A HERITAGE OF HOLY WOOD

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A HERITAGE OF HOLY WOOD

The Legend of the True Cross in Text and Image

BY

BARBARA BAERT

TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH BY LEE PREEDY



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To our son Andreas

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FOREWORD

The Legend of the Cross is one of the best-known stories of Christian mythology. Its most famous and elaborate version is related by Jacobus de Voragine in his *Legenda Aurea*, composed in the twelve-sixties. The kernel of the story, the so-called *Inventio crucis*, tells how Helena, the mother of Constantine—first Christian emperor of the Roman Empire—travelled to Jerusalem at the end of her life to search for the Cross of Christ, and how, with the help of the Jew Judas Cyriacus, she eventually found the Cross. On the site of the discovery a church—now known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—was built.

The origin of the legend of Helena's finding of the Cross most probably goes back to fourth-century Jerusalem. It is known that relics of the Cross were already kept and venerated in the 340s in the basilica built by Constantine on the presumed site of Christ's crucifixion and burial. However, the earliest attributions of the finding of the Cross to Helena date only from the end of the fourth century, and it is very likely that Helena's *Inventio crucis* is historical fiction; the origin of the story must be seen in the context of Jerusalem's political endeavours in the fourth century to gain a prominent position in the world of Christendom vis-à-vis Antioch, Alexandria, Rome and in particular Caesarea, the metropolitan see of the church province of Palestine, to which Jerusalem was subordinate.

Virtually from the moment of its origin the story about Helena's discovery of the Cross became tremendously popular in Late Antiquity; various versions of the legend came into being in the main languages of the antique world. In the Byzantine and western Middle Ages the popularity of the legend increased, and prose and poetic renderings in vernacular languages came into being. At the same time the legend expanded: new elements and legendary traditions were included, in particular those of the *Lignum crucis*, the Wood of the Cross—the Cross represented as the Tree of Life—and the legend of the *Exaltatio crucis*. The latter recounts the return and exaltation of the Cross in Jerusalem by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius in 628, after it had been captured by the Persians in 614.

In the past fifteen years or so there has been a significant increase of scholarly interest in Helena and the three legendary cycles of the Cross (*Inventio, Exaltatio* and *Lignum crucis*), and some important studies on the subject have appeared. Thanks to new research and recent publications we now have better insights, for instance, into the rise and function of the legend in the fourth century, its diffusion and adaptation in later centuries, and the rich British legendary cycle about Helena. It appears, furthermore, that the legend has become a popular subject for Ph.D. theses and that sessions of conferences are devoted to Helena and the Cross. There has also arisen a non-scholarly interest in the theme. In 2000 the novel *Priestess of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer-Bradley, which has Helena as protagonist, was published. Unfortunately, it does not have the same literary level as Evelyn Waugh's *Helena* (1950).

As often happens with subjects related to Christianity those working on the legend of the Cross, in particular those of Christian conviction, sometimes find it hard to distinguish clearly between historical 'objectivity' and belief. Regrettably, this means that there still appear publications, often intended for a more general audience and presented as sound scholarly works, that fail to take notice, deliberately ignore or unsubstantially reject the results of recent research.[1]

Almost all recent research about Helena and the Legend of the Cross has been undertaken by either historians or philologists. Consequently the textual tradition of the legend and its historical context have received considerable attention. But the iconographic representation of the legend has, until now, been understudied. Perhaps the highlight of the iconography of the Legend of the Cross is Piero della Francesca's cycle of frescoes in the Church of San Francesco in Arezzo. These frescoes were completed in 1466 and are based on Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*. This particular cycle has been well studied, but the same cannot be said of the many other iconographic representations of the Legend of the Cross distributed all over Europe.

In this book various iconographic representations of the Legend of the Cross are expertly described and contextualized in time and place. For many of the visual narratives of the legend, this is the

[1] For example, Carsten Peter Thiede, and Matthew d'Ancona, *The Quest for the True Cross*, London, 2000.

first time they have been so elaborately dealt with. Fortunately, this study is not a catalogue; it does not aim at dealing with each and every representation of the Legend of the Cross, but presents a stunning choice of medieval images from various parts of Europe: the lands of the Meuse and Rhine, northern and southern Germany, Switzerland, and of course Italy. But the greatest merit of this study is its interdisciplinary character, in the sense that it combines textual and visual narratives of the legend. This makes the book interesting to a wide audience; for example historians and art historians, scholars of medieval literary theory and Jewish studies, anthropologists, Arabists, Byzantinists and church historians.

This is a wonderful study of the various literary and visual traditions of the Legend of the Cross in the Middle Ages. These traditions deserve to be studied not only for their intrinsic value but also for the great devotion medieval man had for the symbol of the Cross.

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Fig. 1. *Legend of the Cross with the Apostle's Creed. Detail of the Queen of Sheba as Sibyl.* Wall paintings, late 15th century. Loffenau, Church of the Holy Cross.

PREFACE

There must have been a time when people were so fascinated by the wood of Christ's Cross that the longing to see it, to touch it, even to kiss it consumed them completely. It was the time when Christianity had cautiously begun to emerge from its struggle for recognition and the religion's expansion was outwardly manifested in new places of worship from Rome to Constantinople, from Jerusalem to Edessa. And it was at that time, so it is told, that a single Jew and a Christian queen dug deep into the earth and found that which people yearned to find: the True Cross.

This study is an attempt to fathom this desire, the desire for the tangibility of things and—perhaps the deepest desire there is—the origin of things. Christianity grafted its imagery onto a living trunk, a cross that brought death and new life. It was onto the live grain of its wood that Christ's blood dripped. And that wood was once a tree, the first and most noble of trees, the Tree of Life that grew in Paradise. The mysteries of Christianity are contained in many texts and represented in many images, but they also lie concealed in the growth rings of the holy wood.

The tradition of the Legend of the True Cross proliferated with seemingly inexhaustible vigour throughout the Middle Ages. From the fourth to late in the fifteenth century the legend spread in word and image. The resolve to get to the bottom of this extremely whimsical tradition took hold of me ten years ago. It became the subject of my doctoral thesis in Art History at the Catholic University of Leuven. At that time, I had not the slightest idea of the way the project would expand, and it was probably just this innocence that made it possible. I think of the colleague who exclaimed to me on 29 December 2003 in Bersheeba, 'But this subject must have begun as a glorious mistake!'

A Heritage of Holy Wood has been with me for many years, years in which my perceptions of the material have evolved on the waves of the life that reaches for unattainable completion. During those years my promoter, Professor Maurits Smeyers, who gave his constant support to this 'glorious mistake', sadly died. He never saw the first Dutch edition of the book (Leuven University Press, 2001). And

during those years I met and married my husband, and we had our son, Andreas.

But in terms of eschatological time a decade of researching and writing, revising and refining, cutting and adding, mourning and loving, birthing and translating is as nothing, the merest fragment, a splinter. I offer this splinter of salvation history, in compassion for the many trees that perished in this printed paper.

It is not in the nature of a living trunk to be a last thing. I should like to think that *A Heritage of Holy Wood* would be read as the still growing annual rings; as a dendrochronology to which other scholars will add future rings.

Barbara Baert
January 2004

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Lee Preedy is more than the translator of this book. Her acute mind and unquenchable thirst for knowledge were the best that could have happened to this study. Over the course of time, *A Heritage of Holy Wood* became her book too.

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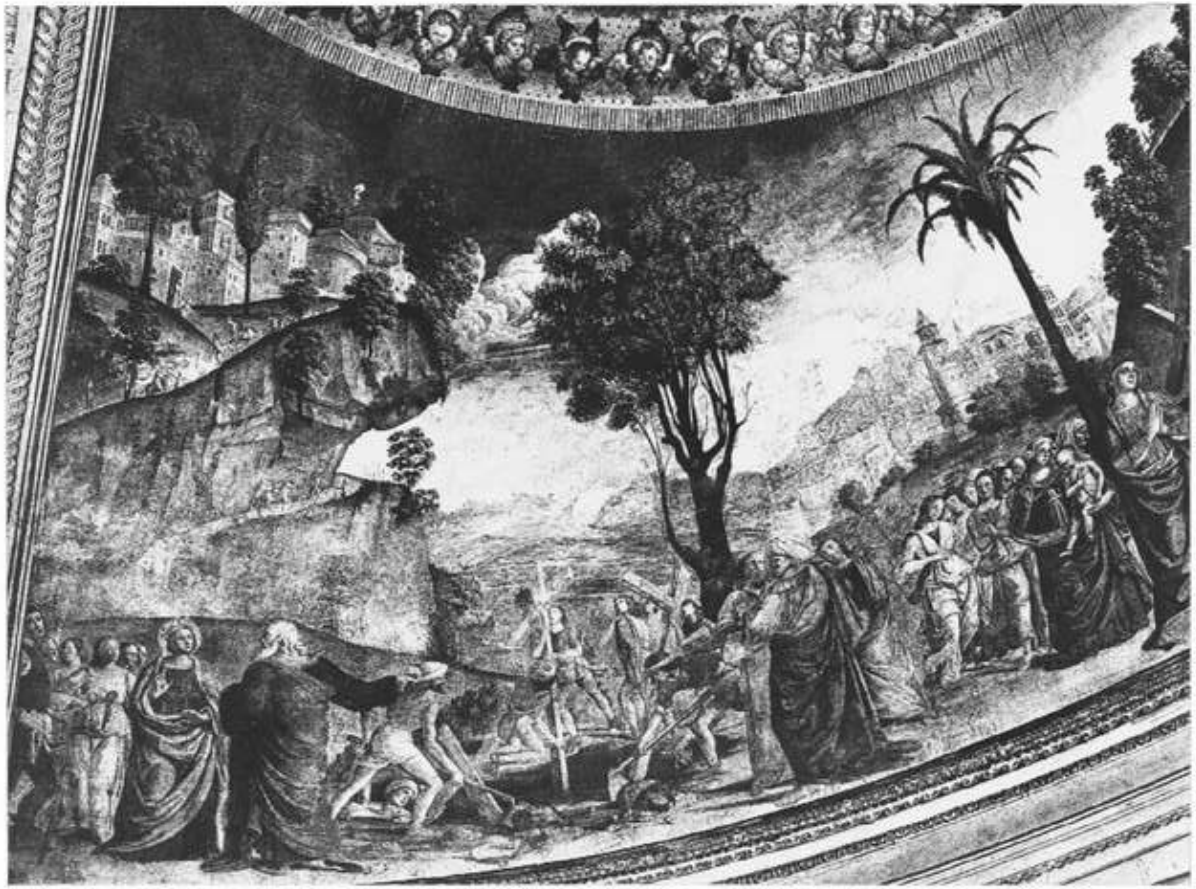


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INTRODUCTION

To medieval man there was perhaps nothing more fundamental than the Cross on which Christ died. As a symbol, an image and an object it possesses an all-embracing symbolic significance. It is at the heart of the evangelical message and its tangible form is maintained in countless relics. Between the early fourth and the fourteenth century a legend developed around the material instrument of Christ's suffering: the Legend of the Cross.

The Legend of the Cross is a complex construction, to which church fathers, travellers and crusaders, literature, liturgy and the visual arts all contributed. In fact the legend comprises three distinct traditions, each of which originated at a different time, which were fused into one in the high Middle Ages.

The first comes into being in the early fifth century. It tells of the *Inventio crucis*, the 'Invention' or Finding of the True Cross by the dowager Empress Helena at the request of her son, Constantine the Great. The second dates from the seventh century and concerns the *Exaltatio crucis*, the recapture by Emperor Heraclius of the relic of the Cross Helena had left in Jerusalem, whence it was carried off by the Persian ruler Chosroes. The last of the trio, the Legend of the Wood of the Cross—or the 'holy rood' as it is sometimes known—developed in the twelfth century, largely stimulated by typological exegesis, and binds several individual prefigurations of Christ's Cross in the Old Testament into a narrative whole. By the fourteenth century these three separate themes had been woven into a single chronologically coherent story. At different times and in different places the legends' content came to be used for a variety of purposes, exemplary, proselytising, didactic and votive.

The Finding of the Cross

This book does not set out to investigate how much truth there may be in the story of the Finding of the Cross, an issue that has been ably addressed elsewhere, but rather to examine the creation and evolution of a legend. Chapter One traces the literary and historical

context in which the alleged event originated. Constantine the Great (ca. 285–337) incorporated the cross symbol into the imperial insignia of his Christian empire after the angelic promise of its efficacy as a *tropaion* had been fulfilled. Cyril of Jerusalem is the first to mention the presence of a relic of Christ's Cross in Jerusalem (ca. 340) though he makes no reference to Helena in connection with it. The Cross as relic soon came to supplant the cross as symbol. The complex layering of the perception of the Cross as an eschatological symbol of God, an instrument of evangelization, a theocratic *vexillum*, a tropaic emblem and a splinter of wood was already well under way by the middle of the fourth century.

The pilgrim Egeria, who stayed in Jerusalem between 381 and 384, likewise makes no reference to Helena. She links the Finding of the Cross with the feast of the Dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on 14 September, when the relic of the Cross was exhibited, venerated and kissed. John Chrysostom takes the next aetiological step in his 85th homily on St John's Gospel (390) using the gospel text as the basis for a story in which three crosses are discovered and Christ's Cross is identified by its headboard, or *titulus*. Just a few years later Ambrose associates this chronologically unspecific event with Helena, Constantine's mother, when he refers to the dowager empress's discovery of the Cross and the nails in his funeral oration for Theodosius I (d. 395). The passage in question is conceived as an exemplum for Christian emperors and an admonition to maintain the unity of the Constantinian empire. That it should be Helena who Ambrose introduces into his oration is perhaps not unrelated to the Theodosian court's image of her as a role model: she was the instigator of a great many building projects in Jerusalem and Palestine and had undertaken many pilgrimages. And, of course, she was also the first 'mother' of the Christian empire, which connects her role in, and the significance of, the Finding of the Cross to the very origins of the Church. Ambrose compares Helena with Mary, thus firmly rooting the Finding of the Cross in salvation history itself.

The material cross as an instrument of torture and execution was a source of Jewish and pagan mockery. Eusebius deprives these groups of that critical advantage by a presenting the Cross as a crucial instrument of God's plan. Nonetheless, the Cross increasingly evolved into an apologetic weapon aimed at the Jews. The story of Judas Cyriacus is not merely an extended version of the Finding of the

Cross variously recorded by the early Church Fathers, it also confronts Helena with an antagonist—Judas the Jew. The parent text of this anonymous legend was written in either Syriac or Greek in the early years of the fifth century and by 500 it was circulating in the Latin West. Judas belongs to a lineage of Jews who had covertly acknowledged the Messiah in the death on the Cross. This tale turns the relic of the Cross into the cause of Jewish-Christian confrontation; Judas's discovery of the relic, and subsequently the nails, provides the clinching proof of the Messiah. It also adds another theme to the legend, the Testing of the Cross, the means of establishing which of the three discovered crosses is that of Christ by demonstrating its miraculous power to revive the dead. The legend uses cosmogonic symbolism—oppositions between darkness and light, hell and paradise, concealing and revealing—as the building blocks of the narrative.

It is the Judas Cyriacus legend, more than any other version of the Finding of the Cross, that provides the basis of *Inventio crucis* iconography. Chapter Two describes the legend's diffusion through monastic channels in the form of homilies and sermons. The eighth-century Gellone Sacramentary contains the first iconographic reference to the Finding of the Cross. The miniature accompanies the Mass for 3 May, in which the Cross is extolled as *vexillum* and *Lignum vitae*. The manuscript, produced between 750 and 790 in the Benedictine Abbey of Sainte-Croix in Meaux and donated to Gellone Abbey in 804, is still firmly rooted in the Merovingian tradition. The miniature requires an abstract reading in which each element has its own symbolic significance. In 814 the *Wessobrunner Gebetbuch* was produced, in which the legend of Judas Cyriacus was transcribed and illustrated with drawings. It is the only illustrated text in a manuscript containing a compilation of sermons. Maybe it played a part in the campaigns of conversion waged against the Jews in the Carolingian empire, for which there is documentary evidence.

By the twelfth century the iconographic landscape has expanded, and specific iconographic biotopes can be identified. The wings of the Stavelot triptych reliquary (1154–1158) are fitted with enamels combining iconography relating to Constantine and the Finding of the Cross, a choice of images that was motivated by the two smaller Byzantine triptychs mounted on the centre panel. Each contains a relic of the Cross, which Abbot Wibald perhaps received during his

diplomatic mission to the court of Manuel I Comnenus in Constantinople. The Stavelot triptych is actually a meta-reliquary, and the iconography featuring Helena and Constantine signals the precious contents and imperial importance of the tiny triptychs within. Moreover, inscriptions derived from the antiphon sung at Lauds on 3 May situate the reliquary in a liturgical context. To the Finding of the Cross are added scenes showing Helena's interrogation of the Jews and the Testing of the Cross. The Stavelot enamels are closely related to those on the Lobbes (?) phylactery (1160–1170) and the Berlin/London altar cross (1170). The liturgical context and reliquary function are typical of this group. But it should be remembered that *Inventio crucis* iconography is still rather the exception than the rule on Cross reliquaries.

In this same period an iconographic formula emerges that is derived from a Byzantine type: the presentation of the Cross by Constantine and Helena. Supporting the Cross thus they personify the Christian empire. In Byzantine art this representative iconography occurs on icons, for instance, and is integrated into monumental mural cycles. On one of the small Byzantine triptychs incorporated into the Stavelot reliquary Constantine and Helena are depicted flanking the Cross. The type was adopted in the West to illustrate the feast of 3 May, as in the *Perikopenbuch* of Sankt Erentrud (Salzburg 1140). But in the Zwiefalten martyrology (1160) Constantine has been replaced by Judas Cyriacus. It is now the converted Jew and Helena who present the Cross and personify the state of Grace.

The Exaltation of the Cross

When the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610–641) defeated the Persian ruler Chosroes II on his home ground in Ctesiphon (present-day Iran), he was described even by his contemporaries as a hero of mythic dimensions. And when Palestine and Jerusalem were threatened by the rapid Arab expansion that followed the death of Muhammad and the areas freed from the Persians fell into Arab hands and converted from Zoroastrianism to Islam, Heraclius became the exemplary defender of the Christian empire. In the sources, where myth and historical truth are often difficult to distinguish, the motivation for the conflict between Heraclius and Chosroes was seen

as the theft of the relic of the Cross from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Chapter Three examines the restitution or Exaltation of the Cross by Heraclius, which is celebrated in the Byzantine church on 14 September, a feast day already associated with the Finding of the Cross at the time of the pilgrim Egeria's visit to Jerusalem (381–384). The commemoration of Heraclius's deed came to displace that of Helena's. Because on that day too the Cross was raised on high the feast was also known as the Exaltation of the Cross, the *Exaltatio crucis*. At the time of Pope Sergius (687–701), 14 September was adopted in Rome according to its Byzantine content: the *Inventio* and *Exaltatio* of the Cross, with the exaltation of the relic as its most important liturgical component. In the seventh-century Gallican rite the feast of the *Inventio crucis* was set at 3 May, as Helena requires in the final paragraph of the Judas Cyriacus legend (possibly a post hoc correction of an existing custom). In liturgical manuscripts the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross is illustrated with motifs derived from the 70th homily of Hrabanus Maurus (780–856). Its earliest reception in western iconography is found in the Sacramentary of Mont Saint-Michel (1060). The homily forms the core of the *Exaltatio crucis* legend and would later be taken over in its entirety by Jacobus de Voragine in his *Legenda Aurea*.

The medieval legend of the Exaltation of the Cross combines a number of traditions. The Persian ruler's astrological throne—its destruction by Alexander the Great and restoration by Chosroes II—is described in the Arabic *Firdausi* verses (900). The cock is an ancient Iranian embodiment of fire, the Zoroastrian symbol of eternal divine power. In Hrabanus's legend the cock stands for the Holy Spirit. The *Porta Aurea*—Jerusalem's Golden Gate—is typologically associated with Ezekiel 44,1–3, which describes how the prince will return through this gate at the end of time. Christianity regarded the eastern gate of the Temple Mount as the gate of Christ and the place where Mary was conceived in the embrace between Joachim and Anna. In the legend of the Exaltation of the Cross, the gate is connected with Heraclius as the *imitator Christi*. But the Golden Gate is also the gate of the Second Coming. Pseudo-Methodius (685–692) describes a Byzantine Last Emperor who will lay down his imperial insignia before the altar of God. Alexander of Bremen ascribes this role to Heraclius, who does battle against Gog and Magog and

defeats the Antichrist, Chosroes. In manuscripts now in Cambridge, Breslau and Prague (last quarter of the thirteenth century) this passage is illustrated with the relevant scenes from the legend of the Exaltation of the Cross.

The connection between the Finding and Exaltation of the Cross was developed liturgically, intrinsically and theologically. The splitting of the feasts between 3 May and 14 September was a Carolingian initiative, but the prayers and readings were interchangeable. Moreover, in the texts concerning the restitution of the Cross it is the Cross raised by Helena in Jerusalem that is recalled. And in the chronicles, church histories and the *Legenda Aurea* family of texts the two legends are also intrinsically connected. Thus the Exaltation of the Cross comes to be understood as a sequel to the Finding of the Cross. Within a soteriological model the two events provide an image of the beginning and end of Christian history. God gave the relic of the Cross to man as the material evidence of the Redemption (Helena), hence it is protected and maintained by the defenders of the Christian state (Heraclius). The relic of the Cross on earth is the epiphanic instrument of God: found in Christ, it was victorious over the Devil and the Jews; exalted a second time in Christ it was victorious over the Antichrist and the pagans. Thus the combined legend is also a metaphor for the First and Second Coming of Christ, mediated by the Christian emperors Constantine (Helena) and Heraclius.

This theological and soteriological basis is clear in the cycle depicted in the stained glass windows made for Louis IX's Sainte-Chapelle (1243–1248), and the cycle of wall paintings in Brunswick (1240–1250) produced for Otto the Child. The Sainte-Chapelle was built as an 'architectural reliquary' to house the relics of the Cross and the Crown of Thorns that the French king had received from Constantinople. Brunswick's cathedral, dedicated to St Blaise, was founded by Henry the Lion, but completed by his grandson Otto the Child. Otto engaged in a campaign of Welf restoration, and the Legend of the Cross cycle in the South transept commemorates the spirit of his grandfather. Henry the Lion nurtured a special devotion to the Cross, and also possessed a *Volto Santo*. He returned from his diplomatic meeting with Manuel I Comnenus with many relics (cf. Abbot Wibald of Stavelot); it is certainly not impossible that a relic of the Cross was among them.

Both Louis IX and Otto the Child played a role in combating

the pagans and were involved in the battle against the Mongols, who were seen as the apocalyptic nations of Gog and Magog. It is striking that in a letter to Otto, the Hungarian king Bela IV (1235–1270) compares the Mongol threat with that of Chosroes. In the Sainte-Chapelle and Brunswick cycles the legends of the Finding of the Cross and Exaltation of the Cross coincide for the first time. The Cross is exalted as the stake of pilgrimage (Helena) and the crusades (Heraclius), and is thus regarded both as a relic and as a *vexillum*. The cycles exemplify the guardianship of the Cross by kings and queens.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Legend of the Cross iconography reached its quantitative peak. This was almost entirely due to the appearance of Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* (1261–1266), popularly known as the 'Golden Legend', which became the standard source for the Legend of the Cross. It spread via Dominican, Benedictine and Cistercian networks, and in northern Europe the Devotio Moderna also contributed to its diffusion. From the monasteries the *Legenda Aurea* also reached the lay public, helped by translations into European vernaculars, such as the French version produced in 1333/4 by Jean de Vignay for Jeanne de Bourgogne. De Vignay's was a faithful translation of Jacobus's text, but in the course of the fifteenth century his version was twice thoroughly revised, with a number of feasts being added and a change in the order of the chapters. However, it was in German and Dutch-speaking areas that the greatest number of translations were produced, sometimes with the addition of specific local details that influenced the image. Chapter Four examines the *Legenda Aurea*, and the legendaries and compilations of saints' lives that derived from it, such as the *South English Legendary* and the German *Alte Passional*, which was intended for the knights of the Teutonic Order. The latter in turn influenced Hermann von Fritzlar's *Heiligenleben* (before 1343), which appeared in Hessen, and the *Märe vom Heiligen Kreuz* set in verse by Helwig von Waldirstet at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

The fifteenth century saw a high point of individualized devotion which was reflected in the diversity of legends and saints that were incorporated into the compilations. The shifts in the *Legenda Aurea* traditions is exemplified by *Der Heiligen Leben* (ca. 1400), composed by a Dominican of Nuremberg, who added the lives of at least 100 saints from southern or central Germany. *Der Heiligen Leben* provided

the basis for a fifteenth-century miracle play about the Holy Cross, the *Augsburger Heiligkreuzspiel*, which takes its title from the unique copy of the text found in the German town.

There are many illustrated manuscripts of the *Legenda Aurea* and its translations. However, from the fifteenth century the Finding, Testing and Exaltation of the Cross became important motifs in monumental art as well. The *Tempziner* altarpiece (1411) from the *Antoniter-Präzeptorei* of Tempzin is a case in point. The wings of the triptych's predella contain scenes illustrating the Heraclius legend, with his defeat of Chosroes and restoration of the Cross to Jerusalem, where it is adored by the emperor and his retinue. The interior of the triptych itself reveals scenes from the Life of Christ; when closed, episodes from the Life of Mary, set in Jerusalem, are displayed, establishing a typological relationship with the scenes within. The altarpiece belonged to the Order of the Hospital Brothers of St Antony in Tempzin, which perhaps explains its iconographic emphasis.

The Antonians were part of a wider tradition of crusading orders that had arisen in the thirteenth century in northern Germany. The Teutonic Order was one of these. With Heraclius as their model and exemplar, the knights of the Order took arms against the infidel in Palestine, and also sought to advance the frontiers of Christendom into the Baltic from the state they established in Prussia. Around 1400, Johannes Marienwerder, knight of the Teutonic Order and dean of Marienwerder Cathedral from 1388 to 1409, commissioned a reliquary to house the relics of Dorothea of Montau (d. 25 May 1394) who, with the Virgin Mary, was considered a patroness of the Order. When open, the reliquary displays a complex programme incorporating Marian, Host, Passion and Cross legend iconography. It focuses on the most important soteriological dogmas (Incarnation and Resurrection) and combines references to important liturgical feasts: the Annunciation, the Finding of the Cross, Maundy Thursday, Corpus Christi, the Assumption of the Virgin and the Exaltation of the Cross.

Cross legend iconography was very much in evidence in Nuremberg, which since 1365 had been the capital of the Holy Roman Empire and where the display of the Cross relic, as one of the State insignia, was an occasion for the granting of indulgences. Stained glass windows, altarpieces, and textiles featuring the Finding, Testing and Exaltation of the Cross were produced in the town for both burghers and clerics. Much of the work originated from the workshop of

Michael Wohlgemut, such as the *Kaiserfenster*—the central window in the choir of Sankt Lorenz—and the *Memminger* altarpiece, commissioned by Levinus Memming for an altar in that same church. Southern Germany and Bohemia seem generally to have had a particular fondness for the theme, and the iconography is conspicuously present all along the course of the Danube. In this area too Constantine makes an appearance at the Finding and Testing of the Cross. The memory of the battle against the barbarians at the Danube may have been behind this iconographic contamination.

The Wood of the Cross

The Legend of the Wood of the Cross—the *Lignum crucis*—combines patristic prefigurations of the Cross of Christ into a narrative account. As we shall see in Chapter Five, the Legend of the Wood of the Cross tells the story of the Wood of Paradise; how it was planted by Seth, admired by Moses (and, in some versions, Abraham), David and Solomon, and recognized by the Queen of Sheba as the future Cross of Christ. The legend follows the Wood of the Cross on its 'pilgrimage' from Tree of Life to its final destiny as the instrument of the Passion. The legend's content had a huge influence on the history of medieval literature and art. The implantation of symbolism and metaphor into Old Testament time and space emerged in the twelfth century in several versions and variants in history-bibles, church histories and independent texts written in monasteries.

It is this last group that produces the most extensive and colourful versions. Moreover, these *Lignum crucis* legends are closer to archaic concepts of natural magic, as exemplified by the so-called *Legenda* group. On the other hand, the motifs of the Wood of the Cross legends in the ecclesiastical histories that were passed on through the Cathedral schools are more closely attuned to scriptural exegesis and have cast off their archetypal and proto-Christian influences. For example, the relationship between the Wood of the Cross and water (Fountain of Paradise, Moses and the bitter waters of Marah, David's well in Jerusalem, the *Piscina Probatica*) is expounded by Honorius of Autun. He develops the typology between wood and water in a baptismal context. This is less clearly articulated in the *Legenda* group (which is not to say that this function was not acknowledged), though a magical/sacral character is retained. The elements of water (the

wood creates springs and heals through springs), fire (which burns, but cannot consume the wood), and earth (which cannot swallow up the wood) are all applied to the wood but cannot get a hold on it, so to speak, for the wood dominates the natural elements. In the Legend of the Wood of the Cross the wood possesses all the powers of the relic of the Cross itself, and the way is prepared for the legend of the Finding and Testing of the Cross.

The twelfth century witnesses the increasing hold of the written word and the rise of universal historiography. Thus the Legend of the Cross becomes methodically 'visible', though we can assume that older cores go back to the Carolingian period. The diachronic approach to the typology of the Tree of Life and/or the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil may have reached the West from the Balkans via dualistic channels. The figure of Seth is not only relevant to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, as illustrated in apocryphal Genesis stories like the *Vita Adae et Evae* and the Apocalypse of Moses (first century AD), he also has a Gnostic past. Both the Jewish apocrypha and Gnostic texts portray Seth as the progenitor of the Messiah—Jerome refers to him etymologically as *semen*, Augustine as *resurrectio*—but Gnosticism also endows him with the status of one initiated into divine knowledge. This status forms the starting-point for the legend, as related in Lambert of Saint-Omer's *Liber floridus* (1120) and the works of John Beleth (1170).

In the *Legenda* group, where anecdote and biblical knowledge are cleverly combined, Seth has a vision that informs him of the coming of Christ. The dry tree that Seth sees grow into a cosmic Tree of Life forms the core of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross. This image alludes to Neoplatonic and Judaeo-Christian metaphorism. Seth's visionary world also recalls the Apocalypse of Enoch and the Coptic tradition of the 'Mystery of John the Evangelist' (1006), and it shares elements with the Perceval saga and the Grail quest. In the figure of Seth, Jewish, Arab and European images of the regaining of Paradise are associated. The wide diffusion of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross shows that Seth was a character very well known in the Middle Ages (albeit Jacobus de Voragine warns us about his dubious Greek past); he is also encountered in travellers' and pilgrims' tales.

Like Seth, the Queen of Sheba is also part of an intercultural network. Her meeting with Solomon inspired Jewish, Islamic and Christian apocrypha. The Legend of the Wood of the Cross alludes to the

biblical passage that tells of her meeting with Solomon, but here she appears in the role of sibyl—she is the first to venerate the wood with a foreknowledge of the Passion. Petrus Comestor (d. 1178) describes her recognition of the wood in the *Domus Saltus*; John Beleth locates the event at the bridge over the Kedron. Her proto-demonic origin connects her with Lilith, the demon queen, and Semiramis, the consort of the Assyrian King Sausiadad V (824–810); and as a bringer of gifts she is associated with the Three Magi.

From the thirteenth century the search for Paradise, the ultimate quest, is also incorporated into travels and pilgrims' accounts. The dry tree and the Tree of Life are brought into contact with extra-biblical characters such as Alexander the Great and feature in the travels of Marco Polo (1286–1324) and Sir John Mandeville (1322).

Jacobus de Voragine treats the *Lignum crucis* legend as a typological prologue to the Finding of the Cross. His became the standard version and iconographic benchmark. With its inclusion in the *Legenda Aurea* the development of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross was complete.

The Legend of the Cross: alpha to omega

The complete Legend of the Cross was elaborated for the first time at the end of the fourteenth century on the walls of the chancel of the Church of Santa Croce in Florence. The cycle, commissioned by the Alberti family, was painted by Agnolo Gaddi (1388–1393) and became the model for mural programmes in Volterra (Cenni di Francesco de Ser Cenni, 1410), Montepulciano (Giovanni de Caccia, 1415, now lost) and Empoli (Masolino da Panicale, 1424). Apart from a small number of details, such as Heraclius's vision, derived from other sources, Gaddi's cycle follows the story as recounted by Jacobus de Voragine in the *Legenda Aurea*.

Chapter Six examines the homogenous iconographic tradition of the Legend of the Cross. It emerged in a Franciscan environment. The Franciscans had a particular preference for the theme in its three-part form, not only because the Cross—which they sought to imitate—is central to the legend, but also because the Legend of the Cross offers a microcosmic reflection of salvation history as expounded by Joachim of Fiore in his theory of the three states or ages into which history is divided, the ages of the Father, the Son and the

Holy Spirit. To the Franciscans, for whom the sacrifice of the Cross is of central importance, the *Lignum vitae* is the key to devotional and mystical experience: the Legend of the Cross provides a foundation and a framework for this experience. In the first half of the fourteenth century, moreover, the Franciscans were the custodians of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The defenders of the Holy Sepulchre found an iconographic counterpart in the Legend of the Cross.

In the fifteenth century two more programmes were produced in Italy in a Franciscan context: in Montegiorgio a Cross legend cycle was painted by an anonymous artist from the Marches in around 1425, and in Arezzo the Bacci family commissioned Piero della Francesca to illustrate the Legend of the Cross sometime before 1466. The cycles belong to differing stylistic and iconographic traditions, but both are removed from the Gaddi model in their pronounced narrativity and typological rereading. Their particular emphases may well have arisen from local circumstances.

Contrary to the long-held assumption, the phenomenon of monumental Cross legend programmes was not an exclusively Italian (Franciscan) affair, for cycles also were also created in Germany and Switzerland. They all date from after 1450 and are generally found in modest churches and chapels, largely unknown and tucked away on the Rhine (Wiedenest), the Neckarthal (Duttenberg), in the Black Forest (Loffenau) and on Lake Constance (Wiesendangen, now in Switzerland). These northern artistic and iconographic traditions are of a different order to those of Italy. The churches are independent foundations, but they can all be associated with the veneration of a relic of the Cross, with the Teutonic Order and/or with routes to the Holy Land. The *Legenda Aurea* is still the principal source of inspiration, but in Wiedenest and Duttenberg a northern signature can be discerned in the influence of traditions like the *Vita Adae et Evae*. The choice of episodes from the Legend of the Wood of the Cross shows similarities with the selection of scenes in the Hours of Catherine of Cleves and the *Boec van den Houte*. The extraordinary cycle at Wiesendangen is combined with the typological Apostles' Creed and Prophets. Painted by Hans Haggenberg between 1494 and 1496, it is, as far as we know to date, the last of the extensive programmes based on the Legend of the Cross.

The Legend of the Cross was an immensely popular theme in the Middle Ages. In both word and image medieval man eagerly absorbed the microcosmic history of this relic of relics. This study traces the iconographic tradition from its origins in the early Christian era to its decline at the end of the fifteenth century, following the correspondences between text and image and bringing together for the first time the literary and iconographic sources in their chronological relationship. Case studies illustrate the contexts and functions of the Legend of the Cross. The material, which for the most part has been gathered by myself in the course of my research, deals not only with western European but also with Arabic and Byzantine routes of influence. At various points the study of the purported origin and development of the Wood of the Cross cannot be other than interdisciplinary.

A Heritage of Holy Wood presents the synthesis of one of the most important apocryphal beliefs of the Middle Ages. To medieval man the living wood, the adored and venerated material recollection of the Saviour, was the quintessence, the alpha and omega.

CHAPTER ONE

HELENA AND THE JEWS. THE LEGEND OF THE FINDING OF THE CROSS

Christian culture has defined the Cross as a symbol, an event and a tangible object. As a symbol its history is as old as mankind itself.[1] The event it signifies is the death of Christ.[2] As a tangible object it was distributed in the form of countless relics, tiny splinters of the holy wood which, from the beginning of the fifth century onwards, found their way into every corner of Europe.[3] This chapter is concerned with this last aspect, with the tradition that relates how, in the days of Constantine the Great (ca. 285–337), Christ's Cross was rediscovered after more than three centuries of concealment.

Constantine the Great, the cross, and the Inventio crucis

Constantine the Great is one of the most discussed emperors in the history of Christianity. As founder of a Christian empire,[4] more

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[1] A. de MARNESSE, *Les combinaisons de la croix et du cercle dans la préhistoire, les monuments et la folklore du monde entier*, CHARLEROI, 1934; P. PAULSEN, *Axt und Kreuz bei den Nordgermanen*, Berlin, 1939, pp. 53–55; C. CECCHELLI, *Il trionfo della Croce. La Croce e i santi segni prima e dopo Costantino*, Rome (1954); G. WAGNER, *Volksfromme Kreuzverehrung in Westfalen von den Anfängen bis zum Bruch der mittelalterlichen Glaubenseinheit*, Munster, 1960; J. DANIELOU, *Le symbolisme cosmique da la Croix*, in *La Maison-Dieu*, 75, 1963, pp. 23–35; J. MARINGER, *Das Kreuz als Zeichen und Symbol in der vorchristlichen Welt* (*Studia Instituti Anthropos*, 36), Bonn, 1980; A. FRUTIGER and H. HEIDERHOFF, *Zeichen, Symbole, Signete, Signale* (*'Eidos'. Beiträge zur Kultur*, 37), Paris, 1981.

[2] F.P. PICKERING, *Literature and Art in the Middle Ages, English trans.*, Miami, 1970, pp. 223–285; M.-Chr. SEPIERE, *L'image d'un Dieu souffrant (IXe–Xe siècle). Aux origines du crucifix*, Paris, 1994 (with foreword C. HEITZ).

[3] Primary literature: A. FROLOW, *La relique de la vraie croix. Recherches sur le développement d'un culte*, Paris, 1961; J. SUMTION, *Pilgrimage as an Image of Medieval Religion*, London, 1975, passim; P. GEARY, *Furta Sacra. Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, Princeton, 1978.

[4] Primary literature: A. LINDER, *Ecclesia and Synagoga in the Medieval Myth of Constantine the Great*, in *Revue Belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 54, 1976, pp. 1019–1060; A.H.M. JONES, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe*, Toronto, 1978; T.D. BARNES, *Constantine and Eusebius*, Cambridge, 1981; J. NEUSNER, *Judaism and Christianity in*

epithets, *topoi* and myths have been associated with him than with any other figure.[5] According to patristic sources he was also connected with the *Inventio crucis*, the Invention or Finding of the Cross.

When Constantine was still at an early age his parents, Constantius Chlorus and Helena, entrusted their son to the court of the emperor Diocletian (284–305). Constantius Chlorus regarded himself as a direct descendant of Hercules and had already extended his power as far as Britain. In 306 he died at York. Constantine took up his father's sceptre, successfully contending with the Alamanni and the Franks and earning the title of Caesar as a result. The following year he married Fausta, daughter of Emperor Maximian Hercules, hoping thus to extend his hegemony over the northwest of the Roman Empire as well. Meanwhile, in the eastern parts of the empire, Christians were still persecuted, though Constantine began to demonstrate a more tolerant attitude.[6]

In 312 he went to war against Maxentius, a contest that culminated at the Milvian Bridge over the Tiber.[7] Lactantius (ca. 250–ca. 320) tells how, in a dream before the decisive battle took place, Constantine was besought by an angel to put the sign of Christ (the staurogram) on his soldiers' shields.[8] Eusebius (ca. 260–338) refers to

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the Age of Constantine. History, Messiah, Israel and the Initial Confrontation, Chicago, 1987; R. MALCOLM ERRINGTON, *Constantine and the Pagans*, in *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 29, 1988, pp. 309–318; R. LEEB, *Konstantin und Christus. Die Verchristlichung der Imperialen Repräsentation unter Konstantin dem Grossen als Spiegel seiner Kirchenpolitik und seines Selbstverständnisses als christlichen Kaiser* (*Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte*, 58), Berlin-New York, 1992; H.A. POHLSANDER, *The Emperor Constantine*, London-New York, 1996, passim; B. LANCON, *Constantin. 306–337*, Paris, 1998.

[5] W. von KAEGI, *Vom Nachleben Constantins*, in *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, 8, 1958, pp. 289–326.

[6] LACTANTIUS, *De mortibus persecutorum*, XXIV, PL 7, col. 234: 'Suscepto imperio, nihil egit prius quam christianos cultui ac Deo suo reddere'; J.C. CREED (ed. and English trans.), *Lactantius. De mortibus persecutorum*, Oxford, 1984: 'The first act of Constantine Augustus on assuming imperial power, was to restore the Christians to their worship and their God'; J. MOREAU (ed. and French trans.), *De la mort des persécuteurs*, 2 vols., vol. 1, Paris, 1955, p. 105v, p. 106r.

[7] Today called the Ponte Molle.

[8] LACTANTIUS, *De mortibus persecutorum*, XLIV, PL 7, col. 261 and ns. cols. 554–563 with reconstruction: 'Commonitus est in quiete Constantinus ut caeleste signum dei notaret in scutis atque ita proelium committeret. Fecit ut iussus est et transversa X littera summo capite circumflexo, christum in scutis notat'; J.C. CREED, op. cit., p. 62: 'Constantine was advised in a dream to mark the battle. He did as he was commanded and by means of a slanted letter X with the top of its head bent round, he marked Christ on their shields'; J. MOREAU, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 126v and 127r.

a vision during the battle, in which Constantine saw a cross of light in the heavens, superimposed on the sun and bearing the inscription *in hoc vinces* ('in this sign, conquer').[9] The following night, Eusebius tells us, Christ appeared to Constantine and commanded him to make a likeness of his 'sign' as faithfully as possible.[10] Eusebius claims to have seen the result, made in gold and precious stones, in the palace with his own eyes.[11] Probably what he saw was the *labarum*, the Constantinian standard,[12] a gilded spear with a transverse bar and above it Christ's monogram—*chi-rho*—encircled by a laurel wreath. To the Greeks and Romans a cross surmounted by a wreath had long been a symbol of victory. Sometimes a construction like this would be left behind on a conquered battlefield. Constantine's helmet also bore the *chi-rho*; it was depicted on a silver medallion of 315;[13] and in Siscia between 317 and 320 the earliest coins to have the *chi-rho* on the reverse were struck.

In 313 at Milan, Constantine issued an edict jointly with Licinius granting greater freedoms to the Christians. When he finally defeated Licinius at Chrysopolis in 324, the furthest eastern corners of the empire also came under his control. He must have recognized the importance of a unifying religion for this enormous empire, for in

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[9] EUSEBIUS, *Vita Constantini*, I, 28–29; Edn.: EUSEBIUS, *Vita Constantini*, PG 20, cols. 909–1229, col. 943 (Greek: col. 944): 'Horis dei meridianis, sole in occasum vergente, crucis tropaeum in coelo ex luce conflatum, soli superpositum, ipsis oculis se vidisse affirmavit cum huiusmodi inscriptione: "Hac vince".' See also: F. WINKELMANN (ed.), *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin* (*Die Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderts. Eusebius Werke*, 1.1), Berlin, 1903, pp. 50–54; J.B. AUFHAUSER, *Konstantins Kreuzvision in ausgewählten Texten*, Bonn, 1912; V. KEIL, *Quellensammlung zur Religionspolitik Konstantins des Grossen* (*Texte zur Forschung*, 54), Darmstadt, 1989.

[10] EUSEBIUS, *Vita Constantini*, 29, PG 20, col. 943 (Greek: col. 945): 'Tum vero Christus Dei dormienti apparuit cum signo illo quod in coelo ostensum fuerat, praecepitque, ut militari signo ad similitudinem eius quod in coelo vidisset fabricato, eo tanquem salutari praesidio in praeliis uteretur.'

[11] EUSEBIUS, *Vita Constantini*, 29, PG 20, col. 943 (Greek: col. 945): 'Tum vero Christus Dei dormienti apparuit cum signo illo quod in coelo ostensum fuerat, praecepitque, ut militari signo ad similitudinem eius quod in coelo vidisset fabricato, eo tanquem salutari praesidio in praeliis uteretur.'

[12] EUSEBIUS, *Vita Constantini*, 31, PG 20, col. 946 (Greek: col. 945): 'Erat autem eiusmodi: Hasta longior auro contexta, transversam habet antennam instar crucis. Supra in ipsa hastae summitat e corono erat affixa, gemmis et auro contexta. In hac salutaris appellationis signum: duae videlicet litterae nome Christi primis apicibus designabant, littera, [P], in medio sui decussata.'

[13] A *graffito* in a crypt of St Peter's in Rome (Wall G), with 'in hoc vinces', may be the earliest evidence of a transmission of this vision; J. VOGT, art. cit., col. 479.

325 he convened the Council of Nicaea, aimed at the suppression of the Arians and other heretical groups. Nonetheless, on his deathbed (337) Constantine received baptism from an Arian priest. He wished to be interred in the Mausoleum of the Twelve Apostles in Constantinople. In the eastern Roman Empire he was revered as *isapostolos*—the thirteenth apostle. In the orthodox Church he was venerated as a saint, together with Helena, his mother, on 21 May, and on 26 May and 9 July as one of the 'Fathers of the Six Ecumenical Councils' ('Father of Nicaea').[14]

Much has been written on the question of how fundamental was Constantine's conversion to Christianity. Obviously we can only guess at his religious feelings. After all, the testimonies of Lactantius and Eusebius were no doubt intended to contribute to the emperor's glorification as the first Christian sovereign.[15] It can be deduced from an anonymous panegyric of 310 that Constantine originally worshipped the sun god, *Sol Invictus*,[16] as had his father.[17] Religion and the symbolism of victory were very closely linked in the imperial cult and ideology, which were still largely inherited from the pagan Romans.[18] The emperor would associate himself with whatever lent him an advantage in the struggle for power. From the early fourth century religious practice began to be influenced by monotheism and the mystery religions of the East. Constantine's devotion to *Sol Invictus* displays all the characteristics of monotheism. Once the Invincible Sun had replaced Jupiter (and the whole Roman pantheon) the road to Christianity, possibly mediated by the Neoplatonic *logos*, was quickly laid. The vision described by Eusebius and Lactantius plays a syncretizing role in this process. Eusebius's description of a luminous cross superimposed on the sun seems literally to bring about the transition from worship of the sun to worship of the Cross.[19] That

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[14] H. RAMISCH, art. *Konstantin*, and art. *Konstantin und Helena*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 7, Rome-Vienna, 1974, col. 336 and cols. 336–337. As a saint and in connection with the Cross Constantine is represented at the earliest in the 10th century in the churches of Cappadocia.

[15] D. McDONALD, *The Vision of Constantine as a Literary Motif*, in *Studies in Honor of Tom B. Jones* (*Alter Orient und Altes Testament*, 203), Neukirchen, 1979, pp. 289–296, points out that 'visions' were a common theme in the Roman battle genre.

[16] J. VOGT, art. cit., col. 479.

[17] H.P. L'ORANGE, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World*, Oslo-Cambridge, 1953, p. 143.

[18] R. LEEB, op. cit., p. 24.

[19] R. LEEB, op. cit., p. 23: '[. . .] ist ein Abbau der Sonnensymbolik im Laufe der Zeit festzustellen.'

this was not an overnight change is evidenced by the early Church Fathers, who often compare Christ with the sun, using the sun as an image of the *resurrectio*, for example.[20] Moreover, within Constantine's empire the monogram of Christ and the symbol of the sun both retain their place in the iconography.[21] And though it can be said that the Constantinian cross displaced the symbol of the sun, relegating it to the background, it must nonetheless be interpreted principally as part of the symbolism of imperial victory—as the *vexillum*.

The Old Testament speaks of a sign, or 'mark', in two crucial places.[22] In Ezekiel 9, 4 the Lord commands a mark to be painted on the foreheads of certain of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that they will be spared His final fury. In Exodus 12, 22 a mark is applied to the doorways of the Israelites as a sign of their chosen status. In Hebrew this sign is called *taw* (pronounced 'tav'), and is written like a plus (+) or a multiplication (×) sign. It is the last letter of the old Hebrew alphabet and this, in combination with the biblical context, has provided a field for eschatological interpretation. Moreover, the shape of the letter in combination with those passages where the mark is applied provided the Jews with an early visualization of cross signs with eschatological significance (funerary, for instance).[23]

In referring to Christ's Second Coming, Matthew (24, 30) writes of the 'sign' of the Son of Man. The eschatological *taw* of the Old Testament is transferred to the *semeion, signum* of the New Testament.[24] Thus the association of the 'sign of the cross' with the 'sign of Christ' occurs via a typological movement,[25] in which the eschatological

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[20] Examples in: P. PEIRCE, *The Arch of Constantine. Propaganda and Ideology in Late Roman Art*, in *Art History*, 12, 1989, pp. 387–418, p. 408.

[21] On, for example, the triumphal arch in Rome (probably begun in 312), where Constantine is represented with right arm outstretched in tribute to *Sol Invictus*; P. PEIRCE, art. cit., pp. 387–418.

[22] All biblical quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version, Oxford University Press, 1995.

[23] E. KIRSCHBAUM, art. *Kreuz*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 2, Rome-Vienna, 1970, cols. 562–590.

[24] G.Q. REIJNERS, *The Terminology of the Holy Cross in Early Christian Literature as Based Upon Old Testament Typology* (*Graecitas Christianorum Primaeva*, 2), Utrecht, 1965, p. 147: the translation of *taw* to *semeion* or *signum/signatio* in Matthew, would have a wide patristic diffusion, except where the Bible passage itself is concerned (Second Coming). Which other concepts are employed to designate the Christian 'sign' (the cross) will appear later.

[25] More on this in: E. AUERBACH, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (*Theory and History of Literature*, 9), Manchester, 1984, passim.

significance (the Cross as the End of Time) had already paved the way for the transfer.

The two ways of writing the Hebrew *taw* found a counterpart in the Greek letters *tau* and *chi*.[26] This provided transpositions between other areas of meaning. In antiquity the *tau* ('T') was already used as a *tropaion*, a sign of victory: Christ is the victor over evil and death. According to Plato (36 BC) the *chi* ('X') was the form of the cosmic soul, the *logos* (*Timaion*, VIII).[27] Moreover, the *chi* was also read as the first letter of Christ: *chi* = Christos = *logos*. A combination of *chi* and *tau* formed the monogram of Christ, in which the top of the vertical stroke of the *tau* needed only to be curved round into a *rho* ('P') to form the second letter of Christos as well.[28] Constantine's *labarum* eventually standardized the combination.

In pre-Constantine Christianity the cross was by no means the most important symbol and was even secondary to the fish, the ship, the shepherd and the dove.[29] Nevertheless, literary and monumental sources indicate a familiarity with the sign. It appears chiefly on gemstones and in funerary contexts.[30] In Armenia and Syria crosses were already in use for liturgical purposes in the pre-Constantine era.[31] Constantine's vision brought about chiefly quantitative changes. Archaeological sources of the period provide evidence not only of a visual boom but also of a diffusion of the sign in different contexts (from places of prayer to palaces), in different forms (from Christogram to staurogram) and on different things (from coins to clothes).[32] To the soteriological and eschatological meaning of the cross sign was

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[26] C. CECCHELLI, op. cit., pp. 72–73.

[27] A. FROLOW, op. cit., p. 47; B. LEONI, *La Croce e il suo segno. Venerazione del segno e culto della reliquia nell' Antichità Cristiana*, Verona, 1968, p. 36.

[28] C. CECCHELLI, op. cit., p. 65.

[29] J. DANIELOU, *Les symboles chrétiens primitifs*, Paris, 1961, passim; F. TRISTAN, *Les premières images Chrétiennes. Le symbole à l' icône. IIe s.–VIe s.*, Paris, 1996.

[30] H. LECLERCQ, art. *Croix, Invention et Exaltation de la*, in *Dictionnaire d' archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 3, Paris, 1914, cols. 3049–3059, refers, amongst other things, to: 1. Precious stone with Crucifixion from the 2nd cent. AD, London, British Museum; 2. *graffito* from Gaza, 2nd–3rd cent., Wakefield, England; 3. Pectoral crosses of the 3rd cent.; 4. Blasphemous 'mocking Crucifixion' (Christ with an ass's head), 2nd–3rd cent., from the Roman palace on the Palatine Hill.

[31] H. LECLERCQ, art. *Croix*, art. cit., col. 3061.

[32] P. STOCKMEIER, *Theologie und Kult des Kreuzes bei Johannes Chrysostomos. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Kreuzes im 4. Jahrhundert* (*Trierer theologische Studien*, 18), Trier, 1966, pp. 212–217.

added a secular significance as national *vexillum* and imperial trophy,[33] and an apotropaic value, as an amulet.[34]

The question arises, however, of how, why, and when this cross symbol also began to allude to the physical instrument of Christ's torment. In the New Testament the death on the Cross is denoted by *cruciferunt* or *stauroun*, the instrument of torment itself by *stauros*.[35] Etymological research shows that both concepts are connected with 'to fix to the stake' or 'to torture'.[36] This custom was in use among the Romans but not the Jews, who executed their condemned by stoning and then displayed the body on a tree. In the Septuagint the core *stauros* does not appear, and *xulon* (wood) is used instead, often in combination with the verb *kremazein* (to hang). Whereas the New Testament opts fairly consistently for *stauros* when referring to the instrument of Christ's death, *xulon* replaces it on the odd occasion.[37] This occurs depending on the context, for instance if the subject is the Jew (as in Acts 5, 30).[38] It is striking that within the text itself both concepts are already made more profound, both soteriologically and allegorically. For Paul, *stauros* becomes the symbol of redemption and *xulon* gains a typological significance, given its Old Testament origin. Moreover, the word *xulon* is used for every wooden object. On a nominal basis the object becomes a prefiguration of the Cross.[39] Consequently, the first Church Fathers avoid the more

[33] C. CECCHELLI, op. cit., p. 58; G.Ch. PICARD, *Les trophées Romains*, n.p., 1957, fig. 5; E. DINKLER, *Das Kreuz als Siegeszeichen*, in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 62, 1965, pp. 1–20.

[34] Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catecheses*, XIII, 3) refers to protection against evil spirits. In 427, under Theodosius II, a prohibition was issued against making cross signs on the ground; E. KIRSCHBAUM, art. *Kreuz*, art. cit., col. 565.

[35] G.Q. REIJNERS, op. cit., p. 11.

[36] G.Q. REIJNERS, op. cit., pp. 2–8.

[37] G.Q. REIJNERS, op. cit., chiefly analysed Paul's Letters, the Acts of the Apostles and Revelation.

[38] G.Q. REIJNERS, op. cit., p. 14: 'The God of our forefathers brought Jesus to life by hanging him on a tree'. The contradiction is reconciled in the idea of the 'Tree of Life'. As will be fully elaborated later, the Tree of Life is a prefiguration of the Cross: both bring victory and eternal life.

[39] See: G.T. ARMSTRONG, *The Cross in the Old Testament. According to Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem and the Cappodocian Fathers*, in *Theologia Crucis. Signum Crucis. Festschrift für Erich Dinklers zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. G. KLEIN, Tübingen, 1978, pp. 17–38: Deuteronomy 21, 23. Other images are the Tree of Paradise, Noah's Ark, the sacrifice of Abraham and Isaac (rather having reference to the Crucifixion itself than the Cross), Moses' staff, the brazen serpent on the pole.

common term, *stauros*, in alluding to the Crucifixion as an Old Testament prefiguration.[40] Of the earliest generation Tertullian (ca. 160–ca. 240) is of importance here because he informs us about the Latin counterparts. He proves that the same distinction is made between *crux* and *lignum*.

Given the symbolic tradition that is embedded in it, the choice of word for the Cross has led to allegorization, sparingly in the New Testament and increasingly in the patrology. In this way the Crucifixion, which is an event, and the Cross, which is an instrument of torture and execution, can be elevated to an altogether higher, divine plane. After all, in addition to being a common means of punishment, the *stauros*, like the *xulon*, was also the instrument of the God who arose from the dead. It may well be imagined that the Cross provoked feelings of scorn and indignation. Literary, prefigurative and symbolic interpretations could provide a counter-argument. 'Death appeared on earth through the wood, and in the same way it must be driven out'[41] or 'God has chosen the most unworthy means to ensure his triumph over Satan.'[42] Nevertheless, a complete fusion of fact and symbolism could only take place when the use of the cross as an instrument of torture was finally discontinued under Theodosius I (379–395)—although Constantine had made attempts.[43] Once removed from the penal statute book and stripped of its negative connotations, the Cross (till then 'a stumbling block to Jews, and foolishness to Gentiles' 1 Cor. 1, 23) would become a crucial instrument of God's plan.[44]

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[40] G.T. ARMSTRONG, art. cit., p. 17. G.Q. REIJNDERS, op. cit., p. 95, adds that the Old Testament 'horn' and 'staff' can be used for the Cross of Christ. The author also examines the ritual functioning of these concepts (pp. 97–147 and pp. 148–187).

[41] Gospel of Nicodemus (4th cent.); this is clearly an allusion to the typology between the Tree of Knowledge and the new Tree of Life; F. SCHEIDWEILER, *Nikodemus Evangelium. Pilatusakten und Hollenfahrt Christi* (*Neutestamentliche Apocryphen in Deutscher Übersetzung*, 1, *Evangelien*, ed. E. HENNECKE and W. SCHNEEMELCHER), Tübingen, 1959, p. 351: 'Was du durch das Holz des Erkenntnis gewonnen, durch das Holz des Kreuzes verloren hast!'

[42] A statement of Commodian, 4th cent.; see: H. LECLERCQ, art. *Croix*, art. cit., col. 3047.

[43] E. KIRSCHBAUM, art. *Kreuz*, art. cit., col. 564.

[44] F.P. PICKERING, op. cit., pp. 223–285, makes a distinction between actual history and 'historia'. A refining of these concepts in the Middle Ages turns Christ's Crucifixion in the writings of the first Church Fathers into a 'theological construction' in place of a 'historical reconstruction'.

In the period in which Christianity began to unearth the bones of its martyrs, so as to venerate them *in memoria* along pilgrim routes, the desire must also have grown to bring the Cross materially among men. The combined action of the worship of relics and the 'materialization' of the cross symbol no doubt created a favourable context for the genesis of the oral and literary tradition of the *Inventio crucis*—the Finding of the Cross.

No research is carried out here into how much truth there might actually be in the *Inventio*. That issue has already been most ably dealt with by historian Jan Willem Drijvers (Groningen, the Netherlands)[45] and theologian Stephan Borgehammar (Uppsala, Sweden).[46] We start from the indisputable existence of the tradition itself, in the texts and the images through which it has been given visual expression.

The first source that refers to the discovered Cross is ascribed to Cyril (315–386), Bishop of Jerusalem. In his *Catecheses* (340) he refers to the material presence of pieces of the wood of the Cross: the whole world, he says, is filled with fragments of the Cross (IV, 10).[47] Moreover, the Cross is to be seen in Jerusalem (X, 19).[48] Cyril makes no mention of the role Queen Helena might have played in this diffusion,[49] not even when, in a letter to Constantius II written in 351 after a luminous cross had appeared above Jerusalem, he expressly mentions the discovery of the Cross in the time of Constantine.[50]

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[45] J.W. DRIJVERS, *Helena Augusta. The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of Her Finding of the True Cross*, Leiden-Cologne, 1992.

[46] S. BORGEHAMMAR, *How the Holy Cross Was Found. From Event to Medieval Legend*, Stockholm, 1991.

[47] CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *Catecheses*, PG 33: 'Crucis ligno universus iam orbis in partes secto repletus est.'

[48] Ibid., col. 686: 'Multa existant, dilecti, vera de christi testimonia [. . .] Sanctum crucis lignum testatur.' And again he emphasizes that it has been dispersed from Jerusalem in pieces. (XIII, 4).

[49] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 88–90, seeks, through a linguistic analysis of passage X, 19, to demonstrate that Cyril's choice of word indicates that the discovery had taken place not long before he was writing. The author thereby seeks to counter the assertion of A. FROLOW, op. cit., p. 56, that the Finding originated later as a literary *topos*, precisely to give a basis to Cyril's references. Borgehammar reasons compellingly here in the direction of an 'actual' Finding of the Cross.

[50] CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, op. cit., PG 33, cols. 1168–1169.; A. FROLOW, *La croix dans le ciel*, in *Revue des études slaves*, 27, 1951, pp. 103–112; J. VOGT, *Bericht über Kreuzerscheinungen aus dem 4. Jahrhundert n. Chr.*, in *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie*

Nor does John Chrysostom mention Helena (85th homily on the Gospel according to St John, 390). He relates only that one day three crosses were discovered, and the True Cross was identified because it was the middle of the three and bore a headboard or *titulus*.[51] Evidently both church scholars found the relic and its veneration of more interest than its finder.[52] Moreover, Chrysostom keeps as closely as possible to the content of the gospel (he mentions the *titulus*).

Helena is first associated with the Finding of the Cross in Ambrose's (339–397) funeral oration for Emperor Theodosius (*De obitu Theodosii*, 40–56), which was delivered by its author on 2 February 395.[53] He

et d'Histoires Orientales et Slaves, 9 (*Mélanges Henri Grégoire*, 1), 1943, pp. 65–72; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 90–92, does not regard the suppression of the Helena character as a serious *argumentum e silentio*. In the first place Cyril is seeking to make a literary analogy between Constantius II and Constantine the Great. Moreover, it should stimulate a strong opposition between the Cross 'out of the earth' and the cross 'out of the air'. In both cases a reference to Helena would be distracting; Z. RUBIN, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Conflict between the Sees of Caesarea and Jerusalem*, in *The Jerusalem Cathedra*, ed. L.I. LEVINE, Jerusalem, 1982, pp. 79–105, p. 98, Appendix III, points out that H. GOUSSEN, *Über Georgische Drucke und Handschriften. Die Festordnung und der Heiligenkalender des altchristlichen Jerusalems*, Munich-Gladbach, 1923, p. 32, has demonstrated that Cyril's *Catecheses* are 'retuschiert um nicht mehr zu sagen'. And the letter to Constantius II would be transmitted in anything but an authentic form. This would take us too far; moreover, this is not the place to unravel this issue.

[51] JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilias in Joannem*, PG 59, col. 461: 'Cum enim crucis lignum defossum fuisset, nec illud quispiam eruere auderet, instante metu, et fideles, aliis rebus urgentibus, incumberent; et tamen futurum erat, ut insequenti tempore crux perquireretur, et tres cruces una jacerent: ne ignoraretur quaenam Dominum fuisset, primo quod in medio esset, deinde ex titulo agnita fuit; latronum quippe cruces titulos non habebant'.

[52] Jerome writes in 392–393 to his sister Marcella: 'Ergone erit illa dies, quando nobis liceat speluncam Salvatoris intrare? In sepulcro Domini flere cum sorore, flere cum matre? Crucis deinde lignum lambere et in Oliveti monte cum ascendente Domino, voto et animo sublevari.' JEROME, *Epistola* 46, 13, CSEL 54, p. 343; in 398 he formulates his aversion to the wearing of talismans containing relics of the Cross. This would be typical of superstitious women; JEROME, *In Mattheo*, PL 26, col. 168. Indeed, during the Council of Laodicea the wearing of talismans was forbidden. They are 'fetters for the soul' (can. 36); K.J. HEFELE (ed.) and H. LECLERCQ (trans.), *Histoire des Conciles d'après les documents originaux*, 1, 2, Paris, 1907, p. 1018; B. LEONI, op. cit., p. 125.

[53] Source edn.: AMBROSE, *De obitu Theodosii*, ed. O. FALLER, CSEL 73, 1955; AMBROSE, *De obitu Theodosii*, PL 16, col. 1400; AMBROSE, *Oratio de obitu Theodosii* (*The Catholic University of America, Patristic Studies*, 9), trans. from Latin by M.D. MANNIX, Washington, 1925, p. 77 ff. (with introduction IDEM). Secondary literature: Ch. FAVEZ, *L'Épisode de l'invention de la Croix dans l'oraison funèbre de Théodose par Saint Ambroise*, in *Revue des études Latines*, 10, 1932, pp. 423–429; G.H. KRAMER, *Ambrosius*

praises Helena as the valiant seeker of the Cross though 'She hesitated, as a woman'[54] and needed the help of the Holy Spirit to determine which was Christ's Cross and which were those of the thieves. The Holy Spirit also inspired her to search for the nails from the Cross. One of these she had incorporated into a horse's bit, or bridle, and one into the emperor's diadem. Ambrose adds that the diadem will be worn by all Christian emperors. The Jew will not only blush but be tormented also (49).

What is Helena doing in the obituary? It is worth looking briefly at the context of her appearance. Theodosius (379–395), successor to Emperor Valens, died in Milan. His body had lain on the bier for forty days, and would eventually be interred in Constantinople. Theodosius had seized control of the Eastern Roman Empire, whereby his co-emperor, Gratianus (375–383), ruled the Western Roman Empire. Theodosius has gone down in history as a fervent proponent of the policy of Constantine the Great.[55] He was, as it were, the second Christian emperor *par excellence.*

One of the most frequently employed stylistic devices of the obituary is the *exemplum.* The deceased is invested with the praiseworthy characteristics of figures from the Bible or from historical tales and the mourners are comforted with similar exemplary reflections. This must also have been the purpose of the Helena passage. In rhetorical terms it is the *digressio*[56] (digression) in the *peroratio* (the last part of the eulogy) which has already been announced in paragraph 33.[57]

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van Milaan en de geschiedenis (Doct.), Amsterdam, 1983; W. STEIDLE, *Die Leichenrede des Ambrosius für Kaiser Theodosius und die Helena-legende*, in *Vigilae Christianae*, 32, 1978, pp. 94–112; K. THRAEDE, *Zwischen Eva und Maria. Das Bild der Frau bei Ambrosius und Augustinus auf dem Hintergrund der Zeit*, in *Frauen in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter. Lebensbedingungen, Lebensnormen, Lebensformen*, ed. W. AFFELDT, Sigmaringen, 1990, pp. 130–139, p. 133 ff.

[54] AMBROSE, op. cit., ed. O. FALLER, p. 394: 'Haeret ut mulier'.

[55] D.B. MELLON, *Theodosius and the Conversion of the Roman Pagan Aristocracy*, Michigan, 1984, pp. 21–27.

[56] W. STEIDLE, art. cit., p. 95 (after Cicero, *De oratione* 2, 312); See also: M. BIERMANN, *Die Leichenrede des Ambrosius von Mailand. Rhetorik, Predigt, Politik*, Stuttgart, 1995, passim.

[57] W. STEIDLE, art. cit., p. 95, emphatically rejects Favez's proposition (*a.c.*, p. 424) that the *peroratio* is too extensive and the Helena passage can thus be considered a later addition. Steidle sees announcing the end in good time as a rhetorical trick used, for instance, to recapture attention: 'unter denen sich ja ungebildete barbarische Soldaten befanden' (para. 10: 'audistis certe, milites, [. . .]'). He also sees sufficient intrinsic and formal arguments to regard the Helena passage as a part of the original concept.

The beginning of the elaboration comes in paragraph 40: 'Now indeed, in his own eyes he [Theodosius] is a king, when [. . .] he greets Constantine, who, though resolved in his last hour, was freed by the grace of baptism from all sin, and because he was the first of the emperors to believe and left after him a heritage of faith to princes, he was found a place of great merit. Of whose times the following prophesy is accomplished: "In that day that which is upon the bridle of the Horse shall be holy to the Lord omnipotent" [Zechariah 14, 20]. And this holy object, Helen his mother, of sainted memory, when filled with the spirit of God, unveiled for herself.'[58]

Paragraph 41 continues with 'Happy Constantine, because of such a mother, who at her son's command sought the aid of divine favour by which in battle he might both engage safely and not fear danger.'[59]

It was to be expected that Theodosius would be compared with the first Christian emperor. He was, after all, the inheritor and propagator of Constantine's Christian policy (the principle of *hereditas fidei*). Yet Ambrose immediately introduces Constantine's mother into the analogy. In paragraph 41 Ambrose lauds Helena for her loyalty to her son ('Happy Constantine, because of such a mother . . .'), *a fortiori* elaborated with a digression about her lowly origin as the hostess of an inn (42). Altruistic piety eventually impelled her to search for the Cross (43). That the *Inventio* is at once claimed as evangelical proof appears from: 'How do I believe that I have been redeemed, if my redemption itself is not seen?' (43).[60] That this 'proof' is also

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[58] O. FALLER, op. cit., pp. 392–393: 'Nunc se augustae memoriae Theodosius regnare cognoscit, quando [. . .] Constantino adhaeret. Cui licet baptismatis gratia in ultimis constituto omnia peccata dimiserit, tamen quod primus imperatorum credidit et post se heredidatem fidei principibus dereliquit, magni meriti locum repperit. Cuius temporibus completum est propheticum illud: *In illo die erit, quod super renum equi, sanctum domino omnipotenti*. Quod illa sanctae memoriae Helena, mater eius, infuso sibi dei spiritu revelavit'.

[59] O. FALLER, op. cit., p. 393: 'Beatus Constantinus tali parente, quae imperanti filio divini muneris quaesivit auxilium, quo inter proelia quoque tutus adsisteret et periculum non timeret'.

[60] O. FALLER, op. cit., p. 394: 'Quomodo me redemtam arbitror, si redemptio ipsa non cernitur'. The polemic character is also apparent in a closing comment in par. 48: 'That [Helena's search] is not presumption but piety' (M.D. MANNIX, op. cit., p. 80). Ambrose seeks to show that it does not become a true believer to need convincing in a spectacular way. Indeed, the Jews were accused of jealously and scorn in respect of the Cross, as well as having an extreme susceptibility to miracles; W. BUNTE, *Juden und Judentum in der mittelniederländischen Literatur. 1100–1600* (*Judentum und Umwelt*, 24, ed. J. MAIER), Frankfurt-Paris, 1989, pp. 460–477. Ambrose seeks, perhaps not coincidentally, to deprive Helena of these

really 'redemption' follows from 'You [the Devil] were vanquished by Mary who gave the Conqueror birth. [. . .] Today, also, you shall be conquered when a woman [Helena] discovers your snares' (44).[61] The analogy between Helena and Mary is taken up again after the Finding of the Cross: 'And, as before Christ had visited a woman in Mary, so the Spirit visited a woman in Helena' (46).[62] That mankind's redemption came through the Resurrection appears from: 'She [Mary] showed Him created; I [Helena], raised Him from the dead' (44).[63]

It is only after these musings that Helena effectively 'opens the ground' (45).[64] The identification takes places not thanks to a miracle but because of the presence of the *titulus*:[65] 'Let Helena have something to read whereby she may recognize the cross of the Lord' (45).[66] The discovery of the nails follows.

To Ambrose the incorporation of the nail into a bridle (image of just rule) and the Cross into a diadem (image of faith)[67] is an

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characteristics, for she too was thought by some to be of Jewish origin (*Acta Silvestri*); J. VOGT, *Helena Augusta. Das Kreuz und die Juden*, in *Saeculum. Jahrbuch in Universalgeschichte*, 27, 1976, pp. 211–222.

[61] O. FALLER, op. cit., p. 394: 'Vicit te [devil] Maria, quae genuit triumphatorem, [. . .]. Vinceres et hodie, ut mulier tuas insidias deprachendat'.

[62] O. FALLER, op. cit., p. 395: 'Ut quia iam feminam visitaverat Christus in Maria, Spiritus in Helena visitaret'.

[63] O. FALLER, op. cit., p. 395: 'Illa generatum docuit, ego resuscitatum'; W. STEIDLE, op. cit., passim, interprets the Finding of the Cross as a second Resurrection.

[64] M.D. MANNIX, op. cit., p. 79; O. FALLER, op. cit., p. 394: 'Aperit itaque humum'. Thus, typologically seen, Helena also 'gives birth'.

[65] E. DASSMANN, *Ambrosius und die Märtyrer*, in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 18, 1975, pp. 49–68, frames this in a careful attitude (not rejection) in respect of the worship of relics and martyrs. Indeed, when he comes to the finding of the *titulus* Ambrose expressly points out that: 'She discovered the title; she adored the King; not the wood indeed, because this is an error of the Gentiles and a vanity of the wicked; but she adored Him who hung on the wood, who was inscribed in the title' (para. 46, M.D. MANNIX, op. cit., p. 79); 'Invenit ergo titulum regem adoravit, non lignum utique, quia hic gentilis est error et vanitas impiorum, sed addoravit illum, qui pependit in ligno inscriptus in titulo.' (O. FALLER, op. cit., p. 395). Of course, Ambrose could also have used Chrysostom's account of five years earlier as a basis. Furthermore, the *titulus* gives Ambrose the opportunity to keep this Finding of the Cross in *regalia* phraseology: the inscription of a king.

[66] O. FALLER, op. cit., p. 395: 'Habeat Helena, quod legat, unde crucem domini recognoscat'.

[67] M. SORDI, *La tradizione dell'inventio crucis in Ambrogio e in Rufino*, in *Rivista di Storia della chiesa in Italia*, 44, 1, 1990, pp. 1–9, p. 8, on the diadem. The descriptions 'corona de cruce' (48), 'diadema gemmis insignitum, quas pretioso ferro innexas crucis redemptionis divinae gemma conceteret' (47), match the 'corona ferrea', kept

authoritative fact.[68] They are material and commemorative symbols for the first empire to be governed under the aegis of the Christian God. Ambrose puts forward the Christian doctrine of salvation as the precondition of a flourishing empire: 'Mary was visited to liberate Eve; Helen was visited that emperors might be redeemed' (47).[69] The nail should be a constant reminder to emperors not to offend by tyranny and capriciousness. Ambrose also points out to future emperors that they have the blessedness of being allowed to possess this divine sign. He makes repeated allusions to a Christian continuum—the persecutions by Julian the Apostate (331–363) were still fresh in the memory—as the first and only condition for a prosperous future.[70] For indeed, the division or even disintegration of the empire was very possible after Theodosius's death.[71]

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in the treasury of Monza (Italy), which according to tradition belonged to Theodosius and, in the good Roman tradition, offered him protection (Johannes Codagnellus, Cronaca (1230); M. SORDI, art. cit., p. 4; ed. of the passage; R. ELZE, *Die "Eiserne Krone" in Monza*, in *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik*, ed. P.E. SCHRAMM (*Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historia*, 13, 2), Leipzig, 1955, pp. 440–479, p. 467. Another source from Berengarius I (9th cent.), mentions a 'corona aurea cum ligno Domini' (R. ELZE, art. cit., p. 464). According to Sordi (*o.c.*, p. 9) the wood of the Cross was possibly confused with the nail. Ambrose also seems to identify nail and Cross with each other: 'Wisely did Helena act who placed the cross on the head of sovereigns, that the Cross of Christ might be adored among kings' (para. 48).

[68] On the long symbolic tradition of the bridle see: E. VILLARD, *Il chalinos come sphragis del tiranno*, in *Civiltà classica e cristiana*, 9, 1988, p. 117 ff.

[69] M.D. MANNIX, op. cit., p. 80: 'Mary was visited to liberate Eve; Helen was visited that emperors might be redeemed.' The Mary-Helena typology is extended here with an antithesis.

[70] See also: J. STRAUB, art. cit., pp. 244–274.

[71] In para. 55 Ambrose comforts Arcadius, who is unable to accompany his father's remains, by comparing him with Joseph who only went into a neighbouring province, whereas there are many regions and seas between Milan and Constantinople. He consoles Honorius by likening him to Jacob, who also saw his father placed on the bier in a foreign land. In his final para. (56) Ambrose says that it should not be regretted that Theodosius would not receive a triumphant entry into Constantinople after his victory in the West, because that triumph will now be accorded him by the saints in heaven. Favez thinks that the Helena passage is specifically directed at the two sons, Honorius and Arcadius; C. FAVEZ, op. cit., pp. 426–427. Ambrose explicitly addresses them at the end of the oration, immediately before the moment that he turns to the transmission of the body: 'You weep, Honorius, august scion' (54) and 'You weep, also, August Emperor' (55) (M.D. MADDOX, op. cit., p. 82); 'Fles, Honori, german augustum; Fles etiam, imperator auguste' (O. FALLER, op. cit., p. 400). In my opinion the content of the Helena passage is too complex for this. For instance, I have referred above to the 'replay' of the Resurrection that Ambrose reads into the Finding of the Cross: 'Christ has risen again, and princes acknowledge that he had risen' (M.D. MADDOX, op. cit., p. 81); 'Iterum Christus resurrexit et resurrexisse eum principes agnoverunt' (O. FALLER, op. cit., p. 397).

In the Church of San Ambrogio in Milan was a nail relic.[72] It is tempting to connect this relic with the obituary. A document of 1389 mentions only that it has been in the church 'ab antiquo', as is usually the case with relics.[73] It might be expected that Ambrose would expressly refer to the presence of such a noteworthy object in the funeral oration. Or was it too obvious? The opposite is also possible—perhaps it was Ambrose's oration that created the desire for a nail relic.

The Helena passage in the *De obitu Theodosii* is to be seen in the light of political–religious objectives, of care for the future. For that matter Helena, like the relics, receives an edifying and soteriological place in the politically and religiously motivated salvation history.[74] Theodosius was only 50 when he died: would his mother have been one of the mourners?[75] We recall the exclamation 'Happy Constantine, because of such a mother . . .' immediately after Constantine is presented as Theodosius's model. Is Helena's inclusion meant to appeal to the women in the company?[76] The emperor's wife, Aelia Flacilla, sought to excel in piety, just like Helena. Moreover, like Helena, Aelia had been granted the title of Augusta. There was, in other words, more than a hint of *imitatio Helenae* in the Theodosian milieu.

In addition to Ambrose, Rufinus (b. 345, Aquileia) also mentions a Finding of the True Cross by Helena in his *Church History* (403).[77]

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[72] See: W. KIRSCH, *An Early Reliquary of the Holy Nail in Milan*, in *Mitteillungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz*, 3, 3, 1986, pp. 569–576.

[73] *Annali della Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano dall'origine fino al presente*, I, n.p., 1874, p. 24.

[74] See further: A.-L. FENGER, *Aspekte des Soteriologie und Ekklesiologie bei Ambrosius von Mailand*, Frankfurt-Bern, 1981.

[75] I find no data about Theodosius's mother; more is known about his father 'Comes Theodosius'.

[76] J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., p. 123; L. BRUBAKER, *Memories of Helena. Patterns in Imperial Female Matronage in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries*, in *Women, Men and Eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium*, ed. L. JAMES, New York, 1997, pp. 52–75.

[77] RUFINUS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, PL 21, cols. 475–478; RUFINUS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. E. SCHWARTZ and Th. MOMMSEN (*Griechische Schrifsteller der christlichen ersten Jahrhunderts. Eusebius Werke*, II–1, II–2), Bamberg, 1903–1908; J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., p. 100 ff.; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 21–23; F. THELAMON, art. *Rufin d' Aquilée*, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique*, 13, Paris, 1988, cols. 1107–1117; See also: Fr. X. MURPHY, *Rufinus of Aquileia (345–411). His Life and Works*, Washington, 1945. Eusebius refers in *Vita Constantini*, III, 30–32 to a letter, probably written in 325, from Constantine to Bishop Macarius, who

Four themes stand out. First, divine inspiration causes Helena to travel to Jerusalem and there, with the help of the inhabitants, to find the holy place, on which, until that moment, a statue of Venus has stood. Likewise at divine prompting she finds the three crosses, but which of the three is that of Christ is impossible to determine for the *titulus* has become detached. Secondly, the True Cross is identified by Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, who tests it on a dying woman. Thirdly, Helena builds a church in Jerusalem, but she also sends a fragment of the Cross, and with it the nails, to Constantinople. Fourthly, Helena invites holy virgins to a banquet.[78]

Before his return to Italy in 397, Rufinus had worked with the pilgrim Melania the Elder (ca. 340–406), with whom he had co-founded a combined convent and monastery on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.[79] There he was occupied for the most part in translating Greek works into Latin. The first nine of the eleven books of his *Historia Ecclesiastica* comprised a Latin translation and continuation of Eusebius's *Church History*. Books 10 and 11 were a translation of Gelasius of Caesarea's history of the Church (covering the period 367 to 394), which today survives only in part. The Finding of the Cross is recorded in Book 10, chapter 768, and despite Rufinus's habit of regularly adding his own little details, abridging oral traditions and quoting from classical epigraphy,[80] the passage

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was responsible for the building of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem; (*Über das leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, ed. and trans. F. WINKELMAN (*Die Griechischen christlichen Schrifsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte. Eusebius Werke*, 1.1), Berlin, 1975; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 130 and J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., p. 57.

[78] RUFINUS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, op. cit., VII: De Helena Constantini matre, col. 476: 'Macarius per idem tempus Ecclesiae illius Episcopus erat. Is ubi cunctantem reginam atque omnes pariter qui aderant, videi: Adferte (inquit) hunc totas, quae repertae sunt cruces, et quae sit quae portaverit Dominum, nunc nobis adaperiet deus. Et ingressus cum regina pariter et populis ad eam, quae decumbebat, defixis genibus huiuscemodi ad Deum precem profudit; caput VIII: De cruce salvatoris in Jerosolymis ab Helen reperta', cols. 476–477: 'Et cum haec dixisset [prayer to the Lord, recalling the miraculous healing of a woman] [. . .] ut vero admovit tertiam, repente adapertis oculis muliera consuxerrit, et stabilitate virium recepta, alacrior multo, quam cum sana fuerat, tota domo discurrere et magnificare Dei potentiam coepit'. J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., p. 139: these holy virgins are an anachronism. The liturgical feasts came into use in the second half of the 4th century.

[79] According to tradition, Helena built this convent: Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, III, 43, 1; S. HEID, *Der Ursprung der Helena-Legende im Pilgerbetrieb Jerusalems*, in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 32, 1989, pp. 41–71, p. 47; J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., pp. 100–101.

[80] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 22; J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., p. 100, on the other hand, agrees with A. GLAS, *Die Kirchengeschichte des Gelasios von Kaisareia.*

containing the Finding of the Cross can guide us to Gelasius's lost version.[81] Gelasius thus becomes the oldest literary source and is characterized by the prominent role of the bishop of Jerusalem. Through Rufinus, Gelasius's history of the Church also becomes the source for Gelasius of Cyzicus, Sozomen (425), Theoderet (428) and Socrates (439).[82]

Gelasius (d. 395) was appointed by his uncle, Cyril of Jerusalem, as Bishop of Caesarea in 367, but he did not take up his see until the death of Emperor Valens. The emperor was a supporter of Arianism and had exiled both Cyril and Gelasius. Around 386, at his uncle's request, Gelasius took on the continuation of Eusebius's history of the Church.[83] In his writing he shows great interest in current theological disputes, and he was a fervent promoter of the pronouncements of the Council of Nicaea. Thus he emphatically rejects Arianism and in that sense distances himself from his great example, Eusebius. Gelasius was a keen admirer of Helena and Constantine the Great. It is precisely in this connection that hypotheses are formulated to situate the Finding of the True Cross in the Nicaea debate.[84]

Gelasius was not averse to using miracle stories and other popular themes from the oral tradition. It is possible that his tale of the Finding of the True Cross derives from this category, as none of his known sources (Pamphilus, Eusebius's *Vita Constantini* and *Historia Ecclesiastica*) mentions the event. If Gelasius recycled the legend from an oral tradition, or at any rate from a tradition that up to that time had not yet attained any literary 'visibility', he did so during

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Die Vorlagen für die beiden letzten Bhcher der Kirchengeschichte Rufins, Leipzig-Berlin, 1914, p. 32, who regards Rufinus as a colourless translator.

[81] On the basis of a thorough examination of Rufinus's style, as well as those of Gelasius himself, S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 11–14 and pp. 31–55, has reconstructed this passage on the Finding of the Cross. He is guided by studies by F. WINKELMANN, *Untersuchungen zur Kirchegeschichte des Gelasios von Kaesareia (Sitzungsberichte der deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Klasse für Sprachen, Literatur und Kunst*, 3), Berlin, 1966; IDEM, *Charakter und Bedeutung der Kirchengeschichte des Gelasios von Kaesareia*, in *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 1, 1966, pp. 346–385; IDEM, *Das Problem der Rekonstruktion der Historia Ecclesiastica des Gelasius von Kaesarea*, in *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, 38, 1964, pp. 311–314; IDEM, *Zu einer Edition der Fragmente des Gelasios von Kaesareia*, in *Byzantinoslavica*, 34, 1973, pp. 193–198.

[82] J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., pp. 102–108; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 29–30.

[83] J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., pp. 96–99.

[84] P.W.L. WALKER, *Holy Cities, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century*, Oxford, 1990, pp. 275–281.

the reign of Theodosius and in a Greek-speaking corner of the empire (Caesarea, Palestine).[85] As Jerusalem and its bishop, Macarius, figure prominently in the source, its (possibly oral) genesis must rather be sought in that city. Be that as it may, an early literary manifestation in Caesarea is not so unlikely, considering the many economic and political contacts—and thus also religious and cultural exchanges—that existed between two important centres of Palestine.[86] Did the legend of the Cross evolve in the traffic between the two cities, in that between Cyril and Gelasius for instance, and become embellished with the Helena-Macarius characters under the influence of the Theodosian court?

Another account of the discovery of Christ's Cross is recorded in a letter (written in 402)[87] of Paulinus of Nola (353/5–431) to Sulpicius Severus, who in turn records it in his *Chronicles* (II, 33–34).[88] Sulpicius had asked Paulinus for a relic of a saint for the dedication of a new basilica in Primuliacum.[89] Paulinus sent him a relic of the Cross which he himself had been given by Melania the Elder, who had received it from John, Bishop of Jerusalem. With the relic Paulinus sent a letter describing the way in which the Cross had been dis-

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[85] M. PARDYOVA-VODOVA, *L'impératrice Hélène et l'invention de la sainte croix*, in *Sbornik Parci filozoficke Fakulty Brnenske. Series Arrcheologicko-Klassicka*, 25, 1980, pp. 235–240, is not aware of the Gelasius issue and on the basis of Ambrose ascribes the Finding of the Cross to a Latin and exclusively Western origin.

[86] This led to envy between both centres; Z. RUBIN, art. cit., p. 79–105. Such wrangles had also occurred in the past between the bishops of Caesarea and Jerusalem. Gelasius's uncle, Cyril, in particular left no stone unturned to consolidate his power in the Holy City. This he did, for instance, by stressing the qualities of Jerusalem as Holy City and chosen place of pilgrimage. P.W.L. WALKER, op. cit., pp. 251–275, opposes Cyril to Eusebius of Caesarea for the same reasons; there will be more about this later.

[87] PAULINUS VAN NOLA, *Epistolae*, PL 61, cols. 325–330; PAULINUS VAN NOLA, *Epistolae*, ed. W. de HARTEL, CSEL 29, pp. 167–175; P.G. WALSH (trans.), *Letters of Paulinus of Nola*, 2 (*Ancient Christian Writers*, 36), Westminster-London, 1967, pp. 134–159; J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., pp. 113–116; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 66–71; J.T. LIENHARD, *Paulinus of Nola and Early Western Monasticism. With a Study of the Chronology of his Works and an Annotated Bibliography*, Cologne-Bonn, 1977; J.T. LIENHARD, art. *Paulin de Nole*, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique*, 12, Paris, 1984, cols. 592–602; B.P. McQUIRE, *Friendship and Community. The Monastic Experience 350–1250* (*Cistercian Studies*, series 95), Michigan, 1988, pp. 66–72.

[88] SULPICIUS SEVERUS, *Chronicon*, ed. C. HALM, CSEL, 1, 1886; J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., pp. 116–117.

[89] C. CURTI, *L'"inventio crucis" nell' epistola 31 di Paolino di Nola*, in *Orpheus*, 17, 1996, pp. 337–347, p. 340.

covered, probably as a proof of authenticity.[90] This account takes up three of the letter's six paragraphs.[91] Like Rufinus, Paulinus also mentions how the Cross was put to the test—not, however on a dying woman but on the corpse of a man, an event he compares to the raising of Lazarus.[92] There is no digression about Macarius. A statue (*sic.*) of Jupiter stood on Golgotha, according to the author. Helena sought the council not only of the Christians but of the Jews as well. There is no reference to the finding of the nails and the letter closes with an envoi about worship of the Cross and pilgrimage. Every day people receive fragments of the Cross but the wood never gets any smaller. The wood remains *integra* for those who venerate it and it divides itself (*divisa*) for those who desire a part of it.[93]

Paulinus describes the events as an ascetic and priest. His tone is more instructional, simplified and summarizing.[94] His version of the Cross's discovery must prove the power of the relic he sends and enhance his correspondent's belief. The miracle is more important than its witness, Macarius. Besides, Paulinus writes from a peregrine,[95] not an episcopal perspective, as does Gelasius.[96] Moreover, perhaps the West was not so keen on a 'hero' from Jerusalem. Finally, the finding of the nails is irrelevant to the sending of a relic of the Cross. It is rather striking that Paulinus 'defeminizes' the earlier versions. Helena finds the Cross not beneath a pagan statue of Venus but of Jupiter[97] and the Cross is not tested on a woman but on a man. Paulinus also presents his story more emphatically in the light of Jewish-Christian controversy.

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[90] PAULINUS VAN NOLA, *Epistolae*, op. cit., PL 61, col. 328: 'Itaque non solum de Christianis doctrina et sanctitate plenos viros, sed et de Judaeis peritissimos, ut propriae, quae miseri et gloriantur, impietatis indices exquisivit, et accitos in Hierosolymam congregavit [. . .] et contra spem omnium [. . .] abditae cruci arcana patuerunt [. . .] Postremo dominicam crucem prodit resurrectio, et ad salutaris ligni tactum morte profuga funus excussum, et corpus erectum est [. . .] ut Lazarus quondam, vinculis expeditus.'

[91] C. CURTI, art. cit., p. 340.

[92] It is typical of Paulinus to devote great attention to miracles; E. DASSMANN, art. cit., p. 60.

[93] C. CURTI, art. cit., pp. 340–343; J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., pp. 113–117, sees Paulinus, despite these differences, as dependent on Gelasius; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 66–71, isolates Paulinus.

[94] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 70; J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., p. 109.

[95] This is also the conclusion of C. CURTI, art. cit., p. 347.

[96] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 71.

[97] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 68.

How should the relationships between the patristic testimonies be understood, and in which milieu must the prototype, the 'original' form of the *Inventio crucis* tradition be sought?[98]

Ambrose, Rufinus (via Gelasius) and Paulinus of Nola all share a common core: divine inspiration and/or piety causes Helena to go in search of the Cross; she finds three crosses together in a place that was occupied by pagans and Jews (Ambrose: demons; Rufinus: Venus; Paulinus: Jupiter), and with help of one kind or another she is able to identify the Cross of Christ. It is on the question of this 'help' that the traditions diverge. Ambrose steers clear of miracle stories: Helena arrives at the discovery of the Cross quite naturally, thanks to her knowledge of the gospels and through the Holy Spirit.[99] Hence she knows that Christ's Cross stood in the middle and bore a *titulus* (cf. Chrysostom).[100] Bishop Macarius is not credited with any part in its identification.[101] Macarius is mentioned in Eusebius's *Vita Constantini* (III, 31–32) however.[102] In a letter the emperor asks the bishop to coordinate the building of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Money is to be no object, for the church must be the most splendid ever built. Macarius should also have a list drawn up of the best artisans and craftsmen in the area. In 325 or thereabouts (perhaps during the Council of Nicaea?), the bishop had informed Constantine about the discovery of the Holy Sepulchre, Christ's tomb, which lay hidden beneath the Hadrianic temple of Venus.[103] In that same year the demolition of the temple and the construction of the new Constantinian basilica must have begun. In 335 it was officially dedicated by the emperor.[104]

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[98] In addition, of course, to J.W. Drijvers and S. Borgehammar, M. SORDI, art. cit., pp. 1–9 and S. HEID, *Der Ursprung*, art. cit., pp. 41–71, also devote attention to this issue. S. Heid (p. 41) emphasizes that he has made his study independently of J.W. Drijvers.

[99] According to M. SORDI, art. cit., p. 2, Rufinus and Ambrose must have been familiar with the same prototype. Does Ambrose fail to mention Macarius because he perceives the bishop as a rival? Ambrose himself was often present at the exhumation of martyrs, but shunned the 'miraculous', E. DASSMANN, art. cit., p. 49 ff.

[100] S. HEID, art. cit., p. 43 ff.; the analogy between the Holy Scriptures and the sacred topography is essential to the archetype of the pilgrimage to the Holy City.

[101] Paulinus suppresses Macarius, but assumes knowledge of this tradition by the reference to a testing of the Cross.

[102] J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., p. 57.

[103] E.D. HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312–460*, Oxford, 1982, p. 7.

[104] Primary literature: V. CORBO, *Il Santo Sepolcro di Gerusalemme*, 3 vols., Jerusalem, 1981; H.A. DRAKE, *The Return of the Holy Sepulchre*, in *The Catholic Historical Review*,

A second element missing in Ambrose's version is the construction of a church on the site where the Cross was found. By the addition of this key motif the legend acquires an aetiological function. Perhaps the origin of the tradition must be dealt with in connection with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Thus Ambrose deviates from a core shared by the other sources. On this basis he cannot be regarded as representing an 'original' form. Because of the influence that the very specific context, the function and the genre of the funeral oration exercised on the theme, I do not see Ambrose as being the prototype for the legend.[105]

The search for the legend's literary origin thus shifts to Gelasius (who began his continuation of the history of the Church in 386). Stephan Borgehammar proposes Cyril as a source for Gelasius. Borgehammar had already prepared the ground for this thesis by implicitly reading Cyril's testimony as a 'finding'. Then he could indeed have passed on the legend to his nephew and successor. Meanwhile, the figure of Helena could have gained in importance, likewise Macarius, and in this way the legend finally came into being with Gelasius.[106] For that matter, family and social links are certainly striking in the *Inventio crucis* tradition: Cyril and Gelasius are uncle and nephew and Melania knew Rufinus and Paulinus of Nola. It is significant that Helena's role began to emerge and develop in the time of Theodosius, at whose court we know were admirers of Helena. Moreover, Helena had put her stamp on most of the building projects in Jerusalem and she was probably 'spontaneously' associated with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The figure of Macarius was integrated for imperial-episcopal balance (harmony between State and Church).[107] Meanwhile, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was

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70, 1984, pp. 263–267; J. FOLDA, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1187*, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 175–245; P. von NAREDI-RAINER, *Salomos Tempel und das Abendland. Monumentale Folgen Historischer Irrtümer*, Cologne, 1994, pp. 43–46; R. OUSTERHOUT, *The Temple, The Sepulchre and the Martyrion of the Savior*, in *Gesta*, 29, 1, 1990, pp. 44–53; Z. RUBIN, art. cit., pp. 79–105.

[105] C. ANDRESEN, *Die Kirchen der alten Christenheit* (*Die Religionen der Menschheit*, 29, 1–2), Stuttgart, 1971, p. 515, nonetheless regards Rome as the place of origin of the Helena legend.

[106] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 88 ff.

[107] J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., p. 141 and p. 142: the sending of part of the Cross to Constantine (Constantinople) is doubly significant. The emperor is protected by the Cross but is, at the same time, charged with its protection. A standard work on the double function of the emperor is still: E.H. KANTOROWICZ, *The King's Two Bodies. A Study on Mediaeval Political Theology*, Princeton, 1957.

aetiologically associated with the material Cross, the relic. 'The Sepulchre, the Cross and Helena are the three stages in the organic development of the legend.'[108]

Which milieu has contributed to the evolution of the Helena legend? A plausible hypothesis has been developed by Stefan Heid: *Der "Sitz im leben" der Helena-legende im Pilgerbetrieb der Grabeskirche.*[109] The author concludes that the sources connected with the Finding of the Cross make use of pilgrims' vernacular or refer to their practices: the emphasis on piety, the close contact with the local population, the making of vows, praying, the works of charity, particularly those connected with monastics (for instance, donating food to a monastery or convent), and so forth.[110] One can imagine guides or monks who related the story of Helena's discovery of the Cross time and again during visits to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[111] This would explain the relatively stable character of the tradition.[112] It should be pointed out, however, that the pilgrim of Bordeaux (the so-called *Itinerarium Burdigalense*), who visited Jerusalem in 333, does not mention either the relic or Helena.[113] The pilgrim Egeria describes the proceedings in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre between around 381 and 384[114] and informs us about the liturgy surrounding the relic of the Cross, but she does not refer to Helena either.

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[108] S. HEID, art. cit., p. 61: 'Grab, Kreuz, Helena, das sind die drei Etappen in der organischen Entwicklung der legende, die sich an Kirchweifest und Kreuzauffindungsfeier knüpfen.'

[109] S. HEID, art. cit., passim and particularly p. 62 ff.

[110] S. HEID, art. cit., p. 44: 'Neben den genannten äusseren Gründen sprechen vor allem innere Kriterien für Palästina, genauerhin für Jerusalem, als den Ursprungsort der legende. [. . .] Zum anderen ist die Legende durch und durch vom Pilgerkolorit geprägt. So bittet etwa die Fassung des Paulinus in der Gestalt Helenas nichts anderes als einen Reflex der Pilgerfrömmigkeit. Helena wird geradezu zum Typus des Palästinapilgers.'

[111] H.S. SIVAN, *Pilgrimage, Monasticism and The Emergence of Christian Palestine in the 4th Century*, in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. R. OUSTERHOUT (*Illinois Byzantine Studies*, 1), Chicago, 1991, pp. 54–66.

[112] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 80. I find the arguments and data that S. Heid (*o.c.*, p. 63 ff.) introduces to regard the story also as a liturgical reading unfounded. The author himself calls it only a possibility.

[113] The pilgrim attributes all the churches in Palestine and Jerusalem to Constantine. His account is rather sketchy and extremely phlegmatic in tone where it touches on miracles or relics; *Itinerarum Burdigalense*, ed. P. GEYER and O. CUNZ, CCSL 175, c 593,4–594,3; H. DONNER, *Pilgerfahrt ins Heilige Land. Die ältesten Berichte christlicher Palästinapilger (4.–7. Jahrhundert)*, Stuttgart, 1979, p. 40. Moreover, he describes only the exterior of the church. It is therefore not certain whether the pilgrim ever actually went inside; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 92.

[114] *Itinerarium Egeriae*, eds. P. GEYER and O. CUNZ, CCSL 175, 37, pp. 1–3;

A popular oral origin could explain Helena's late and tentative entry into the written tradition. Moreover, Gelasius was known to supplement his writings with motifs from the popular tradition. Helena's role in the *Inventio* was the product of a typical process of formation. Helena, the *femina nobilissima*, had immortalized herself in numerous building projects in Palestine and Rome. In both east and west of Constantine's realm she had helped to shape the architectural face of the Christian empire. Thus her name was directly linked with the holy places of the imperial territory.[115] In the collective memory she must have become the very type of the pilgrim.[116] The relics of the Cross in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the many churches financed by Helena were mutually enhancing. Such amalgamations may later consolidate into 'official' traditions. Once rumour and legend join, it needs but one church scholar to take note for it to become standardized in a long tradition.[117] And nothing keeps a tradition alive like the pilgrim. For pilgrims of every social class carried home not only relics but everything that was connected with them, including the stories.

J. WILKINSON, *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land*, Jerusalem-Warminster, 2nd ed. London 1971, 1981, pp. 136–137.

[115] See: H. HEINEN, *Konstantins Mutter Helena: de stercore ad regnum*, in *Trierer Zeitschrift*, 61, 1998, pp. 227–240.

[116] K.G. HOLUM, *Hadrian and St. Helena. Imperial Travel and the Origins of Christian Holy Land Pilgrimage*, in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, op. cit., pp. 66–85, sees Helena as a diplomatic factor between Constantinople and Jerusalem; T.D. BARNES, *Constantine and Eusebius*, Cambridge, 1981, pp. 220–221 and E.D. HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312–460*, Oxford, 1982, pp. 32–35, refer to the drama that took place in the imperial palace in the middle of the third decade of the 4th century, when Constantine had his own son Crispus murdered. The authors regard Helena's arrival in Jerusalem in 326 as a diplomatic stunt to ameliorate the ill fame of Constantine's court. Eusebius solves the scandal by making a comparison with the sacrifice of Isaac. The focus on Helena's piety should be both a salve on the wound and a welcome diversion for the sake of unity within the realm.

[117] For these reasons I will not deal with every subsequent church history. Some of them, in any case, I will return to at the appropriate moment: Socrates, Theoderet and Sozomen are continued from the 6th century by 1. Malalas, *Chronographia*, LXIII, ed. B.G. NIEBUHR, CSHB, 1831, col. 319 (from the Greek): 'Idem Constantinus Imperator matrem suam, Dominam Helenam, Hierosolymas misit, ad exquirendam Crucem Venerabilem: quam una cum quinque clavis repertam, Helena inde reportavit. Ex eo tempore res Christianorum melius se indies habuere'. 2. Georgios Cedrenos, *Historia Compendium*, ed. E. BEKKER, CSHB, 1838, cols. 497–498 (from the Greek): 'et Helena mater imperatoris insomnio admonita Hierosolymam proficiscitur; ibique sacris locis detectis venerandam crucem invenit, omniaque restituit, et templa iis locis aedificavit ac spendide exornavit'. 3. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. J. CLASSEN, CSHB, 1839, col. 38 (from the Greek): 'Helena [...] adhibita multidudine [...] tres cruces effossae [...] clavi etiam repert. Macarius dubium

The fact that Eusebius does not mention the Finding of the Cross has been a source of great concern to previous writers.[118] The 'silence' of both the *Historia Ecclesiastica*[119] and the *Vita Constantini*[120] on this topic is traditionally invoked as an argument against there being any real truth in the Finding of the Cross in general and its discovery by Helena in particular.[121] It goes without saying that this *argumentum e silentio* is only valid in the context of research into whether or not the discovery of Christ's Cross did actually take place. I seek to supplement the issue in a double sense: first by means of a nuance, and then by means of a methodological shift.

As Stefan Heid has already observed, it is not actually the case that Eusebius says nothing whatever about the Finding of the Cross, but—to use Heid's words—you have to look for it with a magnifying glass.[122] The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is minutely described

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omne fide dissovit'. Even the mere shadow of the Cross brings the woman back to life. 4. Johannes Zonaras (2nd quarter of the 12th cent.). 5. Alexander Monachos of Salamis (late 6th cent.). 6. Andreas of Crete (1st half of the 8th cent.) 7. Nikephorus Kallistos (14th cent.). The Latin tradition is mostly continued after Rufinus's version in: 1. *Excerpta latina barbari* (early 5th cent.). 2. Cassiodorus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (6th cent.), in his *Historia Tripartita*, PL 69 about Constantine's vision. 3. Gregory of Tours (late 6th cent.), *Liber in gloria martyrium*. 4. Ado of Vienna (3rd quarter of the 9th cent.), *Martyrologium*: *Le martyrologe d' Adon*, ed. J. DUBOIS and G. RENAUD (*Sources d'histoire médiévale*), Paris, 1984: *Inventio sanctae Crucis*, refers both to the *titulus* and to Macarius. 5. *Martyrologium* of Usuardus (after Ado), ca 875. 6. Hrabanus Maurus (1st quarter of the 9th cent.), 70th Homily, *Homiliae in Evangelica et Epistolas, ad Lotharium Augustum*, PL 110, cols. 131–132: *Reversio sanctae atque gloriosissimae Crucis Domini nostri Jesu Christi*: '[. . .] ab Helena iam dicti principis matre sancta crux fuisset inventa, atque per sanitatem aegroti et resuscitationem mortui fuisset evidenter indicio'. 7. Altmann of Hautvillers (9th cent.). 8. World History of Otto of Freising (mid-12th cent.). 9. *Kaiserchronik* (1st half of the 12th cent.). 10. *Gesta Treverorum* (1st half of the 12th cent.).

[118] Eusebius's silence on this point has acquired almost mythic dimensions; P. MARAVAL, *Lieux Saints et pélérinages d'Orient*, Paris, 1985: 'entourée du plus grand mystère'; H. LECLERCQ, art. *Croix*, art. cit., col. 31317: 'insoluble'. Various hypotheses are introduced by: Z. RUBIN, art. cit., pp. 79–105; H.A. DRAKE, *What Eusebius Knew. The Genesis of the Vita Constantini*, in *Classical Philology*, 83, 1988, pp. 20–38; H.A. DRAKE, *Eusebius on the True Cross*, in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 36, 1985, pp. 1–22; J. VOGT, *Helena Augusta*. art. cit., pp. 211–222; P.W.L. WALKER, op. cit., p. 129 and p. 252 ff.; J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., pp. 82–89; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 93–123.

[119] Edns.: *Histoire Écclésiastique. Eusèbe de Césarée*, trans. and gloss G. BARDY, Paris, 1952; *The Ecclesiastical History*, trans. X. LAKE, 2 vols., London-Cambridge, 1963–1965; *Kerkelijke geschiedenis*, introduction and trans. D. FRANCE, Bussum, 1946.

[120] Edn.: EUSEBIUS, *Vita Constantini*, PG 20, cols. 909–1229.

[121] Apart from that, Eusebius has a reputation as an extremely reliable and conscientious historian; P.W.L. WALKER, op. cit., p. 242, '[. . .] Eusebius' essential reliability as a historian'.

[122] S. HEID, art. cit., p. 45.

in Eusebius's *Vita Constantini*, III, 35–47 (338). He attributes the building of the basilica (dedicated on 14 September 335, according to the *Chronicon Paschale*) to the discovery of Christ's tomb.[123] He also tells us that the church was built on the spot where a statue or temple dedicated to Venus had stood (VC III 26, 3). The place was purified, the idols were destroyed and the site was excavated. The Sepulchre was discovered after digging very deeply.[124] He does not mention the discovery of the Cross as such. It is not so much his silence on the subject of Helena that is problematic—after all, Eusebius is writing the biography of Constantine, not of his mother[125]—as his silence about the relic, which according to Cyril was already being venerated little more than a decade later, in 348. The real anomaly is the fact that Eusebius chooses to ignore the worship of the relic of the Cross per se.[126]

Nevertheless, it is not the case that Eusebius is completely silent on the subject. When referring to Constantine's letter to Macarius he dwells on the Cross (VC III, 30, 1) and says that it lay concealed beneath the ground until its time had come to shine forth. Those who worship it are now freed from the common enemy and that truly surpasses all admiration.[127] And in his *Laus Constantini*, a panegyric to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Constantine's reign (336),[128] Eusebius mentions the Church of the Holy Sepulchre very much in the light of the glorious Cross. The 'temple' is built for 'the salutary sign'.[129] This 'sign' can only be a reference to the Cross. In each case Eusebius regards the Cross as a symbol.[130]

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[123] EUSEBIUS, *Vita Constantini*, ed. F. WINKELMANN (*Die Griechischen christlichen Schrifsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte. Eusebius Werke*, 1), Berlin, 1903–1908, p. 40.

[124] S. HEID, art. cit., p. 47, observes that this 'digging deeply' is echoed in the 'digging deeply' for the Holy Cross in Rufinus, Paulinus of Nola and others.

[125] In fact Eusebius does mention that Helena undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (VC III, 42, 1) in the years 327–328, that she built churches in Bethlehem and on the Mount of Olives (VC III, 42, 1) and that she performed a great deal of charitable work (VC III, 44–47).

[126] H. LECLERCQ, art. *Croix*, art. cit., col. 3135: the earliest monumental evidence of devotion to a relic of the Cross dates from 359. In an inscription in Tixter (Algerije: A. AUDOLLENT, *Mission Épigraphique en Algérie*, in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, 10, 1890, p. 452) can be read 'de ligno crucis'.

[127] Z. RUBIN, art. cit., p. 83.

[128] EUSEBIUS, *Laus Constantini*, ed. I.A. HEIKEL (*Die Griechischen christlichen Schrifsteller der ersten Jahrhunderts. Eusebius Werke*, 1), 1903–1908.

[129] H.A. DRAKE, *Eusebius on the True Cross*, art. cit., p. 14; Z. RUBIN, art. cit., p. 83.

[130] J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., pp. 85–86.

Eusebius devotes more time to Christ's tomb and the recently built basilica than to Golgotha, the site of Christ's crucifixion, which is understandable, given his emphasis on theophany and the Father.[131] But even in the case of the Holy Sepulchre, Eusebius rather refers to its symbolism than its historical authenticity. Sensational discoveries are not at all in his line, and emphatically not if they also contribute to the attractions of a rival city.[132] Cyril of Jerusalem certainly puts the emphasis on the material Cross. In his short dissertations sensory perceptions play a great part. This indicates the pilgrim and relic cults: *multa existant, dilecti, vera de Christo testimonia* ('There are many remains that testify to the truth of Christ'). It is even suggested that he speaks on the very spot: *hic crucifixus est*, and *felix iste Golgothas in quo nunc* [. . .] *congregati sumus* ('Here is the Crucifixion' and 'Blessed is Golgotha, on which we are now gathered').[133]

On the other hand, Cyril tries to reconcile the Incarnation with the Resurrection (the dogma of the two natures in one). This he does in a catechetical play of symbols, in which the 'tangible' once more sets the tone. Cyril sees in the two locations both a geographic and a material connection:[134] both lie in the same Holy Garden[135] and both Golgotha and the sepulchre are part of the same rock formation.[136] Coming from the Holy Scriptures 'garden' and 'rock' are by no means neutral concepts but loaded with symbolism. Cyril transfers this symbolic dimension to the topographic reality.[137] Cyril and Eusebius both appear to be aiming at the sacralization of particular locations, Eusebius rather by a mystic process, Cyril by way of the senses.

Eusebius may have found it inappropriate for Constantine to be associated with a Cross that was seen by some intellectuals as a

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[131] Although, according to the *Laudes Constantini*, the Holy Sepulchre seems to have been built for the Cross; Z. RUBIN, art. cit., p. 83.

[132] P.W.L. WALKER, op. cit., p. 29.

[133] CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *Catecheses*, PG 33, ch. 146, col. 686.

[134] P.W.L. WALKER, op. cit., pp. 260–275.

[135] The garden must be understood here as in John (19, 41), for in reality the ground presumably lay fallow.

[136] This possibly refers to 'petra' from Matthew 27, 51.

[137] J.Z. SMITH, *To Take Place. Towards Theory in Ritual*, Chicago-London, 1987, p. 117; 'to call to the mind the narrative of the place. Here all has been transferred to inner place. All that remains of Jerusalem is an image, the narrative, and a temporal sequence'.

rather tender spot in the faith.[138] How can a king and incarnate God die by such a common instrument of execution?[139] Regarded in the light of intellectual debate it might be suggested that Eusebius, the court theologian, would not seek needlessly to expose the fledgling state religion to such an animadversion. Besides, personally Eusebius would have gone along with the arguments of the pagans when they suggested that Christians might not worship false gods, but they did worship human bodies.[140] The focus on the resurrection from the dead gave Eusebius the opportunity to lay the heart of the Christian mystery in the divine *logos*.[141] Thus he perceived the Cross not as a relic but as a symbol (*tropaion, vexillum*): a triumph over the pagans on the one hand (as Constantine also used it)[142] and a triumph over death on the other (the Resurrection).[143] If we return to the hypothesis that the legend was already current among the pilgrims' tales from Jerusalem,[144] this would once again explain Eusebius's distrust, averse as he was to populism in general and in association with the emperor in particular.[145]

In his commentary on the gospels, moreover, Eusebius had made a strong theological distinction between what he called Hebrews on

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[138] Socrates, who completed Eusebius's church history, does describe the Finding of the Cross. In his foreword he writes that Eusebius's *Vita Constantini* was intended more as a panegyric than an account of actual facts (Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 1, *proem*, PG 67, col. 33); K.M. SETTON, *Christian Attitude Towards the Emperor in the Fourth Century. Especially as Shown in Addresses to the Emperor*, New York, 1967, p. 41.

[139] Drake appoaches it from an opposite angle. He thinks that Eusebius wants to dissociate the Cross from the emperor, in order to avoid the criticism of an overly-imperialized Christianity; H.A. DRAKE, art. cit., p. 19. S. Borgehammar sees insufficient grounds for this fear in the early 4th century.

[140] An expression of Eusebius in his 'In Praise of Constantine', XI–XVIII, recorded in H.A. DRAKE, *In Praise of Constantine. A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations*, Berkeley-London, 1976, pp. 38–45.

[141] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 117–119; P.W.L. WALKER, op. cit., pp. 72–92.

[142] On the contrasts between Eusebius and Constantine, see: A. GRILLMEIER, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, London-Oxford, 2nd ed., 1975, pp. 250–264.

[143] In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* IX, 9–10 Eusebius calls the Cross 'a trophy of the Saviour's passion'. In the *Vita Constantini* I, 40 he uses a 'trophy of victory', a 'sign of salvation'. The most unusually factual pronouncement for Eusebius in this context must have been that he considers the Holy Sepulchre to be the place that our Lord suffered (VC III, 33).

[144] The most important theory of S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 77–81 and S. HEID, art. cit., pp. 41–71.

[145] S. HEID, art. cit., passim, regards the Finding of the Cross as a totally naive invention, in which the pilgrim projected his emotional quest onto a noble Helena. Eusebius's silence is seen as a 'proof' of this.

one hand and Jews on the other.[146] The latter were those Jews who continued to practice their belief after the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, the former were the patriarchs up to and including Moses. Of the patriarchs Christ was the divine fulfilment and Constantine the political accomplishment.[147] Eusebian political theology integrates only the patriarchs of the Old Testament in its Christian salvation history. The *sub legem* era is the 'shameful' and 'dark work' of the Jews, culminating in the murder of Christ. Eusebius has no desire to 'mitigate' the guilt and atonement that the Jew must bear by granting him a rediscovered Cross that he too can embrace as a convert.[148] Thus his silence can also have been motivated by an attempt to deprive the Jews of every apologetic advantage. The 'stumbling block' of 1 Corinthians 1, 23 must have been vividly present to his mind's eye.[149]

Ironically enough, Eusebius's role as exemplar has ensured that his writings would work in both an aetiological and edifying way. Later sources have applied Eusebius's aetiology of the Holy Sepulchre to the relic of the Cross in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In that case Eusebius is 'in fact telling his very own special version of the finding of the cross.'[150]

The Judas Cyriacus legend

During the first decades of the fifth century, an important ramification occurs in the literary history of the *Inventio crucis*. A second, anonymous version appears that is certainly familiar with the patristic motifs but has considerably embellished them. Moreover, there are a number of shifts in emphasis, probably reflecting a reorientation of function and target readership. For instance, Helena acquires a

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[146] H. BERKHOF, *Die Theologie von Eusebius von Caesarea*, Amsterdam, 1939, passim; J. VOGT, *Helena Augusta*, art. cit., pp. 218–219.

[147] Eusebius makes a direct connection between Moses, Christ and Constantine; M.J. HOLLERICH, *Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius. Reassessing the First Court Theologian*, in *Church History*, 59, 1990, pp. 308–325; M.J. HOLLERICH, *Myth and History in Eusebius' De vita Constantini. Vit. Const. 1–12 in its Contemporary Setting*, in *The Harvard Theological Review*, 82, 1989, pp. 421–423.

[148] J. VOGT, art. cit., p. 219.

[149] Ambrose uses the rediscovered Cross in reverse, namely as the great shame of the Jew ('the Jew blushes').

[150] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 121.

boldly characterized antagonist, Judas the Jew.[151] This version of the legend of the Finding of the Cross would become very widespread and, compared to the patristic sources, would exercise a far greater influence on the iconography.[152]

According to the legend, in the year 351, Helena goes to Jerusalem and orders the entire population of the city and surrounding towns and villages to assemble (1).[153] In some versions she does this at the time of the vision and conversion of her son, Constantine (2). There is specific reference to the queen's familiarity with the Holy Scriptures (3). On the 28th of the second month Helena has all the Jews of the city and surrounding area gathered together. Only three thousand can be found, because at that time Jerusalem is lying waste. She orders them to choose from their number men who know their Law and will be able to answer her questions. (4). Helena's command causes great perturbation and from their midst a thousand of those who know the Law are brought before the queen. In vain Helena interrogates them about the meaning of the prophecies of Moses (immaculate conception), David (Resurrection), and Isaiah (the unbelieving Jew), prophecies that are all connected with the Messiah (5). Then, out of the thousand, five hundred experts in Jewish law

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[151] Hence the term Judas Cyriacus legend. It was used for the first time in the now outdated study by: J. STRAUBINGER, *Die Kreuzauffindungslegende. Untersuchungen über ihre altchristlichen Fassungen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der syrischen Texte* (*Forschungen zur christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte*, ed. A. EHRHARD and J.P. HIRSCH, 11), Paderborn, 1912.

[152] I pass over a third anonymous offshoot, the so-called Protonike legend, in which it is said that the Trus Cross was found in the reign of Emperor Claudius (41–45) by his wife Protonike. The legend spread mainly in Syria and would not exert any influence on the Western iconography. Between 400 and 430 it was added to the Abgar tradition; D. LOFTUS, *A History of the Twofold Invention of the Cross Whereon Our Saviour was Crucified*, Dublin, 1686; M. VAN ESBROECK, *Le manuscrit Syriaque, Nouvelle serie 4 de Leningrad (Ve siècle)*, in *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont. Contribution à l'étude des christianismes orientaux*, Geneva, 1988, pp. 211–220; A. DESREUMAUX, *Histoire du roi Abgar et de Jésus. Présentation et traduction du texte syriaque intégral de la doctrine d'Addaï et en appendices traduction d'une version grecque par* A. PALMER, *Traduction d'une version Éthiopienne par* R. BEYLOT (*Apocryphes*, [1]), [Turnhout], 1993, pp. 138–145.

[153] J. STRAUBINGER, op. cit., pp. 15–49, takes as his basis a Syriac version; H.J.W. DRIJVERS and J.W. DRIJVERS, *The Finding of the True Cross. The Judas Kyriakos Legend in Syriac. Introduction, Text and Translation*, CSCO 565, Leuven, 1997; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., appendix, publishes the three Latin translations (*Inventio crucis* A, B, C). The *Inventio crucis* A was published for the first time. It is a critical edition based on a codicological and philological comparison of the different editions.

are put forward but they too do not understand their forefathers' words. Helena reproves them for not knowing their own Law (6).

Now one of them, Judas, had learned from his grandfather Zacheus and his father Simon how the Jews had crucified the true Messiah because he rebuked the elders and scribes. But Simon also knew that Christ was risen and thus was truly the Saviour. He had asked his son Judas never to betray the truth, referring to the stoning of Stephen (7). Judas declines to cooperate with the queen—though he knows that the prophecies refer to the lost Cross—and so Helena threatens to have all the Jews burned. She promises that the discovery of the Cross will ensure life in heaven. Judas still prevaricates, reminding the queen that it all took place many years ago and that he would not be able to find the exact place of the Crucifixion. Helena argues with him, pointing out that those who died in the Trojan War are still remembered and the locations of their graves are known, precisely because these things were written down. Likewise, the location of Calvary was described in the Gospels (8). Judas is still silent and is punished by being thrown into a dry well for seven days.

On the eighth day Judas gives in and shows Helena the place where Christ was crucified. Praying in Hebrew he asks God for a sign. He calls God a creator, the maker of the Cherubim, who serve Him, and the Seraphim who guard the Tree of Life at the centre of Paradise. And he begs God for a revelatory miracle, such as Moses was granted when he found the bones of Joseph hidden in the river, adding that the era of the son of Mary is now at hand.

Then the earth shakes and sweet-smelling perfume rises from the spot where Golgotha is located. Filled with admiration Judas claps his hands (9) and digs twenty fathoms deep, where he finds three crosses. These are taken and displayed in the middle of the city and at about the ninth hour a dead youth is carried by. Judas determines the identity of the 'tree of power' by laying each cross in turn on the corpse. The youth's return to life at the touch of the third establishes that cross as Christ's (10). But the devil is jealous and attempts to disrupt the proceedings. Judas overcomes him with the name of Christ and damns him to eternal fire (11). The Cross is mounted in gold and precious stones and kept in a silver shrine. Helena builds a church on Golgotha. Judas receives the 'washing of rebirth', and is baptized a second time by the bishop of Jerusalem. Helena gives him a new name, Cyriacus ('of the Lord') (12).

Because she is versed in the Holy Scriptures, Helena also searches for the nails with which Christ was transfixed to the Cross. Judas smites his breast and prays—this time with many brethren who have come to believe in Christ—to receive another sign from God. A tremendous flash of lightning shows Helena and Judas Cyriacus where the nails lie buried. They shine like pure gold in the earth. Helena kneels and worships them (13). The nails will be incorporated into the bridle of the emperor's horse and kept as imperial trophies (14). Later, Helena drives all the Jews who still do not believe out of Judea. In Jerusalem itself she performs acts of charity. She requires all men and women[154] to commemorate the Finding of the Cross on 3 May every year. All who do that will receive part with the blessed Mary, Mother of God (15).

The reference to the Apostle Stephen, witness of Christ's Resurrection and the first martyr, who died by stoning, provides some help in defining the chronology of the text. St Stephen's grave was discovered at Christmas, in the year 415, at Caphargamala by the priest Lucian. This provides a *terminus a quo* for the legend. The *terminus ad quem* is supplied by Sozomen's *Church History* (to 425), which already refers to aspects of the legend, albeit in a negative (condemnatory?) sense—Helena found the Cross through a sign from God, not through the mediation of a Jew who had got his information from his ancestors.[155] Moreover, the legend's final dedication refers to Mary as the Mother of God, *Theotokos*, a title that was ratified at the Council of Ephesus in 431. On this basis the *terminus ad quem* can be established as the fourth decade of the fifth century.

Although the cult of St Stephen points to Jerusalem there has been much speculation about the original language of the text. A Syriac original is generally accepted on the basis of the oldest manuscript, now in the British Library in London (Add. Ms. 14644), which dates from the fifth to sixth century.[156] However, on the grounds of

[154] Women only, in the Greek version; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 160.

[155] On this dating, see: S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 147 and pp. 201–204; J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., pp. 174–175; J. STRAUBINGER, op. cit., p. 76; SOZOMEN, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. J. BIDEZ and G.C. HANSEN, *Die Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller des ersten drei Jahrhunderte*, 1960, II, 1, 4.

[156] J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., p. 165 ff., based on J. STRAUBINGER, op. cit., p. 66 ff.; first German trans. E. NESTLE, *De Sancta Cruce*, Berlin, 1889, pp. 25–36, pp. 55–64.

the first thorough philological analysis Borgehammar postulates an original text in Greek, which was later translated successively into Latin and Syriac. Moreover, his research has shown that the Latin version must already have been known in Rome in around 500.[157] However, the earliest Latin copy has been handed down in a manuscript of the sixth century (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 2769).[158] The Syriac translation is thus preserved in the oldest manuscript but is, according to Borgehammar, the last stage of the literary stemma.[159]

The Judas Cyriacus legend displays more differences than similarities to the earlier patristic traditions. Only the core of the plot is kept, and even then in its most universal form. Helena finds the Cross with local help and a knowledge of the Scriptures. Three crosses are unearthed. Christ's Cross is identified by a miraculous resurrection. Helena builds a church on Golgotha and elevates the relic to a Christian status symbol. She drives the Jews from Jerusalem (or Judea). In some versions the legend begins with Constantine's vision, which does have a patristic foundation, but now occurs specifically in the context of Helena's mission. The discovery of the nails closely resembles Ambrose's version. Certain elements are reminiscent of the version given by Paulinus of Nola. In that version, too, Helena asks for the help of the Jews and the candidate for resurrection is also a young man. According to the *terminus a quo* suggested above, Paulinus would have integrated these elements independently from the Cyriacus legend. They reduce the antagonist group to the Jews and enhance the *mirabilia* content. In the written tradition presented here, the strong stress on the Semitic and the emphasizing of the miraculous are solidly rooted in the structure. Indeed, the role of the converted Jew is at the heart of the legend.

Twice Helena refers to the Bible. First she interrogates the Jewish scribes about the meaning of the prophets. The learned men of the city cannot explain that the prophecies of Moses, David and Isaiah refer respectively to the Incarnation, the Resurrection and its denial by the Jews, this last in contrast to the fact that the Jews must still

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[157] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 203.

[158] Fol. 15v–21v. Probably originating in Ravenna and first published by A. HOLDER, *Inventio sanctae crucis*, Leipzig, 1889, pp. 1–13; See also: S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 211, no. P.

[159] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 149; critical editions, p. 201 ff.; *Inventio crucis* A is a reconstruction of the lost original Latin version.

be regarded as the righteous seed of God. Still later, the cynically demonstrated 'foolishness' concerning their own writings is contrasted with the (still secret) knowledge of the outcome in the Jewish oral traditions (Zacheus-Simon[160]-[Stephen]-Judas).[161] Further on, when Judas is asked to divulge this secret knowledge, the motif of the written word is taken up again, but this time in analogy with classical Greek sources that tell of the Trojan War—in just the same way the location of Golgotha is known from the New Testament.[162]

The reader has perhaps noticed that a shift has taken place. In the first instance Helena interrogates the Jews about the Messiah by questioning them about the prophets. When they confer together Judas speaks up and the very first thing he mentions is the Cross. The focus of Helena's interrogation suddenly—and through Judas himself—shifts to the material Cross, concealed on Golgotha. The mystery of the Messiah is revealed (or concealed) tangibly and topographically, and the latter is used as proof of the former. The basis of this reasoning is to be found in St Paul: the secret of Christianity is revealed not only through wisdom but also through mystery (1 Cor. 2, 10–16).[163] The Jew cannot accept Christ as the Messiah because he does not accept the Cross (1 Cor. 1, 23). It has to be shown that the Crucifixion was part of God's plan. This can be achieved through a demonstration that the ancient prophecies have been fulfilled, for instance, but also through a revelation external to the Scriptures—in reality.

The mystery of the revelation is contained in the Emmaus story (Lk. 24, 31).[164] Christ appears *incognito* to a number of his disciples on the way to Emmaus and reveals to them what is concealed in the Holy Scriptures, at which their eyes are opened. They recognize him, or rather, see the light of the revelation. The event at Emmaus refers to a *nachträglich* fulfilling of the Holy Word in catechetical-pastoral reality. The Cyriacus legend can also be read in this way.

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[160] The Apostle Judas Iscariot is also called the son of Simon (John 13, 2).

[161] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 168, sees here a respect for the teaching of the Aggadah on the part of the anonymous author.

[162] Does the anonymous author give an ironic wink here at a namesake: Helen of Troy? Still, the analogy is not entirely sound. At most the Gospels allow us to conclude that Golgotha existed, not where it was actually located. For that Helena clearly needs the oral tradition.

[163] M.N.A. BOCKMÜHL, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity*, Tübingen, 1990, passim, on the concept of secret and revelation.

[164] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 169.

For, in Matthew 13, 17, Christ says to his disciples that 'many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, but did not see it'. This is repeated by the Jewish scribes when they present Judas to Helena: 'This is the son of a righteous man and a prophet' (8). The typology lies in the fact that Judas will indeed see.

The apologetic composition of the Cyriacus legend shows similarities with the *Adversus Judaeos* genre (for example, the *Dialogi* of Justin Martyrs and Tertullian's *Adversus Judaeos*).[165] The same argumentation can be recognized in the sermon of St Peter. In Acts 2, 14–36 Peter first demonstrates the fulfilment of the prophecies before proceeding to the accusation of the killing of the Messiah. Moreover, that reproof is formulated as an address to the whole house of Israel, just as Helena assembles all the Jews in the area and then expels the unconverted.[166] Perhaps Peter's sermon was a source of inspiration for the anonymous author.[167] The Acts are also the source for the reference to Stephen (7, 51–56).[168]

That the anonymous author of the Cyriacus legend is sufficiently acquainted with Jewish writings is clear from Judas's prayer for a sign from God. There are similar prayers in 2 Corinthians 19, 15–19, Isaiah 37, 16–20 and Esther 13, 9–17. The threefold *Sanctus* is reminiscent of the Qedushah of the synagogue.[169] That this—according to the anonymous author—is connected with a secret language appears from the fantastic transcriptions.[170] In 2 Enoch 23, 2 it is said that

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[165] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 166, refers to: A.L. WILLIAMS, *Adversus Judaeos. A Birds-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance*, Cambridge, 1935; but seems unacquainted with: H. SCHRECKENBERG, *Die Christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte (11–13 Jh.). Mit einer Ikonographie des Judenthemas bis zum 4. Laterankonzil*, Frankfurt-Paris, 1988; JUSTIN, *Dialogi*, ed. G. ARCHAMBAULT (*Textes et documents du Christianisme*), Paris, 1909; TERTULLIAN, *Adversos Judaeos*, CCSL 2, 1954.

[166] Possibly prefigured in Psalm 15(16), 8; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 168.

[167] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 167–168.

[168] Stephen is called Judas's brother. In Stephen's Passion it is mentioned how his father was torn between sorrow and joy; sorrow because he could not free his son from the hands of those who stoned him and joy because he knew that he suffered for Christ; M. VAN ESBROECK, *Jean II de Jérusalem et les cultes de Saint Etienne*, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 102, 1984, pp. 99–134, p. 104; The words of Judas—that he had never taken part in their acts, and had often spoken against them (paraphrase of para. 7)—echo Jacob's predictions about Simeon and Levi (Gen. 49, 5); S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 173–174. Judas is presented as an *imitatio Stephani* and in the same way also as an *imitatio Christi*.

[169] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 171.

[170] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 273–278, has added a synoptic edition of the Hebrew prayer based on 18 manuscripts of the *Inventio crucis A* tradition.

Enoch learnt Hebrew from an angel. It is interesting to note in this connection that according to Genesis 4, 26 the Israelites began to worship their God from the generation of Enoch onwards. In 2 Enoch there is also a cosmogonic tale about the fallen angels and Paradise. In the Testament of Levi (18, 10) it is said—just as Judas says in his prayer—that the Messiah will open the gates of Paradise and the saints will be given to eat of the Tree of Life.

The text tells us that when Judas set to work he girded his loins like Abraham. We learn from Philo of Alexandria that Abraham served as a prototype of the priestly sacrificial rites.[171] In Leviticus 8, 7 and 13, and 16, 3–4 it is expressly stated that a girdle must be worn during rites. Finally, in the Jewish apocrypha, the link is made between the girdle and the sacrifice of Isaac.[172]

The choice of the name Judas also shows a knowledge of Jewish teachings. In Genesis 45, 8 *yudu* means to praise God and in Targum Onqelos, to confess, to make confession.[173] In Targum Neofiti all Jews (*Yehudim*) will be named after Judah[174] and, finally, in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan both meanings—praising and the naming of the people—come together.[175] Judas Cyriacus thus exemplifies all Jews. He is universal; in him the Christian desideratum, the universal conversion of the Jews, is embodied. This aspiration is evident in other passages too. Judas alludes rather obliquely to Christ in the wilderness: 'And who, being in the desert with bread placed before him, will eat stones?' (8). These words recall the temptation of Christ (Mt. 4, 3). Even so, Judas first chooses hunger in a dried-up well (no water = desert). However, his fast will bear fruit: the rediscovered Cross. This is reminiscent of Joseph, who was betrayed by his brothers and put in a well, an event that is seen as prefiguring the Passion of Christ.[176] In his prayer Judas recalls Moses, who also undertook a search, in his case for the bones of Joseph. Genesis 50, 25–26 and

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[171] PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, *De Abrahamo*, 198 (*The Loeb Classical Library*, 6), 1934, p. 96; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 176.

[172] L. GINZBERG, *The Legends of the Jews*, vol. I, Philadelphia, 1913, p. 290.

[173] M. ABERBACH (ed.) and B. GROSSFELD (trans.), *Targoem. Targum Onqelos on Genesis 49* (*The Society of Biblical Literature. Aramaic Studies*, 1), Missoula, 1976, p. 10; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 174.

[174] R. le DEAUT, *Targum du pentateuque* (*Scriptorum Christianorum*, I), Paris, 1978, p. 436.

[175] R. le DEAUT, op. cit., p. 437.

[176] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 170.

Exodus 13, 19 relate that the bones were brought out of Egypt to Israel. In the Mishna the bones are specifically associated with Moses; they were found in a silver casket.[177] Another widespread tradition has Joseph's bones being sunk in the Nile.[178] The Nile is used as a metaphor for the mausoleum.[179] The Testament of Simeon 6, 2 adds that the place where they were buried gave forth a sweet fragrance. That fragrance is, of course, a paradisal topos. The Tree of Life also smells pleasing[180] and the spot where Judas finds the Cross is revealed by means of the same pleasant tingling of the senses. In this way the typology between bones-Joseph and Tree of Life-Cross is symbolically enhanced. Likewise, in Exodus the Ark of the Covenant, metaphor for the Law, is called to mind. In Christianity Jesus is the sole fulfiller of the Law: the Cross replaces the Ark and the bones.[181]

The motifs of the thunder, lightning and sweet fragrance are associated with the liturgical practice of the *elevatio* of the relics of martyrs. Only a sign from God permitted the body or bones of a martyr to be removed from their place of burial and displayed for veneration. The requisite sign from God was often induced by a period of fasting.[182] Although it was not until the Carolingian period that this practice was made official and supplemented with a *translatio* (removal to the destined shrine) and *deposito* (interment in that shrine), and rules were formulated that allowed only a bishop or noble to open the tomb (Council of Mainz, 831),[183] the liturgical and literary convention of the miraculous *elevatio* is already interwoven with the Judas Cyriacus legend. The Cross is in fact regarded as a martyr and Golgotha functions as the Cross's 'tomb'. That it is a Jew who opens the ground is intrinsically and apologetically motivated. The place is known only by those who were alive at the time of the Crucifixion,

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[177] H. BIETENHARD (ed.), *Die Mischna*, III, 6, Berlin, 1956, pp. 46–49.

[178] PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, *De Somniis* II, 109 (*The Loeb Classical Library*, 5), 1934, pp. 490–492.

[179] L. GINZBERG, op. cit., vol. III, p. 5.

[180] *Dulce carme lingua*, a hymn from a 9th-century manuscript, taken from the *Pange lingua* of Venantius Fortunatus, but with the addition of Helena's discovery and Constantine's vision (15 strophes in total): '[. . .]/hinc odor exit aromaticus/Nectare mellifluo astius/[. . .]' (strophe 24); J. SZÖVERFFY, *Hymns of the Holy Cross*, Brooklyn-Leiden, 1976, p. 25.

[181] J. WILKINSON, *Jewish Influences on the Early Christian Rite of Jerusalem*, in *Le muséon*, 2, 1979, pp. 347–359.

[182] A. ANGENENDT, *Heilige und Reliquien. Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart*, Munich, 1994, pp. 172–175.

[183] A. ANGENENDT, op. cit., pp. 173–174.

which in effect means simply the Jews. Its recognition by the Jews is their recognition of the truth of the Cross.

The implicit and explicit references in the Scripture and elsewhere are intended to present the Finding of the Cross to the Jew as the final and overwhelming truth of the Christian mystery. The cosmic dimension becomes clear in the contrasts. The written word as opposed to the orally transmitted word; the cultivated earth (fertile) versus the desolate earth (barren) and the upper world (heaven, or risen from the earth) versus the underworld (hell, or locked in the earth). These dualisms are opposed as truth (light) is opposed to untruth (darkness) and they are personified in the Christian (Helena) and the Jew (Judas). The Cross was concealed in the darkness of the earth but was revealed to mankind once more through the understanding and acceptance of the Scriptures and the truth by a group of converted Jews. The Resurrection takes places, as it were, for the second time. The era of untruth is represented by the city laid waste,[184] which afterwards is rebuilt in the sign of the Cross. The Finding of the Cross sheds light on the Scriptures, it reveals their meaning, as the bolt of lightning revealed the 'golden' nails. 'Reality' and 'Truth' have become counterparts. Jerusalem is now preeminently a Holy City: previously barren, now fertile.[185]

The archetypes culminate in the 'dried-up well' of Judas's period of fasting and the 'life-giving well' of baptism.[186] Here, the history

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[184] Unlike the patristic tradition, which recognizes the opposition between the Hadrianic temple and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: pagan versus Christian architecture. In the Judas Cyriacus legend the opposition is radicalized in a cosmogonic sense. The discovery of the Cross displays cosmogonic characteristics: chaos, darkness, expressed by the rubble that had accumulated there in the course of time, yielding to the sacred and the orderly. The 'rubble' element also appears in the context of the discovery of the Sepulchre in Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, III; A. LINDER, *Ecclesia and Synagoga in the Medieval Myth of Constantine the Great*, in *Belgisch tijdschrift voor filologie en geschiedenis*, 54, 1976, 4, pp. 1019–1060, pp. 1036–1039; J.Z. SMITH, *To Take Place. Towards Theory in Ritual*, Chicago-London, 1987, p. 80.

[185] B. BLUMENKRANZ, *Juifs et Chrétiens dans le monde Occidental. 430–1096*, Paris, 1960, p. 37, no. 21a–b: Prosper of Aquitaine (end of the 4th cent. to ca. 463) uses the metaphors 'barren' and 'fertile' in connection with, respectively, the Jerusalem of the Jews and the Jerusalem of the Christians.

[186] P. CRAMER, *Baptism and Change in the Early Middle Ages. c. 200–c. 1150*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 168, refers to the symbolism of wells in the context of baptism: Abraham and Isaac dig wells; the city of Beersheba and the kingdom of Solomon are rich in wells; Rebecca is found at a well; Moses strikes a spring from the rocks; Moses helps the daughters of Midian at a well, and so on. They are the anamnesis of baptism; LEIDRAD VAN LYON, *Liber de sacramento baptesimi*, PL 99, cols. 853–872, or 820.

of salvation takes its radical Christological turn, symbolically expressed in the seven days of Creation and the eighth of the Resurrection and eternity, as well as the symbolic groundplan of early Christian baptisteries and martyria.[187]

In the Judas Cyriacus legend the focus is shifted from the found True Cross to the found True Messiah. The apologetic character of the *Inventio crucis* is now fully revealed. The resolution of the Jewish-Christian controversy that it presents is the converted Jew, who, after centuries of wandering, desires to follow the path of the Cross. Only from this moment on can Jerusalem truly be claimed by the Christians as a holy city. We have come far from Eusebius, who was unwilling to represent the Cross in a sensory sense but far, too, from Ambrose and Rufinus, for instance, who told of a Christian queen worthy of all honour. Indeed, in the Judas Cyriacus legend it is not so much Helena who is the *exemplum* as the Jew. Its aetiological character has thus shifted to evangelization and conversion to Christianity.[188]

The Judas Cyriacus legend became extremely widespread.[189] Amnon Linder believes that its function pertains to the enforced baptism of Jews. Yet there are no indications that this was happening in the fifth century, although it did take place from the twelfth.[190] In the

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[187] In baptism 'time' is absent, the spirit is restored to its 'eternity'; P. CRAMER, op. cit., p. 170, after Augustine.

[188] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 164.

[189] History of manuscripts in Latin; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 208–213; J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., p. 175. Yet the *Decretum Pseudogelasianum de recipiendis et non recipiendis libris*, attributed to Gelasius I (d. 496), but probably from the first half of the 6th century, mentions: *item scripturae de inventione crucis* [. . .] *et alia scripturae de inventione capitis beati Iohannis Baptistae, novellae quidem relationes sunt, et nonnuli eas catholici legunt;* 'also the writings concerning the Finding of the Cross and other writings concerning the finding of St John the Baptist's head, and the stories that refer to these; none of them are acceptable'; Edn.: E. von DOBSCHÜTZ, *Das Decretum Gelasianum de libris recipiendis et non recipiendis* (*Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristliche Literatur*, 38, 4), Leipzig, 1912, pp. 43–44; J.W. DRIJVERS, op. cit., p. 175; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 202–203. J. Straubinger applied the reference to the Judas Cyriacus legend, probably on the basis of a Bollandist comment: J. STRAUBINGER, op. cit., p. 73; *Acta Sanctorum. Maii Tomus primus*, Paris-Rome, 1866, pp. 356–366: caput I: Helena legend, pp. 366–368: caput II: *Fabulosa inventae Crucis*. There is, however, no certainty at all about which tradition the *Decretum* is prohibiting here. Around the same period, ca. 500, the *Vita Silvestri* was propagated, accompanied by a Finding of the Cross, but this is clearly an appendix and not an autonomous text; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 203, n. 8. It is not clear why the *inventio* of the Cross is mentioned together with that of John's head. In both cases—at least according to the decree—a controversial discovery of relics is dealt with.

[190] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 162; G. STEMBERGER, *Juden und Christen*

high Middle Ages the legend was certainly used to justify such compulsory conversion. It can be linked to a more hard-line attitude to the 'guilt' of the Jews, now blamed individually for the death of Christ.[191] But in the early Middle Ages the strife between Jews and Christians was based on an altogether more apologetic conflict,[192] though this does not preclude the possibility that the Judas Cyriacus legend could already have played a part in a conversion campaign aimed at Judaism as a whole.

On the basis of the closing sentences Stefan Borgehammar thinks that the text was originally written for nuns. In the patristic tradition too reference is made to the holy virgins of Jerusalem. The early Church Fathers always associate pilgrimage and relic worship with female 'sentimentality'. Moreover, Borgehammar also refers to an inscription in the Basilica Sessoriana in Rome, in which it can be read that women may not enter the chapel except on the day of its dedication: in essence the Finding of the Cross and the dedication of the Constantinian basilica in Jerusalem share the same date, 14 September (see above).[193] In the Judas Cyriacus legend, however, the date of 14 September is replaced by 3 May.[194]

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im Heiligen Land, Munich, 1987, p. 251; A. BOUREAU, *L'événement sans fin. Récit et christianisme au Moyen Âge*, Paris, 1993, p. 210: the 'massacre de bois' in 1171, can be regarded as the breakthrough of anti-Semitism.

[191] B. BLUMENKRANZ, op. cit., p. 60, no. 45b: The diaspora that begins in the legend with Helena is the punishment for the Crucifixion; Cassiodorus (ca. 485–580), PL 69, col. 525.

[192] G.B. LADNER, *Aspects of Patristic Anti-Judaism*, in *Viator*, 2, 1971, pp. 355–363, compare Augustine, *Tractatus adversus iudaeos*, X, 15, PL 42, col. 63 ff.; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 162, n. 40.

[193] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 173 and n. 58 for the inscription.

[194] On the date and the anomalies concerning it, see: S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., excursus pp. 181–184.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FINDING OF THE CROSS IN CAROLINGIAN AND ROMANESQUE ART

It is in the Carolingian period that an iconography for the *Inventio crucis* develops. Its origin can be traced to three manuscripts: the Gellone Sacramentary (750–790), the Vercelli *Canones conciliarum* (ca. 800) and the *Wessobrunner Gebetbuch* (814). We shall examine the context in which they were produced, and see what their constituent features are in terms of content, thus gaining a greater insight into the functions of these pictures and the iconological structures in which they operated in the early Middle Ages.

