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Time and Place in a Story Told by a Painting. *The Jerusalem Triptych* from Gdańsk: Issues of Narration and Iconography

One of the most important works in the collections of the National Museum in Warsaw, *The Jerusalem Triptych*[1] (**figs 1–2**), recently took part in two major international exhibitions, *Van Eyck to Dürer. The Influence of Early Netherlandish Painting on European Art, 1430–1530* (Bruges, 2010–11) and *Europa Jagellonica 1386–1572. Art and Culture in Central Europe under the Jagiellonian Dynasty* (Kutná Hora–Warsaw–Potsdam, 2012–13). The triptych is also one of the focal points in our museum's recently refurbished Gallery of Medieval Art.

This grand painting (138.5 × 396.8 cm, 138.5 × 421.8 cm with its predella) came to us from the Jerusalem Chapel of Saint Mary's Church in Gdańsk. The chapel has been managed by the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary (active since 1385) since 1497, who also direct the parish. The work was probably created in c. 1497–1500, and, as its most recent conservation shows, in two stages. First, an unknown Netherlandish or North German master from the Netherlands-Germany border area or from the Rhineland, who worked in the sphere of influence of Dirk Bouts and his sons, painted its wings and the landscape background of the central panel. Then, one of his associates or a different master of the Rhineland or Westphalian stylistic idiom completed its main panel by filling in the figural scenes. Why the work on the retable began with the wings, a departure from typical practices, remains an enigma. Detailed study will

[1] Andrzej Kłoczowski, "Ołtarz z kościoła N.M. Panny w Gdańsku zwany Jerozolimskim," in *Późny gotyk. Studia nad sztuką przełomu średniowiecza i czasów nowych. Materiały sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki, Wrocław 1962* (Warsaw: PWN, 1965), pp. 298–304; Adam S. Labuda, "Malarstwo tablicowe w Gdańsku w 2. poł. XV w." (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), pp. 91–104, 197–200, cat. no. 48; Tadeusz Dobrzeniecki, "Sukcesywny i symultaniczny program narracji w gdańskim Tryptyku Jerozolimskim," *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie* 1989–1990, XXXIII–XXXIV, pp. 139–233; Adam S. Labuda, "Dzieła tworzone w Gdańsku w drugiej połowie XV i w początkach XVI wieku," in Jerzy Domasłowski, Adam S. Labuda, Alicja Karłowska-Kamzowa, *Malarstwo gotyckie na Pomorzu Wschodnim* (Warsaw–Poznań: PWN, 1990), pp. 135–8. Prace Komisji Historii Sztuki – Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, vol. 17; Adam S. Labuda, "Malarstwo tablicowe na Pomorzu Wschodnim," in *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce*, vol. 1: *Synteza*, Adam S. Labuda, Krystyna Secomska, eds (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2004), p. 347. Dzieje Sztuki Polskiej, vol. 3, part 3; ibid., vol. 2, *Katalog zabytków*, Adam S. Labuda, Krystyna Secomska, Andrzej Włodarek, eds, p. 171 (with a full bibliography); Till-Holger Borchert et al., *Van Eyck tot Dürer. De Vlaamse primitieven & Centraal-Europa 1430–1530*, exh. cat., Groeningemuseum, Bruges, 29 October 2010 – 30 January 2011 (Tielt–Brugge: Lannoo, 2010); in English: *Van Eyck to Dürer. The Influence of Early Netherlandish Painting on European Art, 1430–1530* (London–New York: Thames & Hudson, 2011); in German: *Van Eyck bis Dürer. Altniederländische Meister und die Malerei in Mitteleuropa 1430–1530* (Stuttgart: Belser Verlag, 2010); in French: *De Van Eyck à Dürer. Les primitifs flamands & l'Europe centrale 1430–1530* (Paris: Hazan, 2010), pp. 506–7, cat. no. 277 (Małgorzata Kochanowska); *Europa Jagellonica 1386–1572. Sztuka i kultura w Europie Środkowej za panowania Jagiellonów. Przewodnik po wystawie*, Jiří Fajt, ed., exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw, Royal Castle in Warsaw, 10 November 2012 – 27 January 2013 (Warsaw: The National Museum in Warsaw, Royal Castle in Warsaw, 2012), p. 156, cat. no. II.33.

be necessary to explore this technical aspect with both technological analyses (IRR, X-ray, X-ray fluorescence spectrometry etc.) and stylistic and comparative ones. Such a study would allow us both to delve into the creative process and to learn more about the artistic circles and workshops of its authors.

This essay will focus on another aspect of the painting – its pictorial narrative. *The Jerusalem Triptych* is one of very few Late Medieval painted altars that use many consecutive, and at the same time simultaneous, episodes to tell a story from the Bible or a hagiography. This essay will show that this triptych represents a rare attempt to reveal the presence of time in history and in the present.

Natural, Liturgical and Historiographical Time

In the Middle Ages, the perception of time, recording and measuring it,[2] incorporated an awareness of divisions in biological, astronomical, vegetal and historical (social) time. For example, in the seventh century, Bede the Venerable recognized that time could be measured by using various categories: "nature" (the solar year), custom (months) and "power" (at the end of the fifteen-year indiction, the Roman Empire enforced a special tax; Sunday was the official day off work and so on).[3] In the fourteenth century, Nicolas d'Oresme made a distinction between natural time, which was marked by the material phenomenon of movement, and formal time, which was mathematically measured.[4]

Jacques Le Goff defines two eras in the human experience of time: the mature medieval period as the theological Church's Time, which focussed on Salvation, eternity and an extra-temporal God, and was subordinated to the liturgical calendar; followed by Merchant's Time, the era of commerce and of traders, ruled by the practical calculation of negotiations, transactions, enterprises, transport and travel, aimed at making a profit.[5] Le Goff's division is too broad, however, to serve as a tool for analyzing the medieval concept of time. Natural time was marked by the astronomical rhythm of the units of the solar and lunar year, the rhythm of the seasons, months associated with work in the field, times of day and night and so on. Church calculations were based on these divisions associated with nature: the liturgical calendar, the calendar of general and local holy days in a particular diocese, and the system of regular times of services and prayers (matins, primes, Third Hour, sexts, nones, vespers, complines listed in breviaries and hours, which governed the clock in the lives of monks, canons and the lay piety).

[2] See, e.g., *Mensura – Maß, Zahl und Zahlensymbolik im Mittelalter*, Albert Zimmermann, ed. (Berlin–New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1983–84). Miscellanea mediaevalia. Veröffentlichungen des Thomas-Instituts der Universität zu Köln, 16; Hans-Werner Goetz, "Zeit/Geschichte. Mittelalter," in *Europäische Mentalitätsgeschichte. Hauptthemen in Einzeldarstellungen*, Peter Dinzelbacher, ed. (Stuttgart: A. Kröner, 1993; expanded edition: Stuttgart: A. Kröner, 2008); Peter Dinzelbacher, *Lebenswelten des Mittelalters 1000–1500*, (Badenweiler: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Bachmann, 2010), chapter "Zeit," pp. 138–58. Bachmanns Basiswissen, 1. See also "Constructions of Time in the Late Middle Ages," *Disputatio. An International Transdisciplinary Journal of the Late Middle Ages*," vol. 2, Carol Poster, Richard J. Utz, eds (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1997).

[3] Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, "Hodie tot anni sunt. Große Zeiträume im Geschichtsdenken der Frühen und Hohen Scholastik," in *Mensura – Maß, Zahl und Zahlensymbolik im Mittelalter*, op. cit., pp. 192–211, esp. p. 193.

[4] Jürgen Sarnowsky, "Zur Messung von Zeit und Bewegung," in *Mensura...*, op. cit., pp. 153–61, esp. p. 156.

[5] Jacques Le Goff, "Merchant's Time and Church's Time in the Middle Ages," in id., *Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, Ill. and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), trans. Arthur Goldhammer, pp. 29–42.

The system of the normative measuring of time, the church calendar,[6] combined computistics, based on the ancient tradition of astronomy and the computation of time of the Sun's (apparent) revolution around the Earth and the moon's around the Earth – the solar and lunar calendars – with the canonical settings of liturgical feast days going back to the tradition of the First Council of Nicaea in 325.[7] The church calendar absorbed the astronomical calendar. The vernal and autumnal equinoxes, when day and night are of equal length, occurred under the signs of Aries and Libra, respectively, and the summer and winter solstices under the signs of Cancer and Capricorn, marking the seasons, while the cycles of change in the natural world were translated into different systems of holy days.[8] Superposed on them were various political calculations, such as those of power: counting the days from the beginning of a pontificate, from the investiture of a bishop or from the enthronement of a king or the lord of a manor. This method of measuring time was dominant in local historical writings, chronicles and "histories" of monarchies, countries or dioceses. Historiography merged the Christian computation both before and after the birth of Christ with the ancient Roman one, from the founding of the City (*ab urbe condita*).

