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Retelling the Passion at Naumburg: The West-Screen and Its Audience

For Gerhard Schmidt

When reading iconographical studies on narrative images or cycles one may get the idea that there are two crucial operations in the authors' arguments. The first isolates the image or cycle from its actual contexts (as if the consideration of material, site, and audience would contaminate the meaning); the second traces the work to a single written source (as if a visual representation could be nothing but an illustration of a specific passage in a specific text).¹ My case study is concerned with a cycle of thirteenth-century reliefs at Naumburg Cathedral that relate the Passion of Christ, and I will proceed in a different way. I will begin with a very special context, which, as far as art historians know, is unique. (But examined twice, all contexts will prove more or less unique). Then I will address the question of the source. It will turn out that there were more than one. Not all of these sources were written texts nor were they all prefabricated. Important elements of the plot must have been invented during the conception of the reliefs. Finally I will try to point out that the relief cycle was created to form an alternative to other representations of the Passion, among them the most authoritative texts within the corpus of Christian holy writing. I will interpret the cycle as a medium designed especially for its context and for a certain audience, its message becoming contradictory and less significant under other conditions.

The reliefs on the celebrated Naumburg rood screen are either seven or eight in number (that depends on whether you count the central scene beside the gable as one or two) [Fig. 1]. The two reliefs on the right are replaced so that it remains unclear how the narrative originally ended. This is one reason why I will concentrate on the first scenes: the four reliefs on the left which tell the beginning of Christ's Passion.²

I

It is important to realize that the rood screen at Naumburg does not close the main choir of the cathedral but the western choir, which preferably should be called a chapel or even an independent church. Like many spaces in medieval churches, it probably had several functions:³ on the one hand, it almost certainly served as a church for the daily services of a body of canons dedicated to the Holy Virgin and separated from the canons of the cathedral.⁴ On the other, the western choir may have served as a chapel for the bishop and the canons of the cathedral, but obviously not for their daily services, which took place in the eastern choir. As far as we can deduce from the statues I will discuss below, the



1) Naumburg Cathedral, the western rood screen as seen from the nave; behind the screen the western choir is visible.

bishop and the chapter used the western choir for rituals that benefited the benefactors of the cathedral. It has been said that: “Catholicism at the end of the Middle Ages was in a large part a cult of the living in the service of the dead.”⁵ This was also true for the High Middle Ages, and the western choir of Naumburg Cathedral is a site where this statement becomes tangible. When passing through the screen, one is surrounded by the deceased.

Twelve of the most important benefactors of Naumburg Cathedral appear as statues in the choir. By the mid thirteenth century, when the sculptures were created, all persons represented were long dead. Most had been buried in the cathedral for more than 150 years. Thus it is obvious that we are not dealing with portraits in the strictest sense. However, the statues could hardly look more alive, whether it is despite or because of the courtly manners that some display.⁶ The very popular statue of Countess Uta, for example, projects what in thirteenth century Germany was probably called *Zuht* and may be translated as “aloofness”⁷ [Fig. 2]. Others behave less elegantly, among them Count Thimo [Fig. 3]. It may be difficult to say exactly which emotion the sculptor wished to represent, but it is clear that he refrained from reproducing the cliché of a nobleman. And the same is true if we look at Count Dietmar [Fig. 4]. He is reported to have been killed in a trial by ordeal. The story that Thimo, of all people, was the man who avenged Dietmar’s death in the most cruel way seems to be one of the many legends triggered by the Naumburg statues and cannot be proven.⁸ It illustrates, however, the sorts of responses which the statues evoke.

To summarize: the benefactors of the cathedral were represented as noblemen and noblewomen, one as a victim, and some, if not all, as sinners. And if we consult their biographies in the chronicles of the tenth and eleventh centuries, as we may assume they were consulted in the thirteenth century when the statues were created, we find, not surprisingly, that many of their lives were littered with the unavoidable sins of the powerful.⁹

As long as we consider the statues as monuments to the benefactors, it remains an astonishing fact that many of these appearances are anything but idealized—more dark heroes than heroes. However, these statues were not made in order to remind the public of the accomplishments of these men and women, but to remind the Naumburg clerics to pray for their souls,¹⁰ precisely what “cult of the living in the service of the dead” means. It was not because of their accomplishments but rather because of their sins that the benefactors so strongly needed prayers and masses to be said for them. Once we realize this connection we can better



2) «Countess Uta», Naumburg Cathedral, western choir.

understand the dark sides of the characters simulated by the sculptor.

