The Iconography of the Tympanum of the Temptation of Christ at The Cloisters

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A carved Romanesque tympanum and lintel (Figure 1) in the Cloisters Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art are said to have come from Errondo (also known as Raondo), a small community that lies in ruins nineteen kilometers southeast of Pamplona, Spain, near the village of Unciti. In 1944 José Gudiol attributed these two reliefs to the Cabestany Master, an anonymous sculptor associated with a group of works in Languedoc, Roussillon, Catalonia, and Tuscany.1 Discussion of the “Errondo” carvings has focused entirely upon their relationship to the oeuvre of this master, whose enigmatic career Léon Pressouyre has convincingly placed within the third quarter of the twelfth century.2 I would like for the moment to ignore the attribution and chronology of these sculptures and concentrate on the iconography of the tympanum.

It must first be noted, however, that the present arrangement of the tympanum and lintel as a single architectural unit is probably incorrect. Their different dimensions seem to suggest that these sculptures are not from the same portal. The lintel (62 × 198 cm.), approximately three-quarters the height of the tympanum (79 × 160 cm.), is altogether too large for the tympanum, which rests unevenly along its upper edge. The lintel is also much too long for the tympanum, especially if one takes into account that no voussoirs, which would have required the added length of the lintel, have been found at Errondo. Furthermore, the color of the stone differs: the lintel is gold brown, the tympanum almost gray. The stone evidently came from different quarries, although only a petrographic analysis could confirm this.

Gudiol had traced the carvings to Errondo on the basis of an old photograph that showed only the lintel in situ embedded in the wall of a mill. Fr. Fernando de Mendoza first published this photograph in 1924 as an illustration to his article describing in some detail his discovery of the lintel and the site of Errondo, but he made no mention of a tympanum. He suggested that the lintel may have come from the chapel of the fortress of Errondo, of which only a section of wall remains.3 Having recently examined the site, now reduced to a barren plowed field around the wall of the fortress, I found it impossible to determine the ground plan of either the fortress or a chapel. The stone debris scattered over the hills beyond the immediate site, which occasionally defines rectangular plots, seems to be the vestige of the community. Gudiol, who was apparently unaware of Mendoza’s account, was familiar with the photograph of the lintel from its reproduction in a later publication, which again discussed only the lintel and did not refer to a tympanum.4 The lintel disappeared from Errondo after 1924; in 1941 it turned up combined with the tympanum in the possession of a dealer.

in New York. Neither the site nor the disposition of the tympanum at the time of its recovery has ever been reported, and to the present day the original context of the work remains unknown. The Cloisters tympanum and lintel, then, may have even belonged to different monuments. The iconography of the lintel, which is indigenous to northeastern Spain, is not thematically related to that of the tympanum and will not be considered further, here.

The sequence of events on the tympanum proceeds from right to left, in contrast to the conventional order in narrative relief sculpture. The alternation of three demons with three large cross-nimbed figures of Christ standing on an animal and holding a book in his left hand in Buenos Aires, 1951) pl. xiv. The Metropolitan Museum purchased the carvings in 1965.

5. It has not been possible to trace the history of the carvings between the date of the publication of the lintel in situ and the date of its arrival in New York. In 1941, James Montillor, Inc. owned the sculptures and sold them a year later to Joseph Brummer, who in turn auctioned them in 1949: Joseph Brummer Collection III, sale, Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, June 9, 1949, p. 122, no. 523. In 1951, the sculptures, which then belonged to Paula de Koenigsberg, were exhibited in Buenos Aires: P. de Koenigsberg, Exposición de obras maestras: siglos XII al XVII, exhibition catalogue (Buenos Aires, 1951) pl. xiv.

hand illustrates the Temptation of Christ (Matt. 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13). On the left side Christ appears a fourth time, but with two small winged figures, the ministering angels who attended him immediately following his temptation (Matt. 4:11, Mark 1:13). The artist has carved the three encounters between Christ and Satan, but has given an identifying prop for only the first trial—the request to transform stones into bread—by rendering the demon with stone in hand (Figure 2). Although this episode is common to both Luke and Matthew, the latter is probably the source here, since it is the only account that both describes three distinct temptations and includes the Ministry of the Angels. The angel to Christ’s right bears a platter of fish, while Christ holds a round loaf of bread offered by the angel to his left (Figure 3). Neither scripture nor any commentary to my knowledge names the objects borne in service to Christ.

