

**MONUMENTAL APOCALYPSE CYCLES
OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines ten large-scale depictions of the Apocalypse of John found throughout Europe in the fourteenth century. Despite their similarities, these Apocalypse cycles have never before been explored as a group. I aim to do this by contextualising the cycles through juxtaposition and comparison with each other, and with their sources, both written and visual. In the first chapter I examine precursors to the fourteenth-century cycles, in both monumental and manuscript media. I start by presenting a survey of earlier examples of monumental Apocalypse imagery, insisting on precision in the definition of what constitutes a narrative Apocalypse cycle rather than merely an apocalyptic image (a question also raised in more general terms in the Introduction). I then examine the complex tradition of illuminated Apocalypse manuscripts, concentrating particularly on the Anglo-French manuscripts that were both widespread and influential in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In Chapter Two I turn to the fourteenth-century monumental cycles themselves, examining their patronage and the cultural environments in which they were created. In particular, I examine the extent and nature of apocalyptic awareness found in the various patronage centres. Since other contemporary usages of the Apocalypse are often political or polemical in nature, this chapter asks whether it is valid to see the pictorial Apocalypse cycles as in some sense a contribution to political discourse. The next chapter elaborates on one of the central themes of the thesis, that of the significance of location, function and artistic medium for interpretation. I compare the function and effect of large-scale monumental work with the much more personalised sphere of the illuminated book, and analyse how this contrast affects the potential readings of the Apocalypse imagery. I provide examples of the monumental cycles' dependence on content drawn from the illustrated books, while also demonstrating the fundamental difference between the media. Chapter Four proposes an alternative strategy for placing the Apocalypse cycles within fourteenth-century culture, through a re-examination of their imagery in the light of liturgical and devotional practice, particularly as relating to relics, the eucharist, the Virgin, and salvation. It is the powerful and evocative imagery associated with these cults and practices that, I suggest, holds the key to the full understanding of the monumental Apocalypse cycles of the fourteenth century.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- AMA* Emmerson, Richard K., and Bernard McGinn, eds., *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London, 1992)
- CVMA* Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi
- EETS* Early English Text Society
- JWCI* *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*
- PL* Migne, J.P., ed., *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina*, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844-64)

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines a number of large-scale artistic depictions of the Apocalypse of St John which were commissioned in Europe in the fourteenth century and in the first years of the fifteenth. My aim is to contextualise these cycles through juxtaposition and comparison with each other, and with their sources, both written and visual. I intend to consider what motivations may have been behind these unusual commissions, and in particular how the choice of subject matter can be explained. Through close analysis of the cycles themselves I will examine issues of narrative, display, location and function. I will use the evidence of the cycles together with apocalyptic material found in other contemporary media to explore the range of uses of the biblical text, attempting through this process to uncover the meanings the Apocalypse may have had for its fourteenth-century readers and viewers.

Introduction to the Cycles

The ten monumental Apocalypse cycles that I focus on are diverse in their media, ranging from wall paintings (of greater or lesser size) to panel paintings, stained glass, carved roof bosses and tapestry. They are widely dispersed across Europe, with four cycles emanating from Italy, three from England, one from Bohemia, one from France and one from northern Germany.

The cycles can be broadly subdivided on various grounds, but any such division should be undertaken in the awareness that, inevitably, the factors chosen will result in different groupings. Perhaps the most obvious method of subdivision rests on the iconographic choices displayed in the imagery of the cycles; this often,

but not always, overlaps with a geographical arrangement. It is this grouping that I use here to present the cycles under discussion.¹

Italianate Cycles

Some of the earliest examples of fully-narrative Apocalypse art emanate from Naples in the first half of the fourteenth century. Two of the extant cycles, a fresco in the church of S. Maria Donnaregina and a pair of panels, now in Stuttgart, are stylistically and iconographically related, although neither has a certain provenance in terms of the commissioning patron. However, in other respects the two cycles are complementary. The mural painting in S. Maria Donnaregina (c.1320-50) is in such poor condition that it is not a feasible subject for detailed discussion of imagery and narrative. Yet its location is at least certain and thus questions of audience and the interrelation of the work with other aspects of the building, both architectural and decorative, can be addressed. Conversely, little can be established with certainty about the ownership, original location or function of an unusual pair of panel paintings, dated before 1350 and now in the Stuttgart Staatsgalerie, but their imagery is both elaborately detailed and well-preserved. Consequently, my discussion of the Neapolitan cycles at the level of iconography is based on these panels.

The second general group can be formed out of cycles that derive their imagery to some extent from an Italianate tradition, although not necessarily from the Neapolitan one. This group includes the cycle (c.1357-67) at the castle of Karlstein, near Prague, as well as the frescoes in the Baptistery at Padua (c.1375-85).² Closely related to the Paduan cycle is an altarpiece now in the Accademia,

¹ See below for full details of all the cycles.

² Another cycle (c.1361-76) is found in the nave of the abbey church of Pomposa, in northeast Italy. Due to the lack of material available regarding this cycle, I have not been able to include it in this study. General works on the abbey include M. Salmi, *L'Abbazia di Pomposa*, 2nd edn. (Florence, 1966) and L. Caselli, *L'Abbazia di Pomposa: guida storica e artistica* (Treviso, 1996).

Venice (before 1397). This last is not strictly a narrative work, since it contains only five scenes, but is worth consideration as a unique piece which deploys highlighted moments from an implied larger narrative to gain a particular effect.³

Anglo-French Cycles

The final group of cycles is the most explicit in its use of common visual material, which it derives from the Anglo-French illuminated manuscript cycles of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The cycles that make up this group are, unsurprisingly, predominantly English and French. They include the vast tapestries at Angers (c.1373-80), the paintings in the chapter house at Westminster Abbey (c.1372-1404), the painted glass in the east window of York Minster (1405-08) and the carved roof bosses in the cloister of Norwich Cathedral (c.1323-29, then 1415-30). The Norwich bosses form something of an anomaly within the group: they were begun at least half a century earlier than the other examples and, while they share much of the same imagery, their three-dimensional medium and their location create a fundamentally different impact to their two-dimensional cousins.

A final, and somewhat tenuous, member of the Anglo-French group is a painted altarpiece (c.1400-10) now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. This work, created in northern Germany, derives much of its imagery from the manuscript illustrations which accompanied a particular thirteenth-century Apocalypse commentary. However, certain aspects of the imagery are also influenced by the Anglo-French image tradition, and as such it can be conveniently catalogued as part of this group.

Lost Works

A number of other fourteenth-century monumental depictions of the Apocalypse do not survive, and are known only from written evidence. Several of

³ See Chapter 4.

them have links with works which are extant. For example, sixteenth-century sources suggest the existence of a third cycle in Naples, a work said to have been painted by Giotto, in the church of S. Chiara; it is not known whether this pre- or postdated the extant examples mentioned above.⁴ There was also once a second Apocalypse fresco in Padua: it was located in the convent church of S. Benedetto, in a chapel which had been given by Fina Buzzacarini, patron also of the Baptistery cycle. The paintings, however, dated to after Fina's death: they were executed in 1394 (thus ten to twenty years after the Baptistery paintings) under the orders of her sister, the abbess of the convent.⁵ Finally, the Angers Tapestry, made for Duke Louis I of Anjou, seems to have inspired similar commissions from two of his art-

⁴ An anonymous chronicler and Vasari both claim that Giotto painted the Apocalypse in the royal church and double monastery complex of S. Chiara, with the design assistance of Dante, who was, however, dead by the time that Giotto was working in Naples: C. Frey, ed., *Il Codice Magliabecchiano (cl. XVII. 17). Contenente notizie sopra l'arte degli antichi e quella de' Fiorentini da Cimabue a Michelangelo Buonarroti. Scritte da Anonimo Fiorentino* (Berlin, 1892, repr. 1969), 53; Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' piú eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori Italiani, da Cimabue insino a' tempi nostri (nell'edizione per i tipi di Lorenzo Torrentino, Firenze, 1550)*, ed. L. Bellosi and A. Rossi (Turin, 1986), 122-23; Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' piú eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori (nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568)* ed. R. Bettarini and P. Barocchi (Florence, 1966-87), 108. Vasari's phrasing ('Dove ancora, in una capella, sono molte storie dell'Apocalisse') suggests the images in question were still there in the sixteenth century. However, no sign of any Apocalypse frescoes now survives in any part of the S. Chiara complex. All the medieval frescoes of the church were plastered over in the eighteenth century and are now lost following very severe bombing of the building in the second world war; only one Giottesque fragment of a Lamentation survives in the nun's retrochoir. We can thus neither prove nor disprove the statements of the anonymous Florentine and Vasari that there were fourteenth-century apocalyptic paintings in S. Chiara. If they did exist, however, the most likely commissioning patrons would have been Queen Sancia, who was the founding patron of the church and convent, or King Robert, who made the church a focus for royal and state occasions. If we accept that the lost S. Chiara Apocalypse was the work of Giotto himself, it must have dated from 1328-33, the years that he is documented to have worked for Robert in Naples: see F. Bologna, *I pittori alla corte angioina di Napoli, 1266-1414, e un riesame dell'arte nell'età fridericiana* (Rome, 1969), 183-85. However, it is also possible that another artist's work was attributed to Giotto by the two later historians, in which case the dating must remain uncertain. The possibility that the Stuttgart panels are in fact the 'lost' S. Chiara paintings of Giotto (as suggested by A. Graf zu Erbach-Fürstenau, 'Die Apokalypse von Santa Chiara', *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 58 [1937], esp. 100ff.) seems extremely unlikely in view of Vasari's phrasing, quoted above, which implies frescoed wall paintings in a chapel rather than panels, which he normally refers to as 'tavole': see P. Hills, 'The renaissance altarpiece: a valid category?', in P. Humfrey and M. Kemp, eds., *The altarpiece in the renaissance* (Cambridge, 1990), 46. Moreover, since the Stuttgart panels display little stylistic similarity to other work by Giotto, the idea has not been taken up by later scholars.

⁵ C. King, 'Women as patrons: nuns, widows and rulers', in D. Norman, ed., *Siena, Florence and Padua: art, society, and religion 1280-1400* (New Haven and London, 1995), vol. 2, 249-50.

loving brothers: neither of these later tapestries has, however, survived.⁶ Since these works are not extant it is impossible to be sure how extensive the Apocalypse depictions were. They could have been full narrative cycles, like those to which they are linked by place or patron: in the case of one of the later Apocalypse tapestries, this seems more than likely.⁷ But the two lost Italian frescoes, at Naples and Padua, might just as easily have been mere allusions to the matter of the Apocalypse, such as are found in Giotto's Life of St John in the Peruzzi Chapel, S. Croce, Florence. Because of the insurmountable problems of a lack of evidence in regard to size, structure and (most importantly) iconography, such lost works are excluded from this study.

Other Categories

The groups into which I have placed the ten cycles are not hard and fast categories. Other criteria could be used, which would result in different groupings. For example, one could divide the works according to medium, which would result in a large group of wall paintings (S. Maria Donnaregina, Naples; Karlstein; Padua; Westminster), a smaller group of panel paintings (the Stuttgart panels; the Venice Altarpiece; the London Altarpiece), and several choices of medium which were apparently unprecedented for the subject: the tapestries at Angers, roof bosses at Norwich and stained glass at York. Another obvious division would be along the lines of patronage: corporate versus individual, ecclesiastical versus secular. However, these apparently clear distinctions become very clouded when one tries to determine the patronage of cycles such as those at York Minster and Westminster

⁶ F. Muel et al., *La tenture de l'Apocalypse d'Angers*, 2nd edn. (Nantes, 1993), 34.

⁷ The Apocalypse Tapestry made for the Duke of Burgundy was in six pieces like the one at Angers, and may have reused the cartoons; however, the one made for the Duke of Berry was a single piece, and was therefore presumably smaller and probably non-narrative. Muel et al., *La tenture*, 34.

chapter house, where the claims of individual named donors compete with the strong likelihood of an overall institutional control.

Alternatively, and perhaps more profitably, one could consider the cycles in terms of the function of the space in which they are located: in this way, we see that the majority of the examples would have been found within strictly liturgical space, in a church or chapel (Naples, Karlstein, Padua, York, the two altarpieces), while a further two decorated the conventual space of a religious order (Norwich and Westminster). The original placement of the two remaining cycles, the Stuttgart panels and the Angers Tapestry, is unknown, and as both were probably designed to be portable, definitive statements about their location are perhaps best avoided. Another distinction also relates to location, in so far as it shapes the relationship, known or inferred, between the patron and audience of a cycle. The question here is whether access to the work would have been restricted to the commissioning patron, his household and guests (as at Karlstein, Norwich, Westminster) or whether instead the cycle was located in what might broadly be called the public domain (Naples, York). However, it must be admitted that in many cases we do not have sufficient information to answer this interesting question successfully, or else the issue is confused by shifting usages of the space (as at Padua).

These alternative strategies for division generate a number of useful ideas, and should at no point be neglected, but the fundamental commonalities of imagery apparent in the groups outlined above remain to my mind the most useful way of classifying the cycles at the outset. This approach has the additional advantage of relying only on the internal evidence provided by the image cycles themselves rather than on external evidence as to patron, location or audience which in many cases is lacking or disputed.

Scope

The apocalyptic image cycles that form the basis of this study are based particularly on the Apocalypse (or Revelation) of St John, the last book of the New Testament. The imprecision which conflates the term Apocalypse with the Last Judgement is not generally found amongst art historians and iconographers, however common it may be in daily usage. Nevertheless, it is worth making clear at the outset that this dissertation will be specifically confined to truly apocalyptic art, and thus will not address representations of the Last Judgement. While the Apocalypse was a rare subject for monumental representation, the Judgement appeared in countless churches in the later Middle Ages. Its familiar imagery — Christ the Judge, surrounded by the instruments of the Passion and bearing the wounds of it on his body, the division of souls into saved and damned, the delights of heaven and the torments of hell — formed an independent and usually self-contained iconography, predominantly derived from Matthew 25: 31-46.⁸ Where the Apocalypse is long, repetitious and obscure, the text in Matthew's gospel is concise and definitive: it is eminently suitable for the making of clear moral points in sermons and devotional literature. Such didactic messages were reinforced by the powerful symmetry deployed in the visual imagery typically found on chancel arch or west wall.

Although at first it may seem false to separate the Apocalypse from the associated subject of the Judgement or indeed from popular legends such as the fifteen signs before doomsday, the division is found within the medieval material itself. Where such subjects are treated in popular late-medieval texts such as the *Golden Legend* or the *Pricke of Conscience*, they are generally presented with only

⁸ The Judgement is also narrated in a short section of the Apocalypse (20: 11-15), in terms which differ from, but are not incompatible with, the account in Matthew. The traditional iconography of heaven often draws on the description of the New Jerusalem which immediately follows (Apoc. 21).

passing reference to John's Apocalypse.⁹ In fact, the full story of the Apocalypse is not narrated at all in the *Golden Legend*, the standard compendium of gospel stories and hagiographic knowledge in the later Middle Ages. The visionary book is too complex, it would seem, to be summarised in this way. Despite obvious thematic links with other material, the Apocalypse remained, in the late Middle Ages, an essentially independent and self-contained narrative. This is true of both the written sources and the pictorial versions.¹⁰

The exception to the rule is the interpolated Antichrist mini-cycle found in a small number of illuminated Apocalypse manuscripts.¹¹ The figure of Antichrist does not appear by name in the Apocalypse, and the legend of his life is largely derived from other sources, both biblical and extra-biblical. Nevertheless, Antichrist was by the later Middle Ages firmly established as a character in John's text, since many commentaries, including the twelfth-century *Glossa Ordinaria*, routinely identified various of the beasts with Antichrist.¹² Despite this widespread identification, the presentation within the Apocalypse narrative of an additional

⁹ See Jacobus de Voragine, *The golden legend: readings on the saints*, trans. W.G. Ryan (Princeton, 1993), vol. 1, 7-12 (the second advent of Christ), vol. 2, 201-06 (St Michael battles Lucifer and Antichrist); the life of St John describes his exile to Patmos and the fact that he wrote the Book of Revelation there, but nothing more about its content (vol. 1, 51). R. Morris, ed., *The pricke of conscience (stimulus conscientiae)* (Berlin, 1863), Bk V (108-73): the references to the Apocalypse in this section relate primarily to the legend of Antichrist and the related subject of the two witnesses (110-26).

¹⁰ See, for example, L. Grodecki, 'Les quinze signes précurseurs de la fin du monde dans les vitraux allemands, français et alsaciens', in *Kunst des Mittelalters in Sachsen: Festschrift Wolf Schubert* (Weimar, 1967), 292-99.

¹¹ See R.K. Emmerson and S. Lewis, 'Census and bibliography of medieval manuscripts containing Apocalypse illustrations c.800-1500', *Traditio* 40 (1984), 337-79; 41 (1985), 367-409; 42 (1986), 443-72, nos. 78, 90, 95. See also J. Poesch, 'Revelation 11: 7 and Revelation 13: 1-10: interrelated Antichrist imagery in some English Apocalypse manuscripts', in M. Barasch and L.F. Sandler, eds., *Art the ape of nature: studies in honor of H.W. Janson* (New York, 1981), 15-33; R.K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: a study of medieval apocalypticism, art, and literature* (Seattle, 1981), 109, 125-45; S. Lewis, *Reading images: narrative discourse and reception in the thirteenth-century illuminated Apocalypse* (Cambridge, 1995), 107, 111-12, 115, 229. Illustrated Apocalypse manuscripts are discussed in detail below, Chapters 1 and 3.

¹² *Glossa Ordinaria: Apocalypsis B. Joannis*, PL 114: 709-52; also in M.T. Gibson and K. Froelich, eds., *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria* (facsimile of first printed edn. of 1480) 4 vols. (Turnhout, 1992).

sequence of three to five scenes depicting the life and pseudo-miracles of a human Antichrist is a rare feature even in the manuscripts. It is not found in any of the monumental cycles of the fourteenth century. Independent monumental Antichrist imagery, which is in any case very rare in the fourteenth century, is also excluded from consideration, on the grounds that it leads inevitably into discussion of a much larger area which has already been the subject of several detailed studies.¹³

Furthermore, it is not my intention to trace the presentation of the divine figure with apocalyptic attributes derived from the great theophanies of Apocalypse chapters 1, 4 and 5. Such depictions are very widespread but their message, I would argue, is not primarily apocalyptic. Instead they draw on details from the descriptions in the Apocalypse to add resonance to a known, traditional image such as the Majesty or the Judging Christ. These images can be clearly understood even without a close knowledge of John's text; the apocalyptic subtext simply gives them a depth of allusion, another layer of awe-inspiring splendour and terror. Despite the prevalence of this type of image, I am excluding it from this study on a number of grounds. Firstly, it is drawn from only a very small portion of John's text, and is fundamentally non-narrative. Moreover, it is a very ancient image within Christian iconography and although originally it may have made direct and recognised reference to the Apocalypse, once it became an established iconographic type the textual source of the attributes may have been unclear, and unimportant, for many viewers. Additionally, the most important image of this type, the Majesty, has

¹³ See, for example, Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*; B. McGinn, *Antichrist: two thousand years of the human fascination with evil* (New York, 1994); B. McGinn, 'Portraying Antichrist in the Middle Ages', in W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst and A. Welkenhuysen, eds., *The use and abuse of eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1988), 1-48; R.M. Wright, *Art and Antichrist in medieval Europe* (Manchester, 1995). The only fourteenth-century example of monumental narrative Antichrist imagery that I am aware of is a fresco of the Judgement including two Antichrist scenes, formerly in S. Maria in Porto Fuori, Ravenna (see McGinn, 'Portraying Antichrist', 21). The best known example from a later period is Signorelli's early sixteenth-century fresco cycle in Orvieto Cathedral: see J.B. Riess, *The renaissance Antichrist: Luca Signorelli's Orvieto frescoes* (Princeton, 1995).

already been the subject of a detailed study.¹⁴ Finally, the frequency with which images of this type occur means that they are in a sense unremarkable.¹⁵ What is rare in the fourteenth century is the attempt at a full representation of the narrative episodes of John's Apocalypse. By 'narrative', I mean a pictorial rendition of the biblical text in which an attempt is made to evoke the whole, or substantial parts, of John's vision. A large number of individual scenes, each of which corresponds to a specific section of the text, are presented in such a way that a sequential reading of the story is encouraged. A precise classification along these lines gives us a much smaller group of examples to work with, and allows us to focus on the complex and interesting issues of the means and effects of monumental narrative.

The focus of this study is on monumental, that is large-scale, works. I have not included illuminated manuscripts in my discussion except as they interact with monumental works, primarily as sources. This distinction is of course to a certain extent artificial, in that all narrative Apocalypse art, whether large- or small-scale, contributed to the overall dialogue of the transmission and development of imagery. However, I have excluded manuscripts from primary consideration on two grounds. Firstly, they have already been extensively studied, and are consequently much better known than the monumental cycles. An increasingly large number of the Apocalypse manuscripts are available in facsimile, which has greatly facilitated scholarly investigation, while on the analytical side much detailed and fine scholarship has been produced on the complex questions of the manuscripts' interrelations, and, more recently, on their patronage and use.¹⁶ Secondly, while the medium of manuscript work is essentially directed towards private, individual

¹⁴ F. van der Meer, *Maiestas Domini: théophanies de l'Apocalypse dans l'art chrétien* (Rome, 1938).

¹⁵ C.R. Dodwell, *The pictorial arts of the west, 800-1200* (New Haven and London, 1993), 36.

¹⁶ See, for example, M.R. James, *The Apocalypse in art (the Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1927)* (London, 1931); Emmerson and Lewis, 'Census'; G. Henderson, 'Studies in English manuscript illumination, Part II: The English Apocalypse I', *JWCI* 30 (1967), 104-37; 'Part III: The English Apocalypse II', *JWCI* 31 (1968), 103-47; Lewis, *Reading images*.

consumption, monumental work by its very nature invites us to consider the aspects of display, surroundings, audience, function and impact. These are the aspects of medieval Apocalypse art that have, I believe, been insufficiently considered in the past, and it is my purpose in this thesis to address these questions.

The inclusion in this study of two altarpieces and a pair of panel paintings requires a word of explanation. Although they are ‘monumental’ in the technical artistic sense (being in a medium other than illumination), their scale is nowhere near as large as the other cycles. I have not wished to exclude them on this account, however, since they are all worthy of consideration on one or more grounds. As one scholar notes, ‘If we are interested in the history of religion there is nothing to be gained, and perhaps something to be lost, in separating altarpieces from the general class of sacred images.’¹⁷ Moreover, like their larger-scale companions, these very interesting panel paintings have suffered from a relative scholarly neglect, since the majority of work on late-medieval Apocalypse art takes as its focus the medium of the illustrated book.

Previous Scholarship

The monumental narrative Apocalypse cycles of the fourteenth century have not previously been considered as a group. Some of the cycles in question have been examined individually, or discussed as part of the overall decorative scheme of a building. On occasion, scholars working on one Apocalypse cycle have made mention of others: as we saw above, the cycles can be formed quite naturally into small subsets based on geography or iconography — the English group, the Italian group, or the cycles derived from Anglo-French manuscripts. Yet often these

¹⁷ Hills, ‘The renaissance altarpiece’, 48.

discussions make no more than brief reference to the fact that other cycles exist, without any attempt to draw out possible links, parallels or differences.

More typical of scholarship on the subject is the urge to provide a comprehensive survey of all forms of apocalyptic art, whether manuscript or monumental. This tendency began with M.R. James, whose ground-breaking study of 1931 remains indispensable.¹⁸ His work was the inspiration for the much more detailed and scholarly listing of all known apocalyptic manuscripts, compiled half a century later by Richard Emmerson and Suzanne Lewis.¹⁹ This census is a magnificent resource and has acted as a spur to further scholarship, but crucially it excludes non-manuscript depictions, and thus has inadvertently contributed to the marginalisation of the monumental versions of the Apocalypse. More recently still, this omission has to some extent been made good by the immense survey produced by Gertrud Schiller, the fifth volume in her *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*.²⁰ Schiller's book, although valuable (particularly for its extensive bibliography and numerous plates), is nevertheless flawed. As a work of overview, it relies heavily on previous scholarship and can be guilty of reducing earlier scholars' hypotheses, assumptions or suggestions to the status of unquestioned facts; occasionally also established facts are misreported.²¹ Moreover its chronological sweep is so wide and its definition of apocalyptic art so broad that it sometimes risks submerging the truly rare and interesting cycles. Nevertheless, it is a very comprehensive survey and an essential first point of reference for the subject of apocalyptic art.

¹⁸ James, *The Apocalypse in art*.

¹⁹ Emmerson and Lewis, 'Census'.

²⁰ G. Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst. V: Die Apokalypse des Johannes*, 2 vols. (Gütersloh, 1990-91).

²¹ For example, patronage of the Stuttgart panels and the fresco in S. Maria Donnaregina is ascribed confidently to Robert of Anjou and his mother, Mary of Hungary respectively (Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst. V*, vol. 1, 286-90): these are likely but by no means certain candidates (see below). The date of the east window in York Minster is given incorrectly (205).

Much of the previous scholarship on the fourteenth-century monumental cycles has considered them primarily in terms of models and analogues, or else in terms of style. The possible meanings of the subject matter have been considered only cursorily, if at all. This is surprising when we consider how relatively rare this subject is as a choice for monumental decoration, and how intrinsically unusual and interesting the material is. Moreover, in many cases the cycles have never previously been subject to a full analytical examination of their imagery and iconography, let alone their narrative strategies, placement and impact, patronage and functions.

Therefore, whenever possible, I have attempted to use the cycles themselves as my most important source of evidence, both in terms of detailed examination of the imagery and with a view to the overall effect. Close contextualisation has been attempted both in terms of the actual architectural and artistic surroundings of each cycle and in the more conceptual terms of the recoverable or presumed function(s) of the space in which the cycle appeared. Cultural contextualisation centres on the patron, or more generally the environment, in which the artwork was commissioned.

THE CYCLES

Background information about the ten fourteenth-century monumental cycles is given here. The cycles are arranged in chronological order, as far as this can be determined. The most important previous literature on each work is listed,²² together with such details about the location, condition, patron, artist, date, and audience as are known.

*Naples, S. Maria Donnaregina*²³

Location and Condition

The fresco (fig. 1) is located on the right wall of the nave of this Clarissan church, over the entrance to the Loffredo funerary chapel. It is in poor condition and only partially extant. The painting consists of a number of small scenes, surrounding a large image of Christ enthroned. The design shares several elements with the Stuttgart panels (see below): most obvious is the use of independently floating scenes painted in light colours on a dark background. What remains of the fresco is the upper central portion of what may have been a substantially larger composition, extending out and downwards to the left (where one fragment from the opening chapters of the Apocalypse remains)²⁴ and presumably also an equal way to the right in order to balance the layout around the central figure. Despite the fresco's fragmentary nature, we can assess the layout of the approximately seventeen scenes that were considered the most important and placed centrally in the composition: the

²² Bibliographic details are given in date order rather than alphabetically to show the development of scholarship.

²³ Bologna, *I pittori alla corte angioina*, 134-45; A. Schmitt, 'Die Apokalypse des Robert von Anjou', *Pantheon* 28 (1970), 475-503; E. Carelli and S. Casiello, *Santa Maria Donnaregina in Napoli* (Naples, 1975); C.A. Bruzelius, 'Hearing is believing: Clarissan architecture, ca. 1213-1340', *Gesta* 31 (1992), 83-91.

²⁴ See Schmitt, 'Die Apokalypse des Robert von Anjou', fig. 34.

arrangement appears to be somewhat random in relation to the textual order of events.

Patron, Artist and Date

The patron of the church of S. Maria Donnaregina²⁵ was Mary of Hungary (wife of Charles II of Anjou and mother of Robert the Wise), who financed its construction between 1307 and 1320.²⁶ As a result, she is frequently referred to also as the commissioning patron of the Apocalypse cycle in the church.²⁷ As far as I am aware, there is no specific evidence to support this idea. In fact, it is by no means certain that Mary herself commissioned the rest of the decorative work within the church; it is quite likely that some or all of it was added in her honour when she was buried there in 1323.²⁸ There are no heraldic devices or other marks of patronage

²⁵ Sometimes called S. Maria Donnaregina Vecchia to distinguish it from the adjacent baroque church of the same name.

²⁶ The vaults supporting the raised gallery, and in the apse, were originally completely painted with Mary's colours (alternating Angevin fleurs-de-lys and Hungarian stripes); under the gallery, in addition, each keystone depicted her arms. See Carelli and Casiello, *Santa Maria Donnaregina*, pls. 11, 16, 17.

²⁷ For instance by Schiller, who does not give further details about her source for this assertion: Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst. V*, vol. 1, 286.

²⁸ Bologna suggests that the first decorative campaign could well have been commissioned by Mary between the consecration of the church in 1320 and her death in 1323, especially since during the period 1318-24 Robert (the next most likely candidate) was based not in Naples but at the papal court in Avignon. Bologna proposes that the archaic style of the paintings is proof of 'il gusto della vecchia regina.' Most later writers on S. Maria Donnaregina have taken this to mean that the entire decorative scheme was therefore commissioned by the church's founder. But Bologna groups the Apocalypse frescoes not with the early 'archaic' works of the first campaign but at the height of achievement of his 'Maestro di sant'Elisabetta', whom he thinks (on the basis of stylistic analysis) was working after Giotto's stay in Naples, in the 1330s (Bologna, *I pittori alla corte angioina*, 134-45). Bologna may here be swayed by his wish to emphasise Giotto's influence at Naples, and I am not arguing that his dating is necessarily correct. Rather, the confusion that surrounds this issue is proof of the impossibility of making an exact dating on stylistic grounds alone, particularly when Giotto's fresco cycle (all-important according to Bologna) is not extant. The date most often given for the Apocalypse fresco (for example, by P.K. Klein, 'Introduction: the Apocalypse in medieval art', in *AMA*, 195, and Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst. V*, vol. 1, 286) is 'after 1317', but this date is misleadingly early if Bologna's stylistic analysis is to be believed (and considering the church was not consecrated until 1320). I suspect that Bologna's dating of the Last Judgement (on the west wall of the gallery) to after 1317 (on the grounds that Louis of Toulouse, who was canonised that year, appears among the elect) has led to this confusion (see Bologna, *I pittori alla corte angioina*, 116, 134).

associated with the Apocalypse fresco itself, although it is possible that the destroyed portion would have supplied this deficiency.

The fresco's location, symmetrically arranged above the doorway to the Loffredo chapel, suggests another patronage possibility: a link with the chapel itself, which was dedicated to St John the Evangelist. The chapel housed the tomb of the nobleman Francesco Loffredo (d. 1300), and fragments of the Loffredo family arms are visible opposite the entrance.²⁹ Loffredo's honoured position in this royal church may reflect his service to the Angevin dynasty at the beginning of its reign in Naples: according to one source, when Charles I of Anjou entered Naples in 1266, he was received as a liberator by the pro-papal city, which welcomed him with an address in French delivered by Francesco Loffredo.³⁰ Loffredo must at any rate have been an important figure in court circles to have been granted the singular honour of a personal mortuary chapel in S. Maria Donnaregina, not only a royal burial place but a church apparently otherwise without chapels.³¹

Access and Audience

Although the church of S. Maria Donnaregina was linked to the Franciscan convent, it was also open to the laity, necessitating architectural arrangements to allow the strictly enclosed Poor Clares to participate in worship without seeing or

²⁹ Carelli and Casiello, *Santa Maria Donnaregina*, 37-38. The tombstone's inscription, recorded in the seventeenth century, read: 'Hoc sepulchrum est Domini Francisci de Loffrido, qui hanc capellam fieri fecit ad laudem nominis Sancti Joannis Evangelistae cuius anima requiescat in pace anno domini 1300' (Carelli and Casiello, *Santa Maria Donnaregina*, 68n27). See also D. Ambrasi, 'La vita religiosa', in E. Pontieri et al., eds., *Storia di Napoli*, vol. 3 (Naples, 1969), 511.

³⁰ Bologna, *I pittori alla corte angioina*, 52. Note however that this story is recorded in the *Diurnali* of Spinelli, which according to Sabatini is an apocryphal work: F. Sabatini, *Napoli angioina: cultura e società* (Cava dei Tirreni, 1975), 230n68bis. On the entry into Naples, see also C. de Frede, 'Da Carlo I d'Angiò a Giovanna I, 1263-1382', in E. Pontieri et al., eds., *Storia di Napoli*, vol. 3 (Naples, 1969), 15.

³¹ For a plan of the church, see Carelli and Casiello, *Santa Maria Donnaregina*, fig. IX. The authors note that there was originally a series of rooms accessible from the apse, since traces of medieval building remain including a door to the left of the altar (28); it is not clear whether these might have been chapels.

being seen by these members of the outside world. A raised gallery for the Clares extends two-thirds the length of the nave.³² As a result, the Apocalypse cycle, situated on the right wall of the nave, would not have been seen by the nuns (unless they were to lean over their balcony in an immodest fashion). They had their own picture cycles (including the Last Judgement, a Passion, prophets and female saints) on which to meditate during the Mass (which they also could not see).³³ The Apocalypse cycle formed part of the decorations of the main body of the church, and thus would have been seen by the laity who worshipped there, including members of the royal household.

*Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie*³⁴

Location and Condition

The painting fills two wooden panels each measuring 35cm high x 86cm wide (fig. 2). The original location of the panels is not known. They are in generally good condition.

Patron, Artist and Date

These panels belonged in the earlier part of this century to the collector Erbach-Fürstenau; their provenance before the nineteenth century is unknown.³⁵ Their production has been ascribed to the Neapolitan court in the first half of the fourteenth century on the grounds of close similarities in style and content to the fresco at S. Maria Donnaregina and to a later illustrated Bible made at Naples. The

³² Bruzelius, 'Hearing is believing', 83, 86-88.

³³ Bruzelius, 'Hearing is believing', 86-87.

³⁴ Erbach-Fürstenau, 'Pittura e miniatura a Napoli nel secolo XIV', *L'Arte* 8 (1905), 1-17 and 'Die Apokalypse von Santa Chiara'; Schmitt, 'Die Apokalypse des Robert von Anjou'; L. Castelfranchi, 'Le "storie apocalittiche" di Stoccarda e quelle di Giusto da Padova', *Prospettiva* 33-36 (1983-84), 33-44.

³⁵ They are first recorded in Germany; Erbach-Fürstenau notes that a tradition held that they had been purchased in Italy by Goethe's brother-in-law ('Die Apokalypse von Santa Chiara', 83). See also Castelfranchi, 'Le "storie apocalittiche" di Stoccarda', 43n1.

arguments for the panels' provenance at Naples are convincing,³⁶ but the exact patronage and date can only be guessed at. Links to specific members of the royal family, particularly to King Robert (r.1309-43), are often assumed but cannot be proven.³⁷ All that is certain is that the panels must have been present at the court and available to the artist who was commissioned by Robert's successor, Joanna, to make the Hamilton Bible (the dating of this manuscript is known to be c.1345-50).³⁸ This manuscript replicates the panels' imagery in such a way as to make the connection between them indisputable.³⁹ The patron of the panels is therefore likely to have been a member of the royal family or a member of the court. Apart from the *terminus ante quem* provided by the Hamilton Bible, the dating cannot really be focalised more specifically: stylistic analyses that argue the panels must post-date Giotto's time in Naples (1328-33) are more optimistic than convincing.⁴⁰ The panels' relationship to the S. Maria Donnaregina frescoes in terms of dating is also unclear, although most scholars assume on stylistic grounds that the frescoes predate the panels.

³⁶ These are set out in exhaustive detail in the following articles: Erbach-Fürstenau, 'Die Apokalypse von Santa Chiara' and 'Pittura e miniatura a Napoli'; Schmitt, 'Die Apokalypse des Robert von Anjou', Castelfranchi, 'Le "storie apocalittiche" di Stoccarda'.

³⁷ See, for example, Schiller's confident attribution of the panels' commission to Robert (*Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst*, V, vol. 1, 287). The title of Schmitt's article (on which Schiller draws) is misleading ('Die Apokalypse des Robert von Anjou'), although she steers clear of making a definitive attribution within the article.

³⁸ The Bible, now in the Staatliche Museum, Berlin, was given by Joanna to Pope Clement VI in 1350. See Emmerson and Lewis, 'Census', no. 138.

³⁹ The parallels were first noticed by Erbach-Fürstenau: detailed comparisons with the Hamilton Bible and with various other manuscripts are made in his two articles; more recently Schmitt has elaborated on his discoveries. These formal and iconographic links are certainly convincing, particularly a number of syntheses also found in the Stuttgart panels, such as the merging of the usually separate armies of locusts and horsemen. A 'mistake' in the arrangement of the Hamilton Bible's scenes of the four horsemen (noted by Erbach-Fürstenau, who does not, however, realise its significance: 'Pittura e miniatura a Napoli', 15) can be explained as a misreading of the fluid layout of the Stuttgart panels. If the panels are read in the up-and-down pattern often used within the registers (although not in fact here) it yields exactly the erroneous arrangement found in the manuscript: the first two horsemen (Apoc. 6) are followed by the holding back of the four winds (Apoc. 7), then the scene of War in Heaven (Apoc. 12) appears between the third and fourth horsemen.

⁴⁰ Castelfranchi, 'Le "storie apocalittiche" di Stoccarda', 37-39.

Access and Audience

Due to the lack of certainty regarding the patronage, date and function of the panels, the questions of access and audience are also difficult to resolve. The function of the Stuttgart panels is unknown, and their unusual shape is not paralleled in other works. There is no information extant about how the panels were physically attached to each other, if at all, in their original state. They may have been situated one above the other, or side by side as they are currently displayed in Stuttgart. Various unconvincing suggestions for their purpose have been made, including their use as part of a reliquary.⁴¹ While each panel is roughly the right shape for a predella to an altarpiece, in other respects their composition is unsuitable and in no way conforms to the standard format for fourteenth-century predella panels (a series of individually-framed scenes); similarly, the panels are unlikely to have formed the whole of a portable altarpiece due to their unsuitable horizontal format and unwieldy shape. In the absence of external evidence, we can only assess the panels themselves. The large amount of very fine detail involved in the painting suggests the panels were meant to be studied at close quarters. The most likely possibility is that they were made as personal devotional objects for the private use of the patron, perhaps in a chapel or oratory.⁴²

⁴¹ See Castelfranchi, 'Le "storie apocalittiche" di Stoccarda', 39, citing the various suggestions made by previous scholars.

⁴² Castelfranchi, 'Le "storie apocalittiche" di Stoccarda', 39.

*Norwich, Cathedral Cloister*⁴³

Location and Condition

Historiated roof bosses are located in the vaults of the cloister (figs. 3, 4). The Apocalypse, in the south and west walks, is the most extensive narrative, but other subjects also appear. The 38 apocalyptic bosses in the south walk are arranged along the central spine of the vaults. The later west walk begins in a similar fashion but from the fifth bay additional images appear also in the adjacent side bosses, making a total of 64 Apocalypse scenes in this walk.⁴⁴ Some of the bosses are damaged and difficult to identify. Repainting to restore the effect of the original polychromy was undertaken by E.W. Tristram in the 1930s but since the restoration itself finally destroyed any traces of original colour, the accuracy of Tristram's decisions is now impossible to assess.

Patron, Artist and Date

The rebuilding of the cloister was begun in 1297 but several campaigns, over a period of more than a century, were necessary to conclude it. Although several benefactors contributed funds, in general the new cloister was part of the usual building works undertaken by the Benedictine community rather than the gift of any

⁴³ M.R. James, *The sculptured bosses in the cloisters of Norwich Cathedral* (Norwich, 1911) and 'The carved bosses in the Cathedral Church and cloisters', in D.H.S. Cranage, ed., *Thirteenth-century anniversary of the Diocese of East Anglia: official handbook* (Norwich, 1930), 55-63; E.W. Tristram, 'The cloister bosses, Norwich Cathedral', in *Norwich Cathedral cloister* (Norwich, 1938) (reprinted, with original pagination, from the *Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Annual Reports of the Friends of the Cathedral Church of Norwich*); I. Atherton et al., eds., *Norwich Cathedral: church, city and diocese, 1096-1996* (London, 1996), esp. M. Rose, 'The vault bosses', 363-78. I use Tristram's numeration of the bosses.

⁴⁴ Rose, 'The vault bosses', 365.

one individual.⁴⁵ The Apocalypse series begins on the south walk which was vaulted in c.1323-29: the first twelve chapters of the Apocalypse appear here. Financial constraints, management difficulties and acts of God prevented any further work on the vaulting, and hence on the Apocalypse, until 1415-30, when the west walk was finally completed.⁴⁶

Access and Audience

The placing of the cycle within conventual buildings indicates the primary audience was the Benedictine community itself: it was customary to use the cloister for study, and for various social and educational activities.⁴⁷ Norwich was a monastery of around sixty monks during the fourteenth century.⁴⁸

The Norwich Apocalypse cycle is not particularly prominent within its architectural setting, compared to many of the other examples. Their position in the vaulting makes extended study of the images uncomfortable, and the bosses are also laid out in a curious manner, so that to follow the narrative it is necessary to walk around the cloister backwards.⁴⁹ Yet because of the relatively low roof of the cloister, and thanks to the polychromy, the images are at least visible, which cannot

⁴⁵ The fifteenth-century antiquarian William of Worcester credited much of the building of the south and west walks to Bishop John Salmon (d.1325), but documentary evidence suggests his contribution was negligible. On the other hand, the financial contribution of Bishop John Wakering (d.1425) to the completion of the vaults of the west walk is certain, but it is unlikely that he had significant influence on the subject chosen since his donation was posthumous; moreover, the Apocalypse series was already more than half completed. See F. Woodman, 'The gothic campaigns', in I. Atherton et al., eds., *Norwich Cathedral: church, city and diocese, 1096-1996* (London, 1996), 167, 169, 171-74; D.H.S. Cranage, 'Norwich Cathedral cloister', in *Norwich Cathedral cloister* (Norwich, 1938), 9; James, *The sculptured bosses*, v-vi; E.C. Fernie and A.B. Whittingham, *The early communitarian and pitancer rolls of Norwich Cathedral Priory with an account of the building of the cloister* (Norwich, 1972), 34-43.

⁴⁶ Woodman, 'The gothic campaigns', 166-67, 169-74, 177, fig. 84.

⁴⁷ See D.H.S. Cranage, 'History of the Cathedral Church of Norwich', in D.H.S. Cranage, ed., *Thirteen-hundredth anniversary of the Diocese of East Anglia: official handbook* (Norwich, 1930), 50, 52; James, *The sculptured bosses*, i.

⁴⁸ B. Dodwell, 'The monastic community', in I. Atherton et al., eds., *Norwich Cathedral: church, city and diocese, 1096-1996* (London, 1996), 231.

⁴⁹ A problem noted by Eric Fernie, who suggests hopefully 'this may be an attempt to have the bosses make some sense whatever direction one is walking in': *An architectural history of Norwich Cathedral* (Oxford, 1993), 177.

be said of the fifteenth-century roof bosses in the much higher vaults of the cathedral itself.

*Karlstein Castle*⁵⁰

Location and Condition

The castle of Karlstein, built by the emperor Charles IV, is located 18 miles south-west of the Bohemian capital, Prague. Three independent structures, linked only by walkways and bridges, made up the major part of the castle: the imperial palace on the lowest level, the tower which houses the Marian chapel at the intermediate level, and highest of all the fortress tower in which is found the Holy Cross chapel. Apocalypse wall paintings are found in the chapel of the Virgin and the Holy Cross chapel.

The space which was to become the Marian chapel was originally intended for secular use but, once built, it was converted to accommodate the five-member chapter established by Charles in 1357; it was consecrated in that year.⁵¹ As a result its architectural style is secular, rectangular in shape with a flat, rather low, ceiling (fig. 5). The Apocalypse paintings were perhaps originally presented on all four walls of the chapel but survive today mainly on the two long sides (east and west walls). The north wall was removed at the Renaissance, together with any images it contained, although the wall itself has since been reinstated. The south wall is split between apocalyptic scenes on the left (fragmentary remains of the four horsemen) and images of Charles IV receiving and venerating relics on the right.

⁵⁰ A. Friedl, *Mistr Karlštejnské Apokalypsy* (Prague, 1950); V. Dvoráková, J. Krása, A. Merhautová, K. Stejskal, *Gothic mural painting in Bohemia and Moravia 1300-1378* (London, 1964); V. Dvoráková and D. Menclová, *Karlštejn* (Prague, 1965); N. Kubu, *Karlštejn Castle: guide*, trans. J. Turner-Kadecková (Prague, n.d.); F. Fišer, *Karlštejn: vzájemné vztahy tří karlštejnských kaplí* (Kostelní Vydří, 1996).

⁵¹ K. Stejskal, *European art in the fourteenth century*, English edn. (London, 1978), 102, 106, 112; Dvoráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 134.

The narrative cycle starts properly on the east wall. Losses have been suffered: of the original three horizontal registers, only the lower two survive. Framed by bands of text (short biblical extracts) in a large, readable black-letter, the narrative shows the loosing of the angels of the Euphrates, the army of monstrous horsemen, the mighty angel with the book, John measuring the temple, the preaching, death and resurrection of the two witnesses, the seventh trumpet, the woman clothed with the sun and War in Heaven: these are the consecutive scenes of Chapters 9: 13 to 12: 9. The story continues on the opposite wall with the dragon's pursuit of the woman and her escape; this sequence ends with a separate image (vertically-oriented) of the standing apocalyptic woman and her child.

Unfortunately we have no information about what was pictured on the destroyed north wall of the chapel. If the cycle did continue, it is difficult to see how the rest of the book, a further ten chapters, could all have been represented. The north wall may have had a synthetic rather than a narrative mode, representing one or more of the triumphant, heavenly scenes from the latter part of the Apocalypse.

The standard theophanic visions of the Apocalypse are not represented in the Marian chapel as it stands today, but they do appear in the Holy Cross chapel (consecrated 1365). Two painted scenes represent the apocalyptic Godhead (Apoc. 1, 4) and the adoration of the Lamb by the elders (Apoc. 5).⁵² In addition, the overall design of the chapel is thought to make reference to the description of the heavenly city in Chapters 21-22.

Patron, Artist and Date

The personal patronage of Charles IV is certain. By 1355 Charles was already in residence at his new castle (founded 1348), perhaps supervising the execution of the decorative schemes. The building work was complete by 1357; the

⁵² Dvůráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 138.

decorative programmes of the interior took perhaps another ten years.⁵³ A number of artists are linked with the Bohemian court at this time, but there is no consensus about which of them was responsible for the Apocalypse paintings.

Access and Audience

Karlstein was Charles IV's favourite personal residence, and he also held court there occasionally. It is reasonable to assume that guests and diplomatic visitors as well as members of the royal family and the court would have seen the paintings in the Marian chapel, although access to the Holy Cross chapel, with its precious relics, was probably more restricted. The Marian chapel's chapter of five canons was in permanent residence.

*Angers Castle*⁵⁴

Location and Condition

The tapestry's original placement within the castle is unknown (see below). Left by the patron's grandson René of Anjou to the cathedral at Angers in 1480, it remained there for nearly three hundred years. In the eighteenth century it was mistreated (some sections were used to insulate greenhouses). It was rescued in the mid-nineteenth century and restored.⁵⁵ The tapestry is now displayed in a purpose-built gallery at Angers castle (fig. 6).

⁵³ Kubu, *Karlštejn Castle*, 4; Dvůrková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 51.

⁵⁴ R. Planchenault, *The Angers Tapestries*, trans. D. Mahaffey (Paris, 1980), now superseded by Muel et al., *La tenture*. This latter publishes colour photographs of the back of the tapestry, taken during restoration in 1982, with the negatives reversed to duplicate the design of the front. The quality of the weaving was so high that the back of the tapestry is as well-finished as the front. Protected by the lining, the reverse side has preserved the striking colours used by the original weavers: in the place of the faded reds and blues which dominate the front of the tapestry, vibrant yellow, orange and green colour schemes have emerged. The scene numbers referred to in this thesis refer to this edition.

⁵⁵ F. van der Meer, *Apocalypse: visions from the Book of Revelation in western art* (London, 1978), 177-78.

Despite the vicissitudes it has undergone, the tapestry has survived in remarkably good condition, which is due in large part to the excellent quality of its production. Of an original 84 narrative scenes (six large sections of fourteen scenes each), some 17 are wholly or largely lost, particularly in the last two sections, and others are damaged. As a result of the damage, the placement of scenes in the second section is not certain, but it has been reconstructed with reasonable certainty in the rest of the work.⁵⁶ Woven bands of text, which once ran beneath the scenes, are left only in the tiniest of fragments, having been cut off and destroyed in the nineteenth century;⁵⁷ more remains of the upper band of musical angels and the lower of mille-fleurs.

Patron, Artist and Date

The patron of the Apocalypse Tapestry was Duke Louis I of Anjou, second son of King John II of France. He commissioned the tapestry between 1373 and 1377, and it was probably completed by 1380, or at the latest by 1382.⁵⁸ To design his tapestry, Louis commissioned the king's painter, the miniaturist Jean Bondol (also known as Jean or Hennequin of Bruges) who was the foremost artist in Paris.⁵⁹ The actual weaving of the tapestry took several years: each of the 22 metre long

⁵⁶ As published in Muel et al., *La tenture*.

⁵⁷ See Muel et al., *La tenture*, 60, for a reconstruction of the tapestry's original organisation, and, on the lettering fragments, 57, pls. 39-43. Given the amount of space available (around 58cm), the captions were probably an abbreviated version of the biblical text.

⁵⁸ In 1373 an inventory of the king's library was taken, and a certain manuscript, which by 1380 had been lent to Louis for the tapestry, was still present. However, it does not necessarily follow that the manuscript was lent and the tapestry commissioned in 1373. The first mention of the tapestry in archival documents is in 1377 (a payment on the first two sections) and Bondol was only paid for the designs in 1378 (Muel et al., *La tenture*, 26, 33). Therefore, a more likely date for the commission is c. 1376. Christian de Mérindol argues from the heraldic devices employed that the fifth section of the tapestry can be redated to as late as 1382 (Muel et al., *La tenture*, 48). However, his argument overlooks the documentary evidence: the duke's account book shows that sections 3-5 were to be delivered by Christmas 1379 (quoted by Antoine Ruais in Muel et al., *La tenture*, 33-34). Mérindol's argument may, however, be valid for the final (sixth) section of the tapestry.

⁵⁹ For details of Bondol's life and work, see M. Meiss, *French painting in the time of Jean de Berry. I: The late fourteenth century and the patronage of the duke* (London, 1967), 20-22; E. Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish painting: its origins and character* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), vol. 1, 35-41; Muel et al., *La tenture*, 283-89.

sections was woven in a continuous piece. Louis paid in instalments as the six sections were delivered; each seems to have cost around 1000 francs.⁶⁰

Access and Audience

This is uncertain, since the original placement of the tapestry is not known.⁶¹ Probably it had no one set location but was moved about to suit the duke's requirements. Tapestries were moveable furniture, and frequently travelled from one estate to another with their owners.⁶² Due to its immense length (originally around 140 metres), the tapestry must have been spread through several chambers. The one documentary reference we have regarding this matter states that for the wedding of Louis's son in 1400 it was hung outside, as a splendid decoration for the courtyard of a palace.⁶³

*Padua, Baptistery*⁶⁴

Location and Condition

The frescoes are located in the small altar chapel of the Baptistery which adjoins the Cathedral at Padua (fig. 7). They were most recently restored in the 1980s, and are in good condition.

⁶⁰ The account books record that he made the payments to a certain Nicolas Bataille. Some recent scholars have questioned the traditional assumption that Bataille was the master weaver, arguing instead that he was a merchant who supervised the production of the tapestry, supplying the money for materials and liaising with the duke over the delivery schedule. See Muel et al., *La tenture*, 14, 33-34.

⁶¹ Although George Henderson states that the tapestry was made to decorate the chapel of the castle ('The manuscript model of the Angers "Apocalypse" tapestries', *Burlington Magazine* 127 [1985], 209), there is no documentary evidence of this. The size of the tapestry, which originally measured 140m long by 6m high, makes it inconceivable that it would fit in a castle chapel. The chapel building now in the castle complex was not built until the fifteenth century: J. Mesqui, *Angers Castle*, trans. J. Shirley (Rennes, 1989-92), 21-23.

⁶² Meiss, *French painting in the time of Jean de Berry. I*, 32.

⁶³ Muel et al., *La tenture*, 35.

⁶⁴ H. Saalman, 'Carrara burials in the Baptistery of Padua', *Art Bulletin* 69 (1987), 376-94; A.M. Spiazzi, ed., *Giusto de' Menabuoi nel Battistero di Padova* (Trieste, 1989), esp. C. Bellinati, 'Iconografia e teologia negli affreschi del Battistero', 41-82; C. King, *The Baptistery, Padua* (Open University television programme, 1993); P. Lievore, ed., *Padua: Baptistery of the Cathedral: frescoes by Giusto de' Menabuoi (XIV c.)* (Padua, 1994).

Patron, Artist and Date

The entire Baptistery was frescoed by the Florentine artist Giusto de' Menabuoi to mark its rededication as a funerary chapel for the ruling Carrara family. The date of the frescoes is c.1375-85. Fina Buzzacarini, wife of Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara, is usually accepted as the individual patron of the Baptistery's frescoes on the basis of documentary evidence, and the donor portrait in the Baptistery itself. She died in October 1378, but the frescoes were either not begun or unfinished at this date as her will of that year leaves money for their production.⁶⁵ Francesco is charged in Fina's will with organising the decoration, and so may be considered a co-patron.⁶⁶ The tombs of Fina and Francesco were originally located in the Baptistery, although they are no longer extant.⁶⁷

Claudio Bellinati's claim that the complex decorative scheme of the Baptistery was designed by the great '*mens*' of Petrarch is entirely without substantiating evidence: Petrarch's life is exceptionally well-documented for the fourteenth century, and no reference is made to such a task in his numerous detailed letters. Moreover, after some years of ill health, he died in 1374, at least a year before the redecoration of the Baptistery was begun.⁶⁸ It is likely that theological advice, if it was required, would have come from another source. The Carraras were generous patrons of the city's famous university, where a theology faculty had been founded in 1363, and Padua was also home to Dominican, Franciscan and Augustinian studia.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ The will is printed in Saalman, 'Carrara burials', 390-94.

⁶⁶ Saalman, 'Carrara burials', 381-82.

⁶⁷ See Saalman, 'Carrara burials'.

⁶⁸ E.H. Wilkins, *Life of Petrarch* (Chicago and London, 1961), v, 262.

⁶⁹ On the Dominican studium and the theology faculty of the University, see L. Gargan, *Lo studio teologico e la biblioteca dei Domenicani a Padova nel tre e quattrocento* (Padua, 1971). On the Augustinian studium and some of its fourteenth-century scholars, see his 'Libri di teologi agostiniani a Padova nel trecento', *Quaderni per la Storia dell'Università di Padova* 6 (1973), 1-23.

Access and Audience

The Baptistery continued to be used occasionally for its original purpose: twice-annual baptismal ceremonies at Easter and Pentecost would have enabled the Paduan public to see the frescoes.⁷⁰ At other times, access to the funerary chapel was probably restricted to the Carrara family and cathedral staff.

Venice, Accademia⁷¹

Location and Condition

The five-panel polyptych (central panel 95 x 61cm; other panels 45 x 33cm) shows the Great Whore on the beast, the Last Judgement, God worshipped by the elders (central panel), the Vintage of the Earth, the Conqueror on the white horse (figs. 96-98). Restored in 1952 after acquisition by the Accademia, it is in generally good condition except where damaged by the removal of the frame.⁷²

The exhibition catalogue *Europäische Kunst um 1400* assumes that these five scenes represent the only surviving panels of a once greater polyptych.⁷³ There is no evidence that this is the case (as early as 1832 only five panels were recorded).⁷⁴ The scenes do not of course form a complete narrative and even as fragments are out of textual order: however, as I argue in Chapter 4, the altarpiece can be read thematically as a carefully balanced whole.

⁷⁰ Saalman, 'Carrara burials', 385.

⁷¹ S.M. Marconi, *Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia: opere d'arte dei secoli XIV e XV* (Rome, 1955), 4-5; *Europäische Kunst um 1400: Achte Ausstellung unter den Auspizien des Europarates* (Vienna, 1962), 79-80; G. Bissoli, 'L'Apocalisse nell'opera pittorica di Iacobello Albergno', *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* 30 (1980), 251-54.

⁷² For further details on the condition and history of the panels, see Marconi, *Gallerie dell'Accademia*, 5.

⁷³ *Europäische Kunst um 1400*, 79; this possibility is also suggested by F. d'Arcais, 'Venezia', in M. Lucco, ed., *La pittura nel Veneto: il trecento* (Milan, 1992), vol. 1, 79, but she admits there is no documentary evidence to support the idea.

⁷⁴ Marconi, *Gallerie dell'Accademia*, 5.

Patron, Artist and Date

The provenance of the altarpiece is the church of S. Giovanni Evangelista, Torcello, Venice (now demolished). This church belonged to a Benedictine nunnery.⁷⁵ The altarpiece is rather small to have been located on the high altar and a side chapel or lesser altar is a more likely placement.

The altarpiece has been ascribed fairly convincingly on stylistic grounds to Jacobello Alberegno, a Venetian painter who died c.1397.⁷⁶ Earlier suggestions were that it was an anonymous Venetian work of c.1400 or the work of Giusto de' Menabuoi or a member of his circle.⁷⁷ These latter attributions depend on the similarity of some of the iconographic and stylistic features to Giusto's frescoes at the Padua Baptistery, but these parallels are not conclusive and could equally be explained by the use of a common, probably manuscript, source.⁷⁸

Access and Audience

This remains uncertain, since it would have been dependent on where the altarpiece was deployed. However, as is the case for all altarpieces, the officiating clergy would have had the best opportunity to see the imagery at close range.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ See G. Mazzucco, ed., *Monasteri Benedettini nella laguna Veneziana* (Venice, 1983), 46.

⁷⁶ Marconi, *Gallerie dell'Accademia*, 5-6. The Vienna catalogue gives the date of death incorrectly as 1395.

⁷⁷ *Europäische Kunst um 1400*, 79-80; Marconi, *Gallerie dell'Accademia*, 6; d'Arcais, 'Venezia', 79, 87n97.

⁷⁸ d'Arcais, 'Venezia', 78-79, 87n97.

⁷⁹ On altarpieces in general, see the collections 'L'altare: la struttura, l'immagine, l'azione liturgica' (proceedings of a conference held at Milan, 12-13 November 1991), *Arte Cristiana* 80: 753 (1992), 399-514; E. Borsook and F.S. Gioffredi, eds., *Italian altarpieces 1250-1550: function and design* (Oxford, 1994); P. Humfrey and M. Kemp, eds., *The altarpiece in the renaissance* (Cambridge, 1990).

*London, Victoria and Albert Museum*⁸⁰*Location and Condition*⁸¹

This German altarpiece (fig. 8) has been held by the Victoria and Albert Museum since 1859. Its provenance is uncertain, as nothing is known of its whereabouts or ownership before this date.

The altarpiece is a triptych: the central panel measures 137 x 168cm and the side wings each 137 x 84cm.⁸² Forty-five scenes depicting the first sixteen chapters of the Apocalypse appear in four continuous registers reading horizontally across the front of the altarpiece; on the back of the wings appear scenes from the lives of the Virgin Mary, St John the Evangelist, St Giles and Mary Magdalen.

The altarpiece was transferred from panel to canvas probably in the nineteenth century, and the three sections cut down somewhat at the top and sides, destroying some of the inscriptions that frame each scene. The frame, probably original except for the upper cornice, was also cut down. There is some nineteenth-century repainting on the front of the altarpiece, particularly in the central section.

Patron, Artist and Date

The altarpiece displays a north German style, related to the work of Master Bertram of Hamburg. Suggestions for the identity of the commissioning patron are based entirely on internal iconographic evidence: the four saints that appear on the back of the wings, the subject matter itself, and the fact that the imagery, unusually, is taken from the commentary of the Franciscan Alexander of Bremen. C.M. Kauffmann suggested the painting was made for the Franciscan Friary of St Mary

⁸⁰ C.M. Kauffmann, *An altar-piece of the Apocalypse from Master Bertram's workshop in Hamburg* (London, 1968), repr., with additional notes, in his *Studies in medieval art* (London, 1992), 121-72, 408-09 and pls. 1-24; M. Hasse, 'Der Apokalypse-Altar (Johannes-Altar) im Victoria und Albert Museum zu London', *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte* 19 (1980), 125-36.

⁸¹ The following details draw on Kauffmann's monograph, *An altar-piece of the Apocalypse*, esp. 123-33.

⁸² Kauffmann, *An altar-piece of the Apocalypse*, 166n1.

Magdalen in Hamburg. However, Max Hasse argued that the Cistercian Convent of St John at Lübeck was a better candidate, since it was dedicated to the first three of the saints on the wings, while Mary Magdalen was the patron saint of the city. In the absence of any other evidence, the issue of patronage remains unresolved. The altarpiece is usually dated to c.1400-10, on the basis of stylistic similarities to the Buxtehude altarpiece (Hamburg), also by a follower of Bertram.

Access and Audience

As with the Venice altarpiece, the resolution of these issues depends on information regarding the altar's location which is no longer available. However, it should be noted that altarpieces in the north of Europe were usually kept closed except on feast days, which would have limited the display of the Apocalypse imagery.⁸³

*Westminster Abbey, Chapter House*⁸⁴

Location and Condition

The wall paintings are positioned on the blind arcading of the thirteenth-century octagonal chapter house (fig. 9). The space contained by each arch is divided into four framed, rectangular scenes. Of an original estimated 96 episodes, only about 50 identifiable scenes now survive, many of them in poor condition. The cycle is best preserved at the beginning, on the northwest bay adjacent to the entrance (Chapters 1-6). Nothing is preserved in the next two bays (destroyed

⁸³ A. Nova, 'Hangings, curtains, and shutters of sixteenth-century Lombard altarpieces', in E. Borsook and F.S. Gioffredi, eds., *Italian altarpieces 1250-1550: function and design* (Oxford, 1994), 179, 186.

⁸⁴ J.G. Noppen, 'The Westminster Apocalypse and its source', *Burlington Magazine* 61 (1932), 146-59; E.W. Tristram, *English wall painting of the fourteenth century* (London, 1955), 47-8, 201-06; S.E. Rigold, *Chapter house and pyx chamber, Westminster Abbey* (London, 1976); B. Turner, 'The patronage of John of Northampton: further studies of the wall-paintings in Westminster chapter house', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 138 (1985), 89-100; P. Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: kingship and the representation of power 1200-1400* (New Haven and London, 1995), 185-95.

through alterations to the fabric in the eighteenth century), but the narrative would undoubtedly have continued here. A 'Judgement' painting, different in scale and style, then interrupts the sequence, taking up the east wall as well as some of the southeast. The Apocalypse narrative continues in the remainder of the southern bays (Apoc. 13 onwards), but many scenes are badly preserved.⁸⁵

Patron, Artist and Date

There is some confusion over the patronage and dating of the Westminster cycle. The abbey's *Liber Niger Quaternus*, which dates from the late fifteenth century, states that both the Apocalypse and the Judgement wall paintings in the chapter house were the gift of one of the monks, John of Northampton.⁸⁶ This documentary evidence, although unequivocal in its wording, is not contemporary,⁸⁷ and hence is open to question. To add to the confusion, the *Liber Niger* entry does not give a date for the donation. If we accept John as patron, the paintings must date from between 1372, when he entered the monastery, and 1404, when he died.⁸⁸ These dates are not incompatible with the only other available source of information, stylistic analysis. On the basis of stylistic and costume evidence, the date of the Apocalypse series has been suggested as c.1400.⁸⁹ Stylistic analysis of the Judgement scene on the east wall has led various scholars to argue that it dates from c.1350, contemporary with the similarly 'Italianate' style of the paintings in St Stephen's chapel at the Palace of Westminster;⁹⁰ this parallel cannot, however, be relied on, considering the St Stephen's paintings are extant only in tiny fragments

⁸⁵ Rigold, *Chapter house*, 8, 23-25.

⁸⁶ Turner, 'The patronage of John of Northampton'; E.H. Pearce, *The monks of Westminster: being a register of the brethren of the Convent from the time of the Confessor to the Dissolution* (Cambridge, 1916), 8.

⁸⁷ A point many scholars seem to have ignored. The relevant passage may of course be based on earlier information which has not survived. See J.A. Robinson and M.R. James, *The manuscripts of Westminster Abbey* (Cambridge, 1908), 95-97.

⁸⁸ Pearce, *The monks of Westminster*, 112.

⁸⁹ Turner, 'The patronage of John of Northampton', 95.

⁹⁰ See, for example, Turner, 'The patronage of John of Northampton', 89, 92, 99n12.

and known principally from eighteenth-century antiquarian drawings. Since at any rate the Italianate style is acknowledged to have remained fashionable after the 1350s,⁹¹ it seems by no means impossible that the Judgement painting does in fact date from the only slightly later period in which John of Northampton was at the monastery. The Judgement thus either slightly predates, or is contemporary with the Apocalypse, and is a crucial key in understanding its significance (discussed in Chapter 4). It is, however, immediately apparent that whether or not the two cycles are exactly contemporary, they were designed and executed by different artists.⁹²

The question is then to what extent John of Northampton can be considered the patron of the cycles. Brian Turner has recently argued that the amounts of money mentioned in the *Liber Niger*, particularly regarding the Judgement, seem too small for the whole cost of work on such a scale; instead, he suggests, John's donations may have paid for the 'completion or repair' of the paintings.⁹³ Another, more likely, possibility is that John's donation, while worthy of being recorded as the principle source of funding for the decorative scheme, was supplemented from general abbey income. The extent of John's personal responsibility for the cost of the paintings, or for the choice of the Apocalypse as subject matter thus remains uncertain; however, since we know almost nothing else about him, clarity on this issue would be of purely incidental interest. More importantly, it is apparent that the idea for the chapter house's decoration must have been at the very least acceptable to the other members of the community, as it occupied such a prominent position within their central conventual building and was, as we shall see, related to the function of the chapter house itself. As at York, it seems more plausible to ascribe the traditional controlling role of the patron to officials of the monastery acting

⁹¹ Turner, 'The patronage of John of Northampton', 92.

⁹² Rigold, *Chapter house*, 21.

⁹³ Turner, 'The patronage of John of Northampton', 89, 91-92.

institutionally, notwithstanding the possibility that the individual donor, John, may have made considerable financial contributions.

Access and Audience

As at Norwich, the placing of the cycle within conventual buildings indicates the principal audience would have been the Benedictine monks of the abbey, of whom there were about sixty in 1400: the chapter house has room for eighty to sit.⁹⁴ However, between 1352 and 1395, the chapter house was also used as the meeting house for the Commons in the near-annual parliaments, so, depending on the date of the paintings, it is possible that these members of parliament would also have seen one or both of the cycles. The monks' disapproval of the parliamentarians' behaviour meant that in around 1395, they were moved to the Abbey's refectory instead.⁹⁵ It has been plausibly suggested that one factor behind the commission of the paintings, if it postdates this event, was an urge to 'reconsecrate' the chapter house as a religious space, committed to orthodoxy and belonging solely to the monks.⁹⁶ In either case, the monastic community was undoubtedly the main intended audience of the Apocalypse and Judgement pictures, since it used the chapter house on a daily basis.

⁹⁴ B. Harvey, *Living and dying in England, 1100-1540: the monastic experience* (Oxford, 1993), 73; Rigold, *Chapter house*, 1.

⁹⁵ R. Butt, *A history of Parliament: the Middle Ages* (London, 1989), xxiii, 266, 337; Rigold, *Chapter house*, 4, 6.

⁹⁶ Rigold, *Chapter house*, 6, although I would not necessarily concur with his further suggestion that the monks 'saw the Commons, not without cause, as fermenters of disorder, heresy and fratricide, forerunners of the apocalyptic disasters on the walls'.

*York Minster, East Window*⁹⁷

Location and Condition

The window is located at the east end of the church, in the Lady Chapel (figs. 10, 11). It contains scenes from the Old Testament in the upper section, followed by 81 scenes of the Apocalypse. At the window's reinstatement after the second world war its scenes (which had previously become muddled) were reorganised, but there are still some out of place. It has been subject to numerous repairs and some interpolations.

Patron, Artist and Date

The window's donor was Walter Skirlaw, Bishop of Durham from 1388 until his death in 1406.⁹⁸ Although his gift is not recorded in any external documentary evidence, Skirlaw appears in the traditional donor posture in the window itself, accompanied by an inscription in which he offers the work to God.⁹⁹ His arms appear several times among the shields at the very bottom of the window,¹⁰⁰ and also in important scenes within the narrative itself.¹⁰¹ Skirlaw's position within the

⁹⁷ John A. Knowles, *Essays in the history of the York school of glass-painting* (London and New York, 1936); D.E. O'Connor and J. Haselock, 'The stained and painted glass', in G.E. Aylmer and R. Cant, eds., *A history of York Minster* (Oxford, 1977), 313-93; J. Rickers, 'The Apocalypse scenes in the Great East Window of York Minster' (M.A. thesis, Medieval Studies, University of York, 1992) and 'Glazier and illuminator: the Apocalypse cycle in the East Window of York Minster and its sources', *Journal of Stained Glass* 19 (1994-95), 265-79. Complete photographs of the window are now published in T. French, *York Minster: the Great East Window* (CVMA: Great Britain, Summary Catalogue 2) (Oxford, 1995). Scene numbers referred to in this thesis are from this edition.

⁹⁸ A very brief fifteenth-century biography of Skirlaw appears in J. Raine, ed., *Historiae Dunelmensis scriptores tres, Gaufridus de Coldingham, Robertus de Graystones et Willielmus de Chambre* (Surtees Society 9) (London, 1839), 144-45; see also A.B. Emden, *A biographical register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500* (Oxford, 1959), vol. 3, 1708-10. On Skirlaw's other (similarly generous) donations, see N. Pevsner and D. Neave, *Yorkshire: York and the East Riding*, 2nd edn. (London, 1995), 48, 141, 486-88, 689-90; J. Bilson, 'Howden Church: some notes on its architectural history', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 22 (1913), 163-64.

⁹⁹ French, *Great East Window*, 140, col. pl. 18.

¹⁰⁰ The scenes are 1f and 1h (where his shield is central and associated with the arms of the See of York). The heraldry in the bottom row of 1a is modern but Skirlaw's shield does appear elsewhere in the scene, as a banner on the right-hand turret of the side shaft, balanced by that of the city of York. See French, *Great East Window*, 137-43.

¹⁰¹ For example, 8j and 7e, in both cases as a small banner decorating the temple of God (French, *Great East Window*, 98, 102).

window indicates that he was undoubtedly recognised as the donor of this extremely prestigious, and expensive, window. Once again, however, it is impossible to tell whether the choice of subject matter lay with Skirlaw himself or with some other person or persons. It is likely that the Minster clergy were at the very least consulted as to the suitability of the subject matter.

At any rate, the contract (drawn up at the end of 1405) makes it clear that the corporate body of the Dean and Chapter were responsible for the supervision of the work, contracting with the glazier John Thornton of Coventry over materials, wages, and completion dates. It was the Dean and Chapter who were to decide which sections of the painting were to be done by Thornton himself, and which he could leave to his assistants; it was they who promised to provide him with a ten pound bonus if he completed the window to their satisfaction within three years.¹⁰² As with many projects of this size and importance within cathedrals, the commission of the east window is thus perhaps best viewed as a collaboration between the Dean and Chapter, taking on the traditional role of the patron, and an outside donor providing the financial backing.¹⁰³

Access and Audience

The window would have been seen not only by the cathedral clergy but also by visitors to the Minster of all social standings. The audience was not confined to local people, since pilgrims, such as Margéry Kempe, could come from much further afield. The east end of the church was open to these pilgrims, as the shrine of St William was located just behind the high altar, so they would have been able to see the window at reasonably close quarters.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² See the contracts in French, *Great East Window*, 153-54.

¹⁰³ Madeline Caviness points to a distinction between churches where the clergy defined a programme for the windows, and those more haphazardly glazed according to the interests of donors (see her review in *Speculum* 65 (1990), 974-75).

¹⁰⁴ The issue of the intended audience of the York window is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 below.

CHAPTER 1 EARLIER APOCALYPSES

Monumental Cycles

The fourteenth-century cycles that form the subject of this thesis are not the first manifestation of the Apocalypse in the field of monumental art. Some of the earliest monumental Christian art is, in a general sense, apocalyptic, in that it draws some imagery or topoi from Revelation itself or from apocalyptic books of the Old Testament.¹ Typically, a scene such as Christ in Majesty will include one or more of the following: the four living creatures around the throne, the twenty-four crowned elders worshipping, the seven candlesticks or lamps, the seven churches of Asia, the Lamb, the book with seven seals.² These image components are derived from the great theophanies of Apocalypse Chapters 1, 4 and 5. However, apart from being totally non-narrative, depictions of this kind usually feature only very limited elements of apocalyptic iconography, which are used simply to add another layer of significance to a traditional image. For instance, the twenty-four elders, through their respectful poses, provide a model for the spectator's response to the divine figure. Similarly, the description of the New Jerusalem in Chapters 21 and 22 of the Apocalypse feeds into numerous depictions of heaven. The use of the Apocalypse in this way is too non-specific, and the examples, throughout the Middle Ages, too numerous to allow an extended discussion of this type of image here. Instead, I will focus on imagery that is more significantly apocalyptic, featuring scenes from different chapters of the book and, in some cases, moving away from synthetic

¹ See D. Kinney, 'The Apocalypse in early Christian monumental decoration', in *AMA*, 200-16.

² See F. van der Meer, *Maiestas Domini: théophanies de l'Apocalypse dans l'art chrétien* (Rome, 1938), and, for more examples, E.W. Tristram, *English medieval wall painting: the twelfth century (with a catalogue by E.W. Tristram compiled in collaboration with W.G. Constable)* (Oxford, 1944), 128-31, 134-35, pls. 28, 35b, 60; O. Demus, *Romanesque mural painting*, trans. M. Whittall (London, 1970), 416; C.R. Dodwell, *The pictorial arts of the west, 800-1200* (New Haven and London, 1993), 80.

compositions towards narrative. The first part of this chapter aims to provide a brief survey, not comprehensive but representative, of surviving monumental work of this type, in Italy, England, Spain and France.³

Italy

The earliest surviving examples of monumental art that do more than merely allude to the theophanies of John's Revelation date from the Romanesque period. As early as the beginning of the eleventh century, the octagonal drum of the cupola in the cathedral baptistery at Novara (near Milan) was frescoed with eight Apocalypse scenes, of which seven still survive.⁴ These images depict specific and dramatically powerful moments plucked from the narrative, predominantly from the sequence of the sounding of the trumpets (Chapters 8-9). After starting with the angel at the altar (Apoc. 8: 3), the first five soundings and their catastrophic effects are shown: the rain of hail, fire and blood, the burning mountain cast into the sea, the waters turned to wormwood, the darkening of the sun and moon, the appearance of the locust beasts from the pit. The scene that follows is lost, but very probably continued the sequence with the sixth trumpet, the loosing of the angels of the Euphrates and the army of monstrous horsemen (Apoc. 9: 13-20). The final surviving scene combines the delayed sounding of the seventh trumpet (Apoc. 11: 15) with the vision of the woman and the dragon of Chapter 12. Thus the cycle represents the full septenary of the sounding of the trumpets, while missing out intervening episodes such as the mighty angel with the book, John's measuring of the temple and the appearance of the two witnesses. The apocalyptic scenes at

³ For more extensive surveys, see esp. P.K. Klein, 'Introduction: the Apocalypse in medieval art', in *AMA*, 159-99 and 'Les cycles de l'Apocalypse du haut Moyen Age (IX-XIIIe s.)', in Y. Christe, ed., *L'Apocalypse de Jean: traditions exégétiques et iconographiques, IIIe-XIIIe siècles* (Geneva, 1979), 135-86; G. Schiller, *Ikönographie der christlichen Kunst. V: Die Apokalypse des Johannes* (Gütersloh, 1990-91).

⁴ See Demus, *Romanesque mural painting*, 291, pls. 1-2; Klein, 'Les cycles', 141, fig. 17; Schiller, *Ikönographie der christlichen Kunst. V*, vol. 1, 176, vol. 2, pl. 408.

Novara gain further significance from their proximity to the images of sixteen prophets, and would also have complemented the vault's central image if it was, as Otto Demus suggests, a large Majesty.⁵

While the choice of the Apocalypse as a subject for monumental work remained rare in the Romanesque period, as far as we can tell from the surviving evidence, it is sometimes possible to discern small clusters of cycles linked by their geographical and/or chronological placement. Although its paintings date from about a century after those at Novara, the church of S. Pietro al Monte at Civate (near Lake Como) is not far distant geographically. It features several apocalyptic paintings in various parts of the church.⁶ The ante-chapel vault has a representation of the Heavenly Jerusalem, shown as a walled garden with twelve gates manned by the representatives of the twelve tribes; in the centre sit Christ and the Lamb. The allegorical foundations of the Holy City are suggested to the viewer by the inscription of the four cardinal virtues in the spandrels. The narthex vaults, each a rectangle quartered on the diagonal, show the four rivers of Paradise, the four symbols of the Evangelists, and four trumpeting angels. More specifically apocalyptic is the dramatic fresco located in the lunette above the entrance to the nave (fig. 12), which depicts War in Heaven (Apoc. 12). At the left is the reclining figure of the woman clothed with the sun, but the main focus of the image is the subjection of the great dragon by a dense army of angels ranged around the apocalyptic Godhead. The dome of the ciborium features the worship of the Lamb and, in the spandrels, the four angels holding back the winds (Apoc. 7).

Also in Northern Italy, although later again (second half of the twelfth century), are the frescoes in the nave at S. Severo in Bardolino (near Lake Garda).

⁵ Demus, *Romanesque mural painting*, 291.

⁶ See Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst*. V, vol. 1, 178, vol. 2, pls. 767, 796; Dodwell, *The pictorial arts of the west*, 182-83; Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 188, fig. 32; Demus, *Romanesque mural painting*, 292-93, pls. 12, 16, 17.

The eight surviving apocalyptic scenes are taken from Chapters 1-12, and include John writing to the seven churches in Asia, the theophanies of Chapters 1 and 4, the fourth seal, the fifth and sixth trumpets, the monstrous army of horsemen, and the woman and the dragon.⁷

The Apocalypse is also found in Lazio, with the two surviving examples dating from the early twelfth century. The frescoes in the cathedral crypt at Anagni, once considered to be thirteenth-century work, are now dated to c.1100.⁸ Here, apocalyptic subjects, taken largely although not exclusively from the text's theophanies, form part of a theologically complex programme, encompassing also cosmographic imagery, Old Testament scenes (relating particularly to the ark of the covenant), and scenes devoted to St Magnus, the church's patron. Located immediately above both the altar which contained the saint's relics and a depiction of their translation, the main conch is devoted to the vision of the apocalyptic Lamb of God, complete with seven horns and seven eyes; the book with seven seals has an inscription which identifies the Lamb with the Lion of Juda, in accordance with Apoc. 5: 5. The four living creatures surround the mandorla, and the elders are ranged in two rows below, holding up their cups. In the vault of the adjoining central bay appears the vision of the Son of Man (fig. 13). Unlike many of the Majesties mentioned above, this image is precisely and specifically derived from the first chapter of John's text: the central figure holds the seven stars in his right hand, two keys in his left, and a sword issues from his mouth. Outside the mandorla a tiny image of John falls at his feet among the seven miniature churches; the angels

⁷ See Klein, 'Les cycles', 146n43; Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst*. V, vol. 1, 180, vol. 2, pl. 39; Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 181.

⁸ On the cycle in general, see Demus, *Romanesque mural painting*, 304-05; M.Q. Smith, 'Anagni: an example of medieval typological decoration', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 33 (1965), 1-47; Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst*. V, vol. 1, 181, vol. 2, pls. 40, 90, 163, 196. For the redating, see M. Boskovits, 'Gli affreschi del duomo di Anagni: un capitolo di pittura romana', *Paragone* 30, no. 357 *Arte* (1979), 3-41; Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 180n106.

belonging to these churches are, unusually, separated from them by the row of candlesticks. On either side of these two central theophanies appear various other apocalyptic scenes drawn from Chapters 6, 7 and 12 including the four horsemen, the souls of the martyrs — with obvious relevance to the altar and relics just adjacent — the angels holding back the four winds (not, as M.Q. Smith assumes, the subjection of the rebel angels),⁹ and War in Heaven.¹⁰ The close links created at Anagni between the Apocalypse, relics, and the ark of the covenant, within the liturgical space of the crypt,¹¹ are a fascinating anticipation of the function of some of the fourteenth-century cycles I will discuss in Chapter 4.

Also in Lazio and roughly contemporary with Anagni are the frescoes in the Basilica of Castel S. Elia, near Nepi.¹² The Apocalypse scenes are ranged in rows on the flat walls of the transept. For the first time amongst surviving monumental cycles, the action is displayed in uniform rectangular compartments each containing a separate scene; the compartments are marked off one from another by a decorative border (fig. 14). This device gives equal weight to each part of the narrative and thus encourages the reading of the cycle in an ordered, sequential manner. The cycle at Castel S. Elia survives only in a fragmentary state on the south transept wall, where beneath a row of prophets, the apocalyptic scenes are taken from Chapters 1-12. John is depicted in each scene at the far left, and in the first scene appears twice, once before the Son of Man and once when the angel shows him the elders around the throne (these two theophanies, from Apoc. 1 and 4-5 respectively, are shown as

⁹ Smith, 'Anagni', 26; image reproduced in Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*. V, vol. 2, pl. 196 and Boskovits, 'Gli affreschi', pl. 30b.

¹⁰ Demus's identification of another scene as the two witnesses of the Apocalypse is not strictly accurate since it in fact shows the ascension of Elijah, watched by Elisha. See Boskovits, 'Gli affreschi', pl. 25, and Smith, 'Anagni', 23-24.

¹¹ For an excellent brief exploration of the interrelations and interpretation of these themes, see Smith, 'Anagni'.

¹² See Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*. V, vol. 1, 177, vol. 2, pls. 38, 195, 271, 790; Demus, *Romanesque mural painting*, 298, col. pls. 44, 45; Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 181.

separate episodes rather than the usual synthesis, another mark of the cycle's emphasis on narrativity). Given the careful symmetry of the overall composition, it is possible that the north wall opposite continued the story with scenes from Chapters 12-22; this, however, is not certain, since in general the Romanesque cycles focus on the first half of the text. The east wall bridging these two sections shows the elders holding up their cups towards the central apse: the imagery here has not survived, but we can assume that this central scene was a traditional Majesty, probably with apocalyptic attributes.

Perhaps the most important pre-fourteenth-century Apocalypse paintings are those at Assisi, in the north transept of the upper church.¹³ The frescoes, by Cimabue, date to the late thirteenth century (c.1275-80), and were in poor condition even before the earthquake of 1997. The six scenes do not form a full narrative cycle but instead depict synthetic scenes of heavenly glory and some individual episodes from the text: the throne with the seven-sealed book, the angels holding back the winds, the angels with the seven trumpets and the censuring of the altar, War in Heaven, the fall of Babylon, St John and the angel. The meaning of the cycle has been the subject of considerable debate, but Yves Christe's analysis of it in terms of traditional Christological and ecclesiological commentaries is most convincing.¹⁴ The iconographic links to Anglo-French manuscripts proposed by some scholars are in fact not at all persuasive.¹⁵ The slight similarities perceived can easily be explained through reference to a common textual source, while the iconography is more closely related to the earlier monumental Italian examples than to the Anglo-French manuscripts.

¹³ Colour reproductions of five of the scenes are found in E. Lunghi, *The Basilica of St Francis in Assisi*, trans. C. Evans (Florence, 1996), 34-38; see also 28-43. See also H. Belting, *Die Oberkirche von San Francesco in Assisi: ihre Dekoration als Aufgabe und die Genese einer neuen Wandmalerei* (Berlin, 1977), 131-34.

¹⁴ Y. Christe, 'L'Apocalypse de Cimabue à Assise', *Cahiers Archeologiques* 29 (1980-81), 157-74.

¹⁵ See, for example, I. Carlettini, 'L'Apocalisse di Cimabue e la meditazione escatologica di S. Bonaventura', *Arte Medievale* 7 (1993), 106-19.

England and Spain

Some few fragments of apocalyptic paintings from the twelfth century survive in England and Spain. Because of the extent of destruction, it is difficult to say whether the subject was once present in greater numbers, or whether it was genuinely rare. However, from what remains, it seems unlikely that there were any very substantial developments towards a narrative approach, such as is found in some of the Italian cycles discussed above. The images that remain (in both England and Spain), while moving slightly away from standard static theophanies, rarely depict any action beyond the middle of the sixth chapter of the Apocalypse (the four horsemen and the souls of the martyrs under the altar).

The imagery found in the Norman church of St John the Baptist at Clayton, Sussex, dates to c.1080-1120, but there is some doubt as to how apocalyptic it really is.¹⁶ A large Judgement is flanked on the south wall by angels and the elect, and a horseman trampling some recumbent figures: this could perhaps represent one of the four horsemen of Chapter 6 or the monstrous horsemen of Chapter 9. However, this figure may in fact be a mounted devil — iconography which is certainly unusual but not specifically apocalyptic. Unfortunately, any other scenes are now impossible to identify due to decay.

Just slightly later, the scheme in the crypt chapel of St Gabriel at Canterbury Cathedral (c.1130-55) presents only one unequivocally apocalyptic image: John writing to the seven angels of the seven churches, which appears on the soffit of the eastern archway. A further echo of apocalyptic imagery appears in the large central scene of Christ in Majesty. Here the towers at the top of the picture space evoke the

¹⁶ Tristram, *English medieval wall painting*, 113-15, pls. 36-43; D. Park, 'The "Lewes Group" of wall paintings in Sussex', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 6 (1983), 200-37, esp. pl. 7; R.R. Milner-Gulland, 'Clayton church and the Anglo-Saxon heritage', in S. Cather, D. Park and P. Williamson, eds., *Early medieval wall painting and painted sculpture in England* (B.A.R. British Series 216, 1990), 207-08.

New Jerusalem, but the wavy substance beneath the angels' feet, identified by E.W. Tristram as the 'sea of glass' of Apoc. 4, is nothing more than a standard representation of heavenly clouds.¹⁷

In Spain the frescoes (c.1100) formerly at S. Quirce, Pedret (province of Barcelona) show the sequence which results from the opening of the first five seals (the four horsemen and the souls of the martyrs under the altar) as well as the adoration of the Lamb and Christ in Majesty.¹⁸ Similarly, the late twelfth-century scheme at S. Salvador, Polinyà, portrays the apocalyptic Lamb among the candlesticks, the seven churches in Asia, and two of the horsemen of Chapter 6.¹⁹

France

Monumental Apocalypse imagery also survives in France, in a number of different media, from the late eleventh century onwards. As with the Italian cycles, it is surely no coincidence that two roughly contemporary cycles in western France appear within 30 miles of each other. The cycle at St-Hilaire-le-Grand in Poitiers, probably dating from the last years of the eleventh century, was not known until the 1980s.²⁰ The seven scenes, arranged in a continuous frieze in the spandrels of the choir arches (fig. 15), are taken from Chapters 1-12 of the text, and include the four horsemen, the martyrs under the altar and the woman and the dragon. Closely related in style and iconography, although not in layout, are the paintings in the porch of St-Savin-sur-Gartempe (near Poitiers). These frescoes, dating to c.1100,

¹⁷ Dodwell, *The pictorial arts of the west*, 347; Tristram, *English medieval wall painting*, 15, 102-04, pls. 2, 2a, 3, 16, 19 and frontispiece. Demus, *Romanesque mural painting*, 509, follows Tristram's identification of the sea of glass, but his colour plate (pl. 234) shows clearly that this is incorrect.

¹⁸ See B. Al-Hamdani, 'Los frescos del ábside principal de San Quirce de Pedret', *Anuario de estudios medievales* 8 (1972-73), 405-61; Demus, *Romanesque mural painting*, 476.

¹⁹ See C.L. Kuhn, *Romanesque mural painting of Catalonia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1930), 51-52; E.W. Anthony, *Romanesque frescoes* (Princeton, 1951), 175.

²⁰ See M-Th. Camus, 'À propos de trois découvertes récentes: images de l'Apocalypse à Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand de Poitiers', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale X-XIIe siècles* 32 (1989), 125-33, with numerous reproductions; Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 179.

originally included twelve apocalyptic scenes, of which only half survive; they are arranged, in painted rectangular compartments, on the barrel vault ceiling (fig. 16).²¹ Once again, to judge from the extant scenes, there is a discernible focus on the first half of the book, with depictions of the locusts and the loosing of the angels of the Euphrates (both from Chapter 9), and the vision of Chapter 12 (the woman and the dragon, War in Heaven).²² Along with figures of angels and apostles, these narrative scenes act as a framing device for the central image of Christ in Majesty: this is not an overtly apocalyptic portrayal but rather draws on traditional Judgement iconography in the position of Christ's outstretched hands and the unusually large cross held by the angel on his right.

