

All ye who, having duly performed your prayers,
leave the house of the Lord, return with your bodies but remain
there with your hearts.

The basilica does not, however, as is more usual, look to the East, but is turned towards the basilica of my blessed Lord Felix, facing his tomb; yet an undulating apse unfolds itself with two recesses, one to the right and one to the left within the space left open around it, one of these offering place to the priest when he makes the offers of jubilation and the other receiving the praying congregation behind the priest in a spacious bend. It is a splendid sight, the way in which this basilica suddenly in its entirety opens in the direction of the basilica of the renowned confessor in three similar arches with a lattice, pervious to light, by which the buildings and the spaces of the two churches are connected. But because the apse of another monument had been built between, and an obstructing wall separated the old basilica from the new, as many doors were opened in the side wall of the confessor's church as existed on the front of the new church. And thus this wall gives a vista, which might be called open-work, from one church into the other, as is indicated by the inscriptions placed between the two rows of doors. Consequently there are just above the entrance of the new church the following lines:

The bountiful house is open with triple arch to those entering,
and this threefold doorway bears testimony to pious faith.

Likewise there are to the right and left next to crosses painted in red-lead these epigrams:

The high cross is surrounded by the orb of a flower-bearing wreath,
and is red, dyed by the Lord's shed blood.
The doves perched above the heavenly sign
intimate that the Kingdom of God is open to the simple of heart.

And:

Slay us unto the world with this cross and the world unto us,
by virtue of Thy giving life to our soul through the downfall of
guilt.
Us too wilt Thou make doves pleasing to Thee, Christ,
if Thy followers have strength through purity of heart. . . .

Let us now go out of this Nolan church and proceed to that at Fundi. Fundi is the name of the town which was equally familiar to me, as long as my property, which I had there and visited regularly, existed there. Consequently it was a wish of mine, a pledge, so to say, of my attachment as a resident or in memory of my former fortune, to found a basilica in that town, since it was certainly in need of it, for the church it possessed was dilapidated and small. Therefore I thought I should add the following verses too, which we have prepared for the inauguration of

that church in that town. For it is still in the making, but if God be propitious, it is nigh unto consecration. The reason that induced me to do this was especially, that my friend Victor also thought the painting destined for the apse of this church very fine and wanted to bring you the texts, in case you should make a choice from the two for a painting in your newest church too, in which, according to his statement, an apse has also been made. But whether I had better refer to this as *absida* or *abside*, you may settle for yourself; I admit I do not know, because I do not remember having seen this case of the word anywhere. But also to this little church the holy ashes of the blessed relics of apostles and martyrs will give their consecration in the name of Christ, the saint of saints, the martyr of martyrs and the Lord of Lords. For He Himself has testified that He in His turn would become the confessor of His confessors. Therefore there is a separate second inscription with regard to this mercy which is detached from the painting.

As regards the painting:

The labour and the reward of the saints are justly connected with
each other,
the high cross and the sublime prize for the cross, the wreath.
God Himself, for us the Predecessor in cross and wreath,
Christ, stands in the heavenly forest of flower-bearing Paradise
under the blood-red cross, in the form of a white lamb,
lamb because He was delivered up to unjust death as innocent
sacrifice.

From on high the Holy Ghost imbues the yearning lamb, and out
of a ruddy cloud the Father wreathes it.
And because it stands as a judge on a high rock,
there are around its throne cattle of a twofold kind,
goats which are at discord with lambs; the shepherd turns
from the goats on his left and he welcomes the lambs on his right,
which have performed their duty.³⁸

Instructions for a Painter of Miniatures (Fourth Century)

The same pious and wealthy patrons who poured their riches into the building of churches must also have wanted to possess or donate sumptuous editions of Biblical books. Luxurious Scriptural manuscripts are mentioned by St. Jerome,³⁹ who scoffs at them. Fragments of such a manuscript, coming from Quedlinburg and containing passages from the Books of the Kings, have survived. Dated between 350 and 410, the manuscript still uses an old Latin translation of the Bible, the so-called Itala,

³⁸ Paulinus of Nola, *Epist.* 32, Chaps. 10-14, 17 in *Paulinus' Churches at Nola*, Academisch Proefschrift door Rudolf Carel Goldschmidt (Amsterdam: N.V. Noord-Hollandische Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1940), pp. 39-47. Reprinted by permission of the North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam.