The Temptation cycle of the Cloisters tympanum is interesting not simply because it is an example of a narrative that occurs infrequently in Romanesque sculpture, but because it is a unique variation of iconographic conventions established in wall painting and manuscript illumination as well as in sculpture. The components of the Cloisters cycle—the series of three confrontations between Christ and Satan, the descriptive detail of the stone, the completion of the cycle with the ministry of angels who bring food to the victor, and the image of Christ treading upon a beast—derive from several distinct traditions within the pictorial reper-

7. Gudiol Ricart, "Los relieves de la portada de Errundo," p. 10 mistook the angels for children and wrongly identified the scene as the Miracle of Loaves and Fishes.

8. In 1931, André Wilmart inventoried European libraries for extant manuscripts of the Enarrationes. Of the 968 manuscripts surveyed, he judged 147 to be from the twelfth century, 61 from the eleventh century, 24 from the tenth century, 37 from the thirteenth century and 29 from the fourteenth century: A. Wilmart, "La tradition des grands ouvrages de Saint Augustine," Miscellanea Augustiniana II (Rome, 1991) pp. 295-315. The preface to the Enarrationes in the Corpus Christianorum, series Latina 98 (Turnhout, 1965) p. vi, note 4, lists 28 manuscripts not included in Wilmart’s survey: 6 from the twelfth century, 5 from the eleventh century, 5 from the ninth century and earlier, 3 from the thirteenth century, and 3 from the fourteenth century. Both inventories overlooked a late twelfth-century manuscript in the Cathedral of Burgo de Osma (Ms. 76) that can perhaps be localized to the abbey of Fitero in Navarre, not far from Pamplona (L’art roman, exhibition catalogue [Barcelona, 1961] p. 97, no. 161). The authors of these surveys were not concerned with manuscripts recorded in the holdings of medieval scriptoria, but now no longer extant. A catalogue of the library of Santa Maria de Só de Urgell, drawn up in 1148, mentions Augustine’s books of the expositions on the psalms (P. Pujol i Tubau, "De la cultura catalana mig-eval: una biblioteca dels temps romànics," Estudis Universitarius Catalans 7 (1913) pp. 1-3, and esp. 5 f.).

9. Frescoes: Sant’Angelo in Formis, north wall of nave (1070s or 1080s); St-Aignan at Brinay-sur-Cher, south wall of choir (mid-twelfth century), includes only two episodes of the Temptation plus the Ministry of the Angels; section from San Baudelio de Berlanga, Soria province (third or fourth decade of the twelfth century) now at The Cloisters. A fresco of the Temptation, now nearly completely destroyed, once existed in the chapter house of the monastery in Sigena, Huesca province (first quarter thirteenth century). Mosaics: San Marco’s in Venice, vault of the south crossing (late twelfth or thirteenth century); Cathedral of Monreale, back wall of south transept (1180s).
temptations are strung out horizontally or arranged in a more complex structure, as at Beaulieu, it is the scenic element that identifies the episode, orders the events, and thus provides the full narrative context of the image.

In abbreviated versions, one temptation stands for the entire series. This type appears in several capitals, where one face displays a single confrontation between Christ and Satan, usually the episode of the stones, and the side adjacent to the main scene may occasionally contain an attending angel. The few abbreviated representations in Western manuscripts also focus prima-


11. In the cloister of Moissac, in the cloister of San Pedro el
Viejo in Huesca, the capital group of the trumeau of the Puerta de la Gloria at Santiago de Compostela, and a French capital of unknown provenance in the Metropolitan Museum (21.I.2). All but the Huesca capital offer variations in the standard setting of building and mountain that normally correspond to the second and third temptations. In the capital at Moissac, for example, the image of the demon grasping hold of Christ represents the third temptation. To illustrate the same episode, the New York capital shows Christ borne on the back of the demon, and in the cycle of the Puerta de la Gloria, both Christ and Satan hold banderoles with inscriptions of their respective lines from scripture. The capital cycle at Compostela further substitutes the image of the demon before the seated Christ for the episode customarily associated with the pinnacle of the Temple. The trials, if not identifiable by standard motifs, are nevertheless differentiated from each other through compositional variation, and the narrative tradition is thereby maintained.

