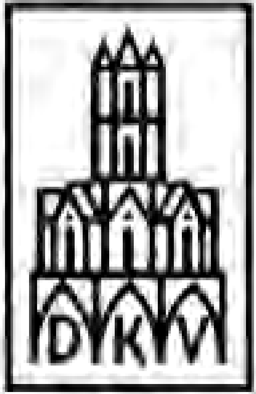

All Nature Speaks of God . All Nature Teaches Man: The Iconography of the Twelfth-Century Capitals in the Westwork Gallery of the Church of St. Servatius in Maastricht
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Elizabeth den Hartog

All Nature Speaks of God · All Nature Teaches Man

The iconography of the twelfth-century capitals in the westwork gallery of the church of St. Servatius in Maastricht

This article is concerned with the iconography of the Romanesque capitals in the westwork of the former collegiate church of St. Servatius in Maastricht, one of the most interesting churches in the Netherlands. Having been founded in the fourth century as a funerary chapel for St. Servatius, it is also one of the oldest churches in the country. The building one sees today, with its two crypts and two pairs of towers – one set flanking the apse, the other surmounting the westwork – is an intricate structure that developed into its present form over the centuries.

The westwork is truly impressive, consisting of a large rectangular body that supports two square towers appearing to rise up out of the sloping roof. Access to the westwork can only be gained from the interior of the church, via two flights of steps, placed on either side of the western choir screen. Three great arches mark the division between the westwork and the nave and aisles. The central, triumphal arch is articulated by two superimposed columns attached to the inner faces of the supporting piers.

The central space – or western choir – of the westwork consists of three bays, of which the middle one is considerably larger than the other two. West of the choir are five smaller compartments and in the south-west and north-west corners are stair-cases, providing access to the storeys above. The outer bays of the western choir also lead into smaller compartments located north and south, and these in their turn lead into rectangular spaces situated in the eastern corners of the westwork. The various compartments thus surrounding the western choir support a gallery, that is placed about halfway up the western choir walls. The northern wing of this gallery has two bays terminating in an eastern apse, with left and right of it a smaller apsidal niche, placed at an angle in the thickness of the wall. The southern gallery wing also has two bays, but no apse. The western part of the gallery consists of five bays of varying dimensions. Looking out over the central bay of the western choir there is a tripartite arch, the central section of which is raised above the narrower flanking arches by two tiny columns with capitals placed on the outer angles of the abaci of the larger columns supporting the triple arcade. The width of the arches corresponds to the dimensions of the three bays lying behind, of which the central one is somewhat wider than the other two. This bay is given further prominence by the large oculus in the west wall and by being covered with a semi-dome; all other bays of the gallery have round-headed windows and groin vaults. The outer compartments on the west side have approximately the same dimensions as the central one, but the arches opening onto the nave are not as large, albeit larger than those of the second and fourth bay. Above the gallery vaults is a low corridor. On the first storey, above the western choir, is the so-called *Keizerzaal* (›Imperial Hall‹). This storey has more or less the same divisions as the ground storey. The central section is covered by a dome.

Surprisingly, the only sculpture to be found in the westwork are the four capitals of the triumphal arch, dividing nave and western choir, and the thirty capitals situated in the gallery.[1] These capitals are remarkable for the great variety of motifs employed, including a wide range of plants; foliage inhabited by both animals and men, and people,

[1] Originally there was also an arcade of five arches in the *Keizerzaal*, overlooking the nave. This arcade lost its function in the fifteenth century when the nave was vaulted, and it was therefore bricked up. The capitals, all foliate, still survive; three were reused in the aisles of the church, the fourth seems to have led a wandering

seemingly involved in their day-to-day activities. While it has proved quite difficult to accurately date the various parts of the church, the westwork capitals can be dated with a reasonable amount of certainty on the basis of their likeness to capitals in the nave of the abbey church of Rolduc. These were evidently produced by the same atelier and must therefore be more or less contemporaneous. They are situated in the part of the church that, according to the *Annales Rodenses* (the chronicles of the abbey that were written between 1180 and 1200[2]), was (re)built between 1138 and 1143. A similar date must therefore apply to the capitals in the Maastricht westwork and this suggests that in all likelihood the Maastricht capital sculpture was produced during the provostship of Arnold of Wied (1138–1151), chancellor of the Holy Roman Empire and future archbishop of Cologne.[3] It may well have been with this rebuilding in mind that Conrad III donated the bridge over the Meuse and its very substantial revenues to the chapter of the church of St. Servatius in 1139. One half of the income was intended for the ›refectorium fratrum‹, the other for the provost himself.[4]

The capitals are by no means unknown and are mentioned in every work concerning medieval art in the Meuse valley. Usually attention has been focussed on just a few – and more often than not the same – examples, i.e. those thought to represent scenes from contemporary medieval life. These capitals depict a group of men involved in a brawl, a group of labourers at work in a vineyard, people tilling the land and enjoying its produce and, last but not least, a group of masons working stone. This last capital is especially popular, appearing – for example – in almost every work dealing with the medieval building practice. Judging from the fact that they are hardly ever illustrated, the capitals with plants and animals are considered to be less interesting. In spite of later studies concerning Meuse-valley sculpture or the church of St. Servatius, the most detailed study of the capitals still is the account by Van Nispen tot Sevenaer in the *Geïllustreerde Beschrijving*, written in 1935.[5] Here, at least all capitals are summarily described and illustrated, albeit not from every side.

With regard to the iconography, the only scholar to suspect that the cycle probably did have some, albeit obscure, meaning, was Ozinga.[6] Timmers, on the other hand, held that the capitals were purely decorative, those merely showing foliage and animals and the historiated ones alike. In his opinion the latter represented somewhat burlesque scenes from everyday life.[7] This view was opposed by Mekking,[8] and rightly so. According to him, the scenes from every-day life in fact referred to the seigniorial rights of the chapter: the power to rule the land and the power to administer justice. In another context he interpreted the capital showing masons at work and inscribed *operarii lapis* as an allegory, representing the masons who built the church of St. Servatius as builders of God's kingdom, busy working the corner-stone,

existence and is now displayed in the lapidary in the eastern crypt. Cf. E. den Hartog: Twee romaanse kapitelen in de oostcrypte van de Sint-Servaaskerk, in: De Sint Servaas. Tweemaandelijks Restauratie/Informatie Bulletin 64-65, 1992, 523-527.

[2] P. C. Boeren & G. W. Panhuysen: Annales Rodenses, Assen 1965.

[3] E. den Hartog: Romanesque architecture and sculpture in the Meuse Valley, Maaslandse Monografieën 8, Leeuwarden-Mechelen 1992, 122-133; Den Hartog 1992 (note 1), 526. These two works are merely concerned with dating the capitals and with tracing the provenance of the motifs employed. No attention whatsoever has been given to the iconography of the capitals.

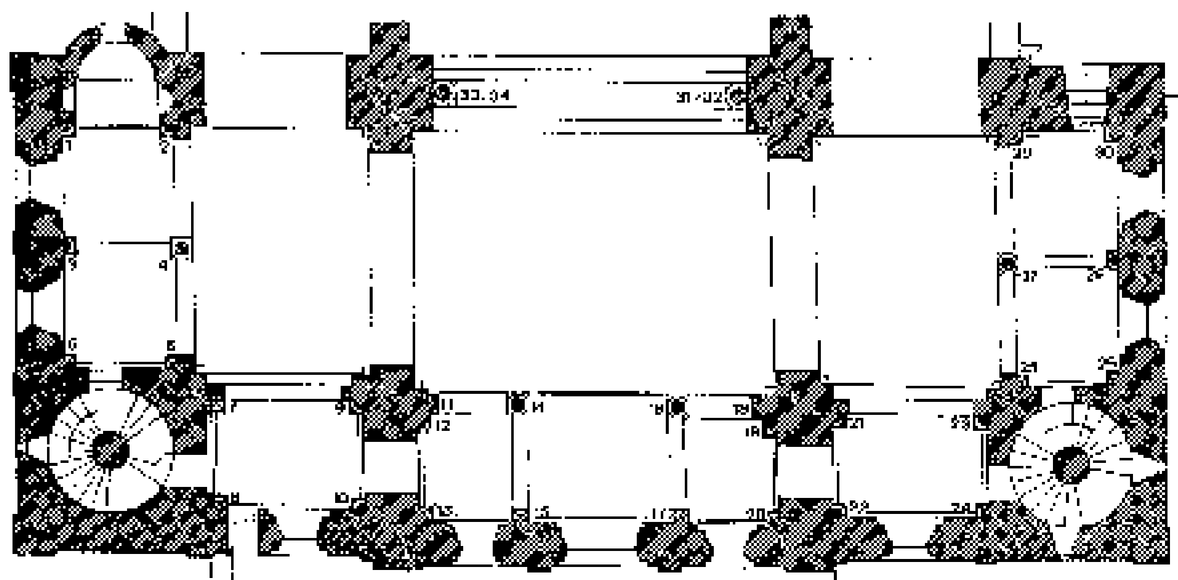
[4] R. Kroos: Der Schrein des heiligen Servatius in Maastricht und die vier zugehörigen Reliquiare in Brüssel, Veröffentlichungen des Zentralinstituts für Kunstgeschichte in München VIII, München 1985, 53-54; charter nr. 31, in: F. Hausmann: Die Urkunden der deutschen Könige und Kaiser. IX. Die Urkunden Konrads III. und seines Sohnes Heinrich, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Vienna-Cologne-Graz 1969, 49-50.

[5] E. O. M. van Nispen tot Sevenaer: De Monumenten van Geschiedenis en Kunst in de Provincie Limburg I: De Monumenten in de Gemeente Maastricht, Den Haag 1935, 314-324.

[6] M. D. Ozinga: De romaanse kerkelijke bouwkunst, Amsterdam 1949, 131.

[7] J. J. M. Timmers: De kunst van het Maasland I, Maaslandse monografieën 1, Assen 1971, 221-223.

[8] A. J. J. Mekking: De Sint-Servaaskerk te Maastricht. Bijdragen tot de kennis van de symboliek en de geschiedenis van de bouwdelen en de bouwsculptuur tot ca.1200, Utrecht-Zutphen 1986, 286-292.



1. Plan of the westwork at gallery level showing the numbering of the capitals

1. A man sitting on a stool cutting up vegetables, a second figure carrying a jug and a third figure leaning over a dibble and harvesting a plant, while eating bread. – 2. A man being carried away by birds with stones in their claws. – 3. Vineyard capital. – 4. east: Astoni, north: foliage, west: two affronted birds, south: Terra suckling two dragons. – 5. A Peridexion flanked by two dragons. – 6. Two confronted ostriches in foliage scrolls. – 7. Two affronted dogs with their necks tied together. – 8. A seated ape grasping a dog, and a blind (?) man. – 9. Foliage. Imbrications alternating with rows of palmettes. – 10. Foliage. – 11. Ferocious-looking quadrupeds biting the surrounding foliage. – 12. Two dragons with long foliate tails attacking a crouching figure. – 13. Foliage. – 14. east: A hoofed animal with two bodies and a ram's head, north: crouching figure dressed in skin, west: two affronted birds, south: two naked figures hopping round in the vegetation. – 15. Lions. – 16. Arbor mala. – 17. Two pairs of dragons. – 18. Birds. – 19. Birds. – 20. Foliage. – 21. Birds. – 22. Foliage. – 23. Blemmyae attacked by Cynocephali. – 24. Man being attacked by dragons. – 25. Tree of Life. – 26. Operarii Lapis. – 27. east: foliage, north: two dressed and kneeling figures, west: foliage, south: naked figures running through vegetation. – 28. Fighting men. – 29. Two affronted and friendly looking quadrupeds. – 30. Nude kneeling figures.

i.e. Christ.[9] However, as the other 31 capitals are disregarded, this interpretation too is deficient. For why would an allegorical representation of God's kingdom be shown amidst an abundance of foliage and wild animals? What can be the connection between scenes such as these and the seigniorial rights of the chapter? Can it be true that the sculptors were only capable of thinking up sensible subjects for just a few capitals and for the rest had to resort to the foliage and animal motifs, so characteristic of Romanesque art? In my opinion, the figurative as well as the decorative capitals have a specific meaning and form a coherent iconographical programme, as will be demonstrated below. The basis for this view is founded on the most popular moral and religious literature of the Middle Ages, in which the idea that nature acts as a mirror for mankind is all pervasive.

