Wallfahrt kennt keine Grenzen

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The Saint and the Shrine

The Pilgrims' Goal in the Middle Ages

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What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. What did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet[1].

The answer to Christ's rhetorical question has varied across the centuries. Christians have »gone out into the wilderness,« that is, they have left their familiar locales, their normal social positions and their accustomed activities in favor of the ambiguous, ill defined »liminality«[2] of the pilgrim in order to seek a variety of persons and things. For some, the life of the pilgrim itself was the goal: as the Christian is a stranger and wanderer in this world until he reaches the heavenly kingdom of the next, so were some pilgrims like the early Celtic missionaries to the Continent life-long wanderers whose only goal was to extend their liminality until the end of their journey on earth[3].

For most other Christian pilgrims, pilgrimage was a temporary hiatus in their normal lives. The Christian abandoned his traditional milieu for a limited time in order to travel to a particular place where the power of God broke into mundane existence before returning to his normal role. The great, perhaps archetypical goals of such pilgrims have been the ancient »high holy places« of the Christian world located at the extremities of European experience: Through the centuries, Christians wealthy enough to undertake an expedition of several years' duration have left their normal lives to travel to the great pilgrimage sites of Christendom: to Rome and, above all, to Palestine where they could visit those places sanctified by the drama of sacred history enacted in them: Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and the empty tomb which marks the place of salvation[4].

For the vast majority of Christians, however, the costs and dangers of such a pilgrimage were too great for such an undertaking to be a realistic possibility. Instead, they have sought to escape the structures of their normal existence by finding a place of local liminality – a place not so removed physically from their familiar surroundings and yet sharing with the great pilgrimage sites of Palestine a direct connection with divine power. These places have been regional or local cult sites, some of recent origin, others much more ancient than Christianity[5].

Such sites were not sanctified by the footsteps of Christ or the events of his passion. Their sacrality did not come from where or what they were. It came from what was to be found there – what physical link with the divine sphere remained incarnate in the physical world. What then did these pilgrims go out into the desert to see?

Ad Sanctos

In late antiquity one often went out into the desert to see a holy man – one of the »friends of God« who, like John the Baptist himself, demonstrated his special relationship with God through his radical rejection of the normal social roles and aspirations, his extreme asceticism, the unusual and often violent forms of self-discipline he practiced, and the miraculous cures and exorcisms he performed[6]. Even after his physical death, the power of the holy man remained in the places where he had lived and died. Mere physical death did not end the importance of the holy man and his tomb continued to attract Christians seeking his help[7].

These living links with divine power were not the only objects of the pilgrim's journey nor, after the sixth century, the most common[8]. In the eastern Mediterranean, the object was often a sacred image, an icon. These pictures were far more than simple artistic representations painted by human artists and intended to inspire the faithful or to educate the illiterate. Instead they, like the holy men, enjoyed a special relationship with the divine power. Often they were not painted by human hands but had rather fallen from the heavens. They participated directly in the existence and the being of the person they represented – the image brought the pilgrim into direct visual (that is to say, in traditional understanding of optics, tactile) contact with the person represented. To be in their presence was to look into a window into the other world, and correspondingly to be seen by the person in the other world[9].

In the West, this profound sense of the participation of images in the person depicted was largely lacking, and here the attention of the faithful turned rather to the corporeal remains of holy men:

> *They [the Greeks] place almost all the hope of their credulity in images, but it remains firm that we venerate the saints in their bodies or better in their relics, or even in their clothing, in the ancient tradition of the Fathers*[10].

Thus the eighth century author of the *Libri carolini* explained the difference between the veneration of saints' remains in the West in contrast to that of icons in the East.

These bodies of saints and their relics, that is either actual portions of their bodies or objects which had been in close contact with them *(brandia)*, became, in the West, the central focus of religious devotion[11]. Well into the eighth century, these objects were firmly fixed within the sacred geography of Latin Christendom: the holy men of Europe were venerated after their deaths where they had lived and died[12]. Originally, the objects of veneration had been the early Christian martyrs. Since Roman law had always mandated burials outside the city walls, the suburban tombs of

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the martyrs became the sites of annual, ritual commemoration of the martyrs' passions. The faithful, led by the clergy of the city, would go out into the »wilderness« to celebrate the memory of the martyrs[13]. From the fourth century, increasingly elaborate basilicas were erected over these tombs, and these martyria became the object of pilgrimages. The significance of this transformation of the sacred geography should not be underestimated: In juxtaposition with Roman tradition of the sacred confines of the city, the center for worship and ritual, contrasted with the »unclean« suburban cemeteries ringing the ancient city, the new, Christian geography placed the centers of sacrality outside the city – a reversal of values consistent with the revolution in cultural values which accompanied not simply the Christianization but the ruralization of Western Europe[14].

The Christianization of Northern Europe and the growing political domination of the West by the Franks brought about a transformation in the distribution of these sacred sites. The old Roman towns of Gaul, Spain and Italy had their Roman cemeteries and their martyrs and holy men. The more recently converted areas of the North however were lacking such places. Sacred sites as such existed, but these were sacred only in pagan tradition – the spread of Christianity had been accomplished with relatively little shedding of Christian blood – with the exception of Boniface and his followers the martyrs had been on the other side. Beginning in the middle of the eighth century, the ancient Western tradition that the remains of martyrs were not to be moved about or divided ended as Roman martyrs' remains, with or without the consent of the Pope, began to find their way north[15]. The significance of this distribution would have major implications for the future of Western Christianity. Sacred places could now be created – the holy men of the past could be transferred to new sites with which they had never before been associated, either in their lives or their deaths. The »wilderness« in which Christians could seek »a prophet and more than a prophet« could now be everywhere.