12. At Beaulieu the first two trials are contained under one arch and the third is isolated in its own. For a full discussion of the sculptural ensemble of the southern porch at Beaulieu: Y. Christe, “Le portail de Beaulieu. Etude iconographique et stylistique,” Bulletin archéologique de comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, n.s. 6 (1970) pp. 57–70.

13. Examples of representations of single episodes on twelfth-century capitals occur in the nave of Notre-Dame du Port in Clermont-Ferrand, in the north gallery of the cloister of Sta. Maria in Estany, in the apse of St-Pierre in Chauvigny, in the nave of St-Nectaire, in the naves of Autun and Saulieu, in a capital from St-Pierre of Puymiclan (Lot-et-Garonne) in the Louvre (No. 2382), and in the nave at Plaimpied. Occasionally two encounters
rily upon the first temptation and the Ministry of the Angels.\textsuperscript{14}

The best known and most monumental example of the Temptation in Romanesque art appears in a northern Spanish tympanum that predates the Cloisters carving, the reliefs of the left tympanum of the Portal of the Goldsmiths at Santiago de Compostela (Figure 4). This is the only other known instance of the Temptation occurring on a tympanum and also the only other sequence that reads from right to left. The Compostela Temptation is neither a narrative cycle nor an abbreviation. It is instead a conflated representation that telescopes into one scene all the various moments of the narrative. A winged demon perched on the Temple proffers the stone while at the same time a second demon kneels on the rocky surface of a mountain. The foliage of a large tree around which a serpent is entwined\textsuperscript{15} separates these demons from the figure of Christ, who faces them, and the ministering angels are rendered: capitals from the Abbey of La Sauve-Majeure, St-Léonard at Ile-Bouchard (Indre-et-Loire) and the cloister of the Cathedral of Tarragona (thirteenth century).

\textsuperscript{14} Exultet Roll (1) of Pisa, Museo Civico; Homilies of Bede, Gerona, St. Féliù, fol. 78; psalter, Berlin Kupferstichkab., Ms. 78.A.6, fol. 10v; psalter, Hamburg Staatsbibliothek, In Scr 84, fol. 12r; psalter, Glasgow, Hunterian Museum, Ms. 229, Sect. 3, fol. 1v; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. 44, fol. 5v; Gospel Book of Henry the Lion, Gnunden, Duke of Cumberland, fol. 20v; Bible, Paris, Bibl. Nat., Ms. lat. 16746, fol. 28v. In Byzantine psalters, the temptation that takes place on the pinnacle of the Temple is represented: Chludoff Psalter, Moscow, Historical Museum, Gr. 129, fol. 92v; Mount Athos, Pantokrator Monastery, Ms. 61, fol. 190v; Rome, Vatican Library, Barb. Gr. 372, fol. 152v; the Bristol Psalter, London, Brit. Mus., Add. 40731, fol. 154v; the Theodore Psalter, London, Brit. Mus., Add. 19352, fol. 193v; the Hamilton Psalter, Berlin, Kupferstichkab., Ms. 78.A.9, fol. 170v.

\textsuperscript{15} For the significance of the serpent’s appearance, M. Schapiro, “The Religious Meaning of the Ruthwell Cross,” \textit{The Art Bulletin 26} (1944) p. 233. The tree appears quite frequently in Temptation cycles, especially in the first episode (for example, in the capitals at Moissac and in the Metropolitan Museum, in the Psalter of St. Bertin, and in the St. Albans Psalter). The serpent, however, is an additional feature, unique, I believe, to the Compostela relief.

