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## Adam Kossowski's Religious Art

Even though it has been twenty years since Adam Kossowski's death, there are no critical publications on either the artist himself or his extensive and varied creative output. This role is not fulfilled by the study *Adam Kossowski. Murals and paintings*, published in English in 1991 by London-based Armelle Press with an introduction by Benedict Read and short passages by Tadeusz Chrzanowski, Martin Sankey, and Tymon Terlecki, as well as a complete list of Kossowski's works compiled by Andrzej Borkowski. The texts written by these researchers combine harmoniously with color photos by Peter Sidebotham and black-and-white photos by J. S. Markiewicz. When reviewing this most comprehensive work to date in the Paris-based *Kultura*, Stanisław Frenkiel considered it a momentous event and an important document of Polish art abroad.<sup>1</sup> Attempts to make up for the deficiencies in the study of Adam Kossowski's work have been made by Stanisław S. Nicieja,<sup>2</sup> Tadeusz

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<sup>1</sup> S. Frenkiel, "Książka o Adamie Kossowskim" [A book on Adam Kossowski], *Kultura* 1991, no. 12 (531), pp. 143–145. A book about the painter is also referred to in: JM, "Na kanwie książki o Adamie Kossowskim" [On the background of the book on Adam Kossowski], *Inspiracje* 1998, no. 2 (50), pp. 22–24.

<sup>2</sup> S. S. Nicieja, "Adam Kossowski – Artifex Dei", in: J. Kopiec, N. Widok, eds., *Człowiek i Kościół w dziejach: księga pamiątkowa dedykowana księdzu profesorowi Kazimierzowi Doli z okazji 65. rocznicy urodzin* [Man and the Church in history: a commemorative book dedicated to Fr. Professor Kazimierz Dola on the occasion of his 65th anniversary], Opole 1999, pp. 267–277.

Chrzanowski in *Tygodnik Powszechny*,<sup>3</sup> Paweł Kądziała in *Przegląd Katolicki*,<sup>4</sup> and Jarosław Kossakowski in *Słowo Powszechne*.<sup>5</sup> The artist's name was also cited by Lechosław Lameński who wrote about a non-completed polychromy project in Chełm Lubelski.<sup>6</sup>

Most of the publications and critical articles about Adam Kossowski's work appeared in the Polish émigré press in London (starting from the first years of his stay abroad, i.e. 1942).<sup>7</sup> They generally do not provide a broader characterization of Kossowski's art.

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<sup>3</sup> T. Chrzanowski, "Adam Kossowski", *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1987, no. 44, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> P. Kądziała, "Wspomnienie o Adamie Kossowskim (1905–1986)" [A memory of Adam Kossowski], *Przegląd Katolicki* 1987, no. 18, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> J. Kossakowski, "Mistrz sakralnej ceramiki – Adam Kossowski" [A master of sacral ceramics – Adam Kossowski], *Słowo Powszechne* 1991, no. 279/280, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> L. Lameński, "O polskiej sztuce religijnej" [On Polish religious art], *Kresy* 1993, no. 14, pp. 189–192.

<sup>7</sup> H. Gotlib, "Wystawa artystów narodów sprzymierzonych" [Exhibition of artists of the allied nations], *Wiadomości Polskie* 1942, no. 24; "Malarze polscy w Wielkiej Brytanii" [Polish painters in Great Britain], *Polska Walcząca* 1943, no. 38; "Pracownia malarska w Londynie" [Painting studio in London], *Dziennik Polski* 1943, no. 1031; "Związek Artystów Plastyków" [Society of Visual Artists], *Dziennik Polski* 1943, no. 1059; mc, "Rozmowy plastyków" [Conversations of visual artists], *Orzeł Biały* 1959, no. 17; "Wystawa malarzy polskich" [An exhibition of Polish painters], *Polska Walcząca* 1944, no. 6 (204); [J. Ostrowski] (n), "Polskie życie kulturalne. Z 'Remanentów' ubiegłego roku" [Polish cultural life. From the "stocktaking" of the last year], *Orzeł Biały* 1961, no. 1; S. Arvay, "Polacy w Wielkiej Brytanii. Malarstwo, grafika, rzeźba" [Poles in Great Britain. Painting, graphic art, sculpture], *Kalendarz Dziennika Polskiego i Dziennika Żołnierza* 1953, pp. 52–53; A. Drwęska, "Przegląd polskich wystaw w Londynie" [Review of Polish exhibitions in London], *Orzeł Biały* 1952, no. 20 (515), p. 3; T. Terlecki, "Wystawa A. Kossowskiego" [A. Kossowski's exhibition], *Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza*, June 24, 1944, p. 3; agn., "Nowy sukces Adama Kossowskiego" [Adam Kossowski's new success], *Tydzień Polski*, September 17, 1966, p. 5; A. Drwęska, "Nowa ceramika Adama Kossowskiego" [Adam Kossowski's new ceramics], *Tydzień Polski*, November 26, 1966, p. 3; H. Heinsdorf, "Angielski kościół i polscy artyści" [English church and Polish artists], *Tydzień Polski* 1964, no. 22, p. 4.

The exceptions are the sketches published in the London-based *Wiadomości*<sup>8</sup> and *Dziennik Polski*, which also published a small number of texts by Kossowski himself<sup>9</sup> and his much more numerous drawings.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, mention should be made of a small press announcement by Bronisława Michałowska published in 1951 in *News and Reviews. The London Guide*<sup>11</sup> and Marian Bohusz-Szyszko's succinct and general discussion in the collection of essays *O sztuce [On art]*.<sup>12</sup>

Noteworthy among Polish unpublished texts are the short posthumous memory by the painter's friend Zdzisław Ruszkowski, a letter from Z. Gro-

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<sup>8</sup> "Adam Kossowski, tegoroczny laureat nagrody Fundacji im. Alfreda Jurzykowskiego" [Adam Kossowski, this year's winner of the prize of the Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation], *Wiadomości* 1971, no. 13–15, p. 7; [Note], *Wiadomości* 1957, no. 12, p. 6; "Nigdy człowiek wojny nie uratował życia tylu ludzi" [Never did a man of war save the lives of so many people], *Wiadomości* 1970, no. 1266, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> A. Kossowski, "Drohojowski i łagiernicy" [Drohojowski and gulag prisoners], *Wiadomości* 1972, no. 51/52, p. 10; idem, "Wołanie o program" [Plea for a program], *Wiadomości* 1946, no. 27, p. 2; idem, "Wiara maluczkich i katolicyzm intelektualny" [Faith of little ones and intellectual Catholicism], *Wiadomości* 1951, no. 45, p. 4; idem, "O niezależność sztuki" [On the independence of art], *Wiadomości* 1946, no. 2, p. 1; idem, "Błędy, których się nie widzi" [Errors that one cannot see], *Wiadomości* 1956, no. 515, p. 6; idem, "Co zrobić z arrasami" [What should be done about tapestries], *Wiadomości* 1972, no. 464, p. 10; T. Terlecki, "Adam Kossowski (1905–1986)," *Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza*, April 23, 1986, p. 3; idem, "Kossowski of Aylesford," *Wiadomości* 1952, no. 336/337, p. 4; idem, "Wystawa A. Kossowskiego" [A. Kossowski's exhibition], *Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza*, June 24, 1944, p. 3; A. M. Borkowski, "Pustka pełna nadziei" [Void full of hope], *Tydzień Polski* 1999, no. 14, p. 7. Also worth mentioning are texts published in New York: Z. Raciński, "Adam Kossowski – artysta w służbie Boga" [Adam Kossowski – an artist in the service of God], *Przegląd Polski*, May 1, 1986, pp. 6–7, 11; T. Terlecki, "Kossowski wrócił do Aylesfordu" [Kossowski returned to Aylesford], *Przegląd Polski*, September 11, 1986, pp. 8–9, 15.

<sup>10</sup> A. Kossowski, "Prawda o życiu artystów w Polsce" [The truth about artists' life in Poland], *Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza*, November 19, 1945; idem, "Publiczność a sztuka nowoczesna" [The public and modern art], *Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza*, February 16, 1945.

<sup>11</sup> B. Michałowska, "Religious art," *News and Reviews. The London Guide*, December 29, 1951.

<sup>12</sup> M. Bohusz-Szyszko, "Malarstwo religijne Adama Kossowskiego" [Adam Kossowski's religious painting], in: idem, *O sztuce [On art]*, pp. 225–226.

szak to the editor of the New York-based *Nowy Dziennik*,<sup>13</sup> and – with regards to Kossowski’s religious art – a sketch by Jerzy Faczyński<sup>14</sup> and a radio statement by Stanisław Frenkiel on the BBC.<sup>15</sup>

Texts from the English press, almost without exception, associated Adam Kossowski’s art with the works of art made for the Aylesford monastery and only out of obligation mentioned the painter’s imprisonment in the Siberian gulags. One of the first articles<sup>16</sup> on Kossowski’s ceramic art, which at the same time contributes the most to the state of the research, was published in 1948 in the periodical *Pottery and Glass*.<sup>17</sup>

It was followed by a more extensive text published in *Queen & Mother* in 1959.<sup>18</sup> Two references to Aylesford also appeared at that time in *Mary*.<sup>19</sup> An essay by an Oxford University student, Poly Stuart, which cites the artist’s biography and focuses in the second part on the artist’s post-war ceramic work in Aylesford holds a separate place.<sup>20</sup> The essay filled in the gaps in research and was based largely on the Aylesford-based Carmelite periodical *Pilgrim’s Newsletter*, the book by E. Fielding<sup>21</sup> written on its basis, and the *Image of Carmel*.<sup>22</sup> The name of the Polish artist also appeared in

<sup>13</sup> Z. Ruszkowski, “O Adamie” [On Adam], [place and year of publication missing]. Manuscript, University Library in Toruń, Archives of Emigratopn (hereinafter: AE); Z. M. Groszak, typescript of a letter to the editor of *Nowy Dziennik*, May 2, 1986, AE.

<sup>14</sup> J. Faczyński, “Sztuka religijna Adama Kossowskiego” [Adam Kossowski’s religious art], July 27, 1970, Liverpool, typescript, 8 pages. (The typescript present in the Archives of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and in the AE)

<sup>15</sup> S. Frenkiel, “Adam Kossowski a sztuka sakralna w Anglii” [Adam Kossowski and sacral art in England], broadcast of December 28, 1986. Typescript, AE.

<sup>16</sup> The first chronological article in the Archive of the Victoria Archives & Albert Museum in London appeared in *The Tablet* on October 4, 1947.

<sup>17</sup> L. M., “3 ceramic artists,” *Pottery and Glass*, December 1948, pp. 33–36.

<sup>18</sup> G. D. Walton, “Adam Kossowski,” *Queen & Mother*, May–June 1959, pp. 2–4.

<sup>19</sup> [Note], *Mary*, July–August 1959, pp. 2, 4–5; idem, May–June 1960, pp. 20, 64–65.

<sup>20</sup> P. Stuart, *A study of the life and work of Adam Kossowski*, Oxford [no year specified].

<sup>21</sup> E. Fielding, *Courage to build anew: the story of the rebuilding of The Friars, Aylesford, taken from the newsletters of Malachy Lynch*, London 1968.

<sup>22</sup> *Image of Carmel. The art of Aylesford*, Aylesford 1974. Other works that should be mentioned are: I. Conlay, “Art,” *Catholic Herald*, November 13, 1964, p. 7; idem, “Where serving God is a joyful thing. Space and colour at E. Acton,” *ibidem*, July 28, 1961; idem, “Downside Abbey’s New Shrine,” *ibidem*, March 8, 1957; idem, “Biggest ceramic in England,” *ibidem*, September 1963; S. Hunter, “An exhibition of catholic art,” *The Tablet*, October 4, 1947, p. 219;

the *Daily Telegraph*,<sup>23</sup> *The Times*,<sup>24</sup> the *Leyland Guardian*,<sup>25</sup> *The Sunday Times*,<sup>26</sup> *The Messenger*,<sup>27</sup> the *Western Mail*,<sup>28</sup> and the *Periscope*.<sup>29</sup>

A lot of attention to Adam Kossowski's creative individuality is also paid in publications on Aylesford.<sup>30</sup> The artist's short biographic note was included by David Buckman in the latest dictionary on artists working in Great Britain.<sup>31</sup>

The primary sources of information necessary to outline the artist's biography are archival and documentary materials held in two archives: the Emigration Archives at the University Library in Toruń (which holds iconographic materials and archival materials related to the artist's life and activities in London, as well as his cooperation with the emigre press) and the the Victoria & Albert Museum Archive (the Archive of Art and Design section), which holds Adam Kossowski's actual archive, deposited by Stefania Kossowska.<sup>32</sup>

"Catholic artist and catholic art," *ibidem*, January 29, 1949, p. 74; "Ceramic for Downside," *ibidem*, April 28, 1956, p. 396; "Cardiff Cathedral," *ibidem*, February 28, 1959, p. 202; [Note], *The Universe*, April 27, 1956; "Former prisoner's work for church," *ibidem*, March 31, 1961; [Note], *ibidem*, March 8, 1968; T. D. Jones, "Four European artists," *Theology*, September 1987, pp. 373–381.

<sup>23</sup> "History of Old Kent Road," *Daily Telegraph*, August 16, 1966.

<sup>24</sup> [Note], *The Times*, September 1, 1966.

<sup>25</sup> P. C., "New church will be circular in design. Many beautiful features answer problem of art integration," *Leyland Guardian*, July 6, 1962.

<sup>26</sup> G. Smith, "Cabinet of curiosities," *The Sunday Times*, October 25, 1953, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> "A Polish artist," *The Messenger*, June 1956, p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> "Eighteen years later a great task has been fulfilled," *Western Mail*, March 3, 1959.

<sup>29</sup> A. Jones, "Aylesford blooms after 300 years," *Periscope*, July 16, 1965.

<sup>30</sup> J. H. Sephton, *The Friars, Aylesford*, Aylesford 1999; B. Little, *Abbeys and priories in England and Wales*, London 1979, p. 170; W. McGreal, *The history of The Friars, Aylesford*, Norwich 1998.

<sup>31</sup> D. Buckman, *Dictionary of Artists in Britain since 1945*, Bristol 1998, p. 714.

<sup>32</sup> This happened at the request of the London-based Victoria & Albert Museum after the publication of the album edition of the book *Adam Kossowski. Murals and Paintings* – a letter from Stefania Kossowska to the author dated April 22, 2003.

## POLISH AND ENGLISH BIOGRAPHY

Adam Kossowski was born on December 16, 1905 in Nowy Sącz. He came from an impoverished landowner family. His father Zygmunt was an Austrian official, and his mother Oktawia (née Mniszek) was a teacher. As a student at a high school in Nowy Sącz, Adam was a member of a scout unit, where he rose to the rank of scoutmaster and led one of the unit's groups. There he became friends with Zbigniew Racięski – later an émigré journalist and editor of *Orzeł Biały*.<sup>33</sup> He was also friends with Antoni Chruściel, later a general, and Józef Wąsowicz, later a professor of geography at the universities of Lviv and Wrocław.<sup>34</sup>

In 1923, at the age of seventeen, he took his high school graduation exam. After the exam, the Kossowski family moved from Nowy Sącz to Warsaw. Adam began his studies at the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology, where the lecturers were the best architects. This field of study seemed to be the most suitable given his drafting skills. More than once, with a sketchbook in hand, he would go to Warsaw's Old Town, where students made drawings of churches and other elements of architecture. After two years of study, with almost a "half degree" in architecture, he made the decision to abandon the study of architecture in favor of painting. During the summer vacation of 1925, Kossowski traveled to Cracow to take the entrance exams for to study painting at the local Academy of Fine Arts, which enjoyed the reputation of the best in the country, which he successfully passed. He stayed with his brother, who as a young doctor was affiliated with the University of Cracow. In the second year of his studies, Kossowski's paintings were displayed in the corridors of the Academy, as a kind of *exemplum* for other students. At the time, the artist had not developed any particular painting style of his own. He made references to Post-Impressionism as well as to French painters, primarily

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<sup>33</sup> Racięski wrote an article recalling his friendship with Kossowski since his school years: "Adam Kossowski – artysta w służbie Boga" [An artist in the service of God], pp. 6–7.

<sup>34</sup> S. S. Nicieja, "Adam Kossowski," pp. 267–277.

Cézanne – like the entire Academy.<sup>35</sup> Kossowski was particularly interested in the Italian art of the early Renaissance, likely due to the influence of his Cracow professors. Initially he studied in the studio of Wojciech Weiss,<sup>36</sup> then under the direction of Felicjan Szczyński Kowarski<sup>37</sup> in the studio of monumental painting,<sup>38</sup> which brought together the best students of the last two years of study. Kowarski brought Leonard Pękalski from Warsaw to run the technical studio for mural painting.

In 1927, the Cracow Academy of Fine Arts was commissioned by Adolf Bohusz-Szyszkowski to reconstruct the paintings of the friezes and the ceilings of the Wawel Castle – the best example of a Renaissance castle north of the Alps. This commission provided well-paid employment and apprenticeships to almost all of Kowarski's students for several years (1927–1928, and partly in 1931),<sup>39</sup> and his studio with Pękalski as an assistant was Wawel's experimental laboratory. Kossowski was then in his third and fourth year of study. This was an important moment in his artistic career, as it raised his interest in mural painting. Almost simultaneously with the work in Wawel, Kowarski received a second major order: the polychromy of the newly restored and added sections of the Pauline monastery on Jasna Góra.

In 1933, Kowarski engaged Kossowski to reconstruct the painting *The Lord's Supper* in the chapel – the place used for giving communion to pilgrims.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> An interview with Adam Kossowski, 1978 by Fr. Martin Sankey OCarm, in: Adam Kossowski, *Murals and Paintings*, introduction by B. Read, London [1991] p. 66.

<sup>36</sup> See: "Rozmowa z Adamem Kossowskim" [A conversation with Adam Kossowski], a biweekly supplement to *Ostatnie Wiadomości* 1954, no. 30 (296), p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Kossowski wrote a commemorative essay to Kowarski in the first volume of the collective work titled *Straty kultury polskiej. 1939–1944* [Polish culture's losses. 1939–1945] (Glasgow 1945, pp. 399–412).

<sup>38</sup> See: T. Chrzanowski, "Adam Kossowski," p. 7.

<sup>39</sup> See: A. Kossowski, "Felicjan Kowarski," pp. 399–412.

<sup>40</sup> A few years earlier, Kowarski had painted the painting himself, basing it, according to the monks' wishes, on Leonardo da Vinci's famous work. Soon, however, due to poor insulation of the walls from the embankment into which the chapel was deeply embedded, moisture almost completely destroyed the painting. In 1933, for the great jubilee of Jasna Góra, the Pauline Fathers wanted to have the painting restored. Kowarski intended to re-paint the entire picture on canvas and place it on a loom at some distance from the

In the academic year 1928/1929, when both works (in Wawel and on Jasna Góra) were at the final stage, there was a personal conflict at the Cracow Academy of Fine Arts between its rector, A. Bohusz-Szyszko, and a group of professors who nominated their own candidate to replace the outgoing Axentowicz.<sup>41</sup> Kowarski and his students supported the rector, and consequently – after their loss – they moved to the Warsaw School of Fine Arts.<sup>42</sup>

Adam Kossowski's work at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw proceeded as follows: From October 1, 1931 to June 30, 1934, he was the manager of Professor Leonard Pękalski's studio. In the 1934/1935 academic year, he conducted practical classes in the decorative painting technology. From September 1, 1935 to January 1, 1938, he was employed as a junior assistant at the Department of Decorative Painting headed by Professor L. Pękalski. After a short break and his return from art studies abroad, he was appointed as a senior assistant at that Department until the Germans closed the Academy (from June 10 to November 10, 1939).<sup>43</sup>

In the 1930s, the Pryzmat group was formed by people associated with Felicjan Kowarski, which consisted mostly of his students, including Adam Kossowski. The first exhibition of Pryzmat members was held in 1933 at the Warsaw Institute of Art Propaganda.<sup>44</sup> The group did not want to set a specific program or manifesto. For most of its members, color was an

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wall. However, the monks wanted to save time and Kowarski engaged Kossowski for the reconstruction, which was completed on time.

<sup>41</sup> A. Kossowski, "Felicjan Kowarski," pp. 399–412.

<sup>42</sup> At the Warsaw Academy, Kowarski no longer ran the decorative painting studio, which Prof. Trojanowski handed over to L. Pękalski. Kowarski's paintings were very well received by both the Academy and Warsaw's main art groups: Rytm and Bractwo Św. Łukasza. In his color preferences, Kowarski advocated the dogma that a wall should be painted almost monochromatically, using little differences in color. This approach to wall painting was dictated by Kowarski's peculiar prudence, for such a method ensured that uniformity would be maintained. Kossowski was critical of this "monochromatization," especially in Kowarski's later decorative works, arguing that one could get the impression that the artist used this approach to make his own work easier.

<sup>43</sup> The data was taken from the personnel file folder of the Records Archive of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, no. K-RP-36.

<sup>44</sup> A. K. Olszewski, *Dzieje sztuki polskiej 1890–1980* [History of Polish art 1890–1980], Warsaw 1988, p. 60.



important factor in the construction of a painting, but it was never a decisive goal in itself.<sup>45</sup>

Czesław Poznański believed that the Pryzmat members were by definition more realistic than the Capists and for them the visible reality was a basic element of art to an even greater extent.<sup>46</sup> Kossowski's four paintings from the late 1930s, created among the members of the Pryzmat group, are well known; characterized by their cool colors, they show the lyrical nostalgia typical of the painter at the time. Those paintings are: *Most nad Lutynią* [Bridge over Lutynia], *Trzy dziewczyny w ogrodzie* [Three girls in a garden], *Portret St. Szurleja* [Portrait of St. Szurlej], *Dom w Słupia* [House in Słupia], and *Krajobraz słupieński* [Słupia landscape] (1939).<sup>47</sup>

The contribution of Pryzmat's members to Polish painting was not limited to still lifes, portraits, and landscapes, but also included monumental art, where Kossowski's achievements were thoroughly original.<sup>48</sup> In 1935, together with Pękalski, he decorated the chapel on the M/S Batory liner

<sup>45</sup> Kowarski himself treated color, lightened under the influence of colorists in the 1930s, as one of the elements in the construction of a painting with monumental forms conveying a romantic and epic content. In the early 1930s, he painted *Wędrowcy* [Hikers] (1930), *Wioslarze* [Rowers] (1931), Italian landscapes, and *Rząd Narodowy 1863 r.* [The National Government of 1863] (1937). L. Pękalski definitely built his paintings with color, but he subordinated it to the overall structure and content. In his still lifes he was closer to the tradition of Chardin or Cézanne, and in figural compositions – to the art of classicism (*Portret siostrzenicy* [Portrait of a niece], 1935, *Podchorążowie na moście Sobieskiego w 1930 r.* [Cadets on Sobieski Bridge in 1930], 1939, and *Martwa natura z zającem* [Still life with a hare], 1936). Among those exhibiting with Pryzmat, Karl Larisch was the closest to the doctrine of “pure” colorism. Painting flowers, nudes, landscapes and social picnics which were most characteristic of his work, he used a wide range of colors, from thick patches to quasi-pointillist color spots. The combination of excellent color skills with a tendency to monumentalize the form, in a decorative spirit, characterized the work of Waław Taranczewski.

