

1 View of the Armenian Cathedral from the south-east. Lwów. Before 1363–1908. Photo: before 1908, from L. Piniński. *Piękno miast i zabytki przeszłości*. Lwów [1912]. Fig. 42.

# The Decoration of the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów

JOANNA WOLAŃSKA  
IRSA, Cracow

The Armenian cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin in Lwów<sup>1</sup> [Lviv in Ukrainian] is a unique example of original Oriental architecture situated in the very heart of Europe (Fig. 1). Dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century (its construction was begun before 1363), the oldest part of the cathedral repeats faithfully the main features of the ancient churches of old Armenia<sup>2</sup> in Asia Minor, located several thousand miles away from central European Lwów. The cathedral does not represent Armenian influence but rather the importing of a piece of original Armenian architecture, the erection of which was financed by rich Armenian merchants from the Crimea,<sup>3</sup> and coincided, apparently, with the instigation of the Armenian Archbishopric in Lwów in 1367.

Such architectural uniqueness would have been inconceivable without the ethnic phenomenon that over the centuries had shaped the city's history, namely – its multinational population. It was here, at the crossing trade routes linking the north and south, east and west that different nations learned to live together. Here were Poles, Ruthenians, Jews, Germans, Wallachians, Italians, Greeks and – significantly – Armenians;<sup>4</sup> the latter best known as the most skilled of tradesmen and envoys, due to their talent for learning foreign languages. This phenomenon of the peaceful and prosperous coexistence of many nations side-by-side culminated in, among other things, their ability to acclimate to local conditions, while at the same time preserving their own identity and culture. Such was the exemplary case of the Armenian community in Lwów, thought to have existed there from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, perfectly mingled and integrated with the Polish community. A momentous confirmation of the cultural and ethnic pluralism of the city was the fact that up until World War II Lwów was the seat of three Catholic Archbishoprics: the Roman, the Greek (Ruthenian) and the Armenian.

The architectural history of the Armenian cathedral,<sup>5</sup> its subsequent reconstructions and remodeling, reflect the social changes within the Armenian community that took place over the centuries of their life in Lwów. The cathedral

in its present state consists of three parts built in different epochs and styles. The oldest, main part of the cathedral complex, was the eastern section, dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It was built of ashlar stone on a Greek cross plan. The eastern and western arms are slightly extended, each ending in an apse and forming a part of the nave. The intersection of the nave and transept is crowned with a dome resting on a dodecagonal drum supported by pendentives. The four massive pillars of the crossing sustain the pointed arches of the vaulting above the nave and the north and south aisles which, like the nave, also end in small apses, which are adjacent to the central one. Cornices of the pillars are decorated with stalactite work (ornamentation consisting of numerous corbelled squinches clustered together) carved in stone, evidently deriving its forms from Islamic art.<sup>6</sup> Similar ornamental motifs carved in low relief adorn the archivolts of the chancel arch. These carvings, as well as stone slabs with traditional Armenian, ornamental votive crosses (the so-called 'kchachkhars') formed the earliest, original decoration of the cathedral. Later the walls were entirely covered with Byzantine style murals, in all likelihood executed in tempera, of which only small fragments were discovered during the restoration in 1925 in the splaying of a small window in the southern wall. These were cautiously dated to the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup>

Additional elements, like open exterior galleries running along the façade and both lateral walls, were added to this basic structure in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Successively they were incorporated into the main body of the expanding church: the narthex-like part of the galleries in the west became one bay of the future nave, the northern gallery was changed into a sacristy and a treasury; only the southern part was left untouched and has survived in its original form to this day. Due to limited space inside the tiny church for the ever-growing congregation, the nave was extended in the 17<sup>th</sup> century towards the west through the addition of two large rectangular bays, forming in conjunction with a little smaller 'narthex'-bay a relatively spacious interior. This extension inevitably changed the layout of the cathe-

dral, giving it very much the appearance of a Latin (i.e. Roman Catholic) church, as its plan was now closer to that of a Latin cross (the old part being the choir of the new cathedral). It was in the same year, 1630, that the Armenian Archbishop of Lwów accepted union with Rome, thus subordinating himself and the whole Archdiocese to the Pope, and starting the Armenian Catholic, Uniate Church here.<sup>8</sup>

The union with Rome resulted in manifold changes to the cathedral building, most of them being alterations to the church's interior decoration, which over the following nearly three centuries led gradually to the almost total disappearance of the majority of the interior's Armenian features. Only the rite remained old<sup>9</sup> though an ongoing process of unification was started also in this area.<sup>10</sup>

After several fires in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries the cathedral was renovated and refurbished. At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it acquired new interior decoration. The walls were adorned with partly figurative, partly ornamental paintings in the Régence style (early Rococo). These were Biblical scenes framed by Régence ornament of interlacing bands and strips with tendril-like motifs. The old, probably still medieval, murals and all the above described stone carvings, constituting the original architectonic decoration of the cathedral, were evenly and entirely covered with plaster and stucco-work in the form of pilasters, cornices and other decorative elements. All this was intended to make the cathedral look like a Roman Catholic church.<sup>11</sup> By the mid-century, matching early Rococo furnishings (the main and side altars, pulpit and pews) complemented the refurbishment.

Meanwhile, in 1862, possibly due to changes in taste, the Baroque murals were replaced with new ones, unfortunately, of inferior quality. They were executed by a mediocre theatre decorator, a certain Jan Düll, and survived only until the conservation.<sup>12</sup>

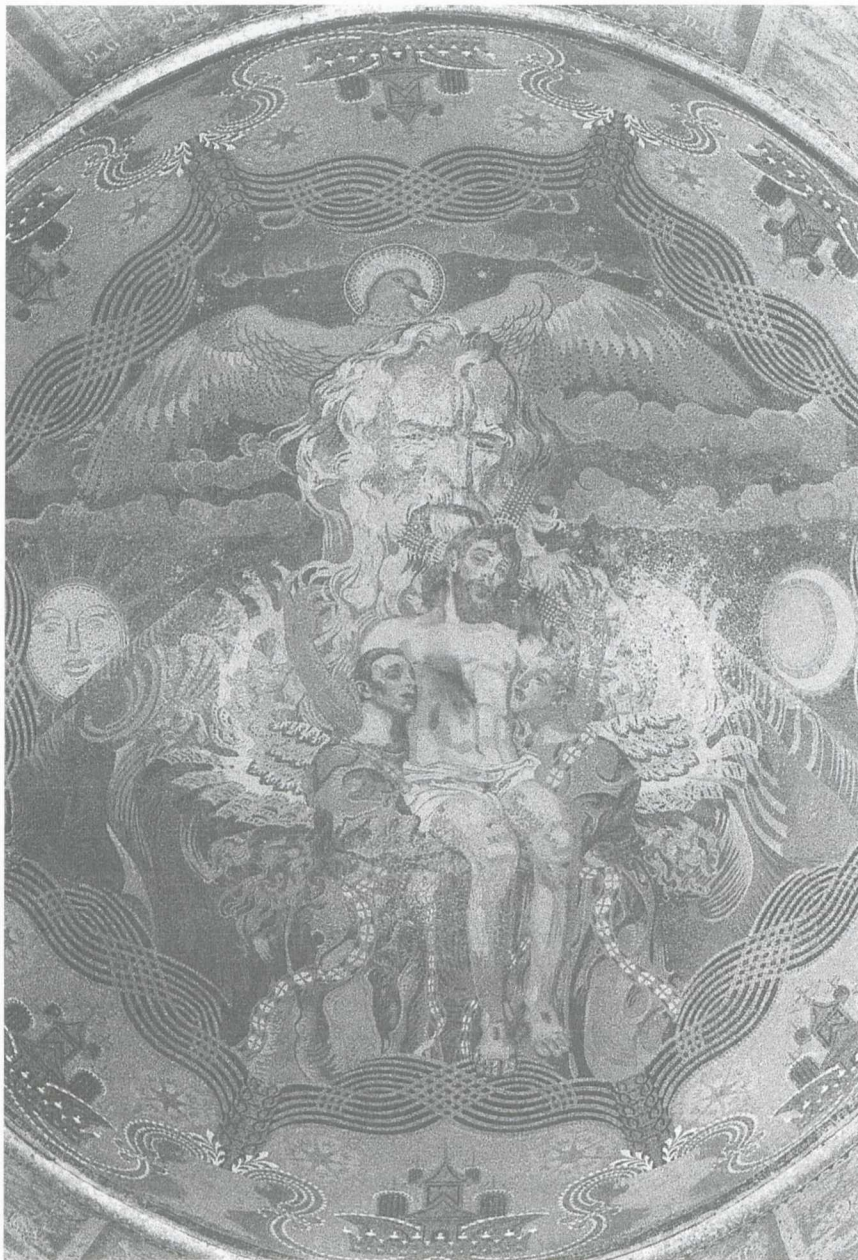
The year 1902 marks the beginning of a 'new era' not only for the cathedral but also for the whole Armenian Catholic Archdiocese. In that year that the Rev. Józef Teodorowicz (1864-1938) was ordained the new Archbishop.<sup>13</sup> From the outset of his tenure, he declared that a thorough renovation of the cathedral building and its redecoration in the 'Armenian spirit' would be the foremost of his objectives. The church was indeed in a very poor state and immediate measures had to be taken quickly in order to preserve the monument. The walls were cracked; the roof leaky, underground water produced moisture that permeated the whole interior and weakened the foundations of the church.<sup>14</sup> The other, ideological reason for the Archbishop's resolution was, however, to maintain and even more, to assert Armenian identity.

It was precisely in the sphere of religion that the Armenians preserved most of the elements distinguishing them from the Poles.<sup>15</sup> Their language was actually only present in the liturgy. In everyday life the Armenians no longer spoke (or only spoke but neither wrote nor read) Armenian. The so-called 'old-Armenian' language, *grabar*, was used only in liturgy – just as Latin was the ritual language in the Roman Catholic Church. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Armenian was no longer understood, except for the main prayers and formulas recited by the priest. The liturgy had to be translated into Polish so that the new generation of Armenians could understand it,<sup>16</sup> or the Armenians would learn by heart most of the prayers and other elements of the mass. A functional knowledge of Armenian was no longer necessary.<sup>17</sup>

It was due to this Latinization that already in the 1860s voices were heard suggesting that the tiny Armenian Archdiocese be suppressed and incorporated into the Roman Catholic one. This would also mean the suppression of the Armenian liturgy which – as has already been stated – had constituted for centuries the core of Armenian identity, and which for the Armenians was the carrier of their national tradition. Fortunately, the threat was never realized. The right to their religious identity was defended by Teodorowicz's predecessor to the episcopal throne of Lwów, the Rev. Izaak Isakowicz: "Their own, distinct rite is a glorious testimony to the richness and spiritual fertility of this community because it flows directly from its heart. Many centuries of the inner life of Armenians have contributed not to a mere bundle of loose prayers; on the contrary – they have produced one coherent liturgy, a new and individual chord in the history of the Church."<sup>18</sup>

It may be therefore assumed that – though the renovation of the cathedral was necessary because the building was dilapidated – its restoration and decoration was aimed principally at re-Armenization. And since – apart from the church architecture and manuscript illumination – Armenian art had not developed any distinct features which would be clearly identifiable as 'Armenian',<sup>19</sup> it appears that the basic notion adopted by the Archbishop while devising the decoration of the cathedral was that of Armenia as the first country to have embraced Christianity as its state religion.<sup>20</sup> Hence both the extension to the church building, as well as its decorative elements followed this conviction, and were carried out in a style which may roughly be characterized as Early Christian.

The restoration was very well prepared and it seems that no decision was made without thorough consideration. Although examination of the cathedral building as well as some theoretical aspects of the undertaking started imme-



2 *Holy Trinity*. 1912. Józef Mehoffer, mosaic in the dome. Armenian Cathedral. Lwów (Photo: author).

diately, the actual work on the reconstruction and extension of the church only began around 1908.

The early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century mark the birth of the so-called modernist school of conservation of historical monuments in Poland<sup>21</sup> (even though the land was then under foreign rule). The Romantic attitude in conservation – of which one of the most famous exponents was Viollet-le-Duc in France – was universally dismissed and a new, ‘scientific’ method was put into practice. It was generally agreed that all stylistic phases of construction should be preserved in a monument, that there should be no ‘purification’ and as much as possible of the original substance should be left untouched. The most important controversy

arose, however, around the question, as to what extent the new (i.e. contemporary) art could be introduced into historical monuments (if at all), and how many of the extant elements could be removed. This was of course a question of quality, not quantity, and there was no simple answer and no general rule to apply. There was no, and there could not be any, straightforward definition of what is and what is not valuable from the artistic or historical point of view. What is more, and what has to be emphasized, the first codification of such principles within the Polish lands took place only several years after the main work in the Armenian cathedral had been started.

Nevertheless, it has to be remembered that Lwów was

a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (where the theory and practice of conservation had a much longer tradition) and any undertaking connected with restoration had to be approved by the Imperial Commission (*K. u. K. Zentral-Kommission für Erforschung und Erhaltung der Kunst- und Historischen Denkmale* (The Imperial and Royal Central Commission for the Research and Preservation of Artistic and Historical Monuments) in Vienna.<sup>22</sup> The representative of the Commission who personally supervised the works in Lwów was Max Dvořák, the General Conservator and a Professor at the University of Vienna. The Commission provided funds for the works, but only if they were carried out 'properly'. It seems that due to the conservative attitude of both the Commission and of some representatives of the local advisory committee in Lwów, the first stage of the conservation (1908-1914) encompassed mainly the works immediately indispensable for the preservation of the building (securing of the walls and roofs), and necessary for the congregation and worship (extension of the nave). The only 'non-utilitarian' exception was made for the mosaic in the dome. It was decided that – for the time being – nothing else would be changed in the Baroque interior decoration of the cathedral.<sup>23</sup>

The Archbishop, as has already been mentioned, was personally involved in every issue pertinent to the renovation of his cathedral, and especially to its decoration, which had to be of a becoming quality and style. Around 1906 he commissioned Józef Mehoffer (1869-1946),<sup>24</sup> a renowned Polish artist and Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow, to prepare designs for murals for the cathedral.<sup>25</sup> Mehoffer took the commission very seriously. He undertook detailed studies of Armenian illuminated manuscripts and even traveled to the island of San Lazzaro near Venice to consult the rich manuscript library of the Mechitarist monastery there; he repeatedly studied the mosaics of Ravenna and Venice. As a result he produced designs for the mosaic in the dome, representing the *Holy Trinity*<sup>26</sup> (Fig. 2) and a design for mural paintings that would entirely cover the walls of the old part of the cathedral,<sup>27</sup> in a clearly Early Christian or Byzantine, Ravennian style (Fig. 3)<sup>28</sup>.

