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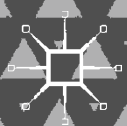
DEVOTION TO ST. ANNE IN TEXTS AND IMAGES

From Byzantium to the Late European Middle Ages

Edited by
Elena Ene D-Vasilescu



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Editor
Elena Ene D-Vasilescu
Wolfson College
University of Oxford
Oxford, UK

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Preface

In memoriam Virginia Nixon

The initiative to write this book came into being at the International Congress of Medieval Studies, Leeds in July 2013. At that event seven scholars assembled to examine aspects of the cult of St. Anne that were discussed in scholarship for the first time. We decided to gather our contributions in a volume with the aim of making known historical, theological, social, and artistic issues pertinent to the life of the saint from periods and areas (in both East and West) that so far have not been focal to scholarship yet are essential in understanding the hagiography of Byzantium and of the Middle Ages. In the volume we did not dwell on the origins of the cult of St. Anne (highly developed in Byzantium, especially in Constantinople) because the editor of the current collection has written a book that refers to that aspect to some length.[1] I had a grant from the British Academy to research the cult of this saint in Southern Europe and gathered some of the results within the above-mentioned work. I fully acknowledge the support of the institution as well as that of my colleagues at the Faculty of History in Oxford, where I worked during my research.

Mary's mother was popular with representatives of various segments of society—from monks, nuns, members of the clergy, royal patrons, to church-goers of every rank. The proposed collection of essays looks into

[1] Elena Ene D-Vasilescu, *Nourished by the Word: heavenly sustenance in Early Christian texts and Byzantine iconography*, submitted. See also E. Ene D-Vasilescu "St. Anne and her infant daughter in medieval [late Byzantine] texts and images", *Eikón Imago*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2015): 1–12.

both the public and private worship of this holy woman. It does so through the examination of manuscripts, monumental art, relics, sculpture, and texts of various genres. Hopefully, the content of the chapters will be of benefit to the ongoing research conducted in the field of Byzantine and medieval hagiography, including that peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon milieu.

The process of publishing has taken longer than we initially envisaged because our intended house, Ashgate, had a pause in its activity that resulted in a merger with Taylor & Francis; as a consequence of this delay, we lost some of the contributors while others have joined the team. But we thought that the enterprise should still go ahead because, after lecturing on St. Anne in Oxford, the editor of the volume found out that more can be done to make this holy woman known. Virginia Nixon, who was the first to send her paper and to encourage our project, died on 9 December 2015. Her passing gave another impetus to our academic enterprise and the publication is dedicated to her memory. Willemien Deeleman-Van Tyen, Virginia's life-long friend, intervened in moments of crisis to be sure that the project went ahead, and is very much looking to see the book published; thanks are due to her.

The rest of the contributions come from scholars who only knew the author of *Anne, Mary's Mother* through her book. Adriana Bara Balaban introduces the readers to the early life of Mary as it is presented in the decoration of the main church of Humor monastery, Romania (1534). This place of worship is adorned with frescoes painted in a style of Byzantine persuasion and became a UNESCO-classified monument in 1993. No researcher has previously published a work solely describing the iconography of Mary's childhood in that particular place. By a strange coincidence, Dr. Bara Balaban has studied at and is employed by the same university at which Virginia worked for many years, although they never met.

Elena Ene D-Vasilescu considers frescoes representing Saints Anne and Joachim with the infant Mary in churches from Southern Europe dated to the twelfth to fourteenth centuries and realized by iconographers who were first taught in Byzantine workshops. Dr. Vasilescu also delves into aspects of Anne's maternity as reflected in Patristic texts as well as in apocryphal written sources and studies the metaphoric interpretation of the breastfeeding episode from the cycle "The Infancy of Mary". Her chapter expounds on how the latter theme was treated from a theological perspective and how this fact has enriched the portrayal of the saint.

Emőke Nagy speaks about medieval manuscripts referring to St. Anne devotion in Hungary—specifically about the Teleki, Kazinczy, and Érdy codices—and elaborates on the influence their content had on monastic and mendicant communities; she refers to a particular Carthusian monastery and a few Franciscan convents. In doing this Nagy touches on various aspects regarding the cult of this saint and takes into consideration the results of previous research about it. She specifically continues the work of Lajos Katona, who identified the Latin source of the Hungarian legends. Nagy discusses the role played by the readers of the three codices she analyses in the propagation of Anne's devotion.

Virginia Nixon's chapter entitled "The Education of the Virgin: an alternative suggestion concerning the origins of this image" elucidates the issue of the missing textual source for a specific type of visual representation. That refers to St. Anne and the child Mary reading. The researcher suggests that this item was primarily intended to present an episode from the process of Mary's instruction concerning her future role as the mother of the Saviour and only secondarily as a display of her introduction to literacy. While intimating a solution to the problem of the "missing textual source" Nixon's chapter situates the occurrence of "Anne-Mary reading" pictorial trope within the mainstream of the devotional culture of the fourteenth century and follows its dissemination through several parts of Europe.

The chapters within this volume present a historical as well as a theological perspective on how the cult of St. Anne (sometimes also with glimpses concerning that of Joachim) established itself. Their appeal is international because they refer to areas on the continent that are not frequently discussed in the scholarship of English expression. The book proposed an interdisciplinary approach to the topic and encompasses a variety of aspects that refer to Anne's cult. This new contribution to the field of hagiography is of interest primarily to academics from a variety of research fields, mainly theologians, Byzantinists, art and church historians, and historians of a larger scope. In addition, researchers and students of literature, particularly of early Christian and medieval texts, are also among the intended readers.

Oxford, UK Elena Ene D-Vasilescu

In Memoriam Professor Virginia Nixon

It is so very right that the volume about Saint Anne is dedicated to Professor Virginia Nixon because she, as one of the foremost scholars on the subject, studied this holy figure for many decades.

After completing her doctoral dissertation and publishing the book *Mary's Mother: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Europe*, Virginia continued her research and published more material connected with the cult of the saint; one of her articles, "The Education of the Virgin: an alternative suggestion concerning the origins of the image", is in the current volume.

Besides being a wonderful and creative Professor as well as a beloved wife, mother, and grandmother, Virginia was also a great friend to many. I was fortunate to be one of them. We met in August 1992 in Naarden, my home town, and attended together the exhibition dedicated to St. Anne at the Museum of Religious Art in Uden. We saw one another again because she visited my family and I in the Netherlands many summers with her husband and children.

It was with great and deep sadness that we heard the news of Virginia's passing away on the 9 December 2015. Her obituary that came out in the *Gazette* in Montreal on 12 December 2015 said that, after 30 years of teaching, Professor Nixon "was much appreciated by her students and colleagues".

Virginia will never be forgotten. May she rest in peace.

Willemien Deeleman-Van Tyen

Naarden, March 2016.

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Notes on Contributors

Adriana Balaban Bara is Lecturer in the Department of Theological Studies at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada and the Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism. She is also a KAICIID International Fellow in Vienna, and works for interreligious dialogue, coexistence, pluralism, and peacebuilding around the world.

Elena Ene D-Vasilescu is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Medieval History and a Tutor in Theology (including Byzantine iconography) at the University of Oxford. She does research and teaches in Patristics and Byzantine history. Recently she has published the book *Visions of God and ideas on deification in Patristics thought* (co-edited with Mark Edwards); Routledge, 2016 and the articles "Generation (γενεά) in Gregory Nazianzen's poem *On the Son*" (2017); "Early Christianity about the Notions of Time and the Redemption of the Soul" (2017), and "Late Developments in Meta-Byzantine Icon-Painting" (2017). Dr. Vasilescu also published the book *Between Tradition and Modernity* and has numerous contributions to collective volumes.

Emőke Nagy is a historian and her research field is medieval Hungarian history with special regard to ecclesiastic and cultural history and the cult of saints. She works for the Romano-Catholic Parish Archives in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Among her publications there are "Motherhood and Sanctity in the Cult of Saint Anne: The Reception of the Saint's Legend Based on her Earliest Sources from Medieval Hungary, the Teleki, Kazinczy, and Érdy codices", *Colloquia* 15 (2009): 28–33; "'Had She Born Ten Daughters, She Would Have Named Them All Mary because of

the Kindness of the First Mary'. St. Anne in the Sermons of Two Late Medieval Hungarian Preachers," in Gecser Ottó (ed.), *Klaniczay Gábor Festschift*, Budapest, CEU Press, 2011, 273–283, and "Urban Patronage of Saint Anne Altars in Late Medieval Hungary", *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 22 (2016): 145–173.

Virginia Nixon Former Professor at the College of Liberal Arts, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada (from 1985 until 2014). She taught and published in art history and hagiography and is especially known for her book *Mary's Mother*: *Saint Anne in Late Medieval Europe* (Pennsylvania, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

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CHAPTER 1

The Lives of Joachim and Anne Depicted in the Church of Humor Monastery, Moldavia (Romania)

Adriana Balaban Bara

Abstract My chapter describes a series of frescoes devoted to Saints Anne and Joachim in the Romanian monastic church of Humor. The paintings focus on the role this holy couple had in the Incarnation of the Word of God (through the essential involvement in it of their daughter, Mary).

The chapter comments on the iconographical reflection concerning the history of salvation that visually unfolds along the walls of this shrine dedicated to the Dormition of the Virgin and to St. George at Humor. I believe that this history is characterized by three 'reversals' in which Mary was instrumental and implicitly so were her parents. Iconographers who works at Humor managed to render a subtle reality as thus; the manner in which they did so is explained.

Keywords Mary • Anne • Joachim • Humor • 'Reversals' • Frescoes

A. Balaban Bara (✉)
Department of Theological Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, QC, Canada
e-mail: abara@oikoumene.ca

E. Ene D-Vasilescu (ed.), *Devotion to St. Anne in Texts and Images*,
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1 Introduction

In 1993 the church of Humor Monastery and six other similar houses of worship from northern Moldavia, Romania, were declared UNESCO Heritage sites thanks to the frescoes painted on their exterior walls, which reflect rich iconographical programmes. My chapter focuses on the church in Humor, which was built in 1530 and has as patronal feasts the Dormition of the Mother of God and St. George. The frescoes visible on both its outer and interior walls, painted in 1535, make this building unique. One of the iconographic series they contain—that which depicts the life of Mary and of her parents as the iconographers imagined it—is within its crypt (*gropnița)* where the founders are buried (Fig. 1.1).

The *gropnița* is placed between the nave and the narthex in the church we present here. At the time of its construction this architectural element

Fig. 1.1 The church of Humor Monastery. (The author took all the photographs reproduced in this chapter)

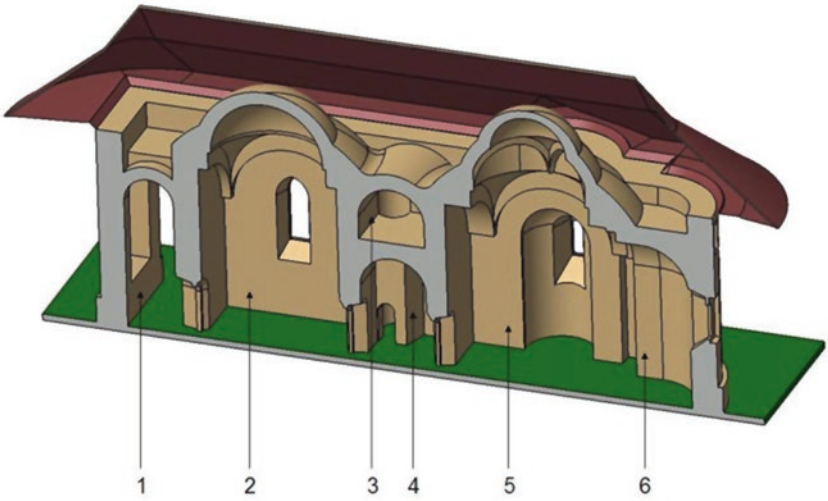

Fig. 1.2 The Church of Humor Monastery—Isometric Cross View. 1—the open porch, 2—the narthex, 3—the room for the treasures of the church, 4—the *gropnița*, 5—the nave, 6—the altar. (Eng. Valentin Bara helped the author to draw the section of the church using dedicated software)

represented an innovation.[1] The burial of important officials or benefactors next to churches was a popular practice in Orthodoxy, but for this purpose usually separate chapels annexed to the main church were used, and not spots within the 'heart' of the building (Fig. 1.2).[2]

Paul Henry assumes that the placement of the burial chamber inside churches was an indicator of the increasing honour given to the founders after their death.[3] However, this practice might have had another explanation. In Orthodox theology death is considered a rest in the expectation

[1] Maria Crăciun, "Apud Ecclesia: Church Burial and the Development of Funerary Rooms in Moldavia," in Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Sacred Space in the Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 144–167.

[2] Ecaterina Cincheză Buculei, "Programul iconographic al gropnițelor moldovenești (sec. xvi)," in Mihai Porumb (ed.), *Arta Românească, arta europeană. Centenar Virgil Vătășianu*, Oradea: Editura Muzeului Ţării Crişurilor, 2002, 86.

[3] Paul Henry, *Les Églises de la Moldavie du Nord des Origines à la fin du XVIe siècle: Architecture et Peinture. Contribution à l'étude de la civilisation moldave*, Paris: E. Leroux, 1930, 144.

of the Resurrection (John 11: 11–13) at the second coming of Christ (1 Thess. 4: 13–14). For patrons and their families, the churches they found and offer to Christ in the hope to have their sins forgiven are the ideal places to await the eschatological event[4]—that was the case during the Byzantine era, the Middle Ages (in both Eastern and Western Christendom), and is today. Thus, the *gropniţa* could be understood as the embodiment of the belief in the Resurrection.

At Humor, the iconographers ingeniously chose to cover the walls of the burial chamber with scenes depicting the Last Judgment and the figures of the most beloved intercessors for the souls of the dead: the Mother of God, her parents Joachim and Anne, and the Archangel Michael. The fresco cycle depicting the life of Mary and of her parents is the most complex of this kind in Romania and in iconography in general. However, researchers have never studied it. This chapter introduces it to scholarship for the first time and analyses it from a theological perspective.

2 An Overview of the Theology Illustrated by the Series of Frescoes That Depicts the Life of Mary and of Her Parents, Joachim and Anne, at Humor

Christian theology centres on the coming of the Son of God into human history, that is, the Incarnation. The execution of the magnificent series of frescoes on the interior and exterior walls of the church of Humor Monastery was an attempt of the founders and iconographers to 'speak' to the viewers about this great event, and about others leading to it. Their endeavours are consistent with those of many similar creators from areas that formerly were under the cultural influence of Byzantium, who paint episodes from the lives of the saints who loved and worshiped Christ, prayed to Him, and/or were martyred for their faith in Him. The frescoes also represent His Nativity, Passions, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. Since these constitute the main themes of Christian faith, liturgy, and spirituality, the iconographers found it suitable to reflect about them vividly in colour.

The series of frescoes depicting the life of Mary and of her parents on the walls of the burial chamber at Humor does not in itself attempt a synthesis

[4] E. Cincheza Buculei, "Programul Iconographic", 86.

of Christian theology. The iconographer focused on the role of the Virgin and of her family in the Incarnation. He or they paid particular attention to the following occurrences in Anne and Joachim's lives and in Mary's infancy: Joachim and Anne's gifts being accepted (Fig. 1.3), The Angel of the Lord appeared to Joachim in a desert (Fig. 1.4), Anne praying in her garden (Fig. 1.5), Joachim and Anne praying (individually) (Fig. 1.6), Anne and Joachim's kiss (Fig. 1.7), Anne giving birth to Mary (Fig. 1.8); Anne who gives the infant Mary to Joachim (Fig. 1.9), Virgin Mary receiving the blessing of the priest (Fig. 1.10), Mary's first steps [towards Anne] (Fig. 1.11), The Entry [Dedication] of the Mother of God into/to the Temple (Fig. 1.12), and Joachim's sacrifice to the Temple (Fig. 1.13).

Other scenes from the history of Christianity are depicted within the cycle of fresco we discuss here: Mary meeting with St. Joseph, the Annunciation through the Archangel Gabriel about Mary's role in the history of salvation [that of Bearer of the divine Redeemer], the birth of Christ, the flight to Egypt of Mary and Joseph with the baby Jesus, and their return to the Holy Land. The series of frescoes also illustrates the prayer of the Mother of God on the Mouth of Olives (at its end, in an interesting 'reversal', it depicts again the opening scene). As the book is chiefly about Anne, I only comment of scenes that involve her.

Fig. 1.3 Joachim and Anne's gifts being accepted

Fig. 1.4 The Angel of the Lord Appeared to Joachim in a desert

The frescoes at Humor illustrate the fact that the birth of *Theotokos* was a joy for her parents and lead, among other things, to the eventual acceptance of her parents into the community; such a state of affairs is symbolized through the fact that Anne and Joachim's offerings are accepted by the Temple. According to the iconographer(s), the event also constituted a remarkably enjoyable occasion for their extended family, including for St. Elizabeth, who declared the Mother of God to be blessed among women (Luke 1: 42).

Fig. 1.5 Anne prays in her garden

Fig. 1.6 Joachim and Anne praying (individually)

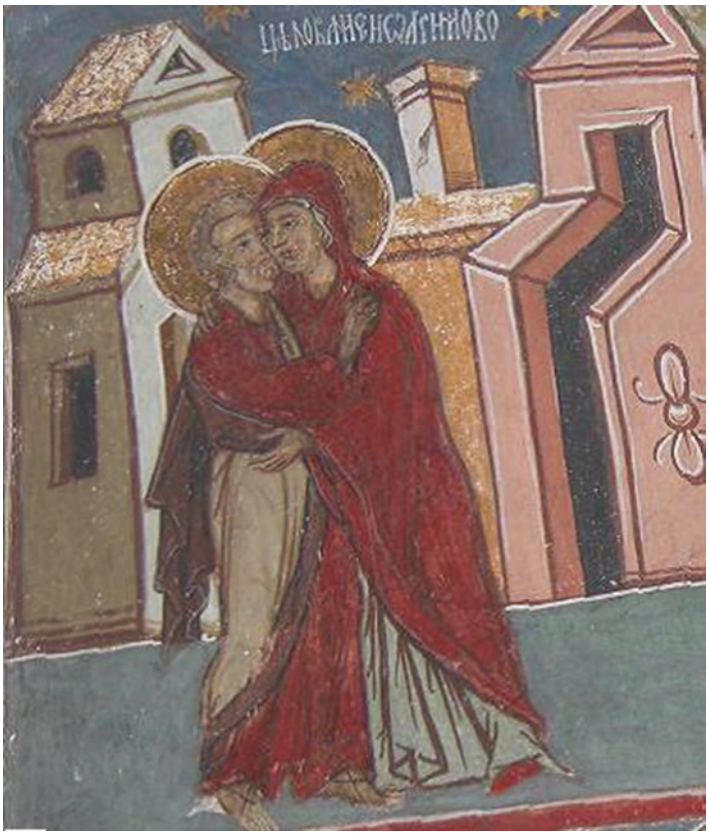

Fig. 1.7 The kiss of Anne and Joachim

2.1 'Reversals' as Operated by the Iconographer(s) When Depicting Scenes That Illustrate the History of Salvation

By concentrating in these frescoes on the lives of Joachim and Anne and on the infancy and motherhood of the Virgin, the iconographer(s) had the opportunity to explore and visually reflect in detail upon all of the above-mentioned themes and on others that relate to the role of Mary's parents and of herself in salvation (for example, on the Orthodox understanding of *Theotokos* as the archetype of humankind). Because he was/they were loyal to the infancy narrative as reflected both within the canonical Gospels

Fig. 1.8 Anne giving birth to Mary

and the material written in the light of the Tradition associated with Mary's childhood and the Incarnation, he was/they were able to explore in depth the theme of salvation history as conveyed by the Scriptures. It means that he/they depicted signs of the mysterious 'reversal' that continuously happens within the history of humanity and that reveals the eternal divine presence in the unfolding of the individual stories themselves.

In these, weak and despised men and women became heroes and heroines for their people, younger sons became inheritors, the young boy with the sling triumphs over the renowned warrior and, above all, an elderly barren woman bears a child. Time and time again, these people end up playing significant roles in the history of salvation; this is the case with Isaac born of Sarah, Samuel of Hannah, John the Baptist of Elizabeth, and

Fig. 1.9 Anne gives the infant Mary to Joachim

the Virgin Mary of Anne. The theological motif of the 'divine reversals' (further explained) is central to the narrative structure of the fresco series inside the *gropnița* of the church at Humor Monastery.

2.2 The 'Reversals' in the Frescoes Illustrating the Life of Mary and of Her Parents, Joachim and Anne

There are three major 'reversals' in the narrative as designed by the iconographer(s) who decorated the Romanian *gropnița*: the change from barrenness to the fruitfulness of parenthood, that from virginity to

Fig. 1.10 Virgin Mary receiving the blessing of the priests

motherhood while preserving the purity of the former, and that referring to the uncreated God becoming incarnate. The visual rendering of the first 'reversal' begins with the image that concerns the ritual of gift offering at the altar in the Temple of Jerusalem. This is depicted in Figs. 1.1 and 1.2, where, to the dismay of Joachim, the High Priest (here identified with Zachariah) refused his gifts, an act that the future father sees as signifying his unworthiness to present them because he and his wife did not yet have children. A note is necessary here: as we shall see later, despite the fact that in the traditional versions of the story of Anne and Joachim, Zachariah is not involved, the series of frescos at Humor conflates the latter with the High Priest. The concluding episode represents a dramatic reversal of the act of refusal of Joachim's prayers and gifts; within it there is a visual

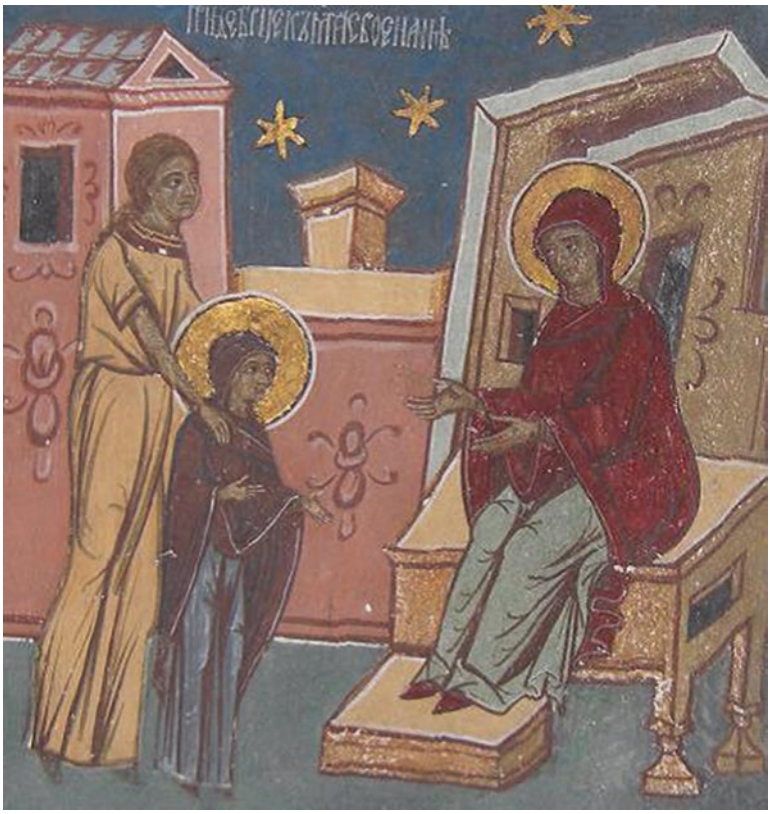

Fig. 1.11 Mary's first steps (towards Anne)

description of the saint receiving himself the most precious gift he wished for, in addition to the fact that his offer is eventually accepted (Fig. 1.3).

In the pictorial narrative rendered by the frescoes, the reversal from sorrow to joy generated by the birth of their child is devotedly celebrated by Joachim and Anne. Zachariah as the High Priest, shares in the joy of this blessed happening and accepts the gifts offered by the family. In the same manner Joachim and Anne did, he and Elizabeth rejoiced in the fruitfulness of their marriages. But the feelings of those four parents went beyond the recognition that God listened to their long years of prayer. It was a trusting response to the revelation that their children, John the

Fig. 1.12 The Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple (The dedication of the Virgin to the Temple)

Fig. 1.13 Joachim's sacrifice to the Temple

Baptist (born to the latter couple) and the Virgin Mary (the daughter of Anne and Joachim), will play central roles in the unfolding of salvation history, as their parents also did. An indication at Humor as to the prophetic role of the parents, who once were barren, is especially obvious in the fresco depicting the Visitation; this is supposed to represent visually the greeting "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1: 42), which Elizabeth addressed to Mary.

In addition to the story of Anne, Joachim, and Mary, the frescoes under discussion here also follow that of Zachariah, Elizabeth, and John the Baptist. They attempt to capture Zachariah's inner struggle after an angel announced to his wife the coming birth of a son (Lk 1: 5–14). The images follow the canonical gospels in illustrating the doubts of this holy man and, finally, his joyful acknowledgment that his child will have a role in the history of salvation, which is 'to make ready a people prepared for the Lord' (Lk 1: 17). The canonical gospels do not speak of him after the opening section of Luke's Gospel, but the frescoes at Humor follow the Church tradition and depict Zachariah as the High Priest who recognizes the worthiness of Joachim's gift-giving and who receives his daughter into the Temple at the age of three, prophetically placing her in the Holy of Holies. Moreover, he accepts her again, after she became a mother, into the group of virgins who served in the Temple. This unexpected tolerance was supposed to allude to something exceptional, namely the mystery of Mary's virginal motherhood through the Incarnation of the Son of God.

The iconographer translates into images this supreme paradox that lies at the heart of the four Gospels and of the Tradition concerned with the mystery of the Incarnation. One can see the visual reflection of the grappling with the shock of this revelation in the distress of Joseph. Another fresco in which tension is observable is that concerning the drinking of the water of conviction; it refers to Mary's public exposure and to her been tested about the reality of Christ's incarnation. Joseph's exercise into faith and the trust shown in him by God through making him the protector of the divine Child was indicated by the fact that he was told to take the family to Egypt and later to bring them back to Israel. Here the infant reached manhood and began his mission as the awaited Messiah, who announces the good news of salvation to the whole human family. These parts of the narrative are depicted at Humor in the church's nave and in the sanctuary.

The frescoes in the church's crypt also clearly illustrate the paradoxical nature of the conception and birth of the Son of God. The iconographer depicted in scene after scene—as he imagined them—the greetings of the

angel and Mary's faithfully positive response to the annunciation of her motherhood (despite her initial incomprehension of the situation). The early perplexity is shown on the face of Joseph, on that of the High Priest Zachariah and of Salome; that is, of those who witnessed the Nativity of Christ. Even Satan is allowed to question such an enigma; he has a probing conversation with the isolated figure of Joseph in a tableau visually represented at Humor. The reflection of this satanic 'curiosity' in painting alongside the portrayal of Salome in a scene of Jesus's birth demonstrates the influence of apocryphal materials on the exemplar of Christian iconography in this particular church (as it happens in other places).

As noticed, the theme of divine 'reversal' expressed in the change from bareness to the fruitfulness of parenthood is an important element in the theology that the frescoes at Humor intend to represent. Moreover, there is a further development of this theme in these murals. That consists in the visual rendering of the prophetic announcement through the Old Testament narratives of Christ's role in salvation history and of the divine intervention in his birth. These two realities constitute a kind of preparation for the culmination of the earlier-mentioned 'reversals' in the Incarnation.

The frescoes are remarkable by managing also to convey the second 'reversal': that of a Virgin giving birth, and furthermore, that according to which her Child is the Son of God. They also reflect the third 'reversal': the Son of God assuming human nature while remaining divine. These are paradoxical realities and as such, they defy human logic; nevertheless, the iconographers at Humor have managed to express some of their significance.

