

URSZULA MAŁGORZATA MAZURCZAK

THE REPRESENTATION OF HUMAN CORPOREALITY
IN PETER CAVALLINI'S PAINTINGS
THE SYNTHESIS OF ROMAN CLASSICISM
AND BYZANTINE TRADITION IN DEPICTING A HUMAN BEING

Peter Cavallini (1240/50-1330) – a Roman by birth, upbringing and artistic fame, working for his hometown, was respected and renowned both in church or monastic circles and royal ones, e.g. at King Charles II's court in Naples. We are making an attempt to analyse this artist's paintings in the light of artistic ways of presenting a human body. This issue is also crucial in the whole painting at the turn of ducento and the beginning of trecento, which are the centuries regarded as Proto-Renaissance. We are concentrating on the painter whose significance in the early historiography as well as in art historians' research was overshadowed by the fame of Cimabue and Giotto, the artists regarded as progenitors of the early Renaissance and whose greatest achievement was 'discovering what was visible in painting'¹. Rome, with its abundance of the ancient and early Christian art, in the 13th and at the beginning of the 14th century seemed to abandon its dominant role in art while Tuscany and Lombardy with Veneto started gaining the leadership. Those provinces had the lead in economical life, in the modern organisation of social life in cities and in the development of trade, as well. Orders such as Franciscan and Dominican, which were shaping contemporary and modern type of religiousness, were concentrated there, too.

Prof. dr hab. URSZULA MAŁGORZATA MAZURCZAK – kierownik Katedry Historii Sztuki Średniowiecznej Powszechniej KUL; e-mail: ursmaz@kul.lublin.pl

¹ S. Y. Edgerton, *Giotto und die Erfindung der dritten Dimension. Malerei und Geometrie am Vorabend der wissenschaftlichen Revolution*, Bild und Text herg. G. Boehm K. Stierle, Padernborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag 2003, p. 9-27.

At around 1300 in Rome the revival in the realm of art occurred. Although the process was short-lived, Pope Boniface VIII deserved credit for it as he was in charge of preparing the city for the celebrations of the Jubilee Year 1300². The Pope's ambition to preserve the prestige of Rome as the authority of power in the Church and in the realm of Christian art ended in failure when, eventually, the papal residence was moved to Avignon. In order to attract attention to the problem of artistic shaping of the human body by P. Cavallini it is essential to point to the duration of tradition both of the ancient Roman fine arts and of Byzantine mosaics, which managed to assimilate in the times when our painter grew up and artistically developed. His cooperation with a sculptor – Arnolfo di Cambio, as well as other artists invited to Rome, Giotto especially, was not indifferent to the Roman master.

P. Cavallini's painting has been preserved to a large extent in Rome and Naples and we are going to concentrate on these examples examining the way of painting the body and human carnality. The lack of definite archival records certifying the master's birth is the reason why researchers rely on indirect records which were preserved in the archives of the Santa Maria Maggiore Church and dated from 2nd October 1273. Documents of the Court of Anjou in Naples from 1308 are of great significance, too. Cavallini's son's (named Giovanni) notes, which were written between 1330 and 1350, were preserved in the manuscript of the Vatican Library and described a hundred-year-old father enjoying good health³. An unquestionable source for our considerations is Lorenzo Ghiberti's (1378-1455) treatise entitled *I Commentari* where he contained information concerning the artist. He stressed that Cavallini lived in Rome as *nobilissimo maestro* and that he was the greatest master and scholar among other masters and the creator of many works of art in

² The research of this period was the subject of a conference 'Roma Anno 1300'. *Atti della IV Settimana di Studi di Storia dell'Arte Medievale dell'Università di Roma „La Sapienza”*, a cura di Angiola Maria Romanini, Roma 1980; O. C a p i t a n i, *L'immagine urbana nelle fonti narrative altomedievali*, w: *Imago urbis. L'immagine della città nella storia d'Italia. Atti del convegno internazionale*, Bologna 5-7 settembre 2001, a cura di F. Bocchi, R. Smurra, Bologna 2003, p. 253-270.

³ M. S k u b i s z e w s k a, *Malarstwo Italii w latach 1250-1400. Malarstwo europejskie w średniowieczu*, (Italian painting between 1250-1400. European painting in the Middle Ages), V. IV, Warszawa 1980, p. 25, compare to: A. T o m e i, *Pietro Cavallini*, w: *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Medievale*, Roma 1994, V. IV, p. 586 with new bibliography, gathered since 1857.

such churches as: St. Peter's, St. Paul's, St. Cecilia's, St. Mary's in Trastevere and St. Francis'⁴.

Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) emphasised also the fact that Peter Cavallini was a painter of Rome – 'over many centuries it (Rome) had been deprived of the fame of reign, no science had thrived there... then, by the will of God, Peter Cavallini was born'⁵.

Perceiving the craftsmanship of the painter, his first biographers subjected him to Giotto's authority and recognised him as Giotto's disciple. The works of art, which were enumerated by master Vasari having made use of Ghiberti's text, have been reexamined in the history of the most recent research. Despite the lack of confirmation that many of the works were actually created by Peter, the merits of this Roman painting have been strongly emphasised.

Our master's intellectual predispositions were highly estimated by Lorenzo Ghiberti who described Cavallini with the word *scholar* and his works as *maniera greca*. Ghiberti recognised the painter's style in the convention of *maniera vecchia* distinguishing it from his contemporary masters as *maniera moderna*. *Maniera greca* was mainly identified in iconographic solutions which survived in the Italian art until the middle of the 15th century⁶. The humanist from Florence appreciated the painter's substantial intellectual preparation writing that a good artist should be familiar with the works of ancient philosophers and medicine men, as well as the range of knowledge of *artes liberales*, rhetoric especially, and moreover, not being a physician, he should know the anatomy of a man: bones, muscles, nerves, tendons⁷. However, the type of painting defined by our author as *maniera greca* was lacking in such expertise.

The pursuits of presenting the body according to its anatomy can be perceived in ancient Roman sculpture with different emphasis, sometimes even with the exaggeration of authenticity. The Roman painting, of the 12th century especially, as *maniera classica romana* was not deprived of observations

⁴ L. G i b e r t i, *I Commentari, a cura di Ottavio Morisani*, Neapoli: Riccardo Riccardi Editore 1947, p. 36.