This initial redistribution of saints' relics in northern and eastern Europe was far from random. It was part of a careful program of Carolingian ecclesiastical policy carried out by the leading bishops and abbots of the Frankish Church[16]. Indeed, the control over the distribution of relics was one of the keys to ecclesiastical control over the sacred. Unlike the living holy men of the Near East or the occasional Celtic pilgrim or local wonder-worker such as the Aldebert who ran afoul of Boniface in the mid eighth century[17], dead saints could be controlled by the episcopal hierarchy. Since at least the time of Gregory of Tours the Frankish episcopate had managed the *memoria* of the saints in order to present to the laity the image of sanctity and the ideal relationship between the sacred and the profane that they wished[18]. The cults established following the massive translations in the later eighth and ninth centuries continued this tradition. Carolingian synods sought to limit the proliferation of shrines containing sacred relics not directly under the supervision of approved clergy, to limit the proliferation of new, unauthorized cults, and the authorization by secular and episcopal authorities for the transferral of saints' remains to new locations[19].

Abb. 115 Pilgerweg und -kirche in den französischen Pyrenäen bei Ostabat

Patrons and Protectors

The successful implementation of this program of Christianizing European geography required more than the passive acquiescence of the pope or even active involvement of Frankish bishops. It was not sufficient that sacred space could be moved about – it was also necessary that the faithful accept the particular form in which it was being presented: the relics of the saints, and that they accept the possibility of the mobility of this sacrality along with the mobility of the relics.

The first, the acceptance of relics, presented few problems. The cult of relics was widely accepted across Europe and became, in post-Carolingian Europe, the primary form in which human society came into contact with the divine. Perhaps a major reason for their success was that saints who were either indigenous or who had been brought into a locality could become involved in the same sorts of face to face, personal relationships which characterized feudal society[20]. The understanding of the relationship between the human and divine spheres often tends to mirror that within the human, and in a society which experienced radical decentralization and erosion of public authority this same process took place. Thus, outside of court circles the cult of Christ underwent a relative eclipse. Just as the influence of official public authorities connecting local communities to central institutions was weakened where ever it did not positively cease to exist, so too did the role of Christ as the primary mediator cede to local personalities, his saints[21]. Perhaps great men or educated clerics could deal directly with Christ just as, under other circumstances, they might deal with counts or kings whose influence was immeasurably distant from the reach of ordinary people. The saint, on the other hand, was physically present in his tomb. He could be approached, implored, cajoled, even under certain circumstances threatened, to provide for the needs of the local community[22].

These needs were great and various. Essential to all forms assistance was the miracle working power of the saint. The possibility of miracles, which was a strong aspect of classical religion, had long held a major place in the development of Christianity[23]. Indeed, one could point to the miracles of the New Testament as evidence that the power to heal and to cast out demons was at least as important as predication in Christ's ministry. The variety of miracles, performed by Christ through his saints prior to the thirteenth century varied but little and tended to fill the needs of a rural population with only the most rudimentary alternatives for health care and public assistance: cures, particularly of various sorts of paralysis and blindness predominated[24].

Within the traditional, Augustinian understanding of the relationship between God and creation which dominated medieval religious thought, all nature was at least potentially miraculous, and God's involvement in creation was such that the explanation of events as miraculous was often the preferred explanation rather than a final possibility to be considered only after all other possibilities had been excluded[25].

While miracles could take place anywhere, and at any time, they tended to be performed in physical proximity to the touchstones of divine power that were the saints' remains[26]. The means by which the faithful approached the saints' relics was essentially the same by which their polytheistic ancestors had approached sites of healing: after preparation by prayer, fasting, and the essential pilgrimage from the normal world to

that of the sacred, the pilgrim would attempt to touch the tomb or at least to come as close to the saint's remains as possible. Often he would pass the night near the tomb, the traditional incubational rite of the Ascelapeous cult[27]. A graphic illustration of this tradition is the windows of Trinity Chapel, Canterbury cathedral completed around 1220, which illustrate miracles performed by Thomas Becket[28]. The recipient of the miracle is often depicted asleep near the saint's shrine, and in one, the saint himself is shown emerging in the night from the end of the shrine to appear in a vision to a monk[29]. As in the ancient cult, the cure would often be effected by the saint who would appear to the pilgrim in a vision, taking the form of the iconographic representation of the saint presented in the reliquary, and effect a cure. Thus, for example, in case of Saint Foy (Fides) of Conques, the saint often appears in the form depicted in her reliquary, the »Majesty of St. Foy«, one of the masterpieces of medieval metal work[30]. (Farbtafel XV)

As important as these cures were, however, they provided only one aspect of the significance of the saints in society. In addition, saints performed miracles in order to assist and to protect their devotees. They found lost object and strayed livestock, they helped their »friends« in times of financial need, and they protected them from their enemies. To this latter end they performed a wide variety of »negative« miracles, chastising and occasionally even killing those who had mistreated them or their supporters[31].

Such miracles, be they cures or assistance, were only the most public part of the saints' role in medieval society. These miracles served to advertise the virtues and importance of the saints, and thus to increase the number of pilgrims to their shrines. More importantly, by their physical presence, saints provided a primary means of social integration, identity, protection and economic support for the communities in which they were found. The religious communities living around the tomb of a saint were identified and united primarily by their attachment to the saint himself. They, along with the peasants working the church lands, made up the »family« of the saint, a wide and often powerful family grouped under the protection of the saint. As in a lay family or episcopal family the head was expected to provide protection and assistance to the members. Protection was both of the supernatural variety – imminent justice visited upon enemies of the community – and more subtle forms of protection such as providing an important focus of public opinion which could be brought to bear on opponents[32].

The protection accorded the family of the saint was not limited to physical or legal defense of rights: the saint assured the prosperity of the community both by guaranteeing the fruitfulness of the land (which received his benediction during periodic processions which brought the remains of the saint to the fields) and by assuring the prosperity of the community by attracting pilgrims, an important source of income, to the area[33].