The Archive of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow has preserved two letters of Archbishop Teodorowicz to his friend the Rev. Adam Stefan Sapięha (1869-1951) in Rome, who was then working in the Vatican, in the Papal Curia. One of them was written c. 1909 in Venice, during one of the Archbishop's numerous journeys, undertaken to find the 'right', i.e. the best in quality but not too expensive, Venetian mosaicist workshop to be commissioned with the execution of the mosaics for the cathedral. In the letter he informs Sapięha he was lucky to have found such a work-

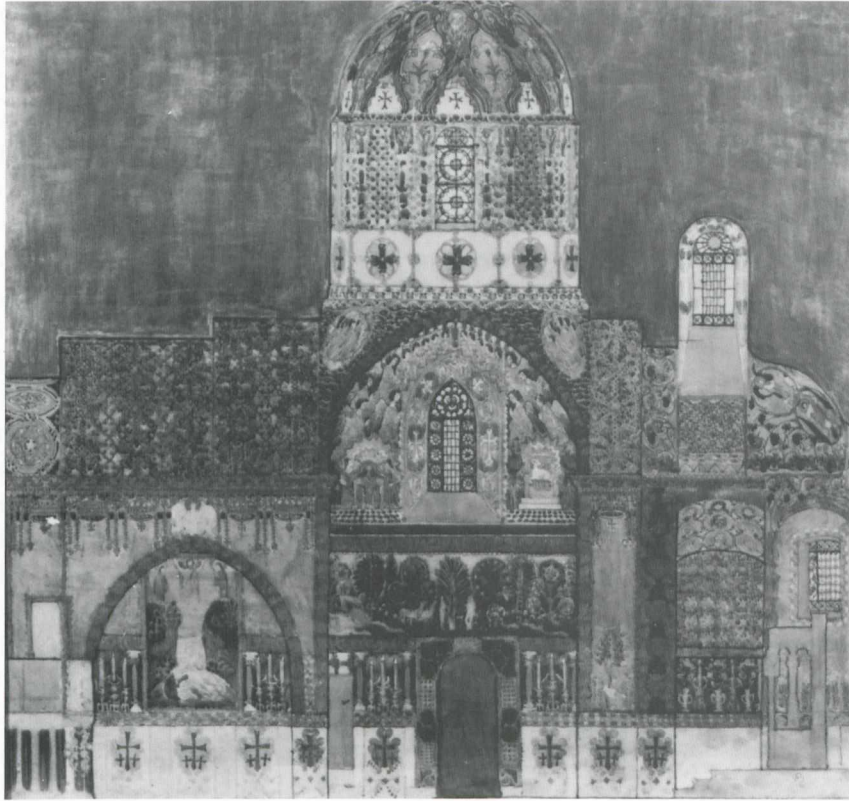
shop in Venice<sup>29</sup> and thus he would not have to go to Innsbruck to look for others.

"Contrary" – he complains – "to our artists! Mr Mehoffer asked for 4000 crowns [for his designs], and then he maintained that the cartoons belonged to him and not to me! And here [in Italy] a well recommended Italian artist [...] asks for 500 francs, and another one – 300 for a work of the same scope and leaves the designs in my possession".<sup>30</sup>

Another letter of Teodorowicz addressed to the same recipient (TS III/167, c. 1909 but most probably prior to TS III/163), was written in Ravenna – a city famous for its Byzantine mosaics and the cultivation of the craft of mosaic-making at the highest level. There, in all probability, the Archbishop was looking for a mosaicist to carry out Mehoffer's designs. Teodorowicz was travelling with Aleksander Krzczunowicz, who was financing the mosaics in the dome, and who was perhaps expected to help provide funds equally for the remaining part of the decoration. The letter again shows the Archbishop's financial concerns, while he tirelessly looks for the best artist to be entrusted with the decoration of the cathedral.

There is in Rome a famous architect or perhaps a painter – I do not know exactly, whose name is Fontana. The Abbot of Monte Cassino showed us<sup>31</sup> his designs for the frescoes he had made for Monte Cassino. The designs were rejected but incidentally, Krzczunowicz and I liked them much more than the celebrated mosaics by Lenz.<sup>32</sup> So it occurred to me, that who knows, maybe we could get to know this Mr Fontana, and maybe even – if the plans by Mehoffer should turn out to be too expensive – we could commission just him to prepare a plan for the cathedral mosaic. I carry the plans by Mehoffer and precise dimensions of the cathedral with me. And even if it came to ask him [i.e. Fontana] for advice only – for remuneration, of course – that alone would be worth a lot to me. Since you, Reverend Prelate, while we were last visiting the church of St Theresa, kindly offered your services to talk to, as far as I can remember, this very Mr Fontana, therefore I take the liberty to request you to pay him a visit now and talk to him in general about the cathedral. Thus you will be able, Reverend Prelate, to infer from this conversation, if it is worthwhile or not to pay him a visit and you will kindly telegraph me here, in Venice (Hotel Danieli), about the said.<sup>33</sup>

The letters leave no doubt as to the fact that the commission Mehoffer received was by no means assured. Recurring complaints about the costs of Mehoffer's work explain



3 Design for murals in the Armenian cathedral in Lwów. Józef Mehoffer, 1907, watercolor on paper, 66 (72 cm. Private collection on loan in the National Museum, Cracow. (Photo: Museum).

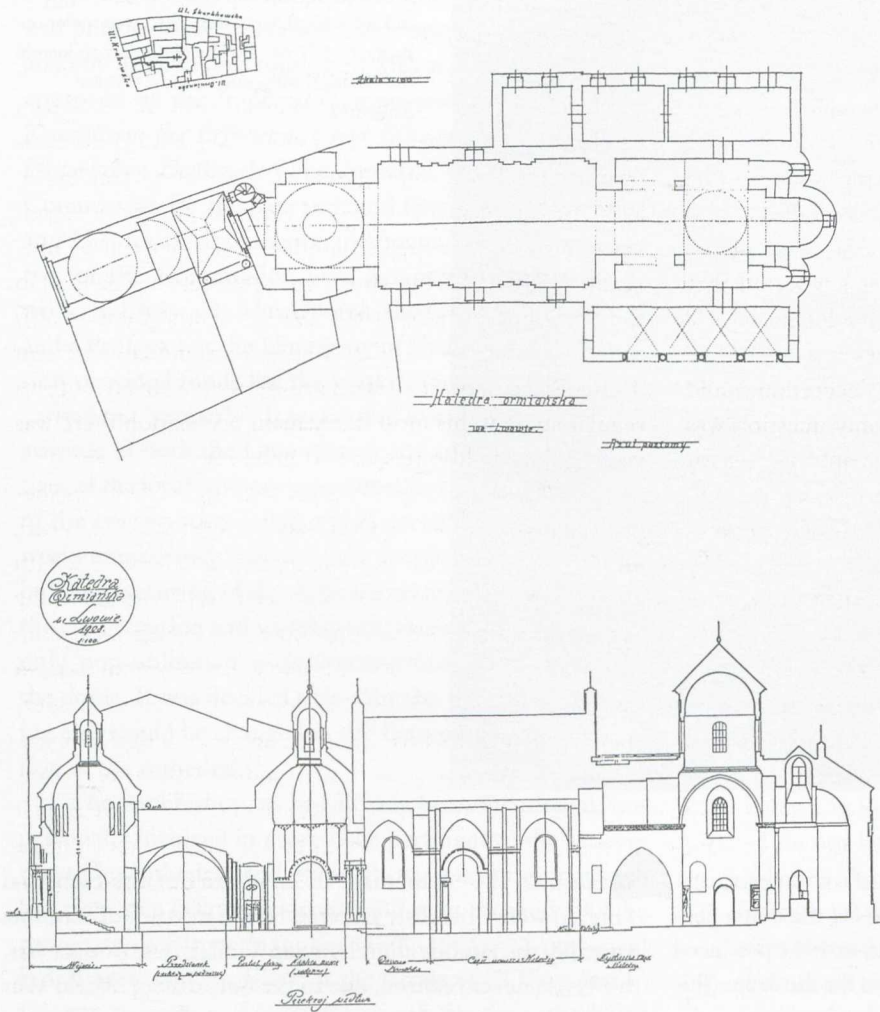
why the Archbishop – evidently in search of a cheaper artist – in 1910 organized an internal competition for the dome decoration.<sup>34</sup> But finally it was Mehoffer who in 1911 produced the cartoons not only for the dome but also for the drum (floral and geometrical ornaments) and pendentives (where the personification of *Faith* was repeated four times).<sup>35</sup> The *Holy Trinity*<sup>36</sup> was based in essence on the painter's earlier studies of the subject,<sup>37</sup> which he only re-worked. That alone would suffice to question the totally ungrounded remarks appearing in the literature,<sup>38</sup> maintaining that the 'Trinity' allegedly represented an 'Armenian type', whereas it is of a type known in Western art since about the 13<sup>th</sup> century, called the 'Throne of Mercy' (*Thronum gratiae* or *Der Gnadenstuhl*).<sup>39</sup> In Mehoffer's mosaic the mighty bust of God the Father, together with His severe countenance fill almost entirely the central part of the dome, leaving space only for the Dove of the Holy Ghost overhead in the clouds, and the representations of the Sun and the Moon, flanking God to His right and left, respectively. Against His chest there reposes the tormented body of Christ, supported on either side by a kneeling angel. The prevalent bright tones of blue, pink, ochre but above all – gold – make an overall pleasant impression, and the ornaments complementing the scheme are very well fitted in the space allotted to them on smaller architectonic fragments of the building.

Mehoffer's designs for the murals, covering only the

oldest (i.e. the 'Armenian' in style) part of the cathedral (Fig. 3) were obviously inspired by the mosaics of Ravenna (notably the famous church of San Vitale). The project was, however, never realized, due to the outbreak of World War I, and later – probably due to the already-mentioned problem of the high cost of Mehoffer's works.

But before the war, in 1908-1909, the church was enlarged by expanding the nave to the west. Originally the intention was the addition of two domed bays, square in plan, connected with each other by a narrow corridor.<sup>40</sup> Thus the cathedral, situated on a plot surrounded on all sides by houses, as if hidden in a picturesque corner of the city, would have gained direct access to the street. The Archbishop very much wanted his church to have – like most churches do – a façade overlooking the street, attracting passers-by and encouraging them to visit the cathedral (Fig. 4).<sup>41</sup> Franciszek Mączyński, like Mehoffer – coming from Cracow, was the architect who drew up the designs for the extension.<sup>42</sup> Again, the war prevented the project from being executed in full: only the first bay, the one adjacent to the nave, and its corridor were completed. The other one, which would have served as a porch and was intended to form the façade proper, was never realized. Mączyński, too, in his designs adopted (probably advocated by the Archbishop) the principle of Early Christian/Byzan-

4 Plan and cross-section of the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów. Franciszek Mączyński, c. 1908.



tine art as a model.<sup>43</sup> In the subtle, yet discernible architectural decoration of this new construction he abundantly drew on the stone carvings and ivory relief decoration of the first centuries AD. His designs (both for the cathedral and for the neighboring tenement house) can be generally described as performed in a modernist style.

This second, realized, dome is supported by squinches and has its top cut horizontally to form an oculus, filled with a stained-glass window.<sup>44</sup> The mosaic adorning the remaining surface of the dome was allegedly designed by Józef Mehoffer.<sup>45</sup> It is a compilation of the 6<sup>th</sup> century mosaics in the apses of the Ravenna basilicas of San Vitale (Christ as 'Cosmocrator', sitting on a globe flanked by angels) with the one of Sant'Apollinare in Classe (lambs on a bright green meadow) – and all that beneath the star-studded sky of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, also in Ravenna. It is these similarities to Early Christian models that make one all the more suspicious of Mehoffer's authorship. When compared with his previous design for the cathedral mosaic,

this design is plain and coarse, and its evident lack of originality can be explained only by the fact that it was one of numerous standard designs offered to their clients by Venetian mosaic workshops.

The last item to have been altered in the cathedral interior before the outbreak of war was the vaulting of the nave. The 17<sup>th</sup> century barrel vaulting, allegedly threatening to collapse, was supplanted with a wooden coffered ceiling resting on gilt consoles, with gilt decorative rosettes in hexagonal cofferings, designed by Mączyński.<sup>46</sup> It is very 'heavy' in appearance, perhaps also too intrusive – so no wonder it was criticized by contemporaries.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, the ceiling, which resembles the Spanish Renaissance coffered ceilings called 'artesonado', formed under the influence of Islamic art, endows the nave with the exotic air of the Orient.<sup>48</sup> It bestows on the plain, mundane even, seventeenth-century architecture the hallmark of something extraordinary. Thus the two parts of the cathedral, dating from different epochs and representing various stylistic fea-

tures were in a way unified by the intangible, yet clearly present Oriental 'spirit'.

World War I prevented the plans for the restoration and modernization of the cathedral from reaching completion. Due to the war and the subsequent financial shortages, it was only in 1923<sup>49</sup> that work could be resumed. It must be remembered that conservation came to a halt halfway. The walls in the old part were already bare but no decision had been taken as to their decoration. It was advocated that Mehoffer's design of 1907 should be executed in mosaics.<sup>50</sup> As to the nave, once its Baroque furnishings and murals had been removed, it was obvious that its new decoration would have to be contemporary in style. The only question was what kind of contemporary art would be appropriate for such an interior?<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile, however, work focused on the new furnishings for the church and the construction of the chapel of the Holy Sacrament (adjacent to the sacristy and the northern wall of the nave). A renowned architect of the Lwów Polytechnic School, Witold Minkiewicz (1880-1961), designed this chapel in the years 1927-1929, as well as the new disposition of the church, the main altar, pulpit, semicircular balustrade and the Archbishopric throne. White marble used for the furnishings came from the Greek Orthodox church, which had been pulled down in Warsaw around 1925.<sup>52</sup> At a later date – already in the 1930s – two side altars made of alabaster, designed, and with reliefs sculpted in the Art Déco style, by Jadwiga Horodyska (1905-1973)<sup>53</sup> complemented the ensemble. Nevertheless, the cathedral was still lacking the murals – or any other wall decoration.

It is a paradox that by far the most important element of such a minutely prepared and carefully planned undertaking, which the restoration of the cathedral surely constituted, should be decided by pure coincidence, as if by accident. For it was nothing else than the 'working of fortune' that caused Archbishop Teodorowicz to see an exhibition of the works of a novice painter, Jan Henryk Rosen (1891-1982)<sup>54</sup> in the Warsaw 'Zachęta' gallery in the autumn of 1925. It was Rosen's first individual exhibition, in which he showed thirteen small paintings done in tempera, representing the legends of saints, based on the text of the *Golden Legend*.<sup>55</sup> Teodorowicz, like most of the viewers and art critics, was enchanted. Instantly, on the spur of the moment, he proposed to the artist that he work for him in Lwów and adorn the cathedral with murals.