⁵ G. V a s a r i, *Żywoty najstawniejszych malarzy, rzeźbiarzy, i architektów*, przetł., wstępem i objaśnieniami opatrzył K. Estreicher. (*The lives of the most famous painters, sculptors and architects*, translated, prefaced and provided with explanations by K. Estreicher), Warszawa: PWN 1985, v. 1, p. 362.

⁶ M. B o s k o w i t s, *Proposte (e conferme) per Pietro Cavallini, w: Roma Anno 1300*, p. 303.

⁷ G h i b e r t i, op. cit., p. 36-38.

of the indigenous ancient art at all. It was exactly this heritage of Roman ancient times that was the reason to distinguish the painter.

In research on P. Cavallini's painting the chronology of his creative activity has been arranged, the works of art created by the master have been specified as well as those which were created in his workshop have been defined more precisely. The relationship with Arnolfo di Cambio and Giotto and their influence on our master have been pointed out. Having worked in all the most significant Roman basilicas Cavallini was inspired by the indigenous Roman painting and the painting of Latio province, which originated in the 12th and 13th centuries⁸. At the time of realisation of the painter's orders such buildings as: St. Peter's, St. Paul's Outside the Walls, St. Cecilia's, St. Mary's in Trastevere, St. Chrysogonus', St. George's in Velabro were modernised⁹.

The efforts to renovate the interiors and front elevations were confirmed by Navicella's mosaics in the fronton of St. Peter's basilica. The frescoes created for the churches of St. Francis 'a Ripa' and St. Chrysogonus were not preserved.

The artist's life and works of art were bequeathed in full monographs written by distinguished scholars: P. Toesca, G. Matthie, P. Hetherington, A. Procacini, among others. Also, more recent synthetical biographies, putting the painter's artistic workshop in chronological order, were written by C. Gullemi Faldi, A. Tomei, A. S. Norris¹⁰. Polemical articles concerning detailed issues and the analysis of particular works of art appeared¹¹.

In analytical research of Peter Cavallini's style the connection with Roman painting, especially with the frescoes in such churches as: San Paolo Fuori le Mura, San Silwestro and Santi Quatri Coronati has been emphasised. Significant inspirations with the painting of the 12th and 13th-centuries' Latio have also been pointed out. The new and breakthrough, in the previously prevailing Roman style, attempts of the artist were directed towards gaining

⁸ P. T o e s c a, *Pietro Cavallini*, Milano: Silvana Editoriale d Arte 1960; G. M a t h i e, *Pietro Cavallini*, Roma 1972; P. H e t h e r i n g t o n, *Pietro Cavallini A study in the Art of Late Medieval*, Rome: Londra 1979.

⁹ C. G. F a l d i, *Biografico degli Italiani* vol. XXII, Roma 1979, p. 775-784; T o m e i, *Cavallini Pietro*; P. H e t h e r i n g t o n, *Cavallini Pietro*, w: *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. J. Turner, vol. VI, London 1996, p. 103-107, (with literature index).

¹⁰ See *Enciclopedia*, passim. C. B r a n d i, *Pietro Cavallini*, w: *Roma Anno 1300*, p. 13-14.

¹¹ P. H e t h e r i n g t o n, *Pietro Cavallini*, w: *The Dictionary*, p. 106.

optically enlarged space for events and figures. In achieving this goal the artist was supported with his observation and the thorough knowledge of ancient Roman architecture, its basic constructions and details of ornamentation, which he introduced to his multiscenic compositions, especially the mosaic ones in Santa Maria in Trastevere¹². Creating the new quality of space which surrounded figures and supported their material volume was the goal of Sienese painters, Duccio especially, who introduced ancient architectural models¹³. Breakthrough achievements in gaining spatial illusion, even called perspective, were introduced by Giotto¹⁴. This was the reason why the significance of Tuscan painters, Cimabue and Giotto mainly, was emphasised in the history of painting. We want to present equally important attempts and, eventually, the results in the painting of a Roman Cavallini without depreciating Giotto's magnitude.

The endeavours to create larger space for figures and for scenic narration were already made, with an obvious result, by Parisian miniaturists and the sculptors of Gothic cathedrals at around 1200, the time which was defined as the period of transmission between Romanesque art and the maturity of the Gothic experiencing of visible reality¹⁵. In Rome fully-plastic figures existed almost constantly following ancient patterns. The corporeality of human figures did not have to be rediscovered here or re-established in art. The expanding of space in narrative compositions meant creating the illusion in order to define a semantically important place and to emphasise the figures' significance. Therefore, Cavallini's striving (already noticeable in the research on his painting) to create three-dimensional illusion for human figures occurred with regard to the presentation of a human being and not only space as such.

The painter was interested in the human body, its complicated external conditioning as well as mental and emotional connotations adequate for the presented event. In the frescoes of the Last Judgement and the scenes of the Old Testament in St. Cecilia's Church the master revealed the wide range of human carnality. The dating of the frescoes and their sculptural style confirm

¹² J. P o e s c h e, *Per la datazione dei Mosaici di Cavallini in S. Maria in Trastevere*, w: *Roma Anno 1300*, p. 423-435.

¹³ P. D i e t m a r, *Duccio und die Antike. Studien zur Antikenvorstellung und zur Antikenrezeption in der Sieneser Malerei am Anfang des 14. Jahrhunderts*, München 1996.

¹⁴ E d g e r t o n, *Giotto und die Erfindung*, p. 49-84.

¹⁵ *The dissertation is in this respect essential for new trends in French art*. Grodecki Louis. *Le Moyen Age Retrouve. De L' An Mile, L'An 1200*, Paris 1986.

Cavallini's cooperation with a sculptor, Arnolfo di Cambio, who in 1293 completed a ciborium above the main altar in the same church¹⁶. The painter was on friendly terms with the sculptor because he learnt from sculpture.

