



## **Annunciation and Dedication on Aachen Pilgrim Badges. Notes on the Early Badge Production in Aachen and Some New Attributions**

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Aachen was one of the best-known and most-popular pilgrimage sites in Northern Europe during the high and late Middle Ages. In 1496, 42,000 pilgrims supposedly visited Aachen in just one day.<sup>1</sup> While these kinds of numbers have been passed down only incidentally and were undoubtedly exaggerated, they underscored the importance of a site. Indeed, the large quantities of surviving Aachen badges support the notion of a massive influx of pilgrims. Demonstrably, people already visited Aachen for devotional reasons since the days of Emperor Charlemagne (742-814).<sup>2</sup> It is a tenable claim that Aachen was one of the first sites to manufacture pewter souvenirs, following in the wake of early badge-producing

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<sup>1</sup> First, I would like to thank Prof. Dr A.M. Koldewey and H.J.E. van Beuningen who have always stimulated my work on badges and who gave me the opportunity to collaborate on *Heilig en Profaan 3*. There I attributed the Annunciation badges to Aachen, but could only go into the matter briefly. To fully investigate the consequences of the new attribution, I decided to dedicate a monographic article to the early badge production in Aachen with this publication as a result. The badge collection of the Van Beuningen Family offers ample material to study the matter in detail.

Kurt Köster, "Pilgerzeichen-Studien. Neue Beiträge zur Kenntnis eines mittelalterlichen Massenartikels und seiner Überlieferungsformen," in *Bibliotheca docet. Festgabe für Carl Wehmer* (Amsterdam, 1963), p.78. These numbers were presumably exaggerated to stress the importance of an event or site. J. Stopford, "Some Approaches to the Archaeology of Christian Pilgrimage," *World Archaeology* 26, no. 1 (1994), p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> H. Schiffers, *Der Reliquienschatz Karls des Grossen und die Anfänge der Aachenfahrt* (Aachen, 1951), p. 9.

sites such as Rocamadour and Canterbury. However there is much uncertainty about the production and the appearance of early pewter souvenirs from Aachen.

The variety of badges that were produced and sold in Aachen seems infinite. Simple searches in publications on badges such as the leading book series *Heilig en Profaan* and online badge databases such *Kunera* (kunera.nl) and *Pilgerzeichendatenbank* (pilgerzeichen.de) yield an enormous number of different types of badges from the city of Charlemagne.<sup>3</sup> The solid plaques depicting the Madonna are the earliest surviving badges that have been tentatively attributed to Aachen.<sup>4</sup> They are usually dated to the second half of the thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth centuries, but these were probably not the first badges to be produced there. Badges depicting the Annunciation that have only recently been attributed to Aachen<sup>5</sup> shed



**Figure 1** Pewter badge of the Annunciation of the “Paris type,” Aachen, found in Middelburg, 50 x 46 mm, after 1240. Photo: Langbroek, collection Van Beuningen Family, inv. 3093 (*Heilig en Profaan* 2, fig. 1412).

<sup>3</sup> H.J.E. van Beuningen and A.M. Koldewij, *Heilig en Profaan. 1000 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit de collectie H.J.E. van Beuningen*, Rotterdam Papers. A contribution to Medieval Archaeology (Cothen: Stichting Middeleeuwse Religieuze en Profane Insignes, 1993), pp. 209-241; H.J.E. van Beuningen, A.M. Koldewij and D. Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2. 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, vol. 12, Rotterdam Papers. A contribution to Medieval Archaeology (Cothen: Stichting Middeleeuwse Religieuze en Profane Insignes, 2001), pp. 310-329; H.J.E. van Beuningen et al., *Heilig en Profaan 3. 1300 insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties* (Langbroek: Medieval Badges Foundation, 2012), pp. 142-143, 169-179.

<sup>4</sup> Van Beuningen, Koldewij and Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2. 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, pp. 310-314, figs. 1315-1339; Van Beuningen et al., *Heilig en Profaan 3. 1300 insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, p. 171, figs. 2493-2496; Carina Brumme, *Das spätmittelalterliche wallfahrtswesen im Erzstift Magdeburg, im Fürstentum Anhalt und im sächsischen Kurkreis: Entwicklung, Strukturen und Erscheinungsformen frommer Mobilität in Mitteldeutschland vom 13. bis zum 16. Jahrhunderts* (Peter Lang, 2010), p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> Van Beuningen et al., *Heilig en Profaan 3. 1300 insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, pp. 169-170.

new light on the cult there, and their Aachen provenance opens up new perspectives on the formative years of the pilgrimage site.

### **Annunciation Badges**

The badges depicting the Annunciation (**fig. 1**) have been known to scholars since the nineteenth century when Arthur Forgeais first discovered one in Seine soil.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently these badges have been attributed to different pilgrimage sites. In 1981 Aron Andersson suggested that the type was produced in Paris, where the first one was found.<sup>7</sup> In 1987 they were attributed to Nazareth for two reasons.<sup>8</sup> First, a badge of this type was found in Sour, formerly Tyre, in Lebanon, not far from Nazareth. Second, the badges show similarities with capital sculpture from the vicinity of the church in Nazareth. Both arguments are quite circumstantial: most badges of the type have been recovered in Western Europe. Since Forgeais's dredging activities in the Seine, these badges have been found in many different locations, including on the isle of Walcheren and other sites in Low Countries (Middelburg, Dordrecht, Amsterdam, Sluis and Antwerp), France (Paris and Durfort), Italy (Rome and

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<sup>6</sup> Arthur Forgeais, *Collections de plombs historiés trouvés dans la Seine*, 5 vols. (Paris: [chez l'auteur et Aubry], 1862-66), vol. IV, pp. 13-14.