Mobility of the saints

For all of these needs, an active cult of the saint was essential. And as we have seen, the physical presence of the saint was important to form the basis of an active cult. As a result, the effort to develop a cult to a saint normally required, sooner or later, the establishment in the cult site of the saint's remains. One can detect, as it were, a tendency to concretize the cult of a saint in his physical remains. Whether or not the possession of the saint's relics had been at the origin of the cult, in time the veneration of a saint ultimately would produce the firm belief that the saint was physically present in the monastery or church.

A prime example of this tendency to concretize the cult in a relic is the evolution of the cult of Mary Magdalene at Vézelay in Burgundy. The Mary Magdalene venerated in the West was a composite saint who was at once the penitent sinner who anointed Christ's feet (Luke viii: 36–50); Mary, the sister of Martha (Luke x: 38–42); Mary, the sister of Lazarus (John xi: 1–45) etc. The origins of her cult in the West are obscure, although as early as 1022 Bishop Erminfroi of Verdun had dedicated a church to her. Within a few years, the *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium* recorded that a monk had brought the remains of the Magdalene to the West from Jerusalem[34], and by 1050 a papal bull acknowledged that the body of Mary Magdalene was to be found in Vézelay.

Explaining exactly how the saint might have come to be in the particular location could be a problem since saints were notorious for their unwillingness to have their remains transferred from their place of burial to new shrines: the hagiography of the early Middle Ages is filled with stories of relics which miraculously became so heavy when attempts were made to transport them that they were ultimately left in place[35]. Likewise, attempts to move saints about met with very human obstacles: the local communities which had looked to the saint buried in their midst was naturally unwilling to see him taken from them. Moreover, in an age in which spurious relics circulated widely, other communities were naturally suspicious of relics acquired from elsewhere – if the original community in which the saint had been found was so willing to give him up, could he really be a powerful protector? If he had allowed himself to be taken from the other community, what sort of protector could he be?

The meditation on the benefits derived by a particular region from the presence of a particular protector, animated both by the firm conviction of the saint's physical and spiritual presence as well as by an awareness of competing claims on the remains of important saints, led to the elaboration of various explanations of how saints who had lived and died in distant areas had come to rest in local churches. For some, such as St. James of Compostella, the presence of the saints' body was explained by a miraculous event: after death the Saint was carried by supernatural power to his new resting place. Of others, it was explained that the saint had miraculously made manifest his intention of being transferred to a new location, often because he was not receiving the proper veneration in the place of his original interment. In this case, the saint was said to have been translated, with or without the consent of the proper ecclesiastical and civil authorities at the express desire of the saint himself[36]. In all of the accounts of these translations, the tension between the two communities and the hesitations about the propriety of moving the saint at all, is made clear in the difficulties encountered in the transfer and in elaborate justifications often made by the perpetrators to explain by what right they could presume to move the saint's remains.

In the most extreme of these accounts, the transfer was often presented as a theft, or more aptly as a kidnapping, which, like the contemporary practice of bride stealing, was carried out with the active assistance of the »victim«[37]. This was the case of Mary Magdalene mentioned above as

