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Uncovering the identities of Cain and Lamech: Christian typology in Hans Memling's scenes from the passion of Christ (ca. 1470)

Hans Memling's *Scenes from the passion of Christ*, dated ca. 1470 and presently in the Sabauda Gallery in Turin, contains a display of twenty-two scenes from Christ's life (fig. 1a). Memling carefully guides the viewer's eye through a sequence of events commencing in the top left corner with the entry into Jerusalem, via the last supper, arrest, ecce homo, crucifixion, and resurrection, through to the apparition with Mary Magdalen in the top right corner of the panel.

Memling's painting has been discussed extensively in various studies. From the 1840s onwards, it received attention when it was identified with a painting in the collection of Cosimo de' Medici and described by Giorgio Vasari in his *Lives of the artists*.[1] Scholars used Vasari's description to identify the depicted donors as Tommaso Portinari and Maria Baroncelli.[2] Later research focused increasingly on the painting's display of spiritual pilgrimage and devotional imagination.[3] So far, no research has been done to explain the grisaille sculpture groups in the central courtyard of Jerusalem, despite their prominent placement in the narrative.



1a
Hans Memling, *Scenes from the passion of Christ*, ca. 1470, oil on panel, 56.7 x 92.2 cm, Turin, Sabauda Gallery, inv. 8.

1b
Hans Memling, *Scenes from the passion of Christ*, detail, ca. 1470, oil on panel, 56.7 x 92.2 cm, Turin, Sabauda Gallery, inv. 8.



There are three grisaille sculpture groups depicted on the architectural frames above the scenes of the denial of Peter, Christ before Pilate and the flagellation of Christ (fig. 1b). The first two sculpture groups are easily recognisable: above Peter, Adam and Eve are depicted alongside the cock that crowed three times after Peter's repeated denial of knowing Christ. Besides its reference to original sin and salvation history, the exact source for this parallel is not clear.[4] Above Pilate, the judgement of Solomon is depicted as an 'exemplum iustitiae', with the wise King Solomon in the centre raising his right arm as his verdict unfolds besides him. His wise judgement is contrasted with Pilate's poor judgement below. The remaining sculpture group, above the flagellation, consists of two grisaille sculptures of nude men.[5] I will argue that they represent the Old Testament figures Cain and Lamech because of their iconographic attributes and typological significance in context of Memling's painting.[6]

Cain

Let us first consider the left sculpture which, in my view, represents Cain. In his right hand, Cain holds his attribute: a jawbone. The jawbone is mentioned only once in the Bible as the weapon with which Samson famously slayed a thousand Philistines.[7] This has led some scholars to identify the grisaille sculpture as Samson.[8] However, Cain, too, was strongly associated with the jawbone as the weapon with which he killed his brother Abel. It is narrated in Genesis 4 that Cain slayed Abel after God favoured Abel's sacrifice and rejected Cain's. There is no mention of the murder weapon, solely of the act. As a result, various weapons have been chosen by artists to illustrate the scene. For example, Cain has been represented slaying Abel with a stone, stick, sword, club, rake, axe, scythe, or spade, the latter beautifully rendered in the medieval altarpiece in the Abbey Church of Klosterneuburg.[9] However, based on my findings, Cain is most frequently depicted holding the jawbone.[10] Besides Hans Memling, other Netherlandish artists such as Robert Campin, Jan van Eyck and Petrus Christus seemed to have favoured this weapon, and it appears abundantly in manuscript illuminations.[11]

The discourse on which weapon Cain used to kill his brother represents a broader medieval interest in biblical exegesis, where stories were developed by adding details when

the Bible does not provide them. This first mode of exegetical interpretation, the 'sensus literalis' or 'sensus historicus', allowed commentators to make biblical narratives more comprehensive and add meaning.[12] Building on the 'sensus literalis', further modes of exegetical interpretation, such as typology, were elaborated on as well. Typologies corroborate salvation history by connecting a (proto)type (a person or event from the Old Testament) to an anti-type (a person or event from the New Testament). The anti-type (often Christ or Mary) acts as the fulfilment of the Old Testament type. The type, in turn, prefigures or foretells the anti-type. Augustine in particular popularised typological interpretations of the Bible as a means to unify the two testaments.[13] As they developed, typologies could become increasingly complex, involving multiple types and (non-biblical) sources.

