

HEROD THE GREAT  
IN  
MEDIEVAL ART AND LITERATURE

In Two Volumes

Volume I

TEXT

By

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the treatment of Herod the Great in medieval art and literature. The opening chapters examine the accounts given by early historians, patristic commentators and the church liturgy for the traditions which they established and the interpretations which they sanctioned, and thereafter chapters deal in chronological sequence with the art and literature of the medieval period in their response to these traditions and interpretations.

Artists of the Early Christian period were conservative in their treatment of Herod the Great; not until the twelfth century was visual expression given to the early dramatic commentaries on Herod's violence and evil. A full flowering in the visual arts took place in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when a vast array of motifs related to Herod were developed. Earlier artistic attempts to represent him as a regal and aloof emperor were abandoned in favour of more ingenious portrayals of this king who was associated with devils and accustomed to wielding a sword. The art of the fifteenth century does not reflect the same vitality in its treatment of Herod.

Herod received his most spectacular treatment in literature in the vernacular drama of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The drama of Spain, Italy, Germany, and France developed a tradition for Herod quite distinct from the characterization given him in the English mystery cycles. A comparison of European vernacular drama with the English mystery cycles is therefore particularly enlightening for a study of the treatment given to Herod the Great.

This thesis, therefore, follows the treatment of Herod the Great in the art and literature of 1500 years, concentrating especially on the iconographic detail and distinctive literary developments of this paradoxical king of the Jews.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Bib. Nat.	Bibliothèque Nationale
Brit. Lib.	British Library
Brown, <u>XIIIth Century</u>	Carleton Brown, <i>English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century</i> (Oxford, 1932)
Brown, <u>XIVth Century</u>	Carleton Brown, <i>Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century</i> (Oxford, 1924)
Brown, <u>XVth Century</u>	Carleton Brown, <i>Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century</i> (Oxford, 1939)
DACL	<i>Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie</i> , ed. Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq (Paris, 1907-1925)
EETS	Early English Text Society
ES	Extra Series
OS	Original Series
SS	Supplementary Series
James, <u>Fitzwilliam</u>	M. R. James, <i>A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Fitzwilliam Museum</i> (Cambridge, 1895)
James, <u>Trinity</u>	M. R. James, <i>The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge</i> (Cambridge, 1900-1904)
Leroquais, <u>Les Psautiers</u>	V. Leroquais, <i>Les Psautiers Manuscrits Latins</i> (Macon, 1940-41)
ODCC	<i>Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church</i> , ed. F. L. Cross (London, 1957)
Pächt and Alexander	Otto Pächt and A. A. G. Alexander, <i>Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford</i> (Oxford, 1966-73)
PG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca</i> , ed. J. -P. Migne
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina</i> , ed. J. -P. Migne
PMLA	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the treatment of Herod the Great in medieval art and literature. Since the iconographic and other traditions of the subject are European, the scope of this study is European, except that the chapter on late vernacular non-dramatic literature, when the traditions are well established and more or less stereotyped, is confined to English sources. The opening chapters examine the accounts given by early historians, patristic commentators and the church liturgy for the traditions which they established and the interpretations which they sanctioned, and thereafter chapters deal in chronological sequence with the art and literature of the medieval period in their response to these traditions and interpretations.

The most creative period in the iconography of scenes involving Herod in the visual arts was the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Artists of the Early Christian period were relatively conservative in their treatment of Herod the Great; not until the twelfth century did artists give visual expression to the early dramatic commentaries on Herod's violence and evil. A full flowering in the visual arts took place in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when a vast array of motifs related to Herod in the Meeting with the Magi scene as well as that of the Massacre of the Innocents was developed. Other events from his life were introduced into art at this time, his suicide and death being the most important. Earlier artistic attempts to represent him as a regal and aloof emperor were abandoned in favour of more ingenious portrayals of this king who was associated with devils and accustomed to wielding a sword. This was true for both English and Continental art. The art of the fifteenth century does not reflect the same vitality in its treatment



of Herod. Although the style of manuscript illuminations was becoming increasingly sophisticated, very little creative iconography is evident.

Herod received his most spectacular treatment in literature in the vernacular drama of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Here the vernacular drama of Spain, Italy and Germany, and the Passion plays in France developed a tradition for Herod which was quite distinct from the characterization given him in the English mystery cycles. A comparison of European vernacular drama with the English mystery cycles is therefore particularly enlightening for a study of the treatment given to Herod the Great.

This thesis, therefore, follows the treatment of Herod the Great in the art and literature of 1500 years, concentrating especially on the iconographic detail and distinctive literary developments of this paradoxical king of the Jews.

## CHAPTER I : HEROD IN HISTORY

## Introduction

Herod the Great has been known by this prestigious title for two thousand years and yet despised as one of the most irretrievably evil characters in the history of Christianity. His career was both more spectacular and more tragic than one is led to believe from the evidence of medieval art and literature which displayed a deliberate tendency 'to blacken Herod's character beyond historical truth and to attribute to him sinful acts which he did not in fact perform.'<sup>1</sup> Modern and ancient historians give differing views of the man. In more recent time Stewart Perowne has pointed out that 'Herod, born as a younger son of an obscure Arab civil servant, on the very edge of the Levant, was to become one of the most glittering figures of one of the most glowing periods of human history. He was to be the friend or enemy of Antony, of Cleopatra, of Augustus' great minister, Vipsanius Agrippa, indeed of Augustus himself. He was a well-known personality in the Roman world. He was, too, the ruler into whose kingdom Jesus of Nazareth was born.'<sup>2</sup> Patristic writers, the church liturgy, and medieval artists, poets and dramatists all seized on this last detail only, seeing Herod as the first foreign king of Judaea and the first persecutor of the infant Christ. They recognized nothing of his triumphs and successes when he was king and, indeed, they may have invented the very deed for which he is best known and most thoroughly condemned, the Massacre of the Innocents. It would have been impossible for medieval writers to recognize Herod the Great as presented by Perowne, for example, when he describes Herod as he became king. 'By the age of thirty-six, Herod had raised himself from obscurity to a

throne. He had attained this eminence by his matchless gift of triumphing over men, sometimes by arms, sometimes by policy, sometimes by charm. So far he had not met his superior. Nor would he....Herod was the enterprising monarch, the fascinating Arab, the friend of Caesar, the most distinguished non-Roman in the whole world, known throughout the empire for his wealth, his splendour and his munificence.<sup>3</sup> And yet Perowne was using the same early source of information that was used by medieval writers and by earlier Church Fathers, that is, the first-century Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the ways in which Herod the Great was represented in medieval art and literature,<sup>5</sup> and as many of these medieval treatments of Herod followed, or claimed to follow, Josephus, a brief summary of his accounts of Herod will be given. In this way, the original information about Herod may be distinguished from the later fictional accretions, and the nature of developing biases may be recognized. This study is confined to Herod the Great and does not include the two other Herods mentioned by Josephus and the New Testament: Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, became tetrarch of Galilee after the banishment of Archelaus and is best remembered for having John the Baptist beheaded; Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great and Mariamne, was hailed as a true Jewish king but is remembered for his part in imprisoning Peter, murdering James and accepting the worship due to a god, which was his downfall (Acts 12: 1-23). Herod Antipas and Herod Agrippa rarely appear in medieval art, and were not generally confused by medieval writers with Herod the Great in spite of certain similarities in their names, personalities and careers.

## I. Flavius Josephus

Flavius Josephus is the single most important source of information about Herod the Great, but it is important to recognize that he was not entirely without prejudice as a historian.<sup>6</sup> He was a Jew of Jerusalem and boasted kinship with the royal Hasmonean dynasty (the royal family from which Mariamne, Herod's second wife, was descended). He was proud of his race and religion, but at the same time, he loyally accepted Roman rule. After taking part in the events which led to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D., he retired to Rome where 'for the next thirty years he lived as a pensioner of the Caesars and wrote the history of the War and a history of his People.'<sup>7</sup> These two works, the *War of the Jews*, published between 75 and 79, and the *Antiquities of the Jews*, published in 93, sometimes fluctuate between 'a desire to uphold the excellence of the Roman empire and a contrary desire to palliate, if not to justify, the rebellion of the Jews by exposing the faults of their Roman governors.'<sup>8</sup> Both works contained extended versions of the career of Herod the Great. Indeed, Perowne points out that the proportion of space allotted to Herod in both books is one-sixth. 'Of such importance did Josephus, the historian and apologist, deem the life of this man.'<sup>9</sup> This is a remarkable proportion when one considers that the *War* covers about two centuries leading up to the Great Rebellion of 67-70 A.D. and the *Antiquities* deals with time from the Creation up to the Great Rebellion.

Josephus was born in 37 A.D., almost four decades after Herod died. For the career of Herod, he seems to have had the *Memoirs* of Herod the Great, which he once cites, but the bulk of his material he derived from the *Universal History* of Nicolaus of Damascus, who was Herod's historiographer and eloquent spokesman.<sup>10</sup> The original versions of

of Josephus' *War* and *Antiquities* have not survived, but he was assisted by a team of translators to produce his works in Greek, the literary language of the day. Scholarly translations from the Greek are the basis of information for the modern historians of Herod and for the following synopsis.<sup>11</sup>

#### A. Herod's Political Career

Herod was born in 73 B.C., son of Antipater, 'an Idumaeen by race' (*War*, 1 vi 2). The Idumaeans were Arabs, but towards the end of the second century B.C., John Hyrcanus, after succeeding his father as high priest and king of the Jews (*Ant.*, XIII viii 1), captured the Idumaeen cities of Adora and Marisa, and after subduing all the Idumaeans, 'permitted them to remain in their country as long as they had themselves circumcised and were willing to observe the laws of the Jews. And so, out of attachment to the land of their fathers, they submitted to circumcision and to making their manner of life conform in all other respects to that of the Jews. And from that time on they have continued to be Jews.'<sup>12</sup> Antipater, the father of Herod the Great, was a close friend of Hyrcanus II, ruler of the Idumaeans and, according to Josephus, he was a powerful and influential figure, held in great esteem among the Idumaeans. Indeed, he was appointed by Pompey as civil adviser and the Jews were really tributary to the Roman people thenceforward.

The background of this Antipater, father of Herod the Great, is not, however, altogether clear. Josephus describes him as an Idumaeen and emphasizes his close relationship with the ruler of his country, but then refers to his source, Nicolas of Damascus, Herod's close friend and court historiographer. 'Nicolas of Damascus, to be sure, says that

his [Antipater's] family belonged to the leading Jews who came to Judaea from Babylon. But he says this in order to please Antipater's son Herod, who became king of the Jews by a certain turn of fortune.... This Antipater, it seems, was first called Antipas, which was also the name of his father, whom King Alexander and his wife appointed governor of the whole of Idumaea and they say that he made friends of the neighbouring Arabs and Gazaeans and Ascalonites' (*Ant.*, XIV i 3). Josephus sees the bias in this account of a distinguished Jewish ancestry for Herod and summarily dismisses it, although he accepts the factual information that Antipas was governor of Idumaea. Because the Idumaeans had lived as Jews for more than a century, they were often considered as Jews. Antigonus, when he was besieged in Jerusalem by Herod, who had the support of the Romans and also of many Jews, objected to giving Herod the kingship because he was only a half-Jew<sup>13</sup> and yet the Jews themselves, when it served their interests, referred to Herod their king as a Jew by birth.<sup>14</sup> In fact the modern *Encyclopedia Judaica* points out that 'it should be noted that according to Jewish law Herod was a full Jew (being the grandson of an Edomite proselyte), although he was not qualified to reign'.<sup>15</sup> To sum up then, the degree and kind of Herod's 'foreignness' has been disputed, but the fact that he was a foreign and alien king in the eyes of the Jews is generally accepted.

Herod's mother was Arabian. Josephus identifies her as Cypros, a lady from an illustrious Arab family among the Idumaeans (*Ant.*, XIV vii 3; *War*, I viii 9). Herod's father, Antipater, through this matrimonial alliance, won the friendship of the king of Arabia and when he went to war against Aristobulus, he entrusted his children,

including Herod, to this king.<sup>16</sup> Later Herod was to meet a king of Arabia under much different circumstances, a king who had followed a star to his kingdom to worship another King, according to the Gospel.

Josephus recognizes the fact that Herod became a brilliant politician like his father. He was made governor of Galilee at the age of fifteen,<sup>17</sup> and immediately rid the country of disturbing bands of brigands. He went on to achieve dramatic victories both in the battle field and in the council chamber, and in 40 B.C. he was appointed king of the Jews by the Romans. He spent three years gaining control over his kingdom (*War*, I xv-xviii) but, after he captured Jerusalem, put his enemy Antigonus to death and became King Herod in fact as well as in name (*War*, I xviii 4), he then ruled successfully for thirty-seven years until his death at the advanced age of seventy. The country was at peace during his reign; old cities were restored and new ones built: Samaria-Sebaste, Caesarea, Antipatris and Phasaelis. Jerusalem was transformed and the Temple rebuilt; trade flourished.

Herod himself followed the Jewish customs. This influenced to some extent his choice of wives. He had ten wives altogether - nine at one time - who gave him nine sons and five daughters. His first two wives are the most important ones in any consideration of his political and domestic affairs. Very little mention is made by Josephus of his first wife, Doris; he spends instead much time over Herod's passionate and tempestuous relationship with his second wife Mariamme.<sup>18</sup> In fact, Doris is mentioned only in passing, and quite incidentally, as Herod makes arrangements for his betrothal to Mariamme. 'He had previously married a plebian woman of his own nation [meaning the Jewish nation rather than the Idumaeon], named Doris, by whom he had his eldest son

Antipater.' (*Ant.*, XIV xii 1). In the *War* she is called a 'Jewess of some standing', (*War*, I xii 3) but Hegesippus, who translated Josephus in the second century, states that Herod's marriage to Doris was conferred on him with great honour and thanks after a great triumph;<sup>19</sup> one may therefore assume that she was a distinguished woman of Jerusalem. But she was quickly put away, with her son Antipater, when Herod arranged to ally himself with the royal family of the Jews, the Hasmoneans, and strengthen his title to the throne, by marrying the very beautiful Mariamme, daughter of Alexander, son of Aristobolus, and granddaughter of Hyrcanus, high priest of the Jews. This was a political marriage but also a passionate one,<sup>20</sup> and the subject of many plays and novels in later English literature.<sup>21</sup> Two sons of Mariamme, Alexander and Aristobolus, shared not only their mother's good looks, legitimate descent and popularity,<sup>22</sup> but also her fate - death at Herod's command (*War*, I xxvii 6).

Herod the Great had responsibilities and inclinations towards both the Jewish nation and his Roman superiors. His unique position was neatly summed up by Cassiodorus (c. 485 - c. 580): 'Significabat autem principatum Herodis, qui cum Idumaeus esset genere paterno, Arabs autem a matre, commisa est ei gens Judaeorum a senatu Romano et Caesare simul Augusto.'<sup>23</sup> Josephus makes it clear that because of his father's influence with Caesar (*War*, I x 3,4) and his own prowess in battle and friendship with Mark Antony (*War*, I xiv 4), Herod received the kingship from the Roman senate on Antony's recommendation.<sup>24</sup> His allegiance lay with Antony and he even managed to graciously avoid Cleopatra's attempts to seduce and then to murder him, and still keep Antony's friendship, although his own view was that Cleopatra should be put to



death (*War*, I xviii 4; xix 1-2; *Ant.*, XV iv 2,8; v 1). When Octavius Caesar defeated Antony at the battle of Actium, Herod astutely presented himself to Octavius, citing his loyal friendship with Antony as his best recommendation to Caesar, and was consequently accepted and recrowned by Octavius (*War*, I xx 1,2). Herod later sent his two sons by Mariamne to Rome to be educated under the personal supervision of Caesar (*Ant.*, XV x 1).

Herod was made king by the power of Rome. At the same time, he was conscious of Jewish law. As he himself was an Idumaeen Jew, he was probably circumcised and he chose only Jewish wives. 'He was fairly careful not to flout the external expressions of the religion of the Jews. He refrained from putting his own portrait or images of idols on his coins, and apart from his disastrous introduction of the "golden eagle", he did not have "graven images" within the borders of Jewish settlement.'<sup>25</sup> Josephus describes how he ruthlessly cleared the field of any Jews who might challenge his right to the throne - including Mariamne's seventeen-year-old brother, Aristobulus, who proved too popular after Herod finally appointed him as high priest, and was surreptitiously drowned by 'Herod's servants and friends' in a swimming pool (*Ant.*, XV iii 3). Mariamne's grandfather, Hyrcanus, the last one left of royal rank, was also eliminated by Herod (*Ant.*, XV vi 1-3). But when Herod became king of Judaea, he was a good ruler, clever and able. He managed the Jews well, suppressing insurrection with absolute severity but never indulging in religious persecution. He used his influence with Augustus to obtain privileges for the Jews in various parts of the world. When there was a terrible famine in the thirteenth year of his reign, 25/24 B.C., he cut up into coinage all the gold and

silver ornaments in his palace and sent it to Petronius, his friend and a prefect in Egypt, who promptly gave Herod priority in exporting grain from Egypt (*Ant.*, XV ix 2). By purchasing this grain, transporting it and distributing it fairly to his own and also neighbouring people, Herod showed both his solicitude for them and also his astute political sense.

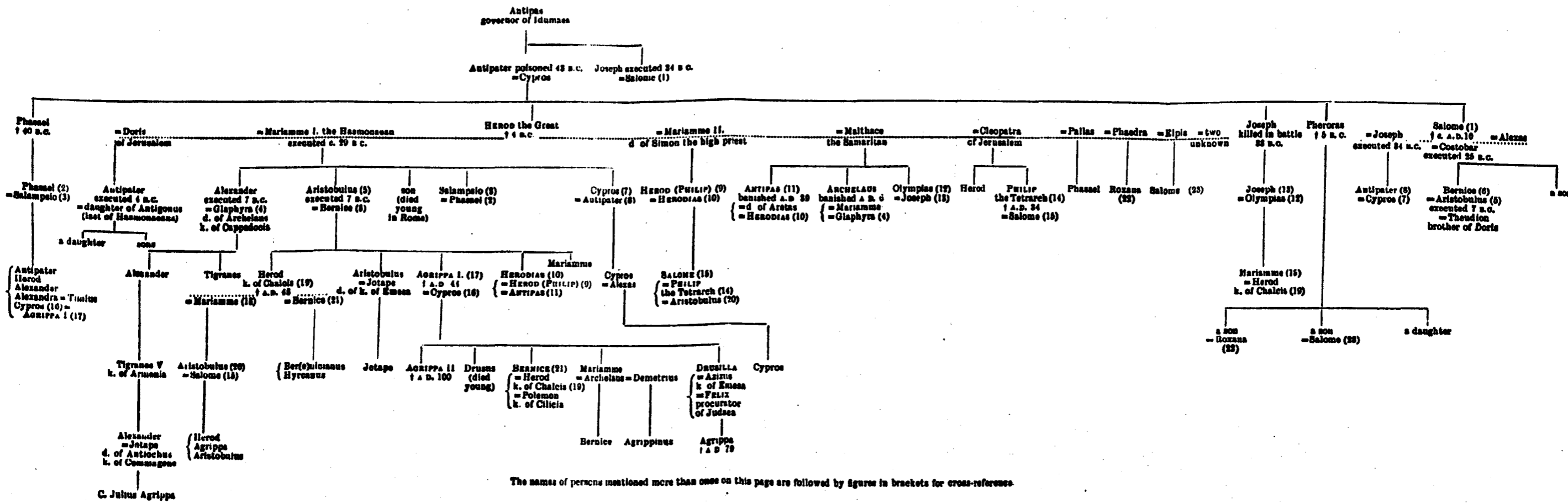
In matters of religion, he did show a certain respect for Jewish traditions. He demanded that anyone who married into his family adopt the Jewish faith. This ruined the hopes of his sister, Salome, who wished to marry Syllaeus, an envoy from the king of Arabia. Syllaeus asked for her hand but refused 'to be initiated into the customs of the Jews' (*Ant.*, XVI vii 6) lest he be stoned to death by the Arabs. Herod was sometimes called the second Solomon, as one of his most spectacular achievements was the rebuilding of the splendid Temple of Jerusalem, for which he spared no expense. (*Ant.*, XV ix 1-7); about 10,000 commoners and 1000 priests were occupied for 9 years in building it,<sup>26</sup> and Herod paid great attention to its proper planning and construction, following Jewish law and tradition in every detail. However, he also built a temple to Apollo, as well as theatres, amphitheatres, hippodromes for pagan games, and indeed even whole cities (i.e. Caesarea) in honour of the emperor and what the Jews would consider false gods. His motivation was undoubtedly from vanity rather than from piety. He lavished money and care on the Jewish nation in the grandiose hope that he would be remembered as its greatest king, according to Josephus:

For Herod loved honours and, being powerfully dominated by this passion, he was led to display generosity whenever there was reason to hope for future remembrance or present reputation.... In fact, among his own people if anyone was not deferential to him in speech by confessing himself his slave or was thought to be raising questions about his rule, Herod was unable to control himself and prosecuted his kin and his friends alike, and punished them as severely as enemies. These excesses he committed because of his wish to be uniquely honoured.

(Ant., XVI v 4)

B. Herod's Domestic Troubles

THE HERODIAN FAMILY



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(*Ant.*, XVI v 4)

#### B. Herod's Domestic Troubles

Herod's love for his wife Mariamne bordered on 'divine madness' (*Ant.*, XV vii 7). He was so possessive and jealous of her that twice, when he had to undertake dangerous journeys, he left secret orders to have her slain if he met death while away lest she fall into the hands of anyone else. Herod could not bear the thought. His sister, Salome, who remained loyal and close to Herod throughout his life, took advantage of this passion to rid the palace of Mariamne whom she hated. Salome 'brought against her the charge which was bound in their [Salome and Cypros] opinion to touch Herod most nearly, that of adultery' (*War*, I xxii 3), falsely accusing Mariamne of sending her picture to Antony, and also of having adulterous relations with Salome's own husband, Joseph, and of trying to poison Herod whom she loathed. Herod, hearing this, went 'mad with sheer jealousy' and ordered them both put to death. He immediately regretted his rash decision and was filled with remorse, suffering such melancholy that he became mentally unbalanced (*War*, I xxiii 1-5).

Herod was responsible for the death not only of his beloved wife, Mariamne, but also of his three eldest sons. The first son, Antipater, child of Doris, was exiled for a time in favour of Mariamne's two sons,

Aristobulus and Alexander. He was crafty, however, and able to take advantage of Herod's suspicious nature to ingratiate himself once more at the expense of his brothers. He claimed that the two Hasmonean sons were planning their father's murder and Herod, enraged, took them to be tried before the emperor in Rome in 12 B.C. These false charges did not hold, however, and Augustus concluded the trial by advising the sons to be more filial, and by empowering Herod to choose his own successor, passing over the rebellious Hasmoneans if he wished. Relationships between Herod and these two sons were alleviated and he returned home in triumph. Antipater, however, encouraged by Salome, persisted in his plots against Mariamme's sons. In the end he accused Alexander and Aristobulus of plotting to poison Herod. Another trial was held, this time in Beirut, in 7 B.C., and the servants and comrades of the young men were tortured for confessions. A barber named Trypho testified that a friend of Alexander's, named Tiro, had tried to persuade him to cut Herod's throat while shaving him (*Ant.*, XVI xi 6); Tiro's son confessed under torture that this was true but Josephus says that this was done possibly to procure the release of his father from further torture rather than because it was the truth. Before the trial, another charge had been made against Alexander, again under torture, this time by some of Herod's favourite eunuchs, 'of whom he was immoderately fond because of their beauty' (*Ant.*, XVI viii 1). These eunuchs were very close to Herod. 'One of them was entrusted with the pouring of his wine, the second with serving his dinner, and the third with putting the king to bed and taking care of the most important matters of state ' (*Ibid*). Herod, on being informed by his eldest son Antipater that his second son Alexander had corrupted these eunuchs and been intimate with them, put them to the

torture and obtained the confession that Alexander had suggested to them that Herod was getting old and trying to conceal his senility by dyeing his hair black and so 'furtively removing the signs of his age.' It seemed as if Alexander was getting ready to take over the royal power and trying to get the support of Herod's friends and leading men. This evidence outraged Herod's sense of pride and vanity, and the barber's testimony convinced him that his Hasmonean sons were plotting against him. They were consequently taken to Sebaste and strangled.

Antipater then began to plot to poison Herod himself, through the agency of Herod's brother, Pheroras. He was exposed, however, by Salome when Pheroras prematurely died and his wife confessed the whole plot to Herod at court. Once more a trial was held; Antipater was found guilty and imprisoned. Again Herod wrote to Augustus asking permission to execute his son. When Herod was on his deathbed, this permission was granted. His last act was to have Antipater beheaded.

### C. Herod's Illness and Death

The final years of Herod's life were macabre and violent. His subjects were stirred to rebellion, and Herod himself suffered from a horrible, wasting disease which drove him to attempt suicide. These events were all related in great detail by Josephus who was in turn using the eye-witness account of Nicolaus of Damascus. According to Josephus, Herod, at the end of his life, 'became quite savage and treated everyone with uncontrolled anger and harshness. The cause of this was his belief that he was despised and that the nation took pleasure in his misfortunes.' (*Ant.*, XVII vi 1). His misfortunes and problems were many. He had made a great mistake when, after appeasing the Jews by building the glorious Temple at Jerusalem, he flagrantly disregarded their law

by constructing a golden eagle over the gates, in honour of Rome. When some young men were incited by two philosophers to tear down this eagle, Herod quickly reciprocated by having them all burned alive. This in turn led to a further and rapid deterioration in his physical state 'for God was inflicting just punishment upon him for his lawless deeds ' (*Ant.*, XVII ii 5). His malady spread to every part of his body and his sufferings took a variety of forms. In addition to a fever, he had an 'intolerable itching of the whole skin' (*War*, I xxxiii 5) and a 'terrible desire to scratch himself' (*Ant.*, XVII vi 5) which resulted in his body being covered by sores and scabs. 'There was also an ulceration of the bowels and intestinal pains that were particularly terrible, and a moist, transparent suppuration of the feet. And he suffered similarly from an abdominal ailment, as well as from a gangrene of his privy parts that produced worms. His breathing was marked by extreme tension, and disagreeable exhalation of his breath and his constant gasping. He also had convulsions in every limb that took on unendurable severity.' (*Ant.*, XVII vi 5). Herod searched for cures in vain, and finally his physicians suggested that he take baths in the warm springs at Callirrhoe, across the river Jordan. He made the journey there but 'when his physicians decided to warm his body there and had seated him in a tub of warm oil, he looked to them as though he had passed away ' (*Ant.*, XVII vi 5). He was removed from the bath and he recovered sufficiently to demand that his soldiers take him back to Jericho, where he remained until he died over a week later.

When he returned to Jericho, knowing that he would die soon, he devised an 'outrageous scheme' to ensure that the whole nation would mourn at his death. He imprisoned in the hippodrome the young nobles

from every family in Judaea and ordered his sister, Salome, and her husband, Alexas, to have them all executed the moment that he himself died. In that way he could be sure that every family in the nation would mourn on the day that he died, even though he knew that they all despised him (*Ant.*, XVII vi 5). Josephus does record the fact that Salome released the nobles on Herod's death and did not have them put to death (*Ant.*, XVII viii 2).

Herod's last days were typical of the rest of his life. His greatest joy, even though he was a dying man, was to receive a letter from Caesar giving him permission to exile or to execute his eldest son, Antipater. On receiving this permission, Herod's spirits revived somewhat, but he soon plunged into the depths of despair. Asking for an apple to eat, as was his custom, and a knife to cut it up with, he 'endeavoured to anticipate the hour of destiny' (*War*, I xxxiii 7), and commit suicide by plunging the knife into his breast. A cousin, named Achiab, saw him in time and 'seizing his hand, arrested the blow' (*Ibid*), but not before a great cry went up, of premature lamentation. Antipater, hearing it in prison, rejoiced and tried to bribe his jailer to free him, but the jailer refused and instead reported his prisoner's designs to Herod who, with superhuman strength, shouted out to his guards and had Antipater slain on the spot. He then changed his will, making Archelaus his heir, and died in agony five days later. The Venerable Bede, in his *Martyrology*, used an expression often repeated by medieval writers describing the demise of Herod as utterly miserable: he died 'miserabiliter et dignè'.

This then is the account by Josephus of the historical Herod. It is fairly close to the representations of medieval works. Penelope Doob



points out that 'the attributes of Herod in Christian writings seem either to have been selected from Josephus to create a morally monstrous enemy capable of killing, or trying to kill, God, or to have been created independently as probable in the man who, according to Matthew, killed the Innocents of Bethlehem. Whatever the origin of any one of Herod's more hateful characteristics, Josephus provides justification for most of them and for many of the medieval Herod's actions as well. The crucial exception, of course, is the Massacre of the Innocents; and it is hard to believe that an historian critical of Herod would have omitted so damning an act if it had really occurred.'<sup>27</sup> For accounts of this event, one must turn to biblical and apocryphal sources.

## II Biblical and Apocryphal Sources

### A. The Vulgate

The historicity of Herod is undeniable. He was king of the Jews and he was king of Judah at the supposed time of the Nativity. The Vulgate recognizes this and identifies the time of the Nativity of Christ through the kingship of Herod. 'Natus esset Iesus in Bethlehem Iuda in diebus Herodis regis.'<sup>28</sup> This method of identification is consistent with the early Christian writers' system of chronology whereby they dated events in relation to the reigns of Roman emperors.<sup>29</sup> But Matthew is not, strictly speaking, doing this as Herod was not a Roman emperor, although he was appointed king by Augustus Caesar. Luke is more accurate in his account, referring not only to Augustus Caesar, but also to Quirinius, the governor of Syria at the time of the emperor's decree. 'In diebus illis exiit edictus a Caesare Augusto ut describeretur universus orbis. Haec descriptio prima facta est a praeside Syriae Cyrino.'<sup>30</sup> Thus the Nativity is established in history by being

associated with Herod. It is this very insistence by the early Christian writers on basing Christianity solidly in history, rather than letting it become merely a philosophy or a set of abstractions, as the Gnostics and Arians tended to do, that saved Christianity from 'receding into a mere philosophical curiosity'.<sup>31</sup> And so all Christian writers accept Herod as earthly king of the Jews when Christ was born.

The historicity of the Magi and of the Massacre, however, is problematical and dubious at best. It is notably absent in the works of Josephus, and it is also presumably absent from his source, Nicolaus of Damascus, whose writings have been lost. Josephus occasionally accuses Nicolaus of being prejudiced: 'throughout his work he has been consistent in excessively praising the king for his just acts and zealously apologizing for his unlawful ones' (*Ant.*, XVI vii 1) and so we might suspect Nicolaus of deliberately omitting these events. But these two historians were both Jewish and as they did not believe that Christ was the Messiah, the events surrounding the Nativity were probably insignificant to them. However, the visit of the Magi and the Massacre of the Innocents are not mentioned in any other source except the Bible and then only in Matthew:

1. Cum ergo natus esset Jesus in Bethlehem Juda in diebus Herodis regis, ecce Magi ab oriente venerunt Ierosolymam.
2. Dicentes: Ubi est qui natus est rex Judaeorum? Vidimus enim stellam ejus in oriente, et venimus adorare eum.
3. Audiens autem Herodes rex, turbatus est, et omnis Ierosolyma cum illo.
4. Et congregans omnes principes sacerdotum, et scribas populi, sciscitabatur ab eis ubi Christus nasceretur.
5. At illi dixerunt ei: In Bethlehem Judae; sic enim scriptum est per prophetam:
6. Et tu Bethlehem terra Juda, nequaquam minima es in principibus Juda; ex te enim dux qui regat populum meum Israel.
7. Tunc Herodes clam vocatis Magis, diligenter didicit ab eis tempus stellae quae apparuit eis;
8. Et mittens illos in Bethlehem dixit: Ite, et interrogate diligenter de puero; et cum inveneritis, renuntiate mihi, ut ego veniens adorem eum.

9. Qui cum audissent regem, abierunt. Et ecce stella, quam viderant in oriente, antecedebat eos usque dum veniens staret supra ubi erat puer.

10. Videntes autem stellam gavisii sunt gaudio magno valde.

11. Et intrantes domus invenerunt puerum cum Maria matre ejus, et providentes adoraverunt eum; et apertis thesauris suis, obtulerunt ei munera: aurum, thus, et myrrham.

12. Et responso accepto in somnis ne redirent ad Herodem, per aliam viam reversi sunt in regiones suam....

16. Tunc Herodes videns quoniam illusus esset a Magis, iratus est valde, et mittens occidit omnes pueros qui erant in Bethlehem et in omnibus finibus ejus, a bimatu et infra, secundum tempus quod exquisierat a Magis.

(Matt. 2;1-12; 16)

This account is sparse indeed. The Magi may have visited Herod and the Massacre may have actually taken place and not been recorded. In comparison with Herod's other butcheries on a much grander scale as to numbers of victims and their status and age, it may have been so insignificant that it was not considered worth recording. Louis Réau estimates, in fact, that the number of children under two years old in a small village like Bethlehem at the time of Christ's birth, probably was no more than twenty, with a maximum estimate of sixty.<sup>32</sup> This would be relatively insignificant in Herod's day. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* points out that various estimates of the probable population of Bethlehem have been made, 'ranging from 10 or 12 (A. Bisping, P. Shegg) to an obviously exaggerated 64,000 (Syrian liturgy) to a fantastic 144,000 (based on Ap 14.1-5, part of the Epistle of their feast).'<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, that such an event took place at all is dubious. If the Magi did visit Herod and say that they were seeking a new king, it seems inconsistent with Herod's highly suspicious nature that he should let them go with only a promise to return, rather than sending out spies after them. Louis Réau notes that this behaviour does not seem suitable for a clever king particularly interested in protecting his right to the throne.<sup>34</sup> As for the search to kill the infant king, Réau adds

that such an event is part of a universal folk motif rather than a likely historical event.<sup>35</sup> The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* also favours an interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew as motifs and themes, finding such elements as the Magi and the Massacre representative of theological rather than of historical fact. The stress in Matthew's account is emphatically on how Christ's life fulfilled prophecy: the Magi follow the star prophesied by Balaam (Numbers 24:17); the scribes quote the prophecy of Micah 5:2 naming Bethlehem as the birthplace of Christ; the Holy Family escape to Egypt so that the prophecy in Hosea 11:1 may be fulfilled and God may call his son out of Egypt; the Massacre fulfils the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:15 about the lamentation of Rachel. At the same time a midrashic interpretation of the events related by Matthew seems to yield rich results when explaining certain basic themes in the gospel, such as Jesus as Moses, Jesus as Israel and Jesus as wisdom.<sup>36</sup> It may be, therefore, that the Magi and the Massacre have more prophetic and symbolic than historical significance.

It seems strange that Josephus does not mention the Massacre, an event perfectly illustrating Herod's cruelty and irrationality during the last ten years of his life.<sup>37</sup> It is inconceivable that such an event could have escaped his notice had it really occurred. Some have suggested that the story of the Massacre had its source in Herod's scheme to have a young man from each Jewish family imprisoned in the hippodrome and massacred right after his death to ensure national mourning for him when he died.<sup>38</sup> This is not an implausible explanation, but it should also be noted that the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* in its article on Herod the Great concludes with this statement: 'The account in Mt. 2:16 of the slaughter of the Holy

Innocents at Bethlehem is entirely in keeping with the King's cruel jealousy.<sup>39</sup> Perowne also concludes that the Massacre was perfectly consistent with Herod's behaviour during his last ten years when he suffered from madness and paranoia and, indeed, Perowne cites analogous massacres of children from 'pagan antiquity'.<sup>40</sup> Whether or not the Massacre of the Innocents was an historical event, early Christian writers accepted it as a fact and used it as a basis for certain inevitable developments in their interpretations of Herod the Great.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Herod's emotional state is noted, but not exaggerated. When he heard about the Magi and their questions about a new king, he was 'turbatus'. It does not seem unusual for Herod to be troubled by such news when he himself had heirs. Many patristic writers recognize this. Bernard (1090-1153) commented, 'Porro, audito nomine regis, rex Herodes successorem suspicatus expavit. Nec mirum si turbatur Herodes',<sup>41</sup> although he immediately condemns Herod's evil. Matthew's account continues to discuss how, in order to discover more about the new-born king, Herod called in his advisers, the chief priests and scribes, and asked where the child was to be born. Then he summoned the Magi to determine when the star appeared (indicating when the child was born), so that he had all the relevant information necessary to start a search. Asking the Magi to report back to him was the last, cunning step in locating this 'imposter'. However, they did not return to him. 'Tunc, Herodes, videns quoniam illus esset a Magis iratus est valde; et mittens occidit omnes pueros qui erant in Bethlehem et in omnibus finibus eius, a bimatu et infra, secundum tempus quod exquisierat a Magis.'<sup>42</sup> This furious rage (iratus est valde) of Herod's is a much stronger reaction than the former 'turbatus est', but it still seems not unreasonable, except in its consequences.

Herod's Massacre of the Innocents as a direct result of his rage seems to the modern reader to be outrageous and extreme, but in Herod's brutal and violent age it probably would not have been so extraordinary, 'when crucifixions [and stonings] were ordered by the score as a commonplace sentence of a court of justice, when torture was a recognized legal process, [and] when the destruction of man by man in the arena was a popular amusement.'<sup>43</sup> In conclusion it can be said that the Vulgate gives a relatively cool, almost cryptic account of Herod as a wise and wily king, prone to anger and violent in his expression of this emotion.

#### B. The Apocryphal Writings

Several apocryphal books make reference to Herod. Generally they tend to be more emotionally and morally orientated than the Vulgate. There is only one apocryphal work from the Old Testament which refers to Herod. This is the *Assumption of Moses*,<sup>44</sup> written in the first half of the first century, in which Moses speaks to Joshua, prophesying the history of the Israelite nation. He ends by saying that the priests as well as the old and the young men will be destroyed by an 'insolent king' who will be foreign and will judge the Israelites as the Egyptians did.<sup>45</sup> 'An insolent king shall succeed them [the priests] who will not be of the race of priests, a man bold and shameless.' This account is significant for two reasons: first, this 'insolent king' was universally interpreted as Herod, and there is a clear moral condemnation of him in this passage notably absent from the factual Vulgate account; second, and even more significant in the light of how later medieval writers and artists treated the idea, is the comparison of Herod with the Egyptians and therefore with their ruler, Pharaoh. In medieval typological works, Pharaoh was often shown as an antitype

of Herod; both Herod and Pharaoh were tyrants and persecutors of Christ or Christ-like figures. There is a distinct adverse critical tone of judgement in this Old Testament apocryphal book, condemning Herod as a cruel and harsh foreign king, and implying a comparison with the notorious Egyptian rulers - a comparison which was to be infinitely fruitful for later artists.

Many New Testament Apocryphal Gospels refer to Herod and they are all uniform in seeing him as a villain, not only in his dealings with the Magi and the Massacre, but also in his horrible illness and death which were interpreted as a villain's just reward. The second century *Protevangelium of James*<sup>46</sup> is one of the two original Infancy Gospels<sup>47</sup> (the other being the *Gospel of Saint Thomas*), and is the most important Apocryphal Gospel for information about Herod. It tells the story of the Magi and their interview with Herod in a slightly different order from the Vulgate. In the latter, the Magi came to Jerusalem (presumably to Herod) and asked openly, 'Ubi est qui natus est rex Judaeorum?'<sup>48</sup> In the *Protevangelium*, however, Herod heard the rumours and the 'great tumult' caused by the arrival and questionings of the Magi and so he 'sent officers unto the wise men'<sup>49</sup> to fetch them to him, meanwhile examining his high priests for scriptural evidence of the Christ. This seems like only a slight change in the order of events but it is, in fact, a subtle way of introducing Herod's wiliness and his suspicious nature;<sup>50</sup> this very change in the order of events and in the additions of Herod's officers, is reflected in the liturgical drama a thousand years later, when Herod is similarly made a more dramatically motivated and evil character. The *Protevangelium* continues the story of Herod. When the Magi did not return to him and he 'perceived that he was mocked by the wise men, he was wroth and sent

murderers'<sup>51</sup> to kill all children two years and under. This statement hints, perhaps, of his paranoid tendencies. The Gospel then continues with an account of how Herod, convinced that John, son of Zacharias the priest, (John the Baptist) was the child whom the Magi worshipped, set out to slay him. Elizabeth fled with John to a mountain which opened up to receive and protect them, but Zacharias, the high priest, was slain before the high altar by Herod's own soldiers on Herod's orders. This story, rich as it is in elements for damaging Herod's character, greatly influenced Byzantine artists (see Chapter 5) but it does not appear in many other religious writings. The reason may be that the story of the death of Zacharias does not properly belong to the text of the *Protevangelium* and besides, Origen (c.185 - c.254) and other early writers explain the death of Zacharias in a completely different way.<sup>52</sup> Neither story seems to have been very popular with later writers. Nevertheless, Herod has become a suspicious tyrant, surrounded by officers, wily in his dealings with strangers and wrathful when aroused.

The *Protevangelium* was the basis for many later Infancy Gospels. The parts of the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*<sup>53</sup> and also of the *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy*<sup>54</sup> which deal with Herod are based on it. *Pseudo-Matthew* is essentially the same as its source, having the Magi come to Jerusalem and question the Jews, rather than Herod, about the birth-place of Christ, and then being summoned to Herod's presence.<sup>55</sup> When they do not return to Herod, he feels he has been 'made sport of...his heart swelled with rage and he sent through all the roads, wishing to seize them and put them to death. But when he could not find them at all, he sent anew to Bethlehem and all its borders, and slew all the male children whom he found of two years old and under, according to the



time he had ascertained from the magi.<sup>56</sup> This Gospel has Herod mount a separate search for the Magi, who were also considered to be kings of foreign lands, with the object of murdering them, rather than just ordering all the young children to be slain; this makes him guilty of regicide as well as infanticide. The legend of the wicked Herod slowly begins to grow.

The *Arabic Gospel* has its sources in the Canonical Gospels of Matthew and Luke and also in the *Protevangelium*. There is in it, however, no description of the Magi meeting Herod. They go directly to worship Christ who was born 'in the time of King Herod...as Zeraduscht (Zoroastre) had predicted',<sup>57</sup> and in a charming variation of the story, receive a swaddling-band from Mary which they take back to their own country and discover to have miraculous powers. Only after they have returned home and Herod realizes that they have left his kingdom, does he summon the priests and wise men and ask for evidence of where Christ is to be born.<sup>58</sup> This Gospel seems rather confused, but both M. R. James<sup>59</sup> and Alexander Walker<sup>60</sup> state that it is a late compilation by an Oriental. This could account for the rather haphazard order of events, a weakness which can be supplemented usefully by reference to the text of the *Protevangelium*.

The other original Infancy Gospel, the *Gospel of Thomas*,<sup>61</sup> deals mainly with the childhood miracles of Christ in Egypt. The Greek texts<sup>62</sup> begin at the point when Jesus is five years old, but the Latin text introduces the Gospel with the Flight to Egypt, undertaken 'when a commotion took place in consequence of the search made by Herod for our Lord Jesus Christ to kill him.'<sup>63</sup> That is the only mention that Herod has in this Gospel which, like the Vulgate, identifies him historically rather than adding any new dimensions to the slowly

growing legend or exaggerating his villainy in any way.

Another Apocryphal Gospel which deals with the Nativity and Flight to Egypt and Herod's part in these events is *The History of Joseph the Carpenter*, an Egyptian book of about the fourth century.<sup>64</sup> The proem states that 'indeed, it was our Lord Jesus Christ Himself who related this history to His holy disciples on the Mount of Olives....and the holy apostles have preserved this conversation and have left it written down in the library at Jerusalem.'<sup>65</sup> Christ describes his own Nativity. 'And indeed Mary, my mother, brought me forth in Bethlehem, in a cave near the tomb of Rachel the wife of the patriarch Jacob, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin.'<sup>66</sup> (This is the inconsolable Rachel weeping for her children, who is cited in Matt.2:18 as a prototype for the grieving mothers of the Massacre of the Innocents.) 'But Satan went and told this to Herod the Great.'<sup>67</sup> Herod here is quite clearly associated with the devil and with evil. But he is punished for his sins. 'Now Herod died by the worst form of death, atoning for the shedding of the blood of the children whom he wickedly cut off, though there was no sin in them. And that impious tyrant Herod being dead, they returned into the land of Israel.'<sup>68</sup>

The death of Herod is introduced in two other apocryphal books, although these books give visions of Herod in hell rather than accounts of his actual death. The first is *The Acts and Martyrdom of Matthew the Apostle*<sup>69</sup> and it begins with Matthew's vision of the Innocents in Paradise. Christ appears to him, as an Innocent, and Matthew recalls the Massacre (he was the only evangelist to record this event in his Gospel), and the first question which he asks is, 'That impious Herod, where is he?' He is given an answer. 'He dwells, indeed, in Hades; and there has been prepared for him fire unquenchable, Gehenna without

end, bubbling mire, worm that sleeps not, because he cut off three thousand infants.'<sup>70</sup> An equally gruesome vision of Herod in hell is given in *The Revelation of Esdras*<sup>71</sup> an Apocryphal Apocalypse, in which Esdras is granted a vision of 'the mysteries of God and His angels', of heaven, where he pleads with an angry and impatient God to save mankind, and of 'Tartarus' where the 'adversary of men' dwells. Michael and Gabriel and thirty-four other angels accompany him to 'the under parts of Tartarus'. 'I went down eighty-five steps, and they brought me down five hundred steps, and I saw a fiery throne, and an old man sitting upon it; and his judgment was merciless. And I said to the angels: Who is this? and what is his sin? And they said to me: This is Herod who for a time was a king, and ordered to put to death the children from two years old and under. And I said: Woe to his soul!'<sup>72</sup> Herod is thus not only quite firmly associated with the devil but also irrevocably ensconced in the deepest parts of hell in the apocryphal books.

In still another apocryphal work, *Letter of Herod to Pilate*,<sup>73</sup> Herod himself seems to realize the enormity of the price he will pay for his sins. He confesses, 'I am in great distress of mind at the death of Jesus, and reflecting on my sins in killing John Baptist and massacring the Innocents.'<sup>74</sup> He tells of the physical sufferings of his wife, his son and himself but recognizes these as the righteous judgments of God. 'Lesbonax my son is in the last stages of a decline. I am afflicted with dropsy and worms are coming out of my mouth. My wife's left eye is blinded through weeping. Righteous are the judgments of God, because we mocked at the eye of the righteous... And Pilate, since we are of one age, bury my family honourably.... Farewell. I have sent you my wife's earrings and my own signet ring.

I am already beginning to receive judgment in this world, but I fear the judgment hereafter much more. This is temporary, that is everlasting.'<sup>75</sup> This letter gives rather a pathetic picture of Herod although it does stress his eternal damnation. However, it is such a confused and obscure work, mixing three different Herods (Herod the Great, Herod Antipas who had John the Baptist beheaded and also tried Christ before the Crucifixion, and even Herod Agrippa who made such a confession before he died) that it is not to be relied on other than as an indication that some early writers<sup>76</sup> tended to confuse the Herods and generally assign the sins of all of them to Herod the Great.

Herod was firmly and permanently placed in Hell in the Coptic Gospel of Bartholomew. 'The text begins with the conquest of Hell and the deliverance of the children of Adam. Then follows the cursing of Judas. After a gap it is related how Death...sends his son Pestilence to secure Amente (i.e. Hell). But when Death with his six decans [sic] comes to Amente, he finds only three 'voices' left, Judas, Cain and Herod. All the rest have been set free by Christ.'<sup>77</sup>

Conclusion: Herod and Pilate

In the *Gospel of Nicodemus*,<sup>78</sup> Herod and Pilate are nicely contrasted. During the trial, although much evidence is presented to Pilate against Jesus, he steadily refuses to condemn him. Only when he is informed that this is the man whom Herod sought to slay is he finally persuaded to judge Jesus.

Before leaving these apocryphal writings and proceeding to more formal and official commentaries and patristic writings concerning Herod, it should be noted that there is a great contrast between the traditions which built up around Herod and those which were associated

with Pilate. While Herod always appeared as the arch-enemy of Christ, a peculiar ambiguity of attitude toward Pilate developed so that in the tradition of the Western church, he was the murderous criminal who sentenced Christ to be crucified, but in the tradition of the Eastern church in Egypt and Syria, he was a martyr and a saint.<sup>79</sup> Two apocryphal accounts of his death vividly demonstrate the contrast involved. In *The Death of Pilate*,<sup>80</sup> Pilate is said to have killed himself with his own knife (just as Herod tried to do) in an attempt to escape Caesar's sentence, but 'malignant and filthy spirits in his malignant and filthy body' caused demons to disrupt the various rivers where his body was unsuccessfully discarded, until at last he was buried in a pit which immediately became volcanic and remained so indefinitely. *The Paradosis of Pilate*,<sup>81</sup> however, tells of Pilate facing his beheading (ordered by Caesar) with prayer and being answered by a voice from heaven, saying 'All the generations and families of the nations shall count thee blessed, because under thee have been fulfilled all those things said about me by the prophets.'<sup>82</sup> As his head was struck off, an angel came down and received it. This was witnessed by his wife who died shortly thereafter.<sup>83</sup> The Marian language and saintly ending are striking details in this account of Pilate's death. Herod was never favoured with any such account. No such dual tradition grew up around him and there was never any ambiguity of attitude towards him. He was always considered a tyrant, a villain and a sinner fit for the worst pangs of hell.

## CHAPTER II: HEROD IN EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS

The histories of Josephus along with the biblical and apocryphal accounts of Herod were the main sources for all later writers on Herod the Great. Patristic commentators followed these sources and yet they occasionally introduced new incidents into their histories, and moral condemnation into their commentaries so that the reputation of Herod, which was never entirely favourable, deteriorated rapidly. This process can be seen in early histories as well as in Bible commentaries, homilies and sermons.

## I. Early Histories

## A. Africanus

Early writers, Christian and non-Christian alike, tended to write histories of the world which started with Creation and continued up to their own times. They dealt with Herod simply in his chronological order as they covered the history of the Jewish wars and the Hebrew people. Early Greek histories all followed this method. This was true of Josephus (see Chapter 1) and of Hegesippus, the second-century church historian whose *De Bello Judaico* is basically a translation of Josephus.<sup>1</sup> The third-century historian, Julius Africanus, (c.160 - c.240) used the same methodology but he expanded a new genealogy for Herod which had first been introduced by Justin Martyr (c.100 - c.165), making Herod's father, Antipater, an Ascalonite (and therefore not a Jew).<sup>2</sup> Africanus invented a lively fictional tale without a shred of evidence, about Antipater being kidnapped by Idumaeen robbers:

Some Idumaeen robbers attacking Ascalon, a city of Palestine, besides other spoils which they took from the temple of Apollo, which was built near the walls, carried off captive one Antipater, son of a certain Herod, a servant of the temple. And as the temple-servant was not able to pay the ransom for his son, Antipater was brought up in the customs of the Idumaeans, and afterwards enjoyed the friendship of Hyrcanus, the high priest of Judaea. And, being sent on an embassy to Pompey on behalf of Hyrcanus, and having restored to him the kingdom which was being wasted by Aristobulus, his brother, he was so fortunate as to obtain the title of procurator of Palestine. And when Antipater was treacherously slain through envy of his great good fortune, his son Herod succeeded him who was afterwards appointed king of Judaea under Antony and Augustus by a decree of the senate.<sup>3</sup>

This unlikely but romantic story was picked up and quoted not only by Eusebius in the third century, (see below) but also by Ambrose in the fourth century,<sup>4</sup> although later editors of these works are unanimous in condemning the whole fabrication as a pack of lies; the Benedictine editors of Ambrose, printed by Migne, state their views strongly: 'Haec iisdem pene verbis leguntur apud Eusebium...isque ea ex Africano desumpsisse se testatur: sed narratio ille ut prorsus fabulosa et commentitia rejicitur; neque omnino probatur Ambrosio.'<sup>5</sup> They suggest that even the authority of Ambrose should not persuade us to believe this story. In fact, this abduction story disappeared altogether after Ambrose and did not reappear until the twelfth century when Hugh of St. Victor reintroduced it.<sup>6</sup> Later medieval writers and painters often identified Herod the Great as Herod Ascalonita to distinguish him from Herod Antipas and Herod Agrippa (see Chapters 9 and 11) but the kidnap story was entirely forgotten.

## B. Eusebius

The most influential of the early Greek patristic historians was Eusebius (c.260 - c.340), bishop of Caesarea (one of the cities built by Herod the Great). In the *Ecclesiastical History*, he also deals with Herod's lineage, combining several sources including the Bible, Josephus and Africanus.<sup>7</sup> Eusebius was the earliest commentator to associate the foreign King Herod with Jacob's prophecy in Gen. 49:10: 'Non auferetur sceptrum de Iuda, Et dux de femore eius, Donec veniat qui mittendus est, Et ipse erit expectatio gentium.' He interpreted this verse to mean that Christ would not appear until a foreigner was king of the Jews and that Herod was, indeed, such a king. He then continued to emphasize Herod's foreign lineage, quoting first from Josephus, who gave his Idumaeen ancestry, and then from Africanus, who asserted that Antipater's father was the son of a certain Herod of Ascalon.<sup>8</sup>

Eusebius was responsible for transmitting another story, original with Africanus, which emphasized Herod's fanatical concern to be considered a legitimate king of the Jews. He is said to have had the Hebrew books of genealogy burnt in an effort to destroy any evidence of his low foreign birth, thinking that he would then appear of noble origin. Official copies of these books were kept in the Temple, and these Herod destroyed, but his ignoble plan was nullified by the fact that many pious Jews also kept these records in their homes.<sup>9</sup> Eusebius' account of such treatment by Herod of the books of genealogy may have been the inspiration for the authors of later liturgical drama who had Herod maltreat the books of prophecy from which his scribes read (see Chapter 7).



Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* was the first significant Christian historian to include an account of Herod's meeting with the Magi and also of the Massacre of the Innocents. Once again, he emphasized Herod's foreignness by relating the Massacre directly to Herod's fear of a true king of the house of David. He also interpreted all Herod's domestic tragedies, his final illness and his death as divine retribution after the Massacre. Deferrari points out that this idea of divine retribution for his evil actions was the traditional Christian explanation of the cause of Herod's sufferings and that Josephus does not make such an interpretation, either through ignorance or because of the unimportance of the tragedy as compared with other atrocities of the time.<sup>10</sup> According to Eusebius, 'Herod, on being asked by the Magi from the East who were questioning where he might be who was born king of the Jews...was not a little disturbed at the situation, inasmuch as his sovereignty was in danger, as he thought.' After inquiring of the Doctors of the Law and being told the prophecy of Micah, Herod, 'with a single edict... commanded that infants at their mother's breast, of two years of age and less, both in Bethlehem and its outskirts, be put to death according to the time precisely indicated to him by the Magi. Immediately, after not even a short delay, divine justice overtook him while he was still in this life.'<sup>11</sup>

Certain other facts about Herod were misrepresented by Eusebius. Not only does his interpretation contribute to the vilification of Herod and the blackening of his reputation, but it is influential in the depictions of Herod which later medieval writers and artists produced (see Chapters 8 and 9). These have to do with Herod's attempted suicide and with his plan to have the young Jewish nobles killed after

he died.<sup>12</sup> Josephus made it clear that Herod's suicide attempt was foiled by his cousin, Achiabus, and that he lived for five days afterwards (*War*, I xxxii 8). He also states that Salome did not follow Herod's orders about the executions, but released the nobles and sent them to their homes (*War*, I xxxii 8). Eusebius, however, gives the impression that the suicide was successful. He quotes long passages from Josephus about the illness of Herod, describes his attempt at suicide with a knife, and then concludes that suicide was a just penalty for Herod's life which ended immediately in great agony. He omits any reference to the next five days of Herod's life and writes as if the suicide was successful, passing straight on to a description of Herod's lavish funeral. Herod was an unpleasant, evil tyrant even for early writers, but to change the details of his death, as Eusebius did, so that he died by his own hand, would be to have him die in mortal sin; this is the worst sin possible for any man, according to the Catholic Church, and is comparable to profaning the Eucharist in the intensity of evil it suggests in the sinner. The second detail which Eusebius seems to misrepresent is Salome's killing of the nobles. He relates Herod's commands to Salome and her husband Alexas to have the nobles killed, but in his account of Herod's death, Eusebius fails to mention that Salome did not carry out those orders. Again, such a change in details makes Herod seem all the more monstrous.

These versions of Herod's death were handed down to the Middle Ages through the writings of Remigius of Auxerre (c. 841 - 908) who, in a homily on Matt. 2:19 and the death of Herod, states unequivocally, ' [Herodes] vibrato cultello percussit pectus suum et cecidit mortuus. Hoc facto occisi sunt omnes qui tenebantur in custodia.'<sup>13</sup> Remigius of Auxerre is cited, but not followed, in the *Legenda Aurea*<sup>14</sup> and thus the

medieval artists and writers had access to this tradition of a successful suicide and massacre of the young nobles.

Herod's suicide may be appropriate and theologically satisfying, but nevertheless it is a distortion of the facts as they were known. As early as the third century, then, Christian historians were distorting their sources in order to vilify their portrayal of Herod the Great. In the early fifth century, Augustine added a new dimension to the chronological approach to universal history by his concept of history passing through six ages. Dr. John Taylor points out that this 'theory of the six ages held the field in Europe until it was replaced by the notion, held by the humanist historians, of a division between classical antiquity and the period which followed.'<sup>15</sup> Writers with this philosophy of the six ages of the world generally dealt with Herod the Great at the beginning of the Sixth Age which covered the time from the birth of Christ to Judgement Day. This is true of Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*<sup>16</sup> and, in the ninth century, of Ado of Vienne's *Sex Aetatum Mundi*.<sup>17</sup> Later medieval historians such as Peter Comestor in *Historia Scholastica* (c. 1150) and Vincent de Beauvais in *Speculum Historiale* (c. 1250) use the same method of organization (see Chapter 9). However, the attitude of Christian historians using this philosophic approach to the history of the world changed considerably towards Herod the Great. He was no longer just one of the historical rulers of Judaea; he became predominantly the first man to persecute the Christ-Child, the Saviour of the world, whose coming was the climax of all medieval histories. In these accounts, Herod's accomplishments as military commander, political negotiator, or reigning monarch were disregarded and his role as persecutor of the Son of God and master of the Massacre of the Innocents was emphasized. Thus it can be seen that all early histories tended to

vilify the character of Herod the Great and occasionally to fabricate events in order to support their portrayals of the murderous foreign tyrant who was king of the Jews.

## II. Gospel Harmonies and Commentaries

### A. Augustine and Jerome

From very early times, Christian writers tried not only to write new accounts of history accommodating their new religion, but also to explain the gospels in the light of that Christian view of history. One of their methods was to collate or harmonize the gospels so as to produce a continuous, meaningful Life of Christ. These harmonies were without commentary at first. The earliest outstanding life of Christ based on a combination of the gospels was Tatian's *Diatessaron*, written in the second century (c. 150) and used in the Syriac-speaking churches as the standard text of the gospels down to the fifth century.<sup>18</sup> This work was immensely popular and it served also as the basis for the later Latin Gospel Harmony written in the sixth century, known as the *Codex Fuldensis*.<sup>19</sup> In these collations of the gospels, the Gospel of Matthew was used, of course, for the parts concerning Herod, the Magi and the Massacre of the Innocents.

Augustine's Gospel Harmony, *De Consensu Evangelistarum*,<sup>20</sup> written c. 400, was prefaced by a discussion of the four gospel texts which had been separated by then in Jerome's Vulgate. Augustine meticulously pointed out the differences between one gospel and another, but he did not concern himself with the reasons for these differences in the texts, concluding that 'tacitus enim quae non vult dicere, sic ea quae vult dicere.'<sup>21</sup> He then proceeded to explain what was happening in the gospel accounts, but he did not make any moral

comments. It is interesting to note, however, that one of the points which he chose to explain was 'De Duobus Herodibus.'<sup>22</sup> He carefully distinguished between Herod 'qui quaerebat animam pueri Christi' and 'Herodes autem alius filius ejus, non rex, sed tetrarcha dictus est, quod nomen praecum a parte regni quarta inditum resonat.'<sup>23</sup> This explanation is strictly historical and factual, with no emotional or moral overtones.

During the early period, not only Gospel Harmonies but also Gospel Commentaries were being produced. Jerome (c.342 - 420) is best known for his Latin translations of Greek and Hebrew biblical texts, but he was also one of the first scholars to write separate commentaries on various books of the Bible. His *Commentarius in Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*<sup>24</sup> deals with the Nativity by commenting extensively on the significance of the star, Bethlehem, the Magi's gifts, Egypt and Rachel; his only comment about Herod is to point out that Archelaus, who reigned in place of his father Herod, was not the Herod of the Passion as many people think, but the brother of that Herod. Jerome then refers his reader to Josephus for the correct genealogy.<sup>25</sup> (It is important to remember that Josephus was highly respected by Jerome, and often used as an authority by other patristic writers as well.) Generally speaking, although Jerome commented on the content of the Gospels, the nature of the material he inserted was mostly linguistic and topographical.

#### B. Bede

Not until Bede's (673 - 735) *In Matthei Evangelium Expositio*<sup>26</sup> did any strong moral comment appear in a Gospel Commentary. Bede founded his exposition on the writings of Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose and Gregory, the Latin Church Fathers, but he also contributed some new material. He

was one of Herod's main detractors, equating him dramatically with the devil, with Jews who hate Christ and with all heretics in general. While explaining Matt. 2:12 and why the Magi returned to their own country by another way instead of returning to Herod, Bede comments, 'Herodes vero significat diabolum, ad quem redire post acceptam fidem prohibemur.'<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that Herod does not merely listen to the devil as he did in the Apocryphal Gospels, but he now signifies the devil himself which the Magi and all faithful Christians must avoid. For the next Biblical verse, in which Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to escape the search of Herod, Bede comments that Joseph must flee Herod who signifies the hatred of the Jews,<sup>28</sup> and also all heretics.<sup>29</sup> Later, when explaining verse 16, 'Tunc Herodes videns quomodo illusus esset a magis,' Bede gives a surprisingly detailed and coherent account of Herod's thoughts and actions before the Massacre. He points out that at first when the Magi did not return to him, Herod thought that they themselves had been deceived by that false star they had followed and were too embarrassed to appear before him, returning instead quietly to their own countries.<sup>30</sup> This interpretation of Herod's behaviour is a good example of the vilification of Herod's character in order to emphasize his subtle and evil ways. According to Bede, Herod then forgot about the new-born king and only realized that he had been deceived by the Magi after hearing rumours of what had happened at the Temple during the Feast of the Purification when Simeon and Anna hailed Christ as the King of the Jews. Then Herod became enraged and decided to pursue the Christ-Child and kill all infants two years and under, not only in Bethlehem and its vicinity, as suggested by the Vulgate, but in all of Judaea, according to Bede.<sup>31</sup> At this point Bede introduces another original piece of information about how the cunning, suspicious and

superstitious King Herod decided on the age limit of two years for those children who were to be massacred. 'Omnes a filio unius noctis usque ad filium duorum annorum occidit. Secundum tempus quod exquisierat a Magis, tractans iniquus rex quod possibile esset regi Deo nascenti, cui famulabantur sidera coeli, in invalidiore aetate anni unius vel duorum puer apparere oculis hominum; et rursus si vellet parvitate corporis celare aetatem naturae, utrum post annum nativitatis Domini an duos hanc necem conficeret, non apparet; nisi forte dicamus quod post annum evolutum, et quattuor dies sequentis anni infantes jusserit occidi, ubi dies passionis eorum a catholica veneratur Ecclesia.<sup>32</sup> Bede suggests that Herod was afraid that the new-born Christ might be able to change his shape and size in order to escape. Herod therefore seems to acknowledge the fact that this babe is Christ, but at the same time he attributes to Christ the same craftiness that he uses himself. Bede's account of Herod's motivation before the Massacre helps to explain the difference between 'turbatus est' of Matt. 2:3 and 'iratus est valde' of Matt. 2:16 when Herod found himself deceived; according to his view, at first Herod did not believe that anyone would try to deceive him and instead he rather enjoyed the idea that the Magi themselves had been tricked and he could mock their gullibility. When, however, he discovered that he had, in fact, been made the fool, his rage knew no bounds. His rage is the one quality on which writers always expand. Bede's Commentary is certainly important in further blackening Herod and in associating him with rage, hatred, heretics and the devil.

#### C. Rabanus Maurus

Bede made some original and dramatic comments about Herod in his exposition of Matthew but his tone was rather reserved and formal.

Rabanus Maurus (d. 856), however, a century later, commented and enlarged on the Gospel in a much more emotional and vindictive way. In his *Commentarius in Matthaeum* he deals with Herod in Book I, Chapter ii, 'De Nativitate Christi in Bethlehem Juda, et Magis; de Fuga in Aegyptum et nece infantum.'<sup>33</sup> He begins by following Eusebius and noting that Herod was the first foreign king of the Jews, thus fulfilling prophecy. When he comments on Matt. 2:3, Herod's meeting the Magi and becoming 'turbatus', Rabanus Maurus comments, 'Et frustra Herodes turbatur suspicionibus, falsis nequidquam agitatur, invidiae stimulis inflammatur, et ob hoc natum Regem occidere conatur. Inanis est ista turbatio et vana prorsus cogitatio.'<sup>34</sup> He suggests that Herod was suspicious, jealous and deceiving, but that he was also foolish and deluded to think that he could kill Christ. There follows a standard list of contrasting motives and methods of Christ the heavenly king and Herod the earthly king:

Rex iste qui natus est non venit reges  
superare pugnando, sed moriendo mirabiliter  
subjugare. Nec ideo natus est, ut Herodi  
succedat, sed ut in eum mundus fideliter  
credat. Venit enim non ut pugnet vivus,  
sed ut triumphet occisus. Nec venit ut sibi  
de aliis gentibus auro exercitum quaerat,  
sed ut pro salvandis gentibus pretiosum  
sanguinem fundat.<sup>35</sup>

Of course, Christ's precious blood was traditionally contrasted with the value of mere money, but there may also be here a hint at Herod's mercenary armies and his practice of obtaining favours by out-bribing all his rivals.<sup>36</sup> The text goes on to consider how Herod questioned the Magi about the star and then dismissed them with the injunction to return to him so that he, too, could go and worship the child. Rabanus Maurus sees in this act great evil and hypocrisy. His first comment on the text is, 'Herodis mens, et facta conveniunt, quia livorem quem



tenebat in corde, forinsecus ostendit in opere.'<sup>37</sup> This use of 'livorem' to describe the blackness and the ugliness of Herod's heart and the malice therein is startling and dramatic. It is this same concept that later medieval manuscript illuminators were expressing when they painted Herod's face black to express outwardly the inner blackness of his evil heart (see Chapter 8). Rabanus Maurus saw Herod as not only evil but as the epitome of hypocrisy - Herod, 'cujus quidem personam omnes hypocritae tenent.'<sup>38</sup> He suddenly changes his style of writing when he considers this aspect of Herod, and addresses his words directly to him. 'Superfluo, Herodes, timore turbaris, et frustra in suspectum tibi puerum saevire moliris. Non capit Christum regia tua, nec mundi Dominus potestatis tuae sceptri est contentus angustiis. Quem in Judaea regnare non vis, ubique regnat. Et felicius ipse regnare si ejus imperio subderis. Cur sincero officio non facis, quod subdola falsitate promittis? Perge cum magis, et verum regem suppliciter adorando venerare.'<sup>39</sup> This direct attack on Herod increases the emotional quality of this commentary. When he comes to discuss the Massacre of the Innocents, Rabanus Maurus repeats Bede's ideas (Herod's belief that the Magi had been deceived and that Christ had magic powers to change his age), but when he deals with Herod's ordering of the Massacre, he comments emotionally, 'Quia crudelitas animi per invidiam et furorem exardescens, modum in nullo tenuit, sed malitia omnes superare contendit.'<sup>40</sup> Here Herod's cruelty and supreme malice are revealed, as he kills the children not only of Bethlehem but of all the neighbouring regions so that he is 'tyrannus impurissimus et omni dolo atque nequitia plenissimus.'<sup>41</sup> In an allegorical interpretation at the end of the chapter, the 'truculentissimus' Herod is said to be the type or example

of all the evil, vile persecutors of all Christ's martyrs,<sup>42</sup> and he is summarily damned for this.<sup>43</sup> The Commentary of Rabanus Maurus, unlike the earlier Harmonies, mingles historical facts from Josephus and Eusebius, patristic explanations of a decided anti-Herodian nature, and great moral indignation, culminating in emotional outbursts which all contributed to the process of darkening the portrait of Herod the Great.

### III. Sermons and Homilies

The process of the vilification of Herod rapidly advanced, as one might expect, in patristic sermons and homilies. These were more likely to be embellished with imaginative and moral comments than scholarly commentaries, although their purpose remained primarily didactic and their audience was similar. The occasion for a sermon was different, however. The great sermon/homily cycles produced by many patristic writers were based on the Festivals of the church year and they tended to expand accordingly. Leo the Great wrote eight sermons on Epiphany; Augustine wrote thirteen on the Nativity and twenty-eight on Easter. The church festivals which involve Herod most fully are the Feast of the Holy Innocents on December 28 and Epiphany on January 6 (see Chapter 4). He is also mentioned sometimes in Nativity sermons and in those concerning the Flight to Egypt.

#### A. Ambrose

Ambrose (c.339 - 97), the earliest of the four traditional Doctors of the Latin Church, made great contributions towards the distortion of Herod's character by setting an example for later writers. In his Gospel Commentary he elaborated on the stories of the kidnapping and the burning of the genealogical books (see above), concluding strongly,

'Herodem nullo affinem generi Judaeorum, regnum adulterina fraude quaesisse.'<sup>44</sup> In his five Epiphany Sermons,<sup>45</sup> Ambrose put great emphasis on Herod's spiritual blindness, and on his refusal to believe in Christ even though he had more evidence, from the Magi and from Scripture, than others who did believe in Christ immediately. As most patristic writers were to do, he quoted Old Testament passages relating them to the Gospels. He quoted Isaiah 6:9, 'Videntes, videbitis, et non videbitis', and explained, 'Hoc est, Salvatorem quem cernerent oculis corporalibus, spiritali lumine non viderent.'<sup>46</sup> Herod's inability to recognize the Saviour or to see the divine light was stressed by many writers after Ambrose; one even suggested that Herod had 'infirmi oculi'.<sup>47</sup> It was for this blind refusal to believe in Christ rather than for his infamous Massacre of the Innocents that Herod was damned, according to Ambrose.

An even more outstanding quality of Herod's nature was his wrath. When Ambrose gave a linguistic reason for the association of the names Bethlehem and Ephrata in his Letter to Horontianus (c.387),<sup>48</sup> he brought out the resulting connection of Herod with wrath. He was dealing with the perplexity of Horontianus concerning the meaning of the names Bethlehem and Ephrata, and of their conjunction in Scripture;<sup>49</sup> Bethlehem means 'house of bread' and Ephrata means 'house of wrath', and yet they were used to indicate the same place. Ambrose explained how these equal names could be reconciled when their meanings were so different. He quoted Micah 5:2 (which is repeated in Matt. 2:6), and then explained:

"Et tu, Bethleem, domus Ephrata, non es minima inter principes Juda; ex te emin exhibit Princeps in Israel." Bethleem domus panis est, Ephrata domus furorem videntis. Hoc habet interpretatio istorum nominum. In Bethleem natus est de Maria Christus: eadem autem Bethleem, quae Ephrata (Luc. II.6). In domo igitur furoris generatus est Christus: et ideo jam non domus furoris, sed domus panis, quia panem recepit eum, qui descendit de coelo (Joan.VI.50). Domus autem furorem videntis est Ephrata; quia illic Herodes dum Christum requirit, perimi statuit infantulos. 50

Thus it was that Herod's wrath caused the name of Ephrata to bear such significance. Ambrose also pointed out that Rachel foresaw Herod's wrath even when she was the patriarch Jacob's wife. Her inconsolable weeping for her children was, of course, taken as a type for the weeping of the mothers of the Innocents, whose grief was caused by Herod's wrath.<sup>51</sup>

#### B. Augustine

Augustine (d. 430) wrote numerous sermons on the Nativity and on Epiphany<sup>52</sup> but he did not stress the wrath of Herod so much as the fear that was struck into his heart when he heard of the birth of the new king. In Sermon CXCIX, 'In Epiphania Domini, I,' the devoted love of the Magi towards Christ is compared to the cruel fear and terror of Herod: the Magi sought Christ in order to worship him, while Herod sought in order to destroy. 'Magi quaerebant, ut invenirent: Herodes quaerebat, ut perderet....Inter Magorum pium amorem, et Herodis crudelem timorem, illi evanuerunt Bethlehem demonstrantes.'<sup>53</sup>

In Sermon CC, 'In Epiphania Domini, II,' the section entitled 'Herodis terror' describes Herod, 'rex impius', showing great fright at the Magi's announcement, while the Magi conversely delight in Christ and adore him.<sup>54</sup> Sermon CCII, 'In Epiphania Domini, IV,' again refers to Herod's reaction of terror to the epiphany or manifestation of Christ, made known to him by the Magi.<sup>55</sup> The fear of Herod expressed in these sermons seems disproportionate to a man in his position, a monarch,

with means of protecting himself against all the dangers of contemporary society. Augustine may be giving here the first indications that Herod had a paranoid fear of losing his kingdom.

Augustine also stresses the blindness of Herod and other unbelievers. In Sermon CCI, 'In Epiphania Domini, III,'<sup>56</sup> he points out that Christ was made known, or manifested, not only to the Jews but also to the Gentiles. He was recognized by Gentiles in the East and in the West, such as Pilate and the Magi, while the Jews who had the evidence of Scripture did not believe. Augustine adds that they were therefore defeated and scattered throughout the lands of the world to wander in a kind of limbo, unable to mix with Gentiles, much like Cain who was an enemy of God but marked so that no one would kill him.<sup>57</sup> Although Herod is not named in this passage, he is certainly one of the unbelievers and an archenemy of God, akin to the first murderer, Cain, in many ways. This inherent suggestion that Herod be associated with Cain intensifies the impression of him as a murderer. It also parallels other typological associations of Herod with Old Testament figures such as Pharaoh. Both Abel and Moses were considered types of Christ. Herod was associated with their persecutors, Cain and Pharaoh.

#### C. Gregory the Great

Gregory the Great (c.540 - 604) was perhaps most outspoken of the early Church Fathers in his damaging remarks about Herod in his homiletic writing. He opens Homily X, for the day of Epiphany, by reading the story of the Magi and then exclaiming, 'Coeli Rege nato, rex terrae turbatus est.'<sup>58</sup> There is a kind of exasperation and disgust in his tone as he indicates Herod's complete lack of understanding of this divine event and his utter blindness when confronted with the facts

concerning the birth of the new king. He points out that an angel appeared to the shepherds and they believed, a star led the Magi and they followed, the Magi and Herod's priests indicated to him not only that the Messiah was born, but also where and when, and yet Herod (and the Jews) still would not believe. Gregory concludes that Herod is therefore damned for his unbelief.<sup>59</sup> He points out that Herod, however, eventually decided to accept the news of the new king and act, lest he lose his own kingdom. He pretended an interest in the new-born king. 'Adorare sum velle se simulat, ut (quasi hunc invenire possit) exstinguat. Sed quanta est humana malitia contra consilium divinitatis?'<sup>60</sup> This behaviour leads Gregory to see Herod as the personification of hypocrisy and as a heretic as well,<sup>61</sup> ideas which Bede later incorporated so dramatically in his vivid commentary.

The sermons and homilies of the early Doctors of the church set the tone for interpreting Herod's character and role within the Christian view of history, ethics and morals. They emphasized only details that made Herod look black - his blindness and refusal to believe, his terror, his hypocrisy and his wrath - but generally speaking, their expression of these ideas was fairly restrained. Ambrose took great pains to give a scholarly explanation of 'the house of wrath', and even Gregory's ideas were more vividly expressed by Bede. Nevertheless, the direction was set for later writers who followed with enthusiasm and ingenuity.

#### D. Vilification of Herod by Other Writers

Other early writings about Herod all tend to darken the portrait of Herod the Great. Two tendencies seem clear: some writers merely continue to vilify Herod, following the examples set for them but expressing themselves in more vehement ways; others distort their accounts of

events in Herod's life, sometimes perhaps unintentionally, but always with the result of making Herod look blacker than he was. There are also several instances where writers quite simply fabricated events to provide examples for what they wanted to say about Herod's character. It is important to recognize the vilification process and the biographical 'accretions' which the Herod legend gathered before he became the raging tyrant of medieval literature and art.

i) Herod's Savagery

From an early date, Herod was referred to as a savage tyrant, who brought nothing but evil to the Jewish nation and was cruel enough to kill his own children. Maximus (c.380 - 470) summed him up thus: 'Quia enim fraudulenter regnum Judaeorum primus ex gentibus adeptus fuerat, non solum Judaeis multa mala intulerit, verum etiam in filiis propriis patricida exstiterat.'<sup>62</sup> The phrase 'saevitia Herodis' appears repeatedly<sup>63</sup> to describe the savage cruelty of the tyrant who could murder so many innocent children, and his 'cruentissimi persecutoris impietas'.<sup>64</sup> The sermons using such terminology and dwelling on these aspects of Herod's career are sometimes written with great vehemence and passion. The sermon of Peter Chrysologus (fifth century), 'De Infantium Nece',<sup>65</sup> is a good example of the emotional intensity of some of the early writers when they discussed Herod. He opened his sermon by referring to Herod's inhuman cruelty, jealousy, spite and envy. 'Zelus quo tendat, quo prosiliat livor, invidia quo feratur Herodiana hodie patefecit immanitas: quae dum temporalis regni aemulatur angustias, aeterni regis ortum molitur extinguere.'<sup>66</sup> Then he comments on Herod's reaction to being tricked by the Magi. 'Dolet impietas se illusam, dilatam se crudelitas furit, fremit dolositas se deceptam, et

in se fraus reversa colliditur. Herodes stridet cadens ipse in laqueum quem tetendit: hinc iniquitatem quam condiderat evaginat: de fide perfidiae sumit arma; terreno quaerit furore, quem natum coelitus non credit; ad sinus matrum militum cogit castra, inter ubera arcem pietatis oppugnat, in teneris uberibus ferrum durat, lac fundit antequam sanguinem, dat ante mortem sentire quam vitam, tenebras ingerit intrantibus lucem.<sup>67</sup> Chrysologus, in a great piling up of parallel phrases, pours out invective on Herod whom he considers the master of all evil. His use of alliteration intensifies the effect in the following passage when Chrysologus is commenting on Herod's dastardly act of ordering the Massacre. Herod is the 'magister mali, minister doli, irae artifex, inventor sceleris, impietatis auctor, pietatis praedo, inimicus innocentiae, hostis naturae, malus omnibus, suis peior, pessimus sibi.... O ambitio quam caeca semper! O quam semper praesumptio pessima!'<sup>68</sup>

This passionate, rhetorical style is found again in the Herod material in the sermons of Fulgentius a century later.<sup>69</sup> In fact, Fulgentius goes one step further and addresses Herod directly, berating him for his anger, denouncing his foolish ire and vain plans to kill Christ, and warning him not to fear for the successor of his kingdom, but to fear for his own soul which will be justly damned for his failure to believe in the real King. His attack begins: 'Quid est quod sic turbaris, Herodes? Quoniam natum regem Judaeorum audisti, turbaris, suspicionibus agitaris, invidiae stimulis inflammaris, et ob hoc natum regem occidere conaris. Inanis est ista turbatio tua, et vana prorsus cogitatio tua....Noli eum timere regni tui successorem, sed time infidelitatis tuae justissimum damnatorem.'<sup>70</sup> Such audacity and passion is a precursor to the spirit of later medieval dramatists who depicted Herod in the English mystery plays.



## ii) Herod's Madness

Because Herod was seen as a tyrant capable of unspeakable savagery who deliberately refused to recognize and worship God, he was said by some early writers to be mad. From being considered as 'inanis', he becomes 'insanus'. Traditionally the church believed that it was foolish, indeed impossible, to oppose God's will and so anyone who tried to do so was considered mad. Radulph Ardens (twelfth century) applies this theological tenet specifically to Herod in his second homily on the Innocents. He notes that Christ was able to escape from Herod through divine intervention (an angel appeared to warn Joseph to flee), and concludes, 'vero demonstratur humanum furorem frustra contra divinum propositum insanire, in hoc quod intentio Herodis Christum occidere machinantis frustatur. Scriptum est enim: "Non est prudentia, non est ratio, non est consilium contra Dominum (Prov. III)".'<sup>71</sup> This is not clinical madness, but madness because it is behaviour contrary to the will of God. The earliest writer, and the most outstanding one, to dwell on Herod's madness was John Chrysostom (347 - 407). In Homily VII on the Gospel of Matthew he states his attitude towards Herod's actions, especially the Massacre, strongly and clearly: 'Attempting to slay That which was born - an act of extreme idiocy, not of madness only.'<sup>72</sup> The 'utter folly'<sup>73</sup> and 'great wickedness'<sup>74</sup> of this 'blood-thirsty tyrant'<sup>75</sup> are continually stressed because he refused to believe all the signs which God sent. In Homily VIII, Chrysostom explains that, after worshipping the Child, the Magi were sent off quickly by God to teach in Persia so that they could be missionaries and also so that God could 'intercept the madness of the king, that he might learn that he was attempting things impossible, and might quench his wrath and desist from this his vain labour.'<sup>76</sup> This, however, was not successful and 'the

excess of Herod's madness'<sup>77</sup> eventually led him 'to receive a yet sharper punishment for folly so great.'<sup>78</sup> Herod's madness still seems equal to folly in this passage. In Homily IX, however, his madness is connected directly with wrath and also with demons. 'For driven wild by this anger, and envy, as by some demon, he takes account of nothing, but rages even against nature herself, and his anger against the wise men who had mocked him, he vents upon the children that had done no wrong.'<sup>79</sup> He was a 'tyrant raging'<sup>80</sup> but acted as if driven by a demon. This is not actual madness, of course, but moral madness; it is 'the extreme folly'<sup>81</sup> of turning away from God, or worse still, against God. Such wickedness seems to be prompted by a devil and can best be expressed as madness, though it is moral.<sup>82</sup>

Slightly later than Chrysostom, Leo the Great (d. 461) used the term 'insanis' in reference to Herod. When the Magi and Jesus escaped from him, according to Leo the Great, it was the 'Herodis insania' that led him to think of the Massacre.<sup>83</sup> Later, when meditating on the fact that Herod had fulfilled the prophecy of Gen. 49:10 because he was a foreign king, Leo the Great comments simply, 'quoniam insanis magistris veritas scandalum est.'<sup>84</sup> Again this is a moral madness; also it should be noted that the indictment is aimed at the Jewish nation for having a mad leader as well as at Herod for being mad. This aspect of Herod's nature was not, in fact, mentioned by any other early writers until the twelfth century, when Peter Abelard, in an impassioned speech directed to Herod during his sermon, 'In Natali Innocentum', rages, 'Insanus in alios factus, in te ipsum crudelior es repertus.'<sup>85</sup> The emphasis here is more on Herod's cruelty than on his madness, however; his wrath and cruelty were always to draw more comment than any other aspects of his character.

## iii) Herod's Association with the Devil

A man capable of such cruelty and such rage as the early writers saw in Herod was considered so abysmally wicked that they quickly associated him with the devil. But the process whereby Herod came to symbolize the devil was slow and subtle. At first he was merely incited to evil by the devil. Origen (c. 185 - 254) explains that Herod conspired against the Christ-Child, 'his mind being agitated by contending passions on account of his wickedness, and being instigated by the blind and wicked devil who from the very beginning plotted against the Saviour.'<sup>86</sup> Chrysostom in Homily IX referred to above, explained that Herod was driven wild 'as by some demon'<sup>87</sup>; Chrysologus makes a clear distinction, saying that when Herod sought out Christ, it was really the devil working through Herod, 'Herodes quaerebat, sed quaerebat diabolus per Herodem.'<sup>88</sup> Some writers became bolder and stated that Herod was not merely the instrument of the devil, but that he acted like the devil himself. Thus Leo the Great, in one of his sermons, suggests that 'Herodes in diabolo saevit contra Ecclesiae filios'<sup>89</sup>; when he describes Herod after the Magi arrive with their unsettling news, he uses the phrase 'Herodes quoque in diabolo fremit',<sup>90</sup> a phrase echoed by Bede in one of his homilies.<sup>91</sup> Still other writers made a direct and strong connection between the devil and Herod. In one of his later sermons, Leo the Great emphasizes that Herod is the devil himself, 'ipse diabolus';<sup>92</sup> Isidore of Seville (c. 560 - 636) states that 'Herod qui infantum necem intulit, diaboli formam expressit';<sup>93</sup> and Bede stated boldly in his Commentary that 'Herodes vero significat diabolum.'<sup>94</sup> Many writers warn that Herod and the devil must be avoided by Christians at all costs. Bruno of Asti (tenth century) advises that just as Christ fled from Herod, so we should flee from the devil<sup>95</sup> (presumably he equates them), but Chrysostom gives an even graver warning. The worst

possible sin a Christian can commit is to partake of the sacrament insincerely, without faith, and so, when Chrysostom wrote that, just as demons inspire sinners to partake of, and therefore profane, the Eucharist, Herod would inspire the Magi to seek and then betray Christ,<sup>96</sup> he must have inspired a deep sense of horror in his audience. No worse profanation than that of the Sacrament could be imagined, and to parallel Herod's diabolical behaviour with this was to paint him utterly black. Damnation is the only just end for him, as Fulgentius stated.<sup>97</sup> Arnaud de Bonneval (twelfth century) suggests a Dantean scene as he rejoices to think that the devil now delights in the blood of Herod, just as Herod delighted in the blood of the Innocents - 'quos usque hodie funestus Herodes persequitur, quorum sanguine et morte diabolus delectatur.'<sup>98</sup>

#### iv) Herod's Son as Antichrist

Although Herod was firmly associated with the devil and although he was reigning monarch at the time of Christ's birth, he was never referred to as Antichrist. This title was reserved for his son, Archelaus (who succeeded him). When Joseph returned from Egypt, according to Matt. 2:22, he was afraid to go into Judaea because Archelaus reigned there in place of his father; early commentators on this passage all point out that Joseph was right to hesitate because 'Archelaus...Antichristum significat',<sup>99</sup> and it was wise to avoid Antichrist. That this interpretation should grow and become immensely popular is extremely interesting, in that the Vulgate already gives one explanation of why Joseph went to Nazareth instead of entering Judaea. This was to fulfil the prophecy that Christ should be called a Nazarene (Matt. 2:23). There was, therefore, no need for any further

explanation of Joseph's choice, and yet one started very early with Maximus (c.380 - c.470) and continued right through the twelfth century.<sup>100</sup> Archelaus had a short and rather unsuccessful reign, ending in deposition and banishment after ten years,<sup>101</sup> and it seems strange that such a weak, foolish leader should be given the title Antichrist, when a diabolical anti-hero was readily available in Herod the Great. However, Archelaus was a contemporary of Christ (Herod died shortly after Christ was born, at the age of about seventy). More important, perhaps, was a tendency in some early writers to compare the circumstances of the births of Archelaus, son of King Herod, and Christ, son of God. Fulgentius (468 - 533), in a sermon on Epiphany,<sup>102</sup> wonders why the Magi went to the king of the Jews (Herod) and told him that they were looking for the new-born King of the Jews, especially when Herod had sons to succeed him and would naturally be 'troubled' by this news. Then he writes a passage in which he compares the birth of the son of Herod with the birth of the son of God:

Archelaus natus est in palatio Christus in diversorio. Archelaus natus, in lecto est argenteo positus; Christus autem natus, in praesepio est brevissimo collocatus. Ille forsitan pretiosis involutus est sericis, iste vilissimis involutus est pannis. Et tamen ille natus in palatio, contemnitur; iste natus in diversorio, quaeritur. Ille a Magis nullatenus nominatur; iste inventus, suppliciter adoratur. Ommino spernitur primogenitus regis, et muneribus adoratur primogenitus pauperulae mulieris. Quis est iste rex Judaeorum, pauper et dives, humilis et sublimis? quis est iste rex Judaeorum qui portatur est parvulus adoratur ut Deus? parvulus in praesepio, immensus in coelo; vilis in pannis, pretiosus in stellis; cujus nativitate comperta.<sup>103</sup>

The despised Archelaus becomes the counterpart of the adored Christ and thus, quite naturally, the enemy of Christ, Antichrist. Maximus points out that the name Archelaus means 'conquering lion' and this also symbolizes Antichrist. 'Archelaus autem, qui vincens leo interpretatur, Antichristum significat. Qui ad tempus in suis victoriam habebit, et qui leo terribilis apparebit.'<sup>104</sup> It was Herod's son, then, who was identified with the archenemy of Christ, and not Herod himself.

v) Herod as *Superbia*

Herod was not identified with Antichrist; he was, however, taken as an example *par excellence* of at least two of the Seven Deadly Sins - *Superbia*, Pride, and *Ira*, Wrath. Although such schematizations as the Seven Deadly Sins are more pertinent to the later Middle Ages than to the early period being dealt with in this chapter,<sup>105</sup> it is such a fundamental element in later literature and art that its appearance in many twelfth century works should be noted.<sup>106</sup> In his sermon 'In Die Sanctorum Innocentium', Adam Scotus (twelfth century) devotes a whole section to an indictment of the pride of Herod and then of Herod as Pride. First he quotes Augustine on the evils of pride, 'Superbia vero bonis operibus insidiatur ut pereant',<sup>107</sup> and then he applies the principle directly to Herod: 'Unde et hic sanctissimum hunc puerum Jesum Herodes quaerit ad perdendum eum.'<sup>108</sup> Pride destroys good works just as Herod tried to destroy Jesus. But the comparison is taken past theological concepts in the next statement. 'Herodes pellis gloria dicitur; gloriari vero in pelle, in vanitate gloriari est. Est itaque gloria pellis, gloria elationis Secundum hunc ergo sensum, Herodes superbia est.'<sup>109</sup> Herod is *Superbia* - he glories in his own personal appearance and his vanity is his sin. Isidore of Seville (c.560 - 636) had described Herod in *Etymologia* with just two words, 'gloriosus' and 'pelliceus'.<sup>110</sup> The first one, meaning 'boastful', is easily understood and is quickly associated with the Herod of later medieval drama who appears as a type of *miles gloriosus*, as well as with the Herod that the patristic writers present, or, in fact, that Josephus describes in his histories. The second term is more obscure. It seems to mean 'clad in skins';<sup>111</sup> one scholar has suggested it might mean 'hairiness' and thus it may be one of the characteristics of the choleric man.<sup>112</sup> Herod certainly seems

to have been of a choleric disposition judging from his historical and patristic fits of rage. The word may just mean 'outward appearance', a poetic use of the base word 'pellis'.<sup>113</sup> This would also fit the descriptions of Herod that Isidore probably knew; Josephus, for example, had hinted that Herod dyed his hair to look younger, suggesting a certain amount of personal vanity. Other common etymologies of the name Herod give 'vainglorious', 'glorying in bodily appearance', and 'a person glorying in the beauty of the body.'<sup>114</sup> Adam Scotus (twelfth century) also refers to this boastful, ostentatious aspect of Herod.<sup>115</sup> His *coup de grace* comes, however, when he explains the death of Herod. He points out that Archelaus reigned in Judaea when Joseph returned there, 'pro Herode patre suo, quia extincto superbiae tumore.'<sup>116</sup> Herod died through a swelling of pride. Josephus, followed by several patristic writers, had described a swelling of the body as one of the symptoms of Herod's last illness, but Adam Scotus brilliantly links that with the puffing up of pride. Herod's vanity and pride were not given their fullest expression until the English vernacular cycle plays, but the seeds for that flowering were already present in the early writings.

#### IV. Imagery and Typology Used For Herod

##### A. The Fox

In order to emphasize Herod's evil character and satanic role in Christian history, early writers used a certain amount of imagery, mostly animal imagery, all of which served to blacken his reputation even further. Only occasionally was he confused with the later Herods,<sup>117</sup> but then imagery used for them was applied to Herod the Great. Thus the Gospel of Luke quotes Christ referring to Herod Antipas (Herod's son) as 'vulpi illi',<sup>118</sup> that fox, and although Herod Antipas was the tetrarch who ordered

the beheading of John the Baptist<sup>119</sup> and also took part, along with Pilate, in the trial of Christ before the Passion,<sup>120</sup> the epithet was soon associated with Herod the Great. Ephraim the Syrian (c.306-73) as early as the fourth century used the image of the fox for Herod in one of his Hymns on the Nativity: 'Herod also, that base fox, that stalked about like a lion, as a fox crouched down, and howled when he heard the roaring of the lion, who came to sit in the kingdom, according to the Scriptures. The fox heard that the lion was a whelp, and as a suckling; and he sharpened His teeth, that while he was yet a child the fox might lie in wait and devour the lion ere he had grown up, and the breath of His mouth should destroy him.'<sup>121</sup> Here Herod is a base fox, waiting to attack its prey, a weak, defenceless whelp.

#### B. The Lion

The image of the lion was an even more popular one for Herod or, indeed, for any enemy of Christ.<sup>122</sup> It has been noted above that Herod's son, Archelaus, was constantly referred to as Antichrist and at the same time, his name was interpreted to mean some kind of lion, usually 'vincens leo.'<sup>123</sup> Adam Scotus (twelfth century) changed this slightly: 'Archelaus namque *agnoscens leo* dicitur, per quem jactantia exprimitur..., per apertam ex more leonis arrogantiam devorare satagit.'<sup>124</sup> The emphasis here is on the lion's boastful pride and arrogance, and could apply even more to Herod than to his son. Remigius of Auxerre (ninth century) also referred to Archelaus in this way: 'Archelaus interpretatur *agnoscens leo*; et significat illum leonem de quo Petrus ait: "Solliciti estote et vigilate quia adversarius vester tanquam leo rugiens circuit".'<sup>125</sup> The image of the lion, however, is an ambivalent one. It is used in the Bible in a number of various ways: as a synonym of



strength and power, as a title for Christ (Rev. 5:5), Israel (Num. 24:9), and Judaea (Gen. 49:9), and also as an image of the devil (I Pet. 5:8) and all enemies of Christ. Herod was often associated with the 'ravening and roaring lion' of Psalm 21:14 because of his wrath and violence and because he was, of course, one of the 'evildoers' surrounding Christ.<sup>126</sup> The ravenous lion as it symbolized evil was an effective image for the raging Herod as he tried to kill Christ.

### C. The Serpent

Some other animal imagery is used for Herod, imagery that is mostly associated with Satan and the devil, such as serpents, Behemoth and Leviathan. Adam Scotus' sermon on Epiphany gives an indication of an early interest in these associations. He begins by describing the conditions under which Christ was born and the evil days of Herod the king:

Fratres, quod sine moerore gravi dicere non possumus, modo Herodis regis sunt dies. Regnat in his diebus malis, in his temporibus periculosis pelliceus', sive 'pellis gloria', utramque enim interpretationem in se habet Herodes: Beemoth loquor quem in Evangelio Dominus fortem armatum appellat (Matth. XI,21): 'cujus fortitudo in lumbis ejus, et virtus illius in umbilico ventris ejus (Job XL,11), omne sublime videns, rex est super omnes filios superbiae' (Job XLI,25). Imperat hodie super terram, et suam potenter tyrannidem exercet, princeps ille mundi, serpens antiquus, qui vocatur diabolus et Satanus; qui seducit universum orbem serpens, inquam pectore superbiae, et ventre luxuriae repens. Et ex re portat illud nomen elatum et immundum quod est Herodes, qui pelliceas in his, qui secundum carnem vivunt: pellis vero gloria in eis, qui in carne gloriantur, laetantes 'cum male fecerint, et exsultantes in rebus pessimus' (Prov.II,14). Est enim idem serpens peste gemini veneni plenus, utpote qui rigidus et lubricus: quem vocat Isaia 'Leviathan, serpentem tortuosum et vectem' (Isa,XXVII,1); qui in viis inanis gloriae cupidos sibi subjugat, pellis gloria elatus. In utero vero carnis concupiscentiis deditos conculcat fetore pelliceo correptus. Videte, si non potissimum sunt dies Herodis, dum tanta in filiis perditionis, hoc maxime tempore, et elatio in mente, et corruptio regnat in carne. 127

Herod the proud king is thus linked with Satan the proud angel/devil in his serpentine qualities and also in his pride.

The fox, the lion and the serpent are the images most often used by early writers to symbolize Herod, of which the serpent (in the form of a devil) was most popular in artistic representations of Herod.<sup>128</sup> Occasionally other animals are used to enliven the impression of Herod as a wicked and cruel beast. Peter Riga (twelfth century) in his very influential versified Bible, *Aurora*, although he was entirely dependent on Comestor for most of the section on Herod, gave Antipater (Herod's eldest son) a speech which uses animal imagery rather effectively. It is said during the trial of Antipater, when he protests that his father is hard and cruel:

Ut leo crudelis, mordens ut tigris, iniquus  
Ut pungens aspis, instimulans ut apis.<sup>129</sup>

The poisonous asp and the stinging wasp are added to the vicious lion and hostile tiger to complete the image of Herod the evil tyrant full of fraud, murderous enemy of Christ and blackened soul damned to spend his days in hell with Judas and Satan.

#### D. Old Testament Tyrants: Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Saul

Early writers used animal imagery to intensify their presentations of Herod. They also used Old Testament types with whom they compared Herod to clarify particular events in his life or traits in his character. Herod was identified mainly with three Old Testament figures, all of whom were considered to be great enemies of God - Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar and the mad Saul. This typological method of comparing a New Testament character with one or more Old Testament characters was extremely popular in the Middle Ages and blossomed in the fourteenth century in such works as the *Biblia Pauperum* and *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, which will be discussed in a later chapter, but as early as the fourth century, such a tendency was already evident in the early Christian writers. By the

twelfth century, all the types for Herod which were to be used extensively by later artists had been presented by patristic writers.

Gregory of Nyssa (c.335 - 95), when he was writing of 'nefarius Herodes', was led to think about the great evils found in human nature in general, and from Herod his mind goes to Pharaoh and the malicious Egyptians, and then to the proud Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>130</sup> He does not elaborate, but this is the precise choice that artists and writers made later when they were looking for types for Herod. In the fifth century, Peter Chrysologus' sermon, 'De Fuga Christi in Egyptum', compares the flight of Christ from Herod to that of David from the mad king Saul who wished to kill him (I Samuel 21,22).<sup>131</sup> This again was the very choice of later artists in typological works. Another patristic writer of the tenth or eleventh century wrote a homily in which he gives a remarkably detailed and elaborate typological comparison of Christ and Moses as they were persecuted by Herod and Pharaoh.

Hanc autem Christi persecutionem Moyses in seipso significaverat. Multa enim sunt, in quibus Moyses Christum significat; sicut enim Moyses a Pharaone, ita et Christus ab Herode persecutionem passus est; et sicut infantes propter Christum in Judaea occisi sunt, ita et in Aegypto propter Moysem in flumine necati sunt. Narrat enim Josephus quemdam sacerdotem et magum Aegyptiorum prophetasse, quia de Hebraeorum gente talis homo nasciturus esset, qui totam illam terram perdere debuisset; unde et Pharaoni consilium dedit ut omnes Hebraeorum infantes interficerentur. Praecipit igitur Pharaon ut Hebraeorum masculos interficerent et feminas reservarent. Hoc autem ideo faciebat ut ille unus, qui quaerebatur vel sic inter alios occidi potuisset. Eadem autem intentio fuit et Herodis, qui quoniam Christum invenire non poterat, tot millia puerorum interfici iussit. Illis autem diebus natus est Moyses, de quo longa historia scribitur, quomodo a parentibus occultatus, quomodo in fluvium missus, quomodo a filia Pharaonis de aqua susceptus, et in filium adoptatus fuerit, quomodo etiam ipsa puella de manibus illius impii sacerdotis, qui eum occidere conatus fuerat, eum liberaverit; quando, ut praedictus historiographus narrat, de capite Pharaonis ludens in infantia coronam eiecit. Haec autem Moyses ideo fortasse praetermisit, ne suum praeconium scribere videretur. Verumtamen postea in Pharaone et in exercitu ejus completum vidit; quod tunc infans, et inscius agebat, significabatur. 132

This very scene of Moses as a child seizing and smashing the crown of Pharaoh was illustrated in the later Middle Ages. Pharaoh as a type of Herod has some fascinating aspects which will be discussed later in a chapter dealing with artistic representations of Herod (Chapter 8). Here it is sufficient to note that Pharaoh was probably the worst tyrant in the whole of the Old Testament and, as such, he was an excellent type for Herod, the worst tyrant in the New Testament. Both ordered great massacres of all male children in order to find one special, prophesied Babe, and both were unsuccessful, eventually suffering horrible deaths as divine vengeance visited them.<sup>133</sup>

Josephus devoted a great deal of space to Herod and although he spent a disproportionate amount of space on Herod's last ten years, which were tragic and repulsive, the general picture is of a king capable of brilliant political manoeuvring and military exploits, the friend of Antony, Caesar Augustus and Agrippa. However, early Christian writers of the Vulgate, the Apocryphal Books, Bible commentaries and sermons accented his violence and brutality, his pride, his fear and his wrath. They gradually exaggerated facts and invented details until Herod became a sort of monstrous archenemy of Christ. He was a man to be hated and despised, an irreparable sinner, a murderous tyrant, and a fit consort for devils. In contemporary early Christian art he was given a more restrained and dignified treatment.

## CHAPTER III: HEROD IN EARLY CHRISTIAN ART: 500-800 A.D.

## Introduction

## Early Christian Art

Art with specifically Christian themes first appeared about the beginning of the third century in the wall paintings of Roman catacombs, and in the sculpture of early Christian sarcophagi slightly later. This new and clandestine Christian art showed the influence of pagan art in its style, and of Jewish religion in its preponderance of Old Testament scenes, but at the same time its Christian themes gave it a new significance. At first these themes took the form of symbols such as the fish, the dove and the anchor, and less frequently, a ship, a palm, the Good Shepherd and the Orant.<sup>1</sup> Then certain Old Testament scenes became popular, especially Noah saved from the Flood, Abraham stayed from sacrificing Isaac, Daniel in the lion's den, the Three Hebrews in the fiery furnace and, most popular of all, the story of Jonah and the whale.<sup>2</sup> These scenes were appropriate to the established pictorial motifs of the time - the shepherd became Christ and popular seascapes accommodated Noah and Jonah. These are all 'signal instances of the deliverance of God's faithful servants in an hour of need,'<sup>3</sup> and they also seem to be visual counterparts of prayers that were current in contemporary Christian liturgy, particularly in the prayers of the Office of the Dead.<sup>4</sup> By the fourth century, these scenes, which were associated with salvation and deliverance from death, were expanded to include representations of New Testament miracles of similar import, such as the raising of Lazarus, and the healing of the paralytic man, and also by scenes that evoked the Christian sacraments, such as the baptism of Christ for the sacrament of Baptism, and the miracle of the

loaves and fishes for the sacrament of the Eucharist. The range of these scenes of salvation and symbols of the sacraments of the church was enlarged to include certain other important moments in Christian history, but they were always given a symbolic value: Adam and Eve evoked man's first disobedience and Original Sin, and the Adoration of the Magi signified the foundation of the Church.<sup>5</sup> The scheme of early Christian art of the third and fourth centuries therefore, is based on symbolic representation of scenes of deliverance from death or from sin and its misery, of scenes evoking the sacraments of the early Church, and of important events in Christian history. In such a scheme, there was no place for the representation of a figure, symbolic or historical, who was responsible for death in any form, particularly when it involved ordering the massacre of innocent children. Herod and the Massacre of the Innocents, therefore, never appeared in the frescoes of the Roman catacombs, and can be found only rarely in some rather unusual sarcophagi from Provence. Herod the Great is noticeably absent from any early Christian art until the fifth century.

#### Appearance of Herod

Herod the Great never appears independently in early art;<sup>6</sup> he is always either interviewing the Magi or ordering (or witnessing) the Massacre of the Innocents.<sup>7</sup> Neither of these scenes was introduced at an early stage into Christian art. In the story of the Magi, their adoration of the Christ-Child was the climactic moment chosen for artistic representation even in the earliest catacombs. Their interview with Herod was only occasionally shown. It appears much more frequently in later medieval art when whole cycles involving the Magi evolved, including their journey to Bethlehem, interview with Herod, Adoration

of the Christ-Child, their being warned in their sleep by the angel, and their return to the East. The other scene involving Herod - the Massacre of the Innocents - was not an appropriate subject for funerary art. However, in the fourth century, with Constantine's official recognition of Christianity in 313 and his enthusiastic patronage of the arts, Christian art was able to come above ground. Large-scale works were initiated and supported by wealthy patrons and in the fifth and sixth centuries 'the first golden age of Christian art'<sup>8</sup> was producing large basilicas with magnificent mosaic decoration. It is in one of these Christian places of worship, Santa Maria Maggiore, in Rome, that Herod appeared for the first time in a large-scale work. In fact, he appears twice on the triumphal arch - interviewing the Magi and ordering the Massacre. The mosaics in Santa Maria Maggiore are iconographically problematical but extremely important in the history of Christian art. They are the only mosaics known in buildings, religious or secular, to include Herod in the scheme of decoration.<sup>9</sup>

#### Problems in Dealing with Herod in Early Art

The purpose of this chapter is to catalogue and discuss as many examples of Herod the Great in early Christian art as possible. Although no pretensions to completeness are made, all examples known to me have been included. Although Herod is a relatively rare subject in art during this period, a fair variety of material does exist and some difficulties arise when attempts are made to organize the material in a logical way. Leclercq's lists of surviving works of art are arranged according to artistic medium.<sup>10</sup> Such a scheme shows that Herod appears in fresco, mosaic, haut-relief, bas-relief, ivories, miniatures and bronze, but as an organizing principle this is inadequate in that it does not recognize the inter-relationships among the different media.

It seems better not to separate them. For the same reason the geographical basis for distinction used by C. F. Morey, although sometimes quite significant, is not entirely satisfactory.<sup>11</sup> A wide range of styles is also evident - Roman, Hellenistic, Alexandrian and Syrian - but, as Herod is the centre of my present attention, the Christian inspiration of the works seems more important than their geographical location or stylistic analysis. Works from all parts of the far-flung Roman Empire will be considered, then, and comments on geography and style made when significant. Chronology offers another means of organization and one which should not be ignored.<sup>12</sup> In this chapter the very earliest examples of Herod in art are being dealt with - some of which cannot be definitely dated at all. The development of the treatment of certain scenes, the Massacre, for example, will be traced, however, and so it seems wise to present these works in their chronological order as far as possible. An even more meaningful framework for the Herod material seems to be an iconographic one. Two main scenes are involved - Herod and the Magi, and Herod and the Massacre - and the latter scene developed in three distinct ways, all of them appearing within a hundred and fifty years of the first occurrence at Santa Maria Maggiore. Given this variety, complexity and richness of material, an organization based on iconography seems the most illuminating, dealing basically with Herod as he appears in the Massacre and then with the Magi. Whenever possible, works will be introduced in their chronological order so that artistic developments and influences will be apparent, and geography, style and genre will be noted incidentally. The first large-scale work introducing Herod the Great is the fifth century mosaic decoration of Santa Maria Maggiore and, as both of the main Herod scenes are represented, a separate section of this chapter is devoted to these mosaics.



## I. Herod in Santa Maria Maggiore

### A. The Mosaics

The mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome (432-440) present a systematic, narrative account of Old Testament scenes in the nave, and a rather more symbolic interpretation of the infancy of Christ in the triumphal arch. The nave mosaics, which are probably earlier than those of the arch,<sup>13</sup> are rectangular panels, sometimes divided horizontally into upper and lower portions, showing a series of scenes from the lives of the patriarchs Abraham, Jacob, Moses and Joshua. This narrative technique may have been modelled on manuscript illustrations of the Septuagint<sup>14</sup> (the second century translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek), or on earlier fresco sequences such as those in the third century Dura-Europos synagogue,<sup>15</sup> but the iconography is often original and unique. The mosaics of the triumphal arch present New Testament material centring on the Annunciation to the Virgin and the infancy of Christ. However, certain peculiarities are to be noted: first, there is no representation of the Nativity; second, the Virgin is given a particularly predominant position - in the Annunciation scene she is attended by at least three angels in addition to Gabriel, who flies down to her from a gold sky, and in that scene as well as in the Epiphany she is dressed splendidly in a fashion very similar to that of Pharaoh's daughter in the nave mosaic; third, the Epiphany is unusual in that Christ does not sit in the Virgin's lap but is seated alone on a large throne attended by four angels, while Mary sits on one side of the throne and another female figure, variously interpreted as St. Anne, Divine Wisdom, and Holy Church, sits on the other side; fourth an unprecedented scene, based on the apocryphal Gospels, shows an incident from the Flight into Egypt - Christ, old enough to be walking, is

attended by four angels again, as well as by Joseph and Mary, when he meets the pagan ruler, Aphrososius, who recognized Christ as divine<sup>16</sup> (it was his city in which the idols fell as Christ entered). These unusual iconographic features, and also the lack of any scenes involving the Visitation, the Nativity or the Annunciation to the shepherds, suggest that the mosaics of the triumphal arch are not meant simply to show the infancy of Christ. Several interpretations have been given concerning the thematic significance of these mosaics, but that of Emile M<sup>^</sup>ale seems most probable.<sup>17</sup> He points out that in 431 at the Council of Ephesus the Virgin Mary was proclaimed the Mother of God, and in 432 Sixtus III began work on Santa Maria Maggiore. The Council condemned Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who believed that Mary was only the Mother of Christ, and that Christ during his childhood was not yet God (becoming so only at his baptism). M<sup>^</sup>ale therefore connects the ensuing cult of Mary the Mother of God with the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore where she is shown with great grandeur previously unexampled in Christian art. But he points out that the Child is glorified even more than his Mother - he sits enthroned in the Epiphany scene and has a nimbus (Mary is not nimbed) and a cross and attendant angels; he is also the centre of several recognition scenes in the triumphal arch - the Presentation has Simeon and Anna recognize him in the Temple, the Magi recognize him as the Son of God, and on the Flight into Egypt, Aphrososius, dressed as a dignitary of the Imperial court and accompanied by a full retinue, worships Christ. These scenes have a special emphasis. 'It is the divinity intimately united with the humanity of the Virgin's Son which they set out to demonstrate, and it is to the heresy of Nestorius that they reply....The mosaics of the sanctuary arch of Santa Maria Maggiore, as well as the church itself which includes them,

are born of the decision of the Council of Ephesus.<sup>18</sup> This stress on the recognition of Christ's divinity might account for the fact that the Magi appear twice: on the left side of the arch they are shown adoring the enthroned Christ, and on the right they are being questioned by Herod about the birthplace of the new King of the Jews, while Herod's scribes read their scriptures for information about the Messiah. Herod also appears twice, the second time ordering the Massacre of the Innocents. Indirectly this could be interpreted as an action demonstrating his recognition of the new King in that he is sufficiently alarmed to try to destroy his supposed rival. The theme of this unusual sequence of scenes in the triumphal arch of Santa Maria Maggiore will, perhaps, continue to be disputed, but the emphasis on Mary the Mother of God and on the divinity of the Christ-Child cannot be denied.

#### B. Herod and the Magi

The scene representing the meeting of Herod and the Magi in Santa Maria Maggiore (*fig. 1*) is regal and glittering with gold.<sup>19</sup> On the left stand the three Magi with a distant town behind them. On the right sits Herod enthroned, attended by a military escort, his right hand raised in a gesture, which indicates speech, directed to the Magi (this gesture later became the standard form of benediction). In the centre are two white-haired priests, dressed identically to priests in the nave, such as Melchisedek, standing beside Herod with an unfurled roll in front of them but looking towards Herod. The entire background is gold. The Magi are obviously Eastern by their dress, which remains uniform in the Epiphany scene. They wear Persian costumes: tightly fitting trousers trimmed with broad, vertical jewelled bands running from ankle to hip; short belted tunics, the edges of which are cut into deep indentations, and which are also decorated with broad horizontal

and vertical bejewelled bands; and brightly-coloured bejewelled Phrygian caps and shoes to match. The first Magus has a long cloak which hangs from his shoulder and covers his left hand, but the right hands of all three Magi are raised in gestures indicating conversation with Herod. The Magi were early associated with Zoroastre<sup>20</sup> and with the Persians, and characterized as such by their distinctive dress. Louis Brehier tells of how a large mosaic representation of the Adoration of the Magi in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (fourth century) was preserved because the Persians, charmed to see their own national costume in the portraits of the Magi, spared this building while destroying Jerusalem in 615.<sup>21</sup> This Oriental dress became standard for the Magi in early art. Herod, on the other hand, is dressed more soberly. He appears as a Roman emperor or general with a short, white pleated tunic, gold chest-armor and a long blue chlamys. His feet rest on a jewelled footstool. Attention is focused on him by the soldiers behind him, the priests and the Magi, who all look towards him. It should be pointed out that two scenes have been combined into one here - Herod's consultation with the scribes and his interview with the Magi, possibly to emphasize the fact that in both incidents Herod is trying to find information that will lead him to the Christ-Child.

There is one iconographic peculiarity in this scene, however. Herod is nimbed. And, lest anyone mistake his identity, a large tablet with the inscription HERODES appears above his head. None of the patriarchs or prophets in the nave is nimbed, and even in the triumphal arch, Mary is not nimbed. Only Christ and the angels bear a nimbus. One might suppose that the nimbus and inscription are the result of bad restoration, but both prove to be good, original antique tiles, at least in part.<sup>22</sup> The explanation lies in the fact that Herod was being identified with

deified Roman generals. His dress would certainly suggest this, as would the footstool before his throne. 'A prominent footstool is always placed before antique representations of enthroned Princes.'<sup>23</sup> Like Moses, Joshua and Christ in the Adoration, Herod also appears with attendants behind him, after the manner of an Imperial official guard. Examples contemporary with and earlier than these mosaics can be found which show a Roman emperor with a halo.<sup>24</sup>

The use of the nimbus was originally pagan and used for images of pagan gods. It was taken over by Roman emperors who assumed the honours due to gods.<sup>25</sup> Because of these associations it was avoided by the earliest Christian artists; it never occurs in the Roman catacombs on frescoes or sarcophagi even for God or apostles or saints. Didron points out that the nimbus is of Eastern origin and that it often occurs in Byzantine mosaics for earthly potentates when the West was avoiding it even for divine figures.<sup>26</sup> Thus in St. Vitale in Ravenna in the sixth century the Emperor Justinian and the Empress Theodora are each depicted with a nimbus. This is a sign, not of their divinity, but of their hierarchical position and of their power. Persons in power can be good or evil, however; thus Herod, though evil, is given the sign of power. Didron, one of the first scholars to study Christian iconography systematically, felt that the nimbus was used 'most prodigally'<sup>27</sup> by Byzantine artists who gave a nimbus to the 'terrible King Herod' in the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore; and in more recent times Berchen and Clouzot have commented that 'sur l'arc triomphal de Sainte-Marie-Majeure, sa distribution est assez capricieuse.'<sup>28</sup> There are, however, parallels for such use in illustrated manuscripts such as the Joshua Rotulus<sup>29</sup> and the Paris Psalter.<sup>30</sup> The texts of both these manuscripts are tenth century, but the illuminations have been dated from the seventh to the

ninth centuries, and are based on much earlier models, possibly of the second century.<sup>31</sup> In the Joshua Rotulus, the scene showing the Execution of the King of Ai<sup>32</sup> (*fig. 2*) has Joshua dressed as a Roman general, seated on a throne with footstool, nimbed and attended just as Herod is in the Santa Maria Maggiore mosaics. Joshua is a patriarch, however, and it is not surprising to see him with a nimbus in Hellenistic art. The Paris Psalter is not limited to a single Biblical book like the Joshua Rotulus, but has illustrations covering a wide range of Old Testament subjects. The Crossing of the Red Sea<sup>33</sup> (*fig. 3*) shows both Moses and Pharaoh nimbed. This is also copied in a Greek Octateuch of the twelfth century which, like the two manuscripts mentioned above, preserves a very early iconography.<sup>34</sup> In both illustrations, Pharaoh is dressed as a Roman general, while Moses appears in long flowing robes. In later medieval art, Pharaoh became a popular type for Herod and so it is significant that even in the very earliest Christian art, both Herod and Pharaoh are portrayed in similar ways.

Herod is nimbed in the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore to show his position of power. He was not, strictly speaking, a Roman emperor, but he had been appointed by the Roman senate and he was a powerful and successful king of the Jews. The theory that Herod's nimbus is a 'piece of intentional irony' pointing out the insignificance of this 'Idumaeen parvenu',<sup>35</sup> is misguided and far-fetched, I think. If we accept the fact that Herod is given a nimbus because he was a powerful potentate, we might ask why Aphrodisius is not also nimbed, since he is also an earthly potentate. He appears, however, only in apocryphal Gospels, and in addition, he was not a king or an emperor, but only the governor of the city of Sotinen.<sup>36</sup> Why Mary does not have a nimbus in this series of mosaics is more difficult to answer. Oakeshott has discovered five

different artists at work in the triumphal arch (and eight different hands in the nave, distinct from those in the arch)<sup>37</sup> and he points out that the artist responsible for Herod in the Massacre scene is so totally different in style from those responsible for the Annunciation, Presentation and Epiphany, that he may even belong to a different generation. The Herod and Magi scene is by yet another (fifth) artist. Whether or not the work of different artists could account for the difference in the use of the nimbus is debatable. It is more likely that there was a controlling iconographic scheme with which we are only partially familiar, one which has puzzled art historians up to the present day by giving Herod the Great a nimbus.

### C. Herod and the Massacre

The scene of Herod and the Massacre of the Innocents in Santa Maria Maggiore<sup>38</sup> (*fig. 4*) is strikingly different from any other artistic representation of this event up to the modern day. Herod appears much the same as he does on the other side of the arch with the Magi, enthroned, dressed as a Roman emperor, nimbed, attended by military guards and with his hand raised in a gesture of command to another helmeted soldier ready to carry out his orders. The outstanding characteristic of this scene is centred in the depiction of the soldier and the mothers with their children (*fig. 5*). There is no hint of violence, nor of grief. All is dignified and restrained. The soldier in the centre is unarmed and, although he moves towards the group of mothers, he turns his head to look back at Herod in a questioning way. He is dressed in a bright orange tunic and short blue chlamys and moves towards a large group of mothers who are all elegantly dressed: the one in front has a long blue and gold striped gown, a white stole bearing what looks like a family crest, and she carries her white-robed child proudly on her arm.

Both mother and child stretch out their arms towards the soldier. The second mother has a similar stole, a long gown of red and blue stripes, and carries a child dressed in a red, gold and green striped gown. Again, both mother and child reach out to the soldier. This child has a tiny cross on its forehead. The only sign of sorrow in these wide-eyed women is that they wear their hair down, loose, over their shoulders and one (the one farthest away from the soldier) seems to be trying to get away. She has wrapped her naked child in her stole and faces the direction opposite from the soldier. This representation of the Massacre of the Innocents, or more correctly, the ordering of the Massacre of the Innocents, has great aristocratic reserve and restraint, and is manifestly different from all other later versions of this event, which stress the cruelty and the carnage involved. This restraint may be due to Hellenistic influence which is also noticeable in such details as Herod's nimbus and indeed seems to inform the whole sequence of scenes with dignity and aristocratic elegance.

There may be theological reasons for this artistic restraint as well. Although Richter and Taylor mistakenly date these mosaics to the second century and try to make them contemporary with Justin Martyr,<sup>39</sup> there is something to be said for making the connection between the restrained treatment of the Massacre in the mosaics and patristic writings such as Justin Martyr's influential comments on the rewards of martyrdom.<sup>40</sup> Peter Chrysologus (c.400 - 450), Bishop of Ravenna when the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore were being constructed, stressed the glorious, blessed fate of the Innocents:

Beati, quos martyrio natos vidimus esse, non saeculo. Beati, qui labores in requiem, in refrigerium dolores, moerore in gaudium commutarunt. Vivunt, vivunt, qui vere vivunt, qui pro Christo merentur occidi.<sup>41</sup>



Chrysologus also emphasizes the way the Innocents accepted their fate willingly, and the joy which their mothers will share:

Arridebat parvulus occisori, gladio adjocabatur  
 infantulus, nutricis loco attendebat lactans  
 percussoris horrorem, nescia lucis aetas moritura  
 gaudebat, infans filius omnem hominem non ut hostem  
 rescipit, sed parentem. Matres tulerunt quidquid  
 et angoris exstitit, et doloris, et ideo non  
 carebunt martyrii gaudio, martyrii lacrymas quae  
 fuderunt.<sup>42</sup>

It is impossible to prove any direct influence of the sermons of Peter Chrysologus on the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore, but it is helpful to see them both as expressions of a contemporary religious spirit which stressed the dignity and the ultimate reward of the Innocents as martyrs, rather than their suffering, to a congregation of neophyte Christians. Christianity had been the official state religion for only fifty years<sup>43</sup> when the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore were produced, and so the Innocents accepting their fate with open arms and crosses on their foreheads, from the nimbed 'emperor' Herod, made a fitting and suitable witness to the faith of the new religion. This attitude continued into the liturgical drama of the twelfth century.

#### D. Herod in the Mosaics of La Daurade

Herod does not appear in any other surviving mosaics before the twelfth century renaissance. However, Helen Woodruff has examined documents relating to the original church of Notre Dame de La Daurade at Toulouse and its mosaic decoration,<sup>44</sup> and although nothing remains standing now of the original building, she concludes 'that the mosaics of La Daurade represented work of the fifth or sixth century under Ravennate influence.'<sup>45</sup> The description of an incomplete cycle of mosaic decoration, made by Dom Odon Lamothe in 1633 when the church was cleaned and renovated,<sup>46</sup> includes two appearances of Herod - with the Magi, and in the Massacre

of the Innocents scene. In both places he was labelled with an inscription ERO-DIS and HERODIS respectively; in the former scene the Magi were in Persian dress and caps and their hands gestured as if in conversation, but the figure of Herod was badly mutilated, 'ob maximas Ecclesiae rimas et crassum testudinis pondus', although he appeared 'vultu horrido et feroci'.<sup>47</sup> The description of Herod and the Massacre is much clearer and quite significant. Lamothe describes the mosaics:

1. Prima sanctorum Innocentium martyrium exprimit: in ea enim cernitur carnifex erectus districto super nudum caput gladio occidens quem sinistra capillis apprehensum sustinet: habetque ad pedes occisum unum et ad latus dextrum alium ejulantem et morti proximum. Figura est in campo aureo et prato viridi. Anonyma.

2. 2<sup>a</sup> est Herodis sedentis et mandantis puerorum occisionem, vultu horrido et irato, habetque laeva sceptrum quadratum, inductus rubea et violacea veste, dextram ad carnificem versus levat: circulo argenteo ornatum habens caput cum hoc verbo HERODIS in campo aureo.<sup>48</sup>

This was a very different scene from that in Santa Maria Maggiore. The soldier had his sword raised and was grasping a child by the hair (a similar pose is to be found in Syro-Egyptian works to be discussed later); Herod was not nimbed, but had a silver circlet about his head,<sup>49</sup> perhaps like the one which Aphrodisius wears in the Flight scene and Herod himself wears in the meeting with the Magi in Santa Maria Maggiore. He also carried a sceptre in the La Daurade mosaic, and seemed directly involved in the Massacre. These mosaics indicate, at a very early period in Christian art, that the iconography of Herod and the Massacre was to realize a variety of styles, while that of Herod meeting the Magi was to remain relatively standard. After the unique Hellenistic or symbolic type of Massacre found in Santa Maria Maggiore, two quite different types developed: the sword type, based on Syro-Egyptian art, and the 'smashing' type, found mostly in Provençal art.<sup>50</sup>

## II. Herod and the Massacre of the Innocents

### A. The Sword Type

The description of the lost mosaics of La Daurade suggests that the soldiers were killing the children with swords. The earliest surviving example of this sword type of Massacre (which became the traditional method of representing the scene throughout the whole history of Christian art), is to be found in the Rabbula Gospels (586).<sup>51</sup> This Syriac gospel-book was written by a monk named Rabbula in the Monastery of St. John at Zagba in northern Mesopotamia. The canon tables in this manuscript are the earliest surviving example of the separation and concordance of the Gospels, a new approach to the canonical Gospels made in the fifth century. Until then the single harmonized account in the *Diatessaron* of Tatian, produced in the second century, had been used as the official text in the Syrian church (see Chapter 2). The first attempt to separate the Gospels was made by Ammonius of Alexandria (c.175 - 242) who used the Gospel of St. Matthew as a basis, and published corresponding portions from the other Gospels beside it in parallel columns. The whole was divided into numbered sections, called 'canons'. Unfortunately, portions of Mark, Luke and John which did not correspond to Matthew were left out. Eusebius, bishop and historian of Caesarea (c.260 - c.340) perfected this system, producing a concordance in parallel columns, indicating all the correspondences among the Gospels, although Matthew was still kept as the norm; these became known as the canon tables. They quickly spread throughout the Christian world from the scriptorium at Caesarea in Palestine and were translated into every Christian language. These canon tables were first used, and their pages first decorated with the architectural frames which they retained throughout their history, in Syria and Palestine.

The Rabbula Gospels also decorates the canon tables with these architectural frames as well as with a full series of figure illustrations 'whose beauty and antiquity make it the most outstanding of Eastern illuminated codices of the early Middle Ages.'<sup>52</sup> At the top of the arcading on each page, the artist has placed two Old Testament figures, and beside the arcades he has placed his marginal miniatures of the whole Christian cycle from the Annunciation to Zacharias to Christ's appearance before Pilate (the Crucifixion and Resurrection, Ascension, Presentation and Pentecost are represented in separate full-page miniatures). They form one of the first surviving New Testament cycles in Christian art. Two or more scenes occur on every page of the canon tables, but sometimes the scene is divided and placed on opposite sides of the tables so that, in the case of the Massacre of the Innocents, Herod is on the left side of the page and the soldier is on the right, opposite him.

The fact that the Gospel of Matthew was used as a basis for the canon tables probably explains why the illuminator included such a scene as Herod ordering the Massacre of the Innocents in this Gospel book. (It is not reported in the other three Gospels.) The only other scene from the Infancy of Christ is the Nativity. Both scenes appear on fol. 4b, Canon I, 3. At the top of this page stand Solomon on the left and David on the right. Below David, there is a representation of the Nativity, and below Solomon, one of Christ's baptism. Below these is the Massacre of the Innocents with Herod on the left side of the tables and the soldier, child and mothers in a group on the right. Herod sits on a throne which is a yellowish bench with a footstool, has a red-orange cushion and a large circular back painted green (*fig. 6*). He is represented as a Roman emperor (as he was in Santa Maria Maggiore): he is in almost identical

military costume - white tunic, breastplate, and purple chlamys - and again he has a halo. He is also accompanied by two bodyguards carrying spears and dressed in red chlamys, who stand behind his throne. But Herod has a very different attitude from that in the mosaics in Rome. He leans forward violently and gestures toward the scene in the opposite margin, where his orders are being carried out.

On the right side of the tables a soldier stands ready to murder a child (*fig. 7*). In one hand he holds his sword raised above his head, and in the other he holds a naked child by the foot and dangles him upside down above the ground. A woman is throwing herself against the soldier to stop him. The colours are garish: the soldier has a short red tunic, green leggings and white stockings with dark cross-garters; the mother has a reddish dress and black dishevelled hair; the ground is green but liberally splashed with patches of red blood. Violence is stressed, not only by the garish colours and the blood, but also by the action of the mother who frantically grasps the soldier with her left hand and tries to stop the sword with her right hand. There must have been at least two mothers originally, but the cutting down of the folio has resulted in the loss of all but the head of the second figure, who is also rushing towards the soldier.

Most interesting of all is Herod's attitude of active participation in the Massacre. He leans forward and is totally involved in the scene. There is a striking resemblance between this figure of Herod and one of Pharaoh in a Syrian Bible<sup>53</sup> (Old Testament only) in which Pharaoh is leaning forward as Moses and Aaron come before him (*fig. 8*). It seems almost as if he would fall forward were it not for his right hand which rests on his knee and restores the balance. The lances of his guards parallel and frame his body posture, which is counterbalanced by his raised arm and the sceptre he holds. Both Morey<sup>54</sup> and Cecchelli<sup>55</sup>

comment that such liveliness of movement and harmonious composition must be based on some older (fourth or fifth century) Hellenistic model. The conception of Pharaoh, and Herod, as an emperor with halo, military dress and attendant bodyguards may be so, but the cruel Massacre with its realism and violence is the contribution of Syrian art.<sup>56</sup>

Another similar representation of the Massacre occurs in the surviving but much damaged frescoes of the underground church of Deir Abu Hennis at Antinoë (*fig. 9*), in Egypt.<sup>57</sup> E. B. Smith has concluded that the fresco scene is derived quite directly from the one in the Rabbula Gospels.<sup>58</sup> Herod, nimbed, is seated on the left on a cushioned seat with footstool, flanked by two soldiers<sup>59</sup> whose shields seem to form a circular background for him, much as they do for Joshua in the Joshua Rotulus (*fig. 2*). The Massacre is similar to that of the Rabbula Gospels although more figures are involved. One soldier holds a child upside down by the legs with one hand, and in the other he holds a sword from which another child dangles. Two other soldiers can be seen with swords and children, but hardly anything remains of the mothers. The frescoes have been dated to the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century<sup>60</sup> and, like the Rabbula Gospels, include a whole New Testament cycle including events from the life of Zacharias, and the escape of Elizabeth and the infant John, scenes which are rare in Western art although they appear in Byzantine art and in the apocryphal Gospels.<sup>61</sup>

The Massacre scene in the Antinoë fresco appears in essentially the same form in a Coptic fresco in a mortuary chapel of the monastery of St. Apollo at Bawit (fifth or sixth century).<sup>62</sup> This realistic sword type of Massacre is also used to decorate a Coptic bronze censer, a Coptic pyx in the Louvre, and a lost ivory panel of the sixth-century Maximianus Chair in the Archiepiscopal Palace in Ravenna, known only from Trombelli's description.<sup>63</sup> All of these examples occur in the

East before the ninth century. The art of Syria and Egypt, therefore, while retaining some Hellenistic influence in the portraiture of Herod, was nevertheless responsible for introducing a more realistic and violent portrayal of the Massacre of the Innocents.

## B. The 'Smashing' Type

### 1. The Sarcophagus of St. Maximin

A second type of the Massacre of the Innocents, in which the children are being smashed to the ground, usually at the feet of Herod, appears on the lid of the sarcophagus of St. Maximin.<sup>64</sup> This sarcophagus has been dated to the early fifth century<sup>65</sup> and closely associated with a school of carvers in Provence.<sup>66</sup> The side of the sarcophagus is decorated with popular scenes of funerary art such as those found in the Roman catacombs, but the lid is extraordinary in its scene of the Massacre of the Innocents, which balances a scene of the Adoration of the Magi, to adorn it (*fig. 10*). In this very early Provençal carving, the scene is relatively simple. Herod is seated on an antique form of throne, a *sella curulis*, with no footstool. He has short hair, no beard, and is dressed in a long tunic and chlamys. He is not nimbed and has no bodyguard. He sits with one leg crossed over the other and while he holds his robes with his left hand, he gestures to two soldiers in front of him with his right. The soldier closest to him is dressed in a short tunic and carries a club in his left hand but it is kept by his side; with his right hand he has swung a naked child high into the air by its ankle and he seems about to smash it to the ground in front of Herod. The second soldier uses both hands to hold a very large, naked boy which he has evidently just snatched from a third figure, a woman in a long robe with her hands clasped in front of her

breast. It is a savage scene and one may wonder why it was used to decorate a sarcophagus. The explanation may be found in the provenance of the sarcophagus in the ancient church of St. Maximin near Marseilles, and the close connection which that church had with the Abbey of St. Victor at Marseilles, of which it was a dependency.

St. Victor was founded in 414 by St. Cassian (c.360-435) who brought with him from Syria some relics of the Holy Innocents, most of which the monks deposited in the crypt of his church at Marseilles.<sup>67</sup> A cult of the Holy Innocents soon developed there in the fifth century and they were worshipped at Marseilles long before an official feast day was appointed for them in the Gallican church in the sixth century.<sup>68</sup> Some of the relics were distributed to the churches throughout Provence<sup>69</sup> and the custom developed in those churches of burying these relics along with their own saints.<sup>70</sup> Smith concludes that 'the sarcophagus [ of St. Maximin ] owes the peculiar scene of the Massacre to the fact that it was to be used to contain a portion of the relics of the first martyrs, presented to the church of St. Maximin by Cassian, which were buried along with the traditional remains of the first apostles of Provence when their bodies were transferred to the new sarcophagi in the early part of the fifth century'.<sup>71</sup>

Southern France, therefore, fostered a very early cult involving the worship of the Holy Innocents. The cultural unity of this area with Northern Spain and Northern Italy in the fifth and sixth centuries has generally been established,<sup>72</sup> and so it is quite possible that the artistic impulses of Provence may also have been influenced by the Mozarabic liturgy of Spain, where the rubric for the day that commemorates the Massacre of the Holy Innocents reads 'In Allisione



Infantum'.<sup>73</sup> This unusual liturgical reference to the 'smashing' of the infants can be traced back to the end of the fourth century in the poems of Prudentius,<sup>74</sup> and so it might very well have influenced early fifth century artists.

The sarcophagus of St. Maximin is not an isolated example. Fragments of another sarcophagus have been found on which an almost identical Massacre scene has been carved<sup>75</sup> (*fig. 11*). To the scene described above several figures have been added: a dead child lies at Herod's feet, a bodyguard holding a long staff stands beside Herod, an extra soldier with a club stands near him over the dead child, and a second mother appears, gesturing to the soldier who is about to smash her infant to the ground. These two sarcophagi are probably products of the same school in Provence and of the same date, early in the fifth century.

## 2. Ivories

This same interpretation of the Massacre reappears in several ivories dating from the fifth to the ninth centuries. The earliest is a fifth-century fragment of an ivory plaque from a book cover now in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin.<sup>76</sup> This panel (*fig. 12*) formed the lateral piece of a five-part plaque which displayed various scenes from the Life of Christ. At the top is the Massacre of the Innocents; below this is the Baptism and at the bottom is the Miracle of Cana. The figures in all the scenes have squat, thick proportions. In the Massacre, Herod appears on the right, seated in a wooden chair, his feet on a footstool. He is dressed in long, bulky robes; his chlamys is held over his left arm and his right hand is raised in that benediction-like gesture of speech that he has in Santa Maria Maggiore. He is not nimbed,

but has a circlet on his head, and is bearded. A sturdy soldier in a short tunic stands facing Herod, ready to smash to the ground a naked child which he swings by the ankle high above his head. Another child lies dead on the ground at Herod's feet. Two mothers with long, dishevelled hair show their grief - one throws both hands up in the air while the other weeps. The scene is quite barbaric when compared with the Syrian sword type.

Another ivory book cover also of the fifth century, now preserved in Milan (*fig. 13*), shows the same smashing type of Massacre but with a very different Herod.<sup>77</sup> Across the bottom of this book cover is the Massacre, paralleling the Nativity, which is portrayed across the top. Herod is seated on the left in a wooden chair which is on a dais, but this time he is dressed as a Roman general again in short tunic and chlamys, and is flanked by two guards whose round shields form an aureole-like background for him. Herod holds a sceptre in one hand and gestures to the soldiers with the other. One child lies at his feet and a soldier is about to fling down another. A second soldier is turned away from Herod and is engaged in pushing away two distraught mothers who have flung their arms up in the air in grief. A third soldier looks on at the gruesome scene.

These two panels, and at least one more which has not survived,<sup>78</sup> are indicative of the 'transformation of style which resulted from the infusion of the Greco-Asiatic factor in Latin art.'<sup>79</sup> They reveal a rather Hellenistic Herod combined with an Asiatic, savage Massacre, but both ivories belong to a fairly limited geographical area, that of Provence. Smith has pointed out that during the period when these ivories were produced, Provence was a region much invaded by Syrian

merchants and missionaries as well as craftsmen.<sup>80</sup> 'Therefore, the art of Provence, traditionally Gallo-Roman and Hellenistic...gradually turned to Eastern ornament....This art, however, was an eclectic one and the Oriental characteristics appeared only as interpolations in a Latin setting.'<sup>81</sup> Thus the barbaric soldiers and frantic mothers of Syrian art are combined with the Roman general type of Herod in some of the Massacre scenes.

### 3. Santa Maria in Stelle

Another example of the smashing type of the Massacre, unknown to Smith, may not belong to Provence. Recently discovered, it is included in the frescoes of the hypogeum of Santa Maria in Stelle, at Val Pantena near Verona.<sup>82</sup> This was originally, in the third century, a funerary structure with two sepulchral chambers, but was converted to a Christian chapel in the fifth century and at that time it was decorated with frescoes dealing mainly with Old and New Testament subjects.<sup>83</sup> The scenes in the right hand cell of Santa Maria in Stelle 'consist of five almost megalographic pictures in which it is possible to identify, from right to left, the ox and the ass of the Nativity with the infant Jesus, the Massacre of the Innocents, the Three Young Men in the Furnace, the Magi before King Herod (or perhaps the same youths refusing Nebuchadnezzar's command to adore the statue) and the Triumphal Entry of Christ into Jerusalem.'<sup>84</sup> It is noteworthy that in these early frescoes Herod appears in two out of five scenes, ordering the Massacre and meeting the Magi. The lower half of the Massacre scene is badly damaged, but the remaining parts<sup>85</sup> reveal three large figures - Herod and two soldiers (*fig. 14*). All of them are shown frontally and seem to be standing. Herod, on the right, is dressed in a tunic and chlamys,

is bearded and has short, dark hair with a jewelled circlet around his head. He carries a sceptre in his left hand and his right hand is raised high above his head, gesturing towards the two soldiers, who stand erect, facing front, with no indication of movement. However, each one swings by the ankles a naked baby which in turn forms an arc over the soldiers' heads. A third baby lies on the ground beside them on the left. This is evidently a smashing type of Massacre - no swords or clubs are apparent - but it is a static and unemotional representation, unlike the Provençal sarcophagi and ivories, where the soldiers lean into their task of dashing the boys to the ground, and mothers express their grief by throwing their hands up in the air. The artist of this section of the chapel was working at the end of the fourth century or in the very early fifth,<sup>86</sup> at about the time that the St. Maximin sarcophagus was carved. Verona may possibly have been influenced by the Provençal school, or by the Mozarabic liturgical emphasis on the smashing of the infants. The influence of Eastern art can be seen in the Oriental ideas of frontality and symmetry, and also in the choice of apocryphal subjects, such as the ox and ass in the Nativity.<sup>87</sup> Such influences were strong in Provence as well, and so it may be that these frescoes do, in fact, fit into Smith's neat 'Provençal or Smashing Type'.

Even the most superficial consideration of early representations of the Massacre of the Innocents makes obvious the fact that, although only a small number of works survive, a large variety of representational methods can be illustrated. Herod may appear as a Roman general with bodyguards or a Syrian sage alone; the mothers may be dignified, or grief-stricken, or fighting-mad; soldiers may wield swords or clubs,

or just use brute strength; the Massacre may take place on grassy fields or in ornate palaces; Herod may be a hierarchical, aloof judge or he may lean forward sadistically to take part in the slaughter; the scene may be full of action or it may be static. This variety is probably the result of a number of factors: the vagueness of the text, the lack of intrinsic significance in *how* the Massacre was conducted, the independent development of artistic conventions in the East and the West, and of the artistic eclecticism which prevailed in places such as Provence where these conventions came together. In no other period is such a variety of iconography to be found in the presentation of this scene.

### III. Herod and the Magi

For the earliest Christians, expressing their faith in catacomb paintings and sarcophagi sculpture, the Adoration of the Magi signified not only the triumph of their struggle against paganism (the Magi were considered pagans), but also the promise of Christianity for gentiles. Patristic writers stressed that the worship of Christ at his Nativity by both shepherds and the Magi symbolized the triumph of Christianity over both Jew and Gentile. Although it is often difficult to establish any definite proof of patristic influence on art, it is also unwise to ignore the possibilities of such interaction. It seems reasonable that the patristic interpretation of the Adoration of the Magi, which the people would hear expounded in sermons, would be particularly inspiring, especially to early Christians who had to express their faith in clandestine ways. The catacombs, in fact, preserve thirteen examples of this scene and at least two more are lost.<sup>88</sup> Later, when Christianity became the state religion, this scene lost its special significance

and appeared comparatively less frequently, but it has always remained a popular subject,<sup>89</sup> not only because it shows the adoration of the Christ-Child, and also of the Virgin, but also because it allows ostentatious displays of artistic talent.

Legends about the Magi gradually began to develop but early literature and art seem to ignore them. Even the apocryphal Gospels added little to the canonical books. Not until the thirteenth century were some of the legends gathered together by Jacobus de Voragine in the *Legenda Aurea*<sup>90</sup> and they served as inspiration for much twelfth and thirteenth century art.<sup>91</sup> Herod, however, entered into the artistic representations of the Magi story in the fourth or fifth century, as there was canonical authority for his meeting with the Magi and questioning them about the birthplace of Christ (Matt. 2:7-8). One of the earliest examples of this scene is in the mosaics of the triumphal arch of Santa Maria Maggiore, already discussed. Above all, Herod's majesty is stressed in these mosaics. He is represented as a powerful but dignified king, meeting and honouring the magnificent Magi from the East. This image of Herod is prevalent in all representations of his meeting with the Magi.