According to P. Toesca, Cavallini's Last Judgement is strictly connected to the representations of this theme already known in Rome¹⁷. In the upper part Christ in Majesty between Virgin Mary and John the Baptist in the glory of cherubs is depicted. Enthroned apostles are seated on both sides. Beneath, to the sound of angelic trumpets, the deceased rise from the dead. At Christ's right-hand side those who have been saved are situated and at the left-hand side those damned are pushed into an abyss. The conscious elaboration of the nature of the body in depicted figures can be observed here, in spite of significant drawbacks. The intense plastic moulding of the figures' bodies, which the artist obtained by means of his craft in operating with colours, light and shade – the effective pictorial measures, is striking. Skillfully drawn figures refer to ancient sculpture. The painter obtained in them vivid physiognomies which imply real people taking part in this event. The figures of apostles are differentiated according to age, which is exposed by their faces. There are younger ones e.g.: John, Matthew, Thomas, James the Less. The last one is similar to Christ's images which confirms his kinship with the Saviour. Older and elderly figures such as: Peter, James – the younger, Thaddeus and Andrew were depicted with a rich artistic variety. Their faces were marked with deep wrinkles applied as dark furrows around eyes, foreheads and mouths. This demonstration of the youth and the figures' senility makes the group of apostles imitate a real human community.

What resembles the Greek pictorial tradition is the hairstyle, the way of arranging younger figures' hair, which refers to Byzantine 'wigs' with regularly curled locks. This archaism contrasts with the new way of painting the body: cheek bones copy both the younger figures' tightness of skin and some degree of slackness of the older figures' skin. Youthful faces, softly outlined in the line of chin, were coloured light pink. Older faces were painted with

¹⁶ M. Pignatti, P. Refice, *Documenti per la storia dei restauri della basilica di s. Cecilia in Trastevere del Rinascimento agli interventi di Federico Hermanin*, w: *Roma Anno 1300*, p. 331-341; *The history of the reconstruction of the basilica at the times of Pope Martin IV's pontificate 1281-1285 is indicated, then the works by Arnolfo di Cambio and Pietro Cavallini were undertaken*. The authors present the period of the reconstruction in the 16th century which resulted in the division of the frescoes of the Last Judgement. An analysis of maintenance works preventing from retaining subsoil waters is carried out.

¹⁷ T o e s c a, op. cit., p. 8-9.

a wide range of ochre shades. The artist obtained a sophistication of the anatomical structure of an auricle in an exposed ear.

In some places Cavallini made use of a Byzantine way of marking wrinkles around eyes, on the forehead and in some part of the mouth with thick contours. However, his faces are something more than painted masks. By receiving plasticity they imitate the thickenings of skin, its bulging and give the figures internal life, tensions and emotions, which are expressed by faces.

As a result, this elaborate external plasticity of a body reflects an internally animated organism. By means of such substitutes as: colours, the lines of convexity and concavity, the painter tried to present a man and not an imitation of a figure. In the tiniest parts of a face, in the uncovered fragments of a neck, shoulders we can discern the internal pulsation of a body. The attempts to copy the nature of corporal matter, its soft folds and the quality of complexion were made. Neck muscles tightened in the shape of a triangle are consistent with the condition of a man making a speech. It is just the moment when his neck muscles tighten and protrude. In this way the figures of Christ, John and Peter were presented. Cherubs do not have the tightness of neck muscles.

The starting point of the artist's painting technique, already tested in the Roman painting of the 12th century, was a wide contour in a malachite tone by means of which he outlined faces and necks, but he was not satisfied only with that. He strung on the contour the particles of ochre spots which created the illusion of shadow in some parts of temples, jaws and the bend of a chin. These measures of artistic craft are visible in the faces of the apostles, Christ and Mary in the discussed scene of the Last Judgement.

The painter watched closely his own Roman community, which in Cavallini's times delivered much richer research than we can access today. Having based on it, he managed to obtain the authentic, in artistic understanding, corporeality of a human figure. His research on sculpture and ancient reliefs was of much help here, which was, along with painting, an equally important field of inspiration in the indigenous Roman tradition. He did not stop here at the drawings of sculpture, either, but he made them the basis of the plastic composition of figures. He *applied onto* them some kind of a coat, a construct of a drawing, the reflections of light and shadow. Thanks to it he exposed the nature of a human body, but also clothes related to the body and surrounding objects. He discovered the value of shadow in painting having worked out means of its artistic message. Shadows in the Byzantine painting are usually lines applied superficially within the shape of figures or objects.

Researchers pointed to the new values of light and shadow in Cavallini's painting seeing them as new beginnings of Proto-Renaissance art, which were also developed by Giotto and his disciples, Tedeo Daddi especially, in Tuscan painting¹⁸. Cavallini and Giotto, two great painters who had met in Rome, were searching for pioneering solutions for painting discovering the characteristics of a body in ancient sculpture. However, both painters had ambitions of their own modelling of the body, applying on a drawing, which had been prepared according to the outlines of ancient figures, colours and tones of light and shadow. It exposed the plasticity and sensuality of human corporeality. Cavallini obtained the effects of the body and bodiliness reflecting the sophisticated matter both of skin shade and the colour of hair, the colour of eyes and the clothes put on a body as well.

In the scene of the Last Judgement Cavallini introduced shadow which is cast over the body in parts of temples, eyes and upper eyelids. By means of light and shadow the artist shaped the individual features of physiognomy. Christ's cheeks were modelled much stronger in the upper part of the face; eyes settled close to the nose highlighted its plasticity – forehead especially. In spite of the style of shaping hair, which is close to the Byzantine representations, facial features reflect Italian anthropometric traits repeated by the artist in almost all the images of the Saviour's face.

Corporeality of the figures participating in the scene of the judgement became the subject of copying the internal properties of a vital force, which was made visible by body movement. The painter paid special attention even to slight twitches of eyes and the mouth as well as to the arrangement of fingers and toes in order to expose internal emotional predispositions of the figures, mainly in the section of the saved and the damned. The apostles' figures show subtle harmony of body movements and restrained gestures underlining the fellowship of the collective body surrounding Christ. There is some quality of elitism in these figures in spite of their individual age and physical traits. The posture of the whole body is uniformly dignified, which is emphasised by the style of clothing imitating costly fabric. In the way of reflecting folds the fabric imitates slippery silk with the gloss of texture which exposes bodily salience of shoulders, knees, breasts and creates soft folds and bends under the neck. The painter applied the range of colours richer in quality – dark crimson, malachite, azurite and rich shades of ochre.