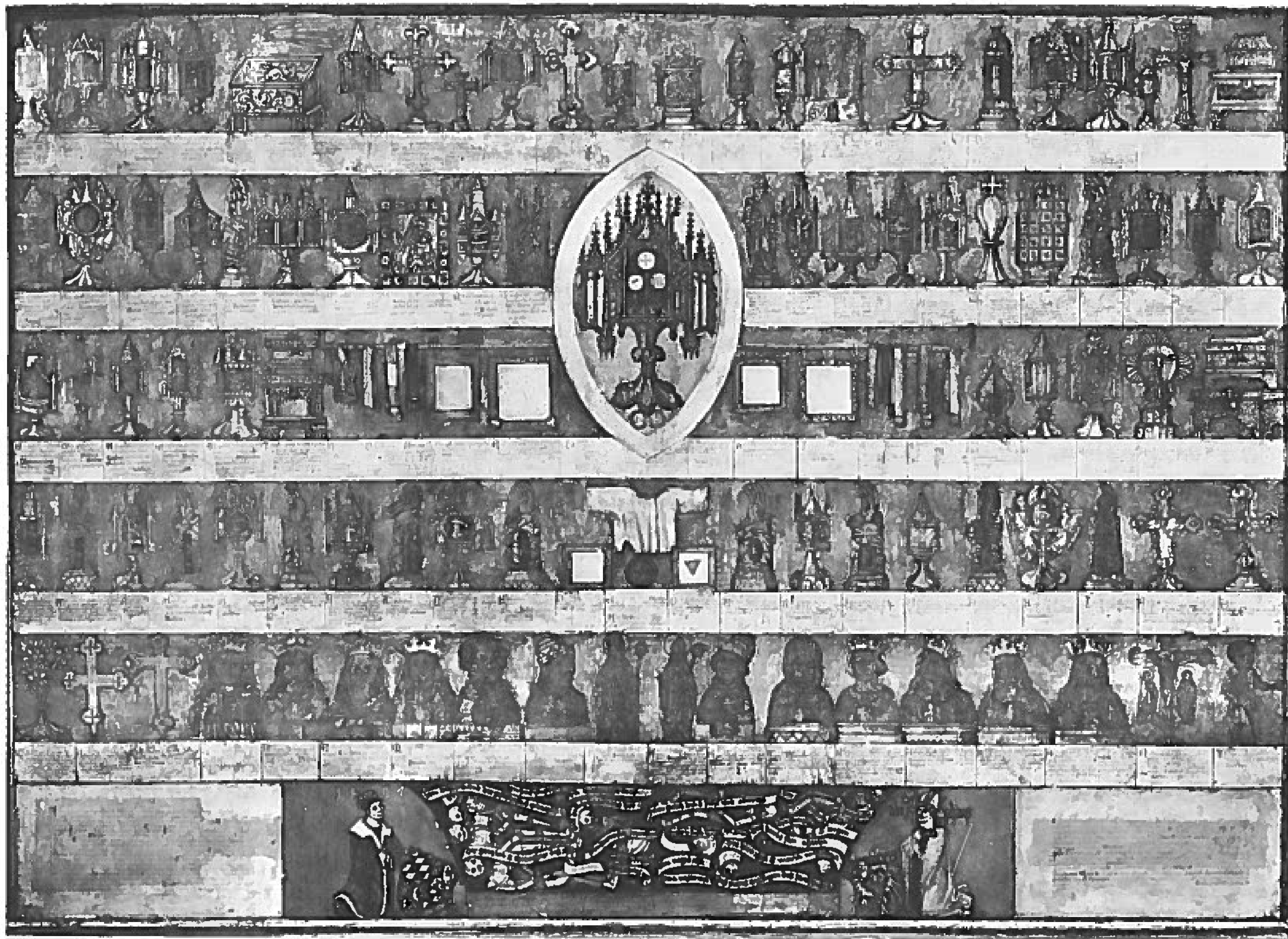


Abb. 116 Andechser Heiltumsschatz. Tempera auf Fichtenholz, teilweise Pergament, 1497. München, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum

well as that of St. Fides of Conques, St. Benedict at Fleury, and numerous other saints both famous and obscure across Europe[38]. In the versions of the translation narrative written within or for the institution claiming to possess the saint's remains, one usually hears that the saint had appeared to a holy member of the community, complained that he or she was not presently receiving adequate veneration, and asked to be transferred to a new, proper community. After this vision was made known to the community, two or more members were sent on the mission of obtaining the saint's body. This task was usually accomplished in spite of the resistance on the part of the local community jealous of its holy patron and eager to prevent the theft. Usually, the saint's miraculous intervention is instrumental in effecting the successful accomplishment of the transfer. As the thieves and their new saint approach their community, they are met by their superior and the community who accompany them into the monastery in a joyful procession reminiscent of the imperial *adventus* of late antiquity[39].

Although an extreme form of relic acquisition, these theft accounts nevertheless indicate the importance of the acquisition of major relics to the religious communities of western Europe. Their presence was essential to the prosperity of the monasteries and churches looking to them for identity and protection, just as they were essential also to the pilgrims who sought from the saints the help that they could obtain nowhere else[40]. In the course of the later eleventh and twelfth centuries, however, the close relationship between the physical proximity of saints and the strength of their cults began to wane. This change would have profound effects on the spiritual geography of western Europe.

Transformation of the Pilgrim's Goal

In general, once can detect three forms of transformations in the nature of local pilgrimage sites. The first was caused by the enormous increase in the number and diffusion of corporeal relics of biblical and patristic saints' remains as a result of the increased pilgrimage and crusade traffic to Palestine[41]. In particular, after the aberrant Fourth Crusade captured and sacked Constantinople in 1215, a vast flood of Byzantine relics spilled into the West, making available to Churches across Europe relics of the early martyrs and saints of the old and new testaments[42]. To cite but one example, pilgrims needed no longer travel to Compostella to find St. James – he was also physically present in Namur, Paris, and Troyes, to name but a few communities[43]. As a result the distinction between local pilgrimages and international pilgrimages became less sharply pronounced. The distinction was lessened still further by the increasing practice of indulgences and in particular the granting of indulgences traditionally reserved for the great pilgrimages for participation in local pilgrimages.

Second, while in the tenth and eleventh centuries the veneration of the faithful was directed primarily to local protectors, either identified in their life times with the region or brought there after their deaths, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the cults of universal saints began to make serious inroads into local veneration. This is not to say that the transformation was one from a physical to an immaterial focus: the actual process was rather a transformation of the physical. First, across Southern Europe the cult of the Virgin began to compete seriously with the cult of local thaumaturges[44]. Often, as in the south of France, these »new« cults were focused on an image, usually a statue. The romanesque virgins of Targasonne and Angoustrine, to mention but two, closely resemble the majesty of St. Fides[45]. All are seated female figures, but the former differ from the latter in that they hold the Christ Child and that they contain no relics. The cult of the eucharist, greatly strengthened after Lateran IV, likewise focused on a different form of physical object, the consecrated host which had been affirmed in the ninth and again in the eleventh centuries as the »body of Christ, not only in figure but in truth«[46]. The development of the cult of Mary and that of Christ in the Eucharist made the first serious inroads into the tradition of the quasi-necessity of corporeal remains as cult centers.

Whether as cause or effect of these transformations in the availability and nature of cult objects, historians have detected from the late eleventh century a shift in popular piety away from strictly local protectors, thaumaturges and patrons to a wider and more individualistic form of veneration[47]. The wider choices as well as the wider horizons of Europe's population made the selection of patron increasingly a question of individual choice. The local pilgrimages, the search for that sacred wilderness in which the Christian could come into contact with the divine presence did not decrease in importance, but once more, the answer to the question, »What did you go out into the wilderness to see?« was again open.

Abb. 117 Gnadenbild von le Puy, Frankreich. Kopie von 1853 nach der verbrannten mittelalterlichen Statue, gekrönt 1856 ▷

Notes

1 Luke 7, 24–26.

2 On the »liminality« of the pilgrim see in particular the work of Victor Turner, *Pilgrimages as Social Processes,* in: Dramas, Fields and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society, Ithica N. Y. 1974, 166–230; V. Turner, *Liminality and Communitas,* in: The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure, Chicago 1969, 94–130; V. and E. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture,* Oxford 1978.

3 On the Irish pilgrims on the continent see most recently: Heinz Löwe, ed. *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter,* Stuttgart 1981; still important are: L. Gougaud, *Christianity in Celtic Lands,* London 1932; and W. Levison, *Die Iren und die fränkische Kirche,* in: Aus rheinischer und fränkischer Frühzeit, Düsseldorf 1948, 247–263.