Romanesque interpretations of the Apocalypse also appeared in France in an altogether different medium: stone carving. The earliest known example dates from c.1060: the column capitals in the porch at Fleury (St-Benoît-sur-Loire), an important Benedictine Abbey which once also contained an eleventh-century painted cycle, no longer extant. While only a small number of the carved images can now be identified with certainty, it has been suggested that the overall design of the porch itself draws on the imagery of the New Jerusalem.²³

Various apocalyptic motifs also appear on the cloister capitals at Moissac (c.1100), mixed in with other biblical and decorative subjects. However, Moissac is probably more famous for the apocalyptic tympanum over the south portal, dating to

²¹ See C. de Maupeou and M. de Christen, 'Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe: restauration des peintures murales de la voûte de la nef', *Monuments Historiques* (1976: 3), 33-56; Demus, *Romanesque mural painting*, 420-23, pls. 125-27; Dodwell, *The pictorial arts of the west*, 233; Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst. V*, vol. 1, 182, vol. 2, pls. 272, 793-94; Klein, 'Les Cycles', 142.

²² There is also an image of the New Jerusalem (Apoc. 21-22), and it is possible that other images from the second half of the text were included in the six scenes of the west bay, now all but destroyed: however, the few fragments that remain suggest that these scenes too were from Chapters 1-12 (Demus tentatively identifies the seven angels with the trumpets of Ch. 8 and the death of the witnesses from Ch. 11).

²³ See Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst. V*, vol. 1, 175, 182; Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 183.

1120-35.²⁴ This is one of the earliest examples of a new form of apocalyptic expression, a translation of the image of the apocalyptic Majesty, discussed above in terms of wall-painting, into a new medium. The great theophanies of Chapters 1, 4 and 5 are now pressed into service to form imposing carved schemes which act as a variant of the similarly widespread Last Judgement tympanum. Situated over the entrance, both image types arrest the viewer with their ordered symmetry and magnificence, thus helping to define the sacred space of the church. As with the painted versions of the apocalyptic Majesty, examples of the apocalyptic tympanum are too numerous, especially in France, to discuss in any detail here. They seem to begin with Moissac and La Lande-de-Fronsac (early twelfth century), and become still more widespread with the development of the gothic style: famous examples are to be found at Chartres (1145-55) and Santiago de Compostela (1168-88).²⁵

By the thirteenth century, stained glass had become another important medium for apocalyptic expression in France. There seems to have been a fashion for including allusively apocalyptic windows in the complex glazing schemes of great cathedrals. These varied from windows devoted to the Life of St John the Evangelist, which merely included one scene of the visionary on Patmos (as, for example, at Chartres, c.1200), to a traditional theophany (such as Christ among the candlesticks, at Lyon, c.1200), to more theologically complicated allegorical

²⁴ See M. Schapiro, *The sculpture of Moissac* (London, 1985), 23-75 (on the capitals), 77-105 (on the tympanum). See also Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst. V*, vol. 1, 174-75, vol. 2, pl. 88; Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 164, 183-84, figs. 10, 23.

²⁵ See E. Mâle, *The gothic image: religious art in France of the thirteenth century*, trans. D. Nussey (New York, 1972), 355-89; W. Sauerländer, *Gothic sculpture in France 1140-1270*, trans. J. Sondheimer (London, 1972), 27-32; Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst. V*, vol. 1, 175, vol. 2, pl. 41; Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 164, 183, fig. 36.

windows, such as that found at Bourges (1210-15).²⁶ Here, three descending quatrefoils presenting large apocalyptic theophanies are encircled by smaller interpretative images (fig. 17), possibly illustrating a text by Anselm of Laon, while the window as a whole is linked through its position to the depiction of the Passion.²⁷

Some indicators remain to suggest that thirteenth-century France also produced at least one apocalyptic window which made use of a more fully developed narrative mode. Unfortunately, the cycle at the cathedral of St-Etienne, Auxerre (1222-34), survives only partially (fig. 18).²⁸ However, the nine scenes that remain of the original seventeen are individual narrative moments (the first trumpet, the Harvest of the Earth, the first horseman, the angels with the seven trumpets, the woman clothed with the sun, and the Lamb opening the book with seven seals, together with three scenes from the life of John) rather than theophanies. Once more, it is notable that all the apocalyptic scenes are taken from the first part of the book, although in this case one scene (the Harvest of the Earth) extends slightly beyond the norm to Chapter 14.

²⁶ On the windows in general see Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst. V*, vol. 1, 204-06. On Chartres, see J-P. Deremble and C. Manhes, *Les vitraux légendaires de Chartres: des récits en images* (Paris, 1988), 24, 34, 189. For the Bourges window, see C. Brisac, 'La verrière de l'Apocalypse à la Cathédrale de Bourges (1210-1215)', in *Texte et image: actes du colloque internationale de Chantilly, 13 au 15 octobre 1982* (Paris, 1984), 109-15; F. van der Meer, *Apocalypse: visions from the Book of Revelation in western art* (London, 1978), 136-37, 144-45, pl. 92; Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 170, fig. 8.

²⁷ An earlier allegorical window with one apocalyptic element (the Lamb and Lion unsealing the book) was installed at St-Denis in the second quarter of the twelfth century. See Suger, *On the abbey church of St.-Denis and its art treasures*, ed. and trans. E. Panofsky, 2nd. edn. (Princeton, 1979), 75, fig. 14; L. Grant, *Abbot Suger of St-Denis: church and state in early twelfth-century France* (London and New York, 1998), 264.

²⁸ It is now incorporated into a composite window with scenes from the story of the Prodigal Son. See *Les vitraux de Bourgogne, Franche-Comté et Rhône-Alpes* (CVMA: France, Recensement 3) (Paris, 1986), 116-17, fig. 99; V.C. Raguin, *Stained glass in thirteenth-century Burgundy* (Princeton, 1982), 102, 134-35, col. pl. II; Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 170; van der Meer, *Apocalypse*, 145. Auxerre also has an unusual crypt fresco, dating from the mid-twelfth century, which shows Christ riding on a white horse at the centre of a cross formed by four angels, also mounted on horseback. This image has obvious apocalyptic resonances, but does not specifically illustrate any part of the book. See Raguin, *Stained glass in thirteenth-century Burgundy*, 105. For a reproduction, see Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst. V*, vol. 2, pl. 682.

A final possibility for early narrative apocalyptic glass is the thirteenth-century Ste-Chapelle in Paris. It is thought that the rose window there may originally have displayed an Apocalypse, as does the current cycle which dates from the fifteenth century.²⁹ However, if this was the case, the original design of the window is lost to us. We thus cannot be certain whether it presented a partial narrative cycle, perhaps linked to the Life of John as at Auxerre, a full narrative cycle (as in the fifteenth-century replacement), or simply a theophanic vision such as is found in the rose window at Chartres (c.1225).³⁰

The most remarkable use of the Apocalypse in thirteenth-century France is found at Reims, where an unusually extensive sculpted cycle (mid-century) is located around the south-west portal (fig. 19).³¹ Over one hundred individual figures (or small groups of figures) from the whole book (and from the Life of John) fill niches on both the exterior and interior of the great door. Some are grouped so as to suggest narrative scenes, for instance in the case of the woman and the dragon of Chapter 12, who face each other across the ridge of the archway. However, despite the large number of scenes, the cycle does not function as a continuous narrative experience for the viewer. As P. Kurmann has shown, the arrangement of the figures does not follow the sequence of the biblical text; moreover, some scenes are missing and others are represented twice, or even three times, in different zones. It is possible to pick out little sections of narrative continuity, but not to 'read' sequentially the whole story in images. Nevertheless, the cycle is extremely interesting as an example of the deployment of the Apocalypse in a unique form: as far as we know, the Reims concept was entirely new, and was never imitated. This is significant in light of the fourteenth-century monumental cycles I will be

²⁹ See below, Chapter 4.

³⁰ M. Miller, *Chartres Cathedral* (Andover, Hants., 1985), 94.

³¹ See P. Kurmann, 'Le portail apocalyptique de la cathédrale de Reims: a propos de son iconographie', in Y. Christe, ed., *L'Apocalypse de Jean: traditions exégétiques et iconographiques, IIIe-XIIIe siècles* (Geneva, 1979), 245-317.

discussing, where a common feature is that cycles are unique in their medium or placement.

From the surviving evidence, it would seem, then, that despite the appearance of several semi-narrative monumental Apocalypse cycles in eleventh and twelfth-century Italy and France, relatively few further schemes of this kind were undertaken during the thirteenth century. In the medium of wall-painting, only the cycle at Assisi, with its small number of scenes, has survived, and this from so late in the thirteenth century that it could almost be considered part of the fourteenth-century group. No frescoed Apocalypses survive in France from the thirteenth century, but this may be a function of the different decorative demands made by gothic architecture when compared to Romanesque. Indeed, the inclusion of apocalyptic iconography in stained glass windows of this period supports this hypothesis. Yet most of these works, with the possible exception of Auxerre and Ste-Chapelle, are essentially non-narrative cycles, as I have discussed above.

Of course it is possible that other painted Apocalypses may once have existed, which are no longer extant. Yet if the apparent lacuna of well over a century between the Romanesque paintings and those of the fourteenth century is an accurate reflection of commissioning decisions rather than simply the result of later destruction, it may help to explain why many of the new cycles look primarily to manuscripts, rather than to previous monumental work, for their models. By the fourteenth century, when Apocalypse cycles were again being commissioned as wall paintings (and in the similarly large, flat media of tapestry and glass), many of the earlier monumental examples, even assuming they were known and accessible, would have seemed unappealingly archaic in style. Also, as we have seen, their relatively small number of scenes and the widespread focus on the first half of the

book meant that they could not provide suitable models if a more comprehensive approach was required. Instead, patrons and designers availed themselves of illustrated books, turning particularly to an elaborate pictorial cycle which had been created in the mid-thirteenth century. It is therefore to manuscript Apocalypses, as an essential source for the iconography, design and layout of many of the fourteenth-century monumental cycles, that we now turn.

Manuscripts

The first extant manuscripts with full cycles of Apocalypse illustrations date from the ninth century, although it is thought that the prototypes may have originated two to three centuries earlier. Celebrated in modern scholarship is the Spanish cycle that accompanied the late-eighth-century Apocalypse commentary written by Beatus of Liébana. The earliest examples of this pictorial cycle are tenth-century, but versions were still being produced in the thirteenth century. However, it is important to note that this vivid cycle was relatively little known in the Middle Ages outside Spain itself, and indeed most of the twenty-five extant manuscripts come from one area, the northern kingdom of Asturias-León.³²

More important for our purposes are the early image traditions in the rest of Europe.³³ Only seven manuscripts survive from the earliest group, including the Carolingian Trier Apocalypse (ninth-century) and the famous Ottonian Bamberg Apocalypse (early eleventh). The six extant manuscripts of the Romanesque period form a rather disparate group, related in some cases to the monumental cycles

³² Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 186-88; Dodwell, *The pictorial arts of the west*, 224, 244-50. For the Beatus manuscripts, see J. Williams, *The illustrated Beatus: a corpus of illustrations of the commentary on the Apocalypse* (London, 1995-); R.K. Emmerson and S. Lewis, 'Census and bibliography of medieval manuscripts containing Apocalypse illustrations c.800-1500', *Traditio* 40 (1984), 337-79; 41 (1985), 367-409; 42 (1986), 443-72, nos. 8-32.

³³ See the useful introduction to Emmerson and Lewis's 'Census', part 1, 338-39, and Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 175-85.

discussed above. The small numbers of these manuscripts throw into relief the extraordinary status of the next group, the Anglo-French Apocalypse manuscripts, of which between seventy and eighty examples survive. Of these, twenty-four date from the cycle's creation in the thirteenth century, thirty-nine copies were made in the fourteenth century, while nine come from the fifteenth century,³⁴ and in fact the cycle continued in the early printed blockbooks.³⁵

Although the Anglo-French manuscript cycles are not themselves the subject of this thesis, having been already the focus of much scholarly attention, their influence on the fourteenth-century monumental works is such that it is necessary to present here an outline of their genesis, popularity and significant features. The manuscripts present a new cycle of Apocalypse illustrations which was created in the mid-thirteenth century in England. Over the next decades the cycle was reproduced, in several different recensions, in both England and France: hence its usual name in the literature.³⁶ All illustrated manuscripts are by definition luxury goods, but the standard of production varies within the group: some volumes are only roughly finished with images unfinished or missing,³⁷ while others rank undoubtedly amongst the most de luxe creations of the era.³⁸

Since the pioneering work of Delisle and Meyer at the turn of the century,³⁹ scholars have been engaged in trying to establish 'families' and genealogies for the

³⁴ See Emmerson and Lewis, 'Census', nos. 38-117; I have not counted those manuscripts which survive only in a very fragmentary state as one or more isolated leaves. For the Anglo-French manuscripts, see also N. Morgan, *Early gothic manuscripts, II: 1250-1285* (London, 1988), 10-12, 16-19, 201-14 and L.F. Sandler, *Gothic manuscripts 1285-1385* (London, 1986), vol. 1, 37, vol. 2, 182-87.

³⁵ G. Bing, 'The Apocalypse block-books and their manuscript models', *JWCI* 5 (1942), 143-58.

³⁶ 'Anglo-Norman', an earlier name for the same group, is misleading in that it refers to the language used in only some of the manuscripts, the others being in Latin.

³⁷ For example, Emmerson and Lewis, 'Census', nos. 45 and 71.

³⁸ For example, the great Trinity College Apocalypse (Emmerson and Lewis, 'Census', no. 50).

³⁹ L. Delisle and P. Meyer, eds., *L'Apocalypse en français au XIIIe siècle (Bibl. Nat. Fr. 403)*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1901; repr. New York, 1965).

picture cycles of the surviving manuscripts on the basis of style and iconography.⁴⁰ This pseudo-philological enterprise (complete with stemmata in some cases)⁴¹ has never resulted in total agreement, nor do its arcane discussions of minutiae of style and imagery appear to have been particularly productive. The arguments often depend on, or result in, propositions regarding hypothetical 'lost archetype' and prototype cycles, from which the various groups and sub-groups are supposed to have emerged. Despite the complicated diagrams, which attempt to lend an air of scientific precision to the study of manuscript illustrations, it is questionable how useful this approach really is, since the groups are not in fact clear-cut but are subject to subtly overlapping influences derived not only from within the Anglo-French cycle as a whole but also from external sources such as the earlier French *Bible Moralisée* and the encyclopedic *Liber Floridus*.⁴²

Despite the years of laborious efforts at classifying the manuscripts into 'families' based on pictorial details, an important distinction within the thirteenth-century manuscripts was apparently overlooked or ignored until more recent art historical approaches prioritised a focus on the artefact as a whole. Where once a binary division existed between text- and image- based studies, the illustrated book is increasingly being considered from a holistic point of view, one that closer approximates the experience of the original medieval reader/viewer. Leading this new approach in the field of Anglo-French Apocalypse manuscripts, Suzanne Lewis

⁴⁰ See, for example, M.R. James, *The Apocalypse in art (the Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1927)* (London, 1931), and esp. G. Henderson, 'Studies in English manuscript illumination, Part II: The English Apocalypse I', *JWCI* 30 (1967), 104-37; 'Part III: The English Apocalypse II', *JWCI* 31 (1968), 103-47.

⁴¹ See, for example, N. Morgan, ed., *The Lambeth Apocalypse: Manuscript 209 in Lambeth Palace Library* (London, 1990), 39-48, figs. A-C.

⁴² On the influence of the *Bible Moralisée*, see S. Lewis, *Reading images: narrative discourse and reception in the thirteenth-century illuminated Apocalypse* (Cambridge, 1995), 202-04. For the *Liber Floridus*, see Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 181-82.

has revealed the central role played in the development of the picture cycles by different exegetical commentaries.⁴³

Basically expressed, the thirteenth-century English picture cycle divides into two groups: those that are accompanied by extracts from a Latin gloss by Berengaudus, and those with a different, anonymous, commentary written in French prose. The imagery of the two groups, while clearly separate, is by no means vastly different, as in each case the basic purpose of the images is to illustrate literally the biblical text; in only a few cases do the images show direct influence from the commentary written below.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the distinction is significant, affecting not only the number but also the typical size, placement and look of the images in each cycle. The cycle featuring extracts of the Berengaudus gloss typically gives half a page to each picture, resulting in standard horizontal compositions regularly spaced; the French prose gloss group, on the other hand, places pictures of differing sizes at irregular intervals throughout the text. The Berengaudus cycle illustrations are generally tinted drawings, while the French prose gloss is accompanied by generally smaller and simpler but more heavily painted images.⁴⁵ The group of manuscripts featuring Berengaudus was the larger in the thirteenth century but was overtaken in popularity by the French prose gloss in the fourteenth century; perhaps because of the accessibility of the vernacular text.⁴⁶

A brief attempt at classifying the two glosses is necessary here, as the facts about them have often been indistinct in the earlier literature. Apart from the

⁴³ S. Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration in thirteenth-century English Apocalypses', in *AMA*, 259-75.

⁴⁴ Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration', 264-73.

⁴⁵ Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration', 260, 264-65, 269, 272. The situation becomes much more complicated in the fourteenth century when it is not uncommon for picture cycles created for one commentary to appear with another. It is presumably partly this confusion, taken in conjunction with the greater numbers of surviving manuscripts from the later period, that stopped earlier scholars from noticing the relevance of the different commentary texts to the creation of the imagery.

⁴⁶ Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration', 261.

existence of the long Apocalypse commentary ascribed to him in a number of manuscripts, little is known about Berengaudus.⁴⁷ It was even unclear until relatively recently to what century he belonged, with some arguing for the identification of the commentator with a ninth-century monk of Ferrières.⁴⁸ However, the scholarly consensus now favours the late eleventh century, commensurate with the earliest known manuscript of the commentary which dates to c.1100.⁴⁹ Although nothing more is known about his life, the commentary's frequent references to the Rule suggest that he was a Benedictine monk. Berengaudus's gloss treats the Apocalypse as recapitulative in form and generally historical in nature, that is, each series of seven (seals, trumpets, vials) is taken as representing the history of the church from before the Flood until the end of the world. It is thus fairly traditional in terms of its structural understanding of the narrative, since the recapitulative approach had been standard since Tyconius and Bede.⁵⁰ However, in its interpretation it is an early entrant in the new and more precisely defined historical approach of the twelfth century, as exemplified also in the works of Rupert of Deutz, Richard of St Victor, Joachim of Fiore and others.⁵¹ Like many of these

⁴⁷ The commentary is edited in *PL* although wrongly ascribed: *Expositio Super Septem Visiones Libri Apocalypsis*, vol. 17: 765-970. On the manuscript ascriptions, see E. Levesque, 'Berengaud', in F. Vigouroux, ed., *Dictionnaire de la Bible* (Paris, 1895-1912), vol. 1: 1610-11.

⁴⁸ See Levesque, 'Berengaud'; R. Freyhan, 'Joachism and the English Apocalypse', *JWCI* 18 (1955), 223-24; B. Nolan, *The gothic visionary perspective* (Princeton, 1977), 9-10. A recent study has once again put forward the ninth-century identification: D. Visser, *Apocalypse as utopian expectation (800-1500): the Apocalypse commentary of Berengaudus of Ferrières and the relationship between exegesis, liturgy and iconography* (Studies in the History of Christian Thought 73) (Leiden, 1996). However, Visser presents no new evidence for this idea, which remains unconvincing: see esp. 4, 63, 93, and note that the Berengaudus manuscript he describes as 'before 1066' in the main body of the text (25, 124) is given an alternative dating of early twelfth century in his Appendix II (200).

⁴⁹ Morgan, ed., *The Lambeth Apocalypse*, 19-20; Lewis, *Reading images*, 43; the manuscript is no. 35a in Emerson and Lewis, 'Census'.

⁵⁰ Lewis, *Reading images*, 42. Note that Lewis is in error to state here that Berengaudus interprets the septenaries 'as overlapping the same indefinite period between the first and second advents of Christ', since in fact (as Lewis acknowledges elsewhere) his interpretation reaches further back, into Old Testament history, with the first of his seven epochs being the time 'from the beginning until the Flood' (Berengaudus, *PL* 17: 771-75). A almost identical slip is found in Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration', 261.

⁵¹ Nolan, *The gothic visionary perspective*, 10; Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration', 261.

later interpretations, the Berengaudus commentary leavens the overall historical character of its views with eschatological and moral concerns.⁵²

It is not necessary to argue that a deliberately obscure commentary was chosen for the creation of the new image cycle, since the 'marginal' status often claimed for the Berengaudus text is rather more likely to be an accident of historical perception than a true assessment of the gloss's success in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁵³ Particularly in England, where the illustrated Apocalypse cycle had its genesis, numerous copies of the Berengaudus gloss, a lengthy work, were held in monastic libraries.⁵⁴ Moreover, the fact that Berengaudus was probably the first to use the historical approach which was employed in the twelfth century by now more famous theologians such as Rupert of Deutz and Richard of St Victor suggests that Berengaudus, or at least the ideas behind his work, may well have been better known than we imagine in the century after he wrote.

The French prose gloss has similarly been the subject of some confusion, sometimes being considered a new Franciscan work of the thirteenth century, due to a particular emphasis on the role of preachers.⁵⁵ However, it is now thought to be modelled on a lost Latin gloss which was also the basis for the commentary found in the *Bible Moralisée*, to which, therefore, it is somewhat similar.⁵⁶ The importance placed on preaching is part of a package of moral directives directed at a clerical

⁵² See R.K. Emmerson, 'The Apocalypse cycle in the *Bedford Hours*', *Traditio* 50 (1995), 178-84, for a useful synopsis of the four main 'interpretative strategies' available to medieval commentators on the Apocalypse; these were not mutually exclusive categories but often co-existed within a commentary, giving a number of different meanings to the same scriptural passage.

⁵³ See, for example, Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration', 261.

⁵⁴ Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration', 262n12, lists the twelve surviving manuscripts.

⁵⁵ M. Camille, 'Visionary perception and images of the Apocalypse in the later Middle Ages', in *AMA*, 279.

⁵⁶ The French prose gloss is published in Delisle and Meyer, eds., *L'Apocalypse en français*, vol. 1, 1-131. A fourteenth-century English translation is printed in E. Fridner, ed., *An English fourteenth-century Apocalypse version with a prose commentary: edited from MS. Harley 874 and ten other manuscripts* (Lund Studies in English 29) (Lund and Copenhagen, 1961). For the link to the *Bible Moralisée*, see Lewis, *Reading images*, 215, 373n70.

audience.⁵⁷ The precisely-defined successive historical periods beloved of Berengaudus are not found here. Instead, no very specific time frame is given as background to a moral struggle between good and bad clerics, between the forces of corruption and heresy and forces of good within the church; as a result, the commentary appears to refer to the problems and issues affecting the contemporary church of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁵⁸

Various suggestions for the sudden popularity of illuminated Apocalypse manuscripts in mid-thirteenth-century England have been made. It is important here to distinguish between the factors providing the impetus for the initial creation of the cycle in the mid-thirteenth century and those related to its continuing success over the next two hundred years.

Although it is unprovable, the correlation in dates between the first appearance of the cycle in the 1240s-50s and Joachim of Fiore's prophecy of the beginning of the third age in 1260 suggests a probable causal link. While R. Freyhan suggests it is unlikely that much Joachite material was actually circulating in England at this early stage of the prophet's extraordinarily prolonged posthumous influence,⁵⁹ other researchers have turned up several instances of early direct or indirect knowledge of his ideas before the middle of the thirteenth century.⁶⁰ Most notable is the meeting between Joachim and Richard the Lionheart in 1190, at which Joachim explained his views on the figure of the red dragon — one of whose heads represented Saladin — and Antichrist, who, he claimed, had already been born.⁶¹ This extraordinary discussion, which had as an audience the courtiers and attendants

⁵⁷ Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration', 263.

⁵⁸ Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration', 263-64, 270-71.

⁵⁹ Freyhan, 'Joachism and the English Apocalypse', 213-14.

⁶⁰ See M.W. Bloomfield and M.E. Reeves, 'The penetration of Joachism into northern Europe', *Speculum* 29 (1954), 772-93; M. Reeves, *The influence of prophecy in the later Middle Ages: a study in Joachism* (Oxford, 1969, new edn. Notre Dame, 1993), 3-15, 37-44; Lewis, *Reading images*, 226-27.

⁶¹ Reeves, *Influence*, 6-8.

of the king, was of course also reported in the English chronicles. Further references to Joachim and especially to his prophecies of Antichrist appear in the chronicles of Ralph Coggeshall and Matthew Paris and in the correspondence between the Franciscan Adam Marsh and Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln.⁶² A number of events highly alarming to the Christian west added fuel to eschatological expectations: the invasion of Eastern Europe by the Mongols (identified by European chroniclers with the apocalyptic tribes of Gog and Magog) in 1236-42, the fall of Jerusalem in 1244, and the feud between the pope and the emperor Frederick II.⁶³ Moreover, the condemnation of Joachim's Trinitarian views in 1215 and the notoriety of the scandal over Gerardo of Borgo San Donnino's *Eternal Gospel* at Paris in 1254 would have encouraged still more widespread knowledge of the substance of Joachite and post-Joachite ideas.⁶⁴

The apocalyptic basis of Joachite theology may have prompted a desire to gain knowledge of the narrative contained in the biblical text itself. As Freyhan suggests, the picture and text cycle may well have served as a re-presentation of an orthodox interpretation of the Apocalypse to counter the provocative usage of the more extreme Joachite theorists:⁶⁵ in particular, there may be significance in the compiler's choice of the Benedictine Berengaudus gloss, which while perhaps

⁶² Bloomfield and Reeves, 'The penetration of Joachism', 785-89.

⁶³ See Lewis, *Reading images*, 225-34 on the 'sense of impending crisis' in the mid-thirteenth century, and 33-34, for the interesting suggestion that the illustrated Apocalypse manuscripts functioned in one way as a substitute for pilgrimage or crusade to the Holy Land. On the Mongol invasions, see also J.R.S. Phillips, *The medieval expansion of Europe* (Oxford, 1988), 59-82; R.E. Lerner, *The powers of prophecy: the Cedar of Lebanon vision from the Mongol onslaught to the dawn of the Enlightenment* (Berkeley, 1983), 9-36.

⁶⁴ Bloomfield and Reeves, 'The penetration of Joachism', 783-85; Reeves, *Influence*, 59-70; Freyhan, 'Joachism and the English Apocalypse', 213, 222; Lewis, *Reading images*, 227. Note that our knowledge of the contents of Gerardo of Borgo San Donnino's work the *Evangelium Aeternum* is derived solely from the proceedings against him initiated by William of St. Amour; no copies of the work survived the condemnation. It was apparently a compilation of Joachim's major works (and probably pseudo-Joachite writings) with added glosses and introductory material: see D. Burr, *Olivi's peaceable kingdom: a reading of the Apocalypse commentary* (Philadelphia, 1993), 14-20.

⁶⁵ Freyhan, 'Joachism and the English Apocalypse'. See also Lewis, *Reading images*, 186.

outdated (by, for example, the widely available *Glossa Ordinaria*)⁶⁶ was nevertheless of impeccable orthodoxy and necessarily pre-Mendicant in its outlook.

What is harder to explain than the initial impetus behind the production of the new cycle is its quite astounding popularity in the thirteenth century, and indeed also in the fourteenth. Not enough is known about the ownership of the earliest manuscripts to make it clear whether or not the cycle was originally created for clerics, although the fact that one text was entirely in Latin while the vernacular alternative emphasised the importance of preaching and clerical morals suggests this may have been the case.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, the illustrated Apocalypse quickly became a popular book among aristocratic lay people, perhaps especially among women (to judge from a number of manuscripts which are known to have been owned or used by women, or which feature female donor portraits).⁶⁸

Theories regarding the reasons for this popularity vary, but one very common proposition again finds its origin with Freyhan's 1955 article. Freyhan argued that the new cycle quickly became 'a picture-book of popular romance ... an illustrated story-book ... the favourite picture-book of ... noble lords and ladies.'⁶⁹ The frequent representation of John within the cycle makes him, according to Freyhan, 'the hero of the book; a hero of romance like Alexander, who sees fabulous monsters and unheard-of happenings, to survive it all and return to tell the tale.'⁷⁰ This idea of the Apocalypse as a 'picture-book romance' proved influential, and was repeated in George Henderson's weighty article on the stylistic development of the English Apocalypse. However, while Freyhan moderates his argument with the remark that

⁶⁶ Lewis, *Reading images*, 42.

⁶⁷ Lewis, *Reading images*, 38-39, 42-43; Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration', 262.

⁶⁸ See C.M. Meale, ' "... alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englich, and frensch": laywomen and their books in late medieval England', in C.M. Meale, ed., *Women and literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1996), 151n40; Morgan, ed., *The Lambeth Apocalypse*; P. Brieger, ed., *The Trinity College Apocalypse* (London, 1967), 14.

⁶⁹ Freyhan, 'Joachism and the English Apocalypse', 225-26.

⁷⁰ Freyhan, 'Joachism and the English Apocalypse', 225.

‘it would be wrong not to stress that throughout the thirteenth century [the illustrated Apocalypse] retained the substance of the mystical content of the book, however tempered by romance,’⁷¹ Henderson adopts an altogether more simplistic approach:

The reason why so many illustrated copies were made was not primarily religious or moral or political ... [instead] artists and patrons alike recognised in the Apocalypse the one biblical text which fell into line with the upper-class literary entertainment of the day. The Apocalypse, regarded superficially, dealt with the same subjects as, say, Chrétien de Troyes’ Romances, ladies in affliction, noble knights riding into battle, magic and mysteries and monstrous beasts.⁷²

He goes on to disparage the style of the thirteenth-century illustrations as weak, suave and precious when compared to the ‘bleak ferocity’ of Romanesque versions, before adding, ‘But as a set of illustrations to titillate an audience of great ladies the first family cycle is a notable success.’⁷³

It is worth taking a few moments to examine the often questionable assumptions implicit in this theory, particularly in Henderson’s enunciation of it. His language makes it clear that he has no great opinion of the intelligence or religiosity of the original consumers of these books. His attitude as to the function of the illustrated Apocalypse cycle is dependent on the assumption that its aristocratic consumers would have been profoundly secular in outlook and involved in a constant quest for new sources of entertainment and ‘titillation’. Similarly, Freyhan’s repeated description of the Apocalypse cycle as an ‘illustrated story-book’ tends to infantilise the books’ owners.

However, what we know of the commissioners and owners of illustrated Apocalypse manuscripts in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries suggests that these assessments of their attitudes are inaccurate. Not all illustrated Apocalypses were

⁷¹ Freyhan, ‘Joachism and the English Apocalypse’, 228.

⁷² Henderson, ‘The English Apocalypse I’, 116.

⁷³ Henderson, ‘The English Apocalypse I’, 117.

made for secular people: some were made for, or owned by, clergy or other religious people, including nuns. And yet the style of these manuscripts in terms of design and imagery is no different from the 'precious' products denigrated by Henderson. Clearly (as so often in the late Middle Ages) there is less of a divide between secular and clerical than twentieth-century scholars sometimes assume. Even when secular in status, it is highly likely that the owners of Apocalypse books were religiously minded and used the manuscripts for a purpose similar to that of clerical owners: as devotional texts for reading and meditation.

It is the format of the Apocalypse manuscripts, in particular their large number of appealing illustrations, and the way these images seem to dominate the text within the layout, that has misled scholars into dismissing their intellectual value to their earlier readers: to a modern view, picture books are for children, and cannot be serious works. However, in the case of the manuscript Apocalypses, the division of the page into a hierarchy of image, biblical text and gloss encourages a sophisticated method of reading three separate but interlinked texts. In the case of upper-class lay readers, it is probable that they were sometimes guided in their devotional reading of the illustrated Apocalypse by a clerical adviser, especially when the book was not in the vernacular.⁷⁴

The fact that vernacular versions of the cycle in Anglo-Norman overtook the Latin-text version by the fourteenth century suggests also that far from being content to look at a pretty 'picture-book', the owners of the Apocalypse manuscripts, although not literate in Latin, were genuinely interested in understanding the text. Even more importantly, the use of the vernacular for the gloss allowed readers to understand the sometimes strange images conveyed by both illustrations and text in

⁷⁴ See Lewis, *Reading images*, 240, for the idea that the use by lay people of a book in Latin represented 'an exact imitation of clerical forms of piety ... undertaken to ensure individual salvation.'

realistic terms. It is significant here that the French prose gloss is more morally didactic and less interested in grand historical and theological schemata than the Latin Berengaudus commentary. Its popularity as the cycle developed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was probably due to its being more appropriate for devotional usage, as it ties the Apocalypse down to meanings which would often have had relevance to readers' understanding of the world, to their own lives and devotions.

Although it may seem pedantic to insist on further interrogating Henderson's statement which, after all, occupies only one or two paragraphs of a long monograph, it is unfortunately the case that his statement has been widely influential, attaining the status of a scholarly cliché.⁷⁵ And yet his assessment of the 'shared' subject matter fundamentally misrepresents both the Apocalypse itself and the romance genre which he claims it resembles. Henderson's description of 'ladies in affliction, noble knights riding into battle, magic and mysteries and monstrous beasts' excludes many if not most of the aspects of John's text that would have been considered important by its medieval readers. It ignores the central, repeated role of the celestial liturgy which — through its echoes of everyday church ceremony, prayers and other forms of devotion — would have been perhaps the most immediately accessible element of the work. It makes no mention of the fact that many of the 'characters' in the story are divine. It elides the universal scale of the setting and the catastrophic events unleashed during the action, thus ignoring also the elements which most impress twentieth-century readers. In short, it seems

⁷⁵ See, for example, R.W. Wright, 'Sound in pictured silence: the significance of writing in the illustration of the Douce Apocalypse', *Word & Image* 7 (1991), 240, 248, 253, 260; P.M. de Winter, 'Visions of the Apocalypse in medieval England and France', *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 70 (1983), 397; Carlettini, 'L'Apocalisse di Cimabue', 106; Visser, *Apocalypse as utopian expectation*, 22. Similarly, Freyhan's formulation is often quoted: for a recent example, see W. Kemp, *The narratives of gothic stained glass*, trans. C.D. Saltzwedel (Cambridge, 1997), 112.

unlikely that medieval readers would, from Henderson's description, recognise the Apocalypse.

Furthermore, contrary to Henderson's reference to their supposed similarities, the Arthurian romances of Chrétien have little in common with the action or characters of the Apocalypse. Whereas John's text has a heavenly, universal setting, Chrétien's tales deal primarily with problems of honour, relationships and allegiance within a complex human social system. Moreover, by contrast with the Apocalypse's numerous composite and many-headed beasts, the 'monstrous beasts' Henderson claims for Chrétien's texts seem very tame: a number of giants and dwarfs of varying degrees of ugliness and evil, some lions and leopards (not in the least monstrous), and, in the work's nearest approximation to a dragon, a fire-breathing serpent which appears very briefly in the Tale of Yvain.⁷⁶ Like Freyhan before him, Henderson makes the mistake of classifying medieval romance as a kind of children's fairytale (featuring knights, ladies and dragons), when in fact as a genre — and in Chrétien's case particularly — romance is a sophisticated and complex form quite clearly intended for an adult audience aware of both social niceties and moral complexities.

Lewis has shown, however, that the idea of an affinity between romances and Apocalypse manuscripts can have some validity, when a more subtle understanding of how the romance genre functioned for medieval audiences is taken into consideration. Rather than seeing them as pure entertainment, recent scholarship has recognised a strong element of moral teaching implicitly or explicitly within the romance tales.⁷⁷ Yet formally speaking, the genre of medieval fiction most analogous to the Apocalypse (because it derives so much from it) is not the romance

⁷⁶ See Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian romances*, ed. and trans. D.D.R. Owen (London, 1987); for the serpent, 326.

⁷⁷ Lewis, *Reading images*, 50-54.

but the dream vision, another significant genre in the late Middle Ages. John's experiences of visions 'in the spirit' provides a model followed by the hero-narrators of dream vision poems such as Chaucer's *House of Fame* or Langland's *Piers Plowman*; it is significant in this respect that the opening image of the Berengaudus group of Apocalypse manuscripts shows John asleep (fig. 20),⁷⁸ the traditional beginning for a dream vision,⁷⁹ even though this is not specified in the biblical text or the gloss. It is the dream vision genre that most closely approximates the sense of strangeness and unreality so apparent in the Apocalypse. As with dream visions, the Apocalypse provides for the reader a sense of special insight, in this case into divine mysteries, the role of the church on earth and God's plan for the history of salvation.

A fundamental aspect, then, of Apocalypse manuscripts in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, was their possibility for use as devotional manuscripts. This function does not, however, preclude them being lavishly made and appealing to the eye, since meditation on the images would certainly have been an important part of the process of devotional reading of the text. The images work as a mnemonic device to help the reader picture the text and hence fix its events and ideas in his or her mind in concrete form. The Apocalypse was frequently accompanied in the codices by other texts and images, and these tend to confirm its status as a devotional text. The additional materials include passages from the gospels and hagiographic narratives, treatises such as the *Lumière as lais*, prayers, and allegorical pictures designed to encourage the individual reader to practice the Christian virtues and

⁷⁸ See, for example, the Cloisters Apocalypse (ed. Deuchler et al.), fol. 3r; Lewis, *Reading images*, figs. 25, 27, 188.

⁷⁹ See, for example, Geoffrey Chaucer, *The house of Fame*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. L.D. Benson et al., 3rd edn. (Oxford, 1987), 347-73, Bk I: 111-14; William Langland, *The vision of Piers Plowman: a critical edition of the B-text*, ed. A.V.C. Schmidt (London, 1987), Prologue, ll. 7-11.

resist the vices.⁸⁰ Lewis concludes convincingly that the Anglo-French illustrated Apocalypses, first developed in the mid-thirteenth century, make up part of a movement towards greater use by both clergy and lay people of devotional and theological works in the wake of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.⁸¹

The lay people in question in the case of the illustrated Apocalypse were emphatically of the highest class in society. In fact, a number of the earliest manuscripts were commissioned by royals, such as the Douce Apocalypse, which includes portraits of Edward I and Eleanor of Castile, and the Trinity College Apocalypse, probably made for Henry III's queen.⁸² The intrinsic exclusivity of the Apocalypse, with its esoteric imagery and complicated plot which require sophisticated theological interpretation, may have been what made it desirable. It fulfils a similar devotional and spiritual need as meditation on the Last Judgement or on the Passion, but through its obscurity gives the reader a sense of being one of a privileged few who is able to understand John's revelation.⁸³ In the fourteenth century ownership of Apocalypse manuscripts seems to have spread to the upper nobility,⁸⁴ suggesting a degree of aspirational fashion behind the success of the cycle in the later Middle Ages. However, it is not necessary to conclude that this 'fashion' was entirely materialistic and secular, although this was no doubt an element as only the very wealthy could afford to commission such lavish books; more importantly, I suggest, the illustrated Apocalypse cycles represents a new fashion within upper-class devotional practice, as is the case a century earlier with the Psalter and a

⁸⁰ For examples, see Emmerson and Lewis, 'Census', nos. 38, 42, 45, 50, 51, 58, 61, 74, 78, 87, 97, 99, 103, 108, 109, 112. For more on late medieval devotional texts, see G. Hasenohr, 'Religious reading amongst the laity in France in the fifteenth century', in P. Biller and A. Hudson, eds., *Heresy and literacy, 1000-1530* (Cambridge, 1994), 205-21.

⁸¹ Lewis, *Reading images*, 272.

⁸² Emmerson and Lewis, 'Census', no. 98; Brieger, ed., *The Trinity College Apocalypse*, 14.

⁸³ This idea is discussed further, with reference to the monumental cycles, in Chapter 4.

⁸⁴ For aristocratic ownership, see Emmerson and Lewis, 'Census', nos. 42, 54, 57, 71, 74, 87, 88, 89, 110, 111; S. Lewis, 'The Apocalypse of Isabella of France: Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS Fr. 13096', *Art Bulletin* 72 (1990), 224-60.

century later with the Book of Hours. It is this fashion within devotional practice that explains the creation of large numbers of illustrated Apocalypse manuscripts in England and France during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Having thus explored the earlier manifestations of pictured Apocalypse cycles, both in monumental and manuscript form, which form an essential background to the subject, we are now ready to begin the examination of the fourteenth-century cycles themselves. The next three chapters investigate these ten cycles using three different thematic approaches. The first, and longest, considers the exegetical and political understandings of the Apocalypse found in contemporary non-visual media, and asks whether the pictorial cycles contribute to this discourse. The second returns to the issue of manuscripts, examining in some detail how the cycles follow and differ from their manuscript models. In the third chapter, the idea of the Apocalypse as a devotional text recurs, as I examine the features which link the cycles to important manifestations of late medieval piety.

CHAPTER 2 USES OF THE APOCALYPSE IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

This chapter focuses on the question of fourteenth-century understandings of the Apocalypse as expressed through its uses in media both visual and verbal. A brief introduction to the exegetical background, emphasising the important differences between medieval approaches to the Apocalypse and present-day understandings, is followed by a series of case studies. The cultural environments in which many of the fourteenth-century monumental cycles were commissioned are either definitely known or can be assumed with a fair degree of certainty. Each case study therefore explores the religious and political uses of apocalyptic material in one patronage centre, in an attempt to contextualise the commission of the large-scale artistic work. An assessment is then made as to whether any influence from these prevalent local understandings of the Apocalypse can be found in the imagery of the monumental cycle itself. In a few cycles, some evidence of such influence is perceptible, but overall the impact of contemporary usages of the Apocalypse on the pictorial imagery itself is rather limited. The chapter concludes with some possible explanations for this apparent independence of the image cycle. *

Meanings of the Apocalypse in the Later Middle Ages

Unsurprisingly, interpretations of the Apocalypse current in the fourteenth century were not identical to those prevalent in the late twentieth century. One of the most important distinctions is the question of the time-frame to which the revelation is thought to apply. The common present-day assumption, based on indications in the text itself, is that the whole of the Apocalypse is a prophecy of those events which will immediately precede and lead up to the end of the world.

This assumption sometimes colours the views of modern scholars writing about medieval Apocalypse beliefs, since the conception of the work as a prophecy of the end, and only of the end, is firmly entrenched in our culture.¹ Yet in medieval understandings, the text is not necessarily read as being mainly about the end of the world, or about current and future events. Although this was one possible strand of interpretation, it was not in fact the most theologically orthodox.

Even allowing for the large numbers of different interpretative traditions and strategies available in the fourteenth century, it is very much a constant that the Apocalypse is seen to relate to the whole of church (or world) history, from the Incarnation (or Creation) to the end of time, and encompassing everything in between. In most cases, moreover, it is assumed that much of the history of the church has already happened, and the text thus relates to periods or events in past time. The Apocalypse is not, therefore, seen primarily as a prophetic text except in the sense that John himself was prophesying events that were to come after him.

Approaches to the Apocalypse in the late Middle Ages can be categorised into three broad groups. The first grows from patristic exegesis, and is a conservative ecclesiological and allegorical reading. Pioneered in the influential work of Tyconius and Augustine, it is found in numerous later commentaries including Bede and the *Glossa Ordinaria*.² It understands the narrative of the Apocalypse as a series of discrete visions, each explaining 'the labours of the church' from the beginning until the last times. The text thus reveals repeatedly, under different figures, the same attacks on the church by heresy, schism or outside

¹ See, for example, I. Carlettini, 'L'Apocalisse di Cimabue e la meditazione escatologica di S. Bonaventura', *Arte Medievale* 7 (1993), 106.

² See P. Fredriksen, 'Tyconius and Augustine on the Apocalypse', in *AMA*, 20-37; E.A. Matter, 'The Apocalypse in early medieval exegesis', in *AMA*, 38-50; Augustine, *Concerning the city of God against the pagans*, trans. H. Bettenson (London, 1972), Book 20; *Glossa Ordinaria*, PL 114: 709-52; Bede, *Explanatio Apocalypsis*, PL 93: 133-206; trans. E. Marshall, *The explanation of the Apocalypse* (Oxford and London, 1878); G. Bonner, *Saint Bede in the tradition of western apocalyptic commentary* (Jarrow, 1966). The Tyconius commentary is lost.

forces. However, this 'recapitulative' approach does not identify real historical figures with the characters of the divine drama, and still less does it engage with the specifics of the writer's own time and country. Although it treats of the last days, Antichrist and the Judgement in general terms, its universal, meditative quality and the recapitulative structure of the text remove any sense of a particularly imminent end. This tradition was highly influential throughout Europe until the twelfth century, and remained significant thereafter, especially in England.³

It is often said of the second interpretative group, which had its beginnings in the twelfth century, that it is characterised by a historicisation of the Apocalypse. But as we have seen, earlier commentaries also saw the Apocalypse as a history of the church, at least in the general terms of salvation history. To be more precise, the major innovation of the twelfth century is the specificity with which actual historical events, known from chronicles or other sources, are mapped onto the text of the Apocalypse. Most important in this development is Joachim of Fiore, who drew together Old and New Testament history, as well as post-biblical events up to his own time, in a complex system based on overarching numerical parallels, or *concordiae*.⁴ Joachim also initiated change in Apocalypse interpretation in structural terms. As well as employing the traditional recapitulative strategy, he developed a new approach: a continuous linear reading which linked the text more closely to the chronological approach found in the genre of chronicle.⁵ In this new method of interpretation, early chapters of the Apocalypse are understood to relate to the early history of the church, while later chapters refer to subsequent events.

³ P. Szittyá, 'Domesday bokes: the Apocalypse in medieval English literary culture', in *AMA*, 378, 392-94.

⁴ Of the vast literature on Joachim, see especially M. Reeves, *The influence of prophecy in the later Middle Ages: a study in Joachimism* (Oxford, 1969, new edn. Notre Dame, 1993); E.R. Daniel, 'Joachim of Fiore: patterns of history in the Apocalypse', in *AMA*, 72-88; M. Reeves and B. Hirsch-Reich, *The figurae of Joachim of Fiore* (Oxford, 1972).

⁵ R.E. Lerner, 'The medieval return to the thousand-year Sabbath', in *AMA*, 57.

These two strategies — specific historical detail combined with a continuous linear approach — proved influential, and found their apogee in the commentary written by the Saxon friar Alexander ('Minorita') in the mid-thirteenth century.⁶ This commentary is an ingenious attempt to treat the Apocalypse as a coded but otherwise straightforward and accurate narrative of the entire history of the church; along the way it imparts vast amounts of historical information lifted from world chronicles. Thus, for example, the four horsemen of Apocalypse 6 are interpreted as Roman emperors who persecuted first-century Christians, while the sequence of seven angels with trumpets (Apoc. 8-9) is read as a chronologically-ordered series of attacks on the church by heretics of different persuasions during the early centuries.⁷ By Chapter 12 of the Apocalypse, Alexander has reached the seventh century, and is able to interpret the great red dragon as Chosroes, a Persian king who captured Jerusalem and Damascus from Christianity; the beast from the earth of Chapter 13 is read as Mohammed.⁸ Alexander's commentary in turn influenced Nicholas of Lyra's widely diffused *Postilla* of 1329, although Lyra steered clear of the controversial last section in which Alexander had identified the New Jerusalem with the coming of the mendicant orders.⁹

In both the earlier and later approaches, then, a large proportion of the Apocalypse is read as a history of what has already happened in the world, while only relatively small sections, at the end of each recapitulative vision or of the text as a whole, are taken as referring to time which is contemporary or future in relation

⁶ Alexander Minorita, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, ed. A. Wachtel (Weimar, 1955). See also J.P. Gilson, 'Friar Alexander and his historical interpretation of the Apocalypse', *Collectanea Franciscana* 2 (1922), 20-36; C.M. Kauffmann, *An altar-piece of the Apocalypse from Master Bertram's workshop in Hamburg* (London, 1968), repr. in his *Studies in medieval art* (London, 1992), 136-48.

⁷ Alexander Minorita, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, 89-110, 122-53.

⁸ Alexander Minorita, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, 255-92.

⁹ Nicholas Lyra, *Nicholas of Lyra's Apocalypse commentary*, trans. Philip D.W. Krey (Kalamazoo, 1997). On Alexander and Nicholas, see also D. Burr, 'Mendicant readings of the Apocalypse', in *AMA*, 89-102.

to the date of the commentary — although one may perhaps assume that it was these sections that were studied with peculiar attention. For example, Alexander Minorita's commentary takes until Chapter 20 of John's text to reach the founding of the mendicant orders, leaving him only two chapters for the present and future.¹⁰ While this may suggest that he viewed the end of time as imminent (a point discussed below), it nevertheless makes clear the extent to which he read the text of the Apocalypse not as an eschatological timetable, but as an account of past history. The situation is the same in many other standard interpretations available in the late medieval period: the Apocalypse is not entirely, or even mainly, a prophecy about the end times, as we tend to understand it today; instead, it presents a narrative of the whole history of the world and the church from creation (or recreation in Christ) onwards. While certain elements within the text make it unlikely that anyone reading the Apocalypse could have avoided absolutely the eschatological theme, nevertheless this is not the only or even the primary reading that we find in the fourteenth century.

The third interpretative group presents a slightly different picture. Growing out of the more concrete historical approach of Joachim and others, interpretations of the Apocalypse which applied it to contemporary situations, or to an end perceived as imminent, became more prevalent in the fourteenth century. These usages were often outside the genre of Apocalypse exegesis as strictly defined, appearing instead in treatises, sermons, and prophetic writings; in many cases they served a particular political, social or religious agenda. An overlap between the more conservative exegetical approach and this more radical position can sometimes be seen in the reception of individual apocalyptic thinkers. For all his complex systemisation of theology and history, Joachim was most famed in his own time not as an exegete but as a prophet of the coming of Antichrist, a topic on which he was consulted by

¹⁰ Alexander Minorita, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, 408-60; Burr, 'Mendicant readings', 99.

contemporaries.¹¹ His written works then became central to the Spiritual Franciscans' understanding of the history of the church, including their own place within it.¹² Similarly, Peter Olivi's long and elaborate Apocalypse commentary was mined by his Beguin followers for information as to their current and future trials: he was perceived by them as a saint and prophet.¹³ Most prominent, however, in this context, are the prophetic writings which used the power of apocalyptic language and symbolism to promote a particular cause. In this method, the Apocalypse was treated as a prophetic text about the fairly imminent end of the world. Many of the central figures in these writings — the Last World Emperor, the Angelic Pope, Antichrist — came originally from prophetic traditions outside John's text, but were identified to a greater or lesser extent with characters in the Apocalypse itself.¹⁴ More importantly, contemporary figures and events were drawn into the picture, and often precise dates were given for the arrival of Antichrist and his minions.¹⁵ The most striking proponent of this prophetic, and usually propagandistic, reading of the Apocalypse in the fourteenth century was the Franciscan Jean de Roquetaillade (discussed below), but the methodology employed proved to be very durable. In fact, the prophetic understanding has been the dominant one from the Reformation period right through to twentieth-century popular culture, giving us, in the present

¹¹ Reeves, *Influence*, 3-15. See also Joachim of Fiore, *Liber de concordia novi ac veteris testamenti*, ed. E.R. Daniel, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* ns 73 (1983), part 8, xx; B. McGinn, 'Joachim and the Sibyl: an early work of Joachim of Fiore from Ms. 322 of the Biblioteca Antoniana in Padua', *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 24 (1973), 97-98.

¹² Reeves, *Influence*, 191-228.

¹³ G. Leff, *Heresy in the later Middle Ages: the relation of heterodoxy to dissent c.1250-c.1450* (Manchester, 1967), 218-19; W.L. Wakefield and A.P. Evans, ed. and trans., *Heresies of the high Middle Ages: selected sources translated and annotated* (New York, 1969), 412-13; A. Cazenave, 'La vision eschatologique des Spirituels Franciscains autour de leur condamnation', in W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst and A. Welkenhuysen, eds., *The use and abuse of eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1988), 394-95.

¹⁴ B. McGinn, ed. and trans., *Visions of the end: apocalyptic traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1979); McGinn, 'Joachim and the Sibyl', 116-22.

¹⁵ Reeves, *Influence*, 295-504.

day, Al Gore as the Antichrist and his computer as the Great Beast.¹⁶ It is therefore easy to forget that, as we have seen, it was not by any means the only interpretative strategy available in fourteenth-century Europe.

A further important point of contrast between medieval and modern understandings of the Apocalypse relates to the literalness, or otherwise, of the medieval readings of the text. Ironically, the extraordinarily literal quality often found in the visual cycles is here quite misleading.¹⁷ While the biblical text may be portrayed very accurately in pictorial terms, all of the interpretative strategies that were current in the Middle Ages understood the book symbolically. This point is sometimes ignored or elided by scholars: discussing written and visual Apocalypses in the later Middle Ages, Michael Camille comments 'all served to convey the phantasmagoric forms of Dragons, locusts, the Woman clothed with the sun, and extraterrestrial battles to an audience whose expectations, approaching the years 1400 or 1500, were of witnessing these things for themselves.'¹⁸ Whatever is the truth of these remarks in terms of expectations of the end, there is no evidence to suggest that people literally expected to see dragons and beasts appear on the earth, even at the end of time. Instead, these creatures and the numerous other figures that inhabit the text were understood in all interpretative systems, whether traditional ecclesiological or radical political, as symbolic of ideas, values, institutions, persons, or races. Nor was it a simple matter of a code, consistently equating one element of the text with one element outside it. Instead, even within one interpretation, a single apocalyptic character or event could represent a number of different things;

¹⁶ According to a New Zealand prophet (*The Independent on Sunday*, 29 December 1996). On twentieth-century uses of the Apocalypse, see also B. McGinn, *Antichrist: two thousand years of the human fascination with evil* (New York, 1994), 250-80.

¹⁷ The literal quality of the visual cycles is discussed below.

¹⁸ M. Camille, 'Visionary perception and images of the Apocalypse in the later Middle Ages', in *AMA*, 277.

conversely, several characters could each be identified as an extra-textual figure such as Antichrist.¹⁹

The other essential contrast with modern conceptions of the Apocalypse is that medieval understandings of the text are ultimately positive. The text describes a movement from adversity and destruction to judgement, re-creation, eternity and bliss in the vision of the New Jerusalem.²⁰ It is chiefly the wicked who suffer, and if the righteous must suffer for a short time, they are promised in return both vengeance and heavenly reward. The entire narrative is interspersed with episodes of eternal thanksgiving at the court of heaven: however violent, the events of the book are not random and horrifying but part of the overall divine plan for the world, a plan which has at its centre a promise of redemption, salvation and glory. This positive aspect of the biblical text may perhaps be remembered today by theologians, but it is completely ignored by the culture in general: representations of and allusions to the Apocalypse focus exclusively on the terrifying elements, to the extent that the word itself (meaning, of course, 'revelation') has become a synonym for total and violent destruction.

Of the ten cycles in this study, seven certainly postdate the crisis point of the mid-fourteenth century, the arrival in Europe of the Black Death in 1348. The influence on artistic culture of the disasters of the fourteenth century, particularly the plague, has been the subject of much debate since the publication of Millard Meiss's *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death*.²¹ While Meiss's general

¹⁹ See, for example, Berengaudus, *PL* 17: 867-74, 861-88, where the beasts from the abyss (Ch. 11) and from the sea (Ch. 13) are each identified as Antichrist; later (903-10), the frogs of Ch. 16 are also understood as Antichrist and his preachers.

²⁰ See K. Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist apocalypticism and Piers Plowman* (Cambridge, 1990), 4-9; R.E. Lerner, 'The Black Death and western European eschatological mentalities', in D. Williman, ed., *The Black Death: the impact of the fourteenth-century plague* (New York, 1982), 82-86, 93-94.

²¹ M. Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death: the arts, religion, and society in the mid-fourteenth century* (Princeton, 1951).

point, that artistic culture should be examined in the context of its social and economic environment, remains sound, many problems with his argument (particularly regarding the dating of central artistic works) have since been pointed out.²² The consensus of opinion on the issue is now that the impact of the plague in particular on the content and style of artistic production was less significant than was previously assumed.²³ Similarly, although vague references to the 'troubled times' of their creation are sometimes made in the literature on the monumental Apocalypses of the fourteenth century,²⁴ this argument is too superficial to be adduced as the sole explanation for the cycles' creation. It is true that the wars, plagues, heresies, uprisings and eventually schisms of the fourteenth century were all considered terrible calamities by the chroniclers of the time, and that they created a sense of anxiety, perhaps even crisis, in many people. Yet it is not satisfactory simply to point to these events by way of explaining the large-scale Apocalypse cycles. For one thing, this argument ignores the different meanings — not by any means all eschatological in focus — which the Apocalypse gave rise to in the later Middle Ages, as discussed above. Nor does it address the issue of why the subject remains relatively very rare, and why then certain patrons should be affected in particular. Moreover, like some of the artistic works discussed by Meiss, three of

²² See, for example, H.W. van Os, 'The Black Death and Sieneese painting: a problem of interpretation', *Art History* 4 (1981), 237-49; M. Boskovits, 'Orcagna in 1357 — and in other times', *Burlington Magazine* 113 (1971), 239-51; N. Rash Fabbri and N. Rutenburg, 'The tabernacle of Orsanmichele in context', *Art Bulletin* 63 (1981), 385-405; J. Gardner, 'Andrea di Bonaiuto and the chapterhouse frescoes in S. Maria Novella', *Art History* 2 (1979), 107-38; J. Polzer, 'Aristotle, Mohammed and Nicholas V in hell', *Art Bulletin* 46 (1964), 457-69; D. Norman, 'Change and continuity: art and religion after the Black Death', in D. Norman, ed., *Siena, Florence and Padua: art, society, and religion 1280-1400* (New Haven and London, 1995), vol. 1, 177-95.

²³ See Williman, ed., *The Black Death*, esp. N. Siraisi's introduction and J. Polzer's 'Aspects of the fourteenth-century iconography of death and the plague', 107-30; P. Lindley, 'The Black Death and English art: a debate and some assumptions', in W.M. Ormrod and P.G. Lindley, eds., *The Black Death in England* (Stamford, 1996), 125-46.

²⁴ See, for example, F. Muel et al., *La tenture de l'Apocalypse d'Angers*, 2nd edn. (Nantes, 1993), 11; I. Kloten, 'Ein Himmlisches Jerusalem in Böhmen: Die Schatzkammer Karls IV. auf Burg Karlstein', in R.W. Gassen and B. Holeczek, eds., *Apokalypse: Ein Prinzip Hoffnung?* (Heidelberg, 1985), 40.

the monumental Apocalypse cycles probably predate the plague of 1348,²⁵ while the manuscript models that many more of them draw on date, in their exemplar forms, to the previous century. Clearly, while the influence of the 'calamitous fourteenth century'²⁶ may have been one factor in the decision to employ the Apocalypse as subject matter, it does not provide a full explanation of this cultural phenomenon.

In fact, despite sometimes facile modern assumptions about the medieval mindset, it is difficult to say with certainty how many people in fourteenth-century Europe genuinely believed they would see the end of the world in their life-times. Biblical authority prohibited attempts to calculate the date of the end, yet prophecies giving precise (and sometimes imminent) dates were written and widely disseminated. Among the educated people who left their own written records of their beliefs, we know of many who gave credence to eschatological ideas: Roger Bacon is one well-known example from the thirteenth century.²⁷ Yet others seem to have been unaffected: the emperor Charles IV was surrounded by preachers of Antichrist and besieged by appeals to take on an apocalyptic role himself, but appears to have remained remarkably moderate on the issue.²⁸ The question of eschatological belief among the vast section of the population outside the social elite, whose ideas were of course rarely documented, or documented only by often hostile observers, is even more difficult. Some scholars have argued for political and economic motives behind the various 'outbreaks' of apocalyptic fervour in the later Middle Ages and early modern period, others for religious or heretical impulses.²⁹ We cannot hope to recover the truth about people's beliefs on the issue,

²⁵ The two Neapolitan cycles (S. Maria Donnaregina and the Stuttgart panels) and the Norwich cycle, which was begun in the 1320s although not finished until c.1430.

²⁶ The phrase is taken from the title of B. Tuchman's popular history, *A distant mirror: the calamitous fourteenth century* (London, 1978).

²⁷ Reeves, *Influence*, 46-49.

²⁸ See below.

²⁹ See, for example, N. Cohn, *The pursuit of the millennium: revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the Middle Ages*, rev. edn. (New York, 1970).

even assuming that there was any less diversity of opinion in the Middle Ages than at any other time in human history. All we can do is examine the use of the Apocalypse in different medieval discourses and media in order to assess whether there are significant similarities or overlaps in the way it is employed, or else what differences there are to be found.

The influence of prophecy?

The rest of this chapter consists of a series of case studies. The cycles chosen for detailed examination are those where the individual patron, or at least the patronage centre (whether court or cloister), can be established with some degree of certainty. However, even in those relatively rare cases where we can ascertain the precise identity of the commissioner, a focus of this kind must take account of what Bram Kempers terms the 'network of artistic patronage', in which donors, patrons, their advisers and the public (broadly or specifically defined) all play a role in the determination and understanding of a work.³⁰ Such an approach enables us to compare the imagery of the cycles with what is known about other forms of apocalyptic usage found in the milieu in which they were created. The cycles at Naples, Karlstein, Angers and Padua were commissioned in environments where it is known, or can be assumed, that apocalyptic ideas had widespread currency, often in prophetic and political discourses. It is therefore necessary to sketch the cultural background to each of these cycles, before examining the pictorial imagery itself with a view to establishing whether these environmental factors were influential. The background to the three English cycles, which despite their different media have a number of generic similarities in terms of patronage and environment, is discussed at the end of the chapter, taking York Minster as a specific focus.

³⁰ B. Kempers, *Painting, power and patronage: the rise of the professional artist in the Italian renaissance*, trans. B. Jackson (London, 1992), 5.

First, though, it is important to consider a central issue in general terms. Why should we expect contemporary political or prophetic usages of the Apocalypse to influence pictorial depictions? The answer to this is threefold. First, we are familiar with the idea that the use of images to serve political, dynastic or order-specific purposes was widespread in the Middle Ages: the frescoes of good and bad government in the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena are one well-known example, the chapter house scheme at S. Maria Novella in Florence another.³¹ It is therefore reasonable to wonder whether the monumental Apocalypse cycles of the fourteenth century, particularly those whose very large scale suggests public display, are aiming for a similar effect. Secondly, since, as we shall see, the powerful imagery of the Apocalypse was frequently appropriated for political ends in written works of the fourteenth century it is natural to imagine that, particularly in the case of interested parties, such appropriations may have affected pictorial representations also. The third point is that previous scholarship has already drawn attention to cases in which other types of apocalyptic imagery — visual as well as verbal — were ‘tailored’ to suit the interests, needs, or even propagandistic purposes of their commissioners. For instance, a series of articles by Suzanne Lewis examines Anglo-French Apocalypse manuscripts whose imagery is unusual, often portraying interpretations which might have had particular relevance for the specific owner/reader.³² Outside the Middle Ages, the use of apocalyptic imagery in the propaganda wars of the

³¹ See the essays in D. Norman, ed., *Siena, Florence and Padua: art, society, and religion 1280-1400*, 2 vols. (New Haven and London, 1995), esp. her contributions: ‘“The glorious deeds of the Commune”: civic patronage of art’ (vol. 1, 133-53); ‘“Love justice, you who judge the earth”: the paintings of the Sala dei Nove in the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena’ (vol. 2, 145-67); ‘The art of knowledge: two artistic schemes in Florence’ (vol. 2, 217-41); ‘“Splendid models and examples from the past”: Carrara patronage of art’ (vol. 1, 155-75). See also C. Walter, ‘Papal political imagery in the medieval Lateran Palace’, *Cahiers Archéologiques* 20 (1970), 155-76; B. Brenk, ‘The Sainte-Chapelle as a Capetian political program’, in V.C. Raguin et al., eds., *Artistic integration in gothic buildings* (Toronto, 1995), 195-213; C.M. Rosenberg, ed., *Art and politics in late medieval and early renaissance Italy: 1250-1500* (Notre Dame and London, 1990).

³² S. Lewis, ‘*Tractatus adversus Judaeos* in the Gulbenkian Apocalypse’, *Art Bulletin* 68 (1986), 543-66; ‘The Apocalypse of Isabella of France: Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS Fr. 13096’, *Art Bulletin* 72 (1990), 224-60; ‘Beyond the frame: marginal figures and historiated initials in the Getty Apocalypse’, *John Paul Getty Museum Journal* 20 (1992), 53-76.

Reformation period has had an enormous impact on later readings, as I suggested above. This use extended to visual imagery, such as the woodcuts of the 1534 Luther Bible where the identification of Protestant preachers with the two witnesses and papal Rome with the beast and the Whore is made unequivocally.³³

With these issues in mind, this chapter examines the fourteenth-century monumental Apocalypses to determine whether or not they can be said to contribute to that century's substantial body of politically-informed apocalyptic discourse. Of course, the commissioning of a large-scale Apocalypse cycle must have constituted in itself a statement of apocalyptic interest of some kind on the part of the patron. However, what concerns us in this chapter is not the broad view of the impact of an Apocalypse cycle in general terms, but the more microscopic question of the imagery of individual scenes within the cycle.

It is important to stress at the outset that it is not a question of crudely obvious alterations of a propagandistic nature being imposed on the imagery of John's vision. The deviations from standard iconography are not necessarily signposted as such, nor are they unambiguous. For one thing, given the geographical range of the sample group, there is no one cycle which could be unequivocally defined as the 'norm'. Rather, careful visual examination and comparison with both the biblical text and probable models is required, before we can establish what range of possibilities can be said to represent a 'standard' presentation, as opposed to an unusual one.³⁴ It is also worth bearing in mind that contemporary observers would

³³ The relevant images appear in Luther's 1534 *Biblia* on 191r, 194v, 195v (my thanks to Rick Emmerson for drawing my attention to this source). See also R.W. Scribner, *For the sake of simple folk: popular propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge, 1981), 148-89, esp. 169-74, ill. 143-44. Another possible example of visual apocalyptic imagery in the service of politics is the Antichrist cycle by Signorelli at Orvieto (1499-1504). However, the extent of contemporary reference in this cycle is now debated. See J.B. Riess, 'Republicanism and tyranny in Signorelli's *Rule of the Antichrist*', in Rosenberg, ed., *Art and politics in late medieval and early renaissance Italy*, 157-85; J.B. Riess, *The renaissance Antichrist: Luca Signorelli's Orvieto frescoes* (Princeton, 1995). See also O. Niccoli, *Prophecy and people in renaissance Italy*, trans. L.G. Cochrane (Princeton, 1990).

³⁴ The issue of manuscript models is examined in greater depth in Chapter 3.

have been much more attuned to nuances that evoked topical events, ideas or personalities, particularly in the case of portraits and heraldic devices, than we can hope to be at a distance of six hundred years. Thus in some cases I will discuss quite minor details which, nevertheless, seem to me to represent possibly meaningful modifications to the pattern of imagery. While these often seem debatable or insignificant in themselves, in combination with other details they may have had a cumulative effect and are, for this reason, worth considering.

Naples

The unusual situation of two, perhaps three Apocalypse cycles (S. Maria Donnaregina, the Stuttgart panels, S. Chiara)³⁵ commissioned at one cultural centre within a relatively short period of time — probably less than thirty years — encourages us to speculate on possible reasons why the Apocalypse should be suddenly in vogue at the court of Naples in the first half of the fourteenth century. The obvious suggestion would be the strong presence there of Franciscan ideas, which frequently drew on the powerful iconography of the Apocalypse.

King Robert 'the Wise' and his queen, Sancia of Majorca, were heavily influenced by the ideas and politics of the Franciscan order, particularly of the rigorist group known as the Spirituals or Fraticelli.³⁶ Even after their condemnation by Pope John XXII in 1323, the Spirituals found a safe haven at the Neapolitan court

³⁵ On the lost cycle at S. Chiara, see above, Introduction.

³⁶ On the Spiritual movement in general, see D.L. Douie, *The nature and the effect of the heresy of the Fraticelli* (Manchester, 1932); M. Lambert, *Medieval heresy: popular movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1992), 189-214. In relation to Naples in particular, see D. Ambrasi, 'La vita religiosa', in E. Pontieri et al., eds., *Storia di Napoli*, vol. 3 (Naples, 1969), 437-573; R.G. Musto, 'Queen Sancia of Naples (1286-1345) and the Spiritual Franciscans', in J. Kirshner and S.F. Wemple, eds., *Women of the medieval world: essays in honor of John H. Mundy* (Oxford, 1985), 179-214; M.R. Toynbee, *S. Louis of Toulouse and the process of canonisation in the fourteenth century* (Manchester, 1929).

under Robert's powerful protection.³⁷ Papal demands that the heretical Franciscans be expelled were challenged or ignored.³⁸ The royal couple's patronage of the order, which depended on both deeply-held religious convictions and political expediency, resulted in the creation of one of the most religious courts in Europe.³⁹

The influence of Franciscan apocalyptic on Robert and his brother Louis had begun early, when they were sent to Catalonia as hostages for their father in 1288. Here they were educated for seven years almost entirely by Franciscans, including several Spiritual sympathisers.⁴⁰ One of their teachers (who later became Queen Sancia's confessor at Naples) was a friend of the Spirituels' influential Provençal leader Peter Olivi.⁴¹ The young Angevin princes were so inspired by their Franciscan education that they wrote to Olivi inviting him to visit them. In his letter of reply (1295), he explains in brief his Joachite apocalyptic view of history, drawing in particular on the imagery of the sixth seal, vial, and trumpet, the Whore of Babylon, and the great angel with the sign of the living God (Apoc. 7: 2).⁴² Olivi's emphasis on the sixth event in each set of seven is consistent with his belief, expressed more fully in his other writings, that current events marked the beginning

³⁷ See Douie, *Heresy of the Fraticelli*, 211; Leff, *Heresy in the later Middle Ages*, 234; Ambrasi, 'La vita religiosa', 508. For John XXII's role, see also N.R. Havelly, 'The blood of the apostles: Dante, the Franciscans and Pope John XXII', *Italian Studies* 52 (1997), 38-50.

³⁸ G.B. Siragusa, *L'ingegno, il sapere e gl'intendimenti di Roberto D'Angiò, con nuovi documenti* (Turin and Palermo, 1891), Appx., documents II, III, IV (pp.vii-xii); Musto, 'Queen Sancia of Naples', 187, 192, 194, 197, 201ff.

³⁹ Robert 'used the Franciscan order to bolster his throne against widespread accusations of usurpation and did not hesitate to exploit the sanctity that the order lent his dynasty' (Musto, 'Queen Sancia of Naples', 190). Robert's claim on the throne had not been straightforward: when his brother Louis resigned the throne to him, the claim of their young nephew Carobert, son of their deceased elder brother Charles Martel, was ignored. For this situation in relation to Simone Martini's famous St Louis altarpiece, originally placed in S. Chiara, see J. Gardner, 'Saint Louis of Toulouse, Robert of Anjou and Simone Martini', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 39 (1976), 12-33. The Franciscan cult of St Louis was also promoted by Robert in central Italy to help further his political ambitions there (see Toynbee, *S. Louis of Toulouse*, 219-20, 224ff.).

⁴⁰ Toynbee, *S. Louis of Toulouse*, 62, 73.

⁴¹ Musto, 'Queen Sancia of Naples', 191.

⁴² Peter Olivi, 'Letter to the sons of Charles II', in B. McGinn, ed. and trans., *Apocalyptic spirituality: treatises and letters of Lactantius, Adso of Montier-en-Der, Joachim of Fiore, the Franciscan Spirituels, Savonarola* (New York, 1979), 173-81.

of the sixth age of the church, an age of apocalyptic crisis.⁴³ His language, especially towards the end of the letter, is stirring: 'Come then, noble knights, gird yourselves for battle! The time of pruning has come'. It is also surprisingly, and uncompromisingly, literal, restating the biblical text as though it were a simple and concrete programme for the end time, rather than explicating it in a more traditional fashion:

It is necessary that at the full opening of the sixth seal the sun and the moon will be deeply darkened, the stars will fall from heaven, and there will be an earthquake so great that all the mountains and the islands will be moved from their places. When the sixth angel blows the trumpet, the four angels that are bound in the great river will be freed so that a mounted force of twenty thousand times ten thousand horses and riders will go forth against the battle line of Christ our God.⁴⁴

Largely as a result of his early exposure to Spiritual Franciscan ideas, Louis gave up the throne of Naples (to his brother Robert) and became a Franciscan friar. He died as Bishop of Toulouse in 1297. The tireless efforts of his father and brother resulted in his canonisation in 1317, and he quickly became one of the most popular Franciscan saints, not least with Sancia who had a particular devotion to his memory.⁴⁵ Following the lead of Louis of Toulouse, an astonishing three out of Sancia's four brothers also renounced political office to become Franciscans.⁴⁶ To add to this familial sanctity, both Robert and Sancia were descended from the Franciscan tertiary St Elizabeth of Hungary,⁴⁷ while Robert was also descended,

⁴³ See D. Burr, *Olivi's peaceable kingdom: a reading of the Apocalypse commentary* (Philadelphia, 1993).

⁴⁴ Peter Olivi, 'Letter to the sons of Charles II', in McGinn, ed., *Apocalyptic spirituality*, 177-78.

⁴⁵ On the cult of St Louis in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Toynbee, *S. Louis of Toulouse*, 212-19; for Sancia, 220, 222.

⁴⁶ Musto, 'Queen Sancia of Naples', 182-83.

⁴⁷ Robert's link to this saint was through his mother, Mary of Hungary, herself a noted patron of the Poor Clares at Naples. The cult of St Elizabeth was introduced to Naples by Mary or Robert: particular devotion to this illustrious ancestress was emphasised by a fresco cycle depicting scenes from her life, in the nun's gallery of S. Maria Donnaregina. See C. de Frede, 'Da Carlo I d'Angiò a Giovanna I, 1263-1382', in E. Pontieri et al., eds., *Storia di Napoli*, vol. 3 (Naples, 1969), 212.

through the French royal house, from St Louis. This pedigree of piety had always been emphasised by the Angevin kings of Naples, who technically held their kingdom by papal appointment.

During his long reign, Robert always emphasised his personal religiosity.⁴⁸ Although he never showed any intention of actually renouncing his kingdom like Louis or Sancia's brothers, he was a Franciscan tertiary and made a point of being buried in the friar's habit he sometimes wore.⁴⁹ Both his elaborate public tomb in S. Chiara (commissioned by his successor Joanna) and the smaller private tomb in the nuns' choir also stress his Franciscan devotion, showing him barefoot and wearing the corded robes as well as with the crown and sceptre of office.⁵⁰ Sancia was if anything more devoted to the order.⁵¹ In 1317, and again in 1337, she asked the pope to allow her to divorce Robert and enter a Clarissan convent. He refused, but did allow her to be attended by two Poor Clares.⁵² But it was not just on a domestic, personal level that Sancia's devotion to Franciscan ideals manifested itself. On several occasions she wrote formal letters to the Chapter General in which, after reminding the assembly of her personal and dynastic links with the Franciscans (even referring to herself as the mother of the order), she presented her support for the Spirituals' cause.⁵³

⁴⁸ de Frede, 'Da Carlo I d'Angiò a Giovanna I', 209-13.

⁴⁹ Ambrasi, 'La vita religiosa', 504, 508, 510-12.

⁵⁰ de Frede, 'Da Carlo I d'Angiò a Giovanna I', 211; Toynbee, *S. Louis of Toulouse*, 218.

⁵¹ On Sancia's Franciscan advisers, see Musto, 'Queen Sancia of Naples', 188, 191, 197-99.

⁵² Musto, 'Queen Sancia of Naples', 185-86, 188-89. After Robert's death in 1343 she finally achieved her wish and died as a Poor Clare in 1345. She was at this time attached to the small house of S. Croce, not, as is often stated (for example, by Toynbee, *S. Louis of Toulouse*, 218), S. Chiara.

⁵³ See Musto, 'Queen Sancia of Naples', 192, 202-14, esp. 206. Sancia's letter does not use a great deal of apocalyptic language, although she does emphasise St Francis's stigmata as Christ's seal on the original ideals of the order. She also comments that Francis prophesied the tribulations to be suffered by his true disciples (203-04). On Sancia's defence of the Spirituals and personal interventions in the Chapters General, see also de Frede, 'Da Carlo I d'Angiò a Giovanna I', 209-10; Ambrasi, 'La vita religiosa', 500.

Sancia's brother Philip of Majorca lived at Naples from 1329 and was the charismatic leader of a group of Spiritual dissidents based at the male convent at S. Chiara.⁵⁴ A follower of Olivi and a personal friend of Angelo Clareno (who himself fled to southern Italy in 1334), Philip was heavily involved in the Franciscan debate on poverty. For example, he is reported to have preached a fiercely anti-papal sermon on the theme of poverty in the church of S. Chiara shortly after his arrival in Naples: this theme was, for the Franciscans, inextricably linked with apocalyptic and prophetic imagery.⁵⁵ Philip's involvement in the fraught politics of the Spirituels meant that he was seen by some as a candidate for the eschatological role of the angelic pope, by others as the probable Great Antichrist.⁵⁶ In 1333, after relations between Naples and Avignon had become particularly strained over the issues of the Spirituels and north Italian politics,⁵⁷ it was even proposed that John XXII be deposed and replaced by Philip.⁵⁸ Philip of Majorca should therefore be considered alongside Robert and Sancia as a possible interested party in the creation, and understanding, of the Apocalypse images at Naples, at the very least because he probably acted as a theological adviser to the royal couple.

⁵⁴ On Philip, see Douie, *Heresy of the Fraticelli*, 62-65, 211, 215, 251-57; Musto, 'Queen Sancia of Naples', 182, 195ff. On the Spirituels at S. Chiara, see C.A. Bruzelius, 'Hearing is believing: Clarissan architecture, ca. 1213-1340', *Gesta* 31 (1992), 87.

⁵⁵ For the sermon, see F. Bologna, *I pittori alla corte angioina di Napoli, 1266-1414, e un riesame dell'arte nell'età fridericiana* (Rome, 1969), 237, 202, 245; de Frede, 'Da Carlo I d'Angiò a Giovanna I', 210; for the 'apocalyptic nature of Franciscan poverty' in the 1320s, see Leff, *Heresy in the later Middle Ages*, 161-62; McGinn, ed., *Visions of the end*, 203; D. Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan poverty: the origins of the usus pauper controversy* (Philadelphia, 1989).

⁵⁶ Douie, *Heresy of the Fraticelli*, 251, 256; Ambrasi, 'La vita religiosa', 510.

⁵⁷ On Robert's changing relations with John XXII, who had originally been a friend and counsellor, see de Frede, 'Da Carlo I d'Angiò a Giovanna I', 168-71; F. Sabatini, *Napoli angioina: cultura e società* (Cava dei Tirreni, 1975), 69.

⁵⁸ John was to be deposed on the grounds of his theological views (pronounced incorrect by the Sorbonne) on the Beatific Vision, a subject on which Robert also wrote a treatise (*De visione beata*, 1332-33). In the end John XXII died in 1334 and the plan was thus abandoned. See de Frede, 'Da Carlo I d'Angiò a Giovanna I', 210; Musto, 'Queen Sancia of Naples', 197, 201 and, on the controversy over the Beatific Vision in general, C.W. Bynum, *The resurrection of the body in western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York, 1995), 283-91.

The impressive royal library built up by Robert was dispersed shortly after his death and no inventory exists. However, its contents can be partially reconstructed from treasury documents which refer to the purchase and production of books for it.⁵⁹ The best represented areas were theology, law, philosophy and medicine, with history and literature apparently playing a much smaller role. Among the known theological and devotional works of the collection there are only a few that are relevant as evidence of apocalyptic understandings current at the court. The first is an Apocalypse commentary by Bruno da Segni,⁶⁰ a learned and pro-reformist Benedictine who became Bishop of Segni in 1080 and was canonised in 1183.⁶¹ Robert's ownership of this work may signal a general interest in the Apocalypse but obviously is not evidence for the currency of specifically Franciscan apocalyptic. More intriguing is the record of a *Concordia Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, bought (among other works) in 1335.⁶² This seems likely to refer to one of Joachim of Fiore's major works, more usually known as the *Liber Concordie Novi et Veteris Testamenti*, which was concerned with finding precise parallels between the generations of the old and new dispensations: from Adam to Christ and from Christ through church history to the end of the world.⁶³ Although the Apocalypse is

⁵⁹ On the library's dispersal, see A. Altamura, *La letteratura dell'età angioina: tradizione medievale e premesse umanistiche* (Naples, 1952), 29-30. For the information that can be gleaned from the treasury documents, see C.G. Coulter, 'The library of the Angevin kings at Naples', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 75 (1944), 141-55; de Frede, 'Da Carlo I d'Angiò a Giovanna I', 214-16; Sabatini, *Napoli angioina*, 71ff.

⁶⁰ Sabatini, *Napoli angioina*, 71.

⁶¹ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. R. Appleton (New York, 1913-14), vol. 3, 14; the Apocalypse commentary is edited in *PL* 165: 603-736.

⁶² Coulter, 'The library of the Angevin kings at Naples', 148.

⁶³ On this work of Joachim's, of which four of the five books are edited with a useful introduction by E.R. Daniel (*Liber de concordia*), see also Reeves, *Influence*, 6, 18-19, 42, 91, 512. Comparison of the incipits of some surviving thirteenth- and fourteenth-century manuscripts shows that the slight variation in the title was not unusual. See, for example, Bibliothèque Nationale, *Catalogue général des manuscrits latins*, vol. 5 (Paris, 1966), 182; L. Delisle, *Inventaire des manuscrits de la Sorbonne conservés a la Bibliothèque Impériale sous les numéros 15176-16718 du fonds latin* (Paris, 1870), 54; G. Abate and G. Luisetto, *Codici e manoscritti della Biblioteca Antoniana* (Vicenza, 1975), vol. 1, 294; F. Leitschuh and H. Fischer, *Katalog der Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Bamberg*, vol. 1 (Bamberg, 1895), 129; *Katalog der Handschriften der Sächsischen Landesbibliothek zu Dresden*, vol. 1 (Dresden, 1979), 56.

not its main focus, it does feature significantly within the work.⁶⁴ Since Franciscan, particularly Spiritual, apocalyptic was often Joachite in its focus and interpretation, the purchase of this work may suggest an interest in the theology behind the controversies.

A richer source for the currency of Franciscan Joachite apocalypticism is contemporary political prophecy. Even without the presence of followers and defenders of the Spirituels at court, the Angevins of Naples would have been aware of a strand of apocalyptic thinking that had direct bearing on their house. This was the use of Joachite prophecies for polemical purposes in the struggle between the Angevins and the heirs of Frederick II for control of southern Italy, drawing on the apocalyptic language of the papal 'propaganda war' that had been waged against the Hohenstaufen emperor.⁶⁵ Such prophecies had circulated particularly in Italy and southern France since the mid-thirteenth century, and continued in the fourteenth.⁶⁶ Bernard Gui reported in c.1324 that the 'Beguins' (the recently condemned Spirituels of southern France) promulgated false and foolish tales 'having to do with the struggle between King Frederick [of Sicily] and the king of France and King Robert [of Naples].'⁶⁷ Gui's account also informs us of the Beguins' belief that the mystical Antichrist had already arrived in the person of John XXII, and that the Great Antichrist was to appear in 1325, 1330 or 1335,⁶⁸ dates which may shed light on the commission of apocalyptic images perhaps in the 1320s or 30s.

⁶⁴ See Daniel's introduction to the edition (Joachim, *Liber de concordia*), xvi, where he discusses Joachim's statement that his *Expositio in Apocalypsim* grew out of the *Liber de concordia*.

⁶⁵ See R.E. Lerner, 'Frederick II, alive, aloft, and allayed in Franciscan-Joachite eschatology', in W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst and A. Welkenhuysen, eds., *The use and abuse of eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1988), 360, 368 and passim; McGinn, *Antichrist*, 152-57.

⁶⁶ See, for example, McGinn, ed., *Visions of the end*, 168-79, 210-11; on the updating of earlier prophetic scenarios for a new situation, see Lerner, 'Frederick II', 372-73.

⁶⁷ Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 424.

⁶⁸ Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 425; the various different groups of Spirituels were united in their unfavourable opinion of John XXII (see Leff, *Heresy in the later Middle Ages*, 234).

The contemporary political importance of these examples of Spiritual belief and propaganda, along with the presence at Naples of numerous important adherents of the cause, makes it clear that there was ample opportunity for Franciscan apocalyptic thought of both orthodox and radical tendencies to have been mainstream at the Angevin court in the first half of the fourteenth century. The very fact that several pictorial versions of the Apocalypse were commissioned during this time itself suggests the topic was considered important. Let us turn, then, to the visual cycles themselves, to consider the question of whether or not their iconography manifests Franciscan influence.

To examine this issue, we need to establish which figures and actions within the divine narrative were particularly stressed in Franciscan apocalyptic (orthodox as well as heterodox), and where, therefore, we might reasonably expect to find unusual iconography or visual emphases. While apocalyptic imagery is used extensively in Franciscan theology, the text is not mined indiscriminately; instead, a few key images recur again and again. Probably the most important image taken directly from John's text is the opening of the sixth seal, which marks the beginning of the tribulations that accompany a new, renovating age of the church.⁶⁹ The identification of St Francis with the angel of the sixth seal (Apoc. 7: 2) is made repeatedly both in authorised Franciscan works such as Bonaventure's *Life of St Francis* (1263) and in work that influenced the Spirituals, such as Peter Olivi's

⁶⁹ I exclude from this discussion those roles, such as the mystical and Great Antichrists put forward by Peter Olivi, which draw significantly on other biblical, legendary and theological sources. These characters in the expected eschatological drama cannot be identified directly and simply with individual figures in the Apocalypse, although they draw generally on the satanic imagery of the dragon and the various beasts. See W. Lewis, 'Peter John Olivi: prophet of the year 2000: ecclesiology and eschatology in the *Lectura super Apocalypsim* (PhD dissertation, Tübingen, 1975), 222-29.

Apocalypse commentary, condemned in 1326.⁷⁰ Francis is also, like Christ himself, identified with the great angel of Chapter 10.⁷¹ The two witnesses of Chapter 11 are frequently linked to Francis and Dominic, as in the work of Bonaventure and Ubertino of Casale.⁷²

How then do these images fare in the visual cycles of Naples? My discussion here focuses on the Stuttgart panels, since a large amount of the cycle at S. Maria Donnaregina is no longer extant; what remains, however, suggests that the two cycles share very similar imagery. In the Stuttgart panels, the opening of the seals is situated in the top right of the first panel (figs. 21, 22). The earthquake that follows the opening of the sixth seal (Apoc. 6: 12) is given the important corner spot, and is depicted with great fidelity to the text: we see the sun turned black, the stars falling, and heaven, which in the text 'departed as a book folded up' (Apoc. 6: 14), is here depicted as a rolled-up scroll. The careful depiction of this section of the text is reminiscent of Olivi's letter to Robert and Louis, quoted above.

However, the all-important angel of the sixth seal itself is, in the Stuttgart panels, exceedingly unremarkable. Located immediately below the fourth horseman in a crowded part of the composition (figs. 2, 21), the depiction of the angel does not draw the eye. It is true that the sun in which it hovers in accordance with the text ('I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun', Apoc. 7: 2) is picked out with gold, but it is relatively small and nowhere near as prominent as the use of red

⁷⁰ Bonaventure, *The soul's journey into God, the tree of life, the life of St Francis*, trans. E. Cousins (London, 1978), 181, 314. See also R.K. Emmerson and R.B. Herzman, *The apocalyptic imagination in medieval literature* (Philadelphia, 1992), 36-41, 44-49, 64-68; Cazenave, 'La vision eschatologique des Spirituels Franciscains', 393-97, 399-400; McGinn, ed., *Visions of the end*, 196-202, 209. On Olivi's Apocalypse commentary, see D. Burr's 'Olivi, apocalyptic expectation, and visionary experience', *Traditio* 41 (1985), 273-88 and *Olivi's peaceable kingdom*; Lewis, 'Peter John Olivi'. The identification of Francis with the angel of Apoc. 7: 2 was also made by Joachites such as Gerardo of Borgo San Donnino and John of Parma (see Burr, *Olivi's Peaceable Kingdom*, 28).

⁷¹ McGinn, ed., *Visions of the end*, 208. Some of the Beguins cast Olivi himself in this role (see Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 422, 762n17; Leff, *Heresy in the later Middle Ages*, 218-21, citing depositions where this identification is made).

