# LITURGICAL ASPECTS IN THE DEPICTION OF THE SIN AND THE ANNUNCIATION IN SANTA MARIA DE BARBERÀ DEL VALLÈS*

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The central apse in the church of Santa Maria de Barberà del Vallès presents the Maiestas Domini in the half dome, and a cycle of the Nativity juxtaposed with the Entry into Jerusalem on the apse wall (fig. 1). One scene, however, was separated from the Nativity cycle and depicted on the left pilasters of the triumphal arch —the Annunciation to Mary (fig. 2). This separation is singular, since all other cycles of the period, the 12th century, include the important scene. We suggest that the artist intentionally placed the scene opposite the Sin, which appears on the right pilaster (fig. 3). His aim was to convey a comparison between Eve and Mary, already current in the exegetical literature and the liturgy of the time.

First, we must examine the role of Mary int he liturgy of the Annunciation.

The adoration of the Mother of God was deeply rooted and widespread in the Romanesque period, particularly in Catalonia and related areas in France. It was expressed through theological treatises, the liturgy, the many churches, chapels and altars dedicated to the Virgin, and the visual arts.[1] Numerous treatises, homilies and hymns exalted

1. M. Righetti, *Historia de la Liturgia*, I, Madrid, 1955, 890-893; For visual arts see: M. Trens, *La iconografía de la Virgen en el arte Español*, Madrid, 1947; A. Pladevall i Font, El culte de la Mare de Déu a Catalunya dels segles XI al XIII a través de les notícies històriques i del testimoni de la iconografia romànica, *Les cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxà* 25, 1994, 41-50; M. Pagès i Paretas, L'iconographie de Marie dans la peinture romane catalane, idem, 71-78; M. Durliat, Marie dans l'art du Sud-Ouest de la France et de la Catalogne aux IXè et XIIè siècles, *Deuxième colloque de Rocamadour, 1972*, Rocamadour/Luzech, Paris 1973, 156-175.

Mary's role in the incarnation of Christ and in the redemption of man, more so by opposing her to Eve.[2] Changes in the conception of Mary's role influenced her visual representation in cycles of the Nativity, and she appeared as the Maiestas Mariae and Maria Ecclesia. Cult objects, such as statues of Mary as the Throne of Wisdom, became popular mostly in Catalonia and the ecclesiastically or politically related areas in France. Many of these statues, called Marededéu, in Catalonia, presented Mary as the new Eve: she holds the Child —the fruit of her womb— on her lap, while in her right hand she holds an apple, the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden. The Child blesses in his right hand and holds the Book of Life with his left.[3] Jesus is presented as an antithesis to the apple, which symbolizes disobedience and the consequent death.[4]

A simultaneous representation of the Fall of Man and the Annunciation, like the one in Barberà, deserves further research. In particular, it will be interesting to follow the influence of the liturgy on the iconology of Eve-Mary in the visual arts. The Barberà church will serve as an example of this iconography in the midde of the 12th century in Catalonia.

## THE CHANGING ROLE OF MARY AND EVE IN THEOLOGY AND LITURGY

The opposition between the Fall of Man and the Annunciation to Mary was a common theme in exegetical literature, the liturgy and the visual arts during the 12th and the 13th centuries. The Fall of Man was a result of Eve's disobedience to God in listening to the serpent and eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:1-6). Mary, on the other hand, adhered to Gabriel, the heavenly messenger sent by God, and obeyed the Lord's will (Luke 1:38).

A comparison of Mary and Eve appears in theological sources as early as the second half of the 2nd century. Ireneus, and Tertullian after him, opposed the damage brought by Eve's false belief to the hope of