Innumerable texts from the twelfth century onward and from all western countries describe what souls have to fear in the other world in a place for purgation, a third realm, situated alongside heaven and hell, which in thirteenth century German was called *Vegefiure* (cleansing fire).¹¹ Among the best known is Dante’s report.¹² Another very impressive description, which has the advantage of being concise, comes from England. The most famous ghost in the history of literature tells Hamlet:



3) «Count Thimo», Naumburg Cathedral, western choir.



4) «Count Dietmar», Naumburg Cathedral, western choir.

I am thy father's spirit,
 Doomed for a certain term to walk in the night,
 And for the day confined to fast in fires,
 Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
 Are burnt and purged away; but that I am forbid
 To tell the secrets of my prison house,
 I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
 Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
 Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,
 Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
 And each particular hair to stand an end,
 Like quills upon the fearful porpentine...

By 1600 or 1601 when Shakespeare wrote this the Reformation had freed a great number of Christians, among them probably Shakespeare himself, from the fear of purgatory. Now purgatory was considered, as the reformer William Tyndale put it, "a poet's fable"—at least by non-Catholics.¹³ Obviously Shakespeare used this fable to give authentic colour to a medieval ghost-story, and therefore he might be called the first historian of mentalités, a position one would normally give to twentieth-century French scholars like Philippe Ariès and Jacques Le Goff.¹⁴

Though the ghost of Hamlet's father is not allowed to report clearly on his sufferings, what Shakespeare makes him say is intimidating enough. While the ghost's haunting of the castle at Elsinore has to do with the fact that Hamlet's father died by murder, burning in purgatory for decades, centuries, or millennia was the normal experience a medieval Christian expected to face after his or her death.¹⁵ This is the reason why Europeans of the Middle Ages were concerned with their afterlives to a nearly inconceivable degree. The prayers of the living were believed to be the best aid against unbearable tortures after death. Not only most pre-Shakespearian ghost appearances but also most sacred works of art from the Middle Ages, among them the Naumburg statues, thus served as reminders to the living of their duties of solidarity with their deceased Christian fellows.¹⁶

II

Here I want to pause in my consideration of the context of the rood screen reliefs and address the problem of their sources. At first glance, this would appear to be simple. The story of Christ's last days on earth was told by all four Evangelists with only slight differences, and this corpus may be considered the most authoritative part and the core of all Christian texts. So, if not one Gospel alone, then all the

Gospels together should have sufficed as sources for the patron and the sculptor. Why should they have made reference to other texts or ideas?

If we start from this assumption and read the scenes we begin to find trouble in the second relief. The first one represents the well known scene of the Last Supper as a regular meal where people actually eat and drink. Although this is not unusual, the sculptor's obsession with depicting modes of consumption is striking. Jacqueline E. Jung has recently compared the behaviour of Christ and his followers with what medieval handbooks of manners prescribed. Thus it becomes clear that we are supposed to perceive Peter as an especially delicate eater, for he raises a small morsel to his mouth with two fingers of a single hand. By contrast, Judas, who sits next to him, is represented as an unrefined and greedy guest: while Christ, according to the Gospel of John (13, 25), places a piece of bread in the traitor's mouth, Judas additionally extends his entire hand into a bowl in the centre of the table.¹⁷ Apart from the representation of differences in table manners, however, the scene can be regarded as a carved translation of the accounts in the Gospels. In fact, this includes the motif of Judas' greed. In John, the traitor is marked by receiving a piece of bread, while according to Matthew (26, 23) and Mark (14, 20), Christ said that the traitor was he who dipped his hand into the common dish.

The second relief has a less popular theme. It shows Judas being paid for his betrayal [Figs. 5, 6]. The coins are clearly visible as they change hands. It is one of the very few and possibly the clearest representation in which Judas actually receives money.¹⁸ But this is not the reason why the relief raises questions regarding its source. The crucial problem is that none of the Evangelists bothers to tell this story. Matthew (26, 14-16), Mark (13, 10-11), and Luke (22, 3-6) mention that money was offered to Judas. According to them this happened before the Last Supper took place. Matthew (26, 15) gives the well known sum of thirty pieces of silver. He also tells how Judas tried to rid himself of the money after Christ had been arrested and finally "cast down the pieces of silver in the temple" (27, 3-10). The delivery of the money and the moment when it took place both remain unmentioned. So the second relief, unlike the first and unlike the following ones, shows something which one can hardly call a biblical scene or an illustration of a passage in the Gospels.

The story told in the relief, however, is also problematic in itself. The exchange of the money is only one aspect of the narrative. The other aspect which holds equal importance is the whispering. Of the six persons represented only one, Judas, is clearly shown neither whispering nor listening. If we look at the person enthroned, who must be the High Priest



5) «Judas Receives the Thirty Pieces of Silver», Naumburg Cathedral, western screen.