Two important literary sources for typologies in the Middle Ages were the *Glossa ordinaria* from the early twelfth century, the text of the Vulgate with exegetical commentaries in the margins, and the *Historia scholastica* (ca. 1168-1175) by Peter Comestor, a compilation of biblical texts supplemented with exegeses and typologies.[14] These textual sources greatly informed the most important reference works for typological imagery in the late Middle Ages: the *Speculum humanae salvationis* and the *Biblia pauperum*. The *Speculum* presents three types per anti-type for the creation through to the last judgement accompanied by explanatory texts. The *Biblia pauperum* is somewhat similar, except with less explanatory text and fewer chapters, presenting two types for each anti-type flanked by prophets. Both works were well known and widely distributed in print in the fifteenth century, particularly in the form of block books.[15] It is important to note that typological thinking developed as a result of complex interactions between written, verbal and visual culture. Literary and pictorial motifs were drawn from different sources and influenced each other continuously. For example, Rogier van der Weyden convincingly displays typological concepts in his inventions. In turn, his and other Netherlandish artists' designs have been appropriated in later *Speculum*-miniatures.[16]

An important typology for understanding the presence of Cain in Memling's painting, is the parallel between Cain and the Jews. This typological parallel is mentioned explicitly in Jacob van Maerlant's *Scolastica* from ca. 1271, a reworked Middle Dutch edition of Comestor's *Historia scholastica*, which states firmly: "Caym die bediet de jueden" (Cain signifies the Jews).[17] The role of the Jews and their parallel with Cain is most prominently emphasised in retellings of Christ's passion, depicted for instance in a *Bible moralisée* of 1226-1275, now in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. This manuscript combines the scenes of Abel's death and Christ on the Cross with the commentary "Cain who killed his brother Abel signifies the Jews who crucified the Lord Jesus Christ".[18] Many other examples of Cain as a type for the Jews (and Abel as a type for Christ) exist in literature and art, relating to various elements of Cain's history.[19] Most significantly here, the Jews were viewed specifically as the agents of the flagellation of Christ, the scene which Memling connects to the sculpture of Cain (fig. 1b). The *Speculum* strongly emphasises that the Jews were responsible for bringing Christ before Pilate to have him sentenced to death. Neither Pilate nor Herod found him guilty of any crime, but to satisfy the Jews, Pilate orders Christ to be flagellated. The Pharisees even bribed Pilate to make the suffering more severe, according to the *Speculum*.[20] In addition to their presence in the *Speculum*'s text, the Jews can be found in some of the accompanying depictions of the flagellation. Oftentimes they can be identified by their pointed or domed hat.[21]

In sum, the typological parallel of Cain and the Jews was significant both in context of the passion in general and of the flagellation of Christ in particular. In combination with the jawbone as his attribute, the left grisaille sculpture that Memling depicted above the flagellation can be identified firmly as Cain.

Lamech

The second sculpture above the flagellation of Christ in Memling's painting can be identified as Lamech. Similar to Cain, this is supported by Lamech's attribute and his typological significance in the context of the passion. Lamech is referred to very briefly in Genesis, as Cain's great-great-great-grand son.[22] Whereas today Lamech is a lesser known Old Testament figure, in the Middle Ages he was part of a rich exegetical tradition. For example, he became known as the first bigamist because he had two wives, Ada and Zilla. This idea was already put forward by Jerome and developed into a popular moral exemplar towards the late Middle Ages.[23]

The few details given in the Bible about the life and death of both Cain and Lamech prompted much exegetical interpretation. For example, Lamech's family is the last generation to be mentioned in the Cainite line, which led some commentators to conclude that he and his descendants must have died in the flood.[24] Likewise, the Bible does not provide much information about Cain's life after he conceived his son Enoch and built a city.[25] Interestingly, the most popular legend to explain Cain's death actually developed



2a
'The flagellation of Christ' and 'Achior bound to a tree', in *Speculum humanae salvationis*, 1427, fol. 20v, Sarnen, Benediktiner Kollegium, inv. Cod. membr. 8.

