

The Architectural Sculpture in the Former Norbertine Churches in Wrocław-Ołbin and in Strzelno in the Romanesque Period

St. Vincent's abbey in Wrocław-Ołbin and the nuns' cloister of Holy Trinity in Strzelno were the most important Norbertine foundations of the Polish circary. Both cloisters derived from the first Polish Norbertine double monastery in Kościelna Wieś¹. They were founded in 1193² and were connected both by filiation and the same founders' families: Włostowic and Wszeborowicz. One circle of founders, who financed the construction and the sculptures, was of vital importance. Both families were of the most renowned aristocratic houses in Wrocław and Strzelno that distinguished themselves among others because of their great wealth. The founders, who were aware of their position, preserved their image in the foundation tympana, manifesting and commemorating their role.

The Romanesque stone sculptures coming from those cloisters are among the most minutely preserved, the most interesting and the most highly valued examples. The sculpture is represented by a church portal from St. Vincent's Church in Wrocław-Ołbin and a unique group, which comprises columns with a sculpted catalogue of *Virtues* and *Vices* on columns, three tympana, two panels in bas-relief from the decoration of the nuns' choir partition boards and a great number of small pieces of original stone sculpture decorations preserved in Strzelno.

The Portal from St. Vincent's Church in Wrocław-Ołbin

The Portal from St. Vincent's Church³ after the destruction of Ołbin's abbey in 1529 was embedded into the southern wall of the gothic church

¹ J. RAJMAN, *The Origins of the Polish Praemonstratensian Circary*, "Analecta Praemonstratensia", vol. 66, 1990, pp. 203-219, here pp. 207-208.

² The preserved papal bulls testify to this.

³ Dismantling of the Norbertine abbey in 1529 and its reconstruction by the southern wall of St. Mary Magdalene Church in 1546 made it necessary to adapt the portal to a smaller church. As a consequence of the reconstruction the portal had to be made smaller by the change in the layout of the stairs, elimination of the plinths at the base of the

of St. Mary Magdalene in Wrocław. It is a set-off portal. There is a semicircular archivolt with four bolsters which leans against the doorposts and three pairs of columns. On those doorposts are images of demonic jaws. The shafts of the columns are decorated with floral and geometric figures; the capitals are adorned with representational, fantastical, animal and floral motifs. The three bolsters are embellished with three floral tendrils and one with representational scenes. These are: *the Annunciation to Mary, the Annunciation to the Shepherds, the Birth of Christ, the Adoration of the Magi, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and the Baptism of Christ*⁴ (ill. 1).

The results of the dating process vary approximately by half a century. It is closely related to attributing the existence of the portal to the activity of either the Benedictines⁵, who were departing, or the Norbertines⁶,

columns and removal of the sculptures of lions from under the larger exterior columns. It is probable that during those reconstructions the portal lost the canopy that covered it, and this in turn led to the introduction of changes in the outer profile of the archivolt. In 1546 the crowns of the doorposts were made and the doorposts themselves were shortened. Only the eastern doorpost is from the 12th century, the western one was built in the XVI century as a consequence of the destruction or impossibility of shortening the previous construction due to the layout of the decorations (thus the repetition of the ornaments from the eastern doorpost). The smooth stemmed columns aren't original as well; they were added during the reconstruction in 1890. Koziński claims that the Olbin monument was primarily built as an analogue to the portal in the Benedictine abbey in Ratisbon (the stairs fitted to the pedestals, lions at the feet of exterior columns, canopies) see: W. KOZIŃSKI, *Uwagi o portalu Olbińskim*, „Ochrona Zabytków”, vol. 11, 1958, pp. 177-191.

⁴ H. LUCHS, *Über einige mittelalterliche Kunstdenkmäler von Breslau*, Breslau 1855; IDEM, *Romanische und gothische Stilproben aus Breslau und Trebnitz*, Breslau 1859; C. BUCHWALD, *Reste des Vinzenzklosters bei Breslau*, „Schlesiens Vorzeit in Bild und Schrift”, NF, vol. 1, 1900, pp. 69-72.

⁵ See: M. MORELOWSKI *Pochodzenie artystów olbińskiego portalu romańskiego u Marii Magdaleny we Wrocławiu*, „Sprawozdania Wrocławskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego”, seria A, vol. 11, 1956, ed. 1959, pp. 22-30. Morelowski is critical of the ideas of the German researchers, mostly of Frey (D. FREY, *Die Kunst im Mittelalter*, [in:] *Geschichte Schlesiens*, vol. 1, Breslau 1938, pp. 442-443) and Tintelnot (H. TINTELNOT, *Die mittelalterliche Baukunst Schlesiens*, Kitzingen 1951). He claims they are a chauvinistic wish to attribute the founding of the monument to the German Norbertines. The inconsistency lies in the fact that the same author in another part of the text which deals with the reasons for the destruction of the abbey in the XVI century accuses the Wrocław patricians of hostility towards the Poles living in Olbin, see: M. MORELOWSKI, *Studia nad architekturą i rzeźbą na wrocławskim Olbinie XII w.*, in: *Sprawozdania Wrocławskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego*, Seria A, 7 (1952), ed. 1956, dod. 1, pp. 1-51, here p. 3. Erich Wiese proposed that the building be dated back to the first half of the 12th century. See: E. WIESE, *Plastik*, [in:] *Die Kunst in Schlesien*, Berlin 1927, pp. 131-132.

⁶ See: H. LUCHS, *Verzeichnis der Kunstdenkmäler der Provinz Schlesien*, vol. 1, *Die Stadt Breslau*, Breslau 1886, pp. 79-82; M. GĘBAROWICZ, *Architektura i rzeźba na*



Ill. 1. Wrocław-Ołbin, archivolts of the portal of the abbey church, now in Sta. Magdalena church in Wrocław.

who were entering the abbey. The Papal Bull of Celestine III which approved the Norbertine transfer to Ołbin and which was issued in 1193 is the sole unquestionable source of information for dating the exchange of convents that took place. It can be said that Norbertines settled in Ołbin a few years before and that it is thanks to them that the portal was built in the last quarter of 12th century. It is hardly conceivable that Benedictines would take on the realisation of such a project just before their departure to Kościelna Wieś.

Śląsku, [in:] *Historia Śląska do roku 1400*, vol. 3, Kraków 1936, pp. 26-28; T. DOBRZENIECKI, *Historia sztuki polskiej*, vol. 1, Kraków 1965, p. 119; D. FREY, *Die Kunst im Mittelalter* (see note 5), pp. 442-443; H. TINTELNOT, *Die mittelalterliche Baukunst Schlesiens* (see note 5); M. SEMRAU, *Die Bauten Breslaus*, Breslau 1901, pp. 81-82; B. PATZAK, *Das romanische Portal der St. Maria-Magdalena-Kirche zu Breslau*, „Schlesische Monatshefte”, vol. 8, 1931, pp. 347-352; see also: M. GUMOWSKI, *Starsze bazyliki romańskie w Polsce średniowiecznej*, „Przegląd Powszechny”, vol. 44, 1927, p. 169; M. WALICKI, *Dekoracja architektury i jej wystrój artystyczny*, [in:] *Sztuka polska przedromańska i romańska do schyłku XIII wieku*, ed. by M. WALICKI, Warszawa 1971, p. 207 and T. MROCZKO, *Polska sztuka przedromańska i romańska*, Warszawa 1988, pp. 131-133.