Since the artist is not known to wider audiences and the murals he painted in the cathedral, owing to their form and iconography are very unusual, to say the least, it will be well justified and hopefully pardonable to devote here some

space to the personality of the painter, his artistic background and education.

Jan Henryk Rosen was born in Warsaw into an artistic family. His father was a painter of mostly historical and battle pieces and was quite popular in his day. In 1895 the family moved to Paris, where Jan Henryk spent his childhood; later they lived in Lausanne (Switzerland). There Rosen began his studies at the humanities faculty of the local university (1910-1911) but after three semesters he changed to the Sorbonne in Paris (1911-1912). Around then he also spent some time in Munich, where he attended Hugo von Tschudi's lectures on modern art, though probably not as a regular student; his most likely main occupation there was visiting the city libraries and art galleries.

It is the period of his Parisian studies that deserves special emphasis, for it seems to have shaped Rosen's future artistic work. At the Sorbonne he studied art history with Émile Mâle (1862-1954)<sup>56</sup> – a celebrated scholar, the 'father' of medieval religious iconography. There is no point in explaining in detail here who he was and how important his research into Christian iconography is for our understanding of medieval art. Suffice it to mention that his monumental, seminal studies, though some of them are already over one hundred years old, have still retained much of their original relevance and continue to serve many art historians as a primer in iconography.<sup>57</sup> Émile Mâle's broad knowledge of medieval iconography, acquired during years of in-depth, first-hand studies of works of art, as well as his dedication to the subject he was teaching, must have made a tremendous impact on young Rosen. This at least can be inferred from the artist's paintings: they reveal Rosen's thorough knowledge of, keen interest in, and liking for, medieval art. For many of them the models or sources of inspiration can be found in Mâle's publications. Rosen not only listened to his *maître* but also tried his own hand at research (as is testified to by his publication<sup>58</sup>) – possibly not without his mentor's encouragement. Just as he did in his paintings – where he not only imitated medieval artists, but wanted to understand the way in which medieval iconography was created. Once in possession of a vast iconographic repertoire, he wanted to innovate within the medieval idiom. Rosen understood the spirit, the mechanisms and the 'laws' governing iconography to such an extent that he was capable of producing completely new creations, which looked so 'natural' and 'authentic' that one was sure they were original medieval compositions. The uniqueness of his talent consisted just in this rare ability – as will be shown below.

Other important factors that should not be neglected while exploring Rosen's art were his fervent (but not fanat-



ical) Catholicism and patriotism. Although he had Jewish ancestry and Protestant parents, Rosen converted to Catholicism when still a child, and had a broad knowledge of philosophy and theology, partly learned at universities, partly self-taught. He was in fact a pious painter, of the 'Beato Angelico' kind, who prayed by painting and treated his work literally as a vocation (which often amounted to resigning from payment for his work).

Strangely enough, he never completed any vocational or artistic school, not to mention study at an academy. He was taught drawing by his father and had had lessons in mosaic making in Paris, in the studio of Luc-Olivier Merson. The outbreak of war in 1914 interrupted his education. He served in the French and then Polish armies and, ultimately, in the Polish diplomatic service, both at home and abroad. After the war he returned to studying art, this time in a municipal vocational art school in Warsaw, where he attended evening classes in painting, at the same time working at the Foreign Office. In 1923, however, he quit his job in order to be able to devote himself fully to painting. The exhibition of 1925, where he met the Archbishop, showed precisely his recent works, pieces created after he had left the Ministry.<sup>59</sup>

The rare enunciations of the artist himself give insight into the, after all, strange circumstances of the 'commission'.<sup>60</sup>

[...] I had a very big show in Warsaw, my first big show in Warsaw. It was a tremendous success. One big painting to another, everything was sold. And I became famous and the Archbishop, an Armenian Catholic, Teodorowicz, was in Warsaw at the time and he called me and said he wants me to come to Lwów because he wants me to do some work in the Cathedral. [...] And when I got there he said [...] it's all yours. You do whatever you like. And here I was, the largest painting I had done until then was I think, four feet. And I said facing these huge walls – white, nicked – and I have to fill all that? And the trouble was that not only had I never done anything like this but I didn't have anyone to advise me.<sup>61</sup>

Passing on to the technique and some practical issues, Rosen recalled:

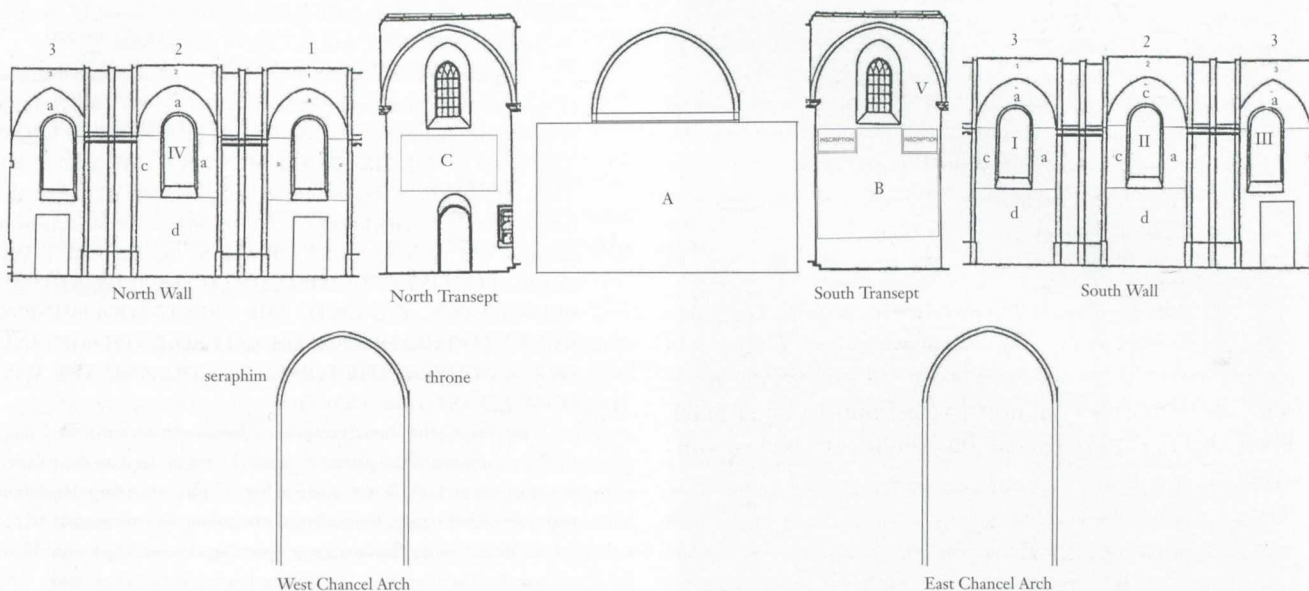
[...] I didn't want to do things at the time like I am doing now – I have to paint on canvas and glue it onto the wall – I wanted to paint on the wall but the technique was lost. No painter was around me who could tell me how to do it. [...] Fortunately, just before that, I had had to go on business for my family to Switzerland because we lived there and had to bring some things with me, and there I met a painter who was painting some murals at the Uni-

versity of Lausanne. And he was painting directly on the wall and he brought me the paints he was using. [...] And that was the special paint based on a recipe which I got from Switzerland [...]. And then I started somehow, I started in October [1925] and it went on for four years.<sup>62</sup>

So, it is clear that there were no preliminary talks specifying the iconographic program for the murals. Rosen's own words that the Archbishop told him to 'do whatever he liked', and the notion that he himself invented the themes of his paintings, seem to be confirmed by the fact that some of the compositions in the cathedral are clearly derived from, or even repeat, his earlier works (e.g. those exhibited in Warsaw in 1925). What is more, the Archbishop must have been very anxious to see the murals ready if he managed to make the painter start work literally immediately, approximately within a month of their meeting in Warsaw.

The murals<sup>63</sup> were done in two stages. The first, in the years 1925-1927 included paintings in the nave and designs for six stained-glass windows (four in the nave and two in the chancel). In the next stage – probably after a debate about whether Rosen's wall paintings could be introduced to and would be suitable for the oldest and most precious part of the cathedral, the architecture of which had its own and distinct Oriental character – the painter made three large paintings in the chancel (1928-1929). All but one of these paintings are done in distemper on wall.<sup>64</sup> The figures in them are roughly life-size, bearing portrait features of people connected with the cathedral who Rosen used as his models.<sup>65</sup> Most of the compositions, however, are treated symbolically – out of time and place. The scenes are framed by ornaments – either Armenian, copied from illuminated manuscripts, or freely devised by the painter, only alluding to Oriental patterns. The murals are executed in a broad palette of saturated, vivid colours, only now slightly faded, or rather washed out by rainwater in the areas near windows. The murals cover almost all the walls of the church.<sup>66</sup> The semi-dome of the apse is covered with a mosaic-like pattern on gilt background.<sup>67</sup> Ornamental paintings in the style of Armenian manuscript illumination (historiated arcades, like those adorning the Tables of Canons) fill the transept walls up to the vaulting.

The disposition of the paintings in the nave – where possible – follows a fixed arrangement. Namely, each of the six fields of the three-bay nave (two fields in each bay, on opposite walls), separated from one another by pairs of gilt (also by Rosen) pilasters supporting the coffered ceiling, is pierced in the middle by a relatively narrow, lancet win-



**5 DISPOSITION OF THE MURALS IN THE ARMENIAN CHURCH IN LWÓW. Chancel.** A.(apse): *Institution of the Eucharist*; B.(transept(south wall): *Crucifixion*; C.(transept, north wall): *Adoration of the Shepherds*. **Transept windows:** V. *St. Paul*; VI.*St. Augustine*. **South Wall:** BAY I. a)*Glorification of St. John the Baptist*; b)*Woodcutter with an Axe/Children Dancing*; c)*Angels in Adoration (Last Judgement)*; d)*Angels Fighting the Generation of Vipers*. **Nave window:** II.*Scenes from the Life of St. John the Baptist*. BAY 2. a)*Annunciation*; b)*The Vision of Elias*; d)*Sibyls (Lubian and Erythraean)*, **Nave window:** II. *Tree of Jesse*. BAY III. a)*Sacrifice of Abraham*; **Nave window:** III. *Pre-Christian Mysteria*. **West Chancel Arch:** A.*Allegories of the Five Senses*; B.*Allegories of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*. **North Wall:** BAY 1. a)*Sts. Blasius, Denis, Pantbaleon, Achatius, and Cyriac*; b)*Sts. Margaret and Barbara*; c)*St. Christopher Carrying the Infant Jesus*. **Nave window:** IV.*Scenes from the History of the Armenians of Lwów*. BAY 3. a)*Angels Conveying the Body of St. Catherine of Alexandria to Mount Sinai*. **East Chancel Arch:** *Cherubim*.

dow.<sup>68</sup> Rosen quite ingeniously used this evident disadvantage, dividing the wall within one bay into four smaller rectangular fields, isolated from one another by ornamental stripes. There are two horizontal fields immediately below and above the window, and two vertical ones flanking it. If one realizes that the window in the middle was not empty, not a 'hole' but containing figural scenes done in stained glass (thus forming a fifth field), and that all these smaller scenes are linked by, or allude to, one principal idea, one recalls the page disposition in medieval manuscripts, especially woodblock print illustrations of *Biblia pauperum*.<sup>69</sup> Though we do not have here any 'canonical' confrontation of Biblical 'types' and 'antitypes', this (rather casual) association – as will be shown below – seems to be fully justified.

### Rosen's Decorative Program (Fig. 5)

#### Chancel:

Presents the three most important moments in the history of Salvation. The *Institution of the Eucharist*<sup>70</sup> (Figs. 6, 7), ingeniously inserted by the artist into the semicircle of the apse, seems to be – just because of its prominent placement – the most important scene of the ensemble. In its

iconography it follows the Orthodox tradition, bearing resemblance to the specifically Eastern type of the Communion of the Apostles, rather than the traditionally Western Last Supper. In fact it is not the Communion but a symbolic – as if frozen – representation of the moment directly preceding it: this is Christ's prayer over the bread and wine, the institution of the most important sacrament in the Catholic Church. Such reading is corroborated by framed inscriptions high overhead on either side of the presbytery walls. The one on the left reads: THIS IS MY BODY WHICH IS GIVEN FOR YOU (Luke 22:19); the other one says: THIS CUP IS THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MY BLOOD, WHICH IS SHED FOR YOU (Luke 22:20).<sup>71</sup> Neither is it the Last Supper – at least not one in its 'classical' reading. The scene – as noted already by a contemporary critic – "in its originality departs from any other representations of the subject: it is not the premonition of Judas' betrayal but the act of the first consecration in history, it is the transformation of wine into the Lord's blood that was presented here."<sup>72</sup> The absence of any genre-like details that could define the time and place of the event, the plain white robes of the Apostles, bearing hardly any attributes<sup>73</sup> – make the scene a symbolic representation and not a historical one. The austere purple background enlivened only with slim gilt arcades, and the surrounding walls and vault lavishly covered in (one is tempted to say – Byzantine, mosaic-like) gold – only underscore the solemnity of the scene. The symbolic aspect is further emphasized by three Passion scenes painted in red outline on the tablecloth of the (altar) table: the Crucifixion in the middle, immediately below the blessing

Christ of the *Institution*, the *Women at the Tomb* (left) and a scene resembling the *Noli me tangere*.<sup>74</sup> They are projections of future events following the one presented in the main scene. All in all, through its 'Byzantine' features, both in form and in content, the *Institution of the Eucharist* perfectly matches and additionally emphasizes the Oriental traits of the chancel. And last but not least, from the liturgical viewpoint it makes a superb setting for the actual altar – placed directly in front of the painting, on a level a little lower than its painted equivalent – and the daily offerings made on it. Thus Christ celebrating the mass in Rosen's painting was always visible for the congregation and it seemed as if an eternal liturgy was taking place in the church (Fig. 6).

*Crucifixion*<sup>75</sup> (Fig. 8). The symbolic features discussed in the previous composition are even more conspicuous here. This is a huge scene covering the whole wall to the right of the *Institution*, this time completely deprived of any historical connotations. The scene is timeless; neither its setting can be defined in any way. On an elevated, stage-like construction of regular white flagstones, precisely in the middle of the composition, there rises a crucifix. Christ is shown alive, standing on the *suppedaneum* rather than hanging on the cross,<sup>76</sup> with His eyes wide open, gazing into the distance, His face – serious and dignified in expression; His arms wide open – as if 'embracing the whole world'. He is represented here as the triumphant Christ – the King of the Universe who had overcome death. The purple of the background only adds majesty to His royal appearance.