around Lamech. In Genesis 4: 23-24, often called Lamech's song, Lamech confesses to two murders: "And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice [...]: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold." These enigmatic verses were related to Genesis 4: 15, where God places a mark on Cain: "And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold". Subsequently, Cain's sevenfold vengeance was connected to Lamech's confession of killing two men. Through the reference to Lamech's seventy and sevenfold vengeance, one of the two men mentioned in Lamech's song was thought to be Cain. This affirmed for some commentators that Lamech must have been responsible for Cain's death.[26]

In addition, an exegetical tradition developed in which Ada and Zilla reprimand Lamech for the murders he confesses to. The scene of Lamech reprimanded by his wives is included in the fortieth chapter of the *Speculum* as one of the three types for the flagellation of Christ. The other two types for the flagellation are Achior bound to a tree and Job tormented by his wife and the devil (fig. 2a-b). The placement of Ada and



2b
'Lamech beaten by his wives' and 'Job tormented by his wife and the devil', in *Speculum humanae salvationis*, 1427, fol. 21r, Sarnen, Benediktiner Kollegium, inv. Cod. membr. 8.


Jei ocit lamech cayn e qda ocire une beste qr il ne ueer
ueeme e son seriant le decheur.

3
'Cain's death', in *Bible historiée*, ca. 1250, fol. 11v, Manchester, Manchester University Library, inv. French MS 5.

Zilla alongside Lamech is explained in connection to the two men besides Christ. The *Speculum* describes these two men as two types of agents: "...the unbeliever and the one from the synagogue", or the Jew.[27] Similarly, Lamech's wife Ada beats him and represents the unbelievers who flagellate Christ with scourges. His other wife, Zilla, persecutes him with hurtful words and represents the Jews, who inflict suffering on Christ by falsely accusing him.[28] The distinction in the text of one wife reprimanding him with physical beatings and the other with words is not always represented in the accompanying images. Most commonly they display the two wives both beating Lamech in various ways: with open hands, fists, clubs, distaffs or kitchen spoons. There are also many depictions in which they pull Lamech's hair or beard.[29] Furthermore, the compositional symmetry of the four scenes in this chapter of the *Speculum* provides a helpful visual cohesion for the typology. Lamech is flanked by his two wives, just as two men are depicted on either side of Christ and Achior, and Job between his wife and the devil.[30]

Besides the typological parallels between Lamech, Cain and the flagellation of Christ, Lamech's attribute is an important detail with which we can identify him in Memling's painting. Lamech is depicted holding a bow and arrow in accordance with the legend in which he killed his ancestor Cain (fig. 1b). The legend appears with variations across many texts, though with a similar outcome every time: when the aged and blind Lamech went hunting, he shot Cain by accident.[31] The scene of Lamech killing Cain with his bow and arrow was widespread in art between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries. For example, representations occur on capitals in the cathedral of Saint Lazarus in Autun and the basilica of Vézelay, and on the west facade of Auxerre cathedral, as part of a creation cycle. Furthermore, the scene appears in manuscript illuminations of world histories, such as the *Weltchronik*, *Biblia pauperum*, *La mer des histoires,* and the *Bible historiée* (fig. 3).[32]

Conclusion

Thus, there is an abundance of imagery depicting Lamech in various scenes, with or without his attribute. The same holds true for Cain. Both biblical figures are widely represented in genealogies, creation cycles, typologies, scenes with their families, and in the context of the murders they committed. However, Memling's particular portrayal of Cain and Lamech seems unique. I have not found other examples besides Memling's painting that depict Cain and Lamech as single figures with their respective attributes. This confirms that they should not be interpreted in isolation. Similar to the other grisaille sculpture groups in Memling's painting, the figures of Cain and Lamech are included together to offer a specific commentary on the passion. The two grisaille sculptures above the flagellation of Christ in Hans Memling's *Scenes from the passion of Christ* should be identified as Cain and Lamech because of their attributes and typological significance in the context of the passion in general and the flagellation in particular. In the light of rich exegetical and pictorial traditions surrounding Cain and Lamech, the two sculptures emphasise the importance of illuminating lesser known figures to further our understanding of the context in which paintings were produced and received.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NOTES