Mechanical clocks came into use in the first half of the fourteenth century and became widespread in its second half and in the fifteenth century.[9] The Teutonic Order began to introduce mechanical clocks at the end of the fourteenth century to count the canonical hours

[6] Arno Borst, *The Ordering of Time. From the Ancient Computus to the Modern Computer* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); Józef Szymański, *Nauki pomocnicze historii* (Warsaw: PWN, 2001), pp. 107–53; Henryk Wąsowicz, "Kalendarz juliański i gregoriański" and "Kalendarz chrześcijański," in *Czas i kalendarz*, Zdzisław J. Kijas OFM, ed. (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PAT, 2001), pp. 77–115 and 117–58. Biblioteka Ekumenii i Dialogu, 14; Tadeusz Jurkowlaniec, *Gmach pamięci. Z badań nad dekoracją rzeźbiarską prezbiterium katedry we Wrocławiu* (Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki PAN, 2004), chapter "Zasady kalendarza," pp. 129–38.

[7] The council placed the day of the Resurrection on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox, which fell on 21 March; this makes it a moveable feast. Christmas was the second key date, which was permanent, however, on 25 December. It marked the historical calculation, the beginning of the new Christian era, a calculation that was used universally from the tenth century on. Christ's birth was also the date from which, going backwards, the moment of the Creation of the World was marked. According to a tradition attributed to Saint Jerome, it was to have happened between 18 and 25 March 5199 before the birth of Christ. The year was calculated in different ways: from Christmas (25 December), which was the so-called style of the Birth of the Lord (*stilus a Nativitate*); from 1 January – the style of the Circumcision (*stilus a Circumcisione*); from 25 March – from Annunciation as the moment when the Incarnation of Jesus as the Divine Logos (the style of the Annunciation; *stilus a Annuntiatione*).

[8] In one system, spring began on the day of the Cathedral of Saint Peter on 22 February (eighth kalendae of March in the Roman, Julian calendar which remains in use); summer on Saint Urban's day, 25 May (eighth kalendae of June); autumn on Saint Bartholomew's Day on 24 August (ninth kalendae of September); winter, most often 11 November, on Saint Martin's day (third ides of November). According to another system, moveable Easter marked the beginning of spring, Saint John the Baptist's Day of summer (24 June), Saint Michael the Archangel's of autumn (29 September) and Christmas (25 December) marked winter. In a third system (*Quatember*), the year was divided according to the cycle of three-day fasts (Dry Fasts) on the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday that followed the first Sunday of Lent, after Pentecost, after the Raising of the Cross (14 September) and after Saint Lucy's Day (13 December).

[9] See, e.g., *Die Geschichte der Zeitmessung und der Uhren*, Ernst von Bassermann-Jordan, ed. (Berlin et al.: Vereinigung Wissenschaftlicher Verleger, 1920); Ernst von Bassermann-Jordan, Hans von Bertele, *Uhren. Ein Handbuch für Sammler und Liebhaber*, 7th ed. (Braunschweig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1969); David S. Landes, *Revolution in Time. Clocks and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983); Gerhard König, *Die Uhr. Geschichte, Technik, Zeit* (Berlin: Koehler & Amelang, 1991); Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders* (Chicago, Ill: The University of Chicago Press, 1998); Jürgen Abeler, *Ullstein-Uhrenbuch. Eine Kulturgeschichte der Zeitmessung* (Frankfurt a. M.: Ullstein, 1994); Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour. Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1996); Carlo M. Cipolla, *Clocks and Culture, 1300–1700* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003).

of religious services in all the convents subordinated to it and to organize life and work in the cities it governed from the end of the fourteenth century. City mechanical clocks were not only practical machines to regulate the times of liturgies and work, but also items used to compete with other towns by symbolizing prestige. About five hundred documented public clocks across Europe stemmed from the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century, and especially towards its end, the mighty, whether rulers or burgher plutocrats and grand entrepreneurs, commissioned portable mechanical clocks to use at home or in the office. As mechanical clocks became popular, the public perception of time changed. While earlier the applied unit of time depended on the season and the day, as well as access to daylight, now it became uniform: for instance, a lecture at Oxford or another university that earlier would have lasted almost a time and a half longer in summer than in winter was now required to submit to the rigours of mechanically measured hours.

Both computational time, measured mechanically and counted with numbers, and natural time were reflected in more and less direct ways in Late Medieval art. The counting of segments of time related to the natural world was expressed simply in countless cycles of illustrations in prayer books, books of hours and breviaries. In these most popular books of that era, always written and illuminated for the use (*ad usum*) of the local diocese or district, according to the local church calendar, there were lists of the days of patron saints, liturgical cycles and cycles of prayers for each universal holy day and fast day, adjusted for local use: illustrations and prayers for the Annunciation launching the Christian computation and the potential beginning of the year, Christmas as the second possible beginning of the annual cycle, the Easter cycle, the holy days of the Holy Trinity and the Descent of the Holy Spirit. This annual cycle, visualized in illuminated pictures, was combined with the daily rhythm of prayers (the cycle of actual hours). Most books of hours and breviaries included a sequence of calendar illustrations with the works of a month, which were connected to the astronomical (zodiac-planetary) cycle. Independent and altar paintings, statues and reliefs showed, on the one hand, the liturgical cyclical character of the universal holy days (the "cult" representations of subjects such as the Annunciation, Visitation, Last Supper, Crucifixion, Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Last Judgement, as well as images of the Virgin and Child and the Holy Trinity), and, on the other, figures of local saints and episodes from their lives celebrated in the local cult, reminding people of their holy days over the course of the year. In this sense, churches served as mnemo-technical instruments, the "building" or "the theatre of memory." The origin of the idea of boosting memory with a collection of *loca* – places of memory that constructed the imaginary space of memory – lay in classical rhetoric, the anonymous treatise on memory, *Ad Herennium* (c. 86–82 BC), and was well known throughout the Middle Ages (Thomas Bradwardine, Hugh of Saint Victor, Albertus Magnus, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Raimundus Lullus and others). Yet even without this special context, the building filled with arranged paintings, figures, reliefs and retables unquestionably preserved and assisted the memory of the chronological order of the day, year and history in a given place. This must also have been the meaning of the great multi-segment retables, such as The Altarpiece of Veit Stoss in Saint Mary's Basilica in Krakow. It is an instrument of memory about universal history, which assembles the history of Salvation through the single person of Mary as Corredemptrix: from her origins as a descendant of King David (*The Tree of Jesse* in the predella), through her involvement in the act of Redemption (Mary's and Christ's life cycles on its wings), up to her passage to the area of Salvation (*Dormition* and *Coronation*). The altarpiece is also an auxiliary, pictorial liturgical "calendar": through its Mariological and Christological cycles, including the Easter cycle, it uses association to retell the sequence of holy days and rituals.

It was especially important to conserve and create a system of historical memory, historiographical memory about the stories of the saints and lay people. "To remember the lives of the forerunners" was the third purpose of creating works of art, after teaching the illiterate and embellishing buildings, according to Honorius of Autun's conviction in the twelfth century. This mnemonic tradition, which absolutely required stratifying historical time, undoubtedly survived universally into the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. History and memory were preserved by the well-developed systems of miniatures in the codexes of chronicles and books about the history of monarchies, principalities, counties, dioceses, monasteries, towns and regions, also thanks to illustrations from classical history, which at the same time operated as knightly romances, such as the popular stories about Alexander the Great or the many historical epics such as the Burgundian *La chanson de Girart de Roussillon*. A separate category of historiographical works were the great tales about the Crusades, including the stories of the elite chivalric-aristocratic orders, such as *Histoire de la Toison d'or* by Guillaume Fillastre (1468–73, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Vienna; copies at Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Brussels, ms. 9028, and Bibliothèque Municipale, Dijon, ms. 2948) or *Chroniques de Jérusalem abrégiées*, c. 1453–54, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Cod. 2533).

Theological and Philosophical Time

The medieval sense of historical-theological time was shaped conceptually and differed from the popular perception, which was tied to biological-natural time.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa (fourth century), who put some order into time in the history of the world, expanded three old Greek concepts, *kairos*, *akolouthia* and *eschaton*, the moment, the sequence and the end.[10] *Kairos* is a moment in time, the instant when God's will is fulfilled and an event takes place, the point in the present that connects the past and the future, a consequence of earlier occurrences and the seed of new ones, a continuation and a beginning. History is an "endless initiation" of new events. Time is a series of linked individual happenings, which produce the successive, chain-like continuity of history – the sequence of time – *akolouthia*. It has its goal and, after it is met, its end; this theological end of time is *eschaton*. God is present in all these tenses of time, even though he himself is above time, timeless, eternal; he manifests himself again and again in the world through *kairoi*, while *akolouthia* is a reflection of his eternity and *eschaton* a transition to this eternity.

In the eleventh book of his *Confessions*, Saint Augustine states that time is priceless, its value cannot be measured or fathomed; it is one of the dimensions of earthly life created by God, who exists outside it. It is related to changeability and motion, which give the world's doings causality (after Aristotle), but it is also burdened by the quality of elapsing. The present is the time of seeing (it is visible, albeit ungraspable), the past is the time of memory and the future the time of expectation. In fact, since past time and future time do not exist here and now, they appear solely thanks to human memory and prophesy.