The portal is a stylistically and chronologically uniform piece of art made by migrant stonemasons from Lake Como⁷. We can trace the source of inspiration for those masons to Italian sculpture because of the representational archivolt with the scenes from the life of Christ – a common Italian topos, which appeared in the same context in the 12th century in Calvenzano. The genesis of the form of the archivolt from Olbin can be connected with the Poitou region; in the second half of the 12th century French stone sculpture influenced northern Italy. The relief from the church of St. Trophine in Arles is the prototype for the doorposts with the images of demonic jaws. The whole structure of the portal suggests the northern Italian solution (Pavia). The lions, which are known from the earlier descriptions and lithography and which were the primary components of the exterior columns, are also a proof of Italian influence.

At first the portal was crowned with a two-sided tympanum⁸, which is now kept in the National Museum in Wrocław and which on the obverse has a badly damaged scene, *the Descent from the Cross*⁹, and on the reverse a much better preserved scene, *the Dormition of the Virgin*. The destruction of the obverse makes it difficult if not impossible to read the scenes accompanying the central *Descent from the Cross*. It could have been *Christ's Descent into Hell*¹⁰ symmetrically reduplicated on both sides of the central scene, or the left side presents *Abraham with Lazarus* and *the Reception of the Good Thief into Heaven*¹¹.

The scenes shown on the archivolt present a Christological cycle beginning with *the Annunciation* and closing with *the Baptism of Christ*, which is a prelude to his subsequent activity. In the corners of the capitals there is a history of Adam and Eve presented in the form of figures of naked

⁷ Z. ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Architektura na Śląsku do połowy XIII wieku*, Warszawa 1955, p. 26. 28; IDEM, *Znaczenie Włoch dla polskiej architektury i rzeźby romańskiej*, „Rocznik Historii Sztuki”, vol. 5, 1965, pp. 47-92; IDEM, *Sztuka romańska w Polsce*, Warszawa 1982, pp. 52-55.

⁸ H. LUCHS, *Über einige mittelalterliche Kunstdenkmäler* (see note 4); IDEM, *Romanische und gothische Stilproben* (see note 4).

⁹ Zygmunt Świechowski suggests that Benedetto Antelami's relief in the cathedral in Parma from 1178 was the prototype of the *Descent from the Cross*. He presented many analogues, such as the frieze character of the composition, the motif of Mary kissing the hand of Christ, the gnarls covering the cross. Those similarities make it possible to date the monument to after 1178, see: ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Znaczenie Włoch* (see note 7).

¹⁰ C. BUCHWALD, *Reste des Vinzenzklosters bei Breslau*, „Schlesiens Vorzeit in Bild und Schrift”, NF, vol. 1, 1900, pp. 69-72.

¹¹ M. SEMRAU, *Zu den Resten des Vinzenzklosters bei Breslau*, „Schlesiens Vorzeit in Bild und Schrift”, N.F., vol. 2, 1902, pp. 70-72.

humans flanking the snake on the side edge of the capital. The iconographic program of the portal presents the history of redemption¹². The cycle begins with the history of original sin and the punishment, moves on through the preparations for the redemption during Christ's childhood and ends with his death on the cross. The Marian motifs presented on the reverse of the tympanum are the culmination of the cycle¹³.

The Stone Sculpture in Strzelno

Even though the richness of the sculpture in the church in Strzelno was discovered only in the first years after the Second World War, the first authors of the texts devoted to Strzelno already noticed the great artistic and historical importance of the foundation tympana, the votive panel, that is, *the Virgin with Child* surrounded by medallions with images of the prophets, the column in the chapel of St. Barbara and a small fragment of the tympanum with the image of *the Annunciation*¹⁴.

During the conservation work conducted after World War II there was a series of spectacular discoveries initiated in 1946 by the discovery of four Romanesque columns in Holy Trinity Church and seven years later of the northern portal. Among all the sculptures, only the columns and the above-mentioned portal are *in situ*.

Gradually the group of sculptures was enriched by the newly discovered elements which are now exhibited in the lapidarium created in one of the buildings of the baroque cloister which is a part of the Otto and Bolesław Romanesque Culture Center Museum.

The round church of St. Procopius had a foundation tympanum, the vestige of which is the head of Christ¹⁵. On the premises of the rotunda there were also fragments of the sepulchral panel which depicted a dead man in a semicircular arcade.

¹² Ibid., p. 72.

¹³ ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Architektura na Śląsku* (see note 7), p. 27.

¹⁴ See for example: J. LEPKOWSKI, *O zabytkach Kruszwicy, Gniezna i Krakowa oraz Trzemeszna, Rogoźna, Kcyni, Dobieszewka, Gołańczy, Żnina, Gąsawy, Pakości, Kościelca, Inowrocławia, Strzelna i Mogilna*, Kraków 1866, pp. 177-185; ŁUSZCZKIEWICZ, *Kościoty i rzeźby duninowskie w Strzelnie na Kujawach. Przyczynek do dziejów sztuki XII wieku w Polsce*, „Pamiętnik Akademii Umiejętności w Krakowie”, vol. 3, Kraków 1876, pp. 89-116.

¹⁵ The form of the tympanum is known from the preserved molding placed in the northern wall of the chancel of the St. Procopius rotunda.

The Columns

In the Holy Trinity Church in Strzelno there are four columns. They date to the end of the 12th century. This assumption is based on architectural details and historical grounds. The shafts of two of them, located in the eastern part of the nave, are ornamented with human figures in arcades placed in three spheres, six of them in each sphere, which gives a total number of thirty-six bas-reliefs. The shape of the shaft of the SW column resembled spirally braided cord, while the shape of the shaft of the NW column was plain. In addition, the capitals of the columns differ in ornamentation. The capital of the SE column is decorated with figures. On the corners there are sculptures of four angels (there are similar motifs on the capitals of St. Michael's Church in Hildesheim and the monastery church in Hammersleben), and from the nave you can see a largely reconstructed¹⁶ scene of the *Baptism of Christ*. The SW column's capital is a reversed Tuscan capital with claws and an engraved monogram of the name Petrus. It was the name of the founder of the monastery: Piotr Wszeborowicz.

Both northern (NE and NW) columns have heavy, cubic capitals with geometric, „Hirsauer” ornamentation with double semicircles of flat bands. They are all placed on monumental bases whose profiles are characteristic of the end of the 12th century, especially in Alsace (churches in Andlau, Rosheim, Mutzig)¹⁷.

