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# Vain and Transitory Love: Mural Paintings in the Žirovnice Chamber and Mural Decoration in Late Gothic Secular Interiors\*

*To the memory of Josef Krása*

The colour green plays a major role in the decoration of late Gothic secular interiors. The dominance of this colour, appearing mainly in all sorts of floral ornamentation, has led to the use of the term 'green chamber' in Czech art history to denote a certain type of secular mural painting. The term has spread since it was used in an article written in 1964 by the young art historian Josef Krása.<sup>1</sup> He connected several known sites of late medieval secular mural painting into a single category focusing on their similar choice of themes in addition to the similar use of colour. In the 'green chambers', that is secular halls characterised by leafwork and the colour green, Krása included other sites such as murals in the Red Bastion at Švihov Castle, in which green is less predominant but which 'adhere thematically', as he put it, to the other murals. In this way the term, originally stemming from historical sources, became an art-historical concept also linked to the meaning of the murals themselves. On the other hand, sources relating to the extant rooms more likely reveal that the term originally and simply reflected the prevailing colour scheme of the room with no regard to the function or the theme.<sup>2</sup>

However, this does not mean that Krása's concept is artificial and inappropriate. On the contrary, the thematic similarities which he noticed in his article were later confirmed by the following research, even at newly-found sites which Krása could not have known about in 1964. An extensive collection of secular paintings, listed under the title 'green chamber', was published by Vratislav Nejedlý and there are also Polish and Slovak scholars allied with the concept.<sup>3</sup> In the neighbouring and artistically-similar German milieu, however, the concept of the 'green chamber' does not really exist with the same meaning that Krása applied to it. Although the use of

floral decoration ('*Rankenmalerei*') has not gone unnoticed in the German art-historical literature, it has usually been studied as a formal phenomenon, apart from the function of the room and the meaning of the mural. Above all it has also included sacred spaces, which are traditionally excluded from the Czech meaning of the concept 'green chamber'.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Krása's concept has recently been questioned in Czech art history.<sup>5</sup> We can certainly agree that the term 'green chamber' is somewhat limiting in this sense and also arbitrary. However, the question which once interested Krása remains: What is behind this thematic homogeneity, and what caused it to arise?

In the following text, I will try to answer this question while at the same time avoiding somewhat vague concepts such as knight culture, aristocratic representation or the relationship of late medieval man to nature. None of these concepts can explain the striking resemblance between the extant sites in both the Czech Republic and abroad, nor do they reveal the reasons why certain scenes were depicted. In my proposed interpretation model, I will rely on detailed analyses of paintings which Josef Krása devoted significant attention to in 1964, those found in the 'green chamber' at Žirovnice Chateau.<sup>6</sup>

## The Green Chamber at Žirovnice

The existence of the mural in Žirovnice is connected to the remarkable figure Vencelík of Vrchoviště, who bought the castle from the squires of Lukavec. It was one of the important steps in his great career. Vencelík and his relatives, the lords of Vrchoviště, became rich thanks to the mining business in Kutná Hora. They were

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1 / **Žirovnice Castle, green chamber**, 1490–1500  
view from the south-west corner

Photo: Šárka Kolářová



2 / **Hunt**, 1490–1500  
mural painting  
Žirovnice Castle, green chamber, west wall

Photo: Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague — Vlado Bohdan

a bourgeois family belonging to the edge of the lower nobility, the use of their coat of arms with a unicorn probably dates to the early 15th century.<sup>7</sup> However, their participation in urban trades prevented them from entering the ranks of the higher nobility despite their growing wealth. It was only through Vencelík's purchase of Žirovnice that the family had their estate registered in the Land Rolls and, in 1492 when Emperor Friedrich III recognized them with an Imperial Privilege, they achieved the status of Imperial barons. They tried to apply

their newly gained status in Bohemia where they applied to enter the higher nobility. It seems from the surviving sources that it was Vencelík, being the oldest of the four brothers, who played a leading role in pursuit of these costly ambitions.<sup>8</sup> In the meantime Žirovnice became the centre of Vencelík's quickly developing estate. In 1493 Vencelík enlarged his holdings through the purchase of Třešť and Stráž nad Nežárkou in 1503. Nevertheless, the meteoric rise of the lords of Vrchoviště reached its limits when the Czech states refused their admittance



to the ranks of the highest nobility and the lords of Vrchoviště lost the base of their wealth due to changes in Kutná Hora and the decline of local mining. Thus with Vencelík's death in the mid-1510s the period of great expansion of the family, represented also by his brother Michal of Vrchoviště and his uncle Jan of Vrchoviště, called Smíšek, came to an end.<sup>9</sup> The decline of the family's power was swift. Shortly after the death of Vencelík's son, Petr, Žirovnice, encumbered in debts, was sold to the lords of Gutštejn in 1544.

Luckily, later additions have not changed Žirovnice fundamentally and in this way the castle stands as a testimony to the former rise of the mining businessman to the nobility. The late Gothic residence, modern for its time, is unique mostly for its mural painting decoration. Despite a period of deterioration in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the castle still contains several sections of murals. The surviving remnants suggest that the murals were even used in the exterior decoration of the chateau — in addition to the use of illusive geometric painting, the courtyard of the castle was also decorated with figurative representations of hunting motifs, the figure of St Christopher and other scenes of a narrative nature. Inside the castle, on the first floor, one encounters three completely painted rooms. These are the castle chapel with murals dating to 1490 according to an inscription, the green chamber, and a sort of foyer (called the knight's hall) connecting it with both the chapel and the wooden gallery overlooking the courtyard. Judging from the heraldic decoration and the slightly dif-

ferent stylistic rendering, the murals were not completed together, but were painted over time. Nevertheless, they are presumably the works of one painting workshop.<sup>10</sup>

Nowadays the term green chamber refers to the hall in the southern wing of the castle, however, there is no evidence that the name is historical. The barrel-vaulted room could be entered through three separate doors, which is clear from the preserved painting decoration. The portals led to the north into the foyer, to the east into a chamber connected to the castle chapel and finally to the west into the western wing of the castle, which was significantly rebuilt later. At the time, the room was lit by a window on the south wall, and the painting decoration reached to the window jamb. The way the paintings on the south wall are interrupted shows that the second window, facing west, was a later addition.

The painting's dominant feature is seen in the opposition of extensive scenes on the western and eastern sides, which are the only larger non-curved surfaces. On the west side the unknown painters depicted a tournament with two knights locked in combat in front of a grandstand with spectators, while on the east side the painters developed a large hunting scene with a number of figures and prey — deer, wild boars and hares. The eastern entrance to the room is decorated by illusory painted architecture with four coats of arms.<sup>11</sup> In the remaining space in the corner, the painters managed to include the figure of a jester with a drum accompanied by a trio of animals — a rabbit playing a bagpipe, a dog and a cat. The layout of the paintings on the north wall



3 / **The Judgement of Paris**, 1490–1500

mural painting  
Žirovnice Castle, green  
chamber, north wall

Photo: Institute of Art History  
of the Czech Academy of Sciences,  
Prague — Vlado Bohdan



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was influenced by the curvature of the wall merging into the arch of the vault as well as the placement of the entrance to the north foyer. This entrance is also accentuated with heraldic emblems, this time with a Moravian chequered eagle, mostly preserved only in the underdrawing. The emblem is held by two armour-clad heralds.<sup>12</sup> Towards the west the painting continues with the well-known view of Žirovnice and an assayers' workshop in the foreground, one of the oldest realistic depictions of a landscape in Bohemia. A smaller section of the wall towards the east is occupied by the Judgement of Paris, made after an engraving by the Master of the Banderoles, as Krása had already noticed.<sup>13</sup> The paintings on the south wall are in worse condition. On the eastern side, the hunting scene is followed by an enigmatic scene with two men, two women and two children, which Krása reluctantly linked to the Judgement of Solomon. The figurative scenes, broken by the window jamb, continue on the western part of the south wall. Apparently, they present a single scene with Judith carrying away the decapitated head of Holofernes on one side and the biblical city of Bethulia, identified by Holofernes' head impaled on a spear sticking out of a fortification, on the other side. However, the central part of the scene was lost when the new window was installed. It most likely presented the army of Israelites conquering the Babylonians, as seen in prints by Israhel van Meckenem.<sup>14</sup> Finally, in the original window jambs, there are two fragments on the opposing walls. One is a kissing couple and the second is an exemplary scene of An Old Woman Is Worse than the Devil.<sup>15</sup> The paintings in

the room are completed by an intertwined floral ornament in the vault and the typical strip with illusive textiles on the bottom sections, separating the figurative motifs from the floor.

But what is the key which brings all these single scenes into a complete whole? Josef Krása attempted to explain the images through a psychological portrait of Vencelík as a profiteer who strove to join the ranks of the nobility. However, throughout his text the psychological view shifts into a sort of sociological portrait of the whole class, who sought to flaunt their wealth through the use of painting — Krása was well aware that motifs similar to those in Žirovnice are found in the murals at other castles, particularly at Švihov and Blatná, which belonged to the long established families of the highest nobility, and thus they can hardly be described as expressions of an ambitious profiteer's mentality. Krása tried to deal with the scenes of the Judgement of Paris, Judith and Holofernes, and the presumed Judgement of Solomon in such a way that he described the two latter works as an allegory of bravery and justice and placed them in opposition to the unfortunate Judgement of Paris. Nevertheless, it seems he was not satisfied with the results for when he returned to the issue of the Žirovnice green chamber he offered other possible interpretations, such as an alchemical explanation of the Judgement of Paris.<sup>16</sup> In the interpretation of allegorical oppositions, the scene of An Old Woman Is Worse than the Devil, which Krása did not recognize in his first article, plays a role of marginal satire.



4 / **Master of the Banderoles, The Judgement of Paris**, 1460–1475 engraving, 23.5 × 31.8 cm  
Albertina, Wien  
Photo: Albertina, Wien





### The Power of Women and the Allegory of Love

However, in the late Middle Ages, the Book of Judith in the Bible was not understood only as an allegory of bravery. It often took on a radically different meaning when interpreted within the context of criticism of the excessive power of women over men (*'Weibermacht'*). I believe that this particular concept is one of the fundamental principles on which the decoration of the green chamber in Žirovnice is based. Patriarchal medieval society was literally obsessed with the fear of a confusion of the roles between traditionally dominant men and subordinate women. Instead of gender equality the ideal was a subordinate harmony which required both sexes to develop their 'natures' — bravery and activities connected to rational judgement in men and passivity, tenderness, and strict maintenance of chastity and marital fidelity in women. From this point of view, amorous passion, though it was celebrated as a knightly ideal, was seen as dangerous because it could break everyday boundaries and rules. Thus, the figure of a man in love, who by succumbing to his emotions brings disharmony to social relations, became an integral element of the medieval mentality. A number of stories are based on this principle, beginning with Tristan and Lancelot as the leading knights of the legends of Arthur and ending with Paris and Troilus from the Romance of Troy. Beginning in the 13th century at the latest, this concept was also clearly apparent in the art of the time and gradually became canonized iconography.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the most typical image is that of the philosopher Aristotle being seduced and saddled like a horse by Phyllis, Alexander's lover. However, other representations are found within this context: Delilah cutting Samson's hair, the ageing Solomon convinced by young women to perform idolatry, Virgil left by his lover hanging in a basket to be ridiculed by all of Rome, or precisely the story of Holofernes who literally lost his head for the charms of Judith.

