

The Iconography of the Crusades

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The phenomenon of the Crusades very early brought to life a vast literature. Indeed, no other event of the medieval era generated such a quantity of literary and historical sources. The Crusades were interpreted in various ways in the heroic epos, prelates' writings, and chronicles. Medieval historical writing is known to have often been done by clerics above all interested in the history of salvation; this was the context in which chroniclers considered the past. For them, the Crusades were the *Dei gesta per Francos*, and thus theology formed the focal point of their discourse, addressed chiefly to an ecclesiastical audience or the higher nobility. The principal protagonists of the chronicles belonged to the higher ecclesiastical levels, knights, and other categories of the feudal aristocracy.¹ Epos served a different purpose. In mid-twelfth century the so-called *Song of Antioch* appeared – the earliest epic to eulogize the deeds of the first Crusaders, later followed by other *chansons de geste*, such as the *Conquest of Jerusalem*, the *Baptism of Corbaran*, and others.² Authors of epic songs drew on popular memory of the legendary heroes Godfrey de Bouillon, Peter the Hermit, Tancred, and others. Preachers, too, presented these persons as examples to follow.³ Images of a Crusade constructed in poetry, preaching, and epistles were addressed to a wider public. They stimulated knights' participation in the Crusades and often served as propaganda.

The history of the Crusades is also reflected in works of art. What is the meaning of the visual interpretation of the events? What makes it different from the historical and literary versions? Who was the iconography of the holy war addressed to?

¹ J. M. Powell, "Myth, Legend, Propaganda, History: The First Crusade, 1140-ca. 1300," in *Autour de Première croisade*, ed. M. Balard, Byzantina Sorbonensia 14 (Paris, 1996), 127-143.

² *Les épopées de croisade. Premier colloque international. Trèves, 1-6 août 1984*, ed. K.-H. Bender in collaboration with H. Kleber (Stuttgart, 1987); P. Grillo, "Romans de croisade, Histoires de Famille. Recherches sur le personnage de Baudouin de Sebourg," *Romania* 110, no. 3-4 (1989): 383-395; *idem*, "Les redactions de la 'Chrétienté Corbaran,' première branche des continuations de cycle de la croisade," *Au carrefour des routes d'Europe: la Chanson de geste, X Congrès de la Société Rencevals pour l'étude des épopées romanes* (Aix-en-Provence, 1987), 585-600.

³ C. Maier, *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994).

Judging by the sources, visual propaganda played an important role in the life of the Crusader states. Suffice it to mention an important image such as the Holy Cross – the most precious Christian relic.⁴ The Holy Cross accompanied Crusaders in all major battles, and its presence inspired Christian warriors. It was the Holy Cross, contemporaries firmly believed, that brought Christians victory on the battlefield. Sometimes the Cross left Jerusalem to defend Antioch and other cities. A fragment of the relic was studded with gems and inserted into a large cross-shaped piece of wood. Chronicles report that during the battles this relic, called *Crux Dominica*,⁵ was carried by as high a prelate as the patriarch of Jerusalem. The relic was kept in the major temple of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem: the church of the Holy Sepulchre. There, worshipped by pilgrims, the relic played the foremost role in various Christian rituals, festivals, collective litanies, and ceremonial processions.⁶

Nevertheless, a historian wishing to study the visual interpretation of the Crusades faces an astounding fact: for a long while, up to the end of the thirteenth century, an iconography of the holy war did not exist! Why did it come about so late?⁷ Did this topic not titillate artists' imagination so as to bring to life new iconographic types? Was that really so? To try to answer these questions, let us first turn to the images of the twelfth century.

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⁴ This cross was known to have been discovered as early as in the fourth century by empress Helen, the mother of emperor Constantine. Later, the cross was split into two pieces, which were awarded to Jerusalem and Constantinople. The part of the relic kept in Jerusalem was seized by the Persians in 614, and it was only in 627, during the Byzantine-Persian wars, that the great Byzantine emperor Heraclius succeeded in re-capturing the relic and restoring it to the Christian world. However, as early as 638 Jerusalem was again occupied by Caliph Umar I and all Christian relics came into Muslim possession. Not until 1099, when Jerusalem was delivered by the Crusaders, did the Christians again acquire the famous relic. See A. V. Murray, "‘Mighty Against the Enemies of Christ.’ The Relic of the True Cross in the Armies of the Kingdom of Jerusalem" (henceforth Murray, "‘Mighty Against the Enemies of Christ’") in *The Crusades and Their Sources: Essays Presented to Bernard Hamilton*, ed. J. Grance and G. Zajac (Aldershot, 1998), 217-237 (henceforth Grance and Zajac, *The Crusades and Their Sources*).

⁵ *Fulcherii Carnotensis Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg, 1913), 414.

⁶ See Murray, "‘Mighty Against the Enemies of Christ;’" on reliquary images and their social function see J. Schmitt, "Les reliques et les images," in *Les reliques. Objets, cultes, symboles. Actes du colloque international de l’Université du Littoral-Côtes d’Opale (Boulogne-sur-Mer, 4-6 Septembre 1997)*, ed. E. Bozoky and A.-M. Helvetius (Turnhout, 1999), 145-167.

⁷ This question, even though from a different perspective, has recently been raised by the French historians Guy Lobrichon and Jean Flori in their respective studies. See G. Lobrichon, *1099. Jérusalem conquisé* (Paris, 1998), *passim*; J. Flori, *Pierre l’Hermite et la première croisade* (Paris, 1999), 499-500 (henceforth Flori, *Pierre l’Hermite*).

It is known that a few stained glass windows at Saint Denis, executed at Suger's order, were dedicated to the First Crusade. These provided an illustration of sorts of the chroniclers' narrative of the siege of Antioch and Jerusalem. Destroyed during the French Revolution, these stained glass windows were later reconstructed by L. Grodecky after B. Montfaucon's drawings. They depicted battles between the Franks and the Muslims, including the battle with Kerboga's army as known from the chronicles of the First Crusade. The creator of the stained glass realized that the Seljuks and Egyptians were distinct peoples; therefore, he accompanied their images with inscriptions: *Parti* for the Parthians and *Arabes* for the Arabs. Medallions of this particular stained glass show easily recognizable iconographic attributes of Christians and Muslims: Christian conical helmets with painted crosses and a cross-signed banner, and Saracen round helmets. Other stained glass medallions represent Charlemagne's famous expedition to Jerusalem. In all likelihood, this stained glass was produced on the occasion of the solemn departure of Louis VII from Saint Denis on the Second Crusade on June 8, 1147. Both stained glass windows appear to have been a straightforward, almost literal, commentary on events related to the Crusade.⁸

In a very dissimilar, rather emblematic, way the holy war is interpreted in another work of art whose indirect relation to the Crusades has not been infrequently demonstrated by art historians.⁹ This is a tympan of the narthex of the St. Magdalen church in Vézelay, probably produced in Burgundy between 1128 and 1132. The subject of the tympan – the apostles' mission – is derived from the New Testament (Acts 1:4-9). According to the Scriptures, Jesus Christ prophesized that the apostles would be overcome by the Holy Ghost and they would become witnesses of the Saviour for the entire world. The sculpted tympan in Vézelay makes the idea of the universal mission of the apostles visual. In the centre one sees a gigantic magnificent figure of Christ; apostles surround him on both sides; archvaults are filled with strange creatures: monsters, pygmies, cynocephals, humans with long ears, and the like. They symbolically represent non-Christian peoples – the heathens of the world – as if illustrating Isaiah's prophecy of salvation for all peoples of the world (Is. 49:12): "Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim." Thus, the tympan portrays a significant event in Christian history: *divisio apostolorum*, when the apostles went to various parts of the world on a mission to preach the Gospel. Incidentally, it was in Burgundy

⁸ L. Grodecky, *Les vitraux de Saint-Denis*, Corpus vitrearum Medii Aevi, France, Etudes 1 (Paris, 1976), 115-121. According to Grodecky's hypothesis, two stained glass windows existed, each containing 14 medallions. However, American research has recently concluded that there were only 14 medallions altogether. Of these, two were dedicated to Charlemagne's pilgrimage to the Orient and ten depicted the First Crusade. See E. Brown and M. W. Cothren, "The Twelfth-Century Crusading Window of the Abbey of Saint-Denis," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 49 (1986): 1-41.

⁹ A. Katzellenbogen, "The Central Tympanum at Vézelay," *Art Bulletin* 26 (1944): 141-151.

that Peter the Venerable, a famous abbot of Cluny, had preached and written on the essence of Christian mission.