The iconographic roots. Identity and diversity

The oldest iconography connected with the *Inventio crucis* appears in the early-Carolingian Gellone Sacramentary (750–790) (fig. 1).[1] The text of the codex is a unique copy of the Frankish version of the *Ritus Gelasianus*.[2] The manuscript is thus an important document in the history of the liturgy of the Franks in eighth-century Gaul. Sometime between 784 and 791 Charlemagne (768–814) donated a Gelasian sacramentary to Pope Hadrian as an exemplum. On the basis of the palaeography the year 750 is suggested as *postquem* and 790 as *antequem*, with 773 being the most likely approximate date.[3] The illuminator and scribe are one and the same individual, who is

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[1] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 12048, fol. 76v, 259 folios, 300mm × 180mm; V. LEROQUAIS, *Les sacramentaires et les missels manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France*, Paris, 1924, 1, p. 168; B. TEYSSEDRE, *Le sacramentaire de Gellone et la figure humaine*, Toulouse, 1959, p. 8 ff.; A. DUMAS (ed.), *Liber sacramentorum Gellonensis. Textus*, CCSL 159, p. 129, no. 142 and 189–190, no. 237. The first results of my research were published in, *Le sacramentaire de Gellone (750–790) et l'Invention entre le symbole et l'histoire*, in *Arte cristiana*, 789, 1998, pp. 449–460. See also: C. CHAZELLE, *The Crucified God in the Carolingian era. Theology and Art of Christ's Passion*, Cambridge, 2001. pp. XX–XX

[2] B. TEYSSEDRE, op. cit., p. 8

[3] B. TEYSSEDRE, op. cit., pp. 7–8 and p. 11.



Fig. 1. *Finding of the Cross.* Initial decoration D(eus), Meaux workshop, Gellone Sacramentary, second half of the 8th century. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 12048, fol. 76v.

assumed to have come from somewhere near Meaux, perhaps from the Benedictine Abbey of Sainte-Croix.[4] He reveals his name as 'DAVID' in the initial on fol. 99r.[5] The codex is known as the *Missale de Gillone* and the *Gellonis Vuillemi liber*,[6] referring to the Benedictine Abbey of Gellone to the northwest of Montpellier, which is first mentioned in a document dated 14 and 15 December 804.[7]

The document does not refer in so many words to the founding of the abbey,[8] but to a gift of lands by Count Guilhelmus in thanksgiving for his victory over the Moors in Barcelona (801).[9] The abbey is also referred to as *in causa domini Caroli*, which means that the demesne was regarded as the personal possession of Charlemagne.[10] Perhaps the sacramentary also had a diplomatic function. Either it was donated—like the lands—in the context of the *reconquista* or, like many other now lost codices, it was meant to supersede ancient liturgical texts as part of the Gelasian reform movement.[11]

The iconographic and artistic language of the Gellone Sacramentary is poised between the decorative expression of the Merovingians and

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[4] B. TEYSSEDRE, op. cit., pp. 14–15. Other hypotheses for the place of production: Gellone (Montpellier), Cambrai, Flavigny (see: ibid., pp. 11–13). See also: J. PORCHER, *Aux origines de la lettre orneé médiévale*, in *Mélanges Eugéne Tisserant*, V, 2, 1964, pp. 273–280, fig. 4; C.R. BALDWIN, *The Scriptorium of the Sacramentary of Gellone*, in *Scriptorium*, 25, 1971, pp. 3–17.

[5] A. DUMAS, op. cit., fig. 80; B. TEYSSEDRE, op. cit., p. 9; noted by E.A. LOWE, *Codices latini antiquiores. A Paleographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts Prior to the Ninth Century*, 5, *France*, Paris, 1950, no. 618. A scribe named David is also mentioned in the lists of the Abbey of Sainte-Croix in Meaux; B. TEYSSEDRE, op. cit., p. 14.

[6] B. TEYSSEDRE, op. cit., p. 11 and n. 25: fol. 1, 159, 167, 203v, 214v, 245v, 256v, 259v, 260v, 267v.

[7] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms 12.778, fol. 252 and 256–257; editions: Abbé CASSAN and E. MEYNIAL, *Cartulaires des abbayes d'Aniane et de Gellone publiés d'après les manuscrits originaux (Société archéologique de Montpellier)*, 2 vols, n.p., 1898 and 1900, pp. 144–146.

[8] At that point in time there were probably consecrated altars, monks and an abbot. Aniane is not mentioned, so the site may have been autonomous; P. TISSET, *L'abbaye de Gellone au Diocèse de Lodève des origines au XIIIe siècle*, n.p., 1992, pp. 42–58.

[9] P. TISSET, op. cit., p. 7 ff.; E. REVILLOUT, *Etude historique et littéraire sur l'ouvrage latin intutilé: Vie de Saint Guillaume*, in *Publications de la société archéologique de Montpellier*, 35–36, 1876, pp. 495–576, p. 503; On the abbey's seal is depicted a knight with a lance and shield; see also A. DUMAS, op. cit., fig. 110, fol. 229v: 'Missa in profectionem hostium eontibus in prohelium'; V. LEROQUAIS, op. cit., I, p. 7.

[10] P. TISSET, op. cit., p. 131.

[11] J. PORCHER, *La peinture provinciale*, in *Karl der Grosse. Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, 3. *Karolingische Kunst*, ed. W. BRAUNFELS (exbn. cat.), Düsseldorf, 1965, pp. 54–73, p. 59.

the—still somewhat tentative—historicizing imagery of the Carolingian workshops.[12] All the illustrations (113 folios in total) are initial decorations.[13] Only twenty or so feature the human figure. Fish and birds appear in the rest,[14] with a purely vegetal flourish now and then. The initials evince an artistic originality in which eastern and Coptic influences are ingeniously allied to Gallic imagery. The decoration is playful but compact in comparison with the antique naturalism seen in other contemporary miniatures.[15] The iconography is of particular interest for its early depiction of Christ Crucified (fol. 143v) (fig. 2).[16]

The Mass of the Finding of the Cross (fol. 76v), which since the appearance of the *Sacramentarium Gelasianum* had been fixed on 3 May in the West,[17] is also illustrated. The initial D(eas) is historiated, albeit the approach is ambiguous. A circle formed by two concentric rings with yellow pigment filling the space between contains three crosses of the Latin type. The central cross is red, with a roundel at the intersection and concave ends such as are found on crosses in monumental sculpture and precious metal. An alpha hangs from the left of the crossbeam, and an omega from the right. Flanking it are two smaller soberly-drawn black and green crosses. Each cross is accompanied by four nails. The red cross in the centre is surrounded by four red nails, two above and two below the crossbeam. The nails belonging to the two smaller crosses are black and are arranged vertically down one side, again two above and two below the crossbeam. Seemingly attached to the rim of the circle are stalks of grain, and a male figure clad in red appears to be tending them with a tool that resembles a reaping hook, though it may also be a type of pick. With the exception of the first sentence, *Deus, qui in praeclara salutifere crucis invencione passionis/ tuae miracula suscitasti*,[18] there

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[12] J. HUBERT, J. PORCHER and V.F. VOLBACH, *L'Europe des invasions* (*L'univers des formes*), ed. A. MALRAUX and A. PARROT, Paris, 1967, p. 191, fig. 201.

[13] There is also influence from the Romanesque initial workshops of the time; J. OSBORNE, *The Use of Painted Initials by Greek and Latin Scriptoria in Carolingian Rome*, in *Gesta*, 29, 1, 1990, pp. 76–85.

[14] It is not certain whether the animals (for instance, on the basis of the *Physiologus*) had a symbolic significance; J. PORCHER, op. cit., p. 58.

[15] J. PORCHER, *Aux origines*, op. cit., pp. 273–280, fig. 4.

[16] T(e igitur); M. Chr. SEPIERE, *L'image d'un Dieu souffrant (IXe–Xe siècle). Aux origines du crucifix*, Paris, 1994 (with foreword C. HEITZ), pp. 118–119, pl. XI: 'Elle [Crucifix] amorce à plusieurs titres l'évolution future des crucifixions carolingiens.'

[17] We shall return to the liturgical history of the Finding of the Cross later.

[18] A. DUMAS, op. cit., p. 127.

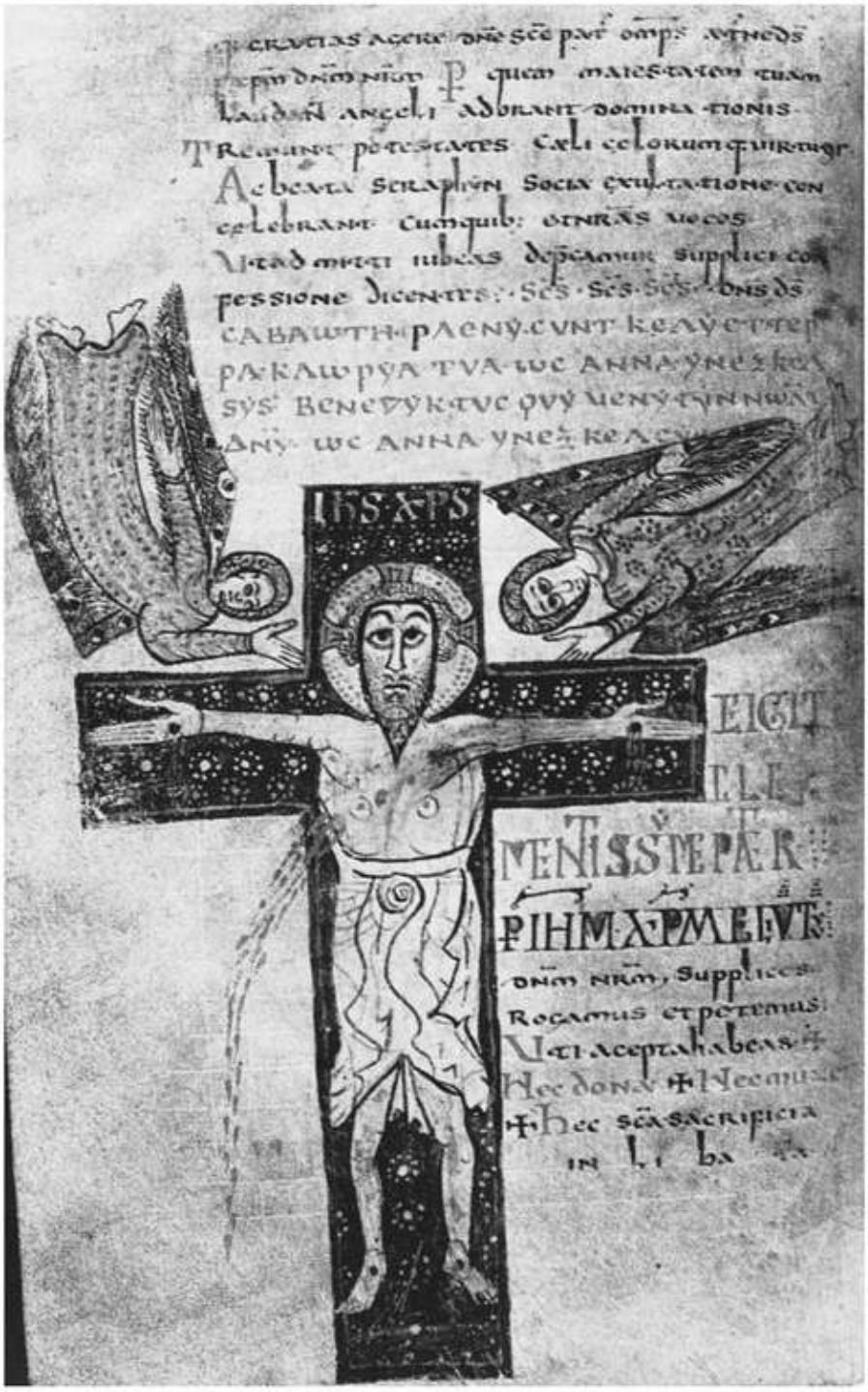


Fig. 2. *Crucifixion*. Meaux workshop, Gellone Sacramentary, second half of the 8th century. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 12048, fol. 143v.

is no reference in the text to the Finding of the Cross.[19] The Cross is lauded for its vital power, its power of protection against the enemy, its power to redress man's Fall, and its ultimate judicial function. Thus the Cross has in the first place a symbolic meaning as the Wood of Life, as a talisman and symbol of triumph in battle: *Ut ab hoste maligno defenda/ quos per ligno sanctae crucis filii tui, arma iusticae pro salutem mundi, triumphare iussisti.* The text must have been very apropos in Gellone Abbey, which was founded in commemoration of a triumph over Islam.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, even before the time of Constantine the Great the cross was already a symbol of victory over the pagans, and crosses or relics of the Cross were carried in triumphal processions.[20] In hymns, too, the cross was lauded as a *vexillum.* The Easter hymn, *Vexilla Regis produent*, written by Venantius Fortunatus to accompany the translation of the relics of Justinian II from Radegond to Poitiers in 569 and still sung in the Middle Ages, also focuses on the Cross as a royal standard.[21] Here the Cross is regarded as the defender of the Christian emperor. The second part of the hymn praises the Cross as the Tree of Life.

For the illustration of the *Inventio crucis*, however, the illuminator has turned to the content of the legend as a basis. At the end of the sixth century, Gregory of Tours makes a brief reference to the role of Judas in the Finding of the Cross: *Huius tempore venerabile crucis Dominicae lignum per studium Helenae nobis eius repertum est, prodente Juda Hebraeo, qui post baptismum Quiriacus est vocitatus*,[22] and the extended version of the Judas Cyriacus legend was already known in a sixth-century Latin version from northern Italy (Ravenna?).[23] Nevertheless,

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[19] The Testing of the Cross is suggested in the text: '*Tua miracula suscitasti*'.

[20] M. WERNER, *The Cross-Carpet Page in the Book of Durrow. The Cult of the True Cross, Adomnan, and Iona*, in *The Art Bulletin*, 72, 2, 1990, pp. 178–223.

[21] B.M. PEEBLES, *Fortunatus. Poet of the Holy Cross*, in *The American Church Monthly*, 38, 1935, pp. 152–166, 158; IDEM, *Venantius Fortunatus and the Earliest Hymns to the Holy Cross*, in *Classical Folia*, 20, 2, 1966, pp. 107–122.

[22] *Historia Francorum*, I, 36, PL 67, col. 929 ff.

[23] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 2768, fol. 15v–21v; A. HOLDER (ed.), *Inventio sanctae crucis*, Leipzig, 1889, 1–13; S. BORGEHAMMAR, *How the Holy Cross Was Found. From Event to Medieval Legend*, Stockholm, 1991, reconstruction of the 'pure' text, 255–271: *Inventio Crucis* A, stemmata: 215, 218, 222, 224. Codices with Latin text: 210–213; Manuscripts with the Cyriacus legend contemporary to the Gellone Sacramentary: Sankt Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 225, 8th cent. (773?). Codices with a Greek text: 226–229; oldest 8th–9th cent., Sinai, Monastery of St Catherine, gr. 493, fol. 1–22v; E. NESTLE (ed.), *Die Kreuzauffindungslegende. Nach einer Handschrift vom Sinaï*, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 4, 1895, pp. 319–345.

this is not a naturalistic rendering of the Cross's discovery: the crosses, the circle, the tool and the man are four individual elements in the image.

According to the Cyriacus legend, the True Cross can be identified by its power to resurrect the dead. In the initial miniature, however, Christ's Cross is distinguished by its colour (red refers to the Passion), its shape (the so-called *croix pattée* is larger), and the apocalyptic letters alpha and omega.

Set into the wall of the Church of Challans, in the Vendée, is a sixth-century stone (its original function was probably funerary) on which is carved in relief a cross with the same concave ends. Originally it was painted red and an alpha (badly damaged) and an omega are borne on the arms.[24] Pectoral crosses, processional crosses and triumphal crosses also exhibit the widening arms, the roundel in the middle and rings on the crossbeam for fixing the apocalyptic letters.[25] This type of cross appears as a full-page frontispiece in the sixth-century *Sacramentarium Gelasianum* (fig. 3)[26] and in St Augustine's *Quaestiones in Heptateuchon* of the same period.[27] The True Cross of the *Inventio* thus enters a Merovingian tradition in which the Cross is modelled on the text of the Revelation to St John:[28] the triumphant God made flesh corresponds with the beginning and end of salvation history, 'Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. [. . .]"' (Rev. 21, 6).

The two black and green crosses represent the crosses on which the good and bad thieves were crucified. It is something of an anomaly, however, that each of these is also accompanied by four nails,[29] so that there are twelve in number. This may be intended

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[24] 30.5cm × 29.3cm × 1cm; H. LECLERCQ, art. *Croix et crucifix*, in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 3, Paris, 1914, cols. 3046–3131, col. 3094, fig. 3390.

[25] See, for example, a pectoral cross, with a roundel at the intersection of the arms (as the illustration in Gellone also suggests) and two rings, in H. LECLERCQ, art. *Croix*, col. 3106, fig. 3409, Merovingian, 6th cent., London, British Museum.

[26] Rome, Vatican, Bibliotheca Apostolica, reg. lat. 316, fol. 3v; M. Chr. SEPIERE, op. cit., p. 67 and fig. 13.

[27] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 12168; M. Chr. SEPIERE, op. cit., p. 69 and fig. 14.

[28] There is also a small initial crucifix on fol. 152v; A. DUMAS, op. cit., fig. 102; V. LEROQUAIS, op. cit., p. 6: 'Benedictio in clausam Pascha.'

[29] The literature does not pursue the matter any further: J. PORCHER, art. cit., p. 275 is silent on the issue; M. Chr. SEPIERE, op. cit., p. 71: '[. . .] toute 'piquée' par de gros clous'; B. TEYSSEDRE, op. cit., p. 96: '[. . .] clous répartis à proximité de leur place d'origine'. The patristic tradition concerning the Finding of the

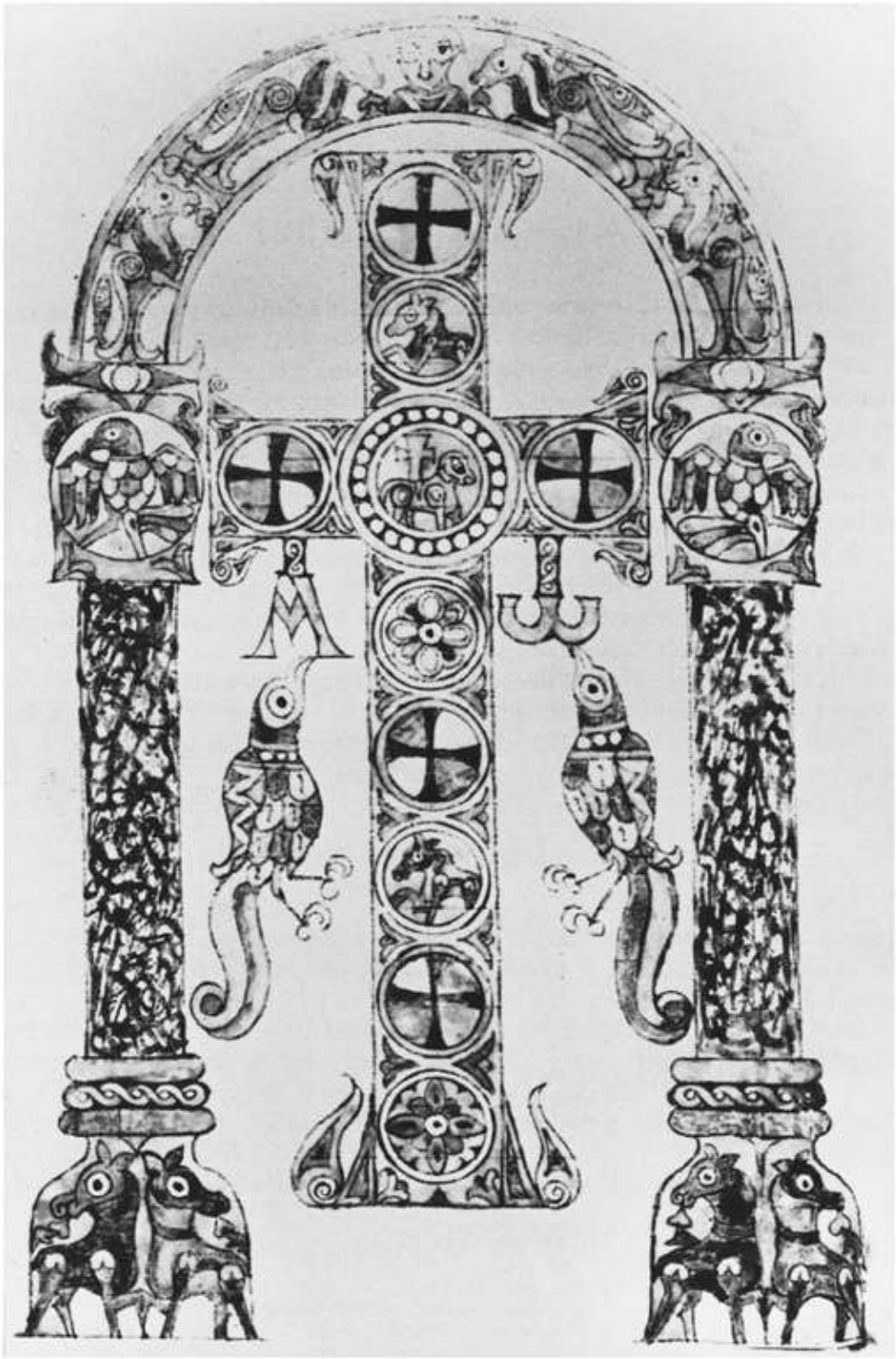


Fig. 3. *Cross.* Full-page miniature from the *Sacramentarium Gelasianum,* 6th century. Rome, Vatican, Bibliotheca Apostolica, reg. lat. 316, fol. 3v.

symbolically, to allude to the twelve Apostles, or to the twelve gates of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21, 12). According to St John the wall of the heavenly city has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve Apostles (Rev. 21, 14). Moreover, twelve also contains the numbers four and three. Four is a cosmic number, just as the four directions of Christ's Cross give expression to its cosmic dimension. The heavenly Jerusalem has three gates on each side: east, north, south and west (Rev. 21, 13). The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was conceived according to this description, with three columns on each side between the pillars supporting the dome.

In the Judas Cyriacus legend, too, the nails have a salvation-historical significance, linking the Old Testament with the New.[30] Indeed, the nails were not discovered by Judas the Jew, but by Judas Cyriacus, the converted Jew, which is why the finding of the nails does not coincide with the discovery of the Cross. The narrative cusp marks the transition to Judas's conversion. *Nunc cognovimus in quo credimus* (vs. 225) says Judas on seeing the nails. Could it be that the Gellone miniature encapsulates a similar soteriological significance? Could it be that Christ is 'nailed' to the Cross twelve times, referring to the Church of the Twelve Apostles and the heavenly Jerusalem?

The nail has played a role in transition rituals since Antiquity. Archaeological research has shown that nails were given as grave gifts, perhaps as symbols of transition, often being laid in great numbers on the breast of the deceased. Moreover, during the rise of Christianity, nails were often left in catacombs. This probably represented the survival of a Roman custom (such as finds in Chiusi, Italy) but was quickly supplied with a Christianized martyrological significance.[31]

Cross does not mention the number of nails; it does say that one is incorporated into a bridle, another in a diadem (Ambrose). The Judas Cyriacus legend refers to the nails as being incorporated into a bridle.

[30] 'Beatam autem Helenam repleta Deius fidem et intelligens in scribturis vetus et novo testamento: instructa repleta spiritu sancto iterum coepit studiose requirerer qui in cruce confixi fuerant clavi'.

[31] H. LECLERCQ, art. *Clou*, in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 3, Paris, 1914, cols. 2034–2037; some nails were decorated, or carried inscriptions or statements. Often the names of angels were found on amulets.

This is the initial 'D', yet even so the illuminator of the miniature has opted for a perfect circle.[32] Teyssèdre suspects that the shape conceals an archetypical reference to the well,[33] but it is also reminiscent of a coin. From the sixth to the eighth centuries in Gaul coins were struck which had on the reverse the Cross in the most diverse forms—though never in a group of three, as in the miniature.[34] Teyssèdre posits that the choice of illustrations and motifs in the Gellone Sacramentary was based on reminiscences of the Holy Land,[35] though he does not elaborate on this. Nonetheless, it is worth investigating whether references to the holy sites of Jerusalem, where the *Inventio crucis* tradition originated, are contained in the circular form. Pilgrims often brought home ampoules with a circular shape. A round flask, probably filled at one time with consecrated oil and now in Monza Cathedral, gives us an idea of the typical souvenir of Jerusalem (fig. 4).[36] The image on the ampoule is enclosed within a circular band in which runs an inscription. Within this circle the figure of Christ in the orant position (without the Cross) is represented in the upper register.[37] He is worshipped by a pair of votive figures. Next to each of these is one of the thieves and a small tree. In the lower part of the composition, directly below Christ, is an aedicule. This shrine, with four columns and a cross on the roof, alludes to the Holy of Holies.[38] To the right of the shrine an angel makes a gesture of benediction; to the left are two figures, each with

[32] The illuminator has a preference for the medallion form; he has also provided a historiated medallion on folio 82: three heads and the Hand of God at Pentecost. In what follows, however, I defend a symbolic meaning for the *Inventio crucis* medallion.

[33] B. TEYSSEDRE, op. cit., p. 98.

[34] H. LECLERCQ, art. *Croix et crucifix*, cols. 3094–3097, fig. 3391.

[35] B. TEYSSEDRE, op. cit., p. 98.

[36] Late 6th–early 7th cent., Italy; M. Chr. SEPIERE, op. cit., pp. 89–90, fig. 17. See also the ampoule in the Dumbarton Oaks collection (ca. 600); R. OUSTERHOUT, *The Temple, the Sepulchre and the Martyrion of the Savior*, in *Gesta*, 29, 1, 1990, pp. 44–53, p. 48, fig. 6; and the two ampoules from the Staatliche Museen Berlin (ca. 600); J. FOLDA, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land. 1098–1187*, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 294–297, figs. 8B.8 and 8B.9.

[37] The orant position was also given to the Crucifixion depicted on the wooden door of the Santa Sabina Church in Rome (top of the left-hand door, 432–440); M. Chr. SEPIERE, op. cit., pl. VIII.

[38] The aedicule is also depicted on Jewish coins. The tomb of Christ is the new Temple, the new Ark; R. OUSTERHOUT, art. cit., p. 53, fig. 4: Tetradrachm of Bar Kochba.



Fig. 4. *Crucifixion and the Holy Sepulchre.* Ampoule from the Holy Land, late 6th–early 7th century. Monza (Italy), Cathedral.

a halo. Perhaps these are the figures of the angel and the Marys at the Holy Sepulchre. In its imagery the ampoule combines the Crucifixion and the Resurrection; it commemorates both Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre, as indeed both were joined in the Constantinian double basilica.

The circle universally expresses the metaphysical and the most holy. This is translated in the circular groundplan of martyrs' churches

and therefore also of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Is it possible that the circle in the Gellone Sacramentary is a schematic allusion to the Anastasis—the rotunda of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem?[39]

In a ninth-century plan (possibly based on an older example) of the double basilica in a manuscript containing a description by the pilgrim Arculf (700), the Holy of Holies of the Anastasis is represented by two concentric rings (fig. 5).[40] Three crosses, similar to those in the sacramentary, have also been drawn, but they are placed in the rectangular Martyrium. The accompanying text says that here Christ's Cross was unearthed, together with the crosses of the two thieves. It seems as if the illuminator of the Gellone Sacramentary has brought these things—the circle and the crosses—together. Sometimes the basilical Martyrium was also included in the term 'Holy Sepulchre'.[41] The illuminator unites topographic references to 'resurrection' and 'death', and thereby the divine and the human nature of Christ.

The rediscovered Cross also has a liturgical connection with the circular Anastasis. The account written by the pilgrim Egeria (in Jerusalem ca. 381–384) describes how, at the feast of the dedication of the Martyrium and the Anastasis (*Encaenia*, 48–49, according to the pilgrim also the Jewish feast of the dedication of the Temple), the discovery of the Cross on Golgotha was commemorated with a feast that lasted for eight days and rivalled the lavishness and grandeur of Easter and Epiphany.[42] On that day, according to Theodosius's *Itinera Hierosolymitana*, the Cross was venerated in the Holy Sepulchre.[43] There are documents known from Saint Riquier and Poitiers that record the arrival of a relic of the Cross, which prompted the building

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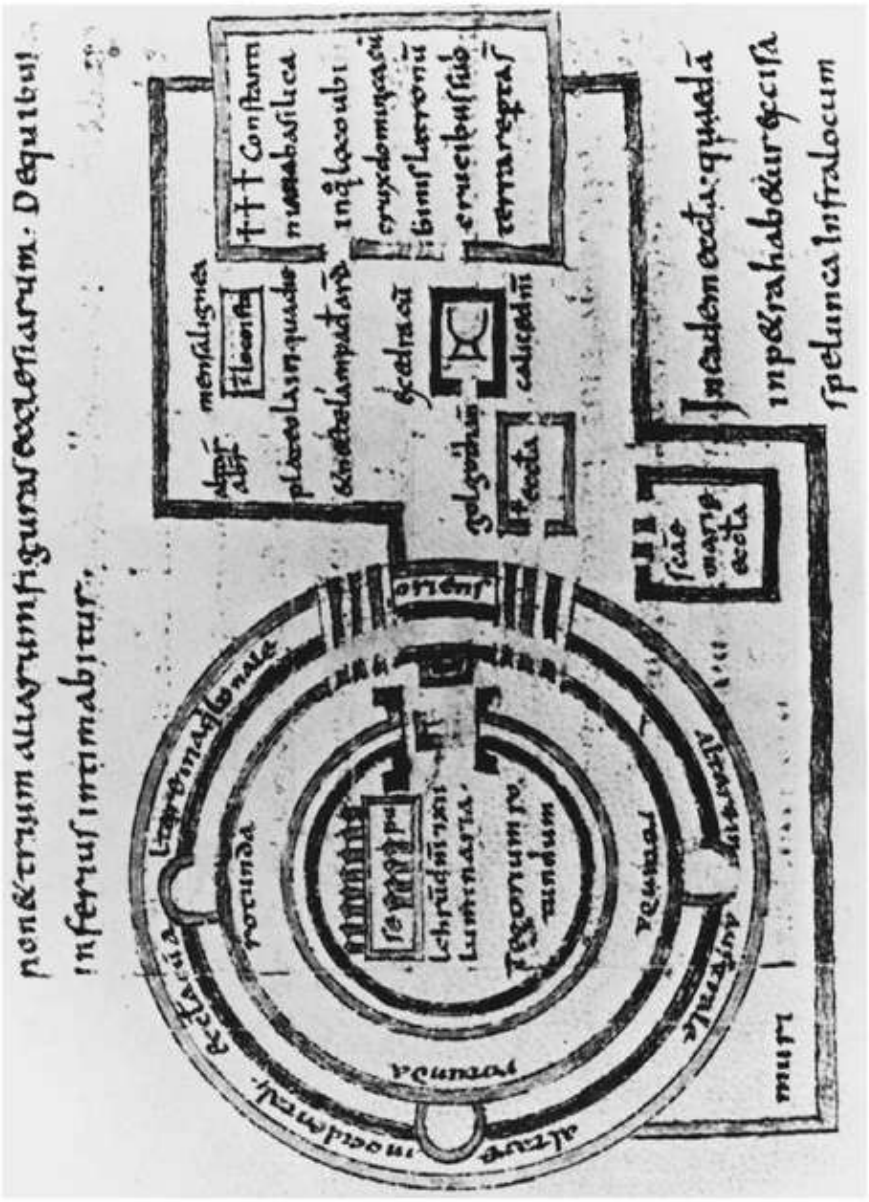
[39] See: J. WILKINSON, *Egeria's Travels*, Jerusalem-Warminster, 1981, pp. 165–166, reconstruction drawing: 45; P. von NAREDI-RAINER, *Salomos Tempel und das Abendland. Monumentale Folgen Historischer Irrtümer*, Cologne 1994, pp. 42–45; figs. 16–17; V.C. CORBO, *Il Santo Sepolcro di Gerusalemme. Aspetti archeologici dalle origini al periodo crociato, parte I. Testo*, Jerusalem, 1981, pp. 51–79.

[40] M.M. GAUTHIER, *Strassen des Glaubens. Reliquien und Reliquiare des Abendlandes*, Freiburg, 1983, no. 23: drawing (100mm × 162mm) from *De locis sanctis* of Adamnanus (Arculf); Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. 458, fol. 4v.

[41] J.Z. SMITH, *To Take Place. Towards Theory in Ritual*, Chicago-London, 1987, p. 115.

[42] H. PETRE, *Ethérie. Journal de Voyage*, Paris, 1971, pp. 264–267: Latin and French text.

[43] J. WILKINSON, op. cit., p. 149; H. PETRE, op. cit., p. 265.


nonferrum alterum figuras ecclesiarum. Deputat
inferius intimabitur.
mensalis
Ecclesia
Constans
basilica
ubi lacrimas
cruxdominica
Sancta
Ecclesia
Ecclesia
Ecclesia

of a copy of the Constantinian double basilica.[44] In both places the culmination of the liturgy was reported as taking place in the rotunda. Perhaps, therefore, the miniature in the Gellone Sacramentary represents the Finding of the Cross in its liturgical setting.

There remains the last motif in the initial miniature: the man with his reaping hook or pick. The figure is constitutive for the iconography. Indeed, its treatment turns a static image with three crosses into a narrative theme. As well as being a timeless image the iconography now alludes to an actual event. The man wielding his tool makes the whole thing 'naturalistic'. There is a fascinating and ambiguous coherence between the dynamic man and the static circle. Porcher identifies the figure as the Judas of the Cyriacus legend.[45] Teyssèdre confines himself to 'the inventor' who gives the theme an 'active' function. But to others this is a universal image of man.[46] Moreover, he is the uniform type of nearly all historiated initials.[47]

In the Judas Cyriacus legend the tool that Judas uses is not further specified: *Et cum haec dixisset cinxit se et accepto fossorio*[48] *coepit fodire. Cum autem fodiret passos vigenti invenit tres cruces absconditas.*[49] Of course, a pick would be the most obvious choice, particularly if the ground was hard to break. This tool also appears in the hands of the *fossores*, the diggers of the catacombs. In the catacomb of Pietro e Marcellino in Rome, which dates from the middle of the third century,[50] there is an example of a man busy with a tool that strongly resembles the figure in the Gellone Sacramentary. Furthermore, etymologically, *fodio* means 'tomb'.[51] Could it be that the initial contains an allusion to the Holy Sepulchre?

The stem of *fodire* also belongs to an agrarian context. The action alludes to the preparatory work on land to be cultivated. Often

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[44] V.H. ELBERN, *Das Relief der Gekreuzigten in de Mellebaudis-Memorie zu Poitiers. Über eine Vorkarolingische Nachbildung des heiligen Grabes zu Jeruzalem*, in *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, 3, 1961, pp. 149–189; M. Chr. SEPIERE, op. cit., pp. 24–26; See also: C. HEITZ, *L'architecture religieuse carolingienne*, Paris, 1980, passim.

[45] J. PORCHER, op. cit., p. 275.

[46] B. TEYSSEDRE, op. cit., p. 97.

[47] See fol. 82: Passover; A. DUMAS, op. cit., fig. 65.

[48] Literally: 'after assuming the capacity of a digger'.

[49] A. HOLDER (ed.), op. cit., p. 9, vs. 269–271.

[50] G. WILPERT, *Le pitture delle catacombe romane, Tavole*, Rome, 1903, scene 59: 'Fossori al lavoro in Pietro e Marcellino.'

[51] *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, ed. A. WALDE, 1, Heidelberg, 1965: *Fodio*.

it relates to the furrow or ditch dug to mark the perimeter of a foundation. It essentially refers to cultivating and marking out.[52] In the Judas Cyriacus legend the Finding of the Cross is comprehended as a state of order versus wilderness, as a new foundation (garden, culture) versus wasteland.[53] Perhaps the circle (*fossia* = furrow) in the Gellone Sacramentary and the natural motif that contrasts with it are related to this duality. The Finding of the Cross is also a 'foundation'—of *Ecclesia* and the Kingdom of Christ.

Digging and cutting tools also have a place in the Christian exegesis.[54] The word *ascia* means, literally, 'axe'. As used in exegetical texts it can refer to many different sorts of bladed implements,[55] including the type with a wooden shaft and curving blade seen in the Gellone Sacramentary. Ireneus of Lyon (*Adversus Haereses* 17, 4) (135–ca. 200) perceives in *ascia* a type of Christ's Cross.[56] In 2 Kings 6, 1–7 the story of the lost axehead is told: 'Now the company of prophets said to Elisha, "As you see, the place where we live under your charge is too small for us. Let us go to the Jordan, and let us collect logs there, one for each of us, and build a place there for us

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[52] *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P.G.W. GLARE, Oxford, 1982: *fossor-oris* [*fodio*+*tor*]: one who digs the ground.

[53] vs. 45–46: 'erat autem Ierusalem deserta tempore illo.'

[54] J. DANIELOU, *Les symboles chrétiens primitifs*, Paris, 1961, cols. 95–106: 'La charrue et la hache', specifically pp. 97–98.

[55] J. CARCOPINO, *Le mystère d'un symbole chrétien. L'ascia*, Paris, 1955, p. 73: typical of woodworking; ibid., pp. 13–26: typification and defining of the object. We will not go into the author's argumentation, which maintains that Gaul was particularly receptive to the motif, given the great quantity of Neoplatonic and Pythagoraean ideas which had blended with the thoughts of the druids; ibid. p. 42: 'Manifestement, la Gaule a été la terre d'élection de l'*ascia*, comme elle a fourni on terrain d'élection à une mystique assimilée à tort ou à raison par nos auteurs à celles de Pythagoriens'; ibid.: on epitaphs: 'sub ascia dedicavit a solo et ab ascia'. Iconographic examples in: F. TRISTAN, *Les premières images Chrétiennes. Du symbole à l'icône. IIe s. VIe s.*, Paris, 1996, p. 82 ff. See also: H. LECLERCQ, art. *France, IV. Epigraphie*, in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 5, Paris, 1923, cols. 2348–2435, cols. 2348–2353 and cols. 2349–2350 'sub ascia'. According to the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P.G.W. GLARE, Oxford, 1982, 'sub ascia' means lit. 'under the trowel', i.e. 'still in process of erection'. The expression derives from masons' jargon.

[56] J. DANIELOU, op. cit., p. 99: Justinianus, *Apologia*, 55, 2–6: the Cross is also linked to the mast of the ship, the orant position of the praying individual, the flag, the mason's stirring-rod, the carpenter's hammer and axe, etc. Joseph used the tool to pour the *vita activa* into Christ. On the right-hand wing of the Annunciation altarpiece by Robert Campin (Tournai, 1425), Joseph drills four holes in a small panel: this is possibly a prefiguration of the four holes made by the nails in the Cross. In the foreground is a block of wood and an axe (Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Cloisters).

to live." He answered, "Do so." Then one of them said, "Please come with your servants." And he answered, "I will." So he went with them. When they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. But as one was felling a log, his axehead fell into the water; he cried out, "Alas, master! It was borrowed." Then the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" When he showed him the place, he cut off a stick and threw it in there, and made the iron float. He said, "Pick it up." So he reached out his hand and took it.'[57]

Here—so says Ireneus—the prophet seeks to demonstrate that the firm (*stereon, firmum*) word of God, which we have lost through neglect, will be found again (epiphany: *ephaneroosen ostendit*) in the wood. Indeed, the word of God resembles the *ascia* (*axine*).[58] It is John the Baptist himself who says, 'Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees' (*Adversus Haereses* IV, 17, 3–4)[59] (Mt. 3, 10).[60] What John says refers to Nebuchadnezzar's vision: the kingdom of the Messiah will come when the cosmic Tree of Life is cut down.[61] From the second century onwards the Gallic *ascia* is thus no longer a purely pagan symbol but a fascinating motif that refers to the dual nature of Christ on the one hand and to the genealogy of the Messiah on the other.[62] Moreover, the *lignum crucis* is incorporated in both typologies.

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[57] The motif of the piece of wood (of life) floating in the Jordan recurs in the Jewish-Christian apocryphal book concerning the lives of Adam and Eve, the *Vita Adae et Evae* dating from the 1st century. Seth is sent to Paradise by his father, Adam, and receives from the angel a twig from the Tree of Life. On the way back he drops a piece of this wood in the Jordan by accident; Edn.: W. MEYER, *Vita Adae et Evae* (*Abhandlungen der philosophisch-philologischen Classe der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 14), 1879, pp. 221–250; See also: D.A. BERTRAND, *La vie grècque d'Adam et Ève*, Paris, 1987. See Chapter Five.

[58] *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ed. G.W.H. LAMPE, Oxford, 1976 (4th ed.), p. 167: 'axine': Mt. 13; *Dictionnaire Étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots*, ed. P. CHANTRAINE, 2 vols., Paris, 1968, p. 94: 'axine': axe in Homer, translated in Latin by 'ascia', in Gothic by 'aqizi'.

[59] Text in French: J. DANIELOU, op. cit., p. 97, and J. CARCOPINO, op. cit., p. 74, with a section in Greek.

[60] 'Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance [. . .]. [Christ] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

[61] In the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* the dream reflects Christ's crucifixion; J. PAUL and W. BUSCH, art. *Nabuchodonosor*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 3, Rome-Vienna, 1971, pp. 304–307, p. 305.

[62] J. CARCOPINO, ibid.

Is it by chance that the iconography of the *Inventio crucis* originated in the early-Carolingian Gellone manuscript? And what do we know about the development of the theme during that period?

For Charlemagne, the contents of the *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, of which the Gellone Sacramentary was the Frankish representative, provided an exemplary fusion of Roman and Gallican liturgy, a fusion that had also exerted an influence on the feasts of the Cross. The accent on the *Inventio crucis* iconography in this manuscript may be related to Charlemagne's liturgical reform.

From Egeria's account we know that the Feast of the Finding of the Cross was already being celebrated in Jerusalem at the end of the fourth century. A fifth-century Armenian lectionary mentions that this feast was connected with the displaying of the relic of the Cross on 14 September.[63] However, in the seventh century this 14 September feast was significantly enhanced. The triumph of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (576–641) over the Persian tyrant Chosroes II, thanks to which the relic of the Cross that had been plundered from Jerusalem was rescued from pagan hands and ceremonially restored, had made a deep impression on the Christian empire.[64] Thus it was that the commemoration of Heraclius displaced that of Helena.

The *Liber pontificalis* I refers to the feast of 14 September at the time of Pope Sergius (687–701) in the context of the Exaltation of the Cross: the *dies exaltationis sanctae crucis* supplements the older feast of Cornelius and Cyprian.[65] In the Gallican ritual of that time, however, the Finding of the Cross is referred to on 3 May.[66] The date would have been taken from the Judas Cyriacus legend, in which Helena herself requests that the Finding of the Cross should be commemorated on *quinto nonarum maiorum*.[67] Even during the seventh cen-

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[63] A. RENOUX, *Un manuscrit du lectionnaire arménien de Jérusalem*, in *Le muséon*, 74, 1961, pp. 361–385, p. 384.

[64] A. FROLOW, *La vraie croix et les expéditions d'Héraclius en Perse*, in *Revue des études byzantines*, 11, 1953, pp. 88–105; V. GRUMEL, *La reposition de la vraie croix à Jérusalem par Héraclius. Le jour et l'année*, in *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 1, 1966, pp. 139–149.

[65] L. DUCHESNE, *Le Liber pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire*, 1, Paris, 1955, p. 374.

[66] A. CHAVASSE (ed.), *Le sacramentaire gélasien (Vaticanus Reginensis 316). Sacramentaire presbytérial en usage dans les titres romains au VIIe siècle* (*Bibliothèque de Théologie*, series 4, 1), Turnhout, 1958, pp. 350–364.

[67] According to Stephan Borgehammar the Greek parent text mentioned 'the third day of the third month'; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 83. Latin copies put this down as 3 May, as in the 5th-century Western Church the liturgical year began in March; W. EVENEPOEL, *La délimination de l'année liturgique*, in *Revue de*

tury, 3 May had been recorded in the papal missal as an addition to the traditional feast of Sts Alexander, Eventius and Theodulus.[68]

Thus, for a short period, Gaul (episcopal) and Rome (papal) each had their own feasts of the Cross. With Charlemagne's integration of the Roman and Gallican liturgies, however, each became an independent feast with its content defined: thenceforth, 3 May commemorated Helena, and 14 September, Heraclius. Nonetheless, the liturgical texts and songs of the two feasts were interchangeable.

Thus the Finding of the Cross in the Gellone Sacramentary is the earliest evidence of a liturgical compromise, and that is immediately manifested in the sacramentary with an iconographic response. The illuminator had as yet no visual tradition to fall back on, as far as we know, and so has sought his inspiration in the eschatological significance of the rediscovered Cross.

It has already been mentioned that during the Mass and the hymns of 3 May the Cross was described as a symbol of victory, a royal *tropaion*, a *vexillum*. The Gellone community must have found the text relevant, for their abbey was founded in thanksgiving for a victory over Islam—indeed, the abbey seal displays the image of a knight.[69] It is also significant that the sacramentary includes additional Masses appropriate to the wars against the Saxons and the reconquest: *missa tempori belli* and *missa in profectionem hostium*.[70] The manuscript probably also had a key role in the 'conversion offensives' that were organized from the southern Gaulish monastery. Moreover, Charlemagne donated a phylactery with gold and precious stones to the abbey when it was founded, which indicates the 'vassal function' that Gellone fulfilled

l'histoire Écclesiastique, 83, 1988, pp. 601–616. Of course it may also be a later annotation, made precisely to comply with an already established practice. The date may also have come about rather accidentally, as the first day that became available after the Easter term for instance. In any case the link with Easter in the liturgy of the Cross is very marked. The Finding of the Cross is a reflection of the Resurrection; K. MANKOWSKY, *Fulgit Crucis Mysterium. Teologia liturgica della celebrazione dell'Esaltazione della Croce* (Diss.), Rome, 1982, p. 9. A. CHAVASSE, op. cit., pp. 350–364, refers to some six texts in the East, where a feast of the Cross was celebrated on various days in May. No examples from Jerusalem are known. The Copts celebrated the Finding of the Cross on 6 May, the Syrian Jacobites on 22 May.

[68] The date was known earlier in Rome, but was not immediately included in liturgical practice; see the *Liber pontificalis* I, 167: 'at the time of Pope Eusebius [309] the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ was found on 3 May and Judas Cyriacus baptized'; A. CHAVASSE, op. cit., pp. 361–364.

[69] P. TISSET, *o.c.*; A. DUMAS, op. cit., fig. 110, fol. 229v.

[70] A. DUMAS, op. cit., pp. 124–125, pp. XVIII–XIX.

in his empire, with the Cross relic as *vexillum*.[71] From the correspondence of Alcuin of York around 789—thus around the time the Gellone Sacramentary was produced—we know that between 772 and 782 the conversion of the Saxons had become an almost sacred affair to Charlemagne.[72] That may also have been a factor in the very early presence of the *Inventio* iconography in the manuscript.

Indeed, the iconography of the *Inventio crucis* accords with the idea of Christianization in the broadest sense of the word and represents the struggle against unbelief and heresy. The discovery of the Cross means the 'founding' of a Christian empire under imperial patronage. In Helena and Constantine the later emperors acknowledged their great examples. Like Helena, Charlemagne also undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem,[73] and he maintained good contacts with the patriarch of the Holy City.[74] The relic of the Cross became the object of religious-political tension in the relations between East and West, which would become more acute in the centuries of the crusades.

In the Carolingian period the *Inventio crucis* iconography was not confined to southern France. When the Benedictine monastery of Wessobrunn (Bavaria, founded in 753 by Duke Tassilo, according to tradition)[75] was dissolved in 1803, a ninth-century prayer book was found that opens with an *Inventio crucis* text: *De inquisitione uel inventione sanctae crucis quae inuente fuerunt*.[76] The words *De inquisitione* (a

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[71] Only from the 10th century is there archival evidence for the presence of a piece of the holy wood in Gellone; A. FROLOW, *La relique de la vraie croix. Recherches sur le développement d'un culte*, Paris, 1961, pp. 199–200; P. TISSET, op. cit., 129: 'Sanctae crucis ligno et Sancto Willelmo'. Naturally, relics were often given an earlier date or associated with interesting and important people from the past. A. Frolow has remarked that the countless relics of the Cross that were associated with Charlemagne constitute conscious anachronisms. Only two relics would be authentic; that of Gellone was not one of them; A. FROLOW, op. cit., p. 123.

[72] R. COLLINS, *Charlemagne*, London, 1998, p. 166; See: *Gesta Sanctorum patrum Fontanellensis Coenobii*, ed. F. LOHIER and J. LAPORTE, Rouen-Paris, 1936.

[73] J. COULET, *Etudes sur l'ancien poème français du Voyage de Charlemagne en orient*, Montpellier, 1907; P. AEBISCHER (ed.), *Le voyage de Charlemagne à Jérusalem et à Constantinople*, Geneva-Droz, 1965; E. VANCE, *Semiotics and Power. Relics, Icons, and the "Voyage de Charlemagne à Jerusalem et à Constantinople"*, in *Rumanic Review*, 79, 1, 1988, cols. 164–183.

[74] F.L. GANSHOF, *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy*, Aberdeen, 1971, p. 166.

[75] H. PÖRNBACHER, art. *Wessobrunn*, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 10, Freiburg, 1966, cols. 1066–1067.

[76] Unframed tinted pen drawings, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm. 22053, fol. 1–20; drawings on: fol. 2, 3v, 6v, 7v, 9v, 10, 10v, 12v, 13, 14v, 15v, 16, 16v,

variant of the more usual *inventione*) are larger than the rest and take up the whole of the first line. The manuscript can be very precisely dated on the basis of the final observation that 814 years have passed since Christ's incarnation and that in that same year 'King Charles' has died and his son, Louis, has been crowned.[77] The *Gebetbuch* is written entirely in Caroline miniscule though by five different hands corresponding with the book's five parts.[78]

It is not entirely clear whether or not the prayer book was originally intended for Wessobrunn monastery. In the eighth and ninth centuries the monastery was not particularly renowned. Furthermore, in the tenth century it was completely destroyed by the Magyars.[79] Perhaps the prayer book was donated when the monastery was rebuilt, or even later. Whatever the case, the text was produced in the diocese of Augsburg.[80] The Legend of the Cross in the *Wessobrunner Gebetbuch* belongs to the so-called *Inventio crucis* A-group—the parent text for the Latin West (ca. 450)—and was in circulation from the

17v, 18v, 19, 20; fol. 8 is missing (statement from the library), but unnumbered pages are also missing between fol. 2 and 3; fol. 4 and 5 should perhaps follow fol. 7: thus, 1, 2, ?, 3, 6, 7, 4, 5 (8?), 9, etc.; A. von ECKARDT (facsmile) and C. von KRAUS (intro.), *Die Handschriften des Wessobrunner Gebets*, Munich, 1922, pp. 5–22, p. 5; K. BIERBRAUER, *Die vorkarolingischen und karolingischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, Wiesbaden, 1990, *Textband*: pp. 83–84, cat. no. 155; *Tafelband*: figs. 219–336; M. RESTLE, *In hoc signo vincis. Ein Beitrag zur Illustration des Clm 22053*, in *Per assiduum studium scientiae adipisci margaritam. Festgabe für Ursula Nilgen zum 65. Geburtstag*, Santa Ottilien, 1997, pp. 27–43. See also: A. MILLAN de FRABOSCHI, *La invencion de la cruz en el manuscritto de Wessobrunn*, in *Anales de historia antigua y medieval*, 1956, pp. 52–68 and pp. 69–73: careless text edition. U. SCHWAB, *Die Sternrune im Wessobrunner Gebet. Beobachtungen zur Lokalisierung des clm 22053, zur Hs. BM Arundel 393 und zu Rune Poem V. 86–89*, Amsterdam, 1973, 1–9, points to the Inselkloster in Staffelsee and relates the manuscript to Bischop Sintpert (d. 791) from Augsburg/Neuburg; A. HUISMAN, *Das Wessobrunner Gebet in seinem handschriftlichen Kontext, in Althochdeutsch*, ed. R. Bergman e.a., 1, Heidelberg, 1987, pp. 625–636; Ulrich Montag writes in the catalogue to the exhibition 'Deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters' in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek of Munich (2003): 'Der Schriftstil lässt auf ein nicht näher bestimmbares Kloster in der südlichen Diözese Augsburg schliessen. Man weiss also nicht, wo dem Schreiber neben dem althochdeutschen Gebet all die lateinischen Texte zugänglich waren, die er offensichtlich nach seinen persönlichen Bedürfnissen als Lehrer oder Prediger zusammentrug. Deren wichtigster ist auf Bl. 1v bisd Bl. 21r die damals im westlichen Europa noch wenig verbreitete Kreuzauffindungslegende mit 18 einfachen kolorierten Federzeichnungen, die noch ihren byzantinischen Ursprung erkennen lassen'. With thanks to Elke Krotz.

[77] C. von KRAUS, op. cit., p. 7.

[78] First part from fol. 1–21, second part to fol. 66, the third to fol. 76, the fourth to fol. 92, the last to fol. 99v; C. von KRAUS, op. cit., p. 6.

[79] C. von KRAUS, op. cit., p. 5.

[80] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 210.

sixth century.[81] Indeed, most of the manuscripts that contain the Judas Cyriacus legend were created in the Carolingian period, but no two versions are quite the same. This indicates the use of several original texts and also the great diffusion and popularity of the theme.[82]

In the prayer book only the *Inventio crucis* text is illustrated. Eighteen unframed tinted pen drawings promptly follow the beginning of each paragraph (fig. 6).[83] Text and image are perfectly geared to monastic and didactic use. The cycle can be read as the way of belief. Judas moves from doubt to conviction, from confession to baptism. Thus unfolds a cycle of confession (internal and secret), penance (imposed, punishment), profession of faith (accompanying the *Inventio*) and baptism. Did the Wessobrunn text perhaps also play a part in a campaign of conversion waged against the Jews? The emphasis on profession and conversion is in any case intrinsic to the legend. It is precisely in the extent of the cycle that the development towards the 'truth' of the Cross versus the 'blindness' of the Jew is expressed.

In Gaul, from the fifth century, references to less 'academic' sermons can be found, and one supposes that they too were aimed at the conversion of the Jews.[84] Gregory the Great (540–604) also sees the conversion of the Jews in an eschatological way, as a step towards an integrated Christian empire, even to the *civitas Dei* at the End of Time. The Finding of the Cross is regarded as the proof of belief and has prompted the confession and conversion of Judas, which will culminate in the sacrament of baptism.[85] Gregory the Great is

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[81] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 204; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 2769, mid-6th cent., fol. 15v–21v, Ravenna (?); A. HOLDER (ed.), *Inventio sanctae crucis*, Leipzig, 1889, pp. 1–13; thus spread at the time of the *Decretum Gelasianum*.

[82] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 203–204. *Inventio crucis* B is a direct and clear Carolingian translation from the Greek. In both content and form this edition is therefore of better quality than the rather battered A-tradition. There is mention of a Greek presence in Rome and Canterbury from 600 on; S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., pp. 279–280.

[83] B. BISCHOFF, *Die südostdeutschen Schreibschulen*, I, 2nd ed., Wiesbaden, 1960, p. 20 ff.; idem, *Kalligraphie in Bayern. Achtes bis zwölftes Jahrhundert* (exh. cat.), Wiesbaden, 1981, p. 16.

[84] B. BLUMENKRANZ, *Juifs et Chrétiens dans le monde Occidental, 430–1096*, Paris, 1960, p. 28: 'les influences juives qui étaient assez fortes dans la Gaule du milieu du VI^{ieme} siècle'.

[85] B. BLUMENKRANZ, *Le juif médiéval au miroir de l'art chrétien*, Paris, 1966, fig. 3: baptism of Judas.

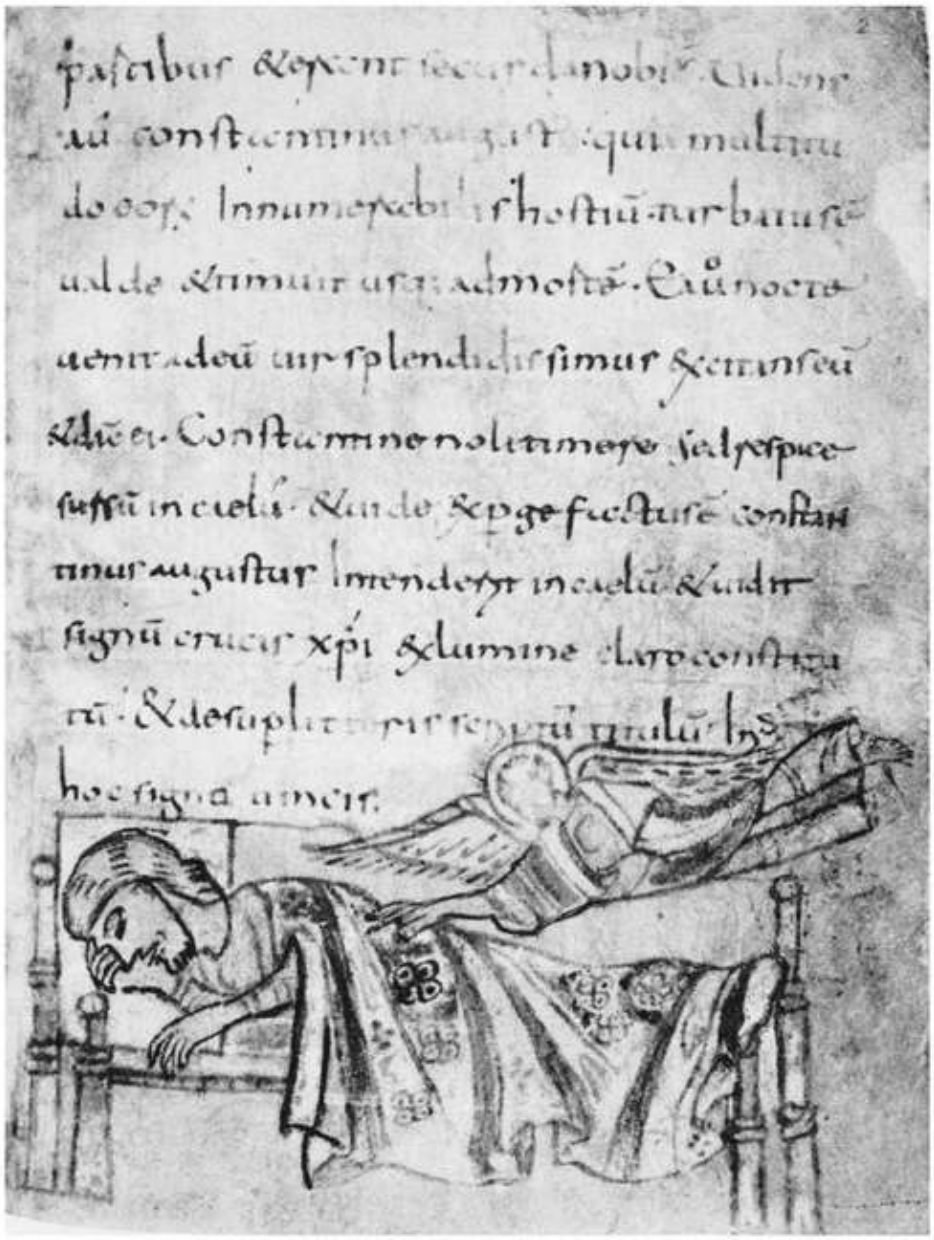


Fig. 6. *Wessobrunner Gebetbuch*, unframed tinted outline drawing, South German, 814. Munich, Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, clm. 22053, fol. 1–20; drawings on: fol. 2, 3v, 6v, 7v, 9v, 10, 10v, 12v, 13, 14v, 15v, 16, 16v, 17v, 18v, 19, 20, fol. 2: Dream of Constantine.

already complaining about forced conversions and pleading for baptism as a result not of compulsion but of conviction, brought about by sermons and preaching, for instance.[86]

Gregory's writings were still current in Carolingian times. They inspired Louis the Pious to reform the monasteries, introducing a tightening and standardizing of the Benedictine Rule.[87] Still there was a considerable degree of tolerance shown to the Jews in the Carolingian period. In 814—just when the Wessobrunn prayer book was being written—Louis the Pious commissioned the *Magister Iudaeorum*.[88] Jews could acquire a legal status and there were flourishing Jewish communities in southern Germany. Is it a coincidence that in that same year an illustrated text was devoted to the Judas Cyriacus legend? The content of the manuscript could be read as exemplary. In this way the monastic community took a standpoint in the debate about the conversion of the Jews.[89]

The apologetic function of the *Inventio crucis* tradition likewise emerges from another Carolingian manuscript. In the Vercelli *Canones conciliarum* (ca. 800) the texts of the fourth and fifth-century councils are introduced by drawings of the Finding of the Cross (fig. 7a).[90] Both texts and drawings were produced in the see of Milan. At the bottom of the page Judas discloses a row of three crosses with his pick. As in the Gellone miniature, the middle cross is larger. Above, Judas hands the True Cross to Helena, who receives it with outstretched arms. The discovery of the Cross by the mother of the first Christian emperor represents the political establishment of *Ecclesia*. Judas hands over the Truth; *Synogoga* yields to Christianity.

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[86] B. BLUMENKRANZ, *Juifs*, op. cit., no. 65.

[87] R. COLLINS, op. cit., p. 116.

[88] R. DELORT, *Charlemagne*, Paris, 1986, p. 112.

[89] Avars systematically threatened Bavaria during the 8th and 9th centuries. The prayer book could be situated more broadly in the Carolingian conversion offensives on the Danube, and the forced baptisms, which are well documented. The chronicle of Moissac tells of the baptism of the Avar leader in 805, which resulted in the *Limes avaricus*, more or less the border with present-day Austria; R. DELORT, op. cit., p. 46; R. COLLINS, op. cit., p. 98.

[90] Bibliotheca Capitulare, ms. 165, fol. 2r; 224 folios, 270mm × 190mm; Chr. WALTER, *Les dessins carolingiens dans un manuscrit de Verceil*, in *Cahiers archéologiques*, 18, 1968, pp. 99–107, p. 99, n. 2; A. SORBELLI, *Inventari dei manuscritti delle biblioteche d'Italia* 19–21, Florence, 1923, p. 117, no. 165; C.M. CHAZELLE, *Archbishops Ebo and Hincmar of Reims and the Utrecht Psalter*, in *Speculum*, 72, 1997, pp. 1055–1077, p. 1060; 2r: the Finding of the Cross; 2v: the Council of Nicaea (ibid., fig. 4); 3r: St Peter and St Paul; 3v and 4r: the first Council of Constantinople; 4v: the Council of Ephesus, and 5r: Christ in Majesty with Helena and Constantine.



Fig. 7a. *Finding of the Cross. Canones conciliarum*, unframed outline drawings, last quarter of the 8th century or first quarter of the 9th century, Milan (?). Vercelli, Bibliotheca Capitulare, ms. 165, fol. 2r.

The fact that this transfer is so prominently portrayed acquires a particular significance in the context of the first Council of Nicaea (325), which dealt with the suppression of the Arians. In the manuscript the Finding of the Cross is followed by an image of Constantine enthroned and keeping a monitory eye on the Arians as they burn their heretical writings (fig. 7b). Often the Jews were attacked at the same time as the Arians,[91] for neither—albeit for different reasons—accepted the full divinity of Christ. The significance of the Crucifixion and the Incarnation are essential in this discussion.

There are many scholarly Carolingian texts in which the issue of the twofold nature of Christ—man and God (thus Son of God)—is thematized. To Alcuin, the Crucifixion conveyed this dual nature very precisely.[92] And it is also expressed in the liturgy of the *Inventio crucis*, which is, after all, related to the content of Holy Week. The texts focus not only on the apotropaic power of the Cross, but also on redemption through the Crucifixion, the *recirculatio* (Adam versus Christ) and the eschatology (the new Jerusalem, Paradise). The themes of the eschatological qualities of the Cross and the Redemption through the Son of Man are more strongly emphasized in Gaul, the Iberian peninsula and northern Italy. This can perhaps be ascribed to a revival of Adoptionism in those areas.[93] Alcuin of York and Benedict of Aniane were great challengers of this eighth-century tendency which, like Arianism, minimized or even denied the divinity of Christ and his consubstantiality with the Father. Perhaps this explains the overcompensatory emphasis on the dual nature of Christ.[94]

The fact that the Finding of the Cross arises in the debates of the first councils may be connected with this. It has already been pointed out that the fusion of Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre, which indeed connects death (human nature) and resurrection (divine nature), also found expression in the Gellone miniature.

The issue of the dual nature of Christ is essentially connected to the dogma of the Incarnation. It is no coincidence that the *Admonitio generalis*, issued on 23 March 789 at Aachen, directed that the Incarnation should be introduced in sermons in order to combat Adoptionism.[95] Thus, in the West, the first *Inventio* iconography—the

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[91] B. BLUMENKRANZ, op. cit., p. 61.
[92] C.M. CHAZELLE, op. cit., p. 73.
[93] R. COLLINS, op. cit., pp. 127–133.
[94] C.M. CHAZELLE, op. cit., pp. 83–85.
[95] R. COLLINS, op. cit., p. 109 ff.



Fig. 7b. *Council of Nicaea and Saints Peter and Paul. Canones conciliarum*, unframed outline drawings, last quarter of the 8th century or first quarter of the 9th century, Milan (?). Vercelli, Bibliotheca Capitulare, ms. 165, fol. 2v–3r.

Gellone Sacramentary can be dated to 792 at the latest—appears at almost exactly the same time as the *Admonitio generalis*. And the interest in the (post-) Constantinian council texts in the Milanese see can also be connected with the stricter ecclesiastical and theological guidelines that were issued from that moment. One could suggest that as the Crucifixion is the proof of the Incarnation, the rediscovered Cross is the proof of the Crucifixion. The thematizing of the Son of Man on the Cross is also prominent in the liturgical texts used during the feast of the Finding of the Cross.

The Carolingian period, with its literary, liturgical and artistic renaissance, provided significant stimuli for the iconography of the Finding of the Cross. Even so, the earliest pictorial tradition is represented by just three examples. Geographically the three manuscripts are divided across the horizontal strip that links southern Gaul, southern Spain and northern Italy. They were created independently, both stylistically and iconographically. The literary background to them all is the Judas Cyriacus legend. The place the theme occupied in Carolingian art was modest. But with the dawning of the twelfth century, that was about to change.

The Meuse region and Rhineland in the twelfth century. Expansion and enhancement

The tenth and eleventh centuries played little part in the development of the *Inventio crucis* iconography. But the twelfth century—the century of the crusades—saw the revival of the theme. It was mostly manifested in the enamels of the Meuse region and the Rhineland: the Stavelot reliquary, the Lobbes (?) phylactery, the Berlin/London altar cross and the Tongeren reliquary.

Much has been written about the importance of the St Remaclus's Abbey triptych reliquary from Stavelot (1154–1158) (fig. 8).[96] Here,

[96] New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, open: 484mm–660mm; Technical details: wood core, with gilded copper, interrupted by silver pilasters with *vernis brun*; these pilasters are 19th-century copies. W. VOELKLE, *The Iconography of the Finding of the True Cross in Mosan Art in the Last Half of the Twelfth Century* (unpubl. thesis), Columbia, 1965, p. 37 ff. (I have been unable to consult this study); M.M. GAUTHIER, *Emaux du moyen âge occidental*, Freiburg, 1972, p. 125, pl. 81; W. VOELKLE, *The Stavelot Triptych. Mosan Art and the Legend of the True Cross* (exh. cat.), New York, 1980; J. LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *L'art byzantin en Belgique en relation avec les croisades*,

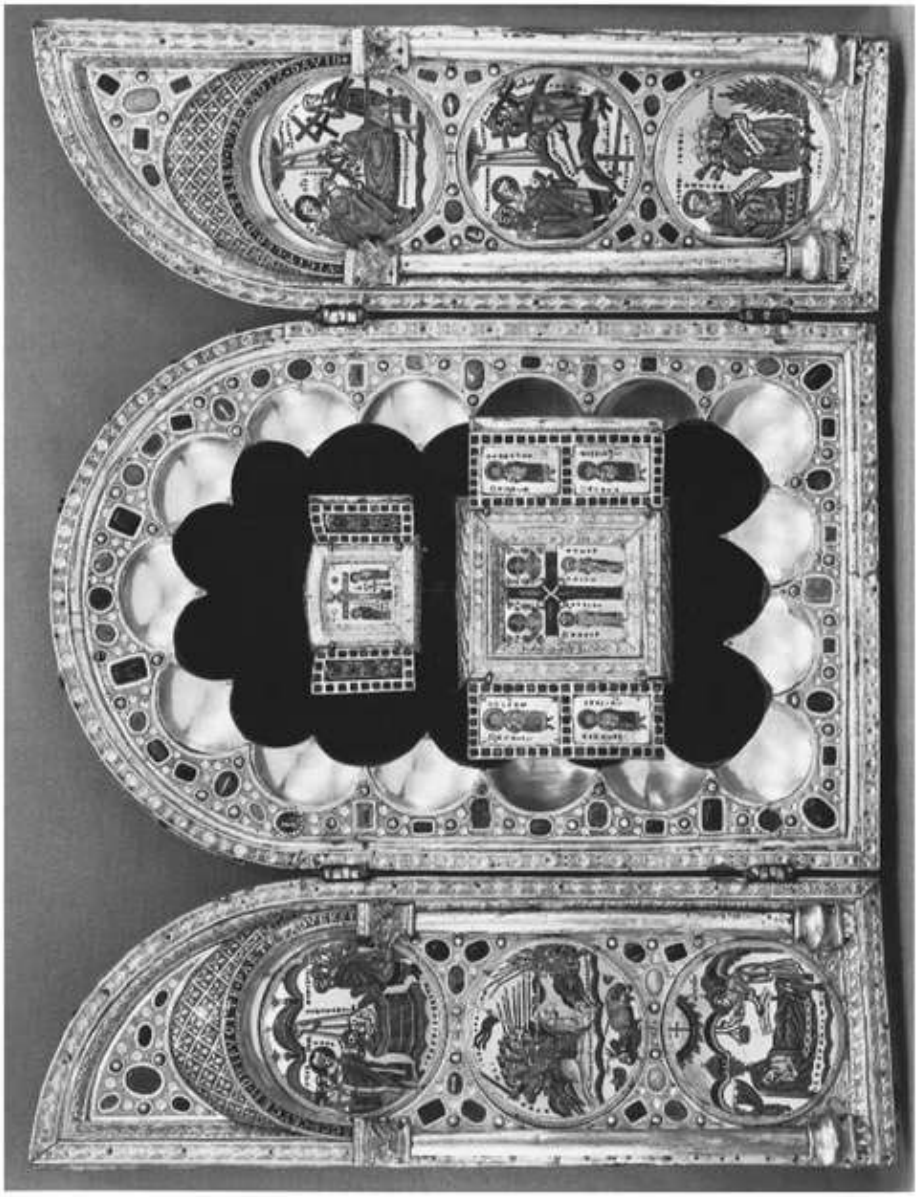


Fig. 8. *Six medallions with the legends of Constantine* (left) *and Helena* (right). Centre: two small Byzantine triptychs. Reliquary of the Holy Cross for Abbot Wibald, Godefroid of Huy (?), Stavelot, 1154–1158. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library.

it will be discussed in terms of its importance to the iconographic tradition. It may be the oldest Cross reliquary in triptych form in the West[97] and is the first to have the legend of the Finding of the Cross as its subject,[98] making it an exceptional type among twelfth-century reliquaries of the Cross.

The Stavelot reliquary's six medallions, which are made in champlevé enamel (known in the Meuse region from 1145), are divided between the inside of the triptych's wings. The central panel serves as a background for two smaller Byzantine triptychs in cloisonné enamel and is covered in red velvet, as are the outside faces of the wings. The velvet is not original. When the triptych was taken apart in 1973 at least twelve attachment points for precious stones or cameos were identified,[99] suggesting that the space around and between the two little Byzantine triptychs was once covered with precious stones, as is still the case for the wings and the frame of the centre panel.

The decorative inner edge of the central section's gilded metal frame is rendered in a series of semicircular indentations. This form is derived from stone altar tables, examples of which date back to the fifth and sixth centuries.[100] The number of indentations differs,

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in *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Oudheidkunde en Kunstgeschiedenis* 56, 1987, pp. 13–47, p. 17 and fig. 2; N. STRATFORD, *Catalogue of Medieval Enamels in the British Museum*, vol. 2. *Northern Romanesque Enamel*, London, 1993, figs 50–52; A. LEMEUNIER, *Le vernis brun dans l'orfèvrerie du Moyen Âge occidental, spécialement dans l'archévêché de Cologne* (Doct. diss.), Liège, 1993; M.L. DE KREEK, *De kerkschat van het Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekapittel te Maastricht* (*Clavis. Kunsthistorische monografieën*, 14), Utrecht, 1994, p. 89; K. McKAY HOLBERT, *Mosan Reliquary Triptychs and the Cult of the True Cross in the Twelfth Century* (unpubl. Doct. thesis.), Yale, 1995, pp. 7–71. Provenance: In 1792 the abbot of Stavelot, Célestin Thys (d. 1796) sold the triptych to the Walz family in Hanau, where it was protected from French secularization. In 1909 the triptych was offered for sale in London, by the firm Durlacher Brothers. The triptych was bought in 1910 by John Pierpont Morgan for the British Museum in London; J. STIENNON and J. DECKERS, *Wibald, abbé de Stavelot-Malmédy et de Corvey (1130–1158)*, (exh. cat.), Stavelot, 1982, p. 68. For this section I am very grateful to Professor Dr. Jos Koldeweij (Catholic University of Nijmegen) and Dr. Albert Lemeunier (Musée d'Art Religieux et d'Art Mosan de Liège).

[97] W. VOELKLE, op. cit., 1980, p. 11; *Wibald*, op. cit., p. 68. The form will be imitated. The Cross reliquary in the form of a triptych originated in 11th-century Byzantine art; See: A. FROLOW, *Les reliquaires de la vraie croix*, Paris, 1965, with numerous examples.

[98] W. VOELKLE, op. cit., 1980, p. 11.

[99] *Wibald*, op. cit., p. 75.

[100] W. VOELKLE, op. cit., fig. 48. See also: A.A. BARB, *Mensa Sacra. The Round Table and the Holy Grail*, in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 24, 1956, pp. 40–67, pp. 42–44. A 6th-century example is kept in The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. See also the altar of the Church of Saint-Sernin in Toulouse (11th cent., Master Gilduinus).

but the principle is based on the popular Palestinian belief that the table of the Last Supper also featured thirteen concave indentations.[101] From the tenth and eleventh centuries onwards this kind of motif also began to appear in precious metalwork,[102] miniatures[103] and architecture[104] that had no direct connection to a table or altar.

On stylistic grounds the triptych can be dated to the eleven-fifties. Although no directly related documents have survived from that time, the reliquary has been ascribed to Wibald (b. 1098), abbot of Stavelot between 1130 and 1158, on the basis of this stylistic dating. Abbot Wibald's correspondence reveals contacts with an artist referred to as 'G'.[105] It could perhaps be that 'G' was his contemporary and countryman Godefroid of Huy.[106] It is not impossible that Godefroid was also the goldsmith of the triptych. Notwithstanding the fact that the attribution is based on rather uncertain extrapolations, it continues to be passed on in the studies.[107]

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[101] A.A. BARB, art. cit., pp. 43–44.

[102] Paten with the Last Supper, Byzantine, 10th cent., Brussels, Stoclet collection;

[103] Last Supper in a Thuringian-Saxon psalter, ca 1220, Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. 85 in scrinio, fol. 12v. The Crucifixion surrounded by a decoration of sixteen lobes, Mosan *sacramentarium* of Wibald, early 12th cent., Brussels, Royal Library, ms. 2034–2035, fol. 25v.

[104] Four semicircular indentations have been cut out on each side of the southern porch of the abbey church of Moissac (1150–1180).

[105] Liège, Archives de l'Etat. Fonds de Stavelot, ms. 341, fol. 30v. Letter from Abbot Wibald to 'G': 'A quelle fin donc cette lettre? Simplement pour que tu t' appliques avec un soin exclusif aux travaux que nous t' avons commandés, écartant jusgu'à leur achèvement toute besogne qui pourrait y mettre obstacle.' The letters are published in *Wibald*, op. cit., p. 48 ff. Other correspondence of Abbot Wibald also in: PL 189, cols. 1121–458.

[106] The attribution was first made by Charles Read in 1910; C. READ, *On a Triptych of the Twelfth Century From the Abbey of Stavelot in Belgium*, in *Archaeologia*, 62, 1910, pp. 21–30, p. 21. See also: O. von FALKE and H. FRAUBERGER, *Deutsche Schmelzarbeiten des Mittelalters und andere Kunstwerke der Kunsthistorischen Ausstellung zu Düsseldorf*, Frankfurt, 1904; F.J. JAKOBI, *Wibald von Stablo und Corvey (1098–1158). Benediktinischer Abt in der frühen Stauferzeit*, Munster, 1979, p. 267; J. LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *L'art byzantin en Belgique*, art. cit., pp. 13–47, p. 17 and fig. 2. Thus, the Cross reliquary is less well documented than the Remaclus altar (known from a drawing of 1661, Liège, State Archive) and the reliquary of the head of Alexander (1145, Brussels, Royal Museums for Art and History); W. VOELKLE, op. cit., 1980, fig. 10 and figs. 14–16. The three reliquaries most probably all originated from different workshops; see also A. LEMEUNIER, *Trésors du Musée d' Arts Réligieux et Mosan de Liège*, Liège, 1982–1983, p. 17. On Godefroid of Huy, see: Ph. GEORGE, *"Le plus subtil ouvrir de monde". Godefroid de Huy, orfèvre mosan*, in *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale. X^e–XIIe siècle*, 29, 1996, pp. 321–338.

[107] S. COLLON-GEVAERT and J. LEJEUNE, *Art Mosan aux XIe et XIIe siècles*, Brussels, 1961, no. 27 with ill. In 1972 Joyce Brodsky undertook a first critical assessment of these theses, but finally the author stuck to the same hypothetical

Each of the triptych's wings has three medallions with scenes from the Legend of the Cross (Constantine on the left, Helena on the right). The medallion design was applied here for the first time; possibly it was adopted from stained glass work.[108] The scenes read from bottom to top—a structure also chosen by the 'Genesis illuminator' of the Stavelot Bible.[109] In the bottom medallion on the left wing, Constantine's dream is portrayed.[110] The emperor reclines, leaning on his elbow and facing the viewer. Behind him are three arches: a curtain hangs in the left arch, a crown in the centre arch.[111] On the right an angel bears the inscription IN HOC VINCE and with his right hand points to a cross that appears in the firmament (indicated by a semicircle). The iconography refers to the dream (Lactantius), not the vision during the battle against Maxentius (Eusebius).[112] The scene can be compared with the illustration in the *Wessobrunner Gebetbuch* of 814 (fig. 6).

Both the dream and the vision were also illustrated in an early Macedonian manuscript, containing the homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus (fig. 9). The collection of Gregory's homilies—as well as a number of *orationes*, panegyrics and letters—was produced at the court of Emperor Basil I of Constantinople.[113] On the basis of the

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grounds; J. BRODSKY, *The Stavelot Triptych. Notes on a Mosan Work*, in *Gesta*, 11, 1972, pp. 19–33.

[108] The so-called 'Crusaders' Window' of Saint-Denis (12th cent.) which included the meeting of Constantine and Charlemagne, is still known from engravings; B. de MONTFAUCON, *Les monuments de la monarchie française*, 1, Paris, 1729; W. VOELKLE, op. cit., 1980, fig. 26; M.M. GAUTHIER, *Strassen des Glaubens. Reliquien und Reliquiare des Abendlandes* (exh. cat.), Freiburg, 1983, pp. 52–53; no. 26.

[109] W. VOELKLE, *o.c.*

[110] CONSTANTINUS, I(N) HOC VINCE (banderole), A(N)G(E)L(US) D(OMI)NI.

[111] Many an author has thought to recognize a halo behind Constantine's head. I think, together with W. Voelkle, that this is a cushion (*o.c.*, 1980, p. 13). The arcades constitute a seemingly antique element. The candelabrum is of the early Christian type, like the 5th-century example in St Peter's Church in Rome.

[112] J. Cl. SCHMITT, *Bildhaftes Denken. Die Darstellung biblischer Traüme in mittelalterlichen Handschriften*, in *Träume im Mittelalter. Ikonologische Studien*, eds. A. PARAVINCINI BAGLIANI and G. STABILE, Stuttgart-Zurich, 1989, pp. 9–25, points to the conventional difference between the portrayal of a dream and a vision: in the first case the eyes are closed, in the second they are open.

[113] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. grec. 510, ca 880; K. WEITZMANN, *Illustration for the Chronicles Sozomenos, Theoderet and Malalas*, in *Byzantion*, 16, 1, 1942–1943, pp. 87–134; S. DER NERSSESSIAN, *The Illustrations of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus Paris GR 510. A Study of the Connections Between Text and Images, in Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 16, 1962, pp. 197–227, p. 197, fig. 15; L. BRUBAKER, *The Illustrated Copy of the "Homilies" of Gregory of Nazianzus in Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. Gr. 510)*, (Diss. The John Hopkins University), 1983.

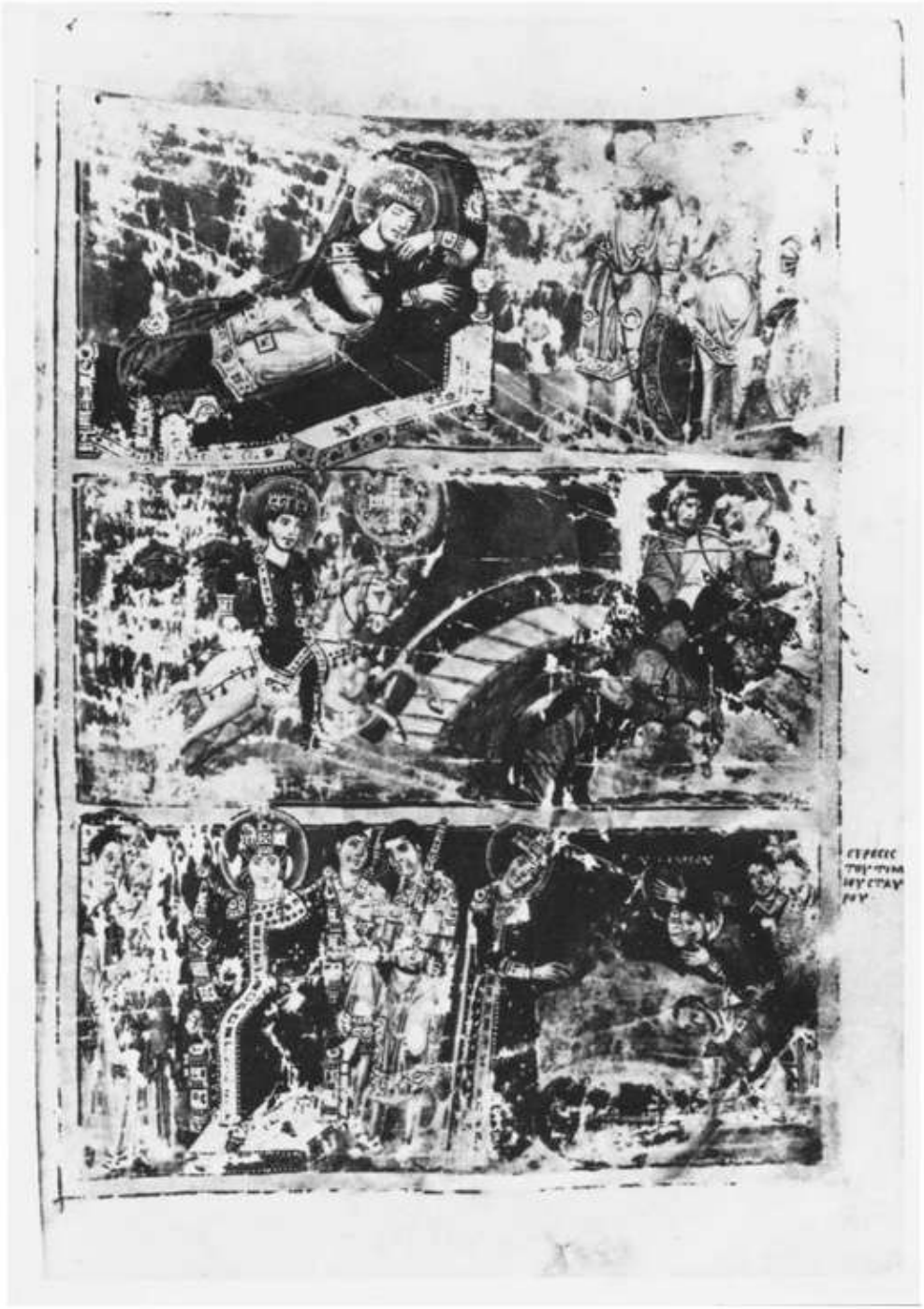


Fig. 9. *Constantine receives a vision from the angel* (top); *Constantine and the battle at the Milvian Bridge* (centre); *Helena and Judas find the Cross* (bottom). Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Constantinople, 880–886. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. grec. 510, fol. 440r.

portraits of Basil, his wife Eudocia and his children Leo and Alexander, the manuscript can be dated to between 880 and 886. Constantine, his eldest son, is missing; he died in 879. Basil himself died in 886.

In the upper register of the miniature in the manuscript the Dream of Constantine is depicted. Three (?) guards look on. The miniature is too badly damaged to make out the angel or the cross that appeared to Constantine, as described by Lactantius. In the middle register the battle at the Milvian Bridge is taking place. Here the cross as a *vexillum* and sign of victory (as described by Eusebius) can certainly be seen. Below on the left Helena sits enthroned and on the right—with Helena portrayed again—is the finding of a cross. The cross points towards the left and has been excavated by an astonished Judas with a pick or spade. The relationship of the image on folio 440r to the text is unclear.

In the middle medallion of the left wing of the triptych the enemy flies before Constantine's lances; one horseman flourishes a triumphant sword.[114] The soldiers ride under a fluttering standard that flies from a lance surmounted by a cross. This is the crusaders' *labarum.*[115] Below a river, schematically rendered by a waving line, lie two corpses. This differs from the Eusebian tradition, in which the Milvian Bridge collapses into the Tiber and Maxentius is drowned. In the miniature in the homilies, too, Constantine kills Maxentius in a duel by a bridge. In the iconography of the Stavelot triptych the two sources—Eusebius and the anonymous Judas Cyriacus legend—are linked. From Eusebius comes the battle against Maxentius in Rome (inscription);[116] from the Judas Cyriacus legend the motif of the River Danube, where Constantine contended with the 'barbarians'.[117] The

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[114] CONSTANTIN(US) VICTOR MAXENTI, ROMANI, LABARUM.

[115] W. VOELKLE, op. cit., 1980, p. 14.

[116] EUSEBIUS, *Historia ecclesiastica*, PG 20, cols. 819–824.

[117] S. BORGEHAMMAR, op. cit., p. 256. There is a similarity of composition with an English manuscript of 1130 containing the life of St Edmund (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 763, fol. 7v), with the lost 'Crusaders' Window' of Saint-Denis and with a Mosan psalter with Abraham driving away the hostile kings (ca. 1160, Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, 78A6, fol. 1v). Here, Abraham and Constantine even carry the same shields. Is there a typological relationship intended between Abraham and Constantine? Eusebius compared the emperor to the patriarchs. At the top of the left panel an antique gem has been incorporated, in which a knight slays a serpent with a cross-spear. Eusebius described the struggle with Maxentius as a metaphorical victory over evil. The serpent (or dragon) being slain by a *labarum*, was a frequently-occuring motif on Roman coins after 333; W. VOELKLE, op. cit.,

inscription above the top medallion on the left wing of the triptych, ECCE CRUCEM DOMINI FIGITE PARTES ADVERSE, in fact refers to this middle medallion. It is a quotation from the antiphon sung at Lauds on 3 May, the feast of the Finding of the Cross.[118]

In the uppermost medallion on the left-hand side the baptism of Constantine is depicted.[119] Constantine is half submerged in the font and only his upper body can be seen. On his left are the MINISTRI and on his right is Pope Sylvester (314–335). Above, the Hand of God appears in a triple beam of light. The scene is derived from the *Acta Silvestri*, which was certainly known in the West from the fifth century onwards.[120] The legend, in which the pope plays the central part, alludes to the servitude of the State to the Church. In the sacrament of *emulatio*, or baptism by complete immersion, it was believed that both *rex* and *sacerdos* were born, and this was exemplary for all rulers and emperors to come. Moreover, one of the priests carries small vessels containing oil, which perhaps refers to the anointing during the coronation ritual. The link between the sacrament of baptism and 'healing' is also made in the *De sacramentis* of Hugh of St Victor (d. 1147), in which the sacrament is compared to the medicine bottle; perhaps this also accounts for the little pitchers in the image.[121] In a Mosan enamel (1150–1160) depicting the baptism of Naaman the Hand of God appears in a similar way (fig. 10).[122] In the *Liber pontificalis* Constantine is compared with Naaman (2 Kings 5):[123] both were healed of their leprosy, Naaman in the Jordan, Constantine by his baptism by Sylvester. A similarity can also be

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p. 14. At the bottom of a map of Jerusalem (Collectary of St Bertin, 1170/1180, The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, ms. 76 F5; 25.5cm–16.5cm) Saint Gregory is depicted stabbing the fleeing Muslims in the back (fig. 39).

[118] W. VOELKLE, op. cit., p. 14.

[119] MINISTRI, SILVESTER PAPA, CONSTANTIN(U)S, BAPTISTERIUM.

[120] BHL II, 1119–1120.

[121] HUGH OF ST VICTOR, *De sacramentis*, PL 176, col. 323: 'Medicus donat, minister dispensat, vas servat quae sanat percipientem aegrotum gratiam spiritalem. Si ergo vasa sunt spiritalis gratiae sacramenta, non ex suo sanant, quia vasa aegrotum non curant, sed medicina'.

[122] London, British Library, 10cm × 10.1cm; FAMULI, CURATIO NAMAM, IORDANEM; W. VOELKLE, op. cit., p. 15; N. STRATFORD, op. cit., pp. 58–59, Pl. II. K. McKAY HOLBERT, op. cit., p. 48 and figs. 38 and 39, allude to the baptism of Constantine in the Warmundus Sacramentary (11th cent., Ivrea, Bibliotheca Capitolare, Cod. 86, fol. 23v) and in the Zwiefalten Sacramentary (ca. 1160, Stuttgart, Landesbibliothek, Cod. 27, fol. 167v).

[123] L. DUCHESNE (ed.), *Le Liber Pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire*, 1, Paris, 1955, p. 74.



Fig. 10. *Namaan's baptism*. Mosan enamel, 1150–1160. London, British Museum.

seen in the depiction of the baptism of the centurion Cornelius on the font (1107–1118) of St Bartholomew's Church in Liège.[124]

Moreover, the sacrament of baptism also alludes to St Remaclus, the founder of Stavelot Abbey. In the Musée Communal in Huy is a pilgrim's amulet that dates from the end of the twelfth century.[125] It shows Remaclus with his mitre and staff in the act of blessing a kneeling man; In the foreground is a flowing well, in the background a raised cross. The inscription reads: + CORPORIS. AC. ANIME.

[124] A. LEMEUNIER, J. DOCQUIER and A. WANKENNE, *Découverte d'un insigne de pèlerinage en l'honneur de Saint Remacle*, in *Bulletin du cercle archéologique Hesbaye-Condroz*, 18, 1983–1984, pp. 241–255.

[125] Lead, 9cm × 3.9cm; A. L(EMEUNIER), art. *Enseigne de pèlerin*, in *Saint Remacle. L'apôtre de l'Ardenne*, ed. A. LEMEUNIER, Spa, 1995, pp. 108–111, cat. no. 59.

TOLLIS. VITIOSA. REMACLE ('You, Remaclus, take away the vices of the body and soul'). The *Vita Remacli* by the monk Heribert (d. 1007), abbot of Lobbes and secretary to Bishop Notger, mentions Remaclus's consecration of pagan wells. The Christianized wells were then used for baptism, which liberates the soul and the body.

The font on the enamel perhaps also alludes to the font made of porphyry and lined with silver in the Lateran Baptistery in Rome. That font is now lost, though it was there until the thirteenth century.[126] According to the *Acta Silvestri* and the *Liber pontificalis* Constantine was baptized in the Lateran. Pope Sixtus III (432–440) had the Baptistery built on an octagonal plan with eight pillars forming an arcade around the font.[127] Arcades feature on the Stavelot enamel too.

On the right-hand wing of the triptych there are three medallions connected with the legend of the Finding of the Cross. Again they read from the bottom up, starting with Helena's interrogation of the Jews.[128] From her throne Helena (with a halo) questions the Jews (in Jewish caps).[129] Judas, elderly and bearded, stands to the fore. The Judas Cyriacus legend tells how Helena threatens the Jews of Jerusalem with fire if they fail to cooperate. Only under this pressure do they push forward Judas, who knows the place where Christ's Cross lies buried. Even in the face of threats, Judas is unwilling to divulge the true location, and not until he has been starved for seven days at the bottom of a dry well does he show Helena the place. On the extreme right the threatening fire blazes.

Notwithstanding the fact that this motif of the threat of fire is a significant part of the literary tradition of Judas Cyriacus, only now, in the twelfth century, is it introduced into the iconography. As will be seen, the motif was imitated on other twelfth-century Mosan crosses and Cross reliquaries. This is the period in which anti-Semitism clearly begins to take shape. The rejection and repudiation of the Jew shifts from theological argument to individually-oriented xenophobia.[130]

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[126] P. LAUER, *Le palais de Latran. Etude historique et archéologique*, Paris, 1911, p. 30.

[127] P. LAUER, op. cit., p. 101 and p. 326.

[128] OSTENDITE LIGNUM (banderole Helena), IUDAS NOVIT (banderole Judas), (H)ELENA REGINA, IUDEI, IUDAS, IGNIS.

[129] As a result of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) Jews were compelled to wear distinctive clothes (a specific type of hat, for instance); W. VOELKLE, op. cit., 1980, pp. 16–17.

[130] It is precisely in the 12th century that legends in connection with the robbery and/or desecration of the Host originate; A. BOUREAU, *L'événement sans fin. Récit et christianisme au Moyen Age*, Paris, 1993, pp. 210–213.

A fertile climate, perhaps, for an interest in this particular motif to take root.

The middle medallion shows the Finding of the Cross.[131] Helena is leading two figures, one with a beard and one in a Jewish cap. On the right is a second scene: two figures (one in a Jewish cap) each hold a cross. In front of them Judas—looking very much like one of the figures accompanying Helena—uses a pick to cut free a third cross, which, unlike the others, has a *titulus*. Chrysostom mentions the *titulus* as being the identifying sign of the True Cross. In the miniature in Gregory of Nazianzus's homilies the composition of the Finding of the Cross is very similar. The digging is being carried out from right to left. Helena stands opposite the labouring Judas and in both images she holds a globe. In the triptych medallion the Hand of God appearing in a triple beam of heavenly light shows that the event is taking place by divine grace.

Although the True Cross can already be identified by the *titulus*, the third and topmost medallion is nonetheless dedicated to the Testing of the Cross.[132] With the *titulus* depicted as a second, shorter crossbeam the Cross has the appearance of the patriarchal cross of Jerusalem.[133] And indeed the Testing of the Cross is carried out by a figure wearing a mitre. Either this is Judas, who was ordained as Bishop Cyriacus after his baptism, or it is Bishop Macarius—patriarch of Jerusalem. If Judas is meant, the fact that he no longer wears a beard alludes to his renunciation of Judaism.[134] If Macarius is intended, then we have an iconographic contamination of two literary traditions in the cycle. This also occurs in the matyrology of Ado of Vienna (d. 875).[135]

A youth lies on a stretcher and his upper body is slightly raised. In the Wessobrunn prayer book (fig. 11) the individual on whom

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[131] CALVARIE LOC(US), (H)ELENA REGINA, IUDAS, LIGNU(M) D(OMI)NI ABSCONDITUM, PATIBULA DU(ORUM) LAT(R)ONU(M).

[132] S(ANCTA (H)ELENA, EP(ISCOPU)S, LIGNU(M) D(OMI)NI, MORTUUS SUSCITAT(UR), PATIBULA I.I. LATRONUM.

[133] M.M. GAUTHIER, *Une croix émaillée à double traverse au musée municipale de Limoges*, in *Revue de l'art*, 3, 1969, p. 8 ff.; A. LEMEUNIER, *Echanges artistiques et religieux dans le sillage des premières croisades*, in *Le temps des Croisades*, Brussels, 1996, pp. 85–111, pp. 93–94. Compare the patriarchal cross of Denkendorf, dating from 1130 and coming from Jerusalem, now in Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesmuseum (loc. cit., p. 89, fig. p. 89).

[134] W. VOELKLE, op. cit., p. 18.

[135] J. DUBOIS and G. RENAUD, *Le martyrologe d'Adon. Ses deux familles. Ses trois recensions. Texte et commentaire*, Paris, 1984, p. 143.

the Cross is to be tested is shown as completely lifeless. On the Genesis embroidery of Gerona Cathedral (second half of the eleventh century) is the first depiction of the 'test case' reanimated (fig. 12).[136] This almost five-metre high and four-metre wide embroidered textile was most likely made by Catalan nuns.[137] At the bottom are the four scenes (now damaged) from the legend of the Finding of the Cross. The combination of the legend with Genesis and the zodiac is exceptional. I have dealt with the relationship to the Carolingian prototypes elsewhere.[138] The textile is the only known link between the Carolingian and Mosan iconographies.

On the medallion on the Stavelot triptych the head of the individual on whom the Cross is to be tested is positioned exactly below the divine rays. The rays indicate that God acts through the Cross: the True Cross is the soteriological medium. The inscription above: VICIT LEO DE TRIBU JUDA RADIX DAVID, 'The lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered' (Rev. 5, 5), is also a quotation from the antiphon sung at Lauds on 3 May.[139] The victor is the lamb of the Apocalypse. The 'root' of David also refers to the Tree of Jesse.[140] Helena is no longer referred to as REGINA but as SANCTA ELENA.

There are clear typological similarities between the wings of the Stavelot triptych.[141] On both left and right the bottom medallion deals with the Cross in its symbolic status: in Constantine's dream; in Helena's interrogation of the Jews. In the middle medallions the Cross is shown in its material state: in the battle as the *labarum*, in

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[136] Wool and linen on woollen cloth, 365cm × 470cm. P. de PALOL, *Une broderie catalane d'époque Romane. La genèse de Gérone*, in *Cahiers archéologiques*, 8, 1956, pp. 175–214 and 9, 1957, pp. 219–251.

[137] P. de PALOL, *Une broderie*, art. cit., p. 176.

[138] B. BAERT, *New Contributions to the Genesis Embroidery of Girona (1050–1100). The Iconography of the Legend of the True Cross*, in *Gesta*, 38, 1999, pp. 115–127.

[139] W. VOELKLE, op. cit., 1980, p. 14.

[140] At the beginning of the Exaltation of the Cross Honorius of Autun also refers to the Tree of Jesse; HONORIUS OF AUTUN, *Speculum ecclesiae*, PL 172, cols. 1001–1006: *De exaltatione Sanctae Crucis*. The text begins with 'radix jesse stabit in signum populorum' (Isa. 11). The Tree of Jesse is a type for the Cross, and is therefore connected to both feasts of the Cross (namely the Finding of the Cross and the Exaltation of the Cross).

[141] Voelkle points out that Helena's halo takes on a different colour each time: green for the expectation and hope at the interrogation, red at the Finding of the Cross as a reminiscence of the passion, and blue at the Testing of the Cross for the cosmological dimension. In Benedictine calendars of the period this symbolic hierarchy of colours is often used; W. VOELKLE, op. cit., 1980, p. 19.

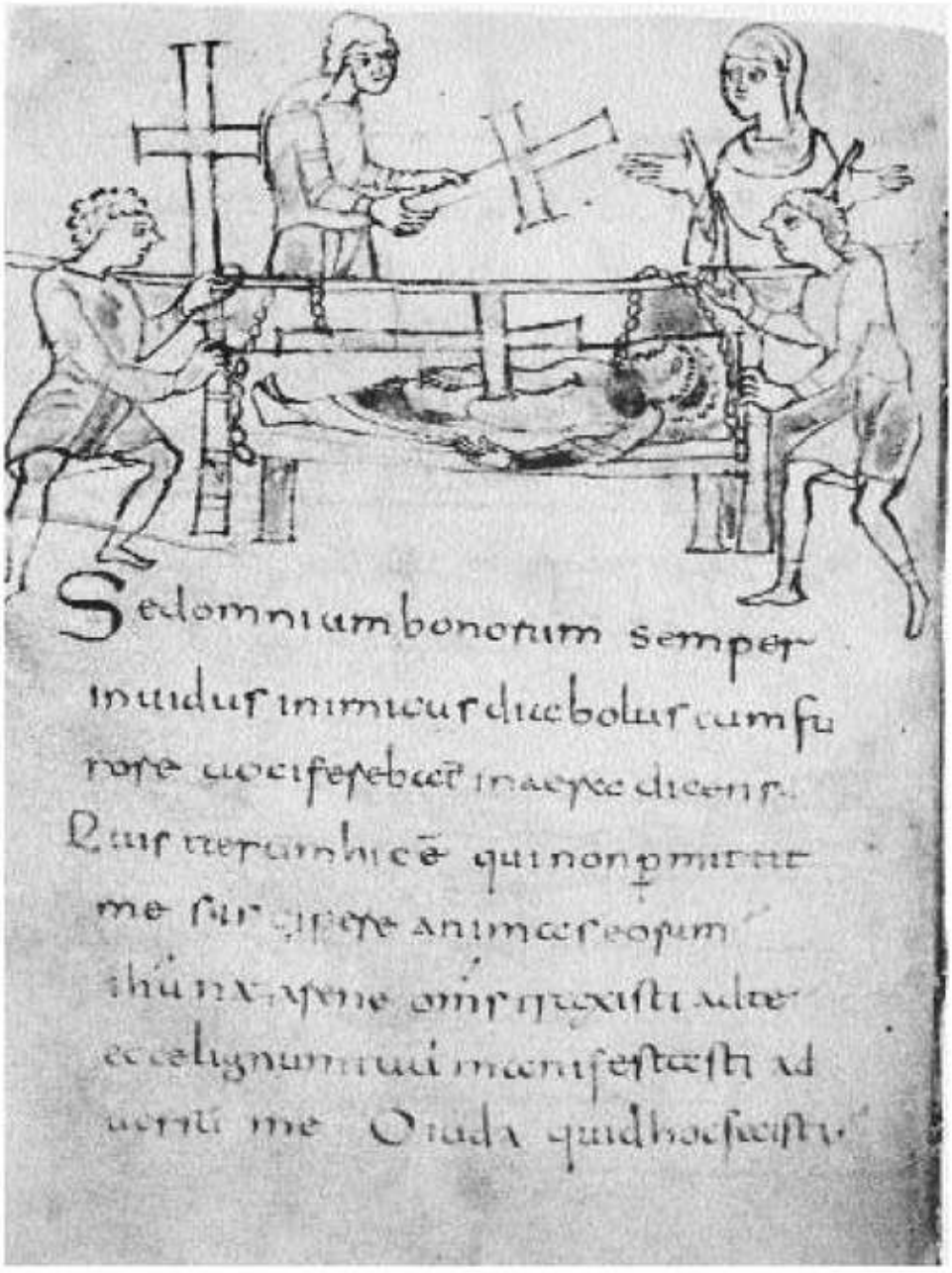


Fig. 11. *The Testing of the Cross. Wessobrunner Gebetbuch*, unframed tinted outline drawing, South German, 814. Munich, Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, clm. 22053, fol. 14v.

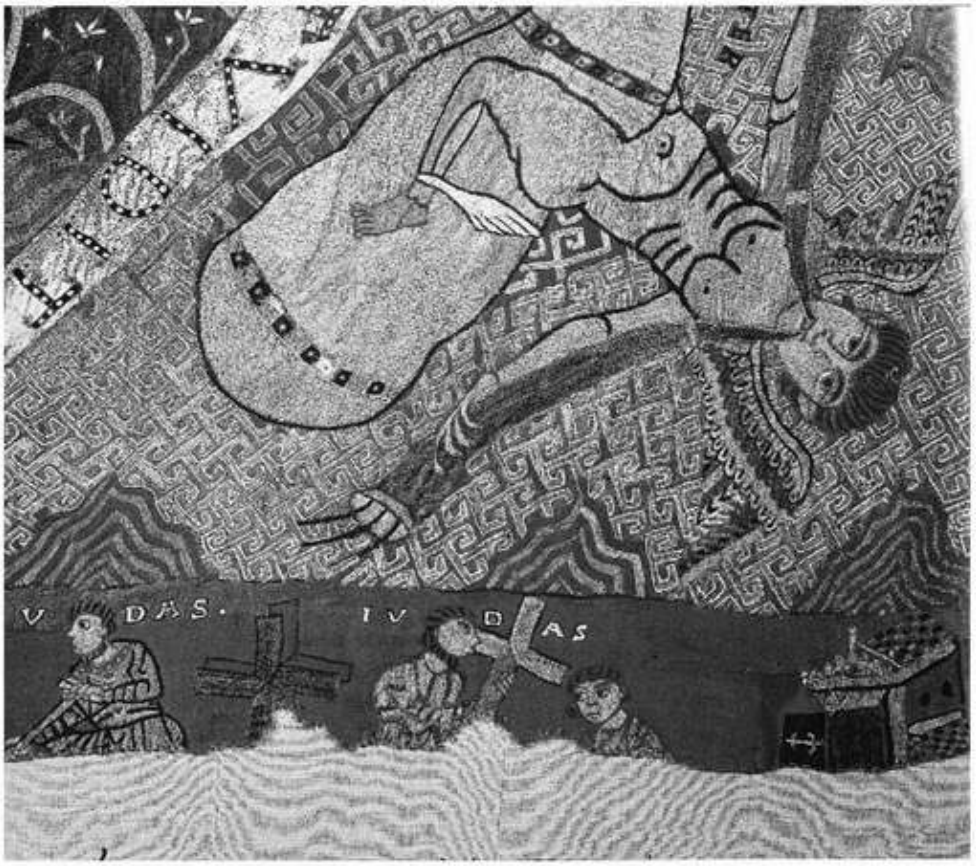


Fig. 12. *Testing of the Cross.* Catalan textile, detail, 1050–1100. Gerona, Cathedral.

the Finding as the relic. At the top the typology culminates (*analogia*). Baptism gives access to Paradise. The baptism of Constantine gives access to the Christian church. In the chronicle (1143–1146) of Otto of Freising (d. 1158) the *civitas terrena* was begun by Constantine's conversion and baptism.[142] Baptism is also a type for the resuscitation of the youth and thus alludes to the *resurrectio* of Christ (Rom. 6, 3–8). Thus, in the iconography of the triptych, the Cross is successively 'symbol', 'matter' and 'revelation'.

The *Inventio crucis* iconography on the right wing is in no sense unique in enamel art. Below we shall examine how the iconography

[142] E. NELLMANN, *Die Reichsidee in die deutschen Dichtungen der Salier- und frühen Stauferzeit. Annolied. Kaiserchronik. Rolandslied. Eraclius* (*Philologische Studien und Quellen*, 16), Berlin, 1963, pp. 11–34. See also: W. LAMMERS, *Otto Bischof von Freising. Chronik oder die Geschichte der zwei Staaten*, Darmstadt, 1980.

relates to three other works of the period with an analogous subject. But first we must pause to address another issue.

On the centre panel of the Stavelot triptych are two tiny Byzantine triptychs. These are both Cross reliquaries (fig. 13).[143] Was the Stavelot triptych specially made to contain the two Byzantine reliquaries? In 1973 the Pierpont Morgan Library analysed the smaller of the two to see how it was joined to the centre panel of the Stavelot triptych.[144] It appeared that the support on which the tiny Byzantine triptych rests is made of the same wood as the centre panel.[145] The larger of the two small triptychs is attached in the same way. Thus both were most probably intended to be contained in the Stavelot triptych. When the smaller triptych was taken apart relics were discovered, concealed in a small cavity in the wooden support:[146] a tiny bag of yellow-brown silk, rolled up in red silk, yielded a piece of parchment, a splinter of wood, a scrap of white silk and a fragment that could not be identified. On the parchment was written: *De ligno domini, de sepulchro domini, de vestimento marie virginis.*[147]

The functional connection between the Stavelot triptych and the Byzantine triptychs was thus materially confirmed. This has strengthened the hypothesis of the relationship between the triptych and Abbot Wibald.

Surviving letters give us a picture of the abbot as an active man, gifted in diplomacy. He was trained by Rupert of Deutz (1075–1127) at the cathedral school in Liège. He also became abbot of Corvey and Monte Cassino (1137). He was adviser to King Conrad III (1138–1152) of Germany and King Frederick I Barbarossa (1152–1190), and in this last function was probably also one of the promoters of the crusades. We know that between 1155 and 1156, and again between 1157 and 1158, Wibald undertook a mission to Constantinople and was received by Emperor Manual I Comnenus to mediate in a marriage between the emperor's niece and Frederick I.[148] He returned

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[143] Small Byzantine triptych: 6.3cm × 11.5cm; large Byzantine triptych: 11.4cm × 2cm.

[144] W. VOELKLE, op. cit., 1980, p. 19.

[145] Carbon dating determined the wood as dating from 'before the 15th century' (Brookhaven National Laboratory); W. VOELKLE, op. cit., 1980, p. 20.

[146] W. VOELKLE, op. cit., 1980, p. 19–21.

[147] W. VOELKLE, op. cit., figs. 37–44; Wibald, op. cit., p. 75: 'De ligno Dni. De sepulchro Dni./De vestimento Sce marie v.' The wood dates from the 5th century and the fabric from the 11th.

[148] J. LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, art. cit., p. 16.

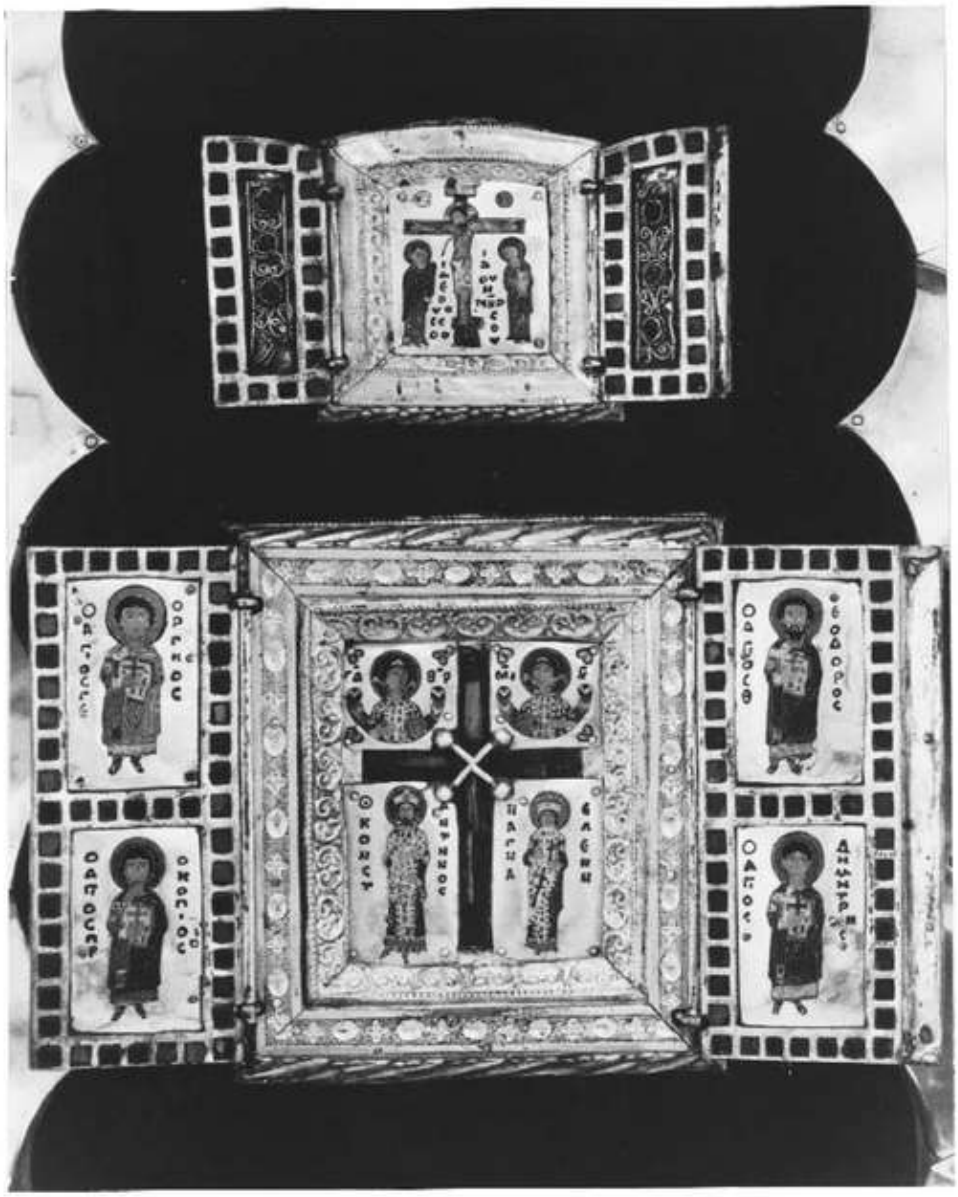


Fig. 13. *The two Byzantine triptychs, open*, 11th–12th century. Reliquary of the Holy Cross for Abbot Wibald, Godefroid of Huy (?), Stavelot, 1154–1158. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library.

from that mission with a Cross reliquary.[149] The eighteenth-century annals of the Benedictines refer to the event: 'a very fine gold cross, in which there is wood of the True Cross, which Wibald brought back from Constantinople.'[150] In 1743 Pierre-Lambert de Saumery visited the abbey. He described a 'considerable portion of the Saviour's Cross, which the celebrated Abbot Wibald brought back from Constantinople, where he was highly regarded; it is enclosed in a gold reliquary enriched with precious stones.'[151]

The triptych was 'inscribed' in the documents, though it was dated to the eighteenth century and it is not absolutely certain whether the descriptions refer to the Stavelot triptych or the Byzantine reliquaries. We should be a little cautious, therefore, in connecting the meaning and function of this altarpiece with the history of Abbot Wibald. For the Remaclus shrine also contains a relic of the Cross, flanked by angels, in a small reliquary at the height of the tympanum.[152]

The Byzantine triptychs date from the late eleventh century or the beginning of the twelfth and are made of gilded copper embellished with cloisonné enamel. When closed, the small triptych, above, shows the Annunciation. The inscription is based on Luke 1, 28: *Salve, gratia plena.* Mary carries a shuttle.[153] On the centre panel is a Crucifixion with Mary and John.[154] Below the Cross's *suppedaneum* is a copper pin where once, perhaps, a pearl was attached. On the outside of the wings of the larger triptych the four Evangelists are portrayed; on the inside, the four Byzantine saints, George, Theodore, Procopius and Demetrius, all of whom can be connected with the cult of the Cross. Each carries a small cross as an attribute. Like

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[149] A. FROLOW, *La relique de la vraie croix. Recherches sur le développement d'un culte*, Paris, 1961, no. 326 ('1136: Monte Cassino') and no. 347 ('before 1157?').

[150] J. BRODSKY, op. cit., p. 20; E. MARTENE and V. DURAND, *Voyages littéraires*, 2, Paris, 1724, pp. 149–161, p. 156: 'Il faut ajoûter à cela une très-belle croix d'or, dans laquelle il y a du bois de la vraye croix, que Vvibaldus rapporta de Constantinople'.

[151] P.L. de SAUMERY, *Les délices du païs de Liège*, 5 vols., Liège, 1738–1744, 3, pp. 198–199: 'une portion considérable de la Croix du Sauveur, que le célèbre Abé Wibalde raporta de Constantinople, où il étoit en grand crédit; elle est enfermé dans un reliquaire d'or enrichi de pierres prétieuses'.

[152] A. LEMEUNIER, *Saint Remacle dans l'art*, in *Saint Remacle*, op. cit., pp. 83–85, p. 84.

[153] Pseudo-Matthew mentions that Mary was spinning purple wool at the Annunciation. The wool was intended for the Temple curtain. See also: G. SCHILLER, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, 4,2. *Maria*, Gütersloh, 1980, pp. 72–75, p. 72 and fig. 535.

[154] The inscription is from Jn. 19, 26–27: 'Woman, here is your son' [to Mary]; 'Here is your mother' [to John about Mary].

Constantine, Procopius also had a vision of the Cross.[155] On the centre panel of this triptych, too, the Crucifixion is depicted, with the Angels Gabriel and Michael occupying the upper corners (each carries a blue globe with a red cross) and Helena and Constantine flanking the Cross. The angels are the exponents of the heavenly liturgy. The pilgrim Egeria (381–384) relates how on Good Friday the deacons of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre display the Cross to the people for veneration in just this way.[156] Constantine and Helena wear imperial garments: the red shoes were reserved strictly for the emperor and empress.[157] Their position flanking the Cross is a convention of Byzantine imperial iconography. Later, other Eastern imperial couples became interchangeable with Helena and Constantine in the presentation of the Cross.

The iconography on the wings of the Stavelot triptych is closely related to a phylactery that is thought to come from Lobbes Abbey (ca. 1160) (fig. 14a).[158] The sides of the phylactery are embellished with semicircular lobes, with four smaller lobes at the corners.[159] On

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[155] W. VOELKLE, op. cit., 1980, p. 21.

[156] J. WILKINSON, *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land*, Jerusalem-Warminster, 2nd ed. of London 1971, 1981, pp. 136–137; F. LEDEGANG, *Als een pelgrim naar het heilig land. De pelgrimage van Egeria in de 4de eeuw* (*Christelijke bronnen*, 4), Kampen, 1991, pp. 87–91.

[157] The *loros* (the long imperial scarf or stole), the *perikarpia* (bracelets), the *maniakis* (the wide collar) and the *thorakion* (the 'shield-like' garment with the cross on it); W. VOELKLE, op. cit., p. 21.

[158] Mosan, *champlevé* enamel, gilded copper, precious stones and *vernis brun*, private collection, 22.5cm × 22cm. Provenance: 1. probably Lobbes Abbey (to the south of Charleroi), 2. Sart-les-Moines Priory (Courcelles, Charleroi), 3. Monseigneur Dumont bought the piece in 1875 from Mevr. Hembise-Bomal, 4. private collection; M.D.A. VAN BASTELAER, *Etude sur un reliquaire phylactère du XIIe siècle*, in *Annales de l'Académie d'Archéologie de Belgique*, 34, 3rd series, 6, 1880, pp. 2–52 (on provenance p. 52); E. BERTRAND, *Sculptures et objets d'art précieux du XIIe au XVIe siècle* (exh. cat.), Paris, 1993, pp. 14–29, figs 19–21, fig. 1 and also list of recommended reading (on provenance p. 14 and p. 29); on the *vernis brun*: A. LEMEUNIER, *Le vernis brun, o.c.* On Lobbes, see also the edition of the 10th-century chronicle of the abbey by Abbot Folcuinus (enthroned in 965) and its 12th-century sequel (to 1159: the death of Abbot Franco), that was not yet known to E. Bertrand: H. BERKANS (trans.) and J.L. WANKENNE (ed.), *Folcuini Gesta Abbatum Lobiensium. Gesta Abbatum Lobbiensium continuata* (*Cahiers de Thudinie*, 2), Lobbes, 1993; On Sart-Les-Moines, see: U. BERLIERE, *L'ancien prieuré de Sart-les-Moines à Gosselies*, in *Documents de la Société Archéologique de Charleroi*, 17, n.d., pp. 288–311.

[159] This was a much-favoured shape in the Meuse region in the 12th century; see the reliquary of St Gondulph, Mosan, 1160, Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History.

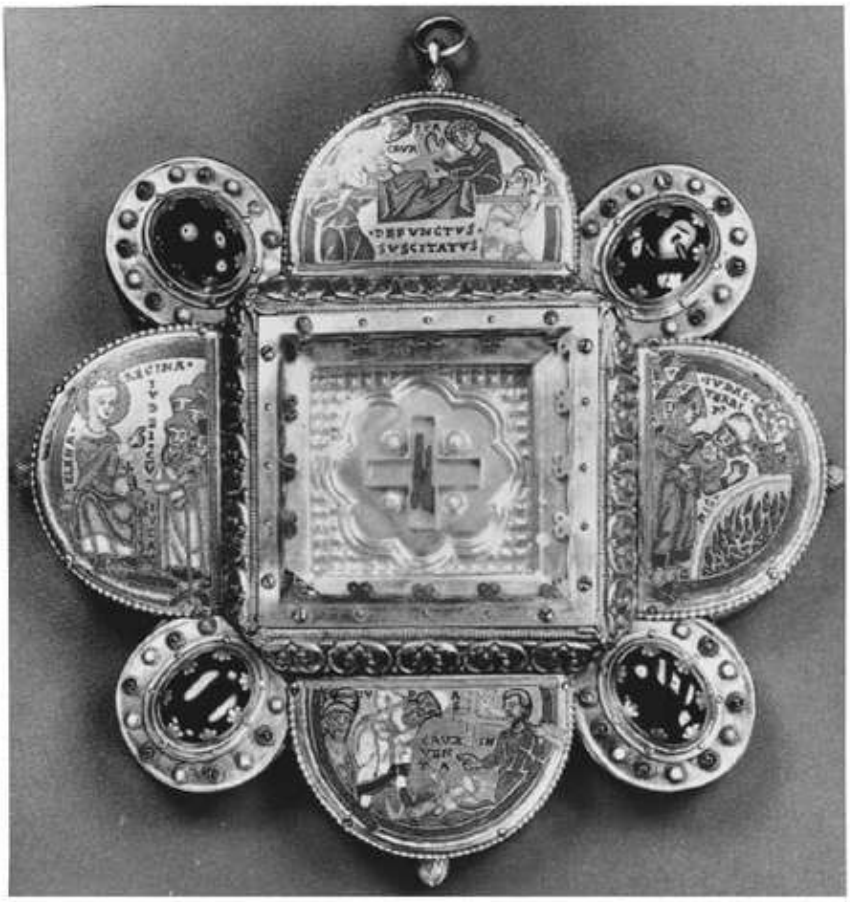


Fig. 14a. *Phylactery* (front). Mosan (Stavelot triptych workshop), from Lobbes Abbey, ca. 1160. Private collection.

the back are vegetal motifs, including *fleurs de lys* in the corners. In the centre the Hand of God is portrayed (fig. 14b). The decoration may also allude to the *lignum vitae* motif.[160] The scenes that relate to the Finding of the Cross are on the front of the phylactery, in the lobes; the central plaque has been lost.[161]

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[160] The motif of the Tree of Life or the Wood of Life appears frequently in Mosan enamel art; see: A. FURNEMONT and A. LEMEUNIER, *Le musée communal et le trésor de la collégiale de Huy*, Brussels, 1992, p. 96: an enamel (dia. 94mm.) of 1160–1170 with a representation of the Tree of Life, flanked by two angels. There is a reference to the text of the Apocalypse in the banderole: the victor will eat of the Tree of Life. In the border the Psalms are paraphrased: here are all the voices of mercy and truth. The enamel probably comes from a Mosan Cross reliquary. See also: R. KAHSNITZ, *Sieben halbrunde Emails in Nürnberg, London und Trier. Zwei maasländische Phylakterien des 12. Jahrhunderts*, in *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseum*, 1992, pp. 105–143, p. 110.

[161] Monseigneur Dumont, the last known owner of the phylactery (1875) before

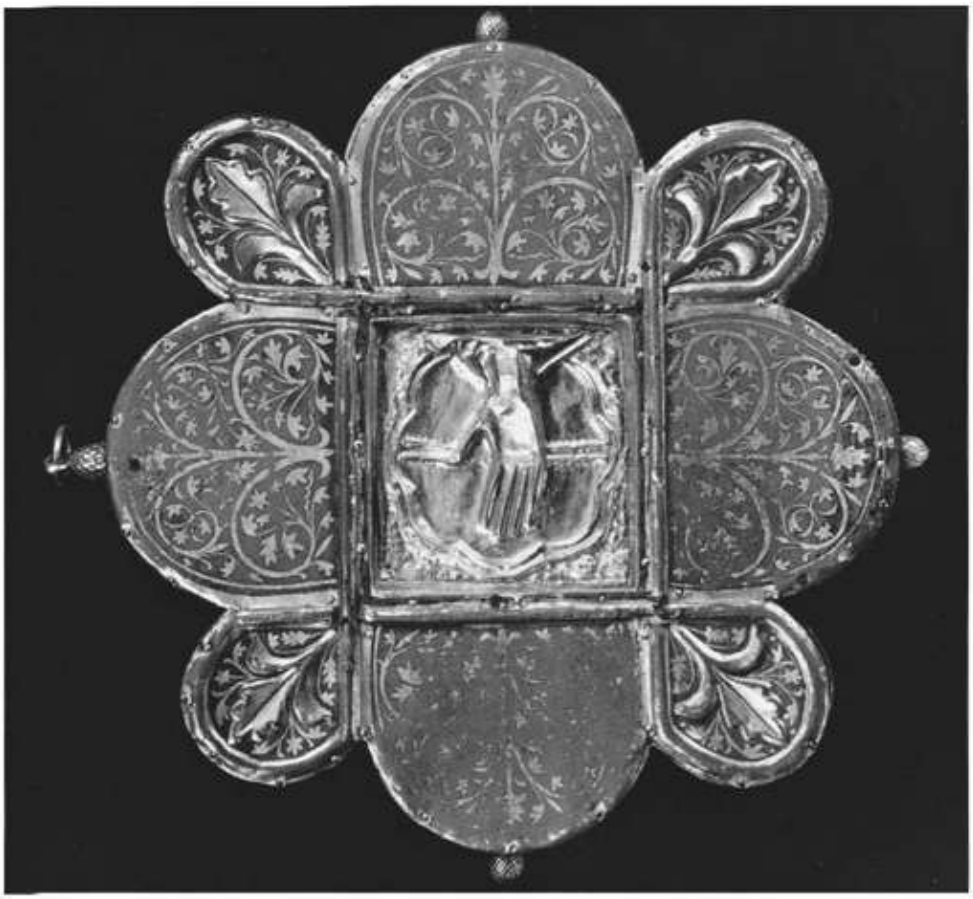


Fig. 14b. *Phylactery* (back). Mosan (Stavelot triptych workshop), from Lobbes Abbey, ca. 1160. Private collection.

The scenes on the left and right in fact belong together, showing Helena interrogating the Jews on one side[162] and the fire with which she threatens them on the other.[163] Judas wears a Jewish cap and, as in the Stavelot reliquary, is shown with a beard. In the scene on

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it passed into another private collection, had restored this central panel and provided it with a window of rock-crystal, behind which was a brass plate with a cruciform holder for the relics. However, allowing the relic to be visible like this in no way corresponds to the customs of the 12th century. It was, after all, precisely the 'revealing' of the relic that was such an important part of the feast day ritual. I will return to this liturgical function later; E. BERTRAND, op. cit., pp. 16–17 and fig. 1. See also P. DINZELBACHER, *Die "Realpräsenz" der Heiligen in ihren Reliquiaren und Gräbern nach mittelalterlichen Quellen*, in *Heiligenverehrung in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, eds. P. DINZELBACHER and D.R. BAUER, Ostfildern, 1990, pp. 115–174, p. 136.

[162] ELENA REGINA, IUDEI, CV. IUDA.

[163] JUDAS TERRIT, IGNIS.

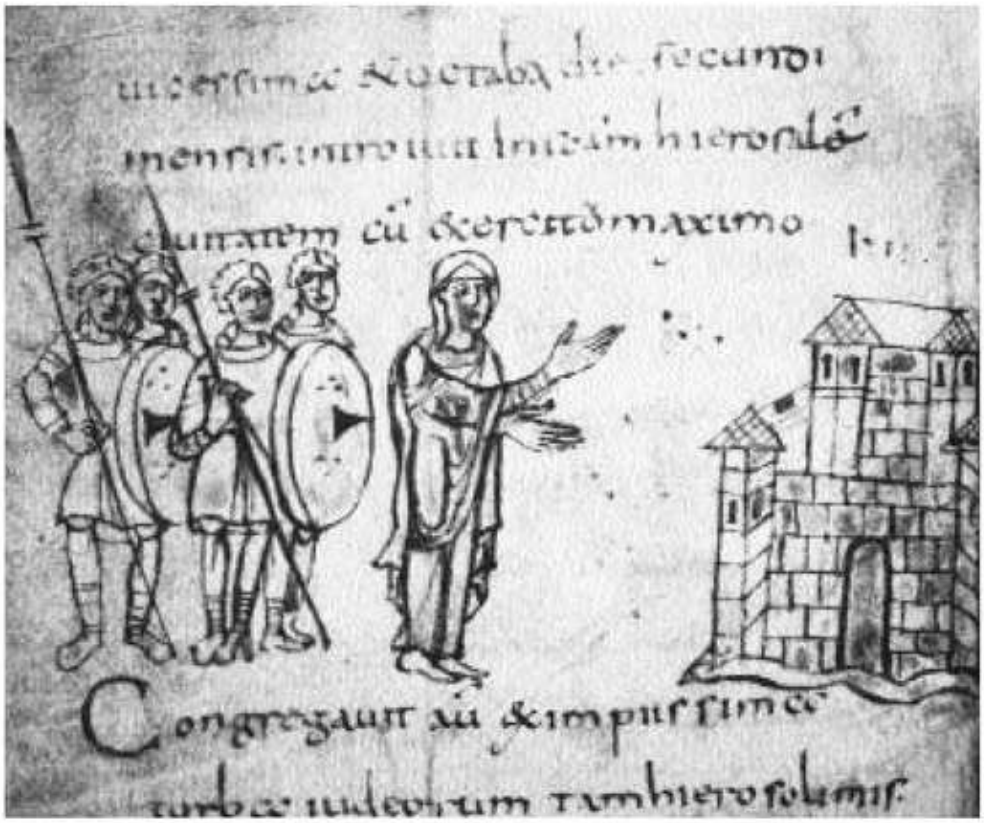


Fig. 15. *Helena arrives in Jerusalem. Wessobrunner Gebetbuch*, unframed tinted outline drawing, South Germany, 814. Munich, Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, clm. 22053, 3v.

the left he appears before Helena with the other Jews and on the right soldiers are pushing him towards the flames. Soldiers are also conspicuously present in the Wessobrunn prayer book (figs. 15–17). In the bottom lobe of the phylactery the Finding of the Cross is depicted.[164] Helena is absent. Several Jews look on as Judas excavates a cross that has a *titulus*. A helper carries on his shoulder the two crosses that have already been discovered. Here, in contrast to the Stavelot triptych, the Finding is oriented from left to right and the tool involved is clearly a spade. Furthermore, the Cross is sticking up out of the ground and there is no indication of the pit Judas has dug.

In the top lobe the True Cross—though already identified by the *titulus*, as is also the case on the Stavelot triptych—is being tested on

[164] JUDAS, CRUX INVENTA.



Fig. 16. *Helena questions four men. Wessobrunner Gebetbuch*, unframed tinted outline drawing, South Germany, 814. Munich, Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, clm. 22053, 6v.

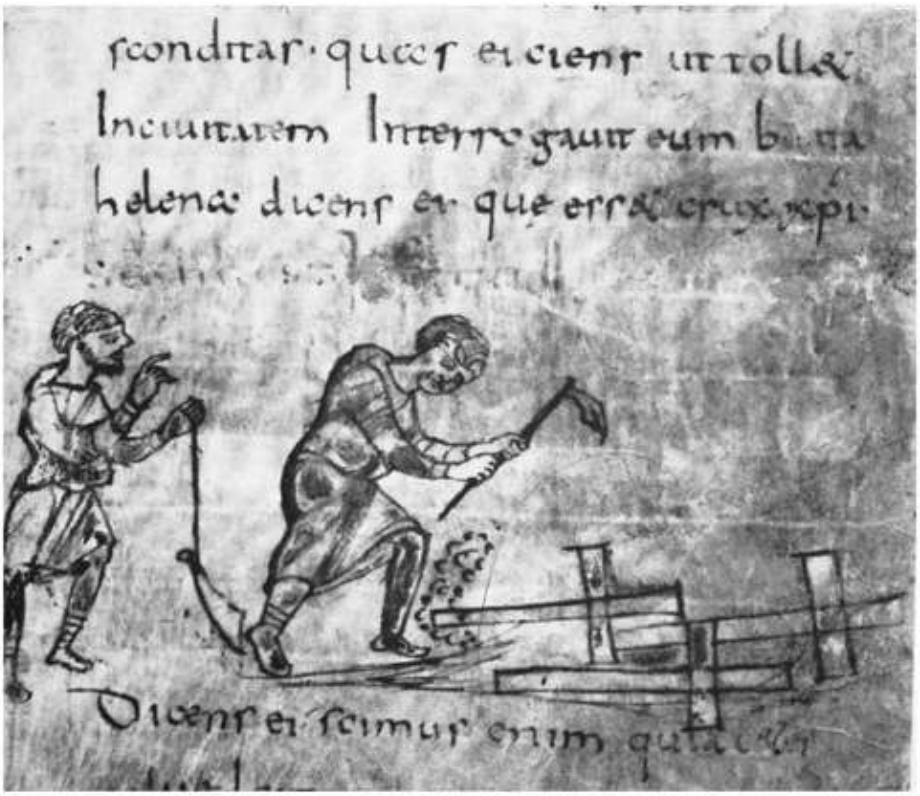


Fig. 17. *Judas finds the crosses. Wessobrunner Gebetbuch,* unframed tinted outline drawing, South Germany, 814. Munich, Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, clm. 22053, 12v, 13r.

a young man.[165] He lies on a bier carried by two men and rises from the dead as he touches the Cross with his left hand. The Cross is held by a third, beardless man, robed as a bishop but with the shaved tonsure of the monk. Most probably this is Judas. If so, this representation of him as a monk is, as far as is known, unique in *Inventio crucis* iconography.

The iconography differs from that of the Stavelot triptych in other ways too. Constantine is absent. And, as has already been mentioned, in the images depicting the discovery of Cross the fire has a scene to itself. Helena is not present at the Finding of the Cross, the action is oriented in the opposite direction, and a spade, not a pick, is used. On the other hand, in the Stavelot triptych the two other crosses are also borne away by helpers. The iconographic analogies between the Stavelot triptych and the Lobbes (?) phylac-

[165] SCA CRUX, DEFUNCTUS SUSCITATUS.

tery are sufficient to presume the existence of a model.[166] The stylistic and epigraphic relationship between phylactery and triptych might also indicate a single workshop, though whether this was the workshop of Godefroid of Huy in Stavelot remains hypothetical.

Not a great deal is known about the context in which the phylactery originated, but Lobbes is usually assumed. The Benedictine abbey was founded in the seventh century and from 965 references to Cross relics appear in the abbey's documents, albeit they can be variously interpreted.[167] It is known for a fact that around 1160–1170 Abbot 'Jean', and his uncle, 'Alvise', Bishop of Arras, took part in the Second Crusade.[168] And as we know, the relic of the Cross and the reference to the Finding of the Cross on Golgotha are part of the crusaders' ideological baggage.

The differences between the Lobbes (?) phylactery and the Stavelot triptych are reconciled, as it were, in an altar cross in the Berlin Staatliche Museen (1170) (Fig. 18a). It is very closely related to a cross in the British Museum, London (fig. 18b); indeed these are the front and back of one and the same cross.[169] It is possible that the

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[166] It has been proved meanwhile that exchanges existed between Mosan artists and workshops. A model is known for an enamel portraying Jacob blessing the sons of Joseph; G. CHAPMAN, *Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph. A Mosan Enamel in the Walters Art Gallery*, *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 38, 1980, pp. 34–59.

[167] The chronicle mentions that under Abbot Erluin (d. 945) many relics were stolen. Nothing was recovered, except that which was made of wood. Among these stolen relics there was also a gold cross. It is not certain whether this was a Cross reliquary; 'ne earum quid repetum, praeterquam quod erat ligneum. Erat et crux aureola, quae sunt Erluino confracta [. . .]'; H. BERKANS and J.L. WANKENNE, op. cit., p. LIX (Latin) and p. 59 (French). His successor, Abbot Folcuinus, restored the abbey after the severe damage inflicted by the Magyars and dedicated an altar to the Holy Cross. The abbot went to great expense for an image of the 'living Christ' placed above this altar; 'fecit altare in honorem sanctae crucis et omnium sanctorum, cui et tabulam argenteam anteposuit, et desuper vivificam illam Domini imaginem, quam nostris adhuc terris incomparabilem ipse quendam ut faceret magno precio locaverat, erexit'; ibid., p. LXIV and p. 64.

[168] The chronicle ends before this period; E. BERTRAND, op. cit., p. 29.

[169] Berlin: Mosan, 1160–1170, champlevé enamel, Staatliche Museen, Kunstgewerbemuseum, Schloss Köpenick, 37.5cm × 26cm. The cross comes from the collection of Peter Beuth (1781–1853), 1853: Beuth-Schinkel-Museum of Berlin, after 1945 to the Staatliche Museen, with which the left arm was lost, but it is still known from photographs. London: Mosan, 1160–1170, *email champlevé*, British Library, 37.2cm × 25.6cm. N. STRATFORD, *Catalogue of Medieval Enamels in the British Museum*, vol. 2. *Northern Romanesque Enamel*, London, 1993, cat. 4, p. 72; D. KÖTZSCHE e.a., *Signa Tav. Grubenschmelzplatte eines typologischen Kreuzes* (exh. cat.), Ostfildern, 2000, pp. 50–73.

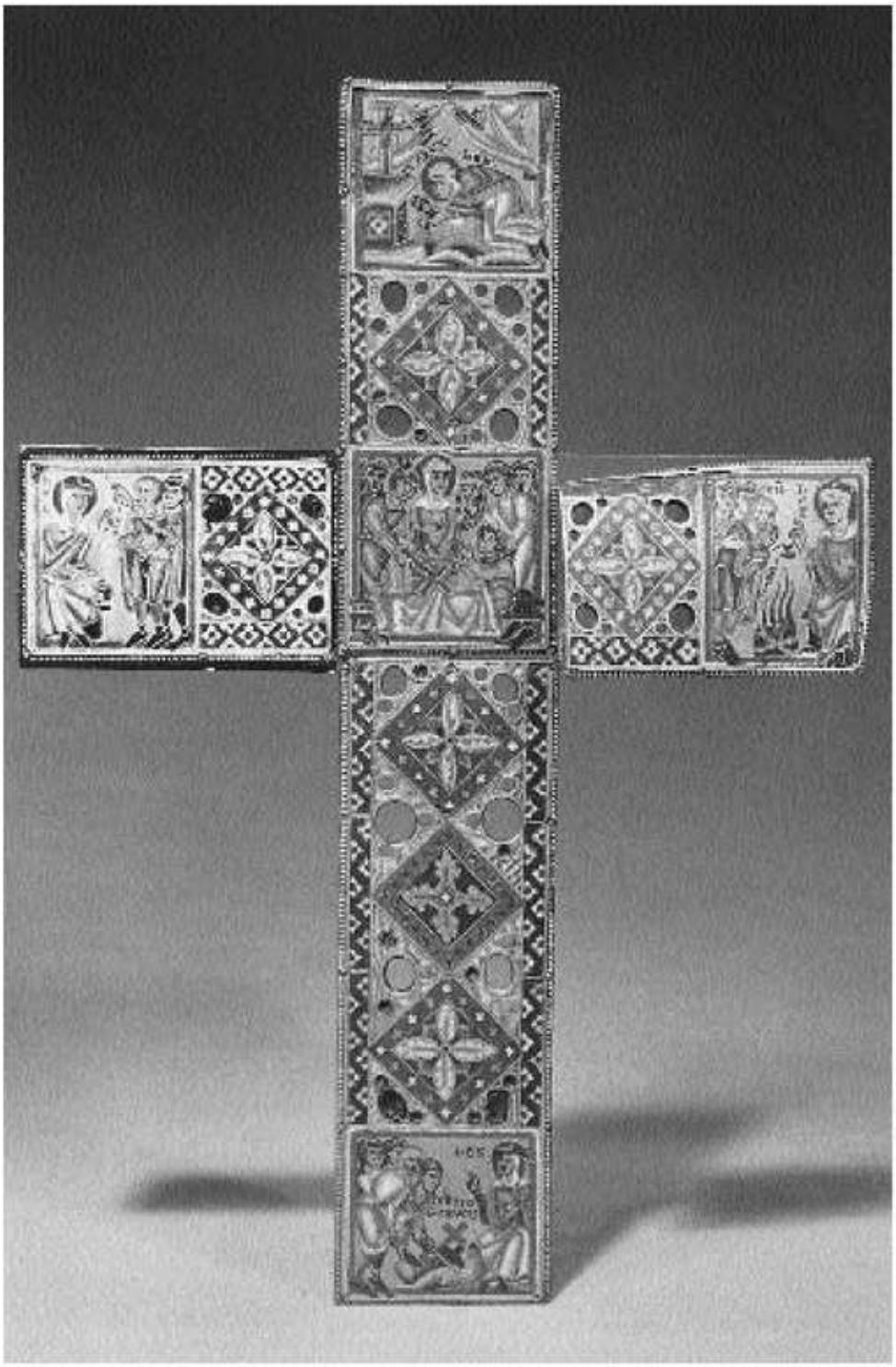


Fig. 18a. *Five scenes from the legend of the Finding of the Cross.* Altar cross, Mosan enamel, 1160–1170. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kunstgewerbemuseum (front [?] of the altar cross in London, British Museum).



Fig. 18b. *Five typological scenes from the Old Testament.* Altar cross, Mosan enamel, 1160–1170, with 14th-century Rhineland enamels mounted on a wooden cross with 16th-century silverwork. London, British Museum (back [?] of the altar cross in Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kunstgewerbemuseum).

