

of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* still survive, many with musical notation, from nearly 700 monastic and municipal churches.

From its inception in the tenth century, the enactment of the Resurrection discovery in churches throughout Europe would often incorporate a grave or graves of persons important to the life of the particular community. The Marys would pause and sing an antiphon at such a tomb, or the chorus as surrogate disciples would gather there to await the *Surrexit dominus* from the women. Such a dramatic moment connected the living with the dead in the annual staging of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* at the German convent of Gernrode. During the performance of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* in Gernrode (in the East Harz Mountain area, text c. 1500) the three Marys processed through the church and entered a stone replica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, built inside the Gernrode church (Figs. 1, 2). Within the grave room of the sepulchre and invisible to the rest of the church, save through a window if not yet sealed up, they exchanged the *Quem quaeritis* lines with two clergy as Angels.

The Marys then exited from the replica of the Holy Sepulchre and took up a station at the architectural crossing to sing there an Easter antiphon at the tomb of Hathui, the highly-revered first abbess (c. 1000, also Hedwig or Hadwig in German): *Tolerunt dominum meum* ("They have taken away my Lord"). We do not know what Hathui's monument looked like—perhaps a stone sarcophagus with a recumbent effigy—but we do know a good deal about the Holy Sepulchre replica, and one can still see it today. This gesture linked Hathui with Christ's Resurrection, bestowing a special blessing upon Hathui. At the same time, the gesture drew from Hathui's tomb—it too was sacred space—an assurance to the Gernrode nuns of their own eventual resurrection.

Thereupon, while singing their antiphon, the three Marys proceeded farther to another part of the church where the Abbess was standing and then sang the *Surrexit dominus* to her. With this gesture the performers reinforced to the living the continuity of life. For the nuns this little music-drama, sung in Gregorian chant, was about their own death and life thereafter.

Dramatic Performance and Permanent Replicas of the Holy Sepulchre

Such imitations of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem were erected in numerous European churches during and after the era of the Crusades, and most of them were used for the ceremonies of Easter. After the fall of Jerusalem in 1099, the Pope founded the Order of the Holy Cross, in 1113, and the following year, the Augustinians established the cult of the Holy Sepulchre. Sepulchres and chapels dedicated to the Holy Sepulchre began to appear all over Europe. On occasion, textual rubrics for the liturgical dramas—that is, stage directions—provide modest information on such matters as the presence of one or

more Angels at such a replica or inside it, as well as notes on the acts of entering and exiting, and the use of the cross, host, and gravecloths.

Today four medieval Easter sepulchres still survive at churches that also possess a related dramatic text, a text with some internal evidence of focus on the existing permanent sepulchre. Gernrode is one of the four.¹ The others are at Aquileia (Italy), Constance (Switzerland), and Magdeburg (Germany).

The permanent Easter Sepulchre at Gernrode dates to c. 1080. It is very early. The church was dedicated in 961. In the south aisle, in the two easternmost bays, stands the sepulchre, this one an attempt to reproduce the configurations of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. It consists of an antechamber or forecourt, called the St. Aegidius Chapel, which opens westward into the grave chamber itself. Originally the antechamber was entered on the east side from the transept; in the twelfth century that entrance was closed up and a small door on the north side opened directly onto the nave. On the outside, the two rooms are rectangular in shape, slightly over two meters in height. The antechamber is open above, whereas the grave chamber once had a rotunda roof, now destroyed. Inside, the antechamber gives the impression of a small forecourt about five meters square with an altar dedicated to St. Aegidius; and to the west of it is the grave room itself, about two and a half meters square. There in the north wall is a niche and low platform for a sarcophagus (1.60 meters long, 60 centimeters wide). Originally a window-like aperture in the north wall at about sarcophagus height opened into the church. It would emit candle light from the grave into the nave, or from the nave one could see moving shadows and light and hear voices within the grave room. From outside, in the nave, one could peer in. This window was eventually closed up with stone work, but one does not know when. As in the case of the other extant replicas—at Aquileia, Constance, and Magdeburg—in early times an onlooker from outside the sepulchre could barely make out something of whatever sights and sounds and odors were within. Perceived in this atmosphere, events taking place inside were rather hidden and thus mysterious. Because one cannot date the closure of this “window” at Gernrode (nor does one know why), one cannot be certain that this special effect marked the *Quem quaeritis* scene in the present text, around 1500—“Whom do you seek in the Sepulchre?”, the Angels’ first line. However, it is clear that the Gernrode text reflects dramatic practice which is very old, perhaps even antedating the construction of the sepulchre around 1080, and that the extant text fits the extant structure.