¹⁸ P. Hill s, *The light of early Italian Painting*, New Hawen–London: Yale University Press 1987, p. 75-143.

Despite the fact that the lower area of the Last Judgement survived only fragmentarily, it can be observed here that the artist made astonishing efforts to present unique and individual faces, which in the case of the saved reveal various physiognomic types such as: faces with broad foreheads, prominent cheeks and a small mouth. They imitate the diversified age of the figures, mainly very beautiful women. Their faces were shown in the state of admiration and elation because of the situation of Christ's Resurrection. The damned figures' bodies, in spite of a significant decline of the fresco, are deformed by the feeling of fear and suffering.

The artist is a reliable observer of the situation of a body condition. As an example a figure of sleeping James can serve. He bears a striking resemblance to sleeping Jonah or ancient Endymion whose compositional form was copied in Christian iconography by the figure of sleeping Adam¹⁹. In Cavallini's fresco James is wearing a short shepherd's tunic and his coat, fastened around his neck, was spread in fanciful drapery on a rocky ground. The smooth surface catches the reflections of light and shadow which lick a very young face. This illusion of carnality, rendered with extreme precision, emanates the state and content of being asleep. As a shepherd, James saw in a dream his spotted sheep and an angel delivering God's will so that he took his belongings and went to Canaan, the land of Isaac's father (Genesis 31, 11-19). Cavallini rendered the complicated composition of a human body, he presented the figure diagonally arranged on the rocky ground. His whole body is supported with his left arm; the right hand laid at ease along the body trunk suggests repose. The condition of being asleep is not the layout of a dead body. One of the most important factors is clothing which in its light and smoothly flowing fabric does not collide with the body, on the contrary, it stresses the body's internal resilience. A very young boy's face reflects the breath of internal life and not merely a lying statue. The artist obtained this impression by the refinement of corporal details: half open lips and eyes, the head supported not laid down.

Sleeping figures were also presented by Giotto and Cavallini is often considered to follow in his footsteps²⁰. However, the sleeping figures of St.

¹⁹ U. M. Mazurczak, *Cielesność człowieka w Średniowiecznym malarstwie Italii (Human corporeality in medieval Italian painting)*, vol. I, Lublin 2012, p. 35-122.

²⁰ Brandi Cesare points to analogies between Cavallini and light-and-shadow trend in painting which developed at the times of the ruling of the Palaiologos dynasty (1204-1453). Optical effects are not identical with artistic pursuits introduced by Cavallini (who had started from the research on sculpture) and compared to Giotto's attempts. See Brandi Cesare. *Roma*

Francis in Assisi and St. Joachim in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua bear no resemblance to the way Cavallini presented the sleeping James. Both masters searched for their own solutions adequate to the content of depicted scenes. Therefore, the figures are dissimilar and by means of sleep they demonstrate their spiritual and emotional state. Cavallini followed his own path in looking for ways of painting corporeality in order to reflect some significance of a figure presented in a certain situation.

The painter managed also to obtain the abundance of emotional states in other scenes e.g. The Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary on a fresco in St. Cecilia's Church. The artist confirmed there his method of arranging figures slightly deflected from the surface of a painting; this gentle directing of figures, the Virgin Mary especially, towards the spectator causes that the body weight is rested only on one foot which is slightly advanced on the throne footrest while displaying in such a way one knee only. Mary presented in such a manner points to the moment of movement, turning around on the throne in order to look at the angel Gabriel. The movement of gentle hands refers to the immediacy of a captured moment, this subtle psychology of astonishment resulted from the arrival of the Angel. The way of painting faces, both Mary's and Gabriel's, confirms the types of physiognomy inspired by the Roman painting of the 12th and 13th centuries, not the Byzantine painting. The shaping of the angel's leg visible under the fabric of his tunic confirms the research on Roman reliefs and Christian sarcophagi. It was by no means extensive research of form and situation which the artist would transfer to his compositions.

The closest, as far as time is concerned, to the fresco in St. Cecilia's Church is the one from the apse of the Church of San Giorgio in Velabro, included in *corpus cavallino* and attached to the painter's early works of art which he created before or around the year 1300²¹. Although it is not possible to confirm the authorship of this work and researchers perceive some archaism in it, the features of refinement of the body and corporeality bear close resemblance to the frescoes in St. Cecilia's Church. The additional favourable argument is the person of the patron, Cardinal Giacomo Stefa-

Anno 1300, p. 15.

²¹ M. B o s c o v i t s, *Proposte (e conferme) per Pietro Cavallini*, w: *Roma Anno 1300*, p. 303, p. 300. J. P o e s c h k e, *Per la datazione dei mosaici di Cavallini in S. Maria in Trastevere*, w: *Roma Anno 1300*, p. 423-428. He points to the connection of the painter with young Giotto, therefore he argues that the creation of the frescoes dates back to 1298 when Giotto arrived in Rome.

neschi, who was appointed the cardinal of this basilica in 1296. The par-ton's high demands, his choice of artists also increase the importance of the painter working for the Cardinal²². Christ's facial features are clearly consistent with Cavallini's workshop. Boskowits compared the range of preserved Christ's images of *Il Volto Santo* type: the Last Judgement from Campo Santo Teutonico – identified by F. Zeri, the paintings of Christ from Palazzo di Venezia in Rome and from the tomb of Matthew of Aquasparta in the Church of Aracoeli in Rome and identified them as the countenances created in the manner of depicting corporeality parallel to the one Cavallini worked out²³. Those images are not copies of the icons widespread in Greek circles in which the model of an ideal face with geometric oval, strict symmetry of a mouth and eye layout was obligatory. Cavallini's images, or those attributed to him, demonstrate Christ's face with thickened and swollen face muscles making an impression of a suffering, truly human face.