Berlin altar cross contains a relic.[170] On the London cross, five fourteenth-century enamels from the Upper Rhineland depicting Old Testament scenes have been mounted on a wooden cross that has sixteenth-century silverwork at the ends of the arms. The silverwork is documented in the archives of Constance Cathedral. Could it be that the Mosan altar cross was also intended for the bishopric on Lake Constance?[171] We know that during the twelfth century the cult of the relic of the Cross enjoyed a high profile in southern Germany. The faces of the characters depicted on the Berlin/London cross are less expressively rendered than those on the Stavelot triptych and the Lobbes (?) phylactery and possibly indicate a different (Mosan) workshop.[172]

The enamels on the Berlin cross allude to five episodes from the *Inventio crucis* legend. As with the phylactery, the interrogation scene is depicted twice, with Helena's questioning of the Jews on the left[173] and the menacing fire on the right.[174] Judas is shown as an elderly bearded man in the company of other Jews. They do not wear Jewish caps. Here, unlike the scene on the phylactery, Helena is present at the fire.

At the bottom of the cross the Finding of the Cross is depicted.[175] Here, just as on the Lobbes (?) phylactery, Judas digs from left to right, using a spade. And, just as on the Stavelot triptych, Helena is present at the event. She bears a sceptre and is thus represented in her imperial persona (cf. the globe in the Stavelot triptych [fig. 8] and Gregory of Nazianzus's homilies [fig. 9]). Unlike those two reliquaries however, here Judas finds three similar crosses together, and he is assisted by a man who wields a pick. It seems as if the differences between the phylactery and the Stavelot triptych have been reconciled, as the combination of the spade (Lobbes) and the pick (Stavelot) goes to show.

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[170] A. FROLOW, *Les reliquaires*, op. cit., pp. 354–357.

[171] N. STRATFORD, op. cit., p. 76. Others think that the cross may originate from the Church of St Victor in Xanten. In the 12th century a new church dedicated to Helena was built there. F.X. KRAUS, *Die christlichen Inschriften der Rheinlande*, vol. 2, Freiburg, 1894, no. 562; N. MORGAN, *The Iconography of Twelfth-Century Mosan Enamels* in *Rhein und Maas. Kunst und Kultur. 800–1400* (exh. cat.), Cologne, 1973, pp. 263–278, p. 263, n. 27.

[172] N. STRATFORD, op. cit., p. 73.

[173] HEL(ENA), IUD(AS).

[174] HEL(ENA), IUD(AS), IGNIS.

[175] EL(ENA), I(N)VE(N)TIO S(ANCTA).CRUX.

At the centre of the cross the Testing of the Cross is represented.[176] Now the testing is logical, for Christ's Cross was not identified at the Finding. A single cross is shown, presented to the corpse by a beardless young man. The revivified youth rises from his bier, hands folded in devotion to the Cross. Helena is present at the centre of the scene. At the sides are onlookers: on the extreme left is a man with a beard (a 'passive' Judas?). The fifth scene shows the altar cross in place and in use.[177]

The worship of the cross on the altar is the closing phase of the relic's discovery—the *deposito* of the relic on the altar for which it is intended.[178] In the background is a half-open curtain. Does this allude to Matthew's description of the moment of Christ's death on the Cross (27, 51): 'At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split'? We shall return to the role of the curtain later.

This is the only cross of which both sides still survive (near enough) intact. The London side of the altar cross is devoted to Old Testament scenes. The Berlin side with the Helena iconography is less richly finished and it has been assumed that this was the back of the cross.[179] It seems to me, however, that it is rather a matter of this side having suffered more. The attachments and cavities for the pearls can still be seen and they are, in fact, in identical places to those on the London cross. Furthermore, is it not the case that the Old Testament side was considered the 'shadow side', and therefore the London cross is the back of the original cross?

At the bottom of the London cross the grapes are brought back from the Promised Land (Num. 13, 23),[180] on the left is the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17, 8–16; Lk. 4, 26),[181] on the right the sign

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[176] HEL(ENA), MOR(TV(V)/SV/S C(RUX).

[177] The altar has the same lozenge-shaped decoration as the altar cross itself. By analogy with the altar cross, a similar theme with the Adoration of the Cross in the lost centre of the phylacterium may be considered; See also, E. BETRAND, op. cit., p. 17, who thinks of a depiction of Constantine's dream (Stavelot), Christ Pantocrater or the Crucifixion.

[178] This is not the place to go into every aspect of the cult of relics of the Cross; see the recommended reading and bibliography in: A. ANGENENDT, *Heilige und Reliquien. Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart*, Munich, 1994, p. 174; E. BOZOKY and A.M. HELVETIUS (eds), *Les reliques. Objets, cultes, symboles* (*Hagiologia*, 1), (acta), Turnhout, 1999.

[179] N. STRATFORD, op. cit., p. 71.

[180] IOSV/E CAL/EPH.BOTR(V)S.

[181] VIDVA HELY/AS.

of the *tau* is painted on the houses of the Israelites (Ex. 12, 22),[182] in the centre Jacob, blesses the sons of Joseph (Manasseh and Ephraim) (Gen. 48, 14)[183] and above, Moses and Aaron flank the brazen serpent (Num. 21, 6–9).[184] The Lord sent Elijah to the poor widow of Zarephath.[185] At that moment there was great famine in Israel, yet even so the widow gave her last morsel of food to Elijah. Miraculously, her store became inexhaustible. The last morsel is a prefiguration of the Last Supper and the Eucharist. In the iconography, however, the moment that Elijah encounters the widow as she gathers wood has been singled out. She holds two sticks, forming a cross with them. The *tau* sign on the houses of the Israelites refers to the cross as an Old Testament *signum*. In Exodus this *signum* anticipates the elect and saving nature of Christ's Cross. The lifting up of the brazen serpent is an image of the lifting up of Christ on the Cross (Jn. 3, 14).[186] The grapes from Canaan prefigure the sacrifice of Christ and the Eucharist.[187] Berengosus of Trier, Abbot of St Maximus, writes in his treatise *De mysterio ligni Domini* (1125) that Jacob's benedictory gesture in the form of a cross prefigures the Cross.[188]

Berengosus of Trier also wrote a version of the Finding of the Cross (first quarter of the twelfth century), based on the Judas Cyriacus legend. It is not impossible that the abbot influenced or stimulated Mosan Helena iconography, including the use of typologies—which is to say that Trier acted as a link in the diffusion of the *Inventio crucis* tradition. From the tenth century, and perhaps from as early as the eighth century, there was a lively Helena cult in the city.[189]

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[182] SIG/NV.TAV.

[183] IACOB EFFRA/IM./MANASSE.

[184] MOZES AARON.

[185] In a manuscript from Oxford, Corpus Christi College (Worcester, ca. 1150, ms. 157, fol. 77v), the widow of Zarephath stands beside the Crucifixion. To the right of the Cross Jonah and the whale are depicted; E. HÜRKEY, *Das Bild des Gekreuzigten im Mittelalter. Untersuchungen zu Gruppierung, Entwicklung und Verbreitung anhand der Gewandmotive*, Worms, 1983, no. 69 and fig. 69.

[186] A. WILMART, *Prières pour l'adoration de la Croix*, in *Ephemeris Liturgia*, 46, 1932, p. 35 ff.; HONORIUS OF AUTUN, *Speculum ecclesiae*, PL 172, col. 943, uses this motif in the introduction to the Finding of the Cross. This passage is also read at the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.

[187] Th. CREPIN-LEBLOND, *Les préfigurations du Pressoir Mystique dans l'art médiéval*, in *Le Pressoir Mystique. Actes du colloque de Recloses. 27 mai 1989*, ed. D. ALEXANDRE-BIDON, Paris, 1990, pp. 79–89, p. 81.

[188] PL 160, cols. 993–994.

[189] E. EWIG, *Kaiserliche und apostolische Tradition im mittelalterlichen Trier*, in *Trierer Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst des Trierer Landes und seiner Nachbargebiete*, 24–26, 1,

According to legend, set down around the eleventh century by a religious of the cathedral, Helena was born in Trier and founded several monasteries there, including St Maximus.[190] In Trier she is also regarded as the finder of Christ's penitential garment. In 952 her relics were translated to Trier from the convent of St Helena in Hautvillers (near Rheims).[191]

During the twelfth century the concept of typology expanded enormously in both word and image. Also, influenced by eleventh-century Neoplatonism, texts were created in which salvation history was reinterpreted along parallel lines. The visible world is an illusory world that alludes symbolically to the divine world hereafter. The same ontology between reality and symbol of reality is developed in the doctrine of the sacraments.[192] Thus there is a 'chiastic' exegesis that should link 'misleading visibility' with 'true invisibility'. It is this concealing/revealing relationship that is also recognized between the Old and the New Testament. The ontological structure permeated

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1956–1958, pp. 147–185; J. DIETZ, *St. Helena in der rheinischen Überlieferung*, in *Festschrift Matthias Zender. Studien zu Volkskultur, Sprache und Landesgeschichte*, 2 vols., Bonn, 1972, vol. 1, pp. 354–382; here the emphasis is laid on the popular Helena cult in the 17th to 19th centuries.

[190] E. EWIG, art. cit., p. 148 and p. 151.

[191] In the *vita* of Helena by the monk Altmann of Hautvillers (860) it is said that a monk from Hautvillers brought Helena's body back from Rome in 842 and deposited it in his abbey in the diocese of Rheims; *Vita Helenae, Acta Sanctorum*, Augustus, III, 1863, p. 580. The Helena cult was, of course, closely linked to the cult of the Cross. The cult spread outwards from its early, possibly even Carolingian, bases of Trier and Rheims. The Byzantine influence on the Holy Roman Empire by the marriage of Theophanu (ca. 960–991) and Otto II may have been an enhancing factor. On this, see: A. VAN EUW, *Kunst im Zeitalter der Kaiserin Theophanu*, Cologne, 1993; A. DAVIDS (ed.), *The Empress Theophanu. Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium*, Cambridge, 1995. In 1100 or thereabouts in Cologne the legend that Helena founded the Church of St Gereon originated (E. EWIG, art. cit., p. 184). The *Vitae Beati Eustorgii Confessoris* (1158–1164) interpolates the legend of the Finding of the Cross into the *translatio* of the relics of the three Magi from Milan to Cologne; H. HOFFMAN, *Die heilige drie Koninge* (*Rheinischen Archiv*, 94), Bonn, 1975. In 1075, in Oeren near Trier, a church was dedicated to Helena (E. EWIG, art. cit., p. 149). In 1039 the Abbey of St Maximus gave relics of Helena for three altars in Echternach (E. EWIG, art. cit., p. 149). At the time of Bishop Meginhard (1019–1034) of Würzburg a church dedicated to Helena is mentioned; there were already Ottonian contacts between Trier and Würzburg, that could have transmitted the Helena cult. There are references to relics of Helena in Freising and Sankt Emmeram in 1029/39 and 1052 respectively. See also: H. HEINEN, *Frühchristliches Trier. Von den Anfängen bis zur Völkerwanderung*, Trier, 1996, pp. 84–99.

[192] B. PRANGER, *God*, in *De middeleeuwse ideeënwereld. 1000–1300*, ed. M. STOFFERS, Heerlen-Hilversum, 1994, pp. 93–116, p. 101; H. WEISWEILER, *Sakrament als Symbol und Teilhabe. Der Einfluss des Pseudo-Dionysius auf die allgemeine Sakramentslehre des Hugo von St. Viktor*, in *Scholastik*, 27, 1952, p. 337 ff.

not only writings on history and cosmology, but the liturgy too. The Old Testament motifs were sung in tropes, sequences and antiphons, most of which originated in Paris, the most important school of music at that time, whence they spread rapidly.[193]

Hugh of St Victor (d. 1141) wrote a commentary on the *De Hierarchia coelestis* of Pseudo-Dionysus Aeropagite permeated with typological symbolism, which was to exercise a very great influence on the liturgy and even on the Gothic of Abbot Suger. In 1137 the commentary was given to the French king, Louis VII. In that same year, Abbot Suger started work on the west front of St Denis.[194] The lost cross of St Denis, made between 1145 and 1147 by the best goldsmiths for the relic of the *titulus* that came from the Church of Santa Croce in Rome (Pope Eugene III), was embellished with scenes on the theme of Bernard of Clairvaux's preaching of the crusades. The reliquary was exemplary in its importance and allure. The bronze foot of the cross (from the Abbey of St Bertin) in the Museum Sandelin in Saint-Omer is in all probability part of a smaller copy of Abbot Suger's cross.[195] On the base of the foot are depicted four writing Evangelists; on the foot itself are Moses and the brazen serpent (Num. 21, 8), Jacob blessing Manasseh and Ephraim, the sons of Joseph (Gen. 48, 14), Aaron marking the houses of the Israelites with the blood of the Paschal Lamb (Ex. 12, 7), and Moses striking water from the rock (Ex. 17, 6). On the sides of the shaft are the grapes from the Promised Land (Num. 13, 23), Elijah and widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17, 10), Aaron marking the foreheads of the chosen with the *tau* sign (Ezek. 9, 4), and Isaac bringing the wood (called *lignum*, like the Cross) to the altar.

An important source for the scenes that represent prefigurations of the sacrifice on the Cross is the *Responsaria ad crucem* of Nicholas of Clairvaux (d. 1178),[196] who was Bernard of Clairvaux's personal

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[193] H. and H. BUSCHHAUSEN, *Studien zu den typologischen Kreuzen der Île-de-France und des Maaslandes*, in *Die Zeit der Staufer. Geschichte, Kunst, Kultur* (exh. cat.), 5, Stuttgart, 1977, pp. 247–277, p. 264.

[194] H. and H. BUSCHHAUSEN, art. cit., p. 262.

[195] D. K(ÖTZSCHE), art. *Voetstuk van een kruis*, in *Rijn en Maas. Kunst en Cultuur. 800–1400* (exh. cat.), Cologne-Brussels, 1972, pp. 254–255 and fig.; J. FOUCART, art. *Meuse, vers 1180, Pied de Croix*, in *Trésor des Églises de l'arrondissement de Saint-Omer* (exh. cat.), Saint-Omer, 1992, pp. 31–34.

[196] H. and H. BUSCHHAUSEN, art. cit., p. 266; See also: J.J. RYAN, *Saint Peter Damiani and the Sermons of Nicholas of Clairvaux. A Clarification*, in *Medieval Studies*, 9, 1947, pp. 151–161; J. LECLERQ, *Les collections de sermons de Nicholas de Clairvaux*,

secretary between 1145 and 1151 and also a confidant at the papal court of Hadrian IV. The typological system was simultaneously developed in the Meuse region by Rupert of Deutz, who had a great educational influence in the Stavelot area.[197] The typological scenes on the London cross also correspond to the various episodes of the Finding of the Cross on its Berlin counterpart. The lifting up of the brazen serpent has been placed behind the lifting up of the relic of the Cross on the altar. The Finding of the Cross recalls the finding of the grapes; both are 'relics' of a symbolic Paradise. The *tau* on the doors of the Israelites marks those chosen by the Lord and corresponds to the interrogation of the Jews, which also led to the election of Judas, the internally-torn Jew. The trial by fire corresponds to the widow of Zarephath, whose crossed sticks are visually repeated in those of the fire.

Prefigurations of the Cross become very common in many other ecclesiastical, iconographic and liturgical sources. In the Meuse region, *Inventio crucis* iconography appears on a reliquary of the Cross intended for the basilica of Tongeren (first quarter of the thirteenth century) (figs. 19a–b).[198]

In the frame of the Tongeren reliquary, champlevé enamel squares in which bishops of Tongeren and Maastricht are portrayed alternate with Old Testament motifs engraved in copper.[199] On the outside

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in *Revue bénédictine*, 66, 1956, pp. 269–302; J.F. BENTON, *Nicolas of Clairvaux and the Twelfth-Century Sequences*, in *Traditio*, 18, 1962, pp. 149–179.

[197] G. HENDERSON, *Early Medieval* (*Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching*, 29), n.p., 1972, p. 229.

[198] The Church of St Mary, 29cm × 22cm; [no author], *Etude sur les reliques et les reliquaires de la vraie croix*, in *Het Gildeboek* 9, 2, 1936, pp. 29–97, pp. 82–83, fig. 12; S. COLLON-GEVAERT and J. LEJEUNE, op. cit., no. 49 and fig.; K. HOFFMANN, *The year 1200. A Centennial Exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (exh. cat.), New York, 1970, no. 178 and fig.; J.J.M. TIMMERS, *De kunst van het Maasland* (Assen), [1971], p. 339 and fig. 485; D. KÖTZSCHE, *Zum stand der Forschung der Goldschmiedekunst des 12. Jahrhunderts im Rhein-Maas-Gebiet*, in *Rhein und Maas. Kunst und Kultur 800–1400*, vol. 2, Cologne, 1973, pp. 191–236, figs 28–29; H. SWARZENSKI, *Monuments of Romanesque Art. The Art of Church Treasures in North-Western Europe*, 2 vols, London, 1974, fig. 424–425, no. 187; A. LEMEUNIER, *La staurothèque mosane de Tongres. Aspects décoratifs*, in *Revue des historiens de l'art, des archéologues, des musicologues et des orientalistes de l'Université de Liège. Mélanges de Pierre Colman*, 15, 1996, pp. 49–52; IDEM, *Echanges artistiques et religieux*, art. cit., p. 90.

[199] From left to right, starting at the top: St Materne (first bishop of Tongeren), St Navite, St Marcel, St Metropolis, St Severin, St Florentine, St Martin, St Maximus, St Valentine and St Servatius; *Etude sur les reliques et les reliquaires de la vraie croix*, art. cit., p. 83.



Fig. 19a. *Cross reliquary, closed.* Triptych, Liège, 1170. Tongeren, Cathedral.



Fig. 19b. *Cross reliquary, open.* Triptych, Liège, 1170. Tongeren, Cathedral.

of the panels are two angels. Each bears a censer and there is a suggestion of mountains beneath their feet. The angels are the heavenly guardians of the Cross and appear regularly on Mosan reliquaries from the twelfth century onwards. They allude to the particular praises sung to God (during Holy Masses, processions, and so on), to paradisal fragrances and spices[200] and to the lifting up of departed souls into Paradise. The purifying power of incense is also associated with driving out evil forces. The reliquary—as appears from the inscriptions around the central case—was donated by the see of Liège. 'Liège gave you, Tongeren, this wood, a token of love of the Saviour, a most venerable sign [inside]. May the high priests of

[200] M. CAZENAVE (ed.), art. *Encens*, in *Encyclopédie des Symboles* (French trans. by Fr. PERIGAUT from *Knaurs Lexikon der Symbole*, ed. H. BIEDERMANN, 1989), Turin, 1996, pp. 227–228. The three Magi from the East offered these perfumes to the infant Jesus. The ingredients, which when burnt produced fragrant incense, came from Persia and the Arabian countries.

Tongeren be worthy of having such illustrious things, until She [Liège] is able to annihilate the race of the Huns' [outside].[201]

But the dating of the reliquary does not need to correspond *ipso facto* with the historical events of 1181: the destruction of Tongeren in the conflict between the Count of Loon and the Bishop of Liège, Rudolph of Zähringen.[202] On the basis of the iconography in *vernis brun* on the back of the triptych, Albert Lemeunier puts the date at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The elaborate scrollwork incorporating several types of fruit is typical of the period after 1200. The style of the *Sedes sapientiae* on the reverse also indicates the turn of the century.[203]

The flanking angels are a Christianized version of the allegories of Victory and personifications of the Virtues that were set up, together with a votive text or triumphal symbol, after a successful battle.[204] The iconography of conquest also appears on the coins of Constantine the Great, where angels surround a *clipeus* and later also the crowned Cross. From the very beginning of Christianity the cross was regarded as the *tropaion* and the *vexillum* of (imperial) victory. From the fifth century this imperial interpretation was also adopted in the liturgy.[205] The flanking angels are a reference to the heavenly worship of the relic of the Cross.[206] They may present the relic, support it or ceremonially guard it.[207] The angels are also associated

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[201] Inscription: HOC SALVATORIS TIBI TONGRIS PIGNUS AMORIS/LEGIA DAT LIGNUM CUNCTIS VENERABILE SIGNUM (inside). PONTIFICES MERVIT HOS INCLITA TONGRIS HABERE/DONEC EAM POTUIT HUNNORUM GENS ABOLERE (outside).

[202] The anachronistic comparison with the Huns is perhaps also an allusion to the pagan threats of the past (including the Magyars in the 10th cent.).

[203] A. LEMEUNIER, *La staurothèque mosane de Tongres. Aspects décoratifs*, art. cit., pp. 49–52; In that case, the Tongeren triptych could also refer to the Battle of Steppes, which took place in 1213.

[204] P. VERDIER, *Les staurothèques mosanes et leur iconographie du Jugement Dernier*, in *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale. X^e–XIIe siècles*, 16, 1973, pp. 97–121 and pp. 199–313, pp. 100–101, fig. 1: with the larger Byzantine triptych of Stavelot as reference material for comparison.

[205] S. SINDING-LARSEN, *Iconography and Ritual. A Study of Analytical Perspectives*, Oslo, 1984, p. 20 ff. and p. 45 on the 'liturgical angel'. On angels in the context of allegories of the Virtues see: R. KROOS, *Der Schrein des heiligen Servatius in Maastricht*, Munich, 1985, pp. 256–296.

[206] The iconography also appears on pilgrims' liturgical objects, such as the 6th-century glass chalice in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection; V.H. ELBERN, *Ein christliches Kultgefäss aus Glas in der Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, in *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen, neue Folge*, 4, 1962, pp. 17–41.

[207] K. McKAY HOLBERT, op. cit., pp. 112–114.

with the Cross of the Second Coming (Mt. 24, 31) and the Last Judgement.[208] This is also apparent from the hymns to the Cross. Especially in the Mosan Cross reliquaries of the twelfth century the Cross of the Second Coming and the Last Judgement carried before by angels forms an important iconographic component.[209]

In Tongeren the angels have taken up a place on the outside of the doors to the Holy of Holies—where the relic is kept, in other words—and thus act as guardians of the heavenly Jerusalem. The insides of these doors are occupied by two episodes from the Finding of the Cross. Thus the heavenly Jerusalem, revealed by angels, also

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[208] P. VERDIER, art. cit., p. 104. In the West this shift of meaning becomes clear during the Carolingian period (see: BEDA VENERABILIS, PL 94, col. 104; HRABANUS MAURUS, PL 107, cols. 1095–1096); Y. CHRISTE, *Les grands portails romans*, Geneva, 1969, p. 126 and p. 135.

[209] See: W.S. MONROE, *The Guennol Triptych and the Twelfth-Century Revival of Jurisprudence*, in *The Cloisters. Studies in Honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary*, ed. E.C. PARKER, New York, 1992, pp. 167–177; In the 12th century theologians disputed over a compilation based on Justinian Roman Law, which was rediscovered around 1100. The church emphasized divine jurisdiction, God's mercy and the ultimate justice of the Last Judgment (e.g. *De misericordia et iustitia* (1105), by Alger of Liège, secretary to Otbert, Bishop of Liège,); J.W. BALDWIN, *The Crisis of the Ordeal. Literature, Law, and Religion around 1200*, in *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 24, 3, 1994, pp. 327–353. Examples: 1. So-called large Cross reliquary, Mosan, 1150, Paris, Musée du Petit Palais, Collection Dutuit, open: 33cm × 43cm. 2. Cross reliquary, Guennol triptych, Mosan, gilded copper and enamel, ca. 1160, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, open: 29cm × 32cm. 3. Cross reliquary, Mosan, 1160–1170, Liège, Church of the Holy Cross, open: 55cm × 53cm. 4. So-called small Cross reliquary, Mosan, 1165, Paris, Musée du Petit Palais, Collection Dutuit, open: 34cm × 39cm. These four reliquaries are triptychs with at the centre a relic of the Cross flanked by angels bearing the *arma Christi*. In the reliquaries of the Dutuit Collection Christ's Holy Sepulchre with an angel and two women is depicted below the Cross. Below the relic on the Liège reliquary are five half-figures and the inscription: RESURRECTIO SANCTORUM. The angel on the left bears the inscription VERITAS, the angel on the right carries JUDICIUM. An enamel plaque immediately above the relic reads MISERICORDIA. These three Virtues are mentioned in Tobias 3, 2 (P. VERDIER, art. cit., p. 108). On the Guennol triptych, under the angels who protect the relic of the Cross, is the personification of *Justitia*, flanked by *Eleemosyna* (alms) and *Oratio* (prayer). At the scales *Misericordia* kneels on one side and *Pietas* on the other. The side panels show the Resurrection of the Dead (on the side panels of all the other examples the twelve Apostles are depicted). The personifications of the Virtues also appear on the reliquary of St Gondulph: *Spes* (with triple-branched twig) above, *Fides* below, *Charitas* to the right, *Justitia* to the left, Mosan, 1160, Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History. 5. Reconstruction of four lobes from the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, including the angels of the Last Judgement and the Resurrection, and the central panel from the Louvre with Christ of the Last Judgement; A. LEMEUNIER, *Essai de reconstitution d'un phylactère Mosan*, in *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Oudheidkunde en Kunstgeschiedenis*, 5, 1996, pp. 27–39.

alludes to Golgotha. The episodes are spread over two registers and they read horizontally, across the panels. Above is the interrogation of the Jews, with Helena occupying the top of the left panel and the Jews the top of the right. Helena is enthroned and adorned with a halo and crown. Before her, the threatened fire is blazing away. All the Jews wear Jewish caps; Judas is the only character with a beard. Below, the discovery of the Cross takes place. Helena is enthroned on the right and with raised hand instructs the rather clumsily-rendered figure of Judas on the left. Judas is now beardless and wields his pick with vigour to free the Cross from the earth. The Testing of the Cross is not depicted. In the frame of the reliquary, the *Inventio crucis* iconography is in fact combined with the Dream of Constantine. Stylistically, however, the scenes display a close relationship to those on the Mosan enamels mentioned above.

In the central panel, enclosed in a silver casing and protected behind crystal, two particles of the Cross have been assembled to form a tiny cross. The relic of the Cross is the Cross of Golgotha *pars pro toto*. The relic is also combined with the conventional iconography of the Crucifixion: on the left, Mary (SCA MARIA) and on the right, John (JOHANNES). Below are *Ecclesia* with the *labarum* and a chalice, and the blindfolded *Synagoga* with a toppling standard. On a twelfth-century paten from Trzemeszno (Poland) (fig. 20) the crucified Christ is likewise portrayed between *Ecclesia* and *Synagoga*.[210] And *Ecclesia* and *Synagoga* are also present on the lid of a portable altar from Stavelot. (fig. 21).[211] In the corners of the central panel of the Tongeren reliquary are tetramorphs (enamel). Above the relic a half-length Christ, is depicted with the book of the Last Judgement in his left hand. As we have already noted, twelfth-century Cross reliquaries were often associated iconographically with the Last Judgement.

Finally, the Old Testament motifs in the frame are as follows. Moses marks the houses of the Israelites with the *tau* (MOISES, T) (Ezek. 12, 7). The Israelites leave Egypt; Joshua and Caleb bring the grapes from the Promised Land (BOTR) (Num. 13, 23); the prophet Elijah (ELIAS TESBITES) and the widow of Zarephath

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[210] Lower Saxon, 1170, silver, Gnieszo (Poland), Dom, dia. 191mm; E. HÜRKEY, op. cit., p. 68 and fig. 68.

[211] Mosan, 1160–1170, Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History; D. KÖTZSCHE, art. *Het draagaltaar uit Stavelot*, in *Rijn en Maas*, op. cit., p. 252, no. G 13.

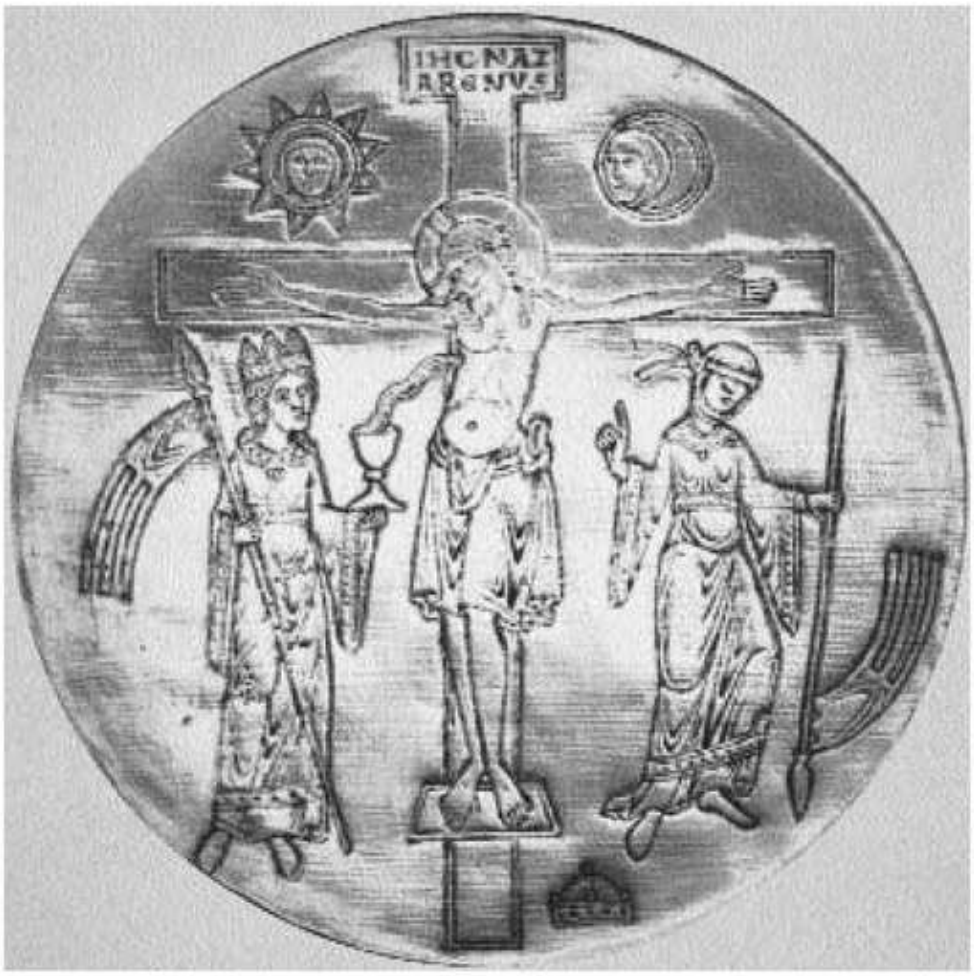


Fig. 20. *Silver paten with the crucified Christ between Ecclesia and Synagoga.* Lower Saxony, 1170. Gnieszo (Poland), Cathedral.

(MULIER SERREPTENA); the sacrifice of Isaac (ABR) (Gen. 22, 1–9); the Jews look upwards (?) at the brazen serpent (Num. 21, 8).[212] The inscription next to the brazen serpent is SPES.[213] The prefigurations are the same as those on the London altar cross, except that here there is also a reference to Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac.

[212] Perhaps, as with the widow of Zarephath and Elijah, this is a division of the scene. In that case the Jews look at the brazen serpent.

[213] Hope is represented by two figures; the one on the right seems to be a queen. The personification of Hope also appears on the reliquary of St Gondulph: an angel with triple-branched twig (Mosan, Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History). Like the erection of the serpent on a wooden pole, the triple-branched twig is a prefiguration of the Cross. The triple-branched twig is the *lignum vitae* of the Trinity.



Fig. 21. *Lid of a portable altar from Stavelot.* Mosan, 1160–1170. Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History.

The sacrifice is an allusion to the sacrifice on the Cross and thus also to the Eucharist.[214] Abraham and Constantine's angels establish a diagonal rhythm.

Each of these four objects is connected with the altar and—though this is not entirely certain in the case of the Berlin/London cross—each contains a relic of the Cross. Thus they must be regarded in their liturgical context. In doing so it should be observed that in the twelfth century the combination of a relic of the Cross with the iconography of the Finding of the Cross was still rather the exception than the rule.[215]

We are well documented not only about the exhibition of Cross reliquaries on the altar so that the congregation could kiss the relic on Good Friday[216] and 14 September,[217] but also about processions. Certainly from the eleventh century in the Abbey of St Benignus in Dijon processions were held on Good Friday and 14 September, the day of the Exaltation of the Cross: a cross and two candlesticks were carried.[218] In 1141, Liège Cathedral's shrine of St Lambert, which also contains a relic of the Cross, was carried in procession in Bouillon in the hope of accomplishing the downfall of the usurper Count Renaud of Bar, who had unlawfully seized the castle of Bouillon, a possession of the bishops of Liège.[219] Thus it is clear that the relic of the Cross was central to the feast of the Cross itself, but could also give rise to ceremonial processions on other occasions.

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[214] The connection is made in the second prayer after the consecration in the *canon messae*, together with the offering of Abel, and the offering of Abraham and Melchizedek as types of the *sanctum sacrificium*; H. and H. BUSCHHAUSEN, art. cit., p. 267.

[215] Compare the Cross reliquary in the Church of the Holy Cross in Liège (above).

[216] From the 5th century in Jerusalem: Egeria, *adoratio crucis*. From the 7th century in Rome; M. ANDRIEU (ed.), *Les Ordines Romani du Haut Moyen Age* (*Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense*, 11, 23–24, 28–29), 5 vols., Leuven, 1957–1961, vol. 3, pp. 270–271.

[217] From the 7th century in Constantinople: Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913–959), *De cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae*, PG 112, cols. 73–1446, col. 400 and cols. 1017–1020.

[218] K. HALLINGER (ed.), *Consuetudines Cluniacensium antiquiores cum redactionibus derivatis*, CCM 7.2, p. 130: 'Post tertiam accipiat sacerdos crucem et duo conuersi candelabra [. . .] ad processionem'.

[219] K. McKAY HOLBERT, op. cit., p. 212; with reference to: *Triumphus S. Lamberti de Castro Bullonio*, G.H. PERTZ (ed.), MGH SS 20, pp. 497–511: 'Praecedente itaque clero cum crucibus et cereis, pia sarcina humeris deportata Montem Publicum ad Mossam fluvium. Antecedebat quoque beatam martyrem portio ligni vivificae crucis'. See also: A. LEMEUNIER, *Echanges artistiques et religieux*, art. cit., p. 101. In 1151, the shrine is also carried around in Andenne.

The processions ended with the placing of the reliquary on the altar. As regards the Good Friday ritual, at the moment the procession assembled in the church to worship the holy wood the Cross was unveiled by the priest or the abbot to the singing of *Ecce lignum crucis*.[220] This action signalled the end of Lent. On the first Sunday (Cluny) or the first Monday (Liège) of Lent all liturgical objects were veiled as a sign of mourning, and to withdraw their beauty and lustre from sight. Kelly McKay Holbert has suggested that the wings of the twelfth-century Cross triptychs are in fact the equivalent of the covering veils.[221] The veils allude to Exodus, where the Lord instructs Moses to build the Ark of the Covenant: 'You shall make a curtain of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen; it shall be made with cherubim skilfully worked into it. You shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, which have hooks of gold and rest on four bases of silver. You shall hang the curtain under the clasps, and bring the ark of the covenant inside, within the curtain; and the curtain shall separate for you the holy place from the most holy' (Ex. 26, 31–33). The Stavelot triptych also features four silver pillars. Solomon followed the same construction for the building of the house of the Lord (2 Chron. 3), but he made two carved and gilded cherubim and in front of the Temple he set up two bronze pillars called Jachin (on the right) and Boaz (on the left). Perhaps the angels on the outside of the panels of the Tongeren reliquary also recall the cherubim of the Temple.[222]

Abbot William of Hirsau (late eleventh century) says that during Lent none but the priests may pass the curtain stretched between chancel and nave, just as Aaron alone was permitted to enter the room of the Holy of Holies.[223] Honorius of Autun compares the veils that cover the altar and altarpieces with the curtain of the Holy of

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[220] K. HALLINGER (ed.), op. cit., p. 90.

[221] K. McKAY HOLBERT, op. cit., p. 205 ff., p. 222. The sources do not always make it clear whether smaller objects such as these Cross reliquaries and altar crosses had to be removed during Lent or whether they could remain, covered, in place. In Fleury, at least, it was the custom that the crosses and Cross reliquaries should remain present and covered. Thus the 'concealed presence' of the crosses seems to be of prime importance.

[222] Above, the angels have already been placed in the context of the heavenly liturgy. The two deacons who hold the cross during the *adoratio crucis* on Good Friday, are a reflection of the angels.

[223] WILLIAM OF HIRSAU, *Constitutiones Hirsaugiensis seu Gengenbacenses*, ed. L. d'ACHERY, PL 150, cols. 923–1146, col. 1092.

Holies.[224] The typological symbolism can thus be connected with both the curtain that conceals the Holy of Holies and the veils that hide the sacred things on the altar from sight. In the strictest sense the curtain concealing the chancel should allude to the outermost tentcloth of the tabernacle, the veil covering the relic to the innermost veil of the Holy of Holies. Be that as it may, both curtain and veil are typologically associated with the coming of the Messiah, with the fulfilling of the Old Testament in the New.[225] Furthermore, below the relic of the Cross in the Tongeren reliquary *Ecclesia* and *Synagoga* are depicted.

In the *De divinus officiis* Rupert of Deutz writes that the cloth that should cover the Cross during Lent should be removed on Good Friday with the words: *Ecce lignum cruces.* The cloth symbolizes the Jews who kept Christ hidden and whose hearts are veiled; but now that veil is set aside in Christ (after 2 Cor. 3, 14–16).[226] In other words, Lent symbolizes the era of the Old Testament, dark and ignorant, that was fulfilled at the Crucifixion in light and truth. Thus, as has been suggested above, the (Berlin/)London cross with the typological scenes may have served as the symbolic 'veiled' side during Lent (fig. 18b). The side with the *Inventio* iconography refers to revelation. The discovery of the Cross by Judas the Jew stands for the dichotomy between the dark and misleading era (the concealed Cross) and the era of light that flowed from it (the revelation of the Cross).

We know from Egeria, writing in the fourth century, that from the beginning the wood of the Cross played a central part in the Good Friday services in Jerusalem. On the Berlin(/London) cross Helena adores the Cross, just as the *adoratio crucis* forms a part of Good Friday worship. Moreover, in the background is a double curtain, which is not only reminiscent of the two wings of the triptych, but also the curtain of the temple that was torn in two at the moment

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[224] HONORIUS OF AUTUN, *Gemma animae sive de divinis officiis*, PL 172, cols. 541–738, col. 595.

[225] GREGORY THE GREAT, *Homiliarium in Ezechielem*, 2.10, ed. M. ADRIAEN, CCSL 142, p. 395, compares the Ark behind the curtain with the Redeemer in heaven.

[226] RUPERT OF DEUTZ, *De divinis officiis*, ed. R. HAACKE, CCCM 7, p. 202: 'Velamen, quo hactenus tegebatur eadem crux, quodque aufertur dicendo: Ecce lignum crucis, uelamen illud significat, sub quo sese Dominus a Iudaeis quodque cordi eorum oppansum est, nobis autem reuelatur, quia uit ait apostolus, in Christo aufertur'.

of Christ's death (Mt. 27, 51). Rupert of Deutz and Honorius of Autun compare the removal of the Lent cloth with the 'breaking' of the temple curtain.[227] And the 'break' is also seen as a mirror for the dual nature of Christ.[228]

In the Stavelot triptych the dynamic of unveiling and veiling is doubly present. One might suggest that its wings allude to the Lent curtain that divides chancel from nave (the outermost curtain of the Ark, thus). They were usually opened on Maundy Thursday.[229] The *sigmas* on the centre panel that are then revealed recall the *mensa* of the Last Supper. The wings of the Byzantine triptychs, in the lowest of which the wood of the Cross is exposed, may have played a role at the unveiling of the Cross on Good Friday (*Ecce lignum crucis*). Thus here they also materially allude to the innermost veil of the Ark.

The veneration of the Cross on the altar also took place on 3 May and 14 September. Moreover, the Old Testament motifs were recruited from the antiphons of both feasts of the Cross. The feasts of the Cross—with their individual emphases—are an echo of Good Friday. In other words they commemorate the Crucifixion and Resurrection yet again. Liturgically speaking, the feasts are interchangeable. Throughout the liturgical year links are developed that connect Good Friday, 3 May and 14 September, with the relic of the Cross as the key, and in which certainly the symbolism of the new Temple/Ark was important.

The examples from Mosan enamel art display a liturgical and iconographic coherence. The differences are mostly related to the choice of the scenes, which was determined by the object's shape and the spaces available for decoration. Thus the Tongeren reliquary has no image of the Testing of the Cross and the Berlin altar cross has a fifth enamel depicting Helena's veneration of the Cross. The constants are the interrogation, the threat of fire and, of course, the Finding of the Cross itself.

The common motifs are so compositionally related that as regards the Stavelot triptych, the Lobbes (?) phylactery and the Berlin/London

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[227] RUPERT OF DEUTZ, *De divinis officiis*, op. cit., p. 22 and HONORIUS OF AUTUN, *Gemma animae*, op. cit., col. 657.

[228] K. McKAY HOLBERT, op. cit., p. 245.

[229] K. McKAY HOLBERT, op. cit., p. 218.

altar cross an exchange of models within the see of Liège can be considered. The Tongeren reliquary, on the other hand, belongs to another and later group. Such differences as there are, appear in the details of the composition—the number of Jews and the position of the characters, as well as the number of crosses that are found, the direction in which they lie, whether or not Helena is present, whether the discovery is made by Judas and/or others, with a pick and/or a spade and whether Judas is a monk, a Jew or a bishop.

The relationship to the literary tradition of the legend of the Cross remains vague. I mentioned Honorius of Autun (ca. 1130) who says that three crosses were found and probably by several people (*fodemunt*).[230] Through the stem of *foidire* the choice of pick or spade is left open. Honorius emphatically places Helena at the discovery.[231] We read the same facts in Bede's homily *De inventione sanctae Crucis*.[232] Hildebert of Le Mans (late eleventh or early twelfth century) added to this that after it was found the Cross was 'removed', 'returned' and 'held out', which perhaps might explain the 'activity' with the crosses.[233] Nevertheless, the literary traditions do not explain the iconographic differences. Apart from the clear distinction between Judas Cyriacus and Macarius the differences are purely on the level of the image. However, it is not until the end of the thirteenth century, with the creation of the legendaries and their diffusion in the various vernaculars, that the literary details become widely known, leading to a specific standardized iconographic translation.[234]

It is striking that in the Mosan group there is no depiction of the finding of the nails, and that only the Stavelot triptych and the Lobbes (?) phylactery have motifs connected with Constantine. It has already been pointed out that images of Constantine were determined

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[230] HONORIUS OF AUTUN, *Speculum ecclesiae*, PL 172, *De inventione sanctae Crucis*, cols. 942–948, col. 948: 'Locus contremuit, fumus thymiamatis de terra ascendit. Mox terram rastris aperiunt, tres cruces inveniunt'.

[231] Ibid., col. 947: 'Regina vero ac populo commitante, ad locum pergit, preces flexis genibus fundit'. It is not said that the Testing of the Cross takes place in the centre of the town, only that a corpse is brought so that the crosses might be tested. It is also unclear who does the testing (col. 948).

[232] BEDA VENERABILIS, *Opera omnia*, PL 5, *Homilia* XCIII: *De inventione sanctae Crucis*, cols. 494–495.

[233] HILDEBERTUS CENOMANENSIS, *De inventione sanctae Crucis*, PL 171, cols. 1315–1322, col. 1316: 'Tres simul cruces reperit, tollit, redit, haeret'.

[234] See Chapter Four.

by the presence of the emperor on one of the Byzantine triptychs, for which the Stavelot triptych was probably specially made. On that tiny triptych Constantine and Helena flank the Cross. This is the representative Byzantine iconography for 14 September: the feasts of the Exaltation of the Cross and the Dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The oldest example of this flanking type is in a Syrian-Jacobite *homiliarium* of the eighth or ninth century.[235] However, most appear from the tenth century onwards in the East.[236] Examples of Helena and Constantine with the Cross are known on (difficult to date) stamps for the holy wafer.[237] In the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin there is an example on a tenth-century Greek ivory (fig. 22).[238] In this instance, Helena holds a globe. In the Church of Göreme (El Nazar in Asia Minor) there is a painted example (1070).[239]

The iconographic formula, derived from the Exaltation of the Cross and connected in origin with the feast of the dedication of the Constantinian basilica, expressed imperial power over the entire Christian empire. Within the Byzantine theocratic model Constantine

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[235] Berlin, Königliche Bibliothek, Sachau 225, fol. 43; W. VOELKLE, *The Iconography of the Legend of the Finding of the True Cross in Mosan Art of the Last Half of the Twelfth Century* (unpubl. thesis), New York, 1965, p. 67 ff.; A. BAUMSTARK, *Konstantiniana aus syrischer Kunst und Liturgie*, in *Konstantin der Grosse und seinen Zeit. Festschrift De Waal*, ed. F.J. DÖLGER (*Supplement Römischen Quartalschriften*, 19), Freiburg, 1913, pp. 218–245, fig. VII, 1.

[236] There may have been older examples, now lost; Chr. WALTER, art. cit., p. 107: Agobardus (814–840, Bishop of Lyon) refers to the type: *Liber de imaginibus sanctorum*, CXXXII, PL 104, col. 225. E. KIRSCHBAUM, art. *Konstantin und Helena*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 7, Rome-Vienna, 1974, cols. 336–337: The type occurs frequently from the 10th century onwards in the painted cave churches of Cappadocia. The motif also appears in the Greek *menelogia* (calendars of the saints), from the 11th century onwards, illustrated after the model of the *menelogion* of Basil II, on 21 May (ca. 1000, vat. gr. 1613); N. P(ATTERSON) S(SEVCENKO), art. *Menelogion* and art. *Menologion of Basil II, The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, Oxford, 1991, p. 1341 and pp. 1341–1342. From the 13th century, the motif becomes an established part of the iconographic programmes of Byzantine churches.

[237] S. PETRIDES and A.E. RIENTJES, *Vraag en antwoord. Byzantijns bronsreliëf*, in *Het Gildeboek* 18, 4, 1935, p. 141; C.M. KAUFMANN, *Konstantin und Helena auf einem griechischen Hostienstempel*, in *Oriens Christianus. Neue Serie*, 4, 1915, pp. 85–87; A. BAUMSTARK, art. cit., pp. 218–245, and J. GEORG, *Konstantin der Grosse und die hl. Helena in der Kunst des christlichen Orients*, in *Konstantin der Grosse und seine Zeit. Festschrift De Waal*, Freiburg, 1913, pp. 255–258.

[238] G. CAMES, *Byzance et la peinture Romane de Germanie*, Paris, 1966, fig. 163.

[239] M. RESTLE, *Die Byzantinische Wandmalerei in Kleinasien*, 2 vols, n.p., 1967, vol. 2: no. XXIII (with ill.): chapel 28, wall painting on the south wall next to the choir. Here, Helena is on the left, Constantine on the right. The Cross bears a *titulus* and a *suppedaneum*, and is roughly finished, suggesting the origin of the Tree of Life.



Fig. 22. *Helena and Constantine flank the Cross.* Byzantine ivory, 10th century. Berlin, Staatliche Museen.

and Helena function as the patron saints of the Cross, the protectors of the ideal state. Their significance is therefore also eschatological. In the monumental painted programmes of Byzantine churches they usually occupy a central place in the choir or the arch at the entrance to the nave.

Given their special relationship to the Cross, Constantine and Helena also appear on Byzantine Cross reliquaries such as that contained in the Stavelot triptych. A Cross reliquary of the ninth or tenth century displays a relic of the Cross in the shape of a patriarchal cross, with the emperor and empress on either side.[240] They raise their hands towards the relic in a gesture of homage. Byzantine Cross relics also found their way to the West, where they influenced local workshops. On the eleventh-century Esztergom reliquary (Hungary) Constantine and Helena flank a relic of the Cross that has been arranged in the shape of a patriarchal cross; below are the Deliverance of Christ and the Descent from the Cross; above, two angels (fig. 23).[241] Sixteenth-century descriptions from the chapter of Our Lady of Maastricht describe the now lost base of a patriarchal cross containing five relics of the Cross and also mention: *cum pede deaurate ac imaginibus argents divinorum Constantini et Helene Imperatorum.*[242] Perhaps the base was produced in a Western workshop when the Cross reliquary (made between 959 and 1171) was conveyed from Constantinople to Maastricht in the thirteenth century.[243] On a twelfth or early-thirteenth-century Cross reliquary from the monastery of Fonte Avellana (Pesaro, Italy) Constantine is on the left and Helena on the right of the relic case.[244] Above the relic are two angels, and in the corners are the four Evangelist symbols, just like the Tongeren reliquary.[245]

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[240] The angels supporting this reliquary were made between 1340 and 1360, Paris, Louvre.

[241] H.W. van OS and G. JASZAI, art. *Kreuzlegende*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 2, Rome-Vienna, 1970, cols. 642–648, fig. 1. The authors also mention a copy of the Abgar letter, where, in the first miniature, Constantine and Helena are represented next to the Cross (Constantinople, late 14th cent., New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 499).

[242] M.L. DE KREEK, *De kerkschat van het Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekapittel te Maastricht* (*Clavis. Kunsthistorische monografieën*, 14), Utrecht, 1994, p. 106.

[243] For the stylistic dating and the inscription on the back, see: M.L. DE KREEK, op. cit., pp. 102–103.

[244] Silver gilt with niello, 48cm–20cm.

[245] M.M. GAUTHIER, op. cit., p. 54–57, art. 27.

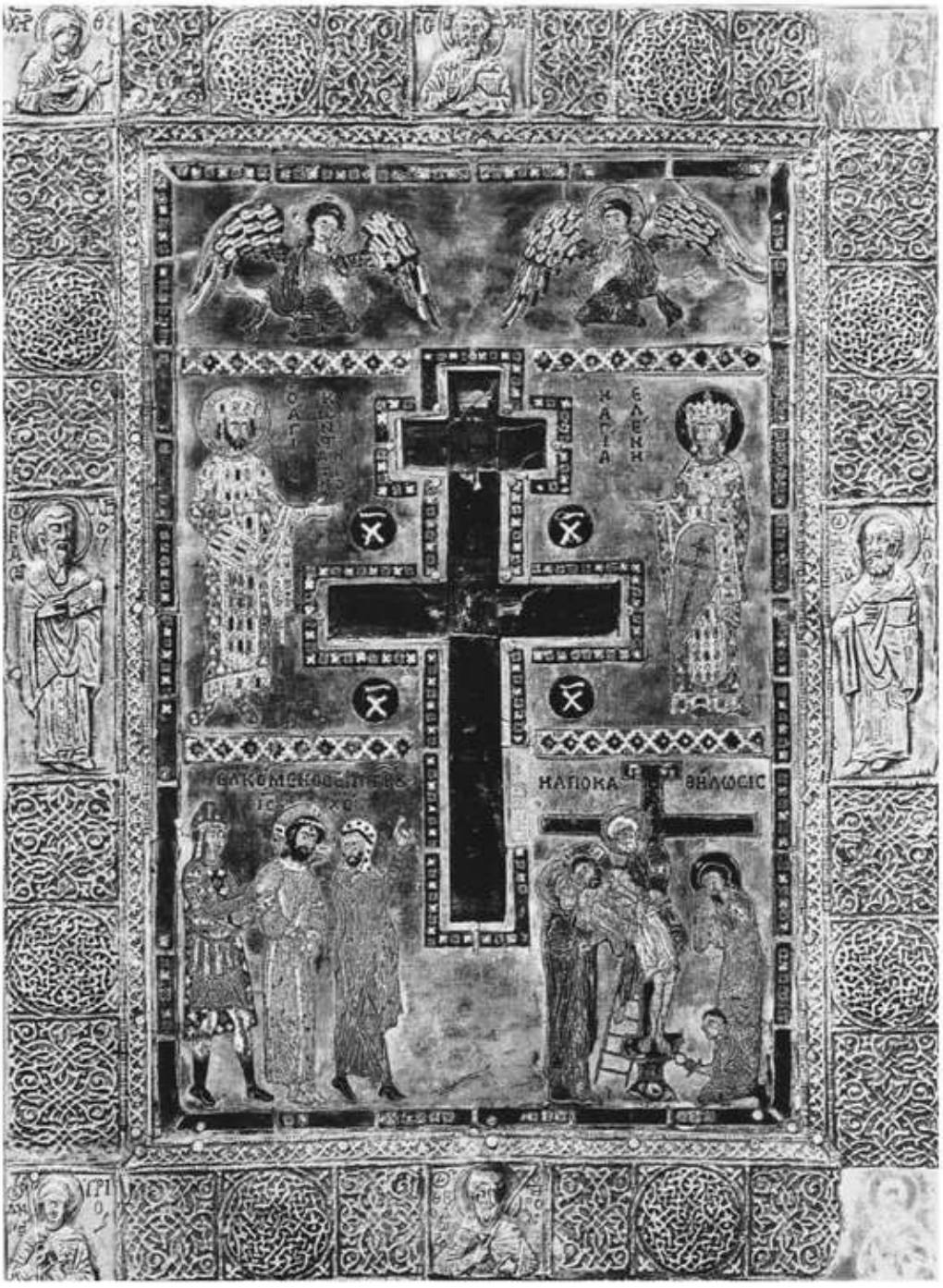


Fig. 23. *Constantine and Helena.* Cross reliquary, 11th century. Esztergom (Hungary), Cathedral.

From the twelfth century this iconography also appears in Western manuscripts[246] such as the *Perikopenbuch* of Sankt Erentrud (Salzburg, 1140),[247] illustrating the feast of 3 May. In an antiphonal from Sankt Peter (Salzburg, 1160), Helena and Constantine have exchanged their conventional places: Helena, now on the left, supports the Cross with its *titulus* and *suppedaneum*, Constantine is on the right (fig. 24).[248] Next to the text is *crucifixus surrexit a mortuis*, which simultaneously refers to the miraculous life-giving power of the Cross on Golgotha after the Crucifixion (Mt. 27, 52) and the resurrection during the Testing of the Cross and at the Last Judgement.

Both manuscripts originated in Salzburg, the principal seat of the archbishop during the Hohenstaufen dynasty.[249] The *Perikopenbuch* was produced during the reign of Conrad III (1138–1152), the antiphonal during that of Frederick I Barbarossa (1152–1190). Both men played an important part in the Second Crusade. Thus it is not unlikely that the feast of the *Inventio crucis* was illustrated in these manuscripts after models that were among the results of such eastern involvements. The Eastern type expressed the unity between Church and State: in the West a continuously current (also during the Hohenstaufen dynasty) though unstable principle. The Byzantine iconography of Constantine and Helena could reach western Europe in various ways, but the crusades were probably the most obvious. In the twelfth century Constantinople and its sphere of influence sent forth many intellectual stimuli and numerous artistic gifts.[250]

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[246] G. CAMES, op. cit., p. 172: Ms. Palat. 5 at Parma. In Macedonia the belief existed that in addition to Helena, Constantine was also present at the Finding of the Cross; J. TRAEGER, art. *Konstantin*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 2, Rome-Vienna, 1970, col. 549. The tradition may have grown out of the Byzantine iconographical tradition, or from the vision motif that has become interwoven with the *Inventio crucis* iconography.

[247] Munich, Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Clm. 15903, fol. 48; G. SWARZENSKI, *Die Salzburger Malerei. Von den ersten Anfängen bis zur Blüterzeit des romanischen Stils. Studien zur Geschichte der deutschen Malerei und Handschriftenkunde des Mittelalters*, 2 vols, Leipzig, 1908–1913, scene LVII, fig. 183 (2), p. 83 (1); E. KLEMM, *Die Romanischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, vol. 1. *Die Bistümer Regensburg, Passau und Salzburg*, Wiesbaden, 1980, cat. no. 272.

[248] Drawing, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, series nova 2700, fol. 338; W. VOELKLE, op. cit., fig. 52; O. MAZAL and F. UNTERKIRCHER, *Katalog der Abendländischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. Series Nova*, 2/1, Vienna, 1963, pp. 355–359.

[249] K. SCHREINER, *Friedrich Barbarossa. Herr der Welt, Zeuge der Wahrheit, die Verkörperung nationaler macht und Herrlichkeit*, in *Die Zeit der Staufer. Geschichte, Kunst, Kultur* (exh. cat.), Stuttgart, 1977, pp. 521–579.

[250] J. LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, art. cit., pp. 13–47.



Fig. 24. *Helena and Constantine.* Antiphonal from Sankt Peter, Salzburg, 1160. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, series nova 2700, fol. 338.

Yet even so, the Byzantine type of Constantine and Helena was limited in western European iconography. Nor, in the West, was Constantine venerated as *isapostolos*. On the other hand, the Byzantine model had influenced the already existing *Inventio crucis* iconography. This too is first noticeable in the twelfth century. A pen drawing in a manuscript containing the *Chronicon Zwifaltense Minus* and martyrology of Usuardus (Zwiefalten [Hirsau] 1160)[251] has introduced a scene at the feast of 3 May that combines both the narrative and representative traditions (fig. 25).[252] The drawing of the Finding of the Cross is part of a full page with five medallions. In the medallions are

[251] Stuttgart, Landesbibliothek, Cod. Hist. Fol. 415, fol. 39; S. von BORRIES-SCHULTEN and H. SPILLING, *Die romanischen Handschriften der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek Stuttgart*, vol. 1. *Provenienz Zwiefalten*, Stuttgart, 1987, cat. no. 65, fol. 39r, fig. 249; S. von BORRIES-SCHULTEN, *Zur romanischen Buchmalerei in Zwiefalten. Zwei Illustrationsfolgen zu den Heiligenfesten des Jahres und ihre Vorlagen*, in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 1, 1989, pp. 445–471.

[252] S. von BORRIES-SCHULTEN and H. SPILLING, op. cit., p. 98.

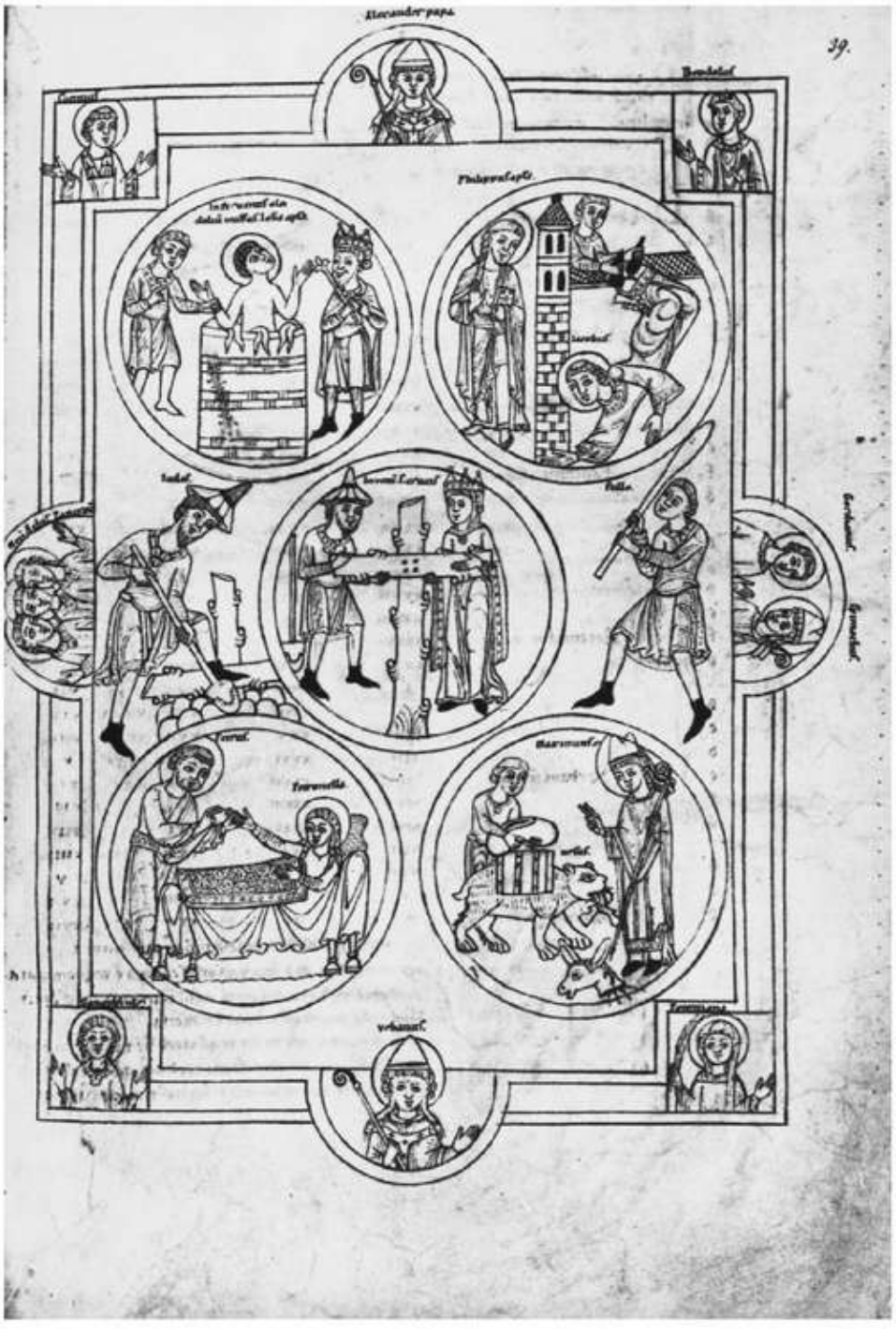


Fig. 25. *Finding and Presentation of the Cross. Chronicon* and martyrology of Usuardus, Zwiefalten, 1160. Stuttgart, Landesbibliothek, Cod. Hist. Fol. 415, fol. 39.

scenes connected with the commemorations of 3 May. In the central medallion Judas and Helena have hold of the crossbeam of a roughly made Cross. In other words, Judas now occupies Constantine's place in the Byzantine iconography.[253] Helena is recognizable by her imperial garments and diadem, Judas by his Jewish cap. The spade that he has laid aside on the left still recalls the act of the discovery. The moment of discovery itself is shown on the left: Judas sets his left foot to the spade, which brings to light the top and the crossbeam of the Cross from a rough and schematically-rendered hillside. The event is oriented rightwards, and in that sense corresponds to the Finding of the Cross on the Lobbes (?) phylactery.[254]

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[253] See also: 1. Roussillon, Monastir del Camp, church portal, capital, 3rd quarter of the 12th cent. Judas (?) grips the shaft of a cross (with halo?); right, a crowned woman, Helena (?); P. PONSICH, *Le Monastir del camp*, in *Congrès archéologique de France, CXII session*, 1935, p. 326; 2. stone cross of Kelloe (ca. 1200) with above, the Dream of Constantine; in the middle, in all likelihood, Helena (damaged) and Constantine, each with a small cross; below a combination of the Finding (Judas-Helena) and Testing of the Cross. The iconography is considered elsewhere; B. BAERT, *In Hoc Vinces. Iconography of the Stone Cross in the Parish Church of Kelloe (Durham, ca 1200)*, in *Archaeological and Historical Aspects of West-European Societies. Album amicorum André van Doorselaer (Acta Archaeologica Lovaniensia Monographiae*, 8), Leuven, 1995, pp. 341–362. 3. also a combination of the Finding and the Testing of the Cross in the wall paintings of the apse of Santa Maria in Barbera (Catalonia, early 13th cent.); W.W.S. COOK, *La pintura mural romànica en Cataluña*, Madrid, 1956, fig. 39 and B. BAERT, *New Observations*, art. cit., fig. 21.

[254] The representation of an isolated Judas with spade is imitated in the 13th-century workshops of Weingarten: 1. Gradual from the monastery of Weingarten, 1217–1235, Vienna, ms. 4981, fol. 34v N(os). 2. Gradual, sequentiary and sacramentary from Weingarten, 2nd quarter of the 13th cent., Fulda, Hessische Landesbibliothek, Ms. Aa 32, fol. 137v D(eus); Chr. JAKOBI-MIRWALD and H. KÖLLNER, *Die illuminierten Handschriften der hessischen Landesbibliothek Fulda*, 1. *Handschriften des 6. bis 13. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart, 1993, cat. no. 57, pp. 115–119, fig. 624; H. SWARZENSKI, *Englisches und flämisches Kunstgut in der romanischen Buchmalerei Weingartens*, in *Festschrift zur 900-Jahr-Feier des Klosters 1056–1956*, Weingarten, 1956, pp. 333–345, p. 335. The miniatures are identical: Judas puts his left foot on a spade. The upper part of a cross emerges from a hillside. 3. Missal of Heinricus Sacrista, Weingarten, 1220–1245, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 711, fol. 101v; H. SWARZENSKI, *The Berthold Missal and the Scriptorium of Weingarten Abbey*, 1943. fig. 106; S. DE RICCI and W.J. WILSON, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, 2, New York, 1961 (repr.), p. 1486, no. 711. Here, Judas does not wear a Jewish cap and Helena gives directions from her throne. The addition of the enthroned Helena possibly occurred after the example of the interrogation in the missal of Abbot Berthold of the same monastery, 1200–1232. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 710, fol. 89; S. DE RICCI and W.J. WILSON, ibid., no. 710; H. SWARZENSKI, *The Berthold Missal*, op. cit., Pl. 304. A. FROLOW, *La relique*, op. cit., no. 673, mentions a Cross reliquary that was made for the abbey church in the 15th century. See also: J. BRAUN, *Die Reliquiare des christlichen Kultus und ihre Entwicklung*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1940, fig. 552. The relic itself may be

Twelfth-century Cross reliquaries with the Finding of the Cross as their subject were rare. Usually they were embellished with decorative motifs or a conventional iconography such as angels, or an image of Christ Crucified between Mary and John, for instance. Despite the fact that the *Inventio* iconography would be logically associated with a relic of the True Cross, this was not always—or even usually—the case. The meaning of the relic of the Cross lay, in the first place, in the divine liturgy and the mystery of the Crucifixion.

Why is it, therefore, that the combination of Cross relic and *Inventio* iconography is found on these Mosan enamels? Is there a distinction in context? It would appear not: the context in which the reliquaries can be placed—relations between East and West concerned with pilgrimage, diplomacy (hypothetical as regards Stavelot and the Comnenus dynasty; Tongeren and the see of Liège) and the crusades (hypothetical as regards Lobbes)—is not after all specific to the Finding of the Cross but to the relic of the Cross as such. And of course far more relics of the Cross have survived than *Inventio* iconographies. Nevertheless, a direct link seems to exist between the century of the crusades and the quantitative development of the Inventio iconography in all branches of art. In this period there was also an increased influx of purported particles of the holy wood into western Europe.

In the century in which routes of influence between East and West flourished, and cross-pollinations also formed a rich iconographic soil, the Mosan enamels elaborated a 'Western' narrative *Inventio crucis* iconography as opposed to the 'Eastern' representative model. In this period the Finding of the Cross received important new impulses that flowed along the Meuse from the cathedral school of Liège. In comparison with the Carolingian and pre-Romanesque period, twelfth-century iconography burgeons with typological and liturgical renewal. The Mosan examples endowed the theme not only with a new visual identity but with a significant intellectual vitality as well. Hence, in the Meuse region, the *Inventio crucis* offered the basic structures for its iconographic development in the Gothic period ahead.

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older. The church was dedicated to the Holy Cross; the abbey gained more importance with the cult of the Holy Blood; G. GRANDEUR, *Eine alte Genealogie der Welfen und des Monchs von Weingarten. Geschichte der Welfen (Die Geschichtschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit,* 68), Leipzig, 1970 (repr.); G. SPAHR, *Kreuz und Blut Christi in den Kunst Weingartens. Eine ikonographische Studie,* Constance, 1962.

CHAPTER THREE

HERACLIUS AND THE PERSIANS. THE LEGEND OF THE EXALTATION OF THE CROSS

From the seventh century the Finding of the Cross by Helena was enhanced by a second legend: the Exaltation of the Cross by the Byzantine emperor, Heraclius (610–641). Even in his own lifetime a complex of legends was generated around Heraclius. He was renowned for his series of victories over the Persians, who threatened the Greek-speaking part of the Roman Empire at the beginning of the seventh century and who, moreover, had pillaged the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The story goes that the Persian ruler Chosroes II (588–628) stole the relic of the Cross, only for Heraclius to rescue it and restore it to Jerusalem. It is this event that is additionally commemorated at the original Palestinian Feast of the Finding of the Cross on 14 September.

The legend of the Exaltation of the Cross is part of a broad cultural platform. Indeed, the figure of Heraclius is shared not only by Persians and Christians, but by Jews and Arabs as well. Because all these different cultures appropriated the stories to suit their own particular agendas, the legend developed in an erratic way. The religious-cultural impact of the conflict between the Greeks and the Persians was so profound that it was perceived in eschatological and apocalyptic terms.[1]

Exaltatio crucis. Worldviews in conflict

At the beginning of the seventh century the Roman army, which by constant campaigning had prevented the Avars from overrunning the

[1] Research results published in; B. BAERT, *Exaltatio crucis. De Byzantijnse keizer Heraclius (610–641) en het middeleeuwse Westen*, in *Bijdragen. Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie*, 60, 1999, pp. 147–172. Meanwhile, the proceedings of the workshop 'The reign of Heraclius: crisis and confrontation' (19–21 April 2001, University of Groningen), have been published, G.J. REININK and B.H. STOLTE (eds.) *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641): Crisis and Confrontation*, Leuven, 2002. W.E. KAEGI, *Heraclius. Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge, 2003. A. SOMMERLECHNER, *Kaiser*

boundaries of the Western Roman Empire, rose in revolt against Emperor Maurice (539–602)[2] Exasperated by unpopular measures, the soldiers put an officer named Phocas at their head, and marched on Rome. The subsequent murder of the emperor by the usurper Phocas (602–610) resulted in a very precarious equilibrium—something that did not escape the Persian Sassanian Empire (third–seventh century AD), which had already extended far beyond the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates. From as early as the third century the Persian Empire had had a love-hate relationship with the Eastern Roman Empire. Even the supposedly 'eternal' peace agreement signed in 562 by Chosroes I (531–578) and Justinian I (527–565) had only kept the eastern border quiet for seven years.[3] When Chosroes failed to receive the hoped-for parts of Italy and Africa from Justinian he retaliated from his home base of Ctesiphon with the annexation of Syria and Antioch.

Chosroes' ambitious grandson, Chosroes II, had promised his support to Maurice. Therefore, profiting from the political chaos that followed the emperor's murder, he declared war on Phocas (603). His series of victories left the Byzantine Empire with access only to Italy, North Africa and Greece.[4] The pillaging of Jerusalem in 614 gave Chosroes a political hegemony, but it was in the first place a

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Herakleios und die Rückkehr des eiligen Kreuzes nach Jerusalem, in *Römische Mitteilungen*, 45, 2003, pp. 319–360.

[2] A. PERNICE, *L'imperatore Eraclio. Saggio di storia bizantina*, Florence, 1905; A. FROLOW, *La vraie croix et les expéditions d'Héraclius en Perse*, in *Revue des études byzantines*, 11, 1953, pp. 88–105; O. VOLK, art. *Herakleios*, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 5, Freiburg, 1960, cols. 237–238; G. OSTROGORSKY, *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates*, Munich, 1963, pp. 73–122; H.M. GUATKIN (ed.), *The Cambridge Medieval History*, 2. *The Rise of the Saracens and the Foundation of the Western Empire*, n.p., 1964, pp. 184–302, pp. 747–758; J.J. SAUNDERS, *A History of Medieval Islam*, London, 1965; V. GRUMEL, *La reposition de la vraie croix B Jérusalem par Héraclius. Le jour et l'année*, in *Zeitschrift für Byzantinistik*, 1, 1966, pp. 139–149; A.N. STRATOS, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 1. *602–634*, trans. from Greek by M. OGILVIE-GRANT, Amsterdam, 1968; W. DURANT, *Weltreiche des Glaubens* (*Kulturgeschichte der Menschheit*, 5), reissue of 1935, Munich, 1981; A.H. BREDERO, *Christenheid en christendom in de Middeleeuwen. Over de verhouding godsdienst, kerk en samenleving*, Kampen, 1986, p. 102 ff.; J. HERRIN, *The Formation of Christendom*, Princeton, 1987, pp. 183–219; M. GIL, *A History of Palestine. 643–1099*, trans. from Hebrew by E. BROIDO, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 65–74. W.E. KAEGI, *Heraclius. Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge, 2003. A. SOMMERLECHNER, *Kaiser Herakleios und die Rückkehr des heiligen Kreuzes nach Jerusalem. Überlegungen zu Stoff- und Motifgeschichte*, in *Römische Historische Mitteilungen*, 45, 2003, pp. 319–360.

[3] See also: A. GRABAR, *L'iconoclasme Byzantin. Le dossier archéologique*, 2nd revised edn. of 1957, Paris, 1984.

[4] See map in J.J. SAUNDERS, op. cit., pp. 54–55.

symbolic act in the conflict between the two rival religious centres. When the city was set ablaze the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was destroyed and—according to tradition—the relic of the Cross was seized and carried away.

In the meantime, opponents of Phocas's regime in Constantinople sent to the exarch of Carthage (North Africa) to ask for his help. The exarch responded by sending his son, Heraclius, who bested and decapitated Phocas, and was then helped to power himself by a senatorial coup. He was immediately faced with the far from inconsiderable task of repelling the advancing Persian army.[5] To add his difficulties, Constantinople was now under threat from various Balkan peoples as well, despite Heraclius's repeated attempts to buy them off—often at considerable cost—as buffer states.[6] In the autumn of 622, Heraclius began his expedition against the Persians in Armenia, where he gained a significant victory against general Shahrbaraz,[7] effectively reopening the gates to Asia Minor. But this served only to strengthen Chosroes II's resolve and he wrote Heraclius an insulting and blasphemous letter.[8] Heraclius pushed on to Dvin (Dovin)[9] then southwards to Ganzak, the great religious centre of the Persians and the location of the fire temple of Zarathustra.[10] The temple was destroyed in reprisal for the sacking of Jerusalem.

Zoroastrianism, founded by the prophet Zoroaster, or Zarathustra (who lived in the seventh [?] century BC in present-day Iran), became the official religion of the Sassanian Empire.[11] Even then the religion

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[5] J. HERRIN, op. cit., pp. 183–219.

[6] G. OSTROGORSKY, op. cit., p. 84.

[7] See: C. MANGO, *Héraclius, Sahrbarâz et la vraie croix*, in *Travaux et mémoires*, 9, 1985, pp. 105–117.

[8] The inscription of the letter reads: 'from Chosrov, favourite of the gods, master and king of the earth, son of the great Armazd, to our servant, idiot and fool, Heraclius'; from: F. MACLER, *Histoire d'Héraclius par l'évêque Sebéos, traduite de l'arménien et annotée*, Paris, 1904, p. 79. Sebeos probably wrote the history of Heraclius in 661.

[9] In Persian 'Dvin' means 'mountain'. At that moment it was the capital of Armenian Persia; A.N. STRATOS, op. cit., p. 396.

[10] After the Armenian word 'Ganza', which means 'treasure'. There is still debate about the exact identity of the city. Perhaps it was the ruins of Leylan, 40 km from Maragha. According to the chronicles the city had both a fire temple and a winter palace; A.N. STRATOS, op. cit., p. 366.

[11] J.R. RUSSELL, art. *Sasanian Culture*, in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 10, New York, 1988, pp. 660–666; G. GNOLI, *L'Iran ancien et le zoroastrisme*, in *L'homme indo-européen et le sacré* (*Traité d'anthropologie du sacré*, 2), Aix-en-Provence, 1995, pp. 111–152. As a result of the Arab conquests (from the 2nd half of the 8th cent.), many Zoroastrians fled to India and Pakistan, where they came to be called the 'Persians',

had already been influenced by the religious syncretism of the Parthian empire at the time of Alexander the Great (356–323 BC). Because of this 'defiling' influence on their religion, the Persians regarded Alexander as a demon. Nevertheless, Zoroastrianism had maintained its authentic core, helped, for example, by the transmission of texts that the Persians believed to have been written by Zarathustra himself. The prophet Mani (third century AD), who formulated the dualistic doctrine of Manichaeism, wrote a commentary on the texts, and it is thanks to this that we are informed today about the original Zoroastrian doctrine and worship.[12]

Zoroastrianism is a dualistic religion. Its followers revere the deity Ahura Mazda as cosmic creator and heavenly guardian and fear the king of darkness, Ahriman. This dualism develops on metaphysical, moral and sacred-historical levels. The history of man is threefold. His original state is the state of perfection; his second and current state is characterized by Ahriman's evil and destructive interposition; and his third state is the supernatural state in the kingdom of Ahura Mazda (comparable with the Christian 'heaven'). Man merits this life after death if his earthly existence has been spent in fulfilling the moral prescriptions. Thus, Zoroastrianism also involves a type of eschatology and soteriology.

Worship is focused on fire, which is kept in temples and regarded as sacred. Fire mediates between death and life, between light and darkness, but it is also a symbol of epiphany and eternal divine power. In Zoroastrianism, fire is regarded as an 'angel', which is typical of Old Iranian thought.[13] The union of light and universe is fundamental to Zoroastrian belief. Herodotus says of the Persians that, preferably in the neighbourhood of a mountain (*axis mundi*), they sacrifice to the sun, the moon and the stars, to water, fire and wind.[14] Ahura Mazda is equated with the firmament and the natural elements. He adds that the Persians build no altars or temples, nor portray their gods in human likeness, referring, probably, to the

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or Parsis, as indeed they are still known today. In present-day Iran too there still exist communities which have been unaffected by the general conversion to Islam and have remained faithful to the age-old teaching of Zarathustra.

[12] See also: J.P. ASMUSSEN, *Manichaean Literature*, Delmar-New York, 1975.

[13] In the old nature religions fire was regarded as a 'living' body because of its mobility.

[14] Herodotus does not specify a particular mountain. There were many mountains that served as sacred places of sacrifice.

oldest and most archaic form of nature religion in Persia, predating even Zarathustra. But it was with the Zoroastrianism of Zarathustra that seventh-century Byzantium came into contact.

Heraclius's conquest of the Persians was accelerated by alliances with Christian tribes in the Caucasus (625) and the Chazar kingdom. Towards the end of 627, with an army strengthened by these reinforcements, Heraclius took Nineveh and drove Chosroes II from his favourite residences in Dastagerd[15] and Ctesiphon.[16] Chosroes II was slain and his son and successor, Chosroes-Siroe, made peace with Byzantium. Heraclius had retaken Armenia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and part of Mesopotamia.[17] In the meantime, however, Constantinople had been under siege from Avars, Bulgars and Slavs since 626.[18] The patriarch at that time, Sergius (610–639), endeavoured to keep up the city's morale with impressive religious processions along the city walls.[19] In 628 Heraclius wrote to Constantinople, reporting that he had defeated the Persians.[20] Returning to the beleaguered capital he vanquished the besiegers, freed the city and received a hero's welcome. The situation in the Balkans was 're-arranged': the Avars converted to Christianity and the Croatians and Serbs, who had been forced to withdraw to the Carpathians, were allowed to settle in the north-west and the south-east of the Balkans, respectively.[21] Not until the ninth century did these two nations convert to Christianity.[22] In the spring of 630 (?), Heraclius made his 'joyous entry' into Jerusalem, where he restored the Cross that had been looted by the Persians.[23] Greek now became the official language

[15] This is the present-day Eski-Baghdad or Zendan. The city lies 170km north-eastwards on a military axis with Ctesiphon. Dastagerd's heyday was during the 6th and 7th centuries; under Chosroes I and Chosroes II it was famed for its dazzling palaces and gardens; A.N. STRATOS, op. cit., p. 395.

[16] This was the capital of the Sassanian kings and was reputed to be impregnable. The city was connected to the outside world by a bridge over the River Tigris (near the town of Seleucia); A.N. STRATOS, op. cit., p. 395.

[17] G. OSTROGORSKY, op. cit., p. 86.

[18] The primary source is an oration of Theodoros Synkellos, a contemporary of Heraclius and presbyter in the Hagia Sophia; G. OSTROGORSKY, op. cit., p. 73 and p. 77; Edn.: L. STERNBACH, *Analecta Avarica*, Cracow, 1900.

[19] G. OSTROGORSKY, op. cit., pp. 85–86.

[20] There is nothing in the letter about the recovered relic of the Cross, however; A. FROLOW, *La vraie croix*, art. cit., pp. 89–91.

[21] G. OSTROGORSKY, op. cit., p. 87.

[22] G. OSTROGORSKY, op. cit., p. 197.

[23] There is debate about the exact date of Heraclius's restitution of the Cross; O. VOLK, art. cit., arrives at 21 March 629; V. GRUMEL, art. cit., develops a hypothesis of 21 March 631.

of the eastern part of the empire: the title of *basilios* replaced the Latin *imperator* or *Caesar*.

With the conquest of the provinces in Asia Minor had also arisen the issue of Monophysitism, a doctrine that maintained that in the Incarnate Christ there is only one nature, not two. With the unity of the Byzantine Empire in view, both Heraclius and Patriarch Sergius supported this belief. But the Council of Chalcedon (451) had condemned Monophysitism, and under pressure from apologias by Pope Honorius (625–638) and Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (634–638), it was replaced by the doctrine of Monothelitism: Christ unites his divine and human natures according to one will (*thelema*). This doctrine was formulated in the *Ekthesis*, or 'Statement of Faith', issued by Heraclius in the narthex of the Hagia Sophia in 638.[24]

As a unifying idea intended to reconcile Monophysite and orthodox parties, Monothelitism failed. The eastern parts of the empire proved unable to withstand new Persian invasions and the rapid Arab expansion that followed the death of Muhammad in 632.[25] Heraclius could do little but look on as, from 634, the areas he had freed from the Persians fell into the hands of the Arab Caliph Omar and subsequently converted to Islam.[26] These attacks endangered the recently rescued and restored relic of the Cross in Jerusalem and it was removed to safety in Constantinople (638).[27]

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[24] G. OSTROGORSKY, op. cit., p. 91.

[25] W. DURANT, op. cit., pp. 405–425; J.J. SAUNDERS, op. cit., pp. 18–38.

[26] G. OSTROGORSKY, op. cit., pp. 92–93. On the last phase of Heraclius's rule, see: H. MANANDEAN, *Les invasions arabes en Arménie (Notes chronologiques)*, in *Byzantion*, 18, 1948, pp. 163–195, p. 163; W.E. KAEGI jr., *Heraklios and the Arabs*, in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 27, 1, 1982, pp. 109–133. An investigation of the Arabic sources and especially of the view of Heraclius expressed therein, is beyond the scope of the present volume. Tabari's 10th-century chronicle provides a suitable line of approach here; T. NÖLDEKE, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sassaniden aus der arabischen Chronik der Tabari übersetzt*, Leiden, 1879, p. 365 ff. I may note here that 'the history of the conquest of Syria' (the *Ta'rikh Futuh al-Sham*, 7th or 12th [?] cent.), includes a speech by Heraclius, in which he warns the Syrians against the Arabs and claims their loyalty as a buffer state by referring to the recent victories over Chosroes II. In this connection Heraclius calls the Persians 'magicians' and the Avars 'those who know no God' (W.E. KAEGI jr., art. cit., p. 113). The Persians are associated with magic not only because of their nature religion and demonologies, but also because of their cultural and political dependence on astrology; B.L. van de WAERDEN, art. *Astronomie*, in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, 1, Munich, 1980, cols. 1146–1153, col. 147; J.R. RUSSELL, art. cit., p. 661.

[27] S. SPAIN, *The Translation of the Relics Ivory*, in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 31, 1977, pp. 294–295. From this point on the traditions become very confusing about the context and the places where the 'parent Cross relics' of Constantinople and Jerusalem

Succeeding thus rapidly upon each other, these events had an enormous impact on the Christian empire of that time—and on the 'pagan' world beyond. Not only were geographic borders at stake in political shifts, but also the various worldviews concerned. In his *Expeditio Persica* (622) and *Heraclias* (628),[28] Georgios Pisides, deacon of Hagia Sophia in the time of Patriarch Sergius, depicted the events as a horrible nightmare, an apocalyptic peril. Theophanes (765–817, *Chronographia*) described Heraclius as a mythic hero, who by his great perseverance alone had been able to compel the yielding of Chosroes' empire.[29] In an early-seventh-century source from Edessa, Heraclius is even compared to Alexander the Great.[30] In the same period Antiochus Stratedus describes the taking of Jerusalem by Chosroes with evangelical references to Christ's Passion,[31] while the anonymous Jewish writer of the *Dream of Zerubbabel* regards the Sassanian incursions as a Messianic liberation from the 'traitor' Heraclius.[32]

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are preserved; K. BURDACH, *Der Gral. Forschungen über seinem Ursprung und seinem Zusammenhang mit der Longinuslegende*, Stuttgart, 1938, p. 119 ff.

[28] A. PERTUSI (ed.), *Giorgio di Pisidia poemi*, I. *Panegerici Epici* (*Studia Patristica et Byzantina* 7), 1960, pp. 225–230, pp. 235–239; I. BEKKERUS (ed.), *Georgii Pisidae. Expeditio Persica, Bellum Avaricum, Heraclias*, CSHB, 1836.

[29] C. De BOOR, *Theophanis Chronographia*, 2, reissue of Leipzig, 1885, Hildesheim 1963, pp. 179–213; C. MANGO (ed.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, Oxford, 1997, pp. 441–455.

[30] G.J. REININK, *Die Entstehung der syrischen Alexanderlegende als politisch-religiöse Propagandaschrift für Herakleios Kirchenpolitik*, in *After Chalcedon. Studies in Theology and Church History, Offered to Professor Albert van Roey For His Seventieth Birthday* (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 18), Leuven, 1985, pp. 263–281, 267. Edn.: E.A.W. BUDGE, *The History of Alexander the Great. Being the Syriac Version. Edited from Five Manuscripts, of the Pseudo-Callisthenes*, Amsterdam, 1976 (reissue of Cambridge 1889), pp. 255–275, pp. 144–148. In the Syrian legend Alexander promises that he will leave his silver throne to Jerusalem. The imperial throne is regarded as foreshadowing Christ's throne; A. CAMERON, *Images of Authority. Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium*, in *Past and Present*, 84, 1979, pp. 3–35, p. 17. On the basis of the Alexander-Heraclius typology a tradition developed around the so-called 'throne of Heraclius', which was behind the main altar of San Marco in Venice, but was moved to the baptistery of the church in 1524; W. DORIGO, *La cosidetta "cattedra di San Marco"*, in *Venezia Arti*, 3, 1989, pp. 5–13; M. van LOHUIZEN-MULDER, art. *De troon van San Marco*, in *De Schatkamer van San Marco. Venetië* (exh. cat.), The Hague, 1991, pp. 106–114. According to tradition Heraclius received the throne in Alexandria and subsequently offered it to Grado. Another tradition has it that Helena brought the throne from Alexandria and it was offered to Elias of Grado later (568–572); M. van LOHUIZEN-MULDER, art. cit., p. 106. The traditions surrounding Helena and Heraclius are sometimes interchanged.

[31] B.M. WHEELER, *Imagining the Sasanian Capture of Jerusalem*, in *Orientalia christiana periodica*, 57, 1, 1991, pp. 69–85.

[32] I. LEVI, *L'apocalypse de Zorobabel et le roi de Perse Siroès*, in *Revue des Etudes Juives*,

What these sources do not mention is the causal connection between Chosroes' looting of the relic of the Cross and Heraclius's expedition.[33] Only the acts of the eighth-century Georgian martyrs David and Constantine refer to the relic as the real reason for the conflict.[34] The connection was taken up by the Arab chronicler Tabari (839–923).[35] However, it is precisely this aspect of the (relic of the) Cross that would acquire a legendary context in Western literature and art history. A homily by Hrabanus Maurus (780–856), abbot of Fulda (822–842) and archbishop of Mainz (847), provides the earliest evidence of the reception of the Heraclius legend in the West.

At the beginning of his 70th homily, *Reversio sanctae atque gloriosissimae crucis Domini nostri Jesu Christi*,[36] Hrabanus first refers to the Emperor Constantine's vision during the battle with Maxentius, then expands on Heraclius's sieges and the persistent conflicts that resulted from the theft of the Cross.[37] He specifies that the Byzantine emperor beheaded Chosroes II in his tower palace—Chosroes had built a tower in which he installed images of the sun, the moon and the stars for what Hrabanus calls 'occult' purposes. As if he were God himself Chosroes could watch from above how the rain streamed earthwards. Thus Hrabanus sought to show how Chosroes tried to (could?) manipulate nature. Deep in a cellar, horses kept the tower in constant motion, like the heavenly bodies themselves. Chosroes had placed the stolen Cross beside him. We shall return to this motif, which is derived from a separate legend, later.

Hrabanus goes on to tell how Heraclius defeats Chosroes' son on a bridge over the Danube.[38] Chosroes' son accepts baptism and

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68, 1914, pp. 129–160; G. GARITTE, *La prise de Jérusalem par les Perses en 614*, CSCO, 202–203 (*Scriptores Iberici*, 11–12), Leuven, 1960.

[33] Pisides does refer to the looting of the Cross and the miracles the Cross worked, but does not connect it, as such, with the cause of the battle between Heraclius and Chosroes II.

[34] N. MARR, *Antioch Stratig. Plenenie Ierusalima Persami v 614 g*, St Petersburg, 1909, pp. 20–21.

[35] T. NÖLDEKE, op. cit., p. 365.

[36] HRABANUS MAURUS, *Homilia* LXX, PL 110, cols. 131–134. This is the same text as the *Exaltatio seu reversio sanctae crucis* in the *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina. Antiquae et mediae aetatis*, ed. *Socii Bollandiani*, Brussels, 1911, no. 4178. PL 110, col. 1142: 'Et in Hierosolyma passio sancto Judae, sive Quiraci episcopi, cui revelatum est lignum Dominicae crucis', is the only reference to the Finding of the Cross.

[37] The edition of the *Patrologia Latina* mentions 'the Greek', *Gracchus*, instead of Heraclius.

[38] 'Pergens igitur filius Chosroe contra Gracchum, iuxta Danubium magnum fluvium consedit exercitus. Tandem inspirante clementia Salvatoris, utrisque prin-

destroys the blasphemous throne. His triumph complete, Heraclius returns to Jerusalem with the Cross, and makes his way down the slopes of the Mount of Olives to the gate by which Christ entered the city at the start of His Passion, where he is greeted with lanterns and palm branches.[39] But, adorned with a diadem and costly array, the emperor is denied entry to the city—indeed, the gate is suddenly miraculously bricked up. A vision of a flaming Cross appears and a messenger of God commands the emperor to enter the city meekly, on a donkey, as did Christ.[40] Heraclius puts off his diadem, his purple garments and his shoes, until his only covering is a linen garment.[41] Only then does the gate open, and the Cross performs its miracles of yore: lepers and lame are healed.[42] Moreover, the emperor makes many costly donations.

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cipibus placuit ut ipsi singuli in medio ponte fluminis dimicaturi confligerent, et cui sors victoriam contulisset' (PL 110, col. 132, D). The localization on the Danube is a historical anomaly. In the 7th century the Danube constituted the natural border with the Avar Empire, and at the time of Hrabanus Maurus with the Hungarians and the Magyars. Although, of course, the Avars were also hostile to the Byzantine Empire, they had no direct connection with the conflict with the Persians. However, it is known that Emperor Maurice conducted several 'Danubian campaigns' against the Avars (G. OSTROGORSKY, op. cit., p. 77). After his victory over the Persians Heraclius expelled the Avars from Constantinople. It is also possible that Hrabanus projected the contemporary threat of the Hungarians onto Heraclius's battle. See also: H. WOLFRAM and F. DAIM, *Die Volken an der mittleren und unteren Donau im fünften und sechsten Jahrhundert* (*Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Denkschriften*, 145), Vienna, 1980. As a natural border the Danube plays an important and 'universal' part in Christendom's confrontations with paganism. The Tigris and Euphrates are perceived in a similar way in the East. Ctesiphon, the capital of the Sassanian Empire, was also connected to the 'outer world' by a bridge over the Tigris. Is the Tigris the Persians' Danube? In his version of the Exaltation of the Cross (1170) John Beleth incorporates a correction: '[. . .] Danubium illum, qui apud Persas est, non hunc qui in Suevia oritur' (Rationale divinorum officiorum, PL 202, col. 152).

[39] 'Cumque imperator de monte Oliveti descendisset per eam portam quam Dominus intraverat quando ad passionem venerat [. . .]' (PL 110, col. 133 C).

[40] 'Repente lapides portae descendentes, clauserunt se invicem, et factus est paries unus [. . .] viderunt signum sanctae crucis in coelo, flammeo fulgore resplendere. Angelus enim Domini aspiciens illud in manibus, stetit super portam et ait. Quando rex coelarum Dominus totius mundi passionis sacramenta per hoc aditum completurus introiit, non se purpuratum, nec diademate nitentem exhibuit, aut equi potentis vehiculum requisivit, sed humilis aselli terga insidens'. (PL 110, col. 133 D).

[41] 'Tunc imperator gaudens in Domino de visu angelico, depositisque imperii insignibus, discalceatus, protinus, lintea tantum zona praecinctus, crucem manu suscipiens' (PL 110, col. 134 A).

[42] 'Vexillum', 'crux', 'partem ligni', 'admirabile signum', 'dulce lignum' and 'splendidior astris', are used interchangeably in this context (PL 110, col. 134 B–C).

Already in the seventh century the restoration of the Cross was celebrated in Constantinople on 14 September, Holy Cross Day.[43] The liturgical texts were seldom illustrated with the Heraclius theme itself. A scene with the ceremonial elevation of the relic by the patriarch became traditional. A miniature in the tenth-century *Menologion* of Basil II is probably the iconographic prototype (fig. 26).[44] The scene accompanied the text of the Judas Cyriacus legend.[45] Here the idea is retained that the Exaltation of the Cross formed a liturgical part of the old feast of the Cross in Jerusalem: the Finding of the Cross and the Dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[46] The East recalled Heraclius as a 'historical' character of the Byzantine imperial dynasty, so to the Greeks Heraclius was in the first place a representative of the Christian empire, just like Constantine the Great. Thus it was that the Byzantine emperor came to be grafted onto the visual model of Constantine and Helena flanking the Cross.[47]

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[43] See: L. van TONGEREN, *Exaltation of the Cross. Toward the Origins of the Feast of the Cross and the Meaning of the Cross in Early Medieval Liturgy*, Louvain, 2000.

[44] Vatican, Bibliotheca Apostolica, cod. gr. 1613, fol. 35; S. DER NERSESSIAN, *The Illustrations of the Metaphrst. Menologion*, in *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honour of A.M. Friend jr.*, 1955, p. 255 ff.; N.K. MORAN, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting (Byzantina Neerlandica*, 9), Leiden, 1986, fig. 22. Facsimile: P. FRANCHI de CAVALIERI, *Codices Vaticani Graeci*, 8, 1907; text: PG 117, col. 48.

[45] According to Prof. Dr. Emer. Voordeckers there is a specific reference to the patriarch Macarius in the Byzantine iconography of the Exaltation of the Cross (personal communication).

[46] On the schemes of the ceremony and their 'reality value' in the iconography, See: N.K. MORAN, op. cit., pp. 59–65 and figs. 22–30; The 10th-century *typikon* from the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople gives the following directives: the morning office begins with the choir (the *psaltai*) which ascends the *ambo* while singing the *troparia*. Then follows the patriarch with the reliquary containing the Cross relic. The archdeacon takes the relic from it and the patriarch's *omophorion* is removed. The patriarch kneels and prays. Next, he raises the Cross relic, assisted by the *synkellos*, and the people sing the *Kyrie Eleison*. It is this scene, the high point of the celebration, that is adopted in the Byzantine iconography. In some cases members of the choir, deacons and lectors accompanying the patriarch are also represented; Other examples: *Exaltatio crucis*, miniature, 11th cent. Mount Athos, cod. Dionysiou 587 m, fol. 119v; *Exaltatio crucis*, miniature, 12th cent. Mount Athos, cod. Panteleimonos 2, fol. 189v; *Exaltatio crucis*, wall painting, ca. 1318. Staro Nagoricimo; *Exaltatio crucis*, wall painting, mid-14th cent. Decani; *Exaltatio crucis*, icon, 15th cent., from Santa Sophia of Novgorod. Novgorod, Historic Museum (also in: V.N. LAZAREV, *Novgorodian Icon-Painting*, Novgorod, 1976, no. 74 and fig.); *Exaltatio crucis*, icon, 16th cent. Lviv, Ukranian Museum. *Exaltatio crucis*, wall painting in the katholikon, 16th cent. Mount Athos; *Exaltatio crucis*, wall painting, 16th cent. Mount Athos, Dochiarou monastery.

[47] Physically Constantine and Heraclius are hard to tell apart; see A. FROLOW, *La déviation de la 4e Croisade vers Constantinople. Note additionnelle. La Croisade et les guerres persanes d'Héraclius*, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 74, 1955, pp. 50–61, pp. 57–58.

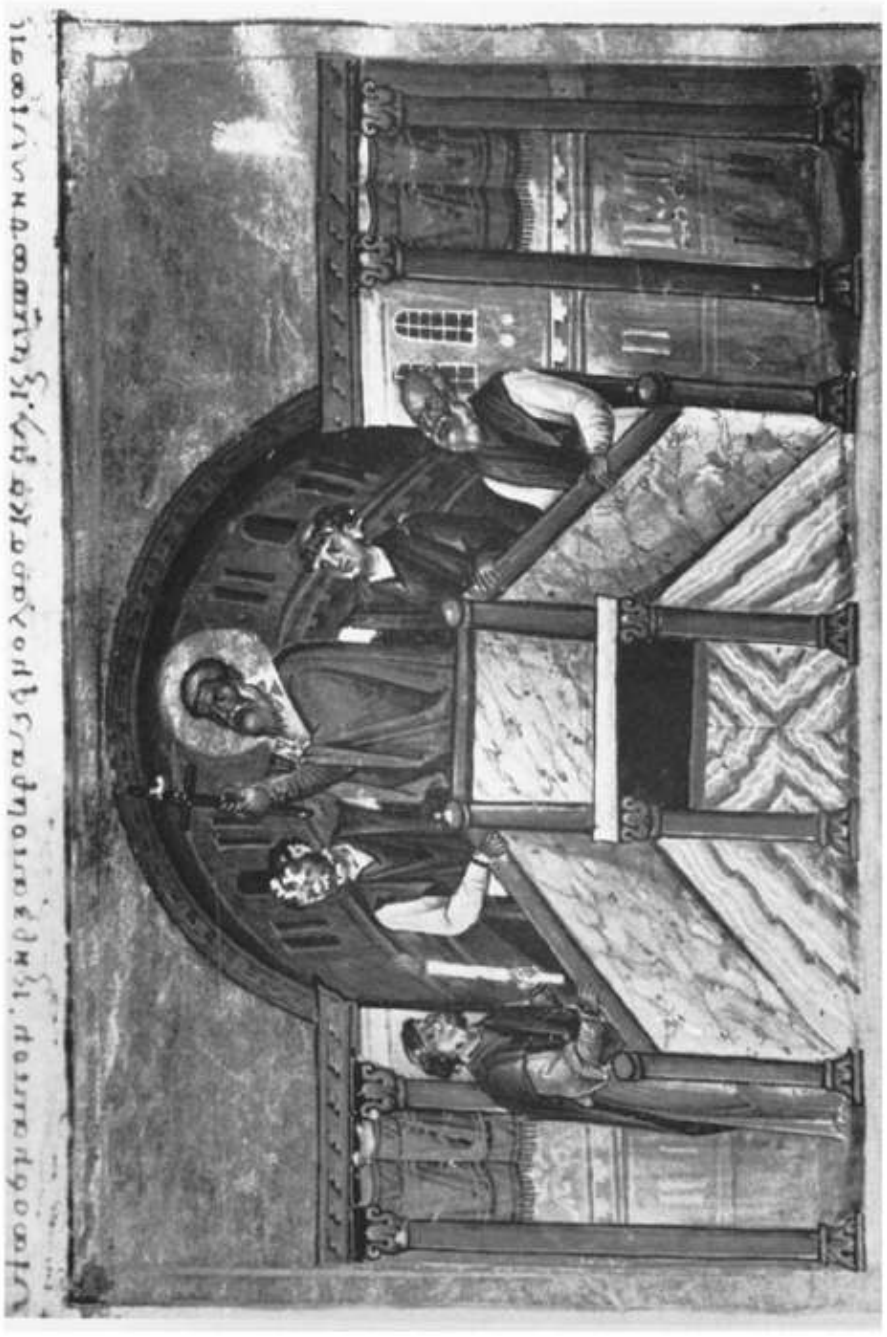


Fig. 26. *Exaltatio crucis* (Macarius?). Miniature, *Menologion* of Basil II, Constantinople, 10th century. Rome, Vatican, Bibliotheca Apostolica, cod. gr. 1613, fol. 35.

During the pontificate of Pope Sergius (687–701) the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross was adopted in Rome.[48] The feast of 14 September gained a firm foothold in western Europe and became extremely popular. In the liturgical books, and later in the *legendaria*, the text of Hrabanus Maurus was included at the feast. Western iconography concentrated on the motifs from the legend.

The oldest known example is contained in the Sacramentary of Mont Saint-Michel (1066) (fig. 27);[49] a monastery founded in 708. The text at 14 September (*veneranda eodem die exalatio crucis*) is based on Hrabanus's homily. The passage is illustrated with a full-page miniature, framed by an acanthus border with a floral roundel midway along each side. The miniature is divided into two registers. In the upper register Heraclius rides with eight companions. He wears no crown and in fact can only be identified by comparison with the register below. The group approaches a walled city with seven towers (the seven gates of Jerusalem at that time). Inside the walls, five

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On one of two coins in the collection of the Duc de Berry (Italy, 1402) Constantine is represented on horseback on the obverse (reverse: the *Fons vitae* with the Cross between two women, the woman on the right is bare-breasted), on the obverse of the second coin is the head of Heraclius (reverse: Heraclius driving a quadriga). Heraclius has a pointed beard; See: J. von SCHLOSSER, *Die ältesten Medaillen und die Antike*, in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, 18, Prague-Leipzig, 1897, pp. 64–108, p. 73 ff. and H.Th. COLENBRANDER, *The Limbourg Brothers, the "joyaux" of Constantine and Heraclius, the Très Riches Heures and the Visit of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus to Paris in 1400–1402*, in *Flanders in a European Perspective. Manuscript Illumination Around 1400 in Flanders and Abroad. Proceedings of the International Colloquium Leuven, 7–10 September 1993*, eds. M. SMEYERS and B. CARDON (*Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts*, 8. *Low Countries, series* 5), Leuven, 1995, pp. 171–184. See also: O. KURTZ, *An Alleged Portrait of Heraclius*, in *Byzantion*, 16, 1942–1943, pp. 162–164; J. SEZNEC, *Youth, Innocence and Death. Some Notes on a Medaillon on the Certosa of Pavia*, in *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 1, 1937–1938, pp. 298–303. The coin with Heraclius driving the quadriga was copied in the *Belles Heures* for the Duc de Berry by the Limbourg brothers (1404–1408); New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Cloisters, Ms. 54.1.1., fol. 156. Further on in this manuscript Heraclius humbly enters Jerusalem with the Cross on his shoulder (fol. 156v); Heraclius and three other eminent individuals worship a rich patriarchal cross standing on the Holy Sepulchre (fol. 157); a burgher and his wife worship the wooden cross with a nail and a crown of thorns on an altar (fol. 207v). The enthroned Charlemagne (fol. 174) has the outward appearance of Heraclius; M. MEISS, *The Limbourgs and their Contempories*, plates, London, 1974, figs. 482–488 and fig. 407 for Charlemagne

[48] L. DUCHESNE (ed.), *Le Liber pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire*, 1, Paris, 1955, p. 374.

[49] New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, ms. 641, fol. 155v; J.J.G. ALEXANDER, *Norman Illumination at Mont St. Michel. 966–1100*, Oxford, 1970, pp. 157–159, fig. 44.

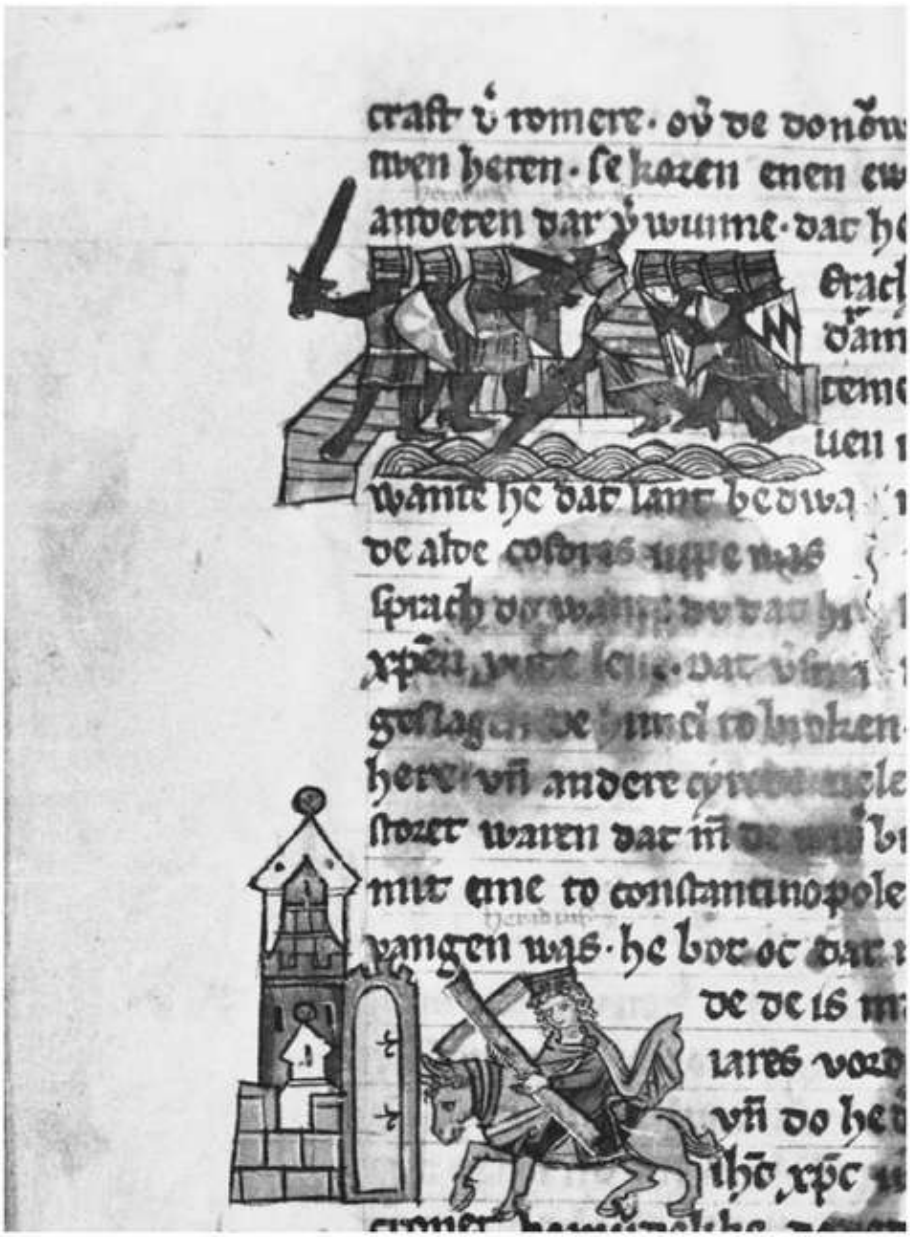


Fig. 27. *Heraclius restores the Cross to Jerusalem.* Sacramentary of Mont Saint-Michel, 1060. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, ms. 641, fol. 155v.

heads can be seen. One of the towers is surmounted with a cross. On the tower on the left stands an angel bearing a processional cross, which he protects with a cloth.

The same city appears in the scene below, though the inhabitants are now reduced to two and the angel has vanished. The proceedings of the dramatis personae are shown in two stages. First Heraclius

is depicted full-length, reverently holding the processional cross with a cloth. Five men follow him, the foremost making a gesture of veneration with out-turned palms. Then Heraclius is shown again, now barefoot and prostrate on the ground. Six other men are shown in the same prone position, although only their heads and shoulders are visible at the left-hand edge of the miniature. Thus we see an iconographic linking of two moments. The scene above is dedicated to the angel's admonition (Hrabanus)—and indeed the gateway to the city is stopped up. In the lower register the gate stands ajar, which also shows that a distinction is made in the Heraclius iconography between the 'mounted' and the 'meek' type. However, by being shown twice the humble Heraclius is also doubly emphasized: not only is he humble, he is also venerating the Cross.[50] Heraclius is portrayed specifically in the context of the adoration of the (relic of the) Cross. For that matter the prostration on the ground, the *humilatio*, is something that occurs frequently in monastic communities, and walking barefoot alludes to a quartet of functions: reverence for God, penitence or mourning, poverty and pilgrimage.[51] The eighth-century *ordines Romani* refer to the report of a Frankish monk from Einsiedeln concerning the Good Friday ceremony in Rome. The *ordines* mention that the procession bearing the relic of the Cross went barefoot from the Lateran to Santa Croce in Gerusalemme.[52]

What does the presence of the theme and the importance attached to it at Mont Saint-Michel—after all, an entire page was devoted to it—have to tell?

A miniature in the same manuscript, next to the Canon's *prefatio*, shows two angels carrying the Cross (*Magestatem tuam laudant angeli*) (fig. 28).[53] The iconography alludes to the cult of the Cross in Jerusalem and it arrived in the West via the images on pilgrims' souvenirs such as ampoules and the like.[54] The scheme forms, as it were, an exaltation of the relic of the Cross according to a heavenly

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[50] In Hrabanus Maurus's homily the people celebtate the restored Cross in song.

[51] W.M. GRAUWERS, *De betekenis van het blootsvoets lopen in de middeleeuwen, voornamelijk in de 12de eeuw*, in *Archief- en bibliotheekwezen in België*, 42, 1971, pp. 141–155.

[52] M. ANDRIEU (ed.), *Les Ordines Romani du Haut Moyen Age* (*Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense*, 11, 23–24–28–29), 5 vols., Leuven, 1957–1961, vol. 3, pp. 270–271. See also the study concerning pilgrims' customs in Rome: M. D'ONOFRIO, *Romei e Giubilei. Il Pellegrinaggio medievale a San Pietro (350–1350)*, Milan, 1999.

[53] J.J.G. ALEXANDER, op. cit., pp. 145–148, fol. 61v, Pl. 36.

[54] V.H. ELBERN, *Ein christliches Kultgefäss aus Glas in der Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, in *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen, neue Folge*, 4, 1962, pp. 17–41, p. 25.



Fig. 28. *Two angels carrying the Cross*, Sacramentary of Mont Saint-Michel, 1060. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, ms. 641, fol. 61v.

liturgy (angels) and perhaps alludes to the replica of the Holy Cross on the so-called *ad crucem*, the open space between Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre.[55] Presumably this would have been a wooden cross at the time of Constantine, a *crux gemmata* under Theodosius (417–440) and from 620 possibly a silver cross.[56]

Several monks from Mont Saint-Michel had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.[57] In 870 the monk Bernard returned; in 1058 Radulfus, abbot of the monastery, died on his way home from the holy city. That the abbey possessed a relic of the Cross in the twelfth century is certain;[58] however, given the exceptional iconographic emphasis on the Cross in this manuscript it is possible that there was a relic there as early as the century before.[59] In 1035 Duke Robert journeyed to Jerusalem, after he had made many donations to Mont Saint-Michel. According to the chronicle of Robert of Torrigny (1145–1158) the Archangel Michael had appeared to the duke in a dream and required him to make these benefactions (1027 or 1028).[60] As we know, an angel played an important part in both the founding of the Normandy abbey and the Heraclius story, which might account for the increased interest in this iconographic motif. However, the miniature did not become a model. As regards the further iconographic history of Heraclius suffice it to say that the motif with 'Heraclius on horseback, riding towards the gate' and subsequently 'humble and barefoot, restoring the Cross in honour' continues to

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[55] P. VERDIER, *Les staurotèques mosanes et leur iconographie du Jugement Dernier*, in *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale. X–XII siècles*, 16, 1973, pp. 97–213, p. 101.

[56] On the site and the evolution of the replica, see: M. WERNER, art. cit., p. 181, n. 18; V.H. ELBERN, *Das Relief der Gekreuzigten in der Mellebaudis-Memorie zu Poitiers. Über eine vorkarolingische Nachbildung des heiligen Grabes zu Jeruzalem*, in *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen, neue Folge* 2, 1961, pp. 149–189, p. 164.

[57] J.J.G. ALEXANDER, op. cit., p. 2.

[58] J. LAPORTE (ed.), *Milliénaire monastique du Mont Saint-Michel*, 1. *Histoire et vie montoise*, Paris, 1967, p. 507, p. 526, p. 528.

[59] J.J.G. ALEXANDER, op. cit., p. 146.

[60] In a 12th-century manuscript of the chronicle preserved in Avranches (Bibliothèque de la Ville, ms. 210, fol. 25v) the events are illustrated (fol. 25v). The two registers of the drawing should be read from bottom to top. Below left the angel appears to Robert, who in the next scene places his gage on the altar of St Michael. This is a symbolical gesture deriving from legal jargon and showing that he gives up his property. At the top the angel hands the brand new foundation to the abbot, in the form of a flowering twig. The Angel Michael is represented here twice in his capacity as a dragon-slayer; B. BÄNSCH, *Der Schatz der Goldener Tafel zu Lüneburg bis 1245*, in *Heinrich der Löwe und seine Zeit. Herrschaft und Repräsentation der Welfen 1125–1235*, 2. Essays (exh. cat.), Munich, 1995, pp. 313–328, p. 314, fig. 193.

be familiar in (para)liturgical manuscripts and *legendaria*, and on the altarpieces that allude to the restitution of the Cross on 14 September.

In addition to Heraclius's restitution of the Cross, however, the throne of Chosroes also becomes a familiar motif.[61]

In 1878 M. J. Mohl published a German translation of the *Firdausi* verses, first written down in Persia in 900 or thereabouts.[62] In this legend a king builds a colossal 'Taq dis'; etymologically this means 'equal to the firmament' (*fornici similis*).[63] This 'celestial throne room' was made of the richest materials and embellished with all the signs of the zodiac. Within, four steps led up to a throne supported by lions. The Persian astrological throne functioned within a ritual context. As the centre of the heavenly realm, the ruler was manifested as one who has power to influence the stars. Indeed, the ruler is revered as the entity into which the cosmic powers have poured. The throne symbolizes this power.

In the *Firdausi* verses it is told that Alexander the Great, indifferent to the treasures of the palace and unfamiliar with the astrological potential of the construction, destroyed the dazzling 'Taq dis'. However, Chosroes II conceived the plan of restoring the ancient astrological temple. T. Nöldeke suggests that the specific passage of the legend in which Chosroes II appears was based on the 'Book of Chosroes', a lost Arabic chronicle that goes up to 628 AD.[64] Cedrenos, in his *Historiarum compendium* (1057), also supplemented his Exaltation of the Cross passage with a description of the astrological temple.[65]

Chosroes' throne room corresponds to the planetarium or cosmic clock. Philostratus described such a structure in Babylon. The men's

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[61] E. HERZFELD, *Der Thron der Khosrô. Quellenkritische und Ikonographische Studien über Grensgebiete der Kunstgeschichte des Morgen- und Abendlandes*, in *Jahrbuch der Preuszischen Kunstsammlungen*, 41, 1920, pp. 1–24 and pp. 103–147; H.P. L'ORANGE, *Studies on the Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World*, Oslo-Cambridge, 1953; L.I. RINGBOM, *Gralstempel und Paradies. Beziehungen zwischen Iran und Europa im Mittelalter*, Stockholm, 1951; IDEM, *Paradisus terrestris. Myt, Bild och verklighet*, Helsinki, 1958 (with English summary p. 422 ff.).

[62] M.J. MOHL (ed.), *Le livre des Rois par Abou'lkasim Firdausi*, 7 vols., repr. 1878, Paris, 1976, VII, pp. 306–315.

[63] E. HERZFELD, art. cit., p. 1.

[64] T. NÖLDEKE (ed.), *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden aus der arabischen Chronik des Tabari übersetzt*, Leiden, 1879, introduction.

[65] I. BEKKERUS (ed.), *Georgius Cedrenus. Historiarum Compendium*, 1, Bonn, 1838, p. 721 ff. E. Herzfeld deduces from this that Cedrenos, as was his habit, gave only an abridged version and that he must have read it either in a lost Theophanes edition or in a source prior to this one; E. HERZFELD, art. cit., p. 19.

hall in the palace had a domed vault that resembled the heavens and was decorated with sapphires and with images of their gods, the planets.[66] At the time of early Christianity, planetaria were also made for private purposes. The Stephen legend tells of a pagan, Chromatius, who built a *cubiculum holovitreum, in quo omnis disciplina stellarum ac mathesis mechanica* as a device for healing. Even so, it was only with Stephen's help that the sick recovered. The pagan destroyed the construction and converted to Christianity.[67]

The description of Chosroes' throne room in Hrabanus's homily are analogous. There is mention of many precious metals, of the sun and moon as a quadriga and of machinery kept in motion by horsepower. Persian textiles and precious metalwork still inform us about this sort of throne, which was connected with the worship of the sun. The quadriga motif may also be an iconographic reminiscence of the heraldically-posed animals (usually bulls or lions) or horses harnessed to the chariot of the sun.[68] In the West, the solar chariot and enthroned ruler motifs became widespread thanks to the bits of cloth in which relics or objects from the East were wrapped.[69] Although the motifs were often intended as no more than decoration they could influence the content of iconographic themes or generate new motifs. In Brussels (Royal Museums of Art and History) there is an example of just such a textile, from the shrine of Abbess Landrada of Munsterbilzen (680–690). Quadrigas are depicted on the cloth, and an enthroned ruler occupies the centre (fig. 29).[70]

In Christendom the attitude to planetaria depended on the use to which they were put. As a location where the deification of the ruler took place—as they functioned in the Middle East—they were

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[66] Translated from Philostratus, *Apollonios*, I, 25, 15; A. ALFÖDI, *Insignien und Tracht der römischen Kaizer*, in *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Römische Abteilung*, 50, 1935, p. 128; F. CONYBAERE (ed.), *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana. The Epistles of Apollonius and the Treatise of Eusebius* (*The Loeb Classical Library*, 16–17), London, 1969, 1, p. 77; V. MUMPRECHT (ed.), *Das Leben des Apollonius von Tyana*, Munich, 1983, p. 83: (A men's hall) 'dessen Dach sich zu einer dem Himmel vergleichbaren Kuppel wölbte und bedeckt war mit Saphirsteinen und in dem Bilder von Göttern an die sich glaubten [. . .]. Hier hält der König Gericht'.

[67] *Vita fabulosa S. Stephani protomartyris*, BHL, 1911, no. 7849; G. HENSCHENIUS and D. PAPEBROCHIUS, *Acta Sanctorum. Januarii tomus secundus*, Paris-Rome, 1866, p. 273.

[68] See also: P.O. HARPER, art. *Sasanian art*, in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 10, New York, 1988, pp. 656–660.

[69] See: J. BALTY and D. De JONGHE, *Hofkunst van de Sassanieden. Het Perzische rijk tussen Rome en China (224–642)*, (exh. cat.), Brussels, 1993.

[70] E. HERZFELD, art. cit., pp. 105–107, figs. 12–13.



Fig. 29. *Quadriga on textile.* From the shrine of Abbess Landrada of Munsterbilzen, 680–690. Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History.

repudiated. As works of art—as *mimesis* of the universe, thus they were particularly appreciated by the Pythagoreans. Notwithstanding their ambiguous associations, the phenomenon was familiar. In Hrabanus's homily on the Exaltation of the Cross the cosmic throne acquired an extra function associated with the relic of the Cross, which Chosroes had set up next to his throne (*iuxta eam*).[71] Godfrey of Viterbo (ca. 1125–ca. 1192) added to this that Chosroes hoped the Cross would

[71] Byzantine and Arabian chronicles do mention the stealing of the Cross (*vexillum*) from Jerusalem (Pisides), and its restitution (Theophanes), but not its integration into the astrological clock itself.

endow him with power to influence life and death.[72] This is a motif that embroiders on Chosroes' legendary ability to manipulate the heavenly bodies, and indicates the 'foolishness' with which Chosroes uses the Cross as a magical object in a nature religion, failing to understand it as the mystery of the Passion. Moreover, in the legend, Chosroes is decapitated, as the images of idols are decapitated. In the Middle Ages the Saracen was the paradigm of the idolater.[73]

Moreover, in Chosroes' blasphemous cosmic throne Christians recognized eschatological traditions from the Holy Scriptures and the Apocrypha. Isaiah (14, 12–15) tells of the fall of the king of Babylon: 'How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of assembly on the heights of Zaphon: I will ascend to the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High. But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the Pit.' The passage was taken to refer to the pride of Lucifer. According to 2 Thessalonians 2, 4 'He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God.' This personification of pride is the Antichrist. In the legend of the Exaltation of the Cross, the figure of Chosroes is modelled on those of Lucifer and the Antichrist.

The eschatological conceptualization of Heraclius and Chosroes appears from the commentary on the Apocalypse written by Alexander of Bremen (Minorite, d. 1271), which is characterized by the search for links between the course of soteriological history and the End of Time. The Minorites were convinced that every event was a prefiguration of this End of Time. In this way a textual structure was developed in which the Apocalypse is diachronically interwoven with soteriological history. The type of the historically-interpreted Apocalypse was not new; it had already been developed in the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius (ca. 655).[74] Pseudo-Methodius tells how the Last Emperor lays down his imperial insignia (crown and

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[72] GODFREY OF VITERBO, *Pantheon*, PL 198, cols. 912–915.

[73] M. CAMILLE, *The Gothic Idol. Ideology and Image-making in Medieval Art*, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 129–164.

[74] Text edn.: E. SACKUR, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen. Pseudomethodius, Adso und die Tiburtinische Sibylle*, Halle, 1898, pp. 644–674; A. LOLOS, *Die Apokalypse des Ps. Methodius*, Meisenheim-am-Glan, 1979 (Greek).

sceptre) on Golgotha, surrendering them to God.[75] Alexander of Bremen adopts the same narrative structure in his commentary on Chapters 12 (the pregnant woman and the dragon) and 13 (the two beasts) of the Apocalypse, but ascribes the roles of the 'anonymous' characters of the Last Emperor and the Antichrist to Heraclius and Chosroes respectively.

The passages were illustrated in three Latin manuscripts of the time (Breslau, Prague and Cambridge [fig. 30]).[76] An imperial company leads three prisoners, each by a rope around the neck. Chosroes is seated on a throne, surrounded by a double circle—a visual formula that indicates the throne's 'cosmic' dimension.[77] Chosroes sits in his firmament, just as the sources had typed his throne—as a copy of the heavens or an astrological clock open to the skies. Below on the right are two of the horses which, it was said, kept the construction in continuous motion. On a rock crystal that reputedly belonged to Chosroes, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris,[78] the ruler sits on a wide throne supported by winged horses (fig. 31). The sun and the crescent moon appear immediately above his head, as if he is crowned with the firmament itself.

Chosroes' throne is also depicted in the Gotha *Sächsische Weltchronik* (1260) (fig. 32a).[79] Here too a solution has been sought in the circle form, enclosed between two gatehouses. In the spandrel-like spaces between the circle and the gateway are the sun and moon. The

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[75] As is known, the legend of the Last Emperor had a strong influence on political-theological thought in the Middle Ages (especially in the Holy Roman Empire). In the Cologne Book of Sibyls, Frederick I Barbarossa is ascribed all the characteristics of the Last Emperor; See: W. GREBE, *Sibyllen Weissagung*, Cologne, 1989.

[76] 1. Cambridge, University Library, Ms. Mm. 5.31, fol. 79r, 80v, 81v; G. SCHILLER, op. cit., 5, pp. 472–473; M. M(ICHAEL), art. *Friar Alexander, Commentary on the Apocalypse*, in *The Apocalypse and the Shape of Things to Come*, ed. F. CAREY (exh. cat.), London, 1999, pp. 83–84; 2. Breslau, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, I, Qu 19, fol. 64v: Decapitation of Chosroes; M. HUGGLER, *Der Bilderkreis in den Handschriften der Alexander-Apokalypse*, in *Antonianum*, 9, 1934, pp. 85–150, fig. 9; 3. Prague, Bibliothek des Metropolitanskapitels, Cim. 5, fol. 80v: Decapitation of Chosroes; See also: R. CHADRABA, art. *Antichrist*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 1, Rome-Vienna, 1968, cols. 119–122.

[77] The same convention applies for the cosmological dimension of the Holy Sepulchre (compare the Gellone Sacramentary, fig. 1).

[78] E. HERZFELD, art. cit., p. 14.

[79] Chosroes enthroned and the battle between Heraclius and Chosroes; fol. 65v: Heraclius and Chosroes' son in single combat on the bridge over the Danube, Heraclius returns the Cross on horseback and Heraclius returns the Cross on foot. Further in this manuscript: fol. 52: Finding of the Cross; fol. 52v: Judas hands the Cross to Helena.



Fig. 30a. *Heraclius decapitates Chosroes. In Apocalypsim*, Alexander of Bremen (d. 1271), Lower Saxony, last quarter of the 13th century. Cambridge, University Library, Mm 5.31, fol. 80v.



Fig. 30b. *Heraclius restores the Cross in humility. In Apocalypsim*, Alexander of Bremen (d. 1271), Lower Saxony, last quarter of the 13th century. Cambridge, University Library, Mm 5.31, fol. 81v.



Fig. 31. *Enthroned ruler.* Rock crystal, reputedly owned by Chosroes, Sassanian, 6th century. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale.

Cross, complete with *titulus*, is on Chosroes' right and a bird is perched on his left shoulder. Perhaps this is an indirect reference to the cock that appears in the texts as a substitute for the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, the mythical sun-bird had a special place in the Sassanian religion.[80] Perhaps that myth has permeated this miniature. The blasphemy of the scene is reinforced by the rainbow on which Chosroes is enthroned—a motif derived from the figure of Christ of the Last Judgement—making the antithetical relationship between Chosroes and the Son of Man more pointed still. Thus the

[80] J.R. RUSSELL, art. *Sasanian Culture*, in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 10, New York, 1988, pp. 660–666, p. 662. Of the bird it is said in the Avesta—the Holy Scripture of the Sassanians—that it devours the heathens (in the Persian geographical cosmology that is Rome, Turan and China) as if they were grains of corn. In Asian culture a particular place is also reserved for the eagle as a sun-bird (See: de Helios van Ba'albeek (Lebanon); Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum; E. HERZFELD, art. cit., p. 22, fig. 24.

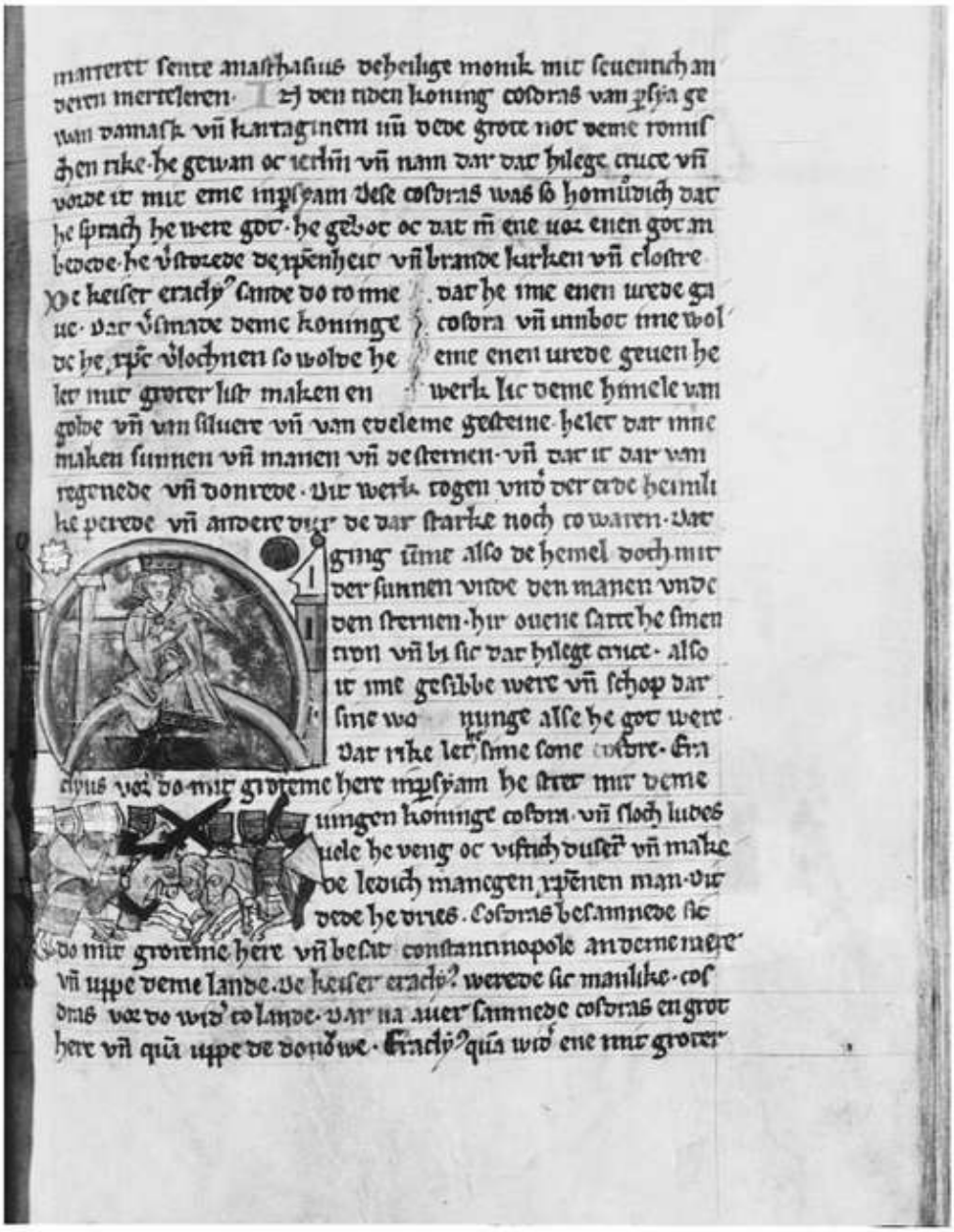


Fig. 32a. *Chosroes enthroned; the battle between Heraclius and Chosroes. Sächsische Weltchronik*, 1260. Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, Codex Memb. I. 90, fol. 65.

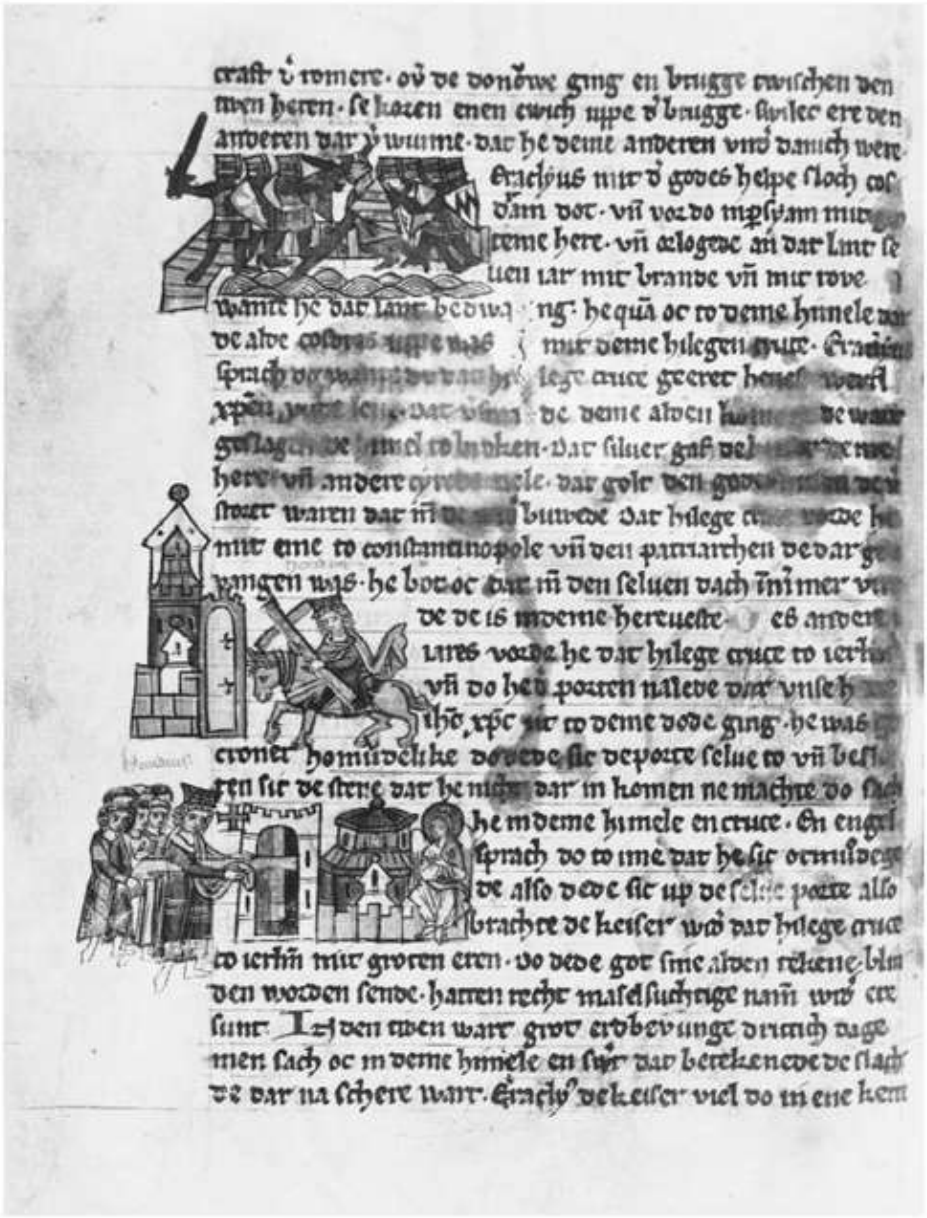


Fig. 32b. *Heraclius battles with the son of Chosroes on the bridge over the Danube; Heraclius in triumph on horseback; Heraclius in humility on foot. Sächsische Weltchronik*, 1260. Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, Codex Memb. I. 90, fol. 65v.



Fig. 33. *Enthroned ruler.* Silver dish, Klimowa, 7th century. St Petersburg, Hermitage Museum.

iconographic identification of Chosroes with the Antichrist is not confined to Alexander of Bremen's text. There is no mention of a decapitation, however. The image is static, an icon-like representation of pagan hubris, and thus can be read as a conflict between two rival and eschatologically-laden sacred areas: Jerusalem versus Ctesiphon, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre versus the overweening planetarium.

The circular composition recalls a seventh-century Sassanian silver dish from Klimowa (St Petersburg, Hermitage Museum) (fig. 33). A crescent moon and two angels surround the ruler, who sits cross-legged on his throne and holds his sword point-downwards in between his legs and his body. The 'moon throne' rests on top of an aedicule in which is an archer. The entire construction is pulled by

oxen.[81] To the ruler's left is an axe—a dualistic symbol that alludes to his cosmic power over light and darkness, life and death. On Chosroes' throne the Cross occupies a very similar position, replacing the axe as one of the regalia. The Cross and the axe are symbolically interchangeable in their functions as imperial *insignum* and *vexillum*.

The decapitation of Chosroes is also represented on the Tongeren reliquary (first quarter of the thirteenth century) (fig. 19a), mentioned in the previous chapter, and on an enamel plaque from a reconstructed Mosan processional cross of 1155–1165 (fig. 34a). Sharing the front of the left arm of the cross with a tetramorph is the death of the Persian ruler: Heraclius, alone and in military attire, grasps Chosroes by the hair, causing his crown to tumble off. In the top left corner of the enamel is a section of firmament with the sun, moon and stars. On the back of the same arm is the offering of Abraham and Melchizedek (fig. 34b).[82] In the Berthold Missal

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[81] E. HERZFELD, art. cit., p. 104 ff.

[82] H. and H. BUSCHHAUSEN, *Studien zu den typologischen Kreuzen der Île-de-France und des Maaslandes*, in *Die Zeit der Staufer. Geschichte, Kunst, Kultur* (exh. cat.), 5, Stuttgart, 1977, pp. 247–277, pp. 266–268, figs. 126–127; D. KÖTZSCHE et al., *Signa Tav. Grubenschmelzplatte eines typologischen Kreuzes* (exh. cat.), Ostfildern, 2000, devoted to the reconstructed altar cross. Reconstruction: Front: centre: Majestas Domini; upper arm: John the Evangelist, offerings of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4, 4–8); left arm: Mark the Evangelist and the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22, 9–14); right arm: Luke the Evangelist, Abraham and Melchizedek (Gen. 14, 18–20); lower arm: Matthew the Evangelist, Samson opens the gates (Judg. 16, 3) and Moses, Aaron and the brazen serpent (Num. 21, 6–9). Back: centre: Majestas Domini; upper arm: the angel of God watches over Jerusalem, Moses strikes water from the rock (Ex. 17, 6–7; Num. 20, 2–11); left arm: cherubim, Heraclius decapitates Chosroes; right arm: cherubim, Heraclius, mounted, restores the Cross; lower arm: Michael slays the dragon, Heraclius, in humility, restores the Cross, Ezekiel and the *tau* sign (Ezek. 9, 4 and 6). The sacrificial scenes on the front (offerings of Cain and Abel, of Melchizedek, and of Abraham) are mentioned in the second prayer after the consecration of the Eucharist. They are all types of the sacrifice of Christ. The opening of the gates of Gaza corresponds to the opening of the *Porta Aurea* for Heraclius. Like Heraclius, Samson is a type of Christ. The setting up of the brazen serpent is read at the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. The typologies on the front are apocalyptically filtered. The four-faced cherubim (Tetramorph) allude to Ezekiel 1, 5–11 and Revelation 4, 6. The *tau* on the foreheads of the Israelites in Ezekiel 9, 4 is also mentioned in Revelation 7, 4. Michael, the dragon-slayer, is described in Revelation 12, 7; the seven-headed dragon itself is referred to in Revelation 7, 3. At the top the *angelus Domini* appears above the city of Jerusalem (Rev. 21, 15). The angel is placed between two Trees of Life (Rev. 22, 2). The 'doubled tree' is a figure for Jerusalem. The miracle of Moses' well is an image of the Fountain of Paradise and consequently also the Fountain of Life in the Apocalypse. During the *improperia* of the celebration of the Cross on Good Friday this event on Horeb is referred to (sometimes equated and/or alternated with the bitter waters of Marah (Ex. 15, 23–25)). Honorius of Autun says in his *Liturgica* (ca. 1140) that the staff with which Moses performed the miracle was the Cross of Christ (PL 172, col. 943).

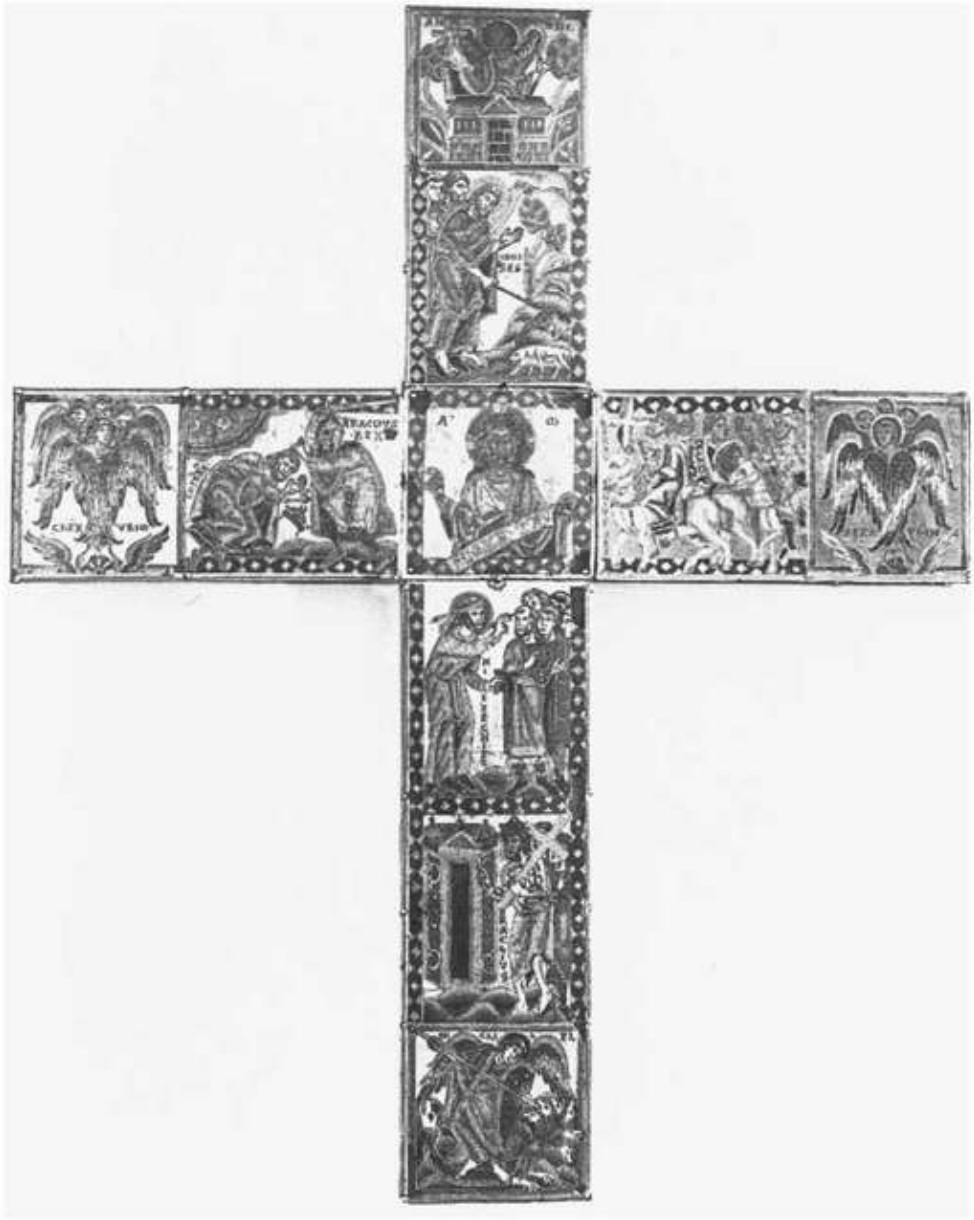


Fig. 34a. *Large 'typological' processional cross* (front). Mosan enamel, 1155–1165. Reconstructed from several museum collections.

