In 1901 Josef Strzygowski published his controversial book *Orient oder Rome* in which he asserted that the main spiritus movens of Early Christian and Early Medieval Art was not Classical Greece and Rome, but Hellenism and the Near East. A fierce debate ensued but today, 115 years later, we should be able to approach the issue in a much more sober manner. If the *Orient oder Rom* is not a valid paradigm, may it still contribute to a better understanding of our European art and culture predicament? What about some other paradigms, such as Rome versus Barbarians, Mediterranean versus Nordic, or North versus South? Is there any pair of opposites or complements that might generally apply and to our Western, and possibly entire human experience?

By relying on the work of Pausanias and Mumford, the author suggest that there is such a paradigm of opposites which are in fact complementary ruling our West European culture – the urbs et rus. As a monumental example from Early Christianity the author presents the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome (432), and for the Early Middle Ages, the Palatine Chapel in Aachen (792-805), which is a true model of cultural cross-fertilization, of Rome and the Barbarians, and of East and West, including some possible so far unrecognized references to the art of the Early Slavs. In that, the Palatine Chapel, we submit, plays an enormous creative role bringing together practically all the themes available at the times.

Key Words: Josef Strzygowski, Orient oder Rom, Early Christian Art, Early Medieval Art, Westwork, Santa Maria Maggiore, Palatine Chapel at Aachen, Early Slavs.

In 1901 Josef Strzygowski, already an established scholar and Professor of Art History at the University of Graz, published his controversial book *Orient oder Rome* (Leipzig, Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung), in which, on the basis of a handful of new acquisitions by the Royal Museum in Berlin, he challenged the predominant picture of the emergence of Early Christian, and, consequently, early medieval art and culture. In Strzygowski’s opinion, the main spiritus movens was not Classical Greece and Rome but Hellenism and the Near East (Strzygowski 1901: 1).

The controversy had its prehistory. Franz Wickhoff had maintained that for the first three centuries the emerging Early Christian art followed Roman models, whereas F. X. Kraus favored the Hellenistic Alexandria. For the 4th and the 5th century the argument was just the opposite. There, Kraus opted for Rome, and Wickhoff for the Orient. In Strzygowski’s opinion Kraus was right for the first three centuries and Wickhoff for the rest (Strzygowski 1901: 1-2). The thunderous debate first between Strzygowski and Josef Wilpert continued, pitching the “Humanists” (as Strzygowski named the “Classicists,” while, of course, not rejecting the positive sides of Humanism and Humanist disciplines), and those who shared Strzygowski’s opinion. The debate has not subsided even today, having flared up off and on, even with political overtones not worthy of humanist scholarship, as partisans of the two camps hurled such labels at the opponents as “nazis,” “reactionaries,” “communists,” “iron curtain,” “free world,” etc., etc. (Jastrzebowska 2105).

Today, 115 years later we should be able to approach the issue in a much more sober manner. If the *Orient oder Rom* is not a valid paradigm, may it still contribute to a better understanding of our European art and culture predicament? What
about some other paradigms, such as Rome versus Barbarians, Mediterranean versus Nordic, or North versus South? Is there any that might generally apply both to our western, and possibly to entire human experience.

An answer from a popular source concerning Strzygowski seems to me most adequate (www.cambridge.org/.../orient-oder-rom, 2016). “... he was one of the earliest art historians to step outside the Eurocentric mainstream and travel to remote locations to study artwork unknown in the West.” Had Strzygowski just published the photos from his adventures in the Near East, Central Asia, Altay and Iran, Asia Minor, the Caucasus, and among the Germans, Slavs, and Europeans of Asian origin, he would have greatly indebted any student promoting an integrated, all-inclusive view of Western art and culture. In fact, in the Introduction to Orient oder Rom Strzygowski himself states that there is always some truth even in the opposing camp. Ever since the Renaissance, the West cherished an image of western humanism and enlightenment, which necessarily led to an aura of western supremacy and infallibility. This has been used as a basis of western colonialism and imperialism, which is in its “Globalism” form still very much with us. Only the centers of imperialism are nowadays more numerous and tend to depend more on social and economic groups than on territory (Goss 2015: 493-496).