In the Middle Ages, theologians debated fluid time, understood as a continuum, a concept borrowed from Aristotle. Continuum, related to movement, was indivisible or (and this amounts to the same thing) infinitely divisible into increasingly smaller and smaller units. But the structure of time itself was to persist as fluid. This definition of time continued at every step

[10] *Patrologia Graeca* (*Patrologiae cursus completus, seu Bibliotheca universalis, integra, uniformis, commoda, oeconomica omnium ss. patrum, doctorum, scriptorumque ecclesiasticorum... Series Graeca*), Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. (Paris: [various publishers], 1800–75) 44, 72bc; 44, 236b; 44, 981c; 45, 364c, 365a, 369b, 433d; 46, 105a; 46, 517d.

to clash with the concept of "atomistic" time, atomized time made of the tiniest conceivable particles.[11] Here, the Bible was the source (different from the atomism of corpuscular physics rooted in classical thought): the Apostle Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians that at the end of the world bodies will be resurrected ἐν ἀτόμω (Lat. *in atomo*) – in an instant, a flash. Thus, the concept of the atom of time appears in the writings of the Church Fathers, Tertullian, Ambrosius, Hieronymus (in his *Vulgata*, *in atomo* was translated as *in momento*) and Augustine. Augustine believed that time is divisible repeatedly, down to its smallest unit, the atom. The year consists of months, the month of days, the day of hours, the hour of smaller units, until we reach the indivisible unit, the time atom.[12] Augustine's concept of the atomistic structure of time entered the most popular medieval encyclopaedia, *Origines*, by Isidore of Seville (sixth–seventh centuries), the writings of Saint Bede the Venerable (seventh–eighth centuries, *De tempore ratione*), Rabanus Maurus (eighth–ninth centuries, *De universo*, *De computo*) and the author of the treatise *De divisionibus temporum* (ninth century) who was inspired by him. *Atomus* appears in the writings of Early Medieval authors as *ostentum*, *momentum* and *punctum*.

The concept of time divided into atoms appeared frequently in medieval computistics, the science of calculating time, from which it was introduced into philosophical discourse by Pierre Abelard in the twelfth century (*Dialectica*). The smallest particle of time, *instans*, is not suitable for counting and measuring time because it is invisible. It unites the past with the future, marking the present. Abelard was aware of the contradiction between the vision of time as a continuum and its divisibility, and provided a solution: the continuum exists when its particles cross into each other "without an interruption." Therefore, basic, indivisible particles-atoms (*instantia*) are possible in it, but there is no separation between them, and this is the reason why their additive sequence becomes continuity. Time is a river of instants. The reception of Aristotle's *Physica* in the Latin West (Gerard of Cremona, c. 1175; Robert Grosseteste, c. 1230) launched a new debate about the continuity of time. In the writings of the Aristotelians, the infinite divisibility of parts, the foundation of Aristotle's concept of continuous time and space, plays a key role. In the fourteenth century many prominent lecturers at Oxford (Henry of Harclay and Walter Chatton) and Paris (Gerardus Odonis [Gérard d'Odon] and Nicolas Bonet), disputed this idea. As they promoted the principle of building space out of points, they were at the same time defending the atomic structure of time: *continuum* consists of *indivisibilia*, indivisible microparticles of time, called *instantia* after Abelard. Chatton wrote: between one "now" and the next, in other words, between all *instantia*, there is no time

[11] Bernhard Pabst, "Zeit aus Atomen oder Zeit als Kontinuum – Aspekte einer mittelalterlichen Diskussion," in *Zeitkonzeptionen, Zeiterfahrung, Zeitmessung. Stationen ihres Wandels vom Mittelalter bis zur Moderne*, Beiträge zum Symposion „Zeitkonzeptionen, Zeiterfahrung, Zeitmessung in Mittelalter und Fruehrer Neuzeit", 6.–9. Juni 1995, Karlsruhe, Trude Ehlert, ed. (Paderborn–Munich–Vienna–Zurich: Schöningh, 1997), pp. 80–102 (the notes contain a bibliography for medieval notions of time in philosophy and theology).

[12] Here Saint Augustine is an anti-Aristotelian. Despite the fact that Abelard was not familiar with Aristotle's *Physica*, he did read his other writings, as well as its echoes in Boethius. Aristotle argued that since two points in space do not yet form a line, two neighbouring points in time do not mark the duration of time, since they are always separated by some passage of time, however minimal, in other words, a period that can always be divided into smaller parts. Thus, continuous time may not consist of permanent indivisible units. The infinite axis of particles makes up its fluid continuity, and lacks interior caesurae. Otherwise, movement would not be possible in time and space. In the "now," the present moment, there can be no movement; it happens between the past "now" and the future "now." "Now" is not a unit for building time, but the line between the happening of the past and of the future. Were time a sequence of "nows," there would be no movement, no becoming, no change and no action in it. All the "nows" must combine into a constant stream of time for movement, the foundation of things' existence in the world, to be possible.

division that can be divided again, as Aristotle and his supporters believed. Instead, after every "now" new ones come directly: as soon as one indivisible moment (*instans*) disappears, the next one arrives. This means an incessant transition from the phenomenon of "this *instans* is" to the phenomenon " this *instans* is no longer."[13] This is the principle of the direct attachment of subsequent *instantia* along the axis of time, which explains its continuousness and at the same time its structure consisting of particles, atoms. And it makes room for the category of changeability, movement and action within the continuum of time. Other fourteenth-century Oxonians, Thomas Bradwardine and Adam Wodeham, who believed in the infinite divisibility of time as a *continuum successivum* (as opposed to the indivisible and vast space of *continuum permanens* – Bradwardine), vehemently attacked the indivisibilists (atomists).[14] Nicolas d'Autrecourt (*Tractatus universalis*, also known as *Exigit ordo*, c. 1330) supplied new arguments to the indivisibilists. Since the atoms in space and matter are made of points, they cannot be stretched out. Therefore, time, which is associated with space, has a particle structure. And yet, movement is possible within it. It occurs between indivisible *instantia* thanks to the differences in the speeds of bodies and not the principle of conquering the time distance between *instantia* (which, according to Aristotle, is always divisible). The variance in the speeds of moving bodies stems from the differences in the duration of the moments of rest, which the bodies adopt at different points in time.[15] The regularity of movement is only a semblance, an impression; in fact, motion is always a change that occurs in skips between *instantia*, which marks the points of brief rest. The change of place from time point to time point always happens at the same speed, from *instans* to *instans*, and thus there really are no faster and slower bodies, but only longer and shorter moments of rest.[16]

This fourteenth-century debate about the divisibility of time fixed the belief in both its continuity and discreteness, giving a – more or less conscious – theoretical basis for the Late Medieval modes of narration in literature and art, which in turn cared very much about the issue of the sacred plane and the lay plane (on Earth) of the history being told. In other words: the questions of time and eternity. This was developed in theological-philosophical terms in the fifteenth century, first by Nicolaus Cusanus (Nicholas of Cusa, Nikolaus von Kues, 1401–64).

This most versatile and deepest German thinker of the fifteenth century studied the origins of the finiteness of time and the world, the extension of time and its limits, changeability, movement and rest, and measuring time. A key problem for him was the relationship between earthly time and eternity, which he examined in the treatises *De aequalitate* and *De docta*

[13] The passage occurs not in the first *instans*, since this would simultaneously make it be and not be; also not in the latter separated by time from the former (see Aristotle) because in that case we could not say that it either is or is not; but in the latter inseparable from the former, in other words, happening directly, without a border of time.

[14] Wodeham wrote that the passage from *instans* to *instans* may not occur only in the former nor in the latter separated from the former (as Chatton argued), but also not in the latter directly after the former and inseparable from it, since there is no next *instans*, but there are only general border points between past and future.

[15] Only the speediest body – the outer heavenly sphere – knows no rest and has no faster movement than its own. The others are always in a moment of rest between movements, this moment's length depending on the resistance of its environment in which they are active and on the given body's predisposition, its weight; in other words, to put it in modern language, depending on its mass.

[16] John Wycliff (*Tractatus de logica*, c. 1360) at Oxford held similar views. The atomic structure of time lies in the directness of *instantia* following each other, and movement occurs because positions and surfaces of the body touch each other in a given *instans*. This is how time on earth works, while divine eternity itself is the one and only *instans*, an eternal present, which knows neither movement nor change.

ignorantia.[17] After Saint Augustine (Cusanus was after all a Neoplatonist), he viewed time as the soul's way of perceiving the world and as the soul's participation in the continuum of creation. Time is a question of awareness, in which it appears as the "present of things past, memory; present of things present, sight; present of things future, expectation" (Saint Augustine, *Confessions*).[18] It is impossible to reflect on time without reflecting on the human being. Man sees time and its passage, thereby experiencing its passage, but the finiteness of time, which is directed towards the end of the world, protects him from experiencing a sense of nothingness; the end of time will be a meeting (*connexio*) of the current temporality, of the past, present, future and all the temporal divisions into one, the end of changeability and differentiation and an entrance into divine eternity.