In still lifes and interiors built with color planes, it was somewhat reminiscent of Matisse (*Still life with a violin on a green background*, 1933–1934; *Still life with a blue vase on a carpet background*, 1938; *A nude with a green curtain*, 1937–1938). More intimate was the work of Lucjan Adwentowicz, the author of landscapes, figural scenes, and portraits painted in tones of violets. (Quoted after: A. K. Olszewski, *Dzieje sztuki* [History of art], p. 60.)

<sup>46</sup> C. Poznański, “Plastycy polscy w Wielkiej Brytanii” [Polish visual artists in Great Britain], *Nowa Polska* 1945, book 1, pp. 64–74.

<sup>47</sup> S. S. Nicieja, “Adam Kossowski,” p. 270.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 269.

ship.<sup>49</sup> In the same year they made the designs for frescoes and the main altar for the cathedral church in Chełmno, which were never implemented.<sup>50</sup> A year later, the artist painted frescoes for the parish church in Górzno near Siedlce. In the winter of 1936/1937, he was employed to work on the renovation of the parish church in Dawidówka in eastern Poland.<sup>51</sup>

In November 1937, Adam Kossowski received a government scholarship and traveled to Italy to study mural painting there, especially its techniques. The artist stayed in Italy until the summer of 1938. He made his first stop in Rome, then he traveled to Florence, Naples, Sicily, and back to Rome, where he studied for some time the techniques of tempera and *sgraffito*.<sup>52</sup> In the Eternal City, he had the opportunity to admire the magnificent mosaics at the Santa Maria Maggiore basilica, where he was even able to climb a ladder to get a closer look at them.<sup>53</sup> In Rome, he met Józef Natanson, his friend from the Warsaw Academy. The two of them toured and discussed the historical buildings of the Eternal City. Then Natanson went to Sicily and Kossowski promised to join him there as soon as he finished studying wall painting.<sup>54</sup> In Agrigento in western Sicily, after rejoining Natanson, Kossowski met his future wife, Stefania Szurlejówna (1909–2003), a young Warsaw journalist (a correspondent of *Wieczór Warszawski*, *ABC*, and the literary weekly *Prosto z Mostu*), a daughter of a prominent Warsaw lawyer, Stanisław Szurlej, a defense attorney in high-profile political trials.<sup>55</sup>

After his return from Italy, in 1938 Kossowski designed and made a polychromy for the church in Wola Okrzejska near Garwolin, the theme of which is related to the *Quo vadis* novel, as Okrzeja is Henryk Sienkiewicz's place of birth.<sup>56</sup> The main part of the polychromy, done in tempera, is the

<sup>49</sup> See: A. K. Olszewski, *Dzieje sztuki* [History of art], p. 63.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*; see also: A. Kossowski, "Felicjan Kowarski," p. 409.

<sup>51</sup> See: Adam Kossowski, *Murals and paintings*, London 1990, p. 110; see also: A. M. Borkowski, "Pustka pełna nadziei" [Void full of hope], p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> "An interview with Adam Kossowski," p. 67.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 68.

<sup>54</sup> J. Natanson, *Zgrzyt otwierającej się bramy* [The screeching of an opening gate], Warsaw 2003, pp. 70, 75.

<sup>55</sup> S. S. Nicieja, "Adam Kossowski," p. 270.

<sup>56</sup> See: S. Szurlejówna, "Okrzeja – Henrykowi Sienkiewiczowi" [Okrzeja – to Henryk Sienkiewicz], *Prosto z Mostu* 1938, no. 45, p. 4.

plafond over the nave, divided into a series of paintings depicting scenes from the life of St. Peter.

For example, one fresco depicts St. Peter before the crucifixion, against a background of a city and a landscape with features of classical architecture, and to the side there is a kneeling silhouette of a Roman who is making a cross out of beams. Jerzy Faczyński considered the polychrome in Okrzeja to be an important work in Kossowski's creative development, which revealed the essential personal, ideological and painterly elements of heroic allegory, which would occupy a permanent place in the artist's consciousness and work.<sup>57</sup>

Kossowski and Szurlejówna got married in 1938 in the church in Wola Okrzejska, and their witness was Leonard Pękalski, with whom in the same year Kossowski jointly made a *sgraffito* for the Royal Arsenal in Warsaw and monochromatic plafonds<sup>58</sup> in the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>59</sup>

In the late 1930s, construction of Warsaw's representative Main Station, designed by Czesław Przybylski, began. The decoration of that building was to be the largest undertaking in Polish monumental art of those years.<sup>60</sup> In the construction of the Station, architects collaborated with painters and sculptors for the first time in the Polish construction sector on such a large scale.<sup>61</sup> Tempera and oil paintings, *sgraffito*, sculptures, and bas-reliefs, graphics, stained glass, and finally mosaic compositions were to be placed in many of the station's spaces. Some themes were designed in competitions. The competition for the mosaic and sculptural composition in the departure hall was won by Kowarski,<sup>62</sup> and the competition for the

<sup>57</sup> J. Faczyński, "Sztuka religijna" [Religious art], p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> A. Kossowski, "Felicjan Kowarski," p. 410.

<sup>59</sup> Adam Kossowski. *Murals and paintings*, p. 110.

<sup>60</sup> S. S. Nicieja, "Adam Kossowski," p. 270.

<sup>61</sup> T. Dzięgielewski, S. Jelnicki, "Parę słów o budowie Dworca Głównego" [A few words about the construction of the Main Train Station], *Architektura i Budownictwo* 1939, no. 3, pp. 8–13.

<sup>62</sup> The theme of Kowarski's mosaic was to be the riches of Poland, geniuses symbolizing the months, and figural allegories of the five parts of the world. The mosaic was to serve as a background for a bronze statue of Polonia raising an eagle with both hands (sculptors

decoration of the station bar was won by Adam Kossowski's design.<sup>63</sup> The completion of the decoration was prevented by a fire that consumed the station buildings three months before the outbreak of the war.<sup>64</sup>

In September 1939, the Kossowski couple were separated by the outbreak of war. Stefania and her parents left Warsaw for Lviv; Adam stayed in Warsaw, awaiting the arrival of his mother and sister, who lived in Poznań. He then went to Lviv, where, having learned that his wife was in Romania, he tried to get through to her. In November 1939, while trying to cross the Romanian border, he was arrested by the NKVD.<sup>65</sup> He was first imprisoned in Skolem (in the Eastern Carpathians), and in December 1939 he was imprisoned in Kharkiv in the USSR. He was sentenced to five years of hard labor in labor camps on the Pechora River in northern Siberia. His life was saved by a doctor who placed him in a lazaretto. She was sent from Moscow because the Kremlin was concerned that the railroad would never be finished if there was such a high death rate among the prisoners. Each prisoner had to undergo a routine visual inspection. The doctor decided that Kossowski was to be excused from any work in the mine or in logging and transferred to the lazaretto.

Kossowski recovered slowly; they found paper, pencils, pens, and ink for him because he drew portraits of the nurses, guards ("pridurki"), and even cooks, who gave him extra portions of food as payment.<sup>66</sup> During his time in the lazaretto, he became a religious man. He then made a promise to God that if he survived, he would show gratitude to Providence through his art.<sup>67</sup>

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Elwira and Jerzy Mazurczyk). (Quoted after: A. K. Olszewski, *Dzieje sztuki* [History of art], p. 63.)

Dzięgielewski and Jelnicki mention that the work was distinguished by its compositional advantages and the use of an interesting technique involving the use of glazed 5 × 5 cm ceramic tiles.

<sup>63</sup> T. Dzięgielewski, S. Jelnicki, "Parę słów" [A few words...], p. 11.

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem, p. 8. See also: A. Kossowski, "Felicjan Kowarski," p. 411.

<sup>65</sup> S. S. Nicieja, "Adam Kossowski," p. 271.

<sup>66</sup> These memories, heard from Kossowski, were written down by his friend, the artist Józef Natanson, in the book *Zgrzyt otwierającej się bramy* [The screeching of an opening gate], p. 216.

<sup>67</sup> "An interview with Adam Kossowski," p. 70.

The conclusion of the Polish-Soviet agreement in July 1941 resulted in the release of those imprisoned in the Soviet Union and enabled the formation of an army subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief in London.<sup>68</sup> On September 22, 1941, Kossowski, locked together with a few hundred Polish gulag prisoners in a separate barracks of the huge Pechlaga distribution camp, awaited release.<sup>69</sup> Kossowski reached the Polish troops in the spring of 1942, after a long journey on the Amu-Darya river, via Uzbekistan. He described this journey in the English-language catalog for the exhibition titled *Polish soldier's journey*.<sup>70</sup> During his journey, Kossowski painted and noted in his sketches the places and faces he saw. Kossowski's friend, a Polish doctor, bought him a sketchbook and watercolors.<sup>71</sup> He saw Polish soldiers in Iran.<sup>72</sup> Kossowski spent the entire month of April 1942 in Pahlavi and was assigned to work on the evacuation of the Polish Army hospital. He helped with the reception and assignment of patients who came from various military units. At the end of April, his unit was sent in trucks to the Persian capital Tehran.<sup>73</sup> There, the artist was commissioned to draw anatomical diagrams for nurses and paramedics who were taking courses held at the camp.

In early June 1942, along with one of the last truck convoys, Kossowski was sent to distant Palestine, via Hamadan, Kermanshah, and Baghdad. Then he went to Port Said and Suez. At the port, he boarded the liner M/S Scythia, which was carrying Italian prisoners of war to the United Kingdom. Natanson writes that it was Stefania Kossowska, having learned that her husband was alive and in Persia, who made an effort to bring him to England.<sup>74</sup> During the nine-week voyage by ship around Africa, Kossowski made

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<sup>68</sup> See: *Druga Wielka Emigracja 1945–1990* [Second Great Emigration 1945–1990], vol. 1: A. Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji* [Emigre political life], Warsaw 1999 (“Więź” Library, vol. 113).

<sup>69</sup> A. Kossowski, “Szkicownik z opisem zwolnienia z łagrów” [A sketchbook with a description of release from the gulag] [no year specified]. Typescript, AE, p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> A. Kossowski, *A Polish soldier's journey: reminiscences in paint* [exhibition catalog], London 1944, p. 3.

<sup>72</sup> See: J. Natanson, *Zgrzyt otwierającej* [The screeching], pp. 216–217.

<sup>73</sup> A. Kossowski, *A Polish soldier's journey*, p. 7.

<sup>74</sup> J. Natanson, *Zgrzyt otwierającej* [The screeching], p. 216.

many sketches and portraits of fellow voyagers. In exchange, he received his first English lessons.<sup>75</sup> He also managed to bring with him to England some drawings from the gulag, and later from his wanderings in Russia.<sup>76</sup>

## THE ENGLISH PERIOD

The British liner *Scythia*, along with troops destined for the 1st Division in Scotland, via Aden, Mombasa, Durban, and Cape Town, reached the Scottish port in October 1942. Kossowski was first put in a hospital where his advanced tuberculosis was treated; it took several months before he reached London. In London<sup>77</sup> he was employed in 1943 at the Polish Ministry of Information, where, together with Józef Natanson, he was in charge of preparing exhibitions (“Poland,” “Polish Sea,” etc.), among other things.<sup>78</sup>

While the war was still in progress, the Ministry commissioned him to document what Stalin’s gulags were on 12 boards. Kossowski made sixteen boards in ink and gouache<sup>79</sup> illustrating real-life episodes and experiences of Polish prisoners of a Kharkiv prison and prisoners of a gulag on the Pechora River.<sup>80</sup> The original charts, placed in a portfolio, titled *Polish soldier’s*

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<sup>75</sup> A. Kossowski, *A Polish soldier’s journey*, p. 11.

<sup>76</sup> J. Natanson, *Zgrzyt otwierającej* [The screeching], p. 217.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 216. He also had a studio at Hampstead, 6 Froggnal Gardens.

<sup>78</sup> Adam Kossowski, *Murals and paintings*, p. 126.

<sup>79</sup> 1) *Long prison in Kharkow, 1940*, 2) *The searching of prisoners in Kharkow Prison*, 3) *Prisoners in their 15-minute exercise period, Kharkow*, 4) *Embarkation of prisoners bound for labour camp, Narian More, Mouth of the River Pechora, October, 1940*, 5) *Under the deck of the slave-barge; the removal of a dead prisoner*, 6) *Prisoners marching over the frozen river Pechora, November 1940*, 7) *The arrival at the camp of the new party of prisoner workers*, 8) *Interior of the “Palatha” – a large tent of canvas on a wood framework, holding up to 200 prisoners*, 9) *The column of workers leaving “the zone” for work in the darkness of polar night*, 10) *Work on the railway line*, 11) *Column of Polish prisoner workers prepared to leave the camp, after the so-called “amnesty” (following the German attack on Russia), Korzwa, October, 1941*, 12) *Free at last. On the way to Kotlos. October, 1941*, 13) *Banks of Amu-Daria: ex-prisoners on the way to join the Polish Army. March 1942*, 14) *Polish ex-prisoners disembarked in Pahlevi, Persia; awaiting bath and uniforms. April, 1942*, 15) *In the bath house at Pahlevi*, 16) *In uniform: first mass in the desert*.

<sup>80</sup> They were published in the London-based *Wiadomości* and in the Canadian literary quarterly *Mosaic*, published by the University of Manitoba, with a short introduction by

journey,<sup>81</sup> and provided with a legend, were given by Kossowski to then the secretary general of the Ministry of Information, Jan Drohojowski, who shortly thereafter switched allegiance to the communist regime. Then the works “disappeared” without a trace. Drohojowski is said to have sent or taken the portfolio with him to America, allegedly in an effort to protect the document from being bombed in London. Kossowski kept only with photographs and sketches.<sup>82</sup>

Kossowski's first individual exhibition in London was opened on June 7, 1944 at the gallery at 61 St. James Street. It was titled “Polish Soldier's Journey” and was a kind of painterly diary from the Soviet gulags and the journey to England.<sup>83</sup> The artist presented two oil paintings: *The house I lost. Słupia near Poznań* and *Self-Portrait*, as well as dozens of drawings and sketches of great historical value, which documented the realities and the journey that the Polish soldier-artist had to take during World War II.<sup>84</sup> The exhibition features a map on which a red line outlines the route of the artist's forced migration, going from the center of Poland up to the Arctic Circle above Pechora, through the country of the Uzbeks, the Caspian Sea, Persia, Syria, Palestine, around Africa, and all the way to the British Isles.<sup>85</sup>

In October 1944, Kossowski took part in the collective “Polish Exhibition” held at the Graves Art Gallery in Sheffield.<sup>86</sup> The catalog for that exhibition lists five of his paintings (four oil and one watercolor painting).

In the same year, Polish artists, members of the Trade Union of Polish Visual Artists in Great Britain (including Gotlib, Koper, Natanson, Kos-

Kossowski on his stay in Soviet Russia.

<sup>81</sup> See: A. M. Borkowski, “Pustka pełna nadziei” [Void full of hope], p. 7.

<sup>82</sup> A. Kossowski, “Drohojowski i łagierownicy” [Drohojowski and gulag prisoners], p. 10.

<sup>83</sup> See: “Adam Kossowski, tegoroczny laureat nagrody” [Adam Kossowski, this year's winner of the prize], p. 7. See also: “Droga polskiego żołnierza” [A Polish soldier's path], *W Drodze* 1945, no. 9, pp. 4–5.

<sup>84</sup> Paweł Kądziała, in his “Wspomnienie o Adamie Kossowskim” [Memory of Adam Kossowski] published in *Przegląd Katolicki*, erroneously states that the exhibition took place in 1943 and that 12 boards made in ink and gouache were exhibited (they were lost, as mentioned above).

<sup>85</sup> T. Terlecki, “Wystawa A. Kossowskiego” [A Kossowski's exhibition], p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> Adam Kossowski. *Murals and paintings*, p. 126.

sowski, Ruszkowski, Topolski, and Żuławski), presented their paintings at the invitation of the London-based Allied Circle.<sup>87</sup>

A month later, on November 23, at an international competition of religious art organized by the publishing company Mowbray and the Central Institute of Art and Design, Kossowski won the second prize for his painting *Annunciation* made in the *sgraffito* technique while on leave from the army in 1942–1944<sup>88</sup> (the painting is now in a private part of the monastery complex in Aylesford). The sketch for this painting was drawn two years earlier in the gulags and the artist managed to preserve it and bring it back to England. Two of Kossowski's works, *Annunciation* and *Jesus Carrying the Cross*, were exhibited in March 1945 at the Leger Galleries at Bond Street in London, where an exhibition of religious paintings and drawings was held. These were the first works fulfilling the artist's promise made in Siberia to devote himself to religious art.

As a result of the competition, Kossowski's name was popularized in the English press.<sup>89</sup> His works attracted the interest of the Guild of the Catholic Artists. At that time he met and befriended its president, the English sculptor Philip Lindsey Clark, who, together with the architect John Goodhard-Rendell, offered the Polish artist membership in the Guild's Art Council.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> "Wystawa malarzy polskich" [An exhibition of Polish painters].

<sup>88</sup> "Rozmowa z Adamem Kossowskim" [An interview with Adam Kossowski], p. 1. See also: "An interview with Adam Kossowski," p. 72; E. Fielding, "Courage to build anew," p. 25; D. G. Walton, "Adam Kossowski," pp. 2–4.

Some authors state that Kossowski received the second prize for the painting *Christ Carrying the Cross (St. Veronica)* (See, among others: Z. Racięski, "Adam Kossowski – artysta w służbie Boga" [Adam Kossowski – an artist in the service of God], pp. 6–7; P. Kądziała, "Wspomnienie o Adamie Kossowskim" [A memory of Adam Kossowski], p. 6; A. M. Borkowski, "Biography," in: *Adam Kossowski, Murals and paintings*, p. 126). They probably derive this erroneous information from: "Religious paintings and drawings exhibition at The Leger Galleries," *Art Notes* (London) 1945, Summer Number, p. 20.

The author of the work refers to the words of Kossowski himself, who said in two interviews (in 1954 and 1970) that he received the award for the painting *Annunciation*. E. Fielding in his book and G. D. Walton in his article make the same statement.

<sup>89</sup> See for example: "Religious paintings and drawings," pp. 18–20.

<sup>90</sup> "An interview with Adam Kossowski," p. 72.



In March and April 1945, another exhibition of Polish art was held at the Castle Museum and Art Gallery in Norwich, with works exhibited by artists from The Society of Polish Artists in Great Britain. Adam Kossowski's name was listed under three watercolors and four oil paintings.<sup>91</sup>

In 1946, Józef Natanson initiated the establishment of the Decorative Arts Studio<sup>92</sup> at Old Brompton Road in London, the members of which, besides Natanson, were Adam Kossowski, Peggy Erskine, and Witold Mars.<sup>93</sup> The charter of the association, which they called Decorative Arts Studio,<sup>94</sup> was drafted by Stanisław Meyer, who worked at the Ministry of Information and Documentation and managed Polish exhibitions, together with a lawyer. The association was to provide assistance to artists in the performance of their profession and was given the premises of the studio established by Natanson. The latter also became its first chairman, but, as he recalled, only formally, since everyone decided for themselves what they would do.

The artists decided that each of them would choose a section of decorative art, according to their skills, which they could exploit commercially.<sup>95</sup> Kossowski, Mars and Natanson opted for ceramics. Natanson bought a small pottery kiln.<sup>96</sup> Initially, they experimented with small objects, mainly ceramic jewelry (which was Natanson's idea) and hand-painted tiles. This was followed by small figurines, then larger figures, and eventually figure groups.<sup>97</sup>

The studio bought clay from Fulham Pottery, and the glaze came from Wengers Ltd. A potter's wheel was ruled out, as it would require years of practice. So the artists created small platters, baskets, jugs, and figurines. They also bought white dishes, on which they painted patterns of their own

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<sup>91</sup> See the catalog: *Exhibition of Polish art, March–April 1945*, Norwich: Castle Museum and Art Gallery.

<sup>92</sup> L. M., "3 ceramic artists," pp. 33–36.

<sup>93</sup> A daughter of William Erskine, the British ambassador in Warsaw, studied at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts before the war; W. Mars – a painter and colleague of Kossowski. He studied at the Academy in Warsaw when Adam was a teacher there.

<sup>94</sup> J. Natanson, *Zgrzyt otwierającej* [The screeching], p. 232.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 233.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>97</sup> L. M., "3 ceramic artists," pp. 33–36.

design. Since it was difficult to purchase white dishware, Natanson went to the Wedgwood factory, as their pottery was characterized by a simple form. He told the factory director about the association and his plans related to ceramics. The director promised to help and manufacture a special batch of cups, plates, and pitchers without the company's name embossed on the bottom so that the artists from Decorative Arts Studio could sign their decoration.<sup>98</sup> Kossowski himself kneaded oval platters in clay, on the center of which he painted simple still lifes.

