

# EXAMPLE OR ALTER EGO?

ASPECTS OF THE *PORTRAIT HISTORIÉ* IN WESTERN ART  
FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE PRESENT

# NIJMEGEN ART HISTORICAL STUDIES XXII

## SERIES EDITORS

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Aspects of the *Portrait Historié* in Western Art  
from Antiquity to the Present

Edited by  
Volker Manuth, Rudie van Leeuwen, Jos Koldewey

BREPOLS

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# IN THE GUISE OF A CHRISTIAN: THE EARLY MEDIEVAL PRELIMINARY STAGE OF THE *PORTRAIT HISTORIÉ*

•  
KEES VEELENTURF  
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**T**his paper examines how alleged portraits and the use of portrait-like images from the early Middle Ages have played a role in the historiography on the development of the *portrait historié*. Especially in the case of representations of princes, within a wide contextual variety, equational identifications with historical and sacred persons from the past have frequently been proposed. Some iconographic probing reveals that such equations are commonplace in texts, but that presumed visual parallels usually are highly problematic, so much so that one can conclude that these parallels exist predominantly in the modern literature on this type of imagery.

As the subtitle of this contribution betrays, this paper will deal with early medieval images. True likenesses, i.e. images resembling the physiognomy of real persons, do not appear to exist in the visual arts of the early Middle Ages. Consequently, there is no isolated category of works of art comparable to the autonomous *vera effigies* from the later Middle Ages and beyond.<sup>1</sup> No portrait means no *portrait historié* either, so it would be a hilarious exercise to examine the latter within the context of this period. A discussion of the struggle of

art historians with problems of portraiture and ‘storiated’ portraits may, nevertheless, produce some illuminating insights stretching further than the theme of the *portrait historié* alone.

It is true, of course, that a considerable number of early medieval depictions of actual human figures have survived, some of which have given rise to the assumption that they possess portrait-like features since they seem, to some extent, to be individualized. The problem with these alleged instances of real portrayal is quite obvious. We will never know whether an effigy dating from the early Middle Ages is a true portrait or not since the possibilities of comparison and documentation for ‘portraits’ from this era are extremely limited.

It will perhaps not come as a surprise that some scholars are nevertheless convinced of the ‘portrait value’ of certain depictions of historical human beings, amongst whom we could count biblical and saintly persons. Apparently, the need of knowing the likeness of our predecessors in time is a perennial one.

## Argument built upon assumption

A fine example of the belief in the existence of early portraits is the well-known gilt bronze

1. *Vera effigies* is used here as a generic term, but of course it has often been used exclusively for an image that stands in a tradition of ‘authentic sacred portraits’, the *vera icon* of Christ. A *vera icon* was considered to be a true portrait since it was not made by human hands, for instance, the *mandylion* from Edessa and the *sudarium* of Veronica. The man-made images that are

in some way derived from them constitute a separate category of portraiture. Almost the same holds true for the Virgin Mary as painted by St Luke the Evangelist, which produced a pictorial tradition of St Luke Madonnas with a distinct authenticity matter. Cf. Katzenellenbogen 1937; Belting 1990, pp. 64-72, 233-52; Kessler/Wolf 1998; Amsterdam 1994, pp. 40-48.

*Barbarosakopf* in Cappenberg, Westphalia (ill. 1).<sup>2</sup> It has been called ‘die erste unabhängige Porträt-darstellung der abendländischen Kunst seit karolingischer Zeit.’<sup>3</sup> In the so-called testament of Count Otto von Cappenberg (d. 1171), who had received this head – which would later function as a reliquary – as a gift from Frederick I Barbarossa (c. 1123-90, r. 1152-90), it is stated that the head was formed after the looks of *an* emperor or *the* emperor.<sup>4</sup> No name was added, but researchers have commonly believed that Frederick I himself must have been meant.<sup>5</sup> The problem here is that the head’s features do not really match the description of Barbarossa’s looks, rather general as it is, given in the continuation from 1158-60 by Rahewin of Freising of the *Gesta Frederici*. This might not be found surprising since in an accepted tradition Rahewin based his description on older texts in which earlier and other rulers are depicted.<sup>6</sup> More weight has been given to the fact that the head does not correspond to ‘authenticated’ images of Frederick on his seals and golden bulls.

These items show him with short curly hair, and short and trimmed whiskers with a drooping moustache.<sup>7</sup> These ‘authenticated’ images display the emperor in the individualized form of a type – viz. as a ruler, and indeed as this specific ruler and no other – but not as a particular identifiable person. It has been assumed that the reason for this manner of individualization might be the wish to conform with the stylized iconography of a predecessor.<sup>8</sup> If this is true, it becomes quite difficult to identify true physiognomic features in these images.<sup>9</sup>

There can hardly be any doubt about Frederick Barbarossa’s involvement in the commission of our head reliquary, but that would not justify a naïve insistence on partial natural resemblance. Neither the wording in the so-called testament of Otto von Cappenberg nor comparative iconography give compelling reason to believe this.

A recently proposed alternative for the Barbarossa likeness is equally problematic.<sup>10</sup> The *Barbarosakopf*, in fact, possesses an Antique

2. Cappenberg, Schloßkirche St Johannes Evangelista, only 31.4 cm high; the head would date to 1150-60, see Cortjaens 2000; Nilgen 2000, pp. 358-60; Horch 2001, pp. 102-48; Belghaus 2005, pp. 37-39.

3. Fillitz 1977, p. 394.

4. The object is erroneously designated as a silver chandelier: ‘quin et lampadem argenteum ad Imperatoris formatum effigiem’, see Erhard 1851, pp. 39 no. 1849, 85-86 no. CCCX; cf. Cortjaens 2000, p. 386; Nilgen 2000, p. 360; Horch 2001, pp. 107-10 (on all relevant sources and on the confusion of *lampas* and *caput*), 134, 136, 140ff.; Belghaus 2005, p. 38. A manuscript from 1622, *Synopticus elenchus* by Johannes Stadtmann, in the Benedictine abbey of Gerleve near Billerbeck, Westphalia, states that Otto possessed ‘caput argenteum ad imperatoris eformatum effigiem’, see Horch 2001, p. 108ff. The Cappenberg head is not made of silver, but this is just one of the many recurring errors and confusions in the historiography of this famous piece of metalwork, for which see Horch 2001, p. 108ff., and especially p. 110 note 496.

5. No inscription on the head reliquary nor relevant written sources mention Frederick’s name, see Nilgen 2000, p. 360; Horch 2001, p. 147 with note 654, cf. p. 107; Belghaus 2005, p. 39.

6. Horch 2001, p. 141 (Latin text with German translation); Nilgen 2000, p. 358. The procedure of Rahewin was like Einhard’s, who in his *Vita Karoli Magni imperatoris* described the physical looks of Charlemagne, according to Gaborit-Chopin ‘dans un portrait sans doute exact dans les détails physiques’, but based on descriptions of emperors, especially Augustus, in the *Vitae duodecim caesarum* by Caius Suetonius Tranquillus, in order to give an idealized picture of his emperor, see Einhard/Notker

the Stammerer 1969, pp. 76-78 §§ 22-23, 185 note 60; Schramm 1965, pp. 22-23; Gaborit-Chopin 1999, pp. 35-36; Winter 2005, pp. 102, 107, 124-26. Rahewin followed in Einhard’s footsteps when he extensively borrowed from a number of Antique and early medieval writings, also Einhard’s, in his description of the ‘new Charles’ Barbarossa, see Goetz/Worstbrock 1989, col. 978; Fillitz 1998, p. 26. At least one author has believed that Rahewin’s personal knowledge of the emperor’s appearance in combination with his choice from the literary sources produced a description that shows what he found ‘bemerkenswert und eigentümlich’ in the emperor, see Horch 2001, p. 141 note 639.