According to Cusanus, the continuity of time lies in *visio temporis* – the view of time which is based on the conjunction of three tenses: "As you see the past as the time that has passed, you can see that it concluded in the present and that it will conclude in the future."[19] Something that happened in the past may go on in the present and in the future. Something that we perceive as being in the present was born and existed in the past, when the past was present, and it will be in the future as its present. This cannot, however, bear the particularity of time. After all, the past is past and the future has not happened yet. But if "there is a time for everything," it is always the present, which the human being views as past, present and future. It is man (his soul) who determines its continuity by viewing time in its three forms. It is *tempus contractum in temporalibus*, the time of duration contained in elapsing times. The soul has no access to actual existence (being): the past of finished things does not exist here and now, the present is reduced to itself and the future does not exist yet. The human soul (consciousness) recognizes time and focusses its three tenses in itself, separating the past and future from the present, at the same time bonding them to itself. In the human perception of time, there is no past or future without the present, nor is there a present without the past and the future. This is *unitrinum tempus*, united three-segment time, which takes part in *tempus intemporale*, the endurance of extratemporality, eternal time. This is the basis of distinguishing between present time and eternity. In establishing the union of the three tenses, the soul stands on the plateau of eternal time, *in horizonte aeternitatis*, without losing touch with the time and space of earthly life. God's timelessness needs the world's temporality.

The connectivity of the three tenses also explains the workings of motion and the occurrence of change in the world. Time, created *ex nihil* at the creation and heading towards its end, is filled with changeability brought on by the incessant turnover by the soul of the past into the present and the future (and vice versa). The changeability of time is a matter of man's self-awareness. It is the making of the time of *temporalia*. The soul itself is *tempus perfectum*, which is the *similitudo aeternitatis*, a reflection of the ideal eternity, of God's "timeless time." The soul, in the variability of human life longs for rest, for the bliss of eternity. This gives sense and purpose to its action, its movement in the present. This fuels its creative power to form a future out of the past in the present. The soul raises all timeness to the level of timelessness, to the horizon of eternity. The

[17] Wendelin Knoch, "Nikolaus von Kues, Zeit und Ewigkeit," in *Zeitkonzeptionen...*, op. cit., pp. 103–16. See also Norbert Fischer, "Die Zeitbetrachtung des Nikolaus von Kues in *De aequalitate* ('in temporale unitrinum tempus')," *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift*, vol. 99 (1990), pp. 170–92.

[18] *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, Book XI [online], Edward Bouverie Pusey, trans. [retrieved: 17 October 2013], at: <www.sacred-texts.com/chr/augconf.htm>.

[19] "Nicolai de Cusa De aequalitate (Vita erat lux hominum)," in Nicolaus Cusanus, *Opera omnia*, Hans-Gerhard Senger, ed., vol. 10 (Hamburg: Meiner, 2001), Opuscula 2, Fasc. 1, 16.

past, present and future are preserved in the soul and referred to eternal life: the past continues in the present, while the future is born in the past, and they are concentrated in the soul as the perfect time. Every temporal event has a supratemporal significance.

In this eschatological perspective on time, the tripartite structure of time corresponds to the Holy Trinity through the analogy to its principle of the coexistence of three divine beings: the three tenses (manifestations) of time exist in the same way, although in eternity they form a united whole. Just as in the Holy Trinity the Son of God serves as the intercessor between *Deus Creator* and *Spiritus agens*, Christ is the mediator between time and eternity. The God-man's incarnation and life in time introduced the divine plan and the dimension of eternity into earthly time. Logos, the pre-existing Son, is the *supra tempus cunctis prior existens*. His birth made God exist in time. His sacrifice and the act of Redemption mark the perspective of all future that will be fulfilled and enclosed in Parousia, Christ's Second Coming on Judgement Day, when life on earth ends, and only eternity will be left. In a sermon on 6 January 1456, Cusanus said: "Behold: the place of time is eternity or [incessantly] the 'now,' or the present day, while the place of movement is rest, and union is the place of the many and so forth. For what sense is there in time outside the present? For time flows, and its course goes from being to being [from one being to the next]. This being is the present, or the 'now.' It is said that out of all our time we only have 'now,' and that there are no more 'nows,' but this single one. And 'now' never becomes the past, just as it cannot be said about the future that it is now. Thus, the 'now' into and out of which all time flows, is the meaning and the nature of time, and we call it the day-to-day [being 'today'] or eternity [being 'today' and 'now'], or the moment 'now' – which always remain unmoved. This is why the 'now' of eternity is eternity itself or being itself, in which there is the being of time, and this is the eternal God, who is eternity. For we call the beginning and the end of being in itself, and therefore the place of time, eternity."[20] This is how Cusanus breaks the cyclical model of time on earth with the linear axis of eternity extended between the timelessness that preceded Creation and the timelessness that will follow the End of the World; the eternity he calls time's extra-spatial place.

It is the place of earthly time set aside for the fulfilment of the time of Incarnation, the time of Jesus Christ, who intercedes between God and the world, God and man, eternity and earthly time. John's metaphor of Christ as the way (and truth and life) becomes associated with Saint Paul's metaphor of *homo viator*: all of us, humans, are travellers. The human being has a well-defined road to travel, the road to eternity in the "place of his time"; he is a pilgrim. The time of life is the time of the journey. As he starts on his road, the pilgrim cannot avoid taking it all the way to the end, and as he travels on it he changes nothing in the outside world. Paradoxically, his itinerary lacks all movement, variability and action. The road of his life makes the pilgrim a pilgrim, he journeys on it, follows it, to its very end. It is unchangeable and irreversible, just like Jesus' fate on Earth, from his exit from eternity to his return to it. To Cusanus, time is therefore a dimension of man's experience of eternity through Christ. Experiencing it is also seeing it, *visio*, seeing time and eternity through the things in the world, which finally leads, after Judgement Day, to seeing God spiritually in eternity.

Certainly, neither the academic clash about the continuity and particleness of time nor the theological theory of Cusanus was well known in painting circles. They kept to the philosophical discourse of a small intellectual elite. Yet because the clash and the theory emerged from a

[20] "Ubi est qui natus est rex Iudaeorum," in *Cusanus-Texte*, 1, "Predigten," fasc. 2/5, *Vier Predigten im Geiste Eckharts*, Josef Koch, ed. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1936/1937).

universal experience of timeness and were immersed in the practical life of religiousness, they influenced the form of retables and altar paintings. The theory of time coined by Cusanus was based on his belief in two temporal axes: the vertical one of theological time, which marked the connections between eternity and time on Earth, and the horizontal one of historical time, which flowed in a linear fashion in the earthly sphere. This connection found its expression in the great multi-part composite retables, in which the two perspectives were mutually superposed through the procedure of opening and closing. Worship-liturgical and devotional panels and parts served to make the timeless persistence of eternity present. Hieratic representations of holiness conveyed the immemorial dogmas of faith, which were not subject to the lapse of time, or they presented instants when eternity touched current time on earth, often imagined as visions. The elaborate narrative cycles on their wings conveyed a sense of a particular division of the present time, and both its segmented nature and its continuity, as it were in accordance with the philosophical theory of temporal atomism. In the altarpiece by Veit Stoss (1477–89, Saint Mary's Basilica, Krakow), the vertical axis that joins earthly time, further developed richly and in detail in the historical narrative on the wings, both open and closed, with timeless eternity, was marked very literally. It is the axis of symmetry with a vector that guides the viewer's gaze upward: from Earth, The Dormition of the Virgin Mary, through the expanse of the earthly heavens and air, where her Assumption takes place, up to the scene of Coronation in Heaven shown at the top, isolated from space and earthly time. Traditional German retables, which in their central shrines showed monumental static figures of saints, usually in sets of five symmetrically arranged figures, portraying the dogma of the Communion of Saints in the beyond, and wings that developed a detailed narrative from earthly *historia sacra* in the cycles from the lives of Christ, Mary and the saints, presented with even greater power the effect of the passage from the narrative of atomic, episodic time to the hieratic course of timelessness. There are very many examples of this, beginning with the *Landsberg Altar* by Hans Multscher (1437; its fragments have survived *in situ*) and the high altar of the Ulm Minster by Jörg Syrlin the Elder (1473; drawing in Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum), which has been lost and which we know only from the workshop drawing by Hans Schüchlin, via the altar at Kefermarkt likely by Martin Kriechbaum (1490–98) or the Blaubeuren altarpiece by Michael and Gregor Erhart and Bartholomäus Zeitblom and Berhard Strigl (1493–94), all the way to the main altar of Saint James's Church in Levoča by Master Paul of Levoča (1508 or 1508–17).

In fact, joining the two planes, linear earthly time and the timelessness of eternal continuance, in the sacred sphere, which was described by philosophers and theologians, including Cusanus, was deeply lodged in the mentality of the people of the Middle Ages, in their conception and experience of time, including the common people. As is documented in confession forms,[21] the procedure of confession – which recorded sins and virtues in retrospection in the hope of future salvation – was founded on the perception of time as a sequence of events from the past, examined in the present with the future in mind, and always eventually in relation to eternity. And it was therefore also a foundation of the institution of indulgence, linked to the institution of pilgrimages, which appears significant in the presentation of *The Jerusalem Triptych*.