#### A. Ciborium of St. Mark's in Venice

An early and rather unusual depiction of Herod can be seen in the sculptured alabaster columns of the ciborium of St. Mark's, Venice.<sup>92</sup> Although the two posterior columns are thirteenth century, the two forward columns are considered to be 'authentic monuments of early Christian art',<sup>93</sup> belonging to the fifth century and possibly brought to Venice from Constantinople as a result of the looting of the churches there during the Fourth Crusade in 1204.<sup>94</sup> These columns contain the earliest existing cycle of the life of Christ in Christian art in

sculpture, although the story is told through individual figures rather than scenes, due to the compositional make-up of the columns. Each column is divided into nine layers, or levels, of carving; then each level has nine arches, or niches, arranged around the column, and within each niche stands a single figure. Inscriptions were added above these niches in the thirteenth century and, although they are usually accurate, they occasionally fail to correspond to the scenes they are meant to describe.<sup>95</sup> The front column on the left of the ciborium begins at the bottom with figures from the Annunciation to the Virgin and the doubt of Joseph. The second level of sculpture includes figures of the three shepherds with the angel announcing Christ's birth to them, then figures of the three Magi, each carefully studying a different object - one a sphere, the second an unfurled manuscript, and the third a star - and finally a figure of 'Herode songeur'<sup>96</sup> (*fig. 15*). Herod is seated, he wears a long robe, and he is bent forward, with his chin in his hand, looking extremely pensive. A conch shell fills the space above his head, as it does in most of the other niches. This is not the 'raging Herod' of Matt. 2:16, who is to appear so often in later art; it is the 'troubled Herod' of Matt. 2:3. The columns of St. Mark's ciborium may be unique in representing Herod at that moment before he summons his priests and scribes and before he interviews the Magi, a moment when he is alone, pondering the import of the news he has heard, looking pensive and uneasy. This iconography is very unusual.

#### B. Iconographical Problems in Identifying Herod and the Magi

The scene of the Magi meeting Herod is not usually difficult to identify. In early art Herod usually sits enthroned, and the three Magi usually stand in a row facing him. By the fourth century, when the scene first

appeared in art, the number of the Magi was generally three, although in earlier Adoration scenes, their number varies from one to six. They usually wear Oriental costumes and Phrygian hats,<sup>97</sup> and quite often have their hands raised in gestures as if in conversation with Herod. The mosaic in Santa Maria Maggiore is a typical example of this scene.

1. Santa Maria in Stelle

Occasionally, however, identification of this scene is made difficult by the inclination of artists to make iconographical associations between the Magi meeting Herod and the Three Hebrews meeting Nebuchadnezzar and refusing to worship his golden idol (Dan. 3).<sup>98</sup> The Hebrews were consequently committed to a fiery furnace, from which they were saved by their God, in the form of an angel. In Verona, the frescoes of the hypogeum of Santa Maria in Stelle, described above, include this scene of the Three Young Men in the Furnace, one which enjoyed great popularity in the catacombs as an example of the Lord's salvation of the faithful (*fig. 16*). Beside this scene occurs one which Dorigo labels 'The Magi with Herod, or perhaps the Three Young Men refusing to adore the Statue.'<sup>99</sup> (*fig. 17*). On the left sits a king enthroned, holding a sceptre and accompanied by a single bodyguard behind the throne. This could be Herod, but it is standard iconography for any king. Before him stand three men dressed in tunics with zig-zag hems, strikingly like those worn by the Magi in Santa Maria Maggiore, and completely different from those worn by the Three Young Men in the Furnace, in the adjoining fresco.<sup>100</sup> However, the three men appear to be walking *away* from the king, although they look back at him, and all of them have both hands raised before their chests, but again in a direction *away* from the king. These gestures and movements are



unprecedented in scenes of Herod with the Magi, but common in scenes of Nebuchadnezzar and the Three Hebrews as the young men show their refusal to obey the king. In representations of Nebuchadnezzar there is usually a pillar beside the king, on top of which stands his golden idol. In the Verona fresco the area beside the king is badly damaged and cannot be made out clearly, although some vertical lines near the bottom could suggest a column, and some remains directly above it might be reconstructed as the outline of a statue. Working only from reproductions of the badly damaged original, it is impossible to know definitely. The identification of this fresco is therefore extremely difficult. The costumes of the three men suggest they are Magi, but their poses and gestures suggest the repulsion which the three Hebrews expressed to Nebuchadnezzar. This latter scene does not appear in catacombs before the fifth century, but it fits in naturally with the scene beside it, the Three Men in the Furnace. Dorigo seems inclined to favour an interpretation of this scene as the Magi before Herod, but George Henderson favours the Three Hebrews because of the gestures and poses.<sup>101</sup>

An early identifiable portrayal of the Hebrews refusing to adore Nebuchadnezzar's statue can be seen on a sarcophagus from Arles (*fig. 18*).<sup>102</sup> The three young men turn away from the king, all making gestures of dismissal with their hands. The king sits on the left and the statue is clearly visible on a pillar beside him. Le Blant points out that the physical features of this statue, and even the band wound round the head which flutters in the breeze, exactly correspond to the features of the king.<sup>103</sup>

## 2. Sarcophagus of St. Gilles

The artists themselves may sometimes have been confused by the associations made between the three Magi and the three Hebrews. This is apparent on the sarcophagus of St. Gilles (*fig. 19*).<sup>104</sup> On either side of the central (blank) cartouche are two scenes which balance each other neatly: on the left the three Hebrews refuse to worship the idol (shown on the top of a column and guarded by a soldier), and on the right the Magi offer gifts to the true God, Christ. The choice of subject here is inspired not only by the physical parallelism, but also because both groups of men symbolize the renunciation of false gods and the recognition of the true God. There is no difficulty in recognizing these two scenes, but there is some strange iconography. The star was always associated with the Magi and appeared above their heads, but on this sarcophagus, the star is quite naturally, but mistakenly, transferred to the side of the Hebrews. Thus, while one Hebrew reacts negatively to Nebuchadnezzar's idol, the other two are pointing to the star (which incidentally is in the form of the monogram of Christ ✠). A similar parallelism of scenes with the star appearing over the Hebrews appears on a sarcophagus in the basilica of St. Ambrose in Milan,<sup>105</sup> and on another sarcophagus in Trèves, Luxembourg.<sup>106</sup> This slight discrepancy over the placing of the star seems to occur mainly when the scene of the Three Hebrews is used to balance or parallel a scene of the Three Magi. This technique of placing similar compositions together and thus achieving an artistic symmetry and balance became quite popular in Carolingian art.

## 3. Berlin Bronze Plaque

This attempt at symmetry is not entirely absent from early

Christian art. On the St. Maximin sarcophagus (*fig. 10*) a sort of balance is attained between the three Magi standing before the cradle of Christ and the three figures standing before Herod in the Massacre scene. Although this balanced type of composition seems neat and pleasing, one should proceed with caution when interpreting such scenes. Hugo Kehrer,<sup>107</sup> followed by Leclercq,<sup>108</sup> has wrongly identified the figure on the right side of an eight-century bronze plaque in Berlin<sup>109</sup> (*fig. 21*) as Herod, and suggests that this is an instance where the visit of the Magi to Herod (on the right) is combined with their Adoration of the Christ-Child (on the left). However, the Magi appear only once. Mary sits on the extreme left; she is watching over the Child who lies on an altar-like bed in front of two animals, the ox and the ass; the three Magi appear next, moving towards the Child; lastly, on the right, is a seated figure, apparently nimbed (it is difficult to tell from the reproduction) and leaning on a staff, suggesting that he is old. This is not Herod, but Joseph. He sits alone, a bearded old man, passively leaning on his staff - a standard iconography for Joseph. If this figure were meant to be Herod, the Magi would be shown in conversation with him as well as adoring the Christ-Child, but, in fact, the Magi appear only once, walking away from this figure. The scene depicted, therefore, is a Nativity combined with the Adoration, and the figure on the right is Joseph, who often appears in this scene as a comparatively insignificant onlooker while attention is focused on the Child.

### Conclusion

Most of the works considered in this chapter are on a small scale. All examples known to me have been discussed. In the body of early Christian art that survives, they form a relatively small group, one

which can feasibly be dealt with and, as Rice advises, 'Where so much of the material has disappeared especially with regard to the large-scale works, it is essential to take the arts that chance to have been better preserved into account in order to complete the picture.'<sup>110</sup> Herod does not appear in early Christian art until the fifth century, and even then he is a relatively rare subject. His appearance is confined to scenes suggested by the canonical Gospel of Matthew: his meeting with the Magi and his ordering of the Massacre of the Innocents. But within these limitations, the iconographical approach to the subjects, and the media used are extremely varied. Herod usually appears as a Roman general or emperor, sometimes nimbed, and always regal and powerful. He is not yet the sadistic villain he will become in later medieval art, although the Syrian artist of the Rabbula Gospels gives a hint of this kind of development. Herod the Great in early Christian art is clearly King Herod, powerful monarch of the Jews, appointed by the Roman senate, host to foreign visitors, but capable of ordering and witnessing drastic measures to insure his position. Already in this very early art, he is associated with such Old Testament monarchs as Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, figures who became important 'types' for Herod in later medieval art because of their positions as powerful rulers as well as their antagonism towards Christ-like figures.

## CHAPTER IV: HEROD IN THE LITURGY

Patristic writings and Early Christian art provide a good introduction for the study of later medieval artistic and dramatic representations of Herod the Great. The background for such a study is not complete, however, without a consideration of the liturgy. Such a study is essential for a true understanding of liturgical drama, in which Herod plays an important part; it is also, more generally, a means of exploring one of the most pervasive influences on any medieval writer or artist.

The liturgy of the Eastern Church developed independently from the Western Church, but both were slow in being formulated, the earliest texts not crystallizing until the fourth century. The liturgy after that steadily developed and became more and more complex as new Feasts were added to the Calendars and new saints were celebrated. The liturgical Feasts in which Herod the Great has a part are only two: the Feast of the Holy Innocents and Epiphany. In this chapter some isolated liturgical texts from the Eastern Church will be examined first for evidence of what role Herod might have played and then the more relevant Western Church liturgies will be explored, beginning with the early Sacramentaries and then proceeding to Missals and Breviaries. Books of Hours will not be included in this chapter but will be discussed in a later chapter on medieval art, as their illumination is more important for this dissertation than their text. This study of the liturgy is therefore centred on Herod and is undertaken in order to appreciate the range of influences and backgrounds that might have been available to medieval writers and artists who dealt with Herod the Great.

## I. Eastern Liturgy

The liturgy of the Eastern Church had its beginnings in the city of Jerusalem and developed into a form of public worship quite distinct from that of the Western Church with its centre in Rome. The Eastern liturgy, like the Western, did not become fixed until the fourth century, when religious persecutions ended and the new religion, Christianity, was given imperial recognition. Antioch and Alexandria were the patriarchates where the Eastern liturgy first developed and although they were later (in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) dominated by the politically stronger Byzantine capital and its rites,<sup>1</sup> the liturgies of Syria and Egypt reveal the attitude of the early Eastern Church towards the sacraments and festivals of the church.

### A. The Syrian Liturgy of the Fourth Century

The liturgy of the Syrian Church in the fourth century is known mainly through two ancient documentary sources: the *Catacheses* of St. Cyril of Jerusalem (c.315 - 86), and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Books II and VIII.<sup>2</sup> The former were directed to catechumens who were to join the church on Holy Saturday, and so the emphasis was almost entirely on the sacrament of baptism and on the ceremony of the Mass.<sup>3</sup> The latter was an ecclesiastical manual but the festivals and fasts in this ante-Nicene liturgy do not include the Feast of the Holy Innocents.<sup>4</sup> In the Syrian church, it was not within the liturgy, but in extra-liturgical contexts that Herod was first mentioned.

The Massacre of the Innocents was the subject of several homilies of John Chrysostom (c.347 - 407), who treated the Massacre in great detail, emphasizing the nefarious deeds of Herod (see Chapter 2).

Similar references to Herod can be found in the hymns of St. Ephraim (.306 - 73), 'the chief hymn-writer of Syria...whose hymn-texts are among the oldest still in liturgical use.'<sup>5</sup> He wrote cycles of hymns in Syriac on the great feasts of the church and these were translated into Armenian and Greek at a very early date, and then via Greek, into Latin and Slavonic. His hymn, or sugyatha, on the Massacre of the Innocents follows:<sup>6</sup>

EXAMPLE 8. Sugyāthā on the Massacre of the Innocents (after JeannM II, 388).

"The children were slain because of Thy Child. O Lord, strike those who have killed our Lord, O Lord of Kings. The tyrant who is scheming to kill the hostages, confound him; conspire to kill him.

"O heavenly hierarchy, receive the hostages who approach to meet you. Blessed be the Lord who crowned them." (Translation and transliteration by Joshua Bloch.)

As in the homilies of Chrysostom, the tone is emotional and dramatic. Vengeance is called for against the tyrant, Herod; the Lord is asked to strike him down, to confound him, and to kill him. This passionate language is acceptable in personal addresses, such as sermons, and in the communal singing of hymns, but it was not appropriate to the more formal liturgy.

The earliest surviving liturgical books of the Syrian church do not include references to Herod and the Feast of the Holy Innocents. This may be due to the lack of scope of the earliest texts, which were

concentrated mainly on the celebration of the Mass especially in its context of Easter. The subject of Herod and the Innocents was not altogether neglected however. It found expression in early Syrian hymns and homilies.

#### B. The Liturgy of the Abyssinian Jacobites

The only other Eastern liturgy which makes mention of the Innocents is the liturgy of the Abyssinian Jacobites, commonly called the Aethiopic.<sup>7</sup> This liturgy is said to be the order which Basil of Antioch (c.330-79) compiled. The prayer of benediction invokes the Lord's blessing on the Christian members of the church through the intercession of a long list of saints, angels, patriarchs, martyrs, etc. The Latin version of the prayer begins:

Custodi eos in recta fide et in gloria, omni tempore,  
 et fac ut ferveant ineffabili et inexcogitabili  
 charitate, per preces ac intercessionem quam pro nobis  
 facit Domina nostra sancta et immaculata virgo Maria;  
 et per preces majorem angelorum splendentium, Michaelis,  
 et Gabrielis, ac Raphaelis, et Urielis, et quatuor  
 animalium sine carne, et viginti quatuor seniorum coeli;  
 et Patrum nostrorum sanctorum patriarcharum, Abraham,  
 Isaac, et Jacob, et omnium probarum Patrum priorum,  
 ac quindecim Patrum nostrorum prophetarum, ac sancti  
 Joannis Baptistae, et quatuordecim millium puerorum  
 Bethlehem, et Patrum nostrorum duodecim principum  
 apostolorum, et septuaginta duorum discipulorum, et  
 quingentorum sociorum eorum;...<sup>8</sup>

The prayer continues, listing twelve more saints individually and several large groups of martyrs as well.

There is no direct mention of Herod here, of course, but the Innocents are indirectly connected with him. Three points should be noted about this mention of the Innocents in this Egyptian liturgy: first, they occupy a position of great importance, near the beginning of a very long list of intercessory saints and coming directly after



the twenty-four elders, the Old Testament patriarchs and St. John the Baptist; second, their number has already become the apocryphal 144,000 (this same tendency will be seen in the liturgy of the Western Church); and third, they are not referred to as 'innocentes', but as 'pueri', boys or children. This slight difference in terminology reappears in later Calendars and Sacramentaries and could be significant in identifying various liturgical uses. L. Duchesne pointed out, for example, that 'le terme d'*Innocents* appartient à la langue liturgique romaine; le calendrier de Carthage et les livres gallicans emploient le mot *Infantes*.'<sup>9</sup> The Egyptian liturgy of the Abyssinian Jacobites shares with the Calendar of Carthage and the books of Gaul this distinctive terminology.

The Eastern liturgy, or at least the surviving documents bearing witness to it, offers very little material on Herod or on the Feasts in which he was involved. This is probably because Sacramentaries did not develop in the East to the same extent as they did in the West. L. Duchesne explained the reason for this. '*Les sacramentaires ou libri sacramentorum* acquirent plus d'importance en Occident qu'en Orient. Cela tient à ce que, dans les rites orientaux, les prières de la messe sont, sauf quelques exceptions, toujours les mêmes, tandis qu'en Occident elles varient d'une messe à l'autre.'<sup>10</sup> The more promising sources of information on Herod are in the extra-liturgical literature, such as sermons and hymns.

## II. The Western Liturgy: Early Period

### A. Extra-liturgical sources: Prudentius

Just as Herod was first mentioned in the Eastern Church in the homilies of Chrysostom and the hymns of Ephraim, so in the Western Church it was in the works of a fourth-century Latin poet and hymn-writer that Herod

was given more emphasis than in the early liturgy. Prudentius (348 - c.410), a Spaniard by birth, wrote a cycle of twelve hymns for daily use, based on the liturgical offices and seasons. Extracts from this cycle, *Cathemerinon*, still survive in the Roman Breviary, including two from Hymn 12, *Hymnus de Epiphania*,<sup>11</sup> which are used for the Feast of the Holy Innocents - 'Audit tyrannus anxius' and 'Salvete flores martyrum'. As Herod is depicted in a dramatic, violent way and the Massacre which he orders is described in an unusually crude and realistic way, it is quoted in full here:

Audit tyrannus anxius, Adesse regum principem: Qui nomen Israel regat, Teneatque David regiam.	95
Exclamat amens nuntio: Successor instat, pellimur: Satelles, i, ferrum rape, Perfunde cunas sanguine.	100
Mas omnis infans occidat, Scrutare nutricum sinus, Interque materna ubera Ensem cruentet pusio.	
Suspecta per Bethlem mihi Puerperarum est omnium Fraus, nequa [ puerpera ] subtrahat Prolem virilis indolis.	105
Transfigit ergo carnifex, Mucrone districto furens. Effusa nuper corpora Animasque rimatur novas.	110
Locum minutis artibus Vix interemptor invenit, Quo plaga descendat patens Juguloque major pugio est.	115
O barbaram spectaculum! Illisa cervix cautibus Spargit cerebrum lacteum, Oculosque per vulnus vomit	120

Aut in profundum palpitans  
 Mersatur infans gurgitem,  
 Cui subter arctis faucibus  
 Singultat unda, et halitus. 12

This is one of the earliest literary liturgical references to Herod and one which was so influential that it was adopted by later official Sacramentaries, Missals and Breviaries, and so it is important to note the details which are stressed about Herod. He is not named in this part of the poem but it was instantly understood that he was the 'tyrannus'.<sup>13</sup> Herod was considered to be a tyrant then, and there are hints that he held David's throne fraudulently and was therefore especially alarmed lest this 'upstart' infant cause him to lose his throne. He was not only 'anxius', or troubled, but also 'amens', meaning mad or out of his senses; this is why he gave those terrible orders which are related in all their cruel detail. The poet even stresses that Herod knew that the women would try to hide their children from the soldiers and so he trusted no woman who had recently borne a child, but suspected them all. He was anxious not to be deceived by anyone. This seems like an ironic preview of the account of his later hypocritical behaviour with the Magi when he himself tries to deceive them by pretending that he wished to worship the Christ-Child, intending really to murder him. It also emphasizes the fact that although he was intent on not being deceived by the women, later he was easily deceived (through God's intervention) by the unwitting Magi who did not return to him on their way home.

The description of the massacre is particularly vivid. Certain details are quite significant. Herod orders his soldiers to take up their swords, 'ferrum rape', (1.99) and to bloody their two-edged swords, 'ensem', (1.104) with infant gore. Then the soldier/murderer kills the children using his sword or sword-edge, 'mucrone' (1.110).

However, a few lines later, mention is made of a child whose head is smashed against the stony ground causing his milk-white brains to be scattered around and his eyes to fall out:

Illisa cervix cautibus  
Spargit cerebrum lacteum  
Oculosque per vulnus vomit. (11.118-120)

Still later, children are being plunged into a deep, swift-flowing stream:

Aut in profundum palpitans  
Mersatur infans gurgitem. (11.121-122)

There are at least three different kinds of murder taking place, the last one paralleling Pharaoh's murder of the Hebrew male children by having them cast into the Nile.<sup>14</sup> A. D. McDonald quotes only the lines about the 'smashing' type of Massacre of the Innocents and presents this as proof that the smashing tradition was prevalent in Spain at the end of the fourth century.<sup>15</sup> He suggests that this influenced the iconography of the Massacre in nearby areas (Southern France and Northern Italy). This may very well be true but it is important to realize that both the sword-type and the smashing-type (and indeed a drowning-type) of Massacre were known, and so the choice of a smashing type of iconography must have been a conscious and deliberate one. The same tradition was also chosen for the Spanish (Mozarabic) liturgy, in which the Feast of the Innocents has the rubric 'In Allisione Infantum'.<sup>16</sup> Prudentius' Latin poem was one of the first Christian hymns in the Western world to mention Herod. His debut was vivid and dramatic.

#### B. Calendars: Carthaginian and Hieronymian

It is difficult to determine accurately when the Feast of the Holy Innocents became officially integrated into the liturgy. 'For the first three centuries the development of the system of Christian festivals was very slow.'<sup>17</sup> The liturgy only began to have fixed texts around the

fourth century<sup>18</sup> and then the only festival to be celebrated was the Pascal moveable feast. Gradually other festivals were added. It seems that in Bethlehem and Jerusalem the Innocents were worshipped. 'Les saints Innocents ne furent pas totalement négligés. Non loin de la basilique de Bethleem, ou l'on montrait les tombeaux du roi-prophète et de son fils Salomon, on fit voir au pèlerin de Plaisance les reliques de ces fleurs des martyrs: *in ipso loco habent monumentum et omnes in unum requiescunt et aperitur et videntur ossa ipsorum*. Avant le VII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Jerusalem n'eut plus d'autres saints propres, dont le martyr soit sérieusement attesté.'<sup>19</sup> But as early as the fifth century the Carthaginian Calendar (c.500) had an entry for the Feast of the Innocents.<sup>20</sup> This is the most ancient church Calendar to have survived. It mentions eighty feast days and covers mostly local saints, although it includes twenty Roman and some other Italian, Sicilian and Spanish saints, as well as SS. John Baptist (June 24), Maccabees, Luke, Andrew, Christmas, Stephen and James (December 27); it also includes Epiphany on the 'viii idus ian.' and, on the 'v kal. ian.' a feast for 'sanctorum infantum quos Herodes occidit.'

A much larger and more widespread Calendar that has survived is the *Hieronymian Martyrology*, containing 8,000 - 10,000 names.<sup>21</sup> This combines a number of early fourth-century Calendars from different churches, both Eastern and Western, which were combined in about the middle of the fifth century in Italy. Then the African list was added and the whole was later revised in Gaul c.600, probably at Auxerre.<sup>22</sup> All surviving manuscripts are derived only from this revision, and all later martyrologies are based on it or on abridged texts, including the martyrologies of Bede, Florus, Rabanus Maurus, Notker, Ado, Usuard

and Baronius. The entry in the *Hieronymian Martyrology* for the V KL Jan. in all four manuscripts published in *Acta Sanctorum* mentions the slain 'infants' as the first of several entries for that day. The fullest, expanded version would read, 'Bethleem natale sanctorum infantium et lactantium qui sub Herode pro Christo passi sunt.'<sup>23</sup> Thus, by the fifth century, the fifth of the Kalends of January (December 28) was established as the day for this festival in the Western Church.

The Eastern Churches, however, were divided in their choice of a date for the celebration of this feast. In their Calendars, December 28 was given to other saints. It was considered the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul in the Syrian Menologion;<sup>24</sup> in the Armenian Calendar, December 28 was devoted to SS. James and John.<sup>25</sup> Other dates were chosen to celebrate the Holy Innocents. The Syrian and Chaldean Churches celebrated on December 27 before the seventh century,<sup>26</sup> while the Coptic Church and the Greek Church (centred in Constantinople) chose December 29.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, Western Churches were fairly consistent in celebrating the Feast of the Holy Innocents on December 28, with the exception of the Mozarabic Liturgy in Spain, which kept this feast on January 8. Calendars and Martyrologies thus indicate whether or not a feast was celebrated and they sometimes specify the exact date, but it is to the liturgical books which preserve the actual texts that were said or sung during those feasts, that one must turn for more specific information on Herod in the liturgy.

### III. Western Liturgical Books: Sacramentaries and Missals

#### A. Roman Liturgical Books

##### 1. Leonine

The liturgical books which ultimately had the greatest influence

on the art and literature of Europe were the Roman ones. The earliest surviving Roman Mass-book is the Leonine Sacramentary,<sup>28</sup> a book belonging to the sixth century and not to the time of Leo I (440-461) after whom it is named.<sup>29</sup> This book is arranged by months, beginning with January, instead of by the ecclesiastical year which begins with Advent. However, the beginning of the manuscript has been mutilated and so the sections for January - mid-April are missing, but the December section has survived, including Chapter XLIII, 'In Natali Innocentium.'<sup>30</sup> In the first part of the service for this feast, one of the prayers mentions Herod specifically: 'Pretiosis enim mortibus parvulorum, quos, propter Filii tui Domini nostri et Salvatoris infantium, bestiali saevitia Herodes funestus occidit, immensa clementiae tuae dona cognoscimus.'<sup>31</sup> The second part ends with a plea: 'Tribue, Domine, quaesumus, fidelibus tuis, ut, sicut ait Apostolus, non efficiantur pueri sensibus, sed malitia innoxii reperiantur....'<sup>32</sup> Thus, in the very earliest Roman liturgy known, Herod is a murderer of bestial savagery. This is interesting in that the great liturgical scholar, Edmund Bishop, in distinguishing the Roman rite from all others, characterized it by its 'soberness and sense',<sup>33</sup> and great restraint. However, the prayer hastens to add that God's gifts of mercy and grace outweigh Herod's worst malice.<sup>34</sup>

## 2. Gregorian

The Gregorian Sacramentary proved to be the most enduring and influential Roman liturgical book and, indeed, is the basis of the Roman Missal still in use today.<sup>35</sup> The Gregorian liturgy was developed in the seventh century<sup>36</sup> and was later sent by request in c.790 by Pope Hadrian I to the Emperor Charlemagne at Aachen and was used throughout Charlemagne's empire, where a Supplement was added by Alcuin to complete the Sacramentary.<sup>34</sup>

Most editors have not distinguished between the two parts, but J. Wordsworth has separated the Roman book from the supplements added in France.<sup>37</sup> The Mass for the V Kalend. Januarii, 'Natalis Innocentum', falls in the original Roman portion and exhibits many similarities to the Leonine and Gelasian books. The Preface is the same as the Leonine one, quoted above, with its reference to 'bestiali saevitia Herodes funestus.'<sup>38</sup> In addition, the Benediction adds a second specific reference to Herod: 'Omnipotens Deus, pro cuius Unigeniti veneranda infantia infantium innocentium catervas Herodis funesti peremit saevitia, suae vobis benedictionis tribuat dona gratissima. Amen.'<sup>39</sup> Herod is presented as cruel, savage and murderous in the Roman liturgical books, but not as the madman nor as the deceitful hypocrite of Prudentius' earlier hymns.

The Gregorian Sacramentary introduced a new element into the liturgy. For every feast, the station where Mass was to be said that day was indicated, unless the name of the saint being commemorated made it clear. The stations were all in or near Rome. As the Innocents did not have a church directly connected with them in Rome,<sup>40</sup> Mass on December 28 was celebrated in St. Paul's, a cemeterial church, close to the Stational Churches in Rome.<sup>41</sup> The liturgical scholar, Ildefonso Schuster, gives a reason for this particular choice. It ' would seem to have been influenced, not so much by association with the relics of the Holy Innocents - said, according to tradition, to have been preserved in that splendid church - as by the...feeling of the ancient liturgy that the great solemnities of the year should always be celebrated by a station at the tombs of SS Peter and Paul....Moreover, it is not unlikely that this station at St. Paul's, following on that of December 25 at St. Peter's, still preserves a last remnant of a very ancient festival in honour of



the two Princes of the Apostles, as is attested by several Oriental calendars and ferial records of the fourth century.<sup>42</sup> As seen above, December 28 was the day, in the Syriac Menologion, for the feasts of SS. Peter and Paul.

## B. Gallican Liturgical Books

### 1. *Missale Gothicum*

Western liturgies other than Roman are generally identified geographically. The largest group is the Gallican.<sup>43</sup> The first Gallican rite to be considered here is the Burgundian *Missale Gothicum*, sometimes called the *Missal of Autun*, written c.700.<sup>44</sup> The seventh Mass, 'Missa in Natale Sanctorum Infantum', has prayers which are more emotionally charged than in the Roman books. The 'Collectio post nomine' is an example, as the death of the children is considered: 'Felix mors eorum, et beatificanda conditio, per quam eis contigit ut saevitiam crudelissimi Herodis devicerint triumphando, et Christum mererentur in praemia.'<sup>45</sup> Herod was considered savage and 'crudelissimus', a word which lingers in the listener's ear. Later, in the central prayer of the Mass, the 'Immolatio Missae', beginning 'Dignum et justum est...', Herod was again referred to directly and horrible details of his cruel deed are given:

Vere dignum et justum est, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, aeterne Deus, pro his praecipue quorum hodierno die annua festivitate recolentes memoriam passionis celebramus, quos Herodianus satelles lactantum matrum uberibus abstraxit....<sup>46</sup>

This vivid picture of the suckling babes being torn from their mothers' breasts at Herod's command appears in the central prayer of the Mass. The prayer continues, referring to the Massacre as a terrible crime, although the children are glorious martyrs:

Praemittit Infantes Infans Christus ad caelos;  
transmittit nova exenia Patri; primitias exhibet  
Genitori Parvulorum prima martyria, Herodis  
scelere perpetrata. Praestat hostia corpori,  
dum nocet; beneficium tribuit, dum occidit;  
moriendo vivitur, cadendo resurgitur, victoria  
per interitum comprobatur...<sup>47</sup>

The emotional tone and dramatic language is typical of the Gallican books.

## 2. The Bobbio Missal

A second Gallican book, of the eighth century, is the Bobbio Missal.<sup>48</sup> This is the first Missal to include readings from Scripture during the Office of the Mass. In the readings for the 'Missa Infantum', a section from the Apocalypse appears: 'Vidi subtus altare animas interfectorum propter verbum Dei, et propter testimonium, quod habebant, et clamabant voce magna dicentes: Usquequo Domine (sanctus, et verus), non iudicas, et non vindicas sanguinem nostrum de iis qui habitant in terra? Et datae sunt illis singulae stolae albae; et dictum est illis ut requiescerent adhuc tempus modicum donec compleantur conservi eorum et fratres eorum, qui interficiendi sunt sicut et illi ' (Apoc. 6:9-11). This is a powerful introduction to the Feast of the Holy Innocents, a great cry from all martyrs for vengeance on their innocent blood. In the context, Herod is presented as an object for God's vengeance for his spilling of the innocent blood of the very first martyrs, the Holy Innocents.<sup>49</sup>

## 3. The Mozarabic Liturgy

The Mozarabic Sacramentary used in Spain and attributed largely to Isidore of Seville (d.c.450) survives only in a ninth-century manuscript, but is generally considered to be Gallican in origin.<sup>50</sup> The surviving Mass for the Feast, 'Allisione Infantum',<sup>51</sup> is longer and more complete than those discussed above, as it includes Psalms, Lections, etc. as well as the prayers said by the priest. Some of the readings, such as those

from Matthew 2, or from Books quoted in Matthew such as Jeremiah 31:15-20, 'Vox in Rama', relating the inconsolable grief of Rachel over the loss of her sons, are obvious choices for the liturgy of this feast. Other Scriptural references outside Matthew also appear in this liturgy. The Introit is Psalm 8:3, 'Ex ore infantium et lactantium perfecisti laudem propter inimicos tuos Ut destruas inimicum et defensorem,' which Christ quoted when the chief priests found fault with him for allowing the young children to acclaim him in the Temple as the Messiah. Other readings for this feast are taken from Matthew 18:1-6 and 10-11 and Matthew 19:13-15 in which Christ uses an innocent child as an example of one who will enter heaven easily, and from II Corinthians 1:3-5 where Paul assures his readers of God's comfort during earthly affliction. The net is spread wide to pick up Biblical quotations relevant to innocent children.

Then the Office of the Mass begins and the Mozarabic prayers make indirect reference to Herod at the beginning. 'Ubi crudelitas impietatis errabit; ibi hostiam suam Salvatoris pietas agnoscebat.'<sup>52</sup> The next prayer gives examples of God's mercy to his children, referring especially to the escape across the Red Sea from Pharaoh, and then continues to ask for God's guidance and grace in developing Christ-like qualities of 'innocence' as opposed to evil, malicious ways:

Dona nobis famulis tuis: ut malicie viribus defecati:  
 in usum concupiscentie carnalis invalidi: docibilem  
 servemus disciplinis voluntatem. Quo mens nec  
 rigida nec superba: sic sit blanda: ne facilis:  
 sit innocens: ne imprudens: sic humilis: ne imbecillis.  
 Quatenus maturo discretionis iudicio sic sufficiat  
 probare quod placeat: ut affectare nesciat quod  
 delinquat. Atque ita salubrem sumat temperantiam  
 moderante consilio: ut et simplicitatem  
 imitetur infantium; et fortitudinem vindicit  
 p [u] gnatorum.<sup>53</sup>

This prayer refers to general qualities of good and evil, rather than the specific qualities of the Innocents and their murderer - but the details highlighted are interesting in that they can all be specifically applied to Herod: he was guilty of 'usum concupiscentiae carnalis'; he had a mind which was obdurate and proud, 'rigida et superba'; he was a man of immature judgment and intemperate actions, 'facilis, imprudens, imbecilis'.

The 'Inlatio' (Communion) is even more specific in its references. It states that Christ was born as a child 'sic rex impius ac profans expavit';<sup>54</sup> all infants were condemned to death but 'sic decepti furoris insania fecit martyres esse per mortem.'<sup>55</sup> The furious insanity of Herod is now the outstanding quality of his evil, and is the inspiration for a great diatribe at the end of this prayer: 'O nefandi furoris immanitas ipso quo perimebatur vulnere: portabatur occisus et tenerum pendebat cadaver in capillum: plus lactis egrediens: quam cruoris'.<sup>56</sup> At the end of the Mozarabic liturgy for this feast, there are some prayers for when the feast falls on a Sunday. One of these recalls the story of Cain and Abel by the words, 'Et sicut illorum vox sanguinis clamavit ad Deum...'<sup>57</sup> The blood of Abel cried out for vengeance against his murderer; the blood of the Innocents also cries out for vengeance against Herod, the New Testament antitype of the first murderer, Cain.

### C. The Ambrosian Liturgy

The other main type of liturgy outside Rome was the Ambrosian rite of Milan.<sup>58</sup> In this liturgy, the feast 'In Natali SS. Innocentum Martyrum',<sup>59</sup> includes the readings from Scripture from the Gallican books, but the Offertory is unique: 'Splendet Aegypti campus de candidata turba Infantum: pretiosa corpora pro Christo occisa jacebant ab Herode'.<sup>60</sup> It relates

Herod's Massacre of the Jewish Infants in Bethlehem directly to Pharaoh's Massacre of the Hebrew Children in Egypt, a comparison which had been made by Prudentius and was to prove fruitful for later medieval artists (see Chapter 8).

#### D. Anglo-Saxon Liturgical Books

##### 1. The Leofric Missal

The Western liturgies were eventually introduced into the British Isles, the Gallican and Roman being the most influential. An early Anglo-Saxon book, the Leofric Missal,<sup>61</sup> retains a feast for the V Kal. ian., entitled 'Natale Sanctorum Innocentium'; this preserves the forms of the Roman Gregorian rite which was to supersede all other liturgies. This book is, in fact, a Missal produced by Leofric who was brought from Lotharingia by Edward the Confessor and made Bishop of Crediton (1046) and then of Exeter (1050-1072). He produced a Lotharingian Gregorian Sacramentary, with the French supplements, and so it was also partly Gallican.<sup>62</sup> The readings and prayers are those of the Roman rite, beginning with 'Ex ore infantium', but another Psalm has been added for the Gradual, Psalm 123:7: 'Anima nostra sicut passer erepta est, De laqueo venantium; Laqueus contritus est, Et nos liberati sumus'. In this context the souls (of the Innocents) are compared to birds which were caught in fowler's nets (Herod's Massacre) but are now freed (and in heaven). This is an effective and picturesque image for 'the victims of Herod's persecution who, having attained their freedom, have gone up to heaven without ever realizing the wondrous manner of going.'<sup>63</sup> The Preface to the Mass repeats the Roman prayer, 'Et impreciosis mortibus parvulorum, quos propter nostri salvatoris infantiam bestiali sevitia herodes funestus occidit, immensa clementiae tuae dona predicare',<sup>64</sup> and the Benediction

repeats the reference to Herod as a man of deadly savagery.<sup>65</sup>

## 2. The Sarum and York Missals

In the thirteenth century in England the church developed local modifications of the Roman rite; in the south the Use of Sarum became most popular,<sup>66</sup> and in the north, the Use of York.<sup>67</sup> Both of these rites have special Feasts for the Innocents which include, besides the various readings from the Psalms, Matthew, the Apocalypse, etc., a powerful Sequence in which Herod is given a prominent place and his role in the Massacre of the Innocents is detailed and vivid:

Celsa pueri concrepent melodia  
 Elis, Innocentum colentes tripudia  
 Quos infans Christus hodie vexit ad astra.  
 Quos trucidavit fredens insania  
 Herodianae fraudis, ob nulla crimina,  
 In Bethlehem ipsius cuncta et per confinia,  
 A bimatu et infra juxta nascendi tempora.  
 Herodes rex Christ nati verens infelix imperia,  
 Infremit totus, et erigit arma superba dextera,  
 Quaerit lucis et caeli regem cum mente turbida,  
 Ut extinguat qui vitam praestat per sua jacula  
 Dum non valent intueri lucem splendidam nebulosa  
   quarentis pectora,  
 Ira fervet, fraudes auget Herodes saevus, ut perdat  
   piorum agmina.  
 Castra militum dux iniquus aggregat;  
 Ferrum figit in membra tenera;  
 Inter ubera lac effundit,  
 Antequam sanguinis fierent coagula  
 Hostis naturae natos eviscerat atque jugulat.  
 Ante prosternit, quam aetas parvula sumat robora....<sup>68</sup>

In this Sequence Herod is mad - he has a clouded mind and he gnashes his teeth; he is also furious, fraudulent, haughty, fierce, wicked, murderous and unnaturally cruel. This is the most dramatic and most highly developed picture of Herod as the villain who was to emerge so powerfully in liturgical drama and later mystery plays.

## IV. Commentaries on the Early Liturgy

A. *Ordines Romani*

To complete the picture of Herod which developed in the early liturgical books, it is important to study the Commentaries and *Ordines*, books which explained the ceremonial aspects of the Mass and also determined the atmosphere which was to prevail for each feast. The most comprehensive of these was the eleventh-century *Ordines Romani*,<sup>69</sup> a collection from ancient writers of ceremonial directions for the performance of the Roman rite, which received substantially their present form in the sixth century.<sup>70</sup> Ordo Romanus XI devotes section 26 to the celebration of the Feast of the Innocents, giving special attention to the chants. The *Te Deum* must not be sung nor any other joyful chants unless the Feast falls on a Sunday:

Non cantatur *Te Deum*....Ad missam non cantatur  
*Gloria in excelsis Deo*, nec *All [elvia]*, nisi  
 venerat in Dominica, sed omne officium est  
 quadragesimale. Isto die Romani non comedunt  
 carnem, nec sagimen, nisi venerit in dominico die.<sup>71</sup>

Thus the greatest songs of praise and thanksgiving are omitted from this most solemn ceremony, commemorating the Massacre of the Innocents. Ordo Romanus XIII also comments on this same feast, this time outlining the solemn colours and vestments to be used:

In festo Innocentium fit officium ut continetur  
 in libro, tamen in Missa utitur colore violaceo,  
 et subdiaconus et diaconus utuntur planetis, et  
 papa mitra simplici. In eorum Octavis utitur in  
 Missa colore rubeo, ut in diebus festivis. In aliis  
 vero festis sequentibus, sive festum confessorum,  
 sive virginum, utitur colore albo, rubeo in Dominicis  
 a Nativitate usque ad Octavam Epiphaniae; si facit  
 de Dominica, non de aliquo festo, utitur albo colore.  
 Ab octava vero Epiphaniae usque ad Septuagesimam  
 diebus Dominicis et ferialibus utitur colore viridi.<sup>72</sup>

Just as the music for this feast was kept sombre, so too the vestments and colours worn by the celebrants of the Mass were dark and simple; the colour worn for the celebration of Mass was purple, the deacon and subdeacon were in plain vestments, and the pope wore only a simple mitre.

B. *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, by Amalarius of Metz

The *Ordines Romani* described the ceremonial of the Roman Church but did not give any explanations for the various aspects of the ritual. However, in the *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*<sup>73</sup> by the liturgical scholar of the ninth century, Amalarius of Metz (780-850), some suggestion as to the reason for certain ritual is given. There is a short chapter (Book I, Chapter XLI) on 'De Missa Innocentum', in which the congregation is urged to identify themselves with the grief of the mourning mothers and celebrate the feast 'cum aliqua tristitia'.<sup>74</sup>

...de missa Innocentum: praetitulatur in Antiphonario sic: "*Gloria in excelsis Deo* non cantatur, nec *Alleluia*, sed quasi in tristitia deducitur dies ille." Compositor officii praesentis conjungi nos vult animis devotarum feminarum quae in morte Innocentum doluerunt et planxerunt. Sicut separat nos ab acta malorum Judaeorum in Coena Domini, sive in Parasceve, sive in Sabbato, omittendo osculo, sive caetera sueta; ita conjungit in praesenti festivitate dolori devotarum feminarum. Causa earum tristitiae omittimus *Gloria in excelsis Deo* et *Alleluia*. 75

In the same way Amalarius gives an explanation of why the Invitatory is omitted for Epiphany, or Theophany, in Book IV, Chapter XXXIII:

Saepe dictum est quod institutor officii, in quantum potuit, actionem omnem illius temporis quando illa agebantur quae recolimus in usitato officio, voluit ad memoriam nobis reducere. Igitur quia voluit in isto distinguere nostram bonam invitationem, qua invitantur et excitantur fideles ad Deum deprecandum, ab invitatione Herodis, qui propterea congregavit scribas et principes Judaeorum, ut sciret ubi Christus nasceretur, quem cogitabat interficere, invitatorium officii praesentis omisit.<sup>76</sup>



He considered the purpose of the liturgy to be to move one to follow right examples and to make the proper emotional responses. Thus the clergy, by omitting songs of praise during their celebration of Mass on the Feast of the Innocents, respected the grief of the mothers, and by omitting the Invitatory of Epiphany discriminated between true and false invitations to worship Christ, the true Lord.

C. *Liber de Officiis Ecclesiasticis*, by John of Avranches

John of Avranches, Archbishop of Rouen in the eleventh century, expressed similar ideas to those of Amalarius of Metz in his *Liber de Officiis Ecclesiasticis*,<sup>77</sup> but he placed emphasis on the deaths of the children rather than the grief of their mothers in the Feast of the Innocents:

Incipiente officio infantum, in omnibus, ut a diaconus in suo, agendum, licet, ut in morte Domini, *Te Deum*, et *Gloria in excelsis*, et *Alleluia*, in aliquot ecclesiis ex more antiquo omittatur; quia ut Christus occideretur, tot parvuli occidi jubentur; et illis occisis fit more Christi secundum aestimationem Herodis: tamen quia placuit modernis, placet et nobis ut cantentur. Subdiaconi et diaconi tunicis et dalmaticis utantur, quamvis apud quasdam Ecclesias hac die [usus] casularum habeatur.<sup>78</sup>

It seems that in the eleventh century, the finer points in the liturgy were not being so strictly observed as previously, but nevertheless, there is a definite awareness of the significance of ceremonial details.

D. *Gemma Animae*, by Honorius of Autun

Honorius of Autun in the twelfth century expanded this explanation of the significance of the liturgy and added a new dimension to it in his *Gemma Animae*, Book III:

Quod *Te Deum laudamus* et *Gloria in excelsis* et *Alleluia* de Innocentibus non cantamus, matres illorum imitatur, quas in tristitia fuisse non dubitamus.

Ideo etiam cantus Laetitia non cantantur, et dalmatica vel subtile non portatur, quia idem chorus infantum ad inferna descendisse memoratur. Si illorum festivitas in Dominica evenerit, omnia de illis, ut de aliis sanctis associatos credimus. In octava quoque illorum *Alleluia* et alia canimus, quia facta Christi resurrectione eos in gaudio receptos scimus. Horum festum ideo infantes solemnizant, quia eos primum ad Christum praemio praeibant. *Gloria Patri* secundum ordinem de Innocentibus canitur, quod nunquam nisi in passione Domini intermittitur. 79

Songs of praise and gorgeous garments were eliminated from this festival, not only to show respect for the mothers' grief, but also to commemorate the fact that the souls of the Innocents did, in fact, descend into hell, or more properly, into Limbo.

#### E. *Micrologus*

This reference to inferno also appears in the *Micrologus*, an eleventh-century book subtitled 'De Ecclesiasticis Observationibus', where it is fully explained.

Merito autem passio sanctorum Innocentium minus festive quam aliorum sanctorum celebratur, quia licet martyrio coronati, nondum tamen ad gloriam, sed ad infernalem poenam\* discesserunt. Nam ante descensum Christi ad inferos, nullus sanctorum ad illam gloriam pervenit ad quam Christus antiquos sanctos perduxit et deinceps suos sequaces perducere non desinit. Sed quia ipsi in resurrectione Dominica cum reliquis sanctis liberari et conglorificari meruerunt, convenientissime et ipsi juxta ordinem solitam gloriam in officiis cum reliquis sanctis obtinebunt, si natalis eorum usque ad diem resurrectionis, id est Dominicam, pervenerit. Octavam quoque eorum eodem modo ut aliorum sanctorum celebramus, quia jam transacta die resurrectionis, non dubitamus eos gloriari cum aliis sanctis. 81

\* Infernalem poenam rite intellige carcerem limbi Patrum, seu sinum Abrahae, quo ante Christi mortem Innocentes martyres descenderunt, unde tamen Christi morte in coelum recepti sunt.

This descent to hell, or rather to the limbo, of the Fathers is difficult to reconcile with the Gradual and Offertory which were taken from Psalm 123:7, 'Anima nostra sicut passer erepta est de laqueo venantium; laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus', using the image of the snare being broken and the souls being immediately free to fly up to heaven. The Psalms were used in the early liturgy for their language and imagery before a systematic attempt was made in commentaries to explain orthodox interpretations.

F. *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, by John Belethus

A century later, John Belethus, the learned theologian of Paris and Amiens, again emphasized this point when he discussed the three festivals falling in Christmas week. He explained that children took part in this feast but that they did so with great solemnity: 'Et pueri in ipso festo Innocentium, quia innocentes pro Christo occisi sunt,...in festo itaque Innocentium penitus subtrahuntur cantica laetitia, quoniam ii ad inferos descenderunt.'<sup>82</sup> There is no softening of 'inferus' to 'limbus' here, but a strict interpretation of the significance of the ceremonial aspects of the liturgy. The omission of these chants and the resulting 'tristitia' was probably the rule in most churches using the Roman rite, but there is evidence that they were not all so very strict. As early as the eleventh century, John of Avranches (see above) wrote that this omission of the joyful chants was carried out 'in aliquot ecclesiis ex more antiquo', but that this custom was being ignored in his time as it did not appeal to modern churches: 'Tamen quia placuit modernis, placet et nobis ut cantentur'.<sup>83</sup> Edmund Martene, the seventeenth-century liturgiologist, also noted that local practices had varied considerably; some churches also omitted the *Gloria Patri* and the

*Ite missa est*, while others included the *Gloria in excelsis*, and still others the *Alleluia*.<sup>84</sup>

G. *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, by Gulielmus Durandus

One of the most influential interpreters of the symbolism of the liturgy was Gulielmus Durandus (1230-96). His *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* is a compendium of liturgical knowledge with mystical interpretation.<sup>85</sup> In his chapter on the Innocents he repeated the ideas of Honorius of Autun about the joyful music being omitted because of the grief of the mothers and the journey of the souls to hell.<sup>86</sup> This is the reason for the solemnity of the vestments as well:

...hac die tristitiam mulierum repraesentamus,  
in multis ecclesiis diaconi non utuntur dalmaticis,  
nec sub diaconi subtilibus. i. tunicellis, ad notandum  
quod Innocentes statim in morte primam, stolam  
non receperunt, sed ad infernum descenderunt; de  
hoc in tertia parte dictum est, sub tit. de coloribus.<sup>87</sup>

Durandus does, in fact, give a thorough account of the use and symbolism of colours in Book III, making several specific references to the Feast of the Holy Innocents.<sup>88</sup> He points out that scarlet vestments are to be used on the festivals of Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs and Virgins, on account of their passion, but that on days of particular sadness, black (or violet) was used. The Feast of the Holy Innocents fits into both categories, and for that reason some churches use black and some scarlet, although all use scarlet on the Octave:

In festo autem sanctorum Innocentium quidam nigris,  
alii vero rubeis indumentis utendum esse contendit,  
illi propter tristitiam quia vox in Rama audita est,  
ploratus, et ululatus multus. Rachel plorans filios  
suos, etc. Nam et propter eandem causam cantica  
laetitie subticentur et sine aurifrisio mitra defertur,  
isti, propter martyrium, quod principaliter commemorans,  
inquit ecclesia, Sub throno Dei sancti omnes clamant,  
Vindica sanguinem nostrum, qui effusus est, Domine

Deus noster, Sicut et in laetare Hierusalem, propter letitiam, quam aurea rosa designat Rom. pontifex portat mitram aurifrisio insigniam, sed propter abstinentiam nigris utitur indumentis. Sed ecclesia Rom. tunc utitur violaceo colore quando illud occurrit extra dominicem, sed in octava rubeo.<sup>89</sup>

From very early times in the Western Church there were specific commentaries and *Ordines* governing the ceremonial aspect of the liturgy for the Feast of the Holy Innocents, especially for the music, colours and vestments, stressing the solemnity and sadness of the Feast and commemorating the first martyrs with great dignity.

#### V. The Boy Bishop

In some Western Churches a custom developed whereby the children of the choir were given certain responsibilities in the celebration of this Festival in honour of the children who first died as martyrs for Christ. This seems to have been more popular in France than in England. Belethus mentioned it in the twelfth century when he was describing the three festivals which followed Christmas.<sup>90</sup> These were all observed in an unusual way in that on St. Stephen's Day deacons took the principal part, on St. John's Day it was presbyters, and on Innocents' Day the boys in the choir.<sup>91</sup> E. K. Chambers found a reference as early as 911 at the Monastery of St. Gall to the grave and sedate Vesper procession of the children of the choir for this feast.<sup>92</sup> John of Avranches (late eleventh century),<sup>93</sup> Honorius of Autun (early twelfth century)<sup>94</sup> and John Belethus (end of the twelfth century)<sup>95</sup> all refer to the children's participation in this festival and by the thirteenth century this was a normal part of the service in both France and England. Edmund Martene, in *De Antiquis Ecclesiae Ritibus*, explained their role: they occupied the more important choir stalls and sang the antiphons and responses; they elected their own Boy Bishop, usually on the eve of St. John's Day, and

he read both the Benediction and the Collects; during Vespers the Precentor of the boys was handed the baton (baculum) by the clerical Precentor after the singing of 'He hath put down the mighty from their seats', and from there he led the boys' choir to their higher stalls from where they led the ceremonial aspects of the feast.<sup>96</sup> After the service the boys were given a feast at the Precentor's home. In the beginning, this ceremony was undoubtedly carried out in a dignified way, but in the later Middle Ages it was greatly abused and led to a good deal of licence and riotous behaviour in France where it was the subject of much controversy and eventually had to be abolished. It seems that the custom was not so abused in England, nor perhaps was it so widespread. Most of E. K. Chambers' examples are French; in England he found reference to it only at Salisbury, York, Lincoln and St. Albans, although he suggested that these instances could be multiplied.<sup>97</sup>

In England, however, the Boy Bishop played his part in the Feast of the Holy Innocents as late as the fifteenth century in the rites of both Sarum and York. Two of the great service books of the Sarum Use, the Breviary and the Processional, include many rubrics indicating the part of the Boy Bishop in the fifteenth century. His actions are given in some detail. The procession begins:

Tunc est processio Puerorum ad altare Innocentium,  
 vel Sanctae Trinitatis, cum capis sericis et cereis  
 illuminatis in manibus suis, cantando R. "Centum  
 quadraginta quattuor milia qui empti sunt de terra"...  
 Ad hanc processionem non dicatur *Gloria Patri*:  
 sed dum Prosa canitur, thurificet Episcopus Puerorum  
 altare, deinde imaginem Sanctae Trinitatis....  
 Tunc Episcopus Puerorum intret stallum suum, et  
 interim Cruciferarius accipiat baculum episcopi  
 conversus ad episcopum....<sup>98</sup>

These indications from a fifteenth-century manuscript of the Sarum Breviary show that the procession for the Feast of the Holy Innocents

was not so austere as in earlier times - indeed, the boys were vested in silken copes and carried candles and thuribles, but they performed their part with dignity. Their part continued throughout the Office:

In Laudibus Episcopus Puerorum dicat modesta voce, quasi legendo, Capitulum, loco nec habitu mutato, quia per totum diem capa serica utitur....  
 Consequenter dicat Episcopus Puerorum benedictionem super populum....Hoc Responsorium [Centum quadraginta] ab uno solo Pueri, scilicet Cancellario, incipiatur ad gradum chori, in capa serica, et suus versus ab omnibus pueris cantetur in superpelliceis in stacione puerorum....99

The York Missal also shows evidence of serious and effective participation by the children and their Boy Bishop in this festival.<sup>100</sup> The fifteenth-century manuscript in Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge,<sup>101</sup> in particular, gives several indications of their functions, including those of the bishop and his 'praecentor' at Mass. The rubric at the beginning of Mass reads, 'Omnibus pueris in Capis, Praecentor illorum incipiat.'<sup>102</sup> After the Kyrie, they continued to lead the ceremonial action. 'Omnibus pueris in medio Chori stantibus, et ibi omnia cantantibus, Episcopo eorum interim in cathedra sedente; et si Dominica fuerit, dicitur ab Episcopo stante in cathedra *Gloria in excelsis Deo*: aliter non.'<sup>103</sup> Then the Gradual was sung, first by 'tres pueri in medio Chori'<sup>104</sup> and then the whole group joined in: 'Repetatur Gradale: sequitur ibidem a turba puerorum *Alleluya*, si Dominica fuerit: aliter non.'<sup>105</sup> Lastly, the Precentor of the boys sang the Sequence, 'Celsa pueri concrepent melodia', which has already been discussed above.<sup>106</sup>

The Feast of the Holy Innocents was popular not only in cathedrals and collegiate churches but in religious houses and monasteries as well.<sup>107</sup> There is evidence that the boys were dressed then in splendid copes and that their Bishop had his own mitre;<sup>108</sup> they must have played a dignified,

DECEMBER 28.

## FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

*Double of II Class with simple Octave.*

AT PRIME.

Ant.  
1. f

H

E-ró-des i-rá-tus \* occí-dit múltos pú-eros in Bét-

lehem Jú-dae ci-vi-tá-te Dá-vid. E u o u a e.

*In the Short Resp., ♯. Qui natus es. p. 229. Short Lesson. Hi empti sunt. p. 431.*

AT TERCE.

*Hymn, p. 235.*Ant.  
2. D

H

bimá-tu \* et infra occí-dit múltos pú-e-ros

Heró-des propter Dó-minum. E u o u a e.

*Chapter from Vespers., Vidi supra montem. p. 431. Short Resp. Lac-támini. ♯. Exsúltent jústi. from the Common of Many Martyrs, p. 1154.*

AT MASS.

Intr.  
2.

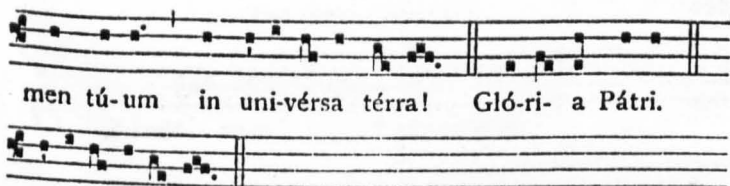
G

X ó-re \* in-fánti-um, Dé-us, et lacté-nti-um

perfe-cí-sti láu-dem propter in-imí-cos tú-os.

*Ps. Dó-mi-ne Dó-minus nó-ster : \* quam admi-rá-bi-le est nó-*





E u o u a e.

Glória in excelsis. *is not said, nor the Alleluia. nor Ite missa est. unless this Feast falls on a Sunday.*

Collect.

**D**eus, cujus hodierna die præcónium Innocéntes Mártyres non loquendo, sed moriendo confessi sunt : † ómnia in nobis vitiorum mala mortifica, ut fidem tuam, quam lingua nostra loquitur, \*étiam moribus vita fateatur. Per Dóminum.

*Commemoration of the Nativity. Collect. Concède. p. 408.*

Lectio libri Apocalypsis beati Joannis Apostoli. *Apoc. 14.*

**I**N diébus illis : Vidi supra montem Sion Agnum stantem, et cum eo centum quadraginta quatuor millia, habéntes nomen ejus, et nomen Patris ejus scriptum in fróntibus suis. Et audivi vocem de caelo, tamquam vocem aquarum multarum, et tamquam vocem tonitruum magni : et vocem, quam audivi, sicut citharodórum citharizántium in citharis suis. Et cantábant quasi cánticum novum ante sedem, et ante quatuor animália, et senióres : et nemo pót-erat dicere cánticum, nisi illa centum quadraginta quatuor millia, qui empti sunt de terra. Hi sunt, qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquináti : vírgines enim sunt. Hi sequuntur Agnum, quocúmque ferit. Hi empti sunt ex hominibus primitiæ Deo, et Agno : et in ore eórum non est invéntum mendácium : sine mácula enim sunt ante thronum Dei.

*Gradual. Anima nostra. from the Common of Many Martyrs. p. 1167.*

**A** - nima nó-stra, \* sicut pás-ser,  
e- répta est de láque-o ve- nán- ti- um.  
**V.** Láque-us  
contrí-tus est, et nos libe-rá-  
ti sú- mus : ad- jutó-ri- um nóstrum

in nómine Dó- mi-ni, qui fé-cit cae- lum

\* et tér- ram.

Tract.

8.

G

F-fudé- runt \* sán-guinem san-

ctó- rum, vel-ut á-quam, in circú-i-tu Je-rúsa-lem.

V. Et non é- rat

qui se- pe-lí- ret.

V. Vín-di-ca, Dó- mi- ne, sán-guinem sanctó- rum

tu- ó- rum, qui effú- sus

est \* super té- ram.

† Sequentia sancti Evangelii secundum Matthaeum. *Matth 2. c.*

**I**N illo tempore : Angelus Domini apparuit in somnis Joseph, dicens : Surge et accipe puerum, et matrem ejus, et fuge in Aegyptum, et esto ibi usque dum dicam tibi. Futurum est enim, ut Herodes quaerat puerum ad perdendum eum. Qui consurgens accepit puerum, et matrem ejus nocte, et secessit in Aegyptum : et erat ibi usque ad obitum Herodis : ut adimpleretur quod dictum est a Domino per Prophetam dicentem : Ex Aegypto vo-

cavi Filium meum. Tunc Herodes videns quoniam illusus esset a Magis, iratus est valde, et mittens occidit omnes pueros, qui erant in Bethlehém, et in omnibus finibus ejus, a bimatu et infra, secundum tempus quod exquisierat a Magis. Tunc adimpletum est quod dictum est per Jeremiam prophetam dicentem : Vox in Rama audita est, ploratus et ululatus multus : Rachel plorans filios suos, et noluit consolari, quia non sunt. Credo.

Offert.

2.

A



- nima \* nó-                      stra, sic- ut pás-  
 ser, e-répta est      de láque- o      ve- nán-  
 ti- um : láque-              us contrí- tus est, et nos  
 li- be- rá-              ti              súmus.

Secret.

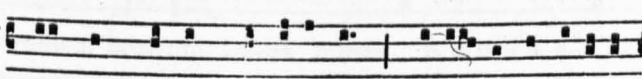
**S**anctorum tuorum, Domine, nobis indulgentiam semper obtineat. Per Dominum.  
 bis pia non desit oratio : quae et muna nostra conciliet, et tuam

*Secret of the Nativity. Oblata Domine. p. 410.*

Comm.

7.

V



VOX in Rama \* audita est, ploratus et ululatus :

Rachel plorans filios suos, noluit consolari, qui-

a non sunt.

Postcommunion.

**V**otiva, Domine, dona percipimus ; quae sanctorum nobis vitae pariter et aeternae tribue conferre subsidium. Per Dominum.  
 precibus, et praesentis, quaesumus,

*Postcommunion of the Nativity. Praesta. p. 411.*

## AT SEXT.

Ant.  
8. G

A

Nge-li e-órum \* semper vídent fáci-em Pátris.

E u o u a e.

Chapter.

Apoc. 14.

Hi sunt qui cum mulieribus non enim sunt. \* Hi sequuntur Agnum  
sunt coinquinati : † virgines quocumque ferit.

Short Resp. Exsultent iusti. V. Iusti autem. from the Common, p. 1155.

## AT NONE.

Ant.  
8. G

S

UB thró-no Dé-i \* ómnes sáncti clámant : Vín-di-

ca sánguinem nóstrum, Dé-us nóster. E u o u a e.

Chapter.

Apoc. 14.

Hi empti sunt ex hominibus primicie : \* sine macula enim sunt ante  
thronum Dei.  
ipsorum non est inventum mendacium.

Short Resp. Iusti autem. V. Exsultabunt. from the Common, p. 1155.

## AT VESPER.

Antiphons and Psalms of the Nativity, p. 411.

Chapter.

Apoc. 14.

Vidi supra montem Sion Agnum bentes nomen ejus, et nomen Patris  
stantem, † et cum eo centum ejus scriptum in frontibus suis.  
quadraginta quatuor millia, \* ha-

Hymn.

1.

S

Alvé-te fló-res Mártýrum, Quos lúcis ípso in lími-

ne Christi insecutor sustulit, Ceu turbo nascentes rosas.

2. Vos prima Christi victima, Grex immolatorum tener:

Aram sub ipsam simplices, Palma et coronis luditis.

3. Jesu, tibi sit gloria, Qui natus... p. 420.

Y. Sub throno Dei omnes sancti clamant.

R. Vindica sanguinem nostrum, Deus noster.

At Magn.

Ant. 2. D

I

Innocentes pro Christo \* infantes occisi sunt,

ab iniquo rege lactentes interfecit: ipsum se-

quuntur Agnum sine macula, et dicunt semper: Glo-

ria tibi Domine. E u o u a e.

Cant. Magnificat. 2. D. p. 208, or p. 214.

Prayer. Deus, cujus. p. 428.

Commemoration of St. Thomas, Bishop and Martyr. Ant. Iste sanctus. p. 262. Y. Gloria.

Prayer. Deus, pro cujus Ecclesia. p. 438.

Commemoration of the Nativity is then made. Ant. Holic. p. 413. Y. Notum fecit.

Prayer. Concède. p. 413.

Y If the Feast of the Nativity, of St. Stephen, of St. John the Evangelist, or of the Holy Innocents falls on a Sunday, no Commemoration is made of the Sunday, but the Office of the Sunday is transferred to December 30.

solemn part in the ceremony for this festival. England was not without its abuses which grew up around this feast, but they were not so extreme as in France. The role of the children as blessed martyrs was emphasized much more than their roles as victims of the cruel Herod.

VI. Text of the Feast of the Holy Innocents: *Liber Usualis*

The most complete and accurate edition of both text and music for the Roman rite is found in the *Liber Usualis*, edited by the Benedictines of Solesmes and based on a thorough examination of ancient manuscripts.<sup>109</sup> Printed below is the *Liber Usualis* version of the Feast of the Holy Innocents.

The Antiphons for Prime and Terce emphasize the angry Herod who kills the babes of Bethlehem; the Mass stresses the purity and innocence of the victims, their association with the sacrificial Lamb of God, a cry for vengeance, and the terrible grief of Rachel as a type of the mourning mothers; Sext points to the virginal purity of these martyrs, None returns to a cry for vengeance on their behalf, and Vespers beatifies them as sacrificial roses in, 'Salvate flores Martyrum' of Prudentius. The final Antiphon, however, returns to the earlier emphasis on the murdering Herod: 'Innocentes pro Christo infantes occisi sunt, ab iniquo rege lactentes interfeciti sunt...' He is the cause of the martyrdom of innocent infants, although God's mercy outweighs the very worst that the evil tyrant can do.

#### VII. The Feast of Epiphany

The Feast of the Innocents as it was celebrated in early Sacramentaries and Missals has provided most of the information on the liturgical Herod in this chapter. The other feast, Epiphany, in which he might be expected to play a part, places very little emphasis on Herod. Aside from the reading of the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 2, in the Gregorian Sacramentary, no mention is made of Herod the Great in any of the early Sacramentaries in the Feast of Epiphany. The stress is on Christ as the light of the world in the Gelasian Sacramentary, and on the three 'manifestations' (epiphany) of Christ in the Gallican and Mozarabic Sacramentaries.<sup>110</sup> The Magi and their Adoration of Christ through the presentation of their gifts are the central element in the celebration of this feast; at the same time, the star that led them, their pagan origins, and their symbolic gifts all receive a good deal of attention and celebration, and so little time is given to their meeting with Herod or his hypocritical enquiries after the Christ-Child. It is a Festival

of Light, of the Star, of celebration of the manifestation of the true Christ, a festival which is entirely joyful and positive. The only negative or cautionary note is in the omission of the Invitatory, mentioned above, intended as a warning to participants to beware of false invitations, like that of the hypocritical Herod, to worship the true Lord.

#### VIII. Breviaries

The early Sacramentaries and Missals present a formal picture of Herod the Great in a liturgical setting. These books, however, were, by their very nature, restricted to the ceremony of the Mass. By the eighth century, on the other hand, a cycle of Canonical Hours for daily liturgical prayer had developed, greatly stimulated by the spread of monasticism. The liturgical book containing all the Psalms, lessons, hymns, readings, etc., for the Divine Office is the Breviary. The earliest extant Breviaries that are complete are from the eleventh century but they were quite rare in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and then they were mostly limited to monasteries.<sup>111</sup> In the thirteenth century the Breviary was popularized in abridged form by the Franciscans and, although chronologically they appear after the first liturgical drama, which will be discussed in Chapter 7, they do clarify and intensify the image of Herod the Great which appeared in earlier liturgical books, and so a brief survey of the more important Breviaries will be helpful and appropriate.

The Breviary, like the Missal, is divided into three sections: the Temporale, the Sanctorale and the Common of Saints. The Feasts for the Holy Innocents and Epiphany are both found in the Temporale, and the litany for these feasts reflects their special character. The Divine Office commences at Matins with an invitatory, hymn, First Nocturn, Second Nocturn,



Third Nocturn and the *Te Deum*. Matins, Lauds and Vespers are known as the greater Hours (the others, Prime, Terce, Sext, None and Compline being lesser Hours)<sup>112</sup> and it is in the liturgy of these Hours that most of the specific references to Herod are made. The Divine Office is not directly concerned with the celebration of Mass but rather it consists of a series of prayers, Scriptural readings, sermons, etc., to be said at specific times during the day; these explore more fully and contemplate more deeply the significance of each day and its appropriate feast(s). The texts for the eight Hours of each day are therefore longer and more detailed and give fuller accounts of the people and events celebrated than would be possible in the Missal. They are thus a good source to investigate for liturgical information on Herod.

#### A. The Roman Breviary

The *Breviarum Romanum*<sup>113</sup> and the *Breviarum Monasticum*<sup>114</sup> are the most reliable versions of the Roman (Gregorian) rite. Although they date from after the Council of Trent (1545-63), which abolished some of the more apocryphal legends and reduced the interruption of the ferial office by the saints' days, they present the basic texts which were being used up to that time. 'Les liturgistes de saint Pie V ont eu pour consigne, évidemment, de garder les principaux traits du modèle, mais aussi d'en diminuer les proportions.'<sup>115</sup> For the rest, the editions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were held rigorously within the limits of the tradition of the Roman Curia, composed in the second half of the thirteenth century and adopted by Pope Nicholas III (1277-80) for the churches of Rome.<sup>116</sup>

## 1. The Feast of the Holy Innocents

The Roman Breviaries begin Matins for the Feast of the Holy Innocents, after the Invitatory, with an abbreviated version of Prudentius' hymn (see above):

Audit tyrannus anxius  
 Adesse regum Principem,  
 Qui nomen Israel regat,  
 Teneatque David regiam.  
 Exclamat amens nuntio:  
 Successor instat, pellimur:  
 Satelles, i, ferrum rape:  
 Perfunde cunas sanguine.  
 Quid proficit tantum nefas?  
 Quid crimen Herodem juvat?  
 Unus tot inter funera  
 Impune Christus tollitur,  
 Jesu, tibi sit gloria,  
 Qui natus es de Virgine  
 Cum Patre, et almo Spiritu,  
 In sempiterna saecula. Amen. 117

The emphasis is on Herod, the moody tyrant, frantic lest he lose his throne, bloodthirsty as he orders the massacre of the children in their cradles. After this hymn, the first Lesson in the First Nocturn is from Jeremiah 31:15-23. 'Vox in Rama', recording the mourning of Rachel and also God's comforting words to her; this is followed by the Response, 'Centum quadraginta quatuor millia, qui empti sunt de terra, hi sunt qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati: Virgines enim permanserunt, ideo regnant cum Deo, et Agnus Dei cum illis', from the Apocalypse. The following Verse continues to emphasize the purity of the slain and also their suffering: 'Isti sunt qui venerunt ex magna tribulatione, et laverunt stolas suas in sanguine Agni. Virgines.' This great tribulation, during which the Innocents washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, was, of course, instigated by Herod. The number he killed is the apocryphal one. Indeed, the Apocrypha supplies many of the readings for Matins. After the second Lesson (Jer. 31:18-20), for example, the Response is:

'Sub altare Dei audivi voces occisorum dicentium: Quare non defendis sanguinem nostrum? Et acceperunt divinum responsum: Adhuc sustinete modicum tempus, donec impleatur numerus fratrum vestrorum.' This cry for revenge is repeated in the Verse: 'Vidi sub altare Dei animas interfectorum propter verbum Dei, et propter testimonium quod habebant, et clamabant voce magna, dicentes: Quare'. The Second Nocturn includes a sermon by Augustine on the Innocents in which he stresses that Herod's cruel hatred towards the Innocents was more than matched by God's grace in accepting them as blessed martyrs. 'Ecce profanus hostis numquam beatis parvulis tantum prodesse potuisset obsequio, quantum profuit odio. Nam, sicut sacratissimum praesentis diei festum manifestat, quantum in beatos parvulos iniquitas abundavit, tantum in eis gratia benedictionis refudit.'

But again, the recurring Response is for vengeance: 'Isti sunt sancti, qui passi sunt propter te, Domine: vindice eos, Quia clamant ad te quotidie.'

The Verse repeats the plea: 'Vindica, Domine, sanguinem sanctorum tuorum, qui effusus es. Quia.' This Nocturn ends with a metaphoric description of the Innocents and Herod in which they are referred to as infant Martyr flowers, the church's first blossoms, cut down in the winter of unbelief by the frost of persecution: 'Quos Herodes impietas lactantes matrum uberibus abstraxit, qui jure dicuntur Martyrum flores, quos in medio frigore infidelitatis exortos, velut primas erumpentes Ecclesiae gemmas, quaedam persecutionis pruina decoxit.'<sup>118</sup>

The Third Nocturn begins (only in the *Breviarum Monasticum*) with a triumphant Antiphon: 'Innocentium passio, Christi exalto: Herodes confusus est qui eos persecutus est.'<sup>119</sup>

The Third Nocturn has a more positive approach, concentrating on the successful Flight to Egypt through readings from Matthew 2, Jerome's *Commentary* on Matthew 2, and a passage from the *Glossa Ordinaria*, but

the cries for revenge recur again and again, 'Vindica...Vindica...  
Vindica'.<sup>120</sup>

Laudes and all other Hours in the Roman Breviaries begin with five Antiphons which starkly summarize the main points of the feast: the massacre, the mourning, and the moans for revenge.

1. Herodes iratus occidit multos pueros in Bethlehem Judae civitate David.
2. A bimatu et infra, occidit multos pueros Herodes propter Dominum.
3. Angeli eorum semper vident faciem Patris.
4. Vox in Rama audita est, ploratus et ululatus, Rachel plorans filios suos.
5. Sub throno Dei omnes sancti clamant: Vindica sanguinem nostrum, Deus noster.

121

Quite appropriately, it is an Apocalyptic vision which supplies the response to these chants. 'Vidi supra montem Sion Agnum stantem, et cum eo centum quadraginta quatuor millia, habentes nomen eius, et nomen Patris ejus scriptum in frontibus suis.'<sup>122</sup> The concluding hymn, 'Salvete flores Martyrum', also from Prudentius, focusses on the glory of the martyrs, budding roses cut down by a whirlwind.

In the third greater Hour, Vespers, no new material appears. The readings from Apocalypse are repeated, as are the cries for vengeance, and the association of the first martyrs with the Lamb of God through their purity and innocence.

## 2. Epiphany

The Feast of Epiphany in the *Breviarum Romanum* begins both Vespers I and Matins with the hymn, 'Crudelis Herodes', which sometimes has the alternative first line, 'Hostis Herodes':

Crudelis Herodes, Deum  
Regem venire quid times?  
Non eripit mortalia,  
Qui regna dat coelestia.  
Ibant Magi, quam viderant,  
Stellam sequentes praevisam,  
Lumen requirunt lumine:  
Deum fatentur munere.

Lavacra puri gurgitis  
 Coelestis Agnus attigit:  
 Peccata, quae non detulit,  
 Nos abluendo sustulit.

Novum genus potentiae:  
 Aquae rubescunt hydriae,  
 Vinumque jussa fundere,  
 Mutavit unda originem.

Jesu, tibi sit gloria,  
 Qui apparuisti gentibus,  
 Cum Patre, et almo Spiritu  
 In sempiterna saecula. Amen. 123

Although this hymn begins with a bold, dramatic attack on Herod, it soon goes on to the three manifestations of God to man celebrated on Epiphany - the Adoration of the Magi, the Baptism and the first miracle at the Marriage at Cana. The emphasis in the nine Lessons of the Nocturns also turns immediately to the Magi and to the other manifestations of Christ through readings from Isaiah and sermons from Pope Leo and Gregory. The sense of the glory and wonder of Epiphany is only once darkened by a reference to Herod, in the fifth Lesson in the Second Nocturn (Leo's Sermon on Epiphany):

Nam et saevitia Herodis volens primordia suspecti sibi Regis extinguere, huic dispensationi nesciens serviebat: ut dum atroci intentus facinori, ignotum sibi puerum indiscreta infantum caede persequitur, annuntiatum coelitus dominatoris ortum insignior ubique fama loqueretur: quam promptiorem ad narrandum, diligentiolemque faciebat et supernae significationis novitas, et cruentissimi persecutoris impietas. Tunc autem etiam Aegypto Salvator illatus est, ut gens antiquis erroribus dedita, jam ad vicinam salutem per occultam gratiam signaretur; et quae nondum ejecerat ab animo superstitionem, jam hospitio reciperet veritatem. 124

Thus the raging Herod's abortive attempt to slay the new King only served to spread far and wide the tidings about the coming of the new Ruler, and the miraculous events surrounding his birth; it also made possible his safe escape to Egypt. Herod is merely a tool in God's hands, and plays an entirely subordinate role in the liturgy for the whole Feast of Epiphany.

## B. The Mozarabic Breviary

## 1. The Feast of the Holy Innocents

The Mozarabic Breviary, printed as the *Breviarum Gothicum* by Migne, includes two long hymns which contribute distinctive details to the liturgical tradition of Herod.<sup>125</sup> The Feast of the Innocents, 'In Allisione Infantum', begins with Vespers and includes a hymn about the Nativity and the Massacre in which a cosmic struggle takes place with the predictable outcome:

Deus sanctorum, psallimus,  
Christi canentes praemia,  
Qui sancto largus Spiritu  
Triumphum dedit parvulis.

Ex ore quoque infantium  
Perfecta laude Domini,  
Totum potens in omnibus  
Artes destruxit Zabuli.

Qui mentem regis impii  
Visorum agens stimulis,  
Deum regemque Dominum  
Posse persuasit perimi.

Magi sequuntur indicem  
Ducentis faciem sideris  
Quae ortu sui luminis  
Aeterno serviret regi.

Herodes natum metuit  
Regem Judaeae dubitum  
In que externus genere  
Succedi timebat sibi.

E dicto coeli posito,  
Magis in terram territus  
Totius causam saeculi  
Coecus ignorat ambiens.

Verbisque mitis primum  
Gaudere sese simulat  
Adoraturum pollicens  
Natum regressi ut prodeunt.

Sed postquam Deo moniti,  
Dolis terra evanuit:  
Immane tentat facinus,  
Cunctis ignotum saeculis....<sup>126</sup>

Herod, the thoroughly evil king, is mainly concerned with keeping his kingdom which he is ready to defend by guile and treachery, such as simulating joy at the Magi's news while computing the time of the birth

so that he can have the child murdered at the same time. But this is all in vain. Such evil, like the devil himself (Zabulus) is destroyed by God. The Office for Matins then puts the emphasis on the Children and their place in heaven, but one of the Antiphons returns to the cry familiar from the Roman liturgy:

Antiphon: Vocem sanguinis ad te clamantis.

Response: Audi, Domine: memorare invictissimas mortes Innocentum  
parvulorum tuorum.

Verse: Effunderunt sanguinem innocentem in circuita Hierusalem,  
et non erat qui sepeliret.

Response: Audi, Domine, memorare. 127

Then, after the Lesson from Jeremiah 31, 'Vox in Rama', another hymn is sung which centres on the massacre and the mothers' grief.<sup>128</sup>

Caterva matrum personat:  
Conlisa defert pignora,  
Quarum tyrannus millia  
Christo sacravit victima.  
    Miraculis dedit fidem  
Habere se Deum Patrem,  
Infirma sanans corpora,  
Et suscitans cadavera.  
    Orat salutem servulo  
Nixus genu Centurio,  
Credientis ardor plurimus  
Extinxit ignes februm.  
    Petrus per undas ambulat  
Christi levatus dextera;  
Natura quam negaverat,  
Fides paravit semitam.  
    Honor matris et gaudiam,  
Immensa spes credentium  
Per atra mortis pocula  
Resolvit nostra crimina.  
    Memento salutis auctor,  
Quod nostri quondam corporis  
Ex illibata Virgine  
Nascendo, formam sumpseris.<sup>129</sup>

Confort is offered in this hymn, just as the Lord comforted Rachel; it is affirmed that the evil of Herod, great as it was, and all other wickedness as well, can be overcome by a steadfast faith in God who miraculously became incarnate.

## 2. Epiphany

The Mozarabic Feast, 'In Festo Apparitionis Domini',<sup>130</sup> explores in some detail the three manifestations of Christ, the wonderful quality and meaning of the light of the star, and the significance of the 'Aethiopian' Magi and their gifts. This Breviary is fuller and more poetic than the Roman in its prayers and in its emotional and figurative language. In Matins, for example, after several Antiphons on the coming of the Magi, their Adoration of the Christ and the spreading of the true light of Christ throughout the world, there is an Antiphon introducing the brilliant image from the Apocalypse of the Woman clothed with the sun, resting her feet on the moon:

Antiphon: Signum magnum visum est in coelo: Mulier amicta erat sole, et luna sub pedibus ejus, et super caput ejus corona stellarum duodecim. Et festinabat, ut pareret; et peperit filium. 131

This image with all its splendour was, of course, applied to the Virgin bearing her Child when placed in the liturgy of Epiphany, and it gave the litany a tone of exalted richness. The Mozarabic liturgy is the only one to introduce this image. It is dramatic and not inappropriate. The fiery red dragon with the seven crowned heads waiting to devour the Apocalyptic Woman's child was interpreted as Herod. In fact, several artists, when illustrating this verse of the Apocalypse, did paint in Herod and the Massacre (see Chapter 8).

### C. The Sarum Breviary

#### 1. The Feast of the Holy Innocents

Before leaving the liturgy of the Breviaries it is interesting to see how the English Breviaries presented Herod. The *Breviarum Ad Usus Sarum*<sup>132</sup> introduced a ceremonial procession of boys from the choir to the altar of the Holy Innocents or to the altar of the Holy Trinity during



the Vigil for this feast, but otherwise, the liturgy for the Holy Innocents proceeded much as in the Roman Breviary. At the beginning of the First Nocturn, the Sarum Breviary (and also the York) has a series of Antiphons and Psalms which are in stark contrast to each other, the former telling of the evil of Herod and his massacre, the latter proclaiming great faith in God who overcomes all evil:

Ant. Herodes videns quia illusus esset a Magis: misit in Bethleem et occidit omnes pueros qui erant in eo et in omnibus finibus ejus.

Ps. Beatus vir...

Ant. Christus infans non despexit suos coaetaneos milites, sed provexit: quibus dedit ante triumphare quam loqui

Ps. Quare fremuerunt

Ant. Arridebat parvulus occisori, gladio adjocabatur infantulus: nutricis loco attendebat lactens percussoris horrorem.

Ps. In Domino confido. 133

The first Lesson continues with this line of thought: no matter what Herod did, he was powerless against God and thus all his evildoing was in vain. The sermon is from Severian (fl. c.400).

Zelus quo tendat, quo prosiliat livor, invidia quo feratur, Herodiana hodie patefecit immanitas. Quae dum temporalis regni aemulatur angustias, aeterni regis ortum molitur extinguere.... [he orders the massacre] Dolet impietas se esse illusam: dilatans se crudelitas furit. Fremit dolositas se esse deceptam: et in se fraus reversa colliditur. Herodes stridet, cadens ipse in laqueum quem tetendit: hinc iniquitatem quam condiderat evaginat. 134

The image of the net, 'laqueus' is by now familiar, but this is the first time it has been suggested that Herod was caught in his own net. There follows a description of a very bloody massacre, a long list of dramatic epithets first formulated by Chrysologus (see Chapter 2) for Herod (magister mali, minister doli, irae artifex, inventor sceleris, impietatis auctor, etc.) and then the familiar Response and Verse from the Apocalypse of the voices of the dead before the altar of God asking how

long they must wait for revenge. The second Lesson is a continuation of the sermon, an emotional outburst beginning: 'Herodes obsidens terrenum regnum, impugnat caeleste. Terrenis inhyans irruit in divina; ipsamque pietatem omni impietate insectatur...' <sup>135</sup> The Second Nocturn includes a sermon from John Chrysostom, again broken by apocryphal cries for revenge but they suddenly take on added meaning when the sermon refers to Abel, the first man whose blood cried out for revenge, just as the Martyrs' blood and the Innocents' blood now cries out, 'Nec novum quod dicitur ut innocens sanguis, aut Deo referat laudes, aut suas indicet passiones: cum Abel sanguis clamet ad caelum, et occisorum animae ab altari vociferentur ad Deum.' <sup>136</sup> Herod in the New Testament, as Cain in the Old, becomes the archetypal murderer, and the liturgy constantly calls for revenge - 'Vindica'. The Third Nocturn consists of a sermon from the English scholar, Bede, and ends on a note of triumph as Christ's safe escape to Egypt is stressed.

## 2. Epiphany

The Sarum Epiphany begins with a Vigil in which the death of Herod is stressed, not as a terrible event in itself, but as the condition for Christ's return from Egypt. A sermon from Haymo is read in which the present ruler of Judaea (and son of Herod the Great), Archelaus, is interpreted as 'agnoscens leo' and then as Antichrist, this being the explanation for why Joseph was afraid to return to Judaea (see Chapter 2). Attention is then turned to Mary and Joseph in readings from a sermon of Maxim, and Vespers ends with the hymn, 'Hostis Herodes impie.'

On the day of Epiphany, the Invitatory and Hymn are omitted (as in the ancient Roman rite) before Matins. Almost all of the Lessons from the Nocturns are devoted to the Adoration of the Magi, with the exception of

one from a sermon of Pope Leo which lashes out at the stupidity of Herod for trying to interfere with God's plans instead of fulfilling them:

Herodes vero audiens Judeorum principem natum,  
 successorem suspicatus expavit, et molitus necem  
 salutis auctori, falsum spondet obsequium.  
 Quam felix foret si magorum imitaretur fidem,  
 et converteret ad religionem quod disponebat  
 ad fraudem.... O caeca stultae aemulationis  
 impietas, quae perturbandum putas divinum tuo  
 furore consilium. Dominus mundi temporale  
 non quaerit regnum, qui praestat aeternum. 137

Herod is no longer the cunning, cruel tyrant, but rather a stupid man who made a mistake in choosing his course of action and who is being severely reprimanded. A final homily from Gregory the Great turns attention back to the miracles of Epiphany, and the Lessons of Matins end with the deacon, subdeacon, censor, candle-bearer and acolyte all proceeding in their rich robes to the high altar which is then censed. At the end of the day, during Vespers, and every day throughout the Octave, the hymn, 'Hostis Herodes' is sung, as it was in the Vigil. But, as has been pointed out above, this is a triumphant hymn, pointing out the utter hopelessness of Herod's position and going on to celebrate the different examples of Christ's Epiphany.

#### D. The York Breviary

The York Breviary,<sup>138</sup> like the Sarum, often reverts to the old Roman ceremonial ways. In Matins for the Feast of the Innocents, *Alleluia* is not sung, nor is the *Te Deum* (unless the feast falls on a Sunday), and the Invitatory is omitted in Epiphany. At the same time, this Breviary, like the Sarum, includes sermons from the English scholar, Bede, as well as the traditional church fathers. In contrast to the Mozarabic liturgy, the York text is not embroidered figuratively but is straightforward and direct. The language is not emotional or flowery. Herod killed the Innocents; the conclusion is simply, 'Occiduntur pro Christo parvuli:

pro justitia moritur innocentia.'<sup>139</sup> Herod himself is dealt with in a similar manner. 'Infelix tyrannus herodes putabat se domini salvatoris adventu regali solio detrudendum: sed non ita.'<sup>140</sup>

The Vigil for Epiphany in the York Breviary, as in the Sarum, begins with an account of the Return from Egypt after the death of Herod, this time using sermons from Augustine. And again, the language and tone are straightforward. 'Defuncto autem herode: Obitus quippe herodis: terminum intentionis maliciose qua nunc contra ecclesiam judea sevit insinuat.'<sup>141</sup> This is noted and passed over for the more glorious Epiphany so that Vespers for the Vigil include again the hymn, 'Hostis Herode impie', and Epiphany begins in joy and triumph. Herod is given little mention, except in the popular Epiphany hymn sung again during Vespers, 'Hostis Herodes'.<sup>142</sup>

#### Conclusion

Breviaries are longer and more detailed than Missals and thus provide excellent sources of information on relatively minor figures such as Herod the Great. The most substantial contribution of the Breviaries towards the liturgical tradition of Herod is in the hymns sung about the Massacre in the Roman and Mozarabic rites. Also very striking is the astute choice of Scriptural verses (especially the cries for revenge from the Apocalypse) in all of the Breviaries to form part of the liturgy for each of the Canonical Hours. Other Biblical references to Cain and Abel, and to the Woman clothed in the sun besieged by the dragon are also effective. Breviaries differed from Missals in that they incorporated several patristic sermons, usually in the Second and Third Nocturns of Matins. This tended to lend a more informal and sometimes emotional tone to the liturgy than was found in the Office of the Mass. Thus, in the four Breviaries considered here, Herod was presented in a variety of ways - as

cunning, evil, insane, or just foolish.

Nevertheless, the figure of Herod the Great which emerges through a study of the liturgy in general is a formal one. He is strictly speaking the king of the Jews at the time of Christ's nativity, as sparsely described in the Gospel of Matthew. The liturgy is adroit at gathering together and juxtaposing all the Scriptural quotations relevant to the feasts involved; thus the quotations in Matthew from Old Testament books are explored and presented in full in the Feast of the Holy Innocents and Epiphany. Other appropriate selections are brought in, many from the Apocalypse, and they are juxtaposed in a creative way so that one illuminates another. But no changes in texts are made and no individual creativity on the part of the composer or compiler of the liturgy is evident. All is restrained and formal, following Biblical wording and order of events in all cases. Herod does what the Gospel of Matthew says he does - questions the Magi and kills the children of Bethlehem - but no emotional involvement or motivation is posited. Some of the patristic sermons quoted in the Breviaries are emotionally charged with invective against Herod, or outrage, or triumph at his stupidity, but Herod himself remains a highly aloof, puppet-like creature. Occasionally hints are made that he acquired his kingdom through guile, that he was wily and deceiving, fearful of the new King, and vicious in putting down enemies even though they were children. But these hints never come from the mouth of Herod himself in the liturgy. Nor do his scribes and high priests appear to advise him. He is restrained and formal in the liturgy. Contemporary art, however, began to show Herod becoming emotionally involved in his actions and, at the same time, liturgical drama began to show him as a motivated individual. The liturgy thus gathered all the relevant material together for the events in which Herod was involved. It was the task of religious artists and dramatists to develop it creatively.

## CHAPTER V: HEROD IN EARLY MEDIEVAL ART, 800 - 1100

The purpose of this chapter is to give a survey of representations of Herod the Great in early medieval art from about 800 to about 1100. It would be beyond the limits of this thesis to examine in detail the history, provenance, influence and dating of each work presented, since the main purpose is to trace the general development of the iconography of Herod in the art of this time. It is also impossible to include all the works of art which are generally acknowledged as the most important for either artistic or historical reasons during this period. The choice of works has been determined solely by whether or not they include a representation of Herod the Great. Generally speaking, however, most of the important works of early medieval art do include some reference to Herod. This in itself is significant. In early Christian art, Herod was not a popular subject and the percentage of works in which he was represented is very small indeed in comparison to the total production of the period. However, in early medieval art he appears in a wider range of contexts and occupies a larger percentage of the art of the period. Carolingian representations of Herod are mostly confined to ivories. Ottonian artists began to produce illuminated Gospel Books with preliminary series of illustrations before each gospel and Herod was usually represented in the miniatures before the Gospel of St. Matthew. Byzantine artists produced Greek Gospel Books which had every page decorated with illustrations of the text, sometimes three or four to a page, and so Herod appears frequently in Byzantine art of the eleventh century when these books were produced. Iconographically the art of this period (800 - 1100) is transitional. Carolingian artists tended to reproduce the 'smashing type' of Massacre from Early Christian art, but Ottonian and Byzantine artists developed new and original details in their expanded treatments of the subject.

## I. Carolingian Art

### A. Ivory Book Covers: Iconography of the Massacre

It has been pointed out by Walter Oakeshott that Carolingian artists attempted to revive classical culture and art rather than turn to the 'magnificent barbaric world of Northumbria'<sup>1</sup> around them. That they admired and imitated Late Classical and Early Christian art becomes clear from an examination of those Carolingian ivories which display representations of Herod the Great.

#### 1. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ivory Book Cover

The earliest ivories date from about 800 and are 'meticulous and somewhat timid copying of Italo-Gallic models.'<sup>2</sup> A prime example of this kind of copying is the Carolingian ivory book cover (*fig. 22*) now in the Bodleian library, Oxford.<sup>3</sup> The central figure depicts Christ trampling on four beasts (from Psalm 90) and this is surrounded by twelve smaller scenes from his infancy and miracles. Six of these scenes were copied from the two fifth-century lateral panels of a composite book cover now in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin (*fig. 12*) and the Louvre. The three scenes from the Berlin fragment<sup>4</sup> - the Massacre of the Innocents, the Baptism and the Marriage at Cana - appear in exactly the same order and position on the Bodleian cover. They represent the three separate manifestations of Christ celebrated at Epiphany (see Chapter 4, n. 110). The style of the Oxford ivory is rather crude, more crowded and less fully rounded than that of the fifth-century panels, but the iconography of all the scenes is identical.<sup>5</sup> The Massacre of the Innocents is the 'smashing type' peculiar to the art of Provence in the fifth century. This iconography was later abandoned, but it survives in several Carolingian ivories.

2. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ivory Book Cover

The Bodleian book cover was a product of the early Court School of Carolingian art,<sup>6</sup> but the later Metz School reproduced the same iconography in a splendid book cover from about 840-45 (*fig. 23*) in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.<sup>7</sup> This was originally the back cover for a manuscript, the front cover having the traditional Metz subject of the Crucifixion.<sup>8</sup> The back covers usually had scenes from the New Testament and this one is no exception; it is divided horizontally into three scenes, showing the Annunciation, the Adoration of the Magi and the Massacre of the Innocents. This is a 'very accomplished and pretentious piece of ivory carving',<sup>9</sup> and the Massacre scene displays its artistic merits to advantage. The composition is balanced and artistically satisfying. Herod sits on one side on a wooden chair/throne, dressed in long robes and gesturing to two soldiers before him. Behind his throne stands a single counsellor and both he and Herod are framed by a curtain which has been drawn up through two loops so that it falls around them like a picture frame. Two soldiers in the centre stand in slightly contorted positions. Each holds a child by the foot poised high above his head, ready to smash to the ground where others lie dead. Behind them stand three mothers expressing their grief, one with her arms flung up in the air. This scene, unlike the one on the Bodleian ivory, takes place indoors in a rich palace with columns, arches and arcades. Figures are linked to architecture and architecture to frame.<sup>10</sup> The whole plaque is done in open-work over a ground of sheet gold<sup>11</sup> and is extremely decorative, like the other sophisticated works of the Carolingian period. The iconography, however, looks back to the past for its inspiration.

3. Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Ivory Book Cover

The 'smashing type' of Massacre is also reproduced on two other Carolingian ivory book covers. The first, in Munich at the Staatsbibliothek,



(*fig. 24*) is from the late ninth century.<sup>12</sup> It preserves the same three scenes as the Bodleian book cover and in the same order. But in the Massacre scene, Herod sits not on a firm, wooden throne, but on a simple faldstool, and he seems to have a staff (or sceptre?) in one hand while he gestures to the soldier with his other hand. As in the other ivories discussed above, the woman expressing her grief so dramatically behind the soldiers is probably meant to be Rachel weeping for her children. 'Vox in Rama audita est / Ploratus, et ululatus multos: / Rachel plorans filios suos, / Et noluit consolari, quis non sunt.' (Matt.2:11) Three scenes are, in effect, telescoped into one in these early ivories: 1) Herod ordering the Massacre; 2) the Massacre of the Innocents; and 3) Rachel weeping for her children. Later, in Byzantine art, these three scenes were given separate treatment (see below).

4. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Ivory Book Cover

The Carolingian book cover in the Victoria and Albert Museum<sup>13</sup> is a later product (*fig. 25*) dating from the second half of the eleventh century and coming also from Lorraine (Metz) or North-East France.<sup>14</sup> It includes eight scenes from an Infancy cycle altogether, but it is unusual in treating Rachel weeping for her children separately from the Massacre. In the latter, Herod still has his long staff (as in the Munich ivory) and he commands two soldiers who smash children to the ground, as in the Metz cover. The composition is almost identical in these ivories: the ground is strewn with corpses, a group of mothers at the side watches in horror and the number of soldiers is the same. But in the Victoria and Albert book cover, the soldiers, although not in such contorted positions as their Metz counterparts, are facing away from Herod instead of towards him. The babies, however, still form living crosses and they still face Herod, seeming to appeal for aid and mercy, as they do in the Paris book cover (*fig. 23*).

The scene beside the Massacre on this book cover is that of Rachel weeping for her children (*fig. 26*). On the left stands a city with a bird perched on one of the turrets, perhaps a symbol of the Saviour. On the right sits Rachel with a beheaded child on her lap; her hands are thrown up in the air in anguish, her breast is bared and her hair falls loose about her shoulders. Other grieving women accompany her. This expansion of the Massacre of the Innocents into two scenes instead of one is rare in Carolingian art but quite common to eleventh-century Byzantine work where the 'sword type' of Massacre prevails.

#### B. Ivory Casket in the Louvre: Herod with the Magi

Carolingian art is noted for its development of a narrative style. This developed directly from the insistence of the compilers of the *Libri Carolini* that art should be decorative but also didactic, so that the unlettered might learn from religious pictures what they could not read in books.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, Carolingian artists developed great skill in portrait painting, not only of Evangelists but also of living Emperors. Perhaps one of the best known ruler-portraits in a Carolingian manuscript is that of the Emperor Lothair which appears at the beginning of his Gospel Book in the Bibliothèque Nationale.<sup>16</sup> Here Lothair sits in the usual medieval posture with his knees apart and his feet close together and resting on a dais; his throne has a high semi-circular back. This is precisely the posture of King Herod as he appears on the tenth-century ivory casket of the Metz School, now in the Louvre.<sup>17</sup> The sides of this casket and the four trapezoidal sections of the lid are carved with scenes from the Annunciation to the Flight into Egypt. The side which is most outstanding is the one showing Herod enthroned in the centre, receiving the Magi as they arrive in Jerusalem (*fig. 27*). This panel reflects both the

Carolingian characteristics of a well developed narrative style, and also of the ruler-portrait. Herod is crowned and holds a round-headed sceptre in one hand while he gestures to the Magi with the other. He is also attended by two soldiers carrying shields and spears, but they have been moved from behind the throne where they stand in the Lothair Gospel Book, to the right side of the panel, thus balancing the three Magi on the left side. The Magi approach Herod in a lively way: the first exchanges gestures with Herod and the second turns to talk to the one behind him. Herod's cushioned throne is less pretentious than Lothair's, but the missing high rounded back is replaced by a thick arcade under which Herod sits, framed by columns on either side. The panel is framed by representations of cities on each side. On the left, the third Magus is, in fact, just emerging from the gate of the city (Jerusalem) to meet Herod; the city on the right is quite possibly Bethlehem, where the <sup>soldiers</sup> / go to slaughter the children. (There is no representation of the Massacre of the Innocents on this casket.) Herod is given unusual prominence on this casket. The only other panel as large as his is divided into two small scenes, the Nativity and the Presentation in the Temple. The section of the lid directly above Herod has a portrayal of the Adoration of the Magi with the Virgin sitting in the centre, just above Herod. But because of the smaller space and the trapezoidal shape of this part of the cover, it is a cramped composition. The Herod scene is further emphasized by a deep border of acanthus leaves. However, it is a mistake, I think, to interpret this as a deliberate attempt to give Herod undue importance, as Kehrer did. He reacted violently against this seeming disproportion, and judged it as 'Unmögliche Grossenverhältnisse!'<sup>18</sup> It should rather be seen as a subject particularly attractive to Carolingian artists who painted many excellent scenes of similar composition, such as ruler-portraits,

investiture scenes and presentation scenes. They were representing something which was familiar to them, and not trying to give Herod more significance than the Virgin and Child above him. Herod happened to fit into a familiar iconographical pattern for Carolingian artists.

C. The Lorsch Gospels Cover and the Drogo Sacramentary:  
the Magi with Herod and with the Virgin

Some Carolingian works of art use a technique of parallel composition so that Herod is given a position parallel to that of the Virgin when he is represented with the Magi. The Magi are the common factor; their meeting with Herod is balanced by the corresponding scene of their Adoration of the Christ-Child, so that Herod at one side of the work occupies a place analogous to that of the Virgin at the other side. These representations have symmetry and balance and are aesthetically pleasing; they must be appreciated as artistic representations based on stylistic rather than theological considerations; no heretical implications should be read into their juxtaposition of Herod and the Virgin.

1. The Lorsch Gospels Cover

An example of this parallel type of composition is the ivory back cover of the Lorsch Gospels,<sup>19</sup> carved in the early ninth century (*fig. 28*). The panel across the bottom shows two incidents from the story of the Magi divided architecturally by a crenellated tower in the centre. On the left, Herod sits on a throne with a high circular back, familiar from other Carolingian ruler-portraits, situated between two buildings with dome-shaped roofs. He has no attendants. The Magi stand before him, dressed much like the Louvre casket Magi, in short tunics, chlamys and pointed caps. They are also young and beardless, as they are on the Louvre casket. On the right, the Magi appear again, dressed identically but now bearing gifts for the Christ-Child who sits on the Virgin's knee. On the

extreme right the Virgin, nimbed, sits on a cushioned bench with her feet on a dais (which Herod lacks). Behind her is a building with a pointed roof - obviously Bethlehem, as opposed to Jerusalem on Herod's side. The whole panel has balance and symmetry, the Magi appearing in similar poses before the two enthroned figures at either end, giving the double scene an aesthetically pleasing air. Of an earlier period, Grabar wrote, 'But everywhere, conforming to the taste of the period, the sculptors who carved these sarcophagi (like their contemporaries, the painters of the catacomb frescoes) tend to subordinate the exact rendering of Biblical themes to aesthetic considerations.'<sup>20</sup> In this Vatican ivory, Biblical themes are rendered accurately; although they are closely styled on Early Christian prototypes of the sixth century both in iconography and in style, they are closer to the illuminations within the major books of the contemporary Court School in treatment of drapery, and abbreviated buildings and towers.<sup>21</sup> But any sense of the priority or superiority of the Virgin over Herod has been subordinated to the aesthetic requirements of the cover as a work of art, and so an unexpected parallelism between these two figures is the result.<sup>22</sup>

## 2. The Drogo Sacramentary

Aesthetic considerations similar to those governing the Lorsch Gospels cover may have inspired the Carolingian artist who illuminated the initials of the Drogo Sacramentary in the middle of the ninth century.<sup>23</sup> Drogo, an illegitimate son of Charlemagne, was, first, chaplain to Lothair and then Archbishop of Metz from 823-855. As a patron of the arts, he deliberately fostered strong classical elements.<sup>24</sup> The Drogo Sacramentary, probably produced for him in the last decade of his life,<sup>25</sup>

has richly decorated initials. Unlike most Carolingian manuscripts, which tend to be derivative in subject matter and conservative in style, it introduces many new subjects into the manuscript illumination, including liturgical scenes and episodes from the life of Christ,<sup>26</sup> as well as the familiar evangelist portraits. These scenes are incorporated into the initials rather than forming separate framed pictures. The initial D (for Dominus) for the Feast of Epiphany (*fig. 29*) presents the related events for the Feast in a new and original way. Within the single letter, three scenes are represented: in the middle of the curve of the D, the Magi are seen, one above the other, on horseback, following the star which appears above them in the empty space in the centre of the letter; below and behind them is the domed gate to Jerusalem, and above them is the pointed gate to Bethlehem; in the lower left corner of the D, the three Magi, carrying long staffs, present themselves to Herod, who is seated in a space at the bottom of the vertical shaft of the D; directly above him, at the top of the shaft of the D and sitting in a similar pose, sits the Virgin with the Christ-Child. She is also, like Herod, receiving the Magi. The design of this illuminated initial is very neat indeed and, as in the Lorsch Gospels cover, using the Magi as a link, it serves to balance or contrast Herod with the Virgin in an aesthetically satisfying artistic creation. The Virgin appears at the top, Herod at the bottom; the gate of Bethlehem balances the gate of Jerusalem; the Magi kneel before the Virgin and stand before Herod. The technique of parallel composition is most successful.

The Drogo Sacramentary also includes an initial decorated with scenes of the Massacre.<sup>27</sup> This initial excludes Herod and fills the space in and around the letter with sword-wielding soldiers, dead children and mourning

mothers, including one with her hands flung up in the air, who is probably Rachel, weeping over a very flat, paper-doll-like child lying on her lap (*fig. 30*). It is a less successful artistic creation than the Epiphany initial, but it shows the liveliness of the figures, the interest in developing the narrative, and the 'delicately windswept style'<sup>28</sup> that characterizes the Rheims School and the Utrecht Psalter, a manuscript produced shortly before the Drogo Sacramentary. Several scholars have pointed out the stylistic similarities in these two works. Hinks commented that 'in style these small vignettes [in the Drogo Sacramentary] bear some relation to the drawings of the Rheims School as seen in the Utrecht Psalter, and like them may be derived from some prototype of the fifth century which has otherwise disappeared without leaving a trace.'<sup>29</sup> If this is true, then it is further evidence of the Carolingian interest in reviving classical art. At the same time, however, the Utrecht Psalter is a good example of how the Carolingians managed to infuse new life into the older styles. Lasko is a little more cautious in making a comparison between these two manuscripts. 'The painter's style in the Sacramentary is not untouched by the free, painterly style of the court art of Louis the Pious, although the figures are not identical to the spiky creations of the Utrecht Psalter.'<sup>30</sup>

The Utrecht Psalter style is one of the great achievements of the reign of Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne. It is perhaps not irrelevant to mention here that, in the illustration for Psalm 47,<sup>31</sup> in their effort to represent almost every possible detail of the text, the artists included a sketch of two ships in the bottom left corner of the illustration for the psalm. These are to illuminate the text of verse 8: 'In spiritu vehementi conteres naves Tharsis', and 'Ut cum

ventus orientis / Confrigit naves Tharsis.' This 'spiritu vehementi' was later associated with Herod the Great who vented his anger against the Magi who came from the East. The apocryphal story of their return home by sea, using ships from Tharsus which Herod subsequently burned in anger, became a subject for artistic representation in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This will be discussed later in Chapter 8. It is sufficient here to note that the Utrecht Psalter gave the first artistic expression to these ships.

## II. Ottonian Art

The Ottonian Empire was heir to the preceding Carolingian Empire artistically as well as politically. The first German emperor, Otto the Great, crowned in 962, gave his name to the renaissance of art in the tenth and eleventh centuries in Germany. Ottonian art was at first quite dependent on Carolingian art, but it assimilated this heritage and developed a distinct and independent style. Like their predecessors, Ottonian artists continued to look to the past - to Late Antique and Early Christian art - for models. But they did not follow the Franks in their choice of subject matter for illumination in their sacred books. The Carolingian artists placed great emphasis on the Old Testament and especially on illustrating the lives of David and Solomon whom they glorified as types of their own king, Charlemagne. Therefore they produced many large, illuminated Bibles and Psalters with extensive Old Testament cycles. The decoration of the New Testament was generally confined to canon tables, initial pages and evangelist portraits. Ottonian artists, however, were more interested in the New Testament, and particularly in illustrating parables, miracles and scenes from the life of Christ as told in the Gospels. Therefore while they produced only one decorated



one-volume Bible and practically no Psalters, they did produce some richly ornate Gospels, Sacramentaries, Lectionaries and Books of Pericopes. The Ottonian artists and patrons were perhaps narrow in their choice of books to be illuminated, but this was a natural result of the appeal of the Gospels rather than the Old Testament for them.

As the focus of this thesis is on Herod the Great, it is to be expected that a greater number of representations of him will be found in Ottonian work than in Carolingian work because of the interest in the New Testament. The infancy of Christ was represented along with the miracles, parables and the Passion, and so Herod appears quite frequently. So far as I am aware, with the exception of the tiny figure in the Drogo Sacramentary, no Carolingian manuscripts include Herod the Great in their decorative schemes.<sup>32</sup> He was confined to the rather static and restricted compositions on various ivory book covers, as reviewed in the previous section of this chapter. This section on Ottonian art, however, turns to manuscript illumination and more precisely to illuminated Gospels. Several scriptoria developed in the Ottonian empire, many of which were directly influenced by the Court, but there is a good deal of controversy about the provenance of various important manuscripts. It is not the intention here to join the controversy but merely to present the manuscripts which deal with Herod the Great and note any changes or developments in artistic representation of this figure.

#### A. The Codex Egberti in Trier

The earliest of the Ottonian manuscripts to include Herod the Great in its decorative scheme is the Codex Egberti.<sup>33</sup> Egbert of Trier was imperial chancellor (976 - 77) and archbishop of Trier at the time when Trier was a powerful centre of reform and scholarship.<sup>34</sup> The Codex Egberti, a gospel lectionary made for him about 980, includes a dedication

picture, four full-page paintings of the evangelists and fifty New Testament illustrations painted in gold, purple, blue, green and red.<sup>35</sup> Francis Wormald attributed part of the greatness of this manuscript to its debt to earlier art; he commented that 'the artist of this book absorbed most successfully the style of fourth-century painting and one of his sources may well have been an early series of gospel illustrations. He made use, however, also of contemporary Byzantine illuminations and in any case seems to have modified his models to meet his own requirements.'<sup>36</sup> Walter Oakeshott agrees with him and suggests that there is strong reason to believe that an actual late classical model was used rather than just a Carolingian copy.<sup>37</sup> The illumination for the Massacre of the Innocents on folio 15v does, in fact, reveal many classical elements (*fig. 31*). It is set in a simple frame within the text. The lozenge and bar ornament on this frame is frequently used in fourth and fifth century ivories and was also used by one of the painters of the Codex Vaticanus.<sup>38</sup> Within the frame, the empty background, the identifying inscriptions, and the attempt at some modelling in the faces all reveal classical influences. The massacre takes place in empty space with no indication as to whether it is indoors or outdoors. The city on the right, labelled BETHLEEM, (and painted with some suggestion of perspective), might suggest an outdoor scene but there is no indication of foreground or horizon. On the left Herod, labelled HERODES, directs the Massacre; he is crowned and leans on a staff as he stands with one leg crossed in front of the other. Directly behind him stand the attendants, all with spears held points up and parallel. This group of figures on the left, including Herod, seem to have been influenced by Byzantine art; they are tall and slender, all are dark and bearded, and the

decorative bands on Herod's robes and stockings are reminiscent of those in early mosaics.

The soldiers, children and mothers are in a different style, being closer to the short round figures of classical ivories. This is particularly true of the children. The group of four mourning women on the right is interesting. Each has a different posture: one woman reaches towards her child whom a soldier is about to snatch, while another turns her head away from the scene and covers her face; two of the women are half-naked with their long hair let down and flowing over their shoulders - one stands with her hands in the Early Christian orans position, although this could also be interpreted as a gesture of grief (familiar from Carolingian ivories), and the other kneels, or sits, and seems to beat her breast. As she is in the foreground, she is almost certainly meant to represent the inconsolable Rachel. Scholars who have studied this manuscript<sup>39</sup> point out the similarity between these mourning mothers and the women who surround Dido to mourn her death in the Vatican Vergil,<sup>40</sup> a manuscript of the fifth century (*fig. 32*). There Dido is shown lying on her couch with her knife in her hand; five women surround the couch and two more stand at the doorway on the left beating their breasts, or rending their garments. All have bare breasts and one on the right has her hands thrown up in the air. The whole is also enclosed in a simple frame. The Codex Egberti illumination also keeps a relatively simple frame. The similarity between the woman standing with her hands thrown up in the air and Dido's friend mourning at the head of the couch is striking. Also the gesture of the woman (Rachel) beating her breast is very close to the gestures of Dido's mourners on the left.

The style of the grotesquely robust children and the poses of the mourning women in the Codex Egberti may indeed have come from classical

sources. The iconography of the massacre is the 'sword type'. The three soldiers, under the inscription PUERI OCCIDUNTUR, stand in identical positions with their weapons poised for action, all parallel to each other in a very rhythmical composition; two have swords and are about to behead some children, and one has a long spear which he plunges into the heart of his victims. In spite of the subject matter of this illumination, however, one is not meant to be emotionally involved in it. Dodwell stresses this quality in his rather over-enthusiastic appraisal of this work. 'Whatever questions there may be about the iconographic sources of the Gregory Master and his associates [the artists of the Codex Egberti], there can be none about the quality of their art. Their paintings express a fine sense of compositional rhythms, a feeling for the relationship of figures in space, and a delicate sensibility to tonal grades and harmonies. The Gregory Master's own work is further characterized by a classical reticence and an aesthetic balance....His classical composure and detachment is everywhere apparent and neutralizes the emotion even of scenes of particular passion like the Slaughter of the Innocents - a mother may beat her breast in grief and another turn away her head in horror, but no sympathetic feelings are aroused: one is only conscious of the overall aesthetic balance of the picture.'<sup>41</sup>

#### B. Gospel Book of Otto III in Munich

The Gospel Book of Otto III<sup>42</sup> was produced c.997 - 1000, two decades after the Codex Egberti, and like its predecessor, it is lavishly illustrated with scenes from the Gospels. These scenes are portrayed with great power and dignity; the iconography of many of them suggests the 'use of a late antique illustrated Gospel cycle without recourse to a ninth-or-tenth-century Byzantine model.'<sup>43</sup> The scene representing the Massacre of the

Innocents, on fol. 30v, (*fig. 33*) seems to be based directly on the same scene in the Codex Egberti, and reproduces the mourning mothers exactly. The artist of the Gospel Book of Otto III has simply taken the Codex Egberti illustration, split it into two parts through the group of mourning women, and presented it on two levels, Herod and the Massacre above being artistically related to the mourning women below by the startling device of a child who is flying through the air, head first, from the top scene to the bottom one, to join the pile of massacred children there. The naked children on both levels are still large and robust, and three mourning women (out of four) have been copied from the earlier manuscript. An unusual fourth woman has been introduced in the Gospel Book of Otto III however; she sits cross-legged on the ground on the right and holds in her bosom the figures of several live clothed children who seem to be looking upwards. She may be a mother whose sons are about to be massacred, but her face is calm and serene; she cannot be Rachel, who is most probably the kneeling woman on the left. Her pose and her position - on the right (and therefore chronologically after the Massacre has taken place) and before a city - suggest that she might be a female counterpart to the figure of Abraham gathering the souls of the blessed (martyrs) to heaven (the heavenly city). However, such a figure is unique in Massacre scenes.

The upper level of the Massacre scene reproduces the two Codex Egberti sword-bearing soldiers exactly, even to the neckline of their tunics. Herod and his counsellors, however, have been modified. Instead of standing by and watching the Massacre, Herod is now seated under a canopy<sup>44</sup> on a cushioned faldstool. The king, his guards and his soldiers all wear short tunics with chlamys over them, and the women are also dressed in a classical

style. However, there are no inscriptions, so common in classical manuscripts, and the dark, round-eyed men presented within architectural frames and before medieval cities are thoroughly Ottonian.

C. Codex Aureus Epternacensis in Nürnberg (formerly in Gotha)

Trier and its abbey of St. Maximin supplied abbots and monks to the abbey at Echternach at least twice. In 1028 when Trier released the monk Humbert to Echternach, he took with him the St. Maximin tradition of a deep interest in art so that during his time as abbot (1028 - 1051) Echternach took over from Trier the task of providing emperors with manuscripts. Three splendid Gospel Books survive from Echternach, two of which were commissioned by emperors. The earliest is the Codex Aureus Epternacensis, variously known as the Nürnberg Golden Gospels or the Golden Gospels of Echternach, formerly in the Ducal Museum of Gotha, but now in the Germanisches National-Museum of Nürnberg.<sup>45</sup> This is a splendid Gospel Book, written, about 1040, in gold and sumptuously illuminated, including in its decoration a Christ in Majesty, canon tables, evangelist portraits, and initials, as well as four full pages at the beginning of each Gospel, containing narrative scenes. These pages are divided into three horizontal bands each so that there are over forty-eight scenes represented (some bands contain two scenes). The sequence of pictures before each gospel does not necessarily follow the text of that particular gospel but follows a liturgical order. The action of each scene is described on a narrow gold strip above the illumination. A great many artists worked on the decoration of this manuscript,<sup>46</sup> and various influences have been traced not only from the Codex Egberti but also from Carolingian and Byzantine art.<sup>47</sup> In the scenes which involve Herod, found at the beginning of St. Matthew, a great variety of artistic talent is evident. His interview

with the Magi is depicted in a delicate and lively miniature, while the Massacre is a less exciting, artistically inferior illumination.<sup>48</sup> However, it is not the style, but the iconography which is of interest here.

Herod first appears at the bottom of the first page of illuminations for the Gospel of St. Matthew;<sup>49</sup> this panel is given great prominence because the two panels above it are both divided to show two scenes each<sup>50</sup> while the bottom panel is wholly devoted to Herod's interview with the Magi (*fig. 34*) which is designed so that all the participants are contained under a single architectural framework. Herod, crowned and holding a sceptre, sits on a cushioned throne which is placed at the top of three or four steps, much higher than anyone else. His feet rest on a dais, as in other Carolingian and Ottonian ruler-portraits. At his feet, on a bench, sit three men, one of whom holds a book which he shows to Herod while another gestures to the Magi. These are the scribes; it is their first appearance in Western art since the fifth-century mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore. The Magi enter from the left; they are now crowned kings rather than oriental philosophers. The first one holds a staff and leads the others; they are not standing before Herod docilely, but have just entered the court and are walking towards him in a lively, vivacious manner. Two soldiers attend Herod, one with a sword held high, the other with a spear at his side, but there is nothing sinister about these figures. They stand ready to hear and obey commands, and add a further dimension of liveliness to the scene. The whole picture is painted with great delicacy and charm.

Herod next appears as he supervises the Massacre<sup>51</sup> (*fig. 35*). He sits enthroned as before, but the architectural frame covers only Herod, identified by a vertical inscription HEROD [ES], and his sword-bearer who stands beside him. A curtain has been drawn back to reveal both of these figures who are separated from the outdoor Massacre scene by a door

through which Herod peers. The centre of this scene is occupied by a huge pile of mutilated corpses labelled INFANTES. One soldier with his sword held high above his head grabs a naked child by one arm and its mother pulls on the other with both hands trying to save it. Another in this group of three women, labelled MATRES, hugs two tiny babies to her breast, perhaps trying to hide them, while the third turns her face away in sorrow. The second of the soldiers, labelled CARNIFICES, plunges his sword into a child which he holds over his knee. The background of the Massacre consists of decorative bands of colour as opposed to the architectural framework for Herod. The identifying inscription above reads REX QVIA TVRBATVR INFANTVM TVRBA NECATVR. The repetition of TVRBATVR and TVRBA, and the inscription for the soldiers, CARNIFICES, emphasize the brutality and cruelty of the angry and troubled King Herod, although this is not reflected in how Herod is represented. Later artists used the figure of the king himself to express these qualities (see Chapters 6 and 8).<sup>52</sup>

#### D. The Golden Gospel Book of Henry III in Madrid

The most important manuscript produced at the abbey of Echternach was the Golden Gospel Book, a gift of Henry III to the cathedral of Speyer in 1045-46, and now in the Escorial Library in Madrid.<sup>53</sup> In the Massacre of the Innocents,<sup>54</sup> Herod the Great occupies more than half the space of the miniature (*fig. 36*). As in the Golden Gospels of Echternach, he sits within his palace under a curtained arcade and watches the Massacre take place outside. He is crowned and clothed magnificently but he holds the sceptre rather awkwardly in the same hand with which he points to the Massacre. Four figures stand beside him on the extreme left. They are not armed guards or soldiers; they may be counsellors, or possibly the citizens of Jerusalem who shared Herod's distress when he heard of the birth of a



new king. On the right, the Massacre is performed by two quite monumental soldiers, precursors of Romanesque figures in English manuscripts of the twelfth century. One looks back to Herod, one arm brandishing his sword in the air above his head, the other holding by the arm a child who is straddling his arm. The second soldier, a remarkable figure shown with his back to us, holds a child by the hair and is posed, ready to strike off the head with his sword. Several mothers huddle in the corner, all seated, one holding about three children to her breast in order to protect them. Above this outdoor Massacre scene is a badly mutilated inscription which reads: HERODES MITTENS OCCID [IT OMNES PVER] OS QVI ERANT IN BETLEEM ET [IN OMNIBUS] FINIBUS EIVS.<sup>55</sup> This manuscript, produced near the end of the Ottonian period, shows a monumentality in figure style which prefigures the twelfth-century Anglo-Saxon figure drawing.<sup>56</sup>

#### E. Codex Purpureus in Munich

The Codex Purpureus in Munich,<sup>57</sup> contains two inserted leaves of illustrations, one with scenes from an Infancy cycle, and the other with scenes of Christ's appearances after the Resurrection.<sup>58</sup> One of these Infancy scenes is the Massacre of the Innocents<sup>59</sup> (the other is the Adoration of the Magi). There has been a good deal of controversy over the date and provenance of this manuscript,<sup>60</sup> but Francis Wormald points out that it 'seems to have been in the possession of one Hatto, who has been identified with an early ninth-century abbot of the great abbey of Reichenau on Lake Constance',<sup>61</sup> and he states definitely that the two inserted leaves, at least, are Ottonian work, although they are copies of sixth-century originals.<sup>62</sup> 'The four miniatures on the two leaves are brilliantly colored in brown, yellow, bright blue, orange, pink, green and violet....The pages are partitioned by a cross in the arms of which the miniatures are painted.'<sup>63</sup> A whole page is devoted to the Massacre

of the Innocents, (*fig. 37*) a depiction which Leclercq dismisses as 'aussi disgracieuse que possible.'<sup>64</sup> In the upper part of the cross Herod sits on his raised cushioned throne, giving orders to a soldier. Both Herod and the soldier wear short tunics, chlamys and striped stockings and they seem to be indoors under an arcade and framed by slender pillars. In the other parts of the cross there are various scenes involving Roman-looking soldiers, mothers and children. In the centre, a soldier seems to stand just above a column,<sup>65</sup> swinging a child through the air with his left hand, dropping another from his right hand, and kicking a third child who is also falling to the ground. Behind the soldier two mothers in long robes and dishevelled hair reach out towards him, but do not approach. On the other side of the cross, another mother rushes towards a second soldier who carries a club in one hand and swings a child in the air with the other. In the bottom of the cross, yet another child is seen falling head-first beside the central column, blood spurting profusely from its body, as it does from all the other children. At the bottom is an unusual scene: a woman kneels and a soldier behind her mercilessly reaches out and pulls her by the hair, keeping his other hand on his club.<sup>66</sup> This miniature does not reflect the reserve of other Ottonian work, nor the iconography. Herod is shown separately, giving the order for the Massacre - a theme developed in Eastern manuscripts rather than Western ones,<sup>67</sup> although the positioning of his throne and the architectural framework over and around it show some Ottonian influence; the iconography of the massacre has reverted to the 'smashing type'; and the interaction between soldiers and mothers is reminiscent of the Rabbula Gospels. Therefore the conclusion that these are Ottonian copies of earlier sixth-century originals seems quite valid on the basis of the folio of the Massacre of the Innocents.

German Ottonian art, as seen in the manuscripts produced at various centres in the Ottonian Empire in the tenth and eleventh centuries, drew from many sources but developed its own distinctive style. Figure style became monumental and at the same time emotional content was enlarged. When Herod the Great was represented, he was an Ottonian emperor (rather than the Roman emperor he appeared to be in Early Christian art), seated on a rather high throne and separated quite often from the rest of the scene by his own architectural setting. He had round piercing eyes and a short black beard and was usually in animated conversation with his audience of Magi, scribes or soldiers. It was Ottonian artists who developed new types of illustration for the New Testament, producing elaborate pictorial cycles with great liveliness and richness of detail. They perhaps found models in Early Christian and Byzantine manuscripts from which they inherited a wealth of narrative detail and secondary figures to fill in the main episodes, but they entirely transformed these models and gave them a vigorous expressiveness. Figures do not stand in a static position; they move. Mothers do not only mourn their massacred children by throwing their hands up in the air or turning their heads away; they try to hide their children by hugging them to their breasts or, occasionally, they try to pull them away from the soldiers. The soldiers are mobile and active, engrossed in their duty of killing the children while turning to Herod to listen to his commands. The outlines of the figures are clear and sharp, causing them to stand out from the plain, neutral backgrounds and emphasizing their every movement and emotion. Most of the scenes involving Herod and the Magi or Herod and the Massacre are presented as neatly balanced compositions, with an almost geometrical symmetry in spite of the fact that they are dealing with very animated figures; every detail is neat and clear and yet all is presented with the utmost dignity. Ernst Kitzinger summarizes the style of Ottonian art by comparing it with

English work. 'While Winchester miniatures are exuberant and overflowing, the German ones have a firm and steady structure. While in England outlines are diffuse and nervous, here they are sharp and crystal-clear.'<sup>68</sup>

He recognizes that Ottonian art is different emotionally as well: 'the artist retires, as it were, behind his subject, and the figures play with great liveliness the part assigned to them in the drama. English miniatures, however lively, have much less specific content. Human shapes are apt to lose their individuality in the general turmoil of nervously drawn outlines.'<sup>69</sup> This is perhaps why the Herod scenes in Ottonian art are given a new clarity and sharpness of focus. They are vibrant, meaningful artistic expressions of the texts of the Gospels.

### III. Byzantine Art

#### A. Manuscripts: Greek Gospel Books

Ottonian artists made a greater contribution to manuscript illumination for the Gospels than their Carolingian predecessors but the number of illustrations in their imperial manuscripts cannot compare with 'the enormous series of illustrations found in some of the Greek Gospel books of the eleventh century.'<sup>70</sup> The earliest Greek Gospels that survive, the Codex Rossanensis and the Sinope fragment, both date from the sixth century and contain long series of pictures for the Gospels, indicating that a fairly complete cycle was already in existence then. However, neither manuscript contains any representation of Herod. The two Gospel books which are most prolifically illustrated, one in Paris<sup>71</sup> and the other in Florence,<sup>72</sup> contain illustrations within the text rather than as a preface to each gospel; indeed they appear with great density on every page. These manuscripts 'show very clearly the early Christian system of a densely spaced, narrative illustration as it exists similarly

in two fragments of early Christian manuscripts of the Septuagint, the Genesis in Vienna and the so-called Cotton Genesis in the British Museum in London.<sup>73</sup> To illustrate the density of scenes used in the eleventh-century Greek Gospel texts, Kurt Weitzmann points out that in the Paris Gospel book, the episode of the Flight to Egypt is illustrated in four phases: (1) the Flight to Egypt, in which the Holy Family are received by a personification of Egypt in front of a walled city; (2) the Massacre of the Innocents; (3) the Dream of Joseph when he is told by the angel to return after the death of Herod; and (4) the Return to Nazareth. This means that four scenes have been used to illustrate only ten verses (14-23) of the second chapter of Matthew.<sup>74</sup> This is a very high density of scenes for the text; in fact, this manuscript, Paris grec. 74, has a total of 361 illustrations; several of these involve Herod the Great.

#### 1. Herod with the Scribes

##### a) Paris gr. 115

In manuscripts which are so precisely and copiously illustrated, the Gospel of Matthew shows more details of the incidents in which Herod is involved than Ottonian gospels, which are organized according to the liturgical order of events. The text of the Gospel of Matthew 2 may be recalled here:

1. Cum ergo natus esset Iesus in Bethlehem Iuda in diebus Herodis regis, ecce Magi ab oriente venerunt Ierosolyman,
2. Dicentes: Ubi est qui natus est rex Iudaeorum? Vidimus enim stellam eius in oriente, et venimus adorare eum.
3. Audiens autem Herodes rex, turbatus est, et omnis Ierosolyma cum illo.
4. Et congregans omnes principes sacerdotum, et scribas populi, sciscitabatur ab eis ubi Christus nasceretur.
5. Et illi dixerunt ei: In Bethlehem Iudae; sic enim scriptum est per prophetam:

6. Et tu Bethlehem terra Iuda, nequaquam minima es in principibus Iuda; ex te enim exiet dux qui regat populum meum Israel.

7. Tunc Herodes clam vocatis Magis, diligenter didicit ab eis tempus stellae quae apparuit eis;

8. Et mittens illos in Bethlehem dixit: Ite, et interrogate diligenter de puero; et cum inveneritis, renuntiate mihi, ut et ego veniens adorem eum.

When Herod heard rumours about the Magi, he summoned his scribes and chief priests and asked them where Christ was to be born (verse 4). They told him the prophecy (verses 5-6). Then, after that, he summoned the Magi to ask when the star had appeared (verse 7). There are, in fact, two interviews involved here, and several of the Greek Gospels presented them both separately. A tenth-century Greek Gospel Book, Paris gr. 115,<sup>75</sup> is the first to do so. On folio 24v<sup>76</sup> Herod is shown consulting his scribes and being shown a very large book, or roll, which is the prophecy (of Micah) which the scribes read to him. The next illustration, on folio 25<sup>77</sup> has Herod enthroned, meeting the Magi formally in his second interview.

b) Copte 13

In another Greek manuscript, Copte 13,<sup>78</sup> written in the twelfth century but actually a copy of an older manuscript retaining Egyptian iconography,<sup>79</sup> full illustrations for the Gospel of Matthew are also given. Both of Herod's interviews are represented (*fig. 38*) but they are combined into a single long scene on folio 5.<sup>80</sup> Herod sits in the centre like an Oriental potentate, dramatically waving his hands in front of him and showing some agitation in his bearing and his defiantly crossed legs. Behind him stand two attending soldiers with shields and spears, and to the left is a lively group of three scribes. One pushes a book towards Herod, the second holds up a long scroll to show him, while the third

gestures to the scroll with his right hand. They all look towards Herod but he is preoccupied with the Magi on the right who have apparently finished their interview with Herod and are walking away from him. The first has already gone through the doorway on the right, the last looks back at Herod as he hurries away.<sup>81</sup>

c) Jerusalem 14

Another very unusual Greek manuscript, called Jerusalem 14,<sup>82</sup> includes Herod's interview with the scribes as well as with the Magi. The emphasis in this manuscript, however, is primarily on the Magi; Herod appears incidentally within the cycle of illuminations showing the story of the Magi. It is important to note that although Herod appears frequently in these Byzantine works, this is not due to any increased popularity of the subject, but rather to two different factors: (1) artists tended to illustrate the Gospels more copiously at this time and so the less important details about Herod were represented; (2) the Magi were becoming an extremely popular subject in literature and art and, as their interview with Herod was part of the Magi story, he was naturally included in the pictorial cycles. Jerusalem 14 is a good example of a Magi-centred series of illuminations in a Nativity sequence. Millet describes the scenes. 'Ils arrivent à cheval, sous la conduite de l'étoile, interrogent un Juif aux portes de Jérusalem, comparaissent devant Hérode (fol. 104a), qui convoque les prêtres et les scribes; les Juifs les entretiennent à maintes reprises (fol. 104v, 105v); enfin, Marie les reçoit, leur permet de faire peindre son portrait, de prendre l'enfant dans leur bras et de le caresser (fol. 106, 106v, 107). Mais, voici qu'étant à table, devant l'église de Bethléem, ils voient un ange descendre du ciel et recoivent l'ordre de partir; aussitôt, ils remontent

à cheval et l'éloignent en toute hâte avec leur guide céleste (fol.107v).<sup>83</sup>

This manuscript appears to be a sermon rather than part of the Gospels and so a good deal of apocryphal material is also illustrated. It does, however, place Herod in the perspective that the Byzantine Middle Ages must have had for him.

d) Laur. VI. 23 and Paris gr. 74

The two copiously illustrated, eleventh-century Greek Gospel Books, mentioned at the beginning of this section on Byzantine art, both include scenes of Herod consulting the scribes. The Florence manuscript (Laur. VI. 23) is most complete in its illumination of the Gospel of Matthew. On folio 6,<sup>84</sup> (*fig. 39*) the gospel order of events is reversed; Herod is shown questioning his scribes, and then the Magi are seen arriving at the gate of Jerusalem and speaking to a Jew there. The story continues on folio 6v<sup>85</sup> (*fig. 40*) with four scenes together showing: (1) Herod interviewing the Magi, (2) the Magi galloping away to Bethlehem, (3) the Adoration of the Magi (the Virgin and Child are in a cave in a mountain as is usual in Byzantine iconography), and (4) the journey of the Magi home.

The Paris manuscript, Paris grec. 74, begins its series by showing the Magi arriving, on foot, at Jerusalem, and speaking to some Jews there (fol. 3v)<sup>86</sup> (*fig 41*). Later, on the same folio (*fig. 42*), Herod consults a large group of scribes about Christ's birthplace.<sup>87</sup> This is the correct order of events according to Scripture. On the next folio (fol. 4)<sup>88</sup> he is shown interrogating the Magi (*fig. 43*). It is clear from noting the number and content of the illuminations in the manuscripts mentioned above that the Greek Gospel books were illustrated copiously and included many details of Scriptural events ordinarily ignored by artists.



## e) Vatican Lectionary

Lectionaries were given the same type of narrative illumination but not so copiously. The eleventh-century Vatican Lectionary,<sup>89</sup> for instance, does not include illustrations for the Magi arriving in Jerusalem, or for Herod consulting his scribes, but it contains Herod's interview with the Magi (fol. 279); it omits the Magi's journey to Bethlehem but includes the Adoration (fol. 279v) and the return of the Magi (fol.280)<sup>90</sup> (fig. 44). These three scenes occur in the lections for December 25, Christmas Day, but the manuscript, being a lectionary, or Book of Pericopes, is unusual in having so many illustrations for one liturgical feast.

'A pericope is an inviolate unit, and for this reason artists respect its unity by not inserting pictures within the text of a lection....Normally they select the beginning of the lection as the most suitable place for its illustration.'<sup>91</sup> Of the scenes mentioned above, whether the manuscript be a Lectionary or a Gospel Book, the most popular scene was, of course, the Adoration of the Magi. If only one miniature were chosen to represent Matt.2, the Adoration was always chosen. The next scene chosen to be illustrated was the Magi before Herod. This first appeared in the Drogo Sacramentary (fig. 29) and after that it became quite frequent. The scribes were introduced as early as the fifth century in the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore and then in the Golden Gospels of Echternach, but Herod's interview with his scribes was given separate treatment only in the Greek Gospel books. It was these Byzantine books then that increased the number of miniatures involving Herod, and expanded his story to include such relatively minor events as his interview with the scribes and their revelation of the prophecy concerning the birth of Christ.

Table of Greek Gospel Books and their Illuminations for Matt. 2.

	Grec. 15	Copte 13	Hier. 14	Laur.VI.23	Grec.74	Vat. 1156
Magi arrive at Jerusalem			(f.103)	f.6	f.3v	
Herod consults scribes	f.24v	f.5	f.104a	f.6	f.3v	
Herod interviews Magi	f.25		f.104a	f.6v	f.4	f.279
Magi go to Bethlehem			f.106	f.6v	f.4	
Adoration of Magi	f.25v	f.6	f.106	f.6v	--	f.279v
Return of Magi			f.107v	f.6v		f.280

## 2. The Massacre Scenes

## a) Suppl. 27

The Massacre of the Innocents is depicted in all the manuscripts mentioned above, not only because it is mentioned in the Gospels but also because the Feast of the Holy Innocents was one of the major liturgical feasts. This Feast was always associated with Joseph's Dream and the Flight to Egypt which was also celebrated on this Feast day, and included in the lections for the Feast of the Holy Innocents. Millet points out that in some cases it is the liturgy, rather than the Gospel order, which determined the series of scenes painted in some of the Greek manuscripts. As an example he cites the unusual order of the illustrations painted in

the margins of a Paris manuscript, Suppl. 27, a book of pericopes.<sup>92</sup>

At the top of folio 173, beside the text Matt.2:13, the illumination shows an angel warning the Magi, who depart, and another angel warning Joseph as he sleeps. Verse 16 is illustrated not by a raging Herod, but by a scene appropriate to verse 7 and presenting the three Magi as they stand before Herod. Then, at the bottom of the page, the Massacre is represented beside a palm tree; one soldier holds a child upside down and is about to cut it in two with his sword.<sup>93</sup>

b) Vatican 1156

To interpret the significance of this order of events in the illustrations, the manuscript should be compared to another lectionary, already discussed, Vatican 1156 (*fig. 44*). On folio 279, for Matt.2:7, there is an illustration of the Magi before Herod. Later, on folio 280v, (*fig. 45*) for verse 16, (after intervening illustrations of the Adoration and Return of the Magi, the Dream of Joseph, and the Flight), in one margin there is a picture of Herod seated on his throne, attended by a guard, giving the order for the Massacre; in the opposite margin the Massacre takes place, slightly expanded so that two soldiers now kill the children with their swords, separated by a tree from two mothers who mourn the dead children.<sup>94</sup> Millet's explanation is that the artist of the first manuscript studied the second one, but seeing Herod sitting in the same position for both verses 7 and 16, mistook the meaning of the scene and painted in the Magi instead of the Massacre for the later verse.<sup>95</sup> The Magi were commonly associated with the Massacre in the Middle Ages; it should be remembered that the liturgy did, in fact, deliberately contrast the Magi's true worship of Christ with Herod's false seeking after the Child by omitting the Invitatory for Epiphany.

## c) Copte 13

The iconography of the Massacre scene shows a development of several themes. First, the stance of the soldiers and their method of slaughter should be noted. In the Lectionaries mentioned above, the soldiers hold the naked children by the legs upside down and stand poised with their swords above their heads, ready to slice the children in two. This is reminiscent of the Rabbula Gospels illustration from Syria, rather than the 'smashing type' of Massacre from Italy and Provence. The mourning mothers in Vatican 1156 are static and formal, however, compared with the fighting mother(s) in the Rabbula Gospels or even the mourning mothers of the Ottonian manuscripts. However, the Gospel books animate the whole scene with more spirit and emotion. In Copte 13, fol. 6,<sup>96</sup> the soldiers have amassed the children before Herod where they kill them furiously, some running them through with swords, some bringing whole basketsful to smash to the ground at his feet (*fig. 46*). Herod sits in the oriental cross-legged position on his cushioned throne, very much interested in the scene; for the first time in art, he has his own sword out and uses it as a prop to lean against as he watches the soldiers. Mothers stand in groups on both sides of the composition mourning with various gestures of grief. This is an extremely lively scene, centred round Herod who seems ready to take part himself.

## d) Paris, gr. 74

In Paris grec. 74, fol. 5r,<sup>97</sup> the Massacre occurs, again with Herod present (*fig. 47*). He sits on his throne under a baldaquin, attended by a guard on the right and, although he is not armed, his pose and gesture reveal his involvement in the scene before him. A pile of children lie at his feet and a soldier facing him is about to execute a child he holds upside down by the leg. Behind that soldier stands another who is

pulling a child from its mother by the hair. A second mother has lost her children and is tearing her hair in grief; a third woman sits on the ground with a dead child on her lap and another beside her, grieving in the traditional attitude with her hands thrown up in the air; this is probably Rachel.

e) Laur. VI. 23

The other eleventh-century Gospel, Laur. VI. 23, also shows Herod present at the Massacre and gesturing towards it (*fig 48*), while soldiers pull children from mothers who try to protect them, and children are held upside down before being pierced with a sword.<sup>98</sup> Another gruesome detail has been added in that one of the soldiers has a child skewered on his long lance. This iconography became very widespread in later medieval art (see Chapter 8).

The naked children being held upside down in the Massacre scene, and their fighting, protective mothers, seem to be a characteristic of Greek manuscripts,<sup>99</sup> e.g. London Psalter (*fig. 49*), as well as the art of Cappadocia. One recalls the vivid sermons of the Cappadocian fathers, in which the massacre is described in every terrible detail, including the hard and murderous looks of the executioners, who with one hand pull the children from their mothers and with the other raise their swords; mothers who hang on to their children only to expose their poor necks to the sword; and infants who cling to their mothers' breasts only to receive a sword blow through the stomach.<sup>100</sup> The Byzantine artists of the eleventh century are still expressing the emotional attitudes of the fourth-century fathers of the Greek Church.

The illustrations of the Greek Gospel books reveal a long and complete cycle of pictures for all the Gospels. Because of the density of

illustrations in relation to the text, there are additional scenes involving Herod, such as his consultation with the scribes, which appears separately from his interview with the Magi in several manuscripts. At the same time, the iconography of the Massacre of the Innocents becomes more complex. The interaction of mothers and soldiers is more pronounced and the methods of massacring the children more varied and gruesome, reflecting perhaps the spirit of the sermons of the Cappadocian fathers. The presence of Herod in the Massacre scenes is, however, somewhat problematical. This can best be studied by turning to other contemporary Byzantine representations of this scene in other media.

## B. Mosaics and Frescoes

### 1. Monreale

Otto Demus discovered when he studied the mosaics of Norman Sicily that 'the largest ensemble of Sicilian mosaics, the decoration of Monreale Cathedral, is the work of a Greek workshop at the end of the twelfth century.'<sup>101</sup> He considered Monreale to be a Byzantine monument rather than Sicilian and so, since the mosaics include a representation of Herod the Great, they are included in this section on Byzantine art.

The mosaics in Monreale Cathedral cover the entire surface of the walls and originally included six different cycles. The one in the central square and transepts is a Christological cycle. Although the mosaics of this cycle were restored and partly renewed in 1819-21, the composition of the scenes is authentic,<sup>102</sup> the work of 'a large workshop of Greek artists with a firm tradition of Byzantine iconography, style and technique. The work's character is predominantly Greek, almost exclusively so, in spite of the Latin inscriptions.'<sup>103</sup> The comprehensiveness of the New Testament cycle is outstanding; Demus points out that the only works which can compare

with it are the Byzantine miniature cycles, most of which have been discussed above; Paris Gregory 510, Paris grec. 74, Laur. VI.23, and the Rockefeller-McCormick Gospels.<sup>104</sup> The mosaics, however, present a slightly different interpretation of the Massacre than the manuscripts.

The Massacre of the Innocents (*fig. 50*) occurs in the top story of the north wall of the central square after a series in the Infancy cycle beginning with the Annunciation to Zacharias in the Temple<sup>105</sup> (a scene not usually found in Western cycles). There are four scenes across the top of the wall: the Journey of the Magi, the Adoration of the Magi,<sup>106</sup> Herod's Order,<sup>107</sup> and the Massacre of the Innocents. The Massacre has been separated into two different scenes - in reality, three scenes, according to the inscriptions. The first inscription reads: HERODES REX. ITE. OCCIDITE. OMNĒ. PUERŌ. A. BIMATV. ET. INFRA. Herod is seated on a raised throne under an architectural canopy, attended by a guard. He is an imposing figure with a large crown. His right hand is raised in command to the two soldiers who stand before him with shields and lances, ready to obey him. This scene, although suggested, is not explicitly given in the canonical Gospels. The Vulgate merely says, 'Tunc Herodes videns quoniam illusus esset a Magis, iratus est valde, et mittens occidit omnes pueros, qui erant in Bethlehem, et in omnibus finibus eius, a bimatu et infra secundum tempus, quod exquisierat a Magis.' (Matt.2:16) There is no account of Herod's actually giving the order, which has been inscribed on this mosaic in the form of a command. However, this very scene, with an identically worded command, is described in the Protevangelium, a Greek apocryphal Gospel from at least the second century.<sup>108</sup> Chapter 22 reads: 'But when Herod perceived that he was mocked by the wise men, he was wroth and sent murderers, saying unto them: Slay the children from two years old and under.'<sup>109</sup> It is quite likely that the iconography of the scene

in the Monreale mosaics has, in fact, been influenced by the text of the Protevangelium.<sup>110</sup> The second part of the Massacre scene has two inscriptions. The first refers to the soldiers: IVSSV. HERODIS. TRVCIDANT. PUEROS; two soldiers stand in identical poses resembling those of the 'smashing' soldiers in the Carolingian ivories, but swords replace the babies being swung over their heads; one soldier also holds a baby upside down. The other tries to pull an infant from its mother who pushes the soldier away. The third inscription reads: RACHEL PLORĀ. FILIŌ. SUOS; Rachel with her arms flung up in the air weeps for her children. This motif is also seen, of course, in Paris grec. 74, and the other Greek Gospels. Thus, in the mosaics, three scenes - the Order, the Massacre and Rachel - are all presented separately.

