Hildesheim Avant-Garde: Bronze, Columns, and Colonialism

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The term "avant-garde" can describe the innovativeness potentially inherent in both artistic ingenuity and technological creativity. To think of medieval art as avant-garde is to believe it so novel and pathbreaking that it shattered creative or production conventions.[1] The expression originated, however, in the Old French *avangarde* since a "vanguard" is the foremost division of an army. This article will explore how the artistic, technological, and combative embedded in the term "avant-garde" were staged in eleventh-century Germany, bound together in a project of territorial colonialism.[2]

[1] For a recent discussion of avant-garde in medieval art, see Stefan Trinks, *Antike und Avantgarde: Skulptur am Jakobsweg im 11. Jahrhundert, Jaca—León—Santiago* (Berlin, 2012). On the ability to "break away" from the "series," see Rudolf Berliner, "The Freedom of Medieval Art," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 38 (1945): 263–88; and Jérôme Baschet, "Inventivité et sérialité des images médiévales: Pour une approche iconographique élargie," *Annales, histoire, sciences sociales* 51/1 (1996): 93–133. See also Jeffrey Hamburger, "The Medieval Work of Art: Wherein the 'Work'? Wherein the 'Art'?," in *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, ed. Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché (Princeton, 2005), 374–412. In recent years, few studies have sought to examine the morphological and pseudomorphological relations between the modern understanding of the Middle Ages and conceptualizations of modernity and modern art, where concepts such as avant-garde would have played a role. See Bruce W. Holsinger, *The Premodern Condition: Medievalism and the Making of Theory* (Chicago, 2005); Alexander Nagel, *Medieval Modern: Art Out of Time* (New York, 2012); and Amy Powell, *Depositions: Scenes from the Late Medieval Church and the Modern Museum* (New York, 2012).

[2] Medieval colonialism, especially in relation to eleventh-century Europe, was an integral part of the spread of Latin Christendom eastward that began with the Carolingian empire and continued throughout the Middle Ages. At least in its early phases, the expansion eastward was done with the establishment of new bishoprics, creating a new form of frontier society. The German-Jewish historian, Richard Koebner, was the first to discuss German colonialism in the Middle Ages. See Koebner, "Locatio: Zur Begriffssprache und Geschichte der deutschen Kolonisation," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte und Alterthum Schlesiens* 63 (1929): 1–32; and in relation to the Slavs in northeastern Germany, Koebner, "Das Problem der slawischen Burgsiedlung und die Oppelner Ausgrabungen," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte und Alterthum Schlesiens* 65 (1931): 91–120. On frontier societies in the Middle Ages, see the essays in Robert Bartlett and Angus MacKay, eds., *Medieval Frontier*

The bronze doors and column at Hildesheim (Figs. 1, 2) have achieved undisputed preeminence in the history of art. They provide the earliest known monumental representations of a biblical narrative in sculpture, and they are the earliest known freestanding bronze sculptures in Western medieval Europe that postdate the decline of the Roman Empire. These two claims to originality are not independent of one another, and this novelty formed part of what can be defined as an artistic avant-garde of the early eleventh century. The two bronze monuments have traditionally been interpreted in scholarship in retrospective terms, by referring to the ancient monuments of Rome, rather than in light of their significance to the time and locale of their creation. Moving beyond traditional art historical interpretations, this essay will show how material, narrative, and ideology were fundamentally linked in what is now northeastern Germany.[3] Additionally, when studied within the historical context of eleventh-century Germany, the relationship between the two monuments permits a new understanding of the selection of specific iconographic program in Hildesheim.[4]

The production of the doors and column has always been regarded as a technological feat.[5] The bronze doors stand almost 5 meters high and together weigh almost three metric tons. They consist of two panels, each cast as a single unit in a

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Societies (Oxford, 1996). In using the term "colonialism" I follow here Robert Bartlett's magisterial work *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (Princeton, 1993), 5–9 and 292–314. See also Francis Dvornik, *The Making of Central and Eastern Europe* (London, 1949); A. P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom: An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs* (Cambridge, UK, 1970), 86–154; Jürgen Petersohn, *Der südliche Ostseeraum im kirchlich-politischen Kräftespiel des Reichs, Polens und Dänemarks vom 10. bis 13. Jahrhundert: Mission, Kirchenorganisation, Kultpolitik* (Cologne, 1979). Although heavily clouded with nationalistic overtones as it struggles with the issue of "nation-building," Herbert Ludat's work is still useful on the relations between the Ottonians and the Slavs in the eastern parts of the Ottonian empire: see Ludat, *An Elbe und Oder um das Jahr 1000: Skizzen zur Politik des Ottonenreiches und der slavischen Mächte in Mitteleuropa* (Cologne, 1971). See also the essays in Ludat's festschrift, Klaus-Detlev Grothusen and Klaus Zernack, eds., *Europa Slavica, Europa Orientalis: Festschrift für Herbert Ludat zum 70. Geburtstag* (Berlin, 1980); and the essays in Felipe Fernández-Armesto and James Muldoon, eds., *Internal Colonization in Medieval Europe* (Farnham, UK, 2008). On whether Ottonian expansion efforts should be viewed as a continuum or as unique and unrelated phenomena, see Matthew Innes's useful overview "Franks and Slavs c. 700–1000: The Problem of European Expansion before the Millenium," *Early Medieval Europe* 6 (1997): 201–16. See also Karen E. Overbey, *Sacral Geographies: Saints, Shrines and Territory in Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout, 2012). Furthermore, on the term and its uses in modern scholarship, see Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen, "Introduction: A Concept and Its Uses," in *Settler Colonialism in the 20th Century*, ed. Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen (Hoboken, 2005), 1–20.

[3] The essay attempts to move away from vertical readings of works of art in which every object is associated with a historical, formalistic forerunner and forms a revivalist project; instead it focuses on horizontal mobility and exchange as a source for the contextualization of the works. On vertical revivalism, see Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (New York, 1972). From the many recent studies on horizontal mobility and exchange, see Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton, 2009).

[4] On early medieval monumental sculpture see Harald Keller, "Zur Entstehung der sakralen Vollskulptur in der ottonischen Zeit," in *Festschrift für Hans Jantzen*, ed. Kurt Bauch (Berlin, 1951), 71–91; Hubert Schrade, "Zur Frühgeschichte der mittelalterlichen Monumentalplastik," *Westfalen: Hefte für Geschichte, Kunst und Volkskunde* 35 (1957): 33–64.

[5] As noted recently in Adam S. Cohen and Anne Derbes, "Bernward and Eve at Hildesheim," *Gesta* 40/1 (2001): 19–38, at 19.

Fig. 1. Bronze doors, Hildesheim, c. 1015, 472 × 226 cm. (Dommuseum Hildesheim. Photo: Tomio Frank.)

Fig. 2. Bronze column, Hildesheim, c. 1020, Height 379 cm. (Dommuseum Hildesheim. Photo: Florian Monheim.)

technique that is traditionally referred to as lost-wax casting (*cire perdue*).[6] The left panel presents scenes from the Old Testament, starting at the top with the Cre-

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[6] From the plethora of works on the doors, see Dieter von der Nahmer, "Die Inschrift auf der Bernwardstur in Hildesheim im Rahmen Bernwardinischer Texte," in *Bernwardinische Kunst*, ed. Martin Gosebruch and Frank Neidhart Steigerwald (Göttingen, 1988), 51–70; Rudolf Wesenberg, *Bernwar-*

ation and concluding with the murder of Cain by Abel, while the right panel presents scenes from the New Testament, beginning at the bottom with the Annunciation and concluding at the top of the panel with Christ and Mary Magdalene in the scene known as *Noli me tangere*. At the midpoint of the doors, an inscription crossing the two panels reads:

AN[NO] DOM[INICE] INC[ARNATIONIS]   IN FACIE[M] ANGEL[I]CI TE[M]
MXV B[ERNWARDVS] EP[ISCOPVS] DIVE   PLI OB MONIM[EN]T[VM] SVI
MEM[ORIE] HAS VALVAS FVSILES   FEC[IT] SVSPENDI

In the year of the incarnation of the Lord   he made for the façade of the
1015 Bishop Bernward (richly remembered)   temple of the angel to hang in
cast these doors   his memory.

The inscription links the doors to Bernward of Hildesheim, securely dates them to the year 1015, and seems to indicate that they were made for the church dedicated to Saint Michael outside Hildesheim's walls.[7] The column, 379 centimeters in height and 58 centimeters in diameter, devoid of any inscription, is decorated with twenty-eight scenes from the life of Christ, the life of John the Baptist, and parables (such as that of the rich man and Lazarus) and was once topped with a metal cross.[8]

   Art historians have focused on the iconographical programs of these objects, noting, for example, the possible origins of their decoration in Carolingian book illumination.[9] Some have sought to determine the theological and devotional mes-

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dinische Plastik: Zur ottonischen Kunst unter Bischof Bernward von Hildesheim (Berlin, 1955); Ursula Storm, *Die Bronzetüren Bernwards zu Hildesheim* (Berlin, 1969); Ursula Mende, *Die Bronzetüren, 800–1200* (Munich, 1983), 28–33; William Tronzo, "The Hildesheim Doors: An Iconographic Source and Its Implications," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 46/4 (1983): 357–66; Søren Kaspersen, "Cotton-Genesis, die Toursbibeln und die Bronzetüren—Vorlage und Aktualitat," in *Bernwardinische Kunst*, ed. Martin Gosebruch and Frank Neidhart Steigerwald (Göttingen, 1988), 79–103; Cohen and Derbes, "Bernward and Eve at Hildesheim"; and Harvey Stahl, "Eve's Reach: A Note on Dramatic Elements in the Hildesheim Doors," in *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object*, ed. Elizabeth Sears and Thelma K. Thomas (Ann Arbor, 2002), 163–76. See recently also Christoph Schulz-Mons, *Das Michaeliskloster in Hildesheim: Untersuchungen zur Gründung durch Bischof Bernward (993–1022)*, 2 vols. (Hildesheim, 2010), 1:280–346.

   [7] On the inscription, see recently Schulz-Mons, *Das Michaeliskloster in Hildesheim*, 1:308–30, and Christine Wulf, "DI 58, Stadt Hildesheim (2003), Nr. 9," Deutsche Inschriften Online, http://www.inschriften.net/hildesheim/inschrift/nr/di058-0009.html#content. See also my own work, Ittai Weinryb, *The Bronze Object in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, UK, 2016), 27–54.

   [8] On the column, see Alfred Ehrhardt, *Die Bronzesäule des Bernward von Hildesheim* (Munich, 1967); H. J. Adamski and Hermann Wehmeyer, *Die Christussäule im Dom zu Hildesheim* (Hildesheim, 1979); Bernhard Gallistl, Alberto Carpiceci, and Johannes Scholz, *Die Bernwardsäule und die Michaeliskirche zu Hildesheim* (Hildesheim, 1993); Michael Brandt and Arne Eggebrecht, eds., *Bernward von Hildesheim und das Zeitalter der Ottonen: Katalog der Ausstellung 1993*, 2 vols. (Hildesheim, 1993), 2:540–48; Michael Brandt, *Die Christussäule: Schätze aus dem Dom zu Hildesheim* (Regensburg, 2009); and Bruno Reudenbach, "Bernwards Bronzesäule aus St. Michael in Hildesheim und die Antike," *Kosmos Antike: Zur Rezeption und Transformation antiker Ideen in der Kunst; Festschrift für Dieter Blume*, ed. Maren Heun, Benjamin Rux, and Stephan Rössler (Kromsdorf, 2015), 159–69.

   [9] On the possible iconographic origins of the doors' narrative, see Carl Nordenfalk, "Noch eine turonische Bilderbibel," in *Festschrift Bernhard Bischoff zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Bernhard Bischoff, Johannes Autenrieth, and Franz Brunhölzl (Stuttgart, 1971), 153–63; Herbert L. Kessler, *The Illustrated Bibles from Tours* (Princeton, 1977), 14–16; Tronzo, "Hildesheim Doors," and Kaspersen, "Cotton-Genesis, die Toursbibeln und die Bronzetüren."

sages behind the anagogic or typological narratives of the Old and New Testaments. While scholars have understood the depictions on the doors as a Christian message articulated at the behest of the doors' benefactor, Bishop Bernward (960–1022), the potential recipients of that message remained unclear.[10] Recently scholars have begun to analyze both objects as part of a devotional project of grand design in which Bernward played a central role.[11] The column has received less attention than the doors, largely because of its partial destruction in the sixteenth century and its modern capital, depicting the kneeling, devout Bernward, added in the nineteenth century. When attention has been directed at the column, however, it, too, has also been centered around potential formalistic forerunners, particularly in light of Bernward's visit to Rome in 1001. Scholars have assigned the narrative of the column the same general interpretive scheme as the doors.[12]

The issues surrounding where and when the doors and column were manufactured and erected have given scholars reason to pause. The sheer physical presence of the doors and column is magnified by their placement in a rather isolated area of northeastern Germany. Hildesheim was a settlement on the frontiers of the Ottonian empire with a total population of no more than four or five hundred residents (by comparison, in this period the city of Mainz had between one thousand five hundred to three thousand residents). While political and spiritual roles are never divorced, recent focus on the political conceptualization of the monumental object within the public sphere has shed new light on the place and function of the bronze doors and column within a small community perched on the edges of the Ottonian empire in an environment isolated from the urban centers of medieval Europe.[13]

Yet the sheer technical accomplishment of these objects, although noted in all past art historical scholarship, remains egregiously unexplored. In this essay, I propose that understanding the technology necessary for the production of the doors and column is the vital clue that allows us to interpret their meaning in the specific sociopolitical context of Hildesheim in early eleventh-century Germany. The art of bronze casting in medieval Germany carried specific motivations and required particular resources that are about more than the simple desire to represent Chris-

[10] Of the many examples, see Bernhard Gallistl, "Die Tür des Bischofs Bernward und ihr ikonographisches Programm," in *Le porte di bronzo dall'antichità al secolo XIII*, ed. S. Salomi (Rome, 1990), 145–81; Wolfgang Saul and Hermann Wehmeyer, *Die Bernwardstür: Tor zum Leben* (Hildesheim, 1994); and Aloys Butzkamm, *Ein Tor zum Paradies: Kunst und Theologie auf der Bronzetür des Hildesheimer Domes* (Paderborn, 2004).

[11] See, for instance, Cohen and Derbes, "Bernward and Eve at Hildesheim"; Klaus Gereon Beuckers, "Bernward und Willigis: Zu einem Aspekt der bernwardinischen Stiftungen," in *1000 Jahre St. Michael in Hildesheim: Kirche—Kloster—Stifter*, ed. Gerhard Lutz and Angela Weyer (Petersberg, 2012), 142–52. See also Jennifer P. Kingsley, *The Bernward Gospels: Art, Memory, and the Episcopate in Medieval Germany* (University Park, PA, 2014).

[12] Brandt, *Die Christussäule*.

[13] See Hans Goetting, "Die Anfänge des Bistums Hildesheim und Bernwards Vorgänger," and Hans-Wilhelm Heine, "Burgen und Wehrbau zur Zeit Bernwards," both in Brandt and Eggebrecht, *Bernward von Hildesheim und das Zeitalter der Ottonen*, 1:261–68 and 313–22, respectively. See also the review of this exhibition, Valentin Groebner, "The Magic of Objects and the Longing for Order: The Exhibition 'Bernward von Hildesheim und das Zeitalter der Ottonen,'" *History Workshop Journal* 39 (1995): 193–95.

tological themes and biblical scenes. The very sophistication of the technology for casting narratives in bronze endowed these works with a power that exceeded mere representation—with an ontological merit that exceeded the epistemological function of their Christological and biblical releiefs. This recognition generates two fundamental, yet overlooked, questions that I will pursue here, the first concerning material context and the second, historical context.

Bronze, the material, is a copper alloy consisting of at least 3 percent tin. The oldest man-made composite material, bronze originated somewhere in the Near East in the fourth millennium BCE. Chemically, an alloy is an amalgam in which the atoms of one metal occupy the interstitial positions between the atoms of another metal. To make a bronze alloy, copper sulfides and tin ores are first unearthed, and then, through a long process of smelting, the metals sought are separated from their rocky binding by mechanical and thermal means. The metal isolates are then mixed at about 1,085 degrees Celsius (1,984 degrees Fahrenheit), creating a material alloy that can be cast. This alloy was commonly defined as bronze, or *aes* in Latin.[14]

The area surrounding Hildesheim is famously rich in copper and other metal deposits that made Hildesheim an ideal artistic locale for the production of objects such as the bronze doors and column. In the thirteenth century Albertus Magnus noted that the landscape near Hildesheim was composed of green rocky surfaces, a result of the high levels of copper found there.[15] The bronze industry at Hildesheim thus developed in an environment where the earth was rich in metal composites, and the odors from metal smelting would have filled the air.