2. A.M. Dubarle, Les fondements bibliques du titre marial du Nouvelle Eve, in: *Mélanges Jules Lebreton* 39:2-4, 1951, 49-64; H. Barré, Marie et l'Eglise. Du Vénerable Bède à Saint-Albert le Grand (Etudes Mariales. Marie et l'Eglise, 1), *Bulletin de la Societé française d'Etudes Mariales* 9, 1951, 59-143; H. Coathalem, *Le parallélisme entre la Sainte Vierge et l'Eglise dans la tradition latine jusqu'à la fin du 12è siècle*, Rome, 1954 (Analecta Gregoriana 74); E. Guldan, *Eva und Maria. Eine Antithese als Bildmotiv*, Graz-Köln, 1966; H. Kraus, *The Living Theatre of Medieval Art*, Bloomington, 1967, 41-62; M.-L. Thierd, *A l'origine du décor du portail occidental de Notre-Dame de Senlis: Le triomphe de la Vierge-Eglise. Sources historiques, litteraires et iconographiques*, Paris, 1984 (=Le triomphe de la Vierge-Eglise).
3. See, for instance, the important collection in the Museu Episcopal de Vic: M. Gros i Pujol, *Museu Episcopal de Vic. Pintura i escultura romànica*, Sabadell, n.d., 83ff with many examples.
4. L. Arad, *The Church of Santa Maria de Barberà del Vallès: Iconography and Iconology of the Mural Paintings*, Ph.D.diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1998, 89.

redemption brought by Mary's faith.[5] Justin Martyr held similar ideas in his Dialogue with Trypho.[6] Two centuries later, Jerome and Augustine stressed the contrary results of the conduct of each: «Mors per Evam, vita per Mariam.»[7] Ambrosius concisely summed up the contemporary thoughts, by saying that «Maria visitata est ut Evam liberaret.»[8] The opposition of Mary and Eve spread mainly through the liturgy. One of the best known and most influential hymns during the Middle Ages was the «Ave maris stella.» It appears in the late 6th century opus of Venantius Fortunatus, bishop of Poitiers and a poet:[9]

> Ave maris stella
> Dei Mater alma,
> Atque semper Virgo,
> Felix coeli porta.
> Sumens illud Ave
> Gabrielis ore,
> Funda nos in pace,
> Mutans Evae nomen.

The poet employs the deep symbolical meaning attached to anagrams in the Middle Ages, and makes Eva into Ave: Eve transformed into Mary. By adhering to Gabriel and submitting to God's will in the Annunciation, Mary made redemption possible. She opened the Gates of Heaven, closed since Eve caused the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Mary is the «porta coeli.»

The «Ave maris stella» reflects the role attributed to Eve-Mary until the 8th century. In the early Middle Ages, Mary had an essentially historical role: her faith and obedience made possible the redeeming Incarnation. As the Mother of Christ, she repaired the damage done by Eve, the mother of all living, and opened the road to salvation.[10]

By the 11th century, a new concept of Mary's role gained currency, as shown by comparing the «Ave maris stella» to a homily to the Star of the

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5. Ireneus, Adversus Haereses, III, 22, 3-4 (PG, 7/958): «Quod alligavit virgo Eva per incredulitatem, hoc virgo Maria solvit per fidem.» Tertullian, De Carne Christi, 17 (PL, 2/782): «Credidit Eva serpenti, credidit Maria Gabriel. Quod illa credendo deliquit, haec credendo delevit.» Coathalem, 14 ff; Dubarle, esp. 58ff. In early Christian exegesis, the maternity of Mary is equated with the virgin earth the Garden of Eden, that served God as the material for the creation of the first Adam, just like Mary was the pure earth that served God as the body of the second Adam. See, for instance, Ireneus (PG, 7/954) and Ambrosius (PL, 15/1614), in: Coathalem, 27.
6. Dialogue with Trypho, 100 (PG, 6/709-712).
7. St. Jerome, Pl, 22/408 ff. Augustine, PL, 40/303. See Coathalem, 14.
8. Ambrosius, PL, 16/140.
9. Venantii Fortunati, Operum Omnium, pars prima, miscellanea, V (PL, 88/265). The hymn was known in Catalonia as part of the Roman liturgy, which replaced the Spanish one in the first quarter of the 9th century. I am indebted to M. Gros for this important information.
10. See above, notes 4-7.

Sea, written by Fulbert of Chartres in the first third of that century.[11]
Fulbert attributes to Eve-Mary a new role in her present life in Heaven:
she is the mediator between believers and her Son. Believers should look
to Mary, Maris stella, in their perilous voyage through this world. Mary's
role is no longer merely historical, but might be termed transcendental.

Fulbert expressed a still exceptional concept of Mary, relying on very
few theologians.[12] During these three centuries, most of them adhered to
the ancient, historical role of Mary in the Incarnation. An illuminating
example of the gradual change is a poem written by Peter Damian
around 1060, recalling the anagram Eva-Ave and asking the New-Eve to
save man.[13]

> Ille, dum te salutat,
> Evae nomen conmutat;
> Reduc nos, Virgo sancta,
> Unde est nequam lapsa.