Caiaphas, we realize how the act of anxiously listening to the whisper of the man behind him competes with the act of pay-

ing out the money. The Priest seems even more concerned with the things told to him than with the trade. In descriptions



6) «Judas' Face», detail of Fig. 5.

of the relief the motif of the whispering and listening persons is often celebrated as one of the artist's most brilliant inventions.¹⁹ It is said to create a fateful atmosphere that went perfectly with Judas' horrible story. And in connection with the money and the conspicuous pointed hats which the Jews of the High Middle Ages had to wear in public, the motif seems to match modern anti-Semitic projections as well.²⁰

I have a different suggestion regarding the origin and the meaning of the whispering motif. I think the visual narration of the relief is characterized by a combination or mixture of two scenes that both occur in a certain type of illuminated book. One scene represents the conspiracy of the High Priests and the Pharisees against Christ. The other scene represents what can be considered the result of this conspiracy, the selling of

Christ to the High Priests by Judas [Fig. 7]. Only the first one is based on passages in the Gospels immediately preceding the story of the Last Supper: "Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtility, and kill him" (Matthew 26, 3-4). "And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people" (Luke 22, 2). Both images form part of the so-called *Biblia pauperum*, a sort of religious picture book or theological diagram, which still exists in dozens of copies. Its prototype was created in southern Germany in the mid thirteenth century.²¹ Today we know that this book did not instruct the illiterate lay people (as the modern name *Biblia pauperum*—'bible of the poor'—suggests) but it served to edify clerics eager to meditate on the relations between the New and Old Testaments. The scenes are inserted in a rather conventional New Testament cycle, which forms the spine of the *Biblia pauperum*, at a very unconventional place between the Last Supper and the Arrest of Christ. This is the place where one would normally expect the Washing of the Feet or the Prayer at Calvary. Thus the position of both scenes in the book corresponds to the position of our relief on the Naumburg screen. The relief also appears between the Last Supper and the Arrest of Christ.

The reason why the author of the *Biblia pauperum* fabricated the scenes is not entirely clear. It is possible that the concept has to do with the two Old Testament columns that frame and comment on the central New Testament column. To a certain degree, the pictures from the Old Testament were the crucial ones because the *Biblia pauperum* and similar twelfth- and thirteenth-century theological diagrams had been developed to re-enhance the status of the Old Testament. Or the invention of the scenes has to do with the obvious fact that the author tried to create groups of four thematically matching New Testament scenes. In this instance, the group embraces the conspiracy, the selling of Christ, the arrest of Christ, and the interrogation by Pilate.²² In any case, there can be little doubt that both the existence and the position of the scenes within the story of Christ's Passion depend on the highly sophisticated medium which was the *Biblia pauperum*. It is all the more astonishing that the images were introduced when the Passion cycle in Naumburg was being conceived, a cycle that neither relates to an Old Testament branch nor can be subdivided into chapters or groups. The inclusion of the scene can only mean that the interest in Judas' fate and in telling it as precisely as possible must have been enormous.

One motif of the relief remains mysterious, the horrified expression in Judas' face and his bristled hair [Fig. 6]. One may doubt that this is a convincing representation of a man



7) «The Conspiracy against Christ» (central column top); «Judas Betrays Christ» (central column bottom), Salzburg, Erzabtei St. Peter, Cod. a IX 12, fol. 5.



8) «The Arrest of Christ», Naumburg Cathedral, western choir.

cold-hearted enough to take blood money. The expression of the face would fit better either with a scene that shows Judas refusing the money or with a representation of his attempt to give it back, the situation in which he said: “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood” and the priests answered “What *is that* to us? see thou to *that*” (Matthew 27, 4). On the other hand, the story the artist tells is clear: Judas is taking the money. And it would be anachronistic to ascribe to the thirteenth century artist the idea of a split personality—a person who eagerly wants and does not want in the same moment, and therefore suffers terribly. Also Erwin Panofsky was disturbed by the pain in the traitor’s face. This reminded him of Judas’ role in the belief of the Cainitic Gnostics: they saw a tragic figure in Judas, a sort of hero who sacrificed himself by betraying Christ and only through this made possible the redemption of mankind.²³ But it is clear, and Panofsky had no doubt about it, that the ideas of the Cainitics, a sect that



9) «Peter Disowns Christ», Naumburg Cathedral, western choir.

flourished in the second century, were completely irrelevant to the western church of the high and late Middle Ages.