<sup>7</sup> Aron Andersson, "Jungfru Marie Bebadelse. Ett parisiskt pilgrimsmärke funnet i Visby," *Fornvännen* 1(1981). The attribution to Paris (with a question mark) was repeated by Lars Andersson. Lars Andersson, *Pilgrimsmärken och vallfahrt. Medeltida pilgrimskultur i Skandinavien*, vol. 7, Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1989), pp. 91-92. In the exhibition catalogue of *Romei e Giubilei*, an Annunciation badge of the type was described as "Francia (?)." Mario D'Onofrio, ed. *Romei et Giubilei. Il pellegrinaggio medievale a San Pietro (350-1350)* (Milan: Electa, 1999), p.364, no. 146.

<sup>8</sup> R.M. van Heeringen, A.M. Koldewey and A.A.G. Gaalman, *Heiligen uit de Modder. In Zeeland gevonden pelgrimstekens*, second, unchanged edition ed., vol. IV, Clavis Kunsthistorische Monografieën (Utrecht: Clavis, 1987 [1988]), pp. 105-106.

Pisa), in the British Isles (London, Stafford) and in Sweden (Visby). One badge from Sour is hardly an argument in which to situate the production site in the Near East.<sup>9</sup>

The second argument is problematic as well. The crusader capitals in Nazareth certainly show Byzantine and Eastern local influences, but are more reminiscent of Romanesque sculpture in the West.<sup>10</sup> That there are similarities between the badges and Nazareth capitals does not necessarily mean that they are from the East. More than that, the badges show the greater influence of Western European sculpture, especially goldsmiths' work, as for example, in Aachen, as I will demonstrate further on. Nevertheless, scholars have reiterated the attribution of the badges to Nazareth, although A.M. Koldeweij, who first made the attribution, always had reservations.<sup>11</sup>

The trapezoid badges depict the Virgin and the Archangel Gabriel beneath a semi-circular arch separated by a slender column. The scene is surrounded by an inscription along the edge of the badge with the words of the common Latin prayer based on the angelic salutation "Ave Maria." The badges have been found all over Europe and beyond, indicating a pilgrimage site of renown that attracted pilgrims from far and wide. The Holy Land certainly qualifies, but a provenance of pewter badges from a site in Western Europe is more probable

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<sup>9</sup> Most recently some badges of western European provenance have been found in Hierapolis (Pamukkale, Turkey). Sven Ahrens, "A Set of Western European Pilgrim Badges from Hierapolis of Phrygia," *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia. Rendiconti* 84, nos. 2011-12 (2012).

<sup>10</sup> Moshe Barasch, *Crusader Figural Sculpture in the Holy Land. Twelfth-century examples from Acre, Nazareth and Belvoir Castle* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1971), pp. 69-164; H.W. Hazard, ed. *The Art and Architecture of the Crusader States, A History of the Crusades* (Madison, 1977); Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. A Corpus*, vol. III (Cambridge, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Denis Bruna, *Enseignes de Pèlerinage et Enseignes Profanes (Musée National du Moyen Age - Thermes de Cluny)* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1996), pp. 93-94, no. 96: "il est plus probable de penser, avec A. M. Koldeweij, que l'enseigne provienne de Nazareth, éloignée de seulement 65 kilomètres de Tyr."; Van Beuningen, Koldeweij and Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2. 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, 12, p. 339 (as "Nazareth?"); Van Beuningen and Koldeweij, *Heilig en Profaan. 1000 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit de collectie H.J.E. van Beuningen*, p. 13 and 236 (as "Nazareth?"); Andreas Haasis-Berner, *Pilgerzeichen des Hochmittelalters*, ed. Heidrun Alzheimer-Haller and Klaus Reder, *Veröffentlichungen zur Volkskunde und Kulturgeschichte* (Würzburg, 2003), pp. 200-204.



**Figure 2** (left) Pewter badge of the Annunciation, Aachen, found in Dordrecht, 43 x 36 mm, 1300-1350. Photo: Langbroek, collection Van Beuningen Family, inv. 3641 (*Heilig en Profaan 2*, fig. 1414)

**Figure 3** (right) Relief of the Annunciation, detail of the *Marienschrein*, Rheno-Mosan, oak covered with silver-gilt and brass, before 1220-1238. Photo: Aachen, Domschatz

because that is where pewter badges were produced from the twelfth century onwards.<sup>12</sup> From the late twelfth century the badges rapidly came to be the most popular type of mass-produced souvenirs while ampullae remained popular in the east.<sup>13</sup> Besides ampullae, pilgrims from the Holy Land brought all kinds of souvenirs with them, such as palm branches, earth and stones

<sup>12</sup> Kurt Köster, "Mittelalterliche Pilgerzeichen," in *Wallfahrt kennt keine Grenzen. Themen zu einer Ausstellung des Bayerischen Nationalmuseums und des Adalbert Stifter Vereins*, ed. Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck and Gerda Möhler (München & Zürich: Verlag Schnell & Steiner, 1984), p. 204.

