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JAN VAN EYCK'S
"TYM. WŌEOC" — PORTRAIT OF JEAN DE CROY?

There is no other portrait by Jan van Eyck which would appeal by means of three inscriptions, as it takes place in case of a portrait of a young man emerging from behind a stone parapet.¹ Although its meaning was interpreted in many different ways, no final explanation has been stated up till now.

There is no doubt about the author's signature on the parapet, which confirms that the work was executed by Jan van Eyck in 1432: "Actu[m] a[n]no d[omi]ni. 1432.10. die octobris. a ioh[anne] de Eyck".

The other two inscriptions, placed on this parapet, bring about controversial comments. Their significance lays in a fact that the unusual monumentalization of the portrait, by means of introducing an element of a stone block as a base for a bust, implicates the painter's desire to stress the prestige of a portrayed man in the eyes of a public, so that the portrayed man seems to be a significant person. The proper reading of these inscriptions can reveal the name of the man.

To follow the trace systematically, we should consider all the presentational elements of the painting as a structural unity of the artistic language of Jan van Eyck, and we should analyse what has been presented and by what means.

The shape of the painting is elongated in the perpendicular and it has the proportions dissimilar to any other portrait by Jan van Eyck. The author's choice of proportions was inspired by a wish to introduce the element of a stone block which constitutes the base of the portrait. This motif, presumably, must have been of great significance to the artist if he had decided to apply such an unusual shape to his work. The presentation

¹ Jan van Eyck, Portrait of a young Man, National Gallery, London 33,5×18,8 cm, n.d. signed and dated 1432. [Inscription is quoted here with spelling TYM. WŌEOC after M. Davies' work (see note 3), there W stands for ω].

seems to be natural and does not place the head of the portrayed man too high, on the contrary, it seems to be lowered in a sense by means of adding a blank part of the background of the same height as the one of the parapet. This way of presenting a head is unusual of Jan van Eyck's practice. His general practice was to draw a frame, leaving only a little space above a head.

The stone tridimensional parapet constitutes the foreground in the arrangement of space of the painting. There are three lines of inscriptions on it, and each of the three enshrines the complete message, although the messages can be interrelated and they may create one or two sequences of information. Probably the inscriptions influenced the need of introducing the element of a stone block, as one of them, in particular, is painted in an illusive way as if it was cut in a stone. Thus it seems to be of a manifestational character. And this particular inscription dominates the impression that we have to do with an inscription of commemorative plaque, so characteristic of monuments of various types. The figure of the portrayed man emerges from behind a stone parapet with the inscriptions exposed to the public. The figure is illuminated by the light directed downwards from the left side, the light which model the parapet and the letters cut in the stone block.

On a black background there appears a man, turned slightly towards the right side, with his arm bent at his elbow. The man seems to be pushing, towards the light and towards the observer, a vellum scroll, presumably a letter or a document. The man is dressed in a red jerkin trimmed with fur at the sleeves and at the collar. He wears a cap folded above his forehead, and falling softly down to his right arm.

The clean-shaven face of the man appears to be intriguing to the observer because of its unusual anthropological type. The face clearly reveals the laponoidal features. Although this face seems to be lacking the noble qualities, no conclusions referring to the social position of the man should be formed on those premises, without first considering those that are derived from the man's garment, the scroll in his hand and the stone parapet with the inscriptions. The two of them refer directly to the portrayed man and the third one, including the date 1432, should be also taken into consideration in any attempt of discovering the man's identity.

The largest inscription, cut in a stone block is: LEAL SOUVENIR — that means "Loyal souvenir". And at the same time it is the only case of application of French language among numerous inscriptions and signatures on Jan van Eyck's paintings.

This practice derives neither from the native language of the painter nor from his habits. Thus the inscription in French language must be connected with the portrayed person. The lexical meaning of such an

expression is quite simple, although it has two connotations which demand different contextual interpretation, significant to the painting.

In the modern transcription "Loyal souvenir" would mean: "true memory", but it can also be understood as "faithful memory". In the first case it states the reality accurately defined and fixed in memory, or it stresses the perseverance of memorized ideas. As the second reading suggests the stress is shifted upon the assurance of firmness of memory towards the addressed person whom the memory is devoted to.

The way of reading and of interpreting the inscription may be suggested by its form. The monumental character should be taken into account. The inscription sounds as a publicly used device rather than a confession or an intimate assurance. Its significance may be dependent on the former words, on the verse placed above the device, the line that consists of two words "TYM. WΘEOC". Because of a little damage the final letter cannot be read accurately. However, there are only two possibilities; it can be read either as "C" or "I". In case of applying Latin transliteration we should take both possibilities into consideration, dependently on the still unknown context of inscription: 1° "Tum." or "Tim." — 2° "Otheos" or "Otheoi".

Those words still remain enigmatic. The critics' polemics focus upon them. And it seems that here lays the key to reveal the name of the portrayed person.

The history of the painting does not bring any significant information that could be helpful in the attempts of identifying its hero. If we trace the history of the painting as an object itself it was mentioned for the first time in 1854.²

As far as the artistic history of the painting is concerned, attention should be paid to the fact that there existed two of its copies, both were in Italy in the mid of the nineteenth century.³ The existence of these copies suggests that the original painting had replicas that were lacking the signature of Jan van Eyck; it means that they were probably intended to convey the image rather than the artistic values. As an image, it could

² E. F. E[rnst] F[oerster]. *Deutsches Kunstblatt*. 5, 1854, 19 October.

³ Mentioned by Martin Davies, *The National Gallery London*, (Les Primitifs Flamands, Corpus), vol. II, Antwerpen 1954, p. 134: Two copies on copper are recorded: (1), in the Lochis Collection at Bergamo, as Pontormo; identified in Eastlake's note-book in the National Gallery, Part I for 1857; *Lochis Catalogue* (Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of the Pictures in the National Gallery, Foreign Schools, 22nd edition, London 1857), p. 247/8, Aggiunta, No CXLV. (2) . . . owned by Count Bertolazzone d'Arache at Turin, and then by his nephew and heir Count Castellani (Mändler's Diary in the National Gallery, 12 October, 1857; inscribed Palma vecchio on the back). Not identifiable in the catalogue of the Arache (Castellani) Sale, Paris, 28. Febr. — 1. March, 1859.

recur presumably in the repetition of collections of portraits, only due to the high rank of the portrayed person. The replicas, signed by the copists with contrived inscriptions such as "Palma vecchio" on a Turin replica, had no intention of showing the fame of the author of the original version of the painting, as in this case the trade value could have been preserved, far more appreciated than that of Palma Vecchio.

So in the light of what was said before, we can conclude that the portrayed man had to be a prominent person who had been sending his images to the friendly houses or who had been lending them for the sake of making copies for the offices that were subjected to him.

The occurrence of Greek letters in the words TYM. WΘEOC has inspired some of the critics to read the whole inscription as a Greek one. They all were neglecting a dot after a letter "M" and a space left between the dot and the next letter "ω", thus the inscription was read as one word: "Tymotheos", which was supposed to be the name of the portrayed man.⁴

We can attempt further interpretations knowing the presumable name of the portrayed person and in the place of the author's signature — the name of the painter — the group of words: "Leal souvenir" which was treated as a link between those two persons and in the light of such an interpretation it evidently became the painter's dedication directed towards his friend, to whom the author presented the picture and whom he assured of his faithful memory.

Such an interpretation was spread at the beginning of the twentieth century and has been preserved for a long time.⁵

In 1942, Gustaw Münzel⁶ postulated the first thought over objections against reading jointly the two lexical elements so clearly separated by means of a dot and a space regular (in the scale of applied letters) in separating independent words. But he was also influenced by a suggestion that the inscription was in Greek, that is why he proposed the interpretation in which the inscription would become a motto or a device of the portrayed person.

⁴ The first man to support a concept of reading a word Tymotheos as a name was L. Kaemmerer, *Hubert und Jan van Eyck*, Bielefeld — Leipzig 1898, p. 60.

⁵ W. H. J. Weale contributed a lot to spreading of that idea, *Hubert and John van Eyck*, London — New York 1908, cf. p. 63 f.: „a parapet of yellowish stone, bearing on the ground, in Greek characters, what is supposed to be his Christian name, Tymotheos, and beneath this in capital letters incised in the stone. „Leal souvenir”, showing that this portrait was painted for presentation to a friend, or more probably was a gift from him in calligraphic characters: Actum (etc.) a Johanne de Eyck. It is not known whom this potrait represents; certainly not a Fleming, perhaps a Greek, possibly a humanist, apparently an intelligent [. . .]”.

⁶ G. Münzel, *Zu dem Bilde des sogenannten Tymotheos von Jan van Eyck*. *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* X, 1941/42, p. 188 - 191.

In 1949, Erwin Panofsky⁷ refreshed the belief in old Tymotheos, as he created the hypothesis revealing the identity of the portrayed man. The name Tymotheos, unusual for the Christian world and not common even in Greek history, Panofsky thought to be the recollection of the name of he created the hypothesis revealing the identity of the portrayed man. The be a recognized theoretician in this field. By means of using this name the painter wanted to pay the tribute to one of his friends — the musician. In Panofsky's opinion two names could be taken under consideration: Guillaume Dufay (1400 - 1474) and Gilles Binchois (1400 - 1460). The second one became a member of Philip the Good's establishment in 1425, exactly at the same time as Jan van Eyck, that is why he could become close to the painter's sentiments.

The presumption that it could be a portrait of a musician, as the name of the Greek reformer of music suggests, has been stated earlier by Paul Fierens-Gevaert.⁸

The miniature presenting Gilles Binchois of about 1441, published by Borren in his studies about Guillaume Dufay,¹⁰ and also presented by Panofsky, does not justify the identification of the Burgundian musician with the artistic Tymotheos, it also does not reduce the doubt referring to the existence of the name Tymotheos in Jan van Eyck's inscription. In spite of that, the hypothesis has been accepted and the picture is often called: "Portrait of Binchois".