## 2. Sant'Angelo

In Byzantine art, the first two scenes of the Massacre (Herod's Order and the actual Massacre) were often presented separately whereas Western artists tended to combine them. The eleventh-century frescoes of Sant'Angelo in Formis, near Capua, Campania, followed the Byzantine tradition of iconography in the Massacre scenes even though they show Western influences in other scenes. These frescoes 'constitute one of the most complete and best preserved medieval schemes in Italy';<sup>111</sup> sixty out of a total of about one hundred scenes survive. The New Testament scenes appear in tiers on the walls of the nave, beginning with the Massacre on the north wall, in two scenes: in the first, Herod gives the order and in the second the Massacre of the Innocents is carried out. In keeping these two scenes separate, the frescoes of Sant'Angelo follow the same Byzantine scheme as the mosaics of Monreale. In Italy and the West, the two scenes were combined even in works under a strong Byzantine



influence, such as the twelfth-century bronze doors of Beneventum.<sup>112</sup>

The apocryphal Protevangelium continues with an account of Elizabeth and the infant John miraculously escaping Herod's wrath by disappearing into a mountain which God causes to open up for them. The influence of this part of the Protevangelium can be seen in other early Byzantine schemes of decoration. In the wall paintings in the nave of the church of Toqale in Cappadocia (ninth or tenth century), the Massacre is shown in three scenes: Herod gives his orders for the Massacre, a soldier executes a child, and Rachel throws up her hands in grief over a dead child. Immediately following this scene is a representation of the mountain of God opening up to receive Elizabeth and John<sup>113</sup> and then the murder of Zacharias at the Temple (also an apocryphal event from the Protevangelium). These last two scenes also appear in frescoes in the chapel of Tchaouch-In (in Cappadocia) and in the ninth-century Greek manuscript illuminations for the sermons of Gregory of Nazianzus (*fig. 51*) in Paris Gregory 510,<sup>114</sup> which has many similarities with the frescoes of Cappadocia.<sup>115</sup> An eleventh-century altar frontal in Salerno also shows the escape of Elizabeth with the Massacre of the Innocents (*fig. 52*). In the Metropolitan Church at Mistra (twelfth century) a similar sequence of events can be seen in the extensive frescoes which preserve a Byzantine scheme: the Massacre begins with Herod giving his order and ends with Elizabeth finding refuge in the mountain. The murder of Zacharias is also included after the Massacre in many Byzantine works of art, such as the Paris Gregory 510 and the frescoes at Trebizond.<sup>116</sup>

All these Byzantine representations of Herod and the Massacre are related iconographically. Perhaps they reflect some common model such as the Rabbula Gospels: Herod gestures towards the soldiers in the Byzantine works just as he did in the Rabbula Gospels; the soldiers hold the children upside down the same way, and the mothers try to protect their children and push the soldiers away, instead of standing in the corners docilely mourning as they do in Carolingian and Ottonian art, which is based on Early Christian art. Through their incorporation of Eastern iconography and their use of the apocryphal Gospels, the Byzantine illustrations are probably the most lively representations of the Massacre in the whole of the early medieval period.

#### Conclusion

In Early Christian art Herod was portrayed as a Roman emperor. Carolingian and Ottonian artists followed similar practices in their representations of Herod the Great by adopting the conventions of the ruler-portrait and applying them to the biblical tyrant. He was usually portrayed in the traditional pose of the ruler-portrait on an elevated throne, sometimes even separated from the action of the scene by a curtain or by an architectural frame. While he retained the imperial attributes of crown and sceptre, he was, nevertheless, always associated with the action of the scenes through his gestures, either in conversation with the Magi, or commanding the soldiers. In one Coptic manuscript he appears leaning on his sword: this is an iconographic detail which was to become important in the twelfth-century representations of Herod the Great. Ottonian and Byzantine art introduced a certain liveliness into portrayals of the Massacre scene, in a way foreshadowing the tremendous interest in cruel soldiers and fighting mothers which became predominant in thirteenth-and-

fourteenth-century depictions of this scene (see Chapter 8). Byzantine artists were also responsible, mainly through their illustrations in Greek Gospel Books, for introducing new scenes for Herod, such as his interview with his scribes, and his command of the Massacre as a separate event from the Massacre itself. Once again, these scenes were to become popular in the art of the next century. Thus the iconography of Herod the Great in the art of the early medieval period is not only representative of its own time but it is also of a transitional nature, leading directly to the monumental and dramatic depictions of this figure in the twelfth century.

## CHAPTER VI: HEROD IN TWELFTH-CENTURY ART

## Introduction

Twelfth-century art is rich in representations of Herod the Great. The sculptured decorations and stained glass windows of the cathedrals being built in France provided excellent opportunities for artists to portray large-scale cycles of the Infancy and Passion of Christ. In England, manuscript illuminators were using similar subject material for cycles of the Life of Christ which were prefixed to the text of the Psalter. In many churches in Europe the walls or ceilings were painted with Christological cycles as well as Doomsday scenes and portraits of saints. As there was an increasing interest at this time in the story of the Magi, Herod was often portrayed within Magi cycles as well as in series of paintings devoted to the Infancy of Christ. At the same time, beginning possibly in Scandinavia, he was associated in folk legend with St. Stephen and the cock so that he sometimes appeared in art independent of the cyclical arrangements mentioned above. An extraordinary series of paintings in Lambach presents a unique series of scenes from the life of Herod which seem to be entirely independent of any biblical, apocryphal or patristic source. Twelfth-century art is notable not only for the variety of contexts in which Herod appears, but also for the dramatic changes which take place in the iconography of this king. He gradually becomes less aloof and regal, and with the introduction of devils to advise him and a sword to replace his sceptre, he is unmistakably associated with the powers of evil. The vilification of Herod the Great begun by early historians and patristic commentators achieves expression in the visual arts for the first time in the twelfth century.

## I. France

### A. Sculpture

The twelfth century in France was outstanding for the building, or re-building, of many of its cathedrals. Abbot Suger of Saint Denis initiated this great building revival in the fourth decade of the century; he brought architects and craftsmen from different regions together and supervised their artistic schemes as well as their technical achievements at St. Denis. The influence of St. Denis spread throughout France, but most immediately to Chartres. The great series of monumental figures that appear in the decoration of Chartres and other later cathedrals were carefully designed and a study of these figures reveals the medieval mode of presenting Biblical truths through typological schema as well as in chronological and liturgical progression. These statues were complemented by tympana which were sometimes superimposed over the jamb statues, and also by relief bands which appeared under them or above them. At the same time, archivolt figures were often related to the tympana they framed to enlarge the meaning of the main scene in a variety of ways.<sup>1</sup> In the twelfth century, Herod the Great did not appear in the form of a jamb statue standing independently among others in a series at a cathedral portal.<sup>2</sup> He was more likely to appear in the narrative scenes portrayed in the relief bands that appeared above or below those statues. Such scenes also appeared on the capitals of independent columns, such as those in the cloister of Moissac, and in the narrative lintels which formed the base of many tympana, such as the one over the Saint Anne portal at the west front of Notre Dame in Paris. It is to these areas that attention should be directed in order to study the iconography of scenes with Herod the Great in twelfth-century French sculpture.

## 1. Chartres and Notre Dame, Paris

The earliest extant appearance of Herod in twelfth-century sculpture in France is on the west doorway, the Portail Royale of the cathedral of Notre Dame in Chartres, which is generally dated from 1145-55.<sup>3</sup> The frieze running across the jamb capitals contains an extensive historical cycle from the Gospels. Starting from the central doorway, and going north, the frieze shows scenes from the story of Joachim and Anna, followed by Christ's Infancy and ending with the Massacre of the Innocents.<sup>4</sup> In the scene which represents Herod's interview with the Magi (*fig 53*), the scribes are also included, for the first time in French art of the twelfth century. Herod is represented as a king, crowned and holding his sceptre. Beside him sit two men turning away from him, one of whom holds a book; these are the scribes whom Herod has consulted on hearing the rumours of the birth of the new king (Matt.2:4). Herod does not look at them, however; he gestures towards the Magi who stand before him. The Magi are crowned (two now have their heads broken off) and carry pilgrims' staves; the one nearest Herod has laid his hand on Herod's thigh, a most unusual gesture. Herod is placed under a single arcade, while the scribes share an arcade between them and the Magi have their own separate arcades.

This frieze at Chartres, showing the Life of the Virgin and the Infancy of Christ (as well as the Youth and Passion of Christ) also includes 'an exceptionally long-drawn-out Massacre of the Innocents, consisting of no less than ten mothers and eight executioners'<sup>5</sup> who kill the children both by the sword and by smashing them on the ground (*fig 54*). Herod, having ordered the Massacre, sits in the midst of this scene, (*fig. 55*) his legs crossed, his drawn sword held upright, his left arm aggressively

akimbo, his cloak blown about as if by a hostile wind; he has a broad face with high cheekbones and an elegant moustache, a physiognomy of unforgettable insolence, matching his striking posture to perfection.<sup>6</sup> He is already the archetypal model for all 'wicked kings' of later medieval art in this superb and unique portrayal.<sup>7</sup>

A second portrayal of Herod's interview with the Magi, which includes the scribes (*fig. 56*), is found on the much larger scale lintel of the tympanum of the St. Anne portal, west front of Notre Dame in Paris (c.1165). The narrative scenes on the two lintels of this tympanum are similar to those at Chartres: the lower lintel (dating from the thirteenth century) begins with scenes from the story of Joachim and Anna and continues through the Marriage of the Virgin and up to the departure of Mary and Joseph for Nazareth. The upper lintel (from the twelfth century) shows the Annunciation, Nativity and Annunciation to the Shepherds on the left side (the Presentation of the Virgin to the Temple on the far left is a later addition from the thirteenth century, as are the charming Magi's horses on the far right at the other end<sup>8</sup>). The right side is devoted to Herod as he asks the Magi and his scribes about the birthplace of Christ. He sits in the centre, facing directly front. He is crowned and sits in a pose similar to earlier Carolingian and Ottonian emperor-portraits, knees apart, feet together and resting on a dais. He has a sceptre, and leans both hands on his knees, elbows out defiantly as he listens to the scribes beside him, towards whom he inclines slightly. The scribes are two little old men seated on a bench to Herod's right, huddled over a book which they earnestly consult. On Herod's left the three crowned Magi stand in a row, holding their staffs (or sceptres); the nearest has his hand raised in front of his chest as if in conversation

with Herod, but the others are turned slightly away from him, the third one, in fact, pointing away from Herod. It is striking that this space is devoted to Herod and his interviews with his scribes and the Magi rather than to a representation of the Adoration of the Magi, which would complete the series of scenes on the left chronologically and liturgically and keep the emphasis on the Virgin (and indirectly on St. Anne, to whom this portal is dedicated). But the narrative scenes end with Herod. In the tympanum is a representation of the Virgin holding the Christ-Child, enthroned between two angels and worshipped by a king and a bishop (also with a scribe). Sauerländer points out that 'on tympana with the Nikopoia type,<sup>9</sup> the Virgin soon came to be joined by a cycle of scenes from the Infancy of Christ. At Chartres it fills two registers, with the Nativity in the centre of the lower field and the Presentation in the Temple in the upper. In Paris the cycle is further developed to include Herod and the Magi'.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the Adoration was omitted in Paris because it would resemble too closely the design of the tympanum.<sup>11</sup> In any case Herod is given representation here within the cycle of scenes used to illustrate the life of the Virgin and the Infancy of Christ.

## 2. Le Mans

The twelfth century saw a great development of the Magi cycle in both literature and art. On the archivolt of the south portal of the cathedral of Le Mans, built before 1158 and much influenced by Chartres, the Magi appear three times in a series of Christological scenes: they appear before Herod, then in an Adoration scene, and lastly, being warned by the angel not to return to Herod.<sup>12</sup> This is a little Magi cycle within a larger Infancy cycle and Herod is represented in these archivolts



of Le Mans mainly because of his part in the Magi cycle. His interview with the Magi was evidently more popular in the art of the north than in the south of France. Vezin commented that 'dans la sculpture romane, le présentation [des Mages] à Hérode figure aussi bien dans le nord que dans le sud de la France',<sup>13</sup> but there is also an example from the south, in the valley of the Rhone, where Herod makes an appearance with the Magi. He appears at Valence on the lintel of the interior of the north portal of the Cathedral in a standard representation of this scene.<sup>14</sup>

### 3. Saint Trophime in Arles: Herod with a Sword

In the sculptural decoration of the late twelfth-century (c.1180-90) church of Saint Trophime in Arles, Herod appears again in another Magi cycle, but he is given a different treatment from the representations discussed above. In all of those he was a dignified king, listening to the prophecies of his counsellors and questioning the Magi. But at Arles he becomes a much more threatening figure (*fig. 57*). He appears on a frieze across the capitals of the west front of the church: the Magi are represented adoring the Christ-Child and also Journeying on horseback as well as appearing before Herod. But here Herod is proud and menacing; he is accompanied by armed guards and he also has a large sword laid across his knees as he entertains the Magi. 'Il est assis majestueusement, comme un baron féodal, se grande épée posée sur ses genoux, un homme d'armes debout derrière lui.'<sup>15</sup> Vezin gives a similar description of this scene: 'Sur la frise de la facade de Saint-Trophime d'Arles (fin XII<sup>e</sup> siècle), Hérode, assis, coudes et genoux écartés, plein d'arrogance, tient à deux mains sur ses genoux une énorme épée rentrée dans le fourreau.'<sup>16</sup> This arrogant, threatening Herod is part of the new interpretation of Herod in the twelfth century; this is the first time he

has appeared with his sword while interviewing the Magi.

4. Poitiers, Moissac and Vienne: Herod with a Devil

The Saint Michael portal on the north side of the Cathedral of Saint Peter at Poitiers<sup>17</sup> is carved with numerous scenes from the Infancy of Christ. The basic scenes of this cycle always include the Annunciation to the Virgin, the Visitation, Nativity, Adoration of the Magi and the Flight into Egypt; however, if the artist had a large field to cover, he included relevant episodes such as the Annunciation to the Shepherds, the Journey of the Magi, their interview with Herod, their angelic Warning and the Massacre of the Innocents. These scenes all have canonical or apocryphal sources, but Maillard stresses that at Poitiers, there are on the capitals on the Saint Michael portal 'd'autres détails, qui n'ont point pour origine les légendes écrites et les légendes orales et qui, simplement imaginés par les artistes du moyen âge, se transmirent dans les ateliers.'<sup>18</sup> One must carefully and thoroughly explore earlier art before making statements about the originality of medieval artists, but in the case of Poitiers, such a statement seems to be justified, at least in relation to the representations of Herod. He appears three times on the capitals on the left side of the Saint Michael portal, which present the story of the Magi and the shepherds, and on the corbels of those capitals where the Massacre and the Flight are depicted. Herod is first seen consulting his scribes or counsellors. Maillard describes the scene: 'Sur l'angle saillant qui est au centre du tailloir, on voit Hérode, assis sur un trône, tourné vers le droite; il se penche pour écouter attentivement l'explication de la prophétie, relative à la venue du Messie, qui lui est faite par deux hommes assis sur un banc et tenant des livres; tandis qu'il écoute, un démon, vêtu d'une cote courte, lui insuffle ses

mauvais conseils au moyen d'une trompe.'<sup>19</sup> Herod leaning over to hear the scribes is much like the scene in Notre Dame, Paris. But the last detail, describing the devil, dressed in a short coat, who whispers bad advice in Herod's ear through a little trumpet, is a new and exciting element in this representation. This is the first appearance of such a devil and it possibly reflects a new role for the devil in twelfth-century thought.

To the left of this scene Herod appears again with the Magi, and again there is a devil with him. 'A gauche de cette scène centrale Hérode, placé à un angle saillant du tailloir, est encore accosté d'un démon, ayant des cornes au front et de grande ailes, qui pose un pied sur le trône et, ainsi juché, souffle ses conseils. Les trois mages, debout, couronnés, vêtus de longues robes, disent à Hérode la date à laquelle l'étoile leur est apparue. Une porte est figurée derrière le dernier mage, et, de l'autre cote de cette porte, nous voyons les trois chevaux des mages, attachés à un arbre, tandis que deux serviteurs, très mutilés, semblent occupés à les panser, et qu'un troisième, debout auprès de la porte du palais d'Hérode, les regarde.'<sup>20</sup> Maillard cites this last detail, of the Magi's servants and horses, as an example of 'une habitude d'atelier,' an original touch of the medieval artists which often recurs in the literature and art of the period. However, the winged, horned devil who perches on Herod's throne and gives him bad advice while he talks with the Magi is also a twelfth-century imaginative innovation which makes the iconography of Herod the Great more dramatic and vivid.

The third representation of Herod, on the extreme left of the corbel, as he watches the Massacre, again includes a devil. Herod is seated on his throne, ordering the Massacre while another winged devil whispers in his ear.<sup>21</sup> Herod's hands are missing but he is crowned, and

addresses a soldier before him. The Massacre of the Innocents takes place before Herod and, although it is badly mutilated, the composition of the scene can be distinguished: one soldier receives Herod's orders and another kills the children in the presence of their mothers. One woman, seated on the ground, holds to her breast a child which a soldier tries to snatch from her. The soldiers are not in coats of mail but have short coats instead.<sup>22</sup> It was probably a lively and dramatic scene,<sup>23</sup> such as those in the Greek Gospel books (see Chapter 5).

A demon appears with Herod three times in the sculptural reliefs at Poitiers and this is most unusual numerically as well as iconographically. But this is not the first instance in French sculpture of Herod being associated with a demon. The earliest representation seems to be on a capital in the cloisters of Moissac, dating from the end of the eleventh century (*fig. 58*). In the east gallery of the cloister, the capital of column thirty-seven<sup>24</sup> has four scenes, two of which relate to Herod. On the west face there is a figure of Herod enthroned in Jerusalem being counselled by devils as he meets the Magi. One devil sits on his shoulder, the other remains at his feet and is shown in the form of a dog. The south face of this same capital shows Herod alone giving orders to a soldier with a sword, and mothers weeping over children whom soldiers snatch away and kill. No devils are present at this Massacre scene. The devils with Herod in his interview with the Magi at Moissac do not whisper with a horn into his ear; instead one sits on his shoulder and the other takes the form of an animal under his feet. Herod is thus associated not only with demons but also with animals. This is further extended in manuscript illuminations of the thirteenth century when he is shown sitting on faldstools with grotesque animal heads (see Chapter 8).

Another example of Herod being advised by a devil can be seen in the sculpture of Notre Dame in Etampes, also of the twelfth century. This time the devil appears with Herod when he is giving the order for the Massacre, rather than during his interview with the Magi. Both episodes are suitable for such representation. During this interview, Herod urges the Magi to report the birthplace to him so that he too may worship the new king, when in fact he is intending to go and murder the Child. The demon's appearance here is particularly apt as a symbol of Herod's hypocrisy as well as his evil, murderous intentions. But demons are equally suitable in representations like this at Etampes, in scenes of Herod's ordering the Massacre of all the innocent children in Bethlehem whom he sacrifices in order to find the one he fears.

A last example of Herod depicted with a devil in twelfth-century French sculpture comes from the Cathedral at Vienne near the end of the century.<sup>25</sup> The scene appears in a relief on the north side of the Cathedral of Saint Maurice and is somewhat mutilated but recognizable as the three Magi before Herod (*fig. 59*). Herod (the head is destroyed) is seated on a bench with lion heads; his feet are placed on two basilisks, and he is flanked by the heads of two devils as he sits under an architectural canopy. This clear association with demons and cruel, ugly animals is very pronounced. Herod is no longer merely the king who happened to be reigning when Christ was born, as he was represented in earlier art (see Chapters 3 and 5). He is now a king who is definitely associated with evil forces and murderous intents. This is the role which later artists and writers continued to portray, to the exclusion of the earlier, more complimentary, portraits.

Twelfth-century sculpture continued the traditional iconography of Herod and the Magi, and Herod and the Massacre; it also included

Herod's interview with the scribes. This is not new or original in the art of this time. But the portrayal of Herod as a threatening figure with his sword out ready to use, as at Arles, and then as being directly advised by winged ugly demons as at Poitiers and Moissac, is a development which seems to be directly associated with the sculpture of France in the twelfth century.<sup>26</sup>

## B. Frescoes

### 1. Vienne, Saint-Pierre-les-Eglises: Herod and the Apocalypse

As well as the Cathedral of Saint Maurice in Vienne, there is a small church called Saint-Pierre-les-Eglises, which has two tiers of paintings around the wide semicircular choir. These have a primitive folk-like character but they belong to the twelfth century.<sup>27</sup> Otto Demus found himself puzzled, however, by the choice of scenes which are represented here, and especially by the inclusion of Herod next to an Apocalyptic scene. 'The choice of subject is strange; in the bottom tier, from left to right, Herod and the Journey and Adoration of the Magi are followed immediately by apocalyptic scenes: the archangel Michael, the dragon and the "woman which brought forth the man child", and a scene which has not been interpreted.'<sup>28</sup> He stresses that the iconography is archaic. That may be, but there is a good precedent for the juxtaposition of scenes involving Herod, the Adoration of the Magi, the Massacre and the Flight, with representations of the Apocalyptic Woman clothed in the sun who bore a man-child but passed it safely to an angel before the fierce and murderous seven-headed dragon could devour it. The precedent for a juxtaposition of these scenes is in the liturgy itself (see Chapter 4). It should also be noted that by the twelfth century, numerous illustrated manuscripts of Beatus' Commentary on the Apocalypse had been

produced and were circulating not only in Spain but also in France.<sup>29</sup> In some of these manuscripts, New Testament scenes were incorporated, such as the arrival of the Magi to worship the new-born king, and also an apocryphal account of Herod's pursuit of the Child when the Holy Family fled to Egypt.<sup>30</sup> This last scene appears in two manuscripts, in Gerona<sup>31</sup> (*fig. 60*) and Turin.<sup>32</sup> Herod's meeting with the Magi and the subsequent Massacre of the Innocents is also included in two thirteenth-century Apocalypse manuscripts which will be discussed in Chapter 8.

## 2. Brinay-sur-Cher, Saint Aignan Church

Another fresco in France from the mid-twelfth century which deals with the Magi and also the Massacre survives. This is painted in two tiers on the walls of the rectangular chancel in Saint Aignan Church in Brinay-sur-Cher in Berry,<sup>33</sup> and consists of a Gospel cycle and also portrayals of individual saints. Unfortunately it is not clear from Demus' description or from his photographs of these frescoes whether or not Herod was included in the scheme. However, there seems to have been a Magi cycle and so it is quite likely that Herod was represented as he interviewed the Magi. The upper tier of the north wall has scenes of the Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, Annunciation to the Shepherds and the Journey of the Magi to Bethlehem; the lower tier is somewhat damaged and Demus' only description is that it continued with the story of the Magi up to their return journey.<sup>34</sup> There are five scenes in the upper tier, and so presumably there would be as many in the lower one. The Adoration would probably be central, but it is quite likely that there was a portrayal of the Magi meeting Herod before they worshipped the Christ-Child.<sup>35</sup> On the east wall of this church there are four related scenes: the Massacre of the Innocents, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple,

Joseph's Dream and the Flight into Egypt.<sup>36</sup> In Demus' reproduction of the Massacre, Herod is not present (*fig. 61*). The scene consists of one soldier who holds a child by the hair and prepares to cut off its head with his sword. Two more beheaded children lie on the ground. There are two mothers present, one of whom sits mourning in the usual iconography of the scene. But this mother is suckling her child - a most unusual detail in this context. Only one other example, at Zillis, is known (see below). It is immediately reminiscent of scenes of the Virgin suckling the Child. At the same time it injects an extra note of pathos into this cruel scene. However, as in twelfth-century art generally, the scene is not treated pathetically, and is not calculated to 'move' the viewers. The subject matter only, and not the style, is calculated to 'move' the people who viewed these frescoes.

### 3. Angers, Saint Aubin

In the fresco showing the return of the Magi in Saint Aignan Church discussed above,<sup>37</sup> the Magi wear crowns which are large, thick and quite prominent. The same type of crowns are worn by the Magi and Herod in the frescoes of Saint Aubin showing a whole Magi cycle.<sup>38</sup> These frescoes were in the arcade of the former cloister of the Abbey of Saint Aubin. The scene represented is the meeting of Herod with the Magi, who once again carry staffs. They are all crowned with 'volumineuses couronnes'.<sup>39</sup> Crowns in the twelfth century tended to be extremely large, diminishing in size both before and after that time and so, on this basis, Vezin dates these frescoes to the second half of the twelfth century.<sup>40</sup> In these Saint Aubin frescoes, Herod is seated on his throne and carries a sceptre in his left hand. The Three Magi stand before him, balanced by three counsellors behind him.<sup>41</sup> This is a standard representation. The



scene beside this is the Adoration of the Magi; it takes place under a separate arcade, but dividing this scene from Herod is a tower which is supposed to represent the city of Jerusalem. Vezin takes this as evidence that the frescoes were influenced by manuscripts which often showed representations of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. This may be true - even the tiny illumination in the Drogo Sacramentary (c.850), showed the gates of the two cities (*fig. 29*), but this tradition was not restricted to manuscripts. The Lorsch Gospel Covers are a good example of this same iconography in ivory (*fig. 28*). In the frescoes Herod is seated on a faldstool with animal legs. Both he and his soldiers hold swords in their right hands; Herod gestures with his left hand to the soldier in front of him whose hair seems to stand on end;<sup>42</sup> this same phenomenon can be seen in the Greek Gospel Books (see Chapter 5).

In these frescoes Herod once again is moving out of the traditional role of dignified king, and moving towards that of a menacing tyrant. He wields a sword and sits on an animal-like throne. The frescoes, like the sculpture of twelfth-century France, were gradually introducing imaginative, dramatic details into the more traditional representations of Herod the Great.

### C. Stained Glass

Representations of Herod the Great in twelfth-century stained glass remained much more standard and traditional than those in frescoes and sculpture. No devils or swords were introduced until the thirteenth century.<sup>43</sup> However, the interview with his scribes was included in windows showing Herod's meeting with the Magi in the earliest windows - a detail which was dropped in later centuries.

## 1. Saint Denis

Contained in the central chapel of the ambulatory of the Abbey Church of St. Denis was a stained glass window depicting the Infancy of Christ. Abbot Suger may have determined the iconographic programme for this window, but his memoirs on the administration of the Abbey and consecration of the Abbey Church<sup>44</sup> are not complete enough to supply proof or give details of separate panels. He mentioned specifically only three windows, those containing the Tree of Jesse, the Life of Moses and one other, 'altera vitrea de materialibus ad immaterialia excitans', possibly the Infancy window. Louis Grodecki claims that fragments from all three of the windows mentioned by Suger survive.<sup>45</sup> One of these fragments is a panel showing a crowned king sitting on a throne, holding a floriate sceptre in his left hand, with his right hand raised in a gesture of greeting or conversation as he turns slightly to the left (*fig. 62*). A slightly mutilated inscription survives across the lower part of this panel, which is shaped like the lower half of a round medallion, identifying the king as [HE] RODES. Beside Herod, on the right of the panel, two men sit on a bench, their heads inclined towards each other as they pore over an inscribed book. These are obviously the scribes whom Herod asks to search the prophetic books for information about the birth of Christ. Grodecki points out that the condition of this glass is excellent and that it is all original except for a few pieces in the drapery of the scribe on the right.<sup>46</sup> However, this panel showing Herod and the scribes was not meant to be complete in itself, an independent representation of this first interview of Herod with his counsellors: Herod is turned away from the seated figures and has his hand raised as if he were talking to someone in front of him. This, of course, should be the Three Magi.

This very panel of the Three Magi before Herod was discovered in a house in Paris in 1957 (*fig. 63*)<sup>47</sup> the kings walk towards the right, the first raising his hand in a gesture of conversation, matching Herod's gesture. There is an inscription but it is mutilated, only the beginning remaining: [MA] GI VENIUNT. This small rectangular medallion would have been placed beside the main medallion of Herod in the Infancy window originally, as can be seen by Grodecki's plan of the window (*fig. 64*). Herod is thus given great prominence in this window showing the Infancy of Christ, forming one of only seven scenes that were represented in the central medallions. Herod and his counsellors appear in the central medallion, rather than the three Magi who have come to worship Christ.

## 2. Chartres

The St. Denis scene of the Magi before Herod may have been the direct source<sup>48</sup> for the same scene in the stained glass window on the Infancy of Christ at the west end of Chartres.<sup>49</sup> Chartres, like St. Denis, has two panels for this scene: in one panel the three Magi approach, one behind the other, the first one with his hand raised in a gesture (*fig. 66*), and in the second panel (*fig. 65*) Herod is seated, crowned and holding a sceptre, and gesturing towards the Magi while two men sit behind him, on a bench, heads inclined towards each other as they pore over an open book.<sup>50</sup> The iconographic scheme is the same for both, although in Chartres, the Magi approach from the right side instead of from the left as they do in St. Denis. The posture of the Chartres kings is slightly odd. The first one is traditional, with his hand raised in the standard gesture. The other two look rather unconventional; the third one, in fact, looks as if he were about to turn and walk away while Herod is still talking to them. This is apparently the result of much restoration done

at the end of the nineteenth century, and earlier, on the whole panel.<sup>51</sup>

Herod appears again in the Chartres window, five panels from the bottom, on the left, in a square panel (*fig. 67*). Here he is enthroned again in very much the pose of the lower panel, that of an emperor-portrait, although he is ordering the Massacre of the Innocents. He reaches across his body with his right hand and points sternly to two men before him: one seems responsible for receiving the order for the Massacre and he has a worried expression on his face as he raises one hand to his head; he is not wearing armour but he does have a long sword; behind him stands a soldier in chain mail with his naked sword over his shoulder, his ugly face revealing his brutality. Following Herod's Order, in the window, there are two panels showing the Massacre, which is the sword-type. In one panel there is a woman kneeling on the ground, bent over a child so that she almost covers it (*fig. 68*). She could be trying to hide her child, but given the iconographic background of these scenes, it is more likely that she is grieving over the child (its eyes are closed which suggests it is dead) and so she could be one of the mourning mothers or even a representation of the inconsolable Rachel.<sup>52</sup>

### 3. Chalons-sur-Marne

Herod appears in another panel of twelfth-century stained glass from the Etienne window in the Cathedral at Chalons-sur-Marne, now preserved in the Treasury of the Cathedral (The Museum of French Monuments) where it was installed in 1957. This was also a narrative window of the Infancy of Christ<sup>53</sup> and the relevant scene is Herod meeting the Magi. Herod is presented as a king, crowned and enthroned, with his right hand raised toward the Three Magi standing before him. One of the Magi, instead of gesturing to Herod, as was usual in the iconography of this

scene, is shown holding a scroll with an inscription from Matt.2:2, 'Ubi est qui natus est rex Iudaeorum? vidimus enim stellam eius in oriente, et venimus adorare eum.' The only other Magus shown in art with a scroll before this is the unusual portrayal on the columns of the St. Mark's ciborium (fifth century) in Venice (*fig. 15*); there the Magi are not before Herod but are on their way to Bethlehem. One Magus consults a sphere, or astrolabe, one points to the star above and one consults a scroll. In the twelfth-century Winchester Psalter, however, one of the Magi also shows a scroll to Herod. In the Magi scene in the glass of Chalons-sur-Marne, a star has been placed in the centre of the composition and the Magi gesture towards it. Attention is directed to the star rather than to Herod. This is emphasized by the presentation of the Magi as astrologers rather than kings; they wear skull caps rather than the more typical twelfth-century crowns.<sup>54</sup> The iconography of this panel presents several problems. The scroll immediately suggests the role of the scribes who were asked by Herod to search the prophecies; perhaps the figures of the scribes have been omitted and only their prophetic scroll remains. However, the scroll is inscribed not with the prophecy from Micah that Christ will be born in Bethlehem, but with the Magi's question about the birthplace.<sup>55</sup> According to the Gospel of Matthew the Magi do ask the question inscribed on their scroll, but they do not ask it of Herod. He summons them and questions them about the time of the star's appearance only. Another iconographic problem lies in the appearance of the star. According to popular belief in the Middle Ages (which is implicitly supported by the Gospel of Matthew and the Protevangelium), the star stopped shining when the Magi were in Herod's presence in Jerusalem and only started to shine again when they left his

city. It is therefore unusual to have the Magi point to the star in Herod's presence. However, from this time on, the star, because of its great importance in the Feast of Epiphany, gradually became a regular feature of any representation involving the Magi. This example in the glass of Chalons-sur-Marne is not unique in the twelfth century; the star occurs again in the *Hortus Deliciarum* in an even more unusual depiction where Herod himself points to it (see *fig. 90*).

French art that includes Herod the Great in its decorative scheme includes sculpture, frescoes and stained glass. Generally speaking, traditional iconography is represented but some new imaginative touches, such as a sword for Herod and devils to advise him, are introduced. In stained glass, some inconsistencies appear in relation to the star shining in the presence of Herod. These inconsistencies soon spread to England.

## II. England

The twelfth century in England saw the production of many outstanding manuscripts. These were produced at several centres in England throughout the century. Many of the manuscripts contain interesting representations of Herod the Great and will be dealt with shortly. Unfortunately no relevant frescoes survive and only a few examples can be found in stained glass and sculpture, but these deserve mention.

### A. Stained Glass: Canterbury

The earliest extant English stained glass which includes Herod in its design is the second window in the north choir aisle of Canterbury Cathedral.<sup>56</sup> This window has been restored but it is still arranged for the most part in typological order, so that New Testament events, mainly from the Infancy cycle, are presented in the central medallions, and Old

Testament types for these events are presented at either side of the main medallions. 'This window formed one of the most exhaustive and complete sets of types and antitypes which were to be found in any English church.'<sup>57</sup> At the same time, a fairly complete Magi cycle is included, with appropriate types. At the top of the window, in the centre, the Three Magi appear on horseback (*fig. 69*) and they all gesture to, and look up at, a star at the top of the panel as they travel on rapidly towards Jerusalem.<sup>58</sup> On the left of this panel is Isaiah at the gate of Jerusalem and on the right is Balaam. The second panel from the top, in the centre again, shows the Magi before Herod (*fig. 70*). Herod, identified by the inscription HERODES, is crowned and seated on a cushioned bench but he looks quite pensive; his left hand is raised to his chin and he appears to be stroking his beard as he listens to the accounts of the people around him.<sup>59</sup> Behind him stands a single figure wearing a pointed cap; this seems to be a counsellor rather than a scribe as he has no book or scroll. Before Herod stand the three crowned Magi, inscribed TRES MAGI, and over their heads, above an arc of heaven, is the star once again, towards which two of them gesture. The same discrepancy about the star appears at Chalons-sur-Marne. The scenes chosen to elucidate this central medallion are, on the right, Christ converting the heathen<sup>60</sup> (the Magi, of course, represented the first pagans who came to worship Christ and be converted), and on the left, Moses and his people leaving Pharaoh and Egypt (this anticipates Herod's ordering of the Massacre of the Innocents, which is not represented in this window, and the safe escape of Christ through the Flight into Egypt). Pharaoh is seated in much the same way as Herod, under a canopy on the right, holding a sceptre in his left hand and looking towards his attendant behind him.<sup>61</sup>

The iconography of this episode in Canterbury, aside from the appearance of the star and Herod's pensive look, is conventional. The scene has been reduced, however, to centre on Herod and the Magi and so the scribes poring over their books, such an enlivening influence in French sculpture and glass, have already disappeared. The man standing behind Herod in the Canterbury glass is little more than an attendant.

## B. Manuscripts

### 1. Pre-Twelfth-Century Manuscripts

Before considering the twelfth-century manuscripts produced in England in such great abundance and richness, it is interesting to consider three manuscripts produced in the eleventh century. Two are Sacramentaries; one was produced in Normandy and the other is Anglo-Saxon. The third manuscript is a Psalter, produced at Bury St. Edmunds. These manuscripts all deal with events in which Herod is involved, but in different ways.

#### a) Sacramentary from Mont St. Michel, Normandy

The eleventh-century Sacramentary now in the Pierpont Morgan Library<sup>62</sup> is a product of Mont St. Michel in Normandy. J. J. G. Alexander points out that 'Normandy stood between the two great centres of manuscript production of the tenth century, Anglo-Saxon England and Ottonian Germany....As the centre of a famous pilgrimage it was able to feel and absorb the different artistic currents of the time. In blending these and making its own experiments the scriptorium was remarkably perceptive and original.'<sup>63</sup> Rather than full-page miniatures, or framed pictures separated from the texts, which formed the popular style of illuminating manuscripts in the twelfth century in England, Norman illuminators developed the inhabited or historiated scroll initial.<sup>64</sup> Most of the initials in the Mont St. Michel Sacramentary are historiated



and thus tend to narrate the events which the various Feasts in the Sacramentary commemorate. In fact, this is the most highly illuminated product of the Mont St. Michel scriptorium of the eleventh century to survive.<sup>65</sup> There is one exception to these narrative initials, however, and that is the initial D which introduces the Feast of the Holy Innocents.<sup>66</sup> In the centre of this initial stands a crowned female figure; in her right hand she holds another crown and in her left hand she has a palm branch. The lower half of the initial, on both sides of this figure, contains three rows of small busts of young men wearing plain tunics and long hair. This initial seems to have nothing to do with the events commemorated during the Feast of the Holy Innocents, but Alexander has given a convincing interpretation.<sup>67</sup> He sees the female figure as an embodiment of the Church holding the crown of everlasting life and the palm of martyrdom, the busts representing the Church's many martyrs. As the liturgy stresses the fact that the Holy Innocents were the first martyrs,<sup>68</sup> this interpretation seems quite acceptable. The uniqueness of this initial leads Alexander to stress how radically different the illustrations for a Sacramentary could be from a Gospel Book, and also to wonder whether or not there was a tradition of initial illumination which placed emphasis on the significance of the Feast it introduced, such as this initial stressing the idea of martyrdom and its rewards, rather than on the narrative events it commemorated.<sup>69</sup>

b) The Sacramentary of Robert of Jumièges

One of the most splendid Anglo-Saxon manuscripts to have survived is the Benedictional of St. Aethelwold, produced about 975-80.<sup>70</sup> It is lavishly decorated with gold and heavy colours and contains forty-nine decorated pages, thirty of which are full-page miniatures. Unfortunately

a few leaves are missing and one of those is the one containing the miniature for the Feast of the Holy Innocents. Epiphany is illustrated, however, with a representation of the Adoration of the Magi on folio 24v. The Magi have large gold crowns, knee-length tunics with chlamys over, and distinctive bandaged stockings, which are common in Saxon figures.<sup>71</sup> The Magi in the Benedictional of St. Aethelwold are impressive, grandiose figures but they are given much greater prominence in a later manuscript, stylistically related to this one, the Sacramentary of Robert of Jumièges, produced in the eleventh century and presented by Robert of Jumièges, while he was bishop of London, to the monastery of Jumièges where he had formerly been abbot.<sup>72</sup> There are fewer full-page miniatures in this manuscript, totalling thirteen scenes or figures enclosed in elaborate Winchester-style borders. And yet two of these pages are devoted to presenting four scenes involving the Magi. Folio 36v (*fig. 71*) shows the first two scenes:<sup>73</sup> the lower part shows the Magi on horseback travelling together towards Bethlehem shown on the right. They do not have crowns here but wear Phrygian caps. In other respects they resemble the Magi of the earlier manuscript, although their feet are shod and they carry long staffs. In the upper part of this leaf the Magi are shown in the presence of Herod. Their hands and feet are now bare and their tunics have lengthened; two of them gesture animatedly to Herod, while the third points behind and upwards towards a star which shines brightly at the top right corner of the page, completely outside the thick architectural frame of this picture. (This is the problematical star that reappears in the Canterbury glass.) Herod is seated on a high round-backed throne like a Carolingian or Ottonian emperor, knees apart, feet together and crossed at the ankles as they rest on a dais. He wears not a crown, but

a Phrygian cap identical to those worn by the Magi during their Journey, a probable Eastern influence in this miniature. He is bearded (the Magi are beardless), holds a sceptre in his left hand and gestures towards the Magi with his right. The whole scene is animated and imaginative. An iconographic problem lies in the interpretation of the four figures, one of whom is tonsured, shown behind the Magi. Are they meant to be servants or retainers of the Magi? Or are they meant to be Herod's scribes or counsellors? The latter would seem to be the correct interpretation in that Scripture makes mention of these men, but they are shown not with Herod, nor even carrying books, but with the Magi, sharing their conversation and gestures. However, they are not shown with the Magi during their Journey to Bethlehem. They cannot be identified with certainty.

The facing folio<sup>74</sup> continues the story of the Magi. At the top the Magi, once more in Phrygian caps and short tunics, present their gifts to the Virgin and Child. Their hands are draped and their feet are bare to show their respectful, worshipping attitude. Below this, the Magi are shown in bed, still wearing their Phrygian caps, and an angel on the right warns them not to return to Herod.

Many Eastern influences can be seen in these illuminations, especially in the draped hands and Phrygian caps. But Otto Pächt stresses even more the Anglo-Saxon element in this manuscript. As an example of a particularly English characteristic, he cites the development of the illumination for Epiphany into a whole Magi cycle of four scenes.<sup>75</sup> This was to be extended still further in the St. Albans Psalter.

c) The Bury St. Edmunds Psalter

'By far the largest series of drawings of the second quarter of the eleventh century is to be found in the great Psalter made in the forties

of the century for the abbey of Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk and now preserved in the Vatican Library<sup>76</sup> in Rome.<sup>77</sup> The Psalter is decorated by a series of line drawings in the margins which illustrate the nearby portions of text. The style is that of Canterbury and the 'Utrecht' style,<sup>78</sup> with lively, elongated dancing figures, 'calligraphic in quality'. Most of the drawings illustrate the text of the Psalms but some New Testament scenes are occasionally introduced. Vignettes from the Massacre appear beside Psalm 78 (*fig. 72*).<sup>79</sup> Herod is not present but several soldiers appear: one is ripping a child in half by pulling its legs apart; another swings a child in the air just before spearing it in the stomach with his lance. Just above the Psalm is a bird and an animal eating a child. On the other side, is a woman labelled RACHEL and a soldier who is about to kill her child with his sword. These scenes are used to illustrate the verses of Psalm 78:1-3:

1. Deus, venerunt gentes in haereditatem tuam;  
Polluerunt templum sanctum tuum  
Posuerunt Ierusalem in pomorum custodiam.
2. Posuerunt morticina servorum tuorum escas volatilibus caeli,  
Carnes sanctorum tuorum bestiis terrae.
3. Effuderunt sanguinem eorum tanquam aquam in circuitu Ierusalem,  
Et non erat qui sepeliret.

The illustrations taken from the killing of the children in the Massacre are apt for this Psalm, and equally exact in expressing the meaning (the bird and beast have been added in a literal interpretation of the Psalm, which complains that such creatures devoured the bodies of those whose blood was shed). The Massacre of the Innocents was obviously a scene with which artists were familiar at this time and which they readily adapted to illustrate Old Testament situations.

These eleventh-century manuscripts show a variety of approaches to the illumination of Herod-related events. The Mont St. Michel initial is conspicuous as the only one in that Sacramentary which does not

illustrate the events of the relevant Feast and so Herod, as well as the Innocents, is conspicuous by his absence. The Sacramentary of Robert of Jumièges, on the other hand, presents colourful, painted full-page miniatures in which Herod is given great importance as the king to whom the Magi make obeisance on their way to Bethlehem. The Bury St. Edmunds Psalter uses line drawings of a New Testament event caused by Herod to illustrate an Old Testament text, extracting only the minor figures and Rachel who was, of course, an Old Testament figure to begin with. The twelfth-century manuscripts are more numerous than the eleventh-century ones, but they may not be so varied in their approach to events which are related to Herod the Great.

## 2. Twelfth-Century Psalters

### a) St. Albans Psalter

Illuminated manuscripts of Psalters were produced from very early times. In the ninth century the Utrecht Psalter initiated a new method of illustrating every Psalm, often quite literally. Then, in the twelfth century, the practice arose of prefacing Psalters with cycles of pictures usually from the life of Christ, but sometimes from Old Testament themes as well. The first extant English manuscript with such a cycle of full-page miniatures (as opposed to tinted drawings) since the early Winchester school is the St. Albans Psalter, which has been dated between 1119 and 1123.<sup>80</sup> It begins with a complete series of calendar pictures and then forty-three full-page miniatures of the life of Christ. Of these, five contain episodes from the Magi cycle, and two have representations of Herod the Great. He first appears on folio 17v (*fig. 73*) with the Magi.<sup>81</sup> He sits on a raised throne under an architectural canopy and gestures to the Magi before him. He wears neither a crown nor a Phrygian

cap but a pointed cap, much like the ones which came to symbolize 'wicked Jews' in art. He holds neither a sceptre nor a sword, although a small figure behind him obviously has responsibility for his sword. An interesting iconographic detail is the book which Herod has on his knees. He points to it and seems to be discoursing with the Magi who all gesticulate in a lively fashion. A telescoping of two scenes into one has taken place here. The artist, instead of showing Herod's interview with the scribes separately, or including the scribes in Herod's interview with the Magi as was done in French sculpture at Chartres (*fig. 53*) and Notre Dame in Paris (*fig. 56*), and in Ottonian manuscripts such as the Golden Gospels of Echternach (*fig. 34*) has omitted the scribes altogether and transferred their identifying book to Herod. And so Herod the king is consulting the prophecies himself and discussing them with the Magi in a lively conversation.

The meeting of the Magi with Herod is the first of the five Magi scenes in the St. Albans Psalter: they ride on horseback following the star,<sup>82</sup> they present their gifts to the Christ-Child,<sup>83</sup> they are warned by the angel not to return to Herod,<sup>84</sup> and then they ride home, going in the opposite direction from their journey to Bethlehem.<sup>85</sup> As Pächt points out, 'it is tempting to see a connection between this long and careful treatment of the Magi in the St. Albans Psalter and the great popularity enjoyed by this theme in the liturgical drama of the time. There is, however, hardly anything in the English cycle which cannot be explained by a pictorial tradition reaching as far back as the Carolingian period; a time when it is unlikely that such a liturgical drama existed.'<sup>86</sup>

The Magi cycle in the St. Albans Psalter is followed by two miniatures showing the Presentation of Christ in the Temple and the Flight into Egypt.<sup>87</sup> Then there is a dramatic depiction of the Massacre of the

Innocents (*fig. 74*) with Herod presiding.<sup>88</sup> He sits on the left under an elaborate architectural canopy but now he is crowned. His tiny sword-bearer still stands behind him with shield and naked sword which is held at such an angle that it cuts across the wide border of the picture. Herod himself has his left hand gripping the handle of the sword by his side as he gives the order for the Massacre, through a gesture of his right hand, to an officer. This young man is a tall, slender figure who points to the Massacre and who is beginning to walk away from Herod, towards the slaughter; however, he turns back to Herod with a lithe, twisting movement, to hear his instructions. Pächt was convinced that this figure of the young officer was directly influenced by the liturgical drama, *Ordo Rachelis*, in which Herod, feeling enraged and ready to commit suicide on hearing how he has been deceived by the Magi, is placated by an armed attendant who proposes the slaughter of all the male children in Bethlehem. Pächt feels that the artist of the St. Albans Psalter had this armed knight in mind when he 'recast the traditional iconography of the Slaughter of the Innocents',<sup>89</sup> to give this officer some emphasis. Although Professor Pächt did not mention it, there are other examples of this scene. The very first instance of the Massacre in art - the mosaics of the triumphal arch of Santa Maria Maggiore (fifth century) - has an identical figure, who moves towards the mothers and children but looks back to Herod as if in communication with him.<sup>90</sup>

On the right of this illumination the Massacre takes place outdoors (indicated by a stylized tree) on a hill divided by contours into different levels so that various killing incidents can be shown. Struggles take place between the soldiers and the women: at the bottom a soldier pulls a child by the arm from its mother's breast and plunges his sword into its stomach; some of the mothers try to hide their children in their robes but have them snatched away; one bolder woman sitting on the ground

has grabbed the leg of the nearest soldier to her and is sinking her teeth into his knee. Corpses litter the ground and are trampled on by the young officer. The division of this scene into the interior of Herod's palace and the outdoors for the Massacre is very like the Ottonian settings for this scene. But the elongated monumental figures, and details like the mother who dares to bite the soldier, are uniquely English. Characteristically, there is no mother in this scene who could be interpreted as the weeping Rachel - all the mothers are angry or fighting.

The St. Albans Psalter style of elongated figures seen in profile is found in another representation of Herod at the Massacre on an ivory liturgical comb now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.<sup>91</sup> Because the style of the comb is so similar to the St. Albans Psalter, Lasko concludes that 'it must have been carved in the generation that produced the St. Albans Psalter, and it is likely therefore to date from the 1120s'.<sup>92</sup> The comb (*fig. 75*) is crowded with scenes from the Infancy on one side, and the Passion on the other side. On the first side, the right half has two scenes concerning the Magi carved across the centre of the comb - the Adoration and their Departure. The Annunciation to the Shepherds is fitted into the two corners. The other side is completely covered by scenes from the Massacre - soldiers with huge swords snatch children from fighting mothers while other mothers try to hide their babies. At the top in the corner Herod presides with a floriated sceptre and a huge hand raised in blessing. He sits regally, as an emperor.

#### b) The Winchester Psalter

The St. Albans Psalter was one of the most influential manuscripts produced in England in the twelfth century.<sup>93</sup> Thirty years after the painting of this Psalter, Winchester made a great contribution to the field



of Psalter cycles. This was the Winchester Psalter,<sup>94</sup> with the text in Latin and French and a prefatory cycle of thirty-eight full-page miniatures, divided into two or three registers on each page, surrounded by inscriptions in Anglo-Norman French.<sup>95</sup> This manuscript is seen to be indebted not only to the Winchester tradition but also to Pembroke 120.<sup>96</sup> It has been damaged by fire and also by having the blue background scraped away, but it still conveys great liveliness, especially in its recurrent grotesquely evil figures, some of the most impressive in the whole of English art.<sup>97</sup> Herod appears twice in the Winchester Psalter and both pictures have interesting iconographic details. The first scene (*fig. 76*) is the meeting of the Magi with Herod.<sup>98</sup> The Magi stand on the left in fairly traditional poses: they are crowned, one points upwards and the others gesture to Herod, although the first Magus extends to Herod his right hand which is covered by an exceedingly long sleeve, which looks very like a scroll. Above the Magi is the inscription ICI VIENENT LI TREI REI A HERODE. Herod sits on the right in the doorway of a building. He is crowned but in his hands he holds an unusual combination of objects: his right hand holds a naked sword across his lap and with his left hand he unrolls a scroll which is inscribed ITE ET INTERROGATE DILIGENTER DE PUERO (Matt.2:8).<sup>99</sup> This scroll is not a replacement for the scribe's book because the inscription is not the prophecy; it is instead an indication of Herod's precise speech to the Magi, much as prophets are often represented holding scrolls inscribed with their own prophecies. Artistically, this scroll balances the Magi's sleeve (or vice versa).

Three Magi scenes follow this miniature (their Journey to Bethlehem, the Adoration and the Warning by the Angel)<sup>100</sup> and then Joseph's Dream and the Flight into Egypt are represented. Under the Flight is the Massacre of the Innocents (*fig. 77*) contained under two arches, one for Herod and

one for the Massacre, on which is inscribed ICI FAIT HERODE OCIRRE LES INNOCENS. Herod sits on a cushioned throne on the left holding his naked sword point up with his left hand, while pointing with a crooked finger at the Massacre in front of him. His face is painted very dark. Behind him stands a soldier in chain mail with a lance; in front of him stands another, similarly dressed, stabbing a child he holds by the arm as he turns back to hear Herod's orders, much like the St. Albans officer. But this figure is eclipsed by a gigantic grotesque negroid monster which is biting into the body of a child he has already impaled with his sword. This astonishing creature 'seems to be a particularly English contribution to the scene'.<sup>101</sup> He is the supreme expression of all the evil of the Massacre and of Herod who ordered it. It was not beyond the capabilities or the imagination of the artist of this manuscript to indicate the evil of a tyrant by drawing a nasty little devil at his ear; indeed, this is how Pilate is represented at the Flagellation,<sup>102</sup> and the devils in the Temptation and Last Judgment scenes are horrific. But in the Massacre scene all the savagery is concentrated in the immense, horrible child-eating monster in the very centre of the picture. On the right, three mothers look on, rather gracefully; the ground is strewn with corpses but the eye returns to the central figure. Other scenes in this manuscript include some grotesque figures, especially evil characters such as the smiters in the Flagellation and the soldiers in the Betrayal, but this child-eating monster in the Massacre is particularly horrendous and quite without precedent, even among the monsters of the late Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, *Marvels of the East*.<sup>103</sup>

c) Emmanuel College MS 252<sup>2</sup>

The first extant English manuscript in which the evil of Herod is represented by a little devil whispering in his ear is contained in

Emmanuel College MS 252.<sup>2</sup> This is a series of illuminations of scenes from the life of Christ, two on a page, which must have been the preliminary leaves of a fine Psalter, and are now bound in at the end of an entirely different manuscript.<sup>104</sup> The pictures are outline drawings enclosed in frames painted green, drawn on plain backgrounds with little use of gold, the main colours of the outline drawings being red and green. There is a long series of Infancy scenes including a Magi cycle, common to so many English manuscripts of this date. A rather charming picture shows the Journey of the Magi (*fig. 78*) in which the Three Kings on horseback with crowns and sceptres all face in different directions - one points right, one points left and one is represented full-face, an indication perhaps that twelfth-century artists were getting bolder and more experimental in their handling of traditional subjects (see Chapter 8 for discussion of Magi's horses). Below this scene the Magi meet a rather unusual Herod (*fig. 79*). He sits on the left on a cushioned bench facing the Magi but has one leg drawn up so that his foot actually rests on the bench. He has one hand hooked into the neck of his garment in a rather peculiar way,<sup>105</sup> and the other raised in a dramatic gesture to the Magi. He is not armed, but sitting on the floor in front of him, facing him, is his scowling sword-bearer who holds a very prominent, naked sword, hilt upwards, balanced on his knee. The three kings stand behind this sword-bearer on the right, the foremost gesturing as if in conversation with Herod. The third king has his hand hooked into his garment as Herod has, but he looks as if he is about to turn away.

After representations of the Adoration of the Magi and their Warning, the Flight is shown and below that the Massacre (*fig. 80*). Herod is present at the Massacre, seated at the right, and standing on the back of his neck, squeezed into the corner, is a little devil. M. R. James calls it an imp

and perhaps that is a better designation for this creature as it is hardly noticeable. Nevertheless, it is important for being the first example in English art of such a devil shown with Herod in the Massacre scene. Herod sits with his right leg defiantly crossed over his left, pointing fiercely at a child skewered on a spear. The Massacre is carried out by two soldiers in chain mail with helmets which have nose-pieces. Each soldier pulls a child from its mother and kills it, one with a sword and one with a spear. Herod urges them on.<sup>106</sup>

d) Northern Psalters: The Copenhagen Psalter and Bodleian Library Gough Liturg. 2

Of the three or four twelfth-century Psalters of northern provenance,<sup>107</sup> two include scenes with Herod. In all English manuscripts, short Magi cycles are incorporated into the Infancy cycles and so a representation of the Magi before Herod becomes almost standard. In those manuscripts which include the Massacre of the Innocents it is more likely than not that Herod will appear also, usually ordering or pointing to the killing of the children. In later centuries he is quite often omitted from this scene. 'These northern Psalters with their large cycles of full-page prefatory miniatures, belong ultimately to the tradition of the St. Albans Psalter with which they share a similar selection of scenes, but the compositions differ in detail. Of the twelfth-century English cycles there are more links with the Winchester Psalter.'<sup>108</sup> The Psalter in Copenhagen,<sup>109</sup> produced about 1170, has sixteen full-page miniatures from the life of Christ preceding the text, many on burnished gold grounds divided by arches and surmounted by architectural buildings. The Magi before Herod<sup>110</sup> has fairly standard iconography (*fig. 81*). Herod, crowned, sits on the left with a floriated sceptre in one hand, the other raised in a gesture to the Magi. His feet are crossed at the ankles and rest on a

dais, just as in the earlier Winchester manuscript, the Sacramentary of Robert of Jumièges. The three crowned Magi stand before him. There is an odd detail in this Copenhagen illustration however: the third Magus is turned slightly away from Herod as if to leave, and he has his hand on the shoulder of the first Magus. The one in the middle has his eyes turned to the third Magus, almost as if they are conspiring to get away. This is not the usual attitude of the Magi; it may be a deliberate attempt by the artist to show that this interview is not entirely honest on Herod's part and that the Magi already have some presentiment of evil.

This manuscript also has a representation of the Massacre of the Innocents but as the iconography of the scenes which the Copenhagen Psalter has in common with Gough Liburg. 2 is said to be identical,<sup>111</sup> and the Massacre is one of these scenes, it will be discussed under the latter manuscript illuminations.

Gough Liturg. 2 in the Bodleian Library is a later northern Psalter, executed about 1200.<sup>112</sup> It has a longer cycle, twenty-two pictures, of prefatory scenes but the Life of Christ cycle is closely dependent on the Copenhagen Psalter; in fact, they have thirteen scenes in common and these are all but identical in composition.<sup>113</sup> The Magi before Herod and the Massacre of the Innocents are both among those common scenes. In the first scene (*fig. 82*),<sup>114</sup> inscribed TRES MAGI VENIUNT AD HERODEM, Herod holds a sword rather than a foliated sceptre, and he has long white hair and a beard. Technically speaking, Herod should be represented as an old man; according to Josephus, he was about seventy when he died. The Magi do not reflect the uneasiness of the Copenhagen Magi but give their rapt attention to Herod. One bears a sceptre.

The Massacre scene takes place with Herod present,<sup>115</sup> under two arches with a gold background, labelled HERODES FACIT OCCIDI

INNOCENTES (*fig. 83*). Herod is painted as a very large figure as he sits on the left, crowned and with one hand gesturing to the soldiers while the other holds his sword point up. There are three soldiers, all in chain mail and helmets with nose-guards like the ones in the Emmanuel College manuscript; they face away from Herod but all look back at him. One has a child impaled half way up his sword and he holds it up in the air near Herod, who glances up at it warily; a soldier on the right has only a child's grotesque head on the end of his sword; another plunges his sword downwards piercing a child and pulling it from its mother who sits on the ground, painted as a tiny figure, with her hair streaming down over her shoulders as an expression of her grief. But she is very small and insignificant. All attention in this miniature is focused on Herod and his soldiers and the actual killing of the children has become more dramatic and specific.

e) Brit. Lib. Add. MS 37472, and Bib. Nat. MS lat. 8846

The four leaves of an English Psalter<sup>116</sup> which are now preserved in three different libraries in New York and London,<sup>117</sup> were produced in Canterbury around 1140.<sup>118</sup> They are all divided into small compartments and painted on both sides with scenes from both the Old and the New Testaments; the Old Testament scenes are fragmentary and incomplete but the Gospels are represented with one hundred and fifty scenes, by far the largest New Testament cycle produced in England in the twelfth century. Scenes from the Infancy are represented on the leaf in the British Library.<sup>119</sup> On the recto of this leaf there are twelve scenes<sup>120</sup> which cover the events between the Annunciation to the Shepherds and the Death of Herod (*fig. 84*). Herod the Great makes no less than four appearances on this single leaf, an unprecedented number of representations in such a short space. He

appears twice within the Magi cycle which begins, at picture two,<sup>121</sup> with the Kings, all crowned and mounted, pointing up to a large star in the sky, one coming from the left and two from the right. In the next scene they appear before Herod who sits under an arch listening to the Kings as one points up to the sky and the other two point to Herod. They are painted against a plain blue background and the whole composition is quite sparse and simple.

Picture four has Herod seated in a similar position under an arch but he is now entertaining a large group of Jews who appear before him wearing their traditional caps. They seem to be discussing a long scroll which is held by Herod and the foremost Jew. This scroll must be the prophecy of Micah which the chief priests and scribes read to Herod. Behind them, in this rather crowded scene, stand the three crowned Magi, listening to what is being said.

Herod is not seen for the duration of the Magi cycle<sup>122</sup> nor in the events surrounding the Presentation in the Temple<sup>123</sup> and the Flight into Egypt,<sup>124</sup> but he is present at the Massacre in picture eleven. He sits on the left, on a cushioned wooden throne and, although he is crowned, he carries neither a sceptre nor a sword. He merely points to the scene before him which is suddenly divided, invisibly, into two planes, perhaps to show more incidents of the Massacre. This is the technique in the St. Albans Psalter, which must have been known to this artist, but in that instance the different levels of a hill were indicated by curving lines whereas this leaf has nothing to indicate the background at all. On the upper level two soldiers hold and stab a child, while one of the soldiers dangles another child by the leg almost in front of Herod's nose. The lower level shows a third soldier pulling a child from its mother and

running it through with his sword. There is no 'weeping Rachel' present.

The great iconographical innovation of this leaf is in the last picture showing the Death of Herod. He lies in bed with a coverlet over him, head to the left. With his right hand he stabs himself in the chest (or throat). His soul issues from his mouth and is seized by a demon above his head. Behind the bed are two figures: one carries a sword upright and seems to be an attendant; the other offers to Herod a round object. This is the apple which Herod asked for in order to get the peeling knife which he used in his attempted suicide, according to Josephus. This is the first appearance of this scene in English manuscripts. The story of Herod's attempted suicide was probably familiar to artists and clerics of the twelfth century through direct contact with the text of Josephus which was found in the library of almost every monastery, or through the orally transmitted stories of the Golden Legend which were drawn together by Jacobus Voragine after this manuscript was produced. The miniature gives an historically inaccurate version of the episode however. According to Josephus, Herod tried to commit suicide by stabbing himself with a fruit knife, but was stopped by his cousin, Achiabus, who happened to be nearby. Herod did not die until five days later. Voragine gives this story in his chapter on the Holy Innocents,<sup>125</sup> but at the very end he adds the version of Remigius, given in *In Originali Super Matthæum*, which said that Herod's suicide attempt was successful. The representation on this Psalter leaf could be following Remigius' version or, more likely, it is the result of telescoping the major related details - suicide and then death - into a single miniature. The suicide and/or death of Herod was illustrated in later English manuscripts, notably the Holkham Bible Picture Book, but Add. MS 37472 is the first known example in English work.<sup>126</sup>



The format, choice of subject and composition of scenes in this leaf seem to have influenced the artist of the cycle of miniatures that preface the Psalter now in the Bibliothèque Nationale.<sup>127</sup> This was the last Psalter to be painted in the Utrecht tradition at Canterbury, not long before 1200,<sup>128</sup> and seems to have been directly influenced by the earlier leaf, also produced at Canterbury.<sup>129</sup> The Paris Infancy leaf, folio 4v, is also divided into twelve scenes (*fig. 85*) and only two are different from the British Library leaf.<sup>130</sup> The scenes involving Herod, however, show interesting developments. His interview with the Magi, for example, is much more lively (*fig. 86*). He sits on his wooden throne, not separated from them by an arcade as previously, but in a much more animated pose; he holds a sceptre and his legs are crossed in an exaggerated fashion. He looks older than his predecessor in the British Library leaf and more wily and cunning.

His next scene with the Jews is unique iconographically (*fig. 87*). Herod sits enthroned, crowned and with a sceptre as usual, but he is confronted by a large group of twelve Jews (in caps) and scribes, who are intent on persuading Herod to believe their prophetic books. One scribe, seated in the foreground, holds an open book, the prophecy of Micah; another, seated closest to Herod, is in lively conversation with him and a third holds up an astrolabe for Herod to see. This is an extremely apt but unique choice of object for this scene - apt because it was an instrument used for measuring the altitude of stars (Herod asks the Magi about the star they followed), but unusual in that it appears in only one other manuscript at this time,<sup>131</sup> but not in a Massacre scene. This is the Psalter of Blanche of Castile and Louis. Although the astrolabe was not shown in other manuscripts, nevertheless an interest in astrology in the twelfth century is evident in such manuscripts as the *Hortus Deliciarum* (see below) and the Canterbury Psalter.

The Massacre scene in this manuscript is quite standard (*fig. 88*). Herod sits on a very high, architectural throne, still holding his sceptre and pointing in a determined way at the Massacre. His soldiers are in chain mail with helmets that have nose-pieces (as in other English manuscripts). The style of these figures is much more sophisticated than that in the British Library leaf. They tear children away from their kneeling mothers, who hang on to them desperately, and run their swords through their bodies. Their large, broad swords form dramatic diagonal and horizontal slashes through this representation.

The last miniature, the Death of Herod (*fig. 89*) is almost the same composition as in the earlier manuscript: even the arcades are identical. There must be an extremely close relationship between the two; both were produced in Canterbury. However, in the Paris manuscript, Herod still wears his crown; also the demon snatching his soul has increased considerably in size, sprouted long horns and become quite a lively dramatic figure. One of the men behind Herod's bed holds the same round object in his hands. This is the apple mentioned by Josephus, but it is rather odd that it should be represented with such reverence, the man who holds it having his hands covered with cloth. This convention is a Byzantine characteristic used mostly for the Magi who have their hands covered when they present the Christ-Child with their gifts. As a sign of great reverence, priests are usually shown handling the host with covered hands. The interpretation of Leroquais is to be questioned, however. He believed that the figure behind the bed was a priest offering Herod the sacrament, which he refuses.<sup>132</sup> Iconographically this is improbable because the figure is not tonsured; and as far as I know there is no literary source which introduces this subject at all.<sup>133</sup> Herod was never considered a candidate for heaven or salvation in any patristic or

liturgical writings.

By the end of the twelfth century, English manuscripts had expanded their repertory of representations of Herod the Great to include almost all of the scenes which were ever represented in later art.<sup>134</sup> He is shown receiving the Magi from the East, consulting his chief priests and scribes, ordering the Massacre of the Innocents and trying to commit suicide. In the Paris manuscript he is also represented in the illuminations for Psalm 71, 'Deus, iudicium tuum regi da, et iusticiam tuam filio regis', in an interesting series<sup>135</sup> including the Judgment of Solomon and his Building of the Temple, the Magi coming to find Herod and the Epiphany. The Magi before Herod and then in Adoration of the Christ-Child have undoubtedly been chosen to represent verse 10, 'Reges Tharsis et insulae munera offerent; Reges Arabum et Saba dona adducent', a verse which was quickly associated with the Magi of the New Testament. But in twelfth-century manuscripts Herod was no longer represented solely as the king who happened to be reigning when Christ was born. His reputation as a tyrant is revealed in art through the introduction of his sword, which often replaces his sceptre. His evil nature is emphasized by painting him with a black face (Winchester Psalter) and representing him with a devil close by. His fiery temperament is suggested by his bold cross-legged sitting posture. Although this pose is used at times for such obviously propitious occasions as the coronation of David<sup>136</sup> and the presentation of Alexander the Great as a glorious invincible warrior,<sup>137</sup> the context of the Herods with crossed legs in the Emmanuel College manuscript and the Paris Psalter leave no doubt as to the evil intentions and rash behaviour of the king. Herod the Great in twelfth-century art becomes potentially the evil tyrant that he became proverbially in the later miracle plays.

3. Contemporary Manuscripts: *Hortus Deliciarum*

In Germany at the end of the twelfth century an entirely different sort of manuscript from the Psalter cycles discussed above was produced by Abbess Herrad (d. 1195), for her nuns in Sainte-Odile. This was her *Hortus Deliciarum*, a literary and pictorial encyclopaedia. This manuscript was destroyed in the Franco-Prussian war at the siege of Strasbourg in 1870, but copies of many of the miniatures had been taken and so something of this unique manuscript survives, although many of the original 636 pictures have perished.<sup>138</sup> 'The *Hortus* deals with history from the Creation onwards, spanning the Old and New Testaments and the history of the Church until the final Last Judgment. Dovetailed into these main themes are ancillary ones. So, Babylonian confusion of tongues offers an opportunity for a discourse on pagan theology and philosophy, the exodus from Egypt leads to a discussion of geography, the birth of Christ to a consideration of ancient history up to the time of His death, and the star of the Magi to the subject of astronomy and medical astrology.'<sup>139</sup> This last scene, of the Magi with the star, is presented in an unusual way in the *Hortus Deliciarum* (fig. 90). The miniature has two separate parts in fact.<sup>140</sup> On the right the three crowned Magi in short tunics and cloaks point up to the star in the sky but one of them actually shields his eyes from the brightness of the star. Then on the left the three kings reverently approach Herod, hands covered, (Byzantine style), and Herod himself makes a sweeping gesture with his right hand towards the star.<sup>141</sup> He is presented as a majestic king, sitting crowned and with a sceptre on a cushioned throne with a dais for his feet, but nevertheless all attention is directed away from him towards the star.<sup>142</sup> This is probably the result of Herrad's interest in the succeeding ancillary diversion into astronomy and astrology. Besides, there is an especially great emphasis on the Magi

in the *Hortus Deliciarum*, so that Herod naturally takes second place to them when they appear before him. In the representation of their Warning by the Angel, the angel does not only appear above them, it seizes the shoulder of one of the kings to shake him awake; in the representation of their Return Journey, they do not walk alone; the angel grasps the wrist of the First Magi to show him the way.<sup>143</sup>

Near the end of the *Hortus Deliciarum* there is an illustration of Hell and the tortures of the damned, including, on the left, a man who stabs himself in the stomach with a dagger. Gerard Cames suggests that this figure is Herod committing suicide and traces such a representation in the *Hortus Deliciarum* to the influence of Honorius Augustodunensis on this work.<sup>144</sup> He cites a passage in the *Speculum Ecclesiae* of Honorius which compares Herod to Antichrist and discusses Herod's history of killing his own wife and children, being struck down with an insufferable illness, attempting suicide and then being punished in hell for ever. However, the representation in the *Hortus Deliciarum* is not the scene depicted in the two English manuscripts of Herod in bed stabbing himself with a knife, in an easily identifiable context after the Massacre scene within the Infancy cycle; it is simply an illustration of the tortures of the damned, one of whom is shown stabbing himself. It should be remembered that Ira, one of the Seven Deadly Sins, was traditionally shown stabbing herself as she committed suicide (*fig. 91*);<sup>145</sup> also, in Psalters with illuminated initials, Psalm 52, 'Dixit insipiens', quite often began with an illuminated D that contained a representation of a man committing suicide by stabbing himself.<sup>146</sup> It is impossible, therefore, to be precise about the identification of the man (or woman) who is committing suicide in the *Hortus Deliciarum* illustration of Hell and its torments.

### C. Sculpture and Frescoes

No representations of Herod the Great survive in any of the twelfth-century wall-paintings in England which were examined by E. W. Tristram.<sup>147</sup>

In fact Tristram does not list a single instance of a painting showing the Magi before Herod, although there are examples of the Journey of the Magi, their Adoration and their angelic Warning. There are, however, two representations of the Massacre of the Innocents, both in the south of England. The first one appears at Hardham, Sussex, a small Norman church of the early twelfth century entirely painted in both nave and chancel. In the nave, above the chancel arch, the whole of the upper zone is devoted to a very full series of Infancy scenes which completely enclose the nave except for the west wall.<sup>148</sup> In the upper tier is painted the Adoration of the Magi, the Dream of the Magi, the Flight into Egypt, the Fall of the Idols and the Massacre of the Innocents.<sup>149</sup> The Massacre, however, involves only soldiers and mothers and children; there is no place for Herod in this church, even in an Infancy cycle which is so extensive.

The second representation of the Massacre occurs among the badly damaged wall paintings of the church in Witley, Surrey. Originally two zones of subjects occupied the south wall of the nave but much of the painting has perished. The upper zone appears to have shown the Life of the Virgin and the lower, which is extremely difficult to interpret, may have had scenes from the Infancy of Christ, including the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, and the Massacre of the Innocents.<sup>150</sup> It is not clear whether or not Herod was included in these paintings.

The only example of Herod in sculpture of the twelfth century in England belongs to the north. It is found in one of four surviving voussoirs showing New Testament scenes that belonged to a doorway of St. Mary's Abbey, York.<sup>151</sup> Although mutilated, this voussoir is recognizable as Herod ordering the Massacre of the Innocents (*fig. 92*).

He sits, headless, under one arcade, and two soldiers in chain mail with swords stand under another crenallated arcade listening to his orders, ready to rush away and carry them out. Zarnecki points out that these carvings in stone still bore traces of paint when they were discovered and should be visualized as richly painted and gilded statues.<sup>152</sup> He also compared this carving from St. Mary's Abbey with the miniature of the Massacre in the northern Psalter in the Bodleian Library, Gough liturg. 2. They have a similar composition - Herod under his arcade and the soldiers under another, facing away from him but looking back. It was in manuscripts, however, that the story of Herod the Great was given widest expression in England in the twelfth century.

### III. Scandinavia

#### A. Aalborg, Jutland

Herod the Great appears in some unusual contexts in the art of Scandinavia in the twelfth century. He first appears in a carving in Jutland from the granite Anglo-Norman doorway (1125-1150) in the church of Our Lady in Aalborg. This carving now appears among others around the west door of that church.<sup>153</sup> The sculptures around the doorway depict four beasts - a cock crowing, a centaur, a winged dragon, a lion - and four figurative scenes - Christ in Majesty, the Flight into Egypt, Herod, and the Raising of Lazarus. These are all fragments. The relief showing Herod (*fig. 93*) has the inscription HERODIS; the crowned king sits on his throne with a large sword lying across his knees. He is completely enclosed by an arcade but on one side of this is a pile of severed heads from his child victims, surmounted by a mother who weeps for her dead child. On the right is a figure in a short tunic and a Phrygian cap, with his hands thrown up in the air, below the star of Bethlehem. Anderson writes that he is a grief-

stricken Jew<sup>154</sup> but there is no literary or iconographic precedent for this. The only figures directly associated with the star are the Magi. The Magi are painted in a similar fashion to this figure, with short tunics and Phrygian caps, in the Anglo-Saxon Sacramentary of Robert of Jumièges. The style of the sculpture in Aalborg is said to be 'spiritual and primitive and might well be of Anglo-Saxon inspiration'.<sup>155</sup> If this is so, perhaps the figure is not a grieving Jew but one of the Magi indicating the star to Herod. The scene is not narrative but representative, showing the main characters - Rachel, her children, Herod and the Magi, all from two different Gospel events.

#### B. Skara, Sweden

Herod appears again, in sculpture, in a Romanesque relief in the cathedral at Skara, Sweden, dating from some time before 1150 when the cathedral was consecrated.<sup>156</sup> This relief in sandstone was also originally part of a doorway in the old cathedral but is now placed at the entrance to one of the sacristies, along with other figurative reliefs 'in an expressive Barbarian style',<sup>157</sup> from the same date. The first shows Adam and Eve being expelled from Paradise, the second shows Pope Gregory being inspired by the Holy Spirit (a dove) while his scribe looks on in amazement, and the third shows Herod in a most unusual scene (*fig. 94*). On the right stands a soldier with a sword raised; in the centre Herod sits in a wooden chair facing left, drawing his huge sword from its scabbard; in front of him there is a large cockerel standing on top of a serving bowl. This unusual scene illustrates a legend which was very popular in medieval Sweden: it combined the story of Herod and the Holy Innocents (celebrated liturgically on December 28) with the martyrdom of St. Stephen (whose feast day is December 26). The legend was that St. Stephen came into Herod's dining hall



to tell him about the bright star that was shining in the sky to announce the birth of the Messiah. Herod angrily retorted that this was a lie and that it was no more true than the idea that the roast fowl lying on the table could suddenly return to life and fly away. At that point the cockerel did get up and crow 'Christus natus est' before flying away. The sandstone relief at Skara shows Herod drawing his sword in anger as the cock gets up and crows. This is the first representation of several in Scandinavia which show Herod in the context of this legend.<sup>158</sup>

### C. The Broddetorp Altar

Another representation of Herod and the cockerel occurs in the late twelfth century in the magnificent Altar of Broddetorp, now preserved in the Museum of National Antiquities in Stockholm. This large wooden altar frontal is divided into compartments (around a central Christ in Majesty) much like the Canterbury leaves were,<sup>159</sup> and in each one is carved a scene from the life of Christ, the whole being gilded and quite gorgeous. On the left there are scenes from the Infancy and on the right scenes from the Passion. The Infancy scenes show an interesting variation from the ones usually found in English manuscripts: they are the Annunciation to the Virgin, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, St. Stephen bringing the news to Herod's table, the Massacre of the Innocents and the Flight to Egypt.<sup>160</sup> The scene with Herod (*fig. 95*) retains the armed guard from Skara standing on the right, behind Herod who stands (sits?) behind a table. Stephen kneels beside the table, giving Herod the news. On the table there is a lively cockerel crowing as it sits in a dish. Herod points to it with one hand, still holding his eating knife in the other. Directly behind Stephen a soldier in chain mail is massacring children; he holds one by the hair and the head of another falls to the ground. The artist

has juxtaposed Stephen's bringing the news and the cockerel coming alive with the episode resulting from Herod's subsequent anger, the Massacre of the Innocents.

This legend does not appear in twelfth-century English or French art, but it continued to attract the attention of artists in Scandinavia. In the thirteenth-century roof paintings at Dödsjö, in Småland, Sweden, several scenes are devoted to this same legend involving both Stephen and Herod.<sup>161</sup> The entire wooden roof is painted with thirty roundels representing scenes mainly from the Infancy. The first roundel in the Stephen legend<sup>162</sup> shows a further extension of the story, making Stephen the groom for Herod's horses (*fig. 96*). The scene shows Stephen with two horses outdoors, framed by two trees. Stephen has his hands raised in prayer as he looks up at a large, bright star in the sky. Even one of the horses seems to react to the star while the other continues eating. The next roundel (*fig. 97*) shows Herod's feast. The table is laden with cups and bowls and cutlery and Herod is accompanied by friends as he lifts a cup to his mouth. Stephen appears before the table and right in the centre of the table, standing firmly in a bowl, is a live cockerel, rather faded but clearly discernible. The man on Herod's right shows surprise and Herod himself points to the cockerel. The series continues with the martyrdom of Stephen<sup>163</sup> and then goes on to Herod's ordering of the Massacre,<sup>164</sup> the actual Massacre,<sup>165</sup> and the Flight (which will be discussed later). Tristram, following Hr. Lindblom, makes the misleading statement that the inclusion of the miracle of St. Stephen is especially interesting because 'it almost certainly shows an English provenance of the subjects'.<sup>166</sup> But as evidence he cites only some curious fragments of wall paintings at Shulbred Priory which depict various creatures, one of which is a cock with a scroll issuing from its mouth inscribed 'Christus natus est'. As neither Herod nor Stephen is present in the English

paintings, while Herod and the cock appear as early as 1150 in Skara, it seems likely that the influence was from Scandinavia to England for this particular subject.

Even in the fourteenth century this legend captured the imagination of Danish artists. In Copenhagen, in the National Museum, is preserved an Antependium from Løgumkloster in South Jutland, which is divided, like the Broddetorp Altar, into a series of compartments each showing a scene from the life of Christ. On the left are six scenes: the Annunciation, the Visitation, and the Nativity across the top, and the Annunciation to the Shepherds, Herod and the cockerel, and the Massacre of the Innocents across the bottom (*fig. 98*). This is again a very unusual sequence. In the central panel at the bottom (*fig. 99*), referred to as Herod and the cockerel, a king and queen stand at a table and one points at a large crowing cockerel in a bowl on the table, while another figure, Stephen, stands by the table watching. King Herod is represented dining with his queen when they are interrupted by Stephen.

The earliest occurrence of this legend in England is in a fifteenth-century manuscript.<sup>167</sup> Stephen has graduated from being Herod's groom to being 'a clerk in kyng Herowdes halle'.

1. Seynt Steuene was a clerk in kyng Herowdes halle,  
And seruyd him of bred and cloþ, as euery kyng befalle.
2. Steuyn out of kechone cam, wyth boris hed on honde;  
He saw a sterre was fayr and bryȝt ouer Bedlem stonde.
3. He kyst adoun þe boris hed and went in to þe halle:  
'I forsak þe, kyng Herowdes, and þi werkes alle.
4. I forsak þe, kyng Herowdes, and þi werkes alle;  
þer is a chyld in Bedlem born is beter þan we alle.'
5. 'quat eylyt þe, Steuene? quat is þe befalle?  
Lakkyt þe eyþer mete or drynk in kyng Herowdes halle?'
6. 'Lakit me neyþer mete ne drynk in kyng Herowdes halle;  
Her is a chyld in Bedlem born is beter þan we alle.'
7. 'Quat eylyt þe, Steuyn? art þu wod, or þu gynnyst to brede?  
Lakkyt þe eyþer gold or fe, or ony ryche wede?'

8. 'Lakyt me neyper gold ne fe, ne non ryche wede;  
     *h*er is a chyld in Bedlem born xal helpyn vs at our nede.'
9. '*h*at is al so soþ, Steuyn, al so soþ, iwys,  
     as þis capoun crowe xal þat lyþ here in myn dysh.'
10. *h*at word was not so sone seyde, þat word in þat halle,  
     *h*e capoun crew Cristus natus est! among þe lordes alle.
11. Rysyt vp, myn turmentowres, be to and al be on,  
     And ledyt Steuyn out of þis town, and stonyt hym wyth ston!
12. Tokyn be Steuene, and stonyd hym in the way,  
     And þerfore is his euyn on Crystes owyn day.

Medieval Scandinavian art presented Herod the Great as the tyrant responsible for the Massacre of the Innocents, but it is especially interesting for the representations of the Herod and Stephen legend, including the cockerel that came to life at Herod's feast.

#### IV. Italy

##### A. Frescoes

Only a few examples of Herod exist in twelfth-century Italian art; he was not such a popular subject for art in the south of Europe as he was in the north, where most of the examples discussed above originated. The frescoes in Sant'Angelo in Formis near Capua have already been mentioned in relation to the more Byzantine mosaics in Sicily. Another set of frescoes in the castle chapel at Castel Appiano near Bolzano, include a representation of the visit by the Magi to Herod's palace (*fig. 100*). This is part of an ambitious programme of frescoes in the chapel which covers all the walls and is devoted almost entirely to the life of Christ.<sup>168</sup> The Annunciation is represented in the upper tier of the south wall and the series continues around the chapel: the west wall has the Adoration of the Magi and their Journey; the north wall shows their audience with Herod, their Dream and Return home, and the Massacre of the Innocents. For his interview with the Magi, Herod appears seated on a faldstool with animal heads in these paintings; he is accompanied by a guard who stands behind him and holds

his sword, point up. The Magi stand in front of him and gesture to him but Herod, instead of gesturing towards them, points to himself with his own left hand. He is a tall, slender, elegant figure, as they all are, but he sits with his legs crossed, much as he does in some of the English miniatures. This pose is more noticeable in the frescoes, however, because his legs are painted a dark colour and contrast vividly with his light-coloured gown. Demus remarks that these 'paintings have some pure Byzantine features but they also include some western motifs, notably of a courtly nature, such as the way Herod sits with crossed legs, and the "modish" foreshortening of the Magi on horseback.'<sup>169</sup> (This foreshortening is identical to that of the frontal Magi in the Emmanuel College manuscript.) Herod's posture with his crossed legs is thus considered merely 'courtly' and western by Demus. It certainly is a pose never found in Byzantine representations of kings.

## B. Bronze

### 1. Pisa

The main entrance to the cathedral in Pisa, the Porta S. Raniero, at the east end is decorated solely by a large double bronze door, produced by Bonnano da Pisa around 1173.<sup>170</sup> It is divided into twenty-four panels, twenty of which are devoted to the Gospel story, from the Annunciation to the Death of Mary.<sup>171</sup> These scenes are done in high relief, in a simple clear style, so that the whole has an air of 'noble grandeur and quiet monumental character'.<sup>172</sup> Herod appears once on these doors, in the Massacre scene (*fig. 101*), second panel up from the bottom of the narrative panels, near the centre of the right-hand door.<sup>173</sup> This panel bears the inscription ERODI. Herod sits on the left under a baldaquin; he wears a very high crown and sits on a faldstool with his left leg crossed over his right (only the sole of his left foot can be

seen). He points to the soldier before him who has beheaded two children and is about to slaughter a third whom he holds upside down by the foot. Behind him stands a mother with long, plaited hair, putting her arm protectively around her child beside her. This bronze relief has great dignity and simplicity.

## 2. Benevento

Herod appeared twice on another magnificent bronze door on the cathedral of Benevento, made near the end of the twelfth century. However, during the last war this cathedral was severely damaged and only fragments of the door remain. They have been placed in a room in the tower where they are now preserved.<sup>174</sup> There were originally seventy-two panels in this door, of which forty-four showed the life of Christ. 'The panels were filled to their very edges with reliefs presenting a great abundance of personages in lively scenes,'<sup>175</sup> and their loss is lamentable. Fragments survive, however, of two different representations of Herod. The first shows him as he receives the Magi (*fig. 102*). He sits on a very high, architectural throne, and extends his arm towards the Magi in a thoroughly majestic gesture. The second fragment, much more of which survives, shows Herod directing the Massacre (*fig. 103*). His throne is set under an arcade and high above the ground. Herod is crowned and holds a simple sceptre as he points to a Massacre scene before him which the artist has fully developed and spread out over the entire space at his disposal. The foreground is littered with children's corpses; a mother sits nearby with a child on her lap whom she mourns. Behind her, in the upper register of the panel, at least two soldiers are seen slashing children with their swords - one tramples a child underfoot while the other cuts a child in half but pauses to look back to Herod. Two mothers

reach towards their children. A great deal of space is given to the scene of killing in this bronze panel, but Herod remains relatively aloof, dignified and regal.

### C. Ivory

To show how very popular Magi cycles were in a variety of media and artistic quality, Vezin included in his illustrations a photograph of an ivory plaque (*fig. 104*) from the private collection of Martin Leroy.<sup>176</sup> This is actually an eleventh-century piece of work from Lombardy and is very crude work indeed; Vezin calls it 'l'art barbare lombard'. It shows in three uneven levels various events concerning the Magi. At the top they ride on horseback to the right, following the star in the corner. In the centre they approach Herod, who is seated and attended by a guard. He may possibly have a book on his lap but the reproduction is too poor to be able to see clearly. Across the bottom the Magi, in a parallel scene, approach the Virgin and Child with their gifts. This is not a great piece of art, but it serves to demonstrate the variety of quality and media that were used for representing the events of the Gospels, especially the Magi cycle where Herod often appears.

### D. Sculpture

An interesting example of Herod in Italian art occurs over one of the portals of the Church of St. Andrew in Pistoia, Tuscany (*fig. 105*), carved by Gruamons and dating from 1166.<sup>177</sup> The right half contains a scene with the Magi walking in a straight line, with their gifts, to present them to the Christ-Child who sits on the Virgin's lap. Joseph stands behind Mary, leaning on his stick. This composition is balanced on the left side by a representation of the Magi riding in a straight line, on horseback, towards Herod who sits facing them. But a fifth figure is present,

a young boy who kneels before Herod and extends his hands to Herod who seems to take the boy's hands in his. This may be a scribe, but it does not resemble any of the northern representations of scribes who usually have books or scrolls. It may be Herod's son, an uncanonical figure who gradually began to make an appearance in the liturgical drama.

#### V. Zillis Painted Ceiling

The alpine Church of St. Martin in Zillis, Switzerland, is remarkable for its well-preserved painted Romanesque ceiling.<sup>178</sup> The whole scheme of paintings includes one hundred and fifty-three panels; within these, fifteen are devoted to the story of the Magi and six to the Massacre of the Innocents. The Magi cycle includes portraits of each king separately and several scenes involving only the horses which 'stand pawing the ground in a delightful row under the wide arch of an arcade.'<sup>179</sup> The scenes of the horses, in fact, frame the panels showing the Magi and Herod (*fig. 106*). These panels are arranged like the panels of St. Denis and Chartres in that the Magi are represented in one section and Herod and his attendant in another. They are all crowned; Herod sits on a cushioned throne with a dais for his feet and is attended by a figure who holds his naked sword on display behind him. The Magi wear short robes with zig-zag hems reminiscent of those in the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore (*fig. 1*). They approach Herod without bringing their gifts, but in the Adoration scene below they bear their bowls of gold coins in draped hands, a distinctly Byzantine iconography. The Massacre of the Innocents begins with Herod giving the orders to two soldiers (*fig. 107*). He sits in the same position as in the Magi scene and although his attendant has almost disappeared behind the architectural framework, his sword is displayed prominently. The scene continues in two panels which show soldiers beheading infants and two more devoted to women with their children. At least one of these latter panels seems to refer to a



period before the Massacre has taken place: one woman suckles her swaddled babe and the other caresses her young son. The motif of the suckling mother at the Massacre in the fresco at Brinay-sur-Cher (*fig. 61*) added pathos to the scene; at Zillis, it refers to an idyllic time before the murder of the children and tends to heighten the contrast in their lives before and after Herod's terrible command. This same technique of introducing the mothers in a happy state before the Massacre was also used effectively by French and English dramatists in the fifteenth century (see Chapter 10). This extraordinary series of paintings at Zillis on the life of Christ is sometimes reminiscent of early Byzantine iconography; at the same time, however, it looks forward several centuries to motifs in other media such as the happy mothers before the Massacre. Herod plays a part in events related to both of these phenomena.

#### VI. Lambach Wall Painting, Austria

A very large and complete series of frescoes exists in what was formerly the west choir of the church of the Benedictine monastery at Lambach. They belong not to the twelfth century but to the eleventh, probably about 1089. However, because of their very unusual nature, and also because of their definite connection with liturgical drama, which is the subject of the next chapter, they have been left until the end of this chapter and considered separately.

'The subjects of the paintings are taken from the early life of Christ, up to his Baptism and the first miracles of healing. They include several rare, and even unique pictures, such as the extended treatment of Herod and the Three Kings, and are arranged not in a strict narrative order but according to conceptual parallels and liturgical significance.'<sup>180</sup> It is the picture cycle involving Herod which is of particular interest; some of the scenes are, indeed, unique, with no precedent and no known source.

The frescoes showing the Infancy cover the vaults of three bays and all the walls of the former west choir of the Stiftskirche.<sup>181</sup> The vaults are devoted almost entirely to the Magi, starting in the south bay with their appearance before Herod and his scribes. In this painting there is a small animated demon, standing on top of a pillar beside Herod, giving him advice.<sup>182</sup> Demons are not unusual in this cycle - they appear elsewhere in the paintings - but this is the first time in Western art that a devil is shown advising Herod. And the demon is shown, not in the more obvious Massacre scene, but in Herod's interview with the Three Kings and in the presence of the scribes who are consulting the prophecies. This demon pre-dates those in French sculpture and in English manuscripts.

The central bay has three scenes with the Magi continuing around in a complete circle but the most interesting one iconographically is the one in the north quadrant, the Adoration of the Magi. Behind the Virgin's throne stand two female figures, the identification of whom puzzled many scholars. But K. M. Swoboda demonstrated that they are almost certainly the midwives from a Latin liturgical play of the Three Kings which is found in a manuscript from the early eleventh century which has been at Lambach ever since the abbey's foundation in about 1056.<sup>183</sup> Swoboda has convincingly argued, in fact, that this liturgical drama influenced the choice of subjects for the wall paintings in the west choir of Lambach, especially those involving the Magi.

The drama does not, however, explain the very unusual scenes on the walls which show events from Herod's life, some of which are, so far as we know, never seen in art before or after these paintings at Lambach. The first (*fig. 108*) on the upper part of the wall of the south bay represents the *Turbatio Herodis*.<sup>184</sup> A very unkingly Herod lies on the ground in the centre foreground of the picture, his crown still falling from his head.

Two men lean over to help him up, but his hands are raised in astonishment. He is looking to the left where a king, dressed exactly as Herod is, sits enthroned holding a sphere and a sword and looking Ottonian and very stern. There is an attendant by him and an angel flies down to bless him. On the right of the picture is a large gathering of twenty distinguished-looking gentlemen; all but one dark figure look towards the enthroned king. Demus follows the suggestion that this scene is most likely a representation of Matt.2:3: 'Audiens autem Herodes rex, turbatus est, et omnis Ierosolyma cum illo'. Scripture explains the large crowd - all Jerusalem - but one must turn to the patristic writers for more precise information about exactly what it was that troubled Herod. All the writers are perfectly clear, and equally scathing, in their explanation of Herod's greatest fears. When he heard the news that the Magi were seeking the new-born king of the Jews, he was immediately concerned lest this king try to usurp his throne. This wall painting probably represents, then, Herod's vision (fear) of this new king dressed in his own robes and sitting on his own throne. Or it may be simply a narrative device, showing Herod twice in the same scene, to portray his own downfall, as suggested in the gospel. In either case, such a representation in art is unique.

The next scene is also without any known precedent (*fig. 109*). According to Demus, it shows Herod giving his successor, Antipas, a hundred talents. Herod is on the right and Antipas is on the left, with the bag of money already in his hand but still threatening.<sup>185</sup> According to Josephus, and every other historian of the age, there was a good deal of intrigue, murder and bribery among Herod's sons, and, indeed, all his relatives and in-laws, but there is no mention of Herod giving this specific amount of money to Antipas under the mysterious circumstances implied by his threatening behaviour.<sup>186</sup> In fact, Antipas was not Herod's successor.

There is, however, a clandestine incident involving Herod giving his son Antipater one hundred talents. This episode is not described directly by Josephus, but reported indirectly. In *War*, I xxx 1-4, the story is told of how Herod discovers that his brother, Pheroras, has died of poisoning; he then tortures the people of his household for information and finds that Pheroras and Antipater had often met in secret and spoken rebelliously about Herod, even though Herod had given Antipater one hundred talents secretly to break off all intercourse with Pheroras. 'Herod believed all these statements because of the detail of the hundred talents, which he had mentioned to none but Antipater.'<sup>187</sup> Antipater was subsequently tried and put in prison. One of the last things which Herod did on his death-bed was to give orders for his execution.

The final scene involving Herod is on the south wall, in the upper tier, on the other side of the window from the scene showing Herod with Antipater, and it is, in fact, a particularly dramatic representation of the Death of Herod (*fig. 110*), appearing almost a century before the depictions in English manuscripts.<sup>188</sup> Herod lies in bed, with his head to the left; in his left hand he holds an apple and in his right, a knife. This must be the moment just before, or just after, Herod attempts suicide, as a male figure, his cousin Achiabus, stands behind him and holds his left arm firmly by the elbow as he stealthily reaches from behind for the knife in Herod's right hand. Herod is not dead yet; in fact this representation is more historically accurate than those in the English manuscripts in revealing the foiling of his suicide attempt. Because he is still alive, there can be no devils depicted snatching his soul, but in their place, the artist has populated the walls of Herod's chamber with lively little demons dancing about him. Coming to Herod's bedside is a woman, who must be his sister Salome, one of the few people to remain close to Herod (and alive) all his life. The person with her is possibly

her husband or a servant. The other male figure is probably a servant, although Wibiral suggests that he is the jail-keeper who comes to report to Herod how Antipater rejoiced when he thought that his father was dead.<sup>189</sup> Herod, hearing this report, ordered his execution instantly. There is historic and patristic precedence for this representation of the Death of Herod, but the artist at Lambach has chosen a slightly earlier moment to depict than those later artists of the Canterbury manuscripts who included this episode of the Death of Herod in their Infancy cycles.

The impact of the Lambach frescoes is best summarized by quoting Demus. 'The programme [of the frescoes of Lambach] is so original that the interpretation of isolated scenes, on subjects depicted rarely or not at all elsewhere, is fraught with difficulty. It is probably true to say that, with the exception of Joseph's Dream (pl. 281, left) and the Return from Egypt (pl. 281, right), none of the pictorial compositions corresponds to a known type; every one is new and original. The very selection of subjects is unusual: the inventor of the programme seems to have been concerned less with straightforward narrative than with distilling the theophanic essence of his material, which he draws not from the Gospels alone but also from apocryphal writings, the histories of Josephus (probably the Latin version, the *Hegesippus*) and the Lambach play of the Three Magi. The amount of space he gives to the story of Herod and to the Baptism is remarkable; perhaps, as with the story of the Magi, he was using a special source.'<sup>190</sup> The Lambach frescoes are an exciting exception to the iconographic traditions in the representation of entire cycles of the life of Christ, but especially in those representations which involve Herod the Great.

## Conclusion

The art of the twelfth century is extremely rich in its variety of approach to the subject of Herod the Great. He is often presented as a majestic king with crown and sceptre, as in the art from earlier periods. However, in many instances, artists began to give visual expression to the ideas which were being promulgated in patristic commentaries about the violence of Herod. His sceptre was changed for a sword not only in portrayals of the Massacre of the Innocents, but also in scenes of his meeting with the Magi, so that he became a threatening figure. The sword was often naked and either laid across his knees or borne upright like a sceptre. This gave him a violent, menacing aspect, further emphasized in manuscripts and frescoes dealing with the Apocalypse in which Herod was introduced and associated with the beast who threatened the Woman Clothed in the Sun. Not only his violence, but also his wickedness was given visual expression. Devils were introduced into the iconography of Herod the Great, accompanying him (often in animal forms) or advising him by whispering in his ear. In Magi scenes the role of these devils was to suggest to Herod the hypocrisy which he exhibited towards the three kings; in Massacre scenes, the devils' role was to urge Herod to more violence. Devils had not appeared before in narrative scenes involving Herod the Great. It was twelfth-century artists who were responsible for introducing these dramatic changes into the iconography of Herod the Great to give expression to his violence and evil. Also, for the first time, Herod's suicide and death were included in manuscript illuminations of the Life of Christ. Devils once more played their part in these scenes by being there to snatch up the soul of Herod when he died and carry it off to Hell.

Twelfth-century artists showed a great interest in painting Magi cycles. As the events of the Magi's journey to Bethlehem were expanded in art, Herod was included. However, the emphasis was specifically on the

Magi in the twelfth century and so Herod appeared in these cycles only once as he interviewed the kings, and not again with his scribes, as in Byzantine art (see Chapter 5). Some contractions of events involving the scribes took place, therefore, resulting in the omission of the scribes and some unusual iconography for Herod in which he himself is portrayed holding the prophetic scrolls or books and showing them to the Magi. In contemporary church drama, these books played an important part in scenes with Herod and the scribes and the Magi (see Chapter 7). The only reason Herod ever touched the books of prophecy in Latin plays, however, was to throw them to the ground in anger or disgust. Only twelfth-century artists showed him giving these books any respect or reverence.

Twelfth-century artists were also responsible for giving the scene of the Massacre of the Innocents a new vitality. The soldiers were shown in the very act of killing the children, and a certain ingenuity is visible in the variety of their poses and methods of slaughter. The mothers in this scene were not neglected. English artists, especially, showed them valiantly defending their children or even occasionally attacking the soldiers, like the woman in the St. Albans Psalter who bites the leg of a soldier. The image of the weeping Rachel is frequently omitted in this period in favour of the more active mothers.

These new motifs all make their initial appearance in twelfth-century European art, although they are given a stylistically restrained expression. In the art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, depictions of a violent and evil King Herod, of fighting mothers and cruel ingenious soldiers become standard iconography for the Massacre of the Innocents. Thus motifs which first found expression through the originality of twelfth-century artists formed the basis for later artists who developed and enlarged them

sometimes to exaggerated proportions, to establish iconographic conventions which have remained to the present day. These were, perhaps, inherent in the subject matter, but were given clear visual expression first in the twelfth century. Tremendous changes were taking place in the twelfth-century context and at the same time, the art of this period was to prove seminal for artists in the centuries to follow.



## CHAPTER VII: HEROD IN LATIN LITURGICAL DRAMA

## I. Introduction

Herod the Great was represented in new and original ways by twelfth-century artists so that he became quite a lively figure, wielding his sword and taking counsel with devils. These new developments in the art of the twelfth century were reflected in the Latin liturgical drama of approximately the same period. Although the earliest Latin drama of the church was based on liturgical elements and included the singing of antiphons, sequences and hymns, an element of free composition soon crept in. This was particularly true in the case of plays dealing with Herod the Great. In one of the earlier Epiphany plays, in fact, the eleventh-century *Officium Stellae* from Freising,<sup>1</sup> Herod already appears as *Herodes iratus*: when his scribes read out the prophecy, Herod insults them, throws down their book and has a fit of rage; he refers to the Magi as *externos tyrannos*; and when his *armiger* suggests massacring the children as a suitable vengeance after he has been deceived by the Magi, Herod immediately consents and hands his own sword over to the *armiger* as he officially orders the Massacre. This is a relatively early play and yet it is one of the most fully developed, disproving the evolutionary theory of the development of liturgical drama presented by Young.

However, Young's careful and thorough study of the relation of these Latin plays to the Roman liturgy is invaluable for an understanding of their development within the church. No study of liturgical drama should be made without a consideration not only of the liturgy but also of the music of the liturgy. It is interesting to note that while scholars of English literature, such as E. K. Chambers, Karl Young and Hardin Craig,

refer to the early Latin plays of the medieval church as liturgical drama, most scholars in other disciplines such as liturgiology and musicology disallow this term and prefer others such as 'ecclesiastical drama',<sup>2</sup> 'church opera',<sup>3</sup> and 'music-drama'.<sup>4</sup> Alex Harman gives his reasons for objecting to the former term, after explaining how the drama developed from the Easter trope, *Quem quaeritis*: 'These dramatic presentations of Biblical stories are generally called "liturgical dramas", an unfortunate title, as neither the tropes nor the scenes that developed from them were ever part of the liturgy; moreover, the word "drama" is usually associated with the spoken word, whereas in fact the earliest examples were sung throughout. A more accurate name, and the one we shall use, is "church operas".'<sup>5</sup> The term 'liturgical drama' has become standard, however, among literary historians, and so it will be used in this chapter, along with other terms such as 'Latin drama' and 'music drama'. The comments of the scholars mentioned above indicate that scholars of medieval Latin drama should be more familiar with the relationship between that drama and the liturgy and music of the medieval church.

Although the precise date of the very first liturgical drama is still a matter of speculation, present evidence and scholarship places the development of this new kind of drama between the eighth and tenth centuries: Chambers<sup>6</sup> and Young<sup>7</sup> long thought that the earliest example of liturgical drama occurred about 950 in the manuscript from the monastery of St. Gall in Switzerland containing the trope *Quem quaeritis* of the introit for the Easter mass;<sup>8</sup> other scholars placed the origin of this same drama in France, at St. Martial at Limoges some thirty years earlier;<sup>9</sup> still others argue for an origin in Northern Italy;<sup>10</sup> more recently, David Dumville has suggested that liturgical drama may have begun in

England as early as the time when Bishop Aethelwold held the see of Lindisfarne from 721 or 724 until 740; moreover, the drama in the Book of Cerne (the manuscript which he discusses) is not based on the Easter visit of the three Marys to the tomb but on an incident involving the Harrowing of Hell.<sup>11</sup> In any case, most of the surviving manuscripts which contain liturgical drama come from within the Frankish Empire and date from the eighth to the tenth century. This is precisely the time when the liturgy of the Frankish Empire was completely revised by Charlemagne as part of the intellectual and artistic revival known as the Carolingian Renaissance. At this time, the Gallic liturgy was officially replaced by the Roman. It was also at this very time that tropes, from which the drama eventually developed, first made an appearance in the service books of the medieval church. It seems appropriate, therefore, to consider the state of the liturgy and also the development of tropes and other musical elements within the liturgy before turning to the liturgical drama and its particular contribution to the further development of the character of Herod the Great.

## II. The Liturgy: Gallican and Roman

Although Charlemagne tried to effect a purification and unification of the liturgy by replacing the Gallican rite with the Roman rite, there was, in fact, a considerable amount of interaction between the two. The indigenous Gallican rite of the Franco-German territories was replaced by the rite from Rome, but in turn, the Roman liturgy assimilated Gallican elements. Since it was during and after this enforced Romanization of the Gallican liturgy (and the subsequent Gallicization of parts of the Roman rite) that the liturgical drama developed, it is important to understand the differences in the nature of these two rites.<sup>12</sup>

When Charlemagne decided to 'purify' the liturgy, continuing the work of his father, Pepin, he issued several documents justifying his actions:

Accensi praeterea venerandae memoriae Peppini nostri exemplis qui totas Galliarum ecclesias romanae traditionis suo studio cantibus decoravit, nos nihilominus solerti easdem curamus intuitu praecipuarum insignire serie lectionum.<sup>13</sup>

Inspired by the example of my father Pepin, of blessed memory, who zealously adorned the Gallican churches with Roman chant [ music and texts ] , we ourselves, after careful study, seek to enrich his reforms with a collection of [ Roman ] readings for use in liturgical worship.<sup>14</sup>

He also explained his demands to the clergy:

Omni clero. Ut cantum Romanum plenitur discant et ordinabiliter per nocturnale vel graduale officium peragatur, secundum quod beatae memoriae genitor noster Peppinus rex decertavit ut fieret, quando Gallicanum tulit ob unanimitatem apostolicae sedis et sanctae Dei aecclisiae pacificam concordiam.<sup>15</sup>

For all clerics: They should learn the Roman chant [ music and text ] thoroughly and employ it in the proper manner at both Matins and the day office [ including the mass ] , just as our father King Pepin, of blessed memory, decreed when he suppressed the Gallican liturgy in order to create unanimity with the Apostolic See and peaceful concord within the Church of God.<sup>16</sup>

What sort of liturgy was Charlemagne asking his clergy and his church to give up?

The Gallican liturgical forms can easily be distinguished from those of Rome by certain well-defined characteristics such as the structure of the services.<sup>17</sup> However, for the purpose of this chapter, the differences in style and language and mode of expression are more important. It should be noted first of all that the Gallican rite was not fixed: it had a great variety of forms and flexibility of texts.<sup>18</sup> This meant that the liturgy could be changed and made more relevant to specific needs

and concerns on any occasion. Along with this variability of texts went a tendency towards prolixity and rhetoric; the prayers were long, and very often skilfully composed<sup>19</sup> as literary, poetic works of art. They were filled with emotional appeal, a sense of great personal involvement in the liturgy, and a flair for rhetoric which at times may seem extravagant, especially when compared with the more austere Roman rite. An example of the Gallican style of liturgical prayer is given here to show these qualities, and also to introduce a part of this rite in which Herod is involved. This is the first prayer from the *Missa in Natale Sanctorum Infantium*:

Deus, qui universam Ecclesiam tuam pretiosorum martyrum tuorum virtutibus, velut quibusdam floribus coronasti, ut per trium, hos tuorum testium et sollemnitatum gloriam et devotionum exempla susciperes, sicut in hoc die, quo pro Domino nostro Jesu Christo Infantum innocentiam extollis usque ad merita passionum. Feliciter pro Christo mortui sunt; sed felicius cum eodem in aeternitate victuri: qui ad hoc tantum per humanam infirmitatem nati sunt ad aerumnam, ut per Dei gratiam nascerentur martyres ad coronam. Praesta, omnipotens Deus, in hac sollemnitate diei hujus, ut sicut illis dedisti palmas victoriae, ita nobis quoque consortium tribuas sempiternum. Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum, quo tecum vivit.<sup>20</sup>

It is instructive to compare this opening Gallican prayer for the Feast of the Holy Innocents with the analogous prayer from the Gregorian Sacramentary. The Roman prayer is short and succinct:

Deus, cujus hodierna die praecorium innocentes martyres non loquendo, sed moriendo confessi sunt, omnia in nobis vitiorum mala mortifica, ut fidem tuam, quam lingua nostra loquitur, etiam moribus vita fateatur. Per..<sup>21</sup>

One further example of contrasting prayers from the same feast should serve to point out the rhetorical richness of the Gallican rite as opposed to the spartan severity of the Roman. The Gallican *Immolatio missae* follows:

Dignum et justum est. Vere dignum et justum est, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, aeterne Deus, pro his praecipue quorum hodierno die annua festivitate recolentes memoriam passionis celebramus, quos Herodianus satelles lactantum matrum uberibus abstraxit. Qui jure dicuntur martyrum flores, qui in medio frigore infidelitatis exorti, velut primas erumpentes Ecclesiae gemmas quaedam persecutionis pruina discussit, rutilante fonte in Bethlehem civitate. Infantes enim quia aetate loqui non poterant, laudem Domini cum gaudio [ *Forsan* gladio ] resonabant. Occisi praedicant, quod vivi non poterant. Loquuntur sanguine, quod lingua nequiverunt. Contulit his martyrium laudem, quibus abnegaverat lingua sermonem. Praemittit Infantes Infans Christus ad caelos; transmittit nova exenia Patri; primitias exhibet Genitori Parvulorum prima martyria, Herodis scelere perpetrata. Praestat hostia corpori, dum nocet; beneficium tribuit, dum occidit; moriendo vivitur, cadendo resurgitur, victoria per interitum comprobatur. Pro his ergo beneficiis et pro praesenti sollemnitatem immensas pietati tuae gratias referentes potius quam rependentes, cum sanctis angelis et archangelis, qui unum te Deum dominantem, distinctum, nec divisum: trinum, nec triplicem; solum, nec solitarium; consona laudamus voce, dicentes: Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus. 22

The comparable Roman prayer, called *Praefatio*, follows:

Vere dignum et justum est, aequum et salutare, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, aeterne Deus: et in pretiosis mortibus parvulorum, quos propter nostri Redemptoris infantiam bestiali saevitia Herodes funestus occidit, immensa clementiae tuae dona praedicare, in quibus fulget sola magis gratia quam voluntas, et clara est prius confessio quam loquela, ante passio quam membra idonea passioni. Existunt testes Christi, qui ejus nondum fuerant agnitores. O infinita benignitas! o ineffabilis misericordia, quae pro suo nomine trucidatis meritum gloriae perire non patitur, sed proprio cruore perfusis et salus regenerationis adhibetur, et imputatur corona martyrii. Et ideo cum angelis, etc. 23

The juxtaposition of these prayers serves to emphasize the great difference between the Gallican and the Roman rite in their use of language and style. The latter can almost be described, in a negative way, as lacking all the characteristic traits of the Gallican. It is reduced to bare essentials. Edmund Bishop in his classic essay, 'The Genius of the Roman Rite', emphasizes 'the simplicity, practicality, great sobriety and self-control,

gravity and dignity,<sup>24</sup> of this liturgy. Of the composition of the Roman mass of the sixth century he concludes that it is 'the mass reduced to its least possible expression. There is not a single element which is not essential.'<sup>25</sup> This quality of restraint and austerity extends to the language and forms of expression used in the Roman rite as well as to the formation of various services. 'Roman prayers leave no place for poetic expression (although there is a good deal of rhetorical balance), and they allow little room for the articulation of personal feelings. As far as we know, no poet ever composed a Roman mass. This lack of the subjective is one of the hallmarks of the Roman rite.'<sup>26</sup>

Another quality quite lacking in the Roman rite but very pronounced in the Gallican rite is the dramatic element. In the second set of prayers quoted above, the Roman prayer merely mentions that the savage Herod killed the Innocents, and immediately passes on to a consideration of God's great mercy. The Gallican prayer, however, gives a dramatic picture of Herod's soldiers snatching the young babies from their mothers' breasts, like tender blossoms plucked in midwinter, and bloodying the streets of Bethlehem by massacring them with their swords. Such a dramatic liturgical text was by no means atypical of the Gallican rite.

It must be stressed, however, that such prayers are in no way to be considered as any kind of source for later liturgical drama. In fact, not a single surviving Gallican liturgical book has the slightest hint of the existence of liturgical drama. Nor does any other Western non-Roman rite, such as the Ambrosian, Celtic or Mozarabic rites. Nor do any of the Eastern liturgies, which share with the Gallican rite a rather rhetorical, dramatic, poetic style. Only in the Roman rite did the

liturgical drama develop. An interesting point, however, is that the drama developed from the Roman rite only after that rite had officially replaced and partially absorbed the Gallican liturgy of the Franco-German territories. The same phenomenon occurred in the north-east of Spain. Donovan has shown that liturgical drama developed only in Catalonia, where Charlemagne's reforms were enforced and the Roman rite was established; in the region round Castile where the old Mozarabic liturgy flourished, such drama never appeared.<sup>27</sup> The liturgical drama, then, must be associated with the Roman rite as it applied to the Frankish Empire.

Charlemagne made great efforts to 'purify' the liturgy. He sent to Pope Hadrian for the official Roman (Gregorian) Sacramentary: 'he required that service-books be carefully collated from pure Roman models, and strengthened his purpose by founding the first great school of liturgical study, in which such scholars as Alcuin, Amalarius, and Rabanus Maurus became prominent figures.'<sup>28</sup> However, the reform was not entirely successful in so far as the Gallican rite was not utterly destroyed but rather, parts of it were assimilated into the new official rite.<sup>29</sup> And so the austere, unpoetic Roman rite was enriched, both in France and Spain, 'by a dramatic element which it hitherto so greatly lacked'.<sup>30</sup> The prolixity and the exuberance of the indigenous rites could not be entirely suppressed.

Very quickly, new non-Roman features began to appear in the liturgy of France - tropes, sequences, dramatic ceremonies and other elements. Flanigan commented that 'all of these new devices should be understood as attempts to reassert the cultic nature of liturgical celebration which was lacking in the new Roman rite.'<sup>31</sup> His theory of



'cultic experience' is basically that of an anthropologist rather than a liturgiologist, but his comments about the liturgy are still valid. He assumes that when such an austere, restrained rite is imposed on a people who are accustomed to such an exuberant, prolix means of liturgical expression, a natural consequence will be a new semi-restrained method of articulating previously expressed feelings. Tropes, sequences and dramatic ceremonial were precisely this. They involved the composition of new melodies and new texts, paradoxically at the very time when the liturgy was being purified of such extraneous material.<sup>32</sup> As the liturgical drama developed directly from these new musical pieces, produced during the Carolingian renaissance, it is necessary to study them more carefully before proceeding to a study of the fully-developed drama.

### III. Tropes and Sequences

#### A. Relation to the Liturgy

'As far as ecclesiastical music is concerned, the Roman chant for the Mass had assumed a fixed form in the course of the seventh century in the Gregorian Antiphonale Missarum: this collection had spread everywhere and moreover had become invested with such a sanctity that throughout this period [the ninth to the twelfth century] it was considered out of the question to incorporate new music with it. The same sort of sanctity surrounded also the music of the Divine Office, but to a lesser extent; consequently all new developments in musical composition, failing to gain admission into the privileged circle of the recognized Gregorian service-books, were thrown together so as to form an independent music-collection supplemental to the official books.'<sup>33</sup> This is W. H. Frere's definition of a Troper, the medieval service-book in which one is most

likely to find tropes. It serves to emphasize two important points: first, the sacredness of the Roman liturgy and ecclesiastical chant at the time when tropes enjoyed their greatest popularity between the ninth and the twelfth centuries, and second, the fact that the trope was extra-liturgical and was never part of the official Roman liturgy. The ecclesiastical chants were fixed by the Gregorian antiphony and official additions could only be made for new feasts or commemorations. Although this arrangement contributed towards Charlemagne's desire for unity, it was also basically a sterile situation, cutting off any opportunity for creativity in the composition of church music at a time when all of the creative arts were being encouraged and stimulated: manuscripts were beautified through the adoption of a clearer and more elegant style of handwriting, the Carolingian miniscule, as well as through the painting of exquisite miniatures; churches were decorated with sumptuous mosaics and murals; their treasuries were enriched with magnificent examples of goldsmithing and ivory carving, and their choirs were carefully trained to sing their official liturgical music to perfection.<sup>34</sup> It was only natural that such artistic creativity should also be applied to the composition of new texts and music. This original composition took the form of tropes and sequences and, although these were never part of the official liturgy, they seem to have been tolerated by the church.

#### B. Development of Tropes and Sequences

The first extensive study of the trope was done by the French scholar, Léon Gautier, in 1886.<sup>35</sup> He defined the trope simply: 'C'est l'interpolation d'un texte liturgique...C'est l'intercalation d'un texte nouveau et sans autorité dans un texte authentique et officiel.'<sup>36</sup>

This definition is true so far as it goes, but musicologists point out that this interpolation was initially not a textual one, but 'a melodic interpolation which supplied the framework for a literary or poetic interpolation.'<sup>37</sup> However, both Gautier and musicologists like Jacques Handschin, point out the close relationship that the trope had with the official liturgy. 'Tropes have not come down to us as an independent product, but as "adapted art". The canonical "Gregorian" repertory could not be *supplanted* by another one; thus it was amplified, added to, *interpolated*. Every trope is in principle intended to combine with a given Gregorian song, as an introduction to it, or as an appendix, or as an interpolation breaking up the Gregorian chant...'<sup>38</sup>

The sequence developed in much the same way as the trope, but because of its nature it soon became an independent unit. The term 'sequence' is usually reserved for those new melismatic and syllabic compositions which developed from the final syllable of the Alleluia,<sup>39</sup> rather than, as tropes, within the lines of the liturgy. During the Carolingian Renaissance in the early ninth century, Amalarius of Metz (c.780 - 850) referred to the sequence in his comments on the liturgy. When speaking of the Alleluia of the Mass he referred to them as 'haec jubilatio quam sequentiam vocant';<sup>40</sup> he also noted that the Alleluia for vespers of Easter day was sung 'cum omni supplemento et excellentia versuum et sequentiarum'.<sup>41</sup> The name of the monk from St. Gall, Notker Balbulus (c.840 - 912), is most often associated with the development of the sequence, however. In a letter to Liutward, Bishop of Vercelli, written in 884 or 885, (which Notker later prefixed as the *prooemium* to his own *Liber Sequentiarum*), Notker tells of the visit to St. Gall of a monk from the monastery of Jumièges after it was destroyed in 851.

In his pack the monk had an antiphonary which Notker examined. To his delight he discovered there the technique of adding verses to be sung with the 'longissimae melodiae' of the final 'a' of the Alleluia; this made the memorization of these long passages much easier and so was a welcome innovation.<sup>42</sup> Notker was already familiar with melismatic sequences, and because he was not satisfied with the verses he found in the Jumièges antiphonary, he wrote new ones, under the guidance of his teacher, Iso, providing a syllable for every note. Undoubtedly he wrote new melodies also. Thus, from the middle of the ninth century, it seems that sequences, and probably tropes as well, were known in at least two forms - with and without words.<sup>43</sup> Because the sequence came at the end of a phrase, it often developed into a completely independent and complex composition having no connection with the preceding text. It became a self-contained composition, independent of the liturgy.

The trope probably developed in the same way and at the same time as the sequence, except that it was not confined to the Alleluia, but was applied to almost every part of the Mass and also to the music of the Divine Office.<sup>44</sup> It was an amplification of a passage in the liturgy and could occur at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the passage. It embellished the accepted liturgical chant by introducing, explaining, expanding or concluding it. The trope was thus closely associated with the official liturgy in both text and music rather than developing independently like the sequence. An example of a very simple trope (text only) is given here from among the tropes of the conclusion of the Mass. In the Roman rite, the Mass is ended by the deacon's announcing *Ite, missa est* and the chorus responds *Deo Gratias*. A monk from St. Gall troped this short and simple formula and produced the following:

*Ite nunc in pace, spiritus sanctus super vos sit, iam missa est.  
Deo semper laudes agite, in corde gloriam et gratias.* 45

This is an extremely simple example but it serves to show how these embellishments were intended 'to adorn the liturgical text, to enforce its meaning, and to enlarge its emotional appeal.'<sup>46</sup> It should be emphasized that these new words and their melody were an original composition although they were based on scriptural and liturgical texts. Another example is given here of a troped Kyrie, one which was composed by the friend of Notker at St. Gall's, Tutilo, and was destined to become known throughout the Roman Catholic world. In this case the trope precedes each *Kyrie*<sup>47</sup>

EXAMPLE 41. *Cunctipotens dominator*—Kyrie trope (from *WagE III*, 504).

Cun-cti-po-tens do-mi-ná-tor coe-li et an-ge-ló-rum, ter-rae, má-  
 Qui de-li-mo-for-má-vé-ras Á-dam pri-mum hó-mi-nem, et pa-ra-  
 Nu-má-no sem-per gé-ne-ré sum-mi ré-gis grá-tiam to-to cor-  
 nis et mor-tá-li-um. Ky-rie-e-lei-son.  
 di-so-po-si-e-tas.  
 de-de-ut-de-rá-ti-

"All powerful Ruler of the heavens and angels, of the earth, of the sea and the dead, *Kyrie eleison*, who from the mire formed Adam, the first man, and set up Paradise, *Kyrie eleison*, Ever to mankind, longing for the grace of the High King with a whole heart, *Kyrie eleison*," etc. (For the full text, see *Analecta XLVII*, 146. The melody is used, in the Vatican edition, for the *Kyrie of Mass XIV*.)

The growth of tropes was considerable and extended to all musical parts of the Mass, both the Ordinary, including the *Kyrie*, *Gloria in excelsis*, *Sanctus*, *Agnus Dei*, *Ite missa est*, or *Benedicamus*, and the Proper, including the Introit, Alleluia, or Gradual, Offertory and Communion. They were also attached to the Epistle and the Gospel. It is those parts of the Mass which are variable, i.e. the Proper, that became

the focus of most of the tropes which eventually developed into dramatic plays. They were changed to accommodate each new feast or saint's day. The Introit provided the most numerous and the most extensive of all tropes; the well-known *Quem quaeritis* trope, for example, was a trope for the introit of Easter, of which Young has discovered over four hundred manuscripts.<sup>48</sup> This trope displays a quality of the tropes which perhaps made their later development into drama almost inevitable - and that is its form as a dramatic dialogue. The trope-dialogue between the Marys and the Angel served as a model for a similar dialogue in the introit of the Christmas Mass which developed into a play involving the shepherds and midwives, although independent music was developed for the Christmas trope.<sup>49</sup> Besides the Introit, the Offertory was also extensively troped. In this position of the Mass, tropes were produced as an introduction to (rather than an amplification of) the offertory and its verses.<sup>50</sup> In a text from Limoges, the *Ordinarium ecclesiae Lemovicensis*, which is now lost,<sup>51</sup> there are rubrics indicating that after the singing of the offertory and before the oblation, three cantors enter, dressed as Kings and holding gifts, and sing a *prosula*, or sequence, which begins a short simple dramatization of the Adoration of the Magi and the Presentation of their gifts to the Christ-Child, just before the clergy or congregation perform their own oblation.

Troping was not limited to the Mass but was extended also to the music of the Divine Office. The Hour of Matins proved to be most suitable, and within this Office, responsories were most often troped.<sup>52</sup> It is precisely in this position, at the end of Matins, after the responsory and before the *Te Deum*, that most of the liturgical dramas, including those involving the Magi and Herod, occurred.

#### IV. Liturgical Drama

##### A. Sources and Context

In his study of the trope, Gautier followed the dissemination and development of the *Quem quaeritis* trope until it was transformed into drama with costumes and versification. There he stopped. 'Ce dernier fait [costumes and versification] nous servira de transition pour en arriver aux Drames proprement dits; à ceux qui ne sont plus formés avec les seules paroles de la liturgie, à ceux enfin qui sont de véritables compositions originales du cerveau de certain clercs...Ce *Quem quaeritis*, qui n'était qu'un Trope, avait pris une telle importance, qu'on avait oublié son origine, et qu'on s'avisait un jour de le troper lui-même ou, à tout le moins, de lui imposer une préface, un prologue: *Hora est, psallite. Juba, dompnus, canere. Eia, eia, dicite: Quem quaeritis.* Le Trope d'un Trope!'<sup>53</sup>

Gautier distinguished clearly between tropes and drama. It is true that the 'liturgical drama is a *direct* outgrowth of troping',<sup>54</sup> but it must be remembered that it *is* an outgrowth, and although the trope was certainly vital to their very existence, the dramas were also nourished by other liturgical elements. Many different sources were tapped by the musician-poets who produced liturgical drama. This is not to say that the drama grew little by little until a well-developed, complex form evolved: some of the Magi Plays remained extremely simple, short and uncomplicated throughout the Middle Ages, while others sprang forth in fullness of growth and complexity at a very early stage. But all the plays used other sources as well as the trope.

##### 1. Antiphonal Singing

Many tropes were arranged in dialogue form and sung by soloists and

small groups or by the whole choir divided into two sections. The importance of the practice of antiphonal and responsorial singing cannot be overlooked as an influence in the background of the development of church-drama. Antiphonal singing is the normal method of singing Psalms in the Office, the single verses being sung in turn by two semi-choruses. Responsorial chant is distinguished by the responsive and supportive interplay between a single or a few voices and those of the total choral group.<sup>55</sup> This, of course, was not necessarily in dialogue form but often the division of parts to be read, or sung, involved 'address' to the whole choir by their precentor and a response from them,<sup>56</sup> certainly an approximation to the dialogic situation. The French scholar, Marius Sepet, was the first to perceive the significance of antiphonal singing for the drama when he was investigating the different types of chanting which the Roman rite had developed when it supplanted the Gallican rite in Carolingian times. 'Ce sont, en général, toutes les variétés du chant *antiphoné*, en prenant ce mot dans son sens le plus étendu (alternance et réciprocité choral entre le préchantre et le chœur ou entre deux sections du chœur) qui ont constitué dans la liturgie catholique un puissant germe dramatique.'<sup>57</sup>

## 2. Reading of Lessons and the Gospel

Another element of the liturgy which had dramatic possibilities was the reading of the lessons in both the Mass and the Divine Office. Again Sepet recognized this. Indeed, he showed that the origin of the *Play of the Prophets* was a dramatic reading of the Matins sermon on Christmas Day.<sup>58</sup> The implications of this discovery were enormous. 'Ces récits, par eux-mêmes, par leur caractère narratif et oratoire, étaient déjà de nature à éveiller l'idée dramatique. Mais la façon dont ils étaient déclamés sur



une mélodie demi-chantante, parfois avec des modifications et des inflexions de voix variées selon le caractère du sujet et même selon les diverses parties d'un même texte, ajoutait encore à leur effet et à la suggestion, pour ainsi parler, qui en résultait dans le sens du drame. A plus forte raison, quand la déclamation était partagée entre plusieurs voix, avec appropriation plus ou moins complète de ces voix diverses aux paroles des personnages qui figuraient dans la narration liturgique.<sup>59</sup>

The reading of lessons, either sermons and homilies, or Epistle and Gospel readings, is not generally considered to be a musical event in the liturgy, but Theodor G8llner has pointed out that in addition to the standard 'liturgical recitation on a single tone...there existed another kind of liturgical recitation...the *polyphonic* rendition of the scripture reading'.<sup>60</sup> Because the music for this type of reading is conceived for two or three parts and based on the perfect consonance of the fifth, G8llner suggests that this practice may go back to the ninth century and the very beginnings of polyphony, but the oldest surviving manuscripts date only from the twelfth century. He has isolated and partly transcribed an example of a polyphonic setting of the Gospel text from Matthew for the Mass of Epiphany preserved in a single manuscript in Geneva.<sup>61</sup> The Geneva manuscript has, in fact, two versions of the Epiphany Gospel - one is monophonic and the other polyphonic. In both, three singers are dressed in rich robes, wear crowns and process through the church impersonating the Magi before reading the Gospel. Afterwards they process through the church again. Thus a tiny liturgical play has formed around the dramatic reading of the Gospel. Not only was Sepet correct in seeing the dramatic possibilities in such readings, he is vindicated by this discovery of an acceptable liturgical play built around such a reading.

Göllner points out<sup>62</sup> that the rubrics of the Geneva manuscript are very sparse, but they are given in full in a manuscript from Besançon, the episcopal seat of the neighbouring diocese.<sup>63</sup> This source unfortunately lacks music. Göllner is tempted to relate these manuscripts because of the great similarity in their texts and, in fact, in the appendix to his article, he prints this edition of the Besançon play reconstructed with music from the Geneva manuscript,<sup>64</sup> indicating the ceremonial and sequences surrounding the performance of the Gospel setting in monophonic and polyphonic units. The only disappointing aspect of the polyphonal Gospel reading done by three singers impersonating the Magi is that, although they divide the reading up, they do not always sing relevant parts. They all do sing *Ecce stella* separately, and each sings about his own gift to the Christ-Child, but one of the kings sings part of Herod's speech *Ite et interrogate*, and the choir (cantores) usurps from the kings their words, *Et venimus adorare eum*. Nevertheless, Young includes this as a true play with its impersonation of the kings, their journey and the Adoration, and its stage-setting with its *stella* and altar-manger.<sup>65</sup> Thus the dramatic reading of the lessons, like antiphonal and responsorial singing, provided the context within which genuine drama arose.

### 3. Ecclesiastical Chants and Free Composition

Elements such as antiphonal singing and polyphonic Gospel reading provided the context for liturgical drama but they do not explain how that drama developed and grew. What made Gautier stop when he came to the 'trope of a trope'? The fact is that the tropes were the basic element of liturgical plays but they served mainly as a focal point around which to gather other liturgical, biblical, or even original material. Thus, some of

the music for these plays came from the hundreds of antiphons and responsories officially adopted by the Roman rite for specific occasions but put together in clever combinations for new plays. For example, the Fleury Play of the Innocents (see below) contains antiphons gleaned from Vespers for the Vigil of All Saints, Lauds in Advent, Good Friday and Innocents Day, and an antiphon from the Feast of the Assumption as well as the *Agnus Dei* of the Mass.<sup>66</sup> Ecclesiastical chants like the *Te Deum* were used, and hymns and sequences also provided source material for lyrical passages, although some lyrics or laments were invented for specific plays or imported from other plays.

Gautier was also astute in being aware of those 'véritables compositions originales du cerveau de certains clerics'. In the more complex of the liturgical dramas, there is usually evidence of free composition, by clever and creative clerks. In several Herod plays, whole scenes of dialogue for Herod with his messengers and soldiers are invented. Some of these plays also show that their authors had a knowledge of the classics. Hexameter lines from Virgil and short tags from Sallust appear in a few of the plays involving Herod. An examination of the catalogues of twelfth-century libraries for their holdings of ancient classics reveals that the popularity of Virgil was universal, and the histories of Sallust were held by twenty libraries in France alone.<sup>67</sup> The monks and clerks who composed the liturgical dramas were often very skilful in adapting their material. They introduced classical texts and secular music, religious or profane, although the Bible and the liturgy based on Biblical texts were always the underlying controlling factors. Very little use was made of abstract allegory or personified abstractions, the Christmas play from Benediktshuern being the only exception among the plays to be discussed in this chapter. 'As a whole, the genre of the

liturgical drama is a direct representational form which represents sacred story concretely by dramatic methods, without allegory or theology or didacticism.<sup>68</sup>

#### 4. The Music

It is a lamentable fact that of the seven hundred or more liturgical dramas which Karl Young discovered, transcribed and published in his two-volume *Drama of the Medieval Church*, only a score or so have ever been edited with their music. These plays were music-dramas, in which every word was sung, and William Smoldon rightly warned that 'any dogmatic statement made concerning these works, based on evidence drawn from a text, must be tested by reference to the accompanying musical setting. The latter evidence may confirm the textual conclusions, but occasionally, sometimes importantly, it confutes them.'<sup>69</sup> The most outstanding example of this was Smoldon's use of the relevant music to disprove several of Hardison's theories<sup>70</sup> concerning the origin of the *Quem quaeritis* trope and 'abbreviated form' theory.<sup>71</sup> The only scholar before Smoldon to take seriously the study of text and music together was Coussemaker, the pioneer musicologist in this field, who published transcriptions of twenty-two liturgical dramas in 1860.<sup>72</sup> At that time, however, 'Gregorian paleography was in its infancy (it was Coussemaker who first realized the basic principles of neume notation); the Benedictines of Solesmes had not begun to publish the results of their scholarly labours towards restoring the authentic melodies of the Roman liturgy; [and as Coussemaker was] denied the opportunity for comparisons such as access to a large number of manuscript versions would have afforded him, he made numerous errors of musical transcription.'<sup>73</sup> His book was, nevertheless, a great pioneering effort and a historical landmark and yet, a century later, no one has

continued his work.<sup>74</sup> The transcription of early medieval music is extremely difficult: music that was written in unheighted or roughly heighted neumes served merely as reminders to singers in the Middle Ages quite familiar with the melodies and are sometimes unfathomable to scholars reading them eight hundred years later. But careful and painstaking collaboration and comparison of manuscripts has revealed many of the musical subtleties to Smoldon, and his book on medieval music-drama, the culmination of his life's work, is awaited with great interest. He has revealed one important finding that is particularly relevant to a study of Herod plays. Although Young, and Hardison, point out the similarity of the Shepherds' Christmas trope to the text of the *Quem quaeritis* Introit of the Easter Mass, and suggest deliberate imitation, Smoldon has discovered that there is no link between their melodies at all.<sup>75</sup> He did find an interesting exception to this: the Rouen *Officium Pastorum*<sup>76</sup> and the Herod play from the Fleury Playbook both follow the Easter music for the *Quem quaeritis* trope addressed to the shepherd. These two French manuscripts share other similarities which could not be coincidental and so Smoldon was convinced that the Herod music-drama written out in the Fleury Playbook came originally from Rouen in Normandy, another example, as he commented, of music revealing an unsuspected relationship.<sup>77</sup>

This is a valuable kind of information. But one would also like to know, for example, if the music of the liturgical drama is expressive of the text or whether it merely imitates other set ecclesiastical chants. Some of the plays were largely original compositions. Did Herod's music then reflect his anger and rage? Did his messengers' music reflect their busyness? Several musicologists have singled out as particularly expressive a lament for Rachel which appears in the Fleury manuscript (see below). Grace Frank

has commented that another play in the same manuscript, a St. Nicholas play called *Filius Getronis*, shows great ingenuity in that each character in the play had his own 'motif'. Not only do the themes of each person differ, they also adapt themselves to the specific emotions of the varying characters and circumstances.<sup>78</sup> Smoldon, in fact, prints six of these tunes, and points out that the different characters always sing their own melodies with two deliberate exceptions: the Consolers show their sympathy with Euphrosina, the boy's mother, by singing her melody to comfort her, and Adeodatus, the young boy, once uses his mother's melody when he is singing about his feelings of homesickness.<sup>79</sup> He refers to a similar use of 'Leitmotif' in the twelfth-century French vernacular *Sponsus* play,<sup>80</sup> and most scholars agree that the music for the Beauvais *Daniel* play is extremely well-developed.<sup>81</sup> These comments are fascinating but cover only an infinitesimal fraction of the field.

Of all the Magi-Herod dramas printed by Young, only two manuscripts have been published with their music.<sup>82</sup> The Herod plays from the Fleury Playbook have been printed at least three times, with the music,<sup>83</sup> and were performed in 1963 at the Cloisters in New York. One other play, not included by Young, has also been printed with its music.<sup>84</sup> For the others, only the libretto of the music-drama has been transcribed and so one is forced to rely on the text alone for a regrettably incomplete study of these Latin music-dramas.

#### B. Herod Plays: Plays Close to the Liturgy

The earliest liturgical drama noted by Young, *Visitatio Sepulchri*, developed from the *Quem quaeritis* trope of the Introit to Easter Mass. This Easter trope served as a textual model for a similar Christmas trope sung by shepherds and midwives instead of the three Marys and the angel.

This trope, like the Easter one, developed into a fuller dramatic performance, with impersonation, costumes and action, when it was sung at the end of Matins rather than in the Introit of the Christmas Mass. However, not many of these Christmas plays, called *Officium Pastorum*, seem to have been written. Certainly, very few survive. Much more impressive in number, and quality, of Christmas plays are the dramas which developed around the Feast of the Epiphany to celebrate the coming of the Magi and the presentation of their gifts to the Christ-Child. Many of the Epiphany plays expanded to include incidents with the shepherds, whom the Magi met as they approached Bethlehem, the shepherds having just left that city. The plays also expanded to include the Magi's visit to the court of Herod the Great where they came in contact with Herod's entourage of messengers, soldiers, scribes and even his son. These Epiphany plays are found in a great variety of ecclesiastical service books, and often appear as part of the liturgy with no special titles. Occasionally they are referred to as *Officium Stellae* (Montpellier)<sup>85</sup> or *Officium Regum Trium* (Rouen)<sup>86</sup> or *Ordo Stellae* (Laon),<sup>87</sup> terms which clearly reflect their association with Epiphany and the star which led the Three Kings to Christ. As some of the plays became less liturgical and more dramatic, their titles reflected a greater interest in other aspects: thus *Versus ad Herodem Faciendum* (Sicily)<sup>88</sup> and *Ordo ad Representandum Herodem* (Fleury Playbook)<sup>89</sup> and *Representatio Herodis in Nocte Epyphanie* (Padua).<sup>90</sup> It is clear that in some plays the centre of dramatic interest 'becomes less and less the visit of the Magi to the manger at Bethlehem, and more and more the occurrences at the court of Herod'.<sup>91</sup> It is the purpose of this chapter to trace the appearances of Herod in liturgical drama and to note the original contributions of the church authors to the treatment of his character as a dramatic personality,

A full appreciation of their originality is impossible, however, without a knowledge of how they were using the antiphons and responsories of the official liturgy. Sometimes they simply inserted certain elements of the liturgy (text and music) exactly as they appeared in the Mass or the Divine Office; at other times the playwrights would weave together antiphons and responsories from various Feasts and Offices, and adapt these liturgical elements to their own dramatic purposes; and finally, they contributed free compositions to their plays sometimes by imitating the plain-chant they knew and sometimes by introducing secular music and texts. About thirty plays, and fragments of plays, survive which centre on the Epiphany or the Massacre of the Innocents. Herod appears in most of them. It is impossible to deal with each play separately in this chapter, but for ease of reference all of them have been listed, in a roughly chronological order, in the following table. Attention will be centred in the text on certain of these plays in an effort to show how they are related to the liturgy and also how they reflect the originality which their authors contributed towards the development of their theme, and particularly towards the characterization of Herod the Great.



fragment

- Karl Young, The Drama of the Medieval Church, Vol.II.

TABLE OF EPIPHANY PLAYS (It may be assumed that all plays contain parts for the Magi, Midwives, and Angel).

	Date	Location	Provenance	Type of Service Book	Place in Liturgy	Neumes	Modern Edition	Herod	Attendants messengers, armiger, etc.	Scribes	Archelaus	Shepherds	Use of Sword	Book thrown down	Use of Hexameter	Use of Classical Latin
1.	11th Cent.	Paris, Bibl. Mazarine MS 1708, f. 81v	Nevers	Liber Responsalis	Matins of Epiphany	North French (no lines)	Y. 50 - 51	X	—	—	—	—	—	—	X	—
2.	11 C (c. 1060)	Paris, Bib. Nat. MS lat. 9449, f. 17v - 18r	Nevers	Troper	Matins for first Sun after Christmas	North French (no lines)	Y. 439	X	—	—	—	—	—	—	X	—
3.	11 C	Paris, Bib. Nat. MS lat. 16819, f. 49r - 49v	Compiègne	Lectionary	After sermon for Epiphany	Metz neumes	Y. 53 - 56	X	X	X	—	—	—	—	X	—
4. f.	10 C - 11 C	Paris Bib. Nat. MS lat. 1152, upper half of fly leaf at end.	Compiègne	—	—	—	Y. 443	X	X	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5. f.	11 C	Rome, Bibl. Vatic. MS lat. 8552, f. 1v	Malmédy, in Belgium	—	—	Metz neumes	Y. 443 - 95	X	X	X	—	—	—	—	X	—
6. f.	11 C	Lambach Monastery - half page, out lengthwise	Lambach	Ordinarium	—	—	Schiffmann, K., <u>Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Litterature</u> , Vol.31 (1907) pp.15-16	X	—	X	—	—	—	—	—	—
7.	11 C	Munich, Staats. Bibl. MS lat. 6264a f. 1r (defective)	Freising	Miscellany	—	German neumes	Y. 92 - 97	X	X	X	—	X	X	X	X	Sallust Virgil

Date	Location	Provenance	Type of Service Book	Place in Liturgy	Neumes	Modern Edition	Herod	Attendants messengers, armiger, etc.	Scribes	Archelaus	Shepherds	Use of Sword	Book thrown down	Use of Hexameter	Use of Classical Latin
11 C	Madrid, Bibl. Nac., MS 288, f. 168 - 170	Le Mans	Troper	-----	North French neumes without lines	Lipphardt, W. "Das Herodesspiel von Le Mans," pp.110-12	X	X	X	-----	X	-----	-----	X	-----
12 C	Madrid, Bibl. Nac., MS 289 f. 107v-110r	Palermo, Sicily (Norman - French)	Troper	After Matins of Epiphany	Norman neumes with lines (transcribed by Lipphardt)	Y. 59 - 62	X	X	X	-----	X	-----	-----	X	-----
12 C	----- Martene, E., <u>De Antiquis Ecclesie Ritibus</u> , Vol.III, p.44	Limoges	Ordinarium	After Offertory, before Oblation	-----	Y. 34 - 35	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
12 C	Paris, Bib. Nat., MS n.a. lat.1235 f. 198r-199v (text is disordered; A & B versions)	Nevers	Gradual and Troper	Matins	North French, on four lines, red and yellow	Y. 440 - 41	X	X	X	-----	-----	-----	-----	X	-----
12 C (c. 1200)	London, Brit. Lib. Add. 23922 f. 8r - 11r	Strassburg	Responsory	Vespers of octave of Epiphany?	German neumes, no lines	Y. 64 - 66	X	X	X	-----	X	-----	-----	X	Virgil Sallust
12 C	----- Jean d'Avranches abp. of Rouen	Rouen	<u>Liber de Officiis Ecclesiasticis</u>	After Terce	Neumes (transcribed)	Migne, PL 147 cols. 135-40	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
12 C	Montpellier Bibl. de la Fac. Med., MS H 304 f. 41r - 42v	Montpellier	Miscellany	Matins?	-----	Y. 68 - 72	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Virgil
12 C	Brussels, Bibl. des Bollandistes MS 299, f. 179v - 180v	Bilsen, in Belgium	Gospel Book	-----	Lorraine notation (careless) no lines	Y. 75 - 80	X	X	X	-----	X	X	Book taken away but not thrown down	X	Virgil
f. 12 C	Munich Staats.Bibl. MS lat 14477	-----	-----	-----	Neumes	Y. 445	X	X	X	-----	-----	-----	-----	X	-----





TABLE OF RACHEL AND MASSACRE PLAYS

Date	Location	Provenance	Type of Service Book	Place in Liturgy	Neumes	Modern Edition
11 C - 12 C	Paris, Bib. Nat. MS lat. 1139 f. 32v - 33r	Limoges	Troper	A trope of a sequence for the Feast of the Innocents	?	Y. 109 - 10
11 C - 12 C	Munich Staats. Bibl. MS lat. 6264 f. 27v	Freising	Lectionary	Matins	Neumes	Y. 117 - 20
12 C	Orleans, Bibl. de la Ville MS 201 pp. 214-20	Fleury	Miscellany	Matins	North French square no- tation on four lines (transcribed)	Y. 110 - 113
13 C	Laon (see above)					
13 C	Benediktbeuern (see above)					
14 C	Rouen, Bibl. de la Ville MS 384 f. 28	Rouen	Ordinarium	Matins of Feast of the Holy Innocents	-----	Migne, PL 147 cols. 135 - 36
15 C	Paris, Bib. Nat. MS lat. 1213 pp. 25 - 27	Rouen	Ordinarium	-----	-----	Young, "A Contribution to the History of Liturgical Drama at Rouen" <u>Modern Philology</u> Vol. 6 (1908)

1. The *Lamentatio Rachelis* from St. Martial at Limoges

The first text to be considered, the *Lamentatio Rachelis* from St. Martial at Limoges, has been chosen because it is so closely related to the liturgy. The appropriate responsory *Sub altare Dei* from the Feast of the Holy Innocents is chanted, and the lament of Rachel which immediately follows may be considered a trope of the responsory.<sup>92</sup> This dramatic trope exists in the eleventh or twelfth century Troper from St. Martial at Limoges.<sup>93</sup> It takes the form of a dialogue between Rachel and a comforting angel and appears immediately after the responsory for Holy Innocents Day sung after the second lesson (see Young II, p.109). Young includes this trope in his chapter on liturgical drama about the Massacre of the Innocents, but describes it as a 'dramatic poem' (p.110) rather than a miniature play. There is no indication of impersonation and the responsory remains intact exactly as it is sung in the liturgy; the dialogue inherent in the responsory is not extracted and made the centre of any new dramatic action.<sup>94</sup> Instead, the responsory is troped by having two new and original speeches added to it, a lament by Rachel, who represents the sorrowing mothers mourning the death of the Innocents, and the consolation of an angel who attempts to comfort her. Rachel's moving lament takes the form of a nine-line stanza, each line having twelve syllables. Most of the lines have internal rhyme and the whole stanza rhymes: aa bb ccc dd. The angel answers in a shorter stanza of ten-syllable lines which have a regular rhyme scheme but are also punctuated by the refrain *Ergo gaude*. (Gautier points out that tropes usually started as prose, but a tendency to turn them to verse quickly made itself apparent. This same tendency revealed itself in the writing of hexameter lines into the newly developing plays.)<sup>95</sup> Young preferred to see this composition as a dramatic trope or a dramatic

poem, but Gautier, an expert on tropes, was more impressed by its qualities as drama. 'Le repons des Saints Innocents est accompagné, dans un manuscrit de Saint-Martial, d'une sorte de petit drame dont il faut faire estime comme d'un document notable dans l'histoire des origines de notre théâtre.' (p.168) He has reservations about calling it a trope at all, but he reluctantly presents it as such. Herod was not directly involved in this example, although he is indirectly alluded to in the text; but this play shows the trope-cum-dramatic-poem-cum-miniature-play at an interesting stage before the Herod scenes begin to develop.