Individual images illustrating the erotic power of women are often found in larger works connected with this motif. It is a phenomenon common throughout Europe. Scenes of powerful women decorate French ivory caskets, German tapestries and *minnekästchen*,

#### 5 / Judith with the Head of Holofernes, 1490–1500

mural painting

Žirovnice Castle, green chamber, south wall

Photo: Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague — Vlado Bohdan

#### 6 / An Old Woman Is Worse than the Devil, 1490–1500

mural painting

Žirovnice Castle, green chamber, east side of the eastern window

Photo: Ondřej Faktor

#### 7 / Pair of Lovers, 1490–1500

mural painting

Žirovnice Castle, green chamber, west side of the eastern window

Photo: Jan Dienstbier



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8 / **Praise of Matrimonial Conception** (?), 1490–1500  
mural painting  
Žirovnice Castle, green chamber, south wall  
Photo: Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague — Vlado Bohdan

Italian marriage chests called *forzieri* (also *cassone* in the literature), small wedding boxes (*forzerini*), trays for women in childbed (*deschi da parto*), as well as later majolica ceramics. There are a number of other objects as well, from figurative tiles through cookie and gingerbread moulds to various board games. These were often objects given as wedding gifts and became a sort of a physical expression of the marriage.<sup>18</sup> In this sense we find this topic in murals, e.g. scenes from the Haus zur Kunkel in

Constance where representations of men at the mercy of powerful heroines were depicted in medallions, one after another, on one of the walls in the house.<sup>19</sup>

In Žirovnice the individual scenes are not tied so closely as in the Haus zur Kunkel (moreover, even there the scenes were portrayed on only one of the painted walls while the whole decoration of the house was more complex) but rather freely. Nevertheless, the interconnection of the concept of the power of women and courtly



9 / **Praise of Matrimonial Conception**, 1480–1490  
mural painting  
Innsbruck, Ferdinandeum — formerly from house Rosengasse 6 in Hall  
Photo: Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck



love, or more precisely *minne*, is clearly apparent.<sup>20</sup> The same logic in classifying the scenes is found as early as the 13th century on ivory boxes, where stories demonstrating the power of women over men appear together with other scenes referring to the power of love in general — e.g. sieges of love castles, knights liberating ladies from the clutches of wild men or the story of Pyramus and Thisbe.<sup>21</sup> In this sense, depictions of the story of Judith, the Judgement of Paris, the exemplum about the old woman and the devil and also the scene which Krása connected to the Judgement of Solomon, all come together in a unified whole at Žirovnice.

The concept of the power of love is mainly shown in the Judgement of Paris, and it is emphasized by the erotic rendering of the scene. The scene corresponds with the most popular version of the story at the time, the Trojan Chronicle. Here Mercury appears to Paris in a dream, bringing him goddesses so he can judge which is the most beautiful and award her with an apple. At first Paris refuses, saying ‘if only the goddesses would appear before me naked, so that I, seeing all their limbs, could

*judge them with justice.*<sup>22</sup> In his request, he establishes a value system based on physical beauty, and in this way he will choose what the goddesses offer him — Juno promises power, Palas wisdom and Venus love.<sup>23</sup> As with Hercules’ choice between virtue and pleasure, Paris must also make a fateful choice, although the consequences reach further — they not only concern his own fate but also the fate of his city. Love not only wins over Holofernes but also over the unfortunate Paris, whose choice leads to the destruction of Troy. Earthly love (*amor*, *minne*) was often depicted in both literature and fine art as an important value corresponding with the life role of the nobleman but also leading to destruction in many cases. In the actual Trojan Chronicle this storyline is repeated several times: for example Helena ultimately causes the downfall of Paris, as does Briseis of Troilus and Polyxena of Achilles.<sup>24</sup> ‘This is what happens to zealous lovers, they are so blinded by love, they don’t regret losing honour and indulging in fights, the only thing they care about is that their lovers are fond of them, forgetting all that is good.’ writes the author of the Czech

10 / **Hunt (detail)**, 1490–1500

mural painting

Žirovnice Castle, green chamber, east wall

Photo: Jan Dienstbier





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version of the Trojan Chronicle in connection to the fate of amorous Achilles.<sup>25</sup>

A variation on the theme of love and its constant demise is also presented in the exemplum *An Old Woman Is Worse than the Devil* depicted at Žirovnice in the window jamb. The story to which it refers, often connected somewhat incorrectly to a fairy tale of Slavic origin in the Czech literature, relates to love as well.<sup>26</sup> The devil, at first unsuccessful, wants to break up the marriage of two young lovers and in desperation hires an old woman, described as an old whore, to help him. Referring to her experience the woman persuades the man that his wife wants to kill him. Then she provokes the young woman's suspicions that her husband is planning to leave her for someone else. She tells her she should cut his hair while he is sleeping in order to prepare a love potion. When the unfortunate young lady leans over her lover with a knife to cut off his hair, he awakes. Frightened and suspicious from the influence of the old woman, he kills his wife, thus fulfilling the devil's wish. The devil's disgust (or perhaps fear?) of the old woman is shown by the way

he gives her the promised reward, a pair of shoes, on a stick.<sup>27</sup> However, the scene at Žirovnice contains another important section, a fragment of a scene which decorated the wall directly across from the image with the old lady. The fragments reveal that it depicted a pair of kissing lovers accompanied by speech scrolls, which are empty today. Although it is impossible to define the content of this scene due to the missing sections (was it part of the previous story with the old woman or was it rendered separately?), the contrast with the decoration on the window jamb on the opposing wall cannot be denied. The placement could not be random, as it accentuates the story of the old woman.

In my opinion, the fourth scene which up to now has been thought to represent the Judgement of Solomon can also be linked to these three representations that are all variations on the impermanence of love. The scene clearly does not represent the Judgement of Solomon. It shows four figures — two men, one older, the other younger, and two women accompanying two children. The two children seem to be quite alive and the younger man is not hierar-

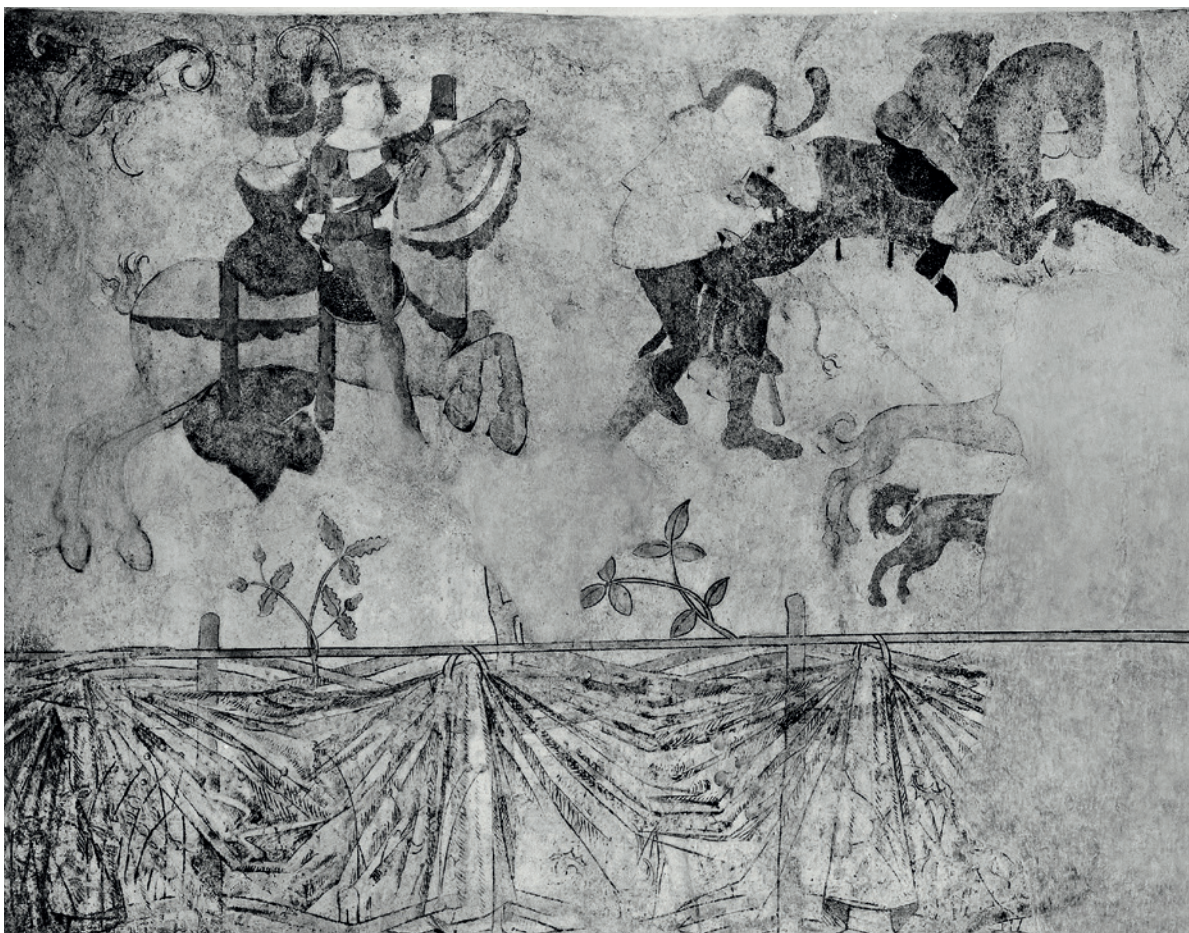
11 / **Hunt (detail)**, 1490–1500

mural painting

Cheb (Eger), Gabler's House no. 507, chamber on the first floor

National Heritage Institute, Directorate-General, Prague

Photo: National Heritage Institute, Directorate-General, Prague — Čestmír Číla





chically distinguished from the older man, who has been identified with King Solomon despite the absence of any attributes of royal power. Moreover, the scene lacks any other evidence that would support the assumed biblical iconography (e.g. a sword for cleaving the live baby in two or the throne of Solomon). On the contrary, a large part of the composition is taken up by lengthy speech scrolls, which are unfortunately empty now. They clearly served to identify the scene and without them it is almost impossible to confirm if any of the suggested interpretations correspond with the original intention. Nevertheless, one can compare this scene with similar scenes elsewhere. It is my view that the enigmatic scene in Žirovnice closely resembles a mural transfer in the Ferdinandeum, which once adorned a house in the Tyrolean town of Hall.<sup>28</sup>

The suspected scene originates from a late painted chamber inside one of Hall's most exquisite burgher houses — the original decoration included a depiction of seated naked woman, the Judgement of Solomon and other images. Among them there was a scene with two men, two women and two children, very similar to the scene in Žirovnice, although there are also some differences. In Hall the children were naked playing with hobby horses and both men approach the scene from the left. The meaning of the Hall painting is known due to the presence of an inscription, partially damaged, representing a conversation between the young man and one of the women. The man asks how is it that the children have such a noble appearance, to which the woman replies that the children are theirs (i.e. the women's) and their men's (?). Originally

she probably added something more about the nature of the parentage, but some words are lost in this part of the inscription and it is only comprehensible that *'everything comes from a right custom/marriage'*. The scene has been interpreted as an allegory of marriage and its legitimacy. The scenes in Hall and Žirovnice are similar and perhaps even identical in their meaning. A clear distinction between the ages of both men and the hand of the younger man stretched to the hip of the first woman while the second woman and the older man are more distant suggest that in Žirovnice, there was probably some variation on the popular theme of the unequal couple or the difference between youth and old age. Regardless, such a meaning would fit well with the proposed scheme referring to variable and transient love.