The alloys from which the doors and column are made shared production methods with alloys used for the making of bells. Although the creation of bells in Latin Christianity can be traced back to the fifth century, at that early date bells were produced by hammering metal sheets (Fig. 3); the casting of bells using the lost-

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[14] The Latin word for bronze is *aes*, which covers not just the modern-day understanding of bronze, but also brass and other types of copper alloy. On this and on copper alloy in the Middle Ages, see Richard Newman, "Materials and Techniques of the Medieval Metalworker," in *Metalwork: Catalogue of Medieval Objects*, ed. Nancy Netzer (Boston, 1991), 18–44; Otto Werner, "Analysen mittelalterlicher Bronzen und Messinge I," *Archäologie und Naturwissenschaften* 1 (1977): 144–220; Pete Dandridge, "Exquisite Objects, Prodigious Technique: Aquamanilia, Vessels of the Middle Ages," in *Lions, Dragons, and Other Beasts: Aquamanilia of the Middle Ages, Vessels for Church and Table*, ed. Peter Barnet and Pete Dandridge (New Haven, 2006), 34–56; Ursula Mende, "Romanische Bronzen: Hildesheim und sein Umkreis," in *Abglanz des Himmels: Romanik in Hildesheim*, ed. Michael Brandt (Regensburg, 2001), 199–228; Ursula Mende, "Zur Topographie sachsischer Bronzewerkstätten im welfischen Einflussbereich," in *Heinrich der Löwe und seine Zeit: Herrschaft und Repräsentation der Welfen 1125–1235*, ed. Jochen Luckhardt, 3 vols. (Munich, 1995), 2:427–39; Lothar Klappauf, Christoph Bartels, Friedrich-Albert Linke, and Bastian Asmus, "Das Montanwesen am Rammelsberg und im Westharz: Historiche und archäologische Quellen zum 12. und 13. Jahrhundert," in *Bild und Bestie: Hildesheimer Bronzen der Stauferzeit: Eine Ausstellung des Dom-Museums Hildesheim vom 31. Mai bis 5. Oktober 2008*, ed. Michael Brandt (Regensburg, 2008), 65–76; and Joseph Salvatore Ackley, "Copper-Alloy Substrates in Precious Metal Treasury Objects: Concealed and Yet Excessive," *Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspectives on Medieval Art* 4 (2014), http://differentvisions. org/issue-four/. See also Weinryb, *Bronze Object*, 1–15.

[15] See Dorothy Wyckoff, "Albertus Magnus on Ore Deposits," *Isis* 49/2 (1958): 109–22.

Fig. 3. Saint Conall Cael's bell, Inishkeel, County Donegal, Ireland, seventh–ninth century, now at the British Museum. (©Trustees of the British Museum.)

wax technique was a later development.[16] The earliest surviving bell made with the lost-wax technique dates to the early ninth century and is now at the Vatican

[16] The majority of medieval bells made from hammered metal sheets are found in the British Isles and are small enough to be held by hand. See Cormac Bourke, "The Handbells of the Early Scottish Church," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 113 (1983): 464–68; Bourke, "The Hand-Bells of the Early Western Church," *Irlande et Bretagne: Vingt siècles d'histoire; Actes du colloque de Rennes (29–31 mars 1993)*, ed. Catherine Laurent and Helen Davis (Rennes, 1994), 76–82. Another early example is found in Noyon, France: see Bourke, "The Hand-Bells of the Early Western Church," 79. Also related is the Gallus Bell, the oldest bell in Switzerland, which might have been brought to Saint Gall from Ireland in the seventh century: see Alfred Mutz, "Die Gallus-Glocke in technologischer Sicht," *Jahrbuch des Vorarlberger Landesmuseumsvereins* (1978–79): 19–39. See also Weinryb, *Bronze Object*, 100–106 and 134–39.

(Fig. 4).[17] Similar surviving examples from tenth-century Germany exemplify the growing demand for copper-alloy casting following the lost-wax technique.[18] Cast bronze was used primarily in the ecclesiastical context for producing bronze bells. Thus the primary use of cast bronze at this time was for producing bronze bells for an ecclesiastical context.[19]

Bells had a unique function as an aural representative of the institution of the church. Often designated by the Latin term *signum* (sign), the bell served as a foundational signifier of Christian worship.[20] Although the bell was the most notable marker of the presence of bronze in the medieval environment, awareness of its presence came not from seeing the material object but from hearing it resound. Writers engaged regularly with the liturgical function of the bell as an object made in the service of the church. The ninth-century author Walafrid Strabo, for instance, noted: "Because we find bronze and silver trumpets in the Old Testament (Num. 10), and the prophet orders the voice of preaching to sound forth like a trumpet (Isa. 18), it is fitting that we use these vessels to call together the faithful, so that the purity of our preaching in the church may be signified by silver, and its lastingness and melodiousness by bronze; that is, that it be fouled by no heretical rust nor enfeebled by negligent laziness, nor suppressed by human fearfulness."[21]

The bell, or rather the resounding bronze, defined the community of Christian worshippers. For Strabo this community was defined by its separation from non-Christians, whose heretical character he compared to the corroded nature of oxidized metal—that is, to rust. Rust is a product of chemical degradation, and bronze, which undergoes only superficial oxidation, was the best symbolic material to use in worshippers' battle with heresy. The bronze bell, as a *signum*, was both in its material and its resounding a marker of Christianity. In 1025 Bishop Gerard of

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[17] On the bell and its inscription, see Simone Piazza, "La campana di Canino al Museo Pio Cristiano: Cronologia, modalità tecnico-esecutive, provenienza, attribuzione; appendice paleografica," *Studi romani* 52/3 (2004): 426–39. See also Weinryb, *Bronze Object*, 100–102.

[18] For example, the tenth-century bell now in the Archäologisches Landesmuseum der Christian-Albrechts-Universität, Schleswig. See Brandt and Eggebrecht, *Bernward von Hildesheim und das Zeitalter der Ottonen*, 2:348–49.

[19] Generally on bells in the Middle Ages, see Heinrich Otte, *Glockenkunde* (Leipzig, 1884); Percival Price, *Bells and Man* (Oxford, 1983); Edward V. Williams, *The Bells of Russia: History and Technology* (Princeton, 1986); John H. Arnold and Caroline Goodson, "Resounding Community: The History and Meaning of Medieval Church Bells," *Viator* 43/1 (2012): 99–130. See also Weinryb, *Bronze Object*, 100–106 and 134–39.

[20] On the definition of the bell as a *signum*, see Otte, *Glockenkunde*, 7–15; Maria Trumpf-Lyritzaki, "Glocke," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum: Sachwörterbuch zur Auseinandersetzung des Christentums mit der Antiken Welt*, ed. Theodor Klauser, Georg Schöllgen, Franz Joseph Dölger, et al., vol. 11 (Stuttgart: 1950), 164–96; Étienne Delaruelle, "Le problème du clocher au Haut Moyen Âge et la religion populaire," in *Études ligeriennes d'histoire et d'archéologie médiévales: Mémoires et exposés présentés à la Semaine d'études médiévales de Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire du 3 au 10 Juillet 1969*, ed. René Louis (Auxerre, 1975), 125–31; Price, *Bells and Man*; Williams, *Bells of Russia*; and Arnold and Goodson, "Resounding Community." See also Weinryb, *Bronze Object*, 100–106.

[21] Walahfrid Strabo, *De ecclesiasticarum rerum exordiis et incrementis* 1.4, PL 114:924. See also the edition and translation in *Walahfrid Strabo's "Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum,"* ed. Alice L. Harting-Correa, Mittellateinische Studien und Texte 19 (Leiden, 1996), 62–63. I follow here the slightly modified translation of Arnold and Goodson, "Resounding Community," 108–9. See also Weinryb, *Bronze Object*, 100–106.

Fig. 4. Bell from Canino, central Italy, ninth or tenth century. Inscription: D[omi]NI N[RI IESU] CHRISTI ET S[an]C[t]I [MIHAEL]IS AR[c]HANGELI. (Musei Vaticani [Pio Cristiano], inv. 31412 [ex 41].)

Arras-Cambrai stressed the role of the bronze bell in the fight against the enemies of the church: "He who was summoned by their sound to war would cast down the weapons of his opponents, and the enemy's bravery would fail through terror at the sound. . . . And thus it comes to pass that, through hearing the war-trumpet, sol-

diers are lit up with more spirit for the fight [and] the enemy's attack, vanquished by fear, is routed and broken."[22] A weapon when in the hands of the church to be used against its enemies, the bell was also a tool to be deployed for the formation of Christian community. In the vitae of Christian missionaries that tell the stories of the conversion of Europe, the church bell plays a crucial role in the act of conversion. In the ninth-century vita of Saint Ansgar, who converted parts of modern-day Scandinavia, the bell, an instrument that was first deemed "abominable in the eyes of the pagans," was later installed in local churches.[23] The arresting sound of the ringing bronze—thought to be frightening to non-Christians and protective, as if warding off evil spirits—thus became a key weapon in the struggle for the Christianization of Europe. The choice of bronze for the production of the doors and column at Hildesheim was intrinsically tied, I argue, to the connection between bronze monument and Christian bell.

Casting a bell demanded a relatively complex set of skills along with an aptitude for the lost-wax technique. The founder first created the alloy from copper and tin with the addition of durable additives, which increased the volume of the composite. The alloy prepared, a wax or tallow positive was made and then placed in a plaster mold, with channels for the bronze to run into the mold and for the wax to pour out. Thereafter, the mold was placed over a fire, which melted the wax, creating the void into which the molten bronze was poured. Once the bronze had cooled, the plaster mold was broken, and the bell was tuned by turning it on a lathe. The alloy thus became an object that resounded. The bronze doors and column at Hildesheim were cast using this same technique, but on a different scale.[24]

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[22] "Quarum etiam clangore hortatus ad bellum tela prosterneret adversantium, et fortitudo inimicorum eo sono exterrita in se deficeret. . . . Et sicut fit, ut audita bellica tuba milites ad praelium animosius accendantur, hostilis impetus formidine fusus dispergatur": Council of Arras, 1025, in *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collection*, ed. Giovan Domenico Mansi, 56 vols. (Venice, 1759–98; repr., Paris, 1901), 19:441. I follow the translation in Arnold and Goodson, *Resounding Community*, 121.

[23] "Insuper etiam, quod antea nefandum paganis videbatur, ut clocca haberetur in ecclesia consensit. In alio quoque vico regni sui, Ripa vocato, similiter locum ubi ecclesia fabricaretur, tribuit: et ut ibi sacerdos praesens adesset, suae potestatis licentiam dedit": PL 118:999. See also Anders Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia: Vikings, Merchants, and Missionaries in the Remaking of Northern Europe* (New Haven, 2012), 105–12.

[24] On the lost-wax technique, see J. Bayley, "Developments in Metalworking during the Medieval Period," in *Papers of the Medieval Europe Brugge 1997 Conference*, vol. 7, *Material Culture in Medieval Europe*, ed. Guy de Boe and Frans Verhaeghe (Zellik, 1997), 73–76; Hermann Born, "Zur technologischen Erforschung von mittelalterlichen Bronze und Messingguss," in *Kirchenkunst des Mittelalters: Erhalten und Erforschen; Katalog zur Ausstellung des Diözesan-Museums Hildesheim, Hildesheim, 1989*, ed. Michael Brandt (Hildesheim, 1989), 191–202; Wolfgang Brockner, "Vor- und frühgeschichtliche Metallgewinnung und Metallverarbeitung in der Harzregion," *Mitteilungsblatt der Technischen Universität Clausthal* 74 (1992): 21–24; R. Brownsford, "Medieval Metalwork: An Analytical Study of Copper-Alloy Objects," *Historical Metallurgy: Journal of the Historical Metallurgy Society* 38/2 (2004): 84–105; L. B. Hunt, "The Long History of Lost Wax Casting: Over Five Thousand Years of Art and Craftsmanship," *Gold Bulletin* 13–14 (1980–81): 63–79; W. A. Oddy, Susan La Niece, and Neil Stratford, *Romanesque Metalwork: Copper Alloys and Their Decoration* (London, 1986); Newman, "Materials and Techniques of the Medieval Metalworker," 18–44; Dandridge, "Exquisite Objects, Prodigious Technique," 34–56; Mende, "Romanische Bronzen," 199–228; and Mende, "Zur Topographie sächsischer Bronzewerkstätten im welfischen Einflussbereich," 2:427–39. For a historical survey of writing about lost-wax casting, see Joachim Wolters, "Schriftquellen zum

Casting such large objects required similar steps but altogether much greater technical ability. The grand scale of the two panels, which together weigh about three metric tons and rise to a height of more than 470 centimeters, exceeds that of even closely contemporary bronze doors.[25] Traditionally, the doors at Hildesheim are regarded as third in a succession of surviving medieval bronze doors. Those at Aachen, dated to the early ninth century, were significantly shorter and lighter, at 379 centimeters tall and less than one metric ton in weight (Fig. 5). The doors made in 1009 for the Marktportal in Mainz (Fig. 6) are more than a meter shorter than the Hildesheim doors and are just less than half their weight.[26] The size and weight of the Hildesheim doors contributed not only to their uniqueness but also to the challenges of their impressive facture. We should remember that the doors at Aachen were made by Charlemagne for the palatine church of the Carolingian empire, while those at Mainz were installed by Archbishop Willigis for the cathedral of his thriving metropolitan see in the Roman urban center of Mainz. In sharp contrast to these two earlier examples, the doors at Hildesheim were made by Bishop Bernward in a small regional town with a few hundred inhabitants. The discrepancy between the size of Hildesheim and the grandeur of this bronze artifact is indicative, I argue, of the singular symbolic function of these doors in the relatively untamed wilderness that made up the episcopal see at Hildesheim.[27]

The making of the Hildesheim doors was a long and trying process—evidence on their surface testifies that the process involved trial and error, both in the preparation of the mold and in the act of casting. Reconstruction of the casting process undertaken by Hans Drescher has demonstrated the extreme complexity of their production as well as the technological advances made over the course of their creation.[28] The arduous manufacture of the doors and column required an unprecedented mastering of techniques for alloy making and casting. The doors and column formed, then, an artistic and technological avant-garde.

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The bronze enterprise at Hildesheim depended on the mining of the copper necessary for the production of copper alloy. According to a tradition narrated by

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Wachsausschmelzverfahren," in *Bild und Bestie: Hildesheimer Bronzen der Stauferzeit*, ed. Michael Brandt (Regensburg, 2008), 42–64. See also Weinryb, *Bronze Object*, 44–52.

[25] On the technical analysis of the doors, see Wesenberg, *Bernwardinische Plastik*, 172; and Mende, *Bronzetüren*, 136.

[26] On the Mainz doors, see Mende, *Bronzetüren*, 25–27, 133–34; Beuckers, "Bernward und Willigis." See also Weinryb, *Bronze Object*, 23–25.

[27] On ideas of wilderness in relation to the bronze doors, see Stahl, "Eve's Reach," 163–75. On the concept of wilderness in medieval writing, see Jacques Le Goff, "The Wilderness in the Medieval West," in Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination* (Chicago, 1988), 47–60.

[28] Close examination of the bronze doors can reveal the complications of the casting process and propose a narrative for their manufacture. The curved, uneven surface of the left panel of the doors indicates that it was cast first, when the casters at Hildesheim had yet to master the casting of such a large object. The right panel, cast second, suggests an even spread of the bronze in the mold and a smaller degree of error. Compared to its counterpart, the right panel also has fewer holes and traces of air bubbles in the hardened bronze, the presence of which generally indicates uneven pouring of the molten bronze into the mold during the act of casting. See Hans Drescher, "Zur Technik bernwardinischer Silber- und Bronzegüsse," in Brandt and Eggebrecht, *Bernward von Hildesheim und das Zeitalter der Ottonen*, 1:337–54.

Fig. 5. Bronze doors, Aachen Cathedral, c. 800, 393 × 269 cm. (Photo: Author.)

Widukind of Corvey (d. 925), a knight by the name of Ram had discovered metal deposits near what later would become Rammelsberg, in the heart of the Harz Mountains, only sixty kilometers southeast of Hildesheim. The beginnings of large-scale and continuous mining in Rammelsberg were linked to the Ottonian

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Fig. 6. Bronze doors, Mainz Cathedral, 1009, 370 × 209 cm. (Photo: Author.)

occupation of the territory and to Henry II's establishment of an imperial palace in the nearby city of Goslar in 1009. Henry II's move was motivated by the proximity of the high-capacity mining in nearby Rammelsberg. The substantial silver deposits were of particular value, for they offered a constant supply of raw material for the imperial mint at Goslar.[29] As a neighboring bishopric, Hildesheim also benefited from the availability of mineral ores for the casting of grand works made in bronze. The production of the massive doors required an enormous quantity of material, both the raw ores from which metal was extracted and the kilograms of wax or tallow from which the models were molded. The sheer quantity of this material gives us reason to consider how imposing the bronze monuments must have appeared in the Hildesheim landscape and how precious they must have been to the community. We know that from at least the twelfth century, two social groups were in charge of mining and smelting in the Hildesheim area, namely the *montani* ("of the mountains"), in charge of mining, and the *silvani* ("forest dwellers"), in charge of smelting. We will return to the questions about the status and geographical origins of these groups later in this article.[30]

The sheer quantity of copper and other minerals that makes up the alloy for the bronze doors at Hildesheim is striking, and although other metals, such as tin and zinc, were also used, the main material is copper, of which about 2,700 kilograms were invested in the casting of the two panels.[31] Recent scholarship has shown that the relatively rich mines near Hildesheim produced ores that were about 10–20 percent pure copper, and we can therefore assume that from 14,000 to 30,000 kilograms of rock had to be excavated to produce the necessary copper.[32] Together with the 1,400 kilograms of copper needed for the production of the column, the total requirement of copper for both the doors and the column was about 4,100 kilograms, which corresponds to more than 40,000 kilograms of ore removed from the ground. Undoubtedly, then, the provisioning of raw material was substantial by the standards of that period; and the project also involved the first large-scale commissioning of raw copper from the Hildesheim area of which we are aware.[33]

An analysis of the high labor demands of copper mining and smelting in preindustrial medieval Germany gives us a sense of the effort that must have been in-

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[29] W. Hillebrand, "Von den Anfängen des Erzbergbaus am Rammelsberg bei Goslar," *Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 39 (1967): 93–111; Christiane Segers-Glocke, Harald Witthöft, and Friedrich Balck, eds., *Aspects of Mining and Smelting in the Upper Harz Mountains (up to the 13th/14th Century) in the Early Times of a Developing European Culture and Economy* (St. Katharinen, 2000); Klappauf et al., "Das Montanwesen am Rammelsberg und im Westharz," 65–76; and Bastian Asmus, *Medieval Copper Smelting in the Harz Mountains, Germany* (Bochum, 2012). See also Weinryb, *Bronze Object*, 30–33.

