The Overdetermination of the Heavenly Jerusalem

Contemporary Windows by Gérard Garouste and Jean-Michel Alberola

Daan Van Speybroeck

At the beginning of 1990s, the Dutch stained-glass artisan Eugène Laudy (1921–1995) realized a window representing the Heavenly Jerusalem for the Dominicus Church in Nijmegen. The window is part of a cycle of ten windows in the church's nave: five scenes from the Old Testament on the north side, and five windows on the south side with scenes from the New Testament, all made by Laudy. His assignment was described very carefully by the church.¹ The biblical scenes that were to be depicted in the windows on one side had to correspond with those in the opposing windows. So, for example, the window opposite the Heavenly Jerusalem shows Moses when he is shown the Promised Land.

Laudy clearly accentuated the Heavenly Jerusalem in this window: the city descends from heaven with its twelve gates guarded by twelve angels, and is a colourful ensemble that contrasts sharply with the mainly greyish background – the world into which this city descends. In short, it is as described in the Apocalypse or the Book of Revelation. At the end of that book, the Heavenly Jerusalem is mentioned (Rev. 21.2): 'And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven'.

Then follows a description of the city, where the city's brilliance is compared to the glitter of precious jewels, with twelve gates in its high wall, each with an angel and bearing the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. In the centre of the Heavenly Jerusalem stands the throne of God and the Lamb, radiating light.

As a stained-glass artisan Laudy complies with his commission, and designs an image of the Heavenly Jerusalem that will function within the local church community. However, the artists Gérard Garouste and Jean-Michel Alberola translate the commission into the language of their own oeuvres. In so doing, they do not merely illustrate, but realize true contemporary works of art with all the characteristic features thereof. This essay, which explores representations of the Heavenly Jerusalem in various windows, starts with Laudy's

¹ Hogema 1998, pp. 2–3; Laudy 2004; Koolen and Van Raaij 1997.

example in order to contrast his rather conventional approach with the totally different artistic considerations of the French artists Gérard Garouste in Talant and Jean-Michel Aberola in Nevers, whose windows will be described more comprehensively in the following.

Concerns with Regard to the Heavenly Jerusalem

In his window Laudy showed the city as it has descended on earth with its gates, angels and flowing spring, but, unlike the city in Revelation, it has the shape of a cross. This refers to the Heavenly Jerusalem as the embodiment of the church of Christ, as professed by the ecclesiastical authority.² Laudy complied with the iconographic and theological tradition, without questioning or problematizing the fact that effectively the church prematurely appropriates the 'paradise at the end of times' with this image.

When we examine this somewhat randomly chosen example more closely, we see that the Heavenly Jerusalem comes to us with a series of problems.

The problem that immediately presents itself is why opposing windows in a church should have to correspond? The reason is that the Old and New Testament can be contrasted with each other that way, thereby establishing an inequality, a hierarchy. In the positioning of the windows, in which light plays an important role, the old testamentary scenes are located on the dark north side. Their content is only explained, made clear, through the confrontation with the new testamentary windows opposite them, which are flooded by sunlight. This kind of reading is called 'typology'³ and contains a frequently occurring, yet disguised and latent, form of discrimination against the Jewish scriptures. This is essentially what happens in Laudy's windows.

A second problem is the church's aforementioned urge to appropriate. By appointing itself as the embodiment of the Heavenly Jerusalem, it bestows on itself an absolute dimension, proclaiming itself the one true church by wanting *its* Jerusalem to reign supreme.

Yet another concern relates to the problem of commissioned art, more specifically artwork commissioned for a church. Nowadays, it is a fact that contemporary windows with themes such as the Heavenly Jerusalem are meant for churches, while the church is often no longer the institution that commis-

2 Recht 1999, esp. pp. 37 and 116; Duby 2002, esp. pp. 109 and 385–88; Frye 1986, esp. pp. 208–09.

3 Frye 1986, pp. 131–206 and 287.

sions them; it is usually the state or a cultural or tourist agency that pays... and the maxim 'he who pays the piper calls the tune' applies here, too.