7. Stuttgart 1977-1979, I, pp. 20-23 cat. no. 28-31; III, pls II-V Abb. 2-5 (cat. no. 29, 28, 30, 31 respectively); Schramm 1983, pp. 261-62, 459-60 no. 206-09; Nilgen 2000, pp. 358, 357 Abb. 1. It is difficult to discern from photographs whether the whiskers are short and trimmed, but the moustache is unmistakably hanging down.

8. Nilgen 2000, p. 357ff.; Belghaus 2005, pp. 38-39. Nilgen 2000, p. 357: ‘Dieser Typus mochte sehr allgemein auf den realen Zügen des jeweiligen Herrschers beruhen; er konnte aber – wie auch die persönliche Stilisierung des individuellen Aussehens – ebenso einer bewußten Wahl, etwa der Angleichung an einen bedeutenden Vorgänger, entsprechen.’

9. In the discussions of portrait features on early medieval ruler images – seals, coins, shrines etc. – facial hair (beard, moustache) is usually taken to be the only, or at least decisive, element that would assist with the identification of a certain historical person. Examples of such argumentations are too numerous to be listed here.

10. Nilgen 2000, p. 358ff.; cf. Belghaus 2005, pp. 37-39.



1. Barbarossakopf, 1150-1160, gilt bronze with silver and niello, 31.4 x 16 x 16 cm, Cappenberg, Schloßkirche St Johannes Evangelista. Photo: Centrum voor Kunst-historische Documentatie, Radboud University Nijmegen

appearance, although it now misses a laurel wreath or some other diadem. The asymmetrical moustache, which is not connected with whiskers

11. Nilgen 2000, pp. 358-59, 365 note 5. The town seal of Aix-la-Chapelle ranks with the earliest German town seals of Cologne, Trier, Mainz and Soest and was used before by the chapter of the minster of Aix-la-Chapelle (Fillitz 1998, p. 26 Abb. 121). It displays 'das Reich als transpersonale Größe in der Gestalt des "archetypischen" Kaiser Karls', see Groten 1986, pp. 5-15, especially pp. 12-14. The moustache of Charlemagne on this seal is more pronounced in its protrusion than the moustache of the *Barbarossakopf*, see Groten 1986, p. 5 Abb. 1. The figure of Charlemagne on his shrine is reproduced in: Mütherich/Kötzsche 1998, pl. III and XXXI.

12. These are sixteenth- and seventeenth-century drawings and the

or a beard, is a detail that is rarely seen in images of rulers from the later Middle Ages. However, some twelfth-century images of Charlemagne allegedly depict this emperor as having a similar moustache. Thus, Charles could be seen on a seal of the town of Aix-la-Chapelle attested as early as 1134, and on his own shrine, c. 1180-1215, in the same town (ill. 2).<sup>11</sup> Moreover, there are copies of Charlemagne images in Rome from the Carolingian period proper that display the same feature.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, if the Cappenberg reliquary once had a vegetal diadem, comparison could be made to coins of Charlemagne that display the same headdress.<sup>13</sup>

In past scholarship the conclusion was that the *Barbarossakopf* certainly is no straightforward 'portrait' of Frederick I Barbarossa, but one of a paradigmatic emperor. To Frederick I Barbarossa no one other than Charlemagne himself was entitled to fulfil this role. It has been supposed that traits of Barbarossa have perhaps been copied onto the Cappenberg head, as well as alleged true traits of Charlemagne.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, it has been deemed evident that the emphasis is on Charlemagne, because we could discern an iconographic relationship of the *Barbarossakopf* at least with other twelfth-century depictions of Charlemagne and not really with images of Barbarossa. The apparent reason would be that Emperor Frederick I wished to indicate or stress his place within the European imperial tradition that connected him with Charlemagne. As such, the Staufer reliquary would refer to Carolingian emperorship and to the Antique tradition in which it was rooted, and the only certain intentional similitude we are supposed to assume is with Charlemagne.

eighteenth-century mosaic copy with Charlemagne and Pope Leo III of the apse mosaic of the triclinium of the Lateran in Rome. The drawings of the lost apse mosaic of Sta Susanna are also from the sixteenth and seventeenth century. See Schramm 1965, pp. 20-21; Schramm 1983, pp. 151, 277-84 no. 7a-g, 7i-m, 8a-d; Luchterhandt 1999, Abbn 1-8; Nilgen 2000, p. 360.

13. Schramm 1983, pp. 149-50, 275-76 no. 6, cf. pp. 149, 274 no. 5i; Nilgen 2000, p. 360; Belghaus 2005, p. 39.

14. Nilgen 2000, p. 360 (cf. Cortjaens 2000, p. 387), whose final argument to some extent contradicts her findings on the imperial iconography of the (golden) seals of Frederick I Barbarossa; Belghaus 2005, p. 39.



2. Charlemagne enthroned, detail of the *Karlsschrein*, 1180-1215, gilt silver, filigree, precious stones, enamel, shrine  
94 x 57 x 204 cm, Aix-la-Chapelle, Dom. Photo: Aachen 2000, p. 363

Like the earlier interpretation, the new proposal for the identification of the *Barbarossakopf* is founded on quicksand. Seals, *Goldbullen* and coins undoubtedly have authentication power by virtue of their purpose. However, is reference to the actual likeness of the depicted ruler a requirement of their function? If so, could details like a floral diadem and moustache style be a decisive factor? Would the moustache have priority over the beard? The two adduced twelfth-century depictions of Charlemagne are not really consistent as regards the rendering of hair. Charlemagne on the seal of Aix-la-Chapelle clearly has a multi-lobed beard, whereas his chin on the *Karlsschrein* is evenly covered by a trimmed beard!<sup>15</sup> As for true portrayal, Charlemagne himself used the bust of Emperor Antonius Pius for his royal seal, while the bust of Jupiter Serapis adorned his judicial seal.<sup>16</sup> It is true that Charlemagne is depicted with a laurel wreath on his coins, but so are his successors Louis the Pious, Lothar I and Charles the Bald on theirs. Apart from making obvious that in the Carolingian period the facial traits that the relevant coins display are not founded in true physiognomy,<sup>17</sup> it may be questioned whether the wreath of Charlemagne alone would have been worthy of imitation in the *Barbarossakopf*. The Staufer seals, which form a series of *typical* renditions of emperors, can be taken to render neither

straightforward personal traits of Barbarossa, nor those of any other Staufer.<sup>18</sup> The entire discussion of true portrait aspects in the *Barbarossakopf*, Carolingian and Staufer coins, seals and bulls is based only on historic circumstantial evidence and upon iconographical assumptions. Since we lack the basis of firm argument, how could we ever believe that the *Barbarossakopf* was intended to represent the exemplary ruler Charlemagne while perhaps also displaying some physiognomic features of Frederick I Barbarossa? The primary written source for this reliquary states that it represents an emperor. Too much weight has been given to the notion that this emperor may be Barbarossa, and all findings on the cross-referral between this ruler and Charlemagne more or less depend on this assumption.<sup>19</sup>

The portrait of Charlemagne on his shrine in Aix-la-Chapelle, which figures so prominently within the advanced arguments, has been taken to be the first work of art in the chronology of the sacred *portrait historié* in Western art history. It was supposed to be executed with the looks of Frederick I since it bears resemblance to the *Barbarossakopf*. That this is a fallacy needs no further explanation.<sup>20</sup> The keywords for understanding facial correspondences in the ruler ‘portraits’ discussed are undoubtedly ‘type’ and ‘idealization’, not ‘precursor’ and ‘likeness.’<sup>21</sup>

15. The *Barbarossakopf*, moreover, has curly hair on the jawbones and a trapezoid goatee, the narrow side of which touches the lower lip.