⁷² Emmerson and Herzman, *The apocalyptic imagination*, 68; McGinn, ed., *Visions of the end*, 213.

and gold highlights elsewhere on the panel (fig. 23). The angel is a conventional half-figure in appearance, and there is no sign that would lead the viewer to identify it with St Francis. The 'sign of the living God' (Apoc. 7: 2), which Franciscan commentators read as Francis's stigmata,⁷³ appears instead as a dark red flag, suggesting the Resurrection banner.⁷⁴ This first example thus seems more concerned with suggesting Christological imagery than with making links between the Apocalypse and Francis.

The great angel of Chapter 10, commonly understood as Christ or Francis, is more centrally-positioned and prominent than that of Chapter 7. Situated below the central image of the worship of the apocalyptic God, the angel is marked out as an important character, rather than just another of the flying messengers, by its stance, gesture, wings and garments (figs. 23, 25). Unlike many of the other angels in the panels (and indeed elsewhere), it is not dressed in ankle-length white robes but in a short tunic which shows off its striking red legs, 'his feet as pillars of fire' (Apoc. 10: 1). However, there is no visual clue added that would encourage the viewer to read the figure as either Christ or St Francis: it is simply a literal rendering of the biblical text.

The case of the two witnesses is somewhat more complex. The witnesses take part in an important sequence featuring the various beasts and their followers, which runs along the bottom of the first panel (figs. 2, 25). They are bearded, fitting their standard identification as the Old Testament prophets Enoch and Elias, but they are also dressed in garments suggestive of a religious habit: long tunics, rather than the antique robes worn throughout by John, and pointed hoods rather than the turban-like headdresses more often seen on prophets. Despite these oddities, they do

⁷³ Bonaventure, *The life of St Francis*, 217, 303-14; Emmerson and Herzman, *The apocalyptic imagination*, 38.

⁷⁴ This banner cannot be seen in reproductions, but is visible in personal examination of the panels.

not represent contemporary friars since their tunics are white, rather than brown or grey, and lack the distinctive Franciscan cord at the waist. Still less do they suggest the Spirituals of S. Chiara, whose short, ragged and patched habits came in for papal disapproval in the 1330s and 1340s.⁷⁵ However, in the lower scene of the martyrdom of the witnesses, there are perhaps some subtle visual suggestions of an interpretative overlay. The two witnesses in the panels hold large and prominent crosses: since there is no specific reference in the text to crosses,⁷⁶ this may suggest the possibility for an enlightened viewer of linking these figures to Francis, whose devotion to the cross was so intense.⁷⁷ Perhaps also the way the soldiers' swords thrust across the body of one witness to intersect with the cross could have been understood, by someone very familiar with the text, as an allusion to Bonaventure's authoritative *Life of St Francis*, where he describes a vision of Francis with a cross formed of two swords across his body.⁷⁸

The panels' depiction of the seven-headed dragon is one place where specifically Joachite prophecies may have affected the imagery. The dragon, shown as a reptilian basilisk, is very suggestive of a sketch which Lerner calls 'a stunning example of thirteenth-century visual propaganda at its most compelling' (fig. 27).⁷⁹ The drawing is a version of Joachim's *figura* of the dragon: the heads are labelled largely in accordance with his interpretation, starting with Herod and Nero and ending with Saladin and (updating the original) Frederick II. The dragon's tail

⁷⁵ Ambrasi, 'La vita religiosa', 510; de Frede, 'Da Carlo I d'Angiò a Giovanna I', 223; Bruzelius, 'Hearing is believing', 87. Note that Olivi's Apocalypse commentary specifically identified the witnesses as Franciscans, emphasising their poverty and scanty clothing (Lewis, 'Peter John Olivi', 195)

⁷⁶ Although Apoc. 11: 8 refers to 'the great city ... where their Lord also was crucified'.

⁷⁷ See Bonaventure, *The life of St Francis*, passim, esp. 182, 202-03, 208, 215, 304-14.

⁷⁸ Bonaventure, *The life of St Francis*, 214, 313.

⁷⁹ Lerner, 'Frederick II', 376: Lerner assumes the c.1300 version reproduces an earlier (lost) exemplar of the 1250s.

encircles a group of barefoot clerics.⁸⁰ The dragon's form in this sketch is very close to its depiction in the Stuttgart panels, particularly as seen in the lower right corner of the second panel (figs 24, 26). Both dragons have a very large first head, with a corona of flame-shaped horns (ten in the case of the Joachite drawing, seven on the panels); the six smaller heads, on their spindly necks, are tucked behind. Both have a reptilian body with wings, two legs only (with clawed or webbed feet respectively) and a long, curving tail.⁸¹ This form for the dragon, standing and composed of a 'combination of bird and reptile characteristics' is very unusual for Joachite *figurae* manuscripts, appearing in only four of the extant examples; much more usual is Joachim's original formulation of the dragon as a snake-like creature, without legs or wings, and with fanned-out heads of roughly equal size.⁸²

The sketch in question dates to about 1300, and is inserted into a late thirteenth-century anthology of genuine and spurious Joachite *figurae* and short texts, almost certainly of southern Italian, and probably Franciscan, provenance.⁸³ This is the type of 'prophetic anthology' which Marjorie Reeves suggests was one of the principal means of disseminating Joachite ideas.⁸⁴ Given its provenance, it is possible that the drawing might have been produced or held at Naples, perhaps in the Franciscan studium where noted Joachites such as John of Parma had taught.⁸⁵ If so, it might have been accessed by someone involved in the creation of the Stuttgart panels (patron, designer, or spiritual adviser) and thus included in the iconography. However, even if this particular manuscript was not the source, it is quite possible

⁸⁰ Reproduced in Lerner, 'Frederick II', fig. 3; described by Reeves and Hirsch-Reich, *The figurae*, 269, 274. On Joachim's original seven-headed dragon figure, see Reeves and Hirsch-Reich, *The figurae*, 146-52.

⁸¹ The Stuttgart panels' dragon does not have an additional head at the end of the tail (which in the sketch represents the Antichrist yet to come). However, the demons' heads that appear to spring from its tail in the scene of War in Heaven may allude to this idea.

⁸² Reeves and Hirsch-Reich, *The figurae*, 269, 271.

⁸³ Vatican Library, MS Lat. 3822. See Reeves and Hirsch-Reich, *The figurae*, 266; Reeves, *Influence*, 90-91, 536; Lerner, 'Frederick II', 376-77.

⁸⁴ Reeves, *Influence*, 38, 90-91, Appx. C ('Examples of Prophetic Anthologies').

⁸⁵ Ambrasi, 'La vita religiosa', 499.

that *figurae* of this type were known at Naples. For instance, the *Liber Concordie* bought by Robert (discussed above) might have contained other extracts from works by, or attributed to, Joachim, including perhaps drawings similar to the dragon figure.⁸⁶

A deliberate reference by the designer of the panels to an image type that had been circulating as propaganda in southern Italy probably since the 1250s should not be ruled out, particularly when the propaganda content was directly relevant to the Angevin house at Naples. In the sketch, the large, seventh head is said to represent Frederick II; the final head, located on the tail, corresponds to Antichrist, who is to be an heir of Frederick II.⁸⁷ This was the Hohenstaufen dynasty which Charles of Anjou, Robert's grandfather, had defeated to establish his Angevin kingdom in southern Italy in 1266, and which remained a permanent threat. Thus although there is no overt identification in the panels themselves, a viewer at the Neapolitan court, familiar with the Joachite dragon sketch (or one like it) might have been encouraged as a result of the similarity between the two images to read the panels' dragon also in a political light.

One final tiny detail continues the potential for this political reading of the panels. In the second panel, an army of 'kings of the whole earth' gathers at the command of the false prophet and its allies, ready for the final battle (Apoc. 16: 13-14). One of the kings holds a gold banner on which is depicted a scorpion (figs. 24,

⁸⁶ On the *figurae* commonly found in Joachim's *Liber Concordie*, see Daniel's edn., xxviii-xxxv; Reeves, *Influence*, 18-19. Reeves and Hirsch-Reich note that 'the Dragon, which looms so large in the *Expositio in Apocalypsim* and afterwards forms one of Joachim's most popular figures, hardly appears at all in the *Liber Concordie*' (*The figurae*, 146). However, this does not exclude the possibility of its appearing alongside that work in a 'prophetic anthology'. By way of comparison, another southern Italian Joachite anthology, now in the Vatican library, includes extracts from many of Joachim's works, including the *Liber Concordie*, along with *figurae* drawn from that work and from the *Liber Figurarum*, the original source of the dragon figure (described by Reeves, *Influence*, 91). A fourteenth-century manuscript now in Dresden includes alongside Joachim's *Liber Concordie* his *Liber Figurarum*, *In Apocalypsis explanatio* and other works (*Katalog der Handschriften der Sächsischen Landesbibliothek*, 56).

⁸⁷ Lerner, 'Frederick II', 377.

26): although earlier the locusts were described as having ‘tails like to scorpions’ (Apoc. 9: 10), the scorpion does not correspond to anything in the text in Chapter 16. However, in a prophetic work entitled *Commentary on the oracle of Cyril* by Jean de Roquetaillade, the pro-French Franciscan Spiritual, the symbol of the scorpion is mentioned several times.⁸⁸ It is identified with Peter of Aragon (d.1285), an heir of Frederick II who took control of the island of Sicily from Charles of Anjou after the Vespers of 1282.⁸⁹ Thus it could be said that through this use of symbolic heraldry, the traditional enemy of the Angevin house — the Hohenstaufen dynasty — is represented among the evil kings of the earth on the Stuttgart panels.

Roquetaillade’s commentary could also explain the prominence given to the angel of Chapter 19: 17, who appears almost adjacent to the previously mentioned scene, slightly below and to the left (fig. 24). Standing frontally, the figure of the angel is highlighted by the gold rays of a large sun, and by the birds which form a kind of mandorla against the dark background. Turning once more to Roquetaillade, we find that he interprets the ‘sun’ mentioned in the oracle as Charles of Anjou, the defender of the church.⁹⁰

The only problem with this theory is that the *Commentary* was not written until c.1345-49.⁹¹ If the panels do reflect the influence of this work, they must have been made after this date (which is just possible: the only certain fact in their dating is that they predate the Hamilton Bible which was presented to the pope in 1350). Alternatively, Roquetaillade may already have made similar identifications in his earlier works, which have not survived (these include a treatise on Antichrist and a

⁸⁸ The commentary is paraphrased in J. Bignami-Odier, *Études sur Jean de Roquetaillade (Johannes de Rupescissa)* (Paris, 1952), 53-112. See below for further information on Roquetaillade.

⁸⁹ Bignami-Odier, *Jean de Roquetaillade*, 66 (here Roquetaillade states that Peter of Aragon had a scorpion on his shield), 67 (here the scorpion is identified as James of Aragon), 81.

⁹⁰ Bignami-Odier, *Jean de Roquetaillade*, 65, 66-67. The sun is also identified as his son, Charles II.

⁹¹ Bignami-Odier, *Jean de Roquetaillade*, 54.

commentary on Daniel which would be natural locations for such themes).⁹² A third possibility is that Roquetaillade's work in the *Commentary* itself reflects earlier prophetic ideas, whether written or oral, which had already made such a link. In either of the last two cases, the dating necessary for the panels to have been influenced by the identification relaxes once more. It certainly seems likely that an anti-Hohenstaufen theme is being presented to the original Neapolitan (perhaps Angevin) owner/viewer in one or two sections of the panels' imagery.

However, the theme is not carried through the whole of the imagery in the way that one might expect. The angel of Chapter 19, although notable for its prominence, is not visually identified, and the 'good' armies are not labelled with anything more conclusive than crosses on their shields: there is no sign of the Angevin heraldry mentioned by Roquetaillade in his treatise.⁹³ In fact, the lack of any personal representation of a patron, either through donor portraits or heraldry in either of the surviving Neapolitan cycles is particularly striking in comparison with other works commissioned by the Angevins of Naples.⁹⁴

Some of the examples in the Stuttgart panels of possible influence from Franciscan, Spiritual or political interpretations of the Apocalypse are very suggestive but they remain, in the end, tentative identifications which rely more on allusion than outright statement. Moreover, my focus here on two or three areas where details of the imagery do seem significant (the portrayal of the dragon, the scorpion banner and the angel of Ch. 19) should not allow us to forget the fact that of a large number of scenes and characters whose portrayal we might expect to be affected, the majority fail to manifest any influence at the level of imagery (as is the case, most obviously, with the angel of the sixth seal). While the panels would no

⁹² Bignami-Odier, *Jean de Roquetaillade*, 53.

⁹³ Bignami-Odier, *Jean de Roquetaillade*, 65.

⁹⁴ See, for example, P.L. de Castris, *Arte di corte nella Napoli angioina* (Florence, 1986), pls. 5, 9, 11, 22 and col. pl. 24; Bologna, *I pittori alla corte angioina*, 116.

doubt have been read with the Franciscan and Joachite contexts in mind — it can hardly have been otherwise at Naples in this period — this interpretation is not usually specifically assisted by the images themselves. By comparison with the often strident nature of partisan uses of the Apocalypse in the prophetic literature, and in light of the unusually strong culture of Franciscan ideas at the Neapolitan court, this overall reticence on the part of the iconography is rather surprising.

Karlstein

There is considerable evidence for the currency of apocalyptic speculation at the court of the emperor Charles IV. On several occasions during his reign, apocalyptically themed, politically motivated propaganda was addressed directly to him. In 1350 Cola di Rienzo, using imagery drawn from Joachite apocalypticism and the last world emperor prophecies, called on Charles to invade Italy and restore Rome to its proper role as seat of the pope, in preparation for the age of the Spirit and the renovation of the world, which he expected to start in 1357.⁹⁵ More insistently and fundamentally apocalyptic in tone was Adalbert Bludow, a Franciscan master of theology whose eschatology was probably influenced by Spiritual ideas. He announced in 1355 that Antichrist would appear within twenty years.⁹⁶ His ideas do not seem to have damaged his career prospects: a close associate of the Archbishop of Prague, he was made a bishop in 1357.⁹⁷

Another apocalypticist connected with the Prague court a few years later was Jan Milič of Kremsier, a chancery official and canon of the cathedral who renounced

⁹⁵ See Reeves, *Influence*, 318-19, 421; S.H. Thomson, 'Learning at the court of Charles IV', *Speculum* 25 (1950), 7-8.

⁹⁶ S. Schmolinsky, 'Prophetisch-endzeitliches Denken im Umkreis Karls IV', in *Literatur im Umkreis des Prager Hofes* (Wolfram-Studien 13) (Berlin, 1994), 103.

⁹⁷ E. Winter, *Frühhumanismus: Seine Entwicklung in Böhmen und deren europäische Bedeutung für die Kirchenreformbestrebungen im 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1964), 49, 103.

these offices to practice poverty and preach reform of both ecclesiastical and secular spheres.⁹⁸ In a sermon at court in 1366 he identified Charles IV himself as Antichrist. The emperor reacted surprisingly calmly, merely imprisoning Milič briefly. Charles's moderate treatment of him seems to have persuaded Milič that he had been mistaken, and his later sermons and writings understand Antichrist, much less controversially, as a general personification of evil, albeit one whose arrival was still imminent. Astonishingly, Charles seems not only to have forgiven Milič but actually to have made him something of a protégé, materially assisting him in his great project, the rehabilitation of Prague's prostitutes. This scheme involved setting up in the red-light district a large evangelical community named, significantly, 'Jerusalem'.

Other sources for apocalypticism in fourteenth-century Prague are more problematic, however, especially when it comes to visual material. Sabine Schmolinsky points out that an illustrated Alexander Minorita commentary, often cited as evidence of Charles's interest in the historicising/prophetic interpretation, probably did not arrive in Prague until the mid-fifteenth century.⁹⁹ The Apocalypse section of a picture Bible (now Prague, University Library, MS 23.C.124) has also been adduced as evidence for the currency in the Bohemian court of radical apocalyptic ideas in the mid-fourteenth century. The Bible's commissioner, one Velislaus, can perhaps be identified with the Prague canon and notary to Charles IV of that name (fl. 1341-54).¹⁰⁰ The pictorial representations of the Apocalypse in the Velislav Bible would thus be an extremely valuable source for study if they

⁹⁸ On Milic see H. Kaminsky, *A history of the Hussite revolution* (Berkeley, 1967), 9-18; Lambert, *Medieval heresy*, 289-90; Winter, *Frühhumanismus*, 86-103; B. Jarrett, *The Emperor Charles IV* (London, 1935), 201-04.

⁹⁹ Schmolinsky, 'Prophetisch-endzeitliches Denken im Umkreis Karls IV', 104. Schmolinsky also demolishes the myth of an Apocalypse commentary written by Charles IV's close associate, the mystic John of Dambach (100). This non-existent work is still being cited, as recently in Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst. V*, vol. 1, 295n771.

¹⁰⁰ K. Stejskal, ed., *Velislav Biblia Picta* (Prague, 1970), vol. 2, 18. This identification is not certain, and on stylistic grounds an earlier date may also be possible for the manuscript (23-25).

genuinely did contain allusions to contemporary politics, particularly since they may have provided an iconographical model for some of the scenes at Karlstein.¹⁰¹

However, in his eagerness to see the manuscript's illustrations as proto-Hussite, Karel Stejskal misreads the evidence, both textual and visual. He claims that the dragon harassing the woman clothed with the sun of Chapter 12 (fol. 163r, fig. 28) 'carries on his back a basilica marked with three papal crosses, instead of the "Whore of Babylon" as corresponding to the text of the Bible ... [this] clearly represents a symbol of the corrupt papal church.'¹⁰² Here Stejskal conflates two separate biblical creatures — the 'great red dragon' of Apocalypse 12: 3 and the Whore's 'scarlet coloured beast' of Chapter 17: 3 — creating a composite beast which does not in fact occur in the text. The Whore of Babylon is never present in Chapter 12, in either the Bible or any pictorial traditions, and when she does appear five chapters later she is always represented as riding a 'beast' visually distinct from the dragon.

Stejskal also misreads the visual evidence of this and other scenes in the Velislav Bible. While it is easy to see how the mistake occurred, it is nevertheless indisputable that the church at the top of the picture frame is not being carried by the dragon (although its wings overlap it): instead it floats, surrounded by a crinkle-edged cloud (the standard signifier for heaven in the manuscript, as elsewhere).¹⁰³ The labelling allows us to identify the church with further precision as a representation of the temple of God in heaven, complete with 'lightnings, and voices'. The temple of God (Apoc. 11: 19), which immediately precedes the vision

¹⁰¹ In most scenes the Karlstein imagery is not similar to the manuscript's, and the layout is very different. However, the scene of the loosing of the four angels shows similarities in the depiction of the angels' physiognomy, and the manuscript also includes scenes from the life of St Wenceslaus which are very like those that appear on the stairway at Karlstein (discussed below, Chapter 4).

¹⁰² Stejskal, ed., *Velislav Biblia Picta*, vol. 2, 23.

¹⁰³ See, for example, the four evangelist symbols appearing from the clouds to announce the four horsemen, Stejskal, ed., *Velislav Biblia Picta*, vol. 1 (facsimile), fols. 155-56.

of the woman and the dragon, appears very frequently in this scene in a wide range of manuscript and monumental sources.¹⁰⁴ And while it is true that the pictures of the destruction of the evil city (fols. 162v and 166v) include church towers in the falling masonry, no special significance can be attached to this feature when it is also a standard part of the iconography of these scenes in the Anglo-French cycles, where the depiction of the concept 'city', whether good or bad, always includes church towers.¹⁰⁵ Stejskal's interpretation of these images as attacks on the corruption of the Avignon papacy (with which Charles and his court were generally on good terms) is untenable.¹⁰⁶

However, the fact that the Velislav Bible contains a separate partial Antichrist *Vita* is worth considering, as further evidence of an interest in the Antichrist tradition in mid-fourteenth-century Bohemia. This cycle (fols. 130v-135v) is fairly typical of Antichrist *Vitae*¹⁰⁷ but is one of the earliest examples to give no indication of Antichrist's evil nature by his outward form. Far from being monstrous, a tyrant, or even royal, Antichrist is in fact identical with the image of Christ elsewhere in the manuscript, except that he has no halo (see fols. 135v/136r, a facing page where the likeness between the two figures is particularly clear). Of course, his true identity is spelled out through labelling and through the frequent appearance of demons at his side, and carrying out his spurious miracles, but the

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, the Angers Tapestry (Muel et al., *La tenture*), scene 35 and F. Deuchler et al., eds., *The Cloisters Apocalypse: an early fourteenth-century manuscript in facsimile* (New York, 1971), fol. 20r.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, the Angers Tapestry, scenes 23 and 33, and the Cloisters Apocalypse (ed. Deuchler et al.), fol. 25v.

¹⁰⁶ He also misinterprets a non-apocalyptic scene on fol. 149r, reading it as an attack on the church hierarchy. In fact, as the labelling makes clear, the image presents the idea of the 'pastor bonus', as embodied in Christ and good churchmen, as well as its opposite, the clerical figure who does not guard his flock and is assisted by demons. In this context (and considering the lack of mitres or liturgical robes of any kind) the crosiers held by both good and bad clergymen are more likely to refer specifically to the metaphorical 'pastor' than to the figure of 'bishop'. See Stejskal, ed., *Velislav Biblia Picta*, vol. 2, 22, and vol. 1, fol. 149r.

¹⁰⁷ For which, see R.K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: a study of medieval apocalypticism, art, and literature* (Seattle, 1981), passim, esp. Ch. 4 'Antichrist in Art', 108-45.

theological point — that Antichrist's deceptive powers are so great that he can seem physically identical to Christ — is made unequivocally. This representation of Antichrist may refer indirectly to current events. The Waldensian heresy was widespread among German speakers in Bohemia in the mid-fourteenth century.¹⁰⁸ Measures against it included a treatise in which the heretics, who were noted for their outward compliance with the established church, were identified with Antichrist, who was similarly able to deceive through external appearances.¹⁰⁹ This well-known treatise may thus have influenced the iconography of the innocent-looking Antichrist in the Velislav Bible. However, as I discuss below, no such contemporary reference in relation to the figure of Antichrist is made in the imagery at Karlstein.

Charles IV's autobiography is a rare and valuable source of evidence as to the personal beliefs and interests of a patron of a monumental Apocalypse cycle.¹¹⁰ Despite the demonstrable currency of Antichrist beliefs and other radical apocalyptic ideas at his court, Charles himself makes little or no reference to the tradition. For example, in his scene-setting discussion of European politics, he has occasion to mention his imperial rival Louis of Bavaria, but he does not condemn him or use inflammatory language, contenting himself with remarking only that Louis created an 'antipapam nomine Nicolaum, ordinis Minorum.'¹¹¹ Later, Charles returns to this topic, describing how just before his own election as emperor, his father John of Luxembourg argued before the papal court that Louis of Bavaria 'non esset verus

¹⁰⁸ Lambert, *Medieval heresy*, 149-56; A. Patschovsky, 'Ketzer und Ketzerverfolgung in Böhmen im Jahrhundert vor Hus', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 32 (1981), 262, 266-67. On Charles IV's strong stance against heresy, see Lambert, *Medieval heresy*, 286.

¹⁰⁹ On the treatise, *De Antichristo*, see A. Patschovsky, *Der Passauer Anonymus: Ein Sammelwerk über Ketzer, Juden, Antichrist aus der Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1968), Appx. II, 157-68. My thanks to Peter Biller for this point.

¹¹⁰ Charles IV, *Vita Karoli IV Imperatoris*, ed. J. Emler (Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, vol. 3, 323-417) (Prague, 1882). Abridged English translation in Jarrett, *Charles IV*, 33-68.

¹¹¹ *Vita Karoli IV*, 341.

imperator, cum ipse staret contra sacrosanctam Romanam ecclesiam.’¹¹² Again the language is very moderate, considering the widely disseminated and papally-sanctioned use of the term ‘Antichrist’ against Louis of Bavaria.¹¹³

Overall, in fact, Charles’s use of the Apocalypse in his autobiography is temperate when compared with the excesses of some of his courtiers and advisers. He does refer frequently to John the Evangelist, but predominantly to his Gospel rather than the Apocalypse.¹¹⁴ His only direct apocalyptic references occur in a passage discussing the Last Judgement and the kingdom of heaven, in which he draws on a variety of Old and New Testament sources including the New Jerusalem of Apoc. 21 and the image of the martyrs under the altar of Apoc. 6: 9-11.¹¹⁵ However, he also employs imagery evocative of John’s vision in his description of a prophetic dream he was granted at Tarenzo. An angel appears to him on a Sunday,¹¹⁶ saying ‘Surge et veni nobiscum’; he is taken up into the air and shown a castle and an army prepared for battle. Further references to the Apocalypse occur in this passage with an ‘alter angelus descendens de celo’ (cf. Apoc. 10: 1) and ‘multos viros stantes amictos palliis albis’ (similar to the blessed of Apoc. 6: 11, 7: 9 and so on, although in the Vulgate the garments are always ‘stolae’).¹¹⁷ The use of the Apocalypse in his autobiography, then, demonstrates that Charles’s interest in the text focused more on descriptions of the heavenly court, and imagery relating to his own assumption of the role of visionary, than on scenes of monstrous beasts, massacres and earthquakes. The autobiography’s only allusion to the end times comes in the reported speech of a servant, who wakes him one morning with the news that ‘ “The last day has come; get up, the world is covered with locusts” ’.

¹¹² *Vita Karoli IV*, 368.

¹¹³ Reeves, *Influence*, 321-22.

¹¹⁴ See, for example, the three references to ‘Aquilaris’ in the opening section (*Vita Karoli IV*, 336).

¹¹⁵ *Vita Karoli IV*, 356-59.

¹¹⁶ Charles altered the actual date of the event in order to place his vision, like John’s, on the ‘Lord’s day’, and on the Feast of the Assumption.

¹¹⁷ *Vita Karoli IV*, 347; Jarrett, *Charles IV*, 44-45.

Charles's response to this sudden plague is more scientific than eschatological: 'I rode hurriedly out, wishing to see where they were.'¹¹⁸

Charles's apparent indifference in his autobiography to radical interpretations of the Apocalypse is borne out also by his actions. While Cola di Rienzo was for a while politely received in Prague, his eschatological programme for Charles was ignored and he was eventually sent back to the jurisdiction of the pope. This sober reaction suggests Charles was not tempted to play out the extreme role of last world emperor. Even Cola's prophecies of certain victory in Italy did not entice Charles into abandoning everyday political realities.¹¹⁹ He did, in fact, accomplish the brief restoration of the papacy to Rome (not in itself a necessarily eschatological act), but through his usual diplomatic means rather than by force. He was similarly pragmatic on the level of domestic morality: following the death of the movement's leader in 1374, Charles reassigned the buildings of 'Jerusalem' to the accommodation of Cistercian students at the University.¹²⁰

Nevertheless, the fact remains that Charles chose to have two chapels at Karlstein decorated with the rare subject matter of John's Apocalypse. These pictures themselves are as much an expression of Charles's ideas as his actions or autobiography, and perhaps more so in that they relate more specifically to the spiritual, rather than political, part of his life. It is to the images themselves that we now turn.

Much of the interpretation put forth by Vlasta Dvoráková about the overall decorative scheme at Karlstein is valid, or makes interesting suggestions.¹²¹

However, her desire to read the entire castle as a completely unified symbolic

¹¹⁸ Jarrett, *Charles IV*, 56.

¹¹⁹ Schmolinsky, 'Prophetisch-endzeitliches Denken im Umkreis Karls IV', 105; Reeves, *Influence*, 319.

¹²⁰ Winter, *Frühhumanismus*, 99.

¹²¹ V. Dvoráková, J. Krása, A. Merhautová, K. Stejskal, *Gothic mural painting in Bohemia and Moravia 1300-1378* (London, 1964), 51-65.

document leads her to argue that like all the other decorative schemes, the Apocalypse paintings were intended as a form of imperial propaganda. It is true that the secular and public spaces of the reception halls in the imperial palace conveyed fairly unequivocal messages about Charles IV's imperial destiny.¹²² However, it is, I would suggest, unnecessary to read a perfectly standard presentation of the apocalyptic Godhead in the Holy Cross chapel (fig. 29) as a coded message that the emperor's constitutional reform, the Golden Bull of 1356, was 'first approved in heaven [and] communicated by special grace to the Emperor.'¹²³ This is simply not borne out by the imagery itself.

Since Dvoráková argues that the overriding theme of the whole castle is the idea of a united Roman empire, the apocalyptic scenes in the Marian chapel can only be fitted into her scheme as a pictorial representation of the last world emperor legend, presented through 'the world-historical theme of the Apocalypse.'¹²⁴ Unfortunately for this theory, no sign of a strong historicising interpretation (such as is found, for instance, in the London Altarpiece) is apparent in the chapel's imagery. Still less is there reference to the last world emperor myth.¹²⁵ Antichrist, a figure central to the last world emperor tradition and important also in contemporary political discourse (as discussed above), completely fails to appear. To begin with, there is no separate series of pictures of Antichrist's life, such as are found in the Velislav Bible: this, however, is not particularly surprising as these occur in no

¹²² The reception hall in the imperial palace, for example, was filled with an elaborate 'genealogy' of the House of Luxembourg, which traced Charles's ancestors back through Charlemagne and Clovis to Noah and Jupiter (this cycle is no longer extant but is known through sixteenth-century sketches): see Dvoráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 53-56, 134; N. Kubu, *Karlštejn Castle: guide*, trans. J. Turner-Kadecková (Prague, n.d.), 20. The niche in which the emperor's throne was positioned in the audience chamber displayed the painted inscriptions 'Roma caput mundi tenet frena orbis rotundi' and the Roman device 'SPQR': K. Stejskal, *European art in the fourteenth century*, English edn. (London, 1978), 106; Dvoráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 57.

¹²³ Dvoráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 64.

¹²⁴ Dvoráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 57.

¹²⁵ On which, see below.

known monumental Apocalypse cycle, and only in a small number of manuscripts. However, several fourteenth-century cycles, including the Velislav Bible (fol. 162r), present a human Antichrist as the agent of the witnesses' death; more common still is the re-appearance of Abaddon, king of the locusts, who is also quasi-human.¹²⁶ At Karlstein, however, the witnesses are killed by a dog- or dragon-like monster, a literal reading of 'the beast that ascendeth out of the abyss' (Apoc. 11: 7, fig. 30). The inscription refers simply to the biblical passage and does not identify the beast with Antichrist.¹²⁷ This is hardly the type of representation we would expect if reference was being made to imperially-focused readings.

The imagery of the Karlstein Apocalypse cycle resolutely resists attempts to read into it an imperial eschatology. This is despite the political and cultural environment of its patronage centre and its placement in a castle where several of the other decorative schemes relate quite clearly to promotion of the empire and the emperor. By way of comparison, it is valuable now to turn to another monumental cycle in which the political affiliations and ambitions of the patron seem to have played a more decisive role in the development of the imagery.

Angers

That Louis I of Anjou had some interest in the Apocalypse is clear enough from his commissioning of a vast tapestry on the subject. What is more difficult to determine is his own likely understanding of the book. I will argue here that certain details in the tapestry's imagery suggest that Louis was interested in contemporary prophetic writings which used apocalyptic language. Although we have no specific documentary evidence for his knowledge of apocalyptic prophecy, his

¹²⁶ See, for example, the Angers Tapestry (Muel et al., *La tenture*), scene 31.

¹²⁷ A. Friedl, *Mistr Karlštejnské Apokalypsy* (Prague, 1950), 11.

position as an ambitious political figure makes it highly likely that he was aware of prophecies circulating in the second half of the fourteenth century, in some of which the French ruling house was given a leading role.

The strand of eschatological prophecy most likely to appeal to Louis, in its emphasis on the role a great leader — Christian but secular — could play in the last days, drew on the idea of the last world emperor.¹²⁸ This figure was expected to conquer the world, converting the heathens and Jews, defeat Antichrist (at least on his first appearance) and transfer the imperium from Rome to Jerusalem; there he would reign over the world until the second coming of Christ ushered in the Last Judgement.¹²⁹ In the fourteenth century this narrative was combined with that of the angelic pope: the two holy figures, one secular and one religious, would form an alliance to fight Antichrist.¹³⁰

These powerful myths were appropriated by late-medieval prophets and polemicists in favour of a number of different European rulers: each was cast as the earthly saviour while his enemies were seen as the forces of Antichrist.¹³¹ Beginning in the early fourteenth century, writers linked the French king, self-proclaimed descendant of the great and pious emperor Charlemagne, with the figure of the last world emperor.¹³² Their prophecies were given resonance by the papacy's move from Rome to Avignon in 1305. Seen elsewhere in Europe as a calamity — the 'Babylonian captivity' of the papacy — to the pro-French prophets the move was a positive sign, the first step towards the hoped-for alliance between the French king and the true pope.¹³³

¹²⁸ McGinn, ed., *Apocalyptic spirituality*, 85-86.

¹²⁹ McGinn, ed., *Visions of the end*, 75-76, 85-86; Reeves, *Influence*, 299-302.

¹³⁰ McGinn, Bernard, 'Angel pope and papal Antichrist', *Church History* 47 (1978), 155-73; Reeves, *Influence*, 401-15.

¹³¹ McGinn, ed., *Visions of the end*, 246-48; Reeves, *Influence*, 327.

¹³² Reeves, *Influence*, 320-31; McGinn, 'Angel pope and papal Antichrist,' 165.

¹³³ Reeves, *Influence*, 320-31.

The French monarchy was particularly emphasised in the prophecies of Jean de Roquetaillade, 'author of the boldest prophetic system of the later Middle Ages'.¹³⁴ His works were widely disseminated from Avignon in the mid-fourteenth century, where although imprisoned he was allowed to continue with his compositions.¹³⁵ His pro-French, pro-Spiritual, Joachite prophecies circulated throughout Europe, enjoying a particular success (for obvious reasons) in France: his writings were known and excerpted by courtly chroniclers such as Jean le Bel and Froissart.¹³⁶ In a number of tracts written between 1345 and 1356 Roquetaillade detailed his expectations for the last days, incorporating recent events, such as the plague and French defeats in the war with England, as signs of the coming time of tribulation. He announced that the Great Antichrist, a Hohenstaufen or Aragonese descendant of Frederick II, would be elected emperor in Rome during the 1360s, and would rule together with his accomplice, the false pope.¹³⁷ Meanwhile, the true pope, along with the Franciscan Spirituals, would find refuge in the kingdom of France. In Roquetaillade's early works, the French king's role is limited to providing military support to the angelic pope. In the later prophecies, however, he takes on the characteristics of the last world emperor: 'the French king ... [will become] Roman emperor, contrary to the custom of German elections. God will generally subdue the whole world to him ... He will be of such sanctity that no emperor or king from the beginning of the world is his equal in sanctity, save ... Jesus Christ.'¹³⁸ This scenario promised the French king not only complete earthly sovereignty but alliance with the most holy of popes and personal salvation.

¹³⁴ Lerner, 'The medieval return to the thousand-year Sabbath', 66.

¹³⁵ See Bignami-Odier, *Jean de Roquetaillade*, 158; Reeves, *Influence*, 225-28, 416-18; Lerner, 'The Black Death', 93, 86-87, 99n20; Leff, *Heresy in the later Middle Ages*, 235ff.

¹³⁶ Bignami-Odier, *Jean de Roquetaillade*, 181-85; Lerner, 'The Black Death', 86-87, 93, 99n20.

¹³⁷ Bignami-Odier, *Jean de Roquetaillade*, 80-81; Reeves, *Influence*, 321-24; McGinn, ed., *Visions of the end*, 336n9.

¹³⁸ Jean de Roquetaillade, *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, trans. McGinn, *Visions of the end*, 231-32; see also Bignami-Odier, *Jean de Roquetaillade*, 171.

The francophile last days scenario outlined by Roquetaillade continued to have currency in the second half of the fourteenth century, influencing other writers such as John of Bassigny and Telesphorus of Cosenza. Writing around 1361, John of Bassigny predicted that a young hero would assume the French crown and dominate the world, supporting the holy pope and fulfilling the role of the last world emperor: this prophecy was probably intended to refer to Charles V, who was Dauphin and regent at the time.¹³⁹ Telesphorus, who wrote between 1356 and 1390, made explicit the link between the French last world emperor and the current French kings (Charles V and, especially, Charles VI) by giving the expected French emperor the name 'Karolus'. The continuous interaction between prophetic writings and contemporary politics is most obvious in an anonymous prophecy of 1380 ('the Second Charlemagne prophecy') that was written specifically for the accession of Charles VI.¹⁴⁰

As the brother of the French king, Louis of Anjou had a dynastic interest in royal propaganda, including presumably the prophecies of the French last world emperor. Louis was a trusted adviser and strong supporter of his brother. He acted as his chief military adviser, and sometimes executive, especially in the Languedoc where he was governor.¹⁴¹ However, it is also quite possible that Louis envisaged himself as succeeding to the throne of France. Until 1368, when Charles V's heir was born after eighteen years of marriage, Louis was next in line to the throne. Even after this date, Louis could expect to be regent if his sickly brother died young; Louis did in fact become regent in 1380.

¹³⁹ Lerner, 'The Black Death', 89-90.

¹⁴⁰ Extracts from these works are found in McGinn, ed., *Visions of the end*, 247, 250-51; see also Reeves, *Influence*, 320-31.

¹⁴¹ G. Duby, *France in the Middle Ages, 987-1460: from Hugh Capet to Joan of Arc*, trans. J. Vale (Oxford, 1991), 285; Jean Froissart, *Chronicles*, selected, trans. and ed. G. Brereton (Harmondsworth, 1968), 181-82, 190.

With the birth of Charles V's second son in 1371, Louis's prospect of outright rule in France retreated and he began to look to Italy for a possible domain. To further his ambitions, he deliberately forged an alliance with the Avignon papacy in the early years of the Schism. Even before Charles V took up his cause, Louis of Anjou supported Clement VII, expressing his delight that a Frenchman had become pope and referring to Urban VI as Antichrist.¹⁴² His support was also expressed in material terms: he supplied Clement with money and soldiers to combat the Roman faction and its imperial supporters.¹⁴³ In return for this military support, Clement offered Louis the possibility of an Italian kingdom, to be composed of whatever part of the papal state he could win back from the Roman pope.¹⁴⁴

Before Louis had begun this venture, however, events in southern Italy forced a change of plan. Queen Joanna of Naples, granddaughter of Robert and Clement's only Italian supporter, had been deposed and imprisoned by her rival Charles of Durazzo, a supporter of the Roman pope. Clement hoped Louis would redress this situation and return the kingdom to its traditional French allegiance. As an incentive, he arranged for Joanna to adopt Louis as her heir, thus neatly restoring the southern Angevin kingdom to the French cadet house which had originally founded it a century before.¹⁴⁵ When in 1382 Joanna was assassinated, Louis became titular king of the double realm of Sicily, and was crowned in Avignon. The importance Louis placed on this inheritance is demonstrated by the fact that he immediately set out to claim his new Italian territory. He died near Bari in 1384, awaiting reinforcements for his unsuccessful campaign. In his will, dated 1383,

¹⁴² These views are found in two of Louis's letters, which are quoted at length in N. Valois, *La France et le grand schisme d'occident* (Paris, 1896-1902, repr. Hildesheim, 1967), vol. 1, 151-52, 182n1.

¹⁴³ Froissart, *Chronicles*, 206-10; Valois, *La France et le grand schisme*, vol. 1, 113, 145-58.

¹⁴⁴ Valois, *La France et le grand schisme*, vol. 1, 167-69.

¹⁴⁵ Valois, *La France et le grand schisme*, vol. 1, 178-92, vol. 2, 8-20; Froissart, *Chronicles*, 209-10; D. Abulafia, *The western Mediterranean kingdoms 1200-1500: the struggle for dominion* (London and New York, 1997), 145, 168.

Louis expressed his thanks to God for raising him first from the rank of count to duke, and then from duke to king.¹⁴⁶

It seems, however, that Louis's objectives may have been even more ambitious. Christine de Pizan, writing only twenty years after his death, asserted that had not fate intervened, Louis would certainly have managed 'à conquerir l'empire de Romme, auquel avoit grant affection et esperance.'¹⁴⁷ The eagle, long an imperial symbol, was taken by Louis as a personal emblem: it appears on much of his silver and gold plate (often associated with a crown or the Anjou double cross) as well as on his private seal, in use between 1365 and 1380.¹⁴⁸ Louis's uncle, Charles IV, had been emperor, and it appears that he aspired to the position himself.

Louis's new kingdom of Sicily, Naples and Provence also nominally included Jerusalem, in reality long since lost by the West. Even before his inheritance of the kingdom, however, Louis appears to have envisaged a role for himself in the recapture of the holy land. Catherine of Siena, who zealously argued the need for a new crusade, saw Louis as the perfect leader for it: in 1376, she appealed to him to take up the cross, and he accepted the mission.¹⁴⁹ In 1383 he re-affirmed that he planned to take Jerusalem, his 'autre royaume', once he had conquered Naples.¹⁵⁰ The conquest of Jerusalem was of course the climax of all versions of the last world emperor narrative, whatever their political allegiance: after conquering and converting the entire world, the emperor was to lay down his crown on the Holy Sepulchre in recognition that the time for the second coming of Christ

¹⁴⁶ For details of the will see Valois, *La France et le grand schisme*, vol. 2, 63, and F. Robin, *La cour d'Anjou-Provence: la vie artistique sous le règne de René* (Paris, 1985), 53-54, 169.

¹⁴⁷ Christine de Pizan, *Le livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, ed. S. Solente (1936, repr. Paris, 1977), vol. 1, 139.

¹⁴⁸ Robin, *La cour d'Anjou-Provence*, 168; Muel et al., *La tenture*, 44, 48, fig. 29.

¹⁴⁹ R. Delachenal, *Histoire de Charles V* (Paris, 1909-31), vol. 4, 598.

¹⁵⁰ Valois, *La France et le grand schisme*, vol. 2, 63-64.

was at hand.¹⁵¹ Louis's ambitions in the 1370s and 80s, pragmatically political as they no doubt were, thus interestingly mirror many aspects of apocalyptic prophecy.

If Louis was aware of prophecies such as those of Roquetaillade, they may well have seemed particularly pertinent to him. Roquetaillade had written that the future Great Antichrist was to be a king of Sicily named Louis.¹⁵² This arresting information would not, however, have alarmed Louis of Anjou, although he was an aspirant to the throne of Sicily. Antichrist was to come not from the blessed French race but from among the Hohenstaufen or Aragonese heirs of Frederick II.¹⁵³ Thus whereas Louis of Anjou was related to the pro-papal French founders of the Italian Angevin kingdom, Antichrist in Roquetaillade's writing represents their great rivals, the Hohenstaufen/Aragonese claimants to the kingdom. Thus through his name, title and family, Roquetaillade's Antichrist could be read as the symbolic antithesis of Louis of Anjou and equated with his political enemies.

Roquetaillade and Telesphorus prophesied that Antichrist would appear within Louis's lifetime; as each relevant date passed, these prophecies were revised to maintain their currency. The circumstances of Louis of Anjou's life make it highly likely that he was aware of these contemporary eschatological prophecies, although this cannot be conclusively proven. No list of Louis's own books survives. But Louis's activities in the 1370s and 1380s were certainly consistent with the prophecies' emphasis on the alliance between the great French royal hero and the French-based pope, furthering the hypothesis that he was aware of, and perhaps influenced by, this eschatological framework. As detailed above, Louis put considerable effort into creating an alliance with the Avignon papacy, positioning

¹⁵¹ McGinn, 'Joachim and the Sibyl', 109.

¹⁵² Bignami-Odier, *Jean de Roquetaillade*, 81; Reeves, *Influence*, 321.

¹⁵³ See also Bignami-Odier, *Jean de Roquetaillade*, 102-03, where Roquetaillade states that the person who will do the most in the fight against Antichrist will be one of the princes born to the French king John.

himself in the role of the French military supporter of the true pope. He gained papal support for his ambitions for a kingdom of his own, and thus became involved in the complexities of the Angevin kingdom of Naples, also the focus of some parts of the prophetic narrative. He planned to conquer Jerusalem and perhaps to become emperor, aims which match two further elements in the French last world emperor myth. These are the elements of Louis's career which feed into an eschatological narrative. With these in mind we can approach the Apocalypse Tapestry, to assess whether any sign of the patron's political interests is visible in the imagery of this impressive work.

The Angers Tapestry is, of all the cycles in this study, perhaps the most fully engaged with its contemporary context and the environment for which it was produced. Yet even here the results are sometimes unexpected, as for example in the deployment and placing of heraldry throughout the tapestry. The familial and personal devices of Louis (and occasionally also of his wife) appear at various points throughout the tapestry, in order to signal clearly to viewers the identity of the person who commissioned and owned it.¹⁵⁴

These heraldic devices appear most obviously in the large opening images which act as framing devices for the six sections of the tapestry, but they also appear sometimes in the upper border, and hence in relation to the narrative. Since no particular internal pattern is apparent, one might imagine that the shields were used to associate the patron with the scenes above which they appear. Yet an examination of these scenes reveals that they are by no means all the type of positive images with which patrons in general prefer to be associated.¹⁵⁵ For example, a shield of Anjou

¹⁵⁴ For a plan of their locations see Muel et al., *La tenture*, fig. 25.

¹⁵⁵ Each section of the tapestry was woven in one piece, so the juxtaposition of the heraldry with narrative scenes is an original and integral part of the work. It is possible that the placement of the heraldic devices corresponded in some way to the intended scheme for hanging the tapestry. However, since tapestries were portable and could be deployed in a variety of locations, the use of a design device predicated on one location seems rather unlikely.

is located above one of the most alarmingly demonic scenes, that depicting the evil spirits in the form of frogs issuing from the mouths of the two beasts and the dragon (scene 62, fig. 31);¹⁵⁶ it is true, however, that it is placed nearer to the positive figure of John than to the beasts. The same could not be said of scene 44, in which the beast from the earth causes fire to fall from heaven: this is often interpreted as one of the false miracles performed by Antichrist to deceive the faithful. The shield of Anjou here is placed directly above the fiery cloud, and its red border reflects the cloud's flames, creating a strong visual link (fig. 32). The shield also appears above the scene in which the beast imprints his character on the hands and foreheads of his followers, who appear in contemporary dress (scene 46, fig. 33). These placement choices seem odd in light of the fact that there are a number of more 'positive' scenes available in the upper row of this section which have not been honoured with a heraldic patronage mark, including the Lamb worshipped on Mt Sion, the new song and the angel with the everlasting gospel (Apoc. 14: 1-7).

On the other hand, often the shields are positioned above scenes either unambiguously or arguably positive in their connotations. Three shields are displayed in close succession in the third piece above a set of scenes which tell the story of the two witnesses (scenes 30-33). The first is unproblematically located above the witnesses, God's instruments (fig. 34). The next is placed between two scenes in which the forces of evil appear to triumph: the death of the witnesses at the hands of the bat-winged Abaddon, and the joy of the people at this event. However, since the heraldic shield is positioned centrally, above John (fig. 35), its association is with him as a startled onlooker to these events rather than with the events themselves. The final shield in this sequence appears, once more unproblematically, above the resurrection of the witnesses; here, it is specifically positioned above their ascension to heaven in a cloud (fig. 36). Most positive of all in the associations

¹⁵⁶ Scene numbers refer to the system used in Muel et al., *La tenture*, figure numbers to this thesis.

caused by their placement above the narrative are the banners in the first two sections of the tapestry and the final heraldic shield. The first banner is located over the scene in which John weeps, because he thinks no one is worthy to open the book with the seven seals (scene 6, fig. 37); here, the Angevin prince might through his heraldry be signalling his identification with the pious desires of John. The second banner is the only one located above any of the theophanic images which are so frequent in the first two sections of the tapestry: here, Christ, the Lamb and angels with their trumpets appear, representing the opening of the seventh seal (scene 17, fig. 38). The final surviving occurrence of heraldry in the tapestry (scene 73, fig. 39) is spectacularly righteous in its placement: the shield (which although damaged appears in its original place) is located directly above the Conqueror on the white horse (Apoc. 19: 11-21). This character, although here identified specifically with Christ through his cruciform halo, is nevertheless suggestive of the last world emperor, in that he rides at the head of a triumphant army which is putting the beasts and their followers to flight. Although it is hard to be certain given the ambiguous uses of heraldry discussed above, the appearance of the patron's arms here may be a visual clue that he wished to be identified with this martial, eschatological figure.¹⁵⁷

The scene adjacent to this (74, fig. 40) may also make reference to Louis's heraldry, although in a more oblique manner, through its internal imagery. As the Conqueror thrusts the beasts and their followers into the pool of fire, birds arrive to pick the flesh. The biblical text speaks generally of 'all the birds that did fly through the midst of heaven' (Apoc. 19: 17), but in the tapestry three eagles are represented. The Berengaudus commentary equates the birds at this point with the faithful, engaged in the destruction of the wicked,¹⁵⁸ so the use of one of the patron's personal emblems here could well be significant. The hypothesis that the image

¹⁵⁷ My thanks to Rick Emmerson for suggesting this point.

¹⁵⁸ Berengaudus, *PL* 17: 922-29.

consciously draws a link between the patron and these divinely-sanctioned birds is furthered by comparison with the tapestry's treatment of an earlier scene involving birds. The birds that appear in the fall of Babylon (scene 66, fig. 41) are not heavenly agents but rather embody the angel's declaration that the city has become 'the hold of every unclean spirit, and the hold of every unclean and hateful bird' (Apoc. 18: 2): to depict this scene, the tapestry employs swallows and gulls, but no eagles.

Further evidence that the tapestry's imagery can draw attention to the context for which it was produced is found within other narrative scenes. For example, in the first theophany of the piece (scene 4, fig. 42), the traditional iconography of the twenty-four crowned elders grouped around God is altered to make them more specifically royal and contemporary. The text requires them to be dressed in white (Apoc. 4: 4) but in the tapestry they wear robes of different colours; instead of being physically indistinguishable one from another, as is usual in the manuscripts (fig. 44), they have individuated faces, hair and beard styles. More intriguingly, the kings seated in the traditional position of honour on God's right are holding lilies which naturally evoke the flower's stylised version, the fleur-de-lys, symbol of the French monarchy and of the house of Anjou.¹⁵⁹ In the top left compartment appears a particularly large, prominent and stylised flower (fig. 43); the king who holds it, through his clean-shaven, youthful features (somewhat inappropriate for an 'elder') and the style of his hair, resembles the standard fourteenth-century image of the French monarch.¹⁶⁰ Yet if this is a hint to encourage the viewer to imagine the

¹⁵⁹ The kings are not required by the text of Chapter 4 to carry anything, but, as Muel points out (*La tenture*, 100), some manuscripts include in this image the 'vials full of odours' attributed to the kings in Apoc. 5: 8. It seems, however, highly unlikely that such a potent symbol as the lily was introduced by mere accident, in a confusion caused by the shapes of the vials, as Muel suggests. On the importance of the fleur-de-lys in the late fourteenth century, see C. Beaune, *The birth of an ideology: myths and symbols of nation in late-medieval France*, trans. S.R. Huston, ed. F.L. Cheyette (Berkeley, 1991), 198, 201-25.

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, the illustrations to the *Grandes Chroniques* in A.D. Hedeman, *The royal image: illustrations of the Grandes Chroniques de France, 1274-1422* (Berkeley, 1991), *passim*.

French ruling house represented in heaven as well as on earth, it is a subtle one, for although the contemporary coloured clothing of the kings continues to appear in the next scenes (5 and 7), the beardless young king and the lilies do not.

Another departure from both the text and the manuscript tradition is found in the important scene (16) picturing the multitude of the elect, who 'are come out of great tribulation' (Apoc. 7: 14). As in the most common manuscript paradigm, the worshippers are divided into three horizontal registers around the figures of God and the Lamb, enclosed in a quatrefoil mandorla (fig. 45). However, in the central register, the Angers Tapestry does not represent the twenty-four crowned elders, who are specified in the text (Apoc. 7: 11) and presented in many manuscripts (fig. 46).¹⁶¹ Instead, it portrays earthly representatives of secular and ecclesiastical power, identified by their headgear and ranked hierarchically. On God's left are a pope, cardinal and bishop, on his right, an emperor, king and lord; beneath them are representatives of the lower orders, both secular and religious (including a Franciscan friar). As with the earlier depiction of the elders, the tapestry replaces the conventional 'white robes' (Apoc. 7: 9) with different coloured contemporary garments suitable to each class of people. In the context of the tapestry's patronage, it is significant that featured among the palm-bearing elect is a nobleman, in diadem and ermine-trimmed mantle, who could be read as a representative of Louis of Anjou. Even closer to the centre of divine power are the other two secular rulers, king and emperor, both titles to which Louis himself aspired during the 1370s, the decade in which the tapestry was made.

The altered character of this scene is also suggestive when considered in the light of the fourteenth-century prophecies discussed above, in which the true pope

¹⁶¹ I have here compared the Apocalypse manuscripts belonging to the Cloisters (ed. Deuchler et al., fol. 11r), the Pierpont Morgan Library and that formerly held at Metz, which for this scene is the closest in overall composition to the tapestry (particularly in the position of Christ and the Lamb and the quatrefoil shape of their mandorla): S. Lewis, *Reading images: narrative discourse and reception in the thirteenth-century illuminated Apocalypse* (Cambridge, 1995), figs. 53, 54.

and emperor are given a vital role. The tapestry positions the two most important servants of God from this eschatological tradition on either side of the central mandorla: the pope on God's left, and the emperor in the position of highest honour on his right. The balancing of these two figures, as well as the similarity between the closed imperial crown and the papal tiara, creates a link between them that reflects their expected alliance in the end times. The tapestry's depiction of this scene thus supports the eschatological scenario in which powerful rulers, if sufficiently pious, can hope to be numbered among God's elect, those who, in the comforting words of the vision,

shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.¹⁶²

Attention is drawn even more specifically to the patron in another key scene of the tapestry (39, fig. 47), in which the dragon makes war on those who 'keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ' (Apoc. 12: 17). The use, unique to this scene, of a monogram as the background pattern device signals the patron's wish to be identified with this vivid portrayal of the struggle against evil. The intertwined letters 'LM' stand for Louis and Marie, his wife, who are thereby specifically aligned with the forces of good, depicted fighting the dragon in the foreground.¹⁶³ Four figures attack the dragon: three laymen and a Franciscan friar. Although they wield weapons, they are not otherwise dressed for battle, but wear ordinary clothing, perhaps to suggest that their struggle is more allegorical, in the daily avoidance of the sins represented (according to the French prose gloss) by the dragon's seven heads,¹⁶⁴ than actual in either current political or eschatological

¹⁶² Apoc. 7: 16-17.

¹⁶³ R. Planchenault, *The Angers Tapestries*, trans. D. Mahaffey (Paris, 1980), 26.

¹⁶⁴ E. Fridner, ed., *An English fourteenth-century Apocalypse version with a prose commentary: edited from MS. Harley 874 and ten other manuscripts* (Lund Studies in English 29) (Lund and Copenhagen, 1961), 92.

terms. The vivid and highly focused composition of this scene is a distinct move away from the Anglo-French manuscript tradition. The manuscripts generally present the servants of God as a number of small, separated individuals, ranged in two registers, and often completely dwarfed by the dragon (fig. 48).¹⁶⁵ The tapestry, on the other hand, by its grouping of the four figures, creates the impression of a large, united and powerful body made up of individuals, both secular and religious, who are working together to attack the dragon successfully: already the two spear thrusts have drawn blood and another man is poised to strike a vigorous blow with his sword. The figures' contemporary clothing highlights the immediate relevance of their action to the onlookers, who are thus encouraged to ponder the importance of aligning themselves with the servants of God, as Louis has so clearly done through the use of the monogram.

One final, and striking, example of an alteration to standard imagery is found in the image of the Harvest of the Earth (Apoc. 14: 14-16). In the Anglo-French manuscripts 'one like the Son of Man' — often a Christ-like figure, although not always identified with a cross-nimbus — appears twice in the same scene (fig. 49). In the upper part of the scene he sits on the cloud, while in the lower part he reappears, identical in appearance, actually performing the reaping.¹⁶⁶ In the Angers Tapestry (scene 53, fig. 50), by contrast, the two figures are not alike: the first is, as is usual in the manuscripts, crowned and bearded, while the second, although also crowned, is a younger man dressed in the distinctive garments and bands of a Master of Arts. These plain academic robes, the crown, and the hairstyle of the second figure, are strongly reminiscent of the standard iconographic depiction of the

¹⁶⁵ See, for example, the Cloisters Apocalypse (ed. Deuchler et al., 22r); the Burckhardt-Wildt Apocalypse (P.M. de Winter, 'Visions of the Apocalypse in medieval England and France', *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 70 [1983], fig. 20); the Pierpont Morgan and Douce Apocalypses (Lewis, *Reading images*, figs. 98-99).

¹⁶⁶ See, for example, Lewis, *Reading images*, fig. 119; Cloisters Apocalypse (ed. Deuchler et al.), fol. 28.

patron's brother, Charles V. He was frequently portrayed in this way in portraits, including those produced by Jean Bondol, the royal painter who also designed the Angers Tapestry (figs. 51, 52).¹⁶⁷ This raises the question of why a portrait of the king, or at least a figure who through his appearance and clothing would have been strongly suggestive of him to contemporaries accustomed to the preferred royal imagery, should be included at this point in the tapestry.

For an explanation, we have to turn away from the standard Berengaudus gloss of the Anglo-French manuscripts, which identifies the Harvester as Christ and the entire passage of the harvest and the vintage as a description of the Judgement.¹⁶⁸ By contrast, the historicising commentaries of the Franciscans Alexander Minorita and Nicholas of Lyra have a markedly different interpretation of the figure of the Harvester. Having reached the eighth century by this point in the text, they both identify him as Pepin, King of the Franks; the reaping action is understood as his attack on the Lombards.¹⁶⁹ This is the first occurrence of the Frankish people in the history purveyed by the glossators. Nicholas of Lyra goes on to disagree with his source, Alexander, and read nearly the whole of Chapter 16 (the seven vials) as referring to Charlemagne.¹⁷⁰ This emphasis on the French role in history is hardly surprising considering Lyra's French birth, education at the University of Paris, and contact with the royal house itself.¹⁷¹ Thus it seems most likely that it is his pro-French gloss, written in 1329 and widely disseminated, rather than the earlier,

¹⁶⁷ Apart from Bondol's famous portrait of the king and the Parement de Narbonne, Charles is depicted in a similar way in numerous other portraits. See the exhibition catalogue, *La librairie de Charles V* (Bibliothèque Nationale) (Paris, 1968), col. pl. 5, pl. 2, pl. 3 (nos. 177 and 203), pl. 19. See also C.R. Sherman, *The portraits of Charles V of France (1338-80)* (New York, 1969).

¹⁶⁸ Berengaudus, *PL* 17: 888-98.

¹⁶⁹ Alexander Minorita, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, 292-320; Nicholas of Lyra, *Apocalypse commentary*, 169-70.

¹⁷⁰ Nicholas of Lyra, *Apocalypse commentary*, 171, 176-84.

¹⁷¹ Nicholas of Lyra, *Apocalypse commentary*, 191n14; P. Buc, 'Pouvoir royal et commentaires de la Bible (1150-1350)', *Annales* 44 (3) (1989), 691-713, 705; P. Krey, 'Many readers but few followers: the fate of Nicholas of Lyra's "Apocalypse Commentary" in the hands of his late-medieval admirers', *Church History* 64 (1995), 185-201.

Saxon-focused and less well-known commentary by Alexander, that lies behind this arresting alteration to the standard Anglo-French iconography of the tapestry.

The presentation of a figure identified with Pepin in a manner strongly reminiscent of the reigning monarch links the ancient rulers of the realm with their modern-day inheritors, the Valois, whose relatively new line was noted for its sophisticated use of such authoritative royal imagery.¹⁷² Furthermore, the actions of Pepin as described by Nicholas of Lyra involved both supporting the pope and invading Italy, which means the image could be read as highly pertinent to Louis's own political ambitions in the 1370s, as discussed above. The pro-French apocalyptic scenarios of Roquetaillade and Telesphorus specifically state that the royal partner of the angelic pope is to come from the line of Pepin.¹⁷³ However, the historicising commentary seems to have had little other impact on the tapestry: for example, in the following section, in which Charlemagne is glorified by Lyra, the tapestry is totally free of pictorial allusion to this reading.

A number of scenes within the Angers Tapestry, then, provide evidence of a personal involvement of the patron with the Apocalypse. While some examples, on their own, might suggest only a general desire to be identified with the positive characters of the narrative, others seem to respond well to a reading informed by knowledge of contemporary pro-French uses of the text, whether prophetic works which engaged with current politics, or historical commentaries which could be used to bolster the authority of the reigning royal house. Yet, although their iconography is striking, scenes of the type I have focused on here make up only a small percentage of the tapestry's narrative. The appearance of contemporary references

¹⁷² Charles V deliberately based his image as an monarch on his powerful and saintly ancestors. See Beaune, *The birth of an ideology*, 91, 116-17; Hedeman, *The royal image*, 1-3, 98, 151-52; Sherman, *The portraits of Charles V*, 13-14.

¹⁷³ Reeves, *Influence*, 321, 323, 326.

in the Angers Tapestry is only intermittent, and, as I have shown, often works on the rather subtle level of allusion and visual echoes.

Padua

We turn now to another commission of the 1370s: the presentation of the Apocalypse, as part of a larger scheme, in the Baptistery of the cathedral at Padua. Apart from the paintings themselves, we have no specific evidence to show whether the patron, Fina Buzzacarini, or her husband Francesco da Carrara, the ruler of Padua, were particularly interested in the subject. However, we do know that some fifteen years after Fina's death, her son Francesco Novello commissioned a vernacular commentary on the book from the regent of the Dominican studium of Padua. Written in 1393-94, the work was widely diffused in Italy in the fifteenth century.¹⁷⁴ The commentary does not, according to Roberto Rusconi, engage with current events; rather it presents a de-historicised, anagogical reading of the Apocalypse which conforms to the conservative Dominican tradition of exegesis of the book. It is not known whether Francesco Novello's interest in the Apocalypse had developed sufficiently early to have any bearing on the Baptistery scheme, completed when he was about twenty years of age. It is possible indeed that his curiosity in the 1390s might have been sparked by the representations in the Baptistery earlier commissioned by his mother. Further family interest in the subject was manifested by Fina's sister Anna, abbess of the convent of S. Benedetto, Padua.

¹⁷⁴ On the author, Federico Renoldo da Venezia, see L. Gargan, *Lo studio teologico e la biblioteca dei Domenicani a Padova nel tre e quattrocento* (Padua, 1971), 47; R. Rusconi, 'Il presente e il futuro della Chiesa: unità, scisma e riforma nel profetismo tardomedievale', in O. Capitani and J. Miethke, eds., *L'attesa della fine dei tempi nel medioevo* (Bologna, 1990), 211-12.

In 1394 she commissioned apocalyptic paintings for a chapel, dedicated to St Louis of Toulouse, which had earlier been built at Fina's expense.¹⁷⁵

Whether or not Fina and Francesco il Vecchio were particularly interested in the subject, it is highly likely that they would have been aware of the polemical apocalyptic discourses which had considerable currency in fourteenth-century Italy. The Avignon papacy was repeatedly characterised by Italian patriots such as Petrarch and Cola di Rienzo as the Babylonian Captivity, a concept which, while it drew also on Old Testament narratives, was inextricably associated with the personification of Babylon as the Great Whore of Apoc. 17. Moreover, the continuing power-struggle between guelphic and ghibelline factions in Italy drew on the historic conflict between the pope and the emperor, which had frequently been portrayed by the protagonists and their supporters in vitriolically apocalyptic terms. Most importantly, the Fraticelli, loyal to the condemned Spiritual faction within the Franciscan order, kept apocalyptic propaganda in the public eye in Italy, France and Spain throughout the fourteenth century.

Francesco da Carrara was a friend and patron to Petrarch, who had held a valuable Paduan canonry since 1349.¹⁷⁶ In 1368, despite numerous invitations from other cities and princes, Petrarch moved permanently to Padua; Francesco gave him a piece of land at Arquà, ten miles from the city, where he built a house.¹⁷⁷ He was involved in diplomatic service for the Carraras, as for instance when he accompanied Francesco Novello to Venice for the settlement of 1373.¹⁷⁸ In his will, Petrarch left

¹⁷⁵ For the chapel, which is no longer extant, see C. King, 'Women as patrons: nuns, widows and rulers', in D. Norman, ed., *Siena, Florence and Padua: art, society, and religion 1280-1400* (New Haven and London, 1995), vol. 2, 243-66, 249-50.

¹⁷⁶ E.H. Wilkins, *Petrarch's later years* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), 3.

¹⁷⁷ E.H. Wilkins, *Life of Petrarch* (Chicago and London, 1961), 179-81, 215, 220-22; M. Plant, 'Patronage in the circle of the Carrara family: Padua, 1337-1405', in F.W. Kent and P. Simons, eds., *Patronage, art, and society in renaissance Italy* (Oxford, 1987), 177.

¹⁷⁸ Wilkins, *Petrarch's later years*, 251.

his Giotto Madonna to the elder Francesco.¹⁷⁹ Their friendly relations mean they may well have talked over the politics of the day, although no record remains of it. Petrarch may have shared with his friend his strong views on the need for the pope and emperor to return to Rome. These views are preserved in a number of Petrarch's letters and sonnets, dating mainly from the 1350s.¹⁸⁰ Petrarch was not a true apocalypticist or theologian, however, but rather a self-consciously humanist scholar, poet and patriot who occasionally borrowed John's damning phrases regarding Babylon (from Chapters 17-18)¹⁸¹ as ammunition for his attacks on the Avignon papacy. The Apocalypse taken as a whole is not a particular focus of his interest either in his letters or elsewhere.

For a fuller picture of apocalyptic understanding in Carrara-ruled Padua, let us therefore investigate some of the repositories of theological knowledge. We can gain some idea of what Apocalypse-related books were available in the city from a number of late fourteenth-century inventories which survive. These relate in the most part to the institutional libraries of various orders; the contents of these libraries would doubtless have been available for the use of the Carrara family which had patronage links with many of the religious houses. For instance, several important members of the family had been buried in the church of the Dominican convent of S. Augustino.¹⁸² An inventory records the books held by this house in 1390.¹⁸³ The

¹⁷⁹ Wilkins, *Petrarch's later years*, 183.

¹⁸⁰ On Petrarch's views regarding Rome, see Wilkins, *Life of Petrarch*, 97-98. See also R. Coogan, ed. and trans., *Babylon on the Rhone: a translation of letters by Dante, Petrarch and Catherine of Siena on the Avignon papacy* (Madrid, 1983), 49-100, for relevant extracts from Petrarch's *Book without Name*. It is interesting to note that even before he moved to the city, one of Petrarch's correspondents in this period was the Bishop of Padua, Ildebrandino Conti (see 64-66).

¹⁸¹ These chapters are quoted and paraphrased in letter 18, Petrarch's most extended use of the Apocalypse. Coogan, ed., *Babylon on the Rhone*, 13, 89-96. Reference is also made in letter 19 (97-100) to apocalyptic figures such as Antichrist and the Lamb. On the sonnets, see R. Rusconi, *L'attesa della fine: crisi della società, profezia ed Apocalisse in Italia al tempo del grande scisma d'occidente (1378-1417)* (Rome, 1979), 61-63.

¹⁸² Gargan, *Lo studio teologico*, 5-6.

¹⁸³ Edited in Gargan, *Lo studio teologico*, 191-220.

document lists 228 items but is singularly lacking in apocalyptic material. There are only two specific copies of the Apocalypse listed (although of course it would also have appeared in the library's full copies of the Bible or the New Testament): one only of these is glossed.¹⁸⁴ The inventory is entirely free from prophetic material and lists none of the works by or attributed to Joachim of Fiore. Nor is there any sign of illustrated Apocalypses which could have served as models for monumental work, with the possible exception of a *Biblia Pauperum*.¹⁸⁵

The book inventory made by the Franciscan convent of St Anthony in 1396-97 is also extant, and yields more interesting results.¹⁸⁶ Included in it are the Apocalypse commentaries of Ambrose (no. 93) and Nicholas of Lyra (no. 40) as well as another, unattributed, postilla on the Apocalypse (no. 112). Also found are two works by Joachim of Fiore: the *Liber Concordie* (no. 49) and the commentary on the gospels (no. 29). The reference to the latter concludes somewhat vaguely 'et aliis tractatibus in magno volumine', thus allowing the possibility that other, more prophetic, Joachite texts may have been included. This particular volume, uniquely among the post-patristic works, was not to be lent out to the friars but was chained up in the library,¹⁸⁷ suggesting it was considered particularly important, precious, or (perhaps) dangerous. These two works of Joachim can presumably be identified with the early thirteenth-century manuscripts still in the Antoniana, discussed by Reeves.¹⁸⁸ The present-day manuscript 322 does indeed include Joachim's commentary on the gospels, and, as was suggested by the inventory description, a

¹⁸⁴ Gargan, *Lo studio teologico*, 194 (item 38, glossed) and 215 (item 191).

¹⁸⁵ Gargan, *Lo studio teologico*, 218 (item 215).

¹⁸⁶ Edited by K.W. Humphreys, *The library of the Franciscans of the Convent of St Antony, Padua at the beginning of the fifteenth century* (Amsterdam, 1966), 24-68.

¹⁸⁷ Humphreys, ed., *The library of the Franciscans*, 8.

¹⁸⁸ Reeves, *Influence*, 79-80, 149.

number of other texts also appear, including eschatological prophecies, political tracts and letters ascribed to Joachim.¹⁸⁹

However, topical apocalyptic prophecy would in general have circulated in an ephemeral fashion, either orally or in impermanent pamphlets. Texts of this sort are more likely to have passed from one person to another than become part of the great institutional libraries of the day, although very short texts are sometimes found jotted in margins or on flyleaves.¹⁹⁰ As discussed above, the popularity of these texts in the later Middle Ages lay in their authors' willingness to engage (usually in a partisan manner) with recent history and current events, and from this to project a scenario for the future. Sometimes, however, actual events seemed to meet the prophecies head on.

The Schism of 1378 fitted with uncanny precision into the Joachite eschatological scenario of the struggle in the last days between a holy pope and a usurping papal Antichrist.¹⁹¹ This narrative was the major theme of the writings, mid-century, of Jean de Roquetaillade (discussed above). In 1378, contemporaries were not slow to recognise that current events seemed to be fulfilling these and similar prophecies.¹⁹² Short prophetic verses about the Schism, of which a few examples survive, circulated in Italy.¹⁹³ Further details of the eschatological storyline, incorporating current events as they unfolded, were provided by writers such as Telesphorus of Cosenza.¹⁹⁴ Similarly, two sets of enigmatic pictorial pope

¹⁸⁹ One of the short prophecies is discussed and edited by McGinn, 'Joachim and the Sibyl'. He also gives a list of the contents of the manuscript (99n10)

¹⁹⁰ For numerous examples, see R.E. Lerner, *The powers of prophecy: the Cedar of Lebanon vision from the Mongol onslaught to the dawn of the Enlightenment* (Berkeley, 1983), esp. 6-7, 25-36.

¹⁹¹ See McGinn, 'Angel pope and papal Antichrist'; Reeves, *Influence*, 401-28; McGinn, ed., *Visions of the end*, 186-95; Rusconi, 'Il presente e il futuro'; McGinn, *Antichrist*, 143-72.

¹⁹² Rusconi, *L'attesa della fine*, 20, 53-54.

¹⁹³ See Reeves, *Influence*, 419. See also R. Rusconi, '“Ex quodam antiquissimo libello”: la tradizione manoscritta delle profezie nell'Italia tardomedievale: dalle collezioni profetiche alle prime edizioni a stampa', in W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst and A. Welkenhuysen, eds., *The use and abuse of eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1988), 443-44.

¹⁹⁴ See Reeves, *Influence*, 423; Rusconi, 'Il presente e il futuro', 197-200, 208-10.

prophecies, produced by Spiritual Franciscans during the course of the century, were combined into a set of thirty images, some by now prophecies after the event.¹⁹⁵ The figure of the apocalyptic dragon, which occurs mid-way through the reorganised set, was seen as highly suitable to represent the outbreak of the Schism, while the later images looked towards an angelic pope to come. These prophecies transcended their Spiritual Franciscan origins to enjoy a widespread distribution, and individual copies were frequently annotated, identifying the prophecies with new popes as they appeared.¹⁹⁶

However, it would be incorrect to suggest that in 1378 the Schism was universally hailed as the beginning of the end times, especially since contemporaries were not of course aware that the situation would endure so long and be so damaging. In Padua, a marginal note made by an Augustinian friar records the circumstances of the Schism which led to 'the whole world then existing in great persecution and adversity'. Despite the suggestive use of wording such as 'tribulations and persecutions', the description is not explicitly eschatological.¹⁹⁷ Similarly, the (admittedly incomplete) account of the Schism in the contemporary Paduan chronicle of the Gatari draws no link with prophecies or last days scenarios. The chronicle provides instead a detailed, matter-of-fact account of how the confusion over the validity of the election came about.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ The best source on the pope prophecies is M. Reeves, 'Some popular prophecies from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries', in G.J. Cuming and D. Baker, eds., *Popular belief and practice* (Cambridge, 1972), 107-34. See also Reeves, *Influence*, 402-06, 412-13, 453-62; R.C. Trexler, *The spiritual power: republican Florence under interdict* (Leiden, 1974), 141; Rusconi, *L'attesa della fine*, 52. Printed editions of the prophecies, illustrated with woodcuts, were popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: see, for example, P. Regisimo, ed., *Vaticinia sive prophetiae Abbatis Ioachimi et Anselmi Episcopi Marsicani* (Venice, 1600). On the printed editions, see also Rusconi, '“Ex quodam antiquissimo libello”', 456-63.

¹⁹⁶ Reeves, 'Some popular prophecies', 119.

¹⁹⁷ 'in omnibus tribulationibus et persecutionibus ... tunc orbe universo in magna persecutione et adversitate existente.' Ludovico da Padova, quoted in L. Gargan, 'Libri di teologi agostiniani a Padova nel trecento', *Quaderni per la Storia dell'Università di Padova* 6 (1973), 19-20.

¹⁹⁸ Galeazzo and Bartolomeo Gatari, *Cronaca Carrarese*, ed. A. Medin and G. Tolomei (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, vol. 17: 1) (Bologna, 1931), 146-47.

It is with this context in mind that we turn to the examination of the Baptistery Apocalypse frescoes themselves. While we cannot be completely sure whether details that now seem unusual really represent a new iconography, since we have no close manuscript analogues for the cycle (very few manuscripts with apocalyptic imagery survive from Italy at this period), nevertheless it is worth examining one or two small details which, whatever their derivation, may have evoked topical associations for their fourteenth-century viewers.

One particular scene differs in a small but marked detail from the iconographical norm (as found, for example, in the Anglo-French manuscripts but also in other Italian cycles such as those from Naples). The beast from the sea is described in the biblical text as having 'seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy' (Apoc. 13: 1). In the Padua fresco (fig. 53) this beast is prominently placed at the left of the altar and the creature is unusually large (it alone fills the entire picture frame, while most of the other scenes feature several figures set at some distance, often in a landscape). The beast's heads are represented not bunched together in the usual way but in a row, separated one from another against the background blue, as if to stress the concept of sequence. In place of the ten diadems specified by the text (usually represented visually as bands, crowns or small discs) the Padua fresco displays mitres. The ten mitres hover over the beast's heads in a curious arrangement: the first four heads have one mitre apiece; the last three (including the final head which falls 'as it were slain to death', Apoc. 13: 3) have two each.¹⁹⁹ Bellinati suggests that these 'insegne religiose' represent the beast's assumption of divine powers, and to some extent they must refer to the text's 'names of blasphemy'.²⁰⁰ But the use of mitres instead of

¹⁹⁹ Compare the more symmetrical arrangement of the ten horns on the seven heads of the dragon (fig. 78): two each on the central three heads and one each on the outlying four.

²⁰⁰ C. Bellinati, 'Iconografia e teologia negli affreschi del Battistero', in A.M. Spiazzi, ed., *Giusto de' Menabuoi nel Battistero di Padova* (Trieste, 1989), 77.

diadems contradicts the biblical text and forms an image which is so strikingly unusual (in fact, to my knowledge, unique) that another possibility must be considered. Viewed in the light of eschatological prophecies, and perhaps also of recent events, this image could be read as an allusion to the split in the papacy expected in the end times.

Although not as common as the tiara, the mitre was also in use in the later Middle Ages as a symbol of the pope in his role as Bishop of Rome.²⁰¹ For example, most of the papal figures represented in the fourteenth-century pope prophecies are equipped with mitre-like headgear, and mitres are given to both bishops and popes in the illustrations of the Alexander commentary.²⁰² The golden and bejewelled rims of the mitres shown at Padua could be seen as particularly evocative of the papal office.

The image of the seven-headed beast with its ten distinctly-arranged mitres — first a series of single mitres, then a change to double for the last three heads — might thus have been interpreted as showing the papal office splitting from one incumbent to two. As I have discussed above, a division within the papacy, into angelic pope and papal Antichrist, was part of the eschatological scenario put forward by writers like Roquetaillade. The thematic link between prophecies of this type and the Apocalypse, the basic text on which they draw, may be the only reason for the inclusion of this iconography in a visual Apocalypse cycle. However, depending on the dating of the painting, it is also possible that the image alludes to the events of the Schism of 1378. Fina's will of that year left money for the Baptistery's decoration, but did not specify whether the work had already begun or

²⁰¹ See G.B. Ladner, *Images and ideas in the Middle Ages: selected studies in history and art* (Rome, 1983), 211-16, 242, and 'Der Ursprung und die mittelalterliche Entwicklung der päpstlichen Tiara', in H.A. Cahn and E. Simon, eds., *Tainia: Roland Hampe zum 70. Geburtstag* (Mainz, 1980), vol. 1, esp. 462-81 and pls. 88-93.

²⁰² For the pope prophecies, see Reeves, 'Some popular prophecies', figs. 12, 14, 17-18, 21, 23-24. For the illustrations of the Alexander commentary (in Cambridge University Library MS Mm.V.31, late thirteenth century), see Kauffmann, *An altar-piece of the Apocalypse*.

not.²⁰³ Therefore the overall decorative scheme, while definitely not finished in 1378, may have been close to completion; alternatively, it may not have been begun. If the Apocalypse section was painted in the years immediately following 1378, the change from one elaborately-decorated mitre per head to two could have suggested to contemporary viewers the current situation of the church.

However, while interesting, this hypothesis is not conclusive. Apart from the vexed question of the dating of the frescoes, it is also uncertain whether the mitre would have been sufficiently clear a symbol of the papacy. The sainted popes painted in the dome of the Baptistery wear the more usual triple crown. Moreover, if the image's double mitres do allude to a split in the papacy, either actual or as part of an eschatological narrative, it is difficult to see why the true (even angelic) pope should be associated, along with his false or antichristian counterpart, with such a negative character as the beast from the sea.

If the image at Padua does not deliberately allude to the papacy, some other explanation must be suggested for its undoubtedly strange iconography. The jewelled mitres could represent the church hierarchy in general terms, since mitres were a consistent attribute of both bishops and cardinals in tomb sculpture and related paintings.²⁰⁴ The image might thus represent an attack on the wealth or worldliness of contemporary prelates, although in this case one wonders why such an attack should be made within the precincts of the city's cathedral.

A similar association of the mitre with an apocalyptic beast occurs in Durandus's influential thirteenth-century work *Rationale divinorum officiorum*. After explaining the meaning of the two 'horns' of the mitre as representing the Old and New Testaments, and alluding also to Moses, he writes,

²⁰³ H. Saalman, 'Carrara burials in the Baptistery of Padua', *Art Bulletin* 69 (1987), 390-94.

²⁰⁴ See, for examples, the numerous illustrations in J. Gardner, *The tomb and the tiara: curial tomb sculpture in Rome and Avignon in the later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1992).

Yet do certain heretics condemn the Mitre with its horns,
and the Bishop wearing it; who allege unto the fostering of
their error the words of John in the Apocalypse, I beheld
another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two
horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.²⁰⁵

This passage is clearly not the main source of our unusual imagery at Padua: it refers to a different apocalyptic beast (from the earth, rather than the sea), and its main point is the link between the form of the mitre itself and the two horns of this beast, rather than the distribution of ten 'diadems' among seven heads. Moreover, the link is stated to be heretical, which, again, would hardly encourage its use within the Baptistery of the cathedral. Nevertheless, the appearance of this passage in such a widely-read text may be a further clue to explicating what must remain, at this stage, an unresolved mystery.

The argument against reading the mitres as symbolic of an eschatological or contemporary papal scenario is strengthened by the depiction of the Whore of Babylon in the Padua cycle (fig. 54). Although Petrarch and others had used this figure to attack the Avignon papacy (as discussed above), no hint is given here, either by means of her dress or any other way, that she should be interpreted as a papal (or rather, pseudo-papal) figure. Instead she is represented traditionally as a beautiful young queen. It is worth pointing out, as further proof of a lack of association between the Whore and the possibly papal iconography of the mitres, that while the beast ridden by the Whore is generally identical with the leopard-like beast from the sea in the Anglo-French cycles, at Padua her beast is clearly a different animal (one which, in fact, conforms more closely to the biblical text at this point).

The Padua cycle does, however, draw attention to the currency of its narrative through its pointed use of everyday contemporary clothing. For example,

²⁰⁵ Quoted here in T.H. Passmore's English translation of Book 3: *The sacred vestments: an English rendering of the third book of the Rationale divinarum officiorum of Durandus, Bishop of Mende* (London, 1899), 95.

the worshippers of the Lamb on Mt Sion (fig. 55) are depicted not in the usual vague robes, but in up-to-date Italian fashions, especially obvious in terms of the hats worn by the blessed. This device is repeated in a number of scenes; similarly, some of the highly individuated buildings of the seven churches of Asia have been identified as specific Paduan churches.²⁰⁶ These features help suggest the relevance of the Apocalypse narrative to local contemporary viewers, extending to them the hope that they will in due course figure among the elect.

As we have seen, the imagery of the Padua Baptistery cycle seems to be making some attempts to link the Apocalypse with contemporary local life. This is most clear in the portraits of the churches and the use of fashionable clothing. It also applies in its unusual depiction of the beast from the sea. Precisely what point is being made here remains unclear: it may suggest eschatological narratives or reformist attitudes to the hierarchy, or it may have conveyed some other meaning, which eludes us at this distance. Yet other characters of equal vigour and importance in the biblical text, such as the Whore, the woman clothed with the sun, the dragon, and the angels, show no signs of being furnished with such interpretative hints. Despite its one eccentric image and its use of fourteenth-century clothing, the cycle as a whole presents no overall interpretative strategy to its viewers; instead, it is a literal depiction of the major events of the biblical book.

²⁰⁶ Plant, 'Patronage in the circle of the Carrara family', 191 and n71; Bellinati, 'Iconografia e teologia', 70. For portraits of Paduan churches (most often the former Romanesque cathedral) in the other New Testament scenes see Bellinati, 'Iconografia e teologia', 58, 64. Some of these scenes also feature portraits of members of the Carrara family. For example, Fina and her daughters are onlookers to the birth of John the Baptist; Francesco il Vecchio, Fina, and her sister Anna are all present at Christ's healing miracle (see Plant, 'Patronage in the circle of the Carrara family', 178-80, 189, 190, 198; Bellinati, 'Iconografia e teologia', 58, 67).

England

It has been argued that the last thirty years of the fourteenth century saw a growing sense of apocalyptic crisis in England.²⁰⁷ Apocalyptic imagery, particularly the figure of Antichrist, takes a prominent place both in poetry, such as *Piers Plowman* and the very popular *Pricke of Conscience*, and in other media: a sermon with apocalyptic themes was preached in London in c.1388, and the Chester cycle plays uniquely feature two episodes regarding Antichrist before the conventional Last Judgement.²⁰⁸ More subtle allusions, which posit readers familiar with details of apocalyptic imagery, are found in works such as the *Canterbury Tales*.²⁰⁹ I find it doubtful, however, that these effusions of apocalyptic imagery sprang from genuine and literal belief in the imminent end of the world. For example, the London sermon ranges over a wide variety of traditional topics to do with individual and universal judgement before it comes to the much-cited section on prophecies regarding the time of the end; even here, the tone retains an academic distance.²¹⁰ In other cases, apocalyptic themes are used for rhetorical effect, to attack the morals or politics of the time. The very fact that the Norwich cloister bosses took over a hundred years to complete suggests that in East Anglia at least there was no great sense of eschatological urgency.

²⁰⁷ Szittyá, 'Domesday bokes', 383-85.

²⁰⁸ William Langland, *The vision of Piers Plowman: a critical edition of the B-text*, ed. A.V.C. Schmidt (London, 1987); R. Morris, ed., *The pricke of conscience (stimulus conscientiae)* (Berlin, 1863); Thomas Wimbledon, *Wimbledon's sermon: redde rationem villicationis tue: a middle English sermon of the fourteenth century*, ed. I.K. Knight (Pittsburgh, 1967); R.M. Lumiansky and D. Mills, eds., *The Chester mystery cycle*, 2 vols. (EETS ss 3) (Oxford, 1974). See also M.W. Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman as a fourteenth-century Apocalypse* (New Brunswick, 1961); R.K. Emmerson, '“Yemen to rede redels?”: *Piers Plowman* and prophecy', *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 7 (1993), 27-76.

²⁰⁹ R.K. Emmerson, 'The *Canterbury Tales* in eschatological perspective', in W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst and A. Welkenhuysen, eds., *The use and abuse of eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1988), 404-24; Emmerson and Herzman, *The apocalyptic imagination*.

²¹⁰ Wimbledon, *Sermon*, 109-28. See also H.L. Spencer, *English preaching in the late Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1993), 67, 329, 487n116.

It is certainly clear, however, that the Apocalypse was a fashionable topic in late fourteenth-century England. The well-educated ecclesiastics of Norwich, Westminster and York could hardly help being aware of this current interest in the great vision with its enigmatic figures. I would like to suggest that, rather than being analogous to these contemporary uses, the English monumental cycles construct a response through which their clerical patrons attempted to re-present the Apocalypse in its traditional, conservative, ecclesiological form.

For fourteenth-century clerics, the most threatening use of the Apocalypse and related imagery must certainly have been that made by the Wycliffite heresy. Apocalyptic imagery was part of the discourse from an early stage, with Wyclif arguing in c.1383 that the pope could logically be identified with Antichrist since he was opposed to Christ in every way.²¹¹ Nevertheless, apocalyptic imagery is not found consistently throughout all forms of Lollard expression. Like their orthodox counterparts, Lollard sermons do not draw very strongly on the last book of the Bible: In the five volumes of Wycliffite sermons edited by Pamela Gradon and Anne Hudson, only one sermon makes more than passing mention of the Apocalypse, where the lectio for the sermon on Holy Trinity is taken from Apocalypse 4.²¹²

However, other sources make it clear that, as with other fourteenth-century heretical groups such as the Fraticelli, apocalyptic language was an important

²¹¹ John Wyclif, *De Christo et suo adversario Antichristo*, in *John Wiclif's polemical works in Latin*, ed. R. Buddensieg (London, 1883), vol. 2, 633-92, Chs. 11-15. See also C.V. Bostick, *The Antichrist and the Lollards: apocalypticism in late medieval and Reformation England* (Leiden, 1998), 56-75.

²¹² P. Gradon and A. Hudson, eds., *English Wycliffite sermons* (Oxford, 1983-96), sermon E30. Similarly, a sermon by William Taylor (1406) uses the Apocalypse only once: the dragon pouring water onto the woman (Apoc. 12: 15-16) is likened to the devil trying to distract priests from the spiritual path by pouring on them an abundance of temporal goods: A. Hudson, ed., *Two Wycliffite texts: the sermon of William Taylor 1406; the testimony of William Thorpe 1407* (EETS 301) (Oxford, 1993), 4-5, 8-9. One exceptional Lollard sermon is extant, however, which identifies the pope as Antichrist: see A. Hudson, *The premature Reformation: Wycliffite texts and Lollard history* (Oxford, 1988), 332-33.

component of the Lollards' criticism of the established church.²¹³ Their most extensive use of the Apocalypse is a full commentary on the text known as the *Opus Arduum*, written in 1390.²¹⁴ Unusually for a biblical commentary, but unsurprisingly given its author was an imprisoned heretic, the work is highly politically engaged, attacking Urban VI and the persecuting church as agents of Antichrist, and defending the Lollard position on images, church wealth and the translation of the Bible. Similar opinions are voiced in *The Lanterne of Lyght* (1409-15), and in some heresy trials, such as that of Walter Brut in 1390-93.²¹⁵

For obvious reasons, these heretical uses of the Apocalypse are not reflected in the imagery of the monumental cycles in the great churches of Norwich, Westminster and York. In fact, these cycles depart only rarely from the Anglo-French imagery of their manuscript models.²¹⁶ Yet the very conservatism of the imagery may be meaningful in the context I have just sketched. The presentation of the Apocalypse in such centres of orthodoxy could be read as a deliberate reaction on the part of the clerical commissioners to the heretical misappropriation of a powerful biblical text.