1 J.D. Passavant, 'Beiträge zur Kenntniss der altniederländischen Malerschulen bis zur mitte des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts', *Kunstblatt* (1843), nr 62, pp. 257-259; G.F. Waagen, 'Nachträge zur Kenntniss der altniederländischen Malerschulen des fünfzehnten und sechzehnten Jahrhunderts', *Kunstblatt* (1847), nr 41, p. 186; C. Schnaase, *Geschichte der bildenden Künste im fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart 1879, nr 264; F. Bock, *Memling-Studien*, Düsseldorf 1900, pp. 21-22, 188. The latter compares the likenesses of the donors to the portraits in Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari triptych*, ca. 1475-1478, Florence,Uffizi Gallery, inv. 1890,3191; 3192; 3193).

2 Max Friedländer argued for the date of 1470, the year of the couple's wedding, because their children are not depicted (their first child was born in 1471), see A. Warburg, 'Flandrische Kunst und florentinische frührenaissance Studien', *Jahrbuch der königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 23 (1902), pp. 247-266, spec. 257. The identification of Tommaso Portinari and Maria Baroncelli and the dating of ca. 1470 are now generally accepted, see D. de Vos, *Hans Memling*, Antwerp 1994, pp. 33, 109; M. Rohlmann, *Auftragskunst und Sammlerbild: Altniederländische Tafelmalerei im Florenz des Quattrocento*, Alfter 1994, pp. 63-64; P. Nuttall, *From Flanders to Florence: The impact of Netherlandish painting: 1400-1500*, New Haven/London 2004, p. 64.

3 See for example J.H. Marrow, *Passion iconography in northern European art of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance*, Kortrijk 1979; B.G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master painter in fifteenth-century Bruges*, Turnhout 2009; M. Kirkland-Ives, *In the footsteps of Christ: Hans Memling's Passion narratives and the devotional imagination in the early modern Netherlands*, Turnhout 2013; K.M. Rudy, 'Virtual pilgrimage through the Jerusalem cityscape', in B. Kühnel e.a. (eds.), *Visual constructs of Jerusalem*, Turnhout 2014, pp. 381-393.

4 There has been no attempt to interpret this parallel further besides De Vos who explains Adam and Eve's position on either side of the cock as symbols of human weakness, see De Vos 1994 (note 2), cat 11, p. 105.

5 These sculptures were left unidentified by C. Aru and E. de Geradon, *Les Primitifs Flamands*, Antwerp 1952, vol. 1, p. 15; M. Bernardi, *La Galleria Sabauda di Torino,* Turin 1968; C. Spantigati e.a., *Pittura fiamminga ed olandese in Galleria Sabauda,* Turin 1982; De Vos 1994 (note 2), cat 11.

6 Outside the main body of art-historical literature on Hans Memling, correct identifications of Cain and Lamech were tentatively put forward by R.-M. Hagen and R. Hagen, *What great paintings say*, London 2003, vol. 2, p. 69; P. Happé, *Cyclic form and the English mystery plays: A comparative study of the English biblical cycles and their continental and iconographic counterparts*, Amsterdam 2004, p. 121. The former draws a moral lesson from the juxtaposition of Cain and Lamech: "those who do violence unto others shall die a violent death". Neither book explains the attributes further nor connects the figures to their typological context.

7 Book of Judges 15:15-17. For this scene in art, see for example *Spegel der minschliken zalicheid*, Gold Scrolls Group, ca. 1440, fol. 43, Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, inv. Ms. GkS 79f°.

8 The identification of the left sculpture as Samson was first put forward by L. von Baldass*, Hans Memling*, Vienna 1942, pp. 15, 37, and thereafter often copied, see for example M. Stevens, 'The intertextuality of late medieval art and drama', *New literary history*, 22 (1991), p. 329; Kirkland-Ives 2013 (note 3).

9 L. Reau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, Paris 1956, vol. 2, p. 96; Anonymous, *Cain slaying Abel*, ca. 1330, tile, enamel on gilded copper, later addition to the Verdun altarpiece of 1181, Klosterneuburg Monastery, Austria.