16. Posse 1909, p. 9, Tf. 1:4-5; Posse 1913, pp. 5-6; Schramm 1983, pp. 148-49, 273 no. 2-3.

17. See the reproduction of Carolingian coins dating to the reigns of these rulers in: Paris 2007, p. 32.

18. Cf. Stuttgart 1977-1979, I, pp. 20-42 (seals and bulls, no. 27-60); III, pls 1-30 (seals and bulls).

19. It must be left aside whether the mentioning of the baptismal dish (*Taufschale*) that depicts the baptism of Barbarossa (Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv. no. 33,25) in the so-called testament of Otto von Cappenberg can play a role in the argument. See Horch 2001, pp. 104ff., 121ff., Abb. 19 on p. 104; Nilgen 2000, p. 360; Belghaus 2005, p. 39.

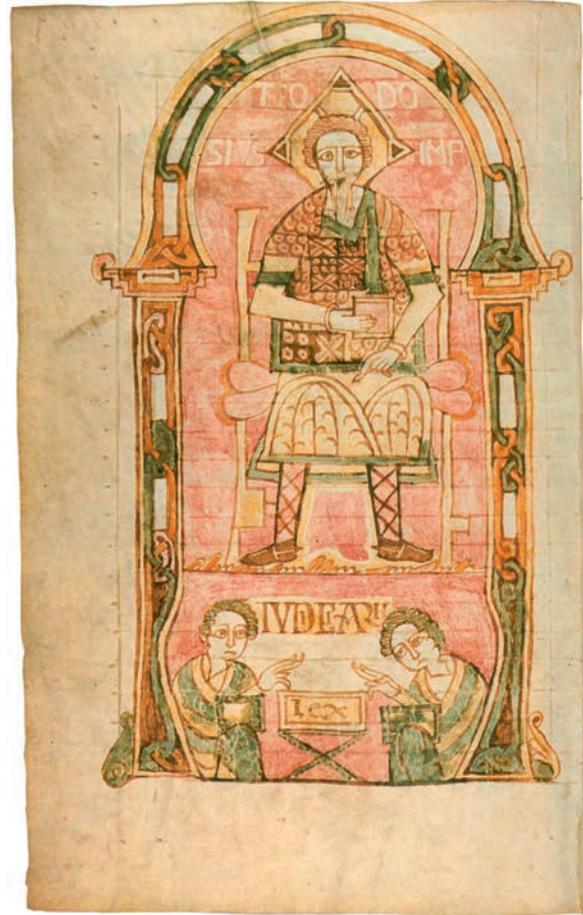
20. Grimme 1967, p. 238, where it states that the *Barbarossakopf*, representing Frederick I, and the head of Charlemagne on the *Karlsschrein* display striking similarities. Grimme saw traits of Barbarossa in the figure of Charlemagne on the shrine, enthroned ‘als ein neuer Carolus’. The identification as Barbarossa was also

proposed in: Ladner 1983, p. 83; cf. Fillitz 1998, pp. 26-27. Thanks to Ladner’s suggestion, the list of *sakrale Identifikationsporträts* in Polleross 1988, pp. 367-418, begins with no. 001 ‘Kaiser Friedrich I. Barbarossa als Karl der Große (?) / vor 1215, Karlsschrein / Aachen, Dom’, cf. p. 252. Although Polleross does not focus on non-sacred *portraits historiés*, Charlemagne could be included since at the instigation of Frederick I Barbarossa, he was canonized in 1165. This shrine depiction of Charlemagne should, however, be removed from the chronology of the *portrait historié*.

21. After having examined the seals, bulls and other Carolingian visual sources displaying the head of Charlemagne, Schramm (1965, p. 22) sighs, ‘Das Ergebnis dieses Rundblicks zusammenfassend, kommen wir zu der Feststellung, daß alle angeführten Bildzeugnisse zwar etwas zur “Staatsymbolik” dieser Jahrzehnte beitragen, daß jedoch ihre Aussagekraft – was das tatsächliche Aussehen Karls betrifft – minimal ist.’ How regrettable this may be, this should do, and, *mutatis mutandis*, also for Barbarossa. For the moustache of Charlemagne, which would be an imitation of the one of Theoderic the Great (c. 454-526), see especially pp. 24-26 in a fine and illuminative discussion of Merovingian and Carolingian attitudes toward hair, beard, moustache, and shearing: Dutton 2004.

## Der Schein trügt

It is clear that interpretative assumption may quite easily lead us astray and yield suppositions that are based on too little evidence. Another impetus for such unwarranted findings is the often frustrating ambiguity of visual detail. A more or less stray example will be discussed to demonstrate this practice. It concerns a miniature depicting Theodosius II in a manuscript in Leiden, probably originating from Bourges around 800 (ill. 3). It contains among other things the *Lex Romana Visigothorum* also known as the *Breviarium Alaricianum*. This particular recension of the Visigothic Roman law code is known as the *Epitome Aegidii* and is an adaptation of the collection issued in 506 by the Visigothic king Alaric II (r. 485-507), which includes sixteen books of the *Codex Theodosianus*. The *Codex Theodosianus* from 438 owes its name to Theodosius II, Eastern Roman emperor from 408 to 450. Therefore, the Leiden miniature should probably be seen as some sort of 'author portrait', which in this case surely must be termed derivative.<sup>22</sup> More problematic is the suggestion that the emperor-author is depicted here 'as a law-giver in the Mosaic tradition: the imperial image is modified by the horns traditionally given to Moses.'<sup>23</sup> Indeed, two horns sprouting from his head is a well-known element in the iconography of Moses. In our miniature, these alleged horns are depicted within a rhombus behind the emperor's head. This device has a visual effect similar to a halo, but it could easily be a decorative element behind the emperor, who is designated by his own name within the same space. The so-called 'horns' may simply belong to the geometrical pattern of the rhombus, which includes small triangles on the three visible corners. This decorative pattern likely represents a distortion of some kind of headdress.



3. Miniature depicting Eastern Roman emperor Theodosius II with two scribes below, probably Bourges, c. 800, Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Ms BPL 114, fol. 17v. Photo: Leiden 1987, p. 38

Another manuscript containing the *Breviarium Alaricianum* and contemporaneous with the one in Leiden also has a miniature of Theodosius, who is accompanied by his two sons and, on the facing page, by four lawyers (ill. 4).<sup>24</sup> The emperor undoubtedly wears some kind of crown.<sup>25</sup> Comparing the two images of Theodosius, it is clear that the Leiden rhombus may be a corruption of headgear similar to what we encounter here.

22. Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Ms BPL 114, fol. 17v; Molhuysen 1912, pp. 57-58; Byvanck 1931, p. 67; Bischoff 1981, p. 17 with note 57; Obbema 1987.