In general terms, the polemical Lollard use of apocalyptic imagery against the established clergy would have demanded the attention of the English cycles' commissioners. This is particularly so when two of the commissioning bodies were

²¹³ Bostick, *The Antichrist and the Lollards*, 114-43.

²¹⁴ A. Hudson, 'A neglected Wycliffite text', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 29 (1978), 257-79, and *The premature Reformation*, 264-66, 334; see also M. Aston, *Lollards and reformers: images and literacy in late medieval devotion* (London, 1984), 226-27; Lambert, *Medieval heresy*, 247-48; Bostick, *The Antichrist and the Lollards*, 76-113.

²¹⁵ On *The Lanterne*, see Aston, *Lollards and reformers*, 60, 228; Bostick, *The Antichrist and the Lollards*, 115-22. For Brut's trial, see J. Foxe, *The acts and monuments of John Foxe*, ed. J. Pratt, 4th edn. (London, 1877), vol. 3, 131-88 esp. 137-39, 141-47, 183-85; Bostick, *The Antichrist and the Lollards*, 147-54; Hudson, 'A neglected Wycliffite text', 272, and ' "Laicus litteratus": the paradox of Lollardy', in P. Biller and A. Hudson, eds., *Heresy and literacy, 1000-1530* (Cambridge, 1994), 222-36, 224. See also A. Hudson, ed., *Selections from English Wycliffite writings* (Cambridge, 1978), 122-27.

²¹⁶ Discussed in Chapter 3.

Benedictine, an order known for its particularly strong opposition to Lollardy.²¹⁷ Moreover, the three cycles were commissioned in places where we have evidence of local Lollard activity or knowledge of their doctrines. For example, a letter from a Norwich monk at the papal court, Cardinal Adam Easton, to the Abbot of Westminster in 1376 asks him to send a copy of Wyclif's works which, he has heard, attack the Benedictine order.²¹⁸ In 1395 a Lollard petition, the Twelve Conclusions, was posted on the doors of Westminster Hall and St Paul's.²¹⁹ At Norwich the 1420s were a period of 'intensive investigation' into the heresy.²²⁰ Bishop Wakering, who left money in 1425 for the final completion of the cloister bosses, conducted some of these enquiries.²²¹ Although obviously long after the first initiative to install Apocalypse bosses, these investigations were concurrent with the second campaign of the work (1415-30). Moreover, the Lollard Apocalypse commentary *Opus Arduum* made extensive reference to the 1383 'crusade' (against the allies of the Avignon pope) led by Bishop Despenser of Norwich. The author argued that the clergy's participation in such a venture made them the associates of Antichrist.²²² Again, this evidence comes from the years between the two boss installation campaigns at Norwich, but it is highly likely that with a direct attack on the bishop as one of its main themes, the work would have been known at Norwich.

Similarly, Bishop Walter Skirlaw, the donor of the east window at York, investigated several renegade priests for preaching Lollard doctrine in his Durham diocese in 1402-03.²²³ Detailed information about these investigations survives in

²¹⁷ R.M. Haines, *Ecclesia Anglicana: studies in the English church of the later Middle Ages* (Toronto, 1989), 212, 220.

²¹⁸ R. Sharpe et al., eds., *English Benedictine libraries: the shorter catalogues* (London, 1996), 290-91, 610.

²¹⁹ Aston, *Lollards and reformers*, 108.

²²⁰ Aston, *Lollards and reformers*, 75, 71-100.

²²¹ Aston, *Lollards and reformers*, 82, 95, 172.

²²² Hudson, *The premature Reformation*, 266, 333, 368.

²²³ M.G. Snape, 'Some evidence of Lollard activity in the diocese of Durham in the early fifteenth century', *Archaeologia Aeliana* 4th series 39 (1961), 355-61.

only one case. The priest Richard Wyche most unusually left his own account of his examination by the bishop; this source is supplemented by the record of his views on specific points of doctrine and by his later recantation.²²⁴ This material does not suggest that apocalyptic polemics were important in this case: instead, Wyche was chiefly exercised about the nature of the eucharist and about the pay and perks of priests and friars.²²⁵ Yet the fact that Skirlaw was personally involved in the investigation of Lollard heretics means that he was almost certainly aware of their frequent use of apocalyptic language to attack the established clergy or the pope.²²⁶

Thus one aim at least of the English monumental cycles may well have been to reclaim for orthodoxy a biblical text which had recently been acquiring a currency through heretical polemic. Even in cases, like Norwich, where it cannot have been a causal factor in the original decision to deploy Apocalypse imagery, the cycle would certainly have taken on resonances as the contemporary situation developed. The subject was very apt, since a major theme of most medieval Apocalypse interpretation is the threat to the church represented by heresy. With the alarming challenge posed in late fourteenth-century England by Lollardy, a heresy with both an intellectual basis and a popular following, it may have been felt necessary to reappropriate a powerful text to the cause of orthodoxy, and in the process to restate that the church would be ultimately victorious.

This hypothesis is strengthened by the sumptuousness and expense involved in the cycles, most obviously in the case of the York window (fig. 10), which alone of the three English examples appears in the public space of the church rather than

²²⁴ Richard Wyche, 'The trial of Richard Wyche', ed. F.D. Matthew, *English Historical Review* 5 (1890), 530-44; *Fasciculi Zizaniorum Magistri Johannis Wyclif*, ed. W.W. Shirley (Rolls Series 5) (London, 1858), 370-82, 501-05; Hudson, *The premature Reformation*, 126, 221.

²²⁵ *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 370-82, 501-05; Wyche, 'The trial'.

²²⁶ See above, and also the accusation made against another fourteenth-century Lollard, John Purvey, who was accused of saying that Innocent III had been chief Antichrist (*Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 383).

within monastic buildings. An issue which was widely identified by contemporaries as a distinguishing feature of the Lollard heresy was an aversion to images. For example, the very first point put to Wyche by Skirlaw was that he had preached that images should not be adored, but burned, a position which Wyche then defended by quoting biblical and patristic sources.²²⁷ The Lollard dislike of images of course applied principally to iconic images that might encourage idolatrous worship, and particularly to life-like sculptures of the saints; narrative cycles were not the focus of their complaints.²²⁸ However, it seems that some sections of the movement objected to any form of imagery or decoration in church, and especially to costly ornaments and fittings.²²⁹ A number of Lollard-influenced texts make pointed remarks about the expense of church decorations, including in one instance a specific attack on the practice of giving stained glass windows in return for divine favour.²³⁰

To those who recognised it, the English cycles' obvious indebtedness to the illuminated Apocalypse books would have acted to further confirm the text's essential orthodoxy and its status as a prized part of the culture of the upper classes. In purely visual terms, the fully illustrated, highly elaborate manuscript presentations of John's text contrast markedly with the scrappy, unbound and certainly unillustrated texts and translations owned by some of the Lollards.²³¹ This contrast might well have been apparent, and meaningful, to churchmen, like Bishops Skirlaw and Wakering, who were involved in the investigation of the Lollard heresy.

While the three monumental cycles do not include direct reference to current events at the level of the imagery itself, they may nevertheless be profitably seen as

²²⁷ *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 370-72.

²²⁸ On Lollard beliefs regarding images, see W.R. Jones, 'Lollards and images: the defense of religious art in later medieval England', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34 (1973), 27-50; Aston, *Lollards and reformers*, 135-92.

²²⁹ Aston, *Lollards and reformers*, 137, 149-50, 160; Jones, 'Lollards and images', 32, 36.

²³⁰ *Pierce the Ploughman's crede*, ed. H. Barr in *The Piers Plowman tradition* (London, 1993), 60-97, ll. 118-35.

²³¹ Aston, *Lollards and reformers*, 200.

partially a response to the challenge of heresy in fourteenth-century England. By framing conservative, orthodox imagery within sacred spaces, they wrest the powerful imagery of the Apocalypse back from polemicists and heretics and insist, instead, on its true meaning as an allegory of the church. To return to the literary analogy with which we began this section, it could be said that the English pictorial cycles sought to present an overall interpretation of the Apocalypse which replaced *Piers Plowman's* use of the text — a focus on chaos and Antichrist — with the blissful vision of the New Jerusalem in *Pearl*.²³²

Conclusion

The widespread appearance of apocalyptic language in texts with political overtones, throughout the Middle Ages and beyond, suggests the possibility that the divine revelation can be used for these particularly worldly ends. Yet, as we have seen, at the level of the visual imagery itself, the monumental artworks of the fourteenth century remain largely unaffected by such external connotations. Although in this chapter I have highlighted several examples of unusual imagery, which, I have suggested, may reflect contemporary ideas, prophecies or politics, a very large percentage of the pictorial imagery within all the cycles remains completely free of such interpretative hints. This is even the case for the Angers Tapestry and the Stuttgart panels, which, as I have shown, are the fourteenth-century cycles most engaged with contemporary politics and the interests of their patrons. Certainly none of the cycles could be said to present ecclesio-political ideas in visual form with the power found in the Reformation period and afterwards. The Apocalypse image cycles would thus seem to be surprisingly independent of the

²³² A.C. Cawley and J.J. Anderson, eds., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Cleanness, Patience* (London, 1976), esp. sections XIV-XIX.

patronal and cultural environments in which they were created. What reasons for this independence can be suggested?

The first point is to do with structural issues. The genre of prophecy, however dependent on apocalyptic imagery, differs structurally from the narrative of John's text. Unlike systematic commentaries on the text which respect the basic arrangement of the vision, late medieval apocalyptic prophecies dip into the text at will, picking out language, characters, symbols and events to include in their own plots. Usually only a small fraction of the book's many events and characters are deployed within a narrative structure which, although it borrows general themes (such as the idea of a prophetic vision or the escalating struggle between the forces of good and evil), does not in fact replicate much of the action of the biblical book itself.

Often, as I have endeavoured to show, the most important characters in polemical or prophetic texts are not even found in the Apocalypse: Antichrist, the last world emperor, the angelic pope. In the case of Antichrist, the external figure of myth had long been identified with characters in John's text (the various beasts, Abaddon, the dragon), but this was not done with total consistency across all interpretative traditions. The last world emperor and angelic pope remained essentially unrepresented within the text. The allusive use of apocalyptic imagery typical to these prophetic discourses thus contrasts with the sequential, narrative unfolding of the vision found within the biblical text itself. This contrast makes it difficult to overlay the two genres, either conceptually or in concrete, visual terms.

This generic explanation is by no means sufficient on its own, however, but forms part of a nexus of reasons for the cycles' apparent lack of 'contemporary meaning'. It is worth pointing out that it was not in fact usual in the Middle Ages to present an overt interpretation of biblical narratives in pictorial cycles. Stories, from

both Old and New Testaments, were simply presented. Only through relatively subtle elements such as positioning and visual echoes were common understandings (such as typological readings of the Old Testament) invoked. In the twentieth century, we expect the Apocalypse to carry meanings relevant to the present or future, rather than accepting the narrative integrity of the text. Yet the evidence we have examined here suggests that in the Middle Ages the Apocalypse, like Old Testament or gospel stories, was perceived as a narrative in its own right, and considered worthy of presentation as such. The narrativity of the Apocalypse is a strong force which can override external, applied meanings.

Perhaps more surprising is the fact that the imagery of the fourteenth-century cycles is not strongly affected by the commentary traditions, which are much closer to the text's own structure than prophetic works. Even many of the illustrative cycles which appear in manuscripts, with textual interpretation furnished on each page, appear uninfluenced. Instead, what is most often depicted, in both manuscript and monumental cycles, is a literal pictorial version of the biblical text. Partly this is a simple matter of practicalities, since even one commentary can provide a number of readings for a single image, or a single interpretation for a number of textual images. For example, the historicising commentaries of Alexander Minorita and Nicholas of Lyra read the episode of War in Heaven (Apoc. 12) as relating to the seventh-century struggle between the Persian king Chosroes and the Christian emperor Heraclius: not only the woman's child, but also St Michael and the wings given to the woman are all identified with Heraclius, while the earth which swallows the water is taken to represent either the Greeks or the soldiers of Heraclius.²³³ It is difficult to imagine how these identifications could all be successfully conveyed in pictorial terms. The London Altarpiece, which represents Alexander's commentary,

²³³ Alexander Minorita, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, 255-72; Nicholas of Lyra, *Apocalypse commentary*, 141-46.

makes the identification only in the frame inscriptions: the child and the warrior angel appear normally without further visual clues (figs. 64, 65).²³⁴ When the problems posed by this one example are magnified by the number of characters and objects needing explication in the entire text, something of the impracticality of this idea becomes apparent. Indeed, if each item mentioned and interpreted in a typical commentary was represented visually, the narrative itself would very likely not survive the overdetermination: the burden of multiple meanings would destroy its intrinsic dynamic.

Commentary interpretations moreover are very often not of the concrete type found in Nicholas of Lyra, where a simple equation can be made between the biblical character and the historical person. Most interpretations refer instead to ideas or qualities either partially or totally abstract: the good priest, the multitude of evildoers, sins and virtues. It is simpler and clearer just to attempt to represent visually the literal biblical text. The imagery of the vision itself, although complex and strange, is always concrete: the characters, whether angels, beasts, or elders, are all described in the text and hence are relatively easy to portray. In fact, this tendency towards literal portrayal goes so far that even textual metaphors or figures of speech are presented visually. For example, the blood from the Vintage of the Earth is described as reaching 'up to the horses' bridles' (Apoc. 14: 20): it is standard in the Anglo-French iconography here to see two horses unexpectedly appear at the side of the winepress (fig. 56); in the Stuttgart panels they attract a whole scene to themselves.²³⁵

²³⁴ Kauffmann, *An altar-piece of the Apocalypse*, 161-62, pl. 3.

²³⁵ See fig. 24, just above the prominent angel discussed earlier. As Schapiro points out, the practice of depicting metaphors 'as if they were simply descriptive terms' is a fairly common feature of medieval art: M. Schapiro, *Words and pictures: on the literal and the symbolic in the illustration of a text* (The Hague and Paris, 1973), 14.

If the narrative of the Apocalypse is simply presented visually in fairly literal terms, this does not of course mean that the images were perceived in the same way, completely uncoloured by interpretative meaning. In fact, the majority of medieval commentaries, from Augustine onwards, either de-emphasise a literal reading of the Apocalypse or actually prohibit it. Yet the images are resolutely literal. This suggests instead that viewers were free to bring to their reading of the visual cycles the same interpretation, or mixture of interpretative strategies, that they had been used to bringing to the written text. The pictorial cycles should be considered more accurately as a visualisation rather than an explication of the text: they present the story in the same basic way the biblical text itself does. Like the words on the page, the images also await interpretation which must be supplied from elsewhere.

In the next two chapters I explore in greater depth two other factors which are central to the understanding of the late medieval monumental Apocalypse cycles. In Chapter 3 I explore the issue of artistic transmission by considering the manuscript models for the cycles. In the final chapter I turn once again to the question of contemporary relevance in the pictorial representation of the Apocalypse. Instead of the outwardly-directed references to politics, people and events that were examined in this chapter, I focus on variations and alterations in the imagery, and aspects of location and function, which draw links between the sacred text and the inwardly-directed aspects of late medieval life: the aspects of contemplation and devotion.

CHAPTER 3 FROM MANUSCRIPTS TO MONUMENTAL CYCLES

The Image Tradition

As we saw in the previous chapter, while a few of the fourteenth-century monumental cycles include unusual imagery that may reflect the context in which they were produced, many of the cycles show little or no such influence. Even in the case of cycles which have close connections with patronage centres where a verbal use of apocalyptic imagery was a familiar part of political debate, the visual imagery found in the artworks remains largely unaffected. This surprising independence on the part of the image cycle can be explained in a number of ways, as I suggested in the previous chapter. In particular I argued that there is a fundamental generic difference between the text of John's Apocalypse itself and the use of its imagery for polemical, political ends. I also suggested that commentaries, although structurally more closely linked to the text, posed difficulties of their own for visual representation by offering multiple, and often non-concrete, meanings for any given passage, character or image.

What I want to investigate in the first part of this chapter is another explanation — complementary rather than alternative — for the imagery's general independence from the particular context of its commissioning. This explanation is grounded in an understanding of the working practices of medieval artists in general terms and, in particular, of the challenges a rare and difficult subject like the Apocalypse must have set the designers of the monumental cycles.

Artists during the Middle Ages were generally perceived as artisans rather than as the figures of creative genius constructed by Vasari and his art-historical

offspring since the Renaissance.¹ In such a context, innovation was placed low among the qualities required to make a good painter. This was particularly true as regards the content, rather than the style, of pictures. Time-honoured formulae, instantly recognisable as particular scenes from well-known biblical or hagiographical narratives, were deployed most frequently. Stylistic innovation, on the other hand, does seem to have been considered a desirable extra, as long as the content of the image was substantially unaffected.² Painters were thus accustomed to work from previous visual models: either from specific exemplars or, in the case of traditional imagery such as the life of Christ or the Virgin Mary, from a general awareness of the familiar formulae. In most cases, artists were not required to produce an individual response to an open brief but to offer a version — updated perhaps in certain stylistic features — of a known, universal image.³

Of course, this general rule of medieval artistic practice was subject to numerous exceptions. The need to represent the life stories of recent saints, and the growing category of non-religious subject matter, particularly from the fourteenth century onwards — allegories of good and bad government, cycles of heroes of antiquity, or themes from the Trojan or Arthurian myths — challenged artists to redeploy traditional formulae in innovative ways, or to create entirely new imagery,

¹ For the early development of this idea, see Baxandall, *Giotto and the orators*, esp. 51-78.

² See P. Rubin, 'Commission and design in central Italian altarpieces c.1450-1550', in E. Borsook and F.S. Gioffredi, eds., *Italian altarpieces 1250-1550: function and design* (Oxford, 1994), 201-29.

³ On the use of models and related issues, see J.J.G. Alexander, 'Facsimiles, copies, and variations: the relationship to the model in medieval and renaissance European illuminated manuscripts', in *Retaining the original: multiple originals, copies and reproductions* (Studies in the History of Art 20) (Washington, 1989), 61-72, and *Medieval illuminators and their methods of work* (New Haven and London, 1992), esp. 52-54, 106-07, 140; E. Kitzinger, 'The role of miniature painting in mural decoration', in K. Weitzmann et al., eds., *The place of book illumination in Byzantine art* (Princeton, 1975), 99-142; S.L. Hindman, 'The roles of author and artist in the procedure of illustrating late medieval texts', in D.W. Burchmore, ed., *Text and image* (Binghampton, 1986), 27-62; R.W. Scheller, *Exemplum: model-book drawings and the practice of artistic transmission in the Middle Ages (ca.900-ca.1470)*, trans. M. Hoyle (Amsterdam, 1995).

based in many cases on a written text.⁴ Although artists were probably often able to read, in many cases educated advisers who thoroughly understood the texts or the ideas to be presented must have assisted them in the creation of these new programmes, choosing which events to highlight and suggesting how they should appear.⁵ Since a collaborative effort must have been involved, I will designate both these hypothetical advisers and the chief artist or artists of a project as 'designers'.

The commissioning of monumental Apocalypse cycles represented a similar challenge for fourteenth-century artists. Compared to other biblical texts, the Apocalypse was depicted extremely infrequently on the monumental scale. Apart from a small percentage which went to make up synthetic images of heavenly glory — the Lamb, the sealed book, the throne, the elders — the imagery of John's vision was not part of the common vocabulary of medieval art. While late medieval viewers would have been very familiar with the iconography of the Annunciation and Crucifixion, the Judgement and even various Old Testament narratives, some of considerable obscurity to modern eyes, the Apocalypse is found in only a handful of locations. Similarly, while the end of the world according to the gospel account (Matt. 25: 31-46) was frequently played out in popular medieval drama, the Apocalypse of John was largely ignored in this medium as well, perhaps as too lengthy and insufficiently didactic.⁶ Where, then, was the monumental artist expected to find a model for a work of such complexity? The natural response was

⁴ See H. Belting, 'The new role of narrative in public painting of the trecento: *historia* and allegory', *Studies in the History of Art* 16 (1985), 151-68.

⁵ Hindman, 'The roles of author and artist', 33-50, 57-58; Alexander, 'Facsimiles, copies, and variations', 63.

⁶ The one exception known in England to the standard gospel-based tradition is the Chester plays of Antichrist: see R.M. Lumiansky and D. Mills, eds., *The Chester mystery cycle* (EETS ss 3) (Oxford, 1974), vol. 1, 396-437; D.J. Leigh, 'The Doomsday mystery play: an eschatological morality', in J. Taylor and A.H. Nelson, eds., *Medieval English drama: essays critical and contextual* (Chicago, 1972), 260-78. Yet here again, it is not John's Apocalypse which is the principal textual source but II Thessalonians and legendary, post-biblical material.

to turn to the deluxe illustrated manuscripts which had perhaps also been the inspiration for the patron's choice of subject in the first place.

Among the fourteenth-century cycles, only one example offers surviving documentary evidence for the use of an illuminated Apocalypse manuscript as a model for large-scale work: the Angers Tapestry. A marginal notation in the inventory of Charles V's book collection records the fact that an 'Appocalipse en françois, toute figurée et ystoriée' had been lent by the king to his brother, the Duke of Anjou, 'pour faire faire son beau tapis'.⁷ In the nineteenth century, the manuscript in question was identified as the extant manuscript Bibliothèque Nationale Fr. 403.⁸ However, Delisle and Meyer demonstrated, on the basis of a detailed comparison of the pictorial cycles and their iconographic choices, that this manuscript was not the model for the design of the Angers Tapestry. Fr. 403 is, as Lewis has more recently shown, an anomalous, hybrid manuscript within the Anglo-French group: it attempts to illustrate one commentary (French prose) using a version of the picture cycle developed for a different gloss (Berengaudus).⁹ There are other extant manuscripts of the standard Berengaudus gloss type that present much closer models for the imagery displayed in the Angers Tapestry.¹⁰ The reference to the loan of a manuscript in the inventory of Charles V's books thus presents us with several possibilities. The manuscript in question may in fact have been Fr. 403, which at least fits the inventory's requirement of being written in French: in this case, we can assume that although it may have been consulted for the

⁷ Inventory of Charles V's library, 1373, with marginal comment added 1380, quoted in L. Delisle and P. Meyer, eds., *L'Apocalypse en français au XIIIe siècle (Bibl. Nat. Fr. 403)* (Paris, 1901; repr. New York, 1965), vol. 1, clxxvii.

⁸ Delisle and Meyer, *L'Apocalypse en français*, vol. 1, clxxvii, citing Jules Guiffrey, *L'auteur de la tapisserie de l'Apocalypse d'Angers* (Paris, 1877).

⁹ S. Lewis, 'The enigma of Fr. 403 and the compilation of a thirteenth-century English illustrated Apocalypse', *Gesta* 29 (1990), 31-43.

¹⁰ An album of pictures cut from a thirteenth-century manuscript and known as the Burckhardt-Wildt Apocalypse has been identified as a close relative of the Angers Tapestry in content and composition if not in style: see G. Henderson, 'The manuscript model of the Angers "Apocalypse" tapestries', *Burlington Magazine* 127 (1985), 209-19.

tapestry's design, at least one other exemplar must also have been used, perhaps from Louis's own collection.¹¹ Alternatively, it is possible that the inventory referred to a different Apocalypse manuscript containing both the standard Berengaudus pictorial cycle which was so clearly the model for the tapestry and a text in French: although the Berengaudus picture cycle typically accompanies Latin text, there are some exceptions.¹² In either case, it is worth noting from the Angers example that it is not imperative for the patron of a monumental cycle to own an illustrated Apocalypse manuscript, as long as he can borrow one long enough for his designer to consult it.

As I have indicated, Angers offers the only authentic documentary evidence of the use of manuscript models for large-scale Apocalypse representations in the fourteenth century. Another example to which frequent reference is made, that of the Norwich cathedral bosses, is not, in fact, based on conclusive evidence. Despite Fernie and Whittingham's confident assertion,¹³ the reference in the cathedral's records to the purchase of an Apocalypse manuscript does not specifically state that it was intended to assist with the design of the bosses.¹⁴ Whether or not it was

¹¹ There is no extant record of Louis's books: they are not included in his extensive inventory of treasures, mainly precious metalwork, for which, see H. Moranvillé, ed., *Inventaire de l'orfèvrerie et des bijoux de Louis I Duc d'Anjou* (Paris, 1903-06).

¹² See, for example, R.K. Emmerson and S. Lewis, 'Census and bibliography of medieval manuscripts containing Apocalypse illustrations c.800-1500', part 2, *Traditio* 41 (1985), 367-409, nos. 50 (the famous Trinity College Apocalypse whose picture cycle, however, is non-standard), 52 (a fifteenth-century manuscript at Chantilly), 71 (a British Library manuscript which has the Apocalypse text in Latin and the commentary in French), 88 (a manuscript made for another of the King's brothers, the Duc de Berry, around 1415 and now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York) and 109 (a fourteenth-century French manuscript now at Paris). The mutilated Burckhardt-Wildt Apocalypse appears to have had a Latin text: Emmerson and Lewis, 'Census', no. 38; N. Morgan, 'The Burckhardt-Wildt Apocalypse', in *Art at auction: the year at Sotheby's 1982-83* (London, 1983), fig. 1.

¹³ E.C. Fernie and A.B. Whittingham, *The early communar and pitancer rolls of Norwich Cathedral Priory with an account of the building of the cloister* (Norwich, 1972), 38. Repeated, for example, in the most recent work on Norwich Cathedral, by M. Rose, 'The vault bosses', in I. Atherton et al., eds., *Norwich Cathedral: church, city and diocese, 1096-1996* (London, 1996), 366.

¹⁴ See P. Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: kingship and the representation of power 1200-1400* (New Haven and London, 1995), 219n130.

intended for use in this way, the manuscript was not bought until 1346-47, twenty years after the completion of the first part of the cycle and three-quarters of a century before work was resumed (although to the extent that part of that delay was due to the Black Death it obviously could not have been foreseen). Similarly, while the 'Book of the Apocalypse' which was owned by Henry, Lord Scrope, a local magnate with family links to York Minster, may well have been an illustrated manuscript,¹⁵ it could also have been a simple, unillustrated vernacular translation of the type that circulated independently from the rest of the Bible.¹⁶

Although unequivocal documentary evidence is thus somewhat sparse, the theory that illustrated manuscripts were used as models by the designers of the monumental cycles can in many cases be confirmed by the visual evidence of the cycles themselves. This is particularly apparent in the case of the three English versions at Norwich, Westminster and York. Like the tapestry at Angers, discussed above, these monumental cycles clearly derive their imagery from the Anglo-French illustrated Apocalypse books that enjoyed a huge vogue among the religious and secular upper classes in England and France in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. However, in most cases, an absolutely specific model cannot be identified among the manuscripts that are extant, because each monumental version includes a number of distinguishing features in terms of the picture cycle and details of its imagery, not all of which are found in any one surviving manuscript, and some of which are found in none.¹⁷

For example, one fourteenth-century Anglo-French manuscript, now in the British Library, contains a rather rare detail which gives concrete form to the powers

¹⁵ R. Marks, *Stained glass in England during the Middle Ages* (London, 1993), 181.

¹⁶ P. Szittyá, 'Domesday bokes: the Apocalypse in medieval English literary culture', in *AMA*, 382.

¹⁷ The same fact makes it impossible that the later monumental cycles within the Anglo-French tradition (Westminster, York) should derive their imagery directly from earlier monumental examples (the first part of the Norwich cycle, Angers).

of the second horseman, to 'take peace from the earth' (Apoc. 6: 4): near his horse, people are represented fighting 'that they should kill one another'.¹⁸ This unusual detail also appears in the east window at York (scene 10g, fig. 57). However, in other scenes, this manuscript's iconography is not at all similar to that employed in the east window. The two witnesses (Apoc. 13) are killed in the manuscript by Abaddon riding on a locust-beast, while in the window they are killed by soldiers (7b, fig. 58); the manuscript's angel with the everlasting gospel (Apoc. 14: 7) bears a scroll inscribed 'Timete Dominum' while the window, most unusually, shows a book inscribed with part of Psalm 31 (5f, fig. 59).¹⁹ Moreover, as is typical of the pictorial cycle to which it belongs (the Berengaudus gloss version), the manuscript includes several images of the Whore of Babylon (at first seated on the waters, then on the beast, then drunk with the blood of the saints, then condemned to burning),²⁰ while the York window contains only one: the Whore on the beast (3a, fig. 60). Jill Rickers has suggested that this dramatic limitation of the imagery of the Whore could have been prompted by considerations of propriety.²¹ But it is also possible that this decision had its basis in the manuscript model, or models, used for the cycle. Overall, the imagery and picture cycle of the York window are reminiscent of the Berengaudus-gloss recension of the Anglo-French manuscripts. Yet if we examine the alternative version of the Anglo-French pictorial cycle, made to accompany the French prose gloss, we find it is standard to see only the Whore on the beast.²² In fact, a comparison with the French prose manuscripts indicates that

¹⁸ London, British Library MS Add. 17333, fol. 6.

¹⁹ Fols. 17 and 25.

²⁰ Fols. 34, 34v, 35 (presumably: the leaf is cut from manuscript), 38.

²¹ J. Rickers, 'The Apocalypse scenes in the Great East Window of York Minster' (M.A. thesis, Medieval Studies, University of York, 1992), 61, and 'Glazier and illuminator: the Apocalypse cycle in the East Window of York Minster and its sources', *Journal of Stained Glass* 19 (1994-95), 270.

²² On the iconographical differences between the Berengaudus cycle and the French prose version, see S. Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration in thirteenth-century English Apocalypses', in *AMA*, 268-71:

the omission of a number of other scenes in the second half of the window also conforms to the pattern set by this version: there is, for example, no representation of the worship of the image of the beast, no giving of the mark of the beast, and no marriage feast of the Lamb. It would be possible to argue, then, that the designers of the York window had access not only to a Berengaudus-type manuscript (or manuscripts) which they used as a base cycle but also to a French prose version which might have suggested that it was feasible to exclude certain scenes. However, to assert relationships between cycles on the basis of omissions alone is inadvisable: none of the positively distinguishing features of the French prose cycle (discussed below) occurs at York.

Exceptionally, a specific manuscript model has been identified for the cycle decorating the chapter house at Westminster.²³ Although stylistically different, the fourteenth-century Berengaudus-gloss manuscript, now at Trinity College, Cambridge (MS B.10.2), is very close in its picture cycle (including some adjustments to the usual order of scenes) and imagery to the first section of the wall paintings, covering Chapters 1-6 of the Apocalypse. Moreover, other evidence in the manuscript also suggests a link to Westminster, particularly the inclusion at the end of the codex of a pictorial life of St Edward, whose cult centre was Westminster Abbey. Perhaps most conclusively, certain oddities in the organisation and spelling of the Apocalypse text and gloss are reproduced identically in the captions found at the chapter house.²⁴

However, my examination of the Trinity manuscript shows that, contrary to Noppen's view, it cannot have been the model for the second extant section of wall paintings at Westminster. Important scenes there find no analogue in the

²³ J.G. Noppen, 'The Westminster Apocalypse and its source', *Burlington Magazine* 61 (1932), 146-59.

²⁴ Noppen, 'The Westminster Apocalypse', 154.

manuscript, since a whole section, covering Chapters 16: 14 - 20: 3 is missing from the book.²⁵ For example, the manuscript contains no representation at all of the Whore of Babylon, while the chapter house has four scenes in which she appears. There is likewise no model in the manuscript for the chapter house's depictions of other key scenes from this part of the text such as the fall of Babylon, the marriage of the Lamb or the Conqueror on the white horse. At first one assumes that the manuscript has suffered some damage and the section has been removed. However, the Cloisters Apocalypse lacks exactly the same portion, and the continuity implied there by the accurate catchword on fol. 33v suggests that the hiatus is original.²⁶ It seems, therefore, that the Trinity manuscript belongs to a small subset of Berengaudus manuscripts in which the narrative is abridged at this point, and thus it cannot have provided the manuscript model for the second part of the chapter house paintings. This furthers the theory, based also on the slight alteration in style found in the second part, that the painting of the chapter house Apocalypse was achieved in two separate campaigns.²⁷

Among the monumental versions deriving from the Anglo-French tradition, Angers, York and Westminster conform (on the whole) to the more widespread Berengaudus picture cycle. Norwich is the exception in that it can be seen, from both its choice of scenes and from individual iconographic elements within the scenes, to derive instead from the rival pictorial tradition which accompanied the French prose commentary. Since this link with a specific subset of Apocalypse manuscripts has not been explored in the previous scholarly work on the Norwich

²⁵ The missing section should appear between fols. 34v (the frogs issuing from the mouths of the beasts) and 35r (the dragon loosed). Noppen is apparently unaware of this problem, and argues for the use of the Trinity manuscript as a model throughout the Westminster cycle ('The Westminster Apocalypse', 154-59).

²⁶ See F. Deuchler et al., eds., *The Cloisters Apocalypse: an early fourteenth-century manuscript in facsimile* (New York, 1971), vol. 1, 33v-34r, vol. 2, 10, 69.

²⁷ See B. Turner, 'The patronage of John of Northampton: further studies of the wall-paintings in Westminster chapter house', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 138 (1985), 94-95.

cloister bosses, despite having been first noted by James in 1927,²⁸ I will briefly sketch here some salient features of the French prose version, as they appear at Norwich and in a number of manuscripts.²⁹

The first clue to the identification of the Norwich cycle as deriving from the French prose gloss tradition comes in two scenes at the opening of John's vision. As Tristram noted, the figure that appears to John as he lies on Patmos (boss A.143) is not an angel but, unusually, Christ himself, identified by a cross-nimbus.³⁰ An explanation for this is the dependence of the Norwich iconography on the pictorial cycle that was developed to accompany the French prose commentary. The appearance of Christ instead of the angel is found in only some manuscripts of the French prose type,³¹ but is never found in the Berengaudus cycle. A couple of scenes later, another sign of the French prose cycle is the devotion of a whole scene (B.145, fig. 61) to the depiction of 'a door opened in heaven', with the angel inviting John to ' "Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must be done hereafter" ' (Apoc. 4: 1); in the Berengaudus cycle, this event, if presented at all, is

²⁸ M.R. James, *The Apocalypse in art (the Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1927)* (London, 1931), 65.

²⁹ The French prose pictorial cycle is poorly served by facsimiles and photographic reproductions, probably because the smaller and irregularly-spaced pictures make it in general less visually appealing than the Berengaudus cycle. To my knowledge, there is no facsimile of any of the true French prose gloss versions. The famous facsimile of Bibliothèque Nationale Fr. 403 (Delisle and Meyer, *L'Apocalypse en français*, vol. 2) unfortunately confuses the issue, since although it contains the French prose gloss, the layout and substantial parts of the picture cycle employed are those designed for the Berengaudus commentary (see Lewis, 'The enigma of Fr. 403'). Scholars without access to manuscript holdings have thus been at a disadvantage on this question. The manuscripts of the French prose gloss Apocalypse which I have consulted are: London, British Library, MS Harley 4972, MS Roy. 15.D.II, MS Yates Thompson 10, MS Add. 38118; Cambridge, University Library, MS Gg 1.1.

³⁰ E.W. Tristram, 'The cloister bosses, Norwich Cathedral', in *Norwich Cathedral cloister* (Norwich, 1938) (reprinted, with original pagination, from the *Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Annual Reports of the Friends of the Cathedral Church of Norwich*), 21; the boss numbers cited are also those given by Tristram in this article.

³¹ See, for example, BL MS Roy. 15.D.II, fol. 108v; BL MS Yates Thompson 10, fol. 2v.

literally marginalised, with John appearing outside the frame, observing the theophany of Chapter 4 through a small aperture (fig. 44).³²

Another cluster of visual patterns distinct to the French prose subset relates to the vision of the woman and the dragon of Chapter 12. As a precursor to the dramatic action, the French prose cycle often gives an separate scene to the figure of the woman, without her child, standing frontally in a cloud of fire with her attributes: the sun at her head or belly, the moon beneath her feet and the stars as a crown.³³ One British Library manuscript of this type, a late fourteenth-century example of very high quality, displays imagery almost identical to the Norwich boss (J.215): the sun is superimposed on the centre of the woman's body, and she raises her hands in the antique *orans* gesture; three angels (one only at Norwich) gesture towards her from inside a church-like building on the right.³⁴ The scene of War in Heaven which occurs shortly afterwards (Apoc. 12: 7-9) also has a characteristic pictorial rendering in the French prose manuscripts, which is reflected in the boss (K.220). The composition has a vertical rather than a horizontal axis dividing the forces of good from the forces of evil, so that the two sides appear more evenly matched than in the Berengaudus cycle where the angels hold the dominant, upper part of the field. Moreover, instead of representing 'the great dragon ... that old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan' as the red dragon of the previous scenes (a device which at least offers narrative continuity), the boss presents a completely different monster, a Leviathan-like creature with a fish's mouth.³⁵ Satan's 'angels' are represented not as

³² See S. Lewis, *Reading images: narrative discourse and reception in the thirteenth-century illuminated Apocalypse* (Cambridge, 1995), 68-70.

³³ A small sub-group of Berengaudus manuscripts includes a similar scene (see Lewis, *Reading images*, 122-24).

³⁴ BL MS Yates Thompson 10, fol. 19.

³⁵ I have not found a French prose manuscript that exactly echoes this image, which is most strongly reminiscent of the *Liber Floridus* Leviathan: Lambert of St Omer, *Liber floridus*, ed. A. Derolez, (Ghent, 1968), vol. 1, fol. 62v. However, it is a common feature of the French prose version that this figure is not identical to the dragon of previous scenes.

small dragons, as is typical in the Berengaudus version, but as hairy semi-humanoid demons of the type found in standard medieval depictions of hell.

Other scenes familiar from the Berengaudus version, including its monumental usages at Angers, Westminster and York, are simply not present at Norwich, and again these omissions are typical of the pictorial recension which accompanied the French prose commentary. For example, there is no image of the angel emptying the censer onto the earth (Apoc. 8: 5); neither the worship of the image of the beast nor the mark of the beast being given to his supporters (Apoc. 13: 14-18) is represented; and the winepress of God's wrath does not appear in the Vintage of the Earth scene (Apoc. 14: 19-20). Even scenes endowed with high symbolic importance elsewhere are not present in this version. One such is the battle between the dragon and the woman's seed (Apoc. 12: 17), with its potential for contemporary costuming and even patronal identification (as at Angers) in the portrayal of the righteous. Another is the marriage feast of the Lamb (Apoc. 19: 7-9), so evocative of the union between Christ and the church or, especially in the later Middle Ages, the individual soul.³⁶

It is possible that the decision to use the French prose version as a model for the bosses at Norwich was simply a matter of chance, in that only a manuscript of this type was available to the designer. However, if a deliberate choice was made, it is clear in formal terms why this picture cycle would have been preferred over the Berengaudus one. Typically, the manuscripts containing the French prose gloss have quite a different layout to the Berengaudus cycle. The pictures do not occupy a regular, dominant rectangular space at the top of each page: instead, irregularly sized and placed images appear within the main body of text. They are generally smaller, often filling a square the width of one text column, but compensate for their relative

³⁶ For the significance of this passage, see Lewis, *Reading images*, 173-76.

lack of size by being more heavily and vividly painted than many of the Berengaudus type, which are most often tinted drawings. Thus the kind of illustration found in the French prose manuscripts — smaller, squarer, more compact and even diagrammatic yet vivid and dramatic — is more analogous to the shape of a boss and to the particular demands of this unusual medium. Hence, assuming a choice existed, a French prose manuscript would have been a more suitable model for the designer charged with such a task.

Outside the Anglo-French tradition, which is very clear in this respect, it is also immediately apparent that the artist of the German Altarpiece now at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, must have been working from an illustrated manuscript, in this case one containing the thirteenth-century historicising Apocalypse commentary of Alexander Minorita.³⁷ Of all the cycles in this study, the London Altarpiece is thus the only one explicitly to present imagery influenced by a specific commentary. Pictorially speaking, however, the London Altarpiece is still in an important sense a literal presentation of the biblical text. In only a few scenes do the historical figures required by the commentary appear as well as, or instead of, the characters from the Apocalypse. Most striking in this regard is the appearance in a number of scenes of figures with two heads — one for the biblical character, the other for the historical figure required by the commentary (fig. 66).³⁸ In a text already over-endowed with multi-headed creatures, it is fortunate that we can establish from the frame inscription that the second head presents the commentary's reading and does not in itself constitute another monstrosity.³⁹

³⁷ C.M. Kauffmann, *An altar-piece of the Apocalypse from Master Bertram's workshop in Hamburg* (London, 1968), repr. in his *Studies in medieval art* (London, 1992), 136-47.

³⁸ See, for example, scenes 17, 19, 20, 41, 42. This conceit is found also in the Alexander manuscripts.

³⁹ Kauffmann, *An altar-piece of the Apocalypse*, 158; Alexander Minorita, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, ed. A. Wachtel (Weimar, 1955), 124-27.

Apart from the handful of double-headed characters, though, the extent to which the commentary influences the imagery itself is actually rather limited. The interpretation is mostly carried by (or relegated to) the inscriptions (abridged quotations and paraphrases of both the biblical text and the commentary) which frame each scene (figs. 62-65).⁴⁰ These inscriptions, however, are not particularly easy to see, or to read. The inscription for each scene appears in two lines of small print which begin across the top border and travel (inverted through 90 degrees) down the right hand side. These cramped lines of text are hardly given priority in the layout. Particularly when the altarpiece's original function as a backdrop to liturgical ceremony in a church or chapel is considered, it does not seem likely that the inscriptions were intended to be read often, if at all. Rather they were surely there to provide a sense of completeness to an altarpiece heavily dependent in its concepts as well as its imagery on a manuscript model.⁴¹

Among the five surviving examples of illustrated Alexander commentaries, the imagery on the altarpiece most closely reflects that of the manuscript preserved in Cambridge University Library (MS Mm.V.31).⁴² Yet as Kauffmann has pointed out, the altarpiece also includes imagery which is derived from the Anglo-French manuscripts.⁴³ The designer of either the altarpiece itself, or possibly of an

⁴⁰ Kauffmann, *An altarpiece of the Apocalypse*, 136.

⁴¹ Unlike the Anglo-French cycle, the Alexander manuscripts are primarily text-based: the images are subservient (in terms of size, number and positioning) to a very full commentary text. The Cambridge manuscript (discussed below) has only 71 illustrations distributed among its 205 folios (in its current state: some folios are missing). The text can go on for ten or more folios at a time without a picture; towards the end, there is a picture-free zone of 36 folios (between 144v and 180v). Neither does the mise-en-page prioritise the images as it does in the Berengaudus version of the Anglo-French cycle; instead, the images, which are of varying sizes, are positioned within the text or margins.

⁴² The correspondences have been thoroughly examined in Kauffmann's monograph. My own examination of the manuscript has confirmed that much of the imagery is indeed very similar, even down to the contents of text labels that appear within the scenes. It is also worth noting that the designer of the altarpiece has rigorously excluded extraneous, non-apocalyptic scenes found in the manuscript, whether these are further elaborations on the historical commentary or familiar biblical images such as the scenes from Christ's childhood that appear on fol. 73v.

⁴³ *An Altarpiece of the Apocalypse*, 145-47.

intermediary manuscript, has conflated some of the imagery of the main model with selections from the much more widespread Anglo-French cycle. Once again, it seems possible at least that the drive to combine two separate image cycles was sparked by the challenge of a new medium, a medium outside the safe confines and relatively predictable demands of the book and its reader.

Because the provenance of the altarpiece is not certainly known, it is difficult to assess for what purpose the particular manuscript model of the Alexander commentary was chosen.⁴⁴ If we assume that the commissioners must also have had access to a manuscript of the Anglo-French cycle, this suggests that given the choice of at least two models, they actively preferred the Alexander cycle. However, to invoke the standard plea of medieval art history, it is possible that their exemplar was already a composite of the two traditions, although no manuscript of this type now exists. Even so, it is clear that the historical reading provided by the Alexander cycle was valued for itself since it was retained (at least in places) when it could easily have been abandoned. The double heads in particular place great strain on the confined space of the picture panels, and on any claims to realism to which the piece might otherwise have aspired; without them, the imagery would revert to a standard depiction of the biblical text.

As the altarpiece exists today, it extends only to Chapter 16 of the Apocalypse, which means that the propaganda in favour of the mendicant orders with which Alexander ends his commentary is not represented. There are a number of possible explanations for this, depending largely on how close the surviving altarpiece is to its original state. Some of the edges have been cut away, but it is not

⁴⁴ Two suggestions as to the provenance have been made. Kauffmann in 1968 argued for the Friary of Mary Magdalen in Hamburg (152-54), while another scholar, in rejecting this idea, put forward the Cistercian Convent of St John at Lübeck: M. Hasse, 'Der Apokalypse-Altar (Johannes-Altar) im Victoria und Albert Museum zu London', *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte* 19 (1980), 125-36. As Kauffmann comments in the 1992 notes to the reprinted monograph, 'As neither attribution is supported by documentary evidence ... it would be rash to claim that a clear solution has been found' (409). See also my Introduction: The Cycles.

known if anything more than some border inscriptions is lost: although the damage is only certain on the top and sides of the pieces, it is also possible that there were once additional scenes located below the current bottom row. If the later chapters have been physically removed, this might be the result of a change of ownership and the desire to obliterate the sections that tied the iconography particularly to the Franciscans, much as heraldic devices were overpainted or rubbed out of manuscripts after they changed hands. Or, alternatively, if the last chapters of the commentary were never represented, the original commissioners, whoever they were, may have been interested in presenting the historical reading offered by the Alexander commentary, but without the much more controversial and partisan recent history he provides towards the end. One final possibility is that the manuscript that was used as the model was itself lacking in illustrations for the final section, as is the case with the Cambridge example, which is, as we have noted, the surviving manuscript closest to the altarpiece's iconography.

It is, then, clearly established that the artists who designed the monumental cycles at Norwich, Angers, Westminster and York, as well as the designer of the London Altarpiece, must have had access to one or more illuminated Apocalypse manuscripts as their immediate models. These manuscripts were presumably supplied by the patron, as we know to have been the case at Angers; since all the patrons in question were either individually or collectively wealthy and powerful, and since the illustrated Apocalypse was one of fourteenth-century Europe's best-sellers among this social class, the assumption does not stretch credibility too far. What is less certain is how the books would have been used in the design process. We can suppose that rather than allow such precious and expensive manuscripts to

sit around in artisans' studios for long periods of time, the head artist would have made working drawings, probably beginning with copies on a small scale.⁴⁵

These copies and further sketches which developed from them could then be used to plan the overall scheme of the monumental version, including alterations which could be made to take advantage of the new medium and scale (for example, the scenes in the York window which were extended to fit a set of three lights).⁴⁶ Design blueprints of this kind, by nature ephemeral, do not of course generally survive, but we can surmise their use on the basis of probabilities and on the evidence of the few extant examples.⁴⁷ At Angers, the king's painter Jean Bondol (whom Louis had apparently borrowed from his brother along with the manuscript) was paid in 1378 for 'pourtraitures et patrons' made for the Apocalypse Tapestry: considering that Bondol was himself a manuscript artist, these were most likely small-scale designs.⁴⁸ Once the overall scheme was worked out and agreed with the patron, it could be used as a template for the creation of full-scale cartoons for those media which required them, such as tapestry or glass-painting, or as a guide for underdrawings in the case of mural or fresco decoration.

The admirable clarity which marks out the cycles we have discussed so far in relation to their manuscript models (at least in terms of general categories if not specific exemplars) unfortunately fails to appear when we examine the Italian cycles. Largely this is due to the relatively much smaller number of possible manuscript models surviving. It is difficult to say with certainty, for instance, whether there

⁴⁵ Kitzinger, 'The role of miniature painting', 108-09, 142; Scheller, *Exemplum*, 58n166.

⁴⁶ See Rickers, 'The Apocalypse scenes', 63-64, and 'Glazier and illuminator', 273.

⁴⁷ See, for example, the sixteenth-century design for a stained-glass window (*vidimus*) discussed by S. Brown and D. O'Connor, *Glass-painters* (London, 1991), 2-3, 34-35.

⁴⁸ F. Muel et al., *La tenture de l'Apocalypse d'Angers*, 2nd edn. (Nantes, 1993), 33. On the use of such designs as a record of the agreement negotiated by the artist and commissioning patron, see M. Baxandall, *Painting and experience in fifteenth-century Italy*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1988), 6-8; Brown and O'Connor, *Glass-painters*, 31-45.

were in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italy any self-contained illustrated Apocalypse books analogous to the Anglo-French cycle in northern Europe: at any rate, none is extant.⁴⁹ There were some complete illustrated Bibles produced in Italy, but again only a few have survived, and scarcely any from a period early enough or a region close enough to have influenced the first monumental Apocalypse cycles under discussion, those emanating from Naples (S. Maria Donnaregina and the Stuttgart panels).⁵⁰ The iconography of the Neapolitan cycles is largely independent of the thirteenth-century Anglo-French exemplum so widely used in northern Europe; instead, it is more closely linked to earlier, Romanesque cycles.⁵¹ As discussed in Chapter 1, a number of monumental cycles from the twelfth century are found in Italy, at Anagni and Castel S. Elia (both in Lazio) and at Bardolino (Lombardy).⁵² The main focus for the eye at S. Maria Donnaregina, the central depiction of the apocalyptic Godhead (fig. 1), clearly derives in general terms from Romanesque models of the *Maiestas Domini*, and perhaps specifically from the version at Anagni (fig. 13). Less usual features from this cycle are also found at Naples: the Stuttgart panels combine the textually separate scenes of the martyrs under the altar (Ch. 6) with the angel's censuring of the altar (Ch. 8), a conflation also

⁴⁹ See Emmerson and Lewis, 'Census'. Only one Italian illustrated Apocalypse from this period survives: a Venetian manuscript of the Alexander Minorita commentary (misattributed to Joachim of Fiore) now in the Vatican ('Census' no. 121). It is not a self-contained codex, being bound with some other Joachite texts, and contains only three completed Apocalypse illustrations, although many more were intended.

⁵⁰ For the Bibles, see Emmerson and Lewis, 'Census', nos. 142, 143 (thirteenth-century, Veronese); 138, 144 (mid- to late fourteenth-century, Neapolitan, and actually influenced by the Stuttgart panels rather than the reverse), 139 (mid-fourteenth-century, Tuscan).

⁵¹ Although in some scenes the iconography of the Neapolitan examples seems similar to the Anglo-French type, this is largely due to the common ancestry in Romanesque imagery of both the Anglo-French and the Italian trecento cycles (see P.K. Klein, 'Introduction: the Apocalypse in medieval art', in *AMA*, 179-89); also, similarities can often be explained through reference to specific details of the biblical text. However, the possibility that there was some iconographic influence from the Anglo-French cycles cannot be discounted, especially in view of the Angevin dynasty's French ancestry and links; but if this was the case, the influence was certainly limited and did not dominate the image tradition in the way it came to in northern Europe.

⁵² See Chapter 1 above, and Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 180-81.

found at Anagni.⁵³ However, the Anagni frescoes show only selected scenes from the first half of the book, a choice which is common among the Romanesque monumental cycles.⁵⁴ Earlier monumental cycles cannot, therefore, have provided the sole model for the fourteenth-century versions, with their coverage of the whole book and their emphasis on detailed and complex narrativity. It is likely that the unknown designers of the Neapolitan iconography were working from a manuscript tradition, whose exemplars are, however, no longer extant. As with their northern counterparts, illustrated manuscripts, whether Bibles or independent Apocalypse books, were probably used to some extent at least as models for the works on a larger scale.

Thus it appears that one principal reason behind the relatively independent transmission of image cycles is related to artistic practice, and specifically, in the case of the Anglo-French cycle at least, to the use of manuscripts as models for what remained a very unusual subject in monumental art. The more or less accurate copying of the image cycle from an exemplar in this fashion is of course familiar scholarly ground in terms of the Anglo-French manuscripts' relationships to each other, and one approach to the monumental Apocalypse cycles is to see them as nothing more significant than further examples of the same essential type, to be catalogued and placed in groups according to their iconographic choices.⁵⁵ Yet ultimately, although a number of interesting points emerge, this kind of approach is rather unproductive. Particularly for the Anglo-French cycle, where the affiliations between monumental cycle and manuscript model are clear enough in general terms,

⁵³ For this iconography at Anagni, see Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art', 182.

⁵⁴ See Chapter 1 above, and Y. Christe, 'The Apocalypse in the monumental art of the eleventh through thirteenth centuries', in *AMA*, 239-40, 251; M.Q. Smith, 'Anagni: an example of medieval typological decoration', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 33 (1965), 1-47.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Klein, 'The Apocalypse in medieval art'.

the temptation is to search ever further for a manuscript which presents a precise model for a cycle or, failing that, to find the one which comes closest.⁵⁶ The search for manuscript models is extremely laborious, due in particular to three factors: the length of the picture cycle itself (typically around eighty separate images occur in each version), the large number of surviving examples (over eighty Anglo-French manuscripts from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries are extant), and the very small percentage of them easily accessible through published facsimiles or photographs. Scholars are usually searching for the exemplars of tiny details, a process which has been ongoing since James's valiant attempt to categorise manuscripts on the basis of which animal was found to be handing out the vials in Chapter 15, and whether or not the kings from the East occurred.⁵⁷ Yet often when it comes to monumental cycles, there is a tendency to ignore the strong possibility that the designer might have had access to more than one illustrated manuscript, as I have suggested above. In that case the imagery would have fused only within the monumental cycle, and no manuscript would ever have presented exactly the same recension. Moreover, it is clear that designers of monumental Apocalypse cycles, in responding to the challenges of a new medium and context, themselves modified imagery, and on occasion created entirely new additions to the pictorial cycle. The central point is that despite minor differences, this group of monumental cycles is so similar in its choice of which passages of the text to illustrate, in its iconographic decisions, even in its design and layout that it can be recognised at a glance as belonging to the Anglo-French tradition of Apocalypse illustration. The insights which can be gained from the kind of approach that focuses forever on the minutiae of the imagery are, in the end, of somewhat limited value and, moreover, can distract attention from more important issues regarding the relationship between the monumental cycles and the

⁵⁶ See, for example, Henderson, 'The manuscript model'; Muel et al., *La tenture*, 24-29; Rickers, 'The Apocalypse scenes', 22-40.

⁵⁷ James, *The Apocalypse in art*, 1-20, 44-65.

manuscripts which they both relied on and, inevitably, broke away from, some much more completely than others.

Visible Signs of the Sacred Page

As a result of their links with manuscripts, unusually strong for monumental art, a number of the Apocalypse cycles retain features that we more commonly associate with the logocentric forms of book art, such as extensive textual captions explaining the images.⁵⁸ At Angers, caption blocks, now destroyed, were originally woven into the tapestry, appearing below each scene (fig. 67). The text in the tapestry thus occupied the same space as in the Berengaudus manuscripts; in both media, the images and the text were arranged in a relationship of mutual explication and interdependence.⁵⁹ The overall design of the tapestry further highlights its self-consciously bookish aspect. An essentially similar introductory scene prefaces each of the tapestry's six sections: the figure of a Reader, dressed in the robes of a prophet, sits under a baldachin decorated with the patron's heraldic emblems. In three of the four extant scenes, the Reader's gaze is fixed upon the large book open on the lectern before him (fig. 68).⁶⁰ The physicality of the book, its seals hanging open and its pages clearly delineated, is emphasised: line rulings, rubricated and plain letters are visible as the Reader turns the page. It is apparent that the Reader's head and the bookstand would originally have been roughly level with the band of

⁵⁸ As Lavin points out, 'most medieval visual narratives include *tituli* and labels': M.A. Lavin, *The place of narrative: mural decoration in Italian churches, 431-1600* (Chicago, 1990), 1. However, unlike the textual element of the Apocalypse cycles, these are usually limited to single words or short phrases. See also R. Ellis, 'The word in religious art of the Middle Ages and the renaissance', in C. Davidson, ed., *Word, Picture, and Spectacle* (EDAM Monograph Series 5) (Kalamazoo, 1984); M. Schapiro, *Words and pictures: on the literal and the symbolic in the illustration of a text* (The Hague and Paris, 1973), 11.

⁵⁹ Camille is apparently unaware that the tapestry originally incorporated captions, writing that 'in the "translation" from book to tapestry, the images become completely autonomous from any text or commentary' (M. Camille, 'Visionary perception and images of the Apocalypse in the later Middle Ages', in *AMA*, 280).

⁶⁰ Muel et al., *La tenture*, 16, 157, 189, 221.

woven inscriptions appearing between the two registers of narrative imagery.⁶¹ Thus the design suggests that the text of this caption band (which also used rubric on occasion)⁶² is the equivalent of the text examined by the Reader. In a brilliant symbol of the designer's interaction with the manuscript tradition, the material once confined to the Reader's book is now displayed in the large scale of the tapestry, and it becomes possible to 'read' the story in a new, non-book, medium.

Similarly, at Westminster, the bookishness of the cycle is emphasised. Ranged around the blind arcading at just above eye-level, the images are unusually close not only to the style and iconography but even to the layout and size of a Berengaudus gloss Apocalypse manuscript. The space of each arcade is divided into four quarters by decorated borders, and each quarter is organised as if it were a page in a manuscript, with a rectangular picture taking the dominant position at the top and a panel of closely-written biblical text and commentary under it: the standard hierarchy of image, text and gloss found in the Berengaudus version (fig. 69). Of all the cycles in my study, the Westminster Apocalypse has by far the greatest amount of textual labelling, with each scene being accompanied by between four and nine lines of writing, including traditional features of manuscript work such as enlarged capitals and rubrication (fig. 70). Moreover, the actual material of the manuscript page, in the form of glued strips of parchment, is physically attached to wall to provide the captions. We can assume from these unusual features that the work was delegated to a professional, literate scribe rather than left to the whims of artistic orthography. The monastic patrons of the cycle were highly educated and theologically trained,⁶³ and they wished to ensure the readability, accuracy and

⁶¹ Muel et al., *La tenture*, 59 pl. 43, 60, 76, 154, 157.

⁶² Muel et al., *La tenture*, 58 pl. 40.

⁶³ For Westminster monks at Oxford, see R.B. Dobson, 'The religious orders, 1370-1540', in J.I. Catto and R. Evans, eds., *The history of the University of Oxford. Vol. 2: late medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1992), 547, 571. For the abbey's books, see R. Sharpe et al., eds., *English Benedictine libraries: the shorter catalogues* (London, 1996), 608-33.

completeness of their cycle by making it as bookish as possible, both in form and content.

Yet book-like features such as captions can also be transformed by the altered function and scale of a monumental medium. In a number of cycles, text bands act as a frame, a means of dividing scenes one from another, not just along a horizontal axis but also vertically. They thus replace the missing edges of parchment pages, as at Karlstein and in the London Altarpiece. The captions at Karlstein, however, are at least readable, written in a large and clear gothic script with few abbreviations (fig. 74). In the London Altarpiece, by contrast, the legibility of the words themselves seems to have become a secondary consideration, as the bands, dark in colour and crowded with text, twist round at right angles to contain the scenes.

Even cycles which are not overtly bookish in these terms demonstrate an affinity with the manuscripts, I would argue, through their strong commitment to narrativity.⁶⁴ Unlike the Romanesque monumental cycles discussed in Chapter 1, the majority of the fourteenth-century examples represent not just a few selected highlights, but the whole sweep of the biblical text, usually in the correct textual order and with markers of layout or design to encourage sequential reading. The reading order in the majority of the cycles is that of books, from left to right and top to bottom, even when, as with the York east window, this is not the norm for the medium.⁶⁵ At Padua the scenes, although they have no text component, are labelled

⁶⁴ On narrative art in general, see Lavin, *The place of narrative*; S. Ringbom, 'Some pictorial conventions for the recounting of thoughts and experiences in late medieval art', in F.G. Andersen et al., eds., *Medieval iconography and narrative: a symposium* (Odense, 1980), 38-69; N. Goodman, 'Twisted tales; or, story, study, and symphony', *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980), 103-19; Belting, 'The new role of narrative'; W. Kemp, *The narratives of gothic stained glass*, trans. C.D. Saltzwedel (Cambridge, 1997).

⁶⁵ M.H. Caviness, 'Biblical stories in windows: were they Bibles for the poor?', in B.S. Levy, ed., *The Bible in the Middle Ages: its influence on literature and art* (New York, 1992), 122-26. See also Lavin's comment that despite a common belief to the contrary, it is by no means automatic that scenes in a fresco cycle read from left to right, 'like lines on a printed page or like comic strips' (*The place of narrative*, 9).

with arabic numerals so that the viewer can follow the correct order of the narrative despite the difficulties posed by the location of some images (for instance, those which appear on the soffits of arches). At York, the decision to create a window filled with small narrative scenes, rather than with massive figures like the west window, must be seen as a conscious choice. The design of the east window demonstrates a clear desire on the part of its clerical patrons to include all of the Apocalypse narrative (the cycle's 81 scenes is a figure fairly consistent with the usual number of scenes in the Anglo-French manuscripts), even at the expense of legibility. The other Anglo-French derived cycles at Norwich, Angers and Westminster are similarly comprehensive, with originally eighty to a hundred scenes each.

The concentration on narrative embodied in the design of many of the monumental Apocalypses calls to mind Gregory the Great's famous justification of images as 'books for the illiterate'.⁶⁶ One function of traditional image cycles in churches, such as the life of Christ, Mary or patron saints, was to provide visual reinforcement of the stories that were preached there.⁶⁷ In fact, this was a mutual process, since narrative images can only be properly understood by those who already know the story they depict,⁶⁸ whether through preaching, teaching (formal or informal) or some other expository medium such as drama or poetry. Yet unlike the commonly-heard stories of the gospels and saints, the Apocalypse was a rare subject

⁶⁶ On this topic, see L.G. Duggan, 'Was art really the "book of the illiterate" ?', *Word & Image* 5 (1989), 227-51; Caviness, 'Biblical stories in windows'; H.L. Kessler, *Studies in pictorial narrative* (London, 1994).

⁶⁷ Kessler, *Studies in pictorial narrative*, 34-38.

⁶⁸ Duggan, 'Was art really the "book of the illiterate" ?'; Schapiro, *Words and pictures*, 9.

in preaching.⁶⁹ It did not even play a very substantial role in the liturgy (which was, in any case, in Latin).⁷⁰ In the absence of any evidence for an explanatory or performative use of large-scale apocalyptic imagery, we have to question whether the elaborate narrative portrayed could to any significant extent have been understood by those unfamiliar with it.

In fact, precisely because of its book-like qualities, the monumental Apocalypse must have functioned most effectively not as a book for the poor and illiterate but as a book for those already familiar with the narrative and its images, those who felt comfortable with the cycles' often overtly logocentric traits — in other words, people who were already reader-viewers of the cycle in its previous, codex-based, incarnation. As we have seen, the monumental Apocalypse cycles under discussion have their close antecedents in expensive illuminated books: these would certainly not have been accessible by the poor, but only by the upper classes,

⁶⁹ Even on such seemingly apt occasions as the Feast of St John, the narrative content of the Apocalypse was not emphasised in preaching. One early fifteenth-century English sermon for this feast is typically curt: '... the same tyrand [Domitian] made him to be exiled in-to Pathemos, where in a serteyne Sondag was shewyd un-to him by divine revelacions the state of holy chirche and other certeyne persecucions, the whiche schuld afturward befalle in the world and of the dampnacioun of the evel and glorificacion unto the goode. Then aftur the deth of the Emperoure Domician, this good man Seynt John was relesid of his exile ...': E.H. Weatherly, ed., *Speculum Sacerdotale* (EETS 200) (London, 1936), 11. Sermons for the Feast of St Michael often referred to the description of War in Heaven (Apoc. 12): for example, Weatherly, ed., *Speculum Sacerdotale*, 213; John Mirk, *Mirk's Festial: a collection of homilies by Johannes Mirkus*, ed. T. Erbe (EETS es 96) (London, 1905), 259.

⁷⁰ C.C. Flanigan, 'The Apocalypse and the medieval liturgy', in *AMA*, 333-51.

whether secular or clerical.⁷¹ These were the only people in a position to recognise the narrative and hence to follow it in its new, monumental form.

The east window at York is a case in point. It is next to impossible to argue that this window allows the narrative to be understood by an uninitiated, illiterate viewer: the scenes are too small, the distance between them and the viewer too vast, and the narrative itself with its 81 scenes too complicated. Yet viewers familiar with the standard imagery of the Anglo-French cycle, particularly the Berengaudus recension, can make out a good number of the scenes (even with the naked eye) because they know what narrative patterns, and within that what imagery patterns, to expect.⁷² The eye may, for example, light upon a vial-bearing angel somewhere in the fourth row: with prior knowledge of the narrative, the viewer is rewarded for the assumption that six further scenes of this type may be found nearby. Similarly, the window consistently represents speech-acts through scrolls whose writing is both heavily abbreviated and too small to read from the ground;⁷³ again, this device assumes prior knowledge of what is happening at this point in the story. For

⁷¹ Whether the secular noblemen and women who used Apocalypse books were in the strict sense of the word 'illiterate' (that is, unable to read Latin) is too complex an issue to explore here: see M.B. Parkes, 'The literacy of the laity', in D. Daiches and A. Thorlby, eds., *Literature and western civilisation: the mediaeval world* (London, 1973), 555-77; M.T. Clanchy, *From memory to written record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1993), 337-39; S.G. Bell, 'Medieval women book owners: arbiters of lay piety and ambassadors of culture', in M. Erler and M. Kowaleski, eds., *Women and power in the Middle Ages* (Athens, Georgia and London, 1988), 149-87. It is notable that the French prose gloss, which was relatively rare in the thirteenth century, became the dominant choice among fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts (Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration', 259), suggesting an accommodation to lay reading preferences (see Chapter 1). However, secular owners of Latin Apocalypses, if they were unable to read themselves, would certainly have been assisted to follow the narrative and its meaning by clerical advisers.

⁷² These points are based largely on my own experience of viewing the window over time: as I grew gradually more familiar with the imagery typical of the Anglo-French cycle, the window proved less of an unreadable blur. Although of course in my case I also had access to detailed photographs of the window itself, I nevertheless think there is a degree of valid analogy between the viewing eye of the art historian and that of the medieval reader-viewer trained in the repeated, contemplative study of images. This is particularly true if one imagines that an illustrated manuscript, perhaps very similar in the details of its imagery if it was in fact used as a model, may also have been accessible to the same group of people (at York, most obviously, the clerical officials of the cathedral) who repeatedly viewed the window.

⁷³ Rickers, 'The Apocalypse scenes', 71-73 and 'Glazier and illuminator', 276-77.

instance, scene 10a depicts John, an angel and an elder, the latter two with speech scrolls (fig. 71). The imagery does not in itself carry a great deal of narrative import, apart from the gesturing hands of the angel and elder, and the scrolls cannot be read: one has instead to recognise that this configuration of three standing figures at this early point in the story must represent the moment at which John weeps, believing that no one will be found worthy to open the book, and is comforted by an elder (Apoc. 5: 1-5). The window acts not to tell a narrative to someone new to it, but to reinforce the story which some, privileged, viewers already know from books.

In York Minster, the east end of the church was not solely the preserve of the clergy: the space immediately before the great east window was open to townspeople and pilgrims paying their respects to the shrine of St William, which stood behind the high altar, and to another 'martyred' archbishop saint (if an unofficial one), Richard Scrope, who was buried near the Lady Chapel in 1405.⁷⁴ Yet, while the material splendour of the east window may well have impressed all its beholders, the content of the Apocalypse narrative itself would, I suggest, have been meaningful only to some.

The placement of the Norwich cycle means that we can in this case make a clearer assessment of the cycle's primary intended audience. The cloister was traditionally the centre of a monastery, and although servants and outsiders would have passed through it from time to time, it was the monks who used the space on a daily basis, for teaching, conversation, study, contemplation and recreation, as well

⁷⁴ On the St William shrine, see C. Wilson, *The shrines of St William of York* (York, 1977). See also R.B. Dobson, 'The later Middle Ages, 1215-1500', in G.E. Aylmer and R. Cant, eds., *A history of York Minster* (Oxford, 1977), 86; R. Cant, 'The Minster', in A. Stacpoole, ed., *The noble city of York* (York, 1972), 37. On the tomb of Scrope, see T.W. French, 'The tomb of Archbishop Scrope in York Minster', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 61 (1989), 95-102; for fifteenth-century representations of Scrope as a saint, see Marks, *Stained glass*, 77-78.

as for liturgical processions.⁷⁵ The monks of Norwich were well-educated, as befitted an important Benedictine house, with a number of scholar monks being sent to university.⁷⁶ The monks' education and theological training would have given them access at least to written versions of the Apocalypse narrative, and, as discussed above, the Priory may also have owned an illuminated manuscript version.⁷⁷ Thus despite the lack of captions, it is likely that many of the Norwich monks would have been able to recognise and identify Apocalypse scenes on the cloister bosses.

Any case in which we can infer or posit the use of a manuscript as model adds strength to the notion of the book-prepared viewer, since the first and most important 'audience' for a medieval cycle is its patron, whether individual or collective. If the patron also owned, or had access to, the book from which the design for the monumental work was taken or adapted, the cycles in their different media would no doubt have acted to mutually reinforce the images within the viewer's mind. This is particularly necessary since in its cosmic dimensions the Apocalypse is far removed from the comfortingly domestic and contemporary level on which so many fourteenth-century depictions of gospel stories and saint's lives are played out. Quite apart from the problems posed by the sinister semi-anthropomorphic multi-headed beasts that populate the picture cycle, it is even

⁷⁵ B. Dodwell, 'The monastic community', in I. Atherton et al., eds., *Norwich Cathedral: church, city and diocese, 1096-1996* (London, 1996), 244; D.H.S. Cranage, 'History of the Cathedral Church of Norwich', in D.H.S. Cranage, ed., *Thirteen-hundredth anniversary of the Diocese of East Anglia: official handbook* (Norwich, 1930), 50, 52; M.R. James, *The sculptured bosses in the cloisters of Norwich Cathedral* (Norwich, 1911), i. The symbolic understandings of cloisters in the Middle Ages are discussed by C.R. Brighton, *Lincoln Cathedral cloister bosses* (Lincoln, 1985), 1-2.

⁷⁶ J. Greatrex, 'Monk students from Norwich Cathedral Priory at Oxford and Cambridge, c.1300 to 1530', *English Historical Review* 106: 420 (1991), 555-83.

⁷⁷ No medieval catalogue of the Norwich cathedral library is extant. See the list of surviving manuscripts which bear a Norwich pressmark: H.C. Beeching and M.R. James, 'The library of the Cathedral Church of Norwich', *Norfolk Archaeology* 19 (1917), 93-116; N.R. Ker, 'Medieval manuscripts from Norwich Cathedral Priory', in his *Books, collectors and libraries: studies in the medieval heritage*, ed. A.G. Watson (London, 1985), 243-72. See also Sharpe et al., eds., *English Benedictine libraries*, 288-325.

difficult to comprehend minor details of the imagery, such as exactly what role is played by the barking animal heads that appear periodically around the edges of clouds (fig. 72): reference to the text reveals that they are a visual representation of the word 'thunders'. Sign-systems like this do gradually become familiar to a reader of illustrated Apocalypse books, and since they occur repeatedly and with surprisingly little alteration even across iconographic traditions, they can then be recognised by such a reader-viewer.

To take another example, the Padua Baptistery is filled with narrative imagery, from the Creation to the Apocalypse. As with all narrative imagery, the pictures cannot be correctly interpreted unless the viewer knows at least the outlines of the story already. The essential difference in the case of the Apocalypse is the relative unfamiliarity of this story when compared with the great biblical and hagiographical stories seen elsewhere on the walls: the Fall, the Flood, the lives of John the Baptist and Christ. The Apocalypse also offers little opportunity to piece together its narrative from the imagery alone: its convoluted plot and bizarre characters mean that it can rarely be made up of familiar components from other stories, the common structural and iconographic codes that allowed, for instance, the rapid assimilation and transmission of new saints' lives.

In fact, I would argue that the relative rareness and unfamiliarity of the Apocalypse imagery is one of its most appealing features for patrons looking for something with which to differentiate the decoration of their space from the countless other image-filled spaces of the late Middle Ages. The biblical text is difficult, obscure; the cycle of images only fully comprehensible to viewers from a select and high-status group, those wealthy and educated clerics and aristocrats who

owned or had access to illustrated Apocalypse manuscripts.⁷⁸ As a result of the social context in which the books were produced and consumed, and due to their inherent costliness, it must have been a status symbol to be well-versed in this imagery. Many of the monumental cycles whose patronage is certain were commissioned by very high-status individuals or institutions: the emperor Charles IV, Duke Louis of Anjou, the ruling Carrara family in Padua, Bishop Skirlaw of Durham, the York Chapter and the Benedictine monasteries of Westminster and Norwich.

Those viewers who were familiar with the Apocalypse from its book form would have been able to identify scenes in the monumental cycles and also perhaps to interpret them, since the Anglo-French book cycles we have discussed as models customarily present both the text itself, and some form of commentary.⁷⁹ Thus the viewers who came to the cycles at Angers, Norwich, Westminster and York and found the imagery familiar from books they had seen and studied would, we can imagine, be prompted to remember some of the interpretations found in the Berengaudus commentary or the French prose gloss, depending on which book cycles they were aware of. The imagery of these two subgroups, although different in some details as I have discussed, is still relatively close and shares a similar number of scenes; thus although familiarity with the appropriate subgroup, either Berengaudus or French prose, would be a slight advantage in interpreting a monumental version of the pictorial cycle, it would still have been perfectly feasible for a person with knowledge of one version only to bring this to bear on the other.

⁷⁸ See Duggan, 'Was art really the "book of the illiterate"?', 240, for an apt comment from the sixteenth-century treatise-writer Johannes Molanus: 'there are images, but very few in number, whose principal signification and representation is grasped by the learned alone. Among them are the revelations described by St John in the Book of the Apocalypse'.

⁷⁹ Some exceptional manuscripts of the Anglo-French group have only the biblical text and no commentary; some include a vernacular translation or paraphrase of the Apocalypse instead. A very small group of manuscripts are genuine 'picture-books' with no text at all apart from inscriptions within the scenes, but even here the extracts are both from the Apocalypse and from the Berengaudus commentary (Emmerson and Lewis, 'Census', nos. 81, 90, 95).

However, as the pictorial cycles get further apart, it becomes more difficult to use book-knowledge of one to interpret another. For example, while the basic narrative of the London Altarpiece is the biblical one, which would be recognisable to those viewers who were familiar with it from whatever source, the Altarpiece would have presented some images, such as the double-headed characters, puzzling to viewers who had not previously seen an illustrated manuscript version of the Alexander commentary.⁸⁰ Other subtleties of the pictorial cycles were also dependent on particular details of the commentary they accompanied, such as whether the fourth rider (Apoc. 6: 8) should be literally represented, as a sinister figure of death, or allegorically interpreted as Christ, in which case the graphical presentation, not surprisingly, is somewhat different.⁸¹ Of course, as I have suggested above, it is in fact more likely that viewers would have been familiar with manuscripts close to their monumental cycle than the reverse: even if they did not have access to a specific manuscript model, it is important to remember that the different pictorial cycles were often geographically separate: the Anglo-French cycle was of English genesis and also popular in northern France, while the Alexander Minorita commentary was originally a Saxon work and remained best known in northern Germany.

Having thus examined some of the ways in which the fourteenth-century monumental Apocalypse cycles depended on book cycles, both for their imagery and for its effective understanding, we now turn to a consideration of the ways in which their effect differs, in terms of form and function, from the private, miniature art of books.

⁸⁰ The sense that the altarpiece is in general more concerned with communicating the biblical narrative than the idiosyncratic commentary is confirmed by the fact that the scrolls which appear in many scenes, and which are more easily readable than the border inscriptions, are devoted exclusively to quotations from the biblical text, rather than explicatory matter.

⁸¹ Lewis, *Reading images*, 81-85; for the presentation of the rider as a skeleton, see the Angers Tapestry, scene 12.

From Page to Wall: The Impact of Monumental Narrative

Despite the strongly book-influenced appearance of some of the cycles, there are fundamentally important differences between a pictorial cycle which appears in a manuscript and one which appears large-scale on a wall as mural, tapestry, or glass. The difference in effect is not substantially caused by alterations in the content, iconography or formal style, since as we have seen, significant alteration at the level of the pictorial cycle or the imagery itself is relatively rare. The crucial difference instead depends on the medium itself. In the process of translating the manuscript cycle, that which was previously contained within the covers of the book is displayed openly, and placed within a specific spatial and architectural context. This acts to transform completely the way in which the imagery functions, the way the cycle is consumed, and can imbue the old imagery with new connections and meanings.

By the later Middle Ages, book consumption was an increasingly private occupation.⁸² The illustrated Apocalypse was probably studied privately, or, in the case of the growing number of secular readers, sometimes with a clerical adviser. The aspect of display inherent in the creation of a monumental cycle meant a fundamental alteration to this mode of consumption: even if the audience was effectively restricted to the same small group of people who had previously had access to the manuscript, their experience of the book could no longer be individual and private but became collective and at least partially public.

The dissimilar experience provided by the monumental cycle suggests therefore that the patrons who commissioned such cycles wanted to achieve some

⁸² See M. Camille, 'Seeing and reading: some visual implications of medieval literacy and illiteracy', *Art History* 8 (1985), 26-49.

effect or effects that were not fulfilled by the mere private ownership of an Apocalypse book. Such effects could have included the urge to display one's learning or one's interest in the Apocalypse; the desire to claim, define and give meaning to space; or the urge to surround oneself in the book, to enter into its world by recreating its imagery on a large, ambient scale. The virtuosity of conception and execution apparent in many of the cycles suggests also the wish to impress viewers through the concrete form of the artwork as well as its content. The designers seem to have relished the challenges posed by intricate and time-consuming media like the highest quality tapestry and glass, not only reproducing the numerous scenes of their small-scale models but even adding further details such as the elaborate foliage-patterned backgrounds found both at Angers and York (figs. 71, 72).

Another important aspect of the transformation to monumental scale is the possibility it allows of interaction with neighbouring image cycles, which can create subtly different emphases for the apocalyptic material. Thematic or visual links of this type, amongst imagery which may date from the same or different periods, do not necessarily presume the existence of a unified overall programme of design: nevertheless, image cycles can be seen to be in dialogue with each other, to interact on a number of levels through their presentation in a shared space.⁸³

For example, the fresco at S. Maria Donnaregina in Naples has thematic resonances with other paintings nearby. The Apocalypse appears over the doorway to the Loffredo chapel, in which appear scenes from the lives of two saints closely associated with the Apocalypse. John the Evangelist, to whom the chapel is dedicated, is shown reviving Drusiana, drinking poison, reviving two boys, baptising Aristodemus and being boiled in oil — scenes reminiscent of those found in the

⁸³ For full discussion of this issue, see V.C. Raguin et al., eds., *Artistic integration in gothic buildings* (Toronto, 1995).

framing sequences of a number of manuscript Apocalypses.⁸⁴ In addition, there is a life of St Francis,⁸⁵ appropriate both as the namesake of Francesco Loffredo and because of the church's allegiance to the order. The scene of St Francis receiving the stigmata, placed thus in reasonably close proximity to an Apocalypse cycle, could have acted as a reminder of the Franciscan identification of the saint with the angel 'having the sign of the living God' (Apoc. 7: 2).

At York, the apocalyptic narrative is framed by images of historical and legendary English kings, founders and saints in the lowest and most easily visible row of the east window. Many are connected with York or with the north of England more generally: King Ebrauk, St William, St John of Beverley, St Paulinus, St Wilfred. John Thornton's design makes the crowned and bearded English kings (1a-d) strikingly similar to the elders who appear periodically throughout the Apocalypse sequence (figs. 71, 73). More figures of national and specifically northern importance appear in the choir clerestory windows (early fifteenth-century), while the windows showing the lives and miracles of saints William and Cuthbert (north and south choir transepts, c.1415 and c.1445) add further texture to this thematic group. Through proximity, a link is thus drawn between the universal narrative of the Apocalypse and the specific narrative of the church, region, and country in which it is so sumptuously deployed.

Just as importantly, reading strategies within the cycle are also opened up by the shift from manuscript to monumental media. The structure of an illustrated book encourages the reader to concentrate on each individual scene: only one opening, with probably two images, is visible at any one time.⁸⁶ The monumental cycles

⁸⁴ G. Chierici, *Il restauro della chiesa di S. Maria di Donnaregina a Napoli* (Naples, 1934), pls. lxxxiv-lxxxviii; E. Carelli and S. Casiello, *Santa Maria Donnaregina in Napoli* (Naples, 1975), 38, pls. 23-29. For examples of manuscripts with scenes from the life of John, see Emerson and Lewis, 'Census', nos. 48, 50, 57, 58, 67, 69, 79, 80, 81, 95, 107, 113.

⁸⁵ Carelli and Casiello, *Santa Maria Donnaregina*, pl. 24.

⁸⁶ Lewis, 'Exegesis and illustration', 260.

position viewers very differently in relation to the narrative. Instead of being isolated, the composition and iconography of each scene are placed in the larger context of the surrounding scenes; each image gains resonance from the others.⁸⁷ What makes this disposition radically different to the manuscript tradition is that it allows visual parallels between different scenes to be seen immediately. Sequences within the text, such as the seven trumpets and the seven vials, can be positioned to impress upon the viewer their repeated actions and hence their cumulative effects, as at York (scenes 4b-j), or formed into an organic whole, as in the Stuttgart panels. Links can be drawn thematically even if scenes are not close in the text, through physical juxtaposition or simply through the repetition of eye-catching imagery.

The most complete exploitation of this type of opportunity is found, paradoxically perhaps, in the cycle which is physically smallest. The size of the Neapolitan panel paintings in Stuttgart (each panel 35 x 86cm) means their delicate, detailed work — the lively expressions of the tiny faces and the gold highlights on the robes — is in some ways more closely related to illuminated manuscripts than to truly monumental work such as wall-paintings.⁸⁸ Scholars have given much attention to their influence on the subsequent miniature tradition in Naples.⁸⁹ But it would be a serious mistake to categorise them simply with book art and thereby deny their 'monumental' qualities: the element of open display is significant here, as is the complete dependence on images rather than words to convey the narrative. Most important of all, however, is the possibility the chosen format gave the designer for creating meaning through the positioning and interrelating of images. Unlike an

⁸⁷ Lavin's concept of 'internal typology', developed in her work on Italian fresco cycles (*The place of narrative*) has been useful here.

⁸⁸ L. Castelfranchi, 'Le "storie apocalittiche" di Stoccarda e quelle di Giusto da Padova', *Prospettiva* 33-36 (1983-84), 36.

⁸⁹ See A. Graf zu Erbach-Fürstenau, 'Pittura e miniatura a Napoli nel secolo XIV', *L'Arte* 8 (1905), 1-17 and 'Die Apokalypse von Santa Chiara', *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 58 (1937), 81-106; see also A. Schmitt, 'Die Apokalypse des Robert von Anjou', *Pantheon* 28 (1970), 475-503.

illuminated manuscript, the panels immediately present the totality of the story to the viewer. Their unusual structure and layout departs radically from a bookish paradigm. Instead of the field being divided into square or rectangular segments that are analogous to the pages of a manuscript, as in nearly all the other monumental examples, the panels present the story through a series of individual scenes which seem to float on the dark ground like the islands they sometimes depict.⁹⁰ While the narrative, with a few exceptions, can be read conventionally from left to right in a total of four registers (two registers on each panel), the 'floating islands' which make up the sequence encourage a more fluid movement of the eye, allowing numerous connections between different chapters to be formed in the viewer's mind. The absence of compartments or a too-monotonous regularity in the placing of the scenes (frequently a top-to-bottom zigzag sequence is used within a register) allows plenty of room for reading the images non-sequentially, instead concentrating on their thematic links and the overall structures that are emphasised by the size and colour, as well as placement, of scenes. As such, it is both a fully narrative cycle, with numerous small details of the text being represented, and one that suggests that simply to follow the story of a divine revelation like the Apocalypse is less important than meditating on its overall significance.

The first panel provides evidence of careful structuring in the central placing and dominant size of the enthroned Majesty surrounded by worshippers (figs. 2, 23). The importance given to this scene, like the central one in *S. Maria Donnaregina*, assures the viewer that the various unpleasant and violent actions depicted in the rest of the panel are not random but subordinate to the will of heaven. However, unlike in *S. Maria Donnaregina*, where the central image is out of scale and essentially non-narrative (fig. 1), the designer here manages to arrange the scenes so that this image is both centrally placed and appears at the right point in the story to represent the

⁹⁰ This arrangement is also found in the clearly related cycle at *S. Maria Donnaregina*.

throne in heaven of Chapters 4 and 5. Another example of the designer's command of layout is found in the bottom row of this first panel, where the lower edge of the picture surface allows the creation of the illusion of a continuous section of solid ground, as opposed to the 'islands' of the upper portion. Most of this ground is taken up by a procession, comprising different groups of figures who merge into one thematically-linked body: the armies and followers of the dragon and the beasts. Thus we see first the horse-like 'locusts' (Apoc. 9: 1-11), who appear from the pit with their demonic leader Abaddon. These merge almost indistinguishably into a second group, the army of leopard-like horses from later in the same chapter. They appear to be heading towards the next scene on this bottom row, as though also to participate in the worship of the seven-headed beast from the sea, who suddenly appears from Chapter 13. The conflation of the various different episodes involving the supernatural beasts is most clear in the next scene, the death of the witnesses, where the fatal orders are given not by Abaddon or a human Antichrist (as we often find in the Anglo-French tradition, for example) but by the beast from the sea, who, by virtue of his similarly leopard-like heads and his placing at the front of the satanic army, is linked with both the leopard-horsemen and the locusts from the pit.

What makes this kind of arrangement possible within the overall narrative framework is the sophisticated use of two rows within the lower half of the panel. Some scenes which are textually required at this point but do not fit the thematic grouping, such as the loosing of the angels of the Euphrates, the mighty angel with the book, and the measuring of the temple, are thrown into the upper row, still allowing them to be read at the appropriate textual moment by using a zigzag sequence, but also expressing their separateness from the satanic procession below. Some passages are also contracted in order to fit into the layout. For example, the two witnesses are first introduced at the moment of their martyrdom. However, even here a brilliant economy with images allows the scene above, which really represents

their ascension (as the cloud, familiar from other cycles, confirms), to also be read as the arrival of the witnesses to begin their preaching against the forces of the dragon (whose harassment of the woman is situated immediately to the right). One last example of the designer's command of structure, this time in a purely aesthetic sense, will suffice. In the top row of the second panel a near perfect symmetry is achieved (fig. 2). In the centre a group of crowned elders, playing harps on the sea of glass, provides a tranquil focus for the eye, while on either side extend the church buildings which are traditionally part of the scenes of the Harvest of the Earth and the distribution of the vials respectively. The balanced composition continues with groups of angels at either end of the panel.

The detailed representation of the biblical text as well as the carefully planned structure and balance suggests the panels may have been used as a visual focus for meditation on the Apocalypse by a viewer already familiar with the narrative or, perhaps, assisted to follow it by a theologically-trained adviser or by reference to the text itself. By helping the viewer to picture the strange, chaotic actions and the weird beasts that populate the text the panels would have enabled him or her to understand and memorise the text more effectively, as part of a devotional activity. The representation of St John, whose face is particularly animated in reaction to the events depicted, would have acted as another empathetic device, providing a model for the emotional response of the viewer.

Moving to a consideration of larger-scale cycles, we see sophisticated design strategies at work also in the Karlstein cycle. Despite the bands of text, the artists responsible for the series have escaped from the bookish format and created truly monumental designs. Compartments are sometimes created by vertical text bands but more often individual scenes are joined together and played out across a shared background, or cleverly constructed so that elements at the edge of one scene can be reused in the next. This can be seen, for example, in the upper band of the east wall

where the church-shaped 'temple' measured by John frames, in the adjacent scene, the group of people listening to the witnesses, thus capturing the immediacy of the text's juxtaposition of these two events (Apoc. 11: 2-3, figs. 30, 111). Dramatic scenes are emphasised through the greatly increased space devoted to them: the single (non-composite) scene of War in Heaven, the final scene of the east wall, is over three metres long, a space filled in the band above by some five individual scenes (fig. 74).