(Weingarten, ca. 1200–1232) a full-page miniature is devoted to Chosroes' decapitation (fig. 35).[83] Here too Heraclius has hold of the enthroned Chosroes by the hair, his sword ready for the lethal stroke. The distortion of the architectural setting into a curve gives the

[83] New York, Pierpont Morgan Library 710, fol. 114. Also, further in this manuscript: fol. 89: Helena interrogates the Jews.



Fig. 34b. *Large 'typological' processional cross* (back). Mosan enamel, 1155–1165. Reconstructed from several museum collections.

impression that the scene is observed through a wide-angle lens. The illusionistic curve provides a rhythmic response to the arch through which we view the proceedings. The circular composition evokes the 'cosmic palace' in a most original way.



Fig. 35. *Heraclius decapitates Chosroes.* Berthold Missal, Weingarten, 1200–1232. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library 710, fol. 114.

Heraclius as exemplar. Loci sancti, crusades and pilgrimage

In the *Perikopenbuch* of Sankt Erentrud (1140) (fig. 36) Heraclius is accompanied by a rider with a crusaders' flag: a banner with three fluttering streamers at the end. The angel at the gate bears a sword, the attribute of the Archangel Michael. Heraclius was revered by the crusaders and he featured regularly as a central character when the crusades were preached.[84]

In the double chapel on Golgotha—which was restored and enlarged by the Greeks in 1042–1048—mosaics (now lost) depicting prophets, episodes from the Passion and scenes from the Old Testament were added in 1149.[85] At the west end of the north aisle were the likenesses of Helena and Heraclius as imperial 'couple', because of their special connection with Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre.[86] The mosaics were created under the direct patronage of the crusader-king, Fulk of Anjou (1131–1143) and his wife, Melisende, daughter of Baldwin II of Jerusalem (1118–1131).[87] They were crowned during the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on 14 September 1131, two weeks after Baldwin II was buried at the foot of Golgotha, as Godfrey of Bouillon had been.[88] It was said of Godfrey that he, like Heraclius, had entered Jerusalem in all humility. These elements have also contributed to the image of Heraclius on Golgotha.[89]

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[84] A. FROLOW, *La déviation*, art. cit., passim. P.J. COLE, *The Preaching of the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095–1270*, Cambridge-Massachusetts, 1991, refers not to Heraclius, however, but to Helena, who functions as the exemplum of the estimable pilgrim (for instance, in Humbertus of Rome, *De praedicatione crucis* (1265–1266)); Th. KAEPPELI, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum medii aevi*, 3 vols., vol. 2, Rome, 1970–1980, p. 289.

[85] H. VINCENT and F.M. ABEL, *Jérusalem. Recherches de topographie, d'archéologie et d'histoire*, 4 vols., vol. 2. *Jérusalem nouvelle*, Paris, 1914–1926, 1914, p. 276; J. FOLDA, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land. 1098–1187*, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 233–240, fig. 6 for a scheme.

[86] The scenes are described in the 12th-century accounts of pilgrims John of Würzburg (ca. 1165) and Theodoric (1172); cited in J. FOLDA, op. cit., p. 239; editions: *Peregrinationes tres. Saewulf, John of Würzburg, Theodericus*, eds. R.B.C. HUYGENS and J.H. PRIOR (*Corpus christianorum. Continuatio mediaevalis*, 139), Turnhout, 1994, pp. 79–141 and pp. 143–197.

[87] J. FOLDA, op. cit., p. 239.

[88] J. FOLDA, op. cit., p. 119.

[89] As we know, the imperial iconography is a variant of the Helena-Constantine pair. They too are present in the programme of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In the uppermost section of the rotunda is, at the north, Constantine with the Twelve Apostles above him (as mentioned in Chapter One, the Byzantine Church venerates Constantine as the thirteenth Apostle); at the south is Helena with the Twelve Prophets and at the west, the Archangel Michael. All were oriented towards



Fig. 36. *Heraclius restores the Cross to Jerusalem. Perikopenbuch* of Sankt Erentrud, Salzburg, ca. 1140. Munich, Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Clm. 15903, fol. 86v.

The successful expeditions in the first half of the twelfth century, led by Godfrey of Bouillon (1099–1100), Baldwin I (1100–1118) and Baldwin II (1118–1131), caused significant shifts in the sacred topography of Jerusalem.[90] The cult of Jerusalem's holy places did not begin with the arrival of Christianity. The Jews had transformed the holy city and its surroundings into a topographical diagram of the Bible. The relationship between Holy Scripture and reality is made evident through the medium of architectural and archaeological 'relics'. Therefore, the connection between place and word is always a commemorative affair, which unfolds in worship and liturgy. The connection is thus chiefly manifested in a peregrine context. The holy place is never simply a translation of biblical topographic descriptions, for which it is sufficient to use the Bible as a guidebook. For out of the liturgical and relic-cultural experience different levels and links of symbols develop. Moreover, the significance of a holy place is never static. Pilgrims' tales demonstrate how sacred-topographical meanings can be liable to shifts through time, and how they may be supplemented by typologies that are sought within the Scriptures and elsewhere. Thus competing and even paradoxical traditions become attached to the phenomenon, or new holy sites are generated.

In the era of the first Church Fathers, Jewish and Christian geographical commemorations were still in harmony. Equally interested in every religious site, the Bordeaux Pilgrim (333) visited the area of the Temple Mount (Mount Moriah, in ruins at that time) and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre,[91] two essential sacred points which, in the peregrine context of the time, were not yet perceived as being in opposition. Egeria focuses not only on Constantine's double basilica but also observes Jewish relics there: the horn of the Kings of Judea and the rings of Solomon. There is mention of a continuing movement, whereby material Jewish sacred history is integrated in the Christian. Egeria's account shows that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was regarded as a continuation of the Temple era.[92]

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the image of the Resurrection at the east; J. FOLDA, op. cit., p. 231 and n. 126 for the bibliography.

[90] S. SCHEIN, *Between Mount Moriah and the Holy Sepulchre. The Changing Traditions of the Temple Mount in the Central Middle Ages*, in *Traditio*, 40, 1984, pp. 172–195.

[91] *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, in *Itinera Hierosolymitana saeculi IV–VIII*, ed. P. GEYER, Leipzig, 1898, pp. 21–22.

[92] R. OUSTERHOUT, *The Temple, the Sepulchre and the Martyrion of the Savior*, in *Gesta*, 29, 1, 1990, pp. 44–53.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries this began to change.[93] When the first crusaders approached Jerusalem and reached *Mons Gaudii*—so called because of the joy they experienced on beholding the holy city—they saw the citadel (which they called the Tower of David), the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Temple Mount with its two mosques, the al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock, built by the Muslims between 687 and 691 (diag. 1).[94] The Holy Sepulchre complex that the crusaders freed from Muslim hands was not the original Constantinian building. In 1009, Caliph al-Hakim had destroyed the Anastasis. It was rebuilt by Constantine IX Monomachus around 1040 with an extra gallery above and a larger apse at the east end.[95] The rectangular Martyrium was also completely destroyed and the atrium that linked it with the Anastasis now had three eastern chapels attached to it (diag. 2). In this period the Helena chapel was built to the north-east with a crypt where the actual Finding of the Cross was supposed to have taken place.[96] At the beginning of the twelfth

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[93] On the period and the shifts which precede the crusades, see: J. WILKINSON, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, Warminster, 1977.

[94] S. SCHEIN, art. cit., p. 172 ff.

[95] V.C. CORBO, *Il Santo Sepolcro di Gerusalemme. Aspetti archeologici dalle origini al periodo crociato*, 3 vols., Jerusalem, 1981, vol. 1, pp. 139–166, vol. 2, Pl. 4–5; J. FOLDA, op. cit., p. 46 ff.

[96] J. FOLDA, op. cit., p. 60 and p. 62, Pl. 4.14 and 7.3bb; described by the Russian abbot Daniel (1106–1108); J. WILKINSON (ed. and trans.), *Jerusalem Pelgrimage, 1099–1185*, London, 1988, pp. 129–130: 'And all these holy places are under one roof in a line to the north. And from the prison of Christ to the place where St. Helen found the true cross, nails and crown, and spear and sponge and reed, it is 25 fathoms'. The church Daniel saw was probably the building restored by the crusaders and, according to his words, smaller than that of Constantine IX. Saewulf (1102–1103) does not dwell long on the church, but does indeed mention that it was destroyed by the heathens (= Muslims). This must have happened between 1040 and 1114; *Peregrinationes tres*, op. cit., p. 65, vv. 210–212. Another possibility is that with the 'larger' old church, simply the Constantine Martyrium is intended, indeed basilical in form and, of course, destroyed by the first incursions of ca. 640. The pilgrims Arculf (700) and Willibald (721–727) describe the Martyrium as the place of the Finding of the Cross (T. WRIGHT [ed. and trans.], *Early Travels in Palestine. Arculf, Willibald, Bernard, Saewulf, Sigurd, Benjamin of Tudela, Sir John Mandeville, de la Brocquière and Maundrell*, repr. London 1848, New York, 1968, p. 3). It is also improbable that Daniel would not actually refer to the Constantinian basilica, which was, after all, at the basis of the restorations carried out by both Constantine IX and the crusaders. Besides, the pilgrim attributes the finding of the whole collection of Passion implements to Helena. The Franks had a Holy Cross chapel of their own on the north side of the rotunda, east of the altar of Mary; H. VINCENT and F.M. ABEL, *Jérusalem. Recherches de topographie, d'archéologie et d'histoire*, 4 vols., vol. 2. *Jérusalem nouvelle*, Paris, 1914–1926, 1914, p. 270.

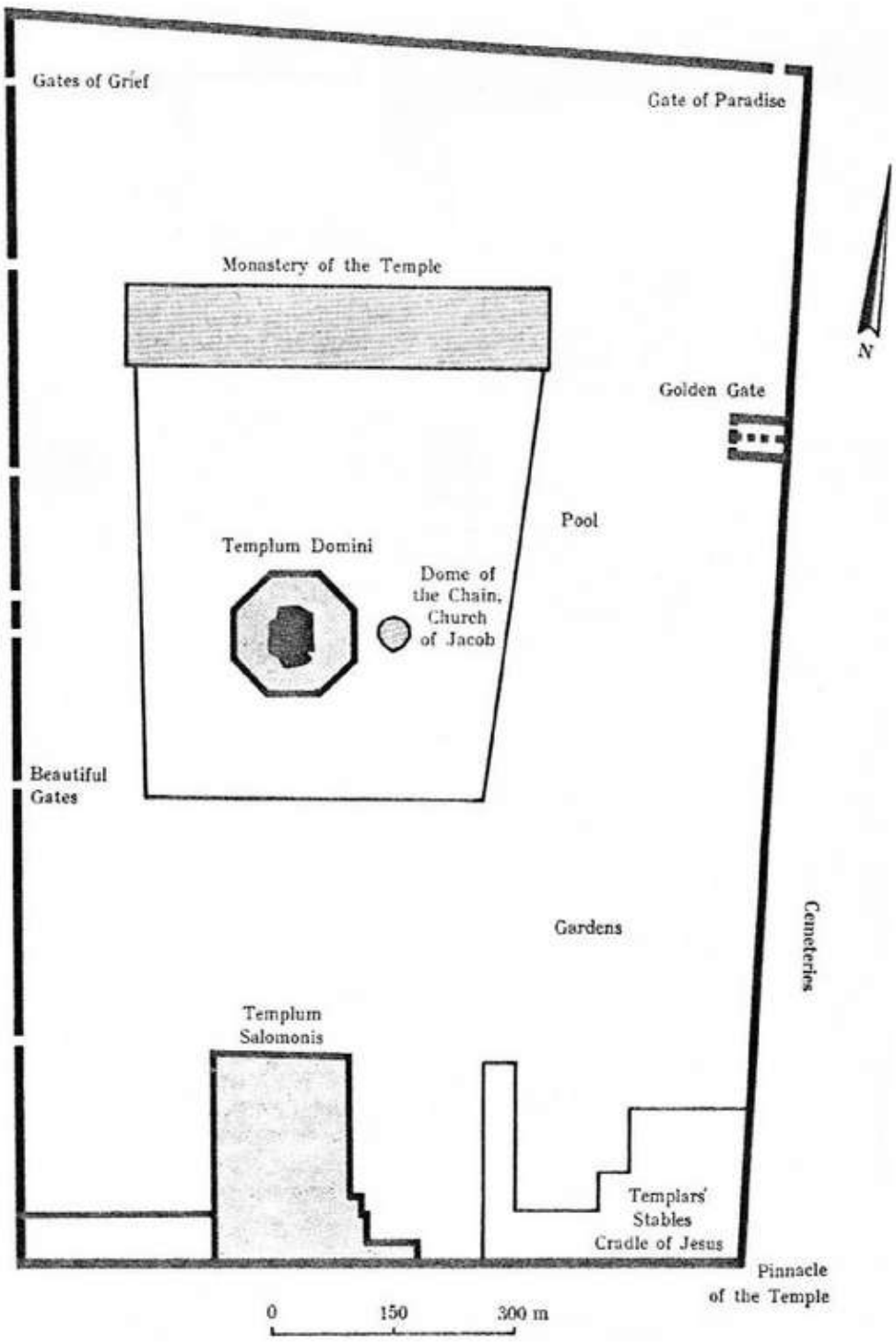


Diagram 1. Schematic plan of the Temple Mount in the time of the crusades (12th century). From: S. SCHEIN, *Between Mount Moriah and the Holy Sepulchre. The Changing Traditions of the Temple Mount in the Central Middle Ages*, in *Traditio*, 40, 1984, pp. 175–95.

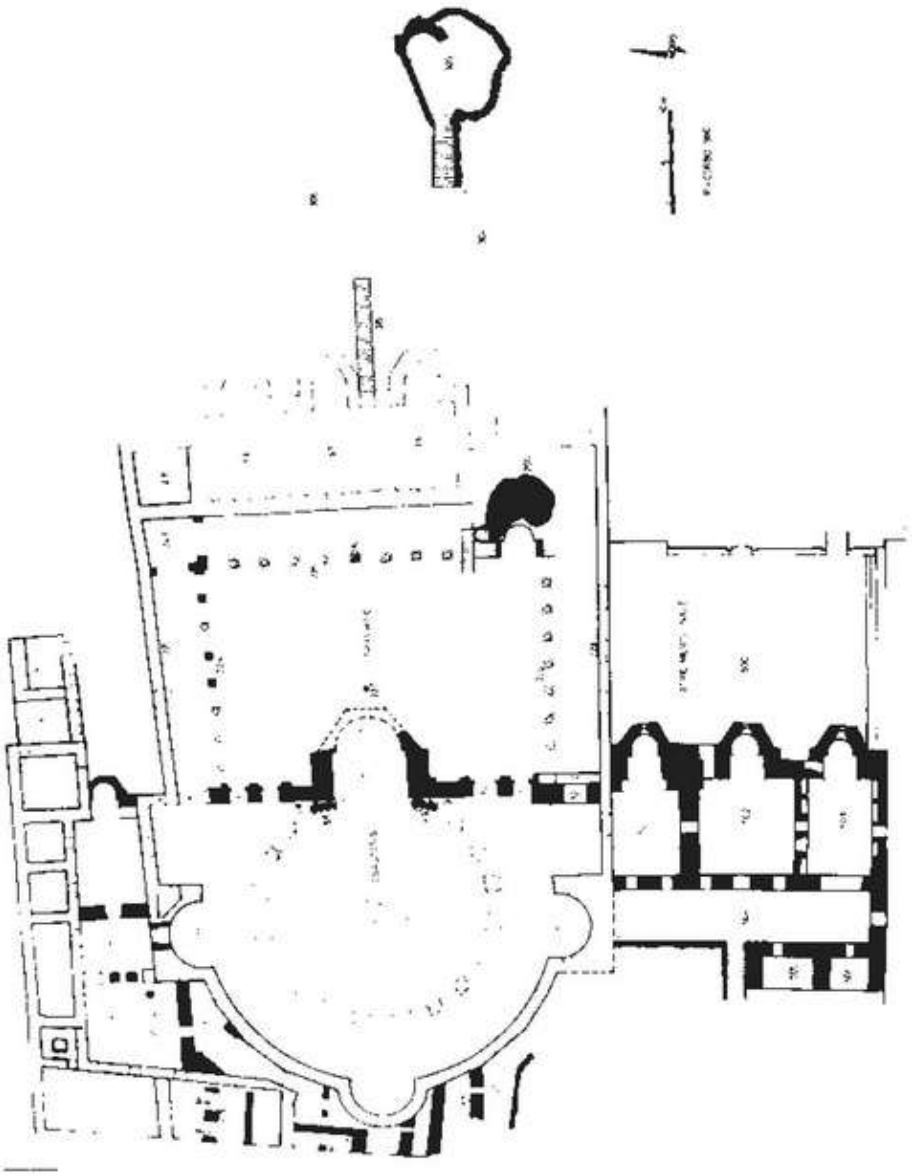


Diagram 2. Groundplan of the Byzantine Church of the Holy Sepulchre (ca. 1040). From: J. FOLDA, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1187*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 177, fig. 3.

century an anonymous German pilgrim added to this that between the chapel and the steps to the grotto there was a large stone cross.[97] Today, there are only countless graffiti crosses to be seen on the walls leading down to the crypt, recalling the hopeful pilgrims who have descended these steps.

The restoration of the churches by the crusaders began in around 1114. The new Church of the Holy Sepulchre was dedicated in 1149 (diag. 3).[98] A great triumphal arch connected the Anastasis to the new Martyrium, which now had three apsidal chapels. The site of Calvary became a chapel with two levels: below was Adam's crypt; above, the place where Christ's Cross had stood.[99] John of Würzburg (1165) says that Adam lay buried in the crypt, although according to the Bible his place of burial is located in Hebron. The pilgrim added that the skull that is sometimes depicted at the bottom of the Cross in paintings is that of none other than Adam, baptized in the blood of Christ.[100] The observation is significant, for it makes the connection between the iconography and the architecture of that time. In other words, liturgical spaces can be motivated and generated by theological and typological notions that had also (or first?) been rendered in the visual arts.

The centre of the world—an archetype in all cultures[101]—was at the centre of the new church between the Anastasis and the Martyrium, albeit not at the mathematical centre.[102] The site was a place of salvation, as in Psalm 73 (74), 12: *Operatus est salutem in medio terrae.* Paradoxically enough, the centre of the world can 'move' according to the symbolic traditions attached to it. To the Christians Golgotha was the cosmic centre. The centre of the world connects the concentric point with the anagogic axis, which is expressed by means

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[97] J. WILKINSON, op. cit., p. 119.

[98] N. KENAAN-KEDAR, *Symbolic Meaning in Crusader Architecture. The Twelfth-Century Dome of the Holy Sepulchre Church in Jerusalem*, in *Cahiers archéologiques*, 34, 1986, pp. 109–117, p. 110.

[99] To this day the pilgrims still put their heads and hands in the cavity where the Cross was fixed. Arculf (700) describes a cave with an altar beneath Golgotha. Golgotha was then still in the open, but marked by a silver cross.

[100] *Peregrinationes tres*, op. cit., p. 118, vv. 971–980. Saewulf (1102–1103) mentions Hebron (after Augustine, according to the pilgrim). He does refer to the story of the Passion, where it is said that in consequence of the death on the Cross 'multa corpora sanctorum qui dormierant surrexerunt'; ibid., p. 66, vv. 225–230.

[101] M. ELIADE, *Images et symboles. Essais sur le symbolisme magico-religieux*, n.p., 1952, pp. 34–72 (with foreword G. DUMEZIL).

[102] N. KENAAN-KEDAR, art. cit., p. 112.

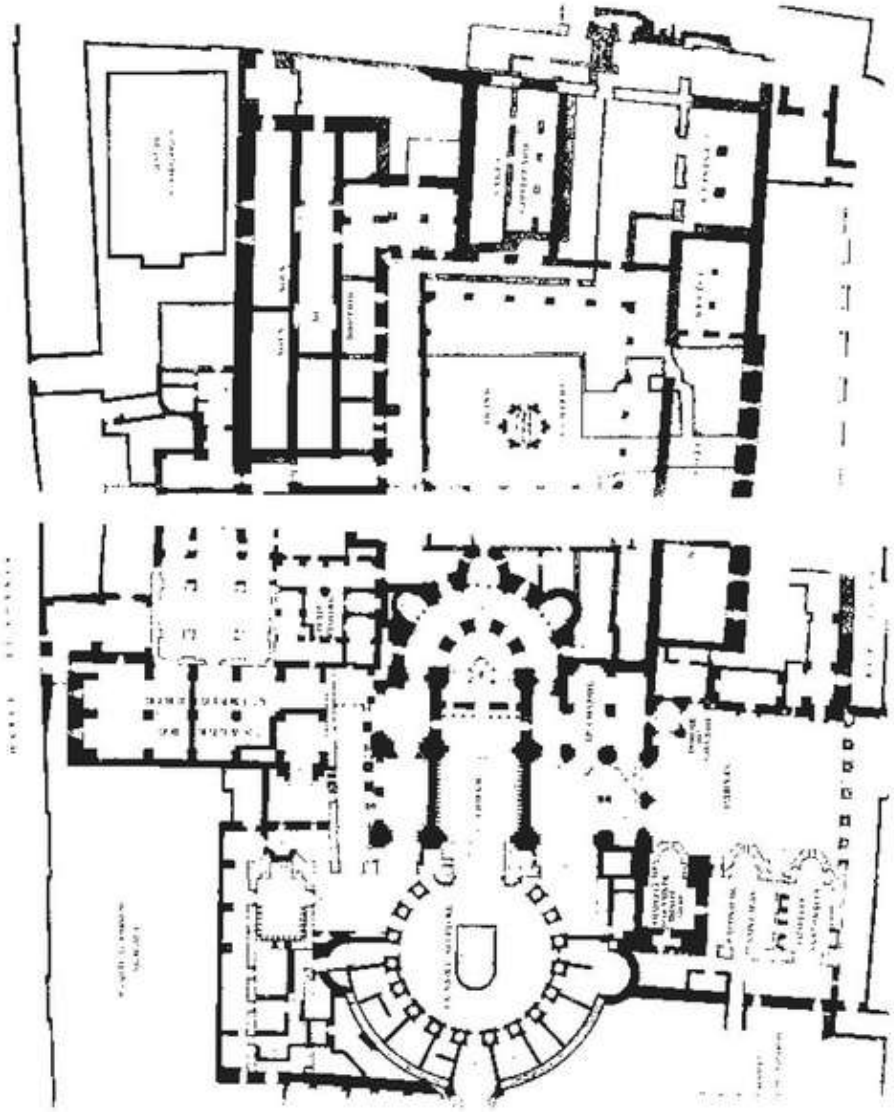


Diagram 3. Church of the Holy Sepulchre after rebuilding by the crusaders (1114–1149). From: J. FOLDA, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1187*, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 180–181, fig. 5.

of a mountain, column or tree.[103] The Cross is also an *axis mundi*. The centre of the world is the place where heaven, hell and earth coincide in one timeless point. Therefore it was believed that here the secret of immortality was guarded.[104] It is no coincidence that the dead are destined to awaken at a point close to the Cross on Golgotha, for the Holy Sepulchre, the place of Resurrection, was also regarded as a cosmic centre. Could it be that the centre of the church was calculated on the basis of the central point between the Holy Sepulchre and Golgotha?[105] This would explain why this centre is not the architectural or geometric centre, but the centre of two centred centres . . .[106]

The crusaders were also confronted with memorials to the Muslim presence in Jerusalem. According to Fulcher of Chartres, chaplain to Baldwin II between 1100 and 1127, the al-Aqsa mosque was badly damaged in the fighting,[107] but Baldwin II restored the complex and installed a military order led by Hugh of Payens. At that time the order consisted of no more than Hugh of Payens himself and a few companions, but it rapidly evolved into the Order of the Knights Templar.[108] According to the German pilgrim Theodoric (1172) the mosque was converted into a magnificent and exotic palace.[109] The crusaders called this building the *Templum Salomonis*, reflecting the cherished notion of their direct descent from the kings of Israel.[110]

The crusaders also gave the Dome of the Rock a new function. Immediately after the conquest of Jerusalem, Godfrey of Bouillon

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[103] Arculf (700) mentions a pillar in the centre of the town that casts no shadow. Saewulf (1102–1103) mentions a compass at the head of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, not far from Golgotha; T. WRIGHT, op. cit., p. 3.

[104] M. ELIADE, op. cit., p. 53 and pp. 71–72.

[105] John of Würzburg (1165) mentions two concentric circles in the canons' choir of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; *Peregrinationes tres*, op. cit., p. 120 and vv. 1011–1013. We recall the double circle in the initial miniature of the Gellone Sacramentary (fig. 1).—N. Kenaan-Kedar has established that the radius of the dome of the Anastasis was used for the new Martyrium: the diameter of the choir is half the diameter of the Anastasis; N. KENAAN-KEDAR, art. cit., p. 110.

[106] According to M. ELIADE (*loc. cit.*) such 'meta-centres' typify sacred spaces.

[107] *Fulcheri Carnotensis Historia Hierosolimitana*, ed. H. HAGENMAYER, Heidelberg, 1913, pp. 291–292.

[108] A. DUMERGER, *Die Templer. Aufstieg und Untergang, 1120–1314*, 3rd edn., Munich, 1993, pp. 17–27.

[109] *Peregrinationes tres*, op. cit., p. 145.

[110] S. SCHEIN, art. cit., p. 173. In the Jewish traditions the site was regarded as the 'stables of Solomon'.

annexed the mosque, renaming it the *Templum Domini*. The church of the Lord would stand on the same site as the ancient Temple of Solomon. In the same period the conviction arose that the mosque was originally a church built by Helena, Justinian or even Heraclius.[111] The sacred rock of Muhammad was covered with sheets of marble, so that it acquired the perfect geometric shape of an altar. A cross was placed on this altar, and a cross of gold was installed on the dome of the building.[112] The *Templum Domini* was dedicated in 1141. By analogy with Muhammad, the rock was considered to be the rock from which Christ ascended into heaven.[113] Next to the mosque stood a smaller, eighth-century copy, which the crusaders dedicated to St James, first bishop of Jerusalem, who was martyred by being thrown off the top.[114] A Muslim legend tells that in the time of Solomon a chain hung from the centre of the dome (or from the 'heavens') of this smaller temple. Whoever could grasp this chain was righteous. According to the legend, this was the place of David's tribunal (*Mahkamet Dahud*). In the days of the crusaders the mosque was also known as the 'Dome of the Chain'.[115]

The conversion of the buildings naturally coincided with shifts in the biblical sacred topography. It is noteworthy that not only commemorations of the Old Testament were attached to the *Templum Domini* but of the New Testament as well. This combination inevitably led to further typologies. Here, Saewulf locates Jacob's Ladder, the Ark of the Covenant, Aaron's flowering rod and the Tablets of the Law, as well as the council of the Apostles, the appearance of the Angel Gabriel to Zacharias, the death of Zacharias, the Circumcision, the Presentation, the twelve-year-old Jesus's teaching and the driving of the merchants from the Temple.[116] Fulcher of Chartres, bound by

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[111] Achard of Arrouais, prior from 1118 to 1131; P. LEHMANN, *Die mittelalterlichen Dichtungen der Prioren des Tempels von Jerusalem Acardus und Gaufridus*, in *Corona Quernea, Festschrift Karl Strecker* (MGH, *Schriften*, 6), Leipzig, 1941, pp. 296–330, p. 329. A similar tradition exists concerning the so-called stable of Solomon's palace. Under Justinian the stables had supposedly been used as a pilgrims' hospital; E. HOADE, *Guide to the Holy Land* (*Franciscan Printing Press*), 11th ed., Jerusalem, [after 1970], pp. 187–188.

[112] S. SCHEIN, art. cit., p. 183. Jerusalem's relic of the Cross fell into Muslim hands after Saladin's victory at Hattin in 1187; J. FOLDA, op. cit., p. 410 ff.

[113] The rock also became a much sought-after relic; S. SCHEIN, art. cit., p. 183.

[114] John of Würzburg; *Peregrinationes tres*, op. cit., p. 92, vv. 328–343.

[115] E. HOADE, op. cit., p. 185.

[116] *Peregrinationes tres*, op. cit., pp. 67–68. P. von NAREDI-RAINER, *Salomos Tempel und das Abendland. Monumentale Folgen historischer Irrtümer*, Cologne, 1994, devoted an

a more 'official' tradition as Baldwin I's chaplain, rejects the topographic typology of the Ark, the Tablets of the Law, and a number of other things.[117]

Not only did the Temple Mount gain in importance as a *locus sanctus*; a symbolic relationship was also sought between the Temple and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In this way the once rival sacred centres should be united in one great sacred fountainhead.[118] This combination was demonstrated in both secular and religious ceremonies that mirrored each other in form. The procession that celebrated the crusaders' victory (15 July 1099) left the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, stopped at the *Templum Domini* and ended at the place—marked with a cross—where Baldwin I had entered the city. In 1149 the same route was followed at the feast of the Dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The processions that took place when the crusader-kings were crowned did likewise. The coronation itself took place in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in the choir of the Martyrium.[119] Then the procession continued to the *Templum Domini*, where the crown was placed on the altar.[120] Finally,

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interesting study to the forming of the image in text and iconography around the idealized temple of Solomon. Yet, in my opinion, he has taken too little account of the phenomenon of the architectural typology. A copy or a reference to the Jewish Temple is no *historischer Irrtum*, but part and parcel of the typological thinking. The fact that many architectural reconstructions are fanciful is subordinate to the typological significance. See also: G. BRESC-BAUTIER, *Les imitations du Saint-Sépulchre de Jérusalem (IXe–XVe siècles). Archéologie d'une dévotion*, in *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité*, 50, 1974, pp. 319–342.

[117] S. SCHEIN, art. cit., pp. 187–188. Theodoric locates Jacob's Ladder in Bethel, likewise the sacrifice of Abraham and Isaac *Peregrinationes tres*, op. cit., p. 199, v. 1375. According to Sir John Mandeville (before 1322) Abraham's sacrificial ritual (= Melchizedek) took place on Golgotha; T. WRIGHT, op. cit., p. 166.

[118] Today, Christian as well as Islamic official guides in Jerusalem think of the Temple Mount and Golgotha as one, based on the fact that the rock of Calvary and the rock of the mosque are part of the same geological vein.

[119] N. KENAAN-KEDAR, art. cit., p. 114, devotes attention to the mosaics that could be seen during the ceremony. John of Würzburg and Theodoric mention a scene combining the Descent into Hell with the Ascension. The iconographical composition is of Byzantine origin.

[120] S. SCHEIN, art. cit., p. 184, interprets this as a reference to the Presentation in the Temple. G.J. REININK, *Der Verfassername "Modius" der syrischen Schatzhöhle und die Apocalypse des Pseudo-Methodios* (*Oriens Christianus*, 67), 1983, p. 59, as taken up by Pseudo-Methodius, probably after a Syrian (Edessa) prototype from the beginning of the 6th century. Here, Emperor Julian refuses to accept the crown according to worldly customs; he kneels before a crowned cross, the crown hovering above it. This motif also appears on Julian coins; J.G.E. HOFFMANN, *Julianus der Abtrünnige*, Leiden, 1880, pp. 200–201.

the community gathered in the *Templum Salomonis* for a great banquet. Thus the *Templum Salomonis* embodies the secular, the *Templum Domini* the sacred.

Liturgical feasts also provide evidence of an incorporation of the Temple Mount. The feasts of the Presentation in the Temple, Palm Sunday and the Exaltation of the Cross were all celebrated by the crusaders in a similar way. On Palm Sunday and the feast of the Exaltation the relic of the Cross was taken from the Treasury.[121] And now a new location comes into focus: the *Porta Aurea*. On both these feast days two processions were formed: one left from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and made for Bethany, while the other left from the *Templum Domini* for the Valley of Josaphat, where it joined the first.[122] Thus united, the procession then returned to the Temple Mount, entering by the *Porta Aurea*, the Golden Gate. This eastern gate was so named as it was the gate by which Christ was said to have entered the city on Palm Sunday (Mt. 21, 1–11; Mk. 11, 1–11; Lk. 19, 28–40; Jn. 12, 12–19). According to the sixth-century gospel of Pseudo-Matthew the meeting between Anna and Joachim also took place at the Golden Gate.[123]

In the twelfth century the Palm Sunday procession was repeated at the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, because Heraclius had also entered the city by that gate.[124] Indeed Hrabanus Maurus had compared Heraclius's entry through the Golden Gate with that of Christ. The epithet of *Porta Aurea* was further enhanced in the period of the crusaders. One of the things said of it was that it had been built by King David (the 'ancestor' of the crusaders).[125] According to John of Würzburg, the gate must remain closed by divine command because the city fell into infidel hands, and may only be opened on Palm Sunday and the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. The gate was associated with Ezekiel (44, 1–3): 'Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east; and it was

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[121] Theodoric mentions a chapel of the Holy Cross (the Franks' chapel?) to the north-west of the Anastasis, and next to the Marian chapel, where the *venerabilis lignum* was kept in a gold container with precious stones. He adds that Heraclius restored the Cross to the chapel; *Peregrinationes tres*, op. cit., p. 153, vv. 320–332.

[122] S. SCHEIN, art. cit., p. 185.

[123] *Evangelica apocrypha*, ed. C. von TISCHENDORF, Leipzig, 1876, p. 60.

[124] Saewulf and Theodoric; *Peregrinationes tres*, op. cit., p. 68, v. 315 and p. 167, v. 781; The *ordo peregrinationis* in the Jerusalem of the 12th and 13th centuries also always went from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to the Temple.

[125] John of Würzburg; *Peregrinationes tres*, op. cit., pp. 95–96, vv. 417–420.

shut. The Lord said to me: This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it; for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it; therefore it shall remain shut. Only the prince, because he is a prince, may sit in it to eat food [cf. the coronation banquet] before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and shall go out the same way.'[126] The key to the gate was kept as a relic in an adjacent chapel.[127] The unique typology between Christ and Heraclius emphasizes once again the commemorative and liturgical importance that was attached to the Byzantine emperor.

The *Porta Aurea* was (is) a double gate (fig. 37).[128] In all probability the southern entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (1141) was based on the Golden Gate.[129] In this sense the crusaders' construction was also provided with a divine gate, extending the parallelism between the Temple and the Holy Sepulchre into the architecture.[130] As the metaphorical entrance to new Christian eras (Christ—Heraclius—crusaders) the *Porta Aurea* also functions as the 'entrance' to the End of Time.[131] Both Muslims and Christians believed that the Saviour would return through that gate. But Heraclius was also assigned a role in the apocalyptic and eschatological-emperor discourse. That Heraclius put off his imperial panoply (Hrabanus mentions the purple robe) when he restored the Cross is thus not only an exponent of the *vita apostolica* or *imitatio Christi*, but also an *imitatio* or prefiguration of the transfer of imperial power to divine power at the End of Time. During the coronation ceremony the crown was placed on the Temple altar. The restoration, on the other hand,

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[126] Ezekiel (44, 4) eventually enters the town by the north gate. When he beholds the Temple filled with the glory of the Lord he falls down upon his face. We recall the *proskynesis* in the sacramentary from Mont Saint-Michel (fig. 27).

[127] Saewulf, Theodoric and John of Würzburg (*Peregrinations tres, o.c.*).

[128] Noted by Theodoric ('Que duplex est'); *Peregrinationes tres*, op. cit., p. 167, v. 774.

[129] N. KENAAN-KEDAR, art. cit., p. 115 and IDEM, *Local Christian Art in Twelfth-Century Jerusalem*, in *Israel Exploration Journal*, 23, 1973, pp. 221–222.

[130] N. Kenaan-Kedar states hypothetically that the proportion between the small dome of the *Templum Salomonis* and the large dome of the *Templum Domini* is repeated in the proportion between the dome of the crusaders' Martyrium and that of the Anastasis. This system of copying was not new. It is known that the design of the 7th-century dome of the Omayad mosque (that is, the later *Templum Domini*) was based on the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; N. KENAAN-KEDAR, art. cit., p. 115.

[131] S. SCHEIN, art. cit., p. 189. Also suggested in Ezekiel 44: 'the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it', 'before the Lord' etc.

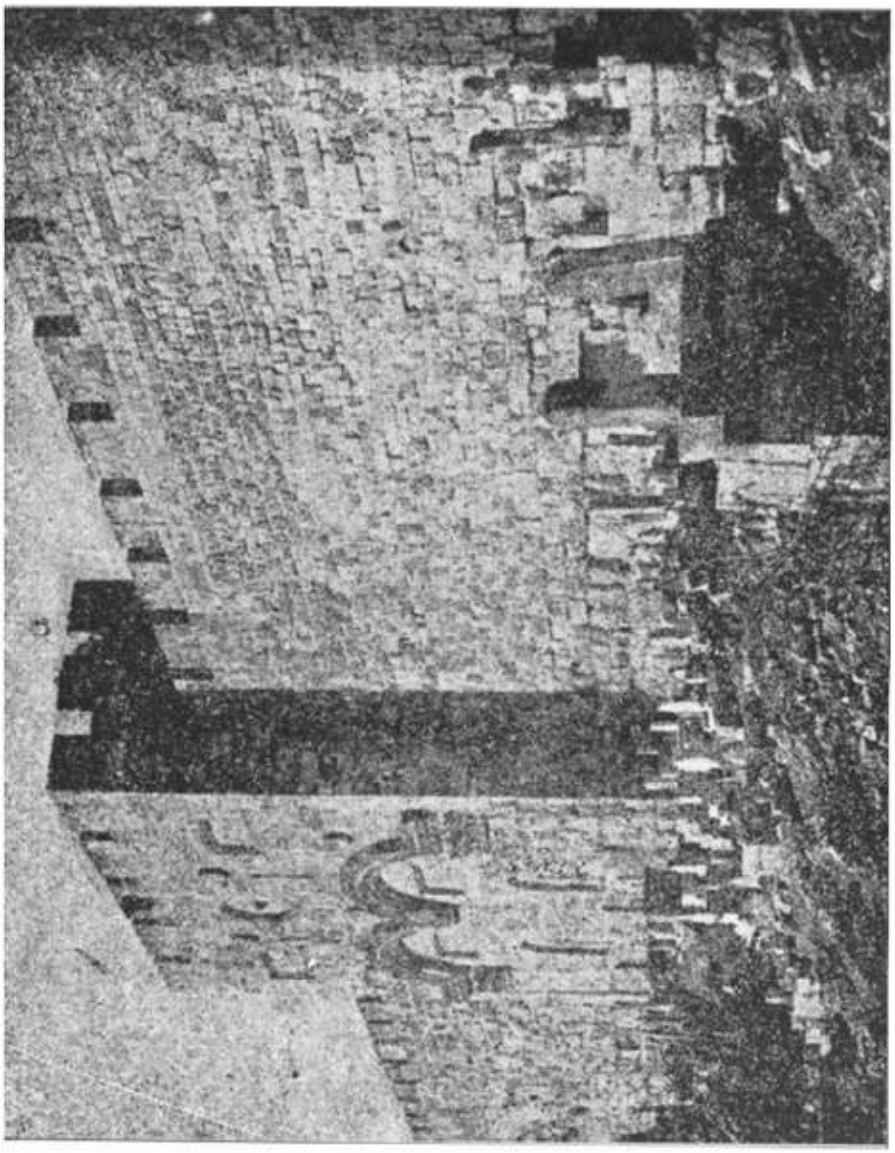


Fig. 37. *The Porta Aurea or Golden Gate.* From: E. HOADE, *Guide to the Holy Land*, (*Franciscan Printing Press*), 11th edition, Jerusalem, [after 1970], p. 196.

took place in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. At the time of the crusades both churches had equal status and their symbolic and metaphorical functions were consequently not always well defined. The relationship between Christ of the Last Judgement and the Last Emperor is set out in a passage from Honorius of Autun's *Elucidarium*. The pupil asks how the Lord of the Last Judgement will appear, and the master answers that he will enter as an emperor enters the city, the crown and other insignia borne ahead of him, to announce his arrival.[132] In the Heraclius legend a distinction is made between the sacred and the profane world, and it is the *Porta Aurea* that marks the dividing line. The gate itself, of old an image of transition between the secular and the sacred space,[133] resists the profane advance towards the sacred by miraculously remaining shut. Heraclius must divest himself of his imperial ostentation before the countenance of God.

Did the topography of Jerusalem influence the iconography of the Exaltation of the Cross during the crusades?

In the martyrology of Usuardus (Zwiefalten, 1162) (fig. 38) the feast of 14 September is illustrated with a drawing which shows Heraclius riding towards Jerusalem in full imperial fig, carrying a monumental cross.[134] Twelfth-century iconography is notable for its liking for the emperor thus imperially arrayed. It also reflects the image of the Byzantine hero that the crusaders wanted to maintain. The lock on the closed gate is also highly conspicuous in the Zwiefalten drawing, and as far as I know it is unique in the iconography. Perhaps it alludes to the key that was kept as a relic in a chapel beside the *Porta Aurea* (Saewulf, 1103).

Not all artists represent the Golden Gate as a double gate, nor, in this period, is it also consistently depicted as closed up, as Hrabanus describes it. But it is usually part of an architectural setting.

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[132] W.S. MONROE, *The Guennol Triptych and the Twelfth-Century Revival of Jurisprudence*, in *The Cloisters. Studies in Honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary*, ed. E.C. PARKER, New York, 1992, pp. 167–177, p. 168, ref. from: Y. LEFEVRE, *L'Elucidarium et les lucidaires. Contrubution par l'histoire d' un texte à l'histoire des croyances religieuses en France au moyen âge* (MGH. *Schriften*), Paris, 1954, p. 457.

[133] M. CAZENAVE, art. *Porte*, in *Encyclopédie des Symboles* (French trans. Fr. PERIGAUT from *Knaurs Lexikon der Symbole*, ed. H. BIEDERMANN, 1989), Turin, 1996, pp. 552–554, p. 552.

[134] Stuttgart, Landesbibliothek, cod. hist. 2E415, fol. 63r; S. von BORRIES-SCHULTEN and H. SPILLING, *Die romanischen Handschriften der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek Stuttgart*, 1. *Provenienz Zwiefalten*, Stuttgart, 1987, no. 64 and fig. 254.

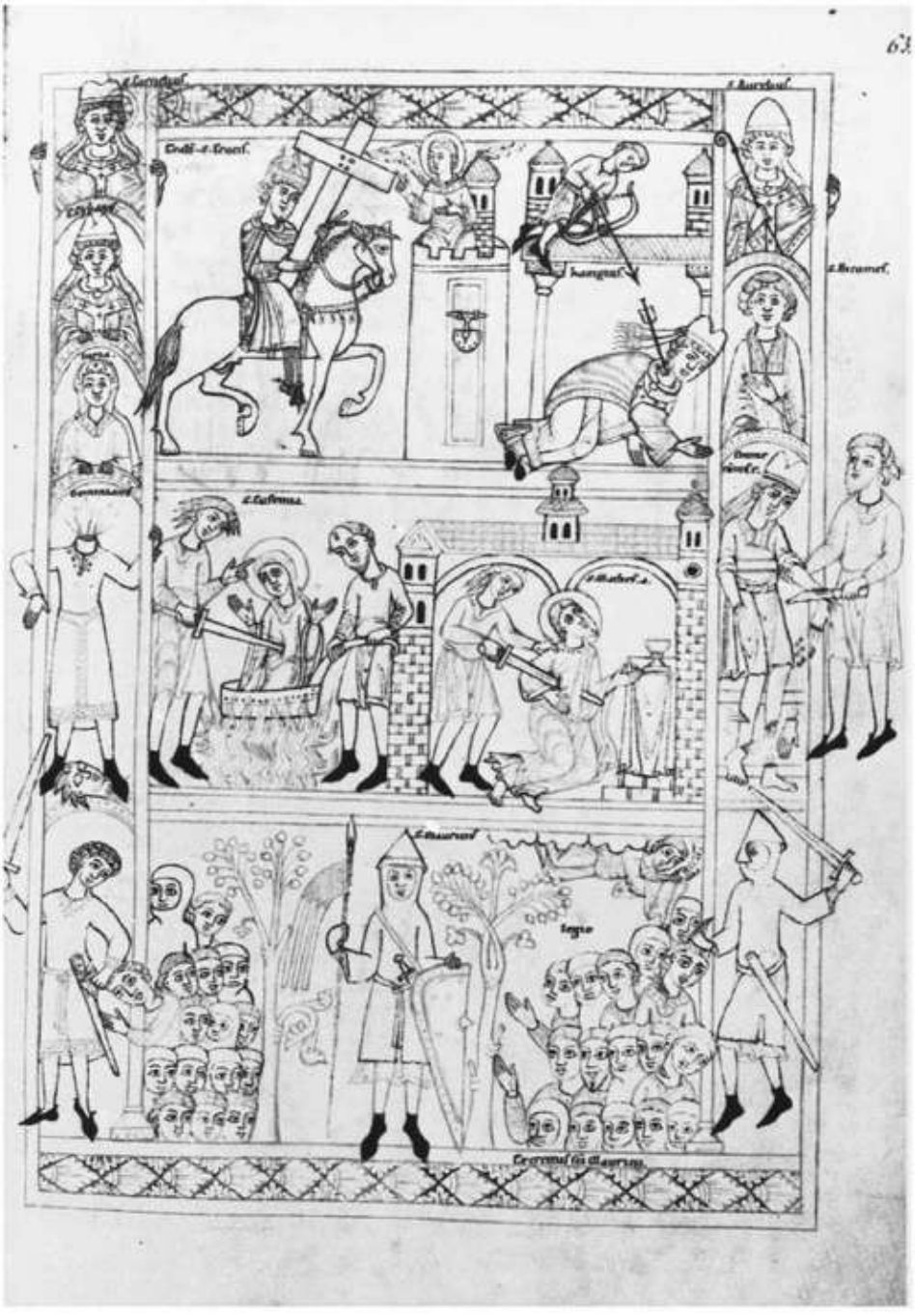


Fig. 38. *Heraclius restores the Cross to Jerusalem.* Martyrologium of Usuardus, Zwiefalten, 1162. Stuttgart, Landesbibliothek, cod. hist. 2E415, fol. 63.

The Holy Sepulchre and the *Templum Domini* are usually distinguished iconographically by the one being shown as a rotunda and the other as an octagonal structure.[135] A map of Jerusalem of 1170/1180 in a collectar from the Abbey of St Bertin (fig. 39) depicts the city in a crusading context.[136] Below, St George is represented as a crusader knight, bearing the red cross on his banner and shield, and felling fleeing Muslims with his lance. The *Templum Domini* is shown as a circular building with a rampart with four merlons which, bearing in mind the frontal perspective, is meant to indicate its octagonal shape. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a perfect circle with a tomb in the middle; just above is a cross, indicating Golgotha.[137] The *Porta Aurea* is shown at the north-east; the double gate is actually filled in with gold leaf.

In the Gotha *Sächsische Weltchronik* (1260)[138] two scenes are devoted to the restitution of the Cross: Heraclius restores the Cross on horseback and on foot (fig. 32b). In the latter scene the emperor is obliged to hold the Cross horizontally to get it through the gate. Despite his imperial attire he is barefoot. On a level with his head a cross has been drawn—perhaps an allusion to the vision, although it is also the customary indication of Golgotha. The angel perches sideways on the city wall with hands crossed before the breast—a type of the Cross. Inside the walls a large building is depicted of which four

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[135] This is not the place to go into every aspect of the architectural history of the rotunda church in Europe and its relationship to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; see further: M. JANNET and Chr. SAPIN (eds.), *Guillaume de Volpiano et l'architecture des rotondes*, Dijon, 1996. Carol Heitz's studies on this topic concentrate mainly on the Carolingian period, including: C. HEITZ, et al., *Recherches sur les rapports entre l'architecture et liturgie à l'époque Carolingienne*, Paris, 1963; IDEM, *L'architecture religieuse carolingienne. Les formes et leurs fonctions*, Paris, 1980.

[136] The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, ms. 76 F5; 255mm × 165mm; S. BORRMANN, art. *Collectar*, in *Heinrich der Löwe und seine Zeit*, vol. 1, op. cit., no. A7, p. 44, fig. 45.

[137] Although a double basilica, it is rendered by means of a circle. The other buildings are seen in profile.

[138] Forschungsbibliothek, Codex Memb. I. 90, fol. 65r: Chosroes enthroned and the battle between Heraclius and Chosroes; fol. 65v: Duel between Heraclius and Chosroes' (grand)son on the bridge over the Danube; *Stadt im Wandel. Kunst und Kultur des Bürgertums in Norddeutschland. 1150–1650*, ed. C. MECKSEPER (exh. cat.), 4 vols., Stuttgart, 1985, vol. 1, no. 474; M. MENZEL, *Die Sächsische Weltchronik. Quellen und Stoffauswahl*, Sigmaringen, 1985; H. HERKOMMER, *Überlieferungsgeschichte der "Sächsische Weltchronik"*, Munich, 1972, p. 126 ff.; *Die Zeit der Staufer. Geschichte-Kunst-Kultur*, ed. R. HAUSHERR, 5 vols. (exh. cat.), vol. 1, Stuttgart, 1977–1979, no. 340.

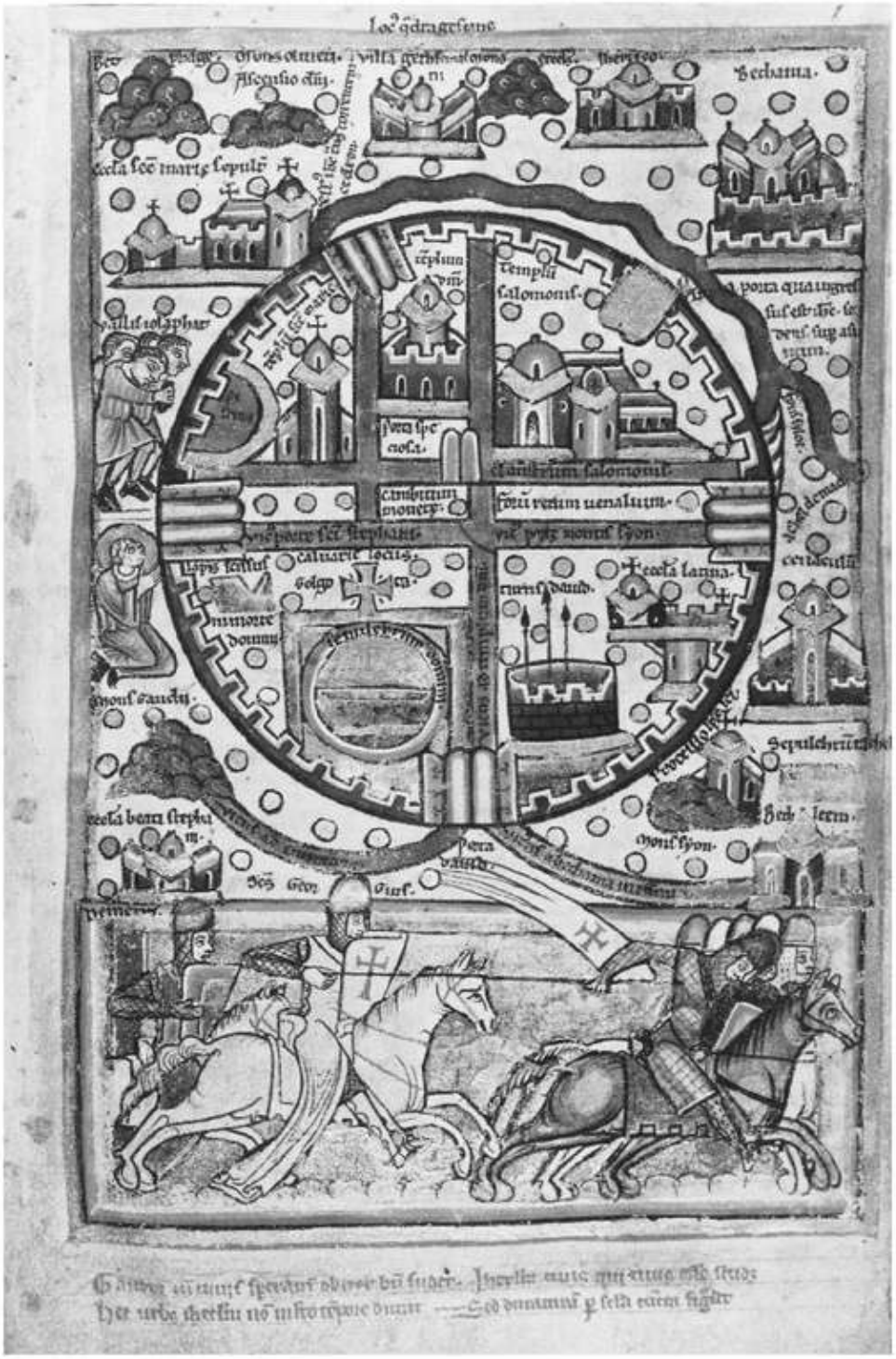


Fig. 39. *Map of Jerusalem.* Collectary of St Bertin, 1170–1180. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, ms. 76 F5.

corners can be seen.[139] Taking the conventions of perspective into account, it may be suggested that the illuminator had a scene in the Temple Mount in view. In front of the octagonal edifice the roof of another building is visible. Is that St James's Church—the smaller version of the *Templum Domini*? It is in fact the case that looking at the city from the Golden Gate both churches could be seen in this way. However, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre could also be seen beyond them.

The miniature in Alexander of Bremen's Apocalypse, now in Cambridge (last quarter of the thirteenth century) (fig. 30b), is schematically related to the example in the Gotha manuscript.[140] A barefoot Heraclius approaches the city gate with a number of companions and here again the Cross is carried in a virtually horizontal position in order to go through the gateway. The architectural composition of interior and exterior, towers and ramparts, makes it difficult to determine which site is intended. But the illuminator has provided a clue. Above is a bell and below is a burning lamp above an altar, or possibly a tomb. The burning lamp alludes to the 'sacred fire'. The miraculous appearance of fire in the lamps above the Holy Sepulchre was one of the most memorable events that occurred on the Saturday before Easter. But in 1101 the expected miracle failed to take place. Baldwin successfully supplicated for the sacred fire by a barefoot procession from the Holy Sepulchre to the Temple.[141] As early as 700 or thereabouts Arculf mentions the eternally burning fire above the Holy Sepulchre. And in his plan of the Holy Sepulchre

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[139] There have been imitations of the *Sächsische Weltchronik*: 1. Lower Saxony, 1280/1290, Bremen, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. a. 33, fol. 51: Heraclius on horseback and Heraclius kneeling before the gate of Jerusalem are combined in one scene. The kneeling position (and white penitential garment) is reminiscent of the miniature from Mont Saint-Michel, where veneration is expressed by prostration. A cross (relic) is depicted. It looks rather as if the emperor is worshipping the miraculous gate. The gate gives direct entrance to a domed building. Only a fraction of it is shown, but it seems to be a round building. In all probability, therefore, Heraclius is kneeling in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Further in this manuscript: fol. 40v: Finding of the Cross; 2. Lower Saxony or the Rhineland, 1st quarter of the 14th cent., Berlin, Staatbibliothek Preussischer Kukturbesitz, Ms. germ. 2E129, fol. 59v: restoration of the Cross. In the humble restitution scene depicted on the reconstructed processional cross (Meuse region, 1155–1165, enamel plaque from Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesmuseum), the gate also gives direct entrance to a building, octagonal in this instance.

[140] University Library, Ms. Mm. 5.31, fol. 81v; M. HUGGLER, art. cit., pp. 85–150; G. SCHILLER, op. cit., 5, pp. 216–227 and 6, figs. 457 and 459.

[141] S. SCHEIN, art. cit., pp. 183–184.

he introduces diverse oil lamps (fig. 5). Therefore, Alexander of Bremen's Apocalypse most likely alludes to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Thus the iconographic traditions place now the Temple, now the Holy Sepulchre, at the centre. This is typical of the syncretic attitude to the two sites at that time. The Temple and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre are not always clearly differentiated. Moreover, these are conventional drawings of architectural sites. For instance, on a twelfth-century plan of Jerusalem in the Württembergische Landesbibliothek in Stuttgart, both the Temple and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre are depicted as circular buildings (fig. 40),[142] which must nuance my iconographic analysis above. The only difference is the cross that rises above the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

From 1187 Jerusalem came under Saladin's control. The Muslims drove both Jews and Christians from the Temple Mount. Even so, the Temple continued to play an important part on the Jerusalem pilgrim route; indeed, a visit to the Temple earned a full indulgence.[143]

Only from 1342 on was the Temple overshadowed, when the Franciscans became the official custodians of the Holy Sepulchre. It was also their task to guide the faithful. Thus they redirected the *ordo peregrinationis* that had been followed since beginning of the twelfth century. The Franciscan route also redefined the content, the symbolism and the typological significance of the holy places in Jerusalem. They recreated a Jerusalem of the New Testament, rather than the Old.[144] Of course, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre continued to be a site that commemorated Christ's Passion. Some biblical events that were associated with the rock altar were forgotten or were shifted to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but others were not. The Lord preached in the Temple, and it was there that Mary learnt her psalter.[145] There too Mary's Presentation took place, according to

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[142] Cod. bibl. 2/56, fol. 135r.

[143] Pilgrims who wanted to enter the Temple had to convert to Islam however, or were killed, at least according to PERO TAFUR, *Travels and Adventures, 1435–1439*, ed. and trans. M. LETTS, London, 1926, pp. 61–62.

[144] S. SCHEIN, art. cit., p. 192.

[145] T. WRIGHT, op. cit., p. 171. The *Templum Salomonis* was identified with Mary's 'school' on the basis of old Jewish traditions which called this place the school of Solomon still before the al-Aqsa mosque; S. SCHEIN, art. cit., p. 192. From the 15th century on the *Templum Domini* was called the *Templum Salomonis*. See: BERNHARDT VON BREITENBACH, *Reyss ins Heilige Landt*, Wiesbaden, 1971, p. 149. This may have been the cause of some confusion.

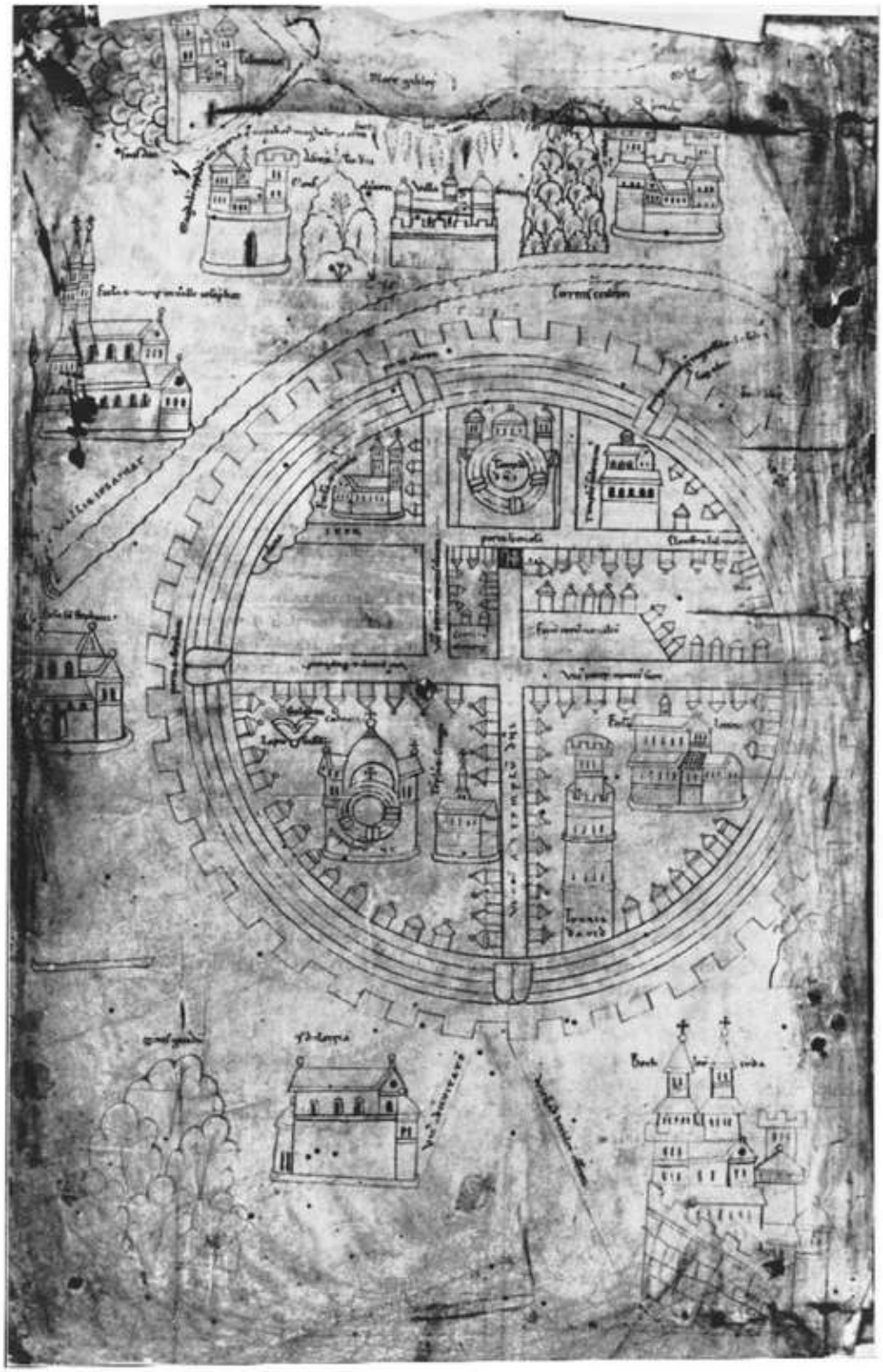


Fig. 40. *Map of Jerusalem*. 12th century. Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. bibl. 2/56, fol. 135r.

Sir John Mandeville (before 1322).[146] He located the place of the sacrifice of Abraham and Isaac on Golgotha, but related Jacob's Ladder, David, the death of Zacharias and the angel's annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias to the Temple.

In the course of the fifteenth century, however, not a single visitor to Jerusalem would still have regarded these events as having occurred on the Temple Mount. Melchizedek's offering took place on Calvary, and here too Jacob saw his Ladder and Elijah drank the water brought to him by an angel (1 Kings 19, 8).[147] The biblical and liturgical integration of the Temple Mount was diminished and attention was once more fixed on Golgotha. In other words the Franciscans did not see Christianity in the first place as the offspring of the Jewish Temple. In fact the shifts led to a return to the topographic symbolism and perception of the pre-crusade period. After all, the Jerusalem of that time was also a holy city that was principally focused on Christ, Mary and the Apostles.[148]

As the embodiment of the crusades and associated eschatology, Heraclius was an important political exemplum in the high Middle Ages. This function can be analysed in two cycles that originated simultaneously in France and Germany, the stained glass windows of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris (1243–1248)[149] and the wall paintings of Brunswick Cathedral (1240–1250).[150] The programmes—intended

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[146] T. WRIGHT, op. cit., p. 171.

[147] S. SCHEIN, art. cit., p. 194: examples in Pierre Barbatre (1480); P. TUCOO-CHALA and N. PINZATI, *Le Voyage de Pierre Barbatre à Jérusalem en 1480*, in *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de France*, Paris, 1974, pp. 73–172, pp. 134–135.

[148] For a survey of all the places in Jerusalem mentioned by pilgrims between 1300 and 1917 see: N. SCHUR, *Jerusalem in Pilgrims and Travelers Accounts. A Thematic Bibliography of Western Christian Itineraries 1300–1917*, Jerusalem, 1980 (with Arabic trans.).

[149] M. AUBERT, L. GRODECKI, J. LAFOND and J. VERRIER, *Les vitraux de Notre-Dame et de la Sainte-Chapelle de Paris* (*Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi. France*, 1), Paris, 1959, pp. 295–309, pl. 86; M. DILLANGE, *De Sainte-Chapelle*, n.p., 1990.

[150] J. Chr. KLAMT, *Die mittelalterlichen Monumentalmalereien im Dom zu Braunschweig* (unpub. Diss.), Berlin, 1968; S. BRENSKE, *Der Hl. Kreuz-Zyklus in der ehemaligen Braunschweiger Stiftskirche St. Blasius (Dom). Studien zu den historische Bezhgen und ideologisch-politischen Zielsetzungen der mittelalterlichen Wandmalereien* (*Braunschweiger Werkstücke*, 25 A. *Veröffentlichungen aus dem Stadtarchiv und der Stadtbibliothek*, 72, Brunswick, 1988; T. S(tangier), *Wand- und Gewölbemalereien in Chor, Vierung und südlichem Querarm der ehemaligen Stiftskirche St. Blasius und Johannes*, in *Heinrich der Löwe und seine Zeit. Herrschaft und Repräsentation der Welfen 1125–1235*, 3 vols. (exh. cat.), Munich 1995, I, pp. 201–202.

respectively for King Louis IX and the Welf duke, Otto the Child, grandson of Henry the Lion—illustrate the history of the holy wood from its discovery by Helena to its restitution by Heraclius.

The Sainte-Chapelle was built at the behest of Louis IX (1226–1270) and was intended to house the extremely precious relics of the Passion that Louis had received from the Latin emperor of Constantinople Baldwin II de Courtenay. Between 1239 and 1241 the emperor had a relic of the Crown of Thorns and a fragment of the True Cross conveyed from the court in Constantinople. In 1243 Louis IX received permission from Pope Innocent IV for the foundation of an 'architectural reliquary'.

The founding of the chapel quite naturally motivated the iconography of the Cross legend window (on the south side of the nave, near the west end of the chapel).[151] In it, Louis not only immortalized Helena and Heraclius but also added the tale of the *translationes* that had taken place during his reign, thereby exalting himself as a guardian of the relic of the Cross, following in Helena and Heraclius's footsteps.

The relics that the king received represented the success of diplomatic relations. In 1204, as a result of the conquest of Constantinople (Fourth Crusade, 1202–1204), Baldwin IX of Flanders (1171–1205) had been crowned as Baldwin I, the first Latin emperor of Constantinople. Jerusalem would not be liberated until the Fifth Crusade (1228–1229), led by Frederick II and Baldwin II—and would be lost again by the latter in 1244. Meanwhile, Constantinople was under constant threat from the Turks and the Bulgars, forcing the emperor to ask for military aid from western Europe. The offer for sale of a piece of the True Cross was in keeping with this policy. Though Europe was by now disenchanted by the many reverses in the Holy Land, Louis IX nonetheless undertook a sixth crusade (1248–1254).[152] Under the continuous clashes with Mongols who tore out of Persia and Mamelukes from Egypt, Jerusalem was seriously weakened. In 1291 Europe lost Acre, its last base in Palestine. The Sainte-Chapelle windows date from before Louis's expedition—indeed,

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[151] M. MÜLLER, *Paris, das neue Jerusalem? Die Ste-Chapelle als Imitation der Golgotha-Kapellen*, in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 3, 1996, pp. 325–336, sees in the chapel a copy of the Golgotha chapel in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

[152] W.Ch. JORDAN, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade. A Study in Rulership*, Princeton, 1979.

the iconography concentrates on the *translatio* itself, which preceded the Sixth Crusade—but even so the iconography of the legend of the Cross reflects the crusaders' ideals and the plans that were made as a result of the transfer of the relic.

The wall paintings in the south transept of Brunswick Cathedral presenting the Helena and Heraclius legend were conceived and begun in 1172 under the patronage of the Welf duke Henry the Lion (1129/31–1195) and completed between 1240 and 1250 by his grandson Otto the Child (figs. 41 a, b, c). Henry the Lion was forced into exile in 1180. Welf fortunes recovered when Henry's son (and Otto the Child's uncle) became the Emperor Otto IV (1198–1218) but were set back again by his defeat by the French at Bouvines in 1214. Only after 1235 under Otto the Child would the house once more become influential. S. Brenske regards the cycle as a *Medium Welfischer Politik*, by which this dynasty would constantly be at the forefront in important religious affairs.[153]

The *Chronica Slavorum* (after 1210) of Arnold of Lübeck (d. 1212) tells how Henry the Lion made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.[154] On 14 April 1172 he arrived in Constantinople, whence he continued by ship to Acre. In Jerusalem he was received with homage and songs of praise. He gave three eternal lamps to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: one for the Holy Sepulchre, one for Golgotha and one for the relic of the Cross. During his stay he made a journey to Heraclea, near Antioch, accompanied by five hundred of Sultan Kilidj Arslan II's knights.[155] He was received in Heraclea—named after the Byzantine emperor—by the Turks, who gave him many precious gifts.[156] Back in Constantinople, Henry the Lion was received by Emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1118–1180, crowned 1143). Arnold of Lübeck adds that he also received relics from the Byzantine court. It is certainly not impossible that among them was a relic of the Cross.[157]

Henry the Lion's pilgrimage took on a mythical quality, becoming the stuff of popular sagas and romances. In a song of which the earliest known version dates from around 1500 but which on linguistic

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[153] S. BRENSKE, op. cit., p. 101 ff.

[154] Ibid., p. 101, n. 2: *Chronica Slavorum*, ed. J.M. LAPPENBERG, vol. I, cap. I–XII, MGH SS 21, 1869, p. 101 ff.

[155] S. BRENSKE, op. cit., p. 103.

[156] *Chronica Slavorum*, 24 (from ibid., p. 103, n. 12).

[157] *Chronica Slavorum*, 30 ff.



Fig. 41a. *Chosroes enthroned in his cosmic tower.* Wall painting, south aisle, 1240–1250. Brunswick, Cathedral of St Blaise.



Fig. 41b. *Heraclius and Chosroes' eldest son in single combat on the bridge over the Danube.* Wall painting, south aisle, 1240–1250. Brunswick, Cathedral of St Blaise.

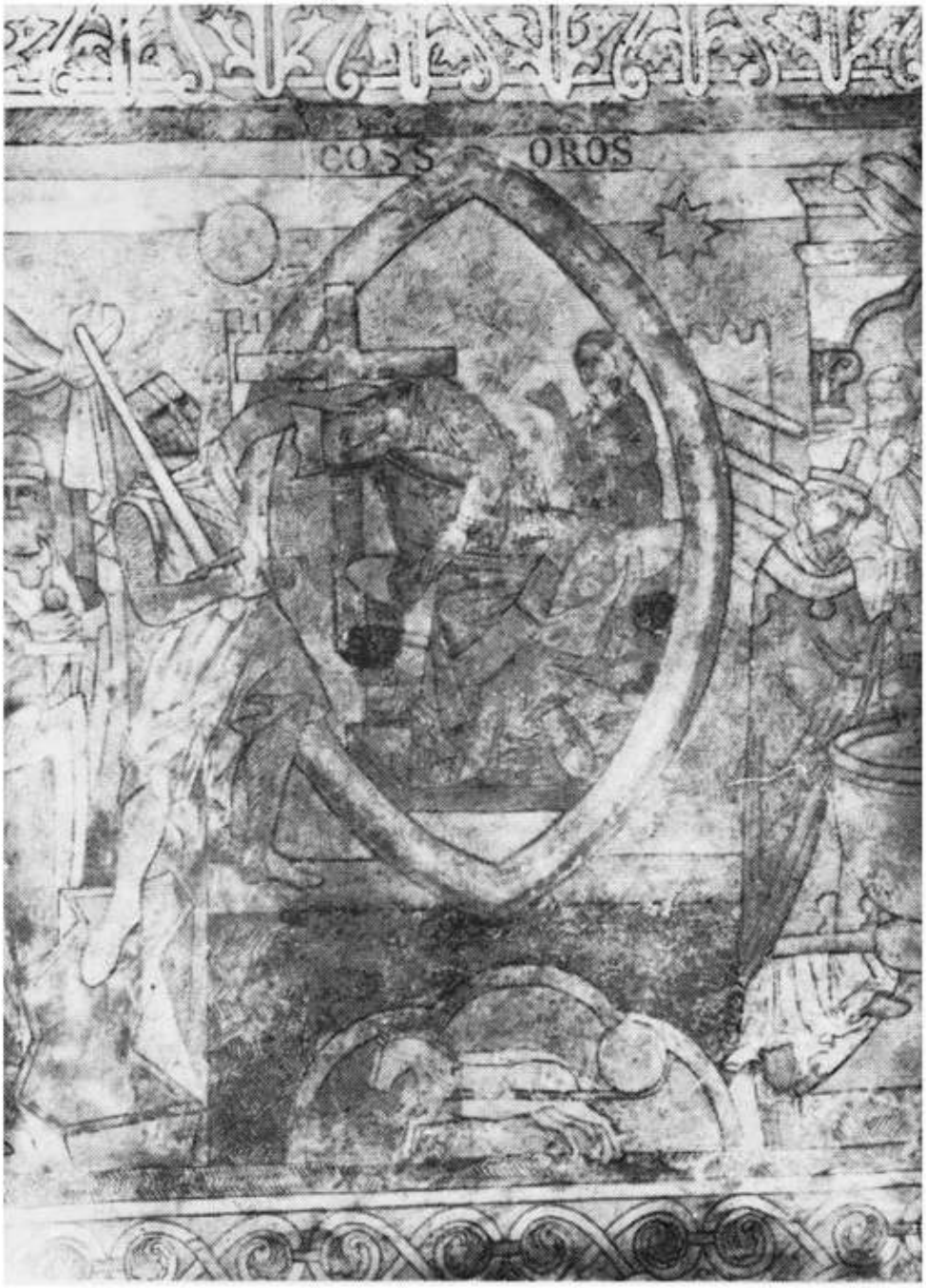


Fig. 41c. *Decapitation of Chosroes.* Wall painting, south aisle, 1240–1250. Brunswick, Cathedral of St Blaise.

grounds probably originated at the end of the thirteenth century, Frederick I Barbarossa is lauded as the hero, though his character seems modelled on that of Henry the Lion.[158] The treasures from distant Palestine and the stories that went the rounds must have kept the memory of the duke's pilgrimage very much alive. The Cross legend cycle in the cathedral picks up the events. Just as in the Sainte-Chapelle, a scene depicting the transfer of the relic of the Cross from Jerusalem to Constantinople relates to the relics that the duke had received from the imperial city.

Crusading is more closely associated with Otto the Child than with his grandfather. In 1239, together with the Teutonic Order, Otto mounted an expedition to Prussia to protect the Baltic from the Prussian pagans. The success of this undertaking was a step along the way to the restoration of Welf power.[159] When Europe was alarmed by Mongol invasions (in 1240 they destroyed Kiev, and the following year Cracow) Otto deployed all possible means. But at Leignitz, in 1241, one Mongol force met and broke an army of Germans, Poles and Teutonic Knights, while a second annihilated the battalions of King Bela IV of Hungary at Mohi. It seemed as if the whole of Europe was within the Mongol grasp. Yet even as they were poised to sweep across the Danube, news of the Emperor Ogodai's death (11 December 1241) caused the Mongols to return to Mongolia to elect a successor.[160]

The *Tartari* were the stuff of eschatological visions.[161] They were seen as the apocalyptic nations of Gog and Magog.[162] The angst they created is reflected in the Heraclius cycle, more specifically in the duel on the bridge over the Danube. Brenske points out that in Brunswick that battle is expressly depicted as Heraclius and Chosroes in single combat (fig. 41b).[163] In the seventh-century anonymous

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[158] H. GERNDT, *Das Nachleben Heinrich des Löwen in der Sage*, in *Heinrich der Löwe*, ed. W.D. MOHRMANN, Göttingen, 1980, pp. 441–446.

[159] S. BRENSKE op. cit., p. 115.

[160] R.H.C. Davis, *A History of Medieval Europe from Constantine to Saint Louis*, 2nd edn. London and New York, 1988, pp 386–387.

[161] Thus, the Mongol invasion can also account for the context of the iconography of the windows in the Sainte-Chapelle.

[162] M. HÄUSLER, *Das Ende der Geschichte in der mittelalterlichen Weltchronistik*, Cologne-Vienna, 1980, p. 58.

[163] Ibid., p. 92. In de *Sächsische Weltchronik*, 1260, Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, Codex Memb. I. 90, fol. 65v, the battle between Heraclius and Chosroes' son is also represented as a duel.

Syriac Alexander legend, Heraclius is involved, in an eschatological sense, in the battle against Gog and Magog. In Alexander of Bremen's Apocalypse, Heraclius is also the Last Emperor who defeats the Antichrist, Chosroes. However, it is noteworthy that Bela himself compared the battle at the Danube with that particular fight.[164] The actual struggle against the Mongols was perceived as having the same dimensions as the battle between Christendom and the Persians. The iconography in Brunswick Cathedral was perhaps intended to adapt Heraclius to contemporary events.[165]

A striking amount of attention is devoted to Chosroes (four scenes: the looting of the Cross, the veneration of Chosroes [fig. 41a], his encounter with Heraclius [fig. 41b] and his decapitation [fig. 41c]). Brenske thinks it possible that this emphasis on Chosroes is intended

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[164] Ibid., p. 121, n. 26: MGH (1859), 231: 'quia in hoc resedit examinatum quampluries nostrorum consilium, quod esset salubrius nobis et toti Europe, ut Danubius fortalicis muniretur. Hec enim est aqua contradictionis, hic Eraclius occurrit Cosdroes pro Romano imperio defendo, et hic eciam nos quantumcumque improvisi, et tunc enormiter lesi per decem menses contradiximus Thartaris, regno nostro tunc fere penitus fortaliciis et defensoribus immunito, quod, quod absit, si possideretur a Thartaris, esset pro ipsis apertum hostium ad alias fidei catholice regiones.'

[165] The Heraclius legend also became the subject of epics: Gautier d'Arras (1175–1190) (E. LÖSETH, *Oeuvres de Gautier d'Arras*, 1, *Eracle*, Paris, 1890; *Gautier d'Arras. (Bien dire et bien aprendre*, 8), 1990; G. RAYNAUD de LAG, *Gautier d'Arras. Eracle*, Paris, 1976) and Otte (ca 1200); E. NELLMANN, *Die Reichsidee in deutschen Dichtungen der Salier- und frhhen Stauferzeit. Annolied. Kaiserchronik. Rolandslied. Eraclius* (*Philologische Studien und Quellen*, 16), Berlin, 1963, pp. 11–34; H. GRAEF, *Eraclius, Quellen und Forschungen*, 50, 1883; P. RAUCH, *Beiträge zur Kritik des Eraclius*, in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, 31, 1887, p. 127; F. MAERTENS, *Untersuchungen zu Otte's Eracilus* (Doct.), Göttingen, 1927; D. HAACKE, *Weltfeindliche Strömingen und die Heidenfrage in der Deutsche Literatur von 1170–1230* (Diss.), Berlin, 1951.). Heraclius's childhood is also described here. According to Nellmann there are internal elements that refer to the climate of the crusades; E. NELLMANN, op. cit., pp. 24–25; this would be even more clearly the case in Gautier (v. 5336) and the *Kaiserchronik* (v. 11176), where Heraclius is commanded by an angel to engage Chosroes in battle. This is a projection of Constantine's vision. Paradise was promised to Christians who fell in battle (Otte, vv. 4772–3: 'der hât iedoch wol gesighet,/der vert ze himelrîche'). It is a typical promise from the literature of the crusades; D. HAACKE, *Weltfeindliche Strömingen und die Heidenfrage in der Deutsche Literatur von 1170–1230* (Diss.), Berlin, 1951, p. 158; F.W. WENTZLAFF-EGGEBERT, *Kreuzzugsdichtung des Mittelaters. Studien zu ihrer geschichtlichen und dichterischen Wirklichkeit*, Berlin, 1960, does not mention any Heraclius material. In the little Romanesque Church of Fraurombach in Oberhessen the Heraclius epic is illustrated in the wall paintings of the transept (1350); M. CURSCHMANN, *Constantine-Heraclius. German Texts and Picture Cycles*, in *Piero della Francesca and His Legacy*, ed. M.A. LAVIN (*Studies in the History of Art*, 48), Hanover-London, 1995, pp. 49–61. It was no accident that the church was founded by Fulda Abbey: the abbey church itself was a copy of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

as an allusion to Frederick II (1212–1254), arch-enemy of the Welfs, who was excommunicated by the pope (successively Gregory IX and Innocent IV). Cardinal Rainer of Viterbo even likens Frederick to Lucifer: 'sitting on his throne as if he was God himself' (1245), a description that could apply equally well to Chosroes.[166] Many evils were imputed to Frederick; he was accused of making overtures to the Mongols, of seeking to betray the Christian empire. The Welfs, and particularly Otto the Child, set great store on maintaining good relations with the pope, motivated perhaps by their ambition to acquire the royal (and imperial) crown, and their consequent competition with the Hohenstaufen dynasty.

In the Sainte-Chapelle and Brunswick cycles the legends of the Finding of the Cross (3 May) and Exaltation of the Cross (14 September) coincide for the first time. The Cross is exalted as the stake of pilgrimage (Helena) and the crusades (Heraclius). It is thus regarded both as a relic and as a *vexillum*. The cycles exemplify the guardianship of the Cross by kings and queens.

[166] Ibid., pp. 122–123.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SPREADING OF THE FINDING AND EXALTATION OF THE CROSS IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the iconography of the Legend of the Cross reached its quantitative peak. The theme now took on a variety of functions and appeared in ever more diverse contexts. The legend owed its spread to the *Legenda Aurea*.

The Legenda Aurea

The *Legenda sanctorum*, or 'Readings on the Saints', was written between 1261 and 1266 by the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine (d. 1298).[1] In western Europe the literary and iconographic influence of the book, whose popularity led it to be known as the *Legenda Aurea*, or 'Golden Legend', was enormous.[2] It also became a standard source for the Legend of the Cross.[3] The story of the Finding of the Cross is given in the first volume (at 3 May), and that of the Exaltation of the Cross in the second (at 14 September).

In the Finding of the Cross, Jacobus tells us that at the urging of her son Constantine, who had seen the sign of a cross miraculously appear in the sky just before a battle, Queen Helena undertakes a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.[4] Her purpose is to trace the supposed Cross

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[1] B. DUNN-LARDEAU (ed.), *Legenda Aurea. Sept siècles de diffusion. Actes du colloque international sur la Legenda Aurea. Texte latin et branches vernaculaires à l'université du Québec à Montréal 11–12 mai 1983*, Montreal-Paris, 1986, pp. 13–16, p. 13.

[2] See: B. FLEITH, *Studien zur gberlieferungsgeschichte der lateinischen Legenda aurea* (*Subsidia Hagiographica*, 72), Brussels, 1991, for the cataloguing of the Latin manuscripts.

[3] Jacobus de Voragine also wrote sermons on themes such as virtue and ethics; *Jacobus de Voragine. Sermones aurei de praecipuis sanctorum festis, et laudibus Deiparae Virginis*, ed. R. CLUTIUS, 2 vols, Augsburg-Cracow, 1769; S.L. REAMES, *The Legenda aurea. A Reexamination of its Paradoxical History*, Madison-London, 1985, pp. 101–114.

[4] Th. GRAESSE (ed.), *Jacobi a Voragine legenda aurea. Vulgo historia lombardica dicta*, Osnabruck, 1969 (repr. 1890), pp. 303–311; T. de WYZEMA (ed. and trans.), *Le bienheureux Jacques de Voragine. La légende dorée. Introduction, traduction et notes*, Paris, 1909; JACOBUS DE VORAGINE, *La Légende dorée*, 2 vols. Latin-French trans. M. ROZE, Paris, 1967, repr. 1900 (with introduction P.H. SAVON), vol. 1, pp. 341–349;

of Christ, already lost for more than two hundred years. Jacobus also mentions the Dream of Constantine, which he attributes to Eusebius, adding that several conflicting traditions exist regarding Constantine's conversion to Christianity: the *Historia tripartite*,[5] the *Historia ecclesiastica*,[6] the *Vita Silvestri*[7] and the *Liber pontificalis* all maintain that it was Constantine's father, also called Constantine (*sic*: Constantius), who became a Christian. Jacobus also says that Constantine's leprosy was cured following his baptism by Pope Sylvester.

In Jerusalem, according to the *Historia ecclesiastica*, Helena questions all the learned Jews of the city. (Here Jacobus digresses on Helena's origins as an innkeeper, or possibly as a daughter of King Clohel, whom Constantine the elder (*sic*) had met during his expedition against the Britons, or as a native of Trier.) Only one of the Jews, Judas, knows the whereabouts of the Cross, for its location has been handed down from his ancestors—his grandfather Zacheus, his father Simon and his uncle Stephen, who had inwardly broken away from Judaism and silently recognized the Messiah.[8] Here, in essence, Jacobus is recounting the Judas Cyriacus legend.

Judas has been forbidden to divulge his secret knowledge but, threatened with immolation, his fellow Jews betray him. They tell Helena that Judas is the son of a just man and a prophet and also learned in the Jewish law. Nonetheless, it is only after being starved at the bottom of a dry well for seven days that Judas consents to lead Helena to Golgotha. A shaking of the earth and delightful perfumes reveal the place where the Cross lies hidden. Judas claps his hands in wonder and professes his belief. Jacobus refers once again to the *Historia ecclesiastica*, which says that there was a Hadrianic temple of Venus on the spot, but that Helena had the pagan temple torn down and the site ploughed up. In other words, Helena cleanses

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R. BENZ (ed. and trans.), *Die Legenda Aurea des Jacobus de Voragine. Aus dem lateinischen übersetzt*, Berlingen, repr. 1955, 1993, pp. 349–358; B. DUNN-LARDEAU (ed. and trans.), *Legenda Aurea*, Montreal, 1993; W.G. RYAN, *Jacobus de Voragine. The Golden Legend. Reading on the Saints*, 2 vols. 5th edn., New York, 1995, vol. 1, pp. 277–284. I have taken W.G. Ryan's edition as a basis.

[5] The *Historia tripartita* (PL 69) of Cassiodorus (6th cent.) is intended.

[6] This is the Church History of Rufinus (403), PL 21.

[7] W.G. RYAN, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 62–71.

[8] Jacobus realizes that this generation must have spanned more than 270 years, but wonders whether this anomaly can be explained by the fact that people lived longer then than they do now; W.G. RYAN, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 281.

the tainted pagan ground and prepares it for the harvest—the Cross.[9] In the *Legenda Aurea* the motif is connected with Judas's digging. Helena and Judas's activities may thus be understood in a metaphorical sense: the Church prepares and works so that the Synagogue can end, and what has already been too long concealed can be found.[10]

Twenty yards down, Judas—who has girded himself for the task—discovers three crosses and brings them to Helena. At the ninth hour, in the centre of the city, each of the crosses is tested on the body of a dead youth. At the touch of Christ's Cross the young man is restored to life. Here Jacobus de Voragine compares other versions, namely Macarius's resurrection of a woman (as described in Rufinus's *Historia ecclesiastica*) and Helena's identification of the True Cross by the *titulus*, an account he attributes to Ambrose.[11] At the moment of this joyful miracle Judas is challenged by the devil, but he vanquishes him in Christ's name. After this, Judas is baptized and given the name of Cyriacus, and is ordained bishop of Jerusalem. Next, at Helena's request, Judas Cyriacus seeks the nails which—so says Jacobus—suddenly appear on the surface, gleaming like gold. He delivers the nails to Helena, who venerates them. Finally, Helena takes one part of the Cross to Constantinople and leaves the other part in Jerusalem itself, encased in silver. As regards the nails Jacobus

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[9] M. CAZENAVE, art. *Charrue*, in *Encyclopédie des Symboles* (French trans. Fr. PERIGAUT from *Knaurs Lexikon der Symbole*, ed. H. BIEDERMANN, 1989), Turin, 1996, pp. 122–123, p. 122: 'La charrue [. . .] est par excellence le symbole des travaux de labour, envisagé autrefois, lorsqu'il s'agissait de retourner la "Terre Mère" et de la féconder, comme un acte sexuel de caractère phallique.' According to this archetypal approach it is Helena, or rather the plough, that causes the fertilization of Mother Earth and no longer, in the first place, Judas's spade/pick. This 'privileged' role is assigned to Helena in the context of *Ecclesia* versus the synagogue, but perhaps also in the context of her typological relationship to Mary. At the end of the Judas Cyriacus legend it is said that whoever commemorates the Finding of the Cross, partakes in the Mother of God. We recall that Ambrose compared Helena with Mary.

[10] Moreover, in Isa. 2, 4 there is a reference to the plough in the context of the peoples' pilgrimage to Jerusalem; Helena also undertakes a pilgrimage. 'He [God] shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.' The plough can thus also be interpreted as Helena's answer to the union of Christians and Jews.

[11] Also mentioned by Chrysostom and Rufinus.

goes on to say that according to Eusebius one was worked into a bridle and the others into a helmet. Gregory of Tours, on the other hand, mentions four nails and asserts that Helena put two in a bridle, a third in the statue of Constantine in Rome and threw the fourth into the Adriatic. Ambrose also speaks of the nails, saying that Helena had one made into a bit and the other incorporated into the royal crown. The nail on the head symbolizes the ruler's consummate spirit, the nail in the bridle his ruling power, the crown his illustrious belief. Finally Jacobus says that Helena commanded the annual commemoration of the Finding of the Cross.

Jacobus adds two epilogues. The first concerns the martyrdom of Judas Cyriacus under Julian the Apostate. When Judas refuses the emperor's command to sacrifice to idols his right hand is cut off and molten lead is poured into his mouth. Then he is laid on an iron bed and tormented with hot coals and fat, but still he refuses. He is flung into a pit full of venomous snakes (which all die) and finally threatened with boiling oil, all to no avail. Enraged, the emperor orders his soldiers to plunge a sword into Judas's breast, and thus he dies.

The second epilogue is a miracle story that tells how a young notary is saved by the Cross. One day, the young man is tempted by a sorcerer, who promises him great wealth. The sorcerer leads him before the devil, who is disguised as an 'Ethiopian' king and surrounded by hordes of other 'Ethiopians'. The demon offers the notary a place at his right hand if he will worship and serve him. But the young man makes the sign of the Cross and all the demons are instantly driven away. Later, when visiting the Hagia Sophia with his master, the notary stands before an image of Christ (*vera icon*). The master notices that Christ's eyes follow the clerk's every movement. Thus God showed that he was well pleased with the clerk's faith.

Given that an episode of the miracle story takes place in the Hagia Sophia at Constantinople a Greek origin may be suggested. Perhaps it was carried to northern Italy along pilgrim routes. Here, the theme of the *vera icon* can be identified: the true face of Christ reacts and acts like Christ Himself (it can see). The motif is evidence of a radical approach to the function of the image. The iconodule climate again points to Constantinople. It is not impossible that the tradition came into being as a result of particular controversies in the

eighth century.[12] As an epilogue to the Finding of the Cross the miracle story teaches us that the sign of the Cross drives away demons (exorcism) but also that whatever refers to Christ—relic of the Cross or *vera icon*—in a certain sense also substitutes for Christ.

The Exaltation of the Cross (*Exaltatio crucis*), Jacobus tells us, is so called because on this day the Cross (literally) and belief in the Cross (metaphorically) were 'raised to the heights'.[13] Jacobus also comments on the nature of the wood of the Cross. He says that the Cross was made from the cheapest wood, that it was unfruitful and ignoble, and dark as death itself. But after the Passion this wood became a precious and fertile material for it was exalted (*exaltatio*) in many ways: by Andrew ('Hail, precious Cross!'), by Solomon in the Song of Solomon (7, 8: 'I will climb the palm tree, and lay hold of its branches.'), by Augustine ('The Cross [. . .] has made its way to the foreheads of emperors'),[14] by Chrysostom ('Christ's Cross [. . .] will, on the day of Judgement, shine more brightly than the sun's rays.') and by the *prefatio* of the Mass of the Holy Cross, at which is sung: *Ut unde mors oriebatur, inde vita resurgeret* (in order that whence death arose, life might rise again).[15] Jacobus adds that the Cross recovered its delightful perfume, just as described in the Song of Solomon (1, 12): 'While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance.'[16]

According to Jacobus the Heraclius legend runs as follows. In 615 the part of the Cross that Helena left in Jerusalem was carried off by the pagan Chosroes, king of the Persians. In his own land Chosroes built a gold and silver tower covered with jewels in which he placed images of the sun, the moon and the stars. Water was led the top of this construction through concealed pipes, so that Chosroes could

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[12] J.M. SANSTERRE, *L'image blessée, l'image souffrante: quelques récits de miracles entre Orient et Occident (VIe–VIIe siècle)*, in *Bulletin de l'institut historique Belge de Rome*, 69, 1999, pp. 113–130.

[13] Th. GRAESSE, op. cit., pp. 605–611; J.B.M. ROZE, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 192–198; R. BENZ, op. cit., pp. 698–705; W.G. RYAN, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 168–173.

[14] Perhaps Augustine also refers here to the mark that Moses painted on the foreheads of the chosen (Ezek. 9, 4). This is a well-known prefiguration of the Cross, which appears, for instance, on the foot of the cross of St Bertin in Saint-Omer (see Chapter Two).

[15] W.G. RYAN, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 168.

[16] Nard is a valerian-like plant from the East, known for its perfume and scented oil. The undoubtedly erotic symbolism of nard in the Song of Solomon is mystically attributed to the Cross.

pour it back down to earth as God pours rain. Beneath the tower was a wheel, turned by horses with a sound like thunder. As if he were God Himself, Chosroes set the holy wood on his right to take the place of the Son, he put a cock on his left to take the place of the Holy Spirit, and between them he placed himself as God the Father.

However, having offered himself to God and commended himself to the Cross, the Byzantine emperor Heraclius joins battle with Chosroes' son and defeats him in single combat on a bridge over the Danube. The Persian people are baptized. Heraclius is ready to spare the life of the Persian king because he had worshiped the Cross, albeit in his own fashion, though he gives him due warning that refusing baptism will cost him his head. When Chosroes, seated on his golden throne, does refuse, he is promptly decapitated. Heraclius also comes upon Chosroes' ten-year-old son, who receives baptism. Heraclius, who has lifted the boy from the font with his own hands, leaves the Persian empire to the young prince. The profane tower is demolished and with its riches the churches that Chosroes had destroyed are rebuilt.

Heraclius brings the stolen Cross back to Jerusalem. He approaches the city by the Mount of Olives, meaning to enter by the gate through which Christ passed. But miraculously the gate becomes impassable. When an angel points out that Christ went through the gate barefoot and in poverty the emperor, deeply moved, puts off his shoes and magnificent apparel, takes up the Cross and knocks at the gate. It opens at once and all the faithful can smell the sweet refreshing fragrance of the Cross that has wafted all the way from Persia to Jerusalem. Heraclius praises the Cross, and the miracles of old begin: the Cross cures four lame, ten lepers, fifteen blind, several cases of possession by demons and various other infirmities. The emperor repairs and enriches Jerusalem's churches and then returns to his own land.

Jacobus says that there are other versions of the story. Some chronicles tell how Chosroes refuses a treaty with Heraclius and so they come to battle. Later, Chosroes is taken ill with dysentery. Chosroes' eldest son, Siroe, makes peace with the Greeks and gives back the Cross and the prisoners of war. Heraclius first takes the relic to Jerusalem, and then to Constantinople. Jacobus concludes this 'critical note' with a pronouncement by the sibyl: 'O thrice blessed wood on which Christ was stretched'.

As with the legend of the Finding of the Cross, Jacobus grips the reader with three miracle stories. In Constantinople a Jew pierces a picture of Christ in the throat with his sword. The sacred image begins to bleed profusely and the blood splashes the Jew's face. In terror, he throws the picture in a well. A Christian who happens by cries out in horror: 'You've killed a man!' To prove his innocence, the Jew retrieves the picture from the well. (In an aside Jacobus tells us that the wound in Christ's throat is said to be still visible.) The Jew converts on the spot. In this story blood is connected with water (the well) just as blood and water streamed from the wound Longinus inflicted on Christ's body.

Then follows the legend of the *Volto Santo* from Berith (Syria). A Jew discovers a picture of the crucified Christ in a house to which he has been bidden to dine, and charges his host with its possession. He fetches other Jews to the house, where they soundly beat the householder and do to the picture what they had previously done to Christ. When they pierce the picture with a lance, water and blood gush from the image. Astounded, they fill a vessel with this liquid and take it to the synagogue where all the sick who are anointed with it are instantly cured. The original Christian owner of the picture is found; he declares that it was Nicodemus himself who painted it and that it has come down to him from his ancestors. Jacobus dates these events to 750. He adds that a phial of blood from the living picture is preserved in Rome.[17]

The third legend is a paraphrase of Gregory the Great. In his 'Dialogues' he describes how one day Bishop Andrew of Fondi receives a nun as a guest. But the devil incites him to imagine things about the woman which, according to Jacobus, are better left untold. Meanwhile, a Jew takes shelter for the night in the temple of Apollo and there he hears demons reporting their achievements: one boasts

[17] Before it was recorded in writing, the legend was represented, together with the Finding of the Cross, on the altar frontal by the Master of Tressa (1215); Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale; M. BACCI, T*he Berardenga Antependium and the Passio ymaginis Office*, in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 61, 1998, pp. 1–16; B. BAERT, *The Retable of the Master of Tressa (Siena, 1215). Iconography and Function*, in *Pantheon*, 57, 1999, pp. 14–21. The Finding of the Cross was applied to the side panels (1445) of the miraculous *Volto santo* (13th cent.) of the Augustinian monastery at Polling; Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum. According to tradition a *Volto santo* was found during a hunt by the Bavarian Duke Tassilo III (741–after 794) in the Peissenberg forest on the Ammer; A. ELSEN, *Gabriel Angler, der Meister der 'Pollinger Tafeln'*, in *Pantheon*, 28, 1941, pp. 219–224.

of how he has caused the bishop to lose his head. When the Jew makes the sign of the Cross, the furious demons flee away. The Jew hastens to the bishop to tell him what he has overheard—and he arrives just in time, for the bishop has already given the nun an affectionate pat on the back.

In his introduction to the story of the Exaltation of the Cross Jacobus considers the various meanings of exaltation. Thus, in addition to its literal sense—the liturgical action—*exaltatio* also has a metaphorical meaning. The 'common' wood is raised to a higher plane by the words of Church scholars, the liturgical texts, the Mitral Office and the Song of Solomon. The version he gives agrees with the homilies of Hrabanus Maurus and John Beleth, though he provides more details about the cosmic tower and the water mechanism also receives more attention. Jacobus is rather confusing on the subject of Chosroes' sons. It is typical of the genre and also of Jacobus's time that Heraclius is considered from a psychological point of view, with emphasis on his noble character, his invincible faith and his emotions. It is also stressed that he later venerated the relic of the Cross. Jacobus compares the legend with a version of the Heraclius story from the chronicles. Here, the conflict between Heraclius and Chosroes is described rather from a diplomatic point of view.

The miracle of the Jew who stabs the painted Christ in the throat and causes the image to bleed again takes place in Constantinople and is yet another variant of the *vera icon*. The miracle story corresponds to the Byzantine concept of the image as a medium of the sacred, the *vera icon* as the embodiment of Christ Himself. The tale of the Jewish guest stems from Syria and is embedded in the *Volto Santo* tradition. The 'incarnated' image pronounces the Jew's retrospective guilt but he is allowed to surrender (belatedly) to the mystery.

Other miracles involve the driving out of demons. The *mirabili* connected with 3 May and 14 September are apparently interchangeable and are related to the sign of the Cross (exorcism) and the image of Christ (*vera icon* or *Volto Santo* variants). Perhaps the miracles at the Exaltation of the Cross are more focused on the Passion. They are *mirabili* that could also be added to the feast of Good Friday. It has already been pointed out in the previous chapter that the veneration of the Cross at the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross provides a liturgical echo of Good Friday. The triumphant tone of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross also points towards

the mystery of Easter (exaltation is raising). The Finding of the Cross rather interprets the mystery of the Incarnation.

The *Legenda Aurea* appeared in the right place at the right time. It was enthusiastically received by an ecclesiastical milieu that pronounced Jacobus's didactic and thoughtfully arranged *legendarium* a welcome standard. His emphasis on synthesis, intrinsic correctness and sober clarity proved to be the ingredients for a lasting success. As the fourteenth century gave way to the fifteenth the book spread rapidly throughout Europe and the Golden Legend firmly put its stamp on iconography.

The *Legenda Aurea* spread via Dominican, Benedictine and Cistercian networks. In northern Europe the Devotio Moderna also contributed to its diffusion. From the monasteries the *Legenda Aurea* reached the lay public. S.L. Reames believes that it was deliberate religious policy to commend the *Legenda Aurea* and set it above other current *vitae* such as Bernardus Gui's *Sanctorale*,[18] Bartholomew of Trent's *Epilogus in gesta sanctorum*,[19] and Jean de Mailly's *Abbreviatio in gestis et miraculis sanctorum*.[20] The *Legenda Aurea* was declared to be the only reliable text and would shield the layman from other influences and views.[21]

The spread of the *Legenda Aurea* was naturally helped by translations into European vernaculars. Some were commissioned by nobles who could not themselves read Latin. It is worth reviewing the contents of these translations, for sometimes they yield specific details that have influenced the image.

In French-speaking areas the most significant translation was produced in 1333/4 by Jean de Vignay for Jeanne de Bourgogne.[22] De

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[18] L. DELISLE, *Les ouvrages de Bernard Gui*, Paris, 1877; A. VERNET, *La diffusion de l'oeuvre de Bernard Gui d'après la tradition manuscrite*, Toulouse, 1981.

[19] Manuscript: Ms. Barberini lat. 2300, Vatican, Rome.

[20] Manuscript: Ms. lat. 1198, Vatican, Rome. Ed. and trans.: A. DONDAINE, *Abrégé des gestes et miracles des saints*, Paris, 1947.

[21] S.L. REAMES, op. cit., p. 205.

[22] See: V. RUSSEL, *Evidence for a Stemma for the de Vignay Ms: St. Nicholas, St. George, St. Bartholomew, and All Saints*, in B. DUNN-LARDEAU (ed.), *Legenda Aurea*, op. cit., pp. 131–154, p. 132: table containing all 37 manuscripts; S.L. REAMES, op. cit., p. 205; H. MADDOCKS, *Illumination in Jean de Vignay's légende dorée*, in B. DUNN-LARDEAU (ed.), *Legenda Aurea*, op. cit., pp. 155–162, concerning 29 illustrated manuscripts; C. KNOWLES, *Jean de Vignay, un traducteur du XIVe siècle*, in *Romana*, 75, 1954, pp. 353–383; W.F. MANNING, *The Jean de Vignay Version of the*

Vignay translated Jacobus's text with great care and fidelity but in the course of the fifteenth century his version was twice thoroughly revised. In 1402 forty-two feasts were added, followed at the end of the century by an 'updating' and a change in the order of the chapters.[23] Thirty-nine manuscripts are known, divided over these two phases, twenty-nine of which are illuminated.[24]

Even before the end of the thirteenth century, the *Legenda Aurea* had served as a model for the *South English Legendary*, which was written in verse form.[25] There are a few differences, however.[26] The author of the *Legendary* begins immediately with the story of the Finding of the Cross, though he omits Constantine's vision (vv. 1–5). For the rest, his version follows Jacobus de Voragine's intrinsic structure, except that the nails are found only at the end. The legend of the Exaltation of the Cross comes immediately after the Finding of the Cross and is thus included at 3 May, not 14 September.

Life of St. Dominic, in *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 40, 1970, pp. 29–46; H. MADDOCKS, *The Illuminated Manuscripts of the Légende dorée. Jean de Vignay's Translation of Jacobus de Voragine's Legenda aurea* (unpubl. Diss.), 1990; IDEM, *Pictures for Aristocrats. The Manuscripts of the Légende dorée*, in *Medieval Texts and Images. Studies of Manuscripts from the Middle Ages*, eds. M.M. MANION and B.J. MUIR, Harwood, 1991, pp. 1–23.

[23] The expansion of the legendary with new and regional saints is of course a consequence of more closely defined markets for translations, but monastic needs also played a part. A 'manual' for the daily readings, furnished as richly as possible, was still preferred; W. WILLIAMS-KRAPP, art. cit., p. 229.

[24] V. RUSSEL, art. cit., pp. 131–154; H. MADDOCKS, *Illumination in Jean de Vignay's légende dorée*, art. cit., p. 155; Ibid., p. 159.

[25] Unlike the 15th-century *Gilte legende* and Caxton's *Golden Legend* (1483), which used Jean de Vignay's French translation with the addition of Anglo-Saxon saints; M. GÖRLACH, *The Legenda Aurea and the Early History of The South English Legendary*, in B. DUNN-LARDEAU (ed.), *Legenda Aurea*, op. cit., pp. 301–316; K.P. JANKOFSKY, *Legenda Aurea Materials in the South English Legendary. Translation, Transformation, Acculturation*, in B. DUNN-LARDEAU (ed.), *Legenda Aurea*, op. cit., pp. 317–330; G. WHATLEY, *A "symple Wrecche" at Work. The Life and Miracles of St. Erkenwald in the Gilte Legende, BL Add. Ms 35298*, in B. DUNN-LARDEAU (ed.), *Legenda Aurea*, op. cit., pp. 333–343; M. GÖRLACH, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary*, Leeds, 1974, p. 165; C. HORSTMANN (ed.), *The South English Legendary* (*Early English Text Society*, 87), London-Oxford, 1887, pp. 1–19; Ch. d'EVELYN and A.J. MILL, *The South English Legendary*, 3 vols. (*Early English Text Society*, 235, 236, 244), London-Oxford, 1956–1959, p. 167; R. HAMER, *The Three Lives from the Gilte Legende, ed. from Ms. B.L. Egerton 876* (*Middle English Texts*, 9), Heidelberg, 1978.

[26] I have taken Horstmann's edition as a basis (ms. Laud. 108, 1285–95). Poems on the Life and Passion of Christ (8) and on Christ's childhood (9) are added to the Finding of the Cross. The poems are not included in the English translation itself, but were specifically added to this manuscript.

It is in German and Dutch-speaking areas that the greatest number of translations is found.[27] Some would also reach Scandinavian countries.[28] The first translation was the *Sermo humilis* or *Abbreviato* (ca. 1300) produced in Central Germany (eastern Prussia) and also known as the verse Passional or *Alte Passional*.[29] In terms of its content the translation resembles the *Legenda Aurea*, but its form is quite another matter. The text is in verse and is divided into three parts: the feast days connected with the Virgin, the lives of the Apostles and finally seventy-five lives of the saints. The *Alte Passional*, of which there are seventy known manuscripts, enjoyed a short but extremely sweet success.[30] It was intended for the knights of the Teutonic Order and thus initially spread through Prussia and northern Germany. This target readership also explains the composition's Marian emphasis: Mary was the patron saint of the *Deutschherren*.[31] The book's influence was felt mainly in an eastward direction (Danzig, St Petersburg). Only a few traces of its influence have been found in Bohemia and Bavaria.[32]

In the Finding of the Cross in the *Alte Passional* Judas is represented as an old man (an 'old prophet').[33] Helena actually helps with the digging and Judas uses a spade.[34] The *Alte Passional* also influenced Hermann von Fritzlar's *Heiligenleben* (before 1343), which appeared in Hessen (Helena is present; the digging is carried out with or by assistants)[35] and the *Märe vom Heiligen Kreuz* set in verse

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[27] W. WILLIAMS-KRAPP, *German and Dutch Translations of the Legenda aurea*, in B. DUNN-LARDEAU (ed.), *Legenda Aurea*, op. cit., p. 228.

[28] W. WILLIAMS-KRAPP, art. cit., pp. 227–232.

[29] H.G. RICHERT, art. *Passional*, in *Die Deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, 7, Berlin-New York, 1989, col. 332–340; Edn.: K.A. HAHN (ed.), *Das alte Passional*, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1845; F.K. KÖPKE (ed.), *Das Passional. Eine Legendensammlung des dreizehnten Jahrhundert* (*Bibliothek der gesammten deutschen National-Literatur von der ältesten bis auf die neuere Zeit*, 32), Quedlinburg-Leipzig, 1852, pp. 264–290. The legend of the Exaltation of the Cross is not included in the *Alte Passional*.

[30] H.G. RICHERT, *Wege und Formen der Passional-überlieferung* (*Hermaea*, 40), Tübingen 1978, p. 2.

[31] IDEM, op. cit., p. 279.

[32] IDEM, op. cit., p. 284.

[33] F.K. KÖPKE (ed.), op. cit., p. 273, vs. 6–7; 'und gennet Iudas/ein alder man under in'.

[34] IDEM, op. cit., p. 276, vs. 3–4: 'nam an die hant einen Spaten/mit aller Vreude und grub'.

[35] W. WERNER and K. RUH, art. *Hermann von Fritzlar*, in *Verfasserlexikon*, 3, Berlin-New York, 1981, col. 1055–1059; Edn.: F. PFEIFFER, *Deutsche Mystiker des 14e Jahrhunderts*, 1, Leipzig, repr. 1845, 1962, pp. 3–258.

by Helwig von Waldirstet at the beginning of the fourteenth century.[36]

From about 1350 the verse form began to lose favour: regarded as a stuffy anachronism it was superseded by other translations in the second half of the fourteenth century:[37] two Alaman, three Bavarian, two Central German, one Lower German, one Northern Netherlandish, one Alsatian (first half of the fourteenth century) and one Southern Netherlandish. The Alsatian translation diverges the furthest from Jacobus de Voragine's text. The juxtaposition of traditions is abandoned in favour of a continuous storyline.[38] Obviously this translation was mainly influential in south-western Germany.

The Southern Netherlandish Carthusian (the so-called Bible translator of 1358 from Herne; 100 manuscripts and thirteen printed books) preferred to leave a word in Latin rather than replace it with

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[36] P. HEYMANN (ed.), *Helwigs Märe vom heiligen Kreuz* (*Palaestra*, 75), Göttingen, 1908.

[37] The *Märterbuch* experienced a similar fate; an anonymous legendary in rhyme for the Countess of Rosenbergh. The text originated around 1300 in the area of eastern Franconia, southern Bohemia or Austria. The source for the *Märterbuch* is not the *Legenda Aurea*, but an older, 12th-century Latin compilation of *vitae*. The historical tradition of the *Märterbuch* extended to 1455 and had a predominantly Bavarian market. K. KUNZE, art. *Buch der Märtyrer (Märterbuch)*, in *Verfasserlexikon*, 1, Berlin-New York, 1978, cols. 1093–1095; Edn.: E. GIERACH, *Das 'Märterbuch'. Die Klosterneuburger Handschrift 713* (*Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters*, 32), Berlin, 1928. The 12th-century compilation is also the basis for the so-called *Bebenhauser Legendar* (before 1400) with 84 hagiographies and 14 sermons. KUNZE, art. *Bebenhauser Legendar*, in *Verfasserlexikon*, 1, Berlin-New York, 1978, cols. 651–653. A number of extracts from the legendary have been published: K. KUNZE, *Die Legende der Hl. Maria Aegyptiaca. Ein Beispiel hagiographisches Überlieferung*, n.p., 1977. De *Schwäbische Heiligenpredigten* (15th cent.) are based on the *Bebenhauser Legendar*. K. KUNZE, art. *Schwäbische Heiligenpredigten*, in *Verfasserlexikon*, 8, Berlin-New York, 1992, cols. 907–909. Only the Kilian legend has been published: K. FIRSCHING, *Die deutsche Bearbeitungen der Kilianslegende unter besonderer Berücksichtigung deutsche Legendarhandschriften des Mittelalters* (*Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Bistums und Hochstifts Würzburg*, 26), Würzburg, 1973.

[38] 36 manuscripts have survived in their entirety: U. WILLIAMS and W. WILLIAMS-KRAPP (eds.), *Die 'Elsässische Legenda Aurea'*, 1. *Das Normalcorpus*, Tübingen, 1980; K. KUNZE (ed.), *Die elsässische Legenda Aurea*, 2. *Das Sondergut*, Tübingen, 1983. The Finding of the Cross is included in Ch. 65 of the 'Normalcorpus', pp. 314–319; the Exaltation of the Cross in Ch. 136, pp. 610–614; K. KUNZE, *Les métamorphoses de la Légende Dorée alsacienne*, in B. DUNN-LARDEAU (ed.), *Legenda Aurea*, op. cit., pp. 233–252, illuminated in two phases, only one example from the first phase: 1. In Strasbourg in 1362, now in Munich, Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, ms. germ. 6, Finding of the Cross on fol. 88; richly illustrated with 178 miniatures; 2. 1419 by Diebolt Lauber, Hagenau: e.g. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. 144, Exaltation of the Cross on fol. 114; simple pen drawings, content and structure for private use. See also: M. CURSCHMANN, *Constantine-Heraclius. German Texts and Picture Cycles*, in *Piero della Francesca and His Legacy*, ed. M.A. LAVIN (*Studies in the History of Art*, 48), Hanover-London, 1995, pp. 49–61, p. 58.

an inadequate Dutch word. This conscientious but somewhat reader-unfriendly trait was avoided in the fifteenth-century redactions. And many *vitae* were added, so that this modest and rather austere work was transformed into an exuberant and colourful corpus.[39] The fifteenth century saw a high point of individualized devotion; the differentiation and diversity of legends and saints that went hand in hand with this demanded these adjustments.

An example of the shifts in the *Legenda Aurea* traditions is provided by *Der Heiligen Leben* (ca. 1400), compiled by a Dominican of Nuremberg.[40] Here, as in the *Legenda Aurea* from Alsace, narrative coherence and reader-friendliness are paramount. While the two-volume structure has been retained, the lives of at least 100 saints from southern or central Germany have been added. This compilation was extremely popular (200 manuscripts and forty-one printed books).[41] Within the entire German literary context *Der Heiligen Leben* probably had the most extensive and diverse readership—it was also known in northern Germany—but the neighbourhood of Nuremberg, Regensburg and Augsburg comprised its heartland. It may be reasonably surmised that the *legendarium* was originally intended for Dominican nuns,[42] but it was also read by laypeople. It was even translated into Swedish and Icelandic. In 1502 Sebastian Brandt printed a run of 1,000 copies, which was considerable for that time.

Der Heiligen Leben includes abridged versions of the legends of the Finding and Exaltation of the Cross. In both, the introduction, epilogues and comparisons with other versions (except for Ambrose's reference to the *titulus*) have been left out, and Jacobus's lively habit of rendering text as direct dialogue has been abandoned. Judas is described as an 'old prophet'; Helena commands Judas to dig but it is implied that she assists in the work. The tool used for the task is not specified. The author has chosen the Macarius version for the

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[39] For this Southern Netherlandish translation, see: W. WILLIAMS-KRAPP, *Die deutschen und niederländischen Legendäre des Mittelalters. Studien zu ihrer überlieferungs-, Text- und Wirkungsgeschichte*, Tübingen, 1986, pp. 53–56.

[40] 197 complete manuscripts survive: K. KUNZE, art. *Der Heiligen Leben (Prosa-, Wenzelpassional)*, in *Verfasserlexikon*, 3, Berlin-New York, 1981, col. 617–625; Edn.: S. RÜTTGERS, *Der Heiligen Leben und Leiden anders genannt das Passional*, Leipzig, 1913, vol. 1, pp. 48–56: The Finding of the Cross and the martyrdom of Cyriacus; vol. 2, pp. 402–404: Exaltation of the Cross.

[41] W. WILLIAMS-KRAPP, art. cit., p. 229.

[42] K. KUNZE, art. cit., col. 624.

Testing of the Cross, so here the 'test case' is a young woman.[43] The destination of the nails is described somewhat differently. Helena takes the nails and a piece of the Cross with her to Constantinople, making the journey by ship. To calm a tempest she casts one of the nails into the sea (compare Jacobus de Voragine's reference to Gregory of Tours). The text ends with the metaphor of the Cross as the key to eternal paradise, which has mystical undertones. As regards the legend of the Exaltation of the Cross, the translator brings some clarification to the vexed question of the son or sons of Chosroes. The German author says quite specifically that Chosroes had a second son aged ten.[44]

Der Heiligen Leben provided the basis for a fifteenth-century miracle play about the Holy Cross, the *Augsburger Heiligkreuzspiel*, which takes its title from the unique copy of the text found in the German town.[45] The manuscript comes from the collection of a certain Claus Spaun, documented as active between 1494 and 1520.[46] The linguistic usage in the text strongly suggests that this transcription was produced in the Tyrol, more specifically in Brixen (Bressanone) or Bozen (Bolzano).[47] The 'relic miracles' play probably originated around the middle of the fifteenth century, but it may have been translated from an older—now lost—Latin version, given the traces of Latin discernable in the stage directions.[48]

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[43] The choice of this variant is perhaps explained by the fact that it was intended for nuns.

[44] S. RÜTTGERS, op. cit., p. 403: 'Darnach hat der König einen jungen Sohn, der war bei zehen Jahrne alt'.

[45] Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 4E codex H 27, fol. 47r–89v (reference in: M. CURSCHMANN, art. cit., n. 23); A. von KELLER, *Fastnachspiele aus der 15. Jahrhundert*, 1858, pp. 54–89; E. UKENA, *Die deutschen Mirakelspiele des Spätmittelalters*, 1. *Studien*, 2. *Texte* (*Arbeiten zur mittleren deutschen Literatur und Sprache*, 1), Frankfurt, 1975, 1, pp. 223–295, 2, pp. 455–559; H. BIERMANN, *Die deutschsprachigen Legendenspiele des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Diss.), Cologne, 1977, pp. 187–218.

[46] M. CURSCHMANN, art. cit., p. 55.

[47] E. UKENA, op. cit., 1, pp. 224–225. The vicinity of Brixen perhaps favoured the creation of this spectacle, given its age-old strategic position on the north-south route (the present-day 'Brenner Pass') for crusades and pilgrimages to Jerusalem. No iconographic references to the Legend of the Cross have been found preserved in Brixen itself. Neustift Abbey, founded In 1190 by Augustinian canons, was a copy of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and dedicated to Saint Michael. On architectural copies, see: G. BRESC-BAUTIER, *Les imitations du Saint-Sépulchre de Jérusalem (IXe–XVe siècles). Archéologie d'une dévotion*, in *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité*, 50, 1974, pp. 319–342; the author does not mention Neustift.

[48] 'Reliquienmirakel' is a term used by E. UKENA, op. cit., 1, p. 223.

The play, which consists or 1,929 lines of verse mostly in the form of dialogue, was performed over two days. The first day was devoted to the Finding of the Cross, the second to the Exaltation of the Cross.[49] The first play, the Finding, presented both the battle between Maxentius and Constantine, and the Finding of the Cross by Helena and Judas. It is worth noting that Judas was thrown not into a dry well but into prison—a prison being easier to stage than a well, perhaps.[50] The second play, the Exaltation, included Chosroes' theft of the Cross and Heraclius's victory and restitution of the Cross. The miracle play ended with a tailpiece in which the devil is vanquished. No fewer than forty-one characters appear in the Finding, and forty-two in the Exaltation. This large cast includes many extras and walk-ons, such as the troops of Maxentius and Constantine, the angels supporting Helena and the Jews she questions (who all have biblical names: Jacob, Isaac, Nathan, Pedak, Abraham and Judas). There is also a 'Bishop of the Jews'—Caiaphas. Jews and soldiers also fill the scenes on the second day. Strangely, Chosroes' companions also have Jewish rather than Persian names.[51] By the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the *Legenda Aurea* reached its saturation point, many plays based on the Legend of the Cross had appeared.[52]

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[49] H. BIERMANN, op. cit., pp. 188–189.

[50] E. UKENA, op. cit., 2, vs. 675–721, pp. 498–500. In a mid-15th century painting produced by an anonymous master from Cologne, now in the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Judas (with hat and beard) sits behind the bars of a cube-shaped building. A further two scenes are integrated into the same space, with a row of six trees in the background. Helena, with crown and halo, stands in the centre in the narrow painting and looks down on the hatted and bearded Judas, who now stands in a pit and hands a *tau*-shaped cross to Helena. A sharp pick is still lying to the left of the pit. The pit alludes to the *Legenda Aurea* and the Judas Cyriacus legend, in which it is said that the Cross is found at a depth of twenty yards. The scene on the left of the painting shows the Testing of the Cross. A beardless man (possibly Judas has shaved to mark his renunciation of Judaism) places a *tau*-shaped cross on an emaciated semi-naked man who raises himself up. The other two crosses lie on either side of the body. Thus both the Finding and Testing of the Cross are represented in a single space, a development typical of the 15th century, when a single undivided spatial setting contained various motifs. Sometimes the Finding is in the foreground and the Testing in the background, sometimes the reverse. The prison is also depicted in a miniature accompanying the *Miroir Historial* made for the French king John the Good (1325–1350); Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms. 5080, fol. 316. A.W. BYVANCK, *Les principaux manuscrits à peintures conservé dans les collections publiques du royaume des Pays-Bas*, Paris, 1931, pp. 88. Here, Judas, with a long beard, sits locked up in a circular building.

[51] List of characters in E. UKENA, op. cit., 2, pp. 469–471.

[52] On this, see: R. BERGMANN, *Katalog der deutschsprachigen geistlichen Spiele und*



Fig. 42. *Finding of the Cross. Legenda Aurea* translated by Jean de Vignay, ca. 1400. Rennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 266, fol. 128.

There is an abundance of illustrated manuscripts of the *Legenda Aurea* and its translations. This is not the place to deal with each and every miniature. Nonetheless, I will mention four examples that are noteworthy for their text-image relationship.

In a *Legenda Aurea* of around 1400 from northern France, in a translation by Jean de Vignay, Judas discovers a cross among the roots of a green tree (fig. 42).[53] Helena, crowned, and attired in royal blue, points to the cross that he has laid bare. His back bent, Judas raises his sharp pick above his head, ready for the next downward stroke, hiding his face in the process.[54] A second man prepares to

Marienklagen des Mittelalters (*Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*), Munich, 1986; Holy Cross play of Augsburg (p. 10), Aarau (p. 34), Lucerne (pp. 85, 95, 99, 103, 106). Luther would call the *Legenda Aurea* the *lügende* (lying) legend. His rejection was based on theological grounds, not on a critical study of the sources.

[53] Rennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 266, fol. 128.

[54] Jacobus de Voragine describes Judas as working manfully (W.G. RYAN, op. cit., 1, p. 282).

pull the cross from the ground.[55] The tree with the newly discovered cross at its foot rises vertically from Golgotha. Hill and tree are two aspects of the archetype of the navel of the world: the *axis mundi*, which in Christianity is associated with Golgotha and the Tree of Life. Typologically, the Tree of Life is connected with the Cross, so that the Cross is likewise the conveyer of cosmic significance. This association is also expressed in the miniature: on the one hand the Cross is hidden (thus unfruitful) beneath the earth; on the other the Cross is the seed (albeit 'concealed'), from which the green tree shoots. In the miniature the transition from the Old Testament (concealment, ignorance of Christ) to the New (revelation, the light of truth) is typologically augmented by the axial-topographical symbiosis between Cross and tree. It is in this iconographic combination that the tree becomes the *Lignum vitae* and the familiar cross acquires its paradisal and eschatological message of redemption.

In a mid-fourteenth-century French translation now in London the focus is on the Testing of the Cross and the miniature shows a 'test case' in a sarcophagus (fig. 43).[56] The lid of the tomb (which is painted with spots) has been laid aside and the top half of a young man can be seen, right hand raised. Helena, crowned and accompanied by a lady, watches from the right of the miniature. Both she and her companion have also raised their right hands. The three simultaneous gestures formally direct the eye to the figure on the other side of the tomb: a bearded and haloed man, a Christ type, who gestures in turn to a cross. Given the tomb and the man's outward appearance it would be easy to confuse what is pictured here with the Raising of Lazarus. Only the presence of the Cross and the queen, and of course the miniature's relationship to the text in

[55] In the Judas Cyriacus Legend it is said that Judas receives help; not so in the *Legenda Aurea*, however. These changes of characters are the result of the iconographic enhancing of the Finding of the Cross with several onlookers. There are other iconographic adjustments, by which Judas attains social 'promotion' and watches at Helena's side. In this case Judas acquires a status analogous to that of Macarius.

[56] London, British Library, Ms. add. 17275, fol. 34. Next to the text of the Finding of the Cross, Helena presents the Cross on Golgotha to four Jews (as indicated by their caps). She points both to the Cross and the ground, as if she were expounding the Finding of the Cross to a small number of Jews. This iconography apologetically demonstrates that the Jews can no longer deny the truth of the Cross—this is the reality in the Finding of the Cross. The iconography is related to the presenting and/or flanking of the Cross by Helena and Judas, based on the Byzantine type of Helena and Constantine.

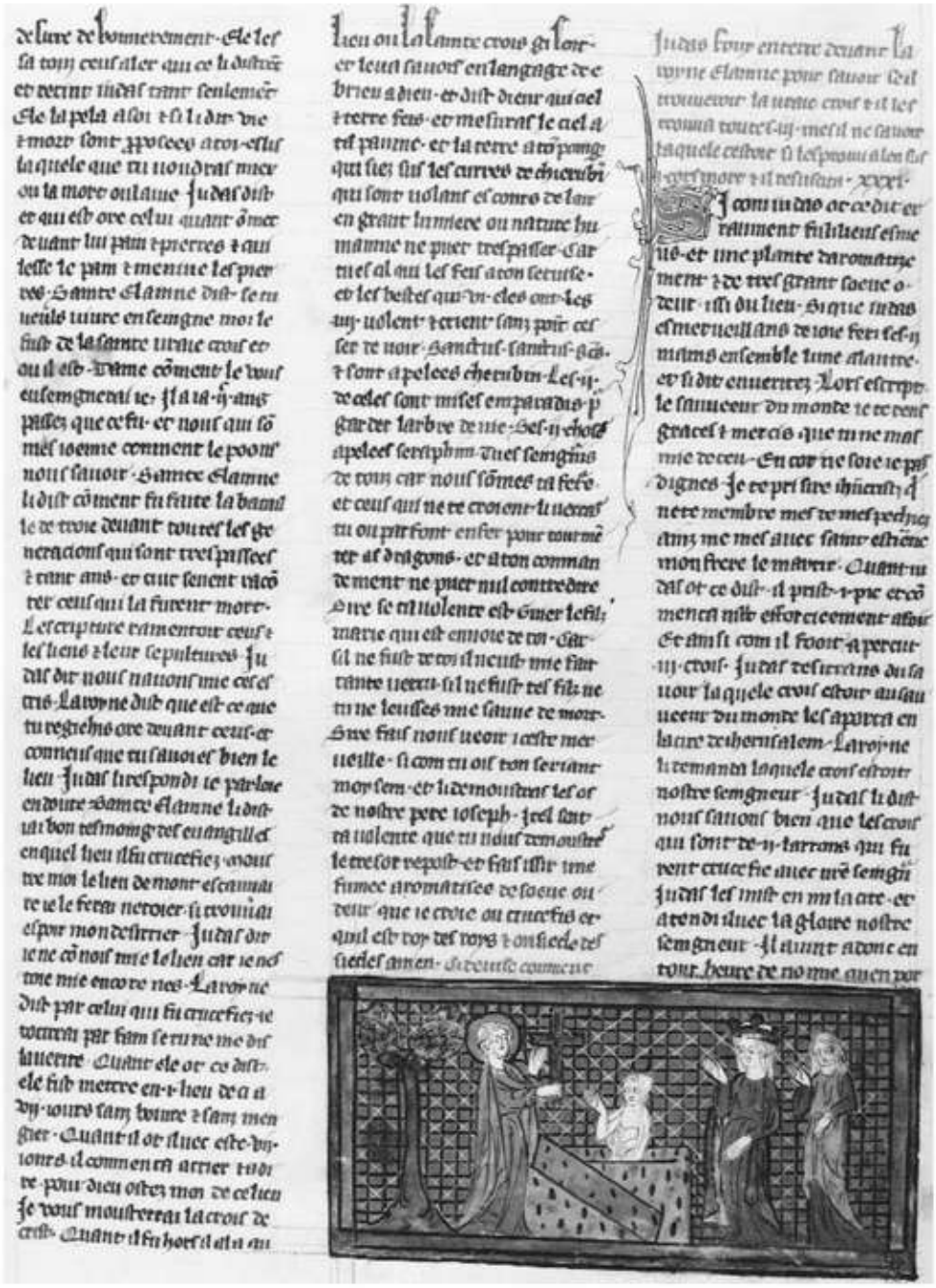


Fig. 43. *Testing of the Cross.* French legendary, mid-14th century. London, British Library, Add. Ms. 17275, fol. 34.

the manuscript, ensure that no mistake can be made. Even so, it is not impossible that the iconography associated with Lazarus (or possibly Naaman) influenced that of the Testing of the Cross. Indeed, Paulinus of Nola compared the two events. The miracles performed by Christ are transferred to the relic of the Cross, and the character of Judas is grafted onto that of Christ.

But the reverse is also true. On a fifth or sixth-century ivory pyx, Christ raises Lazarus with a cross in his hand (fig. 44).[57] Christ appears with the *labarum* after the Resurrection (*Noli me tangere*, Doubting Thomas, the Descent into Hell). The depiction of Christ is thus, in a certain sense, an anachronism, but shows that the Cross and the Host are equivalent to the Messiah, the Saviour. Thus the iconography must be understood from the pyx's function as a container for consecrated wafers.

Seldom is the legend of the Finding of the Cross illustrated with the Testing alone; usually the Finding itself is preferred. Nonetheless, in a *Legenda Aurea* from Tournai the Testing has been chosen (fig. 45).[58] Remarkably, there is no body to be seen, only a cloth-covered coffin on a stretcher. Helena, in a blue gown and red cloak and carrying a sceptre, looks on as a bearded man in a yellow tunic and a hood touches the coffin with a cross. Two other men also observe the event. Could the distinguished man behind Helena be Constantine? There are several German examples in which Constantine is present at both the Finding and the Testing of the Cross, providing an iconographic synthesis of the Constantine and Helena passages in the *Legenda Aurea*. Nowhere in the legends is it suggested that Constantine journeyed to Jerusalem, though it is said that he urged Helena to go. Alternatively, this figure could be Helena's husband, Constantius.

In the French translation of a *Legenda Aurea* made in Bruges for Jean IV (ca. 1460) Helena displays the (*tau*-shaped) Cross and the nails in a chapel with an altar (the Church of the Holy Sepulchre?)

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[57] Musée de Cluny. Also depicted on the pyx: Christ heals the blind, likewise with the Cross, and Christ and the Samaritan Woman; E. MAFFEI, *La reservation eucharistique jusqu'à la Renaissance*, Brussels, 1942, p. 37, fig. 5.

[58] Tournai, Bibliothèque de la ville, cod. 127, 15th-cent., fol. 147v; an Exaltation of the Cross on fol. 268. Heraclius is on horseback and in armour, as are his knights. He carries the Cross upright. Above the gateway, which is filled with gold leaf, an angel addresses him.



Fig. 44. *Raising of Lazarus.* Pyx, 5th or 6th century. Paris, Musée de Cluny.



Fig. 45. *Testing of the Cross. Legenda Aurea*, 15th century, Tournai. Tournai, Bibliothèque de la Ville, cod. 127, fol. 147v.

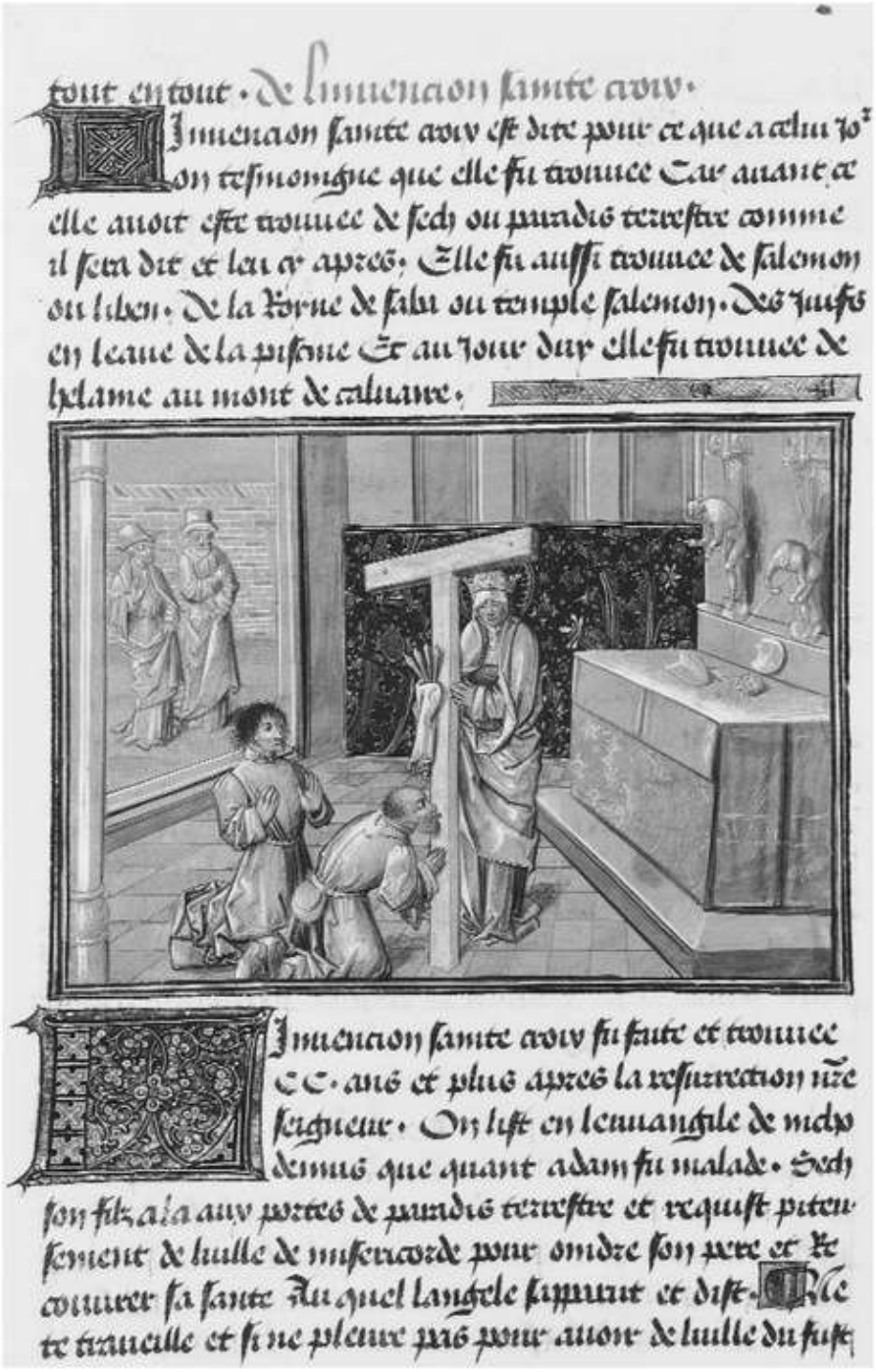


Fig. 46. *Helena and the old idols. Legenda Aurea*, French translation made for Jean IV, Bruges, ca. 1460. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 672–5(3), fol. 242v.

(fig. 46).[59] The onlookers and kneeling worshippers in the miniature can see how the old idols shatter and topple from their places when the True Cross and the Holy Nails are presented. This combination of presentation and idol worship is rare. The found and displayed Cross triumphs over pagan idolatry. The *mirabilium* that Jacobus appends to the Finding of the Cross also concerns the idolizing of the Ethiopian king. The scene appears near to the description of the destruction of the temple of Venus that stood on the site where the Constantinian basilica would later be built.

From the fifteenth century the Finding and Exaltation of the Cross became important motifs in monumental art. We will examine the context in which the commissioning of these works of art must be situated and whether conspicuous core areas can be identified.

Northern Germany and the Teutonic Order. Between Tempzin and Marienwerder

In the Schwerin *Staatliches Museum* is the *Tempziner* altarpiece from the *Antoniter-Präzeptorei* of Tempzin, made in a Wismar workshop in 1411 (figs 47a–47b).[60] This date is derived from a charter of Johan Schelp of Wismar, who commissioned the triptych.[61] On the centre panel the Crucifixion is depicted. On either side of the Crucifixion the space is divided into upper and lower registers, as are the wings, to give a further eight individual scenes. These are read from top left to top right and continue from bottom left to bottom right. Depicted in succession are the Agony in the Garden, the Betrayal, Christ before Pilate, the Scourging at the Pillar, the Crowning with

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[59] New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 672–5(3), fol. 242v. Further in this manuscript: fol. 61: Sylvester interprets Constantine's dream; fol. 77: Elevation of the Cross.

[60] H. REIFFERSCHEID, *Der Tempziner Altar* (*Mecklenburgische Bilderhefte*, 4), Rostock, 1925, pp. 3–17, pls. I–VIIIb; A. STANGE, *Deutsche Malerei der Gotik*, 3. *Norddeutschland in der Zeit von 1400 bis 1450*, Liechtenstein, 1969 (repr.), pp. 198–200, fig. 240. From 1421 a painters' workshop is mentioned in the Wismar town charters; H. REIFFERSCHEID, op. cit., p. 15. The triptych was given to the museum in 1905; ibid., p. 4. It was in the process of restoration just at the time I had hoped to examine it (20 July 1994).

[61] A. STANGE, op. cit., p. 198; H. REIFFERSCHEID, op. cit., p. 4, Johan Schelp was a friend and benefactor of the Antonians. At that time the prior was Peter Barlonis (1390–1417); ibid., p. 3.

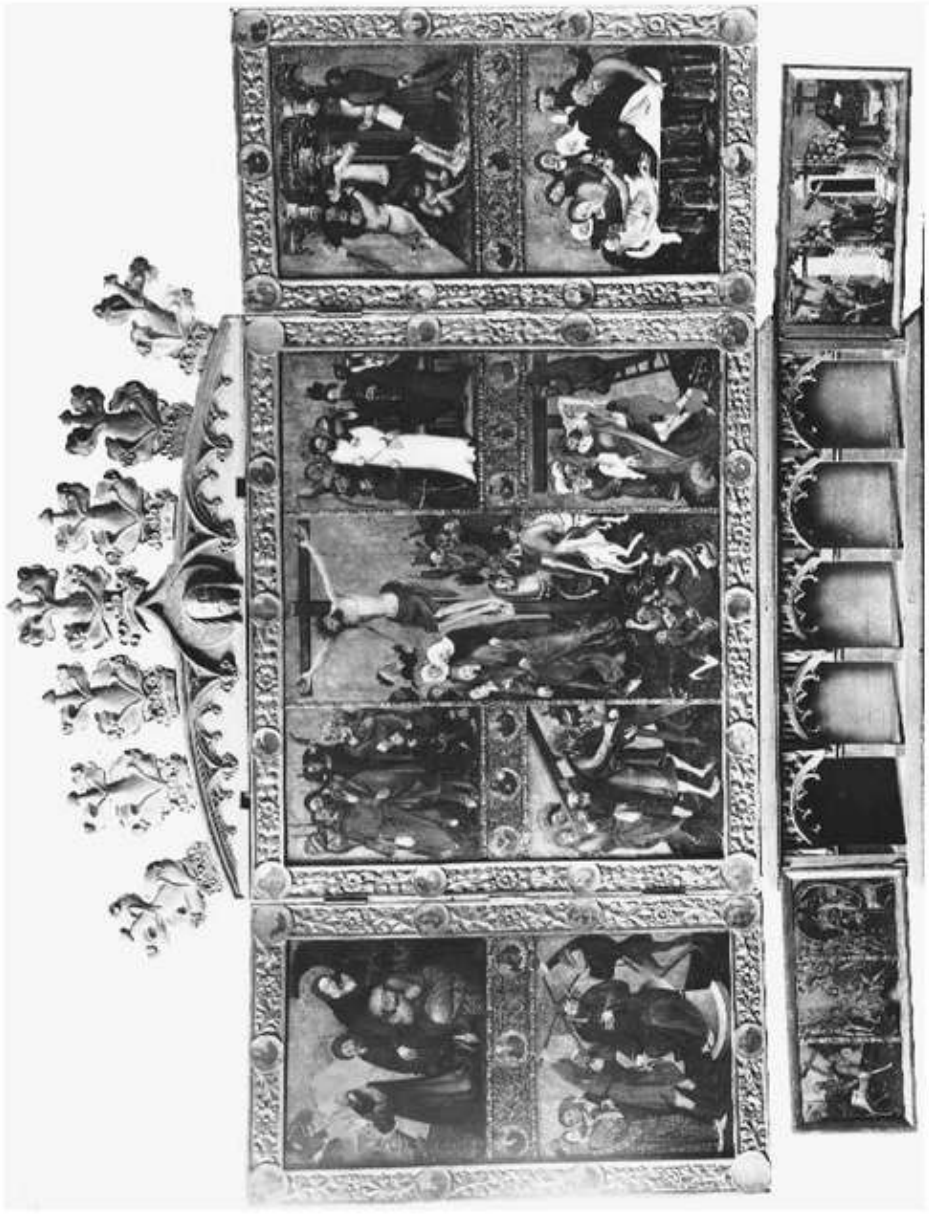


Fig. 47a. *Tempziner altarpiece.* Triptych with predella, open, Wismar, 1411, from Tempzin Priory. Schwerin, Staatliches Museum.