Is there a logical starting point for an interpretation (plate 2)? Foliage alternates with opposed and confronted monsters. On some of the capitals there are little nude men hopping round among the vegetation, on others their dressed counterparts are working stone, fighting one another or are tilling the land. The order in which the capitals are placed seems to be completely haphazard. Should one start numbering them from the east or the west, from the north or the south? There seems to be no logical way to proceed. In this article,

[9] A. J. J. Mekking: Torenhoge misverstanden, in: Bulletin van de Koninklijke Oudheidkundige Bond 1995, nr. 5, pp. 150-153.

2. Capital nr. 23. Two Cynocephali attacking a Blemmyae

therefore, the capitals will not be discussed in their order of appearance, but according to what they disclose of the cycle's iconography.

The monstrous races

The first capital (nr. 23, plate 2) to provide a clue as to the meaning of the cycle as a whole, has a very curious nude creature in its centre, lacking a head, but with a face on its chest. He is flanked by two fully-dressed creatures with dog's heads, biting him in his arms. Timmers recognized only the creature in the middle, identifying it as one of the Blemmyae, a legendary human race.[10] The two flanking dog heads, however, can also be classified among the monstrous races. They are Cynocephali, who were supposed to live in the mountains of India and who communicated by barking.[11] Belief in this type of creature had a long ancestry and can be traced back to Antiquity. The earliest mentions of such races are to be found in Ctesias' writings on India (4th century BC) and in the work of Megasthenes (3d century BC). Pliny used both writers as a source for his *Historia Naturalis*, adding a few new races to the already-existing corpus and extending their habitat to Ethiopia. For that matter, both India and Ethiopia designated faraway regions and not strict geographical confines. The popularity of the wondrous races in the Middle Ages was due to Solinus, who wrote in the third century, and who partly based his *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium* on Pliny's work.[12] In the various descriptions of the races one comes across pygmies fighting cranes; Sciopods moving along with great speed on just one giant foot, that also serves them as an umbrella against the intense heat of the sun; there is mention of people with long tails, like satyrs; of giants; of the Astomi, a people lacking mouths, who live by smelling apples and plants; there are people whose feet are placed backwards; the diversity is quite incredible.

Many of the capitals in the St.-Servatius westwork gallery are peopled with naked and scantily-dressed figures, sometimes, but not always in the company of animals who seem to be threatening them. Thus, it is possible that the Blemmyae and Cynocephali are not the only wondrous races depicted here. Identification, however, is troublesome, for – as Friedman has shown – the many commentators kept creating new races by borrowing one or more features from already-existing ones with several characteristics. As the diversity increased, it became more and more difficult to distinguish the different species.[13] Moreover, not all races had well-defined characteristics. The Ethiopians were different mainly because their skin was black, as a result of constant exposure to the sun; Troglodytes, because they hunted game on foot; the Bragmanni were a race of naked wise

[10] Timmers (note 7), 223.
[11] J. B. Friedman: The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought, Cambridge Mass.-London 1981, 15.
[12] R. Wittkower: Marvels of the east, A study in the history of monsters, in: Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes V, 1942, 159-197.
[13] Friedman (note 11), 23.

men living in caves; Gymnosophisti spent their days standing in the fire and staring at the sun; some races were marked by their brilliantly shining eyes, while others merely lacked speech. Usually the races are shown naked or dressed in animal skins. Nudity, of course, was regarded as a sign of bestiality and suggested that the figures so depicted were set apart from Christian society.[14] Thus, the crouching figure on one of the capitals, seeking support in the surrounding foliage, might well represent one of the monstrous races (nr. 14, north side). His state of partial undress seems to point in this direction. Further, one of the free-standing capitals has on one side two nude figures, working their way through foliage scrolls (nr. 27, south side). Although moving in opposite directions their heads are turned backwards to face one another. The figure on the right has short hair and no beard; the one on the left is bearded and has long hair entangled in the foliage. Apart from their nudity, there is very little to connect them with one race or another. The same holds true for the two dressed figures on the north face of the same capital, who are glaring at one another. So, although it is very likely that they are indeed intended to be ›monstrous‹, it is impossible to determine the nature of their monstrosity. However, the two nude figures greeting each other on capital 14 (south side) could represent a race lacking speech, only able to communicate through gestures. Pliny in fact classifies five races as monstrous, solely or partly because of their lack of speech.[15]

A third factor complicating identification of a particular race is the frequent contradiction between text and image in manuscripts dealing with the monstrous races. The Astomi for instance, living in the eastern parts of India, near the mouth of the River Ganges, were supposed to be without a mouth, hairy all over and were said to wear clothes of the softest cotton or of down, that they themselves harvested from the leaves of trees. They lived by their smell alone, and ate nor drank. Thus they passed their days sniffing roots, flowers, fruit, and apples in particular, which they also took with them whenever they felt inclined to travel. On smelling something offensive they died.[16] Contrary to the text, an illustration in a manuscript of Thomas of Cantimpré's *De Naturis Rerum*[17] shows the Astomi in a state of complete undress, possessing mouths, in the act of sniffing apples. This is interesting, as this picture closely resembles one of the Maastricht capitals (nr. 4, east

3. Capital nr. 4 (east side). Two Astomi sniffing at branches of foliage

4. Two Astomi in a manuscript of Thomas of Cantimpré's *De Naturis Rerum* (Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale MS. 320, fol. 45^r)

[14] Friedman (note 11), 31-32.
[15] ibid. 29.
[16] ibid. 11.
[17] Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale MS. 320, fol.45^r.

side, plates 3 and 4) showing two nude figures seated back to back amidst copious vegetation sprouting from lion masks in the upper angles of the capital. Like the Astomus on the left of the miniature, the two figures on the capital have one leg folded over the other. With both hands they are gripping the foliage and smelling it, as is obvious from their upturned noses and prominent nostrils. As in the miniature, they are probably intended to be Astomi.

On one of the quarter capitals (nr. 30) there are two nude figures wearing hats and facing each other. The figure on the right is holding on to the foliage with his right hand and with his left hand is gripping his left foot. The figure on the left is very similar. With his right hand he is holding his right foot, but instead of grabbing the plant whirling round him, he is clasping his right thigh. Illustrations of the monstrous races show Sciopods holding their own leg, but they have but one leg and foot, while the figures on the capital are quite normal in this respect. Closer to the image in Maastricht is a mosaic in the cathedral of Casal Monferrato showing an Antipode dressed in a skirt and holding his left knee with his left hand and with his right hand gripping his outstretched right leg. That this is indeed an Antipode is clear from the accompanying inscription.[18] Thus the Maastricht figures could represent Antipodes, even though texts describe them as people with their feet backwards, living in a part of the world where men walk upside-down.[19]

The existence of such human beings in earth's far-away regions presented Bible commentators with various problems. Were they actually human or were they animal?[20] Did they possess souls? How were they to be explained? If human, they must have descended from Adam and Eve, but how and why did they get their terrifying appearance? Because of sin? If so, how did they survive the Flood? Did they not rather descend from Noah's sons, for was it not written »these are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread« (Genesis 9,19)? St. Augustine even dedicated an entire chapter of his *De Civitate Dei*[21] to the question whether the monstrous races, whom he describes in great detail, were descendent from Adam or from Noah's sons. In certain writings it was stipulated that, though the appearance and behaviour of the said creatures deviated from that of ordinary mankind, they nevertheless were human and should therefore be christianized. This view gained authority from Matthew 28,19, »Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost«. These nations obviously included the wondrous races of India and Ethiopia, whose extraordinary appearance was merely due to the fact that, so far, they had not heard the word of God.

In Maastricht this mild, humanistic view concerning the curious creatures living in earth's far-away regions apparently did not find favour, for the Blemmyae is caught between two Cynocephali, who are biting him. Clearly, they are meant to portray evil creatures, sinners. This was in fact the more common attitude towards the wondrous races, whose monstrosity was believed to be a result of disobedience and sin.[22] Rather than being a mere manifestation of the variety of God's Creation, they were held to be accursed and degenerate, a warning to other men against pride and disobedience.[23] This is why Hrabanus Maurus[24] discusses them in a chapter headed *De Portentis*. In Maas-

[18] E. Cecchi Gattolin: I tessellati romanici a figure del Duomo di San Evasio a Casal Monferrato, in: Scritti di storia dell' arte in onore di Roberto Salvini, Florence 1984, 37-44, plate XI, nr. 1.

[19] Friedman (note 11), 11, 17, 47-8, 127-8.

[20] In answer to a question concerning the nature of the monstrous races – were they animal or human – posed by Rimbertus, Ratramnus, a monk from Corbie, wrote a long letter, J.P. Migne (ed.), Patrologiae cursus completus...., Series Latina, 121, 1153.

[21] De Civitate Dei 16,8, 530-532. In this article M. Dods' translation of ›De Civitate Dei‹ has been used, M. Dods: The City of God by Saint Augustine, New York 1950.

[22] Friedman (note 11), 93.

[23] ibid. 89.

[24] Migne, PL 111, c. 195, lib. 7.7; According to Isidore of Seville »God's purpose in allowing monstrosities to be born is revealed by their etymology: the words »portenta, ostenta, monstra, prodigia‹ imply that freaks are sent as warnings to portend, foreshadow, predict some

tricht too, they portend to the future and carry a message.

The city of God and the city of men

Epitomizing human sin and disobedience, the wondrous races were thought to be the descendants of notorious biblical evil-doers such as Cain or Ham, ›paragons‹ of sin. As for Cain, Adam's first-born, his most infamous deed was the murder of his brother Abel. As a punishment the earth became barren for him and he was exiled (Genesis 4,12). Cain departed to the land of Nod, east of Eden, and there built the city of Enoch (Genesis 4,16-17). Bible commentators held the contrast between the two brothers, Abel the nomad, and Cain the builder of cities, to be highly significant. In his treatise *De Cain et Abel*, St. Ambrose maintains that the two brothers signify two inimical forms of human consciousness. One, symbolized by Cain, believes only in the primacy of man and in the creations of human genius, whereas the other, symbolized by Abel, renders homage to God and to His works.[25] St. Augustine, pursuing this line of thought, described the two brothers as two cities, »that is, two societies of human beings, of which one is predestined to reign eternally with God and the other to undergo eternal punishment with the devil... Cain... the first-born... belonged to the city of men; Abel was born later and belonged to the City of God... Cain founded a city, but Abel, being a sojourner, founded none. For the city of saints is above«.[26] Not surprisingly, in late medieval art Cain is sometimes shown building his city with the monstrous races in the background.[27]

Further on in his account, St. Augustine likens the fratricide committed by Cain to Romulus' murder of his brother Remus.[28] Romulus' act was inspired by the struggle between them, which of the two was to hold supremacy over the newly-founded city of Rome. Naturally, both murders were loathsome, but in the eyes of St. Augustine Cain's deed was the most foul, as he had murdered Abel out of sheer hate, he himself being evil and Abel good, and he continues, »the quarrel between Romulus and Remus shows how the earthly city is divided against itself; that which fell out between Cain and Abel illustrated the hatred that subsists between the two cities, that of God and that of men. The wicked war with the wicked; the good also war with the wicked. But with the good, good men, or at least perfectly good men, cannot war; though, while going on towards perfection, they war to this extent, that every good man resists others in those points in which he resists himself«.[29] The fighting monstrous races in Maastricht may well refer to the first part of this passage, thus symbolizing the earthly city that is divided against itself and representing man in his most bestial state.[30] The remainder of the passage is depicted on the capital showing a group of fighting men (nr.28, plate 5). In the centre of the scene two men are attacking one another; a figure with long and waving hair is swinging his axe at a person with short hair armed with a sword or stick. Behind this figure another man is being brutally pulled by his hair by a figure coming from the right, shown on the angle of the capital. Others are coming to the rescue, and either join in with the fighting or attempt to appease the quarrelling factions. All this refers to the conflict between the earthly and the heavenly cities. The earthly city sows dissent and even compromises the good.