\textit{FIGURE 4}
The Temptation of Christ and Ministry of the Angels. Left tympanum of the Portal of the Goldsmiths, Santiago de Compostela (photo: Mas)
appear in the very midst of the encounter. This arrangement induced the author of the Pilgrim’s Guide to describe a complete narrative cycle, which in his mind consisted of three groups of demons corresponding to three temptations.16

The Temptation cycle of the Cloisters tympanum is unique in combining the narrative and abbreviated modes. All three episodes of Christ and the demon appear, but the fact that only the first is specified by an identifying prop is typical of the abbreviated mode. The disregard for the clarification of episodes through scenic elements and the repetition of the compositional relationship between Christ and Satan at the expense of elaborated description have resulted in a simplification of the narrative. At the same time, the Cloisters cycle includes the Ministry of the Angels, a scene that frequently appears in representations of the Temptation but is absent from the otherwise complete sculptural cycles at Piacenza, Beaulieu, and Arles. The sculptor has supplied the Ministry of Angels with the curious and unusual feature of bread and fish, whereas in the preceding sequence of scenes he held descriptive detail to a minimum.

The most common type of representation of the Ministry shows the angels in various attitudes of adoration, sometimes bowing or gesturing in recognition of Christ, but most often with empty, though perhaps, veiled, hands.17 When the angels bear objects in service to Christ, these are usually of a liturgical nature.18 The scene of the Ministry in the Temptation cycle of the Ripoll Bible (Figure 5), a Catalanian work of the first half of the eleventh century, is the only other representation in which angels offer bread and fish to Christ. What might the bread and fish signify in this context? Popular devotion may have inspired the notion that the angels provided Jesus with a meal after his long fast in the wilderness. Bread and fish, the common foodstuffs, could have been incorporated into illustrations of such a legend, which did in fact circulate through the Medici-

17. For example, in the Gospel Books of Otto and Otto III, the Exultet Roll of Pisa, the Gerona Homilies, Paris lat. 8846, and Prague XIV.A.13, in the frescoes of Brinay and San Baudelio, in the mosaic cycle of San Marco’s in Venice, and in the last panel of the Temptation cycle in the ceiling of the nave of St. Martin’s in Zillis.
18. For example, bread and vessel: Psalter of St. Bertin; bread and cloth or vestment: capital at Moissac; vessel and cloth: Holkham Bible; liturgical vessels: Gospel of Henry the Lion, mosaic cycle of the Cathedral of Monreale (angel holds chalice); censers: Morgan Ms. 44, a thirteenth-century psalter in Philadelphia (Free Library, Lewis 185, fol. 9r), left tympanum of Portal of Goldsmiths at Compostela, nave capital of Notre-Dame du Port in Clermont-Ferrand. Non-liturgical objects borne by ministering angels: globe: Stuttgart Psalter (Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Ms. Bibl. Fols. 23, 107v); cross-surnoûted staff: Gospel Book of Matilda of Tuscany (New York, Morgan Library, Ms. 492, fol. 43r) and capital No. 2382 in the Louvre; swords: shaft of the candlestick of the Cathedral of Gaeta. In the capital at Ile-Bouchard and in the Avila Bible (Madrid, Bibl. Nac., E.R.8, fol. 323r) the angels grasp Christ’s shoulder.
tations on the Life of Christ, written in the second half of
the thirteenth century by an anonymous monk now
referred to as the Pseudo-Bonaventure. Except for a four-
thirteenth-century recension of the Meditations (Paris,
Bibl. Nat., Ms. ital. 115), which preserves a cycle of
abundant and detailed literal illustrations, this text did
not inspire contemporary representations of ministering
angels bearing bread and fish.\(^9\) Carolingian illus-
trations of the Ministry in the Soissons Gospels (Paris,
Bibl. Nat., Ms. lat. 8850, fol. 82) and the Drogo Sacra-
mentary (Paris, Bibl. Nat., Ms. lat. 9428, fol. 41r) show
angels attending Christ with a meal,\(^20\) but in contrast
to the Ripoll and Cloisters representations, the nature
of the meal is not specified.