³⁹ See below, pp. 37-40.

which by the end of the century was to be replaced by the Vulgate, the translation of St. Jerome. Each page of this manuscript seems to have been faced by a corresponding picture page, containing two or four framed miniatures. Four of these pages survive. Much of the color has fallen off, revealing instructions for the painter written underneath. They tell him not only what elements to include in his painting, but at the same time furnish him with a summary of the story. The completeness of the instructions seems to indicate that the painter was expected to follow them without further recourse to a prototype.

Make the tomb by which Saul and his servant stand and two men, jumping over a ditch, who talk to him and announce that the asses have been found.⁴⁰

Make Saul by the oak and his servant and three men who talk to him, one carrying three kids, one three loaves of bread, one a wineskin.⁴¹

Make prophets, one with a cithara, another with a flute, the third one with a drum, and Saul prophesying and his servant with a harp.⁴²

Make where the prophet Samuel and Saul meet in Mapha and talk to the people.⁴³

Make the prophet in a carriage, talking against the king, Saul sacrificing and two of the king's servants.⁴⁴

Make where the prophet withdraws, and when King Saul tries to hold him by the end of his mantle, cuts it off and withdraws running.⁴⁵

Make where King Saul begs the angry prophet that they may pray God for him and pleads his ignorance.⁴⁶

Make a city and outside the city make where the prophet kills the foreign king with a spear and Saul standing on the other side with two servants.⁴⁷

Make a tripartite scene. Make King Solomon where he sent a messenger to King Hiram asking him to send carpenters to help with the building of the Temple.⁴⁸ Make the workshop where the workmen of King Solomon and King Hiram⁴⁹ build the Golden House and bronze columns⁵⁰ and between and above them make two rows of pomegranates⁵¹ and make the Molten Sea⁵² and make twelve bronze fruits on the four

⁴⁰ I Kings 10: 2.

⁴¹ I Kings 10: 3.

⁴² I Kings 10: 4-6.

⁴³ I Kings 10: 17-24.

⁴⁴ I Kings 15: 12-14.

⁴⁵ I Kings 15: 27.

⁴⁶ I Kings 15: 30-31.

⁴⁷ I Kings 15: 32-33.

⁴⁸ III Kings 5: 1-7.

⁴⁹ III Kings 5: 18.

⁵⁰ III Kings 7: 15-23.

⁵¹ III Kings 7: 42.

⁵² III Kings 7: 23-26.

corners of the ceiling; ... and within the temple the bronze lions and crowns and the cherubim and the braided borders⁵³ and make also the place where Solomon will sacrifice before the Lord and kneeling with extended arms will pray and where all the people with him stood praying before the Lord.⁵⁴

Prudentius: Inscriptions for Scenes from the Old and New Testaments

Paulinus of Nola had placed episodes from the Old Testament in the new basilica at Nola and episodes from the New Testament in the older church. This was one way of expressing their complementary role. In Rome another arrangement became usual. It stressed the correspondence of the two Testaments by assigning opposite walls of the nave to scenes from each. The following poem, written by Prudentius shortly after 400, may have been either a blueprint for or a reminiscence of such an arrangement. It consists of 48 quatrains, half of which deal with the Old Testament, and half with the New. The stories chosen by Prudentius appear, with very few exceptions, in surviving monuments. Given the enormous wealth of Biblical material and the rather limited scope of early Christian iconography, this can hardly be accidental, especially since the title of Prudentius' poem suggests that its verses were composed as inscriptions. In Prudentius' cycle the house of Caiphas and the house of Rahab, and also the rejected Cornerstone of the Temple and Joseph sold and found, would have occupied facing portions of the walls. There is thus some attempt in the poem to draw parallels between the two Testaments, but the comparisons are still much less systematic than in the sixth-century cycle described by Bede.⁵⁵

I. ADAM AND EVE

Eve was then white as a dove, but afterwards she was blackened by the venom of the serpent through his deceitful tempting, and with foul blots she stained the innocent Adam. Then the victorious serpent gives them coverings of fig-leaves for their nakedness.⁵⁶

