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PSYCHOLOGICAL AGE OF CIVILIZATION¹

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The article presents the first part of the study devoted to the system periodization of the development of modern European civilization and to the comparison of the initial period of the development of civilization with the corresponding periods of human development. One of the main criteria considers the similarity of goals and means of expression of art of a certain period in the development of civilization and characteristics of human development in the particular period of life, including the features of game activities.

From the point of view of systems analysis, art is a specific element of civilization representing an information model of major, substantial system links emerging within civilization at different stages of its development. The existence of such a model allows civilization to effectively reproduce and mold links, required for its development, in various zones of civilizational space. This determines the necessity of art for any civilization. Art is a conceptual design of a building or a ship which helps to construct not just one real building or one real ship, but any number of buildings or ships. Art plays the same role in the case of civilization as a game in the case of each individual. A child's or an adult's play allows a human to form the relations which are essential for further life (or else to free oneself from unwanted, parasitic ties); these relations are formed through the imitation of real life situations, not putting a person at risk or endangering anyone. In the same way art, being the game of civilization, allows doing the same for social strata in their entirety — and society as a whole.

The functional semblance of the phenomena of modeling of real world system links in human games and in art allows us to assume that the aims and the expressive means which characterize the art of a certain period of civilization development can be analogous to the specificities of human development in the respective period of life. And moreover, these aims and means can be analogous to the aims and specific features of games played by man at a certain age. Thus, an opportunity is provided to compare the age-based periodization of human life and psychological age of separate epochs in the development of civilization, as depicted in works of art.

In the presented part of the research we adduce the description of such analogies covering the initial period of European civilization development from approximately V to VIII centuries, which — according to the proposed study — corresponds to the first three years of a child's life.

Keywords: system periodization of development; phases of system dynamics; art; game; age of civilization.

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Introduction

From the beginning of the Modern era to the present day, many works have been devoted to the attempts of reflecting on the cause of emergence, evolution and decline of civilizations. In XIX century seemingly naïve considerations of Johann Herder, Nicolas de Condorcet, or Charles Fourier's visionary opera were superseded by still relevant sociological works of Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer and Max Weber. The XX century proved no less fruitful. As early as 1923 Oswald Spengler published his famous book "The Decline of the West" ("Der Untergang des Abendlandes") [15], in which he, on the basis of extensive culture studies material pertaining to various epochs in the life of mankind, predicted the inevitable forthcoming downfall of the European civilization. Somewhat later the theory of the circle of changing each other local civilizations was continued by Arnold J. Toynbee; in the period from 1934 to 1961 he published his 12-volume opus "A Study of History" [11], which almost immediately became known as the classic work on the history of civilizations.

At the same time as Toynbee's study, in 1938, there appeared just as famous work of Johan Huizinga "Homo Ludens" [13], in which the author expresses an interesting idea of play being the primary element of culture. Johan Huizinga believes that culture originates from play. However, on a certain stage of civilization's evolution, in XVIII century, the play element of culture begins to shrink. Labor and production become the ideal of civilization, and this situation, according to the author, is fraught with the danger of the destruction of culture as the latter moves away from its sources.

In 1970s Lev Gumilyov's passionarity theory of the rise and fall of civilizations was put forward; this theory describes various types of ethnic systems and ethnogenesis phases: rise, the acmatic phase, convolution, inertia, obscuration and the memorial phase; the theory has invoked the ongoing debate.

And yet, notwithstanding the diversity of views and conceptions advanced, the bulk of research in the past century has been aimed at suggesting the scheme of civilization development based only on the patterns of historical

and cultural processes noted by the authors. They explained sociological and cultural-historical reality starting from, and in accordance with this reality, not trying to rely on the perception of more general regularities of animate nature evolution, to say nothing of fundamental natural patterns [1].

This approach necessarily determined the author's subjective perception of historical facts — and the correlation between them, thus turning any attempt at reflecting on the course of history into a literary work, rather — the one bearing only little external comparison to a scientific work.