However, the link of the Vézelay tympan with crusading ideas may have been even tighter. In fact, pope Urban II and other prelates preached a new mission: recovery of the Christian holy places and the *dilatatio Christianitatis*. In the eyes of medieval people, the mission of the apostles in a way prefigured that of the Crusaders.¹⁰ The date of the *divisio apostolorum* as celebrated by the Western Church is July 15. As luck would have it, Christian knights conquered Jerusalem on July 15, 1099. Chroniclers of the Crusades and the Church fathers could not fail to make a point of such a significant coincidence, which they did not believe could have been a mere accident. It was highly symbolic that Jerusalem was conquered on exactly the day when the apostles had dispersed all over the world to preach the Gospel. Some art historians contend¹¹ that the iconographic program of the Vézelay tympan implied and imparted to the beholders that Crusaders were the new apostles. The enigma of the Vézelay tympan is thus resolved if it is interpreted in the context of Crusade history. By contrast, other historians caution against such a straightforward linking of the Vézelay tympan to the Crusades.¹²

Admittedly, events of the Second Crusade did find an outright reflection in some twelfth-century works of art. For example, the sculpture of the French chapel of the dukes of Lorraine, in Nancy, was produced in the mid-twelfth century to commemorate one remarkable event of the Second Crusade. It represents Count Vaudemont and his wife, the daughter of the Duke of Lorraine. In 1147, accompanying King Louis VII, the count went on a Crusade. In 1148, Lotharingian participants of the expedition brought back tragic news of the count's death. However, sixteen years later the count returned home to his wife, but exhausted by privations in Muslim captivity he died soon afterwards. The sculptor showed the count as a pilgrim returning from a protracted journey; he is clad in rags, and his shoes are badly worn. The weary wayfarer is supported by his spouse. This sculptural portrait of a Crusader is a rare testimony of twelfth-century artists' attention to the heroes of the crusading epic.¹³

Even though there are very few images actually representing a Crusade, one might also look for indirect allusions to the Crusades in Western European art. In this case, the range of artifacts bearing witness to this subject is consid-

¹⁰ L. Hunt, "'Excommunicata generatione.' Christian Imagery of Mission and Conversion of the Muslim Other between the First Crusade and the Early XIVth Century," *Al-Masaq. Studia Arabo-Islamica Mediterranea* 8 (1995): 79-153.

¹¹ M. D. Taylor, "The Pentecost at Vézelay," *Gesta* 19, no.1 (1980): 9-15.

¹² C. Morris, "Picturing the Crusades," In Grance and Zajac, *The Crusades and Their Sources*, 198-199 (henceforth Morris, "Picturing the Crusades").

¹³ On this sculpture see B. Z. Kedar and N. Kenaan-Kedar, "The significance of a twelfth-century sculptural group: Le retour du croisé," in *The 'Gesta Dei per Francos': Studies in honour of Jean Richard*, ed. M. Blard, B. Z. Kedar, and J. Riley-Smith (Aldershot, 2001), 29-45.

erably wider. Images of fighting Christian warriors, appearing in the early twelfth century on the portals of Romanesque churches, are read by art historians as motifs related to crusading ideas. In the Middle Ages, the life of a Christian was portrayed as a struggle. This image refers to the words of the New Testament (Eph. 6:11): "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Western art owes visualization of this idea to Prudentius' poem *Psychomachy*, dating back to ca. 400 A.D., in which Prudentius described the struggle of vices and virtues as a combat of easily visualized personifications. Later copyists of the poem often accompanied the text with illustrations, drawing inspiration for their imagery from contemporary warfare. They represented the struggle of vices and virtues most frequently as armed conflict between Muslims and the Christians. The motif of virtues combating vices, derived from Prudentius' *Psychomachy* and portrayed in book illumination as knightly jousts, gradually became the subject of sculptural representations.¹⁴ In Saintonge, Poitou, throughout southwestern France and in northern Spain (regions involved in the Muslim-Christian conflicts around the year 1100), the so-called jousting warriors, that is, Christians fighting Muslims, became a preferred iconographic motif. The traditional struggle of vices and virtues was also made visual in sculpture as a combat between Christian knights and Saracens, wherein St. George became a favorite character. Eventually, St. George became a symbol of the holy war of Christianity vs. Islam.¹⁵

In the age of the Crusades, artists began to identify Prudentius' virtues with Crusaders. This identification was a new and important stage in the development of iconography. Saints became warriors of Christ, or Crusaders, and this is also asserted by chroniclers. According to Anonymous in the *Gesta Francorum*, in a battle at Antioch, in June 1098, the Saracens were besieged by "countless enemies on white mounts, with white banners, led by the saints George, Mercury, and Demetrius."¹⁶ This very event is commemorated by a number of artifacts, the earliest of which dates back to roughly 1100. A sculptural image on the southern portal of the church in Fordington (near Dorchester) provides an illustration for this chronicle passage.¹⁷ We see St. George, with a banner and sword, fighting the enemies of faith, helped by the Christian warriors worshipping him. The aid of heavenly forces, participation in the Crusade of

¹⁴ J. Norman noted the capitals of the Notre-Dame-de Puis Claremont as "an example of transition of an allegorical theme from the literary tradition into sculpture." See J. Norman, *Metamorphoses of Allegory. The Iconography of Psychomachy in Medieval Art* (New York, 1988), 29-30.

¹⁵ Morris, "Picturing the Crusades," 195-215.

¹⁶ *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolymitanorum*, ed. R. Hill (London, 1962), 69. It was not only during the siege of Antioch, but also during the battle with Saladin at Montgisard (25 September, 1177), reports the chronicle, that five hundred equestrians assisted by St. George put to flight sixty thousand Saracens, *Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard de Treisorie*, ed. L. Mas-Latrie (Paris, 1871), 43-45.

¹⁷ *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, ed. J. Riley-Smith (Oxford, 1995), 80.

white knights and the saints George, Demetrius, and Mercury, are recurrent motifs in twelfth-century iconography.

Battle scenes involving white knights are part of the wall paintings in the church at Ponce-sur-le-Loire.¹⁸ Separated from each other by two windows, these frescoes cover three panels of the northern nave wall. On the central panel four Saracen knights (recognizable by their usual iconographic attributes such as round helmets)¹⁹ are shown attacked by white knights. Out of the three knights clad in white only two are visible at present, but all three swords are easily discernible. The heads of the equestrians are covered with white veils and white conical helmets, with white halos around them. These are clearly saints. The first panel, badly damaged, seems to represent defeated Saracens leaving the battlefield. The third panel, just as damaged as the first one, shows two groups of knights, the Christian and the Muslim, in combat with swords.

A similar iconographic motif is to be seen in the church of Saint-Pierre-de-Chevillon near Ponce. A panel painting displays two groups of wrestling knights. Those with white heraldic emblems and pointed shields are Crusaders; the others, sporting red heraldic signs and round shields, must be Saracens. Warriors with round shields are prostrate at the hands of the Christian knights.²⁰

One other very peculiar monument of the twelfth century gives a forthright illustration of the events of the Crusade, a Templars' chapel in Cressac near Blanzac (Charente). The entire nave of the chapel was formerly covered with frescoes, of which only insignificant traces can be seen now. In the lowermost register of the northern wall, the painters seem to have pictured a Crusader encampment at rest, with several triangular tents in the centre and a few equestrians about them galloping towards each other. The uppermost register is a war scene. On the left is a fortified town with battlements and towers, from the top of which people are watching the battle. In the background we observe groups of Christian equestrians with white chain mail and white shields painted with the cross: the knights are leaving the town to take part in the fight. One of the horsemen draws his sword over a fleeing Saracen soldier; another aims his sword at a Saracen rider who has turned his horse back and is trying to protect himself with a shield. In the foreground, Saracens wearing conical helmets, with round shields in their hands, are retreating towards the town. The presence in the midst of the Christians' enemies of a crowned Saracen led a French historian, E.

¹⁸ P. Deschamps, "Combats de cavalerie et épisode des Croisades dans les peintures murales du XII et du XIII ss.," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 8, no. 2 (1947): 454-474 (henceforth Deschamps, "Combats de cavalerie").

¹⁹ For usual medieval iconographic ways of denoting adherents of adverse religions see R. Melnikoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art in the Late Middle Ages*, California Studies in the History of Art 32 (Berkeley, 1993); S. Luchitskaya, "Muslims in the Christian Imagery of the Thirteenth Century," *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 12 (2000): 37-67.

²⁰ L. Lecœur, "Peintures murales du moyen âge récemment découvertes dans l'ancien diocèse du Mans," *Bulletin Monumental* (1912): 576.

Deshamps, to infer that the naves of the chapel reproduce a famous episode of Crusader history, perhaps the victory over Nureddin, the atabeg of Aleppo and Damascus.²¹ The battle took place near Krak des Chevallier on September 6, 1163. Nureddin intended to besiege the fortress and move on to Tripoli. The Muslim army was asleep when the Franks unexpectedly attacked them. Crusaders turned over enemy's tents and waged a massacre, while some of the Muslims mounted their horses and fled. This very story is recorded in the wall paintings of the chapel.

The examples listed witness that in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries artists vacillated between literal and the symbolic readings of the events of the Crusades. They either gave an exact visual commentary, as in the stained glass at Saint Denis or treated an event as transcendental or as an implementation of a scriptural prophecy or searched the New Testament for a pre-figuration of what was actually happening before their own eyes, as in the iconography of the Vézelay tympan. Nevertheless, the subject of Crusades produced neither genuine iconography nor new iconographic types. Each Crusade yielded new chronicles and *chansons de geste*, but we would not find their narratives reflected in church portals or bas-reliefs.

Only after the fall of Acre in 1291 did the history of the Crusades lose its momentum and enter age-old legends, becoming an epic. Only then were the manuscripts of the *chansons de geste*, the *Song of Antioch*, the *Baptism of Corbaran*, and, most importantly, of William of Tyre's chronicle *Histoire d'Outremer* (written a century earlier) embellished with splendid illustrations.

