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Chavannes-Mazel, C.A.

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# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE BIBLE AND ITS RECEPTION

5

**Charisma –  
Czaczkes**

De Gruyter  
Berlin · Boston

correct, his household and his neighbor when he sees that they are in danger of falling into some sin (10.9).

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Bernard McGinn

#### IV. Literature

Dante prays that Christ will "once more" strike against the sanctuary-merchants in *Paradiso* 18, a clear reference to abuses in the time of Pope John XXII.

Of the English mystery plays, only the Chester play includes this episode. In a typically earthy scene, the Primus Mercator asks, "What freake is this that makes this fare ...?" saying he will report Jesus to Caiaphas. In other European plays, there is banter between the sellers of temple goods and Jesus' action prompts the attempt to stone him.

Blake, in *The Everlasting Gospel* (1818), associates the event with a spiritual upheaval in the soul of Christ himself: "He scourg'd the Merchant Canaanite/ From out the Temple of his mind ..." (lines 48, 49).

In T. S. Eliot's *A Song for Simeon* (1936), the *Nunc Dimittis* is a peaceful interlude in the vicinity of the temple, "Before the time of cords and scourges and lamentation ..." In Robert Graves' novel *King Jesus* (1946), the episode is expanded to include a verbal exchange with the money-changers, who are vexed that the authority of the temple treasurer is being flouted.

In Vicente Leñero's novel *The Gospel of Lucas Gavilán* (*El evangelio de Lucas Gavilán*, 1979) Jesuchristo attacks the altar during the Mass in a Mexican church, knocking off the liturgical objects and accusing priest and people of degrading the churches to the level of high-street commerce. In José Saramago's *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ* (*O Evangelho segundo Jesus Cristo*, 1991), the cleansing results in a physical skirmish involving the brawny disciples and the temple guard.

In poet Harry Clifton's *Secular Eden* (2007), God's Son asks himself, "In the name of what / Would I drive the midnight circle of philosophers / Out of their TV studios, swivel chairs, / With hempen fire, the rope of castigation?"

**Bibliography:** ■ Anon., *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, vol. 1 (eds. R. M. Lumiansky/D. Mills; Oxford 1974). ■ Blake, W., *Complete Writings* (ed. G. Keynes; Oxford 1969). ■ Clifton, H., *Secular Eden* (Winston Salem, N.C. 2007). ■ Saramago, J., *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ* (trans. G. Pontiero; London 1993).

Anthony Swindell

#### V. Visual Arts

**1. Cleansing (Purging) of the Temple by Persons Other than Jesus.** In a biblical context, the cleansing (or purging) of the temple by persons other

than Jesus occurs in at least two instances. Nehemiah is depicted in some initials, standing inside the temple and holding an aspergil and situla (*Bible in Latin*, New York, Pierpont Morgan M.163 f 151r, initial E, made in Paris and dated 1229; *Bible in Latin*, Princeton University Library MS Garrett 28 f 175v, initial U, made in England ca. 1270–80). More often, it is Judas Maccabeus removing the pagan statuary and purifying the temple after his victorious revolt against the Seleucid Empire. The Jewish Feast of Hanukkah commemorates this restoration of Jewish worship at the temple in 165 BCE (2 Macc 1: 18). Judas is portrayed either in his own right or as a type of the cleansing by Jesus in manuscripts and prints of the *Biblia pauperum*, and even in bibles and Books of Hours (New York, Pierpont Morgan H.5 f 130v, Book of Hours, Paris ca. 1500).

#### 2. Cleansing of the Temple by Jesus just before Passover, usually based upon John 2:14–16.

Having made a whip out of cords, in John Jesus vehemently chases moneylenders, cattle, sheep, and doves out of the temple. In typological context, the cleansing is part of the usual cycle in the *Biblia pauperum*, paralleled with Darius purifying the temple on the left (1 Ezra 6: 16–22), and Judas Maccabeus in his victorious role as restorer of the Jewish law on the right (1 Macc 4: 36–58; Henry: 76–79). Manuscripts and block books of the *Biblia pauperum* were spread all over Western Europe, and so we find the image of the cleansing to be widely known. The now lost window from Canterbury Cathedral (Presbytery, group 7 nr 19, 1175–80) had a typological content, too; here the cleansing was paired with a parable (Matt 22), and Ananias and Sapphira. In some Byzantine manuscripts, the cleansing illustrates Ps 69 because of verse 9: "It is zeal for your house that has consumed me, the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me" (for instance in the margin of the Barberini Psalter, Vatican Barb.gr.372 f 113v, 11th cent.).

