

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE LAST SUPPER SCENE IN ROMANIAN MIEVEAL AND WESTERN RENAISSANCE MURAL PAINTING

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Abstract

The Last Supper is established as one of the representative scenes of Byzantine iconography, one that was retrieved in the Romanian medieval mural painting as well. Its iconography is historical, and appears represented in the nave in the Passion area, or liturgical, being exhibited in the main apse, with an emphasis on the Holy Eucharist. It is generally included in the Passion cycle. Apart from the display on the wall, as a mural, it can also be displayed on a wooden support, on canvas or on paper. Over time, the way it is represented has changed, and this depends primarily on the school which the respective painter or craftsman belongs to, on local or external influences, then on the distribution of the characters, especially on the place occupied by Jesus, the shape of the table, the dimensions of the composition, the shape of the wall on which it is painted, etc. This way, there will be scenes in which the table appears either in the shape of a horseshoe, round, oval or rectangular or in the shape of the letter U, Jesus being rendered with His head slightly bowed, having a sad face, either on the left or in the middle of the Apostles, and in some compositions we will also see Him on the right side. Judas begins to be represented with his hand outstretched for food, and John slightly inclined or even lying on Jesus' chest or supported by His arm, sometimes also shown standing as can be seen in the Princely Church from Curtea de Arges. The halo around the head is not present in all scenes. Gradually, the objects on the table change both in number and in the way they are arranged on the table. The cloth covering the table and the architectural decoration in the background are also painted differently. In Wallachia and Moldavia it is found in the iconographic program of many churches, but in some of them it is preserved damaged.

In Western medieval art, the scene is widely used in the Renaissance era and is most often depicted at a rectangular table, the most famous of which is the work of Leonardo da Vinci. Here, attention is drawn to the representation of the Apostles, who in Giotto, for example, appear on either side of the table, and some of them are shown with their backs. The scenery in the background is also interesting, in some cases completed with vegetation, animals and birds.

In general, medieval art, both Eastern and Western, presents elements that are common in the representation of the scene, but also elements that differ and thus contribute to its specific character, which is why it occupies a special place not only in iconography, but also in artistic compositions belonging to different styles. The differences are conferred by the use of stylistic and plastic details, the shape and size of the composition, to which one may add other elements specific to the school of painting, the artist, etc.

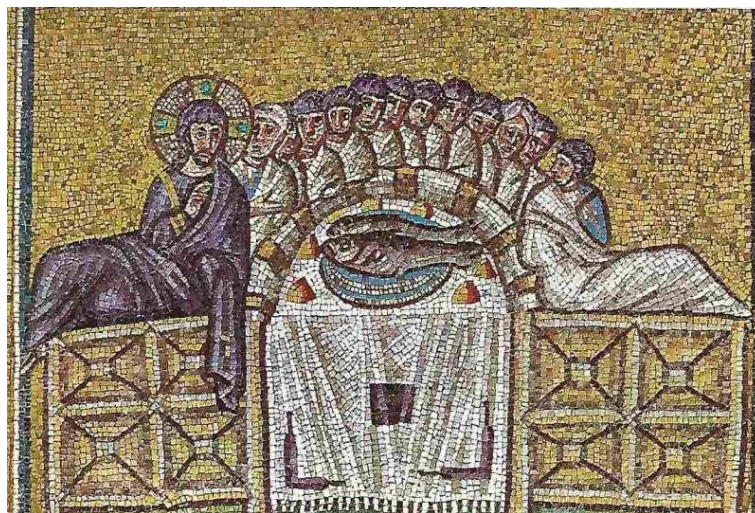
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Last Supper appears represented in the Romanian churches of the medieval era as well as in the Western churches from the same period under various forms. The manner of representation depends primarily on the artistic style, on the architecture of the wall, and then on the shape of the table, the number of objects on the table and their arrangement, the place occupied by Jesus and by some of the apostles, the dimensions of the scene, the decorative elements in the background, etc.