From the very beginning, the individual preferences of the group members were noticeable: Kossowski made religious scenes, Mars made delicate and cheerful figures and groups in contemporary costumes, Peggy Erskine made figures of strange animals, mainly horses, and Natanson made small baskets with woven walls. Kossowski's figurines and groups of figures thematically referred to scenes from the New Testament. They were stylistically simple, even primitive in form, and sometimes even grotesque. Kossowski's earlier groups showed affinity with medieval religious wood sculptures. Later he stopped using the sculptural technique in his work and started taking advantage of the more visual-art characteristics of clay.<sup>99</sup> Kossowski expanded the scope of his work. On the one hand, he returned to flat ceramic works – painted tiles and plaques; on the other, he made single figurines and figure groups in contemporary costumes.<sup>100</sup> The colors of his ceramic works are distinguished by strong and clear yellow and green. Lady Erskine, Peggy's mother, organized an exhibition for the artists in 1947, opened by the Duchess of Kent, who also purchased some ceramics.<sup>101</sup>

In December 1947, a small exhibition of their work was held at Heal's gallery in London, which was very successful and resulted in another exhibition six months later.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> J. Natanson, *Zgrzyt otwierającej* [The screeching], p. 233.

<sup>99</sup> L. M., "3 ceramic artists," pp. 33–36.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>101</sup> J. Natanson, *Zgrzyt otwierającej* [The screeching], p. 235.

<sup>102</sup> L. M., "3 ceramic artists," pp. 33–36. See also: A. M. Borkowski, "Biography," p. 127.

In the spring of 1952, a second individual exhibition of Kossowski's paintings took place in London, this time at the Ashley Gallery, opposite the Westminster Cathedral. The artist exhibited more than twenty paintings, including eight oils, one *sgraffito*, and fourteen watercolors – sketches for ceramics and paintings. Added to this were two cartons with *sgraffito* designs for Aylesford and thirteen ceramic representations. In the opinion of Tymon Terlecki, the exhibition showed a kind of “backstage”: the background, and atmosphere in which the works were created for the Carmelites.<sup>103</sup>

Over the next twenty years Adam Kossowski did a lot of work, mostly in ceramics, in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and even for the Carmelites in Chicago. Most were works with religious themes.

In addition to Aylesford, one of Kossowski's most important projects is the work in *sgraffito* technique for St. Benet's Chapel at the Queen Mary's College in London. It was made in 1964 and illustrated scenes from the Apocalypse of John.<sup>104</sup> Also noteworthy is a series of ceramics, following the pattern of a triptych, commissioned for the Chapel of the Sacred Heart in the Gothic Benedictine Church in the Downside Abbey in 1956.<sup>105</sup> The theme of the three main compositions is Gospel episodes featuring St. Mary Magdalene.

During the English period, Kossowski mainly created art of a religious nature. However, his output also includes quite a large “secular” ceramic work (80 feet long, 10 feet wide) adorning the exterior wall of the municipal library at the North Peckham Civic Centre in the London Borough of Southwark (1963–1966).<sup>106</sup> This large ceramic wall *panneaux*, which consists

<sup>103</sup> See: T. Terlecki, “Kossowski of Aylesford,” p. 4.

<sup>104</sup> See: T. Terlecki, “Faith by intellectual effort,” in: *Adam Kossowski. Murals and paintings*, pp. 99–107; I. Conlay, “Art,” p. 7; “The University Chapel of St Benet, Queen Mary's College, Mile End Rd.” [year and month not specified].

<sup>105</sup> See: *Downside Abbey Church guide, Durham West and Sons Paulton*, Bristol 1956; I. Conlay, “A new Shrine at Downside; Ceramics for Downside,” p. 398; “A Polish artist,” p. 20; I. Conlay, “Downside Abbey's new Shrine,” 1957; [Note], *Universe*, April 27, 1956; [Note], *Wiadomości* 1957, no. 12, p. 6; A. Milker, “Adam Kossowski i jego prace” [Adam Kossowski and his works], *Gazeta Niedzielną*, June 10, 1956, p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> See: S. Essberger, *Monopoly London. The Monopoly player's tour of London*, Cambridge 1987, p. 29; Daily Telegraph Reporter, “History of Old Kent Road in £6000 mural,” *Daily Tel-*

of 2,000 ceramic pieces, depicts a number of scenes from the history of the Old Kent Road – a road that remembers the occupation of the British Isles by the Romans, the pilgrimage to Canterbury (from Chaucer’s and Henry V’s pilgrims to *cockneys* in carnival costumes).

On January 30, 1970, Kossowski was awarded the Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation’s prize in New York.<sup>107</sup>

Adam Kossowski died of a heart attack at the Charing Cross Hospital in London on March 31, 1986. The Carmelite Fathers offered him a final resting place in their monastery cemetery in Aylesford.<sup>108</sup> A ceremonial funeral was held on April 4, 1986. In 2003, Stefania Kossowska was also buried at the same cemetery.

### “The Friars” in Aylesford

The history of the Carmelite Priory in Aylesford, a place commonly known as “The Friars,” begins in 1242. The golden era of the Carmelites fell on the second half of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th century, when it experienced both rapid quantitative development (for 50 years the order spread throughout the British Isles, with almost 40 monasteries established in England alone).<sup>109</sup> In 1534, all monks had to take an oath of

*egraph*, August 16, 1966; agn., “Nowy sukces Adama Kossowskiego” [Adam Kossowski’s new success], *Tydzień Polski*, September 17, 1966, p. 5; a leaflet of North Peckham Civic Centre (*Old Kent Road mural, Camberwell Beauty Butterfly Sculpture*); A. Drwęska, “Nowa ceramika Adama Kossowskiego” [Adam Kossowski’s new ceramics], p. 3; a signed photo with Kossowski’s ceramics, in: *The Times*, September 1, 1966.

<sup>107</sup> The members of the Advisory Committee in 1970 were: Jan Fryling, Aleksander Janta-Polczyński, Jerzy Krzywicki, Ludwik Krzyżanowski, and Szczepan P. Mierzwa (Stephen P. Mizwa). (Quoted in: *The Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation Awards for 1970*. New York 1971, pp. 6, 10, 15.)

<sup>108</sup> S. Frenkiel, in a BBC radio broadcast on December 28, 1986 concerning Kossowski, incorrectly reported that he was buried in the Relic Chapel of the monastery in Aylesford, surrounded by his own works. He compared Kossowski with the architect Christopher Wren, whose tomb in St. Paul’s Cathedral bears the following inscription: *Si vis monumentum CIRCUMSPICE* (if you are looking for a monument, look around).

<sup>109</sup> B. Panek, “Karmelici, Zakon Braci Najświętszej Maryi Panny z Góry Karmel” [Carmelites. Monks of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel], in: *Encyklopedia katolicka* [Catholic encyclopedia], vol. 8, Lublin 2000, gal. 804–808.

loyalty to King Henry and Queen Anne and swear that the Pope had no more authority than any other bishop.

In addition, their sermons were checked for content. In addition to the oath, which they did not take, an inventory of valuable items and portable possessions was to be carried out – the commissioners showed up at the monastery in 1535.

The end came on December 13, 1538, when Richard Ingworth, the Bishop of Dover, received the White Friars' house in Aylesford from the King. This is how the English province of the Carmelites came to an end, and despite years of efforts,<sup>110</sup> it was only in 1926 that the Carmelites were reinstated in England.<sup>111</sup> In 1570, the monastery was donated to the family of John Sedley of South-fleet, who began converting the monastery buildings into a so-called *country house*. Sedley demolished the church and a part of the cloisters. He transformed the remaining buildings by adding new windows. He divided the wing with the refectory into three stories, and in 1595 the entrance gate (*gate-house*) was erected. In the mid-17th century, the estate passed into the hands of Sir John Banks of Maidstone.<sup>112</sup> Banks made a fortune when he got into a syndicate supplying food to the navy. Between 1677 and 1679, Banks carried out work to transform the medieval monastery into a *country house*. The cloisters were enclosed, new windows were installed, and the stone walkway was replaced with black and white marble. A new main entrance was made in the east wing and the old hall was divided into rooms. The west wing on the side of the entrance gate was enlarged to accommodate a dining room. The old refectory was transformed into a ballroom with Dutch-style decor. Banks paid a lot of attention to gardens, as evidenced in the garden surrounded by a wall and a conservatory.

Over the following centuries, the owners of the estate changed and it was neglected. During World War I, the property was rented from the Earl

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<sup>110</sup> E.g., in 1687 the Prior General of the Carmelites wrote to King James II, filing a lawsuit to return the monastery to the order.

<sup>111</sup> The Carmelites returned to Kent in 1926, taking over the Catholic parishes of Faversham and Sittingbourne. The general of the order, Fr. Elijah Maginnis, came to Kent for a visit and traveled with Fr. Elijah Lynch to Aylesford to see the former Carmelite property.

<sup>112</sup> He purchased it from Lady Rycout for the price of 8,413 pounds.

of Aylesford's Estate, where Alice and Copley Hewitt took up residence in 1920.<sup>113</sup> Ten years later, a fire broke out in the former monastery and destroyed the decorative ceilings and stairs, exposing the old Gothic walls. The southern and western wings of the cloisters were burned out. The north wing and the courtyard survived. Mr. and Mrs. Hewitt negotiated the acquisition of "The Friars" from the Board of the Earls of Aylesford, and the relevant deed was ready in March 1932. Then the Hewitts began to rebuild the estate, referring to its medieval monastic style. The cloisters were restored in a 15th-century style, and the old refectory at the western end of the cloisters received a Gothic stained glass window. The old chapel in the south wing was adapted for worship.

The Carmelites returned to Aylesford on October 31, 1949. Over the next few years, the buildings were transformed. A kitchen sector was built, and the Pilgrim's Hall became a hospitality center for visitors. The religious community began to grow, and soon a workshop was established and a group of craftsmen (lay and religious) gathered to rebuild buildings and arrange chapels in them. In addition to craftsmen, artists were employed to rebuild The Friars.

Philip Lindsey Clark<sup>114</sup> and his son Michael Clark<sup>115</sup> are two sculptors, but according to McGreal, Philip Lindsey Clark's greatest contribu-

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<sup>113</sup> Copley Hewitt (1871–1941) worked in the City of London as Commissioner to the Inland Revenue (1929–1930), High Sheriff of Kent, and an assistant county commissioner for the scouts. His wife Alice was in charge of the Girl Scouts, so the place soon became a kind of a scouting center. The meetings were held at the Pilgrim's Hall.

<sup>114</sup> Philip Lindsey Clark (1889–1977), a sculptor, learned his skills first from his father, Robert Lindsey Clark, then at the City and Guilds School (1910–1914) and the Royal Academy Schools (1919–1921). He exhibited his first sculptures at the Royal Academy in 1920, and at the Paris Salon in the following year. In addition to the oak sculptures of St. Teresa of Ávila, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and St. Simon Stock, and the stone sculpture of the Scapular Vision made for Aylesford, he also produced the following works: the Cameronians War Memorial 1914–1918 (Glasgow), the St. Saviour's War Memorial (Southwark), the Belgian Soldiers Memorial (Kensal Green), as well as works for the Westminster Cathedral and the English Martyrs Church in Wallasey. He was a member of the Royal Society of British Sculptors.

<sup>115</sup> Michael Clark (1918–1991), studied at the Chelsea School of Art. After World War II, he enrolled in the City and Guilds of London Art School in Kennington (1947–1950). A member of the Royal Society of British Sculptors since 1960, he was the president of that society from 1971 to 1976. In 1960, he was awarded the Otto Beit Medal for the statue of Our Lady

tion was to introduce the Polish immigrant artist Adam Kossowski to the prior.<sup>116</sup>

The Carmelites of Aylesford had already become familiar with Kossowski's work on the occasion of exhibitions where the artist displayed his religious works. However, the decisive factor was the intercession and support of the sculptor Philip Lindsey Clark (then the president of the Guild of the Catholic Artists, of which Kossowski was a member), who persuaded the prior to get the monastery to hire a Polish emigre for the artistic work. The initiative came from Aylesford and Kossowski received an invitation from the prior. The artist recalled that Clark came to his studio and said: "Aylesford is the place where you should work. You must meet with Father Malachi." The Pole did not know what Aylesford was, or who Father Malachi was. In addition, he was reluctant to have any meetings due to his poor knowledge of the English language at the time. Nevertheless, Clark arranged the meeting a few days later. Kossowski went to the prior, whose first idea was to paint pictures to illustrate the history of the Carmelites and Aylesford.<sup>117</sup> Making these paintings was not an easy task for the artist, given such a long break in painting. Fr. Malachi's next order was to make the fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary Way in ceramics. They were to be installed in the monastery garden so that they would be visible to pilgrims. At the time, Kossowski only fired small ceramic representations and, as he recalled, had no ambition to become a ceramist. In addition, he did not have a suitable furnace in his workshop. For these reasons, he was afraid to accept this kind of order. However, the prior's steadfastness on this issue and his firm conviction that Kossowski was the right artist to take on this

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of the Assumption, made for the Carmelites in Aylesford. He also created a monumental depiction of St. Joseph the Protector for the abbey, and his other works include a statue of Christ above the Westminster Abbey's west door, installed in 1967 to commemorate the 900th anniversary of Westminster Abbey's foundation. M. Clark was also a sculptor and liturgical advisor for the restoration of early 19th century temples in London: the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Church of St. John Wood.

<sup>116</sup> W. McGreal, *The history of The Friars*, p. 41.

<sup>117</sup> See: "An interview with Adam Kossowski," p. 75.

task<sup>118</sup> meant that the Pole completed this order after all, which actually started his career as a ceramic artist.

### Adam Kossowski's works for the Aylesford friary

Kossowski's work dominates almost every building in the monastery complex.

The official publication of the Carmelites in Aylesford states that the first impression aroused by his works is one of sheer quantity.<sup>119</sup> The artist has left here more than a hundred individual works in ceramics, tempera, *sgraffito*, oil, mosaics, ceramics, wrought iron, and stained glass, which almost leads to the conclusion that Aylesford is home to a kind of Adam Kossowski's museum. More than twenty years of his creative work are documented here. Aylesford is where two of the artist's specializations meet: the former, acquired in the free homeland, and the new one learned in exile: monumental painting and colorful ceramics. From these works it is possible to trace the artistic development and evolution of Kossowski's art: from paintings, through stained glass and floor designs, to almost exclusively the practice of monumental ceramics. Kossowski uses an iconographic program that reflects the veneration of the Mother of God and St. Joseph the Husband. Other themes of the visual imagery, which are part of the canons of Carmelite art, include: the Vision of St. Simon Stock, the prophets Elijah and Elisha – the patron saints of the Carmelites, and representations of the Carmelite saints.

In one of his conversations with the prior, Kossowski said that art is a prayer.<sup>120</sup> This conviction was inherent in his work in the restoration of The Friars. It can be said that the purpose of iconography for this artist is, in a way, to raise the piety of the faithful with the help of artistic creation.

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<sup>118</sup> O. Lynch told Kossowski these words (famously and often quoted later): "Adam, I am sure Our Lady has sent you here for that purpose." This fact brings to mind Matisse, who, when completing the decoration of the chapel in Vence (1947–1951), which he considered the work of his life, supposedly said, "I did not choose this work, I was chosen for it." (Quoted after J. Czapski, *Patrząc* [Looking], Cracow 1996, p. 357.)

<sup>119</sup> Quoted after: J. H. Sephton, *The Friars*, p. 67.

<sup>120</sup> See: *Pilgrim's Newsletter* (Aylesford) 1968, no. 93, p. 2.



## 1. A series of seven tempera and two *sgraffito* paintings made for the former Chapter Room (1950–1951)

In the room where monastic chapters used to meet (Chapter Room), there are seven paintings done in tempera on hard fiberboard on empty white walls. They depict the main events in the history of the Carmelites in the English monastic province. The paintings were created in 1950–1951 at the request of the prior, Fr. Malachi Lynch OCarm, and were the first order placed by the monks, the work for whom was to take Kossowski over twenty more years.

The first work is on the north wall of that room, a series of six more paintings is on the east wall, and the last work in the series, a tempera with two depictions of Carmelite saints on its sides, is on the south wall of the former Chapter Room.

### 1. *The Giving of the Rule before 1214*

To the right of the painting, on a throne with an architectural motif, sits a bearded man in pontifical garb, holding an unrolled sheet of paper in both hands. On the left side there is an arcade where four monks are kneeling. The only one with a tonsure on his head is placed in the foreground, immediately in front of the bishop. The other monks, clad in striped mantles,<sup>121</sup> have their hands folded, with architectural motifs outlined behind them. The scene shows Albert of Vercelli presenting the Rule to St. Brocard. The artist placed the following inscription: ALBERTUS DG / HIEROSOLYM. ECC. PATRIARCH: / DILECTIS IN CHRISTO ET CAET.EREMITIS / IUXTA FONTEM ELIAE IN MONTE / CARMELI.

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<sup>121</sup> As for the iconographic costumology of the Carmelites, in the 13th century the Carmelite habit consisted of a hooded robe made from dark brown or black wool, girded with a leather belt, a white mantle with brown or black stripes, of equal width (about 10 cm), and a pair of boots. Initially, the habit varied as to its color, and the mantle as to its width and the arrangement of the stripes. The stripes were vertical or transverse, brown or black. The Carmelite habit of the old Syrian type was dark brown, and the mantle was striped. At the end of the 13th century, the monks started to wear white hoods, and finally the habit consisted of a black robe and a scapular of the same color. On top they wore a large white hood with a large white collar. In 1285, Pope Honorius IV allowed the striped mantle to be replaced with one in solid white.

At the top left, in the mandorla, there is the Mother of God with Child in her arms, surrounded by four angels. Below is a river with a ship sailing on it. In the bottom left corner of the painting, the artist placed his signature: A. KOSSOWSKI A.D. 1950.

2. *The invasion of Mount Carmel by the Saracens*

Three praying monks were murdered by a Saracen on horseback coming from the left side of the altar, depicted very dynamically. This brings to mind a fragment of a painting by Paolo Ucello *The Battle of San Romano* (1435–1436), displayed in the National Gallery in London, depicting in a very similar pose the condottiero Niccolò da Tolentino, seated on the back of a pristinely white horse.

Behind the depicted figures, there is the architecture of the hermitage, where the monks were allegedly burned while singing the hymn *Salve Regina* (Kossowski placed the inscription: SALVE REGINA, MATER OF MISERICORDIAE). One of the hermits in the background flees to a waiting boat.

3. *The arrival of the first hermits at Aylesford in 1242*

In the central section there are four hermits standing with white hoods on their heads; the one in the center has a beard and holds a golden coffer. To the right of them, there is the armed Sir Richard de Grey with his squire wielding a shield.

To the right of the painting there is a piece of architecture, in the back there is a river with an outline of the architecture of the Rochester Castle.<sup>122</sup> There are two ships on the river with their sails rolled up. On the bank, there is a worker carrying a sack on his back and a monk walking in front of him.

In the bottom right corner of the painting, there is the following inscription: AD. MCCXL. FRATRES / ORDINIS BEATE MARIAE GENITRICIS / DEI DE MONTE CARMELI PRIMO / VENERUNT IN ANGLIAM.<sup>123</sup>

In the bottom left corner of the image: ANNO JUBILAEI / M C M L.

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<sup>122</sup> In the identification of de Grey's figure and the dominant outline of Rochester Castle's architecture in the background, I am referring to the work of James H. Sephton (*The Friars*, p. 68).

<sup>123</sup> In 1240, the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel first arrived in England.

#### 4. The first general chapter of the order held at Aylesford in 1247

On the left side of the painting there sits a leaning monk – a scribe with a pen in his hand, taking notes. To the right of him there are five Carmelites sitting in niches. The first, a gray-haired man with facial hair and a halo over his head, crossed his hands and his gaze is fixed *en face*. He is larger than the other monks, who are busy talking. Its niche is topped with an ogive, while the tops of the other niches are more cubic. So let us move on to a brief description of these four monks. The first on the left side also gray-haired; with the index finger of his right hand he is showing something that unfortunately is out of sight of the viewer, and has a red book placed on his left knee.

Next to him there sits the second *hermit*,<sup>124</sup> slightly leaning with his body towards his interlocutor, the entire surface of his left hand pointing to his left side. In his right hand, he is holding a brown book resting on his left knee its back against it.

The third monk, without facial hair, is sitting with his head slightly lowered, his gaze directed toward the inscription placed on a ribbon held by three angels located at the bottom of the image. That monk embraces in both hands, resting at knee height, the halves of the white mantle in which he is clad.

The fourth and final monk is sitting sideways to the viewer; he is bearded, and his eyes and gaze are directed downward. The right fist, as if in the “Lamb of God” gesture, is placed on the left side of the chest, while the left fist rests on the railing of the throne.

At the bottom of the painting, there are three angels with halos, with only the top half of the body depicted, holding a ribbon with the following inscription: FLOS CARMELI VITIS FLORIGERA SPLENDOR CAELI VIRGO PUERPERA SINGULARIS.<sup>125</sup>

The dominant color of this scene is yellow – the architectural niches of the monks and the scribe’s seat are in this color. In terms of color, the background of Simon Stock’s niche stands out (let us recall that this niche

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<sup>124</sup> *Hermit* – a religious recluse.

<sup>125</sup> Flower of Carmel, Vine Branch draped with flowers, Adornment of heaven, Virgin bearing the Son of God in her body.

is the largest), because it is kept in purple tones, while the niches of the other monks are dark blue.

5. *Building the priory church, 1248*

On the right side of the painting, a kneeling man is shown busily pounding out something in a stone block with a special tool he is holding in his raised right hand. Above him, in the upper corner, Kossowski depicted a coat of arms in red, representing the seal of the prior, as well as a ribbon surrounding the upper part of this image, with the following inscription: ASSUMPCIONIS VIRGINIS GLORIOSE.

The left side of the painting shows the figures of three monks leaning over a sheet of paper showing a blueprint of the church's building. Only the Carmelite who is holding the blueprint in his left hand and a compass in his right is clad in a white scapular with a rolled-up cuff and a measuring instrument in his left hand. Behind the figures, in the background, there is the white architecture of the parish church buildings with a wooden scaffolding and the Medway River with a white bridge<sup>126</sup> and architectural outlines. A ribbon with the following inscription is stretched above the representation of the monks: AD. MCCXLVIII IN HONORE.<sup>127</sup>

This is the first part of the inscription, and the second part is the inscription mentioned above, located above the image of the prior's seal. Both ribbons are woven into the scaffolding set up at the temple being built. On the left edge of the painting there are figures of two monks walking along the road and carrying stones.