A similar problem occurs in the following relief that shows the Arrest of Christ [Fig. 8]. Like the Last Supper this event is represented very often and is a basic element of Passion cycles. Nevertheless one motif in the account is uncommon and difficult to understand: the hero seems to be Peter. His sword dominates the foreground of the scene if not the scene as a whole. His act of violence against the servant Malchus rivals, to say the least, what we are told about the encounter of Judas and Christ. This view of the event is unique. Normally and according to the text of the Gospels, Peter plays a supporting role while Judas is marked in a more or less dramatic way to be the villain. In the corresponding picture of the *Biblia pauperum*, Peter is even omitted while Judas’ face is not a normal human one but deformed. In the *Biblia pauperum* and in all representations of Christ’s Arrest from the High Middle

Ages it is the act of betrayal that is emphasized. In Naumburg, however, the main subject seems to be what Peter did when he attacked Malchus.

Sometimes it was said that Peter's behaviour must have corresponded in some respects to the ideas of the culture of chivalry, the same culture which was assumed to have produced the statues of the benefactors in the choir. This view lingers in the description of the scene by Jacqueline E. Jung who says that Peter's violence was presented by the sculptor "as blameworthy in degree, but not necessarily in kind".²⁴ Yet, it is hard to believe that attacking an obviously unarmed man, to whom the gospels refer as a servant, and in spite of much effort doing him no more harm than amputating an ear should have been perceived as an action appropriate to represent the military role of noble laymen. In later representations, according to the account in the Gospel of Luke (22, 50-51), Christ was often shown healing Malchus' ear, thus giving an example of his power and mercy. But as the act of healing is not represented, this cannot be the point in the Naumburg relief either.²⁵ So the question remains open as to why Peter's appearance is such a prominent one.

The following scene again occurs very rarely in Passion cycles. It shows Peter disowning Christ after a woman recognized him as one of the disciples [Fig. 9]. Unlike the scene in which Judas is paid, it is not part of the *Biblia pauperum*, but is biblical in the strictest sense and based on the Gospels of Matthew (26, 71-74), Mark (14, 71), and Luke (22, 54-62). In this case the point is clear. Peter is shown as a sinner. And in this case we also know how the Catholic exegetes of the thirteenth century interpreted Peter's sin. In the *Legenda aurea* for example we read: "[...] no sinner should despair even if he, like Peter, has denied God three times, provided that, like Peter, he confesses God in his heart, by his speech, and through his actions."²⁶ And in the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* we come across a passage where Peter encounters the resurrected Christ and says: "Lord, I confess my fault, for I abandoned you many times", whereupon Christ answers, kissing him: "Peace be with you; do not be afraid; all your sins are forgiven you."²⁷ It is important to realize that this account is not borrowed from the Gospels but is an invention introduced as a commentary on them.

If we look back from the scene showing Peter disowning Christ and its commentary to the preceding parts of the cycle, we have a key to understanding them better. On the one hand the cycle still tells the story of Christ's Passion more or less according to the Gospels. On the other, it tells the stories of two sinners, giving two examples each of their respective sins: Peter violently defends Christ against his will, causing him to say the famous phrases (Matthew 26, 52): "Put up thy sword

into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword". These words may be represented in the relief by the movement of Christ's right hand towards the weapon, a gesture which is otherwise hard to explain²⁸ [Fig. 8]. Later, Peter denies him. These are sins that were forgiven because Peter confessed and repented and did good works later, as told in the *Legenda Aurea*.²⁹ In contrast, Judas sold Christ for money and betrayed him. These were sins which were not forgiven, and the medieval exegetes knew exactly why: because Judas could not believe in forgiveness.³⁰ This inability called despair (*desperatio*), which finally drove Judas to suicide, was first considered by St. Augustine, the Church Father, a sin as damning as the others or even worse, and indeed unforgivable.³¹ In the Frankfurt Passion play of the late fifteenth century the author makes Augustine say: "If Judas had not hanged himself with grief in a certain hour, god would have received him gladly".³² And in the *Legenda Aurea* we read: "[...] for although Judas confessed his sin, he did not hope for pardon and therefore did not obtain mercy".³³

This statement allows us to return to Judas' face in the second scene of the Naumburg screen [Fig. 6]. I still disagree with the psychological model of interpretation, and suggest a theological one instead. What the sculptor wanted to express may be despair, exactly the sin that distinguishes Judas from Peter. While it is true that representing Judas' despair at this point does not meet modern expectations of convincing dramaturgy, it is also true that modern ideas of dramaturgy were as little relevant in the thirteenth century as were modern ideas of psychology. Everybody who has tried to read a medieval novel has encountered this experience.