Have the church and art not drifted too far apart these days for the former to formulate an adequate assignment for the latter? Or, from the other perspective, is the artist not too self-willed, following his own logic and patterns? Is he able, and does he want to bow to an 'external' client who has his own agenda and who is usually a stranger to the artist?

In this context, Markus Lüpertz's design for the windows of the cathedral of Nevers in France comes to mind.⁴ When asked to depict Genesis, the German artist showed man as he knew him, scarred by the recent war history of his country (whatever side people had been on, one is tempted to add). His face is as contorted as it is tormented and he seems to know neither peace nor faith. This did not go down well with bishop Michel Moutier of Nevers. He had asked for man before the Fall and that was what he wanted the windows to present to his faithful.

Yet a further concern is the word 'Jerusalem' itself. This name cannot be separated from historical events, for example the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis not all that long ago; nor from the foundation of the Jewish state, as recently as 1948, and even more recently, for instance, in 1967, the Six-Day War. By giving a window the name 'Jerusalem', one does not only refer to the biblical Jerusalem: the city's present complex issues are also immediately evoked, issues we are all aware of, that we hear of daily, and that are, as yet, far from resolved. This raises the question whether contemporary artists are still able to connect the word 'Heavenly' with 'Jerusalem'. The socio-political situation in Jerusalem has become so corrupted and hopeless that the said elements, 'Heavenly' and 'Jerusalem', can no longer be linked. At the same time, more generally speaking, we live in a secularized world in which 'heavenly' is inconceivable in itself; so it probably does not matter anymore if it is linked to Jerusalem or not.

The Heavenly Jerusalem in Stained Glass

Although stained glass windows in churches are determined by various things – their fixed position, involvement of a church that is no longer the client, and the tradition of opposing the Old and New Testament – it is specifically in the case of the Heavenly Jerusalem that an *overdetermination* takes place. The

4 Blanchet 2003, pp. 31–34; Blanchet 2010, pp. 124–29.

term 'overdetermination' is derived from psychoanalysis⁵ and here represents the fact that an artwork is determined by many factors that are not necessarily consciously experienced by either the artist or the audience. So while producing a window is a complex process in itself, at the same time it is directed by a multitude of divergent forces that have a part in its realization. As a result, the final work is determined by a mix of alliances – conscious and unconscious – each influencing a component part of the work. Although the Heavenly Jerusalem is seldom mentioned, expected or demanded explicitly in a commission to depict the Apocalypse in a stained glass window, there is usually one window depicting that specific theme. The Heavenly Jerusalem is a subject that the artist may choose to include in his interpretation of the Apocalypse. If he does choose it, this new testamentary theme in most cases leads to the conventional confrontation with the Old Testament. One could ask if it is appropriate in our time to ignore Jerusalem's current situation, even if nothing in the assignment refers to it explicitly. Jerusalem joined with 'Heavenly' intensifies both the old testamentary and the contemporary: even though the people there will not stop fighting each other, this city bears the name of peace and cannot continue to do so without consequences when it is being represented in art.

This kind of overdetermination, and all its contradictions, brings us to the core of visual art – to depict the 'unimaginable'. Do we not touch upon the essence of visual art with this problematic situation?⁶ Is the entire (western) visual art not based on capturing the contradictory in one single image: on creating a 'both – and' situation, thereby transcending the logical order. Just think of the depiction of the mother-virgin and the 'son of god', or being God *and* man. Was such a contradictory perspective not the drive behind Lüpertz's windows for the cathedral of Nevers: depicting man as a repulsive war criminal and simultaneously as defenceless victim, scarred by those war crimes? And this, placed in religious context, shows contemporary, post-war mankind and incorporates man from before the Fall – the image bishop Moutier expected?⁷ In short, one *and* the other.

Heavenly Jerusalem windows are inevitably confronted with such overdetermination, which is fascinating from an artistic point of view, and very interesting and inspiring for contemporary artists. In other words, stained glass windows, which have come to be seen as craft rather than art, and therefore

5 The concept of 'overdetermination' has various cognate meanings. Here I use the term as defined by Laplanche and Pontalis 1981, pp. 467–69.