This interpretation is strengthened by comparison with a miniature (plate 6) from an early twelfth-century English manuscript of *De Civi-*

future event«, cf. F. Klingender: Animals in art and thought to the end of the Middle Ages, London 1971, 164.

25 Migne, PL 14, 317; Friedman (note 11), 30.

26 De Civitate Dei 15,1, 478-9.

27 Friedman (note 11), 31.

28 De Civitate Dei 15,5, 482-483.

29 ibid.

30 A similar idea is worked out in a miniature of a treatise on the Vices, that was produced for a Genoese family in the mid-fourteenth century (British Library, London Add. MS. 28841). In the margins of fol. 3r there are a variety of animals, cannibals, a city and in the upper right hand corner a tree with skull-like flowers (see also M. Camille: Image on the Edge. The Margins of Medieval Art, London 1992, 48 and plate 27).

5. Capital nr. 28. A group of fighting men

7. Capital nr. 26. This capital features masons working stone and is inscribed ›operarii lapis‹.

6. The earthly city and the city of God as shown in an early twelfth-century English manuscript of *De Civitate Dei* (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS. Plut. XII, 17, fol.1ᵛ)

tate Dei,[31] possibly from St. Augustine's abbey in Canterbury,[32] showing the earthly city as a group of men killing one another. Underneath, a peaceful scene from rural life, with farmers ploughing, symbolizes the city of God.[33] Significantly, in Maastricht too, there are two capitals (nrs.1 and 3) featuring scenes of this kind, which will be discussed in more detail below.

The wicked descendants of Cain did not survive the Flood. However, in Ham, the second son of Noah, the line of evil was continued. His grandson Nimrod built the city of Babel, the earthly city personified. The tower of this city, symbol of human pride, was to reach unto heaven. This annoyed God (Genesis 11,6) and he confounded their language, so they could no longer understand each other's speech and scattered them over the face of

[31] Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS. Plut., XII, 17, fol. 1ᵛ.

[32] C.R. Dodwell: The Canterbury school of illumination 1066-1200, Cambridge 1954, 28-30.

[33] H. Swarzenski: Monuments of Romanesque Art. The Art of Church Treasures in North-Western Europe, London 1974², plate 87, figure 201; C. M. Kaufmann: A Survey of Manuscripts illuminated in the British Isles III. Romanesque Manuscripts 1066-1190, London 1975, cat. no. 19, 62-63.

8. Capital no. 25. The Tree of Life

9. The Tree of Life on the painted wooden ceiling of the church of St. Michael in Hildesheim

10. The Tree of Life in the *Hortus Deliciarum*

the earth, the wondrous races ending up in its most remote regions. Interesting in this context is the capital with the *operarii lapis* (nr. 26, plate 7). This capital does not simply show masons working stone. Building in stone, and that is what is being represented here, can be equalled to the building of a city. But what city? There is no half-completed tower in the centre of the composition, as is usual in depictions of the building of Babel; the masons are merely preparing stone. For what purpose is not clear. It is up to the beholder of the capital to decide what should be built, the earthly city or the heavenly city, »for we are the labourers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ« (I Corinthians 3,9-11). Like the capital with the Blemmyae and Cynocephali, the capital representing the *operarii lapis* portends to the future, warning the onlooker that the day of judgment is near. He who rejects the foundation or ›corner-stone‹, i.e. Christ, will burn in hell.[34]

The conflict that developed between the earthly and the heavenly city was a direct result of Man's Fall from grace, causing evil to spread into the world.[35] This was not the only consequence of the Fall. Adam and Eve's disobedience also led to man becoming mortal, for after eating from the Tree of Knowledge they were driven from paradise, in order to prevent them from eating from the Tree of Life too. One of the Maastricht capitals (nr.25) does in fact show the Tree of Life, in the form of curling-over branches with upright, folded leaves enclosing tiny human heads (plate 8). This identification is confirmed by the *Hortus Deliciarum*[36] and the painted wooden ceiling of the church of St. Michael in Hildesheim, where the Tree of Life is represented in much the same way (plates 9 and 10). The meaning of the capital is twofold. Not only does it represent what was lost to mankind as a result of original sin, it also conveys the promise of salvation, for by leading a pure life in concordance with God's commands one can avoid dying the second death and obtain life everlasting in paradise.

As a counterpart to this capital, the south face of the free-standing capital of the northern wing of the gallery (nr. 4, plate 11) shows a more or less nude woman in an awkward posture, clasping in each arm a branch of foliage, while suckling two serpents. This can only be ›Terra‹,[37] as is obvious from a wall painting in the church of Limburg an der Lahn, where the same figure – here feeding a serpent and a creature that P. Clemen hesitantly recognized as a pig – is identified by the accompanying legend. A manuscript from the third quarter of the twelfth century actually shows ›Terra‹ with two serpents on her breasts.[38] By this time the motif of ›Terra‹ suckling animals or two tiny human figures was already quite old, the earliest examples having been traced to the ninth century.[39] From Ottonian times onwards ›Terra‹ is sometimes depicted as a woman with her arms round a tree. This idea was taken up in the Meuse valley, where – according to Wirth – a rather idiosyncratic ›Terra‹-type evolved. Here she is often depicted naked or dressed in no more than a skirt, while putting her arms round one or two

[34] Isaiah 28,16; Psalms 117,22; Matthew 21,33-45; Mark 12,1-12; Luke 20,9-19.

[35] De Civitate Dei 13,15, 423.

[36] This manuscript from the abbey of St. Odilien in Alsace, dating from the last quarter of the twelfth century, was destroyed by a fire in the Strassbourg archives in 1870. Luckily, the text and many of the miniatures had been copied by Count Auguste de Batard d'Estang in the 1830's.

[37] K. A. Wirth: Erde, in: Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte V, Stuttgart 1967, 997-1104.

[38] München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Cod. lat. 14399, fol. 40: cf. Wirth (note 37), 1059, plate 29.

[39] See also J. Leclercq-Kadaner: De la Terre-Mère à la Luxure. A propos de »La migration des symbols«, in: Cahiers des Civilisations Médiévales 18, 1975, 37-43.

[40] According to Wirth (note 37), 1039-1040; cf. Tournai, Priest's Seminary, MS.1, fol.6, dated 1084; Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale MS.2, circa 1179.

11. Capital nr. 4 (south side). ›Terra‹, personified by a half-naked woman, clasping a tree in each arm, and with two serpents suckling her breasts

12. ›Terra‹, as shown in the Evangeliary of Bernward of Hildesheim of circa 1020 (Dom-und Diözesanmuseum Hildesheim, Dombibliothek DS 18, fol. 174r)

13. The church of Our Lady in Maastricht. The first capital on the north side of the choir ambulatory

trees.[40] The woman on the Maastricht capital is a perfect example of this type.

Interesting in this context is an illustration of ›Terra‹ in a manuscript from the cathedral library in Hildesheim of circa 1020 (plate 12), where she is shown as a half-nude woman with two little human beings in her lap. Her left arm is folded round a tree from which a snake is emerging, offering an apple to one of the figures in her lap, who can therefore only be Adam and Eve. From this very explicit reference to the Fall of Man it is obvious that ›Terra‹ is here intended as a symbol for earthly desire, the feeding-ground of sin. This is not very surprising, for the relationship between Adam and ›Terra‹ was a close one. After all, Adam means ›earthling‹ and according to Isidore of Seville, man was called ›homo‹, because he was made of earth, ›humo‹.[41] The Maastricht ›Terra‹-figure is likely to have a similar meaning.

The relationship between the ›Terra‹-figure and the Fall of Man is made even more explicit on a capital in another of the Maastricht churches. The capitals in the choir ambulatory of the church of Our Lady were produced by the same atelier as the capitals in the church of St. Servatius. The first free-standing capital on the north side shows four naked figures forming the angles of the capital, suckling a lion and a dragon, two dragons, a dragon and a lion, and two lions respectively (plate 13). Bosman, rejecting the idea that they represented ›Terra‹, as had been suggested before, identified them as ›Luxuria‹, a more popular theme in twelfth-century sculpture. Moreover, as he considered this capital to be out of keeping with the other capitals in the ambulatory, he suggested that the sculptors probably did not even know the exact meaning of the image and used it as a mere decorative device.[42] This cannot be true. The animals being suckled are precisely those, that are mentioned in Psalm 91,13, »the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet«. This passage was taken to refer to Christ and, already from Early Christian times onwards the theme was often represented. It was also known to the atelier that carved the ambulatory capitals, as they showed Christ trampling the beasts on a gabled relief, that is now in the porch of Our Lady's. It is obvious, therefore, that the meaning of these animals – and of the figures suckling them – must have been quite clear to the artist who carved them (or to his patron at least), and that the image thus created must have been conceived as a deliberate anti-type to the ›Christus Salvator‹, for, whereas Christ's trampling of the beasts pertains to salvation, the suckling of the very same creatures must refer to the Fall of Man, bringing along evil in its wake. Significantly, to underline the idea that these figures were in no way related to the work of salvation, those on the side of the capital facing choir and high altar turn their heads away, whereas the figures on the ambulatory side look straight out from the capital. The figures on the capital, therefore, are no mere representations of ›Luxuria‹, but probably represent earthly desire nurturing sin, thus symbolizing mankind in need of salvation. Neither is the fact that the same figure is repeated on each corner of the capital due to mindless repetition. According to me, the four figures stand for Adam and the four regions of the earth of which he was created. St. Augustine, in his commentary on Psalm 95,[43] already noted that in Greek the initial letters of the four regions of the world (Anatole, Dysis, Arktos, Mesembria) form the name ADAM, a reflection of his creation from earth. This symbolism was by no means obscure, for it can also be found in the writings of Bede[44]

[41] »Homo dictus, quia ex humo factus est«. Isidore of Seville, Etym.lib.XII,3 (Migne, PL 82, 397).

[42] A. F. W. Bosman: De Onze Lieve Vrouwekerk te Maastricht. Bouwgeschiedenis en historische betekenis van de oostpartij, Utrecht-Zutphen 1990, 62-65.

[43] Migne, PL 37, 1236.

[44] According to the *Hexaemeron* of the Venerable Bede, »A, et D, et A, et M, a quibus litteris et quatuor orbis plagae, cum Graece nominantur, initium sumunt. Vocatur namque apud eos anatole oriens, dysis occidens, arctos septentrio, mesembria meridies« (Migne PL 91, 78C), cited by R. A. Wisbey: Marvels of the East in the *Wiener Genesis* and in Wolfram's *Parzifal*, in: W. D. Robson-Scott (ed.): Essays in German and Dutch Literature, London 1973, 4-5.

14. The four regions of the earth inscribed with the letters A.D.A.M. (circa 1100, Oxford, St. John's College, MS. 17, fol.7[v])

and others,[45] and as Esmeijer[46] has shown, it was even made the subject of visual exegesis (plate 14). The idea that the four figures represent Adam seems to be confirmed by the rather disturbing male physiognomies of the four ›Terra‹-figures. They are usually said to be women, but as two of them even appear to have beards, this seems highly unlikely, in spite of their large breasts. In fact, they appear to be androgynous rather than female. At this point it should be remembered that before the creation of Eve, Adam had both male and female qualities. According to St. Augustine »... [God] did not even create the woman that was given him as his wife, as he created the man, but created her out of the man, that the whole human race might derive from one man«.[47] The capital in the ambulatory of Our Lady in Maastricht thus presents us with a very complex and original image of Adam, or sinful humanity, in need of salvation and awaiting Christ (the new Adam), who will conquer sin by trampling the beasts.