23. Anonymous caption to p1. 33, in: Thessaloniki/Cologne/Leiden/Stockholm/London 1997. The miniature is only alluded to in passing within this volume in: Wood 1997, p. 116.

24. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms lat. 4404, fol. 1v-2r. This manuscript probably dates to 803-14 and was likely manufactured in the Loire Valley. See Denoël 2007.

25. Prof. Robert W. Scheller, Amsterdam, informs me that this crown is presumably a figment of fancy, which is not an unusual thing in this period. It certainly is no Byzantine crown.



4. Two pages with miniatures depicting Theodosius II and other figures, probably Loire Valley, c. 803-814, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms lat. 4404, fol. 1v-2r. Photo: Paris 2007, p. 164

The conclusion that the presence of the ‘horns’ places Theodosius in a ‘Mosaic tradition’, even conforming him to the iconography of Moses, is rash and based neither on pictorial certainty nor on current art-historical knowledge.<sup>26</sup> In a way this is a pity, for it means one *portrait historié* less, but at the same time it is a clear instance of how the modern scholar may rely too much on superficial observation or reflection.

26. Mellinkoff 1970, p. 13ff., tells us that the first images of the horned Moses appear in the Old English Illustrated Hexateuch from eleventh-century England (London, British Library, Ms Cotton Claudius B. IV), so we do not find the Leiden miniature discussed in her book. For the explanation why Moses received his horns in iconography, see Mellinkoff 1970, pp. 1-2.

27. The first independent painted portrait preserved since Antiquity

### Flash-forward: the true *portrait historié* in the later Middle Ages

The apparent need for identifying *Kryptoporträts* or *portraits historiés* in works of art from the early Middle Ages probably owes much to the more successful results pertaining to later eras. In late medieval art, when the portrait in a modern sense emerges,<sup>27</sup> we also quite soon encounter true

would be the panel painting of the French king Jean II le Bon (1319-64, r. 1350-64), which would date before 1350 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Dépôt de la Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1925 [R.F. 2490]). The inscription on the panel, which is later than the portrait itself, reads ‘Jehan roy de France’. Since Jean is depicted without a crown, he is allegedly represented as the Duke of Normandy, his title before he became king.

*portraits historiés*, usually in an allegorical context of a Christian nature. Not surprisingly, the people who were rendered as venerable persons from the past more often than not were aristocrats or royal persons. The perhaps most appropriate examples make up three distinct groups.

The first group or category consists of individual kings depicted as the Three Kings (Magi) who visited the newborn Christ in Bethlehem.<sup>28</sup> This royal representation within an Epiphany scene served a multiple purpose: in this context the Three Kings formed exemplary representatives of their rank, for in their tribute to the little Christ they express the devotion to which the supreme ruler is entitled. This also works conversely since a king's right to receive homage is presented simultaneously in what might be called a mirroring way.<sup>29</sup> We already encounter this notion in what is not a real specimen,<sup>30</sup> but what may be styled a forerunner: the depiction of Otto IV of Brunswick (c. 1175 or 1182-1218) on the *Dreikönigenschrein* in Cologne.<sup>31</sup> He is not one of the Three Magi or royalties, but functions as a fourth king, albeit without a crown and with slightly smaller dimensions. It is assumed that Otto wished to see his royal position reconfirmed by his inclusion on the front of this important shrine, which then would also function as a visual 'charter'. We apparently do not see a real portrait here, but the inscription 'OTTO REX' makes clear with whom we are dealing.<sup>32</sup>

The late medieval *portrait historié* that uses the Old Testament figure of King David is undoubtedly a category that will be deemed most fitting to represent kingship. David was an obvious role model for rulers because of his courage and wisdom, and his *pietas* and remorsefulness. Moreover, David was called to the kingship by God himself, and since he also stands prominently in the genealogy of Christ, a prince could choose no better antetype for his self-presentation.<sup>33</sup> The kingship of David was something worthy of imitation for medieval royalty,<sup>34</sup> which often found a reflection in iconography, but even after the Middle Ages we still encounter iconographic identification with David.<sup>35</sup> We will meet this king and psalmist again further below.

A group of esteemed historical persons who would have perfectly lent themselves to serious costume pieces were the Nine Heroes.<sup>36</sup> They functioned as appealing examples of chivalry and exemplary rulers. Three pagans came from Antiquity: Hector of Troy, Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar; three Jews were taken from the Old Testament: King David, Joshua, and Judas Maccabaeus while the Christian trio was medieval: King Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon. They emerged in both European literature and art during the fourteenth century and became widely popular, also in association with other groups or figures.<sup>37</sup> An early and by now famous ensemble depicting

28. For surveys, including post-medieval specimens, see Vloberg 1953, pp. 21-28 (French kings only); Büttner 1983, pp. 19-33 (not only *portraits historiés*), 197-99 Appendix A: Porträtszüge in Darstellungen der Magier; Polleross 1988, pp. 177-205.

29. Büttner 1983, p. 27; Polleross 1988, pp. 177-78.

30. The earliest representation of a terrestrial ruler as one of the Three Kings might be the effigy of Emperor Charles IV of Luxemburg (1316-78) on a Bohemian diptych, dating to c. 1360 (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, inv. no. AZO22.1 [Adoration panel]), see Wammetsberger 1967, pp. 83, 89 no. 18; Pešina 1978; Büttner 1983, p. 197; Polleross 1988, pp. 179, 368 no. 10; Fajt 2005. There are more alleged instances of Charles IV as one of the Three Kings, see Wammetsberger 1967, pp. 83, 89, 91 (no. 20, 51, 55).

31. Shrine of the Three Kings or Magi, c. 1190-1225 (Cologne, cathedral), begun by the workshop of goldsmith Nicolaus of Verdun (c. 1130-c. 1205).

32. Stehkämper 1982, pp. 39-40, 45-46; Büttner 1983, pp. 26, 214-15, Abb. 14; Polleross 1988, p. 178; Lauer 2006, pp. 18, 20-21, 26 Abb. 20, 32 Abb. 29.

33. Steger 1961, *passim*; Büttner 1983, pp. 190-91; Polleross 1988, pp. 100-02.

34. Cf. Steger 1961, pp. 125-32 Die imitatio David Regis durch den mittelalterlichen Herrscher.

35. Polleross 1988, pp. 104-11.

36. Also called the Nine Worthies, in French *les Neuf Preux*, in German *die Neun Besten* or *die Neun (guten) Helden*, in Dutch *de Negen Besten*.

37. Wyss 1957; Wyss 1970; Schroeder 1971; Van Anrooij 1997.



5. Miniature in a Coptic manuscript showing Byzantine emperor Heraclius with his family, Egypt, c. 615-640, Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, Ms I.B.18, fol. 4v. Photo: New York 1979, p. 36

the Nine Heroes is the tapestries in the Cloisters, New York, probably made for Jean Duke of Berry c. 1385.<sup>38</sup> It is quite remarkable that the Nine Heroes are rarely depicted as princes or other persons of importance who would emulate them. Perhaps the number nine made it hard to collect enough suitable people to make up a coherent or desirable *portrait de groupe historié*, and maybe we would have indeed possessed a fair number of specimens in that category if it had not been heroes but three triads of the good, the bad, and

the ugly. Whatever the reason, it is remarkable that only a few instances of *versteckte Porträts* have been recognized in Nine Heroes depictions and never up to the full number nine.<sup>39</sup> However, we sometimes encounter a Tenth Hero, but predominantly in texts, who of course is a prince who was thought by himself or by others to be of the same chivalrous standing as the Nine Heroes.<sup>40</sup> In the Netherlands an alleged example of such a Tenth Hero is Prince Maurits of Orange (1567-1625), who apparently was the Tenth Hero on a tapestry that is only known from a 1632 inventory of the royal Huis Noordeinde in The Hague.<sup>41</sup> Here we would have a parallel to the addition of King Otto IV to the Three Kings on their shrine in Cologne.