6 Pontévia 1984, p. 36 ff.

7 Blanchet 2003, pp. 31–34.

slightly stuffy and musty, could, if they succeed in shaping and depicting the unimaginable, return to the artistic stage.

After this general, rather theoretical and abstract formulation of the problem, in order to fulfil the promise in the subtitle, two windows in which *artists* choose the Heavenly Jerusalem as their subject will be discussed.

It must be stressed that the term 'artist' is emphasized deliberately here in contrast to 'artisan'. Stained glass 'artisans' are more rigid, more docile and usually have a fixed iconographical arsenal on which they fall back easily, and all too soon, in order to realize the theme that has been commissioned.⁸ Principally, they make use of their knowledge as artisans and rely on the imagery that is available, or a certain abstraction of it. That is not to say that in their case it is a matter of 'your wish is our command': indeed, there is a form of professional pride and dignity in every craft. Yet, in Nijmegen Laudy did not get beyond illustrating a rather conventional typological and iconographical scheme that had little to do with the unimaginable and undepictable. Artists, on the other hand, reformulate their assignment – or at any rate we expect them to – in order to execute it in line with their oeuvre and their time.⁹ That is what we saw in Lüpertz's windows in Nevers, after all. When choosing an artist for a stained glass commission it is therefore important to know the artist's oeuvre and judge whether it fits the assignment.

Gerárd Garouste in Talant

In 1995, Gérard Garouste (b. 1946) was assigned the task of designing all the windows, forty-six in total, of the early Gothic church of Talant, a fashionable suburb of Dijon in France; a project that was finished in 1997.¹⁰ He is a renowned French artist, with no specific knowledge of, or experience with, stained glass. His designs – once accepted – were realized by Atelier Pierre-Alain Parot, in close cooperation with the artist himself.¹¹

Because the church was dedicated to the Nativity of Mary, the assignment stipulated that this was the theme to be expressed in the choir. In the church's

8 Lagier 2000, pp. 6–9; Loire 2011, pp. 181–92; implicitly about the contemporary battle over windows between stained glass glaziers and artists, see: Geron and Moxhet 2001.

9 This is demonstrated in a series of artistic stained glass projects, described in: *Lumières contemporaines* 2005, including the windows of Carole Benzaken in Varennes Jarcy, Gérard Garouste in Talant, Martial Raysse in Paris, Sarkis in Azay-sur-Cher and Carmelo Zagari in Faymoreau.

10 Ladey 1997; Garouste à Talant 2006; Van Speybroeck 1998, pp. 79–127; Rinuy 1998, pp. 2–5.

11 Parot 2011, pp. 251–58; Parot 2004, pp. 73–75; Bansept 1999, pp. 92–95.

nave (in the clerestory and in the aisles) themes from the Old and New Testament were to be depicted. Elaborating on the figure of Mary, the artist mirrored women from the Old Testament and the New Testament in the aisles, while mainly showing scenes from Genesis in the high nave on the north side and scenes from Revelation on the south side.

From the start, the artist was averse to the traditional division of themes between the sunny side and the dark side that was imposed upon him.¹² The window's commissioners would not go back on this decision, however, because they subscribed expressly to the tradition of the typological reading prevalent in stained glass windows in churches. Garouste saw the typological requirement as a form of explicit discrimination against the Jewish heritage, a discrimination that he regarded as one of the factors leading to the persecution of the Jews, with which he wanted no association: nor did he want to contribute to its return. He was particularly sensitive to this because he was married to a Jewish woman and had two sons with her who were therefore Jewish. Against this background, he learned Hebrew and preferred to speak of the Tanakh (as the collection of the Torah, the Prophets and a number of Writings). Moreover, a recently published autobiography¹³ shows that Garouste's resistance to the division that was forced upon him had – if one can put it this way – deeper and very personal roots. During the war, his father had systematically sold goods that had been seized from Jews. On the other hand, the artist cooperated closely with Père Louis Ladey, a very amiable village priest and member of the diocesan commission that formulated the assignment. Both men got along extremely well, which resulted in great loyalty on both sides.

