

aber sowohl große Ähnlichkeiten zu dem Mosaik der thronenden Madonna in der Euphrasiusbasilika in Poreč (Parenzo; 540 n. Chr.) als auch zu späteren Werken im Patriarchat Aquileia (z. B. Summaga) ausmachen ließen, so wäre meines Erachtens zu fragen, ob nicht bereits ein Vorgängerprogramm in Aquileia eine Marienmaiestas besessen haben könnte. Diese Vermutung leitet sich aus den Beobachtungen von Otto Demus ab (Otto Demus: *Romanische Wandmalerei*; München 1968, Dok., S. 112). Die sogenannten „henrizischen“ Elemente in dem Programm bleiben deutlich vager als die inhaltlichen Bezüge auf die theologischen Diskussionen im Patriarchat und die Übereinstimmungen mit dem Mosaik der thronenden Maria in Poreč.

Insgesamt ist die Arbeit wegen der genauen Beobachtungen zu Restaurierungen und Original sowie der sorgfältigen Bildanalyse der Apsismalereien ein wichtiger Beitrag zur Kenntnis von Malereien in frühalsischer Zeit. Überhaupt nehmen bisher gegenüber historischen Fragestellungen die, welche die Bilderwelt der Salier betreffen, nur geringen Raum ein. Auch in den für 2006 anlässlich des 900. Todestages Kaiser Heinrichs IV. in Speyer organisierten Vorträgen und in dem Kolloquium spielen Fragen zur salischen Bildkunst kaum eine Rolle.

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Heidrun Stein-Kecks: Der Kapitelsaal in der mittelalterlichen Klosterbaukunst. Studien zu den Bildprogrammen (*Italienische Forschungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz, Max-Planck-Institut. Vierte Folge, 4*); München – Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag 2004; 537 pp., 24 colour photographs, 335 black-and-white photographs; ISBN 3-422-06429-x; € 88,-

On the cover of Heidrun Stein-Kecks' book on the iconographical programmes of chapterhouses we see a detail from the frescoed vault of the lower church of San Francesco in Assisi, dating to circa 1320. The fresco depicts a building, opened to the exterior on three sides. On a bench against the back wall three figures are seated who are identified by inscriptions. They are *Prudentia*, *Obedientia* and *Humilitas*. *Obedientia*, in the middle, is represented as a winged abbot with St Francis at his feet, who is being urged to be silent and is given a yoke to carry. Behind the abbot, on the back wall, we see part of a fresco representing Christ's crucifixion. In front of the building are two groups of angels. The left group is introducing two well-dressed pious men into the chapterhouse, while the group on the right has just urged a centaur to leave. On the roof St Francis reappears, with the stigmata, flanked by two angels and ready to be accepted into heaven.

Here, in a nutshell, we see a representation of the medieval chapterhouse and its meaning for the monastic community. On entering a monastery a monk said farewell to the outside world and pledged obedience to an abbot. His life was to be spent in humility and silence, his sacrifice was compared to Christ's passion and sacrificial death on the cross. On entering the monastery, the monk found himself on the way

to heaven, providing he kept to the rules. It was in the chapterhouse that the monk committed himself, it was here that his conduct was judged and all sin expelled. In short, the chapterhouse was the domain of the abbot and the monastic rule and it was the centre of the monastic community.

The image on the cover is thus a very apt visual exponent of the themes that are discussed in Heidrun Stein-Kecks' book, which centres on the meaning, representation and function of medieval chapterhouses and their decoration. One of the most pertinent questions dealt with in the book is to establish whether significant differences can be discerned in the decoration of chapterhouses of the different monastic orders, that all followed their own rule. So far, little research has been done in this field and therefore the book really fills in a gap.

Heidrun Stein Keck's book consists of three main parts. The first deals with the proceedings of the chapter meeting and the architecture of the chapterhouse. In the second part the decoration of chapterhouses is discussed and part three consists of a catalogue in which the most important and well-preserved chapterhouses and their decoration are discussed. The main sources are quoted in full in the appendix (pp. 485–501).

In the first section of her book the author starts off exploring the beginnings of monasticism in the west, the beginnings of monastic architecture and the origins of the chapterhouse, which are obscure. As few early monastic complexes have survived, the St Gallen plan, dating from the ninth century (which was a period of monastic reform), is of seminal importance. Here for the first time we see an orderly arrangement of the monastic buildings around a central courtyard. In the ninth century such an arrangement was probably still extraordinary, as there are only a few excavated examples of such an arrangement: Altenmünster Lorsch (circa 760–764) and Inselkloster auf der Reichenau (after 724) being important examples. Significantly, the St Gallen plan does not show up a separate chapterhouse and neither is one mentioned in the tenth-century treatise *„Carmen de laude vitae monasticae“*. And while the goings on in the „conventus“ or „curiae“ of the abbey of St Wandrille, as described in the *„Gesta sanctorum patrum Fontanellensis coenobii“*, written by Abbot Ansegis of St Wandrille in 823–833, undoubtedly refer to a chapter meeting, it is not so certain that the building where this chapter meeting took place was in fact a chapterhouse. In the ninth century then the separate chapterhouse was still rare or did not exist at all.

Following this brief introduction (pp. 19–26), Heidrun Stein-Kecks turns to the chapter meetings themselves, the meaning of the word *„capitulum“*, and to the chapter office of the various orders. The chapter office usually started with readings from the martyrology and necrology and proceeded with readings from the Gospel, following which a sermon was held. This part of the chapter office was intended for the entire community. What followed, *„das Schuldkapitel“*, was only for the professed monks, to the exclusion of all others (pp. 26–52). Heidrun Stein-Kecks continues to describe the various places where chapter meetings could be held (pp. 52–60) and subsequently deals with the architecture of the chapterhouse (pp. 60–84) and its inter-

ior fittings (pp. 84–92). The author then proceeds with a discussion of the functions of the chapterhouse (pp. 92–105) and its symbolic meaning (pp. 105–111).

