

How to Visualise an Event that is not Representable?

The *Topos* of Massacre in François Dubois' *St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre*

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Situated as it was at the centre of such swirling emotions, revolutionary implications, festering resentments and indeterminate intellectual repercussions, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew became a legend almost before it happened, and it grew with the telling and with the passage of time.¹

The *topos* of massacre as a memory box and the French Wars of Religion

The French Wars of Religion (1562-1598) were some of the most brutal, important and captivating confessional conflicts in the sixteenth century.² On the night of the 24th August 1572, one of the most crucial violent events took

1 KELLEY, 1972, p. 1342.

2 The confessional conflict was entangled with many other domains, among them the preservation of the Valois dynasty, the concurrence between noble houses, the recovering from recent war, financial problems, failed reforms and the fight about hegemony in Europe against Habsburg Spain.

place and soon became labelled St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre by contemporaries.³

This article⁴ examines how the *topos* of massacre, seen as a memory box, became pressing in the representation of this event. Therefore, one of the best known but rarely examined visual representations of St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, the sole known contemporary Huguenot painting, was chosen: François Dubois' *St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre*⁵. Dubois opened the memory box of massacre when composing his depiction of the historical massacre on St. Bartholomew's Day, using layers from this box and adding new aspects hitherto not linked with it.

Of course, phenomena of extreme cruelty and mass killing and terms such as carnage or murder were known since Antiquity (Greek *phonos*).⁶ The French term *massacre* – meaning “the killing of a great number of defenceless people, mostly civilians” by another group who can “undertake the killing without physical danger to themselves” – became widely used during the period of the French Wars of Religion.⁷ However, only in the 1560s, *massacre* was used for a specific type of mass violence which had occurred lately to create a judgmental and emotional short-cut picture of actors and events from the recent past, pressing for a certain way of memorising it. At first, the analogy to slaughtering animals was a central motif, used as a drastic image by Protestants to condemn the Catholic violence, acting so fiercely as if they were not facing humans. Soon further emotions, stereotypical interpretations, were added together with newly experienced ways of how to represent those layers. This was the creation of the memory box as it is understood in this article.

3 Confer for example: CAPILUPI, [1572].

4 This article is based on the research for my master thesis at the Johannes Gutenberg-University in Mainz in 2009 on the painting of François Dubois.

5 DUBOIS, between 1572 and 1584. The painting is mentioned in many works, short biographical articles and catalogue entries with basic data, but only few research literature exists: the Monograph in the nineteenth century by Henri Bordier; the articles on some aspects by Waldemar Deonna, René Gilbert, Jean Ehrmann, Cornette Joël, Godehard Janzing, Ralf Beil and Dominique Radrizzani as well as most recently David El Kenz. The article “Die göttliche Ordnung der Geschichte. Massaker und Martyrium im Gemälde ‚La Saint-Barthélemy‘ von François Dubois“ by MARTIN SCHIEDER (in: *Bilder machen Geschichte. Historische Ereignisse im Gedächtnis der Kunst*, ed. by UWE FLECKNER) was not yet published when this chapter was completed.

6 Confer EL KENZ, 2007a, p. 2.

7 EL KENZ, 2007a, p. 2 (first quotation); confer as well: BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, p. 1; LEVENE, 1999, p. 5 (second quotation).

In the lampoon HISTOIRE || MEMORABLE || DE || LA PERSECVTION || & saccagement du peuple de Merindol & || Cabrieres & autres circonuoisins, appelez || VAVDOIS. || [...] ⁸ from 1555, shortly before the French Wars of Religion started, massacre was used as a politico-confessional accuse against the excessive Catholic killings of the Vaudois in Provence in 1545. ⁹ While the French verb massacre used in the lampoon meant the brutal mass killing of people who could not defend themselves, the noun functioned as a synonym for murder, carnage and slaughter (French: assassinat, boucherie, carnage, héctacombe, tuerie). ¹⁰

Then, and especially after the beginning of the wars in 1562, the *topos* of massacre was frequently used by French Protestants during the Wars of Religion to qualify massive Catholic violence. ¹¹ To make sense of those experiences in their recent past, massacres were inscribed into the tradition of narrating the suffering of the Reformed persecuted community, fitting the Protestant self-perception. In the competition over the interpretation of the recent events (i.e. what was remembered and how), the *topos* of massacre was used by French Protestants as a means of persuasion. Protestant representations relied on pre-set images such as the idealised victims and emotions such as hatred or a feeling of moral superiority, for example, instead of logical

8 Confer French vernacular Books online: USTC 4879.

9 Confer GREENGRASS, 1999, p. 69; EL KENZ, 2007a, p. 2; BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, p. 10.

10 Following the French Vernacular Books online, it was Jean Crespin, the Genevan printer and publisher of Calvinist literature, who printed two editions of this lampoon. The *HISTOIRE || MEMORABLE* was not only reprinted in France, but also translated into German (by Johann Anton Tillier and edited by Samuel Apiarius in Bern). Here kill, murder, destroy and devastate (e.g. “vernüttet” and “vmbbracht” in the preface) served as equivalents to the French *massacre* (Confer Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des 16. Jahrhunderts (VD 16): VD16 ZV 8010 and VD16 ZV 8011). In Germany *Massaker*, derived from the French term, can be proved for the first time in 1664 in the context of the Ottoman Wars, whereas in England the term massacre was adopted shortly after St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre (confer EL KENZ, 2007a, p. 2; EL KENZ, 2006, p. 3; GREENGRASS, 1999, p. 69).

11 Confer BEIL, 2003, p. 9; VOGEL, 2006, p. 10; MEDICK, 2005, p. 16; GREENGRASS, 1999, p. 69. While both tried to clean their communities from pollution and act in accordance with God, Catholics tended to eradicate persons with *false belief*, whereas Protestants rather destroyed symbols of Catholic belief such as liturgical objects (confer DAVIS, 1974, p. 228; EL KENZ, 2007b, pp. 4, 6; BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, p. 5). On some factors forwarding the outbreak of massive violence: EL KENZ, 2007b, p. 4; GREENGRASS, 1999, p. 70.

arguments. However, using the *topos* of massacre could also serve to make the extreme, shocking violence – which was sometimes seen as non-representable, a unique event without comparison¹² – manageable by providing patterns apt to organise the perception as well as representation.