Our present-day European experience is based both on Classical and Judeo-Christian traditions as well as on those of Hellenistic and Christian Near East. But the new Europe of the Middle Ages can not be conceived of without the contribution of the new, “Barbarian” peoples. Together these two large complexes have ‘often been seen as another pair of opposites – Rome and Barbarian, Mediterranean and North, Classical and Primitive. Again, they should have been seen as complements. It is encouraging to see that this view has today penetrated both scholarly and public discourse. Take for example the statement by UNESCO placing Theodoric’s Mausoleum in Ravenna onto the World Monument List in 1996 (Wikipedia, 2016). The ICOMOS has concluded, I paraphrase, that the Mausoleum is in its Goth style and décor, which has no connection with Roman or Byzantine art, although it also employs Roman building techniques and opus quadratum as it had been known for four centuries. The UNESCO and ICOMOS are certainly not enclaves of some suspicious Northerners, possibly “neo-nazis” and their conclusion very correctly recognizes the importance of the barbarian component in early medieval art.

Another good example is the recent book by Laura Chinellato on the key monument of “Barbarian” art, the Altar of Ratchis in Cividale (737-743) (Chinellato 2016). The author does not even raise the issue of Rome versus Barbarian, or South versus North. I quote from my review of the book: “This year we mark the one hundred and fifteenth anniversary of Orient oder Rom?, the controversial book by Josef Strzygowski. The debates that ensued, first of all between Strzygowski and Wilpert, dividing the world of art history between “Humanists” (Classicists) and “Barbarians,” have not quite subsided even today. In Ms. Chinellato’s text, those ghosts have been quite successfully contained to their bottle. The tesserae of the “both (or several) worlds,” have been applied to the mosaic, but they do not clash, rather, they create a balanced picture. In that, the Altar of Ratchis as well as Ms. Chinellato’s presentation thereof, seem to fit with the concept of that “metamorphosis in progress, where principal vector was still art,” invoked by Francois Pinault in his introductory words to the Catalogue of the exhibition Rome and Barbarians in the Palazzo Grassi (Aillagon 2008: 31). Personally, I am an adherent of an “and – and” view of human predicament and creativity. Without stating it explicitly, Chinellato and Co. seem to think the same.

I will illustrate this attitude of mine by briefly expressing my own thoughts about two world famous monuments with endless lists of literature. The mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome came into being around 432. In the apse today we find a Coronation of the Virgin by Jacopo Toritti (1291-1296) replacing an original composition of probably the same theme (Fig. 1). To its sides, on the wall of the triumphal arch there are scenes from the New Testament centering, as appropriate, on the role of the Virgin (Fig. 2). Between the nave windows there are scenes from the Old Testament centering on the leaders of the people from Abraham to Exodus (Demus, Hutter 1971: 45, 53; Van der Meer 1967: 22, 30, 35, 64, 128, 131-132, 139) (Figs. 3, 4).

The mosaics of the triumphal arch are four bands of a frieze composition cut by the frame of the apse (Fig. 2). The human figure, alone or in groups, standing, sitting, moving or lying is the main carrier of the composition and action. The locus is indicated in a coulisse fashion, and the background had already somewhat hardened into horizontal bands, a memory of Roman illusionism and impressionism. The frieze-like character has already been observed by Van der Meer (Van der Meer 1967: 131-132). The figures remind one of the reliefs of classical Greek and Roman buildings, primarily temples, bringing back the memories of Phidias and his Panathenaic procession, transferred to a different architectonic cadre and
setting. Humanism, even an outright mimicking of monumental classical draped figure, remains. The elements of the tradition have been retained within a new content. In fact, so much tradition is applied in an innovative way, that on the first sight it goes unnoticed. And therein rests, I dare say, the success and value of these works. Let us not overlook, that there is also a noticeable touch of imperial grandeur, pomp, and elitism.

If the mosaics of the triumphal arch remind one of a frieze, then the panels between the windows are metopes, and the story is defined by the form of the frame (Figs. 3, 4). But this story is of another world. From a story resting, literally, upon two cities, abbreviated visions of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, the corner stones of the Civitas Dei, we are gone deep into the past, from urbs to rus, into the dessert, among hills and olive trees, huts and sheep of the pastoral Old Testament through which roam confronted rural militias. Those nave mosaics may appear livelier and more naturalistic than those on the triumphal arch, which is, given the type of the story, only natural. The style is very close, but in the nave there is indeed

Fig. 1. Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore, 432, apse and triumphal arch, view.

Fig. 2. Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore, 432, apse and triumphal arch, detail of the left side.

Fig. 3. Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore, 432, nave mosaic. Spies returning from the Promised Land, People attempt to stone Moses, Caleb and Joshua.

