

FR. STANISŁAW KOBIELUS

THE *CONCORDIA NOVI ET VETERIS TESTAMENTI*  
IN ITS JUXTAPOSITION OF ILLUSTRATIONS:  
THE HITTING OF THE HAMMERS OF TUBALCAIN  
AND THE HAMMERING OF THE NAILS INTO THE HANDS  
AND FEET OF CHRIST DURING THE CRUCIFIXIONE

The Gospels that give accounts of the Passion of Christ offer no description of the very action of Christ's body being nailed to the cross, yet there are clear testimonies to the use of nails during the crucifixion. On the basis of Thomas the Apostle's words: "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe" (Jn 20: 25) one may conclude that Christ was nailed to the cross.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, St. Paul in his *Letter to Colossians* (2: 14) wrote that "Christ obliterated the bond against us nailing it to the cross". We must also bear in mind St. Paul's metaphorical statement in his *Letter to Galatians* (2: 19): "For through the law I died for the law, that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ". According to some statements, before Christ was crucified, a cross was prepared for Him on Golgotha and the nails, which were to be forged on the spot.

As to Tubalcain and Jabal, *The Book of Genesis* writes as follows: "Adah gave birth to Jabal, the ancestor of all who dwell in tents and keep cattle. His brother's name was Jabal; he was the ancestor of all who play the lyre and the pipe. Zillah, on her part, gave birth to Tubalcain, the ancestor of all who

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Fr. Prof. Dr Hab. STANISŁAW KOBIELUS—Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw;  
e-mail: [kobielus1939@gmail.com](mailto:kobielus1939@gmail.com)

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<sup>1</sup> Quotations from the Holy Bible: *The New American Bible*, <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/INDEX.HTM>.

forge instruments of bronze and iron” (Gen 4: 21–22). Jabal was, then, Tubalcain’s half-brother, since Lamech was the father of both. Joseph Flavius wrote in the same vein.<sup>2</sup> Venerable Bede, who lived at the turn of the 8th c., added a semantic comment that Jabal was the first zither player and symbolises the Jewish nation living in tents, which denote this world. Jabal moreover indicated the Christian nation among the pagans, using the zither in his singing, i.e. history, and flutes, which denote its meaning (ill. 1). According to Bede, Tubalcain was the first smith and maker of bronze objects. He is symbolic of each saint protecting his or her body and soul<sup>3</sup>. Perhaps for his reason Tubalcain was often depicted in medieval art<sup>4</sup> and had a certain didactic objective.

Petrus Comestor (d. 1179), author of *Historia scholastica Theologiae Disciplinae*, left a significant account of Tubal’s merits:

Zillah gave birth to Tubalcain, who was the first to invent the art of forging, skilfully made weapons for warfare, forged sculptures in metal for the joy of the eye. Making it Tubal, as we speak about him, enchanted with the sound of metals, conjured proportions and harmonious cords out of their weight. This invention was attributed by the Greeks in their accounts to Pythagoras.<sup>5</sup>

On another occasion Petrus Comestor observed that Tubal was the father of zither and flute players. However, he did not mean instruments, as these were invented much later, but the fact that he was the inventor of music, i.e.

<sup>2</sup> “From among the sons born of the second wife of Lamech, Jabal (Tubalcain) towered over all with his strength and made a name for himself in warfare, gaining through it what the body relishes in; he, too, was the first blacksmith,” JÓZEF FLAVIUS, *Dawne dzieje Izraela*, transl. Eugeniusz Dąbrowski (Poznań: Rytm, 1962), 106 (I, II, 2); see also: *Tora. Pięcioksiąg Mojżesza*, transl. I. Cylkow (Warszawa: Austeria, 2009), 47–48.

<sup>3</sup> “Jabal primus citharista fuit. Per Lamech autem populum haereticorum cum duabus Ecclesiis haereseos, vel in bonam partem Christum cum suis duabus Ecclesiis significat. Per Jabal populum Judaeorum habitantem in tentoriis, id est, in hujus saeculi. Per Jabal populus Christianus in gentibus, canens cithara, id est, historia et organo, id est sensu. Tubalcain primus faber ferri, et aerarius. Unumquemque sanctum significat sui corporis et animae custodem,” BEDA, *Commentarii in Pentateuchum*, PL 91, 220.

<sup>4</sup> Jan BIAŁOSTOCKI, “Harfa Dawida i młot Tubalkaina. Miniatura Biblii Płockiej,” *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki i Kultury* 11, no 3–4 (1949): 174.

<sup>5</sup> Sella genuit Tubalcain, qui ferrariam artem primus invenit, res bellicas prudenter exercuit, sculpturas operum in metallis in libidinem oculorum fabricavit. Quo fabricante Tubal, de quo dictum est, sono metallorum delectatus, ex ponderibus eorum proportiones, et consonantias eorum, quae ex eis nascuntur excogitavit, quam inventionem Graeci Pythagorae attribuunt fabulose—COMESTOR PETRUS, *Historia Scholastica Theologiae Disciplinae, Historia Libri Genesis, De generationibus Cain* (Lugduni, 1543).

harmony, so that the shepherd's work could become pleasurable. And since he heard that Adam prophesied about both brothers, in order that invented art should not be lost, he gave a written account of all of it on two columns, as Joseph [Flavius] says<sup>6</sup>, one marble and the other made of brick. One of them was supposed to survive a deluge, the other a fire. As Flavius claims, the marble one has stood in Syria until today.<sup>7</sup> C.J. Verduin's article "Hammers, music and scales. Jabal watching Tubalcain. Some notes on iconography" comes with an illustration<sup>8</sup> where two smiths cut off pieces of metal and they are weighted on a scale held by a man, Pythagoras. In the background of the woodcut, Jabal marks sounds by means of musical notation on the aforementioned two columns, much as Petrus Comestor and Joseph Flavius saw it.<sup>9</sup>