The memory box was filled with new layers by the experiences of the wars. Novel iconographic ways to represent the recent events were experienced, taking up pre-set images from the Bible, the Antiquity and recent French history which were highly emotionally charged (e.g. Massacre of the Innocents).¹³ While only few Calvinist iconographic productions existed, a certain representational type for massacre was established by depictions such as in the *Quarante Tableaux* of Tortorel and Perrissin, to cite one famous example,¹⁴ instituting how to visualise a massacre. The perhaps best known sheet from the *Quarante Tableaux* showed the massacre of Vassy in 1562.

To be perceivable, the *topos* (idea of the type of event; patterns, stereotypes, pre-set images, emotional connotations; memories of earlier massacres) had to be addressed – or in other words: the memory box had to be opened by someone. The label of massacre was employed to make an emotional judgement, consciously evoke certain layers, while others emerged without intentional use. Or, in visual representations, different traits which made those layers perceivable were shown and the *topos* of massacre was thereby unveiled indirectly. Thus, also iconographic traits were attached to the memory box and patterns for narrating were provided as parts of the *topos*.¹⁵

After the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (1572) there was a wave of media representations, above all pamphlets, but some broadsheets as well, which used the *topos* of massacre to address the concrete historical massacre in

12 El Kenz: “In fact, massacres constitute such terrifying acts that they elicit ideological, scholarly and memorial narratives to try to make sense of them and, sometimes, a refusal to put forward any discourse, a sort of silent text. Furthermore, the slaughter mostly remained inexplicable, because its protagonists suppressed it.” (EL KENZ, 2007b, p. 3; confer as well: BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, p. 6).

13 The Bible (especially the massacre of the Innocents), the Antique (the triumvirate and the proscription) and recent French history (the persecution of the Waldensians; parallels with the crusade of the Albigenses) served as an argumentative pool (confer BABEL, 2006, pp. 109-112; EL KENZ, 2007a, p. 2; EL KENZ, 2006, p. 8).

14 Confer BENEDICT, 2007; EL KENZ, 2006.

15 Confer KELLEY, 1972, p. 1324; GREENGRASS, 1999, pp. 70, 74; BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, p. 23.

their depictions. It was all the more important which reading succeeded in developing from a communicative memory to a cultural memory (an interpretation of the event which lasted), because St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre soon turned into the prototype of a massacre in early modern time.

François Dubois opened the memory box by composing *St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre*. This article examines how Dubois made use of the *topos* of massacre in his painting, which pre-existing layers of the *topos* of massacre or rather iconographic traits to visualise those layers he included, which layers and ways of depicting he added and at which points he did not resort to the already existing *topos*. As Dubois' depiction was the unique painting of a contemporary Huguenot of St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, it seems apt to also study how his painting was received and which role it played in memorising the central founding event for French Reformed: St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.¹⁶

The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre

In August 1572, the marriage of the king's sister with the Protestant prince Henri of Navarra took place in Paris as a royal act of conciliation. But the assassination attempt against the Huguenot military leader Admiral Coligny fuelled the already explosive atmosphere in Paris, where many Huguenots were present because of the wedding. In his council, the Catholic King Charles IX decided to kill the Huguenot leaders. However, these royal measures were extended against the king's will and the mass killing by the population of Paris started in the night of the 24th August 1572. It lasted several days and resulted in 3000 dead, most of whom were Huguenots. Thereafter several other mass killings took place in various cities of the French realm until October.¹⁷

While, on one hand, the events of August were assigned a unique character, they were, on the other, seen in one line with other massacres of the Wars of Religion.¹⁸ Following Donald R. Kelley, "the witnesses, participants and

16 Confer EL KENZ, 2007b, p. 3.

17 There is a vast amount of literature on St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, confer among the more recent studies esp. CROUZET, 1994; BOURGEON, 1995; JOUANNA, 2007; for a short literature survey, confer SABEAN, 2006.

18 Confer BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, pp. 6f.; the massacre was extraordinary in this respect that it happened in peacetime, initiated by the government, and had exceptionally vast dimensions. Furthermore, it was assigned an extraordinary

interpreters of the events of late Summer 1572 knew what the phenomenon was practically before it happened: [...] it was a massacre, by no means unexpected and not even the first in that generation. And they knew which part they might ultimately have to play”.¹⁹ This comment suggests that the massacre was acted out following the example of earlier massacres and following the type of event of massacre, which was generally – but not exclusively – known through depictions in media. The stereotypical, repetitive character was true even more for the representations of massacre.²⁰ How these elements were set together, how known motifs were interwoven into an account of the event and which elements were newly attached to representing a massacre, all formed part of the struggle for dominance over the interpretation of the event immediately after the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre (“une compétition mémorielle”²¹). This provided the setting for Dubois’ opening of the memory box.

The topic aspects in François Dubois’ *St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre*

Between 1572 and 1584, François Dubois painted his picture *St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre*, one of today’s best known interpretations of

meaning by contemporaries (Confer EL KENZ, 2007b, pp. 3-5). Natalie Zemon Davis however judged: “St. Bartholomew was certainly a bigger affair [...]. But on the whole, it still fits into a whole pattern of sixteenth-century religious disturbance.” (DAVIS, 1974, p. 241, see also p. 226).

19 KELLEY, 1972, p. 1324.

20 Confer KELLEY, 1972; GREENGRASS, 1999, p. 83. Mark Greengrass speaks of “copycat incidents”, especially for the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre in the provincial cities throughout France (Confer GREENGRASS, 1999, p. 70). There was however a “relative absence of coherent explanations”: Many victims felt unable to address what they had witnessed, local authorities responsible for keeping order during the massacre willingly destroyed the relevant passages in the registers (in accordance with the King’s edicts) and the perpetrators risked revenge and possibly legal consequences when they revealed their participation (confer GREENGRASS, 1999, pp. 82f).

