



A Companion to
Medieval Art
Romanesque and Gothic
in Northern Europe

Second Edition

Edited by

Conrad Rudolph

WILEY Blackwell

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Edition History

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Series Editor's Preface

Wiley Blackwell Companions to Art History is a series of edited collections designed to cover the discipline of art history in all its complexities. Each volume is edited by specialists who lead a team of essayists, representing the best of leading scholarship, in mapping the state of research within the subfield under review, as well as pointing toward future trends in research.

This *Companion to Medieval Art* presents a challenging set of essays that give a clear analytical survey of what is happening in this major area of Western art history. Attention is paid to the historiography of the period; theories of the image, reception, and vision; architectural design; and the concept of revival with particular reference to a broad range of Northern European examples. Together, these themes combine to provide an exciting and varied study that will be essential reading for students and teachers of medieval art.

As one of the first volumes to appear, *A Companion to Medieval Art* set the tone and pace for new and innovative approaches offered in this series, and its publication in this new edition is a reflection of the impact it has had on the field of study.

Dana Arnold, 2005 and 2019



Preface to the First Edition

In a work specifically devoted to the theory and practice of learning, Hugh of St. Victor, the great Parisian scholar and polyhistor, wrote in around 1125: “The number of books is infinite – don’t chase after the infinite.” A few pages later, however, this ally of Bernard of Clairvaux and apparent advisor to Abbot Suger on his famous art program at St.-Denis also said: “Learn everything ... nothing is superfluous!” Herein lies the sometimes almost overwhelming challenge to the scholar. To say that scholarship has grown a bit since the early twelfth century would be facetious. We all know that there is too much to read, that it is impossible to keep current with the vast output of a given field, something that is no less true for the medieval art historian than it is for the scholar of any other field. (Cf. the words of the exceptionally well-read Willibald Sauerländer in *The Cloisters*, ed. E. Parker, p. 29.) Yet, as scholarship grows, it seems as if there has never been a greater desire, even necessity, to understand the issues and arguments that have contributed to the formation of the current state of the field. The present book is an attempt to respond to this dilemma for the medieval art historian, to help strike a balance between the desire to have a broad and informed historiographical grasp of the field and the near impossibility of achieving this.

There have been a number of good historiographical studies on medieval art in the past, both overviews and more narrowly focused pieces. But there has been nothing in English that has attempted the breadth of this work, nothing that has approached the subject through such a wide variety of discrete themes and media, topics both that have been of concern for many generations and that are of more recent interest. This volume is one of the first in an ambitious new series whose goal is “to map the state of research” throughout world art history. It has as its geographical and chronological limits Northern Europe during the Romanesque and Gothic periods (c.1000–1300). It will later be joined by a volume covering the Early Christian through Ottonian and Byzantine periods, as well as by one

that incorporates the later Middle Ages. It is aimed at both scholars and advanced undergraduates.

Aside from the series' limits on chronology, geography, and the number and length of the essays, there were very few other restrictions imposed on this volume. I conceived of it in a way that I hope will address the needs of the field as broadly as possible. After a broad introduction are a number of chapters on current methodological or conceptual issues (vision, reception, narrative, etc.). These are followed by several thematic pieces that might be thought of as unconnected to any specific media (image theory, patronage, collecting, etc.), some presentations of long-established subfields (architecture, sculpture, painting, the sumptuous arts, the Crusader states), a few thematic studies that are either subsets or groupings of the subfields (architectural layout, sculptural programs, pilgrimage art, etc.), and finally two chapters on medieval art in the modern era (modern revivals of medieval architecture and the modern medieval museum). In all this, there has been a conscious mix of older and younger scholars.

Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, not every topic that I would like to have had covered was able to be included. And while it is my belief it is virtually impossible to have a truly satisfying organization with this particular material because of the fundamental conceptual unity of so much of medieval art and the resultant interlocking nature of much of its scholarship, I certainly might have conceived of the selection of essays differently after having gone through the experience of participating in this project, an undertaking with its own challenges.

In the same way that I was given nearly complete freedom as editor, so I used this as a guiding principle for the contributing authors, believing that it is not only impossible to impose universal standards on independent-minded scholars in a case like this, but that it is wrong to try. I asked them to trace out past issues, current trends, and, when possible, what might seem to be future directions. I also asked them to find a balance between a "factual" recounting of the previous literature and their own scholarly opinions, so that the essays would be both of value to students and of interest to scholars. This was not an easy charge, especially given the strict length limits imposed by the series. Nor were the basic parameters of each essay similar. Some authors were heavily burdened with nineteenth-century precedent, while others dealt with topics that have not yet found headings in the periodical indexes. In the end, one chapter may approach its subject in such a way as to be a model of analysis of the secondary literature, another may give a great deal of attention to the establishment of crucial formative institutions, and another still may approach the topic from the angle of the work of art. Some pull the literature together in a way not done before, contributing a dimension of additional analysis and so take the subject further than before. All reveal how generation after generation of scholars approached the subject – archeological strata of understanding that have shaped our conception of the field today. As a group, they exemplify perhaps every mindset (and combinations of mindsets) that can be applied to the subject: traditional and innovative, pragmatic and creative, clinically analytical and broadly reflective. Ultimately, this

is not a systematic historiography of medieval art – something that could only be written by a single author – but a collection of essays covering a broad number of topics and taking a varied number of approaches. But it is also one that, I hope, will help build bridges between the different subfields of medieval art history for those of us who are increasingly forced to pursue our own areas of study in seeming isolation.

Finally, while scholars have always recognized the importance of a historiographical understanding of the field, there seems to be an increasingly strong feeling today that such an understanding also helps facilitate learning on the part of students. Many of the concepts and issues that run throughout this book represent, for me, some of my earliest memories of the study of art history. Working with these concepts and issues in the course of producing this volume has underscored for me the excitement of studying medieval art history, reminded me why I got into the field in the first place – something I hope will also be the case with the younger scholars who use this book.

A work like this is the result of many debts. I would first like to thank the authors of this volume themselves. I know that each one of them had his or her own research waiting when I first approached them, research that was set aside in order to take on this work as a service to the field. Three, in particular, worked on through personal adversities of the most trying kind. Another, the late Harvey Stahl, courageously took up his essay though he knew he might be unable to complete it. I would also like to express my gratitude to those colleagues who generously suggested potential authors for some of the essays in this book, including Dana Arnold, Stacy Boldrick, Michelle Brown, Caroline Bruzelius, Brigitte Buettner, Annemarie Weyl Carr, Paul Crossley, Eric Fernie, Jaroslav Folda, Roberta Gilchrist, Christa Grössinger, Cynthia Hahn, Anne D. Hedeman, Anne Higonnet, Herb Kessler, Peter Kurmann, and Elizabeth Pastan. And I would most particularly like to thank the tireless and supportive series editor, Dana Arnold, for the important role she played in the production of both the series and this volume.

Conrad Rudolph, 2005



Preface to the Second Edition

When I was asked a number of years ago (in late 2001) to put together a relatively comprehensive volume of original historiographical essays by different authors on the development of Western European art history north of the Alps and Pyrenees and including the Latin States of the East from around 1000 to around 1300, I readily agreed, seeing the undertaking as a service to the field, something for a few like-minded souls, sitting out on Skellig. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that the volume produced (early 2006) would be so widely read that it would go into paperback just a few years later (2010) – who would have thought, for a thick tome of 30 essays on the historiography of Romanesque and Early to High Gothic art and architecture! Even more surprising was that, not long after (2014), I was asked to oversee a second edition, for which the publishers would allow an additional 10 new essays (ultimately there are a total of 39). Certainly, the reason for this success is the unusually high quality of the essays in conjunction with the particular thematic, medium, and period range of subjects that the essays take up.

Everything I said in the preface to the first edition also applies to the second. The goal of this book is an attempt to ameliorate the almost near impossibility of keeping current with all the different areas of research in the field on a historiographical level. The authors are an intentional mix of older and younger scholars. The book is intended for both scholars and advanced undergraduates, with the hope that it will be used in teaching. The essays have been shaped to a certain extent by the limits set by the series on chronology, geography, and the number and length of the pieces. In most cases, the essays present a straightforward historiography combined with the author's own scholarly opinion, clearly distinguished. And, it is my belief that it would be impossible, counterproductive, and ultimately wrong to attempt to enforce some kind of artificial uniformity of method or concept on this diverse, highly educated, and intellectually independent body of authors.

The second edition has not just provided an opportunity to bring the essays of the first edition up to date (all essays have been revised but one, the author of the article on art and exegesis no longer being active in research). It has also allowed the addition of a number of new essays that have gone far in strengthening an already strong volume. Some of these essays were envisioned for the first edition but were not able to be written at the time, namely Jeffrey Hamburger's piece on the art and architecture of female monasticism (that is, a historiography on female art and spirituality, as opposed to Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz's historiographical essay on gender and art more broadly speaking), and Shirin Fozi's on iconography. Others that were planned for the first edition but that could not be fit in finally appear: the essay on liturgy and art by Eric Palazzo and the one on the history of the museum of medieval art by Janet Marquardt – the latter history seeming somehow to complement this otherwise largely historiographical body of essays. Others, still, fill a gap that arose only in the course of the writing of the first edition, namely the chapters by Kathryn A. Smith and Michael Curschmann on English and German Gothic manuscripts, respectively. The essay by Jacqueline Jung gives a more comprehensive presentation of the historiography of Gothic sculpture. That by Michalis Olympios on the art of the Latin states in the Mediterranean outside of the Holy Land was necessitated by our rapidly changing understanding of the subject brought about by important new research that has appeared only since the first edition. And some present subjects have been significantly reconceived in one way or another especially since the first edition – Beate Fricke's writing on the artist, Aden Kumler's on materiality, and Cynthia Hahn's on the reliquary. Continuing the first edition's dual strategy of both thematic and chronological essays, these new writings have been integrated into the earlier logical structure of the volume as seems best. I would have liked to include other subjects (and authors) but, unfortunately, space would not allow it – and others still, no doubt, will emerge in the future.

As editor of this volume, I cannot thank these 37 authors enough, none of whom had ever planned to write these challenging essays or had the time in their often overwhelming schedules to do so, but all of whom agreed – sometimes not without a little convincing – and simply made the time, as a service to the field. To say that this volume would not be possible without them would be in some way to miss the point: they *are* the volume. One of them, Michael Curschmann (1936–2017), passed away during the course of the production of this volume. A formidable scholar but also a very generous and collegial one, we have been fortunate to have him as a fellow author and he will be sorely missed. Jayne Fagnoli, formerly Executive Editor at Wiley (formerly Wiley Blackwell, formerly Blackwell), not only suggested this second edition but skillfully guided it through the approval process. It certainly would not have been possible without her. Nor would it have been possible in its current form without the valued advice and support of a number of people, including Stacy Boldrick, Shirin Fozi, Cynthia Hahn, Cecily Hilsdale, Janet Marquardt, Tassos C. Papacostas, Lucy Freeman Sandler, and Kathryn A. Smith.

Finally, let me just say that I see this volume as an undeniable manifestation of the continuing and continuously developing vibrancy of the field of medieval art history in its communal effort to better understand not just earlier generations' but also our own sorting through "the shipwreck of time" (Bacon, 1605).

Conrad Rudolph, 2018



Introduction: A Sense of Loss: An Overview of the Historiography of Romanesque and Gothic Art

Conrad Rudolph

*Little Jack Horner
Sat in the corner,
Eating a Christmas pie;
He put in his thumb
And pulled out a plum,
And said, What a good boy am I!*

So began for Glastonbury, as it had for countless other monasteries, the destruction of the ancient, wealthy, and powerful institution of monasticism – or, according to a different view, the defeat of an oppressor, or, according to another still, the transition of Christianity into the modern age. But it was also, in a way, the birth of medieval art historiography, a birth with a very long period of labor. When Jack (or Thomas) Horner (as the nursery rhyme is popularly and probably correctly understood to relate) rode into London from Glastonbury in 1539, three years after the Dissolution of the Monasteries had begun and one before it

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Edited by Conrad Rudolph.

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would end, he carried with him a gift from Abbot Richard Whiting of Glastonbury for King Henry VIII. The gift was a mince pie and, apparently having a sweet tooth, Horner, the abbot's steward, extracted one of twelve manorial deeds (the one for Mells Manor, a real "plum," as we still say today) hidden in the pie before delivering it in accord with the abbot's intention of sweetening Henry's decision regarding Glastonbury in the Dissolution process.¹ A man of prodigious appetite, Henry's hunger was not so easily satisfied and – even before Horner had served on the jury in a sham trial that condemned the abbot, his master, to death – he consumed Glastonbury as well, perhaps the oldest and one of the wealthiest abbeys in England. Among the last monasteries to hold out during the Dissolution – a great pilgrimage place with legendary associations with the beginnings of Christianity in the British Isles, Joseph of Arimathaea, St. Patrick, King Arthur, and Dunstan – Glastonbury's riches were plundered, its lands sold, and its great buildings demolished. (Little Jack Horner's descendants still live in the manor at Mells.) In all, 577 religious houses were suppressed by Henry – 200 of them great institutions with substantial holdings – their buildings torn down, their artworks destroyed, and their libraries dispersed.² With this, one of the great cultural institutions of Britain ceased to exist.

Around the same time, the medieval patrimony of Northern and Central Europe suffered irreparably from a series of wars, uprisings, and acts of iconoclasm that took place following the momentous posting of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses at Wittenberg in 1517. And in France, the Wars of Religion (1562–1598) were virtually unrivaled in their destruction of the French artistic inheritance.

The breadth and finality of this destruction would bring about a sense of loss that combined with a number of other vital factors such as incipient antiquarianism, the early development of national identity, and a general spread of education that would lead, eventually, to the formation of the field of medieval art history as we have it today. This field, however, can be a multifaceted one, and the times since the Reformation have been no less complex than those in which the very first "medievalists" worked. In the hope that the chapters in this book might be better understood by those readers unfamiliar with the general history of the writing of medieval art history, this introduction will attempt to give a brief overview of this history, a basic narrative, to explain, as best it can, how we got here from there.

The Pre-History of Medieval Art Historiography

Already in the midst of the wreckage that followed in the wake of the Reformation, the first steps were taken to preserve from total loss the vestiges, both documentary and physical, of a rapidly disappearing culture, a culture seen as both compelling and threatening, even at the same time. This spontaneous and erratic rescue arose first in Britain and only later elsewhere in Western Europe, originally always the result of individuals operating on their own initiative, whatever their

professional positions and institutional support may have been. But, in a sense, the historiography of medieval art began long before its writing and before the rescue of medieval culture's remains in the formation and continuation of the authority of Classical art. This was an authority so overwhelming that it acted as an almost insurmountable barrier to an acceptance of the standards of medieval artistic culture in general and of the aesthetic basis of medieval art in particular. It was also an authority that had a long and venerable ancestry in the historiography of Western art.

Not long after what is now called the Late Classical period, the first known history of Greek art was written by Xenocrates (fl. 280 BCE), a history that is believed to have taken as its basic theme the systematic progress toward the perfection of naturalistic or illusionistic rendering through the solving of formal problems by a succession of famous artists. Xenocrates' writing has not survived, nor have those of his contemporaries, such as Douris of Samos (c.340–260 BCE), who is thought to have put the history of art that he wrote into the form of a series of biographies. However, both Xenocrates and Douris, among others, were heavily used by Pliny the Elder in his great *Natural History* (71–77 CE). Pliny continued the concept found in their work of a clear trajectory of phases of broad stylistic development from initial formation to perfection, and from perfection to decline, this perfection being seen as reaching its high point in the High and Late Classical periods. He also generally followed the biographical format, which was a very popular one. Unlike most of the other early writings on art, Pliny's did survive and served as an enormously influential model in the first centuries of early modern art historical writing. In no small part because of this, from the very beginning of early modern art history and for more than two hundred years to come, the standards by which art was judged were those of naturalism, and the format in which the history of art was presented was typically that of the biography. Or, put another way, the paradigm of art historical writing was that of the historically known individual advancing the naturalistic and illusionistic standards of the Classical period. Equally as critical for the historiography of medieval art was the stylistic developmental model of initial formation, naturalistic perfection, and eventual decline. From the very beginning, the deck was stacked against the art of the Middle Ages with a standard that was generally foreign to medieval culture, which, for much of its history, privileged the abstract and the iconic over the naturalistic and illusionistic; and which saw the role of the artist as that of a craftsman, irredeemably below those individuals within medieval culture – saints, great ecclesiastics, and the most important nobles – who were thought of as worthy of having their lives and deeds recorded.

The changes that the naturalistic and biographical paradigms underwent in the beginning of early modern art historical writing were, for the purposes of this introduction, moderate. But the stylistic developmental model of initial formation, perfection, and decline was to be reconceived in a way that Pliny and his contemporaries could never have imagined at the height of the Roman Empire. In the mid-fourteenth century, with Petrarch, an awareness arose in

Italian humanist circles not only of the decline of civilization that accompanied the fall of Rome, which had never been in question, but also of a Classical (that is, “Roman”) cultural revival in their own time. Petrarch referred to the decline as a time of “darkness,” a time of almost unrelieved ignorance – this first articulation of the idea of “the Dark Ages” being, clearly, a negative one (1337–1338).³ Soon, Boccaccio (1348–1353) and others applied this concept to the history of art, although in an unsystematic way, most notably in regard to Giotto (1267/75–1337). It was only a matter of time before historians such as Flavio Biondo came to see the interval between the empire and their own time as a distinct period (posthumous 1483), something Biondo’s contemporaries and immediate followers gradually formalized with terms such as *media tempestas* (1469), *media aetas* (1518), and *media tempora* (1531). (The actual term *medium aevum*, the direct Latin of “the Middle Age” or “the Middle Ages” as the source of the word “medieval,” is first found at least by 1604; with the English equivalent appearing immediately afterwards with “the Middle Age” being used by William Camden in 1605 and “the Middle Ages” by Henry Spelman in 1616.⁴) By the early fifteenth century, Niccolò Machiavelli presented a flexible cyclical theory of history (posthumous 1531), largely based on the work of the Greek historian of ancient Rome, Polybius.⁵

In regard to the historiography of medieval art, these developments took their definitive form in the work of Giorgio Vasari, considered by some to be the founder of (early) modern art history. There had been earlier writings on the history of art from Italian humanist circles, including by the sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti (begun c.1447), but Vasari’s *Le vite de più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori* (1550; rev. edn. 1568) is regarded as the first modern history of art because of its broader, more synthetic, and more critical nature. Following the precedent of Pliny, Vasari presents a history of (largely Italian) art employing a standard of naturalistic progress and a format based on biographies of the artists. On the one hand, his emphasis on technical knowledge and aesthetic judgment gave an enormous impetus to the practice of connoisseurship with its estimation of quality and the determination of attribution that was to dominate art historical discourse for so long. On the other, the biographical format, encouraged by the Italian humanist affinity for the individual, opened the biographical paradigm to the new topos of the artist as genius. (This realm of genius was apparently open only to practitioners of painting, sculpture, and architecture; Vasari is considered to be the source of the distinction between the so-called major and minor arts, a distinction that every period potentially faces but that is particularly disadvantageous to the medieval, whose book painting was considered a “minor art” until the late nineteenth century.) At the same time, in also employing a variation of Pliny’s stylistic developmental model of initial formation, perfection, and decline, Vasari was forced to address something Pliny never was: the millennium and a half of artistic activity since Pliny’s death in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

If Pliny could interpret a few hundred years of what he saw as an artistic decline in his own time simply as the result of an essentially moral decline, Vasari was

compelled to explain more than a thousand years of what he saw as an artistic decline of “morally superior” Christian culture with reference to both the Classical period and his own time – as well as in light of recent developments in the Italian humanist view of history. He did this by accounting for artistic decline, in general, not in moral terms but by conceiving of the pattern of artistic change as a biological cycle (birth, growth, old age, and death) superimposed on the history of the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Thus, the periods of initial formation and naturalistic perfection of the Classical world were followed by that of the decline of the arts of the Middle Ages (begun before the fall but fully realized through the destruction and culture of the Germanic invaders); the cycle then beginning again around the time of Giotto and others who strove toward the ideal of naturalistic perfection with a new sequence of initial formation, increasing perfection, and, finally, perfection itself (embodied in the work of Michelangelo). Vasari describes this process of the re-establishment of naturalistic standards as a “rebirth” (*rinascita*), our “Renaissance” – a concept that not only recognizes a self-conscious view toward the present and future, but also signals a consciousness of a break with the Classical past, any sense of continuity irrevocably ruptured by the Middle Ages. In an attempt to account for major artistic change as something more than technical advances, Vasari attributes this change to “the very air of Italy,” a very unphilosophical and conceptually unrelated predecessor of Hegel’s *Zeitgeist* and Riegl’s *Kunstwollen*, mentioned below. Vasari is, perhaps, most notoriously known among medievalists for his characterization of what is now called Gothic architecture as an invention of the Goths (or Germans), who “filled all Italy with these damnable buildings”; the reference to the Goths – including through the use of the adjective – being one that had been made by other writers earlier (and by Vasari himself) to indicate a much broader variety of forms of medieval architecture with which Italian humanists were out of sympathy.⁶ But his great importance for the historiography of medieval art lies in the fact that his work was so enormously influential throughout Europe that it gave the impression there was only one methodology, only one way of looking at art. This was a way that, in the emulation of Vasari’s own particular naturalistic and biographical paradigms and cyclical model of stylistic development, removed art from its cultural context and relegated medieval art to the low point of Western culture for more than two hundred years to come.

The Reformation and Its Aftermath

What was to Vasari only too ubiquitous, Gothic, was – in the broader sense of medieval culture – to many others now in danger of being lost. Since the mandate of this volume is Romanesque and Gothic art and architecture in Northern Europe, let’s return to England of the Dissolution to look at John Leland, the person who is generally described not as the first medieval art historian but as the first modern English antiquary.

In 1527, after 18 years of marriage without a male heir to the throne, Henry VIII began a series of efforts aimed at having his marriage with Catherine of Aragon annulled and his association with Anne Boleyn legitimized. Unable to achieve this end after seven years of contesting the issue (including a great deal of public pressure on the church in England), he broke with Rome in 1534 and began preparations for the Dissolution of the Monasteries mentioned at the opening of this introduction in that same year. The “visitations” began in 1535 and the monasteries were incrementally suppressed from the weakest to the strongest from February 1536 to March 1540. (In the end, the monasteries lasted longer than Anne, the second of the king’s six wives, who was beheaded in May 1536.) It was in the midst of this gradually escalating state of affairs, from 1534 to 1543, that John Leland undertook a project with the king’s support to research the libraries of all the monasteries and colleges of England, so that “the monuments of auncient writers as welle of other nations, as of this yowr owne province mighte be brought owte of deadely darkenes to lyvely lighte” (the latter possibly being a reference to Petrarch). Leland, who had been in Holy Orders and had been appointed Henry’s librarian around 1530, was an antiquarian (antiquarianism being a form of the study of the past that is based on physical as well as literary remains, typically with an aim toward classification rather than a comprehensive historical view). His antiquarian proposal, however, seems to have received an urgent impetus from the Dissolution, of which he approved but whose destruction of the ancient libraries he deeply regretted (even as he contributed to it himself in his acquisition of books for the king’s library). In the end, this already daunting project expanded its goals to include everything from libraries to inscriptions, important buildings, artistic remains, coins, and geography, in both England and Wales. The result is considered to be a significant innovation in antiquarian method, even if an uncritical one.⁷ Far less a study of art and architecture than it was a broad review of the topography and antiquities of the kingdom, Leland’s project remained unfinished when he was declared insane in 1547 at the age of around 44, dying five years later. His extensive notes, however, were widely known to the next generation of antiquaries who used them, cited them, and even indexed them. These were finally published in nine volumes from 1710 to 1712 as the *Itinerary*; further notes were published in six volumes in 1715 as the *Collectanea*. Some scholars believe that Leland’s insanity was the result of distress at the equivocal role he played in the destruction of his beloved libraries. However this may be, what is not in doubt is that the impetus for this seminal work was Leland’s strong sense of nationalism, and that its purpose was to contribute to an awakening of English national identity.

