

Devils here, there and everywhere

Annedorte Vad

The majority of the Danish parish churches were built in the Romanesque period, which in Denmark is considered the time from approximately 1050 to 1250. The churches were decorated with wall-paintings, tapestry, stained glass windows, etc. In this article I want to deal with the wall-painted decoration, which was continued and expanded during whole the medieval period. I will concentrate on the devil – on how he was depicted and in which motifs we can find him.

In the Middle Ages the church made great effort in stressing that God created the devils. Since God does not create anything bad, it was stated that they originally had been good. They were created as angels but became evil on their own. Satan was the leader of these fallen angels. He was created as the most beautiful of them all, but in his fall he turned into something ugly and nasty. Satan is God's opponent. Satan and his followers are diametrically opposed to God and his kingdom. They were considered a threat to man, but salvation could be found in Christian belief. The medieval church emphasized that God gave Satan his power, and that Satan's activities were dependent on God's will; therefore, Satan was not as such a threat to God.¹

The devils are here, there and everywhere. They can assume all shapes, and in theory there could be devils in the decorations that we do not find because we cannot recognize them. Two things are important to recognize and find the devils in the wall-paintings:

1. Knowing the stories of the Bible concerning the devil;
2. Knowing the iconographical expressions used to depict the devil.

When the devils appear in stories of the Bible, they need not necessarily look like devils as we know them. They assume the shapes described in the Bible, such as snakes and dragons; knowing the biblical stories is, therefore, essential to be able to find and recognize them.

In iconographical expressions, Satan and the devils are depicted ugly and nasty for the spectator to recognize them. In their look as well as their

¹ Georg Heggum, "Djævel", *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder* III, 1958, p. 125-126.

behaviour they are depicted as opposites to God and the saints. This tells us something about the conceptions of beautiful and ugly as well as of good and bad behaviour.²

Statistics

Accumulating information in databases provides us with an implement that can change the way we look at things, because it offers new ways by which we can approach our source material. In our project we gather the information in two databases – an iconographical database and an image database.³ It is important to differentiate between the two, although the information they hold is very similar. In both databases we collect the basic information we have on each wall-painting. The information we gather is as follows:

- the name of the church in which the motif is placed;
- the district and diocese;
- what the motif represents;
- when the motif was painted;
- by which workshop it was painted;
- where in the church it is placed;
- if necessary, we also place a comment.

The difference between the databases lies in the amount of material as well as the form of it. The iconographical database contains information of almost all known wall-paintings, of the existing as well as those that are now lost. It contains information on nearly 11500 different motifs. With such a large quantity reliable statistic analyses can be done, and it is, therefore, obvious that this database offers an opportunity for quantitative studies. The image database on the other hand is an electronic collection of images, which contains more than 5000 digitalized slides of wall-paintings and the descriptions of these. This database naturally provides material for comparative studies of the different motifs.⁴

Our iconographical database is constructed according to the traditional art historical way of describing an image. This tradition, which has been influenced by the Warburg-school and especially Erwin Panofsky, relies and refers to textual points of reference, and records the iconographical motif only.⁵ Since the devils are not part of the classification system traditionally used, finding records of them is not

² Ulla Hastrup (ed.), "Danske kalkmalerier 1175-1275", *Danske Kalkmalerier* Vol. 2, 1987, p. 29.

³ Cf the article by Jesper J. Borrild in this volume.

⁴ The databases are generally open to the public on the Internet. The address is <http://www.kalkmalerier.dk/english/default.htm>

⁵ Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the visual arts*, 1993, p. 53-54.

straightforward. We are working on extending the databases to contain wider iconographical descriptions, but at present searching on words such as Satan, Lucifer, devil, devils etc. produces less than 200 records, and it is a well-known fact that many more are to be found on the church walls. What you have to do is to search for the iconographical motifs in which you expect to find depictions of the devil-motifs, such as The Fall and The Last Judgment, for example. By doing that I have found just over 1000 motifs containing depictions of the devil, and it is from that material I will place my statistic analyses.

The image database contains digitalized slides of 5230 wall-paintings.⁶ To each picture, there are records of its pre-iconographical content. The iconographical information you get is, therefore, dependent on what can be seen on the actual photograph. At present, it is possible to see devils on the photographs, which have not yet been registered in the database. To add information of this kind, we will have to look at each picture separately and write down everything that can be seen on it. It is a very extensive and time-consuming amount of work that so far has been done on clothing only. But when the database has been elaborated with these "unconventional" classifications, it will be a much more useful and powerful implement by which one can find the exact information one seeks.

We use the databases extensively when we approach our source material in this new fashion. We make statistic analyses on the occurrences of different motifs, compare the dioceses and look at the differences between the east and west of Denmark. The future holds opportunities for wider statistic analyses based on the large digital databases, as they develop and grow into more accurate tools. It is obvious that future historical research will concentrate on and make use of the possibilities that the large databases provide. In our own project we see more and more students concentrating their dissertations around these new possibilities within the profession of history.