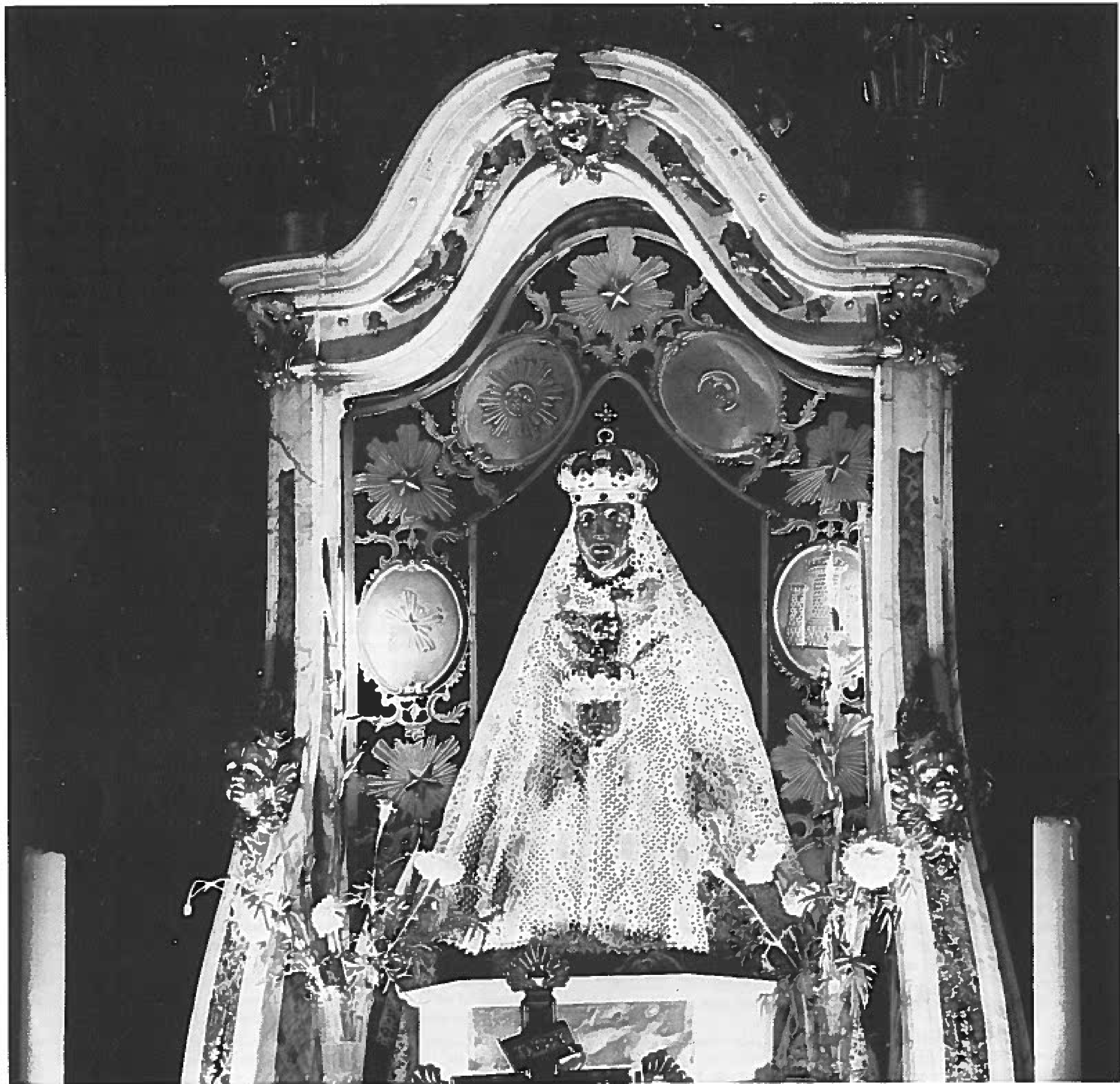
4 One should note a major difference between the pilgrimages to the great pilgrimage sites and those to local sites: the pilgrims to the great sites (Rome, Jerusalem, Compostela) apparently were not seeking miracles. See Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind. Theory, Record and Event 1000–1215,* Philadelphia 1982, 118–119.

5 The primary focus of this paper will be on local prilgrimage sites and the role of their cult objects rather than on the great pilgrimage sites treated by other scholars in this volume.

6 On holy men in late antiquity see the classic study by Peter Brown, *The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity,* in: P. Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity,* Berkeley 1982, 103–152, as well as P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints. Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity,* Chicago 1981.

7 Peter Brown reminds us that ». . . the hillsides on which the stylites purched their columns would be ominously ringed by brand new, empty MARTYRIA, waiting to receive their guaranteed holy occupants . . .« in: *Eastern and Western Christendom in Late Antiquity. A Parting of the Ways,* in: Brown, *Society* (cit. 6) 185.

8 On Icons see in general Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Christian Doctrine, vol. 2, The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600–1700),* Chicago 1974, chapter 3, Images of the Invisible, 91–145; E. Kitzinger, *The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm,* in: Dumbarton Oaks Papers, vol. 8, 1954, 83–150; Peter Brown, *A Dark Age Cri-*



sis. Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy, in: Brown, *Society* (cit. 6) 251–301.

9 On the »face-to-face« encounter possible through the icon see Brown, *A Dark Age Crisis,* in: Brown, Society (cit. 6) 272.

10 Libri Carolini III, 16, MGH Concilia II, supplement, 138.

11 The bibliography on relics and relic cults has grown enormously in the past five years. In general, see Martin Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliquienkultes,* in: Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, vol. 33, Turnhout 1979; H. Fichtenau, *Zum Reliquienwesen im früheren Mittelalter,* in: Beiträge zur Mediävistik. Ausgewählte Aufsätze, vol. 1, Stuttgart 1975, 108–144; Peter Brown, *Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours,* in: Brown, *Society* (cit. 6) 222–250.