Fig. 4. Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore, 432, nave mosaic. Hospitality of Abraham.
more story, more air, more light. And yet those nave mosaics are in no way better than those around the apse. In fact, they do not reach the earnest elegance of the best sections of the New Testament. Within a superb urban monument we have found ourselves facing our great dilemma of urbs and rus. The village, the Old Testament, Orient, appear as unavoidable stepping stones to the New Testament, Christianity and Rome – the locus of transformation of Christianity from rustic cult to the world power. Still it is not a secular Rome that we see on the triumphal arch. Santa Maria Maggiore, the Greater St. Mary, brings brilliantly together in a perfect balance both the visual and the literary, Orient und Rom, Natura and Cultura, as it should be as they are all constituent parts of the Civitas Dei! The creator of the program and its visual executor were geniuses. One is reminded of Fedor Šmit, victim of Stalin’s purges, and his fascinating idea that in the visual arts one should be able to identify various levels of the speech, as one speaks differently at a court as opposed to stable (Dimitrieva 2015: 169-172). In the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore we have two versions of the courtly idiom, one a bit more formal than another. But those both dialects are omnipresent and universal, one validating the existence of the other.

One indeed rejoices in this breath of the rus in an urban setting which is falling apart. This faint breath made it possible to survive, after all, when the rus massively invaded the Roman urban idyll – or hell.

As humans moved out of the cave, some of them settled on the top of the hill, some at the bottom. Those on the top built circles of the wall around the hilltop to feel more secure. With time they learned to use this favorable position within their space as a means to power. The fort kept growing, it developed new circles of walls, new courtyards and halls. They had built. In English, unfortunately there is no same root noun (the built) that would denote the result of building. In some languages that did not inherit the word along with the thing from the Romans (civitas – city, città) there is. In Slavic languages, beyond the Roman limes, the Boljari would have built (to build – graditi) a grad (literally the built). This term applies equally to early pre-urban forts, as well as to later and contemporary urban centers. The building of the built provided security and control of the environment. Its position by itself emphasizes the focal role of the fortress-city, and its successor, the city. As then, so also today it is the city which acts as a center of control – it holds governments, courts, parliaments, headquarters, ministries, bishoprics, academies of arts and sciences, banks, factories, etc. It is and it does record the passing of the time – history (museums, archives, libraries). As such it is eminently secular, materialist and time-conscious. It exerts control over the countryside, the villages, which are physically less permanent but, paradoxically also less time-conscious and thus eternal! It is a well-known feature, wonderfully dealt with by Lewis Mumford in his definitive work (Mumford 1961: 29-50). A city is an imposition onto that prehistoric, paradise landscape (impressively described by Dennis Dutton in his path finding work) (Dutton 2009: 26), it is the inventor and locus of the most horrible terror, control, and crimes making the history nothing but a chronicle of cruelty and violence of one human being over another. Yet the village also has its dark sides – stubborn conservatism, lack of initiative, wildness of emotions. The balance between the city and the village differs from one place of the world to another. In the author’s native area, the city has always been a foreign imposition. Even today, the uncontrolled, forceful urbanization is a crime over Croatia’s cultural landscape (Goss 2014). Yet the city has thrived, greatly coveted and appreciated as a choice place of living for those who really matter.

The process begun in the cave has come to conclusion with the hill-fort and little has changed ever since. Only, those living in the forts and their successors in the cities all over the world have forgotten, have repressed, the existence of that other vast, non-urban world. The history may be but a chronicle of violence and cruelty, but it is also a history of the relationship between the urban zones and the countryside. And as every human being, a city-dweller or a villager, has a bit of the other, there is also a permanent struggle, or balance, between the two in most human beings (Goss 2014: 177-179).

We luckily have a witness concerning the urbs and rus writing some 1800 years before Mumford. Toward the end of the rule of Emperor Hadrian (117-138), Pausanias, an Ionian Greek travelled through Hellas and wrote his travel guide Periegesis tes Hellados. Having read the book I could not but fully agree with the brave Croatian translator and editor, Uroš Pasini, that Pausanias’ Greece was “not bound by asphalt roads and iron rails, not covered by concrete hotel buildings, not disturbed by the noise made by cars, trains, and planes. It was still a pastoral land of little roads and of soft mountain trails, of clean water courses and see bays, of relatively quiet walled-in towns and villages, full of mysterious cults, strange customs, and surprising prophecies. Its groves reverberated with the voices of dissolute satyrs and nymphs, the exuberant cries of Bacchantes. Out of the lush greenery of the land there appeared sanctuaries, temples, theaters, baths, gymnasia, full of the great art Pausanias’ generation was still able to enjoy…” (Pauzanija 2008: 9-10; translation is mine). Briefly, a Greece
I did not know; or, rather, did not expect, although I had caught glimpse of that “other Greece” throughout my classical education and later career, in the dark horrors of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, in Tantalus and Niobe, Procnia and Philomela, the golden masks of Mycenae, the Dipylon vases, the Korae and Kouroi of archaic times and the Corinthian and black figure vases that accompanied them. What struck me as extremely significant was that Pausanias, a Greek was equally proud of some uncut rock worshipped as a revelation of some obscure deity as of the statues by Polycleitos or Phidias.