### Contraflow as a principle

After this triple jump let us return to the *early* Middle Ages, but not at once to Western Europe. The connection between the represented historical person and the actual 'sitter' who lends his or her face to this historical person may sometimes take the form of contraflow. This matter is not always without interpretative problems. An instructive example is a drawing in a fragmentary Coptic manuscript of the Old Testament in Naples (ill. 5). At the end of the text of the Book of Job, an emperor with three women dressed in imperial tunics and dalmatics are depicted, of which the woman in the centre must be an empress.<sup>42</sup> They appear beneath the words 'IOB HO DIKAIOS' (Job the Righteous) and must represent an imperial household. Because of their attire and the beard of the male figure, this family has been identified as

38. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters, inv. no. 47.101.3. The Nine Heroes Tapestry were attributed to the workshop of Nicolas Bataille in Paris, see Rorimer/Freeman 1949.

39. Schroeder 1971, pp. 204, 288 no. 78, Taf. 32; Polleross 1988, pp. 253, 390 no. 311, Abb. 106.

40. Schroeder 1971, pp. 203-24; Schmidt 1990-1991, p. 444; Van Anrooij 1997, pp. 97-104.

41. Schmidt 1990-1991, p. 444; Van Anrooij 1997, pp. 101, 187-88, 193, 216.

42. Drawing and Coptic uncials on parchment, 26 x 29 cm, text in a Coptic dialect, Egypt, c. 615-40; Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, Ms I.B.18, fol. 4v. See Leroy 1974, pp. 181-84, pl. 111; Spatharakis 1976, pp. 14-20, fig. 5; Breckenridge 1979; Ladner 1983, pp. 81-82; Durand 1984, pp. 123-24; Terrien 1996, pp. 47, 50 fig. 2.13.

that of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (c. 575-641, r. 610-41). He would be accompanied by his niece Martina who was his second wife, his sister and mother-in-law Epiphania, and his daughter Eudoxia from his first marriage. Although the name of Job is mentioned in the heading, the depicted male could not be him since Job would never have been represented as an emperor.<sup>43</sup>

This interpretation was countered by Otto Kurz as follows. The Coptic version of the Book of Job as well as the Septuagint redaction contain a concluding chapter in which it is stated that Job's name was formerly Jobab and that he is mentioned in Genesis 36:33 as the king of Edom. This would explain why Job and his family are depicted as royalty, in contemporary attire, but not as the family of an identifiable contemporary emperor.<sup>44</sup>

Both arguments have been combined in a synthesis: what we see is a depiction of Job and his daughters who have received the guise of the contemporary Emperor Heraclius and his female relatives.<sup>45</sup> This would be no anomaly in representational practice. It is known that in Byzantine art sacred persons could be represented while referring or alluding to the emperor or the court in a solemn style reminiscent of some palatine rite or circumstance.<sup>46</sup> If the emperor could be a 'new Solomon' or a 'new David', as he was frequently called, it is small wonder that we sometimes see the biblical figure in the guise of the emperor of the moment, provided his nature and stature would be on an adequate level.<sup>47</sup>

The examples brought forward in art-historical literature are but few, and they comprise King Abgar of Edessa appearing as Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (905-59, r. 913-59) on an icon in the monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai,<sup>48</sup> and St Constantine with the looks of, presumably, Emperor Michael VII (c. 1050-c. 1090, r. 1071-78)<sup>49</sup> on the Princeton Leaf,<sup>50</sup> while Ioannis Spatharakis surmised that in other instances St Constantine was also rendered with features of Basil I (c. 811-86, r. 867-86) and Alexius I (1048-1118, r. 1081-1118).<sup>51</sup> The choice for Heraclius to render the prototype of Christian patience in his capacity as king would fit into the picture of this practice quite well. It has therefore been concluded that the Coptic scribe who illustrated the Neapolitan manuscript apparently used an exemplar, 'a contemporary imperial "icon", on which the emperor was depicted, and that he found it more or less logical to render Job in the imperial manner that was familiar to him.<sup>52</sup>

Perhaps the Coptic artist saw an analogy between the dire straits of Job and the problems of Heraclius. Analogy is comparison, and in Byzantium comparison, *synkrisis*, is a matter of rhetoric. Emperors could be compared to good or bad 'forerunners': a good one to David, to Solomon, or to Constantine, while Saul, Pharaoh, or Herod would be suitable comparanda for a bad emperor. Such a comparison could also be made visually, more generally and also in a more particular way. The comparisons are sometimes not as obvious as a

43. Delbrueck 1929, pp. 270-74. Biblical scholars have meanwhile recognized that the author of the Book of Job wanted to suggest in the person Job a royal personality, see Caquot 1960. In fact, iconography has also taken this royal aspect of Job into account, see Durand 1984.

44. Kurz 1942-1943, pp. 163-64. This explanation was considered to be the best in: Leroy 1974, p. 181. Durand 1984, p. 113ff. expounds on the knowledge of the Job-Jobab identification in the West after St Jerome.

45. Spatharakis 1976, pp. 17-20; Breckenridge 1978, p. 361; Breckenridge 1979, p. 36.

46. Grabar 1971, pp. 95-97.

47. Breckenridge 1978, p. 361; cf. Ladner 1983, p. 81.

48. Weitzmann 1960, pp. 182-84; Spatharakis 1976, pp. 71-72; Breckenridge 1978, p. 361.

49. This emperor was suggested by Spatharakis 1976, pp. 73-74, but see also his survey of other emperors as previously adduced by other scholars.

50. Princeton (NJ), University Art Museum, Ms acc. 32.14, which must have belonged to a *tetraevangelion*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms M 748, see Spatharakis 1976, pp. 70-74, fig. 41; Breckenridge 1978, p. 361.

51. Respectively in a mosaic within the remains of the former Patriarchate next to the Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, and in a fresco in the church of the Panagia at Asinou, Cyprus, see Spatharakis 1976, p. 258; Ladner 1983, p. 81 note 24.

52. Breckenridge 1979, p. 36; cf. Kurz 1942-1943, p. 164; Leroy 1974, p. 184.

modern observer might expect.<sup>53</sup> More important for our concern is that the character of the *portrait historié* is in reverse here and perhaps could better be labelled more generally a *Kryptoporträt*. Therefore, the word ‘contraflow’ has been used here, for it is not the ‘sitter’ who is represented as somebody from the past, but it is the historical, usually sacred figure who receives the looks of a contemporary of the artist.