But the objections were claimed, too. Martin Davies,¹¹ in 1954, pointed out that there is no element in the painting which would confirm the portrayed man's interest in music. Even the vellum scroll in his hand includes the text written in letters, not a musical one. Jan van Eyck applied only the characterized, conventional, unreadable text. If he had intended to show the man's link with music, so instead of using the "pseudo-words" he could have substituted them with notes.

A new and significant remark was made in 1960 by R. H. Wilensky,¹² but made marginally within the general discussion on Flemish painting over centuries. The remark remained unnoticed. The author was

⁷ E. Panofsky, *Who is Jan van Eyck "Tymotheos"?* Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, XII, 1949, p. 80 - 90.

⁸ Timotheos from Miletus, active about the year 400 B.C.

⁹ P. Fierens - Gavaert, *Histoire de la peinture flamande des origines à la fin du XV^e siècle*. I. Paris—Bruxelles 1927, p. 90.

¹⁰ C. van den Borren, *Guillaume Dufay, son importance dans l'évolution de la musique au XV^e siècle*. Académie Royale de Belgique, Classe des Beaux-Arts, Mémoires II, 2, 1926, p. 34.

¹¹ M. Davies, *National Gallery*, op. cit., (1954), p. 134.

¹² R. H. Wilensky, *Flemish Painters 1430 - 1830*, London 1960, I, p. 25.

struck by the resemblance of "Tymotheos" and the figure standing behind a kneeling "scribe" on a famous miniature which depicts handing the volume of "*Chroniques de Hainaut*" to Philip the Good. But Wilensky made a mistake when recognizing the Duke's librarian.¹³ That was probably a result of treating the picture by Jan van Eyck as a present for a friend.¹⁴

Laponoidal features of the supposed to be Tymotheos and the courtier of Philip the Good create a very important link between those two. The features are so unusual that Weale rejected definitely the possibility of treating the portrayed man as the one of Flemish nationality. Weale considered him rather to be of oriental or Greek origin. The supporting factors were: the Greek language of the inscription and the oriental features in the anthropological type.¹⁵

Finally, Verbesselt's — the anthropologist, opinion confirmed the fact that such a type appears within the limits of Flemish ethnos.¹⁶ This type can be noticed pretty often in the art of Netherlands, in works of miniature, and the extremely similar version is presented by Hugo van der Goes in heads of shepherds in Bethlehem. It is not a specific Flemish type, it is rather a remain of the old local anthropological type which was reduced later by the nordic influences or may-be it was the laponoidal element of Normands brought westward from Scandinavia. As it can be traced in the Netherlands, in England and in the western France.

The miniature made for Philip the Good seems to be the first case in which we can trace the representative of this anthropological type. The presented type is, for sure, Jean de Croy, the man of high dignity at the Burgundian Court.

On the dedicational miniature in "*Chronique de Hainaut*",¹⁷ 1445 - 1448, there can be seen the same man who is approaching Duke, together with the joint of translation (Simon Neckart?), who kneeling, hands the chronicle to Philip (fig. 2, 3). Jean de Croy appears here as the protector

¹³ R. H. Wilensky, loc. cit.: "The sitter for the Tymotheos by Jan van Eyck may have been some other member of Philip the Good's establishment, perhaps his librarian, as we see him again, I think, standing behind a kneeling scribe in the frontispiece of a Burgundian manuscript, the "*Chroniques de Hainaut*" which depicts the Duke receiving a new book".

¹⁴ R. H. Wilensky, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁵ W. H. J. Weale, op. cit., p. 64: „certainly not a Fleming, perhaps a Greek".

¹⁶ Ch. M. Davies, *The National Gallery*, op. cit., p. 135.

¹⁷ Bibliothèque Royale, Bruxelles, ms. 9242 (fol. 1.) A work by Jean Wauquelin, translated by Jacques de Guise. Miniature was executed at Mons in 1445 - 1448. (See note 19.: L. M. Delaissé, *Le siècle d'or de la miniature flamande. Le mécénat de Philip le Bon. Exposition (catalogue)*. Bruxelles, 1959 p. 52, no. 42. (noted as *La miniature flamandes*).

of the authors of the *Chroniques*. The name of Jean de Croy is mentioned as the name of the person who had ordered the translation at Jean Wauquelin¹⁹ with the intention of presenting it to the Duke.¹⁹

Jean de Croy appears in similar situations depicted on the dedicational miniatures in Alexander's *History*²⁰ in Paris, and in a poetic novel "Girart de Roussillon" in Vienna.²¹

The variation, more similar to the one at *Chroniques de Hainaut*, appears again in a miniature of 1452 in Gilles de Rome, "Le livre du gouvernement des princes"²² although the features of the presented persons are depicted with less details and with smaller precision.

We can compare the portrait by Jan van Eyck with the Brussels miniature of the "Chroniques de Hainaut" which because of its mastery of technique and well differentiated features of presented people seems to be more reliable.

The similarity of the type of Jean de Croy on the miniature and the model of Jan van Eyck's portrait is great and if we consider the uniqueness of this anthropological type within the range of portraits of those days we must appreciate its significance. Wilensky has already stressed it. The line of the profile of the laponoidal nose, thick lips, heavy, strong jaws are nearly identical in both cases. Also the bone structure of the face, especially wide cheekbones seem to be analogical although the miniature presents the profile of the portrayed person. The only difference becomes the eyes. They are small in both the presentations but on van Eyck's painting the eyehole is shallow and the line is softly modelling the

¹⁸ L. M. J. Delaissé, *Mittelalterliche Miniaturen von der Burgundischen Bibliothek zum Handschriftenkabinett der Königlichen Belgischen Bibliothek*. Köln 1959, p. 122: „Der Höfling im grünen Wams am rechten Bildrand dürfte Jean de Croy sein, [...] Man weiss, dass Jean de Croy der Protektor und Auftraggeber des Autors Wauquelin war; dieser erwähnt es in seinem Prolog"; p. 123: „Wenn nun Simon Neckart in der Handschrift von Brüssel dargestellt ist, dann wird der unmittelbar hinter ihm stehende Höfling Jean de Croy sein, denn er ist aus der Gruppe herausgetreten, als schütze er den Knienden oder beteiligte sich der Überreichung der Handschrift”.

¹⁹ P. Durrieu, op. cit., p. 51; L. M. J. Delaissé, *Les "Chroniques de Hainaut" et l'atelier de Jean Wauquelin à Mons dans l'histoire de la miniature flamande*. Miscellanea Erwin Panofsky, 1955, 1-3, p. 33; L. M. J. Delaissé, *La miniature flamande, Le mécénat de Philippe le Bon, Exposition (catalogue)*, loc. cit.

²⁰ *Histoire d'Alexandre*, Bibl. Nat. Paris, (ms. fr. 9342), executed in Mons in 1448. See L. M. J. Delaissé, *La miniature flamande* ... op. cit., no. 40.

²¹ „Girart de Roussillon”, Nat. Bibl., Vienna, (ms. 2549), executed in Mons in 1448. See L. M. J. Delaissé, *La miniature flamande* ... op. cit., no 45.

²² Gilles de Rome, „Le livre du gouvernement des princes”, Bibl. Royale Brussels, ms. 9043 — Mons 1542, officine de Pilavaine, adaptation de J. Wauquelin. See L. M. J. Delaissé, op. cit., p. 55 no 46 and Pl. 24.

forehead with pale eyebrows, when at the miniature the eyebrows are thick, dark and throwing the shadow to the eyes. However, at least a part of this effect can be explained by the scheme as this kind of eyebrows seems to decorate all the presented persons, so on the scene they seem to be all alike.

The aim of this comparison is not to prove the identity of the person of the "Chroniques de Hainaut" with the man portrayed by Jan van Eyck. Of great importance is only a fact that such an unusual physiognomical type of Jean de Croy of the miniature can help us to trace the possibly repeating features of the members of the same family through generations.

It was not the only physiognomic type amongst de Croy family. For instance, portrait of Philip de Croy of Sempy, painted by Roger van der Weyden, in 1459 - 1461, shows a man with evidently oval face.²³

As the laws of genetics make us reject the possibility of the unique occurrence of prominent features within one family we can state, without a risk, that the physiognomical type on the London portrait stays in agreement with the features observed in de Croys family.

Besides the physiognomy of the presented person noteworthy are also the colours of his garment: red and green, a red jerkin and a green cap.

We can notice that those colours stay in agreement with the heraldry colours of de Croys. Their coat of arms appears to be divided into four fields and it shows red emblems (battle axes and horizontal stripes) on a dark green field.²⁴

The bust of the portrayed man emerges from behind a stone parapet but the inscriptions, especially the monumentalized device which evidently show the intention of associating the parapet with a socle of a sculpture, although the portrait itself has no character of a sculpture. The author's oscillation between a vision of nature and the association with a monument is very important from the point of view of the poetics of the picture and at the same time it may point to the fact that the portrayed person was a member of a recognized family, a man who had deserved such an honourable presentation.

The meaning of the inscription does not imply the author's intention of making a present of the painting to a friend as R. H. Wilensky suggest-

²³ Roger von der Weyden, portrait signed: Philippe de Croy seigneur de Sempy, Antwerp, Musée Royal des Beaux-Arts, inv. no. 254.

²⁴ A coloured reproduction of this coat of arms can be seen under a well known miniature depicting Paradise in a work "Seven Periods in the History of the World". Bibl. Royale, Brussels (ms. 9047) vol. 1. See — publ. L. M. J. Delaissé *Miniatures médiévales*, item 35.

ed: "The Portrait of a Young Man (Timotheos); which, the inscription suggests, was a present to a friend".²⁵

The inscription loses the enigmatic character of an individual idea of the artist when we consider its strong connection with the devices used by the members of de Croy family.