The herminia mentions quite a bit of information about its rendering: „A house and [inside it] a table with bread on it, and bowls of food and a cup of wine and a glass beside it. And Christ, together with the [twelve] apostles, sitting at the table. And to the left side, at His chest, there lies John; and towards the right side, Judas (without a halo) stretching his hand to the bowl and looking towards] Christ. (Dionysius of Forna, 2000, p. 113)

The scene is to be found in our churches either in the nave or in the altar and is related to the moment of Christ's betrayal, but also to the mystery of the Eucharist. The source of inspiration can be found in the Gospel of Matthew, as I.D. Ștefănescu informs us. (Ștefănescu, 1973, p. 106)



*Fig. 1. The Last Supper. Sant' Apollinare Nuovo
(Ravenna, 6th century)*

The same gospel seems to have inspired the author of the scene at Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna who executed a scene in the mosaic technique which represents a horseshoe-shaped table covered with an embroidered fabric on which there lies a plate with two fish. Jesus sits on the left of the composition wearing a halo and ancient clothes, this being considered the place of honour, „in cornu dextro”. The apostles are exhibited in the background behind Him, around the table, facing the viewer, but with their eyes directed towards Jesus or Judas. All the characters are represented half-recumbent, as was customary in the ancient fashion. The Saviour holds His right hand up, announcing the betrayal of Judas, who is depicted on the opposite side of Christ, „in cornu sinistro”, considered the second place of honour (Ștefănescu, 1973, p. 108), trying to hide his face. (Ștefănescu, 1973, pp. 106-107) The scene is represented in the cycle of Passions, next to the altar, being the first scene that begins the cycle, symbolizing the mystery of communion. (Delvoye, Vol. I, 1976, p. 122) The composition in Ravenna can be considered among the oldest representations of the Last Supper, after the representations in the catacombs (Agape from the Capella graeca, from the catacomb of Priscilla in Rome, Vătășianu, 1967, pp.22-23), and gradually it underwent changes. Thus, the table begins to be rendered also in round, oval or rectangular form, and Jesus' place changes so that we see Him in the midst of the apostles. Even the size of the table changes, and the scenes are airier, the characters are no longer represented so huddled together, therefore we will see them rendered rather casually. The position of Judas will also change, he being depicted with his hand outstretched towards the food on the table and without a halo, as mentioned in the herminia. In the West, he

starts to be rendered in the front part of the table. The apostles are presented on both sides of it, and in some compositions they will be shown with their backs to the viewer. The second place is later occupied by Peter, then Thomas or John.



Fig. 2. Agape, Capella graeca, Priscilla, Rome.

2. THE LAST SUPPER IN THE MEDIEVAL MURAL PAINTING FROM THE ROMANIAN PRINCIPALITIES

2.1. The Last Supper in Wallachian Mural Painting

In Wallachia, the scene of the Last Supper exists in the iconographic program of many churches from the medieval period, among which we can mention: the Princely Church in Curtea de Arges, Cozia, Hurezi, Coziei Hospital, the church in Sacuieni, Stanesti-Valcea, Caluiu, Arnota etc.

In the Princely Church in Curtea de Arges, the oldest church in Wallachia, which preserves 14th-century frescoes of Byzantine-Paleological influence executed according to the model of the Chora mosaics in Constantinople (Giugea, 2016, pp.366-375, Giugea, 2022, pp.84-110), the scene of the Last Supper is represented in the nave, its place in the apse of the altar being taken by the Dinner at Emmaus. The scene in the nave is quite damaged, and the art historian Daniel Barbu decodes it based on the pattern book drafted by Radu Zugravu in the 18th century. (Barbu, 1986, p. 53) He describes it briefly, mentioning a table at which Jesus is seated on the left and Peter on the right, with John being represented in standing position. The composition has an architectural background, but it is damaged. Teodora Voinescu presents its image according to the same pattern book of the painter Radu, made after the painting of the 14th century. According to this model offered by him, we can see a rectangular table on which there are dishes with food, cutlery and wine glasses, and the apostles are shown facing the viewer. Jesus takes the place of honour, wearing a halo, and John is shown standing, slightly bent towards Jesus and with his back to the other apostles. Judas reaches for the bowl of food as we will see in many of the representations of the scene. (Voinescu, 1978, pp.18-19, il. 38)



Fig. 3. The Last Supper according to the patterns of Radu Zugravu taken after 14th-century painting



*Fig. 4. The Last Supper extracted from the Princely Church in Curtea de Arges, the 14th century.
(Dobjanschi, Cernea, Tănăsioiu, 2008, p. 17)*