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Originally written in Latin, in the 1150s, the *Histoire d'Outremer* was later continued and translated into Old French. It described all events that had taken place in the Kingdom of Jerusalem and in all other Crusader states during a rather long period: from the early twelfth century up to 1185 – the year of the chronicler's death. More than 50 illuminated manuscripts of the chronicle dating to the thirteenth through fifteenth century are now extant. Some of them were executed in the scriptoria of Jerusalem and Acre, the major cultural centers of the Latins. Up to 1187 – the fall of the First Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem – the scriptorium that produced illuminated chronicles was attached to the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Under the Second Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, the scriptorium again resided in Jerusalem, but in mid-thirteenth century it moved to the

²¹ Deschamps, "Combats de cavalerie," 466-470. The image is indeed an exact visual commentary on one of the passages of the chronicle by William of Tyre. See Guillaume de Tyr, *Chronique*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, vols. 1-2 (Turnhout, 1985-1986), Vol. 2, book 19, chapter 8 (henceforth Guillaume de Tyr).

Syrian seaside town of Acre.²² Other manuscripts, produced in European artistic ateliers, mostly followed the models fashioned in the Crusader state.²³ These illuminated manuscripts cannot be counted among the masterpieces of medieval book art but, importantly for us, they are, perhaps, the only straightforward visual comment on the events of the Crusades.

The first historian to study illuminated manuscripts of William of Tyre's chronicle was a German art historian, H. Buchtal.²⁴ In his book, he convincingly demonstrated that in all these chronicles Western European features reign supreme over the characteristics typical of the Byzantine or oriental manuscripts. According to Buchtal, what we have are manuscripts copied by French scribes and illuminated by French miniaturists in the Kingdom of Jerusalem.²⁵ Codices created outside Palestine, in French and European workshops, did not come into Buchtal's view.

A new page in the research on the chronicle manuscripts was opened by an American art historian, J. Folda, who published a principal study of the scriptorium's activity in Acre (1275-1291).²⁶ In his overview, he included many previously overlooked manuscripts of European provenance. Folda expanded the scope of investigation considerably; not only did he consider the products of the artistic workshop in Acre, but he also scrutinized the influence of this school on the West, in France, Italy, and other countries.

H. Buchtal and J. Folda focused mainly on the problems of style, on the miniaturists' artistic manner, and codicology. In their works, miniatures of the illuminated chronicle by William of Tyre are carefully examined from an aesthetic viewpoint. Such an approach toward medieval book illumination is undoubtedly in order, indeed, as a rule works of art are primarily interpreted as an aesthetic phenomenon. According to received opinion, works of art have mainly an aesthetic function, being nothing but *objets d'art*. A commissioner who had ordered miniatures might have just enjoyed looking at them. Incidentally, it is

²² The following manuscripts are implied: Mss. fr. 2628, 9083, 9084, 9085, 9086, 2825 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris); Ms. fr. fol. v. IV 5 (Russian National Library, St. Petersburg); Ms. 828 (Municipal Library of Lyon).

²³ See manuscripts from other artistic workshops: Ms. 9492-3 (Bibliotheca Albertina, Brussels); Mss. fr. 779, 2631, 2632, 9082, 22495, 22496, 22497, 2630, 2632, 24208, 24209, 772, 2825, 2826, 2827 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris); Ms. 483 (Municipal Library, Amiens); Ms. Palais des Arts 29 (Municipal Library, Lyon). All manuscripts listed are examined in the present article.

²⁴ H. Buchtal, *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford, 1957). See a review of this book in V. N. Lazarev, *Vizantijskoe i drevnerusskoe iskusstvo* (Byzantine and Ancient Russian Art) (Moscow, 1978), 33-35.

²⁵ Crusader knights largely depended on the canons of French culture and the Crusader states were viewed as part of Western civilization. Apparently, this circumstance allowed J. Prawer to define the culture of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and of other countries of the Latin Orient as colonial. See J. Prawer, *The Crusades: An Image of Colonial Society in the Middle Ages* (London, 1972).

²⁶ J. Folda, *Crusader Manuscript Illumination at Saint-Jean d'Acre, 1275-91* (Princeton, 1976).

sometimes argued that illuminated codices need not have been destined for a wider public.²⁷ However, analysis of the aesthetic aspect alone cannot be exhaustive when an iconographic program is concerned. Modern historians are trying to place visual arts into a broader social and historical context. A German historian H. Belting writes that in the Middle Ages the essence of an image (which most often happened to be a sacral one) is not so much revealed through its aesthetic functions as through its cultic and ritual functions.²⁸ An image, it should be borne in mind, can also have a didactic function, that is, in making visual the postulates of the Holy Scriptures or the basics of faith. At present, medieval images are certainly no longer seen as mere illustrations for a text. That was an approach applied at the beginning of the twentieth century by the French art historian E. Mâle, who treated images as a visual commentary on the Holy Scriptures (which, in fact, is not far from the statement by Gregory the Great that sacred images proffer instruction for the illiterate).²⁹ One cannot altogether deny the didactic role of medieval visual arts, which in many ways did instruct Christian laymen in the faith and in the *historia sacra*. Did the iconography of William of Tyre fulfill this function? And, generally, how can one characterize the functions of the visual *Histoire d'Outremer* or decipher its iconographic program?

There are also other miniatures, partly also dedicated to the history of the Crusades – illuminations of the great French chronicles.³⁰ The artists who executed these illuminations adhered to a symbolic vision of the events. For them, a Crusade was a transcendental enterprise wherein heavenly forces played a decisive role.

What, then, is the reading of the events selected by the illustrators of the *Histoire d'Outremer*? How did miniaturists picture the war? Let us give a general characterization of the iconographic program and of the artistic manner whose specific features, just as those of the general program, were determined by the system of values prevailing at the time. *What* and *how* were being depicted to bespeak a certain evaluation of the events. Remembering that a Crusade, according to many chroniclers and Church writers, was indeed a divine enterprise, let us see whether the illuminated codices of William of Tyre's chronicle present an iconography of the *historia sacra*. In other words, let us verify whether the artists, like the chroniclers, perceived the Crusades as an episode of sacred history.

²⁷ See a review of these opinions in L. Lawton, *Manuscript Readers in Fifteenth-Century England (The Literary Implications of Manuscript Study)*, ed. D. Pearsall (Cambridge, 1983), 41.

²⁸ H. Belting, *Bild und Kunst. Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich, 1990).

²⁹ E. Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle en France* (Paris, 1898).

³⁰ See C. Raynaud, *La violence au Moyen âge d'après les livres d'histoire en français* (Paris, 1990); A. Hedeman, *The Royal Image: Illustration of the Great French Chronicles, 1274-1422* (Berkeley, 1991).

On the face of it, this question can be answered in the affirmative. This is asserted by the plentiful presence in the chronicle manuscripts of miniatures illustrating the Holy Scriptures. Not infrequently, manuscripts of the *Histoire d'Outremer* include a twelfth-century text of French origin of the "Nativity of Christ." This was a kind of introduction into the history of the Holy Land, a reconstruction of the life of Christ spent in this land. In this way, the legend of Christ's nativity was made part of the Crusade and pilgrimage perspective. Miniatures accompanying this text reflected the history of Christ: his nativity, the adoration of the Magi, his baptism, and, finally, his trial before Pilate. Some of the miniatures show even Old Testament prophets predicting the coming of the Saviour. In these images, artists keep the accepted iconographic traditions. Christ and Virgin Mary are depicted with halos; Old Testament Jews and a New Testament Jew, Joseph (a character whose status in medieval cultural tradition was not unambiguous), wear conical pointed hats; Pilate, after the manner of the Old Testament prophets, has a horned mitre on his head.³¹ There are even miniatures depicting Abraham's sacrifice, since Isaac had, according to medieval notions, been a pre-figuration of Christ.³²

In other words, in the miniatures placed on the first pages of the manuscripts the history of the Crusades is made part of sacred history, of the history of salvation centered on the sacrificial act of Christ.

Another set of miniatures also asserts that the iconography of the chronicle is related to the *historia sacra*. These are representations of the acts of Peter the Hermit, one of the most admired heroes of the Crusader epic, a popular preacher, and an organizer of the First Crusade of the Poor. Artists give a picture of the events narrated by William of Tyre in chapters 11 and 12 of the first book of his chronicle. Upon arriving in Jerusalem, Peter first visited Patriarch Symeon, who tearfully recounted to him the state of the holy shrines and gave him a message for the pope. Thence the preacher went to the church of the Resurrection, where, after a prayer he fell asleep next to the Holy Sepulchre. In his dream, Jesus Christ appeared to him and urged him to deliver the Christian shrines and to organize a Crusade. After this apparition, Peter, inspired, returned to the patriarch and received his blessing. Such is the chronicler's account illustrated by the miniaturists. Sometimes Peter is depicted conversing with Symeon, with a beautiful city in the background,³³ but more often artists focused on the miraculous appearance to Peter of Jesus Christ.³⁴ Illustrations of Ms. 9081 are of

³¹ A horned mitre is a typical iconographic attribute of Moses. See: R. Melnikoff, *The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought*, California Studies in the History of Art 14 (Berkeley, 1970). For miniatures illustrating the "Nativity of Christ" see the following manuscripts: 22496, f. 1-5; 22495, f. 1-5; 9083, f. 1-5; 24209, f. 2-5, 7; 22496, f. 1-5, 8.

³² Ms. fr. 9083, f. 1.