One of the alternative decisions can be related to the use of systems analysis of social phenomena which allows not only to determine the key phases of social system dynamics, but also to establish certain analogies in the development of social systems at micro- and macro-levels. With this in view, the present paper is aimed at extending the sphere of application of systems analysis method to researching social processes on civilization level, and on this basis constructing the system periodization of development of modern (European) civilization.

Systemic Unity of the Development of Human and Civilization

From the point of view of systems analysis the genesis and growth of any living system, irrespective of the form of life (biological or social) and the level of system organization (human or society) operate under the same system laws and presuppose passing through the same stages, or phases of system dynamics — intensive development, extensive development, disintegration, dissipation etc. (See the detailed description of the sequence of phases of system dynamics of living systems in [10]). As the research on the prevailing motivation of people belonging to different age groups has shown, the sequence of phases of system dynamics in the system periodization of human development can be correlated with the successive eras of life and existential epochs. Thus, the phase of intensive growth which is the initial phase for the development of any living system corresponds to the era

of formation comprising the epoch of childhood and the epoch of adolescence. The subsequent phase of extensive growth corresponds to the era of blossom which includes the epoch of youth and the epoch of adulthood. Next come the era of preservation corresponding to the phase of dissipation and comprising the epochs of middle age and the age of maturity, and the era of return corresponding to the phase of disintegration, and comprising the epochs of elderliness and advanced age [9].

It can be assumed that such a change of existential epochs pertains to civilization as a social super system. It goes without saying that the idea of civilization — same as man — passing through the stage of adolescence, blossom and aging is not new. As far back as 1767 Adam Ferguson in his “Essay on the History of Civil Society” [12] noted that not only each individual makes all the way from infancy to maturity, but the entire human race does it as well, moving from barbarity to civilization. At the beginning of XX century the founder of pedagogical direction in developmental psychology Granville Stanley Hall came up with the so called recapitulation theory which became well-known despite widespread criticism [14]. According to this theory ontogeny repeats all basic stages of phylogeny. A human embryo passes through stages of biological development from the level of unicellular organisms to higher mammals. Childhood corresponds to the primitive stage of the development of society which is superseded by the epoch of barbarity and the beginning of civilization. According to G. Stanley Hall, the period from puberty to the age of 25 corresponds to the epoch of romanticism in European civilization.

Later one of G. S. Hall’s followers, K. Hutchinson described five successive periods of societal development corresponding to certain ages in human life: thus, barbarity corresponded to life before the age of 5, the “hunting” period lasted till the age of 12, “shepherd and flock” period terminated at 14, the “agrarian” period corresponded to the age before 16, whereas the “industry and trade” period ended with coming of adulthood [5]. This viewpoint, similarly to Hall’s theory, was also subjected to seemingly devastating criticism; however, as distinct from a number of other conceptions which proved untenable,

it has not been completely forgotten. Rather, it shared the fate of Cesare Lombroso’s ideas. Today the recapitulation theory is being rejected as a holistic science-based approach — and yet it does find support in numerous details.

At the same time the absence of evidence-based periodization of human life and society in the overwhelming majority of research papers — from A. Ferguson to the comparatively recently published works (see, for example, V. D. Molostov’s “Aging of Civilization”, 2010 [6]), inevitably led to the arbitrariness of presented evolution parallels and, as a consequence, to the legitimate criticism of proposed theories.

The difficulty here lies primarily in finding an adequate criterion that might help to establish the duration of this or that epoch and, perhaps, to ensure the most important thing — to determine the present-day psychological age of civilization. As it has already been noted, the traditionally applied (for this purpose) sets of cultural, social, economic and other indicators — due to their highly subjective interpretation on the part of most authors — as a rule, do not possess the features of science-based criteria.

Art as a Game Played by Civilization

Art is one of the most frequently used indicators of the development of civilization. For Oswald Spengler, art captures the specific features of the soul of civilization, at the same time serving as the most important testimony of socio-cultural changes taking place in society [15]. By contrast, Arnold J. Toynbee points to the existence of productive tension between civilization and art which, according to the author, being in constant struggle, constantly enrich each other [11].