The question of intratextual links becomes somewhat more complicated in the case of the Angers Tapestry. Due to its vast dimensions, the tapestry must have been spread through several chambers, and would not have been seen all at once. Even the great hall at Angers could have held at most two pieces of the six at any particular time.⁹¹ Visual connections and contrasts would therefore have been most visible on an internal level, within each section, rather than between one section and another. The design of the first section, for example, certainly bears this out (fig. 75). Its ten narrative scenes (originally fourteen, in two registers of seven scenes each) display a careful awareness of the overall effect of the piece. In terms of composition, all the scenes in the top register are centrally balanced and quite static. This articulates perfectly the status of heaven, and contrasts with the row beneath, where the opening of the sealed book begins a new part of John's vision. Here the first extant scene (9), with its stark and striking composition, sets the pace for a series of images with strongly rightward-moving composition, depicting the four horsemen.⁹² The horse in each scene seems to direct the viewer's gaze into the next frame by its right profile presentation and its lifted, leading feet. This directional impulse is continued in the next scene (13), where the martyrs approach

⁹¹ The great hall was 30 x 10m, while each piece of the tapestry was originally around 22m long. See J. Mesqui, *Angers Castle*, trans. J. Shirley (Rennes, 1989-92), 6; H. Enguehard, 'Château d'Angers', *Monuments Historiques* (1976: 4), 67, 78.

⁹² Scene 10 is no longer extant, but presumably shared similar composition as part of the sequence of the horsemen.

an angel located at the extreme top right corner of the frame. The eye is drawn along the line of action in a way that is quite unlike the contemplative solemnity encouraged by the composition of the upper row.

Thematic links are also drawn in the tapestry. For example, the scene depicting the fight between the faithful and the dragon (scene 39, fig. 47), discussed in the previous chapter, gains further significance from the context provided by the upper register. It is positioned vertically below the scene in which the witnesses' bodies lie unburied (scene 32, fig. 35), seemingly an indication of their defeat. But the witnesses' eventual triumph is not limited to their resurrection and ascension (in the narrative read horizontally): their disciples below, the faithful Christians prepared by their teaching for the fight against the dragon, are shown to be their most lasting earthly achievement.

At Westminster, a contrast between two antithetical characters is underlined both by the overall design and by apparently minor iconographic details: The Whore of Babylon, who appears in the second extant section of the Apocalypse paintings, holds a large ring instead of her usual cup; she seems to offer it to St John (fig. 76). The first association that springs to mind is the legend of St Edward (fig. 73), the focal saint of Westminster Abbey, who gave a ring in charity to a poor pilgrim who, it transpired, was none other than John the Evangelist in disguise.⁹³ The currency of this iconography in the abbey could have lead to a misreading of a manuscript source: in a number of the relevant manuscript examples, a mirror held by the Whore is quite small and round, and could easily be taken for a large ring (fig. 77).⁹⁴ However this may be, the new addition to the image adds vigour to the dichotomy between the Whore and the Bride of the Lamb — the bad woman and the good —

⁹³ St Edward is often depicted with this ring, as at York in the east window and in the Wilton Diptych (National Gallery, London).

⁹⁴ See, for example, Lewis, *Reading images*, fig. 136.

that is set up particularly strongly in the Westminster cycle. The cycle's last image of the Whore is her destruction, where her body lies in flames while heaven rejoices; the scene which immediately follows is the marriage of the Lamb. Here the Bride, representative of the true church, accepts an golden ring, identical to the Whore's, from the Lamb of God in token of their union (fig. 76). The Whore's ring now reads as a perversion of this scene, an invitation to John, and perhaps the spectators, to join forces with her and the worldly corruption she represents. This invitation is declined in favour of the true nuptials between the Lamb and the Bride.

A similar dichotomy is emphasised in the cycle at Padua. Here, though, the Whore (fig. 54) is contrasted with another version of her opposite number: not the Bride but the woman clothed with the sun of Apocalypse 12 (fig. 78). She appears in the scene directly above the Whore, and their reciprocity is made clear by the unusual device that has them both wearing white, although the good woman's clothes are much more decorous and traditional, less fashionable, than the Whore's. Moreover, the woman's position, lying passively on the ground while the dragon threatens her, contrasts with the Whore's upright bearing as she sits on the beast. 'Thus [the Whore] could be made to display every opposing quality [to the Virgin]: autocracy rather than obedience, arrogance rather than humility, seduction rather than innocence.'⁹⁵

In adapting the detailed and complex narratives of late-medieval illustrated Apocalypse manuscripts, the designers of the monumental cycles took advantage of the qualities of large-scale media to imbue the pictorial cycle with further meaning, through design which focuses attention on links both internal and external. They retained much of the imagery of the manuscript cycles together with a strong sense

⁹⁵ R.M. Wright, *Art and Antichrist in medieval Europe* (Manchester, 1995), 194.

of narrative — yet the overall experience of the monumental cycles is fundamentally and inevitably different to that offered by books. Transferring the imagery away from its original textual context and positioning it within the large-scale architectural discourses of monumental painting, glass, tapestry, or sculpture, also brings to the fore its potential for interpretation under the codes of contemporary Christian imagery. It is these codes, particularly in relation to devotional piety, liturgical practice and questions of individual salvation, that will be further discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 THE DEVOTIONAL APOCALYPSE

The previous chapters have shown that the monumental Apocalypse cycles found across Europe in the fourteenth century, while differing widely in medium and style, yet share an imagery that is remarkably consistent. Close examination of this imagery has suggested that, far from being strongly influenced by contemporary politics or even current commentaries on the Apocalypse, the iconography is relatively stable, due largely to dependence on manuscript models. There are however, significant differences between the cycles, as much to do with placement, emphasis and context as with the imagery itself, that suggest ways of reading that would have been available to contemporary viewers. These readings encode the Apocalypse cycles not as polemical but as devotional works.

Within the broader picture of late medieval religious culture, however, there is no one aspect of devotion that links all the cycles in this study. This is hardly surprising given their geographical separation and varying types of medium, situation and patronage; rather, several (sometimes overlapping) clusters of meaning are discernible. In this chapter I will explore the most important thematic uses of monumental apocalyptic imagery in the fourteenth century: the links with the cult of relics, the eucharist and liturgy, judgement (both personal and universal), the Virgin Mary, and the heavenly city. It is only through a study of their spatial and artistic contexts, together with detailed examination of their internal imagery, that a proper understanding of the Apocalypse cycles can be reached.

The Relic Cult

The text of the Apocalypse itself suggests one of the most important ways of reading apocalyptic imagery: a connection between the earthly and the heavenly liturgy, with a particular emphasis on the intercessory role of martyr saints.

Martyrdom is undoubtedly one of the principal themes of the Apocalypse, a text whose original context was one of imperial persecution. The letter to the church at Smyrna provides an example of the morale-boosting tone that met the needs of first-century Christians: 'Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold, the devil will cast some of you into prison that you may be tried ... Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life' (Apoc. 2: 10). Similar themes of justice and the eventual reward of God's faithful recur frequently throughout the text: the two witnesses of Chapter 11: 3-13, the brethren who 'loved not their lives until death' of Chapter 12: 10-12, the chosen hundred and forty-four thousand of Chapter 14: 3, the harpers of Chapter 15: 2, the judging saints of the 'first resurrection' (Apoc. 20: 4-6), and the blessed who, by washing their robes in the blood of the Lamb, are allowed to enter the New Jerusalem (Apoc. 22: 14).

The imagery of martyrdom within John's vision is frequently bound up with the depiction of the heavenly liturgy. The scenes of heavenly worship are spread throughout the text as though to reassure the reader that the terrible persecutions presented are taking place under the control of divine authority.¹ The relevance of these passages, with their golden altars and their angel priests offering vials of incense (which, we are told, are the prayers of saints),² to actual liturgical ritual is obvious. An important passage occurs at Apoc. 6: 9, the opening of the fifth seal, where the visionary reports, 'I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held'. This passage was cited

¹ Besides the passages mentioned above, see also Apoc. 4, 8: 3-4, 16: 1, 19: 1-8.

² Apoc. 5: 8.

by Augustine to explain the custom of placing relics within altars at their dedication.³ Thus an immensely influential patristic writer connects the imagery of John's vision with the solid reality of the stone altar slab in every church, and with the relics of the saints.

The most prestigious of all relics in the later medieval period were those of the original and ultimate martyr, Christ himself.⁴ Christ's bodily ascension into heaven meant that 'primary' relics such as bones were a theological impossibility, and items such as the holy foreskin and milk teeth were considered dubious.⁵ As a result, 'secondary' or contact relics, which in the case of standard saints were generally considered less valuable, were in this case accorded the highest status. Thus, by the thirteenth century, relics of the instruments of Christ's Passion, particularly the cross, crown of thorns, nails, and spear, were the most treasured items in Christendom.⁶ Their relatively sudden importance is due to the rise in the cult of the human, suffering Christ from the twelfth century onwards and their increased availability due to western intercourse with the Holy Land in the form of trade, crusade and pilgrimage.⁷ Most importantly, however, the Passion relics were massively promoted by the French monarchy, which focused particularly on the regal relic, the crown of thorns.⁸ It is probably at the royal upper chapel of the Ste-

³ This custom was indeed obligatory until Vatican II. See G.J.C. Snoek, *Medieval piety from relics to the eucharist: a process of mutual interaction* (Studies in the History of Christian Thought 63) (Leiden, 1995), 183; F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd edn., (Oxford, 1997), 46.

⁴ On the development of the cult of relics, see P. Brown, *The cult of the saints: its rise and function in Latin Christianity* (London, 1981), and C.W. Bynum, *The resurrection of the body in western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York, 1995), esp. 59-114, 200-25.

⁵ C.W. Bynum, *Fragmentation and redemption: essays on gender and the human body in medieval religion* (New York, 1992), 243.

⁶ M-M. Gauthier, *Highways of the faith: relics and reliquaries from Jerusalem to Compostela*, trans. J. A. Underwood (London, 1983), 68.

⁷ On the late medieval cult of Christ's suffering, see M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi: the eucharist in late medieval culture* (Cambridge, 1991), 302-16. On contact with the Holy Land, see Snoek, *Medieval piety*, 26.

⁸ See C. Beaune, *The birth of an ideology: myths and symbols of nation in late-medieval France*, trans. S.R. Huston, ed. F.L. Cheyette (Berkeley, 1991), 177-78; Gauthier, *Highways of the faith*, 138.

Chapelle in Paris that the link between the relics of the Passion and apocalyptic imagery was first forged.

Louis IX built the Ste-Chapelle in 1243-48 as a magnificent monumental reliquary to house his newly-acquired relics of the crown of thorns and the true cross.⁹ The chapel's huge windows are filled with an unusual and theologically complex glazing scheme, worked out with care to emphasise the nexus between biblical and modern kingship, the Passion relics, and salvation.¹⁰ Special prominence is given to the Apocalypse which fills the west rose window. Apart from its huge proportions (9.05m diameter) and important position, the window is also distinguished by being the only circular light in the chapel.¹¹ The present window, both tracery and glass, dates from c.1485, but it has been argued that the original thirteenth-century glass also showed the Apocalypse.¹² Unfortunately, however, nothing is recorded of the original disposition of the imagery: while it might have been narrative, like the fifteenth-century replacement, it could also have

⁹ J. Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris, 1996), 140-48, fig. 11; see also J-M. Leniaud and F. Perrot, *La Sainte-Chapelle* (Paris, 1991), 49-119.

¹⁰ On the Ste-Chapelle glass, see M. Aubert et al., *Les vitraux de Notre-Dame et de la Ste-Chapelle de Paris* (CVMA: France, Vol. 1) (Paris, 1959), 72-84, 310-28; L. Grodecki et al., *Les vitraux de Paris, de la région parisienne, de la Picardie et du Nord-pas-de-Calais* (CVMA: France, Recensement 1) (Paris, 1978), 29, 33, col. pl. 1, pl. 6; B. Brenk, 'The Sainte-Chapelle as a Capetian political program', in V.C. Raguin et al., eds., *Artistic integration in gothic buildings* (Toronto, 1995), 195-213; Leniaud and Perrot, *La Sainte-Chapelle*, 127-238.

¹¹ See Aubert et al., *Les vitraux*, 75; Leniaud and Perrot, *La Sainte-Chapelle*, 182-83, 214-28.

¹² Aubert et al., *Les vitraux*, 72-73, 313. For the fifteenth-century window, see 315-28. The argument is based on the survival of a thirteenth-century fragment (now in Notre Dame) showing an elder of the Apocalypse.

displayed a standard, synthetic apocalyptic Majesty.¹³ Nevertheless, if we accept the hypothesis that the original west rose was in some manner an Apocalypse, its juxtaposition with the only non-biblical window in the entire scheme, and the one that clarifies the purpose of the whole building — the transportation of the relics of the Passion to Paris and their reception by the king¹⁴ — would have created a powerful link between the royal relics and the Apocalypse. The west window's central placement also meant that it faced the high altar and the reliquary shrine itself,¹⁵ and was directly aligned with the central east light which represented the Passion and thus provided an additional narrative context for the relics.

The existence of a thirteenth-century monumental Apocalypse at the Ste-Chapelle, while plausible, is ultimately unproved. We are on more certain ground with the apocalyptic imagery commissioned for Karlstein about one hundred years later, which may have been inspired by the French example. The patron, the emperor Charles IV, was related to the French royal house through several ties of blood and marriage.¹⁶ More significantly, he had spent his entire youth, from the

¹³ I do not think it is safe to assume (as Aubert et al. suggest, 313) that the fifteenth-century glass simply copied the earlier design. They feel that the existing design appears closer to the thirteenth-century manuscript BN Fr. 403 than to the late fourteenth-century Angers Tapestry, and therefore argue for an older model provided by the previous window. However, this argument fails to recognise that the Angers Tapestry and Fr. 403 represent different pictorial cycles within the Anglo-French manuscript tradition, distinguished by variations in the commentary and imagery rather than by a sharp chronological division (discussed above, Chapter 3). Therefore the use of such a manuscript model would have been quite possible even in the fifteenth century, making it unnecessary to posit a dependence on the imagery of the earlier glass. Moreover, the force of their argument is somewhat reduced by the more marked similarity (which they also note in passing, 313n2) between the fifteenth-century window and a fifteenth-century manuscript, BN Néerl. 3.

¹⁴ Aubert et al., *Les vitraux*, 81.

¹⁵ On the shrine (including its depiction in a fifteenth-century manuscript) see Gauthier, *Highways of the faith*, 160, 164.

¹⁶ Charles IV's aunt was married to the French king Charles IV; the marriage of his sister, Bonne of Luxembourg, to Jean II of France, made him uncle to Charles V of France. The family ties were further tightened by the marriage of Charles IV himself to Blanche of Valois. See B. Jarrett, *The Emperor Charles IV* (London, 1935), 34, 46; S.H. Thomson, 'Learning at the court of Charles IV', *Speculum* 25 (1950), 1-2; K. Stejskal, *European art in the fourteenth century*, English edn. (London, 1978), 26-27; V. Dvoráková, J. Krása, A. Merhautová, K. Stejskal, *Gothic mural painting in Bohemia and Moravia 1300-1378* (London, 1964), 42.

age of seven until he was fifteen, at the court of Paris, where his name was changed from his native Wenceslaus to Charles in honour of his host, the French king Charles IV.¹⁷ During the eight years he spent at the court, he would have become extremely familiar with the Ste-Chapelle's splendid upper chapel, which was reserved for the personal use of the royal household.

The stay in Paris probably provided the impetus for Charles's lifelong interest in relics, especially those of the Passion. His famous and impressive collection of relics formed part of his self-presentation as a pious sovereign, following the model set by rulers such as Louis IX and Constantine the Great.¹⁸ In his funeral oration for Charles the Archbishop of Prague noted that 'ubicunque enim sciebat sanctuaria et corpora sanctorum, acquirebat et auro fulso gemmisque preciosis obducebat et toto corde diligebat ea, sicut alter Constantinus.'¹⁹ Most important of all were the relics of Christ's Passion which he began collecting in 1350. As part of the imperial treasure that had belonged to Louis of Bavaria, these were not only devotional objects but also important symbols of his legitimacy as emperor.²⁰

In the decorative scheme Charles commissioned between 1357 and 1365 for the Marian chapel at Karlstein, contemporary relic-donation scenes are juxtaposed with apocalyptic imagery. Interrupting the Apocalypse narrative, the right half of the south wall is entirely given over to three large images which show Charles

¹⁷ Jarrett, *Charles IV*, 34.

¹⁸ See F. Machilek, 'Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit', in F. Seibt, ed., *Kaiser Karl IV: Staatsmann und Mäzen* (Munich, 1978), 87-94; Jarrett, *Charles IV*, 92; R. Chadraha, 'Der "Zweite Konstantin": zum Verhältnis von Staat und Kirche in der karolinischen Kunst Böhmens', *Umenf* 26 (1978), 505-20.

¹⁹ For the sermons at Charles's death, see J. Emler, ed., 'Sermones post mortem Karoli IV Imperatoris' (Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, vol. 3, 419-41) (Prague, 1882), 429. On Charles's relic collecting, see also E. Winter, *Frühhumanismus: Seine Entwicklung in Böhmen und deren europäische Bedeutung für die Kirchenreformbestrebungen im 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1964), 47; Stejskal, *European art*, 80, 94.

²⁰ Stejskal, *European art*, 80; Dvoráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 51.

receiving relics from two other princes and then placing them reverently in a splendid cross-shaped reliquary positioned on an altar (fig. 79). These scenes commemorate the presentation of important Passion relics to enhance Charles's already large collection. On the left, his nephew, the French Dauphin (the future king Charles V) presents two thorns from Christ's crown and a part of the true cross;²¹ on the right, the Duke of Mantua, Luigi Gonzaga, presents Charles with a piece of the sponge from Golgotha.²² These precious relics were placed in the reliquary cross shown in the third scene, which Charles had made in 1357. Until the decoration of the Holy Cross chapel in the great tower of the castle was completed, this cross was housed in a tiny chapel built into the thickness of the wall immediately behind the relic scenes.²³ Thus the relic murals in the Marian chapel served in a sense as a meta-reliquary, memorialising the process of the relics' acquisition on the outside of the space containing and protecting them.

Apart from the significance of their juxtaposition itself, how does the relic theme affect the imagery of the Apocalypse cycle in the Marian chapel? One image which draws on the nearby relic imagery is the depiction of the temple of God (Apoc. 11: 19, fig. 80). Relatively rare as the subject of an individual scene, it is here given a prominent position in the east wall's lower register (fig. 5). The temple

²¹ Dvoráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 44.

²² F. Fišer, *Karlštejn: vzájemné vztahy tří karlštejnských kaplí* (Kostelní Vydrč, 1996), 340; N. Kubu, *Karlštejn Castle: guide*, trans. J. Turner-Kadecková (Prague, n.d.), 23; Stejskal, *European art*, 112. For illustrations of the relic scenes, see Stejskal, *European art*, 91; V. Dvoráková and D. Menclová, *Karlštejn* (Prague, 1965), pl. 81; B. Dusík and K. Soukup, *Karlštejn* (Prague, 1984), 146; Kubu, *Karlštejn Castle*, 22-23. A further scene, now lost, showed Charles and the pope at the declaration of an indulgence feast (Fišer, *Karlštejn*, 340). It is not clear whether this should be identified with the fresco at Karlstein described by Marignola in his chronicle, showing the miracles attendant on the cutting of a relic particle of St Nicholas' finger: see Giovanni Marignola, *Chronicon*, ed. J. Emler (Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, vol. 3, 492-604) (Prague, 1882), 521-22; Jarrett, *Charles IV*, 230. This fresco may have appeared elsewhere in the Karlstein complex.

²³ G. Schmidt, 'Bohemian painting up to 1450', in E. Bachmann, ed., *Gothic art in Bohemia: architecture, sculpture and painting*, abridged translation of K. Swoboda, ed., *Gotik in Böhmen* (Munich, 1969) (Oxford, 1977), 47; Stejskal, *European art*, 112; Dvoráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 56. On the somewhat complicated interrelationships between the chapels, see Fišer, *Karlštejn*, 336-43 (English résumé), esp. 336-37.

is represented as a gothic shrine; within it is situated the ark of God's testament. The shape of this object is based on both a chest and an altar, but its gilding is also suggestive of a reliquary, as are the gothic arches of the enclosing temple.²⁴ The unusual appearance in the ark of the image of Christ as Salvator Mundi makes the link with the relics of Christ's Passion clearer still. The image of Christ is not a standard part of this scene, either in manuscripts or in the other monumental cycles. However, both the *Glossa Ordinaria* and Berengaudus's commentary identify the ark as Christ (in Berengaudus he is understood as coming forth from the temple which represents the Virgin Mary):²⁵ what is striking here is the translation of this idea into pictorial form. Another link to contemporary religious expression is found in the depiction of the death of the two witnesses (figs. 30, 74). Their multiple, bloody wounds are reminiscent of the image of the crucified Christ increasingly typical in the late medieval period, underlining the links between these martyrs and the first and ultimate martyr.

Apocalyptic imagery, although of a non-narrative kind, also features in Karlstein's Holy Cross chapel, which housed Charles's cross reliquary from 1365. Here the Passion relics were joined by a second 'relic' of great personal and political significance to Charles: the imperial coronation regalia. These items were seen as relics and functioned as such, being displayed annually to pilgrims in the centre of Prague.²⁶ Their permanent home, however, was at Karlstein, eighteen miles from the capital. Many of Charles's other relics were also kept in the richly-decorated chapel, making it a focus not only of vast wealth but also of great spiritual power.

²⁴ Colour photograph in Kubu, *Karlštejn Castle*, 24. See Brenk, 'The Sainte-Chapelle', 207 and fig. 7, for a similar conceit in the Morgan Bible associated with Louis IX of France.

²⁵ *Glossa Ordinaria*, PL 114: 731; Berengaudus, PL 17: 874. Berengaudus also offers a reading of the ark and temple as the sacraments of the New Testament revealed in the Old Testament.

²⁶ Kubu, *Karlštejn Castle*, 3.

The great tower, whose walls were over six metres thick and were supplemented by a separate external boundary wall,²⁷ provided protection for the shrine-like chapel.

The standard images of God, the Lamb and the heavenly court from the first and final chapters of the Apocalypse are not represented in the Marian chapel as it stands, although they may of course have occupied the north wall or the upper register of the east wall.²⁸ They do appear, however, in the Holy Cross chapel, which refers to these theophanic visions both in two of its paintings and its overall decor.²⁹ The painted scenes represent the apocalyptic Godhead surrounded by angels (Apoc. 1, 4, fig. 29); and the adoration of the Lamb by the elders (Apoc. 5, fig. 81).³⁰ Thus once again apocalyptic imagery appears in the context of precious relics, with perhaps a particular link being drawn here between the imperial regalia and the elders' crowns, picked out in raised and gilded plasterwork, and between the Passion relics and the salvific sacrificed Lamb.

On another level of meaning, the physical reality of the cross fragments within the relic cross could have served as a focus for the most traditional kind of relic-related reverence, pilgrimage. Taking the place of the actual pilgrimage to the Holy Land that, despite his piety, Charles never undertook, the cross fragments in their glorious shrine in the Holy Cross chapel provided the opportunity for a spiritual, interior 'pilgrimage' that Charles could achieve in the comfort of his own country retreat. As Dvoráková points out, the component buildings of Karlstein castle are arranged in a hierarchy of height corresponding to their increasing spiritual importance.³¹ The emperor's journey from his own apartments on the lowest,

²⁷ E. Bachmann, 'Gothic architecture in the period before the Hussite Wars', in E. Bachmann, ed., *Gothic art in Bohemia: architecture, sculpture and painting*, abridged translation of K. Swoboda, ed., *Gotik in Böhmen* (Munich, 1969) (Oxford, 1977), 23.

²⁸ As suggested by A. Friedl, *Mistr Karlštejnské Apokalypsy* (Prague, 1950), 10.

²⁹ The latter is discussed below.

³⁰ Fišer, *Karlštejn*, 125, 163-64, 206, 291; Dvoráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 138.

³¹ Dvoráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 51-52, 56, 60.

worldly, level to the heavenly glories of the Holy Cross chapel at the summit would necessarily have taken him through the Marian chapel, where the images that fill the walls — of both relics and the Apocalypse — would have served as meditative aids to prepare him for the final destination: not the earthly, but the heavenly, Jerusalem.

The potential for the castle to function as the site of a virtual pilgrimage is confirmed by the imagery chosen to decorate the walls of the staircase leading to the Holy Cross chapel. Dvoráková notes the craggy mountain landscapes, and suggests an analogy with the unusually steep and winding stairs that lead to the Holy Cross chapel. While this is certainly one level at which the imagery functions, it ignores the apocalyptic overtones present in the collocation of images on the stairway, which would have been apparent to a viewer who had just been immersed in the apocalyptic narrative of the Marian chapel. For the imagery which prepares the viewer for the Holy Cross chapel depicts not only mountains, but angels as well, evoking the passage in the Apocalypse where St John is taken by an angel ‘to a great and high mountain’ in order to view ‘the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God’ (Apoc. 21: 10-11).

Other images on the stairway can also be read as providing a sense of narrative progression within an apocalyptic context, and hence contributing to the spatial and spiritual route towards the top tower. The legend of St Wenceslaus, patron saint of Bohemia and the subject of a life written by Charles himself, includes among its scenes eucharistically significant images of the royal prince personally sowing corn and baking wafers, hoeing a vineyard, gathering the grapes and pressing them in a winepress.³² While one scholar has linked similar images found elsewhere to Charles’s decree that grapes should be grown in Bohemia,³³ these activities are also strongly suggestive of Apoc. 14: 14-20, where the Harvest and Vintage of the

³² Dvoráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 137.

³³ Dvoráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 142.

Earth are performed by the Son of Man, whose appearance, as we have already noted, can evoke a king or prince as well as Christ himself.³⁴ Thus on one level, the images could have been perceived, by a person familiar with the narrative, as making a further allusion to the subject which links the chapel of the Virgin and the Holy Cross chapel thematically as the stairway links them physically: the Apocalypse.

The potent appeal of the relic cult was not, of course, restricted to the emperor. His nephew, Duke Louis I of Anjou, also had a special devotion to relics of the cross. From 1359, he kept a fragment of the true cross from the abbey of Boissière with him at Angers, as well as making the double-barred cross one of his personal symbols, the emblem of Anjou and of his order of chivalry.³⁵ Louis's particular veneration of the true cross was probably inspired by the example of his sainted namesake Louis IX; like Charles, Louis had of course been exposed since childhood to the pervasive imagery of royal sanctity cultivated at the court of Paris.³⁶ The cult also tied in with his imperial ambitions: the cross was historically associated not only with Constantine but also with the emperor Charlemagne, regarded as another holy ancestor by the French royal house.³⁷ The legends surrounding these and other emperors presented the idea that dedication to the true cross assured victory in battle.³⁸ Considering Louis's many military campaigns, this aspect of the cult probably played a significant part in his devotions.

It has been suggested that Louis's Apocalypse Tapestry was intended as a splendid backdrop for the ceremonies of his chivalric Order of the Cross, on account

³⁴ See, for example, the Angers Tapestry, scene 53 (discussed in Chapter 2), and the Cloisters Apocalypse (ed. Deuchler et al.), fol. 28r.

³⁵ F. Robin, *La cour d'Anjou-Provence: la vie artistique sous le règne de René* (Paris, 1985), 47; F. Muel et al., *La tenture de l'Apocalypse d'Angers*, 2nd edn. (Nantes, 1993), 32.

³⁶ Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, fig. 11, shows Louis IX at prayer before the relics of the Passion in the Ste-Chapelle; the double-barred cross is particularly prominent.

³⁷ Beaune, *Birth of an ideology*, 91.

³⁸ Jacobus de Voragine, *The golden legend: readings on the saints*, trans. W.G. Ryan (Princeton, 1993), vol. 1, 279; M.A. Lavin, *The place of narrative: mural decoration in Italian churches, 431-1600* (Chicago, 1990), 102.

of the prominent role of the heraldic double cross which, along with the fleur-de-lys, is scattered throughout the tapestry, appearing most frequently in the upper border on banners held by angels.³⁹ This seems at first unlikely, given that a more obviously relevant theme, such as the legend of the Invention of the True Cross, could easily have been found. However, in light of the association between Passion relics and apocalyptic imagery found certainly at Karlstein and probably at Ste-Chapelle, the idea becomes more plausible.⁴⁰ The Apocalypse in these three cases may have been used precisely because it was not the obvious choice, to add a further degree of exclusivity of subject matter to works already very unusual and costly in terms of their materials and workmanship. Where the legend of the true cross, for example, has a rather pedestrian, didactic aspect in relation to the relic cult, the Apocalypse requires a much higher level of theological understanding on the part of the patron/viewer. Augustine comments, 'in this book called the Apocalypse there are, to be sure, many obscure statements, designed to exercise the mind of the reader'⁴¹ and it may be that a certain degree of obscurity was prized as evidence of the patron's profound theological understanding, especially when the idea had previously been given the stamp of royal or imperial authority.

However, it should be noted that the double cross was taken by Louis as a personal symbol and as an emblem of Anjou, and appears on many of his treasures, not simply those connected with his chivalric Order.⁴² The tapestry may well have played a part in the ceremonies, but could also have been used by Louis for other purposes, depending on the occasion and its placement within the castle or (since it was portable) elsewhere. The fact that his wife's arms and the fleur-de-lys also

³⁹ See, for example, C. Giraud-Labalte, *The Apocalypse Tapestry*, trans. A. Moyon (Rennes, 1986-92), 7; Muel et al., *La tenture*, 32.

⁴⁰ Louis, son of King John II and brought up in Paris, would certainly have known the Ste-Chapelle; he may also have known of the Karlstein cycle commissioned by his uncle.

⁴¹ Augustine, *Concerning the city of God against the pagans*, trans. H. Bettenson (London, 1972), Book 20, Ch. 17 (p. 929).

⁴² Robin, *La cour d'Anjou-Provence*, 47.

appear frequently in the tapestry suggests that the double cross, where it is present, was acting primarily as Louis's personal emblem. For a better understanding of the overall themes of the tapestry, we need to move from a concentration on the heraldry of the borders to the central, narrative part of the work.

Close examination of the tapestry's imagery reveals a number of strong visual cues linking John's text with the affective piety of late medieval Passion iconography.⁴³ For example, in scene 3 the Son of Man sits on a substantial altar-shaped throne, his right hand presented to the spectator (fig. 82). The colour of the seven small stars that he holds in his palm is not specified in the text (Apoc. 1: 16-20), but the designer of the tapestry has chosen to make them red, thus creating a visual echo of the crucifixion wounds. The Son of Man's garment, a priestly cope secured by a prominent morse, establishes him not only as victim but also as celebrant at the eternal, celestial Mass.⁴⁴ The design also draws on traditional imagery in the vision of the 'Lamb standing as it were slain' (scene 7, Apoc. 5: 6, fig. 83). The Lamb is more naturalistic than a strict interpretation of the text would allow: the impact of its seven horns is minimised by their placement in the halo, and it has only the normal number of eyes rather than the seven the text demands. These details, combined with the cruciform halo and banner of the Resurrection, also topped with a cross, normalise the text's more bizarre image by evoking the Agnus Dei. Moreover, comparison with Anglo-French manuscripts confirms the idea that the designer altered his model to create recognisable links to Passion iconography.

⁴³ See J.H. Marrow, *Passion iconography in northern European art of the late Middle Ages and early renaissance: a study of the transformation of sacred metaphor into descriptive narrative* (Kortrijk, 1979); Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 302-16.

⁴⁴ This sacerdotal interpretation of the garment worn by the Son of Man is also found in some Apocalypse commentaries: see, for example, Bede, *The explanation of the Apocalypse*, trans. E. Marshall, (Oxford and London, 1878), 15; Nicholas Lyra, *Nicholas of Lyra's Apocalypse commentary*, trans. Philip D.W. Krey (Kalamazoo, 1997), 37-38. For a related piece of iconography, the eucharistic 'vested angel', see M.B. McNamee, 'The origin of the vested angel as a eucharistic symbol in Flemish painting,' *Art Bulletin* 54 (1972), 263-78, and S.N. Blum, 'Hans Memling's Annunciation with angelic attendants', *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 27 (1992), 48-49.

The Lamb bleeds not only from a side wound but from the hooves as well. While in some manuscript examples the Lamb looks positively jaunty (fig. 84),⁴⁵ in the tapestry its head falls dramatically, recalling Christ's bowed head on the cross and hence highlighting the pathos of the sacrificial victim.

Parallels between the death and resurrection of the witnesses and Christ's Passion, inherent in the text, are particularly drawn out in the Angers Tapestry, although this may be as much due to the choice of manuscript model as to alterations on the part of the designer. The tapestry's composition allows an entire scene to Apoc. 11: 8-9, in which the witnesses lie dead 'for three days and a half ... where their Lord also was crucified' (scene 32, fig. 35).⁴⁶ This pause in the narrative emphasises the reality of their death, thus clearly demonstrating the miracle of their resurrection in the next scene (33, fig. 36). St John, looking on from the left, expresses his joy at this event, mirroring the gesture of the angel at the top right: both these figures indicate to the viewer an appropriate response to this scene of victory. A bird motif woven subtly into the background stresses the importance in this scene of the Holy Spirit, which flies down in the form of two doves, causing the reanimation of the witnesses. As they are taken up to heaven, the prophets' legs and feet alone appear in a cloud at the top of the field, an iconographic code frequently used for Christ's ascension.⁴⁷ The resurrection and ascension of the witnesses affirms that they have not died in vain but have instead fulfilled their role as martyrs (the Greek word means 'witness'): to live and die in *imitatio Christi*.

⁴⁵ See, for example, B.N. Lat. 14410 p. 6, reproduced in F. Deuchler et al., eds., *The Cloisters Apocalypse: an early fourteenth-century manuscript in facsimile* (New York, 1971), vol. 2, 43.

⁴⁶ In this and the next scene the tapestry is closest to the manuscripts Douce 180 and Paris 10474. See G. Henderson, 'The manuscript model of the Angers "Apocalypse" tapestries', *Burlington Magazine* 127 (1985), 214.

⁴⁷ For the history of this image, see M. Schapiro, 'The image of the disappearing Christ: the ascension in English art around the year 1000', in his *Late antique, early Christian and mediaeval art: selected papers* (London, 1980), 266-87.

The Eucharist and the Altar

Despite a rapidly proliferating number of splinters from the true cross, relatively few ecclesiastical centres had enough wealth, high-level connections and luck to acquire relics of the Passion. Those that missed out were, however, still able to mould and focus devotion centred on Christ's sacrificial act. The doctrine of Christ's bodily ascension left room for one 'primary', physical relic of the incarnate God, simultaneously the most precious and the most accessible of all: the eucharistic Host, the true body of Christ. From at least the eighth century, the status of the consecrated wafer as in one sense a relic had been recognised in the practice of establishing altars with particles of the Host instead of, or along with, relics.⁴⁸ G.J.C. Snoek identifies parallel forms of devotion, in use by the later Middle Ages, where relics and consecrated Hosts play the same role in such activities as expositions, processions and blessings. Additionally, similar types of miracle story developed, in which Hosts or relics were found to bleed, be incorruptible, give off light, be fireproof or prevent fires, or have healing properties.⁴⁹

Of course, the significance of the eucharist in the later Middle Ages was not restricted to an analogy, however powerful, with the cult of relics. The increasingly central role of eucharistic devotion in the late Middle Ages has been expertly traced in recent studies.⁵⁰ The feast of Corpus Christi, established in 1264, was both the result of a growing devotion to the real body of Christ, and, once it became widespread in the first part of the fourteenth century, the occasion of still more enthusiasm for the eucharist.⁵¹ The salvific function of the eucharist became the focal point for devotional practice, liturgy and faith and, as a result, a centrally

⁴⁸ Snoek, *Medieval piety*, 4-5.

⁴⁹ Snoek, *Medieval piety*, passim, esp. 1-6, 227-351.

⁵⁰ See Rubin, *Corpus Christi*; C.W. Bynum, *Holy feast and holy fast: the religious significance of food to medieval women* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1987) and *Fragmentation and Redemption*.

⁵¹ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 10, 164-212.

important influence on the related fields of devotional art, church architecture and decoration.

The vast majority of the fourteenth-century Apocalypse cycles, whether paid for by secular or clerical patrons, were created for ecclesiastical settings. The only cycle definitely secular in its original place of display is the Apocalypse Tapestry, which was made for Angers castle and is far too large to have been accommodated in the chapel there. At the opposite end of the scale, the very fine, detailed work of the Stuttgart panels suggests they were in all probability used in a private setting, although we cannot be certain whether secular or ecclesiastical. A large number of the remaining cycles — excluding only those at Norwich and Westminster which decorated monastic but not liturgical space — were deployed inside churches or chapels.

As I suggested above, the theophanic scenes of John's text are particularly apt for an ecclesiastical setting because they mirror the rituals of the liturgy centred on the altar. The text's first readers would have seen the connection even more clearly since the placement of the actors in Chapter 4 is drawn from early church practice, with the Son of Man taking the place of the bishop, seated centrally and frontally behind the altar, surrounded by his elders.⁵² However, even more than a thousand years later, the ritual practices described and evoked by the Apocalypse were recognisably those of the contemporary Christian church, especially, given the text's emphasis on opulent ceremony, as performed in the great cathedrals. The connections between the celestial liturgy and its earthly shadow⁵³ were, of course, strengthened in the process of representing the text in pictured form, as artists tended

⁵² G. Dix, *The shape of the liturgy*, 3rd edn. with additional notes by P.V. Marshall (New York, 1982), 28.

⁵³ Dix, *The shape of the liturgy*, 314.

to update their models, presenting the viewer with recognisably contemporary details in the design and ornamentation of heavenly scenes.

This central affinity between the eternal and earthly church is made particularly clear in the design of the east window at York Minster. While the narrative reads from left to right, like a book, the design also takes full advantage of the strong verticals emphasised by the architecture (and by a long tradition of vertical design in glass), to bring out important aspects of the text's 'internal typology'⁵⁴ and its relation to the liturgy and teachings of the church in which it is situated.⁵⁵ The light (e) at the vertical axis of the window, aligned with the high altar and directly behind the Lady Chapel altar, features several key scenes focused on altars.⁵⁶ A highly significant link is created by the formal likeness between the central scenes of the first and last rows. In the first scene of the vision proper (11e, fig. 85), St John kneels with hands clasped in prayer before the Son of Man, who is seated on a large and elaborate gothic altar. This altar, which also appears in some Anglo-French manuscripts, is not in fact mentioned in the biblical text but its inclusion here is appropriate to the window's architectural and liturgical context. Ten rows below, the centrally-situated donor portrait (1e, fig. 86) echoes John's vision: again at the left, and kneeling (although not quite so humbly) at prayer, is Bishop Skirlaw, at the right is an altar whose frontal displays his arms. On the altar lies an open book. The alignment and similarity of these scenes create a link between St John and the donor, between the original visionary and the man whose

⁵⁴ I borrow this term from Lavin, *The place of narrative*.

⁵⁵ D. O'Connor, 'Iconography', in T. French, *York Minster: the Great East Window* (CVMA: Great Britain, Summary Catalogue 2) (Oxford, 1995), 10; J. Rickers, 'The Apocalypse scenes in the Great East Window of York Minster' (M.A. thesis, Medieval Studies, University of York, 1992), 62-65, 69.

⁵⁶ For the function of the east window as in one sense a vast reredos, see O'Connor, 'Iconography', 11. Compare also the Duomo of Pienza where the renaissance high altar had no altarpiece but was instead situated immediately below a stained glass window: see H.W. van Os, 'Some thoughts on writing a history of Sieneese altarpieces', in P. Humfrey and M. Kemp, eds., *The altarpiece in the renaissance* (Cambridge, 1990), 27, pl. 10.

generosity has allowed the vision to be so splendidly represented. In relation to the ritual action of the church, the repeated altar imagery creates a continuum and hierarchy along the vertical axis: below the window the priest celebrating Mass mirrors the position of the prelate worshipping before his pictured altar; the two in turn reflect and honour the heavenly altar of scene 11e, where the place taken by the open book — the Logos — on Skirlaw's altar is replaced in John's revelation by Christ himself, the Word made Flesh.

Between these two images, still on the central vertical axis, are further scenes evoking the heavenly liturgy, the worship of God and the Lamb, of which several again draw out eucharistic and liturgical readings of the Apocalypse. The temple of God, instead of being relegated to an upper corner of the next scene (the woman clothed with the sun), as is common in the Anglo-French cycles,⁵⁷ has a panel all to itself on the central axis (fig. 87). Its importance is further highlighted by the inclusion of Skirlaw's arms and by the scene's placing at the exact centre of the entire Apocalypse glazing scheme (7e): a position of great theoretical significance, even if it cannot be seen as a result of the gallery. The temple here is imaged as a grand gothic church, complete with bell-tower and leaded windows: an image which, while not a portrait, cannot fail to evoke York Minster itself. Another such church appears in the image of John measuring the temple (8j, fig. 88), this time marked out by the armorial bearings not just of Skirlaw but also of York's Company of Glaziers. The contrast between the two scenes' interiors is telling: the ark of the covenant (7e) is represented precisely and very unusually as the actual Old Testament ark, open to

⁵⁷ See, for example, the Cloisters manuscript (ed. Deuchler et al.) fol. 20r; the Angers Tapestry, scene 35 (Muel et al., *La tenture*, 171); the Lambeth and Gulbenkian manuscripts, fols. 15 and 29 respectively (N. Morgan, ed., *The Lambeth Apocalypse: Manuscript 209 in Lambeth Palace Library* [London, 1990], 296).

reveal Moses's tablets, Aaron's rod and the pot of manna specified in Exodus.⁵⁸ The temple measured by St John, in comparison, is open to reveal a familiar medieval scene: two women and a man performing their devotions in front of an altar ('the altar and them that adore therein', Apoc. 11: 1). They are dressed in contemporary clothes, the man holds prayer beads, and the altarpiece shows a Man of Sorrows with instruments of the Passion. All these factors anchor the scene firmly in late medieval devotional culture, especially since the Man of Sorrows image was of relatively recent origin, becoming fashionable as a result of the 1350 Jubilee at Rome.⁵⁹ The suffering Christ is the image par excellence of the new dispensation between God and humanity. The two scenes thus represent the old covenant between God and the Israelites that was fulfilled and replaced by the new, eucharistic covenant between Christ and the church.

The chronology of the text suggests that scenes 8e and 8f of the window should be swapped,⁶⁰ and if this is done it places yet another carefully centred scene featuring an altar in the central light (the current 8f, the loosing of the four angels, fig. 89). Here the altar with the half-figure of God above it is given unusual prominence when compared to the manuscript tradition, situated centrally and taking up half the panel instead of being relegated to the top right corner (fig. 90).⁶¹ The increasing importance in the later Middle Ages of the elevation of the Host at Mass, and the miracles associated with it — which usually took the form of a vision of

⁵⁸ Elsewhere in the Anglo-French tradition, the ark is shown as a small, closed gold chest topped with a gold candlestick, or as a medieval altar laid with a cloth and chalice. See, for example, S. Lewis, *Reading images: narrative discourse and reception in the thirteenth-century illuminated Apocalypse* (Cambridge, 1995), figs. 86, 88; also the Angers Tapestry and Cloisters manuscript (as cited in previous footnote). The tablets, vessel and manna are mentioned at this point in Nicholas of Lyra's commentary (*Apocalypse Commentary*, 136).

⁵⁹ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 122.

⁶⁰ As suggested by Rick Emmerson in his address to the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of York, 30 October, 1996. The scenes have been moved several times since their first installation, most recently during the post-war restoration of the window.

⁶¹ Compare Lewis, *Reading images*, fig. 64; the Cloisters manuscript (ed. Deuchler et al.) fol. 15r; the Angers Tapestry, scene 25 (Muel et al., *La tenture*, 147).

Christ himself in the place of the wafer⁶² — suggest that the reason for this design adjustment is again due to an awareness of the liturgical rituals which were to be framed by the apocalyptic images. This theme continues even in the upper, non-apocalyptic part of the window, in the careful placing of the meeting of Melchizedek and Abraham, one of the commonest typological foreshadowings of the eucharist,⁶³ once more in the central axis (14è, fig. 91). The marked gesture by which the patriarch holds up the loaf (whether or not the chalice held by the attendant behind him reflects the original design)⁶⁴ gains further significance from its association with the liturgical and eucharistic imagery, both in the Apocalypse cycle and in the everyday ritual of the church, directly below it.

In one case — the angel censuring the altar (Apoc. 8: 3-5) — the liturgical relevance inherent in the scene has overtaken the literal sense of the text and caused a striking alteration to the traditional Anglo-French design. The text calls for God enthroned and most Anglo-French cycles deliver this with the image of Christ, enclosed in a mandorla, above the altar (fig. 92).⁶⁵ Significantly, however, the York east window (9g, fig. 93) replaces the figure of Christ with a eucharistic wafer, labelled IHC, which hovers over a chalice. The identification of the Host with Christ's person has become so unexceptionable that the monogrammed wafer can take the place of the human form. Immediately above the Host the appearance of the apocalyptic Lamb (brought in from the first verse of the chapter) makes clear the sacrificial action inherent in each Mass.

⁶² Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, esp. (on elevation) 55-63, 152-53, 131-34, figs. 1, 7, 9, 19, and for miraculous visions, 117-22, 308-10, figs. 5, 6. See also Bynum, *Fragmentation and redemption*, 119-31; Bynum, *Holy feast and holy fast*, 60-65.

⁶³ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 129-30.

⁶⁴ See French, *Great East Window*, 56, where he notes that the chalice is a '14th-century patch inserted in 1953'.

⁶⁵ See, for example, the Angers Tapestry, scene 18 (Muel et al., *La tenture*, 133); the Cloisters manuscript (ed. Deuchler et al.) fol. 11v; Cambridge University Library MS Gg 1.1, fol. 417r.

The eucharistic associations are so strong in the York Apocalypse that they extend even to parody and inversion. The figure of the Whore of Babylon on the beast (3a, fig. 60) features an unusual iconographical addition: a frog, which leaps out of the golden cup which the Whore traditionally holds in this scene.⁶⁶ The associations that this evokes are multiple. Primarily the frog, together with the snake that crawls across her torso, are evidence of the widespread identification of the Whore with the personified sin Luxuria, who was often portrayed with frogs and snakes attacking her lustful body.⁶⁷ Additionally, the frog reflects a cross-over of imagery from a slightly earlier part of the Apocalypse, where 'unclean spirits' issue from the mouths of the various demonic beasts in the form of frogs ('they are the spirits of devils working signs', Apoc. 16: 14); this detail is not included at panel 4h, although some other cycles devote an entire scene to it.⁶⁸ The frog is also a visual representation of the 'abominations and filthiness of her fornication' which are said to fill the Whore's cup (Apoc. 17: 4). But most startling of all, in the context of the liturgical setting of the Minster, the cup and frog become a fascinating perversion of the familiar late medieval eucharistic image of chalice and wafer.

Similar eucharistic themes can be found in the Baptistery at Padua. As part of a comprehensive scheme of salvation history, the Apocalypse scenes occupy the most sacred part of the space, the tiny altar chapel. Because of the much smaller area involved and the consequent proximity of the painted cycle to the altar, the association of images in the Apocalypse with the ritual action would have been clearly apparent to any spectator, including the celebrant himself. The movement of the elevation of the Host would have drawn the eye up to the large painting that fills

⁶⁶ The frog appears in what seems to be an original part of the composition (French, *Great East Window*, 122).

⁶⁷ Compare the image of the faithless Soul, tormented by devils, snakes and toads, found in the prefatory material to the Burckhardt-Wildt Apocalypse (Lewis, *Reading images*, 298-300, fig. 231), and similar iconography for female sinners in hell (for example, in the Last Judgement in the Camposanto, Pisa). See also B. Nolan, *The gothic visionary perspective* (Princeton, 1977), 6.

⁶⁸ See, for example, the Angers Tapestry, scene 62 (Muel et al., *La tenture*, 233).

the lunette above, a symmetrically-arranged vision of Christ and the Lamb worshipped by the elders (Apoc. 4-5, with elements also from Ch. 8, fig. 94). Although no altar is depicted here, the mandorla containing the figure of Christ would have had powerful resonances with the upraised Host. For spectators a little way back, this scene of the apocalyptic Godhead was itself framed by the chapel's imposing Crucifixion, situated above the entrance arch of the altar chapel (fig. 95). The placement of St John in the Apocalypse scene creates a structural link with the larger Crucifixion. Instead of his more usual position at the left of the Godhead, the Padua cycle places him below and to the right, the same position relative to Christ that the younger version of St John (still identified by his red cloak) holds in the Crucifixion scene just in front. The point being made is St John's role as witness of both the first and second coming of Christ: the first physically and historically, the second 'in the spirit' (Apoc. 1: 10, 4: 2).⁶⁹ The apocalyptic painting of the altar chapel thus forms a web of meaning with other imagery in the Baptistery in such a way that the Apocalypse takes up its rightful place as the ultimate fulfilment of salvation history.

As might be expected from its function, the London altarpiece also emphasises eucharistic themes within the Apocalypse narrative.⁷⁰ Particularly striking once again is the image of the adoration of God by the elders (Apoc. 4, fig.

⁶⁹ St John's prominence in these scenes perhaps compensates for his appearing much less than usual in the rest of the cycle: the designer's decision to prioritise the narrative of the vision rather than the visionary himself means he loses his traditional position as an onlooker and appears only in those scenes where he takes part in the action directly. This contrast is especially marked in comparison with the Anglo-French manuscripts and the monumental cycles that derive closely from them. However, even in an Italian version like the Stuttgart panels John, while not present in every scene, appears much more frequently than at Padua.

⁷⁰ On the liturgical context and eucharistic themes of altarpieces in general, see esp. B.G. Lane, *The altar and the altarpiece* (New York, 1984); van Os, 'Some thoughts on writing a history of Sieneese altarpieces'; 'L'altare: la struttura, l'immagine, l'azione liturgica' (proceedings of a conference held at Milan, 12-13 November 1991), *Arte Cristiana* 80: 753 (1992), 399-514; E. Borsook and F.S. Gioffredi, eds., *Italian altarpieces 1250-1550: function and design* (Oxford, 1994), esp. J. Gardner's 'Altars, altarpieces, and art history: legislation and usage', 5-39; J. Gardner, 'Some Franciscan altars of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', in A. Borg and A. Martindale, eds., *The vanishing past* (B.A.R., International Series 111) (Oxford, 1981), 29-38.

63). The only outsize compartment at four times the standard size, it dominates the composition (fig. 8). It also draws attention to itself through the use of framing concentric circles. These form an image which has cosmic overtones: stars and clouds decorate the outer circles. The circular focus to the composition is unparalleled in the Alexander manuscript exemplars, where the elders sit instead in straight rows.⁷¹ The elevation of the Host immediately before this altar would have made clear the parallels between this image of heavenly worship and the actual earthly eucharist, highlighted by the gradual adaptation of the inner mandorla shape to one more perfectly round, and by the placing of the figure of Christ, on an altar-like throne, at the centre of the eye's focus.

Judgement

The primary, eucharistic context of an altarpiece is not always the central theme reflected in its imagery.⁷² The late fourteenth-century altarpiece now in the Accademia, Venice, features as its centrepiece a traditional scene; in which God's altar-shaped throne, the mandorla and the worshipping elders could be seen as functioning in a similar way to the London altarpiece and Paduan frescoes just discussed (fig. 96). The rest of the imagery, however, is highly unusual, and is a fascinating example of extracts from the Apocalypse used to illustrate a related theological concept: Judgement. The altarpiece is not, strictly speaking, a narrative cycle, since it contains only five scenes. Those scenes, however, are not (as one might expect) of the synthetic type, drawing together separate elements of the text into a whole. Instead, they are discrete, individual scenes, plucked out of the narrative and arranged in a non-textual order (figs. 97-98). The vision of God and

⁷¹ C.M. Kauffmann, *An altar-piece of the Apocalypse from Master Bertram's workshop in Hamburg* (London, 1968), repr. in his *Studies in medieval art* (London, 1992), 141.

⁷² See M. Kemp's 'Introduction' in P. Humfrey and M. Kemp, eds., *The altarpiece in the renaissance* (Cambridge, 1990), 12-13.

the elders (Apoc. 4) makes up the central, somewhat larger, panel; on the left are the Whore of Babylon on the beast (Apoc. 17: 1) and the Judgement (Apoc. 20: 11), on the right, the Vintage of the Earth (Apoc. 14: 17) and the Conqueror on the white horse (Apoc. 19: 11). This defiance of the textual order is actually emphasised, since the relevant chapters (except for the central theophany) are identified with Roman numerals. The piece therefore makes no sense as a narrative, and it is only when we consider it thematically that the reason for the choice of scenes becomes clear.

The composition is centrally balanced around the central panel, whose own internal symmetry confirms such a reading. The scenes immediately on either side represent two different versions of judgement as it is presented in the Apocalypse: the angels preparing to harvest the Vintage of the Earth (Apoc. 14: 17-20) on the right, and, balancing this metaphor with more concrete imagery, the Judge on the white throne on the left. The book held by the Judge is inscribed, very unusually, in the vernacular: 'Chi non e scriti su questo libro sera danadi'⁷³ (cf. Apoc. 20: 15). Below stand the skeletons of the dead, holding up their books as proof of their works: these represent the saved, while, on the other side, the Vintage of the Earth (according to standard commentaries such as the *Glossa Ordinaria* and Berengaudus) represents the damnation of the reprobate.⁷⁴ The two outer panels present the viewer with a stark choice between the embodiments of evil and good: the Whore and the Conqueror, riding their mounts of choice. The Whore is depicted as young and beautiful, dressed in a low-cut, elegant gown which is embroidered and decorated with gems. Her appeal, however, is somewhat undercut by her seven-headed beast and the dark red ribbon issuing from her mouth. In the context of the text's reference to the 'scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy' (Apoc.

⁷³ G. Bissoli, 'L'Apocalisse nell'opera pittorica di Iacobello Albergno', *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* 30 (1980), 254.

⁷⁴ *Glossa Ordinaria*, PL 114: 736; Berengaudus, PL 17: 895-97.

17: 3), this 'speech bubble' can be identified as the oral sin of blasphemy. This identification is confirmed by the opposing image in the far right panel: the triumphant Rider Faithful and True, whose 'name is called The Word of God' (Apoc. 19: 13). The message of the altarpiece to its viewers is clear: in order to be prepared at Judgement Day, with their names appearing in the book of life, they must forswear the illusory charms of the blaspheming Whore and embrace the Word, thus emulating the twenty-four elders who continuously worship God in the central panel.⁷⁵

In the chapter house of Westminster Abbey, the context in which the Apocalypse pictures were presented — in terms of both the decorative and the functional aspects of the space — determined the similarly moral, didactic meaning that the images were meant to convey. The narrative flow of the apocalyptic scenes is interrupted, on the wall opposite the entrance, by a representation on a much larger scale of Christ in Judgement, flanked by two seraphim (fig. 99). As Paul Binski has convincingly demonstrated, the placement and iconography of this image is intricately connected with the function of the chapter house within the abbey.⁷⁶ It was here that, along with other daily business, the monks were required to confess before their brothers any disobedience to the Rule and submit to the judgement of the abbot; the usual punishment was a public scourging by the 'mature brothers' of the abbot's council, which also took place in the chapter house.⁷⁷ The image of Christ in Judgement is placed exactly behind the abbot's stall, thus constructing a

⁷⁵ The thematic message would have been particularly clear in light of the fact that the altarpiece was made for a church on the island of Torcello, Venice. The island's cathedral contains the famous and impressive mosaics of the 'Byzantine Last Judgement' dating from the eleventh century (see Bynum, *The resurrection of the body*, 188-90, pl. 6).

⁷⁶ P. Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: kingship and the representation of power 1200-1400* (New Haven and London, 1995), 187-91.

⁷⁷ A.P. Stanley, *Historical memorials of Westminster Abbey* (London, 1868), 419-20. See Abbot Richard de Ware's thirteenth-century Westminster Customary: E.M. Thompson, ed., *Customary of the Benedictine monasteries of Saint Augustine, Canterbury, and Saint Peter, Westminster* (Henry Bradshaw Society 23, 28) (London, 1904), vol. 2, 191-92. See also the Benedictine Rule: *St. Benedict's Rule for Monasteries*, trans. L. J. Doyle, Chs. 2, 28, 30, 45.

powerful atmosphere of divine authority for his judgements on the behaviour of the monks.⁷⁸ Together with the seraphim, whose wings were originally inscribed with the various elements of confession, contrition and penance, the large central image of the chapter house acts as a focus for meditation on the linked themes of judgement and penance.⁷⁹

The Apocalypse too has its part to play in this scheme. The interpretation of the strange images of John's book was not, in this case, left open, but was rigidly fixed by the inclusion under each scene of extracts not only from the biblical text but also from the Berengaudus commentary. The parchment on which these texts were written has deteriorated badly, but luckily the fourteenth-century illuminated book that served as the model for the first part of the cycle is still extant.⁸⁰ It was clearly not just availability but suitability that led to the wholesale transferral of picture, text and gloss from the manuscript to a new, monumental context. The gloss by Berengaudus, himself probably a Benedictine monk,⁸¹ is particularly appropriate for the moral message of the chapter house, due to its marked stress on the need for penitence and good deeds in the face of God's judgement.

By examining the Trinity manuscript, we can establish precisely which extracts from the Berengaudus gloss were used to contextualise the Apocalypse images in the chapter house. This exercise reveals a number of passages that would have had particular resonances in light of the general themes of the chapter house imagery. For example, the bow held by the first horseman (Apoc. 6: 2) is explained as representing the Lord's vengeance on the first humans, who were damned 'on

⁷⁸ Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, 191.

⁷⁹ B. Turner, 'The patronage of John of Northampton: further studies of the wall-paintings in Westminster chapter house', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 138 (1985), 90-91; Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, 189.

⁸⁰ Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.10.2, discussed above, Chapter 3.

⁸¹ See Chapter 1.

account of the sin of disobedience'⁸² — exactly that sin which was examined and punished in the chapter house. The scales held by the third horseman (Apoc. 6: 5-6) refer to the Mosaic rules for retaliatory punishment: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.⁸³ The sea of Apoc. 8: 8-9 represents the multitude of sinners, its turning to blood the remission of sins.⁸⁴ The crowns cast down by the elders in Apoc. 4 are explained as good works;⁸⁵ and the fumes of incense (Chapter 8: 4) are not just the prayers of the saints as the scriptural text would have it, but the radiance of good deeds.⁸⁶ However, as with the manuscript model, the explications of the commentary do not influence the pictorial rendering of the scenes. The visual imagery of the chapter house Apocalypse is thus standard and literal to the biblical text, but the preferred interpretation is fixed, not just through the juxtaposition with the central Judgement image but also through the precise theological and morally didactic explanations provided by the commentary extracts under each frame.

The Last Judgement is also a significant theme of the York east window. The Judgement section occupies the lowest row of the narrative cycle, and hence is unusually visible and clear to spectators standing immediately in front of the window. The text of the Apocalypse gives only five verses to its description of the Judgement (Chapter 20: 11-15); most pictorial cycles follow this and allocate one scene.⁸⁷ At York, by contrast, the subject is extended to fill four scenes across the important central section of the window (2c-f). As well as the specifically apocalyptic details, such as the sea and hell giving up their dead (2c, fig. 100), the use of extra scenes allows the designer to include aspects taken from traditional Last Judgement iconography. Christ appears with the instruments of the Passion (2e, fig.

⁸² Trinity College MS B.10.2., fol. 7r.

⁸³ Fol. 8r.

⁸⁴ Fol. 12v.

⁸⁵ Fol. 5v.

⁸⁶ Fol. 11v.

⁸⁷ See, for example, Lewis, *Reading images*, 189-90.

101), and the division of souls into saved and damned (not usually found in Apocalypse imagery) is made clear through their opposition on either side of the central Judge (2d, 2f, figs. 102-03); moreover, the damned are shown being led into hell by devils. The traditional, non-apocalyptic aspects of the Judgement are thus emphasised; they are given more space and centrality than the usually more important image of the New Jerusalem, which here is tucked in at the right (2h, fig. 104). A possible explanation for this unusual expansion is its position: the lowest, and most visible, row is furnished with a subject which, while playing its part in the overall apocalyptic narrative, displays at the same time a more familiar iconography. This would therefore have been more meaningful to the wide variety of viewers, including pilgrims and other secular people, who would have been able to see it in the east end of the Minster.

Moving from general ideas of judgement to the particular judgement of an individual soul, the Apocalypse cycles at Naples and Padua gain additional significance from their association with the funerary monuments that were located near them. In the case of S. Maria Donnaregina at Naples, the identity of the patron of the apocalyptic imagery is uncertain. But through its location in the church the Apocalypse fresco interacts with two different tomb sites, and in so doing connects a funerary side chapel with the main body of the church. Placement and thematic links tie the Apocalypse to the Loffredo mortuary chapel,⁸⁸ but it is also connected, through its positioning across the nave, with Mary of Hungary's tomb monument. It is possible that the commission of the Apocalypse frescoes was intended as a kind of intercessory device for the souls of the dead, both at their own personal judgements and at the universal judgement at the end of the world. The Apocalypse of S. Maria Donnaregina thus takes on an association with the personal salvation of the dead buried nearby, acting as an alternative version of a traditional Judgement scene.

⁸⁸ Discussed above, Chapter 3.

The structure of the Naples Apocalypse cycle and its relation to actual Last Judgement imagery at the west end of the church support this interpretation. The Apocalypse painting itself has strong echoes of standard Judgement iconography and composition, such as the disproportionately large central mandorla around the seated Christ, the prominence of the trumpets at his left hand, and the crowd of elders or blessed below his feet (fig. 1). The composition, centred over a doorway, adds to this impression through its similarity to the traditional siting of the Last Judgement on the entrance wall or chancel arch of a church. Moreover, the links between the Apocalypse imagery and the Last Judgement depicted on the west wall of the nuns' gallery are unusually close since the Judgement, most uncommonly, has a number of apocalyptic motifs mixed in with the standard images taken from the synoptic gospels. The sinners on God's left are attacked by the devil in the form of a many-headed dragon,⁸⁹ while above the Judgement itself (now closed off by a sixteenth-century ceiling) stands a very large Apocalyptic Madonna flanked by two angels, one of whom stabs a red dragon.⁹⁰ The Apocalypse fresco thus joins in a general theme of universal judgement most appropriate to a burial church while also acting as a link between the personal space of the Loffredo chapel and the overall scheme of the royal church.

As we have noted, the Baptistery at Padua was transformed in the 1370s into the funerary chapel for the city's ruler Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara and his wife Fina Buzzacarina. The splendid redecoration by Giusto de' Menabuoi dates to this

⁸⁹ E. Carelli and S. Casiello, *Santa Maria Donnaregina in Napoli* (Naples, 1975), pls. 37, 38.

⁹⁰ Carelli and Casiello, *Santa Maria Donnaregina*, 39 and pls. 31, 39. P.L. de Castris, *Arte di corte nella Napoli angioina* (Florence, 1986), 300 and pls. 10, 11. These frescoes are generally considered to be influenced stylistically by Cavallini and to date from the two or three decades after his stay in Naples in 1308: A. Fittipaldi, 'The visual arts under Angevin rule', in A. de Franciscis et al., *Campania*, English edn. (Milan, 1977), 235-36. Thus while they, like the Loffredo chapel frescoes (c.1330) are roughly contemporary with the Apocalypse itself it is not possible to ascertain which of the three schemes was executed first. For the problems of dating and attribution of the Loffredo chapel paintings, see Carelli and Casiello, *Santa Maria Donnaregina*, 37-38.

decision to privatise this previously public space. The tomb of Francesco was probably a free-standing monument, while Fina's wall tomb was located above the original entrance, above the donor portrait which shows her being presented to the Virgin Mary by John the Baptist and John the Evangelist (fig. 105).⁹¹ Fina's tomb and portrait are situated at the optimum point for viewing the carefully-structured painted programme of the Baptistery, because from the entrance the alignment of all the most important scenes is clear.⁹² Starting at the dome, the huge central bust-length image of Christ holding the apocalyptic book ('Ego sum alpha et omega') is succeeded by the large full-length representation of the Virgin in a golden aureole (fig. 106). Around these two figures are ranged the saints who appear in the Great Litany, adding a further intercessory element to the mortuary chapel's scheme.⁹³ Beneath this, and linked to the images of the Virgin and Christ through a brilliant use of colour and repeated shapes, appears the creation of the world. The arched wall immediately below this holds the sombre night-set Crucifixion (fig. 95), the redemption of the world, while below and beyond this can be seen the apocalyptic image of heaven and the altar itself in the altar chapel, focus of the liturgical function for which the entire space was reconsecrated: the performance of the Mass for the Dead on behalf of the Carrara couple.

The Baptistery's impressive history of salvation is without a traditional representation of the Last Judgement: the narrative Apocalypse cycle around the altar fills its place. Specifically, the central scene of Christ and the Lamb (fig. 94), which we have already discussed in relation to its eucharistic themes, also stands in for the Judgement. As with the Neapolitan example, iconographic and compositional similarities with standard Judgements are discernible in the mandorla

⁹¹ H. Saalman, 'Carrara burials in the Baptistery of Padua', *Art Bulletin* 69 (1987), 376-94.

⁹² See C. King, *The Baptistery, Padua* (Open University television programme, 1993).

⁹³ The Great Litany was said only twice a year, at the blessing of the baptismal water at Easter and Pentecost, and hence links also to the original function of the Baptistery (a point which is discussed by Catherine King in her Open University programme).

and the rainbow, the closed book at Christ's side which evokes the book of life (from the Apocalypse's own version of the Judgement in Chapter 20), the worshipping elders, the angels with trumpets and the overall arch shape and symmetry of the scene. The scenes that appear below this large image, on either side of the altar, form part of the narrative Apocalypse cycle which reads horizontally around the entire chapel, but are also suggestive when read vertically and in the context of the Judgement-like image above (fig. 7). In the upper register two angels blow trumpets, a visual echo of the iconography of the general resurrection which is furthered, in the left-hand scene, by the appearance of a pious family in contemporary dress who are taking notice of the warning voice of the eagle above (Apoc. 8: 12-13, fig. 107), while on the right, attacking locusts swarm from the pit (Apoc. 9: 1-6, fig. 108): these images evoke respectively the saved and the damned. Below these scenes, reading vertically, the left-hand column shows one of the many-headed beasts followed immediately by the destruction of another (figs. 53, 109), while the right-hand column represents first the blessed worshipping the Lamb on Mt Sion and then the Conqueror on the white horse (figs. 55, 110). There is thus a clear thematic division in the lower registers: the destruction of the forces of evil on the left, and victory for the forces of good on the right. Allowing for the transposition of the two sides relative to the Godhead, which is necessitated by the scenes' role in the sequential Apocalypse narrative, these two columns could be seen as fulfilling in a somewhat unusual way the traditional requirement of a Judgement scene to represent the fate of the saved and the damned.

The Virgin

The use of the Apocalypse to evoke, complement or even replace images of the Last Judgement is perhaps not particularly surprising, given the text's obvious

relevance to the end of the world. What is more surprising to modern eyes is the idea of using the Apocalypse to glorify the Virgin Mary, who ostensibly plays no role in the biblical text. In fact, however, an influential tradition of medieval Apocalypse interpretation read one of the text's central figures, the woman clothed with the sun, as the Virgin,⁹⁴ an identification that was often taken up visually in the Anglo-French manuscript cycles.⁹⁵

Among the fourteenth-century monumental cycles, it is relatively rare to find a strong response to this form of interpretative strategy. Despite their location — in a Marian church and Lady Chapel respectively — the Apocalypse cycles at Naples and York do not stress the role of the woman clothed with the sun to any unusual extent.⁹⁶ By comparison, the Marian chapel at Karlstein uses the apocalyptic narrative with the clear aim of glorifying the Virgin, no doubt on account of Charles IV's particular devotion to the Madonna.⁹⁷

The first appearance here of the woman clothed with the sun is her unfazed reaction to the slaving seven-headed dragon (fig. 111).⁹⁸ This scene is superimposed on a large carved cross enclosed in a circle (fig. 112): one of the consecration crosses of the chapel of the Virgin. It would seem that the programme was carefully worked out to ensure the identification of this existing symbol with the first piece of potentially Marian imagery; this process must have involved the deliberate stretching-out of the previous scene, a rarely-depicted and rather

⁹⁴ E.A. Matter, 'The Apocalypse in early medieval exegesis', in *AMA*, 44.

⁹⁵ Conversely, depictions of the Virgin, especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, often gave her apocalyptic attributes such as a crown of twelve stars and the moon at her feet. See M. Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death: the arts, religion, and society in the mid-fourteenth century* (Princeton, 1951), Ch. 6, esp. 154-56 and figs. 129, 133, 135-37, 146-48.

⁹⁶ Although at S. Maria Donnaregina, the separate fresco in the upper gallery draws out the point with a representation of the Madonna with apocalyptic attributes and angels fighting the dragon (discussed above).

⁹⁷ See Jarrett, *Charles IV*, 34, 44, 60; Charles IV, *Vita Karoli IV Imperatoris*, ed. J. Emler (*Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 3, 323-417) (Prague, 1882), 362.

⁹⁸ Dusík and Soukup, *Karlštejn*, 151.

overextended 'earthquake' (Apoc. 11: 19, fig. 113).⁹⁹ Facing the entrance and thus immediately visible, the next scene featuring the woman and the dragon (fig. 114) is much larger in scale than the scenes on the wall opposite (its one register is the same height as the two registers of the east wall). In terms of use of space, this moment is thus clearly prioritised as the most important scene in the narrative cycle.

Significantly, the woman here wears a hooded mantle immediately reminiscent of the traditional iconography of the Virgin.¹⁰⁰ To the right of this is a devotional image that literally enshrines the apocalyptic woman under an painted baldachin (fig. 115).¹⁰¹ Here for the first time the woman is shown not only with her apocalyptic attributes of the sun, moon and eagle's wings but with her son, in a traditional pose of the Madonna and Child. Although previous scholars have assumed that the narrative cycle must have continued onto the destroyed north wall of the chapel, it is in fact possible that the cycle ended with this votive image of the woman of Chapter 12, so appropriate for a Marian chapel; its vertical axis and placement make it, even if not a final image, a strong caesura. The Marian focus of the chapel is extended through other, non-apocalyptic, furnishings and decorations: a wooden statue of the seated Madonna and Child, dating to c.1360, is thought to be an original part of the chapel's furnishings,¹⁰² and a representation of the nine orders of angels features both Michael and Gabriel,¹⁰³ the two archangels most relevant to the Virgin Mary in her two roles as Apocalyptic woman and Mother of God.

⁹⁹ Illustration in Fišer, *Karlštejn*, 177. Note the way the artist has had to fill in a rather empty space on the left of the scene with an elaborate representation of the 'lightning' which receives only cursory mention in the text.

¹⁰⁰ See illustration in Fišer, *Karlštejn*, 176.

¹⁰¹ Dusík and Soukup, *Karlštejn*, 164.

¹⁰² Stejskal, *European art*, 90; Dusík and Soukup, *Karlštejn*, 141.

¹⁰³ Dvůráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 137.

The New Jerusalem

Despite the relevance of apocalyptic imagery to these central manifestations of late medieval religious practice — relics, the eucharist, the Judgement, Mary — there was remarkably little use of the text of the Apocalypse in the liturgy.¹⁰⁴ It therefore seems reasonable to assume that those occasions on which it was used might particularly have influenced the overall signification for those cycles which were located in a liturgical environment. The most important of these occasions was the dedication of a church, and the annual celebration of this event. Here, the triumphant description of the heavenly city ‘coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband’ (Apoc. 21: 2) is the central text.¹⁰⁵

The imagery linking the New Jerusalem with the physical, as well as spiritual, fabric of churches had been recognised for centuries.¹⁰⁶ The obvious parallel between the heavenly architecture of Chapter 21 and the design of great churches was exploited by artists who often imaged the New Jerusalem in architectural terms that suggested church buildings as much as the city required by the biblical text.¹⁰⁷ Surprisingly enough, the designer at York did not choose to take this route in the panel devoted to the representation of the New Jerusalem (2h, fig. 104). Although some of the architecture is suggestively ecclesiastical (buttresses, windows, arches and crocketed pinnacles), the form definitely conveys the concept of a walled city, complete with battlements and four portcullis gates, rather than a

¹⁰⁴ C.C. Flanigan, ‘The Apocalypse and the medieval liturgy’, in *AMA*, 333.

¹⁰⁵ See F.E. Warren, trans., *The Sarum Missal in English* (Alcuin Club Collections 11) (London, 1913), vol. 1, 414, 422, 424 and W.G. Henderson, ed., *Missale ad usum insignis ecclesiae Eboracensis* (Surtees Society 63) (Durham, 1874), vol. 1, 257. See also C. Heitz, ‘Retentissement de l’Apocalypse dans l’art de l’époque carolingienne’, in Y. Christe, ed., *L’Apocalypse de Jean: traditions exégétiques et iconographiques, IIIe-XIIIe siècles* (Geneva, 1979), 232-34.

¹⁰⁶ N. Coldstream, *The decorated style: architecture and ornament, 1240-1360* (London, 1994), 11; Suger, *On the abbey church of St.-Denis and its art treasures*, ed. and trans. E. Panofsky, 2nd edn. (Princeton, 1979), 63, 65, 121.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, the Cloisters manuscript (ed. Deuchler et al.), fol. 36r and 36v; Lewis, *Reading images*, figs. 163, 165, 166.

church. However, it is important to observe that the imagery of the New Jerusalem is not restricted to this one panel; instead, it could well be that the entire east window, with its design of unparalleled virtuosity and its famously jewel-like colours, is intended to evoke the beauty of the heavenly city. In concrete terms, the imagery employed to describe the 'Bride of the Lamb' suggests the splendour of a cathedral: great walls and foundations, light, precious stones. There is an emphasis on the combination of transparency and jewelled colours which is particularly suggestive of stained glass: 'the city itself [was] pure gold, like to clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones' (Apoc. 21: 18-19).¹⁰⁸ The Apocalypse cycle at York, deliberately designed to impress through its unprecedented size, its cost, its fashionable international gothic style,¹⁰⁹ and created at a time when the Minster's grand rebuilding programme was nearing completion, must have drawn on this traditional interpretation too: the vast and splendid wall of glass was an earthly echo of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

This holistic approach to evoking rather than representing the New Jerusalem is also found at Karlstein, in the Holy Cross chapel. Much more striking than the two apocalyptic paintings, which are located in a transept, is the overall design of the chapel (fig. 116). The most remarkable aspect is the extravagant use of gold and semi-precious stones. The lowest band of decoration consists of over two thousand large pieces of polished stone, especially cornelian and amethyst, set into the stamped and gilded plaster of the wall to form cross shapes. Above appear 137 portraits of the saints in the form of framed panel paintings, also arranged on gold walls. The cross vaults of the ceiling are not only gilded but set with hundreds of

¹⁰⁸ D. O'Connor, 'York and the heavenly Jerusalem: symbolism in the east window of York Minster', in *Medieval Europe 1992: a conference on medieval archaeology in Europe, September 1992 at the University of York, vol. 7: art and symbolism* (York, 1992), 66-72.

¹⁰⁹ B. Johnson, 'Stained glass', in N. Pevsner and D. Neave, *Yorkshire: York and the East Riding*, 2nd edn. (London, 1995), 54-55.

crystal lenses to represent stars and the sun, moon and planets.¹¹⁰ The emperor's chronicler, Beneš of Weitmil, wrote that Charles had founded 'unam magnam cappellam, cuius parietes circumdedit auro puro et gemmis preciosis ... et ornavit picturis multum preciosis. In diffuso orbe terrarum non est castrum, neque capella de tam precioso [opere], et merito...'¹¹¹ The chapel was obviously intended to impress on a material level, but, particularly in its use of precious stones, was also strongly evocative of the heavenly city of John's vision.

Conclusion

If there is one characteristic that the fourteenth-century monumental Apocalypse cycles share, apart from their fairly common stock of imagery, it is the element of virtuosity and exclusivity. As far as we can tell, given the poor survival rates for medieval art, many of the cycles represent the first — and often the only — use of the Apocalypse as a subject for the type of space or place they adorn, or for the medium concerned. The east window of York Minster, the Norwich cloister roof bosses, the wall paintings in the chapter house at Westminster Abbey and in the altar chapel at the Padua Baptistery are all unique commissions, unprecedented and unparalleled uses of the narrative Apocalypse for these elements of ecclesiastical space. The Karlstein, Angers and York cycles additionally set out to impress through their extravagant materials and exceptional workmanship, while the Stuttgart panels and the altarpieces in London and Venice, although on a much smaller scale, are still so unusual as to be each one of a kind.

¹¹⁰ See the illustrations in Fišer, *Karlštejn*, 125; Kubu, *Karlštejn Castle*, 29. Discussed in Bachmann, 'Gothic architecture', 23; Dvoráková et al., *Gothic mural painting*, 62, 117.

¹¹¹ Beneš of Weitmil, *Chronicon*, ed. J. Emler (Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, vol. 4, 459-548) (Prague, 1884), 533.

Since virtuosity in form was clearly desired by the commissioning patrons, it is possible also that the appeal of the Apocalypse as a theme itself owed something to this urge for the uncommon, the extravagant, the extraordinary. By choosing this subject, patrons had an opportunity to demonstrate both their wealth in material terms and the high quality of their education and theological understanding. While still participating in the devotional cults of relics, the eucharist, the Virgin Mary, or while pondering on the ever-present themes of judgement and salvation, the patron/viewers, through use of the Apocalypse, were able to aspire to an uncommonly advanced interpretation of these hugely popular manifestations of late medieval religion.

This was only made possible by the multivalency of the fourteenth-century pictorial Apocalypse, whose relatively stable imagery could be adjusted subtly to emphasise readings appropriate to the context or location of each cycle. The readings are not mutually exclusive but build naturally on each other, depending on the role the cycle plays in the space it occupies, and how other imagery and liturgical or devotional functions interact with it. Most importantly, the understanding of the cycles has been shown to draw more on context than on content for the creation of meaning, making it imperative that, wherever possible, the pictured Apocalypse is viewed not in isolation but in the full context of its cultural, physical and functional environment — a context that would undoubtedly have been immediately apparent to its original viewers.

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- CVMA Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi
- EETS Early English Text Society
- JWCI *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*
- PL Migne, J.P., ed., *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina*, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844-64)

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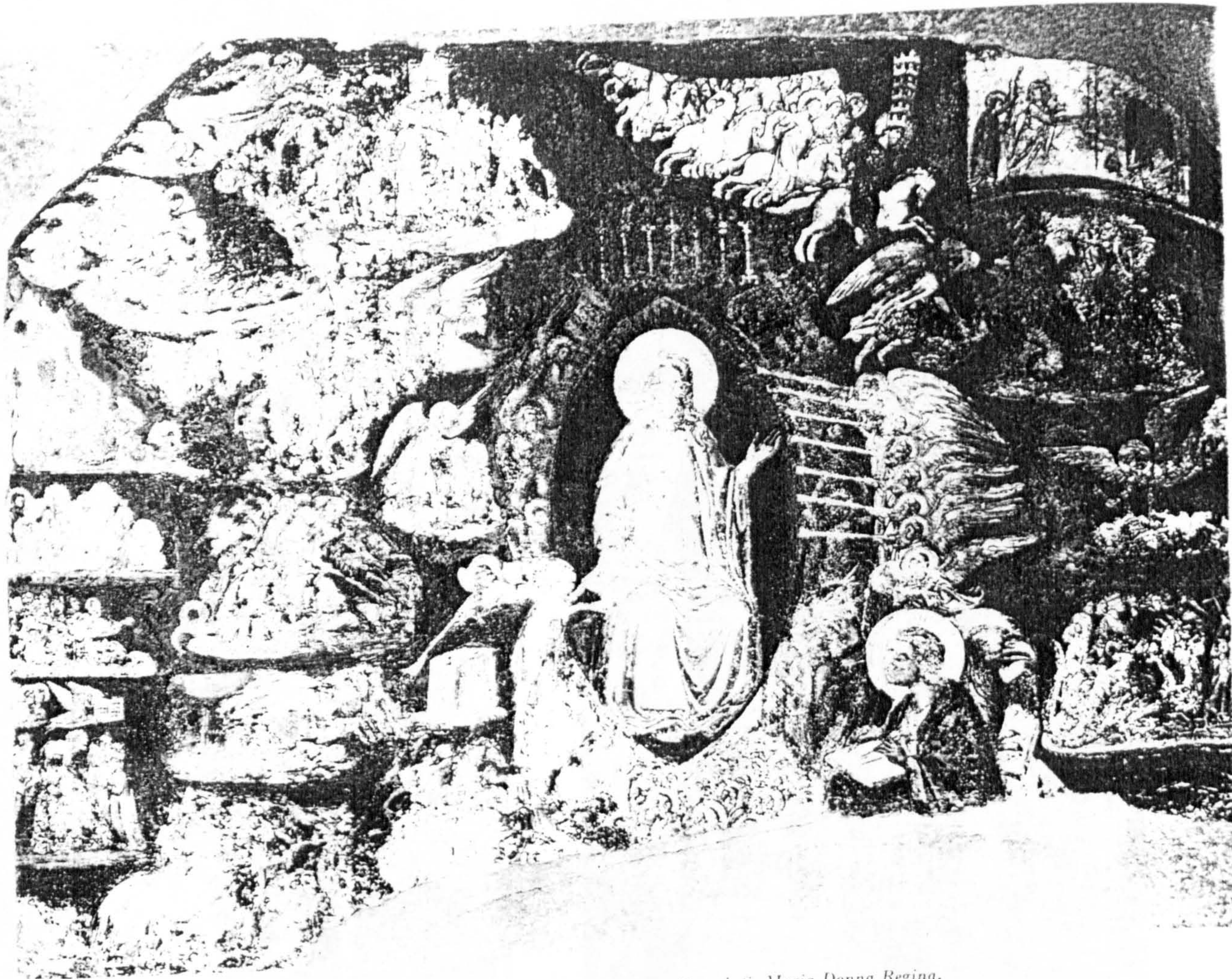
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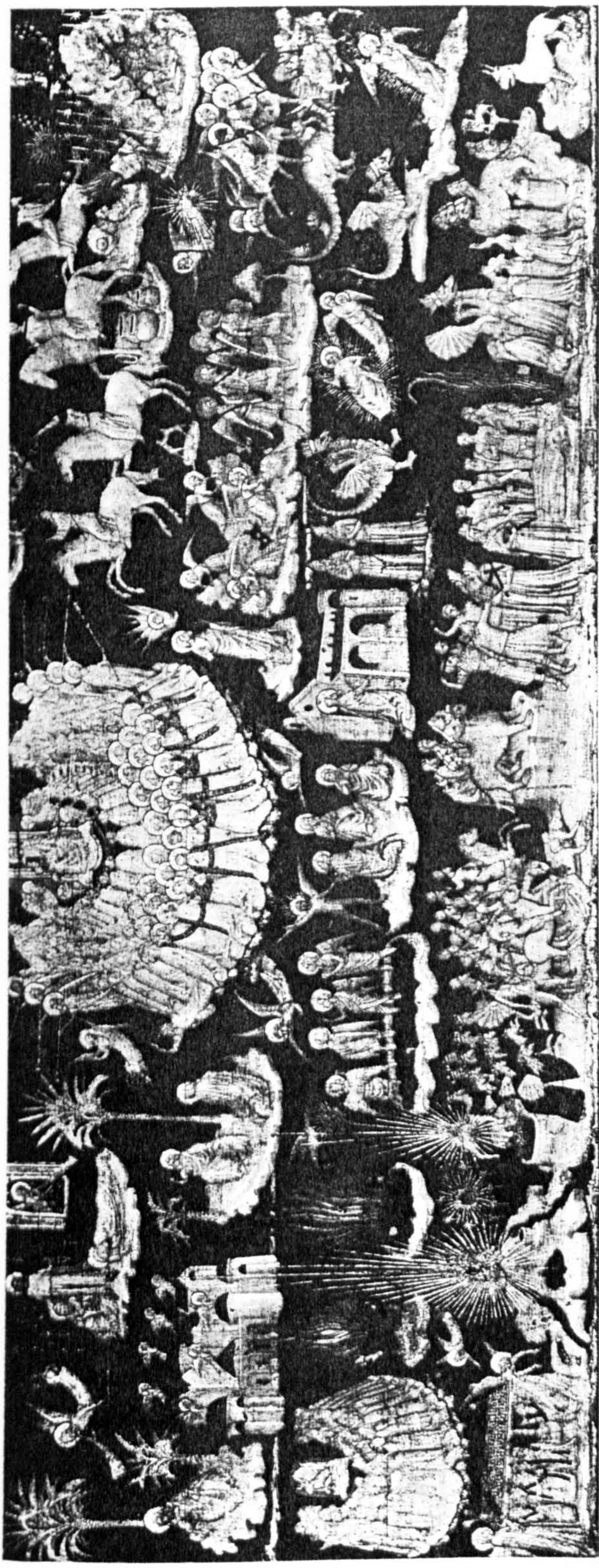
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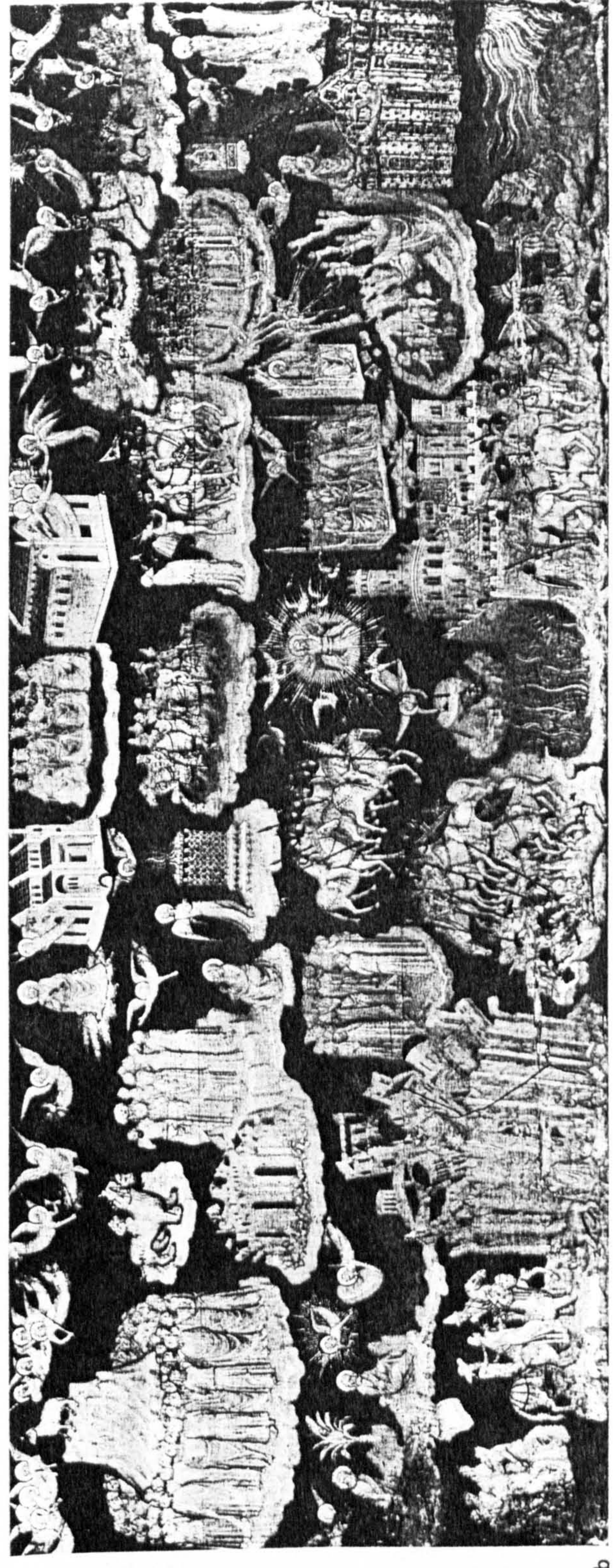
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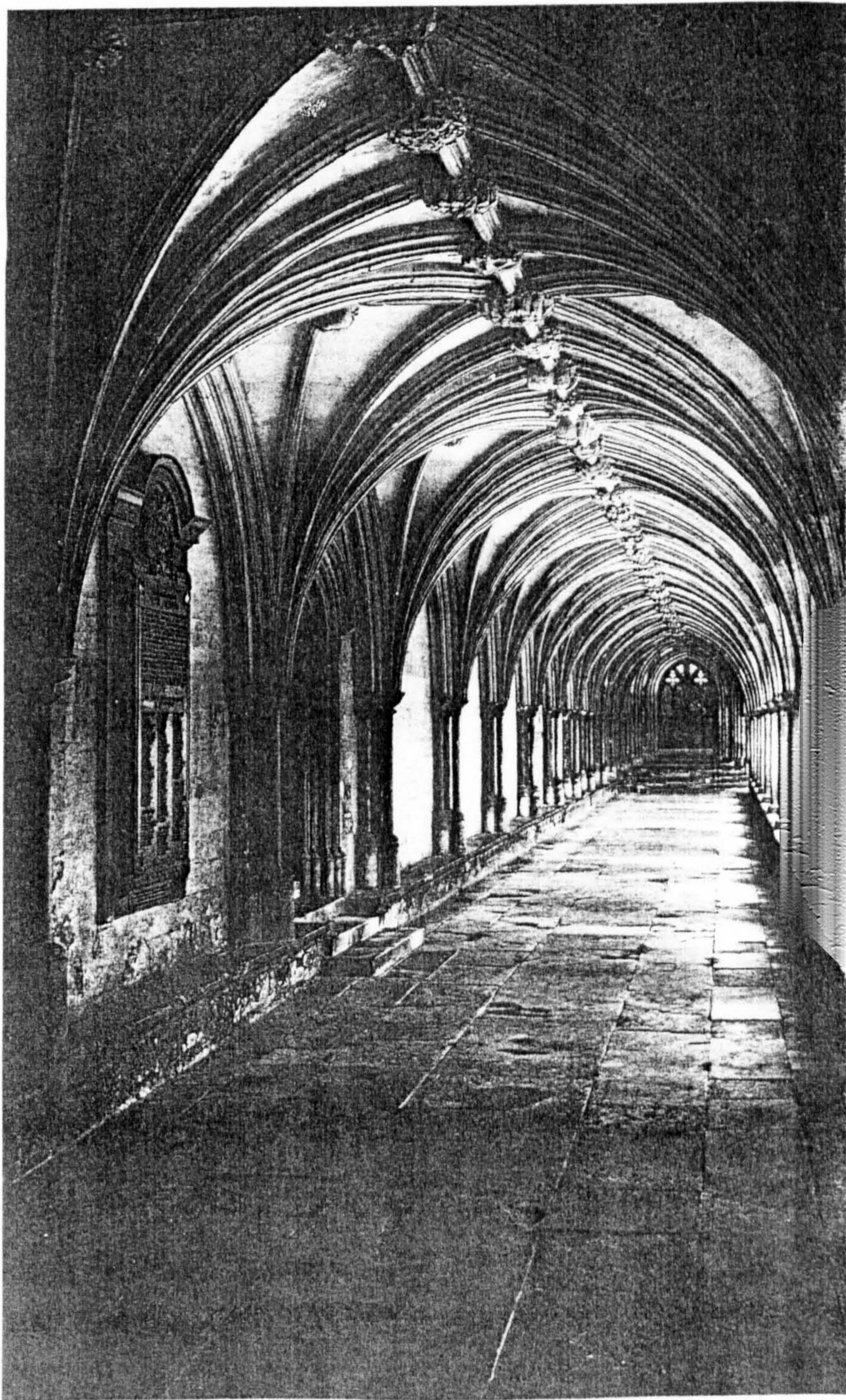
1 Neapel, nach 1317, Apokalypse. Neapel, S. Maria Donna Regina.