³³ Ms. fr. 22496, f. 16.

³⁴ Ms. fr. 9083, f. 16. See also other miniatures devoted to this event: Mss. fr. 9081, f. 1; 22495, f. 14. See miniatures depicting the acts of Peter the Hermit in the following manuscripts: Ms. fr. 22495, ff. 9, 16v, 54; Ms. fr. 24209, ff. 1, 16v, 62v.

the latter type. One of them (fig. 1) reproduces not only the outside of the church of the Holy Sepulchre but also (a rare case) its interior. Peter the Hermit is seen dozing on a tombstone; Christ is bending over him. The miraculous dream of Peter the Hermit was always represented on the first pages of a manuscript,³⁵ often as a large picture consisting of several miniatures. These portrayed major events of the Crusade and the popular preacher as an active participant thereof.³⁶ In this manner, artists demonstrated the influence of divine providence on each and every event, and asserted that the Crusade, too, had been a divine enterprise.

One more testimony to the fact that iconography interprets a Crusade as an episode of the *historia sacra* are miniatures showing the acts of Heraclius (610-641), one of the most celebrated Byzantine emperors of the seventh century, considered by medieval tradition to have been an ideal Christian ruler. Many pictures illustrate one famous story telling how the emperor undertook a victorious war expedition against a Persian satrap, Chosroes II, and regained the Holy Cross – the major Christian relic – from the Persians. On his way home, he stopped over in Jerusalem and had the churches destroyed by the Persians restored. The Persian-Byzantine wars of the seventh century became a model for the Muslim-Christian conflict in general. It is exactly the wars of Heraclius that William of Tyres describes in his chronicle as the beginning of the Crusader epic. Miniatures often render the episode of Heraclius visiting Jerusalem and his meeting with Patriarch Modestus,³⁷ but even more often they represent another glorious event – the entrance into Jerusalem of the wonderful relic recaptured from the Persians – the Holy Cross, the greatest Christian treasure. In many miniatures, such as, for example, that in Ms. 9082 (fig. 2), Heraclius is greeted by an angel standing on top of the church of the Holy Sepulchre. For the miniaturists and for William of Tyre alike, Heraclius' figure was to a great extent a symbol. His name sanctified the Crusade and the episode of rescuing the Holy Cross was thought of as a prototype for the First Crusade, whose participants, too, were intent on delivering the Holy Cross and other Christian relics. It is no accident that many illuminated manuscripts of the chronicle bear the title of *Estoire d'Eracles*.³⁸

As is well known, chronicles of the Crusades, including the one by William of Tyre, abound in stories about miraculous events wherein divine will is realized, in apparitions and prophecies. The divine providence that the chroniclers found in these passages received its brightest and fullest expression. Notably, unlike other chroniclers, William of Tyre was less fascinated by omens and

³⁵ See, for instance, Ms. 828, f.1

³⁶ Ms. fr. 22495, f. 9; 24209, f. 1.

³⁷ This very event is recorded in a colourful miniature of the fifteenth century, very distinct from the miniatures of the classical Gothic period. See Ms. fr. 2629, f. 17; Guillaume de Tyr, vol. 1, book 1, chapter 1.

³⁸ In manuscripts, miniatures dedicated to Heraclius are usually located on the first pages. See Mss. fr. 779, f. 1; 2630, f. 1; 9084, f. 1; 24208, f. 1; 2628, f. 1; 2825, f. 1; 2827, f. 1; 2634, f. 1; 24209, f. 10v; 22495, f. 9; 22496, f. 10v.

miracles. All the more remarkably, the major miracle of the First Crusade – the miracle of the Holy Lance said to have belonged to Longinus the legionnaire and to have been discovered by the Crusaders near St. Peter's church through the help of the visionary Bartholomew – is often shown in the miniatures that accompany the chronicle by William of Tyre. In Ms. 22495 (f. 61v) we see the climax of the event. On the right stands Bartholomew with the lance in his hand, on the left a jubilant crowd rejoices, hands reaching out to the skies (fig. 3). In other illustrations, the composition is identical, but warriors are often replaced with prelates.³⁹ Remarkably, though, the miniatures in William of Tyre's chronicle do not just emphasize the miraculous. They not only depict the fact of discovering the holy relic or the appearance to the peasant Bartholomew of Andrew the Apostle telling him to carry out excavations in the church of St. Peter in Antioch. Rather, these miniatures show a critical instant of the event: the moment of doubting the authenticity of the relic. Bartholomew undergoes a test; to prove the genuineness of the miracle he goes through fire. Thus, in codex 24209 (f. 71v), we see Bartholomew walking with the lance through the fire and the beholders watching the trial. Still, numerous other miniatures recording the miracle of the Holy Lance⁴⁰ spell out the idea of the miracle which, in the miniaturists' view, reveals divine providence.

These, perhaps, are all miniature subjects rendering the Crusade as an episode of the *historia sacra*, as the *Dei gesta per Francos*. Other miniatures manifest a somewhat different iconographic mode, distinct from the illustrations of the great French chronicles, which interpret the Crusade as a heavenly enterprise. Browsing through manuscripts, we realize that iconography of William of Tyre's chronicle is a series of images of siege warfare. War, the usual military operations carried out with help of warlike equipment, siege guns, and siege engines – this is what occupied the miniaturists' imagination. The more we look into these pictures, the more convinced we are of the illuminated chronicles' purpose. They could hardly have been destined as reading for the pious. The Crusades could hardly have been seen as playing the prime role in the sacred history. Apparently, the meaning and the function of the iconographic program of the *Histoire d'Outremer* should be sought elsewhere. Where then?

Events and characters of the iconography of the Holy War

Events. Examining illuminated codices, one finds almost every famous character glorified by participation in the Crusades and comes across every major event in the history of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Conspicuously, the illustrations invariably address all the same passages, depict all the same characters and events. Evidently, when drawing miniatures the medieval illuminator

³⁹ Ms. fr. 22496, f. 61.

⁴⁰ See other miniatures in the manuscripts kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, Ms. fr. 9083, f. 67v.

would divide the text into individual sections and illustrate each section in turn. Perhaps a miniaturist's task was to draw reader's attention to one or another subject by highlighting it with rubrics and illustrations. This undoubtedly implies that an artist made sure to impress specific characters and specific events on the reader's memory. Incidentally, book illumination was often viewed as a source of mnemonically useful images.⁴¹ Requirements of the mnemonic technique, based on rhetoric, whose significance for medieval culture can hardly be overestimated,⁴² could have had an impact on the system of decorating medieval manuscripts. Miniatures, with their recurring elements, should have prompted visual memory just like rhymes and reiterations in medieval literature prompted oral memory.⁴³ Visual arts, in all likelihood, are linked to historical memory; a historian's task is to reconstruct in the visual images the notions they convey, to release the 'experience' of the past they carry within. According to A. Warburg, who made a thorough study of the mnemonic aspect of visual arts, images are 'engrams of collective memory,' while visual arts are a language of symbols wherein experience is rendered 'engraphically.'⁴⁴

Memory is selective; only certain events of the holy war came into the artists' view, only some historical figures attracted their attention. In the miniatures recording the war, that is, profane history, we shall try to detect a system of values and references that determined which pieces of *memorabilia* (that what is worth remembering) were to become *memoranda* (that what must be remembered). Miniatures thus become *lieux mémoratifs* of the history of the Crusades. By analyzing the episodes of profane history illustrated in these miniatures, we should be able to establish what facts and characters enjoyed greater attention on the part of the artists, and how these were being interpreted. Choice of the one or another episode for an illustration is no accident. Many miniatures were produced after the fall of Acre, that is, after the end of the Crusader era. By the end of the thirteenth century the events of the Crusades, previously rendered in epics and historical writing, had become a collective memory.

The iconography of William of Tyre's chronicle allowed ample room for the images of war. Up to 34 miniatures of each manuscript treat this subject. Notably, other aspects of the Crusade history, such as the daily life of the Crusaders or their adventures during an expedition, are not reflected in the miniatures. War constitutes the focus of the artists' attention. Some battles are reproduced in such a minute detail that one can follow the course of the clash or the development of the events. For instance, miniaturists give a faithful account of the successful sieges by the Christians of the cities of Nicea, Antioch, and Jeru-

⁴¹ M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1990), 241.

⁴² See F. A. Yates, *Iskusstvo pamyati* (The Art of Memory) (Saint Petersburg, 1997).

⁴³ For interesting observations in this respect see in M. Camille, "Seeing and reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Art History* 8, no.1 (1985): 35.

⁴⁴ See M. Diers, "Mnemosyne oder das Gedächtnis der Bilder. Über Aby Warburg," in *Memoria als Kultur*, ed. O. G. Oexle (Göttingen, 1995), 79-95.

salem. Let us take a closer look at those miniatures which turn out to be typical elements of an iconographic series. Always addressing identical episodes of the chronicle, these miniatures, in accord with our earlier suggestion, appear to have served to impress these episodes on a reader's memory.⁴⁵

Looking through the battle scenes, one observes that the transformation of the text into an image often introduced modifications in favour of ideology. Artists preferred to portray Christian warriors in moments of triumph or when the enemy was fleeing.⁴⁶ If a defeat of the Christians is recorded, it is either the climax of a battle whose outcome has not yet become clear or a representation of the affray as a psychomachy of sorts. This may have been influenced by the way Muslim-Christian conflicts had been typified in twelfth-century iconography: as a clash of Good and Evil wherein Good is bound to win.⁴⁷ Many miniatures are full of symbols conveying the idea of the text in the generalized terms of symbols. For example, in the depiction of the battle at Damietta (1219), the conflict of the sides is emphasized by means of heraldic emblems: a cross and a lion on the shields and banners of the Crusaders are opposed to the crescents on the banners of the Muslims.⁴⁸ The richness of the text's contents is reduced to an ideogram whose purpose is to display the essence of the conflict and to impress it on beholder's memory.