As a model of cultural studies Pausanias held an unexpected appeal. His book made me realize that the famous dichotomy of European history between the Mediterranean and the North, the Romans and the Barbarians, naturalism and stylization, was in fact a dichotomy (or coexistence) of the urban and rural, *urbs et rus*, and that it was very much present even in what we had come to recognize as the epitome of the urban aspect of the Western Civilization. Those two modes of existence simply stood side by side since times immemorial. What it meant for me, a person who has throughout his life experienced himself both as an urban sophisticate and a villain bumpkin, I need not elaborate any further.

Pausanias did not take sides. He obviously appreciated both aspects of his Greek world, Athens and Arcadia, Apollo and Dionysus. Along with describing a painting showing Theseus, Democracy and the People in the Royal Porch in Athens, an obvious reference to Post-Persian Wars times, and the art of a sculptor of the same vein, Phidias, he, in the same breath, tells us about the ancient gossip how the Goddess Dawn abducted Kephalos to make him her lover, how Theseus killed the highwayman Skiron and threw him into the sea, how the battle of Mantinea led to Theban hegemony, or how the Athenians stopped the Gauls at Thermopylae – a wonderful mix of archaic, classical and post-classical facts, gossip, and propaganda. On the Acropolis, Pausanias has an eye for the monumental Propylaia and the wonderful little temple of Nike Apteros and while admiring the Parthenon and paying due attention to its sculpture and the art of Phidias he does not miss mentioning a certain Frix, son of Atamantes from Cholchis (where to he was carried by a ram), and his sacrifice to some unknown god.

When freed from the imposing setting of a megalopolitan Athens, in the groves of Arcadia or ravines of Boeotia or Phocis, Pausanias is at his best, and that other Greece emerges with an appalling vividness. In Thespias in Boeotia we visit a monument of Eros in the form of an uncut stone. While in Phocis and visiting Delphi, the most Apollonian of all Greek sanctuaries we learn about the tomb of Herophila the Sybil overlooked by a Hermes shown as a rectangular rock. Also in Delphi we hear about the clash between Apollo and a dragon Python whom Gaea set up as the keeper of the sanctuary. The dragon robbed the treasury and destroyed the homes of the rich burghers. So the people of Delphi begged Apollo to rescue them what he duly did. In the Archeological Museum in Zagreb there is a red figure vase from Magna Graecia showing a knight on horseback piercing a dragon trampled upon by the horse. An image bears a striking resemblance to the images of St. George, while recalling also Perun’s clash with Veles, or the exploits of Perun’s son, Juraj-Jarylo. I suspect that here we have an image of Apollo killing Python, an image of a triumph of good over evil common throughout the Indo-European world. At the end of the tour of Delphi Pausanias embarks on a dissertation of caves in the vicinity of the city but also on the most famous caves throughout the lands of the Greek, for example the cave called Steun belonging to the Arcadians, magnificent and rounded and dedicated to Great Mother and containing her statue. Another cave that captured Pausanias’ imagination was Korkia on the Parnassus, dedicated to the nymphs of Korkia and to Pan. In Achaia, in the city of Phara, there was at the central square a statue of Hermes shown as a rectangular rock standing on the bare ground, surrounded by some 30 other rocks, each named after a particular god, as “in old days the Hellenes used to worship uncut rocks rather than statues.”

Similar stories are wound around another great Classical sanctuary, of Zeus in Olympia. In the close vicinity to the wonderful metopes of the temple of Zeus, or of the Temple of Hera sanctified by Praxiteles’ Hermes, next to a description of the famous treasuries, Pausanias tells us a story of how the local God of the Eleians, Sozipolis, turned a new born into a snake which helped the Eleians to a significant victory over the Arcadians. Among the worthwhile pieces in the treasury of Sikyon is an Apollo, made of wood and with the head dressed in gold.

This statue takes us to another worthy aspect of Pausanias’ perегрinations, his genuine interest for old art in unusual techniques such as wood. By saying unusual I am of course voicing today’s point of view, of a history of visual arts which has totally neglected art in wood, i.e., the majority of art production in our segment of history. So it is very refreshing to
go through Pausanias and discover, on almost every page, references to that ancient art he still could see and which he definitely admired. Here are just a few examples.