### Genre Painting as an Allegory of Transience

But how do the genre scenes of the tournament, the hunt and the view of Žirovnice fit into the overall composition? Let us first focus on the representation of the hunt. In another article of mine I drew attention to the significance of so-called 'commentary fools', whose presence pointing to the possible inversion of the meanings of the presented story.<sup>29</sup> This is the way we should interpret the jester with a drum who is related to the hunting scene from behind the door. Not only the jester represents an invasion of the absurd, the world turned upside-down, but also the small figure of a hare with a bagpipe directly below him and the scene with a dog and a cat, who are



12 / **A Hare, a Dog and a Cat**,  
1490–1500  
mural painting  
Žirovnice Castle, green  
chamber, east wall  
Photo: Jan Dienstbier



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depicted standing quietly side by side. In addition to the obvious absurdity of an animal with a musical instrument one should also remember the erotic significance of hares and bagpipes.<sup>30</sup> According to natural behaviour patterns, the pairing of a dog with a cat was considered as an antagonistic relationship and even gave rise to the proverb 'to get along like cats and dogs'.<sup>31</sup> Even in Bohemian art, their eternal struggle has a long pictorial tradition.<sup>32</sup> Thus their harmonious relationship is an aberration and in visual art it usually takes on the allegorical significance of the world turned upside down. An example is an anonymous Flemish painting of a kitchen with three women from the early 17th century deposited in the Musée du Berry in Bourges. The key to the parable is seen in the depiction of a dog and a cat sitting harmoniously side by side in the foreground, accompanied by satirical wedding coats of arms, weird assemblages of various gnawed bones. The explication in the background of the painting clearly reads: 'A dog, a cat and a mouse all

three living in one house and three brother's wives are seldom without strife'.<sup>33</sup>

In Žirovnice, the inversion of meaning represented by the fool, the hare and the dog with the cat does not seem to relate to the decoration of the lintel but directly to the adjoining hunting scene. Several abnormalities in the hunting scene make this clear. There is another fool who basically parodies the actions of the hunters first by mimicking their gestures — like them he raises his arm to drive the dogs and the hunters on the chase — and second, instead of a dog, he leads on a leash the same kind of wild boar that the hunters are struggling with nearby. Another suggestion that the hunting scene is more than just a mere genre painting representing the fact that Vencelík could afford to go hunting can be seen in a scene taking place in the upper right corner of the work. It shows a couple, an older man and a woman who is grabbing rudely for the cup of her companion. In medieval society, such a depiction could not be understood in any

13 / **A dog, a cat and a mouse all three living in one house and three brother's wives are seldom without strife**, early 17th century oil on panel  
Bourges, Musée du Berry  
Photo: Musée du Berry





other way than as a switching of gender roles. According to traditional morality, women were supposed to drink modestly or not at all, as Jan Hus once suggested.<sup>34</sup> The contemporaneous satire *Franta's Law* (*Frantova práva*) drew on this concept when ordering women from the 'guild of easy crafts' to drink carelessly and as much as possible, even the whole day in order to deprive their men of money.<sup>35</sup> In the hunting scene, the older couple fighting for the drink are clearly located across from the two lovers riding together on a horse, a young man with a falcon and a girl sitting behind him (today almost completely destroyed due to a crack in the wall). Unlike the older couple this is a typical image of harmonious *minne*, known to us from a number of analogies abroad: from mural paintings like those at the castle Lohr am Main, Hausbuch, and also Albrecht Dürer's drawings from 1496 where the meaning of the scene is underscored by the presence of a thistle, a traditional symbol of fidelity, which Dürer also used in his self-portrait.<sup>36</sup> The fact that the pair riding together on one horse is a symbol of a relationship between lovers (further examples can be identified at a number of sites) transforms the hunting scene into an allegory. For example, there is a South German tapestry in which a couple of lovers on horseback chase an escaping deer. The speech scroll explains that the fervour of the hunt symbolizes the search for ideal harmony between the two lovers riding together on one horse — '*I hunt for fidelity and if I find it I will never experience anything better.*'<sup>37</sup> Also falconry has always played a similar symbolic role, whether the falcon is held by a man or a woman.<sup>38</sup>

However, it was not only the hunting of deer or falconry which was associated with the theme of love in the Middle Ages, but also a number of other hunting motifs. Scenes in which hunting dogs tear apart wild boars, hares and bears were commonly applied in decorations on wedding presents which were understood as symbolic expressions of love.<sup>39</sup> This iconography probably stems from Ovid's poetry but his concept was significantly expanded during the Middle Ages.<sup>40</sup> Cruelty and violence resonated with the contemporary conception of love, which often accentuated the suffering of those in love. In addition to the well-known symbol of a heart pierced by an arrow, there were many other representations of tortured hearts. The medieval lovers tear out their hearts and give them as presents, or their organs are subjected to various acts of torture, the torturers being almost exclusively women. From the active hunter, medieval man becomes the passive hunted game, a deer shot in the side with an arrow, as Petrarch once wrote.<sup>41</sup> The trapped lover is left to complain about his painful fate and beg for mercy, which can only be granted by his beloved through her reciprocated love and fidelity.

The painting at Žirovnice works with all of these meanings but it also subversively undermines them revealing the pitiful insufficiency of love and its impermanence brought by old age. In addition to other images in the room where this motif is apparent, the chased

deer itself becomes a symbol of transience. One French tapestry from the very end of the 15th century even compares the life of man to a deer hunt. While at first the deer escapes easily, later it is chased by age and diseases and is killed.<sup>42</sup> It is not necessary to assume that the painters reflected on that iconography. The image of a fleeing deer served generally as a symbol of transience and volatility. It was rooted so deeply and known quite widely that it is encountered quite often.<sup>43</sup>

In Žirovnice, the hunt is also adjoining to the scene of the Judgement of Paris which is perhaps not incidental. As related in the Trojan Chronicle, Paris encountered the goddesses in a dream after he had become lost during a hunt and fallen asleep.<sup>44</sup> This fact is sometimes even reflected in depictions of the Judgement of Paris, e.g. it explains the minute figures of a hunter, an escaping deer and other wild animals appearing in the background of two Judgement of Paris tapestries from the Rhineland.<sup>45</sup> Thus it is likely that both motifs appear at Žirovnice in close proximity intentionally to show that the futile chase becomes a precursor to the hero's subsequent bad decisions.<sup>46</sup>

Just as the hunting scene is not a neutral representation of aristocratic society enjoying its leisure time, the same is true of the tournament scene on the opposing wall. Beginning with ivory caskets from the 13th century, a strong tradition firmly connects tournaments with the concept of courtly love. Tournaments were conceived as a test of the knight's ability played out before women in the stands and although this ideal was undoubtedly quite different from daily reality, it still played an important role in late medieval society. Even high-ranking noblemen and kings took part in tournaments and victory served as a spectacular demonstration in front of their chosen one, be it a wife or another lady in favour.<sup>47</sup> During the tournaments, women had their place at the scaffold from where they would watch the contest of the fighters clad in armour. This function of tournaments is confirmed by the use of the devices and emblems of the participating knights, sometimes depicted in murals, but mostly copied in tournament books.<sup>48</sup> In their devices, the knights often demonstrate their dedication to *minne* and admit they are trapped in a folly of love. Successively, the vanity of the tournament was often ridiculed and the tournament itself was represented as a somewhat foolish enterprise in contemporary art and literature.<sup>49</sup>

The representation of the tournament at Žirovnice is rendered rather conventionally. The battle of the two knights is observed by spectators on a scaffold composed mostly of ladies and the only somewhat unusual aspect is the presence of other jester-musicians farther on. On the other hand, two jesters accompanying the knights during the fight appear in representations of tournaments quite often. Jester-squires (or jester-heralds?) dressed in the colours of their masters began to appear sometime in the mid-15th century. The significance of this attire is not quite clear, it would probably have both



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14 / **View of Žirovnice Castle**, 1490–1500  
mural painting  
Žirovnice Castle, green chamber, north wall  
Photo: Ondřej Faktor



15 / **Erhard Schoen, The Vain and Transitory Joys of this World**, 1534  
woodcut, 16.7 cm × 28.3 cm  
The British Museum, London  
Photo © Trustees of the British Museum





16 / Albrecht Dürer,  
**The Pleasures of  
the World**, c. 1496

drawing, 21.1 cm × 33 cm  
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum  
Reproduction: Friedrich Winkler,  
Die Zeichnungen Albrechts  
Dürer, volume I, Berlin 1936

encouraged their master and provoked his opponent. They are also depicted as they catch the falling knights or dance to amuse the audience before the tournament.<sup>50</sup> The caparisons of the knights' horses at Žirovnice lack more complex devices or clearer references as found, for example, in the hall at Blatná, however, we should not underestimate the significance of an emblem portrayed on the crest worn by one of the knights — antlers. Antlers were the charge of Vencelík's wife, as is documented by her coats of arms in the chapel and at its entrance. Thus, the tournament scene at Žirovnice could have even represented an actual event important for the donor.<sup>51</sup>

The last scene in the green chamber which I have not focused on in detail yet is the remarkable view of the chateau. Unlike other early examples of realistic landscapes, e.g. the scene of St George fighting the dragon in the castle chapel at Švihov or in the Lamentation of Christ in the Franciscan monastery in Kadaň, the building itself is the main theme of the painting, the accompanying religious story is missing. The existing literature notes the realistic rendering of the painting, which reproduces many details of the chateau, adjacent town, and the assayer's workshop in the foreground. Particularly the unusual presence of the workshop is a reference to Vencelík's mining enterprise, which did not end even after being relocated to Žirovnice.<sup>52</sup>

However, could the view of the castle contain a different meaning apart from simply demonstrating Vencelík's wealth? An interesting comparison in this regard is a work of art from a slightly later time period than the paintings in Žirovnice, a print by the Nuremberg engraver Erhart Schoen illustrating a poem by Hans Sachs entitled '*Die eytel vergencklich freud unnd wollust dieser*

*welt*'. The woodcut which corresponds closely to Sachs' text represents an enclosed garden with a small castle in the middle with all sorts of entertainment popular among aristocratic society taking place around it. We can see a hunt, a tournament, a circle dance, fishing, a bird hunt, wrestlers and a happy group of men and women drinking. Sachs' text explains that it depicts the garden of Mrs Bliss ('*Wollust*'). The poet meets Mrs Bliss in a dream and she shows him the beauty of the garden and the various entertainments taking place — '*there was every earthly joy there, everything that the heart desires*'.<sup>53</sup> The poet is broken-hearted when he suddenly awakes and realizes that the dream about pleasures '*disappeared like foam on the water*'.<sup>54</sup> Sachs uses this abrupt shift to illustrate his moralizing sentiment that this is precisely the same way all the pleasures we encounter in the world vanish away. He says they are nothing more than a shadow on the wall and therefore, after the example of Solomon, it is necessary to turn one's mind towards God and the pleasures of Heaven. This representation of the courtly pleasures in connection with the presentation of a castle could help to explain the interrelationship of the scenes in Žirovnice.