However, the term “art” remains highly uncertain. There are many works in which wide-ranging definitions of the concept of “art” are presented. “Self-expression of an artist”, “a constituent part of the spiritual culture of mankind”, “one of the forms of social consciousness”, “a historically formed system of the artistic exploration of the world”, “a type of cultural activity satisfying man’s love for the beautiful” — all these definitions, despite their prevalence, do not

give an answer to the question of the historical necessity of the origin of art in all the known civilizations.

From the point of view of systems analysis, art is a specific element of civilization representing an information model of major, substantial system links emerging within civilization at different stages of its development. The existence of such a model allows civilization to effectively reproduce and mold links, required for its development, in various zones of civilizational space. This determines the necessity of art for any civilization.

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The functional semblance of the phenomena of modeling of real world system links in human games and in art allows us to assume that the aims and the expressive means which characterize the art of a certain period of civilization development can be analogous to the specificities of human development in the respective period of life. And moreover, these aims and means can be analogous to the aims and specific features of games played by man at a certain age. Thus, an opportunity is provided to compare the age-based periodization of human life and psychological age of separate epochs in the development of civilization, as depicted in works of art.

Let us consider the history of the genesis and growth of modern European civilization within this framework.

European Civilization. Prehistory and Birth

The formation of the new social system, similarly to the new biological organism, originates in the parent system of the prior period.

The process of the new system genesis starts from the moment when a certain part of elements of the parent system, under the influence of an external impulse, constitute a new specific structure which, when entering the intensive development phase, not only quickly increases in volume, but also rapidly becomes more complex while acquiring new quality.

It is the numerous Germanic tribes threatening Rome over the Alps for many centuries that became the parent system for modern European civilization. Ancient authors unanimously noted great stature, strength and bravery of the Germans, as well as their intrinsic irrestrainable bellicosity distinguishing them other barbarians. Due to active aggressive policy which Rome pursued in Germany during the rule of Julio-Claudian dynasty [3], the situation in the vast areas to the north of the Alps resembled a stirred-up beehive. Starting from II century clashes of Rome with the Germans — the ancestors of the major part of the bearers of the future civilization — became incessant. As a result of these clashes more and more Germans had settled in Rome as slaves, and more and more their free fellow tribesmen — Goths, Huns, Burgundians, Franks and others — were drawn into the struggle with the empire.

It is assumed that at that time, under Emperor Claudius, Apostle Peter founded the first Christian community in the very center of the ancient world — in the city of Rome. That is when the seed of new religion was brought from Judea to the ancient civilization — the religion destined to become one of the systemically important factors of the future civilization.

The first Christians of Rome — the urban poor and slaves, for the most part — all of them from the systemic perspective were the elements of the earlier ancient civilization, since all their social connections, language, cultural traditions, way of life — all was Roman. As they were making their faith stronger acquiring new moral values and the new meaning of life, they were simultaneously becoming the elements of the new system spiritually alien to pagan Rome.

Over the first two centuries of the existence of Christian communities their presence in Rome was practically imperceptible and exerted no influence on the life of society. In the second half of III century the situation changed

substantially when the increased number of Christians began to pose a notable threat to preserving the former civilization values of Rome. The response was the largest and bloodiest persecution of Christianity led by Emperor Diocletian which affected hundreds of thousands of people and became a turning point in the development of Christianity.

Soon after the end of persecution Emperor Constantine, the adopted son of Diocletian, who later got the honorific title of "The Great", issued the Edict of Milan which declared religious freedom on the entire territory of the Roman Empire. In fact, this meant that Christianity acquired the dominating position in the empire.

In 325 AD Constantine convenes the First Council of Nicaea which establishes a clear-cut hierarchy of Christian church and secures a special role for the Bishop of Rome — St. Peter's heir. From that time the western, Roman Church becomes the bearer of the unique model of world organization in which the order copied from the Roman state machine becomes the pattern of the world order, the universal global principle operating both on earth and in heaven. In the future this model would be adopted by barbaric Germanic tribes, and would form the basis for system relations in the new civilization.