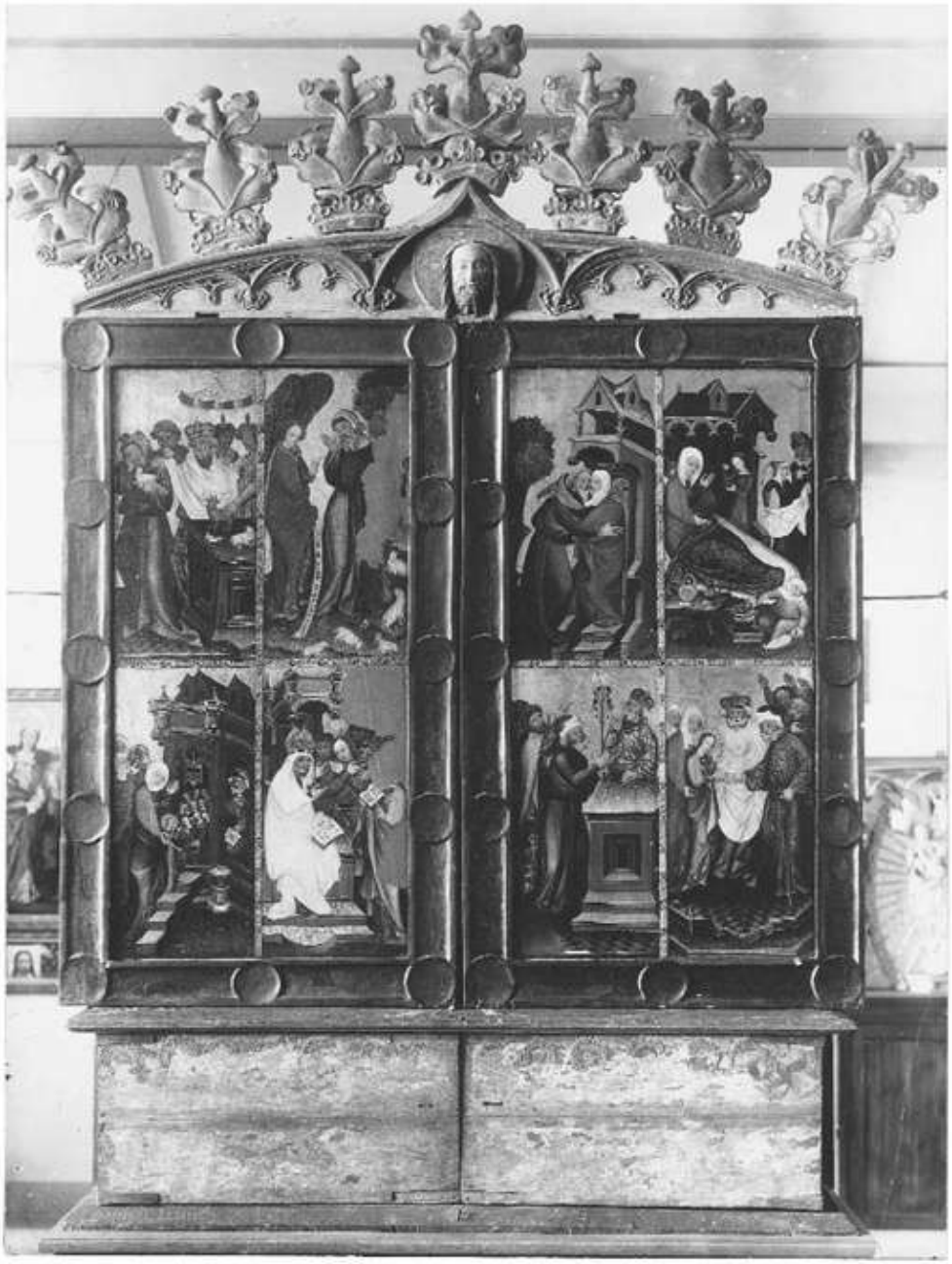


Fig. 47b. *Tempziner altarpiece*. Triptych with predella, closed, Wismar, 1411, from Tempzin Priory. Schwerin, Staatliches Museum.

Thorns, Christ carrying the Cross, the Descent from the Cross and the Entombment. The triptych still has its original frame of acanthus leaves in relief, punctuated by painted medallions featuring prophets and banderoles. The leaves are repeated on the decorative finials that arc over a head of Christ above the central panel. The painted bars dividing the upper and lower registers also incorporate twelve medallions in which are depicted the Apostles.

But our attention in this case is drawn to the predella. The five little recesses in its central section are now empty, but the wings, each containing three scenes, illustrate the Heraclius legend.[62] On the left wing a mounted king carries the Cross (fig. 47c). This is not Heraclius, however, for the banner that follows the king is associated in the next scene with the Chosroes dynasty. Here Heraclius and Chosroes' son are engaged in single combat on a bridge over the Danube. Heraclius wears a crowned helm with a cross and his flag bears the symbol of the Cross. According to the legend's chronology the first scene must therefore be connected with Chosroes' theft of the Cross. The last scene is the decapitation of the Persian king. He seems to be enthroned within a sphere, supported and/or drawn by two horses.[63] In this 'cosmic sphere' are the sun and the moon, the cockerel and the Cross on Chosroes' right, just as described in the *Legenda Aurea*: 'He built a gold and silver tower studded with jewels, and placed in it images of the sun, the moon and the stars. [. . .] and decreed that all should call him God. [. . .] He sat on the throne in the shrine as the Father, put the wood of the cross on his right in place of the Son, and a cock on his left in place of the Holy Spirit. He commanded that he be called the Father.'[64]

In Christianity, the cock symbolizes vigilance (because it crows for the dawn), the Resurrection or Peter's denial of Christ.[65] It is this

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[62] The cycle is by a later master who was no longer working in the style of the atelier of Master Bertram. See A. STANGE, op. cit., pp. 198–199.

[63] The horses can be compared with the miniature in Alexander of Bremen's Apocalypse, now in Cambridge (fig. 30a). In the Brunswick wall paintings (ca. 1240–1250) (fig. 30a), the horses of the cosmic throne—which is depicted in the shape of a mandorla—are visible. In a space beneath they pull a sphere.

[64] W.G. RYAN, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 168–173, p. 169. For the specific description of Chosroes' throne Jacobus refers to the 'Mitral Office'. Here he means the *Mitrale* (1195) of Sicard of Cremona (d. 1215). Sicard's reference at *De exaltatione sanctae crucis* (PL 213, col. 421–422) is a shortened version of Honorius of Autun and John Beleth.

[65] R. CHADRABA, art. *Antichrist*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 1, Rome-Vienna, 1968, cols. 119–122, col. 121.

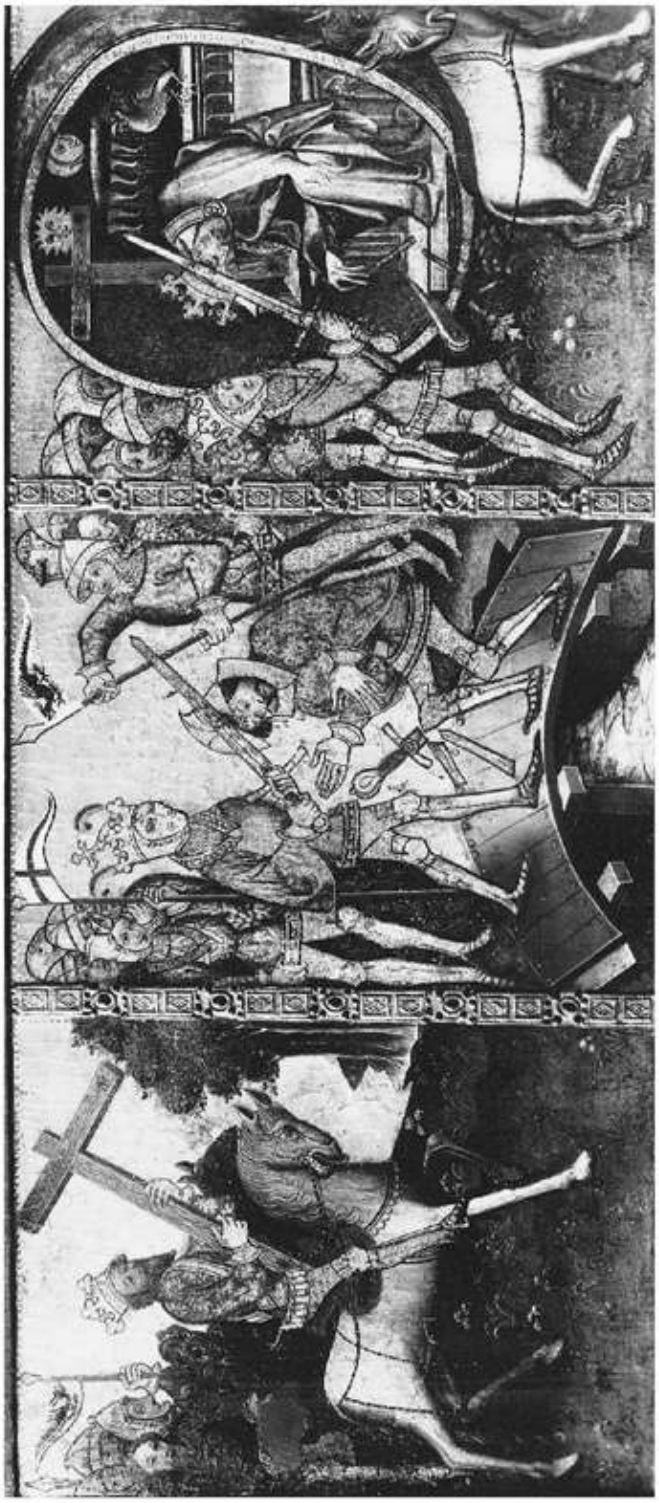


Fig. 47c. *Tempziner altarpiece.* Triptych with predella, left wing of the predella, Wismar, 1411, from Tempzin Priory. Schwerin, Staatliches Museum.

last interpretation that is particularly applicable to Chosroes. But the cock is also a proto-Christian embodiment of the sun and, appropriately, is also regarded as the symbol of fire because of its red comb.[66] Depicted next to the cock on the predella of the altarpiece are six flames. The element of fire with which the cock is associated perhaps explains the fact that in the Western description of the throne the cock takes the place of the Holy Spirit ('tongues of fire'). This blasphemous interpretation is reinforced by the number six—the number of the Antichrist. In the Europe of pagan antiquity the cock was sacrificed to drive away evil powers.[67]

On the right-hand wing of the predella are three scenes showing the restitution of the Cross (fig. 47d): the return on horseback and the angel's admonition (given in a banderole); the meek barefoot entry through the (single) gate; and finally the adoration of the Cross by Heraclius and his retinue. The Cross has been placed on an altar and is flanked by burning candles. In each of the scenes the Cross is clearly intended as the Cross of Golgotha, with three holes where the nails have been driven in. And indeed, the nails are conspicuously present in the scene depicting the Descent from the Cross at the bottom right of the triptych's centre panel. The adoration of the Cross was a component of both feasts of the Cross (3 May and 14 September) as well as of Good Friday. The Cross relic was revealed on the altar, usually after it had been carried in procession. It may also be that the predella was only opened on 14 September. Whatever was depicted on the outsides of the predella's wings is almost completely lost, but it is still possible to make out fourteen haloes, which probably belonged to the Auxiliary Saints, the 'Fourteen Holy Helpers in Need'.[68]

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[66] M. CAZENAVE, art. *Coq*, in *Encyclopédie des Symboles* (French trans. Fr. PERIGAUT van *Knaurs Lexikon der Symbole*, ed. H. BIEDERMANN, 1989), Turin, 1996, pp. 160–161, p. 160. See also: *Literaire, kunsthistorische en volksculturele aspecten van de haan* (exh. cat.), ed. S. TOP, Leuven, 1992, p. 330 ff.

[67] M. CAZENAVE, art. cit., p. 160.

[68] These fourteen saints were grouped together because of their roles as *auxiliatores* and *intercessores*. Three bishops: Denys, Erasmus and Blaise; three virgins: Barbara, Margaret, Catharine; three knights: George, Acacius, Eustace; a doctor: Pantaleon; a monk: Giles; a deacon: Cyriacus; a young man: Vitus; and finally Christopher. The cult of the Fourteen Holy Helpers originated in the 14th century, largely thanks to mendicant friars, and first spread throughout Bavaria. The cult was particularly popular in pilgrims' churches and is of course also associated with votive worship; J. DÜNNINGER, art. *Vierzehn Nothelfer*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 8, Rome-Vienna, 1976, cols. 546–550, col. 547.

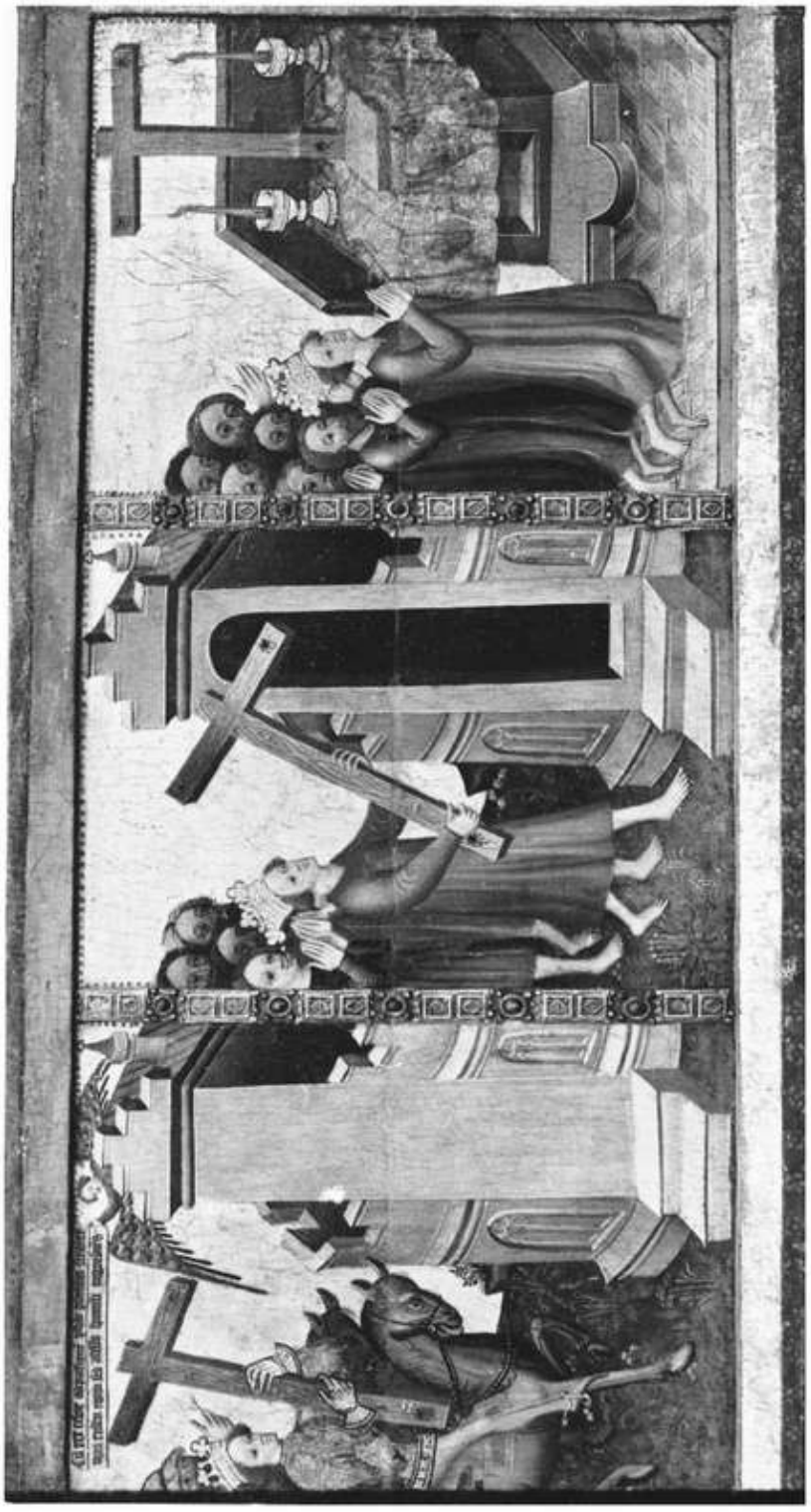


Fig. 47d. *Tempziner altarpiece*. Triptych with predella, right wing of the predella, Wismar, 1411, from Tempzin Priory. Schwerin, Staatliches Museum.

Though little is known about this altarpiece, we do know that it belonged to the Order of the Hospital Brothers of St Antony in Tempzin.[69] The Antonians not only cared for the sick, they also took an active part in the battle against the heathen. Tempzin Priory was founded in 1222. The construction of a church and monastic house in stone was begun in 1400.[70] With its many relics, the hospital was a well-known place of pilgrimage.[71] Thus it may be that the altarpiece was commissioned when the church was being built and, according to a record of 1811, that it stood on the high altar, although, given the iconography, it may also have been intended for a crossing altar, situated between the choir and the nave.[72] Could it be that the predella's five little recesses accommodated relics[73]—more specifically a relic of the Holy Cross, which drew sick pilgrims to the priory in hope of a cure?[74] The Fourteen Holy Helpers generally appear in pilgrims' hospitals and sometimes also in combination with the iconography of the Legend of the Cross.[75]

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[69] L. JÜRSS, *Staatliches Museum Schwerin. Kunstsammlungen, Schlösser und Gärten, Galeriebaude*, Rostock, 1991, p. 72.

[70] H. REIFFERSCHEID, op. cit., p. 3.

[71] This was mentioned in the priory archives in the year 1415; IDEM, op. cit., p. 5.

[72] IDEM, op. cit., p. 4.

[73] IDEM, op. cit., p. 11.

[74] The relationship between Legend of the Cross iconography and the hospital is found elsewhere. In the Leuven Municipal Museum is a small panel (47cm × 3.6cm) depicting the Testing of the Cross, dated ca. 1600 and originally from the infirmary of the Grand Beguinage. In the chancel of the Church of the Grand Beguinage there was an altar dedicated to the Holy Cross, and one convent of the Beguinage was also devoted to the Finding of the Cross. In the foreground of this panel lies a dead youth, a cross is laid on top of him by Bishop Macarius; J. CRAB, P.V. MAES and L. VAN BUYTEN, *Inventaris kerk van het Groot-Begijnhof Leuven* (*Bronnen voor de kunstgeschiedenis van het Arrondissement Leuven*, Reeks A: *Inventarissen*, I), Leuven, 1966, p. 31, no. 5/5; M. SMEYERS, *De proef van het Ware Kruis*, in *Schatten der armen. Het artistiek en historisch bezit van het O.C.M.W., Leuven* (exh. cat.), Leuven, 1988, no. 54, pp. 112–114, fig. 52.

[75] The iconographic connection between the Legend of the Cross and the Fourteen Holy Helpers can be seen for example on the Holy Cross triptych (ca 1430) in the Nuremberg pilgrim's hospital (now in Nuremberg, Friedenskirche). Here the *Nothelfer* are represented on the central panel and the inside of the wings. The closed wings are occupied on the left by the Finding and Testing of the Cross (together in one scene); on the right by the humble Heraclius who relinquishes the Cross to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and then adores it on an altar. The iconography is motivated by the church's peregrine importance; P. STRIEDER, *Tafelmalerei in Nürnberg. 1350–1550*, Königstein im Taunus, 1993, p. 33 en no. 15, pp. 176–177 and figs. 237–241. I noted a second altarpiece in the cathedral of Wolframs-Eschenbach. It was carved by Michael Wohlgemut (after 1480) with in the centre

Closed, the triptych displays eight scenes from the Life of the Virgin. From upper to lower register and from left to right are depicted the rejection of Joachim's offering in the Temple, the angel commanding Joachim to meet Anna at the Golden Gate, the meeting of Joachim and Anna, the birth of Mary, the presentation of Mary in the Temple, the education of Mary in the Temple, Joseph and the flowering rod, and the betrothal of Mary. Mary's childhood is described in the apocryphal Gospels, particularly Pseudo-Matthew and the Protevangelium of St James.[76]

These various motifs relate to those on the inside of the triptych. Saewulf (1103) already makes a connection between the meeting at the *Porta Aurea* and the entry of both Christ and Heraclius into Jerusalem.[77] According to Sir John Mandeville (1322) Mary's presentation in the Temple alludes to the *Templum Domini* or *Salomoni* and there too Mary learned her psalter.[78] Around the fifteenth century, under the influence of the Franciscan *custodies*, the topographic symbolism attached to the Temple was transferred to the Holy Sepulchre. Those things which in the Bible are clearly connected with the Temple are now also associated with the Holy Sepulchre. Thus, in the scene of Mary's presentation, the lamp in the building makes it clear that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is the new 'Temple'. This is the lamp which, so says Mandeville, hangs before the Holy Sepulchre and goes out on Good Friday, only to be miraculously relighted at the Resurrection (some traditions maintain Saturday) and thereafter to burn for the rest of the liturgical year (some main-

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a Finding of the Cross, and on the wings John and Paul (martyrs under Julian the Apostate) with the knights Martin and Gangolf in the background. The predella is composed of the fourteen Holy Helpers. H. REIFFERSCHEID, op. cit., p. 11, identifies the fourteen figures of the *Tempziner* triptych as the twelve Apostles flanked by a double depiction of Saint Anthony.

[76] M. NITZ, art. *Marienleben*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 3, Rome-Vienna, 1971, cols. 212–233, col. 212.

[77] *Peregrinationes tres. Saewulf. John of Würzburg. Theodericus*, eds. R.B.C. HUYGENS and J.H. PRIOR (*Corpus christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 139), Turnhout, 1994, p. 68: 'Ibi est porta civitatis in orientali parte Templi, quae vocatur Aurea, ubi Ioachim, pater beatae Mariae, iubente angelo domini occurrit uxori suae Annae; pro eandam portam dominus Iesus, veniens a Bethania die Palmarum, sedens in asyno intravit civitatem Ierusalem cantantibus pueris *osanna filio David*. Per ipsam portam intravit Heraclius imperator, victor rediens a Persia cum dominica cruce [. . .]'.

[78] T. WRIGHT (ed. and trans.), *Early Travels in Palestine. Arculf, Willibald, Bernard, Saewulf, Sigurd, Benjamin of Tudela, Sir John Mandeville, de la Brocquière and Maundrell*, London, 1848, repr. New York, 1968, p. 171.

tain that it is relighted by an angel).[79] In the scene depicting the angel's command to Joachim in the Temple the lamp is also burning.

The outsides of the wings are taken up with sites in Jerusalem (in particular the Holy Sepulchre and the *Porta Aurea*) that fulfil a typological role on the centre panel and the predella. This iconographic emphasis can be explained by the Order. Although the Antonians were active hospitallers they perhaps also felt that they were related to the Knights of St Antony, the lay order founded in 1382 by Albert I of Bavaria to take part in the reconquest of the Holy Land.[80] They were part of a wider context. In the thirteenth century in northern Germany a tradition of crusading orders had arisen, of which the Teutonic Order was one. Under the leadership of Grand Master Hermann von Salza and in close contact with Emperor Frederick II the Order not only served in the struggle against the infidel in Palestine, but also sought to advance the frontiers of Christendom into the Baltic.

The state founded by the knights of the Teutonic Order, with its headquarters in Marienburg in Prussia (the present-day Malbork in Poland), was hugely influential up until the late Middle Ages—indeed, until the last Grand Master became a Protestant in the sixteenth century.[81] Yet the Order could never establish effective dominion

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[79] T. WRIGHT, op. cit., p. 166.

[80] K. HOFMANN, art. *Antoniusorden*, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 1, Freiburg, 1957, cols. 676–677. The iconography of the Fourteen Holy Helpers also points to Bavaria.

[81] See: E. CHRISTIANSEN, *The Northern Crusades. The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier. 1100–1525*, London, 1980; U. ARNOLD and G. BOTT, *800 Jahre Deutscher Orden* (exh. cat.), Gütersloh, 1990, pp. 45–57. The south entrance of Marienburg castle (chapel of St Anne) comprises three great doors. In the tympanum above the left door is the Ascension of Christ; above the right door is the Last Judgement. The central tympanum (ca. 1340) is occupied by a depiction of the Finding and Exaltation of the Cross. In the bottom register Helena is shown interrogating the Jews on the right, and the Finding of the Cross is on the left. The two scenes are separated by an image of a basilica (the Constantinian Martyrium?). In the foreground of the interrogation scene is a fire; Judas kneels in front of it and pleads with Helena. The Finding of the Cross is split into the discovery itself (on the left) and the submission of Judas (on the right). In the centre a separate motif may perhaps be identified in Helena's encouragement to start the digging (she pushes Judas in the back). Judas is an old man; he finds one cross which surfaces against a mountain slope. The iconography continues on the left of the middle register. Helena and a companion are holding two crosses (presentation). Next, she kneels before a figure who raises himself on a horizontal cross and at the foot of a vertical cross. Further, an enthroned old man is depicted with the Cross in his right hand. This is probably Chosroes. At the far right are an emperor and a group of horsemen. Perhaps

throughout the whole of eastern Europe. The still largely pagan Lithuania was always difficult to control. When the Lithuanian ruler Jagello married the heiress of Poland in 1386 the Order's influence was weakened there as well.

Strikingly it was in 1411—the same time that mention is made of the *Tempziner* triptych commissioned by Johan Schelp—that peace was declared between Prussia and Poland.[82] The triptych is focused on Palestine in an exemplary way and alludes to Heraclius, the very prototype of crusader and peacemaker, and his protection of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Teutonic Order brings us to a painted reliquary in the form of a cupboard in Marienwerder Cathedral (figs. 48a–48b).[83] Marienwerder (the present-day Kwidzyn in Poland) was the capital of Pomerania, lying 40km south of Marienburg and likewise on the border with Poland. The reliquary was commissioned by Johannes Marienwerder, knight of the Teutonic Order and dean of the cathedral from 1388 to 1409. It houses the relics of Dorothea of Montau (d. 25 May 1394) who after her husband's death lived a life of retreat in one of the cells of the cathedral with the dean as her instructor and confessor.[84] Like the Virgin Mary, Dorothea was a patroness of

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this is Heraclius, about to destroy Chosroes' throne. In the top register the vertical axis rising to the top of the tympanum is taken up by a cross set up on a platform. This platform appears to have the profile of a throne. The whole is surrounded by a crenellated wall. Behind the cross is an angel; in front of the platform is a figure kneeling with raised hands in the company of another believer. This must be the praying Heraclius, who has 'just' restored the Cross to Golgotha. Egeria mentions a throne in that place, where the patriarch and his deacons (the profane pendant of the angel(s)) present the relic of the Cross to the people. The throne may also allude to the throne of the Last Judgement. The Last Judgement is grafted onto the restitution (transfer of the Cross by the Last Emperor) and is also represented on the tympanum above the right door. The function of the iconography must be connected with the Knights of the Cross in the castle; K.H. CLASEN, *Die mittelalterliche Bildhauerkunst im Deutschordensland Preussen*, 2 vols. Berlin, 1939, vol. 1, pp. 56–58, vol. 2, fig. 48; K.H. CLASEN, *Marienburg und Marienwerder*, Berlin, 1931; C. STEINBRECHT, *Die Wiederherstellung des marienburger Schlosses*, Berlin, 1896; B. SCHMID and K. HAUKE, *Die Marienburg*, Würzburg, 1955.

[82] U. ARNOLD and G. BOTT, op. cit., p. 55.

[83] 213cm high and 36–39cm wide when closed. A. STANGE, op. cit., 2, pp. 85–86, figs. 101–102; H. EHRENBERG, *Deutsche Malerei und Plastik von 1350–1450. Neue Beiträge zu ihrer Kenntnis aus dem ehemaligen Deutschordensgebiet*, Bonn-Leipzig, 1920, pp. 53–56, figs. 33–37.

[84] U. ARNOLD and G. BOTT, op. cit., pp. 96–97: The *Livländische Reimchronik* of the first quarter of the 15th century (Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod.



Fig. 48a. *Marienwerder cupboard reliquary*, ca. 1400. Marienwerder, Cathedral.



Fig. 48b. *Marienwerder cupboard reliquary*. The inner doors, ca. 1400. Marienwerder, Cathedral.

the Teutonic Order in Prussia.[85] Stylistic evidence also indicates that the paintings should be dated to 1400 or thereabouts.

There is no figurative painting on the outside of the reliquary's wings but when opened a complex iconographic programme is displayed. On two inner doors, behind which is the relic itself, the Exaltation of the Cross[86] (left) and the Finding of the Cross[87] (right) are portrayed. Below these scenes are respectively the risen Christ allowing Thomas to examine his wounds, and John the Evangelist presenting the dean to the enthroned Virgin and Child—the Madonna is actually portrayed in the lower register of the open right-hand wing.[88] On the left-hand wing the dean is presented to the risen Christ by his other namesake, John the Baptist. On both side and centre panels the upper and lower registers are separated by painted bands embellished with eagles and crosiers representing John the Evangelist and Johannes Marienwerder, for whom the reliquary was made.

In the topmost register of the open wings are the Annunciation (right) and the Coronation of the Virgin by Christ (left). Just below—on a level with the Exaltation and Finding scenes, thus—are, respectively, the sharing of the wine at the Last Supper, and the Adoration of the Host, displayed in a monstrance, by a group of knights. The exceptional iconographic combinations of Marian, Host, Passion and Legend of the Cross themes requires some explanation.

The Marian iconography on the Marienwerder reliquary is accounted for by the dean's specific devotion to Mary, patron saint of the Order; but it also has a typological significance. The Annunciation is on the same side as the Finding of the Cross and the Coronation of Mary is on the same side as its humble restitution. The Cross is found by Judas, using a spade. Behind him, other Jews

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Palm. Germ. 367) includes the *Siebenlilienbuch*, a collection of Dorothea's visions recorded by Johannes Marienwerder. See also: K. ZIMMERMANS, art. *Dorothea von Montau*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 6, Rome-Vienna, cols. 92–93; see further: S. RÜHLE, *Dorothea von Montau, die Heilige des Preussenlandes*, in *Westpreussischen Jahrbuch*, 1956, p. 83.

[85] On Mary as patron saint of the Teutonic Order, see: H.G. RICHERT, *Wege und Formen der Passional-überlieferung* (*Hermaea*, 40), Tübingen, 1978, p. 279; U. ARNOLD and G. BOTT, op. cit., p. 340.

[86] A. STANGE, op. cit., p. 86, wrongly identifies Constantine here.

[87] Two small scenes at the top, concealed by carved ornamentation, are hard to see. According to Stange the scenes portray Christ as the Man of Sorrows and Christ of the Last Judgement (*loc. cit.*).

[88] H. EHRENBERG, op. cit., p. 55.

look on. Helena—opposite Judas, on the left of the scene—receives a cross that has already been completely excavated. Above her floats an angel. Significantly, the angel recalls the angel of the Annunciation. Helena, like Mary, is informed by divine messenger.

On three occasions in *De obitu Theodosii* Ambrose compares Helena with Mary. The analogy is constructed around the idea of the Incarnation and the Redemption. First Helena is compared with Mary on the basis of the vanquishing of the devil (44). Secondly, Mary gave proof of the Incarnation, while Helena gave proof of the Resurrection. The triumph over death is the triumph over the devil and the redemption of the Fall. Thirdly, Mary caused God to be seen among men and Helena caused the divine banner to be raised to be a remedy for man's sins. The relic of the Cross is exemplified as the enduring redemption on earth for man which flows from the divine mystery.

Now the Cross is found, it shines with grace, which is expressed by an intrinsic exchange. Ambrose says that as Christ had visited a woman in Mary, so the Holy Spirit visited a woman in Helena, granting her insight (46). The comparison on the basis of the Annunciation is fed back to the redemption of the Fall: Mary liberates Eve and Helena redeems the emperors (47). Thus, on several levels, the Finding of the Cross is a type for the Incarnation. Like Mary, Helena bears through the spirit. Helena restores on earth (diachronically) what in Mary was restored dogmatically and mysteriously. The relic of the Cross guarantees the continuation of the divine Incarnation: the dogma is 'activated' through the senses. The connection between the Finding of the Cross and the Annunciation is also iconographically related to the connection between the Annunciation and the Crucifixion; it is the continuation of it. In a manuscript of Dante's *Divina Commedia* Giovanni di Paolo (?) (ca. 1445) illuminated the seventh canto of *Paradise* with an illustration in which Dante and Beatrice (assisted from heaven by a kneeling Emperor Justinian, surrounded by books) look down on a threefold scene (fig. 49).[89] In the centre of the picture is the Fall of Man; expelled from Eden, Adam and Eve gaze towards a pavilion in which the Annunciation is taking place, while behind the pavilion the crucified Christ hangs on the

[89] London, British Library, Ms. Yates Thompson 36, fol. 141r (90mm × 200mm); E. GULDAN, *Eva und Maria. Eine Antithese als Bildmotiv*, Graz-Cologne, 1966, p. 66, no. 52, fig. 52.



Fig. 49. *Beatrice learns about original sin and redemption. Divina Commedia,* seventh canto of *Paradise,* Giovanni di Paolo (?), ca. 1445. London, British Library, Yates Thompson Ms. 36, fol. 141r.

Cross, water and blood flowing from the wound in his side. By thus synchronically and spatially combining the Fall, Annunciation and Crucifixion the iconography concisely summarizes the doctrine of original sin and redemption.[90] The Annunciation is the seed of redemption, which is fulfilled by the death on the Cross. In the Finding of the Cross redemption is made manifest again through the relic.

The combination of the Finding of the Cross and the Annunciation is encountered elsewhere too. In the Hours of Jolanthe of Flanders (Paris 1343) the Annunciation is accompanied in the margin by the Finding of the Cross (fig. 50).[91] Judas with a beard (?) and a spade finds a cross. Opposite him Helena, crowned and haloed holds another. And in Piero della Francesca's wall paintings illustrating the Legend of the Cross in the choir of the Church of San Francesco in Arezzo (before 1466) the Annunciation is likewise typologically integrated. (fig. 88f).

If the Finding of the Cross on the Marienwerder reliquary can be connected with the Annunciation, perhaps the same applies to the Exaltation of the Cross and the Coronation of the Virgin. The meaning of the Exaltation must be sought in apocalypticism and eschatology. Heraclius is the type of the Last Emperor whose coming heralds the Last Judgement. The Coronation of Mary can thus be seen as an image of the Mediatrix at the End of Time. Heraclius must also be placed in the context of the *imitatio Christi*. He not only walks barefoot in a white garment but also bears the Cross on his shoulder, a clear reference to Christ carrying the Cross. The ceremonial bearing aloft of the Cross is engrafted onto the processions of the relic of the Cross that took place on Good Friday and the two feasts of the Cross. Here the underlying idea is the worship and

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[90] An iconographic model has not as yet been found. E. GULDAN, op. cit., p. 184. Nonetheless, there are examples in which the Fall and/or Annunciation are related to the Redemption. In the title drawing of the manuscript (1170–1185) of the *De laudibus sanctae crucis* for the Benedictine convent of Sankt Emmeram near Regensburg, Adam and Eve leave Paradise and walk towards a cleric (bishop, pope?) who proffers a cross from which shoots are escaping; this is the Cross as *Lignum vitae* (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. lat. 14159, fol. 1); E. GULDAN, op. cit., no. 38, fig. 38.

[91] London, British Library, Ms. Yates Thompson 27, Pucelle workshop, fol. 13v. In the bas-de-page: the Betrayal; above left: Mary finds Jesus in the Temple; and right, in the margin: the stigmata of St Francis. The stigmata appeared on 14 September, which explains the predilection for the legend of the Cross in Franciscan programmes. We shall return to this in the final chapter.



Fig. 50. *Finding of the Cross and Annunciation.* Hours of Jolanthe of Flanders, Pucelle (workshop), 1353. London, British Library, Yates Thompson Ms. 27, fol. 13v.

triumph of the Cross. The *elevatio* also alludes to the officiant's liturgical actions during the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. The carrying of the Cross, on the other hand, refers to Christ himself, and its function in procession is as a symbol of atonement. Heraclius is thus represented as a penitential emperor.

Reference to the Passion predominates, as is also made clear by the juxtaposition of the Last Supper and the Exaltation of the Cross. According to the Gospels the Last Supper took place a few days after Christ's entry into Jerusalem, on which Heraclius's entry, likewise via the Mount of Olives, was modelled. Jerusalem's Golden Gate was opened only for the Palm Sunday processions and the Exaltation of the Cross. John (13, 4) says that when Jesus washed the disciples' feet he removed his outer robe and retained only a linen undergarment. The description is reproduced in the *Exaltatio crucis* parent text by Hrabanus Maurus. Perhaps this motivated the combination of the two scenes. Be that as it may, Christ washing his disciples' feet is not the scene chosen. The depiction of the Last Supper may also refer to the custom of opening the reliquary on Maundy Thursday.[92]

On the right-hand wing of the Marienwerder reliquary the Last Supper is associated with the Eucharist. The Host, in a monstrance on the altar, is displayed by a priest to five kneeling knights. The theme of the iconography is the Adoration of the Host, alluding to the feast of Corpus Christi (the Thursday after Trinity Sunday).[93] Transubstantiation takes place during the Mass: the Holy Wafer becomes the body of Christ, commemorating Christ's words during the Last Supper ('this is my body'). The presence of the knights is self-explanatory, for the reliquary was commissioned by the Teutonic Order. Marienwerder was the capital of Pomerania where the Teutonic Order was active and whose headquarters were in nearby Marienburg. Thus the Communion of the Apostles and the Adoration of the Host are set side by side. The knights who fought the pagans in the Holy Land and Europe also regarded themselves as Christ's missionaries—remember that the crusaders considered Heraclius as their patron and example. The Marian iconography can also be connected to

[92] The centre panel of the Stavelot triptych was surrounded by semicircular indentations which allude to the *mensa* of the Last Supper. See Chapter Two.

[93] The doctrine of transubstantiation was formulated at the fourth Lateran Council. The universal observance of Corpus Christi was ordered by Pope Urban IV in 1264.

the scene with the knights, for Mary was the patron saint of the Teutonic Order. The Finding of the Cross in the *Alte Passional*, mentioned above, was supplemented with episodes from the lives of Mary and the Apostles; the translation was specifically intended for the Teutonic Order.

Both the Cross and the Host are adored as the body of Christ.[94] There is, however, a fundamental difference: during Holy Mass the Host is 'really' transformed into the sacrificed body of Christ. The Host is, dogmatically, the body of Christ; the relic of the Cross is not. The Cross perpetuates the presence of God among men: it saves, heals, even resurrects the dead.[95] It sustains the powers of the crucified Christ *pars pro toto*. Which is why, despite this dogmatic difference, the Host is often kept together with the relic of the Cross or concealed in a crucifix.[96] Sometimes a splinter of the Cross might even be consumed, or soaked in water which is then drunk.[97]

Host and Cross are also connected in the Good Friday ritual.[98] In the high Middle Ages—though perhaps it was already an early medieval custom—not only were crosses, crucifixes and/or relics of the Cross laid on or in graves but also, often, a consecrated wafer, in other words 'the body of Christ'.[99] The Cross and interment are

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[94] See: G.J.C. SNOEK, *De eucharistie- en reliekenverering in de Middeleeuwen. De middeleeuwse eucharistieverering in onderlinge samenhang*, Amsterdam, 1989, pp. 2–3.

[95] In the allegorical depiction of the 'Host Tree' the tree bears apples and holy wafers. These are shared out by Eve and Mary, to unbelievers and believers respectively. The expression *Mors per Evam, vita per Mariam* (Jerome) may provide the basis for this iconography. A serpent winds itself around the tree. The *recapitulatio* of sacred history is condensed in the Fall on the one hand and its redemption by the death on the Cross on the other. This is shown not only by the presence of Mary and Eve, but also by the combination of the holy wafers with a crucifix and the apple with the skull. Here too a relationship is established between Host and Cross (sacrificial death), between Eve and Mary, and between Christ and Adam. Helena is the new Mary in the Finding of the Cross. One of the earliest 'Host Trees' was produced in 1420 by the illuminator Johannes von Zittau (Breslau, Städtbibliothek, Cod. M. 1006, fol. 3v). The miniature appears at the start of Genesis. E. GULDAN, op. cit., Graz-Cologne, 1966, p. 140, no. 157 and fig. 157.

[96] A. ANGENENDT, *Heilige und Reliquien. Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart*, Munich, 1994, p. 217.

[97] G. HENDERSON, *Early Medieval* (*Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching*, 29), n.p., 1972, p. 219. Apparently the relic was also an ideal remedy for snake bite. It is striking that the remedy still alludes to the brazen serpent on a pole set up by Moses. This was seen as a *prefigura* of the Cross, and evidently lived on in popular medicine.

[98] H. DÜNNINGER, *Zur Frage der Hostiensepulchren und Reliquienrekondierungen in Bildwerken*, in *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde*, 9, 1986, pp. 72–84.

[99] O. NUSSBAUM, *Die Aufbewahrung der Eucharistie*, Bonn, 1979, pp. 187–189.

complementary in liturgical practice and visual tradition and include the Finding and Exaltation of the Cross in their rites and iconography as well.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries worship of the Host was flourishing.[100] Host and theophoric processions, which are documented from as early as the eleventh century,[101] had evolved into very popular events that were no longer restricted to the feast of Corpus Christi. From the eleventh century the Host was also carried in procession on Palm Sunday[102] (in place of an image of Christ or the Cross) and, from the second half of the fourteenth century, also at Easter, Whitsun, Ascension and on the feasts of the Finding and Exaltation of the Cross.[103] The processions were led by the bishop or priest and ended in the triumphant exposition of the Host on the high altar.[104] Its adoration by knights is depicted on the reliquary. The increasing celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi ensured that from the fifteenth century the Thursday Mass was devoted to the sacrament.[105] These developments in liturgical practice explain why the Last Supper (Maundy Thursday), the Finding of the Cross and the Exaltation of the Cross are brought together iconographically on one register.[106] The Exaltation of the Cross refers in turn to Palm Sunday, also a feast day on which carrying the Host in procession was customary.

The relationship between the Adoration of the Host and the Legend of the Cross is also apologetic. It was not unusual for Host legends

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[100] For the late-medieval adoration of the Eucharist, see also: B. BAERT, *Éénduidig dogma. Veelzijdig beeld. Omtrent de mystieke wijnpers*, in *Dirk Bouts. Een Vlaams Primitief te Leuven*, eds. K. and M. SMEYERS (exh. cat.), Leuven, 1998, pp. 103–119.

[101] O. NUSSBAUM, op. cit., p. 142.

[102] IDEM, op. cit., p. 146.

[103] IDEM, op. cit., p. 159: we know of a Host procession on 3 May in Nuremberg and on 14 September in Brandenburg.

[104] The processions became real folk festivals, and from the mid-14th century until the late 15th century the procession and public display of the Host was customary when asking for mercy in the case of some disaster or when offering thanks for the averting of misfortune. From the 16th century the processions were curbed and restricted to the feast of Corpus Christi; O. NUSSBAUM, op. cit., pp. 159–161.

[105] IDEM, op. cit., p. 160 and pp. 162–163.

[106] It is also known that a certain Willem de Pannemaker, rhetorician of Aalst between 1430 and 1450, was commissioned by the town to write a play *van den helighen Cruce* (V. D'HONDT, *Geschiedenis van het tooneel te Aalst*, Aalst, 1908, p. 20, pp. 170–171). Willem de Pannemaker was probably a sort of director of processions. The mystery play was intended for the ceremonial procession of the Holy Sacrament in 1430. The piece was *zwaer ende lanc* and written in verse.

to have anti-Semitic overtones. The Finding of the Cross includes the conversion of Jews. The idea of tangible reality as spiritual truth—the very heart of relic worship—is expressed by the Incredulity of Thomas. His touching of Christ's wounds is the 'proof' of the two natures of Christ, of the dead and risen God. This polemic is embodied in the relic of the Cross. Only when Judas finds the material Cross does he convert (*confessio*) and acknowledge the truth of the Messiah. Christ's *labarum* corresponds to the Cross that Heraclius bears on his shoulders and both Christ and Heraclius are barefoot. The position of the scene is also attributable to the composition and arrangement of the votive scenes themselves, by which the patron on the wing is detached from the scene on the inner door. The same doubling of patron and object of worship has ensured that Dean Johannes is placed below the Last Supper and the Coronation of the Virgin, and the Virgin and Child below the Adoration of the Host and the Annunciation.

In summary, then, it may be suggested that the left half of the reliquary (with the Exaltation of the Cross) seems rather to be focused on the adult and risen Christ; the right half (with the Finding of the Cross) on the infant Christ and Mary. In this way both a Marian and a Christological emphasis are present (Dorothea and the Dean Johannes?) but a soteriological line is also drawn. The Finding of the Cross represents the inception of the Christian empire under temporal authority. The crusaders who worship the Host embody the preservation of that faith on earth. Heraclius is comprehended as the Last Emperor who precedes Christ's Second Coming; he is consequently a type for the kingdom of heaven on earth. The Coronation of the Virgin symbolizes the heavenly Jerusalem and she is also the Mediatrix at the End of Time. The *civitas terrena* and the *civitas Dei* are united.

The Marienwerder reliquary exhibits a complex iconography for which its commissioner, Johannes Marienwerder, dean of the cathedral and knight of the Teutonic Order, is responsible. As Dorothea's instructor and confessor he has created a programme in which attention is focused on the most important soteriological dogmas (Incarnation and Resurrection). Important liturgical feasts are also combined—of the Annunciation (25 March), the Finding of the Cross (3 May), Maundy Thursday, Corpus Christi, the Assumption of the Virgin (15 August) and the Exaltation of the Cross (14 September).

Is it possible that the cupboard reliquary was rather a cupboard for the Eucharist? Such cupboards, which were affixed or set in to the wall of the sanctuary, were very common, especially in Germany and Scandinavia.[107] They had their disadvantages, however: the faithful could simply open them (Synod of Schwerin, 1492); and the material (wood) was not considered to be sufficiently precious for housing the sacrament (Synod of Breslau, 1406).[108] Moreover, they aroused confusion, so that it was necessary to indicate, by a picture of a chalice, for instance, that the cupboard was for the safekeeping of the Host.[109] The fact that the Adoration of the Host is depicted may point in this direction.[110] This is not to say that a Eucharist cupboard could not also contain a relic of the Cross. It has already been mentioned that Host and relic of the Cross were often venerated and kept together.

Southern Germany and the Danube basin. Nuremberg, insignia of state and new iconographic formulas

A relic of the Cross was one of the imperial insignia of the Holy Roman Empire. Together with the Holy Lance it was transferred from Prague to Nuremberg on 24 February 1424 by Emperor Sigismund (1361–1437, emperor from 1410) and there it was kept until 1796.[111] To commemorate the *translatio* the insignias would be

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[107] It was not possible to carry out *in situ* research that would have shown whether the Marienwerder cupboard was intended for a (still existing?) niche or had been fixed to a wall. Nor does the scanty and outdated literature give any indications.

[108] O. NUSSBAUM, op. cit., p. 399.

[109] IDEM, op. cit., p. 164.

[110] I refer to a late 13th or early 14th-century wooden cupboard with two doors in the Church of Alskog (Gotland). The cupboard is in a niche that was specifically intended for it. The open doors of the cupboard are painted with an Annunciation. Exceptionally, the scene is depicted as though from the viewpoint of the Host itself. When the doors are opened Mary (on the left door) and the angel (on the right door) are back to back, as indeed are the two kneeling angels with candles in the top register. The candles are shown burning. Is this a remarkable iconographic *Spielerei*, to comply with the prescription that the Host should never be left in the dark? A. NILSEN, *Kyrkorummets brännpunkt. Gränsen mellan kor och langhus i den svenska landskyrkan. Fran romanik till nygotik*, Stockholm, 1991, p. 135, fig. 102.

[111] A. WENDEHORST, *Die Reichsstadt Nürnberg von den Anfängen bis zum Ende ihrer grossen Zeit*, in *Nürnberg 1300–1550. Kunst der Gotik und Renaissance* (exh. cat.), Munich, 1986, pp. 11–25, p. 13; A. LEGNER, *Reliquien in Kunst und Kult. Zwischen Antike und Aufklärung*, Darmstadt, 1995, pp. 91–93; A. FROLOW, *La relique de la vraie croix*, Paris, 1961, pp. 263–264, no. 199: The relic was kept in a processional and/or

displayed to the people on the town's market square on a so-called *Heiltumsstuhl*. On 24 December in that same year Pope Martin V decreed that the church of the *H. Geistspital* should become the repository of the relics.[112] On the feast of the Holy Lance (instituted by Innocent VI and Charles IV on 13 February 1354), after the Mass and the naming of the relics, the *Heiltum* was blessed and the imperial relics, that of the Cross foremost among them, were displayed to burghers, clergy, religious and nobility.[113] To venerate them with right intention was to earn an indulgence and so, not surprisingly, pilgrims were attracted from far and wide.[114] Occasionally the Church of the Holy Spirit permitted highly-placed visitors a private viewing of the relics.[115] Nuremberg, which since 1365 had been the imperial capital, was also an important rallying point for pilgrims en route to the Holy Land.[116] For these reasons the cult of the Cross throve in Nuremberg and Cross legend iconography was very much in evidence in the town.[117]

Like the cycles in Paris and Brunswick mentioned in the previous chapter, the *Kaiserfenster*—the central window in the choir of Sankt Lorenz in Nuremberg (workshop of Michael Wohlgemut, ca. 1477)—sprang from courtly (in this case imperial) exemplariness and self-assertiveness (fig. 51).[118] Emperor Frederick III (1440–1493, emperor

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altar cross (78cm × 71cm), on the front completely covered in precious stones, on the back the Lamb in niello, at the ends of the arms the evangelist symbols. For an illustration, see: H. SWARZENSKI, *Monuments of Romanesque Art. The Art of Church Treasures in North-Western Europe*, 2nd edn., London, 1974, pl. 32. For the lance, see: K. BURDACH, *Der Gral. Forschungen über seinem Ursprung und seinem Zusammenhang mit der Longinuslegende*, Stuttgart, 1938, pp. 1–17, pp. 93–105 and pp. 379–397; L. ADELSON, *The Holy Lance and the Hereditary German Monarchy*, in *The Art Bulletin*, 48, 2, 1966, pp. 2–23.

[112] The relics were hung in a coffer from the central vault of the church; A. WENDEHORST, art. cit., fig. 12: copper engraving of 1696, Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum.

[113] In a coloured woodcut dating from after 1487 (Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum), the bishop displays the relic to the people from a raised gallery; A. WENDEHORST, art. cit., p. 15, fig. 11.

[114] IDEM, art. cit., pp. 14–15.

[115] IDEM, art. cit., p. 15.

[116] J. KAMANN, *Die Pilgerfahrten Nürnberger Bürger nach Jerusalem im 15. Jahrhundert, namentlich die Reiseberichte des Dr. med. Hans Lochner und des Jörg Pfinzing*, in *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg*, 2, 1880, pp. 78–113.

[117] I have referred in n. 75 to the Holy Cross triptych (ca. 1430); P. STRIEDER, *Tafelmalerei in Nürnberg. 1350–1550*, Königstein im Taunus, 1993, no. 15.

[118] R. K(AHSNITZ), art. *Schlacht bei Regensburg, aus dem Kaiserfenster der St. Lorenzkirche*, in *Nürnberg 1300–1550*, op. cit., no. 44, pp. 176–177.



Fig. 51. *Kaiserfenster*. Michael Wohlgemut, ca. 1477. Nuremberg, Church of Sankt Lorenz, choir.

from 1452) and his consort Eleanor of Portugal are depicted in the centre standing beneath a great canopy, occupying two of the window's seven registers. In the register below, wild men and angels bear the arms of the imperial couple; above is the Man of Sorrows.

The window also depicts Constantine's vision and baptism, and the battle at the Milvian Bridge (second register), the arrival of Helena in Jerusalem and the Finding of the Cross (third register), the Testing of the Cross (fourth register, to the left of the canopy), the decapitation of Chosroes and Heraclius and Chosroes' son in single combat (fifth register, left of the canopy), the restitution, both equestrian and barefoot (fourth register to the right of the canopy) and finally Charlemagne's battle at Regensburg (fifth register, right of the canopy). The battle scene is based on a legend that was very popular in southern Germany from the thirteenth century.[119] Charlemagne went into battle against the Avars. An angel brought him to the top of a mountain where a triumphal cross was set up; there, on the third day, an angel appeared with a sword which aided Charlemagne to vanquish the enemy. Only the latter scene is depicted.

The legend of Charlemagne accords with the history of Constantine, who also had a vision of an angel and a cross, and who also fought the barbarian on the Danube. According to Hrabanus Maurus, Heraclius also defeated the Persians on the Danube and Gautier d'Arras (1175–1200) adds that the Byzantine emperor was likewise exhorted to fight by an angel.[120] In the mid-fifteenth century the Danube again became a precarious natural barrier, this time to the advancing Turks following the fall of Constantinople, so the window's iconography was very timely. Constantine, Heraclius and Charlemagne were the great models of history, as far as expeditions against the infidel were concerned. They are the exemplary emperors of Christendom and thus the defenders par excellence of the Cross as *vexillum* and *tropaion* that was kept in Nuremberg itself. And as the finder of the Cross, Helena is naturally also included.

In 1485 or thereabouts, Michael Wohlgemut painted a scene from the Legend of the Cross for Levinus Memming, who had commissioned a triptych for the altar of St Catherine in the Sankt Lorenz

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[119] A. SCHÖNBERGER, *Keysers Karls streyt vor der stat regenspurg geschlechen*, in *Pantheon*, 30, 1972, pp. 211–216.

[120] G. RAYNAUD de LAG, *Gautier d'Arras. Eracle*, Paris, 1976, pp. 164–166, vs. 5323–5378.

church (fig. 52).[121] Memming had himself portrayed on the inside of the left wing (on the extreme left) as St Vitus, one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers surrounding a scene of the Mystic Marriage of St Catherine of Alexandria.[122] He rests his hand on a white shield emblazoned with a red cross, symbol of the crusaders. On the inside of the right wing the Testing and Exaltation of the Cross are depicted. The Testing occupies the foreground while the Exaltation is relegated to the distant background, where it is shown in two stages: on the left the mounted Heraclius tries to enter the lower city, only to be admonished by an angel; higher up he meekly approaches the city gate that leads to an upper city (Nuremberg castle?).

The Testing is synchronized with the Finding of the Cross. Judas rests his right foot on a spade, taking his ease after his strenuous digging and apparently discussing the event with two men who look on from the left. Helena, crowned and haloed, kneels in devotion with two court ladies. She seems scarcely to notice the digger but rather prays in the direction of a bearded man who sits on three crosses and is in the process of reanimation. Compositionally, this Testing is almost identical with the scene in the *Kaiserfenster*, suggesting that the Wohlgemut workshop used the same model for both, the only difference being that in the window the resuscitated individual sits the other way round, looking towards Helena, which creates a greater dramatic tension.

The Testing and Exaltation of the Cross are also painted on the insides of the left and right wings of a triptych in the Schwabach *Stadkirche* (after 1485) which has a carved Crucifixion in the centre (fig. 53). The Testing is clearly an iconographic combination of the two scenes by Wohlgemut.[123] The orientation of 'test case' and queen

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[121] Oil on wood, each panel 284cm × 84cm. This altar was set up in 1393 by Kunigunde, widow of Konrad Tracht; P. STRIEDER, op. cit., p. 76, no. 53, figs. 92–93. On the centre panel, from left to right, are carvings of St Levinus, St Catherine and St Helena. On the closed wings are Levinus's martyrdom (right) and the martyrdom of St Catherine (left), painted by Willem Pleydenwurff (?); P. STRIEDER, op. cit., p. 204. St Levinus is the patron's namesake. Could Catherine be the name of his wife? Helena alludes to the Holy Land and also to the city's imperial insignia. The eminent burgher sought to associate himself with the importance and allure of the imperial capital.

[122] Levinus Memming can be identified on the basis of the coat of arms bearing the initials LM in a portrait also painted by Wohlgemut (1485); P. STRIEDER, op. cit., p. 76, no. 54, fig. 91.

[123] H. SCHOLZ, *Entwurf und Ausfhhrung Werkstattpraxis in der Nürnberger Glasmalerei der Dürerzeit*, Berlin, 1991, pp. 18–20. Wohlgemut's Testing of the Cross later

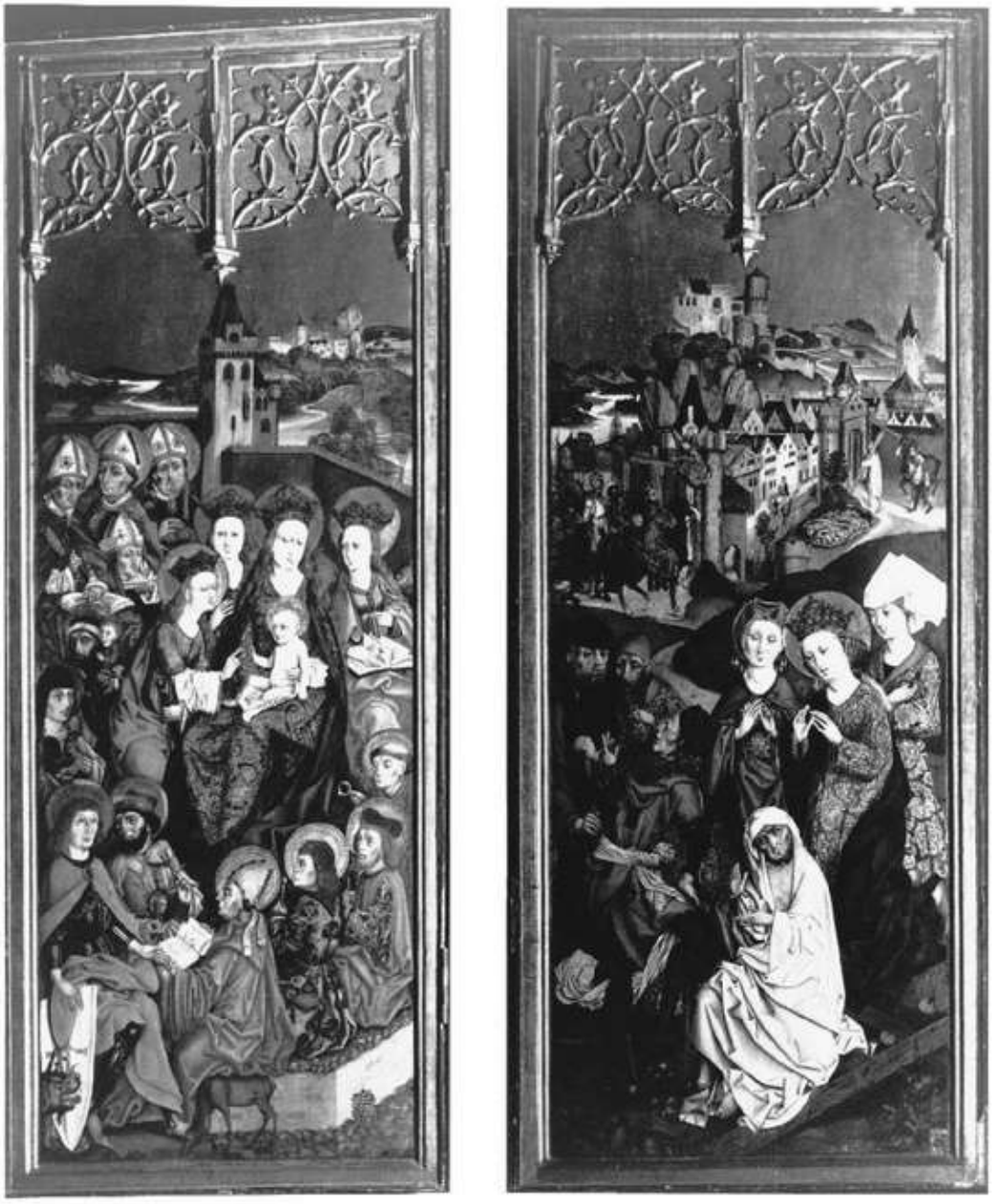


Fig. 52. *Memminger triptych.* Inner side of the wings, showing the *Mystical Marriage of St Catherine surrounded by the Fourteen Holy Helpers* (left) and the *Finding of the Cross, Testing of the Cross* and *Exaltation of the Cross* (right), Michael Wohlgemut, ca. 1485. Nuremberg, Church of Sankt Lorenz.



Fig. 53. *Testing of the Cross and Exaltation of the Cross.* Inner side of the wings of a triptych, Wohlgemut workshop, after 1485. Schwabach, Stadtkirche.

is the same as in the window. The number of figures—two male onlookers and two court ladies accompanying Helena, who here too has a crown and a halo—is taken from the Memminger triptych. Just as did Wohlgemut in the *Kaiserfenster*, the artist of the Schwabach triptych has represented the Testing separately from the Finding of the Cross: the view of the city in the Schwabach Testing of the Cross is not repeated in the Exaltation on the right panel.

The wing of the *Memminger* triptych incorporates two noteworthy elements. The Finding and Testing of the Cross are combined and the resurrection actually takes place on top of the crosses. The fusion of these motifs must be seen in relation to the development of narrative principles. In the fifteenth century a number of individual motifs begin to be brought together in one space, thus achieving an economical thematizing of diverse but related events within the same frame. It is striking that the Testing of the Cross now starts to take place in the foreground. This is achieved either by omitting the Finding altogether (as on the Schwabach triptych), by depicting it in the background, or suggesting it simply by the 'just finished' labour (as in the *Memminger* altarpiece).

In the *Ulmer* Museum there is a painting by an anonymous master (ca. 1450) from the circle of the Master of the Stertzinger Retable which presents a similar iconographic fusion. In the foreground a bearded man, his mattock still in his hand, reaches forward to drag a cross from the ground (fig. 54).[124] On the left his clean-shaven fellow bends to lay the cross on a cadaver of indeterminate gender, whose head and shoulders alone are visible. The position of the corpse—seen only from behind (in *raccourci*)—makes it difficult to tell whether the eyes are open or closed. In the cross being tested the

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influenced Albert Koberger, one of the most important printers of Nuremberg, who from 1484 asked Wohlgemut to make woodcuts for him (R. SCHOCH, *Ein Jahrhundert Nürnberger Druckgraphik*, in *Nürnberg 1300–1550*, op. cit., pp. 93–100, p. 97). For the Raising of Lazarus in the edition of the *Schatzbehalter* of 1491, the seated figure of the individual on whom the Cross is to be tested is again used, looking towards the right—thus the 'negative' of the painting and the 'positive' of the window. The figure of Helena is replaced here with that of Christ and the crosses are still dimly visible in the black rectangular grave from which Lazarus rises; H. SCHOLZ, op. cit., fig. 17. The compositions of the Testing of the Cross and the Raising of Lazarus are interchangeable, just as they were likewise intrinsically associated by Paulinus of Nola.

[124] Oil on wood, 88.5cm × 74.5cm; E. TRUE (ed.), *Bildhauerei und Malerei vom 13. Jahrhundert bis 1600* (*Kataloge des Ulmer Museum*, 1), Ulm, 1981, p. 71, no. 42 and fig. (no inv. no.: in private ownership).

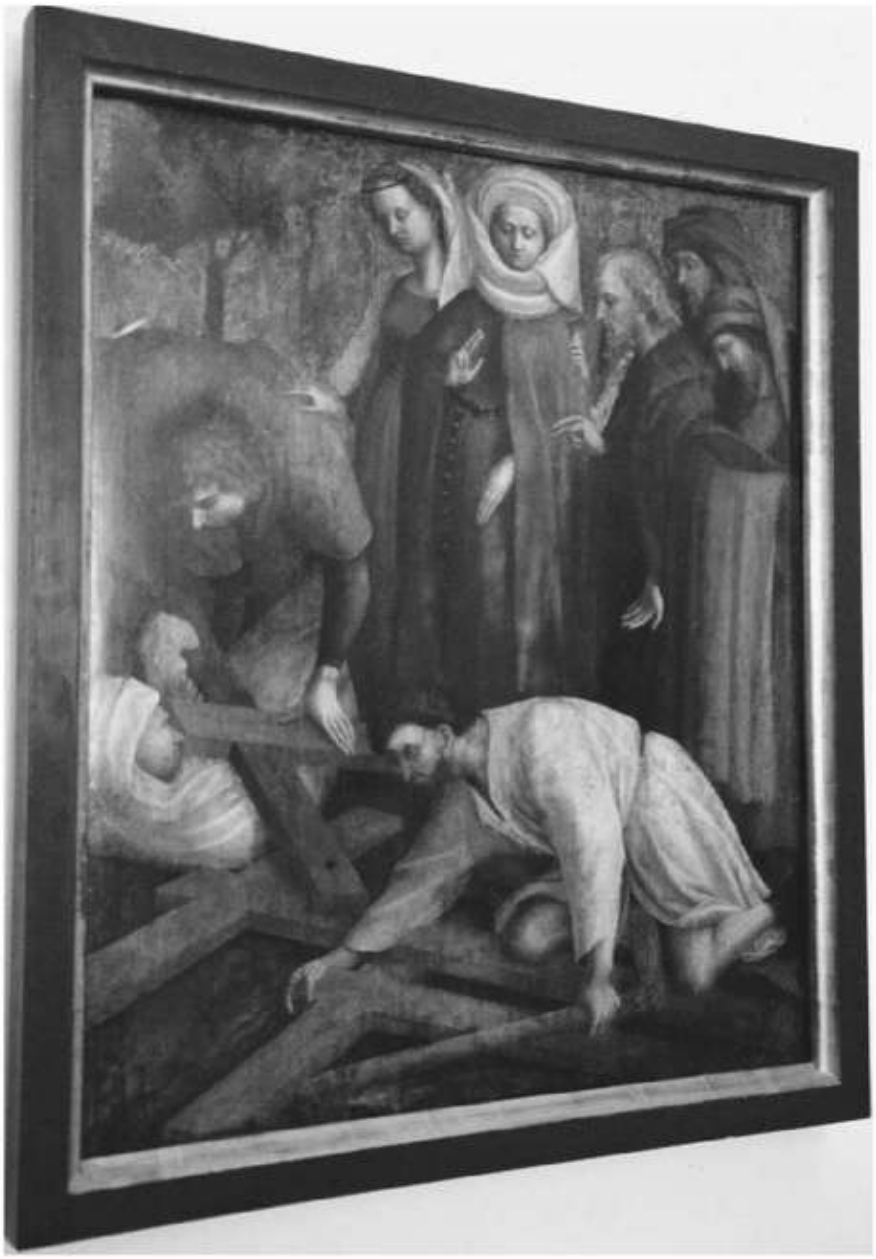


Fig. 54. *Testing of the Cross*. Circle of the Master of the Stertzinger Retable, ca. 1450. Ulm, Städtisches Museum (on loan from a private collection).

holes made by the nails are clearly visible. Helena, with neither crown nor halo, is depicted in the centre, watching the discovery of the crosses. A second female figure standing just behind Helena looks on at the testing. On the right is a small group of older, distinguished-looking men. The figure standing next to Helena stretches

his left hand towards the man with the mattock and points with two fingers of his right hand to the testing taking place. Perhaps this is Judas. Rising along the vertical axis formed by Christ's cross and the corpse is a tree. Maybe this is the symbolic extension of the Cross as *Lignum vitae*.

At that time the literary tradition of the Legend of the Cross chiefly relied on copies and translations of the *Legenda Aurea*. *Der Heiligen Leben* was originally produced in and for Nuremberg and it was printed by Johann Sensenschmidts in 1475. The illustrations he added were copied from the edition produced by Günter Zainer in Augsburg, in which the Finding of the Cross was illustrated with a woodcut depicting the moment of discovery itself.[125] One cross has been laid bare: Judas is on the left, watched by Helena and a rather mixed group (fig. 55a). In the woodcut illustrating the Exaltation of the Cross Heraclius is not on horseback but he is arrayed in full imperial panoply as he stands before the angel and the bricked-up gate (fig. 55b).[126] Wohlgemut has not found his inspiration in this edition therefore.

The fusion of the Testing and Finding of the Cross in a single space suggests that both took place on the same spot. Of course this is, in the first place, the result of iconographic synchronicity. Yet in the literature too there is a suggestion that discovery and trial go hand in hand. In his version of the Finding of the Cross Honorius of Autun says that three crosses were found and in the same breath mentions that a dead body was brought, thus making no reference to the crosses being carried to the centre of the city.[127] He uses an 'accelerated' narrative style that enhances iconographic synchronization. Honorius's writings were still very popular in the late Middle Ages, particularly in southern Germany.[128]

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[125] R. SCHOCH, art. cit., p. 96.

[126] S. RÜTTGERS, *Der Heiligen Leben und Leiden anders genannt das Passional*, Leipzig, 1913, fig. p. 48 and p. 402.

[127] 'Mox terram rastris aperiunt, tres cruces inveniunt, Mortuus apportatur'; *Liturgica*, PL 172, col. 948.

[128] V.I.J. FLINT, *World History in the Early Twelfth Century. The 'Imago Mundi' of Honorius Augustodunensis*, in *Ideas in the Medieval West. Texts and their Contexts* (various reprints), London, 1988, pp. 211–238; A. GUREVICH, *Medieval Popular Culture. Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. J.M. BAK and P.A. HOLLINGSWORTH, Cambridge-Paris, 1988, pp. 153–175: 'The Elucidarium: popular theology and folk religiosity in the Middle Ages'.



Fig. 55a. *Finding of the Cross.* Woodcut, Johan Sensenschmidt, Nuremberg, 1475. From: S. RÜTTGERS, *Der Heiligen Leben und Leiden anders genannt das Passional*, Leipzig, 1913, fig. p. 48.



Fig. 55b. *Exaltation of the Cross.* Woodcut, Johan Sensenschmidt, Nuremberg, 1475. From: S. RÜTTGERS, *Der Heiligen Leben und Leiden anders genannt das Passional*, Leipzig, 1913, fig. p. 402.

A consequence of this iconographic synchronization is that in certain cases it becomes necessary to abandon the body on which the crosses are tried. Indeed, the literary tradition has it that only on the application of the third cross is the 'test case' revived, and in the coinciding of the two operations that cross has often not yet been found. This is the case in the Finding and Testing of the Cross by the so-called Master of the Vision of St John (active in Cologne between 1450 and 1470) (fig. 56a).[129] While a workman in a hood (Judas?) stands waist-deep in a pit and passes up a cross to two bishops—perhaps the bishop receiving the cross is Macarius—another cross has already been laid on the emaciated body of a man which lies on the ground immediately next to the pit. Both crosses are *tau*-shaped; the third cross is yet to be found. There is a broad-bladed pick on the ground beside the body. Helena, with a crown and a halo, looks towards the viewer and points to the fruitlessly tested cross; behind her are sundry individuals and Judas's pit is guarded by two deacons or priests bearing tapers.

A lifeless individual on whom the crosses are to be tested, such as featured in the iconography of the Carolingian period, returns to favour around the fifteenth century. Perhaps this was an influence of the *memento mori* theme. On a panel of around 1440 illustrating the Finding of the Cross, painted in the circle of Hans Multscher

[129] The panel is one of four (oil on wood, each 155cm × 57cm): 1. Helena threatens the Jews with immolation and a pulley is used to lower (raise?) Judas, with a beard and cap, into (out of?) a stone well. (fig. 56b); 2. Finding and Testing of the Cross (both panels were formerly in Frankfurt, Municipal Museum, but have now vanished without trace); 3. Heraclius, mounted, before the closed gate, an angel prevents his approach with a sword; here Heraclius is accompanied by Patriarch Zacharias; 4. Heraclius and Zacharias together hold the Cross upright, they are barefoot and are received by two bishops and a cardinal (both panels in Münster, Landesmuseum). The figure of Zacharias is exceptional and is derived from a source (a chronicle?) other than the *Legenda Aurea*. Originally the panels were placed one above the other, separated by a red strip with inscriptions, remains of which can be seen on the panel depicting the humble entry. Material research has shown that the interrogation and punishment above, and the Finding and Testing of the Cross below, constituted the left panel; the restitution on horseback above and on foot below constituted the right panel. What the relationship between inside and outside was can no longer be determined. Of the original origin and purpose of the panels nothing is now known other than that until 1944 they were in private ownership in Cologne, and were then sold in Munich, ending up in two museums. P. PIEPER, *Die deutschen, niederländischen und italienischen Tafelbilder bis um 1530* (exh. cat.), Münster, 1986, pp. 410–413; A. STANGE, *Deutsche Malerei der Gotik*, 5. *Köln in der Zeit von 1450 bis 1515*, Liechtenstein, 1969 (repr.), pp. 14–16 and figs. 16–19.



Fig. 56a. *Finding of the Cross and Testing of the Cross.* Probably from the left wing of a triptych. Master of the Vision of St John, Cologne (?), 1450–1470. Formerly in Frankfurt, Städtisches Museum.



Fig. 56b. *Helena threatens the Jews.* Probably from the left wing of a triptych. Master of the Vision of St John, Cologne (?), 1450–1470. Formerly in Frankfurt, Städtisches Museum.

(fig. 57) (Ulmer Museum),[130] Helena looks directly at the viewer. She stands among a crowd of folk to the left of a corpse-laden stretcher. A bearded man holds a cross above the motionless body. An older man (Judas?) wearing a hood very similar to the one in the painting just mentioned keeps an eye on the proceedings. That this is Christ's Cross is evident from the blood that stains the holes where the nails were hammered in. On the right, the crosses of the two thieves are held upright by workmen.

Finally, something should be said about the fact that in the examples from Wohlgemut's workshop the revived individual is actually sitting on the crosses. This too was possibly suggested by Honorius of Autun, who says that the body was placed on Christ's Cross and was thus restored to life.[131] From the fifteenth century this iconographic tradition becomes distinct from that which has the deceased placed on a stretcher or on the ground with a cross laid on the body. This iconographic development runs parallel with the motif of the suffering Christ, namely the moment just before Christ is nailed to the Cross, when he sits on or besides the Cross. The motif is related to 'Christ on the cold stone', which originated in southern Germany in the fourteenth century, and was manifested especially in sculpture. Christ suffering prior to his crucifixion provides an *Andachtsbild* of the meek and humble Christ. The motif condenses his sufferings.[132] Perhaps there has been an iconographic exchange between the Testing of the Cross and the Passion motif.

The iconographic shift is clearly illustrated in two textiles that were also made in and for Nuremberg. The more recent of the two, made in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, is consistent with the Wohlgemut workshop.[133] This is an antependium, or altar frontal,

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[130] The panel is a pendant of an Exaltation of the Cross which is also in the *Ulmer Museum* (on loan from the lords of Waldburg-Wolfegg-Waldsee) (oil on wood: 83cm × 98cm); G. JASPER, art. *Das Kunstwerk des Monats*, in *Ulmer Museum*, 128, 1990, pp. unnumbered, and two figs.

[131] 'Mortuus apportatur' and 'cruci Christi impositus resuscitatur'; *Loc. cit.*

[132] Examples: Master of the Lübeck Passion Altarpiece, outside of the right wing, below, ca. 1430, Lübeck, Annamuseum, no. 32; G. SCHILLER, op. cit., fig. 307: Christ sits beside the Cross. Sculpture from the circle of Gregor Erhart, ca. 1496, Friedberg (Augsburg), Herrgotsruh pilgrims' church; G. SCHILLER, op. cit., fig. 308: Christ sits on the Cross.

[133] Chicago, Chauncey-Blair collection. B. KURTH, *Die deutsche Bildteppiche des Mittelalters*, 1. *Text*, 2. *Platen*, Vienna, 1926, no. 300, fig. 300; L. von WILCKENS, art. *Zwei scenen aus der Kreuzlegende*, in *Nürnberg 1300–1550*, op. cit., p. 198, no. 55 and fig. 55.

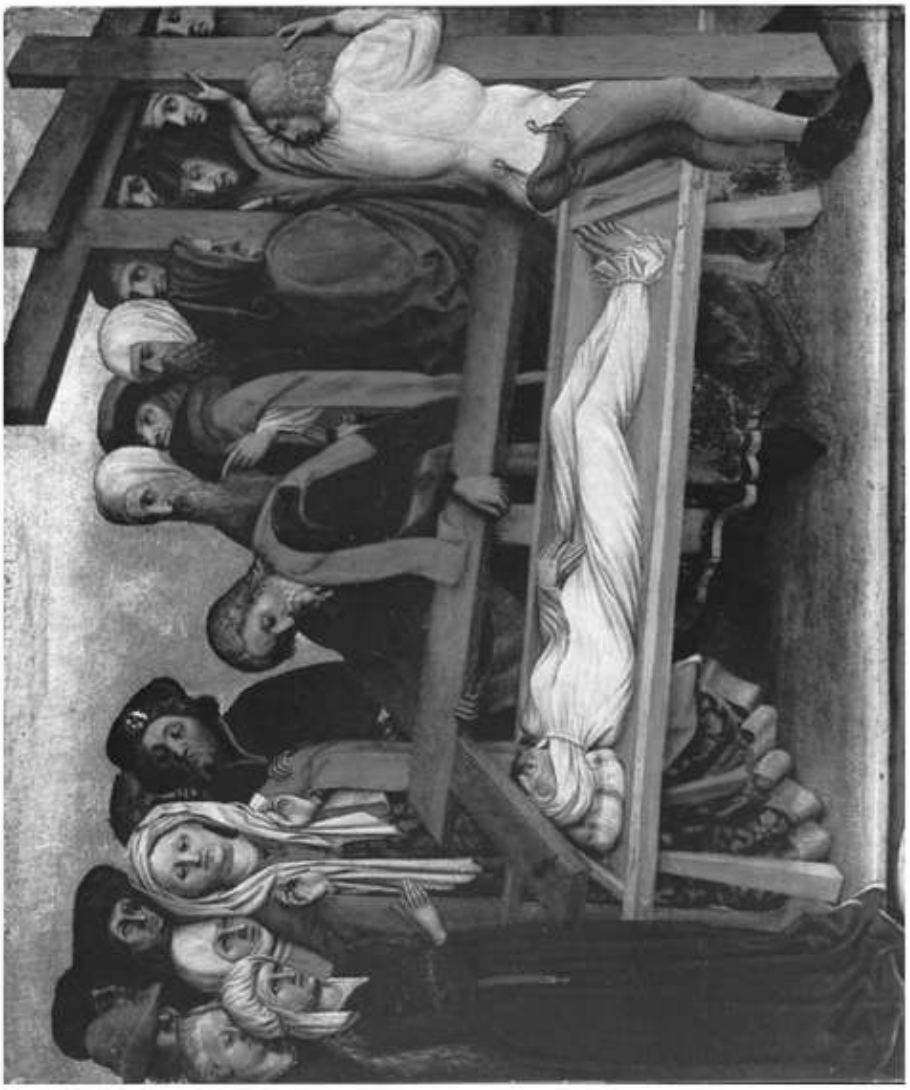


Fig. 57. *Testing of the Cross.* Probably from the left wing of a triptych, circle of Hans Multscher, ca. 1440. Ulm, Städtisches Museum.

on which several scenes from the Legend of the Cross seem to weave in and out of each other thanks to the frieze-like arrangement of characters and the single space in which the events are taking place (fig. 58). In the centre a crowned Helena kneels with hands devoutly raised before the resurrected individual who sits, hands folded, on a cross. A number of onlookers follow Helena's example. A zigzag pattern has been carved into the True Cross. To the right Judas flourishes his pick—though his zeal here is anachronistic given that the crosses have already been dug up. A nobleman (the donor of the tapestry?) watches. The story now jumps to the left of the frontal. In the background Heraclius and his retinue ride towards us from a distant city, but in the foreground he has already divested himself of his rich garments and wears only a while shirt, his crown discarded on the grass behind him. He supports the Cross on his shoulder and strides towards the angel who seems to admonish him even though the gate is already open.

The older of the two Nuremberg textile altar frontals is better documented that the one just described. It was intended for the Sankt Lorenz church, was transferred to the Sankt Sebald church in the nineteenth century, and was sold to the Germanisches Museum in 1926 (fig. 59).[134] It can be dated to between 1430 and 1440 thanks

[134] Wool on linen, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Inv. no. gew 3715; 85–180 cm; B. KURTH, op. cit., 1, nr. 284, 2, fig. 284; L. von WILCKENS, art. cit., p. 198, no. 55 and fig. The tympanum of the south porch on the west front of the Sankt-Sebaldkirche in Nuremberg was carved by Adam Kraft (ca. 1455–60) and shows the legends of the Finding and the Exaltation of the Cross together in one field. The tympanum was commissioned by Sigmund Oertel, a well-known judge of Nuremberg (H.M. BARTH, *Die Sebalduskirche in Nürnberg*, n.p., 1988, p. 2; K. PILZ, *Die St.Sebaldus-Kirche in Nürnberg. Ein Kirchenführer*, n.p., 1994, p. 7). The Testing of the Cross is depicted in the left foreground (behind, workmen rest after discovering the Cross). Here, Judas, who holds the Cross, looks rather like a Moor. On the right Heraclius humbly brings the Cross (covered with a protective cloth) to Jerusalem; he has laid down his imperial crown in the foreground. Before the church entrance is the Oertel family tomb. The coat of arms and the members of the family are shown, small in size, in the bottom right corner of the tympanum. The judicial function is complemented by a paradise or *memento mori* function. The Testing of the Cross recalls the resurrection at the End of Time and the restitution of the Cross evokes the Last Emperor whose coming heralds the Last Judgement (already represented in the south porch (1309–1315)). This choice of iconography may also have been inspired by a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It is well known that many burghers and noblemen of Nuremberg travelled to the Holy Land, particularly in the 15th century; J. KAMANN, art. cit., pp. 78–113, p. 79; Oertel is not mentioned in this article. Between 1490 and 1505 Adam Kraft also produced a Calvary, to be found near the Sankt-Sebald church. The Calvary is the final stage



Fig. 58. *Heraclius humbly restores the Cross; Testing of the Cross.* Textile altar frontal, Nuremberg, last quarter of the 15th century. Chicago, Chauncey-Blair collection.



Fig. 59. *Finding of the Cross and Testing of the Cross.* Textile altar frontal made for Frans Rummel and Agnes Haller, Nuremberg, Sankt Lorenz, 1430–1440. Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum.

to the arms in the bottom left and right corners, which belong respectively to Frans Rummel and Agnes Haller. Frans Rummel came from a line of councillors and was knighted by the emperor in 1433. Agnes Haller was descended from a wealthy patrician family and she became Frans Rummel's wife in 1421.[135] The burghers of Nuremberg took a proprietorial interest in their city's relic of the Cross.

On the frontal are two interwoven scenes: on the left the Finding of the Cross and on the right, the Testing. Helena, in a red robe and with a crown and halo, points to a man clad in green (Judas). He wields a spade and seems to have only just started to dig for there is as yet no sign of a rediscovered Cross. Remarkably, Constantine is also present—haloed and wearing a blue mantle and a hat of the same colour, his imperial crown carried by an attendant. The emperor discusses the situation with Helena. Next to this scene—the figures are arranged as if on a frieze—the crosses are tested. At the touch of Christ's Cross the deceased sits upright on his (or her) litter. The crosses are tried by the man in green and Christ's Cross is distinguished from the other two, which lie disregarded below the litter, by three nail holes and a fine zigzag patterning carved into the wood. Helena, hands folded, stands beside the resurrected individual; Constantine is at his (or her) feet and points to the True Cross. Behind the emperor, who now wears his crown, an attendant waits with the imperial sword.

Constantine's presence at the Finding of the Cross is not supported by literary tradition. Perhaps his appearance in this instance can be attributed to Frans Rummel himself who, in his position of councillor and knight, wished to express his readiness to serve the empire of which Constantine was the personification. Moreover, when the frontal was ordered the state insignia had not been long in the city and it would have seemed desirable to stress the connection between Constantine and the *vexillum* which, according to legend, his mother had found. Constantine instigates and completes the Finding of the Cross, the former by a vision and the latter by the incorporation of the Holy Nails into his horse's bridle. In the cyclic iconography he thus appears at the beginning and/or the end of the

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in the Stations of the Cross, which had attained its full devotional development in the second half of the 15th century; F. DAMBECK, art. *Kreuzweg*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 2, Rome-Vienna, 1970, cols. 653–656, col. 654.

[135] L. von WINCKEL, *ibidem*.

legend.[136] By employing the principal of iconographic fusion Constantine becomes the witness of the Finding of the Cross and it is also made clear that the miraculous operation took place at his command.

Moreover, Constantine and Helena are iconographically united in the presentation of the Cross. This originally Byzantine representational iconography also appeared in the West at the feast of the Finding of the Cross and, as demonstrated earlier, gave rise to a narrative iconography, a development that first began in southern Germany (Zwiefalten).[137]

Constantine lived on in the legend of the battle on the Danube, a legend that indeed also came to be associated with Charlemagne.[138] The iconographic material seems to show that it is the southern German and Bohemian examples, especially in towns on or close to the Danube, that display a conspicuous liking for the connection between Constantine and the Finding of the Cross.

In a combined Testing and Finding of the Cross by the Master of the Rajhrad Altarpiece (before 1420) Helena and Constantine whisper together while two men lay the Cross on the dead body, the older man taking the head of the Cross and the younger taking the foot. The deceased has been laid next to a deep pit from which the crosses have just been excavated by two other men, one using a spade, the other a pick: they have dug so far down that only their heads can still be seen. Here again, therefore, is an iconographic synchronization; the newly-resuscitated test case's eyes are already open (fig. 60).[139]

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[136] We recall the cycles in the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris and the cathedral in Brunswick in which Constantine is depicted instructing Helena to search for the Cross and in a regal portrait (see Chapter Three).

[137] There is an early example of a Finding of the Cross under the eye of mother and son in an Arras breviary produced in the first half of the 14th century; Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 412 (717), fol. 264v (Q(uia)). Or is it Constantine's father? Further in this manuscript, on fol. 467 (T(empore)): Heraclius uncrowned and mounted, restores the Cross to Jerusalem. He carries the Cross straight in front of him. The gate is open and an angel welcomes him; V. LEROQUAIS, *Les bréviaires*, 1, Paris, 1934, pp. 46–49, no. 27.

[138] W. KAEGI, *Vom Nachleben Constantins*, in *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, 8, 1958, pp. 289–327, p. 316.

[139] 97cm × 60cm. Brno (Czech Republic), Provincial Museum, inv. no. A 627. A. MATEJCEK and J. PESINA, *Gothic Painting in Bohemia. 1350–1450*, Prague (1956), pl. 192, pp. 72–74, p. 74; M. BARTLOVA, *De vinding en het Mirakel van het Ware Kruis*, in *Laatgotische kunst uit Bohemen, Moravië en Silezië, 1400–1500*, Brussels, 1998, p. 104, pl. 5. The panel is part of a Passion altarpiece: Christ carries

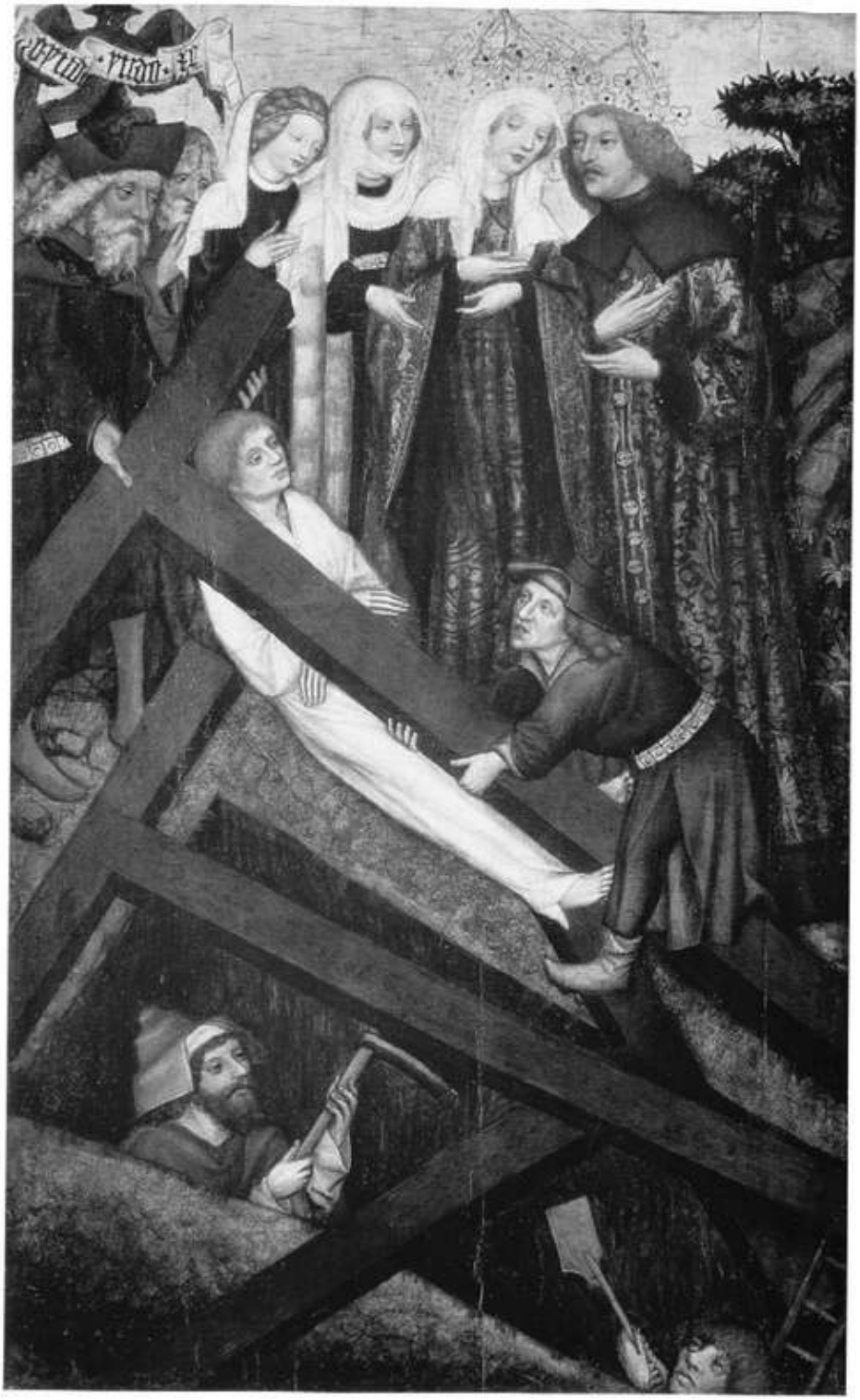


Fig. 60. *Finding of the Cross and Testing of the Cross.* Panel from a Passion altarpiece. Master of the Rajhrad Altarpiece, before 1420. Brno (Czech Republic), Provincial Museum.

In Graz (Joanneum) there is a painting of circa 1440 that is reminiscent of the older Nuremberg altar frontal in its frieze-like arrangement of figures.[140] The work is attributed to the 'Meister von Laufen' or/and the 'Meister des Halleiner Altars' (fig. 61). It could have been destined for and/or produced in Vienna.[141] Helena is in the centre, pointing to the Finding of the Cross, which is almost complete. A spade and a pick lie crossed on the ground and are crossed again on the shoulder of a bald elderly man (Judas?). Constantine, crowned, is on the left behind a crowned and haloed Helena and communicates with her. In the right half of the painting the Testing of the Cross takes place. The newly-revived person sits upright and looks off to the right (on the older textile altar frontal this is the other way round), and is clearly on a stretcher. One cross is tested by Bishop Macarius, a second is held aloft by the Jews who figure in the background of both the Testing and Finding of the Cross.

A panel by the Master of the Stertzinger Retable depicting the Testing of the Cross has survived (Ulm, ca. 1460) which probably comes form the Heiligkreutztal near Riedlingen (11km south-east of Zwiefalten; early in its course the Danube flows through the city) (fig. 62).[142] The reanimated individual, a young man, sits sideways and relaxed on a litter. His hands folded, he looks up to Constantine and Helena, both of whom are crowned and haloed. Helena gestures to the young man, while Constantine devotedly inclines his

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the Cross (99cm × 147cm, Brno, Moravian Provincial Museum inv. no. A626, A. MATEJCEK, op. cit., figs. 181–182; the Crucifixion, 102cm × 142cm, Prague, National Museum, inv. no. O 1584, A. MATEJCEK, op. cit., figs. 184–186; the Last Supper, 97cm × 59.8cm, Brno, Moravian Provincial Museum, inv. no. A 624, A. MATEJCEK, op. cit., fig. 187; The Agony in the Garden, 97.5cm × 59.5cm, Brno, Moravian Provincial Museum, inv. no. A 625, A. MATEJCEK, op. cit., figs. 188–189; the Resurrection, 100cm × 62cm, Brno, Moravian Provincial Museum, inv. no. A 627, A. MATEJCEK, op. cit., fig. 190. The altarpiece probably comprised four wings, of which six panels have survived: two large (Christ carrying the Cross and the Crucifixion) for the centre panel, and four smaller panels for the wings. The altarpiece combined a Passion cycle with a Finding of the Cross cycle, of which only one panel remains. The origin of the altarpiece is uncertain, but it probably comes from Olomouc in Moravia; A. MATEJCEK, op. cit., p. 72. There is a late-medieval altarpiece depicting the Testing of the Cross in Prague, National Museum, Bernhard Strigel, early 16th century; B. BUSHART, *Altdeutsche Bilder der Sammlung Georg Schäfer, Schweinfurt*, Schweinfurt, 1985, p. 135 and figs.

[140] O. DEMUS, *Die Tafel von Innernöring und die salzburgisch-kärntnerische Laib-Nachfolge*, in *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst- und Denkmalpflege*, 1953, pp. 56–64, fig. 69.

[141] O. DEMUS, art. cit., pp. 60–61.

[142] Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesmuseum. M. TRIPPS, *Hans Multscher. Seine Ulmer Schaffenzeit 1427–1467*, Weissenhorn, 1969, no. 255.



Fig. 61. *Finding of the Cross and Testing of the Cross.* Altarpiece. 'Meister von Laufen' or/and the 'Meister des Halleiner Altars', ca. 1440. Graz, Joanneum.



Fig. 62. *Testing of the Cross.* Panel from an altarpiece, probably form the Heiligkreutztal near Riedlingen. Master of the Sterzinger Retable, Ulm, 1460. Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum.

head towards his mother. Helena's women watch and discuss the miracle. To the left behind Constantine, three men hold the three discovered and tested crosses in the air. The event takes place in front of a city gate.

The Netherlands. A periphery?

The Finding and Testing of the Cross are illustrated at the Mass of the Holy Cross in the Turin-Milan Hours (fig. 63).[143] This miniature, of exceptional quality, is attributed to hand G and is dated to around 1440.[144] The Crucifixion is depicted in the initial of *N(os) atuem*. The Finding of the Cross is the principal miniature on the folio and the Testing is illustrated in the bas-de-page. The Belleville Breviary (after 1323) displays the same intrinsic and formal division between principal miniature and bas-de-page (fig. 64).[145] The Finding of the Cross in the Turin-Milan Hours illustrates the event in highly narrative fashion. In earlier fifteenth-century examples the focus was usually on Helena and Judas but here many characters populate the scene. Helena is surrounded by seven dignified men in rich garments and furred hats. One of them stands a little apart and looks towards the viewer—probably Judas, typified as an older man. The group looks attentively to where three men are digging, their backs to the nobly-apparelled spectators. This is the moment when the three crosses surface. The man closest to the viewer has already laid his pick aside and is pulling the uppermost cross out of the earth. His

[143] Turin, Museo Civico d'Arte Antica, inv. no. 47, fol. 118 (Milan section).

[144] M. SMEYERS, *Het Turijns-Milanees getijdenboek, een bijdrage tot de van Eyck studie. Met een eerste synthetisch beeld van de kunst en de weeldetechnieken aan het hof der hertogen van Beieren in de Nederlanden*, 2 vols. (unpubl. Diss.), Leuven, 1971, pp. 356–357 and pp. 715–719; M. SMEYERS, *Answering Some Questions about the Turin-Milan Hours*, in *Le dessin sous-jacent dans la peinture. Colloque VII, 17–19 septembre 1987. Géographie et chronologie du dessin sous-jacent*, eds. R. van SCHOUTTE and H. VEROUGSTRAETE, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1989, pp. 55–70; A.H. van BUREN, *Die Entstehung des eyckischen Gebet- und Messbuchs*, in *Heures de Turin-Milan. Inv. NE 47, Museo Civico d'Arte Antica, Torino*, eds. A.H. van BUREN, J.H. MARROW and S. PETTENATI. In this hand M. Smeyers sees a follower of Van Eyck who also based himself on Eyckian models and was active in Bruges ca. 1440–1450. In the most recent study by A.H. van Buren, et al., just as a hundred years ago, that hand is identified with Hubert van Eyck, between 1415 and 1420.

[145] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 10483–10484, fol. 178; V. LEROQUAIS, *Les bréviaires manuscrits des bibliothèques de France*, 3, Paris, 1934, pp. 198–210, Pl. XXXI.



Fig. 63. *Finding of the Cross and Testing of the Cross*, Turin-Milan Hours, Jan van Eyck or his circle, ca. 1440. Turin, Museo Civico d'Arte Antica, inv. nr. 47, fol. 118.

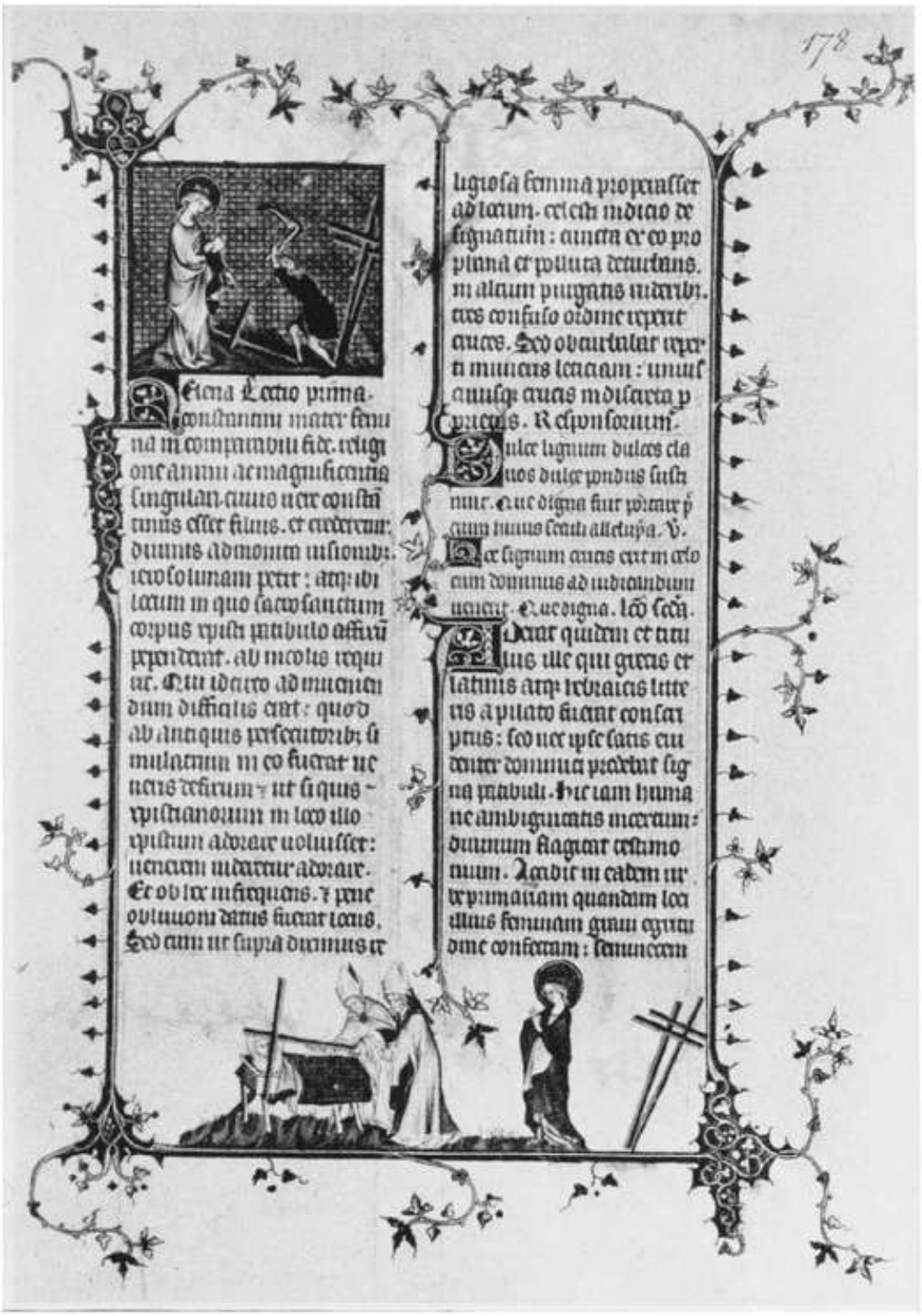


Fig. 64. *Finding of the Cross and Testing of the Cross.* Belleville Breviary, after 1323. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 10483–10484, fol. 178.

two fellows continue to ply their spades, digging down to free the other more deeply-buried crosses. Thus, in this miniature, both onlookers and workmen face towards the right; three crosses are found; there are many onlookers present; three labourers have been called upon; and they combine the use of two different tools.

No prototype has been found that incorporates all these elements. R.S. Wieck, L.M.C. Randall and A. van Buren point out that the scene could be based, albeit only partly, on a miniature produced in the workshop of the Boucicaut Master (fig. 65).[146] The orientation of the action and Helena's position are indeed similar. But only one cross is found, and in a cave at that. Two trees grow from the rock above, a third behind Helena (an image of the Trinity?). Divine rays illuminate the miraculous discovery. Moreover, here only two men are at work, one with a spade, one with a pick. The discovery of a cross with a pick is an oft-appearing formula that was developed in French workshops in the fourteenth century and survived into the fifteenth. The Finding of the Cross in the Belleville Breviary is an example of this. In the miniature two crosses are arranged side by side.[147] But the Senlis Missal dating from the second half of the fourteenth century (fig. 66) may also be mentioned.[148] The Finding of the Cross in the Hours of René of Anjou shows that the tradition was still current in the first or second decade of the fifteenth century (fig. 67).[149]

More characters appear in the Prayer Book of Johanna of Naples, produced between 1346 and 1362 (fig. 68).[150] In the miniature—just as in the Turin-Milan example—a grizzled man is depicted who

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[146] Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, W. 271, fol. 110v, first quarter of the 15th century; R.S. WIECK, *Time Sanctified*, Baltimore, 1988, fig. 54; L.M.C., RANDALL, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Walters Art Gallery*, 1. *France, 875–1420*, Baltimore-London, 1989, pp. 119–123, no. 95, fig. 181; A.H. van BUREN, art. cit., pp. 35–254, p. 191, fig. 47. The miniature was copied in a book of hours by the Harvard-Hannibal Master (1415–1420), which was sold at Sotheby's (*Western Manuscripts and Miniatures. 29 November 1990*, London, 1990, no. 136, pp. 232–239); E. KÖNIG, *Ein pariser Buchmaler in den eyckischen partien des Turin-Mailänder Stundenbuchs: Hand F*, in *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 46–47, 1993–1994, pp. 303–452, p. 309.

[147] L.F. SANDLER, *Jean Pucelle and the Lost Miniatures of the Belleville Breviary*, in *The Art Bulletin*, 66, 1, 1984, pp. 73–96.

[148] Montpellier, Bibliothèque Universitaire, Ms. 261, fol 6.

[149] London, British Library, Egerton Ms. 1070, fol. 91v; R. SCHILLING, *The Master of Egerton 1070 (Hours of Rene d'Anjou)*, in *Scriptorium*, 8, 1954, pp. 272–282.

[150] Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 1912, fol. 209r. Further in that manuscript: the Adoration of the Cross, fol. 218.



Fig. 65. *Finding of the Cross.* Book of hours, Boucicaut Master, Paris, first quarter of the 15th century. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, W. 271, fol. 110v.

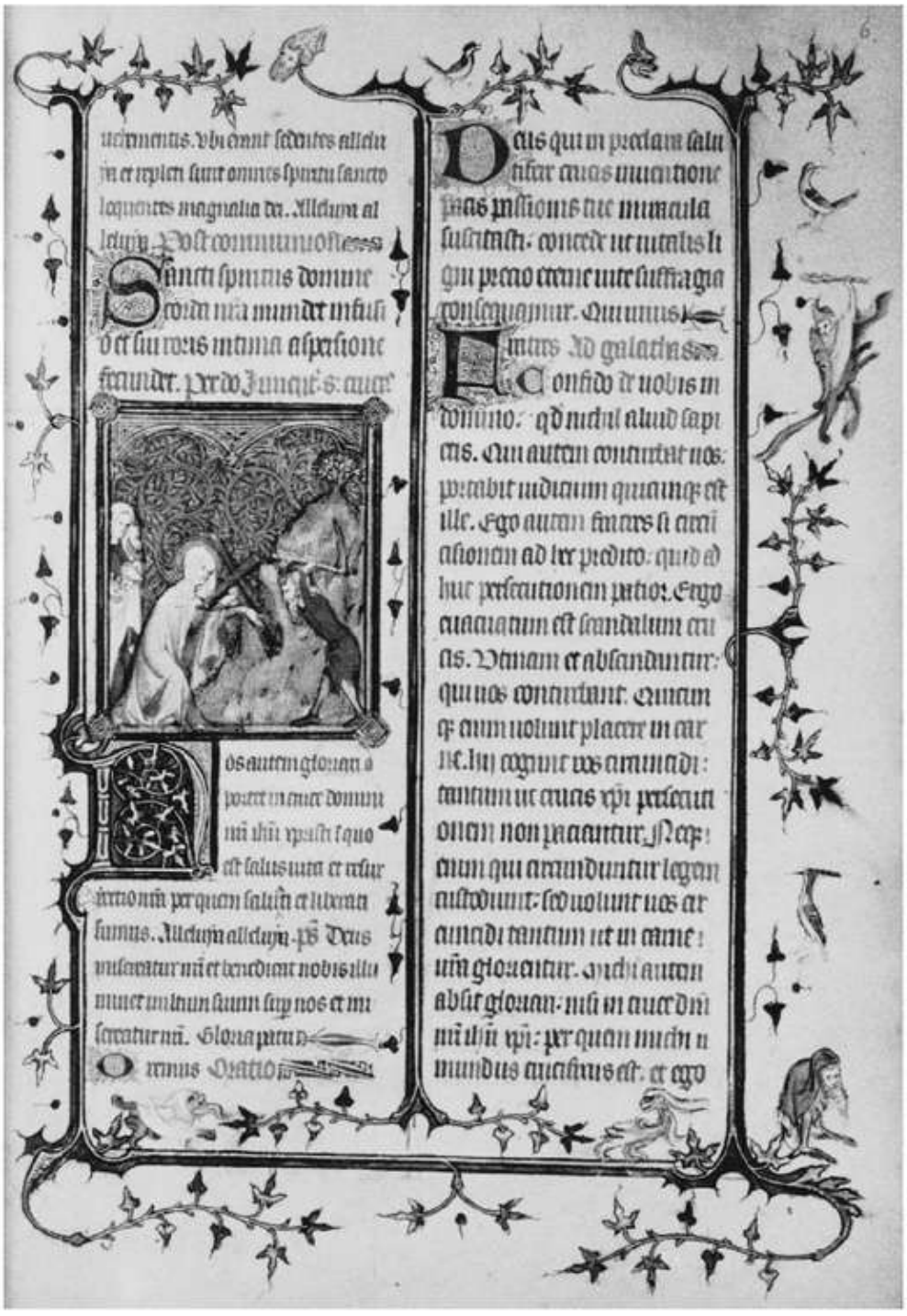


Fig. 66. *Finding of the Cross.* Missal, Senlis, second half of the 14th century. Montpellier, Bibliothèque Universitaire, Ms. 261, fol. 6.

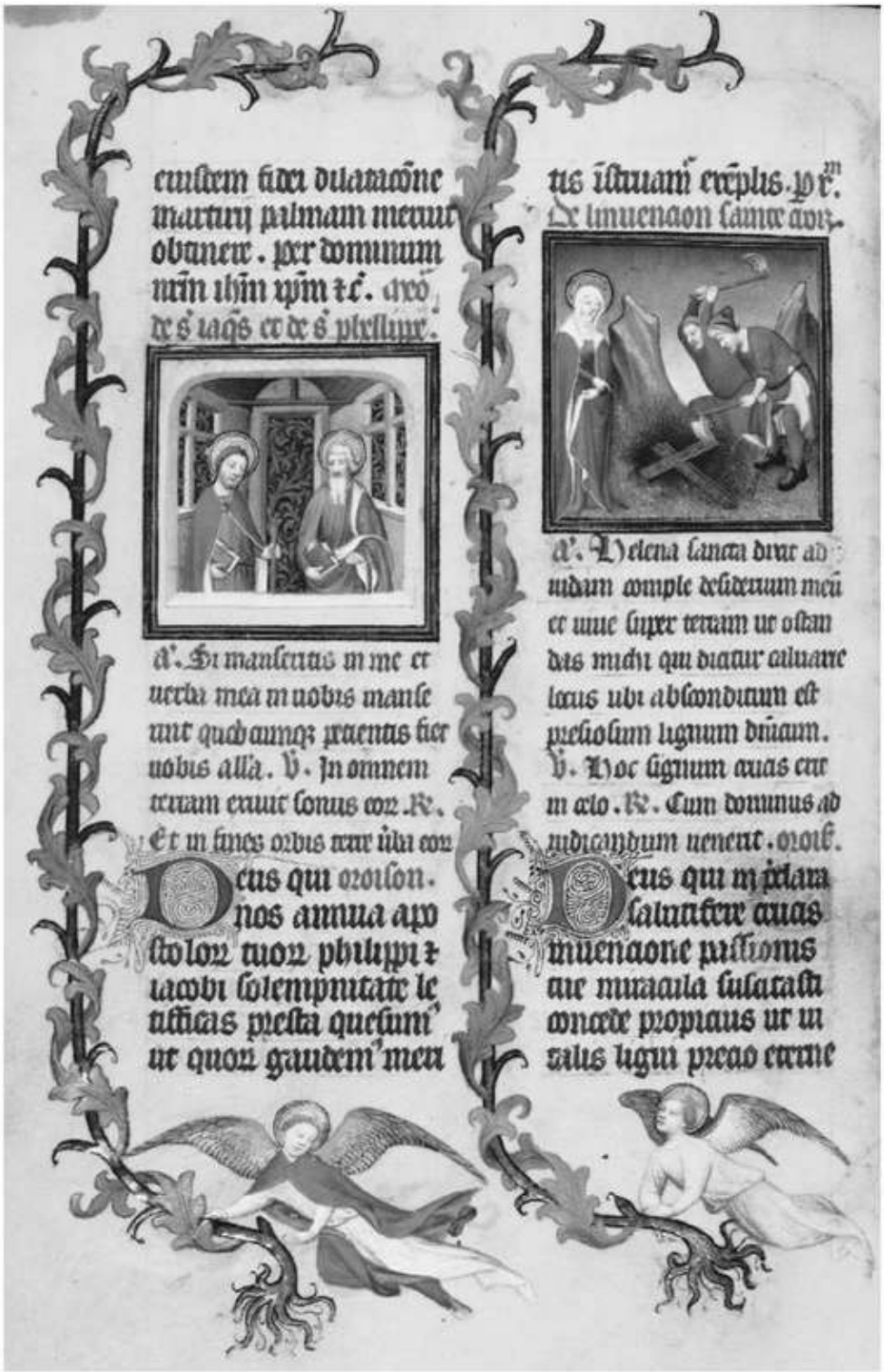


Fig. 67. *Finding of the Cross.* Hours of René of Anjou, first or second decade of the 15th century. London, British Library, Egerton Ms. 1070, fol. 91v.



Fig. 68. *Finding of the Cross.* Prayer Book of Johanna of Naples, 1346–1362. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 1912, fol. 209r.

stands apart from the noble company and closely follows the discovery. Perhaps this is Judas, who has in a certain sense been 'promoted' and no longer takes part in the actual work. It is also noteworthy that here too one workman prepares to lift the cross out of the pit. In this miniature created for Johanna of Naples, however, two men find one cross using only a pick. The man wielding the tool is facing Helena.

The combination of spade and pick has already been seen in the Mosan Berlin/London altar cross (1160–1170) discussed in Chapter Two. The spade is found chiefly in manuscripts from southern Germany, in which Judas is always digging from left to right, like the men in the Turin-Milan Hours. And pick and spade are also combined in the windows of the Church of St Mary in Lübeck (ca. 1399).[151] The cycle was lost during the Second World War, but it is still known from drawings and photographs (fig. 69). Two men stand opposite one another, one with a pick (left) and one with a spade (right). They free the cross from the ground, watched by Helena and her retinue.

The same combination of tools also appears in an Italian idiom. In a historiated initial in a Milanese Dominican missal of around 1400 two men work opposite each other in such a way that the pick and the spade cross (fig. 70).[152] They cross directly in front of two half-excavated crosses, one of which bears a *titulus*. This crossing forms a typology for the True Cross. On the extreme right of the initial Helena's head and right arm appear as she broadly gestures in the direction of the crosses. In the prayer book produced by Michele (Michelino) da Besozzo in 1420 two men likewise find two crosses, one with a *titulus* (fig. 71).[153] Spade and pick are both in use. An older man, Judas, appears to be the intermediary between Helena and the workmen. Together with nobles and soldiers, Helena watches

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[151] C. MILDE and E. DECKE (eds.), *Denkmäler bildende Kunst in Lübeck*, vol. 2, 1847, fig. 1c; F. HIRSCH, G. SCHAUMANN and F. BRUNS, *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler der Freien und Hansestadt Lübeck, 2. Petrikirche. Marienkirche. Heilige Geist-Hospital*, Lübeck, 1906, p. 178 and fig.; W. BREHMER, *Die Glasvenster in die Beichtkapelle zu S. Marien*, in *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Lübeckes Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, 1884, p. 109 ff.

[152] The Hague, Meermann-Westreenianum Museum, ms. 10 A 16, fol. 181. Further in this manuscript an Adoration of the Cross at the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, fol. 214v; P.C. BOEREN, *Catalogus van de handschriften van het Rijksmuseum Meermanno-Westreenianum*, The Hague, 1979, pp. 29–20.

[153] New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. 944, fol. 33v.

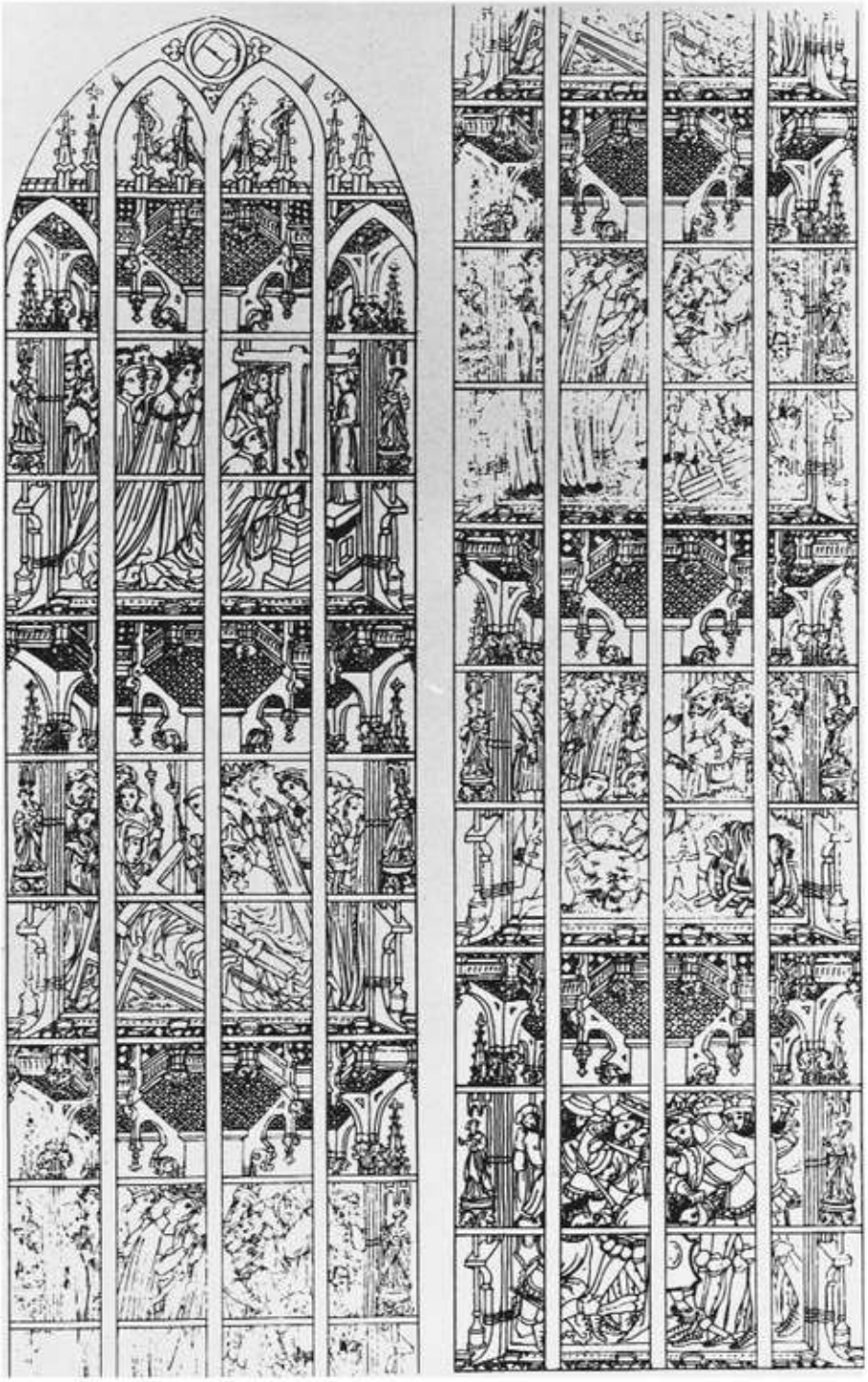


Fig. 69. *Lost window,* ca. 1399. Lübeck, Church of St Mary, confessional chapel.

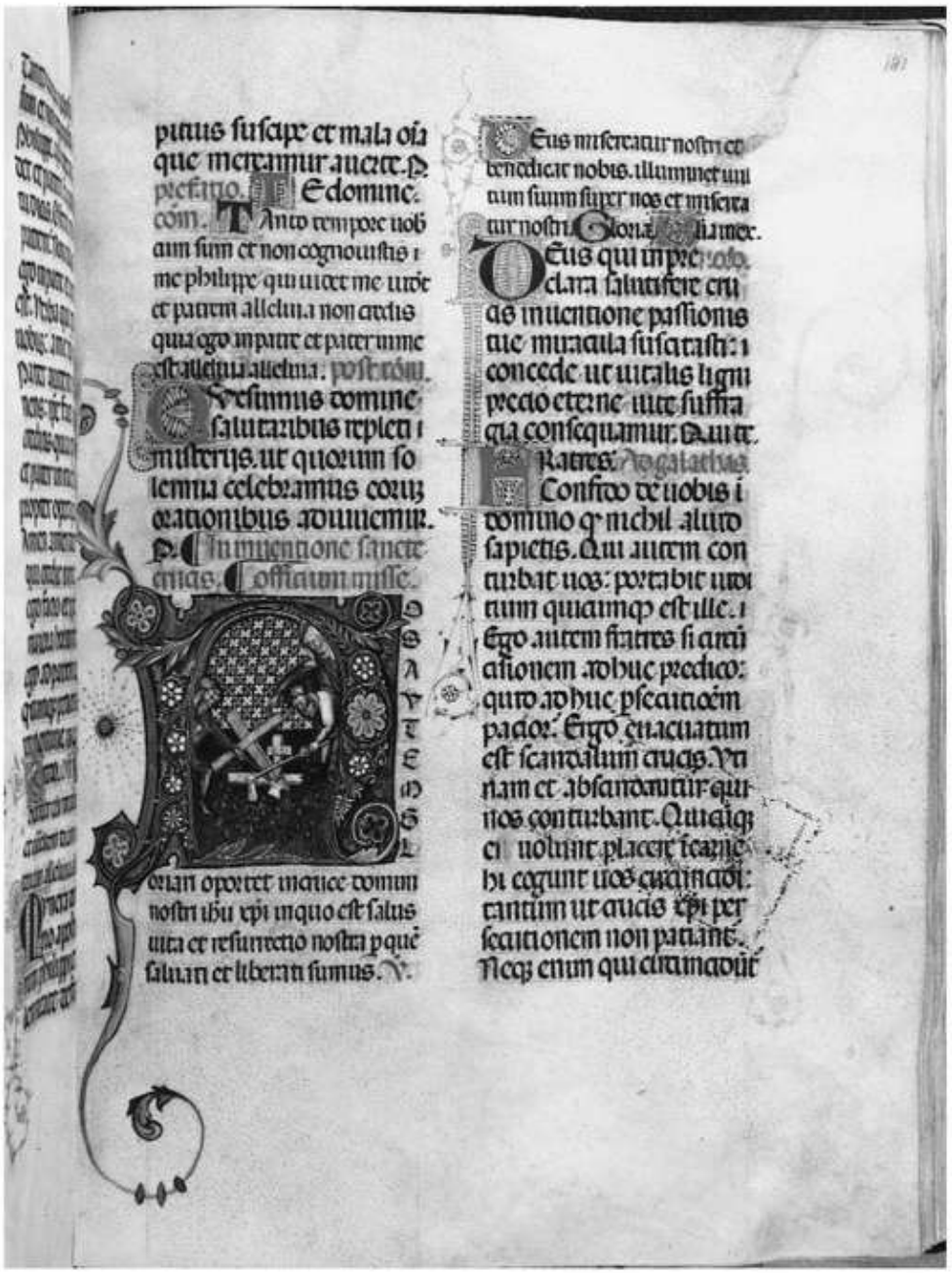


Fig. 70. *Finding of the Cross.* Dominican missal, Milan, ca. 1400. The Hague, Meermanno-Westreenianum Museum, ms. 10 A 16, fol. 181.



Fig. 71. *Finding of the Cross and the threatening of the Jews.* Milanese prayer book produced by Michele (Michelino) da Besozzo, ca. 1420. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. 944, fol. 33v.

and points warningly to a fire, presumably to encourage the Jews to find Christ's Cross. Helena and her retinue are on the left, opposite Judas and his two workmen. It has been suggested in the literature that the Lombard illuminator influenced Van Eyck and his circle.[154]

The illuminator of the Turin-Milan Hours has augmented known storylines with a number of characters, the tools and three crosses, as if endeavouring to create a composition that should incorporate every known element of the *Inventio crucis* iconography.

The Boucicaut prototype exhibits the same position and orientation of the characters, but not the same tools or number of crosses. The miniature is still close to the fourteenth-century French formula (picks, one cross) but has reversed the confrontational composition. It is just this iconographic turn that brings the miniature in the direction of the Turin-Milan Hours. For the combination of tools we must first look beyond the French and Flemish workshops to the Italian context. Yet these examples do not accord with the position of the characters in the Boucicaut miniature. The 'promoted' Judas, the presence of distinguished persons and the man on the point of pulling a cross from the ground can all be recognized in the Italian miniature painted for Johanna of Naples. The rather unusual fact of three workmen being depicted may be an additional indication that various models were amalgamated.

The actual taking hold of the wood is a motif that naturally recurs in the Testing of the Cross. In the man with a scarf tied round his head who lowers a cross onto the corpse due for revivification in the Duke of Bedford's Breviary (ca. 1430) (fig. 72), E. König recognizes a model for the Turin-Milan Hours.[155] I think this is a little far-fetched, although there is another, more conspicuous similarity between the two miniatures. The corpse in the Bedford breviary is virtually a skeleton, or at least in an advanced state of decomposition, as in *memento mori* iconography. This motif also appears in the Turin-Milan Hours. The miniature is attributed to hand I (after 1441).[156]

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[154] S. SULZBERGER, *Michele da Besozzo et les relations entre l'enluminure Italienne et l'art Eyckien*, in *Scriptorium*, 6, 1952, pp. 276–278. According to the author, the Madonna among the Virgins in the Turin-Milan Hours (fol. 59) is derived from a model by Michele da Besozzo.

[155] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 17294, fol. 454. The Finding of the Cross is suggested, not rendered; E. KÖNIG, art. cit., p. 309, fig. 8.

[156] M. SMEYERS, op. cit., p. 356 and p. 717.



Fig. 72. *Finding of the Cross.* Duke of Bedford's Breviary. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 17294, fol. 454.

In Baltimore a partial copy of the Finding of the Cross is preserved in a prayer book from Bruges (1450).[157] In that same manuscript the Raising of Lazarus is depicted at the start of the Mass for the Dead. The man turning to confront the viewer and pointing to Lazarus (who wears a contemporary short cloak) bears a striking resemblance to the man we identify as Judas in the Turin-Milan Hours.[158]

It is my belief that in the miniature in the Turin-Milan Hours, not only French but also Italian and German models are combined. In the light of such an iconographic construction the miniature—or a lost prototype in which this combination had already been made—must have been created after 1425 at the earliest. On an iconographic basis therefore, it is difficult to reconcile the dating of 1415–1420 recently proposed by A.H. van Buren.[159] I would place the miniature rather at the end of the fourteen-thirties.[160] This representation of the Finding of the Cross was imitated in other manuscripts. The miniature was copied in a *Miroir Historial* of Vincent of Beauvais (Bruges, Vrelant group, mid-fifteenth century).[161] The Finding of the Cross in the Turin-Milan Hours was also copied in a Carthusian missal from Utrecht, now in Baltimore.[162]

In the Louvre is a panel attributed to Simon Marmion on which is depicted the Testing of the Cross (Louvre, 1460–1470) (fig. 73). The Cross is tested on a woman (as described by Rufinus and mentioned in the *Legenda Aurea*) and the scene is set in front of a church. Helped by two others a man, seen from behind, wearing a headband and with a sword on his belt, lays the monumental Cross on a semi-naked young woman who is already rising from her stretcher and throwing off her shroud. Helena kneels on the right, attended by her ladies. The already-tested crosses have been laid aside. On the

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[157] Walters Art Gallery, W. 721, fol. 87; M. SMEYERS, *A Mid-Fifteenth Century Book of Hours from Bruges in The Walters Art Gallery (Ms. 721) and its Relation to the Turin-Milan Hours*, in *The Journal of The Walters Art Gallery*, 46, 1988, pp. 55–76, pp. 58–59, fig. 5.

[158] M. SMEYERS, art. cit., p. 57, fig. 2.

[159] A.H. van BUREN, art. cit., p. 191. The author proposes this date on the basis of the costumes. But the dress could be archaic.

[160] M. SMEYERS, op. cit., p. 718.

[161] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. fr. 309; J.D. FARQUHAR, *Creation and Imitation. The Work of a Fifteenth-Century Manuscript Illuminator*, New York, 1976, pp. 155–158, fig. 59.

[162] Walters Art Gallery, W. 174, fol. 79v; M. SMEYERS, op. cit., p. 793 ff.



Fig. 73. *Testing of the Cross and Finding of the Cross.* Painting from an altarpiece attributed to Simon Marmion, second half of the 15th century. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

left, in the distance, is a company including Helena and a dignified man wearing an exotic headdress (Judas? Macarius?). They are gathered round a pit in which a man is busy; a second helps him with a spade. This panel, which may well have once formed part of an altarpiece, is shrouded in uncertainty. Where does it come from, and who painted it? J. Steppe ascribes it to Simon Marmion, an attribution that has been adopted in the Louvre's own scientific catalogue. But Joos van Gent is also a possible candidate. Steppe links the panel with a Legend of the Cross written in verse that has been added to a manuscript containing the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, now in the Bibliotèque Municipale of Saint-Omer (ms. 184, fol. 27r and 27v). The manuscript was produced in the Benedictine Abbey of St Bertin during the prelacy of Guillaume Fillastre (from 1451). Steppe thinks that the verses are evidence of a lost altarpiece on which the Legend of the Cross was illustrated, and of which the panel in the Louvre was perhaps part.[163]

In the nineteenth century the work was still attributed to Joos van Gent. In an account of her travels through the Lower Rhineland and Belgium in 1828 Johanna Schopenhauer describes a painting in the collection of a certain Mr Dewater. She says of this painting: 'The master was called Justus (*sic*) van Gent, a pupil of Van Eyck, whose name has been completely lost outside his homeland and of whose life story barely a trace has been preserved in the history of art. [. . .] A mortally sick, perhaps already dead figure rises in an open doorway, woken to new life because the True Cross has touched her; two other crosses that were found beside it on Golgotha and which could not perform this miracle, lie to the side, recognized as false. The empress, Helena, a beautiful and noble figure, in imperial

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[163] J. STEPPE, *Onbekend werk van schilders uit de tweede helft van de 15de eeuw in de voormalige abdijkerk van Sint-Bertinus te Saint-Omer*, in *Federatie van Kringen van Oudheidkunde en Geschiedenis van België, 43ste Congres Sint-Niklaas-Waas 1974. Annalen*, 1974, pp. 308–319, pp. 309–312; M. COMBLEN-SONKES and Ph. LORENTZ, *Corpus de la peinture des Anciens Pays-Bas méridionaux et de la principauté de Liège au quinzième siècle*, 17. *Musée du Louvre*, 2, Brussels, 1995, pp. 181–193, no. 178. There is a Crucifixion attributed to Marmion in both the Johnson Collection in Philadelphia (no. 918) and in the Galleria Barberini in Rome. One of these could well be a fragment of the lost retable, though in neither is Christ shown between the two thieves, and this conflicts with the description in manuscript no. 184. On the Speculum in this manuscript, see: B. CARDON, *Manuscripts of the Speculum Humanae Salvationis in the Southern Netherlands (c. 1410–c. 1470). A Contribution to the Study of the 15th Century Book Illumination and of the Function and Meaning of Historical Symbolism*, Leuven, 1996, p. 424 (cat. app. II).

array, kneels opposite it with two equally richly dressed ladies behind her. Next to her stands the patriarch of Jerusalem; another man with a turban on his head in a magnificent richly draped robe and two onlookers finally complete the composition of this extraordinarily beautiful group. In all the variously-shaped heads amazement, great astonishment and heartrending joy are expressed in a way suited to each individual. In the far distance is the hill of Golgotha and the workers who are digging for the Cross directed by the empress and her retinue, are depicted here again.'[164]

This description matches the Testing of the Cross in the Louvre, and perhaps indicates that in 1828, at least, the panel was no longer part of a multi-panel altarpiece.

Depicted on the exterior of the wings of the Descent from the Cross triptych (formerly Madrid, private collection) by Vrancke van der Stockt (1420[?]–1495) are the Testing (left) and Exaltation of the Cross (right). Elisa Bermejo describes the latter as *El Emperador Constantino vestido de penitente llevando la Cruz a Jérusalén.*[165] On the panel a figure in penitential garb carries a cross on his shoulders towards a city gate. Iconographically, such a description matches the restitution of the Cross by Emperor Heraclius. Bermejo's identification of the panel is thus an iconographic anomaly.

In the foregrounds of two panels now in the Memling Museum in Bruges (early sixteenth century) the Heraclius legend is illustrated (fig. 74).[166] On the right panel Heraclius is mounted on a splendidly caparisoned steed and carries the Cross. The angel admonishes him. On the left panel the emperor, now clad in a penitential garment, approaches the open gate. Depicted in the background of the right panel is Testing of the Cross and Helena presenting the True Cross to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In the distance on the left panel three episodes from the Legend of the Cross are depicted: Judas released from the well; Chosroes enthroned in his cosmic palace; and Heraclius and Chosroes' son in single combat on the

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[164] Trans. from: JOHANNA SCHOPENHAUER, *Auszug an den Niederrhein und nach Belgien im Jahr 1828*, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1831, pp. 209–210.

[165] E. BERMEJO, *La pintura de los Primitivos Flamencos en España*, 1, Madrid, 1980, p. 144, figs. 137, 138.

[166] H. LOBELLE-CALUWE, *Memlingmuseum Bruges. Saint John's Hospital*, n.p., 1985, pp. 90–91. Job and a musical angel are depicted on the closed wings.



Fig. 74. *Legends of the Finding and Exaltation of the Cross*. Two painted panels (from a triptych?), anon., early 16th century. Bruges, Memling Museum.

bridge over the Danube. Narratively speaking, the scene with Judas in the well has no place in the Heraclius legend. Not much is known about these panels, though the devices on Heraclius's banners suggest a Habsburg connection.[167] Until the middle of the nineteenth century they hung in the orphanage of the Bogarden School.[168] The combination of Helena and Heraclius legends is reminiscent of the *Memminger* triptych in Nuremberg.

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[167] See: M. TANNER, *The Last Descendant of Aeneas. The Hapsburgs and the Mythic Image of the Emperor*, New Haven-London, 1993, pp. 119–130, for the Habsburgs' veneration of the Cross.

[168] H. LOBELLE-CALUWE, op. cit., p. 90. A brotherhood of the Holy Cross was established in Bruges only in 1670; A. SCHOUTEET, *Het rederijkersgilde van het*

The Bruges work shows certain affinities with a panel from the workshop of the German Master of Liesborn (ca. 1465) (fig. 75).[169] The panel was originally part of a polyptych that included episodes from the legend of the Theban Legion, which was particularly popular in the Rhineland.[170] The Rhineland Master painted four episodes. Above left is Constantine's vision. An angel leads the emperor through the doorway of a contemporary house and points to a cross that appears in the heavens. The iconography is exceptional, for it avoids the conventional representation of Constantine's dream and his vision before the battle against Maxentius. Below, the Cross is tried on a youth, who sits up on his stretcher as the elderly Judas lays the tested Cross aside. Helena and a select company watch in wonder. Above right is a bridge over a river. Heraclius dispatches Chosroes' son, thrusting his sword in his fallen enemy's back. Below, in penitential garb, he restores the Cross to Jerusalem. On the Bruges panels the Finding of the Cross was also omitted in favour of the Testing. This development can be dated to around the middle of the fifteenth century. The left-hand Bruges panel also combines the scene on the bridge with the humble restitution, albeit the orientation of the latter is the reverse of the Master of Liesborn's work.

Why is it that the German contribution should be so prominent in fourteenth and fifteenth-century panel painting and stained glass work? Naturally, in Flanders, manuscript illumination compensates for this, though this is not the place for an exhaustive study. Yet it is not only the various artistic traditions that have played a role; the devotional concentrations referred to above have also been a determining factor. Constantine, Helena and Heraclius are all imperial figures. The Teutonic Order also took Heraclius as a model. These contexts send out their strongest signals in the imperial cities and the states of the Teutonic Order and give an extra 'German' aspect to the

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heilig kruis te Sint-Michiels en te Brugge, in *Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Taal en Letterkunde*, 2, 1969, pp. 257–281, p. 257.

[169] Münster, Landesmuseum; P. PIEPER, op. cit., pp. 254–260.

[170] London, National Gallery. For the reconstruction, see, P. PIEPER, op. cit., p. 58. For devotion to Helena in this area, see: J. DIETZ, *St. Helena in der rheinischen Überlieferung*, in *Festschrift Matthias Zender. Studien zu Volkskultur, Sprache und Landesgeschichte*, 2 vols. Bonn, 1972, 1, pp. 354–382. It has already been indicated in Chapter Two that Helena was venerated in the Trier area because she was supposedly a native of that city.

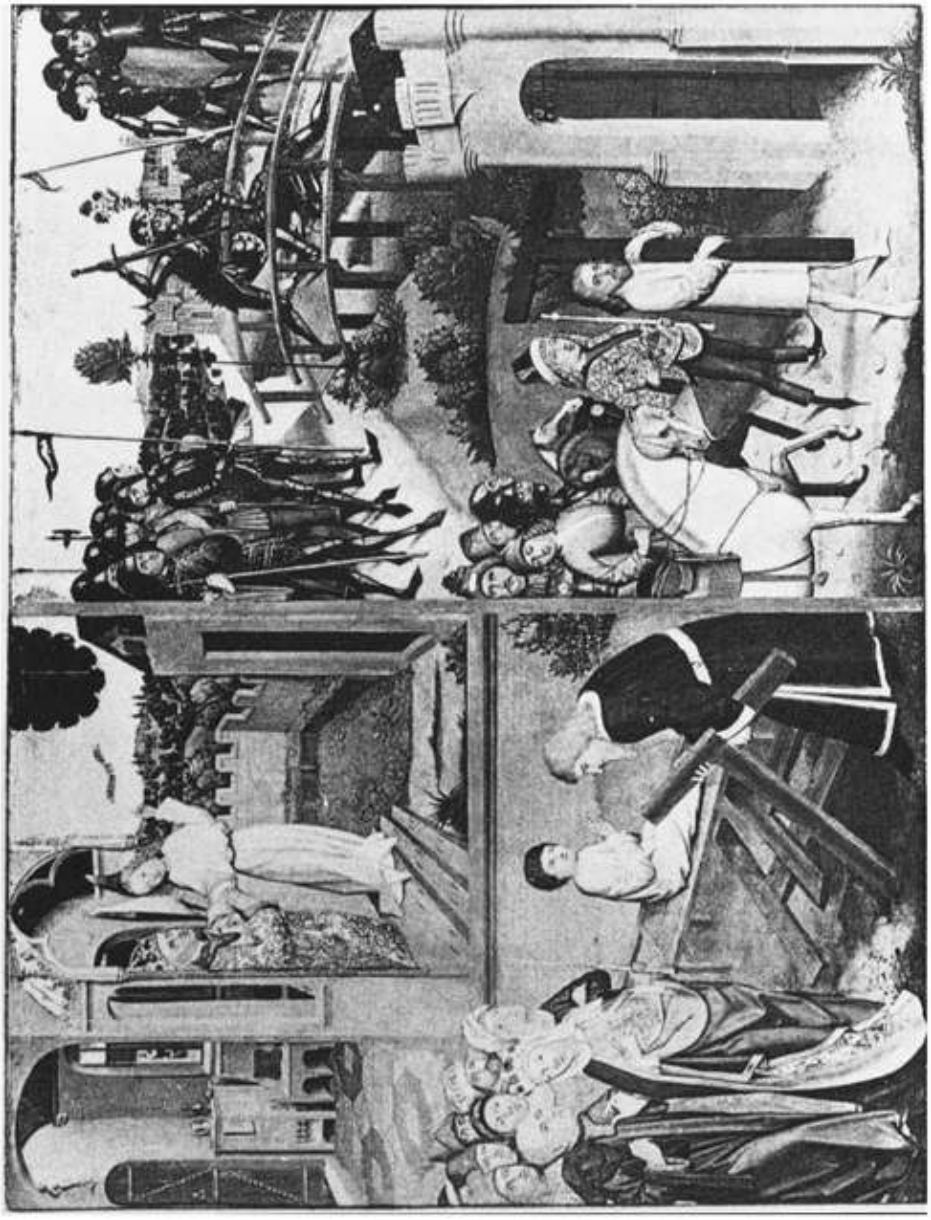


Fig. 75. *Legends of the Finding and Exaltation of the Cross.* Panel from the workshop of the Master of Liesborn, ca. 1465. Münster, Landesmuseum.

general liturgical and para-liturgical functions that the iconography of the Finding and Exaltation of the Cross fulfil in the manuscripts.

This is not to say that other ruling houses did not employ the Cross legend in this exemplary context: the windows in Louis IX's Sainte-Chapelle must be viewed in the same light. Jean de Berry continued the French tradition at the beginning of the fifteenth century and evinced a personal devotion to a relic of the Cross.[171] The Burgundian court—and despite my arguments this is striking—made no explicit use of the Finding and/or Exaltation iconography as far as is known, although Philip the Good also possessed a relic of the Cross.[172] But then, in the Middle Ages, what self-respecting individual did not? It would seem that quite simply no strong Cross legend tradition evolved in Flanders because the seeds had been sown elsewhere (France, Germany). Or it must be that paintings have been lost.

The sixteenth-century painters of the Southern Netherlands were not oblivious to the theme however.[173] A triptych was commissioned

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[171] A. FROLOW, op. cit., p. 545, no. 830. Jean Duc de Berry also owned two medallions on which were portraits of Constantine and Heraclius. In the *Très Riches Heures* of the Duc de Berry (Chantilly, Musée Condé, 1413–1416, fol. 133v) the Testing of the Cross is illustrated next to the Friday Mass. Here too the person on whom the crosses are to be tested is laid upon the crosses by a man. On the left, Helena kneels with a number of women; on the right a group of men look on in wonder. In the background are a castle and a lake. Further in this manuscript, at the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, fol. 193: a monk and a patriarch display a gem-covered cross on an altar beneath a ciborium. A nobleman and his wife worship it (Heraclius and his wife?). A snake twines around the foot of the altar cross: Moses' brazen serpent (typology)?; the serpent of man's Fall. The iconography of the Exaltation of the Cross is engrafted onto the Byzantine formula. In the bas-de-page Judas discovers the Cross with a pick. The connecting of the Exaltation and the Finding of the Cross on 14 September is also Byzantine; M. MEISS, *The Très Riches Heures of Jean, Duke of Berry*, New York, 1969, p. 209 and p. 222, figs. 104 and 133.

[172] A. FROLOW, op. cit., p. 575, no. 896.

[173] For the theme as represented in tapestry: 1. tapestry in Zaragossa Cathedral with both the Finding and the Exaltation of the Cross (Tournai, mid-15th cent.); E. TORRA de ARANA, et al., *Los tapices de la Seo de Zaragoza*, Aragon, 1985, pp. 88–90, fig. p. 89; G. DELMARCEL, *Het Vlaamse wandtapijt van de 15de tot de 18de eeuw*, Tielt, 1999, pp. 40–41; In the Museo de Bellas Artes there, a disassembled altarpiece of the Holy Cross (workshop of Martin Bernart, 1485–1487); 2. a Finding of the Cross, woven by Lenaert Knoest, now in the Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels (second decade of the 16th cent.); G. DELMARCEL, *L'Invention de la Sainte Croix*, in *Tapisseries bruxelloises de la pré-Renaissance* (exh. cat.), Brussels, 1976, pp. 76–78, no. 18, fig. 18; 3. in 1615 the Church of the Holy Cross in Angers also received a *Histoire de la Vraie Croix* (fig. 77); R. PLANCHENAULT, *Les tapisseries d'Angers*, Paris, n.d., pp. unnumbered.

from Bernard van Orley (1515–1520) for St Walburga's Church in Veurne, where it graced an altar dedicated to the Holy Cross. Most likely the Crucifixion was depicted in the centre of the now partly lost triptych: only the exterior of the right wing remains, with the Carrying of the Cross in the background and in the foreground what M.J. Frieländer calls 'St Helena in Rome'.[174] However, what is depicted here is Helena's arrival in Jerusalem, a much more familiar iconographic theme in this context.

In St Peter's Church in Dortmund is a carved triptych produced in Antwerp in 1521. It was ordered from Master Giesz by Dortmund's Franciscans. Seven scenes from the Finding and Exaltation legends were carved on the predella. The painted scenes on the exterior of the predella's wings recount the lives of St Anne and the Virgin, and the childhood of Christ. When closed, the triptych displays the Adoration of the Host and the sacrament of confession and two typologies: Abraham and Melchizedek and the manna from heaven. The Adoration of the Host is also combined with the Legend of the Cross on the Marienwerder cupboard reliquary. The *Tempziner* altarpiece has the childhood of Mary on the exterior. We have associated this with fifteenth-century typologies referring to Holy Places in Jerusalem. As mentioned earlier, from the mid-fourteenth century the Franciscans were the custodians of the holy sites of Golgotha and Bethlehem.[175] We shall be returning to the Franciscan connection with the Legend of the Cross in the final chapter.

In the Church of St Leonard in Zoutleeuw is a carved triptych of the Holy Cross (Brabant, ca. 1530) which has come to serve as part of the Spiecken family memorial (fig. 76).[176] In the centre is a Calvary. The triptych rests on a console. Painted on the wings of the triptych are a number of scenes from the Legend of the Cross. On the left, reading from bottom to top, are Helena questioning Judas, the Finding of the Cross and Constantine's encounter with Maxentius on the Milvian Bridge. On the right, again from the bottom upwards, are depicted the Testing of the Cross, Heraclius before

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[174] Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts. M.J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Jan Gossart and Bernart van Orley* (*Early Netherlandisch Painting*, 8), Leiden-Brussels, 1972, pp. 57–59, fig. 98.

