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## Tainted Trees: Uncovering the Long Shadow over Germany's Medieval Maypoles and Ancient Tree Cults

This article revisits sources on German maypoles and tree cults in the ancient, medieval, and modern periods. It opens important historiographic horizons on at least three fronts, from the church's relationship to tree-oriented customs throughout the Middle Ages, to the National Socialist appropriation of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century folkloric scholarship, and to the consequent postwar aversions to any trace of modern admiration for an alleged premodern veneration of trees. It shows how postwar art historians have remained so hesitant to perpetuate narratives about pre-Christian, homogenous belief systems that revered the forests of northern Europe that they have overlooked some of the few surviving physical traces in art from Slavic Eastern Europe, whose ancient ties to nature Germans toiled to erase in both the medieval and modern eras.

Springtime merrymaking in Germany that revolved around trees has very deep roots. The great minnesinger Neidhart von Reuenthal (c. 1190–after 1237), who composed poetry in Bavaria and Austria in the early thirteenth century, tells us that as sap rose again after long winters, a village's grandest lime tree came into bloom and awakened the local people, too, stirring them to wild exuberances in song and dance—the likes of which Hieronymus Bock had famously memorialized in his herbal book of 1539 (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> Illustrated by David Kandel in his accompanying woodcut, the central, stocky tree with its busy network of foliating branches dominates the upper two-thirds of the picture, providing cover to the musician and revelers who, with the help of the jug of booze, persist throughout the day, so overcome they are with the *joie de vivre* of “dancing into May.” Instead of celebrating about a rooted lime, villagers would also honor the annual cycle of renewal and rebirth by sacrificing the finest local conifer, felling it, dragging it into town, delimiting it to its crown, and decorating it

with wreathes, flowers, streamers, and other ornaments on May Day—hence the English term maypole (as opposed to the German *Maibaum*). Brought from the forest into town, often its market square, the giant vegetal votive was staged and folded into the wider panoply of amusements played throughout the spring and summer festivals to reenact the spirit of reaping gifts that people sought back from nature in the form of good harvests. As part of a game pictured in Albert Glockendon's Nuremberg breviary from the 1530s, above the pairs on the ground a peasant man can be seen clambering up the maypole's smooth trunk to attempt to capture the prized rooster surmounting it (fig. 2). Though shorn from the ground, the maypole still thrives, as attested by its bushy crest. Dangling with glass trophies, it contrasts with that of the lone, desiccated and fruitless tree of the owl, a harbinger of death and misfortune.

As unassuming as they seem, German maypoles and other ritual trees have in fact been taboo objects of contention since the Christianiza-



1 David Kandel, *The Lime Tree Dance*, woodcut for Hieronymus Bock's *Kreuter Buch*, Strasbourg 1551

tion of northern Europe. Inherently ephemeral or vulnerable to destruction, they do not easily survive for art historians to study. Even where they can be reconstructed, they are classified as folk or minor art. Michael Baxandall in his landmark study of limewood sculpture, in which he illustrated Kandel's print, repudiated the idea of analyzing the new class of wooden carvings that became fashionable at the time across Germany—some of which were left unpainted—in the context of popular vegetation rituals. “It [folkloristic practice] is uncomfortably fugitive material and it may even be better to leave it aside.”<sup>2</sup> Baxandall's hesitation is emblematic of a justified reluctance in German art history to reexamine the medieval

and ancient legacy of ceremonial trees and maypoles, tainted as they are in modern historiography. Indeed, historical tree customs formed the quarry for nineteenth-century folklorists who hunted through sources to establish historical precedents for wood as a “national material” for Germany.<sup>3</sup> Theirs was a nationalist enterprise whose embellishments were contaminated and radicalized under the fascist folklorists of the so-called Third Reich, who corrupted the history of maypoles and sacred groves as a means of laying claim to bordering landscapes to the east that they declared “German.”

In returning to the sources on maypoles and tree cults, ancient, medieval, and modern, this article opens important historiographic horizons on at least three fronts, from the church's relationship to tree-oriented customs in the Middle Ages, to the National Socialist appropriation of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century folkloric scholarship, and to the consequent postwar aversions to any trace of modern admiration for an alleged premodern veneration of trees. In addition, it will highlight an irony in the National Socialists' adoption and propagation of the myth of primordial Germanic tree worship, since ancient Slavs, whom they deemed an inferior race, were also thought to have worshipped trees, and the clergy who razed the cult-trees were themselves German. In its invocation of little-known artworks and objects, it will show how the real and persistent intimacy with vegetation within the religious life of medieval Germans has also been clouded both by modern church figures, who downplayed pagan influences, and a post-war scholarly fastidiousness that has flattened the historical sources. Indeed, art history is well positioned to uncover the ways the church, despite its antipathy to the natural world as inscribed in Genesis, absorbed real local trees—cultic and folkloric—not just typological and symbolic ones into its devotional and liturgical system, both in its early campaigns of converting pagans and much later in its fight to maintain its cen-





2 The Maypole Celebration, c. 1537–1540, manuscript illumination for Albrecht Glockendon's Breviary. Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, Hert. Ms. 9.2, f. 24r



3 Georg Pahl, *Ein Schwarzwaldgruß der Grenzmark Baden*, 1934, photograph. Koblenz, Bundesarchiv

tripetal position as it pulled in and sanctified the rhythms of everyday life in the leadup to the Protestant Reformation. What ultimately becomes clear in the diachronic juxtapositions between medieval tree cults and their evolving and perverted reception in the modern period, however, is that trees, by their very nature, swayed the terms of their cultural ascriptions just as they always outgrew them.

### A Totalitarian Totem

In 1933, Adolf Hitler, who presided over thousands crowded in Berlin's *Lustgarten* for the Nazi party's highly produced commemoration of May Day, consecrated what was billed the "largest maypole ever erected in world history."<sup>4</sup> It was in fact enormous. A single, hulking forty-four-meter-tall trunk crowned with a gilded swastika,

the maypole formed the centerpiece of an hours-long public display, going late into the night, of human and cultural power from the capital of the newly formed Third Reich. But the modern maypole custom was foreign to much of Prussia and certainly to Berlin's urban environment. In keeping with the tradition normally observed in village and country life of Germany's south, the tree itself had to be among the most majestic one could find. Instead of the local forest, event organizers sourced it first from hundreds of kilometers away in the Bavarian forest. A photograph taken by the dissident photojournalist, Georg Pahl, the following year attests that it came from the opposite side of southern Germany in the storied Black Forest (fig. 3).

According to lore of the Reich's 1934 celebration of May Day, at least ten attempts to import a pristine trunk from the south were foiled before an eleventh reached Berlin unscathed by some



of the more treacherous curves on its rail trip to the northeast.<sup>5</sup> Hitched to a truck rather than a horse cart, the prostrate trunk denuded of its branches was ceremoniously processed through the triumphal Brandenburg Gate as if it were booty from war, seized from nature's clutches. Lavished with wreathes, flags, and Hitler Salutes from throngs of onlookers along the way, the festive prop was implanted at the nation's military, royal, and cultural fulcrum on the Lustgarten Plaza between the City Castle, Arsenal, and New Museum. Wrapped with colorful streamers and grassy garlands, the maypole was standard fare in a south German beer garden or small-town square. In the capital of the new empire, it was a confabulation of multiple National Socialist ideologies.

Hardly two months had passed since Hitler rammed through the Reichstag Fire Decree in February 27, 1933, which suspended individual rights and due process to silence socialist opposition. In the same vein, he and his government choreographed Berlin's May Day spectacle both on Museum Island and to even larger crowds on the Tempelhof Airfield to rid the holiday of its associations with the labor movement and restore it to its rightful place in German folk (or *Volk*) tradition.<sup>6</sup> "One should not choose the most beautiful spring day of the year as a symbol of fight," Hitler proclaimed. Rather, it should be "a symbol of constructive work; not as an embodiment of decay and thus disintegration, but only of *völkisch* solidarity and thus of rising up."<sup>7</sup> With May Day declared a national holiday and ultimately renamed the National Day of German People, the maypole too was sanitized of its modern history, where it had shapeshifted into a tree of liberty symbolizing various freedom struggles since the French Revolution, including the now defunct republican ideals of the bygone Weimar era.

More than purging recent memory, though, Hitler sought to resurrect the mythical ancient Germanic roots of the holiday and its signature

arboreal emblem. "German Volk, forget fourteen years of disintegration and rise up to two thousand years of German history!" he recited twice in his speech that day.<sup>8</sup> As a prototype for all the copies proliferating throughout the empire in its image, the emergent, totalitarian totem was festooned with neo-pagan motifs and a swastika—"the symbol of Aryan being," according to a Nazi folklorist recounting the Berlin gathering.<sup>9</sup> Standing proudly like a colossal candle with a wreath hung around it, from which hundreds of colored banners fluttered in the wind, the reborn maypole was conceived to stir up an enduring, ethnonationalist fantasy that intrinsically linked a pure, pre-Christian German *Volk* with their surrounding environment. Rallying around the virginal wood as a reinstantiation of ancient custom, the May Day spectators were enfolded into a larger messianic narrative that reunified Germans with a landscape that had for millennia been sullied by Christianity, western occupations, capitalism, and other nefarious external forces.