In Arcadia, on the Kylena Mountain there is a ruined temple of Hermes, and an eight-foot statue of the God made from spruce, “as it was a custom in the past to make statues from wood – ebony, cypress, cedar, oak, yew, or lotus.” In Thebes there used to be an old wooden statue of Heracles made by Daedalus. In the next sentence Pausanias bridges centuries and speaks of the carvings in the tympana made by Praxiteles! Thebes also used to have three wooden statues of Aphrodite, so old that it was believed they had been commissioned by Harmonia. Statues of some among the earliest Olympian winners, Praxidamantes and Rexibios were made of wood, the former of fig, latter of cypress. Pausanias still saw them. In the temple of Hera in Olympia there was a wooden casket given by the Corinthians. We learn that those old wooden caskets were quite frequent. Often they bore inscriptions in unusual or ancient lettering which no one can read.

As a true artist of both creating and experiencing Pausanias goes in time and space through the Greek cultural landscape taking in the drama of the Greek space and then putting it down in writing in as vivid and variegated way as he had experienced it. Pausanias painted for us what we may metaphorically call a “painted Greece,” as opposed to a “white Greece” which is the Greece we usually hear about. In order to check Pausanias’ validity I had to have a confirmation so I looked around for an author to help me. On a shelf in my parents’ apartment I found J. B. Bury’s *A History of Greece*, published in 1900, and in the Preface I learnt that “The early portion of Greek history… is inevitably distorted and placed in a false perspective through the strange limitations of our knowledge… and the false impression is produced that the history of Hellas… consisted merely of the histories of Sparta and Athens and their immediate neighbors… The wrong, unfortunately, cannot be righted by the recognition of it. Athens and Sparta and their fellows abide in possession. *Les absents ont toujours tort.*” (Bury 1900: X-XI).

Luckily, just like Pausanias 1800 years earlier, Bury makes a magnificent effort to right the wrong. His Greece is of course also the Hellas of Pericles, whose efforts on the front of democracy he duly recognizes, but whom he also criticizes for imperialism, politicking and demagoguery; but also that other Greece Pausanias was so much aware of. The great Greek spirit was not infallible, the Geeks could behave like barbarians as well – sometimes to advantage and delight of viewers from a very distant niche of history, i.e., ourselves. Long live that happy mélange of urbs and rus.

European early middle ages are rightly seen as a triumph, be it temporary, of rus over urbs. But the Europe as we know it today is unimaginable without both components. In this context I would like to briefly comment on the building I have dealt with several times recently, so there may be some unavoidable repetitions (Goss 2010; 2014: 222-238). It is the Palatine Chapel in Aachen (Figs., 5-8).

The Chapel was built by Odo (Eudes) of Metz between 792 and 805. It is a centralized building with a dome, octagonal inside, sixteen sided outside, a small rectangular sanctuary flanked by two rectangular annexes, preceded by a multistory tower, a westwork. The Chapel stands at the end of a long and narrow atrium, which, as reconstructed, clearly shows Roman references (Figs. 5,7).

Usually, the Palatine Chapel is related to San Vitale in Ravenna (526-545), a prime example of Early Byzantine imperial architecture. In order to grasp the unique significance of the Chapel one must first do away with that myth.
San Vitale (Figs., 9-11) is a two-story centralized building with a dome, octagonal both inside and out with an irregular western annex, itself preceded by an atrium, which is no more (Demus, Hutter 1971: 75; Van der Meer 1967: 39). The central core underneath the dome juts out into the ring nave by semicircular exedras screened by columns. There are seven such projections plus a rectangular sanctuary with an apse on the East. The lightness and liveliness of the interior still breathes the spirit of Hellenism, and in those terms recalls another Justinianic building, SS. Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople (Demus, Hutter, 1971: 75, 95). Yet, San Vitale is more solid and compact, the exterior masses are well-defined by pilasterstrips, the vertical orientation more prominent.

The Aachen interior is in principle two-story, but in fact it is not (Fig. 7). The ground floor is heavy, the supports massive, the surfaces and spaces flat. It is topped by a gallery opening onto the core by tall, tripartite windows cut horizontally so that they imply a three-story elevation. Although this is fake, it represents a marked departure from the concept of San Vitale. Another such departure is the octagon within and the sixteen-corner structure outside (Fig. 6), a very simple square apse, as well as an overall sense of heaviness and flatness. We shall return to those features later.