This sense of nationalism and of a need for a more clearly defined national identity in the face of an irrevocably changing world was a common factor in much of the work (from both sides of the aisle) on British antiquities and topography that followed Leland. It was a time of first beginnings, and the progress – however much erudition and initiative was involved – gives, in historiographical retrospect, something of the impression of intellectually feeling around in the dark. Two

scholars who emerge most strongly from this challenging period before the English Civil War were William Camden and Robert Bruce Cotton. Camden built upon Leland's manuscript notes to produce what Leland never managed: a comprehensive and coherent antiquarian study of England, and one that was extremely popular (1607). Cotton was a great antiquarian and collector who is known to every medieval art historian from the cataloging of his famous manuscript collection according to the Classical busts, particularly of Roman emperors, that stood on top of the bookcases that housed the manuscripts (e.g. British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A XV, MS Cotton Nero D IV, etc.). (Cotton also bought and moved components of the room in which Mary, Queen of Scots, had been executed at Fotheringay Castle to his own house at Conington, apparently for conscious, ideological purposes.) A vital part of the great activity of this formative era was the creation of a number of modern institutions, if only in their nascent forms. Cotton's collection, which was actively used by contemporaries in the manner of a modern research library, would later become an important part of the manuscript collection of the British Library. Together, Camden and Cotton were part of the founding of the Society of Antiquaries in 1586, an important institution in the encouragement and dissemination of scholarship at this time of early development (dissolved in 1614 but to be re-established).

But there were also a number of other scholars who, if less well known than Camden and Cotton, contributed perhaps more directly to the foundation of an art historical base of methodologies, terminology, and periodization. For example, William Somner wrote on a number of medieval churches, including the Cathedral of Canterbury, distinguishing between Romanesque and Gothic elements (though not using these terms) and trying to use architectural form as a means of dating (1640), a method that was to have a long history. It is from this time that we have the first recorded use of the term "Gothic" in English: in 1641 as an adjective and in 1644 as a noun, although it is not clear from the passages whether the author, John Evelyn, was using the word specifically in the sense that we understand it today or more generally in the meaning of "medieval."⁸ William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor of Oxford University, left his valuable collection of manuscripts to the Bodleian Library in Oxford (e.g. Bodleian, MS Laud misc. 409) and helped to obtain the Great Charter for Oxford University Press before being beheaded for Royalist support by order of Parliament in 1645. And John Webb, in an edition of some of Inigo Jones's writings on Stonehenge of 1655, incorporated the distinction between round and pointed arches already made (though unsystematically) by Somner in 1640 into a broader conception of architectural style, calling them "Saxon" and "Norman," respectively.

But the potential prejudice against medieval art remained, and not just on the intellectual level. With the outbreak of the English Civil War (1642–1651) and its aftermath, the Protectorate (1653–1659), the destruction of the medieval patrimony continued, attention now turning to the British cathedrals since the monasteries had already been destroyed in the Reformation. From the symbolic cutting down of the famous Glastonbury Thorn (said to have sprung from Joseph

of Arimathaea's staff) on the Tor (where Abbot Whiting had been executed and dismembered) during the Civil War by a member of Cromwell's New Model Army to "rattling down proud Becket's glassy bones" (the partial smashing of the stained glass windows of Canterbury Cathedral in 1643) by an iconoclastic Puritan minister, the losses continued to mount up (fig. 1-1 shows a 1642 "sighting").⁹ But Cromwell's death in 1658, in the old Somerset House on the Thames in London, symbolically marked the end of the conscious political destruction of medieval art. The Lord Protector's effigy lay in state – his funeral being described by Evelyn as "the joyfulest funeral I ever saw" – and his body (or at least one answering to that description) was disinterred from Westminster Abbey, publicly hanged, and then decapitated. Despite the efforts of the iconoclasts – or, rather, because of them – this second phase of destruction of medieval art in England had the same effect as the devastations of the earlier Dissolution, and acted as an impetus to further scholarship, although one that was still largely limited to England at this time.



FIGURE 1-1 Puritans "sighting" ("disrespecting," in the current vernacular) Canterbury Cathedral, 1642. From *Mercurius rusticus*, a series of Royalist reports about Parliamentary depredations, particularly those involving the great medieval cathedrals. These reports began the same year as this sighting, and from 1646 to 1732 were published in book form. The depiction here is from the frontispiece of the 1685 edition.

On the Continent, the Thirty Years' War raged (1618–1648), taking its toll as well. Early modern scholarship, however, was in full swing by now, with important implications for the development of medieval art history. This was the time of the beginning of modern biblical criticism. The Early Church became a subject of great study as a result of both the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. The catacombs of Rome were accidentally rediscovered in 1578, and Antonio Bosio's great work on the catacombs, *Roma sotteranea*, was published in 1632–1634. Cardinal Mazarin opened his personal library (later known as the Bibliothèque Mazarine, sometimes said to be the first dedicated research library) to scholars in 1643. Historical terms such as “BC” (Bousset 1681) and “century” began to be used (the Anno Domini or AD system of dating, created by Dionysius Exiguus c.525, only became widespread by the eleventh century, especially through the influence of Bede's *De ratione temporum*). The quality of published reproductions of artworks improved, and archeological reconstructions began to appear in publications (having been used in Italy since the mid-sixteenth century). The antiquarian societies that had been popular in Italy for some time were beginning to spread throughout Europe. The *Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture* was established in Paris in 1648. Collecting increased at a dramatic rate, the art market developed, more collections began to be opened to a select public, buildings began to be designed specifically as museums, catalogs were sometimes even printed for visitors (Villa Borghese, 1650), and the Grand Tour became an institution. In the Low Countries and Germany, the influential histories of art written by Karel van Mander (1604) and Joachim von Sandrart (1675–1679) included Northern artists in their biographical formats, contributing to a loosening of the grip of Classical and Renaissance dominance. All of this helped build an intellectual atmosphere and professional structure that encouraged the growth of the discipline of medieval art history, if only indirectly.

In France, in particular, much work was done under the stable regimes of Louis XIII and Louis XIV and in the less secure region of present-day Belgium to save the medieval heritage, even if little of it was immediately related to art and architecture. The Jesuit Bollandists in Antwerp published the first volume of the renowned *Acta sanctorum* in 1643 (we eagerly await the final volume, whose introduction was written in 1940) in order to provide dependable primary sources of the lives of the saints as part of the defense of the church in the Counter-Reformation. The Benedictine Maurists, of whom the best known is Jean Mabillon – who said of Cluny at the absolute low point of popularity of medieval art, “If you see it a hundred times, you are overwhelmed by its majesty just as often” (1682) – set new standards of historical methodology, Mabillon himself being especially prominent for his work in paleography and diplomatics. Operating out of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris, they distinguished themselves with such works as the *Acta SS. Ordinis Sancti Benedicti* (1668–1701), the *Annales Ordinis Sancti Benedicti* (1703–1739), and the *opera* of many Fathers, which quickly became part of the essential foundation for medieval studies for generations of scholars. Among lay scholars, Charles Ducange published his

Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae latinitatis in 1678, still an authority in the field. In the area of art history generally speaking, the first scholarly art historical bibliography was compiled (by Raphaël Trichet du Fresne on Leonardo in 1651). The grave of Childeric, rich in Merovingian jewelry, was accidentally discovered in Tournai in 1653, causing a sensation. In the debate known as the Quarrel of Ancients and Moderns, Charles Perrault (an influential voice in French artistic circles and the “author” of Mother Goose) declared that contemporary architecture was superior to Classical, and that, alongside absolute beauty, there was a relative beauty that could change with time (1688) – an idea that led to an increasing subjectivity of standards, contributing to the undermining of the Classical ideal as the sole authority. Roger de Piles did much to counter the assumption that the history of art could only be written by artists, an idea that owed its basis to the Italian precedent, and, like van Mander and Sandrart before him, included Northern artists in his work, thus helping to weaken the near monopoly of Mediterranean artistic authority in the Northern conception (1699, 1708). But more significantly for the development of the field of medieval art history in particular, Jean-François Félibien des Avaux differentiated (for the first time in French scholarship) between systems of structure based on round and pointed arches, which he termed *gothique ancienne* and *gothique moderne*, respectively (1687). Although this strain of thought was not taken further at the time in France, it was across the Channel.

England after the death of Cromwell was more concerned than ever with better understanding its medieval art historical past, something largely manifested through a very gradual awareness and articulation of architectural styles and their origins. In this effort, by far the most influential English antiquary of his generation was William Dugdale, the intellectual heir of Camden and Cotton. Dugdale is the primary author of the *Monasticon anglicanum* (written with Roger Dodsworth; 1655–1673), a deeply researched history of monasticism in England that incorporated a discussion of the building histories and the destruction of the various institutions with which he was concerned. A Royalist who had at one time been commissioned to make a record of the monuments of the leading churches of England in anticipation of the Civil War – an action not so different from the removal of stained glass from the great churches during World Wars I and II – Dugdale’s book both employed the work of Leland and went beyond it in setting new standards for documentation and quality of illustration, even being called “the first illustrated architectural history of a mediaeval style” (figs. 1-2 and 1-3).¹⁰ While the three-volume work was being released, Dugdale also published a history of St. Paul’s Cathedral, which was the first illustrated monograph on a work of English ecclesiastical architecture and an important step in the beginnings of medieval art history (1658).¹¹ Aside from this, John Aubrey wrote an important, inclusive history of English architecture in the 1670s in which the round and pointed styles were clearly distinguished, a history that was widely known among scholars despite the fact that it was not published at the time.¹² Roger North took the differentiation between the two forms further,

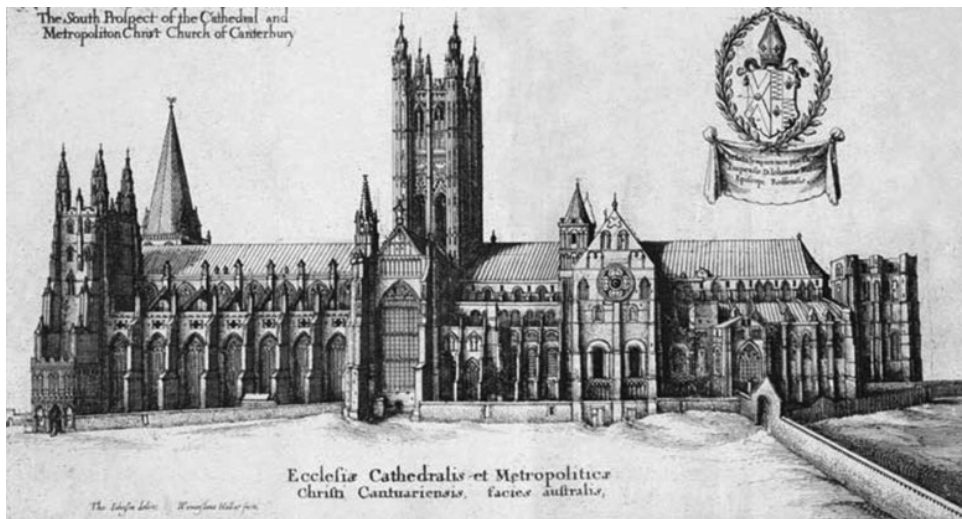


FIGURE 1-2 Canterbury Cathedral, engraving by Thomas Johnson and Wenceslaus Hollar from William Dugdale’s *Monasticon anglicanum* (1682 edition). The engravings in Dugdale’s edition are perhaps the first reproductions of medieval art intended for serious scholarly study.



FIGURE 1-3 Detail of frontispiece engraving by Wenceslaus Hollar from William Dugdale’s *Monasticon anglicanum* (1682 edition). If Dugdale’s *Monasticon* is “the first illustrated architectural history of a mediaeval style” (Frankl), it may also contain the first pointed juxtaposition of images, and in no less a place than its frontispiece. On the left, a good king (perhaps Edward the Confessor, mentioned in the coronation oath in connection with the liberties of the church) places what seems to be a deed of foundation for a monastery (seen in the background) on an altar (whose triptych appears to include a monk and another robed figure, perhaps Augustine of Canterbury and Gregory the Great, shown elsewhere in the frontispiece), dedicating this work “To God and the Church.” On the right, Henry VIII is shown ordering the destruction of a monastic church (perhaps meant as Glastonbury, with the Tor in the background), declaring, “As I will,” an apparent reference to “As I will, so I command,” from Juvenal (*Sat.* 6: 223), a passage occasionally cited at the time in the characterization of tyranny. Henry is thus said to have put his own will above the rule of law in the Dissolution of the Monasteries; this is made even more pointed through a scene (not shown here) at the top of the frontispiece of the signing of Magna Carta, whose first article guarantees the liberties of the church for all time.

characterizing rounded-arch structures as “elder Gothick” (1698; apparently following Félibien) and associating what is now called English Romanesque with Roman architecture for the first time in print, this connection contributing to the intellectual respectability of medieval architecture in a time of classicizing standards. Even so, the approaching Enlightenment was not sympathetic to the study of medieval architecture, seeing it as the irrational antithesis of the Enlightenment’s own rational self in medieval architecture’s relative darkness, its absence of Classical proportions, its particular use of architectural sculpture and detail, and its delight in monstrous forms.

The Age of the Enlightenment

It was, ironically, precisely this “irrational” quality that spearheaded a broader acceptance of medieval architecture on the part of a more general public at the time of the Enlightenment. This was a social phenomenon of unexpected origins and complex development, one that must have seemed extraordinary to its contemporaries. In 1711, Joseph Addison introduced the philosophical concept of the Sublime into the discussion of architecture, a concept that distinguished between the traditional concept of beauty (as understood from the principles of Classical art) and awe (the Sublime). Generally speaking, this new appreciation for the Sublime permitted the qualities of vastness, irregularity, and obscurity commonly associated with Gothic architecture to be opposed positively to the qualities of human proportions, regularity, and clarity universally associated with Classical standards. This obviated the almost unshakable principle that associated both Classical and Renaissance art with beauty as an expression of truth – or Beauty and Truth, as the terms are often rendered. A theme given significant development by Edmund Burke (1756) and Immanuel Kant (1790) over such a period of time as to ensure its continued viability, the concept of the Sublime gave an intellectual respectability to Gothic architecture that was extremely important in the slow process of breaking down the walls that shut off medieval architecture from mainstream artistic thought.

The undeniable legitimacy that the concept of the Sublime gave to Gothic architecture contributed to its further acceptance on the popular level through the Gothic Revival movement. The Gothic Revival began at least as early as 1717 with the Gothic Temple at Shotover, Oxfordshire, an overtly political monument (as were others, whether Whig or Tory). But for the purposes of this introduction, perhaps the most interesting example of this phase of the Gothic Revival is that of Strawberry Hill (1753–1776), the country residence of Horace Walpole, an enthusiastic and astute advocate of the movement and the author of the first Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1764). More historicist than many contemporary examples of the Gothic Revival (often described as “follies”) but less than would generally be the case in the nineteenth century, Strawberry Hill and other Revivalist works employed Gothic as a novel source of inspiration

for contemporary design – one that broke away from the old Mediterranean precedent in its search for a new indigenous style as part of a gradually evolving and very self-conscious conception of national identity. “Gothic” was clearly no longer a term of criticism, at least to some. The pointed arch that had earlier distanced medieval architecture negatively from the Classical precedent with its round arch now did so in a positive way, one that was soon to spread throughout Europe (fig. 1-4).

Germany, too, began to build in the Gothic Revival style, but it was to be a while, if only a short while, before any truly broader recognition of Gothic would be achieved on the Continent, and then even as period styles earlier than Gothic were typically considered “decadent.” In other ways, however, the general infrastructure of art history, of which medieval is a part, began to develop significantly. In Germany, art began to be studied at the university level, most notably with Johann Friedrich Christ at the University of Leipzig (1734).

In France, Michel de Frémin’s architectural theory of rationalism (the idea that beauty is based on the degree to which the form of a building expresses its function and materials; 1702), which included medieval in its discussion, further continued the process of chipping away at the Classical stranglehold, as did Marc-Antoine Laugier’s recognition of the role of rationalism in Gothic architecture (1753), a subject that would be argued for generations. The Abbé Mai first presented the idea of French regional schools of architecture (1774), also a topic that would continue to receive attention. Scholars began to discuss the great sculpted portals, to attempt to distinguish them by style, to date them, and to debate their meaning. The Maurists carried on their work, including *Gallia Christiana* (1715–1765), the *Histoire littéraire de la France* (1733–1768), and Bernard de Montfaucon’s *Les Monumens de la monarchie françoise* (1729–1733), the latter essentially presenting a history of the French monarchy through its artistic monuments. The latter also produced what might be called the first attempt at a national union catalog of manuscripts (1739). And Rousseau’s writings on nature did much to prepare the way for the Romanticists.

In Italy, interest in things medieval was scant, but writing about art began to be undertaken less by artists, as had traditionally been the case, and more by connoisseurs – the often conflicting relationship between artists and non-artists in the writing of the history of art being one that would continue for some time. Greek art began to be distinguished from Roman. The excavation of Herculaneum started in 1738, and of Pompeii in 1748.

Everywhere, museums were opening up to an increasingly wide segment of the public, although just what museum collections and their publics constituted varied greatly over the years. The Ashmolean was established in Oxford in 1683 by Elias Ashmole, son-in-law of William Dugdale. The Capitoline Museum (the first formal public art collection since antiquity, founded in 1471) was opened to the public in 1734 (by the pope), the Uffizi was founded in 1743 (building designed by Vasari for court use in 1559), the Louvre in 1750, the British Museum in 1753, the Museo Pio-Clementino in 1770, the Albertina in Vienna in 1773, and



FIGURE 1-4 *The Entry of Prince Frederick into the Castle of Otranto*, pen and wash drawing by John Carter (1790). As fanciful as any medieval architectural drawing, this literally illustrates both the impact Horace Walpole's book had on the Romantic conception of Gothic and one of the means of the diffusion of that conception. Source: reproduced courtesy of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

the Schloss Belvedere in Vienna in 1781, to name a few. Proper layout of collections was an ongoing issue, particularly the question of aesthetic versus chronological layout – a manifestation of the ongoing conflict between connoisseurship and art history, the two principal and often contending approaches to the study of

art at the time. Encyclopedias and dictionaries began to include or even be exclusively devoted to art, artists, and iconography. And some of the great medieval buildings began to be restored on a scholarly basis.

As the eighteenth century progressed, the terminology of Saxon, Norman, and Gothic architecture continued to develop in England. Browne Willis wrote a series of studies on British cathedrals that provided an extensive body of plans and elevations for further study (esp. 1727–1730). After a period of irregular association, the Society of Antiquaries received a royal charter in 1751 and began meeting in Somerset House, where Cromwell had died. The Cotton collection was finally acquired by the British Museum in 1753, as was the fine manuscript collection of Robert and Edward Harley (e.g. London, British Library, MS Harley 603). Thomas Gray advanced the study of what is now called Romanesque and theorized the origin of the pointed arch (1754, published 1814), work that was employed and furthered by James Bentham (1771). The journal *Archaeologia*, which published many medieval studies, was established in 1770. And William Stukeley helped raise the standard of scholarship through new attention to the differentiation of primary and secondary sources, as well as going beyond a gathering of strictly factual information through the analysis of those facts (1776), something of a new proposition.¹³

But, actually, the greatest change affecting the study of medieval art at this time of the Age of the Enlightenment was the work of a classicist, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, considered by some to be the founder of modern art history (as is Vasari by others, though Winckelmann might best be thought of as modern and Vasari early modern). In major publications of 1755 and 1764, Winckelmann wrote the first modern histories of figural art, more or less initiating the German dominance of the study of the history of art that was to last for so long and to be so distinguished. Choosing to write on Classical sculpture but forced to come to terms with the anonymity of the limited extant works that were available to him, he presented his study as an inclusive, synthetic analysis rather than a series of artists' biographies or discussion of individual works. The basis of this synthetic analysis was Winckelmann's periodization of Greek art on the cyclical model, a stylistically based methodology that became extremely influential in both art history and archeology. Central to his conception of art was the notion of the Classical ideal of beauty, to or from which all art was understood to either adhere or deviate. Both the cyclical model and the standard of Classical beauty were almost insurmountable obstacles to the development of the study of medieval art. Winckelmann himself, however, applied these standards to all of ancient art, seeing Roman art – previously only poorly distinguished from Greek – as a distinct second to Greek. Thus, despite the unchanging ideal of the Classical that he set up, Winckelmann – with an almost unimpeachable authority – shattered the myth of the Classical period as a time of consistent artistic standards and so unintentionally opened the way, eventually, for the recognition of the respectability of the artistic production of other historical periods. At the same time, he explained the basis of the changes in his periodization as the product of historical context – social, political, and religious factors, including the concept of freedom.

Both Winckelmann's attention to historical context and his demonstration of the utility of stylistic analysis were interpretive devices that had seen no systematic use before, and were strongly counter to the antiquarianism of the time. To these important new methods, he added a new interest in iconography, a scholarship free of nationalism, and the model of original research (as opposed to a rehashing of previous work). Before Winckelmann, the writing of the history of art had largely been the exclusive domain of the artist, one that generally followed the biographical format established by Vasari two hundred years before. Winckelmann broke with these two very substantial traditions, even if he did try to approach a given artwork with the "eye" of the artist. It was only once this constricting situation had been left behind that the history of art as a history of society and culture could begin to be written. But Winckelmann also called for the imitation of the ancients, and in so doing gave an unprecedented impetus to the establishment of neo-Classicism, whose underlying mind-set was by definition inimical to medieval. The result of this was, to a large extent, to firmly reinforce the already strongly entrenched idea that there was but one standard, the Classical.

Romanticism

The virtually unquestioned position of Classical as the only standard by which art might be judged was irrevocably shattered with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's essay *On German Architecture* of 1772. Gothic had traditionally been seen as the negative counterpart to Classical. In this essay, Goethe argued that it was the positive counterpart. He sharply criticized the fact that his German education had taught him to disdain Gothic architecture and, through the vehicle of Strasbourg Cathedral – despite a very imperfect knowledge of the historical details involved – he praised Gothic structure as based on necessity, Gothic ornament as appropriate to the structural framework, and Gothic variety as within an overall harmonious unity, all of these subjects having been traditional points of criticism of Gothic in the past. It was, however, not the neo-Classical that Goethe was consciously challenging, but what he saw as the tyranny of contemporary tastes, particularly the "effete" French Rococo. Gothic was German architecture, the product and expression of the German psyche, and it was upon this – and not the expressions of other cultures – that German national identity should be based. Goethe later distanced himself from this identification with medieval (though he would eventually return to a limited acceptance of it), but the impact of this essay on others was profound and lasting. The influential *Sturm und Drang* movement – which had been heavily influenced by Rousseau – was especially affected by Goethe's essay in its furtherance of the right of artistic genius not to be impeded by rules, of the importance of the potential emotional power of art, of a rejection of the universality of the standards of Classical culture, and of the legitimacy of the artistic production of other periods, particularly the medieval. Any pejorative sense to "that misunderstood word 'Gothic'" was now laid aside

forever. But, more to the point, the universal primacy of the fundamental premise of Classical – rationality – was brought into question. Goethe’s championing of an art form that should be “felt rather than measured” was, in its very emotion, contrary to the neo-Classical ideal.¹⁴ It was also a sentiment that was eminently better suited to this new Age of Revolution than it ever could have been before, in the Age of Reason.