Underneath, there flock together the most eminent personalities that had shaped the twenty-century-long history of the Christian faith – from its very beginnings in the first years AD till the contemporary martyrs who most recently gave their lives for the faith. Owing to its location, however, the choice is slightly biased in favor of the history of the Polish Church. To Christ's right stand the figures of His Mother and His Beloved Disciple, St John, traditionally assisting the Crucifixion scenes.<sup>77</sup> Sts. Peter and Luke stand further to the right, withdrawn to the edge of the composition. They can be identified by rather uncommon, yet clearly comprehensible attributes. St. Peter, represented as a robust oldster with the bearded countenance of a philosopher, is holding in his muscular hands – apparently as his attribute – a huge piece of pink granite with a model of his Vatican Basilica on it. The piece of granite, instead of the customary keys, alludes to the Latin version of his name – *petrus*, meaning 'a rock' – the rock, in the sense of the foundations on which the future Catholic Church was to be built. St. Luke traditionally holds a painting of Madonna and Child; but here this is the venerated Polish so-called Black Madonna of Czestochowa.

The group on the opposite side is headed by the figure, imposing in its dignity, of St. Benedict leaning on a crosier. Behind him stand Sts. Gregory the Illuminator depicted as a bishop with mitre and crosier, Casimir, the Polish prince holding his princely mitre and John Baptist Vianney, the 'curé of Ars' and in front of them – St. Theresa of Lisieux. Before the 'stage', on a slightly lower level there kneels, as if in ecstasy, St. Francis of Assisi and behind him stands St. Thomas Aquinas, engrossed in prayer. On the other side of this raised platform, partly hidden by it because they are standing on a lower level, are the 'witnesses' – in the double meaning of the word since they not only bear witness to the events taking place before them on the 'stage'. They are also martyrs who bore witness to their faith, in other words – gave their life for it. Standing from the left, visible behind the Roman centurion, are St. John Capistrano with a flag, St. John of Nepomuk, St. Maurice with his spear, the Blessed Andrew Bobola. On either side of the cross we can see the Stoning of St. Stephen, adapted here from one of Rosen's earlier paintings<sup>78</sup> (the

crowd hurling stones at the saint is visible to the right of the cross). Behind St. Stephen there stand two martyrs of the twentieth century: the Jesuit Fr. Miguel Pro, and Fr. Charles de Foucauld.<sup>79</sup>

The inscriptions flanking the cross form an unspoken dialogue between the Crucified and his confessors. On the left Christ's words prophesizing His triumph read: AND I, IF I BE LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME (John 12:32). The saints seem to be responding to Him, with words taken from the letters of St. Paul (in the inscription on the right) as if explaining their devotion and perseverance in adhering to the faith: BUT WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED, UNTO THE JEWS A STUMBLING-BLOCK, AND UNTO THE GREEKS FOOLISHNESS; BUT UNTO THEM WHICH ARE CALLED, BOTH JEWS AND GREEKS, CHRIST THE POWER OF GOD, AND THE WISDOM OF GOD (1 Cor. 1:23-24).

By placing the Roman centurion (he is most probably St. Longinus) on the edge of the platform, leaning with his foot on the painted frame of the picture, Rosen made of him a link connecting the distant painting with the palpable reality of a beholder. He resorted to an old artistic device of the 'liminal space', privileged especially by the Mannerists, thus obliterating the border between the two worlds. The beholder may in this way join the conversation of the saints with God, or reflect upon the Redemption with St. Longinus.

The painting thus is an individually conceived summa of the history of (Western) Christianity, an expression of the painter's own 'theosophy', full of contemporaneous references. For instance the three Catholic archbishops of Lwów are portrayed in the scene. St. Luke has features of the Roman Catholic Archbishop, the Rev. Bolesław Twardowski; St. Benedict is portrayed as the Rev. Andrzej Szeptycki, the Greek Catholic Archbishop; and Archbishop Teodorowicz has two portraits: in profile as St. Thomas Aquinas (being a kind of flattery for him as a theologian), and *en face* – as St. Gregory the Illuminator.

St. Peter is given the features of Professor Tadeusz Zieliński (1859-1944),<sup>80</sup> a classical philologist of an internationally acknowledged reputation, who devoted most of his scholarly work to the study of ancient religions, especially those of Greece and Rome.<sup>81</sup> He believed that Christianity derived directly from them; that the various *mysteria* of the ancient world were nothing else but a cult of then still unknown, but in principle the same God: Jesus Christ, of whom the Ancients only had a vague presentiment. He maintained that the very foundations of Christianity should be looked for not in the Old Testament but in Greco-Roman religions, which psychologically prepared the world for the advent of Christianity.<sup>82</sup> This is worth mentioning in relation to some associations contemporary beholders made about this and some other scenes in the cathedral decoration. A renowned Polish writer, Jan Parandowski, also a classical philologist, wrote about *Crucifixion* in 1928: "A cross is spanned across the Parthenon. What a new and beautiful idea this is! The cross of Golgotha, rising high as though the tallest of trees in this forest of columns, extols the triumph of Christianity as the most mature of the ideas yielded by the ancient world."<sup>83</sup>

Shall we therefore assume that Rosen, by portraying Zieliński as St. Peter, regarded him and his ideas to be of comparable importance for the modern Church as the personality of St Peter was for its beginnings?

*Adoration of the Shepherds* (popularly called also 'The Nativity' or 'Bethlehem')<sup>84</sup> opposite the *Crucifixion*. Similar to the two other paintings in the chancel, this is also a symbolic one, matching them with its purple background. But the figures are treated here more stiffly than there and the composition is based on strict, even rigid, symmetry. The

Virgin Mary forms the centerpiece, sitting, dressed in a pink gown and a voluminous turquoise-blue cloak, with Her arms spread out in adoration. On Her lap lies the Christ Child – depicted here as an ‘ordinary’ baby. She is flanked by two pairs of angels in immaculate white robes, in adoration, placed slightly to the rear. Shepherds, some of them with dogs and lambs, bent in adoration, approach the Virgin on either side. Two youngsters kneel symmetrically before the Virgin and Child. A flock of sheep hardly visible in the background and the green at the feet of the shepherds suggest that the event takes place on an unreal meadow, where only a carpet had been spread in reverence for the deity.

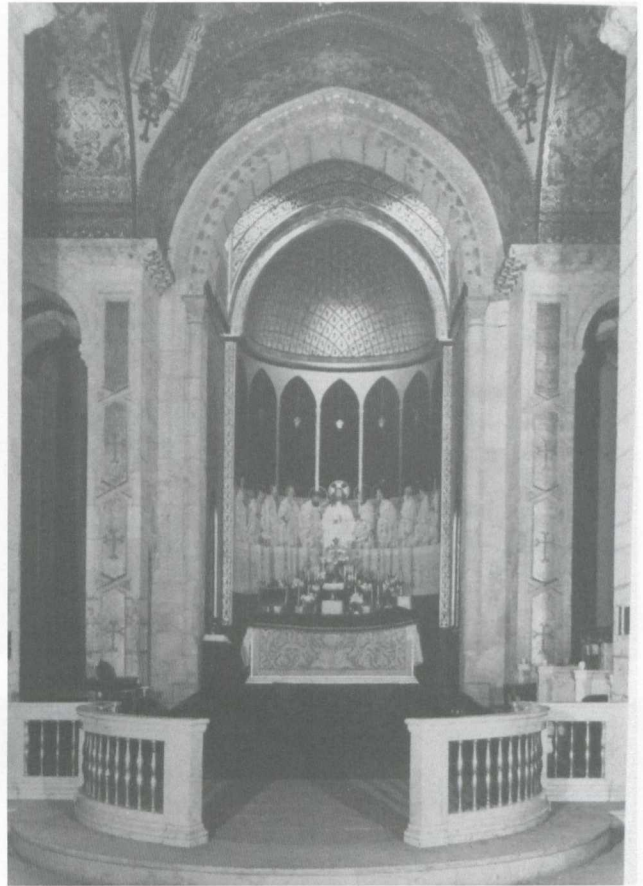
#### Windows of the Transept:

Rosen also designed two stained-glass windows<sup>85</sup> for the chancel, one above the *Crucifixion*, the other over the *Adoration*. They depicted Sts. Paul the Apostle and Augustine – both somehow missing from the ‘pantheon’ of great personalities depicted in the *Crucifixion*. It is not known, however, and hardly possible to find out, where they were originally placed. There are good reasons for both St. Paul and St. Augustine to be located over the scene with the crucified Christ. The former saint could have been represented there because of his authorship of the inscription (1 Cor. 1:23-24) and as a traditional counterpart to St. Peter. The latter could have been understood as a match for St. Thomas Aquinas.

#### Nave

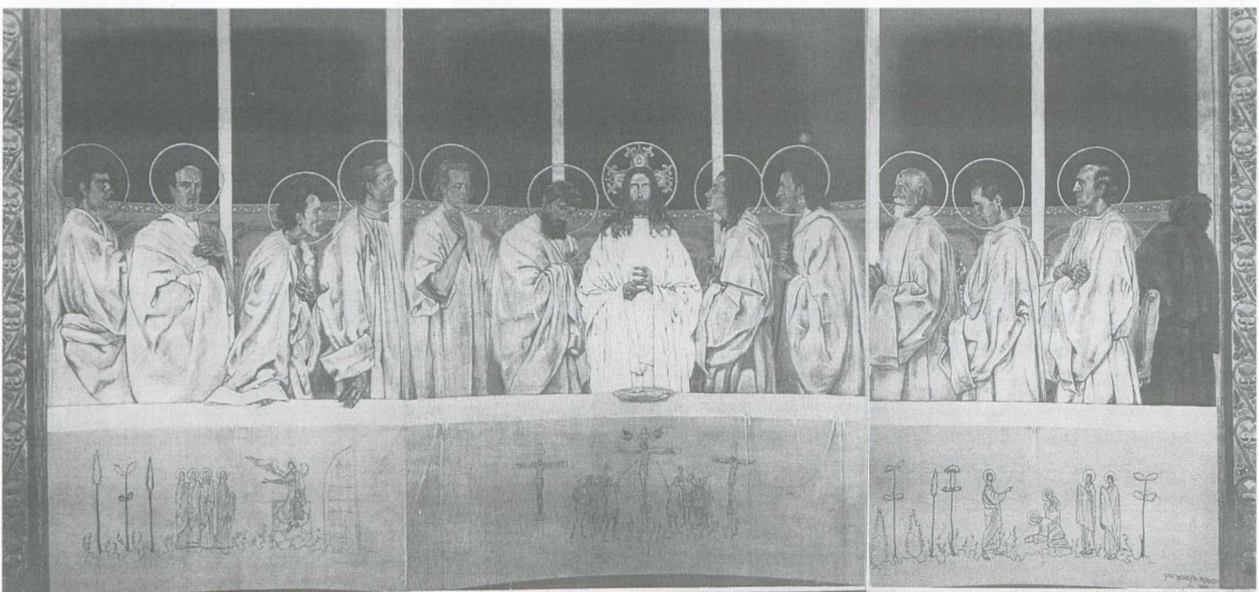
##### South Wall:

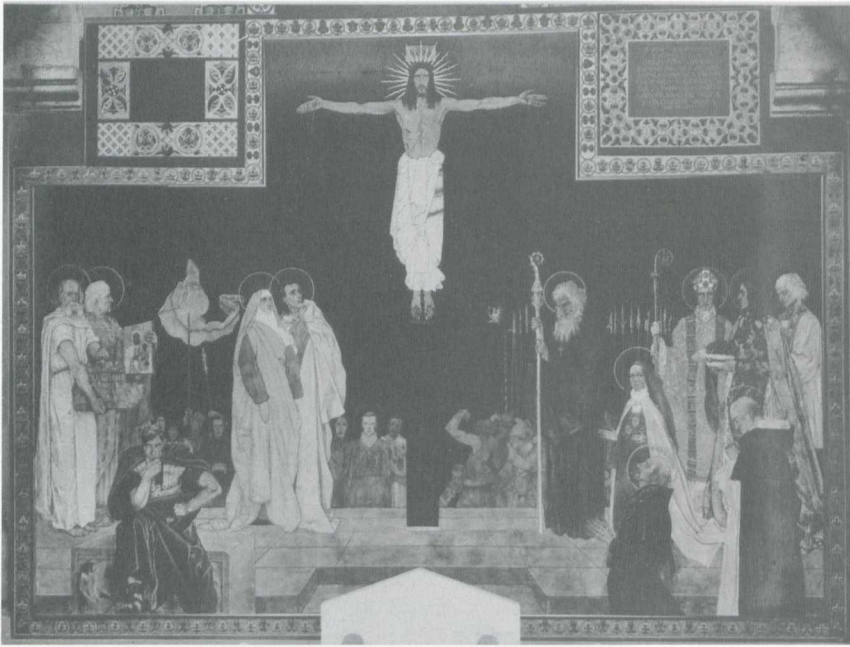
Bay 1. The murals depict St. John the Baptist and his teachings. A most unusual scene covers the lower part of the wall, under the window. Due to its singularity it was variously titled: traditionally but not quite accurately – as ‘The Beheading of St. John the Baptist’, or more precisely but rather awkwardly – as ‘The Night after the Beheading of St. John the Baptist’. It seems however, that the *Glorification of St. John the Baptist*<sup>86</sup> would be the most appropriate title for this scene (Fig. 9). Against the background of three gilt arcades there hover six figures dressed in sumptuous, richly embroidered robes, apparently – liturgical vestments. With halos around their heads, they seem to be angels but not ordinary ones. “[...] These are potent spirits of light,



6 View of the chancel with the *Institution of the Eucharist*. Mural. J. H. Rosen. Armenian Cathedral. Lwów. (Photo: L. Wieleżyński).

7 *Institution of the Eucharist*. Mural. J. H. Rosen. Armenian Cathedral. Lwów. (Photo: L. Wieleżyński).





8 *Crucifixion*. Mural. J. H. Rosen. Armenian Cathedral. Lwów. (Photo: L. Wieleżyński).

9 *Glorification of St. John the Baptist*. Mural. J. H. Rosen. Armenian Cathedral. Lwów. (Photo: L. Wieleżyński).



reminiscent of Gnostic Aeons, all flaming with shine, their eyes lost in the distance, the eyes which remember the emergence of worlds,<sup>87</sup> as Jan Parandowski described them. The angel in the middle<sup>88</sup> holds the decapitated, as if swooning body of St. John but with his arms raised above where once his head was and where now instead of it glows supernatural light encircled in luminous rings. Other angels surround this central group placed on the axis of the composition. The angel on the left displays a bloodstained axe, with which the Saint was beheaded; the next one has in his hands an ornate lamp labelled 'IOANNES' because it was told about St. John in the Bible: 'He was a burning and a shining light' (John 5:35). The angel on the far right

presents the Saint's head on a dish, as it was given to Salome. The two remaining angels stand in the rear in adoration.