The fresco fragment from the Princely Church dating from the 14th century was extracted during the restoration of the painting as part of the restoration campaign launched at the beginning of the 20th century and consists of only nine apostles and Jesus on the right side with a halo around His head. It is part of the collection of the National Art Museum, having been exhibited for a while in the Old Romanian Art Gallery. (Drobotă, 2019, p. 63)

At the church in Stanesti, Valcea, the Last Supper is represented in the southern conch of the nave, but it is quite damaged. We can see the apostles lined up at a rectangular table without being able to notice any details, however, it is the semicircular shape of the wall on which it is painted that stands out.



Fig. 5. The Last Supper from Stanesti, Valcea.

At Bolnita Coziei we find it on the same wall of the nave, in the southern conch, as displayed in Stanesti Valcea, whilst in Caluiu it is painted two registers below according to the iconographic program created by Carmen Laura Dumitrescu. (Dumitrescu, 1978, pp. 27, 30, 41)

At Arnota, the foundation of ruler Matei Basarab (1632-1654), the painter represented the Last Supper in the nave, with a horseshoe-shaped table, Jesus being depicted in the midst of the apostles. All the characters have halos around their heads, except for Judas who reaches for the bowl of food. Constantine Cavarnos holds the opinion that the use of the halo for all characters in the Last Supper is inappropriate, it being specific only to the Saviour. (Cavarnos, 2020, p. 135) Here, John is not shown lying on Jesus' chest, but sitting at the table with the others, gently extending his hand to one of the Saviour's hands, who is depicted while blessing with His right hand. This gesture was considered too intimate and familiar by the Cretan and Serbian painters, and medieval Romanian painting took over this influence in some of the churches. (Ștefănescu, 1973, p. 108) On the edge of the table there is a napkin that surrounds it and on which the characters rest their hands, similar to the traditional Romanian napkins. There are three large dishes on it, instead of one as it appears in the first representations, but we can also see cutlery and other dishes as mentioned in the herminia. In the front part of the table we can see the three large pitchers, each of a different shape and decoration, two of them have a single handler, whilst the third has two. An architectural decoration, designed in accordance with the Byzantine tradition, is rendered in the background.



Fig. 6. The Last Supper at Arnota.



Fig. 7. The Last Supper at Sacuieni Church.

At the church in Sacuieni, also from the 17th century, the Last Supper is represented on the south wall of the nave, having above it the scene of the Resurrection of Lazarus, which deteriorated, and on the right side the Arrest of Jesus. Under the Last Supper there is an inscription with the date of the painting and the names of the craftsmen. (Pillat, 1980, p. 32) Here the table appears in an oval shape with the Saviour in the middle of the apostles but, this time, two of them appear in front of the table, seated on two masonry constructions similar to two chairs, but of a bigger size. If at Arnota the front part of the table, which is straight, is left free by the apostles, at Sacuieni they occupy almost the entire table by placing the two figures in front of it. Judas is positioned in front of Jesus with his hand outstretched for food and without a halo. Jesus has His hand on John's shoulder, who is bent over the table with his head resting on his palm and a frightened look. (Pillat, pp. 62-63) The table from Sacuieni is poorer than the one from Arnota, and the tablecloth around it is devoid of decorations; similarly, the architectural decoration in the background is simpler in the first church.

Cornelia Pillat considers that the scenes represent a combination between the narrative and the symbolic, with the Athonite and Moldavian influences meeting at Arnota.



Fig. 8. The Last Supper. Church of the Hurezi Monastery.

At the Main Church of Hurezi Monastery, the masterpiece of Brancovan art during the reign of Constantin Brancoveanu (1688-1714), the iconographic program was made by a team of craftsmen led by the Greek painter Constantinos. It also includes the Last Supper painted here with a rectangular table, as it also appears in the Topolnita church. Jesus is among the apostles and the only character with a halo on His head, thus highlighting the use of the psychological perspective, accentuated by the fact that He is depicted in larger dimensions compared to the rest of the characters. On the right side there appears John leaning

towards Him. Judas, on the left, reaches for the dishes. The Brancovan decor that adorns the tablecloth attracts attention, as well as the positioning of the characters arranged around the entire table. Four of them are shown from behind, but with the eyes towards the others, so that their faces are seen from the profile. We can notice the wonder or astonishment highlighted both on the faces of the apostles and through their gestures. They are seated on benches similar to traditional Romanian benches, with simple decorations. In the background there stands out the rich architectural decoration that beautifies the scene.