The following analyses represent a first attempt in approaching the source material of devils statistically. The material I work with is the data of the iconographical database.⁷ For my analyses I have used the data which is found in the period between 1100 and 1550. That interval covers the first entry of the devil and the end of the Middle Ages. The amount of data on which I place my statistic analyses is as follows: all motifs 10388; motifs containing depictions of the devil: 1024.

When looking at the dispersion of the number of motifs found in each diocese, you clearly see that they are not spread equally. Roskilde and Lund are represented with more than 3000 motifs each. Odense and Århus

⁶ As at November 1997.

⁷ As at November 1997.

are represented with approximately half that amount. Børglum, Ribe and Viborg are represented with about 400 motifs each, whereas only 214 motifs represent Slesvig.

Looking at the number of motifs containing depictions of the devil in each diocese, you would expect to find a similar distribution, and apparently you do: Roskilde and Lund are still represented by a much larger amount than the other dioceses, and Slesvig still has relatively few. But looking at the dispersion of motifs containing depictions of the devil expressed as a percentage of all the motifs reveals that the distribution between the dioceses is not quite the same, and it is clear that three groups emerge (diagram 1).

1. In Børglum, Lund, Odense and Roskilde 9.02-10.23% of the motifs contain depictions of the devil.
2. In Ribe, Slesvig and Viborg that percentage is between 6.33 and 7.48.
3. Århus diocese is distinguished by having as many as 12.24%.

Looking at Denmark in general, differences between the eastern and western parts of the country appear, although they are only small when considering the occurrence of the devil in the wall-paintings. Of the 6248 motifs that represent the dioceses of Eastern Denmark (Lund and Roskilde), 9.92% contain depictions of the devil. Western Denmark (Børglum, Odense, Ribe, Slesvig, Viborg and Århus) is represented by 4135 motifs, 9.72% of them contain depictions of the devil.

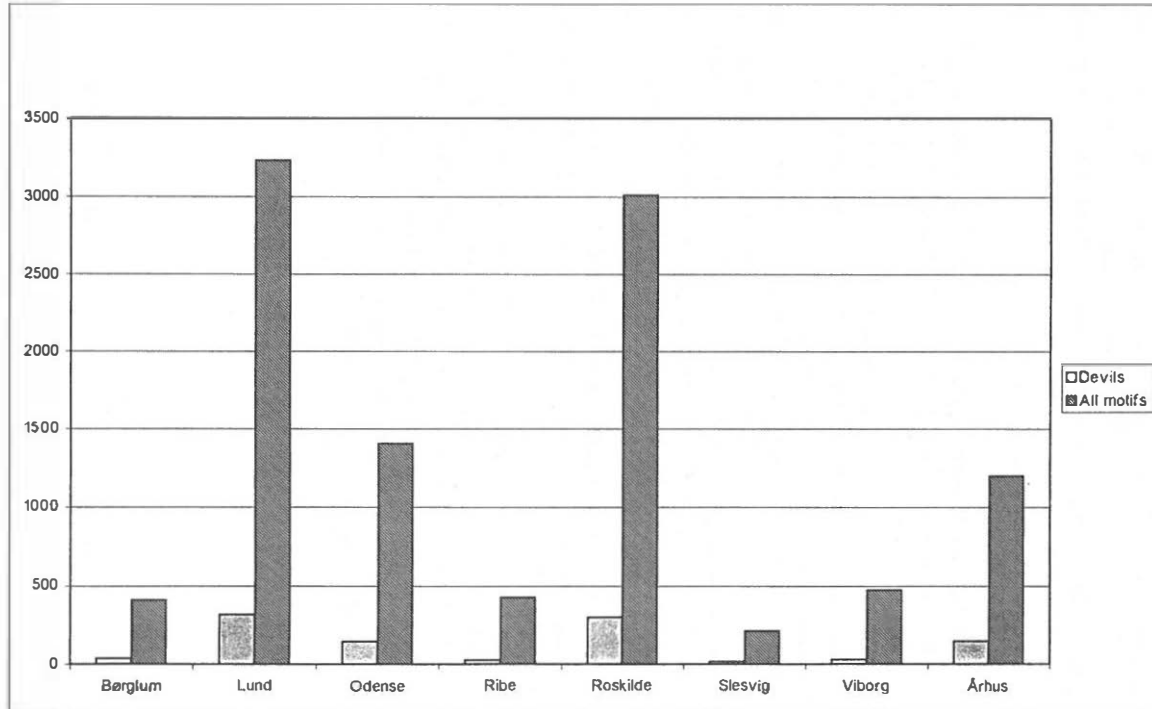
The Depiction of the Devil in the Romanesque and in the Late Medieval Period