3 The Description of the Frescos Depicting Scenes from the Lives of Joachim and Anne

In what follows a close attention will be paid exclusively to the series of frescoes that depict the life of Mary and of her parents, Joachim and Anne. The series contains twenty-four episodes. The anonymous iconographer(s) begin(s) the cycle with Zachariah (Fig. 1.1) who, tradition says, was the first to venerate the Mother of God.[5] The prophet, depicted in prayer,

[5] According to tradition, St. Zachariah was put to death because when the Mother of God came to the temple with the child Christ for her purification 'he placed her among the virgins, where women who have husbands have no right to stand'; Léonide Ouspensky and

announces the birth of Mary, the Mother of God. He introduced her as the beginning of the fulfilment of the Old Testament's prophecies and prayers; she is the one 'who was to lend her human nature to Christ, so that the mystery of the Incarnation could be realized'.[6]

The second fresco depicts Joachim and Anne offering their sacrifice to the same Zachariah, who is represented as the High Priest of the Temple. Both the *Synaxarion* and the *Protoevangelion of James*, the literary sources for this fresco, explain how Joachim's offering was rejected because he was childless.[7] Childlessness was considered a divine punishment for sin, and

Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999, second ed., 162; see also the *Synaxarion,* September 5, 40–42. This tradition originates in Gregory of Nyssa's work. He asserts that: 'Zachariah foretold the future. Led by the prophetic spirit to the knowledge of hidden mysteries, and aware of the mystery of virginity that surrounds the incorrupt birth, he did not remove the Virgin Mary from the place in the Temple that the law reserves to virgins. He explains to the Jews how the Creator and King of all creation holds human nature subject to himself, together with all other things, so that he governs it according to his pleasure and not controlled by it. Thus it is within his power to create a new kind of generation, which does not prevent a mother from remaining a virgin. This is the reason why Zachariah does not remove Mary from the place in the Temple reserved to virgins. The place in question was an area located between the temple court and the altar. The Jews, having heard that the King of creation, according to his divine pleasure, had come through a new kind of birth, and fearing to be subject to a King, slew Zachariah while he, in his capacity as priest, was offering the sacrifice in front of the altar because he had witnessed to the events relating to Christ's birth'; Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Birth of Christ*, *Patrologia Cursus Completus*, Series Graeca, Paris: Migne, 1841–1864, 46, 1137 A-B.

The act of placing Mary among the virgins is due to the prophetic power which St. Zachariah had; he was able to 'see' the divinity of Christ and his birth from a Virgin. Therefore, the iconographer begins the series of images concerning the life of the Mother of God and of her parents with that of the saint who was the first to venerate the Mother of God.

[6] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976, 140.

[7] One might presume that the *Menaion* was a literary source for the depiction of the fresco series that visually fathoms the life of the Mother of God and of her parents since the iconography is 'liturgical art' and the *Menaion* is the book containing the liturgical texts of the Orthodox Church. I have consulted 'The Menaion of the Orthodox Church', a translation in English of the Slavonic *Menaion* (containing also some services from the Greek *Menaion*), as well as the modern Romanian edition of the *Menaion* and an eighteenth-century Romanian edition in order to explore the source as a possible literary source for this fresco series. There are no clear examples of such an influence. Since the frescoes depicting the lives of saints in the narthex of the majority (if not all) the sixteenth century Moldavian churches have as their literary source the *Synaxarion* (*The Life of Saints*), one might presume that the fresco series of the Life of the Mother of God and her parents, has also the *Synaxarion* as its literary

the priest could not accept his gifts since Joachim was seen as 'unworthy' of the sacrificial custom. Although the icon-painter(s) has/have obviously 'transposed' stories from the *Synaxarion* and *Protoevangelion* into the fresco, he/they were not loyal to these texts with respect to the name of the priest; the writings have it as Reuben, but on the walls he/they rendered Zachariah. The identity of this ancient man within the fresco is unquestionable since his figure in the first painted scene at Humor is like that within the episode referring to *The Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple* (in which he always occurs), and also because he has a halo around his head. Within Orthodox iconography Zachariah is the only High Priest from the Old Testament to be depicted with this sign of holiness. Within the episode that references his prayer, he stands at the extreme left of the fresco, with his left hand open in rejection of the gifts brought by Joachim and Anne. Nevertheless, at the same time, he blesses Joachim and Anne with his right hand. The fingers of his right hand are curved in the shape of the letters abbreviating Christ's name in Greek (IC XC). Through this act of benediction the iconographer *transfigured* the text; he shows that Joachim and Anne were to be chosen by God to be the parents of Mary, the future Mother of the Son of God. Also through it and by the representation of a cross on the top of the Temple that is positioned above Zachariah's head, the iconographer alluded to the power of priests to bless

source. Yet, a careful examination of this fresco series supports the argument that the *Protogospel* of James is its literary source. In my PhD dissertation I have provided a comparative study of the fresco series depicting the Life of the Mother of God (which includes that of her parents) with the *Synaxarion* and the *Protogospel of James* concluding that the visual narrative the frescoes render in its fathomed unfolding is related to both textual narratives. See *The Menaion of the Orthodox Church* edited and translated by Br. Isaac E. Lambertsen, Liberty, TN: St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1996, and *Minee*, Bucharest, Editura Institutului Biblic si de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1984, 12 vols. and *Mineiul de Râmnic*, 1789, vols. 1–2. *Mineiul de Râmnic* is the oldest Romanian Menaion I was able to consult and probably the closest version to the *Menaion* that was in circulation in sixteenth-century Moldavia. The care in the *Menaion* for the preservation of the liturgical texts for the Marian feasts is remarkable. The following are the liturgical texts that have been consulted: September 5–12, October 1, November 20–25, December 9, December 20–31, February 1–9, March 24–26, July 2 and 25, July 25, August 14–23 and 31. See also *The Synaxarion: the Lives of the Saints of the Orthodox Church*, edited by Hieromonk Makarios of Simonos Petra, Chalkidike: Press of the Holy Convent of the Annunciation of Our Lady Ormylia, 1998 and "The Protogospel of James" in *New Testament Apocrypha*, translated by Wilhelm Schneemelcher and R. McL. Wilson, Cambridge, UK: J. Clarke, 1991, vol. I, 426–436.

people in the name of Jesus.[8] The fact that the High Priest sanctifies this holy couple despite refusing the gifts they brought is meant to emphasize that Mary's birth took place because God accepted their prayers. The frescoes are supposed to 'translate' these realities for the viewers.

We can speak about another 'transfiguration' of the texts. In the written narratives Joachim alone attempts to make his offering; Anne is not present at the Temple. But the fresco depicts both of Mary's parents. Adelheid Heimann underlines that the mother appears next to Joachim in a manuscript illustrated with scenes from the Protogospel of James[9]; that or another codex displaying a similar image might have been the source of their rendering together in the story. The portrayal of St. Anne inside the Temple might have also been done under the influence of Cyril of Jerusalem's sermon about Mary's infancy.[10] His text states that the holy couple went together to this shrine to pray to the Lord to terminate their infertility. Joachim heard a voice that came from the altar telling him that his prayer was heard and that his petition would be fulfilled. He thought that the voice was that of the priest and, together with his wife, he returned home as the utterance instructed. Several days later, Joachim visited Anne, and she became pregnant. Her presence at his side when his gifts were refused shows 'the bond between husband and wife as well as the shared problem of infertility'.[11] The fresco emphasizes this state of affairs by artistic means considering it important because the prayer of the holy woman, alongside the blessing and entreaty of the priest and of Joachim, are examples of the power of communion in petitioning the Divine. Anne was barren and aged, but as a consequence of the imparted faith, God reversed the laws of nature, destroyed the bonds of sterility, and gave her a child.

[8] Orthodoxy holds that priests can bless in the name of Jesus Christ. They also believe that whatever they bind on earth will be bound in heaven and that whatever they loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16: 19). That because they are the successors of the Apostles through the mystery of ordination. Moreover, they have the power to forgive the sins of the people (John 20: 23). The importance of blessing by the priest is emphasized because that is important in the approaching of the Eucharist and of the Church in general. See Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*, Michigan: Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2003, 30.

[9] Adelheid Heimann, "The Capital Frieze and Pilasters of the Portail Royal, Chartres", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 31 (1968): 78 [73–102].

[10] Wallis E. A. Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, London: British Museum, 1915, 632.

[11] Laura Spitzer, "The Cult of the Virgin and Gothic Sculpture: Evaluating Opposition in the Chartres West Facade Capital Frieze," *Gesta* 33 (1994): 137.

The next three frescoes depict the family in supplication. Joachim is shown on the left, Anne on the right, and the next tableau in the series depicts them both. The fresco that shows Joachim is considered first because the cycle is 'read' from left to right. The literary sources of which references to the holy family have been transposed onto this fresco, mention that, after the incident at the Temple, Joachim went into the desert. Within the fresco the holy man is depicted sitting in a corner in deep grief, with his right arm fallen on his knees, and his head supported by his left hand. Two shepherds stand in front of him. The link among the three people is noticeable because of the gazes of the former and the gestures of the latter; the two men stretch their right hands toward Joachim as if addressing him.

Above Joachim there is an angel who descends from heaven and is rendered at half-length. Generally speaking in iconography angels have wings; a fact that is supposed to indicate their swiftness of movement—since they are God's messengers they need this ability to promptly pass on to people the news from Him. The visual representation of winged angels is connected with the writings of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, who names these celestial beings 'winds;:

> They [the angels] are also named 'winds' as a sign of the virtually instant speed with which they operate everywhere, their coming and going from above to below and again from below to above as they raise up their subordinates to the highest peak and as they prevail upon their own superiors to proceed down into fellowship with and concern for those beneath them.[12]

In iconography, the angel of good news *par excellence* is the Archangel Gabriel because he appeared to Virgin Mary to reveal that she was chosen to bear the Son of God. Thus, the angel in this fresco could be Gabriel coming down from heaven to give Joachim the good news of his fatherhood. In his left hand the angel carries a spear and with his right hand he blesses Joachim in the name of Christ (one 'reads' the blessing by the shape of the angel's fingers), exactly as the *Painter's Manual* teaches iconographers to depict this form of heavenly power.[13]

[12] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*; translated by Colm Luibheid, New York: Paulist Press, 1987, 187.

[13] On how the Archangel Gabriel must be iconographically represented see Dionysius of Fourna, *The Painter's Manual* edited by Paul Hetherington, Oakwood Publications, 1974, 32 (165).

The mountains in the background of the fresco are represented in steps with their lines converging towards the viewer; such an illustration is achievable through the technique of inverse perspective. In consequence of this being employed the image is placed in a two-dimensional space, which leads to a radically different depiction of reality than that which considers the three-dimensional space. The visually described event 'moves' from a familiar milieu into one of another kind, that is, one that is spiritual.[14] According to some authors, the departure from the rules of perspective constitutes a premeditated, conscious method within icon painting. For instance, when referring to it, Pavel Florensky says that such 'illiteracies' in drawings within an Orthodox Christian context, that normally ought to alert any viewer who understands their 'obvious absurdity', give rise to pleasure and feelings of admiration within this particular denomination:

> When the viewer has the chance to see two or three frescoes from about the same period and painted with approximately equal skill, he perceives an enormous artistic superiority in that fresco which demonstrates the greatest violation of the rules of perspective, whereas the frescoes which have been drawn more 'correctly' seem cold, lifeless and lacking the slightest connection with the reality depicted in them. It always transpires that the frescoes that are the most creative in terms of immediate artistic perception are perspectivally 'defective', whereas frescoes that better satisfy the perspective textbook are boring and soulless. If you allow yourself simply to forget the formal demands of perspectival rendering for a while, then direct artistic feeling will lead everyone to admit the superiority of icons that transgress the laws of perspective.[15]

Elena Ene D-Vasilescu, in her book *Between Tradition and Modernity*, draws attention to the fact that there is still a controversy as to whether what literature describes as the 'reversion ("inversion") of perspective' is consciously employed by all iconographers.[16]

Going back to the decoration at Humor, in the fresco *The Angel of the Lord Appeared to Joachim in a Desert*, as stated, the mountains are ren-

[14] See more on this in Elena Ene D-Vasilescu, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Icons and Icon-painters in Romania*, Saarbrűcken: VDM, 2009.

[15] Pavel Florensky, *Beyond Vision: Essay on the Perception of Art*, translated by Wendy Salmond, Bodmin, UK: MPG Books, 2002, 202.

[16] E. Ene D-Vasilescu, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, 77.

dered in inverse perspective and have 'steps', a detail that symbolizes a ladder by which the ascent to the Divine by means of prayer and fasting becomes possible. This underlies the principle that solitude brings one closer to God. Next to the fresco depicting Joachim in the wilderness is that of his wife in prayer, presented in Fig. 1.5.

Sometimes the images rendering the holy woman pleading with God in the garden and her husband in the wilderness were juxtaposed; at Humor Anne prays alone because the Moldavian iconographer chose to follow the *Protogospel* and the *Synaxarion* which state that the saint did not know that Joachim went into a mountain to fast and pray. As Fig. 1.5 illustrates and as the title reads, Anne is in her garden. This fresco, together with the previous one, emphasizes the importance of devotion in the life of believers and also that Joachim and Anne's child is the fruit of their prayers. They did not lose hope in God's mercy, although they were old; they continuously appealed to Him until their desire to have a child was fulfilled.

Anne is depicted as totally transfigured by the act of praying. Her large and vivid eyes bear witness to the Scriptures: 'My eyes are always towards the Lord, for He shall pluck my feet out of the trap' (Ps. 24 (25): 15). 'For my eyes have seen Your salvation' (Luke 2: 30). Her long and fine nose emphasizes the saint's nobility, whereas her thin mouth, very geometrically depicted and without any sensuality, is closed, as indicating that prayer needs to happen in silence. Anne's head is covered; so are her ears. Thus, the noise of the world does not disturb her entreaty. Such iconographical details augment the idea that 'The dialogical character of prayer means that God is able to speak, and human's heart is able to hear'.[17] A hand reaching down from heaven through the clouds symbolizes God's response to Anne's prayer. The body of this holy woman is depicted without 'anatomic precision' or details and this suggests that she has acquired one that is new and transfigured. The absence of realist features reminds readers that in the bodies of the saints believers see the spiritual world, and not that which is physical.[18]

[17] Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, *Encountering the Mystery: Understanding Orthodox Christianity Today*, New York, NY: Random House, 2008, 77.

[18] For the depiction of saints' bodies in iconography, see Michel Quenot, *L'icône fenêtre sur l'absolu*, Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1987, 121–127.

Above and towards the right of the fresco *Anne Praying in Her Garden*, there is another that depicts both Joachim and Anne separately addressing the Divine, yet sharing the same space, Fig. 1.6.

This image repeats in a different manner the previous scene concerning the holy couple entreating. On the right, above the head of the holy man, God's hand reaches out from the clouds, while on the left, above Anne's head, is also a divine hand, much extended, to bless the woman. The iconographer(s) suggested the transfiguration of time and space, and to do so he/they depicted in a single fresco events that unfolded at different times and in different places.[19] Thus despite the fact that Joachim and Anne are represented within the same fresco, they are positioned back to back (that is meant to indicate that they did not know about each other's place and time of prayer). Also, the places where they prayed look different; neither Joachim is on the mountain nor Anne is in her garden, but both saints are in a paradisiacal location rendered in white. This colour represents divinity and purity and because it lacks a particular pigmentation, is considered closest to light itself. In iconography white is reserved for Christ in the icons of the Resurrection, Transfiguration, and Nativity.[20] Yet, the Moldavian iconographer(s) also used it in other episodes, notably in that concerning the Creation, in which the frescoed background is entirely white.[21] The same chromatic choice is evident in the lower register of the Last Judgment fresco, where Paradise is represented as a fortress. In its centre the Mother of God with the Child, the saved thief, and the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are portrayed; each one of the patriarchs carries saved souls in his bosom.[22] In a totally unexpected manner, the Moldavian iconographer also used white in the fresco of *Joachim and Anne praying at a distance from each other*; the place where the two saints receive the answer to their plea is suggestive of Heaven and very probably this is the reason for such a prefer-

[19] For and explanation of the transfiguration of time and space in iconography see Constantine Cavarnos, *Guide to Byzantine Iconography: Detailed Explanation of the Distinctive Characteristics of Byzantine Iconography*, Boston, MA: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1993, 38.

[20] Egon Sendler, *The Icon, Image of the Invisible: Elements of Theology, Aesthetics and Technique*, translated by Steven Bigham, Torrance, CA: Oakwood Publications 1999, 150.

[21] Series of frescoes illustrating the Creation of the World exist in many churches that have their external walls painted.

[22] Gabriel Herea writes about white used by iconographers as a background colour in their frescoes in Moldavian churches; G. Herea, *Pelerinaj in spatiul sacru bucovinean/*A pilgrimage within the sacred space of Bukovina, Cluj: Patmos Publishing House, 2010; 63 and 85.

ence. By using this colour the iconographer intimates that, through the conception of Mary by Anne, the promise of the reopening of Paradise's gates is created; this because the daughter is the future Mother of God, and in that capacity she can mediate for this to happen.

Following the frescoes with the episodes regarding the prayers of the two saints, another one—that representing what is known in iconography as the *Kiss of Joachim and Anne*—leads one to recall Mary's coming into the world (Fig. 1.7).

The pictorial theme of the embrace of Joachim and Anne is widespread among both Eastern and Western churches. In Byzantium, often circulated as the *Conception of the Most Holy Mother of God* after the liturgical feast it represents, it was depicted as early as its celebration was introduced into the liturgical calendar, which happened at the end of the eighth century.[23] In the church of Humor Monastery, the iconographer used the traditional illustration of the embrace, where Anne hugs Joachim and her cheek affectionately rests on his face. The fresco points out the holiness of the two figures through the presence of halos around their heads. They have often been compared with the patriarch Abraham and his wife Sarah who at an old age, as promised by God, brought Isaac into the world. However, it can be said that the nativity of the Virgin Mary has a superior significance than the birth of Isaac. Because *Theotokos* is more worthy of honour than Isaac, Joachim and Anne's existence is richer in theological meaning than that of Abraham and Sarah. The holy couple depicted at Humor exceeded others in virtue, hence God considered them creditable to be the parents of the future Mother of God. The blessing of becoming such and, accordingly, the ancestors of God incarnate, would not have been bestowed on them if they had not indeed surpassed others in righteousness and holiness through fasting and prayer.[24] The two saints are considered great intercessors before God for those who want but cannot have children, therefore a depiction like this has a special significance for people in such a situation. At the same time, the episode highlights the theological understanding of God's intervention in the history of humankind. Traditionally an icon representing this episode is offered to couples at their wedding.

[23] Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'empire byzantin et en Occident*, Brussel: Palais des Académies, 1964–1965, vol. 1, 83.

[24] St. Maximus the Confessor, in Ioan I. Ica Jr. (edit and trans.), *Viata Maicii Domnului/* The Life of the Mother of God, Sibiu: Deisis Publishing House, 1998, 7–9.

The series there continues with the episode of the *Nativity of the Mother of God* [Anne giving birth to Mary] (Fig. 1.8).

In the liturgical year the feast dedicated to this event is the first,[25] and properly so because this is a celebration of beginnings. Any birth is a beginning, but that of Mary constituted the inauguration of redemption for humankind because Anne's daughter is that human being who was worthy to receive in her womb the Son of God incarnate. St. Dimitri of Rostov (seventeenth-century) observed that the person of the Virgin is unique given that in her the divine fire dwelled.[26] He said that,

> One could ask why the Word of God delayed His descent to the earth and his incarnation to save fallen humanity. But before the middle of the sixth millennium since the fall of Adam, it was not possible to find a virgin pure in body as well as in spirit. There was only one such, unique by her spiritual and bodily purity, who was worthy to become the church and the temple of the Holy Spirit.[27]

Thus, the Nativity of the Mother of God is the prologue to the history of salvation. On 8 September the Church celebrates the one who was chosen by God to be the 'new Eve', the Mother of Christ the Saviour, the well-spring of our restoration, and the archetype of all Christian holiness. The celebration of the *Nativity of the Mother of God* is an occasion of great joy, as the liturgical texts chant and the icon of the feast suggests. The fresco that illustrates this special day in the *gropnița* of the church in Humor Monastery expresses the iconic tradition and transmits the same theological message as the homilies of the Church Fathers and the liturgical texts.

The iconographer transposed the written narration of Mary's birth into the fresco in a scene that takes place inside Anne's house. As a rule, when an event takes place indoors, the iconographers depict a decorative cloth on the icon's background, thus suggesting a three-dimensional reality. The Moldavian iconographer did not use this detail, but simply depicted the

[25] The Nativity of the Mother of God, one of the twelve great feasts of the Orthodox Church, is celebrated on the 8 September (as known, the liturgical year starts on the 1 September).

[26] Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, 140 and Dimitri of Rostov, t. III, 101, *Christian Readings*, 1842, 395 (in Russian). Note from the editor: there is an English edition of Dimitri of Rostov's work in eight volumes**:** Dimitri of Rostov, *The Great Collection*, Manchester, USA: Chrysostom Press [no date mentioned, but it came out after 2000].

[27] Dimitri of Rostov, t. III, 101, *Christian Readings*, 1842: 395.

event in a two-dimensional space. The image of Mary's coming into the world shows Anne recumbent on a bed covered with an ornate brown and yellow quilt, fatigued after delivering her daughter. The new mother is depicted larger than the people around her. She is a beautiful woman, yet her face betrays her old age. The saint wears a red vestment and her head is covered. She supports it with her left hand and seems to be contemplating the mystery that has taken place. Her right hand rests on her womb, with the index finger pointing to her child. She looks towards the three young women servants; the fact that their heads are uncovered indicate their role in the household. The women offer a plate and a vase to Anne. According to Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, the origin of the custom regarding the offer of vases at birth lies in Antiquity, when it was abided by in the case of imperial births[28]; that is visible in images dating from that period. Typically, the plate had on it three or four eggs as a symbol of fertility or/and of prosperity. At Humor, in the scene depicting Anne giving birth to Mary, on its right side, another young servant pours water from a jug into a large, typical Orthodox baptistery in order for the child to be bathed. A seated sage woman whose left hand is uncovered, is preparing to carry out the ablution. Her right hand is ready to test the temperature of the water. Little Mary (depicted here with the features of an adult) was placed on the woman's knees to await her bath. The child has a halo and the initials of her royal title: Mother of God; MP ΘΥ. These initials are present in most icons depicting the Virgin, including those referring to her birth, as is the case at Humor.

The fresco of the *Nativity of the Mother of God* depicts the story of the final preparation of humanity for the receiving of the Divine since the Mother of God is perceived as the bridge between the Old and New Testaments.[29] The sacred history of humanity continues through her. She is at the same time both 'the fruit of the Law' and 'the treasure-house of Grace'.[30] Her existence is rooted in the Old Covenant where the sanctity of God's Chosen People is summed up and, at the same time, she is the Mother of the Son of God through whose incarnation the New Covenant came into being.[31]

[28] Lafontaine-Dosogne, Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge, vol. 1, 97.

[29] John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, Bronx, NY: Forham University Press, 1979, 147.

[30] Nicolas Cabasilas, *Homilies on The Mother of God*, I, 3, edited and translated in Latin by Fr. Martin Jugie, Paris: Patrologia Orientalis, 1926, vol. 19, 465–510.

[31] John Baggley, *Festival Icons for the Christian Year*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000, 19, and Bradley Hanson, *Introduction to Christian Theology*,

We have at Humor a rare depiction of Mary's family (reproduced also, with permission, in the following chapter by E. Ene D-Vasilescu), which in this special cycle of frescoes is situated immediately after that of Anne giving birth. The saint and Joachim pleased God through their lives of prayer and he blessed them by bestowing on them parenthood. In the later scene above Anne carefully holds her daughter and Joachim has his arms open to receive her, in a gesture similar to that which a person makes when is ready to receive God's grace in a religious service (Fig. 1.9). His motion suggests his awareness (received through a revelation) that Mary would be a light for the world and the beginning of the renewal of human nature. For this reason, both parents are depicted as supervising their daughter with extreme care. They show their love for her not only because she was a long-awaited child, but also because they revere her as their Lady. For she has a unique role under the sun. John of Damascus asserts that 'the culmination of miracles which is the Incarnation had been prepared by means of miracles; for through Joachim and Anne it was offered a gift to the Creator which is more excellent than all (other) gifts, a holy mother who alone is worthy of the Creator'.[32]

The names of Joachim and Anne, inserted onto the fresco at Humor, are an integral part of the Liturgy and are always mentioned in the prayerful conclusion of services thus:

> May the risen Christ, our true God, with the prayers of his pure and holy Mother, the power of the precious and life-giving Cross, the protection of the spiritual powers of Heaven … the holy and righteous ancestors Joachim and Anne … and all the saints whose memory we celebrate have mercy on us and save us.[33]

Thus, the emphasis in the fresco is theological, the righteousness of Mary's parents, and God's miraculous intervention in the reversal of their infertility being a preparation concerning the greatest mystery, namely the Virgin's conception of a divine and human son.

Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997, 32.

[32] John of Damascus, "In Nativitatem B.V. Mariae", PG 96. 663A; John of Damascus, *Expositio fidei* 45, in Bonifatius Kotter (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* 2, 108. 44–45, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988; trans. as "On the Nativity of the Holy *Theotokos*," in Cunningham (ed. and trans.), in *Wider than Heaven*, 54.

[33] Nicholas Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, trans. J.M Hussey and P.A. McNulty, London: SPCK, 1960, 22.

The fresco of the Virgin Mary receiving the blessing of the priests (Fig. 1.10) depicts her, Joachim, two celebrants, and a young man. Mary wears the *maphorion* and opens her hands to receive the benediction. St. Joachim carries his child and has the hands covered by his own cloak as a sign of reverence vis-à-vis the future Mother of God.[34] The sanctity of both Joachim and the Virgin child is signified in the fresco by means of haloes, which are represented in contrast to the priests and the servant (who are not haloed).

The iconographer placed the depiction of Mary taking her first steps (Fig. 1.11) immediately after the fresco of the priests' blessing. In this way, the iconographer emphasizes the importance of their act.

This visual representation differs from the narrative as told in the *Synaxarion* and the *Protogospel*, where the precocity of Mary (her ability to walk at 6 months) is underlined. In the fresco it looks as if Mary were waiting for the priests' blessing in order to walk for the first time.

The fresco depicts the Virgin child, dressed as a small adult, advancing toward her mother, who is sitting on a bench with her arms outstretched to welcome her daughter. Mary and Anne are haloed in contrast with the servant watching them. The countenances of the three women are depicted fully; this way *transfiguration* is suggested. In iconography people are depicted frontally or in semi-profile (certainly not in profile). Fotis Kontoglou, a famous Greek icon painter, explains the reason behind such a practice:

> A spiritualized person cannot be depicted as incomplete, from his profile, because he has his soul filled with the glory of God and became in his wholeness light and likeness to God, and this cannot be hidden. This is why the person (in iconography) turns entirely his face to the viewer.[35]

Profiling persons is rare in iconography. An additional reason for this situation is the fact that the profile violates the circle of the face and distorts its perfection. Where there are profiles, this indicates that the iconographer

[34] As a rule in icons, the covering of hands is a sign of reverence which saints and angels manifest towards the Mother of God or Jesus Christ; Ouspensky and Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, 165.

[35] Constantine Cavarnos (ed.), Byzantine Sacred Art: Selected Writings of the Contemporary Greek Icon Painter Fotis Kontoglous on the Sacred Arts According to the Tradition of Eastern Orthodox, Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine& Modern Greek Studies, 1985, 97.

is ignorant, or that the persons portrayed are less important or evil. Examples of figures portrayed only in profile include Judas in the icon of the Last Supper, and the demons in the representation of the Last Judgment.

The space within the fresco in Fig. 1.11 is limited to the foreground and is closed off towards the background where buildings are depicted. In this scene, as in others presented above, a spatial or three-dimensional illusion has been created in such a way as to suggest that the event represented takes place in the foreground. By increasing the proportions of the buildings, the iconographer makes the latter look as though they belong to both the background and the foreground. In order to avoid the representation of the event inside the house, which would necessarily have required the depiction of depth, the scene is shown as taking place outside. The architectural elements of the houses, the bench, and the pedestal under Anne's feet are depicted in inverse perspective, and even the parts of the building not normally visible are painted. Although the iconographer did not rigorously pay attention to the verticality of the buildings, he succeeded in giving the impression that the line of movement within this tableau is from the interior of the fresco towards the viewer.

In another frescoed sequence within the crypt, the Virgin child, followed by her parents, walks toward the Temple (Fig. 1.12). Her father, with his head bowed in reverence, has his left hand stretched out in order to aid the gesture of introducing the Virgin to the High Priest, whereas her mother points towards Joachim. By bringing the Holy Virgin to the temple the couple offered to God the most pure gift. Hence it was natural for the High Priest to place her in the Holy of Holies, 'which was an unheard-of thing under the Old Covenant for only the High Priest was allowed to enter there once a year on the Day of Atonement'.[36]

In this episode at Humor the 'daughters (virgins) of the Hebrews' who accompanied Mary to the Temple were depicted, with one exception, bareheaded. The first letter to the Corinthians says, 'Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head' (1Cor 11: 5), and in icons prophetesses or women of prayer are depicted veiled. In this fresco the veiled woman has her left hand raised and pointing towards Mary, and this might be interpreted as a prophetic gesture.[37]

[36] This day is 21 November according to the *Synaxarion*.