## 2. The Rouen Plays

More than a score of Epiphany plays survive and their relationship with the liturgy can easily be examined. The play from Limoges<sup>96</sup> occurs 'Cantato offertorio, antequam eant ad offerendam' and is a dramatization of the oblation of the Mass, relying almost entirely on antiphons and hymns from the liturgy although the opening processional is taken from a 'prosula' or sequence. The play from Besançon,<sup>97</sup> referred to above, occurs immediately before the reading of the Gospel and culminates in a semi-dramatic tripartite reading of the Epiphany Gospel by three clerics dressed to resemble the Magi in richly coloured robes, wearing gold crowns and accompanied by attendants bearing their gifts. These plays both occur during the Mass and rely closely on the liturgy or the Gospel for their content. A group of manuscripts from Rouen, ranging from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries,<sup>98</sup> all preserve Epiphany plays which are still loosely linked with the Mass: they were performed after Terce and the Three Kings then directed the ceremonial of the Mass that followed. Nevertheless, they developed into real drama, with a large amount of original dialogue and music. One of these manuscripts (Paris, Bib. Nat. MS lat. 904) contains

the music in square notation, and when studied with another of the manuscripts which has particularly full rubrics (Rouen, Bibl. de la Ville, MS 384), it provides an excellent example of liturgical drama in its simplest form. The musicologist Smoldon, after studying both text and music, concluded that the Rouen drama represents 'the core of the whole *Magi* series',<sup>99</sup> and includes all the original speech and music which is found in other extant Epiphany plays, with alterations at times. However, the Rouen dramas are relatively late, and quite conservative, in that they do not include any incidents in which Herod is concerned. In order to follow the development of earlier drama and also to assess the part that Herod played, it is necessary to turn to other plays. However, Coussemaker's edition of the Rouen drama is inserted here for reference (Coussemaker, pp. 242-46).



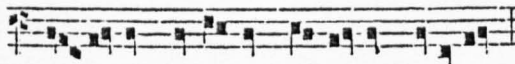
## XVI.

## LES TROIS ROIS.

D'après le même Manuscrit, f° 28, v°.

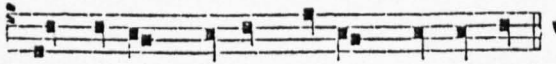
*In die Epiphaniæ, Tercia cantata, TRES CLERICI de majori sede cappis et coronis ornati, ex tribus partibus cum suis famulis, tunicis et amictis intulit ante altare convenient.*

*PRIMUS stans retro altare, quasi ab Oriente veniens, stellam baculo ostendat, dicat simplici voce :*



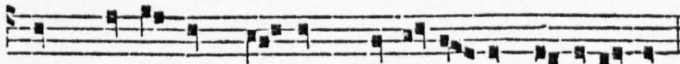
Stel- la fulgo-re ni-mi-o ruti-lat.

*SECUNDUS a parte dextera veniens :*



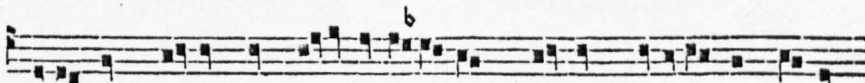
Que re-gem regum natum demonstrat.

*TERCIUS a sinistra parte veniens, dicat versum :*

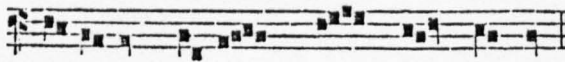


Quem ventu-rum o-lim propheci-a signave-rat.

*Tunc regressi, ante altare aggregati osculentur sese, simul dicentes versum :*



E-a-mus er-go et in-quiramus e-um, offe-rentes e-i



mune-ra : au-rum, thus et myrrham.

*Hoc finito, eat processio ut in dominicis, CANTORE incipiente :*



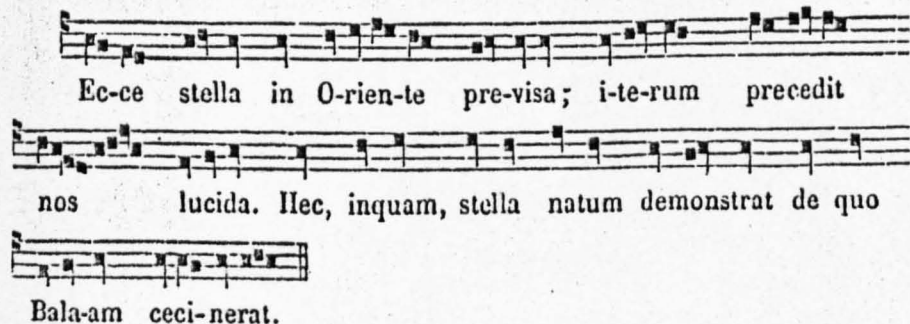
Magi ve-niunt ab O-ri-ente, Jero-so-limam queren-  
 tes et di- cen- tes : U- bi est qui na- tus est,  
 cu- jus stellam - vi- di- mus ; et veni- mus a-do-  
 rare Domi- num.

*Versus :*



Cum natus esset Jhesus in Bethleem Jude in di-  
 e-bus He-rodus re- gis, ecce magi ab O-riente vene-runt Je-  
 ro-soli- mam, di-cen- tes : U- bi est ?

*Ad introitum navis ecclesie, MAGI ostendentes stellam cum baculis, incipiant antiphonam et cantantes pergant ad altare, dicentes :*

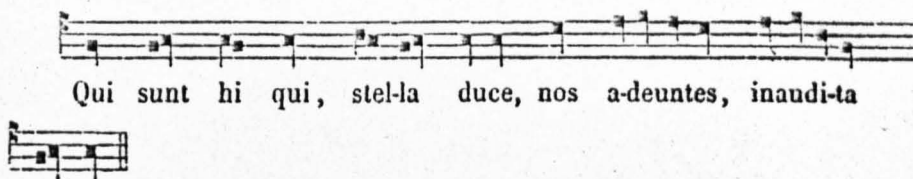


Ec-ce stella in O-rien-te pre- visa ; i-te-rum precedit  
 nos lucida. Hec, inquam, stella natum demonstrat de quo  
 Bala-am ceci-nerat.

*Versus :*


Ori- tur stel-la ex Jacob, et e-xurget homo de I-sra-  
hel et confringet o-mnes du-ces a-li-e-ni-genarum, et e-rit  
o-mnis ter-ra possessio e-jus.

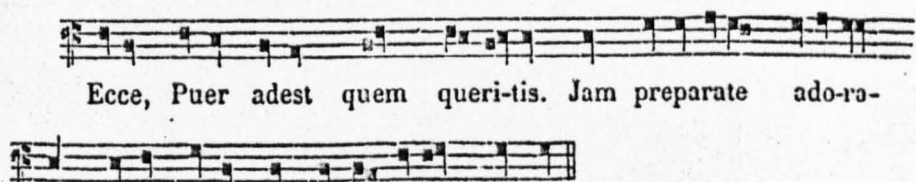
*Hoc finito, duo de majori sede dalmaticis induti in utraque parte altaris stantes, submissa voce inter se dicant :*



Qui sunt hi qui, stel-la duce, nos a-deuntes, inaudi-ta  
fe-runt?

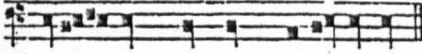
*Tunc MAGI respondeant :*


Nos sumus quos cernitis, re-ges Tharsis et A-rabum et  
Saba, do-na feren-tes Christo Regi nato, Domino, quem, stel-  
la deducen-te, adora-re ve-nimus.

*Tunc DUO DALMATICI, aperientes cortinam, dicant :*


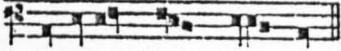
Ecce, Puer adest quem queri-tis. Jam preparate ado-ra-  
re, quia i-pse est redemptio mundi.

*Tunc procedentes simul REGES, ita saluent Puerum et dicant :*



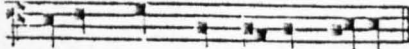
Sal- ve, princeps secu-lorum !

*Tunc PRIMUS offerat, ita dicens :*



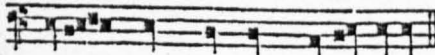
Suscipe, Rex, au- rum.

*SECUNDUS offerat, ita dicens :*



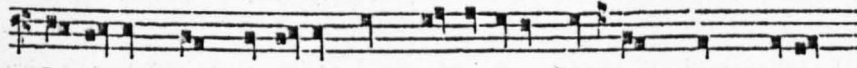
Tolle thus, tu ve-re Deus.

*Postea TERTIUS offerat, ita dicens :*

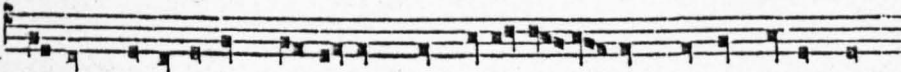


Myr- ram, signum sepul-ture.

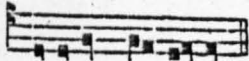
*Tunc orantibus Magis et quasi somno sopitis, QUIDAM PUER, alba indutus, quasi Angelus, antiphonam ante altare illis dicat :*



Im-pleta sunt o-mnia que prophètece di-cta sunt. I-te,

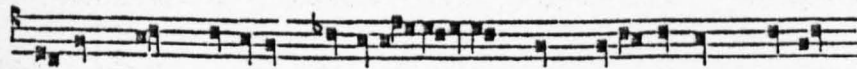


vi-am remeantes a-li-am, nec dela-to- res tanti regis pu-

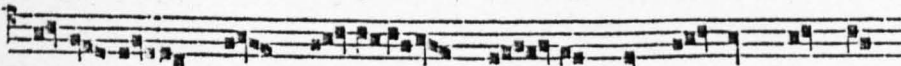


niendi e-ri-tis.

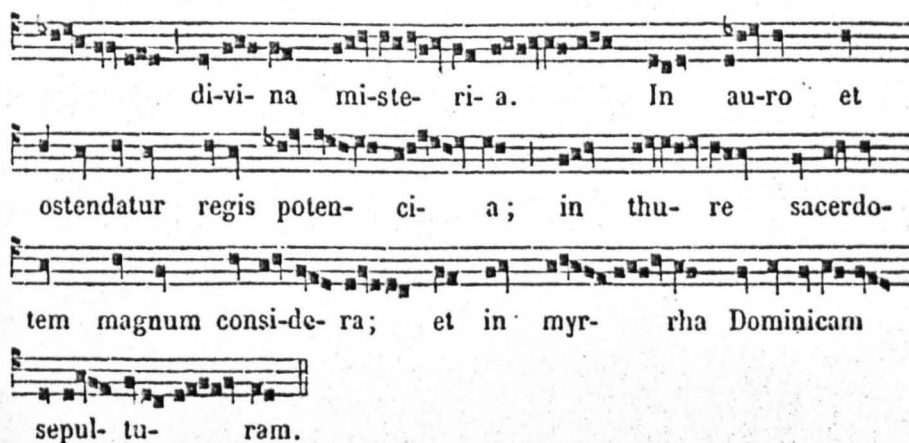
*Finita antiphona, CANTOR incipiat responsorium ad introitum chori :*



Tria sunt munera preci-o- sa que obtu-le-runt Magi



Do-mi-no in di-e i- sta, et ha-bent in se



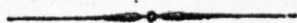
di-vi-na mi-ste-ri-a. In au-ro et  
ostendatur regis poten- ci- a; in thu- re sacerdo-  
tem magnum consi-de- ra; et in myr- rha Dominicam  
sepul- tu- ram.

*Versus :*



Salutis nostre auctorem Magi venerati sunt in cuna-  
bu-lis et de thesau-ris su-is misticas e-i mune-rum  
speci-es ob-tu-le- runt. In au-ro, etc.

*Sequitur Missa, ad quam tres Reges regant chorum qui cantent : Kyrie fons bonitatis, et Alleluia, et Agnus, et Sanctus festive. Officium incipiat.*



## C. Herod Plays: Eleventh Century

## 1. The Play from Nevers

A very early and relatively simple play, in which the Magi's meeting with Herod is enacted, is preserved in a book of Responsories from the cathedral of Nevers.<sup>100</sup> The play follows the ninth responsory of Epiphany, *Rex magnus natus est*, and ends with the *Te Deum* of Matins:

Finitis lectionibus, lubeat Domnus Presul preparare tres clericos in trium transfiguratione Magorum, quos preparatos terque a presule uocatos ita: Venite; pergant ante altare hunc uersum dicentes:

Stella fulgore nimio rutilat,  
que regem regum natum monstrat,  
quem uenturum olim prophetie signauerant.

Quo finito, uerso eorum uultu ad populum pergant usque ad Regem. Dicant hunc uersum:

Eamus ergo et inquiramus eum, offerentes ei munera: aurum, thus, et myrram.

Quibus respondens Rex dicat:

Regem quem queritis, natum esse quo signo didicistis? Si illum regnare creditis, dicite nobis.

Adcontra ipsi:

Illum natum esse didicimus in oriente stella monstr(an)te.

Quo audito, dicat iterum Rex:

Ite et de puero diligenter inuestigate,  
Et inuentum redeuntes michi renuntiate.

Accepta licentia, pergant:

Ecce stella in oriente preuisa iterum preueniet. Vidimus stellam eius in oriente, et agnouimus regem regum natum esse.

Quibus respondeant Custodes ita:

Qui sunt hi qui, stella duce, nos adeuntes inaudita ferentes?

Atcontra ipsi:

Nos sumus, quos cernitis, reges Tarsis et Arabum et Saba dona ferentes Christo, Regi, nato Domino, quem, stella deducente, uenimus adorare.

Ostendentibus illis Imaginem dicant:

Ecce puer adest quem queritis; iam properate, adorate, quia ipse est redemptio uestra.

Quorum Magorum unus offerens aurum dicat:

Salue, Rex seculorum, suscipe nunc aurum.

Et secundus offerens thus dicat:

Tolle thus, tu uerus Deus.

Necnon tercius (offerens) mirram dicat:

Mirram, signum sepulture.

His itaque gestis, dicat puer stans in excelso loco:

Impleta sunt omnia que propheticè dicta sunt. Ite, uiam remeantes aliam, ne delatores tanti regis puniendi eritis.

Omnibus peractis, dicat presul *Te Deum laudamus*.

The manuscript provides music in the form of Northern French neumes, without lines: neumes without lines, whether heightened or unheightened, are extremely difficult to decipher and, so far as I know, the music of this manuscript has not yet been transcribed. Unfortunately this means that only the text is available for study, and so half of the evidence is missing in any attempt to determine which parts of the drama use traditional liturgical elements and which are original. The texts do give some indication, however.

Three clerics, having been costumed by the bishop as Magi, proceed towards the main altar singing *Stella fulgore nimio*. This three-line verse is a free adaptation of the antiphon sung at Lauds on Epiphany:

Stella ista sicut flamma coruscat, et regem regum  
Deum demonstrat. Magi eam viderunt, et Regi  
munera obtulerunt. 101

The antiphon (see facsimile) has not been slavishly adapted but rather seems only to have provided inspiration. The wording in the play is original, and it reappears in almost every other surviving Epiphany play, where it is usually divided into three parts so that each King has a line. In analyzing the Rouen play, Smoldon concluded that not only the wording, but also the music for these speeches, was probably original.<sup>102</sup> As the text of the Rouen play is identical to that of Nevers, it is not unreasonable to assume that the Nevers music was probably original and probably similar to that of Rouen, included above.<sup>103</sup>

After singing this first verse, at the high altar, the Magi turn to face the congregation and then proceed *ad Regem*, to Herod, who presumably had a *sedes* or throne somewhere between the high altar and the nave, perhaps near the choir screen. As they process, the Magi sing *Eamus ergo*. Again, this is taken from an antiphon in Lauds of Epiphany (see facsimile):

Magi viderunt stellam, dixerunt ad invicem: hoc  
signum magni Regis est; eamus et inquiramus eum,  
et offeramus ei munera: aurum, thus, et myrrham. 104

À Mirabile mysteriū.

A DVEST

À Tecum principii Carel. R Tria sunt mun. INIŪ.

À Tribus miraculis ornatum diem sanctum colimus hodie stella  
magos duxit ad presepium hodie vinum ex aqua factum est  
ad nuptias hodie a iohanne xpictae baptulari voluit ut salua  
ret nos aeterna. **ITEM ANTIPHONAE UNDE SUPRA.**

À Videntes stellam magi gausi sunt gaudio magno & intrantes  
domum obtulerunt domino aurum thuf & myrram. **Yoi**

À Vidimus stellam eius in oriente & uenimus eum muneribus adorare **ob**

À Stella ista sicut flamma coruscet & regem regum deum demonstrat  
magi eam viderunt & xpicto regi munera obtulerunt **Yil**

À Ab oriente venerunt magi ut in bethleem adorarent dominum  
& captis thesauris suis pretiosa munera obtulerunt aurum  
sicut regi magno. Thuf sicut deo vero Myrram sepulture eius aeterna **we**

À Fontes aquarum sanctificati sunt xpicto aparente in gloria or  
biterrarum. Hauritis aquas de fonte salutaris sancti ficant  
enim nunc omnem et excuram xpictae deus noster **u**



ū Reges tharsis & insule munera offerent reges arabum & saba

dona adducunt **FRATRES IN MAT̄ LAUDIBVS.**

**A** ANTE LUCIFERUM GINIVS ET ANTE SAECULA DOMINUS SAL

uator noster hodie mundo apparuit **A** Venit lum̄ tuū.

**A** Apertis thesauris suis obtulerunt magi domino aurum thus &

myrram ac uia **V** domino ac uia

**A** Maria & flumina benedicite domino ymnum dicite fortiter

**A** Magi videntes stellam dixerunt ad inuicem hoc signum mag

ni regis est eamus & inquiramus eum & offeramus ei munera

aurum thus & myrram **IN EVANḠ.**

**A** Bodie celesti sponso iuncta est ecclesia quoniam in iordane la

uit xpicte eius erumna currunt cum munerib; magi ad rega

les nuptias & de aqua facta vino lactantur conuiuij ac uia

**A** Lux de luce apparuisti xpicte cui magi **A** D C U R S V S.

munera offerunt ac uia ac uia ac uia **A** Ante luciferū genē.

**A** Ecce nomen domini emmanuel quod adnuntiatum est p̄ gabri

belem hodie apparuit in israhel p̄ mariam virginem magnam ex

ū Caeli aperta sunt super eum & vox patris audita est. Hic EST

Ŕ Omnes de saba veniunt aurum & thus deferentes & laudem

domino ad merciantes. **V** dona ad ducunt. Et laudem

ū Reges tharsis & insule munera offerent regi sarabum & saba

Ŕ Stella quam viderunt magi in oriente ante eadebat eos

donec venirent ad locum ubi puer erat videntes autem

eam gausi sunt gaudio magno

ū Intrantes domum inuenerunt puerum cum maria ma

tro eius & proidentes adorauerunt eum. **GAUSI**

Ŕ Interrogabat magos herodes quod signum vidistis super na

tiam regem stellam magnam fulgentem cuius splendor

illuminat mundum & nos cognouimus & venimus adorare

dominum. **ū** Magi veniunt ab oriente inquirentes faciem. **oii. Eios.**

Ŕ Omnis terra adorabit te & psallat tibi psalmum **IN. II. NOCT.**

dicat in omni tuo domine. **Ŕ. labilate dō.**

Ŕ Reges tharsis & insule munera offerent regi domino. **Ŕ. Ds vid.**

Ŕ Omnis gens quaequam fecisti venient & adorabunt coram te **oie. Ŕ. Incti.**

In this case, the latter half of the antiphon has been followed quite closely, as it was perfectly appropriate for the action of the play. The first half, however, has been omitted as it would have been inappropriate to have the Magi talk about themselves in the third person.

The next scene in the play involves a rather abrupt interview of the Magi by Herod, an interview, however, which has Scriptural authority.

The verses in the Vulgate are from Matthew 2:7-9:

Tunc Herodes clam vocatis Magis diligenter didicit ab eis tempus stellae, quae apparuit eis: et mittens illos in Bethlehem, dixit: Ite, et interrogate diligenter de puero; et cum inveneritis, renuntiate mihi, ut et ego veniens adorem eum. Qui cum audissent regem, abierunt, et ecce stella, quam viderant in oriente, antecedebat eos, usque dum veniens staret supra, ubi erat puer.

The interview is mentioned, and Herod's parting command is quoted, but nothing of his precise questions or of the Magi's answers. The question arises as to what sources the playwright used. This time, a responsory from the second nocturn of Epiphany Matins has served as an inspiration (see facsimile):

Interrogabat magos Herodes: Quod signum vidistes super natum Regem? Stellam magnam fulgentem, cujus splendor illuminat mundum; et nos cognovimus, et venimus adorare Dominum.  
*Vers.* Magi veniunt ab Oriente inquirentes faciem Domini, et dicentes: Et nos [cognovimus] .105

This may in turn have been inspired by the apocryphal gospel by James, the *Protevangelium*.<sup>106</sup> In any case, Herod's first speech in the Nevers play is a blending of several elements. The first part, *Regem quem quaeritis*, echoes, of course, the well-known Easter and Christmas Introit tropes *Quem quaeritis*. This question is completed by an adaptation of the Epiphany responsory with its reference to Herod's question about the sign by which the Magi learned of the birth of a new king.<sup>107</sup>

Herod's next question in the Nevers play seems to be an original contribution on the part of the playwright since there is no known source:

Si illum regnare creditis, dicite nobis.

This is an ideal statement for Herod to make. It reveals his pomposity and also his underlying concern, qualities which were emphasized in the Vulgate and in the patristic writings (which were read as part of the lessons of Matins), but never before so aptly articulated. And all this is free composition, according to Smoldon.<sup>108</sup> This question, the Magi's reply, and Herod's command that they seek out the child and then bring him word, form the basis of the court scene in all subsequent plays. Smoldon has transcribed Herod's question:<sup>109</sup>

Re-gem quem quæ-ri-tis na-tum es-se quo si-gno di-di-ci-stis? Si il-lum re-gna-re

cre-di-tis, di-ci-te no-bis.

Ex. 70 (ii)

Re - gem quem quæ - ri - tis na - tum es - se quo si - gno di - di -

- ci - - stis? Si il - lum re - gna - re cre - di - tis, di - ci - te no - bis.

(By what sign have ye learned that the King ye seek is born? If ye believe that he reigneth, tell us.)

The Magi's answer to this question is not really appropriate.<sup>110</sup> They mention the star rather than giving any proof of their own faith. Their answer is, in fact, an adaptation of two sources, the Vulgate (Matt.2:2):

Ubi est qui natus est rex Judaeorum?  
 Vidimus enim stellam eius in oriente,  
 et venimus adorare eum.

and the antiphon from Lauds:

Vidimus stellam ejus in Oriente, et venimus cum muneribus  
 adorare Dominum.<sup>111</sup>

Herod's next command to them is also based on the Vulgate but it is not a direct quotation, in spite of the fact that a dialogue is given for him in Matthew 2:8: 'Ite, et interrogate diligenter de puero: et cum inveneritis, renuntiate mihi ut ego veniens adorem eum'. Instead, the playwright has turned it into two rhyming hexameter lines, giving more evidence of his originality, learning and literary sophistication.

Ite et de puero diligenter investigate  
 Et inventum redeuntes michi renuntiate.

The Magi then leave Herod and process to the *praesepe*, perhaps somewhere in the nave, singing *Ecce stella*, an adaptation of Matthew 2:2 and 2:8 quoted above.

The next scene involves a dialogue between the Magi and the *Custodes*; this is an unusual term for the more common term *mulières* or *obstetrices*, whose role was generally interpreted to be the apocryphal midwives. Their appearance in Epiphany plays paralleled their appearance in Christmas plays. They have no Scriptural or patristic justification for being in this play, but as Young comments, their appearance probably 'arises from demands of stagecraft. Speakers being needed for a conversation with the Magi at the manger, the writer adopted for this role the midwives from the tradition of Christmas.'<sup>112</sup> They stop the Magi and ask *Qui sunt hi*. This first question seems to have no direct source, and may therefore be considered original. The second utterance of the midwives is obviously based on their conversation with the shepherds and the Christmas trope,<sup>113</sup> reflecting both *Quem quaeritis* and *Adest hic parrulus* in their statement

to the Magi, *Ecce puer adest quem quaeritis*. Their further admonition to the shepherds in the Christmas trope:

Nunc euntes dicite quia natus est  
is reflected in their sentence to the Magi:

Iam properate, adorate, quia ipse  
est redempti vestra.

In this case the Epiphany play is adapting tropes from Christmas plays and these, in turn, seem to have been modelled on the Easter Introit tropes.

The Magi identify themselves by using the Psalm-verse which quickly became associated with the New Testament Magi and was in fact used in the offertory of the Mass of Epiphany.

Reges Tharsis et insulae munera offerent; Reges  
Arabum et Saba dona adducent.<sup>114</sup>

The play reaches its climax when the Magi present their gifts to the Christ-Child. Each one speaks in turn, naming his gift and also its symbolic significance. This interpretation of the Magi's gifts was known as early as the second century when Irenaeus (c.130 - c.200) wrote:

Myrrham quidem, quod ipse erat, qui pro mortali  
humano genere moreretur et sepeliretur; aurum vero,  
quoniam Rex, cujus regni finis non est; thus vero,  
quoniam Deus, qui et notus in Judaea factus est, et  
manifestus eis qui non quaerebant eum.<sup>115</sup>

It was incorporated into the Roman liturgy where it appeared as an antiphon of Epiphany:

Ab Oriente venerunt Magi in Bethlehem adorare  
Dominum; et a portis thesauris suis, pretiosa  
munera obtulerunt, aurum sicut regi magno, thus  
sicut Deo vero, myrrha sepulturae ejus, alleluia.<sup>116</sup>

This was the standard interpretation of the Magi's gifts throughout the Middle Ages, reappearing much later in the vernacular mystery plays.

In the Nevers play the first king greets the new king, *Salve, Rex seculorum*

and then presents his gift; the other two kings name their gifts and the significance of these gifts in short, simple, dignified statements, which again form a model for all subsequent plays.

The Nevers play ends with the appearance of the angel announcing that all has happened as was prophesied, and warning the Magi to return home another way lest they fall into Herod's hands. The angel's first sentence is not closely modelled on the Vulgate, but was a 'formula of a somewhat conventional nature'.<sup>117</sup> The concluding sentence is an adaptation of Matthew 2:12:

Et responso accepto in somnis ne redirent ad Herodem,  
per aliam viam reversi sunt in regionem suam.

The play ends with the singing of the *Te Deum laudamus*, an indication that it was performed at the end of Matins.

This play is still quite closely tied to the liturgy, but not in a slavish way. At times the author quotes antiphons, responsories, Psalms, and the Vulgate fairly accurately, but he was more likely to adapt these sources to his own purpose. He occasionally contributed some free composition of his own - Herod's bold challenge to the Magi to prove their belief in the new king to him is an example of his creative approach to this type of drama. Herod is otherwise quiet and sedate, appearing alone with no attendants, not even the high priests and scribes. They were not long in making an appearance, however.

## 2. The Play from Compiègne

In all other versions of the Epiphany play in which Herod appears, he is accompanied by his courtly entourage. As he was King of Judaea at the time of Christ's birth, and referred to in the Vulgate, apocryphal gospels and patristic writings as a powerful tyrant, it was a natural

development for dramatists to surround him with advisors and attendants when he appeared in the plays. This increased his role and developed dramatically some of his other characteristics, including his anger, which writers had emphasized throughout the centuries. An anonymous early Greek writer had stressed Herod's unreasonable anger:

Quid agit incensata ira tua, Herodes? Si non credis  
verbis quae magi dixerunt de rege futuro, quare sine  
cause insanis in pueros? si autem credis verum  
esse quod dictum est de puero et de stella, iterum  
dico, quare sine causa insanis in pueros? numquid  
potes tu mutare sententiam Dei, aut perdere illum,  
quem Deus defendit?<sup>118</sup>

St. Augustine (354 - 430) stressed the same quality in Herod, his cruel and savage anger:

Quid times, Herodes? Quid maligna mente turbaris?  
Si salutem tuam sapias: ille natus est per quem  
regnum Dei videas. Quid saevis? Quid occidis  
infantes? Quid aetatem innoxiam noxius insectaris?<sup>119</sup>

In the eleventh-century play from Compiègne, Herod 'begins to disclose those traits of pomposity, impetuosity and violence which promise well both for dramatic conflict and for comedy'.<sup>120</sup> At the same time the writer has drawn upon various parts of the liturgy, and Vulgate, as well as ecclesiastical poetry, for the basis of the play. It is longer than the Nevers version, but is quoted here in full so that a comparison may be easily made and the different approach to the same material more fully appreciated. The text survives with neumes, but very little of the music has been transcribed.<sup>121</sup>

Primvs:

Stella fulgore nimio rutilat.

Secundvs veniens a meridie:

Que regem regum natum monstrat.

Tertivs ab avstrali parte:

Quem uenturum olim prophetia signauerat.

Postea dant oscvla inuicem; deinceps dicunt:

Eamus ergo et inquiramus eum, offerentes ei munera: aurum, tus,  
et mirram; quia scriptum didicimus: Adorabunt eum omnes reges,  
omnes gentes seruient ei.



Legati Regis ad Magos:

Principis edictu, reges, prescire uenimus  
Quo sit directus hic uester et unde profectus.

Magi:

Regem quesitum duce stella significatum  
Munere prouiso properamus eum uenerando.

Nuntius:

En magi ueviunt,  
Et regem regum natum, stella duce, requirunt.

Iussvs Regis:

Ante uenire iube, ut possim singula scire  
Qui sint, cur ueniant, quo nos rumore requirant.

Iterum Legati ad Magos:

Reges eximii, prestante decore uerendi,  
Rex petit ad sese, placeant mandata, uenite.

Veniunt ante Regem. Osculatvs eos.

Regem quem queritis, natum esse quo signo didicistis?

Magi:

Illum natum esse didicimus in oriente stella monstrante.

Rex:

Si illum regnare creditis, dicite michi.

Magi:

Hunc regnare fatentes, cum mysticis muneribus de terra longinqua  
adorare uenimus, trinum Deum uenerantes tribus in muneribus.

Primvs:

Auro regem.

Secvndus:

Ture sacerdotem.

Tertivs:

Mirra mortalem.

Rex:

Huc, simiste mei, disertos pagina scribas prophetica ad me uocate.

Nvncii ad Scribas:

Vos, legis periti, a rege uocati cum prophetarum libris properando  
uenite.

Rex:

O uos scribe, interrogati dicite si quid de hoc puero scriptum  
uideretis in libro.

Scribe:

Vidimus, Domine, in prophetarum lineis quod manifeste scriptum est:  
Bethleem, non es minima in principibus Iuda, ex te enim exiet dux  
qui regat populum meum Israel; ipse enim saluum faciet populum suum  
a peccatis eorum.

Rex:

Ite et de puero diligenter inuestigate,  
Et inuento, redeuntes michi renuntiate.

Ter:

Ecce stella,  
Et ecce stella in oriente preuisa  
Iterum precedit nos lucida,  
Quam Balaam ex Iudaica  
Orituram dixerat prosapia;  
Que nostrorum oculos fulgoranti lumine perstrinxit pauidos lucida.

Ipsam simul congregiēdo sectantes non relinquamus ultra,  
Donec nos perducāt ad cunabula.

Mulieres:

Qui sunt hi qui, stella duce, nos adeuntes inaudita ferunt?

Magi:

Nos sumus, quos cernitis, reges Tharsis et Arabum et Saba, dona  
ferentes Christo, Regi, nato Domino, quem, stella deducēte,  
adorare uenimus.

Mulieres:

Ecce puer adest quem queritis; iam properantes adorate, quia  
ipse est redemptio mundi.

Magi:

Ave, Rex seculorum.

Primus:

Suscipe, Rex, aurum.

Secundus:

Tolle tus, tu uerus Deus.

Tertius:

Mirram, signum sepulture.

Angelus:

Impleta sunt omnia (quae propheticē dicta sunt. Ite, uiam  
remeantes aliam, ne delatores tanti regis puniendi eritis).

Nuncius ad Regem:

Delusus es, Domine; magi uiam redierunt aliam.

Armiger:

Decerne, domine, uindicari iram tuam, et stricto mucrone querere  
iube puerum; forte inter occisos occidetur et puer.

Rex:

Indolis eximie, pueros fac ense perire.

Angelus:

Sinite paruulos uenire ad me, talium est enim regnum celorum.<sup>122</sup>

The Compiègne play opens with the same verse as the Nevers play, but it is now distributed among the Magi so that each has a part to sing. They approach the high altar from various parts of the church, suggesting their different lands of origin, and when they meet, they greet each other with a kiss. This action is a felicitous adaptation of the liturgical Kiss of Peace, or Pax, usually given in High Mass, and is used again very effectively when Herod greets the Magi at his court. The following processional of the Magi, *Ecce ergo*, has been expanded from the earlier liturgical antiphon to include a verse from the Psalms (Psalm 71:11):

Et adorabunt eum omnes reges terrae; omnes gentes  
seruient ei.

This is appropriate for the Magi to sing and broadens the context of the play.

The next scene is a completely new addition and is entirely original in text and presumably in music as well. Herod's officers stop the Magi as they approach Jerusalem and question them. The soldiers' questions and the Magi's answers are all written in hexameter lines, and these same lines reappear in most of the later plays. The same is true of the messenger's subsequent announcement to Herod that the kings have arrived, and of Herod's command that they be brought before him and of the soldiers' summoning of the Magi to Herod's court. These newly-composed sentences become standard dialogue in later manuscripts.

The next scene, the interview between Herod and the Magi, in the Compiègne play is fairly close to that in the Nevers play. One or two points, however, should be noticed. Herod's two questions to the Magi are answered separately and so there is more repartee between him and the kings, although the text remains the same, with one important exception. When Herod asks his bold, challenging question, 'Si illum regnare creditis, dicite michi', he is now given an appropriate answer. The Magi show evidence of their faith by showing Herod the symbolic gifts they have brought to present to the new king. They explain that they have travelled from far countries 'cum mysticis muneribus', in a speech which is again a new composition and has no source in any of the Gregorian antiphons or responsories. It is an appropriate and powerful speech and one which appears in all the later dramas as well.

The Magi describe their gifts separately, as proof of their faith. On seeing the gifts of the Magi, Herod, in another new speech, sends a messenger to fetch his scribes so that they might search the prophetic

writings for evidence of the new-born child. For the scribes' reply to Herod, the author had readily available sources. The Vulgate could easily be quoted (Matt. 2:5-6):

At illi dixerunt ei: In Bethlehem Judae: sic enim  
scriptum est per prophetam:  
Et tu Bethlehem terra Juda,  
Nequaquam minima es  
Tu principibus Juda:  
Ex te enim exiet dux, qui regat populum  
meum Israel.

The antiphon of Epiphany could just as easily have been used:

Tu, Bethlehem, terra Juda, non eris minima  
inter principes Juda, Ex te enim exiet qui  
regat populum meum Israel.<sup>123</sup>

These were the obvious, and necessary, sources for the playwright and yet he has not slavishly copied either, but has given a slightly enlarged version of the prophecy. Herod then dismisses the Magi with the same two hexameter lines that appeared in the Nevers play.

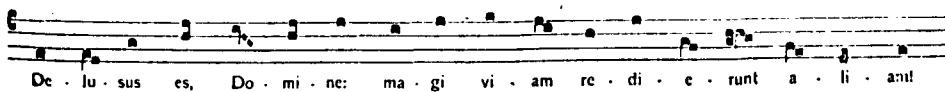
Generally speaking, the scene involving Herod's scribes shows less originality and versifying than the newly invented scenes with his messengers and legates, presumably because there were sources to be followed for the scene with the scribes, while the playwright was free to experiment with the messengers and soldiers. It should be noticed that, according to the Vulgate, Herod summoned his scribes as soon as he heard rumours of the arrival of the strange kings in his territory; after he had ascertained from them the place of birth of the new king, he then interviewed the Magi, asking them about the time of the appearance of the star. This order of events is not followed by the Compiègne playwright, or any others. Herod speaks to the Magi first and when he is convinced of their seriousness and sincerity, he calls his own scribes, supposedly while the Magi are still there. After hearing the prophecy of the scribes, he turns back to the Magi

to dismiss them. Both the scribes and the Magi are represented in the sculpture and stained glass of France in the twelfth century (see Chapter 6). It is impossible to prove any influence of the liturgical drama on the art of the period, but it is interesting to note that both art and drama agree in presenting a scene which was not strictly canonical.

The next scene, with the Magi at the *praesepe*, meeting the *mulieres* and then presenting their gifts, is standard, but the processional they sing as they walk on their way is greatly amplified, from the earlier two-line *Ecce stella* of Nevers to an eight-line poem, a sequence in fact, following the rather strict rules of sequence composition.<sup>124</sup> Young points out that the Compiègne sequence was indebted to a longer sequence, *Quem non praevalent*, which he prints from *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi* (Leipzig, 1886 sqq.).<sup>125</sup> This hymn provided the Compiègne playwright with two full lines beginning *Quam Balaam*, and possibly inspiration for the next line, but the remainder of the composition in the Compiègne manuscript seems to be original.

The most outstanding innovation in this play is the last scene. After the angel has warned the Magi to return home another way to avoid Herod's wrath, the scene returns to Herod's court. The messenger appears again to tell Herod that he has been deceived; then an armed attendant urges him to take vengeance by putting all the children to the sword and Herod orders the Massacre of the Innocents at once, singing a solemn hexameter line. The invention of the roles in this play for the messengers and armed attendant are bold and original touches. The playwright might have been influenced by the *Protevangelium* in which such emissaries are at least mentioned,<sup>126</sup> although they are given no dialogue. The *armiger* has no Biblical or apocryphal precedent. It should be remembered, however,

that in early art, representations of Herod ordering the Massacre of the Innocents almost always show him accompanied by two armed guards who stand behind his throne, and he is usually depicted giving his order to a third soldier. Such figures occur as early as the mosaics of the triumphal arch of Santa Maria Maggiore (*fig. 4, 5*). The author of these liturgical plays did not invent entirely these messengers and soldiers, but he gave them lively and significant dialogue to sing. Smoldon has transcribed the music for the messenger's line, *Delusus es:*<sup>127</sup>



The tremendous range of a whole octave in this short piece is unusual for plain-chant and seems to give a hint of the violence to follow. It is most effective composition.

The Compiègne play ends, on a gentle note, with an angel singing an antiphon from Lauds of Innocents' Day (see facsimile):

Sinite parvulos venire ad me; talium est enim  
regnum coelorum.<sup>128</sup>

This is taken direct from the liturgy and returns the mood of the play to the more exalted, impersonal tone of liturgical singing.

From this cursory examination of the Compiègne play, it becomes obvious that there is a good deal of original material here. New roles and scenes are invented, texts from the Vulgate and liturgy are used freely rather than being limited to Epiphany texts, and these texts are often adapted to the playwright's needs. Hexameters and rhyme are introduced, not only in new scenes, but in adaptations taken from the Vulgate. The drama is lively: changes in Gospel narrative order are initiated freely and the characterization of Herod the Great shows a marked advance over the earlier Nevers play.

**R** Centum quadraginta quatuor milia qui impij sunt de cor-  
 ris hi sunt qui cum mulieribus non sunt conquinati virgines  
 enim permanserunt ideo regnant cum deo & agnus dei cum illis  
 in fine ipforum non est inuentum mendacium sine macula  
 sunt ante thronum dei. ideo **I**no & seuntur agnum.

**R** Coronauit eos dominus corona iusticie quia passi sunt pro domi-  
 ni. **A**mauerunt xpictum inuita sua imitati sunt eum in morte  
 sua. **Q**uia **I**N MAI LAYDIS. **I** dauid

**A** Berodes iracundus occidit multos pueros in bethleem iuda ciuitate  
**A** Abimatu cainfra occidit multos pueros herodes propter ou-  
**A** Vox inrama audita est ploratus & ululatus rachel plorans filios suos.  
**A** Sub throno dei omnes sancti clamant vindica sanguinem nos-  
 trum deus noster **I**sonabat terra in uoces eorum

**A** Cantabant sancti canticum nouum ante sedem dei & agni & re-

**A** Hi sunt qui cum mulieribus non sunt conquinati. **I**N EY  
 virgines enim sunt & seuntur agnum quocumq; ierit

**A** Sicut paruulus uenit ad me talium est enim regnum celorum

### 3. The Play from Freising

One other play from the eleventh century should be considered for both its development of the characterization of Herod and its increased literary sophistication. This is the play from the cathedral of Freising.<sup>129</sup> It is longer than the Compiègne play and begins in an unusual way with a processional sung by the Chorus during which Herod probably mounts his throne ceremoniously. Then follows a short scene with the shepherds and the angel. After the Magi are introduced, singing their standard *Stella fulgare* and *Eamus ergo*, they are shown addressing the citizens of Jerusalem and asking where the new king has been born. This is the first occurrence of this scene in liturgical drama, but it was depicted in Greek Gospel-books (fig. 41) and it is suggested in Matthew 1:1-2. Again, the playwright's originality can be seen. The Vulgate gives the Magi their question to ask:

Ubi est qui natus est rex Judaeorum? Vidimus enim  
stellam eius in oriente, et venimus adorare eum.

The playwright, however, has them identify their audience and expand on the significance of their search:

Dicite nobis, o Hierosolimitani cives, ubi est  
expectatio gentium; noviter natus rex Judaeorum,  
quem signis celestibus agnitum venimus adorare?

The scene then changes to Herod's court where a tremendous amount of running to and fro is being done, first by a messenger, *intermuncius*, and then by an armed attendant, *armiger*. They generally greet Herod with *Salve, Rex Judeorum!* or *Vive, Rex, in aeternam* as they bring him their rumours and news:

Assunt nobis, Domine, tres viri ignoti ab oriente venientes,  
noviter natum quendam queritantes.



Under Herod's orders, the messenger goes back and questions the Magi:

Que rerum novitas, aut que vos causa subegit  
 Ignotas temptare vias?  
 Qui genus? Unde domo? Pacemne huc fertis an arma?<sup>130</sup>

After being assured that they mean peace, the messenger leads them to Herod's court. The Magi are dignified and kingly, and greet Herod appropriately with *Salve, Princeps Judeorum!* but Herod immediately demands to know why they are in his kingdom, who they are and where they have come from:

Que sit causa vie, qui vos, aut unde venitis?  
 Dicite.

Their answer is straightforward and simple:

Rex est causa vie; regis sumus ex Arabitis  
 Huc venientes.

Then their usual conversation (seen in the Nevers and Compiègne plays) follows, and Herod sends a soldier to fetch the scribes.

A new expression of Herod's anger is invented in the next scene. On hearing the prophecy in this play, Herod turns and insults the scribes, dismisses them and then throws down their book of prophecies. This must have been a very dramatic scene and one wonders why it was never represented in the art of the Middle Ages. This action of throwing down the book occurs in several later plays and certainly was not beyond the talents of the artists to paint or sculpt. But art is more permanent than short liturgical plays and perhaps such disrespectful treatment of Holy Scripture was considered too blasphemous for permanent representation. However, it makes very good drama.

Herod turns from the scribes and their prophecies and demands advice from his armed attendant:

Consilium nobis, proceres, date laudis, honoris.

He is answered in four hexameter lines:

Audi que facias, Rex, audi pauca sed apta.  
Eois des dona magis, nec mitte morari,  
Vt noviter nato quem querunt rege reperto,  
Rex, per te redeant, ut et ipse scias quid adores

(Young, II, p. 95)

The initiative for the plan to send the Magi off to find the child and then report back to Herod is given here to the courtier rather than to Herod, but Herod reacts immediately with that 'delightfully insolent' (Young, II, p. 98) line:

Adduc externos citius, vassalle, tyrannos.

To have Herod, the arch-tyrant, make such a remark about the wise and dignified Magi is a masterful touch. He then asks each king abruptly and rudely his place of origin ('Tu ai, unde es?') and then gives his final command to them. This whole conversation with the Magi is repetitive and, indeed, it seems designed specifically to enlarge Herod's role in the play, but it works well in that it allows a perfectly natural course of events rather than creating an artificial situation. The Kings identify themselves: one is from Chaldea, the second (named Zoroastro) is from Tharsus, and the third from Arabia (the country, incidentally, of Herod's mother). Herod treats them arrogantly and rudely and then sends them off to search for the child and report back to him, adding *Ut et ego veniens adorem eum*. This is patently hypocritical after his ungracious behaviour.

The Adoration of the Magi and their warning by the angel proceeds normally and then the Magi recess singing a new antiphon, from Christmas:

O Regem celi cui talia famulantur obsequia!  
Stabulo ponitur qui continet mundum; jacet in  
praesepio, et in nubibus tonat.<sup>131</sup>

But at the end of the play the scene changes back to the court of Herod again. A messenger announces that he has been deceived and Herod replies with a quotation from Sallust:

Incendium meum ruina extinguam.<sup>132</sup>

This is a superbly apt classical quotation to put into Herod's mouth, and undoubtedly it contributed to the enrichment of the *Herodes iratus* tradition which was growing within the context of these plays. When the attendant urges Herod to take vengeance by massacring the children, Herod hands a sword to him and gives the order immediately. He is given alternative speeches for this. Either he can say:

Armiger o prime, pueros fac ense perire<sup>133</sup>

or he has a complete stanza taken from the well-known hymn by Prudentius, 'Salve, flores martyrum':

Mas omnis infans occidat,  
scrutare nutricum sinus,  
fraus ne qua furtim subtrahat  
prolem virilis indolis.<sup>134</sup>

Both are suitable as expressions of Herod's bombastic outburst. The play ends on a quieter note, however, as in Compiègne. In Freising an angel does not appear, but a procession of boys, representing the Innocents, sing a rather obscure verse, followed by part of the sequence, *Laetabundus exultat fidelis*. Their sweet voices and gentle song form a distinct contrast to the violent and passionate Herod who has become the centre of attention in this play.

The Freising play shows a marked advance in literary form. It must have been written by one of those clever clerks of whom Gautier was wary. A quotation from Sallust can be clearly identified and there are echoes of Virgil as well in the questions put to the Magi by the messenger and by Herod. In the scene when the Magi appear before the throne of Herod, Herod's abrupt question, and the Magi's answer, is sung in new and original hexameter lines. Young points out (Young vol.II, p. 67)

that Herod's utterance was composed under the influence of another passage from the Aeneid:

State viri: quae causa viae? quive estis in armis?  
Quove tenetis iter.<sup>135</sup>

The author of this play was familiar with classical authors and clever at fashioning hexameter lines as well. He incorporated still more liturgical antiphons than earlier plays had used, and was able to adapt at least one well-known hymn to his uses. On one occasion he composed a highly original and lyrical passage for the Magi to sing, in contrast to the questions sung by the agitated messenger:

Que rerum novitas, aut que vos causa subegit  
Ignotas temptare vias?  
Qui genus? Unde domo? Pacemne huc fertis an arma?

(Young, II, p. 93)

The Magi calmly reply:

Chaldei sumus;  
pacem ferimus;  
regem regum querimus,  
quem natum esse stella indicat  
que fulgare ceteris clarior rutelat. (Young II, p. 94)

Later, Herod asks the same questions in a smooth melodic line, and the Magi answer in a balancing hexameter. When the Magi identify themselves separately, one says he is from Chaldea, one is from Arabia and one is king of Tarsus and is called Zoroastre. The lands of their origins listed here contradict those in the antiphon they sing a few minutes later:

Nos sumus, quos cernitis, reges Tharsis et  
Arabum et Saba dona ferentes Christo,  
Regi, nato Domino, quem, stella duce,  
adorare venimus.

It was only in the twelfth century that the numerous triads of names which had been assigned to the Magi over the years resolved into the familiar Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar.<sup>136</sup> In the early plays, two unusual names appear in the Epiphany plays: Zoroastre in the plays from

Freising and Bilsen (see below), and Fadizarda in a play from Malmédy, in Belgium, also an eleventh-century manuscript (see Young, II, pp.443-44). The writers of these plays were obviously familiar not only with the Vulgate, and the liturgy, but also with patristic writings and classical literature.

This has been a brief survey of some of the representative Latin music-dramas which survive in eleventh-century manuscripts. Even at this relatively early date these dramas show a high degree of literary sophistication. Growing out of the liturgy, they use antiphons and responsories, but the writers often adapted these elements especially for their plays. They also freely contributed their own compositions in the form of tropes and sequences, hexameter lines and rhymed verse, original dialogue and even new roles for minor characters. Herod's role has developed significantly from the rather quiet but abrupt king in the Nevers play to the *Herodes iratus* in the Freising play, who is surrounded by legates and messengers scurrying to and fro; he insults the Magi and the scribes, throws down the book of prophecies, and even takes out his sword when giving the order for the Massacre of the Innocents and hands it to one of his soldiers. This last motif, the sword, was one which made an early appearance in the twelfth-century art of France, where most of these manuscripts originate (see Chapter 6). The drama of the twelfth century, however, continued to make further contributions to the development of Herod the Great as an irascible tyrant.

#### D. Herod Plays: Twelfth Century

Much of the Latin drama written for Epiphany in the twelfth century and, indeed, right through until the seventeenth century, remained simple and dignified. It relied on the official liturgy for text and music and did not introduce Herod at all, but concentrated on the Magi, their journey, their conversation with the midwives, their presentation of symbolic gifts to the Christ-Child, and their warning by the angel to return another way.<sup>137</sup> However, because it is the purpose of this chapter to trace the contribution made by liturgical drama to the development of the figure of Herod the Great, two or three plays have been chosen from among some of the twelfth-century plays precisely because they do show an interest in the role of Herod the Great. Details were added to the events which involved him and he himself was given a larger part to play. In fact, 'the court rather than the crib is becoming the centre of interest'.<sup>138</sup>

##### 1. The Norman Play from Montpellier

The play from Montpellier<sup>139</sup> is interesting for its tendency to add more passages in verse and also for its remarkable enlivening of the role of Herod. Nothing can be said about the music but one may assume that it reflected the originality of the text. The absence of music is particularly regrettable because this play contains one passage, referred to as an antiphon, *Haec primum orientales fines*, which Young was unable to identify (II, p. 69, n.1). The chorus sings it as an explanation of the Magi's journey; if the music could be transcribed, it would soon reveal whether this passage was sung to one of the official antiphon melodies, or was, indeed, an original piece of composition.

Other original lines and verses are certainly in evidence. When the Magi (now called Kings) answer the question of the messenger about

their purpose, seen earlier in the Freising play when Herod asked it, their answer is twice as long as in the earlier play, expanded by two hexameter lines:

Rex est causa vie; reges sumus ex Arabitis  
 Huc venientes  
 Querimus hic regem regnantibus imperitantem,  
 Quam natum mundo lactat Judaica virgo.

(Young, II, p.69)

Later, after the Magi meet the shepherds, on their way to adore the Christ-Child, they sing as a processional the sequence *Quem non prevalent*. They do not sing the whole sequence; the last lines have been omitted probably because the text of the play repeated the words of the sequence. Not only is the sequence astutely cut, it has been adapted to suit the context of the play. The sequence refers to the Magi in the third person:

Haec *magorum* oculos fulguranti lumine praestrinxit providos.

However, in the play, the Magi themselves are singing and so the text has been altered slightly:

Hec *nostrorum* oculus fulguranti lumine perstrinxit providos.

This is the work of a careful and alert writer.

The playwright also expanded the Magi's speeches when they presented their symbolic gifts at the manger from the short catalogue-like utterances seen in earlier plays to more sophisticated regal statements, the third king actually speaking in verse, as they prostrate themselves:

Quo viso, primus Magus aurum offerendo in terram prostratus dicat:  
 Salve, Rex seculorum, cuius ad imperium universa  
 paescunt, suscipe nunc aurum, regis signum.

Secundus thus offerendo subinferat:  
 Domine, Rex eterne glorie, suscipere dignare thus,  
 sicut Deus verus.

Tercius mirram offerendo dicat:  
 Puer iacens in presepe,  
 tamen imperans ubique,  
 suscipe mirram signum sepulture.

(Young, II, p. 71)

The most outstanding verse contribution made by this author, however, occurs in a new scene at the end of the play when Herod's son appears. He pompously greets Herod, who replies in a similar vein, and then they consider the new threat to Herod's kingdom:

Qua peracta, Filius Herodis ad patrem:  
 Salve, pater inclite,  
 salve, Rex egregie,  
 qui ubique imperans,  
 sceptrum tenens regia.

Cui Herodes:  
 Fili amantissime,  
 digne laudis munere,  
 laudis pompam regie  
 tuo gerens nomine,  
 rex est natus fortior  
 nobis et potentior.  
 Vereor ne nos exturbet  
 nostri regni solio.

Item Filius patri:  
 Contra natum puerum,  
 contra illum regulum,  
 iube, Pater, maximum  
 imminere premium.

Hac peracta, Duces tenentes nudatos gladios dicant Herodi:  
 Decerne, Domine, vindicari iram tuam; iube occidi pueros; forte  
 inter occisos occidetur et puer.  
 Herodes acceptum gladium librans hac et illac reddat a quo sumpsit.

This author was not only skilled in using verse: he was also interested in personifying the Magi and adding some realistic touches to their individual utterances. Most of the time he had them sing in formal Latin but at the climactic moment when these three foreign kings meet Herod, and formally introduce themselves, the author has penned a remarkable scene. He breaks with convention by having the Magi, rather than Herod, begin the interview by giving a formal greeting and then asking why they have been summoned:

Salve, rex populi fortis, dominator et orbis.  
 Quid vis edissere nobis?

Herod responds by formally giving the first king the kiss of peace and showing him to the seat of honour, on his right. The second king then



speaks - in three long lines of foreign-sounding words (gibberish?), and Herod treats him exactly as the first, kissing him and seating him next to the first king. The last king also speaks to Herod in a strange language, but one which sounds quite different from that of the second king, and Herod treats him with similar courtesy. I doubt that this jargon is meant to be comic.<sup>140</sup> It is rather an attempt by the author to emphasize the foreign nature of the Three Kings and perhaps to add some realism to their roles. Even the foreign languages have been differentiated.

The Kings in this play are provided with a new stage property. As in all the plays, they follow a moveable star, but in the Montpellier version they also carry staffs which are given great prominence in the rubrics. When the Magi sing their well-known *Ecce stella*, separately in this play, the rubrics indicate that they use their staffs to point at the star: 'Reges, alter alteri ostendendo Stellam, baculis innuentes erectis, dicat...' Later, when they explain to Herod that they have followed this star as a sign to them, they again point to it with their staffs to show him. These staffs are probably meant to be visual symbols of the fact that the Magi have travelled a long way from foreign countries (their foreign jargon also emphasizes this point). Such staffs held by the Magi also appear in sculpture, stained glass, manuscripts and mosaics of this period (see Chapter 6).

Herod's role in this Norman play is greatly enlarged. The fact that he formally and ceremoniously greets the Magi one by one is evidence of the extra time given to him. In this same scene, when the Magi answer his challenge to prove their faith, they get up from their seats of honour and kneel on the ground before Herod as they show him their gifts. Not often was Herod shown receiving such deference - and this from mighty kings of foreign countries (see Chapter 10 for a similar tendency in

Continental vernacular drama).

Herod's regality is further emphasized in the Montpellier play by the people who surround him. His messenger greets him with ceremonious salutations and acts with great responsibility in questioning the Magi; and instead of having armed attendants, messengers and soldiers to carry out his commands, Herod in this play has men of higher rank about him. For example, when he wants the scribes fetched, he sends his Bishops, *Episcopos*, for them. The author here, in having bishops and scribes, seems to be trying to keep close to the 'principes sacerdotum et scribas populi' of the Vulgate; he is the only author to do so. Herod keeps his elite entourage even at the end of the play; when urged on to vengeance by his courtiers, Herod is not spoken to by an *armiger*, but by several *Duces* - definitely men of higher rank.

An advance in the *Herodes iratus* tradition is also made in the Montpellier play. As in the Freising version, Herod is enraged by the scribes' prophecy. He snatches the book from them, looks through it for himself and then throws it down in anger. Later a new touch is added to reveal his violent behaviour at the end of the play. After his son, Archelaus, urges severe action against the upstart king, *contra illum regulum*, several military leaders, *duces*, support him by entering with naked swords and singing:

Decerne, Domine, vindicari iram tuam; iube  
occidi pueros; forte inter occisos occidetur  
et puer. (Young, II, p. 72)

At this point Herod takes one of their swords and brandishes it as he runs to and fro among the viewers. The rubrics describe this: 'Herodes acceptum gladium librans hac et illac reddat a quo sumpsit.' This is an advance over the Freising Herod who merely handed a sword to one of his soldiers, and also over contemporary art where Herod simply held his sword

across his knees or in his hand as he sat on his throne. This action is excelled only in the Fleury play (see below), where both Herod and his son brandish their swords at the Magi as they leave his court, and in the play from Bilsen which will be discussed next.

## 2. The Play from Bilsen

The Epiphany play, *Ordo Stelle*, from the monastery of Bilsen, in Brussels,<sup>141</sup> is remarkable in many ways. It expands to include scenes with the shepherds at both the beginning and at the end. This is not unusual. But the text for these scenes is based entirely on liturgical antiphons without any adaptation or original writing, while in other parts of the play, whole scenes are completely original. In addition, all the rubrics have been written in hexameter lines. This might suggest that this text was meant only as a literary exercise, and yet the rubrics are so specific about actions to be performed that it seems that the play must have been written for performance. The manuscript which contains the play is an Evangeliary and the text may be incomplete. The ending is abrupt and it is followed by two or three blank lines at the bottom of the page.<sup>142</sup>

The play begins in a rather unusual way with a trope of the *Benedicamus*.<sup>143</sup> This is the same trope that appears at the end of the Freising play, and nowhere else. At Bilsen, the chorus sings it and during the last two lines it is quite probable that Herod was meant ceremoniously to ascend his throne. While he is doing this, the chorus also sings the antiphon, *Super solium David*.<sup>144</sup> The play then proceeds by means of three Christmas antiphons, sung by the angels and shepherds, and then the

Magi appear. They sing their usual lines and greet each other with the Kiss of Peace. Then, instead of the standard *Eamus ergo* to sing as they proceed to Herod, they are given a new line:

Hac ducente, pergamus ubi eius sit nativitatis locus.

The whole of the next scene is original and dramatic. The Magi are intercepted by Herod's messenger who demands that they follow him and not tarry:

Regia vos mandata vocant; non segniter ite.

When they ask who the king might be, the messenger threatens to kill them with his sword and announces that his king is king of the whole world:

Magos tunc ense iugulari Preco minatur

Internuncius:

Rex est qui totum regnando possidet orbem. (Young, II, p.76)

This is a well-contrived build-up to the appearance of Herod, king of the world.

He appears in the next scene as the messenger reports to him, greeting him ceremoniously:

Vivas eternus Rex, semper vivere dignus!

Herod asks for news, and in a rather lengthy and formal conversation, the messenger tells of the three strangers who have just arrived, *tres viri ignoti ab oriente*. At that point a second messenger rushes in, out of breath and obviously excited. He forgets his formal greeting and plunges into the tidings he has to tell:

Rex, Rex, Rex!

Rex, regem natum constat per carmina vatum.

Constat per lumen natum de virgine natum.

No sooner has he finished than a third messenger comes in to announce the approach of the Magi. All this action gives the impression of the court of a powerful magnate, served by an enthusiastic spy system.

Herod orders the Magi to be brought to him and then there follows a scene which is unique in liturgical drama and outstanding for the boldness of conception. At first Herod quizzes the Magi about their identity, their purpose and their homelands. Then Herod asks by what sign they learned of the new king, and the Magi point up to the star with their staffs. At this, Herod is seized with rage, and proceeds to brandish swords about. The rubric indicates this: 'Ira rumens, gladios sternens, Rex ista redundat'. He then makes the standard demand that the Magi prove their faith, and when they do so by showing Herod their mystical gifts, he takes the gifts from them and has the Magi sent to prison: 'Rex, his auditis, iubet hos in carcere trudi'. No other playwright, not even in the fifteenth-century English mystery cycles, was bold or imaginative enough to show Herod expressing his anger by such extreme action. It must be pointed out, however, that the text of the interview between Herod and the Magi shows no innovations at all. The brandishing of swords and the imprisoning of the Magi all take place in the rubrics. Perhaps this explains why this scene wasn't imitated. It never appears in other manuscripts, although a large proportion of all the Epiphany plays share identical texts. In any case, it solved the dramatic problem of having the Magi present while Herod consulted his scribes.

The scene following, with the scribes, is standard. Herod does not throw down the book of prophecies; he merely examines it and hands it back bitterly, *amare*. He then recalls the Magi from prison and, threatening them with a staff of his own, again demands that each king identify himself and his country, much as in the Freising play, and with much the same results:

Primo Regi cantet rex fuste minando:  
 Tu michi responde stans primus in ord(ine, fare):  
 Tu ergo, unde es?

Magus:  
 Taisensis regio me rege nitet Zoroastro.

Rex:  
 Tu alter, unde es?

Magus:  
 Me metuunt Arabes, mihi parent usque fideles.

(Rex:  
 Tu tercius, unde es?)

Magus:  
 Impero Caldeis dominans rex omnibus illis.<sup>145</sup>

Herod then asks the advice of his attendants, as he does in the Freising play, and receives precisely the same answer as the Freising attendants gave, about freeing the Magi and having them report back.<sup>146</sup> Herod then returns their gifts and dismisses the Magi.

The remainder of the play proceeds as usual until the end. After the angel gives its warning, the Magi sing the Christmas antiphon, *O Regem celi*,<sup>147</sup> followed by the chorus which sings the well-known hymn, *Hostis Herodes* by Prudentius (see Chapter 2). This is the first play to make use of this hymn, which is perfectly apt for the situation. The play ends with the *armiger* announcing to Herod that he has been deceived. This seems a rather strange and unsatisfactory ending for such a well-devised play but the text may be incomplete. This is all the more regrettable because it is certain that the lively imagination of the author of this play could have produced another new and exciting scene for Herod at this point. One other play did, however, complete the action by presenting a further episode concerning Herod: that was the Herod play in the Fleury Playbook.

## 3. The Fleury Play-Book

The Fleury Play-Book<sup>148</sup> contains the text and music for ten liturgical plays.<sup>149</sup> The manuscript is a composite one, but the plays belong to the twelfth-century part of this Play-Book, written (or copied out) at the Benedictine monastery of St. Benoît-sur-Loire near Fleury in the north of France.<sup>150</sup> Two plays involve Herod, the *Ordo Stellae*<sup>151</sup> and the *Ordo Rachelis*.<sup>152</sup> The *Ordo Stellae* is 'the most highly developed form of this play found in France'.<sup>153</sup> It begins with an *Officium Pastorum*, much like the Montpellier play; it continues with echoes of the earlier plays from Bilsen, Freising and Compiègne. Many familiar scenes reappear: the Magi greet each other with the Kiss of Peace, and when they arrive at Jerusalem, they question the citizens there about the birthplace. The Fleury play contains many hexameter lines, although it is written mostly in prose; it has the same Virgilian echoes of earlier plays. Generally speaking, it shares the originality of the other plays, but at the same time uses a great deal of authorized liturgy and consequently has the dignified tone reminiscent of the best liturgical drama. Herod appears, of course, but no new 'business' is devised for him. A small but interesting change has been made in the rubrics near the beginning, however: when the Magi arrive in Jerusalem, Herod takes the initiative in sending his attendants out to find them and report back to him, rather than hearing first about the three strangers from his messengers and then having them called. This, of course, is closer to the Vulgate account. Later, with the scribes, he takes their book, examines it and 'furore accessus' throws it down. And the commotion arising from this action causes his son to appear and try to calm him. Thus the arrival of Archelaus is better motivated than in the play from Montpellier, the only other play to include this episode.<sup>154</sup>

The music for the Fleury play has been transcribed in full by both Smoldon and Bailey. When the text was borrowed from the liturgy, the music too was taken over, although different versions of the same responds were combined in the same play.<sup>155</sup> Original music was produced for original dialogue, however, and of course texts borrowed from other Epiphany plays, written by different pens in different countries, were accompanied by their set music. Bailey points out (p.11) that the Fleury play is indeed composed of diverse elements and therefore 'it presents a number of distinct literary and musical styles...The music is mostly of a moderate character, employing neither long melismas nor a great compass. In contrast is the more assuming cantilena of the trope and the responds, and the severely syllabic setting of the sequence. One of the well-known features of plainsong is the frequent appearance of certain short musical phrases, especially opening and closing figures. But in this play, musical repetition has been used above this, unmistakably to underline the correspondence between certain speeches.' Smoldon agrees with Bailey about the subtlety of the Fleury music, especially those passages which the Magi sing. 'The settings of the dramatic prose passages...show not only melodic attractiveness, but subtle workings of melodic motifs of a few notes. Such patternings are particularly apparent in the Magi's music, and in that of those who encounter them at court.'<sup>156</sup> An example of this use of motif can be seen, for example, when the Magi first tell the *interpretes* why they have come;<sup>157</sup> the three-note motif at the beginning of their melody is repeated by the *oratores* (another word for *interpretes* and used interchangeably in this play as opposed to the more usual *intermuntius*) when they return to Herod (no. 22); then Herod in turn sings it when ordering the *armiger* to fetch the Magi (no. 23). When the



200

prescire venimus quo sit profectus hic vester et unde profectus.

duce stella significati. munere proviso propter eum venerando.

Reges sunt Arabum; cum trino munere; natum querunt infantem quem monstrant sidera regem.

monstrant sidera regem.

Ante venire jube, quo possim singula scire qui sunt, cur veniant, quo nos rumore requirant.

quod mandas citius, Rex inclyte, perficietur.

Regia vos mandata vocant; non segniter ite.

210

prescire venimus quo sit profectus hic vester et unde profectus.

duce stella significati. munere proviso propter eum venerando.

Reges sunt Arabum; cum trino munere; natum querunt infantem quem monstrant sidera regem.

monstrant sidera regem.

Ante venire jube, quo possim singula scire qui sunt, cur veniant, quo nos rumore requirant.

quod mandas citius, Rex inclyte, perficietur.

Regia vos mandata vocant; non segniter ite.

prescire venimus quo sit profectus hic vester et unde profectus.

Magi:

21

Regem quesitum duce stella significatum; munere proviso properamus eum venerando.

Oratores reversi ad Herodem:

22

Reges sunt Arabum; cum trino munere; natum querunt infantem, quem monstrant sidera regem.

Herodes mittens Armigerum pro Magis:

23

Ante venire jube, quo possim singula scire qui sunt, cur veniant, quo nos rumore requirant.

Armiger:

24


Quod mandas, citius, Rex inclyte, perficietur.

Armiger ad Magos:

25

Regia vos mandata vocant; non segniter ite.

Armiger adducens Magos ad Herodem:

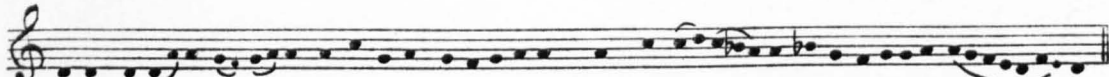
26   
En Magi veniunt, et regem natum stella duce, requirunt.

Herodes ad Magos:

27   
Que sit causa vie? Qui vos, vel unde venitis? Dicite.

Magi:


28   
Rex est causa vie; Reges sumus ex Arabitis huc veni-

  
entes. Querimus en regem regnantibus imperitantem, Quem natum mundo lactat Judaica virgo.

Herodes ad Magos:

29   
Regem, quem queritis, natum esse quo signo didicistis?


Magi:

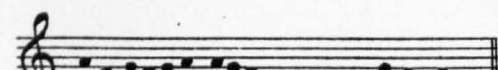
30   
Illum natum esse didicimus in Oriente, stella monstrante.

Herodes:

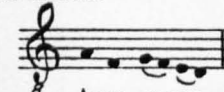
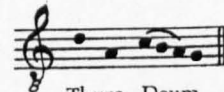

31   
Si illum regnare creditis, Dicite nobis?

Magi:

32   
Illum regnare fatentes, cum mysticis muneribus de terra longinqua adorare venimus, trinum Deum

  
venerantes tribus cum muneribus.


Tunc ostendant munera.

33 Primus dicat:  Auro regem. Secundus:  Thure Deum. Tertius:  Mirra mortalem.

Tunc Herodes imperet Simistis qui cum eo sedent in habitu juvenili, ut adducant Scribas qui in diversorio parati sunt barbati:

34   
Vos mei Simiste, legis peritos ascite ut discant in Prophetis quid sentiant ex his.

Simiste ad Scribas, et adducant eos cum libris Prophetarum:

35   
Vos, legis periti ad regem vocati, cum Prophetarum libris properando venite.

Postea scriba interrogatus dicens si quid de hoc puero scriptum videritis in libro. Tunc scriba duo revolvant librum, et tandem inventa quasi prophetica, dicant: Vidimus, Domine, in prophetarum lineis, nasci Christum in Bethleem Jude, civitate David, propheta sic vaticinante. Et ostendentes eum digito, regi incredulo tradant librum. Chorus: Bethleem non es minima... Tunc Herodes, visa prophetica, furore accensus, projiciat librum; ac filius eius, audito tumultu, procedat pacificaturus patrem, et stans salutet eum: Salve, pater inclyte; Salve, Rex egregie; Herodes: Qui ubique imperas. Sceptra tenens regia. Fili amantissime, digne laudis munere; Laudis pompam regie tuo gerens nomine.

212

Herodes cum audisset quod factum esset, misit in Bethleem et in vicinis locis, ut occideret omnes pueros in illa regione, quos inveniret. Tunc Herodes, cum occideret omnes pueros, ait ad matrem infantis: Fugit cum matre in Egyptum. Tunc Herodes, cum occideret omnes pueros, ait ad matrem infantis: Fugit cum matre in Egyptum. Tunc Herodes, cum occideret omnes pueros, ait ad matrem infantis: Fugit cum matre in Egyptum.

Postea Herodes interroget Scribas, dicens:

36 O vos Scribe; interrogati dicite si quid de hoc Puero scriptum videritis in libro. Tunc Scribe duo revolvant librum, et tandem, inventa quasi prophetica, dicant:

37 Vidimus, Domine, in Prophetarum lineis, nasci Christum in Bethleem Jude, civitate David, Propheta sic vaticinante.

Et ostendentes eum digito, Regi incredulo tradant librum.

Chorus:

38 Bethleem non es minima...

Tunc Herodes, visa prophetica, furore accensus, projiciat librum; ac filius eius, audito tumultu, procedat pacificaturus patrem, et stans salutet eum:

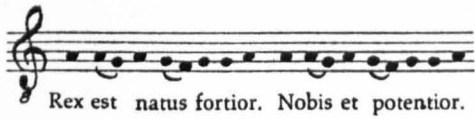
39 Salve, pater inclyte; Salve, Rex egregie;

Herodes:

Qui ubique imperas. Sceptra tenens regia.

40 Fili amantissime, digne laudis munere;

Laudis pompam regie tuo gerens nomine.



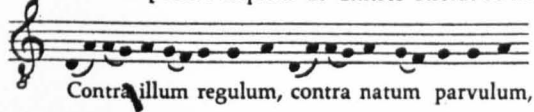
Rex est natus fortior. Nobis et potentior.



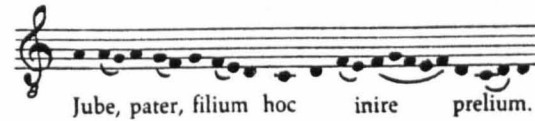
Vereor ne solio Nos extrahet regio.

Tunc filius despective loquens de Christo offerat se ad vindictam dicens:

41



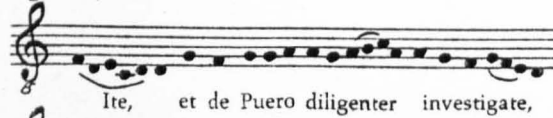
Contra illum regulum, contra natum parvulum,



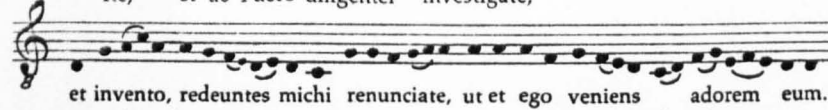
Jube, pater, filium hoc inire prelium.

Tunc demum dimittat Herodes Magos, ut inquirent de Puero, et coram eia spondeat regi nato, dicens:

42



Ite, et de Puero diligenter investigate,



et invento, redeuntes michi renunciate, ut et ego veniens adorem eum.

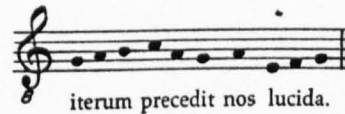
Magis egredientibus, precedat stella eos, que nondum in conspectu Herodis apparuit. Quam ipsi sibi mutuo ostendentes, procedant. Qua visa, Herodes et filius minentur cum gladiis.

Magi:

43



Ecce Stella in Oriente previsa



iterum precedit nos lucida.

Interim Pastores redeuntes a presepe, veniant gaudentes et cantantes in eundo:

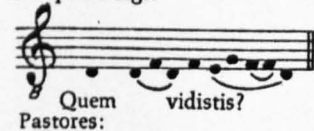
44



O regem celi ... (incipit)

Ad quos Magi:

45



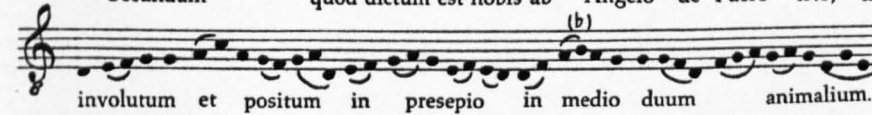
Quem vidistis?

Pastores:

46



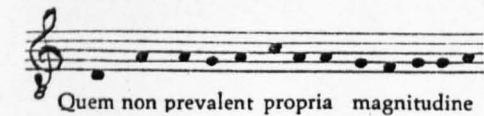
Secundum quod dictum est nobis ab Angelo de Puero isto, invenimus infantem pannis



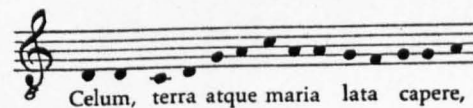
involutum et positum in presepio in medio duum animalium.

Postea Pastoribus abeuntibus, Magi procedant post stellam usque ad precepe cantantes:

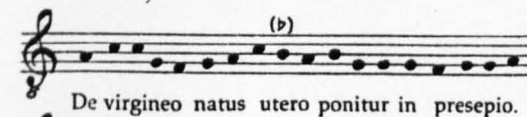
47



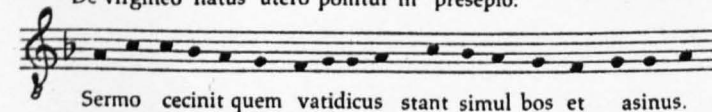
Quem non prevalent propria magnitudine



Celum, terra atque maria lata capere,



De virgineo natus utero ponitur in presepio.



Sermo cecinit quem vaticus stant simul bos et asinus.

*armiger* speaks to the Magi, he also uses the same motif, only inverted (no. 25). A second longer motif is introduced when the *armiger* brings the Magi to the court, at the beginning of his speech (p. 87, no. 26). This is repeated by Herod when he questions the Magi (no. 27) and again by the Magi when they answer (no. 28,30). It is interesting to see that it is not the music of Herod which introduces the motif in these scenes, but that of the Magi. Both motifs discussed above are sung first by or about the Magi and then repeated by Herod. He does not, therefore, dominate the music as he does the court.

Most of the Fleury play dialogue is written in prose and 'set to a type of free melody not to be distinguished from the style of the short liturgical antiphon'.<sup>158</sup> Relief is afforded, however, by three passages of verse. One of these is directly relevant to Herod.<sup>159</sup> It occurs at the end of the play when Archelaus appears and converses with his father in rhymed verse. The text, *Salve, pater inclite*, appears in the Montpellier play, also of the same century, but the music is not preserved there, and so it is impossible to determine if any borrowing has taken place. Both Bailey and Smoldon have interesting comments to make on the music of this passage. Bailey sees it as an exception to the rhythm of the rest of the manuscript and thinks it is therefore the latest addition to the play. 'The rhythm [of the whole play], as indicated in the manuscript by the customary thirteenth-century [sic] chant notation of the region around Fleury, is the unmeasured, oratorical rhythm of plainsong. A striking exception will be found in the dialogue between Herod and his son. In this case the poetic metre employed for the scene - evidently one of the most recent additions to the play - suggested a transcription in keeping with the newer metrical music coming into prominence in France about the time of the Fleury manuscript.' (p.11) Bailey suggests a comparison of

the Fleury manuscript with contemporary works, which is always valuable when dealing with medieval manuscripts, but he places it in the wrong century and, moreover, he does not seem to appreciate the textual and musical subtleties of the play. 'The *Play of Herod* is certainly outstanding in regard to its poetic items, which, when the rhythms of their settings are interpreted, turn out to have exceptionally charming and expressive melodies...In the matter of mensural interpretations, the trochaic "first rhythmic mode" appears to be the usual solution, but the angry stanzas of Herod and his son gain an additional vigour from the iambic "second mode".'<sup>160</sup> It should be remembered that this scene ends with both Herod and his son brandishing their swords in the air in a threatening way after the Magi have been dismissed to go and seek the Christ-Child. The strong, repetitive rhythms in their music emphasize their anger and also set the scene apart from the rest of the drama. Young comments that one is hardly prepared, after the contemptuous and threatening words of Archelaus and Herod about the *parrulum regulum*, for Herod's seemingly solicitous words to the Magi and his concern that he learn where the new child lies so that he too may go and worship him (Young, vol.II, p.92). However, such behaviour as Herod's gentle dismissal of the Magi with wily words, and violent actions behind their backs, could be interpreted as a demonstration of his hypocrisy and his deliberate attempts to deceive the Magi. This interpretation would not be out of keeping with the increased attempts of the playwrights to motivate Herod's various actions.<sup>161</sup>

The Fleury Epiphany play is actually entitled *Ordo ad representandum Herodem*, but the play which follows it in the manuscript, *Ad interfectionem Puerorum*, is the one which expands still further the

*Herodes iratus* material. It is centred around the Massacre of the Innocents and the mourning of Rachel. To a large extent it relies on a variety of authorized liturgical texts and verses from the Vulgate. Contained within this ecclesiastical material are some passages of exceptionally beautiful original verse (in Rachel's laments) and two new scenes for Herod. These scenes, however, do not involve any new dialogue; the action is all described in the rubrics.

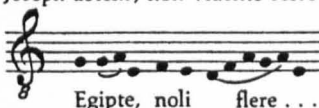
The stark contrast provided by these Herod scenes in context is noteworthy. The play opens with a succession of liturgical chants: boys costumed as the Innocents enter singing an antiphon of Vespers for the Vigil of All Saints;<sup>162</sup> then they process behind a Lamb singing an antiphon of Lauds in Advent;<sup>163</sup> Herod next appears and ceremoniously mounts his throne and receives his sceptre while an antiphon of Lauds of the second Sunday before Christmas is sung;<sup>164</sup> the scene changes after this to the angel warning Joseph to flee and singing a verse from Matthew 2:13; Joseph then takes Mary and Christ to Egypt while a responsory of Matins of the third Sunday before Christmas is sung.<sup>165</sup>

This solemn liturgical mood is suddenly broken when the armed attendant reappears, as he does at the end of the plays from Compiègne and Freising, to tell Herod that he has been deceived. After the salutation and his news, *Delusus es, Domine* (sung to the same music as in the Compiègne play) the rubrics describe a totally new scene. 'Tunc Herodes, quasi corruptus, arrepto gladio, paret seipsum occidere; sed prohibentur tandem a suis et pacificetur.' Herod seizes a sword and tries to commit suicide, but is restrained by his attendants. His only comment is the Sallustian quotation found in other plays, *Incendium meum ruina restinguam*. This is not the attempted suicide that patristic writings




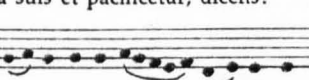


Joseph abiens, non vidente Herode, cum Maria portante Puerum, dicens:

6  (incipit)  
Egipte, noli flere...

Interim Armiger, nuncios Magos per aliam viam redisse salutatur prius Regem;  
postea dicat:

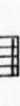
7   
Rex, in eternum vive! Delusus es, Domine; Magi viam redierunt aliam!  
Tunc Herodes, quasi corruptus, arrepto gladio, parat se ipsum occidere: sed  
prohibeatur tandem a suis et pacificetur, dicens:

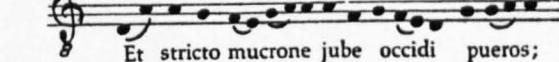
8   
Incendium meum ruina restinguam.  
Interea Innocentes, adhuc gradientes post Agnum, decantent:

9   
Agnus sacro pro nobis mortificato,  
  
Offerimus Christo sub signo luminis isto.  
  
Agnus salvemur, cum Christo conmoriemur.  
Armiger suggerat Herodi dicens:





Splendorem patris splendorem virginitatis,  
  
Multis ira modis ut quos inquit Herodis


10   
Discerne, Domine, vindicare iram tuam,  
  
Forte inter oculos occidetur et Christus.  
Herodes tradens ei gladium dicens:





Et stricto mucrone jube occidi pueros;

11   
Armiger eximie, pueros fac ense perire.  
Interim, occisoribus venientibus, subtrahatur agnus elam, quem abeuntem salutant  
Innocentes:

12   
Salve, Agnus Dei! Salve, qui tollis peccata mundi, alleluia!  
Tunc Matres occidentes orant occisos:

13   
Oremus, tenere natorum parcite vite.  
Postea, jacentibus Infantibus, Angelus ab excelso ut moneant eos, dicens:

14   
Vos qui in pulvere estis, expergiscimini et clamate.  
Infantes jacentes:

15   
Quare, non defendis

217

Sanguinem nostrum et nostrum. Adhuc sustinere modicum tempus donec impleatur numerus fratrum vestrorum. dicens. Heu teneri partus laceros quos cernimus artus. Heu dulces nati sola rabie jugulati. Heu quem nec pietas nec vestra coeruit etas. Heu matrem misere quae cogimur ista videre. cur non si facta fuisset heu quae memores inbituque leniret dolores. Gaudia non possunt in dactyla pignora desistere. Heu ungo Rachel noli dulem ista matrem pro nos parturientem fletu renuere dolere. In qua emiserat pulchra quae lacrimant

215

Gaudere cum nati essent super albis beati. Heu heu heu quod gaudebo cum mortua matre undebo. Heu sic comata fuerit infans. Heu faciem uere pueri sine fine dolere. O dolor o partum miramque gaudia matrem de lugubres lacus lacu maris fundat fletu. Iudeus fletu parit lacrimando dolorem. Quid tu uirgo mater Rachel ploras super mola. Heu uideli sacri doleris seu horrida mactile lipundo cum amas. Heu mater flentes oculos. Quare dixerit quantum miseri. Heu heu heu quod

sanguinem nostrum, Deus noster?

Angelus:

16

Adhuc sustinete modicum tempus, donec impleatur numerus fratrum

vestrorum.

Tunc inducatur Rachel, et due Consolatrices; et stans super Pueros plangat, cadens aliquando, dicens:

17

Heu! teneri partus, laceros quos cernimus artus!

Heu! dulces nati, sola rabie jugulati!

Heu! quem nec pietas nec vestra coeruit etas!

Heu! matrem misere, quae cogimur ista videre!

1

Heu! quid nunc agimus cur non hec facta subimus!

Heu! quia memores nostroque levare dolores.

Gaudia non possunt, nam dulcia pignora desunt!  
 Consolatrices excipientes eam cadentem dicentes:

18

Noli, virgo Rachel, noli dulcissima mater,  
 Si que tristaris, exulta que lacrimaris.

Pro nece parvorum fletus retinere dolorum.  
 Namque tui nati vivunt super astra beati.

Item Rachel dolens:

19

Heu! Heu! Heu! Quomodo gaudebo; dum mortua membra videbo;  
 Dum sic commota fuero per viscera tota?

Me facient vere pueri sine fine dolere.

O dolor! O patrum! mutataque gaudia matrum  
 Ad lugubres luctus! Lacrimarum fundite fletus,

Judee florem patrie lacrimando dolorem!

Item Consolatrices:

20

Quid tu, virgo, mater Rachel, plorans formosa, cuius vultus Jacob delectat?  
 Ceu sororis agnicule lippitudo eum juvat!  
 Terge, mater, flentes oculos. Quam te decet genarum rivuli?

Item Rachel:

21

Heu, heu, heu! Quid

219

me incusastis fletus incassum fudisse. Cum sim orbata nato, paupertatem meam (qui solus) curaret; qui non  
 paupertatem meam curaret. Quis uero hostibus cederet angustos terminos  
 et uos iacob adquisiuit. Quis uero stolidis fratribus, quos multos, pro  
 hostibus cederet angustos terminos, quos michi iacob adquisiuit. Quis uero  
 stolidis fratribus, quos multos, pro dolor, extulit, esset profuturus?

220

me incusastis fletus incassum fudisse. Cum sim orbata nato, paupertatem meam (qui solus) curaret; qui non  
 hostibus cederet angustos terminos, quos michi iacob adquisiuit. Quis uero stolidis fratribus, quos multos, pro  
 dolor, extulit, esset profuturus?

me incusastis fletus incassum fudisse, Cum sim orbata nato, paupertatem meam (qui solus) curaret; qui non  
 hostibus cederet angustos terminos, quos michi iacob adquisiuit, Quisque stolidis fratribus, quos multos, pro  
 dolor, extulit, esset profuturus?

Tunc Consolatrices, esupinantes Infantes, dicentes:

22

Numquid flendus est iste, qui regnum possidet celeste, Quidque prece frequenter miseris  
 fratribus apud Deum auxilietur?

Item Rachel cadens super Pueros:



23

Anxius est in me spiritus meus; in me turbatum est cor meum.

Tunc Consolatrices abducant Rachel, et Angelus interim de supernis dicat antiphonam que sequitur:

24  (incipit)  
Sinite parvulos . . .

Ad vocem angeli surgentes Pueri intrent chorum dicentes:

25   
O Christe, quantum patri exercitum juvenis, doctus ad bella maxima; populis predicans, colligis,  
  
umbras suggens cum tantum miseris.

Dum hęc fiunt, tollatur Herodes et substituatur in loco eius Filius eius, Archelaus, et exaltetur in regem. Interim Angelus ammonet Joseph in Egiptum, quo prius secessit, dicens:

26   
Joseph, Joseph, Joseph, fili David! Revertere  
  
in terram Judam; defuncti sunt enim qui querebant animam pueri.

Tunc Joseph revertatur cum Maria et Puero, secedens in partes Galilee dicens:

27  (incipit)  
Gaude, gaude, gaude, Maria Virgo; cunctas hereses . . .

Cantor incipit:

27a   
Te Deum laudamus . . .

Sic finit.

described, of a desperately ill man lying in bed in agony and trying to end his misery by plunging a knife into his breast, although it is true to the fact that the attempted suicide was foiled. In the Fleury play, Herod is sitting on his throne, healthy and powerful, enjoying the pomp and ceremony of his court. His anger was, by then, proverbial, and other plays showed him wielding his sword in a moment of passion. The Fleury playwright extended the situation one step further and had him try to stab himself - the act of a madman, the traditional act of *Ira* in Prudentius' *Psychomachia* (see fig. 91). For the first time, then, this event has entered medieval dramatic literature. A more accurate account of Herod's suicide had appeared earlier in art, in a Spanish manuscript (fig. 60) and also in two twelfth-century English manuscripts (fig. 84 and 89). After the attempted suicide in the Fleury play, the Innocents process before Herod's throne and when the *armiger* urges vengeance by killing the children, Herod immediately hands him his sword.

The next section of the play centres on four laments of Rachel and the efforts of her companions to comfort and console her. There is a great deal of free composition here in both verse and prose, and also some borrowing from an *Ordo Rachelis* from Freising.<sup>166</sup> The text from the second speech of the *consolatrices*, through Rachel's third lament and then the consolers' next response, is, in fact, the complete text of a well-known sequence by the monk Notker of St. Gall, but the music is entirely original.<sup>167</sup> These laments of Rachel have appealed to musicologists as outstanding examples of the accomplishments of liturgical drama. They are unusual in their degree of emotional expressiveness. The French scholar Théodore Gérold described the lamentations of Rachel as 'plus expressives',<sup>168</sup> and more recently Smoldon has singled out part of this lament as

'a particularly brilliant piece of dramatic recitative'.<sup>169</sup> He refers especially to the lament beginning *Heu... Quid me incusastis fletus*.<sup>170</sup>

Richard Axton also recognized the *planctus* as the most striking composition of the play but he felt that the essentially Gregorian aesthetic of the music, with its 'fundamental restraint and economy', contained the emotive element.<sup>171</sup> However, in a note (p.210, n.3) he acknowledged the opinion of John Stevens that Rachel's *planctus* are not properly Gregorian in their aesthetic. Their original and expressive quality went beyond the more orthodox musical compositions of the liturgy.

The play ends with an angel singing *Sinite parvulos*, the antiphon for Lauds of Innocents' Day,<sup>172</sup> and with the boys getting up and processing to the choir as they sing a passage from the *Festa Christi* sequence.<sup>173</sup>

Then another new scene is introduced, again only in the rubrics: ' Dum hec fiunt, tollatur Herodes et substituat in loco eius Filius eius, Archelaus, et exaltetur in regem.' This presumably was acted out in mime and is immediately followed by the angel appearing to Joseph and telling him, 'Joseph, Joseph, Joseph, fili David! Revertere in terram Judam, defuncti sunt enim qui querebant animam pueri', from Matthew 2:20. The playwright is following the Vulgate closely. However, the Gospel of Matthew refers only fleetingly to the death of Herod and other enemies of Christ. As this is essential information in order to explain the Return from Egypt, the playwright presented the event in mime, not providing any new dialogue for the death of Herod or ascension of Archelaus, but including this event in order to motivate the final Return of the Holy Family. The Fleury play is the first to present the death of Herod. Not until the thirteenth century did another play undertake to show this event again, and then it was in a more gruesome and realistic way.

### E. The Benediktbeuern Play

Some of the Magi plays in the eleventh and twelfth centuries showed a tendency to expand and include events involving the shepherds.<sup>174</sup> One *Ordo Stellae* includes the Massacre of the Innocents.<sup>175</sup> The Fleury Massacre of the Innocents play included events germane to the Return from Egypt. In the thirteenth century a lengthy and comprehensive play evolved which included all the Christmas themes - the procession of prophets, the Annunciation to Mary and the Visitation, the Magi, Herod, the shepherds, the Massacre of the Innocents and the Death of Herod. It probably also included the Flight but the manuscript is incomplete. This play survives in the *Carmina Burana* manuscript in Munich.<sup>176</sup> It is provided with musical notation but this is written in German unheighted neumes, impossible to transcribe accurately. As the text is in verse and unique, it is impossible to make even an approximate musical transcription through collation with other manuscripts of similar texts; thus any appreciation of the musical texture is impossible, although most of the play has neumes. However, the manuscript occasionally lacks musical notation of any kind; Young has carefully noted where this occurs and, in fact, there may be some significance to these omissions, many of which occur during the speeches of Herod, or his associates.<sup>177</sup>

The Benediktbeuern play begins with a confrontation: Augustine and the prophets argue with Archisynagogus and the Jews. After the prophecies are presented by the appropriate speakers, Archisynagogus begins to act in an obstreperous way, pushing others around, stamping his feet on the ground, waving a staff and exaggerating the actions of the Jews. At this point a Boy Bishop interrupts him, saying that Augustine will refute the drunken inanities of the Jews. There is no music provided



for the Boy Bishop's speech. Archisynagogus then begins to debate, 'cum magno murmure sui et suorum' and 'cum nimio cachinno', mocking in particular the prophecies about the Virgin Birth with cynical but comical verses, while Augustine calmly overrides his objections and disbelief, 'voce sobria et discreta'. At the climax, Augustine's *Res miranda* is answered by Archisynagogus' *Res neganda*; this may have been shouted as no music is provided for either utterance. Augustine wins this comical match of wits, of course, and then all the participants retire. Archisynagogus reappears later, however, as Herod's counsellor.

After a short enactment of the Annunciation and Visitation, the Magi appear in the Benediktbeuern Play, singing very long verses of great erudition. When the messenger tells Herod of their appearance, he replies 'cum magna indignatione' threatening the messenger for bringing false information. He then sings a boasting passage, not seen before in liturgical drama, but destined to become part of the medieval image of Herod, especially in the English cycles (see Chapter 10):

Nam Herodes ego sum  
 potens subiugare  
 quicquid mundus continet  
 celum, terra, mare. (11.394-397)

He boasts that he has power to control everything in the universe - heaven, earth and the sea. Nevertheless, he calls in Archisynagogus and his Jews as counsellors for advice on how to treat the three Magi. Archisynagogus appears, 'cum magna superbia', and speaks 'cum magna sapientia et eloquentia', suggesting that Herod entertain the Magi *sub amoris pallio*. The sins of pride and hypocrisy are stressed here, more than Herod's anger or violence. He does not call his scribes nor threaten anyone with his sword. He has no court attendants, messengers or soldiers. He only boasts inordinately and then follows the sly advice of Archisynagogus

to be a hypocrite.

The Magi, having been questioned, withdraw from Herod's court and the shepherds appear in an extraordinary scene. The angel appears and tells them the good tidings; then a devil also appears and tries to dissuade them from believing such 'nonsense', in the same way as Archisynagogus earlier tried to deride the sayings of the prophets. This attempt is unsuccessful, of course. After the shepherds visit the Christ-Child they meet the Magi who also worship the Child and are duly warned to return another way. After they have gone, the angel continues, in a speech, again with no music, to tell how Herod was deceived:

...Rex Herodes anxius  
ignorat quid faciat,  
cum a tribus regibus  
se lusum inspiciat. (11.532-35)

Herod then rather belatedly asks Archisynagogus to read the prophetic books for evidence of this boy the Magi are seeking and in a moment of supreme irony, Archisynagogus, who had denied all the prophecies, reads *Tu Bethlehem, terra Juda*. Now *Herodes iratus* calls his soldiers and orders them to slay all new-born children with the sword. His command is given, again with no music:

Ite, ite pariter  
manu iuncta gladio;  
etas adhuc tenera  
nulli parcat filio!  
Immo mater quelibet  
nudo flectat gremio,  
ut de nato puero  
michi detur ultio! (11.545-52)

After this cruel speech the Massacre takes place and the mothers sing a mournful lament.

Then follows a scene full of horror, described in these rubrics:  
'Postea Herodes corrodatur a vermibus, et excedens de sede sua mortuus accipiatur a Diabolis multum congaudentibus. Et Herodis corona imponatur

Archelao filio suo.' The death of Herod is shown but not, as in the Fleury play, by simply removing him from the throne and having Archelaus replace him. Here in the Benediktbeuern version, some of the more macabre details of his sickness and death, first given by Josephus, dwelt on by patristic writers and emphasized by Peter Comestor in the twelfth century and Vincent de Beauvais in the thirteenth, are presented in drama for the first time. In the *Historia Scholastica* Comestor described the event:

Nam febris non mediocris erat, prurigo intolerabilis  
in omni corporis superficie, assidius vexabatur colli  
tormentis, pedes intercutaneo vitio tumuerant,  
putredo testiculorum vermes generabat, creber  
anhelitus et interrupta suspiria, quae ad  
vindictam Dei ab omnibus referebantur. 178

Comestor interpreted Herod's vile death as the direct vengeance of God for the Massacre. His death and the Massacre are thus thematically related. The Benediktbeuern playwright also disregarded the historical time scheme and had Herod die immediately after the Innocents were slain rather than several years later. In the play Herod is not only eaten by worms, but when death takes him, devils snatch his soul with great jubilation, as they did in the twelfth-century Canterbury manuscripts (*fig. 84 and 89*).

The play does not end there, however. The crown is placed on Archelaus' head and then the angel warns Joseph to take Mary and the child and escape to Egypt. This is a less successful disregard of historical time as, according to the Vulgate, the angel should be telling Joseph to return from Egypt after the death of Herod and Christ's other enemies.

The Benediktbeuern Play is much longer and more comprehensive than any of the other liturgical drama that survives. It relies much less on the singing of authorized antiphons, responsories and sequences, and presents almost the entire play in eight-lined stanzas of rhyming verse. It cannot confidently be assigned to any one liturgical feast or canonical Hour as most of the other plays can (most belonging to Matins) and it is

the only Latin music-drama which uses personification and angels and devils in the way which became so popular with writers of later morality plays.<sup>179</sup> The literary sophistication and the display of formal learning in this play point to scholastic authorship - perhaps it is the effort of some pupils in a monastery<sup>180</sup> or of some wandering scholars.<sup>181</sup> It does, however, reveal close ecclesiastical connections, quoting the Vulgate and using several liturgical chants. It also adds to the development of the Herod tradition: he is advised by Archisynagogus and dragged off to hell by devils; his boasting is dramatized for the first time, his wily nature is emphasized, and some of the more horrible aspects of his death are acted out in grim detail. This completes the contribution of liturgical drama to the representation of Herod the Great. Most of the major motifs concerning his anger, and his pride, as well as the lesser figures who surround him, appear in early liturgical drama. Later vernacular drama expanded the role of Herod further, and exaggerated many of his most damning traits (see Chapter 10), but the seeds for this later flowering were all present in the Latin church drama.

## V. Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be reiterated that 'the liturgical plays were never an official part of the church service; the Church never prescribed nor forbade them.'<sup>182</sup> They were deliberate additions to the liturgy rather than dramatizations of essential parts of it. Precisely because of this loose and rather free association with the official Roman liturgy, which was rigidly defined by the time the trope and the sequence began to develop, the drama became a means by which the creative impulses of the church could be expressed with the rhetoric and flamboyance characteristic of the Gallican liturgy. Many of the extant liturgical plays depend to a great

extent on the singing of authorized antiphons and responsories. This is true especially of shepherd plays and those built around the lament of Rachel. The Magi plays differ from these, however, in displaying more free composition and imaginative experimentation. Not the Nativity, but the Epiphany, became the centre of the Christmas plays. When playwrights showed the Coming of the Magi and their Adoration of the Christ-Child, they relied almost entirely on actual antiphons or on a skilful adaptation of them to create the proper atmosphere and forward the story. But very soon, the Magi's visit to Herod was included and new dialogue was created for the court scenes. Grace Frank has commented that as soon as Herod appeared in the plays 'further opportunities for dramatic development became obvious and liturgical authors soon made effective use of his presence. They could now introduce not only a more complicated plot, with an element of suspense, but also portray a villain whose speech and actions, costumes and accessories might be used to suggest his vicious character. The Three Kings had been slightly individualized in dress, perhaps in deportment, but Herod's was the first role capable of giving us a real person and not a type.'<sup>183</sup> This is perhaps over enthusiastic about the presentation of Herod as a 'real person', but it is true to say that he was being given traits of individuality and his dramatic role was greatly increased. Scenes involving Herod became quite lively and displayed a great range of interpretation: he sometimes greeted the Magi with the ceremonious liturgical Kiss of Peace, but in one play, he throws them into prison; his anger was sufficient to make him throw down the books of the scribes when he disliked their prophecies, or to brandish his sword when he found himself deceived by the Magi; in one play he attempts suicide, and in others his death is enacted more or less realistically. He may rant and rage more in the English mystery cycles, but almost every action

in those later plays is foreshadowed by the treatment Herod is given by the writers of the Latin music-dramas of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In the Benediktbeuern play of the thirteenth century he is already making the boastful arrogant speeches that characterize him in later literature, and in most of the plays he is surrounded by the entourage one would expect of a powerful potentate - messengers, military attendants, soldiers, scribes, counsellors. At the centre of attention, then, stands Herod the Great, with the convention of *Herodes iratus* now fully developed and a hint of the comic already appearing, especially in the German plays.

As the dramatists developed more individualized and better motivated characters, their interest in the literature and the music kept pace. Initially, tropes and sequences were in prose and melodically they simply repeated or imitated the liturgical chants they adorned. Smoldon comments that many of the prose dialogue passages are indistinguishable from short liturgical antiphons.<sup>184</sup> However, the authors began to introduce hexameter lines, classical quotations, and rhymed verse, and these were all accompanied by original music. 'Artistry in form, the use of hexameters and rhymed verse, corresponding no doubt to intricacies of musical structure, indicate the concern of the playwrights for their work.'<sup>185</sup> The Herod plays were especially challenging and satisfying for authors, however, with their contrasting scenes and dramatic potentialities: the rusticity of the shepherds and midwives, the elegant sophistication of the Magi, the dark and threatening court of the tyrant Herod with his busy messengers, learned scribes and militant attendants, the shocking Massacre of the Innocents, the mournful lament of Rachel, the horrible death of Herod - these roles all lent themselves to a dynamic treatment and, indeed, such plays as the two Fleury Herod plays are among the best dramatic treatment

of their themes.

The composition and performance of liturgical plays was undoubtedly undertaken in a reverent and devout spirit. Most of the well-known criticisms of the plays of the Middle Ages were levelled not at the serious dramatizations of sacred subjects, but at the abuses connected with them and at the folk *ludi*. Some individuals, however, did criticize liturgical drama. Gerhoh of Reichersberg (1093 - 1169), a firm supporter of the papacy who objected to any departure from ancient traditions, criticized all plays as representing vanity and falsehood.<sup>186</sup> He especially singled out plays of Herod (son of Herod the Great) and of the Massacre of the Innocents when he criticized the monks of Augsburg; he wrote that when he was *magister scolae* there (about 1122), the monks could only be induced to gather in the dormitory or eat in the refectory when there was a performance of Herod or the Innocents or some other theatrical spectacle to entice them:

Cohaerebat ipsi ecclesiae claustrum satis honestum, sed a claustrali religione omnino vacuum, cum neque in dormitorio fratres dormirent, neque in refectorio comederent, exceptis rarissimis festis, maxime, in quibus Herodem repraesentarent Christi persecutorem, parvulorum interfectorem seu ludis aliis aut spectaculis quasi theatralibus exhibendis comportaretur symbolum ad faciendum convivium in refectorio, aliis pene omnibus temporibus vacuo.<sup>187</sup>

He later continued his antagonistic attitude towards liturgical drama in his treatise *De Investigatione Antichristi* (about 1161). In the chapter 'De spectaculis theatricis in ecclesia Dei exhibitis', he accuses those who use the church as a theatre for plays about the acts of Antichrist or the raging of Herod of being followers of those evil characters:

Quid ergo mirum si et iste nunc antichristum vel Herodem in suis ludis simulantes eosdem non, ut eis intentioni est, ludicro mentiuntur sed in veritate exhibent, utpote quorum vita ab antichristi laxa conversatione non longe abest?<sup>188</sup>

A near contemporary of Gerhoh, but a more discriminating critic, was Herrad of Landsberg (1167 - 95), abbess of the monastery of Hohenburg and author of the *Hortus Deliciarum* mentioned above (Chapter 6). She acknowledges the good intentions behind liturgical plays but again singles out the Herod play as one which has led to shameless revels even though the Church fathers instituted the *Ordo Stellae* at Epiphany:

De sancta die vel octava Epiphaniae  
 ab antiquis patribus religio quaedam imaginaria  
 de Magis stella duce Christum natum quaerentibus,  
 de Herodis saevitia et eius malitia fraudulenta,  
 de militibus parvulorum obtruncationi deputatis,  
 de lectulo Virginis et angelo Magos ne redirent  
 praemonente et de ceteris diei illius appendiciis  
 praefinita est per quam fides credentium augetur  
 gratia divina magis coleretur et in ipsa spiritali  
 officio etiam incredulus ad culturam divinam  
 excitaretur. Quid nunc? Quid nostris agitur in  
 quibusdam ecclesiis temporibus? Non religionis  
 formula non divinae venerationis et cultus materia  
 sed irreligiositatis dissolutionis exercetur  
 iuvenilis lascivia. Mutatur habitus clericalis,  
 incohatur ordo militaris, nulla in sacerdote vel  
 milite differentia, domus Dei permixtione laicorum  
 et clericorum confunditur, commessiones, ebrietates,  
 scurrilitates, ioci inimici ludi placesibiles armorum  
 strepitus, ganeorum concursus omnium vanitatum  
 indisciplinatus excursus. Huc accedit quod aliquo  
 discordiae genere semper turbatur hoc regnum et si  
 aliquo modo pacifice incohatur vix sine dissidentium  
 gravi tumultu terminatur.<sup>189</sup>

She reluctantly advises against the performances of liturgical plays, even though they are admirable in themselves.

Her description of the Herod play may have been entirely justified.

A later (thirteenth century) version of such a performance survives in an Ordinarium from Padua.<sup>190</sup> After the eighth lesson of Matins, Herod and his chaplain enter from the sacristy dressed in untidy tunics and carrying wooden spears. They proceed towards the choir:



Et cum hasta lignea in manu, et cum maximo furore proicit eam versus chorum, et cum tanto furore ascendit pergamum, et duo scolares deferunt cereos ante eum, et cum tanto furore incipit nonan lectionam. Et interim ministri eius cum magno furore circuunt chorum percutiendo episcopum, canonicos et scolares vesica inflata, et etiam viros et mulieres in ecclesia existentes; et quandoque deportant dictam hastam Herodi, qui proicit eam per ecclesiam. Finita lectione, descendit Herodes cum ministris suis, et cum supradicto furore iterum circuunt chorum percuciendo ut supra...

This is not a play being performed in a refectory; it formed part of the official Office of the church, and so this most unseemly invasion of the service by Herod, who hurls his wooden spear around the choir and has his attendants go about hitting people with inflated bladders while he reads the ninth lesson of Matins, is indeed offensive. Young suggests that it was tolerated 'under the general spirit of misrule prevailing during the Christmas season' (Young, vol.II, p.99). However, this spirit is not discernible in any of the liturgical plays discussed above from France and Germany. Perhaps Italy had a different tradition.

All comments made by contemporary authorities about Herod plays were not so damning as those by Gerhoh and Herrad of Landsberg. It has often been written that in 1207 Pope Innocent III (1198 - 1216) passed an act forbidding the performance of liturgical drama in church, an act that was reaffirmed by Pope Gregory IX (1227 - 41),<sup>191</sup> but Chambers and Young have pointed out that this not true. Innocent III, in a letter to Henry, archbishop of Gresen in Poland, written January 8, 1207, condemned the performance in church of *ludi teatrales, ludibria, larvae* and *spectacula*, all of which were associated with the Feasts of Fools and other such popular disorders;<sup>192</sup> None of these are serious liturgical plays. This letter was incorporated in the *Decretals* of Pope Gregory IX, and fortunately the *glossa ordinaria* to the *Decretals* by Bernard de Bottone, written in 1263, survives.<sup>193</sup> It explains that certain plays, including

both the *Officium Stellae* and the *Ordo Rachelis*, are expressly to be performed because they stimulate devotion and serve as aids to religion.

The gloss reads:

Non tamen hoc prohibetur representare presepe Domini, Herodem, Magos et qualitor Rachel plorat filios suos, et cetera, que tangunt festivitates illas de quibus hic fit mentio, cum talia potius inducant homines ad compunctionem quam ad lasciviam vel voluptatem, sicut in Pasca sepulchrum Domini et alia representantur ad devotionem excitandam.<sup>194</sup>

As a final example of a particularly auspicious occasion when a Herod play was performed, mention should be made of the Council of Constance held as late as January 24, 1417. At a banquet in the evening, between the courses of a feast,<sup>195</sup> a play was performed there by the bishops of England. It represented the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi and Herod's Massacre of the Innocents. An eye-witness account survives:

Robertus Archiepiscopus Sarisberiensis, Episcopus Londoniensis, alique Angliae Episcopi plures, Legati Regii, praeter splendidum convivium, quo Constantiensem senatum exceperunt, comoedia sacra, de Mariae partu, Magorum in natum Jesum devotione, Herodis in Magos insidiis ejusdemque infanticidio, novo et admirabili exemplo, Constantiam reddidere illustriorem...

[the account continues in German and concludes]  
Das machter sie alles mit gar kostlichen  
Geward, und mit grossen guldenen und  
Silbernen Gurteln, und machten das mit  
groster Gezierd, und mit grosser Demukt.<sup>196</sup>

This sumptuous performance was repeated on the following Sunday, January 31, before the Emperor Sigismund.<sup>197</sup> No text survives, and it certainly was not being performed as part of the liturgy, but the fact that a Herod play was being performed by such a dignified cast of bishops and an archbishop before such an ecclesiastically elite company is evidence of the enduring popularity which these plays enjoyed through five centuries. The earliest manuscript of the *Ordo Stellae* belongs to the tenth or eleventh century,

and as late as the fifteenth century, manuscripts from Rouen preserve this same play (see table of all *Ordo Stellae* and *Ordo Rachelis* plays).

The Magi-Herod plays have been singled out for comment from the entire body of liturgical drama by several scholars. William Smoldon chose them as particularly good examples of their authors' originality: 'Altogether the Magi dramas deserve much credit as original compositions. The actions at Herod's court had to be supplied from the imagination, and though the Vulgate and the Epiphany antiphons might sometimes suggest material, most of the texts, with their music, were new.'<sup>198</sup> When reviewing Young's monumental book, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, in 1934, George Coffman pointed out that 'a notable feature of the Magi plays is the development of the Herod tradition';<sup>199</sup> in fact, he felt that Young's analyses and expositions 'concerning the importance and distinctive position of Herod in the Christmas plays....should convince Dr. Owst that the Herod of the English cyclic plays owed his "peculiar growth and fashioning" at least as much to the Latin Church drama as to the contemporary English "preacher's sketches of the proud nobleman".' (p.114) Indeed, although Herod did more ranting and raving on the pageant wagons and in the streets of later medieval England, his dramatic character was already well-developed in the Latin liturgical drama of the Roman Catholic church in the eleventh and twelfth centuries when his action was confined to the choir and the nave of the sanctuary.

## CHAPTER VIII: HEROD IN THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH-CENTURY ART

## Introduction

Herod the Great appears frequently in the art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This is not because he has become suddenly popular, but rather because there was a great increase in artistic production during these centuries, due in part to the emergence of wealthy patrons and the development of artists' workshops. In the area of illuminated manuscripts, Psalters with preliminary cycles of Biblical pictures continued to be produced, but other texts, such as chronicles and apocalypses also gained popularity. Other media were also used so that *opus anglicanum* embroidery, wall-paintings, stained glass and sculpture were all well represented. The fourteenth century especially developed an interest in narrative in illustration, and in marginal illustrations; this can be seen in a manuscript such as the Taymouth Hours which has over three hundred illuminations, many of them bas-de-page. The whole period is characterized by a variety of subject matter and the originality with which it was treated. The visual arts which deal with Herod the Great reflect this variety and originality. Artists show imagination in devising ways to make the evil of Herod more apparent - they pay careful attention to his facial expression, his gestures and his surroundings; they also supply him with a great variety of demons. The other characters who appear with Herod are treated in an equally imaginative way: the Magi begin travelling on camels and bearing their gifts before Herod, the soldiers and mothers in Massacre scenes become more violent and begin to fight each other. Various interpretations of Herod's suicide and death are given, and one manuscript even shows him falling into a gaping hell-mouth.

Typological interpretations, so important during this period, contribute variety and richness to the significance of events in Herod's life, and the inclusion of apocryphal events serves to fill out and complete the canon of Herod-related scenes.

## I. The Magi and Herod

### A. Horses and Camels

In the twelfth century there was an interest in the cycle of the Magi as a subject for artistic expression. Consequently the Magi were shown not only being interviewed by Herod and admiring the Christ-Child, but also travelling to Jerusalem and to Bethlehem. In most early representations of their journey, they ride horses, in both Eastern and Western art. In Eastern art they remain on horses, through the centuries, and these animals usually move along parallel to each other or in a straight line.<sup>1</sup> Western art, however, shows a greater variety in the positions of the horses; in the thirteenth century the Magi are occasionally shown riding not horses, but camels.

Twelfth-century art shows a good deal of interest in the presentation of the Magi's horses. On the lintel of the porch at Arles, the Magi are shown riding away together after meeting Herod (*fig. 57*); on the side portal of St. Andrew's church at Pistoia, they appear before Herod himself on horseback in single file (*fig. 105*). These scenes, in sculpture, are fairly traditional. It was in manuscripts that experimentation began to take place. The artist of Emmanuel College MS 252<sup>2</sup> shows ingenuity in having the Magi meet on horses which face three different directions so that one is seen in profile riding to the left, another is in profile going to the right, and the horse in the centre is seen facing directly front (*fig. 78*). These differing views of the Magi's horses are completed in

the thirteenth century by the artist of the *Berthold Missal*, who shows one of the horses from the rear as well (*fig. 111*).<sup>2</sup> In the early fourteenth century, the *Holkham Bible Picture Book* continues to show the horses from different angles; in addition, one of them is dappled in design (*fig. 112*).<sup>3</sup>

There was an interest in showing the horses from different angles not only to vary the design and balance of the representations of the Magi, but also to further the narrative. The artist of the twelfth century Bible leaf in the British Library (*fig. 84*) showed six scenes involving the Magi; when they first meet (in the central square of the top row) they have obviously come from different directions as the horses all face each other. However, after the Magi have their interview with Herod in Jerusalem and then continue their journey to Bethlehem, they all ride together in the same direction. They do the same in the *Holkham Bible Picture Book* (*fig. 173*). The *Berthold Missal* also uses the Magi's horses to forward the narrative (*fig. 111*). At the top of the page they ride to the right and through a doorway, going away from the viewer, into the presence of the Virgin and Child, whom they are shown adoring in the central band of the page. At the bottom, one comes jumping out of the same door, now towards the viewer, while the others ride to the left, away from Bethlehem. Note that the Magi wear cloaks for the outdoor riding scenes but not for the central Adoration scene.

A further step in the artistic development of the horses was to try to indicate speed and motion by having them actually disappear beyond the frame of the picture so that only half of the horse is visible. This technique is used in the stained glass of Canterbury Cathedral, where the horse of the first king has already begun to disappear to the right,

even though the king looks back and up towards the star (*fig. 69*). This suggests the motion of the Magi as they quickly follow the star. A similar treatment can be seen in the Winchester Psalter<sup>4</sup> where not only has one horse already begun to walk out of the picture frame, but the rear end of the horse on the left has not yet appeared (*fig. 113*). An earlier, less successful attempt at this technique of showing only half the horse in an attempt to suggest movement or speed, was made in the St. Albans Psalter in the illumination showing the Adoration of the Magi (*fig. 114*).<sup>5</sup> The Adoration is shown on the right, but the left side of the miniature shows an open gate through which is seen only the hind-quarters of a horse, a (Magi's) cape still fluttering over it. The king has presumably jumped off the horse and rushed into the presence of the Virgin and Child.

The thirteenth century continued to show the Magi with their horses. In the early thirteenth century stained glass of Laon Cathedral, the Magi are shown on horseback in a medallion of a window in the choir;<sup>6</sup> in sculpture, the twelfth century upper lintel of St. Anne's Portal, Notre Dame, Paris, was filled out in the thirteenth century by the introduction,<sup>7</sup> on the south end, of the Magi's horses tethered to some trees, awaiting their masters who are shown being interviewed by Herod (*fig. 56*). In another example from the thirteenth century, heads alone are introduced, as their tethers are held by a servant, on the end of a relief from the destroyed jubé in Chartres Cathedral, of about 1240, showing the Dream of the Magi (*fig. 115*).<sup>8</sup> Manuscript painting continued the same tradition. A thirteenth-century Italian Psalter in the Bodleian Library<sup>9</sup> has an illumination of the Magi before Herod in which Herod is seated on the left on a cushioned throne, while the Magi appear on the right on horseback

(painted one above the other). Each one bears a gift in one hand. A more usual sequence of scenes is found in an English manuscript of c. 1320 - 30, also in the Bodleian, the *Gesta Infantiae Salvatoris*.<sup>10</sup> On folio 2, across the top of the page, the Magi journey on horseback; the ones on the right and on the left proceed towards the right, but the one in the centre is shown from the front as if he were riding towards the viewer, continuing that lively interest in various views of the horse and man. On folio 2v, the Magi stand in a row in the presence of Herod, still bearing their gifts (*fig. 116*). Herod is seated on a cushioned bench on the left; he is crowned, wears gloves, has his legs crossed and points at the Magi with an imperious gesture although his facial expression reveals some concern.

A new mode of transportation for the Magi appeared in the thirteenth century. For centuries, there had been controversy over when the Magi actually arrived to worship the Christ-Child and how long it took them to make the journey from their countries far off in the Orient.<sup>11</sup> John Chrysostom (c.347 - 407) insisted that the star appeared to the Magi a long time before Christ was born and the Magi had to travel for years in order to reach the Christ-Child while still in his swaddling clothes.<sup>12</sup> However, Augustine (354 - 430) insisted that they made the journey in only thirteen days: 'Dominus ergo noster Jesus Christus adte dies tredecim natus a Magis hodie traditur adoratus'.<sup>13</sup> At the end of the ninth century, Christianus of Stable suggested, for the first time, that the Magi were able to travel from so far away in such a short time because they had come on dromedaries, 'et quidam dicunt quod cum dromedis in duodecim diebus venerunt, postquam stellam viderunt. Est autem dromeda genus camelorum, minoris quidem staturae sed velocioris'.<sup>14</sup> This theory that the Magi travelled on dromedaries which could travel much faster than horses, was widespread in



the twelfth century. John Beleth (twelfth century) gives this account:<sup>15</sup>

Si quaeratur qua ratione tam cito reges venire potuerint, cum ipso die Nativitatis primo eis stella visa sit, ita ut difficile fuerit ab externis regionibus spacio dierum tredecim itinere terrestri venire Hierosolyman. Sed huic nos bifariam respondere possumus, quod nimirum ut plerique affirmant, eis ante Nativitatem stella apparuerit, vel quod, ut alii putant, Dromedariis venerint. Est autem Dromedarius animal paulo minoris staturae quam Camelus, cum tamen cursu fit multo velocior. Potest enim uno die tantum itineris conficere, quantum equus diebus tribus.

It is, perhaps, not insignificant that in the late twelfth century, illustrated Bestiaries enjoyed great popularity. Not surprisingly, the camel was included, and so was the dromedary. Camels never wear away their hoofs, 'numquam pedes atterunt'. This is because they have fleshy soles with concertina-like pads, and from these there is a cushioning counteraction for the walkers, with no hard impediment to putting down the foot. The dromedary is a species of camel, which was small and swift and could cover a hundred miles and more in a day. 'Dromedarius genus est camelorum minoris quidem staturae sed velocioris...centum enim et amplius milia una die pergere solet.'<sup>16</sup> In the thirteenth century, this beast was represented not only as an item in the Bestiary, but as part of related Biblical scenes. The St. Louis Psalter, for example, includes a series of scenes to illustrate the passage in Genesis 24:10-21 in which Rebekah waters the camels of Abraham's servant at the well (*fig. 117*).<sup>17</sup>

It seems that Matthew Paris was the first artist to give the Magi dromedaries or camels in the thirteenth century. His outstanding drawing occurs as a bas-de-page illustration in the *Chronica Majora*<sup>18</sup> and shows the Magi riding on long-legged beasts with two humps and round ears, which take giant steps across the wavy landscape (*fig. 118*). The Magi each hold a gift in one hand while they manage their reins with the other. The illustration is bold and clear and lively, and quite unmatched by anything

in its time. This illustration occurs below the passage 'De diversis opinionibus Magorum', a presentation of theories, quoted from Comestor, regarding the time of the appearance of the star and the speed of the Magi's journey:

Tradunt quidam tertia die a nativitate Dominum fuisse adoratum a Magis, et stellam apparuisse eis multo tempore antequam Christus nascerentur, et ita de longinquo venire potuerunt, vel forte super dromedarios sedentes, longa terrarum spatia transmearunt.<sup>19</sup>

As an artist as well as a chronicler, Matthew Paris illustrated this passage, for which there are several literary sources, with the appropriate dromedaries.

Matthew Paris introduced the iconography of the Magi travelling on dromedaries into thirteenth-century art. As a major motif, however, it did not occur very often. In the Duke of Rutland Psalter, c. 1250, a single dromedary appears, his neck entwined with that of a grotesque bird-like dragon, in a bas-de-page decoration (*fig. 119*).<sup>20</sup> In a fifteenth-century Book of Hours the main illustration of the Adoration of the Magi is accompanied in the margin by a scene showing the servants of the Magi as they load the gifts and provisions onto camels (*fig. 120*).<sup>21</sup> In the fourteenth century, a dromedary appears with the Magi in a mosaic in the Baptistery of Saint Mark's in Venice, executed in 1343 (*fig. 121*).<sup>22</sup> While the Magi present their gifts to the Christ-Child, a servant is kept busy controlling their camels, one of which has pushed its long neck through the door. To the left of this scene, the meeting of the Magi and Herod is depicted. Again, as in several thirteenth-century manuscripts cited above, the Magi appear before Herod immediately after their journey, so that they still bear the gifts which they have brought for the Christ-Child. This iconography is rare before this period.

### B. The Magi's Gifts

The motif of the Magi actually carrying their gifts for the Christ-Child when they are being interviewed by Herod does not appear often before the thirteenth century, but then it suddenly becomes quite popular. It appears (*fig. 116*) in both of the thirteenth-century Bodleian manuscripts mentioned above,<sup>23</sup> and in several others as well. The fourteenth-century Carew-Poyntz Hours<sup>24</sup> shows an illustration of the Magi on horseback being met by a man in long red boots (Herod's messenger) (*fig. 200*) before their actual meeting with Herod, where they all stand in a row, holding their gifts (*fig. 203*); the fourteenth-century Taymouth Hours<sup>25</sup> also shows a similar progression of scenes - on folio 92v the Magi ride towards a gate, above which Herod appears, and on folio 93r they stand before the enthroned King Herod, each bearing a gold vessel. The Carew-Poyntz Hours and the Taymouth Hours resemble each other in many respects,<sup>26</sup> but it may be significant that all four manuscripts cited above show the Magi appearing before Herod with their gifts after they have been shown riding towards his city. A certain sense of urgency is conveyed by the juxtaposition of these two scenes. It looks as if the Magi have dismounted and walked immediately into the presence of King Herod, without stopping to deposit their gifts, not meant for him, before answering his summons to appear before him.

This is not always the case, however. At least three thirteenth-century Psalters from France and England show the Magi bearing gifts before Herod without having first approached his city on horseback. The Psalter of Wenceslas, King of Hungary and Bohemia,<sup>27</sup> includes four small oval shaped scenes on folio 23; the one at the top left shows Herod sitting on the edge of his seat, legs crossed, sword poised, chin jutting forward and hand raised to the Magi who stand before him, all bearing gifts.

Another thirteenth-century French Psalter, in Trinity College, Cambridge,<sup>28</sup> shows a similar scene, this time occupying the upper half of a page. Herod is seated on the left wearing a cap rather than a crown, and holding his sword while the Magi stand before him, each holding what looks like a red money-bag. A third manuscript, the thirteenth-century English Huntingfield Psalter, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York,<sup>29</sup> devotes a whole page to the scene of the Magi before Herod. Two of the Magi in this illustration carry round, gold caskets, while the third holds a square gold casket as he speaks with Herod. None of these manuscripts shows the Magi arriving on horseback and yet they all appear with their gifts before Herod. This scene is also represented in stained glass. The thirteenth-century Jesse Tree window in the choir of the Cathedral in Tours shows the Magi before Herod. The Magi, like Herod, are crowned, and one holds a box, representing his gift, or perhaps containing all their gifts.<sup>30</sup>

It is interesting to remember here the great importance which this scene had in the liturgical drama. The Magi *always* appeared with their gifts when they came before Herod in Latin church drama, mainly because they were processing through the church on their way to worship the Christ-Child at the *praesepe* near the high altar. But the gifts became a very important part of their interview with Herod. When he asked the Magi to give some proof of their faith in the star they had followed, and in the new king that had been born, they ceremoniously showed their symbolic gifts to Herod and commented briefly on their symbolic significance (see Chapter 7). Already an attempt at differentiating the gifts has been made in the Morgan manuscript. Perhaps artists shared the interests of the authors of the liturgical drama in stressing the importance

and symbolism of the Magi's gifts, so that they depicted the Magi carrying them into the court of Herod the Great, and even tried to present the gifts in different shapes and sizes (*fig. 122*).<sup>31</sup>

### C. The Magi's Ships

A new motif which appears in the visual arts concerning Herod in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is the apocryphal event of his following the Magi after being deceived by them and burning the ships which they used to return to the East. One of the earliest examples of this theme appears in the thirteenth-century quatrefoil medallions which are carved on the west facade of Amiens Cathedral, below the large statues. A series of eight medallions on the right porch of the cathedral shows several scenes from the story of the Magi and Herod (*fig. 123*). Across the top, from right to left, are represented four scenes: Balaam showing the star to three men; Micah announcing his prophecy (that the Messiah will come from Bethlehem); Herod consulting the scribes; and the Massacre of the Innocents. Below these medallions, the second row shows four more scenes. From right to left: the Magi being warned by an angel (not to return to Herod); the three Magi riding in a boat, with a pilot, over the sea (*fig. 124*); men setting fire to the ships at Tarsus; King Herod ordering two men to set the ships on fire (*fig. 125*).<sup>32</sup>

Although this is one of the first appearances in art of the burning of the ships, it was probably familiar to men of the thirteenth century through such popular writings as the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine (c.1230 - c.1298). He included this account in Chapter 10, 'De Innocentibus': 'Cum igitur Herodes de nece puerorum disponderet, a Caesare Augusto per epistolam est citatus filiorum accusationibus responsurus. Qui cum per Tarsum iter faceret, intellexit, quod magos naves Tarsensium transvexisset,

et ideo omnes naves Tarsi comburi fecit, secundum quod praedictum fuerit: in spiritu vehementi conteres naves Tharsis.'<sup>33</sup> A slightly earlier work which may have been even more familiar to the designers and viewers of ecclesiastical art in the thirteenth century was *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais (c.1190 - 1264). He included a similar version of the return of the Magi in Book VI, chapter 93: 'Herodes autem dum de nece puerorum disponeret, per epistolam est citatus a Caesare Augusto ut Roman iret, accusationi filiorum responsurus. Qui cum iter faceret per Siliciam; audiens naves Tharsensium Magos traduxisse, in spiritu vehementi combussit naves Tharsis; secundum quod David prophetaverat: In spiritu vehementi conteres naves Tharsis'.<sup>34</sup> Vincent of Beauvais acknowledged here that he was in fact using Peter Comestor (d. 1179) as a source, who in turn named Josephus as his source.<sup>35</sup> The variety and popularity of these sources suggests that the story of Herod's burning of the Magi's ships must have been well-known in the thirteenth century.

In the early fourteenth century this event was pictured in at least two English manuscripts mentioned above, both of which have literally hundreds of illuminations depicting Biblical and other episodes, painted as bas-de-page and marginalia decorations. The Taymouth Hours<sup>36</sup> has 389 illuminated pages. Across the bottom of folio 97, there is an illustration showing a man with a twisted taper (not crowned and so not Herod) setting fire to three ships in some green water. The inscription identifies the scene: *Cy erodes comanda darder toutes les niefs pur ire des .iii. Ro(y)s.* The Carew-Poyntz Hours also illustrates this incident in a cycle devoted to the Magi.<sup>37</sup> On folio 67, the Adoration of the Magi is depicted and, in the bas-de-page, their warning by the angel is shown. Then on folio 67v, in the bas-de-page, two men in armour are shown standing by a hillock on

the left (*fig. 126*). One stands on the shore holding a shield and sword; the other wades into the sea towards a ship. He has a tool, possibly a taper, in his hand. He moves towards two ships and a third boat which has no tackling. As in the Taymouth Hours there are three ships, suggesting the three Magi. The Carew-Poyntz Hours shows the same progression of events as the Amiens bas-reliefs (*fig. 123*) in having the Dream of the Magi precede the burning of the ships. All three representations agree in not having Herod actually set fire to the ships himself, but, as is right and proper for a king, he gives the orders for this to be done. Visual art is rather more subtle than the literary sources in making this distinction. The fourteenth century account of the life of Christ by Ludolph the Carthusian (c.1300 - 78), *Vita Christi*, gives this version of the return of the Magi: 'Et sic "responso accepto in somnis ne redirent ad Herodem" descenderunt ad mare, et per navem transfretantes, in Tharsis Ciliciae abierunt, sicque "per aliam viam reversi sunt in regionem suam": quia secundum Hieronymum, infidelitati miscendi non erant Judaeorum. Propter quod factum Herodes iratus, postea naves Tharsensium incendit, secundum prophetiam David dicentis: "In spiritu vehementi conteres naves Tharsis".'<sup>38</sup> Ludolphus seems to suggest that Herod himself burned the ships; manuscript painters were perhaps less dramatic but more accurate in having him give the command for the burning and having his servants carry out the orders.

It was only in the thirteenth century that artists began to show the Magi in ships and then to show Herod burning those ships. This was, however, the final commingling of several exegetical and artistic threads. As early as the eighth century, the Utrecht Psalter had introduced two tiny ships into the complex illustration for Psalm 47 to illustrate the

'naves Tharsis' of verse 8 (see Chapter 5). The Magi, however, were initially associated not with Psalm 47, but with the kings of Psalm 71:9-11. These verses were interpreted as a prefiguration of Epiphany:

9. Coram illo procident Aethiopes,  
Et inimici eius terram lingent.
10. Reges Tharsis et insulae munera offerent;  
Reges Arabum et Saba dona adducent;
11. Et adorabunt eum omnes reges terrae,  
Omnes gentes servient ei.

This identification was first made by Tertullian (160 - 220) who wrote: 'De illo autem tunc auri munera etiam David: et dabitur illi ex auro Arabiae, et rursus reges Arabum et Saba munera offerunt illi. Nam et magos reges habuit fere Oriens.'<sup>39</sup> It was not until the fifth century that the Magi and Herod were connected, by Arnobius the Younger (c.460), with the ships of Tarshish in Psalm 47, thereby suggesting the return of the Magi by ship; 'quod tempore quo non est inventus Dominus et infantes occisi sunt, etiam navigia regio sunt jussu vexata, quibus magi, qui non redierant ad regem credebant fugere potuisse'.<sup>40</sup> The relevant part of the Psalm is:

5. Quoniam ecce reges terrae congregati sunt,  
Convenerunt in unum.
6. Ipsi videntes, sic admirati sunt,  
Conturbati sunt, commoti sunt.
7. Tremor apprehendit eos;  
Ibi dolores ut parturientis:
8. In spiritu vehementi conteres naves Tharsis.

In the *Glossa Ordinaria*, the Magi retained this association with the ships of Tarshish and Herod was also introduced into the interpretation for verse 8 of this Psalm:

*In spiritu vehementi, Herodis. Conteres naves Tharsis. Quia in Tharso, Ciliciae naves quam Magos transposuisse in patriam suam credebantur, confracta sunt ab Herode.*



This twelfth-century gloss<sup>42</sup> then refers to Augustine's comments. In his *Ennaratio in Psalmum XLVII*, Augustine (354 - 430) does not refer to Herod, but he gives a lengthy digression on the significance of the ships and their origin, stressing their association with a nation given to pride:

*In spiritu violento conteres naves Tharsis: Breviter intelligitur, evertes superbiam gentium. Sed unde ex hac historia dicitur eversio superbiae gentium? Propter naves Tharsis: Tharsis civitatem quaesierunt docti, hoc est quoniam civitas hoc nomine significaretur: et aliquibus visum est Ciliciam dictam esse Tharsis, ex eo quod metropolis ejus Tharsus dicitur....Manifestum est autem, quod primordia regni Carthagenis navibus floruerunt, et ita floruerunt, ut inter ceteras gentes excelleret negotiationibus et navigationibus....Atque hinc nimium superba facta est civitas illa, ut digne per ejus naves intelligatur superbia gentium, praesumens in incertis tamquam in flatibus ventorum...Quicumque ergo ex incertis hujus vitae tumuerant, evertantur; et subjiciatur Christo omnis superbia gentium, conterenti in spiritu violento naves Tharsis: non cujuscumque civitatis, sed Tharsis. Quomodo in spiritu violento? Timore fortissimo. Sic enim eum tremuit omnis superbia judicaturum, ut in humilem crederat, ne excelsum expavescent.*<sup>43</sup>

This deadly sin of pride, here associated with the successful wealthy city of Tarshish<sup>44</sup> (interchangeable with Carthage) was, of course, considered to be one of the many faults of Herod the Great by most patristic writers.

The text of the twelfth-century Canterbury (Eadwine) Psalter<sup>45</sup> reflects this attitude. The text of the Psalms is in three Latin versions, the Hebraicum, Romanum and Gallicanum, this last having marginal and interlinear glosses of an explanatory nature. The marginal gloss for 'Tharsis' of Psalm 47, on folio 83v, summarizes Augustine, 'Cilicia regio a tharso metropoli tharsis dr. ut tharsis et cartago que navibus floruit ad mercandum quibus superbia gentium signatur.' This reference to 'superbia' is not in the *Glossa Ordinaria* which the scribe used as a

source for most of his glosses, but was deliberately chosen from Augustine. At the same time, a marginal note for verse 5 of the same Psalm, on folio 83, associates Herod with the kings. '*Reges: principes iudaeorum congregati ab herode convenerunt concorditur dicendo. In bethleem iude secundum....*' and later in the same note in explanation of the phrase 'in spiritu vehementi', Herod is directly involved. 'In spiritu vehementi herodis naves in tharso cilicie quas magos transposuisse in patriam suam credebatur confracte sunt'. Here the reference from the *Glossa Ordinaria* is used and the vivid image is given of Herod smashing up the ships rather than burning them. The illustration for the Psalm, on folio 82v, follows the pattern of the Utrecht Psalter from which it was copied. Across the bottom is the sea full of fishes and bearing still only two ships of Tarshish. No smashing or burning of ships is taking place.

In the thirteenth century these various strands of exegesis came together, identifying the Magi with the kings of the Psalms, and then with the ships of Tarsus. Several examples can be found in thirteenth-century art of the Magi on their return journey, travelling in a boat. They can be seen in a panel of the rose-window at Soissons,<sup>46</sup> and again in the window dedicated to the childhood of Christ in the apsidal chapel of the Cathedral of Tours.<sup>47</sup> An excellent example of a manuscript illumination of this same subject is to be found in the twelfth-century German Evangelary of Spire (*Fig. 127*).<sup>48</sup> A mosaic in the Baptistery in Florence from the fourteenth century completes a cycle of the Magi, after showing the Adoration and the Magi sleeping and being warned in a dream to depart, by depicting them all sailing across the ocean in a splendid boat with sails and tackle (*fig. 128*).<sup>49</sup> Then Herod was identified with the 'spiritu vehementi', and he was made to destroy the

Magi's ships. It seems to have been Peter Comestor who initiated the dramatic change that made Herod set fire to the Magi's ships, rather than smash them. As he was the source for Vincent of Beauvais and Jacobus de Voragine, this was the image which became popular in the thirteenth century; it was the one which inspired the sculptors of the medallions of Amiens Cathedral and the painters of the Taymouth and Carew-Poyntz Hours to represent Herod giving orders for the burning of the ships in a bold, new interpretation of the pride and rage of this irascible tyrant.

## II. Visual Signs of the Evil of Herod

### A. Facial Expression, Colour and Gesture

The artists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were ingenious in devising ways to indicate the evil nature of Herod the Great. Even though most manuscript illuminations were of minute proportions, artists, nevertheless, carefully portrayed his facial features and body posture. The most outstanding example of this is to be seen in the Oscott Psalter.<sup>50</sup> Herod appears twice in the preliminary cycle of pictures in this Psalter, once as he interviews the Magi (*fig. 129*) and again as he watches the Massacre (*fig. 130*). In both instances the artist has painted him with an evil grimace on his face, produced by the technique of depicting him with his mouth slightly open in an evil grin and then by painting in the teeth. The result is quite effective. The same technique was used by the artist who illuminated the Abingdon Apocalypse (*fig. 131*)<sup>51</sup> and by the glaziers who produced the stained glass windows of St. Ouen church in Rouen.<sup>52</sup> Herod is shown there with teeth bared and all individually articulated. This malicious grin gives him a diabolical look. 'L'artiste a accentué l'expression cruelle, notamment par un rictus découvrant les dents.'<sup>53</sup>

Exactly the same technique was used again in the Massacre of the Innocents panel in the south choir clerestory of York Minster (*fig. 132*).<sup>54</sup> Herod sits dramatically gesturing towards the soldiers and mothers and, although the paint has worn away to some extent, it seems fairly certain that his teeth were bared and painted in separately. This glass from York Minster has been related to that of Rouen through certain stylistic features;<sup>55</sup> the unusual way of depicting Herod with teeth bared, peculiar to Rouen and York glass of this period (first half of the fourteenth century) seems to support the view that the York glass was strongly influenced by that of Rouen.

In other cases, a similar diabolical effect was gained by the opposite technique of having Herod laugh, especially in the Massacre scene. In the thirteenth century Carrow Psalter now in the Walters Art Gallery,<sup>56</sup> folio 25 has a depiction of Herod seated, legs crossed, sword in right hand, smiling as he watches his soldiers kill the children; a Psalter of similar date (c.1250 - 70) in Trinity College,<sup>57</sup> Cambridge, also shows Herod throned, holding a naked sword in his right hand, watching the soldiers massacre infants while mothers sit on the ground and reach after their children; he has his head thrown back and is laughing. A fragment from a late thirteenth century Book of Hours in the Fitzwilliam Museum<sup>58</sup> shows Herod in a similar posture with crossed legs and sword looking positively gleeful as he supervises the Massacre (*fig. 133*). In another thirteenth-century French Psalter, he adopts the same pose, but looks on with a supercilious expression as he watches the outdoor scene in which his soldiers brutally kill children with their swords.<sup>59</sup>

It must be pointed out, of course, that these examples are exceptional in their depiction of Herod. There are scores of other

instances when he appears regal and detached, much as any other king. Such a representation is most likely in a scene where he is interviewing the Magi, such as that in the thirteenth-century English Psalter in the British Library, Royal MS 1 D.X. (*fig. 134*).<sup>60</sup> Herod sits on a cushioned throne, wearing a crown much larger than those of the Magi and paying serious attention to what they say. He is equally regal and serious in a mid-thirteenth-century wall painting in St. Mary's Church, Brook, Kent, where he is attended by a counsellor as he interviews the Magi (*fig. 135*).<sup>61</sup> He sits with his feet on a footstool, and carries a sceptre. In a single leaf, perhaps from a Psalter, painted by W. de Brailes and now in the Pierpont Morgan Library,<sup>62</sup> Herod appears in two of the six main roundels and in both he shows a regal attitude (*fig. 136*); in the top right corner he listens to his scribes pronounce the prophecy of the king to be born in Bethlehem (this appears on the scroll they hold) and in the lower left corner he watches dispassionately as soldiers carry out the Massacre. He is almost as aloof in the Berthold Missal (*fig. 137*)<sup>63</sup> although he sits with his legs crossed, which may be a sign of agitation; here it is more likely used as a device to make him look more dramatic. He is similarly detached in the Massacre scene of MS Royal 1 D.X. (*fig. 138*).<sup>64</sup> A later example of the mid-fourteenth century of church sculpture in Lye, Gotland<sup>65</sup> shows Herod in quite an affable mood in the Massacre scene although the soldiers wear frightening visors and one even manages to kill two swaddled children at once (*fig. 139*). In a French Psalter of the early thirteenth century<sup>66</sup> Herod is seen watching the Massacre; he carries neither sceptre nor sword and appears to view the slaughter whimsically. In the Bodleian Apocryphal Infancy of Christ of the early fourteenth century,<sup>67</sup> Herod

sits with crossed legs and naked sword and gestures towards a soldier who holds up before him a child who seems to pray to Herod from its bloody perch on the sword, but Herod has a somewhat apprehensive expression on his face here (*fig. 140*). In a French casket of c.1360-1380, now in the Wernher Collection at Luton Hoo, he carries a sword but is regal and calm (*fig. 141*).<sup>68</sup>

Herod reacts to the news that a new king has been born with various facial expressions and gestures. In the Ingeborg Psalter<sup>69</sup> he looks solemn and depressed as he fondles a chain about his neck while listening to his scribes and the Magi (*fig. 142*).<sup>70</sup> In the Kristina Psalter in Copenhagen, also a French manuscript of the early thirteenth century,<sup>71</sup> Herod is shown in a scene with five or six Jews gesturing towards him; he sits, chin in hand, and looks rather troubled and pensive.