[30] Adolf Zycha, "Montani et silvani: Zur älteren Bergwerksverfassung von Goslar," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 3 (1939): 175–210; Christoph Bartels, "Montani und Silvani im Harz: Mittelalterlicher und frühneuzeitlicher Bergbau und seine Einflüsse auf die Umwelt," in *Bergbau, Verhüttung und Waldnutzung im Mittelalter: Auswirkungen auf Mensch und Umwelt; Ergebnisse eines internationalen Workshops (Dillenburg, 11.–15. Mai 1994, Wirtschaftshistorisches Museum "villa Grün")*, ed. Albrecht Jockenhövel (Stuttgart, 1996), 112–27; and Asmus, *Medieval Copper Smelting*, 106, 120–22.

[31] The right panel of the doors, for example, consists of the following metals: 77.22 percent copper, 8.64 percent lead, 8.5 percent tin, 5.04 percent zinc, 0.28 percent iron, 0.18 percent arsenic, and 0.08 percent nickel. See Wesenberg, *Bernwardinische Plastik*, 172; and Mende, *Bronzetüren*, 136.

[32] Asmus, *Medieval Copper Smelting*, 106, 120–22.

[33] Asmus, *Medieval Copper Smelting*, 120–22.

volved in the casting. The smelting of the copper ore would have involved at least five workers at any given time, their number dependent on the weight of the ore. Thus the very production process, in light of the quantity of rock that had to be removed from the earth and then smelted, would have had a significant socioeconomic impact on this small settlement on the borders of the Ottonian empire.

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While the bronze doors at Hildesheim represented a technological, scientific, and highly artistic avant-garde, the development of this artistic avant-garde had its own role to play within the Ottonian political, military, and, especially, colonizing project. In the following pages we will see how the colonialist mindset of Bernward and his see served the production of the pathbreaking and innovative large-scale bronze objects that, in turn, represented and embodied the struggle by the Ottonian empire to colonize northeastern Germany.

The use of bronze at Hildesheim was focused on the public monument. In recent years scholars including Hans Belting and Beate Fricke have turned our attention to the development in the West of the three-dimensional venerated image as a discursive object.[34] Such monumental objects as the Madonna of Essen and the shrine of Sainte Foy were in many ways also monumental images, and they were created in the very years in which the Hildesheim bronze enterprise was taking shape.[35] Scholars have shown that the long developmental narrative that led to the generation of venerated sculpture, such as that at Sainte Foy, involved a constant discourse concerning the place and function of pagan idols.[36] Indeed, the practice of image veneration may have been the result of an ongoing Christian negotiation with pagan imagery, in some cases as an aspect of Christian conversion efforts. One result of this engagement was the three-dimensional Hildesheim Madonna (Fig. 7), a wooden sculpture covered with a solid gold revetment that was placed at the heart of the sacred space of the cathedral.[37] Yet, while Western image theory has paid much attention to such contextualized objects in sacred space, we have

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[34] Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago, 1994); Cynthia J. Hahn, *Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400–circa 1204* (University Park, PA, 2012), 103–44; and the new English translation of Fricke's book from 2007, Beate Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints: Sainte Foy of Conques and the Revival of Monumental Sculpture in Medieval Art*, trans. Andrew Griebeler (Turnhout, 2015).

[35] Frank Fehrenbach, *Die goldene Madonna im Essener Münster: Der Körper der Königin* (Ostfildern, 1996); Anna Pawlik, *Das Bildwerk als Reliquiar? Funktionen früher Grossplastik im 9. bis 11. Jahrhundert* (Petersberg, 2013), 234–44; and Fricke, *Fallen Idols*, 5–14.

[36] Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge, UK, 1989); Signe Horn Fuglesang, "Christian Reliquaries and Pagan Idols," in *Images of Cult and Devotion: Function and Reception of Christian Images in Medieval and Post-medieval Europe*, ed. Søren Kaspersen and Ulla Haastrup (Copenhagen, 2004), 7–32; and Fricke, *Fallen Idols*, 48–105.

[37] On the Hildesheim Madonna, see Ilene H. Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France* (Princeton, 1972), 112–21; Karen Blough, "The Princess-Abbesses of Essen and the Golden Virgin," in *De re metallica: The Uses of Metal in the Middle Ages*, ed. Robert O. Bork (Aldershot, 2005), 147–62; Manuela Beer, "Orte und Wege: Überlegungen zur Aufstellung und Verwendung frühmittelalterlicher Marienfiguren," in *"Luft unter die Flügel . . .": Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Kunst; Festschrift für Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen*, ed. Andrea Hülsen-Esch (Hildesheim, 2010), 99–121; Kingsley, *Bernward Gospels*, 21–25; and Pawlik, *Das Bildwerk als Reliquiar?*, 234–44, no. 17.

Fig. 7. Madonna, Hildesheim, c. 1000, gold over wooden core. (Dommuseum Hildesheim. Photo: Florian Monheim.)

very little theoretical understanding of the function of monumental and public sculpture outside the church, which led to the first instances of historiated monumental sculpture at Hildesheim. The scholarly narrative concerning the development of the cult statue does not sufficiently explain the appearance of the extraor-

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dinary bronze commissions. In this section, I will focus on the column as we explore the place and function of monumental bronze in eleventh-century Germany.[38]

At the turn of the millennium, Hildesheim was situated at a delicate political juncture, somewhere in the midst of imperial expansion and territorial colonization.[39] From the second half of the tenth century, the forces of Otto I had moved farther into northeastern Germany, beyond the river Elbe, into territories occupied by the western Slavs.[40] Accompanied by bishops and supported by the archbishopric in Magdeburg, Otto sought through his military campaigns to convert the Slavs

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[38] The interpretation I offer in the following discussion was found discomfiting in the second half of the twentieth century, mainly as a result of the negative connotations with the Nazi regime and the Third Reich of any attempt to discuss the imperialism and colonialism of the Ottonian empire and the First Reich. Historians working under Hitler provided a distorted interpretion of Ottonian expansion in northeastern and central Germany and in Central Europe, falsely representing many historical facts regarding the colonization of these parts and the conversion of the Slavs. Revisiting the original Latin documents with the support of new archaeological finds can offer, however, a refined interpretation, devoid of Nazi sentiment, of the Hildesheim monuments and of Ottonian art. For an example of medieval art history under the Nazi regime, see the interpretation of the Hildesheim column in Werner Haftmann, "Die Bernwardsäule zu Hildesheim," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 8/3–4 (1939): 151–58. From the many other examples, see Dagobert Frey, *Die deutsche Kunst: Die deutsche Leistung in Ostmitteleuropa* (Berlin, 1938); Dagobert Frey, "Die Entwicklung nationaler Stile in der mittelalterlichen Kunst des Abendlandes," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 16 (1938): 1–74; and Wolfgang von Rothkirch, *Deutsche Kunst: Eine Auswahl ihrer schönsten Werke* (Berlin, 1934). From the plethora of historiographical analyses of the use of the Middle Ages and the role of art history during the Third Reich, see Lars-Olof Larsson, "Nationalstil und Nationalismus in der Kunstgeschichte der zwanziger und dreissiger Jahre," in *Kategorien und Methoden der deutschen Kunstgeschichte 1900–1930*, ed. Lorenz Dittmann and Oskar Bätschmann (Stuttgart, 1985); Hans-Ulrich Thamer, "Das Heiliges römisches Reich als politisches Argument im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," in *Heiliges römisches Reich deutscher Nation 962 bis 1806*, ed. Matthias Puhle, Claus-Peter Hasse, Hans Ottomeyer, et al. (Dresden, 2006), 2:385–95; and Willibald Sauerländer, "Von den 'Sonderleistungen Deutscher Kunst' zur 'Ars Sacra': Kunstgeschichte in Deutschland 1945–1950," in *Wissenschaft im geteilten Deutschland: Restauration oder Neubeginn nach 1945?*, ed. Walter H. Pehle and Peter Sillem (Frankfurt am Main, 1992), 177–90. See also the essays in the following edited volumes: Nikola Doll, ed., *Kunstgeschichte im Nationalsozialismus: Beiträge zur Geschichte einer Wissenschaft zwischen 1930 und 1950* (Weimar, 2005); Ruth Heftrig, Olaf Peters, and Barbara Schellewald, eds., *Kunstgeschichte im "Dritten Reich": Theorien, Methoden, Praktiken* (Berlin, 2008); Jutta Held and Martin Papenbrock, eds., *Kunstgeschichte an den Universitäten im Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen, 2003); and Bruno Reudenbach, ed., *Mittelalterbilder im Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin, 2013). In relation to the Third Reich and an exhibition centering on medieval art, see William J. Diebold, "The Early Middle Ages in the Exhibition 'Deutsche Grösse' (1940–1942)," in *Medieval Art and Architecture after the Middle Ages*, ed. Janet T. Marquardt and Alyce A. Jordan (Newcastle, 2011), 363–89; and William J. Diebold, "The High Middle Ages on Display in the Exhibition 'Deutsche Grösse' (1940–1942)," in Reudenbach, *Mittelalterbilder im Nationalsozialismus*, 103–17. I thank William Diebold for his help in compiling this bibliography.

[39] See Bartlett and MacKay, *Medieval Frontier Societies*; Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, 5–9; Dvornik, *Making of Central and Eastern Europe*; Vlasto, *Entry of the Slavs into Christendom*, 86–154; Petersohn, *Der südliche Ostseeraum*; and Innes, "Review Article: Franks and Slavs c. 700–1000," 201–16.

[40] Much of what we know of the ethnicities and social groups residing in the northeastern part of Germany before the attempted expansion of the empire comes to us from the ninth-century writings of the Bavarian Geographer, who described the people and towns north of the Danube. See the edition by Erwin Herrmann, *Slawisch-germanische Beziehungen im südostdeutschen Raum von der Spätantike bis zum Ungarnsturm: Ein Quellenbuch mit Erläuterungen*, Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum 17 (Munich, 1965), 212–21.

across the Elbe as part of his strategy for expanding his empire eastward.[41] Around the year 1000 in Germanic lands conversion was more frequently a political act than a matter of personal faith, and it was often a communal event, encompassing a plurality of understandings of what it meant to be a Christian.[42] Otto's campaigns can be interpreted as proto-Crusades by means of which the ruler hoped to impose on converted Slavs the tithe, a royal tax intended for the support of the church, rewarding the bishops and the clergy for their military exploits with a source of income.[43]

In the power struggles that were a product of the expansion of the Ottonian empire, in which bishops, such as Bernward, represented royal interests, we find a trigger for the commission of the bronze monument at Hildesheim. Bernward served as a court bishop under Otto II and became the tutor of his son Otto III.[44] Even prior to these appointments, Bernward had ties to the Ottonian court, having been ordained by Bishop Willigis of Mainz, who had been appointed by Otto I and had served as imperial chancellor during the reign of Otto II. The expansion of the Ottonian empire and the conversion of the Slavs were integral to the life at the court and were among the empire's most immediate political concerns.[45]

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[41] On Otto I and the expansion eastward toward Slavic territories, see Christian Lübke, "Die Ausdehnung ottonischer Herrschaft über die slawische Bevölkerung zwischen Elbe/Saale und Oder," in *Otto der Grosse: Magdeburg und Europa*, ed. Matthias Puhle, 2 vols. (Mainz, 2001), 1:65–74; and Gerd Althoff, "Saxony and the Elbe Slavs in the Tenth Century," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 3, *c. 900–c.1025*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge, UK, 1999), 267–92.

[42] On conversation and Christianity in late antiquity, see: Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981); Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000* (Malden, MA, 2003); and Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton, 2012). See also Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400–1050* (Harlow, 2001). On conversion in the Middle Ages, especially in the context of communal practice, see Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore, 1993); Web Keane, "From Fetishism to Sincerity: Agency, the Speaking Subject, and Their Historicity in the Context of Religious Conversion," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39/4 (1997): 674–93; Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia, 2013). Narratives of conversion such as that of the twelfth-century Herman the Jew of Cologne are thought to represent an institutional Christian agenda and to have served as propaganda for the conversion of other Jews. See Jean-Claude Schmitt, *The Conversion of Herman the Jew: Autobiography, History, and Fiction in the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia, 2010). See also the recent study Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia*, 102–37.

[43] Tithes have a long history within Christian thought. See Eric Shuler, "Caesarius of Arles and the Development of the Ecclesiastical Tithe: From a Theology of Almsgiving to Practical Obligations," *Traditio* 67 (2012): 43–69; Emma Mason, "English Tithe Income of Norman Religious Houses," *Historical Research* 48 (1975): 91–94; Robert Ignatius Burns, "A Mediaeval Income Tax: The Tithe in the Thirteenth-Century Kingdom of Valencia," *Speculum* 41/3 (1966): 438–52; Catherine Evangeline Boyd, "The Beginnings of the Ecclesiastical Tithe in Italy," *Speculum* 21/2 (1946): 158–72; Giles Constable, *Monastic Tithes: From Their Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, UK, 1964); Susan Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* (Oxford, 2006), 459–518; and John Eldevik, *Episcopal Power and Ecclesiastical Reform in the German Empire: Tithes, Lordship, and Community, 950–1150* (Cambridge, UK, 2012).

[44] On the role and function of the courtier bishop, see C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939–1210* (Philadelphia, 1985), 19–53.

[45] On the life of Bernward, see Francis J. Tschan, *Saint Bernward of Hildesheim*, 3 vols. (Notre Dame, 1942–51); Hans Jakob Schuffels, "Bernward Bischof von Hildesheim: Eine biographische Skizze," in Brandt and Eggebrecht, *Bernward von Hildesheim und das Zeitalter der Ottonen*, 1:29–45.

Approached in light of this contemporary sociopolitical situation in northeastern Germany, bronze manufacturing in the Hildesheim region provides evidence of a territorial avant-garde. In fact, I argue that the challenging political situation may very well have been the catalyst for the production of monumental art in bronze. Moreover, the unique historical circumstances of Hildesheim and its neighboring cities help us understand the uniqueness of the bronze artifacts. Hildesheim was not only the site of cutting-edge artistic and technological production but was also, quite literally, politically and geographically in the vanguard. Bishoprics including Starigrad (est. 946), Havelberg (est. 946), Brandenburg (est. 948), Merseburg (est. 967), Meissen (est. 971), and Zeitz (est. 968) were constructed as fortresses of faith, the thick walls of their strongholds protecting both bishop and church (Fig. 8).[46] Situated on the front line of the bishoprics that ran along the river Elbe, Hildesheim was a frontier in the joint struggle of the church and the Ottonian kings to conquer and convert the pagan Slavs.[47] In the course of this struggle, in 915, and again in 922, Hildesheim was a target of attacks by Slavs whose origins were in Hungary. By the time of Bernward, however, the main concern was not the Hungarian Slavs, but the Slavic communities of the north and the west, who unleashed constant attacks on the Ottonian empire. In 994, Ekkehard, who had left Hildesheim to serve as bishop of Schleswig in northern Germany, was driven from his see and returned to Hildesheim, seeking refuge with Bernward. By the late tenth century, the Slavs were conducting regular raids on Ottonian settlements. Thietmar of Merseburg (d. 1018) describes one of these raids that reached just east of Hildesheim, in the area of the river Tanger, where "Slavs had burned and pillaged all the burgs and villages." He noted there were "more than thirty bands of warriors on foot and horseback," and continued, "without sustaining any losses and aided by their gods, they did not hesitate to revenge the rest of the region, as their blaring trumpets preceded them."[48] Thietmar subsequently characterized the Slavs as "utterly abandoned . . . who had once dared to reject God and stupidly chose to worship meaningless idols, which they themselves made, rather than their own creator."[49] Much like the church bells discussed by Strabo, war trumpets for Thietmar functioned for the Slavs as aural weapons of war. The belief system of the Slavs and the man-made nature of their gods, as we shall see, were central to their characterization as enemies

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[46] See Walter Schlesinger, "Stadt und Burg im Lichte der Wortgeschichte," in *Die Stadt des Mittelalters*, ed. Carl Haase (Darmstadt, 1969), 1:95–121; Sébastien Rossignol, "Early Towns and Regional Identities on the Eastern Coast of the Baltic Sea and in the Land of the Rus' as Perceived in Western and Central European Sources (9th–Early 12th Centuries)," in *Ethnic Images and Stereotypes—Where Is the Border Line? (Russian-Baltic Cross-Cultural Relations): Proceedings of the III International Scientific Conference on Political and Cultural Relations between Russia and the States of the Baltic Region (Narva, October 20–22, 2006)*, ed. Urve Aja, Katrin Karu, Jelena Nõmm, and Nina Raud (Narva, 2007), 241–52; Sébastien Rossignol, "Civitas in Early Medieval Central Europe—Stronghold or District?," *Medieval History Journal* 14/1 (2011): 71–99.

[47] On churches as strongholds in the Middle Ages, see Sheila Bonde, *Fortress-Churches of Languedoc: Architecture, Religion, and Conflict in the High Middle Ages* (Cambridge, UK, 1994), 11–52.

[48] Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* 3.19, in *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, ed. Robert Holzmann, MGH SS rer. Germ. n.s. 9 (Berlin, 1935), 121; translation after *Ottonian Germany: The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, trans. David Warner (Manchester, UK, 2000), 142.