For more than a hundred years after Constantine's reforms the western part of the empire still retained a considerable part of the attributes of the previous Roman civilization, only very gradually giving way to the pressure of barbaric invasion. However, the clergy and the religiously active part of Christians at that stage already constituted the specific cultural environment living in accordance with their traditions. This environment never accepted the surrounding ancient culture. And at the time of Rome's agony Christians regarded it as just retribution upon the great people and the City, once powerful and merciless, shedding rivers of innocent martyrs' blood, and now — helpless, caught in the mire of debauchery and idleness. Yet, according to the witness of those incidents, Blessed Augustine, Christians were unable to hold back the tears looking at its marvelous palaces and libraries perish in the fire [1].

Shortly after the capture of Rome by the Visigoths in 410, dozens of Germanic tribes flooded the territory of the Western Roman Empire. Some

of them, like the Franks, soon found the new motherland in the former Roman provinces; others, like the Vandals, moved from place to place; but wherever the barbarians came, they ruthlessly destroyed the remains of the former civilization. Christian churches were the only exception (though not always); this happened because many Germanic tribes had converted to Christianity before the Migration Period. Others became Christians somewhat later (for example, the king of the Franks Clovis I was baptized in 496). However, by VI century only those Germanic tribes that lived outside the former Roman borders, in Central and Northern Europe, held onto old pagan beliefs. Thus, Christianity was, in essence, the main communication link between the old — and the emerging new — civilizations.

And here some refinement is definitely called for. Most of the Germanic tribes that had settled on the territory of the former empire — Goths, Burgundians, and Lombards, or Longobards, who at the end of VI century ruled over a considerable part of Italy, were arians, i. e. the followers of the movement in the Christian religion that was deemed to be a heresy at the First Council of Nicaea as far back as 325. This made them enemies of the Roman-Catholic Church and separated them from the model of the world order which this church had inherited from the Roman Empire. Only the powerful Kingdom of the Franks adopted Roman-Catholic tenets and, simultaneously, the idea of Roman hierarchy. It is exactly this state that — together with the revitalized Rome — will become one of the most important centers of the formation of the new civilization.

Infancy of Civilization

For a person, infancy is a period from birth to about one year. At this age children grow quickly; they are self-centered and explore the world through sensations; they learn to grab things, and they play with themselves [7; 8].

Something similar can be easily guessed in the meager evidence which the history of the Kingdom of the Franks of V–VI centuries has at its disposal. Over the first hundred years of its existence, the Kingdom of the Franks almost doubled in size. However, not counting

the military expansion, its contacts with neighbors remained on the minimal level. The brightest pages of this period are the shocking cruelty of the war between the two queens — charming Fredegonda caught in the mire of wilful homicide (545–597) and her implacable rival Brunhilda (543–613).

The art of Western Europe of this period is also poor and primitive. It can be seen in several royal tombstones, including the tomb of fiendish Fredegonda in the Basilica of Saint-Denis, the burial place of the French kings (Fig. 1), roughly decorated with sword handles and fibulae (cloak clasps or cape) — objects originally designed for grasping and simple manipulations. This is natural. Art keeps the historical memory of mankind. But the memory of the period of infancy will not be preserved, either in the individual, or in the civilization as a whole.



Fig. 1. Fredegonda's tombstone, VI century
(Paris, The Basilica of Saint-Denis)

Another hotbed of nascent civilization, Christian Rome, at that time existed somewhat in isolation, except for short periods of its forced inclusion in Byzantium. Ruined and desolate, it completely lost its former greatness trembling

at the new hordes of the barbarians. The population of once the greatest city on Earth decreased by tenfold. Waterworks supply did not operate since Germans destroyed famous aqueducts, ancient patrician families disappeared, and local self-administration did nothing having no resources. Papal authority was the only surviving force in Rome; the Pope was the last defender to whom people approached when bread supply was exhausted or enemies reached the city.