10 The jawbone as a pictorial motif has been discussed by O.F. Emerson, 'Legends of Cain, especially in Old and Middle English', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 21 (1906), pp. 831-929, spec. 859; M. Schapiro, 'Cain's jaw-bone that did the first murder', *Art bulletin* 24 (1942), pp. 205-212, spec. 210-211; G. Henderson, 'Cain's jaw-bone', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 24 (1961), pp. 108-114; A.A. Barb, 'Cain's murder-weapon and Samson's jawbone of an ass', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972), pp. 386-389

11 See for example Robert Campin, *The betrothal of the Virgin*, ca. 1420-1430, Madrid, Museo del Prado, inv. P001887; Jan van Eyck, *The adoration of the mystic lamb*, 1432, Ghent, St Bavo's cathedral; Dirk Bouts, *Triptych of the life of the Virgin*, ca. 1445, Madrid, Museo del Prado, inv. P001461; Petrus Christus, *The nativity*, ca. 1450, Washington, National Gallery of Art, inv. 1937.1.40; Master of the Gathering of Manna, *The offering of the Jews*, ca. 1460-1470, Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, inv. 2349 recto (OK). The motif continued into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for example in Lucas van Leyden's prints *Cain*

killing Abel of 1520 and 1524, see G. Luijten (ed.), *The new Hollstein Dutch and Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts: 1450-1700: Lucas van Leyden*, Rotterdam 1996, nr 12, 13. For manuscript illuminations, see the examples included in Schapiro 1942 (note 10); Henderson 1961 (note 10); Barb 1972 (note 10), and R. Mellinkoff, 'Cain and the Jews', *Journal of Jewish art*, 6 (1978), pp. 16-38.

12 B. Cardon, *Manuscripts of the Speculum humanae salvationis in the Southern Netherlands (ca. 1410- ca. 1470)*, Leuven 1996, pp. 1-9, 30; B. Murdoch, *The medieval popular Bible: Expansions of Genesis in the Middle Ages*, Suffolk 2003, pp. 3-5; J.A. Kidd, 'Behind the image: Understanding the Old Testament in medieval art', *Cultural interactions: Studies in the relationship between the arts*, vol. 30, Oxford 2014, pp. 135-200.

13 A.D. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine through the ages: An encyclopedia*, Kentwood 1999, p. 856.

14 Cardon 1996 (note 12), pp. 13-14; K. Goudriaan, 'Maerlants bronnen in de Scolastica: Comestor en de anderen, in J. van Moolenbroek and M. Mulder (eds.), *Scolastica willic ontbinden: Over de rijmbijbel van Jacob van Maerlant*, Hilversum 1991, p. 48.

15 B. Kramer, *Een lekenboek in woord en beeld*, Hilversum 2013, pp. 13-14.

16 Emile Mâle argued that artists like Jan van Eyck must have owned a copy of the *Speculum*, see E. Mâle, *L'art religieux de la fin du Moyen âge en France*, Paris 1908, p. 236. According to Daniels, this is also true for Rogier van der Weyden, see L.M. Daniels (ed.), *De spieghel der menschelijker behoudenesse*, Tielt 1949, p. xlv. However, the appropriation of motifs by Netherlandish artists was complex and should be considered in the light of the broader didactic context in which the *Speculum* and other reference works functioned, as Bert Cardon asserts, see Cardon 1996 (note 12).

17 Jacob van Maerlant, *Rijmbijbel*, 1271, ed. by M. Gysseling, The Hague/Antwerp 1998, fol. 6v.

18 *Cain slaying Abel* and *Christ on the cross*, in *Bible moralisée*, ca. 1226-1275, fol. 8r, Oxford, Bodleian Library, inv. MS Bodley 270b. See also Mellinkoff 1978 (note 11), p. 23.

19 See Mellinkoff 1978 (note 11), pp. 11-19; L.A. Unterseher, *The mark of Cain and the Jews: Augustine's theology of Jews and Judaism*, New Jersey 2009; Kramer 2013 (note 15), pp. 220-221.