The artistic means applied in our artist's frescoes allowed him to obtain subtlety in presenting the figures' carnality and to identify them as real people not merely figures. These features were worked out by the artist in a mature way in his works created later than 1300, e.g. in the ornamentation of Matthew of Aquasparta's (a Franciscan theologian and cardinal) tomb, finished about 1303-1304 in the Basilica of Santa Maria Aracoeli in Rome²⁴. The enthroned Mary with the Christ Child is adored by the saints: St. Matthew and St. Francis, who commends the kneeling cardinal. In this classic dedicatory scene such Mary's physiognomy is depicted: broad full cheeks in their upper part and deep-set almond-shaped eyes, which is characteristic of Cavallini's style. This type of female corporeality is related to the painting created in the whole Lazio region in the 12th century, now preserved only rudimentarily. The painter could have seen a much bigger repertoire of those works. It is pointed out that there are analogies with the fragment of the fresco of Virgin Mary with the Christ Child preserved in the Vatican Grottos²⁵.

The painter worked out Christ's subtle touch of his Mother's hand and thanks to it the physical contact with Mary is direct and human. The similar

²² T o e s c a, op. cit., p. 12-13.

²³ B o s c o v i t s, op. cit., p. 302-304, fig. 12, 13, 22, 23 defines a common source for this type of images which is the painting of the Roman region of Lazio.

²⁴ The cardinal died on 29th October 1302 thus the tomb could have been created a year later, quoting Boscovits, (op. cit., p. 301).

²⁵ Boscovits points to it, (op. cit., fig. 26).

touch was known in the Sienese painting, Duccio's especially. The exposing of Mary and Christ's corporeality, which was represented in gestures and activities, (e.g. the Christ Child's bath) had its dogmatic justification. Thus Cavallini attributed a human dimension to the theological truth. Franciscan theology of a human body affected the visualization of passion scenes in the representation of a man's body. The relations between the Child and Mary reflect the natural relationship, they do not deny the earlier established dogmas, on the contrary, they make the dogmas more familiar to the faithful in their own feelings. Our painter worked for the Franciscan order, however, most of his works were not preserved e.g. the frescoes in the church of San Francesco 'a Ripa' were destroyed in the 16th century²⁶. In this thesis we cannot elaborate further on the analyses of Franciscan theology and its influence on the imagery of a body and corporeality by Cavallini, among others. Like Giotto, he was familiar with and continuously studied the religiousness of the Pauper of Assisi. The influence of this trend in the religiousness in the 14th century was already revealed in valuable studies by Rony Goffen and John V. Fleming²⁷.

Cavallini defined his painting craftsmanship in particular features of human carnality and they let us perceive this Roman painter's own artistic way in spite of Giotto's dominant significance and authority at that same time. The features, which were worked out by Cavallini in the fresco technique, can be traced in mosaics despite the basic difference in technology. Mosaics at the apse of the church of Santa Maria Trastevere date back to the first years of the 14th century²⁸. The conch of the apse had already been filled with a monumental scene of the Coronation of the Virgin Mary dated from around 1140. The same technique was repeated in a frieze Cavallini was commissioned. The idea of corporeality is definitely different here. In his cycle the master presented six events: Nativity of the Virgin Mary, Annunciation, the Birth of Jesus, Adoration of the Magi, Presentation in the Temple and Dormition. Some connections with the tradition of the Byzantine iconographic imagery of such scenes as: the Birth of Jesus and the Dormition of

²⁶ Tom ei, *Pietro Cavallini*, w: *Enciclopedia*, p. 586-594.

²⁷ J. V. Fleming, *From Bonaventure to Bellini. An essay in Franciscan Exegesis*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1982, p. 4-31; R. Goffen, *Spirituality in Conflict Saint Francis and Giotto's Bardi Chapel*, London: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press. 1988.

²⁸ P. Hetherington, *The Mosaics of Pietro Cavallini in Santa Maria in Trastevere*, „Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes” 33(1970), p. 84-108; Boscovits, op. cit., p. 302.

Virgin Mary can be noticed here. Cavallini confirmed his own language of artistic expression although the art of mosaics in Rome had already had a long history and he was well-informed about it having so much respect for the tradition of his City. His compositions are distinguished by the new consideration of depicting corporeality and the place of presenting events.

Giotto's attempts to deepen both architectural and landscape space for figures were already presented in research²⁹. The corporal volume of figures derived from Roman patterns resulted in the possibility of creating optical relations between the surroundings and the heroes of events. It was attempted to obtain illusions suggesting that events took place in a particular physical setting and had their time of narration³⁰. The scene of Virgin Mary's birth takes place within the boundaries of two places limited by curtains and shallow pillar constructions of ancient architecture. The place appointed for St. Anne resting on a bed is so shallow that the saint's body goes beyond the shallow niche. The second place, designed for the supposedly less important event of Mary's bath, is much spacious. Moreover, the illusion of depth is suggested by a drawn-back curtain. If we look closer at the way of elaboration of those places, we will see the painter's attempts to create the optical magnification of spatial construction, which is a symbolic intention. A closed curtain behind St. Anne is a supposition of the accomplished, the past and, to some extent, the closed time. The curtain which is drawn back in the place of Mary's bath directs us towards the present time or the open time. In this time spectrum Mary's birth and the Child's bath are linked because they anticipate Christ's birth and the parallel bath of the Saviour, understood in those times as the archetype of the Baptism. The table with bread on it is not merely a piece of equipment in the chamber, it symbolises Christ's forthcoming eucharistic feast. The artist considered thoroughly the asymmetry of niches in order to emphasise the continuation of the Old Testament in the New Testament, and not the closure of times. The figures' corporeality is distinct in these scenes and it stresses the human nature of both the female figures and the child as well.

Symbolic ideas were included in the space of the landscape scene of Jesus' Birth. *Taberna meritoria* is presented here – the place where the miracle of an oil spring occurred at the moment of the Saviour's Birth³¹. A simple

²⁹ Edgerton, *Giotto*, p. 49-84.

³⁰ As above.

³¹ In Christian tradition it was known in the 1st century and confirmed in the document by Eusebius – quoting Hetherington, op. cit., p. 84-108.

chapel as a part of the later, contemporary church of Santa Maria in Trastevere is represented. The real place serves as a means of the symbol referring to the miracle of Jesus' Birth, which is presented in the mosaic.

