

EÖTVÖS LORÁND UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Anna Boreczky

THE BUDAPEST MANUSCRIPT OF CONCORDANTIAE CARITATIS
Propositions of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Tutor: Dr. Tünde Wehli

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The subject of my dissertation is Codex CX 2 of the Central Library of the Order of the Pious Schools (*Piarists*) in Budapest. The codex is the most richly illuminated medieval manuscript preserved in Hungary. Made in Vienna in 1413, it is worthy of attention in several respects. By its content, it belongs to the family of the so called *Concordantiae caritatis* manuscripts, which deserves interest in itself; also, it is one of the most distinguished copies of the whole family. The several painters who participated in its illustration, though conspicuously different in their style, were obviously related to one another. However, other works, which could be attributed to the same masters without any doubt, are not known. Without the more than one-thousand pictures, and, at least, seven masters(!) of the Budapest manuscript of *Concordantiae caritatis*, the total number of Viennese artworks of international gothic style would be considerably poorer. The manuscript became known in 1979 (cf. Papp László: Ismeretlen XV. századi kódex a Piarista Könyvtárban [László Papp, „An unknown codex from the 15th century in the Library of the Order of Pious Schools], *Magyar Könyvszemle* 95, 1979/2, 113-125). Although the codex soon captured the attention of Hungarian and Viennese art historians, most of all that of Tünde Wehli, Gerhard Schmidt, Fritz Koreny, Jörg Oberhaidacher and Martin Roland, its thorough and systematic monographic study has not been concluded yet.

Concordantiae caritatis

Concordantiae caritatis itself is the work of Ulrich von Lilienfeld, who lived in the 14th century. It is the most voluminous typological collection of late medieval times; one might suggest that it was meant to be an encyclopedia by its author. (Typology, in essence, creates systematic relationships between the events of the Old and the New Testament according to their role in the stages of

salvation, in which events in the Old Testament are seen as pre-figurations of the revelation of their meaning in the New Testament, creating one mutually illuminating unit. It is one of the characteristic structures of thought of the Middle Ages, already present in the New Testament. Though it never disappeared from the mental map of medieval times, it only spread to a broader circle in the late Middle Ages.) *Concordantiae caritatis* was meant to be a „picture book” by its author. As an illustrated typological compilation, it stands closest to *Biblia pauperum* and *Speculum humanae salvationis*, but, unlike these, its structure follows the order of feasts in the liturgical year instead of the narrative of the Gospels. Due to its liturgical structure, it extends typologies to scenes taken from the life of saints (which, by *imitation Christi*, serve as examples, similar to events in the life of Jesus). Furthermore, *Concordantiae caritatis* also incorporates natural phenomena in its typology in such a systematic manner as it had never been known before. As a consequence, it offers comprehensive knowledge of the world as it was known in medieval times. The work ends with a so called *Bilderkatechismus*: the summary of the tenets of faith complete with symbolical and allegorical figures.

The Budapest Manuscript

The Budapest manuscript of *Concordantiae caritatis*, as we have it today, contains 524 pages. According to its colophon, its text was copied by Stephanus Lang, a burgher of Vienna, in his own home (*in suo parvo studorio sue magne stube*) in 1413. In it, we can read the description of altogether 1225 biblical scenes and natural phenomena. The understanding of these descriptions is helped by the same number of colored pen-and-ink drawings, bringing biblical events, legends, fabulous and real animals to life. The cycle of illustrations is made complete by the pictures of the *Bilderkatechismus*. The manuscript was illustrated by more than one painters. The most talented master of them (referred

to as „chief master”) can be affiliated with the circle of the Master of the *Votiv* Panel of Sankt Lambrecht. His drawings are the earliest pieces of known date of the prevailing style of panel painting in Vienna in the first third of the 15th century represented by the circle of the Master of the *Votiv* Panel.