In the last relief preserved from the thirteenth century on the right side of the screen, we come across a similar expression that is just as difficult to understand as Judas' face in the selling of Christ. The scene shows Christ before Pilate [Fig. 10]. While the Gospels suggest that Pilate's downfall might have been his prudence and his endeavour to retain neutrality, in Naumburg Pilate appears as a hysteric [Fig. 11]. This corresponds with the high medieval legend of Pilate that describes him as a person possessed by evil who finally ended his life by suicide.³⁴ In other words: the Roman was presented as a second and non-Jewish Judas. Written in the mid twelfth century the legend was popular enough to be included in the *Legenda Aurea* providing one more example for the mortal sin of despair. This was also the way the biblical figure was construed by the medieval exegetes.³⁵ Therefore the expression of the face, terrifying and at the first glance inappropriate, again characterizes a man guilty of despair whose biography could be read as the contrary of a Christian life.



10) «Christ before Pilate», Naumburg Cathedral, western choir.



11) «Pilate's Face», detail of Fig. 10.

III

Is it possible to connect the peculiarities of the cycle on the screen with the space behind the screen and its liturgical purpose? As I showed earlier, we have some reason to believe that the space behind the screen was not only a Lady Chapel but also the site where the canons of the cathedral, while praying, fought against the temporal and eternal consequences of the sins committed by the benefactors of the cathedral during their lifetimes. As far as we are informed about the mentalities of medieval clerics the memorial services were taken very seriously, and could be experienced by the priests as struggles against the powers of purgatory and hell, if not against God himself, because praying for sinners at least sometimes meant lodging an appeal on his verdict.³⁶ The *Legenda Aurea* tells the story of Pope Gregory the Great who obtained Emperor Trajan's release from hell, an example appropriate to show what pious clerics could achieve by their prayers.³⁷ Unfortunately we do not have any sources about what form of edification or instruction the canons may have expected from the decoration of the screen they had to pass through when entering the field. I would dare say, however, that the stories of

the sinners Peter, Judas, and Pilate were especially appropriate for the preparation of the fighters. The story of Peter gave encouragement while the stories of Judas and Pilate stressed the necessity of the fight, and provided some important arguments that the canons could make use of in their prayers. One argument was that the benefactors deserved forgiveness, because unlike Judas and Pilate they had not despaired but had trusted in God's mercy, and had proved this by benefiting Naumburg cathedral. Another argument was that unlike Judas they had not sold Christ for money, and even if so (as in a sense everybody could sell Christ for money), they had not thrown the money away but used it for doing good works, a fact that again proved their trust in God's mercy.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that we are concerned not only with gripping visual narratives carved in a masterly fashion in stone but also with a concretized system of differing texts. The fundamental one is the written text of the Four Gospels from the first century. In addition to this corpus, there are the medieval legends and commentaries whose authors on the one hand tried to supplement the accounts of the Gospels in order to make them more vivid and understandable, and on the other ascribed certain meanings to them, as if

everything in the Bible could be read as a parable. Actually a multi-level or polysemous reading was the normal method of biblical interpretation in the Middle Ages.³⁸ An often repeated Latin rhyme says:

Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria;
Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.³⁹

(The letter teaches what happened, the allegorical what to believe,
The moral what to do, the anagogical toward what to aspire.)

According to this idea, narrative is only the basic stratum of the biblical stories. Today we know the polysemous exegesis exclusively from the written versions; in the form of sermons, however, there must have been an oral commentary on the Bible in Naumburg and elsewhere as well.

No less important seems to be the painted text of the *Biblia pauperum* which belongs to the mid-thirteenth century and was, apart from sermons, the most recent source used in Naumburg. The *Biblia pauperum* was a product and visualisation of the polysemous reading of the Scriptures, but was also important because it provided variations of the biblical stories and therefore made a valuable addition to the visual tradition of retelling the Gospels.

All these texts—Gospels, legends, commentaries, sermons, the *Biblia pauperum*—were obviously considered both authoritative and variable by the patrons and the sculptors when they were conceiving their own text, the carved one of the reliefs. The texts were considered authoritative as far as the upper strata of the stories, the parts which were called the allegorical, moral, or anagogical, and which today one may call the message, are concerned, and variable as far as the details of the plot are concerned. The representation of the details was less related to the authenticity of the narrative than to the purpose of clarifying the central message. The horrified faces of Judas and Pilate, for example, do not belong to the biblical narrative itself but to the message of the biblical story as it was read in the High Middle Ages.