Obviously, most interest was directed to the columns which are unique in Europe, with figuratively decorated shafts (NE and SE). According to Zygmunt Świechowski the form of the bas-relief refers to the Saxon sculpture in the so-called *beautiful style* phase¹⁸. The primary interpretation of the images in the arcades as personifications of *Virtues* and *Vices* was made by the discoverer of the columns, Zdzisław Kępiński¹⁹, acknowledged in the bibliography²⁰. Identification of the figures was

¹⁶ Z. KĘPIŃSKI, *Odkrycie w Strzelnie*, „Biuletyn Historii Sztuki i Kultury”, vol. 8, 1946, p. 203, ill. 12. 15; Z. ŚWIECHOWSKI, *A jednak Hildegarda*, „Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie”, vol. 36, 1992, p. 116, note 2.

¹⁷ K. JÓZEFOWICZÓWNA, *Trzy romańskie klasztory. Strzelno*, [in:] *Studia z dziejów ziemi mogileńskiej*, ed. by C. ŁUCZAK, Poznań 1978, p. 254, note 297.

¹⁸ Z. ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Studia nad rzeźbą w Strzelnie*, „Rocznik Historii Sztuki”, vol. 8, 1970, pp. 61-116.

¹⁹ KĘPIŃSKI, *Odkrycie w Strzelnie* (see note 16), pp. 202-207.

²⁰ See: Z. ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Strzelno romańskie*, [in:] *Strzelno romańskie. Zbiór studiów*, Strzelno 1972, pp. 5-34; IDEM, *Strzelno. Rzeźba romańska*, Strzelno 1987; IDEM, *Die*

possible due to the attributes or gestures, and because of the clothes. Zygmunt Świechowski²¹ and Krystyna Rozalia Markowska²² who are experts on the iconography of columns could not identify all the figures. This was done by Zbigniew Sroka, whose discerning studies of the monument and of the culture (including monastic culture) of the second half of the 12th century led to a most probable identification of each of the figures²³.

Personification of the *Virtues* on the SE column:

Obedience in the convent	Love – Compassion	Modesty	Faith	Following God's will	Obedience
Persistence – Fidelity	Prayer	Convent	Peacefulness (?)	Patience (?)	Renunciation – Following Christ
God's service	Prudence	Justice	Moderation	Humility	Piety

Personification of the *Vices* on the NE column:

Despair	Temptation – Envy	Sloth	Vanity	Vanity	Impurity
Slaughter	Plunder	Revenge	Disbelief	Gluttony	Egoism
Wrath	Greed	Pride	Deceit	Injustice	Lying

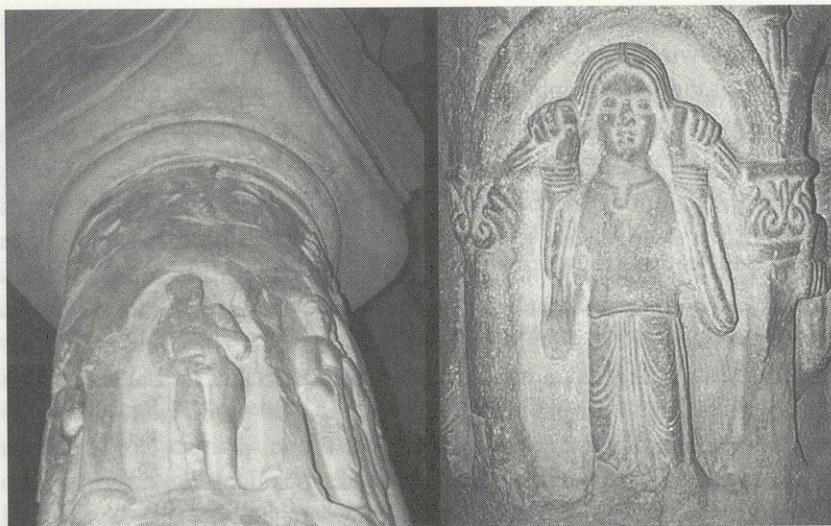
The poses and gestures of some figures refer to the representations discovered in antiquity. The personification of *Impurity* may be seen as one of the examples where the *Vice* is represented as a naked woman in a pose characteristic of ancient representations of Venus (mostly *Venus Pudica*). The personification, unanimously interpreted by the three researchers as *Wrath* (ill. 2) and portrayed as a woman pulling out her

Figurensäulen der Klosterkirche in Strzelno und die Sächsische Plastik des 12 Jahrhunderts, „Kunstchronik”, vol. 19, 1966, pp. 312-313; IDEM, *Die figurierten Säulen von Strzelno*, „Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte”, vol. 30, 1967, pp. 273-308; R.K. MARKOWSKA, *Ikongrafia cnót i przywar na kolumnach w Strzelnie*, „Studia Źródłoznawcze”, vol. 26, 1981, pp. 79-111. One exception is: Z. CIEĆKIEWICZ, *Liczba w koncepcji ideowej romańskich kolumn w Strzelnie. Cztery żywioły, trzydzieści sześć dekanów*, „Roczniki Humanistyczne”, vol. 52, 2004, fasc. 4, pp. 31-54.

²¹ ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Studia nad rzeźbą...* (see note 18), pp. 61-100.

²² MARKOWSKA, *Ikongrafia cnót i przywar...* (see note 20), pp. 79-111.

²³ Z. SROKA, *Romańskie kolumny w Strzelnie. Ikongrafia*, Gniezno 2000.



Ill. 2, a: Strzelno, Holy Trinity church, personification of *Impurity* on NE column; b: Strzelno, Holy Trinity church, personification of *Wrath* (or *Despair*) on NE column.

hair, can also have its origin in antiquity. This was the way mourners were represented in antiquity. In the Christian context, this manner of representation can indicate the personification of *Despair* (*Desperatio*)²⁴. The images are considered unique due to their location. It was most common to place the personifications of *Virtues* and *Vices* on the facades of the churches. Static presentation of the figures is also characteristic of this particular imagery, as it was most common to portray the dynamic fight between the *Virtues* and the *Vices*. In those interpretations the use of the *Virtues* and the *Vices* motifs to decorate the architectonic cantilevers shows the inspiration found in the popular treatises of monastic circles which were written for the use of the nuns, or even by themselves²⁵. Some examples are the *Speculum Virginum*²⁶ which described the *Trees of Virtues and Vices*, works of the famous Benedictine nun Hildegard of

²⁴ Z. Sroka saw the personification of Despair in another figure placed in the upper sphere, see: *ibid.*, p. 172.

²⁵ ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Studia nad rzeźbą...* (see note 18), p. 98.

²⁶ See: *Listen daughter: The Speculum Virginum and the formation of religious women in the Middle Ages*, ed. C.J. MEWS, New York 2001.