As we see, miniaturists concentrate on a key episode linking the past to the present. Most often, they call attention to the significance of one particular episode as an example of eternal truth; events are considered *sub specie aeternitatis*. For precisely this reason, events of the holy war are frequently described symbolically.

Miniatures may help to reconstruct the course of an event, such as, for example, the siege of Nicea. Its episodes, exemplifying Christians' victories, often appear on the pages of illuminated codices. Most curious, to my mind, is an illustration from Ms. 2827 (f. 19), a commentary on the chronicler's narration (in Book 3, chapter 1) of the city's history and the beginnings of the siege.⁴⁹ This episode is given an illustration in every single manuscript of the chronicle,

⁴⁵ Every miniature in this study is selected on the basis of analysis of a series and represents an epitome of the series. On serial analysis in iconography see J. Baschet, "Inventivité et sérialité des images médiévales. Pour une approche iconographique élargie," *Annales HSS* 51, no.1 (1996): 93-133.

⁴⁶ See Ms. fr. 9082, ff. 66v, 75; Ms. fr. 22495, f. 95v, and other miniatures treating siege warfare to be analyzed hereafter.

⁴⁷ Morris, "Picturing the Crusades," 201.

⁴⁸ Ms. fr. 22495, f. 265v. For more on the representation of Muslim warriors in medieval iconography see the dissertation by F. Caroff, "L'adversaire, l'autre, l'oriental. L'iconographie du monde musulman dans le contexte des croisades, les manuscrits enluminés en France du Nord, en Flandre et dans les états latins d'Orient entre le XIII et le XV siècle," vols. 1-3 (Paris, 2002).

⁴⁹ See the catalogue of images displaying the siege of Nicea in Ms. fr. 22495, f. 28; 9081, f. 26v; 2630, f. 22v; 9082, f. 49; 779, f. 21v; 9083, f. 30; 24208, f. 19v; 2634, f. 26; 24209, f. 32; 2825, f. 20; 2827, f. 19; Ms. 828, f. 24; Ms. 9492-3, f. 29.

which may indicate the artists' wish to attract the reader's attention to this particular event. The miniature is noteworthy for the fact that the artist combines in it several individual events rather than recording one single moment of the siege. What methods allowed him to "overcome the (text's) narrativity"?⁵⁰ How did he transform the narrative of the chronicler into a short statement, how was the "condensation of time" achieved? To represent time in terms of space for a medieval artist meant to arrange single episodes in a certain order. As a rule, the left side of the picture was occupied by the Christian camp, while the right side represented the Muslim military base. Miniatures operated with customary iconographic types and attributes: Saracens in round helmets throw stones; square-helmeted Christian knights storming the citadel climb a ladder in an effort to reach the tower; a villain with a crossbow accompanies them. In the tower we see a woman in headgear, most likely the wife of Kilich Arslan. This detail alludes to the events following the siege (fig. 4). The chronicler reports in Book 3, chapter 1, that the wife of Kilich Arslan, having learned of the Muslims' defeat, collected her children and boarded a boat in an attempt to flee. Crusaders arrested her and violently rendered her justice. With a few exceptions,⁵¹ this latter episode is not normally reproduced in miniatures, perhaps because the artists preferred to record more plausible acts of the Christian warriors. Prelates are sometimes present in the scenes of the siege of Nicea,⁵² or an artist chooses to describe the history of the city or of the Council of Nicea.⁵³ Generally speaking, however, the miniatures accompanying the narrative of the siege of Nicea are no more than standard scenes of siege warfare where recurrent iconographic and compositional solutions suppress the details of particular battles.

The conquest of Antioch (1098) is also treated frequently in miniatures. From manuscript to manuscript, artists invariably illustrate the same passage from the chronicle (Book 5, chapter 1), the one that narrates the strenuous siege.⁵⁴ The general composition and iconographic elements are about the same in all the illustrations of the subject and are already found in Ms. 9082 (f. 66v). In accordance with the accepted compositional model for siege scenes, a battlement is represented on the right from which Saracens, distinguished by their round helmets, are throwing stones at the Christian combatants. At the very top a Saracen with a round shield in his hand is blowing a horn. On the left, Christian horsemen in square helmets are storming the citadel (fig. 5).

The story of the siege of Antioch is continued in the sixth book of the chronicle (chapter 1). It deals with the baron's council's decision to storm the dungeon using features of the local landscape. All manuscripts illustrate this

⁵⁰ D. S. Likhachev, *Poetika drevnerusskoj kul'tury* (Poetics of Ancient Russian Culture) (Moscow, 1979), 38.

⁵¹ Ms. fr. 9081, f. 26v, Ms. fr. fol. v IV f, f. 10v.

⁵² Ms. fr. 24208, f. 19v.

⁵³ Ms. fr. 22495, f. 28.

⁵⁴ Mss. fr. 2630, f. 38v; 2631, f. 56v; 9082, f. 66v; 24208, f. 33.

particular part of the story.⁵⁵ Monotonous scenes of the siege are again rendered in agreement with the usual scheme. In this miniature series, the typical representation of a battle in Ms. 9082 (f. 75v) frays out. On the right we see a dungeon, indeed situated on an elevation. On the walls, Saracens in round helmets stand with slings in their hands. The dungeon is besieged by equestrians on white mounts, their coats decorated with golden crosses on a black background, their banner sporting royal lilies. The action in the miniature is to be “read” from the bottom up and left to right. The figures of the Christian knights are larger than those of the Saracens; the Christians are pushing forward; their imminent victory is beyond doubt. This illustration of Ms. 9082 follows the text very closely and records many minor details mentioned by the chronicler (fig. 6).

Most often, an artist offered a generalized description of events, while the texts contain multiple precise indications of the time and place of the action. Do images of siege in other manuscripts, recording other events such as the siege of Jerusalem, differ from those analyzed above?⁵⁶

The answer is no. Again we see repetitive scenes of siege following an identical scheme and illustrating the same passage from the chronicle. On the right, as usual, there is an oriental city with tent-top roofs and battlements; on the left Christian besiegers are camped.⁵⁷ The siege equipment and battle episodes are carefully drawn. The artists seem to imply that the outcome of a siege is determined by enginery rather than the aid from heaven. As we know, in the chronicles Crusaders are always supported by heavenly forces: the saintly warriors Mercury, Demetrius, and George interfere in the battle and determine its result. This episode is described in a number of twelfth-century works of art. In codex miniatures, however, such episodes are not to be found as easily and a Crusade appears to be a rather routine undertaking, the siege of Jerusalem being the only exception. A miniature from Ms. 22495⁵⁸ depicts one of the crucial episodes in the siege of the Holy City. As the miniaturist has it, supernatural interference played a decisive role in the battle. At a crucial moment, a knight from the angelic host came down the Mount of Olives and started to wave his shining shield, thus signaling the Christians to continue the siege. The first to notice the heavenly messenger was Godfrey of Bouillon. He called soldiers for a fight and in the end they seized the main tower of the besieged city (fig. 7).

Miniaturists were also fascinated with sea battles, in particular with the siege of Tyre in 1124,⁵⁹ Askelon in 1153,⁶⁰ Sidon in 1111.⁶¹ Keeping the princi-

⁵⁵ Ms. fr. 9082, f. 75v; 2631, f. 69; 2827, f. 40; 2630, f. 46v; 2628, f. 45v; 2634, f. 55v.

⁵⁶ See miniatures displaying this war episode: Mss. fr. 22496, f. 81; 483, f. 54; 828, f. 79; 2634, f. 77v; 2631, f. 96; 9492-3, f. 89; 779, f. 55.

⁵⁷ Ms. fr. 2634, f. 77v.

⁵⁸ Ms. fr. 22495, f. 69v. Guillaume de Tyr, vol. 2, book 18, chapter 26.

⁵⁹ See miniatures in Mss. fr. 2630, f. 111; 24208, f. 100; 24209, f. 122v; 22496, f. 129; 9492-3, f. 160v.

⁶⁰ Mss. fr. 22495, f. 109v; 24209, f. 119.

⁶¹ Mss. fr. 22495, f. 162v; 22497, f. 28v.

pal compositional and iconographic elements typical of siege scenes unaltered, they introduced new details related to the description of sea battles.