Also of interest are the various attempts by artists to represent Herod's evil nature and his anger. Colour was used effectively. In two French manuscripts of the fourteenth century, now in the Bodleian, Herod is portrayed wearing bright red stockings which are particularly prominent as he is wearing a short tunic and sitting with his legs crossed in both instances.<sup>72</sup> This same technique is used in Norwich Cathedral<sup>73</sup> in the roof boss of the north transept which shows Herod expressing his anger (*fig. 143*); his cloak opens to reveal his red stockinged legs which are crossed in anger while two men hold him steady. In this same boss, Herod wears a demon-crown (see below) and is furiously pulling his beard. This beard motif can also be found as early as the twelfth century in a French manuscript at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York,<sup>74</sup> where Herod is seen sitting with crossed legs and tugging at his beard as the Magi appear before him.

An even more dramatic way of representing Herod's evil nature was to paint him with a grey or black face. This became a common practice among later manuscript illuminators as a means of representing such evil characters as the torturers at the Crucifixion, and occasionally Pilate and Judas. The technique was also applied to Herod. As early as the thirteenth century, the English artist of the Huntingfield Psalter<sup>75</sup> painted Herod at the scene of the Massacre with a devil at his ear and a face coloured dark grey (although he does not have an angry expression). In the Passion scene of this same manuscript, the soldiers and executioners are also represented with grey faces. In a fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Vita Christi*,<sup>76</sup> with half page illuminations above the single stanza on each page, the Massacre of the Innocents is a rather crowded scene with five soldiers, and Herod, who looks on, with a black face. The scene is particularly colourful: Herod wears a red robe and carries a sword; the soldiers are all in gold with red helmets and armour; the background is blue. In this manuscript, Judas and the soldiers who arrest Jesus have dark faces (folio 17) and so do the soldiers who fall to the ground before Jesus at his arrest (folio 16v) and the buffeters and scourgers (folio 17v). The men nailing Christ to the cross (folio 23) have not been painted in this way in this manuscript and indeed they seldom were included in the group of people who had blackened faces. Sometimes Herod himself escapes this treatment. In Royal MS 1 D.X in the British Library, mentioned above,<sup>77</sup> Herod is portrayed with normal features and colouring (*fig. 134*) but later in the same manuscript, in the scene showing the arrest of Jesus, the soldiers and torturers have black faces. Perhaps Herod was considered a little less evil than these soldiers. However, even in the Massacre scene in this manuscript, he was not treated

the same as other evil black-faced figures. He holds a naked sword and directs the soldiers, but he does not have a grey face.

The most daring innovation of all was to show Herod becoming actively involved in the Massacre himself. A tendency towards this can be seen in such illuminations as that of the thirteenth-century Psalter of Wenceslas<sup>78</sup> where he sits on the edge of his seat, legs crossed, leaning forward with chin jutting out, eager to hear more information from the Magi. He moves closer into the action in Add.MS.49,999<sup>79</sup> a thirteenth-century English Book of Hours in the British Library. In the illumination of the Massacre, Herod actually reaches out with his left hand and holds the wrist of one of the soldiers. The final step was not taken until the fifteenth century when Herod himself was shown killing children, along with his soldiers (see Chapter 11).

It is evident that the artists of this period were ingenious and imaginative in discovering new ways to represent Herod, and other characters who were associated with evil. His facial expression and colour was altered, his gestures and his clothing were designed to show his violence, his physical posture and finally his active participation in murdering the children were introduced. These were all new features in the art of the thirteenth century and they were/<sup>used</sup>effectively to emphasize Herod's evil nature.

#### B. Herod's Faldstool

Herod was a king and so he was most often shown seated on a throne. By introducing new elements into the structure of the throne and into the way Herod was seated, artists could sometimes make subtle visual suggestions about his associations with evil. The conventional throne in early manuscripts was a bench, sometimes cushioned, usually with no back and



occasionally with solid, architectural features. No difference was made between the thrones of Christ or the Virgin, and the thrones of more evil figures like Herod. An early thirteenth-century English manuscript in St. John's College, Cambridge,<sup>80</sup> which has two scenes painted on each page, has one folio which shows the Adoration of the Magi in the top half and the Massacre of the Innocents in the lower half (*fig. 144*). The Virgin and Herod sit on identical thrones; Herod's may even be larger. However, in the later part of the thirteenth century, interesting innovations were made in Herod's throne. Another English manuscript, also in St. John's College, painted in England in the thirteenth century and repainted in part in the fourteenth century, includes two radically different interpretations of Herod's throne.<sup>81</sup> George Henderson has convincingly argued that these unusual versions of the throne probably bear a significance deeper than mere artistic experiment.<sup>82</sup> On folio 13v, the Magi are shown in the presence of Herod (*fig. 145*),<sup>83</sup> but instead of sitting on a low, backless bench, Herod sits in a narrow wooden chair with tall, vertical struts at each corner, all carefully painted with a distinct pattern. Henderson has discovered a twelfth-century prototype for such a chair,<sup>84</sup> but more interesting is his discovery of similar wooden chairs with high wooden posts at all four corners in two Apocalypse manuscripts.<sup>85</sup> In both of these manuscripts in Paris and in Trinity College, the wooden chair represents the Seat of the Beast on which the fifth angel empties his vial. 'It seems not impossible that the unusual throne on which Herod sits on folio 13b of MS K 26 was borrowed from Apocalypse iconography and is an allusion to the Seat of the Beast, which Herod, the persecutor of Christ, might well occupy.'<sup>86</sup>

In the illustration for the Massacre of the Innocents on folio 15v of MS K. 26 Herod sits on a grotesque faldstool (*fig. 146*). The lower

part seems to be like the hind quarters of a large wild animal; it looks alive and actually seems to be walking along into the centre of the picture. The upper part consists of four beasts' heads at the ends of writhing necks: the front two are griffins' heads with beaks, and the rear ones are wolf heads with short muzzles. (Both of these beasts are particularly ferocious according to the Bestiary.)<sup>87</sup> These also seem to be alive; they twist around and face inwards as if to watch the occupant of the chair. The use of faldstools is not unusual in art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: King Solomon sits on one on the Beatus page of the Windmill Psalter,<sup>88</sup> but there it is obviously a rather delicate and decorative structure; the Bishop is seated on a faldstool in the Metz Pontifical<sup>89</sup> on folio 82v, and even though this faldstool has lion legs with little tufts of hair above the feet, they are stylized and match the small rather charming lion heads, with tongues sticking out, placed at the end of long necks which are all painted in gold and give a purely decorative effect. In the twelfth-century *Commentary on the Apocalypse of Bede* in St. John's College,<sup>90</sup> St. John sits on a faldstool which has clawed feet and griffins' heads twisted so they are looking towards him, much as those on Herod's throne in MS K. 26. But these too are stiff and straight so that they appear symmetrical and stylized. But Herod's animal-like faldstool surpasses all others in its degree of animation. It does not have symmetrically arranged beasts' heads, nor stiff, unjointed decorative legs. It is alive and ugly with biting heads and clawed feet. Again, Henderson has pointed out the similarity between this throne and an alternative design for the Seat of the Beast in another English Apocalypse manuscript from c.1250 - 60 in the Bodleian.<sup>91</sup> It has even closer associations with evil, however, in its resemblance to

the throne of Antichrist which appears in the Abingdon Apocalypse.<sup>92</sup> This throne, which occurs several times, always has numerous beasts' heads on coiling necks growing from it or from the figure sitting in it. On folio 40, for example, Antichrist is seated on a faldstool with four animal feet and four dog-heads which look around in different directions as if alive. To complete the impression of evil, a large winged devil sits on the shoulder of Antichrist. Herod, in the St. John's College manuscript, has no devil on his shoulder but he sits in a posture similar to Antichrist in the Abingdon Apocalypse, naked sword held upright and legs crossed. 'The Abingdon Apocalypse has stylistic connections with MS K. 26. Herod's throne on folio 15b may therefore be interpreted as an extension of the kind of iconographic invention richly displayed in the Abingdon Apocalypse.'<sup>93</sup> The animal-like faldstool for Herod in the St. John's College manuscript thus serves to associate him visually with such Apocalyptic subjects as the Seat of the Beast and Antichrist, and consequently to deepen and intensify the degree of evil suggested by this illumination.

French artists of the thirteenth century also associated Herod with beast-like faldstools. A manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale<sup>94</sup> shows Herod seated on a faldstool with animal feet and beaked, eagles' heads. This is in a scene showing, not the Massacre of the Innocents, but his interview with the Magi. His dark stern looks suggest his concern or his wickedness. In still another manuscript of the first half of the thirteenth century, possibly earlier than the English ones, the Psalter of St. Louis and of Blanche of Castile,<sup>95</sup> Herod is again depicted sitting on a faldstool, with animal legs and feet, while he watches the Massacre. The faldstool is less vicious than that in the Cambridge manuscript, but

Herod's wickedness is emphasized by the fact that a winged demon sits on his shoulder and speaks into his ear. This represents yet a further method of indicating Herod's evil nature.

### C. Demons

One of the most obvious ways for an artist to emphasize the evil nature of a character such as Herod was to present him accompanied by a devil. Devils had been introduced into scenes with Herod in the twelfth century (see Chapter 6). However, in the next two centuries a great variety of demons appeared with him, taking several different shapes and sizes. Their purpose was twofold: either they whispered evil thoughts and bad advice into his ear, or they dragged his body or soul off to hell. Occasionally they tried to drag his crown from his head. Some of these devils were depicted as tiny creatures, others were painted almost as large as Herod himself. Every one of them seems to have a unique shape - it may appear as an animal, like a dog or a bull; it may be decidedly negroid; it may be winged, horned, hairy or reptilian. It is impossible to introduce them all in this chapter, but a sample will be mentioned and some illustrated in order to show the great variety of demon iconography which the thirteenth and fourteenth-century artists created, in so far as these creatures related to Herod. A study of such episodes as the Temptations of Christ, his healing of the possessed, the Trial before Pilate, and the Descent into Hell would, of course, produce a mass of material on demons, but that would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Only demons which accompany Herod are considered here.

It is interesting to note the variety of physical forms which the devil was given. In an earlier chapter on twelfth-century art it was pointed out that in a cloister capital at Moissac, Herod was accompanied

by two demons in the shape of dogs. This same tradition of a dog-demon seems to have existed also in Sweden. A late thirteenth-century retable fragment has survived from the church at Södra Rada in Värmland, Sweden (*fig. 147*). It consists of a crowned figure seated on a traditional throne; beside him is a creature which looks like a dog, thin and bony with all ribs showing. It is standing on its hind legs resting its forepaws on the shoulder of the king and speaking into his ear. On the basis of other fragments which survive from this same retable, relating to the infancy cycle, this fragment has been identified as King Herod being advised by the devil in the form of a dog.<sup>96</sup>

In the thirteenth-century English Psalter, MS Lansdowne 420,<sup>97</sup> Herod is assisted in his interview with the Magi on folio 8 by a creature in the form of a horned bull who takes much the same stance as the dog-devil from Södra Rada: it stands on its hind legs with its front ones resting against Herod's back while it whispers in his ear. Usually demons are bestial, but not quite so easily identifiable as these. On folio 9 of the same manuscript two demons are about to drag Herod off to hell by a rope tied around his neck, after he has slain himself (*fig. 148*). These demons are certainly bestial but it would be difficult to identify them further.

Most demons seem to have horns, however. A thirteenth-century Flemish Psalter in the Pierpont Morgan Library<sup>98</sup> has an illustration of the Massacre of the Innocents in which Herod is depicted on the left side of the page. There was not room for the artist to paint in a complete devil behind Herod, so he painted only the devil's head at Herod's ear, and this head is complete with horns. Other bestial devils, scaly, winged, or furry, will occur in photographs introduced throughout the chapter and so will not be given special attention here. Mention should

be made, however, of a rather unusual devil which appears in the late thirteenth-century English Huth Psalter.<sup>99</sup> It is black and furry but has taken on an almost human form. This extraordinary creature appears in the Massacre of the Innocents scene (*fig. 149*). Herod sits in a large cushioned, architectural throne and behind him sits this devil - jet black, but with distinctly negroid features which are especially noticeable because the artist has painted his mouth, eyes, eyebrows and ears a bright red. This devil is a large, round creature and stands with one hand on Herod's shoulder, like a comrade. Other demons are depicted in this manuscript: there is one on folio 13 with St. Margaret, but it is more animal-like with a hooked nose and black fur; the devils of the Last Judgement on folio 13v are similar to the one with St. Margaret. Herod's devil is unique in the manuscript.

Quite often the devils in Herod scenes differ very little from those introduced in the twelfth century. These are still relatively small in size and not terribly conspicuous. Such is the case in the thirteenth-century French Bible *Moralisée*<sup>100</sup> in the scene involving the Massacre of the Innocents, which includes a little black devil sitting on Herod's shoulder (*fig. 150*). This is paralleled in the scene immediately below which illustrates tyrants who, through the ministrations of the devil, put to death the martyrs of the church. A king sits on the right of the roundel and is advised by a little devil on his shoulder, identical to Herod's. In sculpture, similar composition and proportion can be seen in the tympanum of the north transept portal of Notre Dame, Paris, executed about 1250.<sup>101</sup> Across the bottom register there are scenes of the Nativity, the Presentation in the Temple, the Massacre of the Innocents and the Flight (*fig. 151*). Herod sits on the left in the

Massacre scene, left leg crossed defiantly over his right knee, as he gives orders for the Massacre to a servant standing before him. The orders presumably come from the little devil who appears on the inner side of the sculptured panel (away from the viewer) leaning on Herod's shoulder and whispering in his left ear. This devil is not unlike the ones in the Bible Moralisé, with its small round ears and rather tiny proportions. A further example of a relatively small devil whispering into Herod's ear as he orders the Massacre appears in the thirteenth-century stained glass of Lyons Cathedral, in a window of the apse.<sup>102</sup> Not only is Herod accompanied by a devil, but he also sits on a faldstool decorated with animal arms and feet. All the above examples are French work, but English artists showed a parallel development. The Huntingfield Psalter<sup>103</sup> contains a Herod in the Massacre scene who is not only advised by a devil (of which only the face and a hand can be seen) at his ear, but is also painted with a grey face so that there is no mistake about his evil intentions.

Medieval devils accompanying Herod soon began to grow in stature. One of the largest to survive can be seen in the stone relief from the south door of the nave in Linköping Cathedral, in Östergötland (*fig. 152*).<sup>104</sup> This winged creature seems to swoop in on Herod. A detail of this relief shows that it has one of its scaly feet on top of a demon head (with pointed ears) which forms part of Herod's faldstool (*fig. 153*). Even the traditional animals of the faldstool have turned to demons. Another demon which is large in comparison to Herod can be seen in the Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux,<sup>105</sup> a Book of Hours illustrated by Jean Pucelle in the early fourteenth century (*fig. 154*). The painting of Herod and the Massacre appears on folio 69 in a bas-de-page decoration to the Hour of Sext, where the main illustration shows the Adoration of the Magi;

the devil who stands on Herod's throne and nonchalantly leans against the king as it watches the Massacre he is directing, is more than half the size of Herod himself. This devil does not have wings; he has an animal-like body and an ape-like face much like his smaller ancestors. In size and pose he is much like the devil in the Huth Psalter (*fig. 149*). A rather large horned and furry devil hovers above the head of Herod in the Queen Mary's Psalter,<sup>106</sup> and is probably meant to be urging him on as he begins to unsheathe his sword, as if to participate personally in the Massacre (*fig. 155*). This should be compared with the illustration in the same manuscript of Herod and the Magi on folio 131 where no devil is present at all (*fig. 156*). Earlier, however, on folio 51v, a cousin of this devil appeared above the head of Saul to emphasize the fact that Saul became possessed as he listened to David play the harp for him and tried to kill David with his javelin (*fig. 157*). This scene was considered an Old Testament type for the New Testament antitype of the tyrant Herod killing the Innocents.<sup>107</sup> Iconographically, the two scenes are linked in this Psalter by the use of this devil.<sup>108</sup>

Occasionally Herod is accompanied by not one but two devils. This happens in MS Lansdowne 420 (*fig. 148*) when one devil starts to drag him to hell while another helps to push. An interesting example can also be seen in the early fourteenth-century carved stone choir screen of Notre Dame, Paris, on the north side (*fig. 158*). As Herod watches the Massacre, gesturing with his sceptre, he is plagued by two black devils. One crawls up his back and reaches up to pull off his crown. The other (not visible in the photograph) sits by his left ear; with one hand it also pulls at Herod's crown and with the other it pulls Herod's hair. Herod grimaces under this treatment. An interesting dimension is added in this portrayal. Herod's throne is overhung by an architectural canopy; in the canopy are



three little windows, and from each of these windows peers a devil with pointed ears. By multiplying the number of devils the artist has emphasized the cruel nature of this otherwise rather elegant-looking king. It is of interest that these devils are tormenting Herod at the Massacre of the Innocents rather than advising him. The Notre Dame choir screen gives a unique interpretation of their role.

Manuscripts of this period continued to represent the theme, introduced in the twelfth-century Bible leaves in London and Paris, discussed above, of Herod lying on his deathbed while his soul was carried off to hell by a devil. A good example of this occurs in the Peterborough Psalter,<sup>109</sup> where a fiend hovers above Herod's bed, ready to take his soul away as he plunges a dagger into his chest (*fig. 159*). This theme can also be seen rather later in some of the roof bosses of Norwich Cathedral.<sup>110</sup> In the western line of bosses in the north transept the fourth boss shows the death of Herod (*fig. 160*). He lies, crowned, in a red bed with a gold coverlet. There is no indication of suicide. Behind the bed stand three figures in various postures of grief: one is putting his hands to his eyes. In the central line of bosses in the same transept, the second boss again shows another aspect of the death of Herod (*fig. 161*). He lies in bed wearing a demon-crown and covered by a sheet and a gold counterpane. Beside his bed stand two grotesque devils; one has the head of a bird with a huge hooked beak, and the other is like a giant toad. This latter demon holds by the ankle and tail a third, even larger demon which hovers over Herod and is taking his soul as it issues from his mouth. This demon is larger than Herod, has a scaly body, cloven feet and a long tail. This version of the death of Herod, accompanied by these three revolting creatures, is grotesque and horrifying. These devils are the most extreme examples both in size and shape that are to be found with Herod in medieval art.

## D. Apocalypse Manuscripts

Manuscript illuminations of Herod, with or without a demon, appeared mainly in Bibles and Psalters and in some Books of Hours during this period. However, in the thirteenth century Herod also appeared in two Apocalypse manuscripts. This is quite unusual in that he appears in only two out of the more than eighty surviving illustrated Apocalypses. Both of these manuscripts were produced by the same workshop, the one which produced the Lambeth Apocalypse, although they are later than that manuscript.<sup>111</sup> They are the Lisbon Apocalypse and the Abingdon Apocalypse.

The Lisbon Apocalypse<sup>112</sup> is most unusual in containing not one but two illuminations of Herod as he directs the Massacre of the Innocents. This may be partly explained by the fact that this manuscript is outstanding for its total number of illuminations, 153 in all; of these, 74 illustrate the actual text of the Apocalypse and 79 illustrate mystical and moral commentaries on the text.<sup>113</sup> However, the first appearance of Herod in this manuscript, on folio 23v (*fig. 162*), could not be explained by Delisle and Meyers:

Mais j'avoue qu'il est souvent difficile de découvrir la raison de la place assigné à tel au tel morceau de la série complémentaire. On peut se demander, par exemple, pourquoi au tableau qui représente à la fois un ange enveloppé d'un léger nuage et mettant un livre ouvert dans la main de saint Jean, et le même ange recommandant à saint Jean de ne point en registrer les signes annoncés par les sept tonnerres (folio 23), pourquoi, dis-je, se trouve à côté de ce tableau, pour lui faire pendant, une représentation du massacre des Innocents et de la fuite en Egypte (folio 23v). Les cinq lignes mises au bas du second tableau,<sup>114</sup> rendent un compte bien insuffisant du motif qui l'a fait rapprocher du premier...Rien de plus, pas la moindre allusion au massacre des Innocents, qui aura été introduit à cette place parce qu'un commentateur se sera imaginé que la recommandation faite à saint Jean de garder le silence rappelait l'avis donné en songe aux mages de ne point aller parler à Herode de leur visite à l'enfant Jesus.<sup>115</sup>

The inclusion of this Massacre (and Flight) at this point in the manuscript may be problematical, but the iconography is fairly traditional with some

interesting innovations. Herod appears enthroned on the left, raised high above the rest of the action, but this arrangement is obviously an attempt to use all the available space to full advantage rather than a suggestion of hierarchical importance. A devil appears in the air above him, urging him on as he unsheathes his sword with that peculiar gesture whereby both elbows are held high in the air. A servant receiving Herod's order stands before him and all around him soldiers in chain mail are massacring children with their swords and lances. One mother holds her baby in her left arm but in her right hand she has a peculiar sort of wooden paddle<sup>116</sup> raised in a threatening gesture towards the soldier. The right half of the picture shows the Flight to Egypt with the donkey being led by Joseph's son who walks right out of the frame of the picture.

The second depiction of the Massacre of the Innocents occurs on folio 29v (*fig. 163*) and is presented as the symbolic explanation of the Apocalypse 12:1-6:

<sup>1</sup>Et signum magnum apparuit in caelo: Mulier amicta sole et luna sub pedibus eius, et in capite eius corona stellarum duodecim: <sup>2</sup>et in utero habens, clamabat parturiens et cruciabatur ut pariat. <sup>3</sup>Et visum est aliud signum in caelo: et ecce draco magnus rufus habens capita septem, et cornua decem: et in capitibus eius diademata septem, <sup>4</sup>et cauda eius trahebat tertium partem stellarum caeli, et misit eas in terram, et draco stetit ante mulierem, quae erat paritura; ut cum peperisset, filium eius devoraret, <sup>5</sup>Et peperit filium masculum, qui rectorum erat omnes gentes in virgo ferrea: et raptus est filius eius ad Deum, et ad thronum eius, <sup>6</sup>et mulier fugit in solitudinem ubi habebat locum paratum a Deo, ut ibi pascant eam diebus mille ducentis sexaginta.

The seven-headed dragon which threatened the Woman was traditionally associated with Satan who tried to destroy Christ at his Nativity, through the

instrumentality of Herod. Joachim of Fiore's (d.1202) commentary on the Apocalypse connected actual historical events with those of the Apocalypse. Two English chroniclers<sup>117</sup> relate that when Richard I met him at Messina and asked about the significance of the seven-headed dragon, he is reported to have identified the heads with a series of persecutors, beginning with Herod and Nero and proceeding through Mahomet and Saladin to Antichrist. The illumination of folio 29v shows at once the Adoration of the Christ-Child by the Magi on the left and the attempt at his destruction by Herod on the right. He holds upright an unsheathed sword in his left hand and gestures towards the soldiers with his right, while a swine-like devil whispers in his ear. His teeth are bared in a hideous grimace, just as in the Oscott Psalter (*fig. 129, 130*) and under his throne lies a lion. This lion, in such a position, is unique, although such a beast appears later with Herod in the *Grandes Heures de Rohan*. It is appropriate here in the context of the Massacre by the 'roaring and ravening' lion (Ps.21:14), Herod. However, on the other side of the miniature, the lion is balanced by a figure of Jesse who lies beneath the throne of the Virgin with the 'tree of Jesse' growing from his loins. This is an unusual interpretation of the Tree of Jesse iconography; no other examples like this have been found. The miniature is completed on the left by a representative of the Magi being warned by the angel to depart by another way. On the scroll held by the angel is the inscription '*ad herodem nolite*'. There is considerable emphasis on Herod, then, in this illumination and, indeed, in the manuscript as a whole. He appears twice while most other manuscripts do not include him at all.

The Abingdon Apocalypse<sup>118</sup> contains a most unusual iconography for Herod the Great in another Massacre scene (*fig. 164*). He unsheathes his sword with the same gesture he used in the Lisbon Apocalypse and he also

bares his teeth, but in this illumination, there is no devil whispering in his ear or hovering above his head. Instead, there is an animal-like demon which has curled itself around Herod's crown and then stretched its head down to whisper in his ear (*fig. 131*). As has been noted above, this manuscript abounds in faldstool thrones which grow multiple lively-looking animal heads: on folio 40 the faldstool of Antichrist has four animal heads and at the same time Antichrist is represented with a large winged devil on his right shoulder; on folio 36 he is represented as a king, and five grotesque heads issue from his head; on folio 39 he has six animal heads emerging from his collar and some even grow from the points of his crown, a visual suggestion that he himself is the seven-headed dragon, or is possessed by it. As Herod appears in this manuscript in the logical place, symbolizing the dragon of Apocalypse 12:1-6, George Henderson is probably quite right when he comments on the iconography of the demon perched on Herod's crown. 'This curious iconography must be related to the image of Antichrist whose crown sprouts beasts' heads in a later picture.'<sup>119</sup> Herod's demon crown, seen only in the context of this manuscript, lends itself to such an interpretation. However, the iconography of a demon in Herod's crown may be much more subtle and meaningful.

#### E. Herod's Demon Crown

Herod the Great was associated with the devil from very early times as the first enemy of Christ, much as Lucifer was considered the first enemy of God. From Origen's statement that Herod was 'instigated by the blind and wicked devil',<sup>120</sup> it was a short step to Leo the Great's characterization of him as 'ipse diabolus'.<sup>121</sup> This association, built up by patristic writers, was regularly emphasized by artists, who showed Herod being advised by devils (see above).

M. D. Anderson has pointed out that Herod is often represented wearing a 'demon-cap...a crown within which rises a peaked cap ending in a demon's face.'<sup>122</sup> She concludes that this cap was meant to represent the diabolical thoughts passing through the mind of its wearer.<sup>123</sup> Such a cap is worn by Herod in several of the roof bosses of the north transept of Norwich Cathedral. One of these portrays Herod 'exceeding wrath', furiously pulling his beard with both hands while seated in a round chair, one leg crossed over the other; he is controlled by two attendants but his violent actions express his fury while a demon-face at the tip of a hat within his crown associates him with evil (*fig. 143*). The hat becomes a complete bestial devil stretched out across the top of the crown and leaning down to whisper in Herod's ear as he unsheathes his own sword in a Massacre scene in the Abingdon Apocalypse (*fig. 131, 164*). This bestial devil becomes a superb dragon-crown in a restored panel of fifteenth-century stained glass in St. Michael, Spurriergate, in York. While Herod supervises the Massacre of the Innocents, a lively dragon-demon stretches out of his crown to watch the scene it has supposedly instigated (*fig. 265*). It seems reasonable that such a demon-crown should represent, as M. D. Anderson suggests, diabolical thoughts in the mind of its wearer, and it may be 'a convenient way of showing on the stage the little devil who whispers infernal suggestions into the ears of men in some manuscripts'.<sup>124</sup> However, when used for Herod the Great, it may have a deeper significance and a more specific meaning. It may, in fact, be closely associated with the pagan god Ammon, and the evils of pagan religions.

Several Old Testament types are used as prefigurations of Herod. The types of the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* include one which seems particularly significant. The Flight into Egypt is represented by Joseph

leading the ass, Mary carrying the Christ-Child, and the idols falling (*fig. 165*). The three Old Testament types are, first, the statue of a Virgin and Child which the Egyptians worshipped (*fig. 166*); second, Pharaoh threatening the child Moses who has taken Pharaoh's crown and thrown it on the ground (*fig. 167*); and third, Nebuchadnezzar's dream (*fig. 168*). It is the second which is significant for us in that Moses is a type of Christ and Pharaoh is a type of Herod.<sup>125</sup> M. R. James traced its origin partly to a passage in Josephus, who amplifies the scriptural narrative (Ex.2.10).

Such was the child Moses whom Thermuthis [Pharaoh's daughter] adopted as her son, being blessed with no offspring of her own. Now one day she brought Moses to her father and showed him to him, and told him how she had been mindful for the succession, were it God's will to grant her no child of her own, by bringing up a boy of divine beauty and generous spirit...She laid the babe in her father's arms; and he took and clasped him affectionately to his breast and, to please his daughter, placed his diadem upon his head. But Moses tore it off and flung it to the ground, in mere childishness, and trampled it underfoot; and this was taken as an omen of evil import to the kingdom. At that spectacle the sacred scribe who had foretold that this child's birth would lead to the abasement of the Egyptian empire rushed forward to kill him with a fearful shout: 'This,' he cried, 'O king, this is that child whom God declared that we must kill to allay our terrors...Kill him then and at one stroke relieve the Egyptians of their fear of him and deprive the Hebrews of the courageous hopes that he inspires.' But Thermuthis was too quick for him and snatched the child away; the king too delayed to slay him, from a hesitation induced by God, whose providence watched over Moses' life.<sup>126</sup>

The illustration for this episode in the *Speculum* suggests that Moses has thrown down Pharaoh's crown to the ground, as Josephus relates, but it also includes another event not given in Josephus. On the left of the illustration, Pharaoh, crownless, sits on his throne; his crown lies on the ground in the foreground. Beside him is the child, Moses, about to put his hand into a bowl of hot coals held by an attendant. Behind him stands a soldier with raised sword, ready to behead him. This story of Moses' testing by

burning coals is included in Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*, along with the whole story of the scribe's prophecy of a Hebrew child who would destroy Egypt, Pharaoh's consequent massacre of all Hebrew infants, Moses' escape and his interview with Pharaoh:

Quidam sacrorum scriba regi praedixerat, eo tempore in Israel masculum nasciturum, qui regnum Aegypti humiliaret. Pharaeo ergo (praecepit) ut quidquid masculini sexus nasceretur in Israel, in flumen projiceretur. Levita nomine Aram, vel Amram, qui accepit uxorem contribulem nomine Jocabeth, volebat accedere ad uxorem post edictum, malens carere liberis quam in necem procreare. Cui Deus per somnium astitit, ut ait Josephus, dicens ne timeret uxorem cognoscere, quia puer, quem timebant Aegyptii, nasciturus esset ex ea. (Moysen) dum quadam die Terimith (filia Pharaonis) obtulisset Pharaoni, ut et ipse eum adopteret, admirans rex pueri venustatem, coronam, quam tunc forte gestabat, capiti illius imposuit. Erat autem in ea Ammonis imago fabrefacta. Puer autem coronam projecit in terram, et fregit. Sacerdos autem Heliopoleos a latere regis surgens, exclamavit: Hic est puer, quem nobis occidendum Deus monstravit! Et voluit irruere in eum, sed auxilio regis liberatus est, et persuasione, cujusdam sapientis, qui per ignorantiam hoc factum esse a puero asservit. In cujus rei argumentum cum prunas allatas puero obtulisset, puer eas ori sui opposuit, et linguae suae summitatem igne corrumpit. Unde et Hebraei impeditioris linguae eum fuisse autumant.<sup>127</sup>

Only these two sources of the legend are mentioned by James, who concludes by referring to the inscription above the illustration: 'Puer Moyses fregit coronam regis Egypti *cum haone*' (my italics). The last two words, he says, 'may contain a corruption of "pharaone" but are obscure to me'.<sup>128</sup>

One of the fullest texts of the *Speculum* is found in a German manuscript in Munich.<sup>129</sup> The legend of Moses is found in ll.23-64 of the Latin text for the Flight into Egypt (Chapter XI). The fall of the idols in Egypt is first described. Then comes the legend of Moses:

Hoc idem etiam erat praefiguratum in Moyse et Pharaone,  
In confractione dei sui Ammonis et coronae.  
Pharaeo enim rex Aegypti coronam regalem habebit,  
In qua imago dei sui Ammonis artificialiter sculpta erat.  
(11.23-26)



Then the story of Moses and Pharaoh is told, following Comestor's account in detail step by step, including the interview between Pharaoh and Moses and the typology with Christ insisted upon. Both Comestor and the author of the *Speculum* make rather casual reference to the fact that Pharaoh's crown was decorated with an image of his Egyptian god 'Hamon', or Ammon (Amun). Neither author specifically suggests that this is the reason why Moses threw the crown to the ground, but this detail is included in other contemporary accounts of the interview between Pharaoh and Moses, and Moses' motivation is made quite clear.

Ludolphus the Carthusian (1300 - 78), in his prose *Vita Christi*,<sup>130</sup> treats the episode of Pharaoh's crown in exactly the same context, using the same types, as in the *Speculum*. The phraseology is remarkably close to the verse of the Munich manuscript.<sup>131</sup> Ludolphus emphasizes the fact that Pharaoh had a statue or image of the god Ammon in his crown, citing Comestor as his source, continues with the story of Pharaoh's daughter and describes the outcome of the interview between Pharaoh and Moses in almost the same words as in the *Speculum*. The conclusion of this section is also the same in both works, comparing Moses to Christ and thus Pharaoh to Herod.<sup>132</sup> Both the *Speculum* and the *Vita Christi* include the false god Ammon in Pharaoh's crown; they later describe how Moses threw this crown to the ground and broke it; they also both place this event in conjunction with the falling of the idols in Egypt and the crumbling of the statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

The choice of types for illumination and textual elaboration is always the same in all versions of the *Speculum*, but when the text is shortened, or turned into prose, or translated, the details retained for emphasis are often significant. Jean Miélot's version, *La Miroir de la Salvation humaine*, in 1448,<sup>133</sup> begins the section on Pharaoh and Moses

by referring to the image of Ammon in Pharaoh's crown, and continues as in the other versions. But he concludes:

Moyses desbrisa la couronne et le dieu Hammon que avoit le roy d'Egypte. Pareillement Jhesu Crist abbati et remist a neant tous les idoles d'Egypte. Ceste ruine et tresbuchement de idoles pretendoit aussi celle statue que le roy Nabugodonosor vey en songant.<sup>134</sup>

The sole reason for his unexpected act, then, was the destruction of this false god. Thus, when the text of the *Speculum* is reduced to an absolute minimum, the essential conflict between Pharaoh's Ammon-crown and a Christ-figure (Moses) is preserved and emphasized.

It now seems quite clear that in these typological works the reason why Moses smashed the crown of Pharaoh was that it had an image of the Egyptian pagan god (Zeus-) Ammon on it.<sup>135</sup> The theme of the four illustrations for the Flight into Egypt involves the destruction of idols and pagan statues and gods: the Egyptian idols fall when Mary and Christ enter their country, Pharaoh's god Ammon is smashed and Nebuchadnezzar's visionary statue crumbles. I therefore suggest that the inscription of the Italian manuscript which M. R. James found obscure should read, 'Puer Moyses fregit coronam regis Egypti *cum hamone*.' The last two words are not a corruption of Pharaoh, but a reference to Ammon. The association between Pharaoh and Herod is always made quite clear in the text of the *Speculum*. I suggest, therefore, that Herod's demon-crown symbolizes evil, the devil and hell, with the added associations of pagan gods such as (Zeus-) Ammon.

The *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* was an extremely popular work in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as attested by the number of manuscripts produced. James calls it 'one of two textbooks which summarized for the later Middle Ages one great aspect of Christian art - the typological.'<sup>136</sup> Lutz and Perdrizet have proved how pervasive its

influence was, acting as model and inspiration for artists in stained glass (*fig. 225*), tapestry, frescoes, sculpture and other illuminated manuscripts.<sup>137</sup> It would not be unreasonable to assume therefore that it inspired later medieval artists to represent Herod with one of the attributes of his Old Testament type, a false god in his crown. The demon-crown with its double significance of not only evil thoughts in the mind of its wearer, but also pagan gods in general, is not restricted to Herod. It appears on other kings: it is worn by Maximinus in an alabaster panel depicting the legend of St. Catherine in the Roman Catholic church at Lydiate, Lancashire,<sup>138</sup> and by the king in the carvings of the martyrdom of St. George in the stalls of St. George's Chapel, Windsor.<sup>139</sup> As these kings are depicted in their roles as executioners of Christian martyrs, it is quite likely that their demon-crowns, like those of Pharaoh and Herod, are meant to show their pagan affinities as well as their evil minds.

The story of the infancy and testing of Moses by Pharaoh is not confined to the *Speculum*. One of the most outstanding versions of this legend occurs in *Le Mistère du Viel Testament*,<sup>140</sup> a mid-fifteenth-century compilation of French mystery plays in verse on subjects from the Old Testament. The complete legend of Moses is presented through several plays, beginning with 'De Cordelamor, second Pharaon, roy d'Egipte, et de sa Cruauté.<sup>141</sup> At the climax, when Pharaoh (whose name is Cordelamor) is presented with the child, Moses, by his daughter, he says:

Cordelamor  
Je prens grant plaisir et lyesse  
A voir cest enfant gracieux.

La fille  
Aussi est il gent et joyeux  
Et de rien qui soit ne s'estonne.

Le Roy Cordelamor  
 Je luy vueil mettre ma couronne  
 Sur le chef, ou le dieu Hamon  
 Est figuré, que tant aymon  
 En signe d'amour je luy mets.

*Ice Moyse prent la couronne et la jecte  
 contre terre, et la ront en pieces.*

(11. 22958-65, p.251)

The editor of this work, James de Rothschild, comments, 'Il Cordelamor veut lui poser sur la tête sa couronne ornée de l'image d'une idole. L'enfant se révolte contre ce qu'il croit être un sacrilège; il prend la couronne, la jette contre terre et la brise.'<sup>142</sup> He points out that the crown is sacrilegious to Moses, as false gods were to Christ.

*Le Mistère du Viel Testament* is not a typological work, but a collection of mystery plays, written by several hands and inspired by a variety of sources such as the Bible, Josephus (c.37 - 100), Comestor (d.c.1179), and Vincent de Beauvais (c.1190 - 1264). The author of the play about the second Pharaoh, Cordelamor, however, makes a completely original contribution to the plot and to the characterization of Cordelamor. The Biblical source simply mentions that a new Pharaoh arose, who did not know Joseph (Exodus 1:8). The French poet, however, introduces Cordelamor, the new Pharaoh, as an intriguing tyrant who conspires to take over the throne by usurpation even before the eyes of the first Pharaoh are closed in death (11.21876-21949). The introduction of Cordelamor's political intrigue and possession of the throne as a usurper is a bold stroke. Such details bring Pharaoh's political manoeuvres remarkably close to Herod's: according to patristic writers, Herod was the first foreign king of the Jews; he had no right to the throne, as he was not of the royal Hasmonean line.<sup>143</sup> Josephus suggested that he gained his coveted position through his friendship with Mark Antony, who consequently recommended to the Roman Senate that Herod be appointed King of Judaea, and he kept his position through complicated intrigues of all kinds.<sup>144</sup> By making Pharaoh

such an intriguing usurper, the French poet made him very much like Herod the Great. Then both kings were frightened by a prediction that a child would be born who would destroy their kingdoms and lead the Hebrews to victory; both kings ordered their soldiers to kill all infant boys in an attempt to slay the prophesied one; both were cruel tyrants, types and symbols of the worst enemies of God, associated with idols and devils. Pharaoh with his Hamon-crown is a type of Herod with his demon-crown, and as such he serves to deepen the significance of that iconographic detail in the artistic representation of Herod the Great.

### III. The Death of Herod

#### A. The Tub

Several new motifs dealing with the illness and death of Herod appear in art for the first time in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. One of the more unusual of these shows Herod in a wooden tub. The earliest example of this scene, according to Réau (II, ii, p.270) is in sculpture above the west door of the small twelfth-century church in Calvenzano, in Lombardy. Around the Norman arch are carved scenes from the Infancy of Christ, ending on the lower left side with a depiction of a king in a wooden tub.<sup>145</sup> This is an isolated small-scale piece of sculpture, but the same scene appears again in France in the next century, at the Cathedral of Amiens.<sup>146</sup> All three doorways of the west facade of this cathedral are flanked by large statues. On the left side of the right doorway are large statues of the three Magi, each bearing a gift, and one of King Herod, carrying a sceptre (*fig. 169*). Herod, like the others, is a regal character, crowned and standing in a dignified manner. However, the socle directly beneath this statue shows the scene carved at Calvenzano. A wooden tub, with three bands around it, is full, and in it stands a king.

Two figures on either side seem to assist him (*fig. 170*).

In a French manuscript illumination from the late fourteenth-century, a similar representation occurs. The manuscript, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library,<sup>147</sup> contains the *Histoire de la Bible et de l'Assomption Notre Dame*, a Biblical poem by Herman de Valenciennes (fl. c. 1175) in French rhymed verse consisting of moralized and apocryphal tales from the Bible and an account of the death of the Virgin. This is illuminated with 223 tinted grisaille illustrations interspersed with the text, from one to four on a page. On folio 31v in the left hand column (*fig. 171*) occurs a scene similar to the one on the Amiens socle. There is a round wooden tub full and in it stands (or sits) a naked figure, who wears only a crown. Beside the tub two doctors stand gesturing as if in conversation. This little grisaille drawing is identified by an inscription in red ink (as opposed to the brown ink used for the text of the poem): 'Comme archelaus par le conseil de ses hommes fist mettre herode / Son pere en un baing de poix et huile chaude et la moru.'

The source for this unusual scene can be found in *Jewish Antiquities* where Josephus gives an account of Herod's vain search for a cure from his terrible sufferings. In a final, desperate attempt to save him, his physicians suggest that he make the journey to a place near the Dead Sea to take advantage of the hot springs there. 'He crossed the river Jordan and took baths in the warm springs at Callirrhoe, the waters of which beside all their other virtues are also good to drink...And when his physicians decided to warm his body there and had seated him in a tub of (warm) oil, he looked to them as though he had passed away.'<sup>148</sup> The round, wooden tub is the medieval version of Herod's attempted cure in the tub of warm oil. Although the works of Josephus were well known in the

Middle Ages, a more likely source for artists mentioned above was Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* or Jacobus Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, which both include this episode. 'Ipse vero Jordanem transiens apud Callionem caledis aquis utebatur. Cumque corpus ejus oleo calidiori foveri medicis placuisset, in arcam plenam demersum ita dissolutum est, ut etiam lumina, quasi mortuus, resoluta torqueret, tamen ad clamorem astantium respicere visus est.'<sup>149</sup> Vincent of Beauvais quoted Comestor in *Speculum Historiale*<sup>150</sup> and so there was no lack of source material for artists who chose to illustrate this event. Nevertheless, the episode of Herod in the tub of water, or oil, was not reproduced often.

#### B. Herod's Suicide

Much more popular than Herod in the tub of oil as a subject for the visual arts was the actual death of Herod. This was introduced in two thirteenth-century manuscripts. In MS Harley 1527, the Bible Moralisée, the illustration for the Gospel of Matthew 2:19 is a roundel showing both the death of Herod and the angel telling Joseph to return from Egypt (fig. 172).<sup>151</sup> On the left of the roundel Herod is shown lying in bed, naked but covered by a red coverlet. He still wears his crown but lies on his side, with his right hand under his cheek as if asleep. Two figures stand behind the bed under a trefoil arch and mourn. There is no suggestion of suffering or violence or of devils snatching his soul.<sup>152</sup> The scene has been included to give a reason for the return of Joseph, Mary and the Christ-Child from Egypt and, at the same time, to illustrate the beginning words of the text, 'Defuncto Herode'. The death of Herod in the Bible Moralisée occupies only half of a small roundel, of which there are eight to a page, and so the event is not given any outstanding importance in this manuscript. Nevertheless, its inclusion in the series

of Biblical episodes is important.

Another rather different interpretation of the death of Herod occurs in an early thirteenth-century Psalter, MS Lansdowne 420 in the British Library, discussed above. It occurs in the preliminary cycle of illuminations showing the Life of Christ, again presented in roundels, this time two to a page. Herod appears twice in this cycle. In the first instance, on fol. 8, he is shown with the Magi. He sits in a peculiar position so that his right leg is crossed over his left leg and held at an awkward position so that the knee is much higher than his waist. Behind him is a devil in the form of a horned bull standing on its hind legs with its front hoofs resting on Herod's back as it whispers in his ear. Herod appears a second time on folio 9, in a medallion which shows two scenes, the death of Herod and the coronation of Archelaus (*fig. 148*). This time, however, Herod does not lie in bed as in the Bible Moralisée or in the twelfth-century Canterbury manuscripts. He sits fully clothed and crowned on his throne. With his left hand he runs a sword through his own neck; his right hand is extended as he starts to fall from his cushioned architectural throne. But around his neck there is a rope; one bestial devil is already pulling on it, while another seems to push Herod over from behind. This is an unusual treatment of this theme. The artist has combined several elements. He shows Herod still as a king on his throne, and yet he incorporates the attempted suicide element, much as the Fleury play did (see Chapter 7); by having devils there, ready to drag Herod bodily off to hell, he also impresses the viewers with the wickedness of the king. This is an impressively dramatic, if historically inaccurate, depiction of the death of Herod.

One early-fourteenth-century English manuscript is particularly outstanding for its treatment of Herod the Great. He appears in five different scenes in the Holkham Bible Picture Book now in the British



Library.<sup>153</sup> Such an extended treatment is very rare, as is the iconography for the entire series of Herod scenes. At first he is shown in the standard interview with the Magi (*fig. 173*). He holds a large sword and sits with his legs crossed as he interviews 'les reis de colonne', according to the Anglo-Norman inscription.<sup>154</sup> The next three folios of the manuscript show a large number of apocryphal events associated with the Flight to Egypt and the Childhood of Jesus there, and then folios 16v and 17 are devoted to various crimes of Herod as well as his illness and death. They follow the account given by Peter Comestor in *Historia Scholastica: In Evangelia*<sup>155</sup> who, in turn, uses Josephus in great detail. The top of folio 16v includes two scenes (*fig. 174*): on the left it is not Herod, but the Emperor Augustus, who dominates the composition; he sits on a throne holding a large scimitar and wearing his imperial crown, as he judges the case involving Herod and his two sons. Herod stands on the left, in conversation with the emperor, while his two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, stand on the other side, one behind the other, although they speak to the emperor with a gesture. This is an accurate depiction of the account given by Josephus (but omitted by Comestor). After quoting the sons' defence at the trial, Josephus continues: 'While Alexander was speaking in this manner, Caesar, who even before had disbelieved the grave charge, was still further won over to the side of the youths, and kept looking steadily at Herod, whom he saw similarly somewhat disturbed.'<sup>156</sup> According to Josephus, the direct result of this trial was that the emperor reconciled Herod and his sons; however, Herod's suspicions were later roused against them and he had them killed. Comestor summarily mentions this, 'His motus Herodes, missis spiculatoribus, jussit filios occidi, et asportari in Alexandriam, ibique sepeliri cum Alexandre avo suo materno.'<sup>157</sup> The artist has telescoped and dramatized this event

by showing beside the trial Herod himself, still crowned, murdering his two sons. One son already lies dead on the ground, his head slashed open; Herod is stabbing the other through the heart with his sword.

The lower half of folio 16v shows Herod's illness (*fig. 174*). He lies in bed, but still wears his crown, and is in animated conversation with a woman beside his bed, his sister Salome. The inscription informs us that he is ordering her 'en prison mettre tuz les nobles bachelers ieuenes de denz la tere demoranz'. Comestor includes this story in Chapter XVII of *Historia Scholastica: In Evangelia*. 'Audiens Judaeos mortem suam expectantes cum gaudio, ex omni Judaea nobiliores collectos, juvenes, concludi praecipit in hippodromo, id est in carcere circi, praeciens Salome sorori suae, ut cum animam suam efflaret, statim illos occideret, ut ita omnis Judaea in morte ipsius, etiam invita plangeret.'<sup>158</sup> The right side of the illustration shows a severe-looking Salome giving orders to a stocky soldier in chain mail who already has a young noble, hands tied, and is pushing him through a doorway, into jail.<sup>159</sup>

The top of folio 17 shows the death of Herod (*fig. 175*). He lies in the same bed, but the cover is half off and his legs are in a distorted position. With his right hand he plunges a knife, or dagger, into his chest while he reaches for his crown with his left hand. In his mouth is a small, round, red apple. On the right, Salome carries out his commands and watches while a demonic executioner prepares to chop off a young prince's head with an axe. Another head (or perhaps the same one) lies at his feet, and two other young men look out of the prison window. This is a lively scene, but it departs considerably from its literary sources. Josephus and Comestor both made it clear that Herod was foiled in his attempt to commit suicide by his cousin, Achiabus, but the Holkham Bible, like the twelfth-century

Bible leaves discussed earlier, exclude this detail and concentrate on the death. What is more surprising is the licence which the artist has taken with the role of Salome. Comestor makes it quite clear that she did not follow Herod's orders. 'Salome vero quos occidi mandaverat absolvit'.<sup>160</sup> Josephus praises her for her actions. 'Before the death of the king became generally known Salome and Alexas (her husband) dismissed those who had been summoned to the hippodrome and sent them to their own homes, telling them that the king ordered them to go off to their fields and look after their own affairs. And this act of theirs came as the greatest benefaction to the nation.'<sup>161</sup> The *Legenda Aurea* states that Salome absolved all those whom Herod ordered killed,<sup>162</sup> as does Vincent de Beauvais.<sup>163</sup> As far as can be ascertained then, the artist of the Holkham Bible was being entirely original when he stressed the wickedness of Salome by having her carry out Herod's orders. Herod, on the other hand, is not depicted so grimly as he was in the twelfth-century manuscripts. He dies by stabbing himself with an apple knife; a round red apple is stuck in his mouth, but no devil appears to carry off Herod's soul. There is space in the painting for such a devil above Herod and in other miniatures in the same manuscript, they do appear: in several illustrations of Christ's healing of demoniacs (folio 23, 23v, 24, 25v) devils issue from the mouths of people and in the hanging of Judas on folio 30, a very ugly winged, horned demon snatches the soul which issues from Judas' stomach from among the guts which hang out. The inscription over Herod on folio 17 says 'sa alme au deable alat', but either the drawing of the devil was forgotten or Herod was not considered quite as evil as characters like Judas by the illustrator of the Holkham Bible.

The next illustration, across the bottom of folio 17, shows, at the left, the new king, Archelaus (*fig. 176*). He sits on his throne, legs not

crossed, looking relatively gentle - he needs both hands to hold his sword upright, almost as if he were not quite used to this new role. The illumination continues with the angel telling Joseph to return, and then an unusual scene of the Virgin giving the child Jesus an apple. The Virgin giving the boy Christ an apple is unusual iconography, although the Virgin giving the child/babe fruit is not; the apple was most likely meant to be associated with the apple offered by Eve to Adam. As early as the second century, Justin Martyr (d. c.165) had preached on the theme of the Virgin as the New Eve, undoing by her obedience the evil wrought by Eve through her disobedience.<sup>164</sup> Nevertheless, in these delicately tinted drawings, the red of the apple in Herod's mouth and of the apple held by the Virgin on the same page, is particularly striking. This scene ends the remarkable series of illustrations based on the history of Herod the Great.<sup>165</sup>

The suicide and death of Herod has been represented in single scenes, such as in MS Lansdowne 420 and the Norwich roof bosses discussed above, and in a series of episodes as in the Holkham Bible. Yet a third method of presenting this subject can be seen in the Peterborough Psalter, a manuscript dating from the early fourteenth century.<sup>166</sup> Included in the wealth of illustrations in this Psalter are one hundred and nine typological miniatures, generally arranged with four scenes on each page, interspersed among the Psalms. On folio 24 the death of Herod is depicted (*fig. 159*). He lies in bed naked but crowned, and he is in the act of stabbing himself in the chest, making a large, bloody wound, while he gestures to two figures beside the bed; the lady clasps her hands to her breast and the man behind her pulls his hair and grimaces; above Herod there is a large black devil, come to get his soul.

To the left of this scene is shown an Old Testament type, in this case, the deaths of Saul and of his armour-bearer, Doeg, both suicides like Herod (although Herod's was unsuccessful). The Biblical text is 1 Regum 31: 2-5. The miniature shows Saul's three sons lying dead on the ground; Saul stands above them stabbing himself in the chest with his sword and the armour-bearer stands at the right, ready to do the same. The inscriptions around the two scenes read: *Se Saul occidit. proprio dum corde relidit. Matronem dira sic herodem necat ira. Dicit ut heresis. se sponte Doeck idumeus. Ferro transfodit metuens quod eum david odit.* This typological method of artistic, and literary, representation was extremely popular in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and will be discussed below. Several types from the Old Testament were chosen as prefigurations or parallel examples of various aspects of Herod's behaviour. In the Peterborough Psalter, the suicide of Saul was chosen to represent the suicide of Herod.

This association of Saul and Herod led artists to occasionally use illustrations of Herod rather than Saul in the illuminated initials of Psalters. This occurs, when at all, in the historiated initial 'Q' used for Psalm 51, 'Quid gloriaris in malitia, Qui potens es in iniquitate', which usually shows a king stabbing himself. Sometimes this same scene is used for Psalm 52, 'Dixit insipiens in corde suo; Non est Deus'. Lucy Freeman Sandler has produced a table in which she lists the historiated initial subjects in twenty-four English Psalters c 1300 - 1340.<sup>167</sup> For Psalm 51, she finds the motif of the suicide of a king used in two manuscripts, Oxford, Bodleian Lib. MS Barlow 22, and MS Douce 131; for Psalm 52 it is also used twice, in Brussels, Bibl. Roy. MS 9961-62 (the Peterborough Psalter) and Carinthia, St. Paul in Lavantthal codex XXV/2, 19

(the Ramsey Psalter). She identifies three of these kings as Saul. However in several earlier Psalters from the thirteenth century, Herod was portrayed, although it is very difficult to distinguish him from Saul in suicide scenes. A Psalter of c.1250 - 70 in Trinity College, Cambridge, has a preliminary cycle of miniatures which includes Herod watching the Massacre of the Innocents with his head thrown back laughing.<sup>168</sup> Then later there is a large historiated initial for Psalm 52, *Dixit insipiens*<sup>169</sup> showing a king on a throne stabbing himself in the stomach while a queen behind him tears her hair in grief. A large black devil in the air snatches the nude pink soul from the king's mouth. The presence of the queen and the demon suggest that this may be Herod rather than Saul. Herod died in the presence of a woman, though not a queen, his sister Salome, and he is often shown with a demon taking away his soul, while this is almost never the case with Saul. It should be noted that this Psalter has a very unusual series of initials.<sup>170</sup>

It is much easier to identify Herod in other Psalter initials because, instead of the suicide, the Massacre is shown. This is the case in a thirteenth-century Flemish Psalter in the Fitzwilliam Museum<sup>171</sup> where the Q of *Quid gloriaris* shows Herod seated on the left while two soldiers on the right kill the Innocents with their swords; one soldier holds a child upside-down by the heel and the other cradles a child in his arms only to attack it viciously, his face screwed up in an ugly grimace. The Amesbury Psalter, now in All Souls College, Oxford,<sup>172</sup> uses this same scene but for a different Psalm, this time Psalm 38 with its text beginning 'Dixi custodiam vias meas ut non delinquam in lingua mea'. The usual scene for this psalm is David, the king, pointing to his tongue. But the Amesbury Psalter shows Herod seated on the right, crowned, holding a

sceptre and gesturing towards a large soldier in the centre who looks ugly and idiotic, sword raised over his head as he turns back to hear Herod's instructions. He takes a naked child from a woman, while another woman weeps, holding a grey naked child drooping over her arm. This is clearly the Massacre of the Innocents with Herod.<sup>173</sup> It occurs in another Flemish Psalter of c. 1300, now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford,<sup>174</sup> in the more usual position for Psalm 51, *Quid gloriaris*. Herod is seated on the right, crowned, holding a sword, and sitting with his legs crossed; he gestures to a soldier in chain mail, bending over (away from Herod), sword raised, one hand on the head of a child being held by its mother who sits on the ground. These examples show that Herod does appear in Psalter illuminations but only rarely.

In one fourteenth-century English manuscript the death of Herod is presented simply as an historical fact, sharing its picture space with a depiction of the Return from Egypt. This illumination occurs within a preliminary cycle of Old and New Testament scenes introducing the text of *Omne Bonum*, an encyclopaedia of canon law, theology and general information compiled by the Cistercian Jacobus.<sup>175</sup> Folio 8v has four main scenes (*fig. 177*): the Flight, the miracle of the tree bowing to the Virgin while she rests during the Flight, the Death of Herod and the Return of the Holy Family, the Virgin and Christ with two tame lions. While an angel appears from the clouds guiding the Return, below them is shown a single crowned figure, certainly Herod,<sup>176</sup> lying in bed. There is no sign of violence or suicide; he looks peaceful and could be asleep, but because of the context, this is more likely to be a presentation of his death.<sup>177</sup>

## C. The Tower

One manuscript illustration of the death of Herod seems unique; it has no precedent and no source so far as is known. It occurred in a German manuscript in Berlin<sup>178</sup> which was lost after the Second World War, but is preserved in a facsimile.<sup>179</sup> The text consists of three poems or songs of the Virgin Mary, telling of the events concerning the birth of Christ. Herod appears in the illustrations four times: he is seen with the three Magi (p. 200) on their way to adore the Christ-Child, and later with two scribes (p. 209) as he tries to determine the place of Christ's birth. These scenes have standard iconography. Then after the Flight and the Massacre are described and illustrated, a long section is devoted to the wickedness of Herod, his terrible illness and his sinful death. His illness is illustrated on p. 218 (folio 88v); he lies in bed with his crown on, but his naked body is covered with sores and scratches and he bemoans his state, chin in hand, while two people watch over him (*fig. 178*). The text is quite explicit about his illness. It tells how Herod began to die; on the white bed-linen he was swimming in blood and pus as he began to rot; never has another person suffered so; people sickened from the stink of his body and nothing could get rid of it; with his nails he tore his skin open, and screamed and groaned aloud; there was no help in doctors, nor in healing spices and salves; his body burst open everywhere, outside and within.<sup>180</sup> The next illustration shows an extraordinary interpretation of his death. He is not stabbing himself, as one would expect. Instead, he is falling from a tower, head first (*fig. 179*). He is still crowned and his body is all covered with sores. The text explains this unusual interpretation. The poet points out that, in the end, Herod lost his mind and committed the greatest of all sins. Despair caught him quickly so that he, the poor and



unclean, threw himself from a high stone to make an end of his life quickly. Then he fell into the hands of the devil.<sup>181</sup> The text accounts for the unusual iconography of the scene, but if other scenes, similar in iconography, were found, they might help explain this unusual interpretation of Herod's death.

In thirteenth-century Bibles with historiated initials, the book of IV Regum is very often illustrated with an historiated initial showing Ahaziah falling from a tower head first in a posture similar to Herod's in the German manuscript.<sup>182</sup> This is to illustrate the text of IV Reg. 1:2: 'Ceciditque Ochozias per cancellos coenaculi sui, quod habebat in Samaria, et aegrotavit: misitque nuntios, dicens ad eos: Ite consulite Beelzelbub deum Accaron, utrum vivere queam de infirmitate mea hac.' There is no doubt that the iconography of the Ahaziah and Herod scenes is similar, but there seems to be no reason for associating them. However, the French artist, Master Honoré, in the late thirteenth century, painted another similar scene in his illustrations of the virtues and vices in *La Somme Le Roy*.<sup>183</sup> Beside a crowned woman, standing on a unicorn, as a symbol of Humility, is a picture of a crowned man falling from a tower (*fig. 180*); he is labelled Pride (*Orgueil*), and is also identified as Ahaziah (*Octozia*). Herod was often associated with the sin of *superbia* by patristic writers and also by artists. It is quite likely, then, that the illustrator of the German manuscript may have known an image similar to that in *La Somme Le Roy* when he drew his version of the death of Herod.

#### D. Herod and Hell-mouth

This discussion of artistic representations of the death of Herod the Great in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, must end with the imaginative marginal drawing in a French Franciscan Missal now in the

Bodleian Library, produced sometime after 1319 by a follower of Jean Pucelle.<sup>184</sup> The text on folio 26 begins 'In illo tempore deffuncto Herode...' and the main illumination within the column of text shows the angel appearing to Joseph on the left, and the Return of the Holy Family on the right (*fig. 181*). However, two drawings appear in the margin, beside this text. Unfortunately, the pages have been severely trimmed and half of these drawings have been cut away but enough remains to make identification quite easy. The upper drawing shows a king, crowned, lying in bed, the upper part of his body naked, eyes closed, and one hand held across his chest. Two people stand behind the bed mourning, with hands clasped. This must be a depiction of the illness or death of Herod. The sequel to this picture lies below (*fig. 182*). The same king, still crowned, is seen falling straight into the wide open jaws of hell-mouth. Part of a black winged devil can be seen above him. This is the most daring of all the illustrations showing the end of Herod, but one which carries the suggestions of other texts and illustrations to the logical conclusion. If Herod's soul was to be seized by a devil, then Herod himself must be expected to make that fearful journey down to hell; the best way to illustrate this was to have him tumble down into a grand and fierce hell-mouth.

One other depiction of Herod in the thirteenth-century French Bible *Moralisée* shows him with the devil and Nero, being trampled underfoot (*fig. 183*). In Bodleian MS 270b, fol. 137v, the roundel at the top of the left hand column shows David slaying Goliath. The 'moralizing' roundel beneath this illustrates the text which sees David standing over Goliath as a figure of Christ 'qui diabolum cum herode et nerone hiisdem armis quibus sanctos cruciaverunt superavit.' Three nimbed figures (two carrying

crosses and one a martyr's palm) trod underfoot three recumbent figures - presumably the devil, Herod and Nero. It is difficult to know which Herod this should be: it may be Herod the tetrarch, son of Herod the Great, who was responsible for the beheading of John the Baptist. The figure bearing the martyr's palm in the illustration does not, however, wear a camel hair robe or carry a lamb, the usual attributes of John the Baptist. It is quite likely, therefore, that this Herod is Herod the Great. He is very often shown with a devil, especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (he is, in fact, shown with a little black devil sitting on his shoulder as he orders the Massacre of the Innocents in a later part of the same Bible, in the British Library, MS Harley 1527, fol. 13, *fig. 150*), and he was responsible for slaying the Innocents who were universally interpreted as the first martyrs of the Church. The martyrs in the illumination are all adult, but there is precedent for this in the eleventh-century Sacramentary from Mont St. Michel, in which the initial for the Feast of the Holy Innocents showed a figure of the Church surrounded by 'adult' martyrs (see Chapter 6).

Depictions of the illness and death of Herod take various forms in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Herod is shown in the last stages of his illness, trying desperate cures, attempting suicide, falling into hell-mouth and being vanquished forever, with the devil, by Christian martyrs and saints. Artists show a good deal of imagination in their range of subjects to show the end of Herod's life, and also in their iconography and typological parallels. This is undoubtedly one of the richest periods of medieval art.

#### IV. Minor Figures in Herod Scenes

##### A. Mothers

One of the mothers in the earlier Massacre scene in the Lisbon Apocalypse (*fig. 162*) was threatening a soldier with a kind of wooden washing paddle. This unusual motif occurs in a group of works which may very well be related. One of the mothers in the St. John's College manuscript illumination of the Massacre (*fig. 146*) holds an implement which is similar in shape and size. The women in both manuscripts are kneeling on the ground, trying to protect their children from soldiers who stand above them. This paddle motif appears also in the Oscott Psalter (*fig. 130*), where again the mother threatens to strike a soldier with it. According to Henderson, the Oscott Psalter is copied from K. 26.<sup>185</sup> This motif occurs again in a fourteenth-century panel of 'opus anglicanum', a fragment from an orphrey, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (*fig. 184*).<sup>186</sup> In this case the woman with the paddle is standing and is about to strike a soldier on the head with it as he reaches for a child held by another woman sitting on the ground. A second soldier dangles a child from the tip of his spear. The single mother with her baby and paddle has expanded to two mothers in this version of the Massacre.

The iconography of the women in the Massacre scenes shows a decided development during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They begin to fight back. Some manuscripts in the thirteenth century show a mother meekly kneeling, reaching in vain upwards towards her child or even with her hands raised in supplication to Herod (*fig. 144*). This iconography can still be seen in some fourteenth-century manuscripts.<sup>187</sup> Some mothers also struggle in thirteenth century manuscripts.<sup>188</sup> However, the mothers with paddles who appear in the thirteenth-century works mentioned above are indicative of a new group of what may be called 'fighting mothers', women who protest

against having their children snatched from them and who sometimes even attack the soldiers. This type of woman was first seen in the St. Albans Psalter illustration of the Massacre in which one of the mothers kneels at the feet of a soldier and tries to bite his leg (*fig. 74*). But in the thirteenth century the mothers become much more prominent and active, some fighting with paddles and some attacking the soldiers. They often struggle; in the preliminary cycle of pictures to the early fourteenth-century Cloisters Apocalypse (*fig. 185*)<sup>189</sup> one woman fights with a soldier over her baby while another expresses her grief in an exaggerated way by leaning forward so that her hair falls over her face and then pulling it with great passion; in the Munich Psalter (*fig. 186*)<sup>190</sup> one of the mothers actually grasps the blade of the sword with her bare hand to keep it from her child; this same action is taken by a mother portrayed on the tympanum of the north transept portal of Notre Dame in Paris (*fig. 151*); in the Huth Psalter, one mother kneels before a soldier with hands outstretched to him beseechingly but a second mother stands and claws another soldier's head (*fig. 149*). A similar combination of mothers in similar attitudes was depicted in the roof paintings of Dädesjö in Smaland (*fig. 188*) and in a cope formerly in the Vatican Treasury,<sup>191</sup> (*fig. 189*). Mothers who try to defend their children and fight off Herod's soldiers are numerous at this time in various media. In the stained glass of St. Ouen at Rouen,<sup>192</sup> the Massacre scene includes a mother who strikes with her right hand the face of a soldier who brandishes a scimitar. One of the liveliest of all mothers from this period is one in the Taymouth Hours (*fig. 190*). Two of the soldiers have successfully speared a child each, but the third has been knocked to the ground by a mother who is piercing him with a spear from above and scratching his face.<sup>193</sup> Not only the struggles of the mothers to defend their children and fight off the soldiers, but also their grief is

dramatically portrayed in art of this period. The women tearing her hair in the Cloisters Apocalypse is one example (*fig. 185*). An even more striking portrayal of a mother's grief can be seen in the fourteenth-century Massacre window of York Minster (*fig. 191*). The woman who stands clasping her child to her breast before Herod and his fateful gesture looks up at him with her face aghast, her mouth dropped open in horror (*fig. 192*). This stark portrayal of her grief is part of the dramatic realism of the whole window.

#### B. Soldiers

The soldiers in Massacre scenes also become more violent towards the mothers in many fourteenth-century manuscripts. One soldier in a Fitzwilliam Museum manuscript<sup>194</sup> holds his sword point up and dangles a child at the tip of it and with his other hand he firmly holds the mother's arm as if to keep her still. In a mid-fourteenth-century English Breviary in the Bodleian a soldier runs his sword through a child held by its mother with his right hand, and with his left hand he pulls the mother's hair.<sup>195</sup>

The soldiers, indeed, become more and more prominent in Massacre scenes of this period. Sometimes they are painted larger than other figures and placed in the very centre of the illustration. In a Flemish manuscript of c.1320 - 30, now in the Bodleian Library, the soldier is depicted as a very large figure and Herod is a very small old man; their sizes are reflected in the arcading over them.<sup>196</sup> They are sometimes painted in outstanding colours and with great detail given to their armour. The soldier in the early-thirteenth-century English MS Arundel 157<sup>197</sup> stands in the centre of the Massacre illumination, resplendent in shining silver armour and helmet with nose-guard; his chain mail is all carefully indicated by precise minute scallops in the silver. One of the soldiers who massacres

children in the embroidered scene on the Bologna cope (*fig. 193*)<sup>198</sup> is clad in silver armour, over which he wears a tunic patterned with green and pink horizontal bands; he is even crowned with a sprig of vine leaves. The Massacre window in York Minster is particularly violent (*fig. 191*). Three soldiers in various combinations of chain mail and plate armour, and three mothers each trying to hold and protect a child, appear before Herod. One soldier holds up a sword and one a spear from which dangle the victims of their slaughter; the third soldier has no weapon but he has his fists clenched and arms raised in an angry gesture as he is about to stamp underfoot one of the mothers on the ground. He may originally have been jabbing a long spear into this mother's child as well. An interesting detail occurs in the lower left corner of this window where a mother kneels over her baby which is still in its cradle. This three-dimensional wooden cradle is well designed; it is placed directly below Herod's throne, which is also drawn in the same perspective. The presence of such a detail adds to the pathos of the already cruel scene. Another window in York Minster in the Lady Chapel contains some badly restored Massacre of the Innocents panels in the tracery (*fig. 194, 195*). The soldiers indulge in their gruesome game of making babies dance on the tips of their swords (see chapter on drama), while one mother tries to throttle one of the soldiers.<sup>199</sup>

In the Ingeborg Psalter from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century,<sup>200</sup> the soldiers are given great prominence (*fig. 196*). Herod sits in the centre of the Massacre scene surrounded by four soldiers with large swords. They are in various stages of killing children, waving swords in the air or resting them on the ground. The chain mail hood of the soldier on the right has fallen from his head to reveal his dishevelled hair, thus giving a suggestion of his fraught activity. Like the soldiers on the left, he pulls a child from its mother as he stabs it. A third soldier grabs a

child by the hair, ready to strike; the fourth is resting his sword on the ground by Herod's feet. In a manuscript which may be the earliest separate Book of Hours in existence (it dates from the early thirteenth century) illuminated by W. de Brailes,<sup>201</sup> Herod himself actually reaches out and holds the wrist of a soldier, as if to physically associate himself with the Massacre. This is the greatest extent of the king's involvement in the Massacre in the art of this period, although in the fifteenth century he is shown actually killing the Innocents.

Extended versions of Massacre scenes sometimes appeared during the thirteenth century. The twelfth-century capital frieze at Chartres (*fig. 54*) was a precedent for such treatments. The choir frieze at Norrey Cathedral (*fig. 197*) follows this example, but has emphasized the grotesque nature of the scene by unnatural poses for the soldiers and mothers. 'Toute en figures déformées et en mouvements enchainées, court au-dessus des arcatures aux moulures seches du choeur.'<sup>202</sup> A French tryptich of c.1300, now in Madrid (*fig. 198*), also devotes a comparatively large amount of space to the Massacre of the Innocents in the lower panel. Twice as much space is given to Herod and the Massacre as to any of the other scenes in the Infancy cycle.<sup>203</sup>

### C. Scribes

The soldiers and the mothers play an active part in the Massacre scenes from this period. The Magi also continue to appear before Herod. The scribes, however, become less prominent and appear less often. A single scribe appears in the Ingeborg Psalter, folio 13 (*fig. 142*). He has no book but he speaks to a pensive Herod and gestures towards the three Magi. The Pierpont Morgan de Brailes leaf (*fig. 136*) includes the Magi in one roundel and Herod consulting two scribes (one almost completely hidden by



the other) in the facing roundel. The scribes, who share Herod's throne, hold a scroll which indicates their message, *Puer natus in betheem*. The W. de Brailes Book of Hours in the British Library<sup>204</sup> gives a more extensive treatment of the scribes. The historiated initials of this manuscript include three scenes with Herod. The Massacre (in which Herod holds a soldier by the wrist) has been referred to above. On folio 16v, he is shown with the Magi, and on folio 17 he appears with four men. Two of them wear doctors' caps. These are the priests and scribes. One of them indicates a scroll which he holds in his right hand, bearing the inscription *In Bedleem IVDE*. This is a small illumination, being confined to an initial.

In some thirteenth-century manuscripts, however, the theme of the scribes and priests is expanded to include the Jews whom the Magi meet and question when they first arrive in Jerusalem. They appear twice in two French manuscripts, the Kristina Psalter<sup>205</sup> and the Bible Moralisée (fig. 199). In the latter manuscript the citizens of Jerusalem first appear wearing the pointed hats of Jewish philosophers as they meet the Magi, who appear as crowned kings, hands raised towards them as they ask the birth-place of the new king. Below this scene appears another, with these same Jews-scribes-doctors (six in the Kristina Psalter, and three in the Bible Moralisée) appearing before a troubled Herod. They point to the sky and to Herod, telling him of the prophecy. These illuminations are reminiscent of certain liturgical dramas which included separate scenes of the Magi questioning the citizens of Jerusalem before being commanded to appear before King Herod (see Chapter 7).

In the fourteenth century, the scribes continue to appear occasionally, but they are differentiated from the Jews. In the Carew-Poyntz Hours, when the Magi first appear riding to Jerusalem on horseback (folio 65v), they

are met by a man who seems to be a messenger (*fig. 200*). He wears bright red boots, carries a staff and is bare-headed and roughly clothed, with a messenger-box at his side.<sup>206</sup> Later (folio 66v) Herod is seen on a canopied throne addressing three scribes who hold open books. The artist of the Taymouth Hours increased the emphasis on the scribes by painting a separate scene in which Herod sends a messenger to fetch them (folio 93v) (*fig. 201*). He sits before his house door, cross-legged, and hands a sealed letter (the seal can be seen hanging from the document) to a messenger who kneels before him. The next illumination (folio 94) shows six scribes/doctors/priests wearing caps, carrying books under their arms and discussing the prophecy (*fig. 202*). The one closest to Herod shows him an open book. This is a relatively large group of scribes, and is matched only by the illumination in the fourteenth-century Franciscan Missal in the Bodleian where Herod greets the three nimbed kings, bearing their gifts, while a group of six doctors and counsellors stand behind him and discuss the significance of their visitors (*fig. 122*). However, this does not match the number or counsellors showing the astrolabe to Herod in the twelfth-century manuscript (*fig. 87*). The Carew-Poyntz Hours has a separate scene (*fig. 203*) with rather elegantly dressed scribes showing Herod their open books and pointing to the star. The scribes appear again in the late fourteenth century, between the arrival of the Magi to Herod's court and their departure from it, in the manuscript of the Biblical poem of Herman de Valenciennes in the Pierpont Morgan Library (*fig. 204*). When Herod meets the Magi, he rises from his (round, wooden) chair, but when he meets the Jews/scribes, he remains seated on a box-like throne, pointing to them with a gloved hand and holding a short stick in the other. The three men wear floppy prophets' caps but bear no books. This illumination

represents Herod's initial questioning of them, rather than their explanation of the prophecy. The next scene continues with the departure of the Magi who again bear their gifts for the Christ-Child.

The scribes play an important part in the roof boss of Norwich Cathedral which shows Herod sitting with the open book of prophecies on his knee (*fig. 205*). A group of four or five priests and scribes crowd around him to explain it; one even holds another roll in his left hand and seems to be speaking in an animated way. Herod, as usual in these bosses, wears his demon-crown, short robe and red stockings. This is the moment before he flies into his rage, pulls his beard and has to be held down by two of the priests. The scribes are prominent, then, in certain works, but their appearance is relatively rare in comparison to the vast number of manuscripts which include related scenes such as the Magi's interview with Herod. The scribes are given less attention in these scenes, while the mothers and soldiers are given more attention in the Massacre scenes.

#### V. The Legend of the Sower

The legend of the sower and the miracle of the cornfield first appears in art in the thirteenth century. As this story is associated with Herod in that the soldiers questioning the farmer or sower are in his employ, it is appropriate that this new motif be discussed in this chapter. In some instances, indeed, Herod himself appears.

Emile Mâle, while investigating the religious art of France in the thirteenth century, could find no examples of the sower in any of the cathedrals. The earliest example he found was in the fourteenth-century sculpture decorating the south doorway of the church of Notre Dame at Avioth, in the Meuse.<sup>207</sup> The sower appears in Scandinavian art, however, in the late thirteenth century: a superb example survives from the roof

paintings in the parish church of Dädesjö in Småland, Sweden. The ceiling of the nave is painted with thirty roundels, concerned mostly with the Birth of Christ, including some unusual details of iconographic interest, such as the legend of St. Stephen and the cock discussed in an earlier chapter.<sup>208</sup> The legend of the sower is treated in two of these roundels. In the first instance, it forms part of the Flight to Egypt scene (*fig. 206*). Mary carries the child and rides on an ass, while Joseph holds the tether of the ass in one hand as he gestures in conversation with a third figure, on the right. This figure has a large bowl tucked under his left arm and his right arm is extended as if scattering seed. He must be the sower of the legend.<sup>209</sup> The roundel beside this shows another moment from the same legend (*fig. 207*). The corn is full-grown and on the right the farmer and his wife are harvesting it, with small sickles. On the left two soldiers on horseback and dressed in chain mail appear, and question the farmer. These roundels present the two most important moments from an apocryphal event for which no early source has yet been found.<sup>210</sup>

The earliest written record which Mâle was able to trace was in a fifteenth-century incunabulum in the Bibliothèque Nationale<sup>211</sup> which relates the legend of the sower immediately after that of the robbers: 'Ainsi, après que Notre-Dame cheminoit, ils vont trouver un laboureur qui semait du blé. L'enfant Jesus mit la main au sac et jeta son plein poing de blé au chemin; incontinent le blé fut si grand et si meur que s'il eût demeuré un an à croître, et quand les gens d'armes de Hérodes qui quéroient l'enfant pour l'occire vinrent à celui laboureur qui cueilloit son blé, si lui vont demander s'il avait point vu une femme qui portait un enfant. "Qui, dit-il, quand je semois ce blé." Lors les meurtriers se pensèrent qu'il ne savoit ce qu'il faisoit, car il avoit près d'un an que celui blé avoit été semé; si s'en retournerent en arrière.' Although the story

of the robbers is to be found in the Apocryphal Gospels,<sup>212</sup> the story of the sower is not, nor is it included in the *Legenda Aurea*, nor in the works of Vincent of Beauvais or Peter Comestor. However, it quite possibly grew out of an incident reported in the Latin version of the *Gospel of Thomas* (second century) which also took place during the Flight to Egypt:

'And as he walked through a sown field he put forth his hand and took of the ears and put them upon the fire and ground them and began to eat. And he gave such favour unto that field that year by year when it was sown it yielded unto the lord of it so many measures of wheat as the number of the grains which he had taken from it.'<sup>213</sup>

In any case, the legend of the sower as seen in the roof paintings of the church at Dädesjö entered the repertory of artists illustrating the Infancy Cycle in the thirteenth century. The Dädesjö paintings are notable not only for introducing this legend into its series of incidents centred around the Nativity, but also for showing the legend in two separate scenes - the sower as he first meets the Holy Family and then later as he is questioned by Herod's soldiers. Very often only one incident is depicted, usually the latter.

This is the case in two other thirteenth-century examples of this legend in art. The earliest instance of the 'Cornfeldlegende' which the German scholar Hans Wentzel found in his search through libraries of the United States and Europe<sup>214</sup> was a manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, from about 1275. This is a French Book of Hours which belonged to Yolande, Duchess of Soissons.<sup>215</sup> The whole of folio 289v is devoted to an illustration of the miracle of the sower (*fig. 208*). On the right can be seen a man sowing seed, behind him in the centre is a field of ripe corn, and on the left are two mounted soldiers. They question the sower, and one points to the corn. The next page of the manuscript puts this event in context by showing the Flight to Egypt.<sup>216</sup> This illumination is much smaller,

occupying only the initial letter 'D', and shows yet another apocryphal event, the falling of the idols as the Holy Family entered Egypt. The legend of the sower is given great prominence in this manuscript.

A representation similar to that in the French manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library can also be seen in English art of the thirteenth century. It occurs among the many scenes embroidered on the Anagni Cope, now in the sacristy of Anagni Cathedral.<sup>217</sup> Christie points out that this unusual scene does not occur anywhere else in existing medieval embroidery.<sup>218</sup> The scene of the sower on the Anagni Cope (*fig. 209, 210*) shows two soldiers standing on the left in silver armour and bearing weapons. They question a farmer who stands by a patch of ripe corn. Although the corn behind him is ripe, he is also sowing seed on the ground before him, as in the manuscript illumination, so that the two moments of the Dādesjð paintings are telescoped.<sup>219</sup>

In the fourteenth century this scene is treated even more fully in several English manuscripts. It also becomes a feature of decorative schemes in other media, where it is usually seen associated with the Flight to Egypt. The sower appears on a carved ivory panel, possibly of French origin, showing scenes from the life of Christ in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore.<sup>220</sup> This panel begins with a representation of the sower alone (*fig. 211*); he stands under a trefoil arch, a sack of grain held in front of his chest, while in front of him is a patch of ripe corn which reaches his waist. The next scene, to the right, shows the Flight to Egypt. The Miracle of the Corn Field is also represented on an ivory pyx, a eucharistic container said to be from the Abbey of Citeaux, and now in the Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon (*fig. 212*).<sup>221</sup> In the lower arcade a cycle of scenes from the Life of the Virgin is shown: the Visitation, Annunciation, Adoration of the Magi, Nativity and Presentation. Above these, the cycle continues with scenes of

the Journey of the Magi, the Annunciation to the Shepherds, the Massacre of the Innocents, the Miracle of the Corn Field and the Flight to Egypt. The Miracle of the Corn Field is represented by a soldier with a spear who questions a farmer, who has a scythe and is cutting down a sheaf of corn as tall as he is. There is no reference to his sowing. The artist in this case has chosen to illustrate a single moment from the legend rather than to combine the beginning and the end. This is the form which the legend usually took in later medieval art.

English manuscript illuminators of the early fourteenth century seem to have been quite familiar with this legend. They gave it detailed treatment in such outstanding manuscripts as the Holkham Bible Picture Book and the Taymouth Hours. The Holkham Bible Picture Book includes illustrations of a remarkable number of the apocryphal events associated with the Flight to Egypt: the robbers (folio 14), the sower (folio 14v), the bitter water, bowing palm tree and the falling idols (folio 15). The story of the sower is shown in two scenes as it is at D desj . The upper half of folio 14 (fig. 213) shows the Flight into Egypt on the left: Mary holds the Child and rides on an ass (the apocryphal ox is also included in all representations of their journey to Egypt) while Joseph with his usual pilgrim hat stands talking to a man who is sowing seed from a wicker basket; behind him is a man digging up the field with his horse-drawn plough. The inscription informs us that Joseph is requesting that the sower 'ke si acun aume venysyst e demandoyt apres teles genz si iles estoyent par ly passez; ke yl lur-disoyt, ke caunt ye sema ceo blee que ye passeyent par luy. e ke ye mettoyt tous son corblioun a tere. e isi fesoyt ye. e tantot jhesu fosoyt miracle.' The bottom of the page shows the same farmer standing in front of a field of ripe corn (Jesus' first miracle) being questioned by three soldiers with ugly faces and threatening weapons as well as swords and

chain mail. The inscription identifies them as 'les turmenturs Heroudes' who are asking precisely the question Joseph anticipated, to which the farmer gives the required answer and gestures towards the corn with both hands. This answer causes the tormentors to return home, deceived. Considerable attention is thus given to this legend in the Holkham Bible Picture Book.

In the Taymouth Hours Herod himself enters into the representation of this legend, in *bas-de-page* illuminations which extend over three pages. This seems to be the earliest appearance of the sower. The cycle begins on folio 95 (*fig. 214*) where a representation of the Flight to Egypt is painted without any of the apocryphal events included. Mary rides on the ass, led by Joseph, who is a relatively young man here. He has a stick over one shoulder and he has draped his coat over it; that is the sum total of their belongings. The next folio, 96 (*fig. 215*), includes details from two apocryphal events: on the left there is a young man sowing seed on the ground from a basket under his left arm; on the right there are two pedestals surmounted by statues of idols with shields and spears which are falling over and breaking, as little devils escape from them. The legend of the sower is continued on the next page, folio 96v (*fig. 216*), as King Herod is shown, crowned, riding in on a galloping horse, hand raised in a gesture towards the man he questions, a farmer cutting down a patch of ripe corn. The miniature is well painted and lively, especially in the movements of the dappled horse, Herod's impetuous gestures and the dress of the reaper. The inscription, however, reveals a certain lack of understanding of the legend: 'Cy erodes demande au messeour nouels de. iii. roys et il dit quil sunt en lur terres'. As James points out, this shows a 'complete misapprehension of the legend'.<sup>222</sup> Herod was not asking about the kings in this instance, but about the Holy Family and the Christ-Child. One cannot



be certain whether the person who painted the miniatures in this manuscript was the same as the one who wrote the inscription. In any case, the legend of the sower is given dramatic treatment, and extended to include the appearance of Herod himself.

French artists also showed an interest in the sower legend in the fourteenth century. It appears in the bas-de-page illumination below the Flight (*fig. 217*) in the Horae of Jeanne II, Queen of Navarre (1313 - 1349)<sup>223</sup> and in a Book of Hours from Metz, now in the Bodleian Library.<sup>224</sup> Only four instances of this legend were cited in manuscripts of the British Library by Birch for the early period<sup>225</sup> but by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was so popular, especially among French artists, that Hans Wentzel found twenty-five examples of its occurrence in the manuscripts from this period in the Pierpont Morgan Library alone.<sup>226</sup> Only one of these includes Herod.<sup>227</sup>

To conclude this survey of the legend of the sower in medieval art, it might be of interest to note some fifteenth-century examples of its appearance where Herod also appears. In Gotland, Sweden, in the church of Eke, which is now part of the same parish as Dädesjö, there are wall paintings in the nave. These are fairly crude, but not without charm. In the south nave is a painting by the artist, known as the Passion master, of the mid-fifteenth century (*fig. 218*): on the right is a reaper and on the left is King Herod on horseback, wearing a large crown and carrying a sceptre. He is accompanied by a sword-bearer, also on a horse, and he questions the reaper who turns his head from his work with the sickle, towards Herod to answer his question.

A much more sophisticated example of the sower legend can be seen in the French manuscript, the *Grandes Heures de Rohan* of about 1425 - 30.<sup>228</sup> It is part of a full-page illumination which shows, in the upper part, the

Flight to Egypt (*fig. 219*). The figures in the lower part of the page are drawn to a smaller scale and represent two reapers being questioned by two impressive-looking men on horseback. They are not soldiers. In his commentaries on the plates of the facsimile edition, Marcel Thomas states that they are courtiers and points out that they 'have been faithfully copied from one of the Wise Men and a knight in his entourage, painted by the Limbourgs in the *Très Riches Heures* of Jean de Berry (folio 51v)'.<sup>229</sup> It is quite likely that the figure in the foreground, although he does not wear a crown, is perhaps meant to represent Herod, accompanied by a courtier, who shows deference to him. This interpretation is supported by the appearance of a fiercely roaring lion in the picture which may be an allusion to Herod as the 'roaring and ravening lion' which several patristic writers used when describing this tyrant. On the other hand, it may just be a rather imaginative use of the zodiacal Leo to help populate the territory between Bethlehem and Egypt.

The use of the zodiac signs and also of calendar illuminations is a source not to be overlooked when considering depictions of the sower legend especially in fifteenth-century manuscript illumination. The sowing of seed and the reaping of corn were themes which were gaining universal acceptance as standard illustrations for the labours of the months of June, July and October. In fact, the reaper of the Rohan illumination discussed above bears a very close resemblance to the reaper in the calendar picture of that manuscript for July. He is accompanied there by the lion as well.<sup>230</sup> His companion can be found in the July Calendar picture (*fig. 220*) painted by Paul de Limbourg in the *Belles Heures de Jean de Berry*, now in the Cloisters, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,<sup>231</sup> a manuscript which influenced the Rohan workshop considerably. As sources of inspiration for the depiction of the legend of the sower, artists had

standard calendar pictures. They also had, of course, Bible illustrations of the Book of Ruth, although in the fifteenth century illuminated Bibles had passed their period of popularity and were being replaced by Books of Hours. These will be discussed in a later chapter (Chapter 11).

One last example of the sower legend where the identification of Herod the Great is not so difficult as in the Rohan Hours occurs in the Jerusalem Altar of the Marienkirche in Danzig, now in Gdansk, Poland.<sup>232</sup> This altar was executed by the 'Danzig Master' about 1500. The lower part of the relevant panel shows two peasants being questioned by two soldiers in plate armour on horseback. In the distance can be seen Herod, crowned, on horseback, leading a large party of soldiers. In the upper left, a foot soldier has opened the door to a house in which stands a woman and her child whom he is about to kill. In this work, then, the legend of the sower is also being associated with the Massacre of the Innocents as well as the Flight.

This same combination of events, Sower and Massacre, is evident in the Bedford Book of Hours.<sup>233</sup> In this French manuscript of about 1423, the main illumination on folio 83 is the Flight, or rather the Entry into Egypt (*fig. 221*). In roundels surrounding this main scene, related events are depicted: in the lower left corner Herod is seen issuing orders to two soldiers on bended knee before him (this Herod, like the one in the *Grandes Heures de Rohan*, has no crown); in the lower right corner two soldiers question a man who is sowing seed before a field of ripe corn taller than he is; above this two or three soldiers are energetically slaying several children; in the upper right corner the idols fall as the Holy Family passes by. This is a rich and luxurious manuscript which contains depictions of many apocryphal events but, in this instance, they

are subordinate to the more important Scriptural event which the main illumination describes.

The legend of the sower, like the legends of St. Stephen and the cock, was represented independently in several works. It was associated at first with the Flight to Egypt, but later it was also associated with the Massacre of the Innocents<sup>234</sup> and thus with Herod. Although Herod is most often depicted with the Magi, or else ordering the Massacre, it is of interest to note that minor legends associated with him also received lively treatment by artists in the Middle Ages.

#### VI. Herod in Typology

Typological representations involving Herod have been referred to earlier in this chapter. A great variety of Old Testament figures and events were used to typify Herod at different points in his career. The *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* has already been introduced. The illuminated manuscripts of this long poem are uniform in their illuminations even though the text ranges over a wide area of types and antitypes for each chapter. The Flight to Egypt (*fig. 165*) was always represented with the same three Old Testament types: the Egyptian image of the Virgin and Child (*fig. 166*), Moses casting down Pharaoh's crown (*fig. 167*), and Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the statue (*fig. 168*). Although Moses' miraculous escape from Pharaoh during this incident, and also at his birth, was considered a forceful type of Christ's escape from Herod, the artists hardly ever chose to paint the Massacre of the Innocents for this chapter.<sup>235</sup> Instead, the event from the childhood of Moses was chosen.

It is interesting to note that when Kurt Weitzmann commented on the influence of Jewish pictorial sources on Old Testament illumination,<sup>236</sup> he cited this very scene from the childhood of Moses to demonstrate that 'the Jewish elements in the Octateuchs are not limited to the book of

Genesis and, furthermore, that the Haggadic texts were not the sole Jewish sources,<sup>237</sup> He traces the source to Josephus. In doing so he also shows that this was the case not only in the Greek East but in the Latin West. A Greek manuscript of the twelfth century, the Vatican Octateuch,<sup>238</sup> (*fig. 222*) shows the finding of the infant Moses by Pharaoh's daughter, and also her presentation of him to Pharaoh as a young child.<sup>239</sup> An English Bible leaf, also of the twelfth century, in the Pierpont Morgan Library<sup>240</sup> shows the same set of events in four scenes, carrying the episode of the child Moses and Pharaoh through to the conclusion where Pharaoh places his crown on Moses' head and then Moses tramples it underfoot (*fig. 223*). This is the very scene which was used by illustrators of the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*. It was not, therefore, unprecedented when it was adopted by the fourteenth-century illuminators of that poem. The Carew-Poyntz Hours contains an extended series of illustrations of Pharaoh and Moses, folio 29-35, including the episode of Moses and Pharaoh's crown on folio 31 (*fig. 224*). The *Speculum*, in turn, influenced other media. Lutz and Perdrizet point out that the glazing scheme for the stained glass of Saint-Etienne Church in Mulhouse (1324 - 40) is based on the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*.<sup>241</sup> One of the panels shows Moses before Herod (*fig. 225*); the crown cannot be seen but Moses is putting a coal to his mouth as a soldier waits with sword upraised behind him.

Although Herod does not appear in any of the illustrations for the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, his father, Antipater, is always shown, and in a rather unusual capacity, in the thirty-ninth chapter. The first illumination for this chapter shows Christ showing his wounds to his Father and interceding for mankind (*fig. 226*). This scene is paralleled by three others: Esther interceding with Ahasuerus for her people (*fig. 227*); the Virgin showing her breasts to Christ as a plea for mercy towards mankind

(fig. 228); and Antipater (Herod's father) showing his wounds to Julius Caesar (fig. 229). He appears usually in a loin cloth (sometimes carrying his robe) so that his whole body, covered with wounds, can be seen. The source for this can be found in Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*,<sup>242</sup> which in turn quotes Josephus.<sup>243</sup>

Et tempore Antipatrum et Hircanum criminabatur Antigonus apud Caesarem, dicens eorum consilio patrem suum et fratrem interiisse. Ad hoc Antipater, veste projecta, multitudinem vulnerum demonstrans, verbis non opus esse dixit, cum cicatrices, se tacente, clamarent, ipsum fuisse fidelem Romanorum, ...<sup>244</sup>

Josephus, through Comestor, was the source of several events illustrated in the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, but the medieval audience may very well have been familiar with a similar anecdote to the one of Antipater and Caesar, told originally by Seneca in *De Beneficiis*, Book V, and related in the *Gesta Romanorum*.<sup>245</sup> It tells about Augustus Caesar and a soldier who had fought for him at Actium:

'Quod Christus se pro nobis morti exposuit'

Quidam imperator, qui in quodam bello mortali expositus fuit mortemque vix potuit evadere, quod percipiens quidam miles strenuus interposuit se scilicet inter imperatorem et hostes ejus, et ita imperator evasit sine lesione, miles autem pro eo diversa vulnera recepit, et curatus est cum magna difficultate, tamen cicatrices in eo semper permanserunt, et ab omnibus est commendatus, quod tam egregie pro domino suo pugnasset. Accidit postea, quod ille miles debuisset hereditatem suam injuste amittere; accessit ad prefatum imperatorem, rogavit, ut eum juvaret et sententiam pro eo daret. At ille: Carissime, non possum tibi ad presens attendere.... At ille: O domine, cur talia dicis? Statim coram omnibus omnia estimenta sua dilaceravit et usque ad nudam carnem cicatrices vulnerum ei ostendit, dicens: Ecce, quid sustinui pro te...<sup>246</sup>

The image of a soldier showing the wounds he has suffered for his emperor as a plea for mercy was well-known, therefore, and Josephus' account of Antipater before Caesar was the ideal example. Thus it was used in the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* as a figure for the two New Testament examples illustrated in this chapter, Christ pleading with God, and the Virgin

pleading with Christ.

Typology was also used in the Peterborough Psalter, where whole series of typological pages, usually containing four scenes each, are interspersed among the Psalms. Herod is shown, or mentioned in the text of four different folios. The portrayal of his death and the Old Testament type of the death of Saul and his armour-bearer has already been discussed (*fig. 159*). Several other moments from Herod's earlier career are also depicted in this manuscript. On folio 11, the Journey of the Magi is portrayed in the lower right section (*fig. 230*). The three other types shown on the same page are Balaam on his ass (Num.21:21-30), Isaiah and the Temple (Is.2:2-5), and the departure of the Hebrews, led by Moses, from Pharaoh (Ex.12:31). The inscriptions around the illuminations comment on them:

Exoritur stella jacob nam pura puella.  
Sic genuit natum. sancta maria suum.

En regi celi, tres reges munera prebent  
Aurum. thus. mirram. mystica dona deo.

Exit ab erumpna populis. ducente columpna.  
Stella magos duxit. lux christi utrisque reluxit.

The illumination in the lower left again involves Moses and Pharaoh, this time as Moses leads the Hebrews out of Egypt. His subsequent miracle of striking the rock and providing water for them is also shown (Ex.17:6-7) by the artist, but the text around the illumination refers to the earlier miracle whereby 'Dominus autem praecedebat eos ad ostendendam viam per diem in columna ignis: ut dux esset itineris utroque tempore. Numquam defuit columna nubis per diem, nec columna ignis per noctem, coram populo'. (Ex.13:21-2) The Hebrews following the pillar of fire was interpreted as a type for the Magi following the star.

Window II in the north choir of Canterbury Cathedral shows the same combination of types for the Magi as the Peterborough Psalter. At the top

of the window in the centre are the three Kings on horseback; on the right is Balaam and on the left Isaiah. The left panel of the row beneath these shows Pharaoh and Moses leading his people out of Egypt, following a pillar of fire. One of the types in the *Pictor in Carmine*<sup>247</sup> for the Magi following the star after leaving Herod is 'Filii Israel recedentes a Pharaone secuntur columpnam ignis'.<sup>248</sup> It looks as if the artist of the Peterborough Psalter has mistaken the miracle or misread his text for the lower left illustration of folio 11 of Moses striking the rock for water. The pillar of fire would have been more appropriate.

The next folio, folio 11v, shows the end of the interview of the Magi before Herod, who sits with crossed legs and holds a naked sword (*fig. 231*). The Magi are on the point of leaving him. This scene is accompanied by three related scenes: the Gentiles turning to Christ and rejecting Satan (Acts 26:17-18), Joseph reunited with his brothers (Gen. 45:1-4), and Solomon being visited by Sheba (III Regum 10:1-2).<sup>249</sup> Two ideas are presented here: the forsaking of evil (note the forsaken winged dragon-devil above the Gentiles' heads) and the worshipping of good. The visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon was the Old Testament type for the latter and also for the Adoration. The Magi turning away from Herod signifies here their rejection of evil. The inscriptions around these illuminations read:

Stella magis luxit. et eos ab herode reduxit.  
Sic satanam gentes. fugiunt te christe sequentes.

Ad te longinquos. Joseph attrahis atque propinquos  
Sic deus in cunis. Iudeus gentibus unis.

His donat donis. regina domum Salomonis.  
Sic reges domino dant munera. tres tria trino.



The next folio to bear a representation of Herod is folio 13, which shows him again with naked sword and crossed legs as he supervises the Massacre (*fig. 232*). Around this illustration are three related scenes: Elijah is warned to flee (III Reg. 19:5-7), the Flight into Egypt begins, and the murder of Rachel's children (the tribe of Benjamin) takes place (Jer. 31:15, Matt. 2:16). The inscriptions for these scenes explain the typology. The top of the page begins:

Ut trucis insidias Jezabel declinat helyas.  
Sic deus heroden. terrore remotus eodem.

Then a reference to Saul's Massacre of the Priests is inserted, as a parallel to Herod's Massacre of Rachel's children.

Non cecidit david pro quo saul hos iugulavit  
Sic non est cesus cum cesis. transfuga ihesus.

Ecce Rachel nati fratrum. gladiis iugulati  
His sunt signati. pueri sub erore necati.

Once again, two themes are being treated together here: the Flight into Egypt and the Massacre of the Innocents. It is interesting to note the wide variety of incidents that were, in fact, considered types of the Massacre by Herod. The *Pictor in Carmine* lists four:

Pharao submergere facit in flumine paruulos Hebrerum masculos  
Tribus Benjamin fere tota ciuili bello consumitur  
Saul per manum Doeck occidit sacerdotes domini propter  
David transfugam  
Antiochus rex facit suspendere duo paruulos ad ubera matrum  
suarum et simul precipitare. 250

Two of these types are illustrated in the Peterborough Psalter, one (Pharaoh) is discussed at great length in the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*; the last is new and does not seem to have enjoyed much popularity.

The examples discussed above, from the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* and the Peterborough Psalter, of the Old Testament types for episodes in Herod's life and death, show great range, variety and versatility.

A different set of types was used in the other typological text-book of the Middle Ages - the *Biblia Pauperum*.<sup>251</sup> The composition of this German work in about 1300 precedes the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* by a quarter of a century and differs from it in being strictly Scriptural. Each New Testament antitype has two Old Testament types but no apocryphal, legendary or historical events are admitted. Each set of types is accompanied by four prophetic quotations and some rhyming lines in Latin to explain the page. There is no other text. Like the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, all versions of the *Biblia Pauperum* use the same standard set of types and antitypes.

Herod appears in the inscription, but not in the illuminations, for the chapter on the Flight into Egypt (*fig. 233*). The first type for the Flight is Rebecca sending Jacob to Laban. This is explained in the text:

Legitur in genesi XXVII<sup>o</sup> cap<sup>o</sup>, quod cum rebecca, mater esau et jacob, audisset quod aliquo tempore evenire posset quod jacob, interficeretur ipsa filium suum jacob de terra sua misit ad terram alienam ut necem subterfugeret. Quod bene figurabat fugam cristi in terra egypti, quum Herodes ipsum iam natum quaesivit ad perdendum.<sup>252</sup>

The other type for the Flight is Michal assisting David in his escape from Saul. The text again draws the parallel:

Legitur in primo libro regum, cap<sup>o</sup> XIX, quod rex saul misit apparitores ut quaerent david interficiendum: uxor autem davidis nomine mycol submitit ipsum per unam fenestram cum fune et sic evasit quaerentes eum: Rex autem saul herodem figurat qui cristum quaesivit ad perdendum quum joseph eum cum maria in egyptum duxit et sic manus quaerentium eum evasit.

Christ's escape from Herod, then, is likened to Jacob's escape from Isaac and David's escape from Saul. Neither of these types appeared in the works discussed above, although other events in Saul's life have been taken as types for Herod.

One of these is found in Chapter VII of the *Biblia Pauperum*, on the Massacre of the Innocents (*fig. 234*). Here Herod appears in the miniature which shows the killing of the children by the soldiers, while mothers weep and protest. The first type for this event is the one which appears in the Peterborough Psalter, Saul causing Ahimelech and all the priests to be beheaded:

Legitur in primo lib<sup>o</sup> regum XXII<sup>o</sup> cap<sup>o</sup>, quod Rex saul fecit occidere omnes sacerdotes domini in nobe quia david fugientem receperant et eo panem sacrum ad comedendum dederant: Saul figurat herodem David enim cristum figurat: sacerdotes vero pueros: quos herodes innocenter fecit occidi propter cristum. 253

The second type, however, is a new one, although the parallel between Herod's killing of the Innocents and Queen Athalia's killing of the sons of Ahaziah was drawn by Gregory of Tours as early as the sixth century in his *Historia Francorum*. The typological significance is explained in the inscription:

Legitur in quarto lib<sup>o</sup> Regum XI cap<sup>o</sup>, quod athalia regina, videns filium suum mortuum fecit accedi (sic) omnes filios regis ne regnarent pro prole sua: huic autem soror regis subtraxit filium suum minorem qui postea factus est rex: Regina crudelis herodem figurat qui propter cristum pueros fecit occidi puer autem subtractus morti figurat cristum ab occisione regis herodis furti subductum.

Of the prophetic quotations on this page, two are of special interest. The first is taken from the Psalm used in the liturgy for the Feast of the Holy Innocents, 'Vindica domine sanguinem tuorum qui effusus est'. The other is a quotation from Proverbs 28: 15: 'Leo rugiens et ursus esuriens principis impius super populum pauperum'. The imagery of the roaring lion as well as that of a charging bear is applied to Herod. The animal imagery used by the early patristic fathers was thus still being used in the fifteenth century.

A great wealth of material was drawn upon by artists and scribes who worked in the typological tradition. The significance of the figure of

Herod was intensified considerably by his association with such Old Testament figures as Saul, Paraoth, the deceived Isaac, Queen Athalia and Jezabel, in these formal typological works.

Other manuscripts made incidental reference to still different Old Testament types for Herod. He is compared to Cain, the first murderer, in two Oxford manuscripts. A German thirteenth-century Lectionary, from Regensburg, now in Keble College<sup>254</sup> includes an historiated initial for the Feast of the Holy Innocents on folio 22. Herod stands and points to a pile of dead children before him while a soldier holds another child by the hair, ready to run him through, and a mother pleads with Herod. The text, on folio 22v, includes the statement ...'cum abel sanguis clamet ad celum'. The Innocents are associated with the innocent Abel and, by extension, Herod is Cain. A more specific reference is made in an English late-fourteenth-century Gospel Commentary by William of Nottingham.<sup>255</sup> On folio 27 while commenting on a text from Luke, the writer mentions such details about Herod as his Idumaeen and Arabian ancestry; even the false story of the abduction of his father Antipater is included. On folio 69 is an historiated initial for Matt. 2:16, 'Tunc Herodes....iratus est valde, et mittens occidit omnes pueros...' The illumination shows Herod seated on the left, legs crossed, pointing angrily to a kneeling mother with a child as a soldier in chain mail grabs it by the foot and stabs it. The text on folio 70 has a marginal note outlined and underlined in red directing the reader's attention to the account of Herod's death, which is to follow. The text then explains how his total body was corrupt, plagued by God and sent to Gehenna to share Cain's fate, whose vices he had - he killed his own sons, Aristobolus, Alexander and Antipater, as well as the Innocents. In this manuscript, then, Herod is emphatically associated with the archetypal murderer, Cain.

In typological works of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the figure of Herod was associated with a great variety of tyrants and villains. The richness of this typological material contributed greatly to a deepening of the significance of the image of Herod the Great as a figure of monumental evil.

## VII. Standard Iconography

Although many new motifs appeared in thirteenth and fourteenth century representations of Herod scenes, and new methods of presenting Herod-centred events were developed, at the same time, the standard iconography of the Magi and Massacre scenes continued to be presented in various media. The Massacre of the Innocents appears in some stained glass from Sandinavia. One panel, possibly from Eksta in Gotland, now preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities in Stockholm,<sup>256</sup> dating from about 1270, shows Herod seated on a throne and facing front, with a naked sword held across his knees (*fig. 235*). His right hand is raised in a gesture towards two soldiers clad completely in chain mail. They hold their swords high in the air and one holds an infant by the ankle, upside down. Several heads of children can be seen between the legs of the soldiers. The style of this panel is fairly formal, suggesting the German Byzantine or late Romanesque style.<sup>257</sup> Another Scandinavian panel of glass, possibly from Hablingbo, Gotland, and dating from about 1350, gives a slightly different version of the Massacre<sup>258</sup> (*Fig. 236*). Herod sits on a cushioned throne, facing front and holds his naked sword upright this time, with the tip in the air. Several soldiers appear before him with bloody swords, represented by ruby glass. Two of them have babies dangling from the tips of their swords above their heads, turned so that they face Herod. This is a feature common in many manuscript illuminations of this period.<sup>259</sup>

It also appears in the fourteenth-century wall painting of the Massacre before Herod on the north wall of the chancel in Chalgrove, Oxfordshire (*fig. 237*).<sup>260</sup> On the right of this scene soldiers and mothers struggle over children, while on the left a haughty enthroned Herod is presented with a bloody child on the tip of a long spear held by a single soldier. Usually Herod is shown pointing to the child or soldier. The late-thirteenth-century English cope in the church of St. Maximin, France<sup>261</sup> contains a Massacre scene of this type with the standard iconography of Herod seated, pointing boldly towards the killing (*fig. 238*). In one rather unusual manuscript example, however, a child is being dangled at the tip of a spear in front of Herod's face as it clasps its hands in prayer to him (*fig. 144*). Herod, however, actually leans away from it. However, this manuscript, executed in the early thirteenth century, is generally characterized by an element of restraint.

Generally speaking, Herod is more actively involved in the Massacre when he appears in that scene. In Gotland, Sweden, for example, the Massacre occurs five times in fourteenth-century stone sculpture at Martebo, Lärbro, Lye, Stånga and Norrlanda.<sup>262</sup> Herod appears in four of these (omitting Martebo). He is usually seated on a throne, legs crossed, naked sword in his hand. At Lärbro, the scene contains only Herod and one soldier, who runs his sword through a child as Herod watches; at Norrlanda, Stånga and Lye (*fig. 139*) the scene is expanded to include four actors - Herod, two soldiers who kill the children before him, and a weeping mother.

If Herod is not watching the Massacre, he is ordering it, as he does in the glass of the Cathedral of Tours.<sup>263</sup> In a window of the Chapel of the Virgin, he is seen crowned, holding a sceptre, seated on a bench,

one hand extended towards a soldier wearing a helmet and holding a sword. In another thirteenth-century window in France at the church of Saint-Julien-du-Sault,<sup>264</sup> Herod is again seen first receiving the Magi and then giving orders for the Massacre to soldiers who stand one on either side of him, helmeted, wearing chain mail and holding swords, ready to carry out his order. In the York Minster window of the Massacre (*fig. 191*) the scene is completed by having several mothers and children represented as well as Herod and the soldiers.

Herod scenes continued to be represented in manuscripts with standard iconography. Sometimes the illuminations are tiny historiated initials in Bibles;<sup>265</sup> sometimes they are larger pictures in Psalters which have preliminary cycles of illustrations from the life of Christ.<sup>266</sup> They appear in other works such as the Life of the Virgin,<sup>267</sup> Breviaries,<sup>268</sup> and versions of the *Legenda Aurea*.<sup>269</sup> Usually the Massacre scenes take place indoors but in one instance, an historiated initial for Compline of the Hours of the Virgin, Herod sits on a throne on a little hillock of green and points to a large soldier about to slaughter a child.<sup>270</sup> Almost all the representations stress the murderous, tyrannical rage of Herod.

Herod was represented simply as a king with no particularly evil attributes in many instances when he was shown with the Magi. This is the case, for example, in several early thirteenth-century English Psalters such as Arundel 157 and Royal 1 D.X (*fig. 134*) in the British Library (discussed above). The same iconography has been used in the scene representing the Magi before Herod on a silver gilt chalice, the 'Coupe de Charlemagne', in the Abbey of St. Maurice.<sup>271</sup> The iconography and style of this chalice is so similar to the English manuscripts that an English origin has been claimed for it.

There are some illuminations, however, which may be considered simply as portraits of a king. In one of the eleventh-century Greek Gospels,<sup>272</sup> Herod was painted on the opening page of Luke, along with three other figures, Theophilus, Zacharias and Elizabeth, who were all mentioned in the opening chapters of that Gospel. Herod is nimbed like the other figures and is a regal figure: he is elegantly dressed and his crown and robe are decorated with jewels. The same type of portrait occurs, on a small scale, in a thirteenth-century English Bible in Christ Church College, Oxford.<sup>273</sup> The Gospel of Luke opens, 'Fuit in diebus Herodis regis judee, sacerdos quidam nomine Zacharias...' The initial 'F' is decorated with two portraits: on the left, Herod sits on a throne, crowned and with a sceptre; on the right, Zacharias appears as a tonsured priest. Another metrical Bible, in the Fitzwilliam Museum, *Aurora* of Peter of Riga,<sup>274</sup> contains a similar portrait of Herod the Great as a noble king (*fig. 239*). This again appears at the beginning of the Gospel of Luke. Herod sits, facing front, on a white cushioned throne with a green semi-circular back. He holds a long sceptre in his left hand, his other is raised in a gentle gesture, and his feet are resting on a sphere (his legs are not crossed). This posture, in this type of throne, is reminiscent of Eastern manuscript illumination where Herod was presented as a powerful emperor-figure.

#### VIII. The Byzantine Renaissance

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Western art presented Herod the Great in a variety of ways so as to emphasize his wickedness. Eastern art also continued to produce infancy cycles in which Herod played a role. However, in Byzantine art, he did not become a villain and a tyrant; he remained a powerful potentate richly robed, and attended by military guards.

Some of the most outstanding works of the Byzantine renaissance



are the fourteenth-century mosaics in the Kariye Djami, Istanbul.<sup>275</sup> The mosaics showing the cycle of the Infancy of Christ occupy fourteen lunettes in the walls that encompass the outer narthex of the nave. The scene following the Nativity shows two events: the Journey of the Magi on horses and their appearance before Herod (this scene appears in the east lunette of the fourth bay) (*fig. 240*). In the latter, Herod sits on a cushioned throne with his feet on a small footstool and an armed guard stands behind him. He wears a crown and, although his right hand is raised in a gesture of conversation, his left hand rests on the hilt of his sword. He wears a richly decorated tunic, made of 'solid blue glass with a hem of gold and red studded with red lozenge-shaped gems flanked by pairs of pearls;'<sup>276</sup> the cuffs are gold and red; the collar and rectangular ornament at his breast are also gold and red, studded with red lozenge-shaped gems and pearls. He wears a mantle which is red, with gold and red edging; the clasp on his right shoulder is a single large, round piece of gold glass. His crown is gold and red, studded with a lozenge-shaped blue gem.<sup>277</sup> The Magi are dressed in a similar style and one carries a golden casket, possibly the container of all their gifts. This scene is full of magnificent richness and power. Nothing sinister is suggested.

The next scene, in the east lunette of the fifth bay, has been two-thirds destroyed and only two figures remain. These are Herod and his guard (*fig. 241*). Originally, a large group of ten or twelve scribes appeared before Herod in this scene, in animated conversation, gesticulating towards the king.<sup>278</sup> Both Herod and the guard are represented in unusual poses: the guard stands with his back to us, and Herod's torso is drawn in a different perspective (three-quarters rear view) from his head and legs (profile). He still wears a crown and holds a sword as in the previous

scene. As in several of the Latin liturgical plays, this scene of Herod and his scribes appears after the scene with Herod and the Magi, in reverse order to that of the Gospel of Matthew.

After the Magi's Return and the Flight into Egypt, Herod appears again in these mosaics, on the south wall of the sixth bay, as he orders the Massacre of the Innocents and his soldiers rush forth to obey his orders (*fig. 242*). The Massacre of the Innocents has received expansive treatment in the Kariye Djami - four lunettes out of thirteen in the Infancy cycle are devoted to various incidents associated with the Massacre. The first scene shows Herod in his palace, on a high cushioned throne with a high footstool. He wears a large fanciful crown and bears no arms; both hands are held out as he gives the order to the soldier before him. However, his chlamys has fallen from his shoulders and reveals the golden body-armour (*cuirass*) he wears. He is attended by two guards in full armour, and gives his orders to a group of three soldiers in armour with swords at their sides. The remainder of the lunette shows the soldiers carrying out Herod's orders: one is walking away from him, eagerly leaning forward, hand on sword, ready for action; one soldier has his drawn sword raised high in the air as he chases a woman with her child hiding behind a tree; a third soldier stabs a naked child which he has snatched while the mother raises her arms in horror. Her hair is dishevelled and hangs down loose over her breast in the classical iconography of grief and despair. In this mosaic and also in the following ones,<sup>279</sup> the grief of the mothers is restrained although the action of the soldiers is often particularly brutal.

In Byzantine iconography the theme of Rachel mourning for her sons, as a symbol of all the mothers weeping over the Innocents, was often given a separate place within the Massacre scene. In the Kariye Djami a whole lunette is devoted to this subject, although only half of the mosaic now

survives, in the western lunette of the fifth bay. It shows a group of mothers huddled on the ground, heads shrouded, bending over the dead children in their arms. However, all of them incline their heads towards the left (the missing part of the mosaic) and Underwood suggests that they are looking towards the source of their grief. 'Since no close parallel for this treatment of the subject exists, one can only speculate that the centre of attention in the left part of the composition was the pile of dead children and perhaps an executioner, or even the enthroned Herod.'<sup>280</sup>

The last scene related to the Massacre in these mosaics of Kariye Djami is the Flight of Elizabeth and John, in the western lunette of the fourth bay. This apocryphal incident often appears in Byzantine art,<sup>281</sup> (see, for example, *fig. 51*), although it hardly ever appears in Western art.<sup>282</sup> The mosaic shows a soldier running, his mantle blown out behind him, sword raised ready to strike (*fig. 243*). He is pursuing Elizabeth who holds the swaddled baby, John, and stands on the mountain, which has opened up ready to receive her, according to *Protevangelium*, 22:3. She and the child are nimbed and thus easily identified.

In late Byzantine art, the Escape of Elizabeth and John is often shown as part of another scene. At Lavra, in the apse of the south transept of the Catholicon, the fresco (*fig. 244*) showing the crowned, enthroned Herod watching the Massacre as mothers appeal to him, and various soldiers murder naked children with swords and knives, also shows the nimbed Elizabeth and John escaping into a mountain, closely pursued by a soldier with naked sword about to strike.<sup>283</sup> The fresco is large and, although Herod is shown on the left before his palace, the remainder of the scene is set in fields and mountains. The Escape of Elizabeth and John is also shown, along with an extended treatment of the Massacre, at

the Red Church at Peruštica in Bulgaria.<sup>284</sup> On one side Herod, enthroned, gives his orders; in the centre, the massacre takes place; on the other side, the Escape of Elizabeth is presented, along with another related apocryphal event, the murder of Zacharias before the Temple. This church was supposedly built on the exact spot where Elizabeth and John found shelter in the rocky mountain.<sup>285</sup>

The Byzantine painting in the Theoskepastos Monastery Church at Trebizond<sup>286</sup> also preserves the apocryphal murder of Zacharias with the elaborate scene, on the roof of this cave-church, showing Herod and the Massacre. On the left is Zacharias in the Temple; next Herod can be seen commanding with a spirited gesture; then a large Massacre scene in which a considerable number of soldiers throw themselves with great violence into their work. Rachel sits on the ground, tearing her hair in grief. One of the mothers, however, resists, seizing the hilt of the sword of her assailant. This seems to be a Western element. Indeed, Rice suggests that Western influences seem to be present in the realistic, violent attitudes of the soldiers.<sup>287</sup>

A fourteenth-century wall painting at Markov Monastir, in Serbia, includes the Escape of Elizabeth in a scene devoted mainly to a depiction of Rachel weeping for her children<sup>288</sup> (*fig. 245*). With both hands stretched up in the air in a dramatic gesture of grief, Rachel surveys a group of nineteen or twenty swaddled children arranged in a circle around her.<sup>289</sup> Above her and in the background is a brief scene from the Massacre beside a mountain which opens up to receive the nimbed Elizabeth and her son.

Byzantine art tended to show these apocryphal events more than Western art. It also tended to preserve the early Eastern emphasis on the grief of Rachel and the mourning mothers. The mid-thirteenth-century wall paintings of the Basilica of St. Martin in Aime, Savoie, painted in the

choir and apse of this Romanesque abbey church, show a strong Byzantine influence.<sup>290</sup> On the south wall of the choir there is a large dramatic representation of the Massacre of the Innocents (*fig. 246*). Herod does not appear; much emphasis has been placed, instead, on the mothers and their various dramatic gestures of grief, their long straggling hair and bare breasts being reminiscent of earlier Byzantine representations. The nimbed figure in the centre beating her breast is Rachel. Demus suggests that these frescoes were the work of an itinerant Italian artist, who took his iconography from Sicilian models, like the mosaics of Monreale, works with a decided Byzantine flavour.<sup>291</sup> These same gestures of the grieving women can be seen in a manuscript in Berlin which is German with Byzantine influence.<sup>292</sup> The upper part of the page shows Herod giving his order to several soldiers; the lower part shows these soldiers pulling babies by the hair from their mothers and stabbing them, to add them to the pile of mutilated corpses below their feet (*fig. 247*). On the left a bare-breasted woman pulls her hair in grief. Above her a child is held upside-down by a soldier; its position is reminiscent of the child flying down from the upper to the lower part of the page in the Ottonian manuscript discussed in an earlier chapter.

Herod still appears nimbed in a fourteenth-century manuscript of Eastern origin, a Gospel Book in Slavonic, copied from a Greek Gospel Book for the Bulgarian Tsar in 1356.<sup>293</sup> The scene at the top of the page shows a group of priests and scribes standing before Herod, who is nimbed, seated on a faldstool before a baldaquin, and accompanied by a bodyguard who is armed and carries a shield. At the bottom of the page, three Magi wearing turbans stand before Herod, who is again crowned and nimbed and sits as he does in the scene above. The Massacre is painted on folio 11 of this manuscript and the usual Byzantine motif of Rachel mourning and other women

tearing their hair appears.<sup>294</sup>

Herod in late Byzantine art remains the powerful, dignified potentate of earlier Eastern works. He is gorgeously clothed, wears a golden crown, and never brandishes his sword. He is aloof, attended by armed bodyguards, and generally found in a throne room or under a baldaquin on a rich throne with a footstool for his feet to raise him above his audience. He remains a king and does not become a passionate tyrant as he does in Western art.

#### Conclusion

So far as the iconography of Herod the Great is concerned, the period discussed in this chapter, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, is undoubtedly the richest in the whole of the history of Herod's representation in art. He appears in a variety of media, and is treated in a highly imaginative way. This wealth of original treatment extends to those figures which also appear in Herod scenes, from the Magi to the mothers. Almost all the historic, apocryphal, patristic and apocalyptic themes concerning Herod are given artistic expression, so that the sower appears as well as the devils who drag Herod to hell after his suicide/death. The fifteenth century added only one new apocryphal story to Herod literature and art; otherwise, the entire canon of Herod-related material has been given expression in the visual arts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in a rich and imaginative way. Much of the material was inherent in twelfth-century art, and given tentative expression in the Latin church drama of France and Germany, but it found full expression in English art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

## CHAPTER IX: HEROD IN NON-DRAMATIC MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE

## I. Early Period

Herod the Great was utterly neglected by Anglo-Saxon poets in so far as extant manuscripts bear witness. This may be partially accounted for by the fact that the Passion, rather than the Nativity, captured the imagination of poets of religious verse as the Church introduced the notion of the resurrected Christ to the pagan peoples of Britain. The earliest mention of Herod appears at the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (ninth century) where he is treated strictly as an historical figure. He caused the deaths of the children of Bethlehem and then died, stabbed by his own hand, to be succeeded by his son Archelaus: 'And þa cild on Bethleem of slagene waeron for ehtnesse fram Herode. he swealt of sticod fram him sylfum. Archelaus his sune feng to rice.'<sup>1</sup> This reference, brief as it was, nevertheless introduced the uncanonical detail of Herod's suicide (and made the suicide attempt successful rather than abortive as in the historian Josephus' account). This theme along with the long illness which preceded the suicide attempt, was to attract a good many medieval writers who dealt with Herod the Great.

So far as is known, Aelfric was the only Anglo-Saxon writer to deal with Herod. His 'Homily on the Nativity of the Innocents'<sup>2</sup> includes a good deal of historical material on Herod, all of which is taken from Haymo, who in turn named Josephus and Hegesippus as sources.<sup>3</sup> Aelfric's choice of details from the Herod story, however, foreshadowed later writers' treatments of this same topic. Most outstanding is his detailed account of the unspeakable diseases which tortured Herod, interpreted by Aelfric as the vengeance of God and a foretaste of what Herod would suffer eternally (ll. 135-139):

Hine gelaehhte unasegendlic adl: his lichama barn wiðutan mid langsumere haetan, and he eal innan samod forswaeled waes and toborsten. Him waes metes micel lust, ac ðeah mid nanum aetum, his gyfernysse gefyllan ne mihte. He hriðode, and egeslice hweos, and angsumlice siccetunga teah, swa ðaet he earfoðlice orðian mighte. Waeterseocnyss hine ofereode beneoðan þam gyrdle to ðan swiðe þaet his gesceapu maðan weollon, and stincende attor singallice of ðam toswollenum fotum fleow. Unaberendlic gyhða ofereode ealne ðone lichaman, and ungelyfendlic toblawennys his innoð geswencte. Him stod stincende steam of ðam muðe, swa þaet earfoðlice aenig laece him mihte genealaecan. Fela faera.aeca he acwealde: cwæð þaet hi hine gehaelan mihton, and noldon. Hine gedrehte singal slaepleast, swa þaet he þurhwacole niht buton slaepe adreah, and gif he hwon hnappode, ðaerrihte hine drehton nihtlice gedwimor, swa þaet him ðaes slaepes ofþuhte.

(11. 139-154, p. 74)

It is interesting to note that in this account Herod killed his doctors because he thought that they could help him but were refusing; this indicates that his mind was as twisted and corrupt as his body. Aelfric continues to tell how the hot baths were tried as a cure but failed, how Herod ordered Salome to imprison the Jewish nobles and have them executed on his death, promising 'fiftig scyllinga' each to the warriors who were to carry out his orders, of how Herod had his own son Antipater ignobly slain and then committed suicide successfully with an apple knife (the last two events should, of course, be reversed in order to agree with Josephus). This extraordinary interest in the details of Herod's illness and death is indicative of later English writers' approaches to Herod as well.

Aelfric also introduced into this Homily on the Innocents the story from Haymo of Halberstadt (d. 853) of Herod's being called to Rome by the Emperor where he conducted himself successfully and returned home only to remember his plan to kill the children of Bethlehem. His honourable homecoming contrasted with his almost whimsical idea of the Massacre contributes to a negative image of Herod even more than if he had been shown to have a strong motivation for the deed.

The Magi, 'ða ðry tungelwitegan', are also introduced into the Homily, arriving on the twelfth day after Christ's birth. Their appearance



allows Aelfric to comment on Herod's precarious position as king of the Jews. 'Naes he ae<sup>f</sup>elboren, ne him naht to þam cynecynne ne gebyrode: ac mid syrewungum and swicdome he becom to ðaere cynelican geðinc<sup>f</sup>e.' He was not connected with the royal family in any way but won his throne through betrayal and trickery. His deviousness is apparent when he questions the Magi, whom he fears will not return; then the treacherous Herod, 'swicola Herodes', dismisses them and demands that they inform him of the child's place of birth so that he may ostensibly worship him, but in fact carry out his plot to kill the intruder.

Aelfric greatly emphasized the treachery and hypocrisy of Herod within this homily written in the late tenth century. A half a century later, the same qualities of Herod were isolated in an entirely different context. The Latin bestiary, attributed to Theobald, abbot of Monte Cassino from 1022 - 1035, represents the fox as a devil and as a deceiver and cites Herod as the supreme human example.<sup>4</sup> A similar interpretation appears in a Middle English bestiary, preserved in a mid-thirteenth-century manuscript, Arundel MS 292:

Ðe deuel is tus ðe [fox] ilik  
 mid iuele breides and wid swik;  
 and man al so ðe foxes name  
 arn worðe to hauen same;  
 for who so seied oder god,  
 and ðenkeð iuel on his mod,  
 fox he is and fend iwis,  
 ðe hoc ne legeð nogt of ðis;  
 So was herodes fox and flerd,  
 ðo crist kam in-to ðis middel-erd,  
 he seide he wulde him leue on,  
 and ðogte he wulde him fordon. 5

Both bestiaries cite Herod as the arch-hypocrite, the supreme example of a man who tried to deceive Christ, although it does not actually say that Herod tried to deceive Christ. In fact, he tried to deceive the Magi about his intentions towards Christ but patristic writers saw the episode as a

clash between Herod and Christ, evil and good, the devil and God. The fox, and Herod, represented the doomed forces.

## II. Middle English Poems on Christ's Nativity

### A. Latin Sources

The earliest Middle English poems on the Nativity of Christ are probably *Estorie del Evangelie*<sup>6</sup> and the *Nativity of Mary and Christ*<sup>7</sup> both dating from the late thirteenth century. These and almost all later medieval poems dealing with Biblical themes are dependent on earlier Latin sources, however. The greatest and most influential of these was Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*<sup>8</sup> (c.1170), which itself showed the influence of Josephus, Eusebius, and Bede; it gives a thorough account of the life of Herod the Great combining historical, Biblical and patristic sources. Two immensely popular Latin works derive from Comestor: Peter Riga's *Aurora*<sup>9</sup> and Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*.<sup>10</sup> As these works are so important for the study of medieval English works concerning Herod, a short summary of their contents is given here.

All these commentaries begin by distinguishing carefully between Herod Ascalonita, Herod Antipas, and Herod Agrippa before concentrating on the first Herod. Comestor and Jacobus then mention Herod's position as a foreign king of the Jews, a situation which causes Herod much concern when he hears that a new king of the Jews has been born. Hence his fear of being overthrown by a legitimate candidate. All three commentators include Herod's canonical attempt to have the Magi reveal to him Christ's birthplace so that he may kill the child; but when the Magi fail to return, all three authors have Herod assume that the Magi are ashamed to appear before him because they were probably mistaken in their quest. He only thinks of the Massacre after hearing about the testimony of Simeon and Anna at the Temple,

but delays when he is called to Rome to answer charges against him by his two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus (according to Josephus, Herod took his sons to Rome to lay charges against them). On the way, however, he burns the ships of Tarsus because they had been used to help the Magi escape. All three sources have Herod carry out the Massacre after he returns from Rome, where he was reconciled to his sons and empowered to choose his own successor, thus enjoying great confidence and honour and power. At this point the *Legenda Aurea* includes a detail not in Comestor, but taken from Macrobius: 'Ipse autem Herodes statim ibi punitus est, nam (sicut dicit Macrobius et in quadam Chronica legitur) unus parvulus filius Herodis ibidem ad nutriendum fuerat datus, qui cum aliis a carnificibus est occisus.' (p. 65) The account of the Massacre leads all the commentators to consider the execution of Herod's two sons after a trial and false accusations, and then to the trial and imprisonment of Antipater. The *Aurora* gives a great deal of attention and space to this trial (ll. 489-828) developing it into a long debate between Herod and his eldest son. At this point, the *Legenda Aurea* includes the remark of Augustus Caesar about Herod's swine being better off than his sons.

All these Latin sources follow Comestor in giving detailed descriptions of Herod's final disease which, Comestor suggests, worsened after his cruel punishment of those responsible for pulling down his golden eagle on the Temple. Comestor and the *Legenda Aurea* tell of Herod's desperate attempt at a cure in the hot oil bath, and his final unsuccessful attempt at suicide; only the *Legenda Aurea* refers to the faulty opinion of Remigius of Auxerre (c.841 - c.908) that the suicide was successful (PL.131, col.898), though Jacobus disagrees with this account. Both Comestor and Jacobus tell of Herod's plan to provide mourners at his funeral but again the *Legenda Aurea* also refers to Remigius' opinion that this plan was carried

out. They all have Herod finally die in torment. All these accounts entirely exclude the many favourable remarks made by Josephus regarding Herod, and tend to vilify him thoroughly. His vengeful spirit is vividly demonstrated in the incident of his destroying the ships (which was, of course, interpreted as the fulfilment of the prophetic Psalms), as well as in his dealings with his sons and subjects. But God's vengeance is visited upon him in the form of a horrible disease, seen as a direct result of the Massacre of the Innocents, and aggravated by Herod's treatment of the Jewish philosophers who tore down the golden eagle.

Two more small but interesting details should be pointed out in these Latin commentaries before the English poems are discussed. First, Comestor, following Josephus, includes a remark attributed to Alexander at his trial against his father: 'Addiditque dixisse Alexandrum non esse spem ponendam in senem, qui canos tingeat, ut videretur adolescens.' This suggestion that the ageing Herod was concerned to appear young and handsome is reflected in later medieval drama in which Herod boasts of his superb looks. Second, the *Legenda Aurea*, in a chapter not on the Innocents, but on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, notes Herod's attempt to preserve his place in history by destroying the Jewish genealogies. 'Cum omnes generationes Hebraeorum et alienigenarum in archivis templi secretioribus servaretur, Herodes omnes jussit incendi, existimans se nobilem posse videri, si deficientibus probamentis progenies sua ad Israel pertinere crederetur.'<sup>11</sup> Thus he hoped to conceal the fact that he was not of noble blood. A later English poem changes his motivation somewhat.

#### B. Thirteenth-Century English Poems

*La Estorie del Evangelie* is a metrical paraphrase of the Gospel narrative and may be based on a Gospel harmony or perhaps a Breviary. The sequence of events concerning the Nativity is precisely the same as in a Book of Hours.

Only a very few apocryphal events are added, but one of them is the account of Herod's journey to Rome and the burning of the ships at Cilicia (ll. 753-761) based on Comestor. No reason is given in *Evangelie* as to why Augustus Caesar called Herod to Rome, but the summons comes immediately after Herod has turned his mind to thoughts of 'felonie' and murder of the children. However, he obeys:

While he to Rome toke þe wey  
 in Cisile he harde say  
 þat þe kinges were ouer fare  
 in þe shippes þat were þare  
 And he in felonie & greet ire  
 alle þe shippes sette on fyre.

(ll. 756-61)

Before the summons to Rome Herod had waited in vain for the return of the Magi:

But he wened & not right  
 þat þei had lost her sight  
 Of þe sterre þat hem gan lede

(ll. 732-4)

He only decided to slaughter the children after hearing rumours of Simeon and Anna, although his plans were delayed by the summons to Rome. He fulfilled his 'wikked wille' on returning home, and the Massacre is described with some pathos:

þer-fore he had hem ouer alle gone  
 of tuoo ȝeere olde ne spare none  
 þe deuyles forth gan hye  
 & did þat greet folie  
 þei slough þe child on þe modirs barme  
 at þe teet in þe modirs arme

(ll. 798-803)

Herod's death after this event is quickly dispensed with: 'And þerfore god him sende / a shendeful lyf & euyl ende' (ll. 807-8). The non-canonical details in this account all derive from Comestor but are told with a characteristic succinctness.

The *Nativity of Mary and Christ* differs from the *Evangelie*, and from other Middle English poems on Christ's Nativity, in having a great deal of apocryphal material. This poem, which is closely connected with the *South English Legendary*, survives in three versions,<sup>12</sup> of which the (c) version contains the most interesting Herod material, found in a 40-line inserted passage on the Massacre.<sup>13</sup> Several interesting and unusual details are introduced in the description of the killing of the children. A new miracle occurs - Rebecca joins Rachel in the congregation of weeping mothers, and the blood of their children turns to milk:

Two wymmen þer were. Rebecca & rachel  
 þat childer haden þere. ne fel hem noþinge wel  
 Stongen þai were to þe hert. wiþ swerde & wiþ spere  
 On her poyntes endes. þese childer þai bere  
 In stid of blode mylke out ran. doun to her hond  
 þis was a myracle fayre. in bedleemes lond  
 (11. 15-20)

The mothers have an altercation with the soldiers, whose answers show that they do Herod's bidding against their will.

þese wymmen cryed & saide, allas why fare ȝe wiþ hem so  
 Why sleen ȝe oure childer, what han þai mysdo  
 þai ben ȝonge & tender. ne con þai no quede  
 ȝe mysdone þat þai shuld. þus giltles be ded  
 Oure ioye ȝe us bireven. allas what is to rede  
 As lefe is us þat we were. wiþ oure childer dede  
 þese knyȝtes þat were. so cruel & so prowde  
 Priuely hem answerde. & cryed on hem lowde  
 Hit is not oure dede. hit is herodes heste  
 We had leuer be at home. in pes & in rest  
 (11. 21-30)

Herod fares even worse in the (a) version<sup>14</sup> where he is actually cursed by the mothers (or possibly by the ever-present narrator) after an account of how the number of slain reached the apocryphal number of 144,000, all of whom 'wenten to þe ioye of heuene' (l. 667):

And sory and deolful was þe cry þat her modres gonne crye.  
 Away, Heroudes, þow wrecche kyng, þow hunttest aboute nouht!  
 Sore þow drast þoru him to be of þi kyndom out ybrouht.  
 Ac napeles wel þow myhtest ywite þat it nas nouht is rihte  
 þi wrecche kyndom here to holde, for he was of more mihte.  
 Whi slowe þow for haterede of him þe children þat gultles were?  
 Wel he wuste, wrecche, þi þouht; ne founde þow him nout [þere] !  
 (11. 668-74)

The Massacre of the Innocents in the *Nativity of Mary and Christ* is preceded by a thirty-line passage on Herod's difficulties with his sons and the dispute over his successor. The poet gives Herod six sons (l. 623), an unusually specific but unhistorical number, as he had at least ten sons, according to Josephus. They were all evil and wicked, 'lupere', but the poet considers this quite natural:

I not what scholde a luper fader bote he luper sones byzete.  
 (1. 627)

After the successful trial in Rome, Herod immediately turns his thoughts to

how he myhte vr lord schende.  
 He cam bi þe see of Tars, and alle þe schipes þat he fond  
 To douste he let hom alle forberne oþer hacky al to grounde  
 For he þouhte þat þe þre kynges þerforþ scholden wende.  
 (11. 636-39)

In Comestor and the *Legenda Aurea*, the sources for this poem, the order of these events is different: the trial took place before the Magi arrived instead of after their return; Herod burned the ships on his way to Rome rather than on his return; also only two sons, not six, were involved in the trial. The poem shows a tendency towards exaggeration which heightens the dramatic element. But no account of Herod's illness or death is given, surely one of the most dramatic parts of his career.

One of the (c) versions of the *Nativity of Mary and Christ* includes a unique poem, the *Holy Feast of Innocents*, which O. S. Pickering considers outside the *temporale* narrative, although it contains an interpolation of

twenty-five lines from the (c) version.<sup>15</sup> It occurs in only one manuscript, (Bodley 779, fols. 265r-66v), but the material before and after the interpolation is quite significant for a study of Herod.<sup>16</sup> The *Holy Feast of Innocents* begins with the Magi arriving at Jerusalem. Then the king is introduced:

þo was þe king þen of iudee. a cruel geaunt of gret ferste  
fful of couatyse & of envie. heroudis he hyzte wit oute lyze  
(11. 7-8)

When the Magi are sent into his presence, the scribe makes an interesting slip of the quill and refers to 'Herod' as 'Edward'. One wonders whether this could have been deliberate; the name appears correctly at the beginning of the next line

þey werein of sent wit oute letting. to come before edward þe king  
herodes of hem gan enquere. of what contre þat þey were:  
(11. 15-16)

Herod treats the kings with 'fals tresoun' (1.30) as usual, but when he learns that they have returned to their own countries he goes mad with rage and rushes off to Tarsus to burn their ships (there is no account of his journey to Rome in this poem):

he herd telle verament  
yt in schipis of tars contre. þese kinges weren went ham aze  
& almost wood he wax for wo. for þat he was by gylid so  
in gret wrappe to tars he went. & alle þe shipis he forbrent  
(11.48-51)

Having wreaked vengeance on the kings, he turns his attention to the children as told in the (c) version. However, the Bodley manuscript has a seventeen-line epilogue to the Massacre in which God's vengeance is wreaked on Herod: he kills his own son (Antipater), he contracts his terrible illness and dies by suicide:



but god yt is of ryȝt ful dome. on yt traytur vengau<sup>n</sup>s nome  
 whan he toward þe deþ drouȝ. his oune sone þe wrecche slouȝ  
 ffor he many man his child be nom. yt ilke vengau<sup>n</sup>s to him com  
 & aftir yt þe wrecche sward. fram heued to foot ouer al  
 & stank so foule in ich lym. yt ech man loþed to come to him  
 mo mys awenturis þan a fewe. fel to hym to al a reue  
 þe myȝt no leche wt medesyne. hele him ne a legge his pyne  
 and as he wold an appil pare. so hard he was aset wit care  
 so wondir bitter his sorwȝ him boot. yt to þe herte him self he smot  
 & thus þe wrecce com to ende. þat þouȝte wt tresoun jhu sch[ ] e\*  
 (ll. 125-134)

\* lacuna in MS - probably meant to be 'schende'

Thus Herod's illness and death are introduced into Middle English poetry. These themes were picked up and expanded in most other Middle English poems dealing with the Nativity Cycle, with one outstanding exception.

### C. The *Metrical Life of Christ*

The *Metrical Life of Christ*, a mid-fourteenth-century poem, occurs in a unique manuscript, British Library MS Add. 39996, and is unusual in its interpretation of certain details of the Herod legend.<sup>17</sup> Although the poem is based on the *Legenda Aurea*, one detail of the Massacre has been picked up and expanded in a unique way. When the soldiers report that they have killed all the children (under two years old) in the country except his own son, Herod has them slay that son before his very eyes:

And when þai hade þe childer slayn  
 þai went to þe kyng aȝayn  
 And telden hym wiþout drede  
 þai hade letted for no nede  
 þat alle were done to deþ. þo.  
 Save his sone wiþout moo.  
 þe kyng hym byþoght þare  
 þat he wolde none spare  
 He made hem his son to bringe  
 To be siker in all þinge  
 He made forto sle hym right  
 Anone in his owne sight  
 And when þe cild was so dede  
 And on lyf none was lede  
 He hoped þo wiþout les  
 In his reme to be in pes.

(ll. 714-729)

While Jacobus notes that one of Herod's sons was killed in the Massacre by mistake, the *Metrical Life* has Herod deliberately order his own child to be brought before him and massacred like the others. And yet, after this

shocking behaviour, the author insists that God took no vengeance on Herod but allowed him to lead a peaceful life:

Bot oure lord was gracewis  
 For all his grete malice  
 He toke no vengauce in his lyf  
 Bot lete hym live withoute stryf...  
 Oon day ȝede anoþer come  
 þat þe vii ȝere were alle done  
 þen heroude sekened on a day  
 þe soþe to telle as I you say  
 And at þat ilke tyme he dyed  
 And into goddes mercy ȝede.

(11. 734-7; 742-7)

This unusual interpretation that Christ did not take vengeance is unique in the *Metrical Life* among Middle English poems, but can be found in the pseudo - Bonaventura's *Meditationes Vitae Christi*.<sup>18</sup>

Miss Stine points out in the introduction to her edition of this poem that the author was most likely a cleric who wrote with the intention of educating laymen, a man of simple piety who was not a great poet, though he was an excellent story-teller.<sup>19</sup> 'One does not find in [the *Metrical Life*] the romance-like trappings of sensationalisms of the *Northern Passion*, the poorly digested theological points of the *Stanzaic Life of Christ*, nor the contemporary ethical teaching of the *Southern Passion*. Rather it is like a serious study told to a child because it is a story he should know.'<sup>20</sup> A certain charm and naïveté shows forth in the account of the Magi, who are presented as the Three Kings of Cologne:

When þai were comen to þe paleys  
 þere as kyng heroude was  
 þai asked hym ȝif he were redy  
 To wende in her company  
 To seche þat lord ful of grace  
 þat in þe erþe born was

(11. 379-84)

King Herod, however, has less gracious thoughts:

perfore he kest hit in his þoght  
 To worschipe hym he wold noȝt  
 With none honour ne wiþ no ȝifte  
 But wiþ þe deþ ȝif þat he myȝt  
 (11. 389-92)

When the kings first prepare to follow the star the poet incorporates Voragine's detail concerning dromedaries,<sup>21</sup> but seems a little confused as to whether they are a kind of horse, or a different species:

þai ordeyned hem forto have  
 To ech a man and ech a knave.  
 Dromedaryes swiþe rennynge.  
 Of alle horses best durynge.  
 For þai were swifte & more durable  
 þen any oþer hors in stable  
 And on a day more to go  
 þen any oþer hors in two  
 þe kynges þer horses vmbestrode  
 And by þe sterre forth þai rode  
 Ech day als faste  
 As þe horses myȝt laste (11. 343-54)

Altogether this version of Christ's Nativity has the liveliness of a good story, told in a simple, straightforward way.