More often historically based than typological, the cleansing by Jesus forms a part of narrative cycles (passion cycle, or life of Jesus in general) in manuscripts, wall paintings, and the applied arts. The monumental frescoes in the Arena chapel in Padua by Giotto (1303–8), those in the churches of Serbian Decani (Sanctuary, South wall, zone 2,2, 1338–47), of H. Demetrios in Thessaloniki (Chapel of H. Euthymios, nave, south wall zone 2,3), and of the monastery Mar Yakub in Qa'ra, Syria (nave of lower church, first half of the 11th cent.) give proof of a widespread and well known pictorial tradition, as do the mosaics in Monreale (Cathedral, north aisle, north wall, 3 and 4, ca. 1180–94), the stained glass window in Bourges (outer ambulatory window 8, 1210–25), the reliefs on the portal of St. Gilles-du-Gard (left frieze, 1140–50), and so on. Even Pope Paul IV (1555–59) had a medal made



Fig. 9 Temple cleansing scene from *The Purple Codex Rossanensis* (6th cent. CE)

with the purging of the temple as his motif, and the inscription: "My house shall be called the house of prayer" (Davies: 87). Book illustrations from early Christianity onwards are manifold. In fact, the oldest representation can be found in the Rossano Gospels (Calabria, Cathedral of Rossano, 188 ff, 30.7x26 cm), a deluxe 6th-century CE purple manuscript produced somewhere in the Greek-speaking world, possibly Syria (see fig. 9). Set apart from the text, the miniatures are arranged at the front of the volume and follow the sequence of reading recited in church during Lent. Below, prophets predict the event with accompanying texts. In the lively illustration of the cleansing, these are David (Pss 69:9; 8:6, 7), Hosea (9:15), and Isaiah (56:8). Almost as famous is the illustration in the Utrecht Psalter (Utrecht University Library f 49r, illustration to Ps 84).

In the Late Middle Ages the cleansing became a rare topic of focus, gaining popularity again in the 16th and 17th centuries. El Greco was fascinated by the subject and made several pictures of the cleansing, first based upon works by Italian painters of his time, but free from his models by his last painting after 1610 (Davies: 86–96; see → plate 8). Rembrandt had a different view, inspired by Dutch Protestantism (Perlove/Silver: 250–55).

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Claudine A. Chavannes-Mazel

## VI. Film

Many, but not all, of the films that narrate the story of Jesus include the incident of his so-called cleansing of the temple. Those Jesus films that include this episode usually place on Jesus' lips his saying about the temple as a "house of prayer" having become a "den of robbers" – a saying using phrases from the prophetic declarations in Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11.

A study of the earliest films about Jesus, from the dawn of cinema in the 1890s, indicates the absence of this temple scene from Jesus films of this period. However, the scene does appear in later silent movies, including Cecil B. DeMille's classic, *The King of Kings* (1927). Here this episode receives one of its grandest treatments. All four gospel texts provide intertitles for a sequence that portrays Jesus in a controlled rage; cowering money changers and sacrifice sellers; a menagerie of pigeons, cattle, and sheep; and Jesus' first confrontation with Caiaphas.

The temple cleansing also appears in such epics as *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (dir. George Stevens, 1965) and *Jesus of Nazareth* (dir. Franco Zeffirelli, 1977). The staging in the rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* (dir. Norman Jewison, 1973) certainly rivals the audaciousness of the sequence in *The King of Kings* – albeit with the sound, look, and tackiness of the 1960s hippie generation.

This episode also appears in those films devoted to telling the Jesus story based on individual gospels: *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1964); the adaptation of the Gospel of Luke called simply *Jesus* (dirs. Peter Sykes and John Kirsch, 1979); and the dramatization of *The Gospel of John* (dir. Philip Saville, 2003). Since the latter movie follows the text of the fourth gospel, it represents that rare Jesus film whose screenplay locates the cleansing episode toward the beginning of his ministry. By contrast, *The Last Temptation of Christ*



El Greco, Christ driving the traders from the temple (ca. 1600)