So despite his disagreement with the typological requirements, the artist continued with the assignment, expecting, even trusting, that he could negate the inherent coercion and the discriminatory dimension by virtue of the content of his windows and their positioning in relation to each other. He tried to do this by allowing women from the Bible to confront each other in opposing windows, making sure that those from the New Testament were not seen as explaining those from the Old, nor appear in any way to be stronger. In this coupled confrontation, the presence of each was equally powerful.

His 'strategy' – discussed too briefly here – is most clearly visible in the confrontation between the windows of the sacrificial altars, which interrupt the sequence of women in the aisles. Here we see that the sacrifices of the Old

12 Garouste *Entretiens avec Louis Ladey* 1989; also: Garouste à Talant 2006, pp. 85–97; Garouste and Lyon 2002, pp. 25–30.

13 Garouste and Perrignon 2009.

Testament are animals, while in the New Testament human sacrifices – even though they are martyrs – are depicted. With this interruption, the artist obliged the visitor to reflect for a moment, thus forcefully raising the question of who is ‘prefigured’.

This strategy indicates a wider context envisioned by Garouste: he wanted his windows to urge the faithful to think. To him, his assignment took place against a background – even though he did not depict it directly, because that would be merely illustrating – of the obedience that is enforced among children from their first Holy Communion, through catechesis and through listening to the priest. He contrasted this tradition with the bar mitzvah of Jewish boys: on their own, in the rabbi’s place, facing all present, they have to read out a text and explain it. With his windows – in their figuration, their composition, and their interrelationships – he invited Catholics to think for themselves and to interpret independently the biblical scenes that were represented.¹⁴ Thus his windows in Talant, in part through the addition of texts in Hebrew, Latin and French, stimulate the spectator to do more than view the windows, but also to look up the texts and so return to the source with an open mind.

This is the context within which Garouste’s Jerusalem window is situated in the church of Talant (Fig. 10.1). It is – from the choir – the first window in the northern aisle. We see the twelve sons of Jacob, who form the twelve gates of the city of Jerusalem, as it were. This is a reference to both the Old and the New Testament: Ezekiel (48.31) and Revelation. In the foreground one of the figures is fully visible – Judah – because he gave his name to the Jewish people. Depicting him this way also makes it look as if he wears the Jewish tribes as his crown, thus showing Jesus to be a descendant from these tribes and making him, from the perspective of Jewish history, somewhat less overpowering. Garouste depicts Judah as the gate to the tetragrammaton here – the four letters used to refer to God in Hebrew.

However, the link to Jerusalem – here with no reference whatsoever to the Heavenly – is weak. Is it not rather the Catholic commissioner who wants to see the heavenly city in the window and who projects his interpretation onto it.¹⁵ However, the window is mirrored by a different, opposing window, depicting another city: Capernaum – as is inscribed on the window (Fig. 10.2). Again, one notices that all is not right on the side of the New Testament: the city is engulfed in flames – cursed by Jesus, who lived there but could not get anyone to listen to his words. Consequently, the city is seized by a fire that may or may not be cleansing. But with Capernaum we do not find ourselves only in the

¹⁴ Garouste and Perrignon 2009, p. 100.

¹⁵ Ladey 1997, p. 14.

FIGURE 10.1 *Gérard Garouste, Jerusalem window, 1995-1997, stained glass realized by Atelier Pierre-Alain Parot. TALANT: ÉGLISE NOTRE DAME DE TALANT.*

FIGURE 10.2 *Gérard Garouste, Capernaum window, 1995-1997, stained glass realized by Atelier Pierre-Alain Parot. TALANT: ÉGLISE NOTRE DAME DE TALANT.*

New Testament, because the city is already also mentioned in the Tanakh. Thus, Garouste invites the visitors to the church to think for themselves, rather than confirming their beliefs. He does so by mixing up the New and the Old Testament, as it were, making it impossible to go back to one of the two books and placing them on this or that side of the church: we are confronted with a complexity of references and connections.