The choice of bread and fish clearly recalls the Mir-
acle of Loaves and Fishes, which the Gospel of John
(6:22–59) sets forth as the prefiguration of the Eucha-
rist. Such eucharistic associations account for the ap-
pearance of the loaf and fish in Last Supper scenes.\(^21\) In
the Ripoll scene, the angels bear two fish and five
loaves in accordance with the specific descriptions of
the Miracle by John (6:9) and Luke (9:13, 16). Since
the sculptor of the Cloisters tympanum tends to reduce
descriptive detail, it is likely that the single loaf and fish
are nevertheless meant to recall the Miracle of Loaves
and Fishes. In both the Cloisters and Ripoll scenes of
the Ministry, the loaf and fish refer to the ideas ex-
pounded in Augustine’s Enarratio on Psalm 90, dis-
ussed below, in which he associates the Miracle of
Loaves and Fishes with the episodes of the Temptation.
That the detail of the loaf and fish is common to both
the Ripoll and Cloisters Temptation cycles reaffirms
the Catalanian background of the master or atelier
responsible for the tympanum.\(^22\)

The sculptor of the Cloisters tympanum gave the
scene of the Ministry a significant arrangement within
the design of the Temptation cycle. The near frontal
pose of the fourth figure of Christ visually resolves the
diagonal progression of the heads (in three-quarter
pose) and extended hands of the first three figures of
Christ. Raising his right hand in a gesture of benedic-
tion and floating above the angels in an ascension-like
image, the last figure of Christ assumes a majestic pos-
ture that celebrates the victory he achieved over Satan
in the previous scenes.

The theme of victory, however, is chiefly conveyed
in the Cloisters relief by the repeated motif of Christ

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19. In the Meditations on the Life of Christ, Christ bids the angels
bring him a meal of bread and fish prepared by his mother. Paris
Bibl. Nat., Ms. ital. 115, fol. 71r, 71v, shows the angels obtaining
the food from the Virgin and spreading a banquet on the ground.
According to I. Ragusa and R. B. Green (Meditations on the Life
of Christ, an Illuminated Manuscript of the Fourteenth century [Princeton,
1961] p. 427, figs. 103, 104), the illustrations accompanying the
text are unique to this manuscript and appear not to derive from
earlier iconographic tradition. The tale itself, however, seems
to derive from a combination of earlier medieval literary sources. In
the following passage (p. 123 in the Ragusa and Green translation)
the author mentions the Miracle of Loaves and Fishes in connec-
tion with the Temptation, as does Augustine in his commentary on
the Temptation in the Enarratio on Psalm 90 (as I shall discuss
below): “And I ask what food the angels laid before Him after so
long a fast. Scripture does not mention it, but we can suppose the
victor to eat in any way we wish. And surely if we consider His
power, the question arises of His obtaining anything He wished or
of creating it according to the decision of His Will. But we shall
not discover that He made use of this power for Himself or His
disciples, but for the multitudes, whom He fed twice, with a few
loaves for great numbers.”

20. For reproductions: W. Koehler, Die Karolingischen Mini-
turen (Berlin, 1960) II, pl. 84; III, pl. 83a. An Armenian Gospel
Book, dated c. 1262, in the Walters Art Gallery (Ms. 539, fol. 24v)
preserves the only Eastern example known to me of the ministering
angels bearing a meal: Serapie Der Nersessian, Armenian Manu-
scripts in the Walters Art Gallery (Baltimore, 1973) pl. 46, fig. 62.

Anfängen bis zum hohen Mittelalter,” Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte

22. M. Durliat, La sculpture romane en Roussillon IV (Perpignan,
Durliat, “Le maître de Cabestany,” Les Cahiers de St-Michel-de-
Cabestany: note sur un chapiteau de Sant Pere de Roda au Musée
nated the psalm as the gradual verse with the recitation of the story of the Temptation.23 In several psalters a scene of the Temptation replaces or even appears in conjunction with the standard illustration to Psalm 90, which consists simply of the motif of Christ “super aspidem.” 24 The rare instances, however, in which the image of Christ upon beasts occurs in representations of the Temptation outside the psalter are found in sculpture—in the Temptation cycles of the Cloisters tympanum and at Beaulieu and in the single temptation scene on a capital at Plaimpied. The Cloisters Temptation, then, is directly connected with the imagery of the psalm. In contrast to the Beaulieu sculptures where the motif of Christ upon beasts follows the last confrontation with Satan and thus appears as an outcome, the motif of victory in the Cloisters cycle appears simultaneously with each of the temptations and therefore as a sign of Christ’s unchallenged omnipotence in a dynamic process of the divine overcoming evil.