[49] Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* 3.19, ed. Holzmann, 122; Warner, *Ottonian Germany*, 143.

Fig. 8. Ottonian settlements in Germany around the year 1000 (Jack McGrath.)

of the Christian Ottonian empire. In 994 and 995, just as Bishop Ekkehard fled from Schleswig back to Hildesheim, Bernward erected two small forts, Mundburg, at the confluence of the rivers Aller and Ocker in the northern part of the diocese, and even further to the northeast at Wyrinholt.[50] The fortress of Wyrinholt was surrounded by a moat and included a chapel that Bernward himself dedicated to Saint Lambert. The two fortresses were built with the permission of Otto II, and in 1013, two years

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[50] Tschan, *Saint Bernward of Hildesheim*, 1:89–101; Wolfgang Meibeyer, "Lag Bischof Bernwards Mundburg in Wienhausen?," *Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte* 71 (2002): 47–52. On coins issued by Bernward at Hildesheim and found in Mundburg, see Ortwin Meier, "Die frühmittelalterliche Münzstätte 'Mundburg' des Bistums Hildesheim," *Deutsche Münzblätter* 58–59 (1938–39): 153–62, 181–87, and 224–28.

before the unveiling of the bronze doors, the rights of the Hildesheim see over the two fortresses were reconfirmed in perpetuity by Henry II with a charter that affirmed the fortresses' roles as defensive strongholds against the Slavs ("contra perfidorum incursionem et vastationem sclavorum").[51] The affirmation of the Hildesheim see's control of the two fortresses must have been in Bernward's mind as he commissioned the doors for the church of Saint Michael, doors that would be placed at the threshold of the Christian church against which the idol-worshipping Slavs were constantly struggling.

At this time, the local western Slavs were still largely pagan, even if in some instances they had adopted partial Christian rituals.[52] Their religion had a complex belief system involving devotion to forests. They constructed elaborate sanctuaries and had a system of priestly hierarchies in which priests could hold high tribal rank. Slavic dress and systems of worship were the focus of a long tradition of Latin writing by church scholars such as Paul Orosius (385–420) and Gregory of Tours (538–594), and were revisited at length by Adam of Bremen in his *Deeds of the Bishops of Hamburg* (c. 1073).[53] Thus the culture and customs of the Slavs had occupied the minds of ecclesiastical authors from the first instances of Christian expansion throughout the European Continent. The Christian scholars' manner of writing, as we will see, resembled that of early ethnographers who recorded and commented on cultures inherently alien to them. On one hand, we find in the Christian writings

[51] Karl Janicke and Hermann Hoogeweg, *Urkundenbuch des Hochstifts Hildesheim und seiner Bischöfe*, 6 vols. (Hannover and Leipzig, 1896), 1:44–45, no. 54.

[52] On the religion of the Slavs, see Zdeněk Váňa, *The World of the Ancient Slavs* (Detroit, 1983); Zdeněk Váňa, *Mythologie und Götterwelt der Slawischen Völker: Die geistigen Impulse Ost-Europas* (Stuttgart, 1992). On Slavic religion according to specific archaeological sites, see Michael Handwerg, *Die slawischen Götter in Pommern und Rügen* (Elmenhorst, 2010); and Ewald Schuldt, "Gross Raden (1973–1980): Ein slawischer Tempelort des 9./10. Jahrhunderts," in *Ewald Schuldt: Archäologische Expeditionen im eigenen Land (1950–1984)*, ed. Klaus-Dieter Gralow and Hartmuth Stange (Schwerin, 2005), 250–316. See also Christian Lübke, "Before Colonization: Christendom at the Slav Frontier and Pagan Resistance," in *The Germans and the East*, ed. Charles W. Ingrao and Franz A. J. Szabo (West Lafayette, 2008), 17–26; Lübke, "Christianity and Paganism as Elements of Gentile Identities to the East of the Elbe and Saale Rivers," in *Franks, Northmen, and Slavs: Identities and State Formation in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Ildar H. Garipzanov, Patrick J. Geary, and Przemysław Urbańczyk (Turnhout, 2008), 189–204; and Lübke, "Religion der Slawen," in *Credo: Christianisierung Europas im Mittelalter*, ed. Christoph Stiegemann, Martin Kroker, and Wolfgang Walter, 2 vols. (Petersberg, 2013), 1:405–8.

[53] On Adam of Bremen and his work, see Aage Trommer, "Komposition und Tendenz in der Hamburgischen Kirchengeschichte Adams von Bremen," *Classica et mediaevalia* 18 (1957): 207–57; Rudolf Buchner, "Adams von Bremen geistige Anleihen bei der Antike," *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 2 (1965): 96–101; David Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden: Vorstellungen und Fremdheitskategorien bei Rimbert, Thietmar von Merseburg, Adam von Bremen und Helmold von Bosau* (Berlin, 2005); Hans-Werner Goetz, "Constructing the Past: Religious Dimensions and Historical Consciousness in Adam of Bremen's 'Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum,' " in *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c. 1000–1300)*, ed. Lars B. Mortensen (Copenhagen, 2006), 17–51; Ildar H. Garipzanov, "Christianity and Paganism in Adam of Bremen's Narrative," in *Historical Narratives and Christian Identity on a European Periphery: Early History Writing in Northern, East-Central, and Eastern Europe (c. 1070–1200)*, ed. Ildar H. Garipzanov (Turnhout, 2011), 13–29; Christoph Dartmann, "Die Rezeption der Frühgeschichte des Erzbistums Hamburg-Bremen bei Adam von Bremen, Helmond von Bosau und Albert von Stade: Ein Beitrag zur norddeutschen Geschichtsschreibung des Hochmittelalters," in *Das Jahr 1112: Ida von Elsdorf und ihre Zeitgenossen*, ed. Wolfgang Dörfler, Luise Knoop, and Bernd Ulrich (Heidenau, 2012), 289–316.

xenophobic and hermetic sentiment about anything that is not Christian; on the other, we encounter openness and attraction to, and even fascination with, customs and rituals that helped these authors develop a dialogic understanding of their own Christian habits.[54]

One such writer, Thietmar of Merseburg, tells us about one of the shrines of the Slavs in the region of present-day Mecklenburg, which he visited in the second half of the tenth century:

> In the region of Redarii, there is a city called Riedegost, which has three corners and three doors. It is surrounded everywhere by a great forest, which inhabitants hold to be inviolably holy. Two of its doors offer entry to all. The third door faces east and it is the smallest. It opens to a path leading to a lake that is located nearby and is utterly dreadful in appearance. In this same <city>, there is nothing more than a skillfully made wooden shrine supported on a foundation composed of the horns of different types of animals. Marvelously sculpted images of gods and goddesses adorn its outer walls, so it seems to the observer. Inside stand gods made by human hands, each inscribed and frightfully clothed with helmets and armor. Among them Swarozyc occupies the first place and all the heathens honor him and worship him above the others. Their banners may never be removed from that place except in time of war and then only by warriors on foot.[55]

Such temples, Thietmar informs us, exist in all regions of the land.[56] The reconstructed temple at Gross Raden (Fig. 9) articulates the Slavic temple's situation within the landscape of Ottonian Germany. At the center of each temple was a column, made of wood, stone, and sometimes of metal.[57] Around 1125 Otto of Bamberg recorded that in the Slavic temple in Julin (modern-day Wolin, Poland), "which had been founded by Julius Caesar and called after him, and in which his spear was kept, fixed on a column of great size in order to preserve his memory, it was accustomed to hold a festival in honor of a certain idol at the beginning of the

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[54] On early medieval ethnography, see Felipe Fernández-Armesto, "Medieval Ethnography," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London* 13 (1982): 272–86; Bartlett, *Making of Europe*; Jeffrey J. Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles* (New York, 2006), 11–42; and the essays in Joan P. Rubiés, ed., *Medieval Ethnographies: European Perceptions of the World Beyond* (Farnham, 2009), especially J. K. Hyde, "Ethnographers in Search of an Audience," 65–120. See also Shirin A. Khanmohamadi, *In Light of Another's Word: European Ethnography in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2014), 1–36. On medieval writing on the barbarian north around the year 1000, see Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*.

[55] "Est urbs quaedam in pago Riedirierun'ii Riedegost nomine, tricornis ac tres in se continens portas, quam undique silva ab incolis intacta et venerabilis circumdat magna. Duae eiusdem portae cunctis introeuntibus patent; tercia, quae orientem respicit et minima est, tramitem ad mare iuxta positum et visu nimis horribile monstrat. In eadem est nil nisi fanum de ligno artificiose compositum, quod pro basibus diversarum sustentatur cornibus bestiarum. Huius parietes variae deorum dearumque imagines mirifice insculptae, ut cernentibus videtur, exterius ornant; interius autem dii stant manu facti, singulis nominibus insculptis, galeis atque loricis terribiliter vestiti, quorum primus Zuarasici dicitur et pre caeteris a cunctis gentilibus honoratur et colitur": Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* 6.23, ed. Holzmann, 302; translation after Warner, *Ottonian Germany*, 253.

[56] Adam of Bremen provides a description of the same temple. See *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, trans. Francis J. Tschan (New York, 1959), 65–66.

[57] See Handwerg, *Die slawischen Götter in Pommern und Rügen*; Schuldt, "Gross Raden (1973–1980)," 250–316.

Fig. 9. Gross Raden, aerial view. (Landesamt für Kultur und Denkmalpflege Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Landesarchäologie. Photo: S. Suhr.)

year, which was accompanied by dancing."[58] The spear was a nonfigural metal object fixed on a column vertically and honored as a central cult image at the heart of the sanctuary, and it served as a marker for the founder god of the city.[59]

Contemporary Slavic deities, images of which have been found near Hildesheim, stood in opposition to the Christian god. Archaeological excavations conducted on the south bank of the Tollensee, which is sometimes associated with the temple at Rethra described by Thietmar of Merseburg, uncovered a double-

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[58] "Iulin a Iulio Cesare condita et nominata—in qua etiam lancea ipsius columpnae mirae magnitudinis ob memoriam eius infixa seruabatur—cuiusdam idoli celebritatem in inicio aestatis maximo concursu et tripudio agere solebat": *Ebbonis Vita Ottonis episcopi Babenbergensis* 2.18.649, ed. R. Köpke, MGH SS 12 (Hannover, 1856), 822–83.

[59] On the life and missionary work of Otto of Bamberg, see Eberhard Demm, *Reformmönchtum und Slawenmission im 12. Jahrhundert: Wertsoziolog.-geistesgeschichtl. Untersuchungen zu d. Viten Bischof Ottos von Bamberg* (Lübeck, 1970); Jürgen Petersohn, "Otto von Bamberg und seine Biographen: Grundformen und Entwicklung des Ottobildes im hohen und späten Mittelalter," *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 43 (1980): 3–27; Robert J. Bartlett, "The Conversion of a Pagan Society in the Middle Ages," *History: The Journal of the Historical Association* 70 (1985): 185–201; Klaus Guth, "The Pomeranian Missionary Journeys of Otto I of Bamberg and the Crusade Movement of the Eleventh to Twelfth Centuries," in *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians*, ed. Michael Gervers (New York, 1992), 13–23; and Helmut Flachenecker, "Bischof Otto von Bamberg und die Christianisierung Pommerns: Zu den Missionsaufgaben eines Bischofs im Hochmittelalter," in Stiegemann, Kroker, and Walter, *Credo*, 1:417–26.

Fig. 10. Double-headed Slavic deity, Tollensee, wood, eleventh century, height 178 cm. (Landesamt für Kultur und Denkmalpflege Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Landesarchäologie. Photo: S. Suhr.)

headed wooden Slavic god dating to the eleventh century (Fig. 10). The 178 centimeter tall sculpture offers a monumental presence carved in the round that resonates particularly well with the vertical presence of the Hildesheim column.[60] Similar wooden Slavic gods found in other parts of northeastern Germany suggest a variety of in-the-round monumental sculptures of deities in areas east of the Elbe.[61] A more striking object, the so-called Zbrucz Idol, found in Poland, is a

[60] See Karl H. Brandt, Manfred Gläser, and Hans-Joachim Hahn, *Heiden und Christen: Slawenmission im Mittelalter* (Lübeck, 2002), 131–33.

[61] For example, a 93 cm tall wooden sculpture found in Ralswiek dates to the tenth to eleventh centuries. Another wooden god, 145 cm tall, was discovered in the area of Behren-Lübchin and dates to the tenth to twelfth centuries. Both are preserved in the Archäologisches Landesmuseum und Landesamt für Bodendenkmalpflege Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in Schwerin. See Joachim Herrmann

267 centimeter tall stone (Fig. 11)[62] decorated column with figural motifs, masks, and animals.[63] The visual vocabulary of the Slavic sculptural deities supplies an intriguing counterpart to the bronze doors and column at Hildesheim. Each has its own narrative and each its own material, but both contain anthropomorphized figures of deities.

Archaeological evidence makes clear that the Slavs east of the Elbe had no access to mines and possessed limited casting abilities; their relatively small casting pits suggest that the majority of Slavic casting and metalwork involved smaller objects, likely weapons, tools such as axes, and small devotional items. An 11.5 centimeter tall bronze object dated to around 1000 presents a cosmological arrangement topped by a Slavic god (Fig. 12).[64] This object was formed through mold casting, a technique similar to that used to fabricate weaponry, and at some point it may have been attached to the knife case of a Slavic military leader. Other small bronze and wooden objects used in devotion, such as a small bronze deity discovered in northeastern Germany (Fig. 13),[65] are indicative of the importance of small-scale objects to Slavic religious life.[66] Standing in contrast to the complex lost-wax cast objects of Hildesheim, the simplicity of the design, fabrication, and execution of the Slavic bronzes may indicate a desire on Bernward's part to exhibit a technologically advanced bronze creation that marked out the superiority of the

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and Dieter Warnke, *Ralswiek auf Rügen: die slawisch-wikingischen Siedlungen und deren Hinterland* (Lübstorf, 1997), 43; Ewald Schuldt, *Behren-Lüchin: Eine spätslawische Burganlage in Mecklenburg* (Berlin, 1965). See also Christoph Stiegemann, Martin Kroker, and Wolfgang Walter, "Erzbischöfliches Diözesanmuseum Paderborn, Museum in der Kaiserpfalz, and Städtische Galerie am Abdinghof," in Stiegemann, Kroker, and Walter, *Credo*, 2:576–78.

[62] See Stiegemann, Kroker, and Walter, *Credo*, 2:555–56.

[63] At the end of the twelfth century, the Danish chronicler Saxo Grammaticus supplied a unique description of the cult of the Slavic deity Sventovit on the island of Rügen, where we find similarities with the Zbrucz: "There stood in the temple a huge image bigger than any man, astonishing for its four heads and four necks, two facing the front, and two the back. And one gazed to the right and one to the left, both before and behind. He was made to be clean-shaven and crop-headed, so you would think the ingenious craftsman had imitated the Rugian style of hair-dressing. In his right hand he bore a horn decorated with various sorts of metal, which the priest skilled in his worship used to fill every year with drink, in order to foresee the next year's crops from the state of liquor. On the left side the arm was represented as bent inward with a bow. A tunic was carved reaching down to the shanks, which were made of different kinds of wood, jointed to the knee so inconspicuously that the places of the join could only be discovered on minuter inspection. The feet appear level with the ground, the bases lying under it": Saxo Grammaticus, *Danorum regum heroumque historia*, trans. Eric Christiansen (Oxford, 1980), 3:494. On the description, see Paul Grinder Hansen, "Die Slawen bei Saxo Grammaticus—Bemerkungen zu den Gesta Danorum," in *Zwischen Reric und Bornhöved: Die Beziehungen zwischen Elbslaven und Dänen vom 9. bis 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. Ole Harck and Christian Lübke (Stuttgart, 2001), 179–86; and Leszek Paweł Słupecki and Roman Zaroff, "William of Malmesbury on Pagan Slavic Oracles: New Sources for Slavic Paganism and Its Two Interpretations," *Studia Mythologica Slavica* 2 (1999): 9–20.

[64] Ingo Gabriel and Torsten Kempke, *Starigard, Oldenburg: Einführung und Archäologisches Material* (Neumünster, 2011); and Stiegemann, Kroker, and Walter, *Credo*, 2:592–93.

[65] See Ulrich Schoknecht, "Eine slawische Götterfigur aus Gatschow, Kr. Demmin, und ein Kästchenbeschlag aus Pasewalk," *Ausgrabungen und Funde* 39/3 (1994): 129–36, and Stiegemann, Kroker, and Walter, *Credo*, 2:580.

[66] See examples in Gläser, *Heiden und Christen*, 95–102.