All texts including the carved one, which was created from the others, served as media in the Christian cult, but in different ways. Here I will only deal with the reliefs and the Gospels. Being read aloud during the services the Gospels formed part of the liturgy and with that belonged to the formalized core of the cult. The passages about the Passion were read on the four most important feasts of Lent. This was (and still is) more or less the same all over the Catholic world. When the western choir of Naumburg was used during Lent, no matter whether

by the canons of the cathedral or by the chapter of the Holy Virgin, the Passion was read by a cleric who according to liturgical rules had to stand on the left part of the screen. Like most screens in Italy, France, and Germany, and unlike those in England, the Naumburg one has a platform and stairs in the rear and was also a sort of pulpit.⁴⁰ The upper part of the reader's body must have been visible from the nave over the section with the Arrest of Christ.⁴¹ It is clear, however, that he did not read the Latin text exclusively or even mainly for an audience of lay people in the nave, but primarily for an audience of clerics in the choir who were able to understand the words and whose liturgical action they completed. This is one reason why we should resist the temptation to relate the reliefs directly to the liturgical reading and to assume that the carved texts were supposed to serve as illustrations of the written and read ones.

Another reason is the fact that the reliefs were probably veiled during Lent. According to William Durandus, the famous liturgist of the High Middle Ages: "Now all things which pertain to the ornament of a church, must be removed or covered during the season of Lent".⁴² There can be little doubt that in Naumburg and elsewhere all images that showed holy persons or stories were either taken away or covered, and it is even possible that the whole screen disappeared behind a curtain for forty days. So the carved Passion of the reliefs was never visible when the written Passion of the gospels was audible. The carved Passion accompanied readings on Christ's childhood, on his miracles, and on other themes.

The carved and the written Passions were independently used in the cult. In any case, unlike the readings, the reliefs did not form part of the liturgy. One can assume from their position on the screen, however, that they were perceived by the audience as a form of commentary on or preparation for the liturgy. Everything related to Christ's Passion could also be related to the Eucharist and this means to the everyday celebrations of the mass on the altar behind the screen. But this would only explain a Passion cycle that retells the gospels (while perhaps underlining Christ's sufferings) whereas the Naumburg reliefs stray from this corpus of texts to a considerable extent. As I tried to point out, it is possible to understand the peculiarities in the narrative as reactions to the special purpose that the western choir served as a chapel for the liturgical memory of the benefactors. This operation makes obvious to what extent the reliefs deal with the problem of how sinners can obtain forgiveness. With that, however, an audience is not only defined by the architectural and liturgical context but also by needs and interests to which the medium itself responds with its message.⁴³ Therefore the audience is not necessarily and not exclusively the very reverend users of the choir, nor

the lay people visiting the church and listening to the services behind the screen. The implied audience was everybody who had learned to face the fear of purgatory and knew that there

were spiritual means against its horrors. For these people the carved text was not an illustration of a written one, but must have been inspiring in itself.⁴⁴

¹ Cfr. M. Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narration*, Toronto 1997, p. 161: 'In art history, however, narratology is not very popular. This is understandable, as art historical interpretation has often relied on the narratives that the image allegedly "illustrates", thus subordinating visual to literary narrative'.

² Among the latest contributions on the screen and its Passion cycle are: I. Schulze, *Der Westlettnner des Naumburger Doms: Das Portal als Gleichnis*, Frankfurt, 1995; A.-F. Köllermann, *Die Darstellung der Passion Christi am Naumburger Westlettnner*, in: *Meisterwerke mittelalterlicher Skulptur*, ed. H. Krohm, Berlin, 1996, pp. 349-363; E. Schubert, *Der Naumburger Dom*, Halle an der Saale, 1997, pp. 128-176; J. E. Jung, "Beyond the Barrier: The Unifying Role of the Choir Screen in Gothic Churches", *Art Bulletin* 82, 2000, pp. 622-657, esp. 630-645; J.E. Jung, "The West Choir Screen of Naumburg Cathedral and the Formation of Social and Sacred Space", Ph. D. diss., Columbia University, 2002 and M.V. Schwarz, *Visuelle Medien im christlichen Kult: Fallstudien aus dem 13. bis 16. Jahrhundert*, Vienna, 2002, pp. 25-64. While Jacqueline E. Jung and I are remarkably close in the interpretation of the crucified Christ in the portal of the screen, our views of the passion scenes differ. Jung is more concerned with facts from political, social and cultural history. For surveys of the scholarship on Naumburg and the artists see K. Brush, "The Naumburg Master: A Chapter in the Development of Medieval Art History", *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, VIe période, tome 122, 1993, pp. 109-126; J. Jahn, *Die Erschließung der Bildwerke des Naumburger Meisters. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Kunstwissenschaft*, Berlin, 1964; E. Schubert, "Zur Naumburg-Forschung der letzten Jahrzehnte", *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 35, 1982, pp. 121-138 and ders., "Bemerkungen zu Studien zur frühgotischen

Architektur und Skulptur des Naumburger Domes", *Kunstchronik* 52, 1999, pp. 577-587.