A reaction to what some saw as the excessive Enlightenment emphasis on rationality had been forming for some time and culminated in the essentially emotional approach to history, literature, and art known as Romanticism. The beginnings of Romanticism are variously dated from around 1750–1800, depending on the particular aspect of this reaction, but it was given an enormous impetus by the French Revolution and by the Napoleonic wars that followed (1789–1815). The term was coined by Friedrich von Schlegel in 1798 as a means of indicating the basis in the medieval romance of an “irrational” strain within contemporary German poetry. Romanticism was, however, a very broad and rather amorphous movement, and it was not limited in its interests to medieval culture. In its “irrationality,” it encompassed, among other things, a deep attraction to nature and even to Classicism (in what has been called Romantic Classicism). It was concerned with the individual, but also became an important vehicle for national identity. It was a major cultural and political movement, but had no defined goal or universally recognized political association. And it was seen as being furthered by many contemporary artists and writers who claimed no affiliation with it. Medieval art, however, was ultimately central to who the Romantics were, an important part of their breaking free, intellectually and culturally, from the dominance of the Mediterranean precedent.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of this use of art in the formation of national identity in the early and mid-nineteenth century arose in Germany in the completion of the construction of Cologne Cathedral. In 1816, a movement sprang up to complete the cathedral, whose Gothic reconstruction had begun in 1248 but which had been left unfinished since 1560. Conceived by Johann Joseph von Görres, furthered by Sulpiz Boisserée, and supported by such influential public figures as Goethe and Karl Friedrich Schinkel and by the state of Prussia, actual reconstruction began in 1842 using the recently discovered plans of c.1300 (fig. 1-5). By the time the cathedral was completed in 1880, the project had become a symbol of German unity during this formative period of the German nation (federal state established 1871), contributing greatly to a sympathetic view of medieval art among the general public in the process. One of the leading voices in this rehabilitation of medieval art in Germany was von Schlegel who, along with his brother, August Wilhelm, argued for a greater recognition of the historicity of art and of the relation between art and religion. Historiographically, Friedrich von Schlegel is also especially important for his discussion of Gothic architecture as the representation of the infinite. The von Schlegels influenced and were influenced by many, including Boisserée and his brother Melchior, who built up an important collection of Northern European art from the medieval period to the

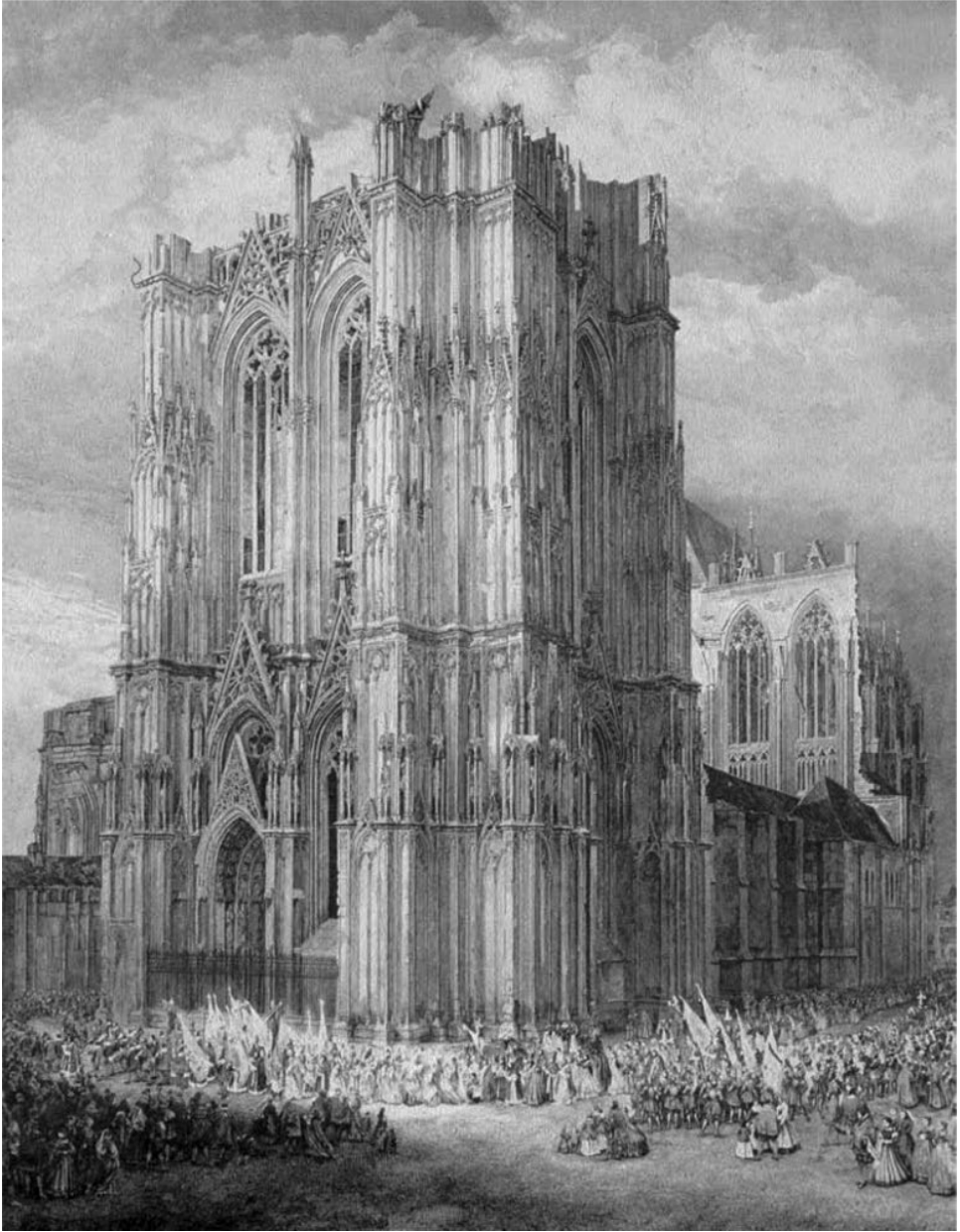


FIGURE 1-5 Building of Cologne Cathedral, engraving of 1842/6 by Wilhelm von Abbema. The continuation of the construction of the cathedral in 1842 was one of the most dramatic uses of art in the formation of national identity in the nineteenth century. This engraving depicts a ceremony of 1824 in a way that dramatically captures both the excitement of the event and the Romantic conception of the Gothic cathedral as one of the great unifying expressions of the human spirit. Source: reproduced courtesy of Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Köln.

Northern Renaissance. These developments in art history were an integral part of a much wider medievalizing movement. Romanesque revival architecture had begun to spread in Germany, where it was known as the *Rundbogenstil*. Caspar David Friedrich, Philipp Otto Runge, and the Nazarenes (one of the first secessionist groups) were influential in painting. And Ludwig Tieck, Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, and Novalis, among others, made important statements in literature. In much of this, ties to the strong Catholic revival of the early nineteenth century both helped and hindered the movement.

As Görres and Sulpiz Boisserée were contemplating the completion of Cologne Cathedral in Germany, in France the great Romanesque abbey church of Cluny was being systematically dynamited and sold for construction material (1811–1823). Feelings were still very bitter on the part of many in France in regard to the *ancien régime*, and French Romanticism took a course different from that in England or Germany. Some French Romanticists were Catholic revivalists, such as the highly influential Chateaubriand, who saw Christian art in general and medieval art in particular as not just equal to Classical art, but superior (esp. 1802). Others, such as Nicolas Chapuy (1824–1830) and the team of Charles Nodier, J. Taylor, and Alphonse de Cailleux (1820–1878), produced important illustrated studies of the regions and cathedrals of France that were heavily influenced by the Picturesque movement and that took advantage of the new technology of lithography. Artists such as Géricault and Delacroix were outstanding in the area of painting, even if the latter would later distance himself from the movement. Less renowned but more medievalizing were the artists of the Troubadour style. Sensational “Romantic” gestures were made to the past; for example, the reinterment of Abelard and Heloise from the Paraclete (indirectly) to Paris around 1796 in a newly constructed tomb in the Musée des monuments français (see below), made of *spolia* from St.-Denis (Abelard was then known as a famous lover, not a scholar, still awaiting rehabilitation as a philosopher by Victor Cousin in 1836).

But by far the single most influential incident in regard to French Romanticism was the publication of Victor Hugo’s *Notre-Dame de Paris* in 1831. Hugo, who established his reputation with the drama *Cromwell*, created a sensation in regard to medieval art with this book, both through his own explicit digressions on the subject and through the role of the cathedral in the story (fig. 1-6). (Hugo was active in bringing about the restoration of the cathedral, which began in 1843, arguing against over-restoration.) Now it was the architecture of the Renaissance that was “decadent,” and pre-modern architecture that was the “book of stone,” the “great book of humanity,” in which every human thought found a page. The Gothic cathedral, in particular, was a book in which the artist was free as never before to express his own imagination, often in a non-religious way.

In Britain, Romanticism resonated deeply with the increasingly historicist Gothic Revival architecture that was rising throughout the island, but nowhere to better effect than in the work of Charles Barry and A.W.N. Pugin (most notably in the Houses of Parliament, designed 1835). In the visual arts, medievalism affected William Blake (esp. 1792–1827), the Pre-Raphaelites (esp. 1848–1853),



FIGURE 1-6 *Esmeralda before Notre-Dame* by Daubigny and Thomas, from the 1850 Perrotin edition of Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*. The publication in 1831 of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, in which the cathedral plays such an important part, was one of the most influential events in the rehabilitation of medieval art. Here, Esmeralda is taken to the place of both her execution and her salvation, the cathedral. In one of the most dramatic episodes of the novel, Hugo makes a point of mentioning the "Gothic portal," the "Romanesque pillars," the reliefs of the main doorway – and Quasimodo, watching from the Gallery of Kings, equated with one of the building's monstrous gargoyles.

and the Arts and Crafts Movement (particularly William Morris, esp. 1861–1896) in prints, paintings, books, stained glass, and furniture of often unsurpassed design. Sir Walter Scott and Alfred, Lord Tennyson were but two among many who popularized the Middle Ages in literature. And John Ruskin was of enormous influence in his many publications throughout his life, particularly *The Stones of Venice* (1851–1853), which spoke of the freedom of the medieval artist, among other things. Ruskin, in 1869 the first Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford, was also strongly opposed to over-restoration. But the pull of the medieval past went way beyond the arts in the profound impact of the Oxford Movement (esp. 1833–1845), a religious reform movement that, as one of its goals, sought to restore (according to some) certain "medieval" or Roman Catholic rituals to the Anglican Church – a proposal so threatening that it resulted in occasional riots and the imprisonment of members who refused to recognize the parliamentary court that sought to suppress these efforts.

Nineteenth-Century Non-Romantic Developments

If Romanticism had helped legitimize medieval art in the course of the nineteenth century, medieval art contributed to the development of a total view of the history of art distinct from Romantic concerns – and not just of Europe, but of the world. It was no longer a question of some perceived need to justify medieval art in face of Classical standards. Art history was in the process of significant change – begun by Winckelmann, but with his Enlightenment blinders now left behind – and no field profited more than medieval. There was now a greater emphasis on methodology, historical documentation, the publication of primary sources (including *Monumenta Germaniae historica*, 1826f.; *Patrologia latina*, 1844–1864; the Rolls Series, 1858f.; and *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*, 1866f.), encyclopedias, and bibliographies. Scholars focused increasingly on such issues as periodization, dating, regionalism, and the use of exegesis in interpretation. In architecture, techniques such as the reading of molding profiles, among others, began to be used. The modern sciences of archeology and philology developed out of antiquarianism. Historical, social, and philosophical theories were articulated that remain influential to this day. And access was continually improved through the opening up of collections, the founding of new museums (stimulated initially partly through their establishment by Napoleonic regimes, later partly through the return of Napoleonic war booty), the increasing ease and safety of travel, and the introduction of photography (1839).

Of the many developments of this time, a few deserve specific mention. In France, the Musée des monuments français opened in 1796 under the direction of Alexandre Lenoir (disestablished 1816). The museum was a direct result of the French Revolution in that it both appropriated its holdings from the institutions of the old regime and protected them from the unstable social situation of the new (the government began efforts to preserve the artistic patrimony already in 1790). The collection – which included some of the royal tombs and stained glass of St.-Denis – represented all periods of French history, and was structured on a room-by-room organization, each room representing a given century. Although this layout was meant to visualize Winckelmann's cyclical model of growth and decline, with medieval representing decline, the museum had an enormous effect on the acceptance of medieval art in France. For the purposes of this introduction, perhaps the most important influence was on the Hôtel de Cluny, the first museum of medieval art (1832; reorganized in 1844 by Lenoir's son, Alexandre-Albert, as the Musée de Cluny).¹⁵ Equally important, Jean-Baptiste Seroux d'Agincourt published his *Histoire de l'art par les monumens* from 1811 to 1823, a work that is generally considered to be the first comprehensive study of medieval art. Actually written from 1779 to 1789, however, the book really looked more to the past than the future in regard to medieval, being conceived of as a continuation up through the Renaissance of Winckelmann's work, and still retaining the old characterization of medieval art as decadent. Even so, the times were changing, and it, too, caused a positive sensation for the art of the Middle

Ages. Other important writings include a history of medieval painting by Paillet de Montabert in 1812, influenced by Seroux d'Agincourt; and a study of French architecture through the Middle Ages by Alexandre de Laborde of 1816, which first put forth the idea of the monk-architect. The Ecole des Chartes, founded in 1821, provided the educational basis for a flood of fundamental documentary research on medieval art, typically of a non-interpretive nature. In 1824, the Norman scholar Arcisse de Caumont called for a halt to the destruction of French monuments and for their preservation, a call that was repeated by Charles de Montalembert, among others, in a published letter to Victor Hugo entitled "Du vandalisme en France" (1833), the latter being a condemnation of those who destroyed the architectural patrimony as Vandals, a term that had been in use in this sense since the seventeenth century. The government responded to the wide public support for this position through the creation of the post of Inspecteur général des monuments historiques by the historian and conservative minister François Guizot in 1830, to which the art historian Ludovic Vitet was appointed in 1831 and the author Prosper Mérimée in 1834 (redefined as a *Commission* in 1837). In 1834, the Société française d'archéologie was founded, immediately publishing *Bulletin monumental* and working to preserve medieval monuments. And Jean-François-Auguste de Bastard d'Estang began to publish a comprehensive series of facsimiles of manuscript illumination (largely medieval) in 1835. While he never completed this project, a fuller study of book painting did appear not too long after by Ferdinand Denis, one that drew attention to the importance of the twelfth century in the history of manuscript illumination (1857).¹⁶

In Britain, the working out of crucial terminology continued. Thomas Rickman's *English Architecture* of 1817 established the widespread use of such terms as Norman, Decorated, and Perpendicular. The origins of the term "Romanesque" are more complex but, in short, the word was first used in the sense we employ today by William Gunn by 1813 in his *Origin and Influence of Gothic Architecture*, which, however, was published only in 1819. The French *romane* appeared at almost exactly the same time, apparently under British influence, in the correspondence of Charles de Gerville of 1818; the use of the term being propagated in France by de Caumont through a public lecture of 1823 (published 1824).¹⁷ In each case, the word was meant to associate Romanesque architecture with "legitimizing" Roman architectural precedents. It was also around this time that the adjective "medieval" (or "mediæval") first appeared in English (1827) – some time before the definitive use of *renaissance* by Jules Michelet in 1855 (though the latter is found in a looser sense earlier).

It was, however, in Germany that the most profound changes were taking place in the early and mid-nineteenth century. There were, at this time, two leading approaches to the study of art.¹⁸ The first was historically based. Art history had long been used as a vehicle of patronal, regional, and national identity, and would continue to be in varying degrees. But with the French Revolution, historicism began to be seen as a means of a broader cultural understanding, though often in very different ways – something that allowed art history to break free of earlier

paradigms. The great historical theorist at this time was Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who saw change (including artistic change and its resultant form) as the progressive development of an informing spirit (*Zeitgeist*) throughout history. According to Hegel's idealist view, the process of historical change is a dialectical one: a given thesis (or historical factor) is confronted by its antithesis (or opposing historical factor), resulting in a synthesis – which then becomes the thesis of a new process of dialectical synthesis. On a broader historical level, artistic change, in particular, takes place through three ages (the Symbolic, Classic, and Romantic), each of which has three phases of development (youth, maturity, and decline). In this very complex and detailed theory, Gothic architecture represents the highest phase of architectural development; and both the medieval and the Renaissance periods are seen as belonging to the Romantic age, because they are both concerned with human rationality and emotion. The second leading approach of the time turned to the artwork's more immediate examination through connoisseurship, especially for reasons of attribution and the judgment of quality. Both of these approaches, and every possible combination of them, form the basis of the best contemporary work.

Perhaps the most influential art historians at this time – the time when art history began to be integrated into the university curriculum and chairs in art history began to be established (the first, according to some, was Johann Fiorillo, at Göttingen, 1813) – were the members of the so-called Berlin School. Gustav Friedrich Waagen, director of the Altes Museum and professor at the University of Berlin (sometimes said to be the first chair, 1844), wrote an important monograph on Hubert and Jan van Eyck in 1822 that was based on both connoisseurship and historical documentation, and that contains a study of medieval painting from the Carolingian period up to the Northern Renaissance, with the latter now being put forth as a synthesis of the medieval and Classical traditions and as the basis of the modern artistic conception.¹⁹ Karl Friedrich von Rumohr, considered to be the founder of art historical archival research, wrote on Italian medieval art in a more general study of Italian art (1827–1831) that set new standards for objectivity through a critical connoisseurship. In this work, he expressed his strong opposition to both the Hegelian view and the more tendentious approaches of the Romanticists, who, by mid-century, were widely beginning to be seen as too subjective. Franz Kugler saw medieval art as equal to Classical art and superior to Renaissance – a view he expressed in the first world art historical survey, an important, technically oriented survey that extended from prehistoric to contemporary, including pre-Columbian, Asian, and Oceanic (1842). In contrast was Karl Schnaase's survey of the following year, one that ran through medieval and was more philosophically based (1843–1864). Strongly Hegelian, this work was known and criticized for beginning each chapter with a general historical introduction, rather than having this material inform the discussion of individual artworks. Here, also, only Classical and medieval art were said to have attained the highest spiritual expression, the dialectical synthesis of which was contemporary European art.²⁰

Outside of the Berlin School, Anton Springer rejected both Romantic and Hegelian approaches (esp. 1857, 1879). Critical of studies that he felt actually separated art from its historical context through the use of generalized historical introductions, he sought to integrate the formal analysis of art with its specific historical conditions.²¹ He also advocated the employment of iconography in the art historical endeavor, and was perhaps the first to note the survival of Classical traditions in medieval art. One of the most influential art historians of the nineteenth century was the Swiss scholar Jacob Burckhardt, a student of Kugler (and Leopold von Ranke). Burckhardt, also a historian, worked on medieval early in his career, but his most significant work is on the art of the Italian Renaissance (esp. 1860, 1867). In this, he employed historical and cultural (including philosophical and religious) contexts to a degree not seen before, emphasizing the importance of the secular dynamic in Italian Renaissance culture and paying greater attention to individual artworks. Despite his enormously successful synthesis of the period, Burckhardt saw his work as “problem solving.” Considering himself to be pragmatic rather than theoretical, he was primarily interested in concepts, rejecting both Hegelian idealism and the straightforward accumulation of facts.²² Burckhardt is generally considered to have struck a middle ground between the broad theoretical views of history and the narrower approach of connoisseurship.

Another theory of history that came out of German-speaking culture in this period that was to have an impact on the study of art – though only within limits and only after some time – was that put forth by Karl Marx. Influenced by Hegel’s dialectic but rejecting *Zeitgeist* as a motivating force, Marx saw an inevitable progress of social change in history through a dialectical process of class struggle. He conceived of society as composed of base (economic factors) and superstructure (religion, philosophy, law, art, etc.), with the base determining the superstructure. Marx argued that the elements of the superstructure, including art, tend to advance the ideological system of which they are a part, whether directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously (esp. 1848, 1867; most of Marx’s writings on art have been lost). While strict Marxist thought has not had a major impact on medieval art history, it has been important because of the impetus it has given to a more generalized social history of art, one that attempts to explain art through its social context without a dogmatic emphasis on class struggle.

In mid-nineteenth-century France, meanwhile, efforts were being made in different directions. If Gothic had been a term of abuse in the centuries following Vasari, now Britain, Germany, and France all wanted to claim it as their own. Gradually, the French origins and the nature of Gothic began to be articulated – a process that was not worked out by the French alone. In 1843, the German architect Franz Mertens identified the origins of Gothic, as we understand it today, in St.-Denis (c.1135–1144). Around the same time, important analyses of Gothic structural dynamics were being given by the German Johannes Wetter (1835) and the Cambridge professor Robert Willis, the latter also writing many

important studies of the English cathedrals, particularly Canterbury (1845). And, in 1842, the French scholar de Caumont gave an influential expression of the so-called French schools in his *Abécédaire ou rudiment d'archéologie*. These and other studies like them provided the beginning of a much needed structural, geographical, chronological, and conceptual foundation upon which to build a fuller understanding of medieval architecture – a better distinction between Gothic and what had come before, as well as an informed beginning of an architectural chronology of Gothic.

But certainly the most brilliant figure in France at this time in medieval archeology – as medieval art history was called by the French – was the architect and scholar, Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc. Among his many influential writings are the *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture* (1854–1868) and *Entretiens sur l'architecture* (1863–1872), two works that give full expressions of Romanesque and Gothic structure, function, and design. These writings are best known for Viollet-le-Duc's theory of the rationality of Gothic architecture, a theory that would be debated far into the twentieth century, particularly the question of the structural versus the aesthetic function of the ribbed groin vault. Also, like Hugo, Viollet-le-Duc saw the sculpture of the Gothic cathedral as providing a field for not just artistic freedom, but even “a kind of freedom of the press” (using Hugo's phrase). His written work was, in general, extremely well received. However, he was deeply involved in the restoration of many of the greatest Romanesque and Gothic churches that was then being undertaken in France; and his belief that restoration meant the restoration of a building as he considered it to have existed at a particular moment in history – not as it stood at the time of restoration – met with a far less popular reaction.

Equally as influential, though far less controversial, Adolphe-Napoléon Didron, considered the founder of a systematically researched iconographical method, produced the ground-breaking *Iconographie chrétienne* (1843), as well as a number of other works and initiatives, including the *Annales archéologiques* (1844 f.). Taking up Hugo's idea of the cathedral as a book for the illiterate, he tried to show in his unfinished iconographic study that the basis of the sculptural program of Chartres Cathedral was Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum maius* (1247–1259). Didron's iconographic method brought a far broader outlook to art historical research, leading to a deeper investigation of the literature related to theology, scripture, and natural science than had ever been the case before. Interest in iconography stimulated work on stained glass, the serious study of which began at this time and was second only to architecture.²³ The investigation of manuscript illumination also increased dramatically, both because of iconographic interests and because of the belief that manuscript illuminations had served as models for medieval monumental sculpture. It is not often realized today just how thoroughly the iconographical meaning of even very prominent images had been forgotten; for example, no less a figure than Alexandre Lenoir could describe the kings of the Jesse window of St.-Denis as a series of images of God the Father (among other striking misidentifications). What structure was becoming to architecture,

iconography was becoming to the visual arts, allowing the study of the art of the “renaissance of the Middle Ages” (Didron) to extend further and deeper than the old limits of antiquarianism.

The Later Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century

Didron’s efforts were brought to fruition in Emile Mâle’s great iconographic work of 1898, *L’Art religieux du XIIIe siècle*, described as the first comprehensive study of medieval French visual art and as the culmination of nineteenth-century scholarship on the subject.²⁴ Explicitly following in the footsteps of Hugo and Didron, Mâle attempted to show that the same encyclopedic program that informed Vincent of Beauvais’s *Speculum maius* also informed the sculptural programs of the Gothic cathedrals. He did, however, challenge Hugo and Viollet-le-Duc on the idea that elements of the great Gothic sculptural programs were the result of the imagination of the artist, free of church control, something Mâle admitted only for “purely decorative work.” This was a book of enormous impact and an important step in deepening our understanding of the interpenetration of the literary and artistic cultures of the Middle Ages. In this study, Mâle expressed an attitude that was common for most of the nineteenth century: that it was only with thirteenth-century Gothic that medieval art attained its highpoint, or, as an earlier generation might have said, even respectability.

However, beginning with de Gerville – and greatly developed with the work of de Caumont and Mérimée’s *Commission des monuments historiques* – the Romanesque art of France began to be seriously cataloged and studied.²⁵ This effort was continued enthusiastically in the research of many scholars, of whom only a few can be mentioned here. Louis Courajod’s lectures of 1887–1894 at the *Ecole du Louvre* (posthumous 1899–1903) emphasized the Gallic component over the Roman in the development of Romanesque in unabashedly nationalistic terms.²⁶ Eugène Lefèvre-Pontalis helped establish a chronology of Romanesque architecture (esp. 1899). With a nationalism consonant with the colonialism of the Third Republic, Camille Enlart strove to show that Romanesque architecture originated in France and was disseminated from there, including to the Crusader states (1902–1927).²⁷ André Michel oversaw the production of a collaborative survey from the Early Christian to the modern era, giving full attention to all periods of medieval and contributing to a wider popular recognition of pre-Gothic medieval (1905–1929). Robert de Lasteyrie, among many others, played an important part in the ongoing discussion of the French regional schools of architecture (esp. 1912).²⁸ The influence of the new abstract movements of painting provided a contemporary intellectual and artistic justification of medieval abstraction, and, in a work on the Romanesque sculpture of Burgundy (not yet a popular subject), Victor Terret went so far in accepting the abstract basis of Romanesque art as to condemn the previous rejection of the style’s lack of naturalism (1914).²⁹ In fact, such a change had come about that, in 1901, Emile

Molinier, curator of the *Département des objets d'art* at the Louvre, could describe the twelfth century as superior to the “sterile” thirteenth. And Courajod could declare, “*Nous sommes tous des barbares*”³⁰ – quite a change from Vasari’s “Goths” and Montalembert’s “Vandals.” To this came Mâle’s *L’Art religieux du XIIe siècle en France* in 1922. If his book on the thirteenth century was the culmination of nineteenth-century medieval art historical scholarship, this one looked forward to the twentieth.³¹ In it, Mâle masterfully rehabilitated Romanesque visual art as the art of a great period, a subject that retains the interest of scholars to the present day. The themes he wove throughout his text included monasticism, the pilgrimage, the cult of saints, various aspects of the liturgy, and the question of Eastern influence. He concluded with a still important discussion of Suger and St.-Denis, and the role of all this in the making of the art of the thirteenth century.