There are several differences between the style of the Romanesque wall-paintings and the wall-painted adornment of the late Middle Ages. Danish Romanesque art was an integrated part of the contemporary European art, whereas Gothic art never became very integrated; instead it was a down-to-earth and Danish art on domestic terms.⁸ The Romanesque wall-paintings are distinguished by the strong colours used, and by the fact that the whole of the surface was painted. This is in contrast to the late medieval adornment where the background, although filled with ornamental decorations, usually was kept white. In the Romanesque style the outline is used to underline and tighten up the motif, whereas in the late medieval style the outline constitutes the actual motif.⁹

⁸ Axel Bolvig, *Bondens billeder. Om kirker og kunst i dansk senmiddelalder*, 1994, p. 92.

⁹ Ulla Hastrup (ed.), "Danske kalkmalerier 1175-1275", *Danske Kalkmalerier* Vol. 2, 1987, p. 16; Ulla Hastrup (ed.), "Danske kalkmalerier 1275-1375", *Danske Kalkmalerier* Vol. 3, 1989, p. 27-28.

Diagram 1: The dispersion of motifs containing depictions of the devil in each diocese, and the total number of motifs in each diocese.



The differences in style are, according to Axel Bolvig, caused by the change in who commissioned the decorations of the churches. In the Romanesque period, the churches were built, decorated, used and owned by a minor part of the population only – namely the great landowners.¹⁰ In the late medieval period, the decline in the population gave grounds for a new social order where the copyholders formed the congregation and took care of the decoration and up-keep of the local church; so, the imagery belonged to them.¹¹

The strict, aristocratic and sublime nature is characteristic of the Romanesque wall-paintings; people were depicted stoic with a composure and peace not seen later. Not much room was left to the display of the devil, unlike the late medieval adornment, in which the artists showed a larger amount of artistic freedom, and the depiction of the devil sometimes developed into something very imaginative. In the late Middle Ages you can even find the devil depicted in obscene positions. As a good guidance, you can say that the devil becomes much more imaginative in time and that the Romanesque devil is pretty tame compared to his dramatic late medieval colleagues. The Romanesque wall-paintings represent an aristocratic art that reflects the ownership of the magnates.¹² The wall-paintings of the centuries before the Reformation represent folk art. Created by artisans, commissioned by the mixed congregation of the churches, and made for all churchgoers, they depict the mentality of the simple population.¹³

But it is not only the *motifs* that change from the Romanesque to the late medieval period. There is also a considerable increase in the *amount* of motifs in which the devils occur. However, the general amount of motifs also increases in that time, and it may, therefore, be more valuable to look at the distribution of motifs containing depictions of the devil expressed as a percentage of all the motifs. (diagram 2).

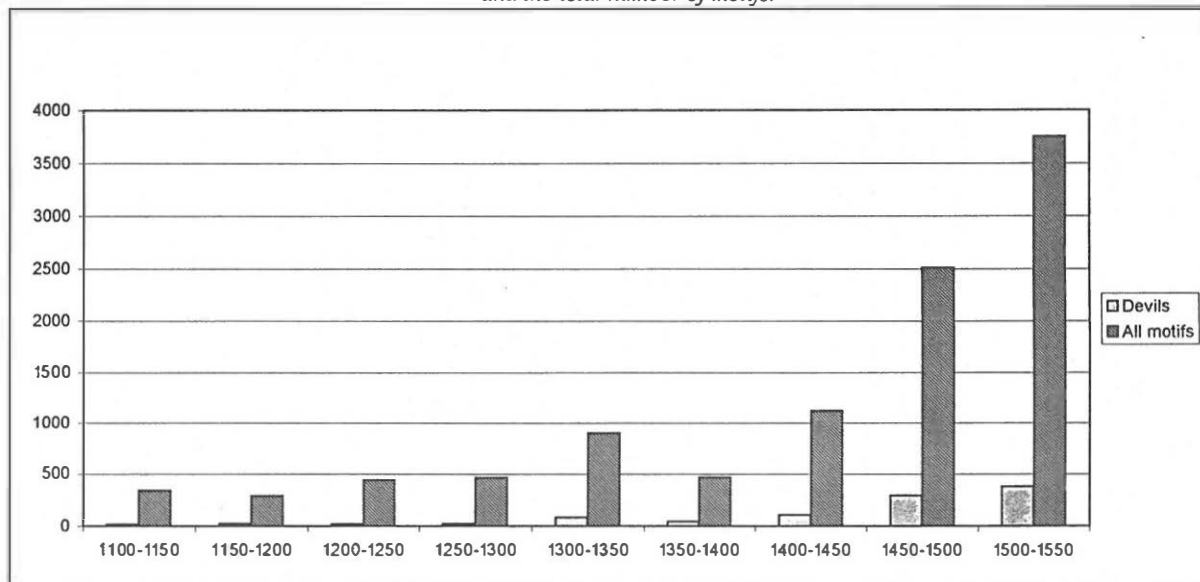
¹⁰ Axel Bolvig, *Bondens billeder. Om kirker og kunst i dansk senmiddelalder*, 1994, p. 60.