Invariably addressing all the same passages of the chronicle, miniaturists limited themselves to showing scenes of siege warfare or Crusaders' triumphs. On the whole, events are presented neutrally, which makes one believe that the chief purpose of the illuminators was to record the key events of the Crusades and to display the siege equipment and enginery. Yet sometimes miniatures present Christian knights in an adverse light. This is testified to by another iconographic series reproducing a famous episode known from William of Tyre's chronicle – the siege of Shayzar (1138). The chronicler reports the following: the Byzantine emperor John was carefully preparing for the siege, while the prince of Antioch and the count of Edessa, *qui estoient joene home ambedui*, "incessantly played chess and tempted others as well with their bad example." This event is covered by a few miniatures,⁶² the most colourful of which comes from the illuminated codex 22495 (f. 130v). On the left we see Emperor John with a golden crown on his head; on the right two richly clad young gentlemen are playing chess in a tent. Oddly, the young men are placed on the right-hand side of the picture, that is, on the side conventionally allocated to the Muslims. Thus the painter expresses his disapproval of the renegade Crusaders' behaviour (fig. 8). In short, Christian values do not always prevail; the personal ambitions of the Crusaders sometimes outweigh group interests. Admittedly, the majority of miniatures portray this episode rather neutrally as a typical war episode.⁶³ Only the crown helps to identify the emperor and allow the deduction that the picture refers to this particular episode. Yet, the depiction of the siege of Shayzar is noteworthy, as it gives an idea of an ambivalent assessment of Crusaders' acts.

The most frequent images devoted to the major events are listed above. Considering these, the First Crusade and its major events such as the sieges of Nicea, Antioch, and Jerusalem, occupied the prime place in the imagination of the miniaturists. The First Crusade must have become archetypal for the history of the holy war. From the miniaturists' viewpoint, this was the genuine Crusade. The choice of events to be illustrated in codices – the First Crusade, sea and land battles, scenes of siege warfare and others – is certainly not accidental. These events must have been meaningful both for the miniaturists and for the intended audience. These events were those that ought to have been preserved in memory (*memoranda*). Miniatures, therefore, are mnemonically valuable images.

Figures. The history of the holy war is personified in the acts of kings, knights, prelates, and noblemen. What characters are to be seen in the illustrations for William of Tyre's chronicle? Judging by codex illumination, the foremost warriors were seigneurs, dukes, counts, and princes: Tancred, Bohemond

⁶² Guillaume de Tyr, vol. 2, book 15, chapter 1; Mss. fr. 2631, f. 205; 9083, f. 142; 22495, f. 130v; 2634, f. 169; 2630, f. 123; 2827, f. 138; 24208, f. 117; 9492-3, f. 186v; 828, f. 160v.

⁶³ See, for example, Mss. 2630 – 2631.

of Antioch, Godfrey of Bouillon, Renaud of Chatillon. The rulers of Jerusalem and European kings such as Baldwin II, Foulques, or Amaury, Saint Louis, and Emperor Frederick II are represented in scenes of public or private life such as coronations, weddings or funerals, but almost never in the battle scenes, where the foreground is always occupied by barons or nameless knights. Crusader leaders are individualized; the heroes are easily distinguished from one another. Miniaturists rarely showed Crusader leaders in an adverse light, as in the case of the image portraying the siege of Shayzar. As a rule, the major life events of the Crusaders and their praiseworthy acts were recorded. A one judge Crusader self-consciousness on the basis of these miniatures, how the Crusader warriors thought of themselves? We shall try to answer this question after having inspected pertinent miniatures.

Most frequently depicted is, of course, Godfrey of Bouillon – the principal hero of the Crusader epic. Was he, in the miniaturists' eyes, a paragon of an ideal Crusader? What episodes of his life attracted miniaturists' attention?⁶⁴ Most often artists illustrate the passage of the chronicle telling how Godfrey with his brothers Baldwin and Eustace departed on the Crusade.⁶⁵ The typical miniature of this series is to be found in Ms 9083 (f. 23); on the left we see a dungeon and battlements (a symbolic representation of Jerusalem, the Crusaders' key destination), on the right, Christian knights on horses approach the holy city. The knights are recognizable by their heraldic emblems: crosses on the horse cloths and lion's figures (*lion rampant*) on the shields. The same scheme is repeated in other miniatures as well. Almost all miniatures are narrative images relating history as a sort of report of the past.

Not infrequently, illustrations offer an appraisal of Godfrey's of Bouillon qualities. Artists provided a detailed commentary on Godfrey's election as a king when, after long negotiations, he finally succumbed to persuasion and consented to rule the state of the Crusaders but only as an *advocatus Sancti Sepulchri*.⁶⁶ Most often, miniatures show the ideal warrior Godfrey praying over a tombstone, with admiring prelates standing behind him.⁶⁷ (fig. 9) Thus, visual

⁶⁴ Remarkably, Godfrey of Bouillon is rarely, except for scenes describing the sieges of Antioch and Jerusalem, depicted as taking part in war actions, as, for instance, in the Orléans manuscript of the "Universal History" (N. Génin-Huriel, "La Chronique universelle d'Orléans (Bibliothèque Municipale. Ms. 470)," MA thesis (Université Paris X, Nantes, 1989). One of the miniatures recounts Godfrey's participation in the siege of Jerusalem; the legendary hero is shown climbing a ladder against the wall of a battlement so as to be the first to enter the conquered city. Compared to the size of the citadel and the tower, the figure of Godfrey is gigantic; in this manner the artist meant to emphasize Godfrey's principal role in conquering Jerusalem.

⁶⁵ Guillaume de Tyr, vol. 2, book 9, chapter 1; Mss. fr. 779, f. 14; 9083, f. 23; 2634, f. 16; 828, f. 15; 483, f. 12; 779, f. 14; 22495, f. 21; 2630, f. 14v; 24208, f. 69; 2631, f. 21; 26208, f. 14; 2825, f. 13; 9082, f. 40.

⁶⁶ Guillaume de Tyr, vol. 1, book 9, chapter 1 (9492-3, f. 101; 779, f. 81; 24208, f. 69v; 25209, f. 89v; see fig. 10 (Ms. fr. 2827, f. 63v)).

⁶⁷ Ms. fr. 779; 22496, f. 92.

means helped to emphasize Godfrey's piety. A number of miniatures narrate another significant episode. According to William of Tyre, the famous Crusader was once called on by a noble Muslim,⁶⁸ who suggested he cut off a camel's head with just one sword stroke as a contest of strength. Godfrey did just that before the eyes of the dumbfounded Muslim. Incredulous, the Muslim gave Godfrey his own sword and asked him to repeat the feat, which Godfrey did with equal ease. This episode of the chronicle was often chosen by miniaturists for an illustration, the most expressive being that in Ms 22495 (f.89).⁶⁹ Trying to render the chronicler's narrative touching upon various subjects, the illuminator, as usual, arranged a series of images spatially,⁷⁰ from left to right. Accordingly, what is on the left had taken place earlier than that what is on the right. On the left we see Godfrey raiding Muslim settlements from which he brings an enormous number of cattle; on the right, Godfrey, a noble and glorious warrior whose virtues are praised not only by Christians but also by Muslims, encounters an infidel (fig. 10).

Apart from Godfrey of Bouillon, European artists also demonstrated interest in other illustrious Crusader leaders, Bohemond of Tarent and Tancred. What events from Bohemond's life did they portray?⁷¹ They mostly showed war feats during the siege of Antioch, much discussed by William of Tyre. Often enough they reproduced a crucial episode during the siege of Antioch – the betrayal of Firuz. This episode recurs in a number of manuscripts, including the codex kept in the National Library of Russia. The miniature is split horizontally into two parts: at the top, Firuz is seen opening the gates of one of the towers in accordance with his agreement with Bohemond; at the bottom, Crusaders are invading the city⁷² (fig. 11). This miniature represents a fairly neutral commentary on the chronicler's narrative. Just as often the artists address more routine concerns of Bohemond. In his chronicle (Book 9, chapter 1), William of Tyre gives a lengthy account of how the ruler of Antioch, burdened by huge debts, went to Apulia to collect dues from his subjects. During his sojourn in Europe, he succeeded in entering a profitable matrimonial alliance; he and his nephew Tancred married the daughters of the French king Philip I. Artists pictured these episodes in multiple manuscripts of the chronicle – the moment of Bohemond's departure

⁶⁸ Guillaume de Tyr, vol. 1, book 9, chapter 22; 24209, f. 89v; 2630, f. 79; 22495, f. 78; 22496, f. 92.

⁶⁹ See the illustration of the same episode in another illuminated manuscript: Ms. fr. 2630, f. 79.

⁷⁰ On "overcoming of narrativity" in miniatures see O. Pächt, *The Rise of the Pictorial Narrative in Twelfth-Century England* (Oxford, 1962), 1.

⁷¹ See images of Bohemond in the following miniatures: 2630, f. 89; 24209, f. 100; 22496, f. 104; 2825, f. 89v; 2634, f. 112; 24208, f. 80; 828, f. 106; 2827, f. 80; 22495, f. 89; 483, f. 78.

⁷² See Mss. fr. fol. v. IV 5, f. 27. See other images in Mss. fr. 22496, f. 55v; 9083, f. 52; 22496, f. 55.

for Apulia and the wedding scene⁷³ (fig. 12). These narrative images offer a fairly precise visual commentary on the chronicle passages that record episodes from the life of this celebrated Crusader.

As for Tancred's exploits, miniaturists preferred to describe his raids on the towns of Cilicia.⁷⁴ For example, on the right hand side of a miniature from the Albertina illuminated codex 9492-3 (fig. 13), we observe the pensive figure of Tancred leaning on his shield, with a symbolically depicted Crusader camp in the background. More often, though, artists rendered the chronicler's account as a typical scene of siege warfare,⁷⁵ fairly neutrally and with no perceptible evaluation of what is being portrayed.