21 JOUANNA, 2007, p. 244. This was a struggle on different levels: Catholic versus Protestant, head of communities versus basis, centre versus provinces, realm versus international, etc. On competing massacre representations in media, confer as well: LEVENE, 1999, p. 3; GREENGRASS, 1999, p. 84.

the event, in Geneva.²² So, the memory box was displaced – though its spatial and temporal transfer is rather cut short – and opened up again in Geneva. Dubois was a French painter born in Amiens (*1529), who possibly lived and worked – influenced by the School of Fontainebleau – in Paris.²³ He presumably left France for Geneva after August 1572.²⁴ Little is known about him, since the only sources left are an entry in the city records upon his cause of death²⁵ and a testament.²⁶ But this testament confirms that Dubois was a Reformed and that the painter was integrated into French refugee society in Geneva, as he was funded by the wealthy French Pournas family.²⁷

22 The painting is shown on several book covers of scientific research, as an illustration in school books, as the centre of various recent exhibitions, and in the majority of Wikipedia-articles on St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Poster reproductions of the painting are available, as well. But either it is used without the necessary remarks on the context, the painter or a problematisation of the painting itself, or it has been interpreted as a reliable source for the course of events. Most studies have adopted the Dictum of Border: "François Dubois s'est attaché à ne rien inventer et qu'il a voulu que chacun de ses groupes fût exactement vrai." (BORDIER, 1879, p. 26). In my opinion, Dubois' painting provides an insight into an individual handling of various contemporary discourses in the context of negotiation processes on the Reformed communal identity after St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.

23 Confer RADRIZZANI, 1998, p. 1.

24 Confer BORDIER, 1879, p. 4; BEIL, 2003, pp. 8, 18, note 5; RADRIZZANI, 1998, p. 1. The city registers that only reach up to 1572/1573 do not contain Dubois' name (confer BORDIER, 1878, p. 28/8; BORDIER, 1879, p. 6).

25 Dubois died "d'une defluxions de cerveaux avec fièvre continue, âgé d'environ 55 ans, ce 24 aoust 1584" (Dubois, François, in: *Registre des décès genevois*, cited by: BORDIER, 1878, p. 31/11; BORDIER, 1879, p. 9).

26 Testament, pp. 44f.

27 Testament, p. 44.



Figure 1 : Dubois, François, *Le Massacre de la Saint-Barthélemy*, between 1572 and 1584, oil on wood, 94 cm x 154 cm, Lausanne: Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts. Photo: Nora Rupp, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne; Don de la Municipalité de Lausanne, 1862

Explicit evidence is lacking, but the painting was possibly a remittance work and the Pournas family the contractor for the painting.²⁸ If this was the case, they might have been an influential factor for the representation chosen and they would have been the crucial audience of Dubois' depiction of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre as well as the gatekeepers to promote and constrain the publicity of the painting.

Dubois had to provide a persuasive account as he was competing with other readings of the massacre, even though few visual representations existed and only one Catholic painting.²⁹ One possibility was to cite core facts of the events on the 24th August 1572 – persons involved, key events and important places – to prove he was well-informed and to serve the expectations of his audience who surely had heard about the defenestration of Admiral Coligny, for example. Dubois included important historical persons such as King Charles IX, his mother Catherine of Medici and the Huguenot leader Admiral Coligny, well-known scenes (especially the sufferings of Coligny) and architectural quotations, among them the Louvre and the Hôtel de Ponthieu in the Rue de Béthisy.³⁰ All these concrete, non-topical quotations directly addressed the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre and allowed to identify the depicted event easily. Apart from these quotations, unallocated, stereotypical scenes of a massacre dominated: mass violence which defenceless victims had to endure from superior perpetrators who acted with extraordinary cruelty.

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- 28 Since the Jean Pournas family can be related to Dubois whom they had given some money (which the testament proves) and since they were a Reformed French family that had fled to Geneva immediately after the massacre in Lyon, it is quite probable that they were interested in the subject, especially when the painter was a French exiled as well – as the French historian Henri Bordier has suggested. But Bordier could not provide evidence for this thesis as well as there was none for his idea of how the picture was transferred: If the picture belonged to the Pournas family, which we cannot be certain of, Marie de Gabiano might have taken it with her from Geneva to Lausanne when fleeing from a suit of adultery which her husband, Pournas, filed in 1597. As the next reference to the picture in the late seventeenth century placed it in the Lausanne town hall, Bordier speculated that Marie de Gabiano might have given it as a present to the town (confer BORDIER, 1879, pp. 9-11; BORDIER, 1878, p. 56/36).
- 29 Vasari's depiction of St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Rome which will be treated below.
- 30 Topographical aspects: BORDIER, 1878, pp. 24/4, 50f. as well as 48/28; BORDIER, 1879, pp. 2, 25, 36, 38-38A; EHRMANN, 1972, p. 452; RADRIZZANI, 2003, p. 21. Other elements pointed to the constructed character of the painting, such as the construction as an overview picture with simultaneous scenes and parallels to the coulisse of the tragedy (Sebastiano Serlio).

This was presented with an overwhelmingly large amount of details in an accurate, eyewitness-like style.³¹

Dubois expressly developed the polarity of perpetrators and victims, one core element of the *topos* of massacre, as his guiding theme: While the committers were presented as uncivilised barbarians³², stocky, dark skinned, heavily built, some armed with cudgels, all with some headgear, their victims were unarmed, bare headed and mostly of a light skin tone. The male perpetrators,³³ reaching from youth to mid-aged, dressed like civilians and militia, attacked men and women regardless of age or rank, new-born babies as well as old men, nobles as well as simple people. They acted with extreme cruelty when dragging corpses through the streets with ropes around their neck and fired with archebuse at people drowning in the river. Masses of dead people lying in the streets, accumulations of naked bodies and blood spread on the ground, dead corpses floating in the Seine which was red with blood and fleeing people who were hunted down underlined the vast dimensions of this massacre.³⁴ These were depictions of the course of St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre as it might have happened, seeming to be realistic especially because