¹¹ Axel Bolvig, *Bondens billeder. Om kirker og kunst i dansk senmiddelalder*, 1994, p. 68-72.

¹² Axel Bolvig, *Kirkekunstens storhedstid. Om kirker og kunst i Danmark i romansk tid*, 1992, p. 76-79.

¹³ Axel Bolvig, *Bondens billeder. Om kirker og kunst i dansk senmiddelalder*, 1994, p. 88.

Diagram 2: The dispersion of motifs containing depictions of the devil in 50 years' periods, and the total number of motifs.



By looking at the dispersion expressed in percentage you see a clear difference between the Romanesque and the late medieval period. In Romanesque art, the devil occurs in approximately 5% of all the motifs.¹⁴ From around 1300, that percentage has redoubled! The percentages accentuate the incredible rise in the amount of motifs containing depictions of the devil that takes place from around the year 1300.

Description of the Devils

In the world of the wall-paintings, it is easy to differentiate good and holy people from evil – you see the difference in the mere depiction, because people are depicted according to their qualities. Holy people as well as ordinary people are usually depicted en face or in three-quarter profile, whereas evil people and the devil mostly will be seen in clear profile – a position in which you will never find holy men and women. Besides that, ordinary people and holy men and women are more quiet and elegant in their appearance than crude people and the devils who often are seen in action.¹⁵

The following classification of the devils is based on the way they look. I have classified them into five different groups. I must however draw attention to the fact that the different kinds of devils are not always clearly differentiated; it is mixtures of the five categories one usually finds.

1. The first group contains the ones that look like dragons or snakes. This kind is very much connected to the descriptions of the devil in the Bible. They are most commonly found in pictures of Saint Michael's Combat with Satan¹⁶ and in The Fall of Man.¹⁷
2. In the second group we find the crippled devils. According to the common belief in the Middle Ages, ugly and crippled people were evil or at least bad. Obviously that belief counts for the devils as well. They may have lost their limbs in the combat with God, but the feelings they evoke in the spectators must have been the same. The crippled devils are often found near the mouth of Hell, probably to underline that this place really is disagreeable.¹⁸

¹⁴ The 50-years period from 1150 to 1200 is conspicuous. But, since it is the period with the least amount of records, it may be due to the element of uncertainty that statistic analyses inevitably contains, and not an honest deviation.

¹⁵ Ulla Haastrup (ed.), "Danske kalkmalerier 1175-1275", *Danske Kalkmalerier* Vol. 2, 1987, p. 29-30

¹⁶ For example Vigersted (22/177) and Ballerup (Ad 6_26). (The information in the brackets is the search-code for the specific motif which can be used on <http://www.kalkmalerier.dk/english/default.htm>. When no search-code is given the motif is not yet to be found in the database).

¹⁷ For example Råsted (29_219) and Keldby (17_28).

¹⁸ For example Udbyned (11/22) Ottestrup (SH/221) and Hyllested (20/159).

3. Those created from different animal body parts constitute the third group. When mixing different body parts of animals with that of the human, you get a grotesque figure (Fig. 1). At the same time you can underline certain features known to be related to the particular animal.¹⁹
4. The fourth group contains devils with wings. When equipping the devil with wings, you draw a line back to the thought of the devils being angels. It varies whether they have been given frayed angel-wings or wings more similar to that of the bat. With the latter, you draw the attention to the well-known fact that the bat is a creature of the night, which many consider frightening.²⁰ There are a lot of examples of the devil defying the laws of gravity; so obviously they do not need the wings to fly. Devils that were given wings are often, but not always, the ones taking the souls to Hell. They are also seen near the churning woman.²¹
5. The rest group – those with masks everywhere on their body, for instance. The ones in Sæby (Fig. 2) and Vrå are such examples – they are both fetching the soul of a dying man.²² The ones in Gudum and Ågerup who try to tempt Christ²³ also belong to this group.



Fig. 1: The small devils from Ballerup are created of different animal body parts (group 3). They are acting in a Soul Weighing scene, but all their efforts in pressing down the scale are in vain.

¹⁹ For example Over Dråby (22/151) and Gudum (29_1/10).

²⁰ Frayed angel wings: Udbynder (11/22), Bat wings: Sønderholm (15/103), Gjerrild (18/61).

²¹ Near Hell: Gudum (29_1/10) and Hørve (16/83), Near the churning woman: Tuse 30_3/75).

²² Sæby (15/67), Vrå (11/14).

²³ Gudum (15/45), Ågerup (29_1/11).