None of this went unchallenged, either from inside or outside France. The distinguished German art historian Wilhelm Vöge – with whom Erwin Panofsky wrote his doctoral dissertation – rejected the prevailing French view that monumental sculpture arose at Chartres, arguing instead for origins in Burgundy and Languedoc, particularly Provence (1894).³² The American Arthur Kingsley Porter disputed French proprietary claims to the origins of Romanesque architecture (which was generally seen by French scholars of this time as arising in Northern France) and to the predominant role of the so-called schools. In a series of important publications (esp. 1915–1917) he demonstrated the priority of the architecture of Lombardy, Spain, and Southern France, a position in which he was joined by Josep Puig y Cadafalch, who gave to this architecture the term “First Romanesque” (1928). In his *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads* (1923), Porter argued that the vehicle for this cultural transmission was not the French “schools” but the intellectual traffic of the pilgrimage roads aided by the interests of monasticism.³³ He offered a radical new dating of certain key works of sculpture, characteristically based on documentary evidence and a more broadly comparative stylistic analysis (rather than simply fitting the works into the current French theoretical constructs of stylistic development), and giving precedence to Spain and Burgundy over Languedoc, contrary to the mainstream French position, including that of Mâle (the “Spain or Toulouse” controversy).³⁴

More radical still were the theoretical developments that were taking place in the German-speaking countries, in general, and in Vienna, in particular. The interest in the historical and cultural context of art as exemplified in Burckhardt’s work found its counterpart in two major trends. The first was a more rigorously conceived version of traditional connoisseurship, the self-proclaimed “scientific” method of Giovanni Morelli, a French-Italian of largely German-Swiss and German education, who, even in 1890, described the irreconcilable differences between connoisseurs and art historians as of very long standing. After spending most of his life either studying medicine or in politics, Morelli began to apply the methods of comparative anatomy that he had learned in medicine in Germany and France (and the arrogance he apparently had learned in politics in Italy) to the study of art, achieving phenomenal success in the attribution of artworks.

His method consisted of the minute analysis of figurally complex but otherwise often insignificant elements of a composition such as ears, hands, and drapery folds whose depiction, he claimed, were unique to a given artist and so acted to identify the artist. (Bernard Berenson, who did at least some work in medieval and Late Roman, was, perhaps, Morelli's best-known disciple.) A revitalized connoisseurship, whether following Morelli's method or not, had a strong base in the thriving sphere of the museums, its natural home today. The second trend was based on the theorization of artistic form. This was given an important impetus by Konrad Fiedler, who was strongly opposed to historicism and who postulated that artistic form is autonomous, independent of its historical context, and that it comprises an ordering of experience on a level equal to that of language (esp. 1887).

Franz Wickhoff, sometimes described as the founder of the Vienna School of art history, could be said to have been strongly influenced by both trends. Wickhoff combined the study of form and Morellian connoisseurship – which he saw as a means of creating a “scientific” basis for the study of art – with cultural and intellectual history in his desire to demonstrate uniform principles of artistic development for all periods.³⁵ More particularly, he legitimized the study of Roman art, which had been discredited since Winckelmann, seeing it as a discrete period with its own artistic methods and goals. This he achieved largely through his famous study of the Vienna Genesis (1895, with Wilhelm von Hartel), a work that integrated the terms “illusionism” and “continuous narrative” into the art historical vocabulary. Wickhoff's colleague, Alois Riegl, was also concerned with articulating universal artistic laws (esp. 1893, 1901). He explicitly rejected the old cyclical theories of perfection and decline – which contemporary abstract art had helped undermine – seeing instead a Hegelian *Kunstwollen* at operation (an artistic urge, whether of a culture or of an individual), an extremely well-known concept that, however, has not been taken up by the discipline. The primary vehicle through which Riegl explained this new theory of artistic change was his idea of the progression from the haptic to the optic, an idea based on contemporary perceptual psychology.³⁶ A relatively complex theory that applies to all media, it might be briefly described in terms of the medium of sculptural relief as the development of a given form from relatively strongly outlined, linear, and flat figures isolated in the single picture plane in Egyptian art to relatively well modeled, three-dimensional figures integrated into multiplanar illusionistic space in early Imperial Roman. Riegl stressed that no period is inherently superior to another, emphasized the continuity of the antique with the medieval, denied the distinction between the major and the minor arts, and rejected contemporary attempts to model art historical methodology and theory on the sciences. While much of what he wrote was formulated in response to certain contemporary materialist theories (especially those of the students of Gottfried Semper, who exaggerated Semper's emphasis on the roles of function, material, and technique in artistic creation), he also directed some of his later writings against Josef Strzygowski, who replaced Wickhoff at the University of Vienna and with whom Riegl clashed as well.

Rather than see continuity between the antique and the medieval, Strzygowski saw certain elements of the great artistic changes of Late Roman and early medieval as the result of the introduction of Eastern influences, especially from Syria, Armenia, and Iran (a subject that would later interest Jurgis Baltrušaitis, a student of Henri Focillon). The exchange has come to be known as the “Orient oder Rom?” controversy, one of the key debates of turn-of-the-century medieval art history. It is now generally accepted that while the change took place from within Late Roman culture – and while there were some Eastern influences – other internal factors not identified by Riegl were operative, such as popular culture. (Toward the end of Strzygowski’s highly successful career, as the Nazis rose to power, his original ethnic interests began to take on racist overtones.) Other Vienna School medievalists also made important contributions to the field. Max Dvořák once said that a sense of history was something a person was born with, that it could not be taught,³⁷ and in this he may be right. Originally close to Riegl in his theoretical position, a study of Goya’s *Disasters of War* during World War I led Dvořák away from Riegl’s one-sided emphasis on a virtually autonomous evolution of form to make the relation between style and the Christian worldview the driving force of his medieval work, especially as seen in his major medieval study, *Idealismus und Naturalismus in der gotischen Skulptur und Malerei* (1917).³⁸ Seeing the interrelation of all aspects of culture – theology, patristics, philosophy, literature – Dvořák felt that it was necessary to critically study all of these aspects, ultimately seeing *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte* (the history of art as the history of ideas, the title of his last book). This approach, as obvious as it may seem to many today, was in strong contrast at the time to most previous scholarship, which, with some exceptions, typically came from the strong anti-clerical tradition of post-Enlightenment and post-Revolutionary Europe. Finally, Julius von Schlosser, another distinguished member of the Vienna School, should be mentioned, being particularly well known for his *Die Kunstliteratur* (1924), an important discussion of art historiography from the medieval period through the eighteenth century.³⁹

Outside of the Vienna School and even of medieval, Heinrich Wölfflin, the Swiss contemporary of Wickhoff and Riegl, did important work that had reverberations in the field of medieval. Wölfflin wanted an “objective,” “scientifically” based art history, one whose goal is the explanation of artistic change through the art object, a purely visual concern with little reference to historical or cultural context. Continuing in the path of Fiedler, his was a history of the autonomous evolution of pure form, influenced by recent work in psychology, an “art history without names.” His best-known articulation of this is his theory of the development of form using a number of dichotomies to express change, such as the progression from the linear to the painterly, from planarity to depth, and so on; a progression he saw in the context of a non-biological and non-qualitative cycle of “early, classic, and baroque” phases for each Western period style (esp. 1898, 1915). Though his principles are no longer employed in the sense that he originally espoused, the influence of Wölfflin, perhaps more than any of the other

grand theorists of his time, does live on in the institutionalization of the practice of looking and describing as the explicit first stages in art historical study, and in the ubiquitous use of juxtaposed images in classes and lectures, for which he is generally believed to be the source. Theories claiming universal validity, however, were hardly universally accepted by contemporaries. It was against such theories that Georg Dehio – the influential author of the widely used *Die kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlandes* (1884–1901) – railed as “the cold, clinical concepts in art history, which only an unfeeling dilettante could adopt with any confidence.”⁴⁰

Equally influential in his time was Henri Focillon, a scholar who worked in a number of fields but who is best known for his studies of Romanesque sculpture (esp. 1931, 1938). Focillon’s work was in strong reaction to the currently popular iconographic and contextual study of art, despite the fact that he was the immediate successor of Mâle at the Sorbonne. In contrast, he was interested in finding basic rules governing the nature and development of form (esp. 1934, 1943). He did this in a way that was at times related to Riegl and Wölfflin, expressing himself in a variation of the developmental model of initial formation, perfection, and decline – calling them experimental, classic, and baroque – although he explicitly rejected any basis in Hegelian thought, which was increasingly losing prominence at this time.⁴¹ In the process, Focillon articulated the basic relation between Romanesque sculpture and architecture (medieval architectural sculpture, in particular, had been seen earlier as contrary to general classicizing principles), broadly established a new level of aesthetic acceptance for Romanesque sculpture (which had been low), and gave a new legitimacy to the art of the eleventh century (in distinction to Mâle’s twelfth). His work had an especially great impact in the United States, where he taught from just before the war until his death in 1943.

Even more widely received were the methods of Focillon’s contemporary, Adolph Goldschmidt. Like so many before him, Goldschmidt wanted an objective, “scientific” approach to the artwork, one that, to one degree or another, borrowed from and could claim to be the equal of the scientific methods of the time. And, like others (especially Dehio), Goldschmidt was concerned with establishing the documentary evidence of his subject. He did this by combining unusually precise stylistic analysis (as opposed to the formal analysis of Wölfflin), iconographical investigation, and comparison with other artworks to group, localize, date, and relate large bodies of works that had never been systematically studied before. This was an approach that both revealed and allowed the study of the interrelation of the “major” and “minor” arts. Toward this end, Goldschmidt undertook work of lasting importance particularly on Carolingian, Ottonian, Romanesque, and Byzantine ivories (writing several distinguished corpora that showed the interaction between East and West; 1918, 1930–1934), Carolingian and Ottonian illuminated manuscripts (1928), German Romanesque bronze doors, and German Romanesque and Gothic sculpture. Believing that art historical study begins with the individual artwork, he preferred practice to theory. Because of the wide reception of his methodology, of his role as perhaps the first major art

historian in Germany who was primarily concerned with the Romanesque and Gothic periods, and of the almost one hundred dissertations completed under his direction, Goldschmidt was of great importance in the development of medieval art history in Germany and the United States, where he taught as a visiting professor on three different occasions.⁴²

The Twentieth Century

As influential as Goldschmidt was – and he was very influential – perhaps Germany’s greatest contribution to art history, including medieval, was the iconological method originating from Aby Warburg and those associated with him. Warburg, who was strongly influenced by Burckhardt’s cultural history of art, first applied the term “iconology” to his method in 1912. Though not a medievalist, he set before the discipline a new approach to the study of art, one that went beyond either stylistic analysis or iconography and that fundamentally ran counter to the theories of Riegl and Wölfflin on the autonomous development of artistic form. In the field of art history properly speaking, Warburg did important work on the meaning of antique survivals in Renaissance art. He was, however, a scholar of enormous breadth, with very diverse interests that included religion, magic, philosophy, cosmology, astrology, science, literature, psychology, and memory, among others. He believed that art can only be understood in its broad historical and cultural contexts, and toward this end incorporated all branches of learning and all forms of visual representation – as well as the patron and the patron’s general goals – in his radical vision of an interdisciplinary cultural history of art.

Warburg was a man of independent wealth and enormous enthusiasm for his subject, both of which enabled him to establish first a library and then a research institute in Hamburg, the Bibliothek Warburg, which opened to the public in 1926, shortly before his death in 1929. In 1933, the scholars of the Bibliothek Warburg, under the direction of Fritz Saxl (who did important work on medieval astrological manuscripts), were forced to flee the waking nightmare of National Socialism with their library, and, like so many others, found refuge in England. Here, re-established as the Warburg Institute, they soon began to publish their distinguished journal (1937). They were joined in this publication effort a few years later (1939) by the Courtauld Institute, which was founded in 1932 and which eventually took up residence in the (new) Somerset House, the site of the death of Cromwell and the former quarters of the Royal Society of Antiquaries. More than any other approach to the study of art from this period of vital intellectual experimentation, the cultural history of art as conceived of by Aby Warburg – his interdisciplinary blend of iconography and iconology – retained its influence, if not its form, over the years.

One of the reasons, only one, that Warburg’s method became so strongly integrated into the historiographical tradition of art history was that it was taken up and refined by a man considered by many to be the most brilliant art historian

in the history of the discipline, Erwin Panofsky. Panofsky wrote on art theory, the Italian Renaissance, and the Northern Renaissance, as well as medieval. He was not a student of Warburg's, but he met and was influenced by Warburg at the Bibliothek Warburg when Panofsky held the first professorship in art history at the University of Hamburg. Panofsky took Warburg's method further and theorized it, in this way both demonstrating its applicability and broadening its appeal. As differentiated in his famous *Studies in Iconology* (1939), there are three levels of visual interpretation. Though more complex than explained here, pre-iconographical description deals with a relatively direct reading of the artistic motifs of an image; this was characterized by Panofsky as a history of style. Iconography is the study of the themes or concepts of imagery as conveyed through the literary and visual traditions; this is a history of types. Iconology is the "intrinsic" meaning or content related to the "symbolical" values, that which was the impetus to the selection of the iconography and which is understood by determining the "underlying principles of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion ... which are generally unknown to the artist himself and may even emphatically differ from what he consciously intended to express"; this is a history of "cultural symptoms – or 'symbols.'"⁴³ Employing all branches of learning, as in Warburg's method, this is very much a cultural history of art, but it is not one that attempted to interpret specific artworks in light of their more immediate social and political contexts. As it pertains to medieval, this approach is most effectively seen in Panofsky's discussion of medieval renaissances in *Renaissance and Renascences* (1960), a study that transcended not just the fields of Renaissance and medieval but the discipline of art history itself. Less successful was his *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (1951), which attempted to explain the subdivision, division, and totality of the physical structure of the Gothic cathedral as a display of "visual logic," the result of the same mentality that brought about the intellectual structure of the Gothic *summa* – a theory that has not received broad acceptance. Though certain points of his *Abbot Suger* (1946) have also long been questioned in Europe – and more recently in the United States – it is nevertheless one of the seminal books of medieval art history of the twentieth century, his discussion of the relation of Pseudo-Dionysian mysticism and the art program of St.-Denis still being one of the central issues in medieval art history today.⁴⁴

Panofsky was enormously influential in the United States in no small part because of his presence in America for 35 years, after having been forced to flee Germany in 1933. This period, before and after World War II, was an extremely active one for medieval art history, and Panofsky was, tragically, joined in his flight by a large number of distinguished art historians, many of them medievalists, scholars who had an important effect on art history in the US. It is impossible to present the scholarship of either these individuals or those others who continued to work in their home countries in this present introduction, authors whose names and significance will be covered in greater detail in the chapters of this volume.⁴⁵ But let me mention one last scholar, known equally well for his work in medieval as in modern, Meyer Schapiro.

One of the most influential art historians of his time, Schapiro managed to address contemporary interests in form, style, and artistic change in a truly fundamental way, one that had no need to resort to theories of autonomous laws of art. He did this by accepting many of the techniques used by previous historians of form and style while rejecting the universalizing claims of their theories. At the same time, he followed the practice of the members of the Vienna School and others of employing methods from outside art history proper, especially psychology, although he strongly cautioned against excess in this general practice. Perhaps most persuasively for many, he was instrumental in introducing the approach of social art history to the art of the Middle Ages, even if he himself followed it only inconsistently. For the purposes of this introduction, this process shows up most clearly in his studies of the French monastery of Moissac and the Spanish monastery of Silos, both of which present penetrating examinations of Romanesque style. In 1931, Schapiro attempted to explain the sculpture of Moissac not as a point in an autonomous development of form or as a complex of iconographical puzzles to be deciphered, but as an art whose principle of abstraction was as intentional as that of the art of Schapiro's own time. But he was not concerned with the dynamics of this purposeful abstraction alone, emphasizing as well – on a level of sophistication that had not been seen before – a realism that he saw emerging from this abstraction, and that he saw as in opposition to it. In 1939, however, in his famous study of the art of Silos, he took his exploration of style further, no longer limiting himself to the visual component of style alone. Introducing a more contextually explicit approach than the excellent, though typically more general, cultural history of Warburgian iconology, he explained two competing styles – one indigenous (Mozarabic) and the other foreign (Romanesque) – as the result of competing ideologies within the same institution in this period of fundamental political and social change in Northern Spain. In the process, he provided a historical basis to an emerging realism, seeing it as a manifestation of artistic freedom attributable to the rising bourgeoisie in the face of the traditional church establishment; at the same time, he also attempted to counter the dominant view that art production was entirely subject to church control. His reading is shaped by Marxist theory, though not in the sense of simplistic or forced theories of class struggle. However, by the time of his article on the aesthetic attitude in Romanesque art (1947), his arguments for a culture of artistic freedom were now largely based on testimony that came from the same establishment church that he had earlier seen as fundamentally opposed to such freedom.⁴⁶ Schapiro's Marxist art history was short-lived and his themes of the freedom of the artist, the interaction of styles, and psychology had all been broached before. But it was all used to such effect – even if many of the individual arguments have been shown to be incorrect – that his work still commands enormous respect today and is seen both as a model of formal and stylistic analysis and as a crucial stage in the development of a social history of art.

Finally, the period from the beginning of the Vienna School to around 1968 (the date usually given as marking, in however symbolic a way, the great changes

that took place in Western culture in the years following World War II) or a bit later was also an important one in the continued development of the art historical infrastructure, without which the discipline would not have developed in the way that it has. In 1873, the first International Congress of the History of Art of the Comité international d'histoire de l'art (CIHA) was held in Vienna. Other national and international organizations followed, as did a number of journals. Let me cite only a few, aside from those already mentioned: the Deutsche Verein für Kunstwissenschaft in 1908; the College Art Association in 1911, the first professional organization of academic art historians (*Art Bulletin* really was a bulletin when it first began in 1913; scholarly articles appeared only in 1917); the Medieval Academy of America in 1925 (*Speculum*, 1926); the *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* in 1932; the Verband Deutscher Kunsthistoriker in 1948; the Centre d'études supérieures de civilisation médiévale in Poitiers in 1953 (*Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 1958); the International Center of Medieval Art in 1956 (originally the International Center of Romanesque Art; *Gesta*, 1963/1964); the (British) Association of Art Historians in 1974 (*Art History*, 1978); and *Arte medievale* in 1983. The development of university art history departments and university presses is a story in itself.⁴⁷ The American museum of medieval art, the Cloisters, opened in New York in 1939. Important research guides, such as book and periodical indices, were established: the *Répertoire d'art et d'archéologie* (1910–1989) and the *International Repertory of the Literature of Art* (RILA, 1975–1989) merged in 1991 to form the *Bibliography of the History of Art* (BHA, 1975–2007), now continued by the *International Bibliography of Art* (IBA, 2008–). Efforts in the area of iconography continued: the Index of Christian Art (now the Index of Medieval Art) was founded at Princeton University in 1917 through the efforts of Charles Rufus Morey, primarily a scholar of Early Christian art; and other important iconographical aids were produced by Karl Künstele (1926–1928), Louis Réau (1955–1959), Gertrud Schiller (1966–1980), and Engelbert Kirschbaum (1968–1976). Indispensable reference works appeared: *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1907 f.), Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq's *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (1907–1953), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (first edn. 1957; word for word, the best medieval reference work available), the *Encyclopedia of World Art* (1959), *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (1967), and *The Dictionary of Art* (Grove, 1996), to name only a few. Many distinguished catalogs appeared and continue to appear (of which I will mention only two series, *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, 1975 f. and *Manuscrits enluminés de la Bibliothèque nationale*, 1980 f.), as well as corpora (most notably the *Corpus Vitrearum* series, 1952 f.⁴⁸). New editions of sources, also, continue to be published (*Corpus Christianorum*, 1953 f., being only the most prominent), as do many translation series.

With the great changes that began to emerge in the 1960s, changes that affected almost every aspect of Western culture, came an increasingly complex environment for medieval art history. There were many reasons for these far-reaching changes. But as they apply to art history – which was especially affected by them

in the 1970s and throughout the 1980s – one of the initial causes may be said to be the relativism that has for so long been a central factor in Western thought. Although a recognition of the impossibility of achieving an objective historical reality appeared already with Herodotus – the “Father of History,” considered to have written the first comprehensive, more or less critical history in the West – an increasing appreciation of this issue had a particularly destabilizing effect on art history at this time. The claim of a universal standard for Classical art that had been so taken for granted from the first history of Western art by Xenocrates to at least the late nineteenth century was now seen as thoroughly invalidated, as was that of a “scientific” basis to so many late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century theories of art. Not only did the universal theories of the leading scholars of earlier generations seem hopelessly antiquated, but the basic necessity of continuing to identify, document, and classify the vast body of artistic remains from the past seemed lacking to some as the primary mission of art history. And while most of the great theorists of the earlier generations would never have insisted that a given approach was the only way, a reaction set in to what seemed to some to be attempts to put forth a single way of viewing and interpreting art. A new art history that was socially relevant and intellectually current was being called for, and the discipline seemed to be in a crisis.

While the “new art history” would have been quite impossible without the gains of the “old” – the indispensable work on authentication, localization, dating, periodization, style, attributions, biography, and so on – the “new” has revitalized the field and opened up new areas of research by asking new questions. This has come about through the adoption of interdisciplinary methodologies that have transformed other areas of the humanities and social sciences, typically described under such designations as literary criticism, structuralism, deconstruction, post-structuralism, linguistic theory, semiotics, reception theory, narratology, psychology, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, post-colonialism, feminism, the new historicism, Marxism, and social art history. What these new methodologies all have in common is that they have often redirected attention from very circumscribed approaches regarding questions of style, form, dating, the *œuvre* of the artist, biography, and so on to broader concerns of the function of the artwork in its historical context – economic, social, cultural, ideological, gender, perceptual concerns – while reading the artwork as an active agent in the construction of that context.

However, these new “theories,” as they are sometimes called, are not always compatible, with one stating that the meaning of an artwork is constructed by the viewer (not the artist), another that the original meaning is unknowable, another still that meaning is found only deeply beneath the surface of the subject, and still another that the meaning of a given artwork is based in a generally recoverable historical reality even if formed by a complex and variable dynamic of economic, social, and political conditions. Structuralism, for example, looks beneath surface content at social relationships in terms of an abstract system of signs, whose meaning lies in the relationships between these signs. Deconstruction, in contrast,

analyzes the text, or in the case of artworks, the “text,” in terms of binary oppositions, revealing a number of contradictory meanings that subvert the hierarchy that is the basis of the oppositions, ultimately hoping to show that there is no single authoritative reading of a given text (or “text”). And Marxism and social art history in general (which are not new at all, although they are usually associated with these other methodologies as part of the “new art history”) find very specific meanings in texts and images, though they typically see those texts and images in relation to contemporary ideologies.

Most of these new theories originated in the study of modern or contemporary culture, and, generally speaking, they were first introduced into the discipline of art history through those same fields of modern and contemporary. Whether because the medieval field already had a tradition of image theory and exegetical interpretation⁴⁹ or because some of the new theories are so strongly based in modern (as opposed to medieval) modes of thought, medieval has taken up some methodologies more quickly than it has others.⁵⁰ These new approaches have resonated, in particular, in the areas of vision, reception, narratology, and gender.⁵¹ Other areas, such as the Crusader states, might be said to be affected in a significant, if relatively indirect, way by post-colonial theory.⁵²

New issues have also arisen, sometimes as a result of the new environment of interdisciplinarity, sometimes as a development of earlier issues that were never worked out, such as our developing conception of the artist or of patronage and collecting, which, at times, may now investigate the relation between art and society with regard to a wide range of social and political issues beyond the immediate identification of a given patron or pieces of a collection.⁵³

But none of this means that proven methodologies have simply been cast aside – *non omnia grandior aetas, quae fugiamus, habet*, “Not everything old age has is to be spurned,” as Dugdale so boldly stated (see fig. 1-3).⁵⁴ Good, often excellent, work continues on stylistic analysis, attribution, dating, biography, and iconography, whether as discrete topics or as part of broader studies. Similarly, scholars continue to work toward a fuller awareness of issues related to the often essential liturgical context of so many medieval works of art.⁵⁵ At the same time, subjects and issues that have been of interest to medieval art historians for generations continue to be of interest, although, now, they are often informed by the so-called new theories in such a way that they would not be characterized as overtly dependent on these theories. The study of Romanesque architecture may address questions of economics, that of Romanesque sculpture may ask questions about the subjectivity of the viewer of an artwork, and that of Romanesque manuscript illumination may take up feminist issues.⁵⁶ Work on Gothic architecture may reflect the new interests in the function of the artwork in its historical and social contexts, Gothic manuscript illumination may be concerned with the reception of the image, and stained glass may employ narratology.⁵⁷ This is true for all the areas of architecture, sculpture, painting, stained glass, and the sumptuous arts.⁵⁸ Some subjects that were of concern in the past have now become virtually distinct areas of research, including materiality, the reliquary, architectural layout,

sculptural programs, *spolia*, the monstrous, and the marginal.⁵⁹ While important monographic studies continue to appear, specific groups of artworks – sometimes institutionally based, sometimes thematically – have taken on a new interest, such as the art of female monasticism, the art of the Cistercian Order, the illustration of saints’ lives, and the art of the pilgrimage.⁶⁰ The primary sources continue to be given attention. And the interest in medieval has extended into the modern period in the study by medievalists of medieval revival movements and the modern medieval museum.⁶¹ Of all the recent changes, perhaps the most conspicuous is the increasingly wide and deep acceptance of one form or another of social art history. This interest in the social function of art has been on every point of the spectrum – typically not Marxist, although usually with a more specific focus than Burckhardt’s cultural history or Panofsky’s iconology. Its subjects may range from specific social interactions to broad social control to the particular spirituality associated with a specific social group, all of which may be seen as reinforcing the current social system, though often interpreted through different dynamics and understood in different degrees, according to the different authors. What has fallen by the wayside is an exaggerated concern with explaining medieval art through universally applicable artistic standards, cyclical theories of history, the exaltation of medieval art in the formation of national identities, studies of the artist as genius, and universal theories regarding autonomous artistic form.