Main questions

In my study of the Budapest manuscript of *Concordantiae caritatis*, my interest was focused on how the manuscript was created. I was not only interested in the technical aspects but the questions that could reveal the circumstances and process of its creation. I was curious who Stephanus Lang, the *scriptor* of the codex was; how many painters participated in its illustration; how they divided the work among themselves; whether they worked separately, or knew their fellow painters’ work, as well; whether they knew an earlier illuminated manuscript of *Concordantiae caritatis*, and if so, to what extent they followed it or diverted from their model. I wanted to know where and how they learned to paint, where their stylistic orientation pointed to, what kind of models they used in their compositions, and how they were integrated into the local Viennese, Lower-Austrian tradition.

My pursuit of these topics has led to two major outcomes. First, it was made clear how the *corpus* of drawings preserved in the Budapest manuscript of *Concordantiae caritatis* contributes to our knowledge of the history of Viennese painting in the early 15th century, and changes the general picture that had been drawn of it before the codex was found. Second, the extraordinary richness and heterogeneity of the cycle of illuminations has made it possible to concretely analyze some more general problems concerning the nature and preconditions of painters’ creative activity in medieval times; such as the communication between masters/ workshops, the creativity of the artist in his relationship to the

model, or the way and extent he followed tradition in his choices of models, or made innovations instead.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Research findings

In the first thematic unit of my dissertation I wanted to introduce the creators of the Budapest manuscript of *Concordantiae caritatis*. I was able to identify its scriptor, Stephanus Lang, in Viennese sources as a councilor of the city of Vienna. On the basis of his biographical data and his work as a compiler, which was revealed by Christine Glassner, I could also paint a picture of the social and intellectual environment of the makers and the audience of the Budapest manuscript. As regards the illustrators, I was not able to rely on written sources; I had to start out from the manuscript itself. I have found that at least seven persons participated in the creation of the series of pictures. (The reason why there is still some ambiguity concerning the number of painters is that a group of the pictures that can be clearly separated from the other pictures, referred to as “the second group,” is itself embarrassingly heterogeneous; however, it is the work of the same hand by all probability.) Four of the illuminators were clearly closely related to one another; probably they belonged to the same workshop. The most interesting evidence of their close co-operation is that they took over some figures or even whole compositions of the “chief master,” whose formative solutions recur in the drawings of the “second group” and the “fourth hand.” This fact also reveals how the workshop operated.

In order to find the place of the Budapest manuscript in the family of *Concordantiae caritatis* manuscripts, I had to study its author, audience, spread and reception, and I had to measure up the extant group of manuscripts. Since other researchers have also addressed these questions before, and parallel with, my research, I have been able to rely on a substantial amount of scholarly work (especially Hedwig Munschek’s doctoral dissertation of 2000). Earlier, altogether 40 (33 non-illuminated and 7 illuminated) copies of the work had been identified. Owing to the continuous growth of Internet databases, I have

been able to find further 23 non-illuminated manuscripts, and identify the author of an early text reduction of *Concordantiae caritatis* as Konrad von Waldhausen, a reform preacher in Prague, known as a forerunner of Jan Hus. Yet, from the point of view of my research, illuminated copies have obviously played the most important role. It was relevant to compare the Budapest manuscript with the only earlier extant illuminated copy of *Concordantiae caritatis*, which was made in the presence of its author, Ulrich von Lilienfeld. The illuminated manuscript is still held in the library of the Cistercian Monastery of Lilienfeld (Stiftsbibliothek Lilienfeld Hs. 151.) I have found that the relationship of the illustrations of the Budapest manuscript with the drawings of the Lilienfeld codex is not uniform. While the compositions on ff. 1v-120v, the work of the “chief master,” and “group two,” are significantly different from those of the Lilienfeld codex with a few, albeit very important exceptions, the pictures on ff. 121v-271v, made by the “chief master” and the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th hand, clearly follow the pictorial solutions of the Lilienfeld manuscript. As regards other illuminated copies of *Concordantiae caritatis*, the Budapest manuscript is closest to a manuscript also made in Vienna in 1471, now preserved in Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale Nouv. Acq. Lat. 2129); the Budapest manuscript was its model. By comparing the illuminated copies of *Concordantiae caritatis* manuscripts, especially those of Lilienfeld, Budapest and Paris, I have been able to draw a picture of the around 120 year long history of change in the cycle of illustrations. I have found that beside, and in spite of, changes in the style of the drawings, this story was also characterized by the changes as well as the permanence, and unexpectedly long-lasting vitality, of certain types of figures, compositions and iconographical solutions.