Fig. 2. The devil of Sæby (group 5) is fetching the soul of a dying man. He is very scary, and the thought of ending with him must be terrifying.

Why is the Devil Depicted in the Church, and in Which Context do We Find Him?

Depicting the devil in the wall-paintings was to illustrate parts of everyday life as well as religious beliefs. We most commonly find the devil in scenes taken from the Bible, where he illustrates and explains the motifs. When we find him in other scenes he is used to underline a certain belief or give the motif a certain meaning.

The Fall of Man and scenes related to The Day of Judgment are the biblical motifs in which the devil most commonly occurs. Other motifs related to the stories of the Bible in which one finds depictions of the devil are The Temptation of Christ and The Fall of Satan, but they are not as commonly used as the others.

Besides, in themes taken from the Bible, the devil often appears in other scenes, especially in the late medieval period when we find him depicted as the one who leads people astray, and as a tempter. He is the one luring man to breaking the Ten Commandments or to committing one of the Seven Deadly Sins. He is also the one who punishes people for having committed these sins. He grasps the souls of sinners who have just died. He is found in scenes taken from everyday life, where he can be either a helper or a nuisance to people. And you see the devil Tutivillius making notice of those who gossip in church and of those who are late for

service – information he can probably use for his own favour on the Day of Judgment.²⁴

I have classified the different motifs in which the devil appears into superior groups according to their contents. Three major groups have to be mentioned:

1. Motifs associated to God or Heaven: The Day of Judgment, Christ's Descent into the Land of the Dead, Saint Michael Killing the Dragon, The Fall of Satan and Saint Michael Weighing the Souls. – In these scenes the devil, as a rule, is the weaker part.
2. The devil as a tempter: The Fall of Man, The Seven Deadly Sins, The Temptation of Christ and King Herod Commanding the Slaughter of the Children. – The devil usually is the stronger part in those scenes (with the exception of The Temptation of Christ where he does not succeed). The devil is weak in these scenes because he is opposed to God who is always his superior.
3. Interrelationship between man and the devils: Motifs in this group depict everyday life chores such as churning butter and brewing beer, as well as devils in general. I find it difficult to decide who are the stronger and the weaker parts in these motifs since they are depictions of the relationship between humans and the devil in everyday life, rather than actual battles. The churning women do not always look like they enjoy the devil's interference,²⁵ other times they do not seem to mind too much.²⁶ In other scenes the devils even look frightened of ill-tempered women who beat them up, and the women are clearly the devils' superiors.²⁷ I assume, however, that the humans in general are the weaker part. Even though associating with the devil could give some advantages, consorting with the devil must have been an action not looked well upon in society, and by doing that you would be left out of the social environment of the village.

As a rule of thumb, the devil is the loser when he competes with God and Jesus, but when he fights with man he has more success in his enterprise.

²⁴ For example Fanebjerg (SH/475) and Kværkeby (SH/169). It is noteworthy that the devil is not ignorant, he is able to read and write; something the majority of the population was unable to.

²⁵ Tuse (30_3/75).

²⁶ Tyvelse (29/80).

²⁷ For example Åstrup (SH/167) and Estruplund (12/100).

First Group of Motifs: Scenes Associated with God or Heaven

The Day of Judgment. In the Middle Ages, there was a strong belief in a kind of double judgment. Straight after one's death an angel or a devil would fetch the soul and take it to Heaven, Purgatory or Hell, according to the way of living one's life. On the world's last day everybody was to be judged again, this time by Christ who will decide who should go to Heaven forever, and who should be banished to Hell for all eternity.²⁸

The Day of Judgment was part of every extensive decoration, as far as we know today.²⁹ The motif appears in whole the medieval period, although it is most common in the later part of the Middle Ages. It is almost always placed in the east of the church in either the chancel, on the triumphal wall or in the vaults of the first bay. In that way, the congregation was reminded of the power of God when looking towards the most sacred place of the church – the chancel. Of the 485 representations, 361 are placed at these locations. Of the remaining 26%, 23 more are placed in the eastern vaults but not in the first bay. 22 are placed in the northern vaults, 16 in the southern vaults and 17 in the western vaults, 4 more are placed in the vaults but the adjustment is unaccounted for. 38 are placed on the walls, four are placed at other places specific to individual churches.

The motifs representing The Day of Judgment have a fixed composition, where Christ sits in the middle. To his right, you see Heaven and the redeemed people, and to his left you will find Hell and the condemned. The depiction of Hell varies from church to church and over time. Sometimes it is merely a few flames, other times it is a vivid description of the horrors of that place.³⁰ The idea of Hell as a big Leviathan is taken from the Bible.³¹ Sometimes it is very fierce;³² other times it looks more like an old tired dog.³³ A lot of devils usually appear near Hell. They work very hard on dragging the souls of sinners into the big mouth of Hell. They use wheelbarrows, ropes and other implements³⁴ to keep the souls of the sinners, sometimes they carry them on their back.³⁵ The devils near Hell very often have wings, which is very practical for the

²⁸ Heinrich Roos, "Dommedag", *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder* III, 1958, p. 209.