In order to enhance our interpretation of Garouste's windows, we should look at two windows that are in the same bay in the clerestory as 'Jerusalem' and 'Capernaum': 'The Burning Bush' on one side, and 'The Throne of Light' on the other. God is the focus of both windows; his name appears in the flames of the bush (as depicted in the window) and there is a reference to him on the

back of his throne. This Throne of Light brings us back to Revelation, albeit to the beginning rather than the end (Rev. 4.2). Garouste shows us the empty throne with only one inscription: 'God is one'. In the 'checkerboard' in the lower part of the window, we can see a reference to the floor of the temple in Jerusalem. Both the throne and the temple are empty – we can project various meanings onto them. Here, Garouste speaks of an absence 'to experience the presence of what immateriality absence possesses'.¹⁶ Without becoming very concrete, we could (with a bit of goodwill) think of contrasts when considering the checkerboard: of all the black-white situations in Jerusalem – ranging from good and evil, and war and peace, or about day and night and old and new, the earthly and the heavenly, the latter emphasized by the throne depicted above it.

However, all this does not bring Jerusalem itself, today's city, to the forefront. Is the concreteness of present-day, troublesome Jerusalem not 'missed' here, perhaps even avoided? On the other hand, the artist might have been somewhat reluctant because depicting a Heavenly Jerusalem could be too much of an invitation to see the window as 'the church', surrounded by its light and glory. Thus we could say that Garouste, reading Revelation, did not reach the passage about the Heavenly Jerusalem, and therefore lets his visual reading end earlier – although he does let the theme shine through in the window with The Throne of Light.

Even though in Garouste's windows in Talant (the Heavenly) Jerusalem is not the main theme, the message of the windows is powerful. And perhaps it is precisely this 'absence' making room for a much more essential immaterial 'presence' that the artist was after. In any case, visiting the church of Talant and being caught in the light falling through the windows, breaks our world open to the heavenly. Feasting our eyes, we are encouraged to read, to think, and to interpret. In this church, Garouste takes us to the source of the words, to 'the word as a creative agent'¹⁷ if not in order to accomplish, at least to evoke a birth, or as it were, a rebirth.

Jean-Michel Alberola in Nevers

It is a strange fact that one of the windows of the northern transept arm of the cathedral of Nevers in France, designed by the French-Algerian artist Jean-Mi-

¹⁶ Garouste à Talant 2006, p. 72.

¹⁷ Garouste à Talant 2006, p. 30.

FIGURE 10.3 *Jean-Michel Alberola, Heavenly Jerusalem window, also called Babylon window, stained glass realized by Atelier Duchemin. NEVERS: CATHÉDRALE SAINT-CYR-ET-SAINTE-JULIETTE DE NEVERS.*

chel Alberola (b. 1953), is called 'Heavenly Jerusalem', although no one seems to remember where the name came from (Fig. 10.3).

More generally speaking, there are other strange aspects to this art assignment.¹⁸ Initially, in 1989, Alberola was commissioned to design a series of seven windows depicting Revelation¹⁹ in the southern transept arm of the aforementioned cathedral. After he had finished this project – which does not show a Heavenly Jerusalem but does, in a sense, include the Throne of Light – he was given a second assignment of realizing the same theme in six windows in the northern arm of the transept. The fact that he was allowed to take Revelation again and depict it a second time in the same church, and this so close to the

¹⁸ Blanchet 1998, pp. 40–8; Alberola. Entretien avec Christine Blanchet 2010; Labar 2010; Alberola 1999–2000, p. 30.

¹⁹ Van Speybroeck 1998, pp. 60–91; Bansept 1999. The windows were commissioned by the Délégations aux Arts Plastiques (DAP), the programme was written by the *Association Regards sur la Cathédrale de Nevers* with help from the *Commission diocésaine d'art sacré*.

other, existent windows, is curious. What is even more curious was that these windows were to be placed on the north side.

In the meantime, stained glass artisan Pierre Denfert, with whom Alberola had been working, had died and the artist went in search of a new studio. He chose Atelier Duchemin²⁰, a renowned stained glass studio in Paris, passed down from father to daughter, that specialized in working with artists and was very open to what many artisans saw as the strange expectations and demands of artists who were usually not familiar with stained glass. Consequently, owing both to the experience the artist had gained with stained glass and the new collaboration, this second series of windows has a different character. Where Alberola used quotations from a classic medieval window – the *Tree of Jesse* from the Kunibertus Church in Cologne²¹ – for his windows in the southern arm, he mainly quotes from medieval illuminations of various Apocalypses in the northern arm. The Heavenly Jerusalem window mentioned above should be placed in this context (Fig. 10.3).