[175] H. NIEUWDORP, *Antwerpse retabels. 15de-16de eeuw*, 2. *Essays* (exh. cat.), Antwerp, 1993, p. 34, figs. 19–20.

[176] J.K. STEPPE, *Retabel van het H. Kruis. Memorietafel*, in *Aspecten van de laatgotiek in Brabant* (exh. cat.), Leuven, 1971, pp. 632–636.



Fig. 76. *Legend of the Cross*, Brabant, ca. 1530. Zoutleeuw, Spiecken family memorial, Church of St Leonard.

the closed gate, and an image that J. Steppe calls 'Heraclius's prayer of thanksgiving'. Indeed this is a variation on the theme of the penitent, Cross-carrying emperor. On the console is an inscription explaining that the triptych is dedicated to the Holy Cross, as was also the case in Veurne.

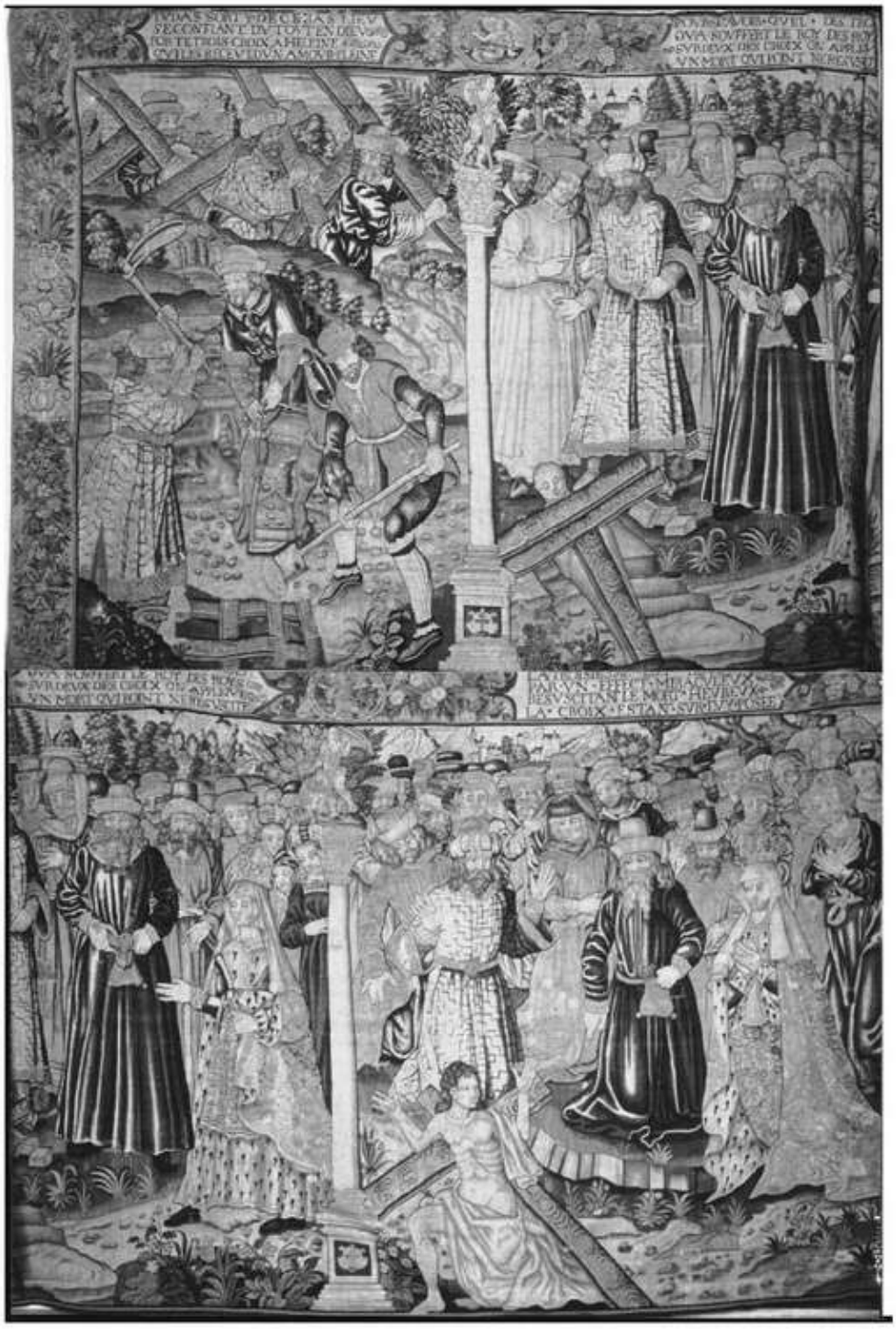


Fig. 77. *Legend of the Finding of the Cross.* Tapestry, 1615. Angers, Church of the Holy Cross.

This chapter concludes the long and complex tradition of the Finding and Exaltation of the Cross. It has been seen that the legends of Helena and Heraclius were increasingly diffused, that though their iconographic history began in illumination and precious metalwork, by the fifteenth century it had also come to be illustrated on altar-pieces, polyptychs and in stained glass. The legends' distribution was evident in areas with an increased interest in the relic of the Cross as the symbolic stake in politico-religious engagements with the Holy Land and the non-Christian world.

However, this is only part of the story of the medieval 'heritage of holy wood'. The relic of the Cross gave rise to another great fascination—the matter of its 'material', its 'biological' origin. A third legend, that of the Wood of the Cross, sought to appease the hunger for knowledge of the origin of the wooden Cross and its relic. The next chapter looks at how the medieval texts and their underlying ideas gave expression to the journey of the Wood of the Cross from the Book of Genesis to the coming of Christ. This urge to ascribe to the Cross a biological ancestry in the Old Testament, from a twig from the Tree of Life to the trunk from which the Cross was made, reflects a desire for the completion of one great salvation history. The Legend of the Wood of the Cross sought to honour a salvation that was already mysteriously operative in the Old Testament, to honour the Cross that indeed connects alpha and omega.

CHAPTER FIVE

FROM PARADISE TO GOLGOTHA. THE LEGEND OF THE WOOD OF THE CROSS

The term 'Legend of the Wood of the Cross' refers to a miscellany of stories about Christ's 'Cross' in the Old Testament. The legend follows the Wood of the Cross as it evolves through different guises, until it reaches its final destination and assumes its role as the instrument of the Passion. The legend is a prolegomena on the shape and meaning of the True Cross and is in the nature of a diachronic prefiguration.

The legend's content had a huge influence on the history of medieval literature and art. Its growth was extremely vigorous and its ramifications were often whimsical. There is scarcely a unified form of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross—or the 'holy rood-tree', as it is sometimes called—to be found, and it must have had a rich oral history before it appeared in written form. W. Meyer,[1] A. R. Miller[2] and A. M. L. Prangsma-Hajenius[3] have all carried out research on the phases of the legend's development and literary typology.

Between typologia and narratio

In the twelfth century, stimulated by the cathedral schools, systematic reflections anent the relationship between the Old and New Testaments

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[1] W. MEYER, *Die Geschichte des Kreuzholzes vor Christus* (*Abhandlungen der philosophisch-philologischen Classe der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 16, 2), Munich, 1882. This was the first study to endeavour to unravel the Legend of the Wood of the Cross by using the techniques of literary history. Research has been indebted to it for a considerable time.

[2] A.R. MILLER, *German and Dutch Versions of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross. A Descriptive and Analytical Catalogue*, 2 vols. (unpubl. Doct.), Oxford, 1992. As the title suggests, the author has concentrated on sources from German and Dutch language areas up to the 15th century. However, this study has also greatly contributed to the understanding of the origin of the Legend of the Cross in Greek, Slavonic and Armenian circles.

[3] A.M.L. PRANGSMA-HAJENIUS, *La légende du Bois de la Croix dans la Littérature française médiévale* (Doct.), Assen, 1995. The great merit of this study is its structural

were elaborated. The Old Testament was seen as a prefiguration of the New. An exegetic network developed that was intended to show how the prophets of old had already predicted the coming of Christ. From the twelfth century onwards this pattern of thought—termed typology—ran through most literary genres, from liturgical texts to world chronicles, and stimulated new iconographic motifs. The Legend of the Wood of the Cross belongs to this typological idiom.

Honorius of Autun was a considerable contributor to this typological historiography. In his *Speculum ecclesiae* (before 1125 or between 1095 and 1102), at the feast of the Finding of the Cross, he expands on the 'concealed' meanings of the Cross.[4] He connects the Wood of Paradise with the Cross of Christ. He compares Abel with Christ for they were both killed with wood; he compares Abraham with Christ because Abraham saw three angels beneath a tree (also a prefiguration of the Trinity), as the faithful below the Cross saw the Messiah; and he compares Moses with Christ for God appeared to Moses in burning wood.

He also identifies a number of prefigurations of the Cross in Moses' staff (*virga*), which had driven away the brazen serpent, parted the Red Sea, struck water from the rock, thus heralding baptism, and caused the redeeming water of life to appear. Moses led the Jews to the Promised Land; Christ on the Cross led Christians to Paradise. Moses made the bitter waters sweet with his staff; Christ gave the water immortality with the Cross. Honorius also introduces a new motif: the *Piscina Probatica*.[5] This refers to the description in John 5, 2 of a pool with five porticoes, called Bethzatha. Here the Jews used to bathe their sacrificial animals, and here Jesus cured a man who was lame. Moses' Wood of Paradise is said to have ended up in this pool. At certain seasons an angel of the Lord went down into the pool and stirred up the water, imbuing it with healing power for whoever bathed in it, just as baptism in the name of Christ gives new life to the baptized.[6]

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analysis of some twenty French Wood of the Cross legends dating from the 13th to 15th century.

[4] HONORIUS OF AUTUN, *Speculum ecclesiae. De inventione sanctae Crucis*, PL 172, col. 945.

[5] See: B. BAERT, *La Piscine Probatique à Jérusalem. L'eau médicinale au Moyen Age*, in *Als Ich Can. Liber Amicorum in Memory of Professor Dr. Maurits Smeyers*, ed. B. CARDON et al., Leuven, 2002, pp. 91–129.

[6] PL 172, cols. 945–946. Honorius explains the shape of the Cross: the three

Honorius treats the individual prefigurations of the Cross in terms of their exegetical and liturgical meaning. He develops the typology between Tree of Life, staff and Cross in a baptismal context. Even though there is no question of a narrative structure, important elements of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross are already present: the Tree of Life and the *Piscina Probatica*.

In the second half of the twelfth century the first texts to deal with the typological Wood of the Cross appeared. An interpolation in Honorius of Autun's *De imago mundi* contained in a manuscript from Augsburg (1154–1159) tells that Adam was created in Hebron, lived in Jerusalem and was buried on Mount Calvary, but that his body was brought back to Hebron by an angel (his skull remaining on Golgotha?).[7] There the angel buried him in a purple robe (*ostrum*) and placed a nut from the forbidden tree in his mouth (*nucleum vetiti ligni*).[8] The mouth has a typological meaning connected with the Fall, and also alludes to Isaiah 11, which speaks of the branch that grows out of the roots of Jesse (11, 1): 'he [the Messiah] shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth' (11, 4).[9] It is significant that the Wood of the Cross motif becomes part of the symbolism connected with the Tree of Jesse.

Petrus Comestor (d. before 1178) says in his *Historia scholastica* that the Queen of Sheba observed a piece of wood in the *Domus Saltus*—Solomon's palace, also called the 'forest house'—and that once home she wrote to the king about the purpose of this wood and the danger

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visible ends symbolize the Trinity; the four directions, the universe. 'Per quartum, quo tria sustenantus, veneratio unitatis demonstratur'.

[7] Munich, Bayerische Staasbibliothek, clm 22225 and 23387a, at a sermon on the angels and Hell; A.R. MILLER, op. cit., 1, pp. 93–99; V.I.J. FLINT, *Anti-Jewish Literature and Attitudes in the Twelfth Century*, in *Ideas in the Medieval West. Texts and their Contexts* (Variorum reprints), London, 1988, pp. 39–57, pp. 50–52.

[8] Adam's skull at the foot of the Cross as a 'chalice' is an ancient Jewish-Christian concept. L. GINZBERG, *The Legends of the Jews*, 6 vols., Philadelphia, 1913–1928, 5, n. 137; V.I.J. FLINT, art. cit., p. 50. Often the place of Christ's burial is identified with that of Adam, according to the Jewish notion that Adam was buried at the centre of the earth. To Christians, Golgotha—the 'place of the skull'—was the navel of the world. See also: H. van DIJK, *Reizigers naar het Heilig Land en het middelpunt van de wereld*, in *Een school spierinkjes. Kleine opstellen over Middelnederlandse artes-literatuur*, ed. W.P. GERRITSEN et al., Hilversum, 1991, pp. 49–52.

[9] E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 77. The mouth as a site of sin and a site of redemption is a Jewish apocryphal motif; See also: L. GINZBERG, op. cit., 5, p. 98, n. 70.

it posed to the Jews. Solomon accordingly buried the wood.[10] On that spot the *Piscina Probatica* welled up.[11] And in that pool the wood was found at the time of Christ's Passion.[12]

Godfrey of Viterbo (*Pantheon*, XIV, ca. 1180) recounts a story that embroiders on the book of Genesis.[13] Jonitus, Noah's fourth son (*sic*) and an accomplished astrologer, plucked three fruits in turn from a cypress, a palm and a fir.[14] These he planted, and miraculously they produced a single tree. In this tree David immediately recognized the Trinity. When Solomon began to build the Temple, he cut down the tree. But when he tried to use the wood it constantly changed

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[10] Gervase of Tilbury, in his *Otia Imperialia* (1212), focuses on Comestor's Temple passage. 'Traditio Graecorum habet quod de arbore illa, in cuius fructus peccaviat Adam ramus fuit translatus in Jeruzalem qui in tanteam excrevit arborem, quod de illo facta est crux domini'. It is not clear which Greek source he means here. But according to the author, others also say that Adam had surreptitiously taken with him an apple from Paradise, and that the Cross grew from its pips. The typology connected with the apple tree becomes more frequent from the 12th century; T.N. HALL, *The Cross as Green Tree in the Vindicta Salvatoris and the Green Rod of Moses in Exodus*, in *English Studies*, 72, 4, 1991, pp. 297–307, p. 305, n. 30. In the context of the Tree of Life we deal with a *prefiguratio* (analogy), in the context of the Tree of Knowledge with a *recapitulatio* (polar). J.R. CADWELL, *Gervasius Tilburiensis. Manuscripts of Gervase of Tilbury's Otia Imperialia*, in *Scriptorium*, 16, 1, 1962, pp. 28–45; A. DUCHESNE (trans.), J. le GOFF, et al., *Gervasius Tilburiensis. Le livre des merveilles. Divertissement pour un empereur*, Paris, 1992. The Apocalypse of Moses, a Jewish apocryphal text of the first century AD (before 70 AD) (XXIX, 4–7) also speaks of paradisal herbs that Adam and Eve smuggled out with them; A.F.J. KLIJN, *Seth in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic Literature* (*Supplements to Novum Testamentum*, 46), Leiden, 1977, p. 19.

[11] PETRUS COMESTOR, *Historia scholastica*, PL 198, cols. 1578–1579; 'Cognominata Hebraice bethsaida, quinque porticus habens, [. . .] in ea Nathinaei hostias lavabant. Nathinaei erant aquae bajuli in templo, quod officium subdiacones, aquam sacerdoti ministrantes, habent'. See also: J.H. MOREY, *Petrus Comestor and the Medieval Popular Bible*, in *Speculum*, 68, 3, 1993, pp. 6–35; A.R. MILLER, op. cit., pp. 103–105.

[12] Ibid.; 'Traditur a quibusdam quod regina Saba vidit in spiritu in domo saltus, quae Nethota dicebatur, lignum Dominicae crucis, et nuntiavit Salomoni cum iam recessisset ab eo, quod in eo moreretur quidam, pro quo occiso perirent judaei, et perderent locum et gentem. Quod timens Salomon, defodit illud terra ubi post facta est piscina'.

[13] Not in GODFREY OF VITERBO, *Pantheon*, PL 198, cols. 872 ff.; it is included in W. MEYER, op. cit., pp. 112–114; A.R. MILLER, op. cit., pp. 108–114.

[14] According to the Scriptures Jonitus is not a son of Noah (these are Shem, Ham and Japhet). Moreover, in the Jewish Apocrypha, astrological knowledge is usually ascribed to Enoch (Enos) (not to be confused with Enoch, the son of Jared, Gen. 5) or his father, Seth (see below). Jonitus may be a derivative of Moniton from the Apocalypse of the Syriac Book of the Cave of Treasures. A slip of the pen perhaps turned Moniton into Joniton (Latin: Jonitus); A.R. MILLER, op. cit., p. 110.

size and therefore he set it up at the Temple gate to be worshipped. In this wood the sibyl Nikaula[15] discerned the Messiah, and so, fearing it portended the downfall of the Jewish kingdom, Solomon cast the wood into the pool of Siloam. Godfrey adds that when Christ's Cross was made from this wood it still displayed three different colours. Here the trinitarian character of the tree is strongly elaborated. The Trinity is the operator of the Incarnation. Thus the Messiah issues from a union of three branches. The union takes place in Jerusalem itself, observed and acknowledged by David. David is thus literally the stem of Judah, the stem of the Messiah. The Tree of Jesse is grafted onto the tree of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross.

Godfrey of Viterbo is not the only author to turn to Genesis as a source. Lambert of Saint-Omer mentions the Wood of the Cross at the very beginning of his *Liber floridus* (1120).[16] Speaking of the genealogy of Old Testament characters, he describes Adam's infirmity. Here he introduces a new character: Seth, Adam's third son, who at his father's request fetched a branch of the Tree of Paradise from the Archangel Michael. On his return Seth showed the branch to his father, but Adam died before knowing the joy of smelling its sweet fragrance. Seth planted the branch, and Solomon cut it down to build the Temple. However, the wood proved unusable and it was thrown away. At the time of Christ the wood was seen once more and from it a cross was made. The *Liber floridus* says nothing about the *Piscina Probatica*; Seth, Adam and Solomon are the only characters mentioned.

John Beleth (*Rationale divinorum officiorum*, 1170)[17] also includes Seth and the Wood of the Cross in *De exaltatione sanctae crucis*.[18] The author

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[15] According to Herodotus, Nikaula is an Egyptian-Chaldean queen. From Josephus (H. THACKERAY (ed. and Greek-English trans.), *Josephus Flavius. Antiquitates Judaicae*, I, 60–65, 5 vols., London, 1958–1965: VIII, 6, 2, par. 195) onwards she is fused with the sibyl Saba; S. KRAUSS, *Die Königin von Saba in den byzantinischen Chroniken*, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 11, 1902, pp. 120–131, p. 128.

[16] A. DEROLEZ (ed.), *Lamberti S. Audomari Canonici Liber Floridus. Codex autographus Bibliothecae Universitatis Gandavensis*, Ghent, 1968, p. 5, fol. 2r; IDEM, *Lambertus qui librum fecit. Een codicologische studie van de Liber Floridus-autograaf (Gent, Universitaire bibliotheek, ms. 92)*, Brussels, 1978, p. 35; E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 156, n. 15.

[17] JOHN BELETH, *Rationale divinorum officiorum*, PL 202, Paris, 1856, cols. 152–153; A.R. MILLER, op. cit., pp. 100–101.

[18] Ibid.; 'Ferunt ab Adamo Seth. Filium eius missum fuisse in paradisum, qui ramum inde sibi datum ab angelo retulit ad patrem, qui statim illius arboris mysterium cognoscens, eam terrae inservit, in magnam arborem procreavit'. In the

tells us that Solomon cut down the tree that grew on Adam's grave and endeavoured to use it when building the Temple. But the wood miraculously shrank or stretched and would never fit, and thus it was cast aside and came to be used as a bridge over a stream on the edge of the city. Here the Queen of Sheba made her entrance into Jerusalem. Silently she perceived the Messianic purpose in the wood of the bridge and venerated it. After that, the wood was deliberately left behind in the *Piscina Probatica*, there to remain until Christ's condemnation. Unlike Honorius of Autun, Beleth makes no mention of the angel that gave the pool its healing powers.

With the inclusion of the legend in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* (ca. 1260) its process of formation in twelfth-century Latin Church histories and liturgical compendia was complete. This became the standard version and iconographic benchmark. Jacobus used the Legend of the Wood of the Cross as a prologue to the feast of the Finding of the Cross on 3 May. In his introduction it is clear that he deliberately adds these motifs within a prefigurative framework. He says that the Cross had already been found many times before Helena's discovery of it.[19] Thus the concept of *inventione* also means 'typological finding', the concealed 'finding' of the wood. Jacobus specifies that by the time Seth returned, Adam was already dead[20] and that the branch was planted over Adam's grave. The angel's pronouncement is striking: only when the tree bears fruit will Adam be made whole.[21] But Solomon cuts down the tree, just like Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4, 7–14). This is a metaphor for the coming of the era of the Messiah. Jacobus also cites Beleth's assertion that when attempts were made to use the wood it was always too long or too short,[22] adding that the Queen of Sheba encountered the wood at

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interpolation of the text of Honorius of Autun (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm. 22225 and 22387a, 1154–1159) it is said that an angel planted a seed of the Tree of Life in Adam's mouth; W. MEYER, op. cit., p. 109.

[19] Th. GRAESSE (ed.), *Jacobi a Voragine legenda aurea. Vulgo historia lombardica dicta*, Osnabruck, 1969 (repr. 1890), p. 303; W.G. RYAN (ed. and trans.), *Jacobus de Voragine. The Golden Legend. Reading on the Saints*, 2 vols., 5th edn, New York, 1995, 2, pp. 277–284, p. 277.

[20] This motif was first made explicit in a version attributed to Adelphus, *Contra Saracenos*, 1180; A. MUSSAFIA, *Sulla leggenda del legno della croce* (*Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie. Philosofisch-historischen Classe*, 63, 165), Vienna, 1869, pp. 171–172; A.R. MILLER, op. cit., p. 107.

[21] A.R. MILLER, op. cit., p. 121.

[22] After Gervase of Tilbury (*Otia Imperiali*, 1212) who clarifies Beleth's 'allata est' with 'aut enim brevis erat aut longis quam requirebat'.

the bridge and recognized and venerated it. He mentions another version, that of Petrus Comestor, according to which the wood remained abandoned in the 'forest house'. The *Piscina Probatica* scene is included, based on Honorius of Autun's extended version. From time to time an angel would descend and stir the water and this, together with the power of the wood, endowed it with its healing qualities. When the time of Christ's suffering drew nigh the wood floated up to the surface of the pond and was used to make the Messiah's Cross.[23]

The development of typological reflections in Church histories up to the *Legenda Aurea* is but one aspect of the growth of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross, for it permeated other literary genres as well. Some were transmitted in vernaculars, and it is worth pausing to examine one or two of the high-medieval variants.

In the *Historia*, a manuscript from Regensburg dating from before 1150,[24] we are told that in the time of David a certain Jew found a branch of wood bearing three different kinds of leaves, which he brought to the king. By divine inspiration David discerned the wood's Messianic purpose and he honoured it. Solomon also venerated it and caused the branch to be gilded. The Queen of Sheba visited Solomon; she prophesied that one day a man would hang upon that same piece of wood and the kingdom of the Jews would be at an end. She did not wish Solomon to know this, however, for then he would cease to venerate the wood. But a chaplain (*sic*) passed on the queen's words in a letter and Solomon, made fearful by the ominous message, buried the wood in a deep pit. When the *piscina* dried up in the time of Jesus the wood was seen and deemed fit for making a cross.[25] In this version the Queen of Sheba keeps her supernatural perception a secret from Solomon for 'reasons of conscience': she does not want the king to lose his respect for the wood. As the

[23] The version is given thus in the transcriptions and translations of the *Legenda Aurea*. Only the *Alte Passionael* and the *Der heiligen Leben* do not mention the *Piscina Probatica* by name. In *Der heiligen Leben* it is suggested that at first Solomon wanted to burn the wood, but, in his wisdom, refrained. 'Do het im got di weishait benhmen, daz er es niht his verprennen'; A.R. MILLER, op. cit., p. 190.

[24] W. MEYER, op. cit., pp. 103–106, Munich, cod. lat. Monach 14442, fol. 1; A.R. MILLER, op. cit., pp. 87–90. English trans. J. WILKINSON, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage. 1099–1185*, London, 1988, p. 75.

[25] The dried-out well alludes to the *Piscina Probatica*.

queen hopes to keep the wood from destruction she becomes complicit in the mysterious 'conspiracy' that is already preparing the New Testament in the Old.[26] It is actually the simple chaplain who upsets the queen's strategy. The feudal character of this old version is striking. Indeed, the roots of the text may go back to the Carolingian period.[27]

In the early-thirteenth-century *La citez de Jherusalem* (*Chronique d'Ernoul*)[28] a Wood of the Cross motif is incorporated into the description of an abbey by the River Jordan in which a relic of the Cross was kept. This was said to be a piece of the wood that grew longer or shorter and could not be fitted into the Temple of Jerusalem. Thus it remained there on display. At a certain moment a queen (*sic*) came to visit the Temple and venerated the wood. The author then proceeds to give the wood's history. Adam asked one of his sons (unnamed) to fetch a seed from the tree of which he had eaten. When Adam died, the seed became a tree growing out of his mouth, and along with other trees it was swept by the Flood to Mount Liban (*sic*), where the Temple would be built. In the wood of Christ's Cross, which was made from this tree, Adam's skull lay concealed. Come the Passion, it suddenly fell out of the wood and received Christ's blood.[29]

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[26] In the so-called St Martialis redaction (undated) the queen refuses to confide her insight to the king, for she fears he will burn the wood; A. WILMART, art. cit., p. 236; A.R. MILLER, op. cit., p. 90.

[27] A. WILMART, *La légende du bois de la croix*, in *Revue biblique*, 2, 1927, pp. 226–236. Meyer's *Historia* appears, among other places, in a compilation about the customs and practices of the Church, the *Candela* (1130–1149) of Gerlandus Chrysopolitanus. In the seventeenth book the canon of St Paul's at Besançon describes the legend as *Ex libro Magistri Franconis Legiensis*. In the first half of the 12th century Gerlandus recorded a story that came from Franco, who was a scholar at the cathedral school in Liège from 1066 until his death after 1089. Wilmart argues that Franco's version is itself not an original product but repeated, not after an oral but a written tradition that possibly dates back to the 9th century; See also: A.S. NAPIER, *History of the Holy Rood-Tree. A Twelfth Century Version of the Cross-Legend*, London, 1894, p. IX; L. HERMODSSON (ed. and introduction), *Dat Boec van den Houte. Eine mittelniederländische Dichtung von der Herkunft des Kreuzes Christi*, Uppsala-Wiesbaden, 1959, p. 15.

[28] Edns: T. TOBLER (ed.), *Descriptiones terrae sanctae ex saeculo VIII.IX.XII et XV*, 7. *La citez de Jhérusalem*, Leipzig, 1874, pp. 196–244, p. 216; H. MICHELANT and G. RAYNAUD, *Itinéraires à Jérusalem et descriptions de la terre sainte rédigés géographique*, vol. 3. *Itinéraires français*, Geneva, 1882, pp. 45–47. Discussion: A.M.L. PRANGSMA-HAJENIUS, op. cit., pp. 37–38.

[29] The author of the *Citez* forces the transition of Adam's burial place, which is Hebron according to tradition, to Mount Liban via the Flood. Sometimes this is

Another variant is included in a thirteenth-century poem about the childhood of St Anne by Hermann, a priest of Valenciennes.[30] In the one thousand-year-old Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (which, like Adam and Eve, was expelled from Paradise) Abraham hears a voice which tells him that Christ will die on that tree.[31] The story goes on to say that Isaac had given a flower from the tree to Emperor Fanouel. His daughter Anna married Joachim and to them Mary was born. Mary can thus been regarded as symbolically connected with the Tree of Knowledge. The sacrifice of Isaac is a prefiguration of the death of Christ. Although very different and not particularly memorable, this version gives an indication of the Marian context that had formed around the motif.

There is also a trace of the Wood of the Cross motif in the *Queste du saint Graal* (thirteenth century).[32] Perceval's sister leads Galahad to a ship and shows him a remarkable sight: a bed with a sword and crown upon it and a canopy from which hang three spindles, each of a different colour. Eve plays a linking role here. She had taken with her from the Garden of Eden a twig from the deadly tree and planted it in remembrance of her sin. The twig took root and shot up apace and soon became a tree, with trunk, boughs and leaves as white as snow. Abel was begotten beneath this tree, and straightway it became green as the grass of the field. But when Cain slew Abel under the tree its green tints turned to scarlet in remembrance of the deed.[33] The tree survives the Flood and so it comes to the

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mediated by the twig brought by Noah's dove. This 'moving' to Liban is necessary to comply with the tradition that the forests there were cut down in order to build the Temple. The Temple's leap to Golgotha is not explained. The connection is symbolic: the Temple's altar is the Christian's Cross.

[30] W. MEYER, op. cit., p. 120.

[31] Abraham's role in the Legend of the Wood of the Cross is not new (cf. Honorius of Autun). Abraham is prototypical of God's epiphany. In the *Vie de Notre Dame* (13th cent.) the same motif appears; J. NEVE, *La légende de l'arbre de la croix avant Jésus-Christ*, Brussels, 1897; Le ROUX de LINCY, *Le Livre des légendes*, Paris, 1839, p. 29.

[32] A. PAUPHILET, *Etude sur la queste del Saint Graal*, Paris, 1921, pp. 36–46 and p. 84 ff.; A.M.L. PRANGSMA-HAJENIUS, op. cit., p. 50.

[33] White, green, red and black are the colours of the horses of Rev. 6, 2–8. It was the customary colour scheme in the Middle Ages, because it was believed that these were primary colours, from which the world was created. The Cross is depicted in these four cosmic colours in a stained glass window in Bourges; E. MÂLE, *L'art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France. Etude sur l'iconographie du Moyen Âge et sur les sources d'inspiration* (Paris), 8th edn., 1948, p. 280, fig. 78. In the 12th-century Anglo-Norman mystery play 'Adam', which deals with the Fall, two colours are specified for the

time of Solomon. To Solomon it is revealed that his line will end with the Son of the Virgin, and he ponders long on how he might make it known that he had foreknowledge of His coming. His wife counsels him to have a fine ship made and place within it the sword of King David, his father. And so the ship is made and a great and marvellous bed is set in it upon which Solomon lays his crown and his father's sword. Then the queen commands her carpenter to cut from the miraculous tree as much wood as will make three spindles. The man fears to follow her orders, for when he cut it drops of blood issue from the wood. Yet still it was done.[34]

The symbolism is regarded as deriving from the Wood of the Cross motif.[35] In both the Grail context and the Wood of the Cross legend there is reference to the Wood of Paradise and a woman plays an important role in the tree's fate. The woman in the Quest also has much in common with Sebile (*sic*), a figure gifted with powers of enchantment in the Arthurian romances. The name is of course derived from that of the sibyls of antiquity who, in the Middle Ages, were often personified as one particular prophetess. In the Arthurian context she also displays characteristics of the Celtic fay.[36] The Queen of Sheba also acquires the role of sibyl.

The ship can be explained in terms of the patristic metaphor of the Church: the unpredictable and dangerous journey that the Church

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costumes: Abel and Eve wear white, Adam and Cain wear red. The white alludes to Eve's purity before Fall. The red to Adam's divine love before the Fall, and in the case of Cain, to bloodshed; L.R. MUIR, *Liturgy and Drama in the Anglo-Norman Adam* (*Medium Aevum Monographs. New Series* 3), Oxford, 1973, pp. 37–39. For colours in the Middle Ages, see: M. PASTOUREAU, *Formes et couleurs du désordre. Le jaune avec le vert*, in *Médiévales*, 4, 1983, pp. 62–73; M. PASTOUREAU, *Et puis vint le bleu*, in *Europe*, 61, 1983, pp. 43–49; R. VAN UYTVEN, *Rood-wit-zwart. Kleurensymboliek en kleursignalen in de Middeleeuwen*, in *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis*, 97, 1984, pp. 447–469; M. PASTOUREAU and Ph. JUNOD (eds.), *Regard croisés sur la couleur du moyen âge au XXe siècle. Actes du colloque Lausanne 1992*, Lausanne, 1995.

[34] A. PAUPHILET, *La queste del Saint Graal. Roman du 13e siècle*, Paris, 1949, pp. 210–226. The passage is also included in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* (XVII), *Tale of the Sankgreal*, of the 15th century.

[35] E. BAUMGARTNER, *L'arbre et le pain. Essai sur la Queste del saint Graal*, Paris, 1981, pp. 130–140; K. von BURDACH, *Der Gral. Forschungen hber seinen Ursprung und seinem Zusammenhang mit der Longinuslegende*, Stuttgart, 1938; E.C. QUINN, *The Quest of Seth, Solomon's Ship and the Grail*, in *Traditio*, 21, 1965, pp. 185–222; A. PAUPHILET, *Etude sur la queste del Saint Graal*, Paris, 1921, p. 151.

[36] W.L. KINTER, *Prophetess and Fay. A Study of the Ancient and Medieval Tradition of the Sibyl* (Doct.), Colombia, 1958, p. 66, pp. 73–74, p. 87, pp. 100–101; E.C. QUINN, art. cit., p. 196. In the Arthurian romance the woman cannot pilot the ship home. In a 12th-century French poem, 'Partonopeus de Blois', Morgan le Fay has sunk this ship (*Fata Morgana*).

must make to God's final destination. Peter is the captain of the ship, the clergy are his crew and Christ is the sail (mast, Cross).[37] That the ship appears in a Solomonic context is the result of a well-known typology: the Temple of the Old Testament versus the Church of the New. In Herrad of Landsberg's *Hortus deliciarum* (ca. 1180) the account of the Finding of the Cross is introduced by the metaphor of the ship. The ship is the *Ecclesia*. The Finding of the Cross has, according to Herrad, returned the ship to the faithful.[38] The bed can also be recognized in scholarly Christian metaphors. The Cistercian Gilbert of Holland says: *Dulcis lectulus illud crucis tuae lignum*.[39] The Cross is the bed of Christ.

As regards the canopy from which the spindles hang the author of the Quest says that it has the shape of a cross. Quinn thinks that the canopy must make explicit the symbolism of both the Cross and the Trinity. But that is not all. Of old, everything connected to spinning is an allusion to time, to destiny, to which the ship is also subject. The mysteries are safe in woman's wisdom.[40] Consider the Fates

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[37] Tertullian is the first to draw a comparison with the ship. This metaphor would have a huge literary and iconographic diffusion; TERTULLIAN, *De baptesimo*, 12, CSEL 20, cols. 212; U. WEBER, art. *Schiff*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 4, Rome-Vienna, 1972, cols. 61–67; K. VETTER, *Sankt Peter Schifflein*, in *Kunst in Hessen und am Mittelrhein*, 9, 1969, pp. 5–34. The ship's earliest appearance is on Christian sarcophagi. In a funerary context it symbolizes the journey to the other world. The ship carries the blessed to Paradise, the ultimate haven. Gradually the ship acquires a richer iconographic programme. In a Lombard manuscript of 1480 the mast is occupied by the crucified Christ; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. 799, fol. 234v; U. WEBER, art. cit., cols. 64, fig. 2. The Odyssey (quest archetype) has been influential here; H. RAHNER, *Griechische Mythen in christlicher Deutung*, 2nd edn., Freiburg-Vienna, 1992, pp. 291–315. Odysseus was tied to the mast of his ship, this being the only way to resist the lure of the sirens' singing.

[38] Fol. 148v-149v. The manuscript perished in a fire in 1870 in Strasbourg, Dépôt central du district. Reconstruction and facsimile: R. GREEN, *Herrad of Hohenbourg* (*Studies of the Warburg Institute*, 36), 1979, 2, pp. 264–265, no. 520. Other literature: A. STRAUB and G. KELLER (eds.), *Herrad von Landsberg. Hortus Deliciarum*, Strasbourg, 1901; G. DREVES, *Herrad von Landsperg*, in *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, 23, 1899, pp. 632–648; O. GILLEN, *Ikonographische Studien zum Hortus Deliciarum der Herrad von Landsberg*, Berlin, 1931; G. CAMES, *Allégories et symboles dans l'Hortus deliciarum*, Leiden, 1971.

[39] A. PAUPHILET, *Etude sur la queste del Saint Graal*, Paris, 1921, p. 151: PL 184, cols. 21. In the Arthurian context the bed is also a sexually ambiguous metaphor for the physical trial of the hero before he undertakes his quest.

[40] E. BAUMGARTNER, *L'arbre et le pain. Essai sur la Queste del saint Graal*, Paris, 1981, p. 135, n. 9: G. DURAND, *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*, n.p., 1969, pp. 369–370: 'Les instruments et les produits du tissage et du filage sont universellement symboliques du devenir [...]. La fileuse utilisant cet engin 'une des plus belles machines', est maîtresse du mouvement circulaire et des rythmes [...].

of antiquity, the (spinning) wheel of Fortuna, of Lady Holle/Bertha the spinner(s), of Eve who spun thread after the Fall and even of Mary, who was one of the seven spinners of the wool for the purple Temple curtain.[41]

In this context the averting of fate by means of the spool has been steered into a Marian Cross symbolism (the ship is the Temple). In the canopied bed Solomon's throne can be recognized (1 Kings 10, 18), which itself is a prefiguration of the Incarnation, just as the bed symbolizes the union of *Sponsus* and *Sponsa*: namely Solomon and the Queen of Sheba as forerunners of Christ and Mary. On the bed lie a sword and a crown, recalling the laying down of the imperial insignia by the Last Emperor on the altar or at the foot of Cross.

Around 1200 a group of Wood of the Cross legends formed which, as regards content, possessed an individual identity and exhibited a complex stemma. The type Legend of the Wood of the Cross unites an extensive Seth passage and appearances of the Wood of the Cross in the time of Moses and David with the 'classic' meeting of Solomon and Sheba and the *Piscina Probatica*. According to Meyer, at the core of the tradition is a Latin prose version of 1220: the *Legenda*.[42] The *Legenda* group is characterized by an early diffusion in European vernaculars from monastic milieus.[43] The following texts are still known:[44] an Old French prose text by a certain thirteenth-century monk,

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Ce qui importe ici, plus que le résultat qui est fil, tissu et destin, c'est le fuseau qui, par le mouvement circulaire qu'il suggère va devenir talisman contre le destin'. See also: A. KLEIN, art. *Spindel*, in *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, 8, Berlin-Leipzig, 1936–1937, cols. 263–264; R. GRAVES, *New Encyclopedia of Mythology*, repr., London, 1993; M. LURKER, art. *Spinnen und Weben*, in *Wörterbuch der Symbolik*, Stuttgart, 1991, p. 697; J.H. EMMINGHAUS, art. *Verkündigung an Maria*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 4, Rome-Vienna, 1972, cols. 422–437. See also: F.M. BISCOGLIO, *'Unspun' Heroes. Iconography of the Spinning Woman in the Middle Ages*, in *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 25, 2, 1995, pp. 164–176.

[41] H. ROSENAU, *A Study in the Iconography of the Incarnation*, in *The Burlington Magazine*, 84, 1944, pp. 176–179.

[42] Cambridge, University Library, Ms. I 14, 13th cent.; W. MEYER, op. cit., p. 128 ff.: class VI; pp. 131–149. A list of manuscripts in: A.R. MILLER, op. cit., pp. 129–130.

[43] The most important research results are those of J. Mozley, H. Suchier, M. Lazar and more recently A.R. Miller and A.M.L. Prangsma-Hajenius.

[44] Data taken from L. HERMODSSON, op. cit., p. 16, and A.S. NAPIER, op. cit., p. XII. Both authors give incomplete details or none at all about the dating of the texts or the place where they were found. The sigla are taken from the abovementioned publications.

Andrius;[45] a Middle English text in 860 verses known as the *Story of the Holy Rood* in the fourteenth-century Harley Ms. 4196 in the British Library in London;[46] a French version in a fourteenth-century manuscript (fol. 267–277 in Ms. fr. 763 in the Bibliotèque Nationale in Paris);[47] a Legend of the Cross included in the *Cursor Mundi* (1310);[48] the Flemish *Boec van den Houte* or *Van den drie Gaerden* (1290–1330); a Dutch translation of this poem (1410) and a Middle Dutch prose adaptation in a fifteenth-century manuscript.[49] The French prose text by the monk Andrius is a translation of the *Legenda* in the Cambridge manuscript.[50] The Middle English verse text in the Harley Ms. was created in imitation of the *Legenda*[51] and the passage in the *Cursor Mundi* is a translation of the French poem in Ms. fr. 763.[52]

Meyer gives the following outline of the *Legenda*.[53] When Adam is nine hundred and thirty years old he calls his wife and sons together to prepare them for his approaching death. He desires the healing oil of life from the Tree of Mercy and carefully explains to Seth how he can find the way to Paradise by following his parents' blighted footprints. When Seth reaches the gates of Paradise the Archangel

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[45] Complete text in A.S. NAPIER, op. cit., p. 40 ff.

[46] Complete text in R. MORRIS, op. cit., pp. 62–86.

[47] Extracts from the text in A.S. NAPIER, op. cit., pp. 64–67.

[48] R. MORRIS, *Cursor Mundi (the Cursor of the World). A Northumbrian Poem of the XIVth Century in Four Versions, Two of Them Midland (Early English Text Society*, 1, 3), London, 1874–1877, pp. 79–90, pp. 364–371, pp. 460–477, pp. 504–517.

[49] The popularity of the *Van den drie Gaerden* legend continued into the 18th century (L. HERMODSSON, op. cit., pp. 30–32). J. TIDEMAN, *Dboec van den houte, door Jacob van Maerlant (Werken uitgegeven door de Vereeniging ter bevordering der oude Nederlandsche letterkunde*, 1, 2), Leiden, 1844, pp. XVI–XIX, discovered a German translation in the *Hartebock* (1404) that belonged to the Hamburg *Flanderfahrer*, a confraternity established in 1392 in honour of the *H. Leichnams zu S. Johannis*. The dating is made on a philological basis; see: J.F.A. KINDERLING, *Geschichte der nieder-sächsischen oder sogenannten plattdeutschen Sprache vornehmlich bis auf Luthers Zeiten nebst einer Musterung der vornehmsten Denkmahle dieses Mundart*, Magdeburg, 1800, pp. 299–304; K.F.A. SCHELLER, *Bücherkunde der sächsisch-nederdeutschen Sprache, hauptsächlich nach den Schrift denkmälern der Herzogl. Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel*, Brunswick, 1826, pp. 55–56. The *Hartebock* is a compilation of seven spiritual and secular poems translated from Dutch into Low German; the second poem appeared under the title *Vom deme Holte des hilligen Krützes*.

[50] A.S. NAPIER, op. cit., p. XIII.

[51] A.S. NAPIER, op. cit., p. XXXIII.

[52] A.S. NAPIER, op. cit., pp. XXIII–XXIV.

[53] This outline is based on the edition of Meyer (op. cit., pp. 131–149). The author uses two manuscripts from Munich, Clm 3433, 15th century from the monastery of Au, and Clm 11601, fol. 200.

Michael tells him that the oil can only be given to him after 5,228 years have gone by, for then Christ will redeem Adam from hell and baptize him. The angel grants Seth three glimpses of Paradise. In his first vision he sees a fountain from which four rivers flow to water the whole world. Above the fountain is a bare tree. In his second vision he sees a serpent twined around the tree's trunk. In his third the tree suddenly grows and bursts into bright green leaf. In the top of this mighty tree Seth sees a baby, which the angel tells him is the Son of God. In the tree's roots Seth sees the soul of his brother Abel entangled. The angel then gives Seth three seeds from the apple of the tree beneath which Adam and Eve had sinned and orders him to plant them in Adam's mouth at his death. A cedar will grow from the first seed, a cypress from the second and a pine from the third. The angel says that the cedar symbolizes the Father, because this tree is so universal and grows so high. The cypress refers to the Son, because its fragrance is so sweet. And the pine signifies the Holy Spirit because of its great number of leaves and seeds.[54] Everything takes place as foretold: the saplings grow on Adam's grave in the valley of Hebron, and there they remain until Moses arrives.

One morning, Moses discovers the little trees and greets them as a sign of the Trinity. When he uproots them the air fills with a pleasing fragrance and their power causes water to flow from the rock. Just before his death, Moses plants the saplings on Mount Tabor. There, David finds them and takes them to Jerusalem. On the way the remarkable wood heals three Ethiopians, a leper and a hermit. Once home, the king puts the three saplings in a well, intending to plant them in his garden the next day. But by the morning they have firmly taken root and David must extend the city wall

[54] In Lambert of Saint-Omer's *Liber floridus* (ca. 1120), these trees and the palm are referred to: A. DEROLEZ (ed.), *Lamberti S. Audomari Canonici Liber Floridus. Codex autographus Bibliothecae Universitatis Gandavensis*, Ghent, 1968, pp. 282–283, fol. 139v–140: 'arbor significantes beatitudinum ordines'; IDEM, *Lambertus qui librum fecit. Een codicologische studie van de Liber Floridus-autograaf (Gent, Universitaire bibliotheek, ms. 92)*, Brussels, 1978, p. 230. Eight trees are schematically depicted with inscriptions that refer to their origins and symbolic meanings. The cedar alludes to Lebanon ('Lybanus') and to humility; it is the 'beatitudo prima'. The cypress is found on Zion ('Syon') and alludes to piety; it is the 'beatitudo secunda'. The palm alludes to knowledge and wisdom and is the third beatitude. It is found in Cades. The rose bush is found in Jericho and stands for strength and justice. On the next page the olive tree is associated with mercy, the plane tree with intelligence, the turpentine tree with wisdom and peacefulness and the grapevine with perfection.

around them. Soon the saplings grow together into a single tree and every year a silver ring is placed around its trunk (other versions also mention a chain). Beneath this tree David composes his penitential psalms, laments his sins and begins the construction of the Temple, though he is denied the joy of finishing it.

It is Solomon alone whom God allows to complete the building. His carpenters are just one tree short and so cut down the tree in David's garden. But no matter how they try to make it fit the wood is either too long or too short, and so it is fixed over the doorposts or placed in the Temple and venerated. One day a woman called Maximilla inadvertently sits on the wood. Instantly her garments burst into flames, and she cries out the name of Jesus, calling him Lord. For this blasphemy the Jews stone her to death and fling the 'offending' wood into a pond, whereupon an angel comes and stirs the water, giving it healing power. When the Jews see these miracles they drag the wood from the pond and use it as a bridge, so that its marvellous power will be trodden out. When the Queen of Sheba meets Solomon there, she perceives the nature of the wood and venerates it, and foretells Christ's death on the Cross. The wood lies there ignominiously until the Jews use it to make the Cross.

In the *Legenda* group, anecdote and biblical knowledge are cleverly combined. It is worth looking at how the specific motifs connected with Moses, David, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba were arrived at.

Moses had already been associated with the Wood of the Cross, but usually only in a symbolic-typological way on the basis of his staff. Now this figure is smoothly integrated as a narrative theme. The typology connected with the bitter waters is still to be understood as a foreshadowing of baptism.[55]

David's 'healing' of the Ethiopians also falls into this context. In Abbess Herrad's *Hortus deliciarum* (1180) the baptism of an Ethiopian is proposed by Paul.[56] The Wood of Life is connected with the Water of Paradise and the notion of baptism (cf. Honorius of Autun). The Ethiopians' contact, via David, with the wood, can be seen as a

[55] D.A. WELLS, *The Vorau Moses and Balaam. A Study of their Relationship to Exegetical Tradition* (Doct.), Cambridge, 1970; H.G. JANTSCH, op. cit., p. 85, explains the three-day trip as a medieval metaphor for thought, word and deed.

[56] Fol. 199; R. GREEN, op. cit., 2, p. 325.

prefiguration of Christian baptism. This also applies to the leper.[57] The leper is a type of Lazarus, who was cured of his leprosy by Christ. Here David prefigures Christ, just as the Wood of Life prefigures the Cross. The wood already displays the miraculous powers of the Messiah. In the *Hortus deliciarum* it is explained that the cleansing of the leper means the cleansing of sins and heresy before the Last Judgement.[58] David's therapeutic saplings thus also allude to the redemption of the Tree of Life of the Apocalypse, of the heavenly Jerusalem. Isaiah 53, 3 tells of the man of suffering, which was exegetically interpreted as *quasi leprosus*. The text is read on Maundy Thursday.[59]

It is clear that the tree features in several Christological dimensions in which anecdote, liturgy and theology are interwoven. According to Jewish tradition David is regarded as the builder of the complex system of canals intended to provide Jerusalem with water from the surrounding area. This finds a pendant in the Legend of the Wood of the Cross. The Tree of Life is planted in a well that is integrated into the city. The correlation of tree and water is a paradisal *topos*. The tree's growth is marked by silver rings. In Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon* the legend of the thirty pieces of gold (*sic*) immediately follows the Legend of the Wood of the Cross. Godfrey attributes the tradition to Bartholomew, the Apostle who preached to the Armenians. It is also no coincidence that David composed the penitential psalms and mourned his adultery under that particular tree. In Psalm 1, 3 the righteous are compared to the Tree of Life: 'They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither.' David's sin also provides an appropriate transition to Solomon and the building of the Temple.

Throughout the episode of the building of the Temple in the *Legenda* there glimmers a fleeting reminiscence of the old Jewish Midrash, which tells that God had promised to give Solomon a sign

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[57] Lepers and their portraits have an apotropaic function in Ethiopia.

[58] Fol. 238v; R. GREEN, op. cit., 2, p. 400, p. 208 and no. 305.

[59] In 15th-century Passion stories the figure is built into the narrative of Christ's suffering in Caiaphas's house: 'Ende mysmakeden hem daermede alsoe deerliken, dieghene die daer is die glorie des hemels ende die blytschap der engelen, dat hie scheen toe wesen een melaetschen menschen, ende die verwopenste van allen creaturen'; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, ms. 135 C8, fol. 167v; J.H. MARROW, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (*Ars neerlandica*, 1), Kortrijk, 1979, p. 52.

when David's sins were forgiven.[60] The story runs thus. When the Temple is almost complete Solomon tries to carry a baulk of wood inside. But the doors of the Temple refuse to open. Solomon's beam is too big, the portal too lowly. Therefore Solomon makes a smaller beam, but still the doors refuse to open. In the end, Solomon prays to God. The doors open, the wood is borne inside and a heavenly fire descends. This fire signifies David's forgiveness and the holiness of the Temple.

The wood of the Temple is mythic wood. According to the Midrash (inspired here by Isa. 35, 2) it stems from the era of Paradise. It comes from the forests of Lebanon and bears golden fruit. Isaiah predicted that if pagans should enter the Temple the golden-fruit-bearing tree would wither, and since the days of Manasseh the trees of Lebanon no longer bloom.[61] Therefore the Temple is often compared to a forest or even to Solomon's *Domus Saltus* (1 Kings 7, 1–9). The sacred species grows eternally, according to the Midrash, just like the wood Solomon tries to use in the Wood of the Cross legend, which although cut down and thus 'withered', can still change size. Both the miraculous growth of the Wood of the Cross and the fire sign (in the story of Maximilla, whose clothes combusted) are perhaps derived from Jewish apocrypha, but typologically and apologetically revised and adapted.

The motif of fixing the wood to the doorpost is also typological. In Exodus 12, 3–13 God's sign is painted on the doorposts in the blood of a sacrificed lamb. This mark is the letter *tau*, a familiar prefiguration of the Cross. The text of Exodus was read on Good Friday, moreover. In the Passion literature of the fifteenth century this typology was narratively associated with the suffering of Christ. When Christ is led away from the house of Caiaphas he is roughly pushed against the doorpost, which causes his face to bleed (the sacrificed lamb of Exodus 12, 3–13).[62] The sacred wood of the doorpost is indeed an older motif, but perhaps it provided a 'mediating' typological figure, like that of the *quasi leprosus*.

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[60] G. SALZBERGER, *Salomos Tempelbau und Thron in der semitischen Sagenliteratur*, Berlin, 1912, pp. 22–30.

[61] G. SALZBERGER, op. cit., p. 20.

[62] 'Ende als die somege seggen, so namen si onsen lieven heer ende stietenen mit grote hardlicheit tegen de posten van der doren so dat hem neuse en ende mont bloede'; Brussels, Royal Library, ms. IV 115, fol. 85v; J.H. MARROW, op. cit., p. 126.

The fact that in the *Legenda* group two prophetesses are mentioned is perhaps connected with rival Sheba motifs. Usually the wood is set up either in the Temple or in the *Domus Saltus* (Petrus Comestor), or the version with the bridge (John Beleth) is chosen. In both cases the Queen of Sheba worships the wood. The *Legenda* accepts both variants as authoritative and tries to combine them. Thus two prophetesses come into contact with Christ's Cross—the first even receives martyrdom (Maximilla means literally she who 'goes to the extreme').[63] The element of the spontaneous combustion of the wood and the woman's clothes is a *topos* derived from mysticism.[64] Fire is, of course, a very ancient magical theme, used in many symbolic contexts. The Holy Spirit is likewise associated with fire. At the bridge, Queen Sibylla (*sic*) foretells the Passion. The prophetic gift ascribed to the Queen of Sheba has now become a proper name. The legend is a little clumsy as regards the transition to the *Piscina Probatica*. The pool originates between the two prophecies. When the wood is hauled out to serve as a bridge it is 'left behind' there until the condemning of Christ.

What can have been the function of these stories about the Wood of the Cross, which spread in so many variants?

The prevailing theme in the literary fabric of the Wood of the Cross is the temporal and spatial *translatio* of Paradise into salvation history. The world that was destroyed by the Flood will be healed by the Cross. The Wood of the Cross legend complex embodies a universal *Sehnsucht* for Paradise. The Old Testament is 'complicit' in a sacred and mysterious chain of events. The key to unlock deeper meanings is granted to very few, to patriarchs, seers and prophets. The usually so impenetrable history of salvation is illuminated by that most precious vestige which was handed down to man from this mythical state of paradisal innocence. Thus, cautiously, enigmatically, not yet full grown, as a twig, a sapling or a beam of wood,

[63] A female martyr called Maximilla also appears in the *vita* of St Andrew. The Apostle baptized Maximilla, daughter of the governor Aegeas. Later, Andrew was also crucified. Thus the Legend of the Wood of the Cross may also allude to this woman at the time of the Apostolic Church.

[64] I refer to the practice of relic-burning: the relic's authenticity was demonstrated by the non-consuming fire. Jean Dreux's chronicle of Jerusalem (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 2544, fol. 7, ca. 1450) tells how the lance was discovered in Antioch. The miniature accompanying this passage shows how the Cross was found under the floor of a church and, below, was thrice tested in a fire.

a new Paradise delicately creeps through the Old Testament, accumulating there the soteriological powers it will discharge to the full in the Messianic sacrifice.

In some versions this wood does not clearly come from Paradise but is associated with biblical passages where holy wood is mentioned (namely Moses' staff) or is alluded to as the miraculous wood of the Temple and the *Domus Saltus*. It is not impossible that there were influences from the Midrash, as mentioned above.

The holy wood is the armature of time, the framework of space, but it is also the tiny seed. The vegetal symbolism is evident: the wood sprouts, ages, rots, vanishes, and miraculously goes on growing. A few people will actuate this vigorous miracle: Seth, Moses, David, Solomon. Only the sibyl sees 'truly': she is supernaturally initiated in the providence of God's plan.

Perhaps the shaping and conveying of these stories and motifs can be sought along the route from East to West, a road that was early paved between the Anglo-Saxon monastic system and the East, for example.[65] Religious houses were the recipients of all kinds of Greek material; indeed, it was in such places that a knowledge of languages was to be found[66] and it is well enough known that from the twelfth century Arab and Jewish colonies also exerted an influence on these centres. Nor should we forget the travel accounts of pilgrims who in Jerusalem and the Holy Land had absorbed *in situ* the wandering memories of Moses, David and Solomon and took them home, spreading them wider still. These hypotheses are necessarily vague. Unclear paths of transmission and the capricious composition of the legend itself hamper a literary historical reconstruction. The flourishing of the legend in the twelfth century, its natural symbolism and its relationship to the Perceval saga, tend to suggest a Cistercian milieu with an Anglo-Saxon background.

The content of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross is a fantastic travelogue. The Wood and its bearers leave Paradise and Hebron; it journeys via Marah to Jerusalem, where it remains till the coming of Christ in various holy places: David's foundation of

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[65] K. CIGGAAR, *England and Byzantium on the Eve of the Norman Conquest (The Reign of Edward the Confessor)*, in *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 5 (*Proceedings of the Battle Conference*), 1982, pp. 78–96.

[66] B. BISCHOFF, *Das griechische Element in der Abendländischen Bildung des Mittelalters*, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift. Festschrift Franz Dölger*, Leipzig, 1951, pp. 27–55.

the city (the well), the Temple or the *Domus Saltus*, the Valley of Kedron, the *Piscina Probatica* and finally Golgotha. It offers a reflection, a diagram of the holy city and in doing so also approaches 'internally' the genre of the pilgrims' tales. In other words the legend offers the reader/listener the opportunity to make a journey to Jerusalem by way of the holy wood. Just as architectural copies of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were a substitute for peregrine fulfilment, so this story evoked an inner journey to the Cross. The Legend of the Wood of the Cross can thus be regarded as a devotional catalyst for the soul's journey, the wood as the conveyer of the aspiring soul.

Once fitted into an indigenous idiom the Wood of the Cross legends were passed on and read aloud. It is possible that they rapidly came to function within the context of the feasts of the Finding of the Cross (3 May) and the Exaltation of the Cross (14 September), as they were handed on together in diverse sources. The legends were also included in the Good Friday ritual.[67] That the various shapes of the Cross in the legend are still imperfect (the Old Testament is obscure), but at the same time 'anticipate' its Messianic destiny, attests to an eschatology that is typical of the period of mourning, penitence and expectation, namely Lent. In at least two cases motifs are interwoven that in turn form prefigurations in the liturgy of Holy Week: *quasi leprosus* on Maundy Thursday and Exodus 12, the cross (sign) on the doorpost on Good Friday. In the Passion stories of the high Middle Ages these typologies are connected with the requisite physical vitality to the *ductio* of Christ to his Cross. Thus the way of the Wood of the Cross through the Old Testament also forms a prefiguration of the *ductio Christi*. But the material of the Wood of the Cross appears to be older than this type of Passion story. It thus remains unclear how the relationship between the Legend of the Wood of the Cross and these stories of the Passion should be understood. It is probable that the prefigurations described—some of which were already recognized by the first Church Fathers[68]—were included independently but, strikingly, surface simultaneously, because the medieval border between the idea of Christ's Cross and Christ himself is wafer-thin.

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[67] E.C. QUINN, *The Penitence of Adam. A Study of the Andrius Ms. (Bibliothèque Nationale Fr. 95 folios 380r–394v)*, Mississippi, 1980, p. 30 ff.

[68] J.H. MARROW, op. cit., passim.

It is striking that behind the narrative screen of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross typologies of baptism lie hidden. Baptism and regeneration—the latter is the heart of the legend—go hand in hand. Hence baptisms were performed for preference at Easter and Christmas. Moreover, just as Lent can mean a time of expectation and mourning, the Wood of the Cross legend can almost be regarded in the literal sense as an *adventus Christi*. It is not impossible that the Legend of the Wood of the Cross accompanied the rites and reflections connected with these two principal feasts of the Christian Church.

The Legend of the Wood of the Cross did not make use of difficult theological jargon, which of course is not to say that theological content was lacking. It remains a story, almost a myth, that grafts its message onto natural symbolism and does not depart very far from anthropological practice and popular belief. Also the fact that the texts were written in the vernacular at a very early stage suggests a focus on a lay audience. Medieval man could read the Christological and salvation-historical message of the legend on the basis of archetypal recognition. Water and wood allude to the founding of a holy site, to the sacred. The non-consuming eternal fire is a metaphor for the epiphany of the divine. As a symbol of the trinitarian God the three saplings replace the ancient worship of tree and forest. Pagan customs were turned into a Christian pendant on a basis of opposites or analogies. Both mechanisms appear to operate side by side. An example or two may be mentioned.

In the *Vita Amandi episcopi* we learn that St Amand was angered by a blind woman who nurtured a specific veneration for a tree.[69] When the bishop cut down the tree the woman was cured. Blindness is not a random motif: according to ancient natural magic 'light' (the soul) escapes from a felled tree.[70] Only the clergy were permitted sacred contact with trees. Alternatively contact by others could be tolerated by sanctifying the tree within Christian belief. The Archangel Michael was also connected with the tree, as well as the fountain and the mountain.[71]

It is said of St Odile of Hohenburg (ninth century) that she received three twigs to plant. When one of her nuns warned her of the superstitious character of this deed she planted them anyway, but in the

[69] V.I.J. FLINT, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*, Oxford, 1991, p. 265.
[70] The 'tree of light' lives on in Manichaeism (see below).
[71] V.I.J. FLINT, op. cit., p. 226.

name of the Trinity. Moses also greeted the saplings in the name of the Trinity. Pagan magic is turned into divine mystery. Maximilla ignited magically, but she recognized the miracle as the sign of Jesus. In the Legend of the Wood of the Cross a superstitious past is not dismissed but rehabilitated in a Christian context.

And that context is to a great extent actuated by Seth and the Queen of Sheba.

Seth and the return to Paradise

Seth, Adam's third son, plays a very particular role in the Legend of the Wood of the Cross. He is the thematic starting point of the legend. Yet he is a far from straightforward character. He originates in a dubious history of the Greeks, according to Jacobus de Voragine, who leaves it to the reader to decide how much truth can be attached to the story.[72] Seth is thus somewhat controversial.[73]

The Bible mentions Seth in four places. In Genesis 4, 25–26 he is seen as taking the place of the murdered Abel: 'Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another child instead of Abel, because Cain killed him."' In Genesis 5, 3–4 Seth is spoken of as the image of Adam and the progenitor of the ten generations before Noah: 'When Adam had lived for one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.' It is suggested here that Seth was a first son of Adam. And in the enumeration of the generations and tribes up to Abraham in 1 Chronicles 1, 1 he is mentioned immediately after Adam. In Luke 3, 38 the list is extended up to the coming of Christ.

The two references to a 'first' son of Adam—Cain, in Genesis 4; Seth, apparently, in Genesis 5—must have been the cause of some confusion. The Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (fifth century) deals with

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[72] Th. GRAESSE, op. cit., p. 303; W.G. RYAN, op. cit., 1, p. 277.

[73] Literary studies: E.C. QUINN, *The Quest of Seth for the Oil of Life*, Chicago-London, 1962; A.F.J. KLIJN, *Seth in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic Literature* (*Supplements to Novum Testamentum*, 46), Leiden, 1977; B. BAERT, *Seth of de terugkeer naar het paradijs. Bijdragen tot het kruishoutmotief in de Middeleeuwen* (with an English summary), in *Bijdragen. Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie*, 56, 1995, pp. 313–339; IDEM, *The Figure of Seth in the Vault-Paintings in the Parish Church of Östofte. In Search for the Iconographical Tradition*, in *Konsthistorisk tidskrift*, 66, 2, 1997, pp. 97–111.

the anomaly by regarding Cain as engendered not by Adam but by Sammael, a demonic angel, whereas Seth was born of the physical union of Adam and Eve.[74] The Genesis Rabbah makes the antithesis between the two sons hereditary: the generation of Cain (demonic and tainted with fratricide) is a tribe cast out by God and the generation of Seth (the new Abel and made in Adam's image) is a righteous and chosen tribe.[75] But their descendents mixed and therefore had to be destroyed by the Flood (purification and God's punishment).[76]

The first book of the Zohar (second century) builds on the Creation story, adding that Adam was gifted with prophetic powers and that the Angel Raziel had given him books containing supernatural wisdom.[77] While apocryphal writings seek to explain the antithesis between Cain and Seth by giving them, respectively, a demonic and a divine ancestry,[78] pseudepigraphic texts extend it to the post-Noah period. The Book of Jubilees 22, 12 (100 BC) asserts that all the seed of man came from Seth and that from him would spring the Messiah.[79]

Seth receives most attention in the Jewish-Christian apocrypha that amplify the lives of Adam and Eve. In the *Vita Adae et Evae* (ca. 70 AD) the dying Adam sends his wife and son, Eve and Seth, to Paradise to obtain the healing oil of life.[80] On the way, Seth is bitten

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[74] J. BOWKER, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, Cambridge, 1969, p. 132.

[75] See: C. CALIER, *Le Livre des générations* (*Bulletin du centre protestant d'études*, 41, 4–5), Geneva, n.d., pp. 3–10.

[76] J. RABBINOWITZ, *Midrasj Rabbah 10*, n.p., 1961, p. 183 ff.

[77] A.F.J. KLIJN, op. cit., pp. 10–11. The Zohar is a work central to Jewish mysticism. It was crucially important in the development of kabbala.

[78] Other motifs that stemmed from this antithesis are: 1. Seth, made in Adam's image would thus also be made in the likeness of God. 2. Seth had to be circumcised at birth. 3. Seth will appear as one of the shepherds at the coming of the Messiah. 4. Seth is the only natural son of Adam; Caïn and Abel were the fruit of a diabolic conception. A.F.J. KLIJN, op. cit., pp. 11–12.

[79] A.F.J. KLIJN, op. cit., p. 13 ff.; the Book of Jubilees devotes more attention to Enoch. 'And he was the first among men that are born on earth who learnt writing and knowledge and wisdom and who wrote down the signs of heaven according to the order of their months in a book, that men might know the seasons of the years according to the order of their separate months.' (4,17). In the Apocalypse of Enoch (I, 85–90) Seth ushers in the generation of the white bull, and Cain, that of the black ox. The white bulls will produce the Messiah.

[80] Critical edns.: W. MEYER, *Vita Adae et Evae* (*Abhandlungen der philosophisch-philologischen Classe der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 14), Munich, 1879, the passage concerned, pp. 231–243; P. RIESSLER, *Altjüdische Schrifttum ausserhals der Bibel*, Augsburg, 1928, pp. 674–681. The principal intrinsic variant of the *Vita Adae et Evae* is the Apocalypse of Moses, before 70 AD); Edn.: R.H. CHARLES,

by a snake. Eve chides the serpent for daring to cast itself at the image of God (Seth). When they arrive they encounter the Archangel Michael, guardian of Paradise, who sends them back with the promise that Adam will be led back to the Tree of Life at the coming of the Messiah.[81] Shortly afterwards, Adam dies and is buried in Paradise.[82] When Eve feels her own end is drawing near she imparts to her gathered children the knowledge that God had entrusted to her husband before the Fall, including a prophecy of the destruction of the world by fire and water. She also asks Seth to explain the disposition of the stars. Seth inscribes all that he has seen and learned on two pillars, one of stone that will withstand water and one of clay, which will withstand fire.[83]

The nostalgia and longing for Paradise is a cosmogonic and anthropogonic archetype. There are conspicuous similarities between Seth's mission and the 'return to Paradise' in the Sumerian-Babylonian epic

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The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, 2, Oxford, 1913, pp. 123–154. For the traditions and versions in different languages, see: M.E. STONE, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (*Early Judaism and its Literature*, 3), Atlanta, 1992; G.A. ANDERSON and M.E. STONE, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve* (*Society of Biblical Literature*), Atlanta, 1994.

[81] In the earliest version of the mission to Paradise—which will be an essential motif of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross—there is no mention yet of the Tree of Life. But the motif is not far off: The salutary saps that are mentioned could only come from the Tree of Life. In 2 Enoch 8, 3–5 the Tree of Life is lauded for its sacred oil. The motif of the oil as source of life and healing appears in all primitive cultures, but especially in the Sumerian; G. WIDENGREN, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient and Near Eastern Religion*, Uppsala, 1951, pp. 59–60. The promise that the blessed will enjoy themselves under the Tree of Life is typical of Jewish Apocalypticism; E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 27.

[82] In this source, there is a reference at the burial to the 'ostrum', which is also mentioned in the interpolation in the *De imago mundi* of Honrorius of Autun; A.R. MILLER, op. cit., p. 96.

[83] The most important translations are the Greek and Armenian; the latter reputedly from Gnostic circles; M.E. STONE, *The Penitence of Adam*, CSCO 429–430 (*Scriptores Armeniaci*, 13–14), Leuven, 1981; H.F.D. SPARKS, *The Apocryphical Old Testament*, Oxford, 1984, pp. 141–143; F. MORARD, *L'apocalypse d'Adam*, Québec, 1985; D.A. BERTRAND, *La vie grècque d'Adam et Eva*, Paris, 1987. In the *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, mid-13th cent., ms. 467, fol. 1v (Brussels, Royal Library), Adam and Seth are introduced as *Autorenbild*: Adam inscribes all that he has learned on the pillar of geometry, Seth on that of astrology. As mentioned, the Apocalypse of Moses tells the same story, adding that Adam took precious plants with him at the expulsion. Adam's soul is taken to heaven by angels, but his body is buried on the spot where God created dust. It may be noted that in the Legend of the Wood of the Cross the Cross is proof against water (*Piscina Probatica*) and fire (in the Temple). The Cross is the navel of the world, an image which is also translated in the symbolism of the pillar. The Cross is also the knowledge (*logos*) of the pillar.

of Gilgamesh (ca. 2000 BC). However, Gilgamesh undertakes the journey in quest of his own immortality, though is likewise confronted with its impossibility.[84] The motif of the son who strives to heal his father by means of supernatural aid has much in common with the Canaanite epic of Keret (1800–1375 BC). In this case the father is miraculously cured.[85] The return to Paradise is also not unknown in Hebrew literature itself: probably the earliest antecedent appears in 1 Enoch.[86]

The motif of Sethian knowledge is taken up in the *Antiquitates* I, 60–65 of Flavius Josephus (39–100).[87] Here, for the first time, the destruction by water is connected with the Flood and Seth's knowledge is named as geometry and astrology.[88] Ginzberg points out that little is known about a Jewish 'glorification' of Seth, but that Josephus's account betrays traces of 'veneration' or at any rate a Messianic identity connected with the figure.[89] Philo of Alexandria no longer calls Seth a son of Adam but 'drinking-water' and 'seed' of Adam, thus expressing the idea that Seth embodies an entire (Adamic) generation.[90] He adds, however, that no historical truth whatsoever can

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[84] S.N. KRAMER, *Gilgamesh and the 'Huluppu'-Tree. A Reconstructed Sumerian Text*, Chicago, 1938; A. HEIDEL, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*, 2nd edn., Chicago, 1949, pp. 268–269; N.K. SANDERS (ed. and trans.), *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, London, 1971. In Assyrian art the genii carry a twig. See an alabaster wall panel from the period of Ashur-Nasiz-Apal II (885–860 BC), originally from Nimrud, New York, Metropolitan Museum.

[85] T.H. GASTER, *The Canaanite Epic of Keret*, in *Jewish Quaterly Review*, 37, 1946–1947, pp. 285–293.

[86] E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 23; L. GINZBERG, op. cit., 5, pp. 95–96, p. 163. On journeys to Paradise in folklore, see: G. GATTO, *Le voyage au paradis. La christianisation des traditions folkloriques au moyen âge*, in *Annales. Economies. Sociétés. Civilisations*, 34, 5, 1979, pp. 929–942.

[87] H. THACKERAY (ed.and trans.), *Josephus Flavius. Antiquitates Judaicae*, I, 60–65, 5 vols., London, 1958–1965, vol. 4, 1961, p. 28 (Greek) and p. 29 (English). The chronicle became an important prototype for medieval world chronicles.

[88] Perhaps this contributed to Enoch being superseded by Seth as the first 'astronomer'; A.F.J. KLIJN, op. cit., p. 49.

[89] The Byzantyne chronicler Syncellus (ed. G. DINDORF, CSHB, 1829, I, 16–17) maintains that Seth was carried off by angels (cf. Enoch) and initiated by them concerning the Fall, the coming of the Messiah, and so forth; L. GINZBERG, op. cit., 5, p. 149, n. 52. A Sethian soteriology is elaborated in Gnosticism (below); L. GINZBERG, ibid.

[90] Philo of Alexandria, *De posteritate Caini*, 10 and 124–125 (13–50 AD); R. ARNALDEZ (ed. and trans.), *De posteritate Caini* (*Les oeuvres de Philo d'Alexandrie*, 6), Paris, 1972, p. 50 (Greek) and p. 51 (French): 'ce sera un rejeton mâle, Seth, l'acte d'abreuver' (10) and p. 118 (Greek) and p. 119 (French): 'Seth se traduit par "abreuvement"' (124). 'Donc de même que sur la terre les semences et les plantes lèvent' (125).

be attributed to this generation. Perhaps his words are directed against the Samaritans, who believed themselves to be the direct descendants of Seth and thus also considered themselves as the possessors of divine wisdom.[91]

The early Church Fathers refer rather sporadically to Seth and indeed they add little to the Jewish interpretations. However, Augustine contrasts Seth as a righteous ancestor with Cain, and—as in the targum—integrates the story of Noah as the end of a decadent mixing of the two generations.[92] Augustine makes an etymological association between his name and *resurrectio*.[93] Jerome recognizes in Seth the concepts *semen* and *positio*.[94] John Cassian attributes to him the qualities of *pietas* and *justicia*,[95] thus verging on a comparison with Christ.[96]

Thus Christianity sees in Seth both Abel's replacement (Gen. 4) and a new progenitor (Gen. 5).[97] Etymologically too he is alluded to as righteous seed and therefore connected indirectly with Christ. Hugh of St Victor (1096–1141) goes so far as to interpret (*significat*) Seth as *Christum* and Cain as *diabolum*.[98] This typological attention

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[91] Seth was said to have built the Samaritans' home town, Damascus, and given them books; A.F.J. KLIJN, op. cit., pp. 25–26.

[92] J.B. FRIEDMAN, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, Cambridge-London, 1981, pp. 93–94, adds to this that in the *Wiener Genesis* the world monsters are considered to be descendants of Cain. Moreover, the blending of Cainites and Sethites had produced giants and consequently the Flood. See also: M. BRESC, *Le temps des géants*, in *Temps. Mémoires. Traditions au Moyen Âge. Actes*, Aix-en-Provence, 1983, pp. 243–266; G. REIM, *Joh. 8.44. Götteskinder. Teufelskinder*, in *New Testament Studies*, 30, 4, 1984, pp. 619–624; W.E. STEPHENS, *'De historia gigantum'. Theological Anthropology before Rabelais*, in *Traditio*, 40, 1984, pp. 43–89.

[93] AUGUSTINE, *De civitate Dei*, 15, 17–18, CCSL 67, p. 479: 'Seth interpretatur resurrectio'; G. WIJDEVELD (trans.), *Aurelius Augustinus. De stad van God*, 2nd edn., Baarn, 1984, p. 706. Also noted by A. ULRICH, *Kain und Abel in der Kunst. Untersuchungen zur Ikonographie und Auslegungsgeschichte*, Bamberg, 1981, p. 192.

[94] JEROME, *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum*, 20, 17, CCSL 72, p. 71: 'Seth positio sive positus aut poculum vel gramen aut semen seu resurrectio'.

[95] JOHN CASSIAN, *Collationes*, 21, CSEL 13, p. 23.

[96] EPHRAEM, *Commentatio in Genesim et Exodum*, 5, 1, CSCO, 152, p. 54; Latin trans., ibid., 153, 5, 1, p. 43: 'In Seth autem, qui omnino similis fuit Adae, similitudo Filii figurata est qui signatus est a patre suo genitore, sicut Seth ab Adam qui progenuit eum. Seth [. . .] est: Populus iustus Domini'; *Ephraem Syrus. Uitleg van het boek Genesis*, Dutch trans. A.G.P. JANSON and L. van ROMPAY, Kampen, 1993, p. 86.

[97] In turn, Abel is seen as a type of the Passion of Christ; E.C. QUINN, *The Penitence of Adam. A Study of the Andrius Ms. (Bibliothèque Nationale Fr. 95 Folios 380r–394v)*, Mississippi, 1980, p. 48. Seth prefigures Christ's mission in connection with God's realm (Paradise!).

[98] HUGH OF ST VICTOR, *Allegoria in Vetus Testamentum*, I, CXI, PL 175, cols. 640; A.F.J. KLIJN, op. cit., p. 25.

already contains the germs that will allow Seth to develop as the progenitor of the Messiah in the Legend of the Wood of the Cross. The journey to Paradise on Adam's behalf is also incorporated in the etymological interpretations that are generatively related to 'seed' and 'foundation'.

The integration of Seth into the context of the Wood of the Cross was initially somewhat tentative. The fact that Seth played a leading role in a branch of Gnosticism, whose adherents were known as Sethites, may be at the root of this.[99] The Gnostic Seth was a fusion of the character in Genesis (and his apocryphal elaboration) and the Egyptian god.[100] Gnosticism adheres to a dualistic doctrine, in which equal and thus continuously conflicting roles are assigned to principles of good and evil.[101] The symbolism of light and darkness plays an important part. Gnostic texts (which often have a mythological quality) emphasize the participatory nature and transmission of divine knowledge. Gnostics thus distinguish themselves from other Christians by their status as initiates, just as Seth, via Adam, God or angels, was also a possessor of divine knowledge.

Our knowledge of Gnosticism, formerly necessarily based on anti-heretical tracts,[102] was considerably increased by the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library (1945) near present-day Cairo.[103] Found among this long-buried trove of papyri were three hymns or 'steles' devoted to Seth,[104] as well as writings purportedly in Seth's own hand. In

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[99] A.F.J. KLIJN, op. cit., pp. 81–117.

[100] On this issue, see: B.A. PEARSON, *The Figure of Seth in Gnostic Literature*, in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, 2, ed. B. LAYTON (*Studies in the History of Religions. Supplements to 'Numen'*, 41), Leiden, 1982, pp. 472–503; Chr. ONASH, *Der Ägyptische und der biblische Seth*, in *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, 27, 1980, pp. 99–119.

[101] On this issue, see: B.A. PEARSON, *The Figure of Seth in Gnostic Literature*, in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, 2, ed. B. LAYTON (*Studies in the History of Religions. Supplements to 'Numen'*, 41), Leiden, 1982, pp. 472–503; Chr. ONASH, *Der Ägyptische und der biblische Seth*, in *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, 27, 1980, pp. 99–119.

[102] EPIPHANIUS, *Panarion Haeresis*, 39, 1, 2, ed. K. HOLL, Leipzig, 1922, p. 72, suggests that Gnosticism equated Seth with Christ; PSEUDO-TERTULLIAN, *Adversus Omnes Haereses*, 2, ed. A. KROYMAN, Vindobonae-Lipsiae, 1906, p. 218; explains this 'Christus *tantummodo* Seth' by their equal descent from the 'Mother-God'.

[103] See the series: *Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi. Section textes*, eds. J.E. MENARD, P.H. POIRIER and M. ROBERGE, QuJbec; G. QUISPEL, art. *Gnosticism from its Origins to the Middle Ages*, in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. M. ELIADE, New York-London, 1987, pp. 566–574, p. 567; A.F.J. KLIJN, op. cit., pp. 90–107; J. SLAVENBURG and W. GLAUDEMANS (ed. and trans.), *Nag Hammadi geschriften*, 2 vols., Deventer, 3rd edn., 1994–1995.

[104] P.C. CLAUDE, *Les trois stèles de Seth. Hymne gnostique à la triade (NH VII, 5)*, (*Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi. Textes*, 8), Quebec, 1983; J. SLAVENBURG and

Manichaeism, the culminating expression of Gnostic thought (preceptor, Mani 216–276), Seth is often referred to as 'our Saviour'.[105] Moreover, it is precisely these milieus in which there was a strong development of myth and symbolism surrounding the Tree of Life. The tree, the fruit, the root and the twig are central. Mani interpreted the Fall of Adam positively: by biting into the apple his eyes were opened—he became a sharer in divine knowledge, in other words.[106] Thus, in Manichaeism the dry Tree of Knowledge becomes a positive pole, just like the green Tree of Life. The dry tree merely conceals its light, allowing it to escape when it is cut down. The Manichaean tree usually has three stems, referring thus to the three sons of Noah.[107]

In the Gospel of Nicodemus (originally written in Greek at the beginning of the fifth century but swiftly translated into Armenian and Coptic),[108] Seth's journey as described in the *Vita Adae et Evae* is reintroduced in the context of Christ's descent into hell.[109] Seth

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W. GLAUDEMANS, op. cit., pp. 363–375. This version mentions three pilars rather than two.

[105] *Kephalaia I*, ed. H. IBSCHER, Stuttgart, 1940, p. 133.

[106] That also appears from an Armenian text in which an angel lays a twig on Adam's eyes, which makes him 'see'. The action symbolizes an alternation between light and darkness, the paradox of life and death; E. BÖKLEN, *Adam und Qain. Im Licht der vergleichenden Mythenforschung (Mythologische Bibliothek*, 1), Leipzig, 1907, p. 76, does not date this source, although, according to A.R. MILLER, op. cit., p. 59, the wording could be called 'primitive'.

[107] V. ARNOLD-DÖBEN, *Die Symbolik des Baumes in Manichäismus*, in *Symbolon*, 5, 1980, pp. 9–26; H.J. KLIMKEIT, *Der dreistämmige Baum. Bemerkungen zur Manichäistischen Kunst und Symbolik*, in *Festgabe Wilhelm Perpee zum 65. Geburtstag*, Bonn, 1980, p. 254 ff. The Manichaean tree bears precious stones. In Slavonic versions of the Wood of the Cross legend, often three different trees operate, which separately come into contact with Seth, Lot and Moses. The trees grow into the three crosses of Calvary; A.R. MILLER, op. cit., pp. 31–33.

[108] The oldest Latin version is found in a 10th-century manuscript preserved in Einsiedeln; Codex Einsidlensis 326, Einsiedeln, Stiftsbiliothek; H.C. KIM (ed. and trans.), *The Gospel of Nicodemus. Gesta Salvatoris*, Toronto, 1973, p. 2; J. MICHL, art. *Evangelien, II, 18. Nicodemusevangelium*, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 3, Freiburg, 1959, cols. 1226; A. VAILLANT (ed. and trans.), *L'Evangile de Nicodème. Text Slave et texte Latin*, Genève-Paris, 1968; M. VANDONI and T. ORLANDI, *Vangelo di Nicodemo*, 2 vols., Milan, 1968, vol. 1: the original Coptic text, vol. 2: commentary and Italian trans.; F. SCHEIDWEILER, *Nikodemusevangelium. Pilatusakten und Höllenfahrt Christi*, in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher übersetzung*, eds. W. SCHNEEMELCHER and E. HENNECKE, 1. *Evangelien*, 6th edn., Tübingen, 1990, p. 398 ff.; A.F.J. KLIJN, *Apocriefen van het Nieuwe Testament*, 1, 3rd edn., Kampen, 1990. Jacobus de Voragine's 'Greek apocrypha' probably does not refer to the *evangelium Nicodemi*, as further on he mentions the source by name.

[109] G. EVERY, *Christian Mythology*, n.p., 1970, p. 134. The *Descensus* was added to the Apostles' Creed at the synod of Sirmium (359); E.C. QUINN, op. cit., pp.

himself is speaking and he tells Nicodemus how Adam sent him to Paradise and what happened there. Eve has dropped out of the picture. The Christianization of the motif is expressed in the promise that when 5,500 years have passed Adam shall be saved by Christ, baptized in the Jordan and anointed with the oil of the Tree of Paradise. The *Descensus* must be read in relation to baptism and the restoration of Paradise.[110] This frame story points to the ultimate redemption of baptism (baptism in the Jordan = anointing with oil = union with the Tree of Life). The idea in which baptism and the Tree of Life are melded is tinged with Manichaeism.[111] The earliest western European translation of the *Vita* appeared in 998 in the Old Irish *Saltair na Rann* ('psalter in verse'), written by Airbertach Mac Cosse Dobráin.[112] Neither text mentions a 'materially present' twig or describes its further growth.[113]

The 'tangible' connection between the Tree of Life and Seth's role as initiate is made in the Armenian translation of the *Vita Adae et Evae*. Today there is much debate as to whether or not the production of the 'Apocalypse of Adam' (probably in the fifth century) was directly influenced by Gnosticism.[114] Stone observes that the

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37–38. The return to hell or the descent into the underworld is obviously archetypical. The motif appears in Babylonian, Egyptian and Greek myths (for bibliographic data: ibid., p. 38).

[110] As in the Gnostic-apocryphal letters of the Apostles (Ethiopia, 2nd cent.). J.-N. PERES (ed. and trans.), *L'Épître des Apôtres et le Testament de notre Seigneur et notre Sauveur Jésus-Christ* (*Apocryphes*, eds. A. DESREUMEAUX and E. NORELLI, 5), Turnhout, 1994, pp. 86–87 'Je [Christ] leur ai donné (de) la main droite le babtème de la vie, du pardon et de la rémission de tout mal'; see also: ibid., pp. 40–41. In the 'Odes of Solomon', a Gnostic-Syrian text from the 1st, 2nd or 3rd century AD, the descent into hell is celebrated as a salvation of mankind, as a rejoicing of the restoration of Paradise. This is also the meaning of baptism. M.-J. PIERRE (ed. and trans.), *Les odes de Salomon* (*Apocryphes*, op. cit., 4), pp. 194–198, Ode 42; This is, in fact, the final ode.

[111] E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 43 ff.; F. CUMONT, *La cosmogônie manichéenne d'après Theodor bar Khôni* (*Recherches sur le manichéisme*, 1), Brussels, 1908, pp. 46–49

[112] Edn.: B.O. MURDOCH, *The Irish Adam and Eve Story from Saltair na Rann*, Dublin, 1976.

[113] Also in the Gospel of Nicodemus the function of the Seth motif is not chronological but structural-theological; E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 38. In the *Saltair na Rann* Seth is described as the new Abel (vv. 2008–2012). Here, Seth is not the mediator for his father's salvation but the Archangel Michael himself appears at Adam's death and takes his soul with him to await the restoration of Paradise.

[114] M.E. STONE, *Report on Seth Traditions in the Armenian Adam Books*, in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, op. cit., pp. 459–471; E. PREUSCHEN, *Die apokryphen gnostischen Adamschriften aus dem armenischen übersetzt und untersucht*, in *Festgruss B. Stade*, eds. W. DIEHL, et al., n.p., 1900, pp. 163–252.

passage in which Seth is sent away (the 'quest') and the dialogue with Adam that precedes this (the 'words') were fairly independently elaborated in the Armenian version, so that they may originally have formed autonomous traditions.[115] In the Armenian passage[116] there is a reference to a twig that was planted on Adam's grave. Seth himself explains the wood's destiny in the Cross.[117] In a Slavonic translation of the Latin *Adae et Evae* (1000–1200) Seth receives three twigs, one from a pine, one from a cypress and one from a cedar. Adam weaves a crown from the twigs and sets it on his head.[118] But how the wood will make its way from Seth/Adam to Christ is not described.

Another Slavonic version, supposedly composed by 'Pope' Jeremiah, founder of the Bogomils, is probably the earliest example of a 'narratively elaborated' path from Tree of Paradise to Cross of Christ.[119] The eighth-century sect, which given its dualistic doctrine may be called a Gnostic variant[120] and which flourished mainly in the Balkans,

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[115] M.E. STONE, op. cit., p. 461 and p. 464.

[116] M.E. STONE, op. cit., p. 466; IDEM, *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Patriarchs and Prophets (Israel Academy of Sciences)*, 1981. The passage was not included in de Armenian manuscript edn. of M.E. STONE, *The Penitence of Adam*, *o.c.*

[117] The author does not date the divergent 'quest', but possibly it originated later than the 5th century at a time when the twig had already been incorporated into the legends (below). See also: J. MAGNE, *From Christianity to Gnosis and from Gnosis to Christianity. An Itinerary through Texts to and from the Tree of Paradise*, Atlanta, 1993. In another Armenian variant on the *Vita*, 'The History of Repentance of Adam and Eve', an angel announces Seth's birth with a twig as a consolation for Adam (M.E. STONE, *The Penitence of Adam*, op. cit., pp. 466–467; edn.: J. ISSAVERDENS, *Uncanonical Writings of the Old Testament*, Venice, 1901, pp. 7–80). In the Apocalypse of Moses the same passage appears with Michael. In the oldest representations of the Annunciation, the angel announces his message with a twig in his hand or with a Tree of Life in the background; figs. in H. EGGER, *Verkündigung*, Vienna, 1987, passim.

[118] A.R. MILLER, op. cit., p. 45.

[119] ANASTASIUS SINAITICA (650), *Anagoricorum contemplationum in hexaemeron*, PG, 89, cols. 944–45, also makes a first attempt to connect the Cross and the Tree of Life not symbolically-typologically but diachronically; E.C. QUINN, *Seth*, art. cit., p. 77. Maybe this is the 'Athanasius' Godfrey of Viterbo is referring to (*Pantheon*, ca. 1180): 'narrat Athanasius quoniam Noe patriarch/filiolos genuit binos egressus ab archa'; W. MEYER, *Die Geschichte*, op. cit., p. 112 (n. 1: 'Dieser Athanasius is nicht zu bestimmen'). A.F.J. KLIJN, op. cit., p. 64, refers to Athanasius's (295–373) *Interpretatione ex vetus testamentus*, PG 28, col. 740, which calls the sons of Enoch the sons of God. The same epithet is sometimes applied to the sons of Seth. Enoch was often confused with Jonitus, however. This could explain the passage in Godfrey's *Pantheon*.

[120] H.G. BECK, art. *Bogomilen*, in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 1, Tübingen, 1957, cols. 1345; C.T. BERKHOUT and J.B. RUSSELL, *Medieval Heresies. A Bibliography. 1960–1979*, Toronto, 1981.

developed a legend or myth in which Satanael (one of the many names for the devil) plants three trees in Paradise: one for Adam (found in the Tigris by Lot),[121] one for Eve (found by Moses in the bitter waters) and one for God (found by Michael for Seth).[122] God's tree will survive until Christ's Cross is made from it.[123] In the textual source a Sebila (*sic*) appears who finds the wood in the Temple and bursts into flames.[124]

Nonetheless, it is not certain whether the legends of Seth and Wood of the Cross were introduced into Europe via dualistic channels.[125] For in a Slavonic Bogomil Wood of the Cross legend dating from the second half of the tenth century, Moses discovers three shoots in Marah; these end up in the Temple of Solomon, where

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[121] The figure of Lot occupies a central place in a Greek variant (800–1000) which was translated into Slavonic around 1200. By the side of the Nile Lot finds three shoots, which he must water and care for in antonment for his incest. Solomon finds this wood, and vainly tries to incorporate it into the Temple. Later, the Cross is made from it. In the monastery of the Holy Cross just outside Jerusalem it is believed that this tree of Lot once stood on the monastry site. This monastery was founded in the 7th century, which could mean that the Lot legend was current before the Greek variant. The monastery is mentioned in Niccolò da Poggibonsi's travels (1346–1350). In this same place the Franciscan friar also integrates the Seth motif, showing that the old Lot legend and Seth were interchangeable. He briefly mentions that Seth's twig of Paradise grew on Adam's grave in Hebron, and that this tree formed the length of the Cross. The crossbeam was made of cypress wood that grew in this monastery. A third kind of wood grew in the cedar forests of Lebanon and formed the footpiece of the Cross. A forth wood came from an olive tree and was used for the *titulus*. A visit to this monastery earned a seven-year indulgence. Fra Niccolò returns to the wood of Hebron when he describes Adam's grave and briefly mentions that Solomon had the tree cut down for the construction of the Temple. Edns.: B. BAGATTI, *Fra Niccolò da Poggibonsi. Libro d'oltramare (1346–1350)*, (*Publicazioni dello Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*, 2, 1), Jerusalem, 1945, pp. 43–44; T. BELLORINI and E. HOADE (trans.), *Fra Niccolò of Poggibonsi. A Voyage Beyond the Seas (1346–1350)*, (*Pubblicazioni dello Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*, 2, 2), Jerusalem, 1945.

[122] See also: H.E. GAYLORD, *How Satanael lost his '-el'*, in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 33, 1982, pp. 303–309.

[123] The version was most likely based on a Greek original; M. GASTER, *Ilchester Lectures on Greeko-Slavonic Literature*, London, 1887, pp. 23, 25, 29, 35–37; E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 53; E. KOZAK, *Bibliografische übersicht der biblisch-apokryphen Literatur bei den Slaven*, in *Jahrbuch für protestantische Theologie*, 38, 1892, pp. 127–158, p. 142: 'Historia de ligno crucis'.

[124] A.R. MILLER, op. cit., p. 52.

[125] J.R. SMEETS, *Joden en catharen. Hun invloed op de Franse rijmbijbels uit de twaalfde en dertiende eeuw*, Tilburg, 1966, pp. 3–16; D. ANGELOV, *Le mouvement bogomile dans les pays balkaniques et son influence en Europe occidentale*, in *Actes du colloque international de civilisations balkaniques (Sinaïa, juillet 1962)*, pp. 173–183; E. BOZOKY, *Le livre secret des cathares. Interrogatio Iohannis. Apocryphe d'origine bogomile. Edition critique, traduction, commentaire*, Paris, 1980 (with foreword E. TURDEANU); A.R. MILLER, *o.c.*

they are recognized by a possessed women.[126] In his *Ecritures cathares*[127] and *Le phénomène cathare*,[128] R. Nelli published a Cathar version of the *Interrogatio Johannis* of 1190[129] which strongly resembles the above-mentioned Bogomil legend and which also makes Moses the main character—indeed the author postulates a ninth-century Bogomil origin.[130] Moses even says that 'Sathanas' came on earth to give him a twig on which Christ would be crucified.[131]

The legend has come down with different opening scenes. The Moses figure seems to stem from a predominantly Slavonic origin while Seth suggests an (older?) Armenian and Latin language area for the Wood of the Cross story. The other Old Testament characters such as Abraham, Lot, David and Solomon originally appear only in Greek or Slavonic versions. Therefore it may be suggested that contacts with the Wood of the Cross first developed separately as far as Moses, Lot or Seth are concerned, but that the Greek-Slavonic context was crucial for the diachronic development of the story. Thus a Wood of the Cross legend can really first be spoken of in these language areas between 800–1000. Via monastic networks the legends travelled westwards, to be translated into diverse

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[126] A.R. MILLER, op. cit., p. 47.

[127] R. NELLI, *Ecritures cathares*, Paris, 1968, pp. 54–57, in a French trans.

[128] R. NELLI, *Le phénomène cathare*, n.p., 1967, pp. 142–149, with quotations from the Latin text.

[129] See also: J. IVANOV, *Livres et légendes bogomiles. (Aux sources du catharisme)*, Paris, 1976.

[130] Two copies of the text remain: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek; Doat foundation, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, no. 36, fol. 26v–35. This foundation preserves the archives of the inquisition against the Cathars. On this manuscript is indicated: 'hoc est secretum hereticorum de Concoretio portatum de Bulgaria Nazaria suo episcopo [plenum erroribus]' (fol. 35r). Nazarius (1150–1235) is the man sent to Bulgaria to thrash out issues of faith; R. NELLI, *Le phénomène*, op. cit., p. 147. The Paris text reads: 'Et tunc cum cognovisset Sathanas quia descendi de coelo in mundum, misit angelum et accepit de tribus lignis et dedit ea ad crucifigendum me Moysi, quae nunc mihi servantur sic' (fol. 30v). The Vienna text reads: 'cum autem cognovisset Sathanas quod descenderem in hunc mundum, misit angelum suum et accepit de tribus arboris et dedit (ea) Moysi prophetae ad crucifigendum me: quae lignum mihi custodiuntur usque nunc'; R. NELLI, *Le phénomène*, op. cit., respectively p. 144 and p. 145.

[131] With the Cathars Moses belonged to the 'negative zone'. He would have led the Israelites out of Egypt at the order of the evil God; R. NELLI, *Le phénomène*, op. cit., p. 146, n. 24. Moses makes no further appearance in the mainstream Wood of the Cross legends of Beleth, Comestor, Gervase and Jacobus de Voragine, though he was already present in the earliest texts of the anonymous *Legenda* group (e.g. R: 12th-cent. Middle English variant with an 11th-cent. prototype). On this basis it could be examined whether Moses was suppressed by the church scholars because of a 'negative' past.

languages. On this journey there is no Queen of Sheba, though there is a 'Sebile'. Below it will be seen how the Queen of Sheba made her entrance via Jewish and Arabic branches (among others) of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross and became fused with the Greek-Latin sibyl tradition.

In the West, Seth's twig is first mentioned in Lambert of Saint-Omer's *Liber floridus* (1120) (Gen. 5, 3–4). In 1170, John Beleth has Seth appear as a 'mediator' between the Tree of Life and the Cross in the context of the Exaltation of the Cross. The motifs of the seed and the twig continue to appear side by side, since to the Church Fathers they both formed the etymological explanation of Seth's name. The Seth-Wood of the Cross motif also spread in the form of interpolations in other apocrypha. In addition, from the twelfth century on, most *Vita Adae et Evae* variants, which already had a Seth character thus, were also provided with a Wood of the Cross motif[132] and from the thirteenth century the connection of an existing (Seth's mission) and later theme (Seth receives and plants a part of the Tree of Paradise) also appears in the Nicodemus traditions and translations.[133]

Researchers have not yet been able to categorize every text that contains a Seth-Wood of the Cross motif. M. B. Halford has ventured on the manuscripts that contain the *Vita Adae et Evae*. The length of the list demonstrates the popularity of the Adam legend and also reveals that most manuscripts were produced in Germany.[134]

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[132] E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 88; W. MEYER, *Vita*, op. cit., so-called Class III of the *Vita*; see also the list of the most manuscripts that relate to a variant, a translation or an interpolation of the *Vita*; M.E.B. HALFORD, *The Apocryphical Vita Adae et Evae. Some Comments on the Manuscript Tradition*, in *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 82, 1981, pp. 417–427.

[133] R.P. WÜLCKER, *Das Evangelium Nicodemi in der Abendländische Literatur*, Marburg, 1872; W. MEYER, *Die Geschichte*, op. cit., p. 118; B. LINDSTRÖM, A *Late Middle English Version of the Gospel of Nicodemus Edited from British Museum MS Harley 149*, Uppsala, 1974; A. MASSER, *Dat Evangelium Nicodemi van deme lidende unses heren Ihesu Christi. Zwei mittelniederdeutsche Fassungen*, Berlin, 1978; J. CUMPS, *De middelnederlandse prozavertalingen van het evangelium Nicodemi* (unpub. thesis), (Leuven), [1963]; H.E. SHIELDS, *An Old French Book of Legends and Its Apocryphical Backgrounds. A Study of Ms 951 (I.5.19) of the Library of Trinity College*, Dublin (unpub. doct.), n.p., n.d.

[134] Of importance is the late 13th-century poem *Eva und Adam* by the poet Lutwin, transmitted only in a mid-15th-century manuscript preserved in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna, Codex Vindob. 28980. In addition the manuscript is illustrated; M.B. HALFORD, *Illustration and Text in Lutwin's Eva und Adam. Codex Vindob. 2980*, Stuttgart, 1980; IDEM, *Lutwin's Eva und Adam. Study. Text. Translation*, Göppingen, 1984.

There was an explosion of texts from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century[135] After 1500 the Seth motif was less in evidence, but it lived on, albeit inconspicuously, in popular narrative.[136]

Within the hard-to-classify number of interpolations, additions, fusions and regional translations the *Legenda* group stands out, as far as Seth is concerned, for only in this tradition does Seth receive a vision. In fact he has three visions in succession, for the text says that Seth must thrice heed the angel. First Seth sees a sparkling fountain, from which flow the four rivers of the world. Above the fountain grows a tree, but it is bare (6: *sed foliis et cortice nudat*).[137] The angel tells Seth that the tree has dried up because of his parents' sin.[138] The motif of the dry tree (to be contrasted symbolically with the 'green tree')[139] was already known to the Jews (Ezek. 17, 24) and is included in the Apocalypse of Moses and the fifth to sixth-century Ethiopian *Adae et Evae*.

The 'dead' dry tree stands near the Fountain of Life.[140] According to Genesis, therefore, this should be the Tree of Life, but given its bare and withered aspect it seems rather to be the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.[141] Moreover, in his second vision Seth sees a serpent twined around its trunk (7: *serpentem circa arborem nudata involutatem*). The Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge were often

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[135] M.E.B. HALFORD, *The Apocryphical Vita Adae et Evae*, art. cit., pp. 417–427.

[136] W.-E. PEUCKERT, *Die Legende vom Kreuzholz Christi im Volksmunde*, in *Mitteilungen der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde*, 18, 1927, pp. 164–178.

[137] Latin quotations from: W. MEYER, *Die Geschichte*, op. cit., pp. 131–149.

[138] Preceding the vision is the motif of the blighted footprints. This is a magic-religious motif which draws its meaning from natural symbolism. The angel says that the footprints formed when Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden: the blighted spots refer to the 'infertility' and death that was the consequence of this; E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 108; H. RAHNER, op. cit., p. 232 and p. 361. But the dying-off also points to the possibility of regeneration; T.N. HALL, art. cit., pp. 297–307. The motif also exists in reverse: gods and saints often leave luxuriant and fragrant flowers in their footsteps; C. McDANNELL and B. LANG, *De hemel. Een aardse geschiedenis*, trans. L. STAPPER, Haarlem, 1991, p. 96.

[139] T.N. HALL, art. cit., p. 298, describes an Anglo-Saxon translation of the 11th-12th century of the so-called *Vindicta Salvatoris*, a 9th-century appendix to the Gospel of Nicodemus, in which God asks the emperors Titus and Vespasian to crucify the Jews on a dry tree, since they did the same to Christ on a green tree.

[140] The association tree-fountain takes place, as we know, in the context of baptism D. VIGNE, *Le baptême du Christ. Onction paradisiaque*, in *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 112, 6, 1990, pp. 801–820.

[141] On the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, see: H.G. LEDER, *Arbor Scientiae*, in *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*, 52, 1961, pp. 155–189.

symbolically merged.[142] In the *Legenda* group the *Arbor scientiae* is transformed into the Cross as the new Tree of Life (redemption and regeneration).[143] In Seth's vision this transformation strongly recalls a Coptic tradition of the 'Mystery of John the Evangelist' (1006).[144] John is led to heaven by an angel and there he sees a fountain with four rivers and many trees. John asks which is the forbidden tree and sees a dry tree with thorns, its trunk hidden deep in the ground. The tree became bare at God's command, because it had borne a species of apple.[145]

That Genesis mentions two trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge, is exegetically fundamental.[146] Perhaps the 'double Tree of Paradise' is the result of a Canaanite and Iranian syncretization. In Canaan the Tree of Life is venerated;[147] in Mesopotamia, the cosmic tree with the sun-bird are revered. The dry Tree of Knowledge in Seth's third vision recalls this Mesopotamian origin (9: *sic regressus tertio ad angelum, suae vidit, diligenter narravit*). For here it suddenly grows into a colossal tree that links heaven (the branches) and earth (the trunk and roots) (8: *vidit arborem iam dictam usque ad celios elevatam*). The tree with cosmic dimensions is a constant in many cultures. Often this tree that touches heaven and underworld is the centre of the world, the dwelling place of the Sun god (Egypt: Ra; Babylon: Eridu).[148] To shamans the tree is a cosmic ladder. Yggdrasil,

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[142] Z. AMEISENOWA, *The Tree of Life in Jewish Iconography*, in *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 2, 1938–1939, pp. 326–345, already from Philo of Alexandria the two trees were interchangeable.

[143] Z. AMEISENOWA, art. cit., p. 326.

[144] E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 110; E.A.W. BUDGE (ed. and trans.), *The Mysteries of John the Apostle and Holy Virgin*, in *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, London, 1913, pp. 249–250. See also: R.J. PEEBLES, *The Dry Tree. Symbol of Death*, in *Vassar Medieaval Studies in Memory of Gertrude Schoepperle Loomis*, Paris, 1927.

[145] A.R. MILLER, op. cit., p. 129 ff.

[146] G. HÖHLER, *Die Bäume des Lebens. Baumsymbole in den Kulturen der Menschheit*, Stuttgart, 1985, offers a clear and well-furnished survey of the role and functions of Trees of Paradise in both Western and Eastern cultures.

[147] E. DELEBECQUE, *Où situer l'arbre de vie dans la Jérusalem céleste. Note sur Ap. XXII*, 2, in *Revue Thomiste*, 88, 1, 1988, pp. 124–130, remarks that the notion Tree of Life (*Lignum vitae*: Gen. 2, 9; Ezek. 21, 8; Rev., 2, 7; Rev. 22, 2, 14, 19) appears in the Hebrew and Greek translations as 'to xulon', the wood; pp. 126–127: 'il ne signifie pas "arbre", il signifie "bois", la matière du bois et singulièrement un objet taillé dans du bois, comme un poteau, un pieu ou un piquet, donc du bois mort, lequel, ici, vit'. The argumentation apparently developed independently of G.Q. REIJNERS, *The Terminology of the Holy Cross in Early Christian Literature as Based Upon Old Testament Typology* (*Graecitas christianorum primaeva*, 2), Nijmegen, 1965, passim.

[148] A.I. MARTYNOV, *The Solar Cult and the Tree of life*, in *Arctic Anthropology. Studies in North Asiatic Archaeology. Neolithic to Medieval*, 25, 2, 1988, pp. 12–29.

too, is a cosmic tree, from which Odin hung for nine days in his quest for wisdom.[149]

In Jewish-Christian concepts the Tree of Paradise is eschatologically transposed to the last kingdom: the tree grows in the centre of Zion. Furthermore, the tree is the pillar of cosmic union.[150] The cosmic tree is also the epiphanic medium of God and His Son. In Nebuchadnezzar's dream a cosmic tree becomes the tree hewn down so that it will shoot again in the Messianic kingdom.[151] The Tree of Jesse is likewise a cosmic tree that will produce the Messiah.

The cosmic tree in Seth's vision is related to these concepts, but is specifically elaborated as the typological essence of the Cross. The motif of the 'cosmic Tree of the Cross' was developed by the first Church Fathers, influenced by Neoplatonism and ancient Semitically-nuanced traditions.[152] The first tradition generally regards the Cross as the materialization of the world soul, the *logos*, whose universality is symbolically recognized in the four (cosmic) directions of the Cross, with Golgotha as the centre. From the point of view of biblical Semitic tradition the Cross is seen as the final stage of the Old Testament 'wood'. The symbolic comparison with the 'tree' is more strongly elaborated and the emphasis is mainly on the paradisal *Lignum vitae*.[153] Thus, 'growing' in the 'navel' of the world, the Cross diffuses its life-giving powers in the four directions of the Rivers of Paradise and the Fountain of Life.[154] Usually this Tree of Life is described as a link between heaven and earth.[155]

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[149] E.S. GREENHILL, *The Child in the Tree. A Study of the Cosmological Tree in Christian Tradition*, in *Traditio*, 10, 1954, pp. 323–371, p. 331; A. WÜNSCHE, *Die Sagen vom Lebensbaum und Lebenswasser*, Leipzig, 1905, p. 55.

[150] H. BERGEMA, *De boom des levens in schrift en historie*, Hilversum, 1938, pp. 503–511.

[151] E.S. GREENHILL, art. cit., p. 336.

[152] E.S. GREENHILL, art. cit., p. 331.

[153] S.J. RENO, *The Sacred Tree as an Early Christian Literary Symbol. A Phenomenological Study (Forschungen zur Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte*, 4), Saarbrücken, 1978; G.T. ARMSTRONG, *The Cross in the Old Testament. According to Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem and the Cappodocian Fathers*, in *Theologia Crucis. Signum Crucis. Festschrift für Erich Dinklers zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. G. KLEIN, Tübingen, 1978, pp. 17–38.

[154] E.A.S. BUTTERSWORTH, *The Tree at the Navel of the Earth*, Berlin, 1970; E. SHORE, *The Tree at the Heart of the Garden*, in *Parabola*, 14, 1989, pp. 38–71. See also the Early Christian mosaic in the chancel of San Giovanni in Laterano in Rome, restored by J. Torriti and J. da Camerino in the 13th century. A colossal cross set with precious stones takes the place of the Tree of Life at the centre of Paradise. The archangel guards the gate. At the foot of this cross spring the four rivers of the world.

[155] As a metaphor for the universe, the tree also leads to the ladder (Gen. 28,

One of the older poems of Christianity, *De pascha* (fourth century), consisting of sixty-nine hexameters and attributed to St Cyprian, combines Neoplatonic thought with the abovementioned biblical exegesis.[156] First the *Lignum vitae* of Paradise is described. The Tree of Life is hewn down, but one shoot of the tree is planted again. The new tree produces a fruit which—as the poem foretells—will grow to be the 'Tree of the Cross'. Once ripe, the fruit falls to the ground and from it sprouts a tree of cosmic dimensions. The author says that the cosmic tree is likewise a ladder for the soul:[157] the soul may use this tree as a means to climb to heaven and bliss,[158] which indicates a catechetic-tropaic function.[159] The tree, the poem continues,

12–13) and the pillar (Gen. 28, 18–22). The pillar (cf. Seth's pillars) appears as a cosmic symbol in the Cave of Treasures (ed. E.A. WALLIS BRIDGE, London, 1927, p. 63) and was adopted by the Venerable Bede (*De locis sanctis*, CSEL 39, p. 307). I refer in this connection to the Irminsul shrine, an Old Saxon cult landscape that was dominated by a pillar. The pillar was a 'mythische Weltstütze'. Charlemagne destroyed this shrine in 772. Louis the Pious founded Corvey Abbey (822) in the vicinity of the cult site. It is conjectured that during the fifty years between the destruction of the pillar and the foundation of the abbey, a local acculturation of the old cosmic 'navel' must also have taken place, as can be seen at Extersteine. The rock formation that was part of Irminsul comprises various caves and springs which were most certainly involved in proto-Christian natural magic. Above such a cave a relief depicting a Descent from the Cross was carved. This shows that the Holy Sepulchre and the Cross of Christ were perceived as the cosmic centre and old pagan vestiges were supplanted; W. MATTHES, *Corvey und die Extersteine. Schicksal eines vorchristlichen Heiligtums*, Stuttgart, 1982, pp. 13–14 and p. 17 for the quotation. Also the tower and the mountain function as cosmic centres. See: M. and P. KUNTZ, *The Symbol of the Tree Interpreted in the Context of Other Symbols of Hierarchical Order, the Great Chain of Being and Jacob's Ladder*, in *Jacob's Ladder and the Tree of Life. Concepts of Hierarchy and the Great Chain of Being*, eds. M. KUNTZ and P. KUNTZ, New York-Paris, 1987, pp. 319–334.

[156] CYPRIAN, *Opera*, ed. HARTEL, CSEL, 3.3, p. 305 ff.; PSEUDO-TERTULLIAN, *De ligno vitae*, PL 2, cols. 1113 ff. and extracts included in: E.S. GREENHILL, art. cit., pp. 339–341.

[157] In an Easter homily, Hippolytus (probably a pupil of Ireneus, early or mid-3rd century) identifies the Cross with the cosmic tree and the ladder: P. NAUTIN, *Homélies Paschales, 1. Une homélie inspirée du traité sur la Pâque d'Hyppolite* (*Sources Chretiennes*, 27), Paris, 1950. It is significant that the associations take place in the context of Easter (resurrection). Also Jacob of Sarug (451–521) projects the *logos* of the Cross onto Jacob's ladder; S. LANDERSDORFER (trans.), *Jacob von Sarug. Gedicht über die Vision Jakobs zu Bethel*, in *Ausgewählte Schriften der syrischen Dichter aus dem syrischen übersetzt* (*Bibliothek der Kirchenväter*, 6), 1912, pp. 333–343.

[158] W. BOUSSET, *Die Himmelreise der Seele*, in *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 4, 1901, pp. 136–169, for the relationship with shamanism.

[159] E.S. GREENHILL, art. cit., p. 140. In Lambert of Saint-Omer's *Liber floridus* a Tree of Virtues is represented. Virtue is *Ecclesia* and flowering, Vice is *Synagoga* and barren; A. DEROLEZ (ed.), *Lamberti S. Audomari Canonici. Liber Floridus. Codex autographus Bibliothecae Universitatis Gandavensis*, Ghent, 1968, fol. 231v and fol. 232. *De*

has beautiful foliage and heavenly nectar; drinking of it endows the mind and soul with insight; this is an anchoretic-mystic connotation.

Thus in the description of the tree's growth three trees are mentioned. The first tree can easily be identified as the Tree of Life that God planted in Paradise. The shoot alludes to Isaiah 11, 1, the Tree of Jesse, of which Christ is indeed the fruit.[160] The shoot is thus also an image of the Incarnation.[161] That the fruit can only ripen on the Cross alludes to redemption in the Messianic era through the Crucifixion.[162] This redemption is universal, and leads to a third cosmic tree. This is the last tree, the Tree of heavenly Paradise (Rev. 22, 2), and it completes the *recirculatio*. The similarities between the poem and Seth's vision are conspicuous. In the vision the transformation of a dry tree into a cosmic tree also occurs. It is hard to say whether the poem had a direct influence on the passage in the *Legenda*.[163] As has been shown, the web of symbols surrounding the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Cross developed early and spread in many variations.[164]

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laudibus sanctae crucis of the 12th century (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14159, fol. 6), features a drawing in which man crawls over a cross in the form of a ladder, which springs from a dragon towards the head of Christ. Amongthe steps he passes are those of law and of wisdom. On the man's chest is the word *spes*; R.L. FÜGLISTER, *Das lebendige Kreuz. Ikonographisch-ikonologische Untersuchung der Herkunft und Entwicklung einer spätmittelalterlichen Bildidee und ihrer Verwürzelung im Wort*, Einsiedeln-Cologne, 1964, fig. 18. In the hymn *Laudes crucis attollamus* (11th cent.) the Cross is a *scala peccatorum*.

[160] O. LAUFFER, *Kinderherkunft aus Bäumen*, in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, 6, 2, 1935, pp. 93–106, p. 106.

[161] E.S. GREENHILL, art. cit., p. 339; E.C. QUINN, op. cit., pp. 122–125; the cosmological tree symbolizes a Marian 'shoot'.

[162] In the Church of Sankt Nikolai in Wismar the monumental wall paintings on the north and south inner walls of the west entrance (1479) have been restored (1994). The south wall features two huge genealogical trees: to the left the patriarchs, amongst them also Seth (inscription). The tree grows out of the belly of the naked (= patriarch) Adam and ends in the crucified Christ. To the right is a similar stylized tree, but this time starting from a clothed Jesse and ending in the Apocalyptic Madonna. In other representations of the genealogical tree the tree is also rooted in Adam, but I have never encountered Seth depicted in such a tree; E. GULDAN, *Eva und Maria. Eine Antithese als Bildmotiv*, Graz-Cologne, 1966, p. 141.

[163] Besides, from the 9th century on, the texts of St Cyprian were copied less often; only in the 15th century can one speak of an increased interest; E.S. GREENHILL, art. cit., p. 141.

[164] The Franciscans emphasized the tree-Cross association. In his *Lignum vitae* (1259–1260) Bonaventure, inspired by Isaiah 11, 1 and *De pascha*, links the twelve branches of the Tree of Life to the twelve mysteries of Christ's life, grouped in fours around *origo*, *vita*, *passio* and *glorificatio*; *Bonaventure. The Soul's Journey into God. The Tree of Life. The Life of St. Francis*, trans. and introduction by E. COUSINS,

Seth's third vision introduces a motif that has previously not appeared—at least not in this specific form. In the branches of the tree grown to cosmic size Seth sees a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes; in its roots the soul of Seth's brother Abel is entangled: *et in summitate arboris quaso parvulum iam natum et pannis involutum* [. . .] *vidit radicem eiusdem arboris terram penetrantem usque in infernum pertingere, ubi recognovit animam fratris sui Abel.* The angel explains to Seth that the child is the Son of God lamenting his parents' sin, but when the proper time has come that child will provide the required oil of mercy (cf. the Gospel of Nicodemus). Nothing more is said about Abel, but he is a familiar prefiguration of Christ's Passion.[165]

The 'child-in-a-tree' motif can still be found today in the *Kinderbaum* of popular belief. Man is born from trees or bushes, a notion that finds its widest credence in northern Europe. The *Legenda* group containing the Seth motif, which is thus characterized by the addition of the vision, indeed spread most widely in a north-westerly direction and diffused much more slowly south-eastwards from the fourteenth century.

The child-in-the-tree motif is more than a remnant of an animistic belief however: at its root is a cosmology of the tree.[166] The tree is the throne of the Godhead, and via the tree He can reveal Himself. The tree is thus the creative principle itself. In Iranian myths the first human couple, Mrtija and Mrtijana, spring from the Tree of Life. In Herrad of Landsberg's *Hortus deliciarum* (1180) a tree with

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New York-Toronto, 1978, pp. 119–175. See also: E. RANDOLPH DANIEL, *Joachim da Fiore. Patterns of History in the Apocalypse*, in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, eds. R.K. EMMERSON and B. McGINN, London, 1992, pp. 72–88, who discusses the eschatological ideas of the 12th and 13th centuries starting from the increasing interest in nature. V. FUMAGELLI, *Als de hemel zich verduistert. De geschiedenis van het middeleeuwse levensgevoel*, introduction J. le GOFF, trans. from Italian by S. CONTARINI and A. BÖTTNER, Amsterdam, 1992, pp. 28–44, develops a similar reasoning. From the 12th century on, alienation from nature constantly increases. Precisely this distance from nature polarized it with regard to the 'supernatural'. The pre-eminent embodiment of mysterious nature was the impenetrable forest. This was metaphorically and symbolically sublimated in religion: visions and suchlike took place there. The divine was 'read off' nature. For a systematic approach of the Cross-Wood-Tree clusters in the middle ages, see: B. BAERT, *Cross-Wood-Tree. Grains of Thought*, in *Fascinating Facets of Flanders* (exh. cat.), ed. P. Vandenbroeck, 1998, pp. 108–122.

[165] The passage also appears in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, in which Abel colours the roots red.

[166] KUMMER, art. *Kinderherkunft*, in *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, 4, Berlin-Leipzig, 1931–1932, cols. 1342–1360, cols. 1347–1353.

human heads bearing the inscription *Lignum vitae* is depicted next to the creation of Eve.[167] Again in a Creation context a thirteenth-century tapestry in the abbey church of Bergen (Norway) shows children entwined in a tree.[168] And on the painted ceiling of St Michael's Church in Hildesheim (ca. 1220) the Tree of Paradise is also shown bearing little heads.[169]

The baby in Seth's vision, however, is specifically the Christ Child. There are two iconographic traditions connected with the Christ Child enthroned in the tree: the Tree of St Anne[170] and the Tree of the Annunciation. In a votive relief in Ulm Cathedral (ca. 1400) Anna and Joachim spring from a grapevine. Mary is depicted (as a teenager) halfway along the stem and right at the top is the baby Jesus holding a cross. In the Schleswig Landesmuseum is an altarpiece (ca. 1535) in the centre of which the Holy Family is portrayed.[171] The Child is enthroned in a tree above the rest of the family who are gathered around it. In the Annunciation on an altarpiece (1460–1470) in the National Museum in Warsaw the Angel Gabriel is shown holding a tree. Above sits God the Father; below him, the Christ Child.[172] However, these iconographic traditions are of a later date than the literary working of the Christ Child in a tree.[173]

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[167] Fol. 17; G. CAMES, *Allégories et symboles dans l'hortus deliciarum*, Leiden, 1971, Pl. II.

[168] O. LAUFFER, art. cit., p. 106 and fig. 1.

[169] R.L. FÜGLISTER, op. cit., fig. 14: The Tree of Knowledge is flanked by a tree with little heads on the right and with Christ enthroned (in a mandorla) on the left. This tradition also grafts itself onto the trees of Virtues and Vices. In the museum of Trier Cathedral a relief of the *arbor mala en bona* on a late-13th-century capital has been preserved. Little skulls as well as little smiling faces are concealed in the foliage; R.L. FÜGLISTER, op. cit., fig. 11.

[170] T. BRANDENBERG, *Saint Anne. A Holy Grandmother and her Children*, in *Sanctity and Motherhood. Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages*, ed. A.B. MULDER-BAKKER, New York, 1995, pp. 31–65.

[171] On the predella the Fourteen Holy Helpers are shown; on the wings are the devices and arms of Claus von Ahlefeldt and Heilwich von Putlof (patronage of the Goschhofkapelle in Eckenförde).

[172] T. DOBRZENIECKI, *Legenda o secie i drzewie zyclia w sztuce srednio-wiecznej*, in *Rocznik muzeum Narodowego w Warszanie*, 10, 1966, pp. 165–202 (with French synopsis, pp. 200–202).

[173] In a wall painting on the vault of the chancel of Kleranta (Brixen, before 1480) Mary takes Hosts from a tree in which God the Father is enthroned above with a little naked Christ below Him; R.L. FÜGLISTER, op. cit., fig. 4. The iconography is based on the so-called Host-tree, an allegory of the Fall and the Redemption. Eve gives apples to unbelievers; Mary gives the Eucharist to believers. These are the fruits of the *arbor mixtus* (good and evil). A crucifix is often represented in the 'good' treetop (sometimes also divided treetops or trees). These

Nonetheless, Seth's vision has a twelfth-century literary pendant. Between 1190 and 1200 Wauchier wrote a continuation of Chrétien de Troyes' Perceval romance. Perceval finds himself in a wood. In one of the trees he sees a beautiful and richly clad child of some five years of age holding an apple. The child points the way to 'Mont Dolerous' (Golgotha?). Having given this direction the child climbs swiftly to the top of the tree, hovers there for moment, then vanishes before Perceval's eyes (vv. 33765–33836).[174] A second grail saga, the so-called *Didot Perceval* written between 1190 and 1212, describes how Perceval comes to a forest that contains the loveliest trees in the world. In the most beautiful tree of all sit two children of six years old or so. Perceval asks them in the name of the Trinity to tell him why they are there. The children reply that they come from the Garden of Eden and have waited for him in the tree to tell him the way to the grail,[175] after which, both tree and children vanish.[176]

Both 'heroes' are on an archetypal quest for Paradise.[177] That Perceval should be so closely related to this type of Wood of the Cross legend variant perhaps says something about a common audience and a shared context of creation. Whatever the case, the Perceval tradition appears to precede the motif of Seth's vision.[178]

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images continued to be very popular in the Tyrol until well into the 17th century. E. GULDAN, op. cit., pp. 136–143; L. KRETZENBACHER, *Wortbegründetes Typologie-Denken auf mittelalterlichen Bildwerken*, Munich, 1983, passim.

[174] Edn.: *Perceval le gallois ou le conte du graal*, 5, ed. Ch. POTVIN, Bergen, 1870; W. ROACH, *The Continuations of the Old French 'Perceval' of Chrétien de Troyes*, Philadelphia, 1949, pp. XIII–XIV.

[175] W. ROACH, *The Didot Perceval According to the Manuscript of Modena and Paris*, Philadelphia, 1951, pp. 203–204.

[176] E. BRUGGER, *The Illuminated Tree in two Arthurian Romances*, New York, 1929, p. 9, says that since the 12th century the Seth material was 'divulgatissima', and that the latter may thus be regarded as a source of inspiration for Perceval. I take this opportunity to correct the author. In the 12th century the Legend of the Wood of the Cross was already known, the figure of Seth was even mentioned in the context, though not the vision. The oldest *Legenda* text stems from an Anglo-Saxon tradition of the 12th century—even from the 11th century, according to Napier (*o.c.*, p. XII)—but begins with Moses. And that also applies to the 12th-century Latin version now in Cambridge. See also E.S. GREENHILL, art. cit., p. 327; E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 118.

[177] Concurring with the identity of the 'grail' as a 'para-paradise' or pleasure ground in the knightly context, see: P. VANDENBROECK, *Jheronymus Bosch' zogenaamde Tuin der Lusten*. 1–2, in *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen*, Antwerp, 1989–1990, 1, pp. 9–209, 2, pp. 9–192, 2, p. 135 ff.

[178] In a Provencal Wood of the Cross legend, *Le roman d'Arles* (1272–1275), the Tree of Life is planted on Adam's grave by the agency of Seth and it grows there until the generation of Joshua. Then this version takes a remarkable turn. A 'chevalier'

From the thirteenth century the search for Paradise, the ultimate quest, is also incorporated into travellers' tales and pilgrims' accounts. In diverse places a dry or other 'miraculous' tree is described in the Holy Land or the distant East (or wherever it was thought Paradise should be located).[179] In the *Merveilles du monde* the 'dry tree' is situated near Hebron, the burial place of Adam.[180] The motif is thus 'naturalized' and its symbolic significance is covered with a layer of exoticism and *mirabilia*-orientated *topoi* typical of the genre itself.[181] The dry tree, the Tree of Life, and the speaking tree follow various paths and are also brought into contact with extra-biblical characters. Such a one is Alexander the Great.[182] At the brink of Paradise Alexander encounters a talking sun and moon tree which apprises him of his approaching death.[183] Here is maybe a similarity with the *Didot Perceval*, where the two children in the tree are perhaps the personifications of the sun and moon.[184] Gervase of Tilbury explains the sun tree as the Tree of Knowledge, the moon tree as the Tree of Life.[185] The sun tree also appears in the travels of Marco Polo (1286–1324): 'In the Province called Tonocail [. . .] there is an immense plain in which stands the Arbre Sol, which the Christians call the Arbre Sec. It is here, according to the people of the country,

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and his king bring the Tree of Life to the Temple where the Tree abides its destiny as the Cross. Here, an epic of chivalry and the Legend of the Wood of the Cross are interwoven; R. NELLI, *Le phénomène cathare*, op. cit., p. 134, edn. in modern French, p. 135–140.

[179] On the location of Paradise, see: R.R. GRIMM, *Paradisus Coelestis. Paradisus Terrestris*, (*Medium Aevum*, 33), Munich, 1977, passim.

[180] M. MEISS, *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry. The Boucicaut Master*, London, 1968: Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. fr. 2810, fol. 157v.

[181] On the Hereford Mappa Mundi (162cm × 132cm) (ca. 1280), a dry tree is depicted in the Garden of Eden; E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 113; B. HAHN-WOERNLE, *Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte*, Ebstorf, n.p., p. 32, fig. 20.

[182] M. LASCELLES, *Alexander and the Earthly Paradise in Medieval English Writings*, in *Medium Aevum*, 5, 3, 1936, pp. 173–188.

[183] In the history bible by Evert of Soudenbalch (Utrecht, ca. 1460), now in Vienna in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (cod. 2771, fol. 335r), a priest shows Alexander the Great two trees with the sun and the moon on one side; O. MAZAL, *Der Baum. Ein Symbol des Levens in der Buchmalerei*, Graz, 1988, p. 19. In a Persian miniature from Shah Namzh (15th century) Alexander encounters a speaking tree; R. COOK, *L'Arbre de vie. Image du Cosmos*, English-French trans. by J. BRETHES, n.p., 1975, fig. 33.

[184] R.J. PEEBLES, op. cit., pp. 294–297.

[185] *Otia Imperialia* I, I, XI, 82–84. In Babylon and Egypt the divinity enthroned in a tree appears in connection with the solar cult; E.C. QUINN, op. cit., pp. 121–122.

that the battle was fought between Alexander and Darius.'[186] Odoric de Pordenone (1286–1331) declares that the dry tree died when Christ was crucified.[187] Sir John Mandeville mentions a dry tree of Seth. Here two traditions are linked (1322).[188]

The quest and the pilgrimage are also metaphors for the searching soul, the mystic search for God. In Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pèlerinage de l'âme* (1355–1358) a pilgrim on the way from Purgatory to Heaven sees a tree *delictable de grant verdeur*. Under this green tree other pilgrims play with an apple. Next to it is a tree which is *seche* and without *humeur*. An angel explains that the other 'souls' like to play with the apples because it brings them solace and consolation (vv. 5591–5616).[189] This apple is not the apple of man's Fall, however. It was borne on the green tree and transferred to the dry tree to replace Adam.[190] The apple is the fruit of the Cross, formerly

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[186] M. LASCELLES, art. cit., p. 180; E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 113.

[187] H. CORDIER, *Les voyages en Asie au XIVème siècle du bienheureux frère Odoric de Pardenone*, Paris, 1891, p. 19.

[188] *Mandeville's Travels*, ed. M.C. SEYMOUR, Oxford, 1967, I, 14. In the *Epistola Presbyteri Johannis* (ca. 1300) (letters to Prester John, a legendary figure who was said to reign over a hidden Christian realm in the heart of Africa), a Christian asks a priest what the 'arbor sicca' (the dry tree) is, and the priest answers that it is the 'arbor Seth'. E.C. QUINN, op. cit., p. 113, points to the similarity between 'sicca', 'sec' and 'Seth', and deduces that the dry tree, which has been a figure of the Cross since patristic times, may also have been connected with Seth in a nominal way.

[189] E.S. GREENHILL, op. cit., pp. 354–357. The earliest manuscript dates from the 15th century: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. fr. 602. Edns. and trans.: J. FLYNN, *Pilgrimage of the Soul. An Edition of the Caxton Imprint* (Doct.), Auburn, 1973; R.P. McGERR, *The Pilgrimage of the Soul. A Fifteenth Century English Prose Translation of le Pèlerinage de l'âme*, 2 vols., New York, Garland, 1990; J.J. STÜRZINGER, *Le Pèlerinage de l'âme*, London, 1895. See also: S.L. GALPIN, *On the Sources of Guillaume de Deguileville's Pèlerinage de l'âme*, in *Pierpont Morgan Library. Annales*, 25, 1910, pp. 275–308. This text is not to be confused with the *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* by de Deguileville; E. CLASBY, *Guillaume de Deguileville. The Pilgrimage of Human Life (Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine)*, New York-London, 1992.

[190] See: J. DECORTE, *Naar Zijn beeld en gelijkenis: de ziel*, in *De middeleeuwse ideeënwereld. 1100–1300*, Heerlen, 1994, pp. 201–232, p. 227, fig. 7.3, p. 228. The author refers in this connection to a 12th-century drawing at the Song of Solomon (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, ms. lat. 4450, fol. 4). The soul is crowned as *Sponsa* next to her bridegroom. In the preliminary stage of this mystic marriage the soul is uncrowned and leans against a tree. A hand with the stigmata covers her right shoulder. Next to the tree is the inscription 'Sub arbore malo suscitavi te'. We note: malus (long ending) means apple tree; malus (short ending) means evil. This nominal relationship was already remarked by Augustine, but it offers insufficient explanation for the symbolic adoption of the apple tree in Christianity. Leder develops the apple tree's 'pflanzengeographischen Hintergrund'. The apple would have travelled from the East to Europe in the Neolithic period. The recollection of an eastern

borne on the Tree of Life. This 'transfer' is also elaborated in the early Christian poem *De pascha*, abovementioned. The poem also already speaks of the solace that the tree brings to the soul. In other words, the green tree that bears the apple is Mary. The origin of the green tree lies in the *virga Jesse*, but then it still bore many pleasant fruits. It is also the same tree that Nebuchadnezzar had seen cut down (vv. 5701–5704). The angel also feels that the pilgrim requires an explanation about how the apple has managed to get to the dry tree. And here Guillaume de Deguileville interpolates the Seth passage. The green tree has reproduced itself in a twig, in a tiny seed, and Seth has become its courier. He is the mysterious traveller between the Old and New Testaments; he is the pivotal figure between propagation and the death on the Cross. This interpolation is followed by a dispute between the two trees and between God and His Son. The green tree sorrows (a *planctus Virginis*?),[191] but the dry tree will live again as soon as the nails are hammered in.[192] The fixing to the Cross is the confirmation of redemption and thus of the recovered Tree of Life and regained Paradise.

This body of thought, namely the network of metaphor surrounding the tree in the context of the soul, receives an iconographic response in mystic primers. In *Thoofkijn van devotien* (Gerard Leeu, Antwerp, 1487) the soul (in female shape) is represented in a *Hortus conclusus* with the Tree of Paradise, but also with a green tree with the Cross and the three nails in its crown (fol. 11v 16).[193] The Cross is referred

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fruit (Paradise *topos*) combined with the 'domestic' aspect of the apple tree (garden) turned this tree into both an archetypical and a universal receptor of Christological ideas. The play on words has enhanced this reception; H.-G. LEDER, art. cit., pp. 181–183.

[191] E.S. GREENHILL, art. cit., p. 354.

[192] I refer here to the popular custom of hammering nails into 'sacred' trees. There was an 'arbre cloué' in Trazegnies. At the beginning of the twentieth century in Gilly (Charleroi) there stood a lime tree into which over 70,000 nails had been driven. The villagers maintained a tradition of 'hammering away' an illness in the tree. Fixing the nail in the wood killed the 'evil spirit' of the illness. Often such a tree was dediated to Mary; J. CHALON, *Les arbres fêtiches de la Belgique*, Antwerpen, 1912, p. 24 and pp. 31–34. In Berlaere (hamlet of Bareldonck) nails were pushed in the tree as a cure for skin diseases; E.H. VAN HEURCK, *Les drapelets de pèlerinage en Belgique et dans les pays voisins. Contribution à l'iconographie et à l'histoire des pèlerinage*, Antwerp, 1922.

[193] Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Res. 169. The text is a Middle Dutch translation of Piere d'Ailly's 'Le jardin amoureux de l'âme'; R.L. FALKENBURG, *The Fruit of Devotion. Mysticism and the Imagery of Love in Flemish Paintings of the Virgin and Child. 1450–1550* (*Oculi*, 5), Amsterdam-Philadelphia, 1994, pp. 36–37, figs. 47–48.

to as sweet-smelling, like all the other herbs in the little garden. The fragrance of the herbs and the Cross is in line with the mystical symbolism of Paradise.[194]

The Queen of Sheba, the sibyl and the Wood of the Cross

In the Legend of the Wood of the Cross the Queen of Sheba foretells the coming of Christ. She is the only character to discern in the wood the future Cross. Thus her role in the legend is crucial. To the queen the purpose of the Cross is clear and the reader is made aware of God's plan. The Queen of Sheba owes her special function to a rich history of syncretization that goes back to Jewish and Arab traditions.

The Old Testament (1 Kings 10, 1–13) tells how the Queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices (never again did spices come in such quantity as that which the Queen of Sheba gave to Solomon), one hundred and twenty talents of gold, and precious stones. There she expressed her wonder at the king's wisdom and the surpassing prosperity she observed in his palace and in the Temple, the house of the Lord. Solomon was well-disposed towards her, adorned his palace and the Temple with her gifts, and gave her every desire that she expressed as well as what he gave her out of his royal bounty. Then she returned to her own land with her servants.

The Talmud does not add much to this biblical passage. Rabbi Jochanan even suggests in his treatise 'Bawa Bathra' that 'queen' should be read as 'kingdom'.[195] The Targum Scheni, an Armenian translation from Hebrew (the dating is very debatable but in any

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[194] In her first vision Hadewych is also led by God to a place in the wood with seven trees. One of these trees is an *arbor inversa*, a tree whose roots are in heaven and whose branches grow down towards the earth; pp. MOMMAERS (ed.), *De visioenen van Hadewych*, Nijmegen-Bruges, n.d., pp. 16–26, p. 20. The inverted tree is an important element in Jewish and Indian mysticism and stands for cosmic manifestation through a single transcendent source. The *arbor inversa* acquired seven branches in the Jewish Kabbalistic tree; R. COOK, op. cit., no. and fig. 38. Hadewych may have been influenced by this Jewish mysticism. See: Z. HALEVI, *Tree of Life. An Introduction to the Cabala*, London, 1972.

[195] L.H. SILBERMANN, *The Queen of Sheba in Judaic Tradition*, in *Salomon und Sheba*, ed. J.B. PRITCHARD, London, 1974, pp. 65–84, p. 67 ff.

case not later than the eleventh century) dwells on Solomon in relation to the Book of Esther, more specifically a passage concerning a banquet with Xerxes.[196] The king sent emissaries to the land of Sheba—in the text compared to Paradise[197]—to summon its marvellous queen to his palace. There, he had the canals covered with glass, so that the queen, thinking she must wade through water, lifted her gown and to everyone's amazement revealed a very hairy foot. The *Alphabeticum Siracidis*,[198] an eleventh-century book of proverbs, promptly turned this into an entire body covered in hair. The ambiguity between 'male', 'female' and 'animal' suggests a supernatural (and thus 'demonic') origin.[199] In the Hebrew tradition this magic-religious echo was perceived as negative and led to controversial traditions concerning the queen.

The somewhat negative Jewish attitude towards the queen is perhaps connected with her proto-Hebrew demonic past. It is not unlikely that her character still contains traces of the half-woman, half-demon Lilith, whom Jewish popular belief had in turn borrowed from an older Sumerian myth.[200] Gilgamesh must drive a demon and a serpent out of a tree. The hero compels Lilith to fly a land where there is nothing but desert.[201] In Sumerian art Lilith is depicted with wings and the lower part of her body is that of a bird.[202]

In a Jewish commentary on the Book of Job the leader of the Sabaeans is called 'Queen Lilith'.[203] The *Alphabeticum Siracidis* says that Lilith was Adam's first wife.[204] But, self-willed and insistent on

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[196] M. GRÜNBAUM, *Neue Beiträge zur Semitische Sagenkunde*, Leiden, 1893, p. 211 ff. For a commentary, see R. BEYER, op. cit., p. 28 ff.; L.H. SILBERMANN, art. cit., p. 65 and R.G. STIEGNER, *Die Königin von Saba in ihren Namen* (Doct.), Graz, 1977, p. 20.

[197] On Sheba as a paradisal land, see: [Red.], art. *Paradies*, in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 5, Tübingen, 1961, cols. 95–100, col. 95.

[198] For the edns., see L.H. SILBERMANN, art. cit., p. 71.

[199] In the *Alphabeticum* the queen afterwards sleeps with Solomon, but her lover requires her to depilate with a certain cosmetic. The child born of this congress is Nebuchadnezzar.

[200] G. SCH(OLEM), art. *Lilith*, in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2, Jerusalem, 1971, cols. 245–249.

[201] A. SCHOTT (ed. and trans.), *Das Gilgameshepos*, Stuttgart, 1958, p. 118.

[202] Terracotta, vicinity of Hammarubis (1792–1750 BC). Illus. from: A. PARROT, *Sumer (Univers des formes)*, n.p., 1960, no. 376.

[203] W. BACHER, *Lilith Königin von Smaragd*, in *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, 19, 1870, p. 187 ff. The emerald was also connected with the Queen of Sheba; R. BEYER, op. cit., p. 34.

[204] G. SCHOLEM, art. cit., p. 246.

her own independence, she leaves her husband. In vain Adam pleads for her return. God takes pity on him and sends the more tractable Eve. But Lilith is jealous. To punish the couple she hands Eve the forbidden fruit. Here, she returns to her 'Sumerian habitat', the tree, and is identified with the serpent of the Gilgamesh passage.[205] The female serpent-devil also appears in the Christian iconography of the Fall. In a woodcut from Augsburg (1470) the winged and crowned Lilith tempts Eve to eat the apple.[206] And there are many instances of the serpent depicted with a female head and torso, as in the thirteenth-century stained glass windows of St Elizabeth's Church in Marburg.[207]

Islam has also adopted the Queen of Sheba. The 34th sura of the Koran deals with the kingdom of Sheba and the 27th with a nameless queen who, if supplemented with apocryphal traditions, shows all the characteristics of the queen in the biblical passage in which the queen and Solomon meet.[208] The queen poses riddles, but, persuaded by Solomon's wisdom, she converts to Islam. The 'glass rivers' (Targum Scheni) are also mentioned, but the reason for them—the revealing of the demonic foot—has become obscure. Indeed, demonic qualities are no longer attributed to her; the queen is a bringer of peace and a convert to Islam.

Her name, Bilqis, is mentioned for the first time by the chronicler at-Tabari (893–923).[209] In his world history the queen has an ass's head. Solomon takes no offence at the foot, even regretting that envy has caused the other demons of the court to reveal it.[210] In

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[205] She lives on in Jewish popular belief as a man-teaser and child-stealer, but also as a protectress of children. R. BEYER, op. cit., pls. 6–7, shows a silver amulet on which Lilith is depicted; on her body is a cryptogram of Yahweh. The author also points to a parchment amulet with the figure of Lilith intended to ward off diphtheria in small children.

[206] R. BEYER, op. cit., fig. p. 41; H. MODE, *Démons et animaux fantastiques*, Paris, 1977, pp. unnumbered.

[207] R. BEYER, op. cit., pl. 5.

[208] J. HALEVY, *La Légende de la reine de Saba*, in *Ecole pratique des hautes études. Section des sciences historiques et philologiques*, Paris, 1905, pp. 5–24, p. 10.

[209] Edn: E. SCHABINGER, *Salomo in der arabischen Literatur*, in *Augsburger Postzeitung*, 1895, p. 229 ff., this passage p. 238.

[210] The practice of reading the future in mirrors was a favourite iconographic theme at the court of Shah Abbas (1588–1629); R. BEYER, op. cit., pp. 54–55 and figs. 13, 25, 26. On the reception of Persian miniatures in the West (as erotica, for instance), see: T.W. ARNOLD, *Painting in Islam. A Study of the Place of Pictorial Art in Muslim Culture*, Oxford, 1928; B.W. ROBINSON, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library*, Oxford, 1958; I. STOUKINE, *Les peintures des*

Islam, thus, the queen is shown in a positive light. She also appears in Arabic texts under the name 'Balmaqua'. 'Almaqua' is the name for a virgin Venus deity of Yemen.[211] In Islam the ancient goddess of the sun cult is transposed into the Queen of Sheba and becomes a devout Muslim woman.[212] The name Bilqis is perhaps derived from *pilgesh*, the Hebrew word for bedfellow.[213] Nashwan ibn Said, a twelfth-century Arab sage, mentions in his *Kasideh* several members of Bilqis's family whose origins can be traced back to animal ancestors. At the root of the family tree is the snake.[214] According to Ethiopian legends the Queen of Sheba was born of the serpent queen.[215] Neither Christianity nor Islam entirely supplanted the ancient animals cults. The distinction between man and animal is hazy where instinct, speed, (super)naturalism and sexuality is concerned.

A common factor in the Jewish and Arab traditions is the Queen of Sheba's marked intelligence. The Bible emphasizes her eagerness to learn (though we hear nothing of Solomon's answers), as does the Koran, where her eagerness is expressed by her conversion to Islam.

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manuscrits Safavis de 1502–1587, Paris, 1959; G.E. von GRUNEBAUM, *Der Islam II. Die Islamischen Reiche nach dem Fall von Konstantinopel*, Frankfurt, 1990 (repr. 1971), p. 167; on the miniatures themselves, see: N. BROSH and R. MILSTEIN, *Biblical Stories in Islamic Painting*, Jerusalem, 1991, fig. 38 and fig. 39.