²⁹ Ulla Haastrup (ed.), "Danske kalkmalerier 1375-1475", *Danske Kalkmalerier* Vol. 4, 1985, p. 18.

³⁰ For example Nørre Herlev (SH/232) and Hørve (16/83).

³¹ The Book of Job 41.

³² For example Keldby (17/52) and Mørkøv (9/50).

³³ Højby (SH/224).

³⁴ For example Tuse (30_3/71).

³⁵ For example Højby (32_1/2).

sort of work they are doing, as it signifies that they are quicker than humans.

It is notable that the Purgatory is very rarely depicted in the Danish medieval wall-paintings. Scenes that could be associated with Purgatory in general are mixed with the depictions of Hell.

An early (1325) and, therefore, unique depiction of Purgatory is found in Keldby church. Whole the triumphal wall is dedicated to the depiction of The Day of Judgment. Christ is represented by The Seat of Grace and placed most centrally above the chancel arch. To the north, the Purgatory is depicted together with Paradise, and to the south we find Hell. Purgatory is thereby placed opposite Hell.³⁶ In Århus Cathedral, Purgatory is depicted as an opposite to Heaven, but the concept of Purgatory is confused with that of Hell.³⁷

When *Saint Michael is Weighing the Souls*, it is part of Judgment Day, too. There are records of 48 soul-weighing-scenes.³⁸ The first entry of this motif dates back to 1250 and is found in Stadager church, Odense diocese. There are only a few records of this motif in the period between 1300 and 1400. The motif is most commonly used from 1400 to 1500, when 55% of the records are found.

In 29 of the 48 churches, the motif is placed in direct connection with the depiction of Judgment Day. The 19 remaining are placed away from the actual scene, but they are still to be considered as part of it.³⁹ In Ballerup⁴⁰ church, for example, the soul-weighing-motif is placed on the westernmost vault, and is, thereby, the last wall-painting you see before leaving the church. The moral is probably to remind people that everything counts on the last day, and that they should live their lives accordingly.

The devil often tries to tamper with the scales in his own favour. Sometimes, more than one devil is working on getting the soul convicted. The devils use their weight, stones or even millstones to lie heavy on the scale.⁴¹ To rescue the humble and often praying soul, Saint Michael or

³⁶ Jenny Flensborg, "Dommedag, Næstestol og Skærsild", *Danske kalkmalerier* vol. 3, (ed. Ulla Haastrup), 1989, p. 118-119.

³⁷ Grethe Foss, *Århus Domkirke*, 1982, p. 62.

³⁸ Petersen, Tom W., *Sjælevejningen i dansk kalkmaleri* (Unpublished dissertation), 1974, p. 51-53.

³⁹ Petersen, Tom W., *Sjælevejningen i dansk kalkmaleri* (Unpublished dissertation), 1974, p. 65.

⁴⁰ (Ad 7_31).

⁴¹ Their own weight: Birkerød (SH/235) and Ballerup (Ad 6_31), Stones: Gerlev (SH/207), Millstones: Jetsmark (SH/399).

Saint Mary sometimes "cheat" on his behalf, by pressing down the scale with a hand or finger.⁴²

All in all, the devil has only little luck in his enterprise. Only three times he succeeds in having the soul convicted.⁴³

Christ's Descent into the Land of the Dead. There are 28 records of this motif. It appears for the first time in Råsted church 1100-1125, but is not represented again before around the year 1300, when it appears in Butterup church. The motif is most commonly used in the period between 1400 and 1500, when almost 60% of the entries are found.

The depictions of Christ's Descent into the Land of the Dead are very uniform, too. Christ is usually seen to the left of the mouth of Hell. He is bigger than the people he is rescuing. He holds out his right hand to the souls. The souls stand in the mouth of Hell. Devils do not always appear in this motif, but when they do, they are harmless – Christ has chained them, and they are the losers.⁴⁴

Hell is mostly depicted as a Leviathan, once it is merely a grotto, at some places you see architectural designs in front – as described in the Bible.⁴⁵

Saint Michael in Combat with the Dragon. Of all the motifs containing depictions of the devil, this motif is the only one which is not most commonly used in the late medieval period. Instead, it is fairly much used in the Romanesque period, and it is among the very earliest motifs containing depictions of the devil I have found. The first entries of this motif date back to about 1100-1125 and are found in Hvorslev and Råsted church, both in Århus diocese.⁴⁶ The use of this motif peaks in the period between 1250 and 1350, when 55% of the records are found.