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- 31 Recently it has been suggested that Dubois – instead of being an eyewitness as it was hitherto assumed – used Simon Goulart's vast work *Mémoires de l' Estat de France sous Charles Neufiesme* as a basis for his picture (confer RADRIZZANI, 2003, pp. 25-27, esp. p. 25). A detailed analysis of the picture and Goulart's *Mémoires* has shown that the only superficial parallels are not forcing this interpretation. Nevertheless, a loose relation of Dubois to the work of Goulart remains possible (confer BORDIER, 1878, pp. 26/6, 29/9; BORDIER, 1879, p. 4; BENEDICT, 2007, p. 189, note 57).
- 32 On the use of the concept of the barbarian in the representations of the Religious Wars, confer: CROUZET, 1982, pp. 103-126.
- 33 Cruelties against female victims were committed mostly by other women. But women were not more likely to become victims of a massacre, although they were far more often represented, especially pregnant women (Confer EL KENZ, 2006, p. 8; DAVIS, 1974, pp. 229, 237). Dubois, however, did not include female offenders. The *massacreurs* were a cross-section of the local society, usually led by priests or militia, sometimes artists or lawyers, as well. The lowest classes who were not well-integrated into the parishes only participated in pillaging. Apart from those exercising violence, many were present to watch (confer DAVIS, 1974, pp. 218, 236-240; in addition: DIEFENDORF, 1991, esp. pp. 104f.).
- 34 The impression of the vast dimension of the massacre and the impossibility to escape it was supported by various details: Hunting of fleeing people, a carriage with corpses, closed town gates, the useless attempts to seek protection inside the houses. There was no safety zone left as especially the defenestration proved (confer JANZING, 2005, pp. 81f.).

they looked like typical elements of massacre depictions and therefore fulfilled the expectations of the viewers.

As Dubois placed his audience at the spot of a direct, immediate observer, he reduced the (emotional) distance between the spectator and the image. He achieved this effect, as several of the buildings and actors, intersected by the image borders, seemed to extend beyond the visible space and in the foreground the trail of blood reached out beyond the panel. It was as if the spectator was standing at the centre (core) of the event.

Apart from the (seemingly) authentic elements, Dubois interlaced biblical and antique motifs. Of course, the river stained with blood associated with apocalyptic imagery (Rev 16,4-16,7) and eschatological expectations.³⁵ The Massacre of the Innocents (Matt 2,16-18) had already been used in the context of mass violence judged to be unjustly committed during confessional struggles before Dubois' *St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre*. The perhaps most prominent parallel between the Massacre of the Innocents and contemporary Catholic misconduct of soldiers against unarmed Protestants was drawn by Pieter Brueghel the Older in his painting *The Massacre of the Innocents* (ca. 1565).³⁶ Dubois included a motif which had already proved to be apt, raising pity and compassion with the defenceless naked babies and women treated unjustly with extraordinary cruelty, as especially the scene where a woman's womb had been opened and the baby left lying amidst her bowels emphasised. In addition, there was a deeper-reaching implication: The parallel with the Massacre of the Innocents suggested a righteous, pious behaviour on the side of the victims (while the offenders opposed God) which evoked the image of God's chosen ones which was at the core of the Protestant self-perception.³⁷

As a representation already paralleled to the massive violence in the confessional struggle of sixteenth-century France well before *St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre*, Dubois employed elements taken from representations of the Antique Roman proscriptions and the Second Roman Triumvirate: Showing a beheading, financial motivations (bounty for beheading; pillage) as well as displaying prominently a group of three

35 On the importance of the end of the world-perception for Catholic violence, confer: CROUZET, 1990.

36 Confer BEIL, 2003, pp. 11-13; BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, esp. p. 21; EL KENZ, 2006, p. 8; EL KENZ, 1998, p. 228; BURSCHER, 2004, pp. 341-343.

37 On this Protestant image confer: JOUANNA, 2007, pp. 232-236; CROUZET, 1994, pp. 50, 158.

negatively connoted nobles in one scene³⁸, Dubois alluded to this popular contemporary motif prominently linked to the complex of persecution, suppression and mass violence in the contemporary discourse, though not exclusively known as representational traits of massacres. About twenty pictures from the mid-sixteenth century had treated the triumvirate as well as the mass killings of Sulla's proscriptions (from 82 BC and 43 BC) parallel to the recent French events, especially the aspect of civil war; among them Antoine Caron's famous *Massacres du Triumvirat* (ca. 1566) and with very different characteristics the many copies and adoptions of the painting by Hans Vredeman de Vries.³⁹ Those pictures developed the representation of predominant offenders, asymmetrical violence and masses of victims: they showed a mass of dead bodies, chaos, stacked corpses, sometimes naked, anonymous victims without individual features, beheaded, impaled, strangled and mutilated, not treated like humans, sometimes like trophies. Furthermore, defenestration, civilians and militia acting jointly and perpetrators looting the corpses were shown.⁴⁰ The great similarities with the massacre depiction by Dubois shows that those images of the triumvirate must have served as a model. Dubois even went one step further foiling the Catholics' justification: When they seized the opportunity to carry away clothes, bags and chests, they revealed low, profane motives such as acquisitiveness, instead of the self-assigned piety and purity in faith.⁴¹ This argumentation of *self-revelation* was

38 These three Catholic nobles maybe represented the duke of Guise, the chevalier of Angoulême and the duke of Aumale (confer BORDIER, 1878, p. 34/14; BORDIER, 1879, p. 26; BEIL, 2003, p. 14; RADRIZZANI, 2003, p. 20; DEONNA, 1943, p. 118; EL KENZ, 2006, p. 17). Bordier had named the three men, but when comparing them with contemporary portraits only vague similarities can be observed, because they rather represented types than individuals.

39 Confer EHLMANN, 1972, pp. 448-451; EHLMANN, 1945, pp. 195-199; CROUZET, 1994, pp. 252f.; EL KENZ, 2006, pp. 13-16; RADRIZZANI, 1998, p. 1; BORDIER, 1879, pp. 12-14. Burucúa and Kwiatowski suggested that Dubois' whole painting was based on the motif of the Triumvirate and Radrizzani insisted that the series following Vredemann de Vries was the main model for Dubois (confer BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, p. 11; RADRIZZANI, 1998, p. 1).

40 Confer EL KENZ, 1998, pp. 226-228; EHLMANN, 1972, pp. 448-451; BORDIER, 1879, pp. 12-14. *Massacre* was used as a metonym for a hunting trophy in the sixteenth century as well (confer EL KENZ, 2007a, p. 2).

41 On the Catholic self-assigned image and the motivation to act: DIEFENDORF, 1991, pp. 37f., 150, 153; JOUANA, 2007, p. 232; CROUZET, 1994, pp. 18f.; DAVIS, 1974, p. 211. Protestant presentations of Catholic motivations as profane: GREENGRASS, 1999, p. 72. There is another strategy Dubois has taken up as well: In order to legitimate their actions, the perpetrators imitated the legal system when using the

persuasive because the (above-mentioned) markers of authenticity supported the effect of an eyewitness-like report.