In his text *On Pythagorean Life*, Jamblich wrote that Pythagoras:

strolling near the blacksmith's shop, heard hammers forging iron on the anvil, making harmonious sounds, with the exception of one combination. He recognized in them the sound of an octave, fifths and quarters.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, he noticed that the intermediate sound between the octave and the fifth is in itself devoid of harmony, but it complements what in others is in excess. Satisfied, therefore, because he was sent help from God, he went to the workshop and, after many different attempts, he discovered that the difference in sounds was born from the weight of the hammers rather than from the striking force, not from the shape of the tools or from the transformation of wrought iron.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "Adam prophesied that the entire world would be annihilated, both by a ravaging fire and by the floods of the deluge—they made two pillars, one of brick and the other of stone, so that if the brick one gets washed away by the deluge, the stone one remained and people might read the legend inscribed in it, where they also mentioned the erection of the brick pillar. The pillar of stone has remained standing to this day in the land of Seiris". FLAVIUS, *Dawne dzieje Izraela*, 106 (II, 2, 3).

<sup>7</sup> "Nomen fratris ejus Tubal, pater canentium in cithara, et organo. Non instrumentorum quidem, quae longe post inventa fuerunt, sed inventor fuit musicae, id est consonantiarum, ut labor pastoralis quasi in delicias verteretur. Et quia audierat Adam prophetasse de duobus judiciis, ne periret ars inventa, scripsit eam in duabus columnis, in qualibet totam, ut dicit Josephus, una marmorea, altera latericia, quarum altera non diluatur diluvio, altera non solveretur incendio. Marmoream dicit Josephus adhuc esset in terra Syriaca," COMESTOR PETRUS, *Historia Scholastica*.

<sup>8</sup> The woodcut comes from *Flores musicae omnis cantus Gregoriani*, Hugo Spechtshart of Reutlingen (ca. 1285–ca. 1360), the 1492 edition.

<sup>9</sup> After <http://www.leidenuniv.nl/fsw/verduin/ghio/speculum.htm>

<sup>10</sup> See Elżbieta WITKOWSKA-ZAREMBA, "*Musica muris*" i nurt spekulatywny w muzykologii średniowiecznej," (Warszawa: Instytut Historii Nauki PAN, 1992), 11.

<sup>11</sup> "O życiu pitagorejskim" [On Pythagorean life], in *Żywoty Pitagorasa*, transl. Janina Gajda-Krynicka (Wrocław: Epsilon, 1993), 68. Gwido Aretinus wrote in a similar vein: "Cum Pythagoras

Johannes de Muris in his treatise *Musica speculativa secundum Boetium* called Pythagoras: “*Princeps numerorum, proportionum magister, cuique a toto tempore, dum viveret, numerus obedivit*”—the prince of numbers, teacher of proportion, to whom numbers were obedient all of his life.<sup>12</sup>

In many depictions, parallel to the nailing of Christ’s members to the cross or lifting the cross with His body, there was a scene of Tubalcain’s forging pieces of iron with hammers in order to extract the appropriate tones. He hits the anvil, and Jabal, sometimes dressed in royal robes, records sounds (ill. 2, 3, 4), or holds a psalterium in front of him, usually in a form similar to a trapezoid, as if he wanted to recreate the tones he heard on this instrument immediately.

The images of Christ’s crucifixion can be twofold. Some show the forging of the nails and driving them into the members of Christ (ill. 5), others, in a separate image next to the scene of crucifixion, showed hammers hitting the anvil and Jabal’s recording of the value of the sounds emitted. A variant of this version is that the first zither player, Jabal, as Venerable Bede reported, produces the sounds of hammers on the psalterium. Such a juxtaposition appears mainly in the treatises *Speculum humanae salvationis*.

In the second set two traditions, Pythagorean and Biblical, met. It is summarized by Isidore of Seville as follows: “Moses considered Jabal, who was a descendant of Cain before the Deluge, to be the inventor of music. The Greeks gave Pythagoras the priority of inventing this art from the sound of hammers and strokes on taut strings. Others considered the following to be the first in this art: Linos of Thebes,<sup>13</sup> Zethus<sup>14</sup> and Amphion.” The Pythagorean tradition of producing harmonious tones by striking the anvil with

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quidam magnus philosophus forte iter ageret, ventum est ad fabricam, in qua super unam incidem quinque mallei feriebant: quorum suavem concordiam miratus philosophus accessit, primumque in manuum varietate sperans vim soni ac modulationis existere, mutavit malleos; quo facto sua vis quemque secuta est. Subtracto itaque, qui dissonus erat a caeteris, alios ponderavit, mirumque in modum divino nutu primus XII. secundus IX. tertius VIII. quartus VI. nescio quibus ponderibus appendebat. Cognovit itaque in numerorum proportione et collatione musicae versari scientiam,” GUIDO ARETINUS, *Micrologus de disciplina artis musicae*, PL 141, 404.

<sup>12</sup> Johannes de MURIS, *Musica speculativa secundum Boetium*, in Elzbieta WITKOWSKA-ZAREMBA, “*Musica muris*,” 173.

<sup>13</sup> “Moyses dicit repertorem musicae artis fuisse Jabal, qui fuit de stirpe Cain ante diluvium. Graeci vero Pythagoram dicunt hujus artis invenisse primordia, ex malleorum sonitu, et cordarum extensione percussa. Alii Linum Thebaeum, et Zethum, et Amphionem in arte musica primos claruisse ferunt,” ISIDORUS HISPALENSIS, *Etymologiae*, PL 82, 163.

<sup>14</sup> Amphion was the son of Zeus and Antiope. Apollon, having noticed his musical talent, offered him a lyre. Zethus was Amphion’s twin brother.

hammers met with the forging on the anvil of the nails for the crucifixion of Christ and with His extremities nailed to the wood of cross. We may therefore assume that the Pythagorean and biblical striking of the hammers into the anvil prefigured the activities of the tormentors during Christ's crucifixion on Mount Golgotha. Even three iconographic motifs and three worlds meet here: antiquity, Old Testament and New Testament.