[21] Trude Ehlert, "Lebenszeit und Heil. Zwei Beispiele für Zeiterfahrung in der deutschsprachigen Literatur des Mittelalters," in *Zeitkonzeptionen...*, op. cit., pp. 256–73, esp. part 2, "Muster der Zeiterfahrung als Sediment in altdeutschen Beichten," pp. 258–66.

The Jerusalem Triptych and Other Multi-Episode Narratives

The Jerusalem Triptych (**figs 1–2**), in comparison with two other typical Late Medieval paintings of "long narration," shows a characteristic narration of events located in time and narrative space, a specific method of operating with pictorial time and scenery.

The author of the Gdańsk triptych chose a different sequential narration from those employed by, for instance, Rogier van der Weyden and Aert van den Bossche. Although they both told a similar simultaneous story, the former favoured a skipping narrative created from segments, constantly mutually referring the past, future and present, and told his story in a scenery broken up into compartments, while the latter adopted a conventional continuous narrative, which was not atomized, but placed in an integral continuous space. The artist who painted the Gdańsk triptych, on the other hand, like Van den Weyden, designed an interrupted narrative that skipped around, but he made it cohesive by bringing it into the sacred space of the imaginary pilgrimage.

Rogier van der Weyden's *Saint Columba Altarpiece* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich)[22] is made up of a sequence of panels, left to right: *Annunciation*, *Adoration of the Magi* and *Presentation of Christ at the Temple* (**fig. 3**). Its narrative is thus linear, as it clearly presents the chronological sequence of the episodes in the biblical story. But it also jumps, or leaps. The artist chose three key episodes in the story of Mary and Jesus' childhood, those in which theophany, God's descent to Earth, took place. These are the moments (*kairoi*) announcing Christ's Sacrifice: The Epiphany of the Holy Spirit and Incarnation in Annunciation, Epiphany in the central scene and the Recognition of the Messiah and the announcement of the coming of the Saviour by Simeon in the scene of the Sacrifice in the Temple. Omitted were episodes that occurred in-between, since a choice needed to be made because of the three-part conception of the triptych. In order to unite this skipping narrative into a whole, Van der Weyden brought together the composition of the individual segments with a frieze, a strip of figural scenes in the forefront, framed by a stable rhythm of vertical figures. In the background, he divided up the view into three large spaces: domestic interior – open landscape – church interior. The time of theophany – as a moment (*kairos*) when eternity is revealed in the present – is seen in all spheres of human life: the private in the home, the official in the outside world (*negotium*) and the spiritual-ritual in the institutional Church. The approximate meeting point of the optical (but not perspective) lines is the pillar above Mary's head and the Child, immediately below the crucifix, which – as a signal of the future Passion and Redemption – is an interjection from another order of time, another reality. The slanted inclination of the space in the wings underscores the centring of the composition's space. The scene of the Adoration of the Magi from the Orient (the youngest of whom may be a cryptoportrait of Charles the Bold)[23]

[22] For the work's narrative-semantic structure, see Alfred Acres, "The Columba Altarpiece and the Time of the World," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 80 (1998), no. 3 (September), pp. 422–51; see also id., "Small Physical History. The Trickling Past of Early Netherlandish Painting," in *Symbols of Time in the History of Art*, Christian Heck, Kristen Lippincott, eds (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp. 7–25; on the triptych itself, see Antoni Ziemba, *Sztuka Burgundii i Niderlandów 1380–1500*, vol. 2: *Niderlandzkie malarstwo tablicowe 1430–1500* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2011), chapters VI.4.2, VI.4.4, VII.6.

[23] Till-Holger Borchert, "The Image of Charles the Bold," in *Charles the Bold (1433–1477). Splendour of Burgundy*, Susan Marti, Till-Holger Borchert, Gabrielle Keck, eds, exh. cat., Historisches Museum, Bern, 21 April – 24 August 2008; Groeningemuseum, Bruges, 27 March – 21 July 2009; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, 15 September 2009 – 10 January 2010 (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2009), pp. 80–1.

is presented as a contemporary event with its grand court ceremony, staged act of adoration and solemn presentation of the gifts – yet again introduces the metaphysical revelation into the sphere of mortal life, stressing the *hic et nunc* of sacred history.

The crucifix plots the final point of the sequence of current events, which are presented as contemporary on a linear plane, as a horizontal narrative. It implies *futurum* of the segment of sacred history it shows. It is Christ's sacrifice that gives humanity a chance at Salvation. At the same time, it ties the narrative, the point of reference for each one of the scenes.

Three entwined temporal tenses are present here. First, the timelessness of eternity, second, the historical time of the Bible with its narrative of the Incarnation and Salvation, and, third the viewer's present time. One of these tenses may be the past, present or future tense of another. In a word, the goal of the representation is an elaborate rhetoric of imagined time and the manipulation of this time. And all this in order to make the viewer put all these different ways of seeing and feeling time into a cohesive schema of the history of Salvation, in which he is to find and define his place, his position in time. Here, time is not so much represented, but it is decided by the spectator, through his position in the painting and vis-à-vis the painting. This makes him not only a witness but, primarily, a participant in history (this very *historia sacra*), and, so to speak, makes him meditate on its path and its meaning. As he goes on his visual journey, the viewer is to cross the time and the space of this painting.

Important in the sequence of the three events – Annunciation, Adoration of the Magi and the Sacrifice in the Temple – is the division of the topographic space. Each panel shows a variety of places: in *Annunciation* we see Nazareth, in *The Adoration* Bethlehem and in *The Sacrifice* Jerusalem. But in this space-time segmentation there are points that connect adjacent stages and places of the story. They resemble a spatial trick, which implies a leap or an intervention from another unit of time, the crossing of a border between two narrative situations. The room in a house in the panel of Annunciation taking place in Nazareth appears as an opening to the interior of a home in a big city, which is then shown at the left edge of the panel of the Adoration, Bethlehem. The right edge of the central panel suggests a similar situation of crossing over the limits of time and space. The Adoration of the Magi takes place outside Bethlehem, but the front of the church we see from the side, the place of the Sacrifice, belongs to the church in Jerusalem (which, incidentally, may come from the description of the Three Kings' travels in the *Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine, according to which the star of the Annunciation first guided them to Jerusalem, where it was extinguished, and from there the Magi independently wandered to Bethlehem). The trick of the motifs from spaces on the neighbouring wings crossing over into the central scene mitigates the striking and blatant jumpiness of the story. This procedure introduces a connectedness and a continuity into the shredded, segmented narrative. It thus instructs us about the flow of the sacred history, syncopated by instants of recurrent revelations.

The sequence of the temporal tenses is quite clear. The Annunciation is the prelude to and proclamation of the birth of Jesus the King of Kings, to whom humanity surrenders by paying homage (Adoration of the Magi). The Annunciation is the past tense of the Adoration. The Adoration is the future tense of the Annunciation. But at the same time, being the central scene of the open triptych, the Adoration defines the present tense of the viewer's gaze. It precedes the Sacrifice, is its past tense, while the Sacrifice in the future tense follows the Adoration. To the viewer, the Adoration marks the present moment for the Sacrifice. Yet even though, of course, realistically all three scenes are on the plane of the past, far away from its present, they are the *praeteritum* (history, happening in the past, the imperfect tense) or *perfectum* (the past simple tense, being observed from the "here and now").

In the central panel, on the wall of the stable, above the pillar, hangs a cross, a crucifix, as a sign of the future tense vis-à-vis the scenes from the childhood of Jesus and at the same time the past simple vis-à-vis the viewer's position. It is united with the sign of the star over the stable's thatched roof, which in the past tense announces the birth of Christ to the three kings and leads them to him. But now the star is presented as the sun, which is covered by clouds and enveloped by the darkening sky, a sign of the future tense in which at the moment of Christ's death on the cross, darkness enveloped Heaven and Earth. The future of the Passion and Resurrection penetrates into time of the Incarnation and Birth.

The plane of the observer's time, of the actual present, current time, was inserted into the plane of historical time (of the biblical story of Incarnation and Salvation), through moments of revelations that unveiled the plane of eternity. The funder appears in the central panel like an insertion from outside history, separately from the group of Mary, Jesus and the Three Kings, by a wall and a crevice (a way leading down to the underground crypt, the symbol of the future Holy Sepulchre). The donor personifies the viewer, placing them both in the space and time of biblical history. Further away, throughout the broad landscape, contemporary travellers wander on the roads, heading for Christ's birthplace. On the right wing, inside the temple-church, a beggar leans on a pillar and reaches out his cap for alms to a man who is entering the church; outside, another beggar sits on a low wall. They are people from the extra-historical area, from the viewer's time-space.