A token of their special, racial kinship with nature, especially as it compared to what Nazi historians of Eastern Europe (*Ostforscher*) considered the ethnically less "cultivated" Poles and Slavs, the maypole was also instrumentalized in the National Socialist colonial campaign to justify the seizure of more nature in the form of territory to the east. By the May Day celebration of 1937, as a postcard from the event describes it, festival organizers abandoned the pretense of preserving and restaging a south German tradition to the capital, instead importing a tree from the Polish territory—settled by Germans—and masquerading it in Alpine culture (fig. 4). The postcard's inscription reads: "In the middle of Berlin's festively decorated *Lustgarten*, the 34 meter-high maypole from the Cadin Forest in the German province of East Prussia [in what today is northern Poland east of Gdańsk] rises, with a large, magnificent wreath with a diameter of 14 meters hung around it." In this case, the



4 1. Mai—Nationaler Feiertag des deutschen Volkes, 1937, postcard

maypole not only projects a spurious historical continuity between the modern custom and ancient, German cult practices. It also performs the colonial project of applying the attendant myth of German unity with nature as a pretext for expansion eastward, both historically and in the contemporary. Bound up with mystical notions of blood, soil, and territory (*Blut, Boden, Raum*), the Polish maypole in Berlin ritualistically enacts the Ostforscher's key tenet of an *Urgermanentheorie*, which held that medieval Germans, given their superior mastery of the environment, had innate rights to eject Slavs from the lands east of the Elbe that Germans regarded "homeland."<sup>10</sup> In reconfirming the fatuous homogenization of Germanic history, the Berlin maypole finally evokes the vigorous suppression of academic inquiry into the presence of ethnic minorities in eastern Germany in the Middle Ages; it papers over the German destruction of preexisting an-

cient, nature-oriented Slavic cultures in its own environs around Berlin—a legacy so entangled in the fraught period of National Socialism that it continues to be underappreciated today.

Hitler and the Party's flamboyant May Day spectacle was praised and its historical precedents vouchsafed by a group of collaborating folklorists who infiltrated the Reich Institute for German Folklore, which was coopted by the Nazis after their rise to power in 1933. Merged into the notorious Rosenberg Office, the Institute, while originally conceived by 'respectable' academics as a sponsored thinktank for rigorous research in the field of folklore, under Party auspices devolved into a bastion of pseudoscience exploited as an official mouthpiece for the National Socialist worldview.<sup>11</sup> For Hans Strobel, a vocal member of the Institute, the May Day maypole custom, an illustration of which embellishes the cover of his *Bauernbrauch im Jahres-*



*lauf*, exemplified Germans' premedieval and preternatural right based on their race and culture to the land they deemed *Heimat*. On his observation of one of Berlin's May Day celebrations, Strobel wrote, "by re-declaring the first day in the Wonnemond [neo-Germanic for May] to be the national holiday of the entire German people, the National Socialist movement took a decisive step towards recognizing and actively honoring the traditional folk customs. Just as thousands of years ago, before the Middle Ages, the youth of our people set out in the struggle for soil and home, so today the whole *Volk* stands loyal to their *Führer* every May 1 ..."<sup>12</sup> Also drawing an uninterrupted through-line between ancient and modern practices, Adam Wrede, folklorist and honorary pressor in the Philosophy Faculty at the University of Cologne, substantiated his bogus historical claims with the same method many of his colleagues employed—by citing the locus classicus on ur-Germanic culture, as unreliable as it was known to be: the Roman historian Tacitus's treatise *Germania*. Wrede interpolated in the Nazi erection of the maypole—which also adorned the cover of his study—a reincarnation of the springtime ritual offerings made in honor of the Germanic goddess Nerthus, who, Wrede writes, embodied the "power of growth," according to Tacitus.<sup>13</sup>

Where the maypole reached its most visually persuasive evocation at the nexus of blood, soil, and colonial ideologies of National Socialists was in the 1936 film *Eternal Forest* (*Ewiger Wald*). Financed by Rosenberg's *Nationalsozialistische Kulturgemeinde*, and giving full expression to his Arian-supremacist, neopagan jeremiad *Myth of the Twentieth Century* (1930), the film was among the first to transcend the clumsy genre of 'cultural films' of previous generations and was distributed around the country thanks to a unique collaboration with the guild of independent German cinemas.<sup>14</sup> Its production team, Lex-Film, employed Sepp Allgeier, a leading camera man from Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* in

1934, score by Wolfgang Zeller, and the writers Albert Graf von Pestalozza and Carl Maria Holzapfel, who in 1934 first pitched the idea to the *NS-Kulturgemeinde*. Published in film journals to occasion the film's release, Holzapfel's proposal called for a cinematic portrayal of the German nation's origin in and primeval domain over the forest. According to Holzapfel, the forest, the laws to which its inhabitants had to adapt to survive, and the strategies they employed to sustain and expand that forest functioned as more than a mere "allegory" (*Gleichnis*) of the German *Volk* and "their struggle against those in eternal migration with goals of different orientations."<sup>15</sup> It was rooted in the very ground of their 'organic' expansionist philosophy, functioning as the subtext for preordained eastern territorial grabs that—rather than overseas—were contiguous with the woods at the heart of Germany.<sup>16</sup>

After a long overture of various interspersed forested vignettes of endless branches and leaves as far as the eye can see, the people of *Ewiger Wald* finally populate the screen. As they gather timber and hay to build their prehistoric village houses, a voiceover narrates:

Aus dem Wald kommen wir,  
Wie der Wald leben wir,  
Aus dem Wald formen wir Heimat und Raum.

In keeping with the forest principle of death and renewal, the film juxtaposes the funeral of a village elder—aptly buried in a hollowed-out trunk—with the ritual celebration of the springtime maypole (fig. 5a). Shot from an unusually low angle to capture the cosmic alignment between the ceremonial tree's wreath and the gleaming sunlight, the scene also heralds the ancient people's rejoicing hand-in-hand around their first work of art—the first in what the film will reveal is a long lineage of wooden or wood-inspired masterpieces (fig. 5b). Following its release, one of the film's directors, Hanns Springer, spoke of the extent to which he "broke new

ground” in striving toward historical accuracy—“standing shoulder to shoulder with scholarship”—in filming the introductory prehistoric reenactments.<sup>17</sup> While they were his most challenging, he admitted, they also set up the foundational origin myth that undergirds the rest of the film, that the unchanging essence of the German race, despite various foreign incursions in its history, first Romans then Christians, would always lurk in the dense thickets of the Teutonic wilderness. Invoking Tacitus, and even dramatizing his epic account of the Germanic tribes’ unlikely victory over three Roman legions at the Battle of Teutoburg Forest in 9 CE, the film gives voice to barbarian Germania as an alternative to the Greco-Roman sphere, a self-consciously primitive place where culture lay on a seamless continuum with nature.<sup>18</sup>

A cinematographic analog to the specious diachronic comparisons made by fascist folklorists, the directors creatively deployed the novel technology of dissolving moving images to collapse time and establish causal relationships in the perdurable history between Germans and trees through a dynamic—and misleading—new medium of formal comparison.<sup>19</sup> One of the film’s leitmotifs in its equivalence of racial and environmental makeup is that Germany’s artistic masterpieces had always been made from trees or at least inspired by them. In the spirit of the entwined maypole, the sparkling sun shines through a cathedral’s rose window (fig. 5a–d). The picture then subtly oscillates back-and-forth between the curving canopies of the German forest and their reincarnation into the iconic feature of Gothic architecture of the north: the classical rounded arch ‘broken’ into a pointed one.<sup>20</sup> The aura of their rudimentary thicket dwellings, also famously described by Tacitus, persists through Christian spaces.<sup>21</sup> Exceptionally meticulous in their alignment of architectural and arboreal form, the cinematographers seamlessly fade a row of compound piers into a file of trunks and a spire into a tree’s tapered crest

(fig. 5e–f). The churches’ altars are furnished with cult statues of Christian saints, albeit ones carved in wood and, more specifically, in the signature style of Tilman Riemenschneider, an artist revered by National Socialist art historians because unlike his contemporary Albrecht Dürer he worked with modest materials and never left the homeland for Italy (fig. 5g).

But it is the maypole that bookends the film, first appearing when land and people are not yet contaminated by outside forces, and recurring at the end after Hitler’s rise to power when a series of scenes pictures peasants, villagers, and city-dwellers alike liberated to frolic about the ceremonial trees as their Germanic ancestors supposedly had (fig. 5h). Culminating in a forest of military banners and soldiers for the Reich’s commemoration of the National Day of German *Volk* (formerly May Day), the film’s conclusion centers on the swastika-emblazoned maypole as the cult object par excellence of the National Socialist jingoistic redemption story reuniting German blood with their soil after millennia of their dislocation from it (fig. 5i–j). Its true history dissolved into a concoction of racial and territorial purity, the imperial maypole transplanted to the regions of Berlin and Brandenburg also embodied a colonial program of Germanizing alien landscapes—a program of German aggression toward the east that, counter to the film’s victimization narrative, had already been actualized centuries prior in the medieval period and one that itself more accurately constitutes a through-line in the historical record, if one could exist at all.<sup>22</sup>

The heavy-handed anticlerical sentiment behind the film—and shared by Strobel and Wrede—was aimed directly at church officials who publicly decried the pseudo-historical revival of pagan confessions and the assumption that prehistoric pagan practices fed or were transformed into Christian ones.<sup>23</sup> The most outspoken and prominent among them was the firebrand cardinal and archbishop of Munich and





a



b



c



d



e



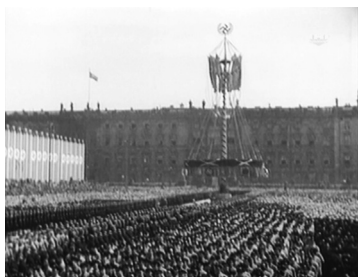
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5 Trees as artworks through the ages, film stills from *Ewiger Wald*, 1936: a–b, ancient maypole with dancers and sun; c–d, sunrays through forest canopy and gothic rose window; e–f, dissolves between forest and gothic hypostyle hall and spire; g, gothic wood sculpture; h, modern maypole dance; i–j, Nazi maypole in Berlin's *Lustgarten*, under the sun

Freising, Michael von Faulhaber, who in his New Years Eve sermon of 1933 warned against “uncritical and unscientific connections” between ancient and medieval traditions and other “fantastical castles in the sky” manufactured by the neo pagan movement.<sup>24</sup> From his pulpit in Saint Michael’s Church in Munich, the grandest of all Renaissance churches north of the Alps, and carried by loudspeaker in two other churches, Faulhaber decried the practice of cherry-picking from Tacitus a number of putative Christian appropriations of Germanic peoples. “It is true that Tacitus mentions the ‘shiny white horse’ that was kept in a grove at the expense of the state, but this does not mean that the steed of St. Martin descended from that old Germanic model.”<sup>25</sup> Forming the fifth in a series of advent sermons principally delivered in defiance of the Nazi ordinance prohibiting the teaching of the Old Testament as an offense against “the Germanic race,” Faulhaber’s final screed targeting Germanic revivalism also took aim at the single most canonical tree of medieval Germany: the so-called Thor or Donar oak that Saint Boniface (d. 754) chopped down with his own hands in his campaign to convert the Saxons.<sup>26</sup> “We will not have planted in the place of the cross a Thor oak,” Faulhaber called out to his audience of Catholics and skeptics, inveighing against hasty extrapolations from any perceived cultic rhymes between paganism and Christianity.<sup>27</sup> For Faulhaber, such hypotheses would ultimately lead to an anthropological deconstruction of Christianity, stripping the religion of its absolute singularity and contradicting its spiritual truth.