20 Daniels 1949 (note 16), fols. 51-52; Kramer 2013 (note 15), p. 216.

21 See for example *Spiegel menschliker gesuntheit*, ca. 1420-1430, fol. 53v, Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, inv. Cod. Pal. Germ. 432; *Speculum humanae salvationis*, ca. 1440, fol. 38, St. Gallen, Kantonsbibliothek, Vadianische Sammlung, inv. VadSlg Ms. 352/1-2; *Speculum humanae salvationis*, ca. 1470-1480, fol. 20v, Marseille, Bibliothèque Municipale, inv. Ms. 0089. Interestingly, there are also depictions of Cain wearing a Jew's hat, for example on the frieze in the Chapter House of Salisbury Cathedral. See also Mellinkoff 1978 (note 11), pp. 24-34.

22 Genesis 4:17-19.

23 J. Byron, *Cain and Abel in text and tradition*, Leiden 2011, p. 143. See for example *La mer des histoires*, 1491, vol. 1, fol. 22v, Paris, Bibliothèque National de France.

24 Byron 2011 (note 23), pp. 116-117.

25 Genesis 4:17.

26 E. Reiss, 'The story of Lamech and its place in medieval drama', *The journal of medieval and renaissance studies*, 2 (1972), pp. 41-42; Mellinkoff 1978 (note 11), p. 61.

27 "Sullen wi merken dat onse here/ Met gheyselen utermaten zere/ Sloughen .ij. manieren van lieden,/ Also mi tlatijn wil bedieden: Donghelovighe/ entie vander synagoghen", see Daniels 1949 (note 16), fol. 53

28 Daniels 1949 (note 16), fol. 53.

29 See for example *Le miroir de l'humaine salvation*, ca. 1500, ch. 20, Chantilly, Musée Condé, inv. Ms. fr. 139; *Speculum humanae salvationis*, ca. 1440, fol. 39, St. Gallen, Kantonsbibliothek, Vadianische Sammlung, inv. VadSlg Ms. 352/1-2; *Speculum humanae salvationis*, ca. 1470-1480, fol. 21r, Marseille, Bibliothèque Municipale, inv. Ms. 0089; *Spieghel der menscheliker behoudenisse,* ca. 1410, fol. 48v, London, British Library, inv. Add MS 11575; *Speculum humanae salvationis*, 14th-15th century, fol. 21r, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, inv. Ms. Latin 511.

30 For the significance of this duality, see Marrow 1979 (note 3), pp. 135-136; F.P. Pickering, *Das gotische Christusbild*, Heidelberg 1953, p. 18.

31 Byron 2011 (note 23), pp. 129-140. An account combining most of the legend's details can be found in E.A. Wallis (ed.), *The book of the Cave of Treasures*, London 1927, p. 78.

32 See for example *Weltchronik*, 1463, fol. 16r, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, inv. Ms Cod. 2823; La mer 1491 (note 23), fol. 20v; *Crusader Bible*, ca. 1240, fol. 2r, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum, inv. MS M.638; *The first volume of a three-part glossed history Bible in Middle Dutch*, ca. 1431, fol. 10r, London, British Library, inv. Add. MS 10043; *Niederländische Historienbibel*, 1439, fol. 11v, Munich, Bayersche Staatsbibliothek, inv. Cod. Germ. 1102. In the oldest known illustrated manuscript of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* from the Southern Netherlands, currently in the British Library, Lamech is depicted holding his bow while being reprimanded by his wives. This is the only instance I know of that combines the scene of Lamech with his attribute, see Spieghel 1410 (note 29), fol. 48v.

PHOTO CREDITS

The Sabauda Gallery, Turin (1a-b); Benediktinerkollegium, Sarnen (2a-b); Manchester University Library, Manchester (3).

SUMMARY

Hans Memling's panel with the *Scenes from the passion of Christ* of circa 1470 (currently in the Sabauda Gallery in Turin) shows three grisaille sculpture groups. One of them – in the architectural frame above the scene of the flagellation of Christ – consists of two nude men, each carrying an attribute. In this article they are identified as Cain and Lamech. These Old Testament figures are typologically connected to the passion of Christ in general and the flagellation of Christ in particular. They can be identified by their weapons, respectively a jawbone and a bow and arrow. The former was used by Cain to slay his brother Abel and the latter was used by Lamech to kill his ancestor Cain. Both figures have rich exegetical and pictorial traditions, which will be touched upon to explain their prominent placement in Memling's painting.