In the late 11th century, Anselm of Canterbury insisted on the essen-
tial intervention of Mary in the salvation of man.[14] From then on, the
transcendental and permanent role of Mary in her present life in heaven,
tends to prevail over her historial role on earth.

The ancient distinction and relation between Eve-Mary and Eve-
Ecclesia underwent a radical change. Traditionally, Eve-Mary represen-
ted a particular and transitory act, the redeeming Incarnation, whereas
Eve-Ecclesia had a permanent role as distributor of the benefits of
redemption.[15] In her new, transcendental role, the Mother of God is the
link between Ecclesia and her Son. She is the essential channel in the
dispensation of grace.[16] The new role of Mary became universal in

11.  PL. 141/329-332.
12.  One of the earliest theologians to attribute to Mary an active role in redemption was
     Ambrosius Autpert. In a homily on the Annunciation, written in the mid 8th century,
     he exalted Mary in her historical role and asked her to accept the mystic marriage not
     just for the benefit of mankind, but also in the name of mankind (PL, 39/2105, 2106).
     This sermon was formerly attributed to Augustine. See Coathalem, 59 ff. The trans-
     cendental concept of the Virgin reappears in the mid 9th century in Paschase Radbert's
     works. Idem, 65ff, 70ff.
13.  S. Petri Damiani, Opera Omnia, Carmina sacra et preces (PL, 145/939 B).
14.  Coathalem, 74ff.
15.  See Zeno of Verona, who drew a double parallel between Eve and Mary and between
     Eve and Ecclesia (PL, 11/352), that was extensively elaborated in exegetical literature.
     Also Dubarle, passim; Coathalem, esp. 17ff.
16.  Coathalem, 85f, 88ff. The first elements of the parallel Eva-Ecclesia are elaborated in
     Eph. 5:24-32; Augustine, Contra Faustum Manichoerum, 12, 8 and Enarrationes in
     Psalmos, Ps. 40,10. The liturgy of the Marian feasts shows the development of the Vir-
     gin's cult by the incorporation of new feasts and of biblical texts associating the
     mysteries of Mary to themes such as Wisdom, City of God, New Jerusalem and
     the Spouse in the Song of Songs. These themes appear almost simultaneously in the
     invocations of believers to the Mother of God, and were originally related to Ecclesia.
     See Barrè, Marie et Eglise, esp. 77-80; Thèrel, Le triomphe de la Vierge-Eglise, 122f,
     146ff.

the first half of the 12th century, mainly through the homilies of Bernard of Clairvaux.[17]


MARY AND EVE IN CATALONIAN ART

The opposition between Mary and Eve became widespread in monumental art and liturgical objects in Romanesque Catalonia and France. In a typical pattern, the two scenes open respectively and Old Testament and a New Testament cycle, as on the nave walls of Sant Pere of Sorpe,[18] conveying the fulfillment of Old Testament prophesies in the Christian Salvation. On a frieze on the façade of Nôtre-Dame-la.Grande de Poitiers,[19] and elsewhere, the Fall of Man representing the Old Testament, in juxtaposition to the Annunciation, cohicle opens a New Testament cycle.

The opposing pair apperars in non-narrative programs too. In Sant Miquel de Marmellar, from the second half of the 11th century,[20] the opposition between the Fall of Man and the Annunciation, in the intrados of the triumphal arch, is emphasized by a similar composition. The Sin is conflated with the Expulsion from Eden, to the right, while to the left the Annunciation takes place in the presence of a witness. A cross above the angel, in the Expulsion scene, promises the redeeming coming of Christ. The half dome shows the Ascension of the incarnated Christ (Acts, 1:9-11). The associated images present Mary as effacing Eve's misdeeds, and as the «porta coeli,» that is, her historical role in redemption.

The Sin and the Annunciation form part of an apocalyptic program decorating an arcosolium in Sant Pau de Casserres, dated around 1200.[21] The program includes the resurrected Christ exposing the signs of his passion, angels blowing horns, the resurrection of the dead, Michael treading over the dragon, and a damaged scene that could be the weighing of souls. Here, too, Mary's role is historical.