However, the painters of the green chamber in Žirovnice could not have known of Sachs' poem or Schoen's woodcut from 1534 as the paintings were probably produced in the 1490s. Nevertheless, a certain connection is not impossible as Sachs' and Schoen's conception was far from original. A similar motif is shown in a drawing by Albrecht Dürer later entitled *The Pleasures of the World*, which he created most likely sometime between 1495–1497.<sup>55</sup> As mentioned in the preceding literature, the drawing is markedly similar to Schoen's rendering.<sup>56</sup> In front of a large city or castle a tournament



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and other festivities are taking place: fishing, a steam bath, lovers strolling. A merry company feasts seated in the grass as is common in older gardens of love while two women provide the scene with a comic tone pulling one of the men away by his legs. Nevertheless, there are disturbing moments in the drawing, such as a skeleton in the lower right corner who reaches for the strolling lovers and who has only attracted the attention of a nearby dog. Dürer's drawing shows that the theme, later popularized by Schoen in print, already existed by the time the green chamber in Žirovnice was created. Therefore,

I believe that the idea of the impermanence of all earthly pleasures, an extremely popular theme at the end of the Middle Ages and best depicted in Schoen's woodcut, is really the key to the arrangement of the scenes at Žirovnice and the answer to the question why we find an unusual view of the castle at Žirovnice there.

When we consider the image of the castle in the context of the other paintings, the aristocratic pleasures and parables about the inconsistencies of love, it takes on a new symbolic meaning as a place of earthly pleasures, fragile and transitory, which the lord of the castle will



17 / **Wrestling**, beginning of the 16th century  
mural painting  
Švihov Castle, Red Bastion  
Photo: Aleš Mudra





18 / **Diana and Actaeon (?)**, 1460s  
mural painting  
Blatná Castle,  
Great Hall  
Photo: Institute of Art  
History of the Czech  
Academy of Sciences,  
Prague — Petr Zinke

have to abandon one day.<sup>57</sup> As with the 'genre' images of hunting and the tournament, the view takes on a moralizing, melancholic sentiment. The notion is supported by the symmetry between the depiction of three cities — Žirovnice, Troy, and Bethulia, for which the painters used the depiction of Troy on a print by the Master of the Banderoles as a model.<sup>58</sup> While the power of love brings salvation to Bethulia, it destroys Troy. Perhaps these two stories have a moralizing significance in connection to the family seat of the lords of Vrchoviště. Are they not meant to serve as a warning against losing their ancestral property through some shameful behaviour, beneath the dignity of the noble position of the family?

In any case, the individual scenes in the green chamber at Žirovnice appear to be strongly linked to each other and the whole work was not designed to merely entertain guests but also represented a sort of moral mirror. The paintings were meant to instruct visitors about the impermanence of love, to which men must yield to their own detriment.<sup>59</sup> In their melancholic spirit, the paintings present the pleasures of the life of knights during tournaments and hunts while simultaneously mocking its pompous self-importance. Indeed, the philosophic attitudes in line with the moral regulations of society did not prevent Vencelík from taking part in the pleasures of the hunt.<sup>60</sup> But the awareness of impermanence allowed him to reconcile this activity with the moral climate of the time, to show that it did not obsessively occupy the mind of the lord of the castle who could easily move from the green chamber through the foyer painted with the Passion of Christ directly to the castle chapel. Even the fact that the scene with Christ's suffering was separated by just one door from the moralizing presentation of pleasures

in the green chamber is no coincidence. A viewer coming into the palace from the wooden gallery in the inner courtyard passed the figure of St Christopher, a patron saint protecting travellers from sudden death, as well as another hunting scene, to enter the foyer with scenes from the Passion of Christ. Only then would he enter the green chamber itself with its depiction of transient love and vain earthly pleasures. The view of the castle thus actually plays a similar role as the other realistic landscapes in the paintings with sacred themes. They show that the soul is at play here and now, that the story of Christ and the other saints is not some distant tall tale, but one which remains urgently present.

### **Green Chambers and Other Secular Murals in Late Medieval Bohemia**

Indeed, the interpretive key which I have shown in detail in relation to the example of Žirovnice can be used for a number of other sites which Krása and others connected to the concept of green chambers. I will try to demonstrate this briefly through a number of examples in the following text.

Krásá already noticed the close links between the paintings in Žirovnice and the paintings in the Red Bastion at Švihov.<sup>61</sup> In my opinion, these links can be elaborated on further. The existing literature contains little interest in the inscriptions which appear in the window jambs.<sup>62</sup> The inscriptions written in humanistic capital letters are difficult to date, so far it has been thought that they did not come into being at the same time as the paintings but only in the second half of the 16th century. But in fact they could belong to the original layer of paintings — humanistic capitals were already in use



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at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries in Germany and the Švihov masters of Rýzmbek, connected to the Munich court of the Dukes of Wittelsbach, may have chosen this modern form. In any case, the inscriptions are done professionally and it should be noted that they relate to the power of time, the impermanence of love, with an added ironic comment about the power of money as well.

The first of the extant inscriptions proclaims: *'No love lasts unless it bears fruits. Everyone is valued by the gifts he possesses.'*<sup>63</sup> It is an excerpt from one of Aesop's fables in the edition by Walter of England, which narrates the sad story of an old dog — as long as the dog could hunt for game, his lord loved him. Finally, the dog could not perform due to old age, so the lord beat him mercilessly and chased him away. The excerpt at Švihov is the bitter complaint of the sad dog about transient earthly love.

The entries on the opposite wall are in the same spirit: *'New things are worthy, old ones become useless'* and the complaint, *'Time rules over everything.'*<sup>64</sup> Only a little further on is found a quotation from the Satyricon by Petronius relating to the power of money: *'Whoever has money, sails with a safe wind and directs fortune according to his own will. To make it short I say: Choose what you will with money at hand, and it will come. Jupiter himself is enclosed in the money chest.'*<sup>65</sup>

The claims about the fatal power of time link up remarkably well with what we have learned from Žirovnice and it supports the close connections between the figural scenes in both places. In addition to a significantly damaged Judgement of Paris we find scenes of aristocratic pleasures on the walls of the Red Bastion: there are two extant tournament scenes, a heavily damaged representation of some sort of ball and a couple of wrestlers. All these festivities also coincidentally appear in Schoen's engraving, while the connection between the Judgement of Paris and the tournament scenes point to Žirovnice. Whether the inscriptions are concurrent with the paintings or are from a slightly later period, they confirm that this was the way this set of scenes was understood in the 16th century — in a melancholic spirit as a parable about the transience of worldly pleasures.

The capriciousness of fate, primarily conceived in the context of the paintings as the problem of the inconsistency of love between men and women also appears in a later period. The decoration of the so-called Vojtěch's Hall of Pardubice chateau was carried out in 1532 by unknown painters in the spirit of the Renaissance stemming mostly from the art tradition of Saxony and the work of Lucas Cranach.<sup>66</sup> However, the content of the paintings and their message is not that different from Švihov or Žirovnice. Unfortunately, only one of the large scenes once dominating the hall is still extant, the other is only preserved in a small fragment and thus remains unidentified. The large image on the north wall depicts stories from the life of Samson, dominated by a large scene of Delilah cutting Samson's hair. The central scene stands

in contrast to the miniature scenes of Samson's miraculous victories. The message the scene offers to us, namely that out of all the enemies that the hero encountered, he was defeated by a woman, is supported by other scenes extant in the hall. The first is an image of capricious Fortune loosely based on contemporary prints, which is a superb expression of the eponymous motif. The subject is supported by an inscription preserved in a fragment beneath the feet of naked Fortune which is most likely supposed to read as follows: *'One who believes in Fortune is near his end.'*<sup>67</sup> Even the decoration of the window niche with Adam and Eve fits the concept — the original sin was often included among scenes in which men succumbed to women to their detriment.<sup>68</sup> The scene in the other window jamb presenting a man standing in front of a forked tree stretching his arm out to a naked woman is in exceptionally bad condition. For this reason, the scene, set in a wild forest landscape, is difficult to interpret, but it probably relates again to a negative conception of the unbridled nature of women which can lead a man to ruin.<sup>69</sup> As commonly found elsewhere, the murals included the heraldic gallery referring to the owner. The coats of arms in Pardubice show the genealogy of the commissioner, Vojtěch of Pernštejn.

This relatively narrow set of themes already appear in a number of older green chambers. In the knight hall of Blatná Castle painted in the 1460s or 1470s, we find a similar polarity as in Žirovnice.<sup>70</sup> There is a large scene of a tournament occupying almost the whole length of the room, while the opposite side is decorated by a hunt. A scene of Delilah cutting Samson's hair is situated beneath the tournament. Among the hunting scene, there is a naked nymph pointing a bow at a knight dressed in and behind them a deer being eviscerated by hunters. A little further on another woman is depicted in a similar pose as the naked nymph, this time with a smaller bow and dressed in rich clothes. Both men, a knight in armour threatened by a naked nymph and a nobleman threatened by a lady, hold out their arms in a gesture of helplessness. Due to limited space, I cannot go into further detail about the context of the complex decoration of the knight hall in Blatná. The scene with a naked nymph could be either a version of the story of Actaeon, which was well-known in Italy as an exemplary punishment for one's lust, or a relatively rare representation of a naked Frau Minne, as found in the German milieu.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, it is obvious that even in the knight hall at Blatná the main focus is on the concept of the power of women and physical love overturning the rules of patriarchal society associated with the hunt and the tournament.

The motif of the power of women over men and the transience of love had probably been used in Bohemia long before the decoration of the knight hall in Blatná. In this regard, I have recently pointed to the neglected mural paintings of Dívce tower, dating most likely from the first decade of the 15th century.<sup>72</sup> As a clear response to the Bible of Wenceslas IV the painting shows a young





19 / **Woman with Men Wearing Collars**, c. 1400

mural painting  
Český Krumlov, Minorite Monastery

Photo: Jan Dienstbier

man locked in a pillory shaped as a minuscule letter 'a'. The youngster attended by a woman in the picture is probably the owner of the manor house, Václav of Divice, known as Skrofa. The wife is Anna Beer, whom he married in 1404. Regarding the theme of the power of women, the scene in Divice was not unique at the time. Another neglected mural with a similar theme is in a house which later became part of the joined Minorite and Poor Clares monastery in Český Krumlov.<sup>73</sup> The damaged painting seems to depict a woman standing on a sort of carriage pulled by young men harnessed in yokes.<sup>74</sup>

Murals in the Silesian village of Siedlęcín, found in the territory of the Jawor principality, which slightly later became a part of the Bohemian Crown, were created even earlier, before the mid-14th century. The clearly unfinished painted cycle focuses on the story of Lancelot, but also depicts a large figure of St Christopher and a moral about love. This scene consists of two pairs of living lovers and then, beneath them, two pairs of dead lovers, who, according to the partially extant German inscription represented a kind of *memento mori* morality.<sup>75</sup>

In addition to Žirovnice, Blatná, Divice, and Český Krumlov, similar content is noticeable in the depiction of a tournament in Nový Hrad in Jímlín from the 1480s or 1490s.<sup>76</sup> The tournament is reduced to a depiction of two knights charging each other, their squires dressed in common jester costumes like in Žirovnice, and a woman. She is not sitting on a scaffold as in other representations but stands at the same level as the struggling knights, just behind their crossed lances. The common idea of amorous folly and aspirations takes on a new dimension at Nový Hrad and the depiction confirms that tournaments were understood as contests over women.