Antoine, seigneur de Croy et de Renty, who died in 1475, a knight of the Golden Fleece used the device; "SOVVENANCE".²⁶

Jean de Croy, seigneur de la Tour sur Marne, councillor and chamberlain of Duke of Burgundy, the gouverneur of Luxemburg since 1443, and since 1453 a bailif of Hainaut, till his death in 1472, being the knight of the Golden Fleece was using the device "SOVVIENNE VOUS".²⁷

Thus as we find the inscription "LEAL SOVVENIR" on a portrait, and the features of the portrayed person are common with those of de Croy family, even the colours of the coat of arms stay in agreement with those on the portrait, it enables us to point out the similarities of the devices of de Croys quoted above; the devices which form a specific unity of the family catchword.

Antoine and Jean de Croy received the membership of Knights of the Golden Fleece Circle at the very beginning of its existence in 1430 when it had only 25 members, including Duke of Burgundy — Philip the Good. This fact gives the evidence to how honourable and of what dignity de Croys were.²⁸

The monumental technique of the inscription: "LEAL SOVVENIR", striking the observer with its form and meaning should be analysed in the context of a monumental form of a socle supporting the bust.

We have already pointed out the significant fact; that at the court of Philip the Good, at whose service Jan van Eyck had also remained, two of the courtiers were the knights of the Golden Fleece and whose devices were "Sovvenance" and "Sovvienne vous"; they appeared to be Antoine

²⁵ Wilensky, op. cit., p. 7.

²⁶ Bar. de Reiffenberg, *Histoire de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or*. Bruxelles 1830, p. 3. — Lorédan Larchey, confirms that information quoting the official manuscript of that epoch. See *Ancien memorial équestre de la Toison d'or et de l'Europe au 15-e siècle*, Paris 1890, p. 28: „Sa devise était: „Souvenance”.

²⁷ Lorédan Larchey, op. cit., p. 6: sa devise était: "Sovienne vous" — Jean de Croy was a younger son of Jean de Croy, seigneur de Renty and of Margaret de Craon, and a brother of the elder Antoine de Croy. The catalogue of an exhibition *La Toison d'Or, Cinq Siècles d'Art et d'Histoire*, Exposition, Bruges 1962 by M. H. Pauwels does not give any information about devices of the knights of the Golden Fleece circle.

²⁸ A catalogue of an exhibition of 1962 gives the names of thirteen members of de Croy family who were the knights of the Golden Fleece over the 15th and 16th century only.

and Jean de Croy. However they were not the only ones who were using the motif of "memory" for the heraldic purposes. Also Jean de la Tremoille, the knight of the Golden Fleece had a device "Ne m'oubliez" which earlier had been the catchword of his family.²⁹

All those catchwords are of the knightly character as they derive from the famous heroic epic of the twelfth century: "Roman de la Rose" by Guillaume de Loris and Jean Meung. In that poem we can find the symbolic names such as: "Dous Regart" (Doux Regard), "Biaus Semblanz" (Beaus Semblant), "Noviaus Pensers", "Douz Pensers", "Douz Parlers", "Bel Acueil".³⁰ which had inspired the ambitions of the Golden Fleece circle. They had earlier been the source of inspiration for many families. That is why we can find such devices in Toison d'or circle and the catchwords such as: "Sans varier" (Antoine de Vergy), "Votre plaisir" (Gilbert de Lannoy), "Bonnes nouvelles" (Baudoin de Lannoy), "Votre veuil" (Pierre de Luxembourg).³¹

Again, the devices like: "Souvenance", "Souviennne vous", and "Loyal souvenir", can be found in the fifteenth century romance "Le Chevalier Dél'ibéré" by Oliver de la Marche (1425 - 1502) who was writing at the court of Philip the Good and in whose work some names of the knights of the Golden Fleece are mentioned. The romance was published in 1486 and it included sixteen wood engravings that clearly present the devices like: "Souvenir", "Freshe memoire" and even the note "C'est le cloistre du souvenance" placed in front of a building.³² (fig. 4).

The device "LEAL SOVVENIR" that dominates the inscription on van Eyck's portrait can be found in the epic and romance of that times and what is more, it appears in two slightly different variations at the Burgundian Court, as a catchword of Antoine de Croy — SOVVENANCE, and Jean de Croy — SOVVIENNE VOUS!

At this stage of an analysis there appears the attempt to check the inscription: "Tym. Otheoc (Otheoi?) as, may be, it enshrines the elements of history of de Croy family.

If we look at the problem from such a point of view the first association with the word Otheoc (Otheoi?) will be the name of a place where the Burgundian army fought one of the most important battles of the fifteenth century, the battle breaking the riot against the bishop of Liège, and as the

²⁹ Reiffenberg, op. cit., p. 3.

³⁰ Le Roman de la Rose, see Gillaume de Loris et Jean de Meung, ed. Ernest Langlois, Paris 1920, vol. II, vers 906, 949, 968, 2654, 2670, 2782.

³¹ Reiffenberg, op. cit., p. 3 - 4.

³² Sixteen woodcuts of „Le Chevalier délibéré" are reproduced in F. W. H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts ca. 1450 - 1700*, vol. XII — *Masters and Monogrammists of the 15th century*. Amsterdam, p. 131, see tabl. I - VI.

result the power of Flemish towns was broken. The commanders from de Croy family played an important role and probably in their own eyes it was them who led to victory. The battle took place in 1408 in the fields of Hasbain near a village called Othée, close to the town Tongres. The village had a double name as it often happened on those territories. The Flemish name was Elch (also Elchen) and the French one Othey according to the spelling of that time, what in Latin version probably looked like Othea.³³

The inhabitants of the village and the armed men fortified round the village, who had lost their lives there, could have been called otheos or otheoi. In case of application of Greek-Latin, mixed spelling, not casual at those times, which appears to be identical with the spelling of the word Otheoc (Otheoi?) of Van Eyck's inscription.

The historiographers of those times estimated the role of the commanders from de Croy family as the decisive one.

The riot of the towns under the rule of bishop of Liège (Leodium) brought about the intervention of Count of Holland and Duke of Brabant and Jean san Peur — Duke of Burgundy. Since his arrival at the battlefield the troops were under commands of de Croy and de Heilly.³⁴ The greatest chronicler of the epoch — Monstrelet mentions the names of de Croy and Heilly as the names of the greatest and the most experienced army commanders summoned to the rank of fieldmarshals of France.³⁵

In the battle at Othey both of them contributed to the victory of a feudal system that had been threatened at all Netherlands at those times. The troops led by de Croy and de Heilly defeated the enemy supporting divisions sent to the battle field in a decisive moment, in the final and decisive fight: "crushing and killing the enemy in the most cruel way, with no mercy on them" as the chronicler reports.³⁶ After liquidating the

³³ Both versions of the name of a place of the battle were defined by contemporary French historiographers (t. eg. Monstrelet) as a battle of Hasbain, and it took place at Elch (Elchen) — Othey, Hasbain it is not a name of a village or a town, it is a name of a region, acc to Franz von Löher, *Jakobäa von Beyern und Ihre Zeit*, I - II, Nördlingen 1862, I, p. 223.

³⁴ Enguerrand de Monstrelet, *Chroniques*, ed. J.-A. Buchon, vol. 27, Paris 1826, p. 348: „Duc Guillaume (i.e. Prince Wilhelm-Count) of Netherlands [...] avec les seigneurs de Croy et Heilly que lui envoys le duc de Bourgogne, bien accompagnés de grand foison de gents de guerre, se tira vers le pays de Liège pour y faire guerre [...]”.

³⁵ Monstrelet, loc. cit. p. 358: „... de Croy et de Hailly, députés de par le roi à exercer les offices de maréchal de France”.

³⁶ Monstrelet, loc. cit. p. 14: „et les envyhirent très aprement [...] iceux abbatant et occisant très terriblement, sans en avoir merci. Et adonc furent faites si grands douleurs et gémisséments d'iceux ainsi abbatu, que ce seroit longue chose à raconter [...]”.

divisions which power and arm could have decided about the victory whose Masters de Croy and de Heilly drew their troops back again to the main battlefield: "And it was the highest time as nobody could tell the fate of the battle and maybe the Leodians would have gained the victory of the above mentioned troupes led by de Croy and de Heilly had not come back and help in the final fight".³⁷

According to the chronicler the role of the commanders was extremely significant, especially their commands at the battlefield at Othey. Because of the de Croy family gained fame and recognition as it is evident in the chronicle by the greatest chronicler of the epoch; Enguerrand Monstrelet.³⁸

It was the greatest defeat of towns of Netherlands which often rioted against the feudal system, but the so called Leodium uprising was the greatest one that took place in the fifteenth century.

Thus, there would be nothing unusual about the fact that the next generations of de Croy family would have liked to preserve the fame and honours gained by Jean de Croy, seigneur de Renty, the first chamberlain of Duke of Burgundy — Jean san Peur. It could also be a reason for adopting the common heraldic device, which constantly repeated the motif of Memory, such as: "Leal Sovvenir", "Sovvenance", or "Sovvienne Vous!". Maybe the inscription Tym. OtheoS (Otheoi) suggests the existence of certain links between family memory and that famous battle.

In this case the significance of those enigmatic Greek words, or maybe Latin-Greek (that is: Latin with Greek spelling) could refer strictly to the historical event at Othey.

The analysis of Greek vocabulary from this point of view gives a result which rather supports than abolishes such an interpretation.

All the words of ancient Greek beginning with a syllable TYM (TVM) mean a grave or burying, cuts or injuries, or playing kettledrums. Even the word Tympanum, only in its figurative sense, means the "frontlet"

³⁷ Monstrelet, loc. cit., p. 358: „Et pour vérité, cette bataille fut moult douloureuse, car par l'espace de demi-heure on ne pouvait pas connoitre ni apercevoir laquelle compagnie était la plus puissante en combattant. Et peut être qu'iceux Liègeois aussent la victoire si icelle compagnie de cheval, retournée de l'occision des dessusdits fuyants, ne fut derechef survenue au dos desdits Liègeois; laquelle compagnie se porta si vaillamment en cette besogne [...]”.