<sup>13</sup> The only pewter souvenirs that have been attributed with certainty to the Holy Land are ampullae. D'Onofrio, *Romei et Giubilei. Il pellegrinaggio medievale a San Pietro (350-1350)*, p. 317, no. 57; Lieselotte Kötzsche, "Das Heilige Grab in Jerusalem und seine Nachfolge," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum. Ergänzungsband 20*, no. 1 (1995), p. 283; Lieselotte Kötzsche, "Zwei Jerusalemer Pilgerampullen aus der Kreuzfahrerzeit," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 51/ 1 (1988); Danny Syon, "Souvenirs from the Holy Land: a crusader workshop of lead ampullae from Acre" in *Knights of the Holy Land, The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, (ed.) S. Rosenberg (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1999); Katja Boertjes, "Souvenirs from the Holy City (working title)," in *The Imagined and Real Jerusalem* (forthcoming).

from holy sites and medallions of different kinds. Yet, pewter badges were not among the usual souvenirs brought from the Holy Land or so it seems.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Annunciation and Aachen**

An Annunciation badge of similar design to the one from Sour was found in Dordrecht in the Netherlands, now in the impressive Van Beuningen Family badge collection in Langbroek (The Netherlands).<sup>15</sup> **(fig. 2)** The narrative scene is the same as the Sour and other Annunciation badges, although stylistically it differs in that the posture of the figures features a Gothic S-curve that is absent in the other Annunciation badges. The figures stand under trefoil arches (not semi-circular ones) and a roof-like structure once crowned the badge. The shape of the badge, too, differs in its square rather than trapezoidal shape. What is more, the Dordrecht Annunciation bears an inscription that deviates from the others, reading SIGNV(M BE)ATE (MARIE) IN AQUIS GRANI, paraphrased: “The sign of the blessed Mary in Aquisgranum.”<sup>16</sup> **(fig. 2)** The name “Aquisgranum” points conclusively to the city of Aachen. The Romans named the spa “Aquaе Granni” which translates as “the sources of Grannus,” the Celtic god of water and health. The Antique name Aquisgranum continued to be used throughout the Middle Ages and in later times. The name appears in the Barbarossa charter of

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<sup>14</sup> Denis Bruna depicted badges of Christ crucified on a cross crosslet which he attributed to the Holy Land. Although they were undoubtedly worn by Jerusalem pilgrims, these badges were probably produced in their homeland to commemorate their pilgrimage. Bruna, *Enseignes de Pèlerinage et Enseignes Profanes (Musée National du Moyen Age - Thermes de Cluny)*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>15</sup> Van Beuningen, Koldewey and Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2. 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, 12, p. 339, fig. 1414 (as “Nazareth?”).

<sup>16</sup> The inscription was deciphered and connected with Aachen in Van Beuningen et al., *Heilig en Profaan 3. 1300 insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, p. 169.

1166 and in a letter of the humanist Erasmus in 1518, for example.<sup>17</sup> Aachen is still called “Aquisgrana” and “Aquisgrán” in Italy and in Spain respectively.

Moreover, the Annunciation badge from Dordrecht soil shows significant similarities to a badge of Emperor Charlemagne also found in Dordrecht.<sup>18</sup> Charlemagne was buried and venerated in Aachen, although his sanctification in 1165 by Anti-pope Paschal III (1164-1168) was never accepted by the Holy See.<sup>19</sup> The square badge depicts the ruler enthroned under a trefoil arch surrounded by a text done in a script similar to the Dordrecht Annunciation. The comparable rendering of architecture, of which in both cases only the lower part remains, is a stylized reference to the Palatine Chapel with its architectural extensions. The Charlemagne badge still shows the lower roof of the central dome and the lower portions of two flanking towers; the Annunciation badge only shows the base of the dome. The badge of Charlemagne is dated to the first half of the fourteenth century and the date of the Dordrecht Annunciation must be similar.<sup>20</sup> The trapezoid badges of the Annunciation with their slightly divergent features probably date from the thirteenth century.

### **The Marienschrein and its Relics**

A comparison of the Annunciation scene on the badges with a relief on the shrine of the Virgin [“Marienschrein”] is most illuminating. **(fig. 3)** This precious and impressive Rheno-Mosan reliquary chasse that housed the four great relics [“die grosse Heiligtümer”]

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<sup>17</sup> Walter Kämmerer, *Aachener Quellentexte* (Aachen, 1980): passim, e.g. p. 196 and 290.

<sup>18</sup> Van Beuningen, Koldewey and Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2. 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, 12, p. 275, no. 1177.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Shahan and Ewan Macpherson, "Charlemagne," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 3 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908). URL: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03610c.htm>, consulted 29 March 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Van Beuningen, Koldewey and Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2. 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, 12, p. 1177; Jörg Poettgen, "Karl der Große auf Aachener Pilgerzeichen des Mittelalters. Mit einem Katalog der bisher bekannten Exemplaren," *Zeitschrift des Aachener Geschichtsvereins* 110 (2008), pp. 76-77.

became the focal point of the pilgrimage cult of Aachen, both physically and spiritually, after its placement in the Palatine Chapel in 1238.<sup>21</sup> The famous dress of the Virgin [“das Marienkleid”], a gift to Charlemagne by the patriarch of Jerusalem in 799 along with other important relics prior to the imperial coronation, was the main attraction.

The relief of the Annunciation on the shrine portrays the Virgin and the archangel Gabriel. The Virgin is clothed in a long robe that falls on the ground with pronounced V-shaped folds in front of her body and less-conspicuous vertical folds below the knees. The sleeves of the garment fall in long vertical lines at the sides of Mary’s body, while a veil covers her hair. She holds a book as a reference to the Word that became flesh in her womb at the moment of the incarnation. The robe of the archangel is a little shorter than the Virgin’s, reaching to his ankles and a lappet of his garment is draped over his left arm. With his left hand he holds a staff crowned with a fleur-de-lis. He is clearly pointing upwards with the index finger of his right hand indicating the heavenly provenance of the child in the Virgin’s womb. There are only minor discrepancies between the badges and the relief, most noticeably in the way the protagonists are framed.