[211] R.G. STIEGNER, op. cit., p. 50. Of course a kingdom of Sheba did exist in present-day northern Yemen, Ethiopia, which was also known in some traditions as the site of the Garden of Eden, where people worshipped the sun and the moon. See: W. PHILIPS, *Kataba und Saba. Entdeckung der verschollenen Königreiche an den biblischen Gewürzstassen Arabiens*, Frankfurt, 1955; G. MANDEL, *Das Reich der Königin von Saba*, Bern-Munich, 1976; P. WALD, *Der Jemen*, Cologne, 1980; On the history of Ethiopia in the context of the Queen of Sheba, see 'Makeda, Die Ethioperin', ch. 10 in R. BEYER, *Die Königin von Saba. Engel und Dämon. Der Mythos einer Frau*, cologne, 1987, pp. 127–180. Ethiopia was converted in the 4th century (Monphysites). Earlier, Jewish colonies already called themselves 'Solomonites' and descendants of the Queen of Sheba; ibid., p. 130 ff. Legend even has it that David transferred the kingdom of Jerusalem to Ethiopia (Abyssinia). This is connected with the purported transfer of the Ark to that country. E.A.W. BUDGE, *The Queen of Sheba and her Only Son Menyelek*, Oxford-London, 1932, pp. XLVI–XLIX. The written establishing of a Queen of Sheba legend in Ethiopia dates from the 14th century: the 'Kebra Nagast', ibid., p. 182; A. CAQUOT, *La reine de Saba et le bois de la croix selon une tradition éthiopienne*, in *Annales d'Ethiopie*, 1955, 1, pp. 137–147, pp. 137–138. Today, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba still frequently appear in Ethiopian iconography. They have a tutelary function, warding off demons; M. RODINSON, *Comment un roi israélite est devenu un magicien universel*, in *Le roi Salomon et les maîtres du regard* (exh. cat.), Brussels, 1992, pp. 132–135.

[212] R.G. STIEGNER, op. cit., p. 42.

[213] IDEM, op. cit., p. 128.

[214] Edn.: G. MANDEL, *Das Reich der Königin von Saba*, Bern-Munich, 1976, p. 58 ff.

[215] A. CAQUOT, art. cit., pp. 141–142.

In the Midrash Mischle, a Jewish collection of sermons and proverbs (tenth-eleventh century),[216] the queen's 'riddles' are elaborated.[217] The Midrash Hachefez (fourteenth century) goes into still more detail.[218] The queen asks Solomon which water, neither of earth nor of heaven, is the most thirst-quenching. This sweat of a horse is the answer. Horses that mate or fight pierce each other's skin and drink the liquid—which is very sweet—beneath the epidermis.[219] Of course allusions to fertility and the erotic play a role here.[220]

The Queen of Sheba can be connected with another woman too. Assyrian history tells of the consort of King Sausiadad V (824–810), Semiramis, who is given a prominent place on the pillars of the kings of Assur.[221] Not only was it believed that the Assyrian queen had a demonic ancestry, her life also displays many similarities with that of the Queen of Sheba. Semiramis was a fierce Amazon. She rode against the Medes (810), the Armenians (807/6) and others. The sagas also portray the Queen of Sheba as very knowledgeable about horses.[222] Both are enthusiastic scholars of hydraulics and mechanics. Semiramis is said to have diverted the Euphrates, which was regarded as next to impossible; while Arabic sources connect the Queen of Sheba with the Marib Dam.[223] The ladies are adepts in love. Moreover, Semiramis is said to be the wife of Nebuchadnezzar.[224] According to the *Alphabeticum Siracidis* Nebuchadnezzar was the son of the Queen of Sheba—which would make Semiramis her daughter in law . . . The hybrid appearance ascribed to the Ethiopian queen is likewise attributed to Semiramis. The Arab chronicler Diodor tells how she concealed her hybridity beneath her garments.[225] Finally,

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[216] Edn.: A. WÜNSCHE, *Die Rätselweisheit bei den Hebräern*, Leipzig, 1883, p. 15.

[217] On the riddles in the medieval West, see: S. KRAUSS, *Die Königin von Saba in den byzantinischen Chroniken*, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 11, 1902, p. 127.

[218] Edn.: L. GINZBERG, op. cit., 4, p. 147 and 6, p. 290.

[219] R. BEYER, op. cit., p. 102.

[220] In the Targum Scheni the riddles were also connected with a woman's everyday activities, with make-up for instance. In the dialogues between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba patriarchal and matriarchal cultures come into contact; R. BEYER, op. cit., pp. 103–109.

[221] W. EILERS, *Semiramis* (*Sitzungsberichte der österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philologisch-historische Klasse*, 274, 2), Vienna, 1971, p. 37.

[222] R. BEYER, op. cit., p. 123.

[223] IDEM, op. cit., p. 124.

[224] L. GINZBERG, op. cit., 1, p. 300, 6, p. 389.

[225] J.F. WURNM (ed. and trans.), *Diodor's von Sizilien Historische Bibliothek*, 2, Stuttgart, 1827, p. 166.

the Queen of Sheba is willing to convert; Semiramis also converts, to Nebo, the god of Assur.[226]

The Christian reception of the Queen of Sheba is typological in nature. Isaiah 60, 6 says that a multitude of camels bearing gold and frankincense shall come from Sheba and shall praise the name of the Lord. The prediction occurs in the context of the glory of the new Jerusalem and so must be understood in an eschatological sense.[227] Thus it is part of a prefigurative system. Responding to a challenge by the Pharisees (v. 38: 'Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.') Matthew (12, 42) prophesies: 'The queen of the South will rise up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!' (recounted in the same words in Lk. 11, 31–32).

The *Regina Austri*—the Queen of the South—is the Queen of Sheba. She represents the new Jerusalem and is thus connected in the New Testament with the Last Judgement of Christ.[228] Through the typological meaning of Isaiah 60, 6 the meeting between the Queen of Sheba and Solomon came to be understood in the context of the heavenly Jerusalem and the return of Christ as realizer of the united Church. In other words, the Queen of Sheba is a metaphor for the Second Coming. From the time of the earliest Church Fathers the Queen of Sheba has been an accepted symbol of the Church, a Church that will harvest its fruits at the End of Time. Thus the queen appears as a 'Messianic empress of peace', a 'bringer of souls'.[229]

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[226] 'Mit der Semiramis ist der Menschheitserinnerung ein Archetyp geglückt, dem auch die kaum weniger faszinierenden Gestalten einer Bilqis (Königin von Saba), einer Kleopatra, einer Zenobia, aber wohl auch der Judith und Salome zuzurechnen sind—unvergessliche Erscheinungsbilder, im Typus durchaus wirklichkeitsnah und anziehend auch dort noch, wo moralischen Urteil sie mit recht verdammt'; W. EILERS, op. cit., pp. 68–69.

[227] Psalm 72, 'Of Solomon', praises the king of Israel because of the wisdom and lustre he enjoys even among the inhabitants of Sheba (vv. 8–14). There is reference here to the uniting of all peoples under the dominion of the tribe of Yahweh.

[228] R. BEYER, op. cit., p. 192. In Psalm 72 the queen embodies all peoples, thus the unified Church. In a French *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* of 1465–1475, the queen appears with John the Baptist as a witness at the Last Judgement; R. BEYER, op. cit., fig. 51.

[229] The terminology is proposed by R. BEYER, op. cit., p. 190. Isidore of Seville (560–633/636), PL 83, cap. 112; P.F. WATSON, *The Queen of Sheba in Christian*

In Herrad of Landsberg's *Hortus deliciarum* (1180) the Old Testament passage of 1 Kings 10, 1–13 is illustrated.[230] Not only do we see the queen riding away from her country followed by a camel laden with gifts, but also her meeting with Solomon. Captions make the meaning of the drawings clear: REGINA AUSTRI ECCLESIAM GENTIUM SIGNIFICAT QUAE, AUDITIO NOMINE FILII DEI, VENIT AD EUM [. . .]. 'The Queen of the South means the church of the gentiles, who, after they had heard the name of the Son of God, came to him.' The next drawing (fol. 209v) shows the meeting, with the queen and Solomon enthroned. Here the caption reads: REGINA AUSTRI ID EST ECCLESIA VENIT AUDIRE SAPIENTIAM VERI SALOMONIS JESUS CHRISTI. 'The Queen of the South,[231] that is the Church, comes to listen to the wisdom of the true Solomon, Jesus Christ.'[232]

In the drawing by Herrad of Landsberg the role of the queen as the personification of the Church and at the Last Judgement is supplemented with a third typology: the *Sponsa*, or bride of Christ. In Revelation 21, 2 and 9–10 the new Jerusalem is represented as a bride adorned for her husband. In the Bible the bride theme is elaborated in the Song of Solomon. In the Middle Ages the Old Testament song of love was reinterpreted as the mystic love between Christ and his Church, the *Sponsa*. In his third treatise on the Song of Solomon (*canticum canticorum*) Honorius of Autun identifies the Queen of the

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Tradition, in *Salomon und Sheba*, op. cit., pp. 115–145, p. 117; also the Venerable Bede, Walafried Strabo and Hrabanus Maurus. In the iconography the role of witness fuses with that of the gift-giving queen. In a miniature from a Parisian *Bible Moralisée* of ca. 1220–30, the queen gives Solomon a dish filled with souls (in the form of holy wafers). On the left the scene is compared with Solomon in the Temple, which is placed in turn above a depiction of Christ and a Gothic church. In the register beneath, Mary intercedes for two individuals.

[230] Fol. 209–209v. R. GREEN, op. cit., 2, pp. 344–345, figs. 290–291.

[231] The Queen of Sheba comes now from the East (Arabian peninsula?), now from the South (Ethiopia? Egypt?). As an Easterner she is usually depicted in her heathen shape; as a Southerner, in her prefigurative guise. Matthew and Luke expressly refer to a queen from the South. 1 Kings 10 does not say which direction she hails from.

[232] Translated in: A. STRAUB, op. cit., p. 40 and 41. See also A. CHASTEL, *La rencontre de Salomon et de la reine de Saba dans l'iconographie médiévale*, in *Fables, Formes, Figures*, 1, 1978, pp. 103–122, p. 104. Black is the colour of idoloatry, says the author. An enthroned Queen of Sheba and Solomon are also depicted on a gilded bronze buckle from the Meuse region, 1200 (New York, The Cloisters Collection, no. 47.101.48); H. BRODERICK, *Salomon and Sheba Revisited*, in *Gesta*, 16, 1977, pp. 45–48, fig. 1.

South with the beloved of Christ.[233] The step is quickly made, since the songs were attributed to Solomon. Honorius goes on to describe the *Regina Austri* as seated in a battle chariot and red as the sun and the martyrs.

In the twelfth-century manuscript of this treatise from Augsburg mentioned earlier is a drawing in which the queen is depicted in a chariot. On its wheels are medallions on which the four evangelist symbols are depicted. The inscriptions read REGINA AUSTRI and APOSTOLI. There are Jews in the chariot (IUDEI). The Queen of Sheba brings the Jews to the *logos* borne upon the evangelical church: Solomon becomes Christ, the temple becomes *Ecclesia*.[234] As *Sponsa* of the Church the queen is likewise the prefiguration of Mary.[235]

As the mystic bride of the eschatological church the queen also plays a role in the Epiphany. Indeed, the Magi also 'came from afar', from the East, to worship the newborn Christ.[236] From the sixth century they are also systematically described as 'kings'.[237] It is not entirely unexpected, then, to find the Queen of Sheba connected with them on the basis of the precious gifts (gold, myrrh, and such-like). In the ninth century the similarity between the gifts of the queen and those of the Magi was elaborated by Prudentius.[238] But already in the Jewish traditions these refined gifts were legendarily brought back to Paradise or to the land of Sheba.[239] The objects were once again 'transferred'. The chain so chronologically and geographically forged serves the deeper dimension of salvation history and Messianic eschatology.[240]

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[233] PL 172, col. 453.

[234] R. BEYER, op. cit., p. 198.

[235] The queen is depicted with the unicorn on 15th-century 'love tapestries' (R. BEYER, op. cit., fig. 17) as a symbol of her virginity (Physiologus). This is to be explained by her role as Solomon's *Sponsa*, a prefiguration of the mystic marriage between the Virgin and Christ.

[236] In a miniature in a Catalan world atlas (1374–1376) produced by Abraham Cresques, the king and the three Magi are situated in 'Arabia Sabba'; R. BEYER, op. cit., fig. 26.

[237] A. WEIS, art. *Drei Könige*, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 1, Vienna-Rome, 1968, cols. 539–549, col. 541.

[238] F. CABROL and H. LECLERCQ, art. *Mages*, in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 10, Paris, cols. 980–1067, col. 987.

[239] A. CHASTEL, art. cit., p. 163.

[240] See: H.E. DEL MEDICO, *Zahab Parwayim. L'or fructifère dans la tradition juive*, in *Vetus Testamentum*, 13, 1963, pp. 158–186; A.F.J. KLIJN, op. cit., p. 57. Important sources that associate the Magi's gifts with a paradisal, Adamic origin are the Apocalypse of Moses and the Syriac Book of the Cave of Treaures. The twig from the Tree of Life in the Legend of the Wood of the Cross is also a *translatio*.

Another relationship between the queen and the Magi is the black Caspar.[241] As Ethiopian or Arab the queen is sometimes also depicted as 'black'. On the altarpiece of Nicholas of Verdun (before 1181) the queen has a black skin.[242] She has coffers with her, no doubt filled with all sorts of precious things. She is portrayed as a rather dominant figure, pointing at a surprised and almost awe-struck Solomon. She is also shown as black in a fresco in Brixen Cathedral (1220). There she personifies wisdom, together with the other daughters of Jerusalem.[243] In the Milanese section of the *Très belle heures de Notre Dame* (Turin-Milan Hours) is a miniature in which the Queen of Sheba gives Solomon a chalice (after 1415).[244] In the initial above, the scene is linked to the three Magi. The figure pointing to the star is identical to the gift-giving queen. Here, thus, she is identified

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[241] On this black Ethiopian king see: J.B. FRIEDMAN, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, Cambridge-London, 1981, pp. 171–173, and J. DEVISSE, *The Image of the Black Man in Western Art*, 2, New York, 1980. From the mid-13th century the legend of the three Magi was elaborated mainly by the exegete Hugh of Saint-Cher. He gave them the names Balthazar, Melchior and Caspar, and, respectively, the three sons of Noah as ancestor. Ham is the 'unrighteous' ancestor of the 'righteous' Caspar (Pseudo-Jerome, 8th or 9th cent.: *Expositio quatuor evangeliorum*, PL 30, col. 537). Caspar is first referred to as 'black' in a homily on the epiphany of Sedatius Scottus (9th cent.): 'In eo, qoud ad christum primum Aethiopes, id est gentiles ingrediuntur'. Heathenism is thus rooted in this Caspar and his blackness. J.B. FRIEDMAN, op. cit., n. 27, p. 251. See also: A. WILMART, *Une homélie de Sedatius*, in *Revue bénédictine*, 35, 1923, pp. 5–6. In certain traditions Cain is also 'black' (J.B. FRIEDMAN, op. cit., p. 100). There is an area of tension between 'good' and 'bad' black. Thus the black man/woman functions as the 'personification' of the converted or minded to convert peoples.

[242] R. BEYER, op. cit., fig. 34; note the inscription *misericordia* above Solomon and *timor* above the queen. Depicted in the series of enamels above her (typology *sub gratia*) is the Adoration of the Magi. This is probably the earliest example of a black queen. R. BEYER, *ibidem*, explains the inscription 'fear' by the pagans' timidity of the wise king; Pliny, *Historia naturalis*; (H. RACKHAM (ed. and trans.), *Pliny. The Natural History*, Cambridge-London, 1961) attributes to the Ethiopians a fourfold fear: fear of God, the world, nature and carnality. According to the *Gesta Romanorum* (English Franciscan milieu, 1342), which is obviously of a later date than the altar, the Ethiopians are beautiful as cranes and righteous because of their scrupulous fear. Were they to be judges in Europe, there would rarely be bad judgement given; H. OESTERLEY (ed.), *Gesta Romanorum*, repr., Hildesheim, 1963, p. 576 and J.B. FRIEDMAN, op. cit., p. 126.

[243] R. BEYER, op. cit., fig. 29.

[244] IDEM, op. cit., fig. 44. Here, an examination of the influence of the grail context is possible. M. SMEYERS, *Het Turijns-Milanees getijdenboek, een bijdrage tot de van Eyck studie. Met een eerste synthetisch beeld van de kunst en de weeldetechnieken aan het hof der hertogen van Beieren in de Nederlanden*, 2 vols. (unpubl. Doct.), Leuven, 1971, vol. 1, p. 324, hand F, ca. 1440. The same prefiguration also appears in the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*; G. HULIN de LOO, *Les heures de Milan*, op. cit., Pl. XIII.

with one of the three kings. None are depicted as black, however.[245]

The queen also presents Solomon with a chalice in a window of the Church of St Urban in Strasbourg (1270).[246] Here her skin is dark. In the *Jüngeren Bibelfenster* of Cologne Cathedral (1280) a typological setting has been developed between the black Queen of Sheba who, with her retinue, greets the enthroned Solomon, and the three Magi—the black king gives a chalice to Mary and the child.[247] A *Biblia Pauperum* of 1330 groups scenes with Abigail before David and the black queen before Solomon around the Adoration of the Magi.[248] Here, like one of the white Magi, she gives a coffer full of coins.

In literature too the black queen is connected with the three kings.[249] Adam of St Victor (twelfth century) composed several sequences for the Mass of the Three Kings at the Cathedral School of the same name in Paris, They describe the coming of the queen from the East to Solomon, portraying her as graceful and blackened with myrrh and incense but lovely withal.[250] The Latin text puts the rhyme exactly on *formosa* (graceful) and *fumosa* (black), on *sapientia* and *pigmentaria*.[251]

The Queen of Sheba appears in the Legend of the Wood of the Cross from the twelfth century. The motif builds on the biblical meeting with Solomon but to this is added her prophecy of the coming of the Messiah on recognizing the holy wood. She is the first to

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[245] In a Cologne *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Ms. W 105, Cologne, Stadsarchief, 15th cent., four illustrations on two leaves; R. BEYER, op. cit., p. 204), a white Queen of Sheba appears as one of the three Magi. She urges one of the kings to remove his crown (which she does not do herself). Each of them presents a chalice. Above right, knights give pitchers (?) to David (inscription). Below right the Queen of Sheba places a chalice at the foot of Solomon's lion throne. Below left, the Christ Child appears to the three Magi, including the queen. The accompanying text reads: 'The throne of the true Solomon is the highly blessed Virgin Maria, on which Jesus sat, the true wisdom' (translated in: P.F. WATSON, op. cit., p. 119 and J. LUTZ and G. SCHMIDT, *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1907).

[246] R. BEYER, op. cit., fig. 47.

[247] IDEM, op. cit., fig. 33.

[248] IDEM, op. cit., fig. 32.

[249] In the *Bellifortis* of Konrad Kyeser (after 1400, Bohemen), her black face is explained by make-up that could be removed with bellows.

[250] Translated and taken from: H. BUSCHHAUSEN, *Der Verduner Altar. Das Emailwerk des Nikolaus von Verdun im Stift Klosterneuburg*, Vienna, 1980, p. 120.

[251] H. BUSCHHAUSEN, ibid., and R. BEYER, op. cit., pp. 202–203 consider this text to be Nicholas of Verdun's source.

venerate the wood with a foreknowledge of the Crucifixion. These motifs are represented in three scholastic sources: John Beleth's *Rationale divinorum officiorum* (ca. 1170), Petrus Comestor's *Historia scholastica* (before 1178) and Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon* (1180). Beleth tells how Solomon had wood brought from all over the kingdom for the construction of the Temple, but that one particular piece, which came from the Tree of Paradise, miraculously changed its size. Unusable, the wood was thrown aside, and ended up as a bridge over the city's river, the Kedron. On this very spot the queen uttered her prophecy.[252] She would not set foot on the bridge but venerated the wood. Petrus Comestor gives another version. The Queen of Sheba recognizes the unusable wood in the *Domus Saltus*, near Solomon's throne.[253] This is moving in the direction of the image of the enthroned *Sponsa* and *Sponsus*. Godfrey of Viterbo also situates the event in Solomon's palace but he calls the queen 'sibille Nikaula'. Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* gives both the Beleth and Comestor versions.

The reference to the *Domus Saltus* is based on 1 Kings 7, 1–9, which describes the building of the palace, called 'the house of the forest of Lebanon' because it was built entirely of cedar.[254] The throne room also served as a courtroom, and it was here that medieval man pictured the meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. It is not strange that there should be a judicial connotation attached to the Queen of Sheba as witness at the Last Judgement. It is also the particular building, made of wood from Lebanon, that provided the incentive to situate the Wood of the Cross there. The Jews themselves attributed a paradisal Adamic origin to this wood.[255] In Hebrew traditions this palace is often identified with the Temple itself (1 Kings 6).[256]

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[252] 'Hanc cum vidisset regina Saba, noluit transire, sed adoravit. Postea autem rejecta est in probaticam piscina, quae tempore passionis Christi desiccata fuit, ac tum apparuit lignum, cui cum aliud non invenirent Dominum affixerunt' (col. 153).

[253] Comestor expressly associates her name with Ethiopia: cols. 1370: 'Est autem Saba quandoque nomen regionis, sed hic est civitas regalis Ethiopiae'.

[254] In the Middle Ages cedarwood was considered the wood of Paradise *par excellence*. In the vision of Seth it is the essence of the Father. Most relics of the Cross were cedarwood.

[255] H.E. DEL MEDICO, *Zahab Parwayim. L'or fructifère dans la tradition juive*, in *Vetus Testamentum*, 13, 1963, pp. 158–186.

[256] In the iconography too the meeting with the Queen of Sheba is situated in the Temple. See: 1. New Haven, Yale University, Art Gallery, Appolonio di Giovanni, Cassone (bridal chest), ca. 1460 (R. BEYER, op. cit., fig. 52). They reach out their

In the Babylonian Talmud cedarwood is connected with Isaiah 35, 2: 'it [the wilderness and the dry land] shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.'[257] The 'Treatise of Vases' mentions a paradisal species of wood belonging to David, which produced golden fruit.[258] David had given it to his son and, according to Jewish folklore, it was still in Jerusalem through the mediation of Alexander the Great.[259]

In the 'Book of the Cave of Treasures' this 'giving' and 'golden' wood is introduced into the world by Seth, and in the Testament of Adam these precious things are given to Christ by the Magi.[260] In a text by Jan van Schadland, Bishop of Hildesheim (1364–1365), referring to the *translatio* of the relics of the Magi to Cologne (1164) it is no longer said that David had received this wood, but that the Queen of Sheba had given it to the Temple of Solomon, that it was recovered by Alexander the Great, taken to Persia and finally brought from there by the Magi.[261] Perhaps the connection between the Queen of Sheba and one or other 'paradisal wood' in the *Domus Saltus* was inspired by Jewish lore. A Christianization of this Jewish wood is evident. The wood of Christ is the extension of the Jewish paradisal wood myths.

In the Wood of the Cross legend the wood takes the shape of a bridge.[262] The ancient Jewish or Arabic texts refer to the 'glass river' (Targum Scheni, before the eleventh century), a motif that could well give rise to the bridge element. When the Queen of Sheba

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hands to each other in front of an altar (Lorenzo Ghiberti used the same composition in his 'Gates of Paradise' for the Baptistery in Florence ca. 1425–1452; ibid., fig. 53). 2. Marriage tablet with the Queen of Sheba and Solomon before the Temple, Umbrisch, 1475, Boston, Museum Fine Arts (*Ibidem*, fig. 54). The mystic love of the Song of Solomon is obviously the reason for this iconographic theme in a marraige context.

[257] H.E. DEL MEDICO, art. cit., p. 162.

[258] J.T. MILEK, *Notes d'épigraphie et de topographie palestinienne. 'Traitƒ des Vases'*, in *Revue Biblique*, 66, 1959, pp. 567–575.

[259] H.E. DEL MEDICO, art. cit., p. 166 and p. 173.

[260] IDEM, art. cit., p. 185.

[261] U. MONNERET de VILLARD, *Le leggende Orientali sui Magi Evangelici*, Vatican City, 1952, p. 187; H.E. DEL MEDICO, art. cit., p. 186.

[262] H. BÄCHTOLD-STÄUBLI, art. *Brücke*, in *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, vol. 1, Berlin-Leipzig, 1927, cols. 1659–1665; R. HÜNNENKOPF, art. *Fluss*, in *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, vol. 2, Berlin-Leipzig, 1927, cols. 1681–1694; M. LURKER, art. *Brücke*, in *Wörterbuch der Symbolik*, Stuttgart, 1991, p. 114.

visited Solomon, the king had surrounded himself with a crystal palace and a glass-covered canal, intended as a trap. As the queen prepared to walk through the seeming water she exposed her demonic feet. Perhaps this motif became known in the West. From the twelfth century the Christian West was often influenced by the output from Persian workshops; the motif could first have been adopted in a literary circuit and then fitted into the Legend of the Wood of the Cross.[263]

The bridge also has an anthropological meaning. In the Greek-Roman tradition the building of a bridge was regarded as an affront to the river god, and this became a choice place of worship in which to become reconciled with gods and demons.[264] As we have seen, the Queen of Sheba with her demonic past was connected with water, and she also worshipped the bridge.[265] Moreover, in the Middle Ages there was a custom that brides went to meet their grooms in the water under a bridge because (from the idea of *purificatio*) this would be good for the fertility of the couple. As we know, the Queen of Sheba and Solomon are the *Sponsa* and *Sponsus* of the Song of Solomon.

The bridge signifies a transition. The act of crossing a bridge is mythicized in many religions, being likened to the crossing of a border between high and low, between life and death, between old and new. And indeed, at the moment that the queen discerns its destiny does not this wooden bridge form the bridge between the Old and the New Testaments?[266]

In the Middle Ages justice was pronounced at the bridge[267] and it was precisely there that in popular belief visions of other worlds

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[263] A. CHASTEL, art. cit., pp. 105–108. At about the same time the Queen of Sheba appears in southern French portals with a goosefoot. The *reine pédauque* (from the Italian *piede d'oca*) is a contamination of the mythological Bertha 'goosefoot' and the Arabian hoofed queen; B. BAERT, *Und mal yr auch eyn gensfuss. The Queen of Sheba's Goose-Foot in Medieval Literature and Art*, in *The Authority in the Medieval West*, ed. M. GOSMAN et al., Groningen, 1999, pp. 175–192.

[264] H. BÄCHTOLD-STÄUBLI, art. cit., cols. 1659–1660.

[265] In this connection I refer to the inscription discovered in an oracle's cave in Eritrea in 1891, in which the cave was dedicated to a demonic water goddess; A. ROSENBERG, *Sibylle und Prophetin*, Weilheim, 1960, p. 42; R. BEYER, op. cit., p. 232.

[266] In the redaction of the *Alte Passional* the bridge lies on the path to the Temple; F.K. KÖPKE (ed.), *Das Passional. Eine Legendensammlung des dreizehnten Jahrhundert* (*Bibliothek der gesammten deutschen National-Literatur von der ältesten bis auf die neuere Zeit*, 32), Quedlinburg-Leipzig, 1852, p. 208.

[267] H. BÄCHTOLD-STÄUBLI, art. cit., col. 1660.

and prophecies took place.[268] The narrow bridge is central in the judgement of souls, a parallel divine judgement that originated under the influence of theories about Purgatory.[269] Judgement took place as a micro-eschatology at an individual's death in expectation of the final and communal orchestration at the End of Time.[270] In the visions and in the iconography the souls must make their transition over a narrow bridge; those who fall in the pool of hell are lost.[271] Perhaps the motif was adopted from this context by Beleth, given the mediating role the Queen of Sheba plays.

The introduction of the Queen of Sheba in the Legend of the Wood of the Cross is connected with her role as sibyl.[272] The belief in the exceptional visionary qualities possessed by these women of Antiquity continued to be respected up until the late Middle Ages. The sibyl tradition originated in Greek and Roman Antiquity. The twelve women, named for their place of origin (Cumae, Eritryea, Persia, Europe, and so on) were inspired by the gods to bring tidings

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[268] Ibid., cols. 1664–1665.

[269] J. BASCHET, *Jugement de l'âme, jugement dernier. Contradiction, complémentarité, chevauchement?*, in *Revue Mabillon. Nouvelle série*, 6, 1995, pp. 159–203, figs. 12–13.

[270] J. BASCHET, art. cit., p. 162.

[271] The Tribunal of Souls naturally contains no representation of the resurrection of the body. That souls are represented is clear from the skinny little naked bodies. Iconographically the Tribunal of Souls differs from the Last Judgement by the presence of additional motifs: the climbing of the ladder, the fight with the Vices and the narrow bridge. The narrow bridge already appears in the Visions of Tondal (1149), the account of the journeys through hell and heaven of the Irish knight Tondal, written by the monk Andrius of the Abbey of St Paul in Regensburg. The story was very popular into the late Middle Ages and was translated into many European vernaculars. In Margaret of York's manuscript of the Visions of Tondal (ca. 1475) the narrow bridge is illustrated (J.P. Getty Museum, ms. 30, Simon Marmion?, fol. 15v). R.S. WIECK, *The Vision of Tondal and the Visionary Tradition in the Middle Ages*, in *The Vision of Tondal from the Library of Margaret of York*, Malibu, 1990, pp. 3–7.

[272] General literature: C. DE CLERCQ, *Contributions à l'iconographie des Sibylles II*, in *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen*, Antwerpen, 1980, pp. 7–35; W. GREBE, *Sibyllen Weissagung*, Keulen, 1989; J. HAFFEN, *Contribution à l'étude de la Sibylle médiévale*, Paris (1984); S. KRAUSS, art. cit., pp. 120–131; A. KURFESS, *Sibyllinische Weissagungen*, Berlin, 1951, pp. 5–23; I. NESKE, *Die Spätmittelalterliche Deutsche Sibyllenweissagung. Untersuchung und Edition*, Göppingen, 1985; E. SACKUR, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen. Pseudomethodius, Adso und die Tiburtinische Sibylle*, Halle, 1898; E. SCHRÖDER, *Das Mainzer Fragment vom Weltgericht. Ein Ausschnitt aus dem Deutschen Sybillenbuche*, in *Veröffentlichungen der Gutenberg-Gesellschaft*, V, VI, VII, Mainz, 1908, pp. 8–9; H. EISING, *Die Predigt der Sibyllen*, in *Monasterium*, 1966, pp. 275–296; F. HEILER, *Die Frau in den Religionen der Menschheit*, Berlin-New York, 1977, pp. 11–31, p. 61, pp. 102–108.

of misfortune in Greek Antiquity.[273] In the Roman tradition (for instance Marcus Terentius Varro, 116–27 BC), on the other hand, their utterances were generally oriented towards conciliation. In the Jewish-Christian collections of sibylline pronouncements, the *Oracula Sibyllina* (developed between the second century BC and the third to fourth centuries AD), the classical literary form is retained, but their pronouncements are now connected with the Messiah and the Christian eschatology.[274] The Church Fathers drew apologetic arguments from the *Oracula*.[275] Moreover, they canonized their pagan origin by taking Moses as the prototype of this knowledge.[276] The group of sibyls was sometimes less clearly defined. Thus contaminations occurred, and the gift was not infrequently attributed to one woman, Sibilla. The generic appellation became a proper name.

The fusion of the sibyl with the Queen of Sheba occurs at the earliest in the Byzantine world history of Georgias Monachos (842–887) and continued to be limited to Byzantine chronicles until the writings of Georgios Cedrenos and Michael Glykas (both twelfth century).[277] Monachos says that he had read the identification between sibyl and the Ethiopian queen with the Hellenes, but that the fusion was not very critical. Perhaps the author came across it in Epiphanios (seventh century).[278] The fusion could take place on the basis of the purported knowledge and riddles of the Queen of Sheba.[279] The

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[273] The oldest known text is the so-called *Erythraeum*; A. KURFESS, op. cit., p. 16.

[274] W. GREBE, op. cit., p. 23; A. KURFESS, op. cit., p. 21.

[275] W. GREBE, op. cit., p. 23.

[276] A. KURFESS, op. cit., p. 22.

[277] Georgias Monachos, ed. MURALT, Petrepoli, 1859, ch. XLIII; PG 110. It is remarkable that Johannes Malalas (IV, 84; p. 70 of the modern edn.), although basing himself on Monachos, does not adopt the identification with the Queen of Sheba. Nor does the *Chronicon paschale*, 108 (p. 201 in the edn.) that does speak of twelve sibyls, but makes no mention of a Queen of Sheba; S. KRAUSS, art. cit., p. 124. Only in the West did the Queen of Sheba come to monopolize the predictions of the Cross of Christ.

[278] S. KRAUSS, art. cit., p. 124.

[279] Riddles and sibylline prophecies are not the same thing, but neither are they so very far apart. Flavius Josephus (1st cent. AD) when speaking of riddles (VIII, 6, 2, par. 159) mentions a Queen of Sheba named Nikaula, whom Godfrey of Viterbo links to the prophecies concerning the Wood of the Cross. According to Herodotus, Nikaula was a queen of Egypt (Nitocris) and none other than the wife of Nebuchadnezzar (Semiramis?!). Flavius Josephus makes her an Ethiopian-Egyptian ruler. (S. KRAUSS, art. cit., p. 128; and with regard to Nebuchadnezzar: J. HALEVY, art. cit., p. 8). Krauss (*a.c.*, p. 129) develops the hypothesis that Monachos knew not Josephus, but Pseudo-Josephus (from before 400). There the Queen of Sheba from Ethiopia is associated with the name Nikaulis, but with the addition that the

Byzantine geographer and historian Pausanias (d. 470)[280] calls a Babylonian or Egyptian sibyl famed of old by the name 'Sabba' This source, known in Palestine, would undoubtedly have called to mind the kingdom of Sheba and its queen.[281]

Only in the twelfth century does the sibyl-Queen of Sheba appear expressly and with a specific oracle in the context of the Wood of the Cross.[282] Still there were already clues available. In the sixth book of the *Oracula Sibyllina* the Tiburtine sibyl praises the happy wood on which a god will hang who will behold heaven.[283] Already in the early days of the Church the wood (*xulon*) was understood as 'the Cross'. The Queen of Sheba had already acquired her role as sibyl and could thus be smoothly integrated into the Wood of the Cross legend. For that matter, in the twelfth century the relationship between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba had already developed into an adult typology concerning the Temple/Church and the Jewish Jerusalem/Heavenly Jerusalem, a typology that supports the whole Cross legend. Moreover a Sebila (*sic*) was connected with the Wood of the Cross in the Old Slavonic version by the Bogomil founder, Jeremiah (eighth century), and the role of a (anonymous?) sibyl is already contained in the earliest versions of the legend in the Balkans.

The Legend of the Wood of the Cross had an extremely complex literary history. The reconstruction of the various motifs involves the almost impossible task of going through every text, interpolation and gloss. The legend demonstrates the limits of contemporary historical methodology and confronts us with the constant development and mutation of thematic tangles, sometimes passed on along the great intercultural routes between East and West, sometimes via the over-

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Hellenes called her Sibille and that she presented Solomon with some children's riddles.

[280] *Descriptio Graeciae*, X, 12, 9, ed. W. SCHUBART, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1889–1891, p. 828. Recent edn: M.H. ROLMA-PEREIRA, *Graecia descriptio*, Leipzig, 1981.

[281] In Suidas (from 'Suda', a compilation of etymologies dating from ca. 1000) the sibyl is called 'Sambethe' and the author has her descend from Noah. This was another name with biblical echoes: in Gen. 10, 7 and 1 Chron. 1, 9 there is mention of Sabtah, great-grandson of Noah; S. KRAUSS, art. cit., p. 123.

[282] The pilgrim Emoul went to Jerusalem around 1230 and tells of a 'Roine sibile estoit appelée'; A. CHASTEL, art. cit., p. 112.

[283] A. KURFESS, op. cit., p. 148.

grown paths of heresy. This apparent confusion is perhaps the result of a twenty-first-century gaze with its desire for clarity, but the stories of Seth, the Queen of Sheba, Solomon's Temple and the *Piscina Probatica* were an important part of a medieval world that moved between the current encyclopaedic knowledge—as contained in the *Legenda Aurea*, for instance—and the unashamed (according to our norms) urge to interpret and reinterpret in the more spontaneous circuits of genres such as pilgrim literature.

Whatever the case, the Legend of the Wood of the Cross satisfied the hunger for the biological origin of the relic of the Cross, and it would be added to the two legends of the Finding and the Exaltation of the Cross as a form of prologue. The trio was most clearly expressed in late-medieval cyclic iconography, the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

THE MONUMENTAL PROGRAMMES OF THE LEGEND OF THE CROSS IN ITALY, GERMANY AND SWITZERLAND (1388–ca. 1495)

At the end of the fourteenth century, in churches and chapels in western Europe, wall paintings were produced that were devoted to the legends of the Wood of the Cross, the Finding of the Cross and the Exaltation of the Cross. They were created as cycles that brought together the three parts of the Legend of the Cross, and it is this iconographic assembly in monumental painting that is the subject of the present chapter.

Italy. Tradition and Innovation

The earliest illustration of the complete Legend of the Cross was painted by Agnolo Gaddi between 1388 and 1393 on the walls of the chancel in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence.[1] The chancel had been completed in 1294.[2] The cycle on its walls is the latest programme of paintings in the church.[3] It was most probably paid for the Alberti family, whose arms were added at the front of the chancel at the same time as the cycle was painted.[4] The wealthy

[1] The early 12th-century Legend of the Finding of the Cross in the Church of San Severino in Bardolino (Verona) lacks the Wood of the Cross legend; Y. CHRISTE, *Le cycle inédit de l'invention de la Croix à S. Severo de Bardolino*, in *Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres. Comptes rendus des séances de l'année*, Paris, 1978, pp. 76–109.

[2] B. COLE, *Agnolo Gaddi*, Oxford, 1977, p. 79 ff.; D. BLUME, *Wandmalerei als Ordenspropaganda. Bildprogramma im Chorbereich franziskaner Konvente Italiens bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Worms, 1983, pp. 90–91; R. SALVINI, *Agnolo Gaddi*, in *Santa Croce*, ed. C. NARDINI, Florence, 1989, pp. 185–215. See also: M.G. ROSITO, *Santa Croce nel solco della Storia*, Florence, 1996; J.P. POESCHKE, *Wandmalereien der Giottozeit in Italien. 1280–1400*, Munich, 2003, pp. 380–403.

[3] D. BLUME, op. cit., pp. 90–99, for the other paintings in the church.

[4] S. PFLEGER, *Eine Legende und ihre Erzählformen. Studien zur Rezeption der Kreuzlegenden in der italienischen Monumentalmalerei des Tre- und Quattrocento* (*Europäische Hochschulschriften*, 18. *Kunstgeschichte*, 214), Frankfurt-Vienna, 1994, pp. 53–72 on the cycle and pp. 123–129 on those who commissioned them. The will of Alberto di Lapo degli Alberti dated 1348 (during the plague epidemic) is the first certain evidence of

banking family also contributed significantly to the Curia's finances. Alberto Alberti wished to be interred in one of the Franciscan church's chapels. For it was believed that the mendicant orders could offer special intercession at the Last Judgement. A document of 1374 shows that the Alberti family had obtained the exclusive right to be buried in the chancel of Santa Croce.[5] The church was dedicated to the Holy Cross, and the Franciscan monastery had received its relic of the Cross, together with a fragment of the Crown of Thorns, from no less an individual than Louis IX of France,[6] who had also dedicated a monumental programme to the Helena and Heraclius legends in the windows of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris (see Chapter Three).

As the probable pioneer of the combination of the three parts of the Legend of the Cross, Gaddi was confronted with the task of translating his primary source, the *Legenda Aurea*, into a fitting cyclic programme.[7] This he did by using eight registers (four on either wall), in most of which two or more scenes are depicted (diag. 4). The individual scenes are framed by painted borders punctuated with medallions and busts of prophets.

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contacts between the family and the Franciscan house (Florence, Archivio di Stato, Diplomatico S. Croce 1348; S. PFLEGER, op. cit., pp. 125–126).

[5] Florence, Bibliotheca Nazionale, Fondo Nazionale II.IV.378; S. PFLEGER, op. cit., p. 127. It is not certain whether that exclusive right was retained until the end of the 14th century. The cycle was dated by R. SALVINI, *L'arte di Agnolo Gaddi*, Florence, 1936, p. 31, on the basis of this document. B. Cole corrected the dating on stylistic grounds to between 1388 and 1393; B. COLE, op. cit., p. 21. Given that the family arms on the pilasters of the central choir were integrated into the scheme as a whole it seems reasonable to suppose that the family commissioned, or at least patronized the cycle. Furthermore, the stylistic date coincides with a period in which the Alberti family's financial hold on the Holy See was beginning to wane. It could be, therefore, that such an important gift to the Santa Croce was intended to curry favour with the pope. See also: M.A. LAVIN, *The Place of Narrative. Mural Decoration in Italian Churches, 431–1600*, Chicago-London, 1990, pp. 105–114.

[6] S. PFLEGER, op. cit., p. 137, n. 26.

[7] The chancel is flanked on the left by a Mary chapel and on the right by a chapel of St Francis. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is represented on the triumphal arch of the Mary chapel, the Impression of the Stigmata on the chapel of St Francis. On each of the pilasters of the chancel itself are paintings of three cross-bearing saints. Above these, as has already been mentioned, are the arms of the Alberti family. On the south side, Louis of Toulouse and Bonaventure are recognizable; on the north side Antony of Padua and Gherardo of Villamagna. In the spandrels of the chancel arch stand two prophets inviting the viewer in. Inside the arch itself are twelve medallions with busts of prophets bearing banderoles. The busts of the saints of religious orders, martyrs and prophets are repeated in the pointed arches of the stained glass windows. On the three stained glass

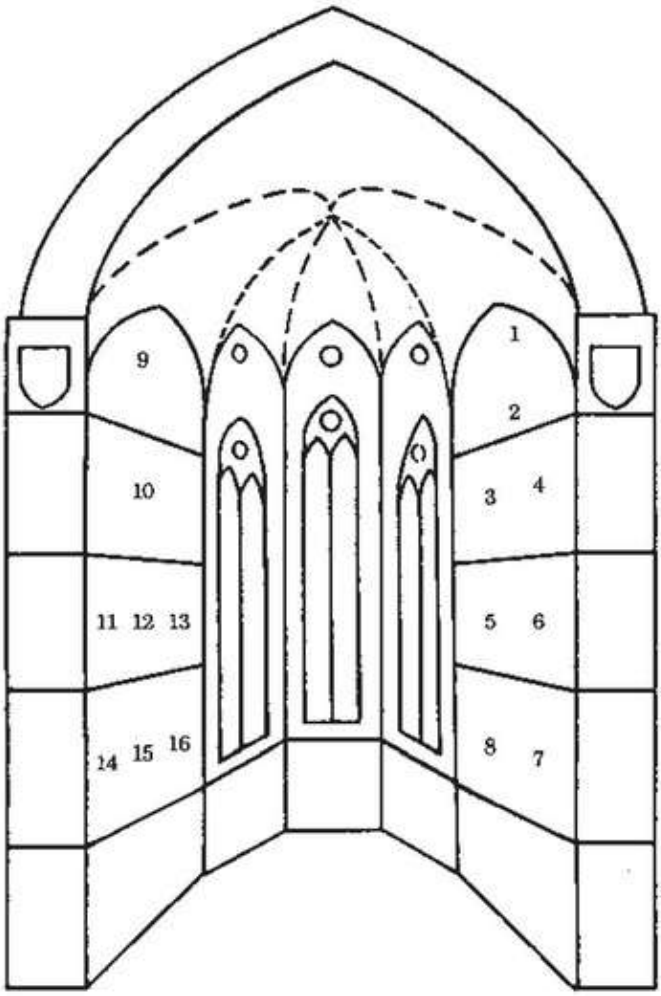


Abb. 32 Florenz, S. Croce, Hauptchorkapelle, Schema der Anordnung der Fresken

1 Seth am Paradies
2 Seth pflanzt den Zweig nach dem Tode Adams
3 Verehrung des Holzes durch die Königin von Saba
4 Vergraben des Holzes
5 Bergen des Holzes
6 Fertigung des Kreuzes
7 Auffindung dreier Kreuze
8 Kreuzprobe
9 Übergabe der Reliquie an Jerusalem
10 Raub der Reliquie durch Chosroe
11 Chosroe läßt sich als Gott verehren
12 Vision des Heraklius
13 Duell des Heraklius mit dem Sohn Chosroes
14 Die Hinrichtung des Chosroe
15 Heraklius vor den Toren Jerusalems
16 Heraklius zieht demütig mit der Reliquie in Jerusalem ein

Diagram 4. Scheme of the programme of frescoes depicting the Legend of the Cross in the Church of Santa Croce (chancel) in Florence (Agnolo Gaddi, 1388–1393). From: S. PFLEGER, *Eine Legende und ihre Erzählformen. Studien zur Rezeption der Kreuzlegenden in der italienischen Monumentalmalerei des Tre- und Quattrocento*, (*Europäische Hochschulschriften. Kunstgeschichte*, 214), Frankfurt-Vienna, 1994, p. 235, fig. 32.

The sequence of scenes begins at the top right with the death of Adam: Seth has received a twig and seemingly planted it on his dead father. The practice of reading the scenes in this direction can be traced back to examples of early Christian art, such as the original programmes in St Peter's in Rome.[8] Adam lies in the foreground, in a shallowly dug trench (fig. 78a). Seth holds a small tree more or less above his father's navel. The navel recalls the motif of the Tree of Jesse, though there are also examples of genealogical trees sprouting from Adam's navel.[9] Seth's gesture also alludes to the navel of the world. To late-medieval Christians this was Golgotha, where Seth's tree would eventually take on the shape of the Cross.[10] Groups of men and women watch from the sides. Above, Seth meets the angel. Kneeling and haloed, Adam's son appears like a colossal hero, in rather inharmonious proportion to events in the foreground.

The scene is set in a contemporary landscape, with a town and a bridge in the distance on the right. The angel is not standing at the gate of Paradise but descends from heaven to alight on a mountaintop.[11] What is taking place here seems rather to be a divine

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windows are images of saints. The middle window is crowned with a Crucifixion, the left with Francis of Arles, the right with Elijah in his chariot of fire. Above the windows were painted pointed arches. On either side of the arches two grisaille angels kneel facing one another. On the arches there are likewise medallions painted in grisaille containing, from left to right, *Fides*, *Spes* and *Caritas*. In the six vaults are the standing figures of the four evangelists, Francis and John the Baptist; see also the description in: S. PFLEGER, op. cit., pp. 53–54.

[8] M.A. LAVIN, *Piero della Francesca's Iconographic Innovations at Arezzo*, in *Iconography at the Crossroads. Papers from the Colloquium Sponsored by the Index of Christian Art. Princeton University 23–24 March 1990*, ed. B. CASSIDY, Princeton, 1993, pp. 139–155.

[9] R. SCHILLING, *The Master of Egerton 1070 (Hours of René d'Anjou)*, in *Scriptorium*, 8, 1954, pl. 31 C, shows a genealogical tree growing from Adam's navel. Figures stand beside the tree: on the left a group of three men, on the right a group of four. They relate to the genealogical list in Lk. 3, 38, which is reproduced below the miniature. Seth is among the names; ca. 1410, Paris, Chambre des Députés, ms. 3, fol. 213.

[10] Naturally this is a symbolic congruence. According to tradition, and also according to the Legend of the Holy Wood, Adam was buried on Hebron. But the receding Flood deposited Adam's head on Golgotha. On the cosmic navel in Christian imagery, see: F. NIEHOFF, *Umbilicus mundi. Der Nabel der Welt. Jeruzalem und das heilige Grab im Spiegel von Pilgerberichten und -Karten, Kreuzzügen und Reliquiaren*, in *Ornamenta Ecclesiae. Kunst und Künstler der Romanik*, 3 (exh. cat.), Cologne, 1985, pp. 53–72; S.J. RENO, *The Sacred Tree as an Early Christian Literary Symbol. A Phenomenological Study* (*Forschungen zur Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte*, 4), Saarbrücken, 1974.

[11] In a 13th-century legend, based on the *Legenda Aurea*, it is specified that Seth finds Paradise on a mountain. The image of Paradise on a mountain is also Dantesque; After S. PFLEGER, op. cit., p. 56: G. BATELLI, *Le più belle leggende cristiane*, Milan, 1925, pp. 91–101.

manifestation or a vision than—as the legend suggests—a real meeting at the entrance to the Garden of Eden. We cannot be sure whether Seth's vision as described in the *Legenda* tradition (see Chapter Five) has influenced the iconography. This iconographic interpretation fits the double meaning of the Garden of Eden, either as a place that can be located somewhere on earth, or a lost region, whereby Paradise is perceived in a metaphorical sense.[12] Above the 'earthly' city in the background soars a second city with a lofty gate: is this the heavenly Jerusalem?

This is not all, however. It has yet to be noted that Seth receives not a twig, but a scroll of text from the angel. In other words, the angel gives him a message: knowledge, which is planted and grows in the foreground. Like the descending angel, the motif is unique in Seth iconography. Both anomalies indicate that the *Legenda Aurea* was not the only source to which Gaddi had recourse. The banderole alludes to 'Sethian' knowledge, which indeed was imparted by angels and written down by Seth. As we have seen, this unique initiation is characteristic of Gnosticism. In the *Vita Adae et Evae* the *translatio* of divine knowledge to Seth was mediated by Adam and furthered by Eve, who passed it on to her son as she lay dying. Seth then inscribed all that he had learned on two pillars, one that was proof against fire, the other impervious to water. In the late thirteenth century the Latin apocrypha were translated into German by the Bohemian poet Lutwin.[13] Thus the theme of Seth's knowledge came to be diffused in the high Middle Ages.[14]

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[12] See further: R.R. GRIMM, *Paradisus Coelestis. Paradisus Terrestris* (*Medium Aevum*, 33), Munich, 1977.

[13] Transmitted only in a mid-15th century illustrated manuscript now in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna, Codex Vindob. 28980; M.B. HALFORD, *Illustration and Text in Lutwin's Eva und Adam. Codex Vindob. 2980*, Stuttgart, 1980; IDEM, *Lutwin's Eva und Adam. Study. Text. Translation*, Göppingen, 1984.

[14] In the *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, mid-13th cent., Brussels, Royal Library, ms. 467, fol. 1v, the pillars of Adam and Seth are illustrated as *Autorenbild*; C. GASPAR and F. LYNA, *Les principaux manuscrits à peintures de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique*, 1, Brussels, 1984, p. 108, no. 41. Also a 13th-cent. copy in Wolfenbüttel, Herzochliche Augustiner Bibliothek, Ms. Aug. 74, 3, fol. 3v; see: O. von HEINEMANN, *Die Augusteischen Handschriften*, 3 (*Kataloge der Herzog-August-Bibliothek Wolfenbhttel*, bd. 6), Frankfurt, 1966, p. 380, n. 2710. Illustrations in: P. BLOCH, *Eine Dialogdarstellung des frühen 12e Jahrhunderts*, in *Festschrift Dr. H.C. Eduard Trautscholdt*, Hamburg, 1965, pp. 54–62, pl. 14; *Grosse Kunst aus tausend Jahren. Kirschenschätze aus dem Bistum Aachen* (exh. cat.), (*Aachener Kunstblätter*, 36, ed. P. LUDWIG), Düsseldorf, 1968, no. 93, fig. XIV; J.M. PLOTZEK, art. *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, in *Rhein und Maas. Kunst und Kultur 800–1400* (exh. cat.), Cologne, 1972, p. 342, no. L18, fig. L18. Critical edn.: G. WAITZ, *Chronica Regia Coloniensis* (*Monumentis Germaniae Historicis Recusa*), Hanover, 1880.

Have we come upon a trace of an iconographic reminder of Gnostic and Manichaean writings which, in a transformed state, permeated the fourteenth-century Franciscan milieu? Does the early iconographic evidence of Seth still form the anamnesis of the Gnostic Seth? And does the motif then perhaps even advert to lost iconographic sources that were influenced by this milieu?

In the next scene the Queen of Sheba venerates the wood of the bridge (fig. 78b). The queen is crowned and kneels on the left bank of the Kedron, a group of men and women clustered behind her. On the opposite bank men dig a hole in which to hide the wood, as the tradition says, fearing the queen's prophecy that the wood portends the downfall of the Jewish kingdom. Here again are many onlookers. The grey-bearded man watching from the river's edge could be Solomon (he is also crowned), but it is the queen who holds centre stage. In the background is the gate to a city; a dome perhaps recalls the Temple of Jerusalem, though it may also be an anachronistic allusion to Constantine's Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

In the third scene the wood has floated up to the surface of the *Piscina Probatica* to be seized and fashioned into a cross (fig. 78c). On the left in the foreground men haul on ropes to drag a baulk of wood out of the small pool. A hoary figure—this can no longer be Solomon, given the course of the legend—points to the wood. This is probably Caiaphas, and therefore he is 'negatively' portrayed with horns. In the background an open building filled with sickbeds provides a reference to the healing power of the *Piscina Probatica* in a contemporary setting.[15] Niccolò da Poggibonsi, a Franciscan friar who had written of his (alleged) experiences in the Holy Land between 1346 and 1350, mentions that the *Piscina Probatica* lay no more than a stone's throw from Caiaphas's house.[16] On the right, in front of a church, carpenters trim and hammer a cross into shape. The *suppedaneum*, cross beam and *titulus* are already in place. Jacobus de Voragine describes the making of the Cross in the *Legenda Aurea*. He tells us that it was made of four kinds of wood: palm, cedar, cypress and olive, hence the verse: *Ligna crucis palma, cedrus, cypressus, oliva.*[17]

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[15] It is also possible that the horned figure alludes to Moses. Honorius of Autun had linked the *Piscina Probatica* to the book of Exodus (see Chapter Five).

[16] Edn.: B. BAGATTI, *Fra Niccolò da Poggibonsi. Libro d'oltramare (1346–1350)*, (*Pubblicazioni dello Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*, 2, 1), Jerusalem, 1945, p. 44.

[17] W.G. RYAN (ed. and trans.), *Jacobus de Voragine. The Golden Legend. Reading on the Saints*, 2 vols., New York, 5th edn, 1995, 1, p. 278.



Fig. 78a. *Seth receives a scroll from the Archangel Michael, and plants a twig on Adam's body.* Fresco, Agnolo Gaddi, 1388–1392. Florence, Church of Santa Croce, chancel.



Fig. 78b. *The Queen of Sheba venerates the wood over the Kedron; the wood is buried.* Fresco, Agnolo Gaddi, 1388–1392. Florence, Church of Santa Croce, chancel.

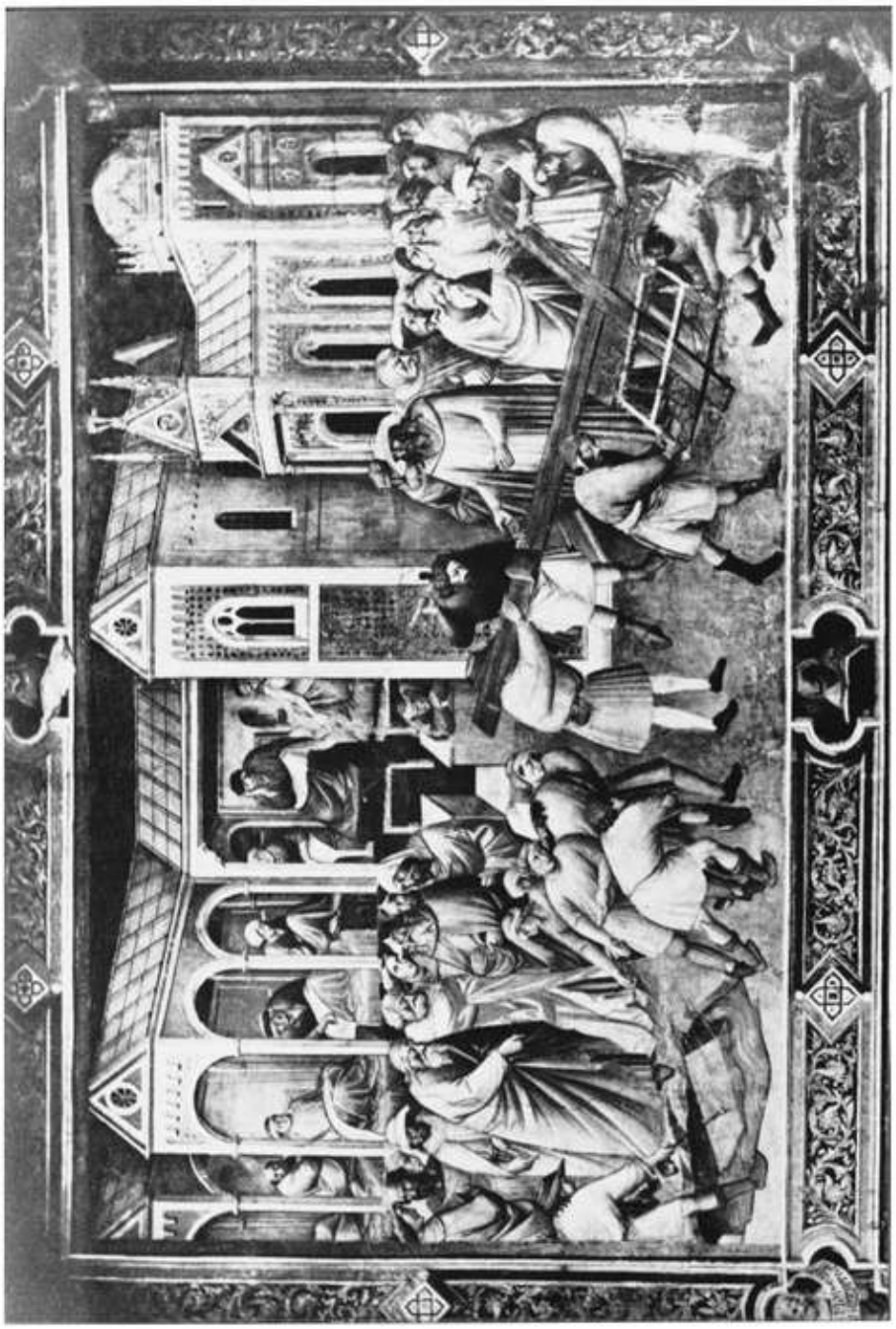


Fig. 78c. *The Piscina Probatica and the making of the Cross.* Fresco, Agnolo Gaddi, 1388–1392. Florence, Church of Santa Croce, chancel.

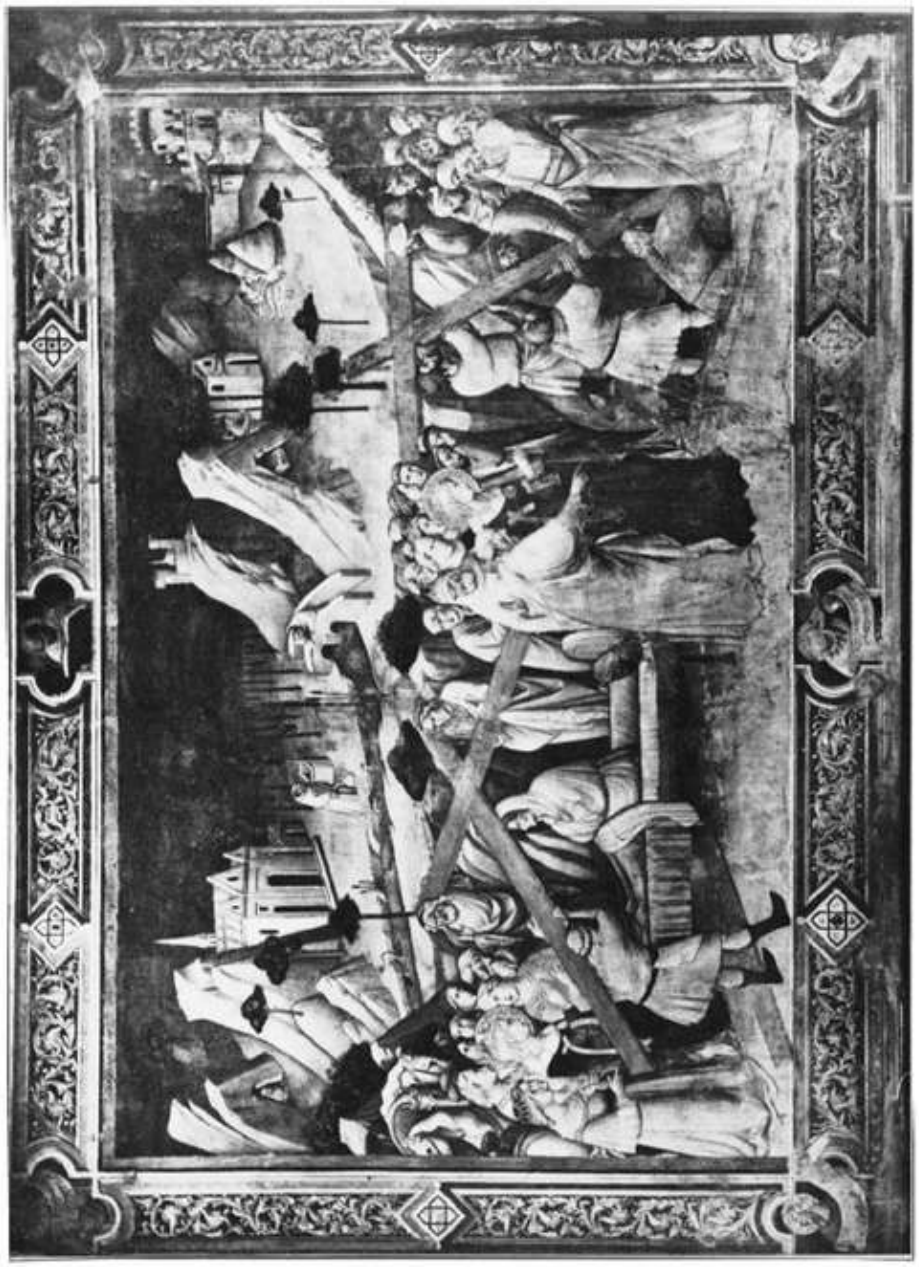


Fig. 78d. *Finding of the Cross and Testing of the Cross.* Fresco, Agnolo Gaddi, 1388–1392. Florence, Church of Santa Croce, chancel.

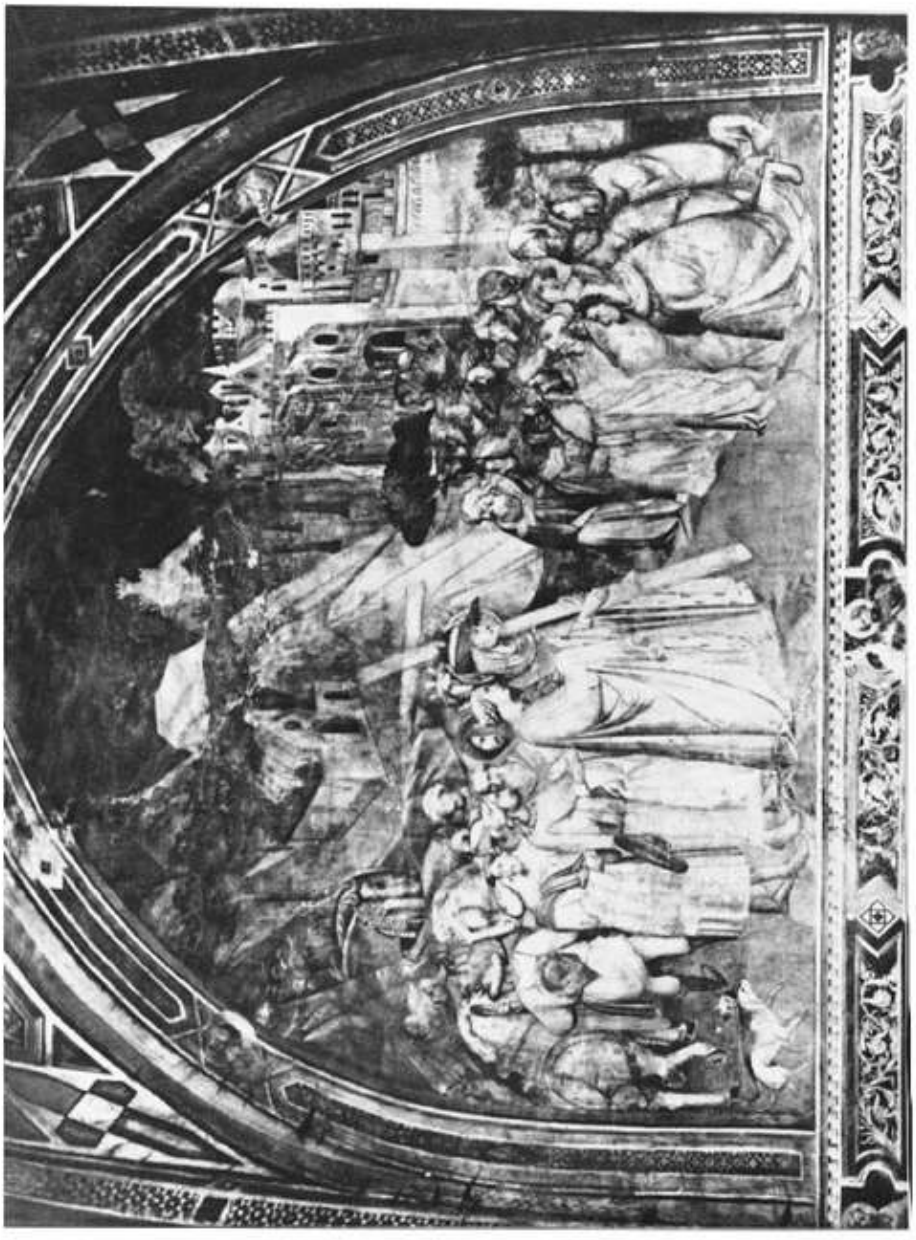


Fig. 78e. *Helena presents the Cross to Jerusalem.* Fresco, Agnolo Gaddi, 1388–1392. Florence, Church of Santa Croce, chancel.

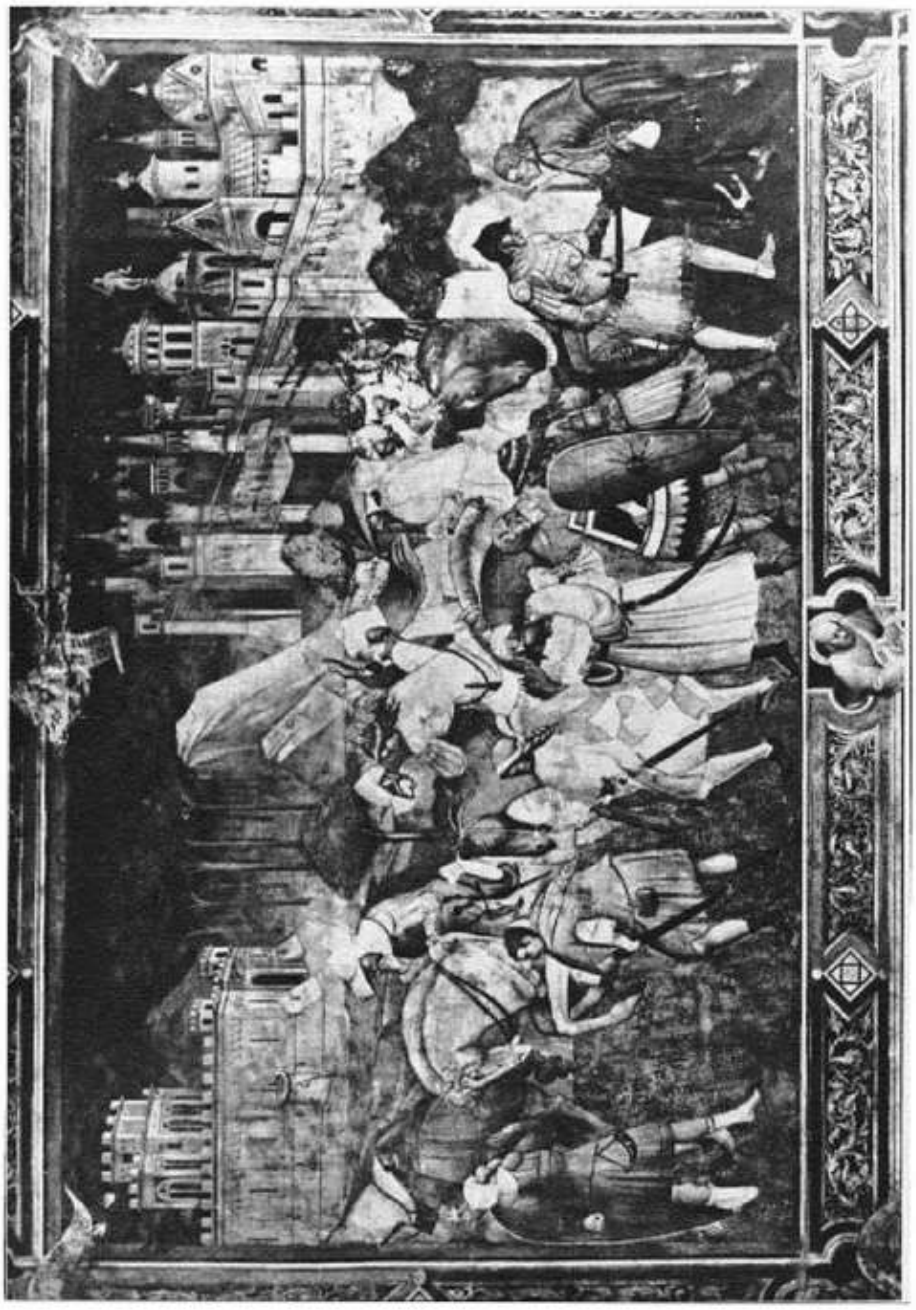


Fig. 78f. *Chosroes pillages Jerusalem.* Fresco, Agnolo Gaddi, 1388–1392. Florence, Church of Santa Croce, chancel.



Fig. 78g. *Chosroes commands that he be worshipped as God; Heraclius receives a vision from an angel; Heraclius and Chosroes' son in single combat on the bridge over the Danube.* Fresco, Agnolo Gaddi, 1388–1392. Florence, Church of Santa Croce, chancel.

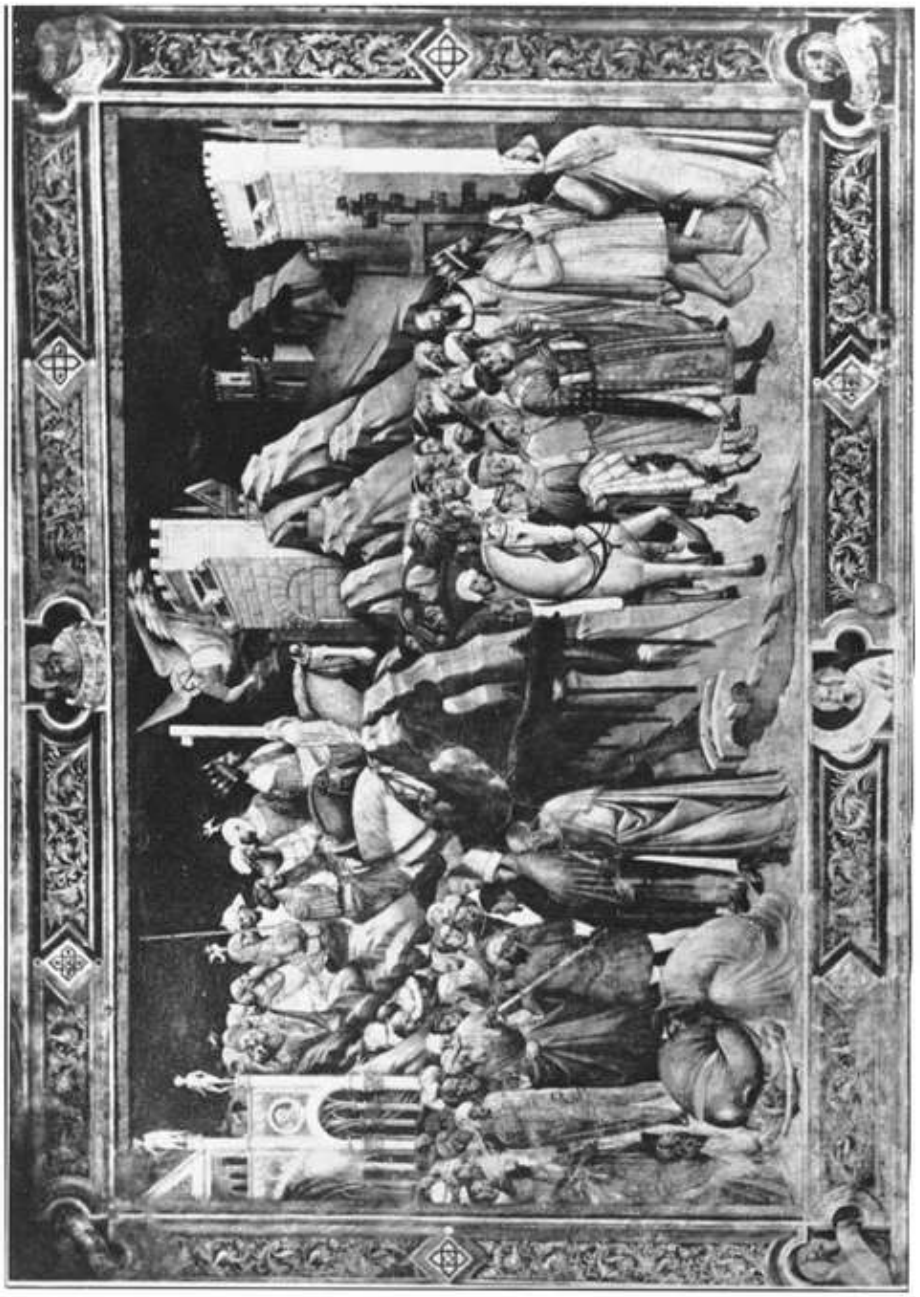


Fig. 78h. *Decapitation of Chosroes; Heraclius restores the Cross to Jerusalem; an angel commands him to return in humility.* Fresco, Agnolo Gaddi, 1388–1392. Florence, Church of Santa Croce, chancel.

He adds that the 'eminent doctor' (probably Augustine) explains the four parts of the Cross—its breadth, length, height and depth—as follows: the breadth of the Cross is the crossbeam upon which Christ's hands were extended; the length means the shaft from the ground to the crossbeam, where Christ's whole body hung; the height means from the crossbeam to the top, where Christ's head touched; the depth is the part hidden by the earth in which the Cross stood. The Cross describes all human and Christian action: to do good works in Christ and to cling to Him perseveringly, to hope for heaven, and to avoid profaning the sacraments. In Gaddi's cycle it can be seen that the Cross is indeed made up of four parts.

Niccolò da Poggibonsi mentions that the twig Seth brought from paradise grew on Adam's grave in Hebron, and that this tree formed the length of the Cross, though he does not say what sort of wood it was.[18] The crossbeam, he adds, is made of cypress wood, which grew in the monastery of the Holy Cross just outside Jerusalem. A third type of wood came from the cedar forests of Lebanon and from this was made the *suppedaneum*—the block the feet rest on. A fourth was the wood of the olive tree—he does not tell us where it came from—and was used for the *titulus*.

Sir John Mandeville (before 1322) also mentions the four kinds of wood of the Cross—palm, cypress, cedar, olive—in his account of his travels in the Holy Land (ca. 1410–1420). Probably, therefore, the first wood mentioned by Niccolò da Poggibonsi is the palm. The making of the Cross is illustrated in a manuscript containing this account, now in London. Four workmen each fit a piece of the aforementioned woods to make the Cross: one man supports the crossbeam while a second adds the *titulus*; a third man steadies the shaft while a fourth wrestles with the heavy footpiece (fig. 79).[19] The men exhibit the ethnographic characteristics of their lands of origin: the man fitting the foot of the Cross wears the typical turban of Arabian Lebanon, for instance. The making of the Cross from four different species of wood is a naturalistic offshoot of the old symbolic interpretations of the Cross and the Tree of Virtues,

[18] B. BAGATTI, op. cit., p. 66.

[19] British Library, Ms. 24189, fol. 11v; J. KRASA and P. KUSSI, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville. A Manuscript in the British Library*, London-New York, 1983, pl. 8; A. LEGNER, *Reliquien in Kunst und Kult. Zwischen Antike und Aufklärung*, Darmstadt, 1995, p. 76 and fig. 20.



Fig. 79. *The making of the Cross.* Travels of Sir John Mandeville, 1410–1420. London, British Library, Ms. 24189, fol. 11v.

such as depicted in Lambert of Saint-Omer's *Liber floridus* (ca. 1120). The cedar of Lebanon alludes to humility; the cypress of Zion to piety. The olive tree is connected with mercy and the palm with knowledge and wisdom.[20]

In the fourth register the Cross is found (right) and tested (left). Exceptionally, therefore, these scenes are read from right to left (fig. 78d).[21] On the right, three men raise a monumental cross out of pit as Helena looks on,[22] while on the left the crosses are tested on a man, who sits up on his litter. A discarded cross lies underneath. Helena kneels at the revived man's feet. Note the church in the background, which with its three-pedimented facade looks very much like Santa Croce itself. In front of the church are a river and a well: a monk leans on a bridge, gazing down at the water; another has drawn water from the well. The hermits' everyday activities and austere lifestyle are thus connected with the events of the Finding of the Cross itself (and the feast of 3 May). Above left a lion lies in a cave. The lion recalls Jerome, who is not depicted: perhaps it provides a metaphor for the scholarly hermit.[23]

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[20] A. DEROLEZ (ed.), *Lamberti S. Audomari Canonici. Liber Floridus. Codex autographus Bibliothecae Universitatis Gandavensis*, Ghent, 1968, pp. 282–283, fol. 139v–140: 'arbor significantes beatitudinum ordines'; IDEM, *Lambertus qui librum fecit. Een codicologische studie van de Liber Floridus-autograaf (Gent, Universitaire bibliotheek, ms. 92)*, Brussels, 1978, p. 230.

[21] In the lower left corner a crowned prophet is depicted (Solomon?). The banderole reads: 'Lignum vitae est hic qui apprenderit eam et tenuerit eam beatus' (Prov. 3, 18).

[22] In a Franciscan book of hours and missal from 1380, produced in Italy (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 757, fol. 348 [of the missal]), the Finding of the Cross is illustrated according to an analogous iconographical principle. Two bearded old men are in a deep pit, lifting out a cross. Helena stands in frontal view behind the pit; she is already holding one cross upright. Noblemen and women observe the event with Helena. To the left of the pit stand the clergy. The three estates are clearly represented in this miniature. See my analysis of the iconography of the Finding of the Cross in the light of the iconography of the estates: *Aspects of the Invention of the Cross. Iconography Around 1400 and its Relationship with the Genre of the Classes and the Adamite Peasant*, in *Flanders in a European Perspective. Manuscript Illumination Around 1400 in Flanders and Abroad. Proceedings of the Colloquium*, Leuven, 8–10 September 1993, ed. M. SMEYERS and B. CARDON, Leuven, 1995, pp. 309–325. Another workman stands at the front, holding a spade and a pick crossed. The traditions of the spade and the pick are thus fused. The 'crossing' of both tools alludes typologically to the Cross itself. Such symbolism also occurs in the iconography of the raising of Lazarus; H. GURATZSCH, *Die Auferweckung der Lazarus in der Niederländischen Kunst vor 1400 bis 1700. Ikonographie und Ikonologie*, 2 vols., Kortrijk, 1980, 1, p. 118, figs. 81, 82, 96. These are 16th-century examples, however.

[23] In the missal of the Augustine hermits the Cross is found in a river; 1362, Toulouse, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 91, fol. 187v.

This type of iconography, representing scenes from the lives of hermits, belongs to the so-called Theban genre. In Tuscany, from the end of the fourteenth century and under the influence of the mendicant orders, the exemplary function of the fourth-century anchorites from the area of Thebes in Egypt was acknowledged.[24] The image of meditation and mortification in an ascetic and eremitic lifestyle was meant to return the faithful to the fountainhead in the *ecclesia primitiva*. This reform movement was begun by the Franciscans, who sought to achieve an *imitatio* of the sufferings of Christ, but it also underwent broader shifts in outlook and took on official shapes at the councils of Pisa (1409), Constance (1414–1418), Basel (1431) and Ferrara-Florence (1439).[25] Between 1330 and 1345 Buffalmacco combined a Theban scene with the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead in the Camposanto in Pisa.[26] Often Jerome would be included in a desolate Mediterranean landscape and the element of water usually played a symbolic role as the Water of Life. Responding to Jerome's visions, Petrarch, in his 'On His Own Ignorance' refers to the water that has its source in heaven, but overflows in eternal life; the drinker of it will never thirst again.[27] Thus the background against which Gaddi's Finding of the Cross is set is also the background of the reform movement that was sweeping Tuscany at that time, encouraged by mendicant orders and their preachers.

Continuing the sequence of scenes at the top of the opposite wall, in the fifth register Helena brings the Cross from the spot where she and Judas have found it and presents it to Jerusalem (fig. 78e). This could also be Constantinople—the *Legenda Aurea* says the Cross was divided between Constantinople and Jerusalem—but the fact that it is still in one piece argues against this. A group of kneeling dignitaries awaits Helena at the city gate. The ceremonial conveying

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[24] See: K.S. FRANK, *Mönche im frühchristlichen Thebaïsche Ägypten*, Düsseldorf, 1967.

[25] Chr. WIEBEL, *Askese und Endlichkeitsdemut in der italienischen Renaissance. Ikonologische Studien zum Bild des heiligen Hieronymus*, Marburg, 1985, p. 46 and pp. 48–49.

[26] Chr. WIEBEL, op. cit., fig. 5, and other examples. Around this period, Domenica Cavalca of Pisa translated the Lives of the first Church Fathers and hermits into Italian; B. SORIO and A. RACHELI, *Domenico Cavalca. Vite dei santi padri*, Trieste, 1858.

[27] Chr. WIEBEL, op. cit., p. 67 and p. 102; A. BUFANO, *Francesco Petrarca. Opera latine* (*Classici italiani*, 3, 4), Turin, 1975, 2, p. 1108; T. HEYDENREICH, *Petrarca's Bekenntnis zur Ignoranz*, in *Petrarca 1304–1374. Beiträge zu Werk und Wirkung*, ed. F. SCHALK, Frankfurt, 1975, pp. 71–92.

of the Cross into Jerusalem is rarely depicted. In the Sainte-Chapelle Helena is shown bringing the Cross to Constantinople in a reliquary. As has been said, the Sainte-Chapelle relic is the parent of Santa Croce's. In the Brunswick wall paintings (1250–1260) Helena has the Cross divided and sees one half placed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The scene in Florence is inspired rather by contemporary practice than the narrative of the legend itself. In Florence on Palm Sunday a Cross procession was held: two groups set out—clerics with the relic, the bishop with his retinue—along two different routes to meet in the atrium of the church. While the bishop's group knelt and *responsoria* were sung, the group attending the Cross stepped slowly forward to hand over the relic to the bishop.[28] This kind of double procession was already being held in the twelfth-century Jerusalem of the crusaders. On Palm Sunday and the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross the *Porta Aurea* was opened for the procession to pass through (see Chapter Three). In Jerusalem the coming together of the processions was connected with a topographic symbolism that linked the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Temple Mount. Antonio Gaddi has depicted the last ceremonial stage, namely the moment when both processions meet, to which has been added Helena, who relinquishes the Cross to the dignitaries of the Church. Usually, Palm Sunday and the procession were associated with Heraclius. Helena's headdress, which comes to a point at the front, is the kind worn by the emperors and empresses of the Paleologus dynasty. Helena is thus depicted as a contemporary Byzantine empress.

In the sixth register Chosroes, the Persian ruler has pillaged Jerusalem. Reputedly he carried off the Cross as part of the plunder (fig. 78f).[29] This is a turbulent scene, with a mass of riders flying from the city. In the three-part scene below, Chosroes commands that he be worshipped as God (fig. 78g); Heraclius receives a vision

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[28] R. DAVIDSOHN, *Geschichte von Florenz*, 8 vols., s.l., 1896, 1, p. 715.

[29] Chosroes' theft of the Cross is also depicted in the Sainte-Chapelle (1241–1246), on the Nedstryn altar frontal, 1310 (Bergen, Historisch Museum); H. von ACHEN, *Norwegian Medieval Altar Frontals in Bergen Museum*, Bergen, 1996, pp. 68–71; B. BAERT, *Das Antependium von Nedstryn (Norwegen, 1310) und die Kreuzerhöhungslegende*, in *Das Münster. Zeitschrift für Christlicke Kunst en Kunstwissenschaft*, 54,1, 2001, pp. 46–57; and in woodcut 50 of the *Boec van den Houte* (Johan Veldener, Culemborg, 1483); B. BAERT, *Het 'Boec van den Houte'* (*Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België. Klasse der Schone Kunsten*, 62), Brussels, 1995, fig. 50.

in which an angel charges him with regaining the Cross; and he battles with Chosroes' son on the bridge over the Danube. The *Legenda Aurea* makes no mention of Heraclius's vision, but it is referred to in the *Kaiser chronik* (1146),[30] the *Eracle* of Gautier d'Arras (1175–1200)[31] and Otte of Hessen's *Eraclius* (ca. 1200),[32] in which a messenger from God bids Heraclius to fight. The vision is a *topos* from the crusader genre.[33] Heraclius's vision is analogous with Constantine's; indeed, in the *Eracle* he is literally compared with the first Christian emperor. Thus, Heraclius emerges as the new Constantine.[34] An angel points to a wooden cross that appears above the tents of the camp. Heraclius leans on his right elbow and gazes at the vision. The encounter between Heraclius and the younger Chosroes is squeezed into the right of the scene. Gaddi shows the climax of the contest, as Heraclius delivers the fatal thrust. On the left is the cosmic tower, which is depicted as a contemporary basilica with a nave and two aisles and a facade decorated with classical medallions, though the building is without exterior walls. Men kneel before Chosroes the king, who is crowned and holds a sceptre. Beside him, on his left, is a cock; on his right, almost unrecognizable, is a small cross draped with a relic cloth.

Finally, Heraclius decapitates the elder Chosroes and restores the Cross to Jerusalem, first in triumph, and then in humility (fig. 78h). A tiny bridge in the foreground recalls the single combat at the Danube. Here too a realistic setting of the scene has been sacrificed to the compositional fusion of several episodes, which makes for some difficulty in reading the picture. At bottom left Chosroes is decapitated in front of his palace. His kneeling figure bends towards the viewer as Heraclius severs his head. Above, Heraclius rides towards a city gate, which is bricked up against him. An angel points to the

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[30] E. NELLMANN, *Die Reichsidee in deutschen Dichtungen der Salier- und frühen Stauferzeit. Annolied. Kaiserchronik. Rolandslied. Eraclius* (*Philologische Studien und Quellen*, 16), Berlin, 1963, pp. 24–25.

[31] G. RAYNAUD de LAG, *Gautier d'Arras. Eracle*, Paris, 1976, pp. 164–166, vv. 5323–5378.

[32] F. MAERTENS, *Untersuchungen zu Otte's Eraclius* (Doct.), Göttingen, 1927; D. HAACKE, *Weltfeindliche Strömungen und die Heidenfrage in der Deutsche Literatur von 1170–1230* (Doct.), Berlin, 1951.

[33] E. LÖSETH, *Oeuvres de Gautier d'Arras*, 1, *Eracle*, Paris, 1890, pp. 115–116; C. ERDMANN, *Endkaiserglaube und Kreuzzugsgedanke im 11. Jahrhundert*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 51, 1932, pp. 384–414.

[34] On the identification of Heraclius as the second Constantine; see: A. FROLOW, *La déviation de la 4e Croisade vers Constantinople. Note additionnelle. La Croisade et les guerres persanes d'Héraclius*, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 74, 1955, pp. 50–61.

closed gate. Heraclius carries the Cross upright; it has lost part of its crossbeam. Below right, the emperor once more approaches the gate—still crowned, but barefoot and in a white shirt—and the stones that miraculously closed up the gate now crumble away. Heraclius still bears the Cross with its partial crossbeam upright, protecting it with a cloth as is customary for carrying relics (*velatibus manibus*). The cloth also alludes to the veiling and revealing of the Cross during the *adoratio crucis* on Good Friday. We have already seen that the customs and iconography connected with the feasts of the Exaltation of the Cross and Good Friday were interchangeable. In both triumphal and humble entries Heraclius is followed by a great crowd; some individuals are in eastern garb. As the emperor makes his humble entry the faithful bow to him in homage.

In this connection there is a wall painting that has received little notice. On the south wall of the Church of San Francesco in Pistoia is an episode from the Legend of the Cross (Heraclius carrying the Cross). Below is a Deposition (fig. 80).[35] Both frescos can be dated to around 1330 and are attributed to a follower of Maso di Banco.[36] It is by no means impossible that the Heraclius scene belonged to a Cross legend cycle (with or without the Wood of the Cross episodes). Di Banco's depiction of Heraclius's entry is conceived differently to Gaddi's. In Santa Croce Heraclius holds the Cross upright and half the crossbeam is missing; in Pistoia he carries the Cross slantwise over his shoulder. The former recalls the ceremonial Cross relic processions, the latter the penitential processions in which crosses were carried thus by the penitents. The Cross with but half a crossbeam became a much imitated motif. It alludes to the actual seventh-century situation, when Constantinople kept part of the Cross. In fact, this depiction of the Cross is at odds with reality: the relic was most probably kept in a reliquary. In medieval thought the relic is one with the True Cross. This *pars pro toto* principle was also adopted iconographically.

The Santa Croce cycle is of manifold importance. On an iconographic level it provides a representative and balanced presentation of the Legend of the Cross. Gaddi excludes the temple-building activities of Solomon and Constantine (in the Florentine church the life

[35] Also not noted by: D. BLUME, op. cit., pp. 49–53, on Pistoia.

[36] A. CONTI, *Maso, Roberto Longhi e la tradizione offneriana*, in *Prospettiva*, 73–74, 1994, pp. 32–45.

of Constantine was illustrated in the chapel dedicated to St Sylvester) as well as Helena's questioning of the Jews and the resulting singling-out and punishing of Judas. As regards Seth, this is both the earliest known visual translation in the context of the Wood of the Cross and, given the replacement of the twig by the scroll in the top register, the most exceptional.[37] Heraclius's vision is new, iconographically, but was taken from a tradition that derives from Gautier d'Arras. Other elements also indicate that Gaddi was familiar not only with the *Legenda Aurea* but also drew inspiration from motifs that appeared in pilgrims' tales (such as the writings of Niccolò da Poggibonsi). In the Church of Santa Croce the Legend of the Cross also acquires a votive value, given that the Alberti family was buried in close proximity to its depiction.[38]

Gaddi's iconographic programme was also noted beyond Italy. On an altarpiece by Miguel Alcañiz, made between 1405 and 1407 and coming from the chapel of Nicolàs Pujades in the Church of Santo Domingo in Valencia (now in the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes de San Carlos in that city), six scenes from the Legend of the Cross flank a central Crucifixion.[39] On the left Seth receives the twig and

[37] The figure of Seth in the mural cycle at Östofte is dated to around 1380, but occurs in relation to Genesis. Here Seth certainly does receive a twig from the angel, which he plants on his father's sickbed; see: B. BAERT, *The Figure of Seth in the Vault-Paintings in the Parish Church of Östofte. In Search for the Iconographical Tradition*, in *Konsthistorisk tidskrift*, 66, 2, 1997, pp. 97–111. In Lanciano (Abruzzo) a 14th-century Legend of the Cross was discovered in the Church of San Nicola. The cycle has not yet been identified and dated with precision. Further study is needed to determine whether it nuances the position of the Santa Croce cycle. See: B. BAERT, *The Wall Paintings in the Campanile of the Church of St. Nicola in Lanciano (ca. 1330–1400). Reading an Unknown Legend of the Cross in the Abruzzi, Italy*, in *Iconographica*, 2, 1, 2003, pp. 108–125.

[38] The Finding of the Cross is also relevant to an *ex voto* in the memorial chapel of Conrad Hirn (d. 1425) and his wife Afra. This wealthy burgher family from Augsburg founded various hospitals in their city, and determined by charter that after their deaths there should be an annual dole of alms to the poorest of the city. By this means the couple, who had remained childless, sought to secure prayers for the peace of their souls. On 26 September 1420 Conrad and Afra Hirn founded a memorial chapel in the Church of St Anne in Augsburg, where the main altar was dedicated to St Helena. The chapel was painted with an image of the saint bearing the Cross, with the interrogation of the Jews, the Finding of the Cross and the Testing of the Cross. The proximity of the Heavenly Jerusalem and the intercession at the Last Judgement (the raising from the dead in the Testing of the Cross) are central. J. WILHELM, *Augsburger Wandmalerei. 1368–1530. Künstler, Handwerker und Zunft*, Augsburg, 1983, pp. 185–196.

[39] Surmounting the altarpiece are also the Resurrection of the Dead with Christ the Judge and Christ Pantocrator between two angels. In the predella are nine

plants it on his dead father, followed by Constantine's battle, and the Finding and Testing of the Cross. On the right is the confrontation between Heraclius and Chosroes' son on the bridge over the Danube, Chosroes worshipped in the cosmic tower, and the meek restitution of the Cross by Heraclius. In depicting Seth's scene Alcañiz follows Gaddi's composition faithfully, with one exception: here it is indeed a twig that Seth receives at the gates of Paradise. The adoration of Chosroes also takes place in an open-sided three-aisled building. But there are differences too: Constantine's vision and battle are depicted, the Testing of the Cross is given more emphasis than the Finding, Heraclius and Chosroes' son in single combat on the bridge has a scene to itself and only the humble restitution is shown. In addition, the Queen of Sheba and *Piscina Probatica* are missing, there is no making of the Cross, and Heraclius's vision is not included.[40]

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episodes from Christ's Passion. L. de SARALEGUI, *El museo Provincial de Bellas Artes de San Carlos (sala I)*, 2 (*Cuadernos de Arte*, 8), Valencia, 1954, pp. 113–138; M.A. LAVIN, *The Place of Narrative*, op. cit., p. 114; A.L. MAYER, *Geschichte der spanischen Malerei*, 1, Leipzig, 1913, pp. 53–66; C.R. POST, *A History of Spanish Painting*, 3, Cambridge, 1930, p. 70. J. MARTINEZ de AGUIRRE, *Arte y monarquia en Navarra 1328–1425*, Pamplona, 1987, does not mention the work.

[40] M.A. LAVIN, op. cit., p. 144, links the cult of the Cross in Navarre to the *reconquista*, and particularly to the memory of the legendary battle of Alorcos in 1195 and the victory at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212. The successful reconquest of Castile, Navarre and Aragon from the Moors during the reigns of Alphonso VIII and Pope Innocent III gave rise to a new feast of the Cross in Spain, celebrated on 21 July. Once again it is clear that victory against infidels is connected to the celebration of the Cross (the Cross as *vexillum*). Lavin is of the opinion that the two victories represented (Constantine's and Heraclius's) are intended to echo the two Spanish victories. It is possible that the three feasts of the Cross are represented on the altarpiece of Valencia: 3 May: Seth, the Finding of the Cross; 21 July: Constantine; 14 September: Heraclius. In the Church of San Miguel in Estella is an altarpiece of St Helena, which was painted in the Franco-Flemish style around the beginning of the 15th century. In the centre stands Helena with the Cross, in the predella are five compartments with scenes from the Passion, a Crucifixion in the middle. Four scenes surround the central section of the altarpiece in which Helena is depicted. These scenes are to be read from left to right: above, Constantine's dream, with the emperor lying on a tester bed; the battle at the Milvian Bridge; the interrogation of the Jews (Helena enthroned under a canopy). Left, in the middle register: the Finding of the Cross (Helena still under a canopy); the Testing of the Cross in a rotunda. Below right: the equestrian restitution and the humble restitution. The interrogation and the appearance of a canopy refer to 12th and 13th-century iconography of the Finding of the Cross. C.R. POST, op. cit., 5, p. 180, fig. 321; J. GUDIOL RICART, *Pintura gotica (Ars Hispaniae*, 9), Madrid, 1955, pp. 185–186, fig. 152.

The Cross legend cycle in Florence must be understood in connection with the Franciscan community.[41] Gaddi's programme had a significant iconographic influence in other Franciscan churches in Tuscany. In 1410 in Volterra a chapel of the confraternity of St Francis in the Church of San Francesco was painted with a Legend of the Cross.[42] It was commissioned from Cenni di Francesco di Ser Cenni, who had looked at the Santa Croce programme with a very keen eye.[43] The lay brotherhood also organized Cross processions.[44] To the left of the door in the north wall of the chapel St Francis receiving the stigmata is depicted, just as in Florence, but here a flagellant kneels to the right of the saint. The confraternity of St Francis was in fact a flagellant brotherhood.[45] Its members were supervised by the Franciscan mother order and the liturgy was provided by the Franciscan clergy.[46] The flagellants scourged themselves in the name of the suffering of Christ. As part of the extreme empathic experience of this suffering, the meaning of the Cross as an instrument of Christ's Passion was fundamental to them.

The Volterra legend is divided over two registers, beginning on the south wall, continuing on the west wall, and finally taking up the entire north wall; there are also eight subdivisions. The order in which the scenes are read is exceptional, beginning along the top

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[41] E. BORSOOK, *The Mural Painters of Tuscany*, London, 1960, p. 155.

[42] A banderole held fast at the top left edge of the Massacre of the Innocents scene (below) reads: 'Nel MCCCCX aloghorono questi della chonpagnia tutte istorie a Cienni d Franciescho di Ser Cienni da Firenze ecieto quatro vangelisti sono die Jachopo da Firenze'. A stone with an inscription has been introduced below the Presentation in the temple scene (below): 'Giovanni di Giusto Ghuidi e Giovanni d'Ataviano Chorsino chomesari della conpagnia di San Franciescho fecione fare queste istorie perrimedio die tutte l'anime delle dette chonpagnia e di tutte delle buone persone che questa chonpagnia avesse dato o dara aiuto o favore le che anime requieschono i santa requie e santa pacie amen'. From: S. PFLEGER, op. cit., p. 138, n. 2; M.A. LAVIN, *The Place of Narrative*, op. cit., pp. 114–117; F.A. LESSI, et al., *Volterra. La capella della croce in san Francesco*, Volterra, 1991; F. PORRETTI, *Volterra magica e Misteriosa*, Pisa, 1992, p. 89, pp. 236–239: See also: E. CARLI, *Volterra nel medievo e nel rinascimento*, Pisa, 1978.

[43] In Volterra, the four Evangelists, St Anthony of Padua, St Francis and Louis of Toulouse are depicted on the vault. In the windows are medallions with angels' heads. The scenes are separated vertically by decorative bands in which prophets are portrayed; the vertical framing is a result of the architecture of the chapel itself; S. PFLEGER, op. cit., pp. 73–74.

[44] S. PFLEGER, op. cit., p. 77.

[45] A so-called *Compagnia dei Battenti di San Francesco* is mentioned in a document of 1363; S. PFLEGER, op. cit., p. 138, n. 11.

[46] J. HENDERSON, *The Flagellant Movement and Flagellant Confraternities in Central Italy*, in *Studies in Church History*, 15, 1978, pp. 147–160.

register and then turning about and following the bottom register in the opposite direction (diag. 5). Moreover, Cenni di Francesco combined the cycle with scenes from the life of Mary and the childhood of Christ in the three chapels along the south wall. Although there is thus a great difference in the available wall surface, Cenni di Francesco had adopted not only the characteristics but also the division (16 in total) and order (8 to a row) of Gaddi's scenes. The Massacre of the Innocents is opposite Helena's presentation of the Cross to Jerusalem (fig. 81b). The Nativity and the Annunciation to the Shepherds are opposite the Finding and Testing of the Cross (fig. 81a), and the decapitation of Chosroes and the restitution of the Cross are opposite the looting of the relics (fig. 81c). The Queen of Sheba is on the west side of the chapel, above Chosroes' throne and Heraclius's vision (fig. 81d). The humble restitution ends below the scene depicting Seth (fig. 81e). This way of reading the sequence has been dictated by the spatial and structural arrangement of the chapel walls. As a total concept a balance has been sought between devotion to Mary and to the Cross.

Apart from a few details and the architectural adaptation, the iconography is taken wholesale from the Santa Croce chancel. Clearly, a close adherence to the parent model also expresses a close identification with the mother convent. It was not only in Volterra that Agnolo Gaddi's iconographic programme was copied. In 1943, in a side chapel dedicated to St Helena in the Church of Santo Stefano in Empoli (35km south-west of Florence) a series of sinopie was discovered. These under-drawings are on the side walls of the chapel, the right-hand pilaster at the entrance, and the vaults.[47] On the basis of archival documents published in 1905, they can be identified with the cycle for which Masolino da Panicale (1383–1447?) was paid in 1424 by the *Compagnia della Croce*, which had founded a

[47] Remnants of the *affreschi* are still preserved on the lowest areas of the two side walls (painted plinths), in the entrance arch (apostles?), a few tondi with female heads on the window reveal in the central wall and a *natura morta à trompe-l'oeil* with glasswork and books at the bottom of the west side wall; see C. de TOLNAY, *Postilla sulle origini della natura morta moderna*, in *Rivista d'arte*, 36, 1961, p. 10. This example is taken to be the precursor of the *natura morta*. In 1993 two studies of Masolino were published: P.L. ROBERTS, *Masolino da Panicale*, Oxford-Clarendon, 1993 and P. JOANNIDES, *Masaccio and Masolino. A Complete Catalogue*, London, 1993. See also: M.A. LAVIN, *The Place of Narrative*, op. cit., pp. 117–118; U. PROCACCI, art. *De Toetsing van het ware Kruis*, and art. *Een ongeïdentificeerde heilige*, in *Fresco's uit Florence* (exh. cat.), New York, 1969, no. 18–19, p. 99.

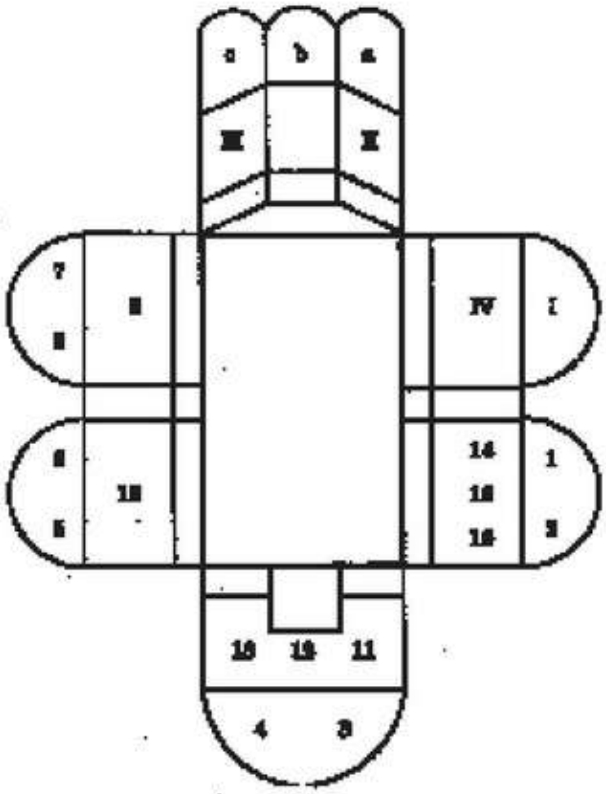


Abb. 41 Volterra, Cappella della Croce, Schema der Anordnung der Fresken

Diagram 5. Scheme of the programme of frescoes depicting the Legend of the Cross in the Church of San Francesco (Santa Croce chapel) in Volterra (Francesco di Ser Cenni, 1410). From: S. PFLEGER, *Eine Legende und ihre Erzählformen. Studien zur Rezeption der Kreuzlegenden in der italienischen Monumentalmalerei des Tre- und Quattrocento*, (*Europäische Hochschulschriften. Kunstgeschichte*, 214), Frankfurt-Vienna, 1994, p. 241, fig. 43.

chapel in Santo Stefano in 1397.[48] The iconographic identification was made in a 1968 study.[49] The frescoes were done away with in 1792 by the Augustinians, who apparently found them no longer to their taste.[50]

Masolino da Panicale was clearly inspired by the cycle of frescoes in Florence, but he focused and monumentalized the scenes in accordance with the 'modern' style of the time. Here too the scenes are read from the top of the right-hand wall (diag. 6), beginning, unexpectedly, with the Queen of Sheba venerating the wood (fig. 82). Although Masolino almost certainly studied Gaddi's cycle, he seemed to have omitted a number of the legend's essential motifs: the Seth episode, Chosroes' departure from Jerusalem with the captured relic, his son and Heraclius, in single combat, and the climax of the entire legend—the humble restitution of the Cross to Jerusalem. The unbalanced character of the programme in Empoli has led me to postulate a third painted wall in the chapel.[51]

That Agnolo Gaddi's cycle did indeed serve as an iconographic 'authority' can be deduced from an archival document brought to

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[48] The documents were discovered and published by G. POGGI, *Masolino e la Compagnia della Croce in Empoli*, in *Rivista d'arte*, 3, 1905, pp. 46–53, p. 48; R.C. PROTO PISANI, *La chiesa di Santo Stefano degli Agostiniani*, in *Masolino a Empoli* (exh. cat.), Empoli, 1987, pp. 35–46, p. 37: 'Datta cappela di sopra nominata chella Compagnia la fece dipingre per infino addi 2 novembre MCCCCXXIIII pagamo a Maso di Cristofano dipintore da Firenze fiorini settantaquattro d'oro come apparisce in su gli antichi nostri libbri'. The relationship between the model in Florence and the sinopie in Empoli was established by U. PROCACCI, *Sinopie e affreschi*, Milaan, 1960, who also made a first and rather clumsy attempt to identify the various scenes.

[49] B. COLE, *A Reconstruction of Masolino's True Cross Cycle in S. Stefano, Empoli*, in *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz*, 13, 1968, pp. 289–300.

[50] *Le pitture grossolane*: the clumsy paintings; I. LAZZERONI, *Le sinopie degli affreschi di Masolino nella Cappella della Croce in S. Stefano degli Agostiniani*, in *Bullettino Storico Empolese*, 1, 1, 2, 1957, p. 145. On the history of the convent see: W. SIEMONI, *La chiesa ed il convento di Santo Stefano degli Agostiniani Empoli*, Castelfiorentino, 1986. The four sinopie on the ribbed vault were restored between 1956 and 1958, the two side walls in 1959 and the *trompe-l'oeil* in 1963; G. BOTTICELLI, *Il restauro del ciclo pittorico della Cappella di sant'Elena*, in *Masolino a Empoli*, op. cit., pp. 47–49. Between 1981 and 1982 they were restored to their original position by *La soprintendenza ai Beni Artistici e Storici di Firenze*.

[51] B. BAERT, *The Iconography of the Cross-Legend in the Sinopie of Masolino da Panicale at Empoli. Twilight Between Tradition and Innovation*, in *Le Dessin sous-jacent. Colloque XI pour l'étude du dessin sous-jacent et de la technologie dans la peinture. Perspectives*, 1995, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1997, pp. 193–203; *The Iconography of the Cross-Legend in the Sinopie of Masolino da Panicale at Empoli. Twilight Between Tradition and Innovation*, in *Storia dell' arte*, 99, 2000, pp. 5–16.

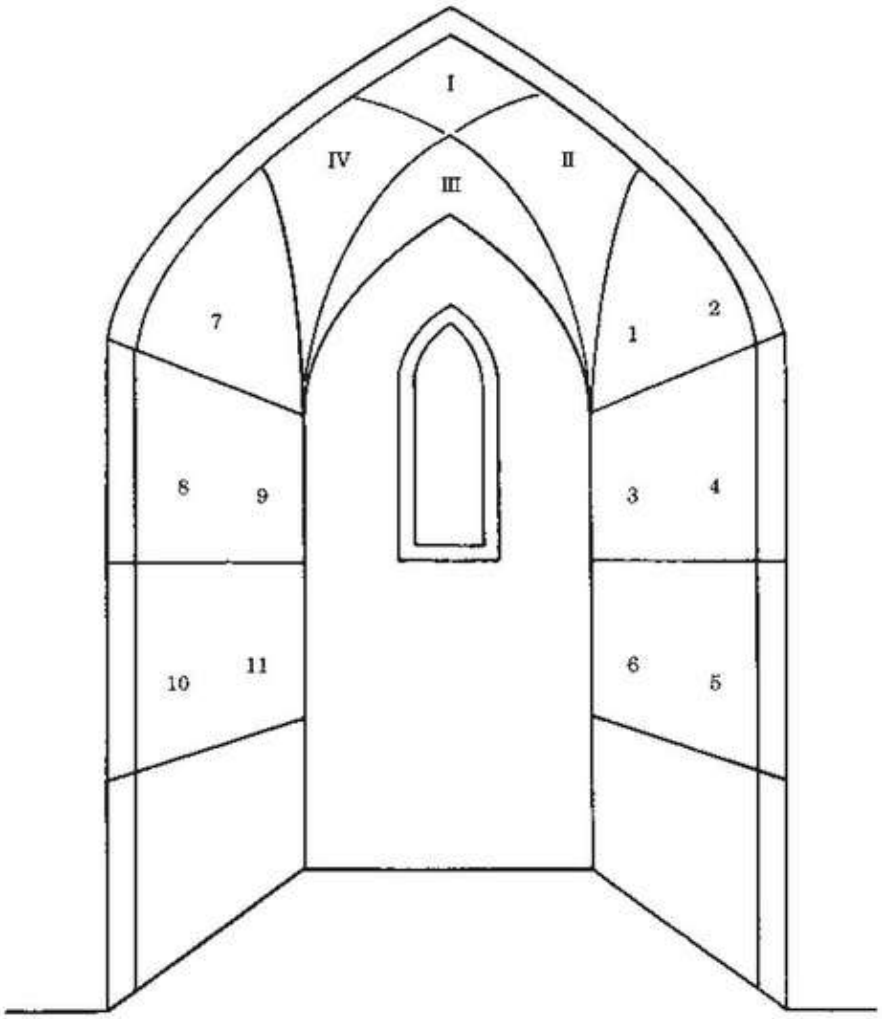


Abb. 61 Empoli, S. Stefano, Cappella di S. Elena, Masolino,
Schema der Anordnung der Fresken

1 Verehrung des Holzes durch die Königin von Saba
2 Vergraben des Holzes
3 Bergen des Holzes
4 Fertigung des Kreuzes
5 Auffindung dreier Kreuze
6 Kreuzprobe
7 unkenntlich
8 Chosroe läßt sich als Gott verehren
9 Vision des Heraklius
10 Die Hinrichtung des Chosroe
11 Heraklius vor den Toren Jerusalems

I Auferstehung
II „Volto Santo"
III Eucharistischer Christus
IV Kreuztragender Christus

Diagram 6. Scheme of the programme of frescoes depicting the Legend of the Cross in the Church of Santo Stefano (St Helena chapel) in Empoli (Masolino da Panicale, 1424). From: S. PFLEGER, *Eine Legende und ihre Erzählformen. Studien zur Rezeption der Kreuzlegenden in der italienischen Monumentalmalerei des Tre- und Quattrocento*, (*Europäische Hochschulschriften. Kunstgeschichte*, 214), Frankfurt-Vienna, 1994, p. 250, fig. 62.

light in 1989 by Andrew Ladis.[52] The documents of the *Compagnia della santa Croce* in Montepulciano reveal that in 1415 Nanni (Giovanni) di Caccia was reimbursed for a journey to Florence to study Gaddi's frescoes in the Church of Santa Croce.[53] Unfortunately, Nanni di Caccia's frescoes and drawings have been lost, but it indicates that Gaddi's work continue to be regarded as an important iconographic benchmark. Nanni di Caccia, a contemporary and fellow countryman of Cenni di Francesco in Volterra (1410), was asked to study the Cross legend iconography at the 'source', not its imitation(s). And the source was naturally the Tuscan metropolis of the Franciscans, who maintained excellent relations with the Curia.[54] iconographic exemplarity is typical of the Franciscans' monumental programmes. It was also they who perceived, elaborated and maintained the didactic potential of mural cycles and so preserved an artistic discipline and tradition which accompanied the evolution of the visual language of the Gothic into the narrative style of the Renaissance.

Towards the end of the fourteenth century the Legend of the Cross was adopted into the Franciscan idiom, replacing the traditional depictions of the life of St Francis, his receiving of the stigmata, and the Crucifixion in the apses of older, more modest churches.[55] With its many chapels the Church of Santa Croce could naturally accommodate a broader iconographic spectrum. It is worth investigating the stimuli that might account for this adoption.[56]

In his *Legenda major* (1260–1262) Bonaventure says that Francis's stigmatization took place around the time of the feast of the Exaltation

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[52] A. LADIS, *Un' ordinazione per disegni dal ciclo della vera croce di Agnoli Gaddi a Firenze*, in *Rivista d'arte*, 41, 1989, pp. 153–158.

[53] A. LADIS, art. cit., p. 155: 'E piu spendemo, dati a Giovanni di Chaccia che ando a Fiorenza a ritrare le storie delle crocie, lire V contanti ebe da Lando di Giovanni di Lando'.

[54] D. BLUME, op. cit., pp. 97–98.

[55] D. BLUME, op. cit., p. 71. The consistency of these iconographic *fortbildungen* indicates thorough preliminary studies. We have already seen that in 1415 Nanni di Caccia was paid for his drawings of the Legend of the Cross in the choir of San Francesco. The catalogue by B. Degenhardt and A. Schmitt included four 14th-century drawings relating to scenes from the life of St Francis in the lower Church of Assisi. No preliminary studies of the Legend of the Cross have survived; B. DEGENHART and A. SCHMITT, *Corpus der italienischen Zeichnungen 1300–1450*, 4 vol., vol. 1, pt. 1, *Süd- und Mittelitalien*, n.p., 1968, cat. no. 47, 48, 52, figs. 79b, 80, 82.

[56] D. BLUME, op. cit., passim.

of the Cross.[57] The Byzantine liturgy for 14 September commemorates not only Heraclius but also Helena's Finding of the Cross. In addition to the chronological neatness of bringing together the legends in one cycle, two important feasts of the Cross from East and West are reconciled. Certainly this fits in not only with the concern for Christian unity for which the Franciscans are known,[58] but also their enormous empathy for all aspects of devotion to the Cross.[59] The miracle of the Impression of the Stigmata occurred during the six-week fast that Francis undertook in honour of St Michael, which he began on 15 August, the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin (Volterra). St Michael plays an important role in the Seth episode, and the Assumption of the Virgin was also depicted in the chancel of the Church of Santa Croce.

The Franciscans developed a synthesis between Marian and Cross theologies. Bonaventure regarded the *verbum incarnatum* as the *verbum crucifixum*.[60] Thus the incarnation of God was immediately coupled with and interpreted in the context of the sacrifice of the Cross. The connection was also developed by Duns Scotus in response to Colossians 1, 15: Christ is the firstborn of all creation. The Incarnation means in the first place the glory of God, in the second place the redemption of the Fall. To Francis, Old Testament man was created to prepare the way for Christ's coming.[61] The *logos* and epiphany of the Cross become the basis of a theological 'Christocentrism'.[62] Christ

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[57] *Bonaventura, Opera omnia*, op. cit., *Legenda major*, XIII, 3: 'seraph unum effigies hominis crucifixi christo sub specie seraph [. . .] circa festum exaltationis sanctae crucis'; D.V. MONTI, *Francis of Assisi*, in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. M. ELIADE, 3, New York-London, 1987, pp. 407–408. Also mentioned in the 13th-century *Fioretti* by Ugolino; G.D. BONINO (ed.), *I fioretti di San Francesco*, Turin, 1974, pp. 176, 180. Even at the beginning of his vocation Francis had received a vision of Christ crucified in the convent of San Damiano (near Assisi).

[58] L. LEHMANN, *Prinzipien Franziskanischer Mission nach den frühen Quellen*, in *Francescanesimo e profezia*, ed. E. COVI, Rome, 1985, p. 144, especially in connection with the threat of Islam, but also with regard to the Byzantine Orthodox Church; G. SPIERIS, *Francesco d'Assisi. Profeta dell' incontro tra Occidente e Oriente*, in *Francescanesimo e profezia*, ed. E. COVI, Rome, 1985, pp. 453–489.

[59] I. OMAECHEVARRIA, art. *Croce*, in *Dizionario Francescano. Spiritualità*, Padua, 1983, cols. 301–312; H. von THODE, *Franz von Assisi und die Anfänge der Kunst der Renaissance in Italien*, Vienna, 1834, p. 502 and pp. 537–538: 'Kreuznachfolge'.

[60] W. HÜLSBUSCH, *Elemente einer Kreuzestheologie in den Spätschriften Bonaventuras*, Düsseldorf, 1969, p. 167 ff.

[61] F.A. HEAP, *The Impact of Written Sources on the Development of the Franciscan Theme in Italian Painting* (unpub. Doct.), Minnesota, 1974, p. 60.

[62] W. HÜLSBUSCH, op. cit., pp. 91–98.

Crucified is the heart of the faith, the core of the devotional experience, the guiding principle for the faithful. Franciscans preach a 'life under the Cross', a poor and humble passage through life, directed towards the imitation of Christ and in that sense based on Christ's encounter with the rich young man (Mt. 19, 16–30). In their commitment to evangelical poverty the Franciscans were comparable to the Egyptian hermits of the fourth century.[63]

The Franciscans were deeply committed to seeing the goodness of God's creation.[64] The meeting with God is fulfilled in nature, in the world (the canticle of Brother Sun, for instance). This is in contrast to the thought of St Augustine, who saw the opening to God precisely in the rejection of the beauty of nature. Even Bernard of Clairvaux saw nature as ambiguous: as an indirect testimony to the goodness and majesty of the Creator, but at the same time as a temptation and enticement, standing in the way of a more direct encounter with the divine. To Francis, on the other hand, God dwelt in the beauty of nature. Seeing God's works in nature is also a fundamental of the Cross legend. For the legend likewise combines theological Christocentrism—the sacrifice of the Cross as the nucleus of the Redemption—with the epiphany of the *logos* in nature. The Legend of the Cross provides an image of the Cross 'growing' in the world: it roots the theological Cross in the life cycle of Creation itself. The Cross is a twig, a tree, it buds and withers, it is dead and lives again. This natural metaphorism of the Cross as a 'salvation-historical and living being'—so typical of Franciscan Cross mysticism—is expressed only by means of the three episodes of the Legend of the Cross (the 'complete' legend). Here, perhaps, is not only part of the answer to why the Legend of the Cross was adopted in Franciscan circles but also to why it was precisely in that context that the iconography first appeared in a continuous narrative. For although the Legend of the Wood of the Cross had developed earlier, outwith Franciscan thought, and though it was quite quickly

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[63] M. TULLENERS-BLOEMEN, *Franciscus van Assisi*, in *Andere structuren, andere heiligen. Het veranderende beeld van de heilige in de Middeleeuwen*, eds. R.E.V. STUIP and C. VELLEKOOP, Utrecht, 1983, pp. 89–114, gives a clear introduction to the social context in which Francis preached evangelical poverty. It also provides an overview of the lives written shortly after his death.

[64] On the *theologia mystica* of the Franciscans and the link with Scholasticism, see: K. RUH, *Franziskanisches Schrifttum im Deutschen Mittelalter*, 1, Munich, 1965, pp. 187–248.

interpreted as a prologue to the Legend of the Finding of the Cross (*Legenda* group; *Legenda Aurea*), it was only actually illustrated for the first time in the chancel of Santa Croce. The natural metaphorism of the Cross is not specifically Franciscan—it is inherent to the Cross legend itself—but the 'natural history' reading of the 'salvation-historical' Cross certainly is. And for that, other literary and iconographic pioneers paved the way.

The Legend of the Cross is the narrative equivalent of Bonaventure's allegory of the *Lignum vitae* (written in Paris between 1257 and 1274). Bonaventure traces the mysteries of the Origin, Passion and Glorification of Christ using an exegetical scheme of the Tree of Life. Each stage has four flowers, each of which bears four fruits; in total, thus, the Tree of Life bears forty-eight meditations[65] which should, according to the author, be 'tasted' in the *sensus litteralis, allegoricus, moralis* and *anagogicus*.[66] In 1305 Bonaventure's *Lignum vitae* was the inspiration for the *Arbor vitae crucifixae Iesus* of Ubertino of Casale (1259–after 1328). The title of this treatise is misleading: it is in fact a polemical tract integrating the life of St Francis into a controversial scheme of utopian expectation. Ubertino of Casale was a leader of the radical faction of the Franciscan movement known as 'Spirituals' that emerged in the decades after Francis's death. He saw Francis as a pivotal figure in the history of salvation and a model for the reform of the whole Church.[67] In the first chapter of

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[65] *Bonaventure. The Soul's Journey into God. The Tree of Life. The life of St. Francis*, trans. and introduction by E. COUSINS, New York-Toronto, 1978, pp. 119–175. H.M. THOMAS, *Franziskaner Geschichtsvision und europaïsche Bildentfaltung*, Wiesbaden, 1989; R. HATFIELD, *The Tree of Life and the Holy Cross. Franciscan Spirituality in the Trecento and the Quattrocento*, in *Christianity and the Renaissance. Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, eds. T. VERDON and J. HENDERSON, New York 1990, pp. 132–159. See also: J.G. BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, New York-Rome, 1964, pp. 159–160.

[66] A.C. ESMEIJER, *Lignum Vitae. Een visueel-exegetisch leerbeeld. 'More geometrico' gedemonstreerd*, Assen, 1981, p. 20; A.C. ESMEIJER, *L'albero della vita di Taddeo Gaddi*, Florence, 1985. For the fourfold interpretative model see also: H.G. JANTSCH, *Studien zum Symbolischen in Frühmittelhochdeutschen Literatur*, Tübingen, 1959, pp. 227–245; A.C. ESMEIJER, *Divina Quaternitas. A Preliminary Study in the Method of Application of Visual Exegesis*, Assen-Amsterdam, 1978. HENRI DE LUBAC, *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l'écriture*, 4 vols, Paris, 1959–1964.

[67] Dante refers to St Francis in his *Divina Commedia* (1310). He places him with St Dominic (Francis as a seraph and Dominic as a cherub) in the fourth heaven of Paradise. This is the realm of the sun, but also of the scholars. Although Francis did not consider himself a theologian, and nor did Bonaventure in the *Legenda major*, the passage in Dante, like that in Ubertino of Casale (and it is accepted that the former read the latter's *Arbor vitae*), testifies to the desire to clericalize the Franciscan

the *Arbor vitae* Ubertino states that the Church must go through seven stages to reach the heavenly Jerusalem. Francis's coming brought the Church to the sixth stage and vanquished the Antichrist. These stages are distinct from the three states, or ages, into which history is divided.[68] Ubertino takes the three-part growth towards redemption and the heavenly Jerusalem, purified in the Apocalypse,[69] from Joachim of Fiore (ca. 1130–1202).[70] Using his Tree of History to expound his theory of the three states of history, Joachim posited an age of the Father (Old Testament), an age of the Son (Christ and His Church) and an age of the Holy Spirit (the dawn of which was felt to be imminent). Although this doctrine was condemned at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) his writings continued to have a substantial following in the high Middle Ages.[71] Joachim of Fiore made his vision of history clear by means of cognitive schemes in which the tree, or at any rate a vegetal scheme, was intended to represent the progression and development of history from Adam via Christ to the Christ of the Heavenly Kingdom (Second Coming).[72]

Ubertino of Casale in his *Arbor vitae*—the title refers not only to Bonaventure's *Lignum vitae* but also to the *figurae* of Joachim of Fiore—interprets the origin of the *logos* as the Father who, for love of man, desires to show this truth through His Son. The age of the Son must still be attained by the friars in the new age of the Holy Spirit. Francis is the key figure in the final stage of the eschatology. Ubertino rewrites the old, controversial Joachimite salvation-historical apocalypticism in accordance with the Franciscan mystic Christocentric model. He extrapolates, as it were, the *Lignum* of the Cross (Bonaventure) to the *Arbor* of Christ. Here the life of Christ reflects the salvation history of Christ. The Cross decodes the entire history of salvation as it has implanted itself in nature.[73]

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movement and present it as exemplary for the whole Church; M. TULLENEERS-BLOEMEN, art. cit., pp. 110–114.

[68] M. DAMIATA, *Pietà e storia nell' arbor vitae di Ubertino da Casale*, Florence, 1988, pp. 217–231.

[69] H.M. THOMAS, op. cit., Wiesbaden, 1989, pp. 10–11.

[70] J. RATZINGER, art. *Joachim v. Fiore*, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 5, Freiburg, 1960, cols. 975–976; E. RANDOLPH DANIEL, *Joachim da Fiore. Patterns of History in the Apocalypse*, in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, eds. R.K. EMMERSON and B. McGINN, London, 1992, pp. 72–88.

[71] L. LEHMANN, art. cit., pp. 103–152.

[72] L. TONDELLI, *Il libro delle figure dell' abate Giochino da Fiore*, 1, text. 2, plates, Turin, 1953, vol. 2, with many illustrations.

[73] G.L. POTESTÀ, *Aspetti e implicazioni della mistica cristocentrica di Ubertino da Casale*,

It is just these three historical stages that are contained in the complete legend of the Cross, even in the *sensus litteralis*.[74] The Wood of the Cross legend begins with Seth obeying the behest of his father (Old Testament); the Helena legend begins with a task ordered by Constantine, the son (the triumph of *Ecclesia*); and Heraclius acts on the command of the angel, the spirit (apocalyptic prefigurement). The allegorical sense lies in the typological relationship between Helena and Heraclius's relic of the Cross and the Old Testament Tree of Paradise. The moral sense points to the example the Cross offers for a way of life 'under the Cross'. The *sensus anagogicus* is translated in the eschatological purposiveness of the wood, namely its redemption of the Fall and its restoration of Paradise at the End of Time. Moreover, the legend of the Exaltation of the Cross corresponds to the sixth stage of Francis in which the Antichrist (Chosroes) is vanquished. This also offers an explanation for the fact that it was precisely in the Franciscan context that the Legend of the Cross was depicted in its three parts.

The tree as a didactic and/or exegetic scheme of teaching and meditation was not new at the time of Bonaventure and Ubertino of Casale. The tree was a favourite encyclopaedic diagram for the organization of all kinds of knowledge.[75] Joachim of Fiore's *figurae* were also trees. Bonaventure used the diagram in the context of Christ's Passion, and thus connected the encyclopaedic formalist tree with the theological intrinsic tree; the result is an instructive metaphor suitable as a mnemo-technical method (in preaching, for instance) and as a meditative catalyst for the mysticism of the Cross. Moreover, the Jesse Tree[76] and the Trees of Virtue and Vice (flowering, withered) already existed as iconographic motifs in which the expectation of the Messiah and the redemption of the Old Testament by the New respectively found expression. It is just this tree symbolism, which is connected with the entire history of salvation, that influenced Ubertino of Casale's *Arbor vitae*.

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in *Abendländische Mystik im Mittelalter. Symposion Kloster Engelberg 1984*, ed. K. RUH, Stuttgart, s.d., pp. 286–299.

[74] L. TONDELLI, op. cit., 1, pp. 305–309, sees in the Cross legend iconography the 'leggenda istoriata' of the *arbor vitae*.

[75] An exhaustive contribution on the visual teaching aids in: F. SAXL, *A Spiritual Encyclopedia of the Later Middle Ages*, in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5, 1942, pp. 82–134 (with appendices by O. KURTH).

[76] In a pen drawing in a missal now in München-Gladbach, ca. 1140, Christ is crucified on a tree that grows out of Adam's head; G. DUFOUR-KOWALSKA,

The didactic or exegetic tree is present in Santa Croce as well. Around 1340, in the Santa Croce refectory, Taddeo Gaddi (father of Agnolo) painted a *Lignum vitae* in which the twelve branches were in fact represented as proverb-bearing banderoles, flowing from the trunk to twine around the twelve Apostles (fig. 83).[77] Above Christ hanging on the tree is the pelican in its piety (not mentioned by Bonaventure); at the bottom, Francis embraces the tree's trunk. Below are Mary and John, the three women of the tomb and three saints: Antony of Padua, Dominic, and Louis of Toulouse. Right at the front is Bonaventure, writing a book (the *Lignum vitae?*). On either side of the tree are two scenes from the life of St Francis. Below the tree is a register in which, appropriately, the Last Supper is depicted. While partaking of their earthly food the Franciscan friars could also sample heavenly nourishment, just as Bonaventure alludes to mystical 'eating' and 'drinking'. The central idea of Franciscan Cross theology is embodied in this iconography. The 'Cross-tree' is based on both the vision of Ubertino of Casale and on the meaning of the Legend of the Cross: the former in an allegorical, the latter in a narrative way.[78] In Florence's Santa Croce the two iconographies are brought together, in the refectory and in the chancel.[79]

The Franciscan devotion to the Cross built on older models related to salvation history that were expressed by means of the Tree of Life (Joachim of Fiore), but took them further in a Christocentric and a mystical sense (Bonaventure and Ubertino of Casale). The radicalization of the Cross also stimulated and elaborated Tree of Life iconography and emancipated it from a merely schematic function. As an independent iconographic motif in manuscripts, as well as on altarpieces and wall paintings, didacticism was now also *ars praedicandi* and cognitive schemes also became meditative mysticism. It is together with this process and shortly after the iconographic explosion of the Cross-tree that the Legend of the Cross in Santa Croce was interpreted in its eschatological sense as a reflection of

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L'arbre de vie et la Croix. Essai sur l'imagination visionnaire, Geneva, 1985 (with foreword J. HERSCH), fig. 24.

[77] A.C. ESMEIJER, op. cit., passim.

[78] There are, of course, numerous other examples. See also: L.J. BOOGMANS, *Het lignum vitae van den H. Bonaventura in de ikonografie der veertiende eeuw*, in *Het Gildeboek*, 11, 1923, pp. 15–45.

[79] The Florentine *Lignum vitae* was copied in the chapter house of San Francesco in Pistoia (ca 1350?). Fragments of the legend of the Exaltation of the Cross (1330) were also found on the south wall of the church (see above).

Franciscan thought.[80] This recognition is connected with the wide currency that the 'Spiritual' branch of the Franciscan movement gave to the controversial and ultimately heterodox eschatological schemes of Ubertino of Casale and Joachim of Fiore.

Local and historical circumstances also contributed to the 'Franciscan Legend of the Cross'. Since 1342, the Franciscans had been the custodians of Jerusalem's holy places: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the cave of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and Mary's tomb in the valley of Josephat.[81] Since 1377 Pope Gregory XI had aimed at a revaluation of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, thus at an incentive to 'take up' the Cross (the theme of the *imitatio Christi* and crusading). The Legend of the Cross is part of crusading philosophy, which was still current in the fourteenth century and directed from Rome. Besides urging the practise of poverty and humility, the lives of St Francis also indicate the importance that was attached to missionary activity. The most imperative task was directed at the Saracens and Islam, but the mission also included preaching to heretics, Jews and pagans. This task must go hand in hand with the necessary forbearance, humility and martyrdom,[82] qualities that can be recognized in Christ's mission itself, and in Heraclius's struggle against the Persians in the service of the Cross.

Certainly the two penitential waves that swept across Europe in 1349 and 1399 also played a role.[83] The first was in response to the great plague epidemic, which had roused pious souls to move from town to town scourging themselves. Both Franciscan-inspired religious communities and lay groups such as the confraternity in Volterra were involved. In 1399 equally large processions were initiated by *I bianchi* (so called for their white garments). Given their penitential practices and their literal interpretation of the *imitatio passionis Christi*, the *bianchi* were at once identified with the flagellants, but this was

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[80] The issue of the Legend of the Cross as 'Franciscan iconography' has been too little noticed; H. EGGER, *Franziskanischer Geist in mittelalterlichen Bildvorstellungen. Versuch einer franziskanischen Ikonographie*, in *800 Jahre Franz von Assisi. Franziskanische Kunst und Kultur des Mittelalters* (exh. cat.), Krems-Stein, 1982, pp. 471–505, makes no mention of the Legend of the Cross, concentrating instead on the Passion iconography.

[81] G. ODOARDI, *La custodia di Terra Santa nel VI. centenario della sua costituzione*, in *Miscellanea francescana*, 43, 1943, pp. 217–256.

[82] L. LEHMANN, op. cit., passim.

[83] E. DELARUELLE, *Les grandes processions de pénitents de 1349 et 1399*, in *La piété populaire au Moyen Âge*, Turin, 1975, pp. 109–144.

a more popular movement with a strong accent on pilgrimage.[84] These religious outbursts should be situated in the climate of the Franciscan call to poverty and penitential preaching. The confraternities founded by these communities orientated themselves liturgically and iconographically towards the Franciscans. From the mid-fifteenth century the phenomenon of the 'Franciscan Legend of the Cross' was no longer restricted to Tuscany. In the southern Marches, too, the theme appeared in a Franciscan church in Montegiorgio.[85]

In 1263, Abbot Peregrino of the Benedictine Abbey of Farfa relinquished the Church of Santa Maria Grande in Georgio to the Franciscans, who rededicated it to St Francis.[86] Uprisings in the diocese of Ancona in the mid-thirteenth century had already caused the Abbey of Farfa to transfer several possessions in the Marches to the Franciscans.[87] This naturally strengthened the Franciscan hegemony in the area between Urbino and Ancona.[88] The small, rectangular chapel (8.5m × 7m) on the north side of the Church of San Francesco still bears the name of its original founder. In the Cappella Farfense can still be seen the memorials to the Patti, Zenobi and Alaleona families, who had managed to ensure themselves of a last resting place close to the 'paradise' of the church.

Each of the chapel vault's eight sections is divided into two registers by painted decorative painted bands. In the sixteen compartments thus formed are scenes from the legend of the Cross (diag. 7). The ribs of the vault are also painted with geometric designs. The wall paintings are by another hand and probably date from the early fifteenth century. Death and the Assumption of the Virgin, and Francis receiving the stigmata have survived. Below, at eye-level, painted spectators look on.

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[84] E. DELARUELLE, art. cit., p. 136.

[85] The murals are relatively little known. I was able to study them *in situ* (1–31 October 1998) thanks to a grant from the Princess Marie-José Foundation. *La cappella Farfense in Montegiorgio. Una leggende della vera croce nelle Marche (ca 1425)*, in *Arte cristiana*, 804, 2001, pp. 219–233.

[86] I. SCHUSTER, *L'imperiale abbazia di Farfa*, 1, Rome, 1987, p. 313; G. and M. LIBERATI, *Storia dei comuni Piceni*, Montegiorgio-Camerino, 1974, pp. 88–93.

[87] I. SCHUSTER, op. cit., p. 303; A.L. PALAZZI, *Caluori, I monaci di Farfa nelle Marche*, Ancona, 1957.

[88] P.A. TALAMONTI, *Cronisteria dei frati Minori della Provincia Lauretana delle Marche*, I, Sassoferrato, 1937; A. PANTALONI, *Aspetti e problemi del monachesimo nelle Marche*, in *Atti del convegno di studi tenuto a Fabriano monastero S. Silvestro abate. 4–7 giugno 1981*, Fabriano, 1982; G. PARISCHIANI, *Insediamenti e soppressioni*, in *Con san Francesco nelle Marche*, ed. P. MERISO, Bergamo, 1982, pp. 199–208.

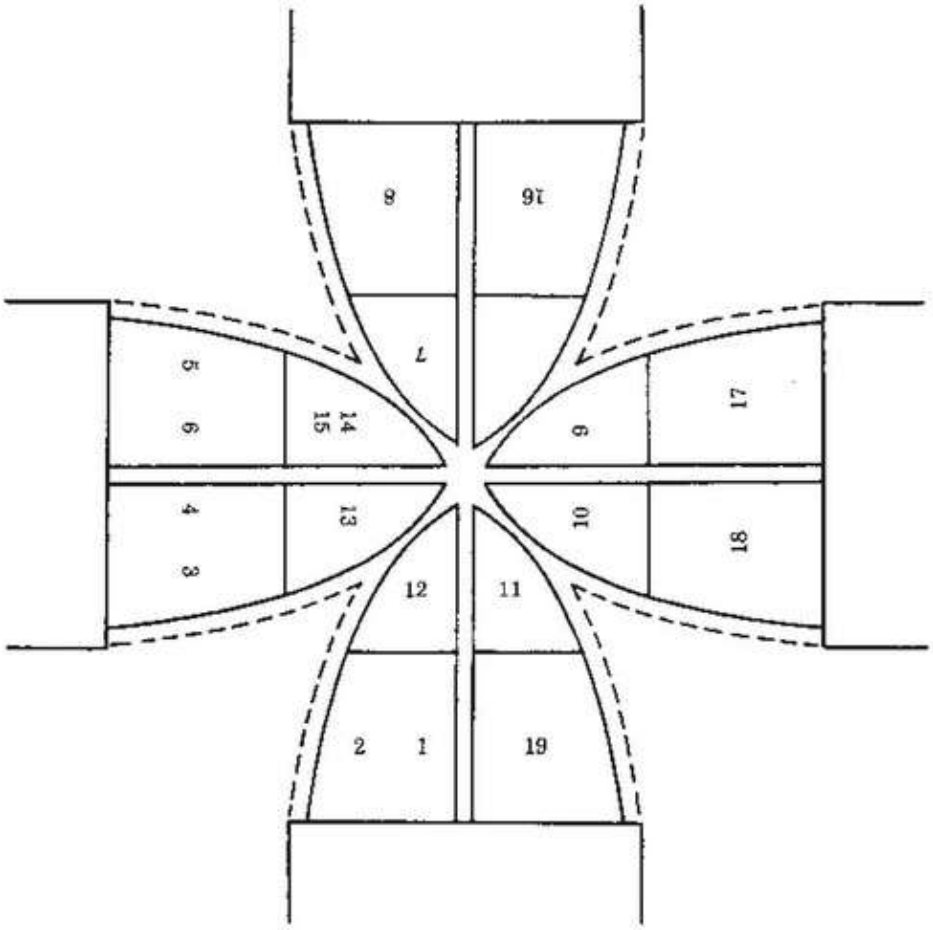


Abb. 66 Montegiorgio, S. Francesco, Schema der Anordnung der Fresken

1 Seth am Paradies
2 Seth pflanzt den Zweig nach dem Tode Adams
3 Fällen des Baumes
4 Bau des Tempels
5 Verehrung des Holzes durch die Königin von Saba
6 Die Königin von Saba durchquert den Fluß
7 Sieg des Konstantin über Maxentius
8 Konstantin fragt die Priester um Rat
9 Ankunft Helenas in Jerusalem
10 Befragung der Juden
11 Verhör des Judas
12 Judas wird zur Folter in einem trockenen Brunnen eingeschlossen
13 Judas ist geständig und darf den Brunnen verlassen
14 Judas gräbt
15 Auffindung dreier Kreuze
16 Kreuzprobe
17 Auffindung der Nägel
18 Verehrung der Reliquien
19 Übergabe einer Kreuzreliquie an Papst Silvester

Diagram 7. Scheme of the programme of frescoes depicting the Legend of the Cross in the Church of San Francesco (Santa Croce chapel) in Montegiorgio (ca 1425). From: S. PFLEGER, *Eine Legende und ihre Erzählformen. Studien zur Rezeption der Kreuzlegenden in der italienischen Monumentalmalerei des Tre- und Quattrocento*, (*Europäische Hochschulschriften. Kunstgeschichte*, 214), Frankfurt-Vienna, 1994, p. 254, fig. 66.

The Montegiorgio Legend of the Cross cycle begins in the lower register of the west vault with the death of Adam (fig. 84a). The fresco is in a poor state, especially the left half of the image, where little more than a six-cornered building can be made out. Within is what seems to be an altar, with three rivers springing from its foot (the fourth can no longer be seen). Paradise is thus depicted as the heavenly Jerusalem with the altar of the Lamb. Seth, in a yellow robe, stands before the entrance and pleads for the twig from the Tree of Paradise. Michael presenting him with the twig is not to be seen. On the right, Adam is stretched out in death. Mourners stand beneath a canopy. A woman pulls her long hair in grief; a man raises his arms to heaven, another squats with his hand over his mouth. In front of this group lies the naked Adam; only his loins are covered, and his hands are folded. Seth kneels at his head, reaching down with his right hand to plant the twig.

The register continues with the building of Solomon's Temple (fig. 84b). On the left a man hacks down a slender tree while Solomon and his entourage look on. The king carries a scroll, but its text has been lost. The felled tree trunk is hoisted up to be used as a roof beam.

The story proceeds in the next vault section. A flowing river is spanned by the wood, which now serves as a simple bridge (fig. 84c). On the right kneels the Queen of Sheba, her hands reverently crossed in veneration. She wears a red gown and a straw hat, and is accompanied by two men and two women. One of the men looks on in surprise from the saddle of his horse, the other stands a little more to the fore with a small hound at his feet that gazes up at its master with equal curiosity. The nobleman with his dog appears even more disconcerted when the queen wades her horse through the water. Her scarf flutters in the breeze and she seems to be smiling at the sight of such consternation.

It is not immediately clear in which direction the remaining scenes should be read. Still in the lower register, moving eastwards along the vault, is a scene with knights (fig. 84d). A king meets a man who points to a cross in the air. A second vision is represented in the register above, and in the scene next to it are again several knights in armour. They are probably connected with the episode of Constantine's vision. The emperor saw the sign of the cross in a dream, and again before battle. It was explained to him as the 'symbol of victory' of Christianity, which led to Constantine's conversion and

the famous commission with which he charged his mother, Helena.

The cycle pursues its course in the upper register with Helena's arrival in Jerusalem and runs on to her interrogation of the Jews (fig. 84e). Helena is seated beneath a canopy; Judas, an old and grizzled, bearded man, kneels before her. Two women peer over a balcony to follow events from above. Still in this register, in the top right corner, are more spectators. The partly vanished scene probably depicted Judas's arrest, for in the adjacent section of the vault he climbs out of the stone well with the aid of a ladder (fig. 84f). The story continues with the Finding of the Cross. Wielding a spade, Judas digs three crosses out of a hole; the middle one bears a *titulus*. Helena watches, hands folded.