Similar qualities may be found in a later tail-rhyme poem, the *Life of Saint Anne*,<sup>22</sup> which again is based on Comestor, the *Legenda Aurea* and also the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew. When the three kings are called into the presence of Herod, however, they are offered refreshments:

He did call þam thre als tyte  
 & asked þam what þai wald bemene.  
 þai sayd all thyng as þai had sene;  
 þan had he sorow & sythe.  
 He sayd for ȝowre tythyng god reste  
 & comand at serve þam of þe beste  
 To drynke boyth red & quyte.  
 (11. 1254-60)

Herod deceives them utterly, so that 'þai held hys tale trew and gude' (l. 1300) and leave his palace for Bethlehem. Only then do they realize that their star has disappeared. The second king comes to understand the reason for this:

Another sayd, wa worth ʒhone dewelles lym  
 Ffor sene we went to speke wyth hym  
 The sterne ys past us fra.

(11. 1306-8)

The star has disappeared because they have been in the presence of the devil, but it returns in answer to their prayer. The devilish Herod reveals his rage, however, when he learns that the kings have returned to their countries by 'þe water of taars' (l. 1360):

Bot efter þam fast enqwerede,  
 & als sone als he was of þam lered  
 þat þai ware passed þat strand,  
 þe same schype þat þai past ouer yn  
 And other allso þan did þai byrne,  
 All þat hys men þer fande.

(11. 1363-68)

After burning the ships, Herod orders the Massacre and at the same time the angel warns Joseph to escape into Egypt. But gentle old Joseph is moved to complain about all the trouble Herod is causing him and ends by cursing him:

Josep rase up þan sone I wys  
 & sayd: lorde god, what lyf ys þis?  
 In what place may I dwell?  
 I am ald & my banys er sare;  
 Now bus me wende I wot neuer qwhare  
 Bot als I hard þe angell tell.  
 Here wend I haf lyfd with my frendes,  
 & now herode all togider shendes;  
 Curst be he with brek & bell,  
 Ffor may I myself never so yll welde  
 Yt bus me travell now in my elede  
 Ffull fare ouer many a fell

(11. 1393-1404)

Thus Joseph adds his curses to those of the mothers in the *Nativity of Mary and Christ* to condemn Herod. In this poem the ending of Herod is quick:

Herode had eftyr sorow jnogh,  
 Ffor with hys knyfe hymselfe he slogh.

(11. 1435-6)

## D. Northern Poems

The poems discussed above are all associated with the Midlands. Writers in the North were also treating the same themes and, indeed, produced much more dramatic versions of Herod and his part in the Nativity cycle. The version of the *Northern Homily Cycle*<sup>23</sup> preserved in MS Harley 4196 includes a long section on the Innocents (ll. 3181-3522) followed by an independent account of the death of Herod. Saara Nevalinna points out that the homilies concerned with Christ's birth and his childhood have their models in such works as Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* and Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* and the *Bible des VII Estaz du Monde* by Geffrai de Paris,<sup>24</sup> and at the same time the Harley MS preserves the compiler's original plan to arrange the homilies throughout the ecclesiastical year according to the *York Missal*.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, the material is greatly expanded. The homily on the Massacre of the Innocents opens, in fact, with the event, thirty years earlier, of Herod's being crowned 'with realte and with grete renowne / Of þe Emperoure Cesare ' (ll. 3182-3). This is mentioned, however, in order to emphasize the great pride Herod took in his position which was, of course, threatened by the birth of Christ. His cunning is also revealed when the author tells of how he was summoned by the Emperor. The account here is a curious mixture of accusations made against Herod by his exiled sons (in 12 B.C.), his trial before the Sanhedrin (in 47 B.C.) and his coronation (in 40 B.C.).<sup>26</sup> The events are obviously used to illustrate Herod's cunningtrickery and wily methods with details such as these:

Bot unto ilk a senatoure  
 Gaf he giftes of grete tresowre.  
 And for his giftes þan he gete  
 In þe court fauore ful grete

(ll. 3275-8)

In the homily 'In die epiphanie', Herod himself recognizes that he has less-than-honest techniques for gaining the throne:

Herod þan in hert cumpast  
 With gillri how he had purchast  
 þat kingdom vnto him at close...  
 For he had purchast it with sum wyle  
 And geten it with sutyll gyle...  
 For ilk man knew and vnderstode  
 þat Herod was nocht of right blude.

(11. 4077-9, 4085-6, 4109-10)

The description of the Massacre in the *Northern Homily Cycle* is similar in many ways to the *South English Nativity of Mary and Christ*.

The actual killing is presented in detail:

Sum with þaire speres reft þai liues,  
 And sum þai stikked with þaire kniues  
 Of sum þe throte sunder þai share  
 And sum with broches thurgh þai bare.  
 Sum þai brittend ilk a bane...  
 Sum þai spetted on þaire speres...  
 Of sum þai rafe þe lims in sunder.

(11. 3353-3361)

This catalogue of various ways of killing is climaxed by these lines, placing all the blame on Herod:

þus spitusly þai gan þam spill  
 Herodes ire for to fulfill.

(11. 3369-70)

The mourning mothers cry out their grief, shock and anger in no less than six individual passages (11. 3389-3438) and end by calling on 'Heuyn King' to take vengeance. Then the narrator joins them in a direct attack on Herod:

Herod, þe wreche þat wroght þis wa,  
 þat soght Jesu sakles to sla,  
 And to murn made so many wife,  
 And so many gert lose þaire life,  
 For sorow sere what saltou say  
 In dome opon þe dredful day,  
 When so grete nowmber of saintes  
 Ogayns þe sal put þaire playntes?

(11. 3455-62)

The number of saints Herod slew is quoted as 'seuyn score thousandes', an unusual way of putting the usual apocryphal number. God's vengeance *is* described against Herod in this homily in the long account, 'De fine Herodis regis narracio'. He fell into a 'sekenes incurabill' as a direct result of the vengeance of God. All the 'leches' and 'fisiciens' of his land were called but could not cure him; Herod, thinking that they were able to help him but were refusing to, had them all slain. Then

In despayre ay gan he dwell  
And hopid to haue no hame but hell  
(11. 3541-2)

He then conceived his notorious plan for providing mourners at his funeral, promising 'fiue hundreth wheghtes of gold rede' to his soldiers to slay the Jewish nobles 'beyfore his eghen'.

Bot his sekenes never leued  
Till his eghen melt out of his heued.  
(11. 3567-8)

A new section, entitled 'De transitu malo Herodis', describes his attempted suicide with the apple knife, the execution of his 'sun Anticipater' before his eyes, a recollection of the death of his two other sons, and then his own demise:

þan was he rauist with þe fende,  
And sent to wa withouten ende.  
(11. 3603-4)

The powerful image of Herod being ravished by the fiend brings the homily to a fitting conclusion.

Another Northern poem, *Cursor Mundi*, gives the most dramatic of all known accounts of the end of Herod.<sup>27</sup> It is decidedly prejudiced against Herod from his first appearance as 'þat fals felun' (l. 11481) who meets the Magi, and later sends spies out to find and slay them when they don't return (11. 11541-4). He is referred to as 'þat wili wolf, þat

fox so fals' (l. 11807) when he orders the Massacre but most spectacular of all is the account of his illness and death. The catalogue of his diseases is the fullest of any and contains all the symptoms in the Latin sources discussed above, plus some new ones, 'the author being determined to have so evil a man suffer every conceivable ailment from leprosy to epilepsy.'<sup>28</sup>

þat caitef vn-meth and vn-meke  
 Nu bigines he to seke;  
 þe parlesi has his a side,  
 þat dos him fast to pok his pride;  
 In his heued he has þe scall,  
 þe scab ouer-gas his bodi all,  
 In his sides him held þe thring;  
 His folk sagh soru on þair king.  
 Wit þe crache him tok þe scurf,  
 þe fester thrild his bodi thurgh,  
 þe gutte þe potagre es il to bete,  
 It fell al dun in-til his fete.  
 Ouer al þan was he measle plain,  
 And þar-wit had feuer quartain;  
 Ydropsi held him sua in threst,  
 þad him thought his bodi suld brest.  
 þe falland gute he had emell,  
 His teeth vt of his heued fell,  
 On ilk side him soght þe sare,  
 It moght naman in lijf ha mare.  
 Ouer-al wrang vte warsum and ware  
 And wormes creuld here and þare.

(11. 11815-36; Cotton MS)

He kills his doctors and is deserted by family and friends because of the stink. Finally, his son Archelaus gathers the barons together to discuss his father's dire plight and convinces them to hire two doctors whom they can 'trust' to prepare a special bath for Herod, of pitch and oil (or brimstone), in which he can sit and 'suate'. They agree to this and present the doctors to Herod who looks at them grimly and addresses them as 'hore sones'. Then follows a vivid account of his assassination in which Josephus' information about the healing hot bath is marvellously twisted and embellished to provide a more suitable ending for this unspeakably



evil tyrant:

þei filled a leed of picche & oile  
 And fast duden hit to boile  
 Whenne it was at her wille diȝt  
 þei liften vp þat cursed wiȝt  
 Traitours he seide ȝe shul goon  
 To honge but I be hool anoon  
 Nay certis þei seide sir kyng  
 Shal þou neuer no mon hing  
 Bi þat we ones fro þe part  
 But if we failen of oure art  
 herwiþ þei let þe heed down  
 And vp þe feet of þat feloun  
 Soone helde him her hete  
 þerynne þei honged him bi þe fete  
 In þat baþ of picche & terre  
 And sende him þere he fareþ werre  
 Wors þen he ferde euer are  
 For neuer comeþ ende of his care  
 he was lefte wiþ sathonas  
 And wiþ þe traitour fals Judas.

(ll. 11885-904; Trinity MS)

He is lowered, upside down, into the tub of boiling pitch and brimstone and summarily drowned and sent to hell to join such suitable companions as Satan and Judas, in this unique re-interpretation of his death.<sup>29</sup>

The association of Herod with the devil was common in patristic writings and in early medieval art. Middle English poetry carried on this tradition, as seen above in *Cursor Mundi*. A different approach to this theme can be seen in the fourteenth-century poem, the *Devil's Parliament*.<sup>30</sup>

The 'maistir deuel' boasts about his deeds on earth:

y consyled herawd in a wyle  
 for to dystroyen the prophetye  
 Alle knaue schyldryn in toun or feld  
 To sle that ihesu myȝt with hem deye.

37492  
 (Add. MS, /ll. 41-4)

Herod becomes the mere dupe of the devil in this account and in some way loses his individual vigour and strength.

E. The *Stanzaic Life of Christ*

One further poem on Christ's Nativity, from Chester, includes long sections on the life of Herod. The fourteenth-century *Stanzaic Life of Christ* is based on the *Legenda Aurea* and Higden's *Polychronicon*,<sup>31</sup> but several passages on Herod acknowledge Comestor and Cassiodorus as the source. This poem gives an exceptionally full account of Herod (ll. 3165-3612), introduced by a careful distinguishing of the three Herods (ll. 3165-3192) and then an explanation of the first Herod's lineage, from 'Duke Antipator Ydumee' and 'the kynges doȝtur of Araby'. This is included to point out that he was the first alien king of the Jews. When his own family is introduced, once again as in the *Nativity of Mary and Christ*, he is given six sons, all of whom are named, before the story narrows down to the two sons Alexander and Aristobulus whose mother was a Jewess. Just at the time when they were exiled and complained to the Emperor, Christ was born and Herod was visited by the three kings. He was not worried about their failure to return, however, as he believed 'thai wer bigilet of sterre lyȝt' (l. 3284). Rumours about the witness of the shepherds, Simeon and Anna make him suspicious, however, and he determines to slay all children in Bethlehem, when he is summoned to Rome. His bad temper motivates him to burn the ships at Tarsus on his way, even though he was in another ruler's kingdom:

And as he toward Rome went  
 be Tharse lond was his goyng  
 all the chippes of Tharse he brent  
 in despite of Tharse keng.  
 And for the chippes, as he herd saye,  
 haden broght hom the kenges thre,  
 all he brent hom in his waye,  
 his foule wille so fullet he.

(ll. 3353-60)

After the trial, Herod continues with his plans for the Massacre, and the *Stanzaic Life*, following and expanding the *Legenda Aurea*, gives a long explanation of differing opinions on the age of the children slain. 'As by the trewest opinion' (l. 3401) the children were from one day to two years; a year had already passed since Christ was born while Herod was in Rome, and as Christ might be able to change his age, Herod decided on two years to make certain of his being included in the Massacre. However, the poet introduces the opinion of 'Johan with the guylden mouthe' (l. 3425; John Chrysostom) that the children were between two and five years old. This theory is based on his idea that the star appeared a year before Christ was born, so by Herod's calculations no child under two was slain. The poet admits that there is some evidence for this view:

As by this evidence, as says he,  
hyt semes wel for to be so,  
ffor bones of hom that men moun se  
Am longer thenne children of ȝeres two.  
(11. 3437-40)

He notes that the relics of the Innocents seem much larger than those of children under two. However, an explanation is forthcoming:

But ther-aȝayn mon vnsuar may  
that tyme men and childer were  
wel more thenne thay ben this day  
and in vch eld more of power. (11. 3441-4)

Children were probably bigger in those days. Therefore, the first opinion is considered more reliable.

Macrobius is next cited in the *Stanzaic Life* as witness that Herod was punished for his wickedness, in that one of his own sons was slain with the Innocents:

For one sone of his there was slayn  
that was ȝiven to keping,  
of whiche was Heroud no-thing fayn  
but in gret sorow and misliking.  
(11. 3453-6)

This detail was mentioned in only one other Middle English poem, the *Metrical Life*, with the extraordinary device of having Herod deliberately order his soldiers to kill his own son before his eyes so that his order to kill *all* children, rich and poor, would be fulfilled. One might think that the idea of having Herod's son killed during the Massacre developed from a confusion over the fact that immediately after the Massacre, during his illness, Herod had his eldest son and heir, Antipater, killed. Writers might have confused this son with an infant son, but, in fact, they did not. Both the *Legenda Aurea* and the *Stanzaic Life* treat the Antipater incident separately, as well as the execution of Herod's two other sons, Alexander and Aristobulus. The *Stanzaic Life* believes in the guilt of the two latter sons and reports as truth their scheme to poison Herod, to have his barber cut his throat, and to discredit him through such remarks as

that in a nold mon was no tryst  
 thagh he kempt day for day  
 his hore lokkes, when þat him lust  
 For to make him seme zungly  
 (11. 3490-93)

for which they are condemned to death. Josephus suggests that the sons were blackmailed and the evidence for these charges was obtained through torture, but the author of the *Stanzaic Life* is not concerned with such evidence. He does, however, report Augustus' remark about Herod's cruelty against his own sons:

he saide hym hade leuer, in gode fay  
 be Heroudes swyn þen Heroude sone,  
 ffor sithen that he conuertet was  
 to Jewes faith & hor lyuyng,  
 to sle swyne he sparet has  
 And slayn his sones olde & zung.  
 (11. 3518-3524)

The whole story of Herod in the *Stanzaic Life* has been written in a dry, factual way as if historical facts were being presented. His illness is similarly treated, succinctly and to the point:

Qven Heraude of gret elde was,  
 sixti ȝer & therto ten,  
 for veniaunce of his wreceidnes  
 he swal & stank both feet & knen,

And a strong feuer eke hade he  
 And al his body in sich swellyng  
 that for gret stench, leue ȝe me,  
 negh hym miȝt no mon be dwellyng.

(11. 3525-32)

His plot to have the Jewish nobles killed to supply mourners, his foiled suicide attempt, the beheading of Antipater and Herod's death five days later are all reported without the slightest emotion or judgemental tone. The account ends simply, 'Thus endet Heroude'. However, a separate section, from Eusebius, is added after the historical observation that John the Evangelist was born the year Herod died:

Now ȝe schun here a wikketnyse  
 that Heroud did at his degging,  
 he commavndet his men expresse  
 go to the tempel for any-thing

And brenne al bokes thai mighten finde  
 of Iewes store and begynnyng,  
 that no mon schuld have after mynde  
 that before him was any keng

for supposet in that maner  
 a grete nome to wyn him i-wis  
 ȝif mynde of other forȝeten were  
 and his nome so broȝt huppe amys,

but ȝette haden Iewes in tresory  
 at hoome the bokes euerichone  
 so Heroudes wiles witerly  
 after his deght ther seruet him none.

(11. 3597-3612)

The *Stanzaic Life* uses the *Legenda Aurea* as a source for this incident but changes Herod's motive. In the earlier work, Herod tries to destroy the Jewish genealogies so that no one would know he was not of noble blood; the later poem has Herod destroy the records of all other kings but himself so that he would gain great fame. 'This alteration has the effect of

increasing the sense of Herod's mad pride and of demonstrating the almost pathetic futility of his actions: the all-powerful Herod could not kill Christ, nor could he outwit the Magi, nor could he be mourned, nor could he achieve fame.<sup>32</sup>

### III. Sermons and Hymns

#### A. Sermons

Unfortunately, most of the English medieval sermon literature remains still to be discovered and published. Much has undoubtedly perished, due to the very nature of sermons, which were relatively short and delivered orally. Of those which have survived and been published, two collections, both based on the Feasts of the Church year, include sermons on the Innocents which make pointed reference to Herod. The *Speculum Sacerdotale* emphasizes the multiple failures of 'that grete tyrande, Kynge Herode'.<sup>33</sup> He feared losing his kingdeom, 'he beyng of a wronge cruel kynde, as a lyon held in his honde' (p. 13, l. 2-3), he tried to deceive the Magi but failed, then he tried to slay Christ but again failed. The sermon ends: 'And so this cruel tyraunt, *scilicet*, Herode, was scorned a-yein. And then in his wodenes for he myȝte not have have his fowle wille of Ihesu, he made to sle his owne children for covetise of Ihesu, and that so schamefully that a philosopher seyþ hym, him had lever be Herodes swyn then his sone' (p. 13, ll. 19-23). The sermon is short but carefully organized so as to point up God's foiling of Herod's every act, and then climaxing in the remark attributed to Augustus, which could hardly be more damning.

John Mirk's *Festial* was written in the same district and at the same time as the *Speculum Sacerdotale* and the sermons are similar, although the *Festial* has more narrative content.<sup>34</sup> Mirk's collection of homilies includes an interesting sermon on the Innocents<sup>35</sup> in which Herod is made to seem

particularly wicked. Just as he had decided on the Massacre, he was called to Rome and there is no doubt about the reason or the guilty party in Mirk's presentation. 'þe Emperour of Rome sende to hym by lettyr forto come to hym yn all þe hast þat he myght; for two of his owne sonnes hadden apechet him of traytery to þe Emperour ' (p. 36, ll. 7-10).

A distinct tone of indignation is clear. After describing the calculations of Herod for slaying children under two, the priest's righteousness bristles as he announces, 'And for wrach schuld falle on hymselfe yn party, þerfor a chyld of his owne þat was don to norysche yn þe contrey was slayn among oþer ' (p. 36, ll. 22-24). His own child, put out to a wet-nurse, has been accidentally slain. This is interpreted as God's justice, which also revealed itself in having Herod commit suicide, successfully. 'And aftyr, as he pared an appull, wyth þe same knyfe he slogh hymselfe. Thus he þat was lusty for to shedde gyltles blod, at þe last he schedde hys owne hert-blod. For he that ys without mercy, vengeans schall fall apon hym ' (p. 37, ll. 4-8). This is the natural point with which to end a homily on Herod and the Massacre, but Mirk astutely juxtaposes it with an episode from the life of Saint Sylvester (also found in the *Legenda Aurea*) to demonstrate the opposite theory that 'he þat loveth to do mercy, God wyll geve him mercy.' It concerns the Emperor Constantine who, being ill with measles or leprosy, was advised by his doctors to bathe in a vessel filled with the blood of three thousand children while it was still warm. However, hearing the great weeping of the mothers, he decided it would be a cruel deed to kill so many bodies for him, a single man, and he sends them all home, with gifts. For this great act of mercy, he had a vision of both Peter and Paul who advised him to follow Saint Sylvester. 'So when þat he was folowed þer anon yn

þe watyr, þe lepull felle away from hym, and he was as clene of skynne and hyde as any chyld þat he delyuerd before ' (p. 37, ll. 34-6).

The aptness of this story as a contrast with that of Herod is immediately apparent and their juxtaposition is extremely effective. Nor was it entirely accidental. The Feast day of St. Sylvester was celebrated soon after the Innocents in the Sarum and York Calendars (December 28 and December 31) and this incident is described in great detail in the Breviaries.

One quality of Herod which is not emphasized in the sermons mentioned above, nor in the Epiphany sermons from the same collections, is his position as an alien king. This *is* stressed, however, in other prose works in Middle English. The *Pepysian Gospel Harmony*<sup>36</sup> is a rather simple, spare narrative in which the accounts of the four Evangelists have been woven together, with little added or omitted. And yet Herod is introduced as 'þe kyng Heroudes þat was paen and helde Goddes folk in seruage and regned in Jerusalem' before the story of Zacharias from Luke is told (page 1). The Vulgate merely says, 'Fuit in diebus Herodis, regis Iudaeae, sacerdos quidam nomine Zacharias...' (Luke 1:5). A similar emphasis on his unworthiness for the position of king of the Jews appears in the popular prose work, *Three Kings of Cologne*.<sup>37</sup> Herod has a surprisingly small role to play in this legend: his meeting with the Three Kings on the way to Bethlehem is not described, nor is the Massacre. But, once again, his reign is used to fix historical events, especially the edict of Caesar Augustus concerning enrolment for taxation:

Than was Herodes made and ordeyned kyng of þat londe of Iewes by þe Emperour and by þe Romaynes. And ȝit Herodes was no Iewe ne kyng of Iewes bore; but, by-cause þat þe same Cesar Augustus and þe Romayns hadde made sogettis to hem þe lond of Iury and many oþer londes aboute þem þorwe strong hande, he made hym kyng. Wherefore all þe contry wist well þat Herodes was but a aliene & neuer come of kyngis blode ne of Iewes bore... ȝit þe Iewes, contynuyng in her malice and in her falsenesse, seyden þat longe



tyme after þe Nativite of oure lord Inesu  
 Cryst her vnccioun sesed not, but þei had  
 many kynges after. But ȝit þe false Iewes  
 forsake noȝt þat Herodes com of a Iewe on  
 þe fadir syde and of a womman - paynyn þat  
 was his moder, and so he was no verrey Iewe.

(pp. 31-33, Royal MS)

Great scorn is poured on Herod here as well as on false Jews who insist on his Jewishness. The only other time he appears in this work is when he pursues the Kings who have escaped him. He is angry at being deceived by them and even more enraged by hearing them praised wherever he goes and so he is driven to drastic action. He burns not only the ships of Tarsus but all the land in his kingdom through which the Kings passed:

Wherefore þis Herodes of gret anger brent  
 and destroyed all þe lond þat was vndir  
 hys power þat þes .iiij. kynges hadde ride  
 by, and specialyche hem of Cizile, ffor  
 he putt vpon hem þat þei had suffride  
 hem priuelich to passe ouer þe see in her  
 schippes; and þerfore he did brenne all  
 her schippes and all her gode.

(p. 85, Royal MS)

It seems that the few prose works extant on Herod deal with fewer incidents in his life than the longer Nativity poems, but they tend to expand the episodes they choose and embroider them beyond any of the standard Latin sources.

#### B. Hymns

Middle English lyrics, hymns and carols present Herod in a variety of contexts ranging from translations of liturgical Latin hymns to folk songs of Scandinavian origin. The ancient hymn by Sedulius, 'Hostis Herodes' which was still sung at Vespers on the Vigil of Epiphany,<sup>38</sup> was translated in the fourteenth century by Friar William Herebert (d. 1333).<sup>39</sup> Only

the first stanza has to do with Herod, (the other three celebrating the Epiphany, Baptism and the Wedding at Cana, all thought to have occurred on the same day):

Herodes, þou wykked fo, wher-of ys þy dredinge?  
And why art þou so sore agast of cristes to-cominge?  
Ne reueth he nouth erthlich god þat maketh ous heuene kynges.

The same hymn was translated again in the fifteenth century. It occurs in only one manuscript, Sloane MS 2593, fol. 32v-33r,<sup>40</sup> in which each stanza is preceded by the Latin original:

hostis herodis impie, Xpm venire quid times; non eripit mortalia.

Emmy herowde, þu wokkyd kyng,  
quy dredes þu þe of cristes comyng?  
he dezyryt here non erþely þing  
þat heuene hazt at his zeuyng.

Herod, the wicked foe, becomes enemy Herod the wicked king, but his actions are not lingered over.

This is true of most of the hymns and carols which mention Herod. Songs on the Nativity<sup>41</sup> and Songs for the Epiphany<sup>42</sup> usually cover a large range of events and mention Herod merely as one person in a much larger canvas. Perhaps the best-known of these songs is the Coventry Carol from the *Pageant of the Shearmen and Taylors*,<sup>43</sup> sung by the mothers of the children.

Herod, the king,  
In his raging,  
Chargid he hath this day  
His men of might  
In his own sight  
All yonge children to slay.

Very occasionally some apocryphal material or gratuitous details creep into these songs. Thus, in the 'Journey of the Three Kings',<sup>44</sup> a pretentious courtier, just like those in Latin church drama and later vernacular plays, meets the Magi and insists that they come along with him:

The stuarde whas Bolde off þat contre  
 And Bade Errod scholde come and see  
 lyke as þey wentyn, all ye iij,  
 Going ffurthe yne þer Iornay.

One thirteenth-century poem in Trinity College, Cambridge MS 323 fols. 36r ff., begins with a brief outline of Old Testament history and then relates with much detail the coming of the Magi, the history of Herod, and the Flight into Egypt.<sup>45</sup> As in the liturgical drama (see Chapter 7), Herod asks the Magi what proof they have that has led them to take such a long journey, and they tell him about the star:

Wat tokene habbe ye of is burtide  
 þat ye from ferre londes comit hider riden  
 Is wonderliche sterre scinet so wide  
 He listit al þe middilerd on euerruche side.

(ll. 185-8)

Then Herod, instead of calling his priests and scribes, goes on an extraordinary journey to Rome and learns from the 'best clerekis' that Jesus is to be born in Bethlehem of 'Jesseis more.'

Herodes þe kinc toward rome moste varen  
 þe beste clerekis of is lond alle heo ben icoren  
 & hescet wer iesus crist sulde ben iboren  
 Heo sigit in bethlehem of Jesseis more

(ll. 189-192)

One wonders what the Magi were doing while Herod confirmed the information they had given him, but he returns to give them his hypocritical dismissal. Later he journeys to Rome again, called by Caesar this time (ll. 221-4), and then massacres Bethlehem's children before falling into his final illness:

To Rome eft he was brout he was in perlesie  
 þe vallinde. & spital uwel feme & dropesie  
 Abroken & def & blint ginke & sqinancie  
 Scabbede on þe menison. fur of helle. deuerie  
 Mo uweles he hede þen i conne tellen  
 þe riche & þe pouverre scen he wonde & brennen  
 He demede him seluein wid is wicke spelle  
 þe fendes is soule vereden te helle

(ll. 237-44)

As in the liturgical drama, a fiend is present to take Herod's soul to hell when he dies.

One other poem, in Sloane MS 2593,<sup>46</sup> makes a clear statement about Herod's fate after death:

Kyng herowdes deyid and went to helle.  
for swete Jesus þat we spelle,  
god saf vs fro þe peynis of helle  
and fro þe wykkyd fyndes pray.

Perhaps the crudest passage in all the religious hymns involving Herod is from 'Regis de Saba venient'<sup>47</sup> where Herod is shown as a villainous madman, rubbing his hands in glee as the children are killed and great crying is heard all round from the mothers and children:

Kyng herowdes he made his vow  
gret plente of chylderin he slow  
he wende þer xuld a be Jesu,  
he falyed of his praye,  
I saye.

Herowdes was wod in ryalte  
he slow schylderin rygȝt gret plente  
In bedlem þat fayre iete  
ne left he non on lyf  
with stryf.

þe chylderin of israel cryid wa wa  
þe moderis of bedlem cryid ba ba  
herowdes low and seyde ha ha  
þe kyng of Juwys is dede  
þat qwede.

(11. 68.83)

This clearly attempts to establish for its simple public the sadism of Herod.

In an earlier chapter, on twelfth-century art (Chapter 6), the legend of St. Stephen and the cock was discussed and the English folk song of the same name was introduced. This legend seems to have arisen in Scandinavia and has several versions.<sup>48</sup> The same story, with the Wise Men replacing Stephen, is also found in the carol, 'The Carnal and the Crane'

in conjunction with the Sower legends already discussed in relation to  
the art of the Middle Ages.<sup>49</sup>

There was a star in the west land,  
So bright it did appear,  
Into King Herod's chamber,  
And where King Herod were.

The Wise Men soon espied it,  
And told the King on high  
A princely babe was born that night  
No king could e'er destroy.

'If this be true', King Herod said,  
'As thou tellest unto me,  
This roasted cock that lies in the dish  
Shall crow full fences three.'

The cock soon freshly feathered was,  
By the work of God's own hand,  
And then three fences crowed he,  
In the dish where he did stand....

Then Jesus, ah! and Joseph,  
And Mary that was unknown,  
They travelled by a husbandman,  
Just while his seed was sown....

'If any should come this way,  
And enquire for me alone,  
Tell them that Jesus passed by,  
As thou thy seed did sow.'

After that there came King Herod,  
With his train so furiously,  
Enquiring of the husbandman,  
Whether Jesus passed by.

'Why, the truth it must be spoke,  
And the truth it must be known,  
For Jesus passed by this way,  
When my seed was sown.

'But now I have it reapen,  
And some laid on my wain,  
Ready to fetch and carry  
Into my barn again.'

'Turn back,' says the Captain,  
'Your labour and mine's in vain,  
It's full three-quarters of a year  
Since he his seed has sown.'

So Herod was deceived  
 By the work of God's own hand,  
 And further He proceeded  
 Into the Holy Land.

Thus Herod became the subject of folk legends as well as of religious songs, sermons and encyclopaedic Biblical poems.

#### IV. Secular Literature

##### A. Higden's *Polychronicon*

Only in secular literature is one given any idea of the accomplishments and successes of Herod the Great as a formidable military leader and long-lived king of the Jews. But there is a sort of appreciation of him as an able ruler and a builder of splendid monuments in such works as Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* and in the English translations of Higden's *Polychronicon*. The latter work was translated at least twice, once in 1387 by Trevisa, and again in the second quarter of the fifteenth century by an unknown writer.<sup>50</sup> In this encyclopaedic work, Herod is twice treated quite extensively. His first appearance in Book III in a chapter (XLIII) on the history of Rome and Judaea presents him as one of the great leaders of Judaea in the time of the Emperor Augustus. His father's friendship with Julius Caesar is described by the very incident that was represented in the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* as a type for Mary's pleading with Christ for mercy. 'Antipater accusede of infidelite afore Iulius, schewede hym the woundes whom he hade suffrede for hym at Egipte, wherefore he was made the proctor of the Jewery.'<sup>51</sup> Herod's struggles to gain control of his own kingdom are recorded (p. 233) and then his various wives and children are described. His great love for Mariamme is mentioned. 'This Herode hade ix wives, whiche refusenge theyme, maryede a noble woman callede Mariamnes, for luffe of whom Herode

circumcidede hym selfe...' (pp. 233, 5). This last detail also reveals his sympathy for the Jewish traditions. Various family problems, and murders, are noted but the chapter ends on a positive note:

This Herod did many noble thynges in his lyfe, for he onornede the temple, and repaired Samaria, whom he callede Sebasten in the honoure of themperour, and made a temple nye to the welle of Iordon, and finischede a cite in Palestine, callenge hit Cesarea in the worschippe of themperoure. Also he putte an egle of golde of a grete weigte at the gate of the temple of Ierusalem callede speciosa, for the honoure off the Romanes, the Iewes hauenge grete indignacion þerof.

(pp. 237, 9)

The very difficult position Herod must have been in, owing allegiance to the Romans, yet ruling the Jews, is made quite clear in this chapter and his successful manoeuvrings and accomplishments with both nations are duly appreciated.

In Book IV, 'The History of the World, from the birth of John the Baptist to the Papacy of Leo the Saint', the sixth age of the world is described, introduced, as it is, by the birth of Christ. A whole chapter is devoted to Herod the Great and his family but it contains all the familiar material from Comestor, who is cited: the Massacre delayed by the trip to Rome, the burning of the ships at Tarsus, Herod's own child being among the children slain, the execution of Alexander and Aristobulus after the trial with the barber's evidence, Augustus' comment on being Herod's swine, the grievous illness, attempted suicide, death of Antipater and the imprisonment of the Jewish nobles. The account ends, as does the *Stanzaic Life*, with Eusebius' account of Herod trying to burn the temple records 'supposenge by that he scholde be made a noble man, and that his originalle scholde not be knowen ' (p. 289). This account rather cancels out the earlier one and yet together they seem to reflect the historical account of Herod's life: he was considered a brilliant leader, only having his miserable family troubles at the end of a long reign.

B. Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*

This very pattern was seized upon and manipulated by Lydgate whose version of the story is unusually successful. It is quite true, of course, that Lydgate was working from Laurence de Premierfait's translation of Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium* for most of the *Fall of Princes*, but much of his material for Herod's early life is very close to Josephus and 'his selection of incident and detail is often fortuitous.'<sup>52</sup> It seems that he used a number of sources other than Laurence.<sup>53</sup> Like the *Polychronicon*, the *Fall of Princes* begins its sketch of Herod<sup>54</sup> by an account of his youthful exploits and impressive lineage:

This same Herodes, gardeyn of Gallile,  
Ordeyned was, first for his hih prudence,  
And for his notable knihtli excellence.

Famous in manhood, famous of his lyne,  
Famous also bi procreacion  
I reede also he hadde wywes nyne.

(11. 82-87)

Both accounts give him nine wives, although he really had ten. But Lydgate narrows his story down to Mariamne and then tells how Herod was persuaded by his sister to kill her. The effect on him was catastrophic. In the *Polychronicon* he was 'as lunatyke' (p. 237). In Lydgate:

For Herodes so sore dede hym repente  
That he for thoughte fell into anoye  
Of hertli sorwe & malencolie.

Reste hadde he non nowther day nor niht  
Troublid with furye that he wex frentik  
With dremys vexid & many an vnkouth siht;  
Of cheer nor colour to no man he was lik  
And eueri moneth onys lunatik.

(11. 110-117)

However, he was crowned and made king of Judaea by Antony and Octavian even though he was a foreigner and a usurper, and Bochas is impressed by him:



For comendacioun in especiall  
 In Ascalon he bilt a statli hous  
 Of riht gret cost, a paleis ful roiall,  
 Was non so riche, for to reknyn all.

(11. 141-5)

But 'this same Herodes, cruel of nature, / Of cheer & port passyng  
 ambitious' (11. 148-9) began to wipe out all his adversaries including  
 his wife's brother Aristobulus whom he had appointed Bishop of Jerusalem,  
 and another bishop whom he killed as he sat at table. Herod is given  
 credit for building four great cities but he only did so because

Ther was no man of corage mor cruel  
 Nor mor desirous to be magnified;  
 To make his name also perpetuell  
 Four statli cites he hath edefied,  
 Of which the names been heer specefied  
 Cesaria, Sebasten, cites souereyne,  
 Antipadra, Cipre, the other tweyne.

(11. 162-8)

According to Lydgate, another of Herod's weaknesses was his 'fals condicioun'  
 of not trusting his own family, thus executing his two sons merely on the  
 basis of suspicion, though they were guiltless. The final cause of Herod's  
 fall was his deceitfulness, exemplified by his treatment of the Magi and  
 his tyrannical rage which caused him to slay all the (144,000) infants  
 of Bethlehem. Lydgate includes the legend of Herod's own child being  
 slain and then comments on it:

On of his childre beyng at norcerye,  
 As the stori put in remembraunce,  
 Of aventure or thei koude it espie  
 His knihtes slough; I trowe it was vengauce  
 Ech tiraunt gladli eendith with myschaunce  
 And so must he that wex ageyn Crist word,  
 Which for his sake shadde innocintes blood.

(11. 197-203)

Henry Bergen has pointed out that Lydgate's passages on the Magi,  
 Innocents, Herod's illness and death (11. 176-245) are entirely independent  
 of his French source, Laurence.<sup>55</sup> Laurence does not associate Herod's  
 illness with the Massacre, but Lydgate connects them directly: 'Fro that  
 day forth, as maad is mencion, / He fill in many vncouth malladie' (11.211-2).

The disgusting symptoms are described, including some new and original ones:

His flessch gan turne to corrupcioun  
 Fret with wermys upon ech partie, ...  
 His leggis suelle, corbid blak gan shyne

(11. 213-4, 216)

Many of the details of the illness, suicide, and imprisonment of the nobles, are probably taken from Comestor who was known as the 'Maister of stories' (l. 90) that Lydgate often refers to. The ending is Lydgate's own, however:

This cursid wrech, this odious caitiff,  
 I reede of non stood ferther out of grace,  
 In sorwe & myscheeff eendid hath his liff.  
 Ech man was glade whan he sholde pace.  
 And for his stori doth this book difface  
 With woful clauses of hym whan I write  
 Therefor I caste no mor of hym tendite.

(11. 239-45)

Thus the story of Herod is cleverly built up with an initial recognition of his great qualities and accomplishments, only to impress the reader with his fall from power and God's grace. Laurence stretched out his account of Herod in his expanded version of 1409 to thirteen columns of a large manuscript,<sup>56</sup> and Boccaccio devoted five or six pages to him<sup>57</sup> but Lydgate confined himself to certain carefully selected, sensational aspects of Herod's life and death, depending certainly on Comestor and the *Legenda Aurea* in part and possibly also on the *Polychronicon*. He names people and places and incidents that do not occur in his French source, such as members of Herod's family and the cities he built. These can be found in the *Polychronicon*, but Lydgate has chosen judiciously from his sources and organized his material into a neat sketch illustrating the rise as well as the fall of Herod the Great.

### C. The Three Herods

There is still a good deal of controversy among modern critics as to how much medieval writers and audiences confused Herod the Great with later

members of his family who shared the same name, particularly Herod Antipas and Herod Agrippa.<sup>58</sup> There is little evidence to support this claim; on the contrary, it has been pointed out here that both Comestor and the *Legenda Aurea* and most English works derived from them introduce their accounts of Herod by a careful differentiation of these three figures.

The *Stanzaic Life* begins in a typical way:

Thre Erodes I fynd there were i-wis  
that gret name haden, that is no nay,  
In vrechedenesse and doyng mysse,  
hor names here I shal 3ow say.

The furst As-calonita was  
that regnet when that Crist was borne  
& slogh the Innocent3 bout trespas,  
for which dede his saule was lorne.

the secund Erode slogh saint John  
that baptizet Crist omnipotent  
In the water of flem Iordan  
& for to preche before him went,

Antipas that Erod hy3t  
& he regnet in Iude  
that tyme that Ihesu ful of my3t  
Deghet opon the rode tre.

The thrid Erod Agrippa was  
that slogh seint Iame, as rede we,  
& prisonet Peter also has  
as be these versez mon may se.

(11. 3169-88)

One French writer, however, seems to have been totally confused about the Herods. His works were translated into English in the fourteenth century, and they became extremely popular. *The Book of the Knight of La Tour - Landry* became the manual of deportment for girls of high birth in France, England and even in Germany.<sup>59</sup> It contains a great collection of stories usually manipulated so as to teach some sort of moral to the knight's gentle daughters for whom it was originally written. Herod makes an appearance in Chapter LXXXI on Herodias, 'an evil woman'.

Another ensauple y wille telle you of an euelle woman, Herodyas, whiche king Herode helde and withdraw from his brother, her husbonde, that was a symple man. But kinge Herode was diuerse, couettous, and right malicious, and this was he that made slee the innocens, weninge forto haue slaine the almighti kinge Ihesu. For whan the sterre made demonstraunce of his birthe, whereof Herode hadde gret feere that suche lynige shulde take away from hym his reaume; and therfor he made slee alle the yong children innocens. And also he was falce and traytour vnto his owne brother, in withholdynge and kepinge hys wyff from hym, ayenst God and the lawe. Whanne seint Johne the baptist reproued of that foule synne, and the falce woman Herodyas, for hate and despite that she had vnto seint Johne, because he blamed her and preched ayenst her synne, she purchased his dethe of Herodes. This was a diuerse and a false woman, and so he hadde an euelle ende, and her fals lorde Herode also, for he deide of gret veniaunce, that smale wormes slow hym as he slow small children, yong innocens. And right so it plesed vnto God that he shulde deye vengeably, bi the leste quicke thing that might be, as bi smale wormes in his hondes, in alle his membres and body, that ete hym, and made hym forto deye.

(pp. 104-5)

The two Herods are totally and magnificently mixed up here, so that the story of Herodias is even more effective, having a double dose of Herodian evil. But this approach to the Herods is quite exceptional. Even John Mandeville, whom one might expect to tell fabulous tales of Eastern potentates, manages to distinguish clearly between Herod the Great and his sons - indeed one of the illuminated manuscripts of his *Travels* is decorated with full-length portraits of the three Herods across the bottom of the page.<sup>60</sup> Another manuscript in the British Library, Royal 11 A.1, although consisting almost entirely of various tracts on theology and on canon law, has some scraps of Latin verse inserted at the end of part one just to fill the space there. One couplet has the sole purpose of differentiating the Herods:

ascolonita herodes necat pueros. antipa herodes johanem  
agrippa herodes jacobum cladens. in carcerem petrum.

(fol. 118v)

This is the more typical approach to the Herod story in both Latin and English literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

## Conclusion

Middle English non-dramatic literature on Herod is mostly religious, and quite dependent on Latin sources such as Petrus Comestor and the *Legenda Aurea*. It includes, of course, the episodes presented in Latin church drama, which are mainly Biblical; there is less business in poetry and prose with Herod's messengers, the Magi and the scribes than in the drama; these people are really only techniques for providing action in the plays and giving Herod more time and attention. The emphasis changes in non-dramatic literature to more detailed accounts of Herod's life or, more precisely, of his last illness and death. The influence of Josephus, as well as of the patristic writings, was easily transferred through Comestor and so English writers began to include historical information about Herod although most of it, certainly in the religious poetry, was biased. Herod's relationships with such eminent and well-known figures as Mark Antony and Julius Caesar are mentioned, but usually only to stress the fact that the Romans, not the Jews, had made him king and he was, in fact, a usurper and a foreigner, thus fulfilling Old Testament prophecy. Secular works tended to give a little more recognition to his accomplishments as a leader, to his successful battles and magnificent buildings, and to his many wives and children, who are sometimes even named. But even these works, such as the *Polychronicon* and Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* conclude by emphasizing God's vengeance on this tyrannical madman who slew his beloved wife and children as well as the babes of Bethlehem. His last illness is almost always described, usually in vivid macabre detail - an aspect of English Herod literature that can be traced back at least as far as Aelfric's homilies. The English writers display a certain ambivalence towards Herod's suicide attempt, several of them creating a more dramatic and

spectacular end to the story by making the suicide successful. Apocryphal incidents, such as the death of Herod's infant son along with the Innocents, and Herod's burning of the ships of Tarsus, are introduced into English literature at a very early stage. These motifs were to appear very soon in the visual arts. No artist went so far as the bold author of the *Metrical Life* who invented that astounding scene of Herod commanding his soldiers to kill his own infant son before his eyes so that his plan for the Massacre of *all* children, rich and poor, could be fully executed, but the death of Herod's son was represented occasionally in late medieval art (see Chapter 11), while the burning of the ships appeared as early as the thirteenth century. However, the liveliest interpretation of Herod as an individual, expressing himself in wild words, crafty plans and raging actions were found in the English vernacular mystery cycles.

## CHAPTER X: HEROD IN MEDIEVAL DRAMA

## Introduction

This chapter will deal ultimately with Herod in English vernacular drama. However, almost two centuries separate the vernacular drama in England from the earlier liturgical drama. During this time, Europe saw the development of vernacular drama, particularly in Spain and France. An examination of the Herod material in European drama therefore will be helpful as a background to the English mystery cycles; it often shares similar motifs with English drama and may even have provided sources for certain events, but more important is the outstanding contrast in the development of the character of Herod in the two different traditions. In European drama he generally remains a courteous king, while in England he developed into a blustering tyrant.

## I. European Vernacular Drama

## A. Short Plays

## 1. Auto de los Reyes Magos

Richard Axton has pointed out that 'the first flowering of the vernacular drama was contemporary with, rather than consequent on, the Latin achievement; and [that] the earliest vernacular plays are strikingly independent of any known liturgical models, both in their plot materials and in their dramatic methods.'<sup>1</sup> He cites four twelfth-century plays in the vernacular, one of which is directly related to Herod, the Old Castilian, *Auto de los Reyes Magos* (c.1155).<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately only a fragment of this play survives,<sup>3</sup> but it has several distinctive features. The play opens with each of the Magi, who are given their traditional names but identified unmistakably as professional astrologers, appearing

independently and revealing their wonder, and doubt, about the new star they have seen. They know of the prophecies concerning the birth of 'el Criador' but they are sceptical. Caspar appears first, sees the star and in a halting speech full of pauses and contradicting statements, he expresses his doubt:

Dios criador, qual maravila  
no se qual es achesta strela!  
Agora primas la e veida,  
poco timpo a que es nacida.  
Nacido es el Criador  
que es de la gentes senior?  
Non es verdad - non se que digo,  
todo esto non vale uno figo,  
otra nocte me lo catare,  
si es vertad, bine lo sabre.  
(11.1-10)

Baltazar is even more sceptical, deciding to watch the star for three more nights instead of one: 'por tres noches me lo vere / i mas de vero lo salore' (11.27-28). Melchior will be satisfied with one more night's observation although as an expert astronomer he cannot understand how such a star can exist. After soliloquizing, the first two Magi meet, exchange greetings and verify their observations. Then Melchior arrives and they resolve to travel together to find and to talk with the Creator. The Latin drama always had the Magi appear simultaneously and never had them express any incredulity or scepticism about the meaning of the star. Such doubts, however, were implied in the writings of Pseudo-Chrysostom in the lines concerning the astronomer-sages: 'orabunt et laudabunt in silentio Deum tribus diebus . . . expectantes semper ne forte in generatione sua stella illa beatitudinis oriretur, donec apparuit eis descendens super montem illam Victorialem . . .'<sup>4</sup> and in fact were given expression in the Benedictbeuern Play:<sup>5</sup>

Sed cum hanc inspicio  
ego miror iterum  
quia non comparuit  
apud quemquam verterum . . .



quid portendat nescio  
sed querens attentuis . . .

In eo, quod ambigo,  
se monstrantem dubium  
et cure participem  
iam inveni socium

(11.263-66, 277-8, 287-90;  
Young, II, pp.181-2)

The position of the kings, in the Spanish play, however, is unique in drama.<sup>6</sup> They wonder how they can be sure that the new-born Creator is God and suggest that they test him by offering the traditional gifts to see which he chooses:

Melchior

Cumo podremus provar si es homme mortal  
o si es rei de tera o si celestial?

Baltasar

Queredes bine saber cumo lo sabremos?  
oro, mira i acenso a el ofrecemos:  
si fure rei de terra, el oro quera;  
si fure omme mortal, la mira tomara;  
si rei celestial, estos dos dexara,  
tomara el encenso quel pertenecera.  
(11.65-72)

Richard Axton comments that 'this is well suited to the scientific scepticism of the three astronomer sages'<sup>7</sup> and Sturdevant points out that it is absolutely 'opposed to the general tradition of the legend both theological and dramatic,'<sup>8</sup> which interpreted the gifts as symbols of faith. A similar interpretation is suggested in one line of the *Geu des Trois Rois* in the Sainte-Geneviève Manuscript (see below), but afterwards it was completely abandoned.

The next scene in the *Auto de los Reyes Magos* brings the Magi into the presence of Herod, a self-pitying, blustering tyrant in a large Spanish medieval court. After he has heard the news of a new

king, he assures the audience that he is not dead yet: 'ni so la terra pusto' (1.110) and he will not tolerate the idea of any other king but himself. He orders his *mayordomo* to summon abbots, potentates, scribes, grammarians, astronomers and rhetoricians, to discover the truth about the prophecy:

Idme por mios abades  
i por mis podestades  
i por mios scrivanos  
i por meos gramatgos  
i por mios streleros  
i por mios retoricos;  
(11.119-24)

Then follows another scene most unusual in religious drama: a dispute between the two rabbis. The first disclaims all knowledge of the prophecy: 'por veras vo lo digo / que no lo escripto' (11.136-37); the other reproaches him and accuses him of ignorance, swearing by Holy Allah:

Hamihala, cum eres enartado!  
porque eres rabi clamado?  
Non entendes la profecias.  
(11.138-40)

Just as the second scribe recalls the prophecy of Jeremiah, the play breaks off. This lively dispute may have been invented as a sort of comic interlude;<sup>9</sup> it may have been a more bitter criticism of Spain's non-Christians (the rabbis are made to state that they can never tell the truth).<sup>10</sup> It is not, however, a contradiction of accepted theological tradition, as is the use of the three gifts in this play; the dispute is generally ascribed to the personal freedom of the author who worked out the exigencies of dramatization in his own individual way.<sup>11</sup> Axton shows how this writer's personal touch has left its influence on the court scene. 'The characters form a medieval social structure that has the stamp of Castilian Spain: the Magi are professional astronomers (in a country where, in the twelfth century,

the astronomers led the world); Herod's entourage has both the Jewish and Mohammedan characteristics of contemporary Spain.<sup>12</sup>

The *Auto de los Reyes Magos* introduces a new detail into religious drama which had not appeared in the earlier Latin plays. The Magi mention that the new star they have discovered appears near Christmas, 'in ahest mes de december,' (1.16) and when Herod questions them on the time of the appearance, they answer that it was thirteen days ago. With the establishment of the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6, it was generally accepted that the Magi arrived then, having set out on Christmas day. Most of the vernacular plays make specific reference to their journey lasting anywhere from ten to thirteen days, this Spanish play being the first to do so. The same interest in this detail can be traced in French and English drama.

## 2. Rappresentazione della Nativita di Cristo

The fifteenth-century Italian *Rappresentazione della Nativita di Cristo*<sup>13</sup> includes some interesting variations in the Herod material. The play covers events from the Annunciation to the Shepherds to the Massacre of the Innocents, giving them fairly traditional treatment until the latter sections. When the Magi are introduced into Herod's court, they greet the king with the utmost courtesy:

O magnanimo Erode, alto e potente,  
Dio ti salvi et mantenga e cresca stato.  
(p.199)

When he hears their story of the star, he asks them to wait a while, 'Posate un poco', so that he can call his *savi* who have not yet spoken of this phenomenon. These scribes are then sent off to discuss the matter, and their conversation is rather interesting. They do not

have a dispute, as in the Spanish play;<sup>14</sup> as Herod has asked them 'Dove ha nascere il Re della natura,' they must find where the King will be born and so each one quotes a different prophecy - from Isaiah, the Tiburtine sybil, and the Erythrean sybil<sup>15</sup> - but they all point to Bethlehem where a virgin will give birth to a son. When they report this to Herod, he questions the Magi about the exact moment and hour when they saw the star (which has disappeared) and the way they came. The oldest king says that they have travelled for thirteen days, but the middle king makes the remarkable statement that he has never even seen the star:

E com' io ti parlai, mai l' ho veduta  
(p.201)

He has simply come with the others who have seen it. Herod then reveals to the Magi where the child has been born. This is a most unusual interpretation of the Gospel, but one which follows perfectly naturally from the previous scene in which the scribes give him this information. He merely passes it on. After exacting the traditional promise from them to return, Herod dismisses the Magi with his blessing:

Andate in pace; Dio vi dia ventura  
(p.201)

He is feeling confident and friendly and his scribes do a great deal of talking to persuade him that this is a dangerous situation in which he might lose his kingdom. They whip up his resolve to save his kingdom and his honour at any cost and to spare no one, not even the child:

Io ardo, i' scoppio, i' vogl'ire a trovarlo  
(p.202)

He then wants to go off and find the child immediately but the scribes persuade him to wait for the return of the Magi.

Later in the play when Herod realizes that the Magi have not come back, the playwright introduces a most ingenious plot. Herod insists that he must keep his reputation and status in his realm and so he demands that his scribes think of a trap whereby he can get the child and yet still remain safe. They then suggest to Herod that he hold a huge festival and invite all mothers with children under one to attend; they will come for fear of being disobedient but as an extra inducement, he should offer gold to them, and then no one will resist. A messenger, the *banditore*, is sent to make the proclamation while Herod lays careful, precise plans with his *siniscalco*. During the festivities, when Herod gives the signal the seneschal and all his soldiers must behead all the children.

The scene changes and a remarkable dialogue among four mothers, Tarsia, Calcidonia, Monusmelia and Candidora takes place. The first two meet, express their happiness at being invited to Herod's palace and talk of their babies, Abram and Samuel. The next two mothers enter, also bound for the court, but they exchange insulting remarks; one goes so far as to accuse the other's child of having lice. Tempers flare but they decide to stop this gossip and be joyful for Herod's festival. When they arrive, he greets each one with outward courtesy while he inwardly gloats at his own cleverness in foiling the prophets. Thus his hypocrisy is given great emphasis and his subsequent bloodthirstiness is made greater by the contrast with his courtesy. He reminds the seneschal of the bribe he has received to perform his task, and then Herod gives the signal, which is reluctantly obeyed. The massacre takes place, followed by the poignant mourning of the mothers. However, these Italian women finally turn on Herod. Tarsia accuses him of deceiving them; the gold he offered has turned to blood;

O crudo, iniquo re, aspro e villano  
 E questo il don che tu dicevi dianzi?  
 Omè, che, scambio d'oro, ho sangue in mano!  
 Perfido re, ch'ogni altro crudo avanzi.  
 (p.209)

Herod is unrepentant and tells her to go away. Calcidonia then curses him:

Va, che venir ti possa una continua.  
 (p.209)

She wishes that a continuous fever might torment him. Although Herod's illness and death are not portrayed in this Italian drama, the author may have known the tradition. The play ends with the mothers returning home, comforting each other and then accusing each other of weakness as they show their grief. Herod boasts that he need have no fear of anything any more, totally deceived as to the lack of success of his plot. An angel briefly summarizes the play at the end.

This vernacular, Italian *rappresentazione* shows great originality in its handling of Herod and of the people who surround him. The idea of the festival which brings together the children to be slain has no precedent and only one parallel (in a late Spanish play) but it is a clever dramatic device for gathering all the necessary characters together in the same place at the same time. Herod's dependency on his *savi* for ideas and plans accentuate his weakness; his handling of the women at the festival points up his hypocrisy and treachery. At the same time, he acts the noble, courteous king when entertaining the Magi.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. The Chantilly Nativity Plays

The simplest extant nativity scenes with Herod material in French drama occur in the two Nativity plays in Chantilly MS 617.<sup>17</sup> According to Gustave Cohen, these plays were performed in a convent of nuns, and he stressed their dependence on liturgical elements as well as their

general restrained, moderate tone.<sup>18</sup> It is true that the Magi lapse into Latin to sing certain antiphons such as 'Hoc signum magni regis est; eamus et inquiramus . . .' so familiar from liturgical drama,<sup>19</sup> but several scenes quite independent from liturgical drama are introduced. Herod hears from his clerks that a new king is to be born in Bethlehem (even before he meets the Magi) and so he turns and addresses his people telling them that, as a new king has come, he can no longer continue to govern them; he ends by bidding them adieu:

Or entendeis, mon bien amez peuple,  
je enten chose fort meruelleuse:  
car, solonc les dis de mes clerck,  
unc aultre roy serat signeur et maistre,  
et est jà neis en Bethleem;  
ons le dit partout Iherusalem.

Je prens congiet à vos, mon peuple;  
a paine que je ne crieue de doeulle;  
je ne vos gouverneraie plus;  
che poise moy; adieu mon peuple!  
(11.217-26)

The people, of course, respond by saying they will never have any other king but him. When the Magi arrive, Herod greets them and questions them with great courtesy and humility:

O tresgentilz signeur roy!  
escouteis, parleis à moy,  
humblement vos require  
que vostre non et terre vos plaist dire.  
(11.282-85)

This emphasis on his impeccable courtesy is found in almost all of the French plays. In this Chantilly play, it is carried even further, as he insists that the kings sit down and stay for a meal while they tell him about the new king:

Or beuons et mengons  
et bone chire faisons,  
por la onor de roy nouvellement nez,  
car je le veulle aleir aoreir.  
(11.311-14)

The rubrics confirm that this action took place: *chi mengent les Roy aueuc Herode*, and, indeed, it may have been quite a comic scene because, as Herod converses with the kings, his knights make rude remarks about how foolish these guests are to talk about another king in front of their 'bons maistre Herode.'<sup>20</sup> The kings take leave of Herod promising to return, and the play ends after they have worshipped the Christ-child and then been warned by the angel not to return to Herod as they had promised.

The second Nativity play in this manuscript is a fragment, but once again, another scene for Herod is introduced. After the Purification, the play returns to the court of Herod where he is found invoking 'Mohon et Terrevagan.' Gustave Cohen has commented on his significant choice of gods. 'Mohon, c'est le Mahon des Mystères, c'est-à-dire Mahomet, dont le nom a été altéré par le scribe. Terrevagan, qu'on trouve dans Shakespeare sous la forme Termagaunt, . . . [c'est] le démon omnipresent "terra vagans". Il manque Appolin pur compléter la trinité, dont le moyen-âge attribuait le culte indistinctement à tous les paiens.'<sup>21</sup> After this distinctive invocation, Herod threatens to kill the Magi within a year, as they have failed to return to him. However, in an extraordinary scene he is ridiculed and taunted by 'le Sot':

Ha! Ha! sire, a vostre parolle out ons bien  
 que vous asteis ung trehome de bien.  
 Coment ouse tu penseir  
 les parolles que dit aueis?  
 Ces nobles roys ont grant puissance,  
 ils ont cent nombre de gens d'arme,  
 il ne vous priesent pont ung botton.  
 (11.104-110)

Herod tells him to be quiet as this talk makes him angry, but when Herod threatens to strike the fool, he quickly answers that he will hit Herod first:



*Herode a Sot*

Taiseis vous, clotton,  
vous moy feriez bien enragier;  
je te donraie ung sofflet à ton visier!

*Le Sot*

Et je le vous donraie tout premier.  
(11.111-14)

This incites Herod to greater violence. First he orders his senescal to go after the king of Tarsus, destroy his whole realm after burning the ships, (for this motif in contemporary art, see chapter 8), and put to the sword 'petit et grans'. He then shouts out that when he gets back from Rome (this is the first mention of his being called there) he will take a hundred thousand men and go to kill the other two kings, leaving 'homes, femes, ne beist' alive in their kingdoms. At this point, the court fool comments that he is mad, and Herod then gives his ultimate mad command to his knight:

Or veneis, mes gentils cheualier,  
le plus beaul qui passent sor vous pies!  
Je veul Jhesus faire definir,  
qui est le vraie roy des Juys,  
sy vous dis et comande  
que vous alleis querant  
par toute la terre de Judee  
et de Bethleem la cité,  
tous le petis enfans,  
qui sont desous l'eage de III an,  
jusque à la some de cent XLIIII mille,  
metteis toute à fin;  
ensy Ihesus, le petit roy,  
serat mis à mort, come je croy;  
et je demouiraie en pais  
vostre roys a tous joirs mais.  
(11.136-51)

The people and the soldiers have been expressing their loyalty and love for Herod throughout the play, and he now uses this to his advantage. The soldiers are not shocked or disgruntled at his command; they tell him to be calm as they will take revenge for him. The age of the children has increased to three years, as it does in several French

plays, but a new twist is given to the apocryphal number to be slain. Herod orders the soldiers to kill up to 144,000 children as surely, in that number, they will come upon Jesus.

The Chantilly plays are perhaps simple and undistinguished from a literary point of view, but the judgement of Grace Frank that they are 'of minor interest, uncertain date and provincial origin'<sup>22</sup> is rather harsh. The two Nativity plays display many original touches which must have made the drama quite effective and heightened interest in the simple text.

#### 4. The Sainte-Geneviève *Geu de Trois Rois*

Manuscript Sainte-Geneviève 1131, like Chantilly MS 617, is a collection of plays. It includes the *Geu de Trois Rois* which belongs to the early or mid-fourteenth century.<sup>23</sup> Ruth Whittredge has concluded that the *Nativité* and the *Trois Rois* were written by the same author, who depended heavily on a French narrative poem *L'Histoire de Marie et de Jesus* as a source.<sup>24</sup> He also composed the latter parts of both plays so that a great many threads of the story are presented almost simultaneously, various scenes being cut up and interwoven with other scenes so that the spectator's interest moves back and forth. Thus at the end of the *Trois Rois*, successive short scenes show the Sower planting his corn, the guards vainly looking for the kings and reporting their failure to Herod, Herod ordering the Massacre of the Innocents, God sending Raphael to warn Joseph, the devils lamenting in hell as they foresee their doom, Joseph and Mary departing for Egypt, the Mothers of the Innocents playing with their children, Joseph meeting the Sower, the Massacre taking place, and the Sower answering the soldiers' questions - all

within the short space of less than 400 lines.<sup>25</sup> This type of simultaneous staging, using two or three parts of the stage at once, must have kept the drama lively. In addition, this play was enhanced by the use of apocryphal material and by original touches.

The play consists basically of the three events: the Adoration of the Magi, the Massacre of the Innocents and the Flight to Egypt, including the meeting with the Sower. The author's use of a French narrative poem as a source has been convincingly argued,<sup>26</sup> but he has also introduced several original ideas to heighten the drama. Like the earlier Spanish play discussed above, the *Geu de Trois Rois* shows the kings setting out separately from their own kingdoms, the first two meeting and then being joined by the third and all proceeding together. The French author however, has each king talk of his own career in medieval terms of war, and makes the three kings turn out to be enemies from previous battles. However, the star makes them forget their grievances, and declare peace as they proceed to follow it.

Melchior, on first meeting him, thus addresses Balthazar;

A roy Baltazar, ou saint nom  
De celui qui sa jus nous maine,  
Vous cry mercy de la grief paine  
Que vous ay fait en guerroient.  
(11.268-71)

And Caspar, on meeting both of them, says:

Seigneurs deus roys qui estez la,  
Aiez mercy de moy qui a  
Mespris vers vous en toutes guises!  
Toutes vengences soient prises!  
A vous me rens tout a bandon,  
Et de ma mort vous fais pardon:  
De moy faites touz voz plaisir.  
(11.309-13)

The fact that the Magi exchanged a Kiss of Peace in liturgical drama could have been the inspiration for having them previously at war.<sup>27</sup>

In any case it is a nice dramatic touch and unique to the Sainte Geneviève play.

This author also retains a slight hint of the idea of the kings presenting their gifts as tests. The Prologue describes the giving of the gifts:

Sy ly offrèrent leurs presans:  
Or, mirre, avec encens,  
Que Diex receut et prient en gré  
(11.93-5)

and Baltazar, in his initial monologue, suggests using his gift to test to see whether the king is real: 'Tant que l'enfant aray trovay / Et de mon tresor aprouvé' (11.167-68). This theme, used in such an astounding way in the Spanish play, is found in the French narrative source, but the idea is totally abandoned in the *Geu des Trois Rois* in the Adoration scene.

Herod in this play makes no decision and takes no action without consulting his advisor, Hermes. Although he is filled with 'grant yre' and 'grant despit' at news of the three kings, Hermes persuades him to see them. Herod preserves his French courtesy when talking to the kings but to Hermes he admits:

A poy ne me font enragier!  
Conseilliez moy sanz estargier,  
Et me dictes que j'en doie faire.  
(11.533-55)

This is a fairly traditional treatment but the French author adds several original touches. For example, Hermes the confidant, acts also as the scribe, but when Herod asks him to clarify the story told by the Magi, he answers in such an indirect way that Herod shouts at him:

Que sces tu? Or le dy et le conte,  
Ou le chief te feray hoster.  
(11.562-63)

This hesitancy to tell Herod the bad news is reminiscent of the Spanish play, and is reflected again in the Arras *Passion*. In a later episode when Herod realizes the kings have not returned to him as he commanded, he orders his soldiers:

Garder lez pors et la cité;  
Et se trois roys d'iniquité  
Passent par aucune meschance  
Arestez lez sanz destriance.  
(11.1059-62)

When they report to him their failure, he swears 'Par Mahon', then takes Hermes' advice and orders them to go to the city of Bethlehem and 'me tuez touz lez enfans / Dessoubz l'aâge de deus ans' (11.1131-32).<sup>28</sup> This double command to first guard the gates against the kings leaving and then to go back and kill the children adds to the drama and excitement of the play.

Before the soldiers carry out their orders, however, a new scene is added. Two mothers, Bietris and Ysabel meet and discuss their children, kissing them and praising their beauty. This scene seems to be an invention of the French playwright, and although the mothers' later mourning and frantic grief is traditional, it becomes more poignant because of the contrast. This same technique was used by the twelfth-century artists who painted the ceiling panels at Zillis (*fig.106*), and was reflected in the more complex scene with the mothers in the Italian play.

When Herod hears of the failure of his soldiers to find their victim in the Sainte-Geneviève play, he falls ill and wants to die. Although Hermes tries to pacify him, the devils take their opportunity to help him commit suicide by placing the knife he needs within reach. He plunges it into his chest and is then carried off to hell by the devils. This version of the death of Herod is familiar from various

depictions in medieval art, English non-dramatic literature and ultimately Comestor although the devils were not given such responsibility in the sources. But in France, the traditional death for Herod was different. It is hinted at in the *Geu de Trois Rois* by the devil Belgibus, who rehearses Herod's sins as he drags him to hell. Herod deserves his fate

Car il fist sa femme murtrir  
 Et cez trois filz aussy morir  
 Et son pere trestout vivant  
 Fist il boullir en plon boullant . . .  
 (11.1491-94)

The details concerning Herod's murder of his wife and sons are familiar, but the murder of his father in a tub of boiling lead is unusual. The mystery is solved when the source poem, *Le Romanz de Saint Fanel* is consulted:

Vers sa fame est une nuit trais,  
 Gete les mains, si l'estrangla,  
 Si qu'entre ses mains devia.  
 Puis s'en revint par ses enfans,  
 .Ii. en estrangla li tirans;  
 Le tiers s'en fui tout tremblant,  
 Et trespensis et esmaians,  
 Toz nus s'en fui et descaus.  
 Rois fu, si out non Archelax.  
 Son pere fist prendre et tenir  
 En plon boullant le fist salir.  
 Toz fu bruis el plon ardant,  
 C'on l'i geta la teste avant.  
 Li fel tirans ainsi fu mors,  
 Molt souffri male fin le cors.  
 Oi avez com faitement  
 Herode morut a torment.  
 (11.2336-52)

This version of Herod's death, which appears in *Cursor Mundi* (see chapter 9), via Hermann's Bible, tells how Herod's son managed to have him cast into boiling lead. The playwright seems to have confused the subject and thus misinterpreted the text and so he inaccurately makes reference to Herod killing his father instead of grasping the fact that it is Herod who is the murdered father.<sup>29</sup> Whittredge points

out that such a mistake is understandable as the verbs of the source poem are all in the third person and it is difficult during the description of the murder to distinguish who 'son pere' is, although all is made clear near the end of the passage.<sup>30</sup>

This French play, although quite short and relatively unsophisticated from a literary point of view, introduces several new details into the treatment of Herod in drama. The fact that it also presents the legend of the Sower, over several scenes, is also of interest, as this legend was also appearing in contemporary art (see chapter 8). As the sower prepares his ground, he talks of the necessity for hard work in order to produce the 'blé et vin' of daily use, surely a eucharistic reference, made immediately following the Adoration scene. An unusual version of the cornfield legend is given in this play, however. Joseph asks the sower the way to Egypt and then begs him to tell a lie by denying that he saw anyone pass on the road should he be questioned. When Herod's soldiers arrive, the sower inadvertently tells the truth and does not need to lie to them:

Certez seigneurs, je vous convant  
C'onque puis que mon blé semay  
Personne vu venir n'aler n'ay,  
Ne creature petit ne grant.  
(11.1380-83)

By saying that he has seen no one since he sowed his corn, he is telling the truth. The miracle seems almost accidental in this play and it is associated with Joseph rather than in the more conventional way with Mary or Jesus. This is perhaps another example of a slight carelessness on the author's part in transposing his source. Notwithstanding such minor flaws, the author of *le Jeu des Trois Rois* had a fine dramatic sense and was able to present events related to Herod in lively new ways.

## B. French Passion Plays

In France, religious drama centred on the events of Holy Week, but most of the French Passion Plays contain in their preliminary section an account of the Nativity and related events.<sup>31</sup> One play from Rouen is devoted entirely to events surrounding the Nativity, the *Mystère de l'Incarnation et Nativité*.<sup>32</sup> It has much to do with Octavian and the Sybil and also with the shepherds, but does not deal with the Magi or Herod. However, reference is made to Herod in an early scene of the first day, set in limbo, where Adam and Eve are bemoaning their state, and Abraham and Jacob comfort them by suggesting that the time has come for their prophecies to be fulfilled and for the Saviour to be born. Jacob speaks:

Et le Dieu me fust revelé  
 Que, se jamais vient que l'en voye  
 Nostre peuple estre gouverné  
 Par aucun roy qui ne soit né  
 De la lignie de Judas,  
 Qu'on tensist pour acertené  
 Que celuy ne tarderoit pas  
 Qu'on esperons.

(Vol. I, p.76)

This emphasis on Herod's foreign lineage is not stressed as much in vernacular drama as it was in the Latin church drama which depended, to a greater extent, on Biblical quotations and prophecies. However, it is picked up and used effectively in the *Mystère de la Passion* of Arnoul Greban<sup>33</sup> when the Magi ask the Jews the birthplace of the new king. The 'scribes de la loy' eye them suspiciously and say they already *have* a king, who, though foreign is powerful and famous:

Quant est pour l'eure, nous n'avons  
 point de roy de nostre lignee,  
 ains est la terre gouvernee  
 d'ung homme d'estrangne paÿs  
 qui se clame roy des Juifz;  
 car, a la point de l'espee,  
 la terre a prins et usurpee  
 et la tient dessoubz l'empereur



de Romme qui est le seigneur  
 de tout le monde pur ce jour.  
 Il nous maintient en son amour  
 tant qu'il puet, affin que n'aillons  
 contre luy et nous rebellons,  
 sentant qu'a nostre sang deffault  
 et a nostre loy, qui pis vault.  
 Herode par nom est nommé;  
 ne scay se tant est renommé  
 que son renom soit pervenu  
 jusqu'au lieu dont estes venu.  
 Voulentiers le vous monstrerons.  
 (11.5987-6006)

It is important to note that, besides the traditional reference to Herod's foreign background, there is a considerable appreciation of his position as a successful ruler in this French play, which English writers never seemed to recognize. Before examining the Herod scenes in Greban's *Passion*, however, two earlier Passion plays should be considered.

1. La Passion de Semur

The *Passion de Semur*<sup>34</sup> is the earliest and the simplest survivor of the great French Passion plays of the fifteenth century. It lasted two days, the first of which included the Herod scenes. The first appearance of Herod, meeting the Magi, occurs after two episodes involving the Emperor Octavian: Octavian summons the Sybil (11.2892-2971) and then the Sybil reveals the Nativity to him (11.2972-3001). The juxtaposition of scenes involving Octavian and Herod is undoubtedly meant to contrast their reactions to the Nativity of Christ. Nevertheless, Herod is not presented as an entirely villainous tyrant. He greets the three strangers to his country with the utmost courtesy:

Vous soiéz bien venuz beaul sire,  
 Vous et ces deux princes vaillans!  
 Gardéz ne soiez deslaians  
 De moy respondre a me demande,  
 Je le vous pry, non pas commande.  
 Vous venez d'estrainge regnés  
 Et cy estes lassés et pénes;  
 Je vous demande pour quel chose.  
 (11.3052-59)

The kings respond to his queries, tell him about the star and its significance in indicating the birth of 'le Roy des roys' (11.3065), and show him their gifts, much as they did in Latin plays. But they cannot answer Herod's question about where to find the new king, and so he sends for his 'maistre de la loy', Godibert; he listens to Herod's question and then he goes off 'a ma sinagogue / Estudfer dedans mon livre.' (11.3114-15) Then follows a short scene in the Jewish synagogue during which one of his fellow-rabbis chants two lines of gibberish while Godibert searches his books. Each of these lines of gibberish is written below a blank music stave in the manuscript. Peter Durbin points out that this gibberish, in which the recognizable words are Jewish names, is used to represent the language of Temple ceremonies. It is an unusual feature, not found in other French Passion plays, but the Semur play gives a large amount of space to representing Jews both in the Temple and in councils.<sup>35</sup> This use of nonsensical language is also reminiscent of the Latin play in the Montpellier manuscript, discussed above (chapter 7), where the Magi spoke gibberish when first introduced to Herod, as a means of identifying them as foreigners. Godibert returns to tell Herod the prophecy about Bethlehem, but when Herod dismisses the kings, he does not pass on this information to them. He gives them the Biblical command to go and seek for the Child and report back:

Seigneurs, alés apertement  
 Et enquerés diligemment  
 Ou il est, cy l'adorerés;  
 Puis par moy cy retournerés  
 Et me dirés en quel contree  
 Il est né, et sans demoree  
 Je l'iray veoir, n'an doubtéz mye.  
 (11.3138-44)

Herod discovers that the kings have returned to their realms from

a 'peregrinus', who has made pilgrimages 'en Bethleam et en Cartaigne' (1.3293) and reveals that

Les troys roys sont ja en leur regne;  
Alé sont par autre pais.  
(11.3295-96)

Herod then falls into a rage and orders the death of all children under *three*. His soldiers assure him that they will carry out his will if only he will stop shouting:

Mon chier seigneur, Dieu vous maintienne!  
Je voy trop bien qu'il vous en poise;  
Ne vuilléz faire telle noise,  
Que, par le grant Dieu quil me fist,  
Il sera par moy desconffit.  
(11.3308-12)

On their way to kill the children, the soldiers meet a 'Rusticus' and his wife, and there follows a rather crude comic scene which serves essentially to heighten the tragedy of the ensuing murder through the contrast with it, much as the scene in the *Sainte-Geneviève* play with the mothers praising their children contrasted with the Massacre.<sup>36</sup>

Once the Massacre of the children is completed, the soldiers return to Herod to tell him of their accomplishment, firm in their belief that 'Jhesu Crist est mors'. Herod is so elated at this news that he showers great gifts and promises on them:

Bons chevaliers estes et saiges,  
Je vous donray grans heritaiges  
Et vous mec tray a grant honneur.  
(11.3417-19)

This is the last appearance of Herod, who is in a mood of riches and joy. The play then moves on to the story of John the Baptist. There is no indication of Herod's agonizing illness or desperate suicide, but only of his position as a successful king. For the story of his death, one must travel to Arras.

## 2. The Passion d'Arras

The *Passion d'Arras*, attributed to Eustache Mercadé, is much longer than that of Semur, taking four days to be performed. Nor does it include any Old Testament material, as Semur did, but is confined to the life of Christ. Thus one would expect a much fuller treatment of events generally. Herod appears in the first day, which is devoted to Christ's Birth and Childhood,<sup>37</sup> and indeed he is accompanied by various messengers, courtiers, scribes and soldiers, while his part in the drama is greatly expanded. The Magi also have their own entourages and extra scenes are created for them: for example, the Magis' messenger appears at Herod's court and is immediately granted a safe conduct and the company of a marshall to accompany them back into the presence of Herod. Extreme formality and courtesy is shown during the interview of Herod and the Magi (*fig. 248*), culminating in his granting them permission to travel through his country and also offering them refreshment, as in the Chantilly play:

Vos requestes me sont propices.  
 Mais vous prenez vin et espices  
 Avec moy ains *que vous* partes.  
 Or ca, marichal! Aportez  
 Espices, ce en userons  
 Et du vin se en buverons  
 Et puis ferons departement.  
 (11.3760-66)

This meal is not the occasion for comic comments, as in Chantilly, but proceeds in a stately way:

*Herode*

Baltazar, s'il vous plest prenez  
 Des espices, et en usez.

*Balthazar*

Monstrez moy comment je feray;  
 Devant vous point nen prenderay.

*Herode*

Or dont, puis quensi le volez  
Jen prenderay.

*Balthazar*

Et moy apres.

(11.3768-74)

After these deferential remarks, the meal proceeds and then Herod makes them promise to return to him. They thank him for his 'haultaine courtoisie' (1.3783) and are escorted to the edge of Herod's territory by the 'marichal' who leaves them with a blessing, 'Dieu par sa grace vous convoie' (1.3796).

A certain amount of fear of Herod is shown by his scribes, however. They are sent for and given directions as to what to look for in their prophetic books (*Fig. 249*), but one of the scribes says he cannot find the prophecy Herod seeks: 'Quesse cy, Maistre Galien, / Ce livre cy n'en parle point'. This incident is very close to that of the scribe in the *Auto de los Reyes Magos* who said that he could not find the prophecy written, but as there is no suggestion of criticizing or satirizing the Jews or non-Christians in Arras, as there was in Spain, the incident is probably included to reflect on Herod and his relationship with his entourage, who would obviously fear to give any news which might upset him.

The 'marichal' is a friend and confidant of Herod throughout the play. When Herod finds himself deceived by the kings, he turns to the 'marichal' and asks him what he thinks 'de ceste grant presumption' (1.4728); Herod then tells him of his plan to kill all male children and again asks his opinion:

. . . Pour ceste conspiracyon:  
Car je veul que tous les enfans  
Jusques a l'aige de deux ans  
Et demy soyent decolles  
Tues occis et desmembres,  
Soit en rues ou en maison  
En bethleem et environ . . .  
Marichal sans dilation  
Dittes en vostre oppinion.

(11.4737-43; 4752-53)

The 'marichal' answers that Herod's will is *his* will, although he tries to calm the king. Herod goes on however to give explicit orders to his soldiers each of whom he knows by name:

Gardez bien que tous les enfans  
 Au dessoubz l'aige de deux ans  
 Et demy soient tous occis.  
 Nespargnies nulz, grans ne petis,  
 Fils de nobles, filz de marchans . . .  
 Tous enfans masles tuerez  
 Et les filles vous garderez.  
 Ainsi sera livre amort  
 Celui qui me veult faire tort  
 De mon regne a peu d'occasion  
 Et sans nul title de raison . . .

(11.4815-20; 4825-30)

In such an extended treatment, a great deal of information can be given: the children are to be under two-and-a-half years old, they must be killed in the streets as well as in the houses, sons from all levels of society are to be killed, but daughters are to be carefully spared. (Only in the Chester cycle does a mother try to take advantage of this by pretending her child is a girl, although the situation has dramatic potential.)

The soldiers carry out these precise orders but have trouble with the first woman. She is tending two young children but when Basaacus, the soldier, kills the first she cries out, 'L'enfant au roy herode est mors' (1.5834). He has killed Herod's own son. This does not stop him, however, and he immediately proceeds to kill and dismember her other child, all of his actions being described in great detail in the dialogue. The Massacre continues and the lamentations of the mothers are truly affecting. Meanwhile, in Hell, Satan reports to Lucifer:

Cent quarante quatre milliers  
 Ont recupt mort bien dire lode  
 Par le command du roy herode;  
 Et de fait sachiez que je fis  
 Tout le premier tuer son filz  
 Dont espoir il esragera  
 Quant la mort de son fis scara.

(11.5231-37)

Lucifer sends Satan, with a company including Cerberus and Astaroth, to capture Herod's soul, now that he is damned through such wickedness.

The scene changes to the soldiers who are discussing the killing of Herod's son and the consequences, as the nurse has threatened to go and tell the king what has happened. The soldiers decide to go first, bearing children on their bloody swords to show Herod their great work. He promises each one 'ung tel don / Que bien je lui deura souffire' (11.5364-65). At that moment the nurse appears before Herod (*fig. 250*), tells him of the deaths of his own son as well as hers and asks to be absolved of blame. He is enraged, calls her a 'vielle putain' and orders her out of his sight; then he turns to his soldiers:

Avez vous occis mon enfant  
 Mon bel fil que j'amoie tant?  
 Qui vous avoit donne licence  
 De faire une si grande offence?

(11.5424-27)

The 'marichal' again steps in to calm Herod and explains that his orders have been followed perfectly, but this event has sent Herod mad.

'Je suis sur le point desragier'. He immediately falls ill:

Une maladie je sens  
 Destoysizons dedens mon corps  
 Trop doloieuse. Ahors! Ahors!

(11.5461-63)

The 'marichal', who seems genuinely attached to him, tries to comfort him, continually asking 'Comment va monseigneur', and urging him

Monstrez yci estat de roy  
 Faites qu'apres vo tespas  
 Vos anemis ne dient pas  
 Que vous ayez eu layde fin.

(11.5502-05)

But Herod calls on the devils to come and end his agony. When the 'marichal' helps him to lie down on a bed and rest, Herod does express his appreciation:

Marichal je vous aime chier  
 Car vous songniez tres bien de moy  
 (11.5519-20)

and then asks him for an apple and a knife. He is offered the best from the bowl of fruit, and the rubrics explain the following actions. *Cy est herode couchier sur ung litt et tient ung coutel a une mayn et une pome a l'autre et se frapperoit du coutel se son marichal ne le tenoit.* His suicide attempt is foiled and the 'marichal' urges him to bear his suffering patiently.

A strange scene follows. The soldiers, still standing nearby, think that Herod is dead and they, like the 'marichal', show genuine grief and begin to mourn. They are eventually assured that the king is still alive. It is unusual to show such a sympathetic attitude towards Herod. But if this play were following such well-known sources as Comestor or the *Legenda Aurea*, this scene should lead to the consequent attempt of Antipater to bribe his jailor to release him in premature anticipation of his new role as king, and then, to his subsequent death at Herod's orders. However, this event is entirely missing from the Arras Passion. Instead, Herod repudiates his favourite 'marichal' and surrenders his soul to the devils:

Ahors, ve cy pour esragier!  
 Marichal felon de putaire . . .

Dyablez! Venez sans plus attendre,  
 Soyés prest de mon ame prendre  
 Hors du corps me part, vez le la.  
 Or va, de par le dyable va!

(11.5571-72; 5600-03)

Satan, Astaroth and Cerberus come in with a chain to drag Herod's soul



to everlasting torment and pain in hell with Lucifer. Here an illumination appears in the manuscript with the rubric *y est herode mors sur son lit et les dyables prendrent son ame*. When the devils have dragged the soul of Herod to Lucifer he instructs them:

Mettez le ou plus parfont dinfes  
 En ploncus boullant et en metal  
 Faitez lui souffrir tout le mal  
 Que vous porres, je vous en charge  
 (11.5629-32)

Here then is reference to the more popular end for Herod in French literature of having him boiled in lead, although it occurs in hell, after a historically accurate presentation of his death. There is much rejoicing among the devils over 'C'est l'ame du plus faulx tyrant/ Qu'onques fu au monde regnant' (11.5638-39) and descriptions of the animal-and-insect infested world of hell so popular in medieval French literature follow:

Vecy gros crapaux et coulevvres  
 Serpens, laisardes, et dragons,  
 Araignes et escorpions,  
 Tout prest pour le bien recueillier  
 (11.5641-44)

The scene ends with the mourners around Herod's bed. The 'marichal' speaks;

Messeigneurs, ve cy grant pite  
 De la piteuse adversite  
 Qui est venue a mon seigneur  
 (11.5654-56)

and the soldiers Cadoc, Jonathas and Basaacus join him in planning the burial.

Because of the great length of this play, numerous details and events are invented to fill in major events. In the Herod episodes, this generally leads to a greater appreciation of Herod as king, of his courtesy and hospitality while entertaining the foreign kings,

and of his personal knowledge of all of his servants and courtiers - he calls them all by name. There is sympathy for him and a representation of personal relationships between him, his 'marichal' and even his soldiers which seem genuine and deep. Great emphasis is put on the killing of his son as the first victim of the Massacre which he personally ordered, and as a direct result of this he is seen to go mad, fall ill, attempt suicide and eventually be carried off to unspeakable tortures in a creature-infested hell. But the final scene again reveals a certain sympathy for him as his friends mourn his loss and prepare to bury him honourably.

### 3. Le Mystère de la Passion by Arnoul Greban

The *Mystère de la Passion*<sup>38</sup> by Arnoul Greban is just as long as the Arras *Passion* covering four days of performances and approximately the same events. It has been said that 'Mercadé's outline and many of his original scenes directly inspired Greban'.<sup>39</sup> But quite a different Herod emerges in the later play. The courteous, hospitable king of Arras is a blustering tyrant in the Paris play. A hint of his attitude is given by his scribes who answer the Magi when they first arrive in Jerusalem by saying that they have a powerful king of their own and don't know anything about a new-born king. When the three kings are finally brought before Herod he shows little of that courtesy that he had in earlier plays. When they explain their journey to him, he immediately takes their quest as a personal insult to himself and begins to bluster and boast of his own position and power, swearing by 'Mahommet, mon dieu infiny / qui a toute puissance en luy!' (11.6051-52). He calls the talk of the kings 'deablerie' and turns to his counts and knights for support:

ConteZ, chevaliers et seigneurs,  
 escoutez cy la deablerie  
 qui touche nostre seigneurie  
 largement et de tous coustéz.  
 Seigneurs, gardez que vous comptez,  
 ignorez vous nostre puissance,  
 nostre seige, nostre ordonnance,  
 ignorez vous que vray roy sommes  
 de Judee et de tous les hommes  
 qui sont au royaulme appeandans?  
 En quel part estes vous tendans?  
 Quel prince, quel roy querez vous?  
 Est il huy autre roy que vous?  
 Est il homme deça la mer  
 si hardy qu'i s'osast clamer  
 roy des Juifz? S'i viengne embatre,  
 par force l'en vendrons combatre  
 tellement qu'il s'en desdira.

(11.11-5-22)

When Balthasar tries to convince Herod that they are not challenging  
 his authority but merely looking for 'la verité / comme gent hors de  
 leurs pays', Herod continues to lecture them on how powerful he is,  
 having received his crown from Rome:

Comment, estes vous esbahys?  
 Ouïr telz motz de vostre bouche,  
 vous semble il pas que pres nous touche?  
 Tres fort nous y sentons touchés  
 et voulons bien que vous sachez  
 le rëaulme estre en nostre main,  
 et ne congnoissons souverain  
 se n'est l'empereur de Romme  
 qui nostre vray seigneur se nomme,  
 et nous n'y contredisons pas.  
 Et, pour vous infirmer du caz,  
 ceste contree, a brief parler  
 a voulu long temps rebeller  
 a l'empereur et sa conduite.  
 Or l'avons par force reduicte  
 et le moïen bien confermé  
 par guoy l'empereur prenommé  
 nous en a donné la couronne.  
 Et donc, nous ne doubtons personne  
 qui, par soy ou force d'amis  
 nous en puist faire estre desmis  
 pour quelque mauvaise rencontre.

(11.6145-66)

Greban must have been familiar with the works of Josephus who is the  
 only writer to deal in detail with Herod's difficult but successful

encounters with bandits and rebellions in Galilee before he was made king by the Roman senate. Greban uses this information cleverly to motivate Herod's passionate reaction to the news that the three kings give him; thus Herod is not only given excellent motivation for his violent language, but he begins to show qualities of the boasting tyrant that he became in English drama. At the end of his interview with the Magi, instead of inviting them to dinner, Herod rages against them, thinking only of his own position. To his faithful knights he cries out:

Seigneurs, escoutez quel horreur,  
 quel perte, quel forcen, quel raige!  
 Voici le plu mauvais langaige,  
 le plus fier, le plus desplaisant  
 qu'oncques fut et le plus cuisant.  
 Pour peu que ne vous desperons.  
 (11.6179-84)

He is only calmed by the suggestion, made by his scribe, that the man sought by the Magi is probably 'en quelque empire / autre de vous' (11.6224-25) and furthermore, he probably isn't the Christ that was prophecied anyway. The star is only 'une fantasie ou ung songe'. Herod is not fully convinced, however, and decides to send for the high priests of his land, 'Anne, le grant pontife, et de son compaignon Cayphe'. For all his learning,<sup>40</sup> Greban seems to have mixed his Herods here, as it was the son of Herod the Great who was involved with Annas, Caiaphas and Pilate at the trial of Christ, as Greban shows on the third day of the trial. Perhaps this is a deliberate attempt to bring in two priests who were known to the audience for their villainous attitude toward Christ. In any case, they immediately come to the king and exchange courteous greetings with him before stating the prophecy concerning Bethlehem as the birthplace of Christ. Herod then questions the Magi again about the unusual nature of their

star in a more polite and restrained way, finally dismissing them with orders to report back to him. After the Magi adore the Christ-child, they go to a nearby inn and, as the rubrics indicate, *boire une foiz, et puis eulx reposer sur leurs couches*. This was also the procedure in Arras. The French plays recognize the need for practical arrangements and usually provide a meal for the Magi - either at Herod's court or at an inn. In the English *Ludus Coventriae* play, Herod sits down to a meal only to be seized by Death.

After the Adoration, when the Magi are warned not to return to Herod, Raphael tells them

vers la mer adresser vos pas  
et nagez jusqu'en vostre pay  
(11.6776-77)

This detail is of interest in that several examples of French stained glass and sculpture do indeed show the Magi sailing home in ships (see chapter 8). Emile Roy traces Greban's mention of the Return of the Magi by sea back to Nicholas de Lyra, whom Roy feels is a main source of the *Passion*.<sup>41</sup> In Greban's *Passion*, Herod does not pursue them however. In fact, when he wonders why they have not returned, his counsellor suggests their quest was in vain:

Ce n'estoit qu'une illusion  
de leur estoille et de leur compte:  
par quoy espoir qu'ilz ont eu honte  
de retourner, comme le tien.  
(11.6918-21)

Herod accepts this until he hears definitely of their escape and then he vows to take revenge in some way, 'par tel devise / que tout le monde en ara crainte' (11.7223-24). However, he must go to Rome to settle a 'grievous affair' with his sons and so his revenge is delayed.

The scene changes to the angel warning Joseph to flee Bethlehem

and then to a large and noisy conference of devils in hell, culminating in Satan's plan to have Herod join them. When Herod returns from his success in Rome, he is proud of himself and ready for revenge on the Magi:

Or avons confirmacion  
 en nostre royaulme haultain,  
 de par l'empereur rommain,  
 sur nos subgéz et tous nos hommes:

Avant nostre departement  
 la nostre intencion fut telle  
 de mectre a mort dure et cruelle  
 tous les enfans de la cloison  
 de Bethléem et d'environ,  
 affin que ce roy meseureux,  
 s'il est né, mourust avec eulx  
 sans pretendre a nostre couronne.  
 (11.7492-95; 7516-23)

The Massacre proceeds, with a great deal of boasting by the soldiers as they arm themselves, and much wailing and cursing from the mothers. One of them realizes that Herod is the author of this atrocity, and curses him accordingly:

C'est Herode, le roy felon,  
 qui nous a baillié cest edict.  
 De Dieu puist il estre maudit  
 et finer ses jours en misere!  
 (11.7666-69)

When the Massacre is over the soldiers boast about the thousands of babies they have killed in one month. Then they see another child. They are expert at killing children by now and one addresses himself to this child:

Le vela tranchié tout d'un coup  
 en deux parts: n'esse pas beau fait?  
 (11.7770-72)

The nurse cries out:

Ha, faulx murtriers, qu'avez vous fait?  
 Occis avez villainement  
 le filz Herode proprement!  
 Quel horreur vous est advenu!

Herod's son is killed in this play, but not much is made of the incident. When the nurse reports to Herod, he is not overly-concerned and absolves the woman of guilt. He doesn't regret his orders and, indeed, when the soldiers report, he praises them and adds that he is sorry for his son's death but will bear it patiently.

He falls ill shortly after this, but when asked why by a soldier, he blames his malady on his whole evil life and not on the death of his young son.

Arfoyat, il nous commança  
 dès ce que noz trois filz tuasmes  
 pour ce que tendons les trouvasmes  
 a noz vouloirs suppediter.  
 Puis, avons oÿ rapporter  
 que le quatriesme, d'abondance,  
 fut ainsi murtry en enfance.  
 qui beaucoup noz dueulx rengrega  
 (11.7860-67)

Strictly speaking, according to Josephus and Comestor, he had only killed two sons at this time; the third, Antipater, was in prison and would die shortly. Nevertheless, Greban shows a good knowledge of his sources here, especially when he has the counsellor comfort Herod by reminding him that he still has three 'Hardiz princes et de grant fame / pour bien succeder au royaume' (11.7871-72). When Herod's illness becomes worse and he lies down, Satan and Astaroth come closer to be sure he does not escape them. Salome, Herod's sister then appears but the attendants warn her to keep away:

N'approucher point si pres de luy,  
 dame, pour le mal sentement;  
 il put le plus horriblement  
 qu'il n'est huy homs plus corruptif.

Les vers le mengüent tout vif  
 et luy saillent par les conduiz.  
 (11.7908-13)

His disgusting foul illness is well dramatized; if it were illustrated

in the visual arts, surely the attendants would hold cloths over their noses, as the family of Lazarus so often does in depictions of the Raising of Lazarus. Herod gives Salome one last command:

Or sçay je bien que les Juifz  
de ma mort feront joye grande.  
Et, pour tant, seur, je vous commande  
que tous les nobles de grand loz  
que sont en noz prisons encloz,  
faictes tuer dessus ma lame  
après que j'aray rendu I 'ame.  
Par ce point les pourrez contraindre  
d'y venir pour ma mort complaindre  
et solempriser mon trespas.  
(11.7914-23)

Greban includes this story, which does not appear in any of the other Passion plays, although Comestor includes it. This order is not carried out on stage, however, and no indication is made as to whether or not Salome obeyed, although she says she will. She then grants Herod's last request - for an apple and a knife and Satan takes his chance:

Ha, meschans homs, fiers en ton ventre  
ce cousteau sans tant endurer!  
(11.7936-37)

Herod follows his suggestion and dies, commending himself to the devils. They obligingly take him to Lucifer who prepares a pot of boiling metal for him. The rubrics end this scene: *Icy font les dyables tempeste*, while the counsellors and Salome are left to arrange the burial.

The circumstances and staging of the death of Herod in Greban's *Passion* are similar to the Arras *Passion* and yet the tone is quite different. Lacking is the sympathy and strong bond of friendship between Herod and his counsellor. In Greban's play Herod's illness is described more vividly perhaps, and his wickedness made more sordid by including the command to imprison the Jewish nobles, but the tone is more distant, cold, and detached. There is even less rejoicing in hell.



Gerban's play was extremely popular. It was used in whole or in part by later dramatists as testified by manuscripts from Amiens, Le Mans and Mons. A director's copy of the *Mystère de la Passion* survives from Mons<sup>42</sup> in which only the first and last lines of speeches are given and it is clear that Greban's *Passion* was the basic text. The Mons manuscript also gives the names of the actors for each role - thus we learn that Herod was played by Frere Bernardin - and careful instructions and preparations are given for the manner of entrances, exits and stage business. The rubrics indicate that the Magi, having found an inn for the night after they see the Christ-child, *Lors puellent boire et mengier, et puis se doivent reposer sur ung lit*, (p. 83). The Mons *Passion* ends the first day with the kings taking leave of the innkeeper and the rest of the Herod story takes place in the 'matinée du second jour', ending with his suicide during which the devils have their instructions: *Lors les diables prennent l'ame de Herode et l'emportent en Enffer et non le corps* (p. 105). A terrible noise is made in hell for Herod, while on earth *on doit absconser Herode en quelque lieu* (p.109).

The texts of Mercadé, Greban and Michel were used as the basis for two very long plays associated with Valenciennes performed over twenty or twenty-five days in 1547.<sup>43</sup> As these are late and added no new material to the Herod legend they are not discussed in detail here. The Adoration of the Magi and the Massacre of the Innocents took place on the fourth and fifth days,<sup>44</sup> and one of the manuscripts has illuminations of these events painted by Herbert Cailleau, who was an actor in the play, as well as the frequently reproduced design for its staging.<sup>45</sup> These are discussed in a later chapter. (see fig. 267)

### C. German Plays

The German drama, in so far as Herod plays are concerned, does not depart radically from the Latin liturgical drama, even in very late texts. The later fourteenth-century Dutch *Mittelniederländisches Osterspiel* still preserves Latin liturgical tags,<sup>46</sup> although the speeches in the vernacular are fairly well developed. The dramatic Biblical poem *Von der Beschaffungediser Welt*, in a manuscript of 1465,<sup>47</sup> is based on the liturgy, as is the *Zerbst Procession* of 1507,<sup>48</sup> which contains a pageant 'Die heligen drie konnige' (p. 283) and then a later one showing Herod and the Massacre:

Herodes eyn konnigk mit eyner kronen  
vf eynem pferde eyn czepter in seiner  
hant.

(p. 284)

However, these are merely pageants without dialogue and only very brief liturgical explanations. At least two German Passion plays survive, with full dialogue and rubrics, but these are also liturgical in language and mood.

#### 1. The Eger Passion

King Herod is a relatively subdued and courteous host to the three kings in the Eger Passion.<sup>49</sup> When they ask 'Wo der Juden kunig geborn ist' (1.1848), the Jews, messengers and doctors familiar from Latin drama direct them eventually to Herod who receives them *cum reverencia*. When the prophecy of Micah is reported to Herod by his doctors from the synagogue, he reacts *cum tristitia*; he asks the kings to report back to him and then grants them permission to pass through his country. Much attention is given to the kings mounting their horses, travelling to a different place, dismounting, giving their packs (gifts?)

to their soldiers to hold and then preparing themselves to meet the Christ-Child. The Adoration and Purification follow with certain touches of originality; for example, Mary is frightened of the kings, and later, Joseph buys his doves for the Temple ceremony from a vendor. Then the scene returns to the court where a messenger reports the disappearance of the Magi to Herod. This time he reacts more violently: *Herodes horribiliter[sic]clamat.*

So schwer ich hie zu diser frist  
 Ein eid bei meinem künigreich  
 Das hört ir all gemenigkleich,  
 Das ich wil lassen totten alle kindt,  
 Die untter zwaien jarn sindt  
 Zu Bethleem in meinem landt.  
 Helff mir, das ich nit werdt zu schandt.  
 (11.2310-2316)

When he orders the Massacre of the Innocents, Herod calls at least five soldiers to him and has separate conversations with them, offering them silver and gold for their services:

Kumpt her, ir lieben treuen knecht.  
 Al die mir wellen diener recht,  
 Den gib ich einen grossen soldt,  
 Paide silber und rottes goldt . . .  
 (11.2357-60)

They rush off to fulfil his orders and in another extraordinarily long scene, they converse separately with at least six mothers (another soldier joins them to make up the number) as they encounter them and kill their children. The mothers utter long laments and curse Herod, who must be standing nearby:

O Herodes, du schnöder man  
 (1.2431)

NUn hats erlitten ein unschuldigen tot  
 Von Herodes, dem verstockten man  
 (11.2474-75)

Finally a soldier dangles a baby on his lance and runs to Herod saying:

Herodes, ich hab dich wal gerochen;  
 Ich glaub, ich hab der Juden künig erstochen  
 Wan die mütter klagt gar manigerlai  
 Aber ich kert mich nichts an ir geschrai.  
 (11.2505-08)

Herod thanks the soldiers for their good work and prepares to reward them. Then the scene changes to the return of the Holy Family from Egypt. Thus while the earlier scene with the Magi is essentially liturgical, the Massacre of the Innocents is given quite an extended treatment, with touches of originality, and long speeches written for the soldiers and mothers. Little apocryphal material is used however, and in comparison with the French Passion plays, the Eger Passion is relatively traditional and close to the liturgical drama.

## 2. The Lucerne Passion

The Lucerne Passion 'represents the culmination of the Passion play performances in German-speaking lands'.<sup>50</sup> The eight surviving manuscripts date from performances ranging from 1545-1616, but they are based on an earlier play, the first recorded presentation of which dates from 1453. This early Passion play was revised and expanded to produce the Lucerne Passion Play; it is also preserved 'with fair accuracy in the text of the Donaueschingen Passion play, dated about 1480'.<sup>51</sup> As in the Eger Passion, Herod in the Lucerne Passion 'Die histori der heiligen dry königen' is courteous, and accompanied by a courtly retinue.<sup>52</sup> However, he is acutely conscious of his position as king. When his priests are about to tell him Micah's prophecy he warns them:

Ir Fürsten der Priester, hörend mich!  
 Bim keiser vnd mir gebütten ich.  
 (11.3021-22)

This causes them some consternation and a scene recalling those in the

Sainte-Geneviève and Spanish plays follows, during which the priests, Mosse and Chore, decide which of them is actually to tell Herod the prophecy. Chore insists that Mosse take the responsibility, as he is older:

Mosse, du bist ouch elltter dann ich  
 Brichtt du den küng, dess bitt ich dich!  
 (11.3035-36)

Mosse does break the news to Herod but then suggests that he summon the three kings who have entered his land on a strange quest. This consulting of the prophetic books before the Magi have even appeared before Herod is a change from the Biblical order of events, but it is dramatically effective in allowing the by-play between the priests.

Herod greets the kings and offers them a welcome:

Grossmechtig künig, Edel Herren,  
 Ich bitt, ir wellind mir zú eeren  
 Nitt verhalltten vnd hie zeigen an  
 Vrsach, warumb ir har sind kon.  
 Nun sitzend nider, damitt vnd wir  
 Hie mögend ervalgen vnser begir.  
 (11.3083-88)

He does not offer them the Kiss of Peace as he does in some of the Latin dramas, but he sits them presumably in seats of honour, listens to their story of the 'gross wunder', the star, and dismisses them calmly. Again the Adoration and Presentation in the Temple separate this scene from the Massacre, beginning with Herod's: 'Nun nemend war, ich bin betrogen' (1.3365). (One of the manuscripts, from 1616, prefaces this with a scene in hell with Beelzebub, Astaroth, Mammon and Pluto plotting to lure Herod to their abode.) Four soldiers appear before Herod, each flattering him and professing loyalty before going off to kill the children, boasting of their prowess. And again the women speak long laments and curse Herod even more strongly than in the Eger play:

O Herodes künig, Tyrannische zucht!  
 Gott well din seel vnd heil verfallen  
 Dörтт ewig in abgrund der hellen!  
 (11.3413-15)

In this play, however, the soldiers return to tell Herod that they did not find the child he was searching for. Herod cries out; 'Ich bin betrogen, das hör ich wel!' but the soldiers answer that they have done very well, and, in fact, have killed 144,000 children:

Herr künig, nun hab darumb nitt nott!  
 Ich wett inn lieber han gstocheu ztod,  
 Dann da der armen wyber kind,  
 Dero dann hundertt mal Tusent sind  
 Vnd vier vnd viertzig an der zal  
 Inn bethlehem, Juda vberal,  
 Diss solltt du künig glouben mier!  
 (11.3544-50)

Thus they try to cheer their king, but no indication is given of their success, as the play moves on to the Presentation of the Christ-child in the Temple.

Again, no apocryphal material is used concerning the death of Herod's son or his own illness and suicide. From the very careful records and accounts kept concerning this play, some interesting information comes to hand. From a list of actors and the parts they played, it was clear that the same man who played king Herod also played king Ahasueras;<sup>53</sup> a guide to costumes indicates that the costume of Herod was similar to that of king Saul, including armour, a shield, a sword and a spear.<sup>54</sup> The three kings in the Lucerne play seem to outdo those of Eger in their means of transportation: Caspar appears with an elephant, Melchior with a dromedary and Balthasar with a camel.<sup>55</sup> The Lucerne Passion was performed outdoors, in the *Weinmarkt* of the town, but it was much closer in text than the French plays to earlier liturgical drama. Medieval German drama was generally conservative and traditional.<sup>56</sup>

## II. English Mystery Plays

The treatment of Herod the Great in the English Mystery cycles is quite different from that in the European Passion Plays.<sup>57</sup> He is never the courteous host of Chantilly or Arras, nor the beloved lord and master of Arras who can turn to the people and receive enthusiastic professions of love and loyalty, and be sincerely mourned at his death. An entirely different tradition of portraying Herod developed in England.<sup>58</sup> He was almost always introduced as a man arrogant and vain, swearing by the pagan god Mahomet, boasting of his beauty and power, and threatening any who should show the slightest sign of disobedience or disloyalty to him. In situations which provoke him to wrath, he quickly becomes hysterical and uncontrollable. He is not presented as the historically successful king of the Jews as in Semur, but as the wrathful tyrant of the Gospel, enemy of Christ and fit company for other villains such as Cain and Pilate. Most outstanding perhaps are the parallels with Lucifer/Satan, the arch-enemy of God. Like Lucifer, Herod is excluded from God's grace and suffers the consequences of his inordinate pride; four of the English plays show him struck down by a terrible disease at the end of his life and in some instances he is carried off to Hell. This was considered the fitting end for one, who like Satan, thought he was a god and could not bear the news that the true God had been born. As Rosemary Woolf points out, 'much careful and subtle thought went into the creation of the character of Herod'.<sup>59</sup> He is not merely the ranting and raving tyrant of Coventry's stage directions and Shakespeare's bad actors;<sup>60</sup> he is more than the political egoist of Arnoul Greban and the *Ludus Coventriae* cycle, or the cruel pagan tyrant of the Wakefield plays.

## A. The Chester Cycle

Although the English Herod differs from the Continental conception of him, the Chester Cycle presents a version of Herod the Great which shares many of the European traditions.<sup>61</sup> Hardin Craig summarized scholarly opinion of his time which attempted to posit a French source for the Chester Cycle<sup>62</sup> and although his theory is not generally accepted today, nevertheless, there are some interesting coincidences between the French Passion plays and the Chester Cycle which are further augmented by a study of Herod-related plays. Chester is the only English cycle to include a scene with Octavian and the Sybil, familiar from the French drama. The Emperor enters with a boastful speech:

I, preeved prince most of powere,  
 under heaven highest am I here;  
 fayrest foode to fight in fere,  
 noe freake my face may flee.  
 All this world, withowten were -  
 kinge, prynce, baron, batchlere -  
 I may destroy in great dangere  
 through vertue of my degree.  
 (11.185-92)

This could be Herod speaking. However, Octavian unhistorically refuses the godhood his senators wish to confer on him<sup>63</sup> and turning to the Sybil for advice, accepts the vision she gives him of the child who is 'prince of postye' (1.692), and eagerly worships him 'with incense throughout all my might' (1.656). The reaction of this emperor of Rome to Christs' birth is undoubtedly meant to be a contrast to Herod's unbelief in the Chester Cycle. The very same contrast is made in the Semur Passion.

One other incident which occurs in several French plays, (notably in the Arras Passion and in the *Mystère de la Passion* by Greban), and in the visual arts, but only in Chester among the English plays, is the



death of Herod's infant son among the massacred children of Bethlehem, leading directly to Herod's disease and death. In the Chester play of the Innocents (Play X), the mothers boldly meet the soldiers and try to protect their children, by insulting and cursing the soldiers, attacking them with household implements and lying about their children.

The second woman jeers:

Naye, freake, thou shalt fayle;  
 my child shall thou not assayle.  
 Hit hath two hooles under the tayle;  
 kysse and thou may assaye.  
 (11.365-68)

But the soldier kills it and then the woman cries out the truth:

Hee was not myne, as you shall see;  
 hee was the kinges sonne.  
 (11.383-84)

When she runs to Herod with the child, he receives her with anger.

'Fye, hoore, fye! God give the kyne! / Why didest thou not say that child was myne?' (11.397-98). She explains that the infant was dressed 'in gould harnesse' and 'paynted wonders gaye' but the soldiers were undeterred. Herod is shocked by his own child's death, immediately falls ill, commends his soul to Satan and is dragged to hell by a demon exactly as he was in the Arras play. His final speech reveals his quick end:

Hee was right sycker in silke araye,  
 in gould and pyrre that was so gaye.  
 They might well knowe by this daye  
 he was a kinges sonne.  
 What the diuell is this to saye?  
 Whye weare thy syttes soe farre awaye?  
 Could thow not speake? Could thou not praye  
 and say yt was my sonne?

Alas, what the diuell is this to meane?  
 Alas, my dayes binne now donne!  
 I wott I must dye soone.  
 Booteles is me to make mone,  
 for dampned I must bee.  
 My legges roten and my armes;  
 that nowe I see of feindes swarmes -  
 I have donne so many harmes -  
 from hell comminge after mee.

I have donne so much woo  
 and never good syth I might goo;  
 therefore I se nowe comminge my foe  
 to fetch me to hell.  
 I bequeath here in this place  
 my soule to be with Sathanas,  
 I dye now; alas, alas!  
 I may no longer dwell.

(11.409-33)

Herod's reviling of the nurse, his acceptance of his fate and his despair are all found in the Arras play, along with the demon, sent from Lucifer, to bring Herod back to hell to burn for ever in a fire 'bloe and brent'.

Chester displays some other unusual features present in Continental drama but lacking in other English plays about Herod. In Play VIII, *The Three Kings*, when Herod commands his doctors to 'looke up thy bookes of prophecye / of Daniell, David, and Isaye' (11.234-35), the doctor, like those in the *Auto de los Reyes Magos* and the Arras Passion, initially disclaims knowledge of any prophecy which might displease Herod:<sup>64</sup>

Nay, my lord, bee ye bould;  
 I trowe noe prophetes before would  
 write anythinge your hart to could  
 or your right to denye.

(11.245-48)

Herod insists that he read carefully every prophecy (Herod then names fourteen Old Testament prophets) and an extraordinary scene follows. The doctor quotes several prophets, one by one, in Latin, then in English, and then he gives an interpretation of each prophecy. Herod counters every example with insolent remarks about the patriarchs: the verse from Genesis draws from him this comment:

That is false, by Mahound full of might!  
 That old villard Jacob, doted for age,  
 (11.283-84)

Daniel fares no better:

Fye on that dreame-reader! Such dotards never schall,  
 ney noe sleepeie sluggard, make my right title cease.  
 (11.304-05)

This scene is reminiscent of the debate in the Benediktbeuern Christmas Play from Germany when St. Augustine quietly explains the prophecies concerning the Virgin Birth and Archisynagogus ridicules them with crude remarks, gradually becoming more and more angry. Just so, Herod soon throws down his sword, swears by Mahound, finally breaks his sword and shouts out, 'Have donne! Those bookes were rent and torne' (1.351). As in the Latin drama, the books are thrown down, or ripped. He then cuts off the reading:

And maugard David, that sheppard with his slinge  
 Esaye, Jheremye, with all there osspringe,  
 here gett noe other messye or kynge  
 from my right title to expell.  
 (11.354-57)

Presumably the doctor runs for his life.

The Chester plays are rich not only in themes found in Continental drama, but in motifs found in contemporary medieval art. Even the dromedary is introduced into the text. The Vintners Play of the Magi opens with the kings as astronomers 'of Balahams bloode', praying on Mounte Victoryall. When the star appears to them they decide to go quickly and follow it:

*Secundus Rex*

Yea, syrs, I read us everyechone  
 dromodaryes to ryde upon,  
 for swyfter beasts be there none.  
 One I have, ye shall see.

*Tertius Rex*

A dromedarye, in good faye,  
 will goe lightly on his way  
 an hundreth myles upon a daye;  
 such beasts now take wee.  
 (11.97-108)

The rubrics up until this point refer in Latin to horses, but the next rubric is in English; *They goe downe to the beastes and ryde about*. The text looks as if the second king really had a dromedary, but it is unlikely that such a beast was ever available for the performances in Chester. This emphasis on the dromedary is of interest, nevertheless, in light of its appearance in the art of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (see chapter 8).

Another iconographic detail emphasized in the same play is the disappearance of the star over Jerusalem:

Alas, where is this starre iwent?  
Our light from us awaye is glent.  
(11.113-4)

The loss of their sign is, of course, put to good dramatic use, as the kings are then inclined to ask the way to the place where 'a child is borne that crowne shall beare / and of the Jewes bee kynge?' (11.137-38). They are led into the presence of Herod and the action of the play continues.

The disappearance of the star above the palace of the evil Herod was standard (see chapter 6). A less familiar typological detail is also introduced into the Chester play of the Magi, one which appeared in Books of Hours and *Biblia Pauperum* as an Old Testament type for the Massacre, the jealous and cruel Queen Athaliah (see chapter 8). When Herod is enraged by the prophecies of 'that pevish page' and 'elvish godlinge', he determines to slay him:

Such vengeance and eke crueltye on them all will I take  
that non such a slaughter was seene or hard before  
syth Athalia here raigned, that fell and furiose queene,  
that made slea all men children that of kinges blood were  
when her soone was dead . . .

(11.332-36)

The Chester plays are notable for the themes they share with Continental plays and also with the visual arts. Some of these also appear, of course, in the *Stanzaic Life of Christ*, which was written

in Chester as well.<sup>65</sup> But the Chester plays are even more important for the development of themes which seem to be peculiar to the English cycle plays. Most outstanding is the vanity and boasting of all the tyrants, Herod being a typical case.<sup>66</sup> The Chester audience was warned about this before he appeared, by the messenger who is surprised by the open questions of the three kings:

Hould your peace, syrs, I you praye!  
 For if kinge Herode here you soe saye,  
 he would goe wood, by my faye,  
 and flye out of his skynne.  
 (11.133-36)

When Herod does appear he is boasting about his own position of power, in utter contrast to the kings who have been discoursing in a courteous and dignified way:

I kinge of kinges, non soe keene;  
 I soveraigne syre, as well is seene;  
 I tyrant that maye both take & teene  
 castell, towre and towne!  
 (11.169-72)

He 'welds this world' and also the devils in hell, he is 'kinge of all mankynde', he masters the moon, the sun, and the rain; he appropriates deeds and even language used for God:

I am the greatest above degree  
 that is, or was, or ever shalbe.  
 (11.181-82)

This overwhelming pride and absurd claim to divine power, accompanied by threats to destroy or beat any who displease him, turns to absolute rage at the thought of another king who might be more powerful. He wields his staff and then his sword as he shouts to the three Magi:<sup>67</sup>

What the devell should this bee?  
 A boye, a growne of lowe degree,  
 should raygne above my ryalltee  
 and make me but a goose.  
 (11.201-04)

After hearing the prophecies, he continues in this same vein, finally dismissing the kings rudely, secretly planning

By cockes sowle, come they agayne  
all three traytors shall bee slayne,  
and that ylke swedlinge swayne -  
I shall choppe of his head.

(11.398-401)

Herod's outstanding pride and also his rage make him the perfect example of at least two of the Seven Deadly Sins, *Ira* and *Superbia*,<sup>68</sup> with which the audience was undoubtedly familiar through weekly sermons. The many preachers' manuals of the day stress the teaching primarily of the Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Seven Deadly Sins, and although Herod is not mentioned specifically in the *exempla* which often accompany these instructions, he fits perfectly into the sermon literature of the man given to Anger and also to Pride, as do most of the tyrants in the English cycle plays.<sup>69</sup> The Chester play also suggests Herod may have been addicted to drink as well:<sup>70</sup>

Have done and fill the wyne in hye:  
I dye but I have drinke!  
Fill fast and lett the cuppes flye,  
and goe wee heathen hastelye.

(11.416-19)

Because Herod is so proud of his position, the one thing he fears most is being displaced or overthrown. The thought that this might be effected by a new-born babe is particularly galling. Kolve suggests that this fall of Herod is part of a larger pattern, common to all of the Corpus Christi cycles, namely the overthrowing of the mighty by the humble, and of the old by the young - stated in the *Magnificat* and symbolized, for example, by the shepherds' wrestling.<sup>71</sup> The *Deposit potentes* theme was familiar from the liturgy, certainly, but whether it was used so consciously by the playwrights as a unifying theme is questionable. Rosemary Woolf sees Herod's raging as an indication of a

more subtle theme. 'His rage springs not from political fears that another king will take his throne or from an overbearing response to defiance, but from the intense hatred of one who believes himself a god and now finds that the true God has come.'<sup>72</sup> Herod's pretensions to almighty power have been obvious in the Chester cycle and are even more pronounced in other cycles. In any case, the terrible raging and inordinate pride of Herod that developed in these plays is not found in Continental drama to the same extent, and may be considered as an English characteristic.

In the Chester play of the Innocents, 'De Occisione Innocensium ex Heredis Tirannica Persuasione,' Herod begins by pompously addressing his audience of 'princes, prelates of price . . . barrones, burges and barronett' and stating his intentions against 'marye that mysbegotten maremasett' (1.15) and 'that recked rybauld' (1.31). He will slay the child and a thousand more, 'though it be agaynst the right' (1.23). In this play it is Herod himself who is responsible for this decision (rather than a messenger or counsellor as in many of the Latin plays), but the actual massacre is carried out by English soldiers, Sir Waradrake and Sir Grymbald Lancherdøpe. When summoned they rush to hear their king's bidding, but on hearing that they are to kill only children, they are bitterly disappointed:

Alas, lord and kinge of blys,  
send you after us for this?  
A villanye yt weare, iwys,  
for my fellowe and mee  
to slei a shitten-arsed shrowe;  
(11.153-37)

The declare they are 'knightes of great degree', fit to battle champions like 'Sampson' or kings of the Scots, and Herod only convinces them of the greatness of the present task by stressing the number of knaves they

must slay, 'a thousand and yett moo'. The reaction of the knights to Herod's order for the massacre emphasizes the pettiness and silliness of the kings' command not only from the soldier's point of view, and the audience's, but from the divine point of view as well. When the first soldier takes his leave of Herod, he still hopes he might find in his way 'Sampsoun in his best arraye' (1.244).

Instead of Sampson, he meets some militant women, who give him more trouble than he expected. In Latin and Continental drama, the mothers usually mourned and occasionally cursed the soldiers and Herod. But in the Chester play they were a lively lot of people: the first woman greets the soldier by calling him 'scabde dogge', and her companion threatens that 'this distaffe and thy head shall meete' (1.303) if he touches her son. When the soldiers advance to see if the children are boys, the women beat them, crack their crowns, and kick them with their boots, as do the fighting mothers in manuscripts such as the Taymouth Hours (*fig. 190*). And the soldiers, like those in the stained glass of York (*fig. 191, 194, 195*) and Norwich (*fig. 263*) and in innumerable Psalters and Books of Hours, make the children 'hopp upon my speare' (1.362). They teach the babies a new 'playe', to dance on the tips of swords.

#### B. The Digby Plays

This iconographic similarity as well as the comic attitudes of the soldiers is carried on in the Digby play *Herod's Killing of the Children*.<sup>73</sup> Herod orders his knights to 'arme your self in stele shynyng bright' (1.106) and 'make all the children on your swordes to dey!' (1.115). The comic episode of Watkin, the messenger who wants to be made a knight, is given extended treatment in this play. Watkin



is ready to fight bravely like a man, but he is terrified of the women with their distaffs, and plans to kill babies by hiding under the beds and waiting until their mothers have left the house before attacking them. The women do, indeed, jeer at him. He takes his part in the massacre but afterwards, he accuses the women of being traitors for opposing Herod's will because they mourn their children, and they, in turn, offer to make him a knight, using their distaffs. He is soundly beaten and has to be rescued by the other soldiers.

Herod is cursed vehemently in this play by two of the mothers:

Gossippis, a shamefull deth I ask upon herowde our kyng,  
that thus rygorously our children hath slayn  
I pray god bryng hym to an ille endyng  
And in helle pytte to dwelle ever in peyn.

(11.322-25)

When these curses are related to Herod later by Watkin, he suddenly falls ill for no apparent reason. He says that he has killed both friend and foe and is not even sure if he destroyed 'that yong child.'

Now for woo myn herte gynneth to quake.  
Alas, I am so sorowfull, and set out of Sadnes,  
I Chille and Chever for this Orrible chaunce . . .

What out, out, allas! I wene I shall dey þis day  
my hert tremelith and quakith for ffeer  
my Robys I rende a to, for I am in a fray  
that my hert will brest a-sunder evyn heer  
my lord Mahound, I pray the with hert enteer  
take my soule in-to thy holy hande,  
ffor I fele be my hert. I shall dey evyn heer  
ffor my legges ffalter, I may no lenger stande.

(11.372-74; 381-88)

With rending of garments and staggering steps he dies, bequeathing his soul not even to Satan, but to Mahound.

### C. Ludus Coventriae

The most memorable portrayal of Herod's death is in the *Ludus Coventriae*.<sup>74</sup>  
As in the Chester and Digby plays, this follows a grisly Massacre scene.

A suggestion is made at the beginning of the play on the Massacre of the Innocents that Herod himself is riding his horse around the kingdom, looking for the Christ-Child personally, spear in hand:

I ryde on my rowel ryche in my regne  
 Rybbys fful reed with rape xal I rende  
 popetys and papawkys I xal puttyn in peyne  
 with my spere prevyn pychyn and to pende  
 The gomys with gold crownys ne gete nevyr ageyn . . .

Sharply I xal hem shende  
 The knaue childeryn þat be  
 in all israuel countre  
 thei xul haue bloody ble  
 ffor on I calde vnkende.

(11.9-13; 17-20)

He wants to 'hewe þe flesch with þe bon' (1.26) of the child called Jesus, but he eventually calls in his knights to do the killing. They answer him with a particularly gruesome relish:

Ffor swerdys sharpe  
 as an harpe  
 quenys xul karpe  
 and of sorwe synge  
 barnys zonge  
 they xul be stunge  
 thurwe levyr and lunge  
 me xal hem styng.

(11.65-72)

They do their work with little opposition from the mothers, who only mourn for their children, describing the work of the soldiers, however, in vivid detail. One mother looks at her child:

With swappyng sword now is he shorn  
 þe heed ryght fro þe nekke  
 Shanke and shulderyn is al to torn

(11.91-93)

The soldiers soon return to Herod to announce their success. He is exultant, rewards them with horses, lands and ladies, and invites them to a grand banquet with 'beste metys and wurthyest wynes' (1.147) and minstrels accompanying the service of courses.<sup>75</sup> It is quite clear from Herod's speeches that he is celebrating his unopposed kingship with

great pride and high spirits:

In sete now am I sett as kyng of myghtys most  
 All þis werd ffor þer loue to me xal þei lowt  
 both of hevyn and of erth and of helle cost  
 Ffor dygne of my dygnyte þei haue of me dowl  
 þer is no lord lyke on lyve to me wurth a toost  
 nother kyng nor kayser in all þis worlde bought.  
 (11.129-34)

Herod expresses his pride in his own position and power and then *Mors* appears - a messenger from God to slay Herod 'ffor his wykkyd werkyng', *Mors* suggests that Herod has delusions of god-like grandeur, thinking he will live forever:

Ow se how prowdeley þon kaytyff sytt at mete  
 of deth hath he no dowte he wenyth to leve evyr-more.  
 (11.194-95)

Herod is deluded until the end:

Ffor now my fo is ded and prenyd as a padde  
 aboue is no kyng on grownd nere on gerth.  
 (11.211-12)

He is struck down with Death's spear while enjoying a cup of wine. He suffers no illness as in Chester, no penitence as in Digby. Death cuts him down in his prime. The presentation of the personification of Death in this play, and his taking of Herod and his soldiers at a celebratory banquet is a technique more associated with morality plays than mystery cycles. After Death strikes, a devil appears on stage to drag Herod to hell and unspeakable tortures. Then Death has the final speech, warning the audience in true morality-play style, recalling themes such as the Wheel of Fortune and *vanitas vanitatum*:

Thow I be nakyd and pore of array  
 and wurmys knowe me al a-bowte  
 ȝit loke ȝe drede me nyth and day  
 Ffor whan deth comyth ȝe stande in dowte  
 Evyn lyke to me as I ȝow say  
 shall all ȝe be here in þis rowte  
 Whan I ȝow chalange at my day  
 I xal ȝow make ryght lowe to lowth  
 and nakyd for to be

Amonges wormys as I zow telle  
 Vndyr þe erth xul ze dwelle  
 and thei xul Etyrn both flesch and felle  
 As þei haue don me.  
 (11.272-84)

Death is costumed as a skeleton, decorated with worms, an image familiar from tomb sculpture of the fifteenth century.<sup>76</sup> The playwright has therefore sacrificed the well-known story of Herod's grim illness involving worm-eaten putrifying flesh for the larger theme of Death coming to Everyman. Rosemary Woolf interprets this as a touch of genius by the dramatist, although the story of Herod suffers in consequence. 'In Death's warning are used many of the themes traditional in the lyrics on death, but it was a stroke of brilliance to present them in this context to an unsuspecting audience; and, while it might be thought that this imposing of the themes of morality plays and lyrics upon the death of Herod might diminish this grotesque and gigantic figure to the ordinary size of the emperor who leads off the Dance of Death, in effect this sudden rooting of Herod in the familiar world of mortality does not diminish but rather confers a horrifying solidity upon him.'<sup>77</sup>

#### D. The Coventry Pageant of the Shearman and Taylors

One of the cycle plays which deals with the end of Herod, has the king actually riding off to follow the Holy Family as they escape to Egypt. In the *Pageant of the Shearman and Taylors* from Coventry,<sup>78</sup> when the Nuntius tells Herod that the child has gone into Egypt, he cries out:

Into Eygippte? alas, for woo!  
 Lengur in lande here I canot abyde  
 Saddull my palfrey, for in hast wyll I goo,  
 Aftur yondur trayturs now wyll I ryde,  
 Them for to sloo.  
 (11.892-96)

This interpretation of the Herod story is rare but not without precedent.<sup>79</sup> The tenth-century Gerona Apocalypse contains an illumination of the Flight into Egypt (*fig. 60*): Mary and Joseph are accompanied by an angel who holds the Christ-Child in one arm and holds up the other hand to stop Herod who appears on horseback and in full armour, carrying the fluttering banners of an Assyrian king.<sup>80</sup> He is also shown lying on the ground naked after the angel stops him - a simultaneous representation of two successive moments of action. A similar scene appears in the Turin Apocalypse (also discussed above) where an inscription still survives to clarify the meaning. *Ubi Heroden recalcitravit equus suus et percussit eum in femore suo.*<sup>81</sup> The angel is responsible for stopping Herod's chase. The Coventry play does not show this detail of the angel, but certainly suggests a knowledge of this early iconography by having Herod arm himself, saddle his horse and ride off after the Holy Family into Egypt.

The Coventry play has Herod enter with one of the most extravagant boasting speeches in the English cycle plays. His messenger goes before, demanding silence and obedience, in Anglo-French, and then the king strides in:

Qui statis in Jude et Rex Iseraell,  
 And the myghttyst conquerowre that eyuer walkid on grownd;  
 For I am evyn he thatt made both hevin and hell,  
 And of my myghte powar holdith up this world rownd.  
 Magog and Madroke, bothe them did I confownde . . .

I am the cawse of this grett lyght and thunder; . . .

To reycownt vnto you myn innevmerabull substance, -  
 Thatt were to moche for any tong to tell;  
 For all the whole Orent ys under myn obbeydeance,  
 And prynce am I of purgatorre and cheff capten of hell.

(11.486-90; 493; 500-4)

But mixed with this pride in his power is an equal pride in his own beauty, not so prevalent in the Chester and Digby plays but common to

all the others. This Coventry Herod continues:

Behold my contenance and my colour  
 Bryghter than the sun in the meddis of the dey  
 Where can you have a more grettur succur  
 Then to behold my person that ys soo gaye?  
 My fawcun and my fassion, with my gorgis araye  
 He thatt had the grace all-wey ther-on to thynke  
 Lyve the myght all-wey with-owt other meyte or drynke,  
 And thys my tryomfande fame most hylist dothe a-bownde  
 Throgh-owt this world in all reygeons abroad,  
 Reysemelyng the fauer of thatt most myght Mahound, -  
 From Jubytor he desent and cosyn to the grett god  
 And namyd the most reydowndid kyng Eyrodde.  
 (11.507-08)

Such boasting of his own bright beauty is, of course, reminiscent of Lucifer's inordinate pride when he is overcome with his own splendour and thinks himself equal to God; Herod, in fact, states in a similar fashion that he is descended from Jupiter and cousin to the great God, 'Mahownd'. The emphasis on his gorgeous apparel is typical of other playwrights as well. At the beginning of the *Ludus Coventriae Adoration of the Magi*, Herod states that he is 'clad in gleterynge golde' (1.9) and 'wrappyd in a wurthy wede' (1.10) but his first action is to 'skyppe down' from his steed and go indoors to change, presumably to even more impressive robes, in order to meet the Magi:

Je mynstrell of myrth blowe up a good blast  
 Whyll I go to chawmere and chaunge myn array.  
 (11.19-20)

He reappears to greet the three kings, 'a-rayd ful Rych / Rollyd in rynggys and robys of array' (11.69-70). In the Coventry pageant he even warns them against being stunned by his beauty:

Now welcum, syr kyngis, all in fere;  
 But of my bryght ble, surs, bassche ye noight  
 (11.642-43)

He then issues them a passport for a hundred days and invites them to come back to him with news of the Child and he will entertain them to

a great banquet (11.661). This is an interesting variation on the French treatment whereby the king, as a matter of courtesy, offers refreshment to his guests when they first arrive. That Herod's motives are not so pure is evident from his remark after the kings leave, 'When the cum ageyne, the schall dy that same dey' (1.682). This prepares the audience for the following archetypal scene of the raging Herod, when he learns that the kings have gone home another way:

I stampe! I stare! I loke all abowtt!  
 Myght I them take, I schuld them bren at a glede!  
 I rent! I rawe! and now run I wode!  
 A! thatt these velen trayturs hath mard this my mode!  
 The schalbe hangid yf I ma cum them to.

*Here Erode ragis in the pagond and in the strete also.*  
 (11.779-83)

Herod's greatly exaggerated speech and action must have been comical.<sup>82</sup> He then suggests to his soldiers that all young children of Bethlehem should be put to death by the sword but the soldiers are not impressed by this idea. The first is unwilling to carry out such a shameful deed and the second makes the excuse that such a massacre would cause an uprising in the country. This creates an opportunity for Herod to *ragis ageyn* before forcing them to swear obedience.

The Coventry pageant produces an exaggerated example of the English type of raging Herod. At the same time it displays qualities found in certain Continental art and drama, such as Herod entertaining the kings at a banquet, and riding off after the Holy Family to Egypt. A further scene of this nature occurs before the actual Massacre. As in the Sainte-Geneviève play, there is a short but superbly effective moment when the mothers are seen happily singing lullabies to their children:<sup>83</sup>

*I Womon. I lolle my chylde wondursly swete*  
*An in my narmis I do hyt kepe*  
*Be-cawse thatt yt schuld not crye.*  
 (11.830-32)

They know of Herod's command, however, and when the knights appear, the women greet them with various stratagems: the first warns them not to shame their reputation for chivalry, the second threatens to defend her child against any 'skwyare or knyght', let alone these 'fawls losyngeres', and the third does, indeed, attack a soldier with her pot-ladle even though he is mounted. These are typical mothers who seemed to develop most fully in English art and drama.

#### E. The Wakefield Plays

In the Wakefield Cycle,<sup>84</sup> the tone of the Herod plays<sup>85</sup> is closely associated with plays involving other villains such as Cain,<sup>86</sup> Pharaoh,<sup>87</sup> Caesar Augustus,<sup>88</sup> and Pilate.<sup>89</sup> The introductions are almost identical calls for silence by the tyrants (in the case of Cain, the ploughman, by his boy), followed by boasts and threats. The claims of great beauty and power are accompanied by wild threats of violence to any who are disloyal or disobedient, no matter who they are:

Who so says agane, I shall hym slo  
 where so he dwell  
 The feynd, if he were my fo  
 I shuld hym fell.

(Towneley *Magi*, 11.21-24)

They all swear by Mahomet, rant and rage with anger, and go about their murderous tasks with glee and determination. Just as Cain is false in measuring his tithes, so Pilate is a false judge, and Herod is a false prince (Annas and Caiaphas are, similarly, false prelates). This empty exaggerated boasting is in the tradition of the *miles gloriosus* of early Roman drama, but in the Wakefield Master's play, *Magnus Herodes*,<sup>90</sup> the very language is appropriated from the Bible. The nuncius warns the audience that Herod has heard rumours of a boy who is called king and is



extremely angry for

He is kyng of kyngys, kyndly I knowe,  
Chefe lord of lordyngys, chefe leder of law.  
(11.37-38)

These very phrases are used to describe Christ's majesty in Apocalyse 17:14 and 19-16. Such a use of Biblical language for the arch-enemy of Christ associates him, of course, with Antichrist.<sup>91</sup>

This association is supported by several incidents in the Wakefield plays where Herod acts or speaks in a sacrilegious way. In the *Offering of the Magi*, when he is informed that three kings seeking a child have entered his kingdom by following a star, Herod comments:

When thare wytt in a starne shulde be,  
I hold thaym mad.  
(11.293-94)

The irony of this statement is clear in the next few lines when Herod himself states that his 'wytt is all away' (1.299). In *Herodes Magnus* this theme is continued, with violent imagery. Herod says he will 'brast for anger and for teyn' (1.118). When the doctors have read the prophecies of Isaiah, and Micah concerning the birth of Christ to Herod, the Wakefield master introduces an action familiar in the Latin drama, but rare in the visual arts or other literature. First Herod curses them, and then tells them to throw their books away:

Fy dottypols, with youre bookys -  
Go kast thaym in the brookys!  
(11.231-32)

This may be evidence that the Wakefield Master was familiar with earlier Latin drama, as no other vernacular drama suggests this singularly appropriate action. He may also have known that classical quotations were used in Latin drama for Herod; when he has Herod order his counsellors to search the sacred books, Virgil and Homer are cited:

Syrs, I pray you inquere in all wrytyng,  
 In Vyrgyll, in Homere, and all other thying  
 Bot legend.  
 Sekys poece-tayllys  
 Lefe pystyls and grales:  
 Mes, matyns nocht avalys -  
 All these I defende.

(11.201-07)

This unusual category of works listed by Herod suggests a wide and varied knowledge of contemporary writings on the part of the Wakefield Master.

This playwright presented Herod as an especially violent and paranoid figure. To the boasting speeches and traditional rages he adds extra touches. When Herod first appears, he shouts to the audience:

Stynt, brodels, youre dyn-yei euerychon!  
 I red that ye harkyn to I be gone;  
 For if I begyn, I breke ilka bone,  
 And pull from the skyn the carcas anone -

(11.82-85)

The Herods in the other play cycles are not so specific or bloodthirsty in their threats. When one of his soldiers dares to tell him that the kings have gone home another way, the Wakefield Herod cries out, 'Why, and ar thay past me by?' We! outt! for teyn I brast! We! fy!' and 'he rushes about and belabours the knights' according to the rubrics Cawley provides. Indeed, he insults them, curses them, blames them for not setting out spies, calls them thieves 'losels', liars 'lurdans' and traitors, and threatens to 'dyng them with stones' (1.170). He treats his counsellors in a similar way, with shouts and insults and then rashly decides on the Massacre:

Hard I neuer sich a trant that a knafe so sleght  
 Shuld com lyke a sant and refe me my right.  
 Nay, he shall on-slant; I shall kyll him downe stryght.  
 War! I say, lett me pant. Now thynk I to fyght  
 For anger.  
 My guttys will outt thryng  
 Bot I this lad hyng;  
 Withoutt I have a vengyng  
 I may lyf no langer

(11.235-43)

This is an extreme portrayal of medieval tyranny, hatred of which was quite commonplace in medieval political thought.<sup>92</sup> Arthur Cawley suggests, however, that the Wakefield Master added zest to his portrait of Herod through his own observation of contemporary magnates, such as the Earl of Suffolk.<sup>93</sup> This gentleman's choleric behaviour is, in fact, compared with the Herod of the mystery plays in a letter written by J. Whetley to Sir John Paston in 1478 about a day in court with the Earl as judge. 'Ther was never no man that playd Herrod in Corpus Crysty play better and more agreable to hys pageaunt then he dud . . . And ther ye were juged - som sayd, 'Sley'; som sayd, 'Put hym in preson'. and Forth com my lord, and he wold met you wyth a spere, and have non other mendes for that troble at ye have put hym to but your hart blod, and that will he gayt with hys owen handes.'<sup>94</sup>

This bloodthirsty, violent portrayal of Herod is relieved occasionally by comic touches. In the midst of his raging over the prophecy, Herod calls for drink, probably to quench his thirst after all his shouting. He calls for wine in Chester, too, but the most effective use of this type of scene - a tyrant (over)-indulging in wine - is perhaps the York Pilate in *The Dream of Pilate's Wife*. Not only is such a scene potentially comic, but the playwright could justify its presentation as holding up to ridicule one of the deadly sins. Another moment of slight relief comes in the *Magnus Herodes* when the knights are summoned to appear before Herod 'in armoure full bright; / In your best aray looke that ye be dight.' (11.280-81). This causes them a certain amount of consternation; 'This is not all right' (1.283). They are afraid they will have to fight a great battle. Their reaction to their commission to kill the children is not clear from the text, but the first knights' elaborate politeness to the first woman:

Dame, thynk it not yll,  
 Thy knafe if I kyll.  
 (11.330-31)

suggests he is indulging in a kind of game, although the Massacre is potentially violent and tragic. In Latin drama, the Massacre of the Innocents was stylized: at Fleury and Laon the children were played by choirboys, who sang the appropriate liturgical cries to God for vengeance when they were killed. However in the English vernacular plays, the same scene had to be treated differently. The use of real children was impossible and so quite probably rag dolls were used instead. The actual killing could not bear much emphasis and so attention was turned to the soldiers and mothers in a sometimes unhappy mixture of pathos and farce.<sup>95</sup> It is quite true that 'by shaking a spitted dummy its death agonies could have been suggested with some verisimilitude,'<sup>96</sup> but it is unlikely that the actors used real blood or substitutes for it in this play as they apparently did in a later play of St. Becket.<sup>97</sup> The Massacre is difficult and embarrassing to produce, but T. W. Craik feels that the Wakefield Master's version was the most successful. 'The mothers' natural instinct to defend and revenge their children is dramatized, but without descending too steeply into a farce that is destructive of pathos. The knights are not turned into grotesque comic braggarts, again to the destruction of the theme's seriousness. It is, I suppose, possible that the farcical elements, in the plays where they occur, spring not only from simple delight in farce but also from embarrassment over the dummy babies: at least, if the audience laughed, it would be at the knights, not at the play'.<sup>98</sup>

The representation of the mothers was indeed problematical. In Latin and Continental drama, they mourned as their prototype Rachel did. English playwrights gave them more fighting spirit, and pot-ladles

and distaffs to defend their children, as they shouted their abuse or screamed out their grief. Thus they were remembered by Shakespeare who has Henry V threaten the citizens of Harfleur with violence like Herod's:

Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,  
Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confused  
Do break the clouds; as did the wives of Jewry,  
At Herod's bloody-hunting slaughtermen.

(*Henry V*, III. iii., 11.38-41)

Chaucer also suggested the roars of grieving mothers at the end of the Merchant's Tale when January regaining his sight, is shocked by what he discovers in the tree:

And up he yaf a roryng and cry  
As dooth the mooder whan the child shal dye:  
'Out! help; alas! harrow! he gan to cry

(11.2364-66)

But the mothers mourning their innocent babes in medieval drama have something in common with the Virgin Mary at the foot of the Cross. This was often overshadowed by the revenging mothers but occasionally a more poignant moment occurs. The third mother in the Wakefield play anticipates the Virgin's lament:

Alas, my bab, myn innocent, my fleshly get! For sorow  
That God me derly sent, of bales who may me borow?  
Thy body is all to-rent!

(11.388-90)

The York mothers also hint at that terrible quiet grief:

Allas! þat we wer wroughte,  
In worlde women to be,  
þe barne þat wee dere bought,  
þus in oure sight to see  
Dispituously spill.

(11.226-30)

This may be compared with Mary at the Crucifixion in the same cycle:

Allas! for my swete sonne I saie,  
þat doufully to dede þus is dight,  
Allas! for full louely þou laye  
In my wombe, þis worthely wight.  
Allas! þat I schulde see þis sight  
Of my sone so semely to see,  
Allas! þat þis blossome so bright  
Vntrewely is tugged to þis tree  
Allas!

(11.131-39)

It is important to remember that the Massacre of the Innocents was included in the play cycles, difficult as it was to dramatize, not only to show the wicked cruelty of the tyrant King Herod, or to give historical validity to the Gospel story, but as a prefiguring of the Crucifixion of Christ. In later plays dealing with the flagellation and crucifixion of Christ, the soldiers are not dealing with rag-doll babies but with the live body of the actor playing Christ.

#### F. The York Plays

The Massacre of the Innocents served as a type of the Crucifixion of Christ.<sup>99</sup> The spectacle of the innocent young babies being put to death by boasting, ignorant soldiers is a prefiguration of the pure and blameless Christ being tortured and crucified by brutal, boorish soldiers.<sup>100</sup> But the role of Herod in this incident was generally interpreted typologically in retrospect in that he was seen as the final type of several Old Testament antitypes rather than as an antitype for some later New Testament event. The *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* shows this most forcefully (see chapter 8). Of the various Old Testament antitypes of Herod, including Nebuchadnezzar, Queen Athaliah, Pharaoh and Saul, the visual arts and the English drama saw Pharaoh as most relevant and apt. The Chester cycle made passing reference to Queen Athaliah in a Herod play, but the York cycle, and also the Wakefield plays, included a separate play devoted to Pharaoh.<sup>101</sup> These cycles (the Wakefield play seems to be a copy of the York version) are unique in this choice of play, and although the greater part of 'The Departure of the Israelites from Egypt' is devoted to the adult life of Moses and his conflicts with Pharaoh up to the Crossing of the Red Sea, a preliminary section introduces Pharaoh at his court. After the traditional

villain's opening speech during which he proclaims his might and power and threatens any who disobey or disturb the peace, he hears the bad news from his officers that the people called Jews are multiplying at an alarming rate. Lest he be 'bygillid' by these people, Pharaoh plans a strategem, after some ranting:

Fy on þam! to þe devell of helle!  
 Swilke destanye sall we nocht drele.  
 We sall make mydwayes to spelle þam  
 Whenne oure Ebrewes are borne,  
 All þat are mankynde to kill þam,  
 So sall they sone be borne.  
 (11.67-72)

The scene then changes to Mount Sinai and Moses introduces himself (before he sees the Burning Bush), recalling that his God 'saued me sythen out of þe see' (1.88). No mention is explicitly made of the fact that the midwives refused to obey Pharaoh's orders so that he had to resort to the more drastic device of having the male Hebrew children drowned (Ex. 1:22). But the miraculous escape of Moses from Pharaoh was well-known<sup>102</sup> and generally interpreted as a type of Christ's escape from Herod. The history of Moses was 'a particularly fertile source of figures',<sup>103</sup> and the York play included two of the most important ones: the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Law; the Crossing of the Red Sea during the Exodus especially prefigured both the Baptism of Christ and the Harrowing of Hell, events which were always represented in the vernacular mystery cycles. Particularly in Pharaoh's fatal pursuit of the children of Israel through the Red Sea can a parallel be seen for Herod's pursuit of the Child of Bethlehem, whether personally, as at Chester, or through the soldier-knights in York. Pharaoh cries out to his soldiers:

Do charge oure charyottis swithe,  
 And frekly falowes me.  
 (11.393-94)

Herod gives a similar command at the very end of the *Massacre of the Innocents* in the York Cycle:

Comes aftir as yhe canne  
 For we will wende be-fore.  
 (11.280-81)

The York Plays include Pharaoh who was a type of Herod in the visual arts. They also introduce a new element into Herod's personal life. The Mason's Play, *The Coming of the Three Kings to Herod*, includes a part for Herod's young son. This seems to be an original contribution, perhaps of a late alliterative writer. The Chester play has an infant son of Herod killed during the massacre, and several non-dramatic English works mention Herod's two sons when they are adult and complain to Caesar who calls him to Rome, but no other work in art or in English literature, so far as is known, introduces a young son of Herod.<sup>104</sup> The play begins with a bombastic, boastful speech in which the alliteration doubles the effect. Herod names all the planets and tells of his power over them, as well as the clouds, the red sky and the thunder. He is similar to the Chester Herod, who declares that 'the sonne yet dare not shine on me / and I byd him goe downe' (11.183-84).