[37] See the traditional depiction of the feast of the *Presentation of the Lord in the Temple* where prophetess Anne is depicted veiled and presenting Christ and his Mother.

The Virgin child has the features of an adult, but her figure is rendered at a reduced scale so as to indicate her very young age. Moreover, her hands are stretched out toward the High Priest while waiting for his blessing. In the same fresco one sees her sitting upon a throne on the right side of the baldachin which represents the Holy of Holies. Here the iconographer *transfigured* physical time. Generally speaking—and this fact is noticeable particularly in the *Entry into the Temple* at Humor—events are presented as transcending time and space. To express the transcendence peculiar to them iconographers assemble and depict in a single fresco various sequences that refer to one happening that unfolds in different times and places.[38] Thus, in the case we discuss here, one sees Mary at the entrance of the Temple as well as in the Holy of Holies where an angel is offering her bread.

The angel flying towards Mary from the sky, holding bread in his right hand and carrying a spear in his left, is the Archangel Gabriel. Although his name is not visible, this messenger is still recognizable because he is depicted according to the indications referring to him which are found in Dionysius of Fourna's *Manual for painters.*[39] The bread in the hand of the angel symbolizes the celestial food that Mary received during the lengthy fasting period that she went through voluntarily.[40]

If the actuality of Mary's entrance into the Holy of Holies might be contested from the Orthodox Christian point of view—since only the High Priest was allowed to access it once a year—its significance is truly theological because the Virgin received God in her womb and accepted to give Him a human nature. Thus, she is a symbol of the Holy of Holies itself[41]; she becomes a Temple, that is, God's dwelling place.[42] This is why the liturgical hymns call her the 'living Church', the 'Temple', and the 'House of God', and also why the iconographers depicted her inside the

[38] For explanation of expressing the eternity in iconography, see Constantine Cavarnos, *Guide to Byzantine Iconography: Detailed Explanation of the Distinctive Characteristics of Byzantine Iconography*, Boston, MA: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1993, 38.

[39] See Dionysius of Fourna, *The Painter's Manual*, 32 (165) and the explanation of the depiction of the Archangel Gabriel in the fresco of Joachim in the wilderness.

[40] There are icons were saints receive bread from angels during their fasting. See icons of St. Antony the Great and of the hermit Paul of Thebes.

[41] James R. Payton, *Light from the Christian East: an Introduction to the Orthodox* Tradition, Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007, 123–124.

[42] Kathleen Coyle, *Mary in the Christian Tradition: from a Contemporary Perspective*, Leominster, England: Gracewing House, 1993, 24.

inner sanctum the Holy of Holies.[43] In other words, the Mother of God has the most intimate knowledge of God.

The fresco series in Moldavia continues with thirteen images that depict the life of Mary and in which her parents are present.

It concludes with the eventual acceptance of the sacrifices offered by Joachim (Fig. 1.13) and Anne. One can see here a 'reversal' taking place: the injured innocence of the members of this couple ends up in victory because God transforms their barrenness into a very special parenthood. The final acceptance of their sacrifice can be explained thus: while God has no need of *gifts since H*e is already spiritually rich without them, He is pleased to accept *people's* offerings when they are an expression of love and thankfulness. This is to be understood as meaning that God hears people's supplications and answers them. Not only Joachim and Anne's petitions are fulfilled, but so is Zachariah's. As known from the Scriptures and suggested by the first fresco at Humor, he prayed for the redemption of everyone's sins and the girl he blessed is destined to give birth to Jesus Christ, 'the Lamb of God who will take away the sin of the world' (Jn. 1: 29). As a participant in Joachim and Anne's joy, the gaze of Zachariah rests on the Virgin Mary, who will carry the Incarnate God, for whose veneration he will later receive the crown of martyrdom.

4 Conclusion

A detailed analysis of the iconographical compositions in the crypt of the church at Humor regarding Mary's vita, which involves also the lives of her parents, reveals the focus of their creator on a central theological issue, God's redemptive plan for humankind. Inspired by canonical as well as apocryphal literature that represents the lived experience of the Christian faith, liturgy, and spirituality he tries to visually convey the message that everything is in the hands of a loving God whose gracious attention to people called upon the sending of the Messiah, His beloved Son, to 'break into' human history.

As becomes evident from the narrative concerning the lives of Mary, Anne, and Joachim, one of the features of the divine plan with respect to the salvation of humankind is a succession of 'reversals' that take people by surprise. The visual compositions discussed in this chapter illustrate these

[43] David Drillock, John H. Erickson, Helen Breslich Erickson (eds.), *The Divine Liturgy*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005, 12; *The Festal Menaion*, 49.

'reversals' while treating the rituals peculiar to the Temple as foreshadowing those of the Church and while iconographically focusing on the life of a community gathered in communal prayer around their High Priest. The beginning of one of these inversion is obvious in the introduction to the story depicted by the frescoes. It refers to a childless man who brings gifts—which are refused—before that community. By contrast, at the end of the tale and of the visual cycle, the same High Priest that triggered subsequent events through his initial act of rejection, receives the gifts of the man, who is no longer barren. Therefore, the 'reversal' here consists both in the fact that an aged childless couple becomes the blessed parents of the Virgin Mary, and in the change of the priest's attitude. (At Humor, the scene regarding the 'Visitation' illustrates the similar situation concerning Zachariah, Elisabeth, and their child, John the Baptist, who 'recognized' the Messiah even in his mother's womb and leaped for joy because of that.)

Even a greater 'reversal' is that of a virginal state which is transformed in motherhood—and that without any human intervention. Mary the Virgin, by receiving God in her womb, represents the ideal of the union between God and his people and, at the same time, the God's dwelling place. The Incarnation, the entry of God into human history, is the most profound—the ultimate—'reversal'. All these realities are pictorially described in the *gropnița* we discuss here.

The preliminary reversals of barrenness into fertility, and of virginity (which remains as such) into motherhood, are pointing to the reversal of death into life—(eternal) life in the Resurrection. In the fresco at Humor the birth of the Saviour is also presented. The rest of the happenings that concern Christ's life on Earth (the Passion and especially his Resurrection) as they point to His central role in the history of salvation, are also depicted in detail at Humor, but on the walls of the church's nave.

The manner in which this little church hidden away in a Moldavian monastery reflects the theology of the Orthodox Church is remarkable. Its series of fresco constitutes a remarkable contribution that it makes to the religious and cultural heritage of the world. That fact has been internationally acknowledged through UNESCO's decision. This theological jewel deserves wider publicity and recognition within both Eastern and Western Christendom.

CHAPTER 2

The Pleasure of Child Nursing: St. Anne and the Infant Mary in Texts and Byzantine Art

Elena Ene D-Vasilescu

Abstract After waiting for decades to become a mother there can be no doubt that Anne took great pleasure in bringing her daughter Mary up. The literature and iconography of the Byzantine Middle Ages reflect Anne's happy and harmonious family life. Little Mary brought many joys to her parents and that becomes obvious from listening to the hymns dedicated to her and to them and from looking at the visual scenes in which she is depicted being milk-fed, caressed as well as taught to walk and read.

My chapter is concerned with how Anne's delight in motherhood is represented in the Byzantine theological, historical, and iconographical sources that considered the act of milk-nursing as pertaining not only to the mundane, but also to the divine realm.

Keywords Mary • Anne • Joachim • Byzantine Middle Ages

E. Ene D-Vasilescu (✉)
University of Oxford, Oxford, UK
e-mail: elena.ene-v@wolfson.ox.ac.uk

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1 Byzantine Texts and Iconographic Creations on Breastfeeding and Pleasure

Byzantine texts from all the periods of the Empire as well as the iconography inspired by them were created with such a degree of mastery that they were able to represent even an intimate act as that of breastfeeding. The nutritious liquid naturally supplied by the human body is and has always been considered the best sustenance for a newly born and sometimes compared with the *manna*, the provision that according to the Old Testament was sent by God to the Israelites in the desert. The act of maternal milk-feeding is a pleasant activity from many points of view, certainly from a physical, emotional, and perhaps even intellectual perspective; the latter is so at least because it adds a new dimension to one's experience, so enriches it. Of course, it can also be a painful process, but in this chapter we shall focus on the pleasure it generates. The actuality of this feeling in the act of breastfeeding is emphasized in Byzantine written sources referring, for example, to the cult of St. Anne, and is suggested by the visual portrayals of this saint offering milk to the infant Mary. My chapter will comment on aspects concerning these realities and argue that Anne—as well as Elizabeth, the mother of the Baptist—would have enjoyed their motherhood more if they realized that breastfeeding is not merely a biological act, but also a spiritual one, a fact some believed to be true; I elaborated at length elsewhere on this topic.[1] I think that actually that was the case, and that the process of her (them) becoming aware of this state of affairs was a gradual one. Most of the reactions Anne had in regard to her being a mother point to this fact, as I hope will become evident in the course of this chapter. I first introduce some general considerations about the notion of pleasure, and then present the manner in which generally the Byzantine creations yielded and reflected it. After that a detailed analysis of the manner in which this sentiment has been reflected in textual and artistic works particularly focusing on *Anne lactans/ Galaktotrophousa* will be carried out.

The appreciation of a text and of the arts leads to inner delectation as well as to the contentment of the senses, especially of the vision and hearing. Even more so when the person involved and his/her perceptions are stimulated by a pleasurable subject-matter. The same terms—τέρψη;

[1] In the book *Nourished by the Word: heavenly sustenance in Early Christian literature and Byzantine iconography*, submitted for publication; in its manuscript I have written about this particular characteristic of breastfeeding.

ήδονή/hēdonē—have always been used by the Greeks for both kinds of pleasure and even today other Indo-European languages employ the same word to express the two. Ecclesiastical art and the literature on which it is based are appreciated simultaneously by, hence pleasurable to, both the intellect and the intuition, which as a rule operate in harmony particularly when specimens of this type of creation are contemplated. We have evidence about this from the Mediaeval Byzantines in their own words. These people conveyed their impressions vis-à-vis the remarkable artistic achievements they produced, many religious in nature; some of them had abundant skills to do this finely, as was the case with Nicholas Mesarites. The *ekphrases* he wrote about the *Apostoleion* church in Constantinople illustrates my point.[2] That text is beautifully written and also describes an exquisite reality since the church of the Apostles was thus. The account of this historian informs us that the shrine was embellished with colours and gold; its viewers were wrapped up in beauty and gleam. The archaeological vestiges from this particular building are too sparse to allow us to double-check Mesarites's description (in case anyone doubts it) since the building was obliterated by sultan *Mehmed II* in 1461 to make space for the Fatih Mosque.[3] But sufficient vestiges have survived from other

[2] In this Middle Byzantine *ekphrases* Nicholas Mesarites (b. 1163) describes how much he enjoyed the splendours of the *Apostoleion* during his visit. The description he made has survived on fols. 93 sup.–96 sup. in Cod. Gr. 350, called by August Heisenberg *Codex Ambrosianus*; see A. Heisenberg, "Nikolaos Mesarites. Die Palastrerevolution des Johannes Komnenos," Prog., Wűrzburg, Stűrtz, 1907; introduction to *Grabeskirche u. Apostelkirche 2*, Leipzig, 1908; Glanville Downey (ed. and trans.), "Description of the church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Philadelphia, vol. 47, 1957, 855–924; see also his article "The Builder of the Original Church of the Apostles at Constantinople. A contribution to the criticism of the *Vita Constantini* attributed to Eusebius," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Washington, DC 1951, vol. 6, 51–80; K. Wulzinger, "Die Apostelkirche und ihre die Mehmedije zu Konstantinopel," *Byzantion* 7, 1932, 7–10; Marc D. Lauxtermann, "Constantine's City: Constantine the Rhodian and the Beauty of Constantinople," Liz James and Antony Eastmond (eds.), *Wonderful Things. Byzantium through its Art*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2013, 303–304, and J. Lansdowne, "Echoes of the Fourth-century *Apostoleion* in Late Antique *Italia Annoraria*," in *The Byzantinist*, the Newsletter of the Oxford Byzantine Society, Issue 1 (Spring) 2011, 4–5, 15.

[3] When Constantinople fell to the Ottomans, the Church of the Holy Apostles briefly became the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church. Three years later the edifice was abandoned by the Patriarch, and in 1461 it was pulled down to allow the construction of the Fatih Mosque, which is still on the site today, even though in a reduced size and in an eighteenth-century form; Wolfgang Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls: Byzantion, Konstantinupolis, Istanbul bis zum Beginn d. 17 Jh.*, Wasmuth Tübingen,

Byzantine buildings contemporary with the monument dedicated to the twelve pillars of Early Christianity in order to permit us to infer that the worshipers' experiences would have provoked intellectual, emotional, spiritual, as well as physical pleasure (the latter especially because the interior of churches was thoroughly incensed and the fragrance subsequent to this act would have made an agreeable atmosphere). Even before their culture reached the climax of its development, the Ancient Greeks spoke about *catastematic* and *kinetic* pleasures, and expounded on the role these play in people's lives as well as in obtaining knowledge about what surrounds them.[4] As Christopher Butler assesses, "[o]ur pleasurable feelings and emotions are […] very complicated modes of understanding the world, and […] it is a combination of feeling and understanding which gives us pleasure."[5] This is because written texts and the arts direct us to intimate and particularized relationships both with people represented in various compositions and with those who produce them—even though we cannot literally encounter the former, and seldom meet the latter. We, as readers and viewers, ascertain and enhance cultural exploits through our reflections and sentiments about and towards writers and artists respectively. Scrutinizing the questions they pose, we learn how faith and sometimes the wonder it entails cause us to enjoy textual and visual accounts, irrespective of whether their origins are "canonical" or fictional.

1977, 406. See Procopius of Caesarea, *De aed*. I, 4, 7–13, J. Houry, Teubner (ed.), Leipzig, 1913, and *Buildings*, I, 3, 5–11, ed. by H. B. Dewing and G. Downey, William Heinemann, London and Harvard University Press, Harvard, Cambridge, MA, Loeb Classical Edition, vol. 7, 1940, 49. See also, Constantine of Rhodes, "Poème en vers iambiques" published in Émile Legrand, "Apostoleion. Description des oeuvres d'art et de l'église des Saints Apotres de Constantinople," in *Revue des Études Grecques*, vol. 9, 1896, 32–65. The latter is based on Cod. A 170, fol. 143v, Lavra [Monastery] of St. Athanasius, Mount Athos. *Mehmed II* (the Conqueror) was an Ottoman *sultan* who ruled from August 1444 to September 1446, and later from February 1451 to May 1481.

[4] Catastematic pleasure is felt when being in a particular state, and kinetic pleasure is that which manifest itself when a person performs an activity. See Epicurus, *On Nature* (Περί φύσεως); this book is partially extant. A few of its fragments and some letters were published by the editor Usener in 1887 in *Epicurea*, reprinted in 2010.

[5] Christopher Butler, *Pleasure and the Arts: Enjoying Literature, Painting, and Music*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, xviii.

2 Saints Anne and Joachim's Pleasure of Parenthood. Anne Breastfeeding Her Daughter

As is known, the story of Anne, Joachim, and their special descendant, narrated mainly in the apocryphal texts of the *Protoevangelion* (fourth century—at least part of it)[6] and *Pseudo-Matthew* (based partially on the *Protoevangelion*),[7] goes that after 20 years of barrenness[8] and much praying for a child separately and together, each of the future parents experienced an encounter that was an annunciation for them. When the angel told her that she will have an offspring, Anne promised to dedicate it to God.[9] What one can surmise about this holy figure is that she was overjoyed to have a daughter, and in consequence of that, would have been a particularly doting mother (Fig. 2.1).

[6] *Protoevangelion*; this is the first book to contain the story of Mary's birth and infancy where St. Anne occurs; it has been used as a source of information especially in Eastern Christianity. Origen speaks about a book "of James" as early as the second century. Michael Neander gave the name *Protoevangelion of James* to the previously known "Book of James" in 1564 (Lafontaine-Dosogne believed that it was Guillaume Postel who did so; see her *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge*, vol. 1, 15). Lafontaine-Dosogne dates this book to the second century. However, on the basis of palaeographic criteria, Émile De Strycker affirms that the *Protoevangelion* was written in the third century, with some parts (Apology of Phileas and Psalms 33–34 –g and h in his classification) belonging to the early fourth century. De Strycker (ed.), "La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile de Jacques. Recherché sur le Papyrus Bodmer 5 avec une édition critique du texte grec et une traduction annotée. En appendice: Les version arméniennes traduites en latin par Hans Quecke," *Subsidia hagiographica* 33, Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1961, 14, 22. Neander gave this title in Latin when translating the Greek manuscript; the complete title was *Protoevangelion sive de natalibus Iesu Christi, et ipsius matris virginis Mariae, somo historicus divi Iacobis minoris, consobrini and fratris Domini Iesu, apostoli primarii, et episcopi christianorum primi Hierosolmys Evangelica historia, quam scripsit beatus Marcus … Vita Ioannis Marci evangelitae, collecta ex probatoribus autoribus, per Theodorum Bibliandrum. Indices … concinnati per eundem*. The translation was edited by Theodorus Bibliander and published by Johann Oporinus in 1552, Basel.

[7] *Pseudo-Matthew*, in James Keith Elliot, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity and Infancy Narratives*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006. *Pseudo-Matthew* is the equivalent in the West of the *Protoevangelion*. In Lafontaine-Dosogne's opinion (*Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge*, 15), the latter influenced the creation of *Pseudo-Matthew*.

[8] J. K. *Elliott, A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity and Infancy Narratives*, Mary 1–2, 5.

[9] Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity and Infancy Narratives*, Mary 1–2, 5. I have noticed that this translation follows closely that effected by Montagues Rhodes James in *The Apocryphal New Testament being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses with other narratives and fragments newly translated by Montagues Rhodes James, Oxford*, at the Clarendon Press, Oxford, Ney York, Toronto etc., 1985 edition (first edition 1924). There is written: "Righteous before God and charitable to men, they lived a chaste married life for about twenty years without producing children. Nevertheless they made a vow that if God gave them a child they would dedicate it to the service of the Lord. For that reason they were in the habit of visiting the Temple of the Lord at every festival in the year."

Fig. 2.1 The birth of Mary, St. Sophia Cathedral in Thessaloniki; the head of the child was covered in such a manner as to suggest that it is a girl, and the representation of the scene 'Joachim and Anne's kiss' in the background identifies the protagonists of this scene. (My photo; August 2012)

That would certainly have included feeding her child with maternal milk, regardless of whether or not she was aware (in any particular moment) of the spiritual grounding which, as suggested, some scholars believe to be peculiar to this act. All literary sources present Anne as being very happy to be a mother. It is not difficult to perceive the pleasure in Anne's words below which, according to Romanos the Melode (c. 490–c. 556), were expressed in a hymn through which the saint joyfully thanks God,

> Who hath visited me and taken away from me the reproach of mine enemies, and the Lord hath given me a fruit of his righteousness … Hearken, hearken, ye twelve tribes of Israel that Anne giveth suck.[10]

Jacob of Serug (c. 451–521),[11] John of Damascus (c. 675–749), and Photius of Constantinople (c. 810/20–c. 893; Patriarch in 858–67 and 877–86) also wrote and preached about Anne's joy at her transformation from a barren woman to a mother nourishing her own infant. I will elaborate further on the ideas of the latter two authors, especially on those of the Damascene because these have had a good reception.

The first homilist to celebrate the Nativity of Mary is John of Damascus; the literary themes and images he employs to express his reverence to the Virgin and to her family were to be taken up by later theologians. He praises Mary's parents thus: "O blessed couple, Joachim and Anne, all nature is indebted to you! […] O most blessed all-blessed loins of Joachim, from which a wholly unblemished seed was sent forth! O renowned womb of Anne, in which slowly, with additions from her, an all-holy infant grew, and once it had taken shape, was born! O belly that contained within itself a living heaven, vaster than the immensity of [all] the heavens!"[12] John mentions Anne as "grace [which] sprouted its fruit"[13] and gives praise to

[10] Romanus Melodus, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica: cantica genuina*, in Paul Maas and Constantine Athanasius Typanis (eds.), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963, 276. 6–7, 280. 6–7. The book was translated as *Kontakia of Romanos, Byzantine Melodist* by *Marjorie* Carpenter, Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1970–1973, vols. 1–2, 1970–1973.

[11] Jacob of Serug, *On the Mother of God*, trans. Mary Hwansbury, Introd. Sebastian Brock, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1998, 46–54.

[12] John of Damascus, "In Nativitatem B.V. Mariae," PG 96. 664A; John of Damascus, *Expositio fidei* 45, in B. Kotter (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* 2, 1973, 108. 45 and 109. 46; trans. as "On the Nativity of the Holy *Theotokos*," in Cunningham (ed. and trans.), in *Wider than Heaven*, 54–55.

[13] John of Damascus, "In Nativitatem B.V. Mariae," PG 96. 664A; John of Damascus, *Expositio fidei* 45, in Kotter (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* 2, 108. 45; trans.

the "breasts that suckled her who feeds the Feeder of the world,"[14] while addressing her thus, "O most holy little daughter: you were nourished on breast-milk and surrounded by angels!"[15] As mentioned, also Patriarch Photius of Constantinople makes commentaries with reference to Anne. He places the story of the saint's motherhood in the context of a discussion that underlines that, when it comes to the relationships of people with God (as when it comes to God in general), nothing is impossible. In such circumstances answers to questions like "How can dried-up breasts gush with streams of milk? For if old age is unable to store away blood, how can the teats whiten into milk what they have not received?"[16] may intimate that these events took place and that their unfolding makes complete sense according to the divine logic.

Among the literary sources that confirm that Anne and Joachim's life as new parents was expectedly pleasant and joyful is the *Synaxarion*.[17] It narrates that after breastfeeding for the first time, Anne gently handed little Mary to her elderly husband in order for him to share ever more fully in the pleasure of being a parent.[18] It is touching to notice in late Byzantine images how the bearded man—thought to be a pillar of the synagogue and community—stretches his hands to receive the delicate baby girl. We observed in Fig. 1.9 within Chap. 1 of this book (the scene 'Anne gives the infant Mary to Joachim') the way iconographers represented this family event in the light of the text just mentioned above. Adriana Bara (the author of Chap. 1), in her doctoral thesis, comments with regard to this

as "On the Nativity of the Holy *Theotokos*," in Cunningham (ed. and trans.), in *Wider than Heaven*, 54. The name Anne/Anne is probably the Greek version of the Hebrew name Hannah. Both come from the common Hebrew verb חנן (hanan), meaning "that who is gracious" or "that who is compassionate."

[14] John of Damascus, "In Nativitatem B.V. Mariae," PG 96. 664B; John of Damascus, *Expositio fidei* 45, in B. Kotter (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* 2, 109. 46, trans. as "On the Nativity of the Holy *Theotokos*," in Cunningham (ed. and trans.), in *Wider than Heaven*, 55.

[15] John of Damascus, "In Nativitatem B.V. Mariae," PG 96. 672B; John of Damascus, *Expositio fidei* 45, in B. Kotter (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* 2, 109. 46, trans. as "On the Nativity of the Holy *Theotokos*," in Cunningham (ed. and trans.), in *Wider than Heaven*, 63.

[16] Photius, Homily lX. 4, translated and edited by Cyril Mango, *The Homilies of Photius. Patriarch of Constantinople*, Harvard University Press, Dumbarton Oaks series, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958, 166.

[17] Alice-Mary Talbot (ed., trans.), *Synaxarion of Constantinople. Byzantine saints' lives in translation*, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection Washington, DC, 1998; St. Nicodemus the Hagiorite also made a translation in the late eighteenth century.

[18] *Synaxarion*, vol. 1, 60.

image: "This sort of scene is rare. Researchers have tried to find the literary source of this depiction. Alfredo Tradigo considers the Homilies of St. John Damascene (especially his second Homily on the Nativity of Mary[19]), and the Homilies of St. Photius on the Birth of the Virgin[20] as being the sources of inspiration for this iconic depiction."[21]

In addition to the texts discussed so far in this chapter, the apocryphal narratives referring to Mary's birth and infancy, some collected, for instance, by James Keith Elliot, speak about Anne's pleasure and joy at having given birth and for having the opportunity to breastfeed her child.[22] Among the most known of the writings that tell the story of this family—at least in Eastern Christianity—the *Protoevangelion* mentioned earlier, describes Mary's mother as continually expressing her gratitude for the gift of childbearing that was bestowed on her: "And Anne sang this song to the Lord God: 'I will sing a hymn to the Lord my God,/For he has visited me and removed from me the reproach of my enemies/And the Lord gave me the fruit of his righteousness, unique yet manifold before him./Who will proclaim to the son[s] of Reuben[23] that *Anne gives suck*.'"[24] Elliot also quotes the *Pseudo-Matthew*, which is the equivalent of the *Protoevangelion* in the West, thus: "Anne brought forth a daughter and called her Mary."[25] And again: "her months were fulfilled; in the ninth month Anne gave birth. And she said to the midwife: 'What have I brought forth?' And she said, 'A female.' And Anne said, 'My soul is magnified this day.' And she lay (sic) down. And when the days were completed, Anne purified herself[26] and *gave suck* to the child and called her Mary."[27] There

[19] Tradigo, *Icons and Saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church*. He considers the *Homily on the Nativity of Mary* ("In Nativitatem B.V. Mariae") discussed above, PG 96; John of Damascus, *Expositio fidei* 45, in Kotter (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* 2, trans. as "On the Nativity of the Holy *Theotokos*," in Cunningham (ed. and trans.), in *Wider than Heaven*.

[20] Photius, *Homilies*, translated and edited by C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius*.

[21] Balaban Bara, *The Political and Artistic Program of Prince Petru Rares,* Annex 1, xxii.

[22] Elliott, *A Synopsis*, 13.

[23] According to the sources quoted here Reuben was the rabbi in the temple where Anne and Joachim worshipped.

[24] Elliott, *A Synopsis*, Protev. 5: 2 F, p. 13; emphasis added.

[25] Elliott, *A Synopsis*, Ps-Matthew, 4, 5, p. 12.

[26] For information regarding the rituals of purification after child-birth see Elizabeth L'Estrange, *Holy Motherhood: Gender, Dynasty and Visual Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008, especially chapter 3, 76–111. The author refers to medieval practices, but one can notice that these are similar to those current during Anne's life in the rendering of apocryphal literature.

[27] Idem, Protev. 5: 2 D, p. 12; emphasis added.

is obvious joy and pleasure in Anne's exclamation and, it is to be assumed, in the milk-feeding act she carried out. The illustrations in Figs. 2.2 and 2.3 indicate how the iconographers imagined the last part of the story.

Fig. 2.2 *Anne Mlekopitatelnitsa* (breastfeeding), fresco inside the chapel of St. George, Kurbinovo; a few reproductions exist in literature (*Cvetan* Grozdanov, *Kurbinovo and Other Studies on Prespa Frescoes*, Skopje: Makedonska akademija na naukite i umetnostite 2006, p. 172; also—of a poorer quality—this image exists in Cvetan Grozdanov and Lydie Hadermann Misguich, *Kurbinovo*, Skopjie: Institut

Fig. 2.3 *Anne Mlekopitatelnitsa*, Church of the Forty Martyrs, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, 1230. © Editions Geuthner (André Grabar, *La peinture religieuse en Bulgarie*, Paul Geuthnier, Paris, 1928, 104–106, and В. Димова/Vesela Dimova, *Църковите в България преэ XIII–XIV век* [Churches in Bulgaria between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries], София/Sofia, 2008, 193–200)

The visual instances we reproduce are only samples of their efforts to render how they fathomed it. The frequent representation of Anne and her daughter in Late Middle Ages within the Byzantine territories and Europe in general is connected with the process of women's patronage—

Fig. 2.2 (continued) républicain pour la protection des monuments culturels, 1992, Fig. 26 in the respective book. In L. Hadermann-Misguisch's *Kurbinovo. Les fresques de Saint-Georges et la peinture byzantine du XII siècle*, Brussels: Peeters, 1975, there is no mention of an image of Anne nursing (or any of Joachim). Looking at the photographs reproduced in the second volume of this book (especially Fig. 6: 'Interior view of the east part of the church'; black and white) I noticed that this particular fresco is missing from the wall. The only possible explanation for its absence in her volume is that when Hadermann-Misguisch did her research in Kurbinovo the wall on which Joachim and Anne are depicted was undergoing restoration; today the respective wall is almost half white and I assume that the loss of a part of the fresco is a consequence of that work). (Personal photo taken in August 2012)

remarkable in this period. Because Anne was seen as an intercessor with Mary on behalf of women wishing to have children, many churches, frescoes, and books were dedicated to this saint. In my book *Nourished by the Word* I provide details about churches and frescoes founded or commissioned by women patrons who lived and made bequests within the "Byzantine Commonwealth."[28] Here I can supply further evidence by referring to Irene the Athenian, the wife of the Byzantine Emperor Leo IV the Khazar (750–780; on the throne between 775 and 780). She ruled with her husband in 775–780, and as a widow and mother of Constantine VI until 802. Irene "appears to have established" a nunnery on Prinkipo, one of the Princes Islands in the Sea of Marmara, where she was eventually buried.[29] Concerning manuscripts, the famous book of hours ordered by Anne of Cyprus/Savoy for her husband Louis in the middle of the fifteenth century represents a good example.[30] This is now in France, catalogued as Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS lat. 9473; the codex contains an office dedicated to St. Anne and a visual representation of *Anne Selbdritt* (Anne, Mary, and the child Jesus together).[31]

Going back to describing the pleasurable relationship between Anne and the child Mary as communicated by textual sources, we have to indicate another hailed event in their family. This is the banquet its members organized on the first anniversary of the infant's life. Important representatives of the community were invited to join in festivities and to witness the blessing of the girl by the High Priest. The *Protoevangelion* narrates the episode:

[28] Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971, the latest reprint 2000; e-book 2009.