17. PL, 183/327-328: «... Merito in te respiciunt oculi totius creaturae, quia in te, et per te, et de te benigna manus Omnipotentis quidquid creaverat recreavit.» Also PL 183/429, 438, 448. Quoted by Coathalem, 87ff.
18. *Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya. Guia art romànic*, ed. E. Carbonell i Esteller et al., Barcelona, 1997, 118f, fig.p.119; Arxiu del Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, no.113144. An interesting version appears in the cloister of Santa Maria d'Estany in El Bagès. The first figurative capital, the sole representative of the Old Testament, presents the Creation of man, the Fall, the Expulsion from Eden, and the Laboring Adam and Eve. The Fall appears on the front and is juxtaposed to the Annunciation, placed similarly on the next figurative capital, which presents a cycle of the Nativity. The New Testament cycle ends with the Crucifixion. See J. Sureda, Santa Maria de l'Estany, *Catalunya romànica, XI: El Bagès*, Barcelona, 1984, esp. 220-225, 235-236.
19. R. Favreau, M.-T. Camus and F. Jeanneau, *Notre-Dame-la-Grande*, Poitiers, 1995, 49-57.
20. X. Barral i Altet, *Les pintures murals romàniques d'Olèrdola, Calafell, Marmellar i Matadars. Estudi sobre la pintura mural del segle XI a Catalunya*, Barcelona, 1980 (Artestudi, 11), 80 figs. 46, 52, 53.
21. R. Alcoy i Pedros, Las pinturas de «Sant Pau de Casserres.» Notas de iconografía y estilo en la disolución del 1200 Catalán, *D'Art* 13, març 1987, 107-133.

SANTA MARIA DE BARBERÀ DEL VALLÈS

In the decoration of the central apse of Santa Maria de Barberà del Vallès,[22] the Fall of Man and the Annunciation to Mary also form part of an apocalyptic and eschatological program. We think that the placement of these scenes was chosen to exemplify Mary's new role.

The apse ornamentation conveys the relation between the earthy and the heavenly liturgy.[23] The program focuses on the Maiestas Domini, and the vertical axis connects to this image the scenes on the crossing, the triumphal arch and the apse wall (fig. 4). The layout of the program takes advantage of the symbolical meaning attached to the architectural space,[24] and creates new meanings through visual axes, including also the altar of the church.

The Sin and the Annunciation appear on the inner face of the pilasters that support the triumphal arch and delimit the central apse. The Sin is on the right pilaster, above a representation of the city of Jerusalem, and the Annunciation is on the opposite pilaster, above the Judgment of Solomon. The decoration of the triumphal arch has been lost. The intrados showed the Offering of Cain and Abel, and its front presented four Elders of the Apocalypse, cohose peers surrounded Christ on the crossing of the nave and the transept. The Maiestas Domini appears in the half dome, and a Nativity cycle juxtaposed with the Entry into Jerusalem, appears on the apse wall. As already noted, the Nativity cycle lacks an essential scene: the Annunciation. The scene apperars in all Catalonian cycles of the Nativity. Thus its apparent absence from the cycle in the Barberà church became a riddle. We contend that the poor state of the left pilaster paintings failed most scholars.[25] The scene is not absent, but was intentionally depicted on the left pilaster, as part of the web of interconnections between the scenes, including the Sin and the Annunciation.

We shall proceed to outline the additional interconnections.

The Barberà juxtaposition of the Annunciation and the Judgment of Solomon is unique in Romanesque art.[26] It may have been prompted by a local

22. On the decoration of the central apse: E. Carbonell i Esteller and J. Vigué, *L'església romànica de Santa Maria de Barberà*, Barcelona, 1975 (Artestudi, 8), esp. 77-104; Arad, Santa Maria de Barberà, esp. 28-111.
23. Arad, Santa Maria de Barberà, esp. 109-111.
24. Idem, 14-20.
25. Some scholars of Catalonian Romanesque art conjectured that the scene was depicted on the apse wall, although the pictorial space to the left of the Visitation is too narrow for two figures. Other scholars pointed to the absence of the scene and considered the Barberà cycle an anomaly. Idem, esp. 84-91.
26. The juxtaposition appears earlier, in a Visigothic or Mozarabic bone casket, and in an iconographically related miniature in the Stuttgart Psalter (Landesbibliothek, ms.23, fol83v.). See C. Hinds, 74-80, who does not mention the depiction in the Barberà church. See Arad, Santa Maria de Barberà, 90; idem, A Biblical Scene in the service of the Church: the Judgment of Solomon in Santa Maria de Barberà del Vallès (to be published).