Bingen, particularly the *Scivias*²⁷ and the *Ordo Virtutum* as well as the *Hortus Deliciarum* of Herrad of Landsberg²⁸. The miniatures which illustrated the works of Hildegard of Bingen²⁹ could have served as an intermediary between the text and the sculptural imagery. In accordance with the symbolism of the parts of the world, personifications of the *Vices* were placed on the northern column and personifications of the *Virtues* on the southern one. The ideological message is confirmed by their proximity to the altar. The personifications can be understood in the context of the liturgical formula of the *Confiteor*³⁰.

The exception is the interpretation based on the research method for astrological iconography and the history of ideas. The number of the columns in Holy Trinity Church – there are four of them – may be related to the four elements. The number of bas-reliefs – thirty-six – may be related to thirty-six decanal planets. The “many-storied” way of medieval thinking inspired the recognition of the character, which was placed on the capital of the SW column and interpreted as the air element, as being a ligature of the Latin word *aer*. There is also an attempt to arrive at the interpretation of the capitals, which are covered with ornaments depicting geometrical hemispheres. The capital of the NE column is decorated with the theme of hemispheres opened at the top containing the signs of a different one of the four elements on each of its four sides. This interpretation is on the basis of astrological treatises or signs: the rosette, the cross and the circles are interpreted as the representations of the sun, and the whole represents a scheme of solar circulation in the sky. It is noticed that the structural similarities to astronomical diagrams represented in a Byzantine manuscript referring to the *Almagest* of Ptolemy occur. The interpretation of the thirty-six bas-reliefs, placed on the eastern columns, is worked out on the basis of documents referring to the hermetic tradition. The subject of decanal iconography dating from the second century is raised. The effigy of the *Baptism of Christ* considered to be linked to the zodiacal sign of Aquarius is applied as a key to the

²⁷ HILDEGARD VON BINGEN, *Scivias – Wisse die Wege. Eine Schau von Gott und Mensch in Schöpfung und Zeit*, transl. and ed. by Walpurga STARCH OSB, 3rd ed., Freiburg 1997.

²⁸ See: HERRAD OF LANDSBERG, *Hortus Deliciarum* (Garden of Delights). Commentary and notes by A. STRAUB and G. KELLER, ed. and transl. by A. D. CORTAZAS, New York 1977.

²⁹ Z. ŚWIECHOWSKI, *A jednak Hildegarda*, „Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie”, vol. 36, 1992, p. 110. (Miniatures, not other sculptures, were most commonly the basis for the expanded atypical iconological program.)

³⁰ MARKOWSKA, *Ikonomia cnót i przywar...* (see note 20), p. 106.

identification of particular decanal planets. Therefore a person with the scepter, placed beneath this scene, is recognized as Mercury in the second decan of Aquarius. The sequence of decanal planets by Teucros of Babylon, found in medieval manuscripts, has allowed for attribution of the decanal planets to the particular bas-reliefs. This way of interpretation allows for a reading of the moral content present in the effigies of Strzelno, according to medieval mnemonic techniques that are different from the modern way of thinking. The reference is to the significance of decanal representations for the medieval art of memory. It has been assumed that an iconological conception of the columns of Strzelno arose from monastic education based on the *septem artes liberales*³¹.

The Tympanum with the Annunciation Scene

The tympanum (ill. 3) is presently in the lapidarium of the museum adjacent to the church. It is still an open question whether it was situated in the portal intended for the nuns or whether it was above the entrance to the monastery. The tympanum did not survive untouched. Until the



Ill. 3. Strzelno, Holy Trinity church, tympanum with *The Annuntiation*.

³¹ CIEŃKIEWICZ, *Liczba w koncepcji ideowej romańskich kolumn w Strzelnie...* (see note 20), pp. 31-54.

beginning of the 80's of the 20th century only a small fragment was known. In 1984 most of the bas-relief and some parts of the panel were found while reconstructing the baroque altar³². They must have been moved there during the cleaning of the church which took place in the 17th or at the beginning of the 18th century. This was also the time when the bas-relief shafts of the columns were covered³³. The new fragment with the standing figure of Mary depicted from the waist up was supplemented with an earlier remnant with an analogical representation of an angel. Together they form the scene of *the Annunciation*.

This discovery is contemporary to the columns and the similarities in the sculpture prove that the author of the tympanum was also responsible for part of the personifications on the reliefs of the NE column³⁴. The similarities, which prove mutual inspirations, are also clearly seen in the repetition of hand gestures of Mary in *the Annunciation* scene and, in the personified *Virtues* such as *Humility*, *Following God's Will* and *Obedience*³⁵ on the SE column. The way the characters are presented and their framing points to the mediation of miniature emblems, whereas stylization of the sculptures refers us to Lower Saxony and sepulchral panels of the abbess in Quedlinburg and bas-reliefs of the Holy Sepulchre in Gernrode.

In Strzelno, we are struck by the clarity of the theme, the lack of apocryphal motifs which would give the presentation a generic feel, and the stress put on the message contained in St. Luke's Gospel (Lk. 1, 26-38). The conventional representation of the angel is contrasted with the realistic modelling of Mary dressed in a contemporary costume which indicates the period in which the sculpture was made.

This version of *the Annunciation* where the angel is close to Mary, who is standing, is a version of the *topos*, which sprang up in the intellectual circles of Constantinople and which was later used in Ottonian miniature painting and Romanesque monumental sculpture in France³⁶.

³² Z. ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Nieznane rzeźby romańskie w Strzelnie*, „Biuletyn Historii Sztuki”, vol. 49, 1987; three years later an extended version of this report appeared: IDEM, *Nieznane rzeźby romańskie w Strzelnie*, „Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici”, Archeologia XIII, 1990, fasc. 184, pp. 41-62.

³³ Z. SROKA, *Romańskie tympanony w strzeleńskiej bazylice i rotundzie. Ikonografia*, Bydgoszcz 2003, p. 71.

³⁴ ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Nieznane rzeźby...* (see note 32), p. 56.

³⁵ Identification of the personifications following: SROKA, *Romańskie kolumny...* (see note 23).

³⁶ T. MROCZKO, *Polska sztuka przedromańska i romańska*, Warszawa 1988, pp. 43-44.

There is no justification in the gospel account for the presence of the Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove seen on the Strzelno tympanum, however, this motif, so popular in the iconography of the Annunciation, is also present here.

The way the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove is presented implies the theological interpretation of the Immaculate Conception – *conceptio per aurem*. We find analogues in the wall paintings in Sorpe in Catalonia and in the miniature from the missal of St. Michael's Church in Hildesheim (Stammheim, Count Fürstenberg's library)³⁷.

The fact that the scene is situated in the garden, implied by the tree which is carved in the right corner, suggests the Byzantine tradition. The tree acquires a new symbolic meaning, *the Tree of Life*³⁸.

The Foundation tympana

From the two foundation tympana³⁹, only the one in the convent church is fully preserved. It is presently embedded outside, above the entrance to St. Barbara's chapel. One hypothesis is that it was built into the portal of the western bay of the southern nave.

The tympanum which was in the entrance to the church of St. Procopius was destroyed in 1945 during the Second World War. Only the head of Christ remained (it is exhibited in the National Museum in Poznań). The tympanum is known from old photos and the plaster cast which is displayed inside the church.