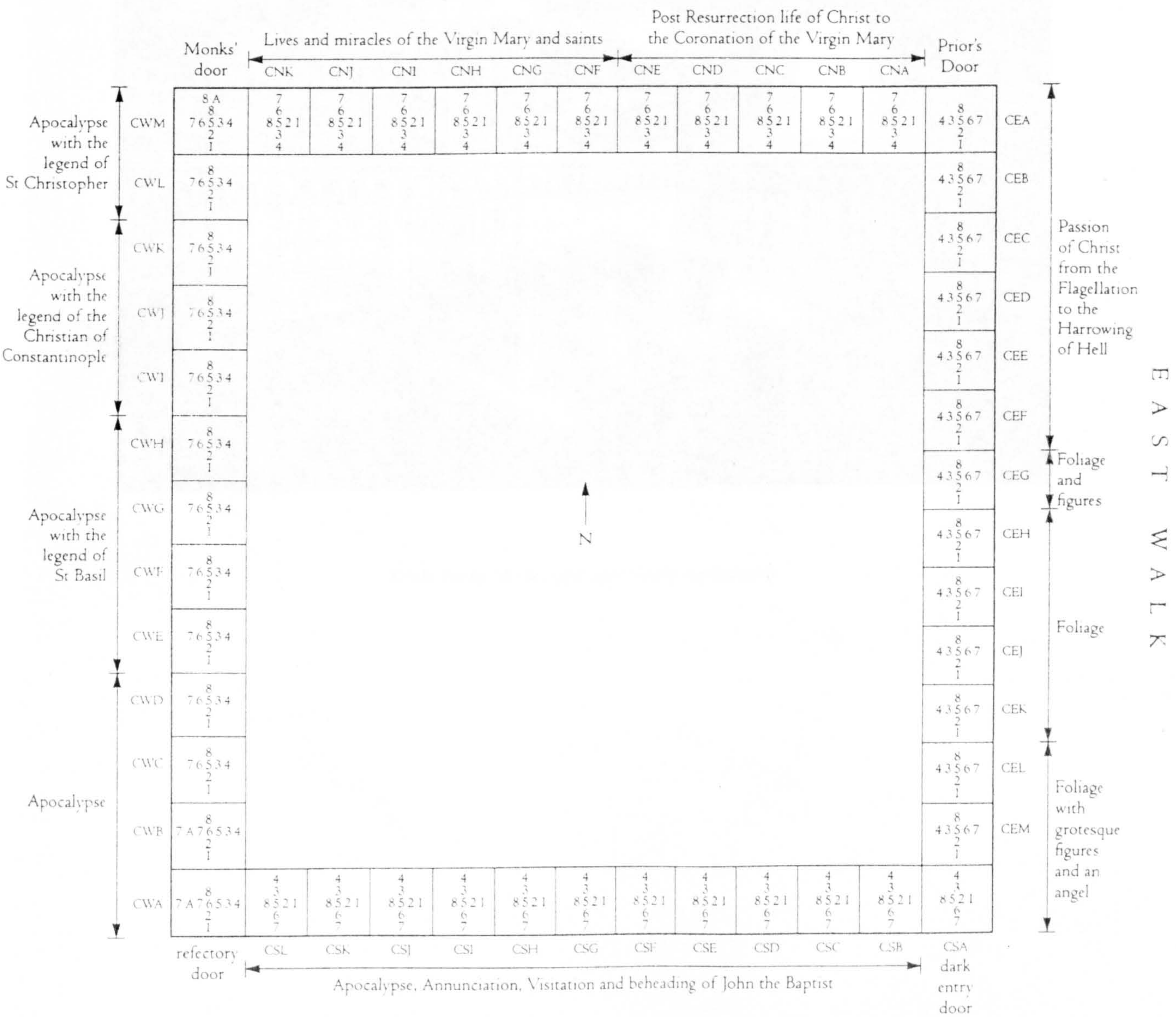
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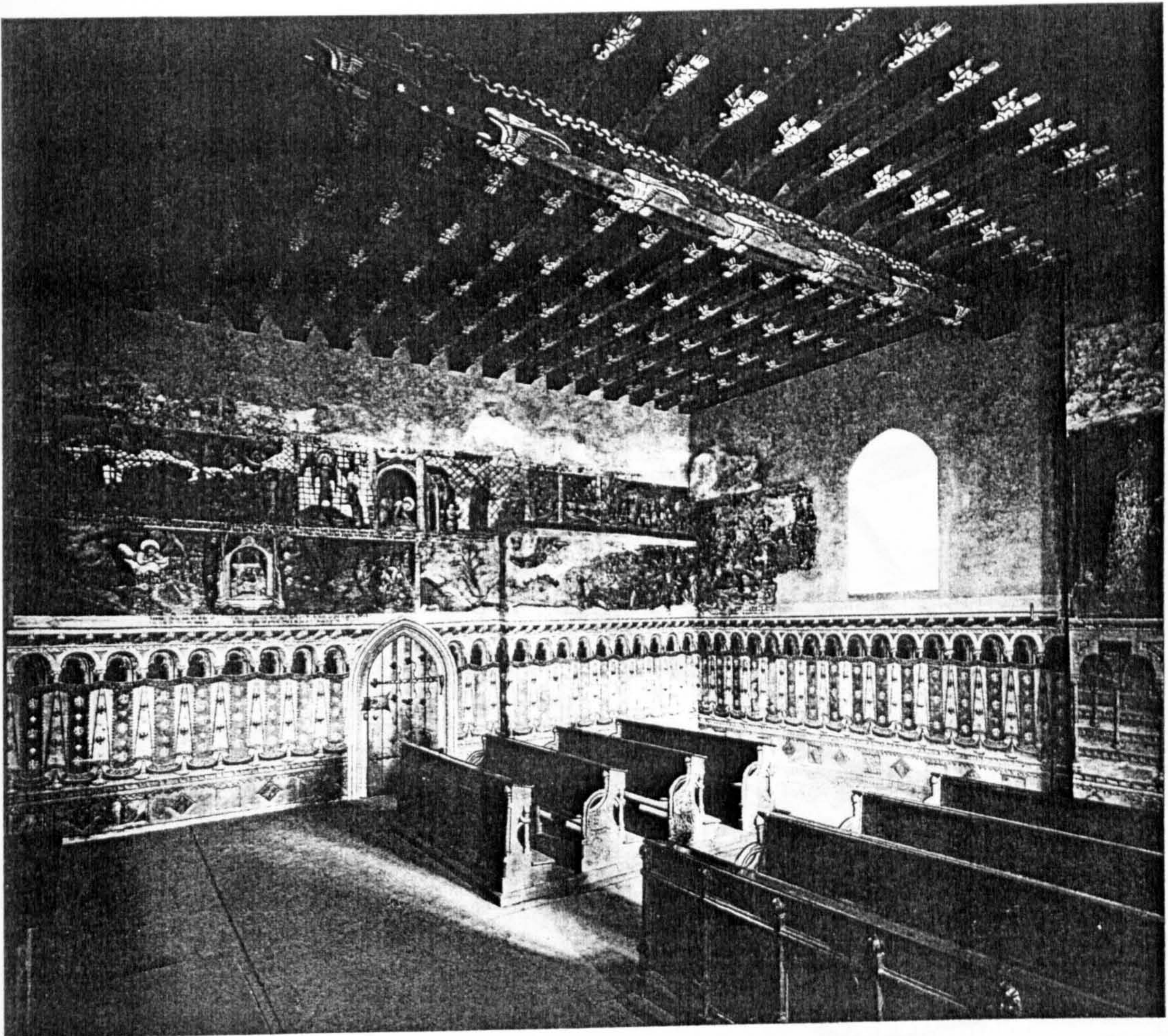
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N O R T H W A L K

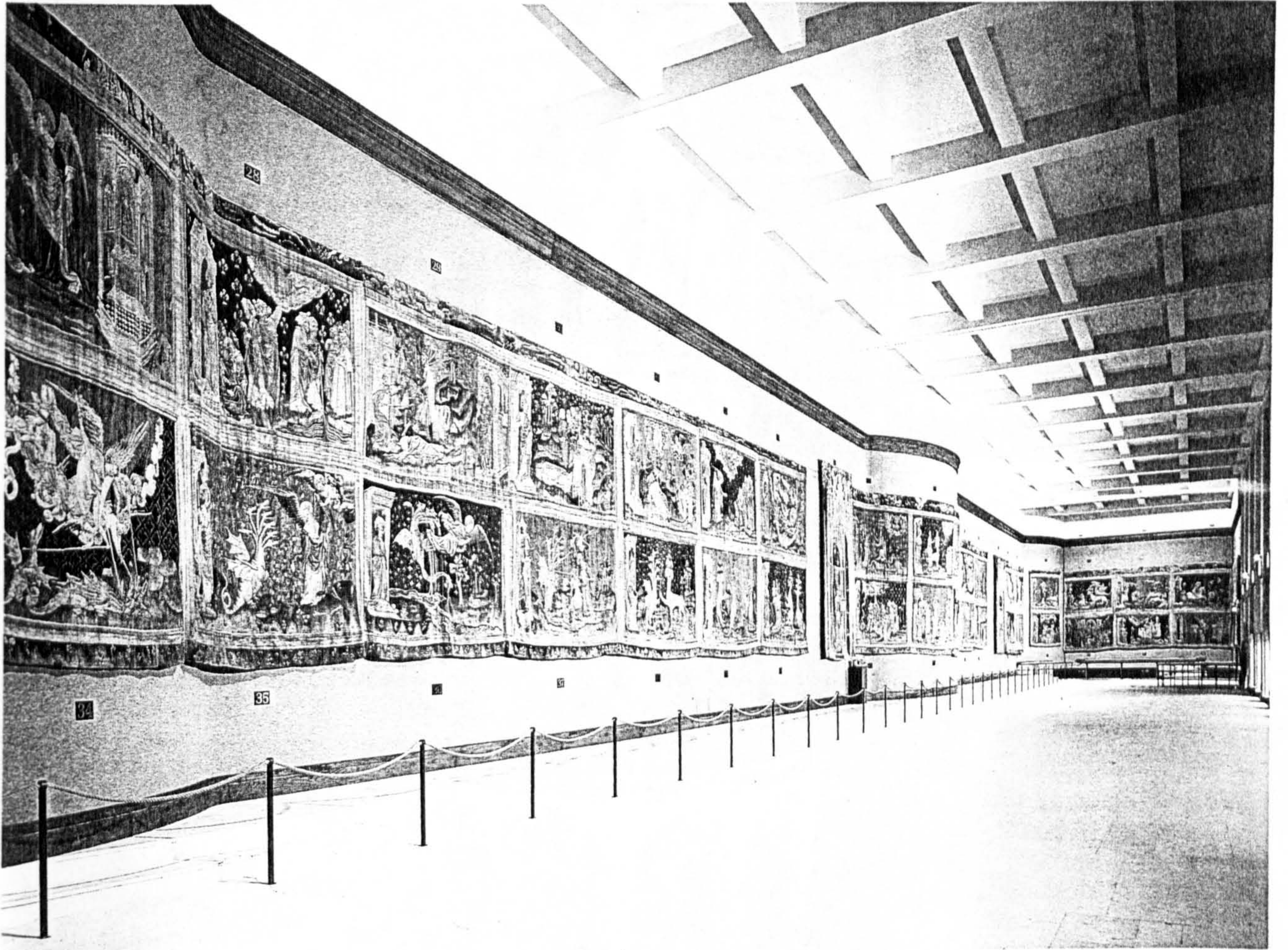


Cloister plan showing iconography of the main series of bosses

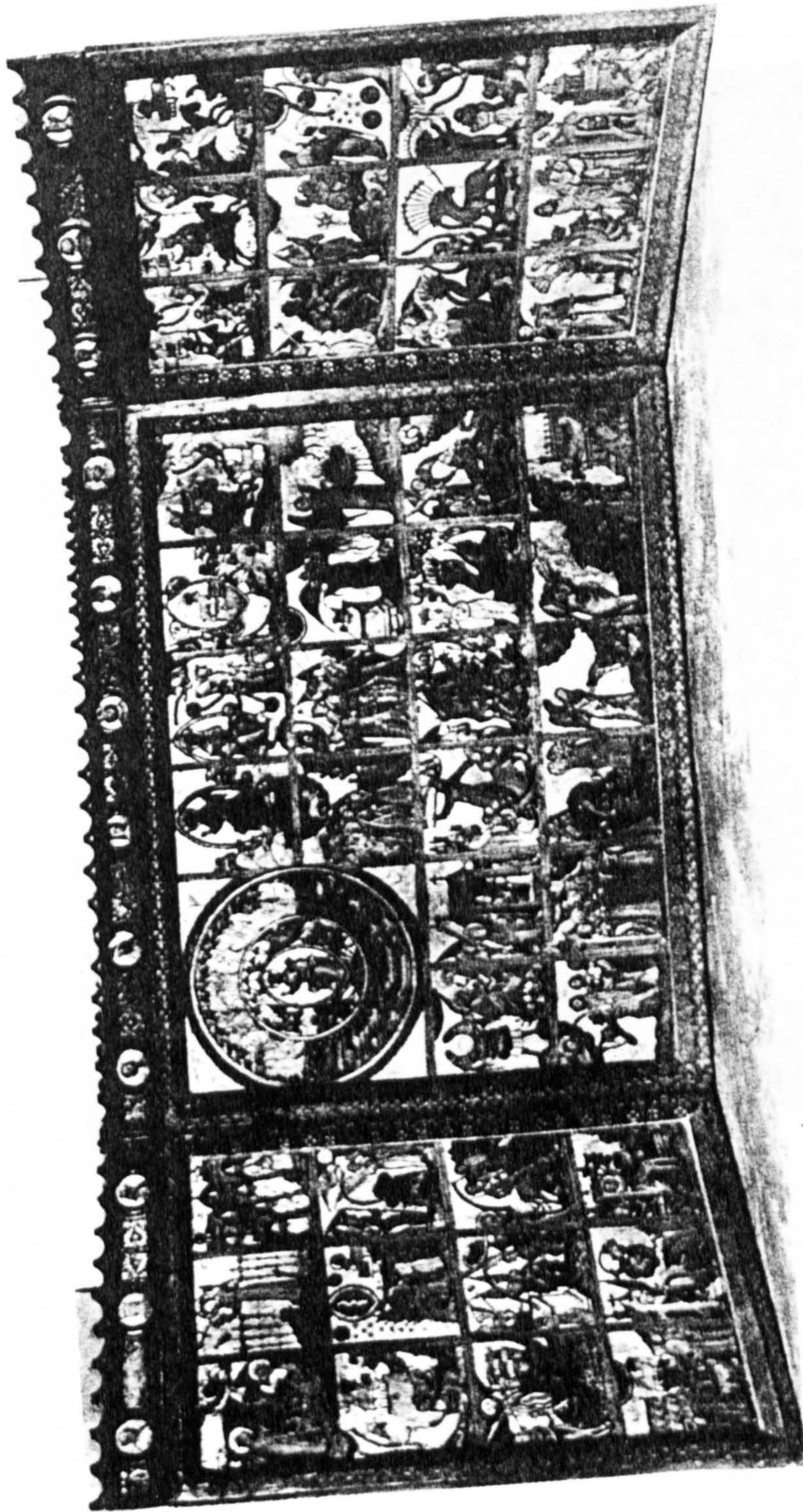


Kaple Panny Marie - pohled na scény Apokalypsy

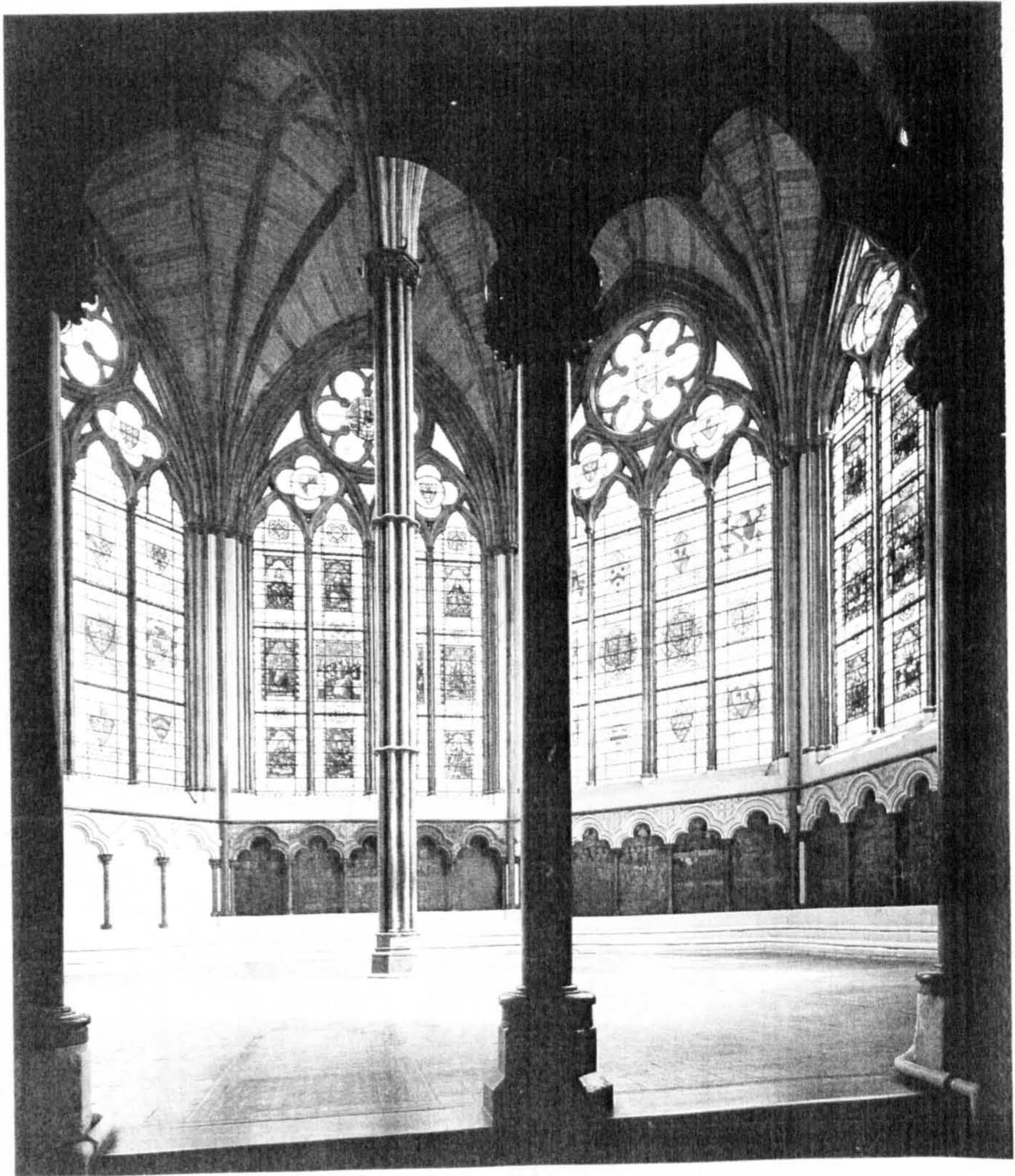
31
Présentation actuelle de la tenture
de l'Apocalypse.
Château d'Angers. Galerie construite en 1954.







Frontispiece The Apocalypse Altar-piece



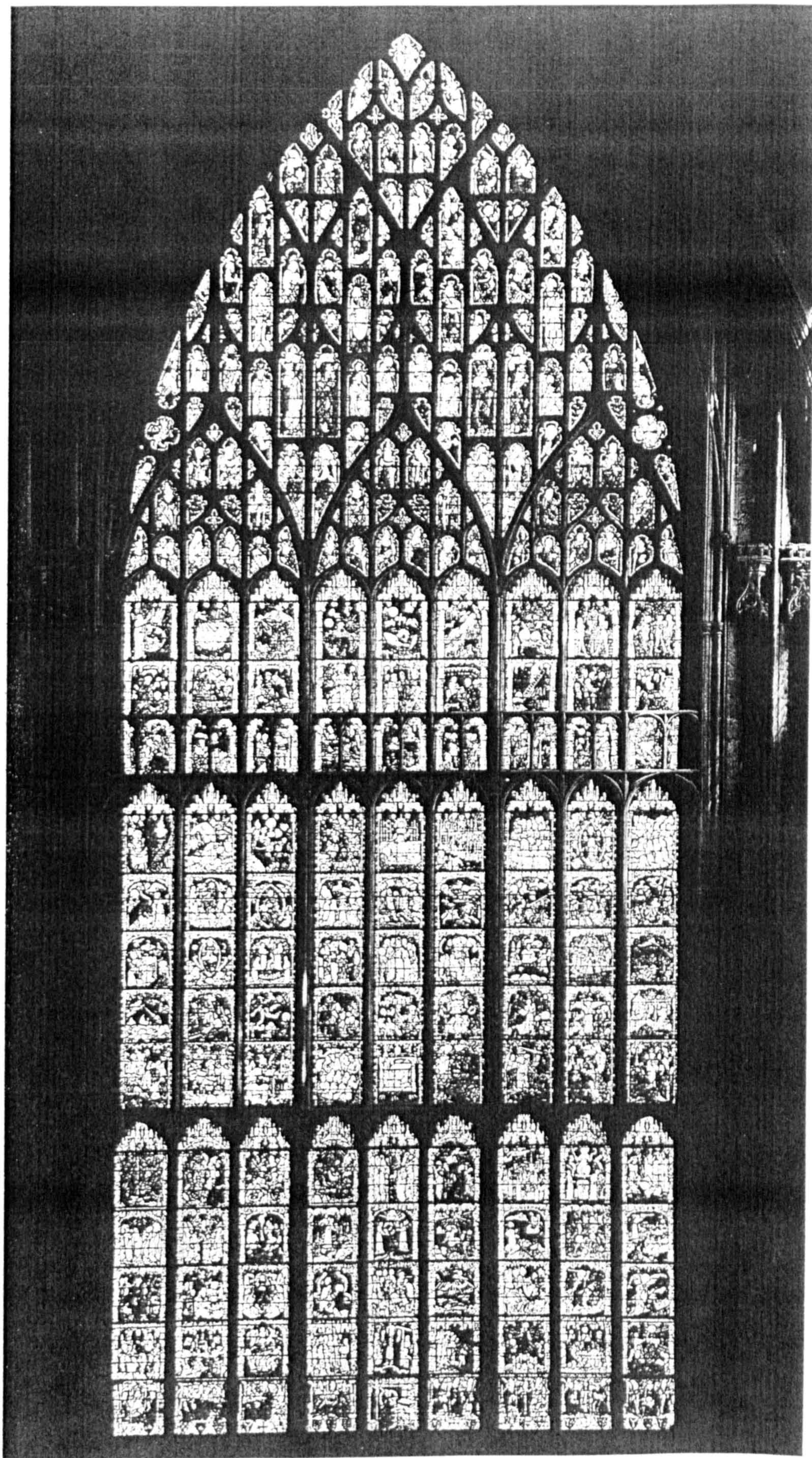
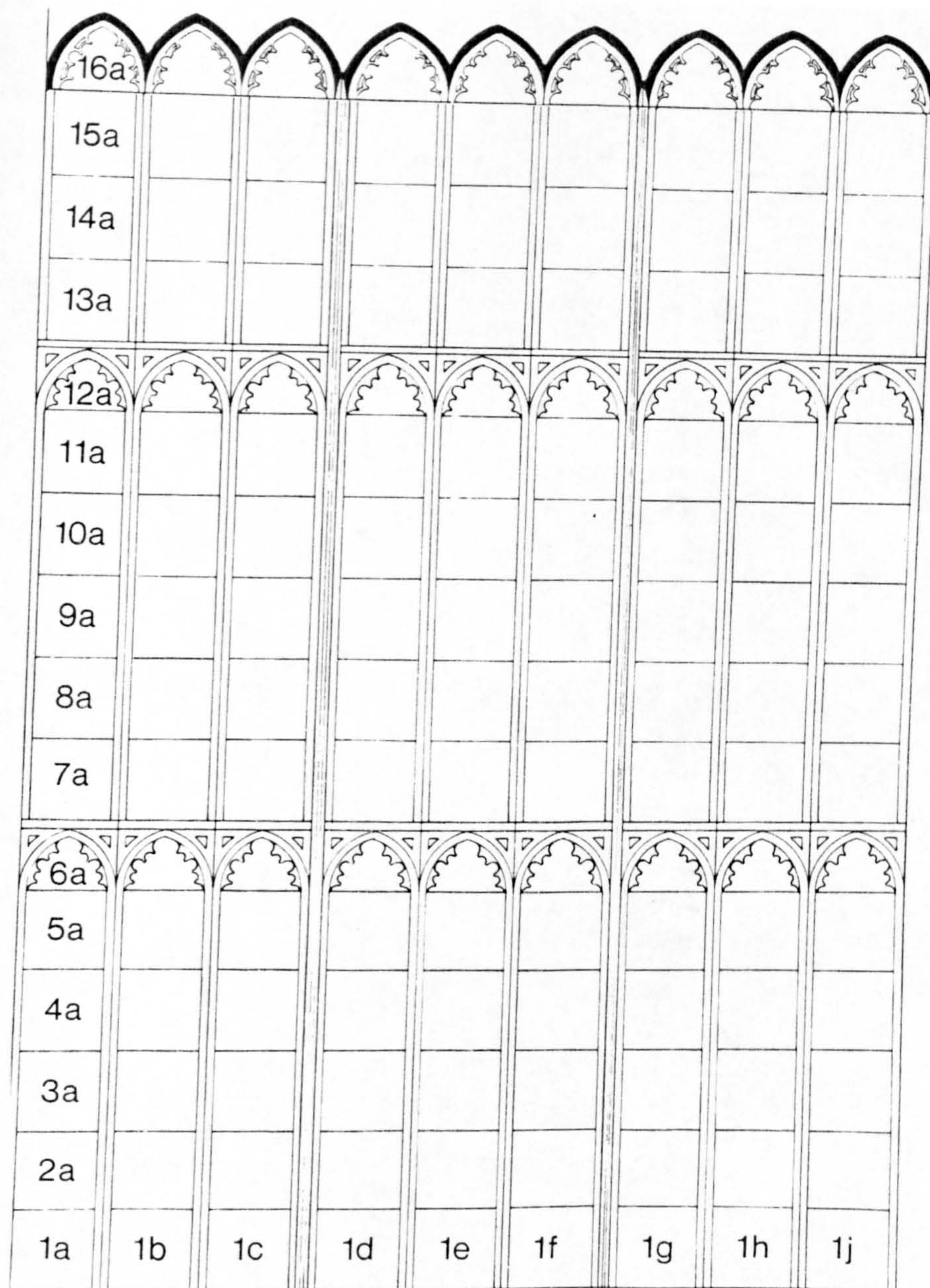


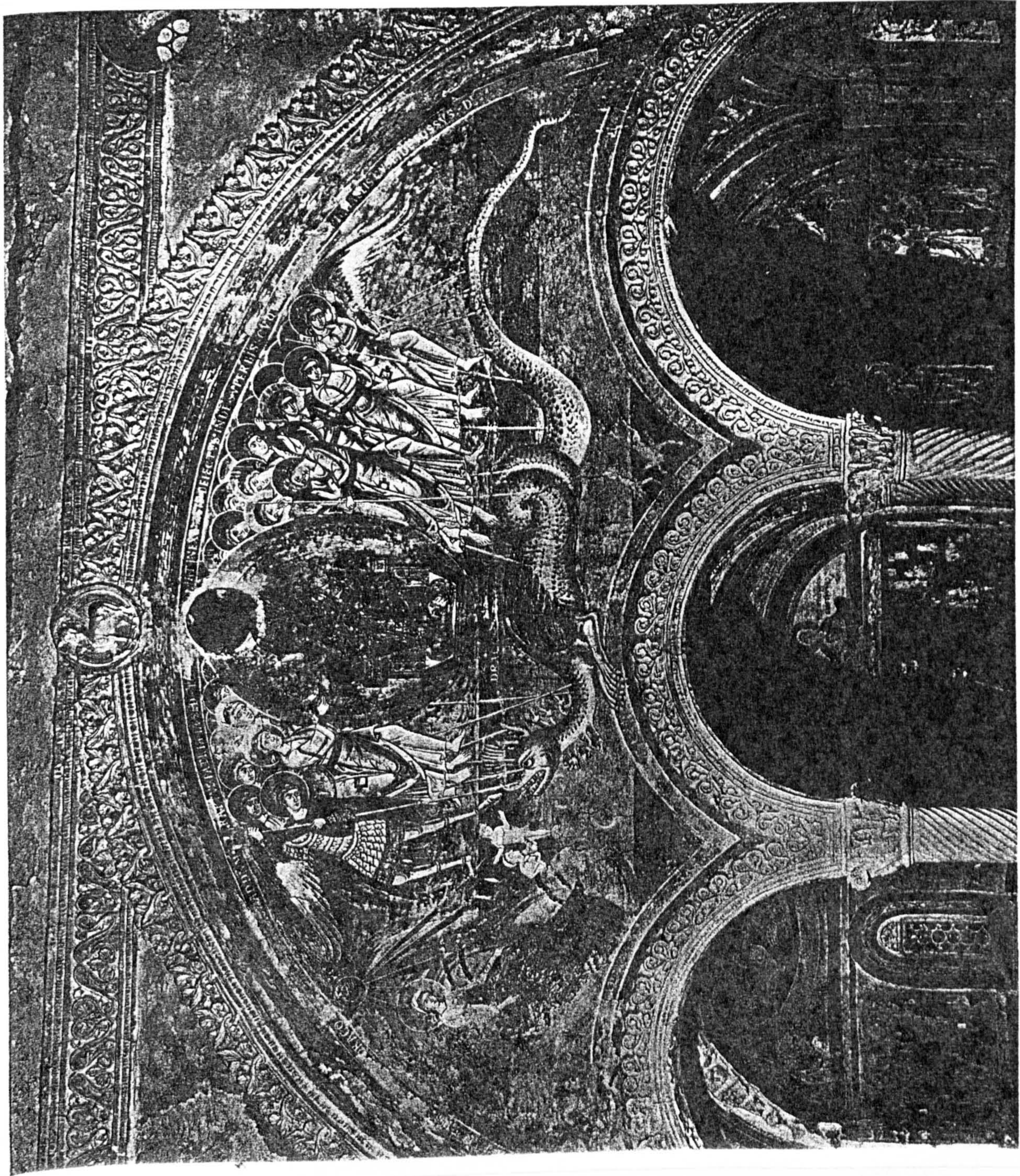
Fig. 1 The Great East Window

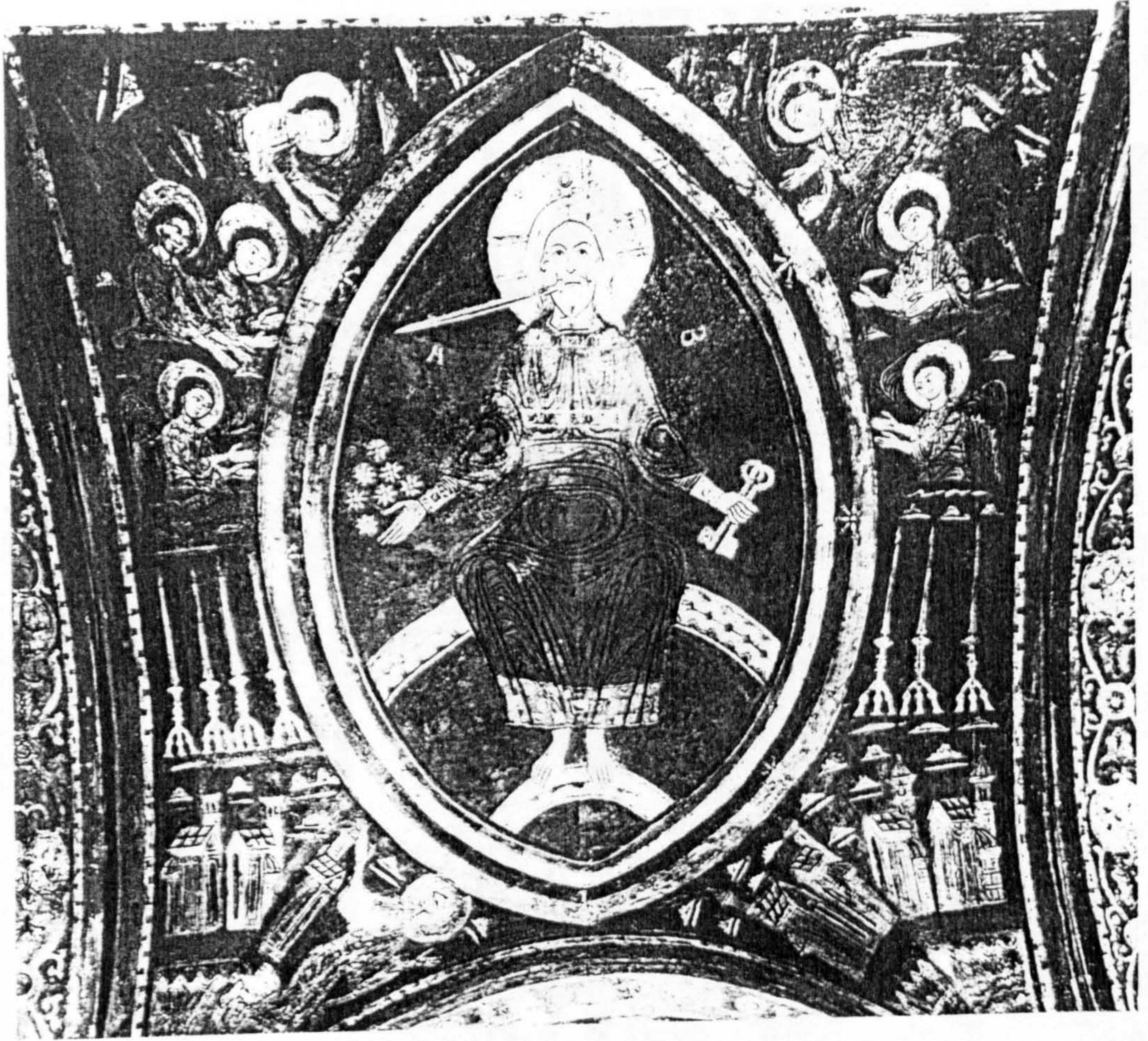
Main Lights

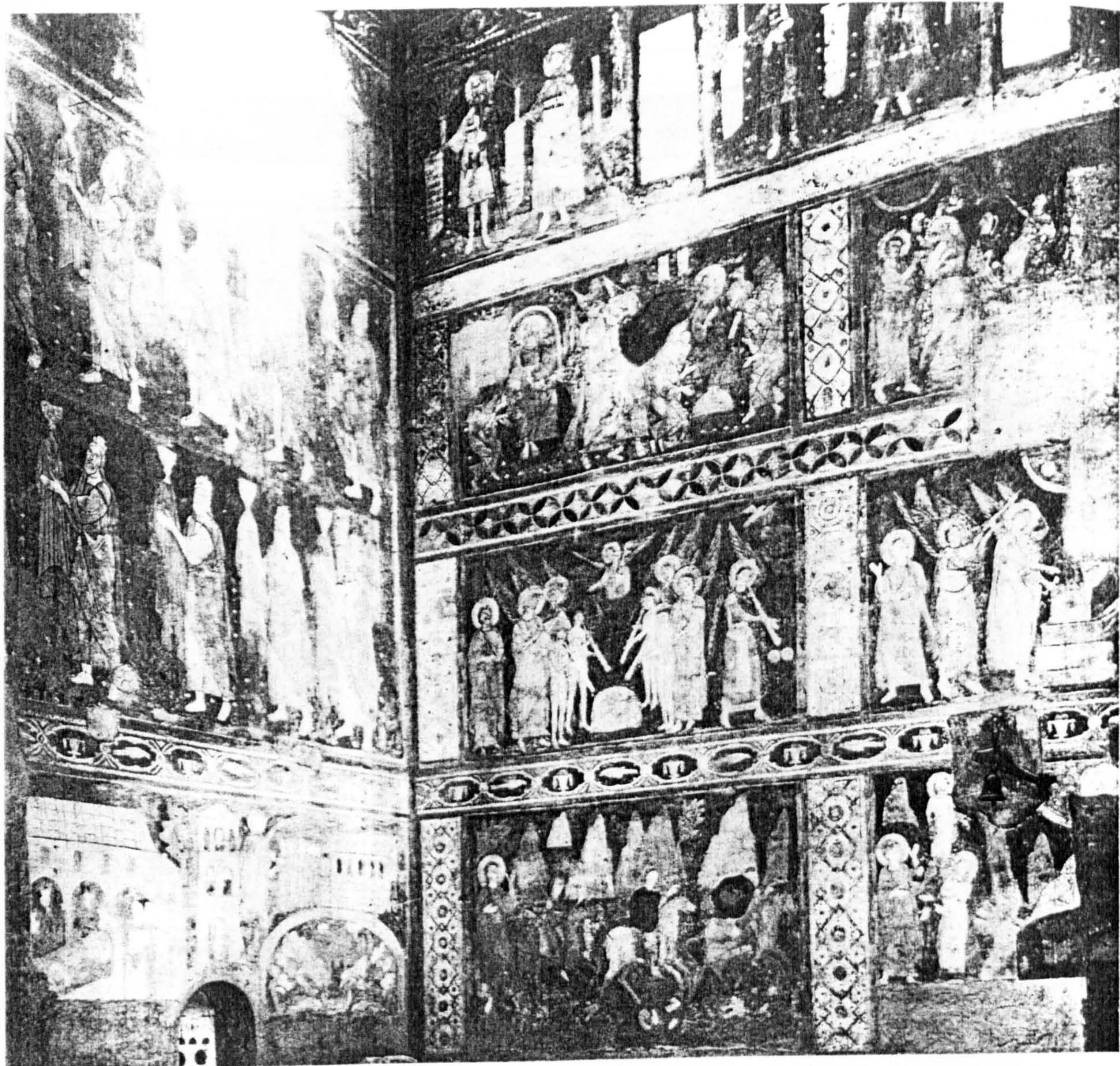


- 15a-15j The Creation and Fall of Man
 14a-11j Old Testament Scenes
 11a-11c Scenes from the Apocryphal Acts of St John
 11d-2j The Book of the Revelation of St John the Divine
 1a-1j Donor, Saints and Historical Figures

The main panels are lettered a-j across the window, leaving out the letter i to avoid confusion.







790

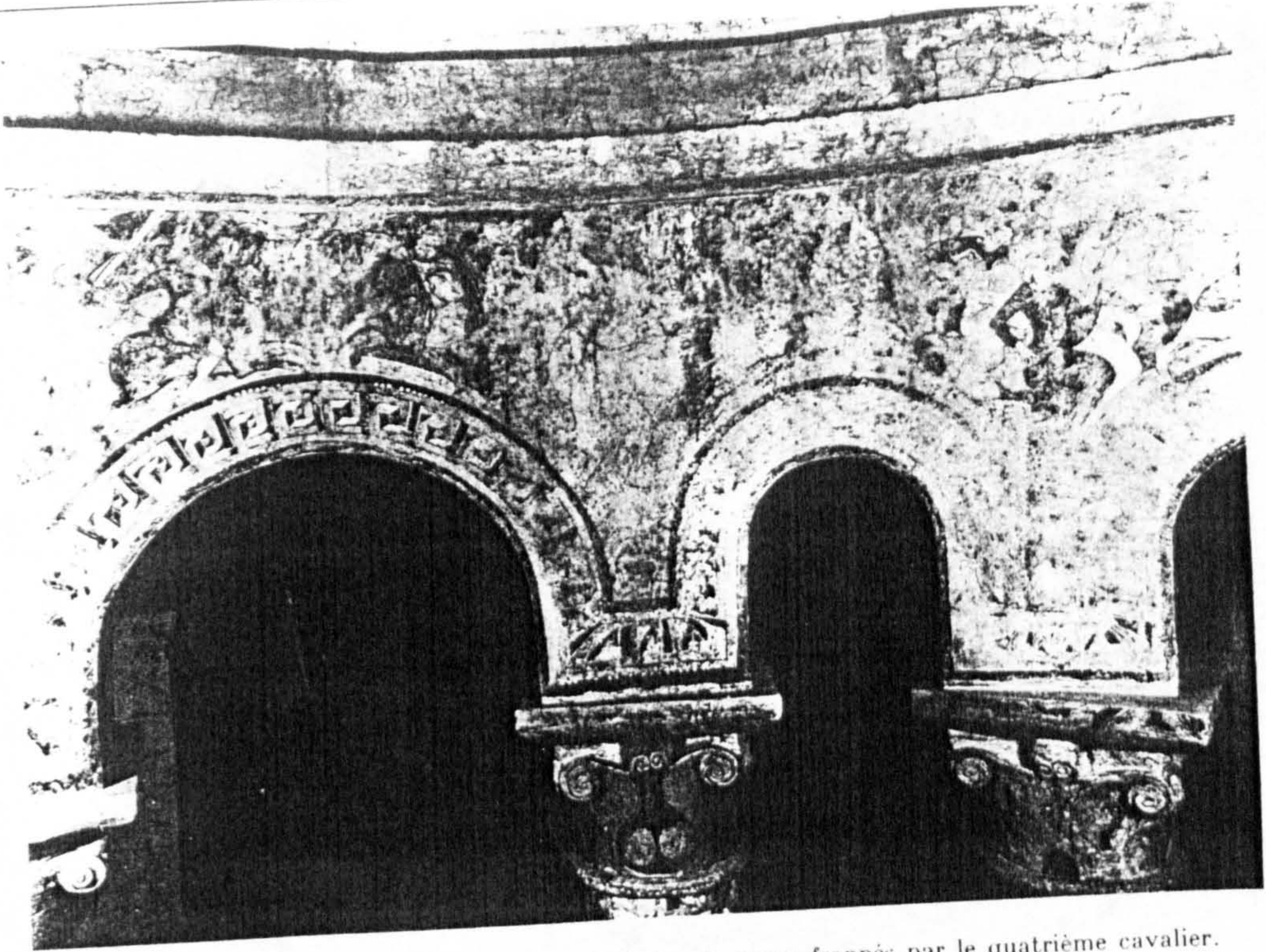


Fig. 14. — POITIERS. Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand. Les hommes frappés par le quatrième cavalier.

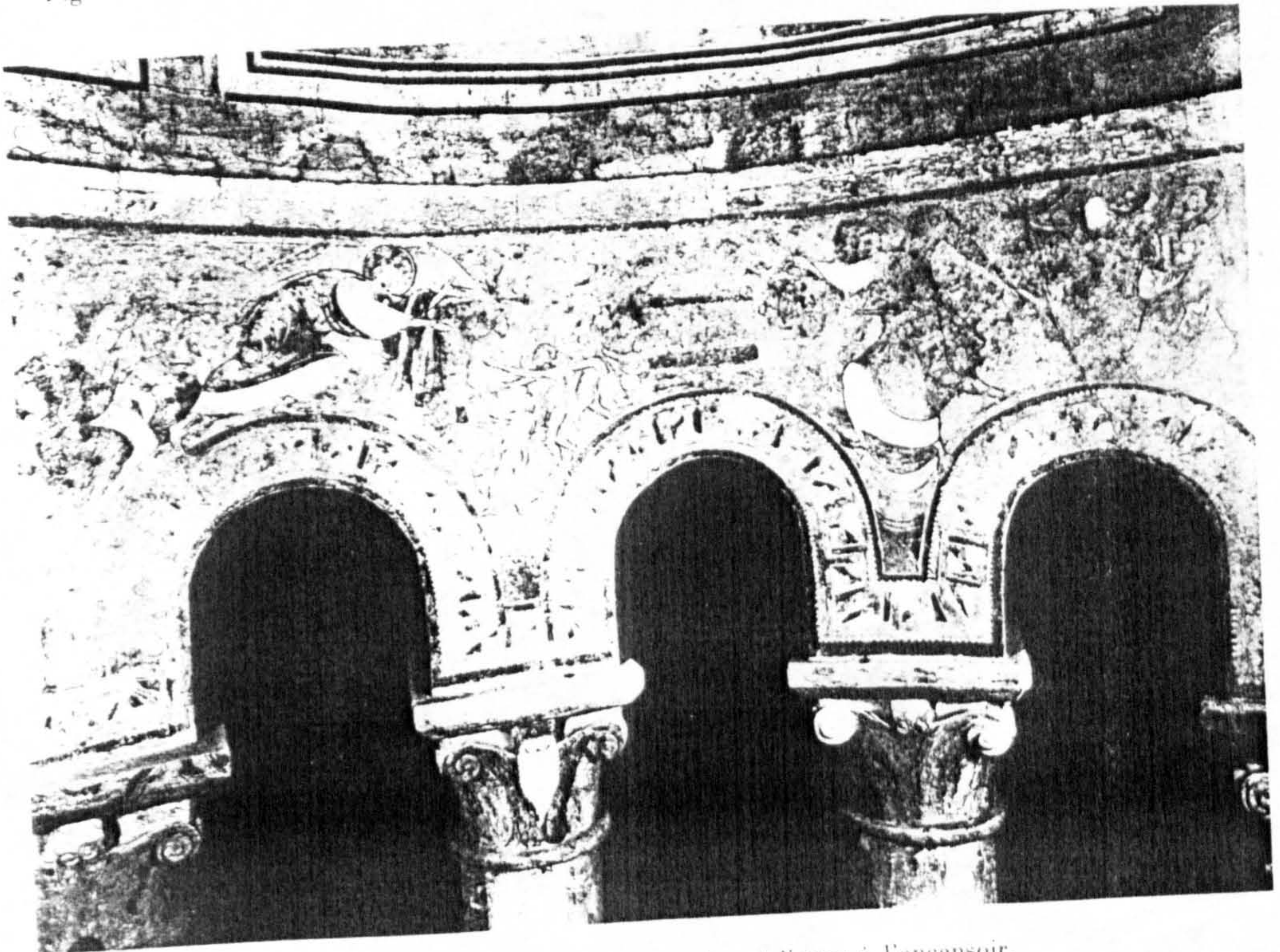
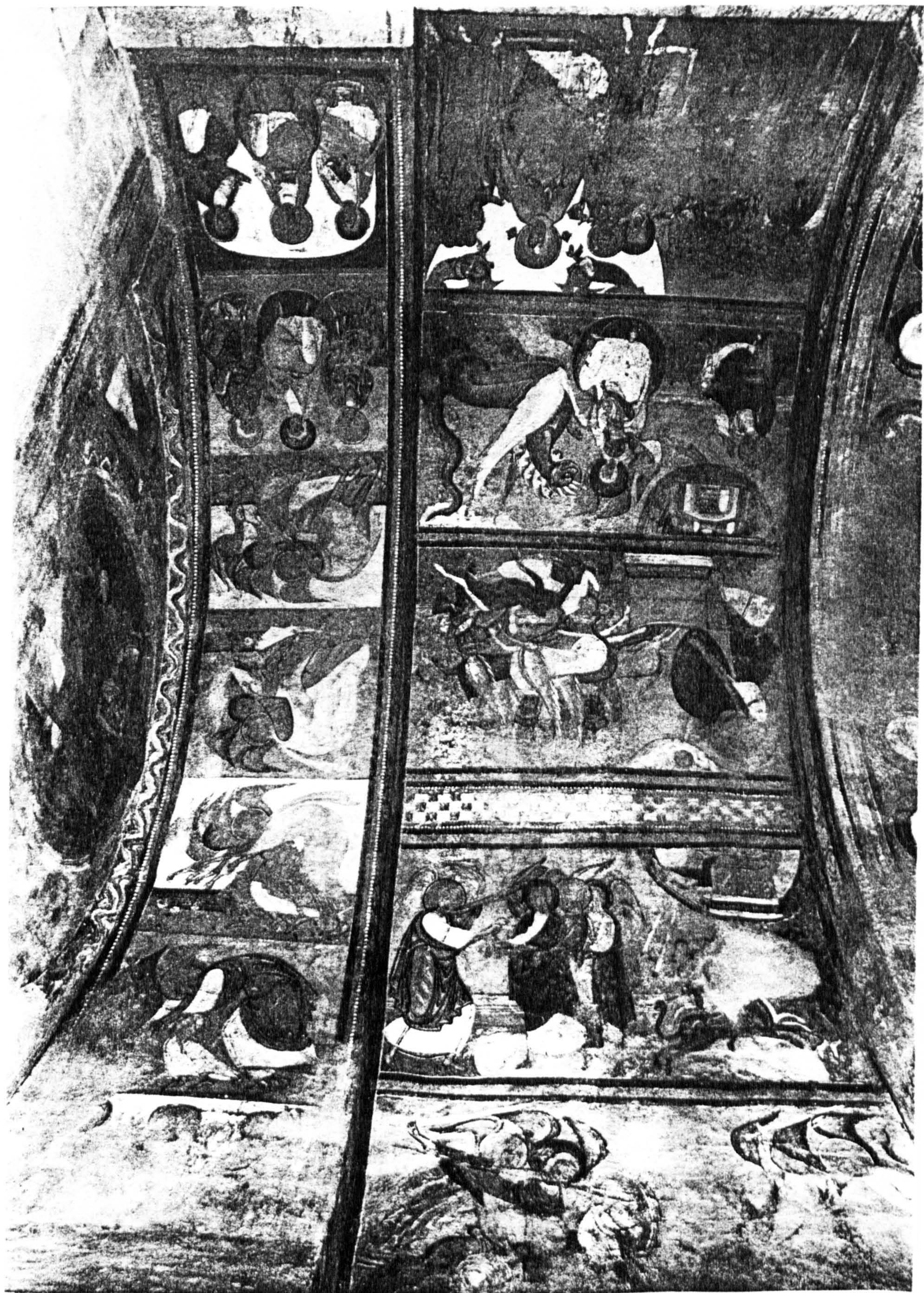
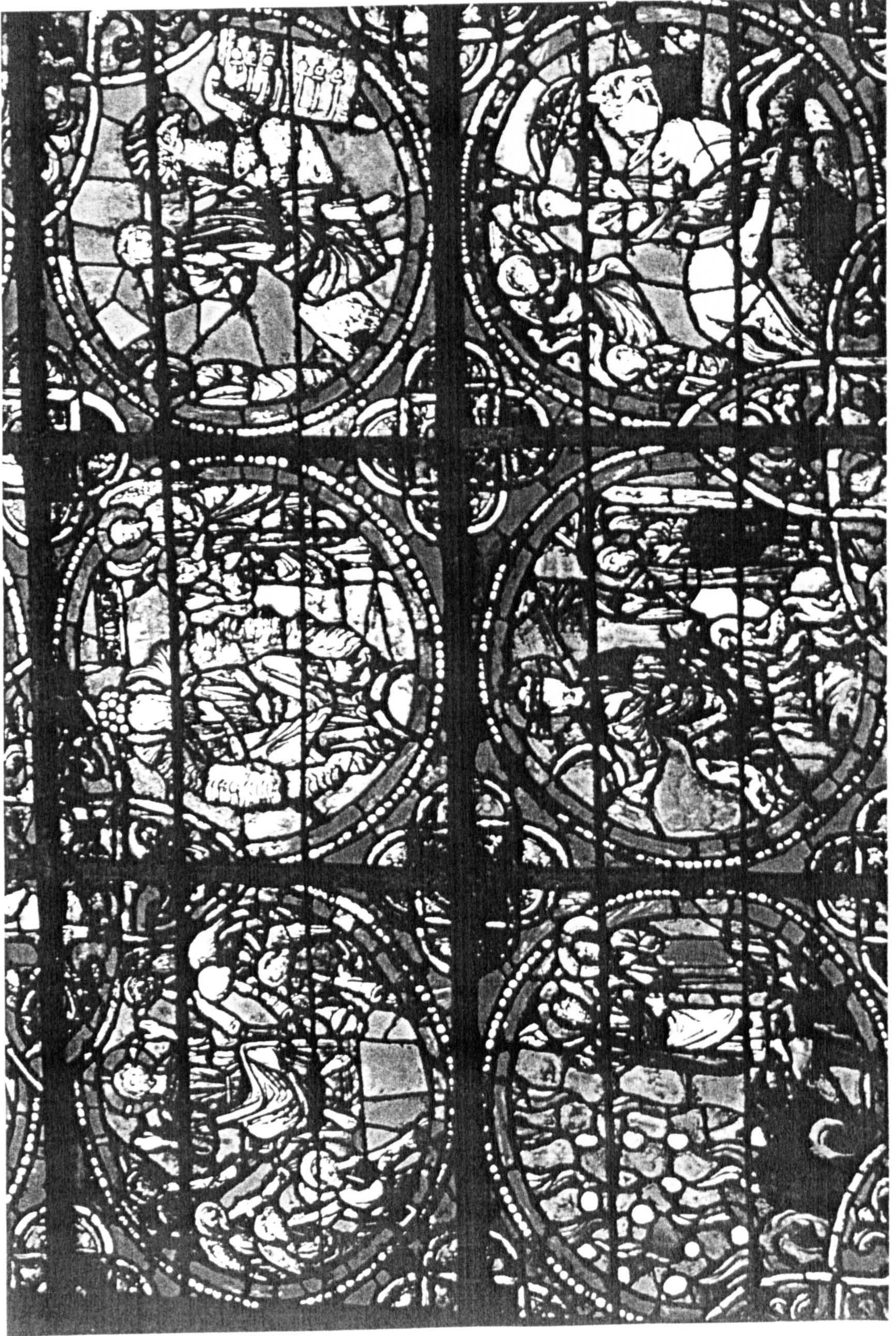


Fig. 15. — IBID. L'ange aux étoles et l'ange à l'encensoir.

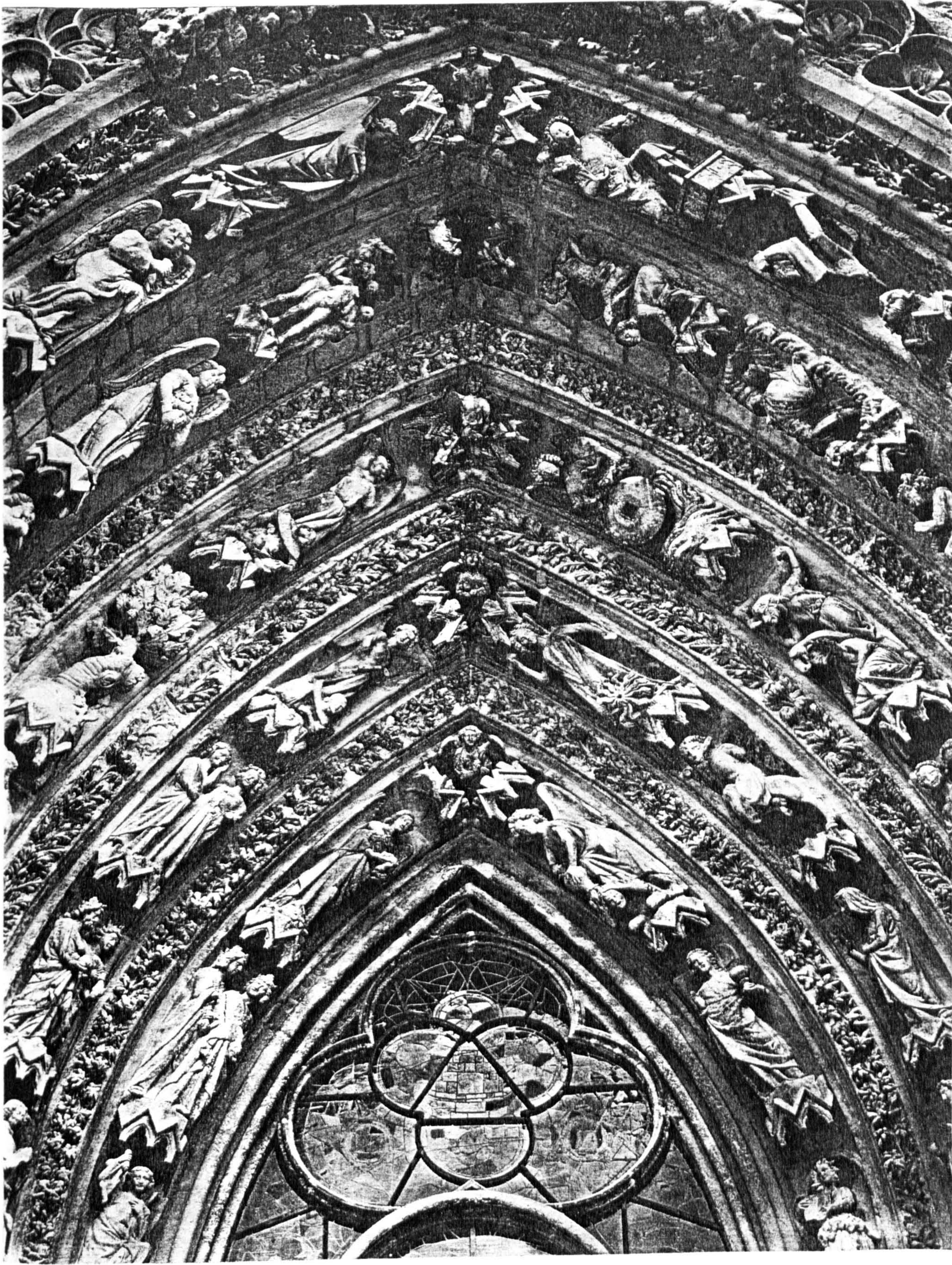




III



II. Auxerre 68:1-6, Apocalypse window





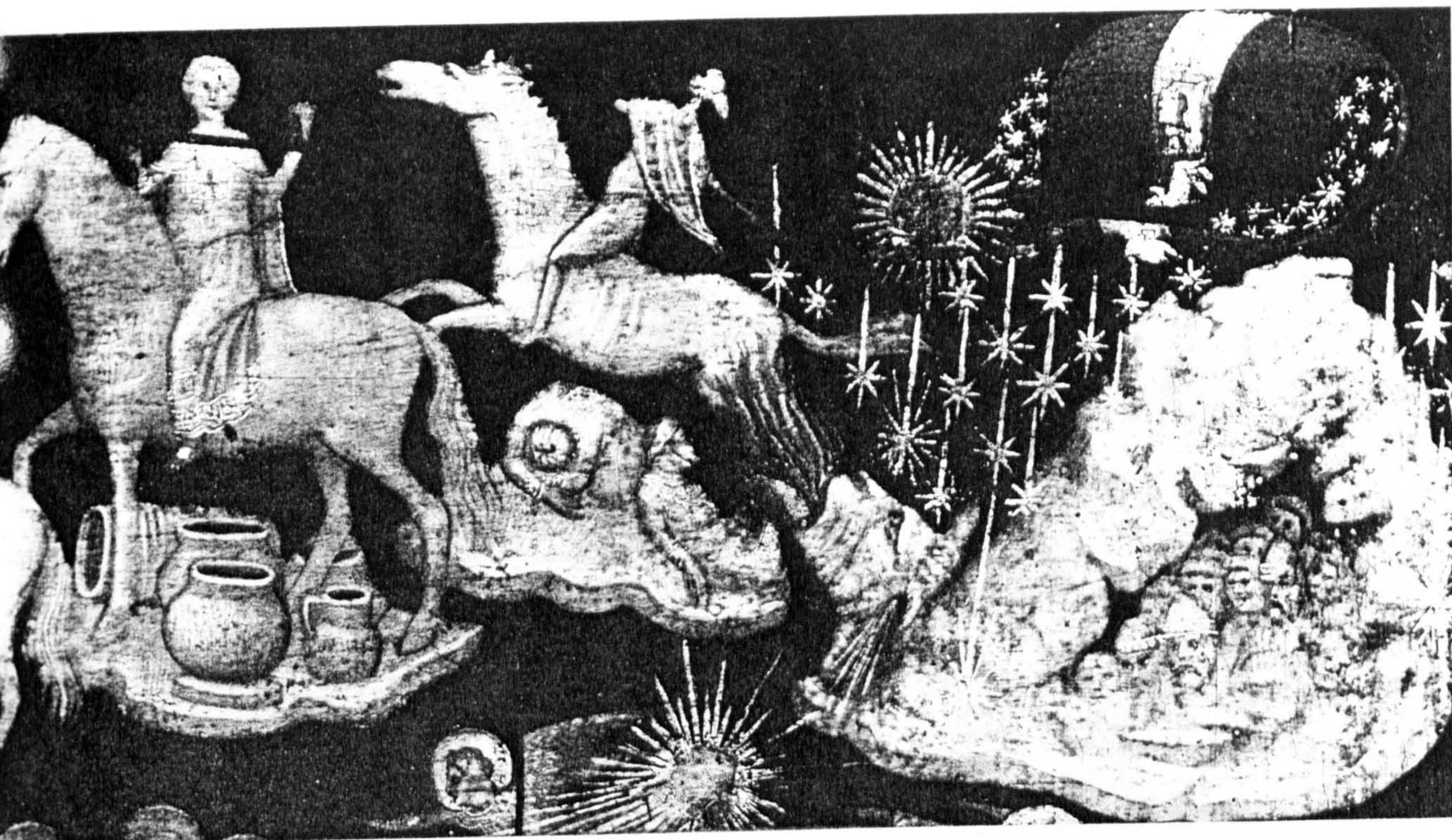
In apocalypsis ihu xpi quam dedit illi de
 us palam facere seruis suis que oportet
 fieri cito. et significauit mittens per ange-
 lum suum suo suo iohi. qui testimonium
 perhibuit uerbo dei. et testimonium ihu in
 his quecumque uidit. **B**eatus
 qui legit et qui audit uerba prophete
 libri huius. et seruat ea que in ea scripta sunt. **T**em-
 pus enim prope est. **I**ohannes septem ecclesias que sunt
 in asia. **G**ratia uobis et pax ab eo qui est et qui e-
 rat. et qui uenturus est. **E**t a septem spiritibus qui
 conspiciunt thronum eius sunt. et a ihesu christo qui est ce-
 latus fidelis primogenitus mortuorum et princeps re-

gnum. **Q**ui dilexit nos et lauit nos a peccatis
 in sanguine suo. et fecit nos regnum et sacer-
 dotes deo et patri suo. **I**psi gloria et imperium in secu-
 la seculorum amen. **E**t ecce uenit cum nubibus et uidebit
 eum ois oculus et qui eum pupugerit. et planget se-
 ipsum cum omni tribu. etiam amen. **E**go sum alpha et co-
 pincipium et finis. dicit dominus deus. qui et qui erit et qui
 uenturus est. omnis. ego iohannes fratrem uostrem et pauperem in tribulatione
 et regno et pacifica in ihesu. sui in insula que appellatur path-
 mos per uerbum dei et testimonium ihu. fui in spiritu dominici die. et au-
 diui per uocem magna tantum tunc dicens. **Q**uod uides in
 libro scribe. et mitte septem ecclesias. epheso. et sмирне. et
 pergamone. et thiatyre. et sardis. et philadelphie. et laodicee.



831 Siehe Nr. 828 a, rechte Seite.
832 Siehe Nr. 828 b, linke Seite.

**TEXT BOUND INTO
THE SPINE**



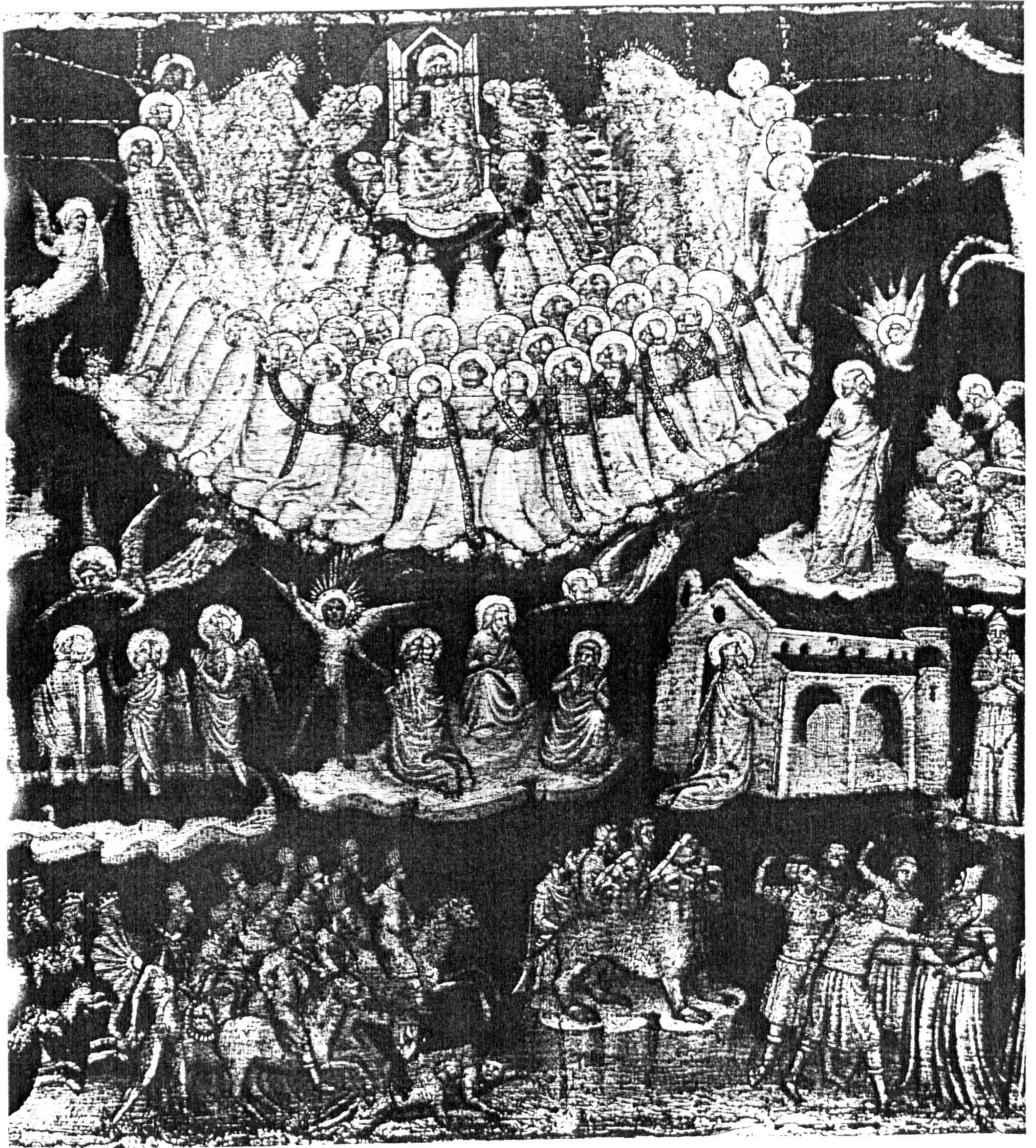
6 Neapel, um 1330-1340, Apokalypse, Detail. *Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie.*

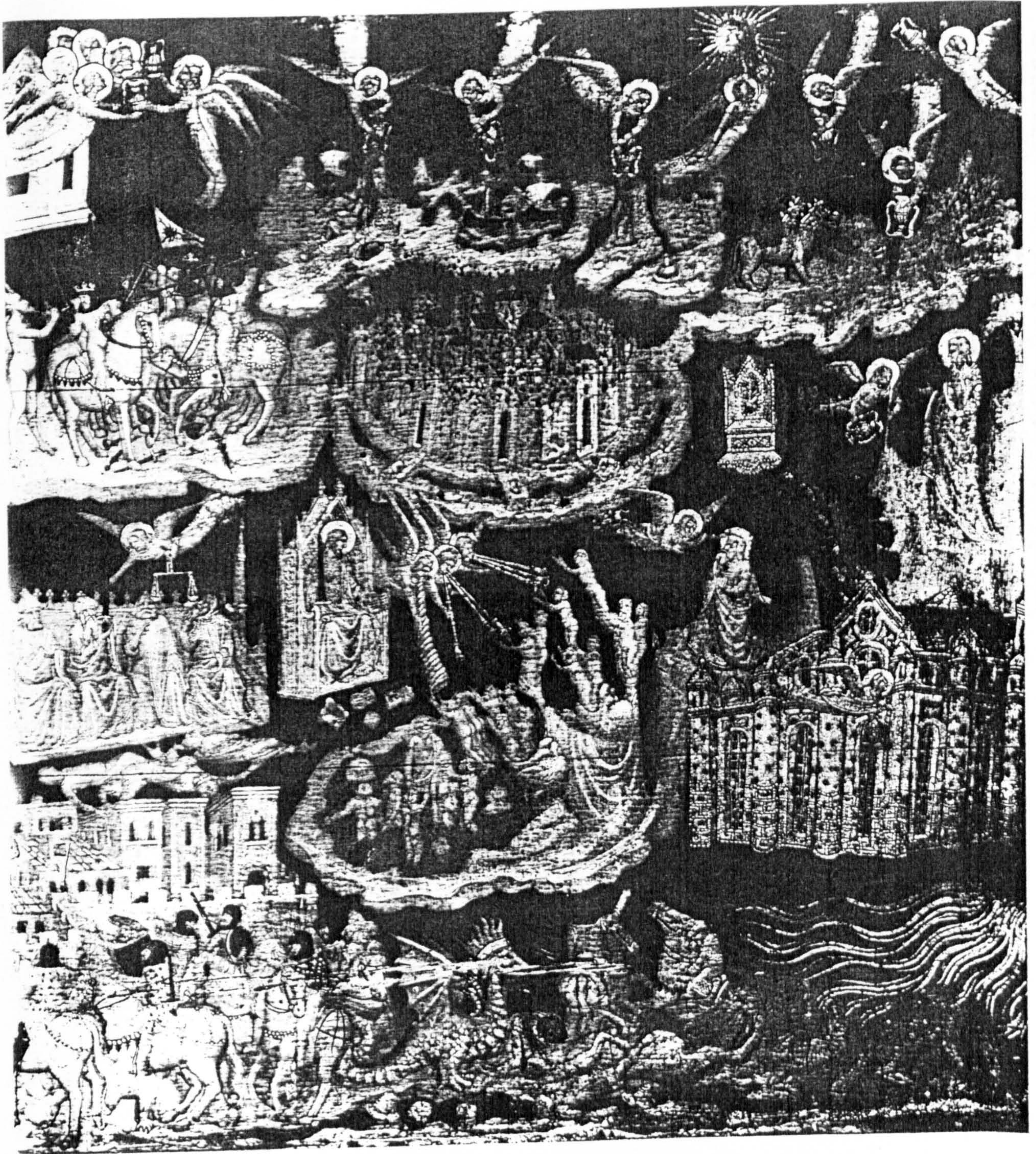


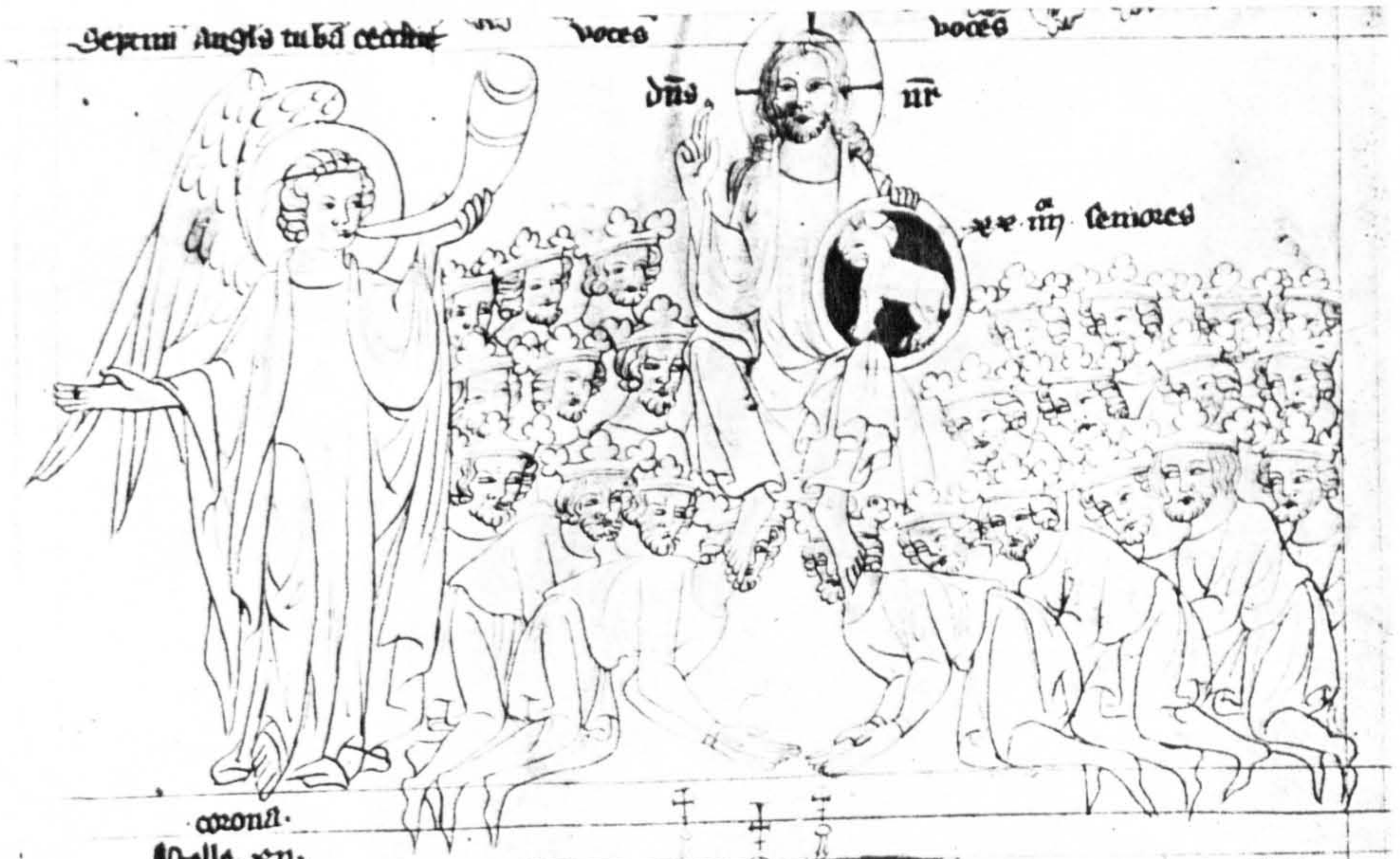
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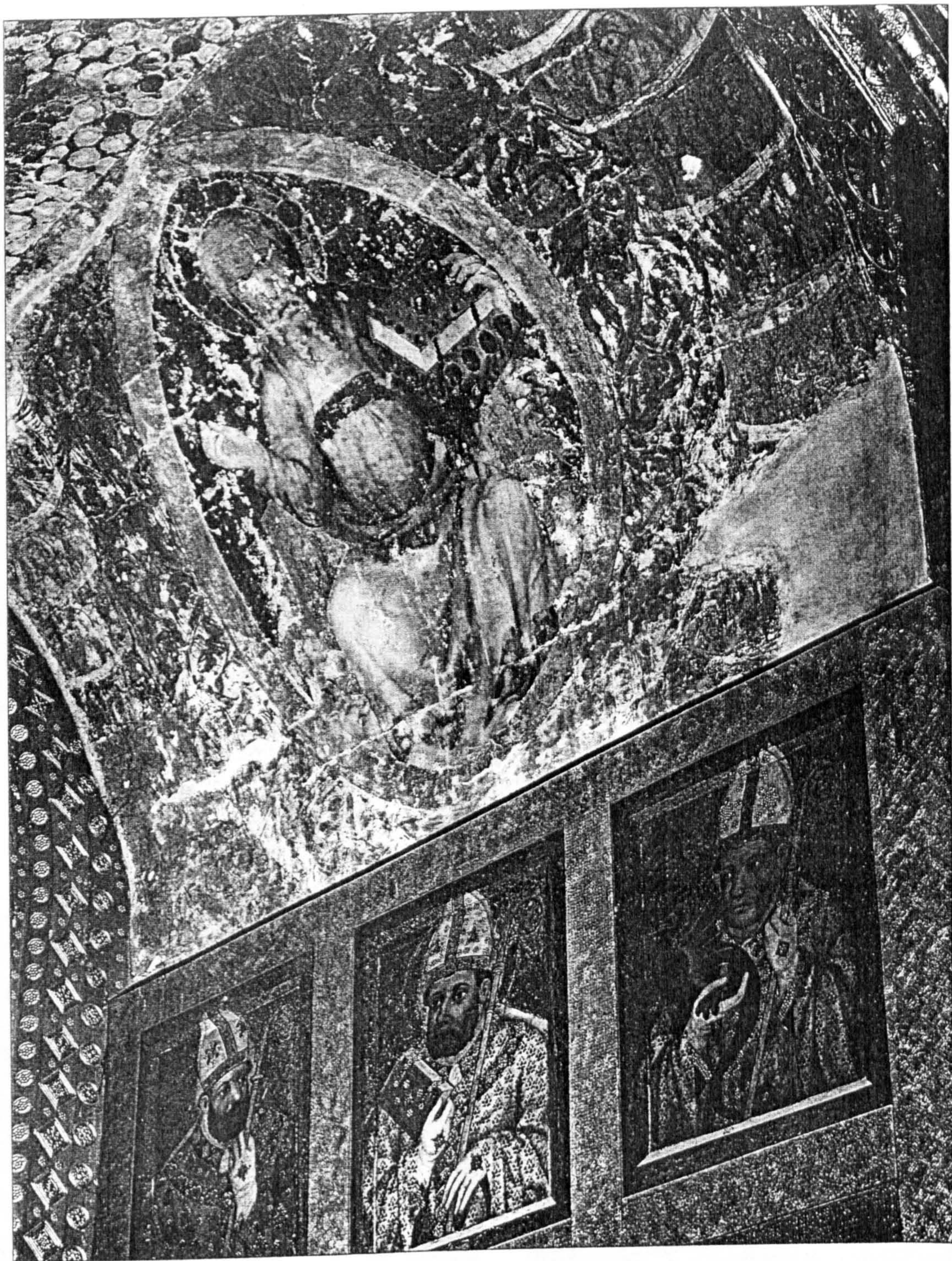


24









Kaple Umučení Páně a jeho znamení -
apokalyptický Bůh Trojjediný na klenbě okenního výklenku evangelní strany presbytáře



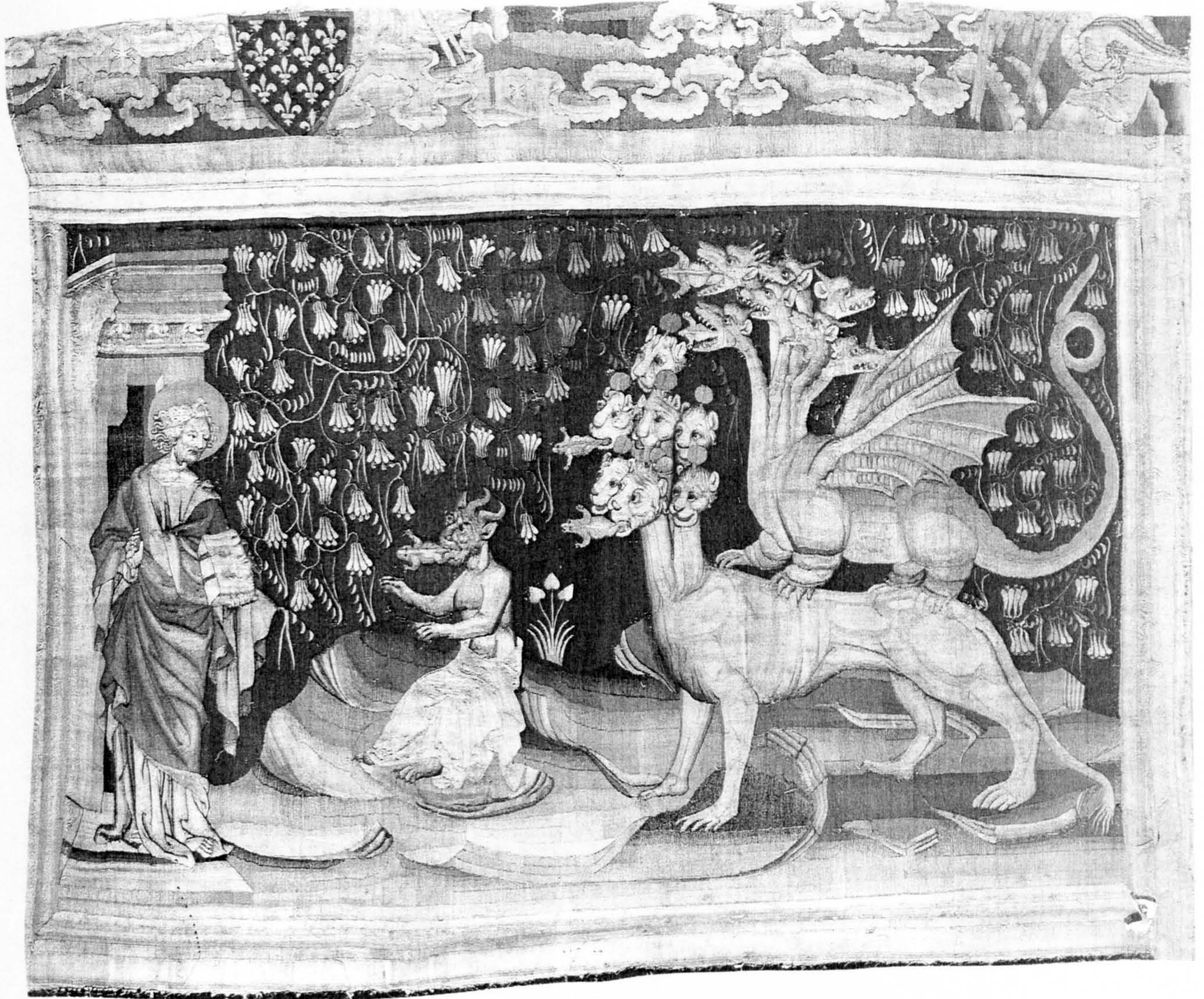
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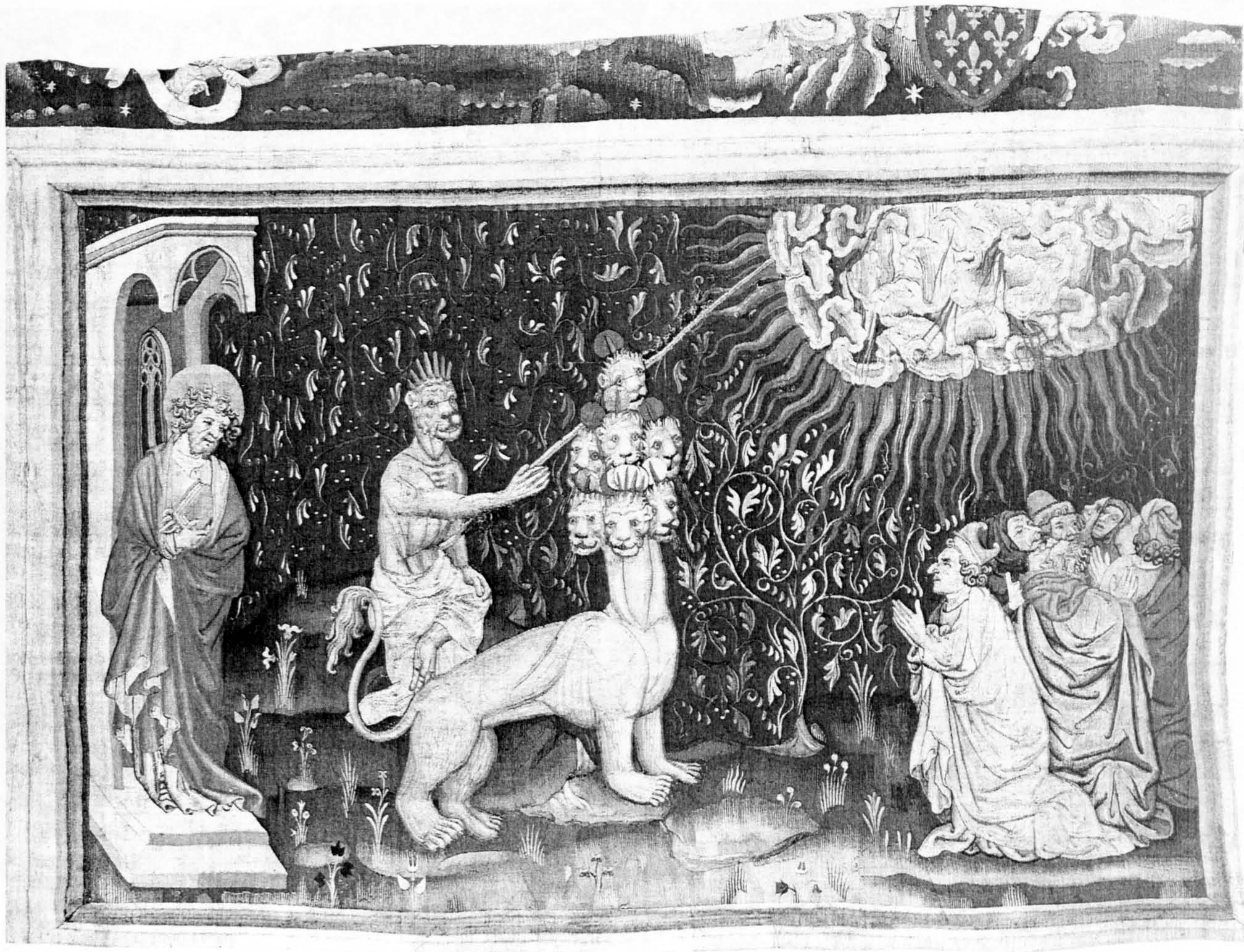