12 On the traditional reluctance on the part of western churchmen to divide the remains of saints see J. M. McCulloh, *The Cult of Relics in the Letters and 'Dialogues' of Pope Gregory the Great. A Lexicographical Study,* in: Traditio, vol. 32, 1976, 145–184.

13 See in general B. Kötting, *Der frühchristliche Reliquienkult und die Bestattung im Kirchengebäude,* Köln–Opladen 1965; B. de Gaiffier, *Réflections sur les origines du culte des martyrs,* in: La Maison-Dieu, vol. 52, 1947, 19–43.

14 Heinzelmann (cit. 11) 26–27; A. Grabar, *Martyrium. Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique,* 2 vols., Paris 1946; J.-C. Picard, *Espace urbain et sépultures épiscopales à Auxerre,* in: Revue d'histoire de l'Eglise de France, vol. 62, 1976, 205–222 (= Actes du colloque de Nanterre sur la christianisation des pays entre Loire et Rhin, IVe–VIIe siècle).

15 On translations into Northern Europe in the Early Middle Ages see K. Honselmann, *Reliquientranslationen nach Sachsen,* in: Das Erste Jahrtausend, vol. 1, Düsseldorf 1962, 159–193; W. Hotzelt, *Translationen von Märtyrerreliquien aus Rom nach Bayern im 8. Jahrhundert,* in: Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige, vol. 53, 1935, 286–343; W. Hotzelt, *Translationen von Märtyrerleibern aus Rom ins westliche Frankenreich im 8. Jahrhundert,* in: Archiv für Elsässische Kirchengeschichte, vol. 13, 1938, 1–52; W. Hotzelt, *Translationen römischer Reliquien ins Elsaß im 9. Jahrhundert,* in: Archiv für Elsässische Kirchengeschichte, vol. 16, 1943, 1–18; H. L. Mikoletzky, *Sinn und Art der Heiligung im frühen Mittelalter,* in: Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, vol. 59, 1949, 183–122; K. Hauck, *Die fränkisch-deutsche Monarchie und der Weserraum,* in: Kunst und Kultur im Weserraum 800–1600, Corvey 1966, 97–121.

16 See Nicole Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit,* Paris 1975, 49–70, 84–86; P. Geary, *Furta Sacra. Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages,* Princeton 1978, 31–50.

17 P. Geary, *The Ninth Century Relic Trade – A Response to Popular Piety?* in: Religion and the People: 800–1700, ed. J. Obelkevich, Chapel Hill N. C. 1979, 10–12.

18 Brown, *Relics and Social Status,* in: Brown, *Society* (cit. 6) 245–249.

19 Geary (cit. 16) 40–50; Herrmann-Mascard (cit. 16) 84–85.

20 On the role of relics in personal interactions, see R. Michalowski, *Le don d'amitié dans la société carolingienne et les 'Translationes sanctorum',* in: Hagiographie cultures et sociétés IVe–XIIe siècles, Actes du colloque organisé à Nanterre et à Paris 2–5 mai 1979, Paris 1981, 339–416.

21 On the cult of Christ in the Carolingian period and its relationship with the cult of the emperor, see C. Heitz, *Recherches sur les rapports entre architecture et liturgie à l'époque carolingienne,* Paris 1963.

22 P. Geary, *La coercition des saints dans la pratique religieuse médiévale,* in: La culture populaire au moyen âge, ed. P. Boglioni, Montreal 1978, 147–161.

23 On the theory of miracles in antiquity and the middle ages see Ward (cit. 4) 1–19.

24 A variety of scholars have attempted to examine the physiological aspects of disease through collections of miracle stories. See in particular R. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims. Popular Beliefs in Medieval England,* London 1977; M. Rouche, *Miracles, maladies et psychologie de la foi à l'époque carolingienne en France,* in: Hagiographie cultures et sociétés, 319–337.

25 Ward (cit. 4) 31.

26 On the rythm of miracles within a specific region see P. A. Sigal, *Maladie, pèlerinage et guérison au XIIe siècle. Les miracles de saint Gibrien à Reims,* in: Annales, E.S.C., vol. 24, 1969, 1522–1539. For other analyses of the process of cures see Ward's examinations of eleventh and twelfth century miracle collections, Ward (cit. 4) 33–109.

27 On the traditional Cults of antiquity see most recently Lionel Rothkrug, *The Cult of Relics in Antiquity,* in: World Spirituality. An encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest, vol. I, European Archaic Spirituality, ed. Charles Long, New York (in press).

28 See Ward (cit. 4) 88–109.

29 Ward (cit. 4) 90–92.

30 On Saint Foy see Geary (cit. 16) 169–174; Ward (cit. 4) 36–42.

31 P. A. Sigal, *Un aspect du culte des saints. Le châtiment divin aux XIe et XIIe siècles d'après la littérature hagiographique du Midi de la France,* in: La religion populaire en Languedoc du XIIe siècle à la moitié du XIVe siècle, Toulouse 1976, 39–59 (= Cahiers de Fanjeaux, vol. 11).

32 Geary (cit. 22); Geary, *L'humiliation des saints,* in: Annales E.S.C., vol. 51, 1979, 27–42.

33 An example of the financial importance attached to the presence of important relics appears in the protracted dispute between the Monastery of St. Eloi of Noyon and the cathedral of that city concerning which institution possessed the remains of the saint. In the thirteenth century the bishop had excommunicated anyone who made a pilgrimage to the monastery or made offerings there to St. Eloi. The monks claimed 3000 marks damages for their loss of revenues. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS. Lat. 13777, fol. 7v.

34 Geary (cit. 16) 89–95, with chronological correction by E. van Mingroot, *Kritisch onderzoek omtrent de datering van de Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium,* in: Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire, vol. 53, 1975, 330–331.

