5. Die Frage nach einer Zerstörung des Klosters in der Zeit der Ungarneinfälle und ob »danach um 1000 eine völlig neue Anlage erbaut worden« sei (Milojčić 1966, 11), faßt beinahe ein ganzes Jahrhundert zusammen. Zum Ungarneinfall hat sich in dem Sammelband (2003, 62ff.und Anm. 62) Wilhelm Störmer unter Berufung auf Sage kritisch geäußert; das muß hier nicht vertieft werden. Brände hat es in Kirchen und Klöstern häufiger gegeben. Sie gelten geradezu als eines der Antriebsmomente für den Gewölbebau in salischer Zeit. Die Generation, die das Konzept einer ganz neuen Klosteranlage auf dem überkommenen Gelände realisiert hat, bedurfte vielleicht nicht einmal eines auslösenden Schadensfeuers. Der Torbau und die Kirche mit dem Portal sind Bauten von großer Individualität, mit denen sich noch näher zu beschäftigen lohnte.

So erweist sich der zweite Teil der letzten Frage als der eigentliche »Sieger« der optionalen Forschungsziele von Milojčić. Meine erste Datierung (1966, 314) der heutigen Kirche habe ich bereits 1970 »bis gegen die ottonische Zeit« erweitert, ist es doch bei der lückenhaften Überlieferung oft mißlich, die Anfänge eines neuen Architekturmotivs näher einzugrenzen.

Um die hier dargelegten Vorstellungen zur Bauentwicklung des Klosters Frauenwörth, auf der Grundlage der bisher veröffentlichten Untersuchungen und vielleicht auch von unveröffentlichten Dokumentationen, die noch nicht in ihrer Bedeutung erkannt sind, abzusichern, bleibt noch viel zu tun, interdisziplinär und durch ausgewiesene Spezialisten in ihren jeweiligen Sparten. Der diskutierte Wissensstand erlaubte es, Fragen zu beantworten, und eröffnet die Möglichkeit, aus dem vorhandenen Potential weiterführende Fragen an das Ensemble Frauenchiemsee zu stellen. Dieses wird noch länger ein Thema der Forschung bleiben müssen, für das die Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften und alle anderen involvierten Institutionen in der Verantwortung stehen.

Friedrich Oswald

Pierre Colman and Berthe Lhoist-Colman

Les Fonts Baptismaux de Saint-Barthélemy à Liège: Chef-d'œuvre sans pareil et nœud de controverses

Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique: Classe des Beaux-Arts 2002. 341 pp., ill., ISBN 978-2-8031-0189-4. € 31,-

Borne aloft by groups of remarkably expressive oxen and adorned with elegant figures in high relief, the monumental brass font that is now in Saint-Barthélemy, Liège, is an outstanding work by any standards; its unparalleled iconography and remarkably naturalistic style add to its unique qualities – which were doubtless enhanced by the (long lost) cover. The early-twelfth-century chronicler who lauded the work as 'cast with an almost incomparable skill/art' was (for once) not exaggerating. The same source (the *Chronicon rhythmicum Leodicense*) categorically links the font to Sainte-Marie de Liège (destroyed at the French Revolution) and to the patronage of Abbot Hillinus (1107-18). Accordingly, the work has long been central to any account of Romanesque art in general and to that of Mosan art in particular. In 1984, however, the date, origin and hence status of the font were vigorously called into question by M. Colman and Mme. Lhoist-Colman who argued that it was actually made in Constantinople, albeit for a client in Italy. That article (from *Aachener Kunstblätter* 52) is reprinted as the first item in the present volume. For the book is in

fact a collection of ten previously-published essays in which the authors set out, defend and refine their views on the subject, augmented by one 'new' study (no. XI) which further develops their theses. Given that the content of most of the earlier works is either incorporated within, or superseded by no. XI, one must question the motive for reprinting them, particularly since they are peppered with traces of disagreements – of *animus* indeed – which would best be forgotten (thus no. IX chronicles 'Les étapes de la "querelle" des fonts baptismaux de Saint-Barthélemy de 1903 à nos jours', while the very title of no. VI articulates the tone of our authors' ripostes to their critics: 'Les fonts baptismaux de Saint-Barthélemy. Non, non, la cause n'est pas entendue!'). When the cut and thrust of academic debate is particularly vigorous it may be, as the authors assert, on account of unreasonably entrenched positions and patriotism: 'Die These ... bringt diejenigen in furchtbare Verlegenheit, die daran gewöhnt sind, die Zuschreibung an Reiner von Huy als eine Gewißheit anzusehen. Sie versetzt diejenigen in Aufregung, bei denen der wissenschaftliche Esprit versagt angesichts eines Lokalpatriotismus' (p. 306). Yet might it not also be because the interpretations and hypotheses are not as convincing to others as they are to their originators?