While Faulhaber’s speech, later published under the title “Christianity and Germanicity,” was criticized by Catholic scholars for its over-reliance on Tacitus as an unreliable source, his invocation of Boniface’s felling of the Saxon oak in Geismar is an entirely different matter—one handed down in medieval texts and serving as the template for the church’s missionary exploits over local populations in Europe and even the

Americas for centuries thereafter.<sup>28</sup> Leveling sacred groves and building monasteries and churches atop their fallow remains was, in fact, a prevalent means of conversion and settlement throughout the Middle Ages—verbal accounts and physical traces for which survive more often in eastern parts of the Holy Roman Empire, where Christianization took place at a later date. What also comes into view in the public spat between the newly installed National Socialist regime and one of the few quasi-insulated voices of internal resistance carrying any weight, then, is a fight for the role of narrator, each side vying to be the rightful heir of Germany’s medieval history—where in fact, the legacy of trees and maypoles, especially in relation to the church, is far gnarlier and more complex than either side would have liked it to be.

### The Medieval and Early Modern Maypole, and the Fallout from Fascist Folklore

Much of what is known about the medieval maypole tradition was first uncovered by the systematic studies conducted of nineteenth-century ethnographers, the propagators of a romantic, sylvan idealism. Early folklore historians like Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823–1897) and Wilhelm Mannhardt (1831–1880), and the polymath philologist Jacob Grimm (1785–1863) all plumbed an immense corpus of textual records for historical proof of rituals involving trees.<sup>29</sup> While painstaking and rigorously cross-disciplinary, their research was also partially motivated by its own suspect brand of nationalism and primitivist fetishism of the peasantry—a dangerous combination that ultimately opened the field of folklore studies to radicalization by National Socialists.<sup>30</sup> After 1945, though, post-war scholars who rightfully sought to de-Nazify methodological approaches in their interpretation of the same medieval sources also set aside the fuller picture of tree-centered customs tak-



ing place throughout the Middle Ages and early modern period, given their suspect ideological connotations.

The following section pivots to postwar folklore and art history and looks anew at well-known and more obscure texts and artworks with historical distance and an eye toward what can be gleaned from them if we are willing to move beyond simply decrying the politics that had co-opted them. Art historians working in this area have, for good reason, grown allergic to any approach that might be perceived as reeking of *Blut und Boden*; they have therefore erred cautiously in their interpretation of the evidence unearthed in generations prior, if they dare to look at all. But our hesitation to confront this fraught history has overshadowed the ways images, in particular, reveal the church's tug of war with folkloric trees and plants. Regardless of how much, if anything, the medieval maypole tradition may have inherited from pagan devotional practices, thanks to the primary source material collated in large part by romantic ethnographers, we know the church in the Middle Ages associated the ceremonial tree with idolatrous, pre-Christian behavior.

A prime example of the tension in the historical reception of tree cults comes from what is putatively the oldest documented maypole in medieval Germany. In his *Eight Books of Miracles*, the Cistercian monk Caesarius von Heisterbach (ca. 1180–ca. 1240) denounces the erection of a ceremonial tree in Aachen in 1224.<sup>31</sup> As was customary for maypoles, it carried a wreath, which would have been issued as a prize to the best dancer of a circle dance. After the city's priest ordered the maypole cut down, the townspeople of Aachen vigorously protested and under the direction of the town's bailiff, they raised an even taller one to spite him. As many predicted, however, God leveled a severe punishment because of the shame done to him and his priest, and within a few days, according to Caesarius, a giant conflagration laid waste to all of Aachen. Indeed,

the city was struck by a fire that year on August 1—that is, during summer, through which point maypoles often remained standing.<sup>32</sup>

In 1875, Wilhelm Mannhardt cited Caesarius's Aachen case in his book *Forest and Field Cults*. Situated in a chapter entitled "Tree Spirit as Vegetation Demon," the Aachen maypole for Mannhardt embodied a fertility spirit that for "heathen" Germans most often inhabited trees and forests.<sup>33</sup> Dressing maypoles with garlands and wreaths, like the people of Aachen did in spring, signified their reification of vegetal animistic forces that took anthropomorphic shape. That is, the formal, analogical relationship between people and the maypole they constructed demonstrated that plants, like people, also possessed spirits. Mannhardt's was an inclusive theory of animism, tracking the spirit as it manifested across space and time—"the same psychic process which explains so many elements in tree worship is also the germ of the Demeter myth."<sup>34</sup> His fellow folklorists—and certainly those following in the National Socialist era—narrowed their field of inquiry to a *Volksgeist* of the German nation, echoing the words of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) that "each nation has the center of its happiness within itself."<sup>35</sup> While Rosenberg, Strobel, Wrede and others perverted Mannhardt's methods in their essentializing of German race and environment, other Nazi folklorists, like Adolf Spamer, the leader of the Reichsinstitut, was more 'ambiguous' in his stance with the fascists and was even punished by the Party for his "lack of political qualifications."<sup>36</sup> Spamer was very much cut from the same cloth as Mannhardt; he drew cross-temporal and global conclusions about the German "folk soul" based on formal likenesses between medieval maypoles, the prehistoric rod idols of Germanic and Slavic peoples, and the burial pillars of ninth-century Lombards described by Paul the Deacon (d. 799).<sup>37</sup>

Since a number of the Nazi folklorists like Spamer and others who helped perpetuate ethnnon-

ationalist ideologies either actively or passively remained active in the field after the war's end, a major critical self-reassessment and reckoning of the discipline's complicity in the fascist era did not occur until decades after the war.<sup>38</sup> Before confronting the events of that period head-on in the 1980's, numerous scholars sought an antidote to the poisoned well by setting a new rigorous standard of hyper-positivism in their analysis of texts and archaeological data.<sup>39</sup> Their driving principal was to attack the discipline's historical predilection for continuities, and to rid the field of its obsession with origin stories—an objective perfectly encapsulated by a wide-ranging corrective study on the maypole published in 1961 by Hans Moser, who from 1938 until 1964, with interruptions due to the war, headed the Bavarian State Office of Folklore (Bayerische Landesstelle für Volkskunde) in Munich.<sup>40</sup> Categorizing the historical examples as a signal of his objective close-reading of the sources, Moser classified the famous, aforementioned Aachen maypole as a “politically ceremonial tree” that, by the thirteenth century, would never have elicited religious fervor, superstition or idolatry.<sup>41</sup> Instead, it functioned as a symbol of Aachen's independence as a free imperial city and, as such, could only have threatened the church's political hegemony, not its religious one. “It was the High Middle Ages, in the Catholic city of Aachen, no less!” Moser, himself a Catholic, exclaimed in his text.<sup>42</sup> Behind the rigor of his analysis, though, it would seem the postwar pendulum swung too far in the opposite direction. In countering Mannhardt's invocation of the episode as a heathen rite, and in seeking to repair the irrevocable damage his field's historical interpretation of the maypole had inflicted, Moser oversimplified the bigger picture, too.

Turning back to the *Books of Miracles*, we see that Caesarius more than subtly compares the ceremonial springtime tree with the Golden Calf—the supreme idol of the Old Testament—by couching the Aachen story between others railing against heretical conduct. Before his trav-

els to Aachen, Caesarius chronicles the wrath that befell the people of Hertene in the Lower Rhine in the same year for their “show of idolatry” (*speciem ydolatrie*): they dance in a circle around and bow their heads down to a sculpted ram spruced up with silk bands on a tree post.<sup>43</sup> The calls of the local clergyman, who threatened excommunication and “the plague of the sons of Israel who danced around the Golden Calf,” fell on deaf ears. Consequently, a vengeful God struck down the festival with a violent thunderstorm, devastating the entire area and smashing the idol into smithereens. God also intervened in a festival game involving a wreath prize, not unlike the one suspended from the Aachen maypole; a priest who won it and hung it from his house died because of the offense.<sup>44</sup> What is at stake in Caesarius's accounts is not whether people honored the maypole, the wreath, or the image of the ram *per se*, or even if either was conceived to possess its own animate spirit. They exhibit an affront to the second commandment for their mockery of the crucifixion, for their inverted formal and functional resemblance to veneration properly bestowed upon the ultimate trophy, the body of Christ, hanging from the saintly wood of the cross—more verbal and visual accounts for which, as we will see, abound in the late medieval and early modern periods.

Trees abound in German art and architecture in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is the moment the densely forested landscape paintings of the so-called ‘Danube School’ emerged.<sup>45</sup> Arboreal motifs proliferated along the frames of fictive and real thresholds of German structures. Perhaps most importantly, it was the time German humanists led by Conrad Celtis had rediscovered Tacitus—publishing an edition of *Germania* in 1500—and pored over his recitations of the tree-laden altars and forested dwellings of their pagan ancestors. Still, like Michael Baxandall, most art historians working in the early modern period demurred from considerations of German folklore.<sup>46</sup> Instead, for German archi-



6 Sebald Beham, *The Village Fair*, 1535, woodcut, 36.7 × 114.9 cm. Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago

sects competing with Quattrocento Italian classicism and painters seeking to define the ideals of Maximilian I's empire, forests were considered to offer a uniquely ancient German vocabulary with which to contrast against that of the Italians, whose cultural patrimony survived not just in treatises but also in physical stone. In truth, however, tree-centered traditions in medieval Germany—sacred and secular—long predated the revival of Tacitus and encompassed areas of literary and visual culture beyond architecture and the small circles of humanist discourse. In their quest to assert a national character, artists were just as well served resorting to Tacitus' account of trees in their ancient history as they were looking out their own windows to the present and how those traditions continued but were transformed, eroded and polished by the winds of time and filtered into Christianity. Not only predating the humanist topos, Germany's historical involvement with vegetation and wood may have provided a symbolic, if usually concealed, substratum for it.