35 On Translationes see Heinzelmann (cit. 11) 46–77.

36 Geary (cit. 16) 143–145; Heinzelmann (cit. 11) 33–42.

37 Geary (cit. 16) 153–154. Bride stealing, one of the oldest forms of Germanic marriage, was still common in the ninth and tenth centuries. As in traditional European societies today, this form of ritual kidnapping could function in a variety of ways: it could make possible a marriage opposed by the family of the wife (since after the fact the woman's virtue was lost and her chances of another marriage were nil) but it could also be a way for families to avoid the scandal of a voluntary marriage considered too far below the woman's status. This latter aspect might be the most appropriate point of comparision with the theft of saints. See Heinrich Brunner, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte,* vol. I, Berlin 1906[3], 94–96.

38 Geary (cit. 16).

39 Heinzelmann (cit. 11) 66–77; Brown, *Cult* (cit. 6) 99–100; Brown, *Relics and Social Status,* in: Brown, *Society* (cit. 6) 247–249; S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity,* Berkeley 1981.

40 On the relationship between patrons living and dead and their communities see in particular Otto Gerhard Oexle, *Die Gegenwart der Toten,* in: Death in the Middle Ages, ed. H. Braet and W. Verbeke, Louvain 1983, 19–77.

41 In general see J. Sumption, *Pilgrimage. An Image of Mediaeval Religion,* London 1975, 114–145.

42 See the mass of data on the relics and sacred images acquired by the West as a result of the crusade collected in the nineteenth century by E. Riant, *Exuviae sacrae Constantinopolitanae,* 3 vols., Geneva 1877–98.

43 P. Geary, *Saint Helen of Athyra and the Cathedral of Troyes in the Thirteenth Century,* in: The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, vol. 7, 1977, 155–156.

44 On images of the Virgin see I. Forsyth, *Throne of Wisdom*, Princeton 1972; On the cults of the Virgin see Ward (cit. 4) Chapter 8, 132–165.

45 On these two statues, both stolen in November, 1975, see La religion populaire en Languedoc (cit. 31) 446.

46 See Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol. 3, The Growth of Medieval Theology (600–1300)*, Chicago 1978, 184–204; R. W. Southern, *Lanfranc of Bec and Berengar of Tours*, in: Studies in Medieval History Presented to Frederick Maurice Powicke, ed. R. W. Hunt et al., Oxford 1948, 27–48.

47 G. Zimmermann, *Patrozinienwahl und Frömmigkeitswandel im Mittelalter, dargestellt an Beispielen aus dem alten Bistum Würzburg*, in: Würzburger Diözesan-Geschichtsblätter, 1958/59.

Zusammenfassung

Der Heilige und der Reliquienschrein: das Ziel des Pilgers im Mittelalter

Im westlichen Abendland hatte die überwältigende Mehrheit aller lokalen Wallfahrten vom 8. bis zum Ende des 12. Jahrhunderts die leiblichen Überreste eines Heiligen zum Ziel. Es gab hier zu diesem Kultobjekttyp, der auch sonst in der Christenheit bekannt und geschätzt war, zunächst praktisch kaum eine Alternative. Er war das Ergebnis karolingischer Kirchenpolitik, unter der sich um die Reliquien von Heiligen – quer durch ganz Europa verbreitet – Kultzentren entwickelt hatten.

Solche heiligen Objekte waren vom Standpunkt einer oberen Hierarchieebene aus besonders wünschenswert – im Gegensatz zu lebenden heiligen Personen oder anderen heiligen Dingen (Ikonen, sonstige Bilder und ähnliches) –, denn der Zugang zu ihnen und die Formen der Verehrung konnten wirksam kontrolliert werden. Umgekehrt befriedigten sie vom Standpunkt des Volkes aus gesehen auf hervorragende Weise – besonders nach dem Niedergang des Karolingischen Reiches – die Bedürfnisse einer Gesellschaft, die an einen persönlichen, direkten Kontakt zu Autoritätspersonen gewöhnt war.

Die Rolle dieser Heiligen war zweifach: Einmal heilten sie Krankheiten – als thaumaturgoi – und bewirkten Wunder, aber noch wichtiger war ihre Aufgabe als Beschützer und Wächter für die Verehrung in ihren örtlichen Gemeinden. Ihre Gegenwart ermöglichte es dem Volk, durch direkten Berührungskontakt mit dem göttlichen Bereich in Verbindung zu treten. Und bei Wallfahrten, auch wenn sie nur über wenige Kilometer Entfernung gingen, überschritten Männer und Frauen die Grenzen ihres normalen Alltagsbereiches und ihrer engen sozialen Umwelt.

Im Verlauf des 12. Jahrhunderts wurde die einem Monopol gleichkommende Stellung der Reliquien örtlicher Heiliger als Zentrum volkstümlicher Wallfahrten untergraben. Gründe waren einmal der zunehmende Import von Reliquien biblischer und frühchristlicher Heiliger im Gefolge von Pilgerfahrten und Kreuzzügen ins Heilige Land, dann das Anwachsen des Marienkultes um besondere Kultbilder und die Verehrung von Christus in der Eucharistie.

Es wuchs aber auch die Freiheit, mit der der einzelne Mensch aus persönlicher Verehrung und nicht nach geographischer Nähe seinen eigenen Schutzheiligen wählte.