Numerous churches had special chapels dedicated to the Holy Sepulchre, but we have almost no evidence of their use in staging the liturgical drama. On the other hand, documentation does show that the Chapels of St. Andrew, St. Barbara, St. Fintan, St. Mauritius, and St. Sebastian served respectively in

productions of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* at Strassburg (*Visitatio* text, 1364), Sion (Sitten, 1474), Rheinau (1600), Constance (fifteenth century, and 1502), and St. Gall (1582, 1583). At Strassburg the chapel itself formed the sepulchre. Earlier documents (1150) refer to it as the Holy Sepulchre Chapel. It stands at the north side of the east choir. So too the tenth-century Chapel of St. Mauritius at Constance was originally constructed in imitation of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. That chapel now contains a later, stone Gothic sepulchre (1280). At Rheinau, the St. Fintan Chapel (*sacellum*, the container of the founder-saint's relics) was in the western porch of the church; in the drama it became the Holy Sepulchre.

At Sion (Sitten, in Switzerland), Archbishop Walter Supersaxo had the St. Barbara Chapel constructed (1471-1474) in the south transept of the cathedral as the position for the *Visitatio Sepulchri* and for his own final resting place. He was buried in it (d. 1474), just in front of its altar. Thus according to the text, as of 1474 the three Marys would gather behind the main altar and proceed in single file, the oldest first, out of the east choir, circle around south and then back eastward to enter the Chapel of St. Barbara. After the brief, three-line exchange with the angel, they would return with the gravecloth to hold it up before the chorus. There they probably stopped in front of the east choir and faced west.

In earlier times at Sion the *Quem quaeritis* exchange had taken place down in the crypt, beneath the east choir. Later the change in the mise-en-scene to the newly built Chapel of St. Barbara adjacent to the east choir changed the dramatic moment to infuse it with the sanctity of her presence. At the same time, singing the *Quem quaeritis* at the tomb of Archbishop Supersaxo there in the St. Barbara Chapel bestowed upon him a particular promise of resurrection.²

Dramatic Performance and Tombs of Local Sacred Figures

Like the mise-en-scene at Gernrode, so the movement patterns at other churches linked the Resurrection message of the dramatic performance directly with the grave of a much-revered local figure: at the Cathedral of Meissen, the Cathedral of Trier and the Abbey of St. Simeon at Trier, at the Cathedral of Bamberg, at Rheinau, and at the Abbey of St. Arnulf (St. Arnould) at Metz. During the *Visitatio Sepulchri* at Meissen, Bamberg, and at St. Simeon in Trier, members of the chorus took up a position at the local sacred figure's tomb. There they waited for the news of the Resurrection: at the tombs, respectively, of Bishop Benno (1066-1106, canonized 1525), Kaiserin and Saint Kunigunde (d. 1033), and St. Simeon (d. 1035). Like the observance at Gernrode, at Trier Cathedral the Marys paused at a local dignitary's tomb (Archbishop Theodoric von Wied, 1212-1242) when returning from the sepulchre; from that position they announced the Resurrection to the chorus. As already noted, at Rheinau the tomb

of St. Fintan (d. 878) served as the Holy Sepulchre in the Easter drama. At St. Arnulf of Metz, the Sepulchre was the St. Arnulf altar, the high altar, and an area just to the rear of it. Two priests as angels sat behind the altar; while three deacons as the Marys approached from the choir and ascended the steps in front of the altar.³

Founding church patrons and high-ranking officials, ecclesiastical and secular, wished to be buried as close to the high altar as possible—or to have an altar of their own. Thus the Easter ceremony derived assurance of resurrection from altars sacred to those who were certainly in heavenly bliss. By the same token, the Easter enactment not only derived power but also created power akin to that of a Mass for the dead.

