

# Picturing the Passion: Devotional Strategies in the Passional of the Abbess Kunigunde.

**November 23, 2022  
5:40 p.m. CET**

**Room A-211, Quellenstrasse 51, Vienna  
Zoom Link: [bit.ly/3VEzNrQ](https://bit.ly/3VEzNrQ)**

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The Passional of the Abbess Kunigunde, an early-fourteenth-century Bohemian manuscript, is a highly decorated book with strong connections between the texts and the illuminations. It comprises of various texts on the Passion of Christ and the history of salvation compiled by a Dominican friar, Kolda of Koldice. Hence, it is not a passional in its usual medieval sense. Rather, it presents a devotional book, which originated for the use of the Benedictine nunnery at Prague Castle.

The codex includes two full-page depictions of arma Christi that are central to my talk. The first one shows a shield dominated by Christ's cross that bears all five wounds of the Saviour and is decorated by the crown of thorns. In contrast to the symbolical nature of the opening illumination, the second image presents the bodily suffering of Christ in a powerful way. Here, almost all the weapons are covered in blood.

In my paper, I discuss both images, but more particularly the latter, with traces of veneration including touching and kissing the parchment. I intend to show how the manuscript with its illuminations communicated with its audience. In particular, the second folio, depicting arma Christi, provides an essential example of devotional strategies that were employed by a female audience.

*Lenka Panušková is a researcher at the Institute of Art History, Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. She works with medieval illuminated manuscripts in which she focuses on the function of the decoration, its iconography, and reception by a reader. Currently, she is preparing a collective monograph with the title "Reflecting Jerusalem in Medieval Czech Lands".*