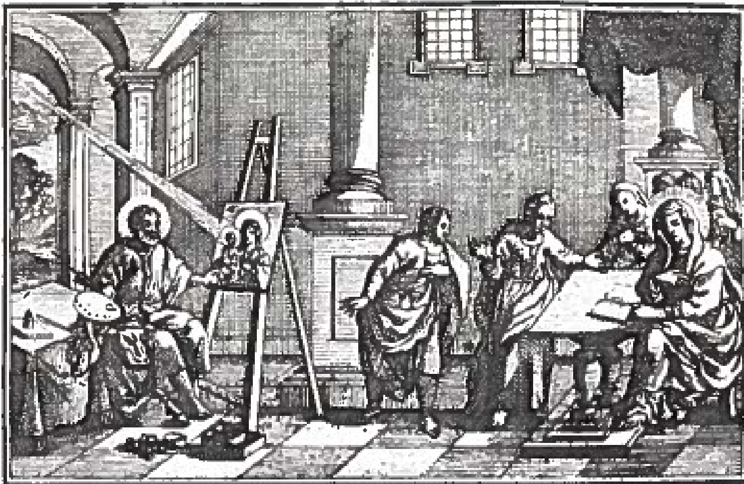
Wahres Abbild

Bildwallfahrt und Gnadenbildkopie

Hans Dünninger

Wallfahrt und Gnadenbild werden meist in einem Atemzug genannt. Nahezu zwangsläufig verbindet sich heute der Gedanke an einen Wallfahrtsort mit der Vorstellung, daß dort ein Gnadenbild besondere Verehrung genieße[1]. Im marianischen Bereich ist dies in der Tat der Fall, und um Marienkirchen und -kapellen handelt es sich beim weitaus überwiegenden Teil aller christlichen Wallfahrtsstätten. Merkwürdigerweise gehören jedoch die Gnadenbilder der ältesten und berühmtesten Wallfahrtsorte Europas – als Beispiele für den deutschen Sprachraum seien genannt: Aachen[2], Altötting[3] und Einsiedeln[4] – der Gotik an, obwohl die Wallfahrt dorthin als älter gilt. Diese Diskrepanz sucht man dadurch zu überbrücken, daß man annimmt, das ursprüngliche Gnadenbild sei einer Zerstörung zum Opfer gefallen oder habe in späterer Zeit aus ästhetischen Gründen einer moderneren Figur Platz gemacht. Dagegen aber scheint die Legende zu sprechen, und zwar generell wie auch speziell: zum einen gehört es zu den unverzichtbaren Merkmalen eines Gnadenbildes, daß es sich nicht von der Stätte der ursprünglichen Verehrung wegnehmen läßt – es wird entweder so schwer, daß man es nicht abtransportieren kann, oder es wandert nächtlicherweile an seinen früheren Platz zurück – und daß es allen Zerstörungsversuchen trotzt – Brände überdauert, im Wasser nicht untergeht usw. –; zum anderen weisen gerade diese frühesten marianischen Wallfahrtsorte Mitteleuropas keine Sage auf, die das Marienbild zum Ausgangspunkt des Kultes macht[5].

Abb. 118 Der hl. Lukas malt die Madonna. Kupferstich aus Xaver Rotter: Gnad und Wunder volle Brosamen, So von der Königlichen Taffel der Herrscherin des Himmels, und Erden MARIAE Durch Würckung ihrer glorreichen, von dem Heil. Luca auf einem cypreßinen Tisch gemahlten, auf dem Clarenberg zu Czenstochau . . . verwahrten Bildnuß . . . abgefallen, Breslau 1750.



Über die wenigen romanischen Madonnen aber, die den Zeitensturm überstanden haben, gibt es weder Sagen noch historische Nachrichten, die mit Sicherheit erkennen lassen, daß sie jemals Kultobjekt einer Wallfahrt waren. Dies schließt allerdings nicht aus, daß man in der Neuzeit versucht haben mag, sie zu solchen hochzustilisieren. Jene wunderbaren Eigenschaften, wie sie dem Altarsakrament, den Reliquien und auch den hochheiligen Ikonen der Ostkirche schon sehr früh zugestanden wurden: Unvernichtbarkeit, »Rasten«, »Wandern«, (Schwitzen) und Bluten, kennt man bei Heiligenfiguren und -bildern des Westens erst seit dem Hochmittelalter[6]. Es hängt dies zum Teil wohl damit zusammen, daß es im Bereich der römischen Kirche bis dahin zu keinem größeren Bildersturm gekommen war; sicher aber auch damit, daß die Bildkulte, wie sie auch das frühe Mittelalter gekannt zu haben scheint, nebeneinander existieren konnten, ohne sich gegenseitig den Rang abzulaufen. Doch die übergroße Zahl der mit Kerzenopfer und Votivgaben verehrten Heiligenbilder in den spätmittelalterlichen Kirchen[7] ließ offenbar eine Art Konkurrenzkampf aufkommen. Die damit verbundenen Umstände waren es, die zunächst die Hussiten, dann aber auch die Reformierten zu Bilderstürmern werden ließ. Wenn auch Luther und seine Anhänger den Bildern der Heiligen mehr Verständnis entgegenbrachten, so teilten sie doch mit den Kalvinisten und Zwinglianern das Mißtrauen gegen einen allzu leichtfertigen Wunderglauben und die wuchernde Legendenbildung[8]. Einig waren sich zudem alle Reformatoren im Kampf gegen die Nebenkirchen und Feldkapellen und das »Auslaufen« dorthin, weil dies ihrem Verständnis des christlichen Kultes und der Gemeinde zuwiderlief[9].

Das uns geläufige Bild der Wallfahrtsstätte in heimischer Landschaft – »Droben stehet die Kapelle, schauet still ins Tal hinab . . .« – mit dem darin verehrten Gnadenbild wurde durch die Gegenreformation und im Zeitalter des Barock geprägt. Die Voraussetzungen dazu hatte allerdings bereits das ausgehende Mittelalter geschaffen. Daß sich die Wallfahrt nicht mehr ausschließlich ferngelegenen Zielen zuzuwenden brauchte, war einerseits durch die veränderte Buß- und Ablaßpraxis, anderseits durch die Mystik möglich geworden: Die Ablaß-Kommutationen und die Ablässe *ad instar* ließen eine verhältnismäßig kurze fromme Reise genauso verdienstlich erscheinen wie das Aufsuchen ferner Pilgerziele[10], so daß an heimischen Stätten dieselben Gnaden erworben werden konnten wie dort; durch »geistliche Wallfahrten«, d. h. meditatives Versenken