To the viewer and the funder, as well as to the other contemporary figures, *historia sacra* is the past, while to it their time is the future, in which the announcement of Salvation is to come true as the future perfect. This weaving of the times in the common space of the painting intends to imply to the viewer that the world moves, migrating between biblical history and the present and vice versa, and that the viewer should think of taking a spiritual journey into biblical time. This agrees with Saint Augustine's view that all of *historia sacra* takes place not in the past, present and future, but in the present of past things, the present of present things and the present of future things. Looking at Van der Weyden's triptych, the viewer understands the *praesens* of the past as memory (*memoria*), the *praesens* of the present as the perception of the events being displayed, and the *praesens* of the future as awaiting his own salvation. In this triptych, atomized, segmented time combines into a continuous historical narrative which, on the one hand, reveals the points of connection with God's timeless eternity and, on the other, incorporates the plane of the current present of the gazing faithful.

Aert van den Bossche's *The Martyrdom of Saints Crispin and Crispinian* at the National Museum in Warsaw (on loan from the Museum of King John III's Palace at Wilanów, **fig. 4**) develops a different tense of temporal narrative. It was the central panel of the original triptych; only the panels of its right wing survive, in the Musée de la Ville in Brussels (Maison du Roi / Broodhuis Museum, **fig. 5**) and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow.[24] The Brussels cobblers' guild funded the retable in 1490 for the chapel of the local Franciscan Church (later moved to Saint Nicholas Church), and, according to surviving accounts, it was made in 1494.

The painting's narrative weaves through the lengthy, multi-stage martyrdom of the twins, Christians from a noble Roman family in the third century, who escaped persecution by the Emperors Diocletian and Maximian to Gaul, to Suessiones (today's Soissons). There, they worked as cobblers without demanding payment for their products and services from those willing to convert to the new faith. The scenes are in chronological order, guiding the viewer's

[24] Ziemba, op. cit., chapter VI.8.

gaze in a zigzag from the depths of the landscape on the left, through a wing of rocks, almost as far as the foreground, then move it deep back, again to bring it forward into the centre of the foreground, again to direct it to the top of the rock (the second wing) and again deep into the landscape. We see the brothers far away on the left, refusing to bow before a statue of a pagan deity, being arrested and led outside the town to the place where they will be tortured. Next, between the back- and foregrounds, the brothers, tied to a tree, are being beaten with canes. In the foreground is a woodcutter, carving canes out of branches for this stage of their tortures. In the next stage, again depicted in the background, on the side of the rock, are the tormentors, who are pushing awls (symbol of cobblers' work) under the martyrs' nails. Then, our eyes leap to the foreground again, to the central scene. Here – in a motif picked up from the previous episode – one of the oppressors cowers on the ground, having been struck by the awls, which through divine intervention, have miraculously vaulted out of the victims' bodies and become implanted in his trunk, head and arms. The fundamental situation of the central group of figures tells us about the next phase of their martyrdom: we see the two brothers, again tied to a tree, at the central axis of the painting, being skinned, as the entourage of the prefect of Gaul, Rictiovarus, watches from the left. And, again, the gaze leaps into the interior: a rock (analogous to the one on the left; together they clearly mark the wings for the perspective) looms over a frozen pond, with locals on skates playing hockey; the brothers are to be thrown from the rock into the water, which – again, thanks to divine intervention – is in the process of freezing, and so the victims cannot drown in it; one twin is clambering out of the pond onto shore, while the other sits on the hanging rock – but there is no point in hurling him down now. We return to the foreground, where another entourage, Caesar Maximian's, watches the martyrdom. We are pulled back into the interior of the painting, to the scene of boiling in melted lead in the background, in a saddle between hills. Yet this torture, too, is obviously ineffective. Our eyes wander on, to the two-part right panel. The first shows us the scene of the brothers in a cauldron of boiling oil, centre stage, but earlier we see an angel taking off, a sign of divine intervention, thanks to which neither the previous nor the current torture will kill the martyrs. Drops of burning oil spray out of the cauldron and burn the torturers; one of them is rolling on the ground in torment. It is only on the second panel of this wing that we witness the final stage of the martyrdom, which is successful. This is the scene where the beheading with a sword is presented frontally in the foreground. Afterwards, the story continues deeper in the painting, to the burial of the martyrs' bodies. We can guess that the lost panels of the left wing, on which the narrative began, included scenes from the brothers' earlier lives: their activities in Suessiones, and definitely their depiction in their cobbler's workshop (as a patronage-professional image).

The narrative woven in this way reveals an exceptionally well thought-out and conceived spatial structure. The painting is an example of a rich and very dynamic historical tale, directed paratheatrically, like mystery and Passion plays, and performed in many mansions. It is also an example of a type of panoramic painting, such as those by Memling, which were transformed into an extensive landscape to be examined frontally. Planned on three planes – the frieze of large figures in the foreground, the range of rocky hills in the middle and the distant background with the skating pond, view of the town, valley and mountains – it is a specimen of the extensive landscape and the earliest example in Netherlandish panel painting of a winterscape.

The narrative sequence is continuous, but not simultaneous. Unlike in Rogier's work, there are no leaps from the past historical time into the viewer's present, nor are there signals of the future. True, the narrative from the distant past has been inserted into contemporary scenery (the town and its people, games on the skating pond), but this updating of history in

no way disturbs its continuity, nor does it introduce a time other than the past. One could say, at the most, that it is the past continuous transferred into an entourage of the present, but already the dress of the historical figures (the emperor, the prefect and their attendants) are costumes: they are fantastical and fantastic and fanciful, freely made to look archaic and not contemporary. The structure of the story is a continuous narrative, unsegmented, unatomized and it leaps only in the way the episodes are spatially distributed. Yet it is not the space of the landscape that imposes the course of the narrative; the story develops on its own, lending the performance an immovable sequence of episodes.

The case of *The Jerusalem Triptych* is different. The story begins atypically with a sequence of scenes in the open retable, which ration the story of Christ from the Massacre of the Innocent to his Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem, and ends with the Passion, on the wings, after the altar is closed. We therefore first see the final episodes of the story on the closed triptych and only later, after the wings are opened, those events that led up to the Sacrifice on the Cross. (Was this sequence relevant to the order, mentioned at the beginning of this essay, in which the parts of the triptych were made, first its wings and then the central panel?)

On the outer sides of the wings, in a single sequence on the two panels, we see the following scenes, first on top, background: *The Last Supper*, *The Agony in the Garden*, *The Taking of Christ*, *Christ before Caiaphas*; next at the bottom, foreground: *The Flagellation*, *Christ Crowned with Thorns*, *Meeting with Veronica on His Way to the Cross*, *The Crucifixion* and *The Entombment*. After the triptych is opened, we see from left to right, from the foreground deeper into the background, the scenes on its left wing: *Massacre of the Innocent*, *Pursuit by Herod's Soldiers*, the legendary *Miracle of the Corn during the Holy Family's Flight to Egypt from the Holy Land*, *Flight to Egypt* (with the motif of the falling figures of pagan idols on a narrow, supplementary panel); on the central panel: *Christ among the Doctors*, *Christ and the Samaritan Woman at the Well*, *The Baptism in the Jordan*, *The Three Temptations of Christ*; finally, on the right wing: *The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem* and in the background *The Expulsion of the Money Changers*. The chronological narrative on the panels of the closed retable proceeds from the background to the foreground, and on the open altar from the foreground to the deep background. Even though it is extensive, it is clearly interrupted, or rather skipping-syntagmatic: the jumps are present between the syntagmatic sequences, or sequences of coherent narrative. There is a large gap between the story of the flight from Egypt and Child Jesus' appearance in the Jewish temple, while the three principal episodes in the central panel are not connected by the logic of the story of the Bible; having been chosen arbitrarily, they remain separate, pulled out of the narrative trail. Furthermore, the chronological order of the events is at times completely illogical.

The episode of the miracle of the corn that grew along the route of the flight to Egypt speaks about the fleeing group passing a field in which corn was being sown. Mary said to the seeder: "Should anyone ask, whether we passed this way, tell them: yes, those people passed when I was sowing the grain." Yet Jesus worked it so that the crop grew in an instant and was ripe for harvesting. The next day, Herod's soldiers came and asked the farmer whether he had seen an old man, a woman and a child riding on the road, and he confirmed it. And when they asked when, he replied that they passed by as he was sowing. The soldiers then abandoned their chase. Therefore, the episode of the miracle ought to end the story of the pursuit, and yet in the painting we can see the riders further away, in the background. This must be the scene of the Holy Family, no longer threatened, turning right onto the path leading to Egypt, while the little band of riders goes left, back to Jerusalem. The point is for the view of Jerusalem – which is key in the retable from the Jerusalem Chapel – to provide the setting for the figural

narrative. For this reason, the author of the altar's programme inserted the episode of the oppressors turning back to Herod's capital, which is not usually presented separately in the iconographic tradition, into this part of the story.