6. *The dissolution and the defacing, 1538*

The painting shows the departure of the Carmelites from Aylesford as a result of a decision ordering the dissolution of religious houses owned by mendicants. In the foreground, on the right side of the painting, there is Henry VIII, surrounded by soldiers, holding a sheet of paper from which he is reading a proclamation. He is the only person dressed in black, which

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<sup>126</sup> *Ragstone bridge* (ragstone is a hard sandstone or limestone; the etymology of the word dates back to the 13th century).

<sup>127</sup> The entire two-part inscription reads: "Year of the Lord 1248 in honor of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

makes him stand out in the painting. To the right of the king, standing with their backs to the viewer, there are monks leaving the monastery. Behind them there is white architecture with a red roof. Above the heads of the Carmelites there is the Mother of God in a mandorla spreading her mantle as a sign of her protection, with two angels on her sides. Above the roof of the monastery, there is a ribbon with the following inscription: ...PROCEDE TO THE DISSOLUTION / AND THE DEFACING... 1538.<sup>128</sup>

7. *The friars' return, 1949*

In the center of the composition there is the gate of the monastery (the gate-house) and the road leading to it, which gives the work perspective and a sense of depth.

To the right and left are shown Carmelite monks with black prayer books in their hands. The first one on the left is standing with his back to the viewer and holding a cross. The figures of the monks approaching the monastery are portraits of the participants of the historical ceremony of return to the Aylesford monastery.

From left to right the following persons are shown: Br. P. Anthony McGreal of Faversham (holding the cross in his hand), Fr. Dr. E. Kilian Lynch (general of the order), Fr. Carmel O'Shea (Irish provincial supervisor), Fr. W. Malachi Lynch (prior of Aylesford), Fr. Seiger (prior of the Carmelite International College in Rome), Fr. M. Elijah Lynch (prior of Faversham), and Fr. Alexander of Malta.

Above the monastery gate there is the figure of the Mother of God with her hands put together, the moon at her feet, and a halo over her head. Mary's figure has two angels on her sides embracing the wind-blown tail of her mantle. The Mother of God, the sky, and the angels are painted in tones of blue with a touch of purple. Above the angels there are two blue ribbons. The ribbon on the left side has the following inscription: AD MCMXLIX / MATER MITIS SED VIRI NESCIA.

And on the right side: CARMELITIS DA / PRIVILEGIA \* STELLA MARIS.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Solution and destruction procedure.

<sup>129</sup> The entire inscription reads: "A.D. 1949. Gentle Mother, incomprehensible to man, grant your grace to the children of Carmel, Star of the Sea."

There is more light in the painting that comes from Mary and the angels, symbolizing joy and hope.

On the sides of the painting, which illustrates the return of the monks to the Aylesford monastery, there are two vertical compositions by Kosowski, made in *sgraffito*, depicting two clergymen, Thomas Walden and St. Peter Thomas, as we learn from the inscriptions placed by the artist in the lower part of these paintings.

On the left side: “Thomas Walden”<sup>130</sup> – this is a depiction of a man standing *en face* in a niche, clad in a white coat, holding in his hands a golden book with the following inscription: DOCTRINALE FIDEI ECCLESIAE CATHOLICAE CONTRA WICLEVISTAS ET HUSITAS.<sup>131</sup> In the upper right and left corners there are two coats of arms of the Carmelite order.

“St. Peter Thomas”<sup>132</sup> – Kossowski presented a depiction of a man with facial hair, wearing a hat, with a halo, standing in an *en trois quarts* position (with the right profile visible), with hands placed together, against the background of a niche. The saint’s attributes include a pastoral staff leaning against a niche and a bishop’s mitre, placed in the lower part of the painting. Two coats of arms of the Carmelite order are located in the upper right and left corners of the painting.

Tymon Terlecki associates this series of seven large *panneaux* illustrating the history of the Carmelite Order with representational, official, or didactic painting.<sup>133</sup> After twenty years, Kossowski himself wondered why he created the paintings of such a significant size (125 × 182 cm). These works are characterized by a form that is monumentalized and simple at

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<sup>130</sup> Thomas Walden (d. 1430), at Oxford he held the position of Master of Theology and became the superior of the province of the English Carmelites. He also traveled on missions to Poland and Lithuania. He went to Poland in 1419 on behalf of Henry V on a diplomatic mission to Władysław Jagiełło for peace between Poland and the Teutonic Order.

<sup>131</sup> The Doctrine of the Faith of the Catholic Church against the Hussites and the followers of Wycliffe.

<sup>132</sup> St. Peter Thomas (d. 1366) was a philosopher and theologian of the Latin Patriarchate in Constantinople.

<sup>133</sup> T. Terlecki, “Kossowski of Aylesford,” p. 4.

the same time. The structural element of the painting is color, and the composition is based on color contrasts.

Although the content of these paintings was not chosen by the painter, he combined his historical and visual imagination, and the sense of composition with the sense of color. Kossowski integrated the depicted events into a backdrop of architecture understood in Giotto's terms, and into a background of nature: trees, river, and sea.

It sets and binds into one a variety of perspectives that in reality exist separately. These images are both spare and complete, completely clear and bright. They are characterized by a harmony of colors and a balance of forces: rapid movement and deep calm.

## 2. The decoration of the Main Chapel of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (The Main Shrine) (1958–1960)

The number of pilgrims coming to Aylesford contributed to the need to raise the question of restoring the medieval church, whose foundations have been uncovered, but the decision to restore it was not an easy one for the Carmelites. There was an urgent need for a separate shrine for pilgrims, but the monks did not have the financial resources necessary to build a sufficiently large church, suitable for the number of pilgrims increasing each year.<sup>134</sup> In such a situation, the community's superior, Fr. Malachi, decided on a design for an open-air shrine, with three chapels extending from it in a radial fashion.

In 1951, medieval foundations were uncovered. This entire area was then paved (lined with stones) in the form of a *piazza*. The location of the medieval foundations was marked by using white paving slabs contrasting with the gray color of the concrete. The location of the Grey family's crypt was marked with a white stone cross placed on a paving slab in front of the chapel steps.

A temporary limestone altar, designed by Philip Lindsey Clark in 1951, was placed on the exact same spot as the medieval altar. It was shielded

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<sup>134</sup> Every Sunday, starting from May until the end of October, 6 to 8 thousand pilgrims come. A total of about 250,000 people come to Aylesford each year.

from the weather by a copper canopy. Wooden benches were set up in the square to accommodate about two thousand pilgrims. A plaque on the wall to the right of the chapel was intended to commemorate the beginning of the restoration. This plaque was blessed by Bishop Cyril Cowderoy on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 8, 1954.

The new main chapel, dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was built east of the previous medieval monastery church between 1958 and 1960. The innovative open-air shrine, with adjacent apse chapels in a layout based on the motif of the Jerusalem Cross,<sup>135</sup> was designed by Adrian Gilbert Scott (1882–1963), who was a member of a well-known family of architects. His son, Antony Gilbert Scott, was Adrian’s deputy in Aylesford; both worked there as volunteers. The shrine’s design was intended to reconcile the needs of the Order with the historic remains of the monastery’s architecture.

The creation of the shrine and the adjacent chapels began in the summer of 1958. Concrete pillars that covered 30–40 feet of soft ground formed the foundation of the temple.<sup>136</sup>

The work manager and master stonemason was Percy Kitchen (d. 1966) of Kent, one of several local craftsmen who knew how to handle ragstone – hard sandstone or limestone.

Kitchen trained eight Italian stonemasons in the art of laying slab stone structures. One of them was named Giuseppe Miccoli. Two brothers from Spain, Brother Simon and Brother Nonio, worked on the construction from its start. Another works manager was Clifford Jones (d. 1963).

Ragstone came from local quarries and the remains of a Roman villa in Eccles. Some of the stone was taken from the vicinity of Boxley and

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<sup>135</sup> The so-called *Crusader Cross* – iconographically, is depicted as four small crosses between the arms of a larger cross. A total of five crosses symbolize the five wounds of Christ. The Jerusalem Cross was first used for the Latin Kingdom in Jerusalem. This mark was borne by Godfrey of Bouillon, the first ruler of Jerusalem after its liberation from the Muslims. During the Crusades, this sign was referred to as the Crusader’s Cross. The four small crosses also symbolize the four Gospels preached to the four corners of the world, and the large cross depicts Christ.

<sup>136</sup> James H. Sephton reports that “skilled craftsmen from the Netherlands, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and England” worked on the construction (*The Friars*, p. 72).



Maidstone. The tiles for the main chapel came from a demolished brewery in Maidstone.<sup>137</sup>

Above the entrance ogive leading to the main chapel, called the Chapel of the Assumption, the motif of the Jerusalem Cross was placed. In the center of the chapel there is a niche, also in the form of an ogive, with a large sculpture depicting the Assumption. The figure has its hands and eyes raised, and a moon at its feet. The sculpture was made in 1960 by Michael Clark from African hardwood.<sup>138</sup> The background of the niche was filled with two thousand small ceramic tiles, designed by Kossowski and fired at the monks' ceramics workshop. Most of the tiles were made in blue (symbolizing the heavens); there are also shades of navy blue, black, and green. Clark recalls that he spent a lot of time discussing with Kossowski how to harmonize the design of his sculpture with the Polish artist's overall design of the chapel.<sup>139</sup>

Behind the statue of Our Lady of the Assumption, in the center of the niche, the artist created a circle out of light blue and light green tiles – perhaps suggesting Our Lady's mandorla. On both sides of the figure, from the center of this circle, wide rays spread out, arranged from yellow ceramic tiles, formed into the shape of teardrops with edges highlighted by black lines, as if carved on the edges of the tiles (two straight lines on each tile).

Behind the altar, on the wall below the niche, Kossowski made a frieze in the *sgraffito* technique in two colors: pale green and red. The frieze is divided into five vertical compositional strips. In each strip there are ribbons with Mary's titles, which are prayer invocations taken from the Litany of Loretto, illustrated with simple representations. Each segment was separated by a representation of a palm tree.

The upper part of the first segment from the left shows a ribbon with the inscription ROSA MYSTICA,<sup>140</sup> under which there is an image of a rose flower. Further below there is a depiction of architecture with a tower

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<sup>137</sup> Style and Winch Brewery.

<sup>138</sup> The sculpture won the Otto Beit Medal from the Royal Society of British Sculptors.

<sup>139</sup> See: *Image of Carmel. The art of Aylesford*, pp. 5–7.

<sup>140</sup> *Rosa Mystica* (Latin) – Spiritual Rose.

topped by a Star of David. At the very bottom there is the invocation *TURRIS DAVIDICA*.<sup>141</sup>

The second strip is crowned by the inscription *ORA PRO NOBIS*,<sup>142</sup> under which Kossowski depicted the Ark of the Covenant in the form of a rectangle topped by a trapezoid, on which there are two burning candles, with a cross between them. Below there is a ribbon with the invocation *FOEDERIS ARCA*.<sup>143</sup> In the lowest part of the frieze of that segment, there is a geometric representation composed of standing rectangles; this pattern also extends to the next two strips.

Another compositional segment is located under the statue of the Mother of God; in its upper part there is a ribbon with the inscription *DOMUS AUREA*,<sup>144</sup> and under it Kossowski depicted an architectural representation topped with a dome.

The penultimate strip is topped by the request *ORA PRO NOBIS*, under which there is an image of a gate, illustrating the litany invocation below, which compares the Mother of God to the Gate of Heaven (*JANUA COELI*).

The last, fifth strip is crowned by a ribbon with the inscription *STELLA MATUTINA*,<sup>145</sup> which is alluded to by the representation of a large multi-pointed star below. Below it there is a depiction of a five-story tower with a dome, which is an illustration of the final invocation placed in that frieze: *TURRIS EBURNEA*, or Ivory Tower.

It is worth adding that it is possible to observe an alternating rhythm of the shape of the ribbons in the upper parts of all compositional strips. Specifically, the first, third, and fifth ribbon, which are invocations to the Mother of God, take the traditional shape of an arch, while the second and fourth ribbon, which are supplication antiphons *ora pro nobis*, are placed in an inverted arch.

For the altar in that chapel, Kossowski made a crucifix with the figure of Crucified Christ in cream-colored ceramics. The perizoma and the plaque

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<sup>141</sup> *Turrus Davidica* (Latin) – Tower of David.

<sup>142</sup> *Ora pro nobis* (Latin) – Pray for us.

<sup>143</sup> *Foederis Arca* (Latin) – Ark of the Covenant.

<sup>144</sup> *Domus Aurea* (Latin) – House of Gold.

<sup>145</sup> *Stella Matutina* (Latin) – Morning Star.

with the inscription INRI placed over the Savior's head were made of white ceramics. The arms of the cross are decorated with small red rectangular plaques with a white stripe in the middle of each. The artist placed two such plaques on the horizontal beam of the crucifix, and three on the vertical beam – one above Christ's head and two below his feet. There are five in total, which could refer, especially due to the red color of the ceramics, to the five wounds of Christ.

The crucifix was placed on a rectangular bar, the elongated side of which on the front side was decorated in the central part with a skull and bones motif in white ceramics surrounded by a white and yellow geometric pattern.

On both sides of the crucifix there are six identical candle holders designed and made by Adam Kossowski. Their shape refers to a cuboid with a cup-shaped head. Each candle holder is characterized by two ogive clearances placed one above the other.

On the antependium of the altar in the chapel dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the artist fixed twelve separate ceramic plaques against a black background.<sup>146</sup> They all refer to symbols of salvation. Between these plaques there are rectangles as if engraved on a black background – this is a geometric decoration. The ceramic representations attached to the antependium are in yellow tones, with black shading. Looking from the upper left corner, the following representations were placed in sequence: the first plaque shows a seven-branched Jewish candle holder referred to as menorah.<sup>147</sup> On the second plaque there is a depiction of a man playing a harp (the biblical David) with his head bowed and leaning against the top of the instrument, with the fingers of his hands placed on the strings. The third shows the outline of a fish in the waves referring to the Greek word *ICHTYS*.<sup>148</sup> The fourth plaque depicts a long cross entwined

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<sup>146</sup> Kossowski discovered the possibility of placing ceramics on a black background, the so-called *black slips*, which would henceforth appear in virtually all of the artist's ceramic images, very often with some ornament, usually geometric, scratched into these blocks.

<sup>147</sup> See: Book of Exodus (Exod.) 25:31–40.

<sup>148</sup> The letters forming the word *ICHTYS* are the first letters of words that mean in Greek: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior. The Greek sound of the word was like Christ's monogram.

by a serpent, which is a reference to the Old Testament motif where Moses made a copper serpent and placed it on a high stake in the desert.<sup>149</sup>

The copper serpent is a figure of the Crucified Christ, since just as “the Jews by looking at the copper serpent were saved from death, so through the cross of Christ eternal life was given to men.”<sup>150</sup> The fifth plaque shows a representation of the head of the Paschal Lamb in a halo, a symbol of Christ sacrificed for the sins of the world.<sup>151</sup> The sixth depiction also corresponds with the sacrificial theme, as Kossowski showed here a pedestal with a large flame on it, signifying a sacrifice burning on the altar.

The next plaques show a building topped with a dome (the Jerusalem Temple)<sup>152</sup> and the tablet with the Decalogue of God’s Law revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai.<sup>153</sup> Another ceramic shows Christ’s monogram composed of the letters X and P<sup>154</sup> against a background of flames. The tenth plaque depicts a bunch of grapes symbolizing Christ,<sup>155</sup> but also the Old Testament sacrifice of Melchizedek.<sup>156</sup> The penultimate plaque shows three stars against the background of a mountain – this is the Carmelite emblem, where Mount Carmel rises between stars symbolizing Faith, Hope, and Love. Finally, the last ceramic representation shows a boat in the midst of waves, with a small house on the boat, which are symbols of Noah’s Ark.<sup>157</sup>

On the antependium of the altar, there is an accumulation of motifs referring directly to the Holy Bible, predominantly to the Old Testament. All these plaques are bound together by the theme of imagery, oscillating around the symbols of salvation.

Set high on the inner walls of the shrine’s chapel, three each to the right and left of the altar, there are six ceramic works by Kossowski, depict-

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<sup>149</sup> See: Book of Numbers (Num.) 21:4–9.

<sup>150</sup> Quoted after: C. Zieliński, *Sztuka sakralna* [Sacral art], Poznań 1959, p. 525.

<sup>151</sup> Cf: Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb) 10:1–18.

<sup>152</sup> See: First Book of Kings (1 Kgs) 6 and 7; Second Book of Chronicles (2 Chr) 3 and 4.

<sup>153</sup> See: Exod 20:1–21.

<sup>154</sup> These are the first two letters of the Greek word *XPISTOS* meaning Christ. It means “anointed” and was used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word *masiah*.

<sup>155</sup> See: Gospel of John (John) 15:5.

<sup>156</sup> See: Genesis (Gen) 14:17–20.

<sup>157</sup> See: Gen 6–9. Noah’s ark symbolizes the Crucified Christ; the tree from which the ark was built resembles the tree of salvation of the cross.

ing angelic figures, all in the same yellow and black tones, made between 1962 and 1964. The largest glaze on the right is located directly above the entrance to St. Anne's Chapel. It depicts an angelic choir – eight angels in three rows. To the right of this ceramic there are two more, on which the artist placed individual figures of angels. The first is St. Michael the Archangel depicted frontally, with both hands supported by his attribute – a sword on which his invocation is inscribed: *QUIS UT DEUS*.<sup>158</sup> A star is placed above his head. The second frontal depiction shows the figure of the Archangel Gabriel (not the angel of Aylesford, as stated by J. H. Sephton),<sup>159</sup> holding in his hand an architectural design – that of the monastery chapel. Above his head there is a star, and at the height of the angel's feet there are outlines of the village of Aylesford and the 14th-century bridge.

On the left side of the altar there is an analogous arrangement of ceramics: the closest to the altar is the largest one, depicting an angelic choir of ten figures, among whom one holds a rose and one a lily. The central ceramic is a frontal depiction of the Archangel Uriel<sup>160</sup> with a staff in his right hand.

He raises his left hand up, three fingers are straightened, two bent, as if in a gesture of warning. There is a star above his head.

The final image in this group is a frontal depiction of the Archangel Raphael, who is shown holding both hands upward, as if in ecstasy, with a prayer on his lips; above his head there is a star, and between his feet there is his attribute in the form of an image of a fish.

The figures of angels and especially archangels are monumental. They impress the viewer with their spatial arrangement and static expression of four elongated, quite hieratic human figures with large eyes.

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<sup>158</sup> *Quis ut Deus* (Latin) – Who is like unto God.

<sup>159</sup> *The Angel of Aylesford*. Cited after: J. H. Sephton, *The Friars*, p. 73.

<sup>160</sup> The name Uriel is not mentioned in the Bible at all, but instead appears in apocryphal Hebrew writings as the name of a leading angel, sometimes mentioned with Michael and Gabriel. In Hebrew, this means: "God is my light/fire." In some Jewish traditions, Uriel is the angel of thunder and earthquake, he warns Lamech of the end of the world.

### 3. The decoration of St. Anne's Chapel (1961–1963)

To the southeast of the Chapel of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary there is a chapel dedicated to St. Anne, the mother of Mary. Its interior was designed and made simultaneously with the main chapel. Italian plasterers spread two layers of green plaster on the walls and the ceiling. The choice of green as the dominant color was meant to indicate blossoming, sprouting, and awakening of new life. Adam Kossowski scratched *sgraffito* patterns on the walls. On either side of the altar, stained-glass windows with abstract images, topped with trefoil arches, are placed in tripartite windows. On the left side of the altar, they are dominated by a range of green and yellow, while on the opposite side the colors are blue and yellow. About two thousand glazed tiles, fired in the monastery's pottery workshop, were installed on the concrete floor and then arranged in abstract compositions. All of this was designed by Adam Kossowski.

On the walls of that chapel, against the background of a *sgraffito* decoration in various shades of green, the artist arranged ceramic compositions.<sup>161</sup> The ceramics depict excerpts from apocryphal stories about St. Joachim and St. Anne, the grandparents of Jesus. These images, placed two on each wall, are designed to be placed on the sides of the tripartite windows. Looking from the left, from the entrance to the chapel, there is a composition depicting the story of how St. Joachim learned from an angel about meeting his future wife, St. Anne, at the city gate. Joachim is standing frontally on the right, wearing a white robe, barefoot, with a yellow halo above his head, a green staff in his left hand, his right arm bent, his hand held to his chest in a gesture of disbelief, as if he were pushing or chasing something away. St. Joachim lifts his head up to his right and looks at the angel's figure above. The angel, with spread wings, clad in a long robe, with a halo, looks down on Joachim. At the same time, he extends his outstretched arms toward him. His entire figure is made of dark yellow ceramic. The composition is set against a *sgraffito* background depicting trees, hills, two sheep, and some buildings.

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<sup>161</sup> J. H. Sephton recalls the artist's words that the ceramics conceived by Kossowski for this chapel, as well as his decoration done in the *sgraffito* technique describe the "springtime of faith" in the Aylesford monastery. See: idem, *The Friars*, p. 76.

The second ceramic composition on that wall shows Joachim and Anna's meeting at the gate. We see them facing each other and embracing each other by the forearms. Both have halos above their heads. Anna is standing on a step, sideways to the viewer, with her eyes lowered, and above her Kossowski additionally placed a ceramic yellow arch. She is clad in a white maphorion and a yellow robe. St. Joachim, also standing sideways to the viewer, is looking at St. Anne, his right foot resting on the step on which she is standing. His attire is a white turban and a long white robe and a mantle. Buildings and trees are drawn against the green background of the *sgraffito*.

On the opposite wall, the first ceramic representation from the altar is the scene of the Nativity of Mary. Actually, it consists of two ceramics placed one above the other. Higher up there is a yellow bed with white pillows, on which lies St. Anne, clad in a white maphorion and a pink gown, holding little Mary wrapped in a white baby sleeping bag. Both have yellow halos over their heads and a yellow arcade arch above them, resting on two columns. Below this depiction there is another one, smaller in size, which shows a servant girl in a pale pink robe with rolled-up sleeves and a white apron, bending over a yellow bowl with water, holding a white sheet in her hands. Next to the bowl there is a yellow dish. Against the green background of the wall, Kossowski depicted tree motifs, outlines of buildings, and geometric patterns.