Some other characters, Herodes on the far left, under an arcade in the dark, and the grieving figure of St. Elisabeth, St. John's mother, on the other side complement the composition. Three scenes are outlined against gilt background above the arcades: *The Annunciation to Zacharias*, *The Last Supper* and *The Visitation*.

While painting the *Glorification* Rosen was evidently inspired by Gustave Moreau's paintings – *Salome Dancing Before Herodes* (1875), and *The Apparition* (1876) – not only in handling St. John's head but in the way he painted the contoured scenes.<sup>89</sup>

The remaining three scenes over the *Glorification* illustrate almost verbatim either St. John's sermons or what was told about him in the Bible. Over the window one can see an athletic woodcutter placing the axe at the roots of a mighty tree, probably related to St. John's preaching: "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruits is hewn down, and cast into fire" (Matt. 3:10). To the right a child plays the fiddle, another is dancing under an apple-tree and two more children accompany them, one sitting, the other one standing nearby. The inscription carved on a stone bank in the background (MATEUSZ XI 16-17) directs the onlooker to the Biblical source of the scene: "But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented" (Matt. 11:16-17).

Flanking the window there we see – on the left – a scene titled by contemporary sources as 'angels separating the wheat from the chaff', being the illustration of Matt. 3:11-12: "(I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. But he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:) Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." The scene indeed alludes to the Last Judgement, but does not literally illustrate the Gospel. Three angels, in their outward appearance reminiscent of those in the *Glorification* underneath, are standing before a Romanesque portal with the scene of *Maiestas Domini* in its tympanum, supported by a column ornately carved with intertwining beasts.<sup>90</sup> One of the angels is raising a pair of scales above the heads of the other two in the foreground, who hold in their outstretched hands a portable altar and a book in golden binding set with precious stones. The binding bears the inscription: 'Math III VII' which refers to the scene on the other side of the window. It shows angels fighting the 'generation of vipers': "(But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them) O, generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matt. 3:7). The angels are depicted in slightly bizarre poses, as if they were casting spells on the colorful snakes winding at their feet.

Window I. The stained-glass window with *Scenes from the Life of St. John the Baptist*, in subtle yellowish-golden tones against a white background, rounds out this elaborate program.<sup>91</sup>

Bay 2. *Annunciation* (Fig. 10). At first sight there is nothing peculiar in this scene, representing the Archangel Gabriel, God's messenger in rich Byzantine garments greeting the girlish Virgin Mary with the words inscribed in the middle ground of the picture: HAIL, THOU THAT ART HIGHLY FAVOURED, [...] THOU SHALT CONCEIVE IN THY WOMB, AND BRING FORTH A SON, AND SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS. HE [...] SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE HIGHEST: [...] AND OF HIS KINGDOM THERE SHALL BE NO END (Luke 1, 28-33). The signs of the zodiac in the arcades' spandrels (Aquarius, Pisces, Aries) designate the time of the event. In the liturgical calendar the feast of the Annunciation falls on 25 March. The two figures though, seem to serve only as the coulisses, directing the beholder's gaze towards the scene of Carrying of the Cross,<sup>92</sup> set against the townscape of Jerusalem. In congruence with medieval theology, the suffering of the adult Christ is implicit already in the Annunciation. If one adds to the picture the Nativity,<sup>93</sup> depicted on a fabric – most probably a tapestry – hanging

behind Mary, one realizes that this is another composition summarizing the past and future events from the life of Christ.

The *Vision of Elias* – the Virgin Mary in a cloud, with the Infant Jesus on Her lap – and the Prophet's Ascension in a 'chariot of fire', are shown in this bay over the window. Flanking it there we see the two *Prophets* (on the left): Jeremiah and Ezechiel, identified by inscriptions on a scroll one of them is holding, and the two corresponding *Sibyls* (to the right): the Erythraean, with a rose in her hand and the Libyan one, holding a candle, their names inscribed on a plinth-like stone below a tripod standing in front of them. The Prophets stand against some architectural fragments supposedly of the Temple of Jerusalem. A prominent menorah was placed in front of them. The Greek roots of the Sibyls are attested by a Doric temple in the background and a Pythian tripod in front of them, alluding also to their prophetic 'profession'. The choice of the Prophets follows exactly their medieval associations with the Annunciation as codified by the *Biblia pauperum*. Hence we know what their prophecies regarding the event were.<sup>94</sup> Though the Sibyls were not introduced into the *Biblia pauperum*, the fact of their inclusion here and their particular choice, even their appearance, are in every respect consistent with the medieval practice.<sup>95</sup>

Window II. The stained-glass window in the middle represents *The Tree of Jesse*.<sup>96</sup>

Bay 3. Stained Glass Windows. *Sacrifice of Abraham*. In the last field on this side of the nave the stained-glass window and the mural above it are mutually complementary, more than anywhere else in the ensemble (Fig. 11). The three medallions in stained glass representing (from bottom to the top): *The Mithraic Mysteries*, *The Procession of Isis in Egypt* and *Orpheus Playing the Lyre* were meant to be understood as pre-Christian sacrifices.<sup>97</sup> Hence the *Sacrifice of Abraham* above becomes their natural continuation.

## Chancel Arch

### West

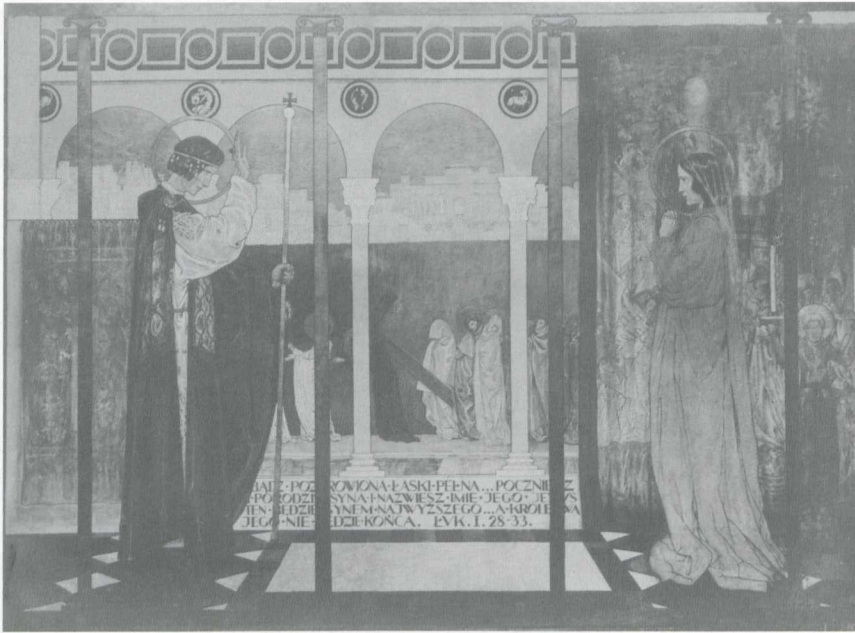
A. The *Allegories of the Five Senses* on the adjacent wall follow in principle the traditional iconography of the subject.<sup>98</sup> They are presented as female figures, each with an attribute alluding to the particular sense, arranged rising upwards on the wall. Sight is holding a mirror in her right and has a falcon sitting on her left; Taste has a plate with fruit in front of her; Hearing plays the trumpet; Smell is holding a flower; Touch – in her outstretched left hand has a porcupine with boldly spread out spines. A male figure atop, holding a plumb in his left, symbolizes the Equilibrium between the Senses.

B. The counterparts of the Five Senses on the opposite side are the *Allegories of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*:<sup>99</sup> Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Might, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of God. Their iconography is most unusual. Three female figures (intended probably to be angels), ascending the wall diagonally, hold accordingly: an oak branch with acorns, a branch of citron with its fruit and a branch with plums on it. Above them there rises a male figure with an apple in his right. Still higher there stand again three male figures, in line, all on the same level. A rainbow spans the spread out hands of the first one from the left; the second seems to have no attributes; the third one is holding a pair of compasses.

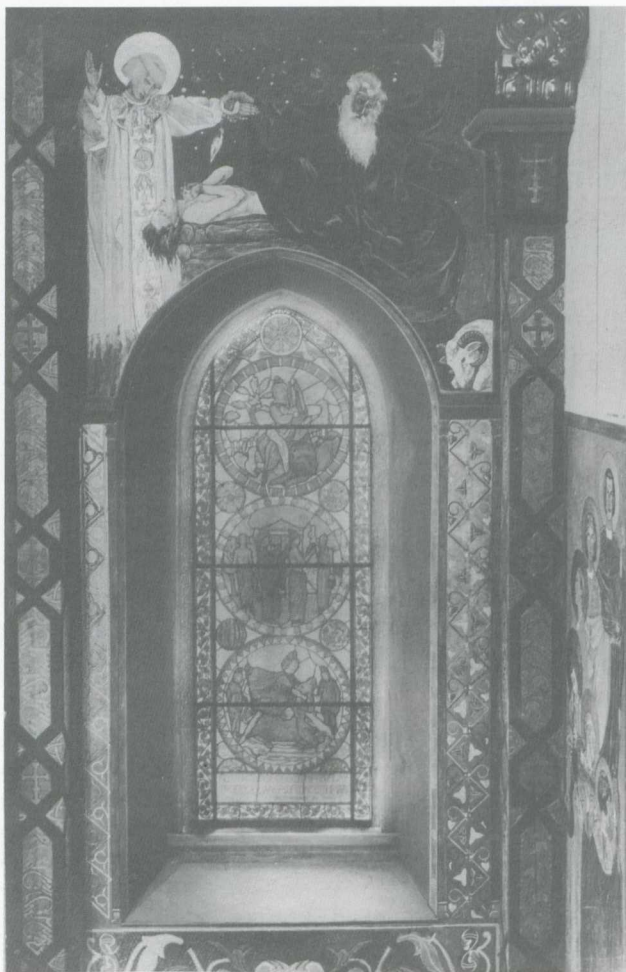
### Nave

#### North Wall:

Bay 3. *Angels Conveying the Body of St. Catherine of Alexandria to Mount Sinai*. Symmetrical to the *Sacrifice of Abraham* on the opposite wall, a



10 *Annunciation*. Mural. J. H. Rosen. Armenian Cathedral. Lwów. (Photo: L. Wieleżyński).



11 *Sacrifice of Abraham*. Mural; *Pre-Christian Mysteries*. Stained-glass window. J. H. Rosen. Armenian Cathedral. Lwów. (Photo: L. Wieleżyński).

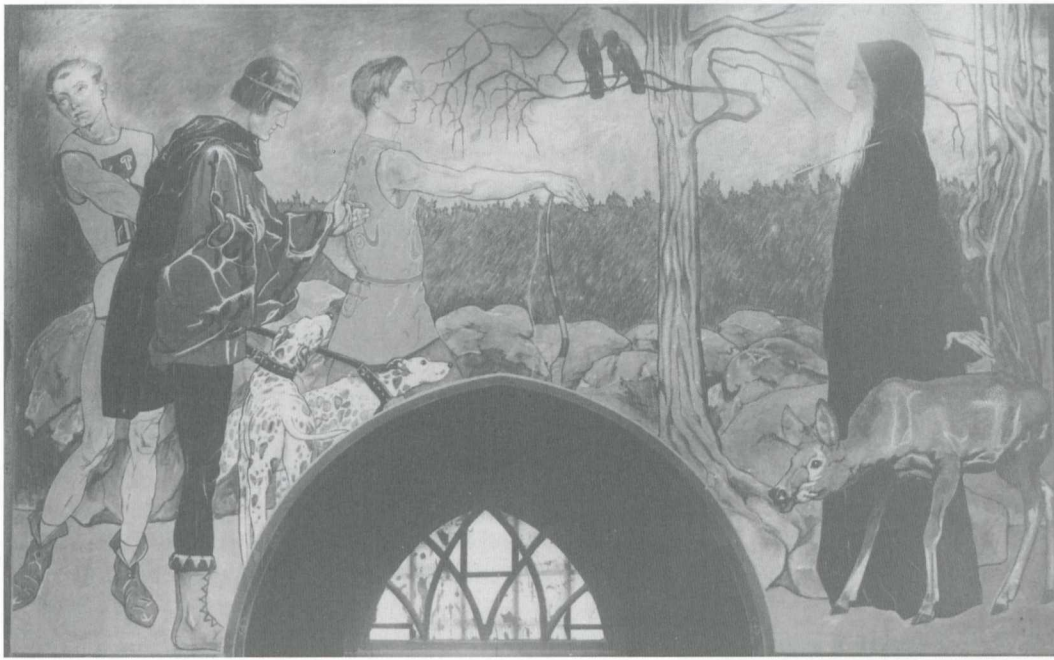
modest three-figure composition, in which the blood-red of the martyr's tunic is contrasted with the white gowns of the angels.

Bay 2. This bay is organized according to the *Biblia pauperum* scheme formally, although it contains four different legends of saints: Giles, George, Christopher, and Odilo.

The *Funeral of St. Odilo*<sup>100</sup> is a unique composition, and by far Rosen's most accomplished and individual creation, both iconographically and artistically. For contemporaries it was – beside perhaps the *Crucifixion* – the most celebrated scene in the cathedral. It shows the Benedictine Abbot, St. Odilo being carried in his last journey by the monks accompanied by mourning ghosts, represented here as translucent silhouettes in hooded cloaks, drawn in white outline only. Obviously they also derive from the Late Gothic Burgundian sculpture.<sup>101</sup> St. Odilo is credited with the institution of All Souls' Day – hence the souls of the dead with gratitude accompany him to his grave. The verse on the bier reads: O, SAINT ODILO, THE PATRON SAINT OF THE DEPARTED SOULS, IN THROUNGS WE ACCOMPANY YOU, WE THE DECEASED, BY YOUR COFFIN. (Scenes on the four hardly visible tapestries hanging in the intercolumniations of the cloister arcades in the background were copied from the Apocalypse of Bamberg, a tenth-century German illuminated manuscript).<sup>102</sup>

In the same bay, above the window we see *St. Giles Defending a Hind against Hunters* (Fig. 12), with the hunters rendered in a strikingly modern way, particularly in comparison with the hermit's plain black clothing. The austerity of the landscape in which the scene is settled seems to underscore St Giles' seclusion.