³⁸ Monstrelet, loc. cit. „Et adonc en assez brief terme futfaite d'iceux grande occision sans prendre nulli (personne) à finance. [...] et churent par milliers morts et navrés en grand confusion et désolation l'un sur l'autre, en telle manière, que les monts et multitude des morts et navré, étoient et plusieurs lieux plus grands que ne sont les chaumes des maissions au mois d'aout”.

of a temple or any other building as its direct meaning is: "a device for cutting heads" or a kettledrum.³⁹

At this stage it is still impossible to go further into the analysis of grammatical possibilities of reading the meaning of those words without the limits of choosing the right word. Although if the first word of the inscription refers directly to the root of Greek words beginning with TYM, the most natural and the most convincing interpretation will seem to be the reading of those two words Tym and Otheos as something close to: a grave of Otheian people, or the conqueror of Otheians.

The inscription that is of a character of handwriting, not the monumental one as "Leal Sovvenir", might have the secondary reference to buried rebels and to the portrayed man, and like if at the background it would present the stone block with an image and a device of the portrayed man, stressing the historical values of his merits.

The reference to the political events of the epoch would be very interesting, and the form of the inscription: "TYM." and "OTHEOS" would become clear and the separate spelling of those two words would become obvious.

But, still, a reading of the inscription in such a way does not reveal the identity of the portrayed person. As the head commander of Burgundian corps that fought at Othey — Jean de Croy, could not be taken under consideration because at that time he had already been killed in a battle at Azincourt in 1415. But this does not exclude the possibility of the name Othey being mentioned by other member of the family, a member who could have taken part in a battle and be proud of it, especially when the victory brought de Croy family honours and the higher rank in the hierarchy of Burgundy.

The memory of the decisive role de Croy members played in overriding the anti-feudal rebel at Othey was still fresh in the family that had a motif of firm memory present in all the devices; "SOVVENANCE", "SOVIENNE VOUS!", and "LEAL SOVVENIR".

Considering those references to associations the van Eyck's inscription could have de Croys family and analysing the Greek version of words spelled in the antic Greek with TYM, we should also take under consideration the flexible spelling of Latin applied for the transcription of Greek words in which "i" was substituted for "y" or "ij" for "y" as it was common in Europe till the nineteenth century.

So it seems to be necessary to study the antic vocabulary of Greek in order to reveal the meaning of the puzzling word TYM . . . ?

³⁹ *Słownik grecko-polski w opracowaniu Zygmunta Węclewskiego, Lwów 1929.*

In further studies we find that the words beginning with "tim" refer also to graves, tombs, they refer to fight, injuries and such words as: timoréo — to punish, to take a revenge, timoretor — avanger, timoria — a revange, punishment, timorós — avanger, timé — prize, penalty, castigation. The meaning of most of the Greek words spelled with "i" — tim are associated with honour, tribute, respect, reverence. For example timào — to pay honours, to pay tribute (in connection with a noun theón it means to love, to adore, to admire), timos — reverence, timocratia — a country which bases on honour, in which dignity depends on a state of possession, timorós — a guardian of honours, pride, but also — humble.

On the meaning of those words probably the Greek name was based; it was the name of the musician from Miletus (mentioned by Cycero in "Tusculanae Disputationes", this information probably has inspired Panofsky). Because of Cicero we must enter the studies of Latin, and even without his mentioning this name we should do it because of the name Timotheos, which appears in the circles connected with the church of eastern and western Europe in Middle Ages and later too. Even Polish name Tymon derives from a Greek one.

In antique Latin all the verbs, nouns and adjectives beginning with "tim" are connected with fear, fright, awareness; timeo — to fear, timendus — fearful, but also the one who looks after public matters, timiditas — timidity, fearfulness, timidus — timid, also shy, timor — fear, awareness, also an object of fear, it also stays for the personification of fear. The name Timotheos (TIMOΘEO) in such a state should be associated with the fear of God, eventually with worshipping of God. Such suggestions are drawn from Greek and Latin roots as well. In this way the word Tim, in its adjectival form could have been used by Jan van Eyck for the sake of presenting the character of the portrayed person. As the meaning of the name Thymotheos is clear to everyone who knows Latin or Greek, the fact of existence of a musician from Miletus is not the decisive and necessary factor that helps to explain the significance of such an inscription as the one on van Eyck's portrait.

Panofsky not only ignored the lack of a letter "Θ" following the first syllable, the presence of a dot after the first syllable and a space, he even did not consider the probable results of reading the inscription as a compound one, which consists of two separate words. The case seems to be more important because of a fact that the name Timotheos has never and nowhere appeared with spelling like TIM THES — TIM ΘEOC. The substitution of "I" with "Y" does not matter here as Jan van Eyck himself used to spell his own name with "y" although it sounded like Eijk, but the usage of ω — Omega instead of O, seems to be unexplainable in case of this name. And what is more, the graphics the painter applied to the

words supposed to be a name, suggests clearly the way of reading it as a separate word of the inscription, namely ΘEOC (otheos). The appearance of the word in such a form created a specific sensation. If not connecting it with a name of a place Othey, its inhabitants who had formed the troupes of rebels — Otheos, there is the only possible meaning left; namely “O theós” — God. This word is spelled in Greek O-ΘEOC (pronounced hó theos) never ΘEOC, and is never spelled together, as the article remains separate in Greek language.

Tracing this track further on we will see that, what at the beginning seemed to be a misspelling, as a result of which there appeared one word WΘEOI (Itheos), could be the revelation of Jan van Eyck's artistic concept or rather his thoughts.

Neither a word OΘEOC — Otheos nor word ΘEOC — Theos appear in Greek, there exists such a word as θεός — thus εός must include the article Ó'θεός what means Deus. Jan van Eyck did not make a mistake. He only repeated the name of God in a version adopted by scribe to certain groups of sacral texts of Middle Ages, the version which did not focus the critics' consideration of Jan van Eyck's creativity up till now.

To be aware of all the consequences of such an interpretation we should study the word Otheos — ΘEOC in a context of all similar words, spelled with Greek letters, which appear in Jan van Eyck's inscriptions and which appear to be of an enigmatic, sometimes of a mysterious character. Then we should confront the results of our studies with the groups of different entities of the above mentioned texts.

That will be the study of magic. As these are the texts which operate on God's names, the names which are not only derived from the Roman-Greek church tradition but from the Hebrew cabbalistic tradition as well.

Let us limit our studies to the texts which were well known since the end of the thirteenth century till the first half of the fifteenth century.

We would certainly consider all the analogies between Latin names, or of Latin roots and those of Hebrew and Greek roots as far as they are used by Jan van Eyck.

Here is a list of names in an alphabetic order:

ADONAI — ADONAY

AGLA

EM/MAN/VEL

ELOY (on a bust of Christ within a circle by Jan van Eyck in Munich, a copy)

ΘEOC

ABAΘT — SABA

TETTRAMA — (Tetragrammaton).

In Latin transliteration, to which we are more used, the names will be as follows: Adonay, Agla, Emmanuel, Eloy, Sabaoth, Tetragrammaton.

Let us leave aside those two names, uttered on the occasions of the magical spells against demons. These names were used by doctor Petrus de Albano from Padua (1253 - 1305) in his recognized work: "Heptameron seu Elementa Magica":⁴⁰

Et imploratis speciatim omnibus nominibus et spiritibus in circulo circumstriptis, dicat: O vos omnes taque contestor per sedem Adonay, per hagnos o Theos, Iscryros, Athanatos, paralectus, alpha et omega et per haes tria nomina secreta: Agla, On, Tetragrammaton, quod hodie deneatis adimplere quod cupio.

Some other names used also by van Eyck can be found in the following spells:

per omnia nomina Dei, et per nomen Adonay, El, Elohim, Elohe, Zebaoth, Elion, Escorehie, Jah, Tetragrammaton, Sadar, Dominus Deus ..."
[where Sadar is misread as Sadai, Z.K.]

[...] venite per haec nomina, Adonay, Zebaoth, Adonay Amioram.

Venite, vebite, imperat vobis Adonay, Saday, Rex regum potentissimus et tremendissimus. [...]

Petrus de Albano appears to be worth noting and worth considering for the purpose of our studies because in some parts of his texts he refers to the names of God, which are derived from the Bible, but he does not call the names as they appear in the Bible itself, he rather refers to the comments either of Talmud or the cabbalistic ones. It gives the high historical rank to his texts but it cannot be used for our purposes. Now, let us mention those explanations (given, in a rhetoric sense to the demons, not to us — the readers) as they can reveal the roots of God's names, sometimes so enigmatic, and which are also used by Jan van Eyck.

Venite vos omnes tales, quia vobis imperamus, per nomen Y et V, quod Adam audivti, et [...] salvus cum sua familia [...] per nomen Zebaoth, quod Moyses nominavit palides de terra Aegypti versae fuerunt Lu Sanguinem [...] et per nomen Adonay, quod Moyses nominavit et fuerunt locustae, et apparuerunt super terram Aegyptiorum et commenderunt [...] et per nomen Alpha et Omega, quod Danie! nominavit et destruxit Beel, [...] et her O Theos, Iscryros athanatos, paractuletus; et per haec tria secreta nomina, Agla, On, Tetragrammaton, adjuro contestor ...

The remark about the sounds Y and V heard and uttered by Adam gives evidence to the deep knowledge of cabbala and its doctrine of sin and redemption.

The treatise by Petrus de Albano gained recognition in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries and it remained unforgotten long after.

⁴⁰ Petrus de Albano, *Heptameron seu Elementa Magica*, quoted after *Henrici Cornelii Agrippae ab Nettesheym, armata militiae equiti avrati, et ivris vtriusque ac medicinae doctoris, Opera, in dvos tomos...* Lugduni s.d. (1531), per Beringos fratres vol. I, p. 460, 461, 462.