Fig. 11. Statue of the god Swantvit from the river Zbrucz, limestone, tenth century, height 267 cm. (Kraków Archaeological Museum.)
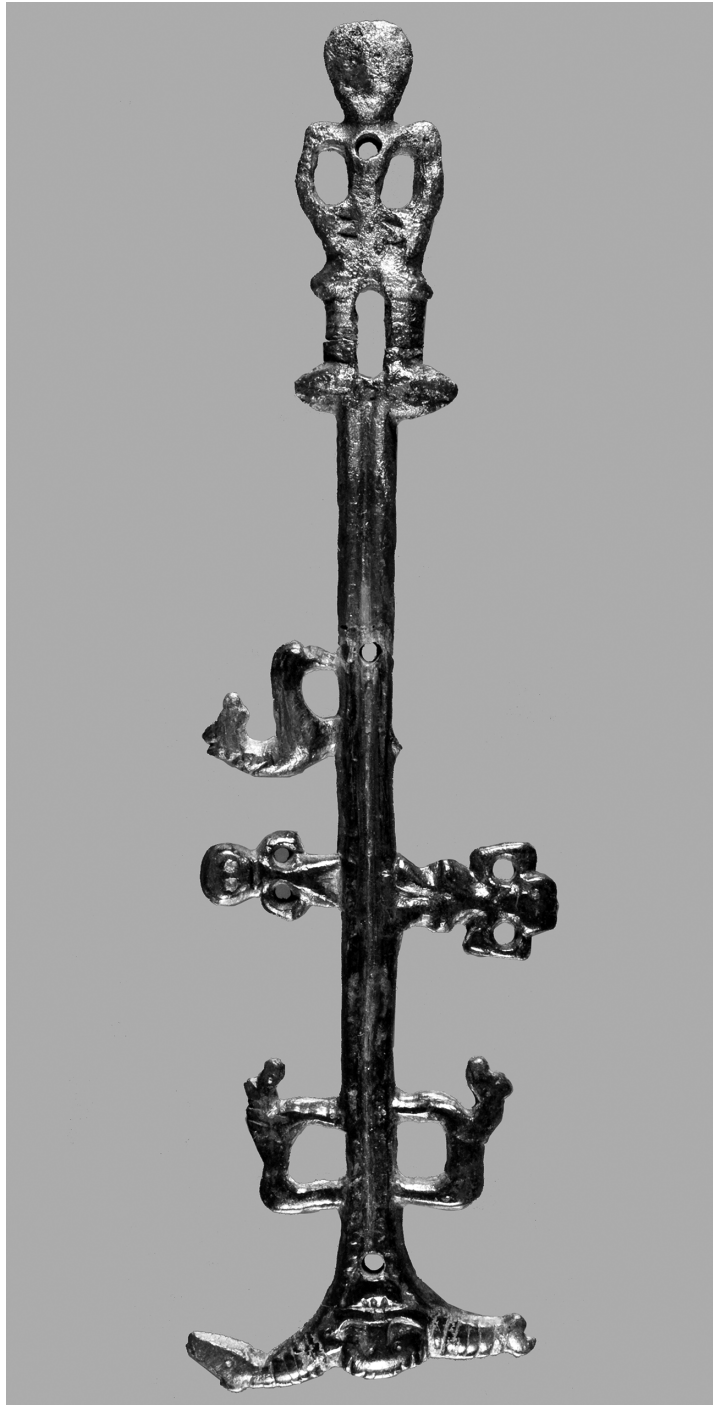
754

Fig. 12. Cosmological arrangement of Slavic deities, tenth century, height 11.5 cm. (Schleswig, Landesmuseum Schloss Gottorf.)

Fig. 13. Small bronze diety, eleventh century, height 6.5 cm. (Landesamt für Kultur und Denkmalpflege Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Landesarchäologie. Photo: S. Suhr.)

Christian god. Within the territorial struggles of eleventh-century Germany, it would seem that religious war could be fought with bronze images.[67]

[67] On the Elbe Slavs and metal production, see Radomír Pleiner, *Iron in Archaeology* (Prague, 2000); Sebastian Brather, *Archäologie der westlichen Slawen: Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Ostmitteleuropa* (Berlin, 2009); Sarah Nelly Fiedland, "Network Analysis in Slavic Archaeology: An Example from the Plön Area in Wagria (Schleswig–Holstein)," and Ingo Petri, "Metal Production and Metalworking in Eastern Schleswig-Holstein in the Slavic Period," in *Landscapes and Societies in Medieval Europe East of the Elbe: Interactions between Environmental Settings and Cultural Transformations*, ed. Sunhild Kleingärtner, Timothy P. Newfield, Sébastien Rossignol, and Donat Wehner (Toronto, 2013), 139–70 and 171–80, respectively. On the specialization of the early medieval metalworker, see Ralph Röber, "Innovation und Spezialisierung im mittelalterlichen Schmiedehandwerk: Ein Diskussionsbeitrag aus archäologischer Perspektive," *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters* 34 (2006): 47–62.

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According to the chronicle of the monastery of Saint Michael at Hildesheim from about the year 1100, the column was made for the newly constructed church of Saint Michael and was placed outside the protective walls of Hildesheim (Fig. 14). The church itself had started out as a wooden Holy Cross chapel, dedicated in 996, two years after Ekkehard had sought refuge in Hildesheim after fleeing his see at Schleswig in the face of the Slavic invasions. Bernward began construction of a stone church and monastery at the location around the year 1010, but the building was consecrated only in 1022, a few weeks before his death. The story of the construction of the chapel and consequent building of the church is telling. Thangmar, the author of Bernward's vita, says that Bernward broke out beyond the fortified walls of Hildesheim to construct the church of Saint Michael
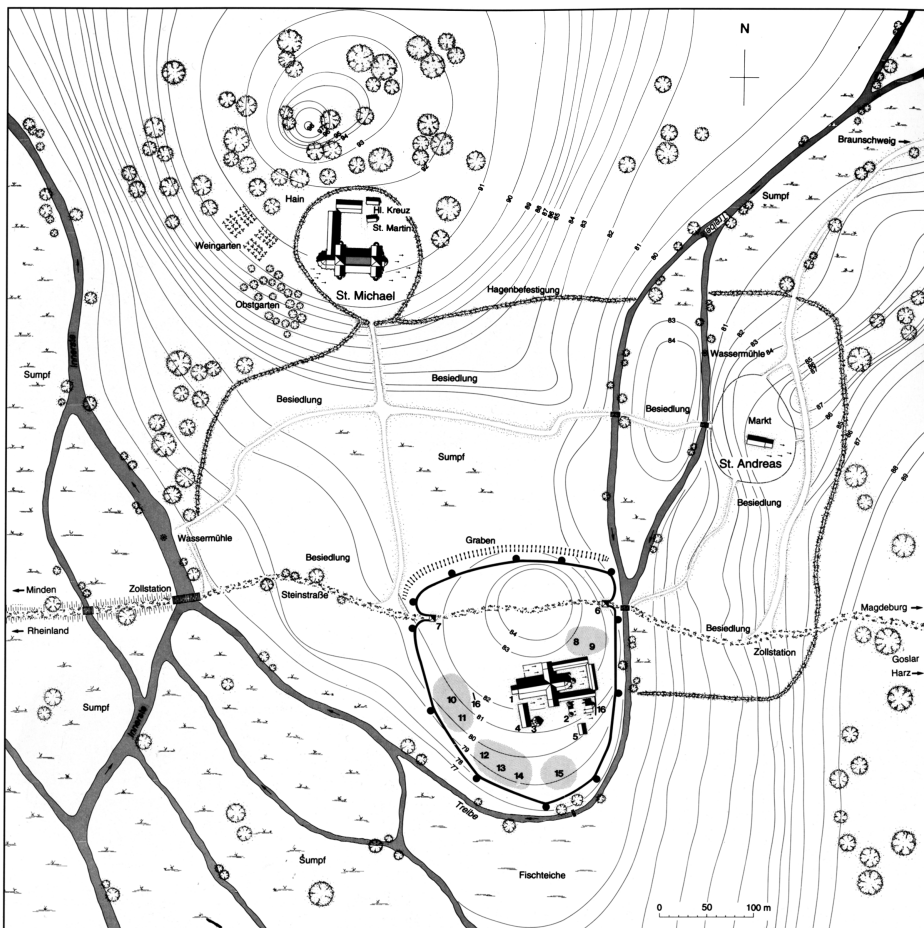

Fig. 14. Hildesheim, showing the church of Saint Michael and the walled city of Hildesheim. (Jack McGrath.)

on a nearby hill. The vita relates that Bernward was building the new church on an untamed frontier filled with wild beasts, a space now occupied by the devout monks of Saint Michael.[68] The location outside the walls might suggest that the threat of Slavic invasion was no longer felt in Hildesheim, or it might be interpreted as an assertion of authority over the landscape that was claimed in retaliation for the trouble Bernward's fellow bishops had suffered at the hands of Slavs elsewhere at the limits of the empire. The newly built fortresses that were warding off danger on the edges of his diocese could also have played their part in Bernward's decision to move outside the walls of Hildesheim. It is within the context of this newly built church and monastery of Saint Michael, in the wilds of the forest and outside the defensive walls of the town, that the bronze column at Hildesheim must be viewed.[69]

The 379 centimeter tall bronze column at Hildesheim presents twenty-eight scenes from the life of Christ, including his miracles and the martyrdom of John the Baptist. The base of the column is decorated with personifications of the four rivers of Paradise, offering an otherworldly grounding to the material artifact that is the column. The depictions on the column itself begin with the Baptism of Christ at the lower end, scroll upward along the banderole, and end with the foot washing by Mary Magdalene and Christ's entry into Jerusalem. The central themes are baptism and conversion. Whether in the scenes of the calling of Andrew, Peter, James, and John, or in the depiction of the resurrection of the son of the widow of Nain, the column exemplifies the miracle-working and transformative nature of the Christian incarnated god. The martyrdom of John the Baptist at the center of the column depicts the symbolic departure of the figure who baptizes Christ at the bottom of the column. The column in its original state was topped by a bronze cross that was dismantled in 1544 in the wars of the Reformation and recast as a cannon, a fact that underscores the considerable magnitude of the cross. By the mid-seventeenth century, the top part of the column had collapsed, and it was replaced only in the nineteenth century by a bronze capital with a kneeling figure of Bernward. This capital was not attested on the original eleventh-century column.[70]

Art historians have long maintained that the inspiration for the column of Bernward derives from Roman triumphal columns, as typified by those of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius in Rome (Fig. 15), a city Bernward had visited in 1001/2 as a member of Otto III's entourage.[71] The spiral presentation of the narrative relief on

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[68] On the notion of wilderness and the foundation of monasteries, see Ellen F. Arnold, *Negotiating the Landscape: Environment and Monastic Identity in the Medieval Ardennes* (Philadelphia, 2013), 22–61.

[69] "Monasterium itaque in septentrionali parte civitatis Hildenesheimensis, in loco quondam squalido, feris quoque seu brutis animalibus coaptato, tota devotione et apparatu decenti instituit, quod praediis sufficientibus dotatum, coenobitis Deo famulantibus ibi collectis delegavit": PL 140:428. On wilderness and frontier as part of Bernward's devotional desire to return to ideals associated with the desert fathers, see Otto Karl Werckmeister, "The Liturgical Locality of St. Michael's at Hildesheim 'in some murky place, suitable for wild or brutish beasts,'" in *The Metamorphosis of Marginal Images: From Antiquity to Present Time*, ed. Nurith Kenaan-Kedar and Asher Ovadiah (Tel Aviv, 2001), 139–46.

[70] See note 5.

[71] Schuffels, "Bernward Bischof von Hildesheim."

Fig. 15. Trajan Column, Rome, 107–113 AD, height 38.4 m. (Photo: Fabio Barry.)

both these Roman columns has no surviving parallels. Scholars therefore saw them as the closest potential models for the Hildesheim column. Late antique triumphal columns in Constantinople and parts of Italy have also been proposed as inspirational forerunners for the Hildesheim column.[72] However, the construction of a column on the front line of the struggle over the northeastern territories of Germany had local exemplars and indigenous motivation. Pagan columns erected in honor of Roman deities, known as Jupiter columns after the images of Jupiter that traditionally decorated their tops, must have played a major role in Bernward's conceptualization of his bronze column. The majority of the Jupiter columns are found in the area between Metz, Strasbourg, and Cologne and date from the third to fifth centuries. Some of these columns were over 10 meters tall and dominated the late antique and medieval landscape. In the city of Cologne, which Bernward visited a number of times,[73] more than twenty columns had been erected.[74] In Ladenburg (Fig. 16), one of the few Jupiter columns from the third century still standing is 6.65 meters high; on its square base are portrayed the gods Mercury, Hercules, Minerva, and Juno, with each sculpted in relief and occupying an entire side of the base. At the top of the column itself, Jupiter on horseback tramples a giant. The Jupiter-column type presented a unique artistic form in late antique Germany, a form, I would argue, that was crucial for the newly constructed vocabulary of monumental Christian art to embrace in its conquest of a previously pagan land.[75]

The column as a focus of pagan worship plays a significant role in Christian writings about Saxon and Slavic religion. The *Frankish Annals* records that in

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[72] On the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, see: Salvatore Settis, *La Colonna Traiana* (Turin, 1988); Filippo Coarelli, *The Column of Trajan* (Rome, 2000); Coarelli, *La Colonna di Marco Aurelio / The Column of Marcus Aurelius* (Rome, 2008); and Francesco de Angelis, "Sublime Histories, Exceptional Viewers," in *Art and Rhetoric in Roman Culture*, ed. Jas Elsner and Michel Meyer (Cambridge, UK, 2014), 89–114. The Byzantine and Italian columns, such as the column of Justinian, that were part of the Constantinopolitan landscape were about 35 m high: see J. P. A. van der Vin, *Travellers to Greece and Constantinople: Ancient Monuments and Old Traditions in Medieval Travellers' Tales*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1980), 2:453, at n. 136. See also Fabio Barry, "Disecta membra: Ranieri Zeno, the Imitation of Constantinople, the Spolia Style, and Justice at San Marco," in *San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice*, ed. Henry Maguire and Robert Nelson (Washington, DC, 2010), 7–62; and Sarah Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge, UK, 2004), 17–36. On the later thirteenth-century columns topped by bronze sculpture, see Cecily J. Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline* (Cambridge, UK, 2014), 109–29.

[73] Schuffels, "Bernward Bischof von Hildesheim."

[74] On the Jupiter columns, see Werner Müller, *Die Jupitergigantensäulen und ihre Verwandten* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1975); Gerhard Bauchhenss, *Jupitergigantensäulen* (Stuttgart, 1976); Gerhard Bauchhenss and Peter Noelke, *Die Iupitersäulen in den germanischen Provinzen* (Cologne, 1981); Greg Woolf, "Representation as Cult: The Case of the Jupiter Columns," in *Religion in den germanischen Provinzen Roms*, ed. Wolfgang Spickermann (Tübingen, 2001), 117–34. Additional discoveries regarding distinct styles and iconographies that enhance the conclusions made in Bauchhenss and Noelke's study from 1981 (see above) are found in Peter Noelke, "Neufunde von Jupitersäulen und -pfeilern in der Germania inferior nebst Nachträgen zum früheren Bestand," *Bonner Jahrbücher* 2010–2011 (2010–11): 149–374.

[75] On the Ladenburg column, see Berndmark Heukemes, "Die Jupitergigantensäule von Ladenburg in antiker Zeit und heute—dreimal zerstört und zweimal wiederhergestellt," *Denkmalpflege in Baden-Württemberg* 4/2 (1975): 39–43.

Fig. 16. Jupiter Column, Ladenburg, third century AD, height 6.65 m. Copy of an original at Lobdengau Museum, Ladenburg. (Wikimedia Commons. Photo: 4028mdk09.)

772 Charlemagne destroyed a certain Irminsul idol in his battles against the Saxons.[76] Like other contemporary texts about the struggle against the Saxons, the *Annals* mentions the destruction of the idol without explaining its form or func-

[76] Bernhard W. Scholz and Barbara Rogers, *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories* (Ann Arbor, 1970), 48–49.

tion.[77] In the mid-ninth century, however, Rudolf of Fulda (d. 865), when discussing the Saxon belief system in his *De miraculis sancti Alexandri*, the story of the conversion of the Saxons to Christianity, provided the following detailed explanation of the symbolic meaning of the Irminsul idol in Saxon culture: "They also worshipped in the open air a vertically erected tree trunk of no small size that they in their native language call Irminsul and in Latin *universalis columna* [universal column] because it sustains everything."[78] Evidently the Irminsul was the center of the entire world. In the minds of these church writers, the two vertical forms, the Irminsul and the Jupiter columns, come to signify pagan worship in Germany. Writing the history of the Merovingian Franks, Widukind of Corvey (d. after 973) suggested another etymological explanation of the origins of the Irminsul: "But when morning came they set up an eagle at the eastern gate and, putting up an altar of victory, worshipped their sacred images with due rites according to the error of their fathers. In name they imitated Mars; in effigy of columns, Hercules; in location, Sol, whom the Greeks call Apollo. From this, it appears that the opinion of those who think that the Saxons had their origin from the Greeks, because Mars is called Hirmin or Hermis in Greek, is in some way likely. We use that word even up to the present day both to praise and to condemn, although we do not know what it really means."[79] According to Widukind, then, the name Irminsul originated in a Saxon mispronunciation of the name of the Greek deity Hermes.[80] The Irminsul was a column erected in honor of Hermes, just as other columns were made in honor of Hercules and Jupiter. With Widukind's exposition, the association between the Jupiter columns, the late antique monuments that decorated the landscape of medieval Germany, and the lost wooden Irminsul

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[77] On the Irminsul and its place in medieval and early modern history, see Heinz Löwe, "Die Irminsul und die Religion der Sachsen," *Deutsches Archiv für Geschichte des Mittelalters* 5 (1941–42): 1–22; Wolf-Dieter Tempel, "Zu Bedeutung und Standort der Irminsul," in *Zweiundvierzig: Festschrift für Michael Gebühr zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Stefan Burmeister, Heidrun Derks, and Jasper von Richthofen (Rahden, 2007), 295–300; and Stephan Winkler, "Die Zerstörung der Irminsul und der Feldzug der christlichen Franken gegen die heidnischen Sachsen im Jahr 772," in *805, Liudger wird Bischof: Spuren eines Heiligen zwischen York, Rom und Münster (eine Ausstellung des Stadtmuseums Münster in Kooperation mit dem Westfälischen Museum für Archäologie/Landesmuseum und Amt für Bodendenkmalpflege, 12. März bis 11. September 2005)*, ed. Gabriele Isenberg and Barbara Rommé (Mainz, 2005), 63–70. Werner Haftmann makes a connection between the Irminsul and the Bernward column in passing: see "Die Bernwardsäule zu Hildesheim," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 8/3–4 (1939): 151–58.