Concluding Remarks

In trying to come to terms with the basic difference between Middle Eastern and Western modes of thought, T.E. Lawrence perceptively identified the underlying characteristic of modern Western thought as relativism, describing it strikingly as, “doubt, our modern crown of thorns” (private edn. 1926, public 1935). His analysis of Middle Eastern thought would now be seen as open to question in a number of ways. But Lawrence – “Lawrence of Arabia,” who wrote what today might loosely be thought of as a Master’s in medieval art history at Oxford in 1910⁶² – was on target with his representation of relativism (which he accepted), implying that it both marks a certain level of attainment for Western culture and punishes and perhaps even mocks its bearer at the same time. Today, the multiplicity of approaches within art history, whose basic impetus has been, in large part, modern relativism, suggests to some that the discipline is in crisis. But as this historiography has shown, there has never been a time since Winckelmann – that is, since the generally accepted beginning of modern art historical studies – that art history did not seem to be in crisis. It is a commonplace that each generation conceives of itself in reaction to the previous one. Indeed, these are not crises in the sense of an uncertainty over the nature of the discipline, but the periodic tensions of re-addressing attitudes and focuses of study to correspond to current interests and perceived gaps of knowledge; such current interests, of course, not being in any way monolithic or accepted uncritically.⁶³ For some, methodological

positions are like a religion – there is no other way. For most, however, there has been a distinct rejection of dogmatism and a willingness to use differing methodologies according to the demands of the problem chosen, seeing methodology and theory as means to shed light on objects of study, rather than the other way around. Whatever the negative aspects of this problematic relativism may be, it has resulted in a positive multiplicity of approaches as called for, most notably, by Hans Belting in 1983, whether or not this has matched Belting's personal conception. While some of these new theories will be with us in the future and some, like the grand theories of the past, will be discarded, a multiplicity of approaches is as characteristic of the early twenty-first century as Romanticism was of the early nineteenth.

The current environment, however, is not explained so easily as simply one in which anything goes. It is not the same world it was when medieval art history began to establish itself so many years ago. Times have changed – including more than academic theories. The world-view of the educated public has also changed, and the major Western cultures that could look to the past as well as the present for national identity in the nineteenth century increasingly look only to the present and the future in the twenty-first. If, in the early nineteenth century, Hugo's popular novel could electrify the public in regard to medieval art and architecture, in the late twentieth, Umberto Eco's novel, *The Name of the Rose* (1980), elicited no such reaction. In a key incident in *The Name of the Rose*, a foreshadowing of the main events of the novel is conveyed through the experience of one of the protagonists (Adso) of viewing a medieval sculpted portal based directly on the twelfth-century south porch of Moissac (the same one studied so remarkably by Schapiro). And, later, the introduction of one of the crucial figures (Jorge) culminates with his vehement condemnation of the potential of medieval art to distract the monk from spiritual pursuits, using the words of Bernard of Clairvaux's famous *Apologia*.⁶⁴ But, despite the popularity of this book (50 million copies sold worldwide; the basis of a major motion picture), it had no discernible effect in stimulating an appreciation or even an awareness of medieval culture on the part of the modern public. Admittedly, Eco does not provide such a gloss on medieval art and architecture as Hugo did in his chapter, "This Will Kill That" (book 5, chapter 2). Yet medieval art and architecture are a constant in *The Name of the Rose*, a key part of the narrative, even of the plot.

The real difference lies in the fundamental change of social and political dynamics since Hugo's time. Medieval culture does not relate to modern Western cultures – especially American – in the present day in the same way that it did in the nineteenth century, at a time of tumultuous formation of national identities. We, today, are no longer drawn to medieval by the Romanticism of an earlier century or by the nationalism; or by the desire to establish universal theories – the often captivating theories of previous scholars that are, generation after generation, called into question. Rather, we are drawn to the Middle Ages because the art and architecture speak to us differently from that of other times and places: the seeming contradictions of simplicity and complexity, stability and change,

domination and freedom, the looking backward and the looking forward, the memory of empire and the growth of urbanism, regionalism and internationalization, superstition and the beginnings of modern thought, the differences from and the similarities to our own culture. And we are drawn by a sense of loss, the same sense of loss that motivated our predecessors, the first medievalists. Relevancy, in any field, is the same as it ever was, even if a given field cannot spearhead national movements: addressing issues of contemporary concern, asking new questions, filling in the gaps of knowledge (both newly perceived and of long standing). And here, medieval seems wide open. Having only recently emerged, with the aid of relativism, that double-edged sword, from the need to compete with the standards of Classical and Renaissance art – and the need to seek justification in modern abstract art – a new history of medieval art is now being written, one step at a time. Whether we look at art history for social relevancy or in terms of Burckhardt’s “problem solving,” this is an exciting time for medieval. A new critical awareness has combined with a dedication to historical research that was not always the case in the past, though there have been eminent exceptions. In many ways, the field is open as never before. The issues of the time are varied and point no less than those of the past both to the heart of medieval art history and to its future. The destruction of the medieval patrimony with the Reformation and its aftermath was a great loss for Western culture. But it is a destruction from which many a plum is still waiting to be plucked.

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Notes

- 1 Iona and Peter Opie, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, new edn. (Oxford, 1997), pp. 275–279.
- 2 James Gairdner, *The English Church in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1924), pp. 419–430.
- 3 Theodor E. Mommsen, *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (Ithaca, NY, 1959), pp. 106–129.
- 4 Paul Lehmann, “Mittelalter und Küchenlatein,” *Historische Zeitschrift*, 137 (1928), pp. 197–213; Nathan Edelman, “The Early Uses of *Medium Aevum*, *Moyen Age*, *Middle Ages*,” *The Romanic Review*, 29 (1938), pp. 3–25; *Oxford English Dictionary*, “middle age.”
- 5 Harvey C. Mansfield, *Machiavelli’s New Modes and Orders: A Study of the Discourses on Livy* (Chicago, 2001), pp. 35–41.

- 6 Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori, Dell'Architettura* 3, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, 9 vols. (Florence, 1878–1885), Vol. I, pp. 137–138; translated by Frankl, in *The Gothic*, pp. 290–291. The terms “Baroque” and “Enlightenment” were also used in a pejorative sense at one time.
- 7 T.D. Kendrick, *British Antiquity* (London, 1950), p. 63.
- 8 *Oxford English Dictionary*, “gothic.”
- 9 Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts: Laws Against Images* (Oxford, 1988), p. 86.
- 10 Frankl, *The Gothic*, p. 352.
- 11 Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*, p. 59.
- 12 Thomas Cocke, “Rediscovery of the Romanesque,” in *English Art 1066–1200* (London, 1984), pp. 360–366, esp. p. 361.
- 13 Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*, p. 47.
- 14 All quotations from Goethe are from John Gage, ed., *Goethe on Art* (Berkeley, 1980), pp. 103–112, esp. pp. 105, 108–109.
- 15 On the modern medieval art museum, see Chapters 38 and 39 by Marquardt and Brown in this volume.
- 16 Walter Cahn, *Romanesque Manuscripts: The Twelfth Century*, 2 vols. (London, 1996), Vol. I, pp. 28–30.
- 17 Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*, esp. pp. 132–149.
- 18 Kultermann, *History of Art History*, p. 62.
- 19 Mitchell Schwarzer, “Origins of the Art History Survey Text,” *Art Journal*, 54, 3 (1995), p. 25.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- 21 Françoise Forster-Hahn, “Moving Apart: Practicing Art History in the Old and New Worlds,” in Michael F. Zimmermann, ed., *The Art Historian: National Traditions and Institutional Practice* (Williamstown, 2003), pp. 67–77, esp. pp. 69–70.
- 22 Fernie, *Art History*, p. 85.
- 23 See Chapters 10 and 26 by Fozi and Pastan, respectively, in this volume.
- 24 Bober, “Introduction,” pp. v–xxi, esp. p. xi.
- 25 *Ibid.*, pp. vii–xi. For the state of research on Romanesque art in France, see Marcel Durliat, “L'Art roman en France (Etat des questions),” *Annuario de estudios medievales*, 5 (1968), pp. 609–627.
- 26 Louis Grodecki, “La sculpture du XIe siècle en France: Etat des questions” (1958), reprinted in *Le Moyen Age retrouvé* (Paris, 1986), pp. 49–67, esp. p. 49.
- 27 See Chapters 29 and 30 by Folda and Olympios, respectively, in this volume.
- 28 See Chapter 19 by Maxwell in this volume.
- 29 Bober, “Introduction,” pp. ix, xix.
- 30 Cited by Thomas Lyman, *French Romanesque Sculpture: An Annotated Bibliography* (Boston, 1987), p. 4.
- 31 Bober, “Introduction,” pp. xi–xii.
- 32 Kathryn Brush, *The Shaping of Art History: Wilhelm Vöge, Adolph Goldschmidt, and the Study of Medieval Art* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 63–65. For the state of research on early Gothic sculpture, see Willibald Sauerländer, “Sculpture on Early Gothic Churches: The State of Research and Open Questions,” *Gesta*, 9 (1970), pp. 32–48.
- 33 Walter Cahn and Linda Seidel, “Introduction,” in *Romanesque Sculpture in American Collections* (New York, 1979), pp. 1–16, esp. p. 9.

- 34 Linda Seidel, "Arthur Kingsley Porter," in Damico, ed., *Medieval Scholarship*, pp. 273–286. See also Seidel, "Arthur Kingsley Porter: Life, Legend and Legacy," in Craig Hugh Smyth and Peter M. Lukehart, eds., *The Early Years of Art History in the United States* (Princeton, NJ, 1993), pp. 97–110.
- 35 On Formalism, see Chapter 7 by Seidel in this volume.
- 36 Margaret Olin, "Alois Riegl," in Damico, ed., *Medieval Scholarship*, pp. 231–244, esp. p. 236.
- 37 Cited by Kultermann, *History of Art History*, p. 167.
- 38 Schiff, *German Essays on Art History*, pp. xlix–l.
- 39 On the successor to the Vienna School, the New Vienna School (particularly the medievalists Hans Sedlmayr and Otto Pächt), see the introduction by Christopher S. Wood, ed., to *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s* (New York, 2000), pp. 9–72.
- 40 Cited by Kultermann, *History of Art History*, p. 138.
- 41 This was not without some contradiction; see Walter Cahn, "Henri Focillon," in Damico, ed., *Medieval Scholarship*, pp. 259–271, esp. pp. 263, 267, 269. For more on Focillon, see also Chapters 18 and 19 by Hourihane and Maxwell, respectively, in this volume.
- 42 Kathryn Brush, "Adolph Goldschmidt," in Damico, ed., *Medieval Scholarship*, pp. 245–258, esp. pp. 254–255. See also Brush, *The Shaping of Art History* (Cambridge, 1996).
- 43 Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York, 1939), pp. 3–17.
- 44 For a review of the literature on the architecture of St.-Denis up until 1999, see Lawrence R. Hoey, "A Critical Account of Suger's Architecture at Saint-Denis," *AVISTA Forum*, 12 (1999), pp. 12–19.
- 45 On this intellectual diaspora, see Colin Eisler, "Kunstgeschichte American Style: A Study in Migration," in Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, eds., *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930–1960* (Cambridge, MA, 1969), pp. 544–629. For a detailed review of medieval art historical scholarship from approximately 1978 to 1988, see Herbert L. Kessler, "On the State of Medieval Art History," *Art Bulletin*, 70 (1988), pp. 166–187. For approximately 1988–2004, see Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art* (Toronto 2004; rev. edn., forthcoming), which – in an unintended challenge to the statement of Sauerländer cited in the Preface, that no one can read everything – is an extended essay explicitly intended as a review of the scholarship covering 16 years, whose subject is a number of issues that have been central to the study of medieval art during this time.
- 46 Karl Werckmeister, review of Meyer Schapiro, *Romanesque Art*, in *The Art Quarterly*, n.s. 2 (1979), pp. 211–218; John Williams, "Meyer Schapiro in Silos: Pursuing an Iconography of Style," *Art Bulletin*, 85 (2003), pp. 442–468.
- 47 On the development of art history in Europe in general, see Kultermann, *History of Art History*; in Germany, see Dilly, *Kunstgeschichte*, and Betthausen et al., eds., *Metzler kunsthistoriker Lexikon*; and in the US, see Smyth and Lukehart, eds., *The Early Years of Art History*.
- 48 On the *Corpus Vitrearum* series, see Chapter 26 by Pastan in this volume.
- 49 See Chapters 9 and 11 by Kessler and Hughes, respectively, in this volume.
- 50 On the distance, at times, of medieval from the rest of the discipline of art history, see Kessler, "On the State of Medieval Art History," p. 166. On modernism as the source

- of the dichotomy between pre-modern and modern art history, see Belting, *End of the History of Art?*, pp. 34–46.
- 51 See Chapters 3, 5, 6, 8, and 34 by Hahn, Caviness, Lewis, Kurmann-Schwarz, and Hamburger, respectively, in this volume.
- 52 See Chapters 29 and 30 by Folda and Olympios, respectively, in this volume.
- 53 See Chapters 2, 12, and 13 by Fricke, Caskey, and Mariaux, respectively, in this volume.
- 54 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6:28–29.
- 55 See Chapter 31 by Palazzo in this volume.
- 56 See Chapters 8, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 34 by Kurmann-Schwarz, Fernie (including in his entirely different essay in the first edition of this volume), Hourihane, Maxwell, Cohen, and Hamburger, respectively, in this volume.
- 57 See Chapters 21, 23, 24, 25, and 26 by Murray, Hedeman, Smith, Curschman, and Pastan, respectively, in this volume.
- 58 See Chapters 22, 27, and 28 by Jung, Buettner, and Hahn, respectively, in this volume.
- 59 See Chapters 4, 28, 32, 33, 14, 15, and 16 by Kumler, Hahn, Zenner, Boerner, Kinney, Dale, and Kendrick, respectively, in this volume.
- 60 See Chapters 34, 35, and 36 by Hamburger, Fergusson and Gerson, respectively, in this volume.
- 61 See Chapters 37, 38, and 39 by Bizzarro, Marquardt, and Brown, respectively, in this volume.
- 62 On Lawrence's Master's thesis, see Chapter 29 by Folda in this volume.
- 63 Since this was written around 2006 – at a time when it was very fashionable to write about the “crisis” in art history – the observation that there really was no actual crisis has become apparent.
- 64 Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose* (New York, 1983), pp. 40–45, 78–83.

Suggested Readings

It was not possible to fully reference this chapter for reasons of space. The vast majority of the historiographical information in it, however, is common knowledge. For this, I have consulted a large number of original authors and secondary studies. The works of the original authors will be clear enough to anyone wishing to read further. Among the secondary studies, unless otherwise cited, see especially the following (referred to in the notes by author name and short title).

For general art historiographical studies: W. Eugene Kleinbauer, ed., *Modern Perspectives in Western Art History* (New York, 1971); Heinrich Dilly, *Kunstgeschichte als Institution: Studien zur Geschichte einer Disziplin* (Frankfurt, 1979); Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven, CT, 1982); Hans Belting, *The End of the History of Art?*, translated by Christopher S. Wood (Chicago, 1987); Gert Schiff, ed., *German Essays on Art History* (New York, 1988); Udo Kultermann, *The History of Art History* (New York, 1993); Vernon Hyde Minor, *Art History's History* (Englewood Cliffs, 1994); Eric Fernie, ed., *Art History and*

Its Methods: A Critical Anthology (London, 1995); Donald Preziosi, ed., *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford, 1998); Peter Betthausen et al., eds., *Metzler kunsthistoriker Lexikon* (Stuttgart, 1999).

For specifically medieval art historiography: Paul Frankl, *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations Through Eight Centuries* (Princeton, NJ, 1960); Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (Stockholm, 1960); Wayne Dynes, "Gothic, Concept of," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (New York, 1973–1974), Vol. II, pp. 366–374. Wayne Dynes, "Tradition and Innovation in Medieval Art," in James Powell, ed., *Medieval Studies: An Introduction* (Syracuse, 1976), pp. 313–342; Harry Bober, "Introduction," in Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Twelfth Century, A Study of the Origins of Medieval Iconography* (Princeton, NJ, 1978), pp. v–xxi; Tina Waldeier Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism: A Prehistory* (Cambridge, 1992) (especially for the early historiography of England and France); W. Eugene Kleinbauer, "Introduction," in Helen Damico, ed., *Medieval Scholarship: Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline*, 3 vols. (New York, 1995–2000), Vol. III, pp. 215–229. A number of other more narrowly focused medieval art historiographies are cited in the notes.

The dates in parentheses in the text are normally original publication dates, not references to works cited in a bibliography; I have given these in the hope of providing a better sense of the chronological progression of the historiographical issues than might be the case with the usual birth and death dates of authors.



Artifex and Opifex – The Medieval Artist

Beate Fricke

A certain Paul signs the former screens of the *schola cantorum*¹ in Ferentino and Rome, now marble fragments, referring to himself once as *opifex* and once as *artifex*.² *Opifex* emphasizes the making of the work (*opus*), and *artifex* highlights the craft (*ars*) necessary for making.³ Paul thus understands himself as a craftsman and an artisan, but not explicitly as an “artist,” as tempting as it might be to use such a word in our translations. Indeed, the modern term “artist” carries a heavy weight and has been charged with an ample array of notions ranging from the divine artist creating out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) to the artistic genius, but, as shown in Paul’s signature, the medieval perspective on artistic production suggests we begin rethinking the modern connotations that have become so familiar to us. What, then, was the medieval “artist,” and did it even exist?

A first glimpse comes through the writings of Theophilus Presbyter, a pseudonym for an unknown Romanesque author who was the first to collect and systemize knowledge about different artistic technologies at the beginning of the twelfth century.⁴ In the preface to his treatise’s third book, Theophilus emphasizes the legitimacy of artists to use their craft to embellish churches, for their craft was an act of pious devotion: “Through the spirit of piety you regulate the nature, the destination, the time, the measure, and the means of the work.”⁵ On the other hand, art historians have argued that the Romanesque period was also the first moment in the Middle Ages when sculptors began to express their artistic inclinations. Despite their works being embedded in the religious context of a church building, their stylistic innovations seem to indicate an increasing awareness

of artists' own originality and self-worth.⁶ As Rudolf Berliner observed, there was a distinct kind of "freedom" and autonomy that Romanesque artists had in relationship to their artistic inventions.⁷

Already in the written testimonies about the builders of the cathedral of Modena from 1184, we encounter far-reaching proclamations of the skills of the leading craftsmen, the sculptor Wiligelmus and the architect Lanfranco.⁸ An inscription referencing the sculptor Wiligelmus is held up by the prophets Henoah and Elias, who were elevated directly to heaven and who usher the church's makers toward the same fate. Wiligelmus is praised as an architect of what could only be considered a "wonder" or, in other words and closer to the Latin phrase *mirificus edificator*, a wonder-causing builder. In another inscription at the same church, architect Lanfranco is praised as an admirable or marvelous craftsman (*mirabilis artifex*). If these quasi-supernatural claims about workmanship were not clearly dated to the twelfth century, they would be more in line with Antique and modern conceptions of the genius.⁹

Indeed, prevailing early and late modern connotations about the artist obscure our ability to understand how medieval artists saw themselves and their works, and how they conceived of their roles and statuses within the larger cultural context of the Middle Ages.¹⁰ The opposition between the Renaissance as a time of paramount artist characters, and the Middle Ages, which covered its artists with a veil woven of the Christian postulate of humility, goes back to Vasari (d. 1574) and has experienced profound revision in the past century. As Bruno Reudenbach has put it, this veil has revealed itself as a rather holey cloth.¹¹

In the following, I explore three essential differences obscuring our retrospective view upon the medieval artist, his or her work, and his or her self-understanding. First is the artist's negotiation between humility and pride, his or her navigation between vice and virtue in dealing with the divine gift, and the ability to craft and to create – to be an *artifex* just like the Creator. Two manuscripts, one from the Romanesque and one from the Gothic period, reveal meta-commentaries about the nature of this divine artistic gift, the act of implementing it, and the act of finishing a work. Through the interpretation of their decorative elements we can understand how artists were navigating carefully the aforementioned line between humility and pride.

In the second part I turn from painting to forms of artistic self-representation in sculpture and architecture. Inscriptions embedded within such three-dimensional works provide the largest body of written evidence about medieval artists. Significant changes in these inscriptions expose important shifts regarding the relationship between the artwork and its maker. These shifts distill the possible motivations for wanting to communicate something textual that is connected to but goes beyond the image or object created. These inscriptions, whether praising one's own gift of craftsmanship, flagging directly the object as proof of one's mastery, or inviting the viewer to pray for one's soul, all engage the audience in unique ways and articulate the relationship between the artist and his surrounding social and cultural contexts.

The final section focuses on late Gothic panel painting and attends to the relationship between *ars* (craft) and *scientia* (knowledge). In the late medieval period, painting became the forum for the demonstration of and expression of both universal knowledge and superior craftsmanship. I am especially interested in the making, use of, and knowledge about color. I suggest that unique ways of using color can be read as individual reflections about artistic work.