Placing the Temptation of Christ after the Meeting with the Samaritan Woman at Jacob's Well obviously violates biblical chronology: their order should be reversed. Here, the author of the programme was clearly determined to make prominent the scene at the well, in which Jesus, using the metaphor of Water of Life to describe himself, reveals himself to be the Messiah, the Saviour; and to set it next to the scenes of the baptism in the Jordan and of the apostles bringing bread from the Samaritan town of Sychar, both of which are shown higher up in the background. Bread and water – the water of baptism, living water from Jacob's well, and the bread being carried by the apostles, who prefigure priesthood – form a symbolic axis in the central part of the altar. In response to the woman's words, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ," he said: "I that speak unto thee am he" (Jn 4, 26). And these words define his presence in the sacraments (baptism, Eucharist). The scene thus has a strictly sacramental meaning, since giving sacraments is the priest's duty, and, as we know, members of a priestly order were the patrons and users of the retable. In the central panel, their function of relaying Christ's teachings as preachers is highlighted by the accompanying scene of twelve-year-old Jesus in the Jerusalem temple, while the three temptations signify the priests' pastoral work in the fight against the temptations of evil, the devil and sin, as well as the requirement of the priestly state to be pure and virtuous. The priest should therefore care about the purity of rituals, of the temple (here: of the Gdańsk church), which is stressed by the other adjacent scene on the right wing, The Expulsion of the Money Changers. The three main scenes, which are presented as three debates, emphasize the three functions of the clergy, their three duties of priest, preacher and pastor. They also tell us that the word that has been revealed is the source of faith and deeds of God's people, as they are guided by the spiritual guardians.

The priest's teaching about the truths of faith, preparing and giving the sacraments and his daily struggle with sin and temptation, which define the message of the principal part of the retable, are immersed in the narrative from the story of the Saviour and Salvation. But only some incidents were picked out from this history, and they were not necessarily the ones that are most popular or usually shown in Christological cycles. Missing from Jesus' childhood is the beginning of the story, there is no follow-up to the Annunciation and the Adoration of the Magi. Of the story of Christ's public activity, key events such as the Sermon on the Mount, cases of healing and raising from the dead, were omitted. It was not the point of the triptych to tell the full and continuous sequence of the Christological cycle.

It was geographic space that primarily guided the choice of scenes and their staging in *The Jerusalem Triptych*. We have already seen that it was the need to convey the topographic scenery of Jerusalem that forced the artist to introduce the motif of the pursuers' return to the City into the sequence of the story of the Flight to Egypt. The retable is actually a map, which recreates the imaginary topography of the Holy Land, including the topography of the Crusaders' Kingdom of Jerusalem. It is no coincidence that the heraldic programme, which is developed through the coats of arms encrusted in various places on the insides of the wings, is a reference to the idea of a new crusade. We see the juxtaposition of the recurring coats of arms of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, as well as the crest of Cleves County (although we cannot identify it with full certainty; but there definitely are no coats of arms of Emperor Maximilian and Marie de Bourgogne, as Andrzej Kłoczowski argues in a 1965 article; its full heraldic programme still needs to be analysed). This leads to the question about who funded this painting: is it conceivable that the priests

in the priestly brotherhood were guided by the idea of a knights' crusade to reclaim the Holy Land for Christianity and to resurrect the Kingdom of Jerusalem? Or was it co-funded by a noble or a patrician who had para-knightly status or ambitions? Or perhaps it served not as a summons to an actual crusade but only a pilgrimage: was it perhaps a manual for the patrician burghers of Gdańsk, which served as an imaginary voyage to the Holy Land intending to turn them into the "soldiers of Christ," *Milites Christiani*? Or maybe – albeit less likely, this interpretation is not out of the question – the retable was not created for the chapel in Gdańsk, but was brought from another place, for which it had been sponsored by a knight or a prince (this scenario would not, however, explain the priestly theme of sacraments, preaching and pastoral duties developed in the central panel).

The scene where Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at the well also has a missionary meaning: the Gospel According to John reports that because of this meeting, the Samaritans in the town of Sychar adopted Christ's teachings and the belief that he was the Saviour. This may combine the motifs of priestliness with crucifixion or the pilgrimage, signifying the clergy's participation in preparing a pious voyage by explaining the teachings, carefully giving the sacraments and being pastorally active.

Jerusalem and Judea are the space in which the following scenes of *The Jerusalem Triptych* take place: the Massacre of the Innocents, Herod's soldiers' return to the city, the Boy Jesus in the Temple, Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem, Jesus Expels the Money Changers from the Temple and scenes from the Passion. The Baptism in the Jordan (according to Jn 1: 28 – "Bethany across the Jordan," a village whose location remains unknown) also probably took place in an area neighbouring Judea; similarly, the background to the Temptation of Christ was also there, since it was to have taken place directly after the baptism. The events on the left wing take place in Judea, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, from which the Holy Family flees to Egypt. Only the central scene of Christ and the Samaritan Woman at the Well is located elsewhere, in Samaria. But this exception, as I have mentioned, is justified by the core message of the retable. This situation allows the triptych's creator to display the panorama of Jerusalem and its environs for his audience, as a scaffolding for the imagination: a network of topographic points to serve as the destination of the pilgrim's imaginary voyage. This voyage to places of memory (*loca*), which join together into a route of meditative stages, takes place in the spectator's soul as he follows it standing before the painting, instead of in real, distant space.

The triptych's unique topographic vision of the Kingdom of Jerusalem makes it allude to the institution of the great pilgrimages, those to the Holy Land, Rome or Santiago de Compostela, present in the literature of pilgrimages. But it is certainly not an "illustration" of itineraries, guidebooks or accounts of travels to the Holy Land.[25] Its choice of scenes does correspond to the holy places and events described in those writings, but their order is inconsistent with them.[26] The closed triptych shows pilgrimage destinations in Jerusalem: *The Last Supper* in the Cenacle on Mount Zion; *The Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane* and *The Arrest* on the Mount of Olives; *Christ before Pilate*, *The Flagellation* and *The Crowning with Thorns*, again near Zion; and *The Meeting with Veronica during the Way of the Cross*, *The Crucifixion*

[25] Kathryn M. Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent. Imagining Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011). Disciplina Monastica, 8 (for further literature). See also Halina Manikowska, *Jerozolima – Rzym – Compostela. Wielkie pielgrzymki u schyłku średniowiecza* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2008), the best Polish reference book (with further literature).

[26] See, for instance, the imaginary pilgrimage routes in the manuscript MS.982, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, Darmstadt, in Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages...*, op. cit., apendix 1, pp. 275–301.

and *The Burial of Jesus Christ* on the road to Golgotha and on its hill (Via Doloris and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre inside the Old City). After the triptych is opened, we see on its left wing the pilgrimage route to Bethlehem: *The Massacre of the Innocents*, *The Chase by Herod's Soldiers*, *The Miracle of the Corn*, *The Flight to Egypt*. On the central panel we return to the City (as instructed by the system of itineraries set by the Jerusalem Franciscans who directed the pilgrim traffic) and in the scene of Child Jesus in the Temple we see Solomon's Temple (actually, only from the outside, since at the time the retable was created, it was the mosque – the Qubbat As-Sakhrah, Dome of the Rock). We then take two new journeys outside Jerusalem. The first, to Samaria, to the place where Jesus met the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (the central scene, *Christ and the Samaritan Woman at the Well*), on the route to Galilee, in the direction of Nazareth, Cana, Capernaum and Lake Tiberias; this route was rarely taken, and then only by the robust, outside the standard pilgrimage, but Jacob's well was closer to Jerusalem, at mid-point, and it could be included in the journey to the River Jordan. The second excursion outside Jerusalem was this very road to the Jordan, the place where Jesus was baptized, a standard itinerary for pilgrims. On the way, their stops would of course include the Mount of Temptation, which we see in the trifold representation of *The Temptation of Jesus*. Finally, on the right wing, in the scenes of *Entrance into Jerusalem* and *The Expulsion of the Money Changers* we return one more time to Jerusalem, at the same time going back to the beginnings of the Passion in Jerusalem.

It is significant that the painting shows neither all the important stages of the standard pilgrimage to the Holy Land nor a full topographic logic (Jerusalem appears in several places), although it does retain the division of pilgrimage routes and principal areas. The artist clearly was guided not so much by the realism of the topography as by its overall imagination, subjected to the narrative chronology. But this very choice and arrangement of the scenery fit in with that era's imagination of the historical, biblical Holy Land, drawn from the very pilgrimage guides and descriptions of the holy places in Palestine.