³ *Heiliger Raum: Architektur, Kunst und Liturgie in mittelalterlichen Kathedralen und Stiftskirchen*, ed. F. Kohlschein und P. Wünsche, Münster, 1998.

⁴ E. Schubert, *Der Westchor des Naumburger Doms: Ein Beitrag zur Datierung und zum Verständnis der Standbilder*, Berlin, 1964; H. Wiessner, *Das Bistum Naumburg* (*Germania Sacra* 35, 1), Berlin and New York 1997, I, pp. 144-145 and passim.

⁵ A. Galpern, "The Legacy of Late Medieval Religion in Sixteenth-Century Champagne", in: *The Pursuit of Holiness*, ed. C. Trinkaus and H. Obermann, Leiden, 1974, pp. 141-176, esp. 149.

⁶ M.V. Schwarz, "Liturgie und Illusion: Die Gegenwart der Toten sichtbar gemacht (Naumburg, Worms, Pisa)", in: *Grabmäler: Tendenzen der Forschung an Beispielen aus Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. W. Maier, Berlin, 2000, pp. 145-177.

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¹¹ *Berthold von Regensburg: Vollständige Ausgabe seiner Predigten*, ed. F. Pfeiffer, Vienna, 1862, I, p. 77.

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¹³ St. Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory*, Princeton and Oxford, 2001, p. 35.

¹⁴ L. Raphael, *Die Erben von Bloch und Fèbvre: Annales-Geschichtsschreibung und nouvelle histoire in Frankreich 1945-1980*, Stuttgart, 1994.

¹⁵ The literature concerning the purgatory is enormous. The classical book, however, is: J. Le Goff, *La naissance du Purgatoire*, Paris, 1981. See also Himmel, *Hölle, Fegefeuer: Das Jenseits im Mittelalter*, ed. P. Jezler (exh. cat. Zürich, Schweizerisches Landesmuseum), Zürich, 1994; A.J. Gurjewitsch, *Himmliches und irdisches Leben: Bildwelten des schriftlosen Menschen im 13. Jahrhundert*, Amsterdam and Dresden, 1997, pp. 200-224; Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory*, and S. Wegmann, *Auf dem Weg zum Himmel: Das Fegefeuer in der deutschen Kunst des Mittelalters*, Cologne, 2003.

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¹⁷ Jung, *The West Choir Screen*, pp. 237-273. J.E. Jung, "Peasant Meal or Lord's Feast? The Social Iconography of the Naumburg Last Supper", *Gesta* 42, 2003, pp. 39-61.

¹⁸ For comparisons, see Schulze, *Westlettner*, pp. 44-48.

¹⁹ Cfr. Schubert, *Der Naumburger Dom*, p. 136.

²⁰ A. Weber, "Die Entwicklung des Judenbildes im 13. Jahrhundert und sein Platz in der Lettner- und Tympanonskulptur: Fragen zum Verhältnis von Ikonographie und Stil", *Städel-Jahrbuch* 14, 1993, pp. 35-54, esp. 35.

²¹ G. Schmidt, *Die Armenbibeln des XIV. Jahrhunderts*, Graz and Cologne, 1959, pp. 85-87. The Salzburg *Biblia pauperum*, which represents this type of book, is published as a facsimile: *Die Salzburger Armenbibel. Codex a IX 12 aus der Erzabtei St. Peter zu Salzburg*, ed. K. Forstner, Munich, 1978.

²² Schmidt, *Armenbibeln*, p. 80.

²³ E. Panofsky, *Die deutsche Plastik des elften bis dreizehnten Jahrhunderts*, Munich, 1924, pp. 150.

²⁴ Jung, "Beyond the Barrier", p. 639. See also Jung, "The West Choir Screen", pp. 303-322.

²⁵ Cfr. D. Gillerman, "The Arrest of Christ: A Gothic Relief in the Metropolitan Museum of Art", *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 15, 1981, pp. 67-90, esp. p. 71 with reference to Naumburg.