The linking of aristocratic pleasures with the concept of *minne* is not only found within complicated sets of scenes but even in murals consisting of only one scene as is the case with the Gabler House in Cheb. There, the whole wall on the second floor is covered by a stag hunt.<sup>77</sup> The mural deserves mention due to the fact that, again, there are two lovers riding on one horse. It is likely that the detail has a similar allegorical importance as in

the other extant examples as found in Lohr am Main, Žirovnice, or various German tapestries.

### Secular Murals and Applied Art between Italy and Germany

The above-described principle for the structuring of secular motifs can certainly be found in a number of sites outside of Bohemia. In Italy, we find the motif of the power of women together with hunting scenes as early as the second half of the 14th century. For example murals in Palazzo Galanetti in Cole di Val d'Elsa in Tuscany combine heraldic representations and scenes such as Aristotle and Phyllis, a hunting scene, the story of Saladin, and a representation of a wedding.<sup>78</sup> In northern Italy, more precisely in Piedmont at Issogne Castle, one finds a parallel depiction of the Judgement of Paris and hunting scenes, which do not lack some moralizing or theological significance.<sup>79</sup> The prior Georges de Challant-Varey, who inherited Issogne as the guardian of his underage relatives, gradually transformed the castle into a comfortable and representative seat with extensive decoration before his death in 1509.

Among other things, the decoration refers to a garden of love, which is not only represented in the paintings on the walls, but also in the castle's garden and courtyard with an iron fountain shaped like a pomegranate. The hall on the first floor is decorated by the mural painting of the Judgement of Paris surrounded by painted landscapes composed as views through illusive architecture. The actual view from the castle windows is thus complemented with imaginary landscapes and hunting scenes. However, the murals were not meant to be just an optical illusion. In one of the scenes depicting a deer hunt, there is a hill with three empty crosses and even a town in the background with a central round building resembling medieval depictions of Jerusalem. The carefree ephemeral joys of the hunt, presented in a dreamy spirit (enhanced by entirely imaginary elements such as glass columns as part of the illusive architecture), stands in opposition to the Christian message, as seen later in the work by Sachs.<sup>80</sup>

Numerous murals of a similar nature are preserved in Tyrol, which always bridged the gap between Italian and transalpine art. The decoration that is perhaps most similar to the one in Žirovnice is found in the castle Pietra (Breitenstein) in Calliano which stands on the very edge of the German-speaking area. In addition to heraldic decoration, the painted hall called Sala del Giudizio contains what appears to be seemingly unrelated scenes of the Judgement of Solomon, the Judgement of Paris,



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20 / **Hunt with a View of Jerusalem**, c. 1500-1509

mural painting

Issogne Castle

Reproduction: Andreina Griseri, *Affreschi nel*

Castello di Issogne, Roma s.d. (c. 1974)

Aristotle ridden by Phyllis, and a large depiction of a hunt. A niche beneath the depiction of a hunt is decorated by a comic scene with a magpie teaching a caged man to chirp. A man is watched by a woman accompanied by two cats, an illustration of a popular proverb inscribed over the painting: *'It is a mean cat which licks velvet from the front and scratches wool from the back.'*<sup>81</sup> In Calliano, the treachery and unpredictability of cats is connected to the characteristics of women. The same connection is documented by the crest of a jousting knight and the caparison of his horse depicted in the tournament book of Marx Walther.<sup>82</sup> A misogynistic interpretation of the Calliano murals is supported by peripheral scenes of a fool playing a bagpipe and a man dancing with a bear. This is also emphasized by both contrasting judgements: in one of them Solomon is able to overcome woman's deception, in the other Paris becomes a victim of female subterfuge.

Other Tyrolean murals combining the themes of the hunt and the misogynistic condemnation of women's power are found in the castle Moos in the Eppan Valley. The murals of Moos' Jagdzimmer include several hunting scenes (deer, wild boar, and chamois) and a garden of love. Other scenes depicted there show a darker side of the idylls of love: a motif adopted from a contemporary print showing Frau Minne riding a donkey and binding foolish lovers together with monkeys, a war of cats and mice as a typical motif of the world turned upside down, and last but not least a strange tree

with penises growing on it.<sup>83</sup> The obscene image clearly served as a criticism of female desire — in Moos two naked women fight ferociously for one of these 'fruits' while another is grabbing for a full sack of erect phalli. The same tree appears in another Tyrolian mural originally found at Lichtenberg Castle and later transferred to the Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck. The Lichtenberg phallus tree, painted around 1400, was accompanied by a tournament, a hunt, a wheel of Fortune with enthroned Frau Minne, and scenes from fables.<sup>84</sup>

Several examples of murals combining the concept of the power of women with other scenes are found in Austria as well. Murals in Hoferhaus in Bad Aussee in Styria bring together a large depiction of a hunt with a scene of Delilah cutting Samson's hair contrasted by a depiction of Samson as he tears apart a lion.<sup>85</sup> In nearby Bad Radkerberg the images of a hunt and a garden of love are accompanied by a scene of the death of Pyramus and Thisbe, another popular medieval story about the destructive power of sexual desire — Pyramus kills himself after he comes to believe that Thisbe has been eaten by a lion, after which Thisbe throws herself on his sword.<sup>86</sup>

Indeed, the same iconographic principles do not appear only in murals but on a variety of other artefacts as well, some of which I mentioned briefly in the introduction. It is not just the appearance of the individual motifs, on the artefacts we encounter remarkable sets which have complex interrelationships comparable to those in the murals. In some of the works, for example stove tiles or tapestries, the iconography is difficult to reconstruct because the whole piece was made of separate parts.<sup>87</sup> The best examples are thus presented by various painted and carved chests, boxes, and caskets, be they German *minnekästchen*, Italian *forzieri* or exclusively French and Rhine ivory carvings. I have mentioned scenes on French ivory works already; the scenes on them relating to a critique of the power of women are often combined with scenes from chivalric novels and depictions of tournaments and hunts.<sup>88</sup> The rules governing their iconography were similar in Germany, as is demonstrated by a carved wooden casket deposited today in Basel. Its lid shows a couple by a spring, the sides depict a woman reworking a man's heart with a hammer on an anvil, a woman with a bird trap trying to tempt a man to it, and finally traditional christological symbols of the pelican and phoenix which take on a new meaning in this context.<sup>89</sup> A complex system of decoration is also found on Italian *forzerini*, knick-knack boxes, which women in Italy were given before the wedding. A perfect example relating to the iconography of love was once held in Berlin Schloss



Musesum but unfortunately it was lost during the war. A large scene on the lid depicting a man tearing out his heart and giving it to a woman was accompanied by medallions on the sides with the coat of arms of the owner and hunting dogs and a lion catching their prey.<sup>90</sup> The lost box thus demonstrated the strong connection between scenes of courteous love and violent scenes of the hunt which existed at the end of the Middle Ages. But there are also other similarities to the iconography of the green chamber in Žirovnice. The motif of the unlucky Judgement of Paris was particularly popular on *forzieri* and it was often further complemented by depictions of the Trojan War or the events that lead to the fateful judgement.<sup>91</sup>

In Germany, the complex relations of different scenes appears on the almost lost genre of painted tables. The foremost example is the so-called Holbein-Tisch, the work of the Basel painter Hans Herbst from 1515.<sup>92</sup> An extensive program is centred around family coats of arms in the middle of the table. Around them, there appears an image of poor Nobody ('Niemand') with various objects whose destruction is attributed to him by hypocrites (i.e. those rejecting their own fault by saying 'Nobody did it') and a depiction of a wandering peddler robbed by apes. Around the edges of the table there is a deer hunt, a tournament, a fishing scene and finally a bird hunt in which women are caught in fowlers' nets. The connection between *minne* and ephemeral earthly pleasures which I found in Žirovnice takes on a humorous form on the so-called Holbein Table, nevertheless, the moralistic appeal is apparent, evolving from the central motif of the tradesman, whom the monkeys rob of useless trinkets, and the scene with Nobody, accompanied by a collection of broken things for which he takes the blame.

### The Green Chamber, a Phenomenon of Aristocratic Representation?

In light of my findings, the denomination green chamber appears somewhat misleading. On the one hand, it seems unprovable *a priori* to connect the term green chamber known from source materials with the specific programme of decoration of the type found for example in Žirovnice. On the other hand, it reveals that the unifying programme, noticed by Josef Krása, Vratislav Nejedlý and others, is not only related to mural paintings but to a broad range of a number of visual artefacts, which are usually classified under the all-encompassing term 'applied arts'.

Nevertheless, we can agree with Krása, Nejedlý and others in their selection and ordering of individual scenes and add to their observations. Motifs illustrating the power of women used to be universally related to ostensible genre depictions of the hunt, tournaments or fishing and thus take on an allegorical dimension. The unifying idea is the omnipotence and capriciousness of love. Late medieval secular iconography, despite being much less preserved, does not lack the complexity we find

in sacral art. Even within secular themes we find fixed grammatical structures, resembling those connected, for example, to scenes from the Old and New Testaments or the life of Christ and the life of the saints. Thus depictions of Samson and Delilah or the story of Judith in secular spaces are often naturally connected with images of a tournament or an unequal couple. The purpose of these images was apparently to strengthen the moral regulations of late medieval society, enhance chastity as opposed to fickle passionate love, warn against the power of love as well as the transience of earthly pleasures. Compared to sacred art the aim was not to frighten the viewer and lead him on the path of immediate repentance, but to mediate an exclusive morality, the form of which is rather melancholic in places or humorous in others.

Medieval secular art had a remarkably wide distribution and uniformity to its time period. We first encounter depictions of this type in Western Europe as early as the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries, as demonstrated by small ivory objects originating mostly from France, although any consideration about the development of this visual culture must bear in mind the lack of preserved works.<sup>93</sup> However the number of extant artefacts increases over time and thus, in the European context, we can work with a relatively large collection of various objects from the 15th and 16th centuries. At the same time, we can say that a more or less unified set of themes, despite certain local variations, was distributed widely and appears all over Europe, from Italy through Germany to Northern Poland and Hungary.<sup>94</sup> It seems that the dissemination of popular iconographic themes was apparently not influenced by the particular denominational groupings which arose in Bohemia after the Hussite Wars. Similar secular mural paintings were commissioned by both the Utraquists, such as the lords of Poděbrady and Vrchoviště, and Catholics, such as the lords of Rožmítal or Riesenberk of the Švihov branch. Wealthy burghers then naturally commissioned subjects similar to those ordered by the aristocracy — Gabler's house in Cheb with its hunting scene or the garden of love depicted in the House at the Golden Pear in Prague are great examples of this.<sup>95</sup>

Unfortunately, Czech art-historical research has remained relatively blind to this phenomenon. After Josef Krása's pioneering studies concerning the question of *minne* in his description of the Knight Hall in Blatná, following scholarly works have mostly left unquestioned the undoubted representative purpose of the presented scenes. Thus certain rhetorical phrases began to be repeated about the 'representative accent', 'attributes of the lifestyle of the aristocracy' and 'luxurious character' of the paintings, obscuring their actual meaning, their moral and playful message, rather than illuminating it.<sup>96</sup> What is more, these phrases do not explain why such a limited set of scenes was chosen for depiction while other possibilities were denied, such as battle scenes well-matched with



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21 / **Tournament**, beginning of the 16th century mural painting  
Švihov Castle, Red Bastion  
Photo: Aleš Mudra

the literary tradition of popular chronicles and chivalric novels. Perhaps it is time to turn away from rather dull political instrumentalisation and seek an anthropological perspective of medieval art, its distinctive otherness. An otherness that is provided by the distant experience of medieval man with all his passions bound by a system of firm moral rules, in which, despite certain differences, we recognize ourselves as well.