Many of the sources on which we rely to recuperate the maypole practice from the period also indicate the church's discomfort with a perceived potential of the maypole to draw out heterodox attitudes towards nature and non-Christian ritual objects. From the verbal sources it is clear that the maypole was feared to conjure worship of nature itself, or ritual objects made to

honor nature and the natural world, especially because the maypole, the mightiest tree from the forest, an object people climbed, adorned with trophies, was so congruent to the cross and the other *Arma Christi* used at the Passion.<sup>47</sup> Clerics did not miss this formal and functional overlap; they either shunned the practice altogether or claimed the rituals for the church and associated them and their use of wood with the cross.<sup>48</sup> In addition to texts, though, it is in fact a group of artworks not often associated with maypoles—some produced within church circles—that help us recover the existence of the secular medieval tradition. What the images also show, which perhaps explains why art historians have overlooked their folkloric significance, is a greater affinity with the folk objects used in the modern era—particularly those recorded by nineteenth-century ethnographers—than has previously been acknowledged.

If one looks closely enough, one can identify a thinly veiled critique of the maypole as a corrupted aberration of the crucifixion—and other Catholic iconographies—in a group of early sixteenth-century prints by the Beham brothers of Nuremberg. Sebald Beham's expansive panorama of the church anniversary holiday (*Kirchweih* or *Kirmes*) features an almost encyclopedic array of revelrous activities that took place at outdoor festivals in the German countryside (fig. 6).<sup>49</sup> While ordered and restrained activity—





7 Detail of fig. 6 showing maypole as mockery of crucifixion

a couple weds below a devotional image of the Virgin and Child—is set before the towering cross-crowned steeple on the left side of the composition, a maypole carrying a rooster counterbalances it on the right (fig. 7). Here Beham relishes in the parodic potential of the scene. A lone man above the fray has made a break to claim the trophy; he indecorously wraps his body around the trunk to shimmy upward, crossing one ankle over the other. A crowded mass of peasants below beholds his achievement, their lances and pitchforks intimating those of the Romans and the centurion, whose echo gallops away on horseback above. In the foreground, the arm gestures of the players on the bowling green harken those wagering for Christ's unhemmed garment, just as those of a woman yanking her husband away from a swordfight do the Magdalene mourning at the foot of the cross.

In many such woodcuts from Sebald and his younger brother Barthel, the scenes of peasant life literally and compositionally radiate about a central, de-limbed tree.<sup>50</sup> In the case illustrating the so-called Nose Dance, the upright post is shunted into a small mound of earth not unlike the way the cross's vertical beam (the *stipes*) is often depicted by artists (fig. 8). Its short crossbars bearing rewards—like the pole behind it—give it the air of an impotent dummy compared to the one on which Christ was crucified. As Protestant artists, the Behams were parodying the behavior exhibited at Catholic festivals but also the very nature of festivals more broadly, which honored saints and their relics—like the Holy Cross and other *Arma Christi*—with vulgar pageantry, artworks, and extra-Biblical liturgical blessings of things. Their prints thus also criticize the Catholic domestication of the maypole and a host of other folkloric rituals involving plants into their devotional and liturgical system. May devotion (*Maiandacht*), as it came to be known, had been popularized a century prior in the same region, and it seized on the temporal coincidence with the May month's liturgical observation of nu-



8 Sebald Beham. *The Nose Dance at Fools' Town*, 1534, woodcut, 26.1 × 36 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

merous cross-oriented feasts—principally the Cross’s Invention on May 3 but also the Cross Week and, by the fourteenth century, a feast to the other *Arma Christi*, too. Indeed, regardless of the origins of the pole games and the rationale for the form of their ornaments, the Behams’ prints make light of the festive stand-in for the cross as well as the resemblance between the prizes they proffered and the *Arma Christi*—like St. Peter’s cock, the crown of thorns, and Veronica’s veil, which, as we will see, adorned as devotional trophies a host of columnar artworks that spiritually allegorized the secular maypole. Such artworks would have been anathema to the Behams as skeptics of devotional images and the church’s embrace of popular superstition.

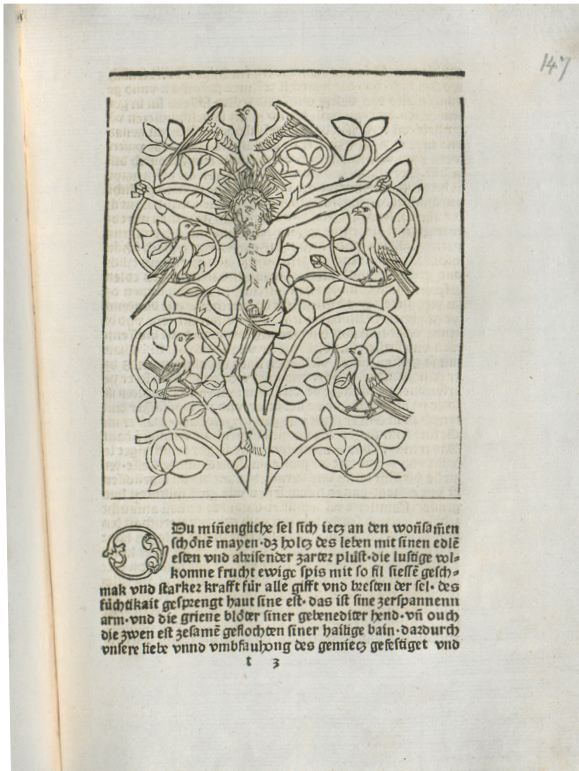
Pioneered by the Dominican Henry Suso (1295–1366) but building off the centuries-entrenched topos of the cross as Tree of Life, May devotion infused the typological tree with real, local ones. It reinterpreted and re-enacted every step of the maypole custom that rejoiced in the teeming plant life of spring but in an orthodox—even doctrinal—framework; that is, as expressions of Holy Cross adoration.<sup>51</sup> For example, the Franciscan Nuremberg preacher Stephan Fridolin (1430–1498) compiled his *Spiritual May* (*Der Geistliche Mai*) in the 1480’s according to the liturgical calendar so the Clarissan nuns he supervised would read it in conjunction with May’s cross holidays.<sup>52</sup> On the eve of May Day, he bid his readers to “seek out” and “choose” the tree most representative of Christ’s beauty and holiness—itsself a parallel to the wood-gathering rite that took place on April 30, also known as Walpurgis Night.<sup>53</sup> Having discovered and felled their perfect tree, the nuns on their second day of prayer were instructed to prepare it in the same way as one would a maypole, as we encounter in the Glockendon manuscript picture (fig. 2)—by “hanging from the highly blessed May-wood of the Cross sweet, small mirrors.”<sup>54</sup> With their devotional greenery trimmed and decorated, the nuns pray the heavenly rosary and invite a chorus of heav-



9 Christ Child Proffering Wreath of Forget-Me-Nots, pen and ink on parchment glued into the manuscript of Stephan Fridolin, *Der geistliche Mai*, Bavarian, 1529. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 4473, fol. 46r

enly saints “to help carry the graceful May-wood through all the alleys ... and [during] this stroll to sing a beautiful little hymn.”<sup>55</sup> They post their love garlands on the doors and windows of the Heavenly Father in spiritual re-enactments of courtship rituals that, thanks to accounts from Suso and others, we know took place on May Day.<sup>56</sup> As a manuscript copy from the Franciscan Püttrich convent demonstrates, in return for a nun’s Maytime devotional exercises, and as a sign of her spiritual marriage to him, the Christ Child rewards her with an allegorical mirror of the prize a festival-goer would have won: a wreath of forget-me-nots, a floral play on the eucharistic utterance,





10 *The Spiritual Maypole*, woodcut frontispiece for *Geistliche Auslegung des Lebens Jesu Christi*, Ulm 1482



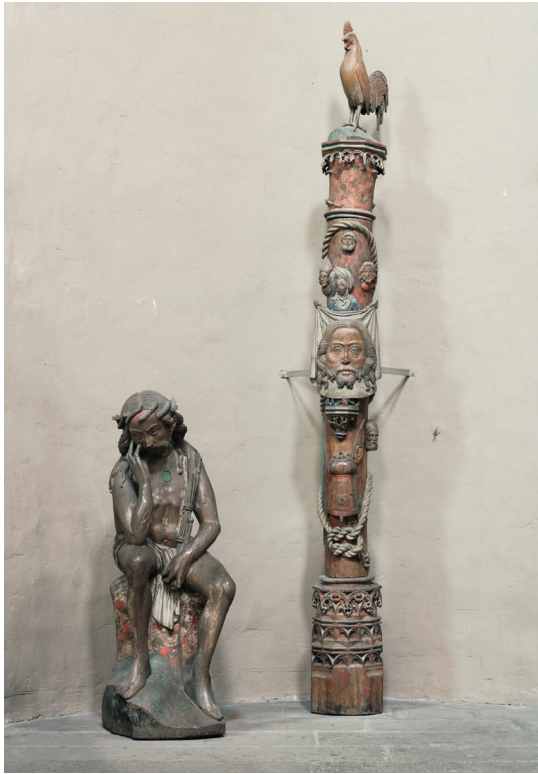
11 *Melancholic Christ in a Tree*, woodcut on concluding page of *Geistliche Auslegung des Lebens Jesu Christi*, Ulm 1482

“This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me” (fig. 9; Luke 22:19).