When at Gernrode the Marys made their discovery in the stone replica of the Holy Sepulchre and then processed to the tomb of Hathui to sing an Easter antiphon there, they honored and derived honor from the sacred place. Likewise they gave assurance of resurrection to the person revered and received assurance of resurrection from her, as it were. The gesture linked Hathui with Christ's Resurrection, thus bestowing special blessing upon Hathui and at the same time drawing from Hathui's tomb an affirmation to the Gernrode nuns of their own eventual resurrection. The gesture gave grace to the founder like a prayer or a Mass for the dead and, at the same time, it gave special memorial reality to the play, bringing the play into the here and now for the audience-congregation.

At the Lions' Den

Robert L. Erenstein

The *Old Testament* story of Daniel is also a resurrection story. In it Daniel is condemned to certain death in a den of lions, but, according to the Biblical account, an angel closes their mouths and Daniel emerges from the pit unscathed. Immediately, his evil detractors are tossed to the lions and summarily consumed. In this conquest of death the Daniel story prefigures the Jesus story in the *New Testament* where after the Crucifixion Jesus' body is laid in a cave-tomb, he rises from the dead, an angel or angels at the tomb inform the Marys and eventually others of the Resurrection, and Jesus appears to his followers in Jerusalem and elsewhere.

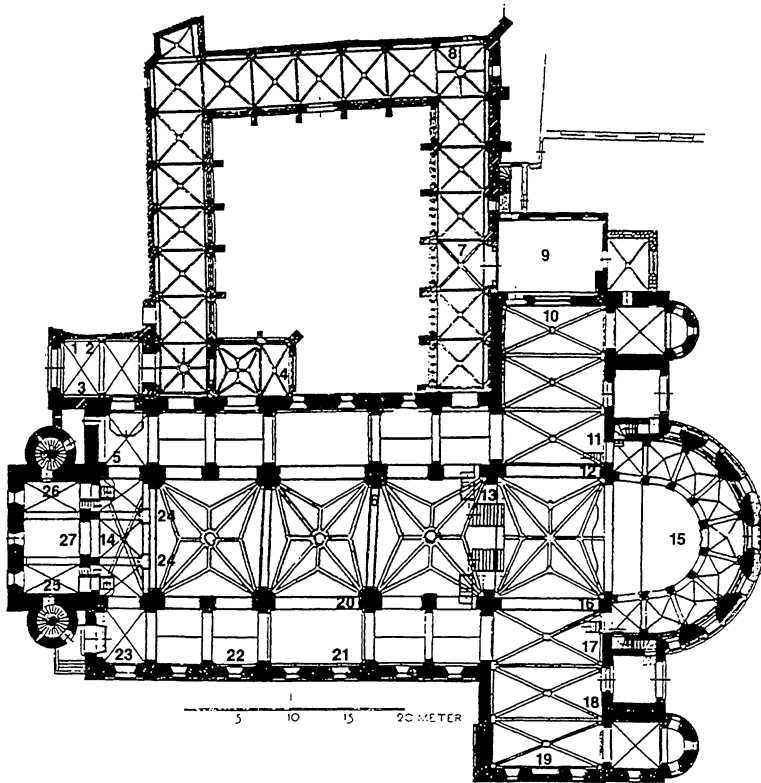
Fully cognizant of the parallel between the Jesus story and the Daniel story (as were the writers of the *New Testament Gospels*), the twelfth-century choir school at Beauvais Cathedral created *The Play of Daniel* in the then two-century-old tradition of the liturgical drama. The "young people" at Beauvais Cathedral, so the dramatic text tells us, composed both words and music, as well as appropriating familiar chant music and texts from the existing liturgy.⁴