[29] Judith Herrin, "Changing Functions of Monasteries for Women during Byzantine Iconoclasm," in Lynda Garland (ed.), *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience. 800–1200*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, 11. There are other publications concerned with women patronage, and among them one can mention Lioba Theis, Margaret Mullett, and Michael Grünbart (eds.), with Galina Fingarova and Matthew Savage, *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond*, Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau, Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte, 2011/2012, Band LX/LXI; J. Herrin, *Unrivalled Influence: Women and Empire in Byzantium*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2013, and Margaret Mullett, "Aristocracy and Patronage in the Literary Circles of Comnenian Constantinople," in M. Angold (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy from IX to XIII Centuries*, BAR Int. Ser., 221, Oxford, 1984, 173–201.

[30] Michael Alan Anderson, *St. Anne in Renaissance Music: Devotion and Politics*, New York, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 61.

[31] M. A. Anderson, *St. Anne in Renaissance M*usic, 63.

> After the first year of the child was *fulfilled*, Ioacim made a great feast and bade the priests and the scribes and the assembly of the elders and the whole people of Israel. And Ioacim brought the child to the priests, and they blessed her, saying: O God of our fathers, bless this child and give her a name renowned for ever among all generations. And all the people said: So be it, so be it. Amen. And he brought her to the high priests, and they blessed her, saying: O God of the high places, look upon this child, and bless her with the last blessing which hath no successor. And her mother caught her up into the sanctuary of her bedchamber and gave her suck.[32]

For Anne that was another opportunity to renew her (chanted, this time, the source says) thanksgiving prayer, and at this point her awareness of the spiritual element involved in the act of breastfeeding might have been at its most acute. We have reproduced this passage in the older translation of James (which Elliot has used as a basis for his own rendering of the *Protoevangelion*) because on this particular point James's variant has more relevance for a discussion on pleasure:

> I will sing a hymn unto the Lord my God, because he hath visited me and taken away from me the reproach of mine enemies, and the Lord hath given me a fruit of his righteousness, single *and* manifold before him. Who shall declare unto the sons of Reuben that Anne giveth suck? Hearken, hearken, ye twelve tribes of Israel, that Anne giveth suck. And she laid the child to rest in the bedchamber of her sanctuary, and went forth and minister unto them. And when the feast was ended, they sat them down rejoicing, and glorifying the God of Israel.[33]

Again, iconography has expressed an interest in the dynamics of this affectionate family and depictions that could aid in fathoming the feelings of its members for one another exist (Fig. 2.4).

The scene within the relatively new fresco reproduced in Fig. 2.5 reminds us of the famous mosaic representing the Virgin taking her first steps, which exists in Kariye Djami (Chora Monastery), Istanbul; c. 1320. The image in the capital of the former Byzantine Empire depicts a scene mentioned in the *Protoevangelion* and the *Synaxarion*: Mary (aged 6 months) is attempting to take her first steps under the supervision of her

[32] James, *Protoevangelion*, 40; emphases added.
[33] James, *Protoevangelion*, 40; emphases added.

Fig. 2.4 St Joachim and Anne with the child Mary, St. Sophia Cathedral, Thessaloniki, twentieth century. (My photo, August 2012)

Fig. 2.5 A sketch of 'The cave of the Milk' or 'of the suckling' close to Bethlehem. It has existed since time immemorial and it is said that Mary hid herself for a while before the flight into Egypt. There are many anonymous painting and drawing likes this hanging on its walls, and it is difficult to date them; www.bethlehem.custodia.org/default.asp?id=488; retrieved May 2013. (The image is on line and freely accessible under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 Generic license)

mother.[34] Seven is the number of sanctity and perfection, therefore there is no wonder that such stories have been circulated. The ever-creative imagination of the iconographers (perhaps despite the canon) shows the three members of Joachim's family walking together.

[34] The *Protoevengelion* and the *Synaxarion* describe this episode; they continue the story concerning Mary's life by narrating the blessings received by her from the priests at the age of one.

3 Why Did the Medieval Byzantine Patrons Order the Breastfeeding Images to Be Made?

A plausible response to this question would be that the mothers and some of the women who prayed in medieval churches, as well as their families, recognized and acknowledged the pleasure of motherhood and that of being able to breastfeed a child. They also might have felt more sympathy towards the saint than to any other woman due to the fact that Anne gave birth at an age believed by her contemporaries to be impossible for parturition and after a very long wait. Another reason is that the religious literature of the Middle Ages, in the vein of Biblical thought, referred to the spiritual value breastfeeding represents in addition to that of providing the necessary sustenance for the physical development of a baby. The frescoes and mosaics accomplished for the Church in the Middle Ages—some of which can still be viewed today—mirrored this idea. As suggested also by Romanos Melodos's work as well as by the Patristic and apocryphal writings mentioned earlier, when Anne had the mystical experience through which she found out that she would conceive, and particularly after having Mary, she might have felt instinctively that giving birth and taking care of a child is much more than just a biological endeavour.

Motherhood could also be tiring and, at times, even a painful undertaking, as said earlier—especially the act of breastfeeding as a part of it—but the previously cited sources do not make reference to this aspect. That may perhaps be because when a child arrives in a family the temporary distress that might accompany the birth is very soon forgotten; it is overcome by the pleasure and the gladness of having him/her. The authors writing about births seem to keep in mind principally this aspect of motherhood. However, the early stages of being a parent could be a taxing time in someone's life. If we place this discussion in a larger context, we can employ here the acknowledgment of St. Maximus the Confessor (580–662) that: "Sometimes men [i.e., human beings] are tested by pleasure, sometimes by distress or by physical suffering."[35]

[35] St. Maximus the Confessor, "Four Hundred Texts on Love. Second Century," *Philokalia*, ed. by Gerald Palmer, Eustace Howell; Sherrard, Philip; St. Nicodemus the Hagiorite; St. Makarios of Corinth, and Kallistos Ware, London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1981, reprinted 1990, 73.

4 Theological Reflections About Pleasure and the Significance of Milk as Experienced and Understood by Anne

The Fathers of the early Church, even before Maximus cited earlier, defined pleasure in general and also its various types. Among them Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–c. 395) is to be mentioned with his description of spiritual pleasure as a result of a mystical union with God achieved through constant progress in virtue and godliness (*epektasis*). Mary's future parents had been on such an ascending path for a long time before being told about the impending change in their status but were unable to experience divine pleasure since the lack of a child was a source of constant suffering for them. They were unable to completely respond to such a high calling before knowing parenthood since the human upward effort towards God "translates" in a movement that is both "receptive and responsive,"[36] and the sadness would have precluded them from being good "receivers." Regarding Nyssen's vision of people endlessly enjoying the divine presence, this was founded on the notions he upheld about God's infinite nature and the human finitude with an unlimited possibility of attaining perfection.[37] Against Origen's notion of satiety (*koros*)[38] the bishop offered the alternative of hunger for the Divine.[39] Any person trusting God knows that the substance of people's nurture is faith; it aids the "growth of our spiritual wings" enabling people to reach a mature understanding of God's Logos and thus to increase their chances of salvation. This kind of awareness and action leads to spiritual pleasure and exultation. On the same line of thought, another Church father, a mediaeval representative of it, Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), distinguished between sensual and spiritual pleasures and strongly supported the prevalence of the latter in people's lives. He asserted that pleasure expresses inner happiness. While such a conviction led the ancient Greeks, with whom the Palamite shared partially in this

[36] Rowan Williams, *The Wound of Knowledge: Christian Spirituality from the New Testament to St. John of the* Cross, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1979, 67. I have discussed in some details the concept of *epektasis* in the Nyssan's view in my article "How would Gregory of Nyssa have understood evolutionism?" in *Studia Patristica*, 151–169.

[37] On this subject, see for instance, Matthew Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

[38] Origen, *De Principiis/On first principle*s. See also Scott, *Journey back to God*, 65–67.

[39] Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, ed. by *Henry Wallace* and Philip Schaff, A Selected Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1893), vol. 5.

view, to a form of sensual utilitarianism, the conclusion the archbishop reached was that permanent and everlasting happiness is the outcome of true faith. Palamas thought that pleasure coming from a strong loyalty to God and trust in Him is the criterion for assessing a person's moral development.[40] There are very few people in human history—real or mythical—who have been more virtuous and who submitted themselves to God's will in greater measure than Jesus's grandparents. They dedicated their long-desired and beloved child to His temple. Anne and Joachim truly embodied the Patristic convictions discussed to this point in the chapter.

Another idea of relevance here, already introduced, is that of milk as divine nourishment. The Old Testament is rich in references to this healthful substance; in some of those it is mentioned together with honey.[41] The New Testament expresses the idea of spiritual and maternal nourishment throughout; the correlated verb τρέφω/θρέφω—particularly τρεφόμενος and τρεφομένους (which means both nourishing in general and breastfeeding) is used in Mt. 6. 26 and 25. 35 in the general sense: "Look at the birds of the air: for they neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Mt. 6. 26), and "For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you

[40] Gregory Palamas, "De oratione et puritate cordis," PG 150. 1117–1121; "Capita CL: psysica, theologica, moralia et practica," PG 150, 1121–1225, and "Confessio fidei," PG 151, 763–767. The actual title of the text, given by St. Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain, is *On Passions and Virtues and the Fruits of the Spiritual Ascent*. See also Georgios I. Mantzarides, "Tradition and Renewal in the Theology of Saint Gregory Palamas," in G. I. Mantzaridis (ed.), *The Deification of Man: St. Gregory Palamas and the Orthodox Tradition*, 1997, trans. L. Sherrard, Foreword Kallistos of Diokleia, 3; John Meyendorff, A Study of Gregory Palamas, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1964, 183–184; Jacques *Lison, L'Esprit répandu. La pneumatologie de Grégoire Palamas*, Paris, Cerf, 1993; Kallistos Ware, *Act out of Stillness: The Influence of Fourteenth-Century Hesychasm on Byzantine and Slav Civilization*, ed. by Daniel J. Sahas, The Hellenic Canadian Association of Constantinople and the Thessalonikean Society of Metro Toronto, Toronto, 1995, 4–7, and *Christos* Yannaras, "The Distinction Between Essence and Energies and Its Importance for Theology," St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly 19, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press (summer 1975): 232–245.

[41] Exodus 3. 8: "So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusi"; Deuteronomy 26:9, "And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee."

gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in" (Mt. 25. 35).[42] Also it occurs with the same meaning in Luke 12. 24, 23.29; Acts 12.20, and Revelation 12. 6, 14. St. Paul uses terms pertaining to the same semantic field to communicate the spiritual understanding of maternity in general, especially in Galatians 4.19[43] and 1 Corinthians 4.14.[44] In Ephesians 5.29, he adds an extra layer of meaning to this metaphor when referring directly to the relation between Christ and the Church (everyone "nourishes and tenderly cares for [their body], just as Christ does for the Church").[45] The apostle also calls himself a tender nurse to the people, in 1 Thessalonians 2.7, and this relates to the idea of the spiritual importance of milk.[46] From these writings an entire "theology of lactation" has developed revolving mainly around Christ's Nativity (the "Cave of the Milk"/the "Milk-Grotto" nearby Bethlehem (Fig. 2.5), as well as the famous "Mother of God's milk relic" in Constantinople remind us about it—the latter, even if a medieval invention, is still significant for the purpose of our argument).

This doctrine about milk has expanded to include references to the birth of Mary herself and to that of John the Baptist. It was reflected in visual arts, as we have observed. Among other instances concerning the manifestation of this phenomenon, a lactating fountain that was erected in Nürnberg in the sixteenth century is notable.[47] Another concrete example—this time from the literary tradition—is indicative of the way in which the Old and the New Testaments appreciate milk. While apparently in an earthly manner, but actually, according to Gregory of Nyssa, having in view

[42] "ἐμβλέψατε εἰς τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὅτι οὐ σπείρουσιν οὐδὲ θερίζουσιν οὐδὲ συνάγουσιν εἰς ἀποθήκας, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τρέφει αὐτά"; "οὐχ ὑμεῖς μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν; τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷοἱ δίκαιοι λέγοντες• κύριε, πότε σε εἴδομεν πεινῶντα καὶ ἐθρέψαμεν; ἢ διψῶντα καὶ ἐποτίσαμεν."

[43] Galatians 4.19: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

[44] 1 Corinthians 4.14: "I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you."

[45] Ephesians 5.29: "For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church."

[46] 1 Thessalonians 2.7: "[W]e might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children."

[47] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, fig. 16, black and white. The caption says: "Fountain of the Virtues in Nűrnberg; all seven allegorical figures lactate as a symbol of the fertility of virtue. Several of the figures also provide nurture in other way, by offering fruit, a chalice, or a jug."

a deeper, spiritual meaning,[48] in the *Song of Songs* Solomon takes pleasure in affirming "Your lips distil nectar, my bride;/Honey and milk are under your tongue."[49] St. Paul refers to the divine-supernatural connotations of milk consumption. He does it emphatically in Hebrews 5. 11–14, where he complains that he had to give this drink to the citizens, who were like the "little ones" and therefore need "milk to drink, not meat" or "solid food."[50]

Other pieces of canonical literature, such as that written by Clement of Alexandria, support the same idea. In his *Paedagogus* the theologian understands, with Paul whose sayings he quotes, milk as being the metaphor for the "simple, true natural, and spiritual nourishment" which Logos ("Christ's milk") is; it constitutes the "perfect" sustenance promised by Christ to the righteous in order for them to attain eternal life. The "already-perfected" drink it with joy and pleasure because it also leads to the knowledge of the truth; those who are as yet "little children" in faith, just suck the milk [to live].[51]

Zuzana Skalova combines information from the writings of the Fathers with that existent within other sources and reminds readers that in the Christianity of the Near East the infant Christ is "the metaphor for the Divine Logos."[52] Denise Kimber Buell indicates that in the same

[48] Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, trans., Introduction, and notes by Richard A. Norris Jr., in J. T. Fitzgerald, gen. ed., *Writings from the Greco-Roman World*, (Atlanta, GA: The Society of Biblical Literature, American Council of Learned Societies, 2012), vol. 13.

[49] *Song of Songs* [of Solomon] 4. 11: "Your lips, O my spouse, drop like the honeycomb: honey and milk are under your tongue; and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon."

[50] Paul, *Hebrews* 5.11–14 ("About this we have much to say that is hard to explain, since you have become dull in understanding. For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that uses milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil").

[51] Clement of Alexandria, "Paedagogus," PG 8, 300–301; Marrou (ed. and trans.), *Paedagogus*, vol. I. 6, 182–183.

[52] Zuzana Skalova, "The Icon of the Virgin Galaktotrophousa in the Coptic Monastery of St. Antony the Great at the Red Sea, Egypt: A Preliminary Note," in Krijnie N. Ciggaar and H. Teule (eds.), *East and West in the Crusader States. Context, Contacts, Confrontations* III, Acta of the Congress Held at Hernen Castle in September 2000, *Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta* 75, Leuven: Peeters, 2003, 244 [235–264]. On the same ideas, see also Elizabeth S. Boltman, *Milk and Salvation: The Nursing Mother of God in the Eastern Mediterranean*,

geographical area nurses (as does science today) still consider the first flow of maternal milk very important[53]; as shown at the outset of this chapter, there it is called *manna*. Caroline Walker Bynum underlines that the Patristic ideas expressed earlier have been reiterated in later historical periods, adds new dimensions to the connection earthly–heavenly sustenance, and shows concrete ways in which people experienced it in medieval times: "I argue that images of food and drink, of brimming fountains and streams of blood [NB and milk], which are used with special intensity by thirteenth-century women, express desire for direct, almost physical contact with Christ."[54] One can understand why in the sixteenth century, when the veneration concerning the relics of St. Anne—the holy person associated to the highest extent with milk—reached a climax in Europe, the lactating fountain mentioned above was erected in the north of the continent.[55] The preoccupation with milk-feeding in various forms has been a long-lasting one, and it is so today. The Orthodox Church recognizes the importance of nourishment, particularly of breastfeeding, by dedicating a feast to the Mother of God lactating [*Galaktotrophousa*]; this is celebrated on 12 January. It also honours Anne on 9 September.[56]

St. Anne was equally commemorated within Western Christianity (and she still is). Among many examples of cultural sources that demonstrate this, one can mention those described by Michael Alan Anderson in his book *St. Anne in Renaissance Music*. He introduces a few codices that include chants dedicated to Mary's mother. One is the manuscript Torino, Biblioteca nazionale MS J. II.9 ("the Turin codex"), dating from no earlier than November 1413. Others are Oxford Bodleian Library MS Canonici misc. 213, from c. 1430; a breviary from Odense, Denmark, written in Lübec in 1457, today in the Royal Library of Copenhagen as

Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming within the series Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion; and Sebastian P. *Brock* and Susan Ashbrook Harvey (eds. and trans.), *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998.

[53] Kimber Buell, *Making Christians*, 159–161.

[54] Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, p. 8.

[55] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, Plate 16, black and white. The caption says: "Fountain of the Virtues in Nűrenberg; all seven allegorical figures lactate as a symbol of the fertility of virtue. Several of the figures also provide nurture in other way, by offering fruit, a chalice, or a jug."

[56] Hieromonk Makarios of Simonos Petra "Saints Joachim and Anne," in *Synaxarion*, vol. 1, 60. See also Passarelli, *Icônes des grandes fêtes byzantines*, 32.

Royal Library L. N. MS 30; and the source of all of these, a two-volume Benedictine breviary from 1424, Oxford Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C. 489.[57] All the works dedicated to Anne and to her daughter, Mary, which we have mentioned here, are beautiful specimens of human creativity made with pleasure and joy and in order to generate inter alia pleasure and joy.

We can conclude by asserting that since Anne was the co-creator—with God firstly—of a "living heaven, vaster than the immensity of [all] the heavens!" [i.e., of Mary], as we observed that, among others, St. John of Damascus believed,[58] she might have been at one point cognizant of this reality or at least of a part of it, as she might have been aware of the spiritual meaning of breastfeeding. That certainly augmented the pleasure of motherhood for Anne. The second element to our conclusion is that in telling and visually rendering scenes of Anne, Mary, and Joachim's happy family life, the writers, scribes, and iconographers have themselves produced pleasure and joy—for the reader and respectively, beholder.Fig. 2.2 (continued)

[57] Anderson, *St. Anne in Renaissance Music*, especially chapter 2, "Heritage and Progeny in an Office for St. Anne," 26–66.

[58] John of Damascus, "In Nativitatem B.V. Mariae," PG 96. 664B; John of Damascus, *Expositio fidei* 45, in B. Kotter (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* 2, 108. 46, trans. as "On the Nativity of the Holy *Theotokos*," in Cunningham (ed. and trans.), in *Wider than Heaven*, 55.

CHAPTER 3

The Reception of Saint Anne's Cult in the Hungarian Ecclesiastical Environment: Her Legend in Codices

Emőke Nagy

Abstract This chapter refers to the veneration of St. Anne in Hungary as it connects with the issue of readership during the Middle Ages. Three manuscripts describing the life of the saint particularly constitute the subject of our discussion: those that are known in the literature concerned with hagiography as the Teleki, Kazinczy, and Érdy codices.

The chapter presents the substance of these pieces as well as their reception and looks at the role of the scribes in the propagation of Anne's devotion. It assesses the impact these texts had on late medieval religious orders and indicates how their production and "consumption"—that is, the reading—significantly aid our understanding of hagiography in Western Christianity.

Keywords Anne • Joachim • Mary • Teleki • Kazinczy • Érdy codices

This study is based on a subchapter of my doctoral dissertation entitled "Narrative and Visual Sources of Saint Anne's Cult in Late Medieval Hungary in

E. Nagy (✉)
Romano-Catholic Parish Archives, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

E. Ene D-Vasilescu (ed.), *Devotion to St. Anne in Texts and Images*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-89399-0_3

Previous works on the veneration of St. Anne in medieval Hungary have treated some of the iconographic, ethnographic, and textual sources that refer to it. Nevertheless, a complex analysis of Anne's cult in its hagiographical and geographical framework by putting together various sources has not yet been undertaken (in contrast to the existing situation in the case of the material concerning the adoration of the Mother of God).

The popularity of Saint Anne has mostly been overlooked in the Eastern part of Central Europe, including medieval Hungary; by discussing it in this chapter we intend to remedy the situation.

First of all, I would like to make some remarks on various debated aspects of Saint Anne's cult in Western Christianity; these will aid the interpretation of the Hungarian textual sources. Then I will focus on the situation in Hungary by introducing the promoters of this cult and the textual sources referring to it.

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a Comparative Perspective; fourteenth–sixteenth centuries", PhD dissertation, Cluj-Napoca and Budapest, Babeș-Bolyai University, 2015. I thank first my supervisors Ioan-Aurel Pop and Gábor Klaniczay, who advised me during research about St. Anne, and also to the scholars who helped me with various suggestions—among them, Csilla Gábor, Edit Madas, and Farkas Gábor Kiss. Special thanks are due to Dr. Elena Ene D-Vasilescu, who reviewed my text several times. Without her work this piece would have not been here. I published about St. Anne, thus: "Motherhood and Sanctity in the Cult of Saint Anne: The Reception of the Saint's Legend Based on her Earliest Sources from Medieval Hungary, the Teleki, Kazinczy, and Érdy codices", *Colloquia* 15(2009): 22–43; "'Had She Born Ten Daughters, She Would Have Named Them All Mary because of the Kindness of the First Mary'. St. Anne in the Sermons of Two Late Medieval Hungarian Preachers", in Gecser Ottó (ed.), *Klaniczay Gábor Festschift*, Budapest, CEU Press, 2011, 273–283, and "Urban Patronage of Saint Anne Altars in Late Medieval Hungary", *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 22 (2016): 145–173. I used some of the material from the article "Motherhood and Sanctity in the Cult of Saint Anne" in this chapter and I am grateful to Prof. Maria Crăciun, the editor of *Colloquia*, the Journal of Central European History for allowing me to do so.

1 The First Legends and Their Historical Context

Since the origins of the cult and its development in Byzantium have been treated by Ene D-Vasilescu[1] and others,[2] I concentrate now on its development in medieval Hungary. In the twelfth century two major controversies involving Saint Anne began. One of these was related to her conception. Many theologians were of Saint Augustine's opinion[3] in considering that people who are conceived as a result of sexual desire are born in sin. But they believed that Mary was freed from the Original Sin in a particular moment and debated about the time when that happened: in the moment of the Annunciation, of her conception, or in Anne's womb[4] (the latter view was held, for instance, by Saint Bernard[5]). Saint Anselm thought Mary was conceived through sin (that is, in accord to the laws of human nature), but that she was released from it before the birth of Christ (in anticipation of his crucifixion that cleansed everyone).[6]

The majority of the Franciscans thought that Joachim and Anne were not driven by sexual desire when they brought Mary into the world, hence their child did not experience the consequences of the Original Sin. Duns Scotus (1265/66–1308) believed that Anne was an exceptional human being since she was chosen by God to be the bearer of the Mother of God. According to him Mary was pure from sin from her conception through Christ's salvific action, which cleansed his mother in advance.[7] He also

[1] E. Ene D-Vasilescu, *The Nourishing Word: heavenly sustenance in Early, Byzantine, and Medieval Christianity*, submitted; Ene D-Vasilescu, "St. Anne and her infant daughter in Byzantine written source and iconography", *Eikón Imago* journal, vol. 4, no. 1 (2015): 1–12.

[2] For instance, György Geréby speaks about the Protevangelium in "Egy orthodox apokrif műhelyében: A Jakab-ősevangélium (*Protevangelium Jacobi*) filozófai szimbolikája"/In the workshop of an Orthodox apocryphon—the Protevangelium of James, *Ókor* 6 (2007/3), 50–61; Idem, "A világ és az idő megállása Jakab Prótevangéliumában"/The stopping of time and the world in the Protevangelium Jacobi, Vallástudományi Szemle 2, no. 1 (2006): 93–126.

[3] Augustine, *De spiritu et anima*, lib. 1 in PL 40, 779–832.

[4] Charles Journet, "Scripture and the Immaculate Conception", in Edward Dennis O'Connor (ed.), *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. History and Significance*, Paris: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958, 1–51; Carlo Balić, "The Medieval Controversy over the Immaculate Conception", in *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception*, 174.

[5] Bernardus, *Epistola* 174, n. 7., PL 182, 335.

[6] Anselmus, *De conceptu virginali et originali peccato*, c. 18, c. 19, c. 20, c. 21, c. 22. (PL 158, 451–454); Ibid., *Cur Deus homo*, lib. 2, c. 16, PL 158, 416–419.

[7] Johannes Duns Scotus, "Lectura in librum tertium Sententiarum", in *Opera Omnia*, Vatican City, 2003, vol. 20, d. 3, q. 1, 119–138; Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The*

believed that at the Crucifixion the whole human race was released from the Original Sin. William of Ware, a Franciscan scholar of the fourteenth century, elaborated at length on Mary's immaculate nature. He justified his view through Augustine's argument.

In contrast, Thomas Aquinas rejected the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Quoting Saint Augustine in the favour of his argument, he condemns marital sexual life; he states *omnem quae de concubitu nascitur, carnem esse peccati*.[8] At the same time he maintains Mary's holiness (despite her conception in accord with earthly law) by averring that when her sanctified soul joined her body in the womb of her mother, it cleansed it from impurity. Therefore, even though Mary was conceived through sin, she was not touched by it. The Dominicans shared in this view,[9] as also did other orders. The question concerning the moment when Anne's daughter was released from the Original Sin remained an unsolved issue among the scholars preoccupied with Saint Augustin's thesis. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception came close to receiving official recognition when it was examined and proclaimed to be a dogma of faith by the Council of Basel in 1438. But that assembly represented only a minority of the Church and was declared schismatic by the Pope. The Franciscan Pope Sixtus IV granted semi-official recognition to the feast[10] and in 1476 he ordered a special office of the Immaculate Conception to be created.[11] The official recognition of the dogma was effected by Pius IX in 1854.

Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary, second edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983, 242; Journet, "Scripture and the Immaculate Conception", 46; Balić, "The Medieval Controversy over the Immaculate Conception", 202–212.

[8] Thomas Aquinas, "Quaestio 27. De sactificatione beatae virginis. In sex articulos divisa", in *Summa theologiae* 3, q. 27, a. 2, Milan: Edizioni Paoline, 1988, second ed., 14–15; *Virginia Nixon, Mary's Mother: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Europe*, Pennsylvania, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004, 14.

[9] Journet, "Scripture and the Immaculate Conception", 1–51; Balić, "The Medieval Controversy over the Immaculate Conception", 161–213, esp. 194–195; Kathleen M. Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, "Introduction", *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990, 13–17; V. Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, 13–16.

[10] Before its official recognition in 1854, the feast of the Immaculate Conception had been celebrated in local centres for a very long time and was connected to some monastic orders (Benedictines, Franciscans, and Jesuits); see Journet, "Scripture and the Immaculate Conception", 1–51; Balić, "The Medieval Controversy over the Immaculate Conception", 161–213.

[11] Ibid., 5–11; Ashley and Sheingorn, "Introduction", 25.