The final, fourth representation, which closes the artist's narrative on the apocryphal story of the Holy Family, is a scene with Mary in a temple. It consists of three figures presented sideways to the viewer. On the left there is St. Anne, with a halo, wearing a white maphorion, a pink dress with black patterns, and light-colored boots on her feet. She is directing her eyes ahead, slightly downward, looking at the little Mary walking in front of her. St. Anne is extending her right outstretched hand toward her daughter, with her right arm bent at the elbow held to her chest. Mary, who is in front of her mother, is pictured with a halo and dark hair, wearing a long blue dress and shoes of the same color. She is keeping her hands placed together, putting her left foot on the first step, and heading towards the priest awaiting her. The celebrant is on the second – highest step in the composition, leaning slightly toward the approaching girl, raising his slightly upright arms toward her. He is clad in a long pink gown tied with

a *cingulum*, with a yellow outer garment resembling a dalmatic on top of the gown, and a priestly headgear. Above Mary's and the priest's heads extend two arches of yellow ceramic. Against the green *sgraffito* background there are motifs of circular architecture, stairs, a hill, and leaf motifs. The letter M is repeated in the lower part of the plaster decoration, while the letter A is repeated on the opposite wall.

When looking toward the altar, one can see the focal point in the form of an ogive-shaped niche with a 15th-century sculpture by the German artist Riemenschneider depicting St. Anne holding Mary and Jesus inside. It was donated to the monks by a Jewish industrialist. In the inner strips of the niche, Kossowski placed five four-sided convex ceramic tiles each, with yellow and light green glaze. The entire wall around the niche is covered with green *sgraffito* with predominantly abstract motifs, among which one can find a geometric thread, a sort of simplified architectural outline, as well as leaf and cross motifs. On the right side of the niche, an image of a cross is scratched, with three nails and a spear below it.

The antependium of the altar is decorated with a ceramic cladding made by Adam Kossowski. In general, it is filled with abstract motifs in two shades: yellow and a tint of green approaching blue, with the former predominating. However, among these non-figural motifs, in the very center of the antependium, one can notice the engraved monogram of Christ with two letters, A and M, slightly on its sides. Between the two-color abstract ornament, one can also recognize a cradle motif in green with a shade of blue, located in the upper right corner of the antependium.

A ceramic crucifix and two candle holders stand on the altar. However, they differ from those in the Shrine Chapel of the Assumption. The red crucifix, supported by a yellow bar, was made very originally, as its arms are surrounded by a yellow oval, as if in the shape of a mandorla, and on either side of it, against the background of that mandorla, the artist placed two figures: Mary, with her hands put together and lowered (on the right side of the cross) and St. John, looking at the Savior, with his hands put together and raised up (on the left side).

To the left of the chapel entrance, on a green *sgraffito* background, there is an inscription dedicated to Anna Maria Cowderoy (January 27, 1868 –



February 28, 1957), the mother of the Archbishop of Southwark: IN MEMORY OF / ANNE MARIE / COWDEROY / BORN JAN. 27. 1868. DIED FEB. 26. 1957 / MOTHER OF CYRIL 7TH BISHOP / OF SOUTHWARK.

On the opposite wall, to the right of the chapel entrance, there is a long inscription calling to honor Christ's grandparents placed symmetrically on a green background: LET US CELEBRATE THE MEMORY OF / THE GRANDPARENTS OF CHRIST / AND WITH FAITH LET US BESEECH / THEM FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE / SO THAT SALVATION MAY BE / ASSURED FOR ALL THOSE WHO / CRY. O GOD BE WITH US / O THOU WHO DIDST GLORIFY / THEM ACCORDING TO THY WILL.

St. Anne's Chapel is a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk* – a total work, made by Adam Kossowski. This is because, in addition to the wall and antependial ceramic decoration, in addition to the *sgraffito* decoration, the crucifix, the candle holders in colored glaze, and the stained glass designs, the artist created the floor design. The floor is completely covered with tiles. The top step – the altar step – is decorated mostly with square-shaped tiles, predominantly blue-black, but also a few brown ones. In front of the altar, they are arranged in the motif of the Jerusalem Cross. The rest of the floor is covered with tri-colored tiles: mostly black-green, with a few brown ones, which take on abstract patterns of squares, triangles, and ovals.

#### 4. The decoration of the Relic Chapel (1962–1966)

The Relic Chapel is located to the southeast of the main chapel. It can be accessed through a long corridor. To the right and left of the entrance there are vessels for holy water made of brown ceramic, with green edges and a carved image of a cross, made by Adam Kossowski. Fixed on the left wall of the corridor is a cross with two wooden sculptures on its sides, made by Philip Lindsey Clark, depicting St. Teresa of Ávila holding a pen, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux, with her attributes: a cross and roses. Further on the wall, there is a fragment of Kossowski's ceramic mosaic depicting the head of an angel, in yellow and red; it is an incomplete work, installed after the artist's death.

Adjacent to the chapel are three additional small apse chapels. Across from the entrance, behind the altar, there is an apse with a massive reliquary of St. Simon Stock. To the right of the entrance, southeast of the

Relic Chapel, there is an apse with the Chapel of Carmelite Saints. The last space here is the Chapel of the English Martyrs, located to the left of the entrance, northwest of the Relic Chapel.

In the early 1960s, Kossowski visited the church of St Germain des Pres in Paris, which became the inspiration for the layout of the Relic Chapel. There, the artist first saw the new liturgy, celebrated at a freestanding altar with pulpits on either side of it. He also sent preliminary sketches to Aylesford from there. Today's appearance of the chapel amazingly resembles those drawings.<sup>162</sup>

A frieze consisting of fifteen ceramic representations of the Way of the Cross, commissioned from the artist in 1963, surrounds the walls around this chapel. Although normally the Way of the Cross has fourteen stations,<sup>163</sup> Kossowski took the liberty of adding one more – the Resurrection scene – which is the keystone of the previous ones and serves as their punch line, as it were.

This is the image of the Empty Tomb, to which the women came and where they saw an angel.<sup>164</sup> This ceramic, almost twice the size of the others, was placed, not coincidentally, above the altar, above the passage to the apse containing the reliquary, which catches the viewer's eye from the very entrance. Below this scene, the artist put the following inscription: RESSUREXIT SICUT DIXIT. On the right, there is a figure of an angel with a long cross in his hand, sitting on a stone rejected from the entrance of the empty tomb. In the very center of the composition, there is the entrance door to the place where the Savior was buried. To the left of the ceramic there are three women in blue robes; the one standing in the center holds a vessel for holy oils in her hands. The figure of the angel heralding the Resurrection is much larger than the Jerusalem women. It is very dynamic not only due to its size, but also due to the gesture made with the right

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<sup>162</sup> See: *Image of Carmel*, p. 21.

<sup>163</sup> *Via Dolorosa* – the Way of the Cross is reproduced in fourteen stations located in the church. Nine stations originate from Gospel texts and five come from tradition: Jesus falling three times under the weight of the cross and Jesus encountering his mother and St. Veronica.

<sup>164</sup> See: Gospel of Matthew (Matt) 28:1–8.

hand, the crossed feet, the inclined head, the unfurled tail of the mantle, and the diagonally held cross.

In the various Stations of the Cross, the human figures made of ceramic are placed on a black background, which is not smooth, but has gouged fragments of architecture or there are carved faces of people and outlines of figures in the crowds accompanying Jesus on the way to Calvary. The stations are numbered and signed at the bottom of each scene, on a yellow ceramic strip.

In these ceramics, Kossowski pays less attention to the role of color, which he limits to yellow (architecture and ground), red (cross), and white (robes), focusing more on the shape and texture of the composition. The expressiveness of the representations is particularly emphasized by the contrast between the yellow ceramics and the black background.

The first station (JESUS CONDEMNED TO DEATH) is located on the wall to the left of the altar. On three steps there is a seat on which Pilate is sitting *en face* in a white long robe. His body tilts to his left, where on the lower steps a servant is kneeling on one knee, girded with a white band, and in his arms outstretched upwards he is holding a yellow bowl, over which Pilate extends his hands. Next to him, there is Christ standing frontally, with his hands crossed and tied with a cord, and his eyes lowered. He has a crown of thorns on his head, as well as a visible halo, and is holding a reed in his hand. He is girded with a white perizoma, with a purple mantle put on his back. Above this depiction, there is an arch made of yellow ceramic over Christ's and Pilate's heads.

The second station (JESUS CARRIES THE CROSS) depicts Christ on the left, clad in a white long gown, tied at hip level, without the purple mantle. He is standing with his hands straight up, grasping the beam of the cross handed to him by a Roman soldier, which, in a shade of purple, occupies the central place in the composition. To the right, there is a Roman soldier standing, wearing a white robe and a helmet on his head. With his right hand he is supporting the beam of the cross, and in his left hand he is holding a spear, also purple in color. The cross is the central element. Kossowski did not fill the entire image inside with a black background, by which he would have obtained a regular, square frame for the scene, but allowed the cross to stand out by, as it appears, projecting above the

composition. The cross is given an additional accent by leaving a black border around its top.<sup>165</sup>

In the background of the ceramic composition, we can see architectural outlines more clearly than in the others: windows, doors, and roofs, which results in a more intricate modeling than in Kossowski's previous ceramic depictions.

The image is completely flat (the artist did not use any perspective to convey depth). Both the figure of Christ and the figure of the soldier are set on the same base line.

The third station (JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME) depicts Jesus' first fall under the weight of the cross. We see him kneeling on the yellow cobblestones, pressed down by the cross, which he is embracing with his right hand, while with his left he is propping himself against the ground in an attempt to get up. Above there is a yellow arcade arch, beside which there is a soldier standing with his back turned towards the arch, wearing a white perizoma and a helmet, with a red spear in his hand, inclining his head indifferently over Christ. The ground on which Christ fell is composed as if it had been shattered into small, irregular pieces by being struck with a hammer.

The fourth station (JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER MARY) is placed not at the viewer's eye level, but high above the entrance to the Martyrs' Chapel. On the right side of the image, there is the figure of Jesus, bent and crouched under the weight of the cross; he is directing his gaze and his left hand towards his Mother, standing in front of him, who, clad in a white long gown and a maphorion, extends both arms in front of her, towards her son. The scene is set against the background of a piece of yellow architecture.

The next station (SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS) shows in the center of its composition a man in a white robe and a turban on his head supporting the cross with both hands. Next to him stands a faint Christ with his head bowed down. On the other side of Jesus, Kos-

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<sup>165</sup> In his essay, P. Stuart draws parallels between the ceramics and the *sgraffito* works with scenes taken from the Book of Revelation, which are found in the chapel of Queen Mary's College in London, seeing the analogy in the fact that some objects were given stronger outlines.

sowski placed another man, wearing a green perizoma and a head scarf on his head, who is looking at the beam of the cross, while supporting it with an upright and raised left arm.

The sixth station (VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS) shows two figures: on the right, a standing Jesus, leaning with his body against the beam of the cross, which he is supporting with both hands, and looking at a female figure standing in front of him, wearing a white robe and a maphorion, and extending a white headscarf in front of him in both hands. In this depiction, one can very clearly see a row of lamenting women, Mary directing her gaze to her son and extending her hands toward him, and Roman soldiers, whose figures Kossowski carved into the black background of the *sgraffito*.

Two more stations are placed high on the wall above the entrance to the Relic Chapel. The first (JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIME) shows Jesus on his knees, with his hands resting on the ground, with his head bowed very low to the ground. Behind him, at head height, there is a man standing, wearing a white perizoma and a headgear, who is supporting the beam of the cross with both hands. The second station (JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM) depicts Jesus carrying the instrument of passion in the center, surrounded by the women of Jerusalem. Two of them are standing with bowed heads behind Jesus, who turns his gaze to a group of four women with a small boy, lamenting at the sight of Jesus carrying the cross.

The ninth station (JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME) shows the third fall of Christ, who, in Kossowski's artistic vision, is literally knocked to the ground. The whole figure lies lifelessly on the ground, and behind it there are two men standing: one only girded with a perizoma and wearing a turban on his head, with both hands holding the cross in a horizontal position, and a soldier standing next to him, with a spear in his right hand, and supporting the beam of the cross with his left hand.

The next station (JESUS IS STRIPED OF HIS GARMENTS) depicts Jesus standing in the center with his head lowered and his hands spread out, being stripped of his garments by a man standing to his left, wearing a white perizoma and a headscarf. Behind them, the tree of the cross is supported by a man girded with green cloth and wearing a headgear of the same color. A Roman soldier is also standing nearby, supporting himself with a spear.

Another ceramic image (JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS) is placed above the entrance to the Chapel of the Carmelite Saints. This is the scene of Jesus being nailed to the cross: he is lying on the ground, parallel to the beam of the cross, and supporting with his right elbow on the ground. He is directing his gaze toward the viewer. His left arm is held upright, it is nailed to the wood by the man kneeling above, wearing a perizoma, with a red hammer. Scattered nails and pincers are laying nearby. Standing by Jesus' head, watching the event, is a soldier leaning on his spear.

The twelfth station (JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS) depicts in its center a cross stuck in the ground with a white plaque with the inscription INRI<sup>166</sup> and Jesus' body nailed to it with his head lowered. To the right of the cross there is a soldier raising a spear to the heart of the Crucified Christ, and to the left there is St. John looking at Jesus and embracing the faint figure of Mary, standing with her head lowered and her hands crossed. Under the cross, there is a skull and crossbones.

The next station (JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS AND PLACED IN HIS MOTHER'S ARMS) shows the removal of Jesus' body from the cross. On the right side of the composition there is a ladder leaning against the cross and a man standing on it (St. Joseph of Arimathea),<sup>167</sup> supporting with his right hand the elbow of Jesus's being taken down from the cross, embraced at the chest by St. John and at the elbow by Mary, both located on the left side of the cross.

The fourteenth station (JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB) depicts the placing of Jesus' body in the tomb.<sup>168</sup> In the rock grotto, there is a red bench on which the dead Jesus is resting. At the head there is the same man who took Jesus' body down from the cross – St. Joseph of Arimathea, and at the feet there is St. John' both are covering the body with a white sheet. Three female figures are pictured in the background, with heads bowed down and

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<sup>166</sup> On the vertical post of the cross, a plate is placed at the top with an inscription with information for the reason for the condemnation to crucifixion. The plate on Christ's cross had the inscription written in three languages: Latin, Greek, and Aramaic. See: Matt 27:37; Gospel of Mark (Mark) 15:26; Gospel of Luke (Luke) 23:38; John 19:19.

<sup>167</sup> See: Matt 27:57–61; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–56; John 19:38–42.

<sup>168</sup> Two synoptics mention that Christ's tomb was carved in the rock. John adds that it was surrounded by a garden. See: Matt 27:59–60; Mark 15:46; Luke 23:50–53; John 19:38–41.

hands put together. The first on the right holds in her hands a red vessel for oils to anoint the dead. Above this composition there is a yellow arch made of ceramic. The fifteen station, Resurrection, which was mentioned earlier, binds together and completes the representations of the various stations of the *Via Crucis*.

The antependium of the main altar was decorated by Adam Kossowski with red ceramics on a black background, meant to represent Calvary: in the center there is the cross of Christ, with two crosses of thieves on its sides. Both ends of the ceramic cladding of the antependium show architectural outlines.

The altar on the celebrant's side also has a glazed decoration. In the entire plane of the antependium, Kossowski designated three compositional fields separated from each other by rectangular geometric plaques: in each field there is a niche of sorts. The central one contains the monogram of Christ, while the two niches on the sides contain the Greek letters *alpha* and *omega*.

There are two pulpits in this chapel, both with red ceramic motifs. The front edge of the pulpit top located to the left of the altar contains a motif of elongated rectangles, with an arch inside each.

Below, the first plaque from the top depicts the motif of a cross, followed by two geometric narrow plaques, then again a larger one with a representation of an angel (a symbol of Matthew the Evangelist), a sequence of another two narrow plaques, and the last one, at the very bottom of the pulpit base, depicts a lion (a symbol of Mark the Evangelist).<sup>169</sup>

The pulpit located on the right side of the altar is similar in formal terms: a top with the same geometric motifs, then three plaques separated from each other by double, narrow, rectangular plaques. The first plane from the top contains the monogram of Christ, the middle plane contains the head of an eagle (a symbol of John the Evangelist), and the last plane contains the head of a bull/ox (a symbol of Luke the Evangelist).

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<sup>169</sup> A lion is also a figure of Christ – the lion of the generation of Judah (Revelation of St. John (Rev) 5:5), who conquered death through his resurrection and who sleeps in the tomb, with eyes open and heart alert. The lion, the king of animals, is a figure symbolizing the royal nature of the God-Man.

In the part of the chapel where the altar is located, Kossowski placed iconographic images that are thematically related to the Resurrection. This is the focal point of this chapel, because it contains the altar on which the Eucharistic sacrifice is performed that commemorates the Passion, the Death, and the Resurrection of Christ. The decoration of the altar with images of the cross refers to this idea of rising from the dead; it was not just an instrument of passion and death; instead, the Resurrection was accomplished through the cross. At the same time, within that space, above the altar, the artist placed a ceramic vision of the Empty Tomb, which closes the Stations of the Cross.

The stained glass windows are of great importance in this chapel. Designed by Adam Kossowski and made by a Benedictine monk, Louis Charles Norris of the Buckfast Abbey.<sup>170</sup> He used an innovative technique developed in France in the late 1920s to make the stained glass windows. To imitate the depth of color and texture of medieval glass, he used thin glass pieces embedded in concrete or mastic. Norris mentions that because Kossowski's designs involved the traditional technique of glass embedded in lead frames, he had to adapt them to his technique of glass pieces placed in a resin mixture. His modification involved two things: he had to increase the spaces between the glass and slightly darken the colors, which are very pale in Kossowski's design.<sup>171</sup>

High up in the four corners of the Relic Chapel, twin multi-part stained glass windows ending in a pointed arch were installed in the walls. Each pair of stained glass windows was given a well-defined iconographic meaning. The stained glass windows in the northwest corner were to depict "Hope and Faith." The dominant color is green, identified as the color of hope.

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<sup>170</sup> He joined the Buckfast Abbey in 1930. He began working as a stained glass artist in 1933 and studied especially 12th- and 13th-century works at the Canterbury and Chartres cathedrals. From 1938 to 1939 he worked under Professor E. W. Tristram at the Royal College of Art, specializing in fresco, tempera, and mosaic. In 1959, he began working with glass pieces and cement, which he later replaced with a resin mixture. In addition to his stained glass windows in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel at the Buckfast Abbey and Aylesford, he made commissioned works of various sizes for nearly seventy Catholic and Anglican churches. In 1943, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

<sup>171</sup> See: *Image of Carmel*, pp. 36–37.



In the right-hand stained glass window emerges a cross, in the center of which is inscribed a yellow oval in the shape of an egg, symbolizing new life. The stained glass windows in the northeast corner are kept in a range of orange. In his design, Kossowski titled it "Zeal and Prayer." Its central motif is a cross. "Solitude and Contemplation" is the title of the third set of stained glass windows, located in the southeast corner of the chapel. The right-hand window shows a solitary cell, in orange and red. The purple-orange-red cross in the right-hand window suggests that contemplation is the fruit of solitude. The stained glass windows in the southwest corner of the chapel depict "Penance and Sacrifice," in light purple and blue.

In the right-hand stained glass window, the motif of the cross is repeated several times, and purple, symbolizing repentance and sacrifice, is used in addition to the two dominant colors mentioned above.

In the stained glass windows installed in Relic Chapel, Kossowski showed a specific, thoughtful iconographic program that refers to the charism of the order, which originally had a strictly eremitic character – such ascetic practices as solitude, poverty, silence, and fasting were carried out, and physical labor was an important element. After the arrival of the eremites in Europe (mid-13th century), the originally few cenobitic elements (common mass and chapters) were enriched (e.g. common liturgical prayers) due to the need to adapt the rule to the new living conditions. This led to the transformation of the order into a mendicant-contemplative one. The Carmelites recognized the prophet Elijah as their spiritual father, seeing in him a model of eremitic-contemplative life, as well as an example of apostolic zeal.

On the axis of the Relic Chapel, in an apse-shaped niche just behind the altar, there is a massive reliquary with the skull of St. Simon Stock, which draws the viewer's attention from the very entrance to the chapel. The relics were placed there in September 1951.

The reliquary took the form of a carefully designed 11-foot-tall turret. The design was prepared by Kossowski, who was assisted by Charles Bodiam (who made the wooden frame for casting the concrete core) and Percy Kitchen (who built the reinforced-concrete turret) in its implementation. This entire work was decorated with black cladding, to which the artist attached white ceramic tiles, covered with real gold. All of them were fired

three times. The gold on the white glaze added a touch of nobility to the design.

The reliquary can be divided into nine component parts: it is supported on a base in the shape of a standing rectangle with geometric decorations. The second part is a truncated trapezoid, on which rests the main part of the reliquary, namely the rectangular box containing the holy relic. The trapezoid is decorated on each side: on the side of the altar it bears the emblem of the Carmelite order, then a cross with two birds on its sides (an early Christian representation), on the back there is the motif of the Cross of Jerusalem, and on the fourth side of the trapezoid there is a figure of the Virgin Mary with the Child in her arms leaning towards a kneeling figure of St. Simon Stock, holding a scapular in his hand. All these four motifs are surrounded by a geometric ornament.

The artist paid the most attention to the decoration of the box with the relics. A pane of glass is placed on each side, surrounded by ceramic decoration. Around the four walls there is a golden inscription: FLOS CARMELI VITIS FLO-RIGERA / SPLENDOR CAELI VIRGO PUERPERA SINGULARIS / MATER MITIS SED VIRI NESCIA / CARMELITIS DA PRIVILEGIA STELLA MARIS.<sup>172</sup>

The glass of the box on the altar side, having the form of an arcade, has two kneeling angels on its sides, with bowed heads and hands put together (the same images appear on the other three sides). Above them there is a ceramic decoration with the motif of a cross, with the following invocation below: ST SIMON OF ENGLAND PRAY FOR US. A tall reliquary coping in the form of six rectangular plates, decreasing in size conically towards the top, is installed on the box. It is meant to represent Mount Carmel. Kossowski decorated each of the six levels with white and gilded (the motif of a cross and geometric patterns) ceramic tiles, taking the shape of triangles, with black-filled holes cut in the center. The triangles were meant to suggest the goals of the hermits on Mount Carmel.