## The use and abuse of King David

The famous silver plates from Cyprus with scenes from the life of David date to the time of Emperor Heraclius.<sup>54</sup> Attempts to connect the scenes with events in the life and reign of Heraclius, victories and marriage as well as the problems of popularity connected with the latter, have not gone undisputed.<sup>55</sup> Considering this, we cannot altogether dismiss the possibility of a connection with the life of Heraclius.<sup>56</sup>

Not only in Byzantium, but also in the West of Europe early medieval rulers were compared with David. This practice is sometimes believed to be reflected in iconography. The scope of the published scholarly literature on early medieval ‘ruler theology’ as well as its depth can hardly be summarized. The early notions and ideas on *maiestas*, typology, mimesis, *gratia Dei rex* or

*Gottesgnadentum*, and other pertinent concepts, have been studied in a still growing but already overwhelming volume of learned literature. A problem for the iconographer is that several of these notions have filtered into the literature on art. Of course, it is rather attractive to apply them to depictions of kings and emperors, for they are linked with them in the written sources, and the David simile is abundantly present in these writings. However, it is to be questioned whether theories and notions that went along with this particular comparison were also translated into visual devices. Sometimes art historians seem to have become possessed by the ‘demon of ruler theory’ and change their humble craft for impressive speculative theology.

Two remarks in very different writings incited a closer look at this ‘use’ of David since they involve a visualization of a typology in reverse, viz. David in his capacity as Christ! This alleged phenomenon needs scrutiny since it might bear upon the matter of the early stages of the *portrait historié*. With regard to a miniature of David playing his harp in the Carolingian Vivian Bible, William Diebold writes: ‘David is not just like Christ, he is another Christ.’<sup>57</sup> Likewise, in an authoritative catalogue of early medieval artefacts, the iconography of the Pictish Sarcophagus from St Andrews has been said to present David as Christ.<sup>58</sup> We will pursue both statements successively.

53. Maguire 1988, p. 89; Maguire 1997, pp. 188-89.

54. Nine silver plates made in Constantinople, 628-30; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917, inv. no. 17.190.398 (I), 17.190.397 (III), 17.190.394 (V), 17.190.399 (VI), 17.190.396 (VII), 17.190.395 (IX), Nicosia, Cyprus Museum, inv. no. J454 (II), J453 (IV), J452 (VIII); reproduced in: Leader 2000, pp. 408-12.

55. See the papers by Suzanne Spain Alexander, James Trilling, Mariette van Grunsven-Eygenraam and Steven H. Wander, enumerated in Leader 2000, p. 424 frequently cited sources, who takes a different stance.

56. More examples of this type of David simile have been brought forward. Henry Maguire analyzed the Byzantine ivory David casket in the Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia in Rome, dating from the ninth or tenth century, which supposedly was made for an empress in Constantinople. He related the David scenes of this casket to the life and deeds of Emperor Basil I the Macedonian (c. 811-86, r. 866-86), but remarked, ‘But it should also be said that, in a general sense, the iconography of the

carvings could have suited any ruler who was a usurper and who gained the throne through the murder of his predecessor; the list of Byzantine emperors holding these qualifications is long.’ See Maguire 1988, pp. 89-93. In the Psalter of Basil II (Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Ms gr. 17), Maguire sees an adjustment of the David iconography to Basil II (958-1025, r. 960/976-1025), and he even sees facial similarity between the miniature of Basil II (fol. 3r) with the depiction of the older, penitent David (fol. 4v). See Maguire 1988, pp. 93-94. Ruth Leader, while heavily leaning upon the argumentation of an unpublished dissertation by John Hanson, challenges the findings of Maguire concerning the casket, as well as a different interpretation by others. She follows Hanson in supposing that the ‘meaning of David’ is modified by the comparison with the emperor, who is a ‘constant and immutable reality’. See Leader 2000, p. 414ff. It is a task for students of Byzantine culture to further elucidate this phenomenon and its problems.

57. Diebold 2000, p. 84.

58. Archibald/Brown/Webster 1997, p. 227.



6. Miniature with King David in the First Bible of Charles the Bald, Tours, c. 845, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms lat. 1, fol. 215v. Photo: F. Mütterich and J.E. Gaehde, *Carolingian Painting*, London 1977, pl. 22

In a miniature in the First Bible of Charles the Bald, also known as the Vivian Bible, we see King David playing his harp within a large mandorla and surrounded by four seated musicians and two standing armed soldiers (ill. 6). In the corners of the miniature four females hold palm branches. All these figures are accompanied by inscriptions.<sup>59</sup> Diebold, who expounds on typology in early medieval art and especially on the differences between word and image, states that whereas verbal language uses the simile or comparison – using *like* and *as* – visual language drops these grammatical elements while producing a direct equation. Since a facial resemblance between this David and the Christ in the *Maiestas Domini* miniature on fol. 329v is alleged, the simile would have given rise to the equation: David ‘is another Christ’.<sup>60</sup> The case becomes even more complex because the facial traits of Charles the Bald on fol. 423v are supposed to be identical to those of King David on fol. 215v. This might mean that in his time Charles was also seen as another Christ.<sup>61</sup> What now concerns us most is the observed facial resemblance of David, Christ and Charles the Bald. They do share some features, which is not surprising with simplified faces like these, but at the same time it is quite

clear that this resemblance emanates from the Tournian way of rendering male faces. One just has to compare all the faces on the three pages under scrutiny to confirm this latter observation. Moreover, Charles the Bald looks quite like his brother Lothar I in the Gospels of Lothar, also from Tours.<sup>62</sup> In the *Maiestas Domini* miniature in the Vivian Bible, St Luke, below right, has more in common with Christ than does King David. The adduced facial resemblances are only of a general nature and we therefore should dismiss any visual equation of David with Christ or of Charles the Bald with David or with Christ.<sup>63</sup>

No doubt the David simile played an important part at the Carolingian court. This is evident from abundant written testimonies, also within the Vivian Bible.<sup>64</sup> This does not mean, however, that we may assume that the simile was also continued in iconography, certainly not on the basis of unconvincing visual evidence. Again, this negative conclusion pertains to the history of the *portrait historié*, for we fail to see true *Kryptoporträt*s in this specific quarter of early medieval iconography, although the David comparison was undoubtedly applicable to the persons depicted.

Our next case is the remark about the

59. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms lat. 1, fol. 215v. The miniature precedes the Book of Psalms in the volume, which dates to c. 845 and was written and decorated in Tours. David is designated as ‘DAUID/REX/ET/PROP[heta]’; the soldiers have been labelled ‘CERETHI ET PHELETHI’, while the musicians are called ‘ASAPH’, ‘AEMAN’, ‘AETHAN’, and ‘IDITHUN’. The Cerethi and Phelethi were tribes subdued by David, and they made up his royal guard. They are mentioned in 1, 2, 3, 4 Kings and 1 Paralipomenon. The named men Asaph etc. occur in 1 and 2 Paralipomenon as singers and musicians. The females in the corners, personifications of the cardinal virtues, are labelled ‘PRVDENTIA’, ‘IVSTITIA’, ‘FORTITVDO’, and ‘TEMPERANTIA’.

60. Diebold 2000, pp. 82-84. The seated assistant figures would complete the similarity. Cf. Kessler 1977, p. 109.

61. Diebold 2000, p. 84; cf. Kessler 1977, pp. 109-10. Other similarities of the two miniatures advanced to establish a direct relationship between David and Charles are the flanking by armed men, the presence of personifications with palm branches, and the identicalness of the crowns of both kings.

62. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms lat. 266, fol. 1v; cf. Lauer 1940, p. 193.

