

## INTRODUCTION

Jean de Rouen, French sculptor and architect, constitutes an exciting phenomenon of European artistic migration during the 16th century. He left an impressive oeuvre: buildings, statues, altars, tombs and reliefs, however his life and his career remain yet uncertain. After an apprenticeship in Normandy, he arrived, probably at the end of the third decade, at Coimbra, where his more important artistic testimonies can be found. His work reveals heterogeneous sources, which makes its analysis extremely complicated and asks for an interdisciplinary approach and the collaboration of an international and pluridisciplinary group of scholars. Once in Portugal, he continued to take his inspiration from models he had seen during his youth in the building sites of the French Northern cathedrals of the late gothic period, and in private and public buildings, and combined them with classical patterns in hybrid compositions, resulting in a style that wasn't very different from that which was being developed in France before he left. Skilfully and swiftly, the master seems to have adopted and integrated local iconographic and technical traditions and succeeded to satisfy his Portuguese patrons, in particular the religious orders. His language incorporated also influences from Spain and Italy. According to the custom of the most ambitious artists of the Cinquecento he probably visited Italy, perhaps before arriving in Portugal. The second register of the Porta Especiosa of the cathedral of Coimbra - attributed to the Rouennais - is an original mixture of late gothic and classic vocabulary, and suggests that he knew Jules' II loggia of Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome. Additionally, the French artist could have studied Italian prototypes through prints, and undoubtedly in architectural treatises such as Sebastiano Serlio's

Fourth Book (Venise, 1575) from which he accurately adopted several details. The Frenchman shared the European Renaissance's interest for centralized organisms, as can be seen in his complex fountain in the Manga Garden in Coimbra; and he uses very à l'antique coffers to decorate the hemispherical cupolas in the chapels of the Sacramento in the cathedral of Coimbra and in the chapel of the Three Kings in the church of San Marcos. If his name belongs to those of the artists who were active in the Monastery of Serra do Pilar - a fascinating building which combines the model of the Collegio di Spagna in Bologna from 1564, marked by a symmetry dominating the whole building, and the circular courtyard of the palace of Charles V in Granada - this would reveal the large network of prototypes that he was accustomed with.

The astonishing remains of the unfinished chapel for the Treasurer in S. Domingos (today in the Museu Nacional de Machado de Castro in Coimbra) differ strongly from Jehan de Rouen's language: they are stricter in following the Vitruvian rules, as the Ionic capital of the giant orders proves, and the play of light is much more contrasted than usual, placing a smooth shafted pilaster next to a fluted one.

So, the work that is ascribed to his corpus is rather heterogeneous, and the chronology lacks precision, as a result it is not easy to place it in the complex evolution of European history of art, where it certainly deserves a place. Probably this is due to the fact that he collaborated with many assistants and pupils, creating an important school, and ingenious followers. But we have also to take in consideration the hypothesis of the existence of two homonymous artists, suggested by the length of the activity that is attributed to "Jehan de Rouen" and the obvious differences of style and of calligraphy.

The meeting in Coimbra of 2018 was a first and important step to open a new international debate around this key personality of the Portuguese Renaissance. The analysis of dialogue between Jehan de Rouen and his patrons allows us to evaluate the political and religious iconographic strategies and the correlated inclination for patterns all'antica. The seminar in Rouen in 2019 intended to investigate the roots of the artistic education of Jehan and, in the absence of written documents, to try to reconstruct the first steps of the young artist. In order to throw new light on his oeuvre it is necessary to explore again the archives and define an accurate catalogue of his artworks on which to draw so as to understand the evolution of his artistic language. Consequently, artworks undertaken by other artists will emerge and reveal the *Nachleben* of his works, but such a listing can contribute moreover to compare his work with that of architects-sculptors, active during the same decades in Europe first of all Michelangelo, but also Bartolomeo Ammannati, the team Pierre Lescot and Jean Goujon, Diego Siloe or Andres del Vandelvira.

The contributions of this volume set off a new thought-provoking horizon of topics to explore. Frédéric Elsig presents the synthesis of his and Carmen Deo Teodorescu's research on painting in Rouen at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, giving us a perspective on the cultural and artistic context in which the French artist developed. It is focussed on major the personality of Arnoult de Nijmegen and underlines the importance of the collections of Italian painting that the Cardinal d'Amboise had gathered in his archiepiscopal castle of Gaillon. Marion Seure centres her study on the well documented construction sites in Normandy in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and singles out the specific functions of masons, stonemasons, sculptors and *tailleurs d'images*, characterized by a polyvalent profile that

influenced the nature of their creations. Valuable information on the Last Supper in terracotta, realized by « Mestre Odart », a French sculptor probably native of the northern half of the kingdom is provided by Jean-Marie Guillaouët. The works of this artist are here, for the first time, examined alongside the contemporary sculptures of the Giusti brothers in France. Rafael Moreira studies the civil and military architecture attributed to master and his followers, insisting on his interest in urban-planning. Maria de Lurdes Craveiro demonstrates that he emphasized the importance of covering sacred buildings with a dome in Portugal, reconciling the legacy of ancient architecture and neo-Platonic philosophy. By analysing Jehan de Rouen's statuary, Rui Robo shows how gradually he became an architect and in which way he assimilated the architectural language of modernity based on the principles of antiquity. Carla Alexandra Gonçalves thanks to the analysis of the spectacular *Depositio* carved by Jehan de Rouen for the Conventual Church of the Sepulcher of Coimbra, explores how the sculptor introduced to Portugal an iconographic theme dear to French spirituality and based on the liturgical plays which were performed during the Holy Week, comparing the monumental group from Coimbra with some similar works built in French territory between the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup>. Founded on the analyse of the decoration of portals, tombs and altarpieces sculpted by Jehan de Rouen in Portugal between 1528 et 1570, Jean Beuvier aims to determine their place within the artistic transfer of Italy, France, Spain and Portugal and to identify the genius inventions. In fine, Joana Antunes raises questions about how Jehan de Rouen, alias João de Ruão's, used the grotesque decorations, linking them to ugliness, monstrosity and hybridism, comparing this to similar phenomena in sculpture, painting or other media. An analysis that reveals how even these small details offer insight into

Jehan de Rouen's knowledge of the main all'antica themes of the Italian Renaissance.

This dialogue between France and Portugal will unfold and lead not only to a better understanding of the works of this artist but also provide the means to insert them in the European evolution of architecture and sculpture. We are delighted that a stimulating dialogue has been initiated between scholars coming from different traditions and schools and look forward to further fertile debates around this important protagonist of circulation and transmission of forms and traditions between France, Italy, Portugal and Spain during the Cinquecento.

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