However, in describing the deeds of Crusader leaders, artists did occasionally show them in an adverse light. This, in particular, was the case with miniatures devoted to the notorious brigand Renaud of Chatillon, who robbed merchant caravans in the Red Sea, ravaged Byzantine Cyprus, and often broke the armistice between the Christians and the Muslims.⁷⁶ Later in his life he became famous as a *miles Christi*, dedicating the last years of his life to the defence of the Holy Land. His contemporaries gave him ambivalent and contradictory characteristics. William of Tyre belonged to those who frowned on Renaud. Miniatures reflect the most scandalous episode of his life; after the death of the ruler of Antioch, Renaud married his widow, Constance. According to William of Tyre, that the widow of such an illustrious Crusader would marry a little-known knight troubled Patriarch Amaury a great deal.⁷⁷ This is a well-known fact from the history of the Crusades. William of Tyre explains that for a long time Patriarch Amaury withheld permission from Renaud to marry Princess Constance, the heir to the principality of Antioch. Outraged, Renaud, oblivious of the sacerdotal dignity of his victim, had the old man bound and put out on top of the highest tower in Jerusalem. He also had the patriarch's tonsure smeared with honey so that Amaury, apart from the heat, would also suffer from insects.

⁷³ Mss. fr. 779, f. 91; 2630, f. 89; 9081, f. 113v; 2634, f. 112; 24208, f. 80; 2825, f. 89v; 2827, f. 80; 22496, f. 104; Ms. 483, f. 78.

⁷⁴ Guillaume de Tyr, vol. 1, book 4, chapter 1: "Tancrez qui moult estoit sages hom et de grant cuer, chevauchoit parmi la terre. . . tant que il vint en Cilice à une cite qui a nom Tarse. . ." See Mss. fr. 2630, f. 30v; 22495, f. 34v; 24208, f. 26; 2827, f. 26; 24209, f. 97v; Ms. 9492-3, f. 40; Ms. 828, f. 33.

⁷⁵ Ms. fr. 2630, f. 30; 24208, f. 26 etc.

⁷⁶ On Renaud of Chatillon see G. Schlumberger, *Renaud de Chatillon, prince d'Antioche, seigneur de la Terre d'Outre-Jourdain* (Paris, 1878); A. Hamilton, "The Elephant of Christ, Raynaud of Châtillon," in *Religious Motivation: Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian*, ed. Derek Baker, Studies in Church History 15 (Oxford, 1978), 97-109.

⁷⁷ Guillaume de Tyr, vol. 1, book 18, chapter 1.

Miniatures quite often reproduce this episode of Renaud's abuse of the patriarch, as well as other of his wicked deeds⁷⁸ (fig. 14).

Paging through the illuminated manuscripts of William of Tyre's chronicle proves that, as a rule, miniaturists invariably illustrated all the same passages of the chronicle related to the significant events in the life of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Of course, first and foremost, attention was paid to the barons and Crusader leaders, so as to make an impact on the emotions and imagination of the beholders. On the whole, the iconography of William of Tyre's chronicle can be called monotonous and meager, as it hardly reflects knightly self-awareness; Crusader knights identified with legendary heroes of the Crusader epic – Godfrey of Bouillon, Tancred, Bohemond of Antioch – whose exploits are most often represented in the miniatures. These images do not so much create an idealized image of knighthood as they comment, at times literally, on some selected passages of the chronicle, with an intention of drawing the reader's attention to them. This leads one to suggest that perhaps knightly self-awareness was reflected in other sources. It is known, for example, that in search of identity miniaturists who illustrated the Bible, the *Deeds of the Romans*, and other historical compositions turned to Old Testament and Classical history. By representing Old Testament characters and figures of Greek and Roman history as Crusader knights by imitating their dress, arms, and heraldic emblems and by identifying their oriental enemies as Saracens, miniaturists forged an image of the knighthood of the Holy Land in a way that would respond to the actual Crusaders' sense of themselves. Crusaders identified themselves with aristocracy of the Old Testament and antiquity.⁷⁹

* * *

Let us now draw conclusions. The iconography of the Crusades emerged late. It was only at the end of the thirteenth century that the fullest visual representation of the Crusades was first executed in the artistic workshop of Acre. From the twelfth century on we have only odd iconographic artifacts, somehow, often indirectly, touching upon the subject of a Crusade. Scarcity of twelfth-century sources may partly be explained by the loss of some works of art in course of time. Of course, making the subjects and ideas of a Crusade visual presents a certain difficulty. In the twelfth century, artists wavered between symbolic and literal interpretations of the Crusader events; sometimes they chose simply to comment on them (see images at Saint-Denis or in the Franciscan chapel at Nancy as an example). Remarkably, monuments of the twelfth-

⁷⁸ See miniatures in Mss. fr. fol. v. IV 5, f. 177; 9084, f. 232v; 779, f. 173v; 2628, f. 175; 2630, f. 159v; 2827, f. 152; 2634, f. 219v; Ms. 9492-3, f. 235v; Ms. 483, f. 146v (Amiens); Ms. 828, f. 205v.

⁷⁹ A. Graboïs, "La bibliothèque du noble d'Outremer à Acre dans la seconde moitié du XIII s.," *Moyen Age* 103, no.1 (1997): 53-67 (hereafter Graboïs, "La bibliothèque du noble d'Outremer à Acre").

century (Ponce-sur-le Loire, Saint-Pierre de Cheville, and Fordington) testify to the artists' attempts to interpret a Crusade as an endeavour involving the heavenly host. The iconography of the Crusades may have taken such a long time to develop precisely because this subject matter resisted any more or less distinct interpretation. Artists may have lacked a pre-determined canon telling them how exactly to depict events of the Crusades, as a sacred or a profane history. Eschatological and apocalyptic tendencies – for originally Crusaders intended to conquer not only the earthly Jerusalem but also the heavenly City which, they believed, would descend to earth – vanished during the first Crusader conquests.⁸⁰ The Crusades could not be as essential for sacred history as the events of the Old and New Testament. This is why these events are only hinted at in the allegorical representations of Christian-Muslim conflicts or in the framework of Biblical subjects.⁸¹ Not even in the thirteenth century did the iconography of the Crusades work out new iconographic types; rather, it borrowed and adapted old types and Biblical subjects to its own needs.⁸² Only after the events lost their relevance did book illustrations immediately related to the Crusades come into being. In these illuminated manuscripts, a Crusade is represented as a profane war, as a literary, and, to a certain extent, shallow interpretation of the events – a chronicle rendered in pictures. Making a Crusader epic visual is undoubtedly linked to the problem of memory. Miniatures may be perceived as, in the words of St. Augustine, *sinus memoriae*.⁸³ In turn, *memoria* generates identity, both cultural and social, which is to say that the function of miniatures goes far beyond just being *objets d'art*.

* * *

The image of the holy war, as it was shaped in the minds of medieval persons by illuminated codices, did not have any specifically religious tinge. Rather than a war waged by God against his enemies, artists pictured a Crusade as a profane war carried out by means of military enginery and equipment. The chief protagonist of the Crusade was the knighthood in general, an impersonal mass wherein only a few distinct characters could be distinguished: Tancred, Bohemond, Godfrey of Bouillon, and others. It is their knightly virtues that are being emphasized, even though sometimes a rebuke can also be found. Iconogra-

⁸⁰ In Jean Flori's view, a clean break with the eschatological tendencies took place after the battle at Askelon (August 12, 1098); Flori, *Pierre l'Hermite*, 400.

⁸¹ Thus, in the Bibles illuminated in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem artists praised the Biblical past for the sake of Crusader knights; the books of Maccabees, narrating Jewish resistance to Greek rulers, were models of a holy war for the thirteenth-century artists. A miniature shows Maccabees breaking into the Temple of Solomon, devastated and turned into a Saracen prayer-house where the infidels sacrificed animals and worshipped heathen idols. See Paris, Bibliothèque d'Arsenal, Ms. 5211.

⁸² Graboïs, A., "La bibliothèque du noble d'Outremer à Acre."

⁸³ *Confessiones*, Book 10, 8.

phy presents not only the triumph of the group's knightly values, but also the occasional prevailing of personal ambitions over group interests; in this sense the pictures convey a didactic message. Perhaps such an appraisal of the facts and figures is related to the general interpretation of the history of the Crusades as a profane war whose participants, therefore, lost a particularly heroic halo. The visual version is certainly different from both the historical and literary ones. Far from being part of the history of Salvation, for miniaturists of the late thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, the Crusades were rather a series of events of siege warfare. Like the poetic works narrating the lives and the exploits of legendary heroes such as Godfrey of Bouillon, Peter the Hermit, and others, iconography extolled their accomplishments. In so doing, iconography may well have been more efficient – in regard to its impact on medieval minds – than literary compositions, for images are more easily comprehensible and available to a broader audience.