The position of this window in the entire wall surface may also cause surprise. The Heavenly Jerusalem window is the lowest window of the four, while, with its heavenliness, we would sooner expect it at the top (Fig. 10.4). That is not necessarily so strange, however, considering that the Heavenly Jerusalem descends on earth, therefore to the lowest level.

Besides 'Heavenly Jerusalem', this window is strangely enough sometimes called the 'Babylon' window, referring to the exact opposite – the doomed city of impure souls that is to be destroyed. Again we are faced with the question of where the name came from. From the church? From the diocesan commission that got to formulate the assignment but to which the artist did not always listen faithfully and attentively? From the ministerial institutions that followed and guided the work closely (and paid for it)? Or is it the result of the visual quotations that were detected through art historical and theological interpretations of the window? In any case, it seems to evoke the two incompatibles – the heavenly and the demonic – simultaneously.

The artist himself does not seem to aim for a single name. His approach results in a synthetic image that can be – however contradictory – one *and* the other. Which brings us to the heart of art again. After all, such a synthetic approach means that the windows in the wall form a whole, and that the various themes from Revelation do not follow each other consecutively in the wall. Garouste's work already showed certain leaps in the story, with breaks and interruptions. With Alberola, the approach is even more radical: various subjects

20 Blanchet 2010, idem, pp. 135–38; Ateliers Duchemin 2009.

21 For descriptions of the window, see: Grodecki 1977, pp. 222–24.

FIGURE 10.4 *Jean-Michel Alberola, Heavenly Jerusalem window, also called Babylon window (bottom left), stained glass realized by Atelier Duchemin. NEVERS: CATHÉDRALE SAINT-CYR-ET-SAINTE-JULIETTE DE NEVERS.*

from Revelation can come together in one window by flowing into one another and mixing. It enables the Heavenly Jerusalem and Babylon to present themselves and take place at the same time in one window – as if Alberola, while designing the window, eats the book to make it his and lets everything come together inside himself. In this respect, he referred in a lecture to a passage in Revelation (Rev. 10.9–10): ‘So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, “Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey”. I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour’.²² In short, in the work of this artist, the

²² Alberola 1991, pp. 9–11.

Heavenly Jerusalem is no longer a theme that stands on its own but, now that the chronology and dichotomy has been broken, is present in the whole of the Revelation window in manifold and diversified ways.

When we return to the window discussed here, we see that it is composed of a series of elements. Formally speaking, there is a window in the window, although not in the usual way, where an ornamented border frames the heart of the window with the actual theme. Here, what seems to be the heart of the window has been tilted and shifted to the right, and thus has disappeared from the centre. This is clearly shown by the way this section is bordered off in the whole of the window. We are more or less familiar with the figurative parts of the window. Maybe 'familiar' is too bold a word: they mainly call up in the mind of anyone with some knowledge of art history strong associations with illuminations from medieval texts, namely Apocalypses. At the top of the window the hand of God comes down from heaven. This hand seems to throw a building towards earth. The movement is accompanied by an angel who, upside down, in the end places the building on earth. Although it is an 'act of God' – described in the Bible as 'coming down from God out of heaven' (Rev. 21.2 and 10) – it is not a city that is thrown, but a building. During its fall and before the building is put straight again, it passes another building with several towers. While the angel is in effect shown in a nose dive, he moves on the edge between the so-called inner window and the so-called border, while the proportion between both parts is far from centred, as mentioned before. The inner window is more peaceful or, rather, harmonic in its composition and refers to Cistercian windows – with little colour and taut, stylized geometric or vegetative patterns. In the inner window, the buildings are standing upright, straight.