On either side of the window the artist represented one saint – *St. George Slaying the Dragon* on the left and *St. Christopher Carrying the Infant Jesus* (Fig. 13) – on the right. Here exceptionally the stained-glass window bears no references to the murals. It was made to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the episcopate of Archbishop Teodorowicz, in 1927. Above the Archbishop's coat of

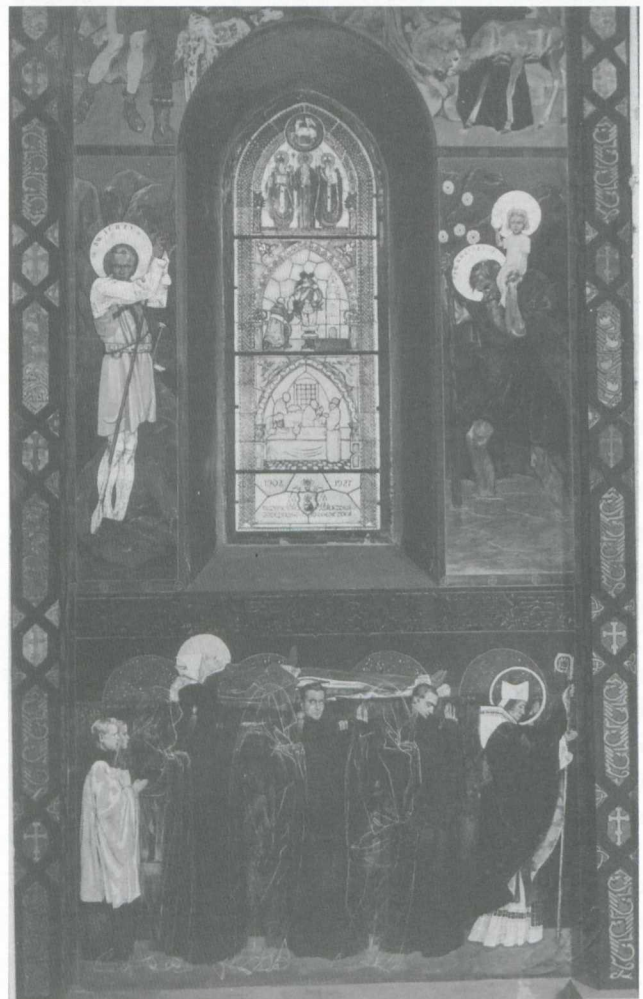


12 *St. Giles Defending a Hind against Hunters.* Mural. J. H. Rosen. Armenian Cathedral. Lwów. (Photo: L. Wieleżyński).

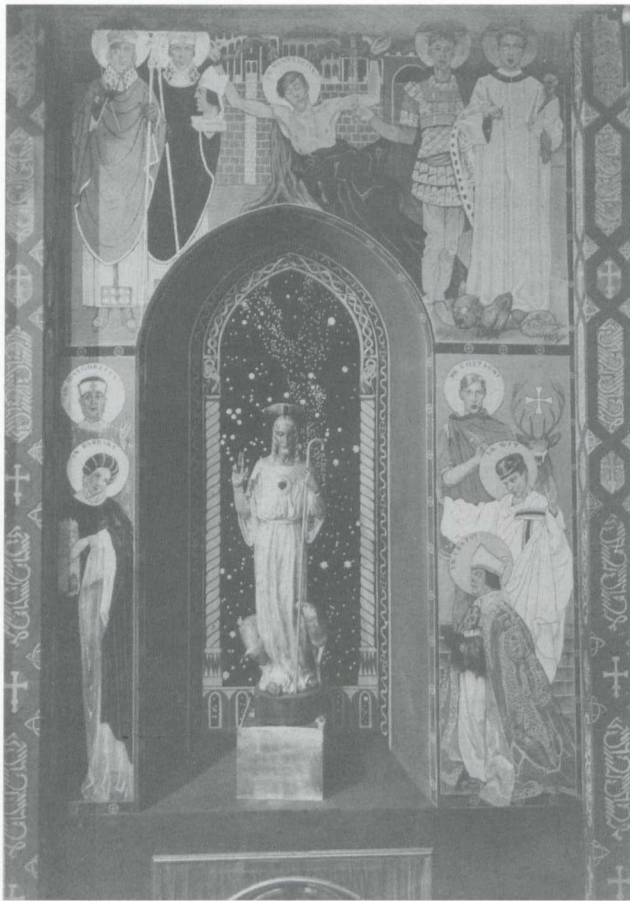
13 North wall of the middle bay with murals: *Sts. George and Christopher, Funeral of St Odilo*; stained-glass window. J. H. Rosen. Armenian Cathedral. Lwów. (Photo: L. Wieleżyński).

arms and a dedication, there follow three scenes: *The Work in the Bank Mons Pius, The Privilege of King John Casimir for the Armenians of Lwów, Sts. Nereses, Isak and Mesrob*, thus depicting the most important events in the history of the Armenians of Lwów.

Bay 1. This last bay includes various saints, clustered together around a walled-up window. In the window niche there stands a wooden, silver-plated statue of *Christ the Good Shepherd* by Rosen's sister, Zofia (1897-1975). The eastern wall of the nave is, in its lower part, covered by two altarpieces, above which were introduced ornamental paintings repeating the ones in the chancel. Over them in spandrels of the chancel arch, there hang Cherubim, complementing the highest Triad of Angels in the Celestial Hierarchy – as counterparts to the Seraphim and Thrones at the other end of the nave. Over the window-niche in this bay we see the martyr saints, each of them identified by his or her traditional attribute (Fig. 14). From the left are: Sts. Blasius (holding two candles), Denis (with his head held on a book), Panthaleon (tied to an olive tree), Achatius (depicted as a knight, in a crown of thorns), and Cyriac (in deacon's vestments, with a devil at his feet); flanking the window from the left stand – Sts. Margaret and Barbara (with a tower); and from the right: Sts. Eustace (as a hunter with a deer), Vitus (as a youngster in voluminous garments), and Erasmus (in bishop's robes). If we add to these saints, Sts. Catherine of Alexandria and Sts. Giles, George and Christopher from the previous bays on this side of the nave – there are fourteen saints altogether, in Germanic tradition known as 'Vierzehn-heiligen' (Fourteen Saints) or 'Vierzehn Nothelfer' (Fourteen 'Auxiliary' or 'Intercessory Saints'). In popular devotion they were the most venerated saints because they could be invoked especially against diseases, in various calamities, or at the hour of death. Or rather we have here not fourteen but even fifteen of them because of St. Odilo who adds to their number, and who also may be seen as a helper for the deceased.







14 *Various Saints*. Mural. J. H. Rosen. *Christ the Good Shepherd*. Sculpture. Zofia Rosen. Armenian Cathedral. Lwów. (Photo: L. Wieleżyński).

## Conclusion

The murals by Rosen, so celebrated in the 1920s and 1930s, fell into oblivion after Lwów and with it the cathedral became a part of the Ukrainian Socialist Republic of the USSR (since 1991 – the Republic of the Ukraine). Yet they remain the best, and matchless, example of sacred mural painting of this time in Poland. Obviously, they have no match whatsoever as far as their iconography is concerned. Their stylistic sources however, must be looked for abroad rather than in Polish art of the interwar period. Namely, they are reminiscent of Maurice Denis' late murals, for instance of those at the church of the Holy Ghost in Paris (1934),<sup>103</sup> or of his earlier religious works, especially at the church of St. Louis in Vincennes near Paris.<sup>104</sup>

It is their decorative qualities that make Rosen's murals comparable and related to Denis' works, especially when we realize that "[...] Denis's works after 1897 became more conservative stylistically. For his church decorations (beginning 1898), as well as his secular commissions, he adopted more classical compositional strategies, and themes [...], and technique.

Denis's early goal to dedicating himself to creating art that reconciled religious content with avant-garde painting gave way to a style that was clearly legible, crisply delineated, and increasingly centred on the human figure."<sup>105</sup> These (among other crucial characteristics of decorative works, like emphasis on surface, flat forms, non-narrative content and large-scale formats<sup>106</sup>) are the very qualities that equally well could refer to the murals of the Armenian cathedral. Paraphrasing Nicholas Watkins' judgement of French decorative painting, it may be said that a simplistic reading of art-historical developments in art up to World War II in general has resulted until recently in decorative painting being regarded as outside contemporary developments [...].<sup>107</sup> As the same author remarked – decorative painting carried the stigma of seeming easy and unchallenging, and "[...] it was a *sine qua non* of good modernist painting that it be difficult and challenging and take a generation or more to absorb."<sup>108</sup> If to all that we add the indispensable condition of the sacred, church art – namely its traditionalism – the reasons why art such as Rosen's lost out in competition with the avant-garde will become self-explanatory. And it is due to such an attitude that the sacred mural painting of the 1920s-1940s still awaits a critical analysis.

The cathedral and its decoration survived World War II in relatively good condition. Only the stained-glass panels, having been dismantled from the windows in order to be protected in the cathedral vaults during the war, were broken into pieces (one of them was completely lost). With the suppression of the Armenian Archdiocese by the Soviet government in 1945, the cathedral was closed and around 1950 was converted into a museum warehouse.<sup>109</sup> A rich collection of icons and sculpture from the Lviv National Museum was kept there until December 2002.<sup>110</sup> Since that date the cathedral has been owned and cared for by the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Nearly a century has passed since the renovation of the cathedral was begun. Despite the war and the numerous subsequent political changes, due to which the cathedral found itself in a different country and serving a different (that is, not Catholic) Armenian community, the church remains a splendid work of art. It proves that the then daring, and often-controversial decisions as to the redecoration of the cathedral, taken at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, were fully justified.

## Notes

1. This article could not have been written without the encouragement of Prof. Wojciech Bałus, the Supervisor of my doctoral dissertation, of which this paper is a small fragment. I thank Prof. Bałus for his kind invitation, allowing me to contribute to the present issue of *CENTROPA*. Mr Guy Torr kindly read the English text, making all the necessary corrections and

adjustments. I should also like to express my gratitude to Dr Józef Grabski, the Director of the IRSA Institute, for his generous and continuous support of my work, and to Mrs Maria Gołas and Mr Andrzej Markowski, IRSA Cracow, for their understanding while I was writing this paper. Last but not least, I am greatly indebted to Wojtek Walanus and to my parents, for their help and support.

General information on Lwów can be found in: *Lviv. Sightseeing Guide* (A. Rudnyts'kyi, Y. Biryulov eds.) Lviv. 1999, for the Armenian cathedral, see 39-41; A. Miłobędzki. *L'viv in The Dictionary of Art* (J. Turner ed.) vol. 19. 835-836. See also J. Chrzęszczewski. "Katedra ormiańska p.w. Wniebowzięcia Najświętszej Marii Panny we Lwowie" (The Armenian Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin in Lwów) in *idem. Kościoły Ormian polskich* (The Churches of Polish Armenians). Warsaw. 2001. 59-98, which is the most up-to-date and comprehensive work on the cathedral, unfortunately lacking critical analysis of facts, amassed in large quantities. Nevertheless, it offers ample, and sometimes hitherto unpublished material for further, more detailed study.

2. On the medieval history of the cathedral, including archival sources and a comprehensive bibliography, with general remarks concerning Armenian art and architecture, see T. Mańkowski. *Sztuka Ormian lwowskich* (The Art of the Armenians of Lwów). Lwów. 1932. 7-53.

3. As Mańkowski writes, book cited in note 2. 44, the cathedral in Lwów had as its direct models the Armenian churches in the Crimea, which slightly differed in details from the churches in Armenia proper. Nevertheless, these differences might be important for an architectural historian, whereas for a 'layman' the cathedral already at first sight would be recognized as an Armenian (or generally 'Oriental') church.

4. An excellent introduction to the history and art of Armenia is offered by: T. F. Matthews. "Preface" in *Treasures in Heaven. Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts* (T. F. Matthews, R. S. Wieck eds.) exh. cat. The Pierpont Morgan Library, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. New York. 1994. (Distributed by Princeton University Press): xii-xv; N. G. Garsoïan. "The History of Armenia," *ibidem*. 2-23. K. H. Maksoudian. "The Religion of Armenia," *ibidem*. 24-37. T. F. Matthews. "The Art of the Armenian Manuscript," *ibidem*. 38-53. See also: D. M. Lang. *Armenia. Cradle of Civilization*. London. 1970 (esp. Chapter VII: "Early Christian Armenia," 155-174, and Chapter X: "Christian Architecture and the Arts," 212-244).

5. D. Kajetanowicz. *Katedra ormiańska i jej otoczenie (przewodnik)* (The Armenian Cathedral and its Surroundings. [A Guidebook]) Lwów. 1930; A. Medyński. *Lwów. Ilustrowany przewodnik dla zwiedzających miasto* (Lwów. An Illustrated Sightseeing Guide). Lwów. 1937. 52-58.

6. On Oriental features in the decoration of the cathedral and the influence of Islamic art on Armenian art, see Mańkowski, book cited in note 2. 53ff.

7. On medieval mural paintings in the cathedral, see Mańkowski, book cited in note 2. 68-79 and J. Piotrowski. *Katedra ormiańska we Lwowie w świetle restauracji i ostatnich odkryć* (The Armenian Cathedral in Lwów in the Light of its Restoration and Recent Discoveries). Lwów. 1925. 32-40.

8. It was not an instant change but rather a lengthy process since the union was achieved as a result of acceptance by the Armenians of the Roman dogma on the double nature of Christ. Dogmatic differences between the Armenian Catholic Church (or any other Catholic Church, also the Roman) and the Armenian Apostolic Church date already to the early history of Christianity. "[...] The Armenians – isolated from the rest of Christendom in the mid-fifth century [...] – failed to perceive and follow the dogmatic development of the period. As a consequence of this ignorance the Armenian church refused to accept the definition of the double nature of Incarnate Christ set down at the Oecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451 and clung to a Monophysite doctrine that acknowledged only one, divine, nature in Christ after the Incarnation." N. G. Garsoïan. "The Armenian Church

Between Byzantium and the East" in *Treasures in Heaven. Armenian Art, Religion, and Society*. Papers delivered at The Pierpont Morgan Library at a symposium organized by T. F. Matthews and R. S. Wieck, 21-22 May 1994. New York. 1998 (Distributed by University of Washington Press): 4.

9. "Since ritual serves to help communities maintain their cohesion and identity, liturgy tends to be repetitive and resistant to change." (R. F. Taft, SJ. "The Armenian Liturgy. Its Origins and Characteristics in Treasures in Heaven," book cited in note 8. 13). Incidentally, it was not for the first time in history that the Latin rite influenced the Armenian one. (*op. cit.* 16-17).