According to the description, the Reliquary of St. Simon Stock received a decoration whose iconography refers strictly to the history of the order. This is indicated by the monastic emblem, the Vision of the Scapular of

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<sup>172</sup> Flower of Carmel, Vine Branch draped with flowers, Adornment of heaven, Virgin bearing the Son of God in her body, Gentle Mother, incomprehensible to man, grant your grace to the children of Carmel, Star of the Sea.

St. Simon, the Latin motto with an invocation to the Mother of God (*Flos Carmeli*), the content of which is attributed to that very saint, and the motif of the hermitage of the first hermits living on Carmel.

## 5. The decoration of the Chapel of the Carmelite Saints (1964–1965)

To the southwest of the Relic Chapel there is an apse that contains a chapel dedicated to the Carmelite Saints. Kossowski declared the entire chapel with ceramics in only two colors: white and brown – the color of the Carmelite habit.

The antependium of the altar is decorated with white ceramics on a brown background. A gate/entry motif is placed in the center, surrounded by motifs of architectural buildings. The artist intended these to be the caves – cells of Elijah and other hermits. On the wall behind the altar, there is a mosaic decoration arranged from small ceramic rectangles in pink, pale blue, and gold. This cladding was lined in the shape of a niche, providing the background for a sculptural group made in wood and depicting the Mother of God with the Child in her arms, blessing a scapular held by St. Simon Stock. The origin of this sculpture is unknown.

On either side of the sculptural Scapular Vision there are Adam Kossowski's wall ceramics: on the right side there are depictions of female Carmelite saints and on the left side there are depictions of male Carmelite saints. All the depicted saints stand grouped in three rows against a brownish background with architectural motifs.

The Carmelite saints are wearing the traditional brown habits, white cloaks, and women are additionally wearing black veils. Two Carmelites are depicted in pontifical attire. All the figures, with the exception of one nun, have halos above their heads, in which the artist placed their names. The canonized Saints have full halos, and those beatified have only crescents. In these depictions, Kossowski refers to the Renaissance artist Fra Angelico and his magnificent depictions with choirs of saints in heaven. Two works in particular can be mentioned: the Retable made for the Dominican church of San Marco in Florence (1438–1440), depicting the Madonna and Child surrounded by angels and eight saints, and the Retable from Bosco ai Frati (1450), commissioned by Cosimo de Medici for the

Franciscan monastery in the town of Bosco ai Frati, with a similar scene. Both depictions contain illustrations of monks in habits, with attributes in their hands or with their hands put together, and inscriptions with the names of the saints placed in golden halos. Both retables are located in the Museo di San Marco in Florence.

In the first row from the bottom, on the left side, St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi is standing with her left side facing the viewer and with her head slightly bowed and her hands put together. Next to her, depicted *en face*, with her eyes turned to her right, there is St. Teresa of Jesus, embracing in both hands a black book with a cross engraved on it. Next, in the same position, with her eyes lowered, St. Teresa Margaret is standing, grasping a golden cross in both hands and a cord in her left hand.

In the second row, above, there are three figures of nuns, no longer with entire silhouettes, but only with a half of the body shown. The first from the left is Blessed Frances Ambroise in an *en face* position, with her eyes closed and a golden crown in her hands. In the middle stands St. Thérèse of Lisieux, gazing into the distance, with a golden rose in her hands. Next to her is St. Joachima, leaning her head down and holding her hands put together in prayer.

The third row depicts four female Carmelites, with only a half of their bodies drawn. First on the left is St. Joan of Toulouse with her head tilted to the right and eyelids closed. Next to her, there is Blessed Teresa of St. Augustine with a palm in her hand. The next figure is Sister Benedicta, also holding the martyr's palm. This, too, is an extraordinary thing. Adam Kossowski presented this nun with the halo afforded to beatified persons, even though Sister Benedicta had not been elevated to the altars. This did not happen until almost 20 years later, and she is now known as Sister Benedicta of the Cross.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> She was born as Edith Stein in Silesia to a Jewish family in 1891. At the age of 32, she converted to Catholicism. In 1933, she joined the Carmelite order. On August 9, 1942, she died a martyr's death in Auschwitz. On May 1, 1987, Pope John Paul II beatified Edith Stein in Cologne, declared her a saint in Rome on October 11, 1998, and the following year declared her a co-patroness of Europe.

Finally, the last nun depicted in that panel is an unnamed Carmelite nun, without a halo, with her head lowered and her hands put together. She embodies all the saint and pious sisters of the order, of whom the world will never hear and who will not be elevated to the altars. To the left of the sculpture depicting the Mother of God and Child, Kossowski placed a ceramic panel with depictions of Carmelite saints and blessed, also arranged in three rows.

In the first row on the left, there is St. Peter Thomas standing sideways to the viewer, wearing a black hat on a slightly bowed head, with facial hair and his hands put together. Next to him, *en face* and in pontifical attire, stands St. Albert of Jerusalem. His right hand is raised as a sign of blessing, in his left hand he is holding a golden pastoral staff, he has a beard and a mitre on his head, and the mantle on his shoulders is decorated with gilded motifs of the cross and the Cross of Jerusalem. The third bearded monk with a tonsure is St. Brocard. He is holding a scroll in his right hand and is pressing his left hand to his chest. He is the only one of the monks pictured here with a mantle with black horizontal stripes.

In the second row there are three other monks, who are depicted only up to waist height. The first on the left, with his hands put together, is St. Albert of Sicily. The next is St. John of the Cross, with facial hair and his attribute – a cross in his hands. Next to him, Kossowski placed St. Andrew Corsini in pontifical attire, standing sideways to the viewer.

In the last row there are four monks, visible up to the middle of the body. The shortest of them, standing on the left, a man with a tonsure and a beard, is Blessed Nonio Alvarez. Next to him there is Blessed Baptista of Mantua with a book in his hands. The third Carmelite, with a tonsure on his head and his hands put together, is Blessed John Soreth. The last monk depicted by Kossowski is Fr. Titus Brandsma, a Carmelite who had not yet been proclaimed as blessed at the time (this did not happen until almost fifteen years later).<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Titus Brandsma, born 1881 in Friesland (Netherlands), took perpetual vows in Carmel in 1899, received a doctorate in philosophy in 1909, and was the rector of the University of Nijmegen (1932–1933). He openly protested the Nazi anti-Semitic campaign

Adam Kossowski absolutely intentionally depicted both Sr. Benedicta and Fr. Titus Brandsma with halos of the blessed above their heads. Although these saints were elevated to the altars only many years later, the artist anticipated this fact with his pioneering vision. Both of the blessed were contemporaries of Kossowski. Moreover, they share a common experience of the difficult years of occupation, during which all three were prisoners in camps – Stein and Brandsma in Nazi camps, and Kossowski in Soviet camps.

The two ceramic panels depicting the Carmelite saints are bound together by an elongated band of decoration located below. It is made of brown blocks, with engraved architectural motifs and elements in a shade of green. To this plane are affixed white ceramic decorations depicting three hills (the middle one and the highest probably symbolizes Mount Carmel) with elements of architecture and trees.

## 6. The decoration of the Chapel of the English Martyrs (1965–1967)

To the northwest of the Relic Chapel there is an apse with a chapel dedicated to English martyrs. The viewer's initial impression is dominated by the accumulation of ceramic decorations in only one shade: deep red, the color of martyrs.

The facade of the altar depicts the killing of St. Thomas Becket on the steps of the Canterbury Cathedral (the first stage of the decoration). The antependium is covered with black cladding, with a carved motif of a portal and other architectural details. On top of this, the artist installed a ceramic decoration: human figures are placed in three niches with architectural framing. At the bottom of the central niche, Kossowski depicted the three steps of the Canterbury Cathedral, where St. Thomas Becket is standing in the gesture of an adorant, in pontifical attire and with a halo. He is turning his eyes to his right, where two killers, with swords in their hands, are emerging from a neighboring niche toward him. The first from the right is already standing with one foot on the first step of the cathedral,

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and was arrested by the Gestapo in January 1942. Killed in Dachau on July 26, 1942, he was beatified by Pope John Paul II on November 3, 1985.

his right arm bent at the elbow is held raised at head height, and he is swinging his sword at the bishop. Behind him is his companion, who is drawing his sword from its scabbard. In the third niche, to the right of the bishop, there are also two killers, intending to kill Becket, one drawing his weapon, the other with his sword upright in front of him aiming at the bishop. All four are clad in soft armor – pointed helmets with chainmail around their heads and knee-length knight's robes, with sword scabbards tied to their belts.

On the wall behind the altar there is a two-part stained glass window ending in a trefoil pointed arch, made by Norris OSB according to Kossowski's design. The artist depicted on it the symbols of martyrdom – three yellow crowns piled one above the other in a field of a green palm tree on an orange-red background, which harmonized seamlessly with the red-purple decor of the chapel.

On either side of the altar there are depictions of two saints, showed *en pied*. On the left side there is an image of St. John Fisher, the bishop of Rochester, standing *en trois quarts*, wearing a mitre and with a pastoral staff in his left hand, lifting his right hand in a gesture of blessing.

The second saint depicted is Thomas More, the chancellor of England, standing *en face* and wearing a coat with fur sleeves and a collar. He is wearing a Renaissance-style hat on his head and a chain on his chest, and his hands are held put together. The two figures are placed on a black *sgraffito* background with carved ornamental motifs, in a frame with the shape of a standing rectangle closed with a gabled arch, made of red ceramic.

Fisher and More are well-known English martyrs who lived in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. They were friends and both objected to recognizing King Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine, and later refused to swear an oath on an act of supremacy recognizing the king as the head of the Church of England, for which they were imprisoned in the Tower of London and beheaded.

On the side walls of the chapel, Adam Kossowski made a ceramic decoration, in red-purple color (the black background of the *sgraffito* shines through in some places) around the niches with stained glass windows. On the wall to the left of the altar, on the sides of the stained glass windows there are ceramic plaques on which are inscribed in red letters the names of

twenty English martyrs (ten names on each side),<sup>175</sup> placed against a black background and with a grooved black palm branch next to each name. These plaques are framed within a *sgraffito* border with an engraved cross motif. Above the window recess, at both ends, the artist placed a narrow strip of ceramic, depicting a cross inscribed in a circle with flames, and in the central part he placed the figures of two angels supporting the monogram of Christ surrounded by a wreath. On the other hand, beneath the stained glass windows there is a wide ceramic panel that reaches almost to the floor and consists of three images, separated from each other by a narrow black strip with engraved cross motifs. In the central part, there is a representation of the gallows from the execution site in Tyburn.<sup>176</sup> Kossowski depicted this gallows as three horizontal beams supported on three vertical piles. The same gallows can be found in William Hogarth's 1747 work titled *Execution at Tyburn* (from a series titled *Industry and idleness*). An executioner is sitting on the gallows smoking a pipe, and the entire composition field is filled with a group of onlookers who have come to see the spectacle. The convict is riding in a cart, along with his coffin, escorted by guards on horseback.

Returning to Kossowski's composition in the Chapel of the English Martyrs. A ladder is supported against the gallows and there is a kettle next to it, with a dense veil of flames rising upward from it. These instruments of execution and martyrdom are surrounded by motifs of buildings. The other two images on both sides of the central ceramic are identical to those in the strip above the window, which show the motif of a cross placed on the background of a fiery rim, only enlarged in size.

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<sup>175</sup> The names on the left side of the window recess: Luke Kirby, Richard Gwyn, Margaret Clitherow, Margaret Ward, Edmund Jennings, Swithin Wells, Eustace White, Polydore Plasden, John Boste, and Robert Southwell. The names placed on the right side: John Houghton, Augustine Webster, Robert Laurence, Richard Reynolds, John Stone, Cuthbert Hayne, Edmund Campion, Ralph Sherwin, Alexander Briant, and John Payne.

<sup>176</sup> The first permanent gallows in Tyburn were built in 1571. It was, along with Smithfield and Tower Hill, the main site of public executions in London (until the 18th century, when it was replaced by the Newgate Prison). It was famous for the so-called *triple tree of Tyburn* - a gallows built with three horizontal beams. Tyburn was located near today's Marble Arch, on the northeastern edge of Hyde Park.



On the opposite wall, Kossowski made an analogous decoration surrounding the niche with stained glass windows, repeating some iconographic motifs.

On either side of the niche he again placed the names of twenty other English martyrs.<sup>177</sup>

Above those ceramics artist placed a strip with a tripartite decoration: on the sides there are duplicated motifs of a cross inscribed in a circle of flames, and in the center there is an inscription in black letters, saying that the martyrs pleased God by victoriously passing the test: GOD DID BUT TEST THEM / AND TESTING THEM FOUND / THEM WORTHY OF HIM.

The ceramic panel below the stained glass windows in the central section depicts England's most famous place of torture and execution – the Tower of London, amidst abstract ornamentation. Below the Tower there is an axe placed on a square block – an symbol of an instrument of death.

## 7. The decoration of St. Joseph's Chapel (1966–1971)

The chapel dedicated to St. Joseph is located northwest of the main chapel of the shrine. Chronologically speaking, it was created as the last one. Its spatial arrangement is somewhat similar to that of the Relic Chapel. Behind the main altar, there is an analogous apse niche, which houses a monumental wooden sculpture on a pedestal depicting St. Joseph, commissioned from Michael Clark in 1963.

Kossowski's ceramic representations were created from 1967 to 1971, in four phases. The first is the simple marble altar in amber color, with a black cross motif. Behind it, on the walls of the northern apse, the artist created a *sgraffito* decoration in dark green with an addition of black. Kos-

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<sup>177</sup> The names on the left side of the window recess: Henry Walpole, Philip Howard, John Johns, John Rigby, Anne Line, Nicholas Owen, Thomas Garnet, John Roberts, John Almond, and Edmund Arrowsmith. The names placed on the right side: Ambrose Barlow, Alban Roe, Henry Morse, John Southwark, John Plessington, Philip Evans, John Lloyd, John Wall, John Kemble, and David Lewis. In total, on both walls Kossowski placed the names of forty English martyrs, including thirty-seven men and three women.

sowski alluded here to the idea of ecumenism by depicting the architecture of different temples.

Strips of decoration placed under the windows of that niche include a representation of a Jewish menorah. On the wall behind the figure of St. Joseph, in the central part, there is an outline of the Vatican Basilica. Above the Basilica's dome, the artist placed the only silver element – a dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit. On the right side, one can also see images of architecture with domes, above which there are several onion-shaped domes, characteristic of Orthodox churches. On the tops of some roofs, Kossowski placed symbols of Orthodox crosses. Outlines of cathedral architecture, portals, vaults, and medieval stained glass windows are shown on the left side. This is the only place where the artist placed engraved Greek symbols, such as the letter X, combined with the letter P, which starts the name – “XP” XPISTOS (Christ).

Kossowski made the floor covered with white and green square tiles, located in the northern apse and in the altar area. Around the sculpture of St. Joseph, the artist planned to depict the symbols of the four Evangelists. They are arranged with white tiles and the letters of their names – with green tiles. Immediately behind the altar there is the angel of St. Matthew, to the left there is the lion of St. Mark, behind the sculptural representation of St. Joseph there is the ox of St. Luke, and to the right there is the eagle of St. John. On the floor under the altar stone there is an image of the Carmelite emblem and the following inscription: A MAN WHOSE NAME WAS JOSEPH.<sup>178</sup>

Above the altar, there are ceramic panels describing the main episodes in the life of St. Joseph. Starting from the left above the altar, the following scenes are shown (clockwise): “The betrothal of Mary and St. Joseph,” “St. Joseph's dream,” “The Birth of Christ,” “The Flight into Egypt,” and “Finding Jesus in the Temple.”

In the first image, Mary and St. Joseph, with halos above their heads, are standing *en trois quarts* holding each other's right hand. Between them there is a celebrant conducting the ceremony, standing frontally in the gesture of an adorant and with eyes closed, wearing a light brown robe. Mary's

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<sup>178</sup> Luke 1:27.

head is slightly bowed down and she is holding her maphorion under her chin with her left hand. She is clad in a long white robe, with stripes of gold, and boots on her feet. St. Joseph, slightly taller than Mary, is looking upward. He has facial hair and his clothes are very similar to those of his future spouse. He is wearing a turban on his head and sandals on his feet.

Behind Mary, there are three women standing on a wooden platform, wearing green-blue-gold clothes and maphorions, with their hands put together. Two men with facial hair, wearing turbans on their heads and clothes analogous to those of the three women, are standing on a platform behind St. Joseph. The first man behind St. Joseph is looking at the young man, and in his hands he is holding a long branch with green leaves.

His companion is looking ahead and holding his hands put together on his chest. Above the heads of Mary and St. Joseph there are two window openings made of golden ceramic. The background of this image is dark brown *sgraffito* with gouged architectural motifs (doors, windows, domes) and the motif of a cross. The scene is framed by a basket-handle arch, with frame made of long yellow ceramic rectangles.

The second scene from St. Joseph's life, placed above the scene of his betrothal, is "St. Joseph's Dream." As if awakened from sleep, St. Joseph is sitting on a long bench in a semi-reclining position, with his left leg tucked under. He is supporting his hands and head on a rectangular raised platform. To his left, a rolled-up mantle and two vases (a larger red one and a smaller green one) are lying on the bench. On the right side there is a builder's square and a large compass. In the background, some buildings can be seen: a slender three-story building and another, stocky and covered with a dome. St. Joseph is looking upward, to his right, at the angel above, who is turning toward him. The God's messenger is almost touching him with his right hand (it seems that the angel is withdrawing it after St. Joseph woke up), and with his upright left hand is showing the direction in which St. Joseph should go. This gesture and the wind-blown tails of his mantle enhance the dynamism of the angel's figure, and his silhouette is depicted as if he were diving into water.

The central image in the series of these ceramic panels is "The Nativity of Christ," placed above the altar, above the entrance to the north apse, with "St. Joseph's Dream" to its left and "Flight into Egypt" to its right.

The ceramics of the “Nativity” are the largest. In the center of the composition, there is an image of a kneeling Mary on the left; on the right, there is St. Joseph leaning over Jesus, extending his hand over him, and holding a staff in the other. The mother is blessing the baby with one hand and holding the other on her chest. Jesus is pictured as a naked baby, placed frontally, as if standing, surrounded by an oval of a golden mandorla. A low rectangular pedestal serves as the manger. The Holy Family is located in a rock grotto, with a lying bull with a bell around its neck on one side (the animal is placed behind the figure of Mary) and a donkey on the other side, behind the figure of St. Joseph, turning its head back in the direction of a procession of the Three Kings approaching the grotto. The first king, with facial hair, clad in orange and greenish robes, is holding a golden goblet in his hands. He is followed by a black-skinned king in red and yellow clothes, carrying a red vessel. The last mage is wearing green clothes and holding a coffer of a similar hue.

On the opposite, left side of the composition, three barefoot shepherds are approaching the grotto. That procession is led by a man holding a brown basket in one hand and a long maroon shepherd’s staff in his left hand. He is wearing a gown made of sheep’s wool. He is followed by a second shepherd, playing a flute (only his head is visible). The last figure in the procession is a third man carrying a lamb in his arms, dressed in a long-sleeved yellow robe and wearing a green cap on his head. The rock grotto is overgrown with green trees, while at the very top, in the center of the composition, there is a large radiant star of Bethlehem in a golden hue.

At the bottom of the composition, against the background of a yellow ceramic strip, the artist placed the following inscription: A WISE AND FAITHFUL SERVANT SET OVER YOUR FAMILY AS GUARDIAN AND FOSTER FATHER OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

The “Flight into Egypt” shows St. Joseph walking bowed down due to the weight of a heavy sack which he placed on his back and is holding with his left hand, while supporting himself with his right hand on a staff. He has facial hair and is clad in a long orange-brown-green robe and a turban, has a halo over his head, and is wearing laced-up sandals.

He is looking behind his back at Mary on a donkey, holding the wrapped baby in her arms. Mary is sitting on a red cloth sheet serving as a saddle. She is dressed in cream-blue and light brown cloths and a maphorion, and has a halo above her head. Behind St. Joseph there is a tall tree with a very large oval crown. Shrubs, grass, and mushrooms are growing on the ground on which they are traveling.

The last scene from the life of St. Joseph in this group is "Finding Jesus in the Temple," placed below "The Flight." The composition is topped with a basket-handle arch, like "The Betrothal," and is divided into two equal parts by arches supported on a column located on the axis of the image. On the right side there is little Jesus teaching people gathered in the temple. The child, wearing a white robe and with a halo over his head, is sitting frontally on a red throne with a high rounded back. He is holding his right arm bent, his index finger straight, and his left hand resting on his chest. On either side of him there are scribes. The one on the right side is sitting on a red stool two steps below, raising one hand up. The listener on the left is sitting frontally right next to Jesus, supporting his face with his left hand in a gesture of thoughtfulness, and holding his right hand in his lap. There are two scribes behind the throne, propping themselves up against the backrest and looking at Jesus.

The other part of the composition shows Mary and St. Joseph. The mother is walking in front, with a concerned expression on her face and both arms stretched out in front of her. She is wearing a pale blue and yellowish robe, with a halo over her head and yellowish boots on her feet. St. Joseph is walking behind his spouse, carrying a sack on his back, which he is holding with his right hand, and holding a long staff in his left hand. He is dressed in blue and yellow clothes and is wearing sandals on his feet. Above the heads of the scribes and Jesus' parents there are two window openings made of yellow ceramic. The scene is surrounded by a frame of yellow ceramic rectangles.

An apse with the Tabernacle is located at the eastern wall of the chapel. Kossowski decorated the entrance to that chapel with a series of ceramics. On the left side, he depicted the figure of St. John the Baptist with a halo over his head, a belt of cloth wrapping his body, and laced-up sandals. In his left hand he is holding a long golden cross, entwined with a white ribbon,

which St. John is holding in his other hand. On the ribbon, Kossowski made the following inscription: BEHOLD, THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD.