Although the components of the Cloisters Temptation derive from established pictorial formulas, the image that emerges from the combination and reorganization of these elements has no artistic precedent. The merging of the abbreviated and narrative modes of representation, the unusual feature of angels bearing bread and fish, and the intrusion into the Temptation of imagery associated with Psalm 90 have resulted in the transformation of conventional iconographic types. Since standardized imagery cannot undergo transformation in form without a concurrent transformation in content, we must carefully examine the message of the Cloisters tympanum.

Saint Augustine’s exposition on Psalm 90 (divided into two sermons) in the Enarrationes in Psalmodos contains his most elaborate and highly charged commentary on the Temptation of Christ. 25 His main concern lies in relating this event in Christ’s life to the spiritual life of the practicing Christian. The experience of temptation was not necessary to Christ, but he undertook to confront the demon so that through the example of his answers the Christian might also overcome temptation. In the second sermon, Augustine develops this idea with regard to the first two episodes of the Temptation as given by Matthew. Christ could have transformed the stones into bread as Satan requested, but by refraining he conquered the demon with the humility of his response. Christ indeed had the capacity to perform such a miracle, for he could feed many thousands from five loaves; he chose, however, to offer humanity a spiritual truth: “Not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”

He was hungry: and then the tempter said, “If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” Was it a great thing for our Lord Jesus Christ to make bread out of stones, when He satisfied so many thousands with five loaves? He made bread out of nothing. For whence came that quantity of food, which could satisfy so many thousands? The sources of that bread are in the Lord’s hands. This is nothing wonderful; for He Himself made out of five loaves of bread enough for so many thousands, who also every day out of a few seeds raised upon earth immense harvests. These are the miracles of our Lord: but from their constant operation they are disregarded. What then my brethren, was it impossible for the Lord to create bread out of stones? He made men even out of stones, in the words of John the Baptist himself, “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” Why then did He not so? That He might teach thee how to answer the tempter, so that if thou was a Christian and belonged to Christ, would He desert thee now? . . . Listen to our Lord: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” 26


24. In several Byzantine psalters (see note 14) a representation of the Temptation accompanies the psalm as a marginal illustration. A scene of the Temptation occurs in conjunction with the motif of Christ upon beasts in two Western psalters: the St. Bertin and the Stuttgart. In the latter, the devil is shown fleeing after his defeat. For specific examples of the motif of Christ upon beasts: J. G. Alexander, Norman Illumination at Mont-St-Michel 966–1100 (Oxford, 1970) p. 148 note 3. p. 149 note 11; also Christe, “Le portail de Beaulieu,” p. 64 note 12.

25. The Latin text quoted in the following notes comes from the Corpus Christianum, series Latina 39 (Turnhout, 1956) pp. 1254–78, but can also be found in Patrologia Latina XXXIX, cols. 1150–71. The English translation I use can be found in The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers VIII, ed. P. Schaff (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1956) pp. 446–452. The abbreviations CC and NPNF are used in the following notes.

26. NPNF, p. 450. CC, p. 1271 f.: Esurivit; et iam tentator: Die lapidibus istis ut panes fiat, si Filius Dei es. Quid magnum erat Domino Iesu Christo de lapidibus panem facere, qui de quinque panibus tota multitudine? De nihiló fecit panem. Tanta enim multió esca, quae saturaret tota multitudine, unde processit? Fontes panem erant in manibus Domini. Non est mirum; nam ipse fecit de quinque panibus multum panis unde saturaret tota multitudine, qui facta quotidie in terra de paucis granis missae ingerent. Ipsa enim sunt miracula Domini; sed asiduitate viuerunt. Quid ergo, fratri, impossibile erat Domino de lapidibus panes facere?
Just as Augustine dwells upon the transformation of stones into bread, so too does the sculptor of the Cloisters relief choose only to describe the first temptation, distinguishing this episode from the following two and calling to mind ideas associated with the miraculous creation of bread. Augustine’s insistence upon Christ’s divine power is reflected in the tympanum in the scene of the Ministry, where Christ displays a large round loaf in his hand as if to confirm his capacity to materialize the bread. The image almost echoes the phrase, “The sources of that bread are in the Lord’s hands.” The combination of bread and fish recalls the Miracle of Loaves and Fishes to which Augustine also repeatedly refers. Augustine further asks:

Dost thou think the word of God bread? If the word of God, through which all things were made, were not bread, He would not say, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.”