So far, Dubois employed quite established visualisations of mass violence illustrating the *topos* of massacre, developing above all polar images of victims and perpetrators as the core element of the *topos*. To heighten and further develop the main characteristics, Dubois included two quite different discourses of his time: firstly, the hunting, and secondly, the Turks.⁴² In both cases, the actors were described as unusually cruel, even barbaric and denying the value of their counterparts. Therefore, these allusions served Dubois to evoke prejudices and to induce an emotional negative attitude in his audience against the committers.

In the foreground, Dubois painted a scene arousing associations of a noble hunting party on their horses, accompanied by some dogs and a beater dressed in black. Other perpetrators bore a spike for a pig hunt. With the hunting-motif Dubois added a new element to his painting that had been discussed in the contemporary discourse on excessive violence in close connection with the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day and was quite a new motif to illustrate the topical character of a massacre. To that date the Turks had not been used widely to characterise the perpetrators in a massacre, although they appeared in different contexts to defame the actors paralleled with them. Dubois painted some of the perpetrators with an unusually dark complexion, a hooknose, black hair, cavernous eyes, a morion and scimitars, so that they alluded to the stereotyped image of the Turks. Thus, he linked the hereditary enemies of Christendom with the Catholic perpetrators in his depiction of St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, as a double condemnation.⁴³ Here, Dubois

official proceedings, instruments and places of execution, e.g. the execution place of Montfaucon, which Dubois represented on the hill on the left outside Paris (For this practice to imitate officials when acting out violence, confer: DAVIS, 1974, pp. 213-217, 234).

42 Confer BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, pp. 9, 13. Probably, Michel de Montaigne was the most prominent figure in this discussion apart from François Hotman ("chasse des huguenots"; anagram of King Charles IX: "chasseur déloyal"): Montaigne criticised the uncivilised cruelty of the hunt, the lack of pity and the cynic-playful handling of life, which was transferred to the context of the Wars of Religion to condemn the excessive violence (confer EL KENZ, 2007b, p. 7; KELLEY, 1972, p. 1338).

43 Confer MALETTKE, 2000, pp. 392-394; CROUZET, 1982, pp. 122f. Besides the destructive religious attack, the equalising with the Ottomans included a moral denunciation as well: Greed, disloyalty, a tyrannical and cruel nature were only some of the stereotypical characteristics assigned to the Turks (confer MALETTKE, 2000, p. 394). Protestant publications widely spread the polemic identification of

developed a new motif to represent a massacre which was then attached to the memory box.

Dubois organised his painting following the polarity of victims and perpetrators, as mentioned already. So far, we have seen allusions to the *topos* of massacre on different levels: Firstly, realistic depictions showed typical elements of a massacre as it might have happened. Secondly, older incidents of massive violence – be it biblical or antique – had previously served as references in the Wars of Religion and were linked to the *topos* of massacre. Thirdly, rather new motifs to further develop stereotypical judgments on perpetrators and victims appeared and were attached to the memory box.

In other parts of the painting, Dubois did not resort to the *topos*, but rather used a unique way of expressing his interpretation – however, once again aiming at the characterisation of the two polar groups of actors: François Dubois' visualisation reflected that the conviction of the heretic's deviance from the godly order was a Catholic construction. In Catholic conviction a heretic, by turning away from God, ceased to be a human being and his internal dehumanisation became apparent in his physical appearance.⁴⁴ One contemporary example for this belief is the famous triptych on the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre by Giorgio Vasari in the Sala Regia in the Vatican: the inhuman appearance of the Reformed was programmatically presented and contrasted with the idealised Catholics who fought heroically⁴⁵ –

the pope with the antichrist only after St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (confer BABEL, 2006, p. 111).

44 Confer CROUZET, 1994, pp. 18f.; EL KENZ, 2007b, p. 6; BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, pp. 4f. The ritual killing was meant to lay open the presence of the devil in the body of the Reformed, the mutilation of the body until it appeared non-human marked the departure of the Reformed from the Creation, the animalisation (e.g. execution on the swine market) highlighted the monstrosity of the Reformed body and the ordeal anticipated the agony in hell that awaited the Reformed (confer DIEFENDORF, 1991, p. 102; EL KENZ, 2006, p. 11; EL KENZ, 2007b, pp. 5f.). In their self-perception the Catholic community acted in priest-like function, as an instrument of God, in legal respect taking over magistrates' functions (confer CROUZET, 1994, p. 18; DIEFENDORF, 1991, pp. 6, 177; GREENGRASS, 1999, p. 72; DAVIS, 1974, esp. pp. 216f.).

45 Vasari's fresco was the only contemporary painting on St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre apart from Dubois' *St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre*. His triptych was part of a cycle of thirteen frescos in the pope's audience chamber, the Sala Regia in the Vatican, where it was placed prominently next to the papal chair. These frescoes were often regarded to form a unit with those showing the battle of Lepanto (1571), because they represented two Catholic victories against the unfaithful of some ideological, strategic importance to the pope. Apart from the

a stereotypical interpretation drawing on pre-set images of the same two groups of actors as in Dubois' depiction, but from the Catholic perspective. In contrast to Vasari, Dubois presented the dehumanisation of the Reformed body as a product of the violent acts of the Catholics: It was them who transformed human beings into masses of fragmented bones, of distorted parts of the body covered with unnaturally grey skin, the faces pale and distorted in horror.⁴⁶ By reversing the Catholic interpretation (of the Protestant being inhuman to the Catholic acting inhuman), Dubois turned the Catholic justification based on self-assigned piety into a revelation of deceitfulness.⁴⁷

Being a Reformed refugee himself, Dubois naturally did not portray degenerated, nonhuman fellow-believers. This is why the complex reversal of the Catholic argument seems to be rather a by-product in the painting. But, be it intentional or not, this line of reasoning was present in *St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre* and one possible interpretation that exceeded the hitherto typical representations of massacres.