The theme of the Annunciation underscores Mary’s role as Mother of God, which forms the essence of the Palatine Chapel: the chapel was dedicated to Christ and his Mother.<sup>22</sup> The lower altar dedicated to the Virgin supported the upper altar dedicated to her Son. One could theorize that the lower floor was dedicated to the incarnation and the birth of Christ, the upper one to his death and resurrection.<sup>23</sup> The level of the Virgin symbolically connected the

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<sup>21</sup> Ernst Günther Grimme, *Der Dom zu Aachen. Architektur und Ausstattung* (Aachen 1994), pp.176-184; Lisa Victoria Cirese, "The Aachen Karlsschrein and Marienschrein " in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles*, (eds.) Sarah Blick and Rita Tekippe (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005):, pp.768-776; Lisa Victoria Cirese, "Maria Ecclesia: The Aachen Marienschrein as an Alternate Body for the Virgin Mary," in *Collisions: Where Past Meets Present (SECAC 2012)* (Durham: Meredith College, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> W. Eugene Kleinbauer, "Charlemagne’s Palace Chapel at Aachen and Its Copies," *Gesta* 4 (1965), p. 2; Schiffers, *Der Reliquienschatz Karls des Grossen und die Anfänge der Aachenfahrt*: 2, p. 19.

<sup>23</sup> Eliza Garrison, *Ottonian Imperial Art and Portraiture. The Artistic Patronage of Otto III and Henry II* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), p. 93.

earthly realm with the heavenly one above. In accordance with the chapel's dedication to Christ and his mother, a liturgical celebration of significance in Aachen was the combined feast of Candlemas, which focuses on the Virgin's roles as Seat of Wisdom and Mother of God (*theotokos*).<sup>24</sup> To further stress the importance of the Virgin and her significance in the Incarnation, Pope Honorius III (r. 1216-1227) issued an indulgence of forty days to pilgrims visiting Aachen on the day of the Annunciation.<sup>25</sup> On those days pilgrims would have eagerly purchased badges with the Annunciation to commemorate their Aachen visit, and the festive and solemn elevation of the relics to the new shrine of the Virgin could have provided the occasion for the production of the first Annunciation badges.<sup>26</sup> The trapezoid badges most likely date from the same period as the *Marienschrein*, around 1240 or shortly after.

**Figure 4** (left below) Pewter badge of the Madonna enthroned, Aachen, found in Dordrecht, 97 x 62 mm, 1350-1400. Photo: Breda's Museum, inv. S09205 (*Heilig en Profaan 3*, fig. 2618)



**Figure 5** (right) Pewter badge of the Madonna enthroned, Aachen, found in 's-Hertogenbosch, 91 x 55 mm, 1350-1400, found in a filled branch of the river Dieze, archeologically dated to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Coll. Afdeling Bouwhistorie, Archeologie en Monumenten, gemeente 's-Hertogenbosch (BAM), inv. I 21733 (*Heilig en Profaan 3*, fig. 2619).



<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>25</sup> Hartmut Kühne, *Ostensio Reliquiarum* (Walter de Gruyter, 2000), p. 188; Brumme, *Das spätmittelalterliche wallfahrtswesen im Erzstift Magdeburg, im Fürstentum Anhalt und im sächsischen Kurkreis: Entwicklung, Strukturen und Erscheinungsformen frommer Mobilität in Mitteldeutschland vom 13. bis zum 16. Jahrhunderts*, p. 44; Schiffers, *Der Reliquienschatz Karls des Grossen und die Anfänge der Aachenfahrt*, p. 70.

<sup>26</sup> Schiffers, *Der Reliquienschatz Karls des Grossen und die Anfänge der Aachenfahrt*, pp. 64-67. The origins of the display of the relics in Aachen are not documented. Kühne, *Ostensio Reliquiarum*, p. 157 and 182-184.

When these plaques, with their focus on the Annunciation, were produced the relics were still kept behind lock and key in the new shrine. It was not until 1312 that the relics would be taken out and shown to the public on a regular basis.

Around the same time the Virgin's robe started to figure prominently on the new badges,<sup>27</sup> but some of them still hint at the inscription of the Latin prayer "Ave Maria" featured so prominently on the Annunciation plaques. For example, badges of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century depict the Madonna with the initial A indicating Aachen (Aquisgranum) first and foremost, but also to the angelic salutation Ave Maria.<sup>28</sup> Two badges, found in Dordrecht and 's-Hertogenbosch, (**figs. 4, 5**) should probably be attributed to Aachen as well because of the vase with lily to the Virgin's right.<sup>29</sup> The Virgin also holds a lily scepter in her right hand. The vase with the lily branch on the Virgin's right side refers to the Annunciation that had become inextricably connected with the Palatine Chapel and its relics, but was slowly driven into the background. The vase is demonstrable on at least one other badge that can be firmly connected to Aachen. The presence of pilgrims seen prominently in both corners on the badge, too, are rare but not unknown on Aachen badges.<sup>31</sup>

**(fig. 6)**

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<sup>27</sup> Brumme, *Das spätmittelalterliche wallfahrtswesen im Erzstift Magdeburg, im Fürstentum Anhalt und im sächsischen Kurkreis: Entwicklung, Strukturen und Erscheinungsformen frommer Mobilität in Mitteldeutschland vom 13. bis zum 16. Jahrhunderts*: 46; Kühne, *Ostensio Reliquiarum*, pp. 174-183.

<sup>28</sup> Van Beuningen, Koldeweij and Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2. 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, 12, p. 310, figs. 1315-1317.