As already mentioned, in the illustrations the sound of hammers during Christ's crucifixion can be heard next to the sound of hammers hitting the anvil (ill. 6). Thus, painting and music meet in the iconography of crucifixion. The question arises here: were any unusual sounds expected on Golgotha, during the forging of the nails on the anvil? Could this striking with hammers have had any symbolic meaning? One answer to this could be a passage from the Revelations of St. Bridget of Sweden, in which she writes that Mary, the Mother of Christ, who was stretched on the cross, heard the sound of hammers when the executioners pierced His hands and legs with nails.<sup>15</sup> We may moreover refer to a similar excerpt from the text *Sprawa chędogo o Męce Pana Chrystusowej* [A beautiful case of the Passion of the Lord Jesus]: "When his most sorrowful mother heard the sound of striking hammers, she cried out in pain and fell to the ground, all her strength abandoning her."<sup>16</sup>

#### THE TASKS OF MUSIC AND PAINTING IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Music and painting have long been arts not only appreciated by everyone, but also competing with each other. This can be seen in the miniature from *The Bible of Płock* (ill. 7). Isidore of Seville said about the number: *Tolle numerum omnibus rebus et omnia pereunt*—"Remove the number from all things and all things will be lost." And because music was based on numbers, he spoke about it in a similar way: "No science can be perfect without

<sup>15</sup> "Videns deinde mater suum Filium in cruce crudeliter extendi, in omnibus sui corporis viribus cepit tabescere. Audiens vero malleorum sonitum, quando Filii manus et pedes ferreis clavis perforabantur, tunc omnibus virginis sensibus deficientibus ipsam in terram velut mortuam doloris magnitudo prostravit. Revelaciones," Book XI, 18, after St. Bridget of Sweden Website, 1999/2000; SANCTA BIRGITTA, *Opera Minora II: Sermo Angelicus*, ed. Sten Eklund (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1972).

<sup>16</sup> *Sprawa chędogo o Męce Pana Chrystusowej*, in *Chrestomatia staropolska. Teksty do roku 1543*, ed. Wiesław Wydra, Wojciech R. Rzepka (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 2004), 141. The text was most likely inspired by a text by Bridget of Sweden.

music, there is nothing without music.”<sup>17</sup> As Ryszard Knapieński observed: “Music was linked not only to mathematical principles, but was also ascribed symbolic and anagogical significance.”<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, music was linked to grammar. Grammar, which helped one to read the Bible and the Fathers of the Church correctly, was to be a means to attaining salvation.<sup>19</sup> It was also proclaimed that the laws of the world are musical laws and that sounds have the same relationships as souls and bodies. In turn, “with the help of music, the words of God transmitted by tradition in liturgy and the Holy Scriptures were to be illustrated.”<sup>20</sup> In religious circles there was a conviction that poor singing is an insult to God. The purpose of musical education was to master the skills of such harmony that would help to add the singing and music of monks to the glory given to God by the angels and the whole universe. The harmony of tones was to express acceptance of the mysteries of salvation. This can be proved by the capitals of columns from Cluny with illustrations of musical tones.<sup>21</sup>

As to painting, the medieval liturgist Wilhelm Durand (d. 1296) wrote in *Rationale divinarum officiorum* that the Synod of Agde (506) banned paintings in churches and prescribed that items of worship should not be painted on walls. In turn, Pope Gregory the Great states that painting must not be destroyed only because they are not to be items of worship, as it seems that images impact the mind more powerfully than writing.<sup>22</sup> Gregory the Great observed moreover in the *Commentary to the Song of Songs*:

We should come to the virtue of impatience through these words of torment. For Scripture is as expressed in words and content as an image is expressed in colours and objects; and the one who adheres too much to the colour of the image and ignores the painted things is extremely foolish. For if we accept the words that we hear and ignore their content, it is as if we ignore the things that have been painted, accepting only the colours.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>17</sup> “Itaque sine musica nulla disciplina potest esse perfecta, nihil enim est sine illa,” ISIDORUS HISPALENSIS, *Etymologiae*.

<sup>18</sup> *Iluminacje romańskiej Biblii Płockiej* (Lublin: RW KUL, 1993), 228.

<sup>19</sup> Jean LECLERCQ, *Miłość nauki a pragnienie Boga*, transl. Małgorzata Borkowska (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Benedyktynów Tyniec, 1997), 57–58.

<sup>20</sup> Jean LECLERCQ, *Miłość nauki*, 289.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 289–290.

<sup>22</sup> “Concilium agathense inhibet picturas in ecclesiis fieri et quod colitur et adoratur parietibus depingi. Sed Gregorius dicit quod picturas non licet frangere ea occasione quod adorari non debent. Pictura namque plus videtur movere animum quam scriptura,” GUILIEMUS DURANTIS, *Rationale divinarum officiorum*, I, 3, f. VII, r., Argentine 1501, after <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de>

<sup>23</sup> “Debemus per haec verba passionis transire ad virtutem impassibilitatis. Sic est enim Scriptura sacra in verbis et sensibus, sicut pictura in coloribus et rebus; et nimis stultus est qui sic

A question must therefore be asked: what reactions did the artists wish to evoke in the viewer through their paintings, showing the poignant and painful “ceremony of crucifixion”? Certainly, apart from emotions, they wanted to convey some other content, which could not always be directly understood by a simple viewer.