The dramatic power of the twelfth-century liturgical drama continues to astonish us. In addition to the approximately 1,000 extant manuscripts of the *Visitatio Sepulchri*, some 200 medieval manuscripts survive of liturgical dramas based on other Biblical stories, such as Daniel in the lions' den. The best dramas from this period bear import and captivate us in our own time. That is not only true for medievalists, musicologists, and theatre historians, but also for performing artists, for musicians and theatermakers. When these different groups collaborate in a live performance as with the *Ludus Danielis* at Maastricht, an artistic breakthrough may occur and our understanding of the work can reach a new level.

Five years ago the Amsterdam Schola Cantorum met up with Dunbar H. Ogden from the Drama Department of the University of California, Berkeley. He had been doing research for some years on the staging of drama in the medieval church and was working at the time as a Fellow-in-Residence at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study. For a decade, the Schola had been specializing in the performance of medieval sacred music. It was a happy accident that brought the Schola together with Ogden. They let him persuade them to undertake patterns of movement in a church while singing the liturgical drama. Together they tested in actual practice of some of his hypotheses about the original, medieval mise-en-scene.

This joint venture led to a number of successful collaborative projects in the Netherlands and in the United States. For Easter Vespers in the Dutch Abbey of Egmond, they staged the *Visitatio Marie Magdalene* [sic], the fifteenth-century manuscript of which (with music) originated at Egmond Abbey. Two years later they collaborated for the first time on the *Daniel*, creating a production in a modern American cathedral as the centerpiece for the huge annual conference of medievalists in Michigan (2,500 medievalists) and then taking the work to "The Actors' Church" in New York City, also known as "The Little Church Around the Corner." The contrast could hardly have been greater between the open, stone cathedral with its high altar erected at the center of a marble disk some thirty-feet in diameter, and the carved wooden surroundings of the small, nineteenth-century Gothic interior (seating capacity c. 250). Right after that the Schola adapted the *Daniel* for radio and made a live broadcast for WNYC, for the annual Christmas-season repertoire of New York City's music and news station. Their most extensive and successful staging took place during the Musica Sacra Festival on 21 September 1996 with the *Ludus Danielis* in the Church of Our Lady in Maastricht.

The performance was carried out with great solemnity by a brilliant sounding, ten-man Schola Cantorum which, dressed all in the same monks' habits, explored the various spaces of the church during the singing. On the basis



Ground plan of the Church of Our Beloved Lady and cloister

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| 1. The Oath, stone relief, 12th c. | 14. Severin organ, 1652 |
| 2. The Triumphant Christ, stone relief, 12th c. | 15. Choir, 12th/13th c. |
| 3. Holy Bishop, stone relief, 13th c. | 16. Sculpture of St Anna Selbdritt, 15th c. |
| 4. Miracle-working statue of Our Lady "Star of the Sea", late 15th c. | 17. Sculpture of St Rochus, 18th c. |
| 5. St Christopher, carving, 15th c. | 18. Painting of St Anna Selbdritt, 17th c. |
| 6. Pulpit, 1721 | 19. Former High Altar, 2nd half 18th c. |
| 7. Cloister, 1558/59 | 20. Painting of St Catherine, 14th c. |
| 8. Treasure chamber | 21. Mary With the Inkwell, sculpture, 15th c. |
| 9. Sacristy | 22. St Hubert, sculpture, 18th c. |
| 10. St Barbara, carving, 15th c. | 23. Pietà, ca. 1400 |
| 11. Altar of St Joseph, 18th c. | 24. SS. Lambert and Nicholas, 18th c. |
| 12. Holy Trinity, carving, 1716 | 25. Baptismal font cast in copper, 15th c. |
| 13. Eastern crypt, 11th c. | 26. Angel with cross and chalice, 14th c. |
| | 27. Western crypt |