And the Popes, as best they could, defended their city. Like Gregory the Great, one of the most respected Roman high priests of VI century, equally worshipped by Catholics and the Orthodox, they fed the hungry from their reserves, bought out prisoners, with their last money bought slaves from the barbarians and set them free. They organized resistance to the barbaric invasions and personally conducted negotiations with the leaders of the barbarians. And when the latter were withdrawing leaving the city unravaged, there was no limit to the exultation and religious enthusiasm of the people, because everyone witnessed a miracle — with the Pope's patronage the Lord himself had saved Rome from destruction.

All this had far-reaching consequences. The former pagan Rome was rich, enlightened, but not religious. The ancient Romans honored traditions, swore by Jupiter, but they were only formally related to religion. Before the beginning of the war, for example, the priests arranged public fortune-telling about its success, and if fortune-telling gave an unfavorable result, they were not discouraged, but continued to make guesses until the gods clearly promised victory to Rome. Even after the victory of Christianity during the time of Constantine, only a small part of the population was truly religious. Now everything was different. Rome was squalid and very few could spell their names. (Gregory the Great altogether prohibited reading anything other than the Bible and theological books, stating that “ignorance is the mother of true piety”), but by then in Rome there had been laid foundations of universal religiousness as one of the most important system links of European civilization for the millennium-long Middle Ages.

On the whole, the strengthening of the Roman Church, and the beginning of the formation of the “new” medieval world outlook, which

became particularly noticeable during the years of the pontificate of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604), allows to regard this time as the end of the infancy of European civilization.

The Early Age of Civilization

The period of human life subsequent to infancy is the early age or early childhood, and it covers the second and the third years of life. At the beginning of this period a child is still focused on himself, he becomes naughty, demands more and more attention; however, his own attention easily dissipates since a child is able to concentrate fully only on one object. At this age a child has no «brakes», it is difficult to stop him, and he becomes curious and imitates adults. Further on, at the age of 2 to 3, a child becomes more and more interested in the world around him; he becomes impetuous, acts on the first impulse. He starts checking the boundaries of what is allowed, becomes more independent; however, he is still very suggestible and illogical. He develops an interest in learning.

At this age, visionary images are formed on the spur of the moment. The reproductive imagination, mechanically replicating the impressions, dominates in a child [4; 7; 8]. At the age of 2 a child can already distinguish several colors. Usually these colors are red, yellow, green, blue, purple, and also black and white. However, when starting to draw or color pictures, a child still does not reflect the pattern's color, but chooses it according to his taste. He plays mostly with himself, same as before.

What follows the epoch of the infancy of European civilization? From VI to VIII century, the history of the Kingdom of the Franks was replete with disarray and bloody strife, fully justifying the name of the “dark centuries” as a general characteristic of the epoch. However, as early as at the beginning of VIII century, there started to occur events of great civilizational importance. In 719, the power in the kingdom passed to the representative of the new dynasty, Carolus Martellus who, having created units of heavily armored horsemen, the prototype of the future knights' cavalry, not only significantly expanded the borders of the state, but also

prevented the enslavement of Western Europe by the Arabs defeating the invaders in the battle of Tours in 732.

No less important role in the formation of the new civilization belongs to his son Pepin the Short (Pippinus Brevis). In 754 he was solemnly crowned by the Pope and proclaimed defender of the church. In 755 Pepin defeated the Pope's enemies, the Longobards, and passed the central Italy and Rome into the possession of the Pope. Thus, thanks to the union of the Pope and the powerful king of the Franks, the idea of the universal world order developed by the Roman Church was for the first time transferred to the barbarians who constituted the core of the new civilization. On the other hand, by acquiring real secular power in the Papal State, thanks to the “gift of Pippinus”, the Roman Church itself became not just the “leaven” of the emerging civilization, but its most important center.