Humility and Pride

A miniature at the end of a twelfth-century manuscript, the first of two volumes containing Augustine's *City of God*, reveals a tension between self-identification as the maker of the manuscript and the postulation for *humilitas* (humility) (fig. 2-1).¹²

Medieval artists do not use their signatures to claim authorship of their art-works, but rather inscribe themselves in curious, often ironic ways. What kind of materials can we then use to start understanding the medieval notion of artistic production? Let us take a look at a manuscript that is both typical and unusual. It follows the standards of Romanesque book production with some illuminated initials, yet it is exceptional because it contains and exposes some aspects of the creator's self-understanding. On the last page of the manuscript (fig. 2-1) we see Hildebert raising his right hand, clenching what is most likely a pumice in his fist. He is about to throw it to his left, at a hungry intruder exploring the workshop of the two collaborators, scribe and illuminator, in search of food. This big mouse or rat has just knocked off one of the bowls filled with food from Hildebert's table. While the rodent sniffs at the large piece of cheese, a roasted chicken is about to hit the floor. His colleague Everwinus has not realized what is going on behind his back, though a second later the sound of the vessel crashing to the floor will stir him up. At this particular moment, however, he is fully sunken into drawing a splendid ornament while sitting on a modest stool. His position, posture, and attire form a stark contrast to Hildebert above. Hildebert was about to erase something, as indicated by the pumice, the knife in his left hand, and the quill tucked behind his right ear. He is seated on a comfortable pillow upon a lavish throne, and he has his own table with food waiting for him (*mensa Hildeberti*). A sumptuous desk is formed by a standing lion, and the open book shows a few words in black written on red lining. Two horns are inserted in the holes on the desk's upper edge, two writing feathers are tucked in two holes at the right edge, and a rabbit's foot is waiting next to them.¹³ The opened pages reveal the anger boiling in the scribe's heart: "Miserable mouse! More and more often you provoke my anger, God should destroy you."¹⁴ The two animals and the two humans are paired in significant opposition. The lion's tail is wreathed around and between his legs as if he is afraid of the fearless rodent and would love to run and hide. The scribe seated on a throne is filled with anger while the lay painter joyfully devoted to the perfect form of an ornament is using his brush (not a feather), and is bowed over his hand-held board on a stool.¹⁵

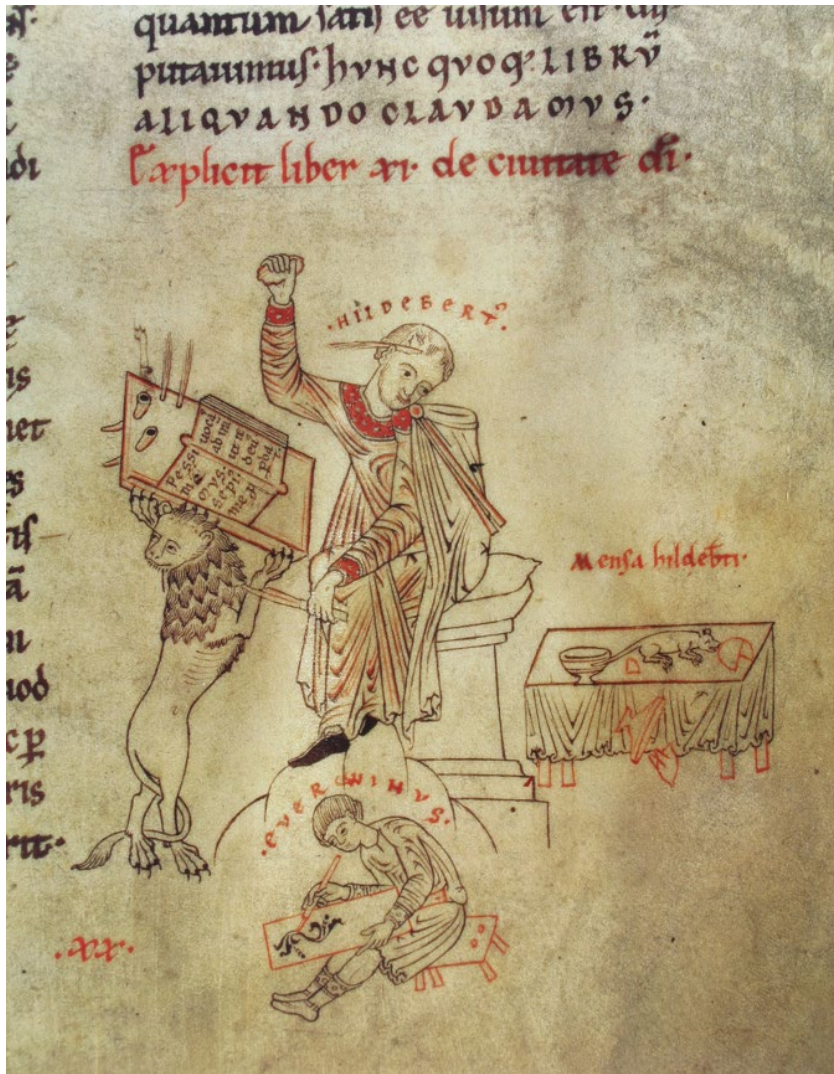


FIGURE 2-1 Hildebert and Everwinus, Augustinus, *De ciuitate dei*, end of 12th century, Metropolitní Kapitula u sv. Víta v Praze, MS A XXI/I:153r. Source: Reproduced by permission of Metropolitní Kapitula.

I suggest reading this scene as a humble reflection by the illuminator and the scribe about acts of creation, including their act of making and illuminating a manuscript. We must first reflect upon the position of this illumination within Augustine's *City of God*.¹⁶ The scene has been understood as a humorous self-portrait by a medieval artist.¹⁷ As much as this claim can hold true to a certain extent, I argue for amending the reading of this scene, following Ulrich Rehm, who has pointed out pictorial components of the scene (the mouse and the scribe's anger) as references to the eleventh book's contents that precede it.¹⁸ But one can

go even a step further: The book that precedes the illumination deals directly with how to understand and access the creation of God – i.e. how in the smallest hint one can understand the largest ideas. This textual content, coupled with the fact that the eleventh book is one of the few passages in a medieval text where *ars/opus*, *artifex/opifex*, and *artificium/opificium* are distinguished from each other purposefully and meaningfully, calls us to read this self-portrait as not only that, but also as a reflection about the relationship between human and divine *artifex*.¹⁹

Let us look closer to the lines that precede the image. Augustine repeatedly addresses the power of imagination and the importance of fantasy in understanding the divine creation; medieval artists, through their creative acts, could conceptualize the deeper dimensions of the divine acts of creation.²⁰ He emphasizes that man, as he is “made in God’s image,” can succeed in battling the vices and rise “above those lower parts he has in common with the beasts, which brings him nearer to the Supreme.”²¹ In addition, he suggests overcoming our inclinations to see a flaw, a vice, or the devil as such, for they are still a part of the divine creation and embody the challenge of understanding the truth behind the visible:

This is the beginning of God’s creations (*figmenti domini*) ... And because God, when He created him, was certainly not ignorant of his future malignity, and foresaw the good which He Himself would bring out of his evil.²²

Even the smallest details – the hungry rodent, the composition of two pairs of humans and animals, of two kinds of labor, the making of a small ornamental detail – speak to the wisdom of the world’s divine designer.²³ The *mise-en-scène* is a hint of what the divine creator or a human artist had in mind when creating the external characteristics; learning how to move deeper allows access to the ideas and processes behind the creation of the world or a work of art. The notion of art this implies, however, is different from representing an abstract idea. What we need to understand in order to look at the described ambivalence between the illuminator’s humbleness and pride in its own terms is the implicit reference to Augustine’s ideas about creation and their relation to human craftsmanship.

Divine and Human Acts of Creation

A later, Gothic manuscript from 1255, the so-called Hamburg Bible or Bible of Bertoldus, depicts the process of making manuscripts in more than half a dozen of the manuscript’s 89 illuminated initials (fig. 2-2).²⁴ Such evidence is particularly strong in the last of the illuminated initials, positioned right before the book of Revelation, which shows the painter himself in the act of painting. What we face here is nothing less than a self-portrait of the illuminator, who depicts himself with the materials needed to make the manuscript.²⁵



FIGURE 2-2 Initials to Genesis and to Revelation, Hamburg Bible, 1255, Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek: G.K.S.4.2E: 5v and 208r. Source: Reproduced by permission of Det Kongelige Bibliothek, København.

The first illumination in the same manuscript, the Genesis initial, also contains explicit references to the artist's ideas about creativity. It is significant that the illuminator inscribes the power of his craft into the original moment of divine creation. This I-Initial is composed of several medallions depicting the beginning of the Genesis story, and the creator stands to the right of the first. In this first medallion a deep blue sky spreads out above the chaotic mixture of ... color? Yet, it remains open to our interpretation whether this spread of color should be viewed as the four elements or prime matter. Blue, yellow, and red, along with black-and-white streaks of color, permeate the lower two-thirds of the sphere. The chaos at the beginning of creation had never before been represented as a mixture of colorful strokes, an innovative pictorial formula for paradoxically using artistic media to give shape to the chaos or nothingness out of which God generates the world. By finding an artistic visualization of the very moment of creation itself the artist assumes a position that suggests a homology between divine and artistic creation. In the Hamburg Bible, this creation out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) becomes a visual metaphor for the origin of painting and, at the same time, for the origin of colors in light. What one sees is the original chaos of the world, that had thus far been considered beyond representation, painted in color.

To provide the beholder with further information about what it is exactly that she or he is seeing, inscriptions are provided on cards or on scrolls. The scribe uses the present tense for all of these inscriptions, even though the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible, he is quoting for the main text uses the past tense, as is the case for the fourth day of creation (*fecit* instead of *fiant*). The works of the divine creation, then, are shown as pictures, and the words that were spoken while they were created are emphasized by the painter by way of the textual inscriptions.²⁶ Again, this shift in tenses inserts the artistic potential in the moment of divine creation. The moment of artistic visualization thus is meant to resemble and reify original creation.

In both the manuscript's first and last miniatures, Genesis and Revelation, is colorful, painterly matter – that is, the means through which the artist represents the act of creation – imbricating the artist's own act as a similar and inextricable enterprise. The innovative beginning and the pictorial “colophone” at the end are visual; the painter speaks through the emphasis given to the materials of his craft, the pigments, or mere color. On the Genesis page, creation coming into being follows along a continuum, with the seven medallions of the creation moving down the page to a lower horizontal level, where the fall of man marks the end of creation and the beginning of time. In the Revelation illumination, the illuminator paints his self-portrait also at the end point of a painted continuum that begins at the top of the page. While all other illuminations in the Hamburg Bible that show monks preparing parchment or writing are restricted to the initial of which they are a part, only the Revelation initial shows the painter having direct access to the act of revelation. This moment of revelation is shown at the top of the same page via the vertical, ornamental frame connecting the top and bottom of the page. The initial opening the book of Revelation is connected through the

red frame and blue vine, as if to indicate a special connection, circumscribing his own work as a self-portrait inspired through an act of divine inspiration. What we can see here is indeed a telling example of a medieval painter embedding his self-portrait into the beginning of the book of the Revelation as yet another act of revelation.

Artists' Inscriptions: Expressions of Presence, Praise, and Prayer

Since Antiquity (and even earlier) artists have inscribed themselves into their finished works, bearing signatures or displaying phrases that laud the maker: "I was made by ..." or "... made me" (... *me fecit*). Hereby, the artifact turns from an object into a person, as if it could speak and tell of its own making. As Horst Bredekamp has emphasized, this applies not only to artworks, but also to bells, door-knobs, ivory crucifixes, and other objects.²⁷ Herbert Kessler has provided ample food for thought if such inscriptions indeed refer to their makers. He suggested that connecting the modern concept of the artist to a medieval individual's creativity may be a rash conclusion. Take the case of the famous tympanum at Autun, where Gislebertus prominently carved his name below the feet of Christ in Heaven. This inscription prompted nineteenth-century writers to credit the work to him. Yet, Gislebertus may, in fact, have been the donor, not the sculptor. In his analysis Kessler describes a complex process of collaboration involving donors, patrons, designers, and fabricators. In an interactive group effort they were utilizing quotation and widely circulated pattern books, rather than relying on individual creativity.²⁸ However, in several cases, the inscriptions express more than merely a name or an explicit mention of a specific profession.²⁹ They comment on the quality of the artist's own work, ranging from praising their own artistry to outranking other artists through sheer humbleness.

Different Phases of Inscriptions

Many important studies have collected Western medieval inscriptions and studied the implicit and/or explicit references to the artist and his work.³⁰ Already in the nineteenth century scholars such as Adolphe-Napoléon Didron (d. 1867) and Fernand de Mély (d. 1935) were undertaking inscription analysis to revise the presumption of the devout and therefore anonymous medieval artist. Anton Springer's (d. 1891) study of artist-monks discussed the contributions of lay and clergy to the production of medieval works of art based on primary sources and inscriptions. In the 1890s the rising practice of *Stilkritik* and attribution to (anonymous) "masters" introduced a practice that dominated especially the fields of book illumination, medieval ivories, and sculpture. Their method of using style to identify artworks where there were no labels was thereby cementing the notion that medieval artists conceived themselves in relationship to the products of their

craft. Against this grain, Meyer Schapiro suggested reading the prominent visibility of inscriptions in medieval (contrary to Antique) works as a sign for the new appreciation of artistic achievements.³¹ In addition, Walter Paatz has argued that in the eleventh century, with the use of the Epitheton *doctus* (learned, erudite), came the emergence of a crafting artist from the sphere of craftsmanship, a phenomenon related to the spiritual context of *scientia* (wisdom, knowledge).³²

Let us take a closer look at the changes in inscriptions referencing the artist. The group of the so-called *Cosmati*, a group of marble workers active in Rome from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, has received wide attention as a significant and consistent group worthy of closer examination.³³ Peter Cornelius Claussen's studies addressing, but not limited to, this group were key to seeing the medieval artist's signature as distinct carrier of complex information about sociocultural context. He distinguished four different phases for Italian inscriptions. First, a heroic phase (1100–1150), in which signatures and epigraphic praise of the artist were part of the artist searching for his or her position within the formation of the Italian communes. Second, a phase of consolidation of craftsmanship (until c.1200), characterized by a reduction of the praise as an expression of now-achieved social status. Third, the phase of academic aspiration (c.1200–1250), reclaiming the realization of an *ars docta* along with an increase of reception of Antiquity. Finally, a lapidary phase (until c.1300), in which epigraphy as primary medium of artistic praise is replaced slowly through the rise of artists' biographies and the historiography of art.³⁴

An excellent example for the third group can be found along the upper edge of a large basin, recently acquired by the Louvre Abu Dhabi (fig. 2-3). As the beholder walks around what seems to be a former fountain, he or she reads an inscription on the lip. The polished verse composed in leonine hexameters praises its maker, Bonifilius. Chiseled in clear letters, the verse reads in English translation: "The greatest of (all) artists, whom no one in the whole world equals, skillfully sculpted this famous basin. The world applauds him whom (already) his great talent praises and blesses. His name is Bonifilius."³⁵ This inscription was originally read high above eye level. The heads of the animal frieze at the lower part of the basin attempt to look down at the beholder, suggesting an installation of the basin well over a full man's height. And, as we circumnavigate the object and read, we realize too that the movement of the animals goes in the direction opposite of our movement and the text, as two pairs of lions chase two pairs of dragons away from us. Ironically, a sole porcupine interrupts their line at one point.³⁶

The inscription reveals the artist's high self-esteem, matched rarely in other inscriptions. Few artists push self-praise like Bonifilius. Not only does he praise himself and his skill for being so worthy of true admiration, but he also calls upon viewers to acclaim him further. In addition, he makes reference to specific sculptural skills; the internal wordplay within the hexameter lets his carving the famous (*clarvm*) basin for the water refer also to the clear (*clar(ar)um*) water and metaphorically allude to his skillful stone-carving as if it were as fluid as water.



FIGURE 2-3 The ‘Bonifilius’ Fountain, Northern Italy (?), late 12th/early 13th centuries, Abu Dhabi, Louvre. Source: Reproduced by permission of Louvre, Abu Dhabi.

This culmination of artistic self-praise is followed by Claussen’s aforementioned fourth and final phase, the lapidary phase (c.1250–1300). Claussen describes the loss of the signature’s superlatives; the artists, and in particular the Cosmati, return to humble phrases composed of a name followed by “me fecit.”³⁷ This is really close to the signature of the Renaissance. In Jan van Eyck’s painting (and presumed self-portrait), with the date 1433 we read “johes.de.eyck.me.fecit” (Jan van Eyck made me).³⁸ And this lapidary phase of inscriptions in sculpture and architecture is also the time of Cimabue and the early Giotto in the genre of painting. Giotto is the first artist since Antiquity who uses the signature with the genitive, *Opus Iotti*, emphasizing the object as a work of Giotto even stronger. This formula, inspired by Antique signatures, comes to be extremely widespread in the Renaissance, especially in Quattrocento Italy. So, in the case of Giotto, we have both an early predecessor of a formula that becomes standard formula in the fifteenth century and, at the same time, we encounter no signature in most of his works. Claussen contemplates that these men, who were called from commission to commission, from one city to the next city, had indeed attained a status that was described from the Renaissance onwards as “artists.” The artistic signature of the Renaissance demanded nothing more than a name and substantiating visible skills through the more or less invisibility of reputation.³⁹ Giotto, already famous in his time, obviously did not need to sign his works. The artist’s signature was substituted by a distinctive, individual style.

It is unlikely that this sudden sobriety was caused by the influence of the mendicant orders, for mendicant monks working as craftsmen deliver the

most voluble signatures of this time. Claussen suggests that, to the contrary, the change was based on a reorganization of the artists and their commissions, i.e. the rise of larger workshops with apprentices and a headmaster, who together took on multiple commissions.⁴⁰ I argue, however, that the shift was not only based on the reorganization of labor, but also on the changing identity of the artist that was both informed by and a facilitation of the new labor structures.

The tradition of artistic self-proclamation gains a distinctly social and political dimension in the early fourteenth century. In Pisa, Giovanni Pisano (d. after 1314) raises himself an epigraphic monument, and it is only around here where such expression of artistic and academic aspirations through inscriptions remains conventional. Elsewhere at this time the so-called lapidary phase has reintroduced humbleness as the operative artistic mode, and “... *me fecit*” has supplanted the *ars docta* of speaking through learned verses filled with references to Antique rhetoric and poetry. Pisano praises himself as blessed with higher skill than his father, and as a learned man from Pisa – the best that was ever seen in the Pistoian pulpit.⁴¹ His inscription demonstrates the culmination of the rhetoric of artistic pride, and it also reveals how such pride newly established social context and status within the Italian city-states. While these inscriptions gain social specificity, they are also quite multivalent. Firstly, Giovanni Pisano’s inscriptions at the pulpits in Pistoia and Pisa are a praise to God inscribed in a work, which the artist completed due to the divine gift of his artifice: “I praise the true God, the creator of all excellent things, who has permitted a man to form figures of such purity.” Secondly, they inform the beholder about the history of the work: from its completion (1311) to difficulties in Pisa during the object’s execution,⁴² with a pun referencing the conflict between the Guelfs and Ghibellines.⁴³ Thirdly, Giovanni praises his own mastery and in return the praise – now coming from the beholder admiring his work – is thus meant to honor both the artist and his self-reflexive artifice:

He is a Pisan by birth, like that Giovanni, who is endowed above all others with command of the pure art of sculpture, sculpting splendid things in stone, wood and gold. He would not know how to carve ugly or base things even if he wished to do so. There are many sculptors, but to Giovanni remain the honors of praise.⁴⁴

Last but not least, Giovanni instructs the beholder to “test them with the proper rules” and includes a final expression of his hope that Christ should have mercy on the man (him) to whom such gifts were given, picking up the topos of a self-inscription into heaven, an expression of the artist’s hope to have gained a secure space in heaven through his works.⁴⁵ The comparison between the two inscriptions shows a distinct shift. Different from Bonifilius’ basin, the contemporary social and cultural context is present in Giovanni’s inscription, and the beholder is embedded in a complex web of praise of God, invitation for praise, and self-praise.

Anonymity and Differentiation of Labor

Another even more profound and influential change had happened before the times when Bonifilius and Giovanni Pisano chiseled their self-praises: the names of individual artists began to completely disappear. In the genre of French Gothic architecture, the idea of the “anonymous artist,” the absence of any signature or name recorded, was especially fetishized in the nineteenth century, as art historians celebrated the idea of an anonymous collective of artists contributing to the making of buildings, which were supposed to appear more like a heavenly site than a creation of heavy human labor.⁴⁶ In contrasting the opposing poles of epigraphic self-articulation in Romanesque signatures and the collective namelessness of Northern French Gothic cathedrals, Claussen questions the ideology of anonymity in the Gothic cathedrals. He argues in favor of the idea that anonymous members were contributing to the building of a “wonder” with their craft. The cathedral as a Celestial Jerusalem is built by workers, who, exactly in this time develop highly specialized skills, acquire scholarly knowledge (*scientia*) relevant to their craft, and divide their labor. All contribute to build an architectonic “wonder” with no connotation of human labor. Exactly in this period of anonymity, until the second half of the thirteenth century, a new type of architect arose: the technically versatile expert.

A century later this role turned into the “star-architect,” whose status allowed him to join the ranks of kings, noblemen, and bishops, and whose images adorned the portrait gallery of the cathedral he had built. In the gallery of the Cathedral of Prague, among kings and church officials, we also encounter the bust of its chief architect, Peter Parler, without an inscription, but bearing the tool of his profession proudly on his chest.⁴⁷ In this moment architects fully stepped out of their anonymity. Moreover, since the second half of the thirteenth century, we can find inscriptions in the church and on tombs. They inform us just as the written records inform us about the architect’s work.

At the same time, important changes can be observed in other genres of Gothic art, too. Different spheres of artistic production emerge: The major groups can be differentiated into artists working in a monastic context, lay artists, court artists, and artists working in cities.⁴⁸ Of interest in the last decades are also groups beyond such categories, or groups that overlap them, such as in the case of female artists working in and beyond the convent. Jeffrey Hamburger has demonstrated how nuns as female artists gained a larger audience in the Middle Ages, as well as how sisters’ methods, their modes of visualization, and their works’ content have changed the history of art since.⁴⁹ Through studying such manuscript illuminations together with early prints, textiles, and metalwork, he has broadened our understanding of their role within the context of religious spirituality and reconstructed the artistic, literary, and institutional traditions that shaped the lives of cloistered women.

More recently, other aspects relating to changing working conditions working conditions in the late medieval period have gained scholarly attention, to which

we will turn now. Artists experiment with new techniques and materials, they experience a high level of mobility, and toward the fifteenth century they reach a new level of professionalization.

Ars and Scientia – Changing Notions of “*Ars/Kunst*” and New Materials for Making Art

“Cry, craft (*kunst*), cry and grieve bitterly, no one cares now any longer for thee.” The inscription is one of two vertical inscriptions on the outer frame of Lucas Moser’s altar at Tiefenbronn (Germany), finished in 1432 (fig. 2-4). As shown by Amy Morrison, the notion that Moser’s verse is “a sign of the burgeoning self-awareness of the artist” has been challenged by more recent scholarly findings stating clearly that *kunst* (craft, art) is not used in its modern sense (art) here, but as craft.⁵⁰ Moser’s inscription adds another layer to the complexity of the artist’s self-expression – this time an emotional layer or register, that of the impending separation of the creative process upon the completion of the object. Moser laments the moment of finishing the altar for Tiefenbronn. He has to move on to the site of the next commission. Opposed to this loud outcry on the



FIGURE 2-4 Lucas Moser, Magdalene altar, 1432, Tiefenbronn, St. Magdalene. Source: Reproduced by permission of Tiefenbronn.

left wing, the tone is entirely different on the right. Here, on the band that runs between the right and the middle panel is a proud inscription. Right in front of the church, and visually connected to the painted church interior, we find the year in which he finished the work, the name of his hometown, Wil, and an explicit reference to himself as master and to the altar as his work (*maister des werckx*). The position of the two inscriptions may not be coincidental. On the left wing we see the sea journey of Magdalene and her companions and read the painter's barely legible lament. On the right wing we are inside a church, comparable to the one Moser made the altar for, and in a very legible script we read about the altar's painter and date. Just as Mary Magdalene here has folded her hands in prayer, we are encouraged to pray for Moser. While the left inscription is indeed quite unusual, and lends a strong voice to the artist's silent inner wish expressed in the verse form, the clearly legible script of the right vertical inscription follows standard practices found in comparable altars of the same time made in this region.⁵¹ Moser must have encountered ideal working conditions, since the technical analysis has revealed that regarding the materials used, e.g. the pigments and gold leaf, he was using only the best materials in abundance and with excellent knowledge how to apply them.⁵²

Peter Strieder, in rejecting the definition of *Kunst* as art for the time of Lucas Moser, argued that the word *Kunst* only gained a new meaning by the end of the fifteenth century, as seen in Dürer's writings. It did not refer to manual dexterity, but rather a combination of *ars* and *scientia*, which gave a new standing to what it meant to have artistic ability.⁵³ What we consider to be *Kunst* in the sense of "fine art," Strieder emphasizes, was not developed and brought into common usage until Goethe and Schiller in the eighteenth century. It was only by then that art could be described as the fruit of the genius, who through "talent," i.e. a natural, inborn gift, gives rule to art.

New Materials

There were also practical developments in late Gothic painting: the use of new pigments, the rise of oil painting, the division of labor within the workshop, and a rising number of manuscripts collecting knowledge about materials used and techniques. All had an impact upon artistic education and practices, the making of "art" works. In a longer perspective these changes also had significant impact upon the concepts of *ars* and *opus* and in consequence the notion of the artist.⁵⁴

But how do the use of new pigments, the relevant knowledge and accessibility, and new ways of using "color" reveal deeper insights about the painter's perspective upon their *ars* (craft)?⁵⁵ Giotto's use of pseudo-Arabic inscriptions and the slightly horseshoe-shaped arch in the border of Mary's veil in his panel *Enthroned Madonna with Child* at the National Gallery of Art in Washington has been identified as an early example for the embedding of distinct "otherness" into a panel for an Christian altar.⁵⁶ These references to the East were described as "uncommon and not otherwise used in Giotto's circle."⁵⁷ However, recent studies have revealed that an extremely rare pigment, the green-blue copper mineral mixite, was used in

the striking yellow-green lining of Mary's mantle.⁵⁸ Giotto, in other words, knew not only how to get rare minerals for preparing his pigments, but he also had the knowledge of how to use them and combine them with further, textual-pictorial elements of "otherness." In her lucid study of real and imagined painting materials, Anne Dunlop has revealed how such textile or scriptural references to Eastern origins in later Italian paintings of the Madonna were often combined with painted, fictive inlays and precious stones on the reverse.⁵⁹ She suggests such two-sided paintings imply a "conceptual link between the holy bodies they represent on their fronts and the fictive stones on the versos." According to Dunlop, such panels were made of pigments as exotic iconographic details like the Kufic inscription in Mary's halo and the depicted textile from East Asia. Those new pigments and painting materials were made from Asian stones, the gold came from Africa, and silver and tin from northern Alpine mines. Through a careful examination of radically shifting trade, she shows that these distant places contributed to the attribution of unusual properties of the stones and metals that were used by the artist's hands to incarnate holy figures. Anne Dunlop's line of argument that the strange materials from afar enhance the hidden power of the holy figures, who also reside afar, in heaven, is reflected in a treatise by Cennino Cennini. He defines painting as the skills to "find invisible things hiding in the shadow of ones in nature and to capture them with your hand, so that you can make manifest that which is not there."⁶⁰ The artist's knowledge to do so relies on both the knowledge (*scientia*) of what is hidden, as well as the art (*ars*) to make the absent visible. This knowledge reached from well beyond the artist's workshop and the local market or trader of minerals. The most precious minerals hailed from the East. Since lapidaries tend to shy away from geographic information, it is the genre of fantasy-enriched travel literature that filled the knowledge gap.⁶¹ The act of gaining *scientia* to implement *ars* was not just a geographical and epistemological conundrum, but a devotional one. Colors and pigments were used to both depict and learn about heaven.⁶²

At the end of the medieval period Albrecht Dürer used colors in an unprecedented way. A last example can show how what has been slowly unfolding in the preceding periods – the mediating role of "pure color" and particular pigments as described above – can be either considered as its culmination, or its transformation and overcoming.