The long campaigns of the authors have brought numerous gains, not least in fostering renewed scrutiny by divers parties of a masterpiece which is indeed problematic. They have rightly highlighted the disjunction between the art and technique of the font and that of Mosan Romanesque art in general. Equally, they have signalled the weakness of the case for attributing the work to Reiner of Huy: his œuvre had been incautiously assembled, and his artistic personality (and hence 'influence') are modern constructs. Concurrently, technical analysis has demonstrated that the lead content of the font originated in Spain, and that one of the ten extant oxen that form its support may be distinguished from the others.

Conversely, the explanation of the authors for the isolation of the font within the context of early Romanesque Mosan culture is less compelling. Rather than seeing it as an early product of a twelfth-century renaissance in northern Europe, they interpret it instead as a work of the 'Macedonian renaissance' in Byzantium, accomplished 'à Rome par une équipe associant des sculpteurs et des fondeurs byzantins et romains' (p. 203); the putative context is summarised in the title of no. XI: 'Les fonts baptismaux ... (abusivement attribués à Renier de Huy) don de l'empereur Otton III au baptistère de San Giovanni in Laterano'. In order to account for its documented presence in Liège by 1119, the authors hypothesise that it was appropriated from San Giovanni by Henry IV or Henry V of Germany, from whom it was somehow acquired by Hillinus and transported to Liège.

Yet if the suggested parallels with 'middle' Byzantine art, and the posited connection with the tastes and interests of Otto III may be adequate to mount such a hypothesis, they are hardly sufficient to prove it. There is no critical mass of obviously similar work from tenth-century Byzantium. Indeed, the exceptional Byzantine image which the authors evidently consider the most telling (Mount Athos, Dionysiou, MS 587) – since it is the one selected for reproduction in colour – comes from a manuscript dated to 1059, over half a century later than the context of creation that they hypothesise; while the Byzantine work which can be associated most directly with Otto III – the ivory plaque with the Dormition of the Virgin that was incorporated at the centre of the jewelled cover of one of his gospel-books – displays an archetypical 'middle Byzantine' stylisation in strong contrast to the 'naturalism' of the Liège font. Furthermore, such extant works from Italy as are linked most directly to the Ottonians – notably an ivory situla, and the Magdeburg antependium panels – are equally distinct in style from the font and are associated with Milan rather than Rome.

At one point, the authors actually admit that there is nothing directly comparable in the Byzantine corpus (p. 261); their explanation – that the relevant material has been lost – might just as reasonably be invoked in relation to north-west Europe in the early twelfth century. And scattered precedents of various forms are as easy to locate in northern European material of eleventh-century date as in Byzantine material of the tenth: one naturally thinks of the large-scale bronze column and doors associated with Bernward of Hildesheim, not to mention numerous other smaller-scale works of ars sacra from eleventh-century Germany and England, ranging from the Basel altar-frontal associated with Henry II to a group of classicising ivories of probable English manufacture. Equally, a more credible explanation for the isolation of the work, artistically and technically, in the context of Liège than Byzantines at Rome and a travelling font is an itinerant artist *tout simple*: for if a certain *pictor peritissimus* called Nivardus, for example, could be summoned from Lombardy to Fleury in the earlier eleventh century (as the *Vita Gauzlini* records), then securing a talented cosmopolitan metalworker for Liège a century later can hardly have been an insuperable task. Correspondingly, while the inscriptions on the font might be interpreted to refer to circumstances in Rome under Otto III (as propounded on pp. 269-73), they can equally be understood to refer to circumstances in Liège itself (as Clemens Bayer demonstrated in 2005). And if such a masterpiece had indeed come from Rome thanks to imperial intervention, there is at least some chance that such a triumph would have been mentioned in the *Chronicon rhythmicum* (when chroniclers did not hesitate to celebrate the appropriation of sacred relics, they are unlikely to have been backward in lauding such a coup).

To sum up: a masterpiece will, by definition, stand out from its context; the weight of evidence in the present case suggests that that context is still more likely to be northern Europe in the early twelfth century than a Rome with Byzantine artists employed by Otto III.

Richard Gameson

Mitteilungen des Verbandes Deutscher Kunsthistoriker e.V.

Der Vorstand freut sich über 240 neue Mitglieder im vergangenen Kalenderjahr.

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