Western European art of VII–VIII centuries is, generally, as unimpressive as in the previous period. The same fibulae in the form of schematically depicted animals and birds made of gold filled with red glass, unpretentious handling of weapons and horse harnesses, roughly carved relief tombstones (Fig. 2), and the improper portrayal of the figures of Christ where the domination of planar style is very much in evidence.



Fig. 2. The tombstone of a Frankish warrior from Niederdollendorf, near Bonn, VII century
(Bonn, Rhineland Museum
(Rheinisches Landesmuseum))

At the same time, however, something new is also revealed which is quite significant from the point of view of the correlation of the age of man and civilization. This new thing is miniature, or illuminated manuscript, appearing at the turn of VII–VIII centuries in the monasteries of Ireland and northern England. Because of their remoteness and inaccessibility these monasteries were somewhat less affected by barbarian invasions. The obligatory accessory of several Gospel manuscripts created there is a large, almost half a page, initial of the opening page filled with ornament. The contour of the ornament, as in the colorings for three-year-old children, represents clear black lines, the space between which is flat painted with watercolors (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. The decorated initial page from the monastery at Lindisfarne containing the incipit from the Gospel of Matthew; a fragment, 715 (London, The British Library)

The set of paint colors used in the miniature completes the similarity of age periods. It is practically the same as in modern children's colorings — green, red and yellow colors prevail, whereas lilac and light blue occur less frequently.

The “Three-Year-Age Crisis” of Civilization

The human's early childhood period ends with a breaking point in his development known as “the crisis of three years of age”, with an abrupt change in behavior and the emergence of new features in child's consciousness. The characteristic symptoms of this crisis are negativism, stubbornness, obstinacy, self-will,

protest riot, depreciation, desire for despotism [3; 4; 7]. The reasons for the emergence of such behavior features are explained by the fact that a child begins to see himself as an individual, an independent personality, and tries to manifest his own will. However, as Lev Vygotsky noted, “each negative symptom of the crisis conceals positive content, usually consisting in the transition to a new and higher form” [3]. This positive content is displayed in the formation of the new level of self-awareness, the development of volitional qualities, progressive changes during the game, cognitive and substantive activity [4].

The early childhood of European civilization also ended off sharply, at the turn of VIII and IX centuries, with the dramatic epoch of Charlemagne who went down in history as one of the greatest reformers of Europe whose influence on its life organization, to a large extent, can be felt even now, twelve centuries later.

The eldest son of Pepin the Short, Charles, nicknamed the Great during his lifetime, reigned over the most of Western and Central Europe for 45 years, since 768 until his death in 814. At first he was content with the position of the powerful king of the Franks. Then, with the persistent expansion of his possessions, he added more and more new titles, and finally, on Christmas Day of 800, he was solemnly proclaimed “Emperor of the Romans” by Pope Leo III. The size of the state created by Charles by that time was, indeed, close to the size of the Western Roman Empire, and his rule extended from the Danish borders to Catalonia, and from Italy to Brittany.

The reign of Charlemagne is a constant succession of aggressive campaigns and wars (extremely cruel even for the early Middle Ages!), in which the crisis nature of the epoch was fully reflected. The war against the numerous Germanic tribes of the Saxons who occupied the vast space between the Rhine and the Elbe proved to be particularly protracted and ruthless. Despite Charles's promise to render support to the newly converted Christians, his obvious military superiority and continued determination to follow through, the Saxons remained adherents of ancient cults and stubbornly refused to accept the new faith and submit to the enemy. For 33 years they would stir up bloody rebellions, mercilessly destroying Christians and Christian

churches. Comparing this time with the crisis of the age of three years in children and analyzing the seemingly pointless persistence of the Saxons, it is hardly possible to ignore the already mentioned obvious symptoms of the crisis — negativism, stubbornness, obstinacy, self-will, protest riot.