Other artworks bear a more explicit footprint of Christ’s cross as a maypole adorned with the other instruments of his Passion as devotional trophies—a phenomenon that, as we will soon see, either persisted through or suddenly reappeared in the nineteenth century. In addition to the rosary, Fridolin and the author and woodcut artist for the frontispiece of *The Spiritual Maypole* (*Geistlicher Maibaum*), printed in Ulm around 1482, also analogized the crown of thorns atop Christ’s head with the flowery trophy that encircled the bushy crests of late-medieval maypoles (fig. 10).<sup>57</sup> “Above on the treetop of this maypole is the lovely and beautiful rosary / ringlet of roses, delightful to admire, but com-

pletely painful and cruel to receive, when it bore through the head of the noble *Sponsus* with its sharp thorns.”<sup>58</sup> Appearing at the end of the same printed book from Ulm, a little-known woodcut shows Christ sandwiched in the fork of a tree from which an expanded arrangement of the *Arma* is carefully arrayed (fig. 11). Here, a Melancholic Christ, beaten but not yet crucified, balances the weight of his thoughts on his left arm and leg, which he plants atop a stump.<sup>59</sup> Propping his heavy head on his hand, he pensively exchanges gazes with the rooster alight the same branch supporting the birches, hammer, and slip-knotted rope. Despite the inclusion of some of the more peripheral objects related to the Passion—like the lantern, dice, and ladder—the cross is remarkably absent. That is,





12 *Melancholic Christ with Whipping Post*, c. 1486–1500, polychromed oak. Braunschweig, Cathedral of Saint Blaise



13 Meister H. W. (Hans Witten), attributed, *Whipping Post*, c. 1510–1522, painted oak. Chemnitz, Castle Church

unless the oak itself, known for its bifurcated trunk, functions as its stand-in. Cradling Christ and the *Arma* and growing out of the earth like the adjacent chaffs of wheat in the foreground, themselves not without eucharistic symbolic import, the tree is the most literal visualization of the Spiritual Maypole topos—though there are others that are entwined with it.

In the fifteenth century and early sixteenth centuries, monumental sculpted programs of Christ with whipping posts emblazoned with the *Arma* invoke the cross and the open-air Maytime customs often cited to symbolize it. Painted and carved in wood and thus materially evocative of trees, crosses, and maypoles, the portable ensemble now installed inside Brunswick Cathedral may well have been transported outdoors

for the liturgies of the cross, *Arma Christi*, and Passion in the spring (c. 1486–1500; fig. 12).<sup>60</sup> The crouching, forlorn Christ serves as a model for the viewer, who is left to walk about and reflect on the kaleidoscope of torture wrapped around the tall, free-standing columns. The placement of St. Peter's cock at the top, along with the centrifugal movement they invite, call to mind the festive springtime staffs—and thus, by an inverted set of associations, the cross itself, so thoroughly had it, its material, and its celebrations, come to be layered over the rituals of May.

A spinoff of the genre, the massive, four-meter tall sculpture of Christ bound to an arboreal whipping post was carved from a single oak trunk and installed in the center of the so-called Scourge Hall (Geißelsaal) in Chemnitz's former

Benedictine monastery (fig. 13).<sup>61</sup> The circular movement the flagellation post invokes—which of course is true to its own story—becomes conflated with the ritualistic movements around the maypole in the season of the celebration of the cross. But it is in its formal and material construction where the maypole resonances are most salient. Following the profane custom, where the maypole represented the most perfect and beautiful tree sacrificed and honored to usher in warm weather, at Chemnitz we encounter in the whipping post-as-tree offering the best and most perfect example of humanity in the figure of Christ and his sacrifice at the Passion.<sup>62</sup> The spectacular figural program, save the protruding appendages of the flagellators, was hewn around the circumference of a single oak trunk with a diameter of 1.2 meters. In fact, the artists were so committed to the material integrity of the prized tree felled from the nearby forest that they recycled real oak branches, shaved them, and twisted them around the trunk to form two wreaths that harken the floral and leafy garlands that decorated medieval maypoles.

Regardless of any putative pagan origins, all of the traditions associated with the maypole were at least not of the church's design and therefore not originally representative of its ideology. Either an uninterrupted holdover of medieval custom or a byproduct of research into it, the *Arma Christi* also adorned some of the earliest maypoles that nineteenth-century ethnographers described and had drawn.<sup>63</sup> Although it was an animosity toward cities as "the domain of Jews" and the "tombs of Germanism" that drove his research into popular customs of rural Germans, Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl tells us the *Arma Christi* were an "indispensable component" to maypoles across Bavaria as early as 1860.<sup>64</sup> The inscription on the maypole from Königsdorf in 1894 signals its role as a marker of God's munificent intervention with the physical world: "You diligently care for the health of souls with heavenly means and divine nourishment [*Speis*]; make our minds

prone to it, where the direction this maypole shows us."<sup>65</sup> Like the aforementioned Ulm print, the cross is conspicuously absent among the range of *Arma* represented on the maypole that Bavarians erected in Ellbach bei Tölz and Kochel in the nineteenth century, the latter topped off with a rooster (fig. 14). In the modern period too, the secular, folkloric maypole stood for the holy cross itself, before which the townspeople, much like Fridolin's nuns under their "Spiritual May," paid tribute to the divine forces at work in the springtime harvest—the lifeblood of the German countryside.

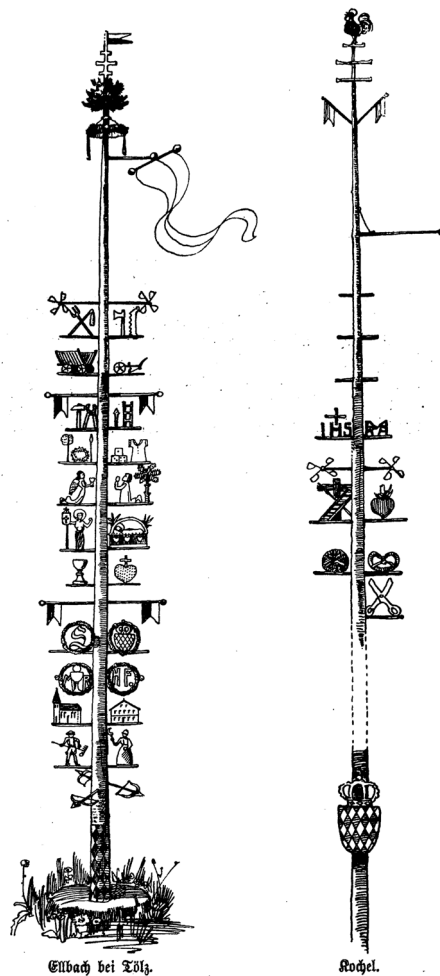
The same transposing of the cross's wood over real trees was a phenomenon much earlier in the medieval period as potentially a means of converting pagans with strong affinities with trees, a subject to which we now turn our attention by way of conclusion.

## The Roots of Conversion

We know of many historical flashpoints that occurred between early Christians and the sacred groves of non-believers in Germany and its environs. Scholars have rightly balked at exploring the similarities between how the church responded to late medieval maypoles and early medieval hallowed trees for fear of perpetuating the bogus and dangerous continuity narratives of previous generations. In particular, art historians have overlooked the few surviving marginal physical clues that not only help us piece together the various histories of ancient German tree cults but also how those histories in turn help us understand the powerful forces and artworks that replaced them. In avoiding this material, we miss how nationalist and fascist historians exploited a deliberate flattening of how culturally disparate these regions actually were, and the different ways the church throughout the Middle Ages had to accommodate and adapt to trees to convert and keep hold over ever

more Europeans. To be clear, we still know little about the role of trees in the religious system of pre-Christian northern Europeans, which were not uniform or standardized.<sup>66</sup> They were also certainly not exclusive to so-called Germanic peoples but also characteristic of various Slavic ethnic groups whom German Christians fought and converted and whose lands they settled.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, rooting out what was anathema to their immaterial, monotheistic God, missionary Germans as part of their expansionist strategy to convert ever wider swaths of eastern Europe did systematically demolish and build over sacred groves of enemy Slavs in, among other places, Szczecin (Stettin) around 1125 and in Henryków (Heinrichau) outside Wrocław, over whose felled remains a Cistercian monastery was built.<sup>68</sup>

To take a highly unusual surviving example, a fossilized tree stump protrudes upward from the ground and into the choir of Lehnin Abbey in Brandenburg, Germany (fig. 15), less than fifty kilometers from Berlin. Carefully embedded into the architecture, its chopped face running flush with the steps leading to the church's east end, the irregularly shaped and barky log arrests the eye as a conspicuous departure from the layers of brick and mortar that comprise the rest of the structure's fabric, from the walls and vaults to the altar table, where the clergy celebrated mass and performed the miraculous transformation of bread and wine to Christ's body and blood. By preserving and exhibiting the severed stump, the Christians who first built this Cistercian cloister in the last two decades of the twelfth century sought to commemorate what had been eliminated from it: a living tree that embodied the nature-centered cult religion of local Slavic peoples.<sup>69</sup> Trees and the vegetal world, when properly domesticated into doctrine, played a role in the propagation of Christian ritual and faith throughout the Middle Ages. At the same time church figures felled cult trees admired by pagans, they advanced their own theological tradition foregrounding the arboreal heritage of



14 Gabriel von Seidl, Maypoles in Ellbach bei Tölz and Kochel, c. 1910, wood engravings

one of Christendom's most sacred signs and relics, the wood of the Holy Cross on which Christ was crucified. Indeed, one of the directives to erect Lehnin Abbey, according to a surviving copy of its foundational legend, was to eradicate "the Slavs, the heathens, and all enemies of the cross of Christ."<sup>70</sup> Aligned along the same central longitudinal axis as the high altar, the stump at Lehnin reveals to the viewer a paradox around the church's attitudes toward wood and earthly matter in the sanctuary; in the foreground, its raw truncation represents a vanquished belief system, while in the background its reconfigura-





15 Oak Trunk, Choir of Lehnin Abbey, Brandenburg, severed in 12th century; carved retablo, 1476, on loan from the Brandenburg Domstiftung

tion into a carved, painted, and gilded altarpiece stages the liturgy and upholds orthodoxy.