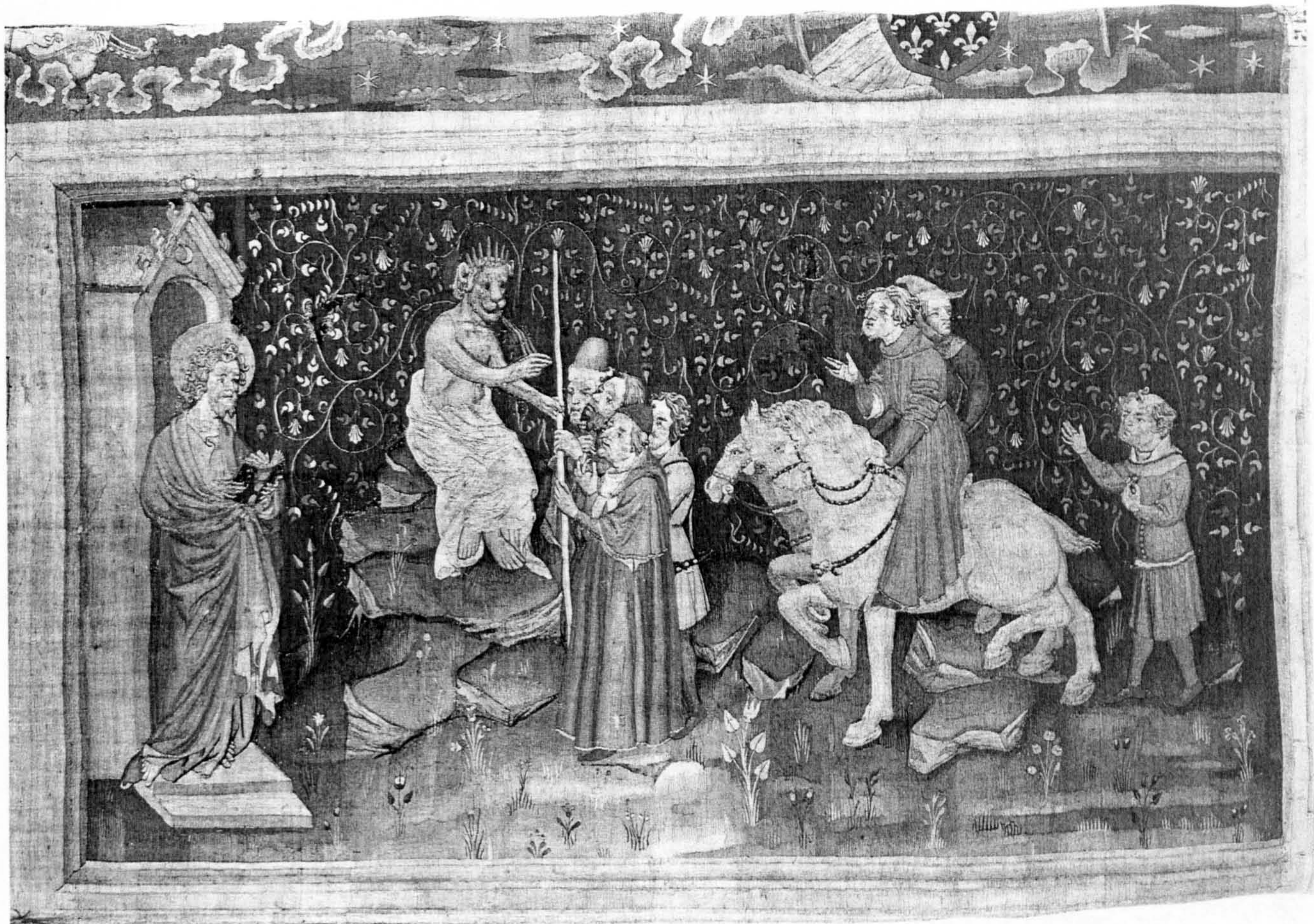
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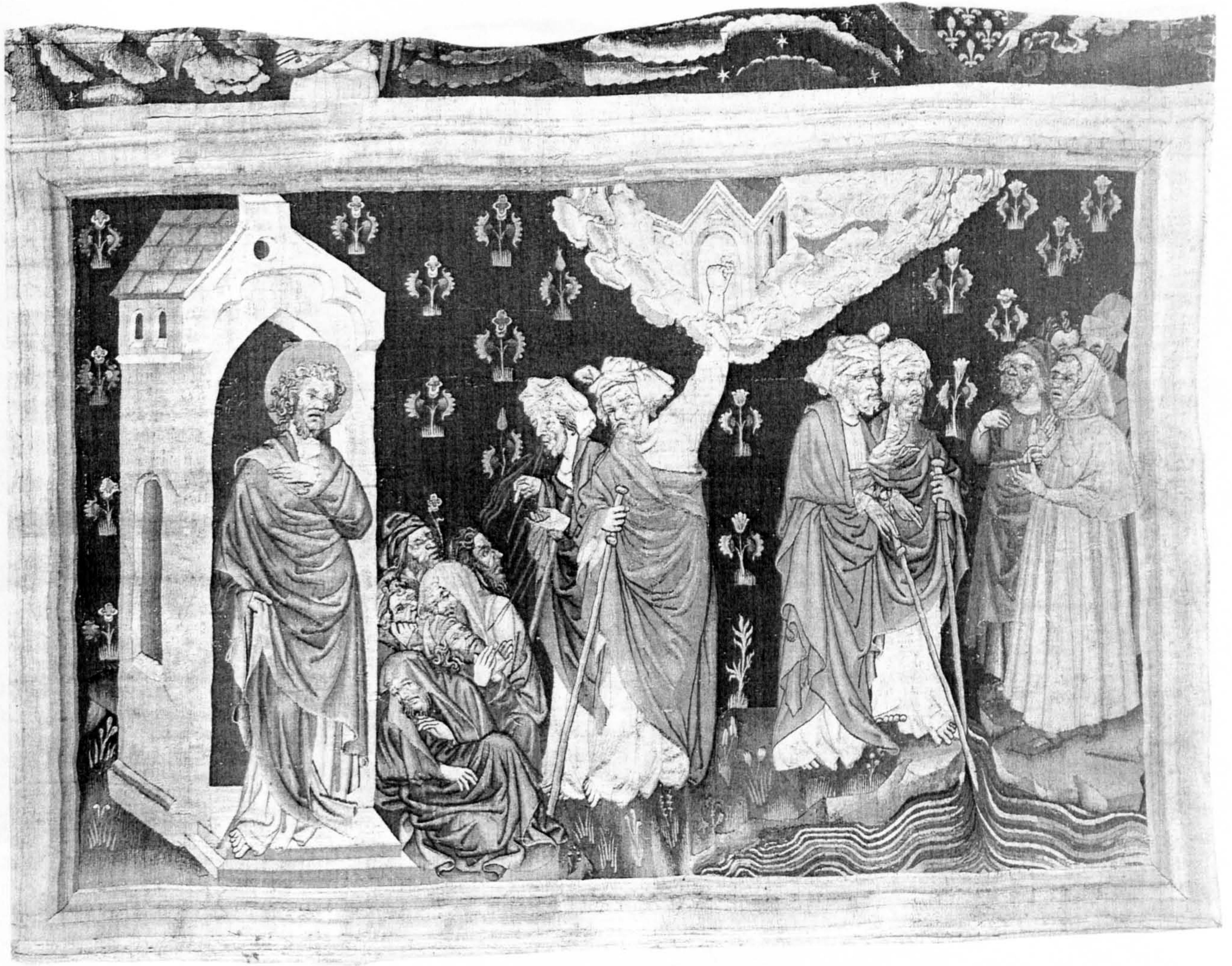
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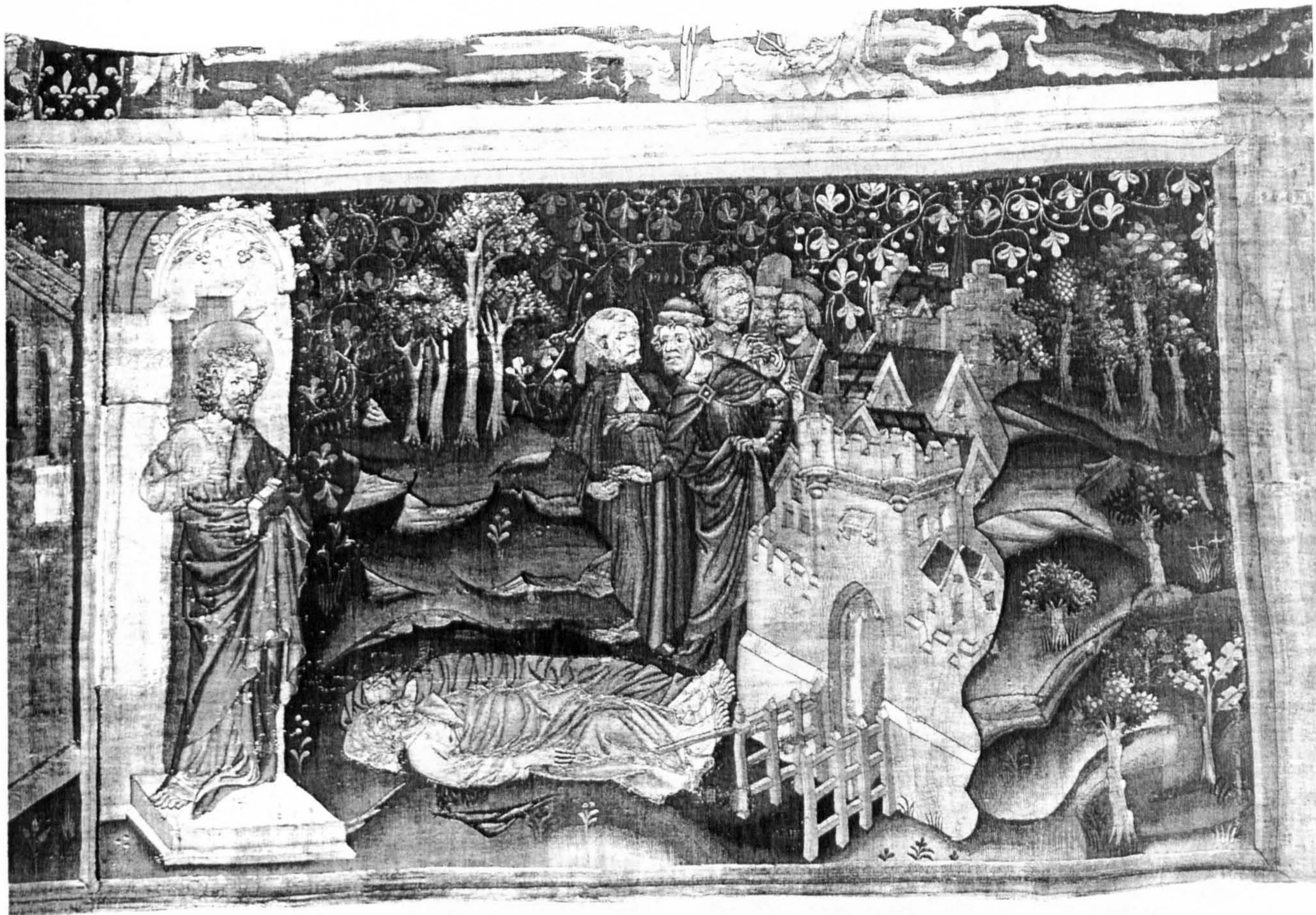


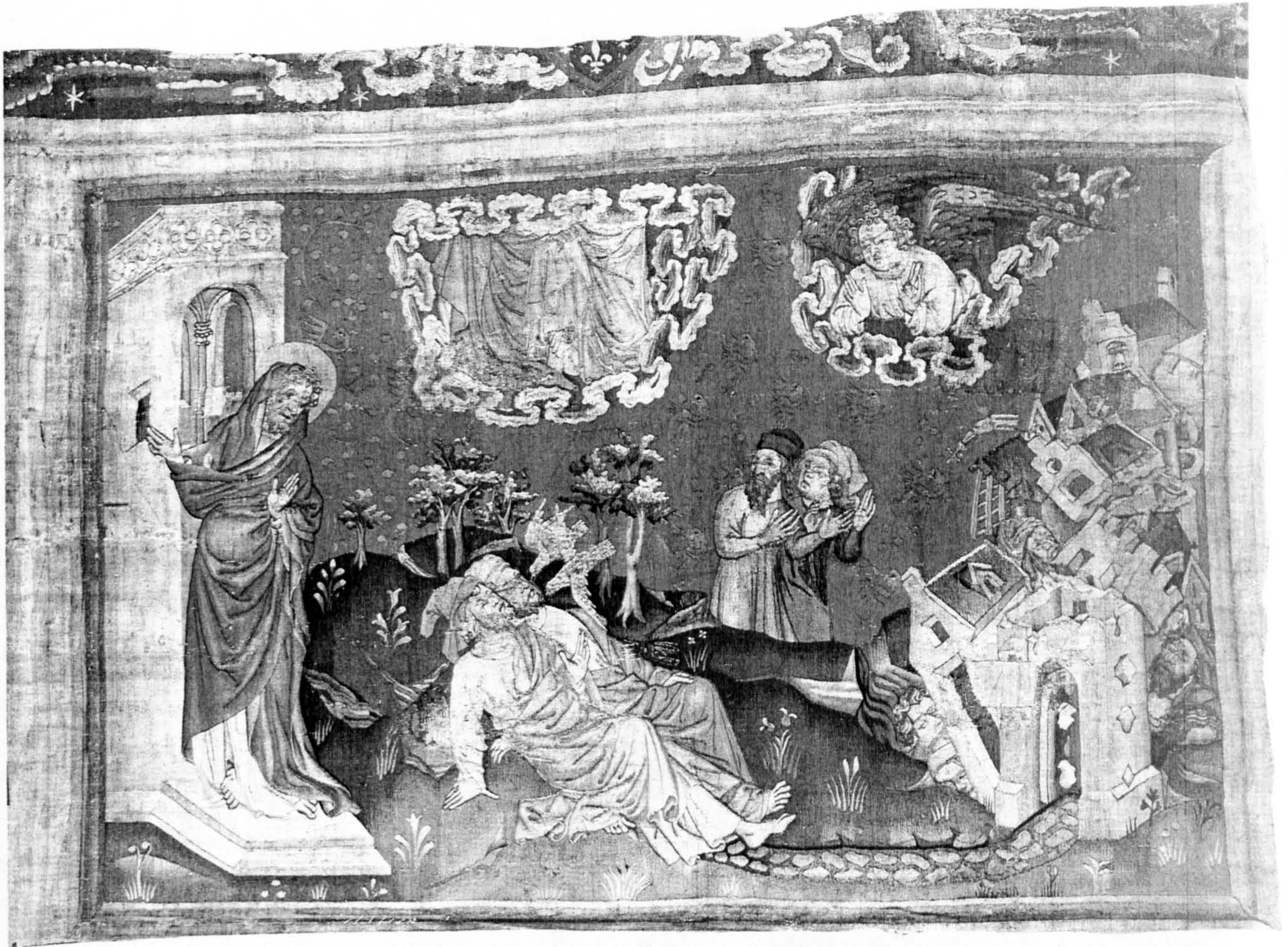


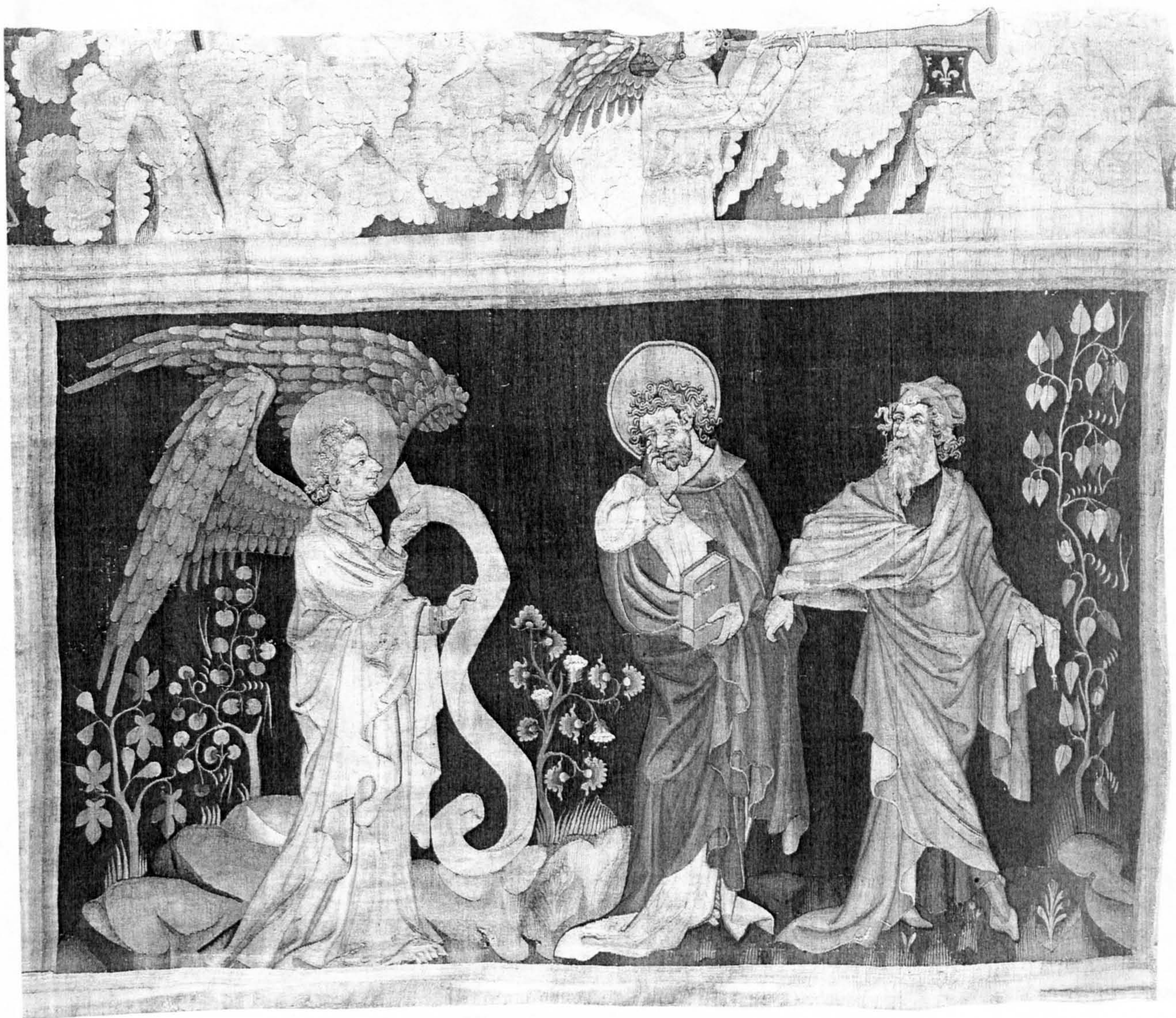




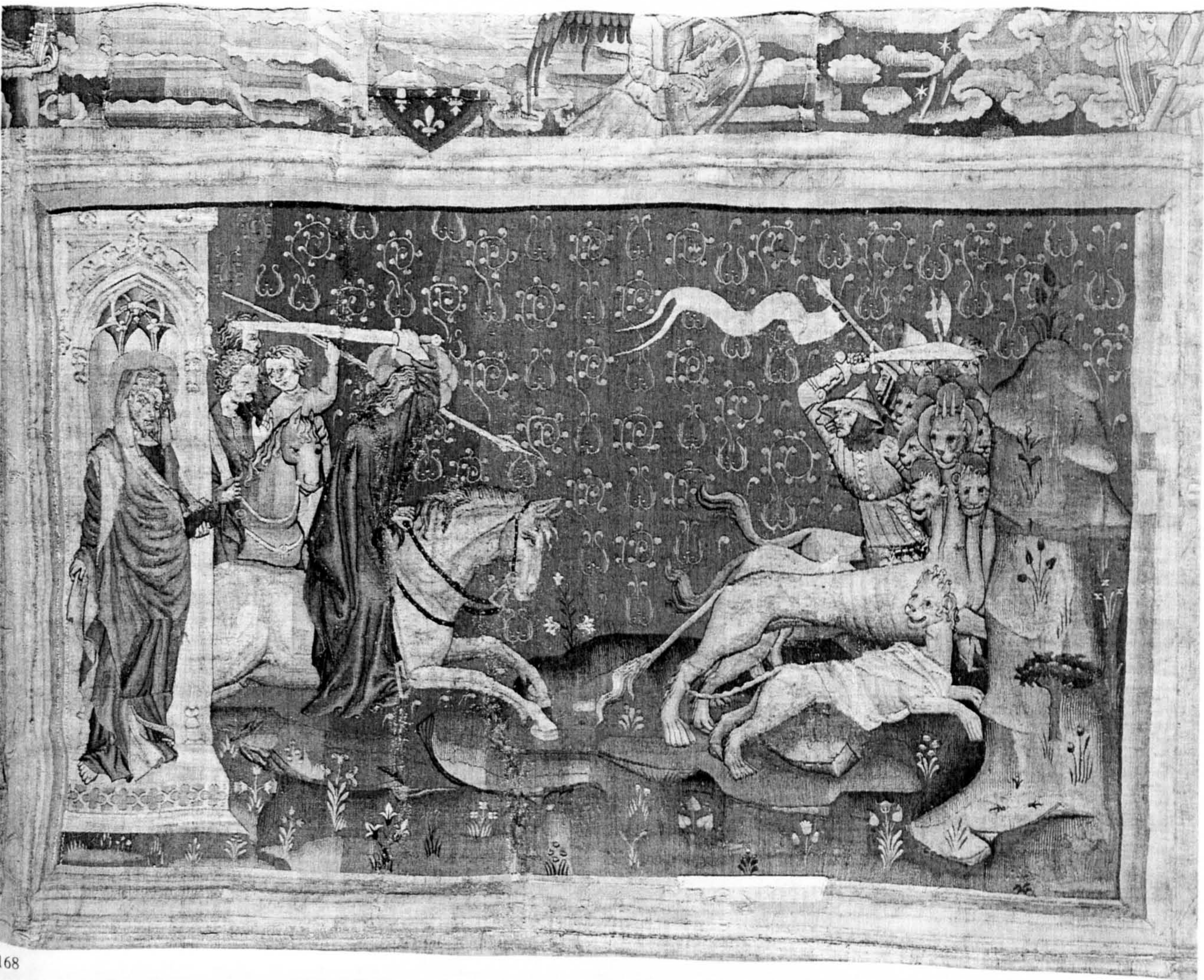




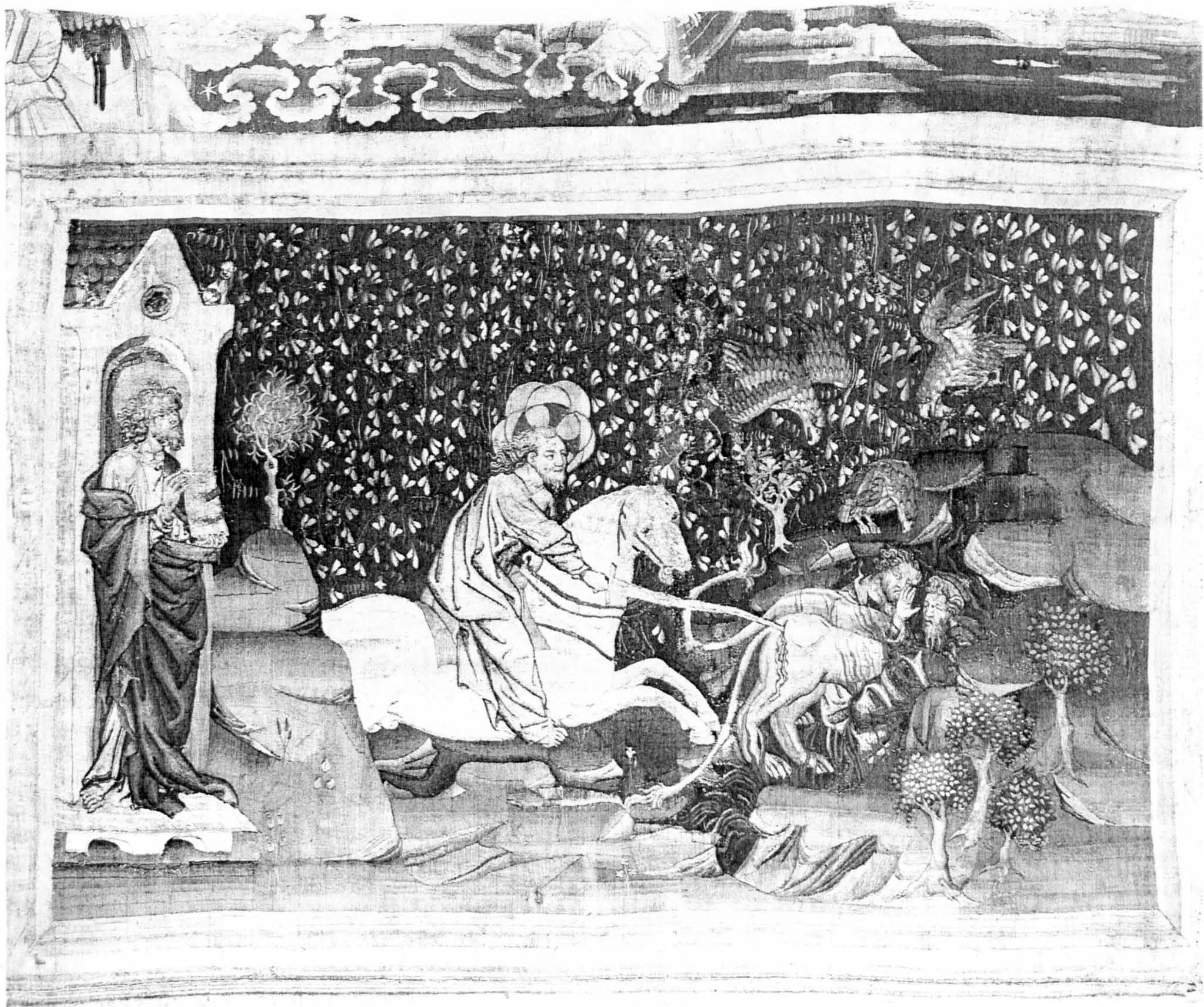


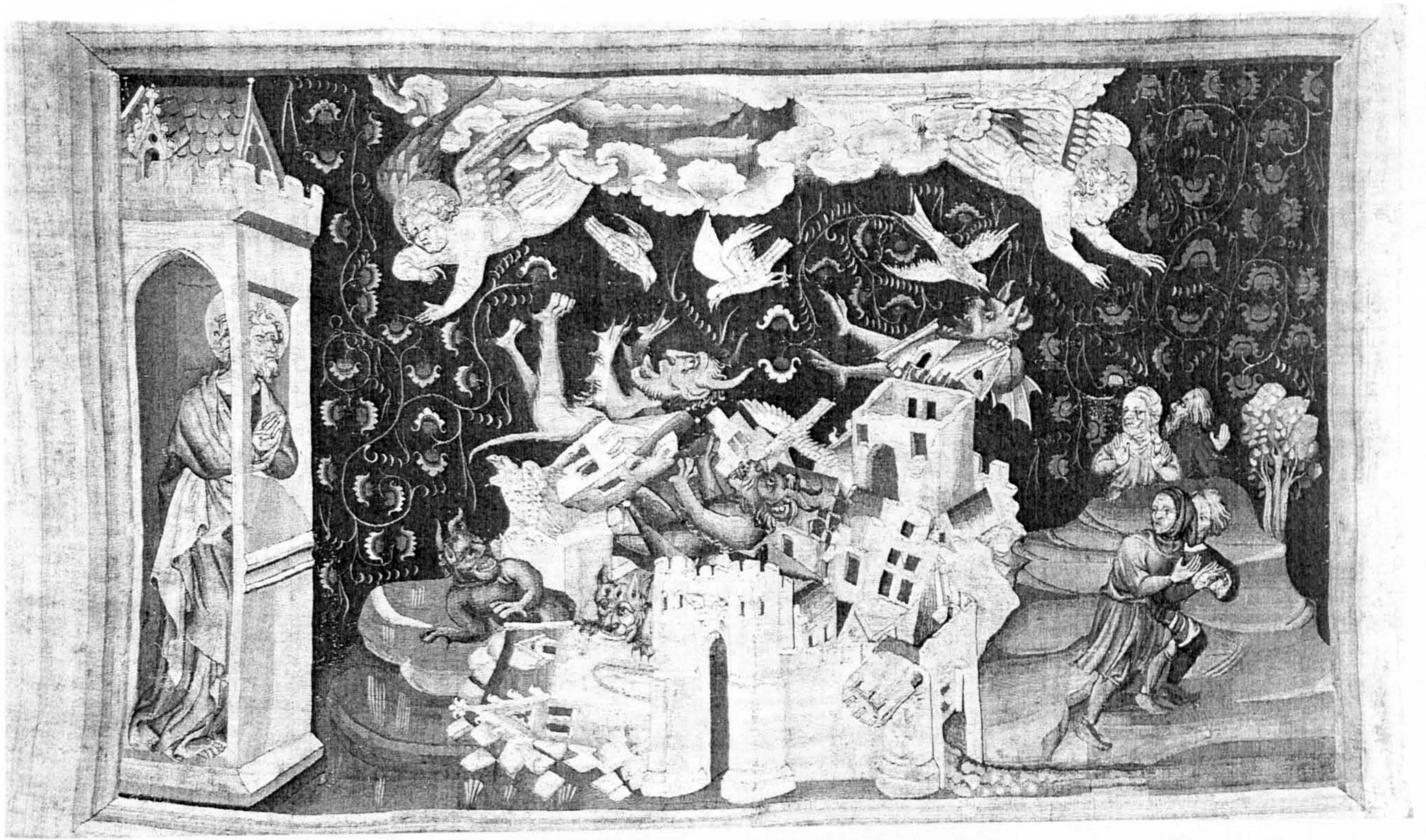


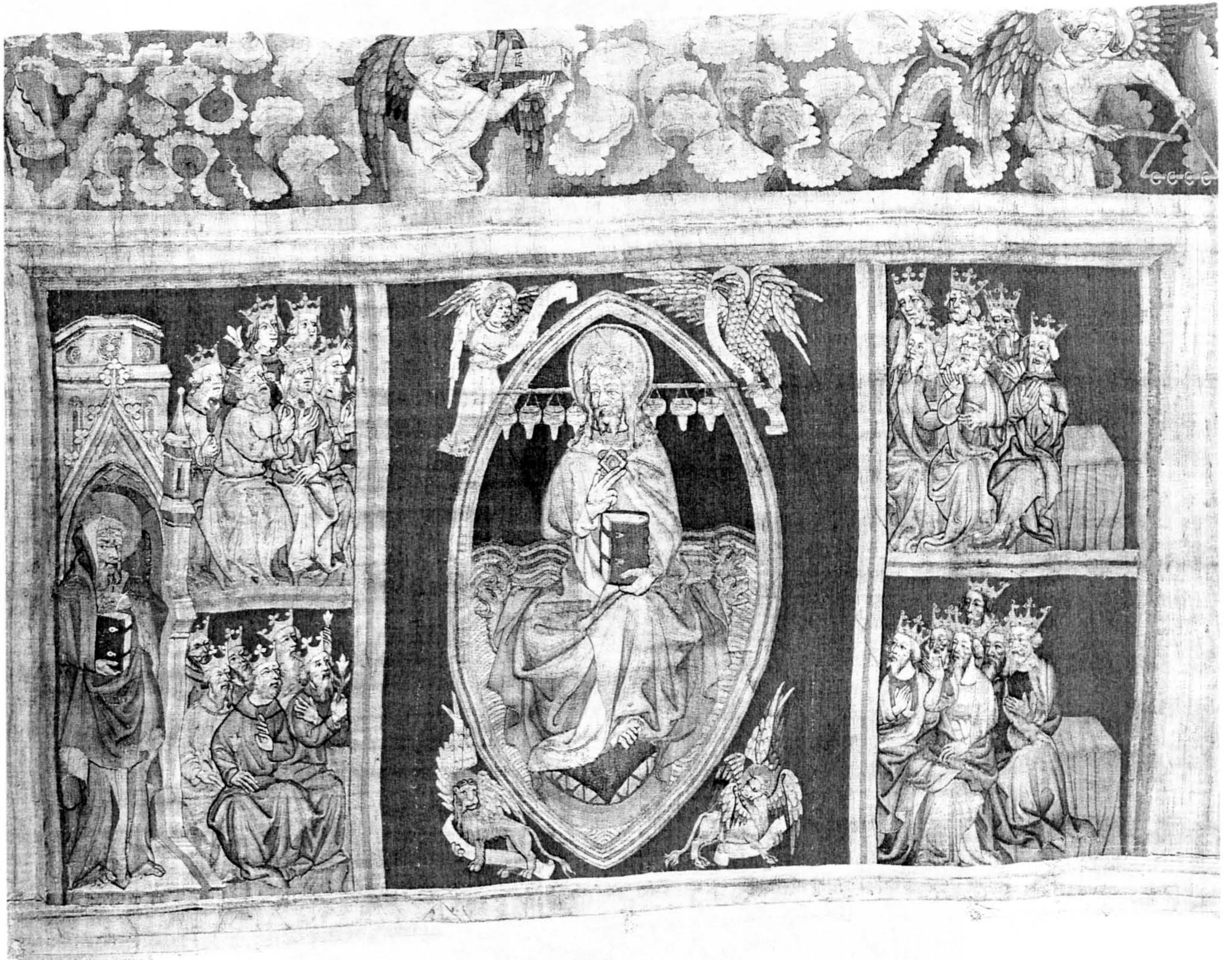




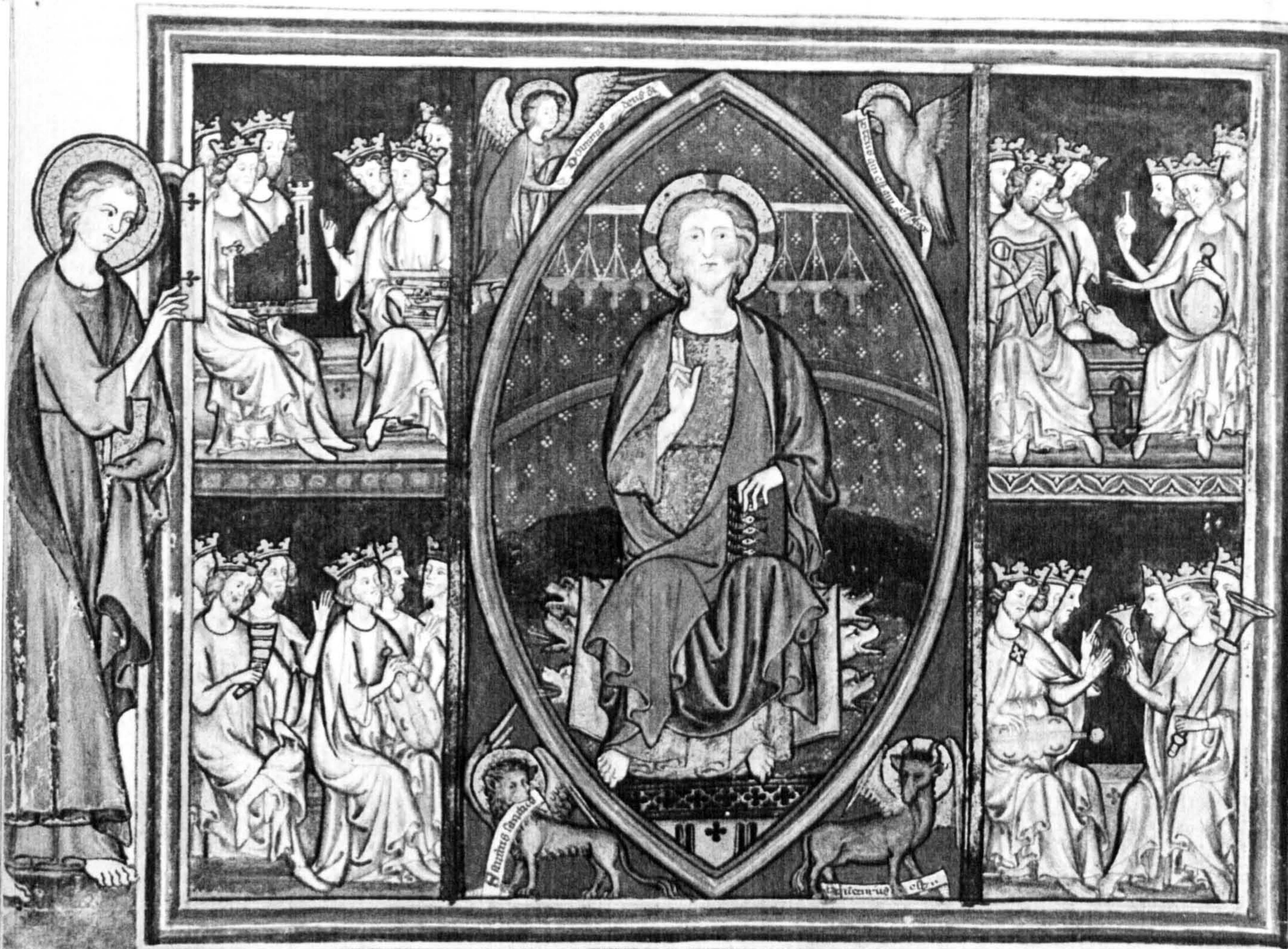
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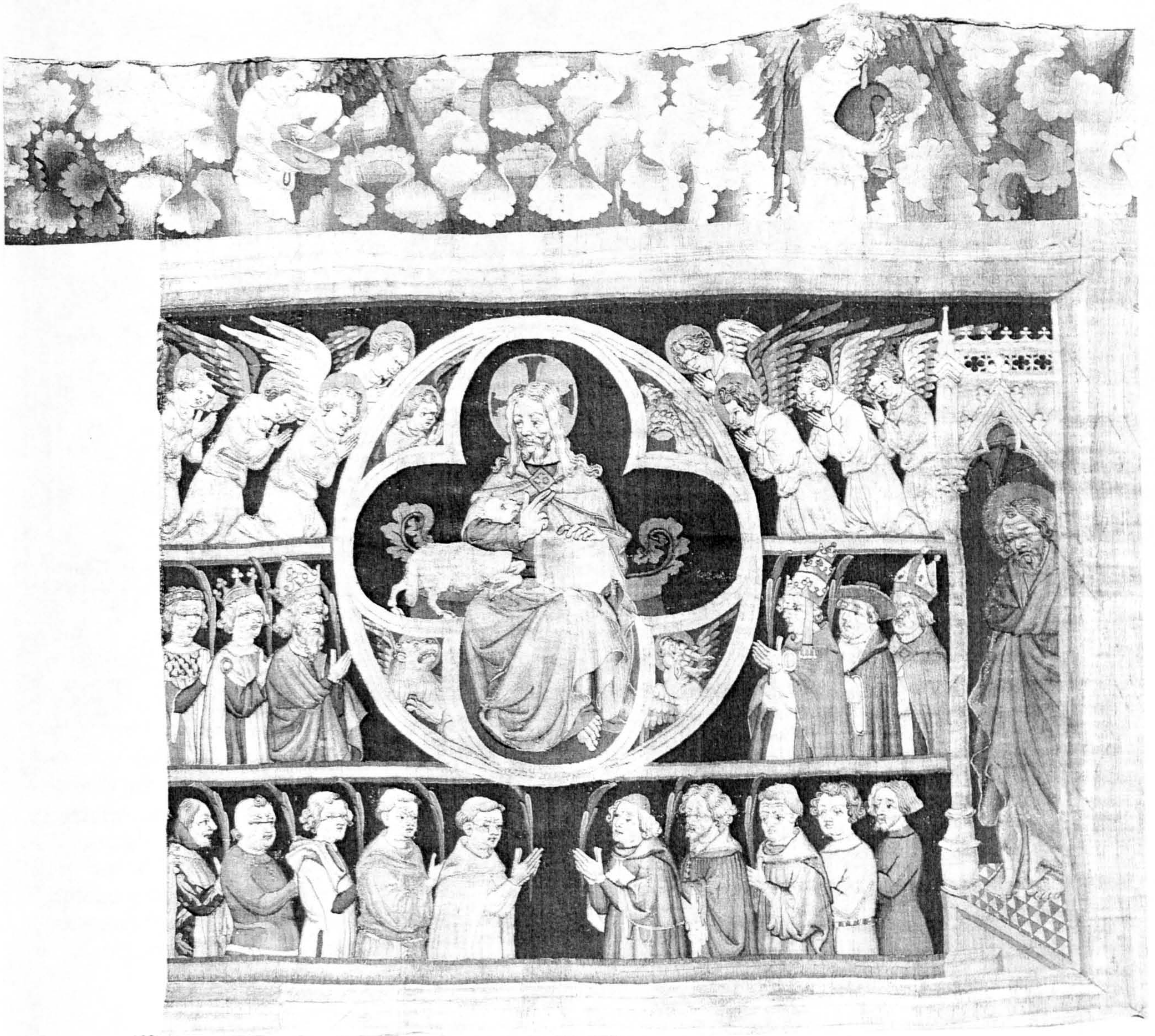


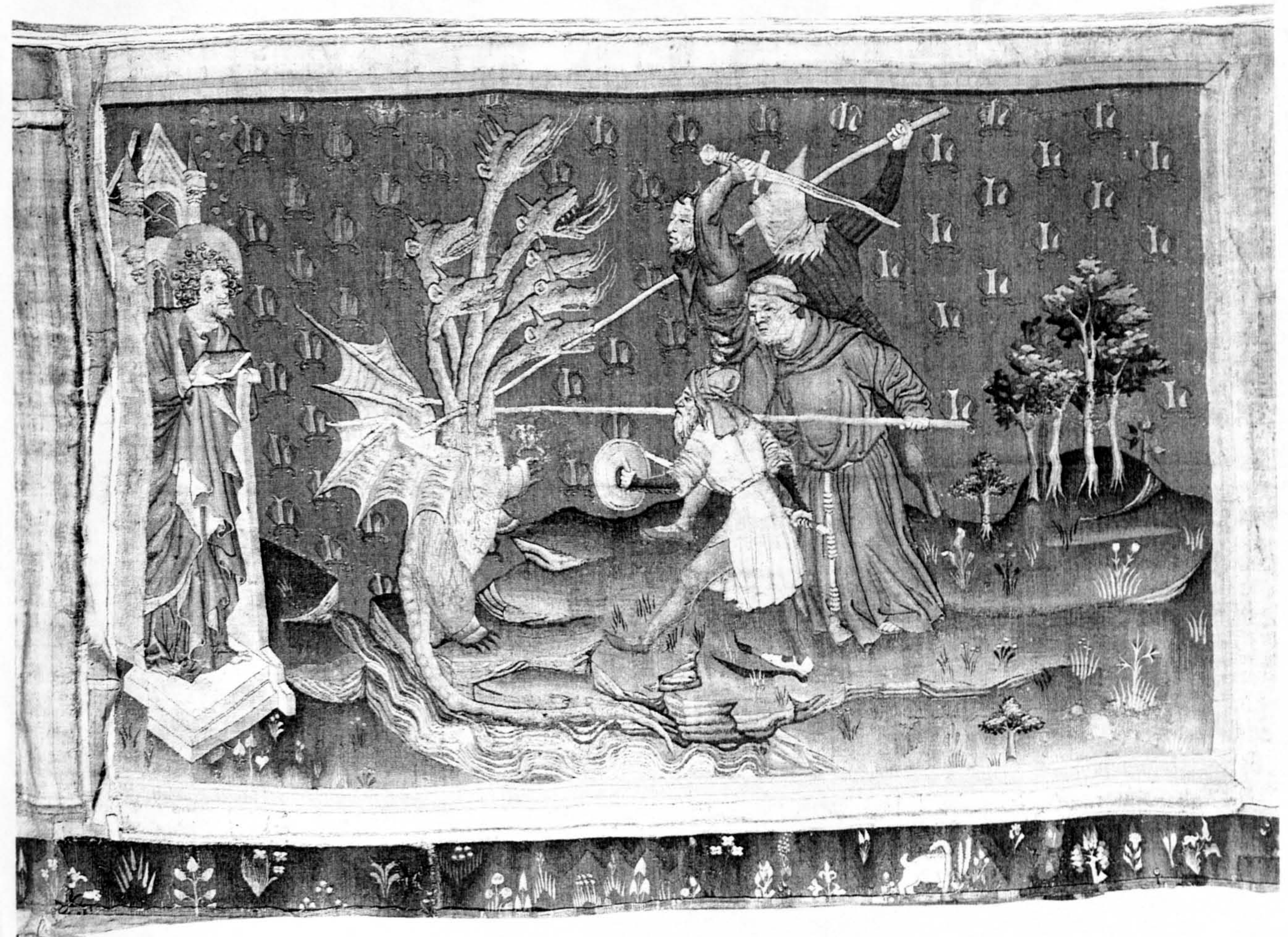




77
Post hec vidi et ecce ostium apertum in celo. et uox
 prima quoniam quidam cum quibus loquebar mecum dicebat
 Ascende huc. et ostendi tibi quod oportet fieri cito post
 hec. Statim fui in spiritu. et ecce sedes posita erat
 in celo. et super sedem sedens. et qui sedebat ad dexteram
 eius aspectu lapidis iaspidis et sardius. Et super eum erant
 circum sedis: filii in hominum similitudine. Et circum
 sedis sedilia xxiiii. et super thronos xxiiii. seniores cum amictis
 stolis albis: et accipiebant coronas aureas. Et de throno
 procedit fulgur. et uoces et tonitrua. Et septem lampades

audientes ante thronum: qui sunt septem spiritus dei. Et in conspe-
 ctu sedis: circum mare uitarum sicut cristallo. Et in medio sedis
 et circum sedis quatuor animalia plena oculis ante et retro et a dextera
 et a sinistra. sicut leonem. et sicut arietem. sicut uentrem. et sicut
 faciem quasi uisus. Et quatuor animalia: sicut aquile uolantia. Et quatuor
 animalia: singula eorum habebant alas sex. Et in circuitu et intus: plena sunt oculis. Et re-
 quiem non habent: die et nocte dicentia. Sanctus. Sanctus. Sanctus. Dominus deus omnipotens.
 qui est. et qui erat. et qui uenturus est.







Et in auro educto in muliere. et abur face
 bellum am reliquis de semine eius qui custodi

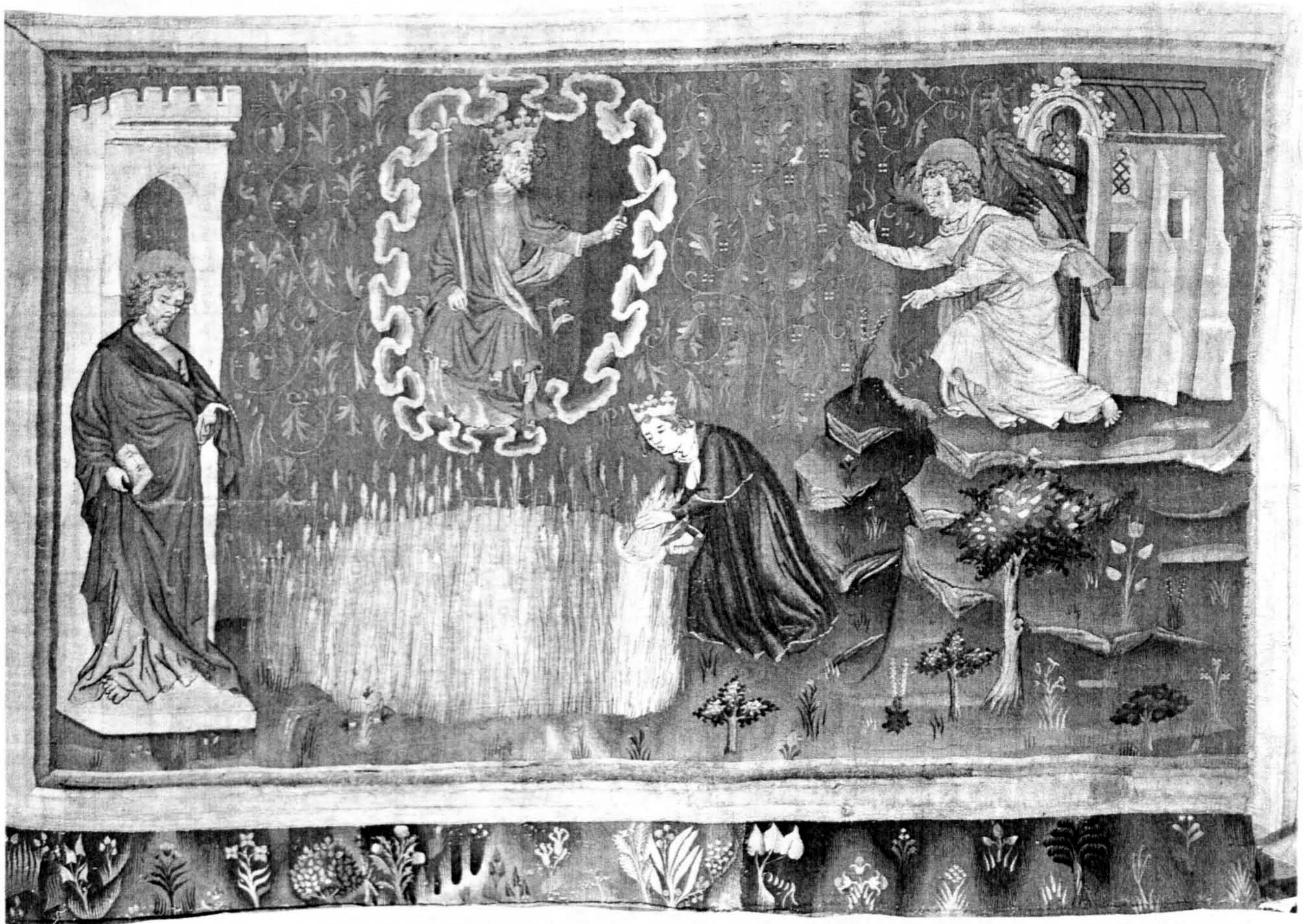
unt mandata dei. Et testimonium ihe
 su habent. Et stetit super hanc manans.



Et iudi. et ecce militem candidum. et sup milite
 sedentem similem filio hois. hinc in capite suo
 corona auream. et in manu sua falcem auream
 et alius angelus exiit de templo. clamans voce

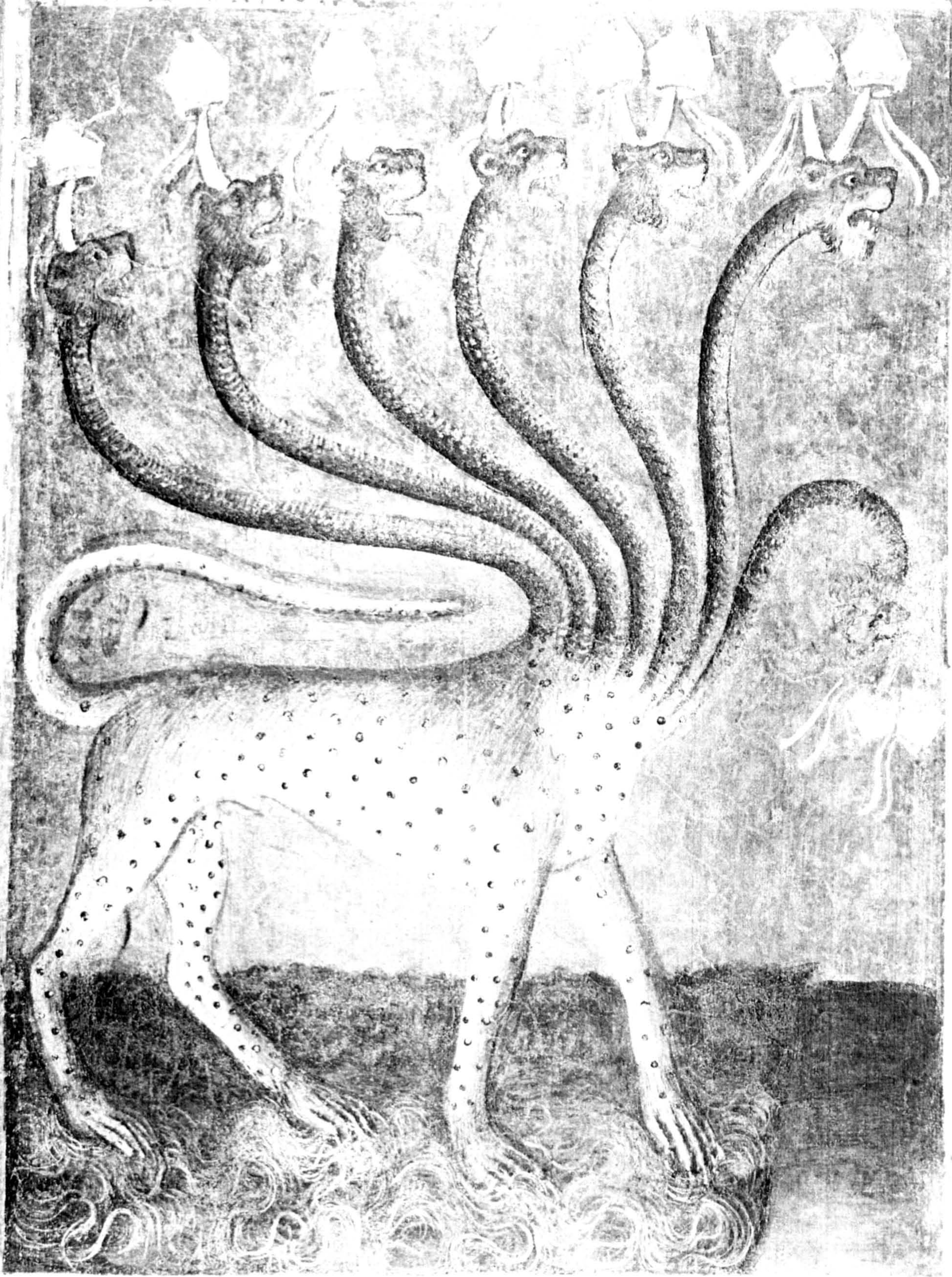
magna ad sedente sup milite. Ecce falcem
 tuam et metere. quia venit hora ut metatur.
 qui amur messis cere. Et misit qui sedebat se
 militem falce suam in terram. et messu.



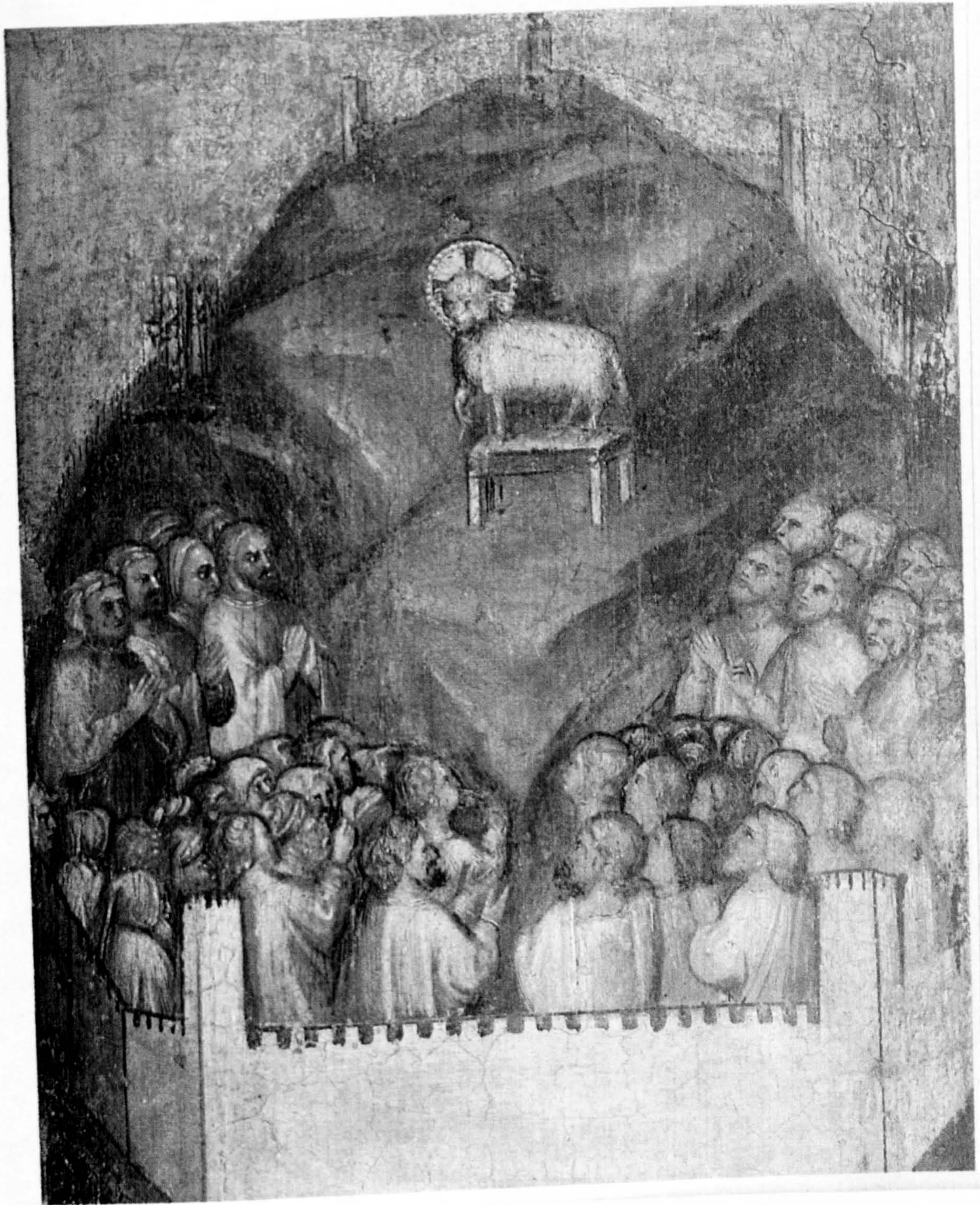












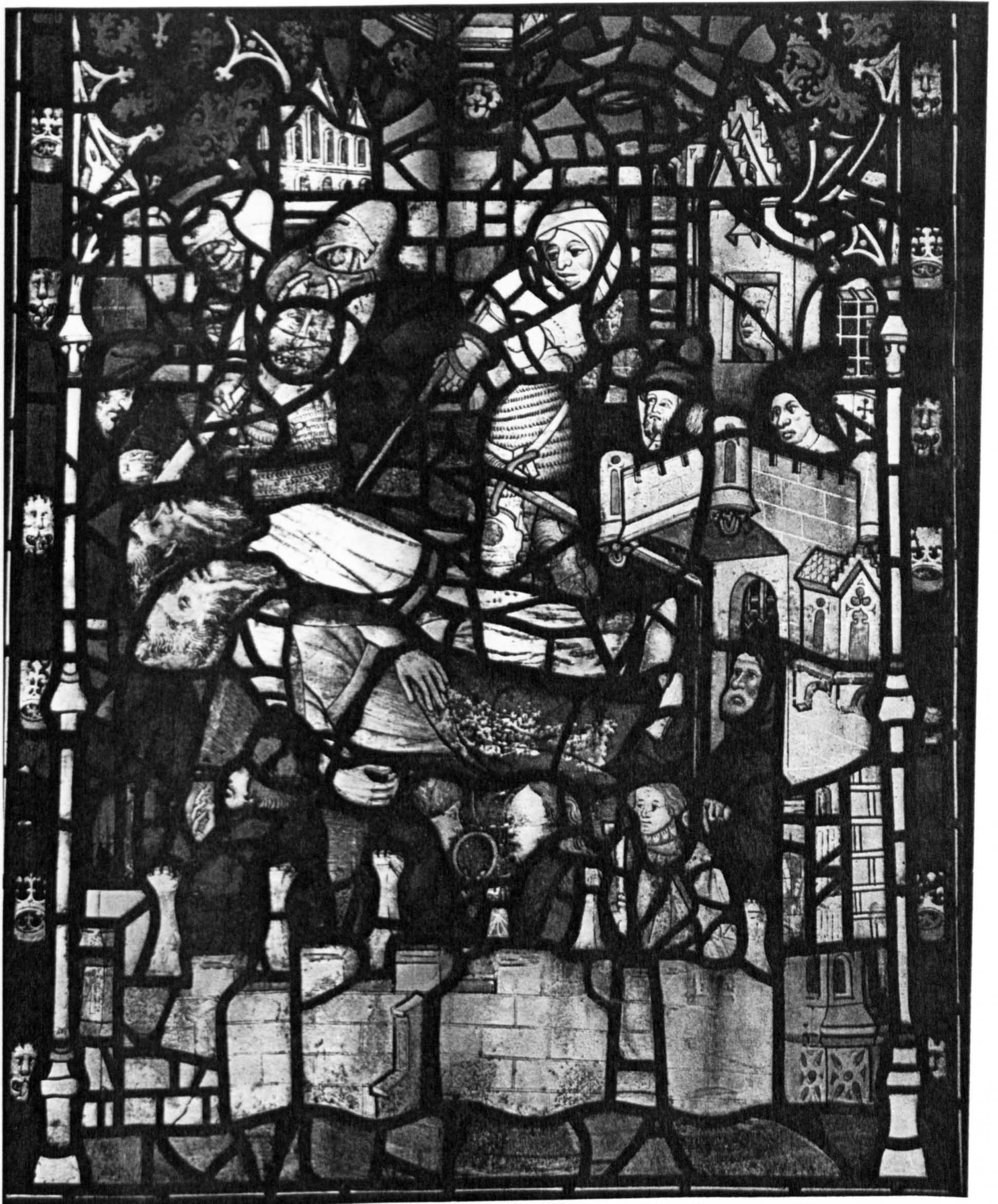


Et misit angelus falce[m] suam nece[m]
 et vindemiarunt vineam terre. et misit
 in lacum nece[m] magnum. Et calcatus

est lacus extra civitatem: et erunt
 sanguis de lacu usq[ue] ad fienos equorum.
 per studia mille sexcenta.

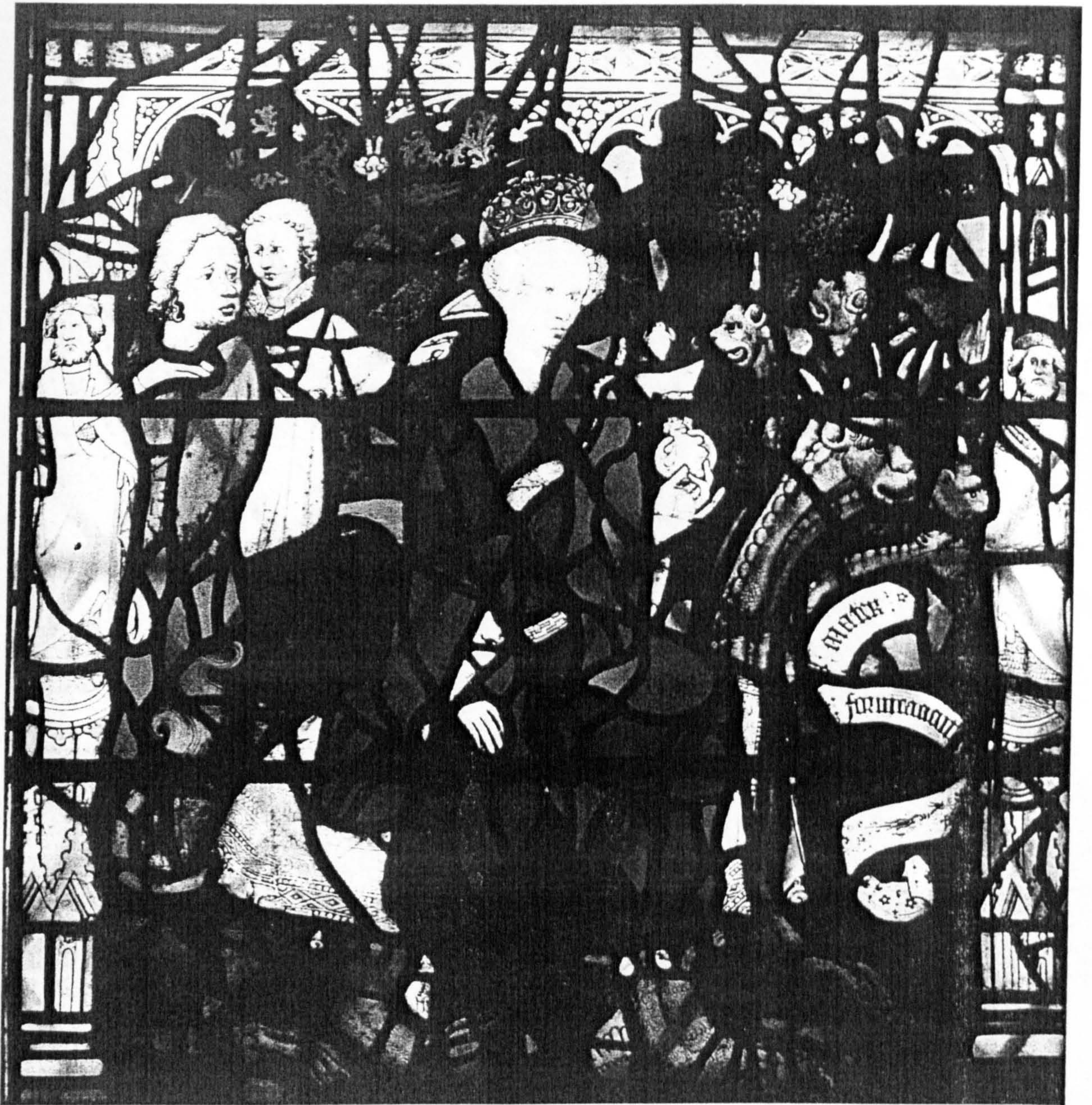






7b





3a





856 Altar, Lübecker Meister (Henselin von Stratzburg), um 1400, linker Flügel. – London, Victoria and Albert Mus.

857 a Siehe Nr. 856, Mitteltafel, linker Teil.





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siehe Nr. 856, Mit-
tafel, rechter Teil.
siehe Nr. 856, rech-
Flügel.

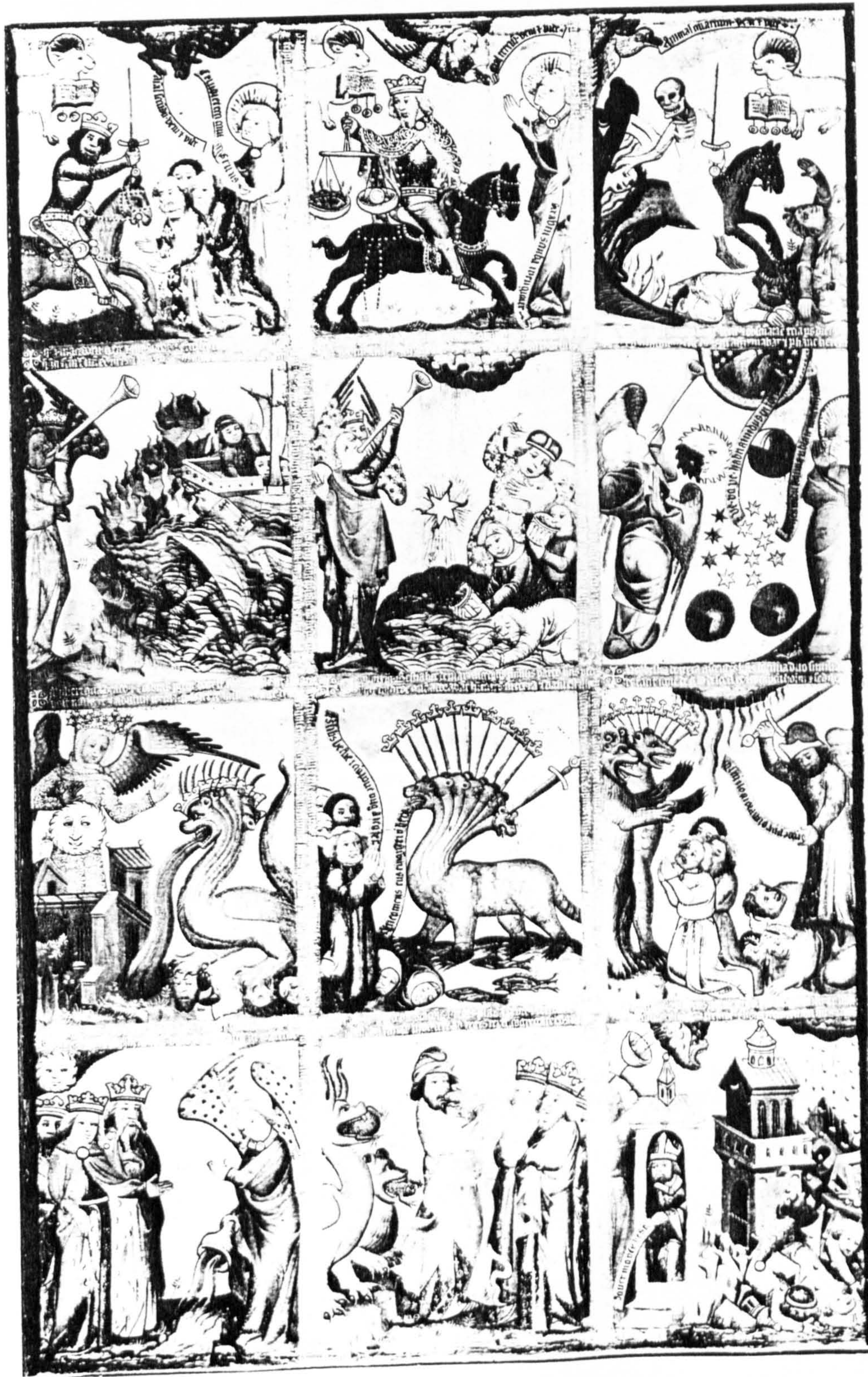
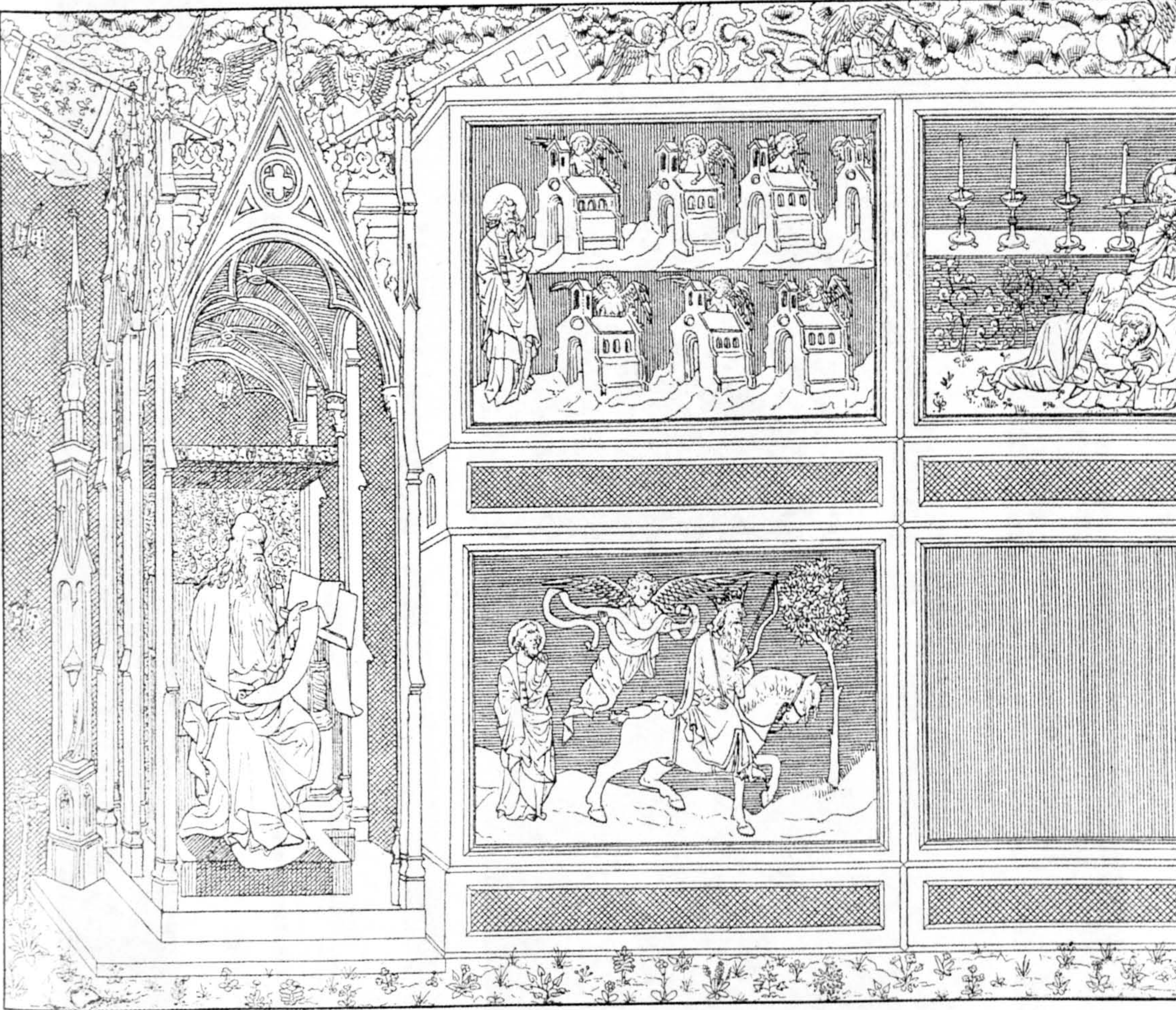




Plate 16 The harvest of the earth (scene 35)



Bande de ciel,

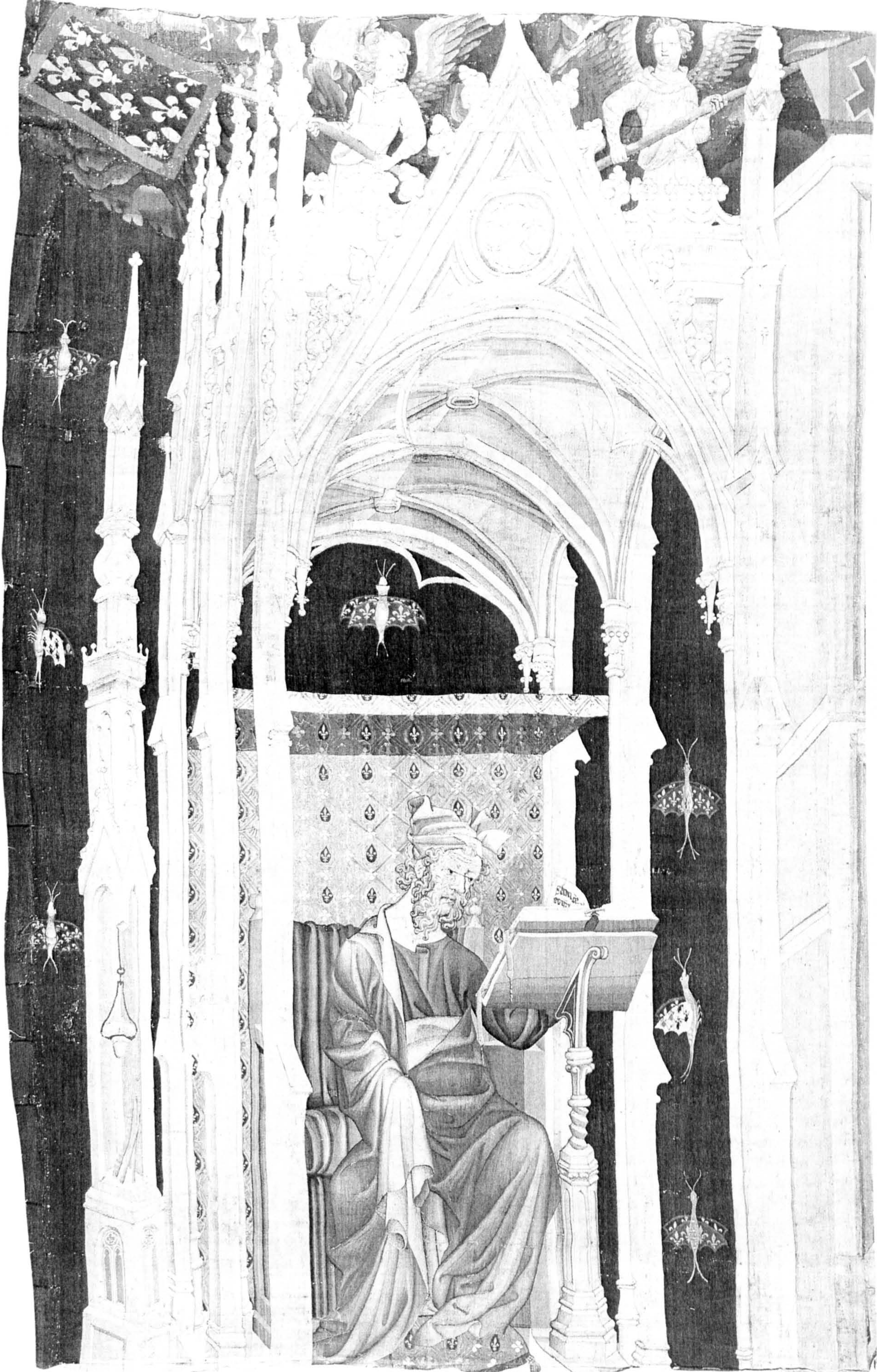
Tableaux.

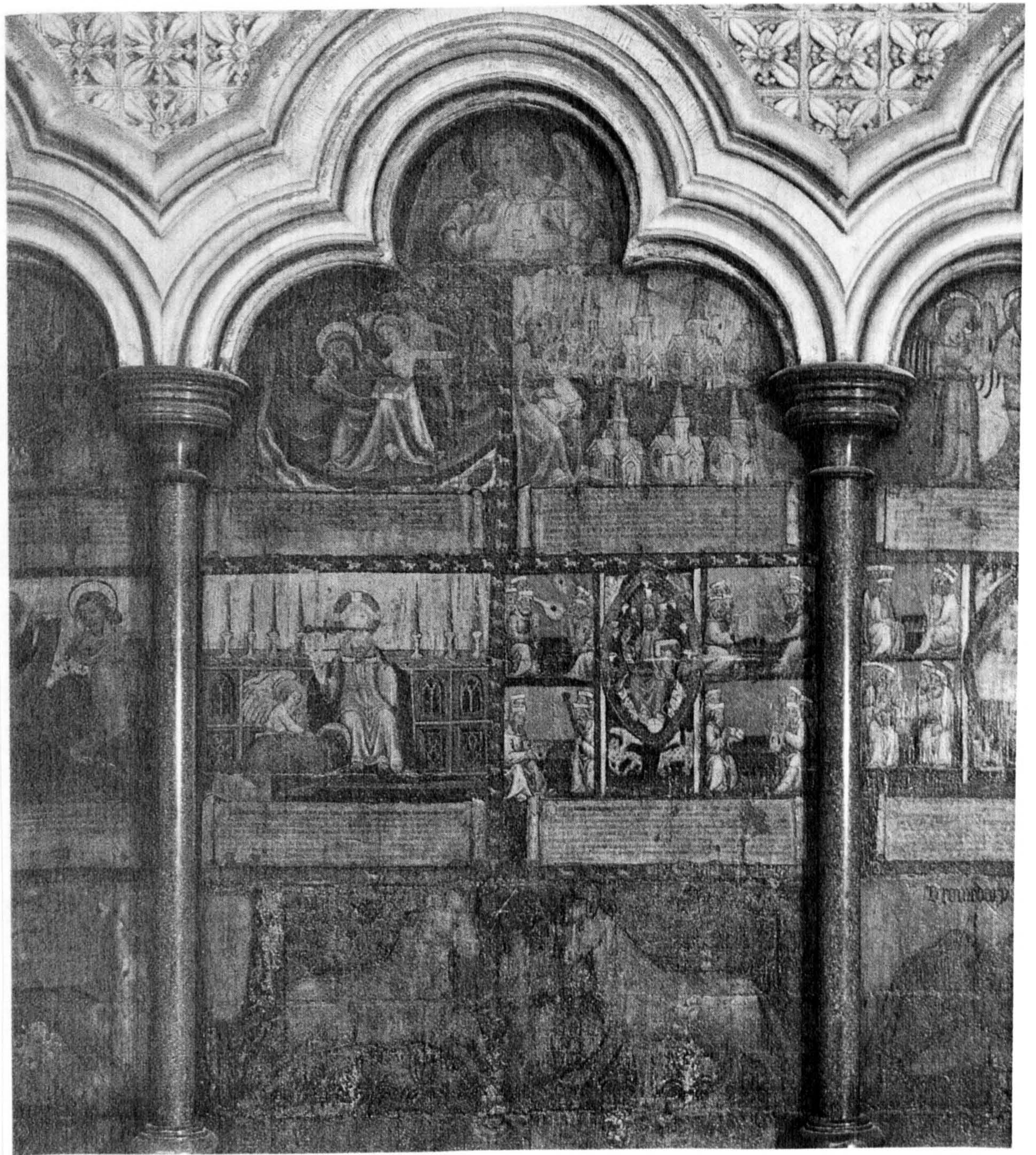
Inscriptions.

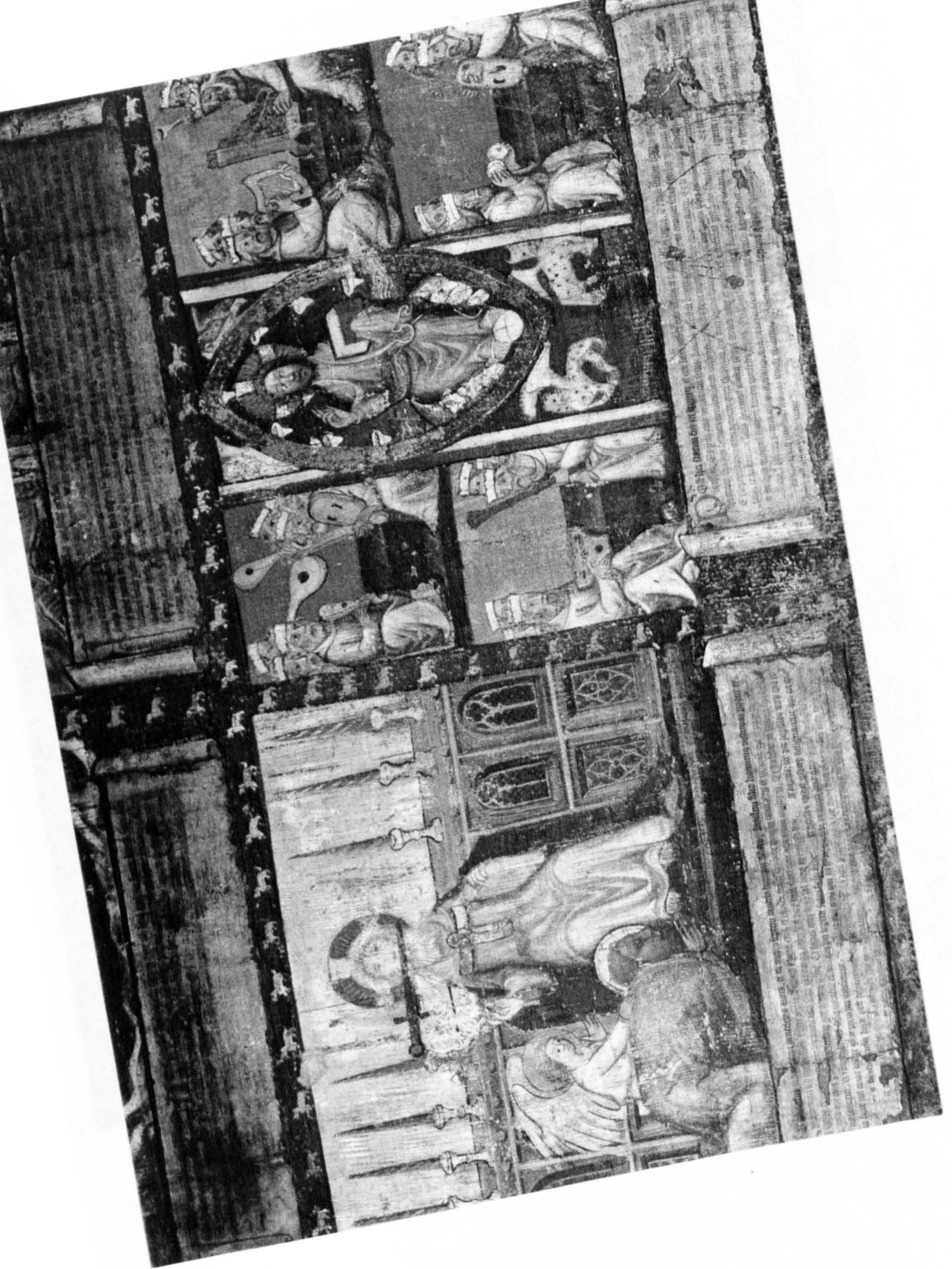
Tableaux.

Inscriptions.

Bande de terre.