The image of a magic circle divided by letters Alpha and Omega in its centre, and with four names of God: Agla, Adonay, Eloy, Tetragrammaton, placed at its circumference was constantly repeated (fig. 6 - 9). All those names, and there are ten of them in the treatise plus a compound name Dominus Deus, repeat the names of God to which the cabbala refers, or they reveal step by step God's hypostasis in a sequence of ten Sephirots, that is concentric circles of God's revelation, equivalent to the creation of man and of the world, in its archetypal, purely spiritual form.

The same links between the cabala and Sephirots can be found in the famous Medieval magical apocryph of the thirteenth century, the author of which was supposed to be the pope Honorius II or Honorius III or the anti-pope Alexander II.

The rhyming text of that treatise was translated into French by a priest Alphons Louis Constant — a recognized scholar who was publishing his works under a pseudonym Eliphaz Lévi. Here are some quotations of this version:

Par toi tout se termine et par toi tut commence:
 Jéhovah, Sabaoth, Eloim, Eloi,
 Hélion, Hélios, Jodhévah, Saddai!
 Éloim, Élohah, Sébaoth, Hélios,
 Éieie, Éieazereie, ô Théos Tsehurstas!⁴¹

Eliphaz Lévi's version is poor, for example this "ô théos tsehurstas" should be spelled, as in other magical texts like: O Theós Ischyros, that means Deus Fortis — Powerful God.

God's names, as they appear in a sequence of ten Sephirots in Cabala reads as follows (with equivalents of these in papal apocryph, quoted above): 1. Ehieh — Eieie; 2. Jah — ?; 3. Jehovah/Jahve, IHVH which is Tetragrammaton, — Jodhévah; 4. El — Eloi; 5. Eloha — Élohah; 6. Elohim — Éloim; 7. Jehovah Sabaoth — Jéhovah; 8. Elohim Sabaoth — Sébaoth; 9. Sadai — Saddai; 10. Adonai — ? Hélios??

This is a set of names, which in the coherent sets, although not always complete can often be found in Medieval magical texts, and sometimes we can notice them at Jan van Eyck's pictures. They have one feature in common, that is, they are all derived from the cabala, although the cabbalistic names were often based on, or derived from the Bible.

Those names were also quoted by Jan Eyck as at his times the treatises signed by doctor Johannes Faustus were extremely popular. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Doctors Jörg Faustus junior, or rather Georgius Sabellicus because this was his real name, often referred to

⁴¹ Eliphaz Lévi, *Histoire de la magie*. Paris 1922, p. 312.

them. And since then the literary tradition of Faustus figure started through the works of Marlow till Goethe.⁴²

Will-Erich Peuckert mentions also numerous manuscripts — the copies of works by Johann Faustus and about the printed, in logprint; “Doctor Johannes Fausti dreyfacher Hoellenzwang ... Passau 1407”.⁴³

One of the versions of “Constraining of Hell” includes the chapter: “Vorrede an den Cabalisten” that fact may give evidence as to how deep and well preserved the cabalistic knowledge was within the circles involved in magic.⁴⁴

The “original” or “The first” Faustus appears to be interesting to us in a specific way as the most significant spell appearing in that treatise includes all the names which were so important in a context of comparing them with those used by Jan van Eyck.

Here are the names used by both of them:⁴⁵

Jan van Eyck	Doctor Johannes Faustus
Agla	— Agla
Adonay	— Adonay
Emmanuel	— Immanuel
Otheos [o Theos?]	— Otheos — Theos
Sabaot	— Zebaoth
Tetragrammaton	— Tetragrammaton.

The difference between those two lists is very small. The text by Faustus includes only three names not mentioned by Jan van Eyck, those are: Agios, Athanatos and Messias. According to the instructions of Doctor Faustus the God's names should be uttered according to a formula of a spell while entering the magical circle, which could be attacked by demons. It is worth noticing that the strongest sets of analogical words were also used by Jan van Eyck and they were applied to images of bucklers-shields of St George at the quest of counts to Heavenly Jerusalem, at Gandua polyptych and at New York diptych presenting Archangel at the last judgement. In this last case we can speak, considering its analogy with Faustus' magical circle, of a specific transformation of the Archangel's shield into a peculiar “magical circle” created for the sake of protection against power of demons of Hell.

The formula of the magical circle can be literary referred to the shields of both heroes of Jan van Eyck's paintings. The formula was quoted by the treatise of the fifteenth century, that is supposed to change the circle

⁴² W.-E. Peuckert, *Pansophie, Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der weissen und schwarzen Magie*, Stuttgart 1936, p. 78 - 81, 189 - 193.

⁴³ see above pp. 186, 178, 179.

⁴⁴ see above pp. 178, 190.

⁴⁵ Names quoted after Faustus' treatise acc. to Peuckert, see above p. 179.

into a shield — scutum (where this term means the Roman oval shield like the one of St George). The spell often appears in different editions of “Dreyfacher Hoellenzwag” by Johannes Faustus.⁴⁶

The shields with God’s names of St George at Gandua polyptych and of St Michael at New York diptych play the same role by means of names written on them.

Now, when all the names have been explained, it is worth considering that the beginning in the inscription of St. George’s shield according to present interpretation: D[ominu]s FORTIS ADONAY SABAOT . . . was supposed to mean: Lord Powerful, Adonay Sabaoth and should be reconstructed as: D[eu]s FORTIS, in Greek; THEOS ISHYROS; that means: POWERFUL GOD.

The names Theos and Ishyros are always included in a formula of a spell of the magic circle — a shield against demons of Evil.

Certainly the painter did not apply the God’s names of an enigmatic character to break the convention of altar painting according to the concept of the Roman Church doctrines. The painter had known these concepts very well and could have applied them perfectly for his artistic purposes. In some cases, as on the shields of the heroes ready to fight with demons, the motifs serving as a protection against the power of darkness seem to be in the right place, as it was the common practice at the artist’s times. He does not unite with demons, on the contrary, he opposes them by applying all the possible means, for his or his heroes’ sake he calls all the names of God.

In the other works the mysterious mood is achieved by means of applying God’s names which sounded strange to believers. By those means the artist could achieve the effect significant even from the theological point of view, stressing the fact that God appeared to be a creature hidden behind many veils, whose revelation, although manifested in many different ways, remained in its very essence impenetrable.

A specific impression achieved through application of mysteriously sounding names, while conjuring the demons down, was rising the feeling of their unusual and fearful power. This impression effected the solemn character of the painting and at the same time it was introducing additional action and inner life to it.

Jan van Eyck had an extremely good chance to study the hermetic

⁴⁶ The text of a spell is repeated in the editions: *Dreifacher Hoellenzwange* dr. J. Faustus’ and in *Trium perfectum magiae albae et nigrae* ed. Romae (really Vienna) 1534. acc. W.-E. Peuckert, *Pansophie*, op. cit., p. 179: „Ego N. N. consecro et benedicto istum circulum, per nomina dei altissimi in conscripta, ut sit mihi et omnibus scutum et protectio + Dei Elohim Adonay T. T. T. contra omnes malignos + spiritus eorumque potestates . . .”.

literature. Because he wanted to improve and reform the technology of paints and binding materials he had to refer to alchemy, as this mosaistic-arabian, mozarabian alchemy was the only knowledge of chemistry of his times. And there were close links between the alchemy and the knowledge of the Cabala and the whole mysterious practice that was supposed to help to subdue the very nature of inanimate objects and the demons which ruled them. Neoplatonic instructions of Hermes Trismegistos and cabbala, besides the enigmatic instructions in reference to offering of the Lamb (which had become an example of sacrificial role of quicksilver; Hermes — Mercury, in the process of synthesis) formed the basis of the alchemists' philosophy. In the second half of the fifteenth century Marsilio Ficino translated the works by Hermes Trismegistos into Latin. And Pico della Mirandola published the shocking studies devoted to black art.

Black magic practices were widespread in the Van Eyck's epoch and its terminology and the techniques were well known not only to magus. The usage of God's names within a circle of black art was not objected as they had already been applied to art or the church practice, although sporadically. We should also remember that Joanna d'Arc was accused of practising black art and she was burnt in 1431; at the times of Jan van Eyck. And also in 1468 Duke Johan de Bourgogne, Count of Nevers, suspected of dealing with black art was expelled from the circle of Knights of Golden Fleece, although he was a brother of Duke of Burgundy who was the head of the confraternity.⁴⁷

In such a situation it was not very likely for the painter and a portrayed person or even for an educated observer not to read the Greek letters of the inscription "Tym. Otheos" and not to be struck by the name of God. Apart from that Jan van Eyck had to be fully aware of the significance of the meaning and probably he had explained this meaning to the portrayed person.

In the context of God's name "O Theos" the word TYM . . . could possibly define the portrayed man as the one who worships God, and who surrenders to God's omnipotence, and in such a case the word should be derived from a verb *timáo*. Certainly some other forms; an adjective or a noun of the same root should be considered especially when we know that those forms appear in a vocabulary of antique Greeks. Those words have also an implication of humbleness. The separate spelling of those two words operates evidently within two separate grammatical entities and it explicates by means of the above presented analysis. And at the same time such an interpretation allows us to avoid all those difficulties caused by the appearance of the name Tymotheos in this place, the name that was un-

⁴⁷ *La Toison d'Or*, op. cit.

usual even in the ancient times and nearly unknown in western Europe in the Middle Ages.

If anyone would attempted reading the first word TYM . . . as written with Greek majuscule "Y" — y(psilon) in minuscule written like "u" and pronounced as U or Y its meaning definitely had to be connected with such verbs as — *tumbeio*, *tumbohéo* which means burying a dead or inhumation in a grave or the association is connected with a noun *tumbos* — TYMBOS, which always means a tomb, grave. Greek antique lexicon does not know any other possibilities of interpretation of these words.