The Chapel is preceded by a multistory tower, a westwork, a new invention of Carolingian architecture. There is plentiful literature on that fascinating architectural feature which made its appearance within the central lands of Carolingian Empire toward 800. In a brief but brilliant statement, Uwe Lobbeday has most correctly pointed out that we really do not know the source of the Carolingian turris, that marvelous invention which turned the boring, low-lying early Christian basilica
into an exciting asset to the landscape, profoundly changing its expressive content in the process (Fig. 14). By proposing a very useful distinction between a westwork proper and a “westbau,” Lobbeday has reminded us that western annexes existed along the facades of Christian churches from a much earlier period. Only, they mostly complied with the simple silhouette of the building’s body. Many western burial chambers of Pre-Romanesque churches, from Asturias to Croatia, follow that principle. Once a “turris” rises over that “crypt,” we have a westwork (Lobbeday 2002; Gvozdanović 1976). In what is still in my opinion the most thorough discussion of the western massif issue, Carol Heitz has explained the full westwork, dealing with St. Riquier at Centula (799, Fig. 14), as a place reserved for the liturgy of the Savior (Christmas and Easter), topping a “crypt” with an altar (Heitz 1963).
Heitz’s analysis does not rule out different paradigms, e.g., the imperial iconography, proposed in various studies by Alois Fuchs, or westworks that could be tied to the iconography of a single, identifiable person such as the westwork of the Palatine Chapel at Aachen ruled by the iconography of Charlemagne, as explained by Braunfels (Fuchs 1950; Braunfels 1991). The westwork, as rightly concluded by Heitz, is in principle a centralized structure. Thus, putting together a westwork and a rotunda would seem to be a tautology.

Yet it did occur at the Palatine Chapel at Aachen. As opposed to the exactly contemporary St. Riquier at Centula (Heitz 1963, Fig. 14), where a centralized western annex was attached to a longitudinal nave, the sequence in Aachen is (atrium=nave) – western turris – centralized (polygonal) “nave” – rectangular sanctuary. That sequence – tower, rotunda, sanctuary – is well-known from Eastern Europe, where, no doubt, the Aachen model was applied on local level. What we indeed have, one might say, is a “World Tree” (the westwork) attached to a “Holy Mountain” (the octagon). This is not without consequences for there is a profusion of Central and East European centralized structures (Fig. 15), primarily rotundas, indeed to such an extent that Veronica Gervers- Molnar (Gervers-Molnar: 1968, 1972) said that rotunda should be seen as a regular, not exceptional feature of Central and East Central European cultural landscape (Goss 2009; 2010: 16-17). Andrej Pleterski in fact concluded that the elevation of a typical Central European rotunda when viewed as section indicates a three story elevation, not without interest in the light of what we said above (Pleterski 2011: 110).

The turris at Aachen is relatively simple compared to St. Riquier at Centula, or the magnificent westwork at Corvey, yet more assertive than other chronologically close achievements such as at Inden or Steinbach (Goss 2010: 17) In a careful analysis Braunfels has distinguished the functions of the several areas of the Chapel. The “Palatine Chapel” was the octagonal space in the middle, the upper story was reserved for the ruler and his retinue, with a throne of the Emperor at its western side, next to the tower which contained another Emperor’s throne, facing the atrium, and above, on the upper story, there was the chamber storing the relics (Braunfels 1991; Goss 2010: 17) (Fig. 6).

The throne that faced the atrium was placed so the Ruler could receive the laudes of the public. It was above the tomb of Charlemagne which was so well hidden that the Normans missed it when sacking Aachen in 881, and Otto III barely managed to find it in 1000. The central area, surmounted by a dome showing Christ and the Elders of the Apocalypse was the earliest preserved “sacred space” to the north of the Alps (Braunfels 1991), a Holy Mountain containing a Dome of Heaven. What was, according to Braunfels, absolutely new, was the appearance of the tribune with the throne (although one may have stood at the westbau of St. Denis) (Braunfels 1991; Goss 2010: 16-17). What is also worth noting is the separation of the sacred (central space) and the turris zone. Or, as the turris as an Axis Mundi is also sacralized (and so also is its denizen, the Holy Roman Emperor), the two sacred zones are separated and clearly defined. One belongs to the Supreme God, the other to the Executive God, the Supreme Deity’s delegate, an important insight which needs to be borne in mind.
This does not seem to have been the case at St. Riquier, another argument for the role of local and individual factors in the creation of individual westworks.