The circulation of Anne's cult in the late Middle Ages involved not only the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, but also that of the *trinubium*[12] (the three marriages of this holy woman). According to its content, Anne had three daughters named Mary from three different marriages. After Joachim's death, she married his brother Cleophas, and after his own death, the third brother, Salomas. That in accordance to the old Hebrew laws that supposed that in the event of the death of a husband, his brother marry the widow. The story continues by imparting that Mary Cleophas (named after her father) married Alpheus and became the mother of James the Lesser, Simon, Jude Thaddeus, and the disciple Joseph the Just. The other daughter, Mary Salome, married Zebedee and gave birth to James the Greater and John the Evangelist.[13]

The text tries to deal with the mysterious remark concerning Christ's brothers [his "kin"] in the New Testament. It also indirectly questioned Mary's immaculate nature. On the basis of Jerome's comments it concludes that Mary had two other younger sisters, also called Mary, and that it is their sons who are mentioned in the Scripture as Christ's brothers.[14]

This tale of the *trinubium* is a Western addition to the veneration of the saint and is based on a legend narrated in three codices: Teleki (1525–1531), Kazinczy (1526–1541), and Érdy (1526–1527).

The debate around it started in the twelfth century because some clerics questioned the divine miracle and the grace of Anne's first marriage because of her subsequent matrimonies and fertility. Also the story is not included in the apocryphal sources referring to Mary's infancy, *Protevangelium of*

[12] More about Anne's *trinubium* and the Holy Kinship can be found in Angelika Dörfler-Dierken's *Die Verehrung der heiligen Anne in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*/The worship of St. Anne in the Late Middle Ages and early modern times, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992, and Werner Esser's "Die Heilige Sippe. Studien zu einem spätmittelalterlichen Bildthema in Deutschland und den Niederlanden"/The Holy Kinship. Studies on a late medieval subject in Germany and the Netherlands] doctoral dissertation, Bonn, 1986 and *B. Kleinschmidt*, *Die heilige Anne, ihre Verehrung in Geschichte*, Dusseldorf: Kunst und Volkstum, 1930. Also Ann Moss, *Renaissance Truth and the Latin Language Turn*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003 is to be mentioned. Moss uses a wide range of texts about St. Anne as a means of examining Renaissance Humanism and touches on the three marriages of St. Anne.

[13] Ashley and Sheingorn, "Introduction", 11–12; Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, 16.

[14] Haymo [of Halberstadt], *Historiae sacrae epitome*, in PL 118, 823–824. The text was attributed to Haymo of Auxerre; see B. de Gaiffier, "Le Trinubium Annae", *Analecta Bollandiana* 90 (1972): 289–298; it has also been mentioned by Ashley and Sheingorn, "Introduction", 59; Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, 168.

James and the early versions of the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* (*Liber de Ortu Beatae Mariae et Infantia Salvatoris*; ca. 550–700). The origins of the legend are not known, but its first written evidence appeared in the West in the Carolingian period; it was recorded by Haymo of Auxerre (ninth century), in the *Historiae Sacrae* Epitome; Haymo was a commentator of the Bible. Around 1100 the cult spread towards the Anglo-Norman regions.[15]

Despite the controversies, the legend of the *trinubium* was included in the famous collection *Legenda Aurea* (1261–1266) compiled by the Dominican friar Jacobus de Voragine, and in late variants of Pseudo-Matthew's Gospel.[16] Jacobus assembled this work for the use of his order; he included the text referring to the *trinubium* as part of the reading about the Nativity of the Virgin. The *Legenda Aurea* was used as a source for the composition of sermons; hence it enjoyed an immense popularity. Because of this also the tale regarding the *trinubium* circulated widely in Western Christianity and was incorporated into biblical history.[17] Not only the Franciscans and the Carmelites defended its content, but also some Dominicans.

2 The Cult of Saint Anne in Late Medieval Hungary

Different types of sources speak to the historian in different ways, according to where they were produced, by whom, and for whom. One needs to take these elements into consideration also when identifying the various aspects and characteristics of the cult of Saint Anne in general as well as the specific realities concerning its promoters in late medieval Hungary, and also when describing what contributed to its dissemination. Thus, through different types of information we shall be able to understand the various forms the devotion to Anne took in the late Middle Ages.

[15] Ton Brandenbarg, "Saint Anne. A Holy Grandmother and Her Children", in Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker (ed.) *Sanctity and Motherhood. Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages*, New York: Garland Publishing, 1995, 41–42.

[16] Ashley and Sheingorn, "Introduction", 16.

[17] Iacopo da Varazze, "De nativitate sancte marie virginis. La natività della Santa Vergine Maria", in Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (ed.), *Legenda Aurea con le miniature dal codice Ambrosiano C 240 inf.*, Firenze: SISMEL, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2007, 1004–1023; Jacobus de Voragine, "The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary", in *The Golden Legend*, trans. William Granger Ryan, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, vol. 2, 149–158; Ashley and Sheingorn, "Introduction", 17; Brandenbarg, "Saint Anne", 41–42.

Literature shows that the first people who promoted the cult of St. Anne in Hungary were the Hermits from the Order of the Austin [Augustine],[18] the Poor Clares,[19] and the Paulines[20]; that happened in the fourteenth century. Various toponyms, well preserved especially in Transylvania, indicate the presence of the cult in the rural environment; such instances are Liptovská Anne/Szentanna (at present in Slovakia)[21] and Sântana de Mureş/Marosszentanna (now in Romania).[22] In the case of the latter settlement mentioned here it is known from the tithe records that a parish church dedicated to Saint Anne existed in 1332 and that it belonged to the Diocese (Archdeanery) of Tileagd/Telegd.[23] Also a convent was founded by the Franciscans in Târgu-Mureş/Marosvásárhely in 1316. Carmen Florea suggests that the presence of the members of this religious order in town had an important cultural influence in the area.[24] Literary works, such as the Teleki codex, were

[18] György Györffy, Az Árpád-*kori Magyarország történeti földrajza/*The Historical Geography of Hungary During the Árpád Dynasty, 4 vols., Budapest, 1963–1998, vol. 1, 378–379, vol. 2, 273–274; Dezső Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza a Hunyadiak korában/*The Historical Geography of Hungary in the Age of the Hunyadis, 3 vols. Budapest, 1941, vol. 2, 288–289; *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár*, Elemér Mályusz ed., vol. 1 (1387–1399), vol. 2/1 (1400–1406) and vol. 2/2 (1407–1410), Budapest, 1951–1958), Iván Borsa (ed)., based on a manuscript of Elemér Mályusz vol. 3 (1411–1412), Budapest, 1993, vol. 2/1, 77; Beatrix Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok a középkori Magyarországon/*Monasteries and Collegiate Chapters in Medieval Hungary, Budapest: Arcanum, 2008, 29, 102.

[19] D. Csánki, *Magyarország*, vol. 1, 600; *Anjoukori okmánytár/*Archival sources from the period of Angevins, 6 vols., Imre Nagy (ed)., Budapest, 1878–1891, Gyula Nagy Tasnádi (ed)., vol. 7 (Budapest, 1920), vol. 4, 8; *Zsigmondkori* oklevéltár (ed.), Mályusz, vol. 1, 470; Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza*, vol. 1, 338.

[20] Csánki, *Magyarország*, vol. 1, 136, 339; Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok*, 38; Tamás Guzsik, *A pálosrend építészeti emlékei a középkori Magyarországon: összefoglaló és katalógus/*The eclesistic monuments of Paulins in medeval Hungary: a summery and catalogue, Magyar építészettörténet, 2nd ed. (Budapest: Budapesti Műszaki Egyetem, Építészettörténeti és Elméleti Intézet, 1980), 18; Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok*, 99.

[21] *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, vol. 1, 666; Pál Lukcsics, *XV. századi pápák oklevelei/The pontifical diplomes of the fifteenth century*, 2 vols., Budapest: Olaszországi Magyar Oklevéltár 1931–1938, vol. 1, 221.

[22] *Monumenta Vaticana historiam regni Hungariae illustrantia* edited by Arnold Ipolyi, Budapestini, 1884, vol. 1/1, 97, 131, 140.

[23] Antal Beke, *Az Erdélyi káptalan levéltára Gyulafehárvárt* (The Transylvanian Chapter at Alba-Iulia) Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1896, 924; *Monumenta Vaticana,* vol. 1/1, 97, 131, 140.

[24] Carmen Florea, *The Cult of the Saints in Transylvania* (fourteenth to sixteenth century), PhD dissertation, Cluj Napoca: Babes-Bolyai University, 2007.

copied by them in the sixteenth century,[25] and a church dedicated to Anne could be indicators of this reality. The building of the church could have been the result of missionary activity, but unfortunately we do not have certain evidence about this.[26]

A considerable popularity of this saint to the end of the fourteenth century can be further detected; the representatives of the Franciscan order were very instrumental in it. For instance, one can mention the foundation in Oradea/Nagyvárad (Romania) of a cloister in which the main church is dedicated to this holy woman (1340). It was built through the patronage of the local bishop, Andrew Báthori (1329–1345), for the Order of the Poor Clares.[27] Anne's cult is also attested in the cathedral of Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár (in Romania) at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The Bishopric of Alba-Iulia was the ecclesiastical unit under which all the other ecclesiastical entities from Transylvania, except those from the Saxon cities, were subordinated. Bishop Demetrius (1368–1376; d. February 20, 1387) was a supporter of the cult of Saint Paul the Hermit and because of that he restored the deserted Franciscan convent from this town to the benefit of this order. The "new" monastery was dedicated to Saint Anne and to Saint Elisabeth of Thüringia. The existence there of an altar dedicated to Christ's grandmother was mentioned in various documents. In 1524 Bishop Francis Várday (1514–1525) endowed the chapel of St. Anne within the cathedral of Alba Iulia, and in his will named it as his burial chapel.[28] The fact that the diocese here adopted the cult of this saint needs to be emphasized because, due to its geographical and ecclesiastic position, it was very influential in the dissemination of the saint's veneration to other ecclesiastical constituents.

[25] Zoltán Soós has published a study about the history of the friary; Z. Soós, "The Franciscan Friary of Târgu-Mureş (Marosvásárhely) and the Franciscan Presence in Medieval Transylvania", *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, 9 (2003): 249–253.

[26] C. Florea, *The Cult of the Saints*, 135.

[27] Vince Bunyitay, *A váradi püspökség története alapításától a jelenkorig*/The history of the bishopric of Oradea from its foundation to the present, 4 vols., Nagyvárad,1883, vol. 3, 129–130; this publication was digitalized in 2003, Arcanum Adatbázis Kft (http://mek.oszk.hu/04700/04735/html/). See also Florea, *The Cult of the* Saints, 132.

[28] János Temesváry, *Erdély középkori püspökei*/The bishops of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár: 1922), 208–209; *A gyulafehérvári székesegyház*/The cathedral of Alba-Iulia (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1958), 205; Vince Bunyitay, *A gyulafehérvári székesegyház későbbi részei és egy magyar humanista emlékezete*/The later parts of the cathedral of Alba-Iulia and the memories of a Hungarian humanist, Budapest, 1940, 27–30; Florea, *The Cult of the Saints*, 133.

The late medieval circulation of St. Anne's devotion can be identified in some upper Hungarian cities inhabited by German settlers. In those, the attachment—sometimes very emotional—of a priest, a community, or an organization to Mary's mother resulted in altarpieces dedicated to her (in, for example, Košice/Kassa, Prešov/Eperjes, and Bratislava/Pozsony, now all in Slovakia). Some locations had more than one altar in her honour. More than seventy medieval works (altars, frescoes, sculptures) have survived in the territory of former medieval Hungary. Among the promoters of the cult one can find clerics (as in the case of Bardejov/Bártfa town—now in Slovakia, who belonged to *Mater Misericordiae* brotherhood) as well as lay individuals from various social strata.[29]

2.1 Saint Anne's vita *in an Ecclesiastical Environment*

Written in Old Hungarian, Saint Anne's legend in the Teleki codex is based on its well-known homonymous in Latin, the *Legenda sanctissimae matronae Annae*.[30] The text of this document has circulated in several variants after 1496, one of which was translated in Hungarian. The Latin source of the Hungarian legend has been identified by Lajos Katona.[31] Anne Veres has compared the Hungarian Anne-legends from the Teleki-, Kazinczy- and Érdy codices with the apocryphal sources, *Protevangelium of James*, but she did not take into consideration their most direct source, which is the

[29] About the cult's propagators in Upper Hungarian cities and an analyses on the images see Emőke Nagy, "Urban Patronage of Saint Anne Altars in Late Medieval Hungary", *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 22 (2016): 145–173 and E. Nagy, "Reprezentările Sfintelor Neamuri in Ungaria Medievală. Imagine și Cult'/Images of the Holy Kinship in Medieval Hungary. Cult and visual representations", in Toader Nicoară (ed.), Anuarul Școlii Doctorale "Istorie. Civilizație. Cultură", Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2006, vol. 2, 127–139.

[30] *Legenda sanctissimae matronae Annae: mit Gedicht 'Anne suos prosperat …' und Gebet zur hl. Anne*, Löwen/Leuven: Johannes de Westfalia, 1496; online http://tudigit.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/show/inc-ii-236/0039 (accessed 25 January 2018).

[31] Lajos Katona, "A Teleki-kódex legendái"/On the Teleki codex legends, Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia *Nyelv—és Irodalomtudományi Osztályának Közleményei* 18, 1904, 1–30. See also L. Katona, "A kedd asszonya"/The Lady of Tuesday, in *Etnográfia* 1 (1905): 1–16; this is an ethnographic study on Anne's cult that contains references to Teleki and Kazinczy codices. See also János Horváth, *A magyar irodalmi műveltség kezdetei: Szent Istvántól Mohácsig*/The Beginnings of Hungarian Literature from Saint Stephan to Mohács, Budapest: Magyar Szemle Társaság, 1931, 214; Angelica Dörfler-Dierken refers to the well known legend in her work, tracing its literary sources (one of these is the Saint Anne legend written by Petrus Dorlandus), see A. Dörfler-Dierken, *Die Verehrung der heiligen Anne in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 175–177, 278–279.

work of the Anonymous Franciscan Friar.[32] In what follows I shall compare the content of Teleki manuscript with that of its counterparts, the Kazinczy and Érdy codices. My analysis focuses on the way the *vita* of the saint has been introduced within these documents and on the debates its presentation has prompted. It also refers to the identity of the people who read about Anne's life in an ecclesiastic environment during this period.

The Teleki Codex

The version of Anne's legend in the Teleki codex (1525–1531)[33] is the most elaborate of all in medieval Hungary and is included within the Marian psalms.[34] Its text was copied by a Franciscan friar and several female members of the Third Order for their own use in Târgu Mureş,[35] where a Franciscan convent and a religious house of the Third Order functioned in the *oppidum*.[36] The codex contains devotional readings and instructions (*regula*) of interest for its members, written in Old Hungarian and specially translated for them as the nuns could not understand Latin texts.[37] In the fifteenth century the Third Order divided themselves into "secular individuals"—those who continued to live in their own houses—and the Third Order "Regulars", that is, those who adopted a life according to the mendicant spirituality peculiar to the area. The Tertiary women with regu-

[32] Anne Veres, "Szent Anne alakja a Jakab-féle ősevangéliumban és három kódexünkben", *Sermones Compilati, Plaustrum* III, http://sermones.elte.hu/?az=337tan_plaus_veresanna (accessed 30 April 2016).

[33] *Teleki-kódex*/The Teleki Codex, György Volf (ed.), *Nyelvemléktár* 12, Budapest: MTA, 1884, 1–149. The critical edition of the codex (Nyelvemléktár) features the original page numbers of the codex on the margin of the text, and I used its notations.

[34] Katona, "A Teleki-kódex legendái", 1–30; Horváth, *A magyar irodalmi műveltség kezdetei*, 214–215; A. Veres, "Szent Anne alakja", http://sermones.elte.hu/?az=337tan_plaus_veresanna (accessed 30 April 2016).

[35] Horváth, *A magyar irodalmi műveltség kezdetei*, 146.

[36] János Karácsonyi, *Szent Ferencz rendjének története Magyarországon* 1711-ig/The History of the Franciscans in Hungary till 1711, Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1922–1923 (two vols.), vol. 1, 203, vol. 2, 114–116; Fortunát Boros, *Az erdélyi ferencrendiek*/The Franciscan Order in Transylvania, Cluj: Szent Bonevantura, 1927, 13–47; Zoltán Soós, *The History of the Târgu Mureş Franciscan Friary. A Comparative Study of the Transylvanian Franciscans Architecture*, MA Thesis, Manuscript, Department of Medieval Studies, Central European University, Budapest, 2000, 15–28; John R. H. Moorman, *Medieval Franciscan Houses*, Franciscan Institute Publications History Series, no. 4, New York: The Franciscan Institute of Saint Bonaventure University, 1983, 290.

[37] *Teleki-kódex*, 400–401.

larized lives conducted themselves very much as the Clarisses did.[38] While the Teleki codex was written for the Third Order Regular, the Kazinczy codex was specifically written for the Clarisse nuns.

Saint Anne's legend, introduced as a "book" in the Teleki codex, is structured into seventeen chapters. It begins with a narrative about Emerentia, who here is considered to be Anne's mother. This woman did not want to get married and consulted the hermits who lived on Mount Carmel. The hermits had a revelation about the lineage that would result from Emerentia's marriage, which persuaded her to wed in order to facilitate the fulfilment of the divine plan.

> this beautiful tree exemplifies the shining purity of the virgin saint Emerentia and her saintly purpose always conforms to God's will. [It] exemplifies her born daughter, Saint Anne, from whom a flower was born and brought up or—one that will be full of mercy. She is the dear Virgin Mary. She will remain immaculate forever. From this flower her sweet fruit, the Son of God, will come.[39]

The document continues with the description of Christ's large family; Anne's brothers and their offspring are mentioned. The second chapter is dedicated to Anne's childhood and presents her exemplary life.[40] It states that the saint married her first husband, Joachim, at the age of fifteen; she did so not because of fleshly lust, but for the sake of obeying human conventions. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 continue with an account of various aspects from the life of this holy couple. Their conjugal existence without children, the rejection of Joachim's sacrifice in the temple, the Annunciation, their meeting at the Golden Gate, and the birth of their daughter, Mary.[41]

[38] J. R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from its Origins to the year 1517*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968; reprint, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, 560–568.

[39] "…e megmutatott fa, látásra szépségös, a szíz szent Emerencia asszonnak fénylő tisztaságát példázza, és az ő szent szándékát mendenkoron az Istennek akaratjára mondja…az ő leányát, szent Anne asszont, ő tőle születendőt példázza, mely szent Anne asszontul, egy virág hozattatik, avagy születtetik, mely malaztal teljes leszön…az édes szíz Mária, örökkön örökké szeplőtelen marad meg, a virágtul kedig, a szíz Máriától, az édességes gyömölcs, Istennek fia…", *Teleki-kódex*, 278/23–32. I have transcribed the text of the codex relying on critical editions and rendered it according to today norms of spelling and regional forms of wording: e.g., c—k, ÿ—i, z—sz, n—ny etc. I thank Csilla Gábor for helping with the transcription of this text.

[40] *Teleki-kódex*, 281–283.

[41] Ibid., 283–291.

In the Teleki codex the story of Anne and Joachim who, despite their advanced age, were blessed with a child, is paired with a similar example from the Old Testament: the tale concerning the wife of Abraham, who gave birth to Isaac at the age of ninety.

The following chapters (the sixth[42] and seventh[43]) provide details concerning St. Anne's second and third marriages, the *trinubium* we spoke about at the outset of this chapter. What the Teleki codex adds to the information advanced there is that the legend claims that another Annunciation occurred to the saint: one through which she was told that she must give birth to two more daughters. This in order to bring into the world further children who were to enrich the saintly genealogical tree. As mentioned earlier, her other daughters were supposed to have had the same name as the first—Mary. The Teleki codex affirms that although after the second marriage the saint offered herself to God, she married again (to Salomas) because the angel told her to do so (this new celestial messenger appeared to her again after Cleophas died).

The author of the legend underlines several times the true reasons for Anne's actions: she wanted to subject herself more to God's will than to the Law (which is a human creation). Because her marriages had a divine purpose, she acquired a special status among women. Not all of the three codices speak about Anne's subsequent matrimonies, but all describe in the same manner the first one, that to Joachim: a good and fruitful wedlock that came about out of obedience to God. That was blessed with a miracle since, although Anne was known to be barren, the gift of motherhood was bestowed on her due to her exemplary life.

The author of the Teleki codex emphasized that the saint had so many fine qualities that she was apt to provide a good example to many children with respect to conducting their life, not to only a daughter—hence she was entrusted with more than one. According to this writer Anne was also able to instruct her children "to keep the divine honour by exercising penitence",[44] and "she taught her daughters from an early age the example of the old Tobias in order to [make them] fear God and pray with mercy".[45]

[42] Ibid., 291–293.

[43] Ibid., 293–297.

[44] "az isteni tisztességöt a penitenciatartásnak gyakorlásába megtartani"; *Teleki-kódex*, 295, 22–23.

[45] "annak okáért a szentségös vén Tóbiásnak példájával tanítá az ő leányit az ő gyengeségös korokba, állapotokba Istent mendenöknek fölötte félniök, ájtatossággal imádkozniok". *Teleki-kódex*, 295/23–26.

Also it is stated within the text that "she educated them to exemplarily conduct their lives".[46] The source underlines several times that the saint had an impeccable character, thus:

> she believed in God, she persevered in keeping the commandments, and prayed during the day and during the night. She spent her nights shedding tears … sometimes castigating her body, and she fasted. She often did works of charity for the poor […]. She bathed and took care of the people's diseases.[47]

Pamela Sheingorn calls Saint Anne "the wise mother" and emphasizes a particular aspect of her life, that of being an educator to the Mary who was the daughter of Joachim. The researcher states: "the devotional image of Anne teaching the Virgin Mary flourished in spite of a virtual, if not total absence of textual sources".[48] The legend in the Teleki codex refers to the fact of Mary being taught, even though it does so only in passing, and without revealing the means through which this process was carried out. Nevertheless, teaching can easily be associated with books. Sheingorn mentions that when a saint is depicted with a book usually that is shown closed, but when Anne and her daughter are represented with one, that is always open. In the earlier-mentioned document there are no textual references to a specific (or any kind of) book used by Anne. When one occurs within visual depictions of the saint next to her child, the literature in the field of hagiography and art history interprets its existence in various ways. Sometimes this is considered to be a copy of the Old Testament; such an interpretation is advanced because here is where the Messiah was promised to humankind—since Mary brought Jesus up, a hermeneutic along these lines makes sense. Other times the book itself is seen as the symbol of Christ, who is the Logos. Both these interpretative undertakings point out to the Incarnation.[49] Additionally, Byzantine sermons from as early as the

[46] "e szent Anne asszon, miképpen az ő leányit igéjével tanítá, ugyan ezönképpen jó példáival es, elől véve őket". *Teleki-kódex*, 295/32–33.

[47] "demaga bízék Istenbe, állhatatos vala, a parancsolatoknak megtartásiban, és imádságokba, éjjel, és nappal, gyakorlatossággal az éjeket könnyhullatásokkal költi vala el… némikoron testét öztöverítvén, böjtöl vala, némikoron az szegényöknek kegyes szolgálatokat teszön vala…korokkal, betegökkel, és poklosokkal bánik vala, és megförözti vala őket…". *Teleki-kódex*, 295/36–296/5.

[48] P. Sheingorn, "'The Wise Mother': The Image of Saint Anne Teaching the Virgin Mary", *Gesta*, 32/1, 71.

[49] Sheingorn, "The Wise Mother", 70.

eighth century described Mary as spiritually and intellectually gifted. Also, in England reading the psalms that allude to Mary's parents was a widespread practice at the time when the image of Anne teaching the Virgin Mary was quite popular.[50]

In addition to considering her a pious and learned mother, the Teleki codex describes Jesus's grandmother as effecting acts that any other female saint does: performing penances, praying during the night, fasting, and helping the poor and sick (especially lepers).[51] Sometimes, she, her descendants, and even her mother, Emerentia, are referred to in terms of "fruitful" people; the imagery of plants is employed in order to convey the fact that all these people left their mark on the history of salvation:

> this Saint Anne, as with her mother, has a fruitful root. Saint Emerentia brought into the world three daughters as grape wines … [The first] Mary had brought into this word a sweetly-perfumed flower, which became the pious redeemer of the human nation. The other two Marys burgeoned flowers, leaves, branches, and seeds, which release a sweet perfume in the world […] lo, it bears testimony that the good tree cannot bring evil fruit.[52]

The idea that the three Maries are grape vines is obviously a reference to the Eucharist, and that of Jesus having a large family is about the future apostles that worked towards the redemption of humanity.

[50] Ibid., 69.

[51] Some relevant works on the topic are as follows: Michael E. Goodich, *Vita perfecta: The Ideal of Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1982); Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, 31–48; Jo Ann McNamara, "The Need to Give: Suffering and Female Sanctity in the Middle Ages", in Renate Blumenfeld, Kosinski, and Timea Szell (eds.), *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1991, 199–221; Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, trans. by Éva Pálmai, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 195–209.

[52] "e szent Anne asszon az ő annyjától gyömölcsös termő gyökerétül, e szent Emerencia asszontul, három szőlő vesszőket…Máriákat hoza, teremte, szüle, e világra honnat egyiktül lőn, kiboltó, származó, édességös illatú virág, mely virág lőn, mend e teljes, elkárhozott emberi nemzetnek kegyes üdvözítteje, és a más két Máriáktul kedig, bimbók, virágok, levelek, ágak, és magok lőnek, melyek mend e teljes világot, kiboltó, származó, édes illatúvá teszik, mert lám a bizonság, tanubizonságot teszön, hogy az jó fa, gonosz gyömölcsöt nem tehet". *Teleki-kódex*, 296/7–16.

The Kazinczy Codex

The Kazinczy codex,[53] probably written for the use of the Clarisse sisters from Óbuda between 1526 and 1541, was copied most likely by Francis of Lippa.[54] This document consists in a shorter version of Anne's legend than that which exists within the Teleki text[55] and does not mention the saint's three marriages.[56] After a chapter dedicated to Emerentia, it narrates the sacred marriage of Anne and Joachim, and includes sermons and other texts about Mary, thus contextualizing Anne's life. The devotion to the Mother of God is encapsulated in three chapters entitled: "About the death of Mary", "The story of the Hungarian prince, who left his bride for the Virgin Mary", and "About the letters in Mary's name".[57] According to Ince Dám, the story of the Hungarian prince, who left his bride for the Virgin Mary is connected to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. However, this is not included in the codex, and this fact suggests that the Franciscan author may have considered it prudent to keep this controversial aspect out of it.[58]

The Érdy Codex

The Érdy codex (1526–1527), the most complete Hungarian collection of legends,[59] includes that of Saint Anne, but in much less detail than the other

[53] Zsuzsa Kovács (ed.), *Kazinczy-kódex 1526–1541. A nyelvemlék hasonmása és betűhű átirata bevezetéssel és jegyzetekkel/*The Kazinczy Codex 1526–1541. The facsimile and transcription of the monument with introduction and notes, Régi magyar kódexek 28, Budapest: Magyar Nyelvtudományi Társaság, 2003, 39–58.

[54] Zs. Kovács, "F. Fráter munkái: a Kazinczy-kódex és a Tihanyi-kódex", Magyar Nyelv (September 2002): 364–380.

[55] Katona, "A Teleki-kódex legendái", 1–30; Horváth, *A magyar irodalmi műveltség kezdetei*, 215; Veres, "Szent Anne alakja", http://sermones.elte.hu/?az=337tan_plaus_veresanna (accessed 30 April 2016).

[56] An interesting discussion on the three marriages of St. Anne (the *trinubium*) can be found in Ann Moss, *Renaissance Truth and the Latin Language Turn*, *Renaissance Truth and the Latin Language Turn*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

[57] Kazinczy-kódex, 1526–1541, 1–24, 25–27, 59–62; Horváth, *A magyar irodalmi műveltség kezdetei*, 210–211.

[58] Ince Dám, *A szeplőtelen fogantatás védelme Magyarországon a Hunyadiak és Jagellok korában/*The Defence of the Immaculate Conception in Hungary during the Time of the Hunyadis and Jagellonians, Rome: Ars Graf, 1955, 58–61.