TRANSLATED BY MAGDALENA WELLS  
AND LAWRENCE WELLS

## NOTES

\* This study was supported by the grant COST CZ 208109 New Communities of Interpretation: Contexts of Religious Transformation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Bohemia. The author would like to thank Malcolm Jones, Jan Klípa and Daniela Rywíková for their valuable comments and suggestions which greatly improved the manuscript.

1 Josef Krása, 'Nástěnné malby žirovnické Zelené světnice. Příspěvek ke studiu pozdně gotické profánní malby', *Umění* XII, 1964, pp. 282–300.

2 The 'green chamber' at Zvíkov is mentioned in the sources from 1504–1512, August Sedláček, *Hrady a zámky, Hrady, zámky a tvrze království Českého 11. Prácheňsko*, Praha 1897, p. 35, probably in reference to the so-called Wedding Hall with green decoration and dancing couples. In Jindřichův Hradec we have a description of a 'building of green chambers' (i.e. 'stavení zelených pokojů') documented from the second half of the 16th century relating to the wing of the chateau with the so-called Judicial Hall ('Soudnice') as well as other heavily damaged painted rooms, Josef Novák, *Zámek jindřichohradecký*, Jindřichův Hradec [1905], p. 50.

3 Vratislav Nejedlý, 'K dobovému smyslu jihočeských zelených světnic', *Umění* XLI, 1993, pp. 206–209. — Idem, 'K významu scény

ze zvířecích bajek v Zelené světnici blatenského hradu', *Umění* XXVII, 1979, pp. 81–82. — Samuel Gumiński, 'Zelená světnice v Lehnici a její české vzory', *Umění* XXXVI, 1988, pp. 560–564. — Peter Megyeši, 'Ikongrafia svätca na maľbe v Thurzovom dome v Banskej Bystrici', *Pamiatky a Múzea* I, 2014, pp. 5–9. See also the recent survey of murals in various Bohemian chateaux and castles, František Záruba, 'Příspěvek k malířské výzdobě hradů v Čechách v době pohusitské', in Magdaléna Nespěšná Hamsíková (ed.), *Ecclesia docta. Společensví ducha a umění*, Praha 2016, pp. 380–407.

4 Compare Krása's concept in Josef Krása, 'Bemerkungen zur nachhusitischen Wandmalerei in Böhmen', in Alicja Karłowska-Kamzowa (ed.), *Gotyckie malarstwo ścienne w Europie środkowo-wschodniej*, Poznań 1977, pp. 109–124, esp. p. 110 and pp. 121–122 with various German literature, e.g. Roland Möller, 'Illusionistische und grünmonochrome Wandmalerei als Dekoration in Sakral- und Profanräumen der Spätgotik', in Ute Reupert, Thomas Trajkovits, and Winfried Werner (eds), *Denkmalkunde und Denkmalpflege. Wissen und Wirken. Festschrift für Heinrich Magirius zum 60. Geburtstag*, Dresden 1995, pp. 223–229. — Angelica Dülberg, 'Die sogenannte Schatzkammer im Kaufmannshaus Untermarkt 5 in Görlitz. Zur Ikonographie der illusionistischen Wandmalereien vom Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts', *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* XXVIII, 2001, pp. 133–158. — Eadem, 'Die illusionistischen Wandmalereien in der so-gennanten 'Schatzkammer' des Hans Frenzel in Görlitz', in Tomasz Torbus (ed.), *Die Kunst im Margraffum Oberlausitz im Zeitalter der Jagiellonenherrschaft*, Ostfildern 2006, pp. 149–162. — Erika Kustatscher, Angelika Möller, Roland Möller, and Helmut Stampfer, *Jöchlsturm in Sterzing*, Innsbruck und Bozen 1992, pp. 117–122. For older Czech and Slovak contributions based on German publications see Eva Ďurdiaková, 'Slovenská neskorogotická ornamentálná nástenná maľba v profánnjej architecture', *Ars* V, 1971, pp. 121–144, or Jan Dvořák, *Pohusitské nástěnné malířství v Čechách* (dissertation thesis), FF UK, Praha 1951.

5 Martin Vaněk, *Reprezentační prostory Jindřicha IV. z Hradce* (master thesis), Art History Department, FF MU, Brno 2008, pp. 71–72. See also Robert Šimůnek, *Reprezentace české středověké šlechty*, Praha 2013, p. 339, note 27.



6 For the sake of simplicity I will use the term 'green chamber' in this text without quotation marks and with lowercase letters. It is an established term in connection with the hall at Žirovnice and the term which was used at the time is not known to us from the extant sources.

7 See Eva Matějková, 'Kutnohorský patricijský rod "Z Vrchovišť" v Jagellonské době', *Východočeský sborník historický* XXI, 2012, pp. 117–149. The older literature does not accept the existence of the family 'of Vrchoviště' by this time based on a disputed report about the tombstone of Jan Knoch of Vrchoviště dated to 1420 but unaccounted for today. See František Devoty, *Popsání založení, zvláštní pobožnosti, a života swattosti, mnohým nešťastným osudům podrobené, bývalé řehole Cysterceyenské*, Praha 1824, p. 73, compare Helena Štroblová, 'Kutnohorský podnikatelských patriciát a erbovní páni z Vrchovišť', *Časopis Národního muzea, Řada historická* CLXI, 1992, nos 1–2, pp. 8–13.

8 This is shown by the complaints of Dorota of Duběnky, the wife of Michal of Vrchoviště, about the fact that Vencelík took and later embezzled financial funds intended to enforce their noble status among the Bohemian estates, *Archiv český* XXXIII, ed. Jaromír Čelakovský, Praha 1908, no. 5464, p. 120 and no. 5415, pp. 75–76.

9 The literature includes a repeated mistake introduced by Sedláček that Vencelík died as late as 1518, for example Šimůnek (note 5), p. 257. However, the sources refer to him as the deceased by 1515, *Archiv český* XIX, ed. Jaromír Čelakovský, Praha 1901, no. 2691, p. 386. By 1513 he had registered the free estate Třešť as the property of his son in the Moravian Land Rolls.

10 The paintings are linked, for example, by the same system of underdrawing brilliantly executed with short, nervous strokes. The drawings are characterized by the ball-shaped eyes of the figures, which the painter later covered over with colour modelling. The same motifs appear in both the green chamber and the much more damaged murals in the foyer, like the motif of a cut tree stump with sprouting branches.

11 Because of the damaged painting around the door it is not clear whether there are some two other emblems missing. The coats of arms have not been identified yet due to the damage and changes in colour, Vladivoj Tomek, 'Heraldické památky Žirovnice', *Heraldická ročenka* 2006, pp. 87–113 speculates about the Austrian, Hungarian and Czech emblems. However, the hierarchical order does not fit.

12 Žirovnice is found on the very border between Moravia and Bohemia, yet still in Bohemia. The presence of the emblem could thus refer to Vencelík's estate in Třešť which was already in Moravia. Was Třešť meant to be the seat of Vencelík's large property?

13 Béatrice Hernad (ed.), *Die Graphiksammlung des Humanisten Hartmann Schedel* (exh. cat.), München 1990, pp. 288–289, cat. no. 102.

14 There are three versions: two very similar engravings (one was made by simply cropping the image) and a circular woodcut, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, accession no. 2012.136.719. They are loosely related to the murals in Žirovnice through the use of a similar composition in which Judith stands outside of a tent in which the headless body of Holofernes lies.

15 The story is also referred to as 'Old Woman as Trouble Maker', Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales*, Helsinki 2004, p. 155, no. 1353, cf. note 26.

16 Josef Krása, 'Nástěnná malba', in Jaromír Homolka, Josef Krása, Václav Mencl et al., *Pozdně gotické umění v Čechách*, Praha 1978, pp. 256–314, quoted pp. 291–293. In these late contributions, Krása otherwise tended to repeat his older conclusions, see also idem,

Nástěnné malířství', in Rudolf Chadraha (ed.), *Dějiny českého výtvarného umění I/2*, Praha 1984, pp. 567–578, quoted p. 569.

17 Susan L. Smith, *The Power of Women. A Topos in Medieval Art and Literature*, Philadelphia 1995.

18 On Italian chests and boxes which function in this way see Adrian W. B. Randolph, *Touching Objects. Intimate Experiences of Italian Fifteenth Century Art*, New Haven 2014, p. 111 and 117. — On German 'minnekästchen' see Jürgen Wurst, *Reliquiare der Liebe Das Münchner Minnekästchen und andere mittelalterliche Minnekästchen aus dem deutschsprachigen Raum* (dissertation thesis), Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München 2015, pp. 196–203. — With tapestries of German origin the situation is more complex but in many cases the presence of Alliance heraldic decoration refers to it, compare Anna Rapp Buri and Monika Stucky-Schürer, *Zahm und wild. Basler und Strassburgerger Bildtebpiche des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Mainz 1990, p. 83.

19 This part of the murals was unfortunately destroyed and it is known only from 19th century copies, see Werner Wunderlich, *Weisbilder Al Fresco. Kulturgeschichtlicher Hintergrund und literarische Tradition der Wandbilder im Konstanzer Haus „Zur Kunkel“*, Konstanz 1996, pp. 113–156.

20 It is not entirely correct to call it courtly love as the concept was cultivated in wider aristocratic and bourgeois circles. Of the various variants of this European phenomenon, the German concept *minne* is the closest to the situation in Bohemia, compare Walter Blank, *Die deutsche Minneallegorie. Gestaltung und Funktion einer spätmittelalterlichen Dichtungsform*, Stuttgart 1970, pp. 45–47.

21 Smith (note 17), pp. 168–186.

22 *Kronika trojanská*, ed. Jiří Daňhelka, Praha 1951, p. 68.

23 Manuscript XVII B 6 held at the National Library in Prague, which Daňhelka (note 22) used to make his transcript, contains a mistake — Pallas illogically promises to Paris that he will be the most liked – 'naymileyssie' (fol. 104r) while other manuscripts, e.g. Strahov Library, DG III 7, fol. 13v reads more correctly that Pallas offers to make him the wisest — 'ze wssiech nayumieleysieho'. In a print which was a model for the composition in Žirovnice — Venus carries a scroll with the inscription 'O mea sunt dona amoris vincula', Juno 'Divicie mundi mea sunt dona dico tibi' and Pallas 'Tribus victoriam et praestatem ultra sampsonem', thus unlike the Czech translation, the other two goddesses promise wealth and victory in battle.

24 *Kronika trojanská* (note 22), pp. 171–172.