Apart from resulting in man's mortality, the Fall resulted in the earth being cursed, for (Genesis 3,17-19) »cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread«. On one of the gallery capitals in the westwork of St. Servatius there are five men working in a vineyard (nr. 3, plate 15). Two figures are busy planting a vine, a third figure is carrying away grapes in a basket, a fourth is supporting a basket on his back and is eating grapes growing on a vine, while a fifth worker is busy treading grapes in a large tub. On another capital (nr. 1) a man is shown leaning on a dibble, while – bent over his labour – he is harvesting a plant and eating his bread. Left of him – on the angle of the capital – is a figure carrying a jug and next to him a man, sitting on a stool, is cutting up vegetables (plates 16 and 17). Surely, this is an accurate rendering of the passage from Genesis quoted above, for it is the herb of the field that is being prepared by the man on the stool, while the other is eating bread, »in the sweat of thy face«. It can hardly be a coincidence that on both capitals there is a figure eating, stooped over his labour. This is the *conditio humana*, the direct result of Man's Fall from grace. This idea is elaborated on after the Flood, when it is said that »while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease!« (Genesis 8,22). In short, he who wants food, will have to work, day-in, day-out, throughout the seasons, throughout the years. This is why the vineyard-capital shows the labourers occupied with activities belonging to the different seasons.

[45] J. Sauer: Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes und seiner Ausstattung in der Auffassung des Mittelalters, Münster 1964, 64, note 2.
[46] A. C. Esmeijer: Divina Quaternitas. A preliminary Study in the Method and Application of visual Exegesis, Assen/Amsterdam 1978, 61.
[47] De Civitate Dei 12,21, 406.

15. Capital nr. 3. Vineyard capital

16. Capital nr. 1 (west side). A man, sitting on a stool, is cutting up vegetables. On the angle of the capital is a figure carrying a jug

17. Capital nr. 1 (south side). A man is shown leaning on a dibble, while bent over his labour he is harvesting a plant and eating his bread

This last capital also brings to mind the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20,1-16), in which Christ compares the kingdom of heaven to a householder, who went out at five different hours to hire workers for his vineyard and at the end of the day paid all of them equally. When the workers who had laboured all day began to murmur, the householder told them, »I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will, with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be the first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen«. The householder, of course, signifies Christ, the vineyard his church, the wages salvation. Expounding on this passage in one of his homilies, Gregory the Great interpreted the five hours as the five ages of man, from childhood to old age, and this view was widely popular throughout the Middle Ages.[48] During each phase man can be brought to work in the vineyard of the

Lord, i.e. to live in accordance with God. Some lead a pure life right from the start, others do not repent of their sins until late in life, but says Gregory – conforming to the spirit of the parable – better late than never at all! Considering the number of workers, i.e. five, on the Maastricht capital, and their seasonal activities, it seems reasonable to suppose that the capital was intended to illustrate this parable.[49] The first two workers planting a vine could well represent those that have come early, the others those that did not join in until later. Thus, the capital has a dual meaning. It confronts the onlooker with one of the direct consequences of the Fall, that is the necessity of labour, but on the other hand, it points out the way to regain grace. Seen in this context it is quite possible that the figures eating bread and grapes refer to the Eucharist, as was suggested by Mekking.[50]

The animal kingdom

According to St. Augustine,[51] after his Fall from grace, man was no more than an animal himself, »for God ordained that infants should begin the world as the young beasts begin it, since their parents had fallen to the level of the beasts in the fashion of their life and of their death; as it is written, »Man when he was in honour understood not; he became like the beasts that have no understanding«. The fate of man was therefore closely related to that of the animals. When God decided to send a flood because of the wickedness of mankind, the animals too were punished (Genesis 6,7). Again, after the Flood, God established a covenant with all the creatures from the ark, man and animal alike, never to send another flood to destroy the earth (Genesis 9,11). However, from now on the relationship between man and animal was disturbed, as man changed his diet, »And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things« (Genesis 9,2-3).

From this moment on, the hostility between man and animal was a fact. Not surprisingly, on the Maastricht capitals man is shown among various species of wild beasts, and many capitals feature human figures in combat with animals. Numerous wild, ferocious and terrifying animals are shown biting or pecking, either at human beings or at plants, and when nothing better can be found, they bite themselves. Clearly, the animals are no longer the peaceful creatures that once inhabited paradise.[52] Although the animals appear to be aggressive, they are hardly ever shown biting each other, however frequently they are opposed to, or confronted with one another. Either they turn their biting heads in another direction or, when standing face to face, they keep their mouths shut or bite in the surrounding foliage. The bear on one of the capitals on the triumphal arch (nr. 31), ferociously biting the neck of the lion next to him, is one of the few exceptions, but is – significantly – being led by a human being, who holds him captive on a chain. All this fits in well with St. Augustine's views,[53] who held that »God was not ignorant that man would sin, and that, being himself made subject now to death, he would propagate men doomed to die, and that these mortals would run to such enormities in sin, that even the beasts devoid of rational will, and who were created in numbers from the waters and the earth, would live more securely and peaceably with their own kind than men, who had been propagated from one individ-

[48] Homiliae in evangelia I, 19, 1-2 (Migne, PL 76, 1154-1155); E. Sears: The Ages of Man, Medieval Interpretations of the Life Cycle, Princeton 1985, 80-88.

[49] The parable was illustrated in the Stavelot Bible (London, British Library MS. Add. 28106, fol.6^r) and is shown on the right jamb of the western portal of the Parma baptistery; Sears (note 48), 84-85.

[50] Mekking (note 8), 289.

[51] De Civitate Dei 13,3, 414.

[52] W. Prangnitz: Das Tier in der Bibel, München-Basel 1963, 62-64.

[53] De Civitate Dei 12,22, 406.

ual for the very purpose of commending concord. For not even lions or dragons have ever waged with their kind such wars as men have waged with one another«. In medieval bestiaries therefore, one frequently finds passages such as these, »O man, do take an example from the civilized behaviour of these animals, devoid of reason!«[54]

In the opinion of John Scotus Erigena, an influential ninth-century scholastic, animals had been created as a symbol for human sensuality. The beasts of burden stood for the five senses, that helped the mind explore the world, while the wild animals symbolized human incentives such as anger, greed, the lust for revenge and so on.[55] In order to return to grace, man had to transcend his animal status. For this purpose, he was endowed with *ratio*, unlike the animals who had nothing to guide them but their senses, their *sensibilitas*. According to Hugh of St. Victor, it is the power of reason that enables man »to know of each thing not only whether it exists, but of what nature it is, and of what properties, and even for what purpose«.[56] Reason thus enables man to learn from nature, for »by contemplating the work of God we learn what ours should be. All nature speaks of God, all nature teaches man«.[57]

The animals and birds on the Maastricht capitals are difficult to identify, as they bear no more than a superficial resemblance to the species commonly found in nature. For instance, all birds have ears, although they are clearly not intended to be owls. However, on the basis of the so-called *Physiologus*-manuscripts[58] and bestiaries, the identity of a number of these animals can be determined. The *Physiologus* is a short treatise, originally written in Greek, dealing with animals, precious stones and even plants, and their symbolism, and takes its name from the mysterious clauses »Physiologus says«, that are used to introduce each chapter. Who or what ›Physiologus‹ – the ›physicist‹ – was, is unknown. Was it the title of the original book or was it the pseudonym of its author? Thus, the origins of this work, probably written in Egypt around 200 AD,[59] are obscure. It was however extremely successful and was soon translated into Latin. The oldest translations are considered to be more or less faithful to the – now lost – original text, even though there are a number of omissions. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when new material, deriving mostly from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* (circa 620), the writings of Solinus, Hugh of Folieto and Gerald of Wales, was added to the text the so-called bestiaries came into being. In contrast to the *Physiologus*, where animals, plants, birds, snakes and stones are discussed in no apparent order, the material is logically arranged.[60] The *Physiologus* and its derivatives were immensely popular throughout the Middle Ages, as can be deduced from the great number of surviving, often richly illuminated manuscripts, and their reflection in the sculpture of the period. It is unfortunate that only one such illustrated manuscript can be traced to the Meuse valley, namely a *Physiologus* once belonging to the abbey of St. Lawrence in Liège.[61] This manuscript is unique for several reasons. Dating from the tenth century, it is apparently one of the oldest illustrated Latin copies of the *Physiologus* extant today. Secondly, the illustrations not only depict the animals described in the text, but also the allegory.[62] Another

54 P. Burger: Jacob van Maerlant. Het boek der natuur, Amsterdam 1989, 52.

55 G. E. Sollbach: Das Tierbuch des Konrad von Megenberg, Dortmund 1989, 22.

56 J. Taylor (ed.): The ›Didascalicon‹ of Hugh of St. Victor. A medieval guide to the arts, New York-London 1968², Book Three, Chapter 3, 50.

57 Hugh of St. Victor, Didascalicon VI-5, v.805 (Migne, PL 176); Taylor (note 56), 145.

58 O. Seel: Der Physiologus, Zürich-Stuttgart 1960; U. Treu: Physiologus. Naturkunde in frühchristlicher Deutung, Berlin 1981.

59 Seel (note 58), 53-58.

60 Klingender (note 24), 340ff.

61 Now Brussels, BR MS.10074 fol.140ᵛ-156ᵛ. Even older are two manuscripts in Bern (MS. 233, MS. 318), dating from the eighth and ninth century respectively. It is also known that in around 984 Bishop Aethelwold gave the monks of Peterborough a ›liber bestiarium‹, that unfortunately has not survived.

62 F. McCulloch: Medieval and Latin and French Bestiaries, University of North Carolina, Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures 33, Chapel Hill 1962, 23. Interesting also is the Averbode Evangeliary (Bibli-

text attesting to the interest felt in the Meuse valley for allegorical beast lore is ›*De Mirabilibus Mundi*‹, probably written by Thierry, abbot of St. Trond from 1099 to 1107, who was hailed by his contemporaries as one of the greatest poets of the late eleventh century.[63] The text was very influential, as is evident from the number of copies extant today[64] and its influence on Orderic Vitalis, Giraud de Barri, the ›Archipoeta‹ and the pseudo-Hugh of St. Victor. Thierry's main source was Solinus, but he also used extracts from Isidore of Seville's ›*Etymologiae*‹ and a poem by Lucan. Interestingly, although the greater part of the text deals with animals, a selection of monstrous races is also included, as well as various plants. Unfortunately, none of the existing copies are illustrated, but, according to M.R. James, some of the titles accompanying the text, and nearly all of the verses were meant to serve as explanations of pictorial representations.[65]

On capital 6 (plate 18) two confronted birds are placed in foliage scrolls and are turning their heads in opposite directions in order to bite the branches surrounding them. Their legs, unlike those of the other birds shown on the capitals, end in a split hoof. Comparison with birds shown in the various bestiaries indicates that such legs are characteristic of the ›medieval‹ ostrich (plate 19). According to Job (39,14-17), the ostrich »leaveth her eggs in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear; Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding«. In

18. Capital nr. 6. Two confronted ostriches in foliage scrolls

19. Ostriches (Cambridge, University Library, MS. Ii.4. 26, fol. 35r)

othèque Generale de l'Université de Liège, MS. 363c), that has several miniatures including themes from the bestiary. On fol. 17v a lady with a unicorn is seated in between Job en St. Matthew, whereas fol. 57v pictures the lion breathing life into his cubs, cf. J. Hoyoux & M. Delcourt: L'Evangéliaire d'Averbode, manuscrit conservé à la Bibliothèque Générale de l'Université de Liège, Bibliotheca Universitatis Leodiensis nr. 30, Liège 1979.

[63] G. Préaux: Thierry de Saint-Trond, auteur du poème pseudo-ovidien ›De Mirabilibus Mundi‹, in: Latomus 6, 1947, 353-366.

[64] Brussels MS. 10615-10729, fol. 179^{r}-183^{v}: Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum McClean MS. 7; Oxford, Bodleian, MS. Digby 100; Eton College no. 91; Cambridge, St. John's College no. 62; London, British Library, Harley 3353; Dublin, Trinity College, no. 270 D. 4.9.