In the scene of Adoration of the Magi, in turn, a city on a hill is shown as a commonly situated town in Italy. However, in this context it implies Jerusalem, the Holy City, and at the same time the goal in the form of a man's salvation, which is brought by the Nativity of Jesus. There are scientifically proved similarities between the compositions: Giotto's in Assisi – of the town in the scene of returning his father's coat by St. Francis and the scene described by Cavallini³². However, the painters preserved their own, respective approach to depicting body and corporeality in spite of the shared inspiration including the studies of ancient sculpture and the thorough knowledge of Byzantine painting. As a Roman, Cavallini was familiar with the theology of history where the idea of Rome as a New Jerusalem had existed since patristic times, therefore the style of composing a place, either an architectural one or a landscape, was not merely an artistic scenario. Shallow caskets, which are the illusion of interiors, of birth chambers especially, are the substitute of space for the figures' corporeality. In their physical volume they preserve the autonomy, demonstrate holy events and the place serves to enrich the meaning of a particular event. Therefore, the *nature* of space and the *nature* of figures are not the reflections of reality. It seems that the imitation of a human body in its real nature plays a crucial role in Cavallini's works.

Spatial compositions as the places of events are strictly connected to human corporeality. In almost all the scenes the figures are of strong physical built, they go beyond the architecture and dominate over the landscape. St. Anne exposes carnality and her authenticity is confirmed by the inscription with her name on it. The name of a new born Daughter Mary was written similarly. In spite of wrapping the whole figure with the elegant fabric of crimson clothing, the resting Mother's sensual body can be detected. Her child's body was actually presented to a spectator.

In the scene of the Nativity the artist acted in a similar way. Mary's body was presented in a posture and motion adequate to the physicality of giving birth which is indicated by the movement of hips and legs. However, there are differences in the presentation of both mothers. St. Anne is half-seated on a bed, while Mary is half-lying on a white linen stretched outside the

³² As above.

entrance to the cave. Both women are young, their faces are elaborated in a similar way, outlined with a gentle but wide curve in the section of cheeks and chin.

A child's bath was a task performed by older women which could be already seen in Roman reliefs and the Byzantine painting. The woman's facial features also point to the position of servitude. Mary, who is directed towards a spectator, is presented as a good-looking infant whose head is circled by a gold halo. In the description of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary in the Armenian Infancy Gospel an anonymous author introduced a midwife's words directed to Anne: „You gave birth to a beautiful, bright and aglow girl, flawless and unblemished”³³. Two young women serving Anne have distinct faces. Those maids were defined by noble clothing and a type of physiognomy which was bequeathed in Roman frescoes from the first half of ducento. The elegance of those figures refers to the realities of rich Roman houses approaching in this way the significance of their origin in the Royal House of David.

Apart from individualized faces, each woman is defined by slowed, almost ceremonious motions and gestures, and, above all, by elegant clothes in fine colours: azure, malachite green, and even the golden hue of a bathing maid's tunic.

The shaping of figures' bodies in the scene of Jesus' Nativity has a similar significance. Mary is taking a rest in front of the cave in a crimson tunic and a blue coat. St. Joseph is sitting in the position of an ancient sage and his white coat resembles that of learned philosophers seated on short stools. The shepherds' figures, whose corporeality refers to the images in the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore Church, are presented in a natural way, accordingly to their background status. Undoubtedly, the images from the church of Santa Maria Maggiore were the shepherds' prototypes for Cavallini. He did not separate the older shepherd from the younger by accident. The older, whose body is tightly covered with simple clothes, is receiving the announcement about the Saviour's birth from an angel. The young, barely covered with a light tunic, refers to the beginnings of Messianic times. These shepherds introduce the climate of Roman pastoral bucolics, which, as far as the function and the significance of a shepherd is concerned, played a crucial role in the beginnings of Christianity and which Cavallini exactly referred to.

³³ Armenian Infancy Gospel, Ch. II, 8. – quoting the New testament Apocrypha, edited by M. Starowieyski, Lublin, V. I p. 311.

The manner of painting the nature of human body is, with regard to visual aspect, an essential means of communication between an artist and a recipient. A body is a beautifully constructed organism, which is not subjected to transformations. A man is for Cavallini a part of mankind, he participates in history, is a part of generation derived from the first man who was created 'in our image, after our likeness'. Therefore, a human body is parallel for saint, divine and lay figures. Cavallini depicts the nature of a body subjected to both young and old age; he suggests features of character and internal feelings. He also reflects social realities suggesting the features of a Roman nation. Cavallini, in spite of his interest in space, made human corporeality a paradigm of his painting, both in frescoes and in mosaics as well. Therefore, those too small and too tight architectural forms, overlapping and over-miniaturised are not real settings but symbolic components for human figures.

In the scene of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary of those mosaics the Virgin Mary's body is a model visualising a young woman who is sitting on an architecturally magnificent throne. Delicate silky fabric with a tiny pattern gives it an additionally noble character. Silky fabrics of that type at the back of the throne were known in Sienese painting, Duccio's especially, and became the subject of research as real fabrics. At the same time, St. Mary's throne is built into a complicated construction, whose details come from monumental architecture and create a new structure of the media of temporal dimension, and not a real construction. Above Mary's head there is a coffer vault in the style of Roman architecture whereas lateral loggias are arched with Gothic cross-ribbed vaulting³⁴. A symbolic significance is delivered by the lateral parts of the throne where a vase with cut flowers and a plate with fruit resembling dates are situated³⁵. The proportions between St. Mary and the throne were not maintained although it optically created a monumental three-level structure. Its essence is the autonomy with respect to the figures and not a real place. Both Mary and Gabriel the Archangel definitely dominate by means of their corporeality. The Heavenly Messenger's movement exposes anatomical details: shoulders, hips, knees. His foot moved suddenly to the left provides the balance for the whole body and the

³⁴ H e t h e r i n g t o n, op. cit.

³⁵ The symbolic significance of fruit and plants in Mary's context is in this place obvious but in Italy in Cavallini's times there was a common knowledge of flower and plant symbolic representation in the Old Testament e.g. the imagery of dates would be here the actual significance of Christ's birth. Erbario Biblico, Valenziano Crispino, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2000, p. 296-303.

outstretched hand. Mary is precisely moulded in her maternal corporeality where particularly such parts of the body as: a prominent belly and knees are exposed. The body size of this figure is adjusted to her seating itself with a footstool and the back of a throne, however, the figure is not connected to the whole construction.