Based on the arguments so far it seems obvious that most parts of the picture depicted a whole spectre of devaluating aspects about the Catholic perpetrators in an offensive, aggressive way, whereas the victims were much less in the focus,⁴⁸ even though the polarity – as a typical element of all massacre depictions – naturally only became obvious in relating perpetrators and victims. Even the depiction of a mass of weak, defenceless, dehumanised victims served first of all to characterise the offenders as cruel, barbarian and acting inhuman, as explained above.

The focus on accusing the Catholic opponent might be better understood when the moment of opening of the memory box by Dubois as he painted the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day is further contextualised by the Protestant struggle for identity. St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre marked a turning point for the Huguenot self-perception: there was a shift towards a more active,

fresco, the pope commissioned a commemorative coin for St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre with his portrait and an angel with a cross (confer RÖTTGEN, 1975, pp. 89, 97f.; HERZ, 1986, esp. pp. 41, 46f.; BURSCHEL, 2004, pp. 347-349; KINGDON, 1974, p. 26).

46 Many individual scenes associated with models such as the scene of the men hanged which might evoke the representation of the execution of Anne Du Bourg in the *Quarante Tableaux*, for example.

47 Similar argumentation in: BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, p. 11.

48 This seems to be a general tendency as El Kenz has pointed out (EL KENZ, 2006, p. 10).

belligerent, military-orientated self-perception.⁴⁹ To create a shared, collective memory of St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre was crucial to the Huguenot community in order to secure the continuation of a communal, if (slightly) changed identity despite or rather because of this massacre, which has been called a founding event.⁵⁰ The memory work was initially aimed at the present Reformed community to create a collective memory, but in a longer perspective also at the future, enforcing their interpretation of the events in competition with Catholic interpretation.

In representations, a balance had to be found between complying with expectations of what a massacre was like, the possibilities to use the *topos* as a means to persuade and the necessity to develop the concrete St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre – even as a unique event. So far, Dubois' painting mirrored a Reformed reading of the massacre which had become predominant: Catholic opponents appeared in stereotypical depictions as an antitype of the Protestant self-perception, which was visualised using different motifs attached to layers from the memory box. Few elements in the picture had alluded to the concrete historical events in August 1572, but there were more: The new aggressive self-assured air of the Protestants was clearly expressed in the concrete assignments of responsibility to the Royal family.

Catherine of Medici was illustrated as the antitype of the Virgin of Mercy, spreading her black veil over a mass of dead bodies and thus perverting the highly emotionally loaded symbol of comfort and protection into its opposite.⁵¹ This negative characterisation was a general attack on Catherine reaching

49 After the massacre, the community still perceived itself as the chosen people and aimed at a coalescence with God, but as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre was seen as a serious threat to their existence, the French Protestants chose to focus harder on their temporal survival (confer EL KENZ, 2007b, p. 2; JOUANNA, 2007, pp. 237f., 251; DIEFENDORF, 1991, p. 144; BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, p. 17).

50 Confer EL KENZ, 2007b, p. 3.

51 Confer CORNETTE, 1995, p. 117; EL KENZ, 2006, pp. 17f. There are various engravings for this representation type of Catherine de Medici dressed completely in black, examining the piles of bodies during St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (confer JOUANNA, 1998, p. 203). More often Catherine of Medici appeared as the new Jezabel, the Old Testament Queen who sold out the Israel people out of lust for power, unscrupulousness and her misbelief in Baal. She was claimed to be the incarnation of the bad and godless government, handing over France to the devil (confer EL KENZ, 2006, p. 3; JOUANNA, 1998, p. 108; CROUZET, 1999, p. 103; KINGDON, 1988, p. 73).

beyond her concrete comportment during the events in August 1572.⁵² The inversion of expectations and viewing habits in regard to the Queen mother as an antitype of the Virgin of Mercy was a personalised and specific interpretation developed by Dubois that was not apt to be generalised and included into the representations of the *topos* of massacre.

Concerning the representation of the king, Dubois provided a reading linked more closely to the general representation of the perpetrators in a massacre than the very individual depiction of Catherine of Medici. King Charles IX (“le Roy chasseur”) was painted shooting out of the window of his palace at those subjects who were trying to escape the massacre.⁵³ This resumed the motif of the hunt,⁵⁴ which served, as shown above, to further develop the characterisation of brutal, scrupulous mass killing and the tendency to deny to the victims being human, linked to the *topos* of massacre. King Charles IX was degraded to being one fierce committer among others, although the portrayal of the king as a hunter of his subjects was an accusation on a different level. Hardly any other visual Protestant representation, neither the earlier on massacres nor those on St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre, went as far as Dubois when painting the King’s active participation in mass violence. This image of the king highlighted his failure to act kingly and fulfil the demands of his office (protect his subjects, guarantee peace and order). As a result, the painting questioned Charles’ integrity and status as king, tending to desacralize him.⁵⁵ As Denis Crouzet has put it, the moral destruction functioned as a political iconoclasm, which can be classified as kind of a

52 Catherine of Medici was assigned the primary responsibility for St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre, but she had already been blamed and attacked before for her widespread Italian network, her merchant background, her ambitions and reputed Machiavellian style of politics as well as her influence on the King, among others (confer CROUZET, 1982, p. 117; JOUANNA, 2007, pp. 15f., 255f.; KELLEY, 1972, p. 1336).

53 The focus on the royal family was intensified by the image’s formation because the alignments in the picture all led to the palace of the Louvre.

54 Confer EL KENZ, 2007b, p. 7; CROUZET, 1994, p. 296.

55 Charles was shown using brutal violence instead of the legitimate power of the king’s authority, which he applied to harm or even murder those subjects he should protect (confer CROUZET, 1994, pp. 24f., 184-205; JOUANNA, 1998, p. 31). Other attempts to desacralize the king had preceded St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre: Charles was compared to Achab, the husband of Jezabel, and thereby his ability and the competence to fight false belief were questioned (confer DIEFENDORF, 1991, pp. 151-153, 156f.; CROUZET, 1994, pp. 24, 124-141; RACAUT, 2002, p. 39).

substitutional regicide or rather tyrannicide.⁵⁶ Connections to early modern discourses of a legal right of resistance (especially the Monarchomachs), which were led with new verve after St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, can easily be drawn.⁵⁷ Obviously, Dubois here connected different contemporary discourses in an individual manner, thus deviating clearly from the hitherto experienced way of depicting a massacre.