of his historical research, Ogden laid out the movements in a choreography. According to the demands of the words and music the ten singers frequently performed as a unit, or at times split into half choruses, or one individual would take on a character role to emerge and perform over against the chorus. The *Daniel* opened in front of the high altar, and then scenes of the music-drama spread to various parts of the eleventh-and-twelfth-century basilica (Fig. 3, 4, 5).⁵ Processions wound up and down every aisle. The chorus would pause and perform scenes at different locations in the basilica, often with characters singing to each other or to the chorus across large distances, each Schola member singing multiple roles, with the exception of Daniel and the two kings. At one point Daniel ascended up into the carved wood pulpit in mid-church—his “house” in the play—and from up there he sang his exchanges with the Counsellors positioned below in the nave. They sang to each other over the heads of audience members seated in the pews. At another point two assassins and King Belshazzar peeled off from a nave-long procession and mimed the royal murder on the steps to the high altar while the rest of the chorus disappeared into a side chapel. Eventually the chorus returned carrying lighted candles in order to install Darius at the high altar as their new king. All the while the Schola sang one piece of music after another, the *Daniel* being much like a little opera. As the work closed, the Schola once again came before the high altar.

Beneath the high altar the eleventh-century crypt entrance became the entrance to the lions’ den. The Latin stage direction in the text calls for “a pit” (*lacus*). Nothing could have been more appropriate than this subterranean burial chamber of the ancient church, and nothing could have infused the pit with the potential for miracle more than its location underneath the sacred high altar. This very crypt was also used in the medieval church on Easter to stage *The Visit to the Sepulchre*: the journey of the three Marys to the Tomb of Jesus, their finding it empty, their learning of Jesus’ Resurrection from an Angel or Angels there, and their turning with their great news to announce it to the congregation. *The Play of Daniel* also ends with a joyous announcement to the congregation and thereby links the Daniel story directly with the Jesus story. Daniel comes forward and then an Angel to conclude with the prophecy of the coming birth of Christ.

Even though the singers only used stylized gestures to indicate various characters, they nevertheless drew the audience into the action. At other times, as the chant soared through the high-vaulted basilica, it seemed an extended meditation on the events of the Daniel story. In fact, as the work unfolded this oscillation between meditative passages and stylized action generated a special dramatic tension in the musical performance.

Always the primary emphasis throughout the event remained on the sung text, while gestures hinting at the creation of a dramatic character were decidedly



Figure 4. The photos (half-tones), from R.R.B.M. Wagenaar, *Maastricht, Papal Basilica and Church of Pilgrimage* (Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 1995), pp. 1 and 5 (photo credit, Andreas Lechtape). Maastricht, Church of Our Lady. P. 1—exterior, tenth-century westwork. P. 5—interior, east choir, twelfth-century.