The early history of the site of the Palatine Chapel is not without interest. Aachen, Aquae Grani, was a place dedicated to a Celtic deity of water. It continued to be a popular spa, and a pilgrimage spot. St. Mary duly inherited the place, and in the 5th century her sanctuary was built over Grano's springs. The place was for the first time mentioned in written sources when Pepin restored the chapel in 761-766. It was apparently a rotunda with rectangular annexes, something like a hall plus a sanctuary? (Goss 2010: 17).

If the westwork had not been passed to the Carolingians from “Rome,” the only other source would have been the “barbarians.” In our case it could mean Celts, Germans and/or Slavs. The concept of the Holy Mountain and/or the World Tree is common to many peoples around the world, including the Indo-Europeans. The westwork of Aachen comes very close to that image: applied, for example, to the Slavic Pantheon that would mean: ground floor – tomb, netherworld, the domain of Veles; first floor – ruler’s gallery, Perun’s court; top – relics, divine power, protection (Katičić. 2010; 2011; 2014; Belaj 2007; Belaj, Belaj 2014; Goss 2010: 21). Additionally, as the peak dedicated to Perun is not always the highest peak of a ridge, the relation between the westwork and the domed area with the representation of Triumphant Christ is the same as, for example, that of Perun’s peak and Suhi Vrh on the Učka, or of St. Jacob’s peak and Sljeme on the Medvednica – that of the executive God (Perun, Thor, etc., lower peak) and God the Creator (higher peak). Charles is thus, architecturally, fully identified as the Vicar of the Lord! Moreover, the outside gallery throne of the Chapel communicates with the atrium wherefrom Charles received the laudes of the people. This is the third point of a tripartite sacred chain. As we watch Perun at Perun or St. Jacob from Zaglav or Medvedgrad, so the people watch and praise Charles, the Holy Emperor on the outdoors throne, whereas, by turning and moving a few meters inside, Charles, himself seated on the inner throne confronts Christ at the Dome of Heaven! (Goss, Gudek 2009: 14-15). Now, is it not also interesting that the Chapel in fact bore a triple dedication: to the Virgin, the Savior, and St. Peter (Lemonde 2009: 5-6). This trinity is not structurally unlike the triad of barbarian, concretely Slavic Gods – Mokoš, Veles and Perun (Belaj 2007), bearing in mind that in Croatia (Veleševac, Petrov vrh, Marija Bistrica) the Prince of Apostles took over the place held by Veles! (Goss, Gudek, 2009: 18).

Could one at least make an intelligent guess as to possible “Germano-Slavic” sources of the westwork? As the linguists invoke non-existing but presumed verbal forms (marked *) referring to Indo and Pre-Indo European past, it would be equally legitimate to do so in the area of visual *forms (Goss 2010: 20).
If you visit the Spiš (Zips) region in eastern Slovakia you will discover as one of the greatest assets of an anyhow delightful landscape a medieval village church, aisleless and with a rectangular sanctuary, and a sturdy tower at the entrance, e.g. Žehra, Fig. 16). Just like in Polish, the tower is called “veža,” somewhat confusing for a speaker of Croatian who associates the same word with a “porch,” or “entrance hall.” The word appears to derive from the Indo-European root *aug indicating “light,” in pre-Slavic weg- which with a suffix –ja gives wegja, i.e. veža. We know that the early Slavs made a big use of “zemunica,” a half-buried dwelling – a rectangular area dug into the ground, covered by some kind of a gable roof. We have a description of such a building from the White Croatia beyond the Carpathians by the Arab traveler Ahmed ibn Omar ibn Rosteh (early 10th c.): “In the Slavic land of Gurab the winters are very cold, so they dig holes which they cover with pointed roofs such as one can see in Christian churches upon which they put clay…” (Belaj 2007: 138-139). It would be nice to have an exact reconstruction of an early Slavic veža, but even this may suffice to raise a very intriguing question: do we have in the wegja, or its possible Germanic equivalents, the source of one of the most fascinating and revolutionary inventions of Pre-Romanesque architecture, the westwork (Goss 2010: 20)? This adds another complex of potential sources for the Palatine Chapel. To consider yet another area, we must now return to San Vitale.