In the refectory of the Hurezi Monastery, decorated on the inside in the same period as the Main Church and the chapel dedicated to the Nativity of the Mother of God, the painters Martin and Preda executed the painting (Tătaru-Cazaban, Herea, 2009, p. 92) Here one can find an impressive representation of the Last Supper scene where a slight Western influence can be observed. Even if the characters are arranged around the table, with Jesus in the centre, those in the foreground are represented with their faces turned towards the viewer, not with their backs, as seen in Giotto's work. Blue and red predominate. In the background we can see the architectural decoration adorned with columns and semicircular arches.



Fig. 9. The Last Supper in the Hurezi Refectory.

2.2. The Last Supper in the Mural Painting from Moldavia

In Moldavia, the Last Supper is better preserved than in the scenes from the churches of Wallachia. Most of the paintings date from the end of the 15th and 16th centuries, but also from the beginning of the 17th century. The compositions that we meet in the churches with exterior paintings, which are part of the UNESCO heritage and on which our attention will rest, are especially noteworthy, although we also find them in other churches from the era of Stephen the Great (1457-1504) such as Balinesti, Popauti, St. Elijah from Suceava, without being limited to these. At Balinesti, there is an interesting cloth that covers the table and is decorated with beautiful floral motifs. The table still retains the shape of a horseshoe in both churches, but in Balinesti we can also see the napkin under the hands of the apostles surrounding the table, all the characters having halos. I.D. Ștefănescu also mentions the plates and the Italian amphorae, round loaves and radishes or deformed dates. (Ștefănescu, 1982, p. 191) The latter are also used at Arnota and in other scenes met with in Moldavian churches. At Popauti, the decoration is simple, and Jesus is the only one with a halo around His head. Similar to the scenes from Balinesti and Popauti is the one from St. Elijah in Suceava. The table is also shaped like a horseshoe, but the Saviour is shown here on the left side of the table, being the only one with a halo, as He also appears at Popauti. Compared to the first two, here we can see the decoration with the semicircular arches in the front side of the table.



Fig. 10. *The Last Supper. St. Elijah in Suceava.*

The Last Supper at St. Elijah in Suceava is part of the original paintings of the altar that were kept inside the sanctuary restored in 2020. (Gorcea, Zaharia, 2021, p. 218)

The representation of the scene in the Voronet church is extremely interesting. Here the Saviour occupies the right side of the table, and not the left or the middle one, as we have noticed so far in other representations. John is lying with his head on His chest as a sign of care and protection, but at the same time also of wonder or amazement. The front part of the table remains free, allowing the decoration with three semicircular arches that seem to be carved in the table, but also the floral decoration around them, to be seen. Judas, with his hand outstretched to the bowl, is shown on the left side, in front of Jesus, amidst the Apostles. The scene is quite crowded, the characters being depicted huddled together, but their physiognomy and gestures stand out, as well as their feelings, especially the concern on John's face. However, their amazed or solemn figures have the same masculine strength in their attitudes and expressions.

We can notice the shades of blue that predominate, blue being the colour specific to Voronet, to which the red is added, but also the transparency of the colours used by the painter. Here Jesus is the only character with a halo, which is considered much more natural than in those compositions where all the characters are wearing it.

Some art historians liken the characters of the apostles "with their purely peasant figures, with deep looks, full of sincerity and boldness" to the Moldavian peasants of the time of Stephen the Great who defended the country with their strength and heroism. Saint John is considered a character who highlights the close connection the artist had with the Moldavian society of that time (Musicescu, Ulea, 1971, p. 12).