[59] Horváth, *A magyar irodalmi műveltség kezdetei*, 243–257; Edit Madas, "Írás, könyv és könyvhasználat a középkori Magyarországon, 1000–1526/Writing, books and the use of books in medieval Hungary", in Edit Madas and István Monok (eds.), *A könyvkultúra Magyarországon, a kezdetektől 1730-ig/*Books from the Beginnings to 1730 in Hungary, Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 1997, 61.

two codices.[60] The document was written by an anonymous Carthusian monk[61] for the use of nuns and lay brothers in the monastery of Lövöld (today Városlőd in Hungary).[62] There is still a debate as to what source inspired the version of Anne's legend that appears in the Érdy codex.[63]

Some scholars consider that it relies on the above mentioned *Legenda Aurea* compiled by Jacobus de Voragine or on the collection of sermons in three volumes, *Pomerium sermonum* by the Hungarian Pelbartus de Themeswar.[64] Nevertheless, in his sermons Pelbartus freely used some fragments from Jacobus's manuscript.[65]

[60] Katona, *A Teleki-kódex legendái*, 1–30; Veres, "Szent Anne alakja", http://sermones.elte.hu/?az=337tan_plaus_veresanna (accessed 30 April 2016).

[61] There are several opinions as to whether the Codex was written by a single or two separate scribes. However, the lack of relevant differences suggests that the Érdy Codex was written by only one scribe. See Dóra Bakonyi and Brigitta Ludányi, "Az Érdy-kódex feltételezett két kezének és a Jordánszky-kódexnek összehasonlító vizsgálata a sorvégi elválasztás alapján"/Comparative Analyses of the Érdy Codex's Supposed Two Handwritings and the Jordánszky Codex's Handwriting Based on Breaks at the End of Lines, Plaustrum seculi, 2 (2004): http://sermones.elte.hu/?az=320tan_plaus_dorabrigi (accessed 30 April 2009).

[62] The Latin prologue of the codex written by the Carthusian monk is the first ars poetica to be formulated in Hungarian literature. The author specifies his aims here, such as he wishes to shield his lay brothers and nuns from different orders, who lack Latin knowledge, with native language readings against the Lutheran heresy. Érdy-kódex/Érdy Codex, György Volf (ed.), Nyelvemléktár 4, Budapest: MTA, 1876, pp. XXIII–XXIV; Edit Madas (ed.), *A Néma Barát megszólal. Válogatás a Karthauzi Névtelen beszédeiből*/The Mute Monk Speaks Up. An Anthology of the Carthusian Anonym's Speeches, Budapest: Magvető, 1985, 11–12.

[63] Érdy-kódex/Érdy Codex, in György Volf (ed.), Nyelvemléktár 5, Budapest: MTA, 1876, 144–150. The critical edition of the codex (Nyelvemléktár) features the original page numbers of the codex on the margin of the text. I used the edition's page numbers and row numbers.

[64] Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, Fabbri editori, 2003, vol. 2, 900–917; Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Pomerium de sanctis II* [pars aestivalis], Augsburg: Johann Otmar, 1502, sermons 36, 37, 38. I used the copy that is in the library of Lucian Blaga University in Cluj-Napoca, BMV 41. For the literary sources used by the scribe, see: Horváth, A magyar műveltség kezdetei, p. 248; Imre Bán, A Karthauzi Névtelen műveltsége/The Carthusian Anonym's Erudition, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976; Madas, *A Néma Barát megszólal*, 553–554.

[65] Edit Madas, "La Légende dorée. Historica Lombardica en Hongrie", in Sante Graciotti and Cesare Vasoli (eds.), *Spiritualità e lettere nella cultura italiana e ungherese del basso medioevo*, Florence: Olschki, 1945, 53–61; Ildikó Bárczi, *Ars compilandi: A késő középkori prédikációs segédkönyv forráshasználata*/Ars compilandi: The Use of Sources in Late Medieval Sermons, Budapest: Universitas, 2007, 39–40. See also my 'Anyaság és szentség: Szent Anne és Szent Erzsébet Temesvári Pelbárt prédikációiban'/Motherhood and Sanctity: Saint Anne and Saint Elizabeth in the Sermons of Pelbartus de Themeswar, in Csilla Gábor, Tamás Knecht, and Gabriella-Nóra Tar (eds.), *Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet: Magyar-német kultúrkapc-*

Although the tale of Anne's *trinubium* is treated both in the *Legenda Aurea* and in the *Pomerium*, the Carthusian Anonym left out this story when presenting the life of the saint. He refers instead to Anne's "sacred fruits"—the three Marys and their children (together the daughters of the saint would have had eight future apostles). The author finishes his discussion with the remark: "If Lady Saint Anne would like to boast of her offspring, than she could truly do so and without committing a sin".[66] But how can one explain that although the Carthusian monk neglected the matter of Anne's triple marriage he takes into consideration her offspring? On examining the content of the document, something becomes obvious: the author is a defender of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. This is noticeable from the fact that, on one hand he dedicated two sermons to this doctrine and explained why it is important to have a feast dedicated to it, and on the other hand from his complaint that the decision of the council of Basel concerning this belief have been ignored.[67] In addition, in his presentation of Anne's legend, the Carthusian emphasizes several times that the marriage of Anne and Joachim was sacred.

His support for the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception makes even clearer why he did not want to include in the Érdy codex the story about Anne's three marriages: a past like hers would have indirectly raised questions about Mary's flawless nature. Nevertheless, because this author addressed a large public who probably already knew about Anne's large family, he enumerated the descendants of the saint without providing any explanation.

solatok Kelet-Közép-Európában/Saint Elizabeth of Hungary: Hungarian–German Cultural Relations in East-Central Europe, Cluj-Napoca: Verbum, 2009, 32–47. Only the sermons of two Franciscan Observants have remained from late medieval Hungary: that of Pelbartus de Themeswar and Osvaldus de Lasko. Both preachers used the *Legenda Aure*a as source for their writings on Saint Anne. See my "Had She Born Ten Daughters, She Would Have Named Them All Mary because of the Kindness of the First Mary". St. Anne in the Sermons of Two Late Medieval Hungarian Preachers, in Ottó Gecser (ed.), *Klaniczay Gábor Festschift*, Budapest, CEU Press, 2011, 273–283; "Szent Anne legendája Temesvári Pelbárt és Laskai Osvát sermóiban"/The legend of Saint Anne in the sermons of Pelbartus de Themeswar and Oswaldus de Lasko Aetas 29/1 (2014): 141–152.

[66] "Ha azért dicseködni akar Szent Anne asszon ő nemzetségéből igazán teheti és bűnnélkül", Érdy codex, 148, 35–36.

[67] Wenceslaus Sebastian, "The Controversy over the Immaculate Conception from after Scotus to the End of the Eighteenth Century", in O'Connor (ed.), *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception*, 228–238; Cornelius A. Bouman, "The Immaculate Conception in the Liturgy", in O'Connor (ed.), *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception*, 148–151.

Stories About Miracles and Anne's Trinubium in the Three Hungarian Codices

An analysis of Saint Anne's *vita* within the textual context of the three codices and a consideration of the scribe's affiliation to a specific order can reveal ideological aspects related to the cult of this saint. Moreover, the abundant information concerning various miracles within the legends themselves can tell for whom the *Lives of Anne* were written. Ton Brandenbarg's survey with respect to the cult of this saint in Northern Europe indicates that she was considered the patron of married couples and of motherhood. In his view, most of the miracles of which existence was told in writing by pastors and theologians, refer to urban society and to daily life.[68] However, Ashley and Sheingorn argue that Anne "could model middle-class values" and that she "was equally available to the aristocracy for their dynastic agendas".[69]

The **Érdy codex** does not contain narrations about miracles. With regard to those in the **Teleki** and **Kazinczy** texts, despite the fact that they were written in a specific ecclesiastic environment, they mention miraculous happenings that refer to people belonging to various social strata. The Teleki manuscript speaks about widows, virgins/nuns, hermits, clerks, a bishop, and a saint. One miracle in the well-known story of Procopius (related in Chap. 9), is about fertility and motherhood.[70] The Kazinczy

[68] Ton Brandenbarg, Heilig familieleven: verspreiding en waardering van de historie van Sint-Anne in de stedelijke cultuur in de Nederlanden en het Rijnland aan het begin van de moderne tijd (15de/16de eeuw)/The life of the Holy Family: the appreciation and dissemination of St. Anne story in the urban culture in the low countries and the Rhineland at the beginning of the modern age (15th/16th century), doctoral dissertation, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1990; Nijmegen: Sun, 1990, 54 [99–165]. See also T. Brandenbarg et al., Heilige Anne, grote moeder: de cultus van de Heilige Anne en haar familie in de Nederlanden en aangrenzende streken/Saint Anne, a great mother: the cult of Saint Anne and her family in the Netherlands and adjacent area, Nijmegen: Sun, Uden, Museum voor Religieuze Kunst, 1992. For the interpretation of miracles see Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event 1000–1215*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987, rev. ed.; Michael E. Goodich, *Miracles and Wonders: The Development of the Concept of Miracle, 1150–1350*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007; Gábor Klaniczay, "The Construction of the Miracles of Saints in the Age of Medieval Canonization", in Gábor Klaniczay (ed.), *Medieval Canonization Processes: Legal and Religious Aspects*, Collection de l'Ecole Francaise de Rome, Rome: Ecole Francaise de Rome, vol. 340, 2004, 1–34.

[69] Ashley and Sheingorn (eds.), "Introduction", 52.

[70] Petrus Dorlandus, „Alter juvenis Hungarus à Sancta Anne plurimis beneficiis affectus", *Acta Sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur* (hereafter: AASS) (68 vols, Antwerp and Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1643–1940), January, vol. 5, 264–265; *Teleki-kódex*, 301–306.

codex which targeted the same category of readers, takes over only the legend of the pauper and prodigal young man, in which the two texts are very similar.[71]

Further on I will refer to the miracle that took place with regard to Procopius according to the Teleki codex, which avers that the man was a scholar and the son of a Hungarian nobleman.[72] A rich *castellanus* tried to convince Procopius to marry his older daughter and managed to do so because the girl was beautiful. But she died, and the *castellanus* offers to Procopius another daughter in marriage, the younger one, but she also died. The young man, exasperated, became a hermit and received consolation from his devotion to Saint Anne. He had a vision consisting in a tree showing the descendants of the saint. Anne's genealogy is named in legends and hymns *Arbor Anne fructuosa* (or it is simply referred to as *Arbor Annae*).[73] The tree is not only about fertility, but also about protection from any kind of hardship. In the case of Procopius, the story says that "[he] had a dream about a tree, which was meant to protect from the rain, breeze, cold, and warm, and to satisfy the one who is hungry with its sweet fruit. He concluded that this tree represents the genealogy of the blessed Anne".[74] It was an apple tree, and probably not by chance. The vision of such a tree suggests that solely by accepting Christ—and his large family—can someone be saved. Furthermore, Anne not only protected Procopius during one of his journeys, but also helped him to find wealth. Because of that, the grateful protagonist of the story asks the king of the realm to make coins with the images of Anne, Mary, and Christ, and to promote the cult of Jesus's grandmother.

The other part of the miracle refers to a birth. The queen of the country that Procopius reached, being alone in a forest just before her labour commenced, asked for the help of the three holy figures just mentioned to have an easy delivery and a healthy child.

[71] Teleki-kódex, 306–313; Kazinczy-kódex, 53–58.

[72] *Teleki-kódex*, 301–306.

[73] Brandenbarg, "Saint Anne", 41.

[74] "néminemű fáról almát láta, mely őtet megoltalmazandó volna, az esőtül, széltül, hidegtül, és heségtül, és az éhözőt, megelégítenéje az ő kedves gyömölcsével, bizonába mely fa miképpen következik, e boldog szent Anne asszont példázza vala", *Teleki-kódex*, 302/27–31.

> She, needing encouragement, in pain and fearful as any woman in her condition, began thinking about the help Saint Anne received through God's will. She looked at the coin around her neck, and humbly kissing it and with great desire said: "Ooh, holy mother Anne, help me now!"…[75]

It seems likely that the impression on the coin represented *Anne Selbdritt*. The queen received it from her husband at the time when the royal couple, who wanted children, pleaded with Anne for such a purpose; he thought an image of the saint and her family would reinforce the spirit of the heavy pregnant woman. He declared:

> the first coin [I] will give to the queen, my wife, to tie it around her neck because she loves Saint Anne. By looking at the picture she will be released from all the pain of childbirth.[76]

Most of the miracles in the Teleki text refer in different manners to the *trinubium*, the controversial aspect of Anne's *vita*. The narration within its eighth chapter[77] links the idea of the saint's three marriages with the story of a nun who had a vision of Virgin Mary's mother. That consisted of a conversation with Anne about her matrimonies; after listening to the justification provided, the nun became a propagator of the cult of this saint, thus ensuring the salvation of her own soul. Anne's marriages were subject to debates in the Middle Ages to such a great extent because at that time holiness was strongly linked with the idea of virginity.[78] Therefore, a narration involving a nun supporting reverence towards this saint would have convinced her fellow sisters that Anne's *trinubium* was divinely ordered and had a sacred purpose.

[75] "asszonyállatoknak jelen voltoknak, vigasztalásoknak, keserűségőkbe és veszödelmekbe helhöztetvén, Istennek akaratjából, kezde gondolkodni a bodog szent Anne asszonnak segédségéről, és meglátván a pénzt az ő nyakában, a szent Anne asszonnak képével, nagy óhajtással és alázatos csókolással mondá: ó szentségős anya Anne asszon, mastan énnéköm légy segédség harmad magaddal", *Teleki-kódex*, 304/2–8.

[76] "az első pénzt, szent Anne asszonnak szeretetiért, a királyné asszonnak adom, az én házas társomnak, hogy nyakára kösse, hogy avagy csak az ő képének tekentetiből, megszabadulhasson a szülésnek menden keserűségétűl", *Teleki-kódex*, 303/30–33.

[77] *Teleki-kódex*, 298–300.

[78] Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage. Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, second edition, 16–51.

The Teleki codex also contains (in Chap. 12) an account with respect to the vision Birgitta of Sweden (1303–1373) had of the saint.[79] The text does not introduce the background of the tale, but emphasizes what Anne says to Birgitta. Jesus's grandmother appeared to this pious woman during a prayer recited by her while she was engaged in a pilgrimage to Rome (no precise location is offered). The narration of the encounter between the two saints in the Teleki codex and in Birgitta's *vita* as recorded in the *Liber Celestis/Revelationes coelestes* are similar:

> I ame Anne, ladi of all weddid folke that were byfor the lawe. Doghtir, wir-shepe God of this manere: "Blissed be thou, Jesu Criste, the son of God that chesid the one modir of the weddinge of Joachim and Anne. And therefor, for the praiers of Anne, haue merci of all thame that are in wedeloke or thinkes to be weddid, that thai mai bringe furth froite to the wirshipe of Gode". Kepe wele the relikes that thou hase of me.[80]

As one can see, Saint Anne is referred to by Birgitta (a widow and a mother of eight children) as the patroness of married people. During her own conjugal life, before her husband, Ulf Gudmarrson died, she persuaded him to avoid sexual life except when trying to have a child and, when so, to do it without lust. They prayed together and asked God to help them with this. Their children were to be dedicated to a spiritual life. The narrative is indicative of the mentality of the author and of that of the people contemporary to him; they taught that married life and virginity are incompatible.[81] The *Revelationes coelestes* also explained that after Ulf's death, Birgitta removed her keepsake ring [chastity belt] and renounced earthly love forever[82]; soon after that (around 1344) she had a spiritual experience which led her to the decision to found a new religious order.[83]

[79] *Teleki-kódex*, 316–317.

[80] Birgitta of Sweden, *The Liber Celestis of St. Bridget of Sweden*, in Roger Ellis (ed.), *Early English Text Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, vol. 1, 467. For other publication concerning the life of Birgitta of Sweden see Günther Schiwy, *Birgitta von Schweden: Mystikerin und Visionärin des späten Mittelalters, eine Biographie*, München: C.H. Beck, 2003. *Revelationes coelestes* was translated into Latin by Matthias, canon of Linköping and by Birgitta's confessor, Peter, prior of Alvastra.

[81] *The Liber Celestis*, 1–6; Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, 224–245.

[82] Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, 226.

[83] *The Liber Celestis*, 1–6.

As noticed, the lack of carnal desire and their divine purpose are frequent themes when Anne's three marriages are touched upon.[84] The awareness about these attributes made Birgitta to consider Anne the "ladi of all weddid folke that were byfor the lawe". Certainly, Mary's mother was the model she wanted to follow in her struggle for sanctity and for conducting a devout life. In turn, Birgitta's existence served as an inspiration for other virtuous married ladies, for instance, for the early fifteenth century English laywoman, Margery Kempe (1373–1438).[85]

The fact that St. Anne is instrumental in the salvation of the souls and that people have the possibility to choose in matters concerning redemption, is underlined in the codex under discussion here by another story about a nun. In this one Anne, holding a miniature of Paradise in her hand, appears to the sister in a dream she had in consequence of her devotion[86]; the tale is reminiscent of Collette de Corbie's vision about Anne and her large family.[87]

Further narrations of miracles in Teleki codex present the same motifs existent in earlier chapters. Anne with Christ and Mary appears at the deathbed of various ecclesiastical persons to mediate for the safe passage of their souls; those are a hermit, a clerk (Chap. 13),[88] and a nun (Chap. 16).[89] In the last case all members of the earthly family of Christ appear to the faithful nun and to her doubting sisters. While the nun in this account, Margaret, prays to Anne in the final moments of her life, she also tries to strengthen her sisters and teaches them to accept Anne as a saint, and to pray with her thus: "in this hour of death call the son of God, his holy parents, and the mother [of] our friend, Saint Anne, with the purpose of obtaining her protection and that of her Threesome".[90]

[84] *Teleki-kódex*, 289–298.

[85] *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. by B. A. Windeatt, London: Penguin Books, 1985, 17; Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, 207.

[86] *Teleki-kódex*, 316.

[87] Peter of Vaux, "Vita sanctae Colettae", *AASS* March, vol. 1, 68. For Colette's life see Elisabeth Lopez, *Culture et sainteté: Colette de Corbie*, 1381–1447, Saint Étienne: Publication de l'Université de Saint Etienne, 1994. For an interpretation of Colette's miracle connected to Saint Anne see Kathleen Ashley, "Image and Ideology: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Drama and Narrative", in Ashley and Sheingorn (eds.), *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, 111–131, especially 119, 127; Ashley and Sheingorn, "Introduction", *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, 35.

[88] *Teleki-kódex*, 317–319.

[89] Ibid., 323–325.

[90] "híjad Istennek fiát, az ő szentségös szüleit, és annak anyját, a mü barátonkat, szent Anne asszont, hogy ő münket e halálnak órájába, harmad magával megoltalmazzon", *Teleki-kódex*,

Another brief story included in the sixteenth chapter of the book is about a sick man who is healed by Saint Anne. The reason behind this exposition, that is, behind the necessity to be devoted to this holy woman, is explained as consisting in the fact that she helps in the process of redemption: "we all honour the blessed Saint Anne so that she could bring mercy to this world".[91] More miracles that illustrate the characteristics of the saint as known from legends refer to Anne's intervention in saving lives when a shipwreck took place, in bringing wealth (Chap. 14),[92] and in holding back epidemics (Chap. 15).[93] Chapter 17, the last, is about the relic of Anne's finger. This was acquired by the Dominicans from Cologne.[94] The text once again lists the attributes of the saint and more types of sickness people can get rid of by touching this little old bone; it is particularly efficacious in healing toothache.

The examples presented by the Teleki codex are supposed to demonstrate the impact the accounts referring to saints had on the lives of the medieval people. They sometimes attributed to holy persons their own feelings. For instance, in Chap. 17 there is one instance that is supposed to illustrate what can happen to those who do not revere Anne.[95] A nun who was devoted to the saint for 60 years, ceased to pray and venerate her; because of that she gave in to carnal desire. She did not ask for the help of the saint, consequently she was not forgiven by Anne. A negative consequence occurred in the case of a bishop who questioned Anne's position among the other saints of the Church (Chap. 11).[96]

Even though the two protagonists of the stories mentioned above lived in ecclesiastic environments, they belonged to different categories. The bishop represented the power and the duty of the Church to propagate the cult of the saint. The nun exemplified the group whose status rests on virginity, one of the virtues of which practice is supposed to be in contradiction to what a first impression can suggest about a *trinubium*.

As observed, the writers of the Teleki codex were a Franciscan friar and some members of the Third Order. Probably this is the explanation for

324/38–325/3.

[91] "azért mendnyájan tiszteljük a bódogságos szent Anne asszont, hogy ő münekönk e földön malaztot nyerjön", *Teleki-kódex*, 325/24–26.

[92] *Teleki-kódex*, 319–321.

[93] *Teleki-kódex*, 321–322.

[94] *Teleki-kódex*, 325–328.

[95] *Teleki-kódex*, 325–328.

[96] *Teleki-kódex*, 314–315.

the fact that only one story connected to childbirth is related within the document while, by contrast, in other European environments Anne is linked to birth and performs miracles concerned with fertility as a norm; she was considered (as she is still today) the patroness of mothers and pregnant women. The other pieces in this codex accentuate the many ways in which the power of the saint manifest itself, and that makes her to have a strong position among the saints. That is noticeable in a variety of manners, especially in the treatment that nuns receive from her and in the teaching Anne undertakes—particularly that concerning prayers dedicated to Jesus, Mary, and herself.

In conclusion, the emphasis on Anne's role in the salvation of the souls is the element all the stories within the Teleki codex and within other two documents analyzed here have in common.

Prayers, Devotion to Anne

Although the usual structure of a saint's *vita* consists in aspects referring to the origins of the holy figure, to the miracles he/she performs, and also to prayers dedicated to him/her, no supplication concerning Anne exists at the closure of the Teleki codex. However, additionally to the various prayers it contains, one addressed to Mary and Anne exists; it is written in the context in which a miracle referring to a hermit and a cleric mentioned in Chap. 13 is presented.[97] Though this miracle is not mentioned in Kazinczy text, the same prayer is taken over from the Teleki codex and introduced at the end of the saint's *vita* narrated by the former document. Thus the usual structure of a saint's life has been followed. The prayer is thus:

> Hail to thee Mary, full of mercy, the Lord is with you, …, blessed are you among women, … and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus Christ, and blessed is lady Saint Anne, your beloved mother, by whom your virgin body was conceived for us without sin. Amen.[98]

This in the Teleki codex is one of a hermit's prayers. It precisely translates the one in the *Legenda sanctissimae matronae Annae*, its Latin source. The latter containes stories about miracles in the same manner the Hungarian version of Anne's life does. The adulatory text addressed to Mary that we discuss here is one very well knowv:

[97] *Teleki-kódex*, 318/16–20.

[98] "Üdvözlégy Mária malaztal teljes, Úr vagyon teveled, …, áldott vagy te asszonállatok között, …, és áldott a te méhödnek gyömölcse, Jézus Krisztus, és áldott a szent Anne asszon, te szeretetös anyád, meltül münekönk jöve: a te szüzei testöd, szeplő nélkül. Ámen", *Teleki-kódex*, 318/16–20.

> Ave Maria gratia plena dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui Hiesus Christus. Et benedicta Anne mater tua charissima, de qua nobis venit caro tua virginea sine macula. Amen[99]

As noticeable, this prayer in the Kazinczy codex is not as elaborated as that in the *Teleki codex* and in its Latin source. It is augmented by an indulgence. It states that if someone reads this text three times in front of an image of Anne he/she will be made free from a myriad of mortal transgressions and from twenty-thousand forgivable sins as made known by Pope Alexander in 1526. As mentioned above, a similar prayer (that referring to a hermit) exists in the *Teleki codex*, but there no instructions are provided. The document contains the intimation that it is the Virgin who suggests that the hermit should pray to her parents as well.

In the Kazinczy codex a request is attached that refers to the scribe: he or she asks to have one Ave Maria said on their behalf[100] Though the legend and the stories about miracles within this document originates in the Teleki codex, in the case of the prayer analysed it seems more likely that the scribe was inspired from another source as well. There is another document even more recent, the Franciscan Lobkowicz codex (1514),[101] which contains only this analysed prayer and nothing more, no legend and miracles of Saint Anne are included in the codex.

The *Kazinczy codex* was copied in 1526, the same year in which the indulgence we have commented on was re-issued. The Teleki conterpart was composed between 1525 and 1541. The creation of Lobkowicz and Kazinczy codices in such a short period of time suggests that a text similar to the prayer included in them was in circulation at that time; that was probably a prayer containing an indulgence and possibly an *Anne Selbdritt* image. Very likely that a such an image with prayer and indulgence

[99] *Legenda sanctissimae matronae Annae*, http://tudigit.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/show/inc-ii-236/0039 (accessed 25 January 2018).

[100] "Idvözlégy Mária malaztal teljes Úr vagyon teveled, az te malaztod legyön énvelem Te vagy áldott asszonoknak közötte és áldott az te anyád szent Anne asszon kitul fogantaték az te szent és istenös testöd kitul szileteték én uram Jézus Krisztus Ámen. Ez imádságot valaki háromszor szent Annának képe előtt meg olvassa tiz ezör halálos bineinek es húsz ezör bocsánandó bineinek kénját oltja meg vele Alexander pápa engette 6 finis. 1526. egy Ave Máriát kér aki irta", *Kazinczy-kódex* (1526–1541), 58/15–26.

[101] Andrea Kacskovics-Reményi (ed.), *Lobkowicz-kódex, 1514. A nyelvemlék hasonmása és betűhű átirata bevezetéssel és jegyzetekke/*The Lobkowicz Codex, 1514, the facsimile and transcription with Introduction and notes, in *Régi magyar kódexek* 22, Budapest: Argumentum Kiadó, 1999, 555/11–24, 251–253.

constituted the source for the prayer in these two codices, or at least in the case of the Lobkowicz codex, from which might be that the Kazinczy codex's scribe inspired in this respect.

Such a hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that a similar text accompanied by an image of Anne was in circulation within the German territories. The feast of Saint Anne was introduced in the Roman calendar by Pope Sixtus IV in 1481. Indulgences appeared following this date. That given by Pope Alexander in 1494 is connected to a prayer against the plague.[102] Who were eligible for this indulgence? The answer can be found in the explanation referring to a particular prayer that is supposed to be said in front of Anne's image. The translation of the text (from Old German) that goes with the prayer and with the indulgence is:

> A devout prayer to the Holy Lady Saint Anne, mother of our beloved mother, against plague:
>
> "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Your mercy be with me. Blessed art thou amongst all women. And blessed be your holy mother Anne from whom Mary was born without sin and without impureness, your holy and merciful body from which Jesus Christ was born. Amen."
>
> The current pope, Alexander, has given to all men who believe in Christ and say three times this prayer in front of the picture of Saint Anne, ten thousand years of indulgence of deadly sins and twenty thousand years of minor sins. This has been issued on the last day of Easter by the Holy See. It was pinned up by his own hands on the doors of all churches in Rome and thus His Holiness's approval was made even more evident. In the year after the birth of Our beloved Lord, Christ, 1494.[103]

The last part of the entreaty draws attention to Anne, who is blessed among the people because she was chosen to fulfil a special task. She is addressed thus: "blessed be your holy mother Anne from whom Mary is born without sin and without impureness, and also your holy and merciful body from which Jesus Christ was born". Mary's holiness is unquestionable in the text. It does not make references to a moment of impurity, hence it does not express a position on either side of the controversy that was taking place in that historical period (if Mary's nature was immaculate).

[102] "Pestblätter des XV Jahrhunderts", in Paul Heitz (ed)., *Einblattdrucke des fünfzehnten Ja*hrhunderts (Strassburg, 1901), 16, fig. 36.

[103] The translation from Old German into Hungarian is done by Gábor Bradács; that from Hungarian into English is mine.

The image that circulated with the prayer in German represented what is called "the Trinity of Anne". It was a woodcut that displayed the Virgin (shown as a child) sitting on Anne's left leg and the infant Christ sitting on the right side of her lap. As Virginia Nixon points out, the reverence expressed by the pope towards this image seems to have been communicated to all visual representations that contain the same elements.[104] The reproduction of the woodcut image was published in 1494 in Augsburg by a printer known under the name Casper. Concerning the prayer, in all these cases it is addressed to Mary, Jesus, and Anne; it consists in the first three lines of the *Ave Maria*. In the context of our discussion one should remember that in Catholicism the recitation of a number of Hail Marys has often been regarded as a penitential exercise. This is one of the oldest forms of salutation[105]—a repeated greetings—most often found in medieval religious books, as for instance, in the Peer codex.[106]

With respect to the types of representation of Anne that were used by people in their prayers, it is to be noticed that within the Hungarian medieval churches most of these are about *Anne Selbdritt* or about the Holy Kinship; only very few depict Anne alone. The prayers in the Teleki and Kazinczy codices confirm that in the Middle Ages the supplications considered to be addressed to Anne were in fact always directed to Christ, his mother and his grandmother (together).[107]

[104] Nixon, *Mary's mother*, 87–88.