As for the architecture of the chapterhouse, on the whole this is rather standard, as chapterhouses are usually situated in the east tract of the cloisters, always with the main wall facing east and with the dormitory overhead. The height of the building was therefore limited and an arrangement with three aisles of the same height predetermined, as was the fact that there were no windows in the north and south walls. Only in England is the situation notably different as here chapterhouses were often built according to a round plan. The centre of the east side was taken up by the cross above and by the abbot or abbess below, who, after all, was the representative of Christ, the ‚vicarius Christi‘. All monks had to confess their guilt in front of the abbot or abbess on a place called the ‚judicium‘ which was sometimes marked by a plaque in the floor. It was here that the monk or nun was punished for his or her disobedience.

An interesting problem is that of the façade, which is always open to the exterior, already from the earliest examples onwards. It is usually held that this openness was intended to enable those who were not permitted to enter chapter to follow the proceedings within. However, as Heidrun Stein-Kecks observes, the proceedings inside the chapter were intended for the professed monks and for them alone. What happened during the ‚Schuldkapitel‘ was secret and monks were not allowed to communicate what had happened inside. It is thus highly unlikely that the façade of the chapterhouse was open to the exterior to enable others to eavesdrop. In fact, the proceedings in chapter paralleled those in a law court, where crimes were punished. Law courts were traditionally held in the open air. It is this parallel that may well explain the openness of the chapterhouse façade.

Interesting is Heidrun Stein-Kecks‘ discussion of altars inside chapterhouses. The altar was by no means a standard element of the chapterhouse, and in the chapterhouses of the Cluniac and Cistercian orders, altars are lacking altogether. The earliest mentions of altars in the chapterhouse of collegiate foundations date from the eleventh century, for monasteries such mentions appear from the thirteenth century onwards, especially in houses of the mendicant orders. According to the author the appearance of altars in chapterhouses is clearly related to lay burial.

The second part of Heidrun Stein-Kecks‘ book is concerned with the iconography of the decoration inside chapterhouses.

The first part of this section deals with images of Christ and the cross, a standard and essential feature of every chapterhouse. Monastic life after all was considered to be the most pure form of ‚Imitatio Christi‘; being secluded in a monastery and living according to a strict discipline, having vowed obedience to an abbot for the rest one‘ s life, was considered as a sacrifice that paralleled Christ‘ s sacrificial death on the Cross (pp. 133–149). Apart from Christ, images of St Mary make a frequent occurrence in chapterhouses (pp. 149–151). Another common theme is the abbot himself, who was considered to be Christ‘ s representative within the monastic walls, the ‚vicarius Christi‘ (pp. 151–156). The apostles too presented a popular theme (pp. 156–160), as

did themes related to ‚guilt‘ and forgiveness‘, especially those pertaining to the monastic rule itself (pp. 160–167). Representations of the monastic Order also enjoyed considerable popularity (pp. 167–176). In the chapterhouses of the mendicants lay patrons had a considerable say in what was represented on the walls (pp. 177–181). In addition, the author discusses what was placed where on the walls (pp. 181–187).

Heidrun Stein-Kecks concludes that every chapterhouse was decorated differently and that it is impossible to trace a chronological development of chapterhouse decoration. This is probably why she chooses to arrange her material thematically rather than in chronological order. Also, as few chapterhouses have survived with their decoration intact, and as there seem to have been no standard schemes for chapterhouse decoration within the different monastic orders, the material has not been arranged according to the monastic orders. The author also chooses to discuss the various chapterhouses from different regions together, rather than separating them according to country.

The third section of the book consists of the catalogue, which is arranged in alphabetical order. It is not intended to be an exhaustive catalogue of every chapterhouse in Europe. The examples were in fact chosen because they have been preserved more or less intact. The result is that out of the 36 examples of chapterhouses discussed in full detail 24 are situated in Italy, 7 in Germany, 2 in France, 1 in Spain and 3 in England. Of course, this is not surprising in a book published under the auspices of the German Art History Institute in Florence, but one wonders how representative the selection really is and how relevant it is to concentrate on fully-preserved ensembles only. The result is that the book is also far more concerned with fresco painting than with sculpture, even though a significant amount of sculptural remains has survived from chapterhouses. Often these ensembles are no longer complete, and that is why they have been excluded from the catalogue, but I do find that sculptural programmes such as those from St Mary’s Abbey in York and St. George-de-Boscherville, might have been included in the catalogue in spite of their fragmentary state. Their inclusion would have somewhat balanced the present emphasis on Italy and mendicant schemes and the emphasis on the later Middle Ages. By concentrating on fully-preserved schemes one automatically leaves out the earlier Middle Ages and countries that have suffered from severe iconoclasm. Somewhat surprising is the inclusion of the chapterhouse of Sta Croce in Florence (the Pazzi Chapel) in the catalogue. This building hardly qualifies as a medieval building.

However, Heidrun Stein-Kecks’ research amounts to pioneering work and the result is quite awesome. The book presents the reader with a very interesting, detailed and readable overview of the function and meaning of the medieval chapterhouse and its decoration. The catalogue is a very usable work of reference. For anyone interested in the medieval chapterhouse and for anyone wanting to research medieval chapterhouses this book is essential reading.

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