Now the cycle jumps to the lower register once more. A crowd of onlookers watches Judas lay the cross with the *titulus* on a corpse (fig. 84g). The 'test case' lies motionless, but with eyes open. An assistant holds a second cross upright. Folk watch from the other side too; some of them point in wonder. Next, the discovery of the nails is depicted (fig. 84h). The three nails lie exposed on the ground. Judas Cyriacus is depicted as a bishop. Next to the finding of the nails is a fresco of which more than half has disappeared. On the left are two women, and towards the middle kneels a woman in white (fig. 84i). By analogy with the previous scene, this must be Helena. Most likely this scene would have depicted her veneration of the relic of the Cross, for her hands are reverently folded. The last scene of the cycle, which is adjacent to the first scene with Seth, has suffered even more damage. Only a fragment of fresco from the middle of the scene can still be discerned. Nonetheless, it is possible to make out a female figure presenting a piece of wood to an enthroned man (fig. 84j). Is this Helena's presentation of the Cross to Constantine in Constantinople, or to the patriarch of Jerusalem?

In the past the cycle has been attributed to the circle of Lorenzo and Jacopo Salimbeni or to followers of Ottaviano Nelli.[89] Gaetana

[89] P. MAZZONI, *La leggenda della croce nell'arte italiana*, Florence, 1914, pp. 121–124; R. VAN MARLE, *Late Gothic Painting in Central and South Italy of the 15th Century*, 8, The Hague, 1927, p. 310 (brief reference); L. SERRA, *L'arte nelle Marche*, 2. *Periodo del Rinascimento*, Rome, 1934, pp. 335–344; P. ROTONDI, *Studi e ricerche intorno a Lorenzo e Jacobo Salimbeni di san Severino, Pietro da Montepulciano e Giacomo da Pecenati*, n.p. 1938, p. 63; P. ZAMPETTI, *Gli affreschi di Lorenzo e Jacopo Salimbeni nell' Oratorio di san Giovanni di Urbino*, Urbino, 1956, p. 39; L. DANIA, *La pittura a Fermo e nel suocircondario*, s.l., 1968, p. 53; G. KAFTAL, et al., *Saints in Italian Art. Iconography of the Saints in Central and South Italian Schools of Painting*, Florence, 1965, cols. 541–560.

Lombardi has attributed the wall paintings to the painter Antonio Alberti da Ferrara (1380–1442).[90] Indeed, another Cross legend has been ascribed to this artist: the lunette in the apse of the Church of San Domenico in Urbino (1424, now the Museo Diocesano) (fig. 85).[91] Today this attribution has been nuanced to the circle of the artist of Ferrara, and the dating has been shifted to 1425–1430.[92]

Whoever he may have been, the artist who painted the Cappella Farfense in Montegiorgio was a true storyteller. The episodes from the *Legenda Aurea* are laid out step by step. The cycle is still conceived in the courtly delicate style of the international Gothic in the Marches.[93] It is a far cry from the concise Cross legend cycle that was created in Florence and would remain the Tuscan model for half a century. The Montegiorgio artist did not base his work on the Tuscan frescoes (cf. Table 1). He omitted the Heraclius legend, rather allowing the emphasis to fall on Helena and Judas. Meticulously the paintings follow Helena's arrival, the selection of Judas, his punishment up to and including the finding of the nails, which in fact Gaddi left out. Nor, in Montegiorgio, is any attention given to the *Piscina Probatica* and the making of the Cross. The artist has introduced Constantine's visions as a transition from the Legend of the Wood of the Cross to the Legend of the Finding of the Cross.

In Montegiorgio, the Wood of the Cross legend has acquired additional motifs. Paradise is represented as the heavenly Jerusalem,

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[90] G. LOMBARDI, *Gli affreschi della cappella Farfense nella Chiesa di san Francesco a Monte Giorgio* (unpubl. Diss.), Urbino, 1975–1976, pp. 65–112, p. 100: dated to around 1440 on the basis of costume history, 'maniche a gozzo'. The researcher comes to this conclusion after a comparison of the wall paintings of the Oratorio Santa Monica in Fermo (after 1420) and signed work by the aforementioned painter, who lived in Urbino but came from Ferrara. We also know that he maintained artistic contacts in the southern Marches. M.T. ZANCHI, *Antonio Alberti da Ferrara e il suo itinerario Umbro-Marchegianao*, in *Commentari*, 3–4, 1964, pp. 173–185; I. CHIAPPINI di SOPIO, *Una proposta per Antonio Alberti*, in *Notizie da Palazzo Albani*, 1–3, Urbino, p. 19.

[91] A.C. BAIARDI, art. *Antonio Alberti*, in *Fioritura tardogotica nelle Marche*, ed. P. DAL POGGETTO (exh. cat.), Milan, 1998, p. 188, fig. 66. In the text there is no mention of the Montegiorgio frescoes. The stylistic relationship becomes clearer in the manner in which the architecture and the houses are represented, as well as in the somewhat stocky build of the figures and the simple and heavy drapery of the garments.

[92] F. MARCELLI, *Pagine di cultura 'cosmopolita'. Leggenda le pareti affrescati a Fermo e nel Fermano*, in *Il Gotico Internazionale a Fermo e nel Fermano*, ed. G. LIBERATI (exh. cat.), Livorno, 1999, pp. 29–47, p. 44, ill. 24–30.

[93] P. ZAMPETTI, *Pittura nelle Marche*, 1. *Dalle origini al primo rinascimento*, Florence, 1988, pp. 294–297, fig. 75.

thus incorporating an eschatological dimension. The scene depicting the felling of the 'Tree of Paradise' for the building of the Temple is also novel. Strikingly enough, this motif is chiefly found north of the Alps. In the Hours of Catherine of Cleves (1442–1445) the Thursday Mass is illustrated with eight miniatures whose subject is the Wood of the Cross. Here too Solomon's tree (fol. 212) (fig. 86e) and the building of the Temple (fol. 214) (fig. 86f) are included.[94] And in the *Boec van den Houte* (Culemborg, 1483), a Netherlandish incunabulum printed by Johan Veldener after a now lost blockbook, three woodcuts (18–20) are devoted to the episode (fig. 87a–c).[95]

The scene with the Queen of Sheba is equally idiosyncratic. That her respect for the wood leads the queen to wade through the water rather than defile it with her foot is not stated by Jacobus de Voragine (who says only that she venerates the wood), but is emphasized in the sibylline books[96] and the northern European Cross legends.[97] In the Hours of Catherine of Cleves (fol. 216) (fig. 86g) and the *Boec van den Houte* (woodcut 25) (fig. 87d) she also wades through water. But the queen making the crossing on horseback is unique in Cross legend iconography. There is an Anglo-Norman version of the Legend of the Cross dating from the mid-thirteenth century which describes how the queen approaches the bridge mounted on her horse—furthermore, that she rides to meet Solomon on that horse, after she has venerated the wood.[98] A direct relationship with the Anglo-

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[94] New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 917; F. GORISSEN, *Das Stundenbuch der Katharina von Kleve. Analyse und Kommentar*, Berlin, 1973, p. 105, pp. 494–525, pp. 959–961 and pp. 999–1001; J. PLUMMER, *Die Miniaturen aus dem Stundenbuch der Katharina von Kleve*, Berlin, 1966, nos. 79–87.

[95] B. BAERT, *Het Boec van den Houte*, *o.c.*

[96] W. GREBE, *Sibyllen Weissagung*, Cologne, 1989.

[97] W. MEYER, *Die Geschichte des Kreuzholzes vor Christus* (*Abhandlungen der philosophisch-philologischen Classe der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 16, 2), Munich, 1882; A.R. MILLER, *German and Dutch Versions of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross. A Descriptive and Analytical Catalogue*, 2 vols. (doct.), Oxford, 1992; A.M.L. PRANGSMA-HAJENIUS, *La légende du Bois de la Croix dans la littérature française médiévale*, Assen, 1995; There the motif is linked to her goosefoot—a mutation left to her by her demonic ancestors—which was healed by the touch of the water; see: B. BAERT, *Und mal yr auch eyn gensfuss. The Queen of Sheba's Goose-Foot in Medieval Literature and Art*, in *The Authority in the Medieval West*, ed. M. GOSMAN et al., Groningen, 1999, pp. 175–192.

[98] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, ms. 66; H.H. HILTON, *Seth. An Anglo-Norman Poem* (*Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures*, 3), 1941, p. 57, vv 390–404: 'De son cheval descent en aire;/pus ses soulers fist terer/E nu pé l'ewe passa,/ E al seint tref se genula/E devoutement se enclina/Cum cele ke Deu mult ama./pus est son cheval munté/E al rei Salomun est alé./E kaunt eus ensemble vindrent/Grant conseil ensemble tindrent;/De plusurs choses unt parlé/Ke en escrit ne sunt pas

Norman text seems unlikely. Be that as it may, there is also a literary pendant to the equestrian Queen of Sheba.

It was the Franciscans—together, perhaps, with some of the nobility who still lie buried in the chapel—who commissioned the painting of the Legend of the Cross. This recalls—albeit in a more provincial sense—the context in which the Legend of the Cross produced for the Santa Croce Franciscans and the Alberti family came into being. The frescoes in the Cappella Farfense were probably created in comparative isolation. At that time, in that area, there was really no important artistic orientation towards Tuscany.

The Farfense chapel in Montegiorgio had already been painted when Piero della Francesca commenced his activities in Arezzo, which most probably lasted from 1452 to 1466.[99] Piero della Francesca was another who did not tamely follow the model provided by Gaddi's cycle (diag. 8). He also added the figure of Constantine (figs 88c–d), as well as Judas's punishment in the dry well (fig. 88e). In the cycles that followed the Gaddi model Judas was virtually anonymous, unrecognizable in the group and even not characterized as a Jew. However, despite the inclusion of Constantine and the specific Judas motif it should not be assumed that Piero della Francesca was influenced by the wall paintings in Montegiorgio.

Much has been written about the typological rearrangement Piero della Francesca implemented in his programme, which was probably commissioned by the Bacci family.[100] The reorganization of the theme required a different selection of motifs to make the internal relationships clear.[101] Thus, for example, the punishment of Judas in

trové. Quant assez unt cunseilé,/La dame en son païs est retourné/En vele manere fu le tref remis'.

[99] This is not the place to go into the question to any extent. On this issue see: C. HOPE, *Vasari's Vita of Piero della Francesca and the Date of the Arezzo Frescoes*, in *Città e Corte nell'Italia di Piero della Francesca*, Urbino, 1992, pp. 119–134.

[100] L. SCHNEIDER, *The Iconography of Piero della Francesca's Frescoes Illustrating the Legend of the True Cross in the Church of San Francesco in Arezzo*, in *The Art Quarterly*, 32, 1969, p. 23–48; M.A. LAVIN, *Piero della Francesca and His Legacy* (*Studies in the History of Art* 48), Hanover-London, 1995; IDEM, *Piero della Francesca: San Francesco*, Arezzo-Paris, 1995.

[101] Typological rearrangement:

Heraclius >> Finding of the Cross >> (7) Battle at the Danube >> (8)	prophet Judas emerges from the well >> (6) Annunciation >>	prophet << *Piscina Probatica* (3) << Constantine's dream (4)	<<Seth (1) << Queen of Sheba (2) << Battle at the Milvian Bridge (5)

the dry well is contrasted with the *Piscina Probatica*, the 'living well' (fig. 88b). Della Francesca also inserted a biblical and evangelical scene into the legend. Some have it that the meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba described in 1 Kings 10, 1–13 reflects relations between East and West, which owing to the fall of Constantinople were then extremely precarious (fig. 88a).[102] And the Annunciation draws the message of the Legend of the Cross to its core (fig. 88f). The Incarnation is introduced as a metaphor for the mystery of the sacrifice of the Cross, namely, the saving of man by the Son of God.

Carlo Ginzburg[103] has pointed out the likely influence on the Arezzo cycle of the Council of Ferrara-Florence, where Cardinal Bessarion (1403–1472)[104] signed the Act of Union between Rome and Constantinople on 6 July 1439.[105] On 10 September 1458, Bessarion was named Minister General of the Franciscan Order,[106] and we know that around this time he corresponded with humanists, of whom Giovanni Bacci, the patron of the cycle in Arezzo, was one.[107] In other words, Piero della Francesca's Legend of the Cross was a reflection of diplomatic contacts between East and West.[108] The meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba could provide a very topical reference to the reconciliation that was

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[102] B. DEIMLING, *The Meeting of the Queen of Sheba with Solomon. Crusade Propaganda in the Fresco Cycle of Piero della Francesca in Arezzo*, in *Pantheon*, 53, 1995, pp. 18–28.

[103] C. GINZBURG, *Enquête sur Piero della Francesca. Le Baptême, le cycle d'Arezzo, la Flagellation d'Urbino*, Paris, 1981, pp. 33–63.

[104] C. GINZBURG, op. cit., p. 56. See: L. MOHLER, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann*, Aachen, 1967; J. GILL, *Was Bessarion a Conciliarist or an Unionist Before the Council of Florence*, in *Collectanea byzantina*, Rome, 1977, pp. 201–219; H. VAST, *Le cardinal Bessarion (1403–1472). Etude sur la Chrétienté et la Renaissance vers le milieu du XVième siècle*, Genève 1977; G. FIACCADORI, *Bessarion e l'umanismo* (exh. cat.), Venice, 1994.

[105] S. PFLEGER, op. cit., pp. 102–103.

[106] C. GINZBURG, op. cit., p. 57.

[107] At his death in 1459 the patriarch of Constantinople, Gregorius Melessino, bequeathed his relic of the Cross to none other than Bessarion. In 1472, shortly before his death, the patron of the Franciscans in turn left the relic to the Scuola Grande e della Carità in Venice, where it is still preserved; C. GINZBURG, op. cit., p. 58; L. LABOWSKY, *Bessarion's Library and the Bibliotheca Marciana. Six Early Inventories*, Rome, 1979.

[108] In the fourteen-sixties, programmes representing Constantine's battle and the Finding of the Cross (not the Legend of the Wood of the Cross) also appeared in the churches of the Greek-speaking parts of eastern Europe. The post-Byzantine programmes on Cyprus have been discussed by A. and J. STYLIANOU, *'By This Conquer'*, Nicosia, 1971, pp. 63–107.

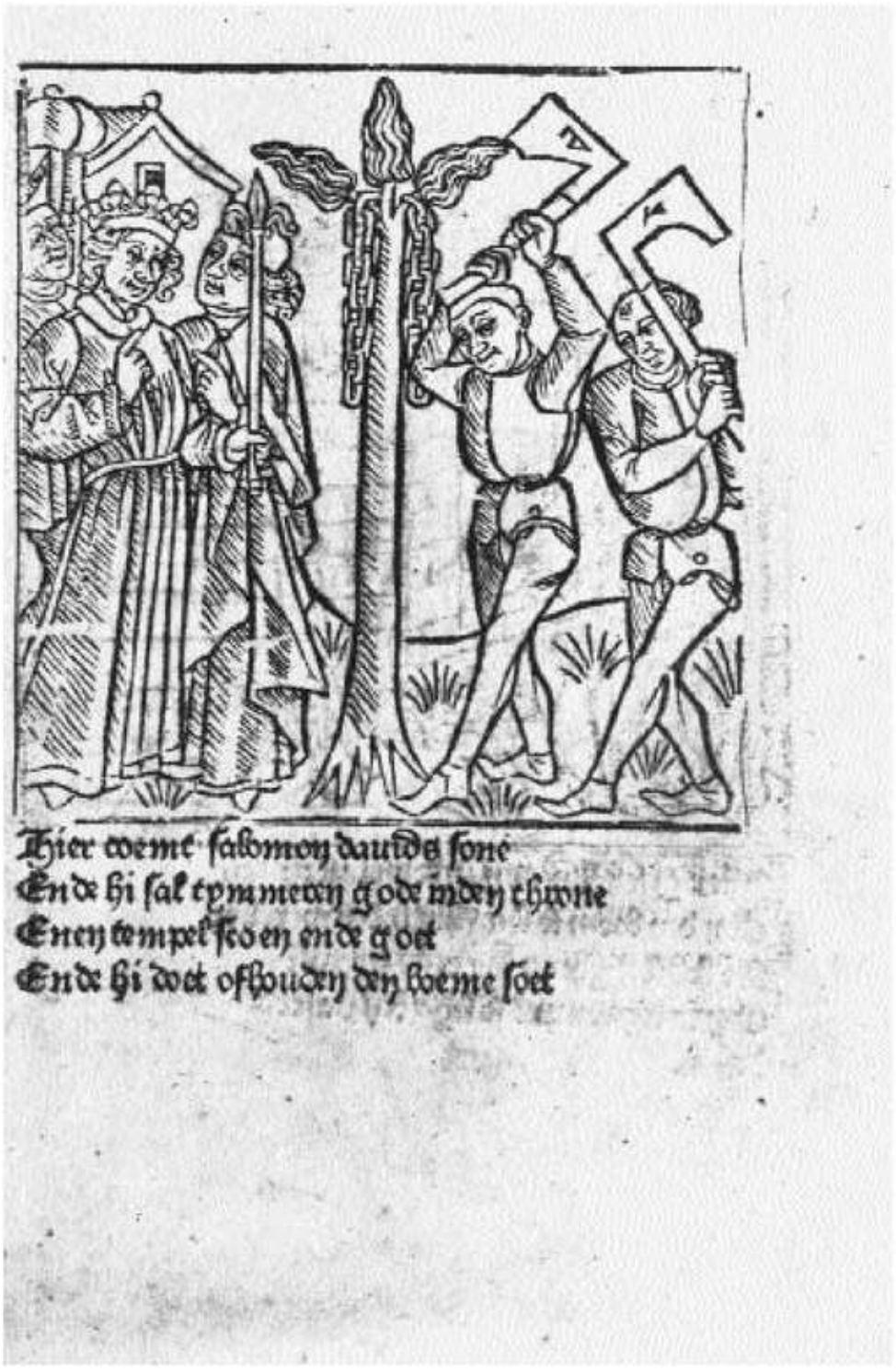


Fig. 87a. *Workmen cut down Solomon's tree. Boec van den Houte*, incunabulum printed by Johan Veldener, Culemborg, 1483. Brussels, Royal Library, no. INC A 1582, woodcut 18.



Fig. 87b. *Carpenters make a plank from the holy wood. Boec van den Houte*, incunabulum printed by Johan Veldener, Culemborg, 1483. Brussels, Royal Library, no. INC A 1582, woodcut 19.

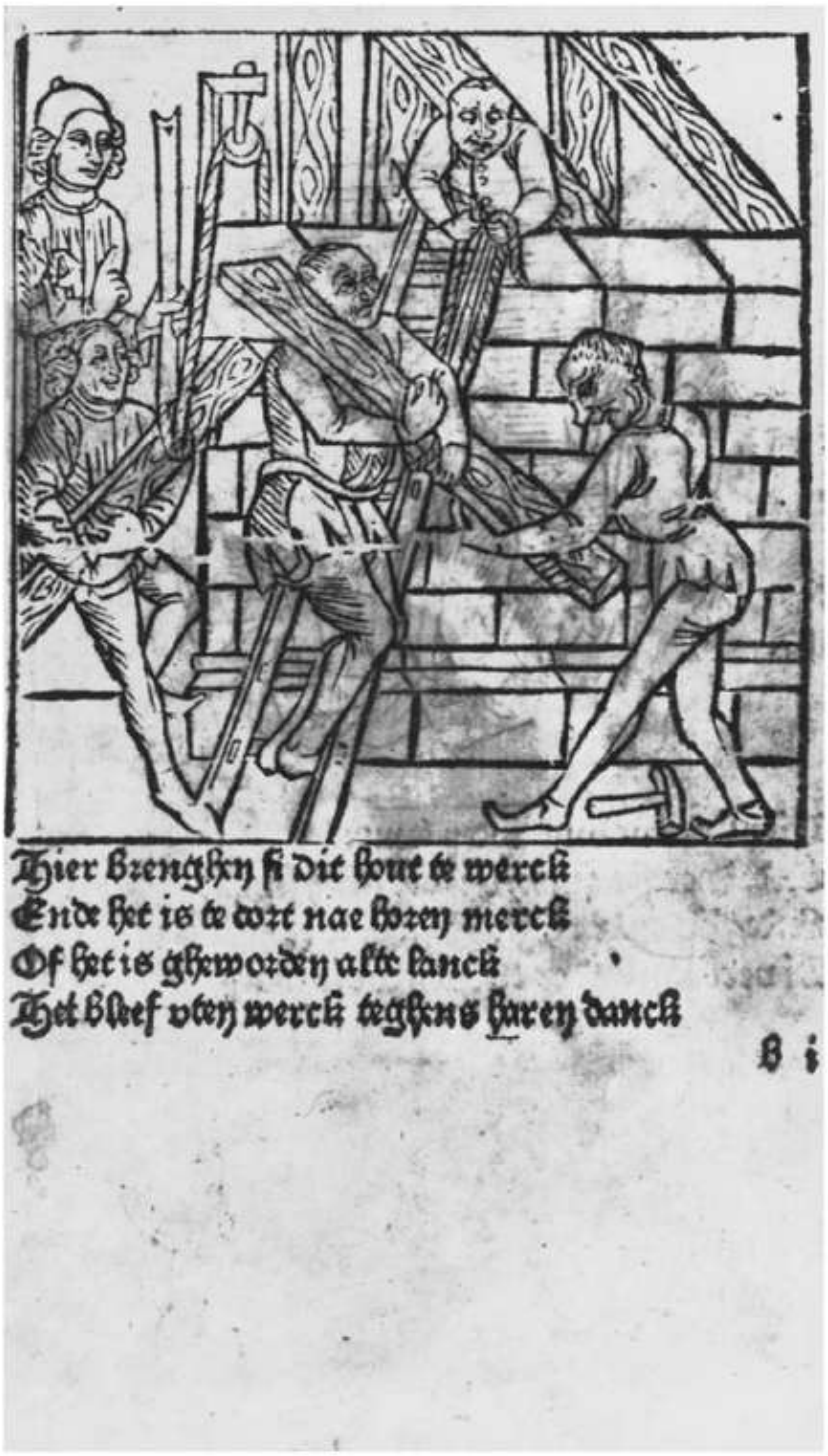


Fig. 87c. *The plank is used for building the Temple. Boec van den Houte,* incunabulum printed by Johan Veldener, Culemborg, 1483. Brussels, Royal Library, no. INC A 1582, woodcut 20.

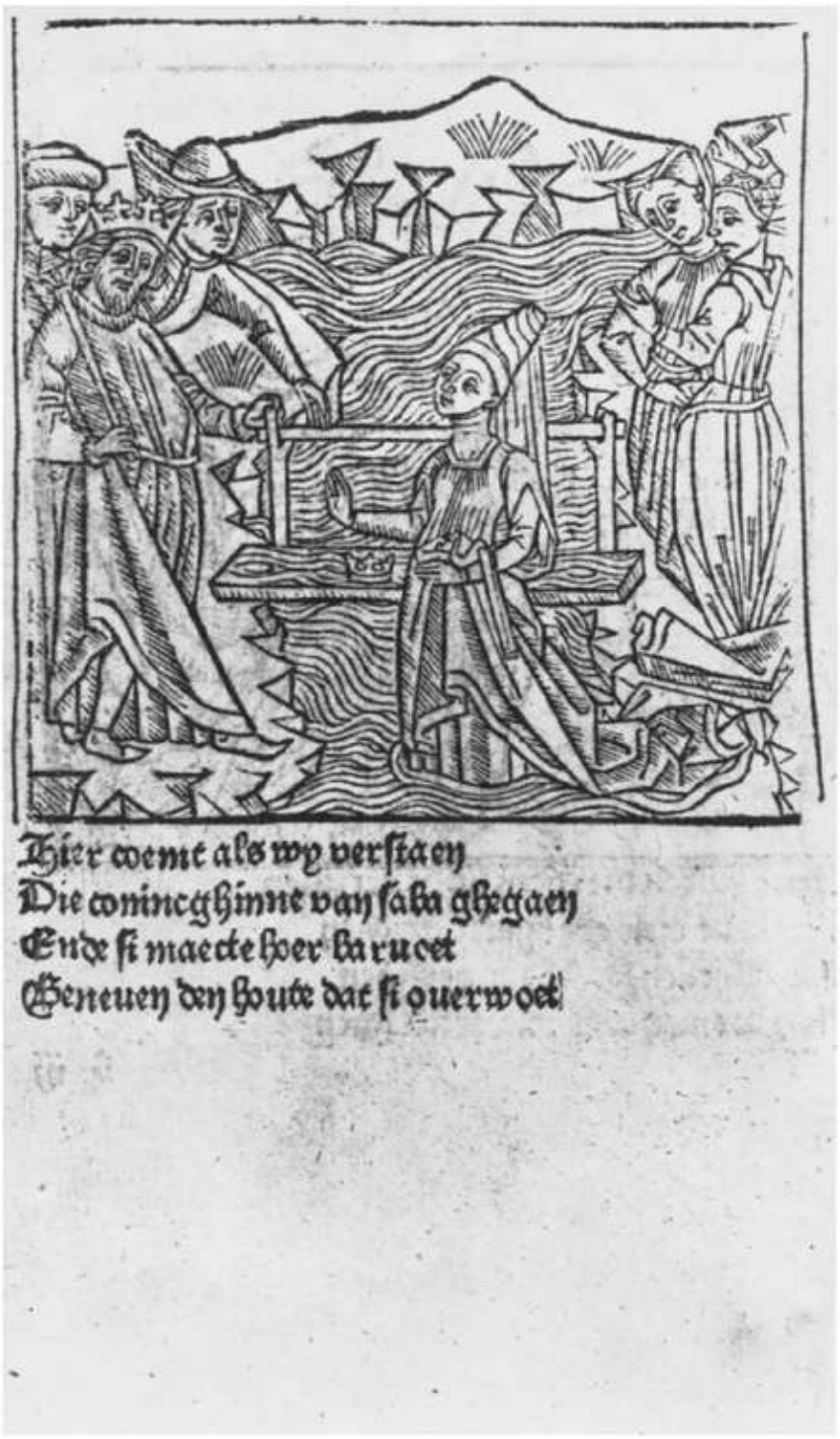


Fig. 87d. *The Queen of Sheba refuses to step on the wood. Boec van den Houte*, incunabulum printed by Johan Veldener, Culemborg, 1483. Brussels, Royal Library, no. INC A 1582, woodcut 25.



Fig. 87e. *The Cross drives out demons. Boec van den Houte,* incunabulum printed by Johan Veldener, Culemborg, 1483. Brussels, Royal Library, no. INC A 1582, woodcut 30.

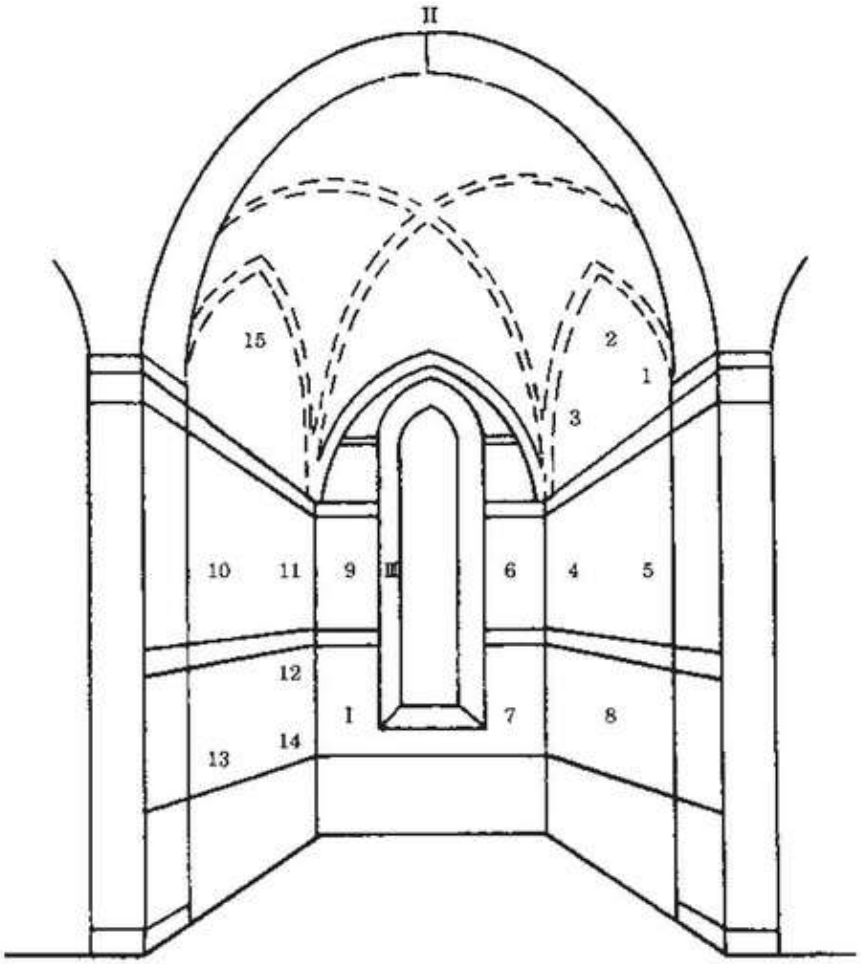


Abb. 82 Arezzo, S. Francesco, Hauptchorkapelle, Schema der Anordnung der Fresken

1 Adam schickt Seth zum Paradies
2 Seth am Paradies
3 Seth pflanzt den Zweig nach dem Tode Adams
4 Verehrung des Holzes durch die Königin von Saba
5 Treffen des Königs Salomo und der Königin von Saba
6 Transport des Holzes
7 Traum des Konstantin
8 Sieg des Konstantin über Maxentius
9 Judas ist geständig und darf den Brunnen verlassen
10 Kreuzauffindung
11 Kreuzprobe
12 Thron des Chosroe
13 Schlacht des Heraklius gegen die Perser
14 Die Hinrichtung des Chosroe
15 Heraklius zieht demütig in Jerusalem ein

I Verkündigung
II Jüngstes Gericht
III Hl. Bernhardin von Siena

Diagram 8. Scheme of the programme of frescoes depicting the Legend of the Cross in the Church of San Francesco (choir) in Arezzo (Piero della Francesca, before 1466). From: S. PFLEGER, *Eine Legende und ihre Erzählformen. Studien zur Rezeption der Kreuzlegenden in der italienischen Monumentalmalerei des Tre- und Quattrocento*, (*Europäische Hochschulschriften, Kunstgeschichte*, 214), Frankfurt-Vienna, 1994, p. 263, fig. 82.

discussed at the Council of Ferrara. Indeed, around 1400 in that city various tondi were created with the same motif.[109]

The Montegiorgio cycle is of an earlier date, but that does not mean that it was uninfluenced by the troubles in Constantinople. The Franciscans were noted for their concern for Christian unity, and the developments in the Byzantine world affected them deeply.[110] Just as would be the case in Arezzo, the Montegiorgio cycle highlighted Constantine, the first Christian emperor, who made Constantinople the capital of Christendom. The Byzantine-Christian world was built on his conversion, thus, in the cycle, the motif also represents the historical tragedy of the impending loss of Constantinople to the Muslims. On the other hand, however, in Montegiorgio—in contrast to Arezzo—the Heraclius episode is missing, which suggests that the issue of Islam was not of primary concern.

There are other elements that may have contributed to the creation of the Legend of the Cross cycle in Montegiorgio. The cycle's identity is determined by the conspicuous presence of Judas Cyriacus.

Judas Cyriacus was particularly venerated in the Marches. He was the patron saint of Ancona, which according to tradition was founded on Mount Venus by Gallia Placidia between 426 and 437.[111] Since the eleventh century the relics of Judas Cyriacus have been preserved in the Cathedral of St Cyriacus, keeping alive the memory of Helena and Jerusalem in the port from which ships regularly set sail for the Holy Land. The devotion to Judas Cyriacus was coupled with an intense devotion to the relic of the Cross in the Marches, an area in which the Franciscans also played a significant role. There is no mention of a Cross relic in the documents of Montegiorgio. However, the Church of San Francesco in Ascoli Piceno preserves a relic of the Cross that is important to the region.[112] We know that around the middle of the fifteenth century Montegiorgio owed feudal

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[109] A. UGUCCIONI, *Salomone e la regina di Saba. La pittura di cassone a Ferrara presenze nei musei Americani*, Ferrara, 1988, passim; J. MIZIOLEK, *The Queen of Sheba and Solomon on Some Early Renaissance Cassone Panels a partiglia dorata*, Florence, 1997.

[110] L. LEHMANN, *Prinzipien Franziskanischer Mission nach den frühen Quellen*, in *Francescanesimo e profezia*, ed. E. COVI, Rome, 1985, p. 144; G. SPIERIS, *Francesco d'Assisi. Profeta dell' incontro tra Occidente e Oriente*, in *Francescanesimo*, op. cit., pp. 453–489

[111] M. POLVERARI, *Ancona e Bisanzio*, Ancona, 1993, pp. 56–57.

[112] B. ORSINI, *Descrizione delle pitture sculture architetture ed oltre cose rara della insigne città di Ascoli*, Perugia, 1790, p. 114.

allegiance to Ascoli Piceno.[113] The regional devotion to Judas Cyriacus and the relic of the Cross must certainly have stimulated the Montegiorgio iconography.

It might even be suggested that in the Montegiorgio Cross legend cycle Judas, rather than Helena, is the protagonist. Of all the cycles examined here, the Montegiorgio cycle is the only one to include the discovery of the Holy Nails. This scene represents the culmination of Judas's conversion; here he at last surrenders himself and is ordained as a bishop. In other words, the motif radicalizes the theme of the 'converted Jew'. Judas—which in fact means 'Jew'—personifies the Judaism that finally turns to Christianity.[114] To Gregory the Great (540–604) there was an eschatological dimension to the conversion of the Jews (Rom. 11, 23–36): the restoration of the new Jerusalem (previewed in the Seth scene), and the *civitas Dei* at the End of Time.[115] The Wessobrunn prayer book, which contains a Carolingian copy of the legend (814), is illustrated with fifteen pen drawings (figs. 6, 11, 15, 16, 17).[116] It could very well be that the monastic text served as a sermon in a climate of conversion offensives against the Jews.[117]

The Franciscans were no strangers to theological anti-Judaism in the late Middle Ages. In no other medieval legend is the turning of the Jew to the Cross made so explicit as in the Wood of the Cross and Finding of the Cross legends. This is less the case in the Heraclius episode, for here the Muslim, not the Jew, is perceived as the antagonist. Is it coincidence that the two parts of the legend involving antagonism towards the Jews were chosen for representation in the Montegiorgio cycle;[118] an antagonism with a 'happy ending':

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[113] In 1455 Ascoli mediated in the conflict between Fermo and Montegiorgio; G. FABIANI, *Ascoli nel quattrocento* (2 vols), Ascoli Piceno, 1958, p. 101.

[114] In the drawings of the Vercelli *canones conciliarum* (ca. 800) (see Chapter II, fig. 7a) the Finding of the Cross meant the beginnings of the imperial protection of *Ecclesia*. Judas, *Synagoga*, submits; Bibliotheca Capitulare, ms. 165, fol. 2r; A. SORBELLI, *Inventari dei manuscritti delle bibliotheche d'Italia*, 19–21, Florence, 1923, p. 117, no. 165; Chr. WALTER, *Les dessins carolingiens dans un manuscrit de Verceil*, in *Cahiers archéologiques* 18, 1968, pp. 99–107.

[115] B. BLUMENKRANZ, *Juifs et Chrétiens dans le monde Occidental. 430–1096*, Paris, 1960, p. 88.

[116] M. RESTLE, *'In hoc signo vincis'. Ein Beitrag zur Illustration des Clm 22059*, in *Per assiduum studium scientiae adipisci Margaritam. Festgabe für Ursula Nilgen zum 65. Geburtstag*, Sankt Ottilien, 1997, pp. 27–43.

[117] B. BLUMENKRANZ, *Le juif médiéval au miroir de l'art chrétien*, Paris, 1966, fig. 3.

[118] The man who roughly pulls Judas by the hair in the Arezzo cycle wears a

conversion and the surrender to *Ecclesia?* Judas Cyriacus is rendered very distinctly in the cycle: he is the only older man with a long beard, the distinguishing trait of the Jew. Did the Montegiorgio Franciscans seek to instruct their congregation on the Jewish question in their chapel? Was it topical there?

From the early decades of the thirteenth century there was an important economic Jewish presence in Montegiorgio and the surrounding area.[119] The San Nicolò *contrade* was home mainly to dealers in linen, wool and hides.[120] But around 1300 the peaceful cooperation between Jews and Christians came to an end. In 1295 the Montegiorgio townsfolk pillaged Jewish goods and chattels. Many Jews fled to Florence. Those that remained did so on a precarious footing. Until late in the fifteenth century tension continued between the Christians and the Jews, who developed various banking enterprises in the time of Sforza rule (1433–1447).[121] It was in this area that the *Monte di Pietà* was created, which was intended to help those unable to pay off the debts incurred on Jewish loans.[122] By the first quarter of the sixteenth century there were hardly any Jews left in the town.

The devotion to Judas Cyriacus as the type of the converted Jew must have been a factor in the strife in Montegiorgio. The Franciscans were sensitive to the anti-Judaistic message on theological grounds. Together with their traditional preference for the Cross legend theme, it provided an appropriate basis for the theme in the Cappella

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hat with the word PRUDENTIUS at the front on a white band. Is this a reference to the Virtue or to Aurelius Prudentius Clemens (4th or 5th century)? Prudentius wrote the *Psychomachia*, the battle between Virtues and Vices, a treatise that was widely disseminated in the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance and was illustrated either with Virtues and Vices fighting one another or with the ladder of Virtues and Vices. At the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) the mendicant orders incorporated the *Psychomachia* into the so-called *summae de paenitentia*. Judas's days in the dry well are also a penance. In this battle of the Virtues Judas is pulled upwards by Prudentius, thus towards the Jewish acceptance of Christ. In Montegiorgio Judas himself clambers out of the dry well up a ladder; L. VAYER, *Problemi iconologici nel ciclo di affreschi di Piero della Francesca ad Arezzo*, in *Arte cristiana*, 78, 1980, pp. 161–168.

[119] M.-L. MOSCATI BENIGNI, *Marche. Itinerari ebei. I luoghi, la storia, l'arte*, Milan, 1996, pp. 104–105.

[120] G. and M. LIBERATI, op. cit., p. 94; C. PACE, *Su la Colonia ebrea di Montegiorgio*, in *Rivista abruzzese*, Teramo, 1902.

[121] G. FABIANI, op. cit., p. 60 ff. No direct relation has been found between Sforza rule and the northern influence in the iconography of the Cappella Farfense.

[122] With thanks to Giuseppe Avarucci of *Studia Picena* (correspondence of 3 December 1999).

Farfense. However, it is striking that in comparison with Tuscany the iconography appeared in the Marches relatively late. Perhaps older cycles have been lost. On the other hand, before the mid-fifteenth century there was hardly an artistic flourishing in that area.[123] Whereas in Tuscany the theme expired with the Arezzo cycle, in the Marches it lived on until the last quarter of the fifteenth century.

In Umbria, between 1460 and 1470, thirteen cartoons of scenes from the Finding of the Cross and the martyrdom of Judas Cyriacus were made for the altar frontal of Ancona Cathedral, possibly by Girolamo di Giovanni and Giovanni Boccati.[124] The textiles were attached to a fifteenth-century Venetian-Byzantine fabric. In the Museo Piersanti in Matelica is an altarpiece with a Crucifixion attributed to Francesco di Gentile da Fabriano (last quarter of the fifteenth century).[125] Below it the story of the Finding of the Cross is told in four scenes on the predella. Flagellants kneel next to the scenes. In the Abbey of Santa Croce dei Conte in Sassoferrato, near Matelica, a polyptych was ordered whose predella was also painted with the legend of the Finding of the Cross. It is attributed to Giovanni Antonio Bellinzoni da Pesaro (mid-fifteenth century).[126]

Iconographically, however, the Montegiorgio cycle exercised no direct influence on these works.[127] The cycle is autonomous, its creation indebted to local impulses, and it was never influential in the way that Gaddi's cycle had been.

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[123] See: A. COLASANTI, *Die Malerei des XV. Jahrhunderts in den italienischen Marken*, Leipzig, s.d.

[124] L. ZANNINI, *Il paliotto di san Ciriaco di Ancona*, in *Studia Picena*, 54, 1–2, 1989, pp. 5–41; IDEM, *L'influsso di Piero in un paliotto ricamato Anconetano*, in *Piero e Urbino e le Corti rinascimentali*, ed. P. dal POGGETTO, Milan, 1992, pp. 419–423, no. 91.

[125] R. VAN MARLE, *The Renaissance Painters of Central and South Italy*, 15, The Hague, 1934, pp. 71–72; G. KAFTAL, op. cit., cols. 541–550, figs. 623, 624, 629; P. ZAMPETTI and G. DONNINI, *Gentile e i pittori di Fabriano*, Fabriano, 1992 (repr. Florence, 1997), pp. 216–217 and p. 240, fig. 51.

[126] Urbino, Pinacoteca Nazionale; G. KAFTAL, op. cit., cols. 541–550; G. DONNINI, *Sassoferrato*, s.l., s.d., p. 172, fig. p. 173; P. ZAMPETTI, *La pittura Marchegiana da Gentile a Raffaello*, Venice, 1970, fig. 124; G.M. CLAUDI, *La rocca di Sassoferrato, sec. XV*, Rome, 1985; A. ANSELMI, *Il Polittico di Santa Croce di Sassoferrato e il suo vero autore Antoni da Fabriano*, in *Miscellanea Storico Artistica di Sassoferrato e dintorni*, 1905, pp. 5–9; P. BERARDI, *Giovanni Antonio Bellinzoni da Pesaro*, Fano, 1988, pp. 123–134; B. CLERI, *Antonio da Fabriano. Eccentrico protagonista nel panorama artistico del Quattrocento marchigiano*, Fabriano, 1997, pp. 147–149.

[127] The theme was probably revived in the Marches towards the end of the 15th century because of the new crusade that Pope Pius II Piccolomini organized from Ancona in 1464, the year of his death; L. ZANNINI, art. cit., p. 23. Zannini refers to a cycle in the San Venanzio at Fabriano. I have not been able to study this

Table 1. Iconographic programmes of the monumental cycles in Italy (14th–15th century).

	Florence 1388–1392	Volterra 1410	Empoli 1424	Montegiorgio ca. 1425	Arezzo before 1466
1. Adam sends Seth to Paradise					*
2. Seth at the gates of Paradise	*	*	?	*	*
3. Seth plants the twig	*	*	?	*	*
4. The tree is cut down				*	
5. The building of the Temple				*	
6. The Queen of Sheba venerates the wood/wades through the river	*	*	*	*/*	*
7. The Queen of Sheba meets Solomon in the Temple					*
8. The wood is buried					*
9. The *Piscina Probatica*	*	*	*		
10. The making of the Cross	*	*	*		
11. Constantine's dream				* (?)	*
12. Constantine and Maxentius in combat at the Milvian Bridge				* (?)	*

Table 1. (*cont.*)

	Florence 1388–1392	Volterra 1410	Empoli 1424	Montegiorgio ca. 1425	Arezzo before 1466
13. Helena's arrival/ Helena questions the Jews/Judas is betrayed				*/*/*	
14. Judas emerges from the dry well				*	*
15. The Finding of the Cross	*	*	*	*	*
16. The Testing of the Cross	*	*	*	*	*
17. Helena venerates the Cross/the finding of the nails				*/*	
18. Helena brings the Cross to Jerusalem	*	*	*	* (?)	
19. Vision of Heraclius	*	*	?		
20. Chosroes steals the relic	*	*	?		
21. Heraclius and the younger Chosroes in single combat	*	*	?		*
22. Chosroes enthroned/ Decapitation of Chosroes	*/*	*/*	*/*		(*)/*
23. Heraclius restores the Cross on horseback	*	*	*		
24. Heraclius restores the Cross on foot	*	*	?		*

North of the Alps. Neglected and diverse

On the walls of the south transept of the parish church of Wiedenest (Cologne, Bergneustadt) is a Cross legend cycle. It occupies the entire east wall and the east half of the south wall.[128] This cycle, whose painter is anonymous, though mentioned in the German *Kunstdenkmäler*, has not hitherto been included in the research of the Legend of the Cross.[129] The fourteen scenes are separated by painted red bands; the points where they intersect are embellished with painted circles. The cycle is read from top left to right; its five registers continue onto the half-painted south wall. Beneath the lowest register,

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cycle. The author explains the 'late appearance of the Judas Cyriacus iconography in the Marches by suggesting, among other factors, a relatively late identification of the patron saint with the 'Finder of the Cross' owing to the fact that the lives of the saint only reached the town in the 15th century. This seems unlikely; the dissemination of the Life of Judas Cyriacus is richly attested to by both literature and iconography in Italo-Byzantine idioms. 1. I refer to a manuscript in the library of Turin with more than sixty illuminated lives of saints, made around 1310 in a workshop in Palermo. The Judas Cyriacus legend was also included in this manuscript, illustrated with ten miniatures in the borders; Bibliotheca Nazionale Universitaria, ms. I.II.17., fols. 134v–136v and the Heraclius legend 203v–205. H. BUCHTHAL, *Early Fourteenth-Century Illuminations from Palermo*, in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 20, 1966, pp. 105–118; IDEM, *Notes on a Sicilian Manuscript of the Early Fourteenth Century*, in *Essays in the History of Art Presented to Rudolf Wittkower*, London, 1967, pp. 36–39; IDEM, *Early Fourteenth-Century Illuminations from Palermo*, in *Art of the Mediterranean World. A.D. 100 to 1400* (*Art History Series*, 5), Washington, 1983, pp. 105–125. 2. I would also mention a now lost early-14th-century Finding of the Cross cycle in the chancel of a church referred to as San Eufemia, possible the curch of that name in Rome, now destroyed. The cycle supplements the Italo-Byzantine trajectory with the Judas Cyriacus iconography. The seven frescoes were copied in a 16th-century manuscript; Rome, Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, cod. vat. ross. lat. 1168. H. TIETZE, *Die illuminierten Handschriften der Rossiana in Wien-Lainz*, n.p., 1911, pp. 163–164. 3. On an altarpiece in Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum, various saints' lives are combined with a Testing of the Cross; N.K. MORAN, *A Trecento Panel with Byzantine Elements in Canada*, in *Pantheon*, 50, 1992, pp. 5–10. 4. A Finding of the Cross cycle in the cave Church of Andria, Apulia, also suggests an Italo-Byzantine influence; B. MOLAJOLI, *La cripta di S. Croce in Andria*, in *Atti e memoria della società Magna Grecia. Bizantina-Medievale*, 1, 1934, pp. 25–35.

[128] In the crossing vault is an image of the Last Judgment; in the choir, fragments of the Twelve Apostles, the Adoration of the Magi and a saint with a staff (Severinus?) are still visible. Christ's Passion is painted in the north transept; W. HANSMANN, *Die evangelische Kirche in Bergneustadt-Wiedenest*, s.l., 1989, pp. 6–8.

[129] E. RENARD, *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Kreise Gummersbach, Waldbröl und Wipperfürth* (*Die Kunstdenkmäler der Rheinprovinz*, 5, 1), Düsseldorf, 1900, pp. 56–59; *Jahrbuch der Rheinischen Denkmalpflege*, 8/9, 1932, p. 55; 10/11, 1934, p. 199; 12, 1935, p. 369; 25, 1965, p. 330 ff.; D. RENTSCH, *Oberbergische Kreis*, 1 (*Die Denkmäler des Rheinlandes*, 10), Düsseldorf, 1967, pp. 91–96; H.-W. MEHLAU, *Erneuerung der Dorfkirche in Wiedenest, Oberbergische Kreis*, in *Kunst und Kirche*, 31, 1968, pp. 27–31; H.E. KUBACH and A. VERBEEK, *Romanische Baukunst an Rhein und Maas. Katalog der vorromanischen und romanischen Denkmäler*, 2, Berlin, 1976, p. 1245.

and at the bases of the ribs, are stylized tree motifs.[130] The wall paintings, created by a mixed technique of *affresco* and *secco*, are predominantly tinted in red, green and ochre. They are badly damaged, particularly those in the lower zones, so that details and faces can no longer be recognized. In 1932 the paintings were discovered and overpainted. In 1962 the overpainting was removed and in 1985 the paintings were cleaned.[131]

The dating is derived from a document which states that in 1455 John, Vicar General of Cologne, consecrated the chancel, which had been renovated and extended in 1452, in the names of the Holy Cross and St Severinus. The high altar was dedicated to the Holy Cross, St Severinus, St Peter and St Paul, and All Saints. It is not certain whether the wall paintings were completed in time for the consecration in 1455. But it is certain that the church was already dedicated to the Holy Cross before the alterations, for a document of 1439 mentions that Diderick Hackenbergh and his wife Gryte left their estate to the *hilgen cruce und der hilgen kercken van Wydenest*.[132] An old legend, which in fact provides the foundation legend of the church, tells that in the twelfth century a crusader gave a splinter of the Cross to the church, which was independent of Gummersbach until 1154. In the churches of Cologne, too, various relics of the Cross were venerated.[133]

In the top register on the east wall Seth's meeting with the angel at the gate of a walled and wooded Paradise takes place (fig. 89a). The gate is in the centre. Hat in hand, Seth receives a dry twig from the angel. In a mid-fifteenth-century manuscript containing an illustrated *Eva und Adam* by Lutwin (late thirteenth century) Seth carries a very similar hat (fol. 73v) (fig. 90c).[134] In the background are

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[130] Centrally placed on vault above the chancel are paintings of two three-leaved clovers, a tree with vines and a tree in flower. On the vault above the Passion of Christ are four identical dry trees. On the vault above the Legend of the Cross two trees with vines are repeated, a rose tree and a dry tree which, in contrast to the other dry trees, has a trilobate leaf at the top. Besides being decorative these stylized trees also function as typologies. The three-leaved clover refers to the Trinity. We may recall that in the *Legenda* tradition Seth received a twig that branched into three. The vine refers to the Eucharist and the rose to Mary.

[131] W. HANSMANN, op. cit., p. 3.

[132] Ibid.

[133] A. FROLOW, *La relique de la vraie croix. Recherches sur le développement d'un culte*, Paris, 1961, passim.

[134] Vienna, *Nationalbibliothek*, Codex Vindob. 2980. M.B. HALFORD, *Illustration and Text in Lutwin's Eva und Adam. Codex Vindob. 2980*, Stuttgart, 1980.

three trees with the same umbrella-like crowns as those within the walls of Paradise.[135] The ground is sprinkled with flowers. Paradise is represented as a *hortus conclusus*.[136]

In the second register, Adam lies on his deathbed. With a theatrical flourish Seth proffers the twig. Eve is also present, wearing a red headscarf. In the next scene, Seth plants the twig, which now has several leaves, on Adam's grave. Redemption is revealed in the twig's fertility; a redemption that springs from Adam's grave. Two other graves can be seen, each with a small painted cross. A simple wall with a gateway suggests that here a contemporary churchyard is used to indicate the biblical Hebron. The repetition of the twig at the deathbed and on the grave also features in the Lutwin manuscript (fol. 77 and fol. 98v) (figs. 90d and 90h).[137] The *Legenda Aurea* says that when Seth returned from Paradise Adam was already dead, and that Seth then planted the twig in his father's mouth. In the Wiedenest wall painting it is not clear whether Adam still lives or not. Seth's dramatic gesture could well indicate his mourning for his father. A miniature in the Hours of Catherine of Cleves (between 1442 and 1445) shows Adam instructing his son from his bed (fol. 199) (fig. 86a), as he likewise does in the Lutwin manuscript (fol. 64v) (fig. 90a).[138] This is followed by miniatures illustrating the planting

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[135] This might be a cedar. A. BERNATZKY, *Tree Ecology and Preservation*, New York, 1978, pp. 2–9, pl. 1, shows in his introduction the oldest trees in the world ('Trees in the history of civilisation'): a cedar that is thousands of years old in Lebanon resembles the type of tree depicted in these murals.

[136] In the Visions of Tondal (1149), the account of the hereafter seen through the eyes of the Irish knight Tondal written by the monk Andrius of Regensburg, there is a description of a 'waiting room' to Paradise for the 'good, but not yet very good', which can be related to the scene. It is a simple enclosed garden full of green trees. The 'Visions' was still very popular in the late Middle Ages, as is apparent from the countless copies in manuscript and print. The text was also translated into various vernaculars. This 'almost paradise' is illustrated in the manuscript of the Visions of Tondal made for Margaret of York (ca. 1475); J.P. Getty Museum, ms. 30, Simon Marmion?, fol. 34v. R.S. WIECK, *The Vision of Tondal and the Visionary Tradition in the Middle Ages*, in *The Vision of Tondal from the Library of Margaret of York*, Malibu, 1990, pp. 3–7 and fig. An angel brings Tondal to the gate into the garden. Within he sees a wood, with the Fountain of Life in the middle of it. This last motif is not represented in Wiedenest. Nevertheless a connection between the figure of Tondal and that of Seth comes to mind; both are initiated into the supernatural and Paradise.

[137] Fol. 82r and 89v are respectively dedicated to the laying in the tomb and the closing of the tomb. The drawing with the twig on the tomb on fol. 98v illustrates the passage in Lutwin's text in which the poor growth of the tree is lamented

[138] New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 917; F. GORISSEN, op. cit., p. 105, pp. 494–525, pp. 959–961 and pp. 999–1001; J. PLUMMER, op. cit., nos. 79–87.



Fig. 90a. *Adam summons Seth, Eve and the rest of his children to his deathbed. Eva und Adam,* Lutwin, 15th century. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindob. 2980, fol. 64v.

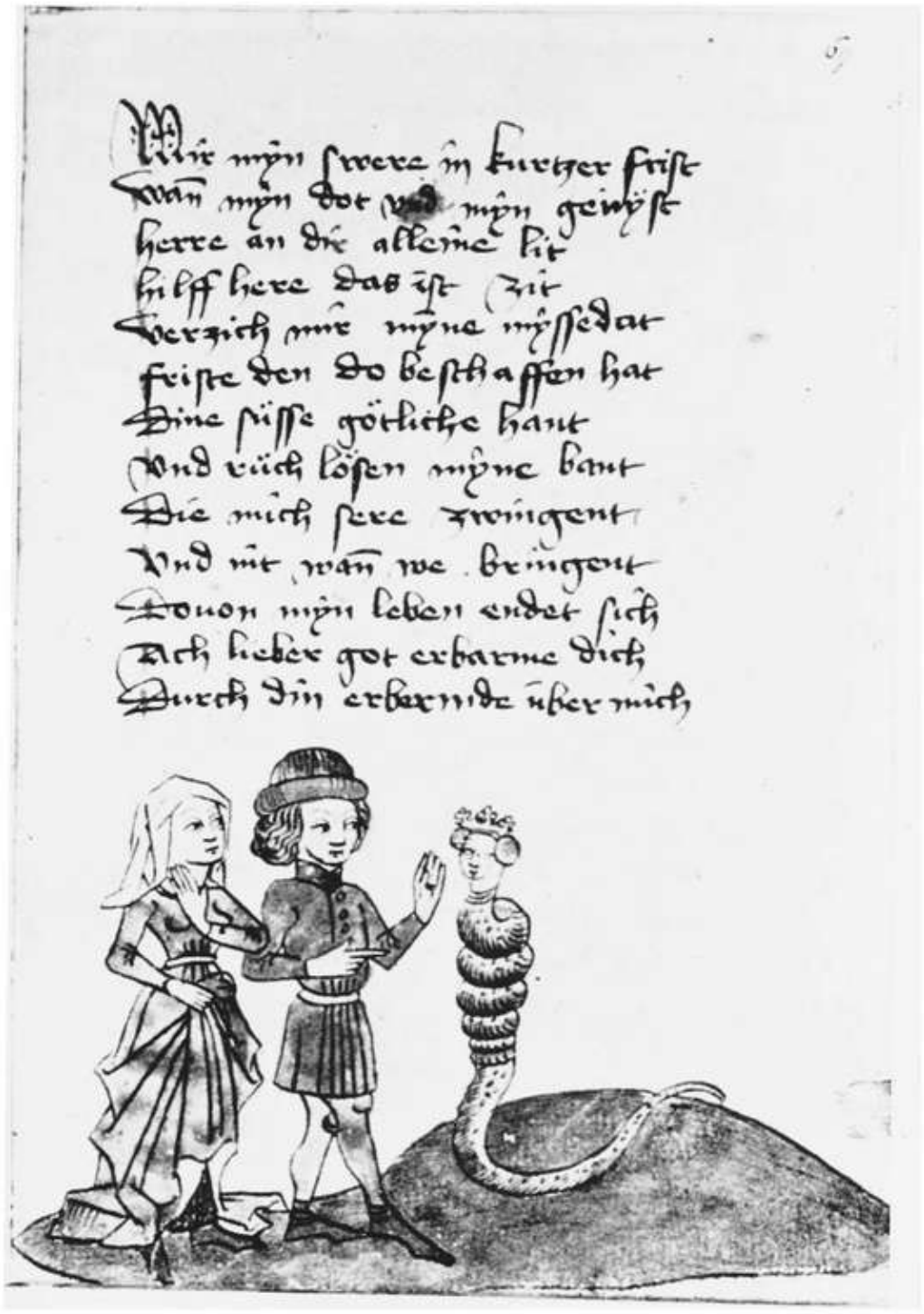


Fig. 90b. *On their way to Paradise Seth and Eve are challenged by a serpent. Eva und Adam,* Lutwin, 15th century. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindob. 2980, fol. 69r.



Fig. 90c. *Seth meets the guardian of Paradise and receives a twig, Eva and Adam*, Lutwin, 15th century. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindob. 2980, fol. 73v.



Fig. 90d. *Seth shows the twig to the dying Adam. Eva und Adam*, Lutwin, 15th century. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindob. 2980, fol. 77.

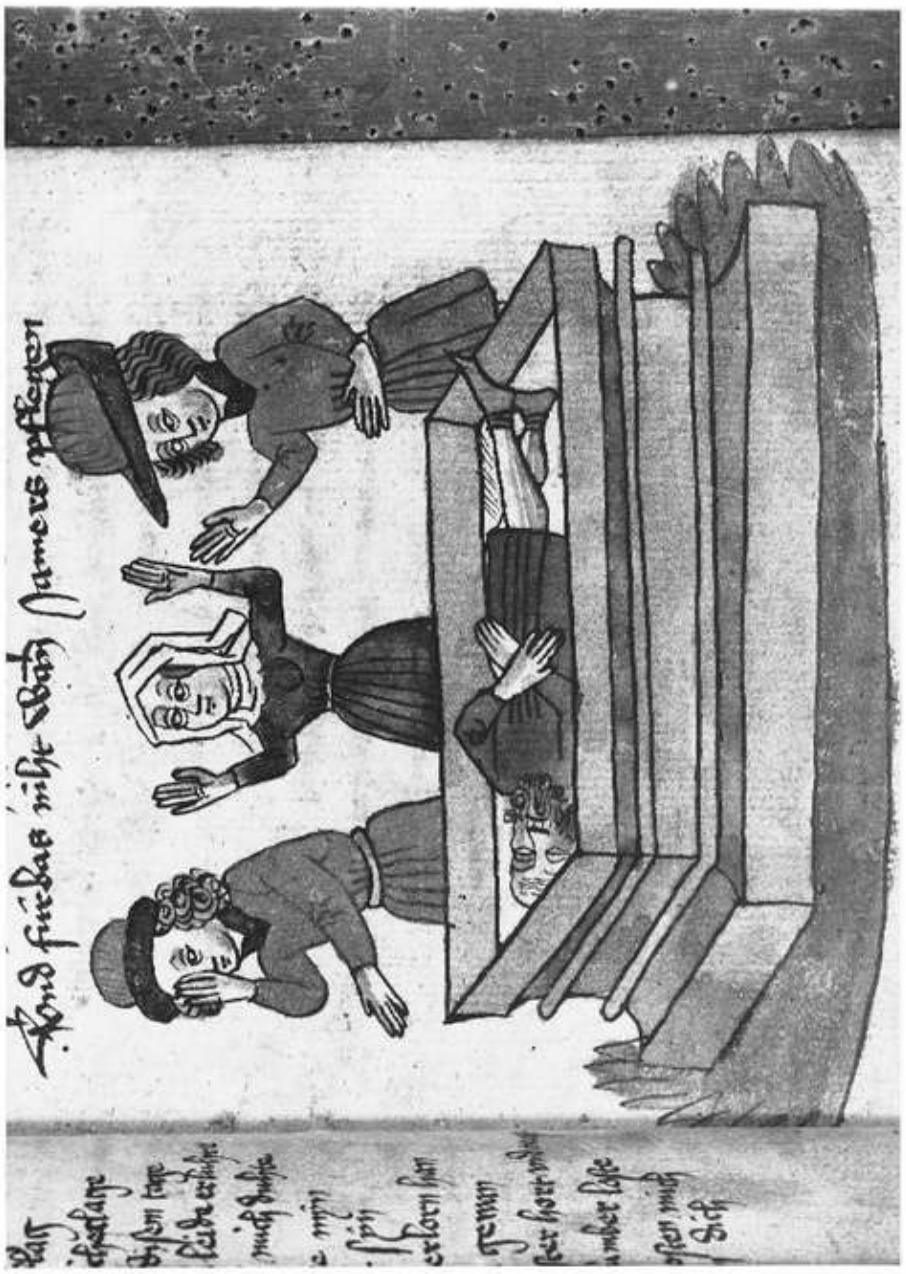


Fig. 90e. *Eve and her children mourn Adam's death. Eva und Adam*, Lutwin, 15th century. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindob. 2980, fol. 82.



Fig. 90f. *Seth and Eve seal Adam's tomb. Eva und Adam*, Lutwin, 15th century. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindob. 2980, fol. 89v.

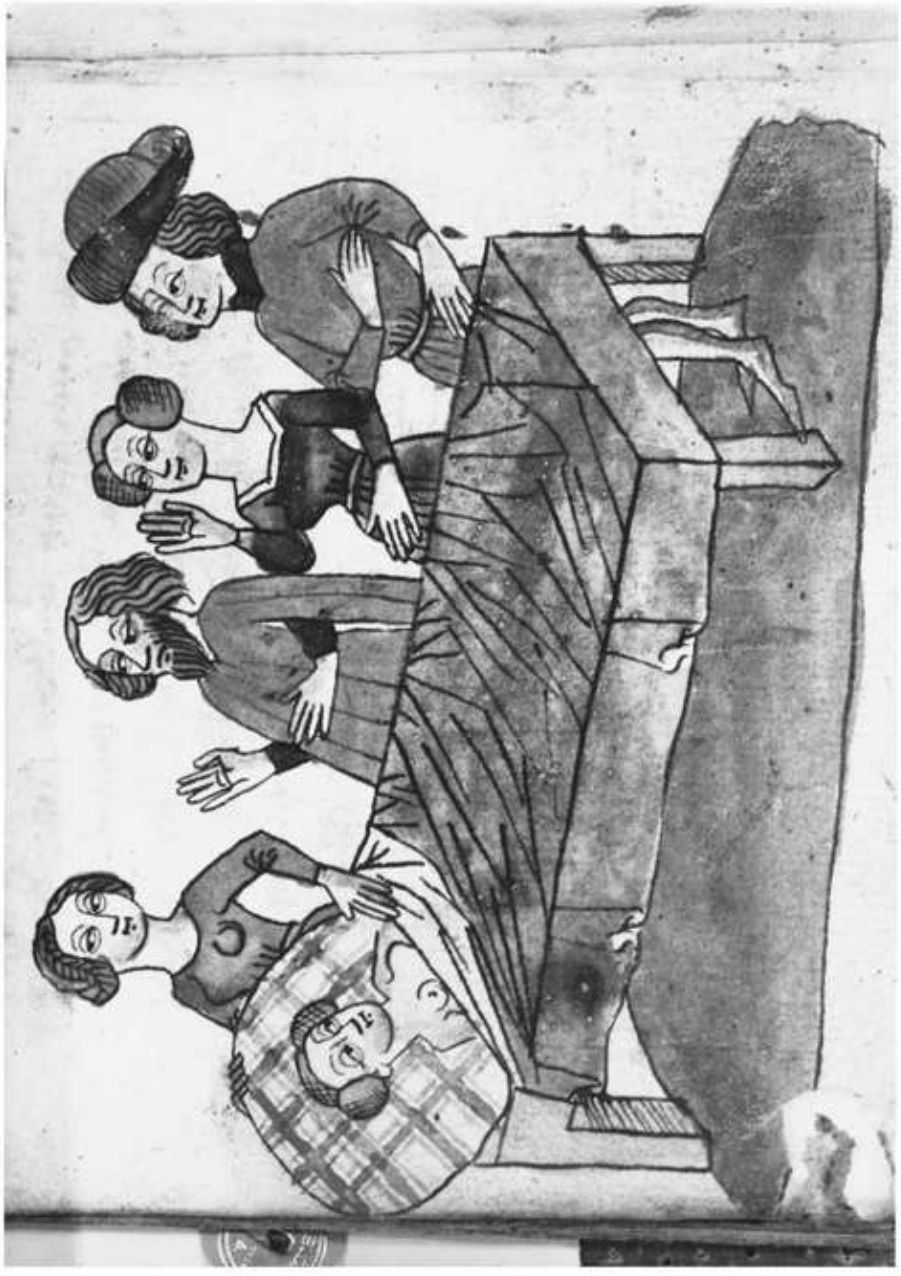


Fig. 90g. *Eve summons her children to her deathbed. Eva und Adam*, Lutwin, 15th century. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindob. 2980, fol. 94v.



Fig. 90h. *Adam's children gather round the new Tree of Life that grows from their father's tomb. Eva und Adam*, Lutwin, 15th century. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindob. 2980, fol. 98v.

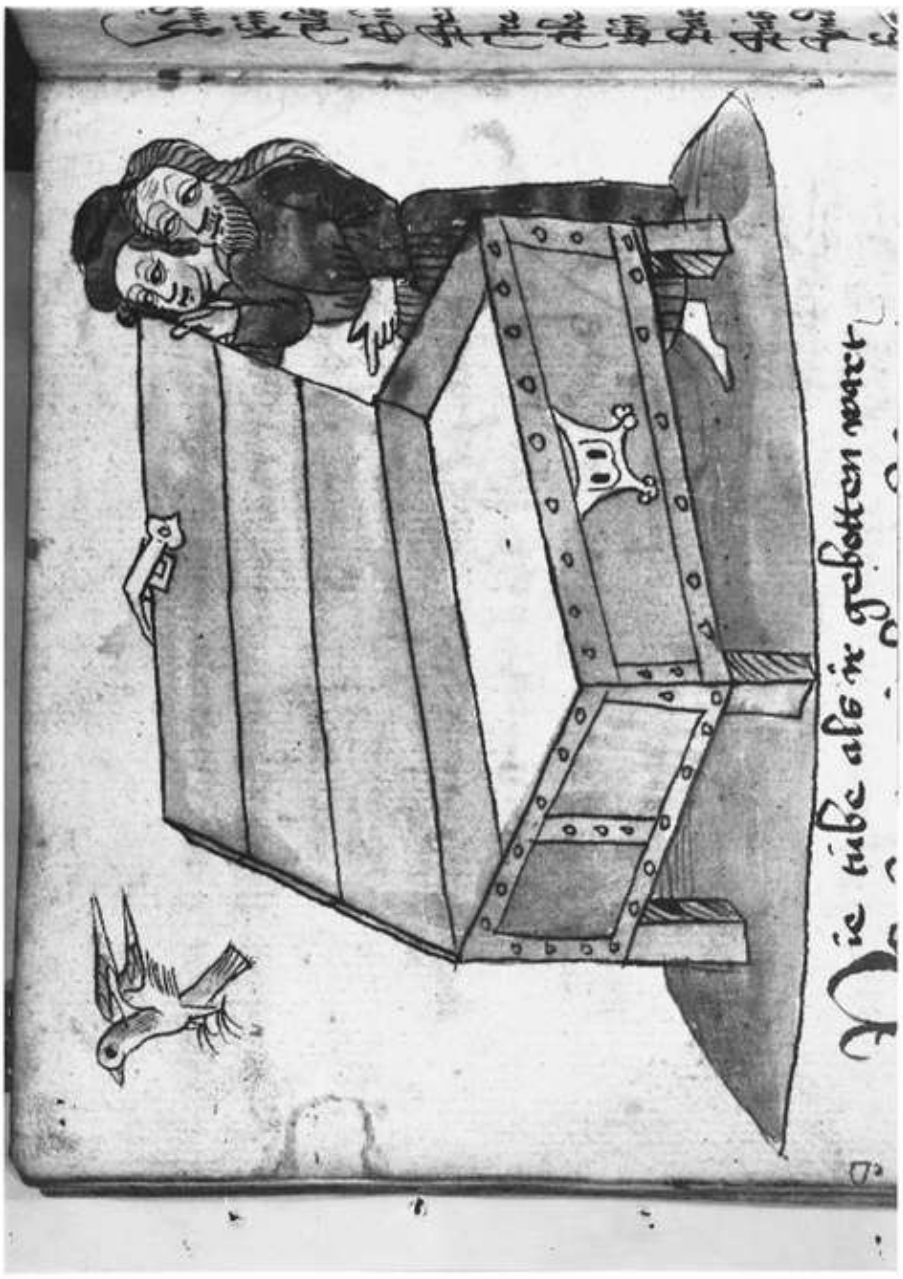


Fig. 90i. *Noah releases the dove, Eva und Adam*, Lutwin, 15th century. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindob. 2980, fol. 104v.

of the twig on Adam's tomb (fol. 207) (fig. 86c) and the growing of the twig from this tomb (fol. 210) (fig. 86d). In the so-called Helena window of ca. 1410 in Erfurt Cathedral Seth receives the twig and plants it on Adam's grave (Adam appears in neither scene), using a spade to do so (fig. 91).[139] In the Italian cycles Adam's death and his burial with the twig were combined. Only Piero della Francesca included Adam giving his son directions to Paradise, though he did not place Adam on his deathbed. In the illustrated manuscript of Mandeville's travels Seth receives a golden twig bearing three fruits from an angel who appears at the gate of a large walled garden, just as in the Wiedenest wall painting.[140] There are birds in the leafy trees. Here, Seth wears his hat on his back. The bushes outside the *hortus conclusus* are leafless and dry (fig. 92a). In the following miniature Seth buries his father. The grave is prepared but first Seth places the twig in Adam's mouth (fig. 92b). A crowd of mourners looks on; one clutches his head, another covers his mouth. The scene accords with the Italian tradition.

In the second register's third scene two labourers wield their axes to cut down the tree for the building of the Temple. In the background two figures observe the proceedings. Is one of these Solomon? This motif also appears in the Hours of Catherine of Cleves (fol. 212) (fig. 86e), the Montegiorgio cycle (fig. 84b) and the woodcuts of the *Boec van den Houte* (fig. 87a). In the book of hours and the Montegiorgio painting the tree is felled by one man, and Solomon

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[139] Seth at the Garden of Eden and Seth plants the twig on Adam's grave (1), followed by Moses and the brazen serpent beside the Crucifixion (2), Constantine sees a cross in a dream (3), the Finding of the Cross (4), the Testing of the Cross (5) and Heraclius mounted with the Cross before the gate of Jerusalem (no humble restitution) (6). John 3, 1–15, on the Cross erected like the brazen serpent, was read on 3 May and 14 September. The Mosan altar cross in London (British Library), which is the reverse of the altar cross covered with enamels depicting the Finding of the Cross now in Berlin (Staatliche Museen, Kunstgewerbemuseum), of 1160–1170, shows at the top Moses and Aaron with the brazen serpent (Num. 21, 6–9). This is a well-known type of the Crucifixion; K. BECKER, et al., *Die Stadt Erfurt. Dom. Severikirche. Peterskloster. Zitadelle*, vol. I, Burg, 1928, pp. 148–153 and figs.; E. DRACHENBERG, *Die mittelalterliche Glasmalerei im Erfurter Dom*, 2 vols (*Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi. Deutsche Demokratische Republik*, 1.2), Vienna-Graz, 1983, vol. 2, pp. 340–370.

[140] London, British Library, Ms. 24189, fol. 13, fol. 13v. The manuscript is a Czech translation by Vavrinec of Brezová, presumably made for King Wenceslas IV; J. KRASA and P. KUSSI, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville. A Manuscript in the British Library*, London-New York, 1983, pln. 9–10, p. 12. Mandeville relates the death of Adam and the twig of Seth in relation to the four sorts of wood of which the Cross was made.



Fig. 91. *Seth plants the twig.* Lower section of the 'Helena window', ca. 1410. Erfurt, Cathedral.



Fig. 92a. *Seth receives the twig from the angel.* Travels of Sir John Mandeville, 1410–1420. London, British Library, Ms. 24189, fol. 13.



Fig. 92b. *Seth plants the twig in Adam's mouth.* Travels of Sir John Mandeville, 1410–1420. London, British Library, Ms. 24189, fol. 13v.

is present in both cases. In the *Boec van den Houte*, on the other hand, two labourers, an onlooker and Solomon are depicted, as in Wiedenest. But in Wiedenest Solomon and his fellow onlooker stand on the right, and the labourers work opposite each other. In the woodcut the tree has three individual tops. The iconography of the *Boec van den Houte* is based on the *Legenda*-type poem *Van den drie Gaerden* (1290–1330), produced in the circle of Jacob van Maerlant.[141] The poem tells how David brought to Jerusalem three separate twigs which, once planted in the city, miraculously grew together into a single tree. The chain that showed the tree's growth is also depicted in the woodcut. It can be seen that the tree trunk in the Wiedenest wall painting also branches into three, though beneath a single crown of the same umbrella shape as the trees in Paradise in the first scene.

In a rather popular, badly damaged mural cycle in a wayside chapel near Duttenberg, on the River Neckar (Wimpfen, Heilbronn), the scenes just mentioned are also depicted. The cycle, which includes six scenes from the Wood of the Cross legend and seven from the Finding of the Cross, is presented in two registers on the chapel's north wall. An inscription in the chancel reading '1485' is assumed to be the date of the wall paintings. The chapel was dependent on the Dominican monastery of Wimpfen, which had been dedicated *zum heiligen Kreuz* since 1270. 3 May and 14 September were among the monastery's most important feast days, and Cross relic processions were also organized on those dates. Charters of the imperial city of Wimpfen dated 1475 and 1483 refer to the Duttenberg vineyards as being *bei den Weingärten am Kapellenweg* and *bei den Kreuzackern*.[142] From 1484, Duttenberg belonged to the Teutonic Order.[143] It is possible that the paintings were produced to mark this transfer. Combined with the local devotion to the Cross, which dated from the

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[141] L. HERMODSSON (ed. and intr.), *Dat Boec van den Houte. Eine mittelniederländische Dichtung von der Herkunft des Kreuzes Christi*, Uppsala-Wiesbaden, 1959; B. BAERT, *Het 'Boec van den Houte'*, *o.c.*

[142] G.S. ADELMANN, *Die Kreuzkapelle bei Duttenberg und zur Geschichte des Heiligen Kreuzes*, in *Nachrichtenblatt der Denkmalpflege in Baden-Württemberg*, 3, 1960, pp. 5–9. The wall paintings were restored in 1959. The present Gothic chapel dates from the second half of the 15th century.

[143] In 1634 Lieutenant-Colonel Augustin Oswald von Liechtenstein of the Teutonic Order had a handsome coat of arms with a black cross on a white field (like that of the Teutonic Order) added to the chapel ceiling

thirteenth century, the choice of this subject would have been further encouraged.

The cycle begins with the meeting between Seth and the angel at the gates of Paradise (fig. 93a).[144] (The scene, like the rest, has suffered badly.) A white angel gives a twig to Seth, who wears a short, dark cloak. Both figures appear again in a space with a red background beyond the gateway (within Paradise thus?). Seth seems to be seated while the angel addresses him. Between the two, a few green patches can be discerned. Was this once a scene representing one of Seth's visions—of the cosmic tree, for instance?

The wood's destiny is clearly articulated in the succeeding scene. Here the twig has grown into a tree on Adam's grave (fig. 93b). The tree is a most exceptional shape, having a small round green crown in the middle and on either side a long upward-pointing leaf or green branch. In the Lutwin manuscript Seth also receives a twig that branches into three, each branch ending in turn with three leaves. In this way the shape of the Cross is prefigured (the Y-shaped cross) but the shape is also an allusion to the Trinity. According to the traditions of the *Legenda* group the twig was composed of cedarwood (for the Father), pine (for the Holy Spirit) and cypress (for the Son).

The contours of Adam's body have been carved into the stone lid of his tomb, following the custom of the day. The Lutwin manuscript is yet again recalled: Seth and two (?) others stand behind the tomb. The twig has now grown into a tree. Two leaf-covered branches emerge from its *tau*-shaped trunk, so it could equally well be described as a cross with two green shoots. In the next frame this scene with Adam's tomb is repeated but the remarkable 'Cross-tree' is being cut down by two men, one on either side (fig. 93c). The episode in between, in which David has brought the tree from Hebron to Jerusalem, is thus not represented here. In his travels (1346–1350), Niccolò da Poggibonsi situates this event in Hebron, on Adam's tomb itself.[145] The *Libro d'oltramare* was translated into

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[144] I am grateful to the inhabitants of Duttenberg, who gave me access to the chapel (early July 1994). Two windows added later have almost entirely destroyed some scenes. The windows were probably put in before 1582, given an inscription of that date of a certain Hannez Veit Götnner and Anna Göttnerin, and given the fact that the window frames are adorned with late-16th-century paintings: St Sebastian, Crucifixion, St Anne and a Mantle Madonna.

[145] B. BAGATTI, op. cit., p. 68.

German in Nuremberg between 1449 and 1453.[146] The cycle's 'accelerated' rendering could perhaps have been influenced by travel accounts of the Holy Land that were known in Germany.

By means of this exceptional iconographic 'Cross-tree' the tree's destiny is made clear.[147] The visual formula can be situated against a literary and iconographic background. Niccolò da Poggibonsi's *Libro d'oltramare* and its German translation describe the apple tree of Eden near the city of Damiata. Every twenty days the tree bears new sweet fruits, and Niccolò specifies that the Cross can be perceived in the shape of the tree, as he has seen with his own eyes.[148] The Franciscan does not explain how the apple tree got there from Eden.[149] The vagueness between the 'imaginary' Eden and the 'real' vestiges of this paradise is typical of the travels of the fourteenth century. The naturalism of the pilgrims' reporting is interchangeable with mystical metaphor and allegorical visions of Paradise. In Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pèlerinage de l'âme* (1355–1358) a pilgrim on the way from Purgatory to Heaven sees other pilgrims playing with an apple under a green tree. An angel explains that these other 'souls' find solace in playing with such fruits (vv. 5591–5616).[150] In an interpolation in the chronicle of Rudolf von Ems (or *Christherrechronik*, before 1385), now kept in Heidelberg under the title *Adams Büsse*, it is told that a *Wurcz* (a fruit) will grow on a branch

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[146] London, British Library, Egerton Ms. 1900; C.D.M. COSSAR, *The German Translation of Niccolò da Poggibonsi's Libro d'oltramare* (*Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik*, 452), Göppingen, 1985, p. 1 and p. 95 for the relevant passage.

[147] The same sort of thing is attempted in the Hours of Catherine of Cleves: a separate scene is given to the tree on Adam's grave; Adam's skull lies at its roots, just as it lies at the foot of the Cross at the Crucifixion (fol. 210).

[148] B. BAGATTI, op. cit., p. 143: 'questo bene scernevo io'; C.D.M. COSSAR, op. cit., p. 158, ll. 15–16: 'Nach der leng nach der twerch so vint man das zaichen dez kreutzes darijnne vnd das han ich gesechen'

[149] Elsewhere he situates the Seth motif in the context of the convent of the Holy Cross on the edge of Jerusalem.

[150] E.S. GREENHILL, *The Child in the Tree. A Study of the Cosmological Tree in Christian Tradition*, in *Traditio*, 10, 1954, pp. 354–357. The earliest manuscript dates from the 15th century: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. fr. 602. Editions and translations: J. FLYNN, *Pilgrimage of the Soul. An Edition of the Caxton Imprint* (doct.), Auburn, 1973; R.P. McGERR, *The Pilgrimage of the Soul. A Fifteenth Century English Prose Translation of le Pèlerinage de l'âme*, 2 vols, New York, Garland, 1990; J.J. STÜRZINGER, *Le Pèlerinage de l'âme*, London, 1895. See also: S.L. GALPIN, *On the Sources of Guillaume de Deguileville's Pèlerinage de l'âme*, in *Pierpont Morgan Library. Annales*, 25, 1910, pp. 275–308

of the Tree of Knowledge and that the branches will soon develop in a very singular way, into a tree in the shape of a cross.[151] The tree whose trunk is in the shape of a cross, or a tree with a cross between its branches, is also an iconographic motif found in the mystical devotional books of the fifteenth century (figs. 94a–b). The tradition contextualizes the soul's journey to Paradise. The ultimate longing of the soul is for Paradise or the 'garden of devotion'. The soul can enter Paradise by means of the worship of the Cross.[152] Thus the iconographic contamination 'Cross-Tree of Life' also alludes to the mystical union between the Cross and Paradise for which the soul longs.

Thus it appears that in the high Middle Ages not only was the familiar typology between the Tree of Life or Tree of Knowledge and the Cross subject to numerous variants, but that whimsical motifs also overran the various literary genres. The Cross-tree is the core of a tangled literary-historical cluster in which the (modern) dividing lines between realism and symbolism are extremely blurred. The many connections between genres and motifs have produced a visual residue. The Duttenberg Cross-tree is an example of this.[153]

The programme in Wiedenest continues on the south wall with the building of the Temple (fig. 89b). A long plank is handed up to a fellow who sits on the as yet unfinished wall; another man (Solomon?) gives directions. The construction of the Temple is depicted both in Montegiorgio and in the *Boec van den Houte*.[154] The wall painting in Wiedenest again shows similarities with the *Boec*. There too a plank

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[151] A.R. MILLER, op. cit., p. 195.

[152] Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Res. 169: a Middle Dutch translation of Pierre d'Ailly's 'Le jardin amoureux de l'âme'; R.L. FALKENBURG, *The Fruit of Devotion. Mysticism and the Imagery of Love in Flemish Paintings of the Virgin and Child. 1450–1550* (*Oculi*, 5), Amsterdam-Philadelphia, 1994, pp. 36–37, figs. 47–48.

[153] Further in the cycle: the Queen of Sheba and Solomon at the bridge; a bishop (Macarius?) and nobles face a figure on the right (damaged by window); the angel appears at the bed of Constantine and points to a cross (damaged because of the addition of a window). Below: the duel with Maxentius; the interrogation of the Jews by Helena, behind her another woman with a halo or Constantine (?); the Finding of the Cross (?); the Testing of the Cross by a gate; laypeople adore the Cross in a chapel; a group of clergymen (? damaged by window)

[154] In the Hours of Catherine of Cleves is an illlustration of how the wood was worked for the Temple (fol. 214). The fashioning of wood into planks is also shown in the full-page miniature from a French book of hours (Lyon) (1480–1490), auctioned by Sotheby's on 10 December 1996; *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures. 10 December 1996*, London, 1996, no. 29, p. 33, no. 29.



Fig. 94a. *The soul in the Hortus conclusus. Thooftkijn van devotien*, Gerard Leeu, Antwerp, 1487. Ghent, Universitaire Bibliotheek, Res. 169, fol. 11v.



Fig. 94b. *The soul in the Hortus conclusus. Thoofkijn van devotien*, Gerard Leeu, Antwerp, 1487. Ghent, Universitaire Bibliotheek, Res. 169, fol. 16.

is raised up, albeit with a pulley. The master mason looks on as four workmen struggle to get the wood over the wall.

The cycle goes on with the placing of the plank across the Kedron. This motif is seldom seen: it is briefly mentioned in the *Legenda Aurea* (after Beleth) as a preamble to the meeting with the Queen of Sheba, but rarely receives iconographic attention. As far as is known it appears as a separate motif only in Wiedenest and in the *Boec van den Houte*. In the woodcut a bishop watches two men, one on each side of the water, position the bridge across the river. In the Wiedenest wall painting the bridge, which has a rail, is also put in place by two men; a third stands on it (Solomon again?) as if to test its strength. In the next scene the meeting with the Queen of Sheba takes place. The queen kneels before the bridge on the right bank. Behind her are two men on horseback. The wall painting features the exceptional appearance of two men who kneel on the bridge facing the queen; one is black and wears an Arabian headdress. The bridge is reflected in the water. Yet according to iconographic convention, a confrontation between the queen and Solomon should be depicted here.

The *Piscina Probatica* occupies the third frame of this register. It is depicted as a square pool in which a beam of wood floats. An angel stirs the water with a staff. On either side of the pool are gathered the sick and the lame. The register continues on the south wall with the making of the Cross. Agnolo Gaddi also incorporated this motif in his cycle in Florence, so it likewise appears in Volterra and Empoli. In Montegiorgio and Arezzo it was omitted. The *Boec van den Houte* also shows how a cross was made from this wood: one man pulls the wood out of the pool while two others split it with an axe and make holes for the nails. But in the Wiedenest wall painting, like the Italian examples, the Cross is practically finished; all that remains is to fix the beams together. The making of the Cross is connected with the four parts made of four different woods, as mentioned by Jacobus de Voragine and in pilgrims' accounts.

In the fourth register the Carrying of the Cross is depicted (fig. 89c). (From here onwards the scenes are very badly damaged.) Not only do they narratively follow the making of the Cross; the motif also links the Old Testament with the New. At the moment Christ takes up the Cross, the Legend of the Cross is decoded. This is the destiny of that enigmatic wood that made its mysterious way through the Old Testament, but it is also the beginning of the rediscovery of this wood as a relic. Yet despite the fact that a scene from the

Passion is thus iconographically 'illuminating', it is seldom incorporated into the legend. The *Boec van den Houte* is another exception, including no less than three scenes from the Passion: the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion, and a woodcut in which a number of individuals have their demons driven out by the still upright Cross (fig. 87e).[155]

Half of the next scene has vanished. Of the five still visible figures one wears a Jewish cap. He turns to a slightly bent figure. Is this Helena? The following scene has also half disappeared. On the left a group of Jews is threatened with fire. Most probably Helena was depicted on the right of the picture. On the south wall, finally, a well with a pulley system is shown (fig. 89d). A man turns a handle, raising Judas up from the bottom of the dry stone well. Judas folds his hands and looks towards Helena. Other Jews as well as Helena's entourage look on. In an altarpiece by the Master of the Vision of St John, active in Cologne between 1450 and 1470, Judas is also hauled out of the well with the aid of a pulley (fig. 56a).[156] Here, the threat of immolation is combined with Judas's punishment

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[155] See a xylographic print of 1460 now in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg; A.R. MILLER, op. cit., p. 291; A.V. ESSENWEIN, *Die Holzschnitte des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts im Germanischen Museums zu Nürnberg*, Nuremberg, 1875, table. LIX, p. 5; W.L. SCHREIBER, *Manuel de l'amateur de la gravure sur bois et sur métal au XVIme siècle*, 6, Berlin, 1900, p. IX, Pl. LXXXXVI. The style indicates the Southern Netherlands. Above: (1) *Hic regina arguit Salomonem quod dimisit illud lignum jacere super solum et prophetauit quod xpistus moreretur in eo* (2) *Hic fecerunt Salomon et regina illud sanctum lignum eleuari et circumuestiri auro et argento* (3) *Hic fecit salomon illud lignum ordinare in ianua templi ut sic virtutem quisque honoraret.* Below: (4) *Hic venerunt joseph et nycodemus deponentes corpus xpi a cruce et crux mansit ibi stans* (5) Hic apostoli *medicaver* [. . .] *populum cum cruce et multi iudei crediderunt* (6) *Multus populus liberatur a demone et ab aliis infirmitatibus ante crucem benedictam.* The removal of the bridge corresponds to the Descent from the Cross; the decoration of the Wood of the Cross prefigures the preaching of the Apostles; the working of the Wood of the Cross to make the Temple door (Godfrey of Viterbo) so that everybody can honour it, is an metaphor for liberation from evil by the Cross of Golgotha. In Bruges City Archive is a second Latin fragment with the watermark of the lost blockbook *Historia sanctae crucis*, with the signature 'f' (ca. 1480). I corresponded with Professor Dr Nigel Palmer (Oxford) who identified the Bruges fragment in 1993. One of his interesting hypotheses is that such fragments were intended for 'posters', and that they were not transmitted in book form. The signatures probably provide guidelines for the ordering and placing of the scenes; our correspondance of 11 October 1999; *Archief*even1994, p. 4 and fig. p. 5.

[156] Formerly Frankfurt, Städtisch Museum, but now lost; P. PIEPER, *Die deutschen, niederländischen und italienischen Tafelbilder bis um 1530*, Münster, 1986, pp. 410–413; A. STANGE, *Deutsche Malerei der Gotik. Köln in der Zeit von 1450 bis 1515*, Liechtenstein, 1969 (repr.), pp. 14–16 and fig. 16–19.

in the well. The altarpiece cannot be more accurately dated than between 1450 and 1470. The Wiedenest cycle is thought to have been begun in 1455, so a direct influence is not impossible. For the rest, however, these are two diverse artistic and iconographic interpretations.

Virtually nothing remains of the first two scenes of the bottom register. Following the legend's narrative it may be supposed that the Finding and Testing of the Cross were depicted here. In the latter a cross and a litter can still just be made out. The cycle's last two scenes illustrate the Heraclius legend. The first is an accumulation of several motifs. On the left, kneeling men in armour see a vision of an angel with a cross. This is a variant of Heraclius's vision, as included by Gaddi and his followers. In the centre is a city gate or entrance to a building, with an armoured figure in the gateway. This is probably Heraclius, forcing his way into Chosroes' cosmic palace, for in the background can be seen a throne and a figure in a green robe with a cross to his left. On the right, though rather vague, is a red figure; most likely this is the moment of Chosroes decapitation. The last scene of the cycle is devoted to the restitution of the Cross (fig. 89e). There is no angel to be seen. Heraclius has dismounted and walks (or kneels?) towards the city gate, his horse the only witness. He rests the Cross obliquely on his shoulder, forming an iconographic counterpoint to Christ carrying the Cross further back in the cycle. He wears no crown; whether he is barefoot and wearing nought but a shirt can no longer be made out.

Certain scenes in Wiedenest correspond to scenes in the only two Cross legend cycles known in the Netherlands: the Hours of Catherine of Cleves and Johan Veldener's incunabulum, the *Boec van den Houte*. The Rhineland's artistic orientation towards the Netherlands in the fifteenth century is well known. The felling of the tree appears in the Hours and the *Boec*. The building of the Temple, the bridging of the Kedron, the making of the Cross and the Carrying of the Cross are depicted only in the latter. Comparisons are based on narrativity and the selection of images, not on composition and form. The relationship between the Netherlandish examples and the Rhineland programme is thus indirect.

The *Boec van den Houte* was printed in 1483, but the woodcuts are in fact from an original (lost) blockbook dating from around 1450. Whether Veldener recycled the blocks, cutting them to the required

format, is not known. He interrupted his stay in Leuven (1474–1501) to go to Utrecht (1477) and later to Culemborg (1483), where he printed the *Boec* for the feasts of the Cross as celebrated in the Gelderland town.[157] Before 1474 he lived in Cologne, working as a punch cutter. Is the key to a common iconographic background to be found in that city, from which the prelate who rebuilt the chancel in Wiedenest also came? It should be borne in mind that as the legend was represented *in extenso* in the *Boec*, similarities with particular selections in Wiedenest are inevitable.

The Hours of Catherine of Cleves is connected with the specific devotion of the dukes of Gelre to the Wood of the Cross. In that area a legend dating from 1308 was still popular: it tells how, when one of the nobles of Kranenburg wanted to cut down a tree, a crucifix appeared. The story is modelled on the Solomon motif and ideas surrounding the 'Cross-tree'.[158]

The Wiedenest programme was based on the earlier mentioned legend, however. A devotion to the relic of the Cross reminiscent of the first crusades continued to be vital in Wiedenest up until the late Middle Ages, when the renovations in the chancel took place and the cycle was commissioned. The motif of Heraclius's vision ratified the original foundation, for it is a typical element of twelfth-century chronicles of the crusades. There are of course more foundation legends told and more Cross relics kept than there are Cross legends depicted in churches.

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[157] L.W. HELLINGA, *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden* (exh. cat.), Brussels, 1973, pp. 143–146.

[158] Such modelling was not exceptional. A 15th-century poem tells of how the Danish king Godenaert, campaigning in the vicinity of Breda, cut down a tree for the building of his chapel. But the wood kept changing shape and proved unusable. So a cross was carved from the trunk and set up for veneration in the chapel: *Wat ic mete ende wat ic micke/ Ic en cant vertimmeren niet ant huys*. These motifs are even more clearly derived from the Solomon episode of the Legend of the Cross; L. WIRTH, *Het Heilig Kruis en de Denensage te Breda*, in *Bibliotheek voor Middelnederlandse Letterkunde*, 49, 1893. In Hakendover (Flemish Brabant) there was a different foundation legend. In 690 three wealthy, pious women decided to build a church, but what was constructed during the day was pulled down at night. The women beg God to show them where they should build. An angel shows them a blossoming hawthorn standing in the middle of an area delineated by a silk thread. Twelve workmen have to cut down the tree and build a church on the site. The legend is illustrated on a 15th-century carved altarpiece in the Church of St Salvator in Hakendover. This story could well reflect a campaign of Christianization with regard to pagan practices of tree-worship and sacralization.

In the area north of the Alps the Wiedenest cycle is the oldest iconographic programme to include the entire Legend of the Cross, though it is possible that other cycles have been lost. There may be many reasons for this: climatic conditions, conservation considerations, restoration policy, to name but a few. It is striking that in Flanders no such cycles have survived (or existed?). In the Scandinavian material I collected there were legends of the Finding of the Cross, but no three-part cycles.[159]

Be that as it may, though the production of Cross legend cycles in Italy was coming to an end as the fifteenth century drew to a close, in Switzerland it reached its peak.

In Wiesendangen, just below Lake Constance (Zurich canton), is a small late-Gothic church dedicated to the Holy Cross. In its chancel survives perhaps the most extensive monumental Cross legend cycle.[160] The iconography of the wall paintings was identified and described in 1916.[161] Between 1964 and 1967 the paintings were restored.[162] They are attributed to Hans Haggenberg, who was very

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[159] 1. Sweden: (a) Risinge, cathedral, painting of the vault, mid-15th cent.; A. LINDBLOM, *Björsäter målningarna*, Stockholm, 1953, with English summary: *The Legends of St. Thomas and of the Holy Cross*, p. 68, figs. 31–32: Constantine's vision; confrontation on the Milvian Bridge; Helena's arrival in Jerusalem; Judas is questioned and betrayed; Judas in the well; Finding of the Cross; Testing of the Cross; Helena brings the Cross to Constantinople (?); Helena venerates the Cross (?). (b) Linköping, cathedral, south wall, 2nd half of the 15th cent.: Judas Cyriacus and Helena hold the Cross; Helena holds the Cross in a hilly landscape; Helena holds the Cross before an altar frontal (?); A. LINDBLOM, op. cit., fig. 31. (c) Örebro, chapel of St Nicholas, 1430–1450, only known from drawings: interrogation of Judas, Finding of the Cross and/or Testing of the Cross. (d) Churches of Östra Eneby, Ask, Mogata; S. BRENSKE, *Der Hl. Kreuz-Zyklus in der ehemaligen Braunschweiger Stiftskirche St. Blasius (Dom). Studien zu den historische Bezhgen und ideologisch-politischen Zielsetzungen der mittelalterlichen Wandmalereien* (*Braunschweiger Werkstücke*, 25 A. *Veröffentlichungen aus dem Stadtarchiv und der Stadtbibliothek*, 72), Brunswick, 1988, p. 72, n. 25. 2. Denmark: church at Södring, 1st quarter of the 16th cent.; U. HAASTRUP, et al., *Danske Kalkmalerei. Sengotik. 1500–1536*, 6, Copenhagen, 1985, pp. 18, 35 and 221. 3. Finland: churches at Hattula, Lojo (both 2nd half of the 15th century); A. NILSEN, *Program och Funktion. I senmedeltida kalmaleri*, Stockholm, 1986, pp. 192–197.

[160] H. KOLLER, *Der Thron Khosraus II. Zu den Chorgemälden in der Kirche von Wiesendangen*, n.p. n.d., pp. 93–99; E. RAMP, *Die legende vom heiligen Kreuz. Ihre Bedeutung und ihr geschichtlicher Hintergrund*, in *Winterthurer Jahrbuch*, 1969, pp. 63–76; Chr. and D. EGGENBERGER, *Malerei des Mittelalters* (*Ars Helvetica*, 5. *Die visuelle Kultur des Schweiz*), Bern, 1989, pp. 162–167; J. MICHLER, *Gotische Wandmalerei am Bodensee*, Friedrichshafen, 1992, pp. 134–150, with a scheme of the wall paintings.

[161] H. BACHMANN, *Die Kirche in Wiesendangen und ihre Wandgemälde*, in *Anzeiger für schweizerische Altertumskunde*, 18, 1916, pp. 118–134, pp. 186–203, pp. 290–300.

[162] H. KOLLER, op. cit., p. 93.

active in the area between Zurich and Lake Constance in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. In a period in which Hans Holbein was already establishing the visual vocabulary of the Renaissance, Haggenberg continue to work in the late Gothic style. He painted in the tradition evolved by Master E. S. and the anonymous painter of the St Sylvester chapel in Constance. His figures are animated but never fanciful, attenuated, with little modelling. His palette is fresh and varied. He devotes a striking amount of attention to vast landscapes that provide a spatial grounding for his somewhat incorporeal characters.[163] Sometimes he allows his landscapes to extend over narrow and otherwise difficult to use parts of the wall. The compositional openness that is thus panoramically expressed shows that Haggenberg skilfully combined a lively Gothic idiom with more modern tendencies in late-fifteenth-century landscape painting.

In 1472, Jacob von Hohenlandenberg, lord of Hegi, acquired the wardship of the village of Wiesendangen. In 1496–1498 his sons renovated the chancel of the church: this at once provides the *postquem* dating of the paintings there. It was most probably Jacob's son, Hugo von Hohenlandenberg (d. 1532), bishop of Constance from 1496, who commissioned Haggenberg to produce the cycle.[164] Indeed, Haggenberg was once called the bishop of Constance's 'court painter'.[165]

The scenes in the Wiesendangen cycle are surrounded by red frames and occupy three registers on the walls (including the lunettes). Some of the scenes have suffered. The chancel has a polygonal apse consisting of three bays: the east and south bay each contain a window, and a third window is set into the chancel's south wall. The cycle begins on the north wall in the lunette, and the register continues all the way round three sides of the chancel. The story then

[163] J. MICHLER, op. cit., p. 134.

[164] Chr. and D. EGGENBERGER, op. cit., p. 162.

[165] He painted the walls of the family castle of Hegi with thick and rampant green vines, which he repeated in a finer and more stylized way with some flowers for the Breny house in Herrenberg near Rapperswil. In the 'Hogenhuis' of Wil he painted in the *Gartensaal* a scene with the presentation of the various estates and in his own house in Winterthur he depicted in *sgrafitto* wine drinkers and a scene with the grapes from the Promised Land. We also know that Haggenberg painted the monastery Church of Sankt Gallen for Abbot Ulrich VIII Rösch. These wall paintings are now lost, just like those in the cloister of the Dominican nuns of Töss (Winterthur). Only two of Haggenberg's cycles on a religious theme are known to survive, one in the choir of Veltheim (after 1482) and one in Wiesendangen. J. MICHLER, op. cit., pp. 134–136, figs. 170 and 171.

picks up again at the start of the second register on the north wall and proceeds in the same way, as does the third register. It requires a little concentration to work out how the essential simple cycle should be read, for on several occasions the artist has interrupted the story's flow along the registers with additional motifs, so that by these 'iconographic interpolations' the viewer loses the thread of the Cross legend itself. The narrative is further interrupted by scenes in the window reveals and the narrow areas between the windows.

First the iconographic motifs will be identified. The 'interpolations' are given in italics and are not continuously numbered (diag. 9).

LUNETTES
north wall
1. Seth receives the twig (?) (fig. 95a)
2. Solomon builds the Temple (fig. 95b)
3. The Queen of Sheba at the bridge (damaged) (fig. 95c)
north bay
4. The *Piscina Probatica* (fig. 95d)
east bay
Maria coeli
south bay
St Stephen
south wall
Founder figure with the Hohenlandenberg arms and St Oswald (fig. 95e)
5. Dream of Constantine (fig. 95f)
6. A knight (Constantine's vision before the battle? Battle with Maxentius?) (fig. 95g)

SECOND REGISTER
north wall
7. Arrival of Empress Helena (fig. 95h)
8. Helena questions the Jews
9. The threatening fire and the Finding of the Cross (fig. 95i)
10. Testing of the Cross
north bay
11. Veneration of the Cross (fig. 95j)
12. Helena brings the Cross to Constantinople by ship (continues towards the window of the east bay)
13. A domed building and a gatehouse (between the windows at the east end of the south wall) (fig. 95k)

14. A group of knights riding beneath a flag emblazoned with a dragon shoot arrows towards the buildings (fig. 95l)
south wall
15. Chosroes enthroned in his cosmic tower (fig. 95m)
16. A group of knights with the dragon flag
17. A second group of knights goes to meet the first group

THIRD REGISTER
north wall
Crusader's cross[166] *with a picture-poem* (fig. 95n)
Two angels beside the tabernacle; above, a stave, also presented by two angels
north bay
18. Heraclius and the younger Chosroes in single combat (fig. 95o)
wooded landscape
south wall
19. Heraclius slays Chosroes in his cosmic tower (fig. 95p)
window reveal: St Antony
20. lost (triumphal restitution?)
21. lost (humble restitution?)
22. Crusader's cross on an altar? (fig. 95q)

Depicted in the vaults are the twelve Apostles of the Apostles' Creed (on the left) and the twelve Prophets (*Concordia veteris et novi testamenti*) (fig. 95r). Above the window in the east apse are Christ (left) and God the Father (right). The inside of the chancel arch between the two half-lunettes on the north and south walls was originally painted, so it is possible that the scenes depicting Seth (north) and the knight (Constantine?) (south) ran on into the spandrels of the arch. On the crusader's cross near the tabernacle a picture-poem has been inscribed which reads *Crux mihi erat salus* and *Crux domini mecum*—most likely two hymns to the Cross. On a banderole above the cross a few words can still be made out: [. . .] *doloris* [. . .] *palme se repat vitam dolce* [. . .].

The tabernacle is in fact a cupboard with a single door. The door itself is not original but the cupboard for the Eucharist must have been in place when the cycle was painted, as the angels and the

[166] The 'crusader's cross' has a crossbar at the end of each arm. It is the cross that features on the arms of the crusaders, hence the name. It differs from the Jerusalem cross in which the four angles created by the crossed arms each contain a small cross.

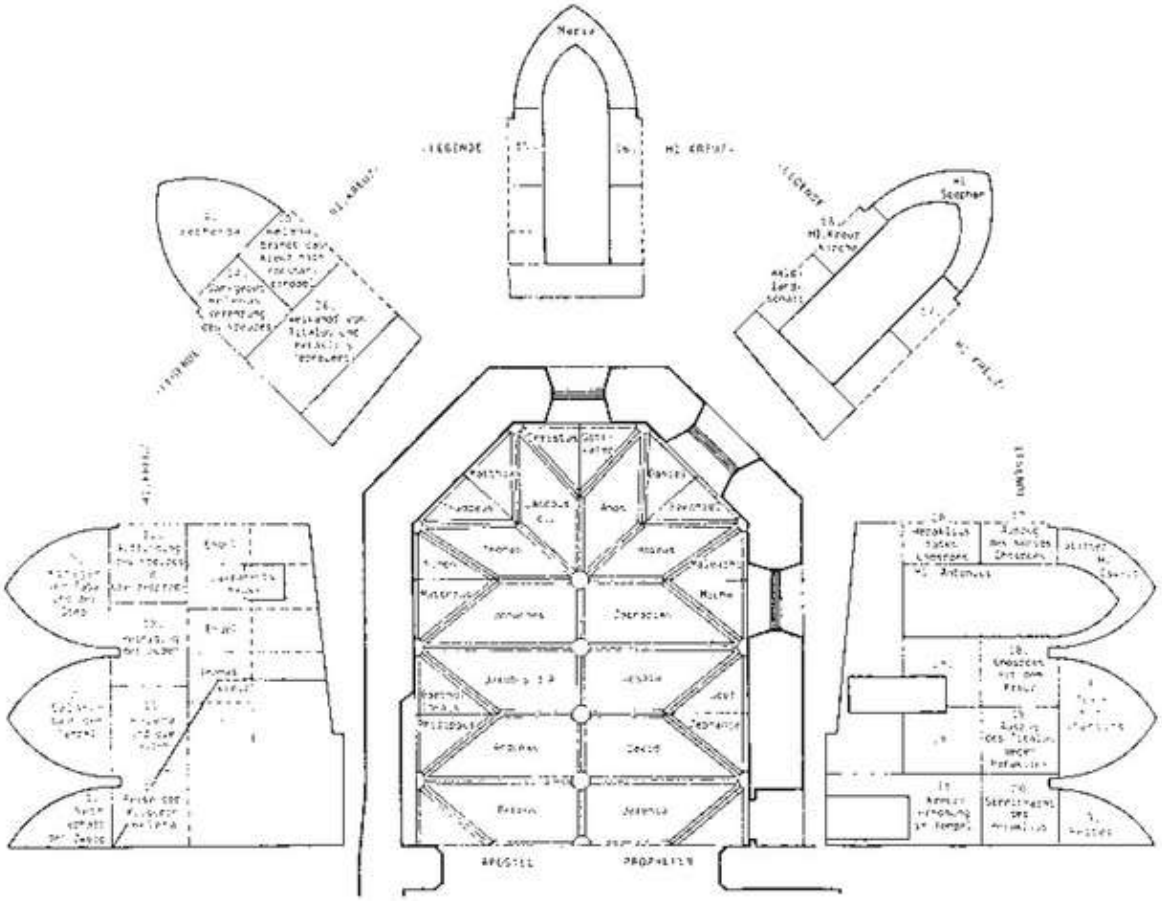


Diagram 9. Scheme of the programme of frescoes depicting the Legend of the Cross in the Church of the Holy Cross (choir) in Wiesendangen (Hans Haggenberg, 1496). From: J. MICHLER, *Gotische Wandmalerei am Bodensee*, Friedrichshafen, 1992, p. 204, fig. 469.

stave of music have obviously been accomodated around it. The left-hand side of this register—below Helena's arrival and the interrogation of the Jews—has also been lost. It is unlikely that it contained a scene from the Cross legend, for there is no intrinsic gap between the confrontation between the forces of Heraclius and the younger Chosroes, and the single combat between the leaders. Both the third and second to last scenes have vanished completely, owing to the addition of a door, but it seems probable that they represented respectively Heraclius's equestrian and barefoot restitution of the Cross.

The scene with Seth is all but lost, however a vague figure turned towards the chancel arch can still be distinguished. In the depiction of the building of the Temple a man in a striped tunic and hose splits a beam of wood that rests on a pair of sawhorses. A dark-robed Solomon looks on, attended by two men, one armed with a slender sword. Behind them rises the shell of the Temple, destined to be a circular building with three storeys and a tower. Within is a wheel. Standing on the second level is a man holding some sort of rod. He looks downwards to where an arcade with a figure walking beneath it can just be made out.

Behind the courtier with the rapier part of the tower can be seen. This building overlaps into the following scene, in which only the lower limbs of three individuals remain: they belong to a figure in yellow hose, a second figure in a dark cloak—Solomon, by analogy with the previous scene—and a third in a white robe, presumably the Queen of Sheba. Solomon points to a plank of wood across the river, which forms a bridge with a handrail. The Queen of Sheba kneels before the wood. There are no figures on the opposite bank.

The *Piscina Probatica* is set in a deep landscape with a castle and a walled city on the horizon. An angel hovers in the sky. A naked man bathes in the pool; on the right a cripple makes his way to the water on crutches, on the left a sufferer lies on a pallet, and in the foreground a pilgrim leans on his staff.

Constantine's dream is also damaged. A man, again in striped attire, pulls aside the curtain of the tent. Inside is a bed, though the figure lying in it is unrecognisable. Adjacent is a horse tent, and above an angel sweeps through the air, but the cross itself can no longer be seen. In the cycle Piero della Francesca created in Arezzo the dream also takes place in a tent. Finally, in the half-lunette on the south wall is a knight on a prancing steed. Is this Constantine again, witnessing his vision before the battle?

Back on the north side, Helena's arrival was partly concealed when a pulpit was built. Helena arrives in a boat, arrayed in a black hood and a white mantle. The hill beside which the boat has moored continues into the next scene, where Helena now wears a crown and a red robe and is accompanied by a lady in blue. A castle can be descried in the distance. Helena is in conversation with a group of three Jews: Judas is to the fore in a yellow robe; following his example the two younger Jews have removed their hats and one of them looks towards the viewer. A hill in the background—an allusion to Golgotha?—continues into the adjacent scene, in which the Jews are threatened with immolation and the Cross is found. The Finding of the Cross is damaged: only Helena and her attendant are still visible. Remaining yellow and brown patches probably represent parts of the clothes worn by Judas and his helper. A walled city appears in the background.

There is a panoramic view of a distant city in the subsequent Testing of the Cross, which according to literary tradition took place in Jerusalem itself. Helena, her attendant and a nobleman look on from the left. This man is unlikely to be Constantine: he wears no crown, as Helena does in all her scenes, and though his cloak is certainly luxurious it is far from imperial. Judas kneels next to the three tested crosses. His two helpers do likewise, one leaning on his pick, the other on his spade. The manner in which the resuscitated individual sits up is borrowed from the production of the Wohlgemut workshop in Nuremberg, in which the event also takes place outside the city (the result of an iconographic contamination from the Finding of the Cross).[167]

The next scene takes place inside a chapel. Helena and her attendant kneel before an altar: around its base runs a colourful border of red, blue and yellow squares; on it are two candles and an altarpiece in which Mary and John worship a wooden Cross. Research *in situ* showed that the painted cross is covered with a thin veneer of wood (fig. 95s). Perhaps this was a *Spielerei* on the part of the

[167] See Chapter Four: The *Kaiserfenster*, the central window in the choir of Sankt Lorenz in Nuremberg (workshop of Michael Wohlgemut, ca. 1477) (fig. 51). 2. The triptych for Levinus Memming for the altar of St Catherine in the Church of Sankt Lorenz (Michael Wohlgemut, 1485), Testing of the Cross on the inside of the right wing (fig. 52). 3. A triptych with a carved centre panel in Schwabach's *Stadtkirche* (workshop or follower of Michael Wohlgemut, after 1485), Testing of the Cross inside the left wing (fig. 53).

artist, though the wood could have been added later, of course.

Next, Helena takes ship with the Cross, bound for Constantinople. The sea is calm and rather modest in extent, scarcely more than a lake. She has set up the *tau*-shaped Cross at the mast: the mast of a ship is a typical metaphor for the Cross.[168] Helena is accompanied by two rowers and a nobleman in a cap. A domed church and a city gateway are painted next to the scene: these are most likely meant to represent Jerusalem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, for in the following scene a group of horsemen rides towards the city. Two foot soldiers are in the van, bearing shields and armed with bows and arrows, clearly ready for the attack. Another man carries a scaling ladder over his shoulders. An older man with a curling pointed hat rides forward on his white charger, his sword challengingly upright in his fist. One of his cohort grins out at the viewer, another bears a yellow banner emblazoned with a black dragon. This scene represents the impending seizure of the Cross by Chosroes and his armies.

Subsequently, Chosroes is depicted on the south wall, seated in his cosmic tower. Its dome, painted blue inside, rests on seven pillars. Chosroes has set up the Cross behind him, as if to form the back of the throne itself. On his right a servitor is in attendance, on his left the cock perches on a pole. The landscape behind the cosmic tower runs on through the following two frames, in which two armies meet: the troops on the left fight under the banner of the dragon; those on the right under a yellow flag whose heraldic device has now disappeared. Shown here is the conflict between the younger Chosroes and Heraclius, which is resolved in single combat in the lower register of the north bay. This duel takes up the width of two normal scenes. Haggenberg has conceived this motif as a sweeping panoramic view of the Danube. The wooded landscape continues across the walls between the windows. In the foreground is a wooden bridge, on which Heraclius despatches his opponent, driving his lance into his vitals. Heraclius's helmet has a pale feather; the same helmet is worn by the founder figure next to St Oswald on the south window reveal.[169]

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[168] Developed by: TERTULLIAN, *De baptesimo*, 12 (*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*, 20), col. 212.

[169] Bede (III, 2) refers to Oswald's veneration of the Cross: 'The place is shown to this day, and held in much veneration, where Oswald, being about to engage

The story continues in the bottom register on the south wall, where the cosmic tower is repeated. But now Heraclius hauls Chosroes out by the beard and raises his sword for the final fatal stroke while the Persian tyrant desperately attempts to escape his doom by clinging to one of the pillars. Here too Heraclius wears the same armour as the founder figure now immediately above. As mentioned earlier, the two scenes that presumably depicted Heraclius's restitution of the Cross have been lost.

The cycle ends with a sanctuary. A crusader's cross is set in an architectural frame. Next to it is a triptych—or is it perhaps a triple window? On the other side of the triptych hangs a closed curtain. The concealing curtain was used in Lent and during the rite of the *adoratio crucis*.[170] It also alludes to the Holy of Holies, the Ark of the Covenant. The Old and New Testaments are placed in a typological relationship. This scene is opposite the picture-poem and tabernacle.

All these episodes are found in the *Legenda Aurea*. Though other cycles refer to the growth or the felling of Adam's tree, here it is omitted, likewise Judas in the well, and the finding of the nails. How the iconographic selection relates to the other cycles discussed is made clear in Table 2. Helena's arrival and departure by boat is noteworthy and as far as I know is unique in the iconography. *Der Heilige Leben*, a German paraphrase of the *Legenda Aurea*, specifically mentions that Helena travels by ship.[171] To calm a storm she throws

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[in battle], erected the sign of the holy cross, and on his knees prayed to God that he would assist his worshippers in their great distress. [. . .] raising his voice he cried to his army, "Let us all kneel, and jointly beseech the true and living God Almighty, in his mercy, to defend us from the haughty and fierce enemy; for He knows that we have undertaken a just war for the safety of our nation." All did as he commanded, and [. . .] they obtained the victory as their faith deserved. In that place of prayer very many miraculous cures are known to have been performed, as a token and memorial of the king's faith; for even to this day, many are wont to cut off small chips from the wood of the holy cross, which being put into water, men or cattle drinking thereof, or sprinkled with that water, are immediately restored to health.' BEDE, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (with introduction VIDA SCUDDER), London & New York, 1922, pp. 164–165. I am grateful to Dr Paul Arblaster for this reference. The application of the passage to the Wiesendangen cycle is striking and strongly suggests that the patrons nurtured a specific devotion to St Oswald, whose cult spread from England to many parts of Europe. More research is needed on this cycle.

[170] On the curtain, for instance on the Stavelot triptych, see Chapter Two (fig. 8).

[171] W. WILLIAMS-KRAPP, *German and Dutch Translations of the Legenda aurea*, in B. DUNN-LARDEAU (ed.), *Legenda Aurea. Sept siècles de diffusion. Actes du colloque international sur la Legenda Aurea. Texte latin et branches vernaculaires à l'université du Québec à*

one of the nails into the sea. The south German edition no doubt also spread to Switzerland. There is no hint of a stormy sea in Wiesendangen. Perhaps the tempest has already subsided.

Der Heilige Leben had a strong influence on the fifteenth-century *Augsburger Heiligkreuzspiel*, the Holy Cross play that takes its title from the unique copy of the text that was discovered in the German city (see Chapter Four).[172] The manuscript came from the collection of a certain Claus Spaun (between 1494 and 1520) and was translated from a Latin parent text into a Tyrolean dialect of the vicinity of Brixen (Bressanone) or Bozen (Bolzano) in the mid-fifteenth century. Before his appointment in Constance, Hugo von Hohenlandenberg was a priest of Trent and dean of Freisich in Carinthia.[173] Perhaps he was familiar with the play. However, it includes only the Finding and Exaltation of the Cross; the two parts being performed over two consecutive days. The play of the Exaltation of the Cross has two acts: Chosroes' theft of the Cross and Heraclius's triumph and restitution of the Cross. The theft of the Cross is represented in Wiesendangen, but otherwise there are no motifs in the cycle which suggest a direct relationship with the play. This is also the case for Helena's journey by boat. The interest in water may have to do with Lake Constance, where the cycle was created. Moreover, the crossing by ship is appropriate to pilgrims' journeys: many who went to the Holy Land—from Switzerland too—travelled to northern Italy, took sail in Venice and crossed the Mediterranean to Acre.[174] A pilgrim is depicted next to the *Piscina Probatica*. And the crusader's cross is also

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Montréal 11–12 mai 1983, Montreal-Paris, 1986, pp. 227–232, p. 229; edition: S. RÜTTGERS, *Der Heiligen Leben und Leiden anders genannt das Passional*, Leipzig, 1913, vol. 1, pp. 48–56.

[172] Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 4E codex H 27, fol. 47r–89v; A. von KELLER, *Fastnachspiele aus der 15. Jahrhundert*, 1858, pp. 54–89; E. UKENA, *Die deutschen Mirakelspiele des Spätmittelalters*, 1. *Studien*, 2. *Texte* (*Arbeiten zur mittleren deutschen Literatur und Sprache*, 1), Frankfurt, 1975, 1, pp. 223–295, 2, pp. 455–559; H. BIERMANN, *Die deutschsprachigen Legendenspiele des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (doct.), Cologne, 1977, pp. 187–218.

[173] Chr. and D. EGGENBERGER, op. cit., p. 162.

[174] It has been pointed out in Chapter Five that in the *Hortus deliciarum* (ca. 1180) the Finding of the Cross is compared to the metaphor of the Ship of the Church. The ship is the *Ecclesia*. According to Herrad the Finding of the Cross restored the Church/the ship to the faithful. Strikingly, in the scene in Wiesendangen the Cross was set up parallel to the mast of the ship. This scene is next to the depiction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, also a symbol of the Christian empire. R. GREEN, *Herrad of Hohenbourg* (*Studies of the Warburg Institute*, 36), 1979, 2, pp. 264–265, no. 520.

a reference to Jerusalem. So the cycle can be seen in relation to pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The two altar scenes—one next to Helena, the other next to (the now lost) Heraclius—commemorated the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The founder figure by the south window is a knight, possibly named Oswald after the saint who commends him. He may be another Hohenlandenberg scion. This unknown Oswald is identified with Heraclius, which highlights the crusading theme in the cycle.

The Wiesendangen cycle is exceptional for its combination with the tree of the Apostles' Creed.[175] The Creed-tree is a variant of Bonaventure's *Lignum vitae*, which portrays the life of Christ via a scheme of twelve branches of the Tree of Life, like the wall painting by Taddeo Gaddi (last quarter of the fourteenth century) in the Santa Croce refectory in Florence (fig. 83).[176] The Creed-tree is also a variation of the Tree of Jesse, in which apostles continue the genealogy of the Messiah. On the back of an altarpiece from Katharinental, near Zurich, painted in 1490 or thereabouts, is a Dominican family tree which is also made up of floral motifs.[177] A wall painting of around 1500 in the choir of St Leonard's Church in Frankfurt depicting a Creed-tree surmounted by God the Father shows the half-length Apostles emerging from chaliced flowers, just as in Wiesendangen.[178] And in Wiesendangen too Christ and God the Father are placed at the top. The Apostles are the blooming Tree of Life; they are the fruits of the dry tree of the Fall on which Christ was crucified so that they should live again.

The combination of Cross legend and Creed-tree is intrinsically motivated. The first tells the story of the Wood of the Cross from Paradise to relic, the second roots the Wood of the Cross in the Apostolic Church that blooms on this Tree of the Cross. Despite the harmonious association of the two iconographies, however, their combination is rare.[179] In 1842 in the Church of the Holy Cross in

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[175] See: J.-P. BOUHOT, *L'origine apostolique du Symbole au Moyen Âge*, in *Pensée, image et communication en Europe médiévale. A propos des stalles de Saint-Claude*, Besançon, 1993, pp. 159–164.

[176] A.C. ESMEIJER, *L'albero della vita di Taddeo Gaddi*, Florence, 1985.

[177] Zurich, Landesmuseum; H.M. GUBLER, *Kunstdenkmäler des kantons Zürich*, 3 (*Die Kunstdenkmäler der Schweiz*, 66), Basel, 1978, p. 310.

[178] C. WOLFF and R. JUNG, *Baudenkmäler in Frankfurt am Main*, 1, Frankfurt, 1896, Pl. III.

[179] Also in the painted wall panels of the church in Björsät (1325–1350, Sweden) the legends of the Finding and Exaltation of the Cross were combined with the Apostle's Creed and Prophets (lunettes); A. LINDBLOM, *Björsäter malningarna*,

Loffenau (Black Forest) wall paintings were exposed in the west south chapel (fig. 96).[180] There are paintings on the vault, in the lunettes and on the walls. The Church Fathers and the four symbols of the Evangelists are portrayed on the vault, and the allegory of the Host mill is depicted on the east wall. The legends of the Finding and Exaltation of the Cross unfold along the south and west walls in the lunettes and the window reveals. Below each scene runs an inscription. The wall paintings were the work of a late-fifteenth-century master from the Black Forest. On the register beneath the Legend of the Cross this anonymous artist introduced the figures of the twelve Apostles holding a banderole on which is inscribed the Apostles' Creed. In medallions and corners outlined in red added between the various Cross legend scenes are half-length prophets bearing banderoles. Thus here too is the combination of Apostles' Creed and Prophets (fig. 96).[181]

It should be mentioned that especially from the second half of the fifteenth century the popularity of the combination of Apostles' Creed and Prophets reached a peak.[182] Whereas, in the high Middle Ages, catechesis emphasized the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Redemption, there was a noticeable shift to the Twelve Articles of Faith following the Synod of Besançon in 1481.[183] Was it the intention of

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Stockholm, 1953, with an English summary: *The Legends of St. Thomas and of the Holy Cross*, pp. 77–80. In the crossing vault of Brunswick's St Blaise the Heavenly Jerusalem is represented. In the twelve gates of the city are the figures of the twelve Apostles. They too each bear a banderole with a line from the Apostle's Creed.

[180] F. PIEL, *Handbuch der Deutsche Kunstdenkmäler. Baden-Württemberg*, n.p., 1964, p. 287.

[181] 1. Vision of Constantine; 2. Battle against Maxentius on the Milvian Bridge; 3. Threatening with fire and in the background the Finding of the Cross; 4. Testing of the Cross by Macarius (outside the city, as in Wiesendangen); 5. Heraclius on horseback with the Cross; 6. Heraclius humbly restores the Cross; 7. Chosroes seated on a throne supported on a planetarium, the people adoring him; 8. Heraclius and the younger Chosroes in single combat on the Danube; 9. The Queen of Sheba (bust in medallion). The Queen of Sheba is depicted in contemporary dress with the name SYBELLA (sic) (fig. i). In a 'thought bubble' she shows a wooden beam, from the middle of which grows a cross surrounded by rays of light. Sybils are related to the creed for the same typological reasons as the prophets; J. ESTERLE, *Les Sibylles associées aux prophètes dans les choeurs d'Auch et de Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges*, in *Pensée, image, loc. cit.*, pp. 201–206. Here this 'Sybella' refers to the prediction at the wooden bridge, a scene not itself represented in the cycle. The Testing of the Cross is carried out by MACARIUS, the then bishop of Jerusalem, as desribed by Ruffinus (see Chapter One). The artist appears not to have fully understood the legend: the inscriptions next to the two restitution scenes read CONSTANTINUS.

[182] P. LACROIX and A. RENON, *Apôtres et prophètes au Credo. Un thème iconographique entre le rayonnement et l'oubli*, in *o. c.*, pp. 83–100, p. 92.

[183] J. LONGERE, art. cit., p. 168.

the bishop from the Hohenlandenberg family to provide the church under his wardship with a rich and complete didactic programme reflecting this new focus? In Constance Cathedral the choir stalls, which date from 1470, were also decorated with a Creed. Moreover, the cathedral has a twelve-sided chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, dating from 1260, in each corner of which is a statue of an apostle.[184] Perhaps the episcopal see of Constance is the key to the iconography in Wiesendangen. A 1343 inventory of the Cathedral mentions a processional cross containing a particle of the Cross.[185] The Church of the Holy Cross in Wiesendangen was within Constance's sphere of influence. As the episcopal see the city was a centre of diffusion of the apostolic creed, but Constance was also a centre of the cult of the Holy Sepulchre and the Cross.

Table 2. Iconographic programmes of the German and Swiss monumental cycles (15th century). With comparative material.

	Hours of Catherine of Cleves 1442–1445	Lutwin mid-15th century	Wiedenest 1455	Woodcut Nuremberg 1460	*Boec van den Houte* 1483	Duttenberg after 1484	Loffenau last quarter of the 15th century	Wiesendangen 1494–1496
1. Adam sends Seth to Paradise	*	*			*	*		?
2. Seth at the gates of Paradise	*	*	*		*	*		?
3. Seth's vision						* ?		?
4. Seth plants/ presents the twig (2)[186]	*	*	* (2)		*			?

[184] P. LACROIX and A. RENON, art. cit., p. 96; P. KURMANN, *Das heilige Grab*, in *Neue züricher Zeitung*, December, 1972.

[185] A. FROLOW, *Les reliquaires de la vraie croix*, Paris, 1965, p. 508, no. 715. The particle of the Cross was much venerated in the parish Church of Eriskirch, founded by the counts of Montfort-Tettnag. Here too a Finding of the Cross and an Exaltation of the Cross were introduced into the stained glass windows of the choir (1408); W. von MATTEN and U. SCHAHL, *Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Tettnang*, Stuttgart-Berlijn, 1937 and fig.; R. BECKSMANN, et al., *Die mittelalterlichen Glasmalereien in Schwaben von 1350 bis 1530 ohne Ulm*, Berlin, 1986, pp. 42–55, pls. 23–24, 143; R. BECKSMANN, *Die Glasmalereien*, in *Die Pfarrkirche Eriskirch. Spätgotik am Bodensee*, ed. E.L. KUHN, et al., Friedrichshafen, 1988 (2nd ed.), pp. 51–66 and fig.

[186] (2) If both motifs are represented.

Table 2. *(cont.)*

	Hours of Catherine of Cleves 1442–1445	Lutwin mid-15th century	Wiede-nest 1455	Woodcut Nurem-berg 1460	*Boec van den Houte* 1483	Duttenberg after 1484	Loffenau last quarter of the 15th century	Wiesen-dangen 1494–1496
5. Seth at Adam's grave/the tree on Adam's tomb (2)	* (2)	*	*		* (2)	*		?
6. Solomon fells the tree	*		*		*			
7. The build-ing of the Temple/ fashioning the wood (2)	* (2)		*		* (2)			*
8. The plank is laid across the Kedron		*		*				
9. The meet-ing between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba at the bridge	*		*	* the wood is taken away * the wood is fixed to the Temple door	* the wood is taken away * the wood is fixed to the Temple door	*		*
10. *Piscina Probatica*	*		*		*			*
11. The mak-ing of the Cross			*		*			
12. Scenes from the Passion (2)			*	* (typology)	* (2)			
13. Constan-tine's dream						*	*	*
14. Constan-tine and Maxentius in single combat						*	*	* (?)

Table 2. (*cont.*)

	Hours of Catherine of Cleves 1442–1445	Lutwin mid-15th century	Wiedenest 1455	Woodcut Nuremberg 1460	*Boec van den Houte* 1483	Duttenberg after 1484	Loffenau last quarter of the 15th century	Wiesendangen 1494–1496
15. Helena's arrival					*			*
16. Helena questions the Jews			*		*	*		*
17. The threat of fire			*				*	*
18. Judas in the well			*		*		*	
19. The Finding of the Cross			* (damaged)		*	*	*	*
20. The Testing of the Cross			* (damaged)		*	*		*
21. Veneration of the Cross					*	*		*
22. Helena's departure					*			*
23. Heraclius's vision			*					
24. Chosroes steals the relic					*			*
25. Chosroes' throne			*		*			*
26. Heraclius and the younger Chosroes in single combat					*			*
27. The decapitation of Chosroes			*		*			*
28. Heraclius on horseback			*		*			*?
29. Heraclius on foot			*		*			*?

Conclusion

The Alps are not only a geographical but also a chronological border between the monumental cycles of the Legend of the Cross. Seventy-five years separate Agnolo Gaddi's cycle in Florence from the cycle in Wiedenest, and when the Wiedenest artist began on his wall paintings, Piero della Francesca had probably been busy in Arezzo for several years. There do not appear to be routes of influence between Italy and Germany. Certainly exchanges did not take place on a purely iconographic level. Indeed, so diverse are the composition and selection of the scenes that we can speak of different iconographic identities between north and south.

The cycles in Florence, Volterra and Empoli form a clear iconographic cluster. The cycles in Volterra and Empoli, close iconographic neighbours of Florence, build on the programme Agnolo Gaddi created in the Church of Santa Croce. Both the Franciscans and influential families employed the medium of wall painting as a communication strategy. The Florence-Volterra-Empoli cluster can also be read in this context. Iconographic adherence signifies a contract with Franciscan ideas—ideas that provide the key to the 'complete' Legend of the Cross, namely the integration of Joachim of Fiore's three stages of history in the Christocentric and Cross-theological model. The Legend of the Cross is a micro-history of salvation, a dendrochronology, as it were, of the living Wood of the Cross. It also offers a narrative pendant to the didactic-mystic meditations on the *Lignum vitae* (Bonaventure) and the *Arbor vitae* (Ubertino of Casale), which, in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, had in turn stimulated and heralded the iconography of Christ on the Cross-tree in wall paintings and altarpieces intended for monastic and/or personal devotion. The Legend of the Cross narrates and adds to this theme. Moreover, the legend was favoured by the mid and late-fourteenth-century revival of crusading philosophy, the installation of the Franciscans as custodians of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and the Flagellant movement, which further radicalized the imitation of the Cross.

The Gaddi cluster represents one stage in the Italian Cross legend programmes. The second was manifested in the Marches and in Arezzo in the middle of the fifteenth century. Although the Franciscan idiom in both churches was still powerful, the iconographic tradition took a different turn. This artistic development was

also responsible for the waning influence of the Gaddi prototype. But the cycles in Montegiorgio and Arezzo are also diverse. The Montegiorgio artists added other motifs to Gaddi's cycle (the felling of the tree, the building of the Temple, the Queen of Sheba wading across the Kedron, Helena's arrival in Jerusalem, her questioning of the Jews, Judas in the well, the finding of the nails, and Constantine). Piero della Francesca omitted some of Gaddi's scenes (the making of the Cross, the *Piscina Probatica*, Helena's presentation of the Cross, and Heraclius's vision) and added other episodes (Judas in the well, Constantine's vision, the Annunciation, the meeting between the Queen of Sheba and Solomon). Both cycles had an independent basis for their programmes, in which artistic tradition, iconographic recruitment and specific contexts were factors that led to an individual emphasis. The Jewish ghetto in Montegiorgio may have provided an extra impulse.

The northern cycles lack any geographic, iconographic or contextual cohesion. The churches in which they appear were all dedicated to the Holy Cross, but then so were others. One common factor is a local devotion to the Cross or to a relic of the Cross, but this was the case in other places too. It could be said that either or both factors could, but did not necessarily, motivate the Cross legend iconography. So was there something in these churches that provided an extra incentive for a programme illustrating the Legend of the Cross? The feudal dependence on an imperial or episcopal city is striking. The wall paintings were produced in modest churches and chapels that came under the aegis of patrons: Wiedenest under Cologne; Duttenberg under Wimpfen; Wiesendangen under Constance. These were centres where an evident devotion to the Cross or to the Holy Sepulchre existed. The cycles were presumably intended to have an edifying function, although Franciscanism was not prominent in the north.

The programming of the cycles reveals more about iconographic diversity than similarity. Even so, they all provide proof of the late-medieval love of narrative. The number of scenes and motifs is extended. The legends of the Wood of the Cross and Finding of the Cross are illustrated at length. The Legend of the Wood of the Cross, with the cutting down of the tree, the building of the Temple and the Queen of Sheba wading across the Kedron, are all elements that also appear in the Hours of Catherine of Cleves and the *Boec van*

den Houte. The Seth iconography in Wiedenest and Duttenberg is filtered through the tradition of the Lutwin manuscript and the *Vitae Adae et Evae*. Research has shown that the iconographic emphasis on Seth is also matched in the lively manuscript production of this kind of text in Germany.

The Wiesendangen cycle represents the final peak of the complete monumental Legend of the Cross. It is rich cycle, extended to include the Apostles' Creed and Prophets, and it was created under the patronage of the Hohenlandenberg family, of which Hugo was Bishop of Constance.

The start of the sixteenth century did not see an end to the iconographic interest in the figures of Constantine, Helena and Heraclius.[187] The monumental cycle in the chapel of the Holy Cross in Albi Cathedral (France) commissioned by Bishop Jean Jouffroy (early sixteenth century) is worth noting, including as it does Constantine's vision and battle, Helena's entry into Jerusalem, her interrogation of the Jews, the Finding and the Testing of the Cross, and the discovery of the nails. In Albi, Cross processions were held each year on 3 May.[188] The frescoes in the apse of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome, attributed to Antoniazzo Romano between 1495 and 1500, were commissioned by a Spanish cardinal (either Pietro Gundisalvo de Mendoza or Bernaldino Lopez de Carvajal) (fig. ii). The questioning of the Jews, the Finding and Testing of the Cross, Helena's presentation of the Cross, the contest between Heraclius and the younger Chosroes, Heraclius restoring of the Cross in triumph on horseback and subsequently barefoot with the Cross on his shoulder, can all be recognized. The scenes follow one another along the same register.[189] The iconography also was adopted in a predella painted by Luca Signorelli (1516).[190] In the post-Tridentine era Helena, Constantine and Heraclius function as personifications and representatives of the

[187] Bartholomeus Bruyn the Elder (1493–1555), wing with legend of the Finding of the Cross, Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum; F.G. ZEHNDEN, *Gotische Malerei in Köln. Altkölner Bilder von 1300–1500*, Cologne, 1989, p. 85, fig. 50.

[188] A. AURIOL, *Les fresques de la chapelle sainte-croix à Sainte-Cécile d'Albi*, in *Annales du Midi*, 35–36, 1923–1924, pp. 418–456 and illustrations.

[189] F. CAPPELLETTI, *L'affresco nel catino absidiale di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme a Roma. La fonte iconografica, la committenza e la datazione*, in *Storia dell'arte*, 66, 1989, pp. 119–126.

[190] Umbertide, Church of Santa Croce. S. PFLEGER, op. cit., p. 118, figs. 86–88.

Catholic Church.[191] Nonetheless, the credibility of the Finding of the Cross began to be doubted, thanks in part to humanist criticism of the sources on which the legend was based.[192] It may be noted that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, north of the Alps, the Stations of the Cross received the addition of a fifteenth station: Helena's discovery or presentation of the Cross.[193]

Seth was more rarely depicted, however. He appears for the last time in a window made in 1530 for St Neot's Church in Cornwall.[194] The Queen of Sheba continued to be an important iconographic theme outwith the Legend of the Wood of the Cross,[195] though she does appear in connection with the Wood of the Cross in a copper engraving of around 1550 by Frans Crabbe.[196]

And so here, perhaps, a conclusion to the conclusion is needed. Indeed, the most difficult task in this work, *A Heritage of Holy Wood*, is its limitation. It is a sine qua non of the theme—in essence the secret of vegetative proliferation—that it expresses itself in its budding, branching, flourishing and eventual withering. And the Legend of the Cross has withered to a considerable degree in the modern age. A new thinking that put reason first, a religious perception that sought to curtail apocryphal knowledge in favour of Holy Scripture,

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[191] See post-Tridentine cycles in Troyes and the surrounding area: Saint-Martin-des-Vignes, 1562; Saint-Pantaléon, 1540, Bar-sur-Seine, Saint-Etiennne, 1542; see: *Les vitraux de Champagne-Ardenne (Inventaire général des monuments et richesses artistiques de la France)*, Paris, 1992, passim; G. CONSTABLE, *Troyes, Constantinople and the Relics of St. Helen in the Thirteenth Century*, in *Mélanges offerts à René Crozet*, vol. 2, Poitiers, 1966, pp. 135–141.

[192] On the controversy surrounding devotion to the Cross, and in particular to relics of the Cross, in the context of the religious disputes of the 16th century, see the contributions of G. SCAVIZZI, *The Cross. A 16th Century Controversy*, in *Storia dell'arte*, 65, 1989, pp. 27–43; J. De LANDTSHEER, *Justius Lipsius's De Cruce and the Reception of the Fathers*, in *Neulatinisches Jahrbuch. Journal of Neo-Latin Language and Literature*, 2, 2000, pp. 99–124.

[193] F. LUCHMANN, *Die Einordnung der hl. Helena in den Kreuzweg. Arbeitsbericht und Versuch einder Deutung*, in *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde*, 7, 1984, pp. 113–158, with index.

[194] E.S. NEWLYN, *The Stained and Painted Glass of St. Neot's Church and the Staging of the Middle Cornish Drama*, in *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 24, 1, 1994, pp. 89–111

[195] R. BEYER, *Die Königin von Saba. Engel und Dämon. Der Mythos einer Frau*, Cologne, 1987, passim.

[196] M.J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Nicolas Hogenberg und Frans Crabbe, die Maler von Mechelen*, in *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 42, 1921, pp. 161–168, fig. 5.

and an ecclesiastical policy that celebrated the triumphs of its historical forefathers, ensured that the Legend of the Cross became a limited, coherent and streamlined story commemorating a noble finder and valiant rescuer of the relic of the Cross. From such a perspective this study is also about what has been lost in this modern age. In other words, I will end 'now', at that point where the wild and whimsical medieval undertone of the Legend of the Cross ended also.

EPILOGUE

The formation of the legend involving the relic of the Cross, the Wood and the Tree of Life began when Cyril of Jerusalem wrote of the existence of many fragments of wood and ended, perhaps, in Calvin's ironic assessment that put together the relics of the Cross would make up not so much a cross as a whole fleet.[1] This study bides in the period between the early Christian manifestation of the Cross relic cult and the modern repudiation of it. The phenomenon of the Legend of the Cross spans the whole of the Middle Ages; moreover, as regards its form and content it is a pure medieval phenomenon. On the basis of the Wood of the Cross, *A Heritage of Holy Wood* seeks to find access to the various aspects and many disciplines of medievalism. It goes without saying that not all problems and their consequences could be dealt with. And nothing like all the iconographic evidence could receive the same attention. However, by way of a farewell to the reader, I would like to pay special attention to one further example.

In the spring of 2000 I received a package in the post, franked by the Università degli Studi in Udine, Italy. The sender, Professor Dr Andrea De Marchi, had learned that in Leuven a study was underway about the Legend of the Cross. Rolled up in the package was a calendar for 1999 from the Cassa di Risparmio in Teramo in Abruzzo; illustrating the page for November were frescoes that had recently been discovered in the campanile of the Church of San Nicola in Lanciano. Though damaged and varying in quality, the frescoes represent a considerable contribution to our knowledge of the diffusion of the theme in cyclic iconography. The style of the scene in which Solomon's building of the Temple is depicted has suggested a date of 1330–1340 (fig. 97). That means that this motif from the Legend of the Wood of the Cross was illustrated in an area regarded, unjustly, as an artistic periphery before the cycle

[1] J. CALVIN, *Advertissement très utile du grand profit qui reviendroit dans la chrestienté s'il se faisoit inventoire de tous les corps sainctz et reliques, (Corpus reformatorum,* 34. *Calvini opera,* 6), 1953, cols. 404–451.



Fig. 97. *Adam's tomb; Solomon builds the Temple*. Fresco, 1330–1340. Lanciano, Church of San Nicola (copyright: Barbara Baert).

elaborated by Agnolo Gaddi in Florence. This discovery came too late to be included in the present volume, however, my findings have been published in the journal *Iconographica*, 2, 1, 2003, pp. 108–125.

The Lanciano cycle seems not to have served as a model, and conceptionally it is not as strong as the Tuscan examples discussed in the previous pages. Nonetheless it is a timely reminder that the study of the Legend of the Cross is far from complete. What are the south-north connections between texts, or oral traditions? Which were the routes from the Balkans to the West, with the Adriatic coast as an important border area? Will the paradigm of the 'Franciscan Legend of the Cross' in Italy have to be nuanced with the passage of time? What of the still-ongoing opening-up of the former Eastern bloc areas? How many Legends of the Cross are still waiting to be discovered?

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c. *Text editions*

abbreviations:

AH:	C. BLUME, *Analecta hymnica*, 55 vols., Leipzig, 1886–1922.
AS:	*Acta sanctorum.*
BHL:	*Bibliotheca hagiographica latina. Antiquae et mediae aetatis*, ed. *Socii Bollandiani.*
CCM:	*Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum.*
CCCM:	*Corpus christianorum continuatio mediaevalis.*
CSCO:	*Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium.*
CSEL:	*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum.*
CSHB:	*Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae.*
CSSL:	*Corpus christianorum series latina.*
MGH SS:	*Monumenta germaniae historica scriptores.*
SA:	*Scriptores Armeniaci.*
SI:	*Scriptores Iberici.*
PL:	*Patrologia latina*, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, 223 vols.
PG:	*Patrologia graeca*, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, 163 vols.

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Master of the Straus Madonna, predella, ca. 1400
Exaltation of the Cross

Private collection
World chronicle of Rudolf von Ems, early 15th century
Wood of the Cross

Rheims, Cathedral
tympanum, north side 1285
Finding of the Cross
Rome, Santi Quattro Coronati, Oratorio San Silvestro
frescoes, 13th century
Constantine-Finding of the Cross
Rome, Vatican, Bibliotheca Apostolica
homiliary and passionale, Ravenna, 12th century, lat. 1269, fol. 117, T(empore)
Exaltation of the Cross (or Constantine?)
Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale
pontifical of Rheims, early or mid-13th century, ms. 370 (A 34), fol. 16v
Finding of the Cross

Schwäbisch-Gmund, Church of the Holy Cross
archivolts of the south choir entrance, 1410
Wood of the Cross
Siena, Museo del Duomo
Benedetto di Bindo, relic chest, 1412
Finding of the Cross (cycle)
Sinai Peninsula, Monastery of St Catherine
16th-century manuscript, Ms. 1187, fol. 19
Wood of the Cross (Seth)

Skibet (Denmark), parish church
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Stratford-upon-Avon, Church of the Holy Trinity
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Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek
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Toledo, Cathedral
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Toulouse, Church of Saint-Sernin
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Venice, Galeria dell'Accademia
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Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
Legenda Aurea, Viennese workshop, ca. 1446–1447, Ms. 326, fol. 95v
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