

THE INTERRELATION OF LITERATURE, ART AND RELIGION: The Adventures of the Archêgos

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ABSTRACT

The collection of goldsmith's works directed towards a statement of the *Archêgos* offers a multiplicity of options in the building of emblematic and votive artefacts.

As a philological preamble the term *archêgos* projects a Judaeo-Christian vision of pioneering and leadership as expressed in Hellenic Antiquity. The Septuagint posits a military sense in its Biblical usage, but within the origins of the Greek language the root for leader (*archêgos*) is a beginning (*arche*) or principle. This context can be paralleled to Prince (Latin: *princeps*) or principal person, but both Latin and Greek show the more abstract idea of a 'principle' extending authority or power.

The offerings of the metaphor provides a negotiation between the contemporary goldsmith and the arena for power exercised. The statements by the goldsmith allow a hidden immaterial intelligence to manifest in badges, insignia, signs of bravery and valour. Distinction and merit, acclaim and identity of rank, or primacy, become the teleology in gold alloys combined with remnant foil, glass and plastic.

The objects are placed beside visuals of Renaissance engravings, nineteenth century political cartoons and photography of weaponry and remembrance panels. This offers a rhetoric in one part concerning ancient mysteries, material and immaterial and a further deconstruction of the nexus of decoration and honour, spirituality and leadership, and the masculine possession of leadership.

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