[105] Athanáz L. Orosz and Isvtán Verbényi, "Üdvözlégy Mária"/Hail Mary, in István Verbényi (ed.), *Liturgikus Lexikon/Liturgical Lexicon*, second edition, Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 2001, 214.

[106] Andrea Kacskovics-Reményi and Beatrix Oszkó, *Peer-kódex. A nyelvemlék hasonmása és betűhű átírata bevezetéssel és jegyzetekkel*[The Peer Codex. The Facsimile and Transcription of the Monument with Introduction and Notes]/Régi magyar kódexek 25, Budapest: Argumentum Kiadó, 2000, 605/7–14.

[107] Anne Ridovics, *Isten mindenhatóságának tárháza: Szent Anne barokk kori tisztelete és ábrázolásainak ikonográfiája egy korabeli imádságoskönyv tükrében/*The house of the Lord: Baroque devotion and iconography of Saint Anne's cult, PhD thesis, Budapest, Eötvös Lóránd University, 2000, esp. 1–26; A. Ridovics, "The changing aspects of the female roles through the cult of Saint Anne in the visual art from the historical territory of Hungary (14–16th c.)", in Attila Kiss and György E. Szőnyi (eds.), *The Iconology of Gender I. Eastern and Western Traditions of European Iconography* 3, Papers in English and American Studies XV, Szeged: JATE Press, 2008, 49–62; Emőke Nagy, "Reprezentările Sfintelor Neamuri", 127–139; E. Nagy, "Urban Patronage of Saint Anne Altars in Late Medieval Hungary", 145–173.

To conclude, the Teleki, Kazinczy, and Érdy codices, which were written in an ecclesiastic environment, considered that the interceding role Anne has in salvation is her main attribute. Generally speaking they avoid aspects of Anne's devotion that could have triggered disputes. There is an emphasis on the impeccable character of the saint and on the good marriage with her first husband, Joachim.

CHAPTER 4

An Alternative Suggestion Regarding the Origins of the Image 'The Education of the Virgin'

Virginia Nixon

Abstract The purpose of the chapter is to suggest a solution to the problem of the missing textual source for the image known as the "Education of the Virgin": the depiction of St. Anne and the child Mary with an open book. It intimates that while such a representation often uses a visual format that suggests that the girl receives tuition in reading, this is in fact intended to illustrate Mary's instruction concerning her future role as the mother of the Redeemer.

The piece follows the interaction of the educational and prophetic themes in texts referring to Anne and closes by calling attention to a previously unnoticed medieval work that might have had a bearing on the way people interpreted the scene "Education of the Virgin."

Keywords Anne • Joachim • Mary • Christ • Education • Virgin

V. Nixon (✉)
College of Liberal Arts, Concordia University, Montreal, QC, Canada

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1 Introduction

The English art historian Anna Jameson, in her book on Marian art, *Legends of the Madonna*, written in 1852, commented on the puzzling absence of a textual source for the image of St. Anne teaching Mary to read:

> It is not said anywhere that St. Anna instructed her daughter. It has even been regarded as unorthodox to suppose that the Virgin, enriched from her birth, and before her birth, with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, required instruction from anyone. Nevertheless, the subject of the "Education of the Virgin" has been often represented in later times … Now, as the legend expressly relates that she was three years old when she became an inmate of the temple, such representations must be considered as incorrect.[1]

In 1993 the American art historian Pamela Sheingorn raised the same question in an article published in *Gesta*:

> The devotional image of St. Anne teaching the Virgin Mary flourishes in spite of a virtual, if not total absence of textual sources. In medieval iconography this is quite unusual for it is common practice to trace an image to authorized sources and to explain its details through references to exegesis and commentary.[2]

As Sheingorn pointed out, the texts that fourteenth-century English people were reading and the religious plays they were seeing say nothing about St. Anne teaching Mary. Indeed, the best known medieval accounts of Mary's life, the *Legenda Aurea*, and the other works derived from the apocryphal gospels, would appear to rule out such a scene for they tell us that Mary passed her childhood from the age of three (in some texts seven) to puberty away from her parents within the Temple in Jerusalem. Yet depictions of Anne and Mary looking at a book together became increasingly popular in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England. The miniature reproduced in an English Psalter made between 1325 and 1330 is typical of these early "Education of the Virgin" renderings.[3] It depicts

[1] Anna Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1852; reprint. New York: Frederick G. Kenyon, 1897), 196.

[2] Pamela Sheingorn, "The Wise Mother: The Image of St. Anne Teaching the Virgin Mary," *Gesta*, 32, 1 (1993), 71.

[3] London, British Library, Add. 24797, fol. 2 v. Lucy Freeman Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285–1385,* 2 vols., A Survey of the Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles (London:

Anne standing beside Mary represented as a girl about 10 years old. The mother is wrapped in her cloak. In most depictions of this scene, one or the other of the figures seems to point at a particular passage in the book.[4]

What was the reason for this new addition to Christian iconography? Sheingorn has suggested an answer. She argued that these representations of St. Anne and her daughter holding books and looking at them had their origins in the literary culture of middle- and upper-class women of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Sheingorn herself and also Wendy Scase—the latter in a separate article published in the same year in which Sheingorn published her "The Wise Mother" (1993)[5]—observed that early examples of the theme coincided with the blossoming of medieval English women's involvement in reading and commissioning literary works as well as in teaching their children. Both scholars were interested in how these images related to the real-life interaction of mothers and children (especially daughters) in the process of imparting literacy.

My opinion is that Sheingorn and Scase took the right decision to search for an answer in the *habitus* and culture of elite households. Indeed, subsequent investigation strongly reinforced their proposal. Recent studies have amplified our understanding of the richness, complexity, and sophistication of medieval English book and reading culture. To cite one important example: Kathryn A. Smith's work on the *Neville of Hornby Hours* (created between c. 1335 and 1340 for the Lancashire noblewoman Isobel de Byron) shows how these customized luxury prayer books were designed to involve owners and family members in complex interaction with the events described in the text and depicted in the illustrations: That Isabel de Byron might have intended to use her

1986) V, ed. J. J. G. Alexander (London, 1986) I, fig. 2. The earliest known example is that which exists in a section of the Alfonso Psalter dated to the fourteenth century (before 1316). Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285–1385*, V, II.

[4] London, British Library, Add. 24797, fol.2 v. Lucy Freeman Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285–1385*, London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1986; See also Jonathan G. Alexander (ed.), *A Survey of the Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, London: Miller, 1986, V, I, Fig. 2. The earliest known example is that in a section of the Alfonso Psalter dated before 1316. L. Freeman Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285–1385*, V, II.

[5] Wendy Scase, "St. Anne and the Education of the Virgin: Literary and Artistic Traditions and their Implications," in Nicholas Rogers (ed.), *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1991 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford Conn.: Paul Watkins, 1993), 81–96. See also Susan Groag Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture," in Judith M. Bennett, Elizabeth A. Clark et al. (eds.), *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976, reprint 1989, 134–161.

book of hours to instruct her young daughter is suggested by aspects of the manuscript's iconographic programme. While this mother marked particular prayers for several members of her family through the inclusion of their "portraits" either in the margins or in the miniatures or in the initials, the family member who appears most frequently in the book (after Isabel herself) is her daughter. In the initial illustrating the Gradual Psalms, Isabel appears to lead her daughter in prayer using a religious manuscript. Isabel had further included in her manuscript a miniature depicting "Saint Anne Teaching the Virgin" from an open book; this is the paradigmatic fourteenth-century English iconography of female "devotional literacy" and mother–daughter education.[6]

Smith suggests that the work was intentionally designed to involve and interest the children of the family as the miniatures "appear to have been tailored for a younger reader/viewer since they include an unusual cycle of apocryphal miracles of Jesus in his infancy—at the Sext of the Virgin, for instance, the boy Jesus transforms his Jewish playmates into pigs." Nicholas Orme points out that children would have been avid devourers of pictures in books of hours, typically the most lavishly illustrated pieces likely to be found in a medieval household.[7] Richard de Bury, in his 1344 work in praise of books, the *Philobiblon*, seems to confirm this when he cautions people—mothers, it appears—who try to calm small children by showing them pictures: "Nor let a crying child admire the pictures in the capital letters, lest he soil the parchment with wet fingers; for a child instantly touches whatever he sees."[8] Presumably, the calm child would be allowed

[6] Kathryn A. Smith, "The Neville of Hornby Hours and the Design of Literate Devotion," *Art Bulletin*, 81/1 (March 1999): 62–193, 77–78. See also K. Smith's *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and their Books of Hours*, London: The British Library, 2003.

[7] Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001. A psalter in the inventory prepared for the Florentine house of Marco Datini (1335–1410) implies that it was used by the young: "1 Children's *Psalter*, old and falling to pieces"; quoted in Iris Origo, *The Merchant of Prato*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1957 reprinted Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963, 277. Children's interest in reading is further in Origo when Datini's friend Ser Lapo asks for the return of his *Fioretti:* "If Monna Margherita keeps my book of San Francesco locked in her chest, I beseech her to send it back; the little boys would take delight in it on winter evenings, for it is, as you know, very easy reading [apertissima lettera]." The closing phrase suggests Ser Lapo might have been reading it with them, perhaps to improve their reading skills. Ibid., 278.

[8] Richard de Bury, *The Love of Books being the Philobiblon*, London: A. Morning, the *De* la More Press, 1903, 108.

this pleasure. A century earlier the Franciscan Bartholomaeus Anglicus, in his list of the foibles of the young, mentions their interest in pictures. Along with crying and weeping "more over the loss of an apple than over the loss of an inheritance" and preferring the company of their peers to that of old men, children, he says, "desire what is contrary and harmful, and appreciate pictures of children more than those of adults."[9] This is just as Kathryn Smith surmised!

Other scholars too have noted the performative functions of medieval book illustrations. Anne Rudloff Stanton argues that the *Queen Mary Psalter*, with its inclusion of episodes from the childhood of biblical heroes—the infant Moses in a fist fight with the son of Pharaoh—was another elite book created with a child reader in mind.[10] Kathryn Rudy's analysis of a fifteenth-century Flemish Abcedarium, a less personalized book intended for the daughter of a family of lesser means and status, shows how this kind of complex interaction among text, images, and users persisted and expanded in later books.[11] The publications of works by

[9] Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum publ as Medieval Lore from Bartholomew Anglicus*, edited by Robert Steele from an early English trans. by John of Trevisa (1326–1402), London: Chatto and Windus, 1924, 51–52, cited in Frances and Joseph Gies, *Marriage and the Family in the Middle Ages*, Gies: New York, Harper and Row, 1987, 196.

[10] Anne Rudloff Stanton, "*The Queen Mary Psalter: A Study of Affect and Audience*," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series, 91, 6, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001, 84–85.

[11] K. Rudy, "An Illustrated Mid-Fifteenth-Century Primer for a Flemish Girl: British Library, Harley MS 3828," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* LXIX (2006): 51–94. See also Miriam Gill, "Female piety and impiety: selected images of women in wall paintings in England after 1300," in Samantha J.E. Riches and Sarah Salih (eds.), *Gender and holiness: men, women and saints in late medieval Europe*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002, esp. 106–107. Nicholas Rogers notes "the high proportion of identifiable female owners [of imported Flemish books of hours]"; N. Rogers, "Patrons and Purchasers: Evidence for the Original Owners of Books of Hours Produced in the Low Countries for the English Market," in *Als Ich Can*: *Liber Amicorum in Memory of Professor Dr. Maurits Smeyers,* edited by Bert Cardon et al., Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts 11–12, Low Countries 8 (Leuven: Peeter 2002), 1165–1181. Of the patron portraits in nine manuscripts reproduced in Nigel Morgan's volume on English manuscripts produced between 1250 and 1280 none of the four men is shown with a book (though one stands beside a large scroll) whereas four of the five women patrons are depicted with books. See catalogue numbers 101, 104, 111, 126, 157, 159, 166, 176, 184 in Nigel Morgan, *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, vol. 4, part II. Early Gothic Manuscripts, 1250–1285, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. Claire Donovan observes that "Before the end of the thirteenth century, ordinary laywomen were portrayed in five more [besides the De Brailles Hours, i.e. six] of the eight surviving books of hours made in England;" Claire Donovan, *The De Brailles Hours:*

Smith, Stanton, Rudy, and others provide strong support for the idea that the theme of the "Education of the Virgin" in books of hours appeared at the request of women benefactors.

But the importance of patrons in the genesis of works of art should not obscure the fact that there were the artists who created the designs. And there is some concrete evidence that in devising an image to convey the idea of Mary's introduction to the prophecies, they may have employed the already established notion of a mother teaching her daughter. For an illumination within a late thirteenth-century English Psalter in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice—possibly commissioned by a woman of the Bohun family in 1270–1280, some three decades before the first extant depiction of the Education of the Virgin by Anne—represents an unknown mother and child in a similar pose.[12] Lucy Freeman Sandler comments on this resemblance: "[T]he owner and her daughter [are] in poses normally associated with St. Anne and the Virgin Mary."[13] She goes on to suggest that the illumination in the Marciana Library might represent these two holy persons; that despite the absence of haloes (these usually identify them as they indicate holiness). But this is clearly not the case. More important than the absence of haloes in the Venetian image is the absence of the book; the little girl portrayed there holds a ball instead.

In any case—and regardless of whether or not an image of the Marciana type served as a visual source for the "Education of the Virgin"—the problem of the missing textual source disappears if we shift our point of view slightly and think of the images rendering such a scene as only *secondarily* depictions of Mary's education, and *primarily* as representations of St. Anne introducing Mary to the prophecies concerning her future as the mother of Christ.[14] Rather than lacking a textual source, the "Education of the Virgin" would thus become part of a visual and textual discourse that was widespread in the fourteenth century: that about Mary's role in the history of salvation.

Shaping the Book of Hours in 13th Century Oxford, London: The British Library Publishing Division, and Toronto Medieval Texts & Translations, 1991, 132.

[12] Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, *Psalter MS lat.* 1. 77, f. 13 (2397); N. Morgan, *A Survey…*, II, 164–166, fig. 329.

[13] L. Freeman Sandler, "Notes for the Illuminator: The Case of the Omne bonum," *The Art Bulletin* 71, 4 (December 1989): 551–564.

[14] The possibility of influence from images of Grammatica cannot be completely discounted, though in my opinion the differences between the two argue against it. It is marginally more plausible in scenes of Mary's education in the Temple.

It is not that this point has gone unnoticed. A number of scholars have commented on the fact that the history of redemption is encapsulated in the image, and they have noted that the texts Mary reads are not infrequently excerpts from the prophecies. However, apart from Manuel Trens, who explicitly states in his book on Marian iconography in Spain, that these images depict Anne instructing her daughter *not in reading* but "in the divine mysteries, and, in particular, to those referring to her prodigious mission as Mother of God," scholarship on this subject have tended to either express or accept the idea that this was a secondary aspect, with Mary's tutelage in reading being the primary one.[15] I contend that it is the other way around: although the education motif (*the form*) would certainly have inflected the perception of the viewers concerning this image, it was the salvation prophecies (*the content*) that were primary. This shift in interpretive perspective re-situates the image: no longer free-floating and textless, but firmly rooted in the mainstream context of salvation history, which is treated in a multitude of texts and is visually represented in a wide variety of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century types of images.

The evidence in support of this opinion is abundant. To begin with, a *strong* textual correlate exists, for the theme of Christ's suffering and Mary's responses to it was widespread in the fourteenth century. No-one was writing about Mary's education; many were doing so with regard to her future joys and suffering. Ann Derbes and Sandro Sticca remarked on Mary's heightened role in Christ's Passion in fourteenth-century art, drama, and poetry.[16] Not infrequently this involved the linking of events from the "Infancy cycle" with those from that of the Crucifixion, a tendency that

[15] Trens cites as one example a Spanish Renaissance sculpture in which the text is "Ecce virgo concipiet, pariet filium, vocabitur nomen euis Emmanuel"; this is in a private collection, Los Arcos, Navarre. See Manuel Trens, *Maria: Iconografia de la Virgen en el Arte Espanol* (Madrid: Plus-Ultra, 1944–7), 135–136. Ayers Bagley, in a recent study of more than seventy medieval examples, argues that the image comprehends a greater range of meanings and allusions than literacy alone; A. Bagley, University of Minnesota, "St. Anne Teaching the Virgin 14th–15th centuries," http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://education.umn.edu/EdPA/iconics/image

[16] See among others Sandro Sticca, *The Latin Passion Play: Its Origins and Development* (Albany: SUNY, 1970); Sticca, *The Planctus Mariae in the Dramatic Tradition of the Middle Ages,* trans. Joseph R. Berrigan, Athens: Georgia, 1988; Ann Derbes, *Picturing the Passion in Medieval Italy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, esp. 64 ff; Nigel Morgan, "Texts and Images of Marian Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England," *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1991 Harlaxton Symposium* (1993), 34–57. K. A. Smith says of the *Neville of Hornby Hours:* "The primary subject of this work, the Passion of

reached its apogee in the fifteenth century, when almost all depictions of Christ's childhood incorporated references to his death; this process began approximatively one hundred years earlier. The connection was made in different ways within different media, and it shows wide regional variations. In England, a memorable fourteenth-century poem intimates about Crucifixion during a familiar scene from daily life; the Child Jesus asks his mother what will happen when he grows up:

> Sing, nov, moder…
> wat me sal befalle
> Here after wan I cum to eld-
> So don modres alle…

When Mary protests that she knows no more than what Gabriel has told her, Jesus says he will teach her:

> 'Moder' seide that suete thing,
> 'To singen I sal the lere
> Wat me fallet to suffring,
> & don wil I am here.
> ….
> Samfuly for I sal dey(z)e,
> Hangende on the rode,
> For mannis ransoun sal I pay(z)e
> Myn owen herte blode.[17]

It is possible that the interaction between Mary and Jesus (about his destiny) is reflected in a large and beautiful early fifteenth-century Burgundian *Enthroned Virgin and Child* work in the Metropolitan Museum made by the Burgundian sculptor Claus de Werve for a Poor Clare convent in Poligny. Jesus, seated on his mother's lap, looks up at her, his mouth open as though explaining the meaning of the words on the page of the large book he is looking at. Within the calm curves of Mary's encircling drapery, de Werve has set up a narrative sequence: the viewer's eye being first drawn to the fan of hands around the texts; from

Christ, gives evidence of the centrality of the Passion as a focus of lay devotion in the later Middle Ages"; Smith, "The Neville of Hornby Hours," 72.

[17] Patrick Diehl, *The Medieval Religious Lyric*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, 147.

there rising to Jesus's upturned face to that somewhat puzzled and down-turned gaze of Mary; and then down again to her large firm hand encircling her son. Jesus points to the words on the scroll by his side: "Ab. ini / tio. et / ante . / secula / creata . / sum +" ("From the beginning and before the world, was I created," *Ecclesiasticus* 24: 14).[18]

William Forsyth and Andre Acres have suggested that the text, which refers to Wisdom in Ecclesiastes 24, alludes to Mary as Wisdom.[19] The idea of the Virgin as Wisdom herself certainly existed "ab initio" in some fifteenth-century writings. For instance, the German scholastic Gabriel Biel (1420–1425/7) wrote of Mary's eternal predestination.[20] But this interpretation does not fit with what one sees when looking at the Metropolitan sculpture, for it is Jesus who points at the text as though explaining it to his somewhat perplexed mother. Mary here is surely shown as recipient rather than dispenser of wisdom—or information—and the words more likely apply to Christ and his mission. In fact, if we look at other depictions of mother, son, and text, for example the 1483 Virgin and Child attributed to Botticelli in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan, we see a confirmation that an active child sharing a text with his mother (the book on Mary's desk) can refer to the future life of Christ rather than to an eternal state of Mary, for this baby Jesus has a crown of thorns slung around his wrist.

Curiously perhaps, the same process that I have described with respect to the Education of the Virgin—the transformation of an image devised to refer to the prophecies into one that refers to education in literacy—may have taken place with reference to the depictions of Mary and Jesus engaging together with a book. Charles Parkhurst in his 1941 article on the subject identifies the texts in five medieval instances in which the words were decipherable as without exception statements made by the adult Christ and thus not likely to have been intended as depictions of instruction

[18] William D. Wixom, "Late Medieval Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum 1400–1530," in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, vol. 64, no. 4 (Spring 2007): 10–11. See also W. D. Wixom, "An Enthroned Madonna with the Writing Christ Child," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, vol. 57, no. 9 (December, 1970): 287–302.

[19] William H Forsyth, "A Fifteenth-Century Virgin and Child Attributed to Claux de Werve," *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, vol. 21 (1986): 50. The text was applied to Mary in hours of the Virgin and breviaries and missals at Lauds, Terce and Vespers. Ibid. Alfred Acres, "Rogier van der Weyden's Painted Texts," *Artibus et Historiae*, vol. 21, no. 41 (2000): 75–109, 80.

[20] Heiko Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theologian: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963, 307, 317–320.

in reading.[21] Yet when an engraving of Mary and Jesus made after a drawing by Guercino in which the child is clearly pointing at the writing on a piece of paper was published in London in 1783, verses from James Thompson's *The Seasons* that describe the teaching of the young were printed under the picture: "Delightful Task! to rear the tender Thought, To teach the young Idea how to shoot, To pour the fresh Instruction o'er the Mind."[22]

The places people chose to position images also provide clues about what their creators and viewers understood them as signifying. If the "Education of the Virgin" had been intended as a representation of a scene in the story of Mary's life, one would expect to find it in depictions of Marian cycles. But in fact it is rare to find it within these. Exceptions exist, such as the illustration inside a French book of hours in the Walters Art Gallery produced possibly in Troyes around 1470, where its placement between the "Meeting at the Golden Gate" and the "Presentation of the Virgin" implies that Mary was taught before going to the Temple.[23] But most artists painting the story concerning the life of the Virgin did not include her education as part of it. By the same token, it is illuminating to see where they did put it. Usually this occurs in one of the following arrangements: paired with an Annunciation; as part of a row or grouping of saints (sometimes Anne shares a page with Catherine, Margaret and Barbara) or in other contexts.

The fact that both the "Education" and "the Annunciation" depict Mary with prophetic books raises the possibility that the intended meaning of these works was also shared. An English altar frontal of c. 1335 in

[21] Charles P. Parkhurst Jr., "The Madonna of the Writing Christ Child," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 23, no. 4 (December 1941): 292–306; bibliography on p. 304.

[22] "Virgin teaching Jesus to read," Stipple engraving with etching after a drawing by Guercino in the Royal Collections, printed in 1785 by Francesco Bartolozzi, published by Antonio Cesare Poggi, London: British Museum.

[23] Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, MS W.249. See Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York: Braziller, 1988), 192–193. Other exceptions include an Italian embroidered altar frontal c. 1336 in the Pitti Palace in which the scene follows the birth of Mary in a sequence showing Mary's life. Christopher Norton, David Park, and Paul Binski, *Dominican Painting in East Anglia: The Thornton Parva Retable and the Musée de Cluny Frontal*, Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Press, 1987, reprinted 1990), fig. 63. In two cycles described by Sheingorn, an embroidered altar frontal of 1320–40 in the Victoria and Albert, and an English wall painting at Croughton, the "Education of the Virgin" episode appears after Mary's presentation in the temple. Sheingorn "The Wise Mother," 70. Overall, Wieck's catalogue includes eight books of hours with cycles of the life of the Virgin that do not include her education, with on the other hand seven examples of the education in the Suffrages of the Saints. Ibid.

the Musée de Cluny combines an "Education of the Virgin" at one end with a now lost "Annunciation" at the other. In the scene where Anne is present, she points to the text "audi filia et vide et inclina aurem tuam, quia concupuit rex speciem tuam" (Listen, daughter, and see, and incline your ear, for the king desires your beauty).[24] Christopher Norton, David Park, and Paul Binski observe that "The text thus prefigures the moment of the Annunciation which was depicted at the other end of the panel, when Mary, through her submission to the divine word, enabled God's redemptive plan to be brought to fulfilment."[25]

Sometimes, on the other hand, depictions of the "Education of the Virgin" in windows and in books of hours seem to be utilized as a means of identifying St. Anne, in other words, of distinguishing her from other female saints, as is the case with the fourteenth-century Alfonso Psalter in which Anne is shown along with three other women saints. This purpose also seems to lie behind the widespread use of the image in sections of books of hours devoted to St. Anne. Julia A. Finch observes that:

> As the feast day [St. Anne's] began to be included in the calendars of books of hours, the accompanying illustration was often that of Anne and the Virgin with an open book … Images of St. Anne instructing the Virgin also appear at the beginning of suffrages to Anne, where the Virgin acts as a kind of attribute of Anne's sainthood.[26]

In surviving stained glass windows, original titles, where extant, identify this representation simply as St. Anne, as in a c. 1425 English glass panel

[24] Eileen W. Tristram states: "…the subject of St. Anne teaching the Virgin may sometimes form part of a 'history,' but more frequently appears either singly or beside an Annunciation." He mentions Annunciation pairings in wall paintings at Croughton and Slapton in Northamptonshire, and at Headington near Oxford (now defaced). Eileen W. Tristram with Monica Bardswell, *English Wall Painting of the Fourteenth Century*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955, 23, 298.

[25] C. Norton, D. Park, and P. Binski, *Dominican Painting in East Anglia*, 50 ff. Norton et al. comment on the conjunction of the two subjects but they nonetheless assume that teaching Mary to read is primary: "Teaching, which was so important to the Dominican Order, is conspicuously present in the subject of St. Anne Teaching the Virgin to Read." They note that in Byzantine art this same text was sometimes used in Annunciation scenes, remarking that *The Painters Manual* of Dionysius of Fourna recommends this usage.

[26] Julia A. Finch, "Women and Books: Reading as Ritualized Performance in Medieval Visual Culture," in *Visualizing Rituals: Critical Analysis of Art and Ritual Practice*, Julia Kim Werts (ed.), Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2006, 49.

in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Despite the fact that this piece depicts a typical English "Education of the Virgin" with both figures standing, the title at the bottom says simply "Saint Ann."

The texts in the books Mary reads, where they can be deciphered, and the words inscribed on banners that float above the figures, contain further clues that support the observation that the emphasis is more often on Anne than on Mary. The popular Marian prayer "Obsecro te domina Sancta Maria" (I beseech thee, Holy Lady Mary, Mother of God) certainly appears with the image of the saint learning the alphabet in books of hours, as does "Domine, labia mea aperies (Lord, open my lips)." But some texts within the images, like that in the Cluny frontal, can be more reasonably read as prophesies referring to Mary's future. The greatest number, however, consist in prayers to Anne, some singling out her role as Mary's mother as is the case with a late fifteenth-century French book of hours where the miniature of Anne and the Virgin is accompanied by a text that begins: "De Sancte Anne … per quam nobis nata est virgo maria R Ora pro nobis beata Anna …" (Saint Anne…through whom was born unto us the Virgin Mary, pray for us, blessed Annea …).[27] And within one of the relatively rare works from Germany, a panel by Bernhard Strigel hosted by the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nurnberg, the banderol above Mary's parents speaks not of her and her education, but of *their* role in producing the mother of God: "Anna mit Joachim gebar Mariam godts mutter dar" (Anne with Joachim bore God's mother). That in spite of the fact that the Anne and Joachim are shown teaching Mary to read.[28]

Other kinds of writings—texts within other texts: owners' notations and instructions for scribes or artists—support the conclusions drawn above. The *Omne Bonum*, an encyclopaedia composed and written in c. 1360–1375 by James le Palmer, the scribe of a treasurer in the Exchequer of Edward III, remained unfinished at the death of its author.[29] After Le Palmer's passing in c. 1380, an artist completed the illustrations, painting twenty-three historiated initials in empty spaces in which instructions had been previously written. Once again we find that the emphasis is on Anne,

[27] Book of Hours, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek*, The Hague, B 74 G 22, fol. 202r, reproduced in Kathryn M. Rudy, *St. Anne in the National Library of the Netherlands*, The Hague: Koniklijke Bibliotheek, 2007, fig. 25.

[28] The "Anne and Joachim" panel of Strigel's "Mindelheimer Altar" is reproduced in Julius Baum, *Altschwäbische Kunst* (Augsburg:, 1923), 58.

[29] L. Freeman Sandler, "Notes for the Illuminator: The Case of the Omne bonum," in *The Art Bulletin*, 71, 4 (December, 1989): 551–564.

not Mary: neither the writer of the instructions nor the artist appears to have associated the visual combination of Anne, the child Mary, and a book, with Mary's education; for the miniature that depicts a typical standing "Education of the Virgin" with the addition of a second adult woman, accompanies a text which begins "Anna et Emeria [sic] fuerunt sorores (Anne and Esmeria were sisters)." The author of the instruction had written "Anna cum Maria & Esmeria" (Anne with Mary & Esmeria) on this page and evidently the artist, in order to distinguish Anne from her sister Esmeria, depicted her standing with the child Mary and a book [The note of the Editor: the name Esmeria seems to have been shared by both Anne's mother and sister].