Pope Gregory the Great in his *Letter to Secundinus* gave us some explanation again. He wrote in it:

We pass on the images you have asked for through the deacon Dulcedo. We were delighted with your desire; you looked for it with all your heart and with all the care since you want to have in front of your eyes, so that when you look at it every day, it will stimulate you, so that when you look at it, it will spiritually ignite towards the One you want to see it. We don't say it on the basis of things, if we show the invisible through visible things. For I know that you ask for the image of our Saviour not to worship it like a god, but for the sake of the memory of the Son of God, to be kindled in His love, whose image you wish to see. For we bow not as if before some divinity, but we worship Him whom we consider through the image of one either born or suffering or sitting on the throne. This image, like scripture, should remind us of the Son of God, rejuvenate our spirit through the resurrection, or be flogged by the Passion.<sup>24</sup>

This was in keeping with what *Libri Carolini* designated for painting: *Ad memoriam rerum gestarum*—to commemorate events.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, according to a Benedictine goldsmith Teophilus Presbyterus, one of the tasks of art was to move the viewer and trigger his commiseration for the Passion of Christ and His martyrs, to show heaven as an award and hell as a punishment, thus inclining people to mend their ways<sup>26</sup>. Finally, it is worthwhile to

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picturae coloribus inhaeret, ut res quae pictae sunt ignoret. Nos enim, si verba quae exterius dicuntur amplectimur, et sensus ignoramus, quasi ignorantes res quae depictae sunt, solos colores tenemus,” Gregorius I, *Expositio super Cantica canticorum*, PL 79, 473–474.

<sup>24</sup> “Imagines quas tibi dirigendas per Dulcidum diaconum rogasti misimus. Unde valde nobis tua postulatio placuit, quia illum toto corde, tota intentione quaeris, cujus imaginem prae oculis habere desideras, ut te visio corporalis quotidiana reddat exercitatum, ut dum picturam illius vides, ad illum animo inardescas, cujus imaginem videre desideras. Ab re non facimus, si per visibilia invisibilia demonstramus. [...] Scio quidem quod imaginem Salvatoris nostri non ideo petis, ut quasi Deum colas, sed ob recordationem filii Dei in ejus amore recalescas, cujus te imaginem videre desideras. Et nos quidem non quasi ante divinitatem ante illam prosternimur, sed illum adoramus quem per imaginem aut natum, aut passum, sed et in throno sedentem recordamur. Et dum nobis ipsa pictura quasi scriptura ad memoriam Filium Dei reducit, animum nostrum aut de resurrectione laetificat, aut de passione demulcet,” GREGORIUS I, *Epistola LII ad Secundinum, Epistolae*, PL 77, 991.

<sup>25</sup> CAROLUS MAGNUS, *De imaginibus*, PL 98, 1147.

<sup>26</sup> “Quod si forte Dominicae passionis effigiem liniamentis expressam conspicatur fidelis anima, compungitur; si quanta sancti pertulerunt in suis corporibus cruciamina quantaque vitae aeternae





different threads (Lev 19: 19; Deut 22: 11).<sup>31</sup> However, the author of *The Book of Sirach* speaks favourably about the smiths' toil and craft: "So with the smith standing near his anvil, forging crude iron. The heat from the fire sears his flesh, yet he toils away in the furnace heat. The clang of the hammer deafens his ears, His eyes are fixed on the tool he is shaping. His care is to finish his work, and he keeps watch till he perfects it in detail" (Sir 38: 30–31). Isaiah's Messianic prophecy will come to pass, among others, when the nations "shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again" (Is 2: 4).<sup>32</sup> The call of the prophets was continued by the Apostles and their followers. For Raban Maur, the smith was symbolic of an order of saintly preachers who, sitting at an anvil, i.e. in the toil of their present life, forge spiritual armour, helpful in the preaching of the word of God, and teach how to withstand the temptations of perennial adversaries, heretics, sects, and subversive philosophers.<sup>33</sup>

Canon regular Gerhoh of Reichersberg (ca. 1093–1169) compared God to a smith, saying that similarly to a smith, who first needs to prepare a hammer or another tool in order to cooperate with it, God first inspires benevolent free will, and then supports it to cooperate with Him.<sup>34</sup>

The ambivalent attitude towards blacksmiths, people who work with fire and destroy shapes in order to create new ones, resulted directly from their connection with the underground world: hellfire, magic and demons,<sup>35</sup> and even devil himself.<sup>36</sup> In Slav mythology there was a conviction that during a storm the blacksmith should immediately stop working, otherwise the smithy may be struck by lightning<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Michel PASTOUREAU, *Średniowieczna gra symboli*, 195.

<sup>32</sup> Maria POPRZĘDZKA, *Kuźnia. Mit. Alegoria. Symbol* (Warszawa: PWN, 1972), 136–137.

<sup>33</sup> "Per fabrum ferrarium idem qui in architecto, hoc est ordo sanctorum praedicatorum exprimitur, qui juxta incudem, hoc est, juxta durum praesentis vitae laborem sedens, arma spiritalia, documenta videlicet divina scribendo atque docendo fabricat, quatenus contra hostis antiqui tentamenta suos fortiter dimicare doceat, et haeticorum atque philosophorum sectas perversas devitare, atque persecutorum minas contemnere faciat," RABANUS MAURUS, *Commentaria in Ecclesiasticum*, PL 109, 1036.

<sup>34</sup> "Sicut enim artifex ferrarius primo vel malleum, vel aliud instrumentum operatur, deinde per instrumentum operatur, et instrumentum cooperatur: sic Deus primo bonam voluntatem libero arbitrio inspirat, et postea bonae voluntati aspirat, ut operetur, sibi que illam, et per illam operanti cooperetur," GERHONUS REICHERSPERGENSIS, *Commentarius aureus in Psalmos et cantica ferialia*, PL 193, 648.

<sup>35</sup> Piotr KOWALSKI, *Leksykon znaki świata. Omen, przesąd, znaczenie* (Warszawa: PWN, 1998), 246.

<sup>36</sup> Mircea ELIADE, *Kowale i alchemicy*, 110.

<sup>37</sup> Piotr KOWALSKI, *Leksykon znaki świata*, 248.