The artistry the painter possessed in the field of mosaic is confirmed by other works he was commissioned e.g. the front elevation of the church of St. Paul Outside the Walls, which, unfortunately, was not preserved. (Works enumerated by Gibberti were supposed to date back to the years 1316-1334 from the times of Pope John XXII)³⁶.

In his imaging of a body and, at the same time, thinking of the body the painter appears to be a Roman, and a classicist. We observe a peculiar restitution of a body in terms of ancient art. Documents dated from 1308 confirm Cavallini's work in King Charles II's service in Naples³⁷. Fresco decorations for the court of the House of Anjou in Neapolitan churches were numerous. The artists working in San Domenico Maggiore and Santa Maria Donna Regina came from different regions of Italy, however, they were united by the spirit of Roman classicism of the decline of duecento. The works created by Cavallini are distinguished by the style of body shaping. In Rinaldo Brancaccio's chapel in the Dominican church St. Peter's face is modelled in a similar way to St. Francis' face on Mateo d'Aquasparta's tomb³⁸. In this chapel the cycle of St. John the Evangelist's martyrdom was depicted, each figure is distinguished here by the face, the body, clothing and gestures. In the scene of St. John's immersion in a cauldron with the consecrated oil he is presented as a young man who says his prayers imitating orants and his youth symbolises timeless sanctity.

However, he was depicted differently in a scene of the Assumption to heaven by angels. He is an aged man here with stout built and his hair resembles ancient wise men's depictions. The saint as an old man refers to hagiographic descriptions. His body is being taken to heaven by heavenly

³⁶ T o e s c a, *Pietro Cavallini*, p. 6.

³⁷ Archivio di stato, reg. Ang. 1307n 167, f.245 quoting Boscovits, op. cit. p. 305, footnote 30. The author states, in view of a fact that the documents do not define particular decorations, that supposedly the frescoes in question are the ones from Casa nuova, where reconstruction was initiated by Charles II in 1305.

³⁸ This chapel was originally in the Gattola family's possession and since 1409 it became the possession of Cardinal Rainaldo Brancacci. Cavallini's frescoes have been recognised by Boscovits, p. 306.

creatures. Cavallini managed to present the old man's awkwardness with unusual suggestibility. Under the cover of delicate fabric a body lifted above the ground can be seen. A group of deacons and priests standing at the city gate is presented in loose robes, which do not show the body. The angels' bodies, as young men, are visible under the soft fabric of clothing. Their faces express concentration and their hands gently touch the martyr's body in order to lift it. In a similar way heavenly courts of angels with beautiful faces, hairstyle and silky colourful robes will be presented by the painters of the early Florentine Renaissance: Fra Angelico, Massolino da Panicale and Benozzo Gozzoli.

By means of shaping the body and by body features Cavallini was able to reflect internal emotional states, experiences visible in the eyes, the mouth and the gestures. He presented human states which had not been depicted in the art so far as they were against the rules, those concerning religious scenes especially. The figure who participates in the scene of St. Andrew's martyrdom demonstrates his terror with a repulsive image and, most probably, scent. He shades his eyes and mouth with his hand parting his lips at the same time. He reflects uncontrolled, unorthodox behaviour of a vulgar man. Similar behaviour was shown by Giotto in the scene of the Raising of Lazarus in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua³⁹.

In the Church of Santa Maria Donna Regina Cavallini presented scenes from the lives of St. Agnes and St. Elisabeth in which crowds of men and women of different age and with various features of individual physiognomy participate. By means of their body, expression of behaviour and countenance every participant communicates their own feelings, experiences and internal expressions. Such saints as: Peter, Nicholas and the apostles express their individuality through prayer.

In 1325 the artist returned to Rome and created mosaics on the front elevation of St. Paul's Basilica, which were destroyed in the fire in 1823⁴⁰. This destroyed work of art is compared to the frescoes in the apse of the Cathedral of Anagni depicting the enthroned St. Peter between two saints, which dated back to 1324. Thus, they would precede decorations from the elevation of St. Paul's Basilica⁴¹. Both saints, with crowns on their heads

³⁹ *This gesture is analysed by Frugoni Chiara L'affare migliore di Enrico. Giotto e la capella Scrovegni, con l'edizione, la traduzione e il commento del testamento do Enrico Scrovegni, Torino 2008.*

⁴⁰ T o e s c a, op. cit., p. 6.

⁴¹ On the basis of the preserved Pope John XXII's letter the decoration could have been

and with their bodily volume, suggest older women. The thickened layer of the body: prominent abdomen, distinctly marked breasts visible under the delicate fabric of a tunic fastened with a belt, confirms the connection of this image with the already existing tendency in Roman painting in the 12th century. In Anagni the painter adopted the models of faces which also correspond to the type of figure, posture and bodily volume which is characteristic of older people. This fact was observed by Boscovits, who defined the bodily convention of the figures in Anagni as certain archaic features. In his discussion with Professor Andaloro, a well-known researcher of the 12th-century Roman frescoes, a question arose about the understanding of 'what is archaic'⁴². Research on the painting of Roman ducento carried out by this scientist confirms a significant variety in depicting a body and a woman's corporeality, especially. Cavallini, who was growing up in this environment, perceived the art that surrounded him, which, as a modern man, confronted with the surrounding reality taking into consideration a recipient's needs at the same time. A man in his corporeal condition is depicted by Cavallini in the imitation of ancient sculpture. The artist goes further with these models: he 'fills' the figures with internal spirit, energy and life thanks to his skillful observations of the surrounding world. Very interesting research considering Giotto as a speaker, orator and an inventor of a three-dimensional perspective allows this artist, like Cimabue, to be enumerated in the pantheon of heralds of modernity⁴³. Filippo Villani defined these painters as innovators who introduced a new view, discovered life and air, created new painting⁴⁴. The stimuli in presenting painting space were analogous to philosophical considerations of a Franciscan scientist Roger Bacon, whose work – *prospectiva* – was well-known in the circles of scholars and artists of the same value as Giotto. Cavallini also participated in Franciscan life and his scholarship was already perceived, as it had been pointed out at the beginning of our considerations, by L. Gibherti. The experience of human corporeality in art is connected to the experience of space being a scenery for figures, which is also proved in Cavallini's works of art. However, there are differences between Giotto's and Cavallini's painting. The Tuscan painter directed the new solu-

completed in 1326, according to the documents confirming the receipt of payment for the work. B o s c o v i t s, op. cit., p. 311, footnote 50.