25 Ibidem, p. 202.

26 Zuzana Plátková, 'Nástěnné malby v kostele sv. Jakuba v Libiší', *Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Philosophica et Historica* 4, *Přspěvky k dějinám umění* III, 1980, pp. 137–181, who noticed the connection based on the work Karel Horálek, 'Orientální prvky v slovanských pohádkách', *Český lid* LV, 1966, pp. 92–101. However, he focused on various Slavic versions and does not mention that the same story was widely known in Germany and one important version is due to Martin Luther, see Stefanie Knöll, '... noch böser als der Teuffel. Zur Darstellung alter Frauen in der Kunst der Frühen Neuzeit', in Heiner Fangerau et al., *Alterskulturen und Potentiale des Alter(n)s*, Berlin 2007, pp. 97–108. Medieval depictions of the story therefore do not only appear in neighbouring Poland, but we find a number of them in Sweden. I am preparing an individual study on the theme.

27 This is how the story is narrated in Martin Luther, *Colloquia oder Tischreden doctor Martini Lutheri*, ed. Johannes Aurifaber, Frankfurt 1593, pp. 310–311. On the way the story is based on the impermanence of love compare: 'Der Mann spricht: Das kan nicht wahr seyn. Ich weiß daß mein Weib mich herzlich lieb hat. Neyn, spricht das alte Weib, sie hat einen andern



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lieb, und wil dich erwürgen unnd machet also daß der Mann sich für der Frauen fürchtet und alles böses besorget.'

28 Murals from the house at Rosengasse 54 (originally 6) have been transferred to the Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck. 'Mittelalterliche Wandmaleteri in Österreich. Originale, Kopien, Dokumentation' (exh. cat.), Wien 1970, pp. 51–52. — Heinrich Hammer, 'Mittelalterliche Wandgemälde in der Umgebung Innsbrucks', *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* V (XIX), 1928, p. 135. The youth asks: 'Sagend. uns. ir. frawen. zart. wes. sind. die. kind. von. [h]ocher. art'. The women probably answers: 'Die. kind. send. unser. kind. und. unse(r). man/ne [---]es. synd. und. das. kumpt. alz. vo(n). rechter. Ee. rat [---]'. See also the transcription in Stefan Matter, *Reden von der Minne*, Tübingen 2013, p. 517. I would like to thank Jan Hon for his consultation on various possible meanings of this inscription in Old German.

29 Jan Dienstbier, 'The image of the fool in late medieval Bohemia', *Umění* LXIV, 2016, pp. 354–370. The terms are according to Jones, *The Secret Middle Ages*, Stroud 2002, p. 119.

30 Jones (note 29), pp. 269–270.

31 The proverb together with an illustration of a dog and a cat staring at each other appears in a French manuscript from around 1490, Walters Art Museum, W 313, fol. 30r.

32 They are depicted this way in the lower triforium of St Vitus Cathedral in Prague.

33 'éenen hont ende een kats en een muys dry gaende in een huys ende dry gebreoders wyven syn selden sonder kyven', I am indebted to Malcolm Jones for reading and translating the inscription.

34 *Magister Iohannes Hus Sermones in Capella Bethlehem II.*, ed. Václav Flajšhans, Praha 1940, p. 9. In a sermon from 1410 Hus especially specifies that women should be moderate in drinking and recalls that the Ancient Romans allegedly forbade women from drinking altogether.

35 *Frantova práva a jiné kratochvíle*, ed. Jaroslav Kolár, Praha 1977, p. 37.

36 Herbert Bald, *Liebesjagd. Eine Wandmalerei des 15. Jahrhunderts im Schloss zu Lohr am Main*, Würzburg 2011, pp. 20–22 and p. 58. — Allmuth Schuttwolf (ed), *Jahreszeiten der Gefühle. Das Gothaer Liebespaar und die Minne im Spätmittelalter* (exh. cat.), Gotha 1998, pp. 109–110.

37 'Ich. iag. nach. truwen. find. ich. die. kein. lieber. zit. gelebt. ich. nie.' Two exemplars of a tapestry with a practically identical scene are extant in The Burrell Collection, Glasgow and in a private collection, Rapp Buri and Stucky-Schürer (note 18), pp. 350–353.

38 TERENCE le Deschault de Monredon, 'La Femme au Faucon', in Frédéric Elsig, TERENCE le Deschault de Monredon, Pierre Alain Mariaux et al., *L'image en questions pour Jean Wirth*, Genève 2013, pp. 155–161. — Blank (note 20), p. 187.

39 Randolph (note 18), pp. 128–130. This holds also for German art, see Rapp Buri and Stucky-Schürer (note 18), pp. 348–349.

40 P. Ovidius Naso, *Ars Amatoria*, ed. Rudolf Ehwald, Lipsiae 1907, lib.: 1, v. 43–50 compares the seduction of a woman to the hunt for deer, wild boar and fishing. On the situation in the Middle Ages, mainly in Italy, see Paul F. Watson, *The Garden of Love in Tuscan Art of the Early Renaissance*, London 1979, pp. 94–95. On Germany see Blank (note 20), pp. 187–194. — Tilo Brandis, *Mittelhochdeutsche, mittelniederdeutsche und mittelniederländische Minnereden*, München 1968, pp. 198–203. German *minne* allegories mostly copy the influential composition *Die Jagd* by Hadamard von Laber in which the main hero is a hunting man. Conversely, the heroine of a later anonymous composition *Die Jägerin* is a woman.

41 Watson (note 40), p. 94. The relation between the situation of hunted stag and lover was common in medieval literature, for

French examples like *Li dis dou cerf amoureux* see Marcelle Thiebaux, *The Stag of Love*, Ithaca and London 1974, pp. 149–166, for Germany see *ibidem*, pp. 167–228.

42 It is a tapestry ordered by Guy de Baudreil, the abbot of the monastery Saint-Martin-aux-Bois sometime in 1492–1531. Today it is deposited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

43 See e.g. *The Triumph of Time*, a circular stained glass work executed after a model by Pieter Coeck van Aelst around 1530–1540, deposited in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. The chariot of terrible Chronos devouring a small child is pulled by a deer and a doe.

44 *Kronika trojanská* (note 22), p. 202.

45 Rapp Buri and Stucky-Schürer (note 18), pp. 236–240.

46 The futility of the hunt was probably also reflected in the later 17th century graffiti written under the images of hunting dogs. The barely legible text states: '... hunting dogs ... of people ...the God is going to shorten them by a hemp cord before they notice it. If not during the winter, then in the summer.', i.e. '[---] olharzy / tem se lydem [---] / skraty je panbuh nez se nadehy / nebudely w zime, ale na leto / konopnym prowazem.'

47 For example, during the tournament held on Shrove Tuesday in 1526 in Greenwich, Henry VIII displayed a burning heart on his cloak, with a slogan embroidered beneath 'Declare ie nose' ('I dare not to say'), thus proclaiming the king's love for Anne Boleyn, see Edward Hall, *Chronicle containing the history of England*, etc., London 1809, p. 707. In the previous years, the symbolic aspects of Henry's tournaments had usually referred to the queen, Catherine of Aragon.

48 Marx Walther's *Turnierbuch mit Familienchronik und Stiftungsverzeichnis*, ed. Daniel J. M. Huber, Königsbrunn 2014. — *The tournament book of Gašper Lamberger: Codex A 2290 Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien*, ed. Dušan Kos, Ljubljana 1997, pp. 148–150.

49 Werner Mezger, *Hofnarren im Mittelalter. Vom tieferen Sinn eines seltsamen Amts*, Konstanz 1981, p. 57. See also the role of tournaments in popular stories like *The Chronicle of Seven Wise Men* published in 1502 even in Czech translation, *Kronika sedmi mudrců*, ed. Jaroslav Kolár, Praha 1985, pp. 36–38 and 47–48.

50 Compare Dienstbier (note 29), note 25.

51 Concrete emblems and other heraldic representations also appear in other murals of tournaments in central Europe, e.g. the knights hall in Blatná, recently found murals in Velké Meziříčí, or the murals in Friedberg Castle in Tyrol, Oswald Trapp, 'Die maximilianischen Gemälde im Friedberger Rittersaal', *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* XXIII, 1970, pp. 7–27.

52 Matějková (note 7), p. 132.

53 Transcript after a reproduction in Walter L. Strauss (ed), *The Illustrated Bartsch 13 (Commentary)*, German Masters of the Sixteenth Century, New York 1984, p. 308 'Inn summa alle freud auff erd // War da, was menschlich hertz begerdt.'

54 *Ibidem*, 'Ob mir, und war der freuden traum // Verschwunden, als ein wasser schaum.' This is the common medieval motif of an ephemeral dream, also found in Bohemia, for example in *May Dream* by Hynek of Poděbrady, *Veršované skladby Neuberského sborníku*, edited by Zdeňka Tichá, Praha 1960, pp. 98–105.

55 Schuttwolf (note 36), pp. 124–125.

56 Christian Müller, *Torheiten des Lebens — Matthias Gerungs 'Melancolia 1558'*, Karlsruhe 1983, pp. 18–22. — *Idem*, 'Die Melancholie im Garten des Lebens. Matthias Gerungs "Melancolia 1558" in Karlsruhe', *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen in Baden-Württemberg* XXI, 1984, pp. 7–35.



57 This idea was generally accentuated in Bohemia as well, it can be found, for example, in the conclusion of the transcript of The Romance of Troy, made in 1442 for the significant nobleman Pavel of Jenštejn. The scribe Zikmund of Habry mentions the he copied the books of the romance for 'the use of the knights of the Czech land', so that they could learn about famous and brave deeds, protect the poor, 'and recognize the vanity of this world so as to despise it and move towards the eternal world', National Library in Prague, XXIII D 1, fol. 188v.

58 This is shown in the dominant feature of a water gate between two towers with a little boat anchored in front, appearing in both depictions. On the other hand, the painters rendered Troy without using the print.

59 The cult of love was well known even in post-Hussite Bohemia. That is shown by the illuminated manuscripts ordered for the rich owners, e.g. the Manuscript of Neuburg from the Rosemberk library, National Library in Prague, sign. V E 39.

60 Archiv český XI, ed. Kalousek, Praha 1892, no. 307, pp. 500–501.

61 For a recent discussion of the paintings at Švihov see Jan Royt, 'Švihov', hrad, in Petr Jindra and Michaela Ottová (eds), *Obrazy krásy a spásy. Gotika v jihozápadních Čechách*, Plzeň 2013, pp. 226–231. Krása even thought that the murals were made by one workshop, Krása, *Nástěnná malba* (note 16), p. 569, however I cannot agree with his hypothesis. Both murals differ in the style of the underdrawings — e.g. see the calm expression of the young wrestler at Švihov and the free rendering of the portraits at Žirovnice (note 10). Even the space is handled differently in Švihov — compare the image of the tournament or the fragments of the feast with dancing figures. The space is skilfully divided into several horizontal plains in a way which suggests a relationship to Bavarian art and the work of Mair von Landshut, accessible in contemporary prints (see for example the figure standing on the stairs and entering the main scene from the side).

62 An exception is found in Magdaléna Nespěšná Hamsíková, *Lucas Cranach a malířství v českých zemích (1500–1550)*, Praha 2016, p. 174, note 79, who studied the inscriptions independently from me. The following epigraphic transcriptions of the inscriptions slightly differ from the reading of Nespěšná Hamsíková.