A smith worked in iron, a material regarded to be the most treacherous metal. The Dominican friar Thomas of Cantimpré called it *ferrum dolosissimum*.<sup>38</sup> However, according to M. Eliade, many saw iron as “saturated with the power of sanctity.”<sup>39</sup> Bartholomeus Anglicus (d. 1272), the Franciscan author of the compendium *De proprietatibus rerum*, indicated that iron is a precious raw material: “[...] It is more useful to man than gold, although greedy beings desire gold more than iron. Without iron, people could not defend themselves against their enemies or impose a common law; the innocent are able to defend themselves with iron, and the shamelessness of the villains is punished with iron. Also, all manual work requires the use of iron, without which no one could cultivate the land or build a house.”<sup>40</sup>

The profession of a blacksmith was opposed to that of a carpenter because the latter worked in noble, living and pure material, while iron was a material opposed to wood. Christian tradition saw Jesus as a carpenter, the son of a carpenter (Mk 6: 3; Mt 13: 55).<sup>41</sup> In the middle ages, metal was treated as originating in the entrails of the earth, in fire, if not in hell. Wood, on the other hand, brought to mind the Wood of the Cross.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, it was believed that iron must not be used alone, but combined with wood, which cleansed it of its negative impact.<sup>43</sup>

According to Hugo from the Monastery of St. Victor, the mechanical arts included arms manufacture, making use of stone, wood, metals, sand, and clay. Metals were forged by smiths with hammers. Hugo observes that *Fabrilis dividitur in malleatoriam, quae feriendo massam in formam redigit*<sup>44</sup>—a smith strikes with a hammer and shapes his material. A case in point

<sup>38</sup> Michel PASTOUREAU, *Średniowieczna gra symboli*, 94.

<sup>39</sup> Mircea ELIADE, *Kowale i alchemicy*, 25.

<sup>40</sup> *Usus ferri utilior enim homini idest pluribus quae usus auri, quamvis plus diligitur auri species ab avaris. Sine ferro enim respublica tute non agitur quia sine eius metu securitas ab hostibus non habetur. Ferro communis iustitia regitur tuetur innocentia et improborum audacia ferri metu coercent. Sine ferro nullum fere opus mechanicum vix perficitur, nullum edificium construitur, agricultura nullatenus exercetur. De proprietatibus rerum Bartholomei Anglici Ordinis Minorum*, Impressus Argentine, 1505, Liber XVI, XLV, transl. after: Jacques Le GOFF, *Kultura średniowiecznej Europy*, 213.

<sup>41</sup> Michel PASTOUREAU, *Średniowieczna gra*, 93–94. The Vulgate uses the word *faber*—a craftsman, but in reference to Joseph and Jesus tradition has it that this was a carpenter’s profession. However, Isidore of Seville in his treatise *Regula monachorum* wrote: *Et Joseph justus, cui virgo Maria desponsata exstitit, faber ferrarius fuit*—“And Joseph the Just, to whom the Virgin Mary was married, was a blacksmith,” PL 103, 561.

<sup>42</sup> Michel PASTOUREAU, *Średniowieczna gra*, 93.

<sup>43</sup> Jacques Le GOFF, *Kultura średniowiecznej Europy*, 213.

<sup>44</sup> HUGO DE S. VICTORE, *Eruditio didascalica*, PL 176, 760–761.

is the illustration from Guiardo des Moulins, *Grande Bible Historiale Complétée*, which depicts a goldsmith forging an idol in gold (ill. 8).

#### THE SYMBOLISM OF THE ANVIL (*incus, incudis*)

The anvil is another element that can have a specific meaning in the context of crucifixion. The anvil, says St. Jerome in his *Commentary to the Book of Job*, strikes but does not bring out a shape, it harnesses the metal placed on it yet itself remains stationary. Such is the devil. For he ignores the threats of the faithful, shatters the words of the prophets, rejects the victories of the martyrs, and therefore, while remaining firm, hard and adamant, is condemned to eternal torment.<sup>45</sup> Raban Maur, too, compares Satan to an anvil: Satan is an anvil, as *The Book of Job* observes, since he is meant to be struck throughout eternity.<sup>46</sup> Saint Jerome believed that the heart of Job hardened among all the trials and tribulations as a stone and he stood adamant like an anvil.<sup>47</sup>

The anvil, a tool for forging metals, was ascribed superhuman powers to. Isaiah writes about God: “Lo, I have created the craftsman who blows on the burning coals and forges weapons as his work” (Is 54: 16). On another occasion he speaks about the occupation of a smith as about someone who makes deities but has no knowledge of the true God (Is 44: 10ff).<sup>48</sup> The mythological son of Zeus and Hera, Hephaistos, was condemned to work in a subterranean smithy. He forged there thunders for Zeus and repaired chariots for Helios. Striking the anvil with his hammer, the smith, imitating the gesture of a powerful deity, became in a way his assistant.<sup>49</sup>

St. Jerome wrote in one of his *Letters*: “The one who deliberately goes to a torment needs fortitude and manhood. Therefore God said to Ezekiel: ‘But

<sup>45</sup> *Incus namque caeditur, sed non producitur, superjecta edomat, immobilis autem ipsa consistit: talis diabolus est. Fidelium enim increpationibus tunditur, prophetarum dictis caeditur, martyrum victoria eliditur, sed manens rigidus, durus, indomitus, aeternis addictus est poenis.* HIERONYMUS STRIDONENSIS, *Commentaria in Job*, PL 26, 793.

<sup>46</sup> *Incus est diabolus, ut in Job: «Et stringet quasi malleatoris incus» quod aeternae damnationis tusionibus diabolus traditus est.* RABANUS MAURUS, *Allegoriae in universam sacram scripturam*, PL 112, 970.

<sup>47</sup> [Job] *Cor ejus obduruit sicut lapis, et stat sicut incudo infatigabilis.* HIERONYMUS STRIDONENSIS, *Liber Job*, PL 29, 111.

<sup>48</sup> Manfred LURKER, *Słownik obrazów i symboli biblijnych*, transl. Kazimierz Romaniuk (Poznań: Pallottinum, 1989), 95.