As a monumental polygonal domed building, but also rather compact and with a clear vertical growth at least in its exterior, San Vitale (Figs. 9-11) is probably “most Armenian” among major imperial foundations of the Early Byzantine period. About one hundred years later, the Armenian architects have spoken the ultimate word on the monumental polygonal structure. It is the Cathedral at Zvartnots, commissioned and even possibly conceived by Catholicos Nerses III the Bilder (643-652). It is a three story domed structure (35.73m) with a 32 sided exterior, more than 30 meters tall (Hasratian 2010: 72-73: Figs. 12, 13)). The core is a tetraconch. Three of the conchs are screened by columns as at San Vitale, the fourth is solid wall. A baptistery was apparently underneath the dome. There is also a square sanctuary, as in Aachen (Fig. 6). The entire fantastic structure hangs in a kind of Proto-Gothic way on four gigantic pylons, which can still be sorted out among the ruins (Hasratian 2010: 72-73, 150-152). A similar building was built at Taik (Banak). That the Zvartnots Cathedral was a world wonder is evidenced by the presence of Byzantine Emperor Constans II at the consecration.

In reading on the Palatine Chapel at Aachen I have found several references, in popular literature, about Eudes of Metz being by origin an Armenian. Unfortunately, I have never been able to confirm that in scholarly literature. In the light of what we just said it is not unlikely. The multi-sidedness and the three-story elevation of the Chapel (albeit illusory) point to the Caucasus. The eight century was a period of Arab occupation and consequently of considerable Armenian diaspora. The fantastic towers rising at the western façade and over the crossing of St. Riquier at Centula (Fig. 14) are also three story – real, not fake! So also seems to be the upper structure of a pagan temple at Pohansko, according to Pleterski (Pleterski 2011: 109; Fig. 17).

Charlemagne’s empire was the Imperium Romanum resurrected, Aachen was a new, little, Roma, Charlemagne a new Constantine. But neither the Empire nor its art were Roman. Even among the bronze masters of the Chapel, along with
almost impeccable classicism of some pieces, there are works that look into the future, toward the art of High Middle Ages (McClendon 2005: 105-127). The same is true of the figured arts of the Court School, as the step from the Coronations Gospels to the Centula or Ada Gospels eloquently testifies. The Early Medieval rus has descended upon Rome and claimed the Imperial Purple, but it did not give up its own traditions. Its old gods and the forms they had been used to, happily merged with the imperial tradition. Throw in a bit of the Caucasus Orient for a good measure and you have a really impressive model of cultural cross-fertilization. In that, the Palatine Chapel, we submit, plays an enormous creative role. It seems to bring together practically all themes available at the times. The fact that some of them have not been sufficiently, or at all, recognized does not diminish the need to expose them to critical review, and see where such a review is taking us (Goss 2010: 21).
Katičić, R. 2010, Zeleni lug, Ibis grafika et al., Zagreb/Mošćenička Draga.
Katičić, R. 2011, Gazdarica na vratima, Ibis grafika et al., Zagreb/Mošćenička Draga.
Katičić, R. 2014, Vilinska vrata, Ibis grafika et al., Zagreb/Mošćenička Draga.
SAŽETAK

ORIENT ODER ROM? 115 GODINA KASNIJE

Ključne riječi: Josef Strzygowski, Orient oder Rom, ranokršćanska umjetnost, ranosrednjovjekovna umjetnost, westwork, Santa Maria Maggiore, Palatinska Kapela u Aachenu, rani Slaveni

Godine 1901. Josef Strzygowski je objavio svoju kontroverznu knjigu Orient oder Rome u kojoj je izjavio da glavni spiritus movens ranokršćanske i ranosrednjovjekovne umjetnosti nije klasična Grčka i Rim, nego Helenizam i Bliski Istok. To je izazvalo oštru debatu u to vrijeme, ali danas, 115 godina kasnije, možemo mirnije raspravljati o tom pitanju. Ako Orient oder Rome nije neosporna paradigma, može li još uvijek pridonijeti boljem razumijevanju problema europske umjetnosti i kulture. Kako da razumijemo druge paradigme, kao Rim i Barbari, Mediteran i Nordijci, Sjever i Jug. Postoji li neki par suprotnosti ili dopune koji bi se mogao generalno primijeniti i na naše Zapadno i na općenito ljudsko iskustvo?

Pozivajući se na djela Pauzanija i Mumforda, autor predlaže da postoji takva paradigma suprotnosti koje se zapravo dopunjavaju u vladanju našom zapadnoeuropskom kulturom, a to je urbs et rus. Kao monumentalni primjer ranog Kršćanstva autor navodi mozaike u Santa Maria Maggiore u Rimu (432.), a za rani srednji vijek navodi Palatinsku Kapelu u Aachenu (792.- 805.), koja je istinski model kulturnog miješanja Rima i Barbare te Istoka i Zapada, uključujući i neke moguće, do sada neprepoznate, poveznice s ranim Slavenima. U tome, možemo reći, Palatinska Kapela, igra ogromnu kreativnu ulogu, povezujući praktično sve raspoložive teme tog vremena.