63 'NULLUS AMOR [DURAT, NISI FRUCTUS SERVET AMOREM] / QUILIBET EST TANTUS MUNERA Q[ANTA FACIT].', the damaged part completed after Gualterus Anglicus, 27: 11, *Uomini e bestie: le favole dell'Aesopus latinus*, edited by Sandro Boldrini, Lecce 1994. The quote also appears in the anonymous Polythecon (before 1366), *Polythecon*, edited by Arpád P. Orbán, Turnhout 1990, lib. 2, v. 582.

64 'OMNIA NOVA PLACENT / CUNCTA IN VE(TE)RATA VILESCUNT', 'OMNIA / TEMPUS HABET'. It is possible that it originally read 'Omnia tempus habent, omnia tempus habet' in the sense 'Everything [should be done] in its proper time, but time controls everything', compare Ecc. 3:1–9.

65 'QUISQUIS HABET NUMOS FELICI NAVIGAT AURA / FORTUNA[MQUE] SUO TEMPERAT ARBITRIO / PARVA LOQUOR QUID VIS NUM(M)IS PREBENTIS / [E]VENIET CLAUSU(M) POSSIDET ARCA IOVEM'. Compare Petronius, *Satyricon*, LLA 363, cap. 137, par. 9, p. 168 lin. 20 and p. 169, lin. 5. The wording is slightly different from the original text of the *Satyricon*, which moreover is only preserved in fragments in this section. However, the quote circulated separately, for example Johannes of Viktring used it in his chronicle to characterize the behaviour of Přemysl Otakar II, but even that version is different from the one found in Švihov, compare MGH, SS rer. Germ. 36, 1, cap. 12, p. 192, l. 24.

66 Vladimír Hrubý, *Pozdní gotika a raná renesance v Pardubicích v letech 1491–1548*, Pardubice 2003, p. 54–67.

67 '[Q]UI FORTUNE FI/[DI]T PROPE IN/[TE]RITU(M) EST'. I expanded the second part of the sentence according to Hebrews 8:13, which corresponds to the outlined abbreviation and allows for adequate space in the painting for the missing letters. Completing the form of the verb in the first part of the sentence depends on the options under consideration, i.e. Latin verbs beginning with 'fi'. Unfortunately, I don't know of any other occurrence of the quotation. The designation 'FORTUNA VOLUBILIS' over the head of Fortune and the sphere under her feet are references to Ovid's *Tristia*, Book V, *Elegy VIII*: 'nec metuis dubio Fortunae stantis in orbe ... passibus ambiguus Fortuna volubilis errat.' I am indebted to Malcolm Jones for this reference. The mirror in her hand is perhaps a reference to foolish pride also mentioned by Ovid in this context.

68 Smith (note 17), pp. 138–139 and 193.

69 This suggests that it is the story of Actaeon, see note 71. However, it is difficult to confirm whether or not the woman is taking a bath, as is presumed from the blue fragments around her body. It is apparent that she has a golden chain around her neck and a green cloth draped over her left arm.

70 Karel Petrán, 'Gotická nástěnná malba na zámku Blatná', pp. 51–58, in: *Sborník k 750. výročí Blatné, Blatná 1985*. — The murals were still not known in 1964, hence Krása dealt with them only in his later contributions, see Josef Krása, 'Nástěnná malba', in Homolka, Krása, Mencl et al. (note 15), pp. 256–314, quoted pp. 279–280. Here he notices that the iconography refers to 'Frau Minne and her omnipotent control'. — Whereas the conclusions of the article Jakub Vítovský, 'Pozdně gotické nástěnné malby. Pět lidských věků v zámku Blatná, Zprávy památkové péče LXI, 2001, no. 4, pp. 89–107 need to be rejected. Vítovský does not provide any comparisons for his arguments, neither wall paintings nor prints in which the theme of five human ages, which he suggests as the explanation of the murals, is represented. For a similar approach see also idem, 'Středověké "Zelené světnice"', *Cour d'honneur / hrady, zámky, paláce IV*, 2008, pp. 60–63.

71 I intend to focus on the murals in Blatná in a separate study. On the meaning of Actaeon's story in Italy see Watson (note 40), pp. 98–99, the story was understood as a moralizing refusal of lust suggesting that Actaeon wanted to rape the nude Diana. The goddess is understood as a symbol of chastity, one of the fundamental virtues required of wives. This version probably stems from Hyginus' explication, *ibidem*, p. 99. — On the naked Frau Minne pointing her bow at the lover see two examples in Heinrich Kohlhausen, 'Die Minne in der deutschen Kunst des Mittelalters', *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft IX*, 1942, pp. 145–172, quoted p. 157, ill. 10–11.

72 Jan Klípa and Michaela Ottová (eds), *Bez hranic. Umění v Krušnohoří mezi gotikou a renesancí*, Praha 2015, p. 384.

73 The mural is mentioned in Petr Pavelec, 'Středověké nástěnné malby v areálu kláštera minoritů a klarisek v Českém Krumlově', in Daniela Rywiková (ed.), *Klášter minoritů a klarisek v Českém Krumlově. Umění, zbožnost, architektura*, Český Krumlov 2015, pp. 201–211, quoted p. 201, but the motif is incorrectly identified and misleadingly described.

74 I will focus on this and other sites connecting the body of work from the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries with the murals traditionally described as green chambers in a separate study 'Od Bible Václava IV. k zeleným světnicím' in a collection on the 30th anniversary of the death of Josef Krása.

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**75** Jacek Witkowski, *Szlachetna a wielce żałosna opowieść o Panu Lancelocie z Jeziora*, Wrocław 2001, pp. 70–71.

**76** For a description of the murals and extensive comparisons see Veronika Horová, 'Nástěnné malby na Novém hradě u Jimlína', *Časopis Společnosti přátel starožitností* (in print), I thank the author for letting me read her still unpublished study. See also the catalogue entry Jan Dienstbier, 'Nástěnné malby v přízemí Nového hradu v Jimlíně', in: Klípa and Ottová (note 72), p. 389. However, I dated the paintings somewhat too early to 1470s and I must agree with Horová, who dates them slightly later. Stylistically, the paintings drew on numerous prints executed by Israhel van Meckenem, which were only widespread in the 1480s, 1490s or even the first decade of the 16th century.

**77** Jan Royt, 'Nástěnné malby v Gablerově domě čp. 507 v Chebu, 1490–1500', in *Umění gotiky na Chebsku. Gotické umění na území historického Chebska a sbírka gotického sochařství Galerie výtvarného umění v Chebu* (exh. cat.), Cheb 2009, pp. 82–83.

**78** Daniela Zachmann, *Wandmalerei in Wohnhäusern toskanischer Städte im 14. Jahrhundert. Zwischen elitären Selbstverständnis und kommunalen Wertesystemen*, München 2016, pp. 147–153.

**79** Noemi Gabrielli, *Rappresentazioni sacre e secular nel Castello di Issogne e la pittura nella Valle d'Aosta alla fine del '400*, Torino 1959. — Andreina Griseri, *Affreschi nel Castello di Issogne*, Roma s.d. (c. 1974).

**80** Compare the end of Sachs's poem: 'Darumb, o mensch, wend dich zu Got / Von diesen zergenglich irsdischen / Wollüsten auf zu den himlischen, / Da ewig freud dir blü und wachst! / Wünscht dir von Nürnberg Hans Sachs.'

**81** Harald Wolter von dem Knesebeck, "'Husere'" and the "Topography of Contrasts" in 15th Century Mural Paintings from Tyrol and Trentino', in Luís Urbano Afonso and Vítor Serrão (eds), *Out of the Stream: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Mural Painting*, Newcastle 2007, pp. 22–41.

**82** Huber (note 48), p. 36. The caparison shows a white cat with the inscription 'Das ist ein bösse katz, die ain vornen leckt und hinden kratzt'. On the crest of his helmet the knight carries a distaff as a symbolic representation of typical women's work. On the comparison of the perfidy of women and cats see also Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, 'Satyrs and sausages: erotic strategies and the print market in Cinquecento Italy', in Eadem (ed.), *Erotic Cultures of Renaissance Italy*, Farnham 2007, pp. 19–60 quoted 34. Here is also cited a proverb, also documented in later periods, that a married man is like a bird in a cage.

**83** Helmut Stampfer, Moos. *Ein Eppaner Adelsitz mit spätgotischen Malereien*, Regensburg 2016, pp. 16–23. — Harald Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, 'Zahm ud wild: Thematische Spannungsverhältnisse und ihre (topografische) Organisation. Die Wandmalereien des Jagdzimmers von Schloss Moos in Eppan', in Eckart Conrad Lutz, Johanna Thali and

René Wetzel (eds), *Literatur und Wandmalerei II. Konventionalität und Konversation*, Tübingen 2005, pp. 479–519.

**84** Waltraud Kofler Engl, 'Die gotischen Wandmalereien der Burg Lichtenberg. Eine ritterlich höfische Bidlerwelt', in: *Rittertum in Tirol. Runkelsteiner Schriften zur Kulturgeschichte, Band 1*, Bozen 2008, pp. 85–106.

**85** Elga Lanc, *Die mittelalterlichen Wandmalereien in der Steiermark. Corpus der mittelalterlichen Wandmalereien Österreichs II*, Wien 2002, pp. 15–17.

**86** Ibidem, pp. 21–29.

**87** For example, in Bohemia there is no single preserved medieval tiled stove despite hundreds of finds of individual relief tiles.

**88** See Richard H. Randall, Jr., 'Popular Romances Carved in Ivory', in Peter Barnet (ed.), *Images in Ivory. Precious Objects of the Gothic Age*, Detroit 1997, pp. 63–79, for individual cases see ibidem, pp. 242–248.

**89** Wurst (note 18), pp. 218–222.

**90** See Randolph (note 18), pp. 118–131, who examines the general context of this iconography as well.

**91** Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *Art Marriage and Family in the Florentine Renaissance Palace*, New Haven 2008, pp. 145–145.

**92** Lucas Wüthrich, *Der sogennante „Holbein-Tisch“. Geschichte und Inhalt der bemalten Tischplatte des Balser Malers Hans Herbst von 1515*, Zürich 1990.

**93** See e.g. the remnants of an ivory casket with scenes from the life of Samson, deposited today in the Louvre, Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires médiévaux V<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 2003, p. 239, or a late twelfth-century enamelled casket possibly ascribed to the court of Aquitaine, which is in the collection of the British Museum, John Cherry, *Medieval Decorative Art*, London 1991, p. 55–56.

**94** Naturally, there is a difference between Italian iconography accentuating a number of classical stories which were obviously known to the local aristocracy, and the iconography in Northern Europe, where Biblical stories had more importance.

**95** Zuzana Všecká and Dalibor Prix, 'Nově odkryté nástěnné malby v domě čp. 458/I U zlaté lilie na Starém Městě v Praze', *Umění LI*, 2003, pp. 510–517. I plan to show in detail that they in fact depict the so-called garden of love after German examples (compare note 74).

**96** Jiří Kuthan, *Královské dílo za Jiřího z Poděbrad a dynastie Jagellonců*, Praha 2010, p. 388 and p. 293.

## REDAKČNÍ POZNÁMKA

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