<sup>49</sup> Mircea ELIADE, *Kowale i alchemicy*, 29, 104.

as for you, son of man, fear neither them nor their words when they contradict you and reject you, and when you sit on scorpions' (Ez 2: 6) and: 'But I will make your face as hard as theirs, and your brow as stubborn as theirs' (Ez 3: 8–9), so that he might withstand pressure as the hardest anvil, if by chance a hammer of all earth stood up to him, and so that he might crush it. We hear about this hammer: 'How has the hammer of the whole earth been broken and shattered!' (Jer 50: 23)."<sup>50</sup>

A medieval anonymous author wrote that Jesus made his naked body available to the strikes of the smiths, like an anvil.<sup>51</sup> The anvil was a symbol of hardness, as Raban Maur observed, and Leviathan was rightly likened to an anvil since we, constantly persecuted by him, merge into one, and he, struck, will never be transformed into a useful vessel.<sup>52</sup>

#### THE SYMBOLISM OF THE HAMMER (*malleus*)

The hammer, used to forge metals on an anvil, belonged to the zone of the sacred.<sup>53</sup> Since ancient times, the hammer was first of all a tool of smiths and a symbol of activity. It was moreover an attribute of the mythological Hephaistos, Etruscan demon of death and the Germanic deity of storm and thunder, Thor. Moreover, its shape resembles the letter "tau," implying the tau cross.<sup>54</sup> The hammer, in the elaborate allegory of the modern era, was seen as a tool for evoking evil. It forged swords and all kinds of weaponry, which wreaked havoc on the human race.<sup>55</sup>

According to Isidore of Seville, the hammer is so called because it strikes and extends what is hot and soft.<sup>56</sup> The hammer is part of biblical accounts whose aim was to affect change. The word of God in the prophesies of the

<sup>50</sup> HIERONIM, *List CXXI, Do Algazji*, in HIERONIM, *Listy*, vol. III, transl. Jan Czuj (Warszawa: PAX, 1954), 168.

<sup>51</sup> [Jesus] *et nudum corpus quasi incudem malleatorum ictibus patienter explicuit*. Auctor incertus, *In coena Domini*, PL 184, 952.

<sup>52</sup> *Recte ergo Leviathan iste incudi comparatus est: quia nos illo persequente, componimur: ipse autem semper percutitur, et in vas utile nunquam mutatur*. RABANUS MAURUS, *De universo*, PL 111, 559.

<sup>53</sup> Mircea ELIADE, *Kowale i alchemicy*, 27.

<sup>54</sup> Hans BIEDERMANN, *Knaurs Lexikon der Symbole* (München: Droemer & Knauer, 1989), 177–178.

<sup>55</sup> Maria POPRZĘDZKA, *Kuźnia. Mit*, 134.

<sup>56</sup> *Malleus vocatur, quia dum quid calet et molle est, caedit et producit*. ISIDORUS HISPANENSIS, *Etymologiae*, PL 82, 671.

prophets was like the striking of the hammer aiming at affecting change of human conduct (Jer 50: 23).<sup>57</sup>

#### THE SYMBOLISM OF THE NAILS (*clavi*)

Expressions indicating a metaphorical meaning of the nails can be found as early as the Old Testament. Nails were used to fix or strengthen something (Is 41: 7). This is illustrated by an excerpt from *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (12: 11): “The sayings of the wise are like goads; like fixed spikes are the topics given by one collector.” The words by Baldwin (d. 1190), Bishop of Canterbury, concerning the Word of God, seem a commentary to the above quote: “When the Word speaks, His voice pierces the heart like a sharp arrow shot from a mighty man’s bow and like nails driven deep, reaches the innermost mysteries of the soul.”<sup>58</sup>

Christ was nailed to the cross by three men. One nailed the legs, while the two others nailed his hands. The use of nails for crucifixion, their number unimportant, is corroborated by Roman pagan literature. The ancient writer Titus Maccius Plautus in his work *Mostellaria* observed that the person condemned to death was crucified, his extremities pierced with four nails.<sup>59</sup>

As to the number of the nails used for crucifying Christ, the theologian Jan Molanus, already after the Council of Trent, in his work on the iconography of sacred images issued in Lovanium in 1570, dedicated separate paragraphs to this issue and to the use of the nails for the two thieves crucified alongside with Christ. He moreover claimed that there were many images of the Crucified Christ with four nails and sometimes the feet, pierced with two nails, have not other support save these nails. He added that the followers of this view make conjectures rather than are based on history. Finally, he recognised the presence of both three and four nails as equally probable.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> *Słownik symboliki biblijnej*, ed. Leland Ryken, Jim C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman, transl. Zbigniew Kościuk (Warszawa: “Vocatio”, 1998), 531; HIERONIM, *List CXXI Do Algazji*, in HIERONIM, *Listy*, vol. III, 168.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted after: *Liturgia godzin*, vol. IV, Poznań 1988, 361.

<sup>59</sup> *Ubi sunt isti plagipatide, ferritribaces viri, vel isti qui hosticas trium nummum causa subeunt sub falas, ubi quinis aut denis hastis corpus transfigi solet? Ego dabo ei talentum, primus qui in cruce excucurrerit; sed ea lege, ut offigantur bis pedes, bis brachia.* TITUS MACCIUS PLAUTUS, *Mostellaria*, II, I, 356–360, after Musaios 2002A-Los Angeles.

<sup>60</sup> Johannes van MOLANUS, *Traité des saintes images*, vol. II (Paris: Éd. du Cerf, 1996), 52.