On the right, the artist depicted the figure of St. John the Evangelist with an eagle, as an attribute, at his side. He is shown as a gray-haired man with facial hair, clad in white and yellowish clothes, and holding in his hands a frontally unrolled roll of paper with the following inscription: IT IS THE SAME DISCIPLE THAT BEARS WITNESS OF ALL THIS AND HAS WRITTEN THE STORY OF IT; AND WE KNOW WELL THAT HIS WITNESS IS TRUTHFUL. THERE IS MUCH ELSE BESIDES THAT JESUS DID; IF ALL OF IT WERE PUT IN WRITING I DO NOT THINK THE WORLD ITSELF WOULD CONTAIN THE BOOKS WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE WRITTEN. JOHN XXI, 24–25.<sup>179</sup>

Above the entrance arch of the chapel with the tabernacle, there is a horizontal ceramic illustrating the scene of Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor. The dominant feature of the composition is the centrally placed figure of a frontally standing Christ. Clad in a snow-white robe,<sup>180</sup> with a beard and half-length hair, he is standing with a halo above his head on the background of a golden mandorla, with his right hand giving a blessing and his left hand held slightly bent at the elbow and tilted away from the body.

The static and majestic figure of Christ has two prophets, Moses and Elijah, on its sides; they are gazing at his glowing face and at the same time provide a contrast because of their very dynamic depiction (twisted bodies, vigorous hand gestures, and unfurled tails of their mantles). The three figures are located on a small hill and on their sides, slightly lower, there are the figures of the Apostles. On the left side there is sitting St. James, supporting his crossed arms against his left knee, his gaze directed at Christ. Behind him kneels a frightened young man – St. John, St. James' brother, also gazing at Jesus, resting his hands on the back of the sitting Apostle. On the right side of the composition, there is St. Peter, kneeling on his right

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<sup>179</sup> John 21:24–25.

<sup>180</sup> See: Matt 17:1–8.

knee, with his arms raised and put together in prayer. Like the other disciples, he is gazing at his Master.

The entire scene is placed on a background imitating a mountain, composed of rectangular yellow and green ceramic tiles. Above the figures of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, at the height of the heads of the prophets from the Transfiguration scene, Kossowski placed two ceramic circles. In the one above John the Baptist, yellow rays spread from the black center, with green ornamental motifs woven in between them. In the other, yellow circle, black S-shaped rays are inscribed with small circles on them.

St. Joseph's Chapel is also dedicated to the prophet Elijah, as the artist placed two huge ceramics dedicated to episodes from Elijah's life on the wall opposite the altar. His figure is particularly important for the Carmelite order. He is one of Israel's most famous prophets. He summoned the idolatrous people and priests to Mount Carmel and proved to them by a miraculous sacrifice on which fire came down from heaven that Yahweh is the true God, he revived faith in the people of Israel, and he had the priests of Baal killed, as was commanded by the law of Moses.

The first ceramic illustrates this very scene, a description of which can be found in the eighteenth chapter of the First Book of Kings.<sup>181</sup> The artist depicted, as it were, two levels: on the higher one, symbolizing the peak of Mount Carmel, with the altar of the Lord and the flames consuming it, there is prophet Elijah, standing, deep in prayer, and on the lower one, there are the terrified people of Israel. The two levels are separated by a narrow strip of yellow ceramic. Elijah is pictured here frontally, with his head raised and both arms in a sign of a supplicatory prayer offered to Yahweh. His white clothes are blown by strong gusts of wind, revealing his torso. Behind Elijah, there is a tail of his mantle lifted upward by the wind. To his right, Elijah set up an altar of twelve stones<sup>182</sup> and dug a trench around it, which was filled with water (Kossowski depicted this using green pottery and S-shaped lines to symbolize water). On the altar, there is an

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<sup>181</sup> 1 Kgs 18:20–40.

<sup>182</sup> According to the number of generations of James' descendants (1 Kgs 18:31).

offering of a quartered calf laid on firewood (brown and blood-red ceramic tiles). The entire altar, down to the base, is surrounded by a tall pillar of fire sent by Yahweh, with clouds of fiery smoke with red-brown-orange flames rising up.

Below, there are the people of Israel participating in this showdown between Elijah and the pagan prophets. In the foreground there are seven men and one woman standing in long clothes with their sides to the viewer, raising their heads high up in the air; their facial expressions show surprise and horror, and some figures have their mouths open in disbelief, pointing with their hands to the huge pillar of fire. In the background of the composition, there are outlines of the silhouettes of Israelis (mainly heads and hands), but in a completely different convention: not realistic, as these are geometrized faces, and reduced to a kind of “cubes.”

In this composition, the artist achieved a greater impression of depth than in the previous depictions. By presenting a second row of figures, he gave the viewer the illusion of a larger crowd of people. This ceramic is full of emotion and expression, due to both the vivid colors of the flames and the facial expressions and positions of the figures. The entire scene evokes dynamism and movement. We can see how Kossowski focused on modeling the figures, giving more of a “feel” to the texture than, for example, in the “Resurrection” ceramic in the Relic Chapel, where his approach had a more painterly form.

The second ceramic on this wall, above the entrance to the chapel on the southern side, is a scene depicting Elijah anointing Elisha as a prophet.<sup>183</sup> In the center of the composition, there are two men on a background of a field and outlines of architecture. The figure on the right, kneeling on one knee, is Elisha, girded with a white tunic around his hips. He is keeping his head lowered and his arms put together. An elderly man with facial hair is leaning over him and putting a white mantle with both hands on the kneeling man, which is a symbol of consecration and anointing. Both men are depicted with halos. Behind them, a fragment of a red plow emerges. To the right and left, placed symmetrically in two rows, there are six white

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<sup>183</sup> 1 Kgs 19:15–21.



oxen with red harnesses in each row. According to the Bible, Elijah found Elisha plowing with twelve oxen.

The third and final image in this series is a two-part ceramic representation of Elijah taken into heaven.<sup>184</sup> The lower panel of this artistic vision depicts Elisha, standing with his back to the viewer, girded at the hips with a tunic, with his arms raised high in the air. The background for that figure is a two-band landscape (the lower band with yellow houses, fields, and cattle, and two human figures with their arms raised and looking up; the upper band with maroon buildings, fields, and green trees).

Above this ceramic panel, there is a second, monumental image illustrating Elijah ascending to heaven in a fiery carriage pulled four fiery destriers (the dominant shade of the ceramic is orange). In the carriage there is a bearded man standing, with a halo above his head (the prophet Elijah), and below him, at the very bottom of the panel, Elijah's white mantle is falling to the ground for Elisha as a sign of his anointment as a spiritual son and successor to the prophet. The composition is tied together by the figure of a horizontally placed angel extending his straight right arm over Elijah's head and his left arm held lowered, as if pointing at Elisha.

On the western wall of the chapel there is a second entrance, above which there is a scene with the Adoration of the Cross. The following inscription can be seen underneath the cross made of yellow ceramic: BEHOLD I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW, while on its sides there are images of angels in white robes, golden halos, and wings. The angel on the left side is bent at the waist and leaning, holding a laurel wreath in his hands. The angel on the other side is kneeling on his right knee and bowing his head, holding his face in his hands.

On the sides of the entrance there are two plaques with quotations from the Scripture written in gold ceramic letters fastened to a black *sgraffito* with carved geometric motifs. To the left, the plaque is topped with a gold monogram of Christ, under which there is an excerpt from the Letter to the Corinthians: THEREFORE, IF / ANYONE IS IN / CHRIST / HE IS A NEW /

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<sup>184</sup> 2 Kgs 2:1–17.

CREATION; THE OLD HAS / PASSED / AWAY, / BEHOLD, / THE / NEW HAS / COME, 2COR 5, 17.

It should be added that Kossowski also depicted early Christian motifs here: two golden peacocks<sup>185</sup> and fish.

The plaque fixed to the right of the chapel's entrance contains a quote from Psalm 90, which precedes the image of a seven-branched candle holder: BEFORE THE / MOUNTAINS / WERE BROUGHT / FORTH, OR EVER / THOU HADST / FORMED THE / EARTH AND / THE WORLD, / FROM / EVERLASTING / TO / EVERLASTING / THOU ART. / GOD, PS 90(89), 2.

As can be seen from the above review, the leitmotifs in the iconography are, on the one hand, St. Joseph the Protector and, on the other hand, the Prophet Elijah, the protoplast of the Carmelites on Mount Carmel. Adam Kossowski supplemented this concept with additional ceramic representations on the other two walls of the chapel so that the St. Joseph's Chapel as a whole visually represents a combination of the Old and the New Testaments. The connectors chosen by the artist are the Transfiguration scene, the figures of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, the large inscriptions with excerpts from both the Old and the New Testaments, and the motif of the Adoration of the Cross.

## **8. Construction of the Rosary Way in the monastery's park (1950–1951)**

After Kossowski produced a series of tempera paintings featuring the history of the Carmelite Order in England; the artist was encouraged by the prior, Fr. Malachi, to make a Rosary Way in the monastery garden. It was to consist of a total of fifteen images depicting the three Mysteries of the Rosary: Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious. The artist depicted each mystery in a separate shrine. He chose ceramics as the artistic medium. However, the wooden "house-like" enclosure of these ceramics was made by craftsman

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<sup>185</sup> Two peacocks depicted on each side of the chalice, sometimes with a cross at the top, symbolize faithful Christians drinking from the fountain of life. In addition, a peacock is a symbol of vigilance, because of the "eyes" on his feathers.

Charles Bodiam. This was the Carmelites' first order for ceramic works, and it was followed by a whole avalanche of subsequent orders, as discussed earlier in this article.

Kossowski made fifteen ceramic images illustrating the various mysteries, which were placed in closed oak frames – shrines (modeled on Polish roadside shrines) designed by the Polish artist. Already in the first work in this series – the *Annunciation* – the artist sketched a design for a closing wooden enclosure in the form of a shrine in the upper right corner of the cardboard box.<sup>186</sup>

The Joyful Mysteries are attached to the garden wall. The Sorrowful Mysteries are placed along the northern path in freestanding shrines. The first two of the Glorious Mysteries are located by the eastern path, and the last two by the southern path. These freestanding shrines are supported on stone column foundations or attached to tree trunks. They all resemble Polish wayside shrines, passions of Sorrowful Christs. The artist did not have much time to look for completely new forms of expression. Years later, he wrote in his notes that, for a long time, these themes, scenes, and figures had been encoded, as it were, in him and, looking back, he wouldn't have made them differently. He transformed them very quickly into ceramic forms, whose freshness of color and directness of concept, and even a kind of naiveté of form are distinctive features found in the art of the Italian naive artists.

The events and figures, and the backgrounds (architectural and depicting elements of nature) located in the foreground of the ceramics are three-dimensional, while in the background they are convex, and further into the perspective they are drawn in clay with a sharpened piece of wood or a metal stylus.

The Rosary Way, marking the way for processions praying the Rosary, became somewhat of a peculiarity in Aylesford, and the prior, encouraged by its success, commissioned from Kossowski a ceramic – giant (as the artist himself called it), which was placed in the northeast corner of the monastery garden, in an unusual chapel that closes the perspective of the long alley. Specifically, in a four-meter high ogive niche, made of stone

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<sup>186</sup> This cardboard box is kept in the Museum of the Archdiocese of Warsaw.

(*ragstone*), a monumental ceramic by Adam Kossowski was placed, consisting of fifteen parts, with a “Vision of the Scapular of St. Simon Stock.” The Mother of God with the Child, supported on her left hand, is standing in the contrapposto, wearing a brown robe and a long white mantle slung over her right shoulder. She is leaning slightly to her right toward St. Simon Stock who is kneeling at her side, wearing a brown habit and a white mantle, and with a tonsure on his head. The saint is gazing at Mary’s face, and in his hands he is holding a brown scapular, which Mary is touching with her right hand as a sign of blessing. The vision is surrounded by a depiction of five half-figures of angels in green ceramic on a dark blue background. A full suspended arch, made of narrow white rectangular ceramic tiles, surrounds the scene. The peculiar bordering of that scene is further enhanced by the depiction of six angelic figures made of four hundred tiles in yellow-gold glaze, holding three ribbons with Mary’s well-known Carmelite titles: *Flos Carmeli*, *Stella Maris*, and *Mater Mitis*. From the top, this composition is tied together by a multi-pointed shining star, probably referring to the invocation “Star of the Sea.” At the bottom, there is the following inscription: ECCE SIGNUM SALUTIS,<sup>187</sup> with two Carmelite coats of arms on its sides.

The images of angels and the inscription on the base were the first attempt to cover a large space with a composition divided into hundreds of irregular tiles, arranged like a puzzle and cemented to the wall.

The matrix of this image is made from 25 pieces, fired in a large obsolete coal and coke kiln at the Fulham Pottery, a pottery workshop established in the 17th century. The kiln could only maintain one temperature level (1,200 degrees Celsius) and could only fire one type of glaze. No changes could be made and each part could be fired only once. So the colored glaze had to be applied right away. The chapel was completed in July 1953.

The making of “The Vision of the Scapular” was a very important step in Kossowski’s artistic evolution as a ceramicist and prepared him to undertake work on large ceramic panels for chapels in Aylesford, which he did in the following years. He did his major ceramic works practically after break of several years, during which, while awaiting the completion of the reconstruction of the main chapel, he was busy working on other projects.

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<sup>187</sup> Here is a sign of rescue/safety.

This does not mean, however, that over the years he completely stopped making works commissioned by the Carmelites. This did not happen, and the artist occasionally delivered his works, such as paintings for the refectory.<sup>188</sup> Throughout this period, Kossowski made advances in terms of the techniques he used. His painterly rather than sculptural approach to ceramics<sup>189</sup> was modified in some ways: color became less important than shape and modeling. This change is evident in the Stations of the Cross, which were commissioned in 1963 for the Relic Chapel.

### Religious art by Adam Kossowski

Religious art is a broad concept in each faith and has its own specific and distinct thematic expression related to the beliefs, depending on the ideas, tasks, people, and teachings that serve as the visual theme for artists of that religion.<sup>190</sup> Religious art includes any imagery that is somehow associated with religion, regardless of where that imagery appears. Religious art, in a broad sense, is also Christian art.<sup>191</sup>

On the other hand, church art is a concept with a different meaning. It has a narrow, if not strict, definition that refers to art that serves the Church in its religious worship directly or indirectly. This art is enclosed within the edifice of worship and plays a specific role in it: it builds, furnishes, equips, decorates, or preserves. The term “church art” includes everything found in temples: portals, reliefs, paintings, mosaics, frescoes, architectural sculpture, supports, consoles, tombstones, tombstones, etc.

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<sup>188</sup> See: *Image of Carmel*, p. 20.

<sup>189</sup> Cf. “Notes /1/: On Aylesford ceramics. Thoughts in retrospective” [no year specified]. Typescript, AE.

<sup>190</sup> C. Zieliński, *Sztuka sakralna* [Sacral art], p. 40.

<sup>191</sup> S. Grabska, “Sztuka sakralna w świetle zmian liturgicznych wprowadzonych przez Sobór Watykański II. Uwagi dla praktyków” [Sacral art in the light of liturgical changes introduced by the Second Vatican Council. Comments for practitioners], in: N. Cieślińska, ed., *Sacrum i sztuka. Materiały z konferencji zorganizowanej przez Sekcję Historii Sztuki Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Rogóżno 18–20 października 1984 roku* [Sacrum and art. Materials from the conference organized by the Art History Section of the Catholic University of Lublin, Rogóżno, October 18–20, 1984], Cracow 1989, p. 106.

The laws governing church art are dictated by the authority of the Church. The content of each work is determined by the Church and religion, since it is intended to serve the purposes of worship, which is established by the Church. As the legislator of church art, the Church recognizes any expression of artistic creativity that corresponds to its tasks and goals, regardless of what artistic direction it represents. Therefore, the Church does not single out any style and does not consider it exclusively ecclesiastical.<sup>192</sup> It does not object to modern art that is an expression of a particular creative period, if that art preserves the proper liturgical or ecclesiastical character. The Church reserves the right to issue binding ordinances and regulations on church art and to pass authoritative judgments on individual works of art.<sup>193</sup>

The distinction between sacral art and religious art was introduced by the Second Vatican Council. An immensely important date is 1963, when the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy<sup>194</sup> was promulgated, the seventh chapter of which (articles 122–129) is devoted to issues of art.

The significance of that Council is groundbreaking: for the first time, the solemn council document contained the word *ars* (art).<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> C. Zieliński, *Sztuka sakralna* [Sacral art], pp. 40–41.

<sup>193</sup> Church regulations, reminding the clergy of their duty to watch over the ecclesiastical character of works of church art, both in the construction and in the interior furnishings and equipment, in renovations, maintenance, and decoration of the edifice of worship, contain the following demands: 1) to take into account the forms and shapes sanctified by Christian tradition; 2) to maintain faithfully the norms of the sacred character of the works of church art; and 3) not to act without the participation of experts, insofar as their participation is necessary. Church regulations do not in any way impede the progress of church visual art, nor do they demand faithful imitation of the works of art of past periods. However, the Church stipulates in the regulations that everything pertaining to church art should be capable of influencing the inner life of the Faithful. (Quoted after: C. Zieliński, *Sztuka sakralna* [Sacral art], pp. 41–42.)

<sup>194</sup> Promulgated by Pope Paul VI on Dec. 4, 1963, and effective as of Feb. 16, 1964.

<sup>195</sup> J. S. Pasierb, "Problematyka sztuki w postanowieniach soborów" [The problem of art in the decisions of church councils], *Znak* 1964, no. 12, pp. 1460–1482.

Finally, the unique characteristics of art and the significance of its formal issues have been recognized.<sup>196</sup> Sacral art has been defined as “signs and symbols of the highest matters,” and its works are called upon to express God, who is beauty, and to elevate human minds toward Him – a departure from the concept of illustrative art.<sup>197</sup>

One article argues for a high artistic level of church interiors, and rules out shoddy, mediocre, and unoriginal art (qualities presented by Sulpician kitsch). Church interiors are supposed to speak with its authenticity, which should consist primarily in the demonstration of the material.<sup>198</sup>

In 1963, Adam Kossowski was finishing work on St. Anne's Chapel, and beginning work on the Relic Chapel. The changes introduced by the Council had an impact on the designs of the chapels. One of the basic liturgical reforms was the change of the position of the celebrant at the altar and placing him with his face toward the faithful. In art, this was expressed by putting the altar forward, which should be visible and give the impression of the heart and center of the church. The altar is accented by both its placement and raising, and by the proper organization of light inside the church building. The reform emphasized the equivalence of the two parts of the Mass: the part devoted to the reading of the Word of God and the Eucharistic part. Before the Council, the first part was treated as less important. It became important to properly position the pulpit for the reading next to the altar so that it would be accessible to both the celebrant and the lectors.<sup>199</sup>

Adam Kossowski is one of those British artists who were involved in the reconstruction and restoration of Catholic churches after the war. Benedict

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<sup>196</sup> Previous councils, including the Council of Trent, dealt exclusively with *imagines sacri* and their themes. The problem of form did not occur as an artistic issue, but only as a matter of clear editing of the theme. Hence, their decisions did not really go beyond the demand of correct illustration of biblical events, truths of the faith, or lives of saints. (Quoted after: J. S. Pasierb, “Problematyka sztuki” [The problems of art], p. 1460.)

<sup>197</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1480.

<sup>198</sup> E.g., wood cannot imitate stone, and reinforced concrete cannot imitate marble. (*Ibidem*, p. 1481.)

<sup>199</sup> S. Grabska, *Sztuka sakralna* [Sacral art], pp. 106–107.

Read points out<sup>200</sup> that for three decades since 1945 there had been an unprecedented campaign related to the construction and decoration of new churches and cathedrals, among others in Liverpool and Cardiff.<sup>201</sup> What was important was the fact that the number of Catholics in England increased, which resulted in the growing need for restored or new temples.<sup>202</sup>

For Kossowski, like for other artists, churches became the main place of decorative work after the war. His work in Aylesford, which lasted from 1950 to 1972, occupies an important place in the artist's *oeuvre*. Beginning with his first artistic creations for the Carmelites, Kossowski gained notoriety outside Aylesford, and from the mid-1950s, over the next twenty years, the artist made a significant number of commissioned ceramic works. In addition to Stations of the Cross (e.g., in Pontypool and two churches in Cardiff), Kossowski also made narrative reliefs (e.g., in the Downside Abbey, the colossal tympanum in Leyland, the reliefs on the walls of the Baptistry in Acton) and ceramic basins for holy water (e.g., in Faversham, Llantarnam, and Neath).

From the very beginning when Adam Kossowski started making sacral art, he had a clear definition of that concept. This is confirmed by the artist's short press response, published in the pages of *The Catholic Herald* in 1953,<sup>203</sup> to an article by Fr. J. D. Crichton on the problem of modern art in church interiors. Kossowski disputes the author's claim that the first and only purpose of liturgical art is to help Christians pray. The artist wrote that in his opinion this was a fundamental mistake. He argued that the entire history of the Church and art clearly indicates that the first and

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<sup>200</sup> B. Read, "Introduction," in: *Adam Kossowski. Murals and paintings*, p. 15.

<sup>201</sup> In 1940, the Catholic Cathedral in Cardiff burned down – only the walls, built in the 19th century by the Victorian architect A. Pugin (1812–1952), remained. When the reconstruction of the cathedral was undertaken fifteen years later, the architect in charge of the reconstruction, T. G. Price, commissioned Adam Kossowski to create the Stations of the Cross. Ceramic works of a rather large size (120 cm high) were placed on both sides of the main nave. The artist made them in the unglazed technique, in three natural colors of clay: blue-black, ivory, and light yellow. Against the matte background, only the cross shines with a scarlet glaze.

<sup>202</sup> G. A. Beck, ed., *The English Catholics 1850–1950. Essays to commemorate the centenary of the restoration of the hierarchy of England and Wales*, London 1950, p. 587.