The Franks acted with the same merciless consistency in response. Year by year, they sent punitive expeditions to Saxony, and de facto established a genocidal regime there. They captured and executed thousands of hostages, burned down entire areas, moved masses of people to the inner regions of the state. The result of the war was the complete desolation of a number of Saxon lands, and some of them became so deserted that Charles handed them over to the neighboring tribes of the Slavs. However, the symptoms of the crisis that were equally clearly manifested in the actions of the winners — stubbornness, self-will, the desire for despotism — were not displayed by the Franks in all seized territories. In Italy, for example, the population and the Pope welcomed Charles regarding his warriors as defenders and peacemakers. Rather, same as in a child at a critical stage, negative trends were the result of the commencing process of civilization's self-awareness. This process necessarily included, on the part of civilization, the recognition of its borders, and the awareness of the conflict between the core and the periphery of the system, where the former, already anachronistic, connections between its elements still remained.

Along with the initiated process of self-awareness of civilization, perhaps, an even more significant feature of Charlemagne's epoch was the formation of the most systemically important links of the new civilization which determined the uniqueness of its character for many centuries ahead. At the heart of this uniqueness was the fusion of several psychological and social stereotypes. On the one hand, it was a stereotype of the German male warrior rooted in the tribal past, with his restlessness, unrestrained aggressiveness and a distinctive "code of honor" that required keeping his word and maintaining dignity in any situation. This somewhat refined stereotype would form the basis of chivalrous morals in the near future. On the other hand, it was deep admiration for the Roman state order and the adoption of Roman Catholic

dogma which for most people was the essence of Christianity.

Having inherited from his father a desire for an alliance with the Roman Church, Charles supplemented it with the desire to revive the foundations of the Roman order on the lands he had collected destroying the power of tribal leaders (which was traditional for Germanic people). He issued a number of decrees in which he ordered everyone to have their own seigneur (liege lord). From now on, the whole empire was divided into kingdoms and counties headed by people loyal to Charles. They and the barons personally dependent on the emperor were considered the emperor's great vassals (retainers). In turn, they were seigneurs for their vassals to whom they transferred part of their land plots in managing, and these vassals could also be seigneurs for their warriors. At the same time, everyone who belonged to the administration of the empire or its military class remained free people, with formally equal rights. Thus, a clear-cut hierarchical system of governance was created, and the foundations of the feudal relations of medieval Europe were laid.

At the same time, the former model of the Roman order meant only a social hierarchy. It established relations between people; however, it was unable to explain the ultimate meaning of these relations, nor could it explain the meaning of human life. On the contrary, the reality of the new civilization consisted in the belief in the inseparable connection between earthly and celestial hierarchies which seemed to be similar to each other. Moreover, earthly life was only the first step of movement towards eternal life, and the order of earthly relations was an imperfect model of the Divine order. In its attempt to cognize this order, the new civilization broke through the narrow borders of the visible world. In contrast to the ancient understanding of the microcosm of a human as the macrocosm of the universe in a miniature, it saw any phenomenon as a manifestation of higher powers. This mystical view of the world, however, laid the foundation for the future European experimental science, since it led to the conclusion that by examining the mechanisms of relatively simple phenomena experimentally it was possible to generalize them to the understanding of universal laws.

The tipping point of Charlemagne's epoch was reflected in the particular cultural upsurge of the end of VIII – beginning of IX centuries known as the Carolingian Renaissance (Fig. 4–5).

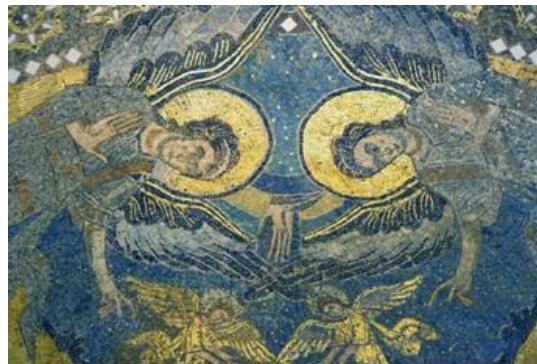


Fig. 4. The Ark of the Covenant. The mosaic of the dome of the oratory in Germigny-des-Prés (near Orléans); a fragment. France, c. 806