<sup>29</sup> A fragment of a badge of similar design should also be attributed to Aachen because of significant similarities to the two badges mentioned here; it is in the collection of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague (inv. UPM 4944). See Hartmut Kühne, Carina Brumme and Helena Koenigsmarková, *Jungfrauen, Engel, Phallustieren. Die Sammlung Mittelalterlicher Französischer Pilgerzeichen des Kunstgewerbemuseums in Prag und des Nationalmuseums Prag* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2013), p. 86, no. 134.

<sup>31</sup> Jörg Ansoerge, "Pilgerzeichen und Pilgerzeichenforschung in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern" in *Wallfahrer aus dem Osten. Mittelalterliche Pilgerzeichen zwischen Ostsee, Donau und Seine*, (ed.) Hartmut Kühne, Lothar Lambacher, and Jan Hrdina (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 81-143, 133-134.



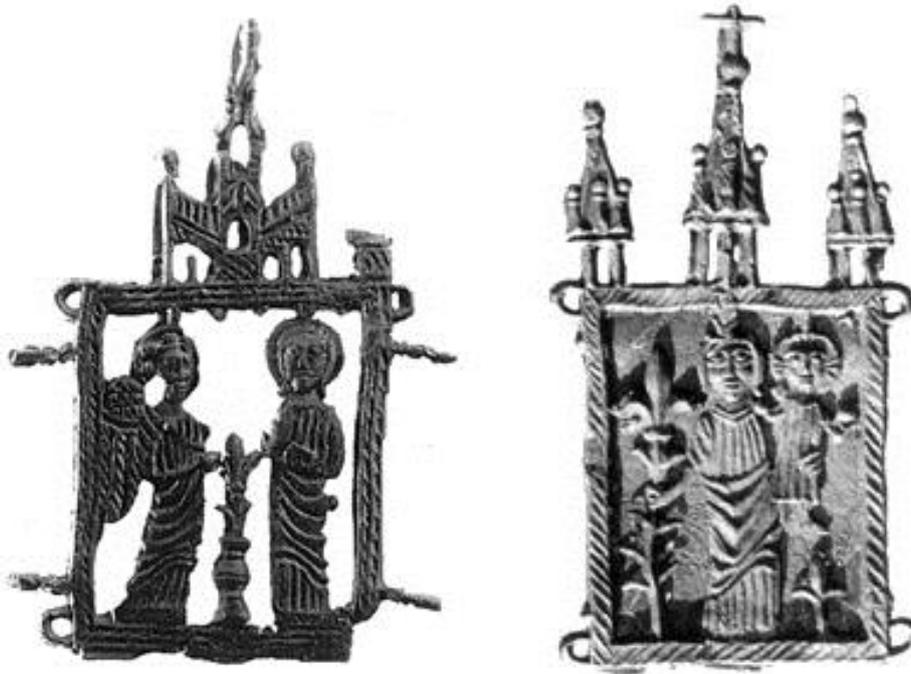
**Figure 6** Pewter badge of the Madonna, Charlemagne, a bishop and the maternity cloth, Aachen, found in Tholen. Photo: Langbroek, collection Van Beuningen Family, inv. 3492 (*Heilig en Profaan 2*, fig. 1347).

### The Palatine as a Shrine

Within the changing range of subjects, the iconography of the Annunciation was not abandoned instantly, but the theme was re-used and Annunciation badges co-existed with the “new” Madonna badges for some time. An Annunciation badge of a different design,

found during excavations in Amsterdam and now in the Van Beuningen Family collection, (**fig. 7**) shows the Virgin and the angel in a rectangular frame with architectural features above: small towers on the left and right have broken off. Another similar badge depicts the Virgin standing with Christ on her arm and a large lily scepter that, because of its sheer size, refers to the lily branch of the Annunciation. (**fig. 8**) Other badges with an identical frame show the Madonna enthroned.<sup>32</sup> Some depict the Virgin and child with a candle-bearing

<sup>32</sup> Van Beuningen, Koldewij and Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2. 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, 12, p. 346, figs. 1443-1444.



**Figure 7** (left) Pewter badge of the Annunciation, Aachen, found in Amsterdam. Photo: Langbroek, collection Van Beuningen Family, inv. 1070 (*Heilig en Profaan 1*, fig. 520).

**Figure 8** (right) Pewter badge of the Madonna, Aachen, found in Dordrecht. Photo: Langbroek, collection Van Beuningen Family, inv. 3338 (*Heilig en Profaan 2*, fig. 1445).

angel referring to the Christ's birth as light, possibly in connection with the feast of Candlemas that was of such great importance in Aachen.<sup>35</sup> All badges share the features of the rectangular frame surmounted by architectural elements – a large central structure with a smaller tower on each side. These stylized elements undoubtedly refer to the Palatine Chapel. Significantly, the badges are not just surmounted with an image of the church, but the Virgin is depicted within its walls.

The Palatine Chapel was built at the instigation of Charlemagne as a structure to house the relics of Christ and the Virgin, and remained important as such. On different images in

<sup>35</sup> Van Beuningen and Koldeweij, *Heilig en Profaan. 1000 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit de collectie H.J.E. van Beuningen*, p. 236, fig. 521; Van Beuningen, Koldeweij and Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2. 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, 12, p. 347, figs. 1446-1450. On Candlemas in Aachen, see Garrison, *Ottoman Imperial Art and Portraiture. The Artistic Patronage of Otto III and Henry II*, pp. 92-93.