³⁷ ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Nieznane rzeźby...* (see note 32), p. 48.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

³⁹ The genesis of this representation goes back to the 1st century and to the altar of *Ara Pacis* of Octavian Augustus which shows the victorious procession of the emperor during which a model of the arch of triumph is carried. Imperial Byzantine iconography refers to the Roman tradition. We can find an example of a foundation scene in the 10th century mosaic in the narthex of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. It presents the Virgin with the Child on the throne in the center, with the emperor Constantine offering her the model of the city and the emperor Julian with the model of Hagia Sophia, see: MROCZKO, *Polska sztuka przedromańska* (see note 36), p. 112. In the 12th century foundation tympana flourished in Germany. An example is the tympanum in the Benedictine abbey church in Alpirsbach. It came into existence c. 1100. In the center of the composition is Christ in the mandorla held by angels. On the sides are placed kneeling donors: probably Adalbert of Zollern and Adwig of Sulz, see: W. SAUERLÄNDER, *Romanesque Sculpture in its Architectural Context*, [in:] *Romanesque Frieze and its Spectator*, ed. by D. KAHN, London 1992, p. 26. The relief from the Neue Pforte in Trier dates back to 1147. It depicts Christ standing in the center and receiving a model of the town's fortifications from the hands of Archbishop Albert.

There are significant stylistic differences between the tympana. This allows for the thesis that they were not made in the same period. Some of the differences are the way the figures are placed on the panels, their poses and relationship to the central divine figures, as well as the way their clothes are draped. The figured group on the tympanum from the church of St. Procopius from around 1170 (ill. 4)⁴⁰ consists of the central figure of Christ on the throne, a man with a model of the church on the left, and a woman with a book on the right. This is a harmonious and clear composition. The tympanum with the foundation scene in the convent church in Strzelno, with its composition filled with dynamic tensions that break the law of framing, is an example of a late Romanesque style. The construction of this tympanum was probably the ultimate achievement of the sculptural ornamentation of the church. The poses of the kneeling founders are typical of late Romanesque foundation tympana from Germany⁴¹. The sharp mannerist outline of the folds and the figures, which breaks the frames, are mostly characteristic features of the decadent Romanesque style that move the date of the construction of the building



Ill. 4. Strzelno, St. Prokop church, tympanum with foundation scene, plaster.

⁴⁰ MROCZKO, *Polska sztuka przedromańska...*, (see note 36), p. 117; on the dating of the Polish foundation tympana see also: K. CIECHANOWSKI, *W sprawie datowania trzech tympanonów polskich z XII wieku na podstawie inskrypcji wotywnych*, „Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka”, vol. 38, 1983, fasc. 2, pp. 235-240.

⁴¹ ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Nieznane rzeźby...* (see note 32), p. 123.

to the years 1180-1190⁴². In addition to the presentation of the religious content, the function of the representations was to accentuate the role of the pious and generous founders as well as to commemorate the momentous event of the consecration of the church.

The only examples of foundation tympana in Poland are in Wrocław and Strzelno. The bas-relief in Wrocław includes inscriptions which allow for the identification of the individuals presented; in Strzelno the distinction is not so straightforward.

The tympanum with the foundation scene from the rotunda of St. Procopius has no lettering. Thus the man whom we see offering the model of the church to Christ and the woman with the book opposite him remain anonymous. Even though the foundation tympanum of Holy Trinity has an inscription, we can only decipher the words *TE VELUT OPTAVERAT HOC DONO PETR(us) HONORAT VIRGINIS ANNA PIE MATER VENERANDA MARIE* (With this gift, O Anne, venerable mother of the compassionate Virgin Mary, Peter honors you as he had wished)⁴³. The content of the inscription makes it possible to precisely identify the central motif. It is St. Ann with the child Mary but the use of the past perfect tense gives rise to the question whether the man depicted with the model of the church was Peter or whether it was one of his successors. It is also not clear who the woman presenting an open book is.

The fact that we find foundation tympana only in Wrocław and Strzelno can be connected to the desire to emphasize the membership of the church at that time. Formal relationships between the Wrocław and Strzelno tympana, emphasized in the older bibliography and which implied the identity of the founder⁴⁴, the workshop and the same construction period⁴⁵, were not confirmed in the later research⁴⁶.

Undoubtedly the two share the ideological theme which accentuates the founding or the donation of the church. As proven by many historians,

⁴² As above.

⁴³ M. PLEZIA, *Strzeleński epigram wotywny*, [in:] *Strzelno romańskie...* (see note 20), pp. 33-37.

⁴⁴ It is especially visible in Łuszczkiewicz, who calls them „dunin's sculptures” (see: W. ŁUSZCZKIEWICZ, *Kościoty i rzeźby duninowskie w Strzelnie na Kujawach. Przyczynek do dziejów sztuki XII wieku w Polsce*, „Pamiętnik Akademii Umiejętności w Krakowie”, vol. 3, Kraków 1876, pp. 89-116). Piotr Włostowie in polish literature is also known as jako Piotr Dunin.

⁴⁵ ŁEPKOWSKI, *O zabytkach Kruszwicy, Gniezna...* (see note 14), p. 185; ŁUSZCZKIEWICZ, *Kościoty i rzeźby duninowskie w Strzelnie na Kujawach...* (see note 44), pp. 95-97.

⁴⁶ K. MĄCZEWSKA-PILCH, *Tympanon fundacyjny z Ołbina na tle innych przedstawień o charakterze fundacyjnym*, Wrocław 1973.

there existed familial relationships between the founders of the Wrocław and Strzelno churches. They were brought together by their closeness to Piotr Włostowic and, as the preserved monuments suggest, only he and his family immortalized their contribution to the construction of the church in this way. The manner in which the man with the model of the church from Holy Trinity basilica was portrayed testifies to the fact that the founding or the donation of the church was supposed to give emphasis to the importance of the founder or the donor. His posture, the way his head is turned towards the onlooker, his rich garments and noble hairstyle attest to his being the most important figure worthy of eternal remembrance: first, because he financed the construction of the church which was to serve the convent and the local community and, second, because he was the owner of the church and could administer it according to his will⁴⁷.

Other issues are the religious themes of the tympana. The central figure of Christ on the throne from the bas-relief of the rotunda is a common motif in monumental sculpture and other spheres of artistic activity⁴⁸. What puzzles the researchers more is the representation of the figure of *St. Anne with the Child Mary* on the tympanum from Holy Trinity Church. It is probable that the image of the saint, which we are unlikely to meet among other images illustrating the symbolic dedication of the church to divine power, expresses the particular devotion she received in the Strzelno monastery. However, there is no direct manifestation of her cult as a patron of the church. The only justification for the presence of St. Anne may be found in the context of an intensified cult of Mary in Norbertine monasteries⁴⁹.