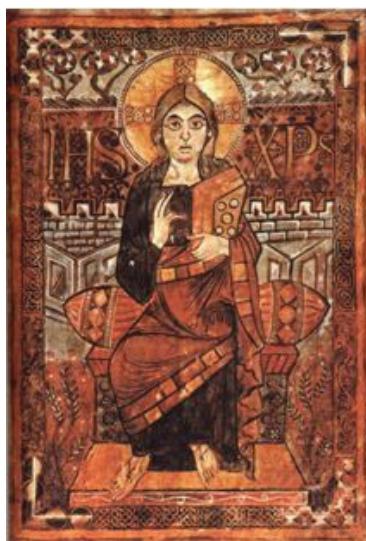


Fig. 5. Christ in Glory. A miniature from the Godescalc Evangelistary, Paris. Bibliothèque nationale de France

Despite the controversial nature of this term [4], the cultural progress during the reign of Charles and his closest descendants was undoubtedly. Being illiterate, like most of his contemporaries, Charles undertook his first campaign to Italy and, although it was lying in ruins, he was shocked by what he had seen. From then on, he maintained a constant interest in ancient, and especially Roman, culture.

Imitating antique designs, Charles established "Palace Academy", which, besides himself

and his relatives, included a number of the best educated contemporaries. A well-known theologian Alcuin and Theodulf, the Bishop of Orléans, were among them; the latter played a significant role in the debate on the procession of the Holy Spirit held at Charles's court [5]. At his court, Charles created a school for the children of the nobility, and he patronized the foundation of schools for the clergy and the children of the laity. The Capitulary published in 787 ordered to open schools for monks and clerics at each monastery and episcopal department. Finally, Karl encouraged the revival of construction; he ordered a large palace complex to be built at his residence in Aachen (on the border of modern Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands).

At the same time art experienced some progress. This is evident, in part, in the chapel built in the city of Germigny-des-Prés, near Orléans, in France in 806 on the initiative of Charles' friend Theodulf, the Bishop of Orléans. Particularly noteworthy is the mosaic of the dome of the chapel depicting the Ark of the Covenant; the mosaic is oriented towards Byzantine patterns and, apparently, is created by Oriental craftsmen (see Fig. 4). It is noteworthy that this plot is found nowhere else in West European monumental painting.

The book miniature was being gradually improved; the Godescalc Evangelistary [6] created for Charlemagne in his palace workshop in Aachen in 781–783, can serve as an example. The book is decorated with images of Christ (Fig. 5) and several scenes from the life of Charlemagne in which ancient style is combined with medieval symbolism and ornament. However, until the beginning of IX century the position of the depicted figures still remained static, whereas the proportions of the human body and objects were distorted.

On the whole, despite a number of positive moments, art during Charlemagne's reign remained primitive and infantile, quite consistent with the early childhood of civilization. And only during his descendants' reign completely new features and new dimensions in art start to emerge.

Conclusion

Nowadays we are witnessing the rapid transformation of civilizations. One aspect of this process is the integration of all existing civilizations with the European civilization. The result of this integration is the ubiquitous spread of European technologies, clothing, everyday life culture and many other cultural features and traditions. European English has become the language of international communication.

At the same time the European civilization is rapidly losing many of its initially inherent features. This is clearly manifested by the phenomenon of dechristianization of Europe which reveals itself not only in the deserted churches, but also in the European Union legislation.

In this regard, the following issues are becoming particularly acute, namely: the issue

of determining the present-day stage in the development of the European civilization — and what civilizational changes are to be expected in XXI century. However, no one of the modern studies provides any concrete and reasoned answer to this question.

All of the above mentioned has provided the basis for the present study built on the use of the general system laws of the development of living systems — as well as the analogies arising from this in the development of humanity and civilization. In the presented part of the research we adduce the description of such analogies covering the initial period of European civilization development from approximately V to VIII centuries, which — according to the proposed study — corresponds to the first three years of a child's life.

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