The motif reproduces the biblical story of Satan's Fall. Saint Michael usually uses a big lance to kill Satan who appears in the shape of a dragon.⁴⁷ The allegory of Satan as a dragon is taken from the Bible: "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down –

⁴² Saint Mary "cheating": Fanefjord (30_2/84), Saint Michael "cheating": Gerlev (SH/207).

⁴³ Gundslev, Højby (SH/204) and Kirke Hyllinge.

⁴⁴ Undløse (SH/98)(SH/99) and Gerlev (SH/230)(SH/231).

⁴⁵ Leviathan: Vallengbæk (SH/544), Grotto: Vrigstad, Architecture: Undløse (SH/98).

⁴⁶ Hvorslev (29_2/31), Råsted (29_2/8).

⁴⁷ For example Bregninge (SH/773) and Kippinge (17/8).

that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.⁴⁸

Second Group of Motifs: The Devil as a Tempter

The Fall of Man. The oldest motifs I have found containing depictions of the devil date back to 1100-1125. One of them represents The Fall of Man. It is found in Råsted⁴⁹ church, Århus diocese. That particular motif is not very common in the Romanesque period, though. There are 109 entries of the motif in the iconographical database. Only six of these are from the period before 1300. The motif is most commonly used in the period between 1450-1550, for which 75 entries are recorded – that is more than 68%.

Looking at the motif makes you realize that it changes very little over time. The Tree of Life is centre of the motif, and Adam and Eve stand on each their side of it. Wrapped around the tree is the devil, who is usually represented in the shape of different mixtures between human and snake.⁵⁰ There are only few exceptions to that: In Skellebjerg church the devil is clearly depicted as a dragon, and in Råsted church he is just a simple snake.⁵¹ The devil can be depicted as both male and female – sometimes as a reflected image of Eve, other times with no clear sex.⁵² In some representations he wears a crown, in others he does not.⁵³ In most cases, the devil addresses Eve, but there are exceptions to that.⁵⁴ Adam and Eve are placed on both sides of the tree – apparently there is not the same allegory of evil being depicted to the right in the picture, as we find it in other motifs, like The Day of Judgment for example. The differences in the composition of this motif occur in all the periods – it seems to be a matter of changes from church to church, rather than a change over time.

King Herod and the Devil. Another way of depicting the power of the tempting devil is shown in Mørkøv and Reerslev church.⁵⁵ When King Herod orders the slaughtering of the children, a devil is seen behind his throne, whispering in his ear. The devil is quite big and hairy. He has pointy ears, long horns and a tail. The decision by Herod to kill all the

⁴⁸ Revelation 12,7.

⁴⁹ (29_2/9).

⁵⁰ For example Kirkerup (29_1/34) and Kettinge (14/120).

⁵¹ Skellebjerg (16/61), Råsted (29_2/9).

⁵² Male: (12/158), female: Nørre Alslev (28_1/60), reflected image of Eve: Tingsted (14/48), no clear sex: (Hyllested 20/147).

⁵³ Crown: Kongens Lyngby (SH/15), no crown: Åstrup (16/154).

⁵⁴ Gjerrild (18/58).

⁵⁵ Mørkøv (9/33) and Reerslev (14/43).

babies is clearly influenced by the act of the devil in these motifs, but the motif also exists when no sign of the devil is shown.

In Nykirke⁵⁶ you see the devil behind Herod, when Jesus is taken before him. The devil there is much smaller and has got wings. This motif generally has no indication to the interference of the devil, and the motif in Nykirke is, therefore, quite extraordinary in that perspective.

The Seven Deadly Sins. This motif is not used in the Romanesque period. It does not occur before the year 1300. The first entry I have found is from Kirkerup (1300-1350). Before 1450, I came across only 9 records of it. It is most commonly used in the period 1450-1550, with nearly 83%.

The devil lures people into mischief, whenever he can. When people are breaking the Ten Commandments or committing one of The Seven Deadly Sins, one often sees the devil in the corridor, pleased with his own achievement.⁵⁷ But he is also the one who punishes people for having committed these sins. In Birkerød,⁵⁸ you recognize nine souls being punished that way. Among them is the adulteress who has two basilisks sucking her breast as a punishment for her crime, and the greedy man who is flown away by a devil, still holding the purse in his hand. The fat man to the left is being force-fed by a devil as a punishment for his crime of gluttony, yet others are characterized by different weapons representing *Ira* and *Acedia*.⁵⁹

The Temptation of Christ. This motif appears three times between 1125 and 1170 (in Asmundtorp, Todbjerg and Jørlunde church, respectively Lund, Århus and Roskilde diocese). In 1200 in Ferring church, the motif is reproduced twice – respectively the second and the third temptation. But the motif is most commonly used between 1450 and 1550, when the remaining 10 records are found; they account for 66%.