The Tympanum of the Northern Portal

The tympanum of the northern portal was discovered in 1953 and it is preserved in its original place. It dates to c. 1216⁵⁰. The tympanum is

⁴⁷ Z. SROKA, *Romańskie tympanony w strzeleńskiej bazylice i rotundzie. Ikonografia*, Bydgoszcz 2003, pp. 59-65.

⁴⁸ T. DOBRZENIECKI, *Maiestas Domini w zabytkach polskich i obcych z Polską związanych*, part 3, „Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie”, vol. 19, 1975, pp. 5-263.

⁴⁹ SROKA, *Romańskie tympanony...* (see note 47), pp. 61-62.

⁵⁰ ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Studia nad rzeźbą...* (see note 18), p. 103. The examinations that had been carried out on the trifoliate tympanum from the portal of the 1189 northern chapel of the later Norbertine church in Veßra in Thuringia showed that it was later in time and could only have appeared in the first thirty years of the 13th century, see: E. BADSTÜBNER,

extraordinary in regard to both its iconographic content and its form. In its form it is distinguished by its trifoliate shape and in the richness of sculptural meanings applied in order to reach a maximum of expression in bas-relief. It is very probable that the northern portal was the main entrance to the church⁵¹.

The bas-relief represents Christ in the mandorla sitting on a rainbow with the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove over his head and treading on a lion and a dragon. Two angels, two symbols of the evangelists and two apostles surround Him.

Among examples of monumental sculpture that are preserved it is difficult to find a complete pattern for the composition of the northern tympanum from Holy Trinity Church in Strzelno. The majority of formal analogues concerning the way Christ is presented can be found on the tympanum of the *Maiestas Domini* in St. Servatius Church in Maastricht (The Netherlands).

Inspiration for this could be traced back to the tympanum of the northern portal in the cathedral in Mainz dating c. 1200⁵². The shared elements of the two representations are the angels in a characteristic pose with one foot stepping forward; they are holding up the *Gloria*. A floral branch surrounds the composition and a dove hovers over Christ's head. In Mainz this is represented on the external bolster of the archivolt.

Among other possible formal inspirations taken into consideration, one should also mention the northern tympanum in the castle chapel in Landsberg (Saxony) from about 1180⁵³. Due to the severe deterioration of the relief, it is difficult to name any analogues with regard to the details but the composition and the positioning of the characters are exceptionally similar.

In Landsberg, as in Strzelno, there is in the center of the representation Christ in the mandorla sitting on a rainbow. The *Gloria* is held by two angels who are similar in the way their legs are positioned and in the shape and positioning of the wings. Other analogues are the busts in the

Die Prämonstratenserklösterkirche zu Veßra in Thüringen, Berlin 1961, p. 76. Parallel examples of trifoliate portals can be found in the Paderborn cathedral (northern portal) and the Würzburg cathedral (portal in the eastern wall of the southern wing of the transept).

⁵¹ J. CHUDZIAKOWA, *Zespół architektury romańskiej w Strzelnie w świetle najnowszych badań*, „Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici”, Archeologia XIII, 1990, fasc. 184, p. 24.

⁵² R. BUDDE, *Deutsche Romanische Skulptur 1050-1250*, München 1979, p. 92.

⁵³ E. NEUBAUER, *Die romanischen skulptieren Bogenfelder in Sachsen und Thüringen*, Berlin 1972, p. 149.

corners, the animals at the feet of Christ, and the wide archivolt decorated with tendrils which surrounds the tympanum.

In respect to form, the Strzelno tympanum is a result of simultaneous influence from a number of sources: monumental sculpture remnants, painting, and the so-called minor arts (book covers, portable altars). Both formal and iconographic associations indicate the Rhine-Mosan circle of art. It raises suppositions that the master working on the Strzelno tympanum had his roots in this artistic environment⁵⁴.

The nature of the representation on the northern tympanum in Strzelno and the richness of its form ideally fulfill the representational function befitting the main portal. A caption such as "a theological treaty forged in stone"⁵⁵ places the monument in direct opposition to the foundation tympana which accentuated feudal wealth.

The tympanum of the northern portal in Strzelno is not representative of the pure *Maiestas Domini* type understood as a representation of Christ in a mandorla surrounded by the effigies of four *Living Creatures*⁵⁶.

The motif of angels holding the mandorla, which is present in this representation and which was established in Burgundian tympana, is one of its differentiating features. The angels are identified as the guards of the divine throne, the archangels Michael and Gabriel⁵⁷.

⁵⁴ ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Studia nad rzeźbą...* (see note 18), p. 114.

⁵⁵ IDEM, *Sztuka romańska...* (see note 7), p. 79.

⁵⁶ See: G. SCHILLER, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst*, vol. 3, Gütersloh 1971, p. 233; also: F. VAN DER MEER, *Maiestas Domini*, [in:] *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, vol. 3, Rome 197, col. 136; IDEM, *Maiestas Domini, théophanies de l'Apocalypse dans l'art chrétien: étude sur les origines d'une iconographie spéciale du Christ*, Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, Città del Vaticano 1938. The composition typical of the western representation of *Maiestas Domini* was formed in miniature painting in about 850 in the scriptorium in Tours. Creatures fill in the outer wedges forming, together with the mandorla, a rectangle. The lion and the ox are placed at the bottom of the page while the eagle and the man are at the top. Models created for the use of miniature painting and minor art when transferred onto the frames of the apse conch and the surface of the tympanum acquired monumental dimension. Giant compositions of *Maiestas Domini* in wall painting and sculpture appeared in the 11th century. The examples of the apse representations of *Maiestas Domini* can be found in many churches, for example in the Premonstratensian convent church of Mary and St. Andrew in Knechtsteden (about 1170-80). The central motif status of the program of sculptural decoration of the portals *Maiestas Domini* was given under the influence of the Cluniac monastic congregation, which is exemplified in the western tympanum from the third church at Cluny (1089-1131) which, although lost, is known from the reconstruction of Sonant, from the portal of the Benedictine abbey of Alpirsbach founded at the end of the 11th century under the influence of Cluny. Hirsau has a tympanum with an image of the Majestic Christ from 1100.

⁵⁷ DOBRZENIECKI, *Maiestas Domini...* (see note 48), vol. 3, p. 193.

For its iconography the most important aspect is the representation of two animal-headed symbols of the Evangelists Mark and Luke and two Apostles, Peter and Paul surrounding Christ, rather than four Evangelists (or their symbols), which is the most common in such representations. These pairs have been connected since the 2nd century when the Christian writer Irenaeus of Lyon described their dependence in the treatise *Adversus Haereses*⁵⁸. At the same time, according to Irenaeus, these Evangelists symbolize the kingship (Mark – Lion) and the ministry (Luke – Ox) of Christ.

Except for the representation shown on the northern tympanum in Holy Trinity Church in Strzelno, only the frescoes in the Premonstratensian church of Mary and St. Andrew in Knechtsteden (Rhineland, 1170-1180) illustrate this idea.