Finally, visual analysis can help us think about the "Education of the Virgin." If one looks at these miniatures and stained-glass windows in ignorance of their customary title one might feel that while some do depict a woman teaching a little girl, many in fact do not. In the Cluny altar frontal, for example, an innocent viewer might well conclude that Anne is calling Mary's attention to the words in the text rather than teaching her to read them. It might also be noted that while most often the prophetic references in the "Education of the Virgin" are about the Annunciation rather than about the Passions (a fact that seems a reasonable accommodation to Mary's youth), Ayers Bagley calls attention to a fifteenth-century manuscript in the Morgan Library in which Anne points outside the porch where she sits with Mary "to a hill in the misty distance where three crosses are vaguely discernible."[30]

If then, the artists of the early fourteenth century did not envisage this image as *primarily* a depiction of Mary being taught to read, to what kind of education do these works refer? It seems likely that the viewers would have accepted both interpretative proposals concerning the representation of Anne with a book sitting or standing next to Mary. They certainly must have seen the instruction in reading in those examples that show little Mary holding a hornbook or scroll with the ABCs—the texts that were used to teach children how to read. An illustration in MS Douce 231 shows Anne sheltering Mary within her cloak in a gesture similar to that of the woman patron in the Marciana example; here Mary is holding a page with the letters of the alphabet on it.[31] It seems unlikely, to say the least,

[30] MS 198 in the Morgan Library, New York; see Bagley, "*Mother as Teacher:* St. Anne and Her Daughter," http://education.umn

[31] MS Douce 231 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, fol. 3; reproduced in Sheingorn, "The Wise Mother," 76.

that a viewer would have *not* seen an allusion to the teaching of literacy here. Yet at the same time one should keep in mind that multiple meanings have been attributed to books, as has happened often in the case of iconographic pieces; however, the viewers would have recognized a well-known Christological allusion: Christ's body as a primer (to be read by Christians).

K. Smith explains that "The identification of Christ with a parchment or with a book was a commonplace"[32] within the devotional and homiletic literature peculiar to the England of the Middle Ages. There are numerous examples of this trope in medieval writing, among them an early thirteenth-century sermon by the English Benedictine Odo of Cheriton. The homily contains an extended analogy between the body of Christ and the alphabet tablet of a child that compares a parchment with the flesh or skin of Christ stretched out on the Cross, the red ink to the blood, and the five vowels to the five wounds.[33] The *Neville of Hornby Hours* indeed refers to this tradition when it says: "and with a great nail they attached his feet to the Cross very firmly so that his body was stretched as tight upon the Cross as parchment on a frame."[34] Kathleen Kamerick, in her study of popular piety and art in Late Medieval England, emphasizes the existence of "texts that called the torn body of Christ the 'charter' on which the promise of heaven was written," and goes on to state that:

> Some Middle English poems name the whips as the "pens" that wrote this charter: "the pennes that the letter was with wryten / was of skourges bi that I was with smyten." The "letters" of the charter's words were Christ's wounds: "How many lettres thare-on bene / Rede & thou may wyten & sene / ffyue thowsand four hundreth fyfty & ten woundes on me bath blak & wen." *The Pore Caitiff* declared "ther weren vpon the blessed bodi of crist opun woundes bi noumbre fyue thousand foure hundrid seuenti & fyue / this is the noumbre of lettris with which oure chartre was writun."[35]

[32] Smith, *The Neville of Hornby Hours*, 203–205.

[33] The text of the sermon is in Helen Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 417. In the fourteenth century Richard Rolle used the same image in his *Meditations on the Passion*, cited in Smith, *The Neville of Hornby Hours*, 203–205.

[34] Smith, *The Neville of Hornby Hours*, n. 37.

[35] Kathleen Kamerick, *Popular Piety and Art in the Late Middle Ages: Image Worship and Idolatry in England 1350–1500*, New York: Palgrave, 2002, 167.

Thus the word *Domine* spelled out in Mary's book may be quite literal; as she learns to read, Mary encounters the body of her son. The literacy lesson is thus ingeniously linked with redemptive and Christological aspects.

We present further what we think is strong evidence that the reason for the representation of the "Education of the Virgin" in England was to call attention to the part St. Anne herself played in the history of salvation and to Mary's future role within it as the mother of the Redeemer. The use of the teaching mother as the visual trope chosen to do this likely arose, as Sheingorn and Scase have proposed, as an aspect of the literary culture of elite households, a culture in which women patrons, users, and teachers of children played very important roles. As for how people read and responded to these works of art, though we can assume habitual multifaceted and polysemic interactions with significant items, to date no medieval texts have come to light that can directly answer the question.

Where does one go in search of a response to this? We think clues to help in such an enterprise might be found in later developments with respect to the history of this image as it spread out from England to other parts of Europe; we shall follow these. In the fourteenth century its English version with the standing Anne and the child Mary looking or pointing at a book held by one or the other, appears to have spread to France, where by the late fifteenth century it become widely popular. As in the case of England, we have no direct evidence about how it was perceived there either, but the distribution of the locations where its renderings existed and are still to be found suggests that in that country the image was also intended primarily as a representation of Anne. In books of hours this appears with material referring to this saint. Sculptures and paintings are associated with confraternities, churches, and chapels dedicated to her. However, a connection with literacy does seem to exist in certain books of hours produced for royalty and the nobility, such as the primer commissioned by Anne of Brittany for her daughter, Princess Claude, c. 1510.[36] Depictions of the "Education of the Virgin" were less frequent—though not absent—in Italy, the Netherlands, and the German and German-influenced regions. Its relative rarity in the latter two areas is consistent with the fact that these regions had their own extremely popular way of representing St. Anne, the Anna Selbdritt, which depicts Anne with Mary and Jesus, as in Fig. 4.1.

[36] See E. L'Estrange, *Holy Motherhood*.

Fig. 4.1 Anna Selbdritt, © Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum, Aachen. (Photo: Anne Gold, Aachen)

Publications have come out about many *Anna Selbdritt* works that show the book held variously by Mary, Anne, or the child Jesus, but in none of these do the characters interact over it. For instance, in one Franconian example in the Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum, Anne looks downwards into a space of her own, one that exists in her soul. She holds Mary and Jesus, one on either arm, but she does not engage with her

daughter or with the book. Mary appears to have just closed it in order to accept the pear that Jesus is offering her.

A late medieval development that may help us in our search for intended meanings and for perceptions of the "Education of the Virgin" in the Middle Ages is the appearance in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries of paintings and sculptures depicting an alternative version of Mary's instruction, this time not at her mother's knee, but inside the Temple in a classroom with other maidens. While some of these pieces simply represent Mary with several young girls, a certain number include an adult man or woman teaching them. The fact that several of these pieces illustrate the teaching scene in combination with Mary's presentation to the Temple eliminates any doubt with respect to the edifice. This is the case with a wall painting from the 1520s in Västerlövsta Church, Uppland, Sweden, which shows Mary going up the steps of this building while three young women sitting together with two open books can be seen through the window.[37]

Where does this type of rendering come from? It too lacks a source in early Christian and medieval writings that typically describe Mary as being an avid reader of the Bible during her stay in the Temple, but not as having learned to read there. Her instruction in literacy was considered as having been carried on before Mary's dedication to this place of worship, through the action of the Holy Spirit. It may well be that the origins of the "Mary at school" theme lay in the expansion of the practice of pilgrimages to the Holy Land; gradually the travellers came to be told that, among the holy sites, the room where Anne's daughter learnt to read was to be found. (Since that was supposed to be within the Temple and that was destroyed in 70 AD, it would be impossible for it to be seen; however, that did not diminish the popularity of this story.) As early as 1384, the inflation of pilgrimage sites can be observed in Simone Sigoli's list of them that includes, along with "the school where Our Lady went to learn her letters," "the place where the apostles

[37] Additionally to this, one can mention a Swedish relief from the second half of the fifteenth century, now in the Lund University Historical Museum. It was originally part of an altarpiece in Lund Cathedral, and shows a male teacher with the crowned Mary surrounded by four other young girls, all but one holding books. Lena Liepe, "Maria I templet fran ett altarskap I Lunds domkyrka," in *Iconographisk Post: Nordic Review of Iconography* 4 (1992): 26–34. According to the same author, a similar subject, with four maidens depicted behind Mary, appears in a late fifteenth century embroidery in Uppsala Cathedral; Liepe, ibid., p. 32. Also a *Presentation of the Virgin* in the Czartoriski Museum in Krakow realized by the Westphalian painter Johann Koerbecke (1420–1491) shows the girls' schoolroom in the background at the top of the stairs.

slept when Christ adored the father […], the fountain where Our Lady the Virgin Mary washed the clothes of her son Christ […], the place where the water for washing the feet of the disciples [was warmed], [the place] where Zachariah climbed a sycamore tree, etc."[38] The knight Arnold von Harff from Rheinland, who wrote an account regarding a devotional trip to Jerusalem in the 1490s, adds his visit to Mary's school to his list of indulgences: "Item we went further through an arch not far from which stood the school in which our dear lady went in her childhood days. Indulgence of seven years and seven Quarantines [the equivalent of a forty-day fast]."[39] Felix Fabri, a loquacious Dominican from Ulm, who also visited the school, pauses to consider the implications the existence of such a building have. Upon seeing it, he expressed reservations concerning the authenticity of the story about this place:

> We viewed this house with admiration [but] a doubt arose in our minds as to whether the blessed Virgin Mary learned her letters from any man, and what Jew could have been her schoolmaster, since we read in the seventh chapter of the Book of Wisdom: "The creator of all things hath taught me wisdom." [140a] For the Lord of all things loved her, therefore she herself is "a teacher of His ways." (Wisdom 8)

But he overcame his qualms with the following justification:

> "Pause, my beloved brother, and do not by any means scorn this house, but believe it to have been the school of the blessed Virgin. Though she was worthy to be a teacher of men, yet for humility's sake she deigned to become a scholar, even as she underwent purification according to the law, not of necessity, but out of humility. Thus likewise the Lord Jesus, with His eternal wisdom, sat among the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions;

[38] Lionardo Frescobaldi, Giorgio Gucci, and Simone Sigoli, *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine and Syria in 1384*, trans. Theophilus Bellorini and Eugene Hoade, Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1948, 189–190. G. Gucci, also noted "the chapel where the Virgin went to school," ibid, p. 128.

[39] "Item voert gyngen wir durch desen boegen neit vern dae is die schole gestanden, dae inne vnse lieue vrauwe in yeren kintlichen dagen so scholen hat gegangen. dae is ablais seuen jair ind vij karenen." Eberhard von Groote (ed.), *Die Pilgerfahrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff von Cöln durch Italien, Syrien, Aegypten, Arabien, Aethiopien, Nubien, Palästina, die Türkei, Frankreich und Spanien, wie er sie in den Jahren 1496 bis 1499 vollendet, beschrieben und durch Zeichnungen erläutert hat* (Cologne, 1860), 77; reprinted in many editions by various publishers.

albeit, neither by listening to them nor by questioning them, could he add to his knowledge." So we went up to the wall of that house, and kissed it, and received indulgences (†), and said the appointed prayers.[40]

Note that neither writer refers to Mary being educated by Anne. Fabri understood Mary's teacher to be male: "what Jew could have been her schoolmaster?" he wondered. The same conviction was held by the sculptor of the relief on the altar in Lund Cathedral that dates to the second half of the fifteenth century and is now in the Historical Museum at Lund University. This depicts a male teacher instructing the crowned Mary and four other young girls.[41] Fabri, the well-read friar, certainly knew that Mary did not need to be educated, while Harff the knight may or may not have known that. But neither felt the need to put forward an opposing claim about who taught Anne's daughter. When did the school of our Lady join the ever-growing number of sites that the Holy Land pilgrimage industry was "discovering" and promoting? New sites claiming to be Mary's birthplace, but which date from the twelfth century, are reported and these likely preceded the "discovery" of the school of our Blessed Lady.[42]

Leaving the depictions of the temple school and returning to the image of the Education of the Virgin at the hands of Saint Anne, we notice that some scholars have asserted that by the seventeenth century this was familiar to educated circles in France.[43] But solid instances and textual evidence that it was perceived as representing Mary learning to read are, so far as we know,

[40] Felix Fabri, *The Wanderings of Felix Fabri*, trans. Aubrey Stewart; reprint New York: AMS Press, 1971, 1, 453–454. I am very grateful to James Bugslag for calling my attention to Fabri's remarks.

[41] Lena Liepe, "Maria I templet fran ett altarskap I Lunds domkyrka," *Iconographisk Post: Nordic Review of Iconography* 4 (1992), 26–34. A similar subject, with four maidens shown behind Mary, appears in a late fifteenth-century embroidery in Uppsala Cathedral. (L. Liepe, "Maria I templet fran ett altarskap," 32) while a Presentation of the Virgin in the Czartoriski Museum in Krakow, by the fifteenth-century Westphalian painter Johann Koerbecke (1420–1491), shows the girls' schoolroom in the background at the top of the stairs.

[42] See Jaroslav Folda, "The Church of St. Anne," *Biblical Archaeologist*, 54, 2 (June, 1991): 88–96.

[43] Paulette Choné suggests that several Georges de la Tour versions of the subject may have been produced in circles connected with education in the milieu of Blessed Mere Alix Le Clerc (1576–1622) and Pierre Fourier who co-founded the Congrégation Notre-Dame (Chanoinesses de Saint-Augustin) dedicated to the establishing schools for girls; Paulette Choné, *Georges de La Tour: un peintre lorrain au XVIIe siècle*, Tournai: Casterman, 1996, 152. However, no evidence is adduced to support a connection.

lacking. There is however one work from the French tradition that contains an iconographic detail that does point to Anne as teaching her daughter literacy. The work in question was produced not in France but in Canada, in Quebec. Attributed to the pious woman Marie de l'Incarnation (1599–1672), who founded the Ursuline convent and the girls' school in that town in mid-1600s, this piece is a roundel embroidered on an altar cloth. It illustrates the scene regarding the "Education of the Virgin" and was inspired by Rubens's much-copied painting (1625–1626) depicting the same theme for the Discalced Carmelite women in Antwerp.[44] An engraving would have been the source for the work of the Flemish/Netherlandish painter. The poses in the two works, though reversed, are similar, and the creator of the roundel has kept Rubens's balustrade and greenery but replaced the *putti* with clouds and golden rays. In Marie de l'Incarnation's embroidery Anne is depicted not in satin and velvet, as in Rubens's work, but in a costume which, with its dark dress, veil, and white neck cloth, strongly resembles the habits depicted in portraits of Ursuline nuns, famed in Quebec as teachers of girls.

Certainly by the late nineteenth century, in French educational discourse, Anne seems to have acquired a kind of semi-official role as educator. At any rate, persuaded perhaps by the works of art, Mgr. Paul Guerin calls her "la premiere educatrice de la sainte Vierge" in his *Vie des Saints*; he cites tradition as his witness: "Sainte Anne fut la premiere educatrice de la sainte Vierge. La tradition la presente lui apprenant a lire dans les saintes Ecritures, ce qui semblerait la designer comme patronne de la librairie catholique" [Anne was the first teacher of the holy Virgin. Tradition presents her teaching Mary to read the Holy Scriptures, a fact that would seem to designate her as the patron saint of the Catholic library].[45]

However, the most important written evidence about the beginning of discussions concerning the topic of Mary's reading (that is, if it is literacy in general or indications about her role in salvation) comes not from France but from Spain, where artists were depicting Anne and Mary with the book in the early seventeenth century and probably before. It is here

[44] Christine Turgeon, *Le Fil de l'art: Les Broderies des Ursulines de Québec*, Quebec: Musée des Ursulines de Québec, 2002, 77. On Saint Anne in Quebec see Nicole Cloutier, *L'iconographie de Sainte-Anne au Québec*, Ph.D diss., Université de Montréal, vols. 1–2, 1982.

[45] Paul Guérin, *Vie des Saints*, Paris/Bruxelles/Genève: Victor Palmé, Société belge de librairie Henri Trembley, 1887, 460, cited in Estrella Ruiz-Calvez, "Religion de la mère, Religion des Mères," in Jean Delumeau (ed.), *La Religion de ma mère*, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1992, 125. "Librairie" usually means "bookshop." However, here "library" (a biblioheque) seems to be a more appropriate translation.

for the first time that the two problematic issues—the missing textual source and the perception of the image (that is, of its meaning)—were explicitly addressed in a contemporary text. This was Francisco Pacheco's treatise *Arte de la Pintura* (1649), which refers to the painting done by Juan de Roelas (1570–1625) in c. 1615 for the Convent de la Merced in Seville; he calls it "Santa Ana ensenando a leer a la Virgen" [Saint Anne teaching the Virgin to read].[46]

According to Pacheco the theme of Mary being taught by Anne first appeared in Seville in 1612, when a sculpture of a "Mary reading" was carved to accompany a pre-existing one that represented St. Anne in a chapel of Santa Magdalena Church. Pacheco asserts that this sculpture was the inspiration for de Roelas's painting, which in turn he regards as responsible for the ensuing popularity of the theme. For though "ordinary painters" were rendering it, it was Roelas (a *licienciado*) who gave it respectability: "pintores ordinarios la estendieron, hasta que el licenciado Juan de Roelas (diestro en el colorido, aunque falto en el decoro) la acredito con su pincel" (ordinary painters spread its popularity, but it was the *licienciado* Juan de Roelas [skilled with colour, but wanting in decorum] who raised its reputation with his brush).

Pacheco has no doubts whatsoever about what the picture represents: it is Mary being taught to read by Anne. And like Sheingorn and Jameson, he is aware that textual sources for this subject do not exist; he finds this absence a matter for comment. At the beginning of an impressively learned discussion of the treatment of Mary's education at the hands of scholars from Augustine, Jerome and Bernard to Johannes Trithemius and contemporary Spanish writers, he states "Con menos fundamento" (with little foundation) with respect to this image. He concludes his lengthy disquisition by announcing that, although the teaching of the Virgin by Anne is not mentioned in any writing, it can be legitimately inferred as possible by analogy with Jesus's humility in learning from the doctors in the Temple despite the fact that he had no need to, an argument similar to that made by Fabri in justifying his visit to Mary's school. The Virgin, though she had infused wisdom and knowledge, humbly submitted herself to being taught, in the first case at school, in the second by her mother.[47]

[46] Francisco Pacheco, *Arte de la Pintura* (Seville, 1649), ed. F.J. Sanchez Canton, Madrid: Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan, 1956, 220. Roelas' painting is now in the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes in Seville.

[47] Pacheco, *Arte de la Pintura*, 218–220, 222–223.

Yes, Pancheco grants legitimacy to the theme of Mary being taught by Anne. But he does not hold it in high regard, for it is the Holy Spirit, not the saint, to whom we should more properly give credit for the education of the Virgin. Nor does he have a high opinion of those who admire the paintings of "the blessed Saint Anne teaching the Mother of God to read, paintings of which are very new, but embraced by the vulgar" [la bienaventurada Santa Ana ensenando a leer a la Madre de Dio cuya pintura es muy nueva, pero abrazada del vulgo].[48] There is no doubt about the subject matter of these works as far as Pacheco is concerned—and not only as he, but evidently as the masses of Seville as well, for he chides them for their enthusiastic embrace of the new theme. However, the prophetic and/or the Anne-centred messages though not mentioned in his description of Roelas's work, are typically present in the Spanish and Latin American versions, whether expressed through titles or labels naming Anne rather than Mary, or through iconographic details. Pacheco may have had a low opinion of Roelas as a painter, but the latter may well have succeeded in creating a model for subsequent versions of the "Education of the Virgin" in the way he arranged these details—possibly even providing a model for the most famous of them all, the one we said above that was painted by Rubens in 1625–1626.

The similarities between the two paintings, though not evident at first glance, are in fact numerous. The poses of the seated Anne and the forward-leaning teenaged Mary are similar. Each painting has angels in the upper right corner. Each makes reference to the Baroque portrait tradition, the Roelas with its red tasselled curtain, the Rubens with its columns and background colonnade. However, Roelas presents a serious Virgin absorbed in her book and his angels are praying, whereas Rubens's Mary lively peeks at the viewer. The playful mood in the work of the latter is carried on in the movements of the putti who, it is not difficult to imagine, are fighting over which of them is to put the wreath on the head of Our Lady. Both works leave the impression that the education being imparted is as much about the proper upbringing of a young lady of the upper classes as it is about literacy.[49] While the linens in Roelas's basket no doubt refer to Christ's shroud, the napkins and tablecloth visible in the pulled-out drawer also allude to the feminine skills of fine sewing. By the same token, sweets—the doughnut-shaped "rosquillas"—were often made not

[48] Ibid, 222–223.
[49] Ibid.

by servants but by the women of the house. (Readers of the letters of Teresa of Avila will recall numerous thank-you letters for the receipt of such special treats.) Yet at the same time these pastries are associated with Holy Week in Spain. Paired animals are usually, though probably not always, more than mere genre elements. The dog and cat at the foot of the table or cabinet, who seem to be looking at one another in what could be described as a friendly manner, may allude to the harmonious relationship between Mary and her mother. Could Rubens have been inspired by Roelas? His work was achieved later, at least 10 years after the Spanish painting. But his first visit to Spain was in 1603, before Roelas's work was completed, while his second was in 1628, 5 years after he had painted his "Education of the Virgin." However, he could have seen an engraving or a painted copy of the Spanish work.

In any case, taking into consideration both texts and images, it seems likely that the Spanish seventeenth-century versions were seen foremost as depictions of Anne teaching Mary to read, while at the same time, their iconography retained allusions to Mary being shown the prophecies. Is it reasonable to project this state of affairs backwards in time to fourteenth-century England? At any rate this is possible. We do know that this blending of meanings continued, for in eighteenth-century French and Italian art the evidence of labels, titles, and locations favours Anne as the main subject in, among others, the versions by Fragonard and Tiepolo. In Jean Jouvenet's painting within the Uffizi Gallery the text within the image is a scroll and that constitutes a standard reference to the Old Testament.[50]

The Tiepolo *Education of the Virgin* was commissioned for the Church of Santa Maria della Consolazione in Venice in connection with the church's ownership of a relic of St. Anne. Its first printed mention, from in 1733, exists in A. M. Zanetti's *Descrizione of paintings on public view in Venice*. There the image, introduced as a painting "with S. Anna, the young Virgin and S. Joachim" was hailed as an "illustrious work."[51] That despite the fact that the Rubens's painting was officially presented as a

[50] In the background Jouvenet has depicted three young girls of the same age as Mary; they seem to be working on needlework of some kind. This detail might suggest that the scene takes place after Mary's return from the Temple; the apocryphal gospels describe a similar episode.

[51] Antonio Maria Zanetti, *Descrizione di tutte le pubbliche pitture della citta Di Venezia* (Venice, 1733) 190, cited in William L. Barcham, *The Religious Paintings of Giambattista Tiepolo: Piety and Tradition in Eighteenth-century Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 174. Another luxuriant eighteenth century baroque Education of the Virgin altar,

depiction of St. Anne, if we are to judge from labels on near-contemporary engravings of it: those by V.F. Poilly (active 1680s), Francois Chereau (1680–1729), and Michel Dossier (1684–1750) are all labelled "Sainte Anne."[52]

In thinking over the implications of the diverse data and observations presented in the foregoing paragraphs we note that, despite the continuous presence of iconographic and circumstantial signifiers relating to the prophetic message and/or to the centrality of Anne, neither Pacheco in the early seventeenth century, nor Jameson in the middle of the nineteenth knew the theme as anything other than the "Education of the Virgin." Both found this state of affairs a matter of wonder—yet neither entertained the possibility of the image having different or additional meanings.

Let us now return to the point that introduced this chapter: the absence of a textual source. Sheingorn and Scase have referred to some of the texts we discussed above by stating that, with a certain stretching of the reader's imagination, they might be seen as alluding to Mary being taught to read by Anne. Both concluded quite reasonably that none of them presents a likely source for the image illustrating this scene. The possible allusions are too tangential and too vague, and the writings in question, according to them, were not widely read in England.[53] In fact there is a text that does fit the visual image, but that is in Germany. A fifteenth-century manuscript referring to the life of Mary in the Bern Stadtbibliothek, published by Carl

that by Cosmos Damian Assam in the Klosterkirche St. Anne in Munich-Lehel, bears the legend "Sancta Anna Ora Pro Nobis."

[52] For reproductions see N. Cloutier, *L'Iconographie de Sainte Anne au Québec*. The engraving by V.F. Poilly (fl. 1680s) after Rubens for the Confrérie des Marchands, Gantiers et Parfumiers de Paris (1710), is entitled "Oraison à Ste. Anne"; Cloutier, *L'Iconographie de Sainte Anne*, fig. 30. The engraving by Michel Dossier (1684–1750), also after Rubens, is entitled "Sainte Anne"; ibid., fig. 32; the reversed engraving by Francois Chereau (1680–1729) is also entitled "Sainte Anne"; ibid., fig. 33.

[53] For example, the *Vita Rhythmica* presents problems because it speaks of Mary's education as taking place after her betrothal, at which point "this child was properly educated by her parents [not exclusively by Anne], and was instructed by them in every discipline." ("Hec proles a parentibus decenter educatur/Et in omni disciplina per ipsos informature"), in Adolf Vögtlin (ed.), *Vita Beate Virginis Marie et Salvatoris Rhythmica* (Tübingen: Bibliothek des litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, 1888), lines 529–30. Scase mentions a Latin translation of Ephiphanius, known to have been in Balliol College before 1361, which refers to Mary "having learned to read Hebrew when her father was alive," in Epiphanius the Monk, *Sermo de Vita Sanctissimae Deiparae et de ipsis annis*, PG 120, cols. 185–216, cited in Scase, "St. Anne and the Education of the Virgin," 88–89.

H. Benziger in 1913, describes the three-year old Mary being taught to read and write at home:

> Thus did the dear noble morning dawn rosiness come out from her mother's womb and she was born in holiness and brought up honourably and was full of all modesty and all mercy and godly virtues such that the like was never seen before or after. When she was three years old she was taught writing so that she could pray the holy psalter; then she was offered to the temple and without any human help she went up (and with great understanding) the fifteen steps into the temple.[54]
>
> Also ward die uffgend edel lieplich morgenröti darnach uff gan von ir mütterlyb und ward heilleclich geboren und erzogen nach allen eran und ward vol aller demütikeit und aller barmhercikeit und aller gotztugenden das doch irsgelichen nie me gesehen ward weder vor noch nach. Do sy dryjerig ward, do ward sy underwist der geschrifft und dass sy kund den heiligen psalter betten; do ward sy in den tempol geopfert und on aller menschen hilff ging sy xv stapflen uff in dem tempol.

Was this German work simply an exception? Or was it based on a textual tradition that went back to the early fourteenth century, and did that tradition have exemplars in England that might have been the source of the "Education of the Virgin" in this country? Such a chain of events seems somewhat unlikely. Did the fifteenth-century Swiss author derive the story from images? But the "Education of the Virgin" was not a common subject in the arts of the area. And as for the widely read Latin and vernacular lives of St. Anne written in Germany, Flanders, and Holland in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, these remarked that Anne taught her daughters good manners, household skills, and their duty to God, but they do not mention reading.[55] For the moment we can only underline again that the argument made in this chapter offers the most reasonable and best supported explanation regarding the meaning of the visual theme "Education of the Virgin": it is primarily about the role of Anne's daugh-

[54] Carl H. Benziger, "Eine illustrierte Marienlegende aus dem 15. Jahrhundert" (Kodex Mss. hist Helv. X. 50 Stadtbibliothek Bern), Strassburg: Heitz & Mündel, 1913.

[55] See for example *Das Leben und Wunderzaichen der allerseeligisten Frawen Annae*, transl. by the Anonymous Franciscan, *Legenda sanctae Annae*, Louvain: Joh. De Westfalia, 1496; Munich: Cornelius Leyffert, 1627, 48–49, in the Bayerisches Nationalbibliothek in Munich, and Jan van Denemarken, *Die historie, die ghetiden ende die exempelen vander heyligher vrouwen sint Annen*, Antwerp: Geraert Leeu, 1490–1499, 54–55, in the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels.

ter in the salvation of humankind and secondarily about her education concerning reading. And indeed its occurrence may have been connected with the existence of pictures of women teaching their daughters. In any case, both meanings attributed to it inflected the creation and perception of this image over the centuries.

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