Fig. 11. *The Last Supper. Voronet. (doxologia.ro)* Fig. 12. *The Last Supper. Sucevita.*

In Sucevita, the painters Ioan and Sofronie created a composition with an oval table, and the cloth that covers it is painted in red at the bottom and decorated with two bands rendered in gold. Jesus also sits on a red throne on the left side, wearing golden clothes, with His feet resting on an oval-shaped support. Judas lies across the table to the bowl in front of Jesus, and in the front part of the table, sitting down, directly on the floor and with his back to Jesus, one of the apostles can be seen. Red predominates in the use of colours, highlighting the green and blue decorated with golden stars in the background, elements that give particularity to the scene from Sucevita. There is no clear information about the name of the apostle sitting down and with his back to Jesus, but his position, his name and the reason for rendering him in such a way as has never been seen before in another scene are among its distinctive elements and remain in the spotlight of specialists. The art historian Vasile Florea is of the opinion that in Sucevita there is a combination between some traditional elements and the use of new themes and interpretations, placing it among the monuments *touched by the new breath of modernity*. He also mentions the refinement of the painting, the narrative character of the small, even miniature scenes, the special colouring, etc. (Florea, 2007, pp. 180-181)

Of particular beauty is the scene from the Arbore church, exhibited in the altar, which is considered less common by art historians consider as Judas appears in the middle of the table and facing the viewer, he being generally rendered in profile and with a tendency to hide his face. (Drăguț, Florea, Grigorescu, Mihalache, 1976, p. 81)

The scene is painted in the altar, on the south side next to the Communion with wine. (Popa, Boldura, Drobotă, Dină, 2016, p. 44,48)

At Probota, still in the altar, (Dina, 2009, p.17) a scene is painted in which four of the apostles occupy the front part of the table, which usually remains free, and are shown from behind, but their faces are turned towards the viewer. Here everyone is wearing a halo, including Judas, but it is one of the apostles depicted in the front of the table that draws attention, as this apostle, instead of a halo, is wearing a kind of hat, similar to the traditional hats of the inhabitants of that time, there being no references to such an item up to that moment, thus this element may be the subject of new research. Jesus, on the left side of the composition, sits on a higher throne, with His feet resting on a rectangular support, and John leans towards Him. The change in the position of the characters at the table demonstrates the Western influence. The decoration of the furniture elements as well as that of the architecture in the background, which is made up of rich ornaments, is very impressive.



Fig. 13. The Last Supper. Arbore Church.



Fig. 14. The Last Supper. Probota.

3. THE LAST SUPPER IN WESTERN MEDIEVAL MURAL PAINTING

In Western medieval art, the theme of the Last Supper was very often painted by artists, especially during the Renaissance. Initially, some small Byzantine influences were preserved, such as the shape of the table, and gradually it came to the elaboration of various compositions, the rectangular table being especially preferred, to which there will be added details related to the architectural decor, the disposition of the characters and their grouping sometimes depending on the architecture of the wall, but also other elements such as the painting of animals or birds, or of groups of characters in addition to Jesus and the 12 apostles, etc.

3.1. The Last Supper Made by the Painters Giotto and Lorenzetti

Many art historians consider Giotto one of the greatest artists making the transition from Byzantine art to the new style of Renaissance art. The most important works made by the artist are mural paintings, among which are the frescoes from Padua, where he painted scenes from the life of the Virgin and Christ. Here we can also find the Last Supper (approximately 1303-1305). He gave an important role to his characters (Gombrich, 2012, pp. 201-202) who are generally characterized by purity of the soul and deep humanity. This is how we see John represented as a young man who approaches Jesus with confidence and puts his head on his chest. (Lazarev, 1983, pp. 262-263)



Fig. 15 Giotto. *The Last Supper*. Fresco from Cappella dell' Arena Padova.



Fig. 16. Pietro Lorenzetti. *The Last Supper*. 1320. Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi.

The table is rectangular, as is usual in Western art, with Jesus on the left side, and five of the apostles standing with their backs to the viewer. One of them is Judas, the first on the left, who reaches for the dishes on the table. Since the image of the table is covered by the bodies of the characters in front of it, it is not possible to distinguish exactly what is on it. The architectural decoration is simple. Giotto emphasizes form, and colour is subordinate to it. He generally uses cold, bright, pure colours, including: pink, pearl-gray, yellow, blue, green, light purple, pale lilac, etc. (Lazarev, 1983, p. 279)

Lorenzetti preserves the Byzantine influence by rendering an oval-shaped table that he frames in a space surrounded by columns, with angels carved at the top, with Jesus in the middle of the apostles, but, unlike other representations, on the left side of the scene, behind the diners, there appear two more characters rendered standing, inside the hexagonal structure, and then another scene with two characters and two animals is added. Other painters who introduce animals or other extra elements were probably inspired by him.