10. In order to consolidate and strengthen the union, the Roman Order of the Theatines was called to Lwów to educate the Armenian clergy in a newly established college there. This was the first step on the way to the Latinization of the liturgy. The Armenian Catholic Archdiocese of Lwów differed from other Polish Catholic dioceses precisely in the way in which their religious services were held. Nevertheless, the ritual with time took on many elements characteristic of the Latin liturgy. Thus, with their language hardly preserved, this most important (and in fact, the only) feature of Armenian ethnic independence – their religion, was seriously threatened. (G. Pełczyński. *Ormianie polscy w XX wieku* (Polish Armenians in the 20th Century) Warsaw. 1997. 15). See also R. A. Mark. *Galizien unter österreichischer Herrschaft. Verwaltung – Kirche – Bevölkerung. Historische und Landeskundliche Ostmitteleuropa-Studien im Auftrage des Herder-Instituts*, H. Lemberg ed., vol. 13. Marburg. 1994. 43.

11. Competition in terms of church art and architecture between the three Catholic rites in Lwów at that time was obvious and very demanding. It was at about this time that the splendid new Greek Catholic cathedral was built and decorated in the Rococo style (architect Bernard Meretyn, 1744-1761); also the Roman Catholic (the 'Latin', as it is called in Lwów) cathedral was undergoing a thorough redecoration (murals by Stanisław Stroiński, and new furnishings, 1760-1778).

12. They were removed, together with their plaster support, around 1908. Their description can be found in W. Żyła. *Katedra ormiańska we Lwowie* (The Armenian Cathedral in Lwów). Cracow. 1919. 111.

13. On Archbishop Teodorowicz see: K. Dola. "The Life and Times of Archbishop Józef Teofil Teodorowicz." *Armenian Review*. 1986. no. 4. 73-82; S. Gawlik. *Zycie i działalność ks. abpa Józefa T. Teodorowicza* (The Life and Work of the Rev. Archbishop Józef T. Teodorowicz). Cracow. 1988; R. Kubik *Józef Teofil Teodorowicz. Ostatni arcybiskup polskich Ormian* (Józef Teofil Teodorowicz. The Last Archbishop of the Polish Armenians). Gorzów Wielkopolski. 1998.

14. D. Kajetanowicz. *Odnowienie i rekonstrukcja katedry ormiańskiej we Lwowie* (The Renovation and Reconstruction of the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów). Lwów. 1908. 6-7.

15. Pełczyński, work cited in note 10. 9.

16. D. Kajetanowicz. *Msza św. w obrzędku ormiańskim. Podręcznik liturgiczny* (The Holy Mass in the Armenian Rite. A Liturgical Handbook). Lwów. 1927; *idem*, "Najświętsza Ofiara w obrzędku ormiańskim" (The Divine Office in the Armenian Rite). Lwów. 1938 (an off-print from the journal *Gregoriana*. vol. 4).

17. Pełczyński, book cited in note 10. 15.

18. Quoted after Pełczyński, book cited in note 10. 31. (If not specified, all translations by the author).

19. A. Taylor. "Armenian Art and Armenian Identity" in *Treasures in Heaven*, book cited in note 8. 133, raises the issue of problems faced by scholars attempting to identify art as Armenian or not Armenian.

20. Christianity was declared the state religion in Armenia at the turn of the 4th century, thanks to the mission undertaken by St Gregory the Illuminator (meaning precisely 'the baptizer'). St Gregory became the patron saint of the country. See Taft, article cited in note 9. 15 and note 5.

21. J. Frycz. *Restauracja i konserwacja zabytków sztuki w Polsce w latach 1795-1918* (The Restoration and Conservation of Art Monuments in Poland in the Years 1795-1918). Warsaw. 1975, see especially chapter 5: "Modernizm i nowe poglądy konserwatorskie w latach 1890-1918" (Modernism and the New Attitudes Towards Conservation in the Years 1890-1918). 189-261. On the conservation doctrine of the time applied to the Armenian cathedral, see Żyła, book cited in note 12. 109-131.
22. Information about the restoration of the Armenian cathedral can be found in the Commission's newsletter: *Mitteilungen der K. u. K. Zentral-Kommission für Erforschung und Erhaltung der Kunst- und Historischen Denkmale*. Vienna. vol. 4, 1905. no. 11. 356; vol. 6, 1907. no. 3; vol. 8, 1909. no. 4. 184; vol. 15, 1916/17. nos. 9/12. 221.
23. Detailed and competent information on the restoration of the cathedral is provided by: B. Janusz. "O restauracji katedry ormiańskiej" (On the Restoration of the Armenian Cathedral), *Wiadomości Konserwatorskie*. 1925. vol. 1. no. 7. 185-191. The minutes of the advisory committee meeting of 19th June, 1905 confirm that only the redecoration of the old, 'Armenian' part of the church was intended. Only there the Baroque murals were removed to reveal the beautiful details in stonework and the 'true' architecture of the cathedral. The nave was intended to be left in its historic Baroque décor, roughly corresponding to the epoch when it was built (*op. cit.* 189). Żyła (book cited in note 12) devotes to the restoration a whole chapter entitled "The problem of extension and restoration of the church." 103-131. See also: Kajetanowicz, book cited in note 14.
24. L. Skalska-Miecik. *Mehoffer Józef* in *The Dictionary of Art* J. Turner (ed.) vol. 21. 51-52. At the time of the commission Mehoffer was already an artist with an international reputation, having won the prestigious competition for stained-glass windows for the church of St. Nicholas in Fribourg (Switzerland) in 1895.
25. Originally Mehoffer was commissioned to draw sketches for wall paintings and not mosaics. It was the wish of Aleksander Krzeczunowicz, a well-to-do Armenian who financed the decoration, that the designs should be executed in mosaics. See A. Zeńczak. "Dekoracja katedry ormiańskiej Wniebowzięcia NPMarii we Lwowie 1906-1912" (The Decoration of the Armenian Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin in Lwów 1906-1912) in *Józef Mehoffer. Opus magnum*. exh. cat. National Museum. Cracow. 2000. 222 (on the decoration in general see *ibidem*. 222-226).
26. All extant Mehoffer's designs for the cathedral are listed in: *Józef Mehoffer. The Catalogue of the Collective Exhibition*. exh. cat. National Museum. Cracow. 1964. 46.
27. This confirms the notion that the Archbishop right from the outset wanted to get rid entirely of the Baroque decoration, no matter what the opinion of the Commission in that regard would be. Mehoffer's designs for murals were not only approved of but also highly praised by the Viennese Commission, as the *Mitteilungen*.... (see note 22) vol. 6:1907. no. 3, informed: "Die Zentral-Kommission bezeichnet die vorgelegten Skizzen als künstlerisch hervorragend und mit feinem Verständnis dem architektonischen Charakter und Raumwirkung der Kirche angepaßt." Cz. Lechicki (*Kościół ormiański w Polsce. (Zarys historyczny)*) (The Armenian Church in Poland. [A Historical Outline]. Lwów. 1928. 148) overtly writes about the discrepancies between the Archbishop who (I quote his own words), wanted to "unfrock the cathedral of its Rococo attire imposed on the church in the eighteenth century and to extract from under the plaster the old ornamented surfaces of the wall, to regain all that has survived of the old times," and the conservators and art historians, who considered that to be an act of vandalism.
28. Zeńczak, article cited in note 25. 224, cat. no. XVII. 1; see cat. no. 341 in *Mehoffer* 1964, catalogue cited in note 26.
29. Indeed, the mosaics were executed by the Venetian firm Gianese. See Zeńczak, note 25. 222. The correspondence between the Archbishop and the Atelier di Mosaico e Pittura, Gianese Cav. Angelo & Co. (S. Chiara, Palazzo Driussi, N. 518, Venice) are preserved in the Central State Historical Archive in Lviv (The Armenian Catholic Metropolitan Consistory, Ø. 475, on. 1, cnp. 609-610).
30. The Archive of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow. TS III/163.
31. That is – Teodorowicz and Krzeczunowicz.
32. Father Desiderius (Peter) Lenz, OSB, painter and architect, an exponent of the so-called artistic School of Beuron, one of the artists who designed and executed the interior decoration (mosaics and murals) in the abbey of Monte Cassino.
33. TS III/167.
34. Zeńczak, article cited in note 25. 222.
35. See the previous note. 225, cat. no. XVII.3, and 226, cat. no. XVII.4.
36. J. Puciata-Pawłowska. *Józef Mehoffer*. Wrocław-Warsaw-Cracow. 1969. 36-38. The intrados of the four arches supporting the drum and fragments of vaulting over the arms of the cross were covered with mosaics (a geometrical pattern with fantastic "Birds of Paradise") but only at a later date (c. 1928). Unfortunately their authorship is unknown (though maybe some of Mehoffer sketches were used).
37. Zeńczak, work cited in note 25, 223; *Mehoffer* 1964, , catalogue cited in note 26, cat. nos. 305-307. It is worth noting that the first project for the overall painted decoration of the cathedral of 1907 showed a completely different design in the dome (see Fig. 3).
38. Piotrowski, book cited in note 7. 18, and Żyła, book cited in note 12. 114.
39. A. Braunfels. "Dreifaltigkeit" in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*. E. Kirschbaum (ed.) Rome-Freiburg-Basle-Vienna. 1968-1976. vol. 1. 535.
40. Żyła, book cited in note 12. 6-7, 122-126.
41. Kajetanowicz, book cited in note 14. 16.
42. In order to gain access to the street, an old tenement house had to be pulled down. It was replaced by the porch of the new cathedral façade and an adjacent narrower tenement house, matching each other in style, both by Mączyński. The architect faced a complicated problem since the axis of the existing buildings of the cathedral run a little aslant to the street, whereas the façade had to be parallel to it. Another problem constituted the differences in the ground level between the old part of the church and the street.
43. All efforts focused on making the cathedral look 'Oriental'. But there were hardly any models to rely on. The Early Christian idiom was supposed to make for a lack of purely Armenian art – which manifests itself actually only in manuscript illumination and architectonic sculpture.
44. It was designed by Karol Zyndram Maszkowski (1868-1938) in Art Nouveau style (decorative, floral motifs) around 1909, but survived only fragmentarily.
45. His authorship of the mosaic is not mentioned anywhere in publications dealing with his works for the cathedral. It is not confirmed in any way and rather implausible, bearing in mind at least the complicated circumstances of the commission for the first mosaic. Such attribution however, can be inferred from some indirect remarks, e.g. by J. Piotrowski. *Lemberg und Umgebung. Handbuch für Kunstliebhaber und Reisende*. Leipzig-Vienna 1916. 88: "Die Kuppel und die Gewölbe werden nach Entwürfen des Krakauer Prof. d. Akad. d. bild. Künste, Josef Mehoffer mit Mosaikbilder geschmückt. Die imposante, originell aufgefasste Dreifaltigkeit, sowie die Engelfiguren und Ornamente in der Kuppel wurden bereits ausgeführt. Der neue Vorbau mit einem Ausgang in die Krakowskagasse besteht aus einem Kuppelraum mit einer runden, **ebenfalls nach Projekten des Prof. Mehoffer** mosaikartig, im altchristlichen Stil geschmückten Kuppel, samt einem bemalten Oberlichtfenster und aus einer Orgel-

Empore für die Nonnen angrenzenden Klosters [...]” (emphasis mine).

46. Żyła, book cited in note 12. 8. Mączyński’s design for the ceiling, signed and dated in Cracow, March 1911, and his plan of the cathedral building (1908), are preserved in the State Archive of the Lviv District in Lviv (‘Plans of the Armenian Church’s Building’, ..., 3, on. 60, cnp. 58).

47. Żyła, *op. cit.* 121-122.

48. Once again, it has to be underscored that any Oriental feature present in the cathedral was immediately associated with and alluded to Armenia and its art, as a cradle of the art that yielded the cathedral building. In that respect the ceiling was another element contributing to the re-Armenization of the church.

49. Lechicki, book cited in note 27. 158.

50. Piotrowski, book cited in note 7. 42.

51. Żyła, work cited in note 12. 118.

52. The church was built by the Russian Tsars and after Poland regained independence in 1918, it was decided to destroy it, as otherwise it would be a token of foreign rule over the country.

53. Mr. Yuri Smirnof of Lwów kindly shared with me the information about the authorship of the side altars. Very little is known about the sculptress and her works. She studied at the Academy in Rome (ca. 1928-1932) where she was one of the most gifted students. (The Library of the Special Collection of the Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw).

54. M. Zakrzewska. “Rosen, Jan Henryk” in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (Polish Biographical Dictionary). vol. 32. Wrocław-Warsaw-Cracow-Gdańsk. 1989-1991. 56-58.

55. *Przewodnik po wystawie Towarzystwa Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych* (The Guide to the Exhibition of the Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts). no. 5 (September). Warsaw. 1925. 27: “The Collection of Works by Jan Henryk Rosen,” cat. nos. 187-199 (paintings) and 200: stained-glass windows designs. The paintings were inscribed on the frames with poems by Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna, a famous Polish poet. Her verses were a kind of poetic commentary on the painted scenes.

56. *Émile Mâle. Le symbolisme chrétien*. exh. cat. Vichy. 1983; H. Dilly. “Émile Mâle (1862-1954)” in *Altmeister moderner Kunstgeschichte*, H. Dilly (ed.). Berlin. 1990. 133-148.

57. É. Mâle. *Religious Art in France. The Twelfth Century. A Study in the Origins of Medieval Iconography*. Princeton. 1978. (Bollingen Series, XC, 1), first published in 1922 [further cited as Mâle 1922 / XC, 1]; *idem. Religious Art in France. The Thirteenth Century. A Study of Medieval Iconography and Its Sources*. Princeton. 1984. (Bollingen Series, XC, 2), first published in 1898 [Mâle 1898 / XC, 2]; *idem. Religious Art in France. The Late Middle Ages. A Study of Medieval Iconography and Its Sources*. Princeton. 1986. (Bollingen Series, XC, 3), first published in 1908 [Mâle 1908 / XC, 3].

58. J. H. de Rosen. “La Pieta de Botticelli à la Pinacothèque de Munich.” *Revue de l’art chrétien*. 1912. 289-292. It is very probable that this paper appeared in the *Revue* through the good offices of Mâle himself.

59. Anticipating the sequence of events, until 1937 Rosen lived in Poland but painted also abroad (the chapel on Kahlenberg in Vienna, the Papal chapel in Castel Gandolfo). In that year he left for the USA, where he stayed till his death and where he decorated numerous churches and public buildings throughout the country. Interestingly, between 1939-1949 he was Research Professor in Liturgical Art at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C., where he received an honorary doctorate in 1957. Moreover, he made good use of his knowledge as a consultant to the Bishops of the US on the iconography of the National Shrine of The Immaculate Conception, Washington D.C. He also published several popular articles on the iconography of Christian art. See entries in: *Who’s Who in American Art*. D. B. Gilbert (ed.) New York. 1959. 145, and more

recently: *Who was Who in American Art 1564-1975. 400 Years of Artists in America*. P. H. Falk (ed.) vol. 1 (A-F). Sound View Press. 1999. 895-896. (Abroad Rosen was known as ‘de Rosen’).