The result of using a word TYM as TUM by Jan van Eyck, read jointly with a word *Otheos* can have only one meaning; where *Otheos* would not mean God but it would mean the inhabitants of *Othey*.

The majuscule Y admits both ways of reading. Then we must state a question; is it possible to think that the artist, certainly not without a prior clearance with the portrayed man, consciously coordinated the associations, not by means of their ambiguity but the two-level structure of associations appearing on the ground of two separate, theoretically acceptable readings of the same text? It is possible to have a reference to God, on one of the interpretational surfaces, and on the other — the actualization by means of reference to the recent historical events that would stay in agreement with the artist's mental concept about his art? The answer should not be difficult if we refer to art of those times when on the pictures showing the Crucifixion on Golgotha, within a group of Christ's pupils, we can see the people who were contemporary to the artist. On the one hand they constitute a crowd and they take part in a description of an event so distant in its scenery and its mystical significance, on the other hand, they create a specific situation in which if they were recognized by an observer their presence at the scene of Crucifixion becomes the illustration of their devotion.

Again, considering our portrait we can state that the association of a word *Otheos* with God's name was absolutely clear for anyone who could read the Greek letters and its significance does not need any complex comment. Certainly it cannot be left without any. The meaning was clear for those who in the year 1432 remembered the battle at *Othey* which took place in the year 1408. And there were still many people who survived and even the commander of the division who played a decisive role in that battle. Anybody who knew Latin could understand the meaning of the word *Otheos* as: *Otheians*. The first word TYM could be interpreted as a way to pay honours to a conqueror — the portrayed man. Even the stone with the inscriptions would, in a sense, play a role of a tomb of the conquered rebels, and at the same time the stone might become a monument of the winners and eventually of the whole family. Thus in such

a way, the artist presented his hero as if on a stone socle resembling the antic tomb-stones of Roman Legionists. Even the illusionary cut-in-stone inscription stresses its associations with such a tombstone which was well known and preserved in a good condition on the northern territories of the Roman Empire. Panofsky has stated it too.⁴⁸

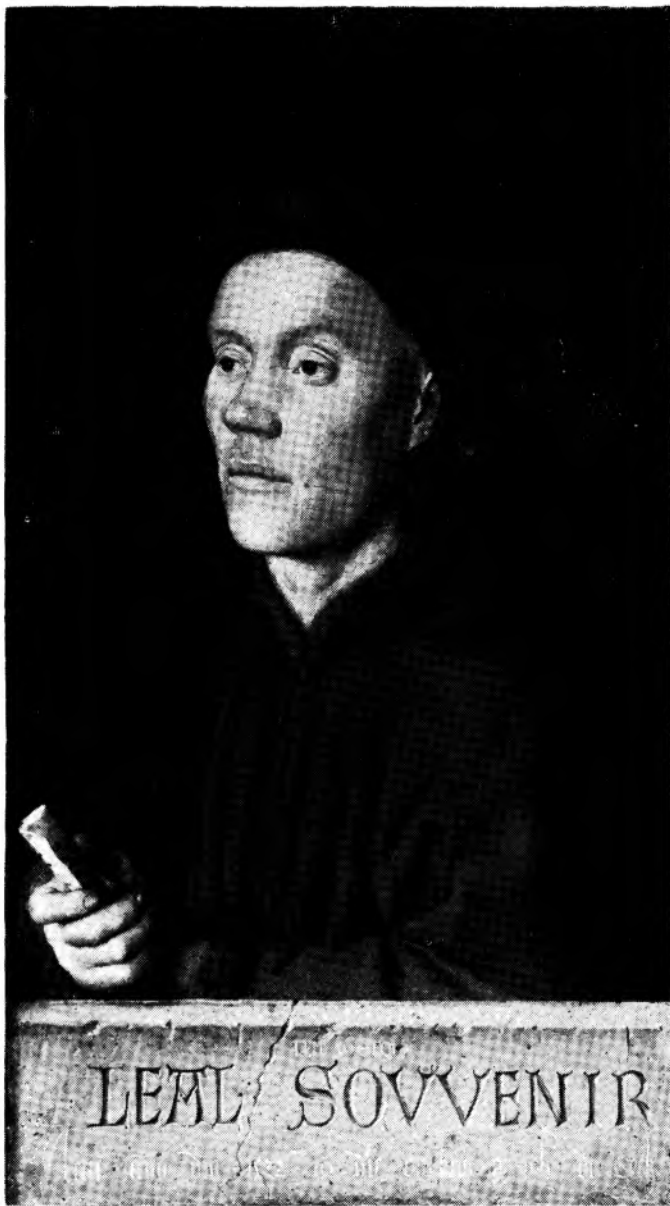
So we are coming back again to the puzzling problem of identity of the portrayed man. The entity dominating the written text in a ground of the picture appears to be: LEAL SOVVENIR painted in an illusive way, as if it was cut in a stone, and which plays a role of a device of the hero. Striking is also its similarity to the devices of both members of de Croy family who were summoned to the circle of Knights of Golden Fleece: SOVVENANCE of Antoine de Croy and SOVVIENNE VOUS! of Jean de Croy. We have to treat the word LEAL SOVVENIR, adopted in 1430 as a catchword by the whole de Croy family. It is nearly improbable for a painter who had been staying so close to the Duke of Burgundy — Philip the Good and to his court, to dare painting at someone's portrait a device which was used by two members of the circle of the Golden Fleece and who were prominent persons at the court at the same time. The order of the Golden Fleece was ascertained on July 10th in Bruges on the occasion of the Duke's wedding with Countess Isabell of Portugal, that took place in this town. Jan van Eyck used to travel to Portugal as Duke's messenger and Bruges was his hometown at those times.

What is more, only a few months before the date of the portrait, on November 22nd 1431 in Lille where the artist had lived for two years, the first chapter of the Golden Fleece was summoned on Duke's order where all the knights set their "declarations" and adopted the statuses which were written in French or rather the Burgundian language — "en langue bourgignonne", not in Latin.

Going on with the analysis of the portrait we must pay our interest to the fact that besides indefinite colours of the dark background, that later became black, and the grey stone socle the painter used only red and green colours to present the man's garment. Those colours appear to be exactly the same as the heraldry ones of de Croy family.

The features of the portrayed man show the striking resemblance to a man painted on a miniature which depicts handing a volume of "Chro-

⁴⁸ A connection of a stone parapet-socle of a portrait with tombstones of Roman Legionists has been stressed by E. P a n o f s k y in his article: *Who is Jan van Eyck's "Tymotheos"* and confirmed in *Early Netherlandish Painting*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1953, I, p. 196: "The figure emerges from behind a stone parapet on which the words Leal Sovvenir appear to have been engraved with a chisel precisely as do the effigies of Roman soldiers or provincial artisans from behind their memorial tablets...".



1. Jan van Eyck, Tym. otheos (Portrait of Jean de Croy?)
National Gallery, London. Photo: National Gallery, London



2. Chronique de Hainaut. Bibl. Royale, Bruxelles, ms 9242, fol. 1. Photo: Bibl. Royale, Bruxelles



3. Portrait of Jean de Croy from miniature
in Chronique de Hainaut



4. Olivier de la Marche, "Le Chevalier Déleberé", after Hollstein. Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450 - 1700, vol. XII, s. 131



5. Jan van Eyck, Tym. otheos (Portrait of Jean de Croy?), detail

DE OCCULT. PHILOSOPH.
DENARI.

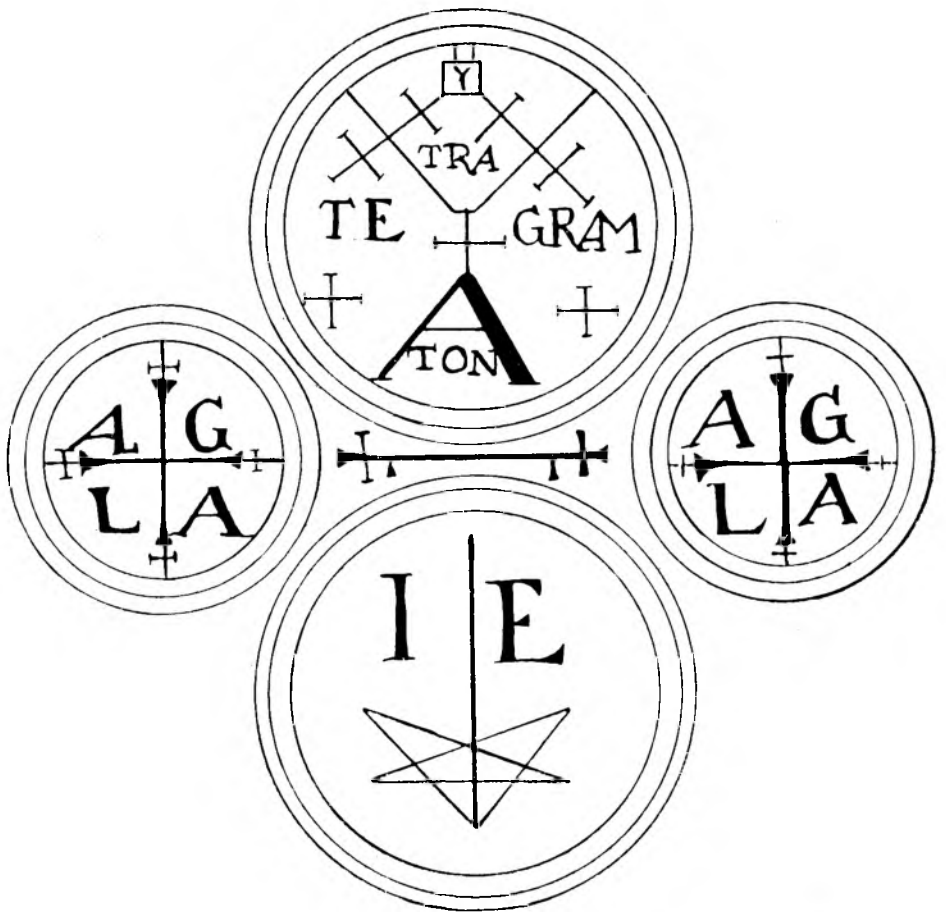
אלהים צבאות Nomen Elohim Sabaoth.		Nomina Dei decem literarum,		
צבאות יהוה Tetragramaton Sabaoth.	צבאות אלהים Elohim Sabaoth.	שדו Sadai.	אדני Adonai. melech.	Decem nomina Dei.
גצה Nezah	חוד Hod.	יסוד Jefod.	מלכות Malchur.	Decem Sephiroth.