<sup>203</sup> A. Kossowski, "Art and worship. First aim of art," *The Catholic Herald*, May 15, 1953.



most important purpose of sacral art is to praise God. Kossowski added that otherwise the magnificent cathedrals, huge frescoes, and countless paintings, sculptures, and mosaics would not exist at all. However, the practical, and important, purpose of that art is of secondary importance. A true artist cannot, in Kossowski's opinion, create his or her works by intentionally subordinating his artistic taste to the taste of the average person. This would impose such limitations on the artist that he or she would not be able to create the best works worthy of God. Kossowski cites the words of the Psalmist: *Domine, dilexi decorem domus Tuae*, which he proposes as a motto for any artist creating religious art. Let us recall that the aforementioned definition of art that identifies art with prayer, which Kossowski formulated while working for the Carmelites.<sup>204</sup>

Tymon Terlecki noted that for Kossowski each sacral theme was a new religious experience that grew out of spontaneous emotions and was an affirmation of faith. Among Kossowski's readings, he cited Pascal and Teilhard de Chardin, whom the artist had read, as well as stressing the importance of the Revelation of St. John.<sup>205</sup> Marian Bohusz-Szyszko spoke in a similar vein: for him, the works of Adam Kossowski, based on thorough technical and professional preparation, were "a rare example of religious art – true both as art in general and as religious art specifically."<sup>206</sup>

The artist's work is part of those areas of artistic culture of our time in which the personal experience of the artist and the service of God through art result in the artistic originality of the works. Adam Kossowski's religious art was "born" in the Soviet gulags. This is well illustrated by the drawings and gouaches with depictions of his Siberian experiences, in which one could see parallels with depictions of Christ's passion. In the naked, martyred prisoner of a Soviet gulag, a corpse carried from under the deck of a Siberian barge, do we not recognize the echoes of the descent from the cross and the laying of Christ's body in the tomb. Perhaps it was

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<sup>204</sup> See footnote 151.

<sup>205</sup> T. Terlecki, "Faith by intellectual effort," p. 103; see also: *ibidem*, "Kossowski wrócił do Aylesfordu" [Kossowski returned to Aylesford], p. 9.

<sup>206</sup> M. Bohusz-Szyszko, "Malarstwo religijne Adama Kossowskiego" [Adam Kossowski's religious painting], p. 226.

inevitable that the pictorial language of torment and pain developed over the centuries in scenes of Calvary, compounded by the artist's own experiences on the inhuman ground, suggested to the artist these forms and gestures of the body.<sup>207</sup>

In the visions of the artist-prisoner, who depicts the martyrdom of his fellow countrymen with accuracy and realism, one can find the key to the understanding of the development of Kossowski's personal style, which he devoted to sacral art. Powerful ceramic compositions with a dramatic vision and deep human and liturgical content, integrally connected with architectural assumptions, gained increasing recognition from artists seeking to modernize church art and raise its level. On this path of monumental religious art, Kossowski made a breakthrough by bringing an invigorating new tone to the contemporary English tradition.

Stanisław Frenkiel noted that Adam Kossowski's name became associated with the blooming of modern religious art in England, to which he brought modern techniques and an individual style that did not follow any conventions, but was in line with the tradition of the Church. Moreover, Kossowski became one of the most recognized pioneers of modern sacral art in the British Isles.<sup>208</sup>

According to Jerzy Faczyński, Kossowski's religious compositions conform to demands regarding colors and follow the trend of modern Polish decorative art of the interwar period. The art forms speak with the vividness of the colors and the compact structure of the form.<sup>209</sup> The monumental ceramic compositions "live" in the interiors and on the walls of churches, constituting an expression of an authentic experience, in all the exquisiteness of content, composition, and color. Stylistically simple and

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<sup>207</sup> A. M. Borkowski, "Pustka pełna nadziei" [Void full of hope], p. 7.

<sup>208</sup> S. Frenkiel wrote that the modern interpretation of sacral art in England is linked to the reconstruction of the Anglican cathedral in Coventry with the participation of modern artists like Piper and Sutherland. Graham Sutherland made a 23 × 13 m decorative tapestry design for that cathedral, the theme of which was "Christ in Glory," surrounded by four six-winged creatures, symbolizing the Evangelists. See: (mamal), "Anglicy i sztuka sakralna" [Englishmen and sacral art], *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1958, no. 18, p. 6; S. Frenkiel, "Adam Kossowski a sztuka sakralna w Anglii" [Adam Kossowski and sacral art in England].

<sup>209</sup> J. Faczyński, "Sztuka religijna" [Religious art], p. 1.

austere, full of static élan and rhythmic figural styling, the ceramic works are filled with subtlety and finesse in terms of form and harmony of color.

Contemporary English and Polish critics perceived in Kossowski an artist striving to renew Christian iconography, which was in crisis, by saturating it with individual thought content. This is reflected in the high opinions of his work, such as the one presented in Hubert van Zeller's book *Approach to Christian Sculpture*, where the author writes that Kossowski had deservedly made a name for himself; his ceramic compositions are truly religious in feeling and truly sculptural in form.<sup>210</sup> The sculptural nature of the ceramics is also emphasized by Winifrede Wilson in *Christian art since the romantic movement*, where the author declared Kossowski's primacy among other Europeans creating their works in this technique.<sup>211</sup>

In his works, Adam Kossowski drew inspiration from early Christian art, characterized by the linear flatness of the figures, further emphasized by the planar use of color. The decorations of the Roman catacombs are characterized by strong linearism, modeling of shapes with color and sharp chiaroscuro, clumsy proportions of human figures, and summary grasp of movement. The themes of early Christian iconography include motifs from the Old and New Testaments in addition to bucolic themes symbolizing the ideal of fullness of life (figures of adorants, shepherds, scenes from daily life, various species of animals, birds, trees, and flowers).

A rich repertoire of biblical scenes is presented in the catacombs at Via Latina in Rome, where entire cycles are featured, including the stories of Adam and Eve, St. James and St. Joseph, and Moses, as well as single scenes –

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<sup>210</sup> “[...] The only Catholic to have made a name for himself, and deservedly, is the expatriate Pole, Adam Kossowski, whose ceramics are truly religious in feeling and truly sculptural in form” (quoted after: H. van Zeller, *Approach to Christian sculpture*, London [no year specified], pp. 148–149).

<sup>211</sup> “[...] It is impossible to enumerate all the competent ceramists at work in European churches before devoting a little more space to Adam Kossowski (b. 1905) who is perhaps the most interesting of all. [...] A fine colorist, his Expressionist vision is best realized in ceramic panels of sculptural character” (quoted after W. Wilson, *Christian art since the romantic movement*, London [no year specified], p. 163).

for example, Noah, Job, Jonah, Daniel, Elijah's ascension in a chariot to heaven, and the bow of the Three Kings.<sup>212</sup>

During Christian antiquity, mosaics became the primary form of decoration for walls, vaults, and especially church apses. In mosaic representations the common biblical cycles, especially in tomb art, were dominated by the motif of Christ's triumph, the Transfiguration, and the transmission of the religious message to his successors – the Apostles. A blossoming center of mosaic art was Ravenna, and the decoration of San Vitale (c. 540) represents, both content-wise and stylistically, the classical apogee of the development of that art.<sup>213</sup>

The second important source of inspiration in Kossowski's work is Romanesque art. Romanesque sculpture is mostly relief – plastic and strongly connected with the substance of the block from which it was extracted. What is important in Romanesque relief is the interdependence and interconnectedness of all members of the composition, so that the individual elements, figures of people and animals, meet or at least are connected by complementary contours. In Romanesque sculpture, there is a hierarchical gradation of scale and plasticity. Christ and Mary on thrones on the axis of a tympanum not only rise above the accompanying figures of saints and founders, but also tower over them in more prominent relief.<sup>214</sup> Frenkiel finds in Kossowski's art a distant kinship with the Burgundian sculpture of Gislebertus of Autun in the specific flattening of space and in the expression of the figures' movement.<sup>215</sup>

Romanesque paintings adorning church interiors in monumental form were pictorial recreations and interpretations of the mystery happening on the altar, the words proclaimed during the liturgy being celebrated. Large wall planes, intended for painting decoration, were usually divided horizontally into strips in which the sequential scenes from the Old and New Testaments and from the lives of saints and martyrs developed, and

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<sup>212</sup> See: E. Jastrzębowska, *Sztuka wczesnochrześcijańska* [Early Christian art], Warsaw 1988, p. 91.

<sup>213</sup> Ibidem, p. 233.

<sup>214</sup> See: Z. Świechowski, L. Nowak, B. Gumińska, *Sztuka romańska* [Romanesque art], Warsaw 1976, pp. 280–281.

<sup>215</sup> S. Frenkiel, "Adam Kossowski a sztuka sakralna" [Adam Kossowski and sacral art].

prophets, saints, angels, majestic images of Christ, and representations of the reigning Mary were depicted. The central themes of the painting decoration were the Creator as Pantocrator surrounded by a mandorla, and symbols of the four Evangelists, apostles, or saints. Romanesque artists, like Byzantine artists, gave these images a form that dominated the rest of the decoration due to its size, monumentality, hieratic nature, and solemnity. The technique used for Romanesque paintings, usually applied over dried plaster and damp mortar, imposed a limitation on the range of colors. In wall paintings mainly simple colors were used: blue, yellow, green, red, brown, and black. On the flat background, two-dimensional architectural structures, stylized vegetation, and human figures were applied, usually surrounded by a strong contour.<sup>216</sup>

Adam Kossowski's ceramic works are a large-scale phenomenon in the 20th century. One can recall the name of the Catalan architect and craftsman Antonio Gaudí (1852–1926) and his works in La Sagrada Família (1882–1926 and later),<sup>217</sup> the Park Güell (1898–1917), Casa Batlló (1904–1906), Casa Milà, and Casa Vicens (1883–1885), and be tempted to say that there are technical and ideological similarities between the two artists. The Catalan artist's architecture gives a strong impression of Catholic art.

Mystical and religious references can be seen in the most diverse details, both in strictly iconographic works and in what is symbolic. Gaudí is classified as the author of the most organic Art Nouveau. All of his work is characterized by a desire to capture wholeness, proportion, and balance. Gaudí was convinced that architecture should be in harmony with the surrounding nature and even be an organic part of it. He modeled his work on nature: plants, animals, and minerals.<sup>218</sup> In his architectural creations, Antonio Gaudí used ceramics extensively. The wavy facade of Casa Batlló is

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<sup>216</sup> Z. Świechowski, L. Nowak, B. Gumińska, *Sztuka romańska* [Romanesque art], pp. 338–341.

<sup>217</sup> The continuation of the construction of the Sagrada Família was undertaken by Gaudí in 1883. The construction was financed almost exclusively by foundations and donations, so it often stalled due to lack of money. Nevertheless, the model and construction plan were already essentially complete by 1906.

<sup>218</sup> For example, in La Sagrada Família the bases of the columns are shaped like turtles, and the chapiters are bent palmettes. The roof of Casa Batlló, on the other hand, resembles

decorated with a mosaic of colorful glass and ceramic tiles and discs. Loggias formed from parabolic brick arches were also faced with shimmering ceramic mosaics. Park Güell is a “work of all arts,” a system of peculiar “collages” built from fragments of stone, porcelain, and ceramics.<sup>219</sup> Gaudi designed a total work of art (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) – also furniture, stair treads, balustrades, doors, handles, gates,<sup>220</sup> etc. were individually treated works of art, integrated into the entire building.

Another artist whose work may have inspired Adam Kossowski is Georges Rouault (1871–1958), considered the most prominent representative of modern sacral art. His name often came up in discussions about art with his friend, painter Zdzisław Ruszkowski.<sup>221</sup> Rouault’s paintings<sup>222</sup> are characterized by a monumentalized, simple form, reminiscent of medieval stained glass windows, a static view, and black contour lines connecting individual planes filled with color.<sup>223</sup> Commissioned by Vollard, Rouault produced a number of pieces of graphic art (such as the *Miserere* series published in 1948), in which he used a radically simplified form, defined by thick contour lines and strong contrasts of white and black. White and black were sufficient for the artist, as they enabled his art to be more solemn; lack of color, made it show austerity and simplicity.<sup>224</sup>

When discussing the work of Adam Kossowski, one can recall two analogies found in Polish art. The first is Stanisław Wyspiański’s artistic activity in monumental decorative art. Wyspiański got a taste for using multi-level wall planes, the rhythm of ornaments, and the fusing of bare walls into

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the curved back of a lizard, topped with amorphous structures, and the stairs in Park Güell feature a dragon, clad in a mosaic of glazed ceramic tiles.

<sup>219</sup> See: G. Fahr-Becker, *Secesja* [Art Nouveau], Cologne 2000, p. 195.

<sup>220</sup> Gaudi designed the so-called “Dragon Gate” made of wrought iron – the entrance to the Güell estate in Barcelona (1884–1887).

<sup>221</sup> Z. Ruszkowski, “O Adamie” [On Adam].

<sup>222</sup> E.g.: *Crucifixion* (1939), *Veronique* (1945), *Head of Christ* (1937–1938), and *The flight into Egypt* (1940–1948).

<sup>223</sup> Cf. J. Turowicz, “Rouault,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1958, no. 9, pp. 1–2.

<sup>224</sup> M. Arland, “Artistic grandeur. Human grandeur,” in: G. Rouault, *Miserere*, Paris–Tokyo 1991, p. 49.

a colorful new whole.<sup>225</sup> His first completely independent work of monumental art was the design of a stained glass window for the Lviv Cathedral. The theme of the depiction was the scene of the vows taken by King John Casimir in the cathedral in Lviv, combined with the composition titled *Polonia*, which was a major artistic achievement. One can also notice here a completely new approach to sacral art, so characteristic of Wyspiański's later stained glass works and his wall paintings.

Aiming to create national art that was contemporary and full of simplicity, he introduced folk figures with common faces and often downright ugly features into works with religious themes. After returning from Paris in 1894, Wyspiański was fascinated primarily by monumental painting. In 1897–1902, he oversaw the restoration of a Franciscan church. He was commissioned to make polychromes and stained glass windows for the church. His works there is evidence of the artist's special love for flowers,<sup>226</sup> which are given the meaning of a symbol. Sharp purple thorns surround St. Francis' head, blooming with golden roses. Next to the figure of Christ, there are dark irises. St. Salomea is surrounded by bright yellow daffodils and lilies. The *Panneau* with the polychrome "Caritas" depicts two girls holding each other in a sisterly embrace, while in the lower plan there is water with two iris-shaped lilies, white and blue, growing from it. And so the girls' simple gesture turns them into natural virtue (white) and spiritual nobility (blue). The two virtues fuse into Caritas. In the side windows of the presbytery, Wyspiański placed stained glass windows depicting the four elements. By introducing macroscopy, i.e., the enlargement of plants to supernatural dimensions, the artist achieved the verticality of the composition emphasizing the Gothic structure of the temple; he also gave great decorative importance to the planar stained glass compositions.<sup>227</sup>

The western window of the Franciscan church was filled with Wyspiański's most magnificent stained glass, "Become," depicting God the

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<sup>225</sup> See: J. Bojarska-Syrek, *Wyspiański. Witraże* [Wyspiański. Stained glass windows], Warsaw 1980, p. 5; see also: Z. Kępiński, *Wyspiański*, Warsaw 1984; H. Nelken, *Stanisław Wyspiański*, Warsaw 1959.

<sup>226</sup> According to Kępiński, flowers and colors are for Wyspiański the equivalents of the chief elements of the chemistry of the world – the equivalents of the Elements.

<sup>227</sup> J. Bojarska-Syrek, *Wyspiański*, p. 11.

Father leading the world out of chaos. The monumental figure of the Creator appears in flaming streams of glowing colors as in a burning bush.<sup>228</sup> In 1904, Wyspiański created his final stained glass window design of extraordinary importance. It was the “Copernicus’ solar system” designed for the Doctors’ House in Cracow. Among the blue and sapphire trails, gods – planets are circling next to the huge figure of Apollo, monumental in its expression. Apollo – Sun tramples the Earth. His figure dominates and stands out with the force of its color.<sup>229</sup>

Stanisław Wyspiański’s stained-glass windows were only a “stage” in his quest to create a unified, monumental work of art that the interiors he created were: for example, the design of the dining room in the Żeleńskis’ apartment in Cracow, the “Common Room” of the Society of Fine Arts in Cracow, and the staircase in the Doctors’ House in Cracow.

Adam Kossowski has an independent parallel to his work in the art of icon paintings by Jerzy Nowosielski. Nowosielski’s work combines the highest artistry with deep theological thought. For that artist, painting is a way of communing with a higher dimension, a place for the manifestation of the spiritual. It is characterized by its peculiar elementariness, strict clarity, and hieratic and static nature of the painting composition. When painting an icon, Nowosielski does not act as an imitator. Nowosielski justifies the immutability of the artistic transmission of the three dogmas: Resurrection, Ascension, and Assumption, by the independence of the formation of these visions through the centuries and their constant relevance. His depictions of Christ and the Madonna, frozen in hallowed canons, are merely a modern synthesis of those messages and suggest the contribution of the hand and thought of a contemporary artist. At the same time, the paint itself, no longer subject to the old secrets of Alchemy, is more brutal due to its total unity and simplicity, and thus closer to modernity.

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<sup>228</sup> See: Z. Kępiński, *Wyspiański*, pp. 48–69 (the author discusses the decoration of the Franciscan church in terms of the cosmological model).

<sup>229</sup> The analysis of this stained glass window was undertaken in: K. Czerni, “Witraz ‘Apollo’ Stanisława Wyspiańskiego dla Domu Lekarskiego w Krakowie” [Stanisław Wyspiański’s “Apollo” stained glass for the Doctors’ Home in Cracow], *Folia Historiae Artium* 1993, vol. 29, pp. 129–149.



Nowosielski completely overtly abandons a more complicated form in favor of a simple, perhaps in a sense primitive one, in order to acquire a material without becoming a slave to its properties.<sup>230</sup> The artist treats human figures summarily, enclosing them in a synthetic contour. They are almost typified, simplified in the drawing and color. Nowosielski has his own canon of drawing: an elongated oval of the face, a sharp contour of the body, monumentalism of the figure, simplicity of the drawing and gesture, economy of the expression. Everything is reduced to the minimum as much as possible. Nowosielski is a mystic of the paintbrush, strict in his treatment of every theme.<sup>231</sup>

Three of Nowosielski's largest and most complete paintings are located in the interiors of Catholic churches (Wesoła, Warsaw's district of Jelonki, and Cracow's district of Azory). His religious or sacral paintings, either by their content nor by the fact that they are placed in Orthodox or even more so in Catholic church interiors, do not conform to the canons of icon theology: they are not consecrated and have no identifying inscriptions, without which an image cannot be an icon in the canonical sense.<sup>232</sup> Jerzy Nowosielski transforms the icon canon in his own way, developing his own artistic language. He is one of the few contemporary artists for whom art, in order to fulfill its mission, must remain in the sphere of the sacrum, in the circle of sanctity. This understanding of art, as well as the combination of the work of painting with the theology practiced by the artist, brings Nowosielski closer to true iconographers.

Both Nowosielski's and Kossowski's creative attitude is determined by the artist's ideological commitment. This unique element of the artists' personalities has played an indispensable role in religious wall art, which

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<sup>230</sup> K. Jerzmanowicz, "Poszukiwania w ikonie" [Explorations in icons], *Życie i Myśl* 1967, no. 11/12 (161/162); see also: J. Pollakówna, "Zielony pejzaż. O obrazie Jerzego Nowosielskiego" [A green landscape. On Jerzy Nowosielski's painting], *Res Publica* 1988, no. 3 (6); T. Jank, *Krótką historią niejednej ikony* [A brief history of more than one icon], Gdańsk 1998.

<sup>231</sup> Z. Strzałkowski, "Malarz współczesnej ikony" [The painter of the modern icon], *Życie i Myśl* 1964, no. 7/8 (121/122), p. 179.

<sup>232</sup> This subject is discussed broadly in: B. Dąb-Kalinowska, "Nowosielski," *Przegląd Powszechny* 1986, no. 11 (783), pp. 258–262.

both of them practice. For both of them, ideological beliefs go hand in hand with the high artistic status of the religious works they create.

Adam Kossowski's artistic creations are numerous. He has made dozens of large-scale color ceramics in more than twenty temples in Britain, Ireland, and the United States. Starting with the works for the Aylesford monastery in the mid-1950s, for the next two decades Kossowski was at the center of religious art in England, being one of the leading contemporary artists of sacral art, besides Eric Gill and Graham Sutherland. Simple and austere, full of static élan and rhythmic figural styling, full of subtlety and finesse in terms of form and color harmony, Kossowski's style of monumental ceramics caused the British press to call the compositions made for Aylesford the only example of modern art in Britain,<sup>233</sup> and the artist himself to become a large-scale pioneer in monumental religious ceramic relief.

Adam Kossowski collaborated with other English religious artists: the main altar in the Acton church is the undertaking of Graham Sutherland; Artur Fleischmann<sup>234</sup> carved the Stations of the Cross, and other sculptural works are made by Philip Lindsey Clark, Georges Campbell, and Arthur Ayres.

However, it was Kossowski's compositions that received the highest ratings in the press.<sup>235</sup> Marian Bohusz-Szyszko wrote in one of his sketches: "If I wanted to bring out the heaviest work of conquest in the battle for the triumph of Polish creative invention in monumental art in England – it is undoubtedly the ceramic sculpture by Adam Kossowski."<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> See: J. Faczyński, "Sztuka religijna" [Religious art], p. 7.

<sup>234</sup> Artur Fleischmann (1896–1990), a sculptor. He studied at the Academies of Art in Budapest, Prague, and Venice. His works can be found in churches in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia, and the Great Britain. In 1958, at the World Exhibition, he exhibited the work *Resurrection* in the first Vatican Pavilion. The author of busts of popes Pius XII (Australia), John XXIII (Rome), and Paul VI (Rome).

<sup>235</sup> See: I. Conlay, "Where serving God; From our notebook. Cardiff Cathedral," *The Tablet*, February 28, 1959, p. 202; "Conversion of St. Paul in ceramics," *The Universe and Catholic Times*, July 1, 1966.

<sup>236</sup> M. Bohusz-Szyszko, *O sztuce* [On art], p. 213.

The apogee of Kossowski's work came in the postwar years, which he spent as an emigre in England. However, it should be remembered that these great artistic achievements in exile were preceded by successes achieved in the field of monumental decorative arts in Poland in the interwar period. Thus, Adam Kossowski is also an integral part of the history of Polish art.

Original issue: "Archiwum Emigracji" 2006, no. 1-2 (7-8)

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