[78] "Truncum quoque ligni non parvae magnitudinis in altum erectum sub divo colebant, patria eum lingua Irminsul appellantes, quod Latine dicitur universalis columna, quasi sustinens omnia": Rudolf of Fulda, *Translatio S. Alexandri* 3, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 2 (Hannover, 1829), 676.

[79] "Mane autem facto ad orientalem portam ponunt aquilam, aramque victoriae construentes, secundum errorem paternum sacra sua propria veneratione venerati sunt; nomine Martem, effigie columpnarum imitantes Herculem, loco Solem, quem Graeci appellant Apollinem. Ex hoc apparet aestimationem illorum utcumque probabilem, qui Saxones originem duxisse putant de Graecis, quia Hirmin vel Hermis Graece Mars dicitur; quo vocabulo ad laudem vel ad vituperationem usque hodie etiam ignorantes utimur": Widukind of Corvey, *Die Sachsengeschichte des Widukind von Korvei*, ed. Paul Hirsch and H.-E. Lohmann, MGH SS rer. Germ. 60 (Hannover, 1935), 20–21.

[80] Norbert Wagner, "Irmin in der Sachsen-Origo: Zur Arbeitsweise des Widukind von Corvei," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 59 (1978): 385–97.

worshipped by the Saxons becomes even stronger, providing a unified presentation of a pagan deity in the form of a vertical column involved in worship.

In the eleventh century, Adam of Bremen returned to Rudolf of Fulda's exposition, but instead of Saxon beliefs, he was describing Slavic belief systems, noting how the Slavs worshipped a "stock of wood, of no small size, set up in the open. In [their] native language it is called Irminsul, which in Latin is *universalis columna* [universal column], as if it sustained everything."[81] Thus the Irminsul, which first appeared in a history of Saxon worship written by Christian churchmen, and then resurfaced in an account of Merovingian practice, where its etymological roots were mistakenly traced, was taken by an eleventh-century writer as a form of Slavic idol.

In sum, the column was understood as the center of Slavic religious life. That column could be found in medieval Germany as both object and text: its centrality came from the presence of Jupiter columns in the landscape and from repeated textual references to the Irminsul, which according to medieval writers was a focus of sacral adoration for the Merovingians, Saxons, and Slavs. Jupiter, who appeared on top of the columns, was the king of the gods and ruler of the skies, while the Irminsul was referred to in Latin sources as the *columna universalis*—the column from which everything was sustained. By the year 1000, then, the column, in the form of either a stone pillar or a tree trunk, had become a religiously charged devotional form signifying the pagan belief system to those who resided in the soon-to-be-converted lands of northeastern Germany. For Christian Carolingians and Ottonians, the column had become a reference point for any attempt at conversion, for bringing Slavic pagans into the Christian fold.

Around the year 1000 we start to find columns as an integral part of new Ottonian art made in German lands. A late antique ivory representing Christ enthroned and flanked by Peter and Paul (Fig. 17) was turned over and its back carved with a depiction of Christ on a column blessing Saint Gereon of Cologne and Saint Victor (Fig. 18). In the German lands the representation of Christ seated on an orb on top of a column fits precisely in this historical moment, as it draws a link to the pagan *columna universalis*.[82]

Another ivory, made for Bishop Adalbero of Metz, a colleague of Bernward's, shows Adam and Eve on top of a column and above them Christ on the Cross (Fig. 19).[83] Inside a window at the base of the column, a carved bust of Adalbero is framed by the inscription "Adalbero, servant of the Cross of Christ." The column replicates the form of the Jupiter column, but where Jupiter had been depicted

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[81] "Truncum quoque ligni non parvae magnitudinis in altum erectum sub divo colebant, patria eum lingua Irminsul appellantes, quod Latine dicitur universalis columpna, quasi sustinens omnia"; PL 146:464.

[82] On the ivory, see Adolph Goldschmidt, Paul G. Hübner, and Otto Homburger, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 4 vols. (Berlin, 1914–26), 2:n.p., no. 47; Anton Legner, *Ornamenta Ecclesiae: Kunst und Künstler der Romanik; Katalog zur Ausstellung des Schnütgen-Museums in der Josef-Haubrich-Kunsthalle*, 3 vols. (Cologne, 1985), 2:238–40.

[83] On the relations between the bishops as part of a conceived medieval scholarly world, see Henry Mayr-Harting, *Church and Cosmos in Early Ottonian Germany: The View from Cologne* (Oxford, 2007), 1–63.
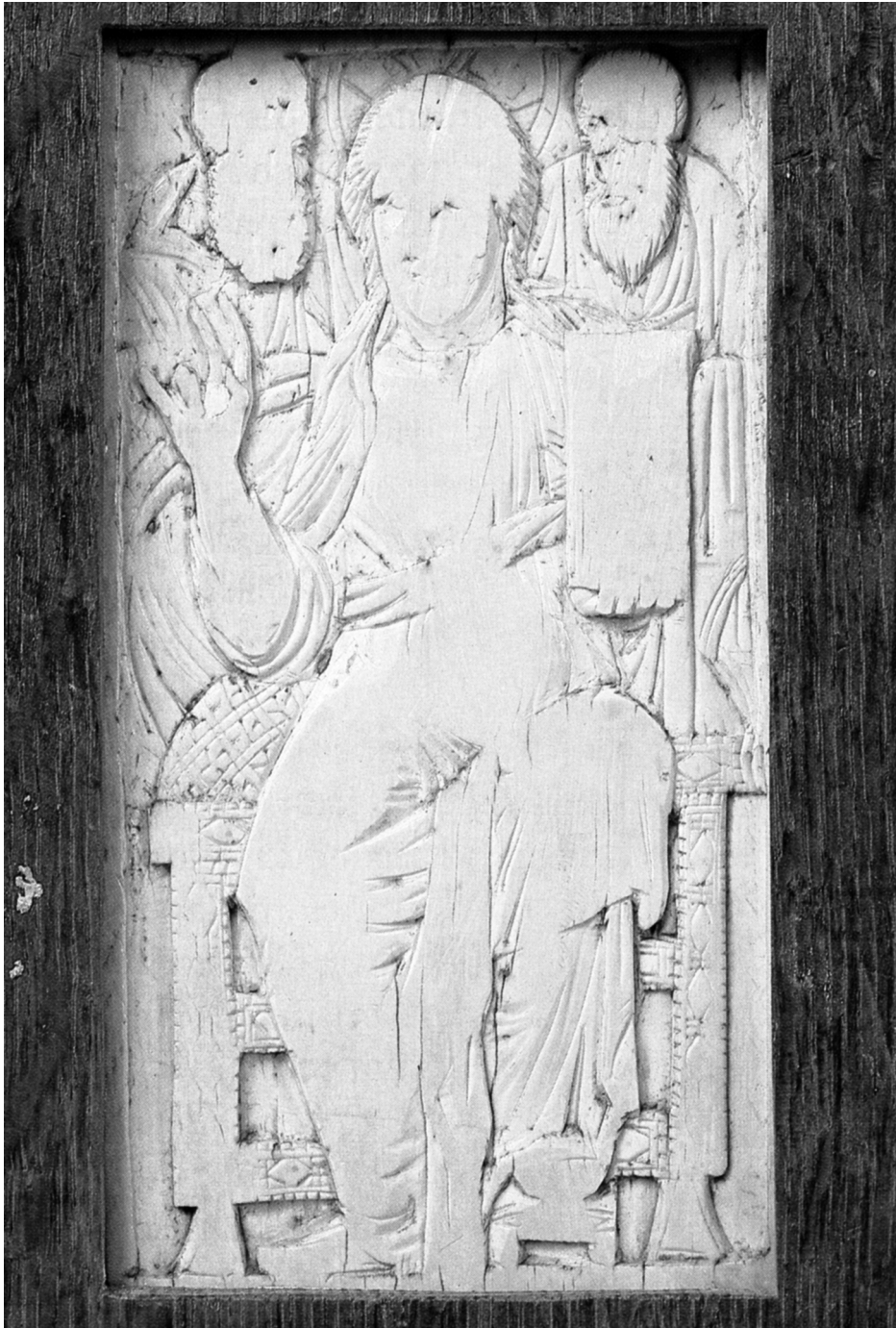
Fig. 17. Christ, Peter, and Paul, ivory panel, sixth century. (Cologne, Schnutgen Museum, rba_094837.)
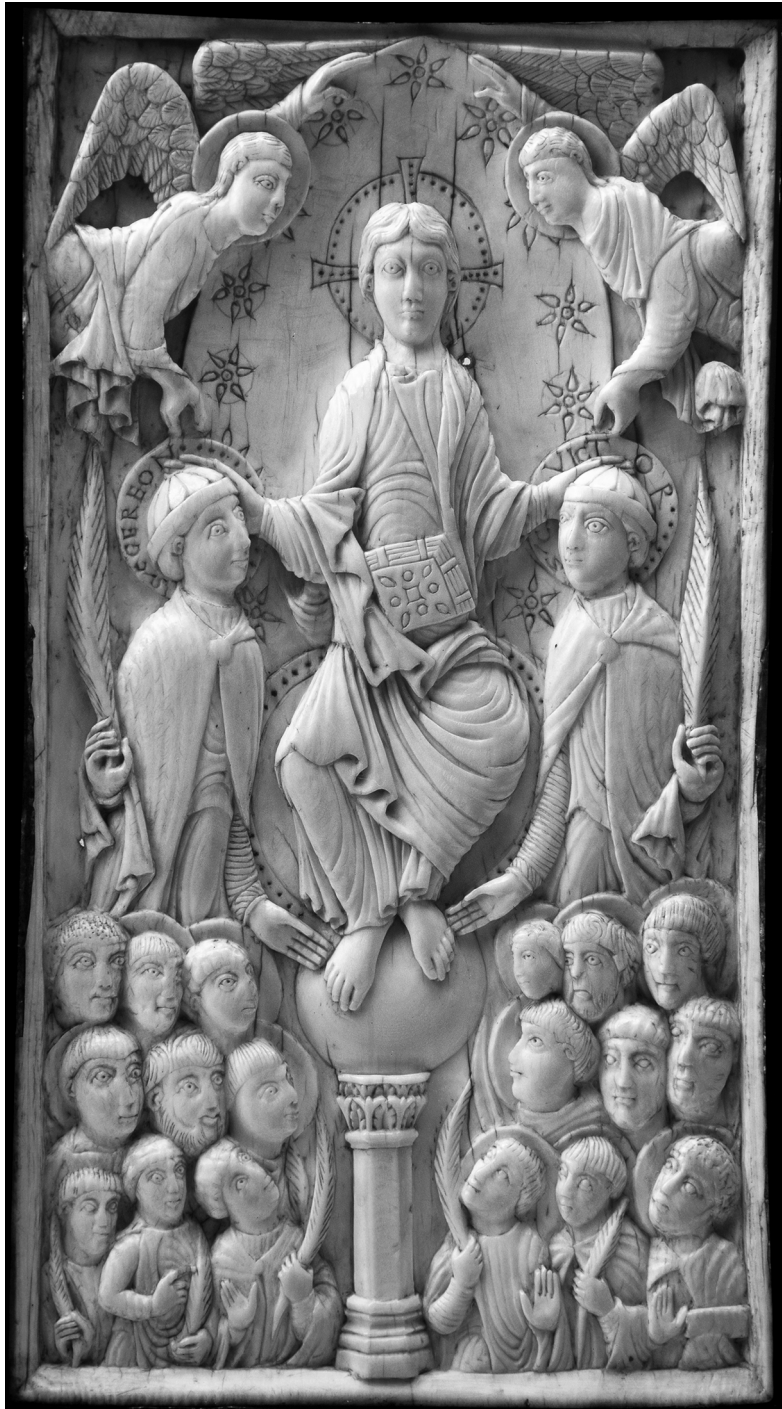
Fig. 18. Christ on a column blessing Saint Gereon of Cologne and Saint Victor, ivory panel (obverse of Fig. 17), c. 1000. (Cologne, Schnutgen Museum. rba_c001258.)

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Fig. 19. Crucifixion, ivory panel made for Bishop Adalbero, c. 1005, 15.2 × 9.2 cm. Metz, Musée de la Cour d'Or. (Foto Marburg/Art Resource, NY.)

defeating a giant, now the victorious crucified Christ appears. The bust portrait of Adalbero is placed on the socle, an area reserved on the Jupiter columns for figures such as Hercules and Juno. Thus Adalbero, the human servant of the Christian god, now appears where the pagan gods and heroes who submitted to Jupiter's supreme power were depicted in pre-Christian monuments. The Bernward column was contemporaneous with the column depicted in ivory, and the cross that previously stood at the top of the Bernward column would have replicated the arrangement in ivory.[84]

On 15 January 993, Bernward was ordained bishop in Mainz, and then went to begin his mission to Hildesheim. In addition to the bronze doors discussed at the outset of this article, Mainz also possesses a Jupiter column that is an astounding 12.5 m tall (Fig. 20).[85] The deities depicted on the column have marked similarities with the presentation of the bronze figures on the Hildesheim column.[86] Bernward may have adopted that particular arrangement from this depiction of pagan deities, which was evidently still displayed in German lands. The personifications of the four rivers of Paradise found at the base of the Bernward column also strengthen the link to the Slavic *columna universalis*. The column, then, had became an integral and significant element of the Ottonian ritualistic vocabulary. The form had its origins in a Christian reinterpretation of a European pagan object, and adopting and adapting it as part of a Christian conversion program that aimed to assimilate the new, not yet Christianized territories. The idolic column, tranformed into a Christian object and manufactured by the avant-garde technology of lost-wax bronze casting, was a potent symbol with which to counter the stone and wooden deities of the contemporary pagan Slavs and Germanic peoples.

The war of images, effigies, and sculpture in which Hildesheim was involved was part of a harsh history of bloody conversion. Ottonian Germany's attempts to dominate the Slavs were not well received, to say the least. In 983 a first revolt by the Slavs resulted in the destruction of several bishoprics in Germany, including Havelberg, Brandenburg, Seitz, and Starigrad, and the massacre of their inhabitants.[87] Material remains of the Slavic uprising in Starigrad are still preserved in the local museum in Oldenburg. The shattered remnants of a bone-carved reliquary (Fig. 21), the reconstruction of which indicates that it would have been a

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[84] On the Adalbero ivory, see Goldschmidt, Hübner, and Homburger, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 1: n.p., no. 78; Brandt, *Bernward von Hildesheim*, 2:199–201; Peter E. Lasko, *Ars Sacra: 800–1200* (New Haven, 1995), 114; Elizabeth C. Parker and Charles T. Little, *The Cloisters Cross: Its Art and Meaning* (New York, 1994), 139–40. On the inscription, see William North and Anthony Cutler, "Ivories, Inscriptions, and Episcopal Self-Consciousness in the Ottonian Empire: Berthold of Toul and the Berlin Hodegetria," *Gesta* 42/1 (2003): 8–9.

[85] On Bernward in Mainz, see Schuffels, "Bernward Bischof von Hildesheim." See also Beuckers, "Bernward und Willigis."

[86] On the Mainz Jupiter column, see Hans Ulrich Instinsky, "Kaiser Nero und die Mainzer Jupitersäule," *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 6 (1959): 128–41; Gerhard Bauchhenss, *Die grosse Iuppitersäule aus Mainz* (Mainz, 1984).

[87] Fritze Wolfgang, "Der slawische Aufstand von 983—eine Schicksalswende in der Geschichte Mitteleuropas," in *Festschrift der landesgeschichtlichen Vereinigung für die Mark Brandenburg zu ihrem hundertjährigen Bestehen*, ed. Werner Vogel and Eckart Henning (Berlin, 1984), 9–55; and Ludat, *An Elbe und Oder um das Jahr 1000*.