impetus to express the veneration of the Virgin in her new role as interme-
diary between the Church and her Son, as an active and permanent protec-
tor of believers, and the chanell of dispensing divine grace. In the Barberà
painting, the new concept of Mary is associated with the traditional Christian
exegesis of the Judgment of Solomon as the choice between Synagogue and
Ecclesia.[27] Moreover, in early Christian exegesis, Solomon, who built the
Temple, the House of God, according to divine instructions, alludes to the
Virgin when he says: «Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out
her seven pillars» (Proverbs 9:1).[28] In the 12th century, Mary was frequently
called Domus Sapientiae, Sedes Sapientiae and Lectulus Solomonis.[29]

At the same time, Mary was also called Aula Dei and Civitas caelestis,
as well as filia Jerusalem, and in the liturgy and popular devotion was
compared to Holy Zion.[30] In the Barberà central apse, the image of Jeru-
salem, on the right pilaster, forms various links with the other scenes.[31]
The Christian concept of Jerusalem[32] justifies the earthly city existence
only by being the scenery of the life, death and resurrection of Christ,
and the reflection of Heavenly Jerusalem. As already said, Mary is linked
to earthly Jerusalem through the Incarnation of Christ, and also related
to the Heavenly City by His sacrifice.

The central apse iconographic program centers on the vertical, litur-
gical axis of the apse. This axis visually connects the heavenly and the
earthly liturgy, focusing on the apocalyptic image of the Maiestas Domi-
ni (Ap. 4,2) that appears in the apse half dome, as if in the dome of hea-
ven. The liturgical thread of the decoration comprises images of adora-
tion and offering. The Elders of the Apocalypse celebrate the heavenly
liturgy above (Ap. 5, 8-9, 13).[33] Mary, holding the Child before the ado-
ring Magi, is shown in Majesty as the Throne of Wisdom.[34] In her place-

27.  See, for instance, Augustine, Sermo X (PL, 38/91-92); Isidore of Sevilla, De veteri et novo
     testamento: Questiones, caput IV, De Judicio Salomonis (PL, 83/216-217); Glossa ordina-
     ria, In vigilia nativitatis Domini sermo VI (PL, 183/115f). On the ecclesiastical and political
     meaning of the Judgment of Solomon at the time of the crusades and the Reconquista, as
     reflected in the scene in the Barberà church, see Arad, Santa Maria de Barberà, 81ff.
28.  The verse was related to the Incarnation of Christ in Mary's womb already by Epipha-
     nius (Panarion, 69) and Hippolytus of Rome (In Proverbia, PG, 10/625-638). See M.-L.
     Thèrel, Le triomphe de la Vierge-Eglise, 108, 147.
29.  For instance, Bernard de Clairvaux, in Sermo 53, De diversis (PL, 183/674-675), called
     Mary Domus Sapientiae. See M.-L. Thèrel, Le triomphe de la Vierge-Eglise, 147 note 431.
30.  Thèrel, Le triomphe de la Vierge-Eglise, 147 note 434, 149.
31.  Arad, Santa Maria de Barberà, esp. 63ff, 75ff.
32.  For example Hebr. 12:18-24; Rev. 14:1, 3:11; Gal. 4 and Rev. 21. B. Kühnel, *From the
     Earthly to the Heavenly Jerusalem. Representations of the Holy City in Christian Art of
     the First Millenium*, Rom, Freiburg, Wien, 1987 (Römische Quartalschrift für christli-
     che Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte, 42. Supplementheft), esp. 55ff, 79ff.
33.  Arad, Santa Maria de Barberà, 109-111.
34.  For Mary as the Throne of Wisdom: Peter Damian, In nativitate Beatissimae Virginis
     Mariae (PL, 144/736-740), quoted by Durliat, 159-160; Guibert de Nogent, de Laude
     Sancte Mariae, III (Pl, 156/541-542); Adam de St.-Victor (PL, 196/1503), quoted by I.H.
     Forsyth, Magi and Majesty: A Study of Romanesque Sculpture and Liturgical Drama,
     *Art Bulletin* 50:3, 1968, 215. Also idem, *The Throne of Wisdom. Wood Sculptures of the
     Madonna in Romanesque France*, Princeton, 1972; Arad, Santa Maria de Barberà, 59-60.