[65] M. R. James: Ovidius De Mirabilibus Mundi, in: E. C. Quinn (ed.): Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway, Cambridge 1913, 286-298.

20. Capital nr. 3. Two confronted dogs with their necks tied together

21. Two confronted dogs (Cambridge, University Library, MS. Ii.4. 26, fol. 20r)

the bestiaries, this policy of the ostrich is considered in a rather more positive manner.[66] She is in fact praised as an example for mankind. »Now if the Ostrich knows its times and seasons, and, disregarding earthly things, cleaves to the heavenly ones – even unto forgetting of its own offspring – how much the more should you, O Man, strive after the reward of the starry calling, on account of which God was made man that he might enlighten you from the powers of darkness and place you with the chiefs of his people in the glorious kingdom of the heavens«.[67] However, the ostrich was not always judged as positively in the Middle Ages. As it has wings but cannot fly Hrabanus Maurus and Gregory the Great considered the bird a hypocrite.[68] Evidently, the ostrich had both positive and negative qualities. The capital is ambiguous in this respect, as neither quality prevails. It is left to the beholder to consider the meanings the bird carried, to take a moral stance and follow those aspects meriting imitation. After all, that is why he has been endowed with reason. The ambiguity of the capital conforms entirely to the spirit of the *Physiologus* where it is stated that every creature has a twofold nature, in being both praiseworthy and reprehensible.[69]

Another capital (nr. 7, plate 20) shows two confronted dogs with their necks tied together, turning backwards in order to bite their own tails. In the Cambridge bestiary (plate 21) there are two similar dogs, arranged in much the same way. However, they are neither tied together, nor do they bite their own tails. Their tongues are hanging out and they simply drag their tails behind them, while in Maastricht the tails are curled between their hind legs. In the text accompanying the Cambridge miniature[70] guard-dogs are compared to priests, for does not the tongue of a dog cure a wound by licking it, just like the wounds of sinners are cleansed, when they are laid bare in

[66] The ostrich did not appear in the original Physiologus-text, but was apparently added later, cf. N. Henkel: Studien zum Physiologus im Mittelalter, Hermeae, Germanistische Forschungen Neue Folge ed. H. de Boor & H. Kunisch, Tübingen 1976, 198.

[67] T. H. White: The book of beasts, 1954, 121-122. This book gives the translated text from Cambridge University Library, MS. Ii. 4.26.

[68] L. H. D. van Looveren: Strauss, in: E. Kirschbaum (ed.): Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie IV, Rome-Freiburg-Basel-Vienna, reprinted 1990, 218.

[69] Seel (note 58), 6.

[70] White (note 67), 61-67.

confession, by the penance imposed by the priest? Moreover, the dog is faithful and will not hesitate to give his own life in order to save that of his master. The dog is also praised for its frugal diet, because, »by no entry can the Enemy take possession of man so quickly as through a voracious gullet«. But again, the dog also has its negative sides. »The fact that a dog returns to its vomit signifies that human beings, after a complete confession, often return incautiously to the crimes which they have perpetrated«. And, when trying to cross a river with a piece of meat in its mouth, the dog is tempted by the reflection thereof in the water. In his attempt to procure this he drops the real meat from his mouth and is left with nothing at all. Whereupon the bestiarist moralizes that »because it leaves the true food in the river out of greed for the shadow, it symbolizes those silly people who often leave that which is peculiarly of the Law out of desire for some unknown thing. Whence it comes that, while they are not able to obtain what they hanker after, what they had before floats uselessly away to loss«. For the modern beholder the dogs on the Maastricht capital may appear to be just dogs. From the above it is, however, quite clear that the dog carried manifold meanings. The medieval beholder, who was well-acquainted with these moral properties, was thus invited to use his reason and consider in what way the dogs pertain to God, to salvation, and in what way they warn against sin and everlasting damnation.

Capital 12 shows two dragons attacking a crouching figure placed on the angle, who has his back turned towards the spectator, thus displaying his prominent spine, since he is wearing nothing more than a skirt.[71] With his right hand he is gripping one of his opponents by the throat, while the dragon on the left is ferociously biting his left hand. Again, bestiaries provide a clue as to the meaning of all this. In works such as these the dragon is classified as the largest of all serpents,[72] while the *Physiologus* already mentions that the serpent flees when he sees man naked, but attacks on seeing him with his clothes on.[73] In this view, clothing is synonymous with sinfulness. The figure on the angle of the capital is neither dressed nor naked and as a consequence is still struggling with the forces of evil. He symbolizes man in a state of sin, not yet lost, as the outcome of the battle has not been decided. By mending his ways he can divert the perils of hell and obtain heavenly bliss. Again, the capital is clearly intended as a warning to the spectator.

A similar theme is shown on another of the quarter capitals, nr. 5, where two dragons are facing one another. Both possess a second head on the end of their tail, which identifies them as Amphivenae.[74] From their appearance they seem rather meek, even frightened. In between them, in the centre of the composition, on the angle of the capital, a curious plant with a prominent fruit is depicted, bearing some resemblance to a cuckoo-pint, albeit that the leaves are completely wrong. This plant might well be a Perindeus or Peridexion,[75] a tree that was said to grow in India and to carry sweet and extremely delicious fruit, on which doves, living in the tree, were supposed to feed. Dragons were afraid of the tree, not even daring to approach its shadow. But they prowled about, hoping to catch any dove stupid enough to leave its safe shelter. In order to keep out of the tree's shadow, the dragons moved east when the shadow lay west and vice versa. So, as long as they stayed in

[71] Similar figures are to be seen on two capitals in the church of San Zeno in Verona, one in the crypt, the other in the southern nave arcade. Both are later than the Maastricht capitals, but, according to G. Valenzano (La basilica di San Zeno in Verona. Problemi architettonici, Vicenza 1993, 75) derive from the work of the Nicolaus-atelier, that worked in Verona in the 1130's. This is not unlikely, as a similar capital appears on the Zodiaque-portal of the church of Sagra di San Michele, which according to C. Verzar (Die romanischen Skulpturen der Abtei Sagra di San Michele. Studien zur Meister Nicolaus und zur »scuola di Piacenza«, Bern 1968, 80) formed part of the original scheme of 1123-30 (97). On the abacus there is an inscription, that reads ›HIC LOCUS EST PACIS CAUSAS DEPONITE LITIUM‹.

[72] White (note 67), 165.

[73] Seel (note 58) 13; White (note 67) 188.

[74] McCulloch (note 62), 81.

[75] ibid. 157-158.

22. Capital nr. 2. Two birds are supporting a crouching half-naked, long-haired mannikin, who is holding them by their wings. The birds are carrying a small stone in their claws

23. Cranes (Cambridge, University Library, MS. Ii.4.26, fol. 32v)

the tree the doves were safe, but if they left it, they were immediately gobbled up. It does not require a great deal of imagination to guess what moralizations were implied by this allegory, for example, »Persevere there in the one Catholic Church. Take as much care as you can not to be caught outside the doors of your refuge. Take care lest the Dragon, the serpent of old, should seize you and gobble you up like Judas – who, as soon as he went out from the Lord and his brother apostles, was instantly devoured by a demon and perished«.[76]

Curiously, the doves are missing on the capital. This could well be due to lack of space; on the other hand, it is conceivable that the beholder is the dove and has to decide whether or not to live in the tree, and obtain everlasting life, or to persist in sin and be damned. According to W. von Blankenburg,[77] most scenes showing two animals flanking a tree can – even without the doves – be interpreted as representations of the Perindeus, the Tree of Life, and symbolize Christ's victory over death and devil.

On capital 2 (plate 22) two birds are supporting a crouching half-naked, long-haired mannikin, who is holding them by their wings. Each bird is carrying a round stone in one of its claws. Stone-carrying is a characteristic of cranes, exemplary guard-birds, who were already praised by the Church Fathers for their vigilance and community sense,[78] and so became a symbol for ›vigilantia‹. The crane does not appear in the *Physiologus*, but is mentioned by Hrabanus Maurus[79] and in works like *De Bestiis et aliorum Rebus*, formerly attributed to Hugh of St. Victor.[80] It was also a favourite addition in the bestiaries (plate 23). The ›Grus‹ or crane was said to eat sand and carry stones as a counterweight against heavy winds, that might blow it off course. Cranes were also said to keep guard at night and to share these night-watches equally. To avoid falling asleep they held stones in their claws.[81] Further, cranes were believed to support tired comrades during flight, giving them a lift until they were sufficiently rested. This is exactly what the birds on the capital appear to be doing.

[76] White (note 67), 161.
[77] W. von Blankenburg: Heilige und dämonische Tiere. Die Symbolsprache der deutschen Ornamentik im frühen Mittelalter, Cologne 1943, 304-5.
[78] E. Dinkler von Schubert: Kranich, in: Kirschbaum (note 68), 557-558.
[79] De universis, VIII 6 (Migne, PL 111, 244).
[80] Migne, PL 177, 40s 148.
[81] White (note 67), 111-112.

24. The birds of Diomedes (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS. C. 246 inf., fol. 13)

Unfortunately, they bear no resemblance at all to cranes, but as the stones held in their claws identify them as guard-birds,[82] it might be possible to connect them to the ›birds of Diomedes‹, that are treated in some detail by St. Augustine in a chapter of *De Civitate Dei* dealing with the transformations of men by demons.[83] Apparently, after the fall of Troy Diomedes was proclaimed a god by his fellow-Greeks. By divine intervention Diomedes was prevented from returning home and his companions were changed into birds. In spite of his godly status, Diomedes was unable to stop or change this. On the island Diomedaea, not far from Monte Gargano in Apulia, a temple was erected in his honour and was guarded by his bird-companions, who sprinkled it with water carried by them in their beaks. If someone from Greece or of the Greek race passed, the birds were said to fly out to meet him; a foreigner, however, was less well-received. The birds flew up at his head, wounding or even killing him with their large and hard beaks. Further on, St. Augustine expresses his doubts concerning the transformation of Diomedes' companions into birds. According to him, when the companions suddenly disappeared, demons replaced them by birds, because »their interest is to persuade men that Diomedes was made a god, and thus to beguile them into worshipping many false gods, to the great dishonour of the true God; and to serve dead men, who even in their lifetime did not truly live, with temples, altars, sacrifices, and priests, all which, when of the right kind, are due only to the one living and true God«.[84] The birds of Diomedes are in fact mentioned by Solinus, and interestingly, also appear in Thierry of St. Trond's *De Mirabilibus Mundi*.[85]

[82] Interestingly, several capitals flanking the central porch in the narthex of the church of St. Mark's in Venice show birds holding stones in their claws. Although they do not bear the slightest resemblance to cranes, considering their location on either side of an important doorway, they may well have been intended as symbols of ›vigilantia‹.

[83] De Civitate Dei 18,16, 622-3.

[84] De Civitate Dei 18,18, 625.

[85] James (note 65), 296, nr. 73: Diomedea auis: Sepulchrum eius.
Pugnaces socii Diomedis in aëra rapti,
Contra naturam uolucrum sumpsere figuram,
Imbrificantque ducis tumulum rorantibus alis.

25. Capital nr. 17. Two pairs of dragons with their necks and tails tied together are pecking their own wings

26. Dragon from the Reiner Musterbuch (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 507, fol. 8r

Some thirteenth-century bestiaries even illustrate them.[86] Apparently they had the form of a coot, the size and colour of a swan and large beaks,[87] a description that matches the birds on the capital fairly well. A better parallel however, can be found in a thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century Solinus-manuscript in the Ambrosiana Library in Milan, the miniatures of which are said to have been based on earlier models (plate 24).[88] If the birds on the capital are indeed the birds of Diomedes, it is likely that the capital warns against the consequences of adhering to some or other heresy.