Fig. 20. Jupiter Column, Mainz, third century, height 12.5 m. Copy of an original at the Mittelrheinisches Landesmuseum, Mainz. (Photo: Lessing Images.)

sizable casket-shaped object, are preserved together with the bronze remains of the church bell, its clapper still intact (Fig. 22).[88] These relics are material testimony of the ongoing struggle between Ottonians and Slavs. The reliquary, a container for the remains of a Christian saint, and the church bell with its resonating metal-

[88] On the remains of the reliquary and bell of Starigrad, see Hahn, *Heiden und Christen*, 120–24. On the reliquary, see also Stiegemann, Kroker, and Walter, *Credo*, 2:598–600.
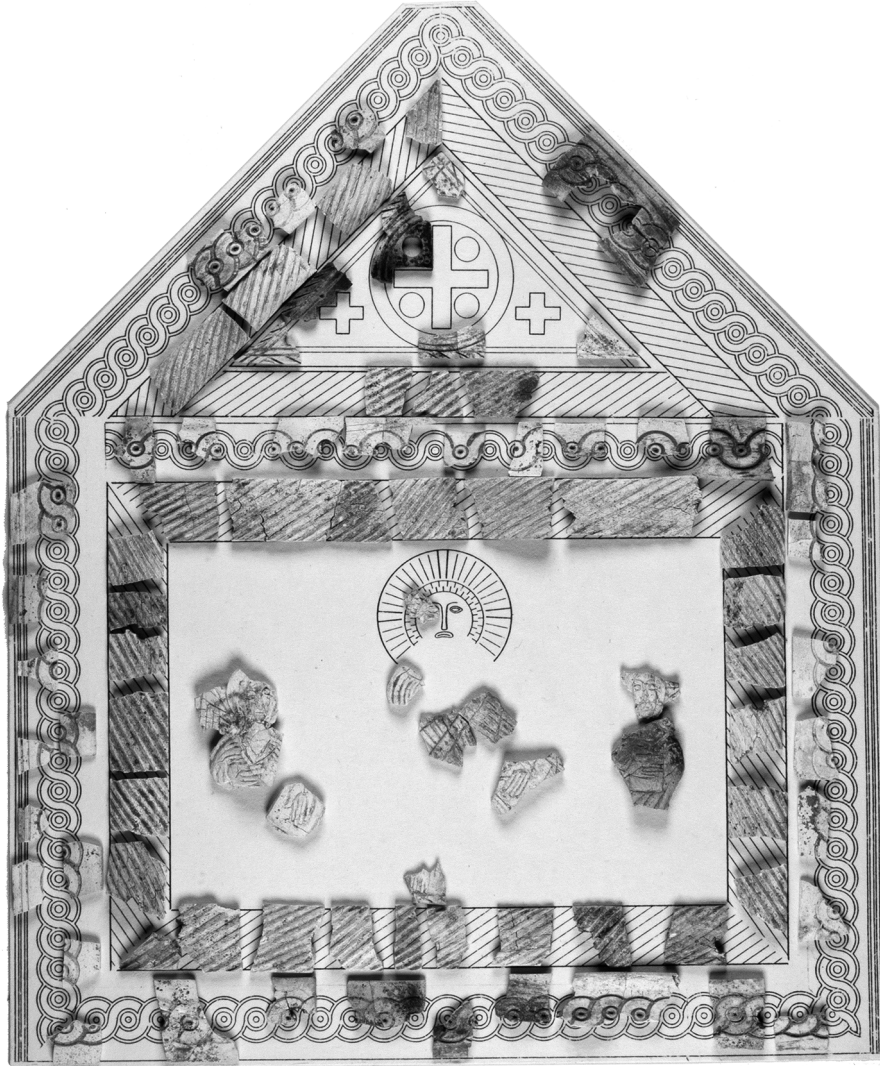
Fig. 21. Broken reliquary casket, second half of tenth century. (Schleswig, Archäologisches Landesmuseum Schloss Gottorf.)

lic sound, a *signum* for the Christian presence in the medieval landscape, were both primary symbols of Christian authority demolished by the Slavs but preserved as testimony by the defeated Christians.[89]

[89] On the use of Christian relics as tools for conversion, see Horn Fuglesang, "Christian Reliquaries and Pagan Idols," 7–32. See also Christian Lauranson-Rosaz, *L'Auvergne et ses marges (Velay, Gévaudan) du VIIIe au XIe siècle: La fin du monde antique?* (Le Puy-en-Velay, 1987); Fricke, *Fallen Idols*, 147–84.

Fig. 22. Shattered bell, second half of tenth century. (Schleswig, Archäologisches Landesmuseum Schloss Gottorf.)

The Hildesheim bronze monuments were made in the shadow of memories of that destruction. And in 1018, only three years after the consecration of the church and doors at Hildesheim, a second Slavic revolt brought the trans-Elbe campaign to a complete halt, with bishoprics such as Havelberg and Starigrad once again destroyed and Hamburg burned to the ground. Two generations later, the historian Adam of Bremen provided a vivid description of the sack of Hamburg in 1018: "Sixty priests—the rest had been slaughtered like cattle—were kept for mockery. The oldest of these . . . was named Oddar. Now he and the others were martyred in this manner: after the skin of their heads had been cut with an iron in the form of a cross, the brain of each was laid bare; with hands tied

behind their backs, the Confessors of God were then dragged through one Slavic town after another, harried with blows or in some manner until they died."[90]

More than anything, Adam of Bremen's gruesome description of the destruction of the Christian stronghold at Hamburg offers us a glimpse into the Christian attitude towards the Slavs that allows us to contextualize the bronze monuments at Hildesheim. The heinous violence of the narrative may very well have been exaggerated by Adam, writing with the same fascination with which he described the customs of the Slavs, but that ethnographic attitude created its own reality, with narratives such as these expressing the terrors faced by churchmen in eleventh-century Germany. Understanding how war and rebellion were experienced in Hamburg and Starigrad is key to understanding the pervasive sense of violence and high stakes that characterized the period, particularly at the edges of the empire .[91]

Having escaped from his see in Starigrad in 1018, Bishop Benno of Oldenburg found refuge in Hildesheim.[92] There, he may have given Bernward, as a gift, a sixth-century Proconnesian marble column (Fig. 23) that, according to tradition, had been used as a statement of Christian victory in the conversion efforts in the north, echoing once more the importance of columns on the front line of the struggle against the Slavs. The column was placed in front of the altar of Saint Michael, which Benno himself consecrated in 1022.[93] Benno died in 1023. The now-lost epitaph marking his tomb read, "See, in this undecorated grave lies the bishop who was called Benno, a man of high moral value. He lived like a guest here in great honor and consecrated the altar to the true God. He entered heaven at the Feast of Saint Michael, in whose hospice he took refuge. *After he had endured severe distress*, he is now compensated by eternal glory. Because of his virtuous character, he went to heaven."[94] The "severe distress" mentioned in the epitaph is a reference to Benno's loss of his see at Starigrad, a sign of the centrality of the struggle against the Slavs for figures such as Benno, Bernward, and other contemporary Ottonian bishops. The monumental works of bronze at Hildesheim must be considered in light of the challenges of the Elbian front line.

[90] Tschan, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, 84.

[91] For recent critical overviews on the place of "violence" in research on medieval art, see Jeffrey F. Hamburger, "Overkill, or History That Hurts," *Common Knowledge* 13/2 (2007): 404–28; and Robert Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 2015).

[92] Fred Ruchhöft, *Vom slawischen Stammesgebiet zur deutschen Vogtei: Die Entwicklung der Territorien in Ostholstein, Lauenburg, Mecklenburg und Vorpommern im Mittelalter* (Rahden, 2008), 124–30; Ludat, *An Elbe und Oder um das Jahr 1000*.

[93] On the column, see Brandt and Eggebrecht, *Bernward von Hildesheim und das Zeitalter der Ottonen*, 2:549–50. Some scholars reject the notion that the column was brought to Hildesheim by Benno and claim that it was brought to Hildesheim from Ravenna as a spolium by Otto I. On the possible liturgical function of the early medieval column, see Pawlik, *Das Bildwerk als Reliquiar*, 125–34.

[94] The epitaph was once located in the northern apse of the church of Saint Michael before the altar dedicated to Saint Benedict: "Hoc no(n)du(m) culto p(re)sul iacet ecce sepulchro / Benno nome(n) habe(n)s vir bo(n)itate valens / Hospit(is) hic mo(r)e q(ui) magno vixit honore / Ha(n)c ara(m) vero dedicat atq(ue) deo / Que(m) iu(n)xit celis festu(m) s(an)cti michaelis / Fecit (con)fugiu(m) cui(us) ad hospiciu(m) / Qui p(re)ss(us) g(ra)vit(er) pe(n)sat(ur) laude p(er)he(n)ni / Virtute ingenii ve(n)it in astra sui." On the inscription, see Christine Wulf, "DI 58, Stadt Hildesheim (2003), Nr. 20," Deutsche Inschriften Online, http://www.inschriften.net/hildesheim/inschrift/nr/di058-0020.html#content.

Fig. 23. Marble column, sixth century, now in the yard of Saint Magdalen Church, Hildes-heim. (Photo: Author.)

War was not unknown to Bishop Bernward, who participated in some of Henry II's military campaigns and was also credited with reconstructing the walls of the Hildesheim *civitas* on two separate occasions specifically to prevent invasions of this Christian stronghold.[95] Ottonian sources traditionally conflate the terms *civitas* and *castellum*, and Ottonian records dealing with the region bordering on Slavic territory refer to the *burgward* (the area surrounding a castle) as the basic form of settlement organization. When we recognize that Hildesheim was a stronghold that resembled a fortified castle, we can better understand the nature of the monumental commissions, installed outside the fortification but at the same time serving as a fortification of the church itself.[96] The bronze doors and column, like the *columna universalis* of the Slavs, were monuments that defined the patterns of local life.[97] As were the monumental religious deities in the heart of the stronghold of the Slavic *civitas* of Riedegost recorded by Thietmar of Merseburg, and the hanging spear of Caesar that Otto said was kept at the center of the Slavic settlement at Julin, the bronze doors and column formed the heart of the devotional center outside the walls of the medieval stronghold of Hildesheim. In both the Slavic settlements and the Christian bishopric, the central object with which worshippers engaged was large scale, had the nature of a monument, and was readily accessible to the population. Our consideration of these large objects of Slavic worship is crucial for understanding the foundational moment marked by the creation of the bronze monuments at Hildesheim.

As we have established, the bronze medium of the doors was an essential aspect of the message they conveyed to their audience. The amount of bronze involved and the skill required to craft the doors and column place these objects far beyond the Slavic devotional items made primarily of wood or stone. Furthermore, as the preserved, ruined bell at Starigrad reminds us, bronze was a medium tied closely to the Christian bell and its resounding call to the faithful—an aspect reflected in the monumental doors and column in Hildesheim as well.

The prominence of the bronze monuments on the hill at Saint Michael's and the aural presence of its church bell are associated with what Alfred Gell has called "enchantment" and, in turn, with spatial control. Gell has observed that "enchantment" is one element in a system that draws together technology, humans, and objects. The object's role is to dazzle the human mind.[98] The "technology of enchantment" is bound up with the "enchantment of technology": in the case of Hil-

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[95] Stefan Weinfurter, *Heinrich II (1002–1024): Herrscher am Ende der Zeiten* (Regensburg, 1999), 222–23; and Eliza Garrison, *Ottonian Imperial Art and Portraiture: The Artistic Patronage of Otto III and Henry II* (Farnham, 2012), 89–90.

[96] See Schlesinger, "Stadt und Burg im Lichte der Wortgeschichte," 1:95–121; Rossignol, "Early Towns," 241–52; Rossignol, "Civitas in Early Medieval Central Europe," 71–99.

[97] We could think here of the bronze monument as an integral part of daily life in Hildesheim, so familiar that its "visual impression" was as recognizable as an actual visual interaction with the spectator. Knowledge of its existence conveyed a forceful presence that was as powerful as an actual, physical engagement. On this notion in sculpture, see Richard T. Neer, *The Emergence of the Classical Style in Greek Sculpture* (Chicago, 2010), 182–214; Alex Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist* (New Haven, 2000), 1–23; and Weinryb, *Bronze Object*, 172–86.

[98] See Alfred Gell, "The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology," in *The Art of Anthropology: Essays and Diagrams*, ed. E. Hirsch (London, 1999), 159–86. On this essay and for more on the concept of enchantment in art and religion, see the essays in Christopher Pinney and

desheim, the bronze mining, smelting, and casting technology controlled by the Ottonians. "The technical miracle," Gell notes, "must be distinguished from a merely mysterious process: it is miraculous because it is achieved both by human agency but at the same time by an agency which transcends the normal sense of self-possession of the spectator."[99] The bronze doors would have been experienced as "miraculous" by the local inhabitants of Hildesheim because they were a "technical miracle." The technology of casting, where the object—whether it was a bell, a column, or a door—was made first in wax and then enclosed in a mold, from which mold the image then appeared in bronze, can be understood as an almost magical technological "enchantment" in medieval Europe. The scale of the monumental objects, too, suggests enchantment. By generating these technologically advanced bronze monuments to underscore the conversion or subjugation of the new peoples of the expanding empire, the Ottonians sought to assert the dominance of the church over the indigenous populations.[100]

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The local Slav population worshipped forests, and according to the Christian writings on Slavic customs, the central object of devotion, the Irminsul, actually was a large-scale tree trunk.[101] Thietmar of Merseburg's comment that the Slavs held forests such as that near Riedegost to be "inviolably holy" was mentioned above.[102] This notion has a long history in Latin texts. As early as the eighth century, the vita of Saint Boniface (d. 754),[103] a leading figure in the early campaign to convert the Saxons, tells of an incident at Geismar, a town 150 km south of Hildesheim, when Boniface destroyed a sacred oak and was cursed by the pagans as the enemy of their god.[104] "At one time he, along with other servants of God standing nearby, attempted to cut down an oak tree of tremendous size which in the ancient vernacular of these pagans is called the oak tree Idsis, located in the place called Gaesmere. After he, strengthened by the steadfastness of his mind,

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Nicholas Thomas, eds., *Beyond Aesthetics: Art and the Technologies of Enchantment* (Oxford, 2001); and James Elkins, ed., *Re-enchantment*, Art Seminar Series 7 (London, 2008).

[99] Gell, "Technology of Enchantment," 49.

[100] Gell, "Technology of Enchantment," 52. The "asymmetrical relations" between Ottonian strongholds and indigenous locales is also significantly present in the different forms of architecture, town planning, and fortification—with the Latin stronghold disproportionate in form and size in comparision to the indigenous villages of the local Slavs. See Schlesinger, "Stadt und Burg im Lichte der Wortgeschichte," 1:95–121; Rossignol, "Early Towns," 241–52; and Rossignol, "Civitas in Early Medieval Central Europe," 71–99.

[101] See Paul M. Barford, *The Early Slavs: Culture and Society in Early Medieval Eastern Europe* (Ithaca, 2001), 188–209; Löwe, "Die Irminsul und die Religion der Sachsen"; and Tempel, "Zu Bedeutung und Standort der Irminsul."

[102] "Quam undique silva ab incolis intacta et venerabilis circumdat magna": Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* 6.23, ed. Holzmann, 302; translation after Warner, *Ottonian Germany*, 253. On the reverence for trees and forests in Saxon and Slavic cultures, see Vykintas Vaitkevičius, "The Sacred Groves of the Balts: Lost History and Modern Research," *Folklore* 42 (2009): 81–94; and Andrzej Kuczkowski and Kamil Kajkowski, "Die heiligen Wälder der Slawen in Pommern im frühen Mittelalter," *Folklore* 42 (2009): 111–28.

[103] On Boniface and his mission, see Wood, *Missionary Life*, 57–78.

[104] See G. R. Murphy, *The Saxon Savior: The Germanic Transformation of the Gospel in the Ninth-Century Heliand* (Oxford, 1989), 13–31.

had cut the tree down, a great number of pagans appeared, who cursed him among themselves with the greatest fervor as an enemy of their gods."[105] The *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum* ("A Short List of Superstitions and Pagan Practices") from around the year 800 lists, as a pagan practice common in Gaul and Saxony, the "sacred rites of the woods that they call Nimidas."[106] The mid-twelfth-century *Chronica Slavorum* by Goslar-born Helmold of Bosau mentions that, once he crossed into Slavia, he saw "the sacred oaks among the very old groves that have been consecrated to the God of the land, namely Prove."[107] In the same chapter he tells of a priest named Bruno who was "cutting down groves and so doing away with superstitious rites."[108] The physical environment had a central role in narratives of religious conversion, and the hewing of forests that were deemed holy was a practice associated with the transformations wrought by the destruction of paganism.[109]

We noted that the early mining industry near Hildesheim required a large quantity of wood, which would have been used to produce the necessary charcoal.[110] Anthracologists who have studied the archaeological remains of charcoal have identified a clear connection between the start of mining in the Harz region and increased clearing of its forests. These physical processes are linked to the smelters, the forest dwellers known as the *silvani*, who inhabited the upper parts of the region, a remote area where relatively dense tree growth made sufficient material available for the creation of charcoal. Calculations made by archaeometallurgists who have conducted research at medieval kiln sites dedicated to the production of charcoal also show a clear correlation between the rise in demand for charcoal, the decrease in forest vegetation, and the beginnings of mining in the Harz region. From the second half of the tenth century until the twelfth century, forest clearings were created in places where massive beech trees (*fagus*) had once stood and were

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[105] "Roborem quondam mirae magnitudinis qui prisco paganorum vocabulo appellitur robor Idsis, in loco qui dicitur Gaesmere, servis Dei secum adstantibus succidere temptavit. Cumque mentis constantia confortatus arborem succidisset, magna quippe aderat copia paganorum, qui inimicum deorum suorum intra se diligentissime devotabant": Willibaldus, *Vita S. Bonifacii*, PL 89:620.

[106] "De sacris sylvarum, quae Nimidas vocant." On the list, see Alain Dierkens, "Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne: À propos de l' 'Indiculus superstitionem et paganiarum,' " in *Magie, sorcellerie, parapsychologie*, ed. Hervé Hasquin (Brussels, 1984), 9–26; Bernadette Filotas, *Pagan Survivals, Superstitions and Popular Cultures in Early Medieval Pastoral Literature* (Toronto, 2005), 145–52; and Yitzhak Hen, "The Early Medieval West," in *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West: From Antiquity to the Present*, ed. David J. Collins, SJ (Cambridge, UK, 2015), 182–206.

[107] "Illic inter vetustissimas arbores vidimus sacras quercus, quae dicatae fuerant deo terrae illius, Proven," *Helmolds Slavenchronik* (*Helmoldi presbyteri Bozoviensis Cronica Slavorum*) 83, ed. Bernhard Schmeidler, MGH SS rer. Germ. 32 (Hannover, 1937), 159.

[108] "Statim enim, ut venit Aldenburg, aggressus est opus Dei cum magno fervore et vocavit gentem Slavorum ad regenerationis gratiam succidens locus et destruens ritus sacrilegos": *Helmoldi Cronica Slavorum* 83, ed. Schmeidler, 164.