The German philosopher and theologian Gabriel Biel (1425–1495) believed four nails to be symbolic of the four cardinal virtues.<sup>61</sup> The unique shape of the nail, its function of piercing and supporting, predestined it to be placed among sacred objects. Pliny the Elder wrote that iron blades, especially nails, torn out of a grave, are a potent measure against toxic poisons, night-time absurdities and other ailments.<sup>62</sup>

Some mythologies of Euroasia mention the so-called “nail of the world,” a “cosmic nail” as one of the variants of the “axis of the world” or a “cosmic tree,” which links heaven and earth.<sup>63</sup> In Christianity this element is the cross which, as Julius Firmicus Maternus observes, supports the machinery of the sky, strengthens the foundations of the earth, attracts people and leads to life.<sup>64</sup>

The nails were thus apotropaic and magic elements. As J.M. Frazer puts it, “Nails driven into a bed bar elves entrance to rooms of women giving birth and their newlyborns.”<sup>65</sup> On another occasion he recalls a ban, attributed to Pythagoras, of piercing a person’s feet with a nail.<sup>66</sup> However, to find a rusty nail on the road was supposed to bring good luck.<sup>67</sup>

In the rite of blessing the Paschal candle on Great Saturday, the celebrant drives five (resin) nails into the candle. They are symbolic of Christ’s five wounds, or five strikes.<sup>68</sup> For Slovenians, the horseradish they put in the Easter basket of food symbolises the nails used during the crucifixion of Christ.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> *Medicina e ferro est et alia quam secandi. Namque et circumscribi circulo terve circumlato mucrone et adultis et infantibus prodest contra noxia medicamenta, et praefixisse in limine evulsos sepulchris clavos adversus nocturnas lymphationes, pungique leviter mucrone, quo percussus homo sit, contra dolores laterum pectorumque subitos, qui punctionem adferant.* PLINIUS SECUNDUS, *Naturalis historia*, 34, 151.

<sup>63</sup> Piotr KOWALSKI, *Leksykon znaki świata*, 162.

<sup>64</sup> *Quapropter lignum crucis coeli sustinet machinam, terrae fundamenta corroborat, affixos sibi homines ducit ad vitam.* JULIUS FIRMICUS MATERNUS, *De errore profanarum religionum*, PL 12, 1041.

<sup>65</sup> Frazer G. FRAZER, *Złota gałąź*, transl. Henryk Krzeczowski (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1996), 197.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>67</sup> Piotr KOWALSKI, *Leksykon znaki świata*, 164.

<sup>68</sup> *Infigit enim ipsi cereo dyaconus quinque grana thuris in modum crucis. [...] Que grana thuris significant aromata que mulieres emerunt ut ingerent crucifixum. [...] Vel quinque grana significant quinque plagas in cruce receptas.* GUILIELMUS DURADUS, *Rationale divinorum officiorum*, Argentine 1501, VI, f. CLXXXIX r.

<sup>69</sup> after <http://www.miasto-info.pl/myslenice/jak-wielkanoc-swietuja-inne-narody>.

## CONCLUSION

Why are these two Pythagorean and Biblical traditions juxtaposed in the scene of crucifixion? There bore a certain similarity on a metaphorical plane. The striking of hammers during forging nails was associated by medieval authors with the striking of Tubalcain's hammers. It was a kind of *concordia Novi et Veteris Testamenti*. The history of Pythagoras was also used to show this prefiguration. It was also an example of a formulation functioning in the Middle Ages, and later in the Renaissance: *concordia or consonantia divi Moysi et divini Platonis*. Tradition has it that Plato, when in Egypt, met Moses and took over some elements which, included in *Timaeus*, made this work, the only one known in the middle ages, as some scholars believe, was called the pagan *Genesis*. The presence of Plato's ideas and texts, for examples in Citeaux, was not a result of academic diligence, but it was a religious presence, as the French Dominican Marie-Dominique Chenu observed.<sup>70</sup>

Images of this kind of crucifixion of Christ, in which all the above elements were present, were mostly paintings in manuscripts, frescoes and less often sculptures. The illustrations accompanied the editions of commentaries on the Psalms, the Life of Jesus, works of mystics and texts such as *Speculum humanae salvationis*, *Concordia caritatis*, mainly in monastic circles. Late Gothic Passion worship loved them, too. Illustrations in these works moreover proved that it was possible to record in writing, by means of notes, the melodies one heard—"sounds translated onto paper."<sup>71</sup> Notker Balbulus, a Benedictine monk from Sankt Gallen from the 8<sup>th</sup> c., wrote in his *Liber sequentiarum* those momentous words: "When I was still at a young age, I was often told to remember long melodies, which escaped by unstable heart. I began to wonder how to commit them all to memory."<sup>72</sup> In order to remember them better, he started to add lyrics to them, he explained later.<sup>73</sup>

Subsequent eras also brought illustrations of the work of smiths and the records of the striking of their hammers via musical notation, as proved by the etching from *Cyclopisches Hammer Tricinium* by Andreas Kohl, from ca. 1655 (ill. 9). Jan Białostocki, referencing the miniature from *The Bible of*

<sup>70</sup> Jean LECLERCQ, *Miłość nauki*, 326.

<sup>71</sup> Andrew WILSON-DICKSON, *Historia muzyki chrześcijańskiej*, transl. Marzena Wiśniewska (Warszawa: "Vocatio", 2007), 55.

<sup>72</sup> *Cum adhuc juvenculus essem et melodiae longissimae saepius memoriae commendatae instabile corculum aufugerent, coepi tacitus mecum volvere quonam modo eas potuerim colligare.* NOTKERUS BALBULUS, *Sequentiae*, PL 131, 1003.

<sup>73</sup> Andrew WILSON-DICKSON, *Historia muzyki*, 56.