Dürer's reference to the intricate relationship between pigments, painting, and their mutual contribution to the generation of meaning is particularly evident on the back side of one of the earliest panel paintings attributed to him, the *Man of Sorrows* at Karlsruhe, Germany.⁶³ On this reverse side, a flaming spectacle of color draws attention to an act of creation connected to the medium of paint (fig. 2-5).⁶⁴ This part of the work has traditionally been interpreted as an echo of the stone burial chamber seen on the front.⁶⁵ Walter Seitter has suggested the panel's verso to be cut agate. Through a painted magnification of this geological matter, Dürer delivers this cut of stone to our sight, revealing the sinuous interior of the stone's structure.⁶⁶ Yet there is even more at stake here.



FIGURE 2-5 Albrecht Dürer, recto and reverse of *Man of Sorrows*, Kunsthalle Karlsruhe. Source: Reproduced by permission of Kunsthalle Karlsruhe.

The connections between this geological tissue and numerous modes of artistic birth, not to mention references to incarnation and resurrection, are, as I have argued elsewhere, too manifold to interpret the reverse painting as just a depiction of a specific type of marble.

Along these lines, George Didi-Huberman's work on Castagno has taught us to understand marbling effects, especially when colorful, as petrified and thus divine art.⁶⁷ In the *Last Supper*, painted for the refectory of Sant' Apollonia in Florence between 1445 and 1450, for example, panels of painted marble are rendered in gentle colors behind all of the apostles. In the panel behind Christ, however, the otherwise gentle colors of painted marble seem to explode behind Christ's head in a cacophony of vibrancy. In this manner, the picture's marble plate becomes the "artificial" trace of the divine in nature. Didi-Huberman interpreted *marmi finti* as a pictorial figure, or indication, of Christ's unrepresentability, and the fictive marble spots on Dürer's panel's reverse could similarly be read as signs of incarnation, as has been done for Castagno, Fra Angelico, and other painters on both sides of the Alps.⁶⁸ However, Dürer's reverse seems

to reveal a more complex commentary upon the relationship between artistic material (paint and color) and “representation,” especially when considering its relationship to the front, with both displaying different deployments of surface color, yet under the common rubric of the form-giving power of Dürer’s mimetic style. On the panel’s recto, Dürer *mixes* colors to render Christ’s skin, which hold the color nuances together in and as a living body. The suffering body and with it the picture itself breathes within this colored skin of paint, more immediately than any marble statue.⁶⁹ Dürer’s rendering of stone on the verso, by contrast, is organized in such a way as to encompass the entire color spectrum, placing brilliant individual color values alongside one another almost without intermediate tones. This is an artistic move which places the relationship between medium and representation in the hands of the beholder; in his treatise on color, Dürer emphasizes that iridescent colors should never be painted, and argues that colors should be instead mixed by the eye itself.⁷⁰ In this panel he thus points to the difference between a representation and its perception.

If we incorporate these observations of pendant paintings into a reconsideration of the well-known front side, we also come to a remarkably different view of the purpose of representation and its relationship to the artist’s identity. The portrait of Christ is presented above an ambiguously rendered easel’s edge, which is simultaneously a stone balustrade, thus I consider the rear side of the panel to be an unsigned “self essay,” setting the stage for the several signed self-portraits to come. What we see here is a model of the divine *artifex avant la lettre*. Not mixing the colors on the reverse and leaving them separate refers not only to the capacity for perception and painterly effects, but also to the origin of painting in the divine creation of colors (i.e. the pigments made of earths and ores), as well as the artist’s ability to reenact that origin, creating a mimetic painting akin to God’s creation of man. Furthermore, the shape on the panel’s back resembles a cave where pigments were mined and collected. This mimesis – the making of a painting – parallels the creation of the divine *artifex*, who made the stones in the earth to be turned into pigment by the artist. With this ambivalence involving the two sides of panel, Dürer combines all three aspects of the self-understanding of medieval artists discussed in this contribution. Firstly, he negotiates the divine origins of his artistic power and, by doing so, oscillates between humility and pride. Secondly, he refers to his own physiognomy, and to his artistic practice in painting a picture of Christ. Last but not least, with the painterly elaboration about the origins of color and pigments, he demonstrates the profound changes in the relationship of *ars* and *scientia*.

Notes

- 1 A *schola cantorum* is an enclosure designed for a choir and located in the center of the nave in early church buildings.
- 2 Claussen, “Früher Künstlerstolz,” p. 11–12: Ferentino: “*Hoc opifex magnus fecit vir nomine Paulus*” and at Rome: “*Nunc operis quicquid chorus ecce nitet pretiosi artificis*”

- scult(o)ris com(po?)s(u?)it bona dextp(!)ra Pauli.*” For the complex terminology of *artifex* and *opifex* see Hamburger, “The Hand of God”; Kruse, *Wozu Menschen Bilder malen?*; Modersohn, “Natura artifex”; Muratova, “Vir quidem fallax”; and Tachau, “God’s Compass.”
- 3 The most widely used general term for artists in the medieval period was *artifex*; *opifex* is less widespread but still occurs in similar contexts. Other general terms used in inscriptions are *actor/auctor*, *fabricator*, *factor*, or *faber/phaber*; see Dietl, *Sprache der Signatur*, pp. 47–99. For a discussion of the medieval concept of the artist and important differences of medieval forms of collaboration to modern ideas about artistic individuality and authorship see Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art*, Chapter 2, pp. 45–64.
 - 4 The collection is known under the titles *Schedula diversarum artium* or *De diversis artibus*, and was attributed to the goldsmith Roger of Helmarshausen.
 - 5 Theophilus Presbyter, *Schedula diversarum artium*, p. 205.
 - 6 Schapiro, *Romanesque Art*, p. 20, p. 33.
 - 7 Berliner, “The Freedom of Medieval Art.” See also Hanning and Davidson, “Ut enim faber.”
 - 8 These are found in the inscriptions at the façade and in the chronicle recording the beginning of the building of the cathedral and the translation of St. Geminianus, written between 1105 and 1115. See Claussen, “Früher Künstlerstolz,” p. 14.
 - 9 For other cases of such “divine” praises of artists, see Bredekamp, “Epoche der Individualität,” pp. 206–223 and Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art*, pp. 50–58.
 - 10 See Strieder, “Schri.Kunst.schri,” and Liebmann, “Künstlersignatur,” for a contrast between the “invention” of the signature in the early modern period and the “anonymous” medieval artist; here the signature is considered a product of increasing competition in an art market, for which works are produced ahead. For early modern signatures and their poetic potential, see Karin Gludovatz, *Fährten legen*.
 - 11 Reudenbach, “Individuum ohne Bildnis?,” pp. 807–808.
 - 12 Prague, Metropolitan Library, MS. A. XXI/I, (25,2 x 33,5 cm) and MS. A XXI/2 (23 x 33 cm), Augustine, City of God. The illumination is in the first volume, fol. 153r on the last page. See: Podlaha, *Die Bibliothek des Metropolitankapitels*, pp. 87–90; Rehm, “Lieber Brot als Mäuse,” p. 3, n. 6; Reudenbach, “Individuum ohne Bildnis?,” pp. 807–808; and Hamburger, “Hand of God,” pp. 75–76.
 - 13 Löhr, “Hildebertus,” p. 26.
 - 14 “Pessime mus sepius me provocas ad iram ut te deus perdat.”
 - 15 Löhr, “Hildebertus,” p. 26; Rehm, “Lieber Brot als Mäuse,” pp. 2–6. While we may at first presume that Hildebert is actually the scribe and Everwinus the illuminator of the manuscript, the comparison with the second depiction of the very same collaborators in the frontispiece of another manuscript (Stockholm, Kungliga Bibliotheket, Cod. A 144) shows Hildebert with the inscription of H. PICTOR in opposition to a monk, labeled as R. S(cript)or, and again Everwinus holding two pots of ink assisting Hildebert.
 - 16 Rehm, “Lieber Brot als Mäuse,” pp. 6–11.
 - 17 See Rehm, “Lieber Brot als Mäuse,” p. 3, n. 6 for a list of interpretations viewing the scene as a humoristic note. Book XI, Chapter 16: “Who, would not rather have bread in his house than mice, gold than fleas?”
 - 18 Self-portrait is used here not as an expression of an individual self, but as a picture showing the artist who made it. For the distinction between medieval and early modern notions of the self-portrait, see Schweikhart, “Vom Signaturbildnis,” pp. 165–187.

- 19 Augustinus, *De civitate dei*, lib. XI, cap. XXI–XXIII. XXI.
- 20 Augustine, *City of God*, translation of Marcus Dods, book XI, Chapter 2.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Book XI, Chapter 17. Translation by Marcus Dods, modified by the author.
- 23 Book XI, Chapter 22: “Now God is in such sort a great worker in great things, that He is not less in little things, for these little things are to be measured not by their own greatness (which does not exist), but by the wisdom of their Designer; as, in the visible appearance of a man, if one eyebrow be shaved off, how nearly nothing is taken from the body, but how much from the beauty! – for that is not constituted by bulk, but by the proportion and arrangement of the members.”
- 24 It was made for a patron in Hamburg in 1255 and is now kept in Copenhagen. Petersen, “Bertoldus’ Bibel,” pp. 7–38; Petersen, “The Bible as Subject and Object of Illustration,” pp. 209–216; Petersen, “Die Hamburger Bibel – 1255,” pp. 270–271; Petersen, “Illuminatio,” pp. 68–105.
- 25 In the dedication of the manuscript, the painter’s name is not mentioned, but the name of the donor, Bertoldus, a former scribe himself, is given. From an entry in the necrology for the city of Hamburg dating from 12 October 1255, Erik Petersen concludes that Bertoldus was the donor, Karolus was the scribe, and the painter was a third person whose name is not given, see Petersen, “The Bible as Subject and Object of Illustration,” p. 216.
- 26 Gen. 1; references in square brackets are to the wording in the Vulgate.
- 27 Bredekamp, “Ich-Werdung,” p. 92.
- 28 Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art*, Chapter 2, pp. 45–47 and Seidel, *Legends in Limestone*, pp. 13–16, 76–78.
- 29 By far more than *artifex* or *opifex* often we find expressions that define clearly the type of craftsmanship involved in the making of a sculpture (*sculptor*), of a painting (*pictor*), of a gold work (*aurifex*, *aurifaber*), or of a building (*architector*, *architectus*). See Dietl, *Sprache der Signatur*, pp. 47–99.
- 30 See Dietl, *Sprache der Signatur* for the largest corpus of vernacular literature as well as bibliography. The entangled relationship between commissioner and artist are discussed by Elbern, “Auftraggeber und Künstler.” For early medieval goldsmiths, see Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art*, p. 46. For the Pisani, see Caillet, “Mise au point.”
- 31 Schapiro, *Romanische Kunst*, p. 56.
- 32 Paatz, “Die Gestalt Giotto’s,” pp. 92–93.
- 33 Claussen, *Magistri Doctissimi Romani*.
- 34 Claussen, “Früher Künstlerstolz,” pp. 10–33.
- 35 “*Artificvm symmvs cvi nullvs in orbe secvndvs //hvnc lvter(e)m clarvm soller(t)er scv- lpsit aqva(rum) //mvndvs ei plavdat qvem tanta peritia lavdat //et benedicatvr boni- flilivs ipse vocatvr*” //.
- 36 Jeannest, “The ‘Bonifilius’ Basin,” p. 20.
- 37 Claussen, “S. Cecilia,” p. 198: e.g. +hOC OPVS//FECIT//ARNVLFVS//ANN’ DNI’ M CC// LXXXIII//M’ NOVE’BER//D’ XX,” 1293, in the ciborium of St. Cecilia.
- 38 Giotto to Dürer, Cat. Nr. 17, p. 256. For the Quattrocento signatures and the changes in the Cinquecento see Boffa, *Artistic Identity*, pp. 193–196.
- 39 Ibid.

- 40 Ibid., pp. 31–33. In further articles Claussen has explored a large span of textual and figural references and artistic strategies of open and hidden (self)representations by the artists beyond these categories, which were based on the Roman group of the Cosmati. Claussen, “Nachrichten von den Antipoden,” and Claussen, “Kathedralgotik und Anonymität.” See also Jean Cuisenier, *Anonymat et signature*, pp. 30–32.
- 41 Pistoia, inscription in the pulpit by Giovanni Pisano: “SCVLPSIT IOH(ANN)ES QVI RES NO(N) EGIT INANES NICOLI NAT(VS) SENSIA MELIORE BEATVS QVE(M) GENVIT PISA DOCTV(M) SVP(ER) OMNIA VISA.” See Middeldorf-Kosegarten, “Die Skulpturen der Pisani,” p. 34, n. 81.
- 42 Giovanni refers to difficulties during the execution in the second inscription running along the pulpit’s base. See Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture*, p. 177.
- 43 “*Iam dominante pisis concordibus atque divisis comite tunc dico montisfeltri Frederico hic assistente Nello Falconis habente hoc opus in cura nec non opere quoque iura.*”
- 44 Translation by Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture*, pp. 177–178.
- 45 For the medieval predecessors see the before-mentioned case of Modena, and for further cases of such self-inscriptions into heaven see Bredekamp, “Epoche der Individualität,” pp. 205–213.
- 46 Klotz, “Formen der Anonymität,” pp. 303–312.
- 47 Inscription in his tomb, at the same church: “... Anno.d.M.CCC.LXXXXVIII.die. sce.mar:garthe.v ...”
- 48 For an excellent overview see Castelnuovo, *Artifex Bonus*.
- 49 Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*, pp. 215–217.
- 50 The vertical inscriptions on the frame reads “+schri·kvnst·schri·vnd·klag·dich·ser·din·begert·iecz·niemen·mer·so·o·we·1432·/+LVCAS·MOSER·MALER·VON·WIL·MAISTER·DEZ·WERX·BIT·GOT·VIR·IN·.” For an overview about the scholarship on the altar see Morris, *Lucas Moser’s “St. Magdalene Altarpiece,”* pp. 23–59 and 260–274.
- 51 *Bitte(n).got.für.hanssen.muoltscheren.vo(n).riche(n).hofe(n).burg(er).ze.ulm.haut.d(a) z.werk.gemacht.do.ma(n).zalt m°ccccxxvii*, Strieder, “schri.kunst.schri,” p. 19.
- 52 Hausherr, “Der Magdalenenaltar in Tiefenbronn,” pp. 177–212.
- 53 For the premodern relationships of *ars* and *scientia* see Craemer-Ruegenberg and Speer, “*Scientia*” und “*ars*”; Lohr, “Aristolian ‘scientia,’ and Smith, “‘Art’ Is to ‘Science,’ *The Body of the Artisan*, and “Artists as Scientists.” For architecture see Müller, *Grundlagen* and Ackerman, “Ars sine scientia.”
- 54 For the medieval concept of “*opus*” see Castelnuovo, “Materiam superabat opus”; Büchsel, “Materialpracht”; Reudenbach, “Panofsky und Suger”; Rudolph, *Artistic Change at St.-Denis*.
- 55 For matter and meaning in sculpture see Weinryb, “Living Matter” and *The Bronze Object*, in architecture see Barry, “Walking on Water.” For materials, matter, and meaning in general see Raff, *Die Sprache der Materialien* and Lehmann, “How Materials Make Meaning,” in *Meaning in Materials, 1400–1800*, pp. 6–27.
- 56 Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza*, pp. 58–61.
- 57 Gardner, “Giotto in America,” p. 173.
- 58 Berrie, Leona and McLaughlin, “Unusual Pigments,” pp. 1–9.
- 59 E.g. Gentile da Fabriano, *Madonna and Child*, c.1421, Museo Nazionale di Pisa. See Dunlop, “On the Origins of European Painting Materials,” pp. 68–96.
- 60 Broecke, *Cennino Cennini’s “Il Libro dell’arte,”* p. 20.

- 61 Buettner, “Precious Stones, Mineral Beings,” p. 216. See also Hesse, “Artistes, artisans ou prolétaires?.”
- 62 For an overview, see Bucklow, *The Riddle of the Image*.
- 63 See Hess, “The Karlsruhe ‘Christ as the Man of Sorrows,’” pp. 508–511 and Kutsche, “Christ as Man of Sorrows,” p. 70.
- 64 Seitter, “Zeigen, verstecken?”
- 65 Fröhlich, “Karlsruher Schmerzensmann,” pp. 400–401.
- 66 Seitter follows here the interpretation of Hess, “Christus als Schmerzensmann,”; Seitter, “Zeigen, verstecken?”
- 67 Didi-Huberman, *Fra Angelico*, pp. 89f, and ill. 36.
- 68 Earlier painted marble on the rear sides from Italy are, e.g., the three examples from Altenburg, Lippo Memmi *Entroned Madonna*, and Giovanni di Paolos *Madonna with Child*. “In Christian medieval allegory the ‘merciful’ stone symbolized the blood spilt by Christ during the Passion,” Müller-Wusterwitz, *Bildnis und Tugendübung*, p. 149.
- 69 For the aspect of the Paragone controversy on pictures’ reverse sides see Müller-Wusterwitz, *Bildnis und Tugendübung*; Itzel, *Der Stein trägt*; Preimesberger, “Zu van Eycks Diptychon”; and Georges Didi-Huberman, *Fra Angelico*, p. 89.
- 70 Blümle, “Glitzernde Falten.” For medieval tracts on the use of color, see Bennewitz, *Farbe im Mittelalter*.

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Vision

Cynthia Hahn

Some understanding of what it means “to see” underlies any concept of art. In recent years it has been argued, however, that sight is not the immutable and ahistoric sense that it was once understood to be. Rather, as “visuality,” it has a history. This chapter will examine some of the ways that conceptions of vision and visuality have shaped and driven scholarship on medieval art.¹

Before beginning, it should be noted that vision has two distinct meanings in medieval art, both important to our purposes here. The first concerns the theological, scientific, and cultural understanding of the means and possibilities of sight or the gaze. The second meaning, related, but often treated quite separately, concerns mental and revelatory or nightmarish experiences. These *visions*² are important theologically and culturally, but are only a subset of an understanding of the more abstract issue of the meaning of vision.

An intriguing starting point for the understanding of vision derives from its negation. That is, Moshe Barasch has treated the “mental image” of blindness and has shown that just as vision has a history, so too does blindness – one which illuminates some of the issues that will concern us in discussing sight. Barasch clarifies that blindness in Antiquity might be a physical failing but also could represent special qualities of vision, as for example, those of a “seer”; in his analysis of the Gospels and early Christian era, he shows that blindness can represent a state of sin or a temporary state of nothingness, as when Paul is struck blind on the road to Damascus. Later medieval meanings shift yet again, continuing the notion of the blind sinner but introducing a new ambiguity with the figure of the

itinerant beggar who can be either devious or virtuous. The Middle Ages additionally creates the category of noble and allegorical figures, such as Synagogue, that represent a condition of disastrous blindness signified by a blindfold.

Just as these meanings vary from seer to sinner, so cultural perceptions of the utility and status of sight vary widely throughout the Middle Ages and even verge upon contradiction. They range from the insistence on the “eye of the mind” and lowered eyes in early medieval work, to the wary use of the visual, to the culturally determined “gaze” and a full confidence in the epistemological potential of physical sight in the later Middle Ages. Although our charge here is to consider discussions of art from the Romanesque to the Gothic, it will be necessary to include some scholarship on earlier and later art in order fully to understand the impetus for discussions of vision in medieval art.

One of the striking qualities of the literature on vision is how often the wheel has been reinvented. The core of scholarship has been produced in religious studies and history of science. Art historians have turned to this material for insight and have not, for the most part, built upon previous art historical studies; a situation that has only gradually begun to change 10 years after I first wrote this comment (see below).

Given the impossibility of constructing a coherent historiography because of these reasons, I will not attempt to treat the subject chronologically, either in terms of bibliography or in terms of any “development” of the history of vision within the Middle Ages. Rather, I will rely upon disciplinary and conceptual categories to outline the complexities of the topic.

Of course, the first task must be a definition of terms. The fundamental understanding of vision for the Middle Ages develops from writings by the Church Fathers, principally Augustine. Sixten Ringbom’s seminal book, *Icon to Narrative*, represents an early treatment of this material by an art historian. A fuller and more contextually grounded treatment can be found in an article on Augustine by Margaret Miles, a scholar of religion. Finally, Jeffrey Hamburger has contributed significantly to this tradition by clarifying the limits and possibilities of the application of Augustine’s ideas to the treatment of art.³

Augustine’s treatment of vision occurs in his treatise *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*.⁴ In that treatise, the Church Father discusses Paul’s visions from 2 Corinthians 12, in which the Apostle is lifted to the seventh heaven. (Already we see the importance of the intermingled ideas of vision and visions.) In a text fundamental to all of Christian theology on sight, Augustine clarifies that there are three sorts of seeing: The lowest level, “corporeal vision,” consists of what one sees with the eyes of the body. “Spiritual vision” is the occurrence of images in dreams or the imagination, largely but not exclusively dependent on the recollections of corporeal vision. As the first level functions in the second, so the second level is interpreted in the third, although it may also work independently. The third level, “intellectual vision,” occurs exclusively in the highest levels of the mind and is the only site where Augustine admitted the possible perception of divine truths. It is not visual in the normal sense of the word but concerns divine knowledge.

In fact, Augustine did not discuss art at all in this commentary; he was primarily interested in the imagery of dreams and prophecies.

Related religious commentary on visions and dreaming is essential to understanding the significance of Augustine's categories. This has been a fruitful area of discussion, particularly distinguished by the work of Steven Kruger.⁵ Again Augustine's treatise on Genesis takes a central place.

For Augustine dreams are a middle ground of mixed nature with the potential to reveal both the human and the divine.⁶ Made up of images, garnered from corporeal vision, they have the potential for "prophetic insight" (XII.21.44). In Augustine if such dreams/visions emanate from a "spirit" source (i.e. an angel as opposed to a demon) and are "used" rather than "enjoyed," they may lead to the highest form of sight, the non-sensory intellectual vision. Augustine's dream theory is repeated almost without change in theological sources throughout the Middle Ages.⁷

Some later sources, however, shift emphasis. For example, Richard of St. Victor, following other early medieval traditions in Tertullian and Prudentius, argues that the reliability of dreams is correlated to the relative cleanliness of the soul.⁸ Albertus Magnus and others even discuss relative levels of individual perception. As Kruger summarizes the *De divinatione per somnum*:

the human [imaginative soul] receives the celestial "lumen," or "motus" or "forma" in images, perceiving celestial truths more or less clearly [according to what is appropriate and possible for each individual].⁹

The terminology that Albertus uses is identical to that of both cosmology (with origins in Plato's *Phaedrus*), and optics. The discussion of visions and dreams, therefore, leads to much larger questions of meaning and epistemology.

The types and contents of visions have been summarized¹⁰ and art historians such as Ringbom and Carolyn Carty have concerned themselves with the representation of dreams and visions. Ringbom has described conventions of such imagery and Carty has gone from the history of dream representations to linking visions to the initiation of narrative.¹¹

Perhaps the most potentially productive extension of the interrelationship of visions and art is Mary Carruthers's work on memory and imagination. She has shown the interdependence of visions and the process or "craft" of thought. Most importantly, she has been able effectively to link these mental processes that lie at the core of medieval thought and religion to the visual and even to art.¹²

As noted above, discussions of dreams and visions in the Middle Ages share a vocabulary with the medieval science of optics. Whereas the theology of vision and visions remained relatively stable (i.e., Augustinian) throughout the Middle Ages, optics, in its guise as natural philosophy, evolves in significant ways.