Up to this point, the focus was placed on the dominating complex accusation of Catholic perpetrators on various levels – topical traits and concrete aspects of the massacre on St. Bartholomew's Day. The weak, dehumanised victims had served above all to mirror the character of the perpetrators and picture the vast dimension of the massacre. This accusative interpretation of the massacre, meant to mobilise Protestants, tended to interpret the events on St. Bartholomew's Day as unique, without comparison and surpassing earlier massacres. The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre was remembered as a watershed.

In addition, Dubois included another interpretation of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, embedding the recent massacre in a continuous narration of Protestant suffering: Several Protestants in Dubois' painting appeared glorified, following certain traits of the iconography of martyrs.⁵⁸ They were presented with a certain dignity in their long black coats or dresses, kneeling on the ground, their hands folded, their faces turned upwards towards heaven or their eyes fixed at a point of blankness as if they had their gaze turned inwards. Their white, pure skin contrasted with the red or brown complexion of the perpetrators. While those glorified were depicted with a certain dignity and individualised without representing a concrete historical person, the offenders' faces disappeared in the shadows under a hat or helmet so that they stayed anonymous. This depiction of Catholic committers invoked the association of depersonalised instruments of martyrdom, which only served as attributes to the martyr.

For his portrayal of the faithful men and women who were superior to their offenders, characterising the massacre victims as martyrs,⁵⁹ Dubois took up a

56 Confer CROUZET, 1999, p. 111.

57 Confer EL KENZ, 2006, pp. 17f.; JOUANNA, 2007, p. 259; CROUZET, 1999, pp. 99f.; KINGDON, 1988, p. 75; KINGDON, 1974, p. 29. On the monarchomaques confer: MELLET, 2006, pp. 79-99.

58 On the *topos* of martyrdom confer the article by Kristina Müller-Bongard in this book.

59 Confer EL KENZ, 2007b, p. 3.

well-established layer of the memory box: the idealisation of the victims visualised in the motif of the faithful men and women with martyr-like traits. This image of the martyrs loaded heavily with emotion had already been used in earlier massacre representations such as in the *Quarante Tableaux*⁶⁰ and was therefore already attached to the memory box. But while those depictions took up traits of martyr iconography, victims of a massacre were in contemporary discourse distinguished from martyrs being only persecuted believers.⁶¹

Dubois inscribed himself into a narration of continued Protestant suffering which formed the core of Reformed communal memory; to invoke the hagiographical roots at the base of the reformed self-image functioned as an offer for the identification with the victims and integration into Protestant memory work. This allowed him to draw on established representational types,⁶² evoking assigned meanings and positive emotional associations: Those who suffered for their belief and thus proved themselves worthy were attested to be God's own people and provided an example for the believer and served as a fix point for integrative communal self-perception.⁶³ This interpretation of St. Bartholomew's Day encased the recent events in a continuous narration of Protestant suffering. Understanding the massacre as one among others allowed to accept patterns as to how to handle and represent the extreme violence by repeating motifs, taking up experienced representations, drawing on layers

60 Confer EL KENZ, 2006, p. 9; BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, pp. 13, 21. Generally, Dubois orientated himself on the *Quarante Tableaux* by Jean Perrissin and Jacques Tortorel (confer BENEDICT, 2007, p. 189, note 57; EHRMANN, 1945, p. 195).

61 In the *History of Martyrs (Histoire des martyrs persecutez et mis a mort pour la verité de l'Évangile)* by JEAN CRESPIN the victims of massacres were labelled "fidèles persecutés", but not martyrs. The representation of their sufferings was summarized and often depersonalized (EL KENZ, 2006, p. 10; EL KENZ, 1998, p. 225; JOUANNA, 2007, p. 239). Only when Goulart took over the *Histoire des Martyrs*, the witness to the faith in a massacre started to converge the representational status of the martyr (confer VOGEL, 2006, p. 158; EL KENZ, 2006, pp. 9f.; RACAUT, 2002, p. 120).

62 Among the many Protestant martyrologies (John Foxe, Ludwig Rabe as well as Heinrich Pantaleone, Johann Sleidan, Flacius Illyricus) the one by Jean Crespin, *History of Martyrs*, was extraordinarily influential for France (KELLEY, 1972, pp. 1324f.; BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, pp. 15, 22). Simon Goulart continued the *History of Martyrs* after the death of Jean Crespin in April 1572 and used large parts of the scenes described on St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in his *Mémoires* as well (confer RADRIZZANI, 2003, pp. 23f.; JOUANNA, 2007, pp. 238f.; BENEDICT, 2007, p. 125; RACAUT, 2002, p. 80).

63 Confer VOGEL, 2006, pp. 156f.; CROUZET, 1994, among others: pp. 40, 47, 125, 155, 158-179; JOUANNA, 2007, pp. 244, 247, 252; LESTRINGANT, 2003, pp. 113f.

from the memory box and giving examples of model behaviour or by just realising that the community had gone through this before and survived – even though the vast dimension of St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre provoked a Protestant crisis.⁶⁴ In this respect, the *topos* provided orientation.

The function of a model and fix point for identification was personified in the Reformed Admiral Gaspard de Coligny⁶⁵, to whom Dubois assigned a unique role, being the sole person depicted various times in his painting, neither as a hero nor a martyr.⁶⁶ While Coligny shared the fate of his coreligionists in being brutally killed, dehumanised and mocked, his portrayal did not draw on stereotypical elements, but was unique and personal. This singularity made the admiral and his fate memorable, apt to become an integrative figure of positive Protestant self-perception in regard to the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.

Dubois' interpretation of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre has received wide publicity today and become quite influential as part of cultural memory with respect to the Wars of Religion. Thanks to exhibitions, illustrations of school books and research monographs, even Wikipedia-articles on this massacre, Dubois' interpretation seems omnipresent. However, it has been widely ignored that Dubois had interwoven layers from the *topos* of massacre into his painting instead of giving an account of the event. Examining the painting *St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre* might provoke new openings of the memory box when emotional connotations and pre-set images linked to the *topos* of massacre are evoked, possibly in the persuasive sense in which Dubois made use of the *topos*, possibly in a different manner, taking into account that new layers have been added when this box was displaced and opened over the past centuries (e.g. colonial context; massacre of the Armenians).