The visual versions differ considerably from the actual text of the chronicle written by an author of exceptional erudition and culture. His chronicle lacks feudal military and ideological pathos and pays a great deal of attention to the daily life and contacts between the Muslims and the Christians. Not so with the iconography; transformation of the text into illustrations must have involved modification of the contents, a certain interpretation. This was not an infrequent case in medieval iconography. Wittkower writes, for example, that medieval readers apparently perceived Marco Polo's book in a way that was drastically different from how the author had meant it. Illustrations accompanying Polo's itinerary are much more traditional than the actual traveler's account.⁸⁴ The same is true for the iconography of William of Tyre's *Histoire d'Outremer*; in comparison with the text, the images are apparently much more canonical. The transformation of the text into pictures added an ideological bias. This was also facilitated by the artistic manner customary for the miniaturists' symbolic representation of time and space: the de-materialization of space and the de-secularization of time. A clash of the Muslim and Christian worlds – that was the image of a holy war that miniatures impressed on the contemporary mind, expressed in those facts and figures that seemed to the miniaturists worth remembering and needing to be remembered (*memoranda*).

⁸⁴ R. Wittkower, "Marco Polo and the pictorial tradition of the marvels of the East," in *Oriente Poliziano. Studi e conferenze tenute all'Istituto italiano per il Medio e Estremo Oriente in occasione del VII Centenario della nascita di Marco Polo (1254-1954)* (Rome, 1957), 155-173.



Fig. 1. Christ's appearance to Peter the Hermit in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. William of Tyre's *Chronicle*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Fr. 9081, f 1.



Fig. 2. Heraclius transferring the Holy Cross to Jerusalem. William of Tyre's *Chronicle*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Fr. 9082, f 25.



Fig. 3. The miracle of the Holy Lance. William of Tyre's *Chronicle*.
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Fr.22495, f 61v.



Fig. 4. The siege of Nicaea. Episode. William of Tyre's *Chronicle*.
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Fr. 2827, f 19.



Fig. 7. Episode from the siege of Jerusalem. William of Tyre's *Chronicle*.
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Fr. 22495, f 69v.



Fig. 8. Episode from the Siege of Shayzar. William of Tyre's *Chronicle*.
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Fr. 22495, f 130

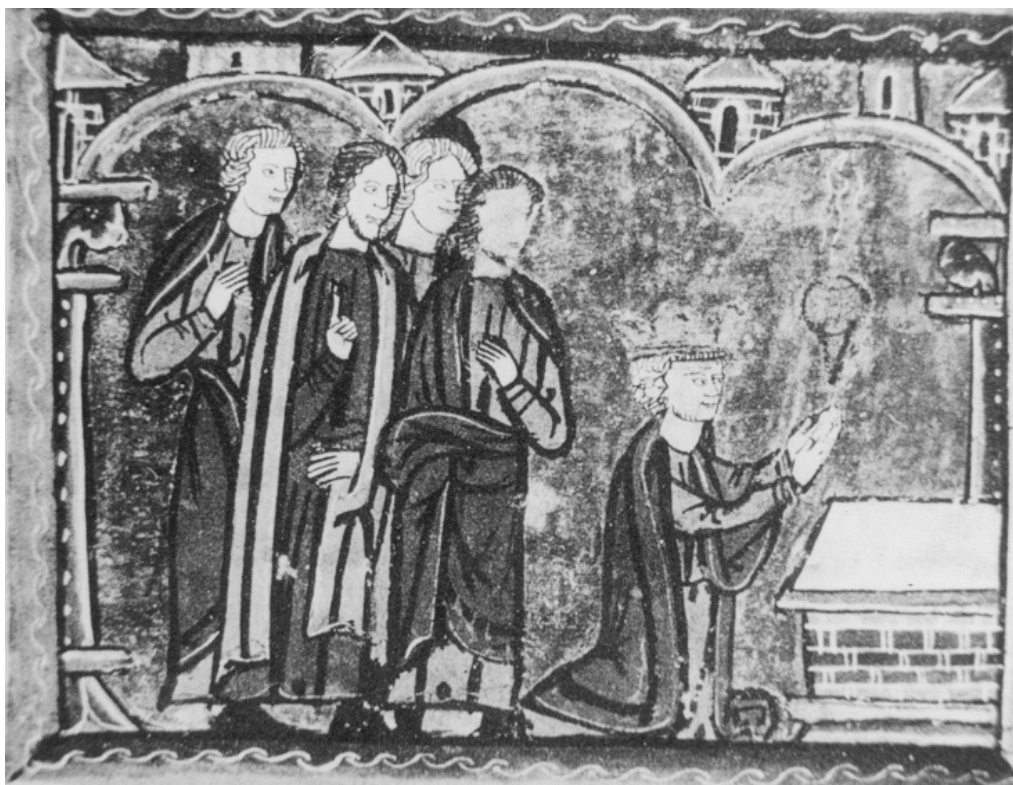


Fig. 9. Godfrey de Bouillon praying at the Holy Sepulchre. William of Tyre's *Chronicle*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Fr. 2827, f 63v.



Fig. 10. Godfrey of Bouillon cutting off the camel's head. William of Tyre's *Chronicle*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Fr. 22495, f 78.



Fig. 11.. Firuz opening the way into Antioch for Bohemond. William of Tyre's *Chronicle*.
St.. Petersburg, Russian National Library, Ms. Fr. Fol. V. IV5, f. 27v.



Fig. 12. Above: Bohemond departing to Apulia.
 Below: a wedding scene; Bohemond and his nephew marry the daughters of the French king.
 William of Tyre's *Chronicle*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Fr. 9081, f 113v.



Fig. 13. Tancred's raids on Cilicia. William of Tyre's *Chronicle*.
Brussels, Bibliotheca Albertina, Ms. 9492 – 9493, f. 40.



Fig. 14. Renaud of Chatillon's abuse of the patriarch. William of Tyre's *Chronicle*.
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Fr. 9084, f 232v.

Images in Medieval and Early Modern Culture

(Approaches in Russian Historical Research)

MEDIUM AEVUM QUOTIDIANUM

SONDERBAND XIII

Images in Medieval and Early Modern Culture

(Approaches in Russian Historical Research)

Edited by

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Preface

In recent years, many historians have recognized their special interest in visual sources. The ‘iconic turn’ has also become vital for the historical disciplines.¹

Images were a constitutive part of medieval and early modern daily life – with regard to their function and usage as well as their contents, ‘language’ and perception. Communication with the help of and via pictures played an important role for all strata of society. Therefore, research into the visual system and culture of these periods has become a basic constituent of (social) historical research.²

We would like to thank the authors of this volume, Svetlana I. Luchitskaya and Aron Ya. Gurevich in particular, for their interest and readiness to have their approaches towards images, which they had presented at a Moscow conference and in the 2002 special volume of the journal *Одиссей. Человек в истории*: “Слово и образ в средневековой культуре” (“Mot et image dans la culture médiévale”), translated into English and published as a ‘Sonderband’ of *Medium Aevum Quotidianum*. These investigations of the visual culture of the past by Russian historical researchers are an important contribution to the international trends and efforts to include images as parts of medieval and early modern culture and sources for today’s (social) historians. The articles offer a wide spectrum: from the history of gestures to various aspects and functions of images in *memoria*, political and religious life. The relevant roles that visual

¹ Concerning the ‘iconic’ or ‘pictorial turn’ see, e. g., W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory. Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago, 1994); *idem.*, “Der Pictorial Turn,” in *Privileg Blick. Kritik der visuellen Kultur*, ed. Christian Kravagna (Berlin, 1997), 15-40; Jan Baetens, “Reading Vision? What Contexts for the Pictorial Turn?”, *Semiotica* 126 (1999), 203-218.

² See, e. g., Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images. Art and the Representation of the Past* (New Haven and London, 1993); Jérôme Baschet and Jean-Claude Schmitt (ed.), *L’image. Fonctions et usages des images dans l’Occident médiéval* (Paris, 1996); Gerhard Jaritz (ed.), *Pictura quasi fictura. Die Rolle des Bildes in der Erforschung von Alltag und Sachkultur des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Vienna, 1996); Otto Gerhard Oexle (ed.), *Der Blick auf die Bilder. Kunstgeschichte und Geschichte im Gespräch* (Göttingen, 1997); Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca, 2001); Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Le corps des images. Essais sur la culture visuelle au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2002); Andrea von Hülsen-Esch and Jean-Claude Schmitt (ed.), *Die Methodik der Bildinterpretation. Les méthodes de l’interprétation de l’image. Deutsch-französische Kolloquien 1998-2000*, 2 vols. (Göttingen, 2002); Axel Bolvig and Phillip Lindley (ed.), *History and Images. Towards a New Iconology* (Turnhout, 2003).

culture played in the Middle Ages and the early modern period are convincingly presented and underlined. Transdisciplinarity and the necessity of contextualization and dialogue are proved to be indispensable.

We do hope that this special volume of *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* will help to intensify and strengthen the international contacts and cooperation among ‘image-historians’. An increasing variety of approaches towards visual sources may, on the one hand, contribute to better understanding specific and individual matters of communication in medieval and early modern society. On the other hand, such approaches will open up possibilities for recognizing general patterns of image usage and perception – patterns of intention as well as patterns of response.³ Analyses of micro- and macro-levels will add to each other. Their structures, contexts and networks will become clearer.

Gerhard Jaritz

³ See, e. g., some contributions of leading representatives of the social history of art already in the eighties of the twentieth century, as: Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention. On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven and London, 1986); David Freedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago and London, 1989). See also the important remarks by Keith Moxey, “Reading the ‘Reality Effect’,” in *Pictura quasi fictura. Die Rolle des Bildes in der Sachkultur des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Gerhard Jaritz (Vienna, 1996), 15-22.