Therefore, the purpose of the triptych's presentation was not direct illustration. Instead, it was the overall context of the place, which could link the painting to the function of a chapel. The Jerusalem Chapel, belonging as it did to the Priestly Fraternity, must have played a role similar to the other known chapels of its kind. They were either an imaginary reconstruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (at the same time the sanctuary of the Crucifixion on Golgotha and the Resurrection), or only its symbolic reminder (a monumental "pilgrimage souvenir"). Playing the same role were the Jeruzalemkerk, built in Bruges by the Adornes family in 1435–83,[27] the Jerusalem Chapel in Saint John's Church in Gouda (c. 1497–1504), which was built to memorialize the pilgrimage of Gijsbrecht Raet, the church's curate, to the Holy Land sometime between 1478 and 1487 (probably around 1485),[28] or the lost Chapel of

[27] J. [Jean-Jacques] Gailliard, *Recherches sur l'Église de Jérusalem à Bruges* ([s.l.]: Gailliard, 1843); Jan Esther, "Monumentenbeschrijving en bouwgeschiedenis van de Jeruzalemkapel," in *Adornes en Jeruzalem. Internationaal leven in het 15de- en 16de-eeuwse Brugge*, Noël Geirnaert, André Vandewalle, eds, exh. cat., Jeruzalemkerk, Bruges, 9–25 September 1983 (Bruges: Jeruzalemkerk, 1983), pp. 50–81; Jozef Penninck, *De Jeruzalemkerk te Brugge* (Sint-Adries–Brugge: Heemkundige Kring Maurits van Coppenolle, 1986); Brigitte Beernaert et al., "De Jeruzalemkerk," in *15de-eeuwse architectuur in Brugge* (Bruges: Open Monumentendag Vlaanderen, 1992); ead. et al., "De Jeruzalemkerk," in *Via Europa, reisverhalen in steen* (Bruges: Open Monumentendag Vlaanderen, 1999); Jean-Luc Meulemeester, "De Jeruzalemkapel in Brugge, enkele summiere aanvullingen," *Brugs Ommeland*, 2012, pp. 162–8.

[28] A.L.H. Hage, "Die stede van der Goude" en „die gloriose ende die heylighe stadt van Jerusalem". Enkele Goudse pelgrimageteksten uit de vijftiende eeuw," in *In de stad van die Goude*, N.D.B. Habermehl, ed. (Delft: Eburon, 1992), pp. 69–82; Ronald Glaudemans et al., *De Jeruzalemkapel in Gouda* (Gouda: Stichting Spoor, 1998).

the Holy Sepulchre at the Augustinian canons' church in Edington in Wiltshire, which was funded by William Wey to remember his two pilgrimages to Jerusalem in 1458 and 1462.[29]

Undeniably, the Gdańsk triptych was not a literal cartographic or topographic tool, a reflection of an actual pilgrimage to a faraway land. By showing the scenery of the Holy Land filled with a sequence of sacred events – the story of Jesus and Mary – it must have stirred up the pious meditation and prayer described in many literary works devoted to "spiritual pilgrimages,"[30] which were a substitute for the burdensome and costly pilgrimage itself and gave access to indulgences, the assigned *loca sacra* from the region of Jerusalem and Palestine.[31] Like guides to the imaginary journey, the triptych could serve as a substitute instrument of pilgrimage.

The Jerusalem Triptych as a vision of the Holy Land's topography, located between Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Mount of Temptation and the River Jordan, has its ideological – but only ideological, not formally compositional – analogy in the late fifteenth-century panorama paintings of places in the Holy Land, which show the Passion of Christ and The Life of Mary. They are Hans Memling's *Passion* in Turin and *The Seven Joys of Mary* (Galleria Sabauda, Turin and Alte Pinakothek, Munich) and the anonymous Passion panels (Museu Nacional do Azulejo, Lisbon; Musée d'Art Sacré du Gard, Pont-Saint-Esprit; M-Museum, Leuven; Church of Saint James, Toruń, **fig. 6**);[32] as well as miniature books;[33] and woodcuts, for instance the originally enormous (120 × 112 cm) Parisian xylograph of c. 1460,[34] only fragments

[29] Pnina Arad, "Pilgrimage, Cartography, and Devotion: William Wey's Map of the Holy Land," *Viator*, vol. 43, no. 1, (2012), pp. 301–22.

[30] On imaginary pilgrimages, see A.M. Koldeweij, "Lijfelijke en geestelijke pelgrimage: materiële 'souveniers' van spirituele pilgrimage," in *Geen povere schoonheid. Laat-middeleeuwse kunst in verband met de Moderne Devotie*, Kees Veelenturf, ed. (Nijmegen: Valkhof Pers, 2000), pp. 222–52; Nine Miedema, "Geestelijke rijckdom": over pelgrimsreizen en aflaten in de Middeleeuwen," in *Een school spierinkjes. Kleine opstellen over Middelnederlandse artes-literatuur*, W.P. Gerritsen, Annelies van Gijsen, Orlanda S.H. Lie, eds (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1991), pp. 123–6; ead., "Following in the Footsteps of Christ. Pilgrimage and Passion Devotion," in *The Broken Body. Passion Devotion in Late-Medieval Culture*, Alasdair A. MacDonald, Herman N.B. Ridderbos, Rita M. Schlusemann, eds (Groningen: Uitgeverij Egbert Forsten, 1998), pp. 73–92; Kamil Kopania, "Duchowa pielgrzymka po Jerozolimie. Obraz pasyjny z kościoła św. Jakuba w Toruniu," *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, vol. 70, nos 1–2 (2008), pp. 91–112; Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent...*, op. cit. (bibliography).

[31] Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent...*, op. cit.

[32] Maurits Smeyers, "Analecta Memlingiana: From Hemling to Memling – From Panoramic View to Compartmented Representation," in *Memling Studies (Proceedings of the international colloquium, Bruges, 10-12 November 1994)*, Hélène Verougstraete, Roger van Schoute, Maurits Smeyers, with the collaboration of Anne Dubois, eds (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1997), pp. 179–84; Kathryn M. Rudy, "Northern European Visual Responses to Holy Land Pilgrimage, 1453–1550" (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, New York, 2001); Vida J. Hull, "Spiritual Pilgrimage in the Paintings of Hans Memling," in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles*, Sarah Blick, Rita W. Tekippe, eds (Leiden–Boston, Mass.: Brill, 2005, chapter 2; Jeanne Nuechterlein, "Hans Memling's St. Ursula Shrine. The Subject as Object of Pilgrimage," in Hull, *Spiritual Pilgrimage...*, op. cit., chapter 3; Mitzi Kirkland-Ives, "Narrative Performance and Devotional Experience in the Art of Hans Memling" (Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2005); Kopania, "Duchowa pielgrzymka po Jerozolimie...," op. cit.; Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling. Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), chapter 8: "Paintings as Aids to Spiritual Pilgrimage," pp. 129–73; Julia Gerth, *Wirklichkeit und Wahrnehmung. Hans Memlings Turiner Passion und die Bildgruppe der Passionspanoramen* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2010); Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent...*, op. cit., pp. 151–70.

[33] Walter Cahn, "Margaret of York's Guide to Pilgrimage to Churches of Rome," in *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the Visions of Tondal*, Thomas Kren, ed., exh. cat. (Malibu, Calif.: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992), pp. 80–98; Laura D. Gelfand, "Bruges as Jerusalem, Jerusalem as Bruges. Actual and Imagined Pilgrimage in Fifteenth-Century Manuscript Illuminations and Paintings," *Annales d'Histoire de l'Art et d'Archéologie*, 29 (2007), pp. 7–24.

[34] André Jammes, H.D. [Henri-Dominique] Saffrey, "Une image xylographique inconnue de la Passion de Jésus à Jerusalem," in H.D. [Henri-Dominique] Saffrey, *Humanisme et imagerie aux XV^e^ et XVI^e^ siècles* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2003), pp. 157–75; Kopania, "Duchowa wędrówka po Jerozolimie...," op. cit., pp. 106–7.

of which survive; or the wood engraving made in Paris in the late fifteenth century;[35] or, finally, tapestries (*Elector Palatine Otto Henry's Voyage to Jerusalem in 1521*, Brussels workshop, 1541, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich).[36] Like they, the Gdańsk triptych could serve as a mnemonic device for an imaginary spiritual pilgrimage.

This was the goal of the segmented and simultaneous narrative, which "atomized" the time of the story. Space – which was also conceived in segments but in a cohesive, continuous, integrated order – became its link and its glue. The skipping order of episodes stems from the artist's desire to direct the viewer's imagination to the pilgrimage routes to Jerusalem, onto the roads to Bethlehem, Nazareth and the River Jordan. It is the sacred space, the sacred topography that integrates the morsels of time, the episodes of history dispersed in a continuum. Much like in the thinking of Nicolaus Cusanus, the horizontal axis of earthly events is bonded with the vertical, sacred axis, which connects the faithful, the viewer, to Christ the God and his theophany from biblical history, with the imaginary participation in sacred happenings and holy places, as they are achieved in meditation and prayer. Cusanus's central metaphor of man as a wanderer and a pilgrim finds space to fulfil itself: the viewer's space of the here and now is transformed in his mind into the ideal place of time on earth destined to satisfy the time of Incarnation, the time of Jesus Christ as intermediary between God and the world, God and man, eternity and the time on earth. This is the time and the space, which through contemplation lead his soul outside space and time, to Salvation, to *visio Dei*, to communion with God in the eternal Heaven, which has no roads, no motion, no variability and no action.

[35] Jan Białostocki, *Spätmittelalter und beginnende Neuzeit* (Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag, 1972), p. 259, no. 183. Propyläen-Kunstgeschichte, 7.

[36] Kopania, "Duchowa wędrówka po Jerozolimie...," op. cit., p. 106; Folker Reichert, *Die Reise des Pfalzgrafen Ottheinrich zum Heiligen Land 1521* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2005).