In order to explore the relationship of the Budapest manuscript with the local, i.e. Viennese/Lower-Austrian, art, I have chosen the activity of the „chief master” as a starting point. He obviously belonged to the circle of the Master of

the *Votiv* Panel of Sankt Lambrecht. The works of this circle include panel paintings, stained glass windows, manuscripts and drawings, whose style was the prevailing style of panel painting in Vienna in 1410-1435. Two things have become clear after having explored the relatively large number of a variety of works belonging to different genres yet clearly related to one another closely in their style represented by the recurrent use of certain types of figures and compositions. First, we do not know of any piece of work that could be attributed to the „chief master” of the Budapest manuscript without any doubt, apart from the ones in the Budapest manuscript itself. Second, the drawings of the „chief master” are the earliest pieces of the whole circle whose date can be clearly established. Since the earliest emergence of the style characteristic of the circle of the Master of the *Votiv* Panel of Sankt Lambrecht is detectable in the Budapest manuscript, the drawings of its „chief master” appeared to be without antecedents; or, in other words, I had to search for their archetypes in a broader context. I could not confirm the assumption of Jörg Oberhaidacher, who claimed that the style of the „chief master” was influenced by an itinerant French painter, referred to as the master of Heiligenkreuz. I have found the roots of the style of the „chief master” in the Franco-Flemish art of the 1370s. While the drawings of the „chief master” served as a starting point for the study of the sources of the style of the circle of the Master of the *Votiv* Panel of Sankt Lambrecht and the interrelationship between masters and their works belonging to this circle, the pieces of art that could be related to those of the „chief master” have proved to be interesting mainly in respect of how certain compositions found followers and then changed, i.e. how the style itself evolved. I have found some of the illustrations of a *Historienbibel*, found separately in different collections, to be closest to the drawing of the „chief master.” These pictures are supposed to have been made a little before 1430. I have also raised the possibility that their master is the same.

It was not possible to cover up the concrete stylistic connections of the other masters who drew the pictures of the cycle of illustrations of the Budapest manuscript. However, it can be claimed without doubt that the drawings of the „second group” were made by masters of Bohemian background. Although there are a great number of Viennese artworks of Bohemian orientation from the years around 1400, I have not found any particular work that was directly related to the drawings of the „second group.”

Whereas the antecedents of the different styles of the illustrations of the Budapest manuscript of *Concordantiae caritatis* could not be found in the local tradition, some compositions of the „chief master,” „the second group” and the „fourth hand” could be integrated into the contemporary Viennese/Lower Austrian art. I found the models of the illustrations in the solutions developed (in the knowledge of former Italian compositions) by French and Bohemian artists by the end of the 14th century that were already known in Vienna/Lower Austria, too, at the time of the making of the Budapest manuscript.

To conclude, I have found the recording of the mobility of styles and artists, the migration of motifs, the communication between artists through their work, of utmost interest. They have provided concrete examples of how a „Gesamteuropäische Kunstsprache” (Otto Pächt) had developed by the 1400s. Moreover, by the multi-layered examination of the transfer of motifs between drawings of different masters in the Budapest manuscript, compositional models from the Lilienfeld manuscript of *Concordantiae caritatis*, and other antecedents found in near-contemporary art, I have been able to capture the mechanism of picture-making in late medieval times and the creativity of the artists in their characteristic method of disassembling available models and reassembling them in a new composition.

My publications related to the topic

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