²⁶ "[...] ut nullus peccator desperet etiam si tertio, sicut Petrus, deum negavit, si tamen eum sicut ipse velit corde, ore et opere confiteri". Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, ed. G.P. Maggioni, Florence, 1998, p. 274. Translation: Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, ed. W.G. Ryan, Princeton, 1993, I, p. 164.

²⁷ "Domine, dico meam culpam quia te dereliqui et pluries negavi; et desculatus est pedes eius. Dominus autem ipsum erigens, osculatus est eum, dicens: Pax tibi. Noli timere: omnia peccata sunt tibi dimissa". Johannes de Caulibus, *Meditaciones vitae Christi*, ed. M Stallings-Taney, Turnholt, 1997 (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 153), p. 309. Translation: *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century*, ed. I. Ragusa and R. Green, Princeton, 1961, p. 365.

²⁸ The gesture was observed by P. Hinz, *Der Naumburger Meister: Ein protestantischer Mensch des XIII. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin,

1954, p. 63. He explained it as an attempt made by Christ to deflect the blow of Peter's sword from Judas' head.

²⁹ Cfr. E. Dorn, *Der sündige Heilige in der Legende des Mittelalters*, Munich, 1967.

³⁰ B. Wachinger, *Die Passion Christi und die Literatur: Beobachtungen an den Rändern der Passionsliteratur*, in: *Die Passion Christi in der Literatur und Kunst des Spätmittelalters*, ed. W. Haug and B. Wachinger, Tübingen, 1993, pp. 1-20, esp. 7-10.

³¹ R. Ewertowski, *Judas. Verräter und Märtyrer: Seine Gestalt in der Bewußtseinsgeschichte*, Stuttgart, 2000, 17.

³² "Het Judas nit in der stunde / vor großem leide sich erhangen, / got het in gerne entphangen". *Das Drama des Mittelalters*, ed. R. Froning, Stuttgart, 1891/92), p. 472.

³³ "[...] nam etsi ludas peccatum suum confessus fuerit, tamen non in spe venie et ideo non est misericordiam consecutus". *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Maggioni, p. 128. Translation: *Golden Legend*, ed. Ryan, I, p. 77.

³⁴ D. Werner, *Pylatus: Untersuchungen zur metrischen Pilatuslegende und kritische Textausgabe*, Ratingen, Kastellaun, and Düsseldorf, 1972.

³⁵ Werner, *Pylatus*, p. 40 points to Paschasius Radbertus, *Expos. in Matth. XII*, cap. 27 (PL 120, col. 930f., 939).

³⁶ A. Angenendt, *Theologie und Liturgie der mittelalterlichen Toten-Memoria*, in: *Memoria*, pp. 79-199.

³⁷ *Golden Legend*, ed Ryan, I, pp. 178-179.

³⁸ B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, Notre Dame, Ind., 1964. H. Reventlow, *Epochen der Bibelauslegung II: Von der Spätantike bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, München, 1994.

³⁹ The distich has been attributed to Augustine of Dacia (+1282). F. Chatillion, *Vocabulaire et prosodie du distique attribué à Augustin de Dacie sur le quatre sens de l'écriture*, in: *L'Homme devant Dieu: Mélanges offerts au père Henri de Lubac*, Lyon, 1963/64), II, pp. 17-28.

⁴⁰ Jung, "Beyond the Barrier", gives a good survey of what is known about rood screens and their function in the medieval liturgy. For a new bibliography on rood screens see: *Heiliger Raum*, pp. 272-279 (C. Kosch).

⁴¹ A. Jungmann, *Missarium Sollemnia: Eine genetische Erklärung der römischen Messe*, Vienna, 1952, I, p. 528.

⁴² "Sane omnia que ad ornatum tempore Quadragesime removeri vel contegi debent [...]". *Guillelmi Duranti Rationale Divinorum Officiorum I-IV*, ed A. Davril and T. M. Thibodeau, Turnholt, 1995 (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 140), p. 45. Translation: J. M. Neale and B. Webb, *The Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments*, Leeds, 1848, p. 72.

⁴³ Cfr. Wolfgang Iser's concept of the "implied reader" or Umberto Eco's concept of the "model reader". W. Iser, *Der implizite Leser: Kommunikationsformen des Romans von Bunyan bis Beckett*, Munich, 1972; U. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, Bloomington, Ind., 1979. These concepts were applied to art history by Wolfgang Kemp. See W. Kemp, *Der Anteil des Betrachters: Rezeptionsästhetische Studien zur Malerei des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, 1983, pp. 29-35 and other contributions by the same author, esp. W. Kemp, *Narrative*, in: *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. R.S. Nelson and R. Schiff, Chicago and London, 1996, pp. 58-69.

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