⁴² B o s c o v i t s, op. cit., p. 309.

⁴³ E d g e r t o n, op. cit., p. 49 passim.

⁴⁴ F. V i l l a n i, *De origine civitatis Florentiae et eiusdem famosis civibus (1400)* quoting Edgerton S.Y. op. cit., p. 49.

tions towards geometry and linear perspective, which he was not able to draw by himself yet⁴⁵. However, it was just this geometrical world where he introduced his heroes of events. The spatial illusion was taken up by Cavallini according to ancient inspirations but he subjected it to the figures full of their bodily volume and, above all, full of internal life and rich psyche.

THE REPRESENTATION OF HUMAN CORPOREALITY
IN PETER CAVALLINI'S PAINTINGS
THE SYNTHESIS OF ROMAN CLASSICISM
AND BYZANTINE TRADITION IN DEPICTING A HUMAN BEING

S u m m a r y

Peter Cavallini's painting has been thoroughly studied by distinguished Italian researchers and many world experts on Italian painting. Analyses of this great artist's style have been conducted in the context of *maniera greca*, which is obvious taking into consideration time and place of the development of Peter's painting skills. Almost the same reason, that is the place of birth and the first years of education connected with Rome, became a proof for those researchers who perceived Cavallini's creative activity as one of the earliest developed ways of the return of Proto-Renaissance to ancient traditions. It is also confirmed by the fact of Cavallini's cooperation with a sculptor Arnolfo di Cambio and, which has been confirmed as well, by parallel to Giotto's endeavours to create his figures as sensual, full of internal life people or groups of people arranging authentic events. All the previous research is extremely important in order to ask a question concerning the way of elaboration of a body and human corporeality by Cavallini what makes that his figures are internally filled with life and reveal their emotional and spiritual expression. Cavallini did not imitate the anatomical ideal of a body but he did not copy Byzantine figures, either. His efforts to paint the body and corporeality in its complexity of external connotations as well as internal psychological conditioning, often adequate to a situation, constitute a new pursuit which is a result of a new spirit of an epoch around the year 1300, the time when Cavallini lived, worked and achieved the greatest painting successes.

In this approach towards a figure as an individually elaborated corporeality differences between Giotto and Cavallini can be observed in spite of many similar interests like, for example, in drawing three-dimensional spatial illusion, which has meticulously been studied by researchers. Research on the manner of depicting human corporeality in art has basically referred to modern art, however, there are also approaches concerning medieval art (Urszula Mazurczak, *Human corporeality in medieval Italian painting*, vol. I, Lublin 2012, there extensive discussion of the state of research). Cavallini's carnality reflects human emotional

⁴⁵ The detailed analysis of the notion of perspective drawn by Giotto is discussed by Edgerton, as above.

states which are exposed by means of: eyes, pupils, eyelids, a mouth, lips and, finally, gestures and moulding of the whole body presented in motion. All those factors are matched by clothes whose fabric emphasises the body. In his approach to the matter of the body Cavallini was not a follower of *maniera greca*, however, he did not stop at ancient sculpture as the external shape of figures. Cavallini 'fills' his ancient statues with internal spirit, energy and life.

Translated by Katarzyna Plebanek

Key words: maniera greca, ancient sculptures, body, human corporeality, individual.

WYOBRAŻENIE LUDZKIEJ CIELESNOŚCI
W MALARSTWIE PIOTRA CAVALLINIEGO
SYNTEZA RZYMSKIEGO KLASYCYZMU I BIZANTYŃSKIEJ TRADYCJI
OBRAZOWANIA LUDZKIEJ TOŻSAMOŚCI

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Mistrz Piotr Cavallini (1240/50-1330), rzymianin z urodzenia, wychowania i artystycznej sławy, pracował w swoim mieście rodzinnym oraz w innych centrach kształtujących modele artystyczne początku XIV wieku, np. na dworze Karola II Andegaweńskiego w Neapolu. Pontyfikat papieża Bonifacego VIII i przygotowania Rzymu na Rok Jubileuszowy 1300 stały u się szczególnie istotnym impulsem odnowienia i odrodzenia sztuki w Świętym Mieście. Dzieła Piotra Cavalliniego w Rzymie syntetyzują cechy określane w historii malarstwa jako rzymski klasycyzm inspirowany głównie tradycją rzeźby i reliefu starożytnego Rzymu. Jednak Lorenzo Ghiberti wywyższył malarstwo Piotra pośród ówczesnych malarzy określając je jako *maniera greca*. Zatem można je porównywać z zachowanymi w tradycji rzymskiej ikonami. *Maniera classica* i *maniera greca* stanowią dwa odmienne nurty w formowaniu i ukazywaniu ludzkiej cielesności. Piotr Cavallini nawiązywał do jednej i drugiej tradycji nie kopiując ani jednej ani drugiej. Dostrzegalne są w jego malarstwie dążenia do tego, aby powiększyć przestrzeń i miejsce zdarzeń, aby stworzyć iluzję swobodnego poruszania się postaci w ukazanych zdarzeniach. Wizualizacja materialnej cielesności w naturalnym, materialnym otoczeniu architektonicznego wnętrza lub przestrzeni otwartej jest dowodem pogodzenia przez malarza tradycji łacińskiej, rzymskiej z grecką, bizantyńską. Artysta na modelach bizantyzujących twarzy wypracował iluzje nowej cielesności nasączonej emocjami, indywidualnymi oznakami fizjonomii, cechami wieku temperamentu, zaznaczając wewnętrzne, psychiczne cechy indywidualne ukazanych postaci. Badacze malarstwa Cavalliniego wskazują na proto-renesansowe cechy, co potwierdza styl malowanej cielesności zarówno w jej materialnym odwzorowaniu, jak i w duchowych oraz psychicznych implikacjach widocznych w malarstwie freskowym, mozaikach i tablicach.

Słowa kluczowe: maniera Greca, starożytne rzeźby, ciało, ludzka cielesność, indywidualny.