

A GERMAN-BOHEMIAN MIRACLE PAINTING IN STYRIA

Leopold Kretzenbacher

In the filial church of the Fourteen Saints of Intercession at the cemetery of Anger in eastern Styria — a heavily frequented place of pilgrimage especially in the 18th century — there is a large oil painting (315 x 220 cm) vividly depicting, in simultaneous scenic form, a late medieval gallows-miracle legend from Kaaden/Eger. Amid his courtiers, the Bohemian king is inspecting the ground plan of an ecclesiastical building — shown under construction — in honor of the Fourteen Saints of Intercession; a man condemned (by cast of the dice among five noblemen-brothers from Kaaden) to hang for lese majesty is supposed to have made so trustful a supplication to these Saints that they saved his life, through Mary's intercession, by holding their hands underneath him. The picture shows in detail the dice game, the moment of anguish on the gallows, the *intercessio Mariae et sanctorum*, the additional miracle of a disbeliever in the gallows-miracle giving monstrous birth to fourteen children. These themes can be detected in archival material on popular tradition, and emerge more strongly in songs and handbills on the *promulgatio miraculorum* for baroque pilgrims. The present study attempts to examine the individual motifs, spread through the West, in the special traditions of a cult filiation from the Franconian Vierzehnheiligen, as well as to explore the question of the secondary filiation of the Egerland miracle picture — presumably through Kaaden immigrants in eastern Styria around the year 1740.