*Plock*, in a way sums up the function of music: “The Romanesque ‘concert of chamber music’ is [...] *summa musicae*—the art most valued, it seems, by the middle ages, since it alone is the common principle of all the elements of the world.”<sup>74</sup>

#### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Jabal, *Speculum humanae salvationis*, GKS 80 2°, fol. 47v., after <http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/219/eng/47+verso/?var=> (access: 18.09.2010).
2. Woodcut from *Flores musicae omnis cantus Gregoriani*, Hugo Spechtshart of Reutlingen (from ca. 1285–1360), 1492 edition, after <http://www.leidenuniv.nl/fsw/verduin/ghio/speculum.htm> (access: 18.09.2010).
3. The driving of nails and Tubalcain and Jabal in a smithy. *Speculum Woodcuts and Miniatures*, Chapter XXII, p. 186. *A Medieval Mirror*, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms. 9249–50.
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6. Crucifixion and forging of the nails, *Heller Hours*, Berkeley, University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library BANC MS UCB 150, fol. 48v., after <http://app.cul.columbia.edu:8080/exist/scriptorium/individual/CU-BANC-7.xml> (access: 18.09.2010).
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<sup>74</sup> Jan BIAŁOSTOCKI, “Harfa Dawida,” 178.



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THE *CONCORDIA NOVI ET VETERIS TESTAMENTI* IN ITS JUXTAPOSITION  
OF ILLUSTRATIONS: THE HITTING OF THE HAMMERS OF TUBALCAIN  
AND THE HAMMERING OF THE NAILS INTO THE HANDS AND FEET  
OF CHRIST DURING THE CRUCIFIXION

S u m m a r y

In the Gospels relating the passion of Christ, there is no description of the act of nailing Him to the cross, but there are clearly other biblical testimonies that nails were used for the crucifixion. In many representations, parallel to the nailing of the members of Christ to the cross or raising it with His body, we find placed alongside it, the scene of hammering iron with hammers by Tubal-Kain for the purpose of drawing out the appropriate tones. He hits on the anvil, while Jabal makes a notation of the tones. With this type of illustration, the sound of the hammers during the crucifixion of Christ meets with the sound of the hammers hitting the anvil. Hence, painting and music meet in the iconography of the crucifixion of Christ. It was a sort of *Concordia Novi et Veteris Testamenti*. In showing this prefiguration, there is also a going back to the history of Pythagoras. It was also an example for the functioning in the Middle Ages, and still later in the Renaissance, of the formulation of the *Concordia divi Moysi et divini Platonis*.

**Key words:** medieval art; passion; blacksmith; Tubalcain.

*Translated by Marcin Turski*



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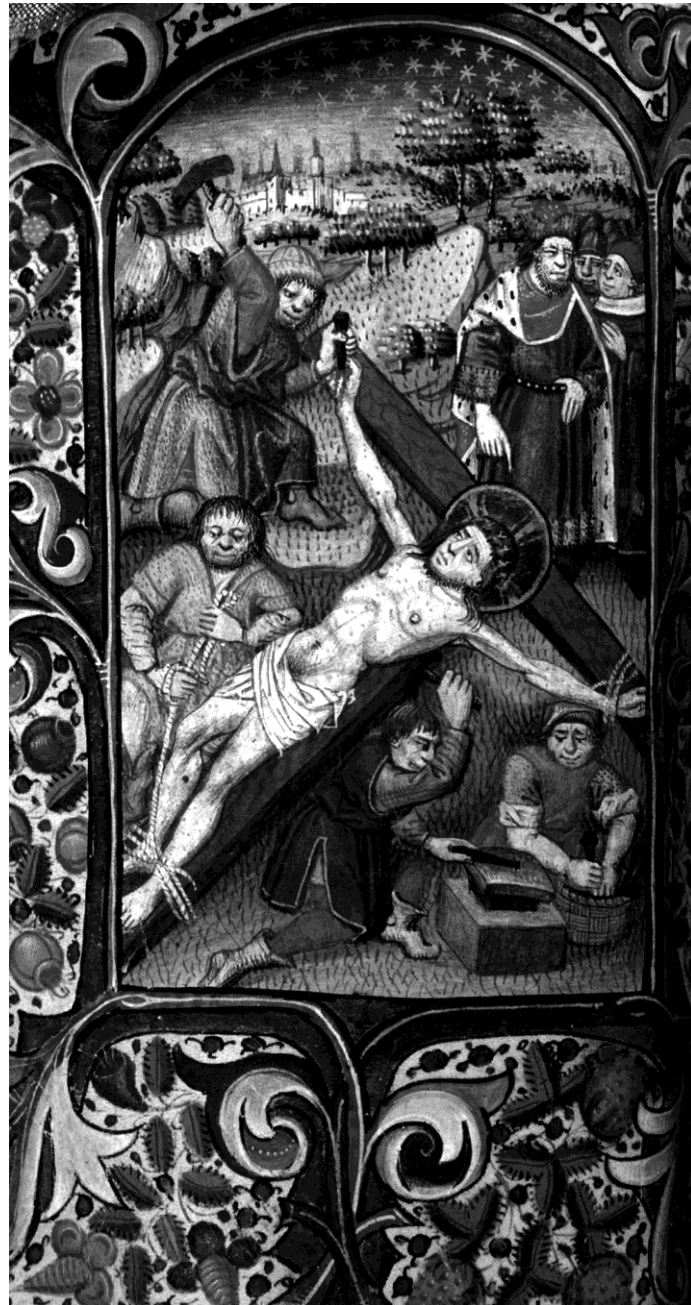
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6. Crucifixion and forging of the nails, *Heller Hours*, Berkeley, University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library BANC MS UCB 150, fol. 48v., after <http://app.cul.columbia.edu:8080/exist/scriptorium/individual/CU-BANC-7.xml> (access: 18.09.2010).



7. David and Musicians, *Biblia Płocka*, 1st half of 12th c., Płock, Diocesan Museum, photo S. Ceglowski.



8. Removing an idol, Guiard des Moulins, *Grande Bible Historiale Complétée*, The Hague, MMW, 10 B 23, f. 19v., Paris, ca. 1371-1372, after [http://www.kb.nl/manuscripts/show/images\\_text/10+B+23/page/6](http://www.kb.nl/manuscripts/show/images_text/10+B+23/page/6) (access: 18.09.2010).





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