60. Mrs. Mary E. Flanagan conducted several interviews with the artist in the 1970s. They were partially used and published in Polish by the Rev. Prof. Janusz St. Pasierb. I thank Mrs. and Mr. Flanagan who indefatigably have helped me with my work on Rosen in the USA. The following quotations come from the interviews, kindly made accessible to me by Mrs Flanagan.

61. Interview of 5 September 1977.

62. *Ibidem*.

63. I. Drexler. *Malowidła ścienne Jana Henryka Rosena w Katedrze Ormiańskiej we Lwowie* (Mural Paintings by Jan Henryk Rosen in the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów). Lwów. 1930 (an exclusive portfolio – Drexler’s text and a set of twenty-five original photographs by Ludwik Wieleżyński, published in a limited edition). Most photographs of the murals illustrating the present article are reproduced from this source. Some other critical articles on the murals include: A. Howhanian. “Nowa polichromia katedry ormiańskiej” (The New Murals of the Armenian Cathedral), *Posłaniec św. Grzegorza*. vol. 2:1927, no. 5/6. 26-30; I. Drexler. “Dzieło Jana Henryka Rosena” (The Work of Jan Henryk Rosen), *Świat*. 1927. no. 42; M. Skrudlik. “Jan Henryk Rosen,” *Rodzina Polska*. 1930. no. 1; *idem*. “Polichromia katedry ormiańskiej” (The Murals of the Armenian Cathedral). *Tęcza*. 1931. no. 45; W. Kozicki. “Malowidła ścienne Jana Henryka Rosena w katedrze ormiańskiej we Lwowie” (Mural Paintings by Jan Henryk Rosen in the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów), *Sztuki Piękne*. vol. 7:1931. 443-451; L. Isakowicz. “Katedra ormiańska we Lwowie” (The Armenian Cathedral in Lwów), *Posłaniec św. Grzegorza*. 1931. no. 53-54. 160-168; J. St. Czarniecki. “Z Katedry Ormiańskiej we Lwowie” (From the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów), *Antena Życia*. 1933. no. 11; St. Machniewicz. “W katedrze ormiańskiej. (Polichromja Jana H. Rosena).” (In the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów. [Mural Paintings by Jan Henryk Rosen]), *Dziś i Jutro*. 1933/1934. no. 1.

64. This exception is the *Adoration of the Shepherds* in the chancel, painted on canvas, as the last picture, in 1929.

65. Identification of the sitters will be made only in cases where it is of immediate importance for the reading of a particular scene.

66. They will be discussed deliberately not chronologically as they were painted but based on the principle of their importance within the ensemble. The sequence of execution of the paintings in the nave was the following: south wall from the east to the west, then the west wall, next – the north wall – starting from the east.

67. These and some other ornaments, designed by Rosen, were executed by Kazimierz Smuczak (1906-1996), Rosen’s assistant from 1927.

68. These are either windows or walled-up, blind windows forming niches.

69. In fact only three walls follow this pattern, since the three remaining ones are pierced by a doorway. The two walls of the last bay, smaller than the others, are too narrow to hold more than one scene – placed above windows. For *Biblia pauperum* see e.g.: A. Henry. *Biblia pauperum*. Ithaca, New York. 1987, and Mâle 1908. 233-246 / XC, 3. 219-225.

70. The mural is double signed: bottom right, on the tablecloth: JAN HENRYK ROSEN 1928, and between the third and fourth apostle from the left: JAN HENRYK ROSEN 21 VII 1928. The scene was discussed in detail by: J. Zachariewicz. “‘Ostatnia Wieczerza’ J. H. Rosena. Nowy fresk w katedrze orm. we Lwowie” (*The Last Supper* by J. H. Rosen. A New Fresco in the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów). *Gazeta Warszawska*. 1928. no. 286. 4 (reprinted in: *Posłaniec św. Grzegorza*. vol. 2:1928. no. 18/19. 148-150); *idem*. “Wtórna kompozycja Ostatniej Wieczerzy Jana Henryka Rosena. Fresk w ormiańskiej katedrze we Lwowie” (The Repeated Com-

position of *The Last Supper* by Jan Henryk Rosen. A Fresco in the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów). *Gazeta Kościelna*. 1929. no. 12. 139-140. (reprinted in: *Posłaniec św. Grzegorza*. vol. 3:1929. no. 22/23. 44-49).

71. All biblical quotations are based on the King James Version of the Bible.

72. Zachariewicz. The Repeated Composition (cited in note 70). 140.

73. The Apostles seem to be characterized only by their outward appearance or age. Only St Jacob the Great leans against a pilgrim stick with a scallop shell atop of it, his traditional attributes. In case of doubts as to their identity one may read the names of each Apostle inscribed in the Armenian alphabet in their halos. Standing on Christ's right (from the left) they are Sts. Simon, Thaddeus, Philip, Thomas, Andrew and Peter. To His right stand Sts. John, Jacob the Great, Jacob the Minor, Bartholomew, Matthew and Judas.

74. These tiny scenes seem to have been copied from an early medieval manuscript – their style reminiscent, for instance, of miniatures in the *Utrecht Psalter*. Most probably, however, they are the inventions of the artist who only cleverly imitated the style of the ninth-century miniatures.

75. The signature (bottom right) reads: JAN HENRYK ROSEN 3 IV 1928. The painter evidently wanted to have the mural ready for the Easter of 1928. Easter Sunday in 1928 fell on April 8th, only five days after the date put on the signature. The painting is dealt with in: J. Zachariewicz. "Ukrzyżowanie' Jana Henryka Rosena. (Fresk w katedrze ormiańskiej we Lwowie)" (*The Crucifixion* by Jan Henryk Rosen. [A Fresco in the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów]), *Gazeta Kościelna*. 1929. no. 9. 100-102 (reprinted as: "Najnowszy fresk J. H. Rosena 'Ukrzyżowanie' w katedrze orm. we Lwowie" [The Most Recent Fresco by J. H. Rosen, *The Crucifixion*, in the Armenian cathedral in Lwów], *Posłaniec św. Grzegorza*. vol. 2:1928. no. 16/17. 117-122).

76. The whole crucifix was inspired by and the loincloth minutely copied from an eleventh-century illumination in the *Psalter-Hymnal* from St. Germain-des-Près, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 11550, fol. 6r. See Mâle 1922. 8, Fig. 4 (as 'Manuscrit de Limoges') / XC, I. 11, Fig. 4].

77. Except for these two figures, all other saints are identified by inscriptions in their halos (in Polish).

78. Painted in 1925, watercolor and gouache on paper, 65,5 (99 cm, Lwów Gallery of Art. See: *Art Déco in Lviv*. A. Bantsekova (ed.) exh. cat. Lviv. 2001. cat. no. III/50.

79. Both of them were quite 'recent' martyrs, not saints yet, hence the dates of their death were inscribed above their heads: Miguel Pro – 23rd November 1927, Charles de Foucauld – 1st December 1916.

80. Whereas all other 'portraits' in the cathedral depict models native to Lwów, Prof. Zieliński at that time had been living in Warsaw. Therefore his portrait here becomes very conspicuous and raises the question as to why precisely Rosen should have wanted to put him in the most significant composition in the church.

81. His greatest work being a series entitled *Religions of the Ancient World* (in several volumes: *Religion of the Ancient Greece*. Warsaw. 1921; *Religion of Hellenism*. *ibidem*. 1925; *Hellenism and Judaism*. *ibidem*. 1927; the others are not relevant for my argument as they were published after the decoration of the cathedral was completed). Parandowski (see below) again used his favorite Parthenon (representing Antiquity in general) parallel when he wrote that reading these books "[...] allows us to hear the murmur of the sources of Christianity under the columns of the Parthenon." (J. Parandowski. "Tadeusz Zieliński", *Pamiętnik Warszawski*. 1929. no. 1. 208).

82. L. Piotrowicz. "Tadeusz Stefan Zieliński," *Kwartalnik Historyczny*. 1946. no. 53. 639-653. Zieliński himself was a very religious man, a Catholic, but his ideas (especially in their lapidary form, without appropriate commentary) clearly opposed Church dogmas and were generally

rejected by the Catholic Church and (particularly the ones presented in his *Hellenism and Judaism*) were regarded as blasphemous and heretic. Even Archbishop Teodorowicz himself fought them in his writings.

83. J. Parandowski. "W lwowskiej katedrze ormiańskiej" (In the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów), *Tęcza*. 1928. no. 6 (unpaginated).

84. Signed (bottom right): JAN HENRYK ROSEN 1929.

85. They have been recently discovered in the vaults of the cathedral, together with fragments of the other three windows of the nave (originally there were four of them), unfortunately preserved only fragmentarily as a pile of small glass panes. St. Paul could be restored, whereas too few fragments exist of St. Augustine for the window to be reconstructed.

86. This title (in French: 'La glorification de St. Jean-Baptiste') can be found in: R. Plus. *Saint Jean-Baptiste dans l'art*. Starsbourg. 1937. 120 where Rosen's painting is reproduced.

87. Parandowski, article cited in note 83.

88. He is wearing a garment known as the 'Dalmatic of Charlemagne' (in fact a patriarchal 'sakkos' of the mid-fourteenth century) from St Peter's Treasury, Rome. See J. Beckwith. *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*. London. 1970. 155, Fig. 296. Patterns on other vestments can be also easily traced especially among Byzantine fabrics.

89. There exists an earlier version of the subject painted by Rosen and entitled *The Vision of Catherine Emmerich* (1924, watercolor, gouache on paper, 62,5 (103,8 cm, Lwów Gallery of Art, see Bantsekova, catalogue cited in note 78, cat. no. III/51). As the title suggests, it was painted after the visions of Anna Katharina Emmerich (1774-1824), German mystic and stigmatic, as it indeed was (see A. K. Emmerich / C. Brentano. *Das zweite Lebrjahr Jesu: aus den Tagebüchern des Clemens Brentano*. Stein-am-Rhein. 1998. 356). The mural however, differs considerably from the watercolor and Stanisław Machniewicz's remark (article cited in note 63. 5) that the painting depicted 'The night after the beheading of St John, from the dreadful vision of Katharina Emmerich' goes rather too far. There is no such Emmerich's vision as the one painted by Rosen in the cathedral.

90. This is the tympanum of the church in Charlieu, copied after Mâle 1922. 33, Fig. 32 / XC, I. 35, Fig. 32; the column is the famous *trumeau* of Souillac, see Mâle 1922. 19, Fig. 15 / XC, I. 21, Fig. 15.

91. All stained-glass windows were executed between the years 1926-1927 by the firm of Franciszek Białkowski from Warsaw. None of them have been preserved in place.

92. The mourners following in procession St. John and the Virgin Mary are copied after the *pleurants* from the Burgundian tombs of Philip Pot and Philip the Bold. See Mâle 1908. 415-421, Figs. 226, 227, 229 / XC, 3. 380, Figs. 235-236, 238].

93. The mutual penetrating and overlapping of the picture planes make the composition particularly intriguing. For instance, the figure of Mary is placed so that it covers the piece of the fabric, where She and the Jesus Child should have been depicted; on the other hand, the Dove of the Holy Ghost from the tapestry seems to be hovering directly above the 'real' Virgin's head. The adoring angel with an armful of seven swords – apparently symbolizing the Seven Dolours of Mary – constitutes an additional peculiarity of the *Nativity* scene.

94. See Henry, book cited in note 69. 48 (Fig. a), 50, and Mâle, 1908. 233-246 / XC, 3. 219-255. "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man" (Jer. 31:22). "This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened" (Ezek. 44:2).

95. Again the two Sibyls were copied after the illustrations in the *Hours for use of Rouen* (1508, Paris), reproduced in Mâle 1908. 268-271, Figs. 138, 139 / XC, 3. Figs. 142-143.

96. Again it was based on illustrations in Mâle. 1922. 169-173, Figs. 133-135 / XC, I. 172, Figs. 148-150.

97. The inscription at the bottom of the window is a citation from Clemens of Alexandria (in Greek). It may come from his *Protrepitkos pros Hellenas* (Encouragement for the Greeks), where he presents Greek philosophy as the precursor of Christianity.
98. See e.g. C. Nordenfalk. "The Five Senses in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*. 1985. no. 48. 1-22.
99. A list of them can be found in Isa. 11:1-3: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord."
100. Signed bottom right: JAN HENRYK ROSEN 1927. An earlier version of the *Funeral* was exhibited in 1925 in Warsaw; its photo is preserved in the National Library in Warsaw (AFF III-57, I.F. 23.144). See my "Kilka uwag na temat ikonografii malowideł Jana Henryka Rosena w katedrze ormiańskiej we Lwowie: 'Pogrzeb św. Odilona'" (Some Remarks on the Iconography of Murals by Jan Henryk Rosen in the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów: *The Funeral of Saint Odilo*), *Przegląd Wschodni*. 1999/2000. 379-402.
101. See note 92.
102. See J. Wolańska. "Die 'Bamberger Apokalypse' in der Armenischen Kathedrale zu Lemberg in *Hansestadt, Residenz, Industriestandort. Beiträge der 7. Tagung des Arbeitskreises deutscher und polnischer Kunsthistoriker in Oldenburg, 27.-30. September 2000*. B. Störtkuhl (ed.) Munich. 2002. 373-378.
103. *Maurice Denis 1870-1943*. exh. cat. Lyons, Cologne, Liverpool, Amsterdam. 1994-1995. Figs. 74, 93.
104. D. Gamboni. "Die moderne Kunst taufen?" in *Maurice Denis* (catalogue cited in the previous note). 75-92, and "Denis' Murals in the Apse of the Church of Saint-Paul de Grange-Canal, Geneva (Switzerland), c. 1916," see *op. cit.* 314-315.
105. G. Groom. "Coming of Age: Patrons and Projects, 1890-99" in *Beyond the Easel. Decorative Painting by Bonnard, Vuillard, Denis and Roussel, 1890-1930*. G. Groom (ed.) exh. cat. The Art Institute of Chicago. New Haven and London. 2001. 53.
106. G. Groom. "Into the Mainstream: 1900-1930," in *Beyond the Easel...*, catalogue cited in the previous note. 164.
107. N. Watkins. "The Genesis of a Decorative Aesthetic in Beyond the Easel..." catalogue cited in note 105. 22.
108. *Ibidem*.
109. See Pełczyński, book cited in note 10. 78, and note 188.
110. See J. Smirnow. 'Odzyskana świątynia. Przekazanie katedry ormiańskiej' (The Regained Temple. Presentation of the Armenian Cathedral), *Gazeta Lwowska*. 2003, no. 1-2 (31 Jan.). 6. The oldest part of the cathedral was opened for worship on 5 Dec 2001.