3.2. The Last Supper Painted by Andrea del Castagno

Another Last Supper scene was done by the painter Andrea del Castagno. In the middle of the 15th century he conceived a composition in which he uses perspective, using a long, rectangular table, with the apostles being seated behind the table and at its ends, and the Saviour in the middle of them. John sits with his head bowed on Jesus' arm. Judas alone stands in front of the table, as if isolated from the rest of the diners, being shown without a halo and in profile. Compared to the scenes in the Romanian Principalities, the cloth on the table allows the feet of the apostles to be visible. In the background you can see an architectural decoration with square shaped boxes and decorative bands.



Fig. 17. Andrea del Castagno. *The Last Supper*.

3.3. The Last Supper by Domenico Ghirlandaio

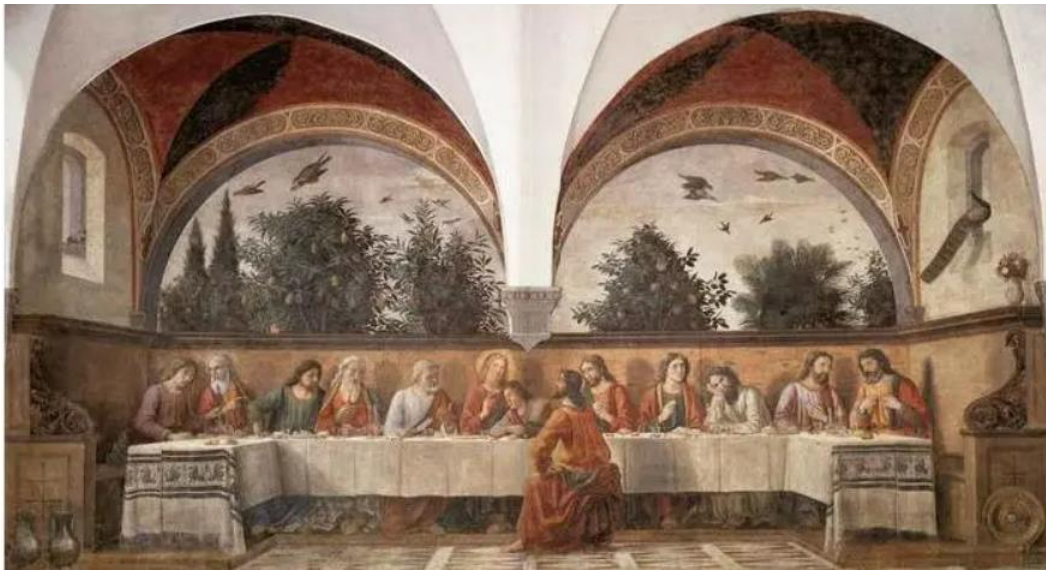


Fig. 18. Domenico Ghirlandaio. The Last Supper.

The refectory of the Ognissanti Monastery, Florence 1480

Inspired by Andrea del Castagno, Domenico Ghirlandaio creates a Last Supper in which he modifies the disposition of the characters due to the console of the vault. Thus he is forced to take the figure of Jesus from the middle of the composition and give birth to a more complex central motif, as the art historian Virgil Vătășianu calls it (Vătășianu, 1972, p. 54), consisting of three characters: Jesus, John and Judas. The latter is still represented alone in front of the table, without a halo and seen from the profile, but looking to the left as compared to Castagno's scene.

Attention is drawn to the setting in the background where the painter exhibits fruit trees and birds in flight in the two lunettes of the vault, which can be compared to a garden which he presents in contrast to the tragedy of the event inside, rendered in the foreground of the composition. The table is loaded with dishes and arranged in the shape of the letter u compared to Castagno's.

A little later, the painter creates another scene in San Marco similar to the one in the Ognissanti Monastery in Florence, only here all the characters have halos, and behind Judas he paints a cat. This also appears in Lorenzetti, in the scene he relates to the Supper and by which he was probably inspired. The two scenes are similar, with some small details that differentiate them.