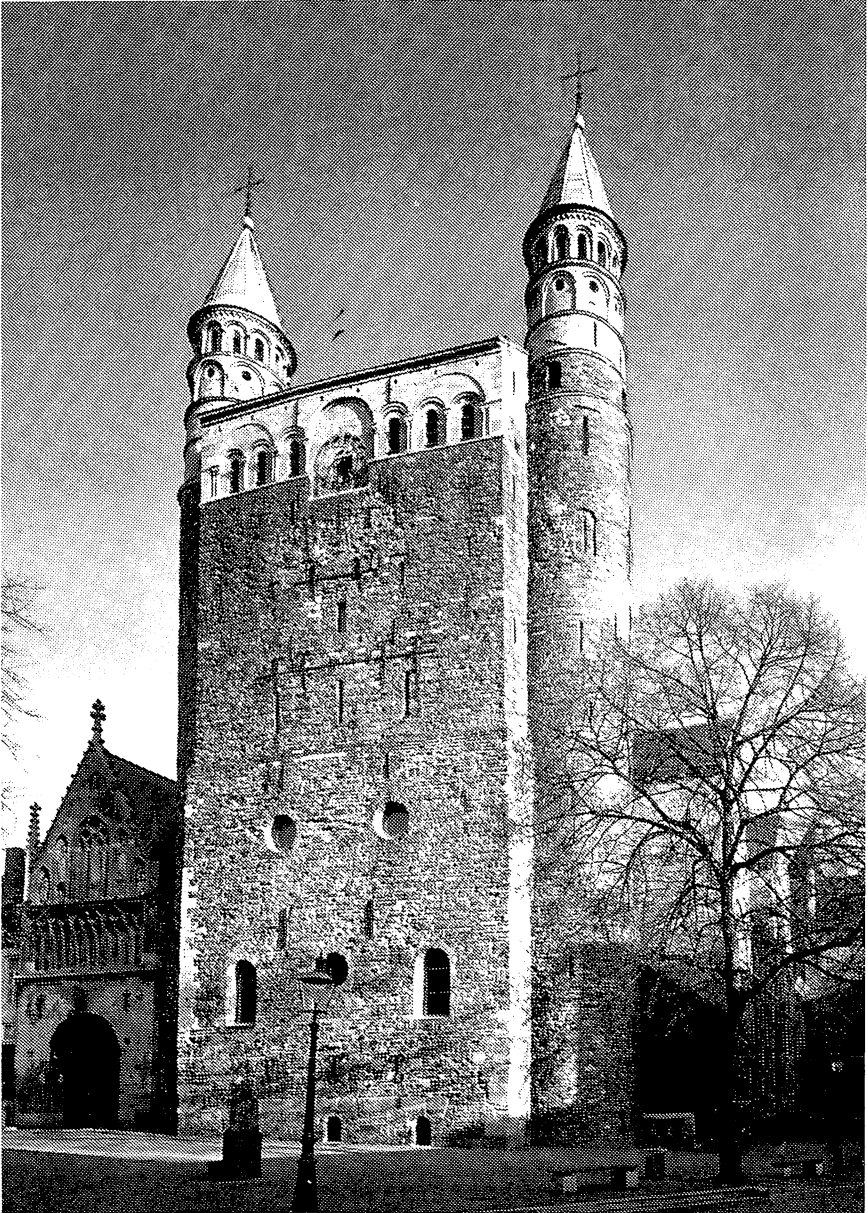


Figure 5

muted. Yet by employing the entire interior space of the basilica, the performance as a whole achieved a visual and musical three-dimensionality. It reached a dramatic point particularly in scenes where a singer stood opposite the chorus. One of the most striking of such moments occurred when Daniel took up an authoritative position in the chancel. There, in front of both chorus and audience, he sang and gestured the meaning of the mysterious writing on the wall, "Mane, Thechel, Phares" (written thus in the medieval Latin text).

At the outset, the audience evinced noticeable surprise. They were unsure, hesitant to accept the *mise-en-scene*. For this was a gathering of people from all over the world who had come to Maastricht for the *Musica Sacra* Festival in order to hear a week filled with sacred music. As the *Daniel* commenced, many began to follow the notes in the musical scores that they had brought with them, while others started to read the dramatic text printed in the Festival program as the Schola sang the lines. Others sat with their eyes closed, listening. But then people started to look up from their scores and texts and to open their eyes and to watch this *Daniel* as well as to hear it. One felt a gradual change in the atmosphere, a shift in the attitude of the audience from hesitancy to acceptance to enjoyment to, finally, being deeply moved by the chant fused with austere, fresco-like pageantry. The production succeeded in annealing the meditative and the dramatic. Some of the audience members seemed to experience the Maastricht performance in a meditative mood, while others seemed to follow the action in a participative way. As Daniel literally arose from the crypt entrance and, singing "King, live forever!" ("*Rex, in eternum vive!*") he came into view, one felt a release of joy in the audience, perhaps a surrogate resurrection from the meditative state or a vicarious thrill at the character's re-emerging from death to life, from darkness into light. At the end—the church was packed—they gave the Schola a standing ovation.