LIBER SECUNDUS, S C A L A.

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In Arche- typo.	י'ח'ח'י'ח'י'ד'י' Nomen quadrilaterū, colle- ctum decem literarum:			י'וד ה'א'ו'א'ח'א' Nomen quadrilaterum extē sum decem literarum.		
	א'ה'ו'ח' Eh eie.	י'ח'ח' Jod Te- tragram- maton.	א'ל'ה'י'ם י'ח'ח' Tetragr. Elohim.	א'ל' El.	ג'ו'ב'ר' א'ל'ה'י'ם Elohim Gibor.	א'ל'ו'ה' Eloha.
	כ'ת'ר' Keth.	ה'ב'מ'ה' Hochima	ב'י'נ'ח' Binah.	ח'ס'ד' Ha sed	ג'ב'ו'ר'ו'ח' Geburah.	ת'פ'א'ר'ת' Tiphe- reth.

8. God's Names, after H. C. Agrippa from Nettesheim, *Opera*...



9. God's Names, cabalistic set after E. Pauckert, *Pansophie*...

niques de Hainaut” to Philip the Good. Jan de Croy, who was a protector of Jean Wauquelin — the translator was recognized as well as Antoine de Croy who patronized the completion of a luxury volume for Duke. This event took place in the years 1446 - 1448. A few years later Jean de Croy became the bailly of Hainaut (in 1453), the region which history was decited in the Chroniques.

R. H. Wilensky had studied the scene on the illustrious miniature ms. 9442 in Brussels' library and he postulated that a man on a miniature was the same person as a man portrayed by Jan van Eyck.⁴⁹

The age of a model stays in agreement with the age of a person whom W. H. J. Weale described as of “about 45 years of age”,⁵⁰ when Jean de Croy, born in 1395,⁵¹ in 1432 should be of about 38 years old. So we would have to do with Jean de Croy, seigneur de la Tour sur Marne, Comte de Chimay, born in 1395, died in 1472, the advisor and the chamberlain of Duke of Burgundy. Jean de Croy governed successively, different lands and he was also a bailly of Hainaut, and one of the commanders of Philip the Good's army. De Croy got fame in the years 1430 - 1432 during the fights with rebels who had been raising again despite the great defeat in 1408 at Othey. He was a younger brother of Antoine de Croy, seigneur de Renty. Their father Jean de Croy married to Margaret de Craon was the conqueror of Leodians at Othey.⁵²

Jean de Croy, jr., as a knight of the Golden Fleece adopted the device Souvienne Vous! analogically to Souvenance — of his elder brother Antoine.⁵³ LEAL SOVVENIR appears to be a form preserved from the early

⁴⁹ Wilensky, op. cit., vol. I, p. 25: “The sitters for the Timotheos by Jan van Eyck may be some other member of Philip the Good's establishment, perhaps his librarian, as we see him again, I think, standing behind a kneeling scribe in the frontispiece of a Burgundian manuscript, the “Chroniques de Hainaut”, which depicts the Duke receiving a new book [...].

⁵⁰ W. H. J. Weale, *Hubert and John van Eyck, their Life and Work*, London 1908, p. 108.

⁵¹ *La Toison d'Or*, op. cit., p. 35 item 23.

⁵² Lorédan Larchey, *Ancien mémorial équestre de la Toison d'or et de l'Europe au 15^e siècle*, Paris 1890, p. 36: Jean de Croy, seigneur de la Tour sur Marne, a Bruges 1429 [...] Conseiller et chambellan de Bourgogne, premier gouverneur du duché de Luxembourg (1443), qu'il sut défendre contre le duc Guillaume de Saxe, grand bailly du Hainaut (1453) [...] il mourut à Valenciennes en 1472 [...] sa devise était: „Souvienne vous” — C'était le frère cadet d'Antoine. Leur père Jean de Croy, seigneur de Renty, Chambellan du duc de Bourgogne, avait épousé Margurite de Craon”.

⁵³ Devices of de Croy brothers published by: Le baron de Reiffenberg, *Histoire de l'ordre de la Toison d'Or depuis son institution jusqu'a la cassation des chapitres généraux*, Bruxelles 1830 p. 3.

times when the circle of knights of Golden Fleece had already been forming and its status was not finally defined. Jan van Eyck knew Philip the Good's attitude towards the circle and the rank of the order, thus he would never dare making a slip against Duke or de Croy brothers. Jan van Eyck was not only a painter he was also a diplomat at the Burgundian Court.

Let us remind once more the rank of a slogan: Souvenir or its synonym *Mémoire* at Philip's court, when its personification, under a name *Fraiche Mémoire* appears in the text and on the illustrations to the poem "Le Chevalier Délibéré", by Olivier de la Marche, the poem that was dedicated to the Duke himself.

The artist knew Jean de Croy for years and even asked for his help during his stay in Lille where the Duke's governor was paying van Eyck's rent for a house.⁵⁴ De Croy's artistic patronage was well known to his contemporaries. Antoine too was the main protector of Wauquelin and of Pilavaine who were making numerous manuscripts for him. So, from that point of view accounting for the artistic patronage, the knowledge of art and even personal contacts with Jan van Eyck a concept speaking in favour of Jean de Croy cannot be denied.

The same can be said about the device *Leal Sovvenir*. As far as the other inscription is concerned, the enigmatic words *TYM. OTHEOS* can be explained explicitly if we agree with a hypothesis of Jean de Croy — a model of van Eyck's portrait, and if we accept its two possible meanings, alternative but not exclusive or contradictive. When we read and interpret those words as: "fear of God" the interpretation will stay in agreement with all the information about devotion and overpioussness of de Croy family. When understood as a "grave of Otheians" or "a conqueror of Otheians" new and fascinating perspectives emerges from the awareness of many hidden allusions referring to that famous battle and the fame of the father — the conqueror, which at the same time stresses the continuation and actuality of battle tradition by Jean de Croy who, sometimes alone and sometimes with his brother played an important role in the battles fought by Duke of Burgundy against new uprisings of the citizens of Leodium — Liége and the whole Leodian diocese.

In 1428 there broke out a bloody rebel of citizens of Tournai. It was a result of putting a tax over beer.⁵⁵ Monstrelet stresses that they rebelled not once and not twice as they used to do before.

In 1430 the citizens of Liége (Leodium), supported by the king of

⁵⁴ Weale, op. cit. vol. 30, p. 189: „Au mois de juillet de cet an 1428), ceux de Tournai se rémurent les unscontre les autres, et furent en armes par lusierus fois, ainsi qu'ils avoient autrefois été. La cause si fut pour se que les gouverneurs d'icelle cité avoient mis aucun subside sur les cervoises (bièrg), pour aider à payer la composition qu'ils devoient au duc de Bourgogne”.

France, suddenly attacked Namur shire and other lands of Philip the Good, but as the chronicler stresses the main cause of that war was an old "hatred and hostility of Leodians against the Duke of Burgundy because of the constant conflicts that had been taking place not only with the Duke but with his predecessor as well".⁵⁶

Bishop Jan de Heneberghe had been forced to lead fifty thousand of armed men into a battlefield. Duke of Burgundy, overtaken by a surprise, could hardly summon eight hundred lances that under the commands of brothers Jean and Antoine de Croy faced the enemy.⁵⁷

According to a historian Antoine de Barante the troops of Liege citizens took a revenge on Duke of Burgundy because they were deprived of all the privileges they had before the defeat at Othey, and they were taking their bloody revenge with sword and fire.⁵⁸

This great Leodian army which had already conquered Fosse and Florines again as in the year 1408, was paralysed by the rides of de Croys. The chronicler says: "En effet le sire de Croy arretera leur progrès..."⁵⁹: (Really, de Croys managed to stop them in their progressing on and on.) That situation enabled the Duke to play for time and prepare negotiations. Although the army moved back, the fights did not stop for two years until 1433 when peace was made.

We can notice that the memory about the fights with the Leodians at Othey in 1408 had still been preserved and refreshed in 1432. The citizens of the capital of the great diocese were taking revenge for their previous defeat, but the commanders of de Croy family proved their abilities and skills and the deep knowledge of tactics in a battlefield, what brought about breaking the riot down. Tracing all reports about the wars led by Philip the Good we always notice that the names of Antoine and Jean de Croys appear there as of those who unite their strength at a battlefield. Analogical unity is also characteristic of their devices popular within the circle of the Golden Fleece, "Sovvenance" and "Leal Sovvenir".

If we are to account for de Croys' war merits which are stressed by both devices, both devices stress the memory or rather the recollections

⁵⁶ Monstrelet, see to p. 297.

⁵⁷ Monstrelet, see to p. 300.

⁵⁸ A. de Barante, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 91: Les Liégeois, toujours orgueilleux, entreprenans, et portés de mauvaise volonté contre les ducs de Bourgogne qui leur avaient fait tant de mal et les avaient dépouillés de toutes libertés venaient de contraindre leur évêque à envoyer des lettres de défi au duc Philippe (*Chronique Philippe de Commines*). Historian considers the order given immediately after the battle at Othey, according to which all the original documents and even the copies of documents that was giving any law to the citizens of Liège, had to be given out.

