

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 SOVVIENTE 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. Panofsky 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...".