The world of art has its own language. For centuries, especially in the sacred architecture, artists have manifested all their consecration to spirituality depicting or representing scenes coming from sacred texts. But are we sure was that all?
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For centuries, especially in the sacred architecture, artists have manifested all their consecration to spirituality depicting or representing scenes coming from sacred texts. To such an extent that only in the XVI century human and nonreligious bodies could have the honour of being present in a work of art.

Yet there is something more.

Many have been the artists who have hidden a sort of code within their representation. Some examples? Michelangelo in his “Last Judgement” inserted codes which lead to the Jewish Kabbalah; Parmigianino in his “Portrait of Galeazzo Sanvitale” represented in a detail the number 72, the so called “number of God”. Moreover, they say that Leonardo da Vinci in “The Last Supper” indicates that Jesus and the figure to His right are painted as mirror images of each other with symmetrically matching clothing, forming a 'V' shape, which represents a female womb and thus homage to the "divine feminine”.

The list of artists hiding secret codes in their works could be longer and longer... but let us remain in Italy, in the so famous period that influenced the whole of Europe, in the fields of art, philosophy, literature, science and music: obviously, we are talking about the beautiful Renaissance.

After a cold and bloody period such as that of the Middle Ages, Renaissance was a rebirth, the seeking of the concept of beauty, during which Man was placed in the centre of the world (see Humanism in literature), with the return to Classicism... with thus the consequential translation, by Marsilio Ficino, of the Corpus Hermeticum (brought to the court of Cosimo de’ Medici) in which the Greco-Egyptian Thrice-Greatest Hermes was the wisest of all.
The work of art that we would like to analyse here is a painting by Piero della Francesca. An Italian painter of the early Renaissance, Piero became so famous also for having depicted “St. Sigismund and Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta” in the Tempio Malatestiano - situated in Rimini, where we can find also a “Crucifix” by Giotto. Another very interesting location, as it seems that its founder, Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, hid in the cathedral - created by the architect and theorist Leon Battista Alberti - a series of symbols originating from the esoteric world, incorporating the letters IS echoing the myth of the Egyptian goddess Isis.

But the painting by Piero della Francesca on which we would like to focus today is also a “container” of secret messages – as suggested in the book written by Giancarlo Iacomucci Litofino (Edizioni Lectorium Rosicrucianum) “Soluzione di un enigma” which provides the title also for this article.

The painting “The Flagellation of Christ”, preserved in the National Gallery of Urbino (Italy) presents only a very singular frame, with the Latin inscription (today unfortunately erased) convenerunt in unum – converging towards the One, suggesting thus that there must be something deeper than a simple representation. Maybe a secret message hidden? Something similar to what Pope Gregory the Great asserted: “Let’s use paintings in churches, as those who cannot read, observing their walls, may at least read those things they are unable to read in codes”.

Observing the painting, we immediately see a group of three people united, on the right side. One of the various theories tells us that here we can recognize Giovanni Bacci – a humanist coming from a very wealthy family, who is identified as a probable client of the painting.

Beside him Cardinal Bessarion (here dressed in an eastern way), an expert who was best known as a translator of ancient codes. Rightly thanks to him the ancient texts of the Egyptian gnosis were translated into Greek. We have to add that, shortly after, within the court of Cosimo de’ Medici, in the beautiful Florence, -also Marsilio Ficino would play an important role - as already stated - translating the Corpus Hermeticum from Greek to Latin, making them readable and translatable into Latin for the western libraries. That’s why the here represented Cardinal Bessarion may be depicted also as the Holy Spirit, the Counselor.

But who is the character between the two, in the middle? Maybe, the artist himself: Piero Della Francesca. Dressed in red and barefoot, he can symbolically be considered
as the Paraclete, the “Comforter”, mainly representing the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Truth, and similarly, in his physical appearance, as a handsome angel. The holy trinity is, moreover, so similar to that which we can admire, on the left side of the painting “The Baptism of Christ” (London, National Gallery), another masterpiece by Piero Della Francesca.

Moving from the other side, we can recognize another inscription (which has not been erased as the other one), on the step which forms the basis of Pontius Pilate’s throne. It is the signature of the artist: Opus Petri Deburgo Sci Sepulcri (“Work by Pietro coming from Borgo San Sepolcro” - his native village). The Cr Santo Sepolcro does not only lead to the name of a village, but also to the discovery of the sepulcher of Christian Rosycross: where the Rose in inserted within the Christ.

Let’s observe Pontius Pilate on the left side of the painting. Is it by chance that he’s sitten on a throne, on two steps? The number two always reminds us of the dualism of this world, the alternation between good and evil, black and white... exactly as the floor which is under his feet, (as we historically know “without taking part” as he symbolically washed his hands.) needs rephrasing

There’s another character beside him, but we can see only his back: barefoot, he represents Love, above the dualism of the floor, uniting the exterior with the inner. He wants to unite the present time with eternity. This figure, dressed in white and with a turban on his head, represents the New Energy. When the ancient material personality will be fully replaced, it can be read as the birth of the New Human Type, the spiritual one, when purification will be complete.

The result, the New Human Type is represented by the golden statue that we can see on the top of the column: in one hand he holds a transparent globe (maybe a crystal sphere) representing perfection, the new sun rising.

We could write more and more, as the details hidden here seem quite infinite... but only to an attentive eye.

Keep searching for them, ‘cause the quest never ends.