3.4. The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci

Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper is the most famous of all his depictions in Western art. He framed the scene in a composition for which he used the linear perspective (Bartos, 2016, p. 151), the central point being represented by Jesus the Saviour. Compared to his predecessors, he renounces halos and groups the apostles, suggesting their agitation and restlessness more than any other artist.

He painted the heads of the apostles with unspeakable skill and beauty, and it is said that he would have left the head of Jesus unfinished, considering that he would not be able to restore the heavenly beauty that the character was worthy of. (Vasari, 1968, p. 185) Leonardo's composition stands out first of all for the portrayal of the apostles' feelings of confusion, love, horror or even sorrow, but also the pain shown towards the impossibility of understanding the soul of Jesus, in contrast to the hatred and betrayal from the face of Judas. Giorgio Vasari believes that the artist showed incredible skill here. (Vasari, 1968, p.185)

Constantine Cavarnos is of the opinion that the Italian artist resorted to a total rejection of the spiritual archetype specific to Byzantine art, preferring the use of natural perspective. (Cavarnos, 2020, p. 136.)

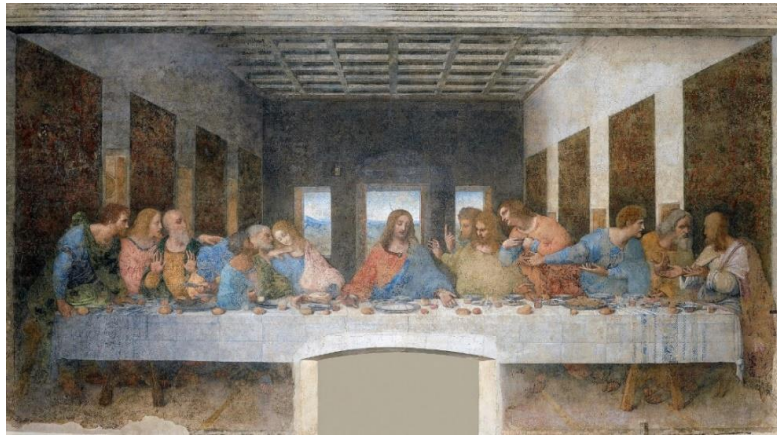


Fig. 19. Leonardo da Vinci. *The Last Supper*.

The refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan. 1495-1499.

3.6. The Last Supper Painted by Andrea del Sarto

Andrea del Sarto was commissioned by the monks of San Salvi to paint a Last Supper in the dining room of the monastery, which Georgio Vasari mentions „...as the least heavy and the most lively, in its colouring and drawing, of the compositions he ever did, if not of the compositions that are still to be done; among other things, he has given the characters so much greatness and infinite grace, that I am afraid that, in relation to this Supper, my words will be too poor, for we are dealing with a piece of work in front of which, whoever looks at it, remains stunned.” (Vasari, 1968, p. 387)

Regarding the shape of the table and the way the characters are placed, the artist took Leonardo da Vinci's idea. He also gives up the halos but introduces two more characters at the balcony of the room, at the middle window. The semicircular arcade above the table is beautifully decorated with medallions with a blue background, a colour that is also used on the three balconies.

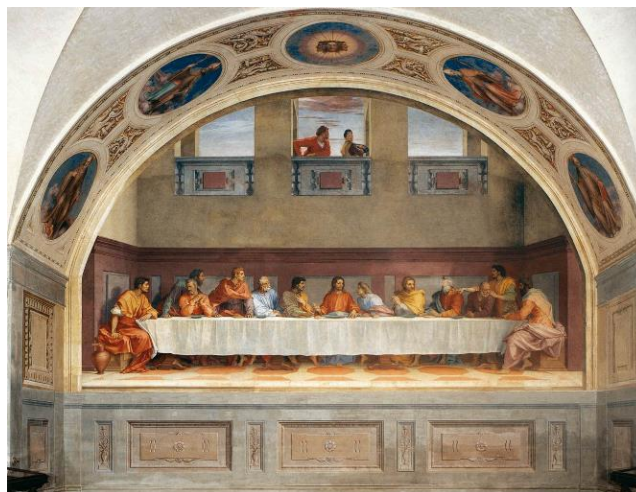


Fig. 20. Andrea del Sarto. *The Last Supper*. San Salvi 1519-1527

4. CONCLUSIONS

The Last Supper is a scene with a special religious significance, closely related to the betrayal of Jesus and the Holy Communion. The first mentions of it are presented in the Holy Gospels, the ones that inspired the painters, then they also appear in the herminia. Over time, artists have modified and adapted the scene depending on several aspects, which are especially related to the artistic style and the skills of the painters.