The act of treading on the lion and the dragon, which we can assume are symbols of Satan and Antichrist, points out the authority of Christ over these evil powers⁵⁹. Traditionally these have representations of four beasts – in addition to these two there are also the basilisk and the asp.

⁵⁸ "Marcus discipulus et interpres Petri, et ipse que a Petro annuntiata erant per scripta nobis tradidit. Et Lucas autem sectator Pauli quod ab illo praedicabatur Evangelium in libro condidit": IRENAEUS, *Adversus Haereses*, lib. 3 cap. 1, (SChr 211, 23-24). Marcus interpres apostoli Petri, Lucas discipulus apostoli Pauli: cf. HIERONYMUS, *Comm. in Matth.*, Praef. (CCSL 77, 2, 31. 35-36); P. SKUBISZEWSKI, *Le thème de la Parousie sur les voûtes de l'architecture „Plantegenet”, [in:] Civilisation Medievale, T. 3, De l'art comme mystagogie*, red. Y. CHRISTE, Poitiers 1996, pp. 105-143, here p. 124.

⁵⁹ This representation was inspired by the words from verse 13 of the messianic psalm 91 (90): *Upon the asp and basilisk shall you tread, and you shall trample upon the lion and dragon* (Latin version from the Vulgate: *Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis et conculcabis leonem et draconem*) which mentions four beasts. The symbolism of treading on beasts was thus already present in the Old Testament and it is there that the names of animals related to Satan appear. In this context they are referred to by St. Augustine: *Diabolus ille biformis est. Leo est in impetu, draco in insidiis* (it is said about the devil that he is a lion and a dragon. A lion because he acts so quickly and a dragon because he is so cunning) see: AUGUSTINUS, *Sermo 34* (PL 36, 867); L. STAUCH, *Drache*, [in:] *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 4, Stuttgart 1958, col. 347. The individual interpretations of those four animals emphasizing the aspects of Christ's victory are given by Honorius Augustodunensis: *Aspis peccatum figurat / basiliscus mortem designat / Per leonem Antichristus intelligitur / draco maximus serpentium est diabolus / rex omnium malorum*, (The asp is the sinner, the basilisk death, the lion is the Antichrist and a dragon, the largest of the snakes, is the devil, the king of all evil), see: HONORIUS AUGUSTODUNENSIS, *Speculum Ecclesiae, Dominica in Palmis* (PL 72, 914-922). Christ triumphant over the four animals mentioned by the psalm is present on the ivory book cover from Genoels made in the 8th century in mozan workshops (Brussels, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire), on the book cover from Oxford (Bodleian Library, first half of the 9th century) and the cover of the Prayer-book from Lorsch (Città del Vaticano,

The bird over Christ's head interpreted as the dove of the Holy Spirit may refer to the *patrocinium* of the church or show the highest majesty of Christ by the permanent presence of the Holy Spirit⁶⁰. The element which completes the representation is the floral branch protruding from the mouths of the masks on the archivolt of the tympanum. This is a symbolic illustration of the theme of *Psychomachia* popular in the Middle Ages⁶¹.

In a broader ecclesiastical and political context this representation refers to the role of the Premonstratensian Order in introducing pro-papal church reform into Poland. At that time the pope was the well-known Innocent III (1198-1216). During his pontificate, the papacy experienced the apogee of its significance. Innocent III put forward the concept of the twofold power of Christ and of the pope himself. The pope, as the deputy of Christ on earth, was supposed to hold in his hands both spiritual (*Christus Sacerdos*) and secular (*Christus Rex*) powers⁶². Thus the representation from the tympanum, which stressed the majesty of Christ by placing around Him all the symbols mentioned above, might be an illustration of this idea.

The Results

The formal analysis of the sculpture in Strzelno proves that the whole unit was not made simultaneously and that it is the work of several

Museo Sacro, years 800-810). In medieval art the motif of treading on the forces of evil was also used in the representations of *Maiestas Domini*. The inspiration for this kind of combination was found in the first verses of the messianic psalm 110 (109): *Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet* paraphrased by St. Paul: *For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet* (Corinthians 15:25), see: SCHILLER, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst* (see note 56), vol. 3, p. 39. Among the works based on this idea is the *Maiestas Domini* section on the "Płockie" Door (from about the middle of the 12th century), the castle chapel tympanum from Landsberg, and the northern tympanum from the cathedral in Mainz.

⁶⁰ DOBRZENIECKI, *Maiestas Domini*... (see note 48), part 3, pp. 207-208. The author is referring to the representation from the northern tympanum from Mainz cathedral and the fresco in the church of Sant'Angelo in Formis where, despite the presence of the dove over Christ's head, there is no connection to the dogma of the Holy Trinity and the author also states that there is no connection to this dogma in the Strzelno tympanum.

⁶¹ W. MOLSDORF, *Christliche Symbolik der mittelalterlichen Kunst*, Graz 1968, p. 203.

⁶² W. ULLMANN, *The Growth of the Papal Government in the Middle Age*, London 1962, p. 429. 430.

sculptors, although there is a possibility that except for the northern tympanum from the 1st quarter of the 13th century it was created in the same workshop. The tympanum with the foundation scene of the rotunda was the first to be made. Then most of the elements of the sculptural decoration of the convent church appeared: the columns, the tympanum with the *Annunciation* scene and the partition boards from the choir. The tympanum with the foundation scene is doubtlessly earlier.

There are no written sources describing the origin of the workshop employed in Strzelno. The form of the bas-relief refers to Saxon sculpture in the so-called *beautiful style* phase with the characteristic allusions to antiquity. It is, however, advised that the suppositions connected with the Saxon origin of the workshop be treated with great caution. The fine arts of this region from the last quarter of the 12th century did not form a school that would give a specific expression to sculpture, but had an eclectic character. Therefore, even if we find certain Saxon reminiscences in Strzelno, there are no grounds to treat them as direct influences of that particular style⁶³. The repertoire of forms of the fine arts forms of northern Italy (Lombardy) used by master Wiligelmo from Modena and his students is a potential analogue for the decoration of the Strzelno columns⁶⁴.

Sculptural decorations of the Benedictine abbey in Andlau (Alsace), which are thought to be the work of the successors of master Wiligelmo, can be regarded as one of the proofs for the above-mentioned speculations. By means of comparative analysis we come to the conviction that there are numerous similarities in the utilization of the form. This suggests that the whole sculptural cycle in Strzelno is a uniform work of art of the third generation of Wiligelmo's followers who had already begun to succumb to the Burgundian influence and who were conscious of the French gothic foundations⁶⁵. The assumption that the far-reaching activity

⁶³ JÓZEFOWICZÓWNA, *Trzy romańskie klasztory...* (see note 17), pp. 261-262.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 263-264.