Capital 24 shows a figure with a forked beard wearing a hat, trousers or skirt and a close-fitting jacket. His legs are bent, his knees point outwards. With his hands he is grasping two bird-like creatures by the gullet, who are pecking his shoulders in return. If it was not for the fact that they do not resemble the birds of the previous capital in any way, one might be tempted to regard them as birds of Diomedes too, in which case the person being pecked would be of foreign extraction and therefore waylaid by the birds. However, their necks are longer, they have ears and also far longer and foliate tails, curling through the man's legs. Thus, in spite of their beaks, wings and birds' feet one may wonder whether they are actually birds and not basilisks, symbols of death, of the devil and of sin.[89] The basilisk is a legendary creature, half-cock, half-snake, and is usually – but not always – depicted with a cock's comb or something of the sort on his head. The Maastricht creatures lack this feature and so their identity remains problematic, but, whatever they are, the scene undoubtedly represents man in the clutches of evil. His plight is worse than that of the already-mentioned sinner on capital 12, for the creatures are all over him. Significantly, he is fully dressed, which further substantiates the idea that on the capitals featuring serpents and their kind, dress is a manifestation of sin.

[86] Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS.254; Cambridge University Library MS. Kk 4 25; London, Westminster Abbey Library MS. 22; Oxford, Bodleian Library MS e Musaeo 136; Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Douce 88ii.

[87] W. George and B. Yapp: The Naming of the Beasts. Natural History in the Medieval Bestiary, London 1991, 136.

[88] Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS. C. 246 inf., fol. 13. Illustrated in L. Cogliati Arano, ›Il manoscritto c. 246 inf. della Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Solino‹, in: G. Vailati Schoenburg Waldenburg (ed.): La miniatura italiana in età romanica e gotica, Storia della miniatura – studi e documenti 5, Atti del I Congresso di Storia della Miniatura Italiana, Florence 1979, 239-258, figure 8.

[89] L. Wehrhahn-Stauch, in: Kirschbaum I (note 68), 251-253.

Elsewhere (capital nr. 17, plate 25) four similar creatures appear, with upright wings, long tails, ears and beaks. Their necks are shorter than those of the previous creatures, as are their legs, which are clearly not birds' legs. In all likelihood these are a species of dragon or serpent (plate 26). They are arranged in pairs, confronting one another. Exactly under the angles of the capital their necks are tied together. While their heads are turned in opposite directions, they are pecking at their own wings. Their tails are curled round their legs and the tails of the two central creatures are also tied together. This brings to mind a passage from Bartholomew Anglicus' *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, a thirteenth-century encyclopedia in nineteen volumes, in which it is said that dragons often band together in groups of four or five. Fastening their tails together and rearing up their heads they sail over rivers and oceans in search of good meat.[90] Similar creatures can be seen on capital 32. Those on the main face of the capital have their necks tied together and their heads are bent so as to touch their own wings. Their tails are linked to those of the birds on the sides of the capital, who repeat the same posture. Curiously, some of these creatures are furry, while others have scales.

On capital 19 (plate 27) one finds a rather similar scene. Two pairs of creatures are shown standing back to back. Those on the left side of the capital bend their long necks in order to gaze at each other, those on the right side bend their crested heads backwards and touch the upper edge of the capital. There is no biting or pecking involved. As on the previous capital their tails and necks are tied together. All these creatures seem quite innocent and can hardly represent depraved beasts such as basilisks or dragons, even though they resemble the creatures on capitals 24 and 32 very closely. In spite of this, they are probably intended as birds, possibly even as coots, as the ›fulica‹ is often illustrated in much the same way. Although the ears of the birds on the capital do not agree with such an identification, it should be noted that a so-called

27. Capital nr. 19. Birds with their tails and necks tied together

28. A coot (New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, MS. 81, fol.65)

coot in a bestiary in the Pierpont Morgan Library has ears too (plate 28).[91] According to the Cambridge bestiary the coot is very intelligent as well as provident and does not eat corpses. It stays in one place for as long as it lives. The moralization is as follows, »In just the same way do the faithful

[90] A. Clark: Beasts and Bawdy, London 1975, 55.
[91] New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS. 81, fol. 65; B. Rowland: Birds with Human Souls, Tennessee 1978, 28.

live, all knit together in one flock. They do not go wandering hither and tither, flapping about in different directions as the heretics do. They are not delighted with secular longings and desires. They always keep together in one place and rest in the Catholic church«.[92] The passage »all knit together in one flock« is especially interesting. Could this be why the birds on the two capitals have their necks and tails tied together? If so, the good join forces in much the same way as the forces of evil rally together.[93]

To the right of the dragon capital there is a capital (nr. 15, plate 29) showing two lions lying down and turning their heads upwards, so as to bite in the vine branches encircling them. The placing of these two capitals in the central bay of the western gallery, on either side of the central oculus, seems quite deliberate. Baldwin Smith considered this oculus to be an image of Christ as the ›sol invictus‹ or the ›sol iustitiae‹.[94] This is very likely as the animals on the capitals flanking the oculus are precisely those of Psalm 91,13, dragons and lions. If the oculus is indeed meant to refer to Christ, then the beasts on the two capitals must refer to the trampled beasts. If this is so, the imagery of the central bay deals with the triumphant Christ and relates to the theme of salvation and redemption through Christ. An interesting parallel for the placement of these two capitals is to be found in the already-mentioned *De Civitate Dei*-manuscript in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence[95]. It shows St. Augustine seated on a throne under a large arch supported by two capitals that feature a dragon and a lion respectively.

Apart from this, it may also have conveyed a political message.[96] The central bay, accentuated as it is by a raised arch and a semi-dome was very obviously the focal point of the westwork. Whoever placed himself in this central bay intended himself to be seen as the ›vicarius Christi‹, a personification dramatized by the huge oculus in the wall behind, that would to all intents and purposes have appeared as a giant halo. In this context the interpretation of Psalm 91,13 is of some importance. Although the Psalm's strong evocation of victory over evil had already been given visual form during the Early Christian and Carolingian periods, and had given rise to lengthy theological interpretations, it is interesting to note

Birds with ears also appear on a capital found at Chartham (Eng.), thought to have come from Canterbury and now kept in the Heritage Museum there (D. Kahn: Canterbury Cathedral and its Romanesque Sculpture, London 1991, 62 and 205). These birds are pecking at their own wings and for this reason Kahn mistakenly identified them as pelicans, while comparing them with an illustration from the Cambridge bestiary showing ›fulica‹, the coot (this time without ears), busy pecking his own wing.

[92] White (note 67), 122-123.

[93] Animals with their necks tied together by a clasp or rope are unusual. B. Brenk (Die Werkstätten der Maastrichter Bauplastik des 12. Jh., in: Wallraf-Richartz Jahrbuch 38, 1976, 57-58) found examples of the motif on the west portal of the church of Mönchengladbach, in the cloisters of Brauweiler abbey, on the southern portal of the abbey church of Maria Laach, in the church of St. Nicolas in Eisenach and in the abbey church of Hecklingen. All these examples date to the last quarter of the twelfth century or are even later. The same motif also occurs on the comb of St. Anno, that was placed in his shrine in 1183, and which is usually dated to 1150. In view of the rather late dates of the examples mentioned above, Brenk suggested a somewhat later date for the Anno-comb. However, the motif was employed shortly before 1150 on one of the imposts in the crypt of Riechenberg near Goslar (J. Salzwedel, Die Krypta der einstigen Stiftskirche zu Riechenberg bei Goslar und die oberitalienisch-französischen Wurzeln ihrer Ornamentik, in: M. Gosebruch and H. H. Grote: Königslutter und Oberitalien. Kunst des 12. Jahrhunderts in Sachsen, Braunschweig 1980, 84-121) and it recurs on a panel of the stone parapet of the imperial throne in Goslar itself.

[94] E. Baldwin Smith: The architectural symbolism of imperial Rome and the Middle Ages, Princeton 1956, 93; see also Mekking (note 8), 243 and Den Hartog 1992 (note 3), 70-74. The latter mistakenly states that the central bay is marked by an apse. Although it was undoubtedly intended to look like an apse, as is obvious from the semi-dome covering this bay, the west wall is in fact straight.

[95] Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS. Plut. XII. 17, fol.3v.

[96] For the function and symbolism of the westwork, cf. Den Hartog (note 3), 71-77.

that revivals of the visual and textual interpretations of the Psalm occurred in early twelfth-century Italy, at times when celebrating the victory of the Roman Church over the German emperor.[97] It has even been claimed that the image of Christ trampling the beasts became an image of the Gregorian reform movement and the Holy See.[98] Probably the best example of such papal propaganda was a now-lost cycle of frescoes in the Lateran palace, in the chambers built next to the chapel of St. Nicholas and dating to the rule of Pope Callixtus (1122–1124) showing the reform popes standing on their respective anti-popes.[99] This renewed interest in the triumphant theme of Psalm 91,13 is particularly interesting, as at about the same time the definition of the papal office was undergoing a transformation, as Herklotz[100] has shown with reference to a passage in one of Peter Damian's letters. In it Christ addresses Pope Victor II (1055–1057) as follows »... ego claves totius universalis Ecclesiae meae tuis manibus tradidi, et super eam te mihi vicarium posui quam proprii effusione redemi«.[101] Not only is the pope referred to as ›vicarius Christi‹, a term that was not to become common usage in the papal curia until about the middle of the twelfth century, in the same passage Peter Damian refers to the papal possession of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, transmitted not through St. Peter but through Christ himself. The term ›vicarius Christi‹, together with similar titles, such as ›Christus Domini‹, ›imago Dei‹, ›vicarius Dei‹ and ›vice Christi‹, traditionally belonged to the kings and emperors and were bestowed on them at the time of their anointment. By usurping the title of ›vicarius Christi‹ the popes obviously sought to undermine imperial and regal claims to such a title. Endeavours like these are very frequent from the eleventh

29. Capital nr. 15. Two lions are shown lying down and turning their heads upwards, so as to bite in the vine branches encircling them

century onwards, at a time when the idea of a sacral kingship was under attack by the reform movement.[102] However, the emperor and his supporters must have been very well aware of what was going on. The power of the papal imagery was understood and used against the pope with equal force. Benzo of Alba, one of the most polemic supporters of Henry IV, identified Gregory VII not only as the Antichrist, but even as Lucifer himself and he wishes

»omnes ordines in mundo dent laudes Altissimo,
Qui concessit Heinrico, casari fortissimo,
Conculcare basiliscum pede beatissimo«.[103]

According to Herklotz[104] the imagery of the papal frescoes in the Lateran palace did not become very popular, being in fact restricted to two monuments, both dating to the late thirteenth century. These are the pedestals of the papal thrones in the upper church, the ›capella papalis‹ of San Francesco in Assisi (circa 1280) and in the church of St.

[97] C. Verzar Bornstein: Victory over Evil: Variations on the Image of Psalm 90-13 in the Art of Nicholaus, in: Scritti di Storia dell'arte in onore di Roberto Salvini, Florence 1984, 45-51.
[98] ibid. 46.
[99] I. Herklotz: Die Beratungsräume Calixtus' II. im Lateranpalast und ihre Fresken. Kunst und Propaganda am Ende des Investiturstreits, in: Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte 52, 1989, 145-214.
[100] ibid, 185.
[101] Epist. VIII. 5: PL 144, 210.
[102] Herklotz (note 99), 211-212.
[103] ibid. 184.
[104] ibid. 190-191.