However, whether the painter's interpretation was influential in adding new layers to the memory box and attaching new types of representation of the *topos* of massacre which then were used when the box was displaced and

64 Confer DIEFENDORF, 1991, pp. 142-144; JOUANNA, 2007, pp. 231-252, esp. pp. 244, 247; RACAUT, 2002, p. 79.

65 Among others: JOUANNA, 2007, p. 241; JANZING, 2005, p. 97; KINGDON, 1988, p. 32; KINGDON, 1974, p. 27; BURUCÚA/KWIATKOWSKI, 2012, p. 15.

66 He is the sole historical person represented simultaneously in the painting, accompanied on his imitation of the Stations of the Cross (confer JANZING, 2005, pp. 80f.): the militia threw his body out of the window, one man cut off the admiral's head, hands and genitals, observed by three nobles, and two civilians dragged the deformed body in the direction of the town gate. However, neither of the scenes was placed in the centre of the picture.

opened again, is uncertain. Dubois' importance for establishing a certain reading of St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in the Protestant community and thereby help to create a collective memory at his time, is even more doubtful. Because of the lack of sources it is impossible to decide how contemporaries understood *St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre* at the moment when Dubois opened the memory box. Clear allusions to the painting in scripture or visual depictions are not known with one exception: More than one hundred years after the creation of the painting, two travelling Swiss briefly mentioned having seen it in the Lausanne town hall – but without further commenting it.⁶⁷ Apparently, Dubois' interpretation did not receive much attention. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was even put in an attic, completely forgotten but rediscovered a few years later (1841).⁶⁸ Only since the end of the nineteenth century, when the painting was reproduced and a first broader examination was conducted, Dubois' reading of St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre started to gain more and more attention.⁶⁹

67 Concerning later understandings of the image there are some sources left, even if only a few: In 1686, the painting is known to have hung in the Lausanne town hall. Labrune and Reboulet, two French Reformed, who visited the Reformed parishes in the Swiss Confederation, saw it there, as reported in their *Voyage de Suisse*. Their description shows that the picture was seen above all as a representative object which was accessible at least for a limited public; however, it did not provoke the two Frenchmen to reflect on the depicted event or even to discuss the interpretation Dubois had given. Apart from some very short remarks on the state of the painting, neither scriptural references nor any interpretation of the picture in other visual sources is known (Confer GRANDJEAN, 1965, p. 411).

68 Confer BORDIER, 1878, p. 31/11; BORDIER, 1879, p. 9; BEIL, 2003, p. 19, note 51. In 1862 the painting was made available for permanent exhibition in the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts where it is still today.

69 Only at the end of the nineteenth century did a more intense examination of this picture begin: Alexandre Duruy produced the lithographic print *La Saint-Barthélemy à Paris (24 août 1572)* after Dubois' picture in 1878 (confer BORDIER, 1878, p. 56/36 and image 1/appendix; BORDIER, 1879, p. 24, image 5), and, in the same year, the French historian Henri Bordier published the first scholarly reflections on the painting.

Visualising a non-representable event? – Dubois' usage of the *topos* of massacre

Without doubt, in the aftermath of St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre many competing interpretations of the recent events circulated. The categorisation as a massacre helped to make the event – difficult to determine, even seen as non-representable – manageable. Thus, patterns and pre-set images as well as a whole array of layers to draw on were provided to overcome the overwhelming character of the events by organising the perception as well as representation. Therefore, traits of the concrete event and topical aspects were interwoven in depictions.

In the context of the ongoing negotiation processes about the Reformed communal identity after St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, closely linked to the question how to memorise the event, François Dubois opened the memory box when he painted *St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre* in Geneva between 1572 and 1584. To present a persuasive account, Dubois cited core facts from the historical massacre as markers of authenticity and credibility which directly alluded to St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (e.g. the Louvre, the defenestration of Admiral Coligny) and immediacy placing the audience in the position of an on-site observer. In addition, he integrated unallocated, stereotypical elements from the general type of event of massacre, such as the omnipresence of blood and corpses and the extreme brutality of the perpetrators.

His guiding theme was the simplifying polarity of victims and perpetrators and most representational traits evoked layers from the memory box linked with the characterisation of these two groups, namely victims and committers. Dubois was able to draw on pre-set images to evoke prejudices and already existing emotional judgements, citing biblical and antique motifs which had already served as references in the Wars of Religion and were linked to the *topos* of massacre: While the motif of the massacre of the Innocents evoked the parallel to pure, righteous, pious victims (God's chosen), the allusion to Sulla's proscriptions and the Second Roman Triumvirate revealed low profane, financial motives, for example. *St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre* included rather new motifs, hitherto not closely linked to the *topos* of massacre, taken from contemporary discourses, in which the actors were described as unusually cruel and denying the value of their counterparts (the Turks, the hunt). This emphasis on a devastating characterisation of the Catholic committers was

driven even further: Catholic justifications (using the dehumanised Protestant bodies as a marker) were turned into their opposite, declassing the Catholics themselves through their inhuman behaviour, cruelty and deceitfulness. Dubois developed ways to further highlight the condemnation of the perpetrators exceeding the hitherto known depictions of a massacre, departing from the concrete events in August 1572.

A rather aggressive self-assurance of the Protestant community – connected to the interpretation of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre as a unique event without comparison – was expressed in the concrete assignments of responsibility to the Royal family, questioning King Charles IX integrity and status as king, tending to desacralise him (substitutional regicide). As counterpart of the perpetrators, Dubois used the established representational type of the martyr-like victim, already attached to the memory box well before. Thus, Dubois embedded his interpretation of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre – then understood as one massacre among others – into the continuous narration of Protestant suffering. Invoking the hagiographical roots on which the Reformed self-image was based, Dubois provided an anchor for identification and a collective memory. Coligny was singled out as the integrative figure, a symbol of a communal Huguenot memory.

Dubois gave a complex interpretation of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, drawing on the memory box on various levels. As there was apparently not much publicity for Dubois' opening of the memory box at his time, his interpretation had then little impact, whereas today the painting has become the best known visual depiction of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. The painting therefore provides an access point to the handling of the *topos* of massacre by Dubois when enforcing his interpretation of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.

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