In general, most scenes include the representation of a table, with Jesus and the apostles around Him, with dishes and various food coursed on it, the entire ensemble being rendered within an interior setting.

Gradually, the position of Jesus changes - if in the oldest representations He is depicted on the left of the scene or in the middle of it, later on He would also appear on the right. John is painted next to Jesus, in some compositions being shown slightly leaning on the Saviour's chest or arm, and in others being only slightly inclined towards Him. The latter variant is a principle used particularly in Romanian medieval art of Cretan and Serbian influence, whilst being ignored in Western art.

In this scene, Judas is an interesting character who starts from being depicted with his hand towards the bowl of food and without a halo, and in some compositions, more than in others, the feeling of hatred, cunning and betrayal on his face is highlighted. In general, he tries to hide his face, but he also appears from the front and in the midst of the apostles, as could be seen at the Arbore Church. The scene is considered less common due to these different elements compared to other compositions.

The clothes of the characters in the Byzantine-influenced scenes are rendered geometrically using the symbolism of the colours and the rigidity of the figures, in full observance of the Byzantine canons, but local influences also appear, as is the case of the scene from Voronet. Here, art historians have established a close connection between the faces of the apostles and those of the Moldavian peasants from the era of Stephen the Great who seem to have inspired the painter. In Western art, a Byzantine influence is preserved initially, then desacralization is achieved, with a preference for the naturalistic trend. Jesus will be depicted without a beard and halo, but still preserving the expression of holiness.

A unique scene can be considered the one from Sucevita, firstly due to the appearance of one of the apostles in the front side of the table, shown with his back towards Jesus and sitting directly on the floor. The painter's use of colours is interesting, marked by a preference for red, blue and gold, colours specific to the painting of Orthodox churches. (Greco, 2016, p. 106) A different element in the representation of the characters also appears at the Princely Church in Curtea de Arges, where John appears standing and slightly inclined towards Jesus. In Probota, the slight detachment of Peter from the rest of the characters is highlighted, with him being rendered on the left of the composition, on the right side of the Saviour.

The shape of the table changes so that in Western art the rectangular model is sometimes preferred, even in the shape of the letter U, by using the linear perspective. The rectangular type was also used in Romanian art in some of the churches, but, in general here there is a preference for the horseshoe, oval or round model.

If in the Romanian medieval mural painting the architectural model of the table is preferred, with the occasional use of a cloth with different decorative details, as well as of specific traditional elements, such as the napkin, in Western art the table is covered with a tablecloth that allows the legs of the people occupying the seats to be seen, this table being closer to a regular one. If we were to add the absence of an aureole, it can be stated that there is an obvious closeness to the mundane, therefore we may be talking about a desacralization of the scenes. Moreover, in Western art decoration with plants and animals is sometimes introduced, therefore two worlds are rendered, an interior one, that of the supper, and an external one, suggested by nature. In the Romanian mural painting, these details are missing, with the exception of the scene from Sucevita, where a starry vault appears in the background.

From the general description, it can also be concluded that almost each of the scenes found in the churches belonging to the Romanian space has a specific element, which sometimes makes them considered unique, representative scenes in medieval mural painting. The Romanian Principalities also retain a preference for the psychological perspective, Jesus being rendered at slightly larger sizes compared to the rest of the characters, which may also comprise a Byzantine influence. Western art also contains representative scenes, with specific details, of particular value for Renaissance art.

All these compositions have specific features and qualities both from a religious and artistic point of view and leave room for many other interpretations and in-depth studies to be performed by specialists. Their value is a special one, emphasizing, not in the least, the special skills of the artists and sometimes even the secrets used by them in medieval mural art, which led to the preservation of these compositions in very good conditions to this day.

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