We see a sequence of quoted images here. Both the Hand of God mentioned above and the city that is passed on the way down are derived from the *Apocalypse of Oxford*. The building that is thrown and put upright comes from the *Apocalypse of Valenciennes* and is the synagogue/church of Smyrna, while the 'accompanying' angel – hardly recognizable due to the omissions in the window, because only the feet and hands are explicitly left – comes from the *Apocalypse of Trier*.

If we look closer, we notice that the *Apocalypse of Oxford* and *of Trier* show details from the depiction of the *Fall of Babylon*. And we can ask ourselves if there was ever a Heavenly Jerusalem here, or if there ever will be. Seen within the synthetic approach of Alberola's Apocalypse there is something to be said for the idea, however. After all, Smyrna is one of the cities, mentioned at the beginning of Revelation, that is judged favourably because of its poverty, which is actually its wealth. The central place of the feet in the window could be a reference to Isaiah 52.7, where, after 'the feet of him that bringeth good tidings'

have been applauded, there is mention of the 'ruins of Jerusalem' – pillaged by the Babylonians – but 'redeemed' now. So a Heavenly Jerusalem on earth after all!

Again, the contemporary Jerusalem with its complex problems is far away. There is no trace of it unless perhaps, and yet again with goodwill, in the quoted reference to the 'ruins of Jerusalem'.

Overdetermination

It is precisely in its overdetermination, that Jerusalem possesses a large potential for art. The unimaginable and the undepictable come together there – and when an artist nevertheless finds a way to display the incompatible, it forms an opening to, even an appeal from, a different world from the everyday one and its prevailing reality. Both Garouste and Alberola have understood this well and use Jerusalem as a suitable handle or force – which they let go just as easily. Sticking to the actual Jerusalem would mean going with the current trend of what we hear and see about it in the media, would eventually become ideological and possibly even end up in 'political correctness'. Both artists are not so much interested in Jerusalem. For them it is *matter to art*, it offers perspective to let something be born, to hold it up to the world. They are after the potential that is hidden in Jerusalem – a potential that goes further than 'stretching'. A transformation takes place here (the temptation is to say 'transubstantiation'²³, because of the ecclesiastical context in which the windows manifest themselves), leading us elsewhere, possibly taking us to another way of living and existing.

The overdetermination of Jerusalem and the perspectives hidden in it, are reinforced even further, intensified, by adding 'Heavenly' to it on one hand, and on the other hand by bringing the overdefinition into a church in the form of windows. Thus the windows of these artists touch upon a social area that (due to advancing secularization) gradually lets more land lie fallow, namely religion and more specifically the *presentia realis* that the Catholic Church hardly refers to in our time. The *presentia realis* is, however, secularized here. It is, in the words of Garouste, 'the presence of what immateriality absence possesses'²⁴. And just as the windows fill this empty spiritual place, they also fill an empty artistic place, presenting stained glass *art*, a genre in which the artistic investment had previously become minimal. After becoming outdated

²³ Sporen 1991.

²⁴ Garouste à Talant 2006, p. 7.

and stuffy as a craft, stained glass art is reappearing on the artistic stage thanks to artists like Garouste and Alberola.²⁵

With their so-called (Heavenly) Jerusalem windows, Garouste and Alberola open up new ground for art and develop it, or perhaps rather perpetuate it in a way one rarely sees in museums these days. Through this – or through this getting out of hand as a kind of divine ‘being thrown’ – much more is offered. It leads to that which we can actually expect of art: a moving presence and a partaking of another dimension of existence in bringing together incompatibles. This is probably an old-fashioned, outdated demand on, and expectation of, art. Perhaps Garouste’s and Alberola’s art only finds a suitable home in churches these days as a last alternative accommodation – so in that sense we can speak of a conventicle or ‘hiding church’. But the attraction of so many cultural tourists probably makes it difficult to experience what is offered there.

Perhaps these artists bring us the name Jerusalem as the bearer of peace. Does Garouste not let something immaterial like that be born in Talant? Does Alberola not turn out to be right when he says that with a successful artwork we find ourselves in something that transcends us, allowing us to join him in speaking of ‘regained peace’²⁶, ultimately that of the Heavenly Jerusalem?

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²⁵ Lumières contemporaines 2005.

²⁶ Alberola 1990, p. 90.

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