II. ABEL AND CAIN

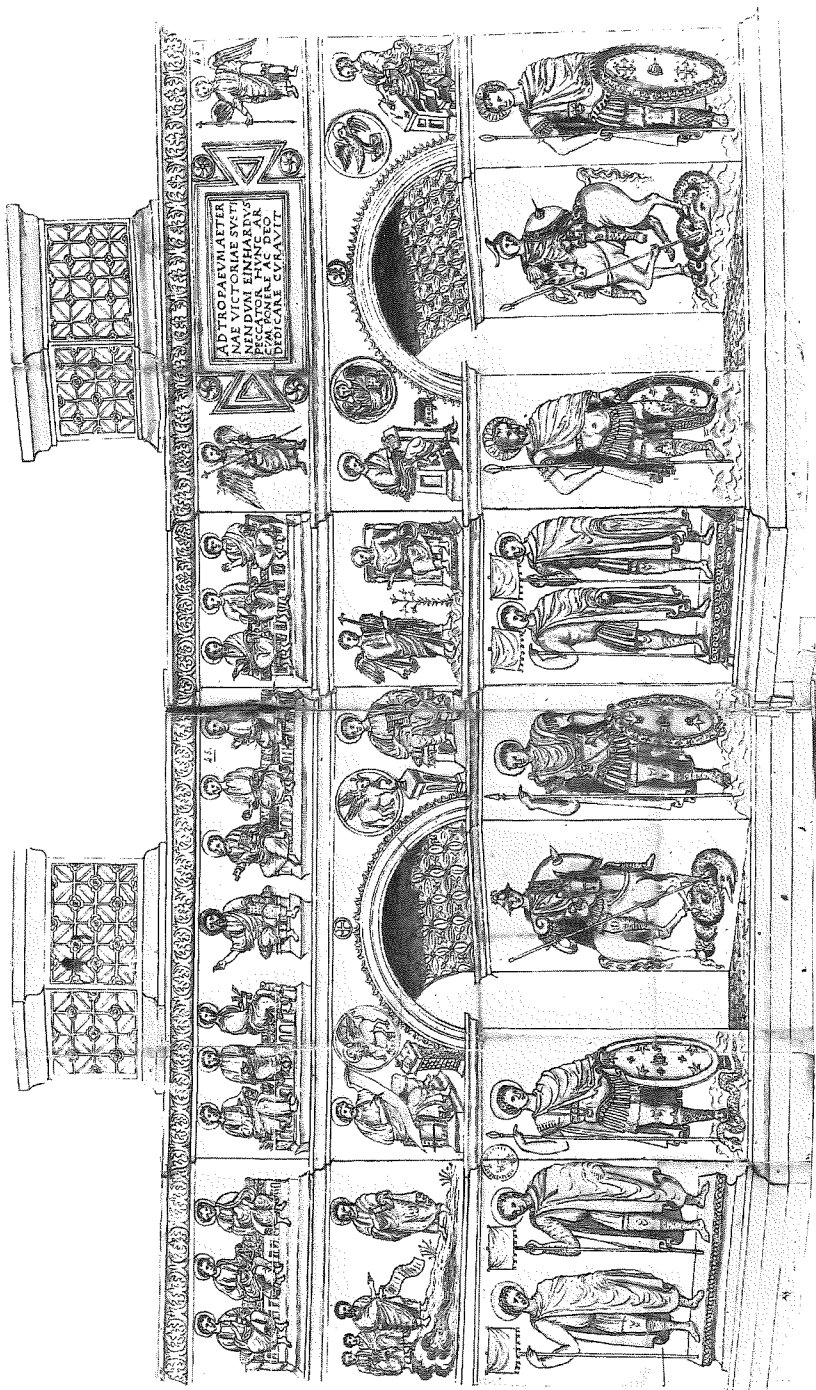
God's pleasure appraises differently the offerings of two brothers, accepting the living and rejecting the products of the earth. The farmer

⁵³ III Kings 7: 29.

⁵⁴ III Kings 8: 22. The selection is taken from H. Degering and A. Boeckler, *Die Quedlinburger Itala Fragmente* (Berlin: Cassiodor Gesellschaft, 1932), pp. 66-67, 69-72, 74-75.

⁵⁵ See below, p. 75.

⁵⁶ Gen. 3: 1-7.



Einhard's lost silver reliquary in the form of a triumphal arch, 820, anonymous drawing of the 17th century. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Early Medieval Art

300-1150

SOURCES and DOCUMENTS

Caecilia Davis-Weyer

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