Historians still cling to the possibility that the stump rather refers to a tree from a modern legend account of the abbey's founding by the Margrave Otto I. That version of the story describes Otto, tired from hunting, falling asleep against a tree; he dreams of a hostile white deer who only stops antagonizing him once he appealed to Christ and awakens. But the surviving physical evidence comports more simply with the historical circumstances and contemporary accounts of Lehnin's establishment—namely, that the cloister was constructed as Christians tightened their grips on the last Slavic holdouts in Lehnin's immediate proximity.<sup>71</sup> As part of a larger twelfth-century "Wendish" Crusade (a term for Slavs east of the Elbe, more commonly known as Sorbs) that swept the region, German, Flemish, and Lombardish Christians who had already settled there closed ranks as Slavic clashes and uprisings per-

sisted.<sup>72</sup> In 1187, it was reported about the Zauche region of Brandenburg that "the ground is soaked with the bloodshed of the pagan attacks." Ten years later, Pope Coelestin III expressed his regret that the provost Heinrich von Brandenburg "had settled in the midst of a depraved and evil tribe, namely that of the Slavs and declared enemies of Christianity."<sup>73</sup> Christians at Lehnin had thus made the exceptional choice not only to keep their trunk trophy but also to repurpose it as Slavic spolia to commemorate in powerfully visual, architectural, and material terms from the holiest place of their church, perhaps even from the spot where a cross altar once stood, the hard-fought victory of their saintly wood over the heathen one.<sup>74</sup>

In recuperating the significance of these visual cues, art historians can begin to investigate histories of sacred trees that lurk behind numerous arboreal topoi that were assimilated into the foundational legends of pioneer monasteries.<sup>75</sup> While Lehnin's stump, which evokes a violent confrontation between belief systems, is indeed singular, there are other cases where we encounter a more syncretic relationship between Christian and heathen wood. Prominent trees figuring in written foundational accounts of Cistercian monasteries that settled Slavic Austria in the eastern Alps also saliently linger in some of their major artworks, like the late Gothic carved retablo for the high altar at Zwettl (ca. 1525) and the unusual mandrake crucifix *acheiropoieton* (ca. 1200) that spawned a pilgrimage cult to Rein monastery's Straßengel church, which was built atop a Slavic burial ground.<sup>76</sup> Lehnin's stump also compels us to reevaluate the illuminations of miracle-performing trees in manuscripts that recount the establishment of monasteries earlier in the Middle Ages, like that of Werden Abbey near Essen (799) or Saint-Amand Abbey in Valenciennes, France (ca. 630).<sup>77</sup> Without corroborating archaeological evidence, historians attempting to infer from pictures alone the existence of sacred groves in this very early period run the risk of chasing Faulhaber's "castles in the sky."<sup>78</sup> Still, there were

many variations of Donar Oaks struck down by Christians; what Faulhaber's rival fascist folklorists were loath to admit, however, is that many of them were torn down by German hands.

While they fabricated ancient histories for beloved sites like the Teutoburg Forest's Externsteine rock formations, Nazi historians ignored the Lehnin case because it disrupted the tidy myth that it was Germans alone who possessed a special, mystical connection to the forest.<sup>79</sup> Inconvenient idiosyncrasies like those of German Christians eradicating sacred groves were expunged from the historical record by fascist researchers of Eastern Europe, who vigorously forbade the study of Sorbian history not only to deny the possibility of the ethnic group's regional independence but also to dismiss any potential cultural kinship with their eastern neighbors.<sup>80</sup> While they insisted on ethnic distinctions from Slavs, they fabricated ancient overlaps—like an historical connection with trees—with their preferred “Aryan” counterparts to the Scandinavian north. Under the official auspices of *Die Nord- und Ostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (NOFG)* and the *Publikationsstelle Berlin-Dahlem (PuSte)*, founded in 1933 and 1931, respectively, researchers advanced the spurious notion of an eastern *Volks- und Kulturboden*, that the Slavic landscape was inherently better suited to German people who were racially

preordained with the know-how to cultivate it. The same dangerous rhetoric of the *Volk's* “indigeneity” (*Bodenständigkeit*) to eastern lands in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, which would culminate in their military conquest of the east (*Drang nach Osten*) and serve as the predicate for the “Wendish question” of how to cleanse Sorbian peoples from all of Germandom in 1937, also accounts for the uncanny, visual dissonance of the maypole erected in Hitler's Berlin.<sup>81</sup> Soaring over lands east of the Elbe, from whose forests it was felled, the ritual tree was erected to tout the abiding Germanic tradition of tree adoration. It also stood as an inverted echo of what medieval German Christians had razed from that very landscape a millennium prior.

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  - 18 Martin M. Winkler, *Arminius the Liberator: Myth and Ideology*, Oxford 2016, 159–188.
  - 19 Karsten Witte, Film im Nationalsozialismus, in: Wolfgang Jacobsen, Anton Kaes, and Horst H. Prinzler (eds), *Geschichte des deutschen Films*, Stuttgart 1993, 119–170, 124–128; Nicola Valeska Weber, Überblendungen: Das Mittelalter im Kulturfilm des Nationalsozialismus, in: Bruno Reudenbach and Make Steinkamp (eds), *Mittelalterbilder im Nationalsozialismus*, Berlin 2013, 89–102; Wolnik 2019 (as in note 14), 408–409.
  - 20 Marvin Trachtenberg, Suger’s Miracles, Branner’s Bourges: Reflections on ‘Gothic Architecture’ as Medieval Modernism, in: *Gesta* 39, 2000, 183–205.
  - 21 Art historians have studied the numerous ways National Socialists appropriated medieval imagery. See Reudenbach and Steinkamp 2013 (as in note 19), some essays in which are cited in this essay, and Wolnik 2019 (as in note 14).
  - 22 Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, New York 1995, 90, and Wilke 2001 (as in note 16), 366.
  - 23 Wolnik 2019 (as in note 14), 409; on Strobel’s public anticlerical campaigns to de-Christianize the calendar, see Hermann Bausinger, Nazi Folk Ideology and Folk Research, in: James R. Dow and Hannjost Lixfeld (eds), *The Nazification of an Academic Discipline: Folklore in the Third Reich*, Bloomington 1994, 11–33, esp. 25–26;



- 24 Michael von Faulhaber, *Judentum, Christentum, Germanentum: Adventspredigten gehalten in St. Michael zu München* 1933, Munich 1934, 101–124, here 119; Sarah Röttger, Zwischen Hirtenamt und politischem Kalkül: Die Adventspredigten Michael Kardinal von Faulhabers 1933, in: *Zeitschrift für altbayerische Kirchengeschichte* 55, 2013, 167–254.
- 25 Faulhaber 1934 (as in note 24), 119.
- 26 In the art historical sphere, and for its elaboration on Charlemagne's destruction of the so-called Irminsul or "universal column," see most recently Ittai Weinryb, Hildesheim Avant-Garde: Bronze, Columns, and Colonialism, in: *Speculum* 93, 2018, 728–782, esp. 774–75; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400–1050*, New York 2001, 57–78.
- 27 Faulhaber 1934 (as in note 24), 123.
- 28 On syncretism in colonial Mexico, see most famously Anita Brenner, *Idols Behind Altars*, New York 1929, and David Tavares, *The Invisible War: Indigenous Devotions, Discipline, and Dissent in Colonial Mexico*, Palo Alto 2011. In an essay honoring Faulhaber's twenty-fifth year as archbishop of Munich and Freising, the Franciscan theologian Father Erhard Schlund, who had published on neo-Germanic heathenism and shunned *völkisch* extremists (though he was a publicly virulent anti-Semite), remarked on Faulhaber's neglect of archaeological evidence and the possibility of Tacitus's observations as second-hand; see Erhard Schlund, Kardinal Faulhaber als Prediger, in: Michael Hartig (ed.), *Erntegarben*, Munich 1936, 210–212; Walter Ziegler, Kardinal Faulhaber im Meinungsstreit: Vorwürfe, Kritik, Verehrung, Bewunderung, in: Peter Pfister (ed.), *Michael Kardinal von Faulhaber (1869–1952): Beiträge zum 50. Todestag und zur Öffnung des Kardinal-Faulhaber-Archivs*, Munich 2022, 64–93, esp. 70–71; Christopher Krebs, *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus's Germania from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich*, New York 2011, 214–244, esp. 214–217.
- 29 Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (ed.), *Bavaria: Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, 5 vols, Munich 1860–1868; Johann W.E. Mannhardt, *Der Baumkult der Germanen und ihrer Nachbarstämme: Mythologische Untersuchungen, Wald- und Feldkulte*, vol. 1, Berlin 1875, 154–311; Jacob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, vol. 2, Göttingen 1844, 613–660.
- 30 See most recently Peter Viereck, *Metapolitics: From Wagner and the German Romantics to Hitler*, London 2017; Schama 1995 (as in note 22), 75–134; James R. Dow and Hannjost Lixfeld, Epilogue: Overcoming the Past of National Socialist Folklore, in: Dow and Lixfeld 1994 (as in note 23), 264–294, esp. 266–268.
- 31 See Caesarius von Heisterbach, *Libri miraculorum*, I.1; *Die Wundergeschichten des Caesarius von Heisterbach*, ed. by Alfons Hilka, vol. 3, Bonn 1937, 38–40.
- 32 Cf. Hugo Loersch, "Dar Hadde Hê Werf Alse Meibôm Tô Aken": Ein Erklärungsversuch, in: *Zeitschrift des Aachener Geschichtsvereins* 2, 1880, 117–126.
- 33 Mannhardt 1875 (as in note 29), 160–170
- 34 Wilhelm Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, Strasbourg 1884, 351.
- 35 Lixfeld 1994 (as in note 11), 179.
- 36 Lixfeld and Jacobeit paint a sympathetic picture of Spamer; see *ibid.*, and Wolfgang Jacobeit, Confronting National Socialism in the Folklore of the German Democratic Republic, in: Dow and Lixfeld 1994 (as in note 23), 247–263, esp. 247–250.
- 37 Adolf Spamer, Vom Problem des Volksgeistes zur Volkskunde als Wissenschaft (1928), in: Gerhard Lutz (ed.), *Volkskunde: Ein Handbuch zur Geschichte ihrer Probleme*, Berlin 1958, 15–22; Adolf Spamer, *Die deutsche Volkskunde*, vol. 2, Leipzig 1935, 121.
- 38 Dow and Lixfeld 1994 (as in note 23), 285–291.
- 39 Johannes Moser, Die Gründung des Münchner Instituts für deutsche und vergleichende Volkskunde: Ein wissenschaftsgeschichtlicher Blick in die 1950er und 1960er Jahre, in: Johannes Moser, Irene Götz, and Moritz Ege (eds), *Zur Situation der Volkskunde 1945–1970: Orientierungen einer Wissenschaft in Zeiten des Kalten Krieges* (Münchner Beiträge zur Volkskunde, 43), Münster 2015, 69–92, esp. 86–88.
- 40 Wolfgang Emmerich, The Mythos of Germanic Continuity, in: Dow and Lixfeld 1994 (as in note 23), 34–54; Utz Jeggle, Kontinuität in der Lebensgeschichte von Nazis, in: *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 84, 1988, 201–211; Christa Kamenetsky, Folktales and Ideology in the Third Reich, in: *The Journal of American Folklore* 90, 1977, 168–178.
- 41 Moser 1961 (as in note 5), 124–125.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 124: "im Hochmittelalter und ausgerechnet in einer katholischen Stadt wie Aachen!"
- 43 Caesarius von Heisterbach 1937 (as in note 31), 38: "In Hertene villa dyocesis Coloniensis dives quidam arietem sericis vestitum malo inposuit atque iuxta theatrum erexit. ... Dictum fuit voce preconaria, ut choros circa arietem ducerent et, remota omni personarum acceptione, quicumque corizando cunctos precleraret, illum cum suis insigniis sibi vendicaret." Hilka notes *malo* comes from *malus*, which he translates to the German *Mastbaum*.
- 44 Caesarius von Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, X.29; Caesarius von Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, ed. by Josephus Strange, vol. 2, Cologne 1851, 238–239.
- 45 Margit Stadlober, Strukturismus: Ein Vorschlag zur Neubenennung des Donaustils, in: Jiri Fajt and Susanne Jaeger (eds), *Das Expressive in der Kunst 1500–1550: Albrecht Altdorfer und seine Zeitgenossen*, Berlin 2018, 55–65.
- 46 The most critical sources on this enormous subject are Ethan Kavalier, *Renaissance Gothic: Architecture*