30. Capital nr. 8. On the left of the capital a seated ape is shown grasping a dog, that is standing on its hind legs, by its paws. A (blind?) and somewhat bent man, dressed in a tunic and a robe, is resting his right hand on the shoulder of the dog that seems to be guiding him

31. Ape and Satyr (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS. C. 246 inf., fol. 37^r)

John at the Lateran itself (between 1288–92). On both the four beasts of Psalm 91,13 are shown, thus indicating that the pope received his authority directly from Christ, that he was, so to speak the ›vicarius Christi‹, who would tread upon lion and aspis, and who would trample the basilisk and the dragon underfoot. There is, however, another – somewhat earlier – example, not mentioned by Herklotz. On the screens encasing the imperial throne of Goslar (circa 1200[105]), there are to the left and right of the steps leading up to the throne a dragon and a basilisk. As a true ›vicarius Christi‹, the emperor seated on his throne would be flanked by these two creatures. On the sides of the screens various fabulous animals and a crowned head from which two dragons emerge are featured. Apparently the German rulers had no intention of forfeiting their claims to sacral kingship and had decided to fight the pope's usurpation of their age-old prerogatives with his very own weapons, as is also evident from the two Maastricht capitals flanking the oculus in the central bay of the westwork gallery and even more clearly from the double relief surmounting the screen dividing westwork from nave, where St. Servatius and St. Peter are shown as equals, receiving their keys from Christ himself.[106]

Probably the most intriguing of the Maastricht capitals (nr. 8, plate 30) is that featuring a seated ape grasping a dog, standing on its hind legs, by its paws. A somewhat bent man, dressed in a tunic and a robe, is resting his right hand on the shoulder of the dog that seems to be guiding him. In the absence of parallels this capital is extremely difficult to interpret. Remarkably, it is the only capital of the series to show a normally dressed human being together with animals. The left half of the capital bears an extraordinary resemblance to an illustration of a sitting ape (scimia) and a dog-shaped satyr (saturis) in the Milan Solinus mentioned above (plate 31),[107] that was probably

[105] A. Legner: Deutsche Kunst der Romanik, München 1982, 179.

[106] Mekking (note 8), 308-312.

[107] Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana MS. C. 246 inf., fol. 37r.

copied from a sixth- or seventh-century prototype.[108] Already in Antiquity the satyr was often classified as some sort of ape[109] and Solinus in fact divided apes into ›simia‹ (without a tail), ›cercopitheci‹ (with a tail), ›cynocephali‹ (with a dog's head and a long tail), ›sphinxes‹ (roughly haired and meek), ›satyri‹ (lively and with pleasant facial features) and ›callitriches‹ (with a pointed snout, a long beard and a broad tail).[110] This classification was still accepted in later times.[111] In bestiaries containing Solinus' text, ›satiri monstruosi‹ follow directly on ›simiae‹ and in some bestiaries even the Solinus-illustrations were more or less retained.[112] Thus, the figure resembling a dog on the Maastricht capital could in fact be some species of ape; either a satyr, on the basis of the Milan Solinus, or a cynocephalus.[113]

The ape was usually considered to be a rather negative sort of creature. Plato, following Heraclitus in his *Hippias maior*, already held that the most beautiful of apes is ugly when compared to man, while the wisest of men is an ape beside God[114] and this line of thinking was echoed in the writings of Plotinus and of St. Augustine.[115] Other Church Fathers thought even worse of the ape, using the term ›simia‹ for every enemy of Christ. In the *Physiologus* one finds the idea, that »the ape not having a tail, is without kind, and his rear, without a tail, is vile; like the devil he has no good end«.[116] Since God created all animals perfect the ape was thought to have lost his tail in much the same way as the devil had lost his; the devil by trying to imitate God, the ape in his attempt to emulate man.[117]

In the Middle Ages Aesop's fable concerning a mother-ape and her two children, who are being chased by hunters, was extremely popular. The mother was said to hold her most beloved child tightly against her breast, while the other had to clasp itself on to her back. During the chase the mother-ape tired and could not help dropping her favourite child. In the early twelfth-century bestiary by Pierre of Thaon this is explained as follows, »the ape-devil ridicules those who do evil, and carries them in front of her into hell, while she leaves the good behind with God«.[118] A similar idea is pursued in a treatise entitled *Das fliessende Licht der Gottheit*, written by Sister Mechtildis in the thirteenth century. Here we read, that »the soul of the redeemed hath thrown the ape of the world from him«.[119]

Others interpreted the fable rather differently. The favourite child now becomes a symbol for carnal pleasure, while the hated child symbolizes the ›bona animae‹. By casting off her sins the ape-mother is redeemed. Others, for example Jacques of Vitry, regarded the hated child as ›sin‹, which prevented the mother from getting away. The hunters are now the ›venatores infernales‹, Satan's troops, whose desire it is to drag the sinner off to hell.[120] Apparently, according to Janson,[121] a second, somewhat milder point of view evolved in the Romanesque period, whereby the ape was no longer held to be the devil incarnate, but a symbol for the sins of mankind.[122] The ape came to serve as a warning against pride and as a reminder »that ›there, but for the Grace of God, go I‹; if we refuse to accept God's offer of salvation; if we repudiate the spiritual aspect of our nature and unreasoningly abandon ourselves to the sins of the flesh; in short, if we let our animal impulses get the better

[108] Wittkower (note 12), 171.

[109] ibid. 191.

[110] H. W. Janson: Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Studies of the Warburg Institute 20, London 1952 (reprinted Nendeln/Liechtenstein 1976), 15-16.

[111] Migne, PL 177, c. 62, Lib. II, 12: ›De simiis‹.

[112] Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. 764, fol. 17^{v} and British Library, Harley 4751, fol. 11^{v}.

[113] Albertus Magnus uses the term *canina simia* for the cynocephalus. Janson (note 110), 84.

[114] Janson (note 110), 15.

[115] ibid. 15 and 287.

[116] F.J. Carmody: Physiologus latinus versio y, University of California Publications in Classical Philology, XII, no. 7, Berkeley, 1941, 121.

[117] von Blankenburg (note 77), 183; Janson (note 110), 19.

[118] McCulloch (note 62), 87.

[119] von Blankenburg, (note 77), 183; Mechtildis von Magdeburg: Das fliessender Licht der Gottheit, Berlin 1907.

[120] Janson (note 110), 33.

[121] ibid. 29-71.

[122] Cf. Hrabanus Maurus: De Universis, Book VIII, chapter 1 (Migne, PL 111, 225): »simiae... peccatis fetidos homines significant«.

32. Capital 14, east side. A hoofed animal with two bodies and a ram's head

of us, then we sink to the level of the ape, human in form but laughable and contemptible in all our actions because we have cut ourselves off from the source of divine wisdom«.[123]

To return to the Maastricht capital, the harsh expression on the seated ape's face and his brutal treatment of the creature on his right bring out his wicked character. As for the creature on his right, whatever it is – dog, wolf, fox or ape – it too is likely to have been intended as something evil. Like the ape, the wolf had a bad reputation and was regarded as an incarnation of the devil, or as a personification of human sin and of greed in particular.[124] The fox was thought of as a sly and crafty animal. Particularly interesting in this context is one of Phaedrus' fables featuring an ape and a fox. The ape, signifying jealousy or luxury, asks the fox, who stands for greed or avarice, for part of his tail, but is haughtily refused.[125] Phaedrus' fables enjoyed great popularity in the Middle Ages, and that of the fox and the ape was even illustrated in the Apocalypse of Saint-Sever.[126] However, as the fable makes no mention of an ensuing brawl, it is unlikely that this is what is being represented on the left half of the capital. Other stories featuring ape and fox are all imbued with a similar moral; the ape is sinful and by thinking too much of himself causes his own ruin.

Whatever the exact meaning of the Maastricht capital may be, the ape surely is the incarnation of some vice and the animal with whom he quarrels is no better. Their quarrel can in all likelihood be equated to the battle inherent to the earthly city. If this is so, the fully-clad human figure leaning on the dog-like creature probably signifies sinful humanity, striding along the path of doom.

Not every creature on the Maastricht capitals can be identified. Even the *Physiologus*-manuscripts and bestiaries cannot solve all problems concerning identification. The fauna depicted in the manuscripts, like that on the capitals, is usually too dissimilar from nature as to be recognizable without the accompanying text. Frequently the same module was used to portray a variety of creatures that are quite distinct in reality.[127] And so, without inscriptions it is impossible to determine whether certain quadrupeds on the Maastricht capitals (nrs. 11 and 29) feature lions, tigers, pards, panthers, lynxes, foxes or wolves, as in contemporary manuscripts they all look pretty much the same. For example, the ferocious looking creatures, viciously biting the foliage on capital 11, seem to fit the description of the wolf, who was known for his sharp teeth and powerful paws. On the other hand, according to the Cambridge bestiary,[128] the wolf was unable to turn his neck backward and that is precisely what the animals on the capital are

[123] Janson (note 110), 29.

[124] »... The unbefriended man gets wolves as his comrades, beasts abounding in treachery; very often that comrade will savage him. For the grey one has to be dread, and for the dead man a grave; it will mourn, this grey wolf, out of ravening and it will wander round the grave, but not with a dirge nor indeed will it weep for the death and destruction of man, but will always wish for more«, an Anglo-Saxon maxim (no.146) from the Exeter Book, in: S. A. J. Bradley: Anglo-Saxon poetry, London 1982, 349.

[125] L. Hervieux: Les fabulistes latins. Depuis le siècle d'Auguste jusqu'à la fin du moyen âge, part II, ›Phèdre et ses anciens imitateurs‹, Paris 1884, 59, 137, 169, 213, 243, 272, 325, 354, 380, 413, 464, 550, 585, 767.

[126] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS. Lat. 8878, fol. 14; Janson (note 110), 38.

[127] McCulloch (note 62), 75-76.

[128] White (note 67), 56-57.

doing. Apart from their terrifying expression there is little to identify them by. Even so, it is quite clear that the animals shown were not intended simply to fill up empty spaces. In the Middle Ages, animals carried a symbolic meaning and were thought to have been created in order to teach mankind. Seen from this point of view even monsters, prodigies and the like had their significance. According to St. Augustine, who has a lot to say about things contrary to nature, »it was not impossible to God to create such natures as He pleased, so it is not impossible to Him to change these natures of His own creation into whatever He pleases, and thus spread abroad a multitude of those marvels which are called monsters, portents, prodigies, phenomena, and which if I were minded to cite and record, what end would there be to this work? They say that they are called »monsters«, because they demonstrate or signify something; »portents«, because they portend something; and so forth... Yet, for our part, these things which happen contrary to nature, and are said to be contrary to nature (...), and are called monsters, phenomena, portents, prodigies, ought to demonstrate, portend, predict that God will bring to pass what He has foretold regarding the bodies of men, no difficulty preventing Him, no law of nature prescribing to Him His limit«.[129]

Thus, the capital showing a hoofed creature with two bodies and a single ram's head (capital 14, east side, plate 32) could well be indicative of God's omnipotence and of the fulfilment of the promise of resurrection.[130]

33. Capital nr. 10. Foliage capital

34. Capital nr. 13. Foliage capital

The vegetation

The plants on the Maastricht capitals are highly stylized; determination in a botanical sense is therefore impossible. However, they are certainly not uniform. On capital 22 two vigorous stems, each growing from a leafy hump, are shown tied together but then curling round in opposite directions to end in a palmate leaf held together by a

[129] De Civitate Dei, 778.

[130] The double-bodied creature is not only found on capitals, but also on tympana and baptismal fonts, which according to von Blankenburg (note 77), 224-238 must indicate that it had a very specific meaning. He regards it as a »Symbol der Überwindung der Gegensätze als auch... Symbol der durch das heilige Taufwasser bewirkten Verwandlung und Auferstehung im neuen Geiste«. Similar creatures are to be found in St. Gabriel's Chapel in the crypt of Canterbury cathedral and at Weissendorf in Bavaria, cf. Kahn (note 91), 46-47. She draws parallels with a manuscript from St. Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury (London, British Library, Royal MS. 5. B. XV, fol. 3) and a Norman manuscript (Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS. A. 85, fol. 36^{v}). See also, V. Slomann: Bicorporates. Studies in Revivals and Migrations of Art Motifs, Munksgaard-Copenhagen 1977.