63. As for the other advanced similarities: the compositions of the

David miniature and the *Maiestas Domini* page are entirely different, and the fact that Carolingian crowns have been placed on the head of Charles as well as on that of David fails to surprise. After much reasoning on verse and image in the Vivian Bible, Dutton/Kessler 1997, p. 99, conclude that at the beginning of this Bible Charles the Bald ‘was truly a young David in training’, ‘In the middle of the codex, he was exposed to and educated by the example of the divine humility of DAVID REX ET PROPHETA’, ‘But by the end of the great book, in the final dedicatory verse and in the Presentation miniature [...], he had finally become DAVID REX IMPERATOR. Charles the Bald was now none other than David himself.’ This is present-day art-historical rhetoric and denies the true nature of the simile in general and this one in particular. Cf. the treatment of the very much related issue of the Christlike rendering of Christians in De Chapeaurouge 1987-1988, which is much more careful.

64. Instances of the simile in the written sources have been collected in an unpublished dissertation by E. Rieber: *Die Bedeutung alttestamentlicher Vorstellungen für das Herrscherbild Karls des Großen und seines Hofes*, Tübingen 1949, which was not available to me. See also Kantorowicz 1946, p. 56ff.; Steger 1961, pp. 2, 126-27; Bullough 1975, p. 238; Garipzanov 2004, p. 92. For David in the Vivian Bible, see Steger 1961, p. 126; Kessler 1977, p. 109; Dutton/Kessler 1997, pp. 8, 41, 43, 81ff.



7a. Drawing of the long side panel and corner-slabs of the Pictish Sarcophagus with David as shepherd, eighth-ninth century, sandstone, St Andrews (Fife, Scotland), Cathedral Museum. © Crown copyright; Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (drawing by Ian G. Scott); licensor [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk)



7b. Long side panel of the Pictish Sarcophagus with David as shepherd, eighth-ninth century, sandstone, St Andrews (Fife, Scotland), Cathedral Museum. © Crown copyright; reproduced courtesy of Historic Scotland; [www.historicscotlandimages.gov.uk](http://www.historicscotlandimages.gov.uk)

iconography of the incomplete Pictish Sarcophagus of St Andrews, which might have contained the remains of a Pictish king (ill. 7a-7b).<sup>65</sup> On the surviving long side, the Sarcophagus displays David in his capacity as shepherd: he is seen extra large on the right, subduing a lion. Perhaps he is also depicted as a warrior or huntsman, for there are two other figures in a hunting scene on this side panel, which is carved on a much smaller scale than the iconic David. ‘The use of imagery from an imperial lion hunt signals clearly the secular prestige of the Sarcophagus. The dominant image of David, however, gives another dimension, by presenting David both as Christ, saviour of his flock, and, through his classicising grandeur and prestigious hunting weapon, as king of Israel.’<sup>66</sup>

Here we meet a similar problem as the one we encountered with the miniatures in the Vivian Bible, but we are not presented with any argument. While looking for further elucidation, it becomes apparent that the present exegesis of the David iconography of the St Andrews Sarcophagus adduces David’s royalty and his ancestry with Christ, as well as an explanation of Psalm 33 by St Augustine which would point to the notion of victory. It has been observed that St Augustine closely associated Christ’s defeat of the devil with David’s defeat of Goliath.<sup>67</sup> The Sarcophagus’ iconic image of David holding a lion by its jaws is then explained as a steppingstone for further allusions and associations.<sup>68</sup>

Augustine’s exegesis, however, is not entirely as it is presented in the context of the Sarcophagus.

For the verse which is quoted – ‘In figura Christi David, sicut Goliath in figura diaboli: et quod David prostravit Goliath, Christus est qui occidit diabolum’<sup>69</sup> – a possible translation could be: ‘David represents Christ, as Goliath represents the devil: and because it is David who killed Goliath, it is Christ who has killed the devil.’<sup>70</sup> The suggestion that David *is* Christ is not corroborated by the contents of the Exposition, for we simply have another David simile here. Moreover, Augustine’s theme is ‘humility’: ‘But what is Christ, who cut down the devil? He is humility, the humility that slew pride.’ ‘By holding fast to Christ’s humility we can strike down Goliath and conquer our pride.’<sup>71</sup> Reading the whole Exposition makes clear that David slaying Goliath is simply meant to be a multi-stage metaphor for working pride underfoot. It would even be rash to see David as a *type* of Christ within this exegesis.

The ‘other dimension’ suggested in the quotation on the St Andrews Sarcophagus above is a corruption built up of notions from what by now may be termed iconographical theology. It emanated from the belief in a ‘sophisticated and multi-layered use of David iconography in Insular art’,<sup>72</sup> but this train of thought hardly does any justice to such sophistication. The St Andrews Sarcophagus *perhaps* displays David in his capacity as shepherd and *perhaps* as warrior. We do not possess much knowledge about Pictish kingship, and the Picts are, in any case, historically obscure. The only written Pictish texts that have survived are two lists giving the names of Pictish

65. St Andrews Cathedral Museum, St Andrews, Fife, Scotland; sandstone, late eighth or early ninth century. Fine colour illustrations and other reproductions can be found in: Foster 1998. The king may have been the eighth-century Christian Pictish ruler Nechtan son of Derile (d. 732), while as patron of the Sarcophagus Oengus son of Fergus (d. 761) was suggested. This, of course, is also a dating proposal, see Henderson 1998, pp. 154-56.

66. Archibald/Brown/Webster 1997, pp. 227, 228-29 fig. 100, pl. 65 cat. no. 69 (caption reads erroneously no. 66); quotation on p. 227.

67. Henderson 1998, pp. 105-07.

68. For this aspect findings by Erich Dinkler concerning early

Christian ‘abbreviated’ or ‘short-hand’ images were held to be pertinent to this Pictish monument, see Henderson 1998, p. 107.

69. See Henderson 1998, p. 106. This verse makes up the starting point of Steger 1961, p. 1, which might easily put the reader on the wrong track.

70. Maria Boulding in Boulding/Rotelle 2000, p. 16, translates it as follows: ‘David represented Christ, as Goliath represented the devil, and when David laid Goliath low he prefigured Christ, who crushed the devil.’ This quotation is from the first Exposition of Psalm 33, 1:4.

71. Boulding/Rotelle 2000, pp. 13-22 (Exposition 1 of Psalm 33); quotations from p. 16 (1:4) and p. 21 (1:10).

72. Archibald/Brown/Webster 1997, p. 211.



8. Miniature with Louis the Pious as *miles christianus*, in a manuscript of Rhabanus Maurus' *In honorem sanctae crucis*, Fulda, first quarter of ninth century, Città del Vaticano, Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica, Ms Reg. lat. 124, fol. 4v. Photo: Centrum voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, Radboud University Nijmegen

kings.<sup>73</sup> Whatever the example or model for this David figure,<sup>74</sup> we are not provided with any visual clue that could confirm or support any of the interpretative statements concerning David that we have noticed.<sup>75</sup>

It is of course possible to take the iconography of the Sarcophagus as expressing ideas on Christian kingship while employing the example and type of David. That is a matter of decent conjecture, but it is simply not true that the relevant references and allusions to kingship and the typology of David and Christ and related notions have been expressed *visually* in the figures and scenes on the Sarcophagus. We may extrapolate our conclusions: the Old Testament figure of King David was a popular comparandum, and a type, and an example for early medieval rulers. *Kryptoporträts* showing David with the looks of an existing king or an emperor are, however, non-existent in our period.