The motifs representing the Temptation of Christ show that the devil does not always succeed in his mischief. Jesus sets a good example. The devil tries to tempt Jesus three times. First, he dares him to turn stones into bread, and then he offers him all the power in the world. Last, he wants him to jump from the highest temple in Jerusalem, to prove that angels will save him.⁶⁰ The motifs in Gudum, Ågerup and Fanefjord⁶¹ represent the first and the third of these temptations. The devil in all three represent-

⁵⁶ (9/2).

⁵⁷ For example Kværkeby (SH/168) and Tirsted.

⁵⁸ (29_31/66).

⁵⁹ Ulla Haastrup (ed.), "Dommen over gode og onde", *Danske kalkmalerier* vol. 3, (ed. Ulla Haastrup), 1989, p. 170-73.

⁶⁰ Luke 4, 1-13.

⁶¹ Gudum (15/45), Ågerup (SH/757) and Fanefjord (12/38).

ations belongs to the fifth group. They have faces on several places of their bodies and are almost as big as Jesus himself. In Elsinore Carmelite Monastery⁶² a person tempts Jesus who does not look like a devil. The devil tries to dissemble. To recognize him as a devil one has to know the context of the Bible concerning the Temptation of Christ.

Third Group of Motifs: Interrelationship Between Man and the Devils

Fetching Souls of Sinners. Several times we find devils fetching the souls of sinners.⁶³ Sometimes we can tell whom the souls belong to, or what crime had been committed – Judas, the evil thief at Golgotha, or people who committed one of the seven Deadly Sins are examples for that situation.⁶⁴ We can be sure that it was to underline the seriousness of these crimes that the souls, at the moment of death, were fetched by devils and taken straight to Hell.

Interfering in Household Actions. Even in the simple chores of everyday life, the devils join in.⁶⁵ One often sees them near the churning woman, once the devil meddles when she pours beer, and in another church even a monk is disturbed when pouring beer.⁶⁶ Brewing beer as well as the churning of butter are processes that not always turn out successfully, since both are dependent on temperature and on the state of cleanliness in the surroundings. Medieval people often seem not to have been aware of that, and to them it was obviously the devils' work, when their milk did not turn to butter, or the beer was sour, especially if the products of their neighbour were fine. When a hare was drinking the milk of a cow, it was actually the devil who had transformed a woman into a hare, to help her steal milk from her neighbours – a perfectly logical explanation to why a cow was not giving any milk! Ignorance as well as a certain amount of jealousy obviously were the leading factors to many of the ideas about devils.⁶⁷

The devils are here, there and everywhere. As I tried to show, it is possible to classify the motifs in which they can be found. Sometimes, though, you find devils who seem to have been placed on the vaults out of context. But

⁶² (19/148).

⁶³ For example Ballerup (Ad 6_17).

⁶⁴ Judas: Fanefjord (12/19), Golgotha: Tågerup (14/104), Seven Deadly Sins: Birkerød (29_31/66).

⁶⁵ Niels M. Saxtorph, *Mellem himmel og helvede*. 1979, p. 28-29.

⁶⁶ Churning: Tirsted (Sh/165), Gjerrild (SH/310), Vejlbj (SH/333), Tuse (30_3/75). Beer brewing: Tuse (30_3/74).

⁶⁷ Ebbe Nyborg, *Fanden på væggen*. 1978, pp. 38-39; p. 80-81.

even when the devils are acting on their own, they usually perform jobs that can be related to the motifs just described. When we find chained devils, it must be the allegory of Christ's power over Satan. When they occur lurking around the vaults, it is probably to remind the congregation that devils are everywhere, and that one should beware of the dangers of slipping into sin, however tempting it may seem.

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VON GERHARD JARITZ

GEDRUCKT MIT UNTERSTÜTZUNG DER KULTURABTEILUNG
DES AMTES DER NIEDERÖSTERREICHISCHEN LANDESREGIERUNG

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Vorwort

Medium Aevum Quotidianum legt mit Heft 39 einen Band vor, welcher sich schwerpunktartig mit der Analyse von Bildquellen, vor allem Wandmalerei, auseinandersetzt. Die Autoren der Beiträge stammen aus zwei Institutionen, in denen Bilddokumentation und Analyse konzentriert betrieben werden: dem Department of History an der Universität Kopenhagen und dem Department of Medieval Studies an der Central European University, Budapest. Das erstgenannte Institut ist besonders durch seine Digitalisierung des Gesamtbestandes dänischer Wandmalerei bekannt geworden, der über das Internet allgemein zugänglich geworden ist und als Basis für umfassende qualitative und quantitative Bilduntersuchungen herangezogen werden kann. Das Department of Medieval Studies der CEU konzentriert sich in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Institut für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften auf die Sammlung, Katalogisierung, Dokumentation und Analyse zentraleuropäischen Bildmaterials. Die Verfügbarkeit des aufgearbeiteten Bestandes via Internet ist in Vorbereitung.

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Gerhard Jaritz, Herausgeber