- and the Arts in Northern Europe, 1470–1540, New Haven 2012; Paul Crossley, The Return of the Forest: Natural Architecture and the German Past in the Age of Dürer, in: Thomas Gaetgens (ed.), *Künstlerischer Austausch* (Akten des XXVIII. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte), vol. 2, Berlin 1993, 71–80; Larry Silver, Forest Primeval: Albrecht Altdorfer and the German Wilderness Landscape, in: *Simiolus* 13, 1983, 5–43; and Christopher Wood, *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape*, Chicago 1993, 151–238, esp. 213–222.
- 47 A short verse from 1473, “A Nice Lesson against Dancing and the Maypole,” written in a mix between Middle Dutch and Middle Low German inveighs against the maypole custom as an inversion of the crucifixion, casting the indecent behavior of revelers against the supreme exemplar of Christ on the cross. The primary text of “Eyn lere schone / Teghen dantzen vnde van den maybome” is handed down in a manuscript now in the Kruissherenklooster Saint Agatha in Cuijk, Netherlands: Hs. C 2° 10, 223r–226v (1473; originally from the Augustiner-Chorherrenstift Frenswegen). See also Christine Stöllinger-Löser, Lehre gegen das Tanzen und von dem Maibaum, in: Kurt Ruh et al. (eds), *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, 13 vols, Berlin 1985–2007, vol. 5, 670, and Rudolf Langenberg, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der deutschen Mystik*, Bonn 1902, 67–71.
- 48 Johannes Geiler von Kaysersberg, *Predigen teütsch und vil gütter leeren*, Augsburg 1510, fol. 142v: “As today is May Day, the day on which one plays with greenery, props up maypoles, and places [them] in front of the houses of their sweethearts, I am of the spirit, to place in your hearts the greenery and maypole of seven green branches, upon which one can see Jesus.” (“Wann es heüt d maitag ist / an dem man spylet maien und bäume aufzürichten und stecken für die heësser der liebgehabten / Also bin ich auch in willen in eüer herzn stecken den maien un baum vo siben grünen esten dar auff man mag jesum sehen”).
- 49 Keith Moxey, Sebald Beham’s Church Anniversary Holidays: Festive Peasants as Instruments of Repressive Humor, in: *Simiolus* 12, 1981, 107–130, esp. 110–112.
- 50 See also Daniel Hopper’s double-plate etching, *The Peasant Festival (Bauernfest)* from ca. 1533–1536, in: *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 17, ed. by Robert A. Koch, New York 1981, no. 74.
- 51 In Suso’s “Life of the Servant” from the Exemplar, he describes his annual devotional exercise erecting a spiritual maypole; the best English translation can be found in Frank Tobin, *Henry Suso: The Exemplar with Two German Sermons*, New York 1989, 83. On Maiandacht, see Kurt Küppers, *Marienförmigkeit zwischen Barock und Industriezeitalter: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Feier der Maiandacht in Deutschland und im deutschen Sprachgebiet*, St. Ottilien 1987; Luzian Pflieger, Zur Geschichte der Marien-Maiandacht im Elsaß, in: *Straßburger Diözesanblatt* 31, 1912, 163–176; and Dietrich Schmidtke, *Studien zur dingallegorischen Erbauungsliteratur des Spätmittelalters am Beispiel der Gartenallegorie*, Tübingen 1982, esp. 1–3, 74–76.
- 52 Petra Seegets, *Passionstheologie und Passionsfrömmigkeit im ausgehenden Mittelalter: Der Nürnberger Franziskaner Stephan Fridolin (gest. 1498) zwischen Kloster und Stadt*, Tübingen 1998, 91–92; See also Dietrich Schmidtke, Fridolin, Stephan, in: Ruh et al. 1985–2007 (as in note 47), vol. 2, 918–922.
- 53 Stephan Fridolin, *Geistlicher Mai*, Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 4473 (1529), 10v. Fridolin uses the verbs “suechen, aussuechen, erwollen.” For more on the lumber rights, see Moser 1961 (as in note 5), 130–135.
- 54 Fridolin 1529 (as in note 52), 10v: “An dem andern tag solltu in den hollesaligen mayen des heylligen creüz hubsche spyegelein hancken.”
- 55 Ibid, 18v: “An dem dryten tag ... laden all dein guet frendt die du hast in dem hymelyschen hof und sy piten das sy dir helfen umb tragen den hochselligen mayen durch alle gassen das ist durch alle thor der heylligen engeln und liebe heyllen vatterlands und das sy dyr in dissem spazier helfen singen das miniglych lyedlein.”
- 56 Moser 1961 (as in note 5), 129–130.
- 57 The anonymously written *Geistlicher Maibaum* was composed at the end of the fifteenth century in Swabia, southern Germany. Anton Birlinger transcribed the text from the Berlin Staatsbibliothek, mgq 1112 (ca. 1500, written in Bavarian) in *Asketische Traktate aus Augsburg*, IV, in: *Alemannia* 8, 1880, 103–117. Illustrations included in this book come from printed edition that once belonged to Bridgettine convent at Altomünster; see *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek: Inkunabelkatalog*, vol. 2, Wiesbaden 1991, no. G-63.
- 58 *Geistlicher Maibaum*, in Birlinger 1880 (as in note 56), 109: “Oben auf den tolden [Dolde] dises maien ist der lieblich schön rossen kranz, wuniglich ze schawen, aber gar schmerzlich vnd greulich ze empfachen, wan er das mark des edelen gesponsen durchdrungen hat mit seinen scharpfen dornen.”
- 59 Gert von der Osten, Christus im Elend (Christus in der Rast) und Herrgottsruhbild, in: *Realexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 3, Stuttgart 1953, cols 644–658; Mitchell B. Merback, The Man of Sorrows in Northern Europe: Ritual Metaphor and Therapeutic Exchange, in: William L. Barcham and Catherine R. Puglisi (eds), *New Perspectives on the Man of Sorrows*, Kalamazoo 2013, 77–116, esp. 97–112.
- 60 *Stadt im Wandel: Kunst und Kultur des Bürgertums in Norddeutschland, 1150–1650* (exh. cat. Braunschweig, Braunschweigisches Landesmuseum), ed. by Cord Meckseper, 2 vols, Stuttgart and Bad Cannstatt 1985,