## In the guise of a Christian

All the images that we have discussed depict biblical persons and historical Christians. If any early medieval *portrait historié* had existed, it would most probably have been an historical king or emperor as an Old Testament figure. However, there is an image type that comes close to a

*portrait historié*: the depiction of the ruler as *miles Christi* or *miles christianus*. The concept of the *militia Christi* has been important since the days of the early Church and encompasses, in fact, a complete world view. Life is a battle, and to obtain the Christian equivalent of victory, moral means, often described in military metaphors, have to be deployed.<sup>76</sup> *Militia Christi* is a concept that goes very well with the bigger picture of early medieval political metaphysics. A famous ‘portrait’ in Carolingian manuscripts of Hrabanus Maurus’ *In honorem sanctae crucis* shows Emperor Louis the Pious (778-840, r. 814-40) dressed as a soldier of Christ (ill. 8). This depiction functions almost like a watermark behind a poem addressed to the emperor himself, a device that is also used in the other poems, *carmina figurata*, in the manuscripts.<sup>77</sup> The figure and gear of Louis are also inscribed, and text and image work together effectively.<sup>78</sup> Louis’ nimbus contains the words ‘You Christ crown Louis’, and his cross has the following inscription: ‘In the cross, Christ, your victory and true salvation, you rule all things properly’, while the text on his shield reads: ‘For the shield of faith wards off the wicked missiles, protects the emperor, preparing him shining trophies; the devout heart reliant on divine gifts stays unharmed and always puts the enemy’s camp to rout.’<sup>79</sup> The Carolingian emperor is a soldier both *of* and *for* Christ: his laurel wreath – his

73. Anderson 1980; Miller 1979. For language and inscriptions on Pictish stone monuments, see: Forsyth 1997.

74. Cf. Henderson 1998, pp. 119-34.

75. After much interpretative discussion of the David iconography of this Sarcophagus, Isabel Henderson states, ‘Professor Bullough has rightly remarked that any interpretation of the iconography of the representations of David in Pictish sculpture is necessarily highly speculative’ (Henderson 1986, p. 111, referring to: Bullough 1975, p. 239).

76. Cf. Wang 1975, pp. 21-37 *Geschichte und Wirkung der ‘militia christiana’*.

77. All *carmina figurata* have been reproduced in colour, after Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica, Ms Reg. lat. 124, in: Perrin 1997, vol. 100A. The poem is A5 in the system of the editor, see pp. 10-12 (Latin), pp. 291-92 (French translation). Sears 1990 reproduces all drawings of Louis the Pious as *miles christianus* in the manuscripts of Hrabanus Maurus’s work (which she refers to, as is often done, as *De laudibus sanctae crucis*). Contemporaneous

with Hrabanus and probably manufactured under his direction are, apart from the Vatican manuscript, fol. 4v (pl. 35): Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms lat. 2423, fol. 1v (pl. 39); Amiens, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms 223, fol. 3v (pl. 40); Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Ms K. II. 20, fol. 5v (pl. 41). In his lifetime the following manuscript was also produced: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms 652, fol. 3v (pl. 42). The other, later manuscripts are Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms lat. 2421, fol. 1v (pl. 43), and Ms lat. 11.685, fol. 5v (pl. 44); Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Ms clm. 8201, fol. 38v (pl. 45); Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, ms. 472, fol. 5v (pl. 46). See Sears 1990, pp. 612-13.

78. Sears 1990 and Perrin 1998 offer elaborate analytical studies of the miniature, the *carmen figuratum* and the *versus intexti*.

79. Nimbus: ‘Tu Hludouuicum Criste corona’; cross: ‘In cruce Christe tua uictoria uera salusqu[e] omnia rite regis’; shield: ‘Nam scutum fidei depellit tela nefanda protegit Augustum clara tropaea parans deuotum pectus divino munere fretum inlaesum semper castra inimica fugat’.

crown – will, literally, be a glory. In concord with the concept of the *militia Christi*, all virtues and victories of the soldier of Christ can be traced back to the example of his Saviour.

It is not surprising that scholars detect more instances of *milites Christi* in ruler iconography. True, it would be hard to believe if the image of Louis the Pious would be the only one that depicts royalty in this allegorical appearance. Mere mention of two examples may suffice, but it is expressly stated here that their interpretations are not unproblematic.

The iconography of the long lost Carolingian cross base of Einhard deals with the triumph of Christianity, which is why it was given the form of a triumphal arch.<sup>80</sup> Its figures are distributed over three storeys, and we see Christ and the apostles, angels, and soldiers. Two equestrian figures on the lower storey, on the inner sides of the arch, have been interpreted as Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, or one of them, as *milites Christi*, who take more prominent positions than the other military figures. Their horses stand on snakes or dragons that the riders subdue with their lances: this evidently is a symbolic rendering of the conquering of evil. 'Here for the first time in Carolingian art the mystical triumph of the Christian Cross is linked with the earthly triumphs of secular rulers engaging in "just wars" against the forces of evil.'<sup>81</sup>

The second and last example is the mounted

warrior on an Anglo-Saxon figured stone from Repton, Derbyshire, England. It was found near the royal crypt of the present-day church of St Wystan's. This rider may be the Mercian king Æthelbald (d. 757) and was shown 'as the barbarian master of a military household', the depiction of which was later interpreted as that of a *miles Christi*.<sup>82</sup>

General and unspecific as the dressing up of the *miles christianus* may be, it probably is the best example of how early medieval rulers were depicted in an 'allegorical' way while referring to the Christian aspect of their office as defender of their faith. None of the images reviewed in this paper, except perhaps some Byzantine depictions, represents a facial likeness and they are, therefore, no *Kryptopoträts* or *portraits historiés*. However, it would be wrong to conclude that the early Middle Ages did not contribute to the development of the *portrait historié* of later times. This contribution just was not visual, but consisted of a widespread practice of simile and typology in thought and writing, which usually can be labelled as Christian allegory. The *portrait historié* would probably never have evolved since Antiquity if these features of ruler metaphysics had not blossomed in early medieval times. It seems justified to say that these phenomena may have partially paved the way for the *portrait historié*, but they were not or were hardly reflected in iconography.<sup>83</sup>

80. The silver Einhard cross base has been missing since the eighteenth century but is known through three seventeenth-century textual sources as well as from a sketch accompanying one of these texts in Liège, Bibliothèque de Liège, Ms 840, from 1633, and from an apparently accurate seventeenth-century drawing in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms 10440. See the final plate in Hauck 1974.

81. Bullough 1975, pp. 249-50 (quotation on p. 250). The figures are discussed at length in: Weitzmann 1974, pp. 35-41, who mentions earlier proposed identifications of these riders as Louis the Pious and Constantine, but who deems it possible that

'Christian emperors from past and present' in a general sense have been depicted.

82. Sandstone cross-shaft, eighth century; Derby Museum and Art Gallery, inv. no. DBYMU 199-59/1165. See Biddle/Kjølbye-Biddle 1985, pp. 289-90; Archibald/Brown/Webster 1997, p. 225 cat. no. 63, in which it is boldly stated that 'the image of the warrior for Christ merges with that of the triumphant emperor'.

83. This paper was finished in 2008 and its English checked in 2009 by Mr Peter Griffith, to whom I am grateful for his meticulous corrections.

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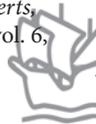
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