ment, in front of the altar of the church, Mary appears as if offering her Son to be sacrificed on it.[35] This theme is repeated both in the Offering of Cain and Abel, which prefigures the sacrifice of Christ,[36] and in the Eucharist offered to believers at the altar of the church that enacts it anew. Moreover, the special location of the Maiestas Mariae, in front of the altar, presents Mary as mediator and dispenser of divine grace, interceding on behalf of believers before her Son.

Thus, the opposite location of the Annunciation and the Sin on the pilasters of the triumphal arch expresses two roles of Mary. By relating the images to the Maiestas Mariae in the liturgical axis, it conveys her transcendental role in heaven, and at the same time it presents Mary's historical role with regard to the Nativity cycle on the apse wall.
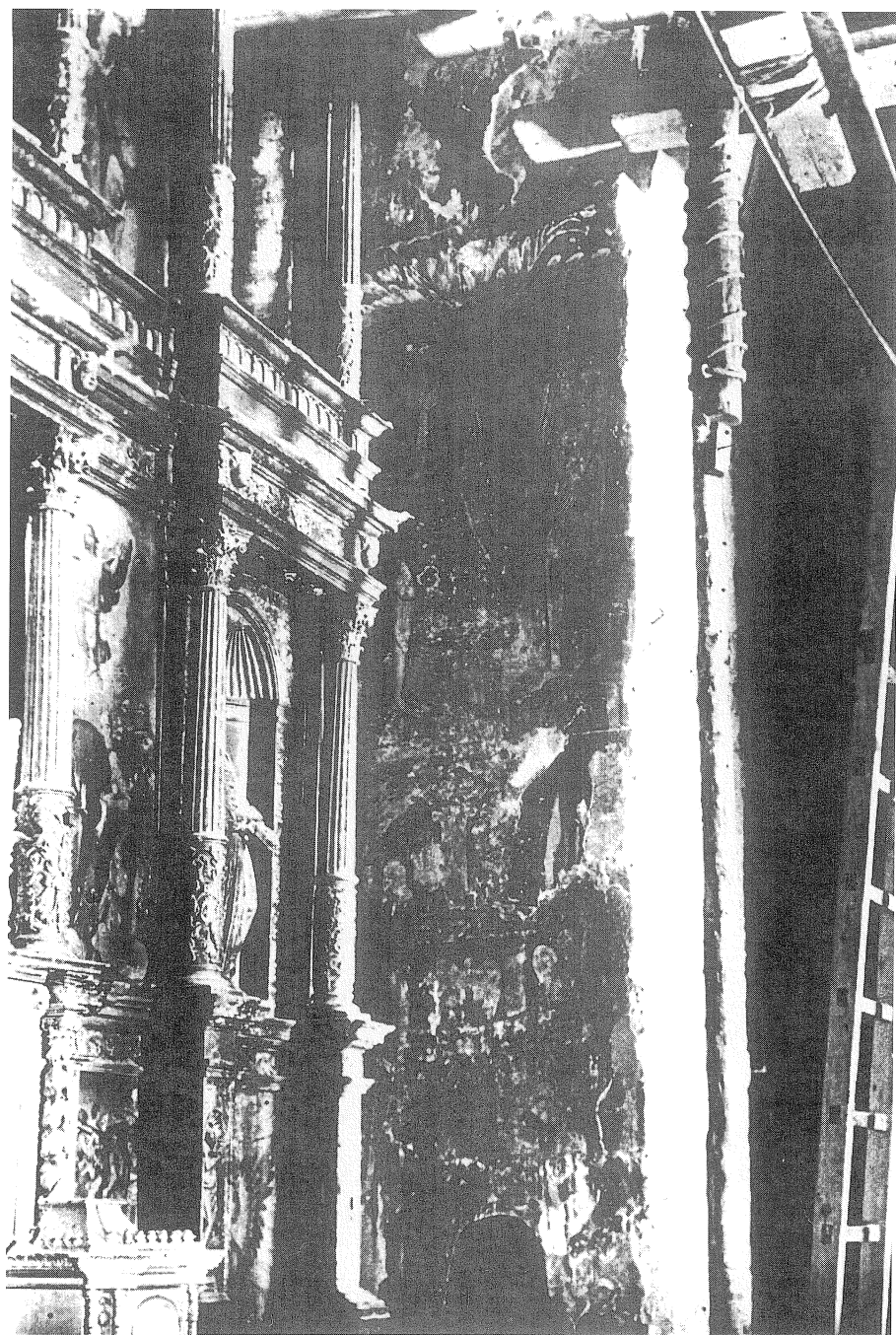