[109] For a useful overview, see James Palmer, "Defining Paganism in the Carolingian World," *Early Medieval Europe* 15/4 (2007): 402–25.

[110] On deforestation in medieval Europe, see Chris Wickham, "European Forests in the Early Middle Ages: Landscape and Land Clearance," in *L'ambiente vegetale nell'alto medioevo: Atti della XXXVII Settimana di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, Spoleto 30 marzo–5 aprile 1989*, 2 vols. (Spoleto, 1990), 2:479–548; and Richard C. Hoffmann, *An Environmental History of Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, UK, 2014), 119–36.

gradually filled with smaller-sized coniferous spruce trees (*picea*), a result of the overexploitation that may have accelerated deforestation, hindering the recovery of the natural beech forests.[111] With simple calculations we may conclude that for the uncomplicated task of melting the necessary copper for the doors, more than twenty mature beech trees had to be hewed. The bronze objects at Hildesheim, then, can be regarded as active participants in the reshaping and colonializing of the medieval landscape.[112]

At Hildesheim, the process of colonization altered the untamed environment in order to produce monuments that embodied that very same colonizing process. The destruction of the wilderness for the sake of bronze production is testimony that industrialization there was a product of colonization. Because the Slavic belief system involved both devotion to forests and worship of the wooden Irminsul, the hewing of trees for the sake of bronze production in the service of the Christian church resulted in the destruction both of forests that were revered as holy and of trees that were understood by the Christians as an embodiment of the Slavic deity. The production of bronze objects meant not only the destruction of the untamed forests but the destruction of the organic deities of the Slavs.[113] In a way, the bronze Christian monuments of Hildesheim consumed the wooden Slavic gods.

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[111] See, here, Isabelle Théry-Parisot, Lucie Chabal, and Julia Chrzavzez, "Anthracology and Taphonomy, from Wood Gathering to Charcoal Analysis: A Review of the Taphonomic Processes Modifying Charcoal Assemblages, in Archaeological Contexts," *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* 291/1–2 (2010): 142–53; Hannes Knapp, Oliver Nelle, and Wiebke Kirleis, "Charcoal Usage in Medieval and Modern Times in the Harz Mountains Area, Central Germany: Wood Selection and Fast Overexploitation of the Woodlands," *Quaternary International* 366 (2015): 51–69; Thomas Ludemann, "Geschichtsträchtige Vegetation und Landschaft im Schwarzwald—Einzigartige und representative Fallbeispiele aus dem Zweribachgebiet," *Tuexenia Beiheft* 6 (2013): 29–85; Hannes Knapp, Vincent Robin, Wiebke Kirleis, and Oliver Nelle, "Woodland History in the Upper Harz Mountains Revealed by Kiln Site, Soil Sediment and Peat Charcoal Analyses," *Quaternary International* 289 (2013): 88–100; H. Kempter and B. Frenzel, "The Impact of Early Mining and Smelting on the Local Tropospheric Aerosol Detected in Ombrotrophic Peat Bogs in the Harz, Germany," *Water, Air, and Soil Pollution* 121 (2000): 93–108; Thomas Ludemann, Hans-Gerd Michiels, and Wilko Nölken, "Spatial Patterns of Past Wood Exploitation, Natural Wood Supply and Growth Conditions: Indications of Natural Tree Species Distribution by Anthracological Studies of Charcoal-Burning Remains," *European Journal of Forest Research* 123/4 (2004): 283–92; and John M. Marston, "Modeling Wood Acquisition Strategies from Archaeological Charcoal Remains," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 36 (2009): 2192–200.

[112] Calculations made by contemporary archaeometallurgists based on archaeological excavations conducted in charcoal preparation sites (kiln sites) suggest that in order to melt 40 kg of copper, one has to use an average of 50 kg of charcoal. The necessary charcoal is in turn produced from 500 kg of dry wood. The weight of an average dry beech tree from the vicinity of Hildesheim was about 800 kg. If the doors at Hildesheim required 1,400 kg of copper to be melted, then for this operation alone (that is, not for the smelting of the copper or the actual casting of the doors but just for melting the copper in preparation for the making of the bronze alloy) more than twenty trees had to be chopped down. We can then assume that large areas in the vicinity of Hildesheim were affected by the making of the bronze doors and column. See, here, Knapp, Nelle, and Kirleis, "Charcoal Usage in Medieval and Modern Times"; Knapp et al., "Woodland History in the Upper Harz Mountains"; and Kempter and Frenzel, "The Impact of Early Mining and Smelting." See also Asmus, *Medieval Copper Smelting*. I thank Bastian Asmus for discussing with me the results of his research and for sharing his calculations.

[113] On deforestation as a process of religious conversion, see Ellen F. Arnold, *Negotiating the Landscape: Environment and Monastic Identity in the Medieval Ardennes* (Philadelphia, 2013), 178–86.

Ottonian control of the mining process extended to control of the labor required for the mining and smelting of copper as well as of other minerals, such as silver. Historians who work with postcolonial theory have demonstrated how environmental control over vast "untamed" lands was a de facto exercise of power that might encompass the purposeful erasure of local communities,[114] which were regarded, as was expressed in the vita of Bernward, as situated at the heart of an "untamed frontier, filled with wild beasts."[115]

A later twelfth-century set of bronze doors in the pilgrimage church in Gniezno (Fig. 24) provides another eloquent example of the place of bronze manufacture in the Christian colonialization of Europe. As were the doors at Hildesheim, each door wing at Gniezo was cast as a single unit. The technical virtuosity evident in the making of these doors has led some scholars to suggest that they might have been cast at Hildesheim.[116] Their iconography is striking when placed in the context of the conversion of the Slavs, for they present scenes from the life of Saint Adalbert of Prague, a student of the archbishop of Magdeburg who later became bishop of Prague and was martyred when he was killed by pagan Slavs. The doors provide what might be called an epitome of conversion in bronze, including such depictions as the baptism of the heathen. An ornamental frieze that frames the doors shows animal and vegetal motifs and motifs that represent untamed nature, as if to stress that the heathen landscape surrounding the church has been regimented and organized at the margins through the hagiographical narrative scenes this decoration surrounds. One particularly striking scene portrays Adalbert freeing the Slavs from their slavery under Boleslaus II, duke of Bohemia (920–99) (Fig. 25), an account drawn from his vita.[117] The miners (*montani*) and smelters (*silvani*), the key social groups who labored in the mining industry near Hildesheim,

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[114] On colonialism and environmental governance, see Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford, 2000), 89–122; William M. Adams and Martin Mulligan, *Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Postcolonial Era* (London, 2002); Mahesh Rangarajan, "Battles for Nature: Contesting Wildlife Conservation in Twentieth Century India," in *Shades of Green: Environmental Activism around the Globe*, ed. Christof Mauch, Nathan Stoltzfus, and Douglas R. Weiner (Oxford, 2006), 161–82; Shalini Randeria, "Global Designs and Local Lifeworlds: Colonial Legacies of Conservation, Disenfranchisement and Environmental Governance in Postcolonial India," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 8/1 (2006): 12–30; and Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8 (2006): 3878409. I thank Daniel Hershenzon for his help in compiling this bibliography.

[115] "Monasterium itaque in septentrionali parte civitatis Hildenesheimensis, in loco quondam squalido, feris quoque seu brutis animalibus coaptato, tota devotione et apparatu decenti instituit, quod praediis sufficientibus dotatum, coenobitis Deo famulantibus ibi collectis delegavit": PL 140:428; see note 61.

[116] Size: left wing, 328 cm × 84 cm; right wing, 323 cm × 83 cm. Thickness of the doors is between 1.5 cm and 2.5 cm. On the Gniezno doors, see Goldschmidt, *Die Bronzetüren von Nowgorod und Gnesen*; Jacques Stiennon, "La Pologne et le pays mosan au moyen âge: À propos d'un ouvrage sur la porte de Gniezno," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 4 (1961): 457–73; Piotr Skubiszewski, "L'art mosan et la Pologne à l'epoque romane: Problématique des recherches," in *Rapports historiques et artistiques entre le pays mosan et la Pologne, du XIe au début du XIIIe siècle* (Liège, 1981), 27–81; Mende, *Bronzetüren*, 84–93, 161–64; Adam Bujak and Adam S. Labuda, *Porta Regia: Die Bronzetür zu Gnesen* (Gniezno, 1998).

[117] The specific account is found in Johannes Canaparius, *Vita Adalberti episcopi Pragensis* 12, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 4 (Hannover, 1841), 586.

Fig. 24. Bronze doors, south portal, Gniezno Cathedral, second half of twelfth century, 328 × 167 cm. (Photo: Author.)

Fig. 25. Bronze doors, Gniezno Cathedral. Panel displaying Adalbert freeing the Slavs from their slavery under Boleslaus II, duke of Bohemia. (Photo: Author.)

were likely originally such Slavic slaves. An irony of the history of colonialization in Hildesheim is that former Slavic pagans were themselves made instruments in the destruction of their sacred environment for the creation of the bronzes, an art commemorating conversion that was predicated upon and embodied by their forced labor.[118]

The bronze monuments at Hildesheim, then, are monuments to conversion, but that art was the result of enslavement. Slavs were engaged in the manufacture of such monuments as slaves working in the mines, extracting and smelting copper for the new cast bronze idols of medieval Christianity. They were aiding the manufacture of monuments that would serve in their own conversion. As Walter Benjamin has noted, "There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism."[119] In many ways, the Hildesheim doors and column stand as documents both of civilization and of barbarism. The creation of these monuments could have only been accomplished through the development of the mining enterprise at Goslar that had to rely on a workforce of indigenous Slavic slaves.[120] The bronzes show that the foundational construction of monu-

[118] On Adalbert, see Wood, *Missionary Life*, 207–25.

[119] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Harry Zohn (New York, 1969), 256. I thank Jeffrey Hamburger for suggesting this quotation to me.

[120] On slavery in medieval Europe, see Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300–900* (Cambridge, UK, 2001), 244–54; Joseph C. Miller, "The Historical Contexts of Slavery in Europe," in *Slavery across Time and Space: Studies in Slavery in Medieval Europe and Africa*, ed. Per O. Hernæs and Tore Iversen (Trondheim, 2002), 1–57; Martin Ježek, "A Mass for the Slaves: From Early Medieval Prague," in *Frühgeschichtliche Zentralorte in Mitteleuropa: Internationale Konferenz und Kolleg der Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung zum 50. Jahrestag des Beginns archäologischer Ausgrabungen in Pohansko bei Břeclav, 5.–9.10.2009, Břeclav, Tschechische Republik*, ed. Jiří Macháček and Šimon Ungerman (Bonn, 2011), 623–42; Zofia Kowalska, "Handel niewolnikami prowadzony przez Żydów w IX–XI wieku w Europie," in *Niewolnictwo i niewolnicy w Europie od starożytności po czasy nowożytne*, ed. Darina Quirini-Popławska (Kraków,

mental public art in the medieval West can be regarded as a product of the socio-political demands of the Ottonian campaigns as the empire expanded into north-eastern Germany. The formalistic Christian understanding of Slavic pagan worship determined, in turn, the form and appearance of Christian monuments. The initial manifestation of this Christian medieval art was embedded in a Christian negotiation with other forms of worship in the unconverted land, where image, material, and technique were made part of the territorial, political, and religious wars.[121] The artistic and technological innovation of the Hildesheim doors and column was one result of this negotiation.[122]

The Hildesheim bronzes are avant-garde in two ways. The full-scale smelting, admixing, and casting of metal alloys is evidence of a technological avant-garde. But that technological mastery was achieved within a political, religious, and military avant-garde cultural context that stemmed from Hildesheim's location on a front line bordering the river Elbe. The development of the innovative technology was intended to dazzle the Slavs as part of a long process of conversion. Through the adaptation and reconfiguration of old pagan forms, the new Christian monuments became symbols of imperial dominance. The enthusiasm shown by Latin churchmen and ethnographers in recording the customs of contemporary pagans sheds light on that process, indicating a receptiveness of other religions that might suggest the adoption and adaptation, rather than complete negation, of forms and conventions. Set in the context of religious conversion and political expansion, the Hildesheim monuments reflect the plurality of faiths and beliefs in medieval Europe around 1000.

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Let us return, finally, to the chronology and iconography of the creation of the bronze monuments at Hildesheim. The doors were made for the façade and are dated to 1015. They represent the word of the Christian faith: on one side we find the Old Testament story of the creation of the world and humankind as well as its fall from grace; on the other wing, its New Testament counterpart, of an incarnate savior who sacrifices himself and ascends to heaven to redeem humankind. The inscription on the doors states that they were made "for the façade of the church of the angel" (IN FACIE[M] ANGEL[I]CI TE[M]PLI), drawing attention to the

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1998), 81–91; and K. Bojko, "Niewolnictwo na Rusi Kijowskiej od czasów najdawniejszych do XIII wieku," in *Niewolnictwo i niewolnicy w Europie od starożytności po czasy nowożytne*, ed. Quirini-Popławska, 101–13. On slavery as consequence of war, see John Gillingham, "Women, Children and the Profits of War," in *Gender and Historiography: Studies in the Earlier Middle Ages in Honour of Pauline Stafford*, ed. Janet L. Nelson, Susan Reynolds, and Susan M. Johns (London, 2012), 61–74. According to a widely accepted thesis, the word slave (*sclavus*) became synonouous with the word Slav in tenth- and eleventh-century Germany. See Charles Verlinden, "L'origine de sclavus = esclave," *Archivum latinitatis medii aevi* 17 (1942): 97–128. For refutation of this thesis, see Alice Rio, *Slavery after Rome (500–1100)* (Oxford, 2017), 165–66. I thank Alice Rio for sharing with me her work before its publication and Florin Curta for the help with this bibliography.

[121] See, here, Horst Bredekamp, *Kunst als Medium sozialer Konflikte: Bilderkämpfe von der Spätantike bis zur Hussitenrevolution* (Frankfurt am Main, 1975).

[122] This notion is best explored in Camille, *Gothic Idol*.

fact that the doors protected the exterior of the church. As such, the doors supplied a narrative for a new Christian world order that confronted the old ideologies of the Slavic belief system, a symbolic confrontation that was physically embodied in the doors' position facing the Slavic landscape.

The column was made in the years that followed, most likely after 1018, the year Benno sought refuge in Hildesheim, and before 1022, the year of Bernward's death. It was created in the aftermath of the failure of the campaign to develop bishoprics across the Elbe and its creation most likely was inspired by the column given by Benno to the church of Saint Michael. Thus while the iconography on the doors deals mainly with the word of God and the story of God's incarnation and baptism, the column richly illustrates tales exhibiting the supernatural powers of Christ through miracles, such as those of the wedding at Cana, the healing of the blind man in Bethsaida, and the raising of the son of the widow of Nain; tales of the spread of the word of God, such as the commissioning of the twelve apostles and the story of John the Baptist; and moral tales, such as that of the rich man and Lazarus. The selection is fitting in the context of the conversion of the Slavs in eleventh-century Germany, as the scenes focus on themes of miracles, socioeconomic morals, and the ideals of the Christian mission. Furthermore, the inclusion of the four rivers of Paradise on the column's base evokes the heavenly and universal nature of the Christian column as a counterpart to the *columna universalis* of the Slavs—the Irminsul. The visual content of the column centers, then, on the miraculous. Ian Wood has noted in regard to the function of miracles in the vitae of Christian missionaries on the Saxon and Viking frontiers, "from being an aspect in the process of Christianization, the miraculous had become a necessary consolation for those Christians under threat. . . . [W]hile Christianity was expanding, its success could be associated with workings of the divine. When it was under threat, those same workings were directed at reassuring the Christians."[123] Even as the miracles presented on the column exhibited the divine powers of the Christian God, they also conveyed comfort to Bernward and his flock at a time of turmoil. The column, then, became a site of memory and consolation whose function may be compared with that of modern-day memorials.[124] The trans-Elbian campaigns—whose consequences so affected the life of Bernward since a constant stream of bishops sought refuge at Hildesheim after losing their own sees—were traumatic events that called for the commemoration of those who had endured severe distress and for those who felt similarly threatened. The Hildesheim column became a site of memory, as it was formed in a shape that recalled monuments of the pagan Roman past and, more forcefully and urgently, of the Slavic present. The innovators of the political avant-garde chose to develop what was, in form and materiality, an artistic avant-garde to preserve, maintain, and memorialize the contemporary political and ecclesiastical situation that preoccupied settlers on the eastern edges of the Ottonian empire, using bronze to resound the colonialist message.

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[123] Wood, *Missionary Life*, 263.

[124] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford, 1990), 70–106; Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage, 1870–1997* (London, 1998); and Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, 1997), 3–20.

Robert Bartlett concluded in his study of the colonization of Europe, "The European Christians who sailed to the coasts of the Americas, Asia and Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries came from a society that was already a colonizing society. Europe, the initiator of one of the world's major processes of conquest, colonization and cultural transformation, was also the product of one."[125] The bronze monuments at Hildesheim are symbols of the beginning of such a European process of colonization. To revisit the notion of the cult images developed by Hans Belting, we see that they also serve as markers of the exchange between two essentially different forms of living and systems of belief and are evidence of cross-cultural discourse regarding the nature and function of images. The monuments at Hildesheim represent both an avant-garde and a point of departure for the development of the monumental image. These innovative bronzes mark the beginning of a new era for image and object in the art of the medieval West, an era initiated by the colonization of other, foreign, cultures.[126]

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[125] Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, 314.

[126] Later European conquest campaigns, such as the Crusades, echoed similar concerns regarding the nature of the Christian image. See Camille, *Gothic Idol*.

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