⁵⁹ A. de Barante, see p. 92.

of the past, we have to remember about the war merits of the two brothers whose deeds at the battlefield contributed to their fame and recognition. The archaic word *Souvenance*, is still being used in the French language nowadays and it means "remote recollection" and *Souvenir* stays for "never-to-be-forgotten" namely: remember, remind. "Leal *Souvenir*" — true memory obviously refers to the past especially if connected with *Souvenance* the device of the elder brother.

However, we do not intend to force through the interpretation of the phrase *Tym. Otheos* as referring undoubtedly to the citizens of *Othey*, precisely: to the defeated rebels. We think that such an association should be considered among other layers of meanings of the inscription.

In reference to the portrayed man, it could stress his devotion and worship of God. But if connected with a device: "*Leal Sovvenir*" which was linked with the elder brother's device; *Sovvenance*, could suggest that the inscription *Tym. Otheos* refers to a historical community of the *Croys* family, its merits and fame gained during a decisive attack in the battle at *Othey*.

The attempt at reading the inscriptions in a way which would allow to join them in one meaningful entity, basing on a common root, that is the device of the order of the Golden Fleece, may bring about the question: why the hero of van Eyck portrait, presumably a knight of the Golden Fleece has not got a chain of the order. Such a question, although psychologically justified nowadays has not got any justification on the ground of customs of the epoch as it might seem before.

Despite all the widespread ideas concerning the matter, the iconography of those times gives evidence, to the fact that even in the presence of Duke who wears the order chain other members of the circle appear without it, or just the opposite, if some of them have the chains Duke appears without it, in spite of the ceremonial character of a celebration. It becomes nearly a rule on the dedicational miniatures which show handing of the precious, illuminated manuscripts. The Duke and the contributor do not wear the orders. The author of the miniature would certainly add this element to the picture to emphasize the ceremonial character of an act, but presumably the orders were worn only at certain occasions.

On a miniature of Brussels ms 9442 which shows an act of presenting „*Chroniques de Hainaut*” to Philip the Good, a founder recognized by J. M. Delaissé as Jean de Croy wears the order chain.

The exhibition of the Golden Fleece which took place in 1962 showed that the individual portraits, even those of a representative character, of the fifteenth century and the sixteenth century pretty often neglect the order chain. Lack of this chain appears in case of portraying Ferdinand the Catholic (cat. No 43), King Alphonse of Aragon (No 23) on a medal of 1448

and also while portraying Robert de Masmynes. Omitting the order distinctions seems to be a rule, although not dictated by any regulation, especially on paintings that show a praying person or a man in the church.

On Jan van Eyck's portrait — the object of our studies, we cannot speak about lack of the order's distinctions because of so distinctively presented device. The device that undoubtedly belonged to a member of the circle of the Golden Fleece. In this case only Jean or Antoine de Croy could be taken into account. If I. M. Delaissé has been right in recognizing Jean de Croy in a figure of a contributor in a dedicational miniature of "Chroniques de Hainaut" we can be positive about the fact that it is Jean de Croy's figure on Jan van Eyck's portrait. If L. M. Delaissé has made a mistake, what can only be proved by Belgian experts studying the manuscripts, the only alternative will be left — the portrayed man is Antoine de Croy. Nobody else could be a protector of the authors of the illuminated manuscripts of "Chroniques de Hainaut". So in such a case the device "Leal Sovvenir" would speak in favour of Antoine de Croy. "Leal Sovvenir" altogether with Antoine's "Sovvenance" — memories, recollections will give a complete entity.

But up till now, as nobody has contradicted the identity of a founder in the Brussels miniature of ms 9442, who appeared to be Jean de Croy, thus the answer to our original question is: Jean de Croy.

JANA VAN EYCKA „TYM. WŒEOC” — PORTRETEM JEANA DE CROY?

Streszczenie

Artykuł, będący kolejną próbą identyfikacji osoby sportretowanej przez Jana van Eycka na jego obrazie ze zbiorów londyńskiej National Gallery, koncentruje się zwłaszcza na analizie zespołu inskrypcji oraz szczególnego typu fizjonomicznego modelu, który zwraca uwagę swą odrębnością na tle twórczości van Eycka i sztuki niderlandzkiej tego czasu. R. H. Wilensky zwrócił uwagę na podobieństwo postaci z portretu do osobistości występującej na miniaturze, przedstawiającej wręczenie Filipowi Dobremu egzemplarza *Chroniques de Hainaut*. Osobistość ta została zidentyfikowana przez L. M. J. Delaissé jako Jean de Croy, co umożliwia postawienie hipotezy o przynależności mężczyzny z londyńskiego portretu do rodu de Croy.

Wstępne potwierdzenie słuszności tropu dają zasadnicze elementy obrazu: czerwień i zieleń ubioru portretowanego odpowiadają barwom herbowym rodu de Croy. Ukazanie popiersia poza parapetem kamiennym, którego wprowadzenie było na tyle istotne dla artysty, że wpłynęło na zastosowanie niezwykłego w jego twórczości portretowej formatu obrazowego, kształtowanie inskrypcji w sposób wywołujący skojarzenie owej podstawy z cokołem rzeźbiarskim, oscylowanie między wizją natury i skojarzeniami pomnikowymi jest ważną cechą poetyki obrazu i może informować, że chodzi o osobistość wybitną i ród godny takiego wyniesienia. Dwie istniejące kopie obrazu — sygnowane nazwiskami Pontorma i Palmy Vecchio — wskazują, że pow-

stały jako wyraz prestiżu portretowanego, a nie autora, miały przekazywać podobiznę, a nie wartości artystyczne.

Zasadnicza część inskrypcji, brzmiąca „LEAL SOVVENIR”, wykazuje uderzającą wspólnotę z dewizami braci de Croy, powołanych do grona rycerzy Orderu Złotego Runa, Antoine'a — SOVVENANCE i Jeana — SOVVIEENNE VOUS, co pozwala traktować inskrypcję jako zawołanie rodowej wspólnoty, przyjęte około 1430 roku. Możliwość tę dodatkowo uzasadnia ścisły kontakt Jana van Eycka z wydarzeniami i miejscem związanym z ustanowieniem orderu. Zawołania o podobnym brzmieniu znajdujemy m. in. w romansie z XV wieku Oliveira de la Marche *La Chevalier Délibéré*, wywodzą się zaś w ogólności z *Roman de la Rose*.

Gdy w zarysowanym kontekście stawiamy drugi człon inskrypcji „TYM. WΘEOC”, traktowany dotąd z reguły jako jeden wyraz, to narzuca się skojarzenie wyrazu Otheos (Otheoi?) z nazwą miejscowości — Othée (Othea), pod która w 1408 r. doszło do rozstrzygającego starcia wojsk Burgundii z powstańcami miast flamandzkich. W rozgromieniu powstańców zasadniczy udział miały oddziały dowodzone przez Jeana de Croy, ojca wyżej wymienionych. Wyraz ten może odnosić się albo do miejscowości, albo do othejczyków. Łącznie ze skrótem TYM., źródłosłowem całej grupy wyrazów greckich o zbliżonych znaczeniach — całość może znaczyć coś w rodzaju: Mogiła Othejczyków lub też Pogromca Othejczyków.

Druga możliwość odczytania członu TYM., nie w antyczno-greckiej pisowni, ale w dość elastycznej pisowni transkrypcji łacińskiej, sugeruje skojarzenia z czcią, obroną czyjejsz czci i honoru. Na znaczeniach odpowiedniej grupy wyrazów osnute zostało antyczne greckie imię TIMOΘEOS (Timotheos). W łacinie wreszcie człon ten kojarzy się z lękiem, obawą, bojaźnią, a imię Timotheos w tych warunkach kojarzyć się musiało z bojaźnią bożą, ewentualnie z czcią oddawaną Bogu. Pisownia drugiego członu inskrypcji (pomijając już kropkę i odstęp) wyklucza tu jednak imię, naprowadza natomiast na inny jeszcze trop, będąc przytoczeniem imienia Boga w wersji przyjętej w traktatach poświęconych magii, operujących imionami Boga, czerpanymi nie tyle z tradycji grecko-rzymskiej, co z hebrajskiej Kabały. Imiona te występują w kilku obrazach van Eycka, tworząc zestaw bliski zwłaszcza zestawowi z zaklęcia z traktatu *Dreifacher Hoellenzwang* z 1407 r., sygnowanego nazwiskiem Doktora Johanna Faustusa. Przy tym kontekst pojawienia się tych imion u van Eycka (tarcze, puklerze) jest analogiczny do funkcji zaklęcia u D. J. Faustusa. W związku z tym poprzedzający wyraz TYM. mógł określać portretowanego jako czciociela godności i obrońcę honoru Boga; pochodziłby w tym wypadku od czasownika *timáo*.

Przypuszczenie, że artysta mógł posłużyć się tu dwupiętrowym układem znaczeń: odniesieniem do Boga i aktualnych wydarzeń historycznych, znajduje potwierdzenie w praktyce artystycznej czasów van Eycka. Drugie z tych odniesień wiąże się ponadto z kamiennym „cokołem”, zyskującym znaczenie grobu pokonanych — pomnika zwycięzców. Nawiązanie do ogólniejszej wspólnoty historycznej rodu de Croy, jego zasług i sławy wojennej, ufundowanej na rozstrzygającym uderzeniu w bitwie pod Otheą, tworzy też powiązanie z dewizą LEAL SOVVENIR. Nie forsując interpretacji odnoszącej zwrot Tym. Otheos bezwzględnie do othejczyków, należy jednak uwzględnić to skojarzenie wśród warstw znaczeniowych inskrypcji.

Idąca za rozpoznaniem L. M. J. Delaissé identyfikacja portretowanego jako Jeana de Croy (1395 - 1472) — wstawionego m. in. w latach 1430 - 1432 w walkach z nowymi buntami podnoszonymi przez pokonanych w 1408 roku przez jego ojca leodyjczyków — nie napotyka również na trudności od strony prawdopodobieństwa mecenatu, znawstwa sztuki, a nawet osobistego kontaktu z Janem van Eyckiem.