Aachen the emperor is depicted offering the Palatine chapel to the Virgin, for example on the dedication relief of the *Karlsschrein*. (fig. 9)

The emperor offers her a model of the building in an iconographical scheme reminiscent of the Adoration of the Magi. Charlemagne offers his gift to Mother and Child as the Three Kings had their treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Mt. 2:11). A dove symbolizing the Holy Ghost appears from the sky and illuminates the central cupola of the Palatine Chapel. The presence of the dove brings to mind scenes of the Annunciation: the dove linking the Virgin with the heavens through his flight embodies the moment of impregnation. Here the dove “impregnates” the chapel, symbolizing both the divine inspiration that lies at the core of the construction and the divine presence inside by means of the relics. The chapel is a shrine to the Marian relics as the Virgin had been a shrine to her son Jesus.

The link between the chapel and the Virgin is also brought to the fore in the figure of Mary who is depicted as a *sedes sapientiae* or the throne of Divine Wisdom that is Christ.<sup>36</sup> The Christ child on her lap makes an eloquent gesture, indicating he is the Word that has become flesh. The Virgin on the throne is reminiscent of Romanesque depictions of Solomon’s throne, which was called the seat of judgment in the Bible and which metaphorically related to the Virgin (1 Kings 7:6-7).<sup>37</sup> Significantly, the throne has the same architectural features as the architectural model of the chapel in the hands of the emperor. The arches are like flying buttresses supporting the body of the Virgin (who is supporting her son in her turn). Clearly, the Virgin and chapel are visually and metaphorically linked, elaborating

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<sup>36</sup> Ilene Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972); Ciresi, "The Aachen Karlsschrein and Marienschrein," p.773; Daniel H. Weiss, "Architectural Symbolism and the Decoration of the Ste.-Chapelle," *The Art Bulletin* 77/ 2 (1995), pp. 310-314.

<sup>37</sup> Weiss, "Architectural Symbolism and the Decoration of the Ste.-Chapelle," pp. 310-314.



**Figure 9** Relief of Charlemagne offering the Palatine Chapel to the Virgin [“Widmungsrelief”], detail of the *Karlsschrein*, Rheno-Mosan, silver, partly gilt, on oak wood, 1182-1215. Photo: Aachen, Domschatz.

on the complex iconography of the Palatine Chapel. The badges with the Annunciation or the Madonna within the walls of the chapel seem to do the same; they link the chapel and the Virgin and thus elaborate on the complex iconography of the Virgin as the throne of Divine Wisdom.<sup>40</sup>

### Dedication Badges

Besides the Annunciation and the Madonna, Emperor Charlemagne was a popular theme on Aachen badges.<sup>41</sup> Although badges of Charlemagne are much rarer than badges

<sup>40</sup> Ciresi, "The Aachen Karlsschrein and Marienschrein," p. 771; Ciresi, "Maria Ecclesia: The Aachen Marienschrein as an Alternate Body for the Virgin Mary."

<sup>41</sup> Van Beuningen and Koldewey, *Heilig en Profaan. 1000 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit de collectie H.J.E. van Beuningen*, p. 175, figs. 264-267; Van Beuningen et al., *Heilig en Profaan 3. 1300 insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, p. 143, figs. 2398-2400. Van Beuningen, Koldewey and Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2*.

featuring the Virgin, many badges from the fifteenth century depict the Madonna with Charlemagne (e.g. **fig. 6**). On these badges, Charlemagne often holds a model of the chapel as the shrine for the important relics, as he does on the dedication relief. (**fig. 9**) A substantial group of badges that have not been linked to Aachen until now focus on Charlemagne in a prominent role as the chapel's donor. (**figs. 10, 11**) Different versions of these dedication badges have been found in Bruges, Ypres, and Valenciennes. The identification of the religious badges has been described as “problematic” and they have even been classified as “profane” a few times.<sup>42</sup>



**Figure 10 (left)** Pewter badge of the dedication of the Palatine Chapel, Aachen, found in Ypres, 98 x 98 mm, 1325-1375. Photo: Ypres, Stedelijk Museum, inv. Ie-97.IVW.2.L3.H1.002 (*Heilig en Profaan 2*, fig. 1686).

**Figure 11 (right)** Pewter badge of the presentation of the Palatine Chapel, Aachen, found in Valenciennes, 78 x 51 mm, 1325-1375. Valenciennes, Service Archéologique Municipale (*Heilig en Profaan 3*, fig. 2921).

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*1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, 12, pp. 275-276, figs. 1176-1182. For badges combining the Virgin and the Emperor, see Van Beuningen and Koldewey, *Heilig en Profaan. 1000 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit de collectie H.J.E. van Beuningen*, p. 209, figs. 416 and 421; Van Beuningen et al., *Heilig en Profaan 3. 1300 insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, pp. 173-176, figs. 2500, 2505 and 2509. Van Beuningen, Koldewey and Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2. 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, 12, p. 316, figs. 1345 and 1347.

<sup>42</sup> Van Beuningen, Koldewey and Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2. 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, 12, pp. 398-399, figs. 1685-1688; Van Beuningen et al., *Heilig en Profaan 3. 1300 insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, pp. 285-287, figs. 2920-2925; A.M. Koldewey, *Geloof & Geluk. Sieraad en devotie in middeleeuws Vlaanderen* (Arnhem: Terra, 2006), p. 22.