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35. Arad, Santa Maria de Barberà, esp. 57-60.
36. Honorius Augustodunensis, Gemma animae, I, cap. 83 (PL, 172/570). Arad, Santa Maria de Barberà, 93f.
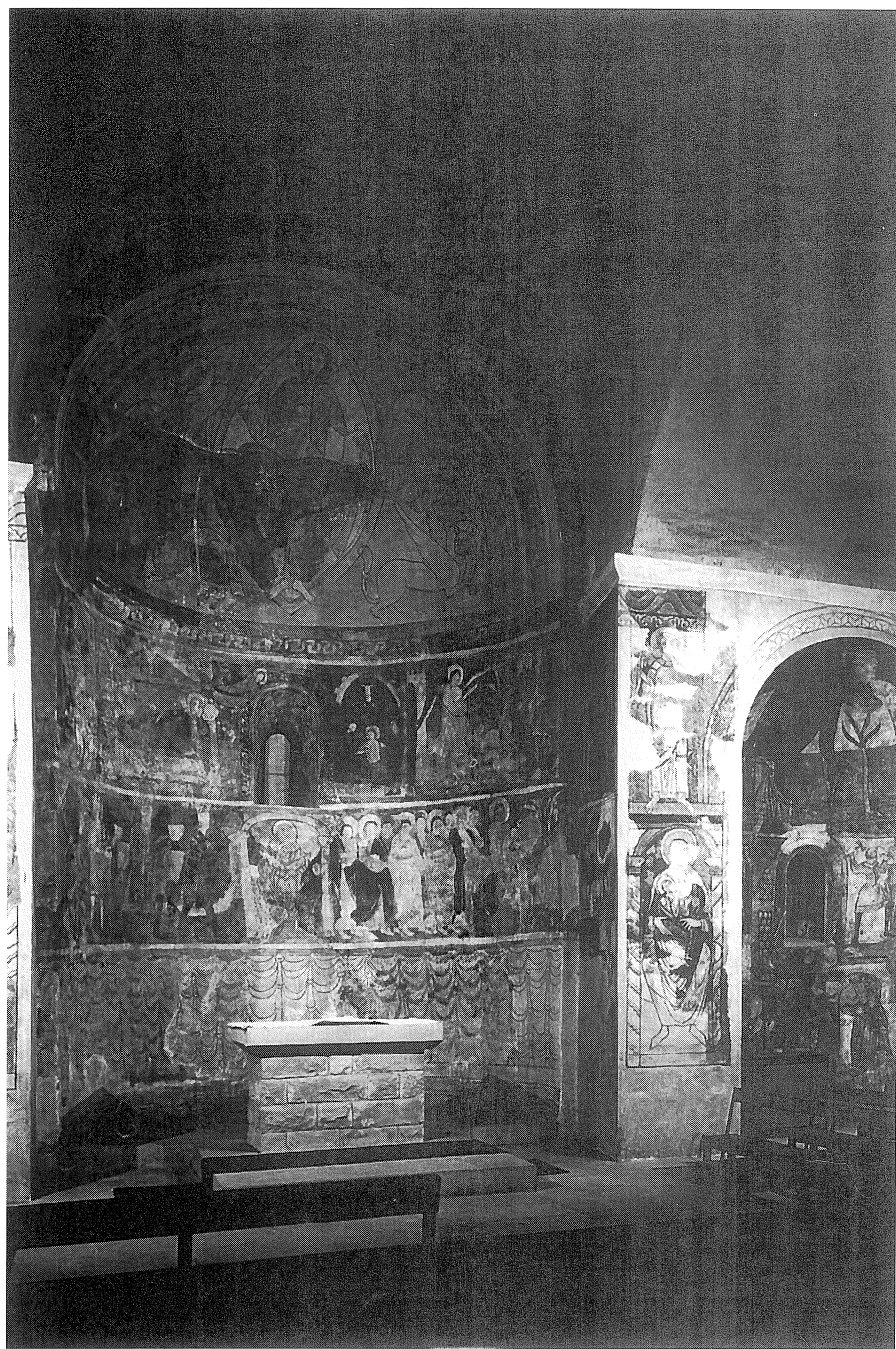
1.  Santa Maria de Barberà del Vallès, central apse
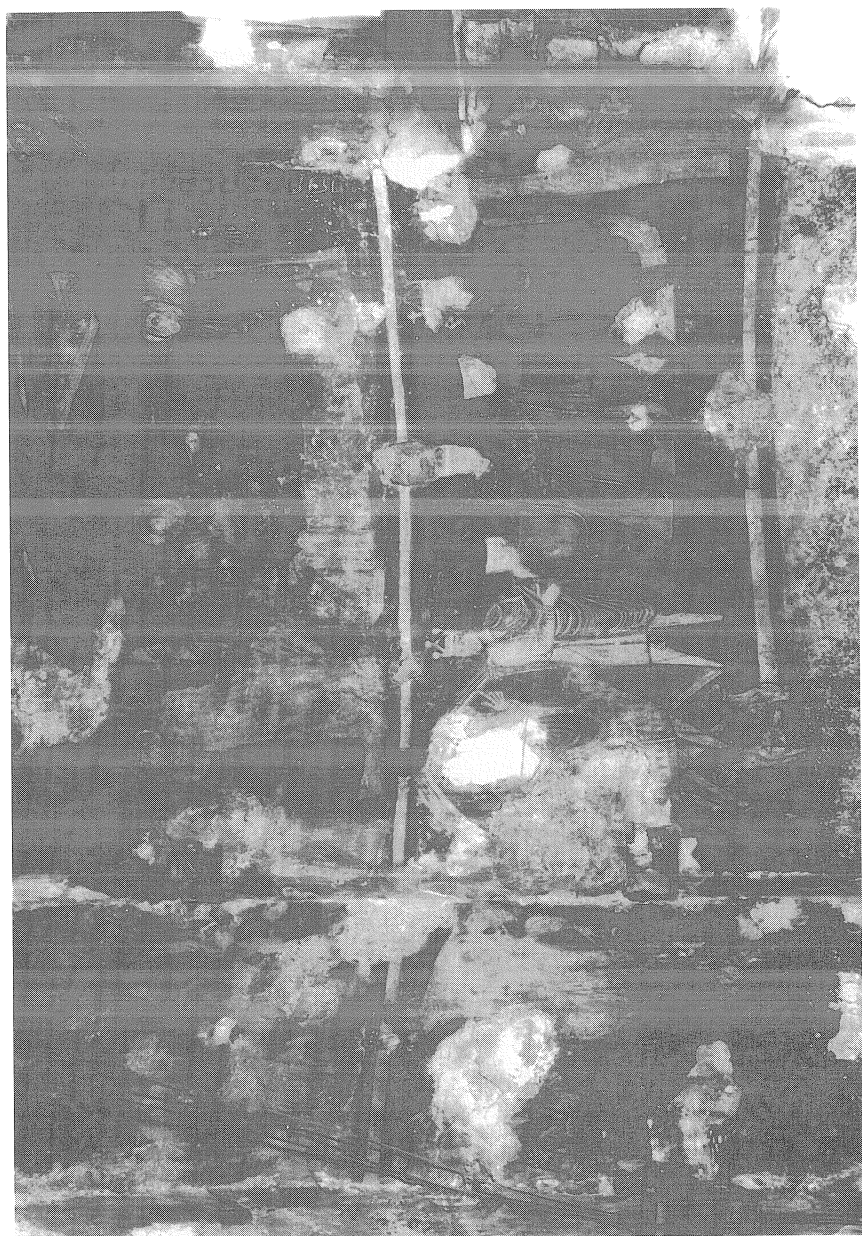
2. The Annunciation (on top) and the Judgment of Solomon (on bottom)

3. The Sin (on top) and the city of Jerusalem (on bottom)