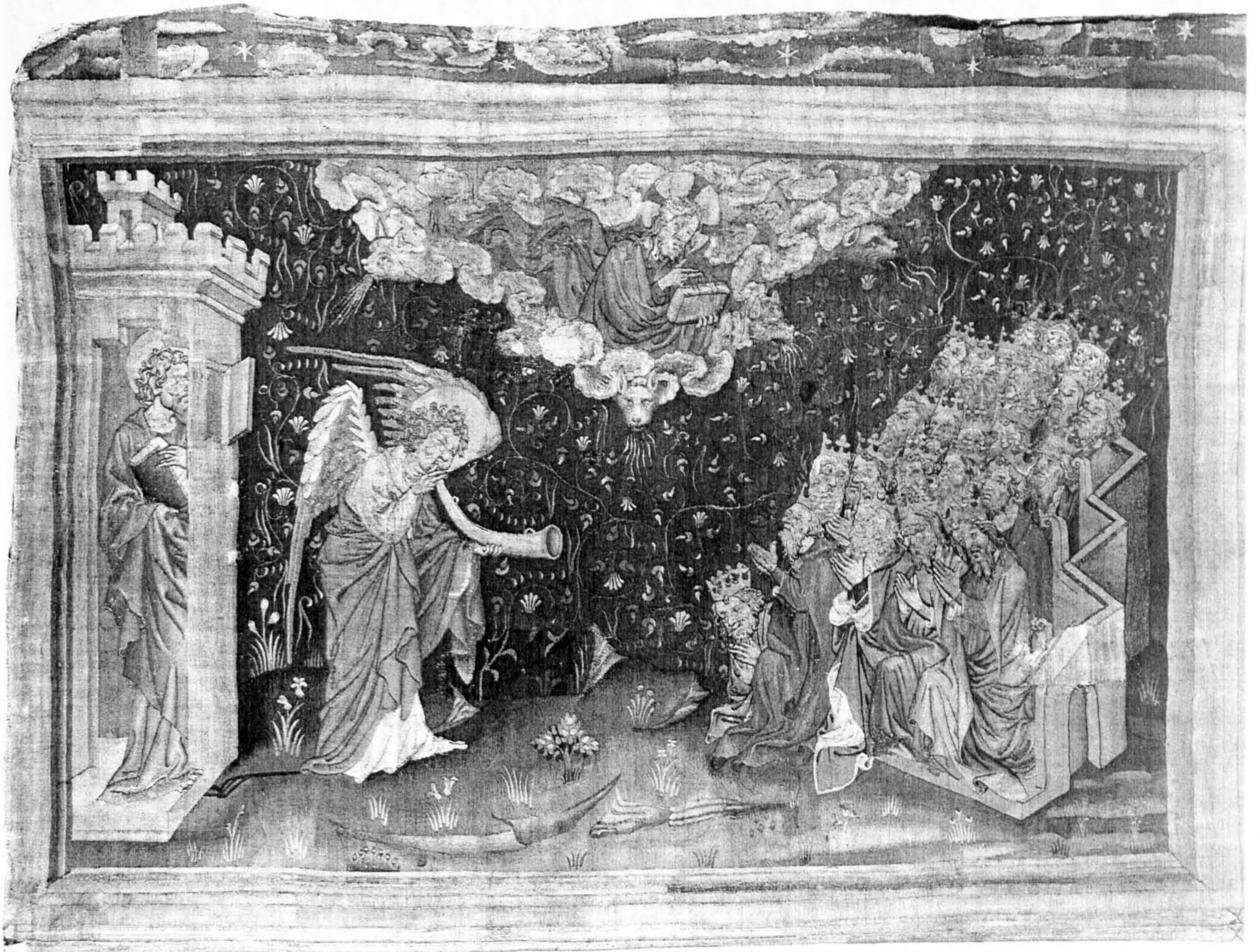






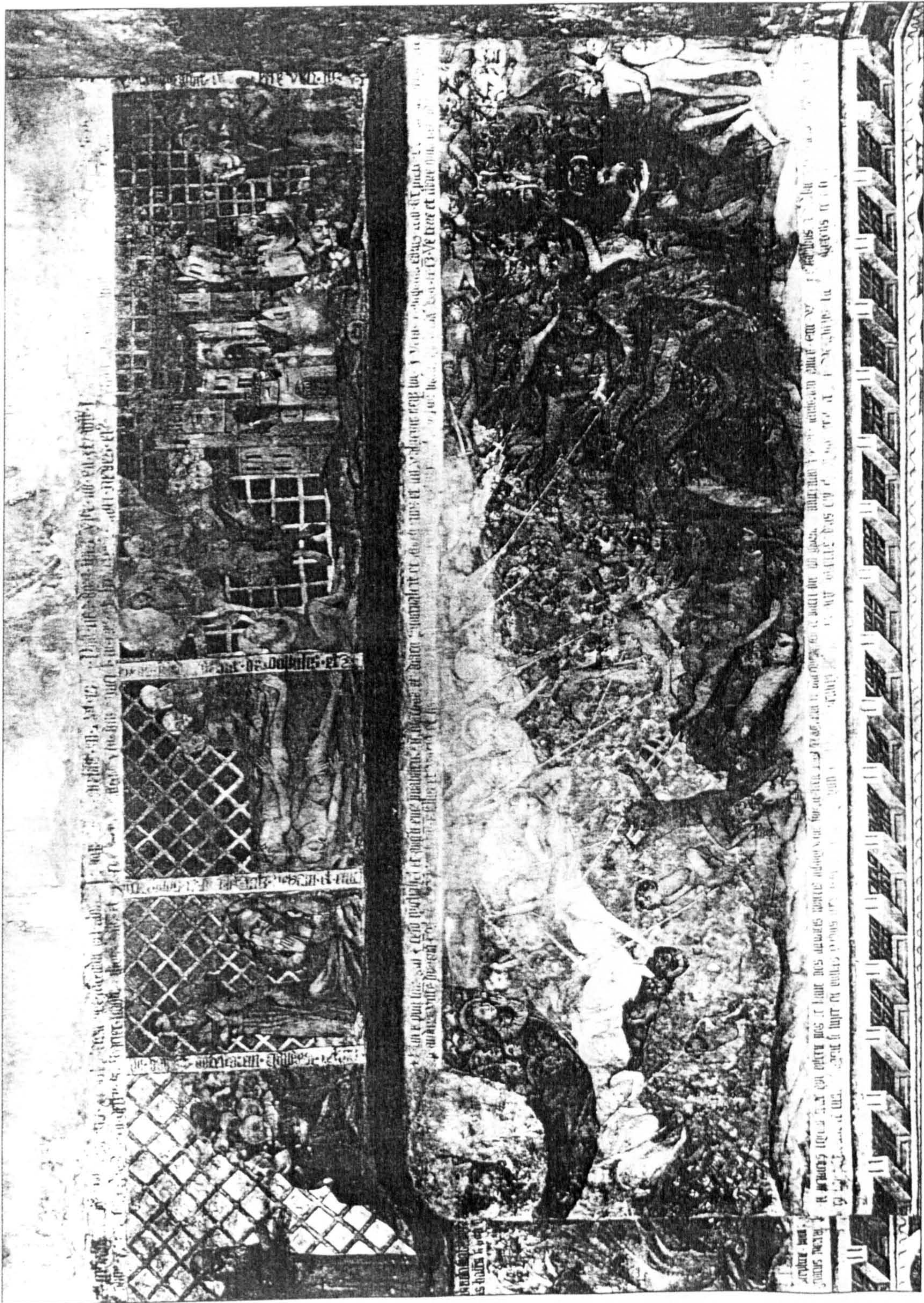


10a





1d



Kaple Panny Marie - Apokalypsa:
 Šelma zabíjející proroky, Mrtvoly proroků, Nanebevzetí proroků a Zemětřesení; dole: Boj andělů

[Saint Jean
dans l'île de Patmos]
1

Les sept Eglises
2 (2)

Le Christ au glaive
3 (3)

Dieu en majesté
4 (4)

Les larmes de saint Jean
6 (6)

Les Vieillards se prosternent
5 (5)

L'Agneau égorgé
7 (7)



8
[L'Agneau ouvre le livre]



9 (8)
Premier sceau :
le vainqueur
au cheval blanc



10
[Deuxième sceau :
le cheval roux et la guerre]



11 (9)
Troisième sceau :
le cheval noir et la famine



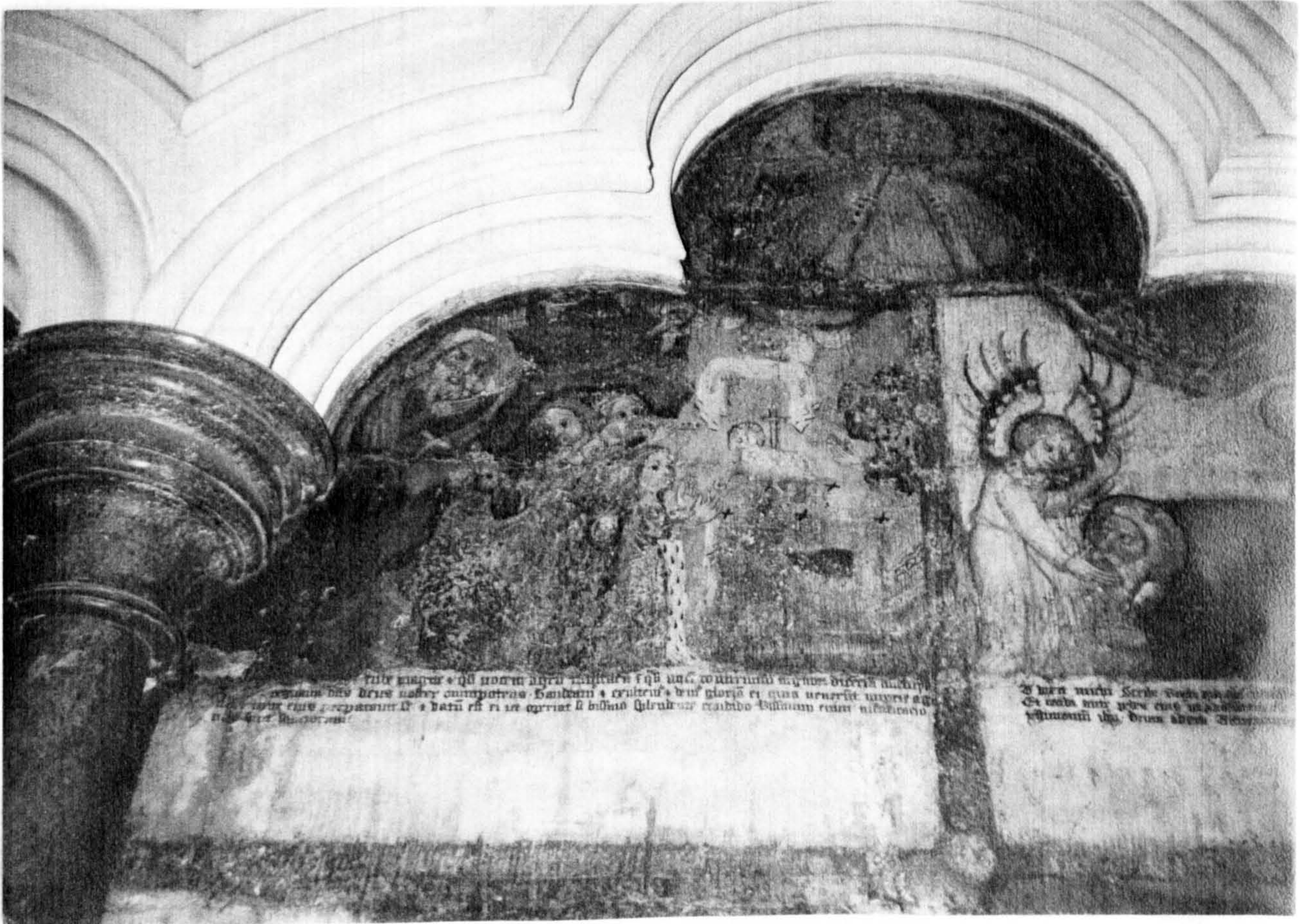
12 (10)
Quatrième sceau :
le cheval livide et la mort

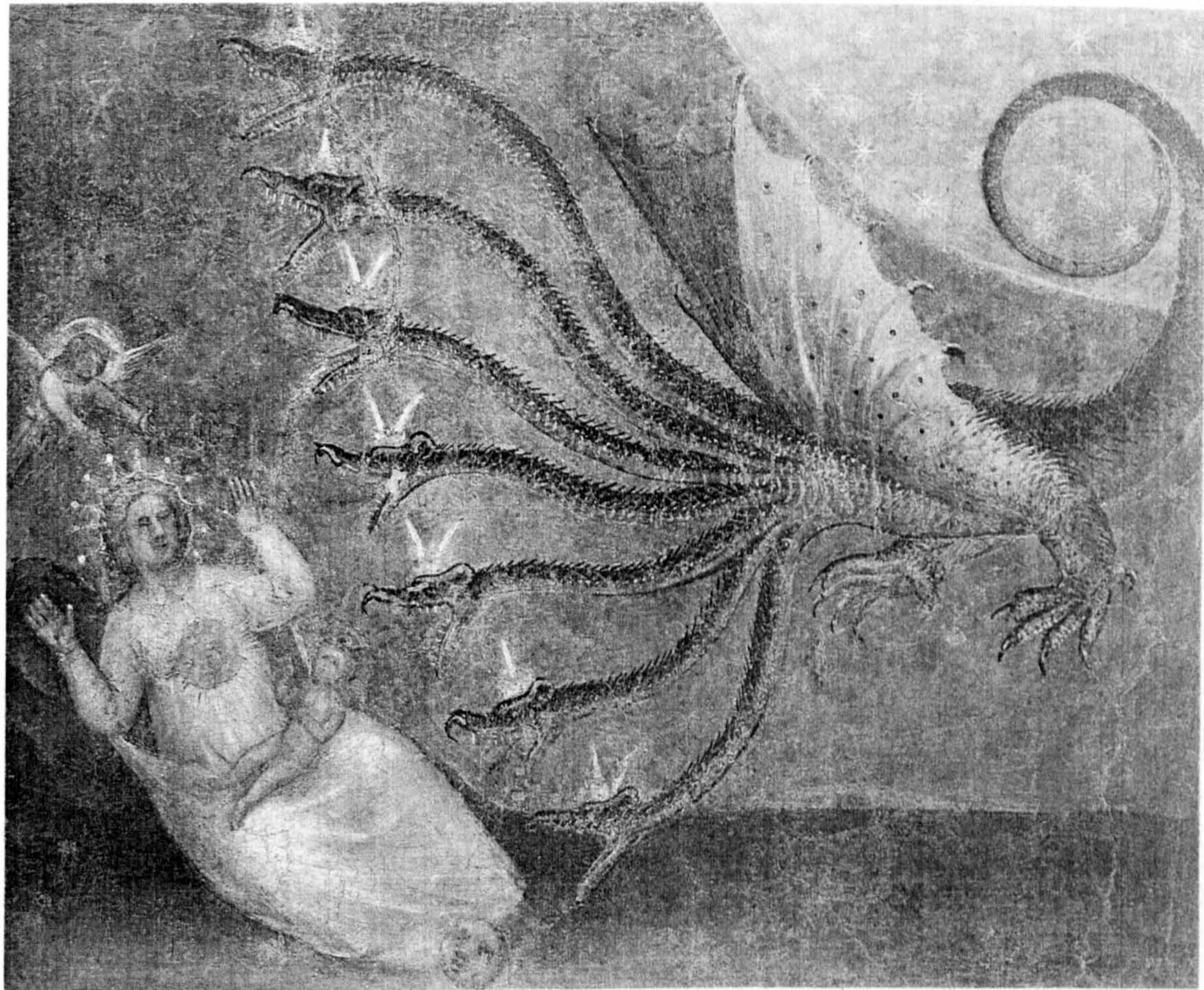


13 (11)
Cinquième sceau :
les âmes des martyrs

14

[Sixième sceau :
le tremblement de terre]





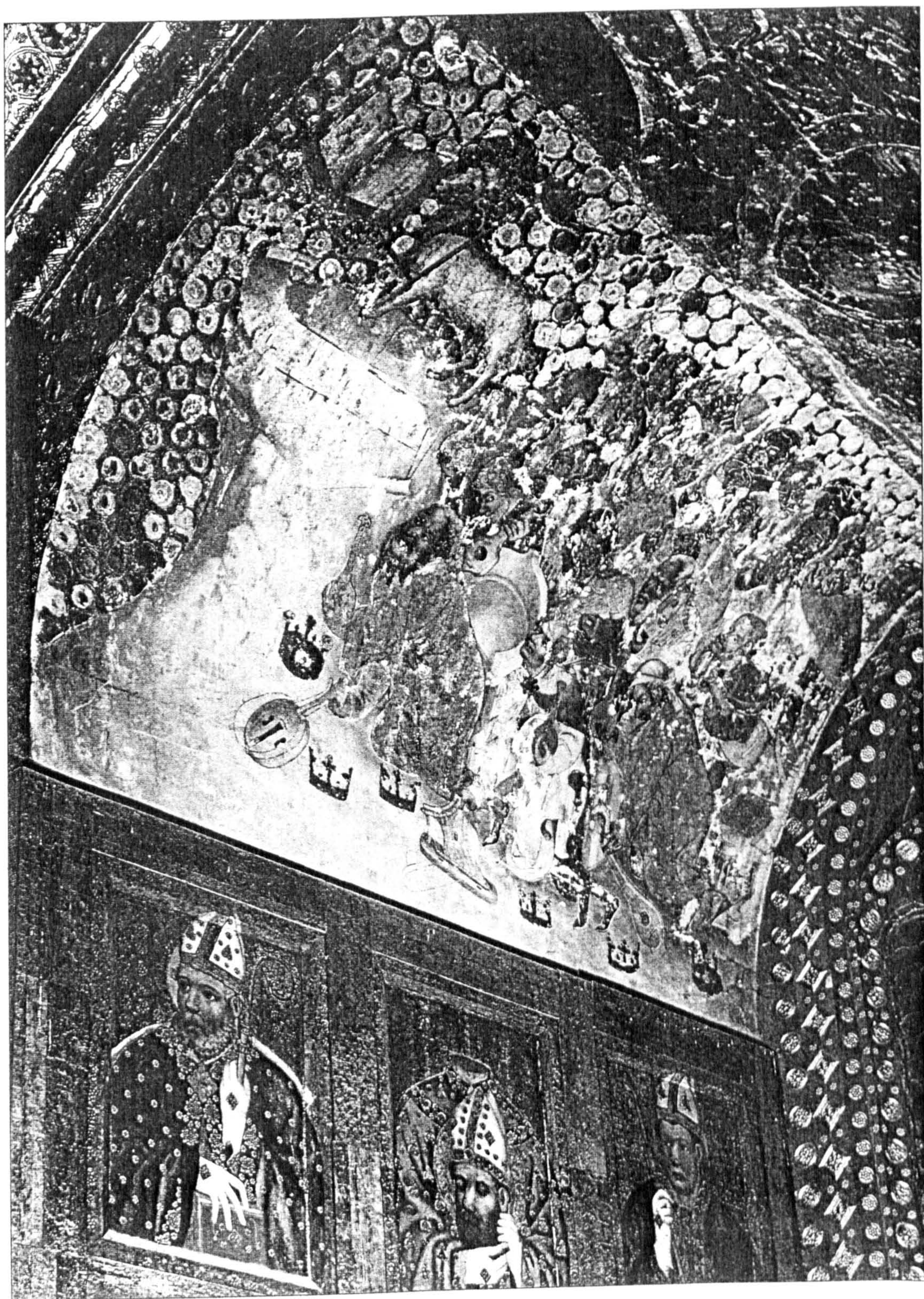
18



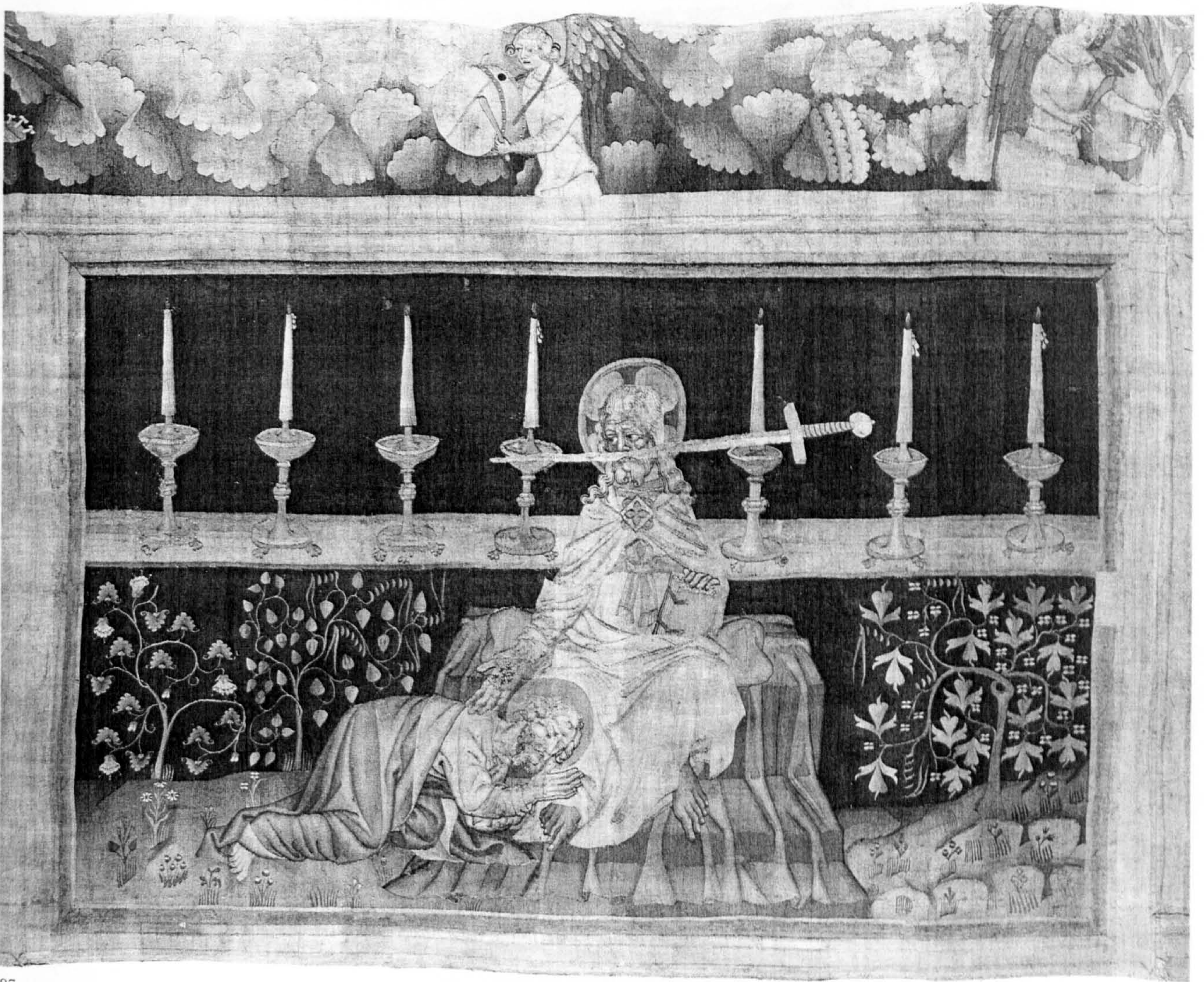
revela. dicentes factu e de conu huius mundi dei uolun. et xpi eius.
Et supra e templu dei in celo. et uita e archa testamenti eius

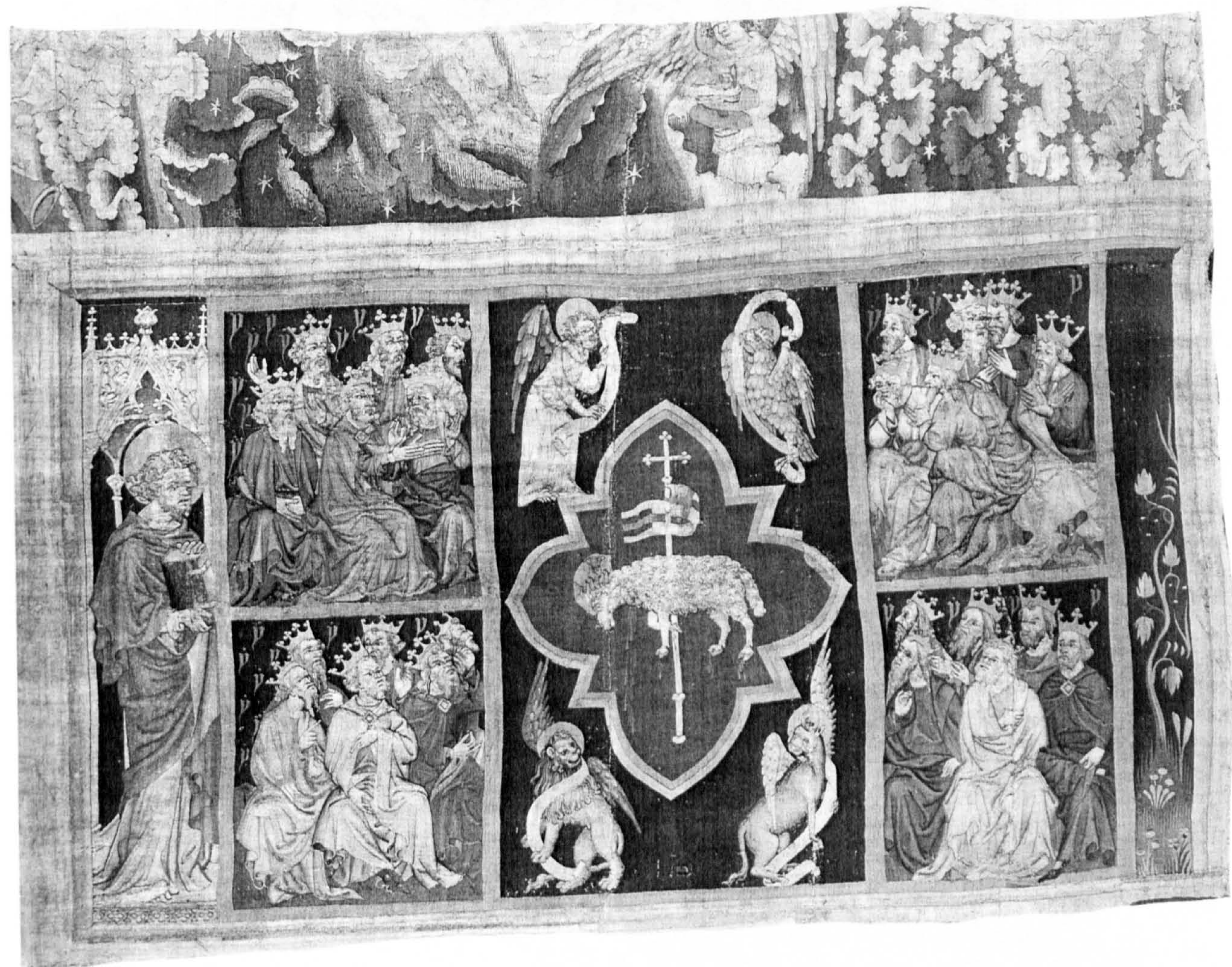


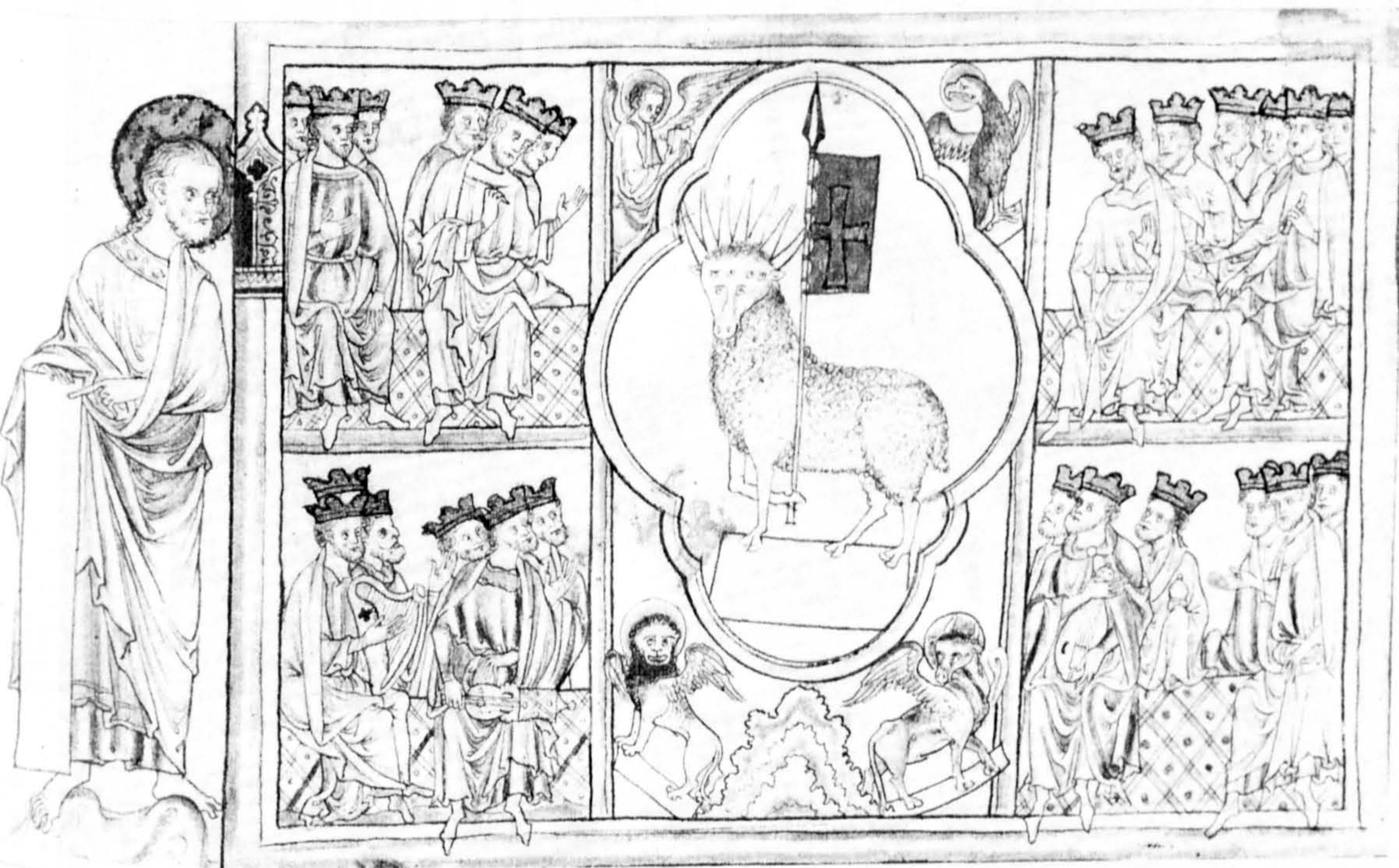
deus ualam fegre seruis suis que opore fieri eto et ueniant uirtus
pau per uobis seruis uobis que sunt mastra uia uobis

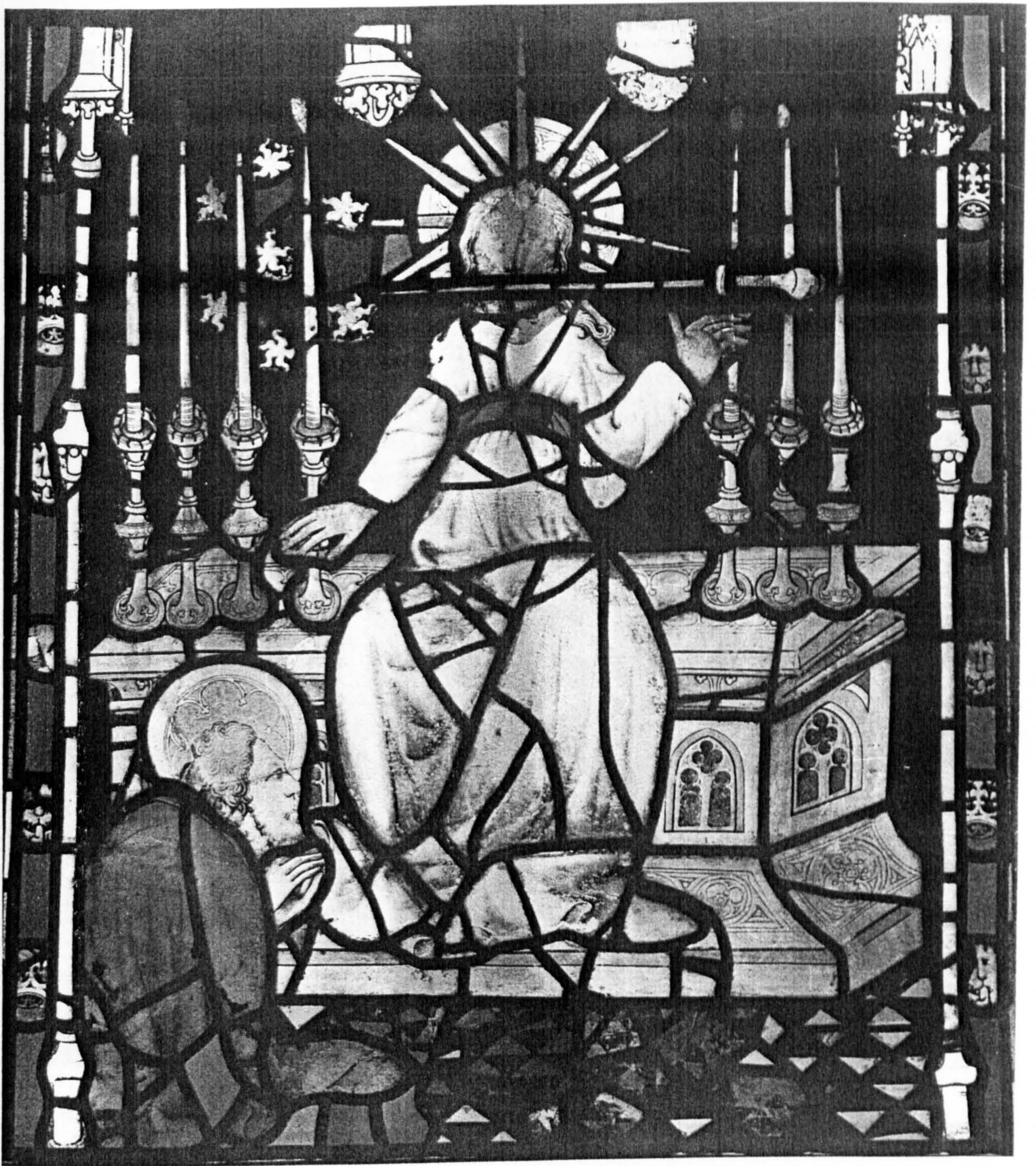


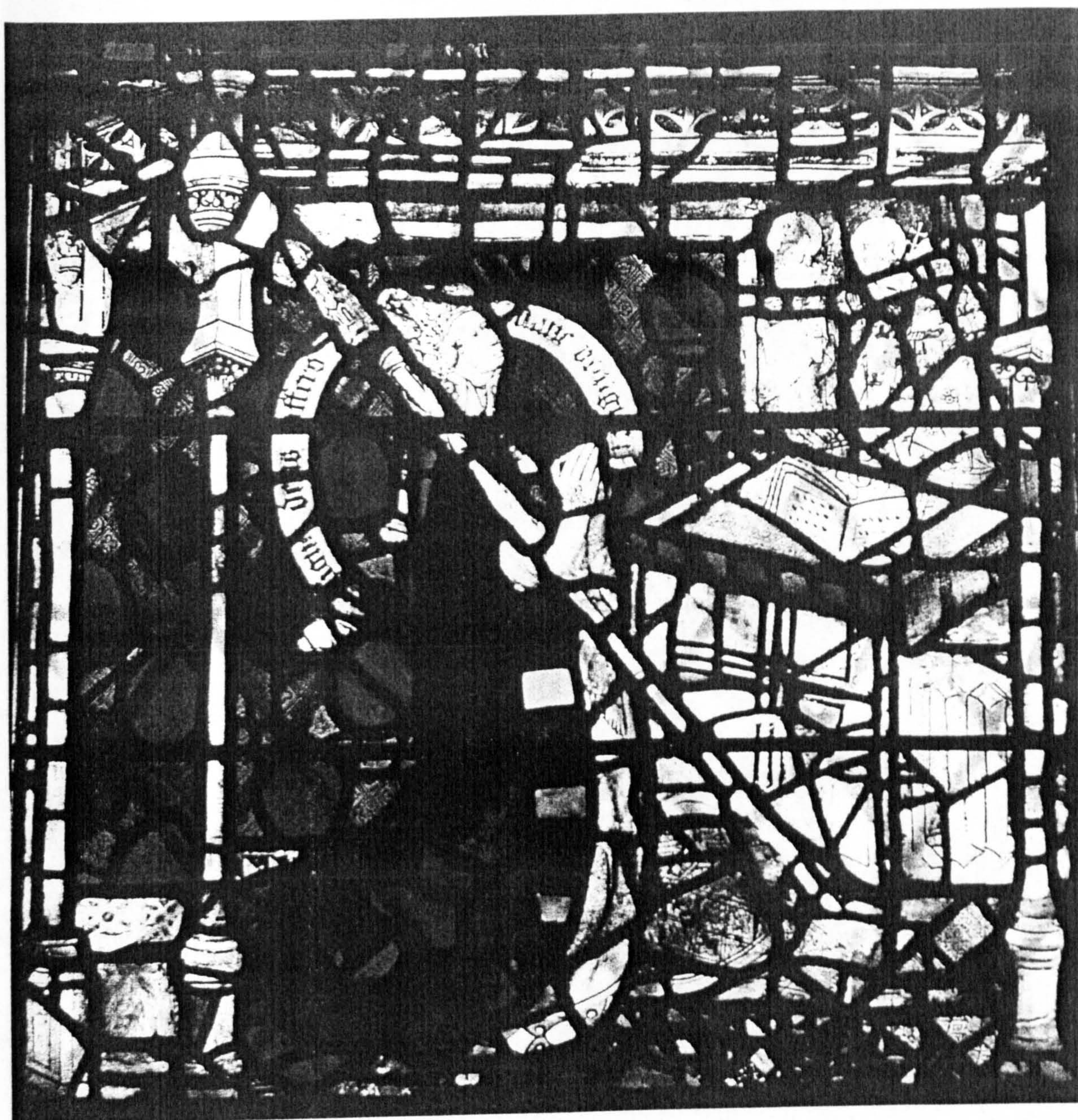
Kaple Umučení Páně a jeho znamení - Klanění Beránkovi na klenbě okenního výklenku evangelní strany presbytáře



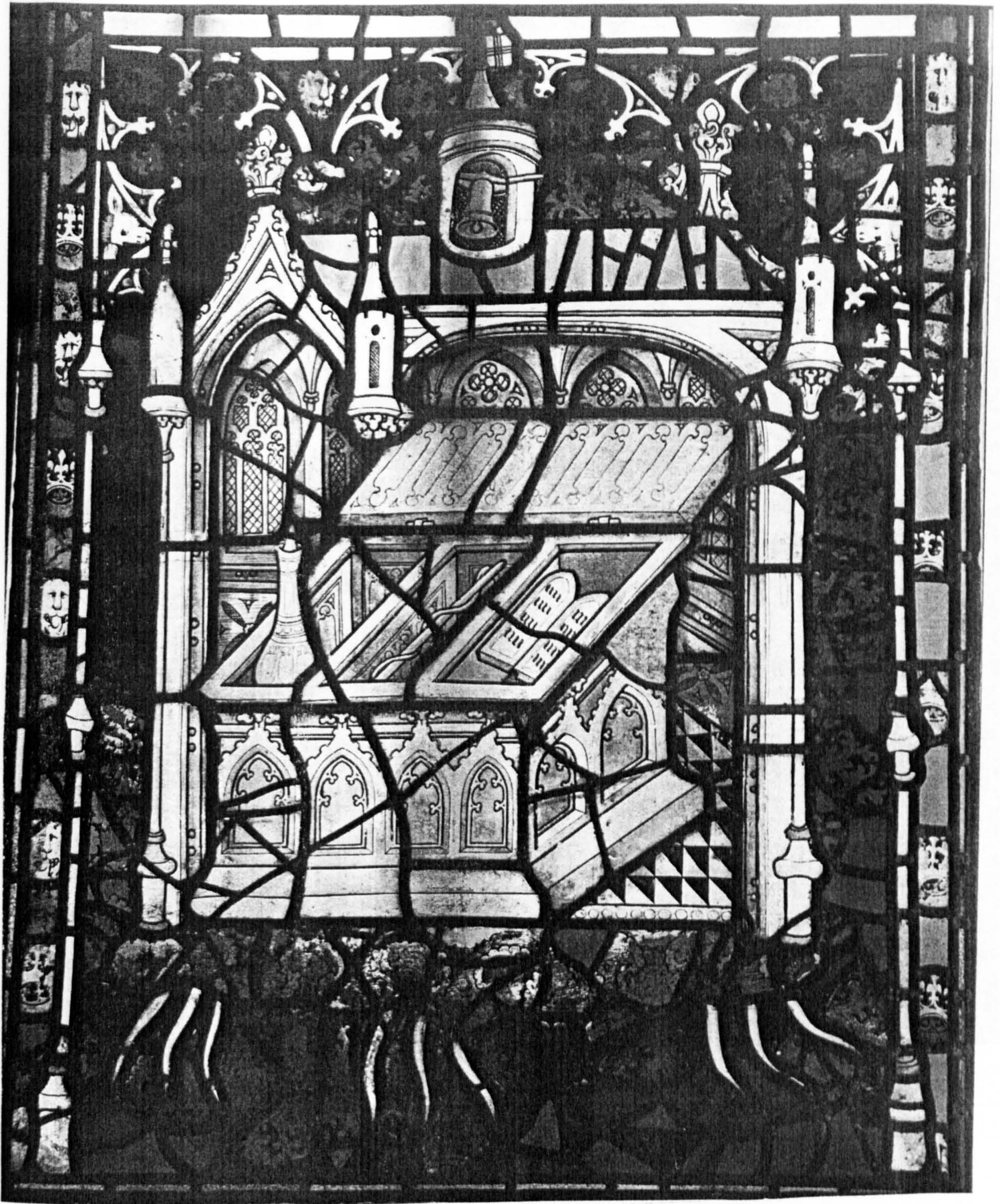








1e









Et seruis angelus tuba cecinit. et audiu
 uocem unam ex quatuor cornib; altis an
 quod est ante oculos d;: dicentem seruo angelo
 q̄ hebat tubam. Solue quatuor angelos qui

alligati sunt in magno flumine eufrate.
 Et soluti sunt quatuor angeli qui parati
 erant in horam. et diem. et mensem. et an
 num. ut occiderent tertiam partem hominum.





Et cum aperisset sigillum septimum:
 factum est silentium in celo quasi media
 hora. Et vidi septem angelos stā-
 tes in conspectu dei: et dedit illis septem
 calices. Et alius angelus venit. et stetit ante al-

tare habens thuribulum aureum in manu
 sua. et dedit illi incensum multum ut daret
 orationibus sanctorum omnium super al-
 tare aureum quod est ante thronum dei. Et
 ascendit fumus incensorum de manibus angelorum ad deum.



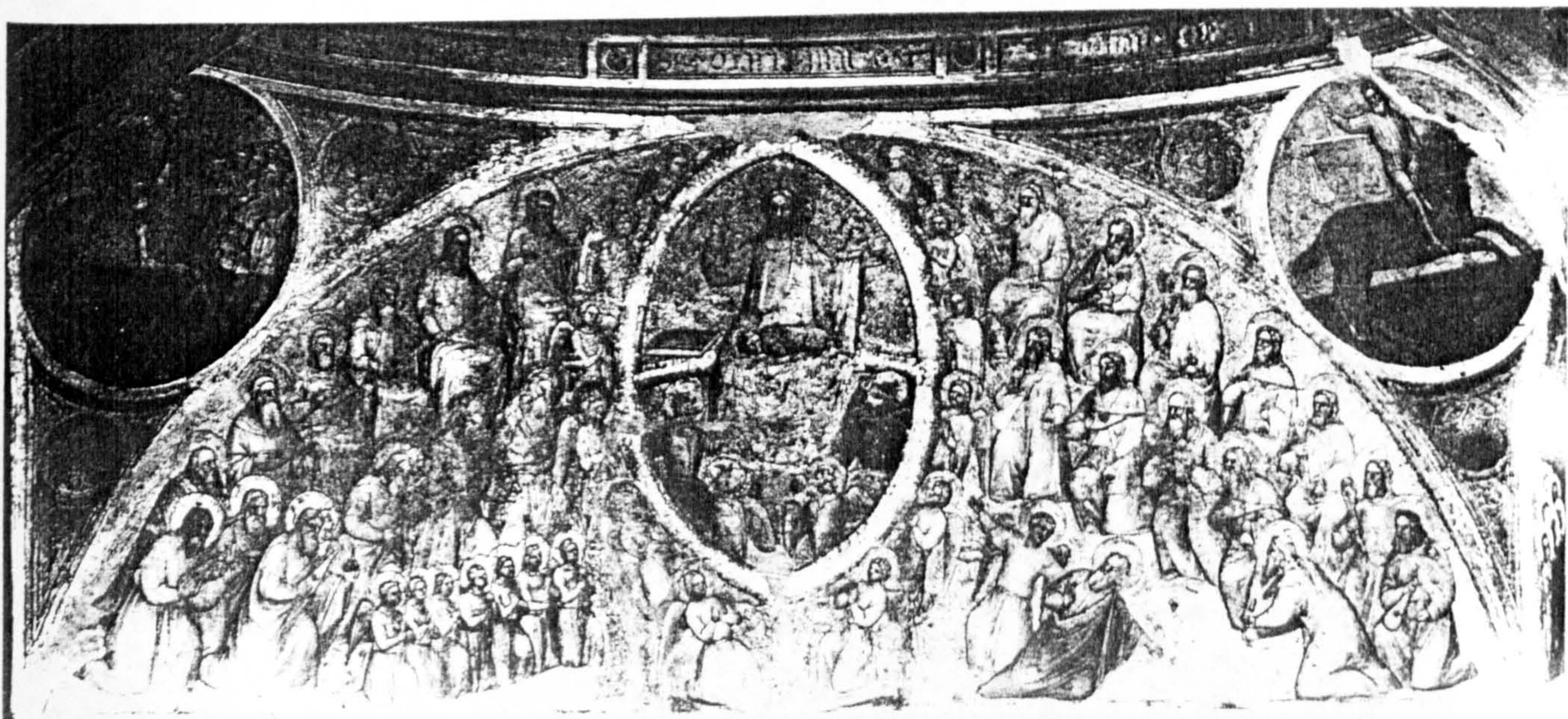
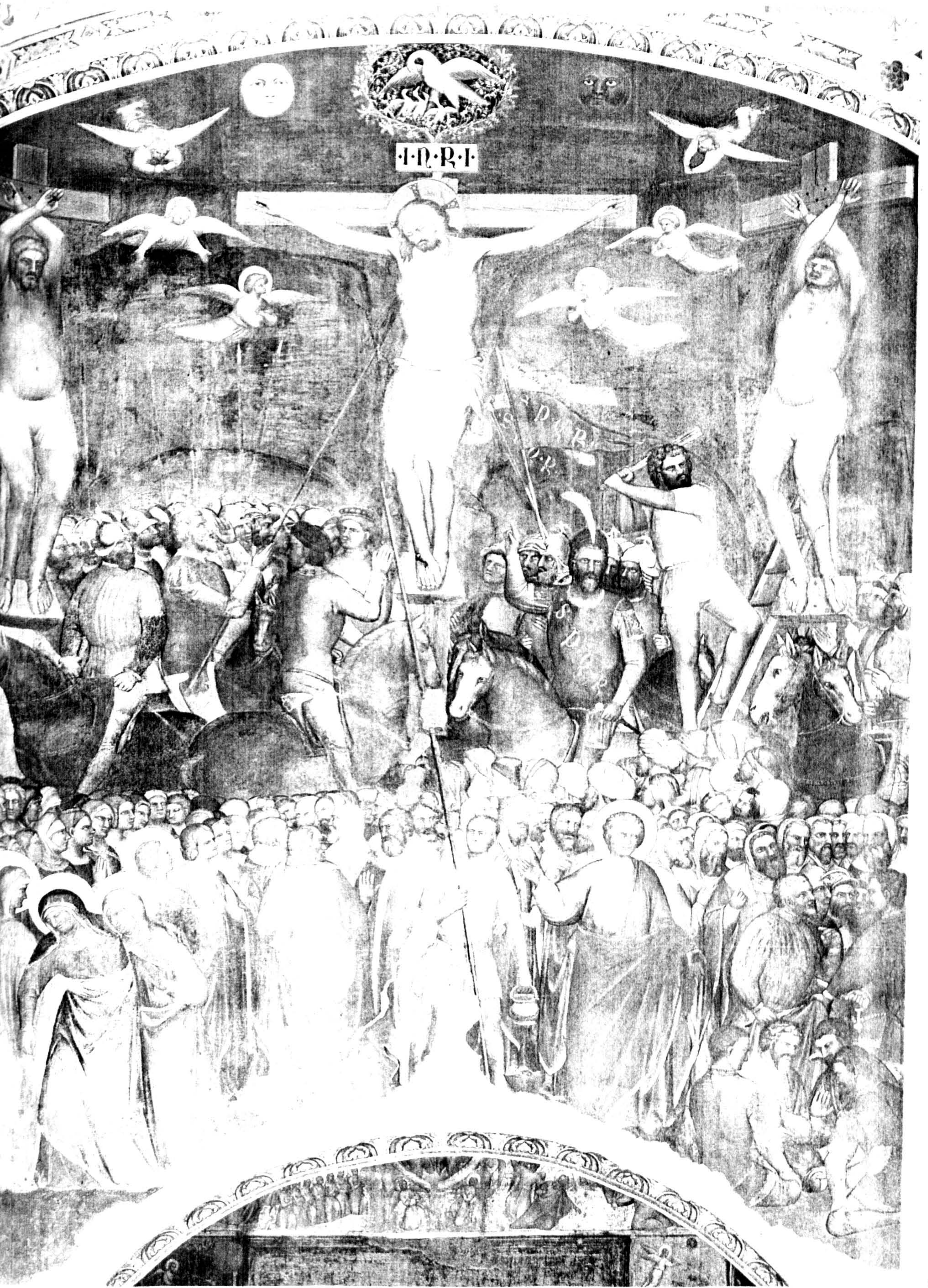
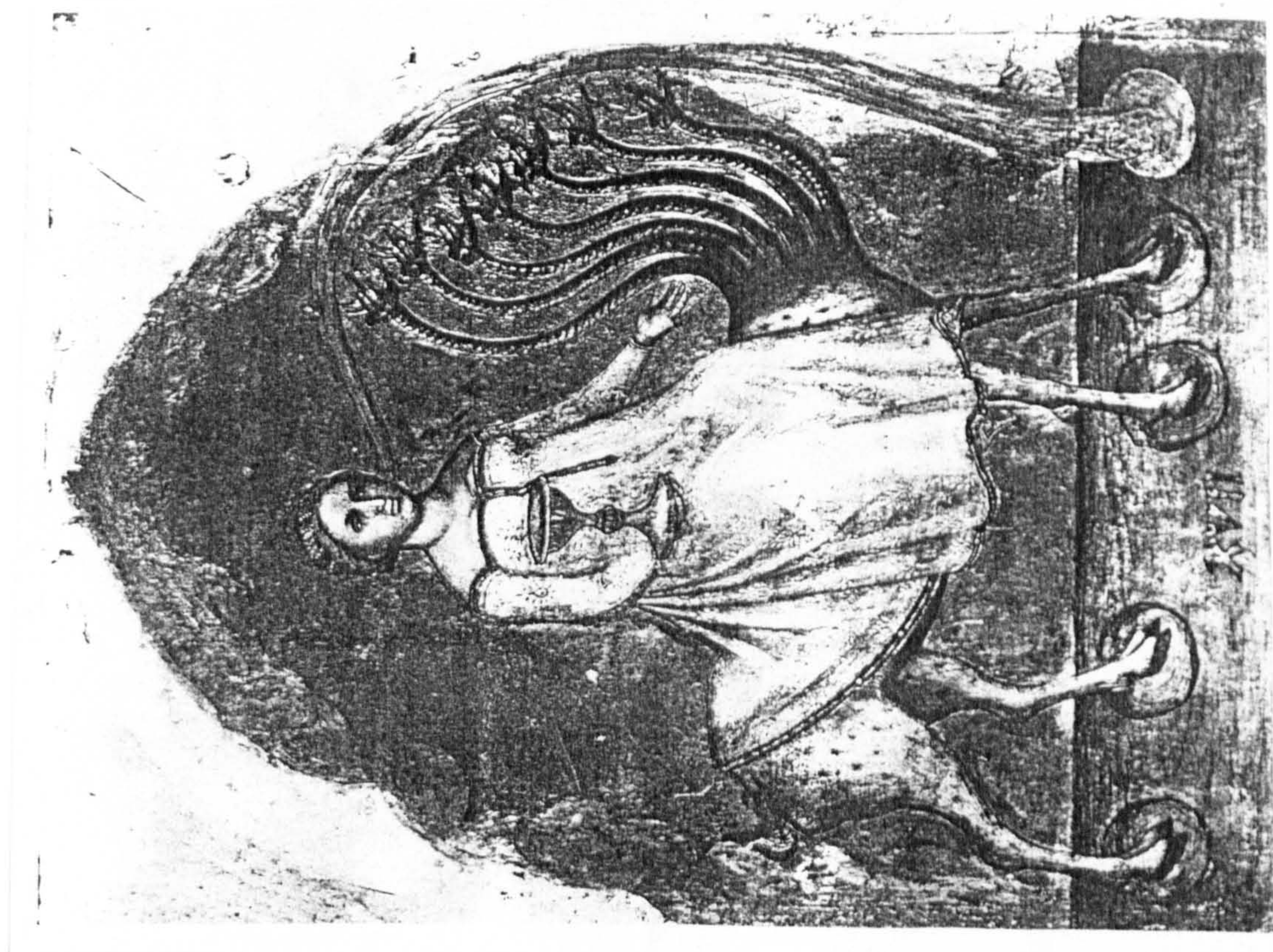
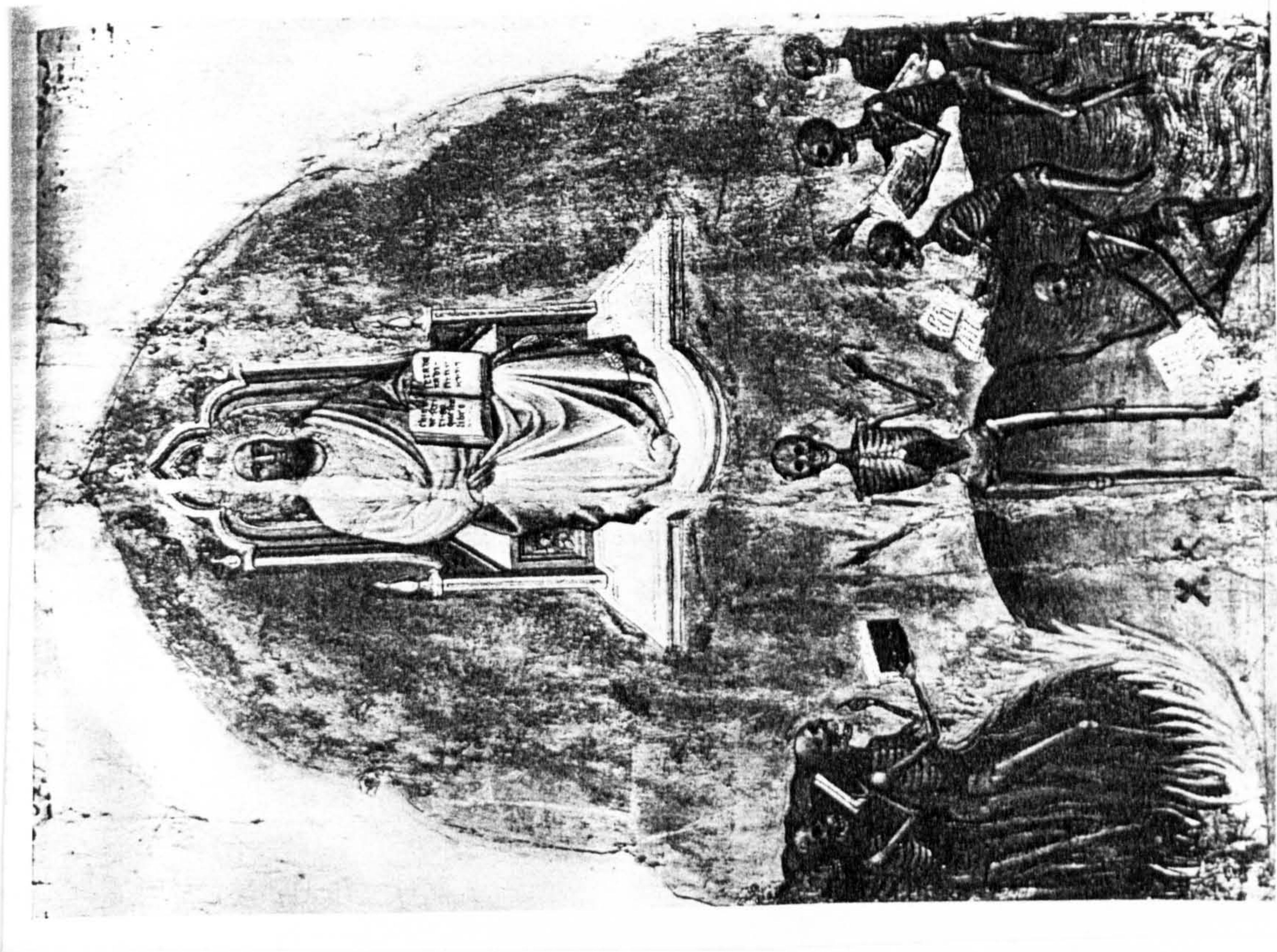


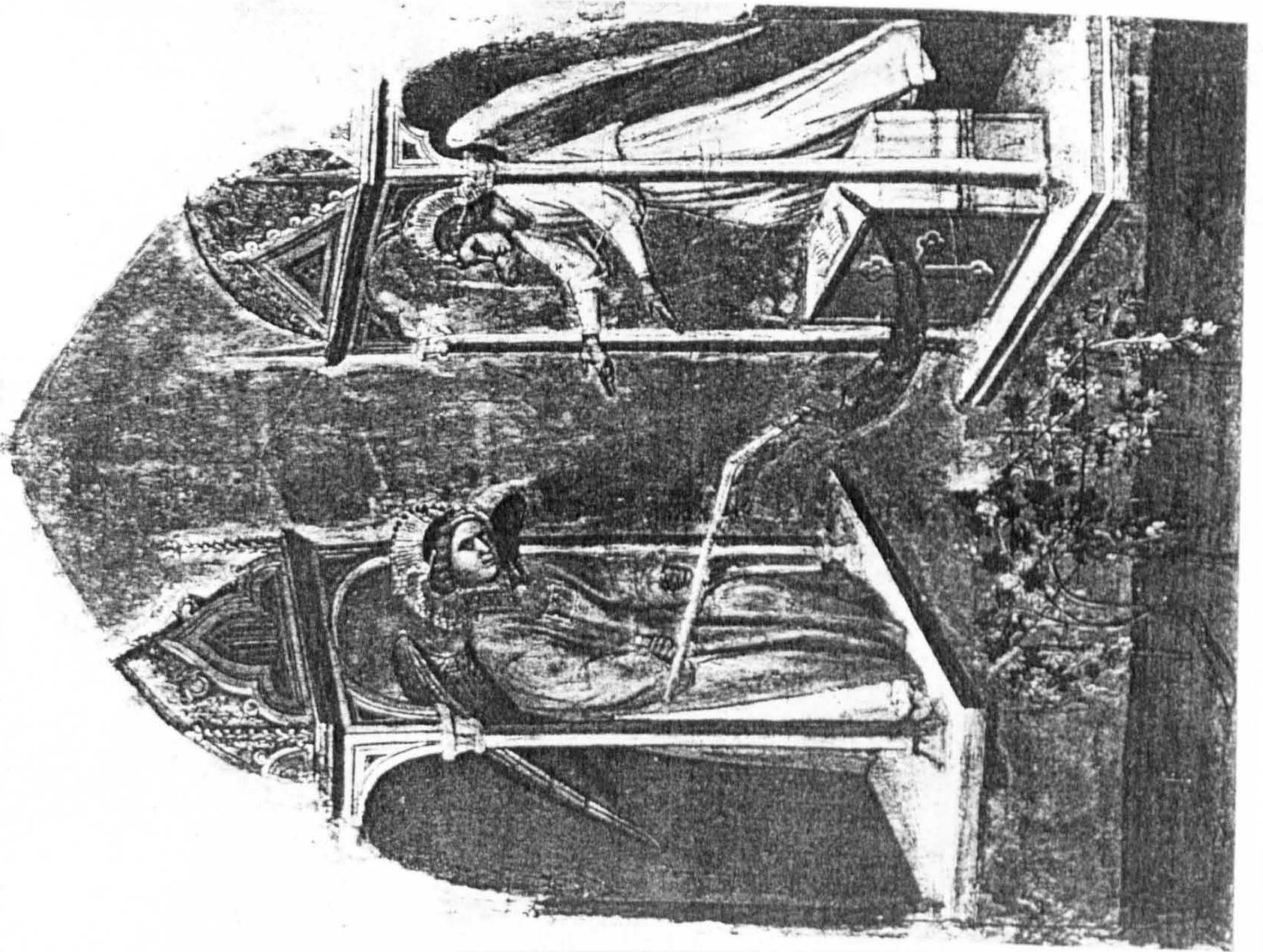
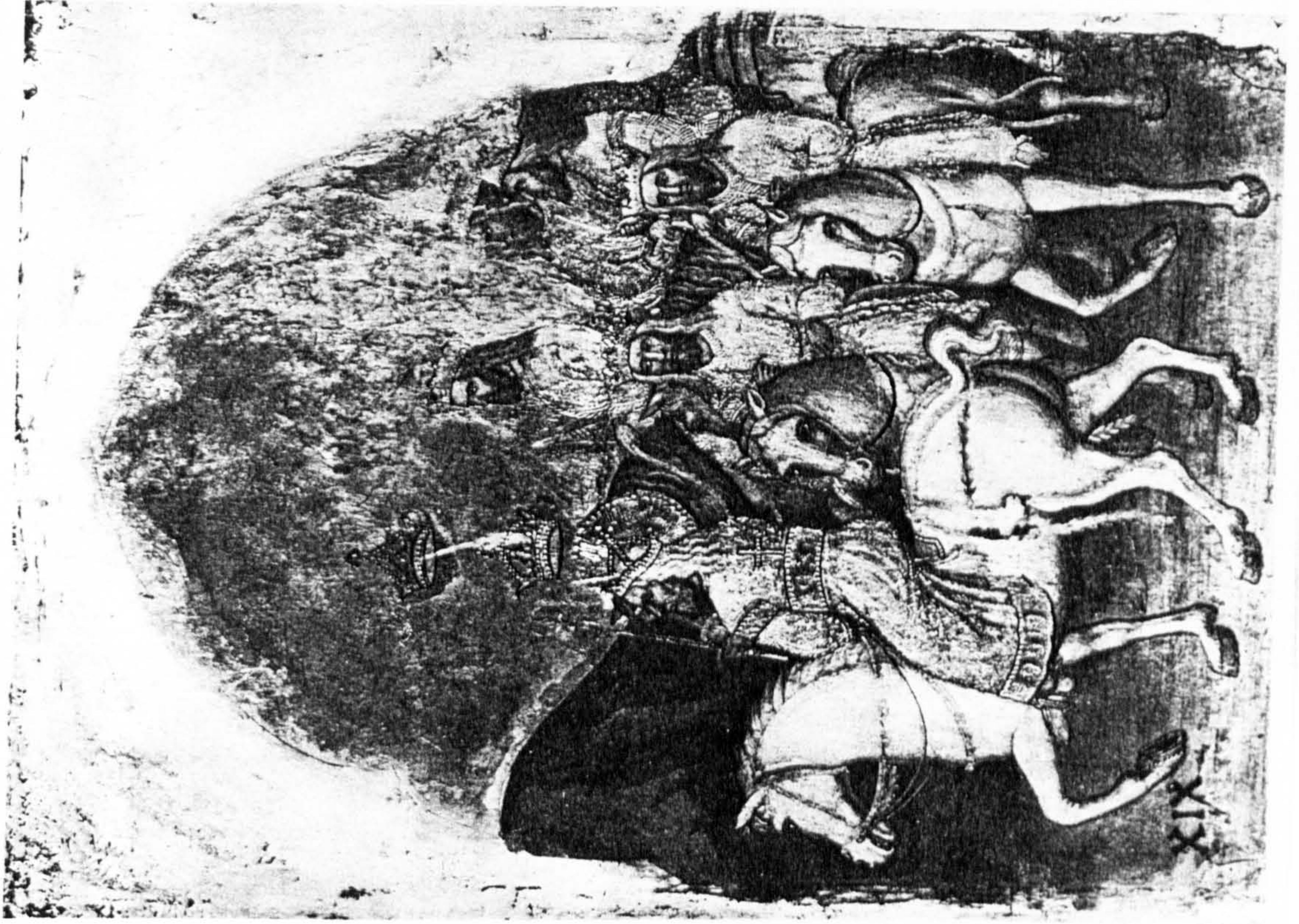
Fig. 49 - «Dio affida all'Agnello i destini del mondo». Ap. 4/5.

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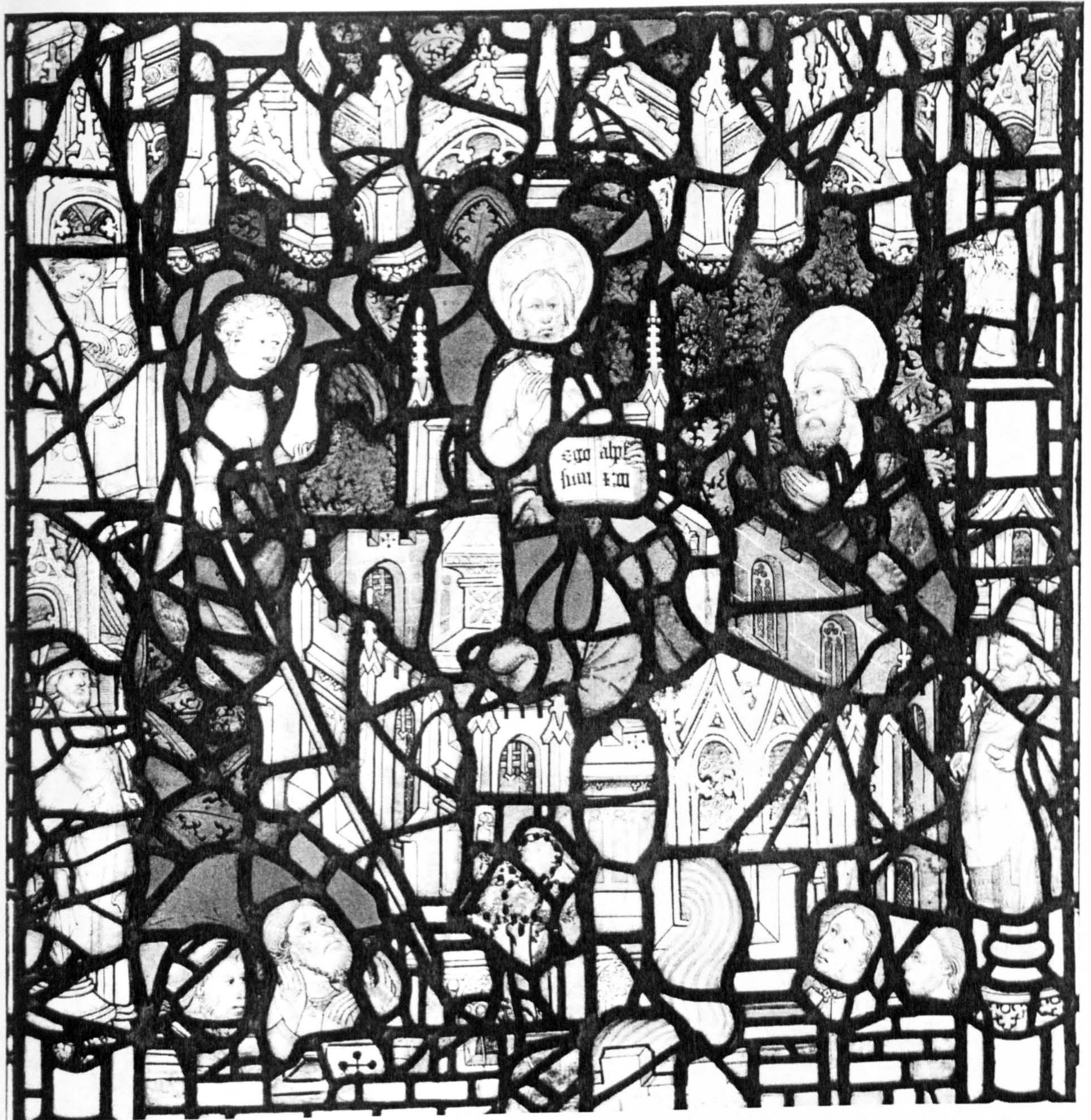








2f



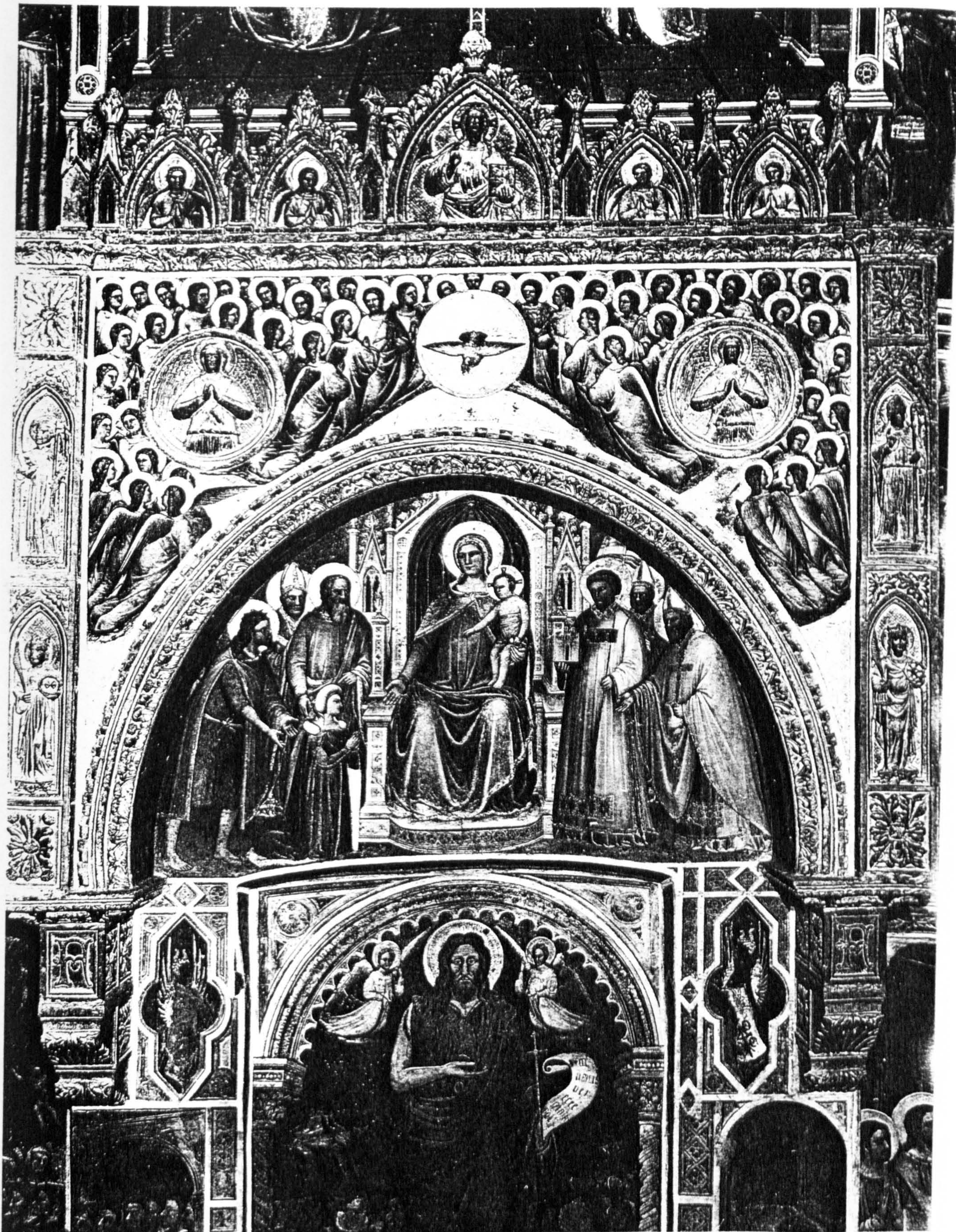
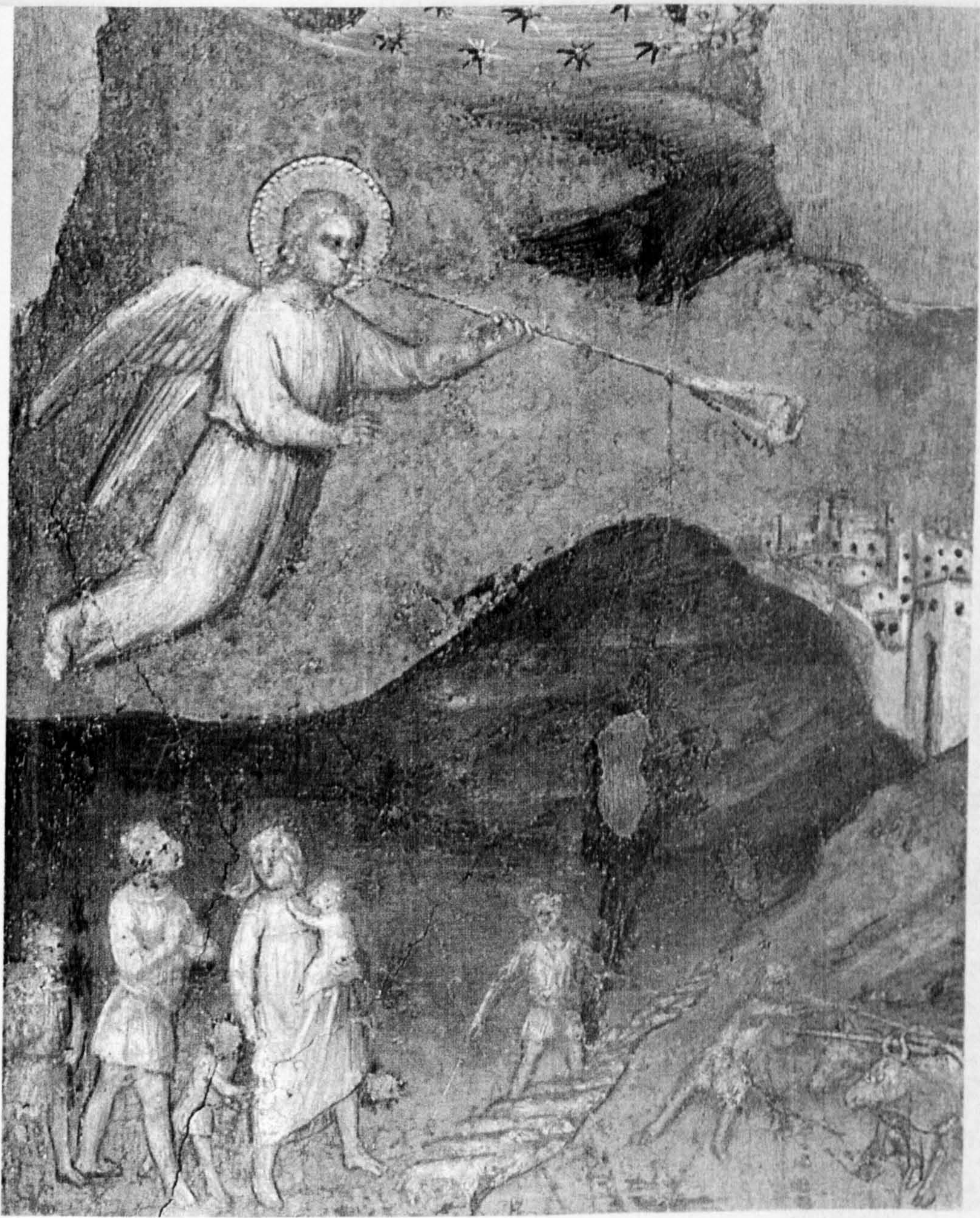
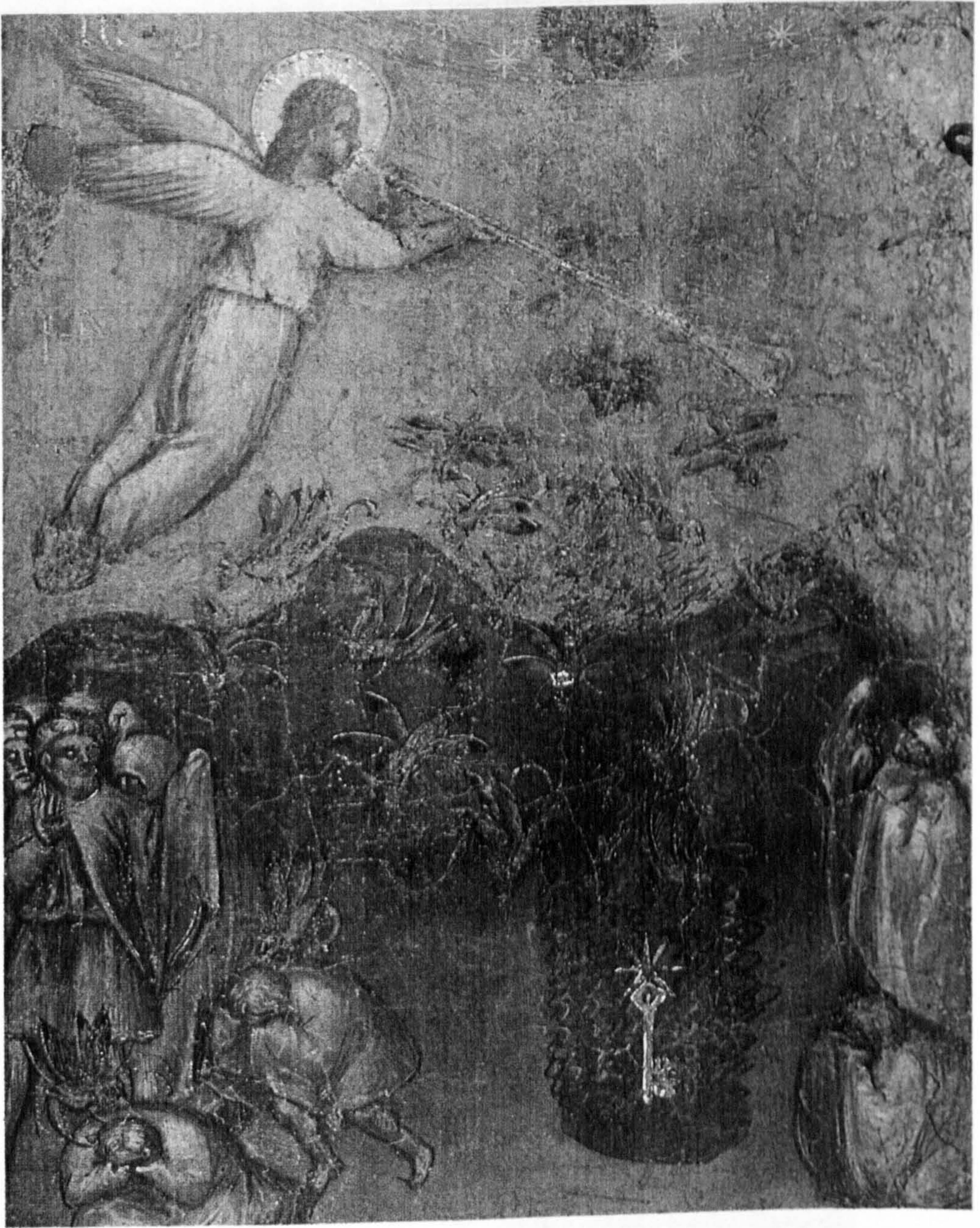


Fig. 149 - «Fina Buzzacarini presentata da San Giovanni Battista alla Madonna e Santi».





12

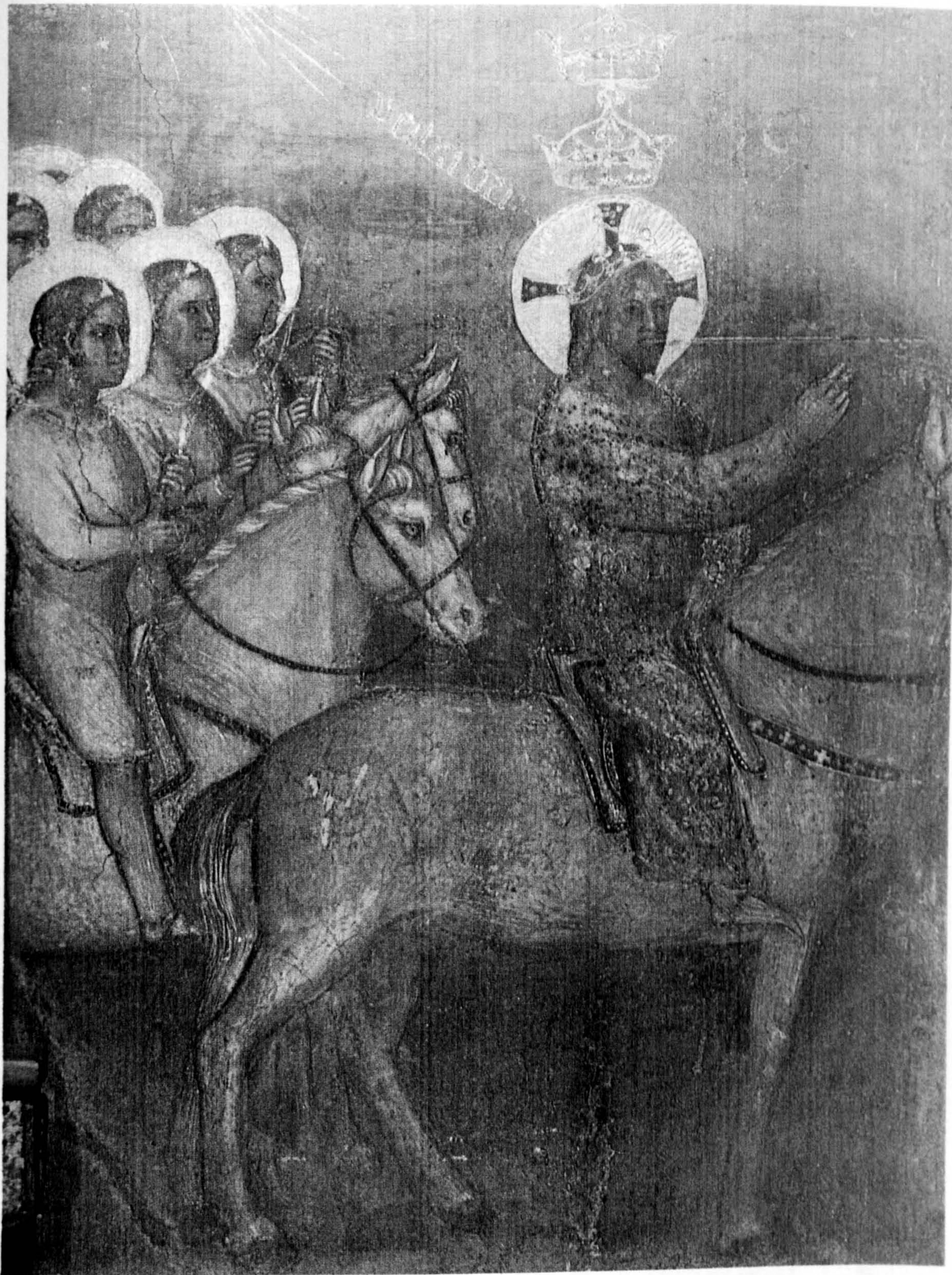


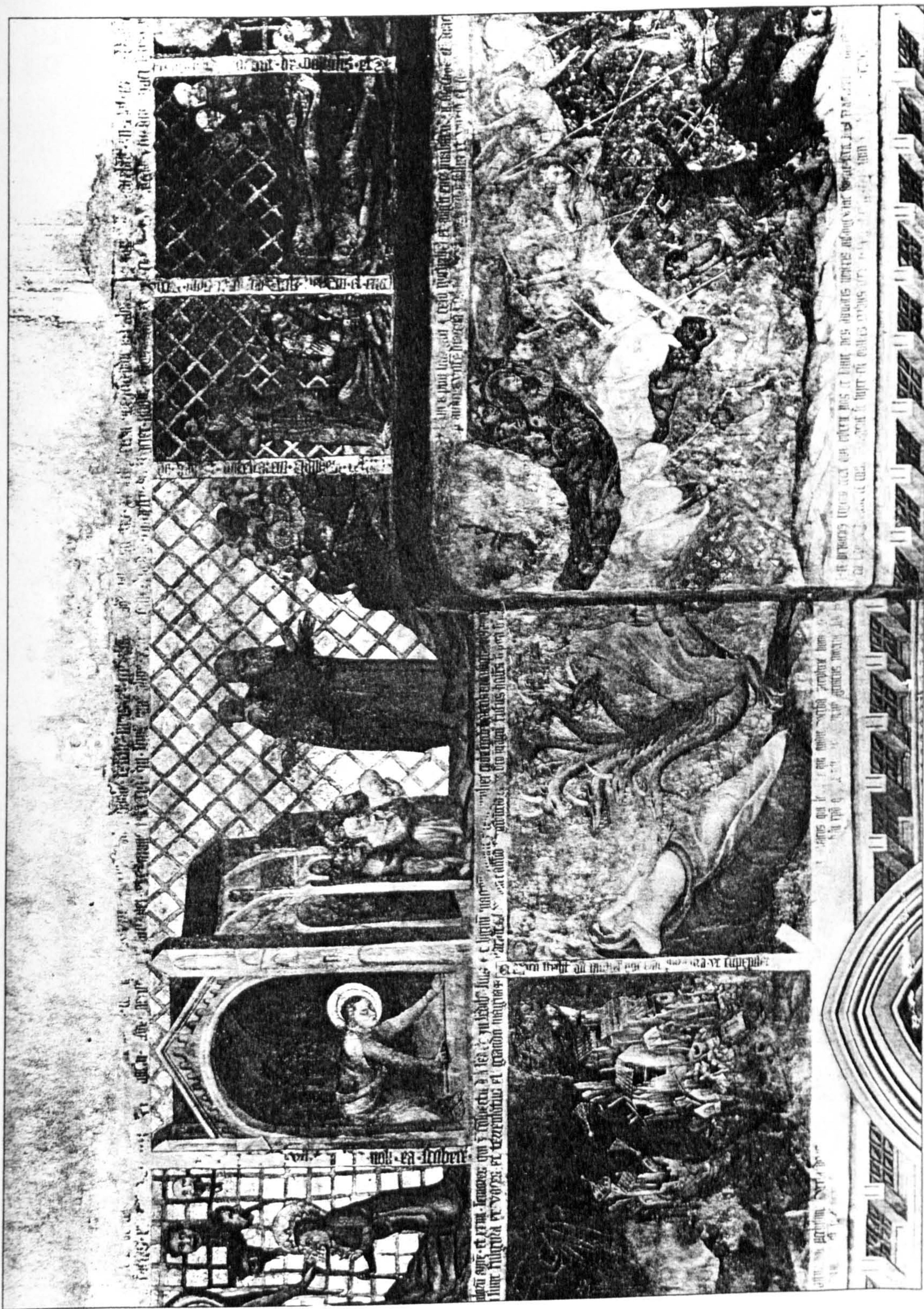
14



38

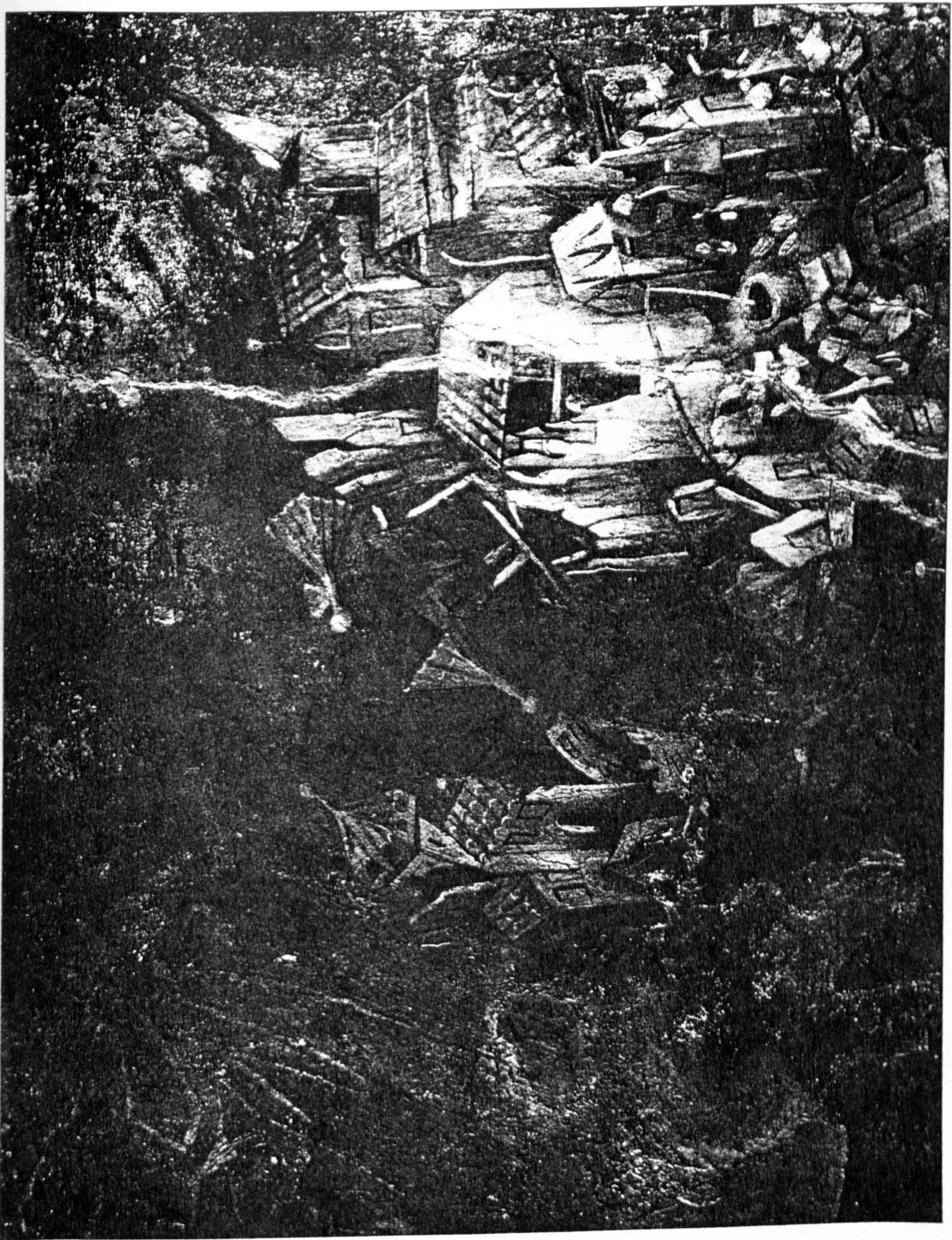
55





Kaple Panny Marie - Apokalypsa.
 nahoře: Jan měřící chrám, Dva prorokující svědkové, Selma zabíjející proroky, Mrtvoly proroků;
 dole: Zemětřesení, Rodící žena ohrožovaná Drakem, Trojjediný Bůh ze scény Boje andělů





Kaple Panny Marie - Apokalypsa: Zeměřesení z vyobrazení mariologické kapitoly



Kaple Panny Marie - Apokalypsa: Žena odlétající na poušť