- vol. 2, nos 1104 and 1105; Mitchell Merbeck 2013 (as in note 59), 98–100. Stone versions can be found outside the parish church of Saint John the Baptist in Billerbeck (ca. 1505–1515) and inside the church (seated Christ lost) in Metelen.
- 61 Christine Kelm, Die Geißelsäule in der Schloßkirche zu Chemnitz, in: *Mittelungen des Landesamtes für Denkmalpflege in Sachsen* 1996, 39–45; Walter Hentschel, *Hans Witten, der Meister H. W.*, Leipzig 1938, 109–115.
- 62 The monastery library possessed a copy of Suso's *Exemplar*, in which he decorates his "Spiritual Maypole" (see note 51); see Jürgen Sarnowsky, Die Bibliothek des Klosters Chemnitz am Vorabend der Reformation: Ein Bücherverzeichnis von 1541, in: *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige* 108, 1997, 321–373, here 352.
- 63 Riehl 1860–1868 (as in note 29), vol. 1, 372: "... namentlich im Ampergrund, aber auch im Innthal und im Chiemgau sieht man sie reich und schön verziert und alle drei bis fünf Jahre erneut [sic]. Neben den bloßen Zierraten (Fahnen, Wappen, Kränzen, Inschriften) hat der Maibaum auch wesentliche unerläßliche Bestandteile, so den Maibüschel, den grünen Tannenwipfel hoch oben, der erinnern soll, daß wir nicht vor einer todten Stange stehen, sondern vor einem lebenden Baum aus dem frischen Wald, dann das Leiden Christi, d.h. alle Werkzeuge seines Leidens (Säule, Geißel, Rute, Leiter, Hahn, Säbel, Lanterne, Hammer, Zange, Nägel, Würfel, Speer, Schwamm, und Krug)."
- 64 On Riehl's *völkisch* motivations and their contribution to Nazi ideology, see George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*, New York 1964, 23.
- 65 Marie Andree-Eysn, *Volkskundliches aus dem bayrisch-österreichischen Alpengebiet*, Braunschweig 1910, 187: "Die Gesundheit der Seelen gesorgst du mit Fleiß, mit himmlischen Mitteln mit göttlicher Speis; mach daß unser Sinn sich dorthin neiget, wohin dieser Maibaum die Richtung uns zeigt."
- 66 Thietmar, prince-bishop of Merseburg's (975–1018) account of Slavs regarding forests like the one near Riedegost to be "inviolably holy" is a central contemporary text on the subject; see Weinryb 2018 (as in note 26); Stanisław Rosik, *The Slavic Religion in the Light of 11th- and 12th-Century German Chronicles (Thietmar of Merseburg, Adam of Bremen, Helmold of Bosau)*, Leiden 2020; Judith Kalik and Alexander Uchitel, *Slavic Gods and Heroes*, London 2018; Leszek Paweł Słupecki, *Slavonic Pagan Sanctuaries*, Warsaw 1994, 159–171.
- 67 The topic of Christian colonization of Slavic eastern Germany is enormous in the scholarly literature; see Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950–1350*, Princeton 1993; see also Christian Lübke, Christianity and Paganism as Elements of Gentile Identities to the East of the Elbe and Saale Rivers, in: Ildar Garipzanov, Patrick Geary, and Przemysław Urbańczyk (eds), *Franks, Northmen, and Slavs: Identities and State Formation in Early Medieval Europe*, Turnhout 2008, 189–204; Richard Koebner, Locatio: Zur Begriffssprache und Geschichte der deutschen Kolonisation, in: *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte und Alterthum Schlesiens* 63, 1929, 1–32; and idem, Das Problem der slawischen Burgsiedlung und die Oppelner Ausgrabungen, in: *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte und Alterthum Schlesiens* 65, 1931, 91–120; Weinryb 2018 (as in note 26).
- 68 The list of felled Slavic tree sanctuaries is too long to enumerate here; for a summary, see Martin Friedrich Rabe, *Der Püstrich zu Sondershausen, kein Götzenbild: Untersuchung über dessen ursprüngliche Bestimmung*, Berlin 1852, 92, n. 16. Along the eastern frontier of the Holy Roman Empire, Bishop Otto of Bamberg (1060–1139) in his campaign of conversion in Pomerania staged a confrontation against non-believers in Szczecin (Poland) around 1125, noting their devotion to a "holy oak tree"; see *Herbordi dialogus de vita S. Ottonis episcopi Babenbergensis*, ed. by Jan Wikarjak, Warsaw 1974, 230–231. Henryków Monastery in Wrocław (Poland) was built around 1222 over a felled "ancient beech tree called Jawor in Polish," according to the Cistercian monastery's Latin chronicle written in 1241; see Piotr Górecki, *The Text and the World: The Henryków Book, Its Authors, and Their Region, 1160–1310*, Oxford 2015, 150. On the history of pioneer monasteries in the Ardennes earlier in the period, see Eleen Arnold, *Negotiating the Landscape: Environment and Monastic Identity in the Medieval Ardennes*, Philadelphia 2013, 23–61.
- 69 Stephan Warnatsch, *Geschichte des Klosters Lehnin 1180–1542*, 2 vols, Berlin 2000, vol. 1, 45–52 and 472–479. On the legendary history of the Holy Cross stemming from Paradise, see Wilhelm Meyer, *Die Geschichte des Kreuzholzes vor Christus*, Munich 1882; Barbara Baert, *A Heritage of Holy Wood: The Legend of the True Cross in Text and Image*, trans. by Lee Preedy, Leiden 2004; and Schama 1995 (as in note 22), esp. 214–226.
- 70 "Ad quod quidam ex illis locum hunc esse congruum ad monasterium construendum, quidam vero dixerunt, castrum debere construi contra Slavos paganos et crucis dampnabiles inimicos," as transcribed in Georg Sello, *Lehnin: Beiträge zur Geschichte von Kloster und Amt*, Berlin 1881, 2. The earliest copy, putatively based on one now-lost but contemporaneous to the abbey's founding in 1180, comes from a Bohemian Chronicle written in Latin and comprised of transcriptions of older Chronicles; it was compiled by Przybyk Pulkawa von Hradenin (died ca. 1380), an historian in the court of Charles IV.



- 71 Joachim Herrmann, *Die vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Burgwälle Groß-Berlins und des Bezirkes Potsdam*, Berlin 1960, 90, 134.
- 72 For the best historical overview of the Wendish Crusade east of the Elbe, see Friedrich Lotter, The Crusading Idea and the Conquest of the Region East of the Elbe, in: Robert J. Bartlett and Angus MacKay (eds), *Medieval Frontier Societies*, Oxford 1989, 267–306, and Wolfgang H. Fritze, Der slawische Aufstand von 983: Eine Schicksalswende in der Geschichte Mitteleuropas, in: Eckart Henning and Werner Vogel (eds), *Festschrift der Landesgeschichtlichen Vereinigung für die Mark Brandenburg zu ihrem hundertjährigen Bestehen*, Berlin 1984, 9–55.
- 73 Both quotes in Sello 1881 (as in note 70), 14, and Warnatsch 2000 (as in note 69), 49.
- 74 Because of the building's many subsequent extensions it is unclear if the stump in the original plan was located by a cross altar, or if the church originally possessed a screen before the choir; see Hermann Priebe, *Bernhard Ludwig Bekmanns Zeichnungen und Beschreibung des Klosters Lehnin um 1750*, Berlin 1936, 25.
- 75 Joachim Köhler, Heilige und Unheilige Bäume: Der Baum in Wirklichkeit und Legende des Mittelalters, in: Harald Schweitzer (ed.), "... Bäume braucht man doch!" *Das Symbol des Baumes zwischen Hoffnung und Zerstörung*, Sigmaringen 1986, 143–166; Stephan Warnatsch, Hirsche und Bäume in Zisterziensischen Gründungslegenden, in: Jacek Kowalski (ed.), *Flora and Fauna in the Medieval Culture from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century*, Poznań 1997, 33–40.
- 76 Rainer Kahsnitz, *Carved Splendor: Late Gothic Altarpieces in Southern Germany, Austria and South Tirol*, Los Angeles 2006, 364–385; Marianne Gerstenberger, *Wallfahrtskirche Maria Strassengel bei Graz*, Salzburg 2012.
- 77 Barbara Abou-El-Haj, *The Medieval Cult of Saints: Formations and Transformations*, Cambridge 1994, figs 39 and 180–181. I thank Cynthia Hahn for this source.
- 78 The standard, if outdated, historical text comparing global religions' tendencies toward tree worship is James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study of Magic and Religion*, abridged ed., London 1922, 109–112. For criticism of Frazer, see Schama 1995 (as in note 22), 6 and 209; Mary Beard, Frazer, Leach, and Virgil: The Popularity (and Unpopularity) of the Golden Bough, in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34, 1992, no. 2, 203–224. Dieter Harmening has identified an historical hollowiness to medieval Christians' specific, repeated accusations of northern pagans as worshippers of "trees, wells, and stones," see his *Superstitio: Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters*, Berlin 1979, 43–75, esp. 58–67. For a recent study arguing for the existence of pre-Christian tree worship in Anglo Saxon cultures, see Michael Bintley, *Trees in the Religions of Early Medieval England*, Martlesham 2018. I thank Robert Vogt for introducing me to Bintley's work.
- 79 The sordid history is distilled in Uta Halle, "Die Externsteine sind bis auf weiteres germanisch!" *Prähistorische Archäologie im Dritten Reich*, Bielefeld 2002, and Gerhard Kaldewei, Die 'Externsteine' bei Horn-Bad Meinberg am Teutoburger Wald in Lippe-Detmold (1937), in: *Schwierige Schauplätze: (NS-) Kultstätten in Nordwestdeutschland*, Oldenburg 2016, 199–223.
- 80 Burleigh 1988 (as in note 10), 18–36; Ulrich Fugger, Wald und Baum, in: Michael Fahlbusch, Ingo Haar, and Alexander Pinwinkler (eds), *Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaften: Akteure, Netzwerke, Forschungsprogramme*, Berlin 2017, 1297–1304, here 1297; Dietrich Beyrau, Eastern Europe as 'Sub-Germanic Space': Scholarship on Eastern Europe under National Socialism, in: *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 13, 2012, 685–723; Alexander Pinwinkler, Volk, Bevölkerung, Rasse, and Raum: Erich Keyser's Ambiguous Concept of a German History of Population, ca. 1918–1955, in: Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch (eds), *German Scholars and Ethnic Cleansing 1920–1945*, New York 2005, 86–99.
- 81 Hollyamber Kennedy, Infrastructures of 'Legitimate Violence': The Prussian Settlement Commission, Internal Colonization, and the Migrant Remainder, in: *Grey Room* 76, 2019, 58–97; Kenny Cupers, Bodenständigkeit: The Environmental Epistemology of Modernism, in: *The Journal of Architecture* 21, 2016, 1226–1252; on the 'Wendish Question,' see Burleigh 1988 (as in note 10), 107–110.

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