⁶⁵ K. HEWNER, *Próba identyfikacji wczesnośredniowiecznego warsztatu budowlanego ze Strzelna*, „Nasza Przyszłość”, vol. 91, 1999, pp. 5-46. The motif of a lily on the capital of the NW column originated in Lombardy. The tendrils growing out of the beast's mouth on the northern tympanum, the column with a spiral shaft, the arcaded columnar supports and the *Traditio Legis* scene come from Italy. The motifs assimilated in Lombard art which are present in the Strzelno sculptural unit refer to the ancient way of presenting people. This goes back to the Byzantine representation of the donors and prophets in the *Imagines Clipeatae* type implying the Burgundian *Maiestas Domini* sculpture with the mandorla held by angels and angels in the corners of the capitals.

of the migrant draftsman may have had an impact on the creation of the Strzelno workshop is confirmed by the frequent examples of Romanesque sculpture with signs of north-Italian influence⁶⁶.

Because of the incomplete preservation of the Romanesque sculptural decoration due to the dispersion of the sculptures, a comprehensive interpretation of the program is rendered impossible. The columns serve as a visualization of the rules established by the popular moralizing treatises of the 12th century, including the works intended for the nuns. For the Norbertine nuns the sculptures of the *Virtues* and *Vices* placed in front of the altar functioned as aids to contemplation and observance of the rules of the convent. This was reinforced by the presence of strictly monastic personifications such as *Humility*, *the Rules of the Convent*, *Service to God*, and *Renunciation of oneself*⁶⁷ on the SE column. Assuming that the church was open to laymen, this also served as a particular morality lecture for the participants at Mass. This is especially true of the personifications on the NE column which allude to the lay social life and morality as seen in problems such as *Slaughter* or *Plunder*⁶⁸.

Frequent use of the iconographic elements devoted to the cult of the Virgin Mary indicates its rapid development in medieval Poland nurtured by the convent of St. Norbert. The dedication of the church in Strzelno to the Virgin Mary was confirmed by a bull of Pope Celestine III in 1193. The tympanum with the scene from *the Annunciation* and the so-called votive panel showing *The Virgin with Child surrounded by medallions with representations of the prophets* clearly refers to this dedication.

In one of the representations we discover the mother of Mary, St. Anne, although the reason for her being there is not yet explained. The only indication is the inscription on the tympanum's rim confirming that St. Anne was cherished by the founder of the church. The central scene from the tympanum can be understood as the beginning of a cycle devoted to the Virgin Mary and Christ. The content of these was developed in the following representations: in the tympanum with *the Annunciation* and in the partition boards from the choir, of which there are two remaining. We can presume that between the symbolic depiction of Mary among the prophets preaching the birth of the Savior

⁶⁶ These are, for example, sculptures in Czerwińsk, Prandocin, the crypt of St. Leonard in Wawel cathedral, Wiślica, Czchów, Tum near Łęczysca, Ślęza and Zagość.

⁶⁷ Identification of the characters based on: SROKA, *Romańskie kolumny...* (see note 23), *passim*.

⁶⁸ As above.

announced in the Old Testament presented on one board and the scenes of *the Descent from the Cross* and *the Mourning* on the other, there used to be an extensive cycle of pictures covering the key scenes from the life of Christ. These accentuated his participation in bringing about Salvation.

The sophisticated iconography of the northern tympanum showing the broad version of *Maiestas Domini* could have been the culmination and the completion of the iconographic program. Except for the glory of Christ defeating the forces of evil, the iconography of the tympanum emphasized Christ's role as king and high priest, as well as the spirit of the convent and its pro-papal politics. Simultaneously, as it was a portal leading into the church, it could have represented the beginning and point of reference for the other representations.

The two foundation tympana in the monastic complex suggest a strong foundation theme. Their function was not only to direct attention to the religious content, but most importantly, to highlight the influence of the donors in the establishment of the abbey and its unique character. It can be seen distinctly in the poses of the founders who do not present themselves as humble contributors whose primary concerns were benefits for their eternal life. Rather their ambitions as founders and the authority of the family are put forward.

Certain analogues to the sculptural program of the Strzelno church decorations were also discovered in the sculptural decoration of the abbey church of the Benedictine nuns in Andlau (Alsace) which was built in the second half of the 12th century⁶⁹. The western edifice of the church is covered with reliefs presenting in a narrative manner the *Virtues* and the *Vices*. The tympanum from the western portal shows Christ sitting on the throne and handing the key to St. Peter and the book to St. Paul. The keystone in the vestibule of the church presents the founder with the foundation document in front of Christ whose feet are resting on a dragon (basilisk). Numerous similarities suggest drawing the ideological pattern from Andlau and its creative development in the church of the Norbertine nuns in Strzelno⁷⁰.

Another analogue to the iconographic program of the sculpture in Holy Trinity Church is based on the analysis of the choir partition boards from Gustorf in the Rhineland which date to the third quarter of

⁶⁹ HEWNER, *Próba identyfikacji...* (see note 65), p. 16.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

the 12th century⁷¹. Its message was derived solely from the choir partition decorations. The cycle did not survive in its complete form. Based on the remaining fragments it is possible to assume that there was an extensive Christological program from the *Annunciation* to the symbolic *Maiestas Domini*. The scenes which did not perish are: *the Announcement to the Shepherds, the Virgin with Child on the Throne, the Adoration of the Magi, the Angel and Three Female Characters at the Grave of Christ, Christ on the Throne Surrounded by his Disciples*. These illustrate the divine plan of salvation presented beginning with the *Epiphany*, through to Christ's *Passion* and *Resurrection*, as well as his *Parousia* and elevation to the throne of God⁷². In Strzelno, as in Andlau, the scenes, which could be included in the program, were placed in different parts of the church.

The richness of the architectonic sculpture is in clear opposition to the humility advocated by the Premonstratensian Order. The scale of this phenomenon in both churches indicates that it was connected with the family ambitions of the patrons who sponsored the construction of the buildings. However, it does not exclude the participation of the members of the convent as far as the iconographic program is concerned.

Thus we cannot reject the idea that the iconological conception originated within the Order of Prémontré which was active in the intellectual life of that period.

Summary

Among medieval art objects preserved from norbertine convent churches in Poland, the attention should undoubtedly be focused on the remarkable examples of Romanesque stone sculpture decorations from Wrocław-Ołbin and Strzelno, dated back to the the last quarter of 12th century. These are: the portal and the two-sided tympanum, which was initially connected with it, from St. Vincent church in Wrocław-Ołbin and the large number of objects preserved in the Holy Trinity church in Strzelno. On the background of the sculpture developed in Poland in that period, the monuments mentioned above impress with their artistry and the iconography as well. The most interesting are, unique because of figurative bas-relief on shafts, columnes between the naves in the Holy Trinity church in Strzelno. The figures are identified as the personifications of the Virtues and Vices.

⁷¹ F. RADEMACHER, *Die Gustorfer Chorschranken. Das Hauptwerk der romanischen Kölner Plastik*, Bonn 1975.

⁷² Ibid., pp. 217-220.

Even though the participation of the Norbertines in the creation of the refined iconographic programs of the sculptural decoration of the convent churches is not confirmed by the written sources, we can assume that their influence was of great consequence.

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