He continues in the true Herodic vein:

þe prince of planetis þat proudely is pight  
 Sall brace furth his bemes þat oure belde blithes,  
 þe mone at my myght he masteres his myght;  
 And kayssaris in castellis grete kyndynes me kythes,  
 Lordis and ladis loo luffely me lithes,  
 For I am fairer of face and fressher on folde  
 (þe soth yf I saie sall) seuene and sexti sithis,  
 þan glorius gulleþ þat gayer is þan golde  
 in price;  
 How thynke ye þer tales þat I talde,  
 I am worthy, witty, and wyse!  
 (11.12-22)

He then continues with his typical threats:



Arest ze þo rebaldes þat vnrewly are rownand,  
 Be they kyngis or knyghtis, in care ze þaim cast;  
 ʒaa, and welde þam in woo to wonne, in þe wanyand,  
 What browle þat is brawlyng his brayne loke ze brest,  
 And dyngge ze hym doune.

(11.35-39)

Herod's son, following the soldiers, gives his full approval of the king's threats and offers to kill any who oppose Herod, winning his father's praise; 'Faire falle þe my faire sone, so fettis of face!' (1.50).

The meeting of the kings with Herod, and their Adoration of the Christ-Child, were presented by the Goldsmiths at York. Herod's son has no part in this play, which has all the elements of a typical English Herod play, as well as details from the Latin drama. After a rude reception and questioning of his messenger, Herod insists that his counsellors 'dresse vs in riche array' (1.91) to meet the kings whom he will show a 'mery chere' at least until he finds out what they want. He gives them Mahomet's blessing but as soon as he hears their story of the star he insults them by calling them mad (1.113); when he hears they seek a king, he flies into a rage:

Kyng! in þe devyl way, dogges, Fy!  
 Now I se wele ze rope and raue.  
 Be ony skymeryng of the skye  
 When ze shulde knowe owthir kyng or knave?  
 Nay, I am kyng and non but I,  
 That shall ze kenne yff þat ze craue,  
 And I am iuge of all Jury  
 To speke or spille, to saie or saffe

(11.121-27)

When the kings insist that they are merely asking leave to pass through his country, he is inclined to imitate his forerunner in the Bilsen play (chapter 7) and throw them all into prison:

Fals harlottis, but ze hye you hame,  
 Ze shall be bette and boune in bande.

(11.135-36)

His counsellors finally persuade him to allow them to go. He flies into rages every time he hears something new, and it is the counsellors who not only soothe him but suggest further courses of action, such as giving the kings leave to pass but making them return with news. Herod is easily persuaded to act as they suggest, and ends rejoicing over the clever trap *he* has laid for the kings. He plans to slay them as soon as they return, and 'no gold shall gete þam bettir grace' (1.210). This additional comment is new and of interest in that it hints at the matter of bribery. Herod was certainly known to have indulged in huge bribes from the accounts of Josephus.

After the Adoration in the York play, as in all the English and Continental plays, the Magi are warned by an angel not to return to Herod but to go home another way. Rosemary Woolf has pointed out that 'in all the English plays save the *Ludus Coventriae* and Coventry, Herod reveals himself as so envious and arrogant that in realistic terms the kings could not have needed the angel's warning to return home by another way; for after his abuse of his councillors and sometimes of the Kings themselves, anyone could have seen through his final words of false benevolence.'<sup>105</sup> This is not the case in French drama where he treated the kings courteously as honoured guests. His rude behaviour as well as his blasphemous boasting and exaggerated threats seem to be an English invention. The York *Massacre of the Innocents* continues this tradition: Herod boasts that the world is run by him and Mahomet whom all must obey and look to for mercy. His threats reach such extremes that when the lowly messenger reports the news that the kings have escaped, Herod calls him a liar and a harlot and threatens to hang him. And yet, perhaps in an effort to show Herod as a ridiculous and comic figure and an empty blustering bag of wind,

the playwright shows him absolutely helpless when decisions are to be made. For example, when he hears the bad news of the messenger, after he rages and threatens, he suddenly admits:

Alas! for sorowe and sighte,  
My woo no wight my wryte  
What devel is best to do.  
(11.136-38)

leaving it up to his counsellors to think of a solution (the Massacre). In these York plays Herod becomes a strange mixture of the hated tyrant and the comic fool.<sup>106</sup> This makes for an ambiguity about him in the drama which is not evident in the visual arts nor in non-dramatic literature, where he is a straightforward villain. Thus the English drama adds to the richness and variety of approach to Herod the Great in medieval art and literature even though this is often due to a certain incompetence on the part of the English writers to produce a well-integrated character study of this difficult tyrant-king.

#### G. Props and Costumes

Surviving records are sparse, but certain accounts, mainly from Chester and Coventry, list some of the props and costumes which were used for Herod. They indicate that he was richly robed and represented as a king with all the attributes of majesty. In Chester the rubrics suggest that he had a sceptre and also a sword which he brandished freely; Coventry records and accounts show that he had a crest of iron, a gilt faulchion, and a sceptre,<sup>107</sup> all of which were made of or decorated with 'silver papur and gold paper, gold foyle and grene foyle.'<sup>108</sup> In 1477 the Coventry Herod was also dressed in a gown of blue buckram,<sup>109</sup> (the spirit of God was also dressed in a gown of buckram).<sup>110</sup> It is difficult to know for certain from the records whether these costumes

were meant for Herod the Great or his son, Herod the Tetrarch, before whom Christ was tried before being doomed to Crucifixion. An interesting entry appears in the accounts for 1477: 'it. to a peynter for peynting the fauchon and Herods face xd.'<sup>111</sup> The colour which immediately comes to mind is black, from the Beverley records. Originally at Beverley, the drapers were in the same guild as the mercers, and they jointly produced a play which covered the two trials of Jesus before Herod and Pilate. When the guilds separated in 1498, their play was also divided in two, the mercers doing 'Blak Herod' and the drapers doing 'Demynge Pylate'.<sup>112</sup> Arthur Leach has assumed from this that Herod always appeared in a black mask or with his face painted black,<sup>113</sup> and although this refers clearly to the Herod of the trial, the practice seems to be supported by the Coventry records. Such a tradition may have been transferred to Herod the Great as well, in which case, his speeches praising his own bright beauty would be ironic indeed, especially as God 'appeared in a gilt mask'. However, 'Blak Herod' may justifiably be interpreted figuratively to mean 'evil' Herod, just as 'Demynge Pilate' means 'judging' or 'dooming' Pilate. The indications about costumes and props for Herod in English manuscripts suggest that he was represented in a grand manner with robes and attributes befitting a king. However, he was supplied with a sword as well as a sceptre, and that, along with indications about the painting of his face, reveal that dramatists were concerned in the same way as contemporary artists, to emphasize the evil of Herod the Great.

### Conclusion

Plays about Herod the Great did not end with the close of the fifteenth century. Several later plays also survive. Records exist

from the sixteenth-century *Misteri del Rey Herodes* manuscript from Valencia.<sup>114</sup> His costume is first described:

*Erodes*

Tunica tota del flors, una museta  
blanca pentada de negre, turbant en  
l·listes, y una corona ab son plomall  
de plomes y cetro pera les mans.

(p.91)

This play begins much as the *Auto de los Reyes Magos* with Melchior setting out alone with his page to follow the star and meeting the other two kings along the way. Herod is then introduced, with his *dos sabis* at court, discussing rumours he has heard about the shepherds who have seen the angels. A page announces the arrival of the Magi and their subsequent meeting with Herod and the Adoration proceeds without any outstanding developments, although the prophecies of Isaiah (7:14), Jacob (Gen. 44:10), Daniel (19:24-5) and David (Psalm 71:10) are given before the relevant one from Micah. The Sower legend is introduced into this play, with Joseph and Mary meeting three sowers, instead of the usual one, during the Flight, although the treatment of the legend is much the same as in the *Geu des Trois Rois*. The soldiers are successfully deceived, and when they report to Herod that neither the Magi nor the Child can be found, he is furious. He issues a new order, that all the mothers with children under two years of age must bring the children to court:

Faras fer crida  
que tot chic fins a dos ans  
porten asi sens engans  
sa mare o quelseuol dia;  
y posa molt grosses penes  
a daquelles que no obeiran  
y a daquelles que vindran  
prometles grosses estrenes.

(11.475-82)

This order is obeyed, with fanfares and reading of names, and then Herod

orders all the children beheaded (11.557-60). The play ends with the laments of five different mothers. Having the babies brought to court to be massacred is an unusual step on the part of the sixteenth-century Spanish author, bringing Herod into the midst of the slaughter. (This invention first appeared in the fifteenth-century Italian *rappresentazione* discussed above.) In a later play of the seventeenth-century by Tirso de Molina, *La Vida de Herodes*, Herod again appears in the Massacre scene to help with the killing, during which his own son dies. When he seizes two children, their mothers cry out for vengeance and Herod immediately dies.<sup>115</sup>

In all of the Herod plays discussed in this chapter, Herod meets the Magi and is told by them of the star they have followed and of its significance. When he hears that they are actually looking for a newborn king, Herod reacts in several ways: usually he calls his scribes and has them look for the relevant prophecy, or else he rants and rages that *he* is the king of the country and no other will be tolerated. As so much 'poetic license' was taken with the sparse Biblical account of Herod and the Magi, even in the earliest Latin drama, it seems odd that Herod was never made to give a perfectly natural response to the Magi and insist not only that he was king, but also that the next king would be his own son. Several plays include a son of Herod but not one points out that he is Herod's heir. Indeed, only one patristic writer thought of comparing the birth of Christ with the birth of King Herod's son; Fulgentius contrasted in a most effective way the births of Christ and Archelaus, contrasting the stable with the palace, straw bales with silken bedclothes, the bitter cold outdoors with the warm cosy nursery.<sup>116</sup> However, there is one Catalonian play which recognizes this response of King Herod as a father concerned for his heir, in the Llabrés manuscript

written in the sixteenth century.<sup>117</sup> The eighth play of the manuscript, called *Consueta dels Tres Reys de Orient*, brings the Magi into the presence of Herod and when they tell him about the new Lord, Herod points out that his son and successor, Archelaus, is to be the King of the Universe. The Magi insist on the evidence of their star and so Herod asks his wise men to see if such a prophecy is written in the books. The first two Rabbis say that they do not find any such thing written (as in the twelfth-century *Auto*). Finally the third Rabbi tells the prophecy about Bethlehem and the first Rabbi makes up for his lapse by suggesting the Massacre of children up to three years of age. Herod then invites the Magi to dine, and sends them on their way, instructing them to return. The play ends after the Adoration. Miss Patt points out that in Spain in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there was a marked preference for shepherd plays rather than Magi plays for the Christmas season, and so it is surprising that such a unique version of a Herod play should survive at all.

A late French play, attributed to Jean Molinet and dated between 1486 and 1507, also deals exclusively with the meeting of the Magi and Herod, and retains a hint of Herod's concern for his own successor.<sup>118</sup> A nice sense of the propriety of a king's birth-place is given by Baltazar as he discusses the problem with Melchior and Jaspert in the *Three Kings Play* from *La Passion de Jesu Crist en Rime Franchoise*;

Les enfans des rois terriens,  
De coustume sont enfanté  
Es lieulx lesquels sont plus hantez  
Et villes metropolitaines.  
(11.251-54)

The kings approach the synagogue where the doctors and scribes are assembled and after courteous greetings they ask about the birth-place of the new king of the Jews. A Pharisee answers them, however, clarifying

the position of their present king Herod and suggesting that any new king would, in fact, be his son:

Seigneurs, depuis Anthigonus,  
 Dernier roy, Juifz roy ne ont nuly.  
 Cesar le fist decapiter  
 Et ung aultre magnifister.  
 Estrangier, le fils d'Idumee  
 Sups Jherusalem renommee  
 Par force a usurpé ce droict,  
 Et resister on n'y a droict.  
 Car l'empereur sups tous transmis  
 A volut que Herode y fut mis.  
 Ja a trengte ans esté reingnant  
 Et paisiblement dominant.  
 Dea, je ne scay se son renom  
 Va jusques voz terres ou non,  
 Ou de son filz la venue  
 Est jusques voz lieux parvenue,  
 Mais ce n'est pas ung nouveau né.  
 (11.282-98)

The author reveals a precise knowledge of Herod's peaceful reign of thirty years at a time of Christ's birth and a nice sense of the problem of his successor. Herod himself greets the kings courteously and bids them be seated as befits royal guests:

Seez vous, car l'estat notable  
 De vous me monstre que estes roys.  
 (11.338-39)

When he hears of their quest he impresses upon them the authority, under Rome, of his own position, without mentioning his son, however, and eventually goes into a rage when they are not dissuaded from their search:

Seroit il sy fort et enthier  
 Que de moy mettre jus? Je esrage.  
 Je n'ay plus coeur ne corage.  
 Perdray je mon rengne et mon hoer?  
 Perdray je le nom de seigneur?  
 Perdray je proesse et amis?  
 (11.412-17)

The play continues in the usual way, with the scribe and pharisee making great efforts to calm Herod who eventually allows the kings to pass through



his territory if they will return and report back to him.

While in France and Spain, emphasis was placed on the courtesy of Herod as well as his rage, and on his concern for his heir, the records from Italy suggest that in that country, great expense and effort was dedicated primarily to showing the gorgeous pomp and ceremony that surrounded the court of a king, any king. The meeting of the three kings with Herod the king was a superbly apt vehicle for them. In Milan the Dominicans instituted a great dramatic procession in the fourteenth-century which took place throughout the city. 'The Kings set out from the church of Santa Maria delle Gracie, and first of all made their way to San Lorenzo for the scene with Herod, passing on to Sant' Eustorgo, where they found the Presepio'.<sup>119</sup> The complete station at San Lorenzo was devoted to Herod and his court and was probably extremely lavish. However, in the next century, Florence seems to have sponsored even more extravagant representations of the Magi and Herod.<sup>120</sup> As in Milan the procession involved movement of the Magi through the city from church to church. Earlier, in 1390, Herod and his retinue were at the Baptistry, San Giovanni, 'on a platform, very well adorned',<sup>121</sup> where the Magi stopped to dispute with him about the Child. Later, when they did not return to him, Herod pursued them and caused many children, represented in the arms of their mothers and nurses, to be killed. Herod, rather than the Magi, seems to have been the centre of the action in this representation. Later, in 1429, Herod's palace was located in the Piazza della Signoria, twice as far from San Marco (the scene of the Adoration) as the Baptistry, so much more emphasis was placed on the actual procession of the Magi and their enormous following of 'seven hundred costumed men' as they paraded from one station to the other.<sup>122</sup> Herod was

undoubtedly very richly arrayed, but nevertheless the focus had shifted to the Magi (no indication is given of the final Massacre scene in this account). This *Festa de' Magi* reached its height in the late fifteenth century. A detailed account survives from that period of a splendid Magi pageant described by the Dominican theologian, Fra Giovanni di Carlo.<sup>123</sup> He tells how the whole city of Florence was considered to be an 'image' of Jerusalem. It was divided into four parts, in three of which were represented the tents of the Magi, the fourth being the palace of Herod, set up in the Piazza San Marco. 'With a frontispiece measuring nearly fifteen by forty *braccia*, it must have been a remarkable structure. The palace was built "in a columnar style" of wooden beams covered with tapestries and greenery. Its *spalliere* were decorated with lions' heads from which were hung festoons and shields surrounded by balls of myrtle. The peaked roof, supported by ropes, was of "airy" cloth, "full of stars in the manner of the heavens, and lilies". Inside one could make out a balustraded passageway in front, which was fitted as Herod's throne room, and three chambers behind. There one witnessed the comings and goings of Herod and his satraps, ministers, courtiers, and servants as they made ready to receive the embassy of the Magi with regal splendour.'<sup>124</sup> Such magnificent opulence was paralleled in the Magi's quarters and during their journey to Herod who received their embassies and gifts 'with much benignity and grace'. The pageant in fact, ends here. Rather than having any sort of religious or dramatic content, it seems to have been planned as a spectacular representation of majesty *per se* for which Herod and the Magi happened to be superb examples.<sup>125</sup>

Italy was unique in organizing such lavish, spectacular attention

on this specific part of the whole mystery cycle, i.e. the Magi and their meeting with Herod. In other countries, including England, the Herod plays were costumed and staged with appropriate splendor and pomp but always within the larger cycle, although King Herod must have been played by men of commanding presence. But rather than having a reputation as a rich and courteous king, as in Spain, Italy and France, the tradition of the ranting Herod in England, remembered by Shakespeare, was firmly fixed even by Chaucer's time. In the *Miller's Tale*, Absalom is described and then the image is topped with the information:

Somtyme, to shew his lightnesse and maistrye,  
He playeth Herodes upon a scaffold hye.  
(ll. 3383-84)

Rosemary Woolf astutely suggests that 'the point of the reference to Absalom's having played the part of Herod must depend upon the discrepancy between the dandyish, love-lorn clerk who sang like a nightingale and the strident character whom he impersonated'.<sup>126</sup> While it is true that Chaucer and Shakespeare perpetuated the image merely of a ranting Herod from the mystery plays, it is important to recognize the variety of interpretations and traditions which were, in fact, used in the presentation of Herod the Great in English drama and the subtlety of the playwright's treatment of this figure. In the earliest Latin liturgical drama, the elements which the English drama emphasized in its representations of the ranting Herod were present<sup>127</sup> but the playwrights also had long traditions from apocryphal gospels and patristic commentaries as well as sermons, other non-dramatic literature and the visual arts, which elaborated and expanded the significance of his every act. A comparison of English drama with that of Continental Europe shows vividly that English playwrights portrayed certain details of the Herod legend

quite differently from French, German, Spanish and Italian playwrights. In the English mystery cycles a complex and distinctive character for Herod the Great emerged, based solidly on tradition, but developed in an ambiguous and rather inept way. He was sometimes a terrifying force of evil and sometimes a comic fool. To a modern audience the Coventry stage directions for Herod to rage in the street seem exaggerated, and Herod's speech ridiculous, and yet, as Rossiter has commented, 'Here the Evil One and the bully Tyrant belong together to the comedy of the terrifying-grotesque, and hilarity touches hysteria'.<sup>128</sup> It is possible that Herod's threatening rages were serious and terrifying to a medieval audience, or at least impressed them as a sort of dark comedy. This uneasy mixture of violence and farce is peculiar to the English playwrights and reveals a certain clumsiness in their portrayals of Herod the Great. Nevertheless, the Herod of the English mystery plays was a lively character, embodying paradoxical elements from various traditions to produce an interesting combination of courtesy and cant, hypocrisy and cruelty.

## CHAPTER XI: HEROD IN LATE MEDIEVAL ART

## Introduction

Herod makes innumerable appearances in the religious art of the late Middle Ages. The iconography of Herod-scenes, however, displays little variety; only one new motif - that of Herod's son - appears near the end of the fifteenth century. Scenes related to Herod, especially the sower legend, continued to be extremely popular, but Herod himself was confined mostly to Massacre scenes and these, in turn, were found mostly in Books of Hours. These Books were very popular in the fifteenth century and their illuminations reflect the influence of contemporary art and costume: soldiers wear plate armour instead of chain mail; Herod and his counsellors wear rich robes with ermine-trimmed collars and broad Flemish hats (over which the crown is placed); the mothers are dressed in elegant gowns and headpieces; the Massacre scene is sometimes set outdoors against a background of vast spacious fields, mountains and distant cities, or in the middle of busy city streets which are lined with rows of houses, fenced and gabled; when the Massacre takes place within Herod's court, the interior is painted to show the complexities of perspective: receding tiled floors, rich tapestries around the walls and over the throne, and windows opening onto wide landscapes. Stylistically, important developments took place in this very rich period of panel and manuscript painting, but the iconography of religious scenes had become fairly stable by then and few new details were introduced - and so Herod scenes in Books of Hours and other religious manuscripts and media remained fairly standard.

In the fifteenth century representations of King Herod also appeared

in a few secular manuscripts. These were usually encyclopaedic works, like Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium* and *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, in which Herod was one of many personages described. These were mainly literary works and relatively few were fully illuminated. It was only occasionally that illustrations were painted with the columns of text giving the biography of Herod, but when this happened, a different aspect of his career from the Biblical and apocryphal events was chosen for representation. In one manuscript, for example, the episode of the two philosophers is illustrated. At the same time, Herod's wife, Mariamme, gains a new importance in the art and literature of the fifteenth century. In so far as Herod is concerned, therefore, late medieval art in spite of a greater diversity in newly fashionable stylistic modes remained fairly static in its basic iconography; at the same time, secular art began to experiment with different aspects of Herod's career. A little more about Herod, the King of the Jews who reigned successfully for thirty-seven years, is revealed in late medieval art, than previously, but generally speaking, the treatment and iconography lacks variety. An exception to this is seen in the stained glass of England, however, where some unusual representations of Herod were placed in several parish churches.

## I. Religious Art

### A. Books of Hours

#### 1. Description

By the late fourteenth century and certainly during the whole of the fifteenth century, the production of Bibles and Psalters was eclipsed

by the production of Books of Hours. These small Office books, including devotions for the eight canonical Hours, were meant to be used for private devotions, and usually included illuminations to decorate each major text in the Book. Besides the Hours, these Books usually contained the Office of the Dead, the Penitential Psalms, the gradual Psalms, a Litany and various Prayers. Almost all Books of Hours were centred around the Hours of the Virgin. Other Hours were sometimes included, such as the Hours of the Passion, the Hours of the Holy Spirit and the Hours of the Holy Cross. There was a fairly fixed series of scenes used to illustrate the texts for each of the Hours. Herod appeared only in the illuminations for the Hours of the Virgin.

## 2. Standard Illuminations

The first four Hours of the Virgin were almost always decorated with a standard set of illuminations:

Matins:	Annunciation to the Virgin
Lauds:	Visitation
Prime:	Nativity
Terce:	Annunciation to the Shepherds

The next three Hours were illuminated in a slightly less rigid way with a combination of three scenes from a possible six or seven:

	Adoration of the Magi
	Presentation in the Temple
Sext	Flight into Egypt
Nones	Massacre of the Innocents
Vespers	Madonna of Humility
	Death of the Virgin
	Assumption of the Virgin

The final Hour of the day, Compline, was usually illustrated by

a representation of the Coronation of the Virgin. It becomes clear from the list above that, if Herod was to appear in a Book of Hours of the Virgin, he would appear in an illustration of the Massacre for Sext, Nones or Vespers. It must be pointed out that the Massacre of the Innocents was not a favourite subject of artists or patrons, and it was much more likely that a depiction of the Flight to Egypt was preferred. Even if the Massacre of the Innocents was represented as the main illumination for the Hour (usually for Vespers), Herod was not always present. Quite often the scene was centred on the soldiers and mothers. In one instance Herod stands outside the scene, in the margin. More often than not, the Massacre of the Innocents became subordinate to the Flight (or occasionally, the Adoration of the Magi) and was represented in marginal or bas-de-page decorations. Therefore, although a large number of fifteenth-century manuscript illuminations of Herod survives in Books of Hours, it is important to remember that a much larger number of Books of Hours without him survive, and that statistically, Herod does not really enjoy great popularity during this period.

### 3. Herod and the Massacre

#### a) Costumes and Court

A great number of fifteenth-century Books of Hours were executed by French or Flemish artists, who painted Herod in elegant, fashionable costumes. A Flemish Horae in the Pierpont Morgan Library has a full-page miniature of the Massacre of the Innocents in which Herod appears in a long robe richly trimmed with fur at the neck, wrists and hem. He also wears a typical Flemish hat of the fifteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In



another manuscript from the same library he is again richly robed with the same kind of Flemish hat which has, in fact, replaced his crown.<sup>2</sup> Quite often he has both hat and crown with the crown worn over the hat. Such is the case in a Flemish *Horae* in the Fitzwilliam Museum, painted c.1470 by the Master of Margaret of York<sup>3</sup> (*fig. 251*). Herod sits enthroned under a scarlet canopy, wearing a gold crown over his blue Flemish hat, and a long gown with a wide ermine collar. He faces two mothers who are extremely elegantly dressed in long brocade gowns, even though one is tweaking the nose of a soldier who has grabbed her child by the wrist ready to stab it, and the other is lying on the ground holding her child from a second soldier who stands over her, sword ready for the Massacre. These women wear on their heads a sort of turban which is not in the least Eastern, but folded and shaped into a Western style of head-dress. Herod himself sometimes appears in such a turban,<sup>4</sup> and occasionally he wears his crown right over his turban, just as the crown was painted over the Flemish hat<sup>5</sup> (*fig. 252*). These crowns are usually small, delicate golden affairs, sometimes difficult to distinguish from the decorations of the underlying head-gear, so that Herod becomes more a courtier than a king.

In the Cambridge manuscript mentioned immediately above (*fig. 252*), Herod wears a patterned robe and carries a sceptre while he sits on a canopied throne, and supervises the Massacre; through a window the Flight can be seen. Many of the Massacre scenes still take place in the court of Herod, but the throne-rooms are richly appavelled and furnished with those tiled, patterned floors which were so popular at this time.

Such floors can be seen in a late fifteenth-century Flemish

manuscript in Oxford,<sup>6</sup> and also in a French Horae in New York<sup>7</sup>. A Book of Hours with mainly grisaille miniatures executed by Flemish artists gives a good impression not only of the tiled floors but also of the architectural features of Herod's palace, including rows of columns with round arches between, and a red tapestry stretched across the wall in the background<sup>8</sup> (*fig. 253*). Grey hills are visible in the distance through a doorway. One French artist, under strong Flemish influence, has provided Herod's hall with a green tiled floor and a row of pointed windows all along the side (*fig. 254*); Herod himself wears a stiffly-pointed hat, a red robe and blue cloak, and watches as a helmeted soldier with a huge curved scimitar over his head prepares to strike a child he has snatched from its kneeling mother.<sup>9</sup> In these indoor scenes, Herod's throne is sometimes very elaborate. An Oxford manuscript of a Flemish Book of Hours includes a Massacre scene in which Herod's throne is surrounded by a round canopy from which rich brocaded curtains hang all around the throne and are drawn back to reveal, and display, the King (*fig. 255*). The background of the scene is painted red with gold stars on it, and all attention is centred on the King as three mothers face him and plead with him for mercy.<sup>10</sup>

#### b) The Massacre Moves Outdoors

In the context of a presumed historical reality, the Massacre of the Innocents would have occurred in the streets of Bethlehem or perhaps even in the homes of Jewish parents. In Eastern and Western art prior to the fifteenth century, however, it often took place at the court of Herod. In this way, artists could telescope Herod's ordering of the Massacre with the event itself. In several manuscripts mentioned

above, Flemish and French artists began to introduce views through the windows and doors of Herod's palace while placing the Massacre at the foot of Herod's throne (see *fig. 251*). Gradually, the locale for the killing shifted. A Flemish *Horae* in the Bodleian places the Massacre in the courtyard of the castle.<sup>11</sup> Herod still sits on a throne with pink and green canopy curtains, dressed in a long blue robe with a small but brilliant gold crown atop his wide turban, a mother lies on the floor pleading, and a soldier in full plate armour prepares to kill a child with his up-raised sword. But the courtyard opens out onto a meadow, visible beyond the wall, and a sense of open space is beginning to be felt in the Massacre miniatures.

*Les Belles Heures de Jean Duc de Berry*, painted by the Limbourg brothers in the first decade of the fifteenth-century, presents the Massacre of the Innocents in one miniature which includes essentially two scenes<sup>12</sup> (*fig. 256*). On the left Herod appears in his palace, complete with ceiling and walls, wearing the traditional crown and attended by an elderly counsellor, as he holds a sword and gives orders to a soldier who kneels before him. The lance borne by this soldier extends over his shoulder and out of the door, carrying the eye to the outdoor scene surrounding the palace. On the green grass all around Herod's palace, the Massacre takes place against a landscape which extends to include a green mountain in the middle distance and a walled city on the far horizon. The Massacre scene takes place entirely outdoors in a manuscript painted two or three decades later, possibly in Hainaut.<sup>13</sup> Two soldiers kill children and fight off their mothers in a flowered meadow. Herod, however, is still supplied with a solid wooden canopy under which he stands, splendidly attired in a red and gold gown. A fifteenth-century French manuscript in the British Library

also places the Massacre entirely outdoors with a background landscape including many divided fields in the middle ground and a city by a river in the distance. But in the foreground, Herod is still provided with a gorgeously canopied throne and is dressed in an ermine-trimmed gown and surrounded by similarly clad courtiers.<sup>14</sup>

c) Herod on Horseback

The shifting of the Massacre scene from Herod's palace, through the courtyard to the countryside led to a change in the iconography of Herod himself. It was obviously incongruous to introduce his throne into such a setting and so he was more suitably presented in such scenes, on horseback. In a mid-fifteenth-century Dutch Book of Hours in the Bodleian, Herod presides on horseback at the Massacre (*fig. 257*). He can be identified by his crown; another mounted figure is also present, a courtier perhaps, but the soldiers are in contemporary dress and on foot. This is an outdoor scene, but the depiction is done in grisaille with a blue and gold background.<sup>15</sup> In a French manuscript in Copenhagen the Massacre takes place in an open field and Herod is present on horseback; his rich robes have been replaced by armour although he still wears his crown.<sup>16</sup> A manuscript of similar date and provenance in Cambridge presents Herod, in a related scene with the reaper; he rides a black horse richly caparisoned in red and gold; his plate armour is black, though partially covered by his gold and black surcoat.<sup>17</sup> A Flemish manuscript of the same date in Oxford shows a similar representation of Herod on a richly caparisoned horse, dressed in plate armour and wearing his crown over his helmet, presiding at the head of a large army which has come to massacre children. In the distance a sower can

be seen.<sup>18</sup> Once Herod was introduced on horseback, he was quite often shown meeting the sower himself. He did not always keep his horse, however. In a French-Flemish fifteenth-century *Horae* Herod is wearing black armour, covered by a blue and red mantle and topped with an ermined cap, but once again he sits in an arrogant pose, on a canopied throne place before a landscape.

Fifteenth-century manuscripts show Herod in armour for the first time. His soldiers, however, had appeared clad in armour from an early date. In this period, nevertheless, the style of their armour changes, from chain mail to plate. In a Flemish manuscript of c.1400 the massacring soldier wears a green surcoat over his plate armour;<sup>19</sup> in a French *Horae* from the late fifteenth century Herod issues orders for the massacre to three knights who kneel before him in resplendent gold armour and helmets, with short surcoats over, in pink, blue and brown;<sup>20</sup> a third type of armour for the soldiers appears in an English and Flemish manuscript which reverts to the Roman style of plate armour with skirt of plate metal as well<sup>21</sup> (*fig. 258*). A great variety of armour was thus available for the soldiers and also for Herod, in a vast array of colours and over-garments.

A group of manuscripts from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries preserves the iconography of Herod in armour on horseback. Nor is he always on a black horse, which one might expect for an evil character. One manuscript, a French *Horae* of 1500-1505, includes Herod only in the distant background of an illumination centred on the *Repose* during the *Flight*.<sup>22</sup> There he appears on horseback, accompanied by two other horsemen and preceded by a footsoldier. Herod, wearing a golden crown and a red robe, rides a white horse, while the other horses are

black and brown. A Dutch manuscript in the same museum also presents him dressed in gold and black riding a white horse, but this illumination is also in a subordinate position, in the border of the page, and is associated with the sower.<sup>23</sup> Herod does appear in the main miniature of the Massacre of the Innocents in a former Yates-Thompson manuscript of c.1530 (*fig. 259*) where he rides a white horse and is dressed in gold with an ermine collar and golden crown.<sup>24</sup> He is surrounded by soldiers and counsellors in a huge outdoor scene; it is difficult to believe that Herod is the villain as he appears all in white and gold. Such a treatment suggests that the artists were becoming more interested in decorative and aesthetic effects than in religious meaning. In another Flemish manuscript Herod still appears mounted on a white horse, when all the other horses are dark, but in spite of his crown, which is worn over an ermine-trimmed hat, he is dressed more like a courtier than a King, in a short coat rather than the armour of the soldiers around him.<sup>25</sup> This Massacre is placed in a meadow, which is more like a village green in that it is lined with a row of houses.

#### d) Slaughter in the Streets

A number of manuscripts finally bring the Massacre scene back into the city (*see fig. 251*). The Massacre takes place on a street, (although it is in front of a meadow and outside of the town) in a North-French or Flemish manuscript of c.1500 in Copenhagen.<sup>26</sup> Herod is no longer on horseback, but he is standing in the street, dressed once more in a rich fur-lined hat, and a robe with fashionably wide sleeves and patterned cloth. In one hand he holds a rod while the other hand is tucked into the belt of his robe; he appears a trifle out of place walking in the streets. Several French artists solved this problem by

placing Herod in a tower where he could look out and view the Massacre without being so involved himself. Two French Horae in New York show him looking out of a window in a tower, identified by his crown but distant from the action, although he waves a scimitar in one of the illuminations.<sup>27</sup> Many Italian artists including Giotto represented the Massacre in crowded street scenes but placed Herod usually on a balcony slightly above the action where he could look down on it. A typical illustration had Herod crowned and richly robed, an arras hanging over the balcony to add to the elegant courtly atmosphere around him while on the street below masses of people mingle in furious cruel struggles over the children.<sup>28</sup> It must be remembered, of course, that the Massacre of the Innocents was often portrayed without Herod, especially when the scene took place outdoors in the countryside or in the city streets. In one manuscript in Oxford, the Massacre is painted in tiny grisaille figures as a subsidiary background incident in the full-page, full-colour depiction of the Flight to Egypt. In the far distant background of this illumination, near the top of the picture, is painted a white city wall; on the right side, between two towers, are three tiny stick-figures. With a magnifying glass one can recognize Herod among them, by his gold crown and sword.<sup>29</sup> He peers over the city wall to look down on the Massacre beyond.

#### e) The Apocryphal Story of Herod's Son

The apocryphal story of Herod's son appeared in literature much earlier than it appeared in art (see chapter 9). The earliest manuscripts to have a scene identified by M. R. James as the death of Herod's son belong to the first two decades of the sixteenth century. The first is a Book of Hours in the Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 132, dating c.1500-1510<sup>30</sup>;

it contains in the margin of p.42 a street scene of the Massacre with two soldiers in golden armour and two mothers. Then a full-page illumination, facing the Hour of Terce, presents Herod standing with his crown and sceptre, but with one hand he clutches his throat, and looks in anguish to a counsellor behind him. Before him a nurse kneels and presents to him a bleeding infant, which she holds in her arms. As the Massacre has already been represented, and there are no soldiers in this full-page miniature, the scene is quite clearly meant to be that of the death of Herod's son; the king's dramatic gesture of putting his hand to his throat verifies this.

The second scene identified by M. R. James occurs not in a Book of Hours, but in a Psalter which has been adapted to the purposes of devotion to the Virgin so that the Psalm illuminations do not follow the usual pattern of expressing the text, but the Horae pattern.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the final group of Psalms, introduced by *Cantate Domino* (Psalm 149) portrays the Massacre of the Innocents. This indoor scene takes place before Herod who sits, full face, on his throne in golden plate armour. Although there are mothers and soldiers present, attention is focused on a sorrowing nurse who approaches from the right bringing a child wrapped in a white cloth, to Herod. In this instance, however, the King is looking away from her towards some of the other soldiers; a soldier behind the canopied throne seems to recognize the nurse and child. Herod has not yet realized that, by his very own orders, his youngest son has fallen victim to the butchery of his own malicious plan. The drama and irony of this scene is thus considerably heightened.

With the identification of these scenes fairly secure, it is possible to recognize the same incident in some other manuscripts of slightly earlier date. A Book of Hours from c.1450-1475 includes a



Massacre before Herod in a courtyard.<sup>32</sup> Two soldiers report to Herod and although no killing is portrayed, three headless swaddled babes lie on the tiled floor. But the counsellor beside Herod seems to be talking to an elegantly-dressed lady who holds a bleeding, swaddled child. This is most likely Herod's son, brought after he was massacred with the others, back to his father by the nurse. No other women are present. A French manuscript of c.1500 shows a simple version of the Massacre. Herod dressed in ermine-trimmed robes stands flanked by two counsellors, but no soldiers are present. A single woman stands before Herod, showing him a dead child.<sup>33</sup> Surely this also is his own son. Another French manuscript from the turn of the century shows a similar scene: Herod is attended by four counsellors and before him two women kneel with Herod's dead child between them.<sup>34</sup> The number of counsellors and mothers has doubled but this is not unreasonable in that the King's son is being portrayed. A fourth example in the Fitzwilliam Museum, again a French Horae of c.1510-1520, includes a bas-de-page decoration, all in gold, below the Flight into Egypt; a woman with a dead, swaddled child before her kneels before Herod.<sup>35</sup> There are no soldiers present, but assorted limbs are strewn about. This is not, technically, the Massacre of the Innocents, but the Death of Herod's son or more precisely, the presentation of Herod's murdered child to him after the Massacre. It is quite possible that this is the subject matter of the Horae discussed and illustrated above (*fig. 258*) in which, for the Massacre scene, a woman pushes a soldier in plate armour away from her as she approaches Herod purposefully with a child in her arms. As mentioned above, this is the only new apocryphal incident which was introduced into late medieval art related to Herod the

Great. The literary expressions of this legend were, however, more detailed and dramatic. The non-dramatic versions were discussed in chapter 9. Continental drama (see chapter 10) often introduced this scene into the plays dealing with the Massacre of the Innocents. The Arras manuscript (discussed in chapter 10) was, of course, illustrated with scenes from the drama, and includes a scene with the nurse before Herod (*fig. 250*). The text makes it clear that she is telling him about the massacre of his own son. This is an effective moment in the drama and thus it was chosen for illustration in this unusual manuscript.

f) Nimbed Children

Several Western manuscripts, of French, Flemish and Italian provenance, representing the Massacre of the Innocents preserve the Byzantine convention of portraying important personages with a nimbus. However, it is not Herod, but the Innocents, who are treated in this way in fifteenth century works; their role as the church's first martyrs is thus emphasized. A Flemish Book of Hours in Oxford presents the typical fifteenth-century Herod in opulent robes seated on a wooden throne on a raised dais; before him kneels an elegantly dressed mother holding a nimbed baby, naked and bleeding.<sup>36</sup> The iconography at first suggests that this might be Herod's son but this is unlikely in that the woman is accompanied by a soldier who leans over the child and keeps his hand on the baby's head acknowledging his murderous accomplishment. If the child were Herod's, it is highly unlikely that the soldier responsible for its death would be acknowledging it before the King. It would also be rather paradoxical to show the son of this tyrant as a nimbed child. A nimbed child lies on the floor before Herod in a French fifteenth-

century Horae in the Fitzwilliam Museum (*fig. 260*), and again a soldier standing over it leans on his sword and drives the point into the child's body.<sup>37</sup> At the same time a woman behind him, wearing the stylish tall, pointed cap of contemporary French fashions, tries to hold his arm back. This is one of the typical 'fighting mothers', and her child is seen emphatically as a martyr of the church. The convention of presenting the Innocents nimbed survived into the sixteenth century. A French artist preserved this iconography in a Book of Hours of c.1530 in a tiny scene which appeared in a *bas-de-page* illumination below a depiction of the Flight (*fig. 261*); only three figures are included: a mother shakes her fist at a soldier who attacks the child she holds in her other arm. He seizes it by the hand and is ready to pierce it.<sup>38</sup> Once more the child is nimbed. Nimbed children also appear in a mid-fifteenth century Gospel of St. Matthew from Milan, now in the Bodleian Library. In a *bas-de-page* illumination Herod directs the Massacre from a pаланquin as two of his men kill a pile of nimbed children with their swords.<sup>39</sup> This emphasis on the martyrdom of the Innocents by painting them as nimbed and therefore saintly, is peculiar to manuscripts of the late medieval period and is rarely found before the fifteenth century, although the Feast of the Holy Innocents was instituted at a very early date (see chapter 4).

#### g) Herod Wields Weapons

It was common to see Herod holding a sword in the sculpture of twelfth-century France, and in the next two centuries he brandished this weapon in a variety of dramatic poses. Books of Hours carry on this iconography (*fig. 255, 256, 258, 260*). An early, fourteenth-century example occurs in a French manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library.<sup>40</sup>

In the fifteenth-century this sword is sometimes replaced by a large, curved scimitar which looks much more vicious as Herod holds it as a symbol of his cruelty and power.<sup>41</sup> But, but the end of the fifteenth century he does more than merely threaten with these weapons. A French illumination shows him seated on his throne, wielding his sword as if he were about to swing it back hand and strike out himself.<sup>42</sup> The two counsellors behind him look quite concerned. Through the window, the Holy Family in Flight can be seen and Herod's attention seems to have been attracted to it. Thus there is an intimation that Herod is ready to strike the Christ-Child dead himself. The next logical step for artists was to show Herod actually using his sword, and indeed, this happens in a Book of Hours in the Fitzwilliam Museum (*fig. 262*). In a depiction of the Massacre for Vespers, Herod appears still sitting on his throne, but holding a bloody sword; a swaddled child lies bleeding before him.<sup>43</sup> The implication is that he has done the killing himself. Another executioner, also with bloody sword, pulls a child from its mother who tries to push him away. This was as daring as manuscript painters became in their depiction of Herod's involvement in the Massacre. The ultimate step was taken by the painters of stained glass.

## B. Stained Glass in England

### 1. St Peter Mancroft, Norwich

The most outstanding example of daring iconography for Herod the Great in a Massacre scene appears in the fifteenth-century East Window of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich (*fig. 263*). It is one of a series of narrative scenes on the Nativity of Christ, appearing second from the bottom of the right hand light of the window. The central figure in the panel is Herod, robed in red; he leans out from his canopied throne

and, using a large scimitar, he slices in two a child which he holds upside-down by the ankle. No other example of such daring iconography for Herod is known in any media in medieval art either before or after this window. Beside Herod, in the upper right-hand part of the panel, stands a soldier who holds up a sword on which a child is impaled. The child's mother, in a ruby red gown, stands behind the soldier and tries to strangle him by throwing her arm around his neck. Below this soldier is another, who has seized a baby from its crib and is killing it.<sup>44</sup> The acts of killing displayed in this window are dramatic and cruel. The artist of the panel also reveals fifteenth-century fashions, just as the manuscript painters did. Herod wears a splendid ermine collar; his attendant has a fashionable blue turban. In the lower left corner of the panel a man and a woman in typical fifteenth-century clothing can be seen in front of a building. It is extremely unusual (no other example is known) to have a father-figure present in a Massacre scene. Christopher Woodforde in his comments on this window was first moved to suspect that these figures might be insertions, especially because 'this part of the picture fits awkwardly into the panel . . . Nevertheless, a close examination of the glass, as well as expressions and postures of the men and women, show that the panel is in its original form.'<sup>45</sup> This panel in St. Peter Mancroft, then, is outstanding for several aspects of its iconography, but especially for showing Herod actually killing one of the Innocents.

## 2. Fairford Church, Gloucestershire

Another panel of fifteenth-century stained glass, from the end of the century, which depicts Herod killing a child with a sword can

be found at Fairford Church (*fig. 264*). It occurs in the clerestory of the nave, on the north wall, second from the West end, in a window which shows three persecutors of the church.<sup>46</sup> Two of these are unidentified, although they appear in crowns and armour. The third is Herod, easily identified through the inscription of his name on the border of his tunic, ERODEC I. He holds a limp child in one hand and with the other he proceeds to run his sword through its body. Oscar Farmer commented that all real dignity has been removed from Herod, and from the twelve other persecutors who appear in the windows of the north clerestory (as opposed to the twelve saints in the south clerestory) 'by giving them each a slight stoop, either from the waist or from the knees.'<sup>47</sup> It is interesting to note also that while the tracery above the saints on the south side has angels, that of the north has devils. In yet another panel of stained glass in York, a devil moves down from the tracery, into the very crown of Herod.

### 3. St. Michael, Spurriergate, in York

A remarkable example of Herod wearing a demon-crown occurs in the stained glass of St. Michael, Spurriergate, in York, in the westernmost window of the south aisle. All of the medieval glass in this church has been badly 'restored' and some panels are merely collections of fragments. The Herod panel, a Massacre scene, is certainly composite. The figure of Herod is fifteenth-century (*fig. 265*), the soldier dressed in chain mail is fourteenth century and the mother is impossible to define. But Herod's crown with its demon (see chapter 8) is painted on a single piece of original fifteenth-century glass and shows the boldest attempt known at associating Herod directly with the devil.

A large and lively demon-dragon stretches its neck forward from within the crown and seems to thoroughly enjoy the Massacre scene which it has supposedly instigated.<sup>48</sup> Thus fifteenth-century English stained glass reveals a bolder interpretation of Herod's evil nature and murderous actions than contemporary manuscripts.

### C. Other Manuscripts and Media

#### 1. Herod's Suicide

Because of the nature of the cycle of illustrations for Books of Hours of the Virgin, the suicide of Herod was not included. It was not a popular subject in late medieval art; in fact the only example known occurs in a Dutch historiated Bible which is heavily dependent on the *Historia Scholastica* for subjects.<sup>49</sup> This manuscript does preserve all Josephus' details about the suicide<sup>50</sup> (fig. 266). Herod, crowned, lies in bed, holding up an apple in his left hand; his right wrist is held firmly (with two hands) by a young man, his cousin, to prevent the suicide Herod is contemplating with the knife in his hand. A couple, presumably his sister Salome and her husband, stand behind the bed as usual, but an interesting realistic detail has been added in the third figure behind the bed - a man holding up a urine bottle, the typical medieval doctor (note also the medieval chair-cum-chamber-pot by Herod's bed). The scene takes place in a fifteenth-century Flemish interior with tiled floor and glazed rounded windows, but the details of the suicide are from Josephus via Comestor.

Another entirely different interpretation of Herod's suicide appears in a sixteenth-century French manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale.<sup>51</sup> The relative miniature contains four scenes: the Adoration

of the Magi on the left, the Massacre of the Innocents on the right, the Death or Suicide of Herod in the middle ground, and the Flight to Egypt in the background (*fig. 267*). Herod is not represented as ill in bed, but fully clothed and crowned and sitting on his throne. He has plunged a dagger into his breast and the attendant by his side has been too late to stop him, evidenced by the large winged devil on his other side who is carrying off his soul. This interpretation of Herod's suicide must have been the one adopted by the writers of vernacular drama in France, as this manuscript is of the *Mystère de la Passion*, played at Valenciennes in 1544. Individual sets and costumes would have been needed in order to present the historical suicide of Herod in the mystery cycle, but as this event was not so significant in the grand design of the cycle, he was made to commit suicide on the spot, immediately after he ordered the Massacre of the Innocents. And so he is represented here killing himself while enthroned and accompanied by attendants, just as the same event was presented in Latin liturgical drama four centuries earlier (see chapter 7).

## 2. Bible Illustrations

Although Herod's suicide attempt is not generally illustrated in Bibles which contain New Testament illuminations other events from his life are depicted. The *Biblia Sacra* from the Yates-Thompson manuscripts contains two small marginal scenes at the beginning of Matthew, a Tree of Jesse and the Massacre of the Innocents with Herod presiding with a scimitar<sup>52</sup> (*fig. 268*). The Tree of Jesse was very often painted at the beginning of Matthew, the Book of the genealogy of Christ, but it was most unusual for an artist to chose Herod and the Massacre as the only other subject to illustrate the beginning of this gospel. The Adoration



of the Magi was a much more popular subject. Sandra Hindman has discovered two more unusual illustrations of events related to Herod used to fill in the chronological gap between the Massacre of the Innocents and the events after Christ's return in illustrated Bibles.<sup>53</sup> In the Vienna Bible Herod's four sons stand before the bishop requesting the division of Judea into four parts<sup>54</sup> (the multiplicity of wills left by Herod, from different dates, caused much scheming and confusion among his heirs); in the Brussels Bible the head of Antipater is brought to Herod (Herod's order for his son Antipater's death was his last official act, issued from his death-bed).<sup>55</sup> Both of these miniatures occur in the Bibles between illustrations of the Massacre of the Innocents and Christ Among the Doctors, and both deal indirectly with events associated with Herod's death. A third, event, the killing of the philosophers, was depicted in a Bible Historiale produced in Bruges, c.1470, possibly for the exiled Edward IV.<sup>56</sup> This is volume four of L'Histoire Scolastique or Historica Scholastica by Comestor translated into French by Guyant des Moulins. On folio 240, rubrics explain the relevant illumination and introduce the text: *Comment herodes fist / mourir deux des maistres / de la loy et pluseurs / des juyf3 quy avoyent oste laigle dor quil avoit / mis sur le portail du temple.* In fact, Herod is not present in the illumination. One figure lies on the ground, beheaded and another kneels in prayer, blindfolded as a courtier-soldier prepares to strike off his head with an upraised sword. On the right, two more figures in short tunics stand, hands bound, accompanied by another courtier-soldier. The scene is outdoors with a river and mountains in the background. The text tells of how Herod, in the throes of his illness, was troubled by the Jewish philosophers who incited the

young Jews to pull down the golden eagle Herod had erected at the gate to their Temple. Herod ordered the philosophers and the leaders executed (Josephus says they were burned alive). This was the only incident chosen for illustration among the long detailed text relating to Herod in this very large manuscript.

### 3. The Evil of Herod

Artists of the late Middle Ages introduced some new techniques for emphasizing the evil nature of Herod. One of the more obvious was used by the illuminator of a Book of Hours in Trinity College, Cambridge produced for an East-Anglian patron c.1400-1420.<sup>57</sup> In the Massacre scene, which occurs in the initial for Compline, Herod sits on a cushioned throne covered with a red and gold brocaded canopy. He wears rich robes and a gold crown over a phrygian cap; his long white hair and curly beard add to the impressive figure who watches the Massacre take place outdoors on a flower-bedecked meadow. The background, however, is not naturalistic; it is painted red with alternating diagonal rows of golden scroll-work and script which contains the phrase *hostis herodis impius* in every line.<sup>58</sup> This figure of the elegant, powerful King then is counterpointed by the insistent invective of the inscriptions surrounding him.

Another technique for emphasizing the evil of Herod's deeds was the use of typological parallels from the Old Testament. Such representations were extremely common in such works as the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* and the *Biblia Pauperum*, discussed in chapter 8. The latter work supplied a type, Queen Athaliah, which was used in several Books of Hours to replace or parallel the appearance of Herod. A late fifteenth-

century Flemish Horae, which belonged to Philip the Fair, preserves this iconography.<sup>59</sup> Facing the Hour of Nones (fol. 195v) the Massacre is presented as a crowded city scene but without Herod, while in roundels in the margin, Queen Athaliah supervises the massacre of the royal children, and an unidentified King watches as soldiers behead three martyrs. For the Hour of Nones, Herod ordering the Massacre is the subject of the main illustration, while roundels below show a soldier finding Moses in a corpse-filled river, and the interview of Moses with Pharaoh when the child throws the crown to the floor - the well-known motif from *Speculum* manuscripts. Another rather unusual early sixteenth-century Flemish Book of Hours preserves a distinct interest in Old Testament types.<sup>60</sup> The Hour of Compline is illustrated by a full-page scene with Queen Athaliah enthroned as she watches an outdoor scene of soldiers killing the royal children; in the margin, several young men, blindfolded, are being beheaded as a King looks on (fig. 269). These scenes replace that of the Massacre, but are reminiscent of the deed of Herod as he attempted to take the life of the Christ-Child by killing all the children of Bethlehem.

A more subtle technique seems to have been used by some artists to discredit Herod by making him appear effete. In an early-fifteenth-century Flemish Horae in the Cambridge University Library, which has suffered damage, Herod appears still crowned as a King but with definite epicene qualities<sup>61</sup> (fig. 270). His head is tilted to one side, the long delicate fingers of his left hand fondle an ornament at his neck while his right hand rests on his thigh; his crossed legs are bare and thus show off his black lacy shoes. The temptation to judge this miniature as an attempt to present the effete Herod, and not simply as

an exercise in a different stylistic mode, must be supported by comparisons with hundreds of other depictions of Herod in medieval art, among which it stands out as having that quality. This type of representation is found in other media as well. A predella panel in Stuttgart by the Master of Frankfurt presents a Massacre scene which Herod views from a balcony.<sup>62</sup> Again he wears his crown, over a Flemish hat, and holds a sceptre in his left hand out over the edge of the balcony. But he is posed in a sensuous curve so that his body leans to the right and then his head is tilted to the left. He is accompanied by three men, one of whom is very plump and sensuous. (This soft figure is balanced by that of one of the mothers who has a soldier by the throat from behind and is about to hit him over the head with her wooden shoe.) One other example, may perhaps, be mentioned from yet another media, the early sixteenth century oak panels, probably from the Abbey of Jumièges in Normandy, now in the Cloisters Collection, New York. The panels are carved with a long series of scenes from the Life of the Virgin and of Christ, including a Massacre scene. In this depiction Herod is a man of sharp features in a thin face; he absent-mindedly strokes his long curled beard with his left hand while he dangles a sceptre in the other hand and displays not very much interest in the scene before him. He looks off into the distance and seems to be thinking of other things. This effete type of Herod is quite distinct from the more usual type who wields a sword, wears armour and kills children himself; the illustrations suggest artistic attempts to stress yet another unpleasant aspect of Herod.

#### 4. Herod and the Magi

In late medieval manuscripts, Herod does continue to appear with

the Magi. Such illuminations, however, are rare and usually subsidiary to other full-page depictions, appearing in the background of the main scene, in roundels, in the margin<sup>63</sup> or in bas-de-page decorations.<sup>64</sup> One Book of Hours in Baltimore is exceptional in that it devotes equal space to each of three events in the story of the Three Magi: their Meeting, their Appearance before Herod, and the Adoration.<sup>65</sup> The meeting is depicted across the top of the page and then the other two scenes are presented beside each other, recalling earlier schemes of using the Three Magi as a common factor in two parallel scenes, before the Virgin and before Herod. One late fifteenth-century Horae even includes a scene showing the Magi's servants packing up their camels (*fig. 120*), but again this is in a subsidiary position in the bas-de-page, below the Adoration.<sup>66</sup> Herod's association with the Magi is kept quite subordinate to other events in late medieval Books of Hours. He does appear with the Magi in a late fifteenth century French manuscript, the *Mystère de la Passion* of Arras<sup>67</sup> (*fig. 248*). He greets the Kings who respectfully remove their crowns and kneel to him. Only Herod's attendant reveals any uneasiness in this rather simple miniature, as he raises his hand in horror at the realization of the Magi's journey. This manuscript also contains a scene rare in fifteenth-century art, that of Herod surrounded by his scribes and counsellors (*fig. 249*). The nature of the manuscript explains the occurrence of this unusual iconography; it is not a Book of Hours but a Passion play with hundreds of illuminations incorporated into the text for the most important episodes of the drama.

##### 5. Grotesque Depictions of Herod

At the end of the medieval period some rather grotesque depictions

of Herod began to appear, especially in Italian work. The painting in Saint Agostino, Siena, of the Massacre of the Innocents, executed in 1482 by Matteo di Giovanni de Bartolo, is a good example.<sup>68</sup> Over a crowded, cruel scene of brutal killing, Herod presides from a raised throne on the right (*fig. 271*). His fiendish face is seen in profile so that his hooked nose, pointed beard, and sharp features are accentuated. He is given a swarthy complexion and ogreish gestures as he obviously enjoys the scene before him. In the background is a triumphal arch dedicated to Herod, and beneath it Herod's children take a viperish delight in the cruel scene before them. Herod is no longer human here, but has become grotesquely villainous. The painting of this scene has been related to an historical event by art historians who also praise the technique of the painter.

His work possesses a certain originality and descriptive power, at times lyrical and at times somewhat crudely dramatic. The famous scenes of the Massacre of the Innocents are typical of his work. Crowded with figures, whose expressions are distorted in an attempt to create a dramatic effect and shown in a state of confusion and panic, they are nonetheless, connected with each other through the continuity of line which was the artist's personal version of Pollaiuolo's dynamic quality. This scene of horror is related to a real incident which took place in 1480, when the Turkish Grand Vizier ordered the defenders of the city of Otranto in Apulia to be slaughtered when they refused to be converted to Islam. The picture is also closely related to the religious plays which were so fashionable at the time . . . The composition is orderly and centres upon a perspective dominated by the cruel figure of Herod. 69

A later Italian work, a sixteenth-century Book of Hours in the Bodleian, presents a different but equally grotesque view of Herod.<sup>70</sup> The Hour of Compline is illustrated by an unusual scene, Christ and the Doctors; in one of the roundels in the margin, executed in black and grey, is a Massacre scene in which Herod, though crowned, appears not as a Turkish tyrant but as the figure of Death. He stands at the top of four steps,

sword in hand, watching his soldiers massacre children, but he is thin and naked with only a thin scarf over his loins. This reminds one of the Bosch triptych of c.1495 in the Prado, Madrid, the Adoration of the Magi, in which that enigmatic figure appears in the doorway of the stable behind the Magi. Many theories have been put forward regarding the identification of this figure, but E. H. Gombrich has convincingly argued that he must be Herod.<sup>71</sup> The ulcerous sore on his leg conforms with the account of Herod's disgusting skin disease in the *Historia Scholastica*, and, as the Biblical account makes clear, Herod is the only other person besides the Magi who had an interest in the new-born Child at the time of their visit. Gombrich concludes, 'It is Herod, therefore, who, in my interpretation, stands in the shadows of the stables in the midst of his scribes and tries to spy out the Christ-child. To avoid suspicion he has picked up the King's tiara as if he were a page. Such a representation, it is true, would be unique in the history of Christian painting, but so are many other of Bosch's inventions.'<sup>72</sup> Thus this weird figure, the product of an enigmatic and ambiguous artist, joins the other grotesque depictions of Herod the Great, appearing in late Medieval and early Renaissance Art.

Religious works of art relating to Herod in the late medieval period tend to reproduce familiar scenes without much experimentation or, indeed, creativity. The range of scenes depicted was narrowed down to deal almost exclusively with the Massacre of the Innocents. Naturally enough, contemporary architecture and costume was introduced, but the only new iconographic elements involved moving the Massacre outdoors, into the countryside with Herod presiding on horseback, dressed in armour, and then into the streets of the cities and towns, with Herod present or watching from balconies or towers. One new apocryphal episode

involving Herod's son was introduced in the late fifteenth century. Attempts at expressing Herod's evil were rather weak, deteriorating into the use of grotesque and enigmatic. Only stained glass maintained a vital and vigorous iconography for Herod the Great.

## II. Secular Art

Illustrations of Herod appear in manuscripts of two secular works in the fifteenth century. These are not particularly exciting or innovative depictions of Herod the Great, but it is of interest to note that Herod was being included in pseudo-historic works as well as religious ones.<sup>73</sup>

### A. The Travels of Sir John Mandeville

One manuscript of the Travels of Sir John Mandeville (written 1366) produced at the beginning of the fifteenth century includes a bas-de-page representation of the Three Herods, all labelled, on folio 23.<sup>74</sup> On the right stands *Herod Ascolonites*, in a long pink robe and gold crown. He holds nothing in his hands but both are raised in conventional gestures of conversation. In the centre stands *Herod Antipas*, in a short red tunic and blue tights. He carries a large sceptre and at his feet lies a head (of John the Baptist). The third figure on the right is *Herod Agrippa*, who wears a three-quarter length blue robe and points to a similar head at his feet (that of St. James). The text of these fantastic travels lingers over the story of the first Herod:

Kyng herodes yat let sle ye innocents. Yis herodes was ful wyckyd man and fel ffor he ferst sle his owen wyff yt he loved wel and for gret love þat he hadde to her. When she was ded he byheld here and waxe out of his wytte and so was



he longe and siben he cam aȝeyn to hym self and þenne sle he eke is cheldren yitt he gat by yt wyff and þen he let sle yat oþer wyff and a son þat he got on her, and when he saw yt he sholde dye he sente for his soster and alle ye gret lordes of ye contre and let put alle ye gret lordes in a tour and seyde to his soster he wyste well þat men of yt contre wold make no sorwe for hym when he wer deed and yerfore he leet her swer yt she sholde let smyte of þe hedes of all ye lordes when he were deed and yen sholde all ye contre make sorwe for his deþ and all noȝt. An þus makyd he his testament. But his soster wolde noȝt fulfille hit ffor as sone as he was deed she delyveryd alle ye lordes and bade hem go home to her owen places, and tolde hem what her broþer wolde yt she hadde ydo wiþ hem. And ye shal understonde yt þer were þre herodes of gret name. Yis of wham y spak now was ycalled *ascolonite*. And he lete smyte of ye hede of seynt john ye baptiste was herodes *antipas*. And herodes *agrippa* lete sle seynt Jame.

Herod's tragic family affairs are stressed, especially his great love for his wife, Mariamme, whom he nevertheless killed, along with her sons. This story of his passionate love for Mariamme seems to have gained a certain amount of popularity at this time.

## B. Boccaccio

### 1. De Casibus Mulieribus

The Death of Mariamme was one of the incidents chosen for illustration in an early fifteenth-century French translation of Boccaccio's *De casibus Mulieribus*, entitled *Des cleres et Nobles Femmes*.<sup>75</sup> Not only Herod, but his wife Mariamme, are now appearing in secular manuscripts. The murder in this case takes place outdoors in the meadows (fig. 272). Mariamme is crowned (she is Queen of the Jews) and wears a long red robe as she stands, composed and beautiful, hands crossed in front of her breast in prayer. Behind her a man swings an axe ready to behead her. The text is, of course, sympathetic towards her cause;

it treats of her distinguished lineage, her great beauty, virtue and courage, and of Herod's insanely jealous love towards her. Her sorrows and difficulties are listed; Herod's enforced visit to Egypt to meet Antony and explain the death of Aristobulus, Mariamme's brother (whom Antony fancied and Herod had killed through jealousy of his great beauty and popularity) is detailed, including the secret orders left for Mariamme's death in case Herod was killed in Egypt by Antony or Octavian. The wicked plotting of Herod's mother and sister against Mariamme is described and the biography ends with an explanation against Herod's ridiculous madness, and wonder that a King who was very wise in other matters should grieve at the uncertain pleasure of others and be so jealous of events after his own death.<sup>76</sup>

## 2. De Casibus Virorum Illustrium

Two French versions of Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium* were produced by Laurent de Premierfait in the early fifteenth century and proved very popular.<sup>77</sup> Scores of manuscripts still survive, entitled *Les Cas des Malheureux Nobles Hommes*. In this encyclopaedic work Herod has a place in Book VII, Chapter 2. Often the beginning story of each Book was illustrated, and occasionally others in the central sections, so that illustrations could be fairly equally spread throughout these huge manuscripts.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the chapter on Herod, King of the Jews was not often illustrated, coming second in the Book. One manuscript in the British Library does, however, have an illustration for the passages on Herod.<sup>79</sup> It presents the same incident as the Bible referred to above (MS Royal 15 D.I), that is, the execution of the two philosophers. But here a different interpretation is given to the means of death. On

the left, two men in white robes hang from a gibbet, from which the executioner descends by means of a ladder. In the centre a crowned King, Herod, points up to the hanging figures with his right hand and holds a scroll in his left hand. A large group of men in tall dark hats and short doublets over hose watch, the foremost two being engrossed in conversation. They are too dignified and elegantly attired to be the other guilty Jews about to be executed; they are probably meant to be Herod's courtiers. His walled city is visible in the background. This is not an historically accurate rendering of the death of the philosophers, as Herod was supposed to be mortally ill in bed at the time he gave the command for their execution, but it is an artistically lively interpretation. However, the fall of Herod, or rather his last fatal illness, is sometimes said to have been a direct result of his trouble with the philosophers over the golden eagle, and so this composition is not unsuitable.<sup>80</sup> The manuscript is unusual, in this choice of event to illustrate the life of Herod, but this is probably a reflection of its secular bias.

Secular manuscripts dealing with Herod are not numerous, but the ones that have survived tend to introduce personal aspects of Herod's life, especially his great love for Marimne whom he married but subsequently killed. Indeed she receives independent treatment by Boccaccio and also by the Knight of the Tour-Landry, although manuscripts of the latter work do not tend to be lavishly illustrated. There is no movement towards grotesque representations of Herod evident in secular art, as there was in religious art.

## Conclusion

The art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries still includes representations of Herod the Great, but with a few exceptions, the iconographic treatment of this figure is generally rather stereotyped. The great exception to this, however, is the English stained glass of the fifteenth century. All of the occurrences of Herod, in stained glass, in Norwich, York and Fairford, reveal daring new interpretations of Herod's active role in the Massacre of the Innocents or of his direct association with the devil. No artist in any other media, so far as is known, showed Herod actually killing children himself. The demon-crown in the York glass is much more effective in relating Herod to the devil than that in the Abingdon Apocalypse and more significant in that it appears independent of other influences such as the Beasts and Antichrist figures in that manuscript. In general, manuscript illuminations were more conservative. No Byzantine works of this period seem to have examples of Herod scenes, but an extraordinary Gospel Book from Ethiopia, dating from the beginning of the fifteenth century, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, includes an extended Nativity Cycle, including a scene inscribed, 'Herod, how he killed the Infants'<sup>81</sup> (*fig. 273*). The illumination has an internal inscription 'Rachel when she wept for her children', and the iconography of Rachel is powerfully reminiscent of earlier Ottonian manuscripts. Herod sits on a rough wooden throne, his soldiers go about their tasks with twisted mouths, and the babes are strangely misshapen and adult-faced. The painting is lively but somewhat crude. This manuscript has undergone no Western influence; the cycle of illuminations was probably borrowed from oriental non-Ethiopian sources, perhaps Armenian and also the Paris

Bibliothèque Nationale MS Copte 13 (discussed in chapter 5), a Bohairic-Arabic Gospel of 1179-1180.<sup>82</sup>

Herod scenes occurred in various media, secular as well as religious. It is perhaps surprising to find the Massacre scene among the Nativity and Epiphany scenes in the decorative carvings on the ivory forepillar of a fifteenth-century French harp in the Louvre<sup>83</sup> (fig. 274). This instrument was made for a French prince and its twenty-five strings conform to the number given by Guillaume de Machaut in his *Dit de la harpe*, suggesting that it was not a mere ornament, but probably meant for performance. The secular manuscripts of the fifteenth century broaden the scope of incidents from the life of Herod, to be illustrated, but it must be admitted that the literature of this period is of more interest than the art when it involves the iconography of Herod the Great. Stylistically the art becomes more varied and responds more to the demands of (probably) secular patrons, but the essential iconography becomes more static and 'orthodox'.

## CONCLUSION

This study of Herod the Great has extended over a wide range of materials and disciplines in its attempt to explore and understand the attitudes of medieval artists and writers towards Herod. It has revealed that, in spite of the popularity and availability in the Middle Ages of the works of the first-century historian, Flavius Josephus, who dealt in great detail with the career of Herod, later writers and artists presented a version of Herod the Great which was a distortion of the historical figure based on a pejorative selection of facts. Artists of the Early Christian period and of the Eastern Byzantine tradition portrayed him as they did other Roman emperors, as a nimbed and dignified figure, surrounded by attributes of power and prestige. However, early patristic writers soon presented a view of Herod based essentially on Biblical and apocryphal sources and emphasizing the role of Herod as the first persecutor of the Christ-Child and the cruel murderer of the Holy Innocents. The liturgy of the Western Church stressed this aspect by including in the Feast of the Holy Innocents verses from the Apocalypse associating Herod with the seven-headed dragon, and giving the apocalyptic number of slain Innocents (144,000) who cried out to God for vengeance against their murderer from the very altar of the church.

Herod was thus presented as a thoroughly and irretrievably evil king and was quickly associated with devils and other forces of hell. In the twelfth century, the iconography of Herod the Great in stained glass, sculpture, wall paintings and illuminated manuscripts began to reveal this association with evil by introducing devils to accompany him and a sword for him to wield in place of his sceptre. These motifs, along with other indications of Herod's evil, were developed in the art of the thirteenth

and fourteenth centuries with subtle variations. Similar attention was also given to other participants in the Herod scenes such as the mothers and soldiers. Gradually the range of scenes in which Herod appeared was expanded to include events surrounding his attempted suicide and sordid death. The artists of this period showed great imaginative ingenuity in their efforts to portray the hypocrisy, cruelty and evil that surrounded this king. Fifteenth-century art lacked this iconographic variety although it was becoming stylistically more sophisticated. Herod's love for Mariamme occasionally became the subject for secular manuscript illumination at this time, but again, only the negative details, such as his impulsive order for her execution and his immediate regret and madness, are portrayed.

The same process of defamation took place in medieval literature. Liturgical drama developed the character of Herod to an extraordinary degree, elaborating on the sparse account in the Gospel of Matthew to provide him with original but apt dialogue and actions. He was usually shown giving the Magi a royal reception but occasionally he revealed his temper by confiscating their gifts and throwing them into prison because they angered him. His scribes also had to endure his rage as he threw their books on the ground; and messengers were threatened with death simply for bringing unpleasant news. It was in the vernacular drama that Herod received the most remarkable treatment, but the Latin church plays had already developed his character to a considerable degree in the twelfth century. No other figure in liturgical drama received such extended treatment.

Non-dramatic English literature is not very rich in Herod material. Religious literature continued to give the traditional interpretation of his Meeting with the Magi and his part in the Massacre of the Innocents, occasionally introducing original details. Generally this literature is

remarkable for its conservativeness and continuity, with the exception, of course, of the *Cursor Mundi*, which gives an interpretation of Herod's death unique in English literature. Even secular literature which dealt with Herod did so from a condemnatory moral point of view, whether dealing with his personal life, his fall from greatness or his death.

The most extensive and original treatment of Herod the Great in medieval art and literature took place in the vernacular drama of England and of the Continent. The range of attitude towards this king in drama was very wide indeed: he was a courteous host who offered wine and refreshment to his guests in French and German plays; he was a glorious representative of opulent kingship in Italian pageants; he threatened and schemed in Italian and Spanish drama; but in England he was a strange mixture of paradoxical qualities. At times he became a comic, ranting fool but, for all his extravagant boasting and fierce threatening, he was essentially an evil, and therefore a frightening, character. The English playwrights showed great scope, if little literary discipline, in their treatment of Herod. He provided a focus of criticism in fifteenth-century England for all bombastic and arrogant tyrants, as well as an embodiment of the sins of pride akin to Lucifer's and anger leading to despair. Death was the ultimate result of these deadly sins and, indeed, the English playwrights portrayed the death of Herod in several of the mystery cycles, continuing the traditions of patristic writers and twelfth-century artists by having him carried off to hell by demons. The English Herod plays are richer and more complex than earlier literature and art but, like all artistic media in the Middle Ages, they show the same tendency to make Herod arrogant and angry, excessively proud and irremediably damned.

No recognition is given in medieval art and literature to Herod's accomplishments as a successful leader of the Jewish people, or as a



builder of extensive cities and palaces or even for his rebuilding of Solomon's vast Temple. Recently, archaeologists have uncovered evidence of Herod's extensive building programmes and are reassessing the role of Herod the Great in the history of the Middle East, but for medieval artists and writers, he was identified solely by the unfortunate fact that Christ was thought to have been born during his reign. During the period covered by this study, the church was responsible for the organization and dissemination of knowledge as well as the iconographic programme for the arts, and so it was inevitable that the portrayal of Herod the Great should have been influenced by the official attitude of the Christian church rather than by the accounts of a Jewish historian.

NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The nature of this thesis with its extremely wide range over a variety of disciplines and a diversity of sources makes a comprehensive bibliography impracticable. All primary sources, including manuscripts, are cited in full in the notes. In addition, a selective bibliography of secondary sources is presented at the beginning of each chapter where it is relevant or useful. Most of the relevant manuscript catalogues are listed before Chapter 8.

CHAPTER I

## Select Bibliography

## Reference Works

Apocryphal Gospels, Acts and Revelations transl. Alexander Walker, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. XVI (Edinburgh, 1870).

The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament ed. R.H. Charles (Oxford, 1913).

The Apocryphal New Testament ed. M.R. James (Oxford, 1924).

Dictionary of the Bible ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh, 1900).

Encyclopaedia Judaica ed. Cecil Roth (Jerusalem, 1972).

New Catholic Encyclopaedia Catholic University of America (New York, 1967).

## Secondary Sources

Doob, Penelope, Ego Nabugodnosor: A Study of Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature Ph.D. dissertation (Stanford Univ., 1969) published as Nebuchadnezzar's Children (New Haven and London, 1974).

Grant, Michael, Herod the Great (London, 1971).

Jones, A.H.M., The Herods of Judaea (Oxford, 1938).

Josephus trans. Ralph Marcus et al., Loeb Classical Library, nine volumes (London, 1927-63).

Perowne, Stewart, The Life and Times of Herod the Great (London, 1956).

## Notes

1. Penelope Doob, Ego Nabugodnosor: A Study of Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature Ph.D. dissertation, (Stanford Univ. 1969), p. 306. This dissertation has been published under the title Nebuchadnezzar's Children (New Haven and London, 1974). The thesis has been quoted for material which has been omitted from the book.

2. Stewart Perowne, The Life and Times of Herod the Great (London, 1956) p. 15. For other modern historians, see F.W. Farrar, The Herods (London, 1898), Louis Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews (New York, 1909-38), and Michael Grant, Herod the Great (London, 1971).
3. Perowne, op cit., p.77.
4. A large number of medieval manuscripts of Josephus' Bellum Judaicum and Antiquitates Judaicae survive, attesting to their great popularity in the Middle Ages. Records show that there were copies of Josephus in Whitby, Rievaulx, Leicester and Peterborough in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; see Cartularium Abbathiae de Whiteby ed. J.C. Atkinson, Surtees Society, Vol. 69 (1878) p. 341; Bibliotheca Aelrediana : Instrumenta Patristica Vol. 2 (The Hague, 1962) p. 154 (items 54 and 55 of the thirteenth century Rievaulx catalogue); Catalogue of the Library of Leicester Library ed. M.R. James, Leicester Archaeological Society Vol XIX (1937), item 354; Lists of Manuscripts formerly in the Peterborough Abbey Library, (Oxford, 1926) for reference to 'Iosephus, antiquitatum' (MS Bod. Lib. 163, f. 261). However after the twelfth century his works were best known through Comestor's Historia Scholastica and Vincent de Beauvais' Speculum Historiale both of which rely heavily on Josephus for information on Herod. See Chapter 9.
5. Doob, op cit., Chapter IV, presents a similar synopsis although it is deliberately selective to emphasize her theory that Herod is a "Mad Sinner".
6. See A.H.M. Jones, The Herods of Judaea (Oxford, 1938), pp. ix-xii; Perowne, op cit., p. 16; H. St. John Thackeray, Josephus the Man and the Historian (New York, 1929), and "Josephus" in Encyclopedia Judaica, (Jerusalem, 1971), Vol. 10, cols. 251-265.
7. Perowne, op cit. , p. 16.
8. Jones, op cit., p. xi.
9. Perowne, op cit. , p. 17.
10. Jones, op cit., p. xii.
11. The relevant portion of the works are Book I of The Jewish War transl. H. St. John Thackeray, in Josephus Vol. II (London, 1927) and Books XIV-XX of Jewish Antiquities transl. Ralph Marcus (Book XIV), Ralph Marcus and Allen Wikgren (Books XV-XVII), and Louis Feldman (Books XVIII-XX), in Josephus Vols. VII, VIII, IX, (London, 1943, 1963, 1965). These works are hereafter referred to as War or Ant., and references will be made to book, chapter and section.
12. Ant., XIII ix 1. The judiazing of the Idumaeans is not mentioned in the Jewish War.
13. Ant., XIV xv 2. Antigonus was defeated and beheaded and Herod then became king in fact as well as in name. He had been appointed three years earlier in 40 B.C.
14. ANT., XX viii 7. The Jews were quarrelling with the Syrians over civic rights in Caesarea. The Jews claimed precedence because the founder of Caesarea was their king Herod, who had been of Jewish descent. The Syrians admitted what they said about Herod.

15. Vol. 8, col. 384.
16. War, I viii 9. Herod had three brothers, Phasaël, Joseph and Pheroras, and a sister, Salome.
17. There seems to have been a controversy over whether Herod was fifteen or twenty-five when he was made governor of Galilee. Ralph Marcus refers to this in footnote d for this section: 'As Otto points out Herodes p. 18, Josephus' emphasis on Herod's youth indicates that "fifteen years" is not a scribal error for "twenty-five years". However, Josephus is inconsistent; in Ant., XVII 148 he tells us Herod was about seventy when he died (in 4 B.C.), hence he must have been about twenty-five in 47 B.C. [when he was made governor.]'
18. Josephus himself was of Hasmonean background, and therefore showed particular interest in the members of that royal family of the Jews, including Mariamne.
19. De Bello Judaico (Paris 1524), Bk. I, ch. XXVII, fol. XIII.
20. War, I xxii 1, 2: Herod's 'ill-fated [domestic] career originated with a woman to whom he was passionately attached, 'Mariamne. "Herod's passion for Mariamne the consuming ardour of which increased from day to day" blinded him to various domestic troubles, and also to her hatred for him.
21. See Maurice Jacques Valency, The Tragedies of Herod and Mariamne (New York, 1940).
22. Dictionary of the Bible ed. James Hastings, (Edinburgh, 1900), Vol. 2, p. 357.
23. Cassiodorus, Historia Partita, PL 69, col. 884.
24. War. I xiv 4. The friendship between Herod and Antony had mixed motivations. In War, I xiv 4, Anthony's motives for giving Herod the kingship are 'compassion at his reversal of fortune....recollection of Antipater's hospitality, but above all by the heroic qualities of the man.... Besides admiration for Herod, he had as strong an incentive in his aversion for Antigonus their enemy'. Josephus adds in Ant XIV xiv 4 a further motivation for Antony in 'the money which Herod promised to give him if he became king'.
25. Encyclopedia Judaica (Jerusalem, 1971) p. 6.
26. Ibid.
27. Doob, op cit., p. 315.
28. Matt. 2:1 All Biblical quotations are from the Vulgate.
29. See C.A. Patrides, The Grand Design of God (London, 1972) pp. 20-21. Patrides explains that the other method of chronology, up to the sixth century, was to date all events from the year of the world's creation.
30. Luke 2:1-2.
31. Patrides, op cit., p. 13.

32. Louis Réau, Iconographie de L'Art Chrétien (Paris, 1957), vol. II, pt. II, p. 268.
33. New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York, 1967), vol. 7, p. 532.
34. Louis Réau, op cit., p. 245.
35. Ibid., p. 268. I am indebted to Joy Rutherford for pointing out that a similar motif is to be found in stories about King Arthur. In Malory's Morte Darthur in Malory Works ed. Eugene Vinaver, 2nd edition, (London, 1971), p. 37, at the end of Book I on Merlin, Merlin tells Arthur that someone born on May Day would destroy Arthur and all the land, so Arthur has all the children born of lords and ladies on May Day put to sea. The ship is wrecked and all the children drown but Mordred, who was found and raised by a good man until he was 14 years old.
36. New Catholic Encyclopedia vol. 9, p. 64.
37. See also Perowne, p. 176, who explains that Josephus 'blackened Herod's private life' and gave 'detail after dirty detail' in response to the desire of Berenice, rich, Jewish mistress of his patron, Titus, for posthumous revenge on Herod, who had killed many of her ancestors (She was the granddaughter of Herod's second son by Mariamne I, Aristobulus).
38. Penelope Doob, Nebuchadnezzar's Children (New Haven, 1974), p. 96.
39. New Catholic Encyclopedia vol. 6, p. 1082.
40. Stewart Perowne, op cit., pp. 204-5.
41. Sermo III, 'In Epiphania Domini', PL 183, col. 150.
42. Matt. 2:16.
43. Perowne, op cit., p. 213.
44. This is printed in The Apocrypha and Pseudepigraphia of the Old Testament ed. and transl. R.H. Charles, (Oxford 1913). vol. 2, pp. 407-24.
45. Assumption of Moses 6.2, in Charles, op cit. pp. 423-4.
46. This is printed in the Apocryphal New Testament ed. and transl. M.R. James, (Oxford, 1924, repr. 1972), pp. 38-49 and in Apocryphal Gospels, Acts and Revelations ed. and transl. Alexander Walker, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. XVI, (Edinburgh, 1870), pp. 1-15. Quotations from the apocryphal books will be in English, from one of these two translations, referred to henceforth as James and Walker, as the original texts are not readily available.
47. James, p. 38, calls it original because it was the source for all later apocryphal gospels.
48. Matt. 2:2.
49. Protevangelium XXI, 2, transl. James, op cit. p.47.
50. In all fairness, it should be pointed out that such actions also show him to be the alert ruler and good politician that Réau thought he was.

51. Protevangelium XXII, 1, transl. James, op cit., p. 48.
52. James, Ibid, p. 38. They said that Zacharias was killed because he allowed Mary to take her place among the temple Virgins after the Nativity.
53. See James, pp. 70-79 for an analysis and summary, and Walker pp. 16-53 for full text.
54. See James, pp. 80-83 for an analysis and summary, and Walker pp. 100-125 for full text.
55. Pseudo-Matthew ch. 16, in Walker, pp. 34-5.
56. Ibid ch. 17, p. 35.
57. Arabic Gospel of the Infancy ch. 6, in Walker, p. 102. Walker gives a footnote here directing the reader to Smith's Dictionary of the Bible art, Magi, for this prediction of Zoroastre.
58. Ibid ch. 9, in Walker, p. 103.
59. James, op cit., p. 80.
60. Walker, op cit., p. x of the Introduction.
61. James, pp. 49-70; also Walker pp. 78-99.
62. James, p. 49-57, Walker, pp. 78-89.
63. Walker, p. 90.
64. James, pp. 84-86; Walker, pp. 62-77.
65. Walker, p. 62.
66. Ibid., ch.7, p. 65.
67. Ibid., ch.8, p. 65.
68. Ibid., ch.9, pp. 65-6.
69. James, pp. 460-62; Walker, pp. 373-89.
70. Walker, p. 374.
71. Walker, pp. 468-77.
72. Walker, pp. 471-2.
73. James, pp. 155-6. This is one of several appendices <sup>to</sup> the Acts of Pilate.
74. Ibid., p. 156.
75. Ibid.
76. James, p. 155, states that the manuscript of the Letter of Herod to Pilate dates from the sixth or seventh century. Never are the Herods

so badly confused as in this letter. Indeed, they are rarely confused at all.

77. Edgar Hennecke, transl. New Testament Apocrypha Vol. I., Gospels and Related Writings ed. R. McL. Wilson, (London, 1963), p. 506.

78. The Gospel of Nicodemus ed. H.C. Kim, Toronto Medieval Latin Texts, (Toronto, 1973), ch. IX, p. 24.

79. For a fuller discussion of these ambiguous attitudes see Arnold Williams. The Characterization of Pilate in the Towneley Plays (East Lansing, 1950).

80. Walker, pp. 234-6.

81. Walker, pp. 231-3.

82. Ibid., p. 233.

83. Ibid.

## CHAPTER II

### Notes

1. Hegesippus, De Bello Judaico (Paris, 1510).
2. Justyn Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho Chapter 52, in PG 6, col. 471-800. For English translation, see Writings of Saint Justyn Martyr transl. Thomas B. Falls, Fathers of the Church (New York, 1948), P. 227. As the present writer is not familiar with Greek, English translations have been used for all Greek sources.
3. Julius Africanus, Epistle to Aristides in PG 10, col. 51-64. See Ante-Nicene Christian Library (Edinburgh, 1869), Vol. IX, pt. ii, pp. 168-9 for transl. by S.P.F.Salmond.
4. Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam in PL 15, col. 1606.
5. Ibid., footnote.
6. Exerptionum Priorum Liber Primus in PL 177, cols. 223-6. There is one exception. Ado of Vienne in the ninth century writes, 'Herodes cessante regno ac sacerdotio iudeorum nihil ad eam gentem pertinet utpate antipatri ascalonite et matris cipridis arabia silius a Romanis iudeorum suscepit principatum', in Sex Aetatum Mundi Breves seu Commentarii (Paris, 1522), Chapter XI, fol. CLXIIII, (also printed as Chronicon in Migne, PL, 123, col. 73).
7. See Eusebii Pamphili Opera Omnia (Basle, 1570), pp. 666-72, Liber primus, caput 2-9; this is the translation into Latin by Rufinus. See also PG 20, col. 9-910 for complete text of Ecclesiasticae Historiae. The Herod material is in Book I, chapters 6-8 (cols. 85-106). For an English translation see Eusebius Pamphili Ecclesiastical History Books 1-5, transl. Roy Deferrari in The Fathers of the Church Vol. 19, (New York, 1953).
8. Ibid., p. 56-7. Deferrari adds in a footnote that nothing is known about any Herod of Ascalon.

9. Africanus, Epistle to Aristides, ed. cit., p. 168-9; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History Book I, Chapter 7.
10. Ed. cit., p. 68, n. 13.
11. Ibid, Book I, ch. 8, p. 65.
12. Both of these events are described in Ecclesiastical History Book I, ch. 8, ed. cit., p. 68.
13. Homilia VI, in PL 131, col. 898.
14. Legenda Aurea Jacobus de Voragine, ed. Th. Graesse, (Osnabruck, 1890, repr. 1969), ch. 10, p. 66. The most outstanding example of these motifs in medieval art is the Holkham Bible Picture Book (See Chapter 8; fig. 175).
15. John Taylor, The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden (Oxford, 1966), p. 34.
16. PL 41, cols. 13-804.
17. PL 123, cols. 23-143.
18. Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church ed. F.L. Cross (London, 1956), p. 396, hereafter referred to as ODC. The Arabic version of the Diatessaron is printed in Tatiani Evangeliorum Harmonia Arabice (Rome, 1888).
19. PL 68, cols. 251-358; Herod material is found in cols. 258-261.
20. PL 34, cols. 1041-1220.
21. Ibid., col. 1079.
22. Ibid., col. 1086.
23. Ibid.
24. PL 26, cols. 15-229.
25. Ibid., cols. 26-9.
26. PL 92. cols. 9-131.
27. Ibid., col. 13.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., col. 14.
30. Ibid.
31. PL 92, col. 14.
32. Ibid. The reference to a year and four days is made to explain the date of the Feast of the Holy Innocents which is celebrated on Dec. 28.
33. PL 107, cols. 754-66.
34. Ibid., col. 757.



35. Ibid.
36. Josephus makes several references to Herod's astute use of bribery. It is possible that this is the subject of one of the wall paintings at Lambach (see chapter 6 and fig. 109) where Herod is seen handing over a bag of money to a young man in a secretive manner.
37. PL 107, col. 758.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., col. 762.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., col. 765.
43. Ibid., col. 766.
44. Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam, PL 15, col. 1606.
45. Sermones, PL 17, Sermo viii - Sermo xii, cols. 618-628.
46. Sermo viii, 'De Sancta Epiphania I', PL 17, col. 619.
47. Bruno, Commentaria in Matthaeum, PL 165, col. 79.
48. PL 16, Epistola LXX, cols. 1233-41.
49. See Gen. 35:19: 'Mortua est ergo Rachel, et sepulta est in via ducit Ephratam: haec est Bethlehem'. See also Micah 5:2, quoted in text.
50. PL 16, col. 1256.
51. Typological conventions will be discussed in chapter 8.
52. Sermones De Tempore, PL 38, cols. 995-1248; see also PL 39, cols. 2149-56 for sermon fragments, including a sermon on the Innocents, Sermon CCXX.
53. PL 38, col. 1027.
54. PL 38, col. 1029.
55. Ibid., col. 1033.
56. Ibid., cols. 1031-33.
57. Ibid., col. 1032.
58. PL 76, col. 1110.
59. Ibid., cols. 1110-11.
60. PL 76, col. 1111.
61. Ibid., cols. 1111-1112.

62. Sermo V, PL 57, cols. 851-2. This sermon is also attributed to Haymo in PL 118, col. 80 as Homilia XII, 'De Sanctis Innocentibus'. The suggestion that Herod killed one of his own sons during the Massacre is quite likely a misinterpretation of Eusebius who noted, after discussing the Massacre, that another of Herod's sons was killed (Book I, ch. 8). This should, of course, refer to Antipater. See chapters 9, 10, 11 for this motif in medieval art and literature.
63. See, for example, Leo, Sermo XXXII, 'In Epiphaniae Solemnitate, LI', PL 54, col. 238.
64. Ibid.
65. Sermo CLII, PL 52, cols. 604-607.
66. Ibid., col. 604.
67. Ibid., col. 604-605.
68. Ibid., col. 605.
69. See for example Sermo IV "De Epiphania, deque Innocentum nece, et Muneribus Magorum," PL 65, cols. 732-737.
70. PL 65, col. 734.
71. Homily VIII, PL 155, col. 1329.
72. The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom on the Gospel of St. Matthew transl. George Prevost, Library of Fathers, (Oxford 1852), Part I, Homilies I-XXV, p. 97.
73. Homily VII, p. 97. All quotations are from the translation by Prevost.
74. Ibid., p. 98.
75. Ibid., p. 101.
76. Homily VIII, p. 109.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. Homily IX, p. 118.
80. Homily VIII, p. 110.
81. Homily VII, p. 98.
82. For a fuller discussion of Herod as a madman, see Penelope Doob, Ego Nabugodonosor: A Study of Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature Ph.D. thesis (Stanford University, 1970), ch. 4, "The Mad Sinner: Herod and the Pagan Kings".
83. Sermo XXXI, 'In Epiphaniae Solemnitate, I', PL 54, col. 237.
84. Sermo XXXV, 'In Epiphaniae Solemnitate, V', PL 54, col. 250.

85. PL 178, col. 608.
86. The Writings of Origen, transl. Frederick Crombie, Ante-Nicene Christian Library (Edinburgh, 1869), vol. X, 'Letter Against Celsus,' ch. LXI, p. 464.
87. Chrysostom, op. cit., Homily IX, p. 118.
88. Sermo CL, 'De Fuga Christi in Aegyptum', PL 92, col. 601.
89. Sermo XXXV, 'In Epiphaniae Solemnitate, V,' PL 54, col. 249.
90. Ibid., col. 250.
91. Homilia IX, 'In Die Festo Innocentium', PL 94, col. 51.
92. Sermo XXXVI, 'In Epiphania Solemnitate, VI', PL 54, col. 254.
93. Allegoriae Novi Testamenti, PL 83, col. 118.
94. PL 92, col. 13.
95. Homilia XIV, 'In Nativitate Innocentium', PL 165, col. 763.
96. Homily VII, ed cit., p. 102.
97. Sermo IV, 'De Epiphania, deque Innocentium nece, et Muneribus Magorum,' PL 65, col. 735.
98. Liber de Cardinalibus Operibus Christi, PL 189, col. 1627.
99. Maximus, PL 57, col. 852.
100. See for example Bede, PL 94, col. 52; Haymo, PL 118, col. 82; Rabanus Maurus, PL 107, col. 766; Glossa Ordinaria, PL 114, col. 78.
101. Ant., XVII, xiii 2.
102. Sermo IV, 'De Epiphania, deque Innocentium nece, et Muneribus Magorum, etc.," PL 65, col. 732-737.
103. Ibid., col. 734. It should be noted that Archelaus was not 'primogenitus', first-born, but Herod's fourth son. However, as Herod had killed the first three, Archelaus was the one who succeeded him.
104. Maximus, op. cit. PL 57, col. 852.
105. It is significant that while the sermons of the Early writers are 'Sermones de Tempore', organized according to the Sunday Feasts of the Church year, later medieval sermons are centred more on teaching the prayers and doctrine of the church so that the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Seven Deadly Sins, etc., are more common organizing principles. The audience, of course, was different: previously the sermons were directed to scholars and monks, while later they were heard by the unlearned layman.
106. The Seven Deadly Sins were listed as early as the sixth century by Gregory the Great. For a full treatment of this subject see Morton Bloomfield, The Seven Deadly Sins (Michigan, 1952, repr. 1967).
107. Sermo XXXIV, 'In Die Sanctorum Innocentium', PL 198, col. 316.

108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. Etymologia, Book XX, 7.10.6, PL 82, col. 289.
111. Lewis and Short, A Latin Dictionary, (Oxford, 1958), p. 1325.
112. Penelope Doob, "Ego Nabugodonosor", pp. 332-3.
113. Lewis and Short, A Latin Dictionary, p. 1326.
114. See D.W. Robertson, Jr., Preface to Chaucer (Princeton, 1962), p. 385.
115. Sermo XXXVI, 'In Die Feste Sanctorum Innocentum', PL 198, cols. 328-34.
116. Ibid., col. 331.
117. See S.S. Hussey, 'How Many Herods in the English Drama', Neophilologus 48, (1964), pp. 252-59.
118. Luke 13:32.
119. Matt. 14:1-11.
120. Luke 23:8-12.
121. Ephraim the Syrian, Hymns and Homilies, transl. John Gwynn, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (Oxford 1898), vol. XIII, p. 237.
122. Medieval Bestiaries, of course, see the lion as a symbol of Christ.
123. Maximus, PL 57, col. 852.
124. Adam Scotus, PL 198, col. 331. Underlining by Maximus (or Migne).
125. Remigius of Auxerre, PL 131, col. 898.
126. This Psalm is interpreted by Augustine and Cassiodorus as a reference to the Passion and so the appropriate Herod would be Antipas, but the imagery also refers to all enemies of Christ, including Herod the Great who was the first and most vicious of all. See Glossa Ordinaria in PL 113, col. 874.
127. Sermo XXXVII, 'In Epiphania Domini', in PL 198, cols. 398-9.
128. See Louis Réau, Iconographie de l'Art Chrétien (Paris 1957), vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 245, 269-72.
129. Aurora: Petri Rigae Biblia Verificata ed. Paul E. Beichner, Publications in Medieval Studies, (University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), vol. II 'Nova Testamentum, Evangelium', ll. 665-6. Peter Riga expands the trial of Antipater to a long poetic debate, but otherwise he paraphrases the Historia Scholastica throughout this section.
130. Sancti Gregori Nysseni Episcopi Opera Gr. et lat. (Paris, 1638), vol. 3, p. 341.

131. Sermo CL, 'De Fuga Christi in Aegyptum', PL 52, col. 600.
132. Bruno, Homilia XVI, 'In Nativitate Innocentum', PL 165, col. 763.
133. Pilate also suffered a miserable death according to certain apocryphal accounts. For a description of his suicide and the destruction caused by his corpse see the apocryphal Death of Pilate in The Apocryphal New Testament ed. M.R. James, pp. 157-8.

### CHAPTER III

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## Notes

1. C.R. Morey, Early Christian Art (Princeton, 1953), p. 60.
2. André Grabar, The Beginnings of Christian Art: 200-395 (London, 1967), pp. 102-3.
3. Ibid., p. 102.
4. See Morey, op. cit., p. 61 and Grabar, op. cit., p. 103.
5. Grabar, op. cit. p. 105.
6. One possible exception is the representation of Herod on the ciborium of St. Mark's, to be discussed later.
7. It is significant that neither Louis Réau, Iconographie de l'Art Chrétien (Paris, 1957), nor Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie, edd. Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq, (Paris, 1908-53) have separate entries for Herod the Great in their catalogues, although they both have entries for Herod Antipas and the beheading of John the Baptist. The Princeton Index of Christian Art does, however, have a separate catalogue entry for Herod the Great, although one must consult the entries for the Magi and the Innocents in order to get a complete coverage.
8. Grabar, op. cit., p.2.
9. It seems quite possible that the mosaics of La Daurade, now destroyed, may have included Herod also in their scheme of decoration. See below.
10. Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétien et de Liturgie edd. Fernand Cabrol, and Henri Leclercq. (Paris, 1908-53), henceforward referred to as DACL.
11. Morey, op. cit., passim.
12. Louis Réau, Iconographie de l'Art Chrétien (henceforward referred to as Réau), 6 vols. (Paris, 1957), gives chronological lists of works of art.
13. For a discussion of the dating, see Walter Oakeshott, The Mosaics of Rome (London, 1967), pp. 73-89.
14. Morey, op. cit., pp. 151-2.
15. See Grabar, op. cit., pl. 66, 67, 68, 69.
16. Pseudo-Matthew, ch. XXIV, The Apocryphal New Testament, ed. M.R. James, (Oxford, 1924), pp. 75-6.
17. Emile Mâle, 'Santa Maria Maggiore and the Puzzles of its Dating', The Early Churches of Rome, transl. David Buxton from Rome et ses Vieilles Eglises (London, 1960), ch.4, pp. 60-69.
18. Mâle, op. cit., p. 66.
19. See Heinrich Karpp, Die Mosaiken in Santa Maria Maggiore zu Rom (Baden-Baden, 1966), pl. 26 for colour reproduction.
20. See Joseph Bidez and Franz Cumont, Les Mages Hellenisés, 2 vols. (Paris, 1938).

21. Louis Brehier, L'Art Chrétien (Paris, 1918), p. 60.
22. Jean Paul Richter and A. Cameron Taylor, The Golden Age of Classic Christian Art (London, 1904), pp. 355, 363.
23. Richter and Taylor, op. cit. p. 308.
24. See Grabar, op. cit., p. 197, pl. 213: Medal, Roman Emperor enthroned between Two Bodyguards, Mid-4th century, The Hague, Koninklijk Kabinet, Gold and also p. 193, pl. 208: Medal of Constans I; Constantine the Great and his Sons, Mid-4th century, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Medailles, Gold.
25. Mrs. Jameson, Sacred and Legendary Art (London, 1848), p. 22.
26. M. Didron, Christian Iconography, transl. E.J. Millington, 2 vols., (London, 1851), I, p. 151.
27. Ibid., p. 155.
28. Marguerite van Berchen and Etienne Clouzot, Mosaïques Chrétiennes du IV<sup>e</sup> au X<sup>e</sup> Siècle (Rome, 1924, repr. 1964), p. XLI.
29. Rome, Vatican Library, Rotulus of Joshua, MS Pal. gr. 431; see Morey, pl. 58, 59.
30. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Psalter, MS gr. 139; see Morey, pl. 60, 62, 64, 65.
31. Morey, op. cit., p. 71.
32. Ibid., pl. 59.
33. Ibid., pl. 62.
34. Rome, Vatican Library, Octateuch, MS gr. 746, The Crossing of the Red Sea; see Morey, op. cit., pl. 63.
35. Richter and Taylor, op. cit., p. 363.
36. Pseudo-Matthew, ch. XXII, The Apocryphal New Testament, ed M.R. James, (Oxford, 1924), p. 75.
37. Oakeshott, op. cit., pp. 74-5.
38. See Karpp, op. cit., pl. 25, and pl. 210.
39. Richter and Taylor, op. cit., p. 360.
40. Justin Martyr, 'Dialogue with Trypho', ch. 110, in Justin Martyr, ed. Thomas B. Falls, in The Fathers of the Church (New York, 1948) p. 316.
41. Sermo CLII, 'De infantium nece', PL 52, col. 606.
42. Ibid.
43. Theodosius I was responsible for the Imperial edict establishing Christianity as the State religion in 380.

44. Helen Woodruffe, 'The Iconography and Date of the Mosaics of La Daurade', The Art Bulletin, XIII (1931), pp. 80-104.
45. Ibid., p. 104.
46. Paris, Bib. Nat. MS Lat. 12608: see Woodruffe, op. cit., pp. 83-95.
47. See Lamothe's description of mosaic number 9, reproduced in Woodruffe, op. cit., p. 85.
48. Ibid., p. 84.
49. The "circulo argenteo" seems to be a circlet rather than a nimbus which is described later as "Radio circumdatus in capite" and appears only on Jacob, two of his sons and Christ.
50. The division of the Massacre into two types, and the terminology used for them is that of E.B. Smith, Early Christian Iconography, (Princeton, 1918), pp. 59-68.
51. Florence, Laurentian Library, Syriac Gospel-book of Rabbula, MS Plut. I,
56. For a facsimile, see the Rabbula Gospels edd. C. Cecchelli, G. Furlani and M. Salmi (Olten and Lausanne, 1959).
52. The Rabbula Gospels edd. Cecchelli et al., p. 26.
53. Paris, Bib. Nat. Syriac Bible, MS Syr. 341, seventh century; see Cecchelli et al., op. cit., pl. 19.
54. Morey, op. cit., p. 81.
55. Cecchelli, op. cit., p. 32.
56. The scene in the Rabbula Gospels has been mistakenly identified as the Judgement of Solomon by Leclercq (D.A.C.L., vol. 28, col. 2038) and Macler (F. Macler, 'Raboula-Mlqe' in Mélanges Charles Diehl, II, (Paris, 1930), p. 88). Although the two scenes are often similar in that a king watches while a soldier slays a child in the presence of two women, the Judgement of Solomon would occur inside a palace, not in a grassy meadow, and the wise king would not be so involved in the action nor would the soldier be so violent. The Rabbula Gospels scene must be the Massacre: it illustrates the text beside it, and follows the Nativity above it. The presence of Solomon at the top of the page along with David should not be interpreted as a figure whose life is to be illustrated in the manuscript below, but as an ancestor of Christ, being used to emphasise the lineage of Christ in this book of Matthew, the "Liber Generationis Iesu Christi".
57. DACL, 'Antinoe', vol. 2, cols. 2326, ff. and fig. 791. For a complete description of this underground church, see M. Jean Clédât, 'Notes Archéologiques et Philologiques', Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, ed. M.E. Chassinat, (Cairo, 1902), Vol. II, pp. 41-70. I am indebted to Mr. Bernard Barr of the Minster Library for reading the inscription above the king's throne, which is in Greek and translates to HEROTES. Mr. Barr assures me exchanging a T for a D was not an unreasonable mistake or corruption for that time and place. See also articles by Jean Clédât in Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscription et des Belles Lettres in 1902 and 1904 for the discovery and description of these frescoes in Egypt, and 'Le Monastère et la nécropole de Baouît' in Mémoires de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, Vol. 12 (1904) p. 520.



58. Smith, op. cit., p. 62.
59. One of these soldiers appears to have the head of an ass. The reproduction is taken from a sketch and not a photograph, however, and may reflect the artist's untrained hand working under extremely difficult circumstances as the wall painting is partially hidden. The apparent ass's head probably does not represent either Roman army uniforms, incorporating animal skins worn over the head and shoulders, or Egyptian attempts to represent certain gods through animal masks or head gear.
60. Smith, op. cit., p. 62.
61. Protevangelium, ch. XXII-XXIV, The Apocryphal New Testament, ed. M.R. James, (Oxford, 1924), p. 48.
62. J. Clédat, Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres (1904), p.22; Smith op. cit., p. 62.
63. Smith, op. cit., p. 62.
64. See Edmund Le Blant, Les Sarcophages Chrétiens de la Gaule (Paris, 1886), pl. LVI, no.1.
65. Ibid., p. 147.
66. Smith, op. cit., p.66.
67. Le Blant, op. cit., p. 156.
68. Louis Duchesne, Origines du culte chrétien (Paris, 1925), p. 284.
69. E. Faillon, Monuments inédits de l'apostolat de Sainte Maire-Madeleine en Provence, 2 vols. (Paris, 1859), I, P. 741.
70. Smith, op. cit., p. 67.
71. Ibid., p. 138.
72. Weigand, 'Zur spatantiken Elfenbeinskulptur', Krit. Berichte (1930-31), p. 54. "Die Rolle dieser keltorömischen Gruppe ist bis jetzt in ihrer Wesenheit und ihrer Bedeutung am wenigsten erkannt ...Oestliches und Westliches, Fremdes und Eigenes verbindet sich und erscheint hier in anderer Weise als in der stad-römisch bestimmten kaiserlichen Kunst...Es kann sehr wohl sein, dass die fruhchristliche westliche Gruppe, die wir zu Mailand in Beziehung setzen, ganz oder teilweise in Gallien zu lokalisieren ist; die Frage muss einstweilen offen bleiben". Quoted in A.D. McDonald, 'The Iconographic Tradition of Sedulius', Speculum (1933), vol. VIII, p. 151, n.6.
73. McDonald, op. cit. p. 152.
74. Prudentius, Cathemerinon, for the Epiphany, PL 59, col. 908.
75. DACL, vol. 13, fig. 5857.
76. Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Ivory plaques from a book cover; see DACL, vol. 13, fig. 5860; Smith p. 63, fig. 52; Morey, pl. 143.

77. Milan, Cathedral Treasury, Ivory book cover: Life of the Virgin and Life of Christ, Fifth century; see Morey, pl. 142; DACL, fig. 5858.
78. In the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, there are preserved three sides of an ivory casket (500-525) which came from Werden, Westphalia, which is so similar to the Milan book cover in iconography and sequence of scenes that Smith concludes that the lost panel of this casket must have borne a representation of the Massacre of the Innocents and, of course, it would have been of the smashing type (Smith, op. cit., p. 222).
79. Morey, op. cit., p. 135.
80. Smith, op. cit., pp. 201-6.
81. Ibid., p. 206.
82. Wladimir Dorigo, Late Roman Painting (London, 1971), p. 258.
83. Ibid., p. 259.
84. Ibid., p. 260.
85. Verona, Hypogeum of S. Maria in Stelle, Massacre of the Innocents; see Dorigo, pl. 213.
86. Dorigo, op. cit. p. 261.
87. Pseudo-Matthew, ch. 14, in Apocryphal Gospels, Acts and Revelations, ed. and transl. Alexander Walker, (Edinburgh, 1870), p. 33.
88. DACL., vol. 19, col. 989.
89. The choir mosaic of S. Vitale in Ravenna, depicting Theodora's Offering, uses the motif of the Adoration of the Magi as a decorative device on the Empress' mantle: see Morey, pl. 182.
90. Legenda Aurea, Jacobus de Voragine, ed. Th. Graesse (Dresden and Leipzig, 1846), "De Epiphania Domini", (ch. XIV), pp. 62-6, 87-94.
91. Emile Mâle, L'Art Religieux du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle en France, 4th ed. (Paris, 1919), p. 254.
92. Venice, Cathedral of St. Mark, Ciborium columns; see DACL, vol. 6, fig. 2922-28. See fig. 2926 for Herod.
93. Morey, op. cit., p. 106.
94. Ibid., p. 105.
95. DACL, vol. 6, col. 1601. The inscription for Herod seems from the context to be accurate.
96. Ibid., col. 1603. Leclercq earlier (col. 1602) refers to this figure as "Herode rageur", but this must be a mistake, as there is only one figure of Herod, and the description of him with his chin in his hand is used both times by Leclercq and matches the figure in the reproduction in fig. 2926.
97. Mâle, pp. 254-55, n. 7, points out that artists do not give them crowns until the tenth century.

98. Such association is made in the sarcophagus of Adelpia in the National Museum at Syracuse (c. 340), the casket of S. Nazaro at Milan (c. 400) and the Theodosian sarcophagus of S. Ambrogio at Milan. See Dorigo, op. cit. p. 260.
99. Dorigo, op. cit., pl. 214.
100. Ibid., pl. 212.
101. I am grateful to Dr. Henderson for discussing with me these frescoes and several other works involving Herod described in this chapter.
102. Edmund Le Blant, Les Sarcophages Chrétiens Antiques de la Ville d'Arles (Paris, 1878), pl. XXVI, with description on pp. 43-4.
103. Ibid., p. 43.
104. Le Blant, Sarcophages...Gaule, pl. XXXVI, fig. 2.
105. DACL, vol. 19, col. 1017, no. 36.
106. Ibid., col. 1033, no. 89 and fig. 7481. Because of this identification of the Three Hebrews and the Magi, there has been some confusion between Herod and Nebuchadnezzar. The most outstanding is the difference of opinion over the interpretation of the scene represented in a bronze buckle in the Museum of Charleville (fig. 20). The problem is discussed by R. de Lasteyrie, "Boucle de ceinturon du musée de Charleville", in Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France (1887), pp. 45-48. It is unlikely that the scene represents the Hebrews as they do not turn away from the king. It may be the Magi, shown with pilgrims' staffs. However Emile Mâle, "Les rois mages et le drame liturgique", Gazette des Beaux-Arts (1910) 4<sup>e</sup> période, t. iv, pp. 261-270 points out that the Magi were not shown in art with such staffs until the twelfth century. The buckle has been dated to the seventh or eighth century. It is also uncommon to have the Magi shown with crowns at this date. They are not crowned in the Frank casket. Therefore, this buckle may not in fact represent the Magi before Herod. Certainly the gesture of the seated king touching the bowed head of the man before him is odd. The staffs could, in fact, be croziers. A convincing identification has yet to be offered.
107. Hugo Kehrer, Die Heiligen drei Könige in Literatur und Kunst (Leipzig, 1909), p. 101.
108. DACL, vol. 19, col. 1053.
109. Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Lombard bronze plaque, c. 750; see Kehrer, p. 101, fig. 99; DACL, vol. 19, fig. 7497.
110. Talbot D. Rice, The Beginnings of Christian Art, (London, 1957), p. 58.

#### CHAPTER IV

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## Notes

1. Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (Westminster, [1945]), pp. 1-11 discusses the influence of politics on the early liturgy.
2. For fuller information on Eastern liturgies and texts, see F.E. Brightman, Liturgies Eastern and Western (Oxford, 1896), vol. 1. See also Louis Duchesne, Origines du Culte Chrétien 5th ed., (Paris 1925), and Gregory Dix, op. cit., for comments passim.
3. L. Duchesne, op. cit., pp. 57-58; O.D.C.C., p. 365. For text, see Brightman, op. cit., pp. 464-70.
4. See list of festivals and fasts in F.E. Warren, The Liturgy and Ritual of the Ante-Nicene Church (London, 1912), pp. 143-4.
5. Gustave Reese, Music in the Middle Ages (London, 1940), p. 69.
6. Ibid., p. 69.
7. For text in Latin, see P L 138, 'Missa Aethiopum', cols. 907-28.

8. Ibid., col. 922.
9. Duchesne, op. cit., p. 284, n. 4.
10. Ibid., pp. 115-16.
11. P L 59, cols. 901-914.
12. Ibid., cols. 907-8.
13. Migne prints a 'Glossa Veteres' in which he notes that one of the manuscripts, Vat. A, does have 'Herodes' in place of 'tyrannus'. P L 59, col. 907.
14. Exodus 1:22. This is described at some length in ll. 141-172.
15. A.D. McDonald, 'The Iconographic Tradition of Sedulius, " Speculum, Vol. VIII (1933), p. 152.
16. M. Ferotin, ed., Le Liber Ordinum en usage dans l'église wisigothique et mozarabe d'Espagne (Paris, 1904), p. 451. This book is Vol. V in Monumenta Ecclesiae Liturgica, edd. Ferdinand Cabrol and Henry Leclercq.
17. John Wordsworth, The Ministry of Grace (London, 1901), p. 63.
18. Gregory Dix, op. cit., p. 7.
19. Hippolyte Delahaye, Les Origines du Culte des Martyrs (Brussels, 1933), p. 185.
20. See Wordsworth, op. cit., p. 65 for a brief description of this Calendar.
21. Critical edition with magisterial discussion by G.B. deRossi and L. Duchesne in Acta Sanctorum, Nov., vol. II, part 1 (1894), p. 1-195, with V Kl. Jan. on p. 2; part 2 (1931) contains 'Commentarius Perpetuus' by H. Quentin and H. Delahaye. See p. 13 for V Kal. Ian. (Dec. 28).
22. Wordsworth, op. cit., p. 66 and Duchesne, op. cit., pp. 290-91. See also Les Martyrologes Historiques du Moyen Age: Etude sur la Formation du Martyrologe Romain, Henri Quentin, (Paris, 1908).
23. Acta Sanctorum, Novembris, vol. II, part 1, p. 2. The four manuscripts and their respective entries are: (1) Codex Bernensis: 'bethlē natl s̄orum infantium et lactantium qui sub herode pro x̄po passi sunt; (2) Fragmentum Laureshamensis; 'in bethleem nāt s̄or infantium et lactantium qui sub herode pro X̄po passi sunt; (3) Epternacensis; 'bethlem iuda nt, infantum, and Rich. 'Bethleem natale scorum martyrum infantium et lactantium; (4) Codex Wisseburgensis; 'Bethlem natl s̄orum infantium qui sub herode pro X̄po passi sunt.' The expanded version appears in the Commentary, p. 13.
24. The Syriac Menologion has been published by Duchesne in Act Sanctorum Novembris, vol. II, p. lii. This Menologion was incorporated into the Hieronymian Martyrology, where the festivals of SS. Peter and Paul were transferred, according to Roman custom, to the 29th of June. See Duchesne, op. cit., pp. 281-82.
25. Duchesne, op. cit., p. 282.
26. Biographical Dictionary of the Saints, ed. F.G. Holweck (New York and London, 1924), p. 505.

27. Duchesne, op. cit., p. 284.
28. It is printed in P.L. 55, cols. 21-156; see also the edition by C.L. Feltoe, Sacramentarium Leonianum (Cambridge, 1896).
29. Duchesne, op. cit., pp. 143 ff.
30. P.L. 55, cols. 152-3; (Feltoe, op. cit., p. 166-7.)
31. Ibid., col. 152.
32. Ibid., col. 153.
33. Edmund Bishop, Liturgica Historica (Oxford, 1918), Chapter 1, "The Roman Rite", p.1.
34. Chronologically, the next extant Roman liturgical book is the Gelasian Sacramentary (P.L. 74, cols. 1048-1244). This is the oldest known Roman Mass-book with the feasts arranged according to the ecclesiastical year, dating from the sixth century. It is basically the Roman liturgy and it includes a feast for "In Natal. Innocent." on V Kal. Januar. (P.L. 74, cols. 1060-1061). The office is extremely short, however, and no direct mention of Herod is made, and so the Gelasian Sacramentary contributes nothing to the picture of Herod the Great first presented in the Leonine Sacramentary. Nor does the Missale Francorum, (P.L. 72, col. 318-39) which L. Duchesne groups with the Gelasian Sacramentary as to date and provenance. (p.142-3)
35. Published by L.A. Muratori, Liturgia Romana Vetus (Venice, 1748), Vol.II and P.L. 78, cols. 9-637; critical edition by H.A. Wilson, The Gregorian Sacramentary, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. XLIX (1915). For critical comment see F. Cabrol, "Gregorien (le Sacramentaire)" in D.A.C.L., vol. 12, cols. 1776-96.
36. S.J.P. Van Dijk, 'Papal Schola versus Charlemagne,' Organicae Voces: Festschrift Joseph Smits Van Waesberghe (Amsterdam, 1963), p. 21.
37. Wordsworth, op. cit., pp. 75-6.
38. P.L. 78, col. 35.
39. Ibid.
40. Later, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the bodies of at least three of the Innocents were believed to be buried with SS. Maxim, Julian and Felicity in the basilica of St. Justina in Padua where they were worshipped. See Acta Sanctorum, Augusti, vol. I, p. 111, n.4-7 and Octobris, vol. III, p. 810, n.87.
41. W.H. Frere, Studies in Early Roman Liturgy, Alcuin Club Collections, XXVIII (1930), Vol. I, pp. 25-6.
42. Ildefonso Schuster, The Sacramentary, trans. by Arthur Levelis-Marke, (London, 1924), vol. 1, p. 385.
43. There is a great deal of controversy over the use of this term. See O.D.C.C. "Gallican Rite," pp. 538-39, and Dix, op. cit., p.459 ff. For

- critical discussion of the Gallican liturgy, see H. Leclercq, 'Gallicane (Liturgie),' D A C L vol. 11, cols. 473-593.
44. Printed in P L 72, cols. 225-318 and Muratori, pp. cit., vol. 2. Critical edition by H.M. Bannister, Missale Gothicum: A Gallican Sacramentary, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. LII (1917 for 1916) and LIV (1919 for 1917).
45. P L 72, cols. 234-5.
46. Ibid., col. 235.
47. Ibid.
48. The Bobbio Missal: A Gallican Mass-Book, ed. E.A. Lowe for the Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. IViii (text), (1920). (PL 72, cols. 339-82)
49. Other Gallican books, such as the Missale Gallicanum Vetus and the Masses Published by Mone (PL 138, cols. 863-882) do not include any references to Herod, mainly because these books are fragmentary. However, the Sacramentarium Gallicanum has a 'Missa Sanctorum Infantum' which retains the readings from the Apocalypse and Matthew. (PL 72, cols. 467-8). It then reverts to the Leonine/Gregorian prayers for the Canon of the Mass, the familiar Preface beginning, 'Deus cujus hodierna die praeconium Innocentes martyres non loquendo, sed moriendo confessi sunt...' (PL 72, col. 467). The Holy Innocents praised Christ not in speech but by death-- death at the hands of Herod.
50. It is printed in P L 85, cols. 109-1041, as Missale Mixtum secundum Regulam Beati Isidori, dictum Mozarabes. See also Le Liber Mozarabicus Sacramentorum et les Manuscrits Mozarabes, ed. D.M. Ferotin, Monumenta Ecclesiae Liturgica, vol. VI, (Paris, 1912). For critical comment see F. Cahrol, 'Mozarabé (La Liturgie)', in D A C L, vol. 23, col. 390-491.
51. Le liber Mozarabicus Sacramentorum, ed. D.M. Ferotin, (Paris, 1912) col. 97.
52. PL 85, col. 208.
53. Ibid., cols. 208-9.
54. Ibid., 209.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., col. 210.
57. Ibid.
58. Printed in Missalis Ambrosiani, ed. A. Ratti and M. Magistretti (Milan, 1913), in Monumenta Sacra et Profana, Tom. IV. For critical comment, see Paul Lejay, 'Ambrosien (Rit)', in D A C L, vol. 1, cols. 1373-1442.
59. Missalis Ambrosiani pp. 58-76.
60. Ibid., p. 60.
61. Leofric Missal, ed. F.E. Warren (Oxford, 1883).

62. Wordsworth, op. cit., pp. 99-100.
63. Schuster, op. cit., p. 387. This interpretation is comparatively modern and will be seen to be in conflict with some medieval interpretations to be discussed below, whereby the Innocents were thought to have rested in limbo until the Resurrection.
64. Leofric Missal, ed. F.E. Warren, p. 133.
65. Ibid. 'Omnipotens deus, pro cuius unigenti veneranda infantia infantum innocentum catervas herodes funesti peremit sevitia'.
66. Missale Ad Usum Sarum, ed. Francis Henry Dickinson, (Oxford and London, 1861-1883); The Sarum Missal ed. Wickham Legg, (Oxford, 1916); The Sarum Missal in English, trans. F.E. Warren, 2 vols., (London, 1911).
67. Missale Ad Usum Insignis Ecclesiae Eboracensis: The York Missal, Surtees Society, Vols. 59, 60.
68. The York Missal, Surtees Society, vol. 59, pp. 24-5. The same Sequence appears in the Sarum Missal.
69. PL 78, cols. 937-1372.
70. 'Ordines Romani', in ODCC, p. 990.
71. PL 78, col. 1035.
72. Ibid., col. 1116.
73. PL 105.
74. Ibid., col. 1074.
75. For further examples see E. Martene, De Antiquis Ecclesiae Ritibus (Rouen, first published as 3 vols. in 1700 and 1702 and later published as 4 vols. in 1736), Lib. IV, cap. xiii, sec. xii; Vol. 3, p. 40 in later edition.
76. PL 105, col. 1224. This is also fully explained in his Liber de Ordine Antiphonarii, caput XXI, 'De Epiphania', in PL 105, cols. 1275-76.
77. Ioannes Abricensis, Liber de Officiis Ecclesiasticis in PL 147, cols. 27-62.
78. Ibid., col. 42.
79. Honorius Augustodunensis, Gemma Animae, in PL 172, cols. 646-7.
80. PL 151, cols. 973-1022.
81. Ibid., col. 1006.
82. Ioannes Beletus, Rationale Divinorum Officiorum (Antwerp, 1562), Chapter LXX, 'De Festis Nativitatem Sequentibus', pp. 151, 153.
83. Ioannes Abricensis, op. cit., PL 147, col. 42.



84. Martene, op. cit., vol. III, p. 40 'Festum Innocentium cum Tristitia Signis Celebratur'.
85. Gulielmus Durandus, Rationale Divinorum Officiorum (Lyons, 1515 and 1584).
86. Book VII, chapter XLII, ff. 461-2 (1584 edition).
87. Ibid., f.462.
88. Book III, chapter 18 has been translated by John Mason Neale and Benjamin Webb, The Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments: A Translation of the First Book of the Rationale Divinorum Officiorum written by William Durandus (Leeds, London, Cambridge, 1843), Appendix E, 'On the Four Colours Used in Church Hangings, etc,' pp. 227-33.
89. Rationale Divinorum Officiorum (1584) Liber III, caput xviii, f. 82v, 83r.
90. See n. 82.
91. These are discussed at length in E.K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage (Oxford 1903), Vol. I, chapters XIII-XVII, pp.274-419.
92. Chambers, op. cit., p. 338-9.
93. Ioannes Abricensis, op. cit., PL 147, col. 41.
94. Honorius Augustodunensis, op. cit., PL 172, col. 646.
95. Ioannes Belethus, op. cit., p. 153.
96. Martene, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 39.
97. Chambers, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 340.
98. Breviarum Ad Usam Sarum, ed. F. Procter and C. Wordsworth (Cambridge, 1879, 1882, 1886), vol. 1, col. cccxix-ccxxxii.
99. Ceremonies and Processions of the Cathedral Church of Salisbury, ed. C. Wordsworth, (Cambridge, 1901), pp. 55-7.
100. The York Missal, Surtees Society, vol. 59, 60, (1874 for 1872).
101. Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College Library, MS. 33.
102. The York Missal vol. 1. p. 23.
103. Ibid., p. 24.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. See page 110.
107. Chambers, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 358-62.

108. Daniel Rock, Church of Our Fathers, ed. by G.W. Hart and W.H. Frere, (London, 1905), vol. 4, p. 252. York Minster had 'Una capa de tissue pro episcopo puerorum' and 'novem capae pro puéris'; St. Paul's London had 'una mitra alba cum flosculis breudatis...ad opus episcopi parvulorum... baculus ad usum episcopi parvulorum'; and Lincoln Cathedral had 'a cope of red velvet—ordained for the barn-bishop'. See also Chambers, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 354, 360. J.M. Neale, Essays on Liturgiology and Church History (London, 1863) describes the children's part in this festival and the resultant terminology, Childermas Day, on p. 512.
109. Liber Usualis ed. by the Benedictines of Solesmes, (Tournai, New York, 1914, repr. 1963). The later edition is used here, pp. 427-32, 1167-8.
110. These 'manifestations' are the Adoration of the Magi, the Baptism and the changing of water to wine at the Marriage of Cana, all celebrated on the same day, as the first three revelations of God to man. Liturgiologists claimed that the Baptism took place thirty years exactly, and the miracle of Cana thirty-one years to the day after the Adoration of the Magi. See Honorius of Autun, Gemma Animae, lib. III, cap. xviii, Rupert, De Divin. Offic., lib. III, cap. xxiv, and Durandus, Ration., lib. VI, cap. xvi.
111. John Plummer, Liturgical MSS for the Mass and Divine Office (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, 1964), p.33.
112. Liber Usualis, Introduction, p. lix.
113. Breviarum Romanum ex Decreto SS Concilii Tridentini, restitutum S. Pii V Pontificis Maximi (Rome, 1568; Malines, 1901).
114. Breviarum Monasticum, Pauli V Jussu Editum, (Rome, 1603-1611; Bruges, 1925). This breviary is used by all people under the Rule of St. Benedict. It developed out of the directions given by St. Benedict in chapters 8-19 of his Rule, and was revised by Pope Paul V (1608-1611) on the lines of the Roman Breviary. The Night Office (Matins) has been translated into English: Monastic Breviary: Matins, Society of the Sacred Cross, (Tymaur, Lydhart, Monmouth, 1956).
115. André Wilmart, Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen âge latin (Paris, 1932, repr. 1971), p. 27.
116. Ibid., p. 28.
117. Breviarium Romanum, p. 260. All quotations from the Breviary are from pp. 260-1.
118. Ibid. It should be pointed out that such metaphoric language is very rare in the Roman liturgy.
119. Breviarum Monasticum, p. 266.
120. The Third Nocturn is found in the Breviarum Monasticum, pp. 266-8 and in the Breviarum Romanum, p. 261-2.
121. See Breviarum Romanum p. 162.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid., p. 185. In the Breviarum Monasticum the same hymn appears with the first two lines slightly altered:

Hostis Herodes impie

Christum venire quid times? (p. 305)

This version proved more popular.

124. Breviarum Romanum p. 187.
125. PL 86, 'In Allisione Infantium', cols. 131-36;
126. Ibid., col. 132.
127. Ibid., col. 134.
128. This hymn also appears in the Mozarabic Psalter as 'Ymnus in Allisione Infantorum'. See The Mozarabic Psalter, ed. J.P. Gibson, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. XXX (1905), pp. 201-2.
129. PL 86. cols. 135-6.
130. Ibid., cols. 175-85.
131. Ibid., col. 179.
132. Breviarum Ad Usam Sarum, ed. Francis Procter and Christopher Wordsworth, 3 vols., (Cambridge, 1879, 1882, 1886).
133. Ibid., vol. 1, cols. cccxxi-cccxii.
134. Ibid., cols. cccxxii-cccxiii.
135. Ibid., col. cccxxiii.
136. Ibid., col. cccxxvii.
137. Ibid., cols. cccxxiii-cccxiv, Second Nocturn, Lectio v and vi.
138. Breviarum Secundum Usam Ecclesie Eboracensis (The York Breviary), Surtees Society, vol. 71 (1871).
139. Ibid., col. 114.
140. Ibid., col. 115, Second Nocturn, Lectio v.
141. Ibid., col. 156.
142. The third important English Breviary does not differ substantially from the Sarum Breviary in the relevant Feasts, and so it has not been treated separately. They may be found in The Hereford Breviary, edd. Walter Howard Frere and Langton E.A. Brown, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. XXVI (1904), vol. XL (1911), and vol. XLVI (1915). The first volume includes the Feast of the Innocents (pp. 162-66) and Epiphany (pp. 191-99).

#### CHAPTER V

#### Select Bibliography

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## Notes

1. W. Oakeshott, The Sequence of English Medieval Art (London, 1950), p. 13.
2. C.R. Morey, Medieval Art (New York, 1942), p. 209.

3. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ivory book cover on MS Douce 176, early ninth century. For full description and reproduction, see Adolph Goldschmidt, Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der Karolingischen und Sächsischen Kaiser VIII-XI Jahrhundert, I, (Berlin, 1914), no. 5, p. 10, and pl. III.
4. See chapter 3. For a full discussion of this ivory, see E. Baldwin Smith, Early Christian Iconography (Princeton, 1918), pp. 248-54.
5. See Smith, op. cit., pp. 76-8 for the iconography of the Baptism and pp. 90-2 for the iconography of the Marriage at Cana.
6. Peter Lasko, Ars Sacra (Pelican History of Art, Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 30.
7. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ivory covers of the Metz Sacramentary, MS lat. 9393. See Lasko op. cit., pl. 38, and Goldschmidt, op. cit., I, no. 72, p. 40 and pl. XXIX.
8. Lasko, op. cit., p. 45 and pl. 41.
9. Smith, op. cit., p. 254.
10. Roger Hinks, Carolingian Art (London, 1935), p. 196.
11. Hans Swarzenski, Monuments of Romanesque Art (London, 1954), p. 40 and pl. 16 and 17.
12. Munich, Staatsbibliothek Clm 10077, Cim. 143. See Goldschmidt, op. cit., I, no. 67b and pl. XXVII.
13. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Ivory book cover. No. 379-1871. See Swarzenski, op. cit., p. 40 and pl. 17, fig. 38, 39; see also Goldschmidt, op. cit., II, (1918), no. 65.
14. A. Heimann in Het Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (1959), pp. 5-50 suggests an English origin.
15. C.R. Dodwell, Painting in Europe 800-1200 (Pelican History of Art, Harmondsworth, 1971), pp. 16-23.
16. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 266, fol. lv. See Oakeshott, Classical Inspiration in Medieval Art (London, 1959), pl. 73b.
17. Paris, Louvre. Ivory casket of the ninth or tenth century. Catalogue Molinier 1896, no. 11. See Goldschmidt, op. cit., I, no. 95, pl. XLI-XLIII for views of all sides.
18. Hugo Kehr, Die Heiligen drei Könige in Literatur und Kunst, 2 vol., (Leipzig, 1909), p. 106.
19. Rome, Museo Sacro Vaticano, MS Lat. 50. See Goldschmidt, op. cit., I, no. 13, pl. VII, and facsimile edition Lorsch Gospels, Wolfgang Braunfels, (New York, 1965).
20. André Grabar, The Beginnings of Christian Art: 200-395 (London, 1967), p. 142.
21. Lasko, op. cit., p. 27.

22. A similar symmetrical effect is given in Early Christian art on the cover of the St. Maximin sarcophagus where the Massacre of the Innocents before Herod on the left is balanced by the Adoration of the Magi on the right. See fig. 10.
23. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 9428, about 855, See Kehrer, op. cit., p. 103 and pl. 101.
24. Lasko, op. cit., p. 43.
25. John Beckwith, Early Medieval Art (London, 1964), p. 62.
26. Hinks, op. cit., p. 118-9.
27. Fol. 31. Reproduced in Swarzenski, op. cit., pl. 16, fig. 37.
28. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 33.
29. Hinks, op. cit., p. 119.
30. Lasko, op. cit., p. 43.
31. Vulgate numbering; Latin Psalter in the University of Utrecht, facsimile ed., (1875), f. 27v.
32. A. Boinet, in La Miniature Carolingienne (Paris, 1913), pl. I, II, reproduces two pages from an Evangelary in Munich, Bibl. roy. lat. 23631 (Codex Purpureus). One of these pages is devoted to the Massacre of the Innocents, but Francis Wormald has pointed out that these two pages are, in fact, insertions into the manuscript. They are Ottonian work, although they are copies of a sixth-century original. See below.
33. Trier, Stadtbibliothek, cod. 24. See Hubert Schiel, Codex Egberti der Stadtbibliothek Trier (Basel, 1960), for introduction and facsimile.
34. Dodwell, op. cit., pp. 53-54.
35. This is the description given by Dodwell, op. cit., p. 58.
36. Francis Wormald, 'Bible Illustration in Medieval Manuscripts', in The Cambridge History of the Bible Vol. 2, (Cambridge, 1969), p. 329.
37. Oakeshott, Classical Inspiration, p. 64.
38. Ibid.
39. André Grabar and Carl Nordenfalk, Early Medieval Painting (New York, 1957), p. 202; Dodwell, op. cit., p. 59.
40. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, MS Vat. Lat. 3225, fol. 41, Death of Dido. Reproduced in Grabar and Nordenfalk, op. cit., p. 95.
41. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 59.
42. Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 4453.
43. John Beckwith, Early Medieval Art (London, 1964), p. 110.

44. W. Oakeshott, Classical Inspiration in Medieval Art (London, 1959), p. 65 points out that "the typical ruler in Ottonian books is isolated under a canopy" and sees this as a Byzantine ideological influence.
45. Reproduced by Peter Metz, The Golden Gospels of Echternach (London, 1957).
46. Peter Metz, op. cit., p. 49 finds evidence for at least ten different illuminators.
47. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 64; Beckwith, op. cit., p. 123.
48. Perhaps this miniature belongs to those which Dodwell speaks so disparagingly of. 'The figure style derives from the Egbert Codex but devalues what it borrows for it lacks both conviction and impact; there is no feeling of weight or structure under the draperies which might equally well have clothed inanimate objects such as furniture or cushions', op. cit., p. 64. These comments are true of the mourning mothers in the Massacre scene, but surely this criticism is too harsh for the Codex as a whole.
49. Peter Metz, op. cit., colour plate IV and also pl. 29.
50. The top panel of this page shows the Annunciation and the Visitation. The middle panel has the Nativity and the Adoration of the Shepherds.
51. Peter Metz, op. cit., colour plate VI, and pl. 31.
52. The first Ottonian manuscript to gather illustrations together and present them at the beginning of each gospel was the Fulda Sacramentary of c. 975 (Götttingen, Universitätsbibliothek MS 231). The St. Matthew illustrations include the Massacre (fol. 16v) presided over by Herod. The iconography is similar to other Ottonian manuscripts except that Herod is seated on a throne in front of his palace as he watches the Massacre take place outside a town (for reproduction see Frick Art Reference Library, New York).
53. Reproduced by Albert Boeckler, Das Goldene Evangelienbuch Heinrichs III (Berlin, 1933).
54. Fol. 25. See Boeckler, op. cit., pl. 43.
55. Given by Boeckler, op. cit., p. 20.
56. Henry III commissioned another manuscript after he visited Echternach and admired the Golden Gospels. This is the Book of Pericopes now preserved at Bremen, Stadtbibliothek, Hs. b. 21, produced between 1039 and 1040. Its miniatures are based on those of the Codex Egberti and besides its four evangelist portraits, decorated initials, etc., it contains seventy-two Gospel scenes, including a Massacre of the Innocents. (Boeckler, op. cit., gives a description of the manuscript on p. 44 and lists the Massacre miniature on p. 88). I would assume that Herod is represented in a similar way to all other Ottonian manuscripts discussed above. However, as I have not seen the original or a facsimile, this is only a conjecture.
57. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm. 23631.
58. Wormald, op. cit., p. 328. See no. 32.
59. Reproduced by Morey, op. cit., pl. 194, and A. Boinet, op. cit., pl. II. For the Ottonian dating see Catalogue of the Munich Exhibition, Ars Sacra, Kunst des frühen Mittelalters (June-October, 1950), no. 58.

60. C.R. Morey, Early Christian Art, p. 177 dates the manuscript to the ninth century and identifies these leaves as insertions whereas E. Baldwin Smith, op. cit., had dated the whole manuscript to the sixth century. For a summary of other attempts at dating these folios, see Kurt Weitzmann, 'The Survival of Mythological Representations in Early Christian and Byzantine Art and their Impact on Christian Iconography', Dumbarton Oaks Papers No. 14 (1972), p. 61.
61. Wormald, op. cit., p. 328.
62. Ibid.
63. Morey, Early Christian Art p. 177.
64. D.A.C.L., vol. 13, col. 615.
65. This column does not seem to be an integral part of the illumination. It might be a remnant from the artist's Hellenistic background (see Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World (London, 1973, p. 12). On the other hand, it is reminiscent of early representations of pagan altars. (I am indebted to Dr. George Henderson for this suggestion).
66. Weitzmann, op. cit., pp. 61-62, recognizes several motifs in this illumination which suggest episodes from pagan mythology, especially from the Trojan War.
67. See below, in the Byzantine section.
68. Ernst Kitzinger, Early Medieval Art (Indiana University Press, 1940, repr. 1964), p. 71.
69. Ibid., p. 72.
70. Wormald, op. cit., p. 328.
71. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS grec. 74. Reproduced by Henri Omont, Evangelies avec Peintures Byzantines du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle, 2 vol. (Paris 1908).
72. Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, MS Plut. VI. 23.
73. Kurt Weitzmann, 'Narrative and Liturgical Gospel Illustrations', Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination (Chicago, 1971), p. 250.
74. Ibid., p. 251.
75. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS grec. 115.
76. Reproduced in sketch form in Gabriel Millet, Recherches sur l'Iconographie de l'Évangile (Paris, 1916), p. 139, fig. 82.
77. Ibid., fig. 83.
78. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Copte 13.
79. Millet, op. cit., p. 138.
80. Ibid., fig. 83 for reproduction, in sketch form.



81. The same combination of scenes is included in the Byzantine frescoes at Gradac in Serbia, although there, Herod is turned towards the scribes. See Millet, op. cit., p. 142.
82. Jerusalem, Jerusalem Library, MS Jerusalem 14. See Millet, op. cit., p. 141, n. 1.
83. Millet, op. cit., p. 141.
84. Reproduced in Millet, op. cit., fig. 85.
85. Ibid., fig 86. Inscription: Matt. 2:7. I am indebted to Mr. Bernard Barr of the Minster Library for identifying the Greek text on photographs 39, 41, 43, 46 and 48 and the Coptic text on photograph 45.
86. Reproduced in Omont, op. cit., pl. 5a (top).
87. Ibid., pl. 5b (bottom). Inscription Matt. 2:9.
88. Ibid., pl. 6a (fol. 4). Note that Herod is still shown with a nimbus, as was customary in Eastern art. In a Syrian manuscript of the eighth or ninth century, a series of homilies, in Berlin library, Kgl. Bibl., syr. 28, fol. 24v, Herod is crowned and nimbed and holding a sceptre, even though the illumination is one which shows the Massacre of the Innocents. See the Princeton Index of Christian Art.
89. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS gr. 1156.
90. Reproduced by Millet, op. cit., fig. 93, 94, 95. Inscriptions: Matt 2:7, 13.
91. Weitzmann, op. cit., p. 252.
92. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Suppl. 27. See Millet op. cit., p. 143.
93. These scenes are sketched in Millet, op. cit., fig. 89-92.
94. Reproduced in Millet, op. cit., fig. 96-99.
95. Ibid., pp. 143-4.
96. Ibid., fig. 118. The text is Coptic, Matt. 2:16. The Arabic inscriptions identify Herod and the children.
97. Reproduced in Omont, op. cit., pl. 7. Inscription: Rachel; Matt 2:18 (beginning and end of verse).
98. Reproduced in sketch form in Millet, op. cit., fig. 113.
99. See also the London Psalter, fol. 123; fig. 119 in Millet, op. cit., The text is Psalm 90:6-11. Inscription at top right - Herod killing; across bottom: Egypt. Jacob. Mother of God. Joseph.
100. See the sermon, 'In Diem Natalem Christi,' attributed to Gregory of Nyssa (fourth century), in PG 46, col. 1144.
101. Otto Demus, The Mosaics of Norman Sicily (London, 1950), p. xix.
102. Ibid., p. 161.

103. Ibid., p. 148.
104. Ibid., p. 271.
105. Ibid., pl. 65 and 66 for Infancy cycle.
106. The Magi carry ~~not~~ their crowns rather than gifts, a feature introduced by the restorer of 1819. See Demus, op. cit., p. 161, n. 265.
107. The two middle pictures (the Virgin receiving the Magi and Herod giving his orders) again reflect the technique of parallel composition whereby the two seated figures mirror each other symmetrically.
108. See chapter 2. For text, The Apocryphal New Testament ed. M.K. James, (Oxford, 1924), p. 38.
109. Protevangelium, ch. XXII, verse 1, in James, op. cit., p. 48.
110. It may even have been influenced by illustrations from the Protevangelium. Weitzmann, op. cit., p. 257 states that there is good reason to believe that the text of the Protevangelium was provided at a fairly early period with an extensive cycle of narrative miniatures, although no copy exists today. His theory is that the miniatures could have 'migrated' into other texts from the Middle Byzantine period. See his Illustrations in Roll and Codex: A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration (second edition, Princeton, 1970) pp. 130-53.
111. Otto Demus, Romanesque Mural Painting (London, 1970), p. 294.
112. C.R. Morey, Medieval Art p. 224; also Demus, Romanesque Mural Painting, p. 337, n. 153.
113. This combination of scenes can also be seen in earlier works in Cappadocia, such as the frescos of Antinoë. See fig. 9.
114. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS grec. 510, Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, ninth century. This manuscript is very fully illustrated with full page illuminations, usually in three tiers, at the beginning of most of the sermons. Sermon XIX includes several references to the Magi and Herod near the end, which the artist has picked out to illuminate on fol. 137. The top tier shows the Adoration of the Magi and their Warning by the Angels; the central section shows Herod at the Massacre. He wears a diadem and is enthroned with two attendants behind him while, in front of him, a soldier holds a child suspended by the hair, ready to cut it in two with his sword. To the right of this scene, Elizabeth and the infant John are seen disappearing into a mountain, and on the far right, Zacharias, in his priestly garments, falls to the ground, having been murdered by two soldiers who then set out to find Elizabeth and John. The bottom tier of this folio shows the Presentation in the Temple. See D A C L, vol. 12, fig. 5425 for a reproduction of this folio, and cols. 1690-91 for a description.
115. For a description of the Cappadocian prototype, see Millet, op. cit., p. 161.
116. A whole frieze is devoted to the Massacre and events associated with the Massacre up to the murder of Zacharias. This frieze appears immediately below a similar one, <sup>which</sup> shows the Adoration, Joseph's Dream and the Flight into Egypt as well as the Nativity. See Millet, op. cit., p. 146.