The tympanum illustrates Augustine’s equation of the word of God with bread—the book held in Christ’s left hand throughout the scenes of the Temptation becomes the loaf held in the same hand in the final scene.

The imagery in the tympanum primarily corresponds to Augustine’s discussion of the first temptation. Augustine also incorporates the second episode into his argument, since it is during this episode that Satan quotes verses 11 and 12 from the psalm. His explication of the latter verse, however, relates to the Ministry of the Angels rather than to the episodes of the Temptation:

Christ was raised up in the hands of Angels, when He was taken up into heaven: not that, if Angels had not sustained Him, He would have fallen: but because they were attending on their King. Say not, those who sustained Him are better than He who was sustained. Are then cattle better than men, because they sustain the weaknesses of men? . . . Thus also in this Psalm we may understand it of the service of the Angels: it does not pertain to any infirmity in our Lord, but to the honour they pay, and to their service.

The phrase “Christ was raised up in the hands of Angels” seems to have motivated the ascension-like image of the Ministry, where Christ rises above the small angels who support him.

It was noted earlier that the Temptation cycle of the Ripoll Bible is the only other work to contain a direct reference to the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes within the context of the Ministry. Included within this scene is yet another feature that seems to correspond to a passage from Augustine’s sermon on Psalm 90. The words concerned with the Ministry, “His head is in heaven, His feet on earth,” may have inspired here the representation of Christ enthroned on a type of figure-eight configuration in which the lower ring symbolizes the earth as the Lord’s footstool.

Both the Cloisters and Ripoll Temptation cycles are related to Augustine’s commentary through their common allusion to the Miracle of Loaves and Fishes. In the Ripoll cycle the features derived from Augustine’s tract appear incidental to the otherwise fully conventional narrative presentation. In the Cloisters carving, however, Augustinian ideas dominate and give meaning to the total image. The threefold repetition of the motif of Christ “super aspidem” not only lends to the relief “a primitive, incantatory character,” to quote Meyer Schapiro’s apt description of the tympanum, but also creates a homiletic quality that captures the rhetorical force of Augustine’s text. The carving sacrifices narrative effect for moral impact.

The link between Augustine’s exposition on Psalm 90 and the Cloisters tympanum seems too striking to be coincidental. We cannot be certain whether the text exerted a direct influence upon the sculpture or whether the influence of the text was transmitted

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28. NPNF, p. 451. CG, p. 1273 f.: Sublatus est Christus in manibus angelorum, quando assumptus est in caelum; non quia, si non portarent angeli, ruitorus erat; sed quia obsequabantur regi. Ne forte dicitis: Meliores sunt qui portabant, quam ille qui portabatur. Ergo meliora sunt iumenta quam homines? Sed quia iinfirmitatem hominum portant iumenta. . . . Sic ergo et de obsequenti angelorum in hoc psalmo intellegere poterimus, non ad infirmitatem Domini pertinet, sed ad illorum honorificentiam, ad illorum servitutem.

through its illustration in recensions of the Enarrationes. In all probability, however, the text itself served as the source of the imagery, since none of the manuscripts known to me contains illustrations relevant to the specific passages of the Enarratio quoted in this study. Artists responsible for the illustration of psalters were apparently well acquainted with the Enarrationes in Psalms. Much that is unique in the iconography of the historiated initials of the St. Albans Psalter, for example, has been attributed directly to Augustine's text rather than to illustrations of that text. Although I could not detect a long-standing tradition of association between the sermon and the Temptation in artistic representations, the example of the Ripoll Bible may indicate a pattern along these lines in Catalonia, where the Cabestany Master was mainly active.

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