The badges depict Emperor Charlemagne presenting the Palatine Chapel and, implicitly, the relics within, in a manner reminiscent of the dedication relief on the *Karlsschrein*.<sup>43</sup> (fig. 9) Because of the fragility of the large badges, the religious crowning with the Crucifixion has often been broken off and lost. Still, the identification of the dedication badges to Aachen is strongly supported by two recent finds. A badge found in the drowned village Moggershil, also depicted in *Heilig en Profaan 3*, shows a dedication scene that is simplified, but otherwise almost identical.<sup>44</sup> The reverse pictures the Madonna, confirming that the dedication scene is connected with a cult of the Virgin. A related small reliquary box found in Dendermonde depicts the Emperor and a bishop with the chapel on both lids.<sup>45</sup> The box is inscribed: AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINUS TECU referring to the Annunciation that played such a prominent role in the Aachen cult from the time that badges were first produced.

Perhaps the dedication badges were not connected with Aachen because the Virgin, such an essential element of the Aachen pilgrimage, is absent. However, the Virgin is implicitly present because of her inextricable connection with the Palatine Chapel. The chapel was not just a pilgrimage church; it was a shrine, a metaphor of the Virgin *theotokos*, of birth and resurrection, and an image of the Holy Jerusalem in one.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, it was Charlemagne's tomb and a monument to his devotion to the Virgin. Because of its function as coronation chapel it was imbued with associations of power. The importance of the church during the life of the emperor and afterwards when the pilgrimage cult in Aachen took on its

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<sup>43</sup> The provenance of the badges was described as "probably Flanders" in: Koldewey, *Geloof & Geluk. Sieraad en devotie in middeleeuws Vlaanderen*, p. 22.

<sup>44</sup> Van Beuningen et al., *Heilig en Profaan 3. 1300 insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, p. 213, fig. 2643.

<sup>45</sup> Koldewey, *Geloof & Geluk. Sieraad en devotie in middeleeuws Vlaanderen*, p. 24, fig. 1.13.

<sup>46</sup> Richard Krautheimer, "Introduction to an "Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942), pp. 92-93; Garrison, *Ottonian Imperial Art and Portraiture. The Artistic Patronage of Otto III and Henry II*, p. 27.

shape can hardly be overestimated. Many fifteenth-century badges from Aachen still present the Church of Our Lady as an integral part of their iconography. The souvenirs are comparable to typical Aachen badges, such as the one found in Tholen. **(fig. 6)** Charlemagne, the Palatine Chapel, and the bishop appear on these too.

The identity of the bishop on the badges is unclear; probably he is Archbishop Turpinus of Reims, Charlemagne's counselor, who is believed to be depicted with Charlemagne on the dedication relief of the *Karlsschrein*. **(fig. 9)** According to contemporary tradition, Turpinus wrote Charlemagne's *vita*, the *Historia Caroli Magni et Rotholandi*, and his authorship was not questioned until the fifteenth century. The bishop even figures as official representative of the Church in the famous *Chanson de Roland* (c. 1100) and other *chansons de geste*. Irrespective of his exact identity, the bishop on the badges is transformed into a symbolic depiction of the clergy. Emperor Charlemagne and the bishop figure are portrayed side by side as agents entrusted by God with their ministries of profane and ecclesiastical matters, respectively. The Palatine Chapel is their votive offering. The incense-burning angels on both sides of Christ crucified indicate the visionary and sacred nature of the scene.<sup>47</sup> **(figs. 10, 11)** The Palatine Chapel, which was supposed to be an earthly reflection of the Holy Jerusalem, is depicted as a *locus sanctus* holding a position between heaven and earth, as did the Virgin. As the first and paramount mediator between God and mankind she was the "gate of heaven" to use the words of the Marian hymn "Ave Maris Stella."

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<sup>47</sup> The Holy Rood that surmounted most of these dedication badges, also appears on many other badges from Aachen. Van Beuningen, Koldeweij and Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2. 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, 12, pp. 317-318, figs. 1350 and 1353 (fragment); Van Beuningen *et al.*, *Heilig en Profaan 3. 1300 insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, p. 172, fig. 2498, pp. 175-176, figs. 2508 and 2511.

### The Palatine Chapel as a metaphor of the Virgin *theotokos*

The trapezoid badges with the Annunciation were among the first pewter souvenirs from the city of Charlemagne. The “Paris type” of Annunciation badges are early examples of



**Figure 12** Pewter pendant with the Madonna (obverse) and the dedication of the Palatine Chapel (reverse), found in Moggershil, 27 x 21 mm, 1375-1425. Van Beuningen Family Collection, inv. 2870 (*Heilig en Profaan* 3, fig. 2643).

souvenirs from Aachen, possibly dating to the early thirteenth century, where they might be connected to the translation of the relics to the new reliquary chasse of the Virgin in 1238. The “Dordrecht type” (**fig. 8**) and “Amsterdam type” (**fig. 7**) are thematically and formally closely related: they depict the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin standing within the confines of the Palatine Chapel as a shrine to the Virgin and the Virgin as a shrine to her son. The badges on which Charlemagne and a bishop offer the chapel to Christ underscore the importance of the Palatine Chapel, and of Charlemagne, to the cult. (**fig. 12**)

The Dordrecht and Amsterdam type of badges were produced after pewter souvenirs with a different iconography, focusing on the Madonna who had assumed greater importance

at the pilgrimage cult at Aachen, especially after 1312 when the robe of the Virgin took over as a focal point. Because of the association cloth and flesh, textile relics were of major importance in the visualization of the incarnation.<sup>48</sup> At the moment of the incarnation the Virgin became the shrine of Christ, clothing him in flesh. Christ's human nature was considered a veil that shrouded his divinity and would be lifted at the moment of his death on the cross. Despite this shift in the cult, the Annunciation badges indicate that the incarnation already played an essential role in Aachen before the great relics were taken out of the shrine and shown to the public on a regular basis. The relics did not provoke a formulation of entirely new themes, but rather visualized old ones in new ways.