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## Notes

1. Adolf Katzenellenbogen, 'Iconographic Novelties and Transformations in the Sculptures of French Church Facades ca. 1160-90', Romanesque and Gothic Art (Princeton, 1963), pp. 108-151.
2. He does not appear in this form, however, in the thirteenth century cathedral sculpture at Amiens.
3. See Adelheid Heimann, 'The Capital Freize and Pilasters of the Portail Royale, Chartres', in Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, Vol. 31 (1968), p. 73 for date.
4. See Willibald Sauerländer, Gothic Sculpture in France, 1140-1270 transl. by Janet Sondheimer, (London, 1970), pl. 33 and 34.
5. Heimann, op. cit., p. 80.
6. Ibid.
7. Alan Priest, 'The Masters of the West Façade of Chartres', Art Studies, Vol. I (1923), p. 39, has studied the various "hands" at work in this frieze, but concludes that 'the lively and precocious seated Herod is like nothing else on the facade'. It is interesting to note that a similar iconography for the 'ungodly' man, namely Superbia, is adopted by the artist of the twelfth century copy of the Utrecht Psalter now in Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.17.1, known as the Eadwine Psalter or the Canterbury Psalter (facsimile by M. R. James, The Canterbury Psalter, London, 1953). This manuscript is exactly contemporary with the Chartres freize. On fol. 5v, facing Psalm 1, and illustrating it, is a large miniature covering more than half the page. Balancing a figure of Beatus vir, Christ, on the left, is a representation of Superbia as a king on the right. He sits on a very high architectural throne within a building which has battlemented walls and turrets (out of which heads appear and look down on him); he is crowned, he holds both sceptre and sword, and sits with his legs crossed, resting the tip of his sword on one knee. He is also attended by numerous spear-bearers on the left, and a large black demon on the right. This representation of the ungodly, Superbia, the wicked king in this manuscript, is very much like the contemporary sculpture of Herod at Chartres.

power (on the left) and secular power (on the right) and the choice of scenes represented on the lintel, mirrors this division. 'Finally, it may not be amiss to call attention to the sculptor's apparent attempt to co-ordinate the unfolding of the narrative in the lintel with the major thematic components of the tympanum. Thus, the Presentation in the Temple, Annunciation, Visitation and Nativity embrace the zone corresponding to the ecclesiastical half of the relief, while the sector dominated by the monarch is echoed on the right side of the lintel by a secular and royal group consisting of the Annunciation to the Shepherds and the appearance of the Magi before Herod. The vertical axis of the portal, strongly accented by the enthroned Virgin and Child, traverses the lintel at a point marked by the back of brooding Joseph's chair. The conceptual frontier between the two halves of the lintel is emphasized by the shepherd closest to the centre who stands with his back turned to the Nativity. How different this is from the lintel at Chartres where the shepherds led by an angel, are shown reverently approaching the newborn Child, whose mensa-like platform dominates the centre of the relief. In Paris, the central axis serves less as a focal point in its own right than as a fulcrum on which the complex forces and values embodied in the two sides are maintained in a state of delicate equilibrium'. p.61.

12. G. Vezin, L'Adoration et le Cycle des Mages (Paris, 1950), p. 99.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Emile Mâle, L'Art Religieux du XII<sup>eme</sup> Siècle (Paris, 1922), p. 68.
16. Vezin, op. cit., p. 100. Vezin continues his description: 'Il est accompagné de trois chevaliers en cotte de mailles portant l'épée nue sur l'épaule'.
17. This door is so-called because the clergy of the nearby church of Saint Michael enter the Cathedral through this door. See Elisa Maillard, Les Sculptures de la Cathédrale Saint-Pierre de Poitiers (Poitiers, 1921), p. 75, n.1.
18. Ibid., p. 76.
19. Ibid., p. 79-80. See also Pl. XII
20. Ibid., p. 80.
21. Ibid., p. 82. Maillard's description of this devil as a naked putti fluttering among the foliage and resembling those on antique sarcophagi seems strange and alien to the rest of the work, and quite out of place.
22. Ibid., p. 82-83.
23. For reproductions of all of these scenes, see the Princeton Index of Christian Art.
24. This is the number given by Jean Chagnolleau, Moissac (Arthaud, 1951, repr. 1963).
25. See Princeton Index to Christian Art. Also reproduced in A. Gardner, Medieval Sculpture in France (Cambridge 1931), p. 182, fig. 179. Gardner thinks this is probably early thirteenth century work. In the photograph only one devil is visible.

26. Louis Réau, L'Iconographie de L'Art Chrétien (Paris, 1957), vol. II, pt. 2 gives two further references to appearances of Herod in French sculpture, both at the Cathedral of Autun. The first reference (p. 245) is to a portrayal of the Magi before Herod on one of the capitals of the Cathedral (Saint-Lazare). The second reference (p. 271) is to a Massacre scene in which Herod himself is seen to be killing a child with a hachet. 'Hérode, armé d'une hache, empoigne un enfant par les cheveux. La mere nue, les cheveux hérissés comme une Furie, le menace avec un coutelas'. This sounds extremely unusual for a twelfth century depiction.
27. Otto Demus, Romanesque Mural Painting (London, 1970), p. 424.
28. Ibid.
29. See Mâle, op. cit., ch. 1, 'Naissance de la Sculpture Monumentale: Influence des Manuscrits', for the great influence these manuscripts are thought to have had on French sculpture in the twelfth century.
30. C.R. Dodwell, Painting in Europe 800-1200 (Pelican History of Art, Harmondsworth, 1971), p. 100. This apocryphal event will be discussed in a later chapter.
31. This manuscript dates from about 975. It is now preserved in the Archives of the Cathedral. For reproduction of fol. 15v, showing the Adoration of the Magi, the Flight into Egypt with Herod pursuing, and the Death of Herod, see Wilhelm Neuss, Die katalanische Bibelillustration um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends und die altspanische Buchmalerei (Bonn and Leipzig, 1922), fig. 169; see also p. 114, n. 41.
32. Turin, Bib. Naz. MS lat. 93. This manuscript dates from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. For reproduction, see Wilhelm Neuss, Die Apokalypse des Hl. Johannes in der altspanischen und altchristlichen Bibel-Illustration (Munster, 1931), vol. 2, fig. 34, showing fol. 14v including the Pursuit of Herod.
33. See Demus, op. cit., p. 424, pl. 153.
34. Ibid. PL. 152 shows the return journey.
35. If there were five scenes, the scheme might have been Magi meeting Herod, Magi travelling to Bethlehem, Adoration, Angel warning Magi and Return of Magi.
36. Ibid., pl. 153, pl. 151 and p. 105.
37. Ibid., pl. 152.
38. See Vezin, op. cit., p. 54.
39. Ibid., p. 100.
40. Ibid., p. 54. He follows Amédée Boinet, Congrès archéol, d'Angers (1910)
41. For reproduction, see Frick Art Reference Library, New York.
42. For reproduction, see Frick Art Reference Library, New York.
43. In the thirteenth century windows of Lyons, Herod is accompanied by a devil as he orders the Massacre of the Innocents.

44. Suger, Liber de rebus administratione sua gestis, PL 186, cols. 1211-1239; the latest edition with translation and commentary is by Erwin Panofsky, Abbot Suger: On the Abbey Church of St. Denis and its Art Treasures (Princeton 1946)
45. Louis Grodecki, "Les Vitraux de Saint-Denis. L'Enfance du Christ", De Artibus Opuscula XL, ed. Millard Meiss, 2 vol. (New York, 1961), vol. 1. pp. 170-186.
46. Ibid., p. 181.
47. Ibid., The glass is now in the Musée de Cluny. Note that the Magi carry staffs in fig. 63 and also fig. 66. Emile Mâle, 'Les rois mages et le drame liturgique', Gazette des Beaux-Arts (1910), 4<sup>e</sup> période, t. iv, pp. 261-270 suggested that this iconographic detail was influenced by the liturgical drama. Staffs for the Magi do, in fact, play an important part in several latin church plays (see chapter 7).
48. Mâle, L'Art Religieux du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle p. 109, 168-70 believes the Chartres glass was the work of St. Denis glaziers. Grodecki mentions Cahier, Martin and Westlake as other scholars who have stressed the links between St. Denis and Chartres.
49. It should be remembered, however, that virtually the same scene appears in the sculpture of this cathedral over the Portail Royale. See above.
50. Grodecki, op. cit., p. 183, n. 91 notes that the rather peculiar pose these scribes have, with their hands on each others' shoulders, is a highly suspicious posture iconographically. He points out that the whole of this part of the panel was restored at various times: the head of the counsellor on the right is thirteenth or fourteenth century; the hands and shoulders of both figures are late nineteenth or early twentieth century. He explains that an engraving by P. Durand in a monograph by J. Lassus, Monographie de la Cathédrale de Chartres (Paris, 1867-1881), pl. XXXIX shows a different pose.
51. Grodecki, op. cit., p. 183.
52. For a fuller study on the windows of Chartres, see Y. Delaporte and E. Houvet, Les Vitraux de la Cathédrale de Chartres (Chartres, 1926). Herod is represented in Pl. IV-VI.
53. For reproduction see Princeton Index of Christian Art.
54. Vezin, op. cit., p. 100.
55. I am relying here on the description given by the Princeton Index of Christian Art. The inscription is not clear in their photograph.
56. B. Rackman, The Ancient Glass of Canterbury Cathedral (London, 1949) dates this glass c. 1200 but Dr. Madeline Caviness has recently established the date as 1220.
57. M.R. James, 'The Verses Formerly Inscribed on Twelve Windows in the Choir of Canterbury Cathedral', Cambridge Antiquarian Society vol. 38, Cambridge, (1901), quoted in Rackman, p. 53.
58. Already half of the first Magi's horse has entered the gate of Jerusalem and has disappeared from view. This gives the scene a sense of movement, if not of artistic balance.

59. This unusual depiction of Herod pulling his beard may be due to restoration but it can also be seen in a French manuscript of the twelfth century, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library M44, f. 4r. Here the Magi stand before Herod who is seated, on the right, on a faldstool, with his legs crossed. One hand rests in his lap but with the other he pulls his beard pensively.
60. It should be noted that this is not a type taken from the Old Testament.
61. Other scenes involving the Magi are the Adoration of the Magi, in the central medallion third from the top, and the Magi being warned by an angel not to return to Herod, in the central medallion fourth from the top.
62. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 641.
63. J.J.G. Alexander, Norman Illumination at Mont St. Michel 966-1100 (Oxford, 1970), p. viii.
64. Ibid., p. 211. This type of initial had, of course, already been used by Carolingian artists in the Corbie Psalter and also in the Drogo Sacramentary.
65. Ibid., p. 127.
66. Folio 6. For reproduction, see Ibid., pl. 31e.
67. Ibid., p. 135-36.
68. The beginning of the liturgy for the Feast of the Holy Innocents reads, "Deus cuius hodierna die praeconium innocentes martyres non loquendo sed moriendo confessi sunt..."
69. Ibid., p. 132, 135-36.
70. London, Brit. Lib. Add. MS 49598. The complete text and illuminations are reproduced by John Gage, 'A Dissertation on St. Aethelwold's Benedictional', Archaeologia, XXIV, (1832), pp. 1-117. (See also Francis Wormald, The Benedictional of St. Ethelwold, (London, 1959).
71. Ibid., p. 37.
72. Rouen, Public Library, MS Y 6. For reproduction of text and illuminations see H.A. Wilson, The Missal of Robert of Jumièges, Henry Bradshaw Society, XI, (London, 1896). The manuscript is, in fact, a Sacramentary and not a Missal. This latter term was often used as a catch-all title for any liturgical manuscript in the earlier days of scholarship. See also John Gage, 'Benedictional of Archbishop Robert in the Library of Rouen', Archaeologia, vol. XXIV (1832), pp. 118-136. For a comparison of these manuscripts, see J.B.L. Tolhurst, 'An Examination of two Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of the Winchester School: The Missal of Robert of Jumièges, and the Benedictional of St. Aethelwold', Archaeologia vol. LXXXIII (1933), pp. 27-44.
73. Ibid., pl. III.
74. Ibid., pl. IV
75. O. Pächt, C.R. Dodwell and F. Wormald, St. Albans Psalter (London, 1960), p. 55.



76. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Regin. lat. 12.
77. Francis Wormald, English Drawings of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries (London, 1952), p. 47.
78. Ibid., p. 48.
79. Fol. 87v. Reproduced in St. Albans Psalter, pl. 128a.
80. Hildesheim, Library of St. Godehard. For description, see C.M. Kauffmann, Romanesque Manuscripts 1066-1190 (London, 1975), Cat. no. 29. For reproduction see Pächt, et. al., op. cit., no. 75 .
81. Ibid., pl. 17b.
82. Ibid., pl. 18a.
83. Ibid., pl. 18b. On the left, the back end of one of the horses can be seen disappearing through a doorway. This technique of showing the movement of the horses by having them disappear through doorways is also used in the Canterbury glass. It is discussed further in chapter 8.
84. Ibid., pl. 19a.
85. Ibid., pl. 19b.
86. Ibid., p. 83
87. Ibid., pl. 20a, b.
88. Ibid., pl. 21a.
89. O. Pächt, The Rise of Pictorial Narrative in Twelfth Century England (Oxford, 1962), p. 53. This drama, and other liturgical drama, will be considered in chapter 7.
90. The style of the mosaics is, of course, more sombre and dignified but the iconography of the young officer is the same in both.
91. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Ivory comb, c. 1120-30. See Peter Lasko, Ars Sacra (Harmondsworth, 1972), pl. 274 for reproduction.
92. Lasko, op. cit., p. 235.
93. Kauffmann, op. cit., p. 31.
94. London, Brit. Lib. MS Cotton, Nero C.IV. For a reproduction see Francis Wormald, The Winchester Psalter (London, 1973).
95. For a description, see Kauffmann, op. cit., Cat. no. 78.
96. Ibid., p. 32. For a discussion of this manuscript see Elizabeth Parker, "A Twelfth century Cycle of New Testament Drawings from Bury St. Edmunds Abbey", Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology, vol. XXXI, pt. 3 (1969), pp. 263-302. Unfortunately the Infancy cycle does not survive.
97. Kauffmann, op. cit., p. 106.

98. Fol. 11; Wormald, op. cit., pl. 14.
99. Wormald, op. cit., p. 19 gives this inscription. It is not clear in the facsimile.
100. Wormald, op. cit., p. 77 explains how movement is expressed in the Journey to Bethlehem miniature by cutting off part of the scene; the front half of the first horse has already passed behind the frame of the picture while the tail of the third horse has not emerged from behind the border on the left. (See chapter 8).
101. Ibid., p. 20.
102. Fol. 21; Wormald, op. cit., pl. 24.
103. For facsimiles of three manuscripts of this work, see Marvels of the East, ed. M.R. James, (Oxford, Roxburghe Club, 1929). They are Vitellius A XV and Tiberius B V from the Cotton MSS in the BL, and Bodley 614 from Oxford.
104. Cambridge, Emmanuel College Library MS 252<sup>2</sup>. For description, see M.R. James, Catalogue of the Western Manuscripts in the Library of Emmanuel College (Cambridge, 1904), pp. 150-52.
105. For the same pose by Alexander the Great see Cambridge, University Library MS Kk, iv. 25, fol. 18v; this is reproduced in Peter Brieger, English Art, (Oxford, 1957), pl. 50.
106. The style of the armour suggests a twelfth-century date for this manuscript, but Herod's floriate sceptre resembles that of Alexander the Great (see no. 105) suggesting a thirteenth century date.
107. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 293 (S.C. 21867).  
Glasgow, University Library MS Hunter U.3.2.  
Copenhagen, Royal Library MS Thott 143 2<sup>o</sup>.  
Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Gough Liturg. 2 (S.C. 18343).
108. Kauffmann, op. cit., p. 120.
109. Copenhagen, Royal Library, MS Thott 143 2<sup>o</sup>. For description see Kauffmann, op. cit., Cat. no. 96.
110. Fol. 10. For reproduction, see Kauffmann, op. cit., colour frontispiece.
111. Kauffmann, op. cit., p. 119.
112. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Gough Liturg. 2 (S.C. 18343). For description, see Kauffmann, op. cit., Cat. no. 97, and also Otto Pächt and J.J.G. Alexander, Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library (Oxford, 1973), vol. 3, no. 290.
113. Kauffmann, op. cit., p. 121.
114. Fol. 18r.
115. Fol. 19r.
116. M.R. James, 'Four Leaves of an English Psalter', Walpole Society, XXV, (1936-37), pp. 1-23.

117. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 724.  
London, British Library, MS Add. 37472 (1).  
New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 521.  
London, Victoria and Albert Museum, MS 661.
118. Kauffmann, op. cit., Cat. no. 66 .
119. London, Brit. Lib. MS Add 37472 (1)r. For reproduction, see James, op. cit., pl. III.
120. The division of the page into such small compartments is not common to the St. Albans Psalter or any other twelfth-century manuscript before this leaf but it is not unlike another manuscript known to have been in Canterbury, the Gospels of St. Augustine, from six centuries earlier. For facsimile see F. Wormald, The Miniatures of St. Augustine's Gospels (Cambridge 1924).
121. I have followed James's numbering of the pictures, starting in the upper left corner and numbering them consecutively across the page, from left to right.
122. Pictures 5-7.
123. Picture 8.
124. Pictures 9 and 10.
125. Jacobus de Voragine, Legenda Aurea, ed. Th. Graesse, (Osnabrück, 1890, repr. 1969), Cap. X, 'De Innocentibus', pp. 62-66.
126. James, op. cit., p.7. points out that this first appeared in Spanish manuscripts of the eleventh century, in Beatus manuscripts and Catalan Bibles. For the former, see Neuss, op. cit., vol. 2, fig. 34 for reproduction of fol. 14 of the Turin manuscript of the Apocalypse; the lower register shows the death of Herod. He lies in bed dead, with his head to the right, and his hands resting on his stomach. Three men approach the foot of the bed in a straight line from the left; the foremost holds in his outstretched hands an upright knife with an apple stuck on to the end of it. A similar scene appears in the Gerona Apocalypse. See note 31, and fig. 60.
127. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 8846. Reproduced in Vezin, Pl. XXXI.
128. See Kauffmann, op. cit., p. 94.
129. For description, see V. Leroquais, Les Psautiers Latins Des Bibliothèques Publiques de France (Macon, 1940-41), vol. 2, pp. 78-79. Leroquais dates this manuscript in the thirteenth century, but later authorities put it at the end of the twelfth century, i.e. Kauffmann, op. cit., p. 94.
130. Pictures 5 and 9 from Brit. Lib. MS Add. 37472 (1) are missing; in their place, two miniatures at the beginning are included: one shows both the Annunciation to the Virgin and the Visitation, and the other shows the Nativity. The numbering system of this leaf is the same as that used for the Brit. Lib. leaf.
131. Leroquais, op. cit., p. civ. 'Je ne connais que deux miniatures de l'astrolabe, instrument dont on se servait au moyen âge pour observer les astres et mesurer leur hauteur au-dessus de l'horizon. L'une figure en tête du psautier dit de Blanche de Castille et de saint Louis (Paris, Bibl.

Arsenal, MS 1186, fol. lv. pl. LXVII): un astronome assis entre un scribe et un computiste, tient l'astrolabe en main et paraît faire une démonstration à ce propos. L'autre miniature représente Hérode interrogeant les princes des prêtres et les scribes du peuple au sujet du lieu de la naissance du Messie (Bibl. Nat. MS lat. 8846, fol. 4v): un des scribes tient un astrolabe'.

132. Ibid., vol. 1. p. cxv.

133. At a later period, such as Shakespeare's, where Ophelia is refused burial in consecrated ground because she died by suicide, this could have been an issue, and Herod's right to take communion after he attempted suicide could have been a burning issue, but there is no evidence of such a discussion at any time and certainly not in the twelfth century.

134. The Holkham Bible Picture Book adds a few details from another event. This manuscript will be discussed in chapter 8.

135. Fol. 124.

136. Psalter in private collection, twelfth century. Reproduced in P. Brieger, op. cit., pl. 51.

137. Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk. iv. 25, fol. 18v; reproduced in Brieger, op. cit., pl. 50.

138. See A Straub and G. Keller, edd., Herrade de Landsberg, Hortus Deliciarum (Strassburg, 1899). A new edition by the Warburg Institute is eagerly awaited. My thanks are due to Dr. Evans for allowing me to have access to the manuscript and plates of this work.

139. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 172.

140. Reproduced in Vezin, op. cit., p. 95, fig. 17, taken from Joseph Walter, Archives alsaciennes d'histoires de l'art (1929), f<sup>o</sup> 92, fig. 21.

141. There is a figure standing beside Herod who might be the object of Herod's pointing figure, but this figure does not seem to be a scribe or counsellor, as one might expect. He has his hands crossed across his chest and his face shows an attitude of surprise as if he, too, is reacting to this spectacular star.

142. It is remarkable that in this scene, the Magi appear with their hands covered (a sign of great reverence) as they approach Herod about the star, but in the Adoration, they present their gifts, bowls of gold coins, with their bare hands. For a reproduction of the Adoration, see Vezin, op. cit., p. 50. fig. 7.

143. Reproduced in Vezin, op. cit., p. 101, fig. 19.

144. Gerard Cames, Allégories et Symboles Dans l'Hortus Deliciarum (Leiden, 1971), p. 43. He traces the inclusion of the Dream of Pilate's Wife in this manuscript also to the same influence.

145. See for example the capital at Clermont, in Notre Dame du Port (twelfth century). This is one of a series of capitals illustrating Pyschomachia, or the Battle of the Virtues and Vices, by Prudentius (fourth century), a work which exercised a profound influence on medieval art and literature (fig.91).

146. Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 11. 4, fol. 65v, Psalm 52, Dixit insipiens.

147. E.W. Tristram, English Wall Paintings: The Twelfth Century (Oxford 1944).
148. Ibid., p. 27-8. This is the church which contains the Magi scenes listed above.
149. Ibid., pl. 31
150. Ibid., p. 29. These wall paintings are not reproduced in Tristram's volume, presumably because they are so badly damaged.
151. This voussoir is now preserved in the Yorkshire Museum. It is reproduced in George Zarnecki, Later English Romanesque Sculpture 1140-1210 (London, 1953), pl. 126. See also the exhibition catalogue, The Year 1200, vol. I, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1970), no. 31. (P. 25). One other example of English (Mercian) sculpture including an event possibly related to Herod is the Wirksworth slab cited by Lawrence Stone, Sculpture in Britain: The Middle Ages (Harmondsworth, 1955) p. 21. There is a difference of opinion about the iconography of this sculpture. Betty Kurth, 'The Iconography of the Wirksworth Slab', Burlington Magazine, Vol. 86 (1945), pp. 114-121 believes that one scene represents the Massacre of the Innocents, but a more recent scholar, R.P.W. Cockerton, 'The Wirksworth Slab', Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Journal, Vol. 82 (1962), pp. 1-20 interprets the same scene as the Presentation in the Temple. As the relevant part of the grave cover is on a corner and partially damaged, and I have only had access to photographs, it is impossible to judge which opinion is correct. The context is unusual; it occurs in a series of rare scenes showing Byzantine and Syrian influence. The definitive interpretation must be left to scholars of Anglo-Saxon art. However, it seems unlikely that Herod himself is represented.
152. Zarnecki, op. cit., p. 49.
153. Aron Andersson, The Art of Scandinavia (London, 1968), vol. 2, p. 61; pl. 57.
154. Ibid., p. 61.
155. Ibid., p. 118; pl. 17.
156. Ibid., p. 118; pl. 17.
157. Ibid.
158. This legend is told by Andersson, Ibid., p. 118. For a fuller account of its Scandinavian appearances in written form see F.J. Child, The English and Scottish Popular Ballads (New York, 1882, repr. Dover, 1965), vol. 1, pp. 233-242. The cock is also associated with Judas in a similar context when he is talking with his mother about Christ's resurrection. It is interesting that this legend of the cock coming to life should be associated with both Herod and Judas as they question the Nativity and Resurrection of the Lord. In later medieval literature, these same two evil characters are singled out and mentioned together as inhabitants of hell.
159. Dodwell, op. cit., points out that the tradition of golden altars divided into rectangular panels goes back as far as the ninth century to Carolingian times and continues on through Ottonian times, exemplified in the golden altar at Aachen.

160. Andersson, op. cit., pl. 212.
161. See Marien Ullén, Dädesjö Och Eke Kyrkor (Stockholm, 1969) pp. 266-68.
162. See E.W. Tristram, 'The Roof-Painting at Dädesjö, Sweden: A Note', Burlington Magazine (1917) pp. 111-116 for a list of the roundels and also their numbering. The first Stephen roundel is thus no. 10.
163. No. 12.
164. No. 13.
165. No. 14.
166. Tristram, op. cit., p. 115.
167. British Library, Sloane MS 2593, fol. 22b. Reproduced in F.J. Child, The English and Scottish Popular Ballads (New York, 1882 repr. Dover, 1965), vol. I, no. 22, p. 241-42.
168. For full discussion see Demus, op. cit., p. 310; pl. 85-89.
169. Ibid.
170. Hermann Leisinger, Romanesque Bronzes (London, 1956), p. (5).
171. For reproduction of whole door, ibid., pl. 88.
172. Ibid., p. (5).
173. Ibid., pl. 91, 102 and 103.
174. Ibid., p. (6).
175. Ibid.
176. Vezin, op. cit., pl. VIIIa.
177. See Kehrler, op. cit., p. 145, fig. 157.
178. See Erwin Poeschel, Die Romanischen Deckengemälde Von Zillis (Zurich 1941)
179. Ernst Murbach, The Painted Romanesque Ceiling of St. Martin in Zillis (London, 1967), p. 25.
180. Demus, op. cit., p. 137. Demus gives a long and thorough account of these recently discovered frescoes, considering also the work of earlier scholars.
181. See Norbert Wibiral, 'Die Arbeiten im alten Westchor von Lambach, 1956-1966', Kunstchronik 19/5 (1966), p. 115 for diagramme and numbering of scenes. Wibiral's plan is followed by Demus. It was under Wirbiral's direction, from 1956-1966, that the frescoes on the interior walls were revealed.
182. See N. Wibiral, 'Die Fresken im ehemaligen Westchor der Stiftskirche von Lambach', in Romanische Kunst in Österreich (Exhibition Catalogue, Krems, 1964) pp. 64ff and illustration facing p. 103 for a reproduction of a sketch

- of this scene; also N. Wibiral, 'Beiträge zur Ikonographie der frühromanischen Fresken im ehemaligen Westchor der Stiftskirche von Lambach (Oberösterreich)', Würzburger Diözesangeschichtsblätter, vol. 25, (1963), pp. 63-92 and illustration facing p. 91.
183. K.M. Swoboda, 'Der romanische Epiphanie-Zyklus in Lambach und das lateinische Magier-spiel', Festschrift für J. Schlosser (Zurich, Leipzig and Vienna, 1927), p. 82-87.
184. This is the term used by Demus. He follows Wibiral who also introduces the possibility that the scene may be a representation of Herod before Augustus (op. cit., p. 119). This is equally difficult to substantiate.
185. Demus, op. cit., p. 625.
186. Demus is specific about the amount of money--a hundred talents, but he does not give a source for this.
187. He is identified correctly by Wibiral, op. cit., p. 119 who says the money is a bribe to put down a conspiracy.
188. The Death of Herod does occur earlier in Spanish manuscripts such as the Gerona Apocalypse (see fig. 60), and in Catalan Bibles: see Wilhelm Neuss, Die katalanische Bibelillustration um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends und die altspanische Buchmalerei (Bonn and Leipzig, 1922), p. 114.
189. Wibiral, op. cit., p. 119. If this figure is, in fact, the jailor who reports Antipater's premature rejoicings to Herod, then it seems to me as if the artist has deliberately chosen episodes from Herod's life in which Antipater plays a part for his frescoes. At least the two scenes on this wall are connected, and both events lead directly to, first, Antipater's imprisonment, and second, to his execution.
190. Demus, op. cit., p. 626.

## CHAPTER VII

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#### Notes

1. Munich, Staatsbibliothek, MS lat.6264a, Miscellanea Frisingensia, fol. 1r. Printed in Karl Young, The Drama of the Medieval Church (Oxford, 1933), Vol.II, pp.92-97. This book is henceforth referred to as Young. For other editions of this and all other liturgical Latin drama referred to in this chapter, see Carl J. Stratman, Bibliography of Medieval Drama, 2nd edition (New York, 1972), Vol.I, pp.113-127. Most of the texts have been printed by Young. Unfortunately he does not reproduce or transcribe any musical notation, (although he makes references to it in his notes) and so, whenever a manuscript with music has survived and has been transcribed and edited, that edition will be referred to, as well as Young's text.
2. Gustave Reese, Music in the Middle Ages (London, 1940), p.193.
3. Alex Harman, Medieval and Early Renaissance Music (London, 1962), p.23.
4. Fletcher Collins, The Production of Medieval Church Music-Drama (Charlottesville, 1972).
5. Harman, op. cit., p.23.
6. E.K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage (London, 1903), Vol.II, pp.9-10.
7. Young, op. cit., Vol.I, p.201 ff.
8. St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek MS 484, fol.11; facsimile in Léon Gautier, Histoire de la Poésie Liturgique au Moyen Age: Les Tropes (Paris, 1886), p.216.
9. See, for example, Grace Frank, The Medieval French Drama (Oxford, 1954) and Edith Wright, The Dissemination of the Liturgical Drama in France (Bryn Mawr, Penn., 1936); J. Chailley, 'Le Drame Liturgique Médiéval à Saint-Martial de Limoges', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, vol.7, (1955), p.133 states definitely that the earliest Quem quaeritis trope belongs to St. Martial and not to Saint Gall.
10. Maria Sofia de Vito, L'origine del dramma liturgico (Milan, 1938) and Helmut A.W. de Boor, Die Textgeschichte der lateinischen Osterfeiern (Tübingen, 1967).
11. David Dumville, 'Liturgical Drama and Panegyric Responsory from the Eighth Century? A Re-Examination of the Origins and Contents of the Ninth-Century Section of the Book of Cerne', Journal of Theological Studies N.S. 23 (1972), pp.374-406.
12. See C. Clifford Flanigan, 'Roman Rite and Origins of Liturgical Drama', University of Toronto Quarterly, Vol.43, no.3 (1974), pp.263-284.

13. Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Legum II, Capitularia Regum Francorum, vol.I, (Hanover, 1883), pp.80-81.
14. Translation by Flanigan, op. cit., p.267.
15. MGH, Legum II: Capitularia Regum Francorum, vol.I, p.61.
16. Translation by Flanigan, op. cit., p.267.
17. See ODCC 'Gallican Rite', p.538-9.
18. For a list of the chief surviving monuments of the Gallican rite see Flanigan, op. cit., p.283 n24 and The New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York, 1967), Vol.VI, pp.259-60.
19. Flanigan, op. cit., pp.273-4, points out that 'literary masses marked by virtually all the characteristics of a highly ornamental and rhetorical style are very common' and were in fact composed by poets and other literary artists for the Gallican liturgy.
20. Missale Gothicum (A Gallican Sacramentary), in PL 72, col.234.
21. PL 78, col.35.
22. PL 72, cols.234-235.
23. PL 78, col.35.
24. Edmund Bishop, Liturgica Historica: Papers on the Liturgy and Religious Life of the Western Church (Oxford, 1918), chapter 1, p.12.
25. Ibid., p.8.
26. Flanigan, op. cit., p.276.
27. Richard B. Donovan, The Liturgical Drama in Medieval Spain (Toronto, 1958).
28. Young, Vol.I, p.180.
29. See Flanigan, op. cit., p.277, for an account of which Gallican ceremonies were absorbed into the Roman rite. Bishop, op. cit., pp.15-16 follows the same process of accommodation.
30. Bishop, op. cit., p.16.
31. Flanigan, op. cit., p.280.
32. For suggestions as to how tropes could be present in the very liturgical books which the Carolingians were supposed to be purifying, see Young, Vol.I, p.181.
33. The Winchester Troper, ed. W.H. Frere (Henry Bradshaw Society, London, 1894), p.vi.
34. See Young, Vol.I, p.180.
35. Léon Gautier, Histoire de la Poésie Liturgique au Moyen Age: Les Tropes (Paris, 1886).

36. Ibid., p.1.
37. Jacques Handschin, 'Trope, Sequence and Conductus', New Oxford Dictionary of Music (London, 1955), p.128.
38. Jacques Handschin, 'The Two Winchester Tropers', The Journal of Theological Studies, Vol.37 (1936), p.35.
39. See Young, Vol.I, p.182 ff. for a full description with textual examples of the development of the sequence from the Alleluia.
40. Amalarius of Metz, De Ecclesiasticis Officiis in PL 105, col.1123.
41. Ibid., col.1295, from Liber de Ordine Antiphonarii.
42. This letter is printed in Gautier, op. cit., pp.20-21, and also in PL 131, cols.1003-4. Young quotes it, Vol.I, p.183-4, and discusses its significance. The authenticity of this document was at one time disputed, but modern scholars now accept its veracity. See Handschin, 'Trope, Sequence and Conductus', p.148.
43. For a full discussion of the development of tropes and sequences, with examples, see Willi Apel, Gregorian Chant (London, 1958), pp.429-464.
44. See Frere, op. cit., pp.viii-xxi, for a detailed account.
45. Analecta Hymnica, Vol.47, p.412. Also in Young, Vol.I, p.178. The words of the trope are underlined.
46. Young, Vol.I, p.178.
47. Reese, op. cit., p.186.
48. It is interesting to note, however, that this introit trope was sometimes shifted from the Easter Mass to other positions in the liturgy.
49. William L. Smoldon, 'The Melodies of the Medieval Church-Dramas and Their Significance', Comparative Drama, vol.II, (1968), pp.191 ff.
50. See Frere, op. cit., p.xix.
51. It was printed by E. Martene, De Antiquis Ecclesiae Ritibus, 4 vols. (Venice, 1788), vol.3, p.44. No indication of date is given. See also Young, vol.II, pp.34-35.
52. Frere, op. cit., p.ix.
53. Gautier, op. cit., pp.225-26. He is quoting from a manuscript in Paris, Bib.Nat. lat 1118, p.40v.
54. Reese, op. cit., p.193. The italics are provided by Reese.
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56. E. Catherine Dunn, 'Voice Structure in the Liturgical Dramas: Sepet Reconsidered', Medieval English Drama, ed. Jerome Taylor and Alan H. Nelson, (Chicago and London, 1972), p.49.

57. Marius Sepet, Origines Catholiques du Théâtre Moderne (Paris, 1901) p.14. 'Les Drames Liturgiques et les Jeux Scolaires', written 1894.
58. Marius Sepet, Les Prophètes du Christ, étude sur les Origines du Théâtre au Moyen Age (Paris, 1878).
59. Sepet, Origines, pp.16-17.
60. Theodor Göllner, 'The Three-Part Gospel Reading and the Medieval Magi Play', Journal of the American Musicological Society, Vol.24, part 1 (1971), p.51.
61. Geneva, Bibliothèque Universitaire, Cod.lat. 38b, fols.37-40v. This is a fourteenth-century Gospel-book from the church of St. Pierre in Geneva.
62. Göllner, op. cit., p.53.
63. Ibid. Only the text remains, first published in 1654 by H. Crombach, Primitiae gentium sive historia et encomium SS. trium Magorum evangelicorum (Coloniae Agrippinae, 1654), pp.732-34; reprinted in Young, Vol.II, pp.37-40.
64. Ibid., pp.58-62.
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70. O.B. Hardison, Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages (Baltimore, Maryland, 1965), pp.178-219.
71. Smoldon, op. cit., pp.64-80.
72. C.E.H. Coussemaker, Drames Liturgiques du moyen âge (Rennes, 1860).
73. Smoldon, op. cit., p.65.
74. Smoldon (op. cit., Comparative Drama p.187) claims that he has transcribed every music-drama that could be tracked down. He died in 1974 and his book on the music drama has not yet been published.
75. Ibid., pp.76-7.
76. Paris, B.N. MS lat 904, thirteenth century. (See n.82)
77. Smoldon, op. cit., pp.76, n.17.
78. Grace Frank, op. cit., p.50.

79. Smoldon, 'Liturgical Music-Drama', Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. Eric Blom, 5th ed. (London, 1954), Vol.5, pp.338-9.
80. Ibid., pp.339-40.
81. Ibid., pp.339-40; Reeves, op. cit., p.196.
82. Paris, Bib. Nat. MS lat 904, Gradual from Rouen, 13th century, fol.28v-30r, published by Coussemaker, Drames Liturgiques, pp.242-49 as Les Trois Rois; text in Young, vol.II, pp.436-7. (There is no part for Herod in this play. The other plays to be published with music are the Herod play and the Massacre of the Innocents plays from the Fleury Playbook, see note 83.)
83. Orleans, Bibl. de la Ville, MS 201 (Fleury Playbook), pp.205-14, 214-20. Coussemaker, Drames Liturgiques, pp.143-65; 166-77. Terence Bailey, The Fleury Play of Herod (Toronto, 1965) (Herod play only). The Play of Herod, ed. N. Greenberg and W.L. Smoldon (New York 1965).
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85. See the play from Montpellier, Young. vol.II, p.68.
86. See the play from Rouen, Young, vol.II, p.43.
87. See the play from Laon, Young, vol.II, p.103.
88. See the play from Sicily, Young, vol.II, p.59.
89. See the play from Fleury Playbook, Young, vol.II, p.84.
90. See the play from Padua, Young, vol.II, p.99.
91. Young, vol.II, p.63.
92. Gautier, op. cit., p.168 and Young, vol.II, p.110, both interpret it as such.
93. Paris, Bib. Nat., MS lat 1139, fol. 32v-33r; printed by Gautier, op. cit., p.168, and Young, vol.II, p.109.
94. The same responsory provides dialogue for the boys who are killed and also for an angel in the Ordo Stellae from Laon, Young, vol.II, pp.103-106.
95. Gautier, op. cit., pp.147 ff.
96. The manuscript has been lost and the date is uncertain. E. Martene, De Antiquis Ecclesiae Ritibus, 4 vols., (Venice, 1788) first published this play, from an Ordinarium of Limoges, vol.III, p.44. Young prints it in vol.II, pp.34-35. A date of c.1100 was suggested by W. Meyer, Fragmenta Burana (Festschrift zur Feier des Hunderdfünf-zigjährieger Bestehens der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen: Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Klasse), (Berlin, 1901) p.38, on the basis of the rhythm, 'mit reinen zurisilbigen Reimen, also nach 1100'.

97. The manuscript for this play no longer exists. The play was first printed by H. Crombach, Primitiae Gentium, seu Historia SS Trium Regum Magorum (Cologne, 1654), pp.732-4, and is reprinted by Young, vol.II, pp.37-40. Göllner suggests a date in the fourteenth century and provides music. See above, p.252.
98. Rouen, Bibl. de la Ville, MS 384 (olim Y 110), f. 38v-39v - 14c Ordinarium in Young, vol.II, p.43-45.  
Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS lat. 904, fol. 28v-30r - 13c Gradual - in Young, vol.II, p.436-7.  
Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS lat. 1213, pp.34-5 - 15c Ordinarium - in Young, vol.II, p.437-8.  
Rouen, Bibl. de la Ville, MS 382 (olim Y 108), f. 35-36, 15c Ordinarium in Young, vol.II, p.437-8.  
Rouen, Bibl. de la Ville, MS 222 (A.551), fol. 4r-4v - 13c Processional (fragment) in Young, vol.II, p.438.
99. William Smoldon, 'Liturgical Drama', New Oxford Dictionary of Music (London, 1955, revised edition), Vol.2, Early Medieval Music up to 1300, p.199.
100. Paris, Bibl. Nazarine, MS 1708, f.81v;11c; Young, vol.II, pp.50-51.
101. Gregory the Great, Liber Responsalis, PL 78, col.743. See also Antiphonale du B. Hartker, fac.ed. in Paléographie Musicale ii<sup>e</sup> série, i, (Solesmes, 1900, repr. 1970), p.77. The Antiphony of Hartker is St. Gall MSS 390-391. It is hereafter referred to as Hartker. References to the Liber Responsalis will hereafter be made by column numbers in PL 78.
102. Smoldon, 'Liturgical Drama', p.199.
103. William Smoldon, 'Melodies of the Medieval Church Dramas', pp.64-80, proves, for example, that although the Easter Quem quaeritis three-item dialogue appears in many manuscripts from a variety of countries, through the centuries, it is always set to a standard music which is easily recognizable. Presumably, then, other similar texts, which appear over and over, such as the three-item opening to the Epiphany play discussed here, would also have their own standard melodies. For interest's sake, I include a copy of the Hartker Antiphonal, with neumes, which may be compared with the Coussemaker edition of the Rouen play for this standard text.
104. PL 78, col.743; Hartker, p.76.
105. PL 78, col.742; Hartker, p.73.
106. Heinrich Anz, Die Lateinischen Magierspiele (Leipzig, 1905), p.53 suggests this use of source material. The Protevangelium, chapter 21, assigns a simple speech to Herod: 'What sign saw ye concerning the king that is known?' M.R. James, The Apocryphal New Testament (Oxford, 1924), p.47. (This apocryphal gospel survives only in Greek, and so the English translation is given here.)
107. The Vulgate does not have Herod asking the Magi what sign they saw. He seems to know that when he interviews them and asks, instead, what time the star appeared.
108. Smoldon, 'Liturgical Drama', p.201.
109. Ibid.

110. It was, in fact, amended in all other texts of the play. See below.
111. PL 78, col.743.
112. Young, vol.II, p.47. There was much patristic discussion over whether the Magi arrived in Bethlehem thirteen days after the birth of Christ, or two years after his birth. See Anz, op. cit., p.19-21. In any case, as Young points out, one would not expect the midwives still to be present.
113. See Young, vol.II, pp.3-28 for the tropes of the Shepherds plays.
114. Psalm 71: 10; for its position in the Mass see PL 78, col.649-50.
115. PG 7, col.870-1.
116. PL 78, col.743.
117. Young, vol.II, p.48.
118. Opus imperfectum in Matthaem Rom.III, PG 56, col.644.
119. Augustine, Sermo in Epiphania Domini vi, PL 38, col.1038.
120. Young, vol.II, p.58.
121. Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS lat 16819, fol.49r-49v - 11c Lectionary. The text of the play follows a sermon on Epiphany; Young vol.II, pp.53-6. Smoldon has transcribed short passages of the music.
122. From Young, vol.II, pp.53-6.
123. PL 78, col.732.
124. The sequence, as described above, is a form that developed from making textual and melismatic additions to the final 'a' of alleluia. Such compositions followed certain patterns. 'It consists of an extended, freely poetic text, usually cast in the form of long paired lines (except for the first and last lines, which are single) with identical music for the two lines of each pair: a bb cc dd...gg h. Paired lines have the same number of syllables (the musical style is strictly syllabic), but there is great variation in length from one pair to another, so that, for example b may have 10 syllables while c has 23.' The Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music, ed. Willi Apel and Ralph T. Daniel (New York, 1960) pp.267-68.
125. Young, vol.II, p.446.
126. The Protevangelium, ch.xxi, vs.2, mentions that Herod 'sent officers unto the wise men'. The Apocryphal New Testament, ed. M.R. James (Oxford, 1924), p.47.
127. W.L. Smoldon, 'Liturgical Music-Drama', p.333.
128. PL 78, col.740. Hartker, p.68. No other Epiphany play contains this antiphon.
129. Munich, Staatsbibliothek, MS lat 6264a, fol.1r; Young, vol.II, pp.93-97.

130. In the Fleury play, Herod sends messengers to the Magi with almost the same series of questions:

Que rerum novitas, aut que causa subegit vos  
 Ignotas temptare vias? Quo tenditis ergo?  
 Quod genus? Unde domo? Pacemne huc fertis an arma?

The playwright may have been using Virgil as a source here. In the Aeneid, VIII, ll.112-14, a similar set of questions appears:

Juvenes, quae causa subegit  
 Ignotas temptare vias? quo tenditis? inquit  
 Qui genus? unde domo? pacemne fertis, an arma?

Winifred Sturdevant, The Misterio de los Reges Magos (Baltimore and Paris, 1927), p.52, states that the relation between the passages is evident, and Young, vol.II, p.67, also commented that the speech in the liturgical drama may have been influenced by Virgil.

131. Young suggests that the Magi may have been singing the following responsory (as only the incipit in the text is given, and the antiphon and responsory both have identical incipits, it is impossible to decide which was meant): 'O Regem coeli cui talia famulantur obsequia! Stabulo ponitur qui continet mundum; facet in praesepio et in coelis regnat. Versus: Domine audivi auditum tuum, et timui; consideravi opera tua, et expavi, in medio duorum animalium.' (PL 78, col.735; Young, vol.II, p.80 n.3).

132. Sallust, De Conjuratone Catilinae, cap.xxxi, ed. A.W. Ahlberg (Leipzig, 1919), p.25. The context of the quotation is as follows: 'Tunc ille furibundus, "Quoniam quidem circumventus", inquit, "ab inimicis praeceps agor, incendium meum ruina restinguam".' It is spoken by Cataline as the Senate reviles him and he secretly plans a massacre in Rome.

133. The Compiègne play provides a better line metrically: 'Indolis eximie, pueros fac ense perire.'

134. This is the fifth stanza. For the complete text of the hymn, see Young, vol.II, p.450.

135. Aeneid, ix, p.376-7. See P. Vergili Maronis - Opera, ed. R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969, repr. 1972).

136. See Pseudo-Bede, Collectanea et Flores, PL 94, col.541. It was Isidore of Seville (570-636) who suggested the name Zoroaster be given to one of the kings: 'Magorum primus Zoroastes rex Bactricanorum' (Etymologiarum, lib. VIII, cap.9, in PL 82, col.310). Zoroaster was given as the name of the prophet who foretold the coming of the Magi in the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy (Evangiles Apocryphes ed. Michel and Peeters, 2 vols., Paris, 1911, 1914, chapter of vol.2, p.91). A tradition then grew up which made Zoroaster the first of the Magians and ancestor of the Three Kings. The traditional names of the three Kings, Bithisarea, Melichior and Gathaspa first appear in literature in the seventh or eighth century. For a full account of details concerning the Magi in Greek and Latin theological writings, see Winifred Sturdevant, op. cit., pp.11-34. For their association with Zoroaster and Nimrod, see Joseph Bidez and Franz Cumont, Les Mages hellénisés (Paris, 1938).

137. Most of these plays come from Rouen. See table.

138. Smoldon, 'Liturgical Drama', p.202.



139. Montpellier, Bibl. de la Faculté de Médecine, MS H 304, fol.41v-42v. This manuscript is an Ecclesiastical Miscellany and so it is impossible to determine what relationship the play had with the liturgy, although it was quite likely associated with Matins. See text in Young, vol.II, pp.68-72.
140. Anz. op. cit., pp.110-11, 117 regards it as comic. The speeches of the kings are differentiated, but they are neither of a vernacular sort, not corrupted Latin. They contain a combination of Hebrew and Latin words with Eastern syllabic tags.
141. Brussels, Bibl. des Bollandistes, MS 299, fol.179v-180v; Young, vol.II, pp.75-80.
142. Young, vol.II, p.80, n.6 describes the manuscript.
143. Gautier, op. cit., 171-3 gives several examples of Benedicamus tropes. This chant appeared at the end of all the canonical Hours except Matins.
144. This is an antiphon for the second Sunday of Advent. See Hartker, p.24 and PL 78, col.728.
145. Young, vol.II, p.83 has suggested that although these hexameter speeches are original, they may have been suggested by the scene in Virgil's Aeneid VIII, 114, 117: "Qui genus? unde domo?"...  
"Troiuigenas ac tela vides inimica Latinis."
146. In the Freising play, Herod asks for this advice before he interrogates the Magi, while in the Bilsen play it comes after the rude questioning.
147. Hartker, p.54. As only the incipit is given, this composition could perhaps be a responsory from Matins of Christmas, which opens in an identical way. See PL 78, col.735, and Hartker, p.45.
148. Orléans, Bibl. de la Ville, MS 201 (olim 178). For various editions see n.151.
149. The plays are as follows: Visitatio Sepulchri, Ordo Stellae, Ordo Rachelis, Peregrini, Resuscitatio Lazari, Conversio Sancti Pauli, Tres Filiae, Tres Clerici, Iconia Sancti Nicolai, and Filius Getronis.
150. Young placed this manuscript in the thirteenth century but two years later Otto Albrecht, in Four Latin Plays of St. Nicolas from the Twelfth Century Fleury Play-Book (Pennsylvania, 1935) pp.3-4, established that it was twelfth century work from a study of its musical notation. William Smoldon and Noah Greenberg, op. cit., confirm this view in the most recent study of this manuscript and its musical notation. An attempt was made by Solange Corbin, 'Le Manuscrit 201 d'Orléans, drames liturgiques dits de Fleury', in Romania, vol.74 (1953), pp.1-43, to disassociate the manuscript from Fleury but the argument and evidence are not convincing. See Grace Frank, op. cit., p.44. However, Smoldon has recently become convinced that the Ordo Stellae in the Fleury MS 'began its career at the ancient capital of Normandy Rouen'. He gives the reasons, the primary one being an "unsuspected musical relationship between this play and the Rouen Officium Pastorum," in 'Melodies of the Medieval Church Dramas', p.76, n.17.
151. Orléans, Bibl. de la Ville, MS 201 (olim 178), pp.204-14. For the text only, see Young, vol.II, pp.84-89. For text and music see Terence Bailey, The Fleury Play of Herod (Toronto, 1965) and the edition by Noah Greenberg and William L. Smoldon, The Play of Herod (New York, 1965). The play was

- also edited with music by E. de Coussemaker, Drames Liturgiques du Moyen Age (Rennes, 1860), pp.143-65, but for reasons discussed above this is not such a reliable text as the others.
152. Orléans, Bibl. de la Ville, MS 201 (olim 178), pp.214-20. For text only, see Young, vol.II, pp.110-13. For text and music see Noah Greenberg and William L. Smoldon, The Play of Herod (New York, 1965). A less reliable transcription appears in Coussemaker, op. cit., pp.166-77.
153. Edith Wright, The Dissemination of the Liturgical Drama in France (Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, 1936), p.152.
154. The Montpellier play is from Rouen and as it is the only other play to include Archelaus and the unique verses which are used for his conversation with Herod, this is more evidence for Smoldon's theory that this Fleury play began in Rouen.
155. Bailey, op. cit., p.10-11.
156. Greenberg and Smoldon, op. cit., p.79.
157. See Smoldon's facsimile of manuscript and transcription in Greenberg and Smoldon edition, p.86, no.21. The following references are to Smoldon's numbering.
158. Greenberg & Smoldon, op. cit., p.79.
159. The other two are interesting examples of the originality of the Fleury playwright. The first is the Magi's answer to the armiger, when they identify themselves Caldei sumus. This text also appears in the eleventh-century Freising play, and may be borrowed, but the Fleury music is entirely original. The second example is the sequence Quem non praevalent. This sequence appears in several of the Magi plays, but the Fleury musical setting is apparently original. See Greenberg & Smoldon, op. cit., p.78.
160. Greenberg & Smoldon, op. cit., p.80. See facsimile and transcription on pp.88-89, no. 39-41.
161. See Isaak Sondheimer, Die Herodes-Partien im lateinischen liturgischen Drama und in den französischen Mysterien (Halle, 1912), p.58-59.
162. Hartker, p.331.
163. Hartker, p.37. PL 78, col.731.
164. Hartker, p.24.
165. Ibid., p.28.
166. Munich, Staatsbibliothek, MS lat 6264, fol.27v; see Young vol.II, pp.117-120.
167. Greenberg & Smoldon, op. cit., p.78.
168. Théodore Gérold, La Musique au Moyen Age (Paris, 1932), p.62.
169. Greenberg & Smoldon, op. cit., pp.79-80.
170. Ibid., p.95-6, no.21.

171. See Richard Axton, European Drama of the Early Middle Ages (London, 1974), p. 78.
172. Hartker, p. 68.
173. For complete text see Young, vol. II, p. 454.
174. See, for example, the plays from Bilsen, Freising and Fleury.
175. Laon, Bibl. de la Ville, MS 263, fol. 149v-151r. Troper, thirteenth century; Young, vol. II, pp. 103-106.
176. Munich, Staatsbibl. MS lat 4660, fol. 99r-104v. See Young, vol. II, pp. 172-90.
177. It is interesting to note that Chailly, in his Appendice Musicale to Le Mystère d'Adam et Eve, another semi-liturgical play like the Benediktbeuern Play, has pointed out that the actions of the devil are never accompanied by music in that play: 'L'intervention de Satan ne doit pas s'accomplir sous l'égide de la musique liturgique. Et c'est dans le grand silence du chœur muet que l'inferral Don Juan épanouira ses artifices', p. 73 quoted by Lynette Muir, Liturgy and Drama in the Anglo-Norman Adam (Oxford, 1973), p. 151, n. 73. It is usually characters associated with the devil, such as Archisynagogus and Herod, whose speeches lack musical notation in the Benediktbeuern Play. However, this may be merely carelessness, as certain passages spoken by Augustine, Elizabeth and the Boy Bishop, also lack music.
178. Peter Comestor, Historia Scholastica in Evangelia, ch. xvi, in PL 198, col. 1546.
179. Mary H. Marshall, op. cit., pp. 32-33.
180. Marius Sepet, Le Drame Chrétien au Moyen Age (Paris, 1878), p. 105. 'Il est probable que l'oeuvre est collective, qu'elle est due à la collaboration de plusieurs clercs des hautes écoles du monastère, les plus habiles et les plus âgés. Les préoccupations scolastiques y sont manifestes. On voit que ces jeunes clercs, dans leur divertissement, ne peuvent perdre le souvenir de leurs études. La classe de logique et celle d'astronomie y versent le trop-plein de leur science débordante. Aristotele, dont les oeuvres commençaient à faire fureur, y est plusieurs fois cité, avec plus ou moins d'à-propos.'
181. Young, vol. II, p. 195.
182. E. Wright, op. cit., p. 9.
183. Grace Frank, op. cit., p. 34.
184. Greenberg & Smoldon, op. cit., p. 79.
185. Grace Frank, op. cit., p. 38.
186. Wright, op. cit., p. 9.
187. Gerhohus, Commentarium in Psalms, cxxxii; PL 194, col. 890.
188. Gerhohus, Libri Tres De Investigatione Antichristi, ch. 5, Book I, 'De spectaculis theatricis in ecclesia Dei exhibitis', ed. by F. Scheibelbeger, Gerhohi Reichersbergensis Praepositi opera hactenus inedita, Vol. 1 (Linz, 1875),

- pp. 25-8, reprinted in Young, vol. II, pp. 524-5. This includes the whole chapter. See also E.K. Chambers, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 98-9.
189. Herrad of Landsberg, Hortus Deliciarum fol. 315r quoted from A. Wilmart, ed. L'Ancien Cantatorium de l'Eglise de Strasbourg (Colinar, 1928), pp. 95-7 and reprinted in Young, vol. II, pp. 412-421; translated in Chambers, vol. II p. 98, n.2.
190. Padua, Bibl. Capit., MS S, fol. 58r-58v - 13c Ordinarium; Young, vol. II pp. 99-100.
191. See for example Harman, op. cit., p. 24.
192. See young, vol. II, p. 416, for the text of this letter.
193. See Chambers, II, p. 100.
194. Compilatio Decretalium Domini Gregorii Pape Noni (Nuremberg, 1482), sig. t 10 verso, quoted in Young, vol. II, pp. 416-7.
195. Wright, op. cit., p. 13.
196. H. von der Hardt, Magnum Oecumenicum Constantiense Concilium, IV (Frankfort & Leipzig, 1699) pp. 1088-9, quoted in Chambers, II pp. 101-2 and Young, vol. II, pp. 419-20. Chambers thinks this was probably a dumb show.
197. See Young, vol. II, p. 419, n.l.
198. William F. Smoldon, 'Liturgical Music-Drama', p. 333.
199. George Coffman, "Review of Karl Young's The Drama of the Medieval Church", Speculum vol. 9 (1934) p. 113.

## CHAPTER VIII

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I am also deeply indebted to:

Dr. W.O. Hassall's Iconographic Index in the Bodleian Library; Princeton Index of Christian Art in Princeton, New Jersey; Frick Art Reference Library in New York.

#### Notes

1. There are a few exceptions to this iconography in Early Christian Art, in which the Magi are shown with camels. See G. Vezin, L'Adoration et le Cycle des Mages (Paris, 1950) pl. 1 and II, for some fourth-century sarcophagi in the Lateran Palace with this iconography.

2. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 710, fol. 19v. See The Berthold Missal, ed. Hanns Swarzenski, (New York, 1943) pl. VIII.

3. London, British Library, MS Add. 47682, fol. 13v. See Holkham Bible Picture Book, ed. W.O. Hassall (London, 1954), fol. 13v.

4. London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero C.IV, fol. 12. See fac. ed. by Francis Wormald, The Winchester Psalter (London, 1973).
5. Hildesheim, Library of St. Godehard, St. Alban's Psalter, p. 25; see The St. Alban's Psalter, ed. O. Pächt, C.R. Dodwell, and F. Wormald (London, 1960) pl. 18b,
6. Laon Cathedral, South choir, c. 1215. Reproduced in Florens Deuchler, Gothic Art (London, 1973) pl. 164.
7. See Willibald Sauerländer, Gothic Sculpture in France, 1140-1270, transl. Janet Sondheimer, (London, 1972), p. 405 for information about thirteenth-century additions.
8. Chartres Cathedral, reliefs from the destroyed jubé, now in the crypt. See Sauerländer, op. cit., pl. 127.
9. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canon Liturg. 393, fol. 241. Pächt and Alexander, Vol. 2, 1051.
10. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Selden Supra 38, fol. 2, 2v. Pächt and Alexander, Vol. 3, 579. This manuscript is related to the school of Walter De Milmete in London.
11. For a survey of patristic writings on this subject see Winifred Sturdevant, The Misterio de los Reyes Magos (Baltimore and Paris, 1927), pp. 8-34.
12. Saint Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew, ed. Philip Schaff, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (New York, 1888), Homily VII, p. 46.
13. Augustine, Sermo CCIII, 'In Epiphania Domini, V'. PL 38, col. 1035.
14. Christianus of Stable, Expos. in Matth. Evangelistam in PL 106, col. 1283.
15. Joannus Belethus, Rationale Divinorum Officiorum (Antwerp, 1565), cap. LXXIII, 'De Epiphania', pp. 155-57.
16. The Bestiary (Cambridge Univ. Lib. MS Ii. 4.26), ed. M.R. James, Roxburghe Club (Oxford, 1928), fols. 24, 24v, 25.
17. Paris, Bib. Nat., MS lat. 10, 525, fol. 12. See V. Leroquais, Les Psautiers, vol. 2, no. 333, and Jean Porcher, French Miniatures from Illuminated Manuscripts (London, 1960), pl. XLIII. See Porcher, fig. 58 for Eliezer and Rebecca with camels in the Bible of Jean de Cis, c. 1355 (Paris, Bib. Nat. MS fr. 15397, fol. 40v). The same incident is portrayed in the eleventh-century manuscript of Aelfric's Anglo-Saxon Hexateuch (see London, Brit. Lib. Cotton MS Claudius B. IV, fol. 39 (40) and 39v (40v)).
18. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 26, fol. 32. See Peter Brieger, English Art, 1216-1307 (Oxford 1957) pl. 44a for reproduction of this scene. Richard Vaughan, in Matthew Paris (Cambridge, 1958) p. 59 ff. dates this manuscript 1245-50.
19. For the text of this part of Matthew Paris' Chronica Majora see Rolls Series, vol. 57, part 4, p. 85.
20. See Jurgis Baltrušaitis, Réveils et Prodiges = Le Gothique Fantastique (Paris 1960), p. 151, fig. 36. for reproduction. See also The Rutland Psalter, fac. ed. by Eric George Millar, Roxburghe Club (Oxford 1937) fol. 14v.

21. London, Brit. Lib., MS Add. 25, 695, fol. 94.
22. See Hugo Kehrer, Die Heiligen Drei Könige in Literature und Kunst (Leipzig, 1908) vol. 2, pg. 98 for reproduction.
23. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canon. Liturg. 393, fol. 241, and MS Selden Supra 38, fol. 2v (see fig. 116).
24. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS 48, fol. 65v and 66. See James, Fitzwilliam pp. 100-120.
25. London, British Library, Yates Thompson MS 13, fol. 92v and fol. 93.
26. See M.R. James, et al, A Descriptive Catalogue of the Second Series of Fifty Manuscripts in the Collection of Henry Yates Thompson (Cambridge 1902) no. 57.
27. Olim Dyson Perrins MS 32, sold in Sotheby Sale 1.12.59, Lot 62; French, thirteenth century; fol. 23r. Photograph in Courtauld Institute.
28. Cambridge, Trinity College MS B. 11.5, fol. 9v. See James, Trinity, Vol. I, no. 224.
29. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 43, fol. 19v.
30. See Princeton Index of Christian Art: Magi, before Herod the Great. See also Chanoine H. Boissonnot, Les Verrières de la Cathédrale de Tours (Paris 1932), pp. 33-35, pl. IX.
31. Some manuscripts from the early thirteenth century still show the Magi empty-handed before Herod. In almost every case, this scene is juxtaposed with the Adoration of the Magi where the gifts are prominent. For example, see photographs below of British Library, Royal MS I.D.X., fol. 2; Chantilly, Musée Condé MS 1695, fol. 17 (Ingeborg Psalter) and the de Brailes leaf in New York Pierpont Morgan Library M 913. In contrast to these, see the photographs below of three fourteenth century manuscripts: British Library, MS Royal 2 B. VII, fol. 131 (Queen Mary's Psalter); Bodleian Library, Douce 313, fol. 26v (fig. 122); and British Library MS 50000, fol. 8 (Oscott Psalter). In these illustrations the Magi hold their gifts, although the shapes of the gifts are not always differentiated.
32. For this interpretation of these scenes, see E. Mâle, L'Art Religieux du XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle en France 4th ed., (Paris, 1919), p. 258, n.5.
33. Jacobus de Voragine, Legenda Aurea ed. Th. Graesse (Osnabruch, 1890, repr. 1969) p. 64. It is of interest to note that Caxton's edition of the Golden Legend does not include this episode.
34. Vincent of Beauvais, Speculum Historiale (Douai, 1624, repr. Graz, Austria, 1965), Liber Sextus, cap. XCIII, p. 205.
35. See Peter Comestor, Historia Scholastica: In Evangelia cap. XI, PL 198, col. 1543:

'Herodes autem cum de nece puerorum disponderet, citatus est per epistolam ab Augusto Cesare, ut Romam iret, accusationi filiorum responsurus. Tamen Josephus dicit quod Alexandrum filium suum secum Romam traxerit, et veneni sibi parati reum apud Caesarem postulaverit. Qui, cum iter faceret per Ciliciam, audiens naves Tharsensium magos traduxisse, in spiritu vehementi combussit

naves Tharsis secundum quod David prophetaverat in quadragesimo septimo psalmo: "In spiritu vehementi conteres naves Tharsis"'.

36. London, British Library, MS Yates Thompson 13. See n. 26.
37. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 48. See n. 24.
38. Ludolph the Carthusian, Vita Christi, ed. L.M. Rigollet (Paris, 1898), Part I, cap. XI; 17, p. 95-6.
39. Corpus Scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum ... Vindobonensis, XLVII, Tertulliani Opera, Pars III, p. 398, quoted in Sturdevant, op. cit. p. 12.
40. Ambrosius the Younger, Commentarii in Psalmos; Ps. XLVII, PL 53, col. 391.
41. Glossa Ordinaria, Psalmus XLVII, PL 113, col. 914.
42. Beryl Smalley, The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1941) p. 60 has convincingly argued that the Gloss on the Psalter was written by Anselm of Laon (d. 1117).
43. Augustine, Ennartio in Psalmum XLVII, PL 36. col. 536.
44. The Old Testament city of Tarshish was confused with the New Testament city of Tarsus and they soon became identified.
45. Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.17.1. See fascimile edition The Canterbury Psalter, ed. M.R. James, (London, 1935).
46. Reproduced by F. de Lasteyrie, Histoire de la Peinture sur verre (Paris, 1938-58) pl. XXV.
47. See Mâle, op. cit., 4th ed. p. 258.
48. Karlsruhe, Landesbibliothek, MS Bruchsal 1, folio 13.
49. See Kehrer, op. cit., p. 98.
50. London, British Museum, Add. MS 50,000, fol. 8 and fol. 13. Note also, that the Magi appear before Herod with their gifts on fol. 8. Herod's mantle is caught on his crown in a most peculiar way.
51. See below, n. 118.
52. This early fourteenth-century glass is described in detail in Jean Lafond, Les Vitraux de l'Eglise Saint-Ouen de Rouen (Paris, 1970), pp. 58-60. Herod appears in the central window of Bay 42, ordering the Massacre of the Innocents, with his teeth bared. See plate 7.
53. Lafond, op. cit., p. 59.
54. York Minster, window S III (Corpus Vitrearum numbers are used for all windows in York Minster).
55. See T.W. French, 'Observations on Some Medieval Glass', The Antiquaries Journal, vol. 51, pt. 1 (1971), pp. 86-93. See pl. XIIIb for reproduction; also pl. XIVA, b for details. David O'Connor of the University of York dates this glass c. 1350.



56. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, MS 34, fol. 25. For reproduction, see Frick Art Reference Library, New York.
57. Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 11.4, fol. 8. See James, Trinity vol. 1, no. 243.
58. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 47, fol. 39. See James, Fitzwilliam pp. 98-99, pl. VI.
59. London, British Library, MS Add. 17868, fol. 20v.
60. London, British Library, Royal MS 1 D.X. fol. 2. See J.A. Herbert, 'A Psalter in the British Museum (Royal MS 1 D.X), illuminated in England Early in the Thirteenth Century', Walpole Society, vol. 111, (1913-14), pp. 47-56 and pl. XLII.
61. See E.W. Tristram, English Medieval Wall Painting (Oxford, 1950), vol. 2. pl. 128; vol. 1, pp. 510-12 for dating and description. The painting appears on the south wall, in the third of four tiers.
62. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 913. See Thirteenth Report to the Fellows of the Pierpont Morgan Library 1963 and 1964, compiled by Frederick B. Adam, (New York, 1964), plate facing p. 12.
63. Berthold Missal, folio 18 (Feast of the Holy Innocents). See above, n.2. For a discussion of the significance of the crossed legs sitting position, see Henry Martin, 'Les Enseignements des Miniatures: Attitude Royale', Gazette des Beaux Arts, Ser. 4, vol. 9 (1913), pp. 173-188, and passim comments in Meyer Schapiro, 'An Illuminated English Psalter of the Early Thirteenth Century', Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute, vol. 23 (1960), pp. 179-89. Both scholars trace this position to thirteenth century English art; however, F.P. Pickering in Literature and Art in the Middle Ages (London 1970) notes earlier examples of this sitting position and also of emperors sitting pulling their beards as Herod is sometimes represented. It is of interest to note that although the cross-legged position is associated with kings and emperors, no example is to be found in the seals of England; see A.B. Wyon, The Great Seals of England (London, 1887).
64. London, British Library, MS Royal 1 D.X, fol. 3.
65. Eke, Gotland. South door of choir. This is executed by the 'Egypticus' master. See Erland Lagerlöf, Gotländsk stensulptur (Uddevalla, 1975), pp. 178-180 for date of 1345-1360.
66. Paris, Bib. Nat., MS lat 1073 A, folio 7v. Photograph in the Conway Library, Courtauld Institute. See Leroquais, Les Psautiers, vol. II, pp. 61-2.
67. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Selden Supra 38, fol. 4. See n.10.
68. See J. Natanson, Gothic Ivories of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries (London, 1951), fig. 52.
69. Chantilly, Musée Condé MS 1695, col. 17. See Florens Deuchler, Der Ingeborgpsalter (Berlin, 1967).
70. This gesture is reminiscent of the Emmanuel College, Cambridge MS 252<sup>2</sup> where Herod pulls at the neck of his robe (fig. 79). See also Oxford, Bod. Lib., MS Canon liturg. 393, fol. 241.

71. Copenhagen, Lib. Kongelige Bibliotek, Gl. Kongl. 1606, fol. 11v. For reproduction see Princeton Index of Christian Art.
72. Oxford, Bodleian Lib., MS Canon Liturg. 251, fol. 92v and MS Douce 245, fol. 114. The former manuscript has 245 leaves and no other illumination survives except the one on folio 92v showing the Massacre of the Innocents. See Pächt and Alexander, vol. 1, 617 and 593.
73. Roof boss E5. See C.J.P. Cave, 'The Roof Bosses in the Transepts of Norwich Cathedral Church', Archaeologia, vol. 83, (1933) pl. XVII.5. The bosses date from the early sixteenth century but reflect earlier techniques and iconography. In his Roof Bosses in Medieval Churches (Cambridge 1948) p. 202, Cave dates the bosses to a time soon after a fire in 1509 when the roof was built under Bishop Nix (1501-36).
74. New York, Pierpont Morgan<sup>Lib.</sup> M44, fol. 4.
75. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 43, fol. 20.
76. Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 10.15, fol. 9. See James, Trinity, vol. 1, 226.
77. See no. 60.
78. Ex Dyson Perrins MS 32, sold at Sotheby Sale 1.12.59, lot 62; fol. 23. See photograph in Courtauld Institute.
79. London, British Museum, MS Add 49,999, fol. 23v.
80. Cambridge, St. John's College, MS D.6, fol. 28v. See James, St. John's, no. 81.
81. Cambridge, St. John's College, MS K. 26, fol. 13v and fol. 15v. Ibid., no. 231.
82. George Henderson, MS K. 26 in the Library of St. John's College, Cambridge unpublished Ph. D. dissertation (Univ. of Cambridge, 1960).
83. The first king is holding a glove in one hand so that he really should have one hand bare, but due to the carelessness of the artist who over-pointed this miniature, he wears gloves on both hands in addition to the one he holds. The presence of gloves was a feature common to people in high position in manuscripts (and drama) and, like crowns and sceptres, added to the impression of their dignity and power.
84. Henderson, op. cit., p. 256. He refers to the chair represented in the illumination to Psalm 78, on fol. 135 of the Aedwine (Canterbury) Psalter in Trinity College, Cambridge MS R.17.1. For reproduction see facsimile edition by M.R. James, The Canterbury Psalter (London, 1935), f. 135.
85. Paris, Bib. Nat., MS lat. 10474 (a sister manuscript of the Douce Apocalypse) and Cambridge, Trinity College MS B. 10.6 (whose first pictures are stylistically related to the Lambeth Apocalypse).
86. Henderson, op. cit., p. 256.
87. The Bestiary M.R. James, ed. cit., The griffin will tear to pieces any human beings which it happens to come across: 'equis vehementer in festum. nam et homines visos discerpit' (fol. 6v). Wolves massacre anybody

who passes by with a fury of greediness: 'rabie rapacitatis que quibus invenerunt trucidant' (fol. 17).

88. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 102. See Margaret Rickert, Painting in Medieval Britain (Harmondsworth, 1954) pl. 123.

89. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 298. See Wormald and Giles, Handlist, no. 98.

90. Cambridge, St. John's College, MS H.6. See Rickert, op. cit., pl. 78. for reproduction; see James, St. John's, no. 209.

91. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct D. 4.17. See H.O. Coxe, The Apocalypse of St. John the Divine (Bod. MS Auct. D. 4.17), Roxburghe Club (London 1876), fol. 17b. Pächt and Alexander, vol. 3, 438.

92. London, British Library, MS Add. 42,555, fol. 40. See The British Museum Quarterly, vol. 6, (1931-32) pp. 71-3 and 109-110 and pl. 56.

93. Henderson, op. cit., p. 277.

94. Paris, Bib. Nat., MS lat. nouv. acq. 1392, fol. 2v. See Leroquais, Les Psautiers, vol. 2, no. 369; pl. LXIII.

95. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 1186, fol. 19v. See Leroquais, Les Psautiers, vol. 2, 255.

96. I am indebted to David O'Connor for bringing this example to my attention and for identifying it.

97. London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 420, fol. 8.

98. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 97, illumination no. 20.

99. London, British Museum, MS Add. 38, 116, fol. 10.

100. London, British Library, MS Harley 1527, fol. 13. See La Bible Moralisée, 5 vols. facsimile, (Paris, 1944), vol. III, pl. 484.

101. See Sauerländer, op. cit., pl. 186 for date.

102. See photograph in the Princeton Index of Christian Art under Innocents, Massacre of.

103. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 43, fol. 20. See above, n. 75

104. Erland Lagerlöf, Gotländsk Stensulptur (Uddevalla, 1975) p. 216 dates this richly decorated sculpture c.1300.

105. New York, Cloisters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. See facsimile edition, The Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux (New York, 1957) fol. 69.

106. London, British Museum, MS Royal 2 B. VII, fol. 132. See facsimile edition, Queen Mary's Psalter, ed. George Warner (London, 1912) pl. 175.

107. The conventions of typology in relation to Herod will be discussed below.

108. For the theory that Herod, too, was possessed and thus a madman, see

- Penelope Doob, Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature (New Haven and London, 1974) pp. 95-133.
109. Brussels, Bib. Royale, MS 9961-62, fol. 24. See The Peterborough Psalter in Brussels and Other Fenland Manuscripts, Lucy Freeman Sandler, (London, 1974) p. 23, fig. 29. See below for discussion of the typology of Herod's suicide as shown in this manuscript.
110. Cave, op. cit., pl. XVIII and pl. XV.7.
111. George Henderson, 'The Angers Apocalypse and English Illuminated Manuscripts', lecture delivered at the University of York, March 1, 1976.
112. Lisbon, Gulbenkian Collection; formerly Yates Thompson MS 55. This manuscript has been photographed by the Courtauld Institute. For description see James, Henry Yates Thompson, no. 55.
113. L'Apocalypse en Français au XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, ed. L. Delisle and P. Meyer, Société des Anciens Textes Français, (Paris, 1900 repr. New York, 1965), vol. 44, pt. 1., pp. XCVII-C.
114. Angelus enim Christus est, qui est nuntius paterne voluntatis. Nube autem apparuit angelus amictus, quia nimirum carne indutus inter homines apparuit, de qua Propheta: 'Ecce Dominus ascendet super nubem levem et ingredietur Egyptum'. Super nubem quippe levem ascendit quando carnem sine gravedine peccati assumpsit.
115. Delisle and Meyer, op. cit., pp. CIV-CV.
116. This paddle appears in some other related works and will be discussed below.
117. Roger of Hoveden: Chronica, Rolls Series, vol. 51, part 3 (1870), pp. 75-79, and Gesta Henrici II et Riccardi I, Rolls Series, vol. 49, pt. 2 (1867), p. 151 (quotes Hoveden).
118. London, British Library, MS Add. 42555, fol. 28, (Massacre and Flight); see fol. 34 for another representation of Herod in a Massacre scene (with a demon crown) and the Adoration.
119. George Henderson, MS K.26 p. 277.
120. The Writings of Origen, transl. Frederick Crombie, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, (Edinburgh, 1869), vol. X, 'Letter Against Celsus', ch. LXI, p. 464. See also The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom on the Gospel of St. Matthew, transl. George Prevost, Library of Fathers, (Oxford, 1852), Part 1, Homilies 1-XXV, p. 97, who suggests that Herod was driven 'as by some devil'.
121. Sermo XXXVI, 'In Epiphania Solemnitate, VI', in PL 54, col. 254.
122. M.D. Anderson, Drama and Imagery in Medieval English Churches (Cambridge 1963), p. 163.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid., p. 163.
125. Speculum Humanae Salvationis, ed. J. Lutz and P. Perdrizet, (Leipzig, 1907-1909). They list over two hundred extant manuscripts. M.R. James

- published the illustrations of a fine fourteenth-century Italian manuscript now in Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Riches Bequest MS 43-1950, in Speculum Humanae Salvationis, Roxburghe Club, (Oxford, 1926).
126. Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, transl. H. St. J. Thackeray, Loeb Classical Library, (London, 1930), vol. IV, Book II, ix, 7, pp. 265, 267.
127. PL 198, col. 1144.
128. James, op. cit., p. 21.
129. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 146. See Lutz and Perdrizet for the complete text and illuminations of this manuscript; text, I, pp. 2-99; plates of mid-fourteenth century manuscript, vol. II.
130. Ludolph the Carthusian, Vita Christi, ed. L.M. Rigollet, (Paris, 1878).
131. Ibid., I, xiii, ed. cit., pp. 120-21.
132. Ibid., p. 121.
133. See Lutz and Perdrizet, I, pp. 121-164.
134. Ibid., I, p. 131. A second French version of this work survives in the form of octosyllabic verses, thought to be mid-fifteenth-century tituli for a tapestry made for Saint-Berlin, now lost. This manuscript is St. Omer, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 184, reproduced in Lutz and Perdrizet, I, pp. 165-174. Moses' motivation for smashing the crown is made clear; see ibid., p. 168.
135. Although the text of the Speculum is quite clear about this, the illuminated manuscripts do not show any crowns inhabited by gods, nor even by the ram's horn of Zeus-Ammon.
136. James, op. cit., p.5. The other work is the Biblia Ruperum (see below).
137. Lutz and Perdrizet, I, p. 287-323.
138. See Anderson, op. cit., pl. 16d.
139. M.R. James, St. George's Chapel, Windsor: The Woodwork of the Choir (Windsor, 1933), p. 19. See also the description of the king in the St. Cypriacus and Julitta carvings, pp. 27-29.
140. Le Mistère du Viel Testament, ed. James de Rothschild, Société des Anciens Textes Français, (Paris, 1878-91, repr. New York, 1966).
141. Ibid., vol. III, ll. 21920-23105, pp. 207-257.
142. Ibid., vol. III, p. lxxxviii.
143. See, for example, Ambrose, Expositio Evangelii Secundum Lucam, PL 15, col. 1606. See also chapter 2.
144. Josephus, Jewish War, I, xiv, 4, p. 175, and passim to end of Book I, p. 321. See chapter 1.
145. For reproduction, see Courtauld photograph Z 7475.

146. See Sauerländer, Gothic Sculpture in France, pl. 166 for reproduction.
147. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 526, fol. 3lv. For the influence of this text on the Cursor Mundi see chapter 9.
148. Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, Book XVII, vi, 5 in Josephus transl. Ralph Marcus, (London, 1963) vol. 8, p. 451.
149. Peter Comestor, PL 198, col. 1546. The Legenda Aurea makes only passing reference to this episode. 'A medicis vero in oleo positus, inde quasi mortuus est allatus'. (Graesse ed., p. 66) Caxton eliminated it altogether in his translation.
150. Op. cit., p. 208.
151. London, British Library, MS Harley 1527, fol. 13.
152. At the top of this same folio, there is an illustration of Herod ordering the Massacre of the Innocents, in which a small black devil sits on his shoulder and whispers in his ear. The devil does not reappear at his death.
153. London, British Library, MS Add. 47682. See facsimile edition by W.O. Hassall, The Holkham Bible Picture Book (London, 1954).
154. See W.O. Hassall, op. cit., p. 91 for comments on the connection between Cologne and London. The relics of the Three Kings had been transferred to the Cathedral in Cologne in 1164 and they were especially revered there.
155. PL 198, col. 1543-48.
156. Jewish Antiquities, Book XVI, iv, 4; p. 255.
157. PL 198, col. 1545.
158. Ibid., col. 1546.
159. For comments relating Herod to Edward II, and Herod's incarceration of the young nobles to Edwards II's attitude to the nobles who supported Thomas of Lancaster, see Hassall, op. cit., p. 99. Such interpretations should be viewed with great caution.
160. PL 198, col. 1547.
161. Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, Book XVII, viii, 2, p. 461.
162. Jacobus de Voragine, ed cit., p. 66.
163. Vincent de Beauvais, ed. cit., Book VI, chapter 100, p. 208.
164. Dialogue with Trypho in Writings of Saint Justin Martyr, transl. Thomas B. Falls, Fathers of the Church (New York, 1948), p. 305.
165. Hallall, op. cit., p.7 considers this series to be one of two digressions which impair the artistic unity and symmetry of the Holkham Bible. It is interesting to note that the other digression has to do with John the Baptist and another Herod, son of Herod the Great (folio 21 and 21v). Hassall suggests that the former may be a covert compliment to Edward III, who he

thinks may have provided funds for the production of this manuscript and the latter as a deliberate digression on the name-saint of another patron of the book. These theories are not fully convincing. It is interesting to note, however, that both digressions are centred on a King Herod.

166. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9961-62. See Lucy Freeman Sandler, The Peterborough Psalter in Brussels and Other Fenland Manuscripts (London 1974).

167. Lucy Freeman Sandler, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

168. Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 11.4, folio 8.

169. Ibid., folio 65v.

170. For example the illumination for Salve me fac on folio 79 shows the Crucifixion rather than the more usual scene of Jonah and the whale.

171. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 41, folio 48. See James, Fitzwilliam pp. 80-82.

172. Oxford, All Souls College, MS lat. 6.

173. The scene has been described in detail lest it be thought that the manuscript subject might perhaps be the Judgement of Solomon, with which it might easily be confused. See for example the Beatus page of the Windmill Psalter in New York Pierpont Morgan Library, M 102, reproduced in Margaret Rickert, Painting in Britain (Harmondsworth, 1954) pl. 123.

174. Oxford, Bodleian Lib. MS Canon liturg. 126, folio 79v. Pächt and Alexander, vol. 1, 292.

175. London, British Library, MS Royal 6 E VI, fol. 8v.

176. The British Library Catalogue of Royal Manuscripts identifies this scene as the Dream of the Magi. This is most certainly incorrect for two reasons: first, there is only one crowned figure instead of three; second the context associating this scene with the Return rather than the Adoration (where the Dream of the Magi is usually shown), points to Herod. The Angel appeared to Joseph after Herod died (Matt. 2:19).

177. Herod also appears on fol. 8 of this manuscript, in a standard scene of the Massacre. He is crowned and holds a naked sword as he watches a soldier dangle a child at the tip of his long spear.

178. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, germ. oct. 109; this text is Driu Liet von der Maget by Wemher von Tegegnsee written c.1172. The manuscript was illuminated in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. (I am indebted to Miss Adelaide Bennett from the Index of Christian Art for information concerning this manuscript).

179. Des priesters Wemher drei Leider von der Magd, ed. Hermann Degering (Berlin, 1925).

180. Ibid., p. 218. I am indebted to Dr. Trudy Berger of the University of York for help in the translation of this text.

181. Ibid.

182. See for example:  
 Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS1, folio 123. See James Fitzwilliam, p.1.  
 Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS 5, folio 128v. Ibid, p.9.  
 Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 10.24, folio 210. See James Trinity I,  
 Mo.235  
 Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O. 4.16, folio 30. Ibid, III; no.1247  
 Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O. 4.27, no foliation. Ibid, III, no.1258
183. London, British Library, MS Millar, folio 97 v. See La Somme le Roy,  
 ed. Eric George Millar, Roxburghe Club (Oxford, 1953).
184. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 313, folio 26. Pächt and Alexander, 1 603
185. Henderson, op. cit., p.273. He also finds stylistic connections between  
 K. 26 and the Abingdon Apocalypse (p.277) which he thinks is from the same  
 workshop as the Lisbon Apocalypse.
186. A. G. I. Christie, English Medieval Embroidery (Oxford, 1938), pp.196-198;  
 pl. CL VII.
187. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 60, illustration no. 8.
188. New York, Pierpont Morgan, <sup>Lib.</sup> M 183, folio 10v shows a mother struggling  
 while a soldier holds her swaddled child before Herod.
189. New York, The Cloisters, The Cloisters Apocalypse, folio 2 v; See  
 facsimile edition, The Cloisters Apocalypse (New York, 1971). Scholars  
 do not agree on the origin of this manuscript; France, Normandy and England  
 have been suggested.
190. Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Clm.835, folio 23.
191. The cope is now lost but a water-colour drawing survives in the  
 Bebington Museum in Cheshire. See Christie, op. cit., pp.183-186. The  
 Massacre scene is third from the right edge.
192. Jean Lafond, Les Vitraux de l'Eglise Saint-Ouen de Rouen (Paris, 1970)  
 pp.58-60. The Massacre of the Innocents occurs in a three-lancet window  
 in Bay 42; on the left is Herod, in the centre a mother with two soldiers  
 and on the right, the same again.
193. For other mothers who strike back at the soldiers see the Psalter  
 of St. Louis and Blanche of Castille, Arsenal MS 1186 (Pl. 25 of the  
 reproduction published by H. Martin, Les Joyaux de l'Arsenal, vol.1,  
 Paris, 1909), the Hours of Jeanne de France, queen of Navarre, and the  
 wall painting from the beginning of the fourteenth century of Marchésieux  
 (Manche) in which a woman 'prend à la gorge un soldat au visage de brute  
 et le frappe de son battoir à linge'. (Paul Deschamps and Mars Thibout,  
La Peinture murale en France au début de l'époque gothique, Paris, 1963  
 p.130 and pl.65; I.)
194. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 259, folio 5. See Wormald and  
 Giles, Handlist, no.19.
195. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 3a, folio 42v. Pächt and  
 Alexander, Vol.3, 642.



196. Oxford, Bodleian Lib. MS Douce 5, folio 15v. (Pächt and Alexander, Vol.1, 296). See also Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 10, 434 (13c Psalter). See Courtauld photograph negative number 506/23 (32). No folio number is indicated by the Courtauld.
197. London, British Library, MS Arundel 157, folio 5.
198. Christie, op. cit., pp.159-161.
199. Windows II. Note that the mother has been given the head of the Virgin. (The panel including Herod and the soldier has been photographed in reverse unfortunately).
200. Chantilly, Musée Condé MS 1695 (9), folio 18 v. See Florens Deuchler, Der Ingeborgpsalter (Berlin, 1967) pl. XIV.22.
201. London, British Library, MS Add. 49,999, folio 23 v. W. de Brailes signed his name on folio 43.
202. Jurgis Baltrašaitis, Réveils et Prodiges: Le Gothique fantastique (Paris, 1960) p.180 and fig.28.
203. J. Natanson, Gothic Ivories (London, 1951) fig.20.
204. London, British Library, MS 49,999 folio 17v.
205. Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, MS 1606, folio 11 v. For reproduction see Princeton Index of Christian Art.
206. See R.E.J. Weber, 'The Messenger-Box as a Distinctive of the Foot-Messenger,' The Antiquaries Journal, Vol.46, pt.1 (1966) pp.88-101.
207. Emile Mâle, L'Art Religieux du XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle en France (Paris 1925) p.220.
208. For a full account of the church and its furnishings and decorations, see Marian Ullén, Dådesjö och Eke kyrkor (Stockholm, 1969).
209. Tristram identified this figure as the apocryphal robber which the Holy Family met during the Flight. See E. W. Tristram, 'The Roof-Painting at Dådesjö, Sweden, A Note', Burlington Magazine (1917) pp.115-16. However, the bowl of grain under his arm, and the subject of the next roundel, suggest he is the sower.
210. M.R. James, Catalogue of the Manuscripts, Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge, 1895) p.xli, and Emile Mâle, op. cit., p.220 both failed to find an early source for this legend.
211. De quelques miracles que l'Enfant Jésus fit en sa Jeunesse (Lyons, n.d.) This is printed in Dictionnaire des Apocryphes, ed.J.P. Migne (1858) vol.2, cols.375-76, note 443, and Mâle, op. cit., p.220.
212. Arabic Gospel of the Infancy - ch. XIII and XXIII. Aelred of Rievaulx, De Vita Eremitica ad Sororem, ch. xlviii, printed with St. Augustine's works, PL 32. See M.R. James, The Apocryphal New Testament (Oxford, 1924) pp. 80 and 81 n.1.
213. Gospel of Thomas, ch. 1 in Apocryphal New Testament, p.58.

214. Hans Wentzel 'Die Kornfeldlegende', Aachener Kunstblätter, vol.30 (1965) pp.131-143.
215. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 729. See Wentzel, op. cit., fig.4 for fol.289 v.
216. Ibid., folio 290. See Wentzel, op. cit., fig.5.
217. For a full description of this cope, see A. G. I. Christie, English Medieval Embroidery (Oxford, 1938) pp.99-101; pl. Ll.
218. Ibid., p.101.
219. This legend also occurred on the wall paintings in Headington church which survived until June 1863. Photographs can be seen in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Top. Oxon. e. 272, folio 14 v and Islip Rural Deanery Magazine (August 1929) p. 4.
220. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, Ivories H. 224-229. See Wentzel, op. cit., p.137, fig.6.
221. For a full description see Treasures from Medieval France, exhibition catalogue by William D. Dixon, (Cleveland Museum of Art, 1967) p.202-3, No.V.16.
222. See James, Henry Yates Thompson, p.62.
223. See Illustrations of One Hundred Manuscripts in the Library of Henry Yates Thompson (London, 1907) vol.1, pl. XXI, No.75.
224. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 39, folio 60 v. Pächt and Alexander, Vol.1, 605.
225. W. de Gray Birch, Early Drawings and Illuminations in the British Museum (London, 1879) p.167.
226. Wentzel, op. cit., pp.135-137. He also cites twelve manuscripts from the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, the De Buz Book of Hours at Harvard, and others in London, Windsor, Cambridge, Paris and Vienna, as well as wall paintings in Scandinavia. The legend also occurs in such well known works as the Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, in the Cloisters, New York, the Book of Hours for Engelbert of Nassau by the Master of Mary of Burgundy in the Bodleian, and Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry (Musée Condé, Chantilly).
227. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 865, folio 81 v. This is an early fifteenth century Book of Hours of French origin.
228. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 9471, folio 99. See the facsimile The Rohan Book of Hours, ed. Millard Meiss and Marcel Thomas (London, 1973) pl.53.
229. Ibid., commentary on pl.53.
230. Ibid., pl.13 (folio 8 v).
231. See facsimile edition, Les Belles Heures de Jean Duc de Berry, ed. Millard Meiss and Elizabeth Beatson (London, 1974) folio 8.
232. See Wentzel, op. cit., figure 2, for reproduction.

233. London, British Museum, Add. MS 18,850, folio 83.
234. See, for example, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 39, folio 60v, the fourteenth-century Book of Hours from Metz where the main illumination shows the Flight and the Sower and the bas-de-page has the Massacre of the Innocents. (See n.224).
235. For example, of the seventeen manuscripts listed by Lutz and Perdrizet for the British Library, only one has substituted the Massacre scene for the one showing Moses and Pharaoh. This is Egerton 878, produced in 1436, which preserves in its inscription a reference to both events.
236. Kurt Weitzmann, 'The Question of the Influence of Jewish Pictorial Sources on Old Testament Illustration,' Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination (Chicago and London, 1971), pp.76-95.
237. Ibid., p.83. For Jewish commentaries on this incident see Bibliotheca Magna Rabbinica, ed. Julius Bartolucci (Rome, 1693, repr. 1968), Vol.4, pp.115-128, 'De Mose Propheta secundum Hebraeos Dissertatio.' Apocryphal sources are found in Yaschar (Livre du Juste), printed in Dictionnaire des Apocryphes, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris, 1856, 1858); Vol.2, col.1263 tells the story of the trial of the child Moses by coals.
238. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS gr. 746, fol.153. (Weitzmann, figure 63).
239. Pharaoh, although an evil character, is still shown nimbed in this Eastern manuscript.
240. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M.724, folio 1 (Weitzmann, figure 68).
241. Lutz and Perdrizet, op. cit., p.306.
242. Peter Comestor, Historia Scholastica: Libri Machabaeorum, cap. XIV, PL 198, col.1531.
243. Josephus, Jewish Wars, Book 1, x,1 & 2. pp.92-93.
244. Comestor, op. cit., PL 198, col.1531.
245. Seneca, De Beneficiis, Book V, section 24; see Seneca Moral Essays (Cambridge, 1935) pp.356-8. See also Gesta Romanorum, ed. Hermann Oesterley (Berlin, 1872). For apocryphal source of this event see 'Machabees' Books III and IV, printed in Dictionnaire des Apocryphes, ed. J.P. Migne, (Paris, 1856), Vol.1, col.711-850, esp. col.810.
246. Gesta Romanorum, ed. cit., pp.415-16.
247. M.R. James, 'Pictor in Carmine,' Archaeologia, vol.XCIV (1951), pp.141-166.
248. Ibid., p.152. For a discussion of this typology, see also Jean Danielou, From Shadows to Reality, transl. Dom Wulstan Hibberd (London, 1959). The earliest reference in English literature to a typological arrangement of Biblical subjects occurs in Bede's Historia Abbatum printed in Baedae Opera Historica, ed. Charles Plummer (Oxford, 1896) p.373 when he describes the treasures that Benedict Biscop saw and brought back after his sixth visit to Rome.

249. The Canterbury window places these latter types beside the panel of the Adoration of the Christ-Child by the Shepherds and the Magi. On the left Sheba visits Solomon, and on the right Joseph is reunited with his brothers. See Rackham, op. cit., pp.53-61.
250. 'Pictor in Carmine,' ed. cit., p.153.
251. Biblia Pauperum, ed. J. Ph. Berjeau, (London, 1859). See also Biblia Pauperum: Facsimile Edition of the Forty-Leaf Blockbook in the Library of the Esztergom Cathedral, ed. Elizabeth Soltész, (Budapest, 1967). These are both fifteenth century block books. For a manuscript version of the early fifteenth-century, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 164. This coincides with another manuscript in London, British Library, MS King's 5.
252. All quotations are taken from the edition by Berjeau. See p.26 for text of chapter V.
253. Ibid., p.27.
254. Oxford, Keble College, MS 49, Folio 22.
255. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Laud. Misc. 165. Pächt and Alexander, Vol.3, 739.
256. Stockholm, Statens Historiska Museum. See Die Glasmalereien des Mittelalters in Skandinavien, Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi Skandinavien, (Stockholm, 1964) pl.60; pp.231-2.
257. Ibid. pp. 231-2.
258. Uppsala, Uppsala Universitets Museum. See Die Glasmalereien des Mittelalters in Skandinavien, pl.23 (colour), pl.124; pp.117; 240-41.
259. See, for example, London, British Library, Royal MS 2 B.111, folio 13v (late thirteenth century Flemish Psalter) and New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 88, folio 30 (fourteenth-century French Psalter).
260. E. W. Tristram, English Wall Painting of the Fourteenth Century, (London, 1955) pp.153-155; pl.30.
261. Christie, op. cit., pl. LX.
262. Erland Lagerlöf, Gotländsk stes<sup>1</sup>skulptur fran gotiken (Uddevalla, 1975), pp.178-180; Lye, pp.277-79, Lärbro, pp.279-81; Norrlanda, pp.284-86; Stånga, pp.287-290; Martebo, pp.121-122.
263. See Princeton Index of Christian Art for reproduction.
264. See Princeton Index of Christian Art for reproduction.
265. See Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D. 3.4, folio 282 v. This is a thirteenth-century Bible. The beginning of Matthew has a square with nine tiny ( $\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $\frac{3}{4}$ "") miniatures in it; in one of these Herod gives a soldier in chain mail the order for the Massacre, and in the next, the Massacre is shown. Also Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 10.1, folio 3. This is a magnificent Genesis initial extending the length of the whole page, containing quatrefoils up the centre with square picture spandrels up each side. In the spandrel fifth from the top on the left, the Magi appear before Herod who holds a sword; in the eighth spandrel from the top only Herod's head can be seen along with a soldier about to kill a naked child.

266. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Lat. 84, folio 17v, Pächt and Alexander Vol. I, 295; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 101, scene 32 of the second full-page illumination.
267. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 20, folio 15. (Fourteenth century, French). See James, Fitzwilliam, p. 31-41.
268. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 75, folio cxvii (fourteenth century, French).
269. See, for example, London, British Lib., MS Royal 19, B.XVII, fol. 30v; La Légende Dorée translated into French by Jehan de Vignay, c. 1340.
270. London, British Library, MS Y.T. 15, folio 324v.
271. See The Year 1200, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1970), pp. 81-2.
272. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS grec 64, fol. 102v. For reproduction see Henri Omont, Miniatures des plus anciens Manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale du VI<sup>e</sup> au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle (Paris, 1929) pl. LXXXVI.1.
273. Oxford, Christ Church College, MS 107.
274. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, McClean MS 31, folio 206 (thirteenth century, French). See James, Fitzwilliam, pp. 55-65.
275. See Paul A. Underwood, The Kariye Djami 3 vols. (London, 1967) for full description, with plates, of the church, its mosaics and its frescoes. He applies numbers to the frescoes--1-187.
276. Underwood, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 93.
277. Ibid.
278. 'The missing parts of this mosaic are known, since the scene is duplicated among the frescoes of the upper zone of the south, west, and north walls of the nave of the Church of Saint Nicholas at Curtea-de-Arges, Romania, which reproduce with considerable accuracy a selection of scenes from the mosaics of the outer narthex of the Kariye Djami', including this one of Herod and the scribes; Underwood, op. cit., p.94.
279. One of the following mosaics shows various scenes of soldiers killing children while the mothers try to shield them or reach out after them. The next shows all the mothers seated on the ground weeping over their dead children.
280. Underwood, op. cit., p. 103.
281. The inclusion of this apocryphal event (among others) in the capital frieze of the Portail Royal, Chartres, led Adelheid Heimann to conclude that the artist was being influenced by Byzantine models. See Adelheid Heimann, 'The Capital Frieze and Pilasters of the Portail Royal, Chartres', Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, vol. 31, (1968), pp. 81-82.
282. Louis Réau, L'Iconographie de l'Art chrétien (Paris, 1957) vol. 2, part 1, p. 447 lists seven representations of this event, only one of which is Western.

283. Gabriel Millet, Monuments de l'Athos (Paris, 1927) pl. 122, i. This scene appears virtually the same in the Catholicon, Dionysiou (pl. 198-1), Dochiariou (pl. 224.2 & 225.2) and Koutloumous, (pl. 159-2). These are all sixteenth century frescoes.
284. A. Frolov, "L' Eglise Rouge de Peruštica", Bulletin of the Byzantine Institute, vol. 1 (1946), pp. 15-42. He depends on the findings of A. Grabar, La Peinture Religieuse en Bulgarie (Paris, 1928), pp. 21 sq. for information on the Herod scenes. He places them as early as the ninth century.
285. Adelheid Heimann, op. cit., p.82.
286. G. Millet and D. Talbot Rice, Byzantine Painting at Trebizond (London, 1936), pl. XIX, no. 2. The present paintings are seventeenth century or eighteenth century but follow exactly the earlier paintings which date from the early fourteenth century.
287. Ibid., p. 117.
288. V.R. Pekovich, La Peinture serbe du Moyen Age (Belgrade, 1930) pl. 146b.
289. This scene is given separate treatment in the Byzantine Gospel codex, the Karahissar Gospels, in Leningrad, State Library, MS Gr. 105, folio 13v, from the last half of the thirteenth century. For reproduction see Frick Art Reference Library.
290. Otto Demus, Romanesque Mural Painting (London, 1970) p. 432.
291. Ibid.
292. Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 A6, folio 8r. Psalter, second half of the twelfth century.
293. London, British Library, MS Add. 39627, folio 9v.
294. B. Filow, Evangel Jean Alexandre (1934), p. 36, pl. 7 (11, 12) and 8 (15).

#### CHAPTER IX

#### Notes

1. The Laud MS (E), fol. lv, quoted in Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel, revised text by Charles Plummer on edition by John Earle, (Oxford, 1892), p.5. The Parker MS (A), fol. lv also includes the same facts about Herod, op. cit., p.4. Of the other eight manuscripts described by Plummer, one other includes a reference to Herod, MS F (a Canterbury manuscript now in the British Library, Cotton MS Domitian A. VIII) which merely points out that Herod died and Christ returned from Egypt: 'Her Herodes forferde. p cild weard geboren agean of Egipten'. (fol. 32, op. cit., p. 5n).
2. See Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader, revised Dorothy Whitelock (Oxford, 1967), pp. 69-76. Herod is not mentioned in the Blickling Homilies, except in so far as to identify the time of the birth of John The Baptist, nor in any other homilies of this period which have been published.

3. Haymo, Homilia XII, 'De Sanctis Innocentibus', PL 118, col. 75-82.
4. Physiologus, A Metrical Bestiary of Twelve Chapters by Bishop Theobald ed. and translated by Alan Wood Rendell (London, 1928), pp. 22-25.
5. An Old English Miscellany, containing a Bestiary, Kentish Sermons, Proverbs of Alfred, Religious Poems of the Thirteenth Century ed. Richard Morris, EETS OS 49(1872), pp. 14-15.
6. See G.H. Campbell, 'The Middle English Evangelie', PMLA, vol. 30, (1915), pp. 529-613.
7. O.S. Pickering, The South English Nativity of Mary and Christ, Middle English Texts, (Heidelberg, 1975).
8. See PL vol. 198, cols. 1541-1689.
9. Aurora: Petri Rigae Biblia Versificata, ed. Paul E. Beichner, Notre Dame Publications in Medieval Studies, No. XIX, 2 vols, (South Bend, 1965), Evangelium, ll. 425-890.
10. Legenda Aurea, ed. Th. Graesse, (Leipzig, 1850), pp. 62-66.
11. Ed. cit., p. 585. Jacobus says he is citing Bede's Eccles. Hist. but in fact Eusebius is his source.
12. See O.S. Pickering, op. cit., pp. 8-45.
13. See Ibid., pp. 18-19 for a transcription of this passage from Lambeth Palace MS 223, ff. 42r-43r.
14. Ibid., pp. 91-94 for a transcription of this passage from MS British Library Stowe 949, fols. 98r-99r.
15. Ibid., p. 18, n. 16.
16. This manuscript has not yet been published. I am grateful to Dr. Pickering for his generous help in discussing the poem and its transcription.
17. See Shirley Packard Stine, The Metrical Life of Christ, Edited from MS BM Add. 39996, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (University of Pennsylvania, 1962).
18. Opera Omnia S. Bonaventurae t.XII, ed. A.C. Petitier (Paris, 1868) caput XII, 'De Fuga Domini in Aegyptum', p. 526.
19. S.P. Stine, op. cit., pp. 4-9.
20. Ibid., p.3.
21. Legenda Aurea p. 89 'Vel potest dici secundum Jerimiam, quod super dromedarios venerunt, qui sunt animalia velocissima, qui tantum currunt una die, quantum equus in tribus'.
22. Life of Saint Anne, ed. Roscoe E. Parker, EETS OS 174(1928). The poem is dated last quarter of the fourteenth century or first quarter of the fifteenth.
23. The Northern Homily Cycle, ed. Saara Nevanlinna, Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki, vol XXXVIII, pt. I, (Helsinki, 1972). The poem is dated 1362-1400.

24. Ibid., p. 125.
25. Ibid., p. 17.
26. These events are described by Josephus but not Comestor; see Jewish War 1.x.7 (pp. 97-9) and I.xiv.4 (pp. 133-5).
27. Cursor Mundi, ed. Richard Morris, EETS OS 57, 59, 62, 66, 68, (1874-78, repr. 1966).
28. Penelope Doob, Ego Nabugodonosor: A Study of Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Stanford Univ. 1969) p. 342. For the moral connotations of many of the diseases in this list see Doob, pp. 12-13, 349, 382 n48.
29. An almost exactly identical account of Herod's murder in 'un baing de paix et huile' occurs in the French Histoire de la Bible by Hermann de Valenciennes. See New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 526, fol. 3lv, which is illustrated, however, with a picture of Herod sitting normally in a wooden bath-tub (see fig. 171). Hermann's Bible is printed in La Bible von Herman de Valenciennes, ed. O. Moldenhauer, H. Burkowitz, E. Kremers and E. Martin,  diss. (Greifswald, 1914), vol. 2-5. Evidence of a more sympathetic doctor than those in the Cursor Mundi can be seen in a roof boss of the North Transept of Norwich Cathedral where a concerned-looking doctor stands beside a richly robed but worried Herod, taking his pulse. For reproduction see M.D. Anderson History and Imagery in British Churches (London, 1971) pl. 89.
30. See Hymns to the Virgin and Christ, The Parliament of Devils, and Other Religious Poems chiefly from Lambeth MS 853, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, EETS OS 24 (1868, repr. 1969), pp. 41-57. I am indebted to Mr. C.W. Marx for bringing to my attention an earlier unpublished manuscript containing this poem, British Library Add. MS 37492, fols. 83r-90v.
31. A Stanzaic Life of Christ: Compiled from Higden's Polychronicon and the Legenda Aurea, ed. from MS Harley 3909 by Frances Foster, EETS OS 166 (1926 for 1924).
32. P. Doob, op. cit., p. 342.
33. Speculum Sacerdotale, edited from BM MS Add. 36791, ed. Edward Weatherly, EETS OS 200 (1936 for 1935), pp. 12-13.
34. Ibid., pp. xv-xx.
35. Mirk's Festial: A collection of Homilies edited from Bodleian MS Gough Eccles, Top 4, etc., by Theodore Erbe, EETS ES 96 (1905).
36. The Pepysian Gospel Harmony MS Pepys 2498 ed. Margery Coates, EETS OS 157 (1922).
37. The Three Kings of Cologne: An Early English Translation of the 'Historia Trium Regum' of John of Hildesheim, ed. by C. Horstmann, EETS OS 85 (1886).
38. York Breviary, Surtees Society, vol. 71, 75 (1879, 1882), Part I, col. 160.
39. Phillips MS 8336, fol. 203r, printed in Carleton Brown, Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century (Oxford, 1924, repr. 1970), p. 15.
40. For all the poems in this manuscript, see B. Fehr, 'Die Lieder der Hs Sloane 2593,' Archiv, vol. 109 (1902). 'Hostis Herodes Impie' is printed by



Carleton Brown, Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century (Oxford, 1939, repr. 1967), p. 130. For a later version, see J. Zupitza, 'Die Gedichte des Franziskaners Jakob Ryman,' Archiv, vol. 89, (1892) p. 223.

Wikked Herode, thou martall foo,  
That Criste shulde come, why dredest thou soo?  
He claymeth nothing terrestrialle,  
That geveth kingdomes celestiaall.

41. See for example, 'A Song of the Nativity,' Brown, XIVth Century pp. 75-8; 'To bliss God bryng us all and sum,' English Carols, ed. R.L. Greene, (Oxford 1962) p. 61; 'With al the reverens that we may,' ibid., p. 79; see also B. Fehr, 'Die Lieder des Hs Add.5665,' Archiv, CVI (1901), p. 265, 269-70 for other poems relating to Herod.
42. See for example, 'The Journey of the Three Kings' (Ballad of Twelfth Day) in Brown, XIIIth Century pp. 39-41; 'þe sterre hym shen boþe ny3t and day,' B. Fehr, op. cit., pp. 54-5; 'A Song for the Epiphany,' Brown, XVth Century, p. 122; 'The Journey of the Three Kings,' Ibid., p. 124-5; 'The Three Kings and Herod,' Ibid., pp. 127-130; 'Reges de Saba venient,' Fehr, op. cit., pp. 56-8, and Ancient English Christmas Carols, pp. 110-12, 112-15. 'Out of the East a star shone bright,' Ibid., pp. 116-17; 'Herod that was both wild and wode,' Ibid., p. 128; 'When God was born of Mary free,' Ibid., p. 128-9; 'In die sanctorum Innocentium,' The Poems of John Audelay ed. Ella Keats Whiting, EETS OS 184 (1931 for 1930) pp. 189-90. The poems in Ancient English Christmas Carols are rather late, but based on earlier versions of the poems.
43. Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays, ed. Hardin Craig, EETS ES 87 (1902, repr. 1957), p. 32. Printed also in Ancient English Christmas Carols, ed. Edith Rickert (London, 1910), p. 76. See Ibid., p. 77 for another carol in which Mary sings a lullaby to Christ, 'An Old Carol, with Lullaby,' mentioning the 'cruel king'.
44. Porkington MS 10, fols. 199v-200v, printed in Brown, XVth Century, p.124-5.
45. Karl Brunner, 'Zwei Gedichte aus der Handschrift Trinity College, Cambridge 323 (B. 14. 39),' Englische Studien (1970) p. 221-243.
46. B. Fehr, op. cit., pp. 54-5.
47. Sloane MS 2593, fol. 17r-18v; see Fehr, op. cit., pp. 56-58.
48. See F.J. Child, The English and Scottish Popular Ballads (London, 1882-98) vol. I, number 22. Note that similar songs of the revived cock are also associated with Judas. This is of interest in the light of Cursor Mundi where Herod goes to hell after his gruesome death to join Judas, who was a successful suicide.
49. Ancient English Christmas Carols, pp. 91-95. This is a modernized version of a much earlier poem.
50. Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century, ed. Joseph Rawson Lumby, Rolls Series, vol. 41, pt. 4 (1872, repr. 1964).
51. Ibid., p. 231. The fifteenth century translation is quoted. Comestor is acknowledged in the text as the source for the material on Herod.
52. P. Doob, op. cit., p. 382, n. 49.

53. See Lydgate's Fall of Princes ed. Henry Bergen, EETS ES 121-4 (1924-27, repr. 1967), vol. IV, pp. 273-4.
54. Book VII, Chapter 2; vol III, pp. 777-82.
55. Ed. cit., vol. IV, p. 274.
56. See, for example, London, British Library, Royal MS 14 E. V., fol. 313v ff. Many manuscripts of Laurence of Premierfait's translations survive.
57. See London, British Library, Harley MS 3565.
58. S.S. Hussey, 'How Many Herods in the Middle English Drama?' Neophilologus, vol. 48 (1964), pp. 252-259. See also chapter 11.
59. The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry, ed. Thomas Wright, EETS OS 33 (1868, revised 1906).
60. See chapter 11.

#### CHAPTER X

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## Notes

1. Richard Axton, European Drama of the Early Middle Ages (London, 1974) p. 100.
2. Ibid. The others are the Norman or Anglo-Norman Adam, the Anglo-Norman La Sainte Resurreccion and Jean Bodel's Jeu de Saint-Nicolas. He also considers the transitional, Latin-Provençal play of the Sponsus in the chapter.
3. For text and facsimile, see R. Menendez Pidal, 'Auto de los Reyes Magos,' Revista de Archivos, vol. 4 (1900), pp. 453-62.

4. PG, vol. 56, col. 637.
5. Winnifred Sturdevant, El Misterio de los Reyes Magos; Its Position in the Development of the Medieval Legend of the Three Kings (Baltimore, 1927), p. 56ff., points out many similarities between the Spanish play and the Benedictbeuern play.
6. Sturdevant, op. cit., p. 73, has found traces of this tradition in only four other places: a single line of one poem, in French narrative poems of the Infancy, and in certain manuscripts of Marco Polo's Travels, and in one line of the Sainte Geneviève Geu des Trois Rois to be discussed below. Only two could have been sources for the Spanish play, i.e., the hymn and the French narrative poem.
7. Axton, op.cit., p. 107.
8. Sturdevant, op. cit., p. 78.
9. Axton, op. cit., p. 108.
10. For this interpretation, see Beatrice P. Patt, The Development of the Play in Spain from the Origins to Lope de Vega, Ph.D. dissertation (Bryn Mawr, 1945), p. 55. She finds the dispute mixed with a certain amount of venom and recrimination.
11. Sturdevant, p. 73, followed by Patt, p. 55, interprets this event thus.
12. Axton, op. cit., p. 108.
13. 'Rappresentazione della Nativita di Cristo', Sacre Rappresentazioni dei secoli XIV, XV e XVI, ed. Allesandro D'Ancona (Florence, 1872), vol. I, pp. 191--210.
14. Miss Patt, op. cit., p. 55 is misleading in suggesting that they have a dispute. The rubrics read Ora vanno a disputare but it is clear from the Italian and also from the context that the meaning is 'to discuss' rather than 'to dispute'.
15. On sybils in medieval thought, see Emile Mâle, L'Art Religieux du XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle en France (Paris, 1919), pp. 393--97.
16. For earlier vernacular laude involving Herod, see 'Laus pro Festo Epifanie' from Perugia in Laude Drammatiche e Rappresentazioni Sacre, ed. Vincenzo de Bartholomaeis (Florence, 1943), Vol. I, pp. 75-86, and 'Laus in Dominica Post Epifaniam Quando Maria Fugit in Egiptum', ibid., pp. 86-93. Herod plays only a very small part in the latter; the former reads like a direct translation from a liturgical drama although it is exceptional in including some apocryphal miracles such as the fruit tree which bows down to the Virgin. A similarly liturgical play in the vernacular survives from Siena, 'Rappresenatzione e Festa de' Magi', Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 203--208. For a summary of liturgical drama in Italy, see Vincenzo de Bartholomaeis, Origini della Poesia Drammatica Italiana, 2nd ed. (Turin, 1952), pp. 112-450.
17. Mystères et Moralités du Manuscript 617 du Chantilly, ed. Gustave Cohen (Paris, 1920), pp. 1--23. Cohen dates the first Nativity play in the thirteenth century, p. CXLVIII, but this date has been disputed by E. Heopffner, 'Les jeux dramatiques de Chantilly', Romania, vol. XLVII, pp. 75ff. who argues for a late fifteenth century date, p. 91g.
18. Ibid., pp. CXXI - CXXXII.

19. Ibid., p.18. Note that they sing this after they leave Herod, instead of when they first meet, as in the Latin drama.
20. Ibid., p. CXXX: 'Vis-à-vis d'eux [les rois], il dissimule sa fureur, au lieu de les faire jeter en prison comme dans Bilsen, il les invite même à dîner et rien n'amuse un public, fût-ce de religieuses, comme de voir les acteurs manger, puis il continue son Interrogatoire.'
21. Ibid., p. CXXXIII.
22. Grace Frank, The Medieval French Drama (Oxford, 1954), p.153.
23. This manuscript has been edited in two parts, La Nativité et le Jeu des Trois Rois, ed. Ruth Whittredge, PhD dissert. (Bryn Mawr, 1944) and Le Mystère de la Passion Nostre Seigneur, ed. Graham Rounalls, (Geneva and Paris, 1974). Both contain useful bibliographies and introductions to the manuscript and the texts.
24. Whittredge, op. cit., pp.36-56. This poem was included in the Romanz de Saint Fanuel (see n.26 below).
25. Grace Frank, op. cit., p.138 first noted how few lines were taken for such a variety of scenes.
26. See note 24. This poem has no name but Whittredge follows Meyer in calling it L'Histoire de Marie et de Jesus. It was first published by C. Chabaneau as a part of 'Le Romanz de Saint Fanuel et de Sainte Anne et de Nostre Dame et de Nostre Segnor et de ses apostres' in Revue des Langues Romanes, vol.28 (1885) pp.157-258. This edition will be cited hereafter. This poem forms part of the twelfth-century Bible of Herman of Valenciennes, (see H. Burkowitz, La Bible von Herman de Valenciennes, dissert. Greifswald, 1915, vol.III) and the thirteenth-century Bible des sept Estay du monde of Geoffroi de Paris and so was readily available as a source of inspiration for later writers.
27. See Emile Roy, Le Mystère de la Passion en France du XIV<sup>e</sup> au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, (Paris and Dijon, 1903, 1904), p.24\*
28. Whittredge, op. cit., p.54 points out that this double command, first to guard the gates and then to kill the children, occurs in the French narrative poem used as a source for this play, but in the source, Herod is seeking the Christ-Child both times, first to prevent his escape and then to kill him. The Trois Rois, in connecting the guarding of the gates with the departure of the kings, is more logical and better motivated. Whittredge assumes the playwright was using another version of the poem more correct than the ones now extant. He may, however, have improved the incident himself. This would be consistent with his sense of drama.
29. A. Jeanroy, 'Sur quelques sources des Mystères Français de la Passion,' Romania, vol. XXXV, (1906), pp.366-68 disagrees with the thesis that the Jeu des Trois Rois uses Le Romanz de Saint Fanuel precisely because of the difference in presentation of this legend in the two works.
30. Whittredge, op. cit., pp.56-7.
31. Some exceptions to this are the Passion du Palatinus which opens with the Entry into Jerusalem, the fragmentary Passion d'Autun, and the Passion of Jean Michel which begins with Christ's Baptism.

32. Mystère de l'Incarnation et Nativité de Notre Sauveur et Redempteur Jésus-Christ représenté à Rouen en 1474, ed. Pierre le Verdier, (Rouen, 1886) 3 vols.
33. Le Mystère de la Passion d'Arnoul Greban, ed. Omer Jodogne (Brussels, 1965).
34. An Edition of the Passion de Semur (B. N. f. fr. 904), by Peter Thomas Durbin, unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, (Leeds, 1973). This replaces and corrects the edition by Emile Roy in Le Mystère de la Passion en France du XIV<sup>e</sup> au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle (Paris and Dijon, 1903, 1904).
35. Ibid., p.xxx-xxxii.
36. This Rusticus appears throughout the Semur play as a kind of unifying device, at different intervals and in different guises: Moses' son Chanaan is transformed into Rusticus; later Rusticus appears as a peasant who meets a messenger on the road to Bethlehem and later meets Herod's soldier, he becomes the owner of the donkey which Jesus requires for his Entry into Jerusalem, a Jew buying goods from vendors in the Temple and finally a gardener in the place where Jesus is buried.
37. I am deeply indebted to Jane Oakeshott, a graduate student at the University of Leeds, who is working on an edition of the text of the first day of the Passion d'Arras, and has generously allowed me to use her manuscript. The only other edition available is by J.M. Richard, Le Mystère de la Passion, texte du manuscrit 697 de la Bibliothèque d'Arras, (Arras, 1891) but this is considered rather inaccurate. I refer to line numbers of the text as worked out by Miss Oakeshott. The manuscript is illustrated and some of the illuminations have been reproduced by Gustave Cohen, Le Théâtre en France au Moyen Age: Vol.I Le Théâtre Religieux (Paris, 1928), pl. IX-XXXVIII.
38. See n. 33.
39. Grace Frank, op. cit., p.185.
40. Ibid., 182-4.
41. Emile Roy, op. cit., p.211.
42. Le Livre de conduite du régisseur et le compte des dépenses pour le Mystère de la Passion joué à Mons en 1501, ed. Gustave Cohen, (Paris, 1925).
43. See Grace Frank, op. cit., p.189.
44. See Petit de Julleville, Histoire du Théâtre en France: II Les Mystères (Paris, 1880, repr. 1968) pp.418-24.
45. The painter is identified by Grace Frank, op. cit., p.171 n.1. For reproduction of Valenciennes illuminations see G. Cohen, Histoire de la Mise en Scène dans le Théâtre Religieux Français du Moyen Age (Paris, 1906), pl.1 for staging and positioning of pageant wagons.
46. Mittelniederländisches Osterspiel of Maastricht, ed. Julius Zacher, Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum, vol.2 (1842) pp.302-350. Roy, op. cit., p.8\* points out that this play is based on French sources.
47. 'Biblische Geschichte: Von der beschaffung dieser welt biss auf das jungst gericht gereymt,' ed. H. F. Massmann, in Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum, vol.2 (1842), pp.130-158.

48. Zerbster Procession, ed. Friedrich Sintenis, Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum, vol.2 (1842) pp.276-297.
49. Egerer Fronleichnamsspiele, ed. Gustav Milchsack, (Tübingen, 1881). See also Karl Bartsch, 'Über ein geistliches Schauspiel des XV Jahrhunderts,' Germania, vol.3 (1858), pp.267-97 for comments on the text. Rubrics in Latin have been underlined.
50. Blakemore Evans, The Passion Play of Lucerne (New York and London, 1943), p.IX.
51. Ibid., p.26.
52. For text, see Das Luzerner Osterspiele, ed. Heinz Wyss (Bern, 1967).
53. Evans, op. cit., p.83.
54. Ibid., p.185. One manuscript indicates some heraldic devices on the shield: 'Schillt knab Herodis: Sol haben im Schillt gmalet ein guldinen Gryffen in blawen feld', (p.202).
55. Ibid., p.185. Evans suggests, however, from evidence in another manuscript, that these animals were not genuine, in n.30.
56. Another drama which includes a part for 'Herodes Ascolonita' is edited in The Kunzelsau Corpus Christi Play: A Diplomatic and Critical Interpretation, ed. D. Reeves, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, (University of Texas, 1963). The text includes formal and liturgical interviews between Herod and the Magi and then between Herod and the Jews when his questions are answered by 'Sinagoga' (p.86). Later Herod speaks with three soldiers but the massacre does not occur on stage; it is reported by the third soldier as a completed act (p.96). However, there is an expanded version of these events (pp.285 ff.) in which the Magi's speeches are longer, much business with books is introduced into the conversation of Herod and Sinagoga, and the Massacre is expanded to include the laments of three Rachel-figures. Nevertheless, the tone continues to be liturgical and subdued throughout. For reference to other vernacular German plays in which devils incite Herod to evil and excite his rage, see Georges Duriez, La Théologie dans le Drame Religieux en Allemagne au Moyen Age (Lille, 1914). These texts are not readily available. Judging from Duriez's comments these plays sound unlike other German plays but not outside the traditions of contemporary art and drama in France.
57. The study by S. S. Hussey, 'How Many Herods in the Middle English Drama?' Neophilologus, vol.48 (1964), pp.252-259 ingeniously suggests that the treatment of Herod the Great in the English mystery cycles was influenced by accounts of Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great (from Acts 12: 22-3) in his claims to godhood and also in his death. As has been pointed out above, this is quite unlikely, as all sources for medieval literature differentiate quite clearly among the different Herods.
58. See Warren E. Tomlinson, Der Herodes-Charakter im englischen Drama, (Leipzig, 1934).
59. Rosemary Woolf, The English Mystery Plays (London, 1972), p.202.
60. Hamlet III, ii, l. 9.
61. The Chester Mystery Cycle, ed. R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills, EETS SS 3 (1974), Plays VIII, IX, and X.

62. Hardin Craig, English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1955), pp.166-178.
63. See Arnold Williams, The Drama of Medieval England (East Lansing, Michigan, 1961), p.72. He contrasts the kindly portrait of Octavian with that of Caesar Augustus in the Townley plays who is 'a boasting tyrant of the Pharaoh and Herod stamp.'
64. Williams, Ibid., p.131 sees this sequence as an illustration of one of the vices of the great, the need for flattery. He sees the doctor's reluctance to state the prophecy as a way of softening up Herod for the bad news, unsuccessfully.
65. See Robert H. Wilson, 'The Stanzaic Life of Christ and the Chester Plays,' Studies in Philology, vol.28 (1931), pp.413-432. See also Hussey, op. cit., pp.253, 257.
66. Ibid., p.131-2. Williams points out that one fourth of all the plays in Townley are built around tyrants.
67. For a detailed analysis of Herod's long opening speech in this play and its implications for staging see David Mills, 'Some Possible Implications of Herod's Speech: Chester Plays VIII 153-204,' Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, vol. LXXIV, (1973) pp.131-143.
68. See V.A. Kolve, The Play Called Corpus Christi (Stanford, 1966), p.223.
69. See G.R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Oxford, 1933, repr. 1966), pp.471-547.
70. For a different interpretation of Herod's drinking of wine, see Penelope Doob, op. cit., pp.357-8.
71. Kolve, op. cit., p.157.
72. Woolf, op. cit., p.203.
73. The Digby Plays, ed. F.J. Furnival, EETS ES 70 (1896, repr. 1967) pp.1-24.
74. Ludus Coventriae or the Plaie called Corpus Christi, ed. K.S. Block, EETS ES 120 (1922 for 1917, repr. 1960).
75. In most of the plays, minstrels are present at Herod's court and are instructed either by Herod or in the rubrics to play at important moments such as Herod's entry and exit.
76. T.S.R. Boase, Death in the Middle Ages (London, 1972), pp.97-102.
77. Woolf, op. cit., p.211.
78. Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays, ed. Hardin Graig, EETS ES 87 (second ed. 1957), pp.1-32.
79. Louis Réau, op. cit., vol.2, pt.2, p.276.
80. Wilhelm Neuss, Die katalanische Bibelillustration um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends und die altspanische Buchmalerei (Bonn and Leipzig, 1922), p.114, n.14 and fig.169 (fol. 15v).



81. Wilhelm Neuss, Die Apokalypse des Hl. Johannes in der altspanischen und altchristlichen Bibel-Illustration (Münster, 1931) vol.1, pp.126-7, and vol.2, pl.xx, fig.34. (fol. 14v).
82. See Arnold Williams, 'The Comic in the Cycles,' Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies, vol.16, Medieval Drama (London, 1973) pp.114-15.
83. Ed. cit., p.32 for text of lullaby.
84. The Towneley Plays, ed. Alfred W. Pollard, EETS ES 71 (1897, repr. 1966)
85. Play XIV, The Offering of the Magi and play XVI, Herod the Great, or Magnus Herodes.
86. Play II, The Killing of Abel.
87. Play, VIII, Pharaoh.
88. Play IX, Caesar Augustus.
89. Play XX, The Conspiracy and Play XXIV, The Talents.
90. The Wakefield Pageants in the Towneley Cycle, ed. A.C. Cawley, Manchester, 1958) pp.64-77.
91. For a discussion of the verbal profundity of this play see Charles Elliott, 'Language and theme in the Towneley Magnus Herodes' Medieval Studies, vol.XXX, (1968) pp.351-3. Herod's blasphemous imitation of Christ makes him a prime example of Antichrist. See Br. L. Lucken, Antichrist and the Prophets of Antichrist in the Chester Cycle (Washington, 1940) p.76.
92. See A.P. D'Entrèves and J.G. Dawson, Aquinas: Selected Political Writings (Oxford, 1948), pp.16-19.
93. Cawley, op. cit., p.115, n.80.
94. Paston Letters, ed. Norman Davis, Clarendon Medieval and Tudor Series, (Oxford, 1958), pp.113-114.
95. See T.W. Craik, 'Violence in the English Miracle Plays,' Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies, Vol.16, Medieval Drama (London, 1973, pp.173-198, for a full discussion of this problem.
96. M.D. Anderson, Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches (Cambridge, 1963), p.136.
97. E.K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage (Oxford, 1903), Vol.II, p.345.
98. Craik, op. cit., p.183.
99. This association was not made by patristic writers or in the visual arts.
100. Only the Digby Burial of Christ makes an association between these events. The third Mary mourns over the body of Christ:

O pepull most cruel and furiose,  
 Thus to slo an Innocent  
 (ll. 68-9)

The use of the word 'Innocent' would recall not only Christ but the Innocents in this context. Later Mary Magdalene rehearses the Crucifixion at the beginning of Christ's Resurrection (Part II of The Burial of Christ) and blames it on Jews who were more cruel than Cain, or Joseph's brothers, or than Herod the Kinge/[who] put to deth many Jonglinge' (ll.894-5).

101. York Mystery Plays, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith, (Oxford, 1885, repr. 1963), Play XI; Towneley Plays, ed. cit., Play VIII.

102. See Cursor Mundi, ed. cit., ll. 5495-5600 for a full account.

103. Kolve, op. cit., p.75. See pp.75-78 for a discussion of these 'figures.'

104. Lucy Toulmin Smith, op. cit., p.xlv, n.2 mentions an Italian play (MS Libri 1264) dated 1490, which is long and full and deals mainly with the New Testament. She comments: 'Several interesting developments might be noted, such as Herod's three sons, the ship with captain and sailors with whom the Magi sail to Herod . . .' It is difficult to know which three sons these are without examining the manuscripts, and whether they are presented as young children or adults.

105. Woolf, op. cit., p.204.

106. See Arnold Williams, 'The Comic in the Cycles,' pp.109-123 for a discussion of the ambiguity and meaning of comic people and events in the mystery cycles.

107. Hardig Craig, ed. cit., Appendix II, pp.82-4.

108. Ibid., p.86.

109. Ibid. See also E. Trollope, 'The Churches of Holbeach and other Parishes in Lincolnshire,' Lincoln Diocesan Architectural Society, Architectural Societies' Papers, vol.XI (1871-2) p.209: amongst 'the stuffe disposed of by the churchwardens of this parish, in 1543, were the following items, viz: Harod's coate, sold for xviii d. All the Apostle's coats and other raggs viii s. iiiid, and the coats of the 3 Kings of Cologne.' The discrepancy in price suggests that the coat of Herod was of good quality or gorgeously decorated.

110. Ibid., p.93.

111. Ibid., p.86.

112. See 'Beverly Town Documents,' ed. Arthur Leach, Selden Society, vol.14 (1900) and Arthur Leach, 'Some English Plays and Players, 1220-1548,' An English Miscellany Presented to Dr. Furnivall (Oxford, 1901), pp.205-234. Here he prints a list of plays found in an original manuscript found on the flyleaf of the Great Guild Book, (p.218).

113. 'Beverly Town Documents,' p.xliii.

114. Los Misterios del Corpus de Valencia, ed. Hermenegildo Corbato, University of California Publications in Modern Philology, vol.16 (1932) pp.113-134.

115. See Beatrice Patt, op. cit., pp.312-13.

116. See Chapter 2, on Fulgentius who compares the birth of the new king, Christ, with the birth of Herod's heir, Archelaus.

117. See B. Patt, op. cit., pp. 82-89. As this play has not been published, I rely on Patt's description on pp.86-87.
118. Sturdevant, op. cit., pp.88-89. This play, the manuscript of which is in the city library of Valenciennes, was printed for the first time by Sturdevant in Appendix II, pp.90-113. She notes that although scholars have traced direct borrowings in this play from the Passions of Jean Michel, Arras and Greban, the incident of the Three Kings has no parallel in the earlier dramas (p.89).
119. Nesta De Robeck, "Nativity Plays in Italy," Dublin Review, vol.196 (1933), p.93. That Botticelli based his painting of the Magi on this pageant is mentioned by A.P. Rossiter, English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans (London, 1950) p.73 and Rab Hatfield, see below, n. 120.
120. See Rab Hatfield, "The Compagnia de' Magi," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, vol.33 (1970), pp.107-161.
121. Quoted and translated from an anonymous chronicler, by Hatfield, Ibid., p.108.
122. Ibid., p.112.
123. Libri de temporibus suis, written between 1480-1482, quoted by Hatfield, op. cit., pp.114-117.
124. Ibid., pp.115-116.
125. For the political motives of producing this pageant as a means of diverting public attention after a banking crisis, see Hatfield, op. cit., pp.112-18.
126. Woolf, op. cit., p.202. It is not absolutely certain which Herod Absolom was playing, of course.
127. See Roscoe E. Parker, 'The Reputation of Herod in Early English Literature,' Speculum, vol.VIII, (1933), pp.59-67 for an excellent survey of early sources for Herod as a ranting tyrant.
128. A.P. Rossiter, English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans (London, 1950), p.64.
129. For an account of post-medieval English drama centred on Herod, see J.B. Fletcher, 'Herod in the Drama,' Studies in Philology, vol.XIX, (1922), pp.292-307. (This is not a scholarly article). Another fuller account is by M.J. Valency, The Tragedies of Herod and Mariamne (New York, 1940). For Spanish drama, see Patt, op. cit.

## Chapter XI

For catalogue references, see select bibliography for chapter VIII.

### Notes

1. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M251, fol. 117v.
2. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M316, fol. 79v; full-page miniature for Vespers. See also Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canon. Liturg. 229,

- fol. 96v, a Flemish Horae of c.1480; Herod wears a long blue robe and a pointed Flemish hat, but no crown or sceptre (Pächt and Alexander, vol. I, 358).
3. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS 268 (Add.27), fol. 52v. See Wormald and Giles, Handlist, p.202.
  4. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M59, fol. 84v; fifteenth-century, Flemish Horae.
  5. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 92, fol. 83; a French Horae of c.1500; Herod wears a strange combination of turban over a pointed hat. See M.R. James, Fitzwilliam, p.224.
  6. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Buchanan E.5, fol. 79v; as usual, Herod wears a crown over his hat and the women in the Massacre display elaborate costumes (Pächt and Alexander, vol. I, 329).
  7. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M850, fol. 47; full page illumination for Vespers.
  8. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Canon. Liturg. 183, fol. 57v; half-page miniature of the Massacre for Vespers (Pächt and Alexander, vol. I, 335).
  9. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 82, fol. 79vv (James, Fitzwilliam, p. 209), The Massacre of the Innocents for Vespers.
  10. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Canon. Liturg. 91, fol. 56v; full-page miniature for Vespers (Pächt and Alexander, vol. I, 317).
  11. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Rawl. Liturg. f. 34, fol. 61v; full-page miniature for Vespers (Pächt and Alexander, vol. I, 328). See also MS Rawl. Liturg. e 26, fol. 57v, a Flemish Horae of the fifteenth century, for a similar setting (Pächt and Alexander, vol. I, 333).
  12. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloisters Collection, Belles Heures de Jean Duc de Berry, purchased 1954; see facsimile, Les Belles Heures de Jean Duc de Berry, ed., Millard Meiss and Elizabeth Beatson (London, 1974), fol. 59v; full-page miniature for Vespers.
  13. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Canon. Liturg. 92, fol. 58v, miniature for Nones (see Pächt and Alexander, Vol. I, 310, for a date of 1430-40 and possible Hainaut provenance).
  14. London, British Library, MS Add. 27,697, fol. 64v, full-page miniature for Vespers.
  15. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 248, fol. 121v. Note that the crown has been added as if it were an afterthought (Pächt and Alexander, Vol. I, 219).
  16. Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliothek, Gl, kgl. Saml. MS 1610, 4<sup>o</sup>, Part II, fol. 58; this is a manuscript of the French school, possibly Rouen, executed 1475-1500; see Frick Art Reference Library for photograph and information on date and provenance.

17. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 73, fol. 53v; Herod and the Reaper, three-quarter page miniature for Nones. This manuscript is French (Dijon or Langres) and has been dated by M.R. James to 1470--80. See James, Fitzwilliam, p. 191.
18. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Gough Liturg. 15, fol. 53; three-quarter page Massacre for Vespers (Pächt and Alexander, Vol. I, 353).
19. London, British Museum, MS Add. 18,213, fol. 45r, Vespers.
20. Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.1.62. fol. 72, Vespers. See James, Trinity, p. 63, no. 1086.
21. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 53, fol.68, Vespers. See James, Fitzwilliam, p. 131 and pl. IX for reproduction.
22. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 116, fol. 73v (James, Fitzwilliam, p. 266).
23. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 144, fol. 31; the main illumination is confined to the initial for Terce and shows Herod and the Massacre in an interior setting. Such a subject is unusual for this Hour (James, Fitzwilliam, p. 330).
24. London, British Library, MS Yates-Thompson 5, fol. 54v; a French manuscript; Massacre scene for Vespers. See M. R. James, A Descriptive Catalogue of Fifty Manuscripts from the Collection of Henry Yates Thompson (Cambridge, 1898), no. 19.
25. Stockholm, Kungl. Bibliotek, MS A228, fol. 101v; a Flemish manuscript of 1500-1525. See Frick Art Reference Library for photograph.
26. Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, MS Thott 542, 4<sup>o</sup>, fol. 102v; see Frick Art Reference Library.
27. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 7, fol. 28, and M 157, fol. 180; the latter manuscript shows Herod with the scimitar. Herod also wields a sword and even wears plate armour in some interior scenes of the Massacre, such as M 194, Massacre at Vespers and M 815, fol. 71v (both fifteenth-century French Horae).
28. Florence, Museo Nazionale, MS 67, fol. 18; this is not a Book of Hours, but a Missale although the illumination is similar to typical Horae illuminations; it was painted by Gherardo and Monte del Fora, of the Italian School. For reproduction, see Frick Art Reference Library.
29. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Auct.D.inf. 2.11, fol.93v; a Norman-French Book of Hours, painted c.1440-50. See Pächt and Alexander, Vol. I, 670.
30. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 132, frontispiece to Terce. See James, Fitzwilliam, p. 308.
31. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS 18, fol. 37r. See James, Fitzwilliam, p. 29. James comments **simply**, 'Nurse brings dead child to Herod', without identifying the child as Herod's son (p. 30).

32. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Rawl. liturg. e.26, fol. 57v, for Vespers; executed in the Low Countries, possibly Tournai; see Pächt and Alexander, Vol. I, 333.
33. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Buchanan e.8, fol. 62v, Vespers; a French Manuscript (Pächt and Alexander, Vol. I, 797).
34. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 131, fol. 48r. This is one of four scenes which occur in the margin of a Nativity scene for Prime, the others being the Massacre of the Innocents, the Falling of the Idols and the questioning of the Sower by Herod's soldiers.
35. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 106, fol. 40v, Vespers. See James, Fitzwilliam, p. 247.
36. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Canon. Liturg. 227, fol. 62v, Vespers (Pächt and Alexander, Vol. I, 339).
37. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 80, fol. 70v, Vespers (full-page illumination). This miniature subtly or perhaps unconsciously emphasizes its subject by a great reliance on reds and crimsons; the tiled floor of the palace is red, and above the low grey wall around it is a brilliant background painted in crimson with gold diaper work in curling scrolls. See James, Fitzwilliam, p. 206.
38. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 105, fol. 66v, Vespers. See James, Fitzwilliam, p. 245.
39. Oxford, Bodleian Lib., MS Lyell 95, fol. 18. Pächt and Alexander, Vol. II, 726.
40. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M229, fol. 62v; full-page Massacre of the Innocents in which Herod holds a sword in his left hand as he watches his soldiers killing children; one soldier has a baby's head on a staff.
41. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 104 and M 357; both are French Horae and include this scimitar-bearing Herod as part of the illumination for Compline. In M 357, fol. 76, Herod is dressed all in gold.
42. Oxford, Bodleian, Douce BB 130, fol. m ii; this is an early printed book with coloured woodcuts (Pächt and Alexander, Vol. I, 795).
43. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 52, fol. 26r. See James, Fitzwilliam, p. 129.
44. The three-dimensional crib of this baby, and the impaled child in the upper part of the panel are reminiscent of the earlier window in York Minster, s III, (fig. 191).
45. Christopher Woodforde, The Norwich School of Glass-Painting in the Fifteenth Century (Oxford, 1950), p. 27; see also pl. III. He numbers the window G 5. A closer examination might yet prove that these two figures are indeed insertions.

46. It is numbered Window XXVI by Oscar Farmer, Fairford Church and its Stained Glass Windows (Taunton (c.1930)), p. 78. See also James Gerald Joyce, The Fairford Windows (London, 1872). The north clerestory windows show twelve persecutors of the church, while the south shows a comparable number of saints.
47. Ibid. Four of the other persecutors who can be identified through inscriptions include, Annas, Caiaphas, Judas, and Herod Antipas. The glass containing the inscriptions is original.
48. This scene is identified as the Judgement of Solomon in Nikolaus Pevsner, Yorkshire: York and the East Riding (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 216 by Ben Johnson. However, it lacks the second mother for such a scene. It is also highly unlikely that Solomon the Wise would ever be represented in medieval art with an evil demon in his crown.
49. See Sandra Hindman, "Fifteenth-Century Dutch Bible Illustration and the Historia Scholastica", Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, vol. XXXVII (1974), p. 131-144.
50. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 78.D.38, Vol. I, fol. 146r; Eerste Historielbijbel, c.1435. See photograph.
51. Paris, Bib. Nat., MS fr.12,536. See Gustave Cohen, Le Théâtre en France au Moyen Âge, vol. I, Le Théâtre Religieux (Paris, 1928), pl. XLIII.2. The manuscript is the Mystère de la Passion, performed at Valenciennes in 1544.
52. London, British Library, MS Yates Thompson 16, fol. 291; fifteenth century (1432) Bible from the Low Countries. The other illustrations for the beginning of Matthew are Christ before the Doctors and the Temptation of Christ.
53. Sandra Hindman, op.cit., p. 140, n.33.
54. Vienna, Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 2772, fol.16r.
55. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9023, fol. 22r.
56. London, British Library, MS Royal 15 D.1, fol. 241.
57. I am indebted to Jonathan Watts for information about his manuscript.
58. Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.11. 7, fol. 53v. This manuscript is considered to be of the Herman Scheere school. See James, Trinity, Vol. I, p. 342, no. 246.
59. London, British Library, MS Add. 17,280, fol. 195v and 196.
60. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Douce 112, fol. 80 (Pächt and Alexander, Vol. I, 396). Old Testament types are used for several of the Hours: for example, Matins-- The Temptation of Adam and Eve; Terce - Moses and the Burning Bush; Sext - Sheba before Solomon, etc. The margins of these miniatures also contain related Old and New Testament scenes.

61. Cambridge, University Library, MS II.6.2., fol. 51v.
62. Stuttgart, State Museum. Two predella panels from an altarpiece by the Master of Frankfurt; see Erick Art Reference Library for reproduction.
63. See, for example, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 359, fol. 35. This is a French, fifteenth-century Horae and beside the Adoration of the Magi on fol. 35 is a roundel, showing the three Magi, before Herod (on fol. 37 Herod appears again giving a soldier the command for the Massacre). See also M64, fol. 51, another French fifteenth-century Horae. In the border of the Adoration miniature are several small roundels showing the kings on horseback and then before Herod.
64. See London, British Library, MS Add. 20,694, fol. 55v; a French Horae from the end of the fifteenth century, showing the Adoration for the Hour of Sext, with a bas-de-page representation of the Magi on horseback riding towards the enthroned Herod in an outdoor scene.
65. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, MS 274, fol. 69v; a French Horae of c.1450-70; see Erick Art Reference Library.
66. London, British Library, MS Add. 25,695, fol. 94. On fol. 114 Herod and the Massacre appear in the bas-de-page of the Flight into Egypt.
67. Arras, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 697. See Gustave Cohen, op.cit., pl. XXIII. See chapter 10 for a discussion of this play.
68. Italian art has not been considered in detail in this dissertation but it seems appropriate to include these examples which show the final stages of Herod iconography, even though they should be considered Renaissance art rather than Medieval art. A photograph of this painting may be seen in the Photographic Library of the Warburg Institute and in the Frick Art Reference Library.
69. Renzo Chiarelli, Margherita Lenzini Moriondo, Franco Mazzini, European Painting in the Fifteenth Century (London, 1961), p. 138. See also p. 137 for reproduction.
70. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Douce 29, fol. 46 (Pächt and Alexander, Vol. II, 1006).
71. E.H. Gombrich, "The Evidence of Images", Interpretation: Theory and Practice, ed., Charles Singleton (Baltimore, 1969), pp. 35--104; see especially pp. 75--89, where he summarises earlier interpretations before giving his own.
72. Ibid., p. 88.
73. My research in this area has been restricted to manuscripts in the British Library.
74. London, British Library, MS Royal 17 C.XXXVIII, fol. 23.
75. London, British Library, MS Royal 16 G. V, fol. 99v.



76. The source is Josephus, Book XV, part ii, iii and vii. The manuscript text occurs on fol. 99v-101r.
77. The first was in 1400; the more popular expanded version in 1409 was executed for the Duke of Berry.
78. See, for example, the well-known illustration of the six-handed figure of Fortune at the beginning of Book VI in MS Royal 14 E.V. fol. 291.
79. London, British Library, MS Add. 35,321, fol. 221. This manuscript is a Rothschild Bequest, vol. XII.
80. Manuscripts of Les Cas des Malheureux Nobles Hommes also include another chapter on a man called Herodes noble roy de parthois in Book V, chapter 7. This is not the Jewish Herod, but Oroses, brother of the Parthian King, Mithridates.
81. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M828, fol. 273. The inscriptions are in Ethiopic. For reproduction see Studies in Art and Literature for Bella Da Costa Greene, ed., Dorothy Miner (Princeton, 1954), fig. 273.
82. Patrick W. Skehan, "An Illuminated Gospel Book in Ethiopic", Studies in Art and Literature for Belle Da Costa Greene, ed., Dorothy Miner (Princeton, 1954), pp. 350--357.
83. Sir Frederick Crane, Extant Medieval Musical Instruments (Iowa, 1972), No. 342, for a description. He points out that everything in the harp but the two pieces of ivory is a restoration. This is, nevertheless, the only medieval harp to have survived. See also O. Beigbeder, Ivory (London, 1965), p. 78.