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Notes

1. Cited texts of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* are published by Walther Lipphardt, ed., *Lateinische Osterfeiern und Osterspiele*, 9 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975-90). Lipphardt numbers each text. Thus the Gernrode text c. 1500 (MS copied 1502): L 786-786a. See also Lipphardt, "Die Visitatio Sepulchri (III. Stufe) von Gernrode," *Daphnis*, 1 (1972) 1-14.

For the Gernrode church and sepulchre: Klaus Voigtländer, *Die Stiftskirche zu Gernrode und ihre Restaurierung, 1858-1872* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1980). See also Wolfgang Erdmann, et. al, "Neue Untersuchungen an der Stiftskirche zu Gernrode," *Bernwardinische Kunst*, ed. Martin Gosebruch (Göttingen: Verlag Erich Goltze, 1988) 245-285. In addition, see Hans K. Schulze, *Das Stift Gernrode* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1965); also Annemarie Schwarzweber, *Das heilige Grab in der deutschen Bildnererei des Mittelalters* (Freiburg i.B.: Eberhard Albert Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1940) 7-8.

Special notes on the location of features of the Gernrode church related to the staging of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* there. The features are numbered and lettered as given on the attached plan, Figure 1: 1. Holy Sepulchre, grave room. 2. Holy Sepulchre, forecourt. F. The grave of Abbess Hathui (Hadwig, Hedwig), the first Abbess, was just west of the altar of the Holy Cross: "in medio aecclesiae coram sanctae crucis altari" (Voigtländer, 136, document from 1014). The Marys emerge from the Sepulchre and go to this position, where the chief celebrant is waiting for them to ask "Maria, quid ploras?" ("Mary, why do you weep?"). H. Possible location of the Abbess.

I wish to express my gratitude to Stiftskirche Gernrode Pfarrer and Frau Christian Günther for their help with my work in Gernrode.

Figure 1: adapted from Voigtländer 28. Figure 2: Schulze 113.

2. For full documentation and discussion of the liturgical drama at Sion see Dunbar H. Ogden, *The Staging of Drama in the Medieval Church* (Associated University Presses, forthcoming).

3. *Visitatio Sepulchri* texts cited in relation to Holy Sepulchre chapels and tombs of local sacred figures. Text numbers in Lipphardt's edition.

Bamberg (sixteenth century) L195a

Constance (fifteenth century, 1502) L239, 241

Meissen (1520) L614

Metz, Abbey of St. Arnulf (St. Arnould) (1240) L269

Rheinau (1600) L316

St. Gall (1582, 1583) L330, 331

Sion (Sitten, 1474) L746, 746a, b, c

Strassburg (1364) L342

Trier, Abbey of St. Simeon (fifteenth century) L356

Trier, Cathedral (1305-1307) L349

4. See *The Play of Daniel: Critical Essays*, ed. Dunbar H. Ogden, Early Drama, Art, and Music, Monograph Series, 24 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1996) with a facsimile of the British Library, MS. Egerton 2615 and a fresh transcription of the music and translation by A. Marcel J. Zijlstra. Another consideration of the *Daniel* at Maastricht by R.L. Erenstein:

“*Ludus Danielis* in Maastricht,” *Western European Stages*, 9, 2 (spring 1997) 67-70.

5. Figure 3 adapted from *Maastricht, Papal Basilica and Church of Pilgrimage*, R.R.B.M. Wagenaar (Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 1995), 15. Position 13 on the plan locates a set of steps—at the **north**-west corner of the raised east choir—leading down into the eastern crypt. A matching set of steps at the **south**-west corner also descends into the crypt. It is these latter steps that served in the *Daniel* as the entrance to the lions’ den. Figures 4, 5 also from Wagenaar, *Maastricht*, pp. 1, 5.

New Orleans' Theatre of the Dead: Remembering at St. Roch's

Leslie A. Wade

What is essential is the cadaver as talisman, as the bearer of life and fertility; culture always develops as a tomb . . . in the end the tomb is the first and only cultural symbol (Girard, 83).

