

Introduction

This volume is devoted to the topic of apocryphal sources and their role in the construction of the visual representation and iconography of Virgin Mary, the Apostles, as well as the Last Judgment in a timespan starting from the Late Antiquity to the Late Middle Ages, both in the East and West. Its aim is to bring into attention some neglected topics and aspects related to apocryphal sources. Research in this field concentrates mainly on the textual tradition and transmission of apocryphal texts, yet aspects concerning the construction and function of women and gender, as well as the integration and adaptation of apocrypha in the construction of medieval iconographies still need to be addressed.

The “apocrypha/on” are understood as movable texts whose composition does not end in the fourth and fifth centuries in the context of the establishment and closing of the canon. This permits to address issues concerning the evolution, transmission, adoption, and adaptation of sources. The apocrypha were important sources for iconography when other information on holy lives lacked or when such information acquired an important function. Originating in the apocrypha, such information has often become part of visual representation tradition.

Firstly, the studies in this volume investigate issues related to the Virgin Mary, and through them, also the status, function, and identity of women. Mary and the female element thus represent significant models and/or background figures in fields pertaining, but not limited to: theology, religious studies, textual studies, manuscript studies, art history in a trans-disciplinary perspective. Secondly, these studies focus on the apostles and the Last Judgment, their visual representations and the use of apocryphal sources. Therefore, the volume is divided in two parts according to these two major topics: Part I dealing with Mary in the Apocrypha, and Part II focusing on the Apostles and the Last Judgment.

Mark M. Mattison deals with the textual tradition of the story found in an apocryphal source which originated in the second century (possibly even earlier in part), the *Protevangelium Jacobi*, with the oldest

manuscript dating back to the late third or early fourth century, the Greek Papyrus Bodmer V. The apocryphal *Protevangelium* is the source discussed and used by several authors in this volume, pointing to its important position –with the necessary critical engagement – in the representation of Virgin Mary, especially, and in Mariology, also supplying information about the family and infancy of Jesus. Mattison analyses the account of examination, undertaken by a certain Salome, in order to confirm the virginity of Mary after giving birth to Jesus. Salome is interpreted in various subsequent sources in different ways: as a midwife who helped Mary with the birth or as a manifestation of disbelief, the “doubting Thomas” of the narrative. Mattison takes the debate back to its original context and the problem of text transmission and instability of textual tradition and argues that she could have originally been depicted as a well-meaning midwife performing a post-partum examination, and an early editor could have subsequently subverted the message, in view of apologetics against charges of Jesus illegitimacy and Mariological debates.

The *Protevangelium of James* is also one of the sources used by Ally Kateusz, who combines the analysis of written sources with the visual representation of Mary as a (high) priest. This motif was popular both in early Christian narratives and iconography, from Late Antiquity to the early modern era among some authors, both East and West, as discussed by several researchers recently. Kateusz contextualizes the reasons why Mary was depicted in this fashion with insignia such as the Eucharistic handkerchief and the episcopal pallium, looking for its sources in canonical gospels and apocryphal extracanonical literature (besides the *Protevangelium of James*, also the *Gospel of Bartholomew* and the *Six Dormition Narrative*). She shows that the iconography of Mary as a liturgical leader and Eucharist officiant was relatively common in the Mediterranean by the sixth century up to the High Middle Ages and also discusses the possible “censorship,” both ancient and modern, to explain why Mary is rarely remembered this way today.

Matthew J. Milliner addresses a similar theme from a slightly different point of view. His chapter analyses the extraordinarily rich visual representation of Mary as a priest in the church at Lagoudera in Cyprus, dating back to the twelfth century. The priestly motifs are not limited to the image in the apse, but they cover the naves with the cycle

of Presentation in the temple, Annunciation and Dormition. Milliner discusses connections with the apocryphal sources as *Protevangelium* and Dormition narratives and argues that the prominence of the priestly aspects of Mary's life in the church in Lagoudera and in Byzantine art can also be interpreted as a visualized form of the Cherubikon, the hymn said by priests at the outset of the Eucharistic part of the liturgy.

Manuela Studer-Karlen also deals with the apocryphal roots of the iconography of Virgin Mary and the infancy of Jesus, this time as a precious case study of the Byzantine churches in Cappadocia, unparalleled for its wealth of surviving painted monuments in the Byzantine world, from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. Again, the meaning of the scenes of Mary's life with apocryphal elements found in the *Protevangelium of James*, accepted and mediated through the Byzantine liturgical and theological traditions, which found its stable place in the decoration of the naves, is discussed.

Marilyn Gasparini's chapter stays with the theme of the representation of Mary in visual material and its apocryphal sources. Gasparini offers an overview of the depiction of the Annunciation in medieval art, including basic motifs such as the pose of Mary during the annunciation, her holding a book, the coming of the Holy Spirit and the conception through Mary's ear; which are based on canonical sources and amplified by apocryphal and non-canonical writings throughout the medieval period.

Apocryphal sources were similarly important for the visual representation and medieval iconography of other themes than Mary, such as those related to the lives and deeds of the apostles and the Last Judgment. Daria Coşcodan offers a case study of the iconography of the Last Judgment cycle in the late medieval church in Luzhany in northern Bukovina, today's Ukraine, an example of Moldavian monumental art, which draws on Byzantine traditions. She analyses especially the scenes depicting the death of the righteous and the death of the sinner and their moralizing dimension, pointing to their literary sources, such as Old Testament pseudepigrapha, mediated through Byzantine literature and hagiography and popular in the later period via Slavonic and Romanian translations. Coşcodan's case study contributes to the evidence of how the legacy of apocryphal literature rooted in late antique and medieval eschatological thought and iconography was

appropriated in the territory north of the Danube in the late Middle Ages.

The last two studies of the volume focus on the representation of the apostles. Andrea d'Apruzzo's chapter focuses on the iconography of Saint James the Greater and offers an overview of primarily medieval Italian examples located on the famous pilgrim route to Compostella. He points to the apocryphal motifs mediated this time via medieval hagiographic legends (from the *Codex calixtinus* with its miracle accounts to the *Golden Legend*), which contributed to the polymorphic and polyfunctional character of Saint James' cult.

Gerd Mathias Micheluzzi, finally, brings a fresh study of the functions of the scenes of Saint Peter Healing the Sick with his Shadow in late medieval painting, especially in San Piero a Grado and in the Upper Church of Assisi from the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Once again, Micheluzzi demonstrates, the visual representation was dependent on early Christian apocryphal sources (Pseudo-Clementine writings), mediated above all via widespread medieval collections such as the *Golden Legend*.

The present volume is the result of the debates started in two conference sessions devoted to the problem of apocrypha and visual representation. One of them focused on "Visualizing Women in the Apocrypha" and took place at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at the Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo (May 9-12, 2019), while the second session, titled "Apocryphal Iconography: Integration, Adaptation, and Church Tradition" took place at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, UK (July 1-4, 2019).

Most authors in these studies, but also this entire volume, aims to bridge what often remains disconnected: the visual art and the written text, the early Christian roots and medieval reception, the East and the West, as well as methodologies of various disciplines. We believe that the studies in the volume present a timely contribution to the growing body of scholarship on the apocryphal writings and their reception in the Middle Ages, especially in connection to visual representation.

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