35. Capital nr. 20. Foliage capital

ring. Another capital (nr. 10, plate 33) is similar, but instead of five leaves there are three longer ones, that somewhat hide the encircling branches from view. Between these leaves spring short little stems carrying bunches of fruit. A third capital (nr. 13, plate 34) features two plants, each with four upright folded leaves, facing the centre of the plant, from where they originate. From each leaf springs a second leaf, bending the other way and harbouring fruit. Yet another capital (nr. 9) shows rows of simple leaves with a central nerve, alternating with rows of palmettes. The entire surface of capital 16 is covered with intersecting ellipses, held together by tiny twigs, the extremities of which have small and unobtrusive, crisp leaves. Curiously, unlike all the other free-standing capitals, it has the same decoration on all of its four sides. A particularly well-managed capital (nr. 20, plate 35) has twisted branches forming entwined oval shapes, sprouting small volutes underneath and carrying heavy, drooping leaves above.

Although the various species of plant life shown on the capitals cannot be identified, their great diversity suggests that they too had symbolic implications. Maybe they were intended to represent the various virtues by which man could gain salvation, following the interpretation given to the trees in the so-called *Liber Floridus*, that was written circa 1120 by Lambert, a canon from St. Omer. Nine copies of this book are still extant.[131] The original is kept in the University Library of Ghent. In this work the Church is described as the *arbor bona* and shown as a tree with widespread branches. Between the roots there is a medallion with the bust of *Karitas* and the branches support further medallions with busts of the personifications of the remaining virtues. The branches end in pointed leaves of various colours and designs. Apparently, they represent a variety of trees, that can be identified by their legends as: rosa, pinus, terebinthus, buxus, cedrus, oliva, cypressus, abies, platanus, cynamomum and balsam. The text accompanying the Karitas-medallion reads »Sicut ex una arboris radice multi rami prodeunt, sic multe virtutes ex una karitate generantur«. The tree itself is explained as follows: »Arbor bona, que est regina a dextris Dei, varietate circumdata, id est fidelium Ecclesia, virtutum diversitate amicta« and above the tree there are quotations from James, Paul, David and Solomon. The *arbor bona*, the Church, is contrasted to the *arbor mala*, Synagogue, shown as a fig-tree. Its branches are uniform and plain green and support medallions featuring the vices. Its roots are already being threatened by two axes. The accompanying text refers to a sermon held by John the Baptist (Matthew 3,2–10), »repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand... And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire«.

In this context, capital 16 (plate 36), that has the same, rather sterile foliage on all of its four sides is interesting, especially as it is the only foliage capi-

[131] L. Behling: Ecclesia als Arbor Bona. Zum Sinngehalt einiger Pflanzendarstellungen des 12. und frühen 13. Jahrhunderts, in: Zeitschrift für Kunstwissenschaft XIII, 3-4, 1959, 139-154.

36. Capital nr. 16. The ›Arbor Mala‹

37. Capital nr. 9. Foliage capital, showing rows of imbrications alternating with rows of palmettes

tal where there are no flowers or fruit. This must be deliberate, and in view of the above it does not seem too far-fetched to interpret this foliage as the ›arbor mala‹, the tree of death.[132]

In the *Liber Floridus* in the Herzog-August Library in Wolfenbüttel[133] trees are shown as the eight beatifications. On fol. 76^r one finds the cedar (the poor in spirit), the cypress (the meek) and the palm (they that mourn), standing on small hillocks, representing respectively Lebanon, Sion and Cadiz. The fourth, the rose of Jericho (they who hunger and thirst after righteousness), is shown growing against a city wall with on either side a tower. On fol. 76^v the olive (the merciful), the plane-tree (the pure in heart), the terebinth (the peacemakers) and the vine (they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake) are featured.

38. The Rose of Jericho in the *Liber Floridus* in the Herzog-August Library in Wolfenbüttel (Cod. Guelf. 1 Gud. lat, fol. 76^r)

[132] O. Goetz: Der Feigenbaum in der religiösen Kunst des Abendlandes, Berlin 1965, 43, cites an interesting passage from a poem concerning the Holy Cross by Heinrich von Freiberg, in which the Tree of Knowledge is described as follows: »ein Baum von starken Stamm und Haupt, doch kahl die Aeste, unbelaubt.«

[133] Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August Library, Cod. Guelf. 1 Gud. lat.

Interestingly, the inflorescence of the rose of Jericho is remarkably similar to that of the Maastricht capital (nr. 9, plates 37 and 38) with nerved leaves and palmettes; the capital only lacks the vigorous twisted stalks. The palm too might be represented in Maastricht, not as it is found in nature, but as a palmate leaf encircled by a stalk (nr.22). According to Isidore of Seville the palm took its name from its branches, spread like the fingers on a hand.

The correspondence between trees and virtues can also be found in other manuscripts. In CLM 14159 in the State Library in Stuttgart[134] there is a representation of Aaron's rod shooting into flower (Numbers 17:1–3). The accompanying inscription likens the rod to the cross, that blossomed and bore a delicious fruit, the faith of mankind. In the actual text the parallel is further elaborated on. Like Aaron's rod, the cross first brought forth the budding faith, then it burst into flower. By its bearing fruit and leaves the cross signifies that the righteous are stable in their faith and can shake of unfruitful sin. Following this, the fruit of the cross is interpreted as faith, hope and charity as well as all the virtues. A twelfth-century manuscript in Leipzig (Univ. Library cod. ms. 305) shows two trees. The first tree, the Arbor mala, has drooping leaves and in its crown there is a medallion with a representation of the Old Adam. The trunk of the tree is inscribed with the words Superbia and Luxuria. The other tree, inscribed with the words Humilitas and Karitas is obviously the tree of virtue. Its leaves stand upright and in its crown there is a medallion with a portrait of Christ, the ›novus Adam‹.[135]

Clearly, each individual capital gives expression to the same underlying theme, without the necessity of being bound to a strict order. The Fall of Man introduced evil into the world and the necessity of labour. Man became mortal, as did the animals. Sin brought along chaos in its wake. From all this earthly confusion there is but one way out, a life conforming to God's commands. Only then can paradise and the Tree of Life be regained. The capitals in the St. Servatius westwork show this Tree of Life amidst the earthly chaos, that was the result of sin and disobedience. Moreover, in the central bay we find an allusion to Christ's trampling of the beasts, a sure sign of man's redemption and salvation. These are the only capitals that have a fixed place and are indicative of the fact that it should be man's central concern to aspire to life everlasting. To aid mankind in his aspirations – for good or for evil – there is nature, in the form of plants and animals. The animals shown often have positive as well as negative sides.[136] It is up to the spectator to discover what aspects are worthy of imitation. Animals are led by their senses, ›sensibilitas‹; man – unlike the animals – has been given intellect, ›ratio‹, enabling him to choose between good and evil, between heaven and earth, and so, man, unlike all other creatures living on earth, is capable of deciding his own fate. If he chooses the earthly city, i.e. for the senses, he is no better than an animal[137] and eternal damnation will be his share. If he chooses the City of God the prospect of paradise is set before him, of salvation and life everlasting.

There is in fact a parallel for this. On folios 2^{v} and 3^{r} of a manuscript of St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* in Schulpforta,[138] written between 1168 and 1180

[134] A. Boeckler: Die Regensburg-Prüfeninger Buchmalerei des XII. und XIII. Jahrhunderts, München 1924, 36 and plate 29, figure 33.

[135] O. Schmitt (ed.): Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte I, Stuttgart 1937, 163-164 (plates 6 and 7).

[136] »But it is ridiculous to condemn the faults of beasts and trees, and other such mortal and mutable things as are void of intelligence, sensation, or life, even though these faults should destroy their corruptible nature«, says St. Augustine (De Civitate Dei 12,4, 383-384),... »It is not with respect to our convenience or discomfort, but with respect to their own nature, that the creatures are glorifying to the Artificer... The same thing, then, when applied in one way, is destructive, but when applied suitably, is most beneficial«.

[137] De Civitate Dei 14,28, 477, »(The inhabitants of the earthly city) became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things«.

[138] Schulpforta, Bibliothek der Kgl. Landesschule, MS. lat. A 10; A. de Laborde: Les MSS à peintures de la Cité de Dieu, 1909, volume II, 216-7 and plates II and III.

39. The City of God (Schulpforta, Bibliothek der Kgl. Landesschule, MS. lat. A 10, fol. 2ᵛ)

by the monk Erkenbertus for Abbot Azzo of the Benedictine monastery of St. Mary's at Posa (formerly Bosau) near Zeitz, scenes representing the six biblical eras are juxtaposed with scenes from profane history. The six biblical eras (fol. 2ᵛ) pertain to the city of God. To give expression to the idea that redemption is only possible through Christ, the artist actually painted these scenes on to the effigy of Christ, of whom only the head, hands and feet can be seen (plate 39). The scenes from profane history (fol. 3ʳ) show the development of the earthly city through time. Both the city of God and the earthly city are framed by town walls, on to which medallions have been mounted. The medallions of the earthly city feature the pagan gods, while those of the city of God show animals from the bestiaries, twenty in all. Starting top left and moving along to the right these are a chicken, a falcon, a lion (placed above Christ's head), a bear, a leopard, a cock, a rhinoceros, an animal called serra, a yale,[139] a wolf, a deer, a boar being hunted by a human figure sup-

[139] De Laborde was unable to identify this creature but from the position of its horns, one up, one down, it is likely to be a yale, an animal able to swivel its horns independently.

porting a javelin, a hare, a crane, a peacock, a swan, a goose, a duck and an elephant. De Laborde[140] considered these animals to be devoid of meaning, in other words as pure decoration. This is unlikely. Like the animals on the Maastricht capitals all the bestiary animals in the miniature carry a meaning portending to redemption and salvation. On the basis of the similarities between this miniature and the iconography of the Maastricht capitals, one may wonder whether an illustrated manuscript of St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* was used as a model for the capitals. It seems a reasonable assumption,[141] but unfortunately it cannot be proved, as there is hardly any comparative material. Before its translation into French by Raoul de Praelles, *De Civitate Dei* was in fact rarely illustrated. Of the sixty-one manuscripts discussed by De Laborde[142] in his monumental study of the illustrated copies of *De Civitate Dei*, only the two manuscripts that have already been discussed can be dated to the twelfth century.[143]

All in all, the Maastricht capitals are a perfect crystallization in stone of the moral and religious views of the twelfth century. The representations on the capitals are intended to edify the beholder and persuade him to trust in God. Moreover, they were intended to warn lay and ecclesiastical worthies alike that power and status on this earth do not guarantee admittance to the heavenly city.[144] As Peter the Chanter († 1197) already said »even in building churches men sin«.[145] It is precisely in the western parts of St. Servatius that a capital cycle on a moralizing theme was most appropriate, as here the ecclesiastical authorities performed their more worldly duties.[146]

[140] ibid.

[141] Throughout the Middle Ages, *De Civitate Dei* was of course one of the most popular theological treatises. According to Einhard it was even Charlemagne's favourite literature, read to him during mealtimes. In a westwork, with its imperial connotations, it was thus particularly appropriate to illustrate passages from St. Augustine's great work.

[142] ibid.

[143] In addition to these there is an illustrated copy of the first 22 chapters of *De Civitate Dei*, probably from Nonantola (northern Italy), in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (cf. E. G. Millar: The Library of A. Chester Beatty. A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Manuscripts, Volumes I and II, 1927, 141-145 and plates XLIV-LVI). This manuscript has 22 large initials, one in front of each book, that are remarkable for the extraordinary realistic birds, fishes and other motives found as historiations. Apart from animals there are two representations of St. Augustine himself, of a knight on horseback and of a standing man in armour fighting some sort of monstrosity. By far the most curious initial is the letter E on fol.133^v, which is formed by the figure of a nude man, crouching and turned over at right angles. His arms form the two arms of the letter and his body and legs the inner shaft.

[144] De Civitate Dei 14,28, 477.

[145] »Item etiam in ecclesiis construendis peccatur«, in: Petri Cantoris Verbum abbreviatum, Migne, PL 205, 56, kol. 255, cf. also V. Mortet: Hugue de Fouilloi, Pierre le Chantre, Alexandre Neckam et les critiques dirigées au douzième siècle contre le luxe des constructions, in: Mélanges offerts à M. C. Bémont, Paris 1913, 105-137.

[146] Den Hartog (note 3), 7

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