The dead body has been an object of fascination for most all cultures, though history has produced no single mode of dealing with or disposing of the corpse. Corpses have been neglected, eaten, disfigured, disemboweled, mummified, burned, embalmed, entombed, and, in the case of Ferdinand Marcos, put under glass and refrigerated.¹ While these many different handlings of the body may reveal no Ur-pattern, funerary practices reveal much about the process of community-making, for a culture's treatment of its dead issues from the constraints, categories, and colonizations of the living.

This essay will examine the matter of death, what Michel Feher calls the "nerve site" of "both life's ritualization and life's problematization" (15). My discussion will first give a site-specific reading of a New Orleans Day of the Dead ritual (the celebration of All Saints' Day at Saint Roch's Cemetery) and its motifs of memory, lineage, and intercession. The paper will then forward some theoretical musings upon identity and community, issues ranging from sacral violence to the posthuman body.

My work is greatly indebted to Joseph Roach's recent book *Cities of the Dead*, which effectively rewrites American history according to the performances enacted by and upon circum-Atlantic bodies. While the book's title draws attention to New Orleans' above-ground cemeteries, traditionally referred to as "cities of the dead," Roach uses the term chiefly as a guiding trope and gives only passing attention to the cemeteries themselves. This essay thus functions in hyper-text fashion, examining one particular city of the dead and its autumnal theatre of the tomb.

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The St. Roch Cemetery (and chapel), though not the oldest cemetery in New Orleans, is perhaps the city's most unusual.² St. Roch's lies some distance north of the French Quarter, established in the working-class neighborhood known as the "faubourg des allemandes." Under the auspices of the Holy Trinity Catholic Church, this site served the many German immigrants who came to New Orleans in the nineteenth century, a time when the city's predominately French hegemony was being eroded by a wider Anglophone influx.

The narrative of St. Roch's founding is both quaint and compelling. Father Peter Thevis, a Catholic missionary from Cologne, came to New Orleans in 1867 during one of the city's yellow fever epidemics and upon witnessing the decimation prayed to St. Roch, the patron saint of miraculous cures, that his parishioners might be spared. According to tradition, Thevis' wish was granted. In appreciation, the priest built—by hand—a small, medieval style chapel, housing a wooden altar and large statue of St. Roch (and his dog). A cemetery developed around the site and was named "Campo Santo," after a burial ground for Germans near St. Peter's in Rome.

From its inception to the present, St. Roch's has each November 1st hosted multitudes who come to the cemetery and chapel to celebrate All Saints' Day, a religious holiday that is honored in South Louisiana with a dedication and fervor seen only in few other places of the Catholic world.³ The spectacle and fame of Mardi Gras have in some sense preempted consideration of other festival celebrations in New Orleans; however, for much of the city's history Mardi Gras and All Saints' Day operated as counterparts, the principal community events of the annual calendar. As a local writer once noted: "New Orleans' two great occurrences are Mardi Gras, to which it invites the world, and All Saints' Day, which is reserved for itself" (Lester 22). For much of this century, All Saints' has been a civic holiday, closing banks, schools, and public offices. Even as late as the 1960s (with the increased transience and secularization of American culture), over a quarter of a million New Orleanians commemorated this day in the local cemeteries (Lepoma).

In *Cities of the Dead* Roach employs the term "vortex of behaviors" (28) to describe ritual sites, and certainly the cemetery on All Saints' Day exhibits a peculiar set of performance conventions. Basic to the celebration is the restoration of the grave itself. Family members usually gather the evening before and attend to the tomb, removing weeds, cleaning the stone, white-washing the exterior, etc. On the morning of the holiday, chrysanthemums are placed on the graves. Though masses are conducted and priests frequently lead processions through the cemetery, the service is not the focal point of the holiday. Rather, the day follows an informal, leisurely rhythm, one set by the coming and going of parishioners and friends. Most allow themselves ample time to sit and visit.