The attribution of new types of badges to Aachen (**see Table**) leads to a revision of current knowledge of the production of pilgrimage souvenirs that might go back as far as the early thirteenth century. Additionally, the new attributions lead to new perspectives on the pilgrimage cult and on architecture as metaphor for the Virgin in medieval devotion. The reliquaries and the ways in which the relics and reliquaries were presented to the public set the tone for the badges. With Aachen as a case in point, it could even be hypothesized that the shift from plaques to open-work badges is connected with the shift from reliquary chasses to open-work reliquaries. The badges certainly seem to reflect which reliquaries were presented to the public and how they were presented. The structure of the Palatine Chapel with the ground floor dedicated to the Virgin and the second level to Christ was certainly crucial. The dedication badges show the same division, with an image of Charlemagne holding the shrine below and the vision of Christ on top. The Palatine Chapel and the monumental reliquary

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<sup>48</sup> On the importance of textile relics in medieval religion, see for example E. Jane Burns, "Saracen Silk and the Virgin's Chemise: Cultural Crossings in Cloth," *Speculum. A Journal of Mediaeval Studies* 81 (2006); Barbara Baert and Kathryn M. Rudy, (eds.), *Weaving, Veiling, and Dressing. Textiles and their Metaphors in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007); Cordelia Warr, "Clothing, charity, salvation and visionary experience in renaissance Siena," *Art History* 27/2 (2004), p. 188, 197.

chasses were the primary points of reference for the pilgrims in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as reflected in the contemporary badges.

Initially, the Palatine Chapel was not the monumental backdrop against which the relics were displayed, but it was a shrine itself housing the relatively closed reliquary chasses and the relics within. More importantly, it was a symbol of the Virgin who was herself a shrine housing the Word that became flesh in her womb. The great relics were still relatively hidden and consequently played a minor part in the iconography of the badges. The emphasis was on Annunciation, Incarnation and enshrinement - the Palatine Chapel as a shrine to the Virgin, the Virgin as a shrine to her son. Because Mary was considered a shrine herself, the imperial chapel became a metaphor for the pregnant Virgin who brought Christ into the world. Visiting the Palatine Chapel with its great relics narrating incarnation and redemption, pilgrims would enter the Virgin's womb, a liminal world connecting life on earth with sacred time and space. The Palatine Chapel held a position between heaven and earth as a veritable "gate of heaven."

**Table 1: Survey of new attributions to Aachen**

<b>Badges</b>	<b>Current location</b>	<b>Published (with a reference to the respective notes in this article)</b>
Annunciation badge of the "Dordrecht type" (Fig. 2)	Van Beuningen Family Collection, inv. 3641	<i>Heilig en Profaan 2</i> : 339, fig. 1414 (as Nazareth?); <i>Heilig en Profaan 3</i> : 169 (as Aachen).
Annunciation badges of the "Paris type" (Fig. 1)	Different collections	For example in Forgeais, vol. IV:13-14 (see n. 6); Andersson (as Paris; see n. 7); Van Heeringen, Koldewij, Gaalman: 105-106 (as Nazareth, see n. 8); <i>Heilig en Profaan 1</i> : 236, fig. 522 (as Nazareth?); <i>Heilig en Profaan 2</i> : 339, figs. 1411-1413 (as Nazareth?); <i>Heilig en Profaan 3</i> : 170, fig. 2492 (as Aachen)
Badge of the Madonna with pilgrims (Fig. 4)	Breda, Breda's Museum, inv. S09205	<i>Heilig en Profaan 3</i> : 209, fig. 2618 (unidentified)
Badge of the Madonna with pilgrims (Fig. 5)	's-Hertogenbosch, BAM, inv. I 21733	<i>Heilig en Profaan 3</i> : 209, fig. 2619 (unidentified)
Badge of the Madonna	Prague, Museum of Decorative Arts, inv. UPM 4944	Kühne, Brumme, Koenigsmarková: 86, no. 134 (unidentified; see n. 29)

Open-work badge of the Annunciation of the “Amsterdam type” (Fig. 7)	Van Beuningen Family Collection, inv. 1070	<i>Heilig en Profaan 1</i> : 235, fig. 520 (unidentified)
Open-work badge of the Madonna with lily branch (Fig. 8)	Van Beuningen Family, Collection, inv. 3338	<i>Heilig en Profaan 2</i> : 346, fig. 1445 (unidentified)
Two open-work badges of the Madonna enthroned	Private collection and Van Beuningen Family, Collection, inv. 3386	<i>Heilig en Profaan 2</i> : 346, figs. 1443-1444 (unidentified, see n. 31)
Open-work badges of Virgin and Child with a candle-bearing angel	Different collections	<i>Heilig en Profaan 1</i> : 236, fig. 521 (unidentified); <i>Heilig en Profaan 2</i> : 347, figs. 1446-1450 (unidentified; see n. 32)
Open-work badges with the dedication of the Palatine Chapel (Figs. 10 and 11)	Different collections	<i>Heilig en Profaan 2</i> : 398-399, figs. 1685-1688 (see n. 37); <i>Heilig en Profaan 3</i> : 285-287, figs. 2920-2925 (see n. 37); Koldeweij: 22 (see n. 38)
Two-sided pendant of the Madonna and the dedication	Van Beuningen Family Collection, inv. 2870	<i>Heilig en Profaan 3</i> : 213, fig. 2643 (unidentified; see n. 39)
Reliquary box with the dedication	Gent, Bijlokemuseum, inv. 3538	Koldeweij: 24, fig. 1.13 (Flanders or northern France; see n. 40)