The foremost historian of optics for the Middle Ages has been David Lindberg, who ardently asserts the centrality of his material: "Because optics could reveal the essential nature of material reality, of cognition, and indeed of God himself,

its pursuit became not only legitimate, but obligatory.”¹³ Optical theory of the Middle Ages consists primarily of a series of variations upon two major theories of sight: that of extramission and that of intromission. The extramission theory contends that the eye emits a visual ray. This ray, strengthened by the presence of light, goes out to encounter its visual object, is shaped by that object, and finally returns to the eye. Lindberg explains that in this, the Augustinian tradition which he characterizes as the epistemology of light, “the process of acquiring knowledge of unchanging Platonic forms is considered analogous to corporeal vision, through the eye.”¹⁴ The intromission theory is Aristotelian in origin and is transmitted through the Arab scholar Alhazen to the Oxford school. It is based on a visual pyramid originating in the visible object. Rays leaving all parts of the object enter the eye. The perpendicular rays are the strongest and dominate reception.¹⁵ Again, light and its divine origin plays an important part.

Thus far, I have given a very crude sketch of some of the theological and scientific bases for the medieval understanding of vision. However, for cultural historians, it is of course the implications of these ideas for medieval art and expression that are of the highest interest.

Literary historians have been more active than art historians in thinking about how such theories, dogmas, and cultural constructions might affect artistic creation. For example, the early medieval literary scholar Giselle de Nie, in attempting to understand the power of images and how they might differ from words, has delved into anthropology, philosophy, and psychology. Following René Devisch, she argues for the embedding of meaning in the body by means of vision which can be subsequently revealed through ritual: “Ritual symbols ... arise from a potential which, akin to the dream, unconceals both images and inner energy woven into the texture of the body.”¹⁶ Or taking the derivation from perception to image, that is, from the other direction as does Paul Ricoeur, in his *Rule of Metaphor*, she argues that an apt mental image or a combination of images can bring awareness or experience into focus.¹⁷ De Nie concludes that both modern anthropology and philosophy can help to explain the Antique and early medieval belief that God communicated through dreams and miracles: “the visible could be regarded as a figure – congruous or inverted – of the invisible, and was thereby thought to participate in the latter’s qualities.”¹⁸ She uses the example of a miracle in which a man was healed through the contemplation of a candle flame. The man’s gaze “generated not only some mental picture of the saint as a person, but also an affect-laden mental image of the powerful mystic fire ... [combined with] the central early Christian imaginative model of illumination by Christ.” Thus “affectively enacting a metaphor + a mental image.”¹⁹ Nevertheless, de Nie rarely discusses art images, and the complications of transferring these provocative ideas about vision to art are many.²⁰

As long as four decades ago, another literary scholar, Ruth Cline, demonstrated the connection between looking and love in medieval texts, an association forged through theories of vision.²¹ Current scholarship links similar, but significantly different, categories – desire and the gaze. Among medieval literary scholars,

Sarah Stanbury has done important work on determining the operation of the gaze and its implication in structuring gender in medieval literature from the twelfth century and later. In an article using the methodology of film theory to investigate Chrétien's *Erec et Enide*, she concludes that: "descriptions of women's bodies in medieval texts are shaped by gendered social conventions governing the rights and restrictions on looking."²² Through the gaze of the court, Stanbury argues that Enide is "transformed from a natural girl to the courtly maiden ... a constructed woman" and concludes that, "gaze [is] a generative process, one that creates self through its very apprehension of the other."²³ The literary critic become art historian, Norman Bryson, established the gaze as an art historical issue. He defined the gaze as a means of apprehending art, distinguished in its aloofness from the emotionally laden glance through which the perception of the "real" is gleaned.²⁴ Medieval art historians, such as Madeline Caviness, have also described the gaze and its constructs but, in general, that interest has been more productive for issues of concern to feminist art history than for those of visibility.²⁵ The historian Suzannah Biernoff has integrated this material, describing the interrelationship of the gaze, especially as it is grounded in the body, gender, and carnality, with scientific and theological theories of vision. For example, theories of extra-mission allow "carnal vision [to extend] the appetite and attributes of the flesh beyond the boundaries of individual bodies." She forcefully reasserts the idea that, rather than a physiological process, "vision is always mediated by discourses about vision."²⁶

Hal Foster most decisively defined this concept of the cultural construction of vision for art history, using the term *visuality*. He noted, "difference, many differences, among how we see, how we are able, allowed or made to see, and how we see this seeing or the unseen therein."²⁷ In the substantial wake of other historians of modern art, including Jonathan Crary and Martin Jay, medieval art historians have explicated modes of visibility operant in medieval art. Two notable moves in this direction have included Marvin Trachtenberg's use of *visuality* in discussing architecture and urban space dependent upon a new "viewing subject" and the "scopic power" of Florentine civic planning;²⁸ and work included in a symposium organized by Robert Nelson at the University of California Los Angeles in 1995 on a wide variety of aspects of pre-modern *visuality*. The introduction of the published volume and five of its essays concern the Middle Ages or its antecedents.²⁹

Jaś Elsner argues against the exclusivity of the "voyeurism" of naturalism in ancient art and suggests that in ritual settings such as pilgrimage (as described by Pausanias) an alternate "medieval" *visuality* obtained that was "oracular, liturgical, and epiphanic."³⁰ In an intentional confrontation with the frontal image that returns the viewer's gaze, "viewing the sacred is a process of divesting the spectator of all the social and discursive elements that distinguish his or her subjectivity from that of the god into whose space the viewer will come."³¹

Also concerned with pilgrimage, but of the early Christian era, Georgia Frank's "The Pilgrim's Gaze in the Age Before Icons" emphasizes that "vision was believed to contain the power to conjure, constitute, and respond to the presence

of the divine ... The physical sense of sight was anything but a passive activity in antiquity; it was a form of physical contact between the viewer and the object.”³²

Robert Nelson, like Elsner, wants to treat the “cultural construction and maintenance” of visuality in the Byzantine world. Using evidence from *ekphrasis*, he argues that vision was more important than hearing in Byzantium because it was “dynamic, forceful, consequential, and even performative.”³³

In my own contribution to the Nelson volume, without trying to explain the mechanism of change, I make use of the medieval theological presumption of vision as a means of knowing to show that the understanding of the operation of sight shifts in the later Middle Ages from the possibility of an epiphany of divine truth perceived in the sudden glance to an appreciation of divine truth growing with the contemplative gaze.³⁴

Finally, in his contribution to the same volume, an essay much expanded from the talk originally presented at a symposium at Northwestern University in 1994,³⁵ Michael Camille generally offers an argument about the crucial role of vision to Gothic perception and therefore to Gothic art. He weaves together medieval scientific texts and observations of artworks to describe medieval psychology and its resultant images that “were so much more powerful, moving, and instrumental, as well as disturbing and dangerous, than later works of art.”³⁶

Camille later expanded and generalized these ideas in a survey text, *Gothic Art: Glorious Visions*, arguing that “[Gothic people] were enraptured witnesses to a new way of seeing” (12).³⁷ His discussion of the thirteenth-century understanding – Roger Bacon via Avicenna – of the completion of vision in the brain is essential to an understanding of Gothic scholastic vision:

One only perceived something when the “species” traveled to the brain, where the internal senses were located. The system of five cells or ventricles ... illustrates how the visible species passed first into the ... *sensus communis*, which apprehended appearances, located at the front of the brain. Next came the ... *ymaginatio vel formalis*, which retained these forms; above it, the *estimativa* judged them. Further back, linked to the first kind of imagination, was a second kind, labeled *cogitativa*, which composed and combined images ... Finally, at the back of the head was the storehouse of memory, the *vis memorativa* with its little flap ... which opened to let the images flow in and out.³⁸

Camille shows how important this understanding is to the increasing “transparency” of images and to their reception in the human brain.

Elsner was concerned to describe two competing modes of vision in the ancient world. Camille, Frank, Hahn, and Nelson look at particular periods, documents, and scientific theories to allow a characterization of visualities dominant in various periods. Clearly, Nelson’s volume provides no single understanding of what the concept of visuality offers, but certain themes dominate the volume. Perhaps the most important conclusion is that discussions of the way sight works can readily be expanded into what sight can mean and what sight can allow us to know – that is, it can add an understanding of the epistemological dimension of vision in a given era.

Of course epistemology in the Middle Ages was essentially the realm of theology. In trying to trace the significance of modern scholarly thought on these issues, one must turn to a larger cluster of work on medieval “image theory” that attempts to understand what medieval viewers believed about art and what it could do. This material, of course, is best read against ecclesiastical image policy and theology. Although it is by no means always cast in terms of “visuality,” image theory is essential to the understanding of the cultural history of vision, especially within the Christian tradition.

A fundamental text in the theology of the medieval image is Paul’s pronouncement in 1 Corinthians 13: 12 that “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.” This prophecy of clear and divine vision after death, when the faithful will see their Lord directly and without mediation, is subject to much controversy in medieval theological discussion, culminating in a fourteenth-century papal constitution.³⁹ In contrast to the confidence in vision of the late medieval period, in the early Middle Ages, this same text is treated very differently. One might begin with art, but any vision of God was founded in prayer and the exercise of the “interior eyes.” The corporeal eyes were lowered, even perhaps pressed into the dust of the earth in a symbolic abasement of the corporeal sense.

In his *Spiritual Seeing*, Herbert Kessler is concerned with the cluster of theological ideas variously characterized as “interior sight,” seeing with the “eyes of the mind,” spiritual sight, etc. He characterizes this interior phenomenon, which might or might not be prompted by a corporeal stimulus such as art, as “spiritual seeing,” in a chapter entitled “Real Absence: Early Medieval Art and the Metamorphosis of Vision,” an important survey of early medieval attitudes both positive and negative toward art’s possibility to contribute to “spiritual seeing,” Kessler builds on the work of Celia Chazelle, Jean-Paul Schmitt, Gerhard Wolf, and Jean-Marie Sansterre, among others.⁴⁰

Of central importance to this discussion as the foundation and origin of Western theology on the image are Gregory the Great’s renowned letters to Serenus of Marseilles that established papal approval for narrative and commemorative art.⁴¹ The relationship is not a complicated one: those that are illiterate can “read” in images as others do in books and thereby be reminded of religious truths. Complications arise in aspects of the way that Gregory presents his case. He notes an emotional element and the striking quality of visual imagery. Memories of edifying stories are stirred and strengthened by the narrative images. Many modern scholars have understood Gregory’s policy to be very limited and conservative, but when all the Father’s writings are considered, Gregory evinces a much more powerful and sympathetic vision of art. Instead of the simple reaction of the memory, he speaks of “revolving images in the mind until they are portrayed on the heart.”⁴² He also demonstrates a belief in the power and potential of the visual to change the soul of the viewer, if that soul is first prepared with prayer and “acts of faith.” These “tangential” issues are the ones that later medieval commentators turn to and build upon.⁴³

One aspect of the commentary tradition on the letters that deserves particular attention is the privileging of certain categories of objects within the realm of

Christian vision. Gregory himself mentioned pictures of Bible stories and lives of holy persons, praising their commemorative quality. In an eighth-century forged addition to a letter from Gregory the Great to Secundinus, additional sorts of artworks are mentioned and it is claimed that they have the power to lift the mind to higher things:

Your request pleased us greatly, because you seek with all your heart and all intentness Him, whose picture you wish to have before your eyes, so that every day, the corporeal sight renders Him visible; thus, when you see the picture, you are inflamed in your soul with love for Him whose image you wish to see. We do no harm in wishing to show the invisible by means of the visible ... Thus, we have sent you two images: one of the Savior and Mary the Holy Mother of God and the other of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and a cross. CCSL 1110f.⁴⁴

Perhaps it is not surprising that the representation of the cross and icons of Christ and Mary stand above other art objects in their status as access to the divine. This text, however, in mentioning an icon of the apostles Peter and Paul, opens the door to yet other images.

In contrast to this textual (or theological) validation, it should be noted that medieval ritual and cult importance testify to the special possibilities of vision offered by certain other categories of objects. These objects include relics (and reliquaries); *acheiropoietae*, that is images that avoid the taint of human manufacture⁴⁵ in their origin as miraculous images “made without hands”; and once again, the cross.

The cross is exceptional among manufactured images – it is at once an image but also, in its physicality, it is like a relic (and of course, crosses often serve as reliquaries). It is allowed a particular status as an enduring and revealing sign, already promoted by Paul himself in the first letter to the Corinthians (1: 18): “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” However, in early medieval images of devotion to the cross (fig. 3-1), it is notable that the devotee’s eyes are not even lifted to gaze upon the sign of salvation. Instead, the hand grasps and the eyes are averted, focusing attention away from corporeal eyes, turning to the “eyes of the heart,” in contrast, later medieval art allows and even encourages contemplation of the cross and the crucifixion, arguing that such contemplation, a type of prayer, will bring faith.⁴⁶

One particular example of the crucifixion as means of divine access through vision is discussed by Jeanne-Marie Musto. Musto relies on the Carolingian theologian John Scottus Eriugena, who describes a hierarchical status of vision: “each shall behold that Vision in his own way ... through certain apparitions of Himself appropriate to the capacity for contemplation of each one of the Saints, shall God be seen.”⁴⁷ Musto argues that the upper cover of the Lindau Gospels in the Morgan Library represents an early medieval version of the relative access of persons to the divine vision, dependent on the perfection of their souls.

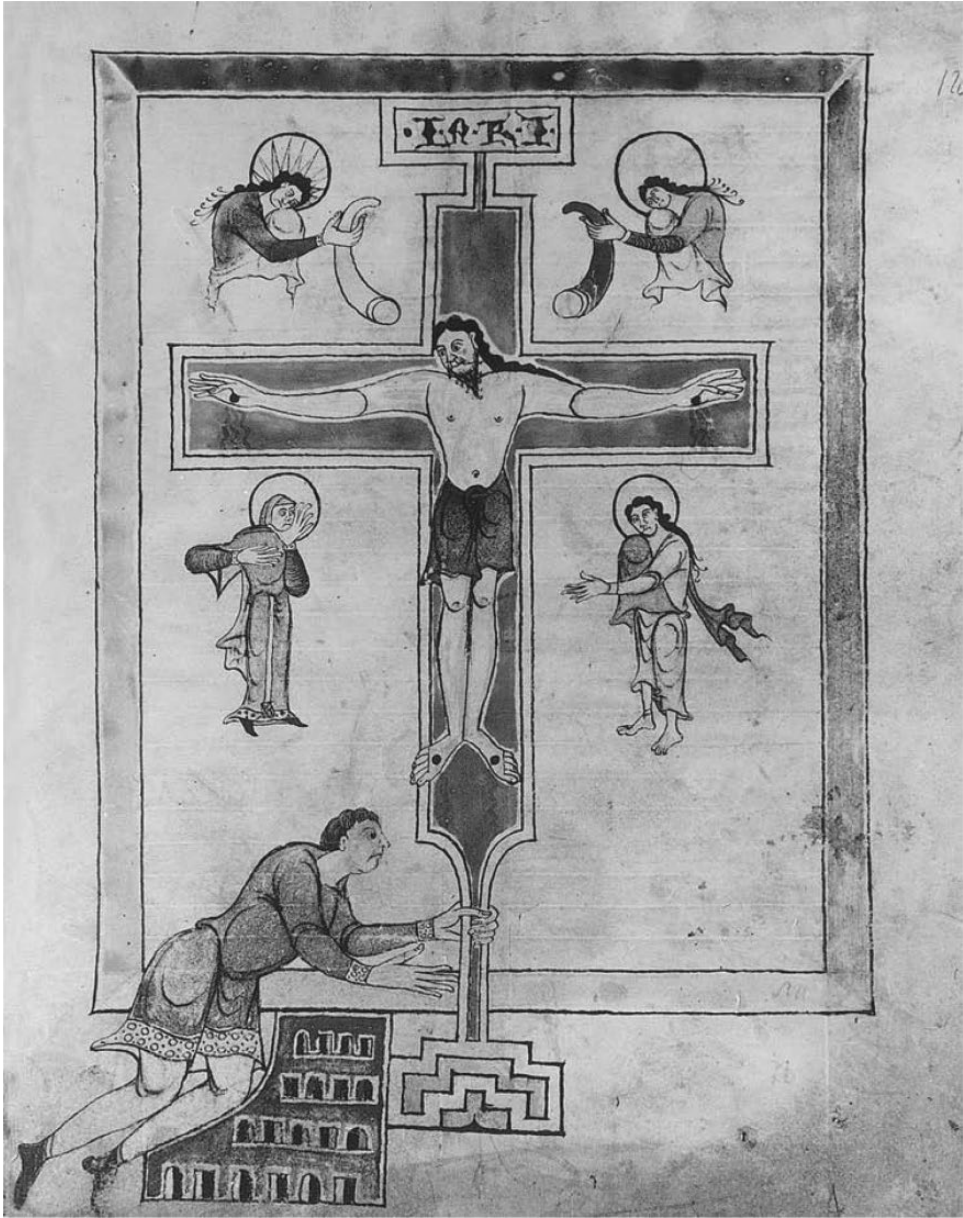


FIGURE 3-1 “Adoration of the Cross,” Psalter of Louis the German (the drawing is a late ninth-century addition). Berlin: Staatsbibliothek MS lat. theol. fol. 58, fol. 120r. Source: reproduced courtesy of Bildarchiv Foto Marburg.

Thus angels, floating at the top, view directly. In the mortal realm, saints are granted sight but mere mortals must turn away and look for guidance to the saints. Although Musto’s example is a particularly concrete instance of the special status of the cross or crucifixion, presumably all of the crosses produced in the Middle

Ages, although not explicitly presented with such interpretive supplements, were held in similar regard.

In striking contrast to such approved objects of vision, some subjects seem to have been represented due to their negative status. Thomas Dale argues for the importance of the mechanism of “sublimation” in the operation of monastic viewing in the Romanesque period. Monks looked at images of vices – nudes, monsters, etc. – in order to overcome sensual temptation and weakness.⁴⁸

Such functionality of images, working on the mind of the viewer, leads us from categories of images to types of imagery privileged by image theory. Here we return to Gregory’s original letters and the intimation that he is particularly interested in the edifying possibilities of narrative: “the deeds of holy persons.” This is one of the elements that has been exploited in recent studies on narrative in medieval art, including those of Caviness and Hahn.⁴⁹ In the *Life of Saint Alban* by Matthew Paris, the saint’s sight of the cross leads to a narrative that explicates and realizes a series of concepts about faith and Christian meaning.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the investigation of certain isolated narrative scenes, particularly moments of Christ’s divine epiphany such as the Transfiguration and the Ascension, has proven particularly fruitful in revealing possible mental processes set in motion by medieval images. Such studies include Jaś Elsner’s treatment of the Transfiguration at Sinai as well as Robert Deshman’s discussion of the Ascension in Anglo-Saxon art.⁵¹ In the latter, for example, Deshman argued that the English monastic reform, in warning of the dangers of corporeal vision, held that the Apostles themselves were distracted by Christ’s physical presence. The miniatures of the Ascension depict, not Christ’s presence but his “disappearance,” allowing the viewer to begin to see His true and divine nature with the “eyes of mind.”⁵²

If images can tell “effective” narratives and work to lift the mind to God, a final question concerning image theory remains. Can images convey the intricacies of theological meaning? And in particular, can art explicate or facilitate the relationship of sight and knowledge? In “Medieval Art as Argument,” Kessler expands on the possibilities of dogmatic or epiphanic images. He argues that art can be used to evoke “spiritual seeing” through its ability to “synthesize diverse sacred texts” and its capability, even in the early medieval period, to have an anagogical effect.⁵³ For example, he argues that in the Apocalypse frontispiece from the Touronian Bible in London (BL Add. MS 10 546, fol. 449 recto) the mysterious figure in the lower register, from whom the four evangelical beasts pull the veil, is a composite figure of Moses, John, and Paul, representing the *videntes*, or seers, of the Bible, both Old and New Testament. In a “subversion” of the author portrait type, the figure ends the manuscript with a portent of the vision to come in which the veil of both text and image will be lifted in order that the faithful will at last gain sight of the divine. However, far from thus creating a comprehensive and sufficient vision for the faithful, Kessler also contends that artists consistently reminded their audiences of the shortcomings of their media. He cites a series of Roman images of Christ’s face on board that were inserted into frescoes to argue that medieval artists consciously highlighted the materiality of their artistic

product, denying that it actually represented a vision of the Lord's face. Kessler compares these uses of images to Byzantine icon theory. He emphasizes: "Western image theory [was differentiated] absolutely from Byzantine notions that the icon was transparent, a window onto the higher reality." "If the sacred image in the West was a bridge, then it was a drawbridge drawn up, if a window, then only with a shade pulled down. It marked the existence of the 'world out there,' but it also revealed its own inability to transport the faithful into that world."⁵⁴

Such ambitious, densely intellectual, and self-reflexive images tend to be the exception in the early medieval period. A symposium at Princeton University in 2001, sponsored by Anne-Marie Bouché and Jeffrey Hamburger, attempted to make a stronger case for such imagery in the art of the High and Late Middle Ages. Although "over recent years the interpretation of medieval art in terms of theological discourse has fallen out of favor," they contended that:

Given all the uncertainties inherent in the interpretation of images, it seems significant that such important theological material [on the nature of Christ, the Eucharist and the meaning of the Incarnation] was entrusted to the visual realm ... Instead of using theology to explain art, we are now beginning to consider art as a special kind of language for communicating theology.⁵⁵

The conference allowed a variety of approaches to that end. Mary Carruthers argued that in *De Archa Noe mystica*, Hugh of St. Victor speaks of the ark in terms of its construction, using active verbs of craft and painting in a "pre-imaginative" process similar to that which craftsmen were taught to use in the Middle Ages. She argued that no material diagram was ever intended to accompany the text but that the visualization was a form of theological thought. In contrast, Bernard McGinn argued that Joachim of Fiore's diagrams were communicated to him by vision and scripture and that these *figurae* were intended to allow fleshly eyes to open spiritual eyes. Images could be used to go beyond images in a distinctly theological setting. (This approach is, of course, reminiscent of the early, important work of Anna Esmeijer.) Further in this vein, Christopher Hughes presented typology as a "cognitive style," using Augustine's *City of God* to argue that the comparative approach represents essential aspects of the structure of knowledge and encourages the viewer to think more deeply about the world. Thomas Lentz focused on the spiritual senses and discussed how vision – "you are what you see" – shaped the person, and Katherine Tachau discussed scientific and theological aspects of the work of Grosseteste, Bacon, and others, showing its profound importance in the medieval understanding of the possibility of divine knowledge.⁵⁶ Again, the conference had no single message about the status of "vision" in the Middle Ages, but instead, in these and other papers, provided a remarkably rich picture of the possibilities of medieval images in explicating and even advancing theology.⁵⁷

Since this essay first appeared, new work on vision, the gaze, and visibility⁵⁸ has appeared that begins to take the question of vision as central to both historical and art historical concerns.

In an intricately argued discussion of murals in a house in Pompeii (II.2.2–5), outside the purview of this chapter but certainly of interest to medieval art and issues of the iconic versus narrative art, Verity Platt takes on the complexities and danger of the gaze and voyeurism, reminding us, as did Jacques Lacan, that the object can “look back.” As Platt notes about Jacques Lacan’s discussion of the gaze, “The way in which we view the supposed object of our desire is distorted by the very fact that we desire it; the ‘real’ object is concealed by the desired, fantasized image we project onto it.”⁵⁹ Platt pursues “a dynamic dialectic between viewer and image which raises ... questions about the relationship between naturalistic art and religious modes of viewing.”⁶⁰ Platt’s treatment excels in its integration of her elucidation of theory and its implementation in the discussion of the art of the murals.

Dallas Denery’s important book, *Seeing and Being Seen*, is grounded in texts, turning away from Alhazen and the scholastic heritage, and introducing treatises by Peter of Limoges, Peter Aureol, and Nicholas of Autrecourt, thus focusing on religious practice and sermons rather than a “scientific” explanation of sight. Denery links self-presentation and the processes of confession, arguing that in the Late Middle Ages people thought of themselves in visual terms, making careful inspections and using introspection. Alexa Sand also addresses a “concern with visibility and self-scrutiny that characterized the religious life of the laity after the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215” that produces “a more intimate and reflexive mode of address in Psalters and Books of Hours created for lay users.” She argues that the performance of devotion serves to create identity.⁶¹

Kessler’s essay on the mirror in the journal *Speculum*, another addition to his commentary on issues of vision, like Denery’s work exploits the sermons of Peter of Limoges and others, arguing that our understanding of vision is amplified, reflected, and generally more complex when we think of it in terms of practice; in this case, with the use of a simple but significant tool that, already in the Pauline Epistles, was equated with the limitations of sight. Other writers further investigate the changing environment of vision, such as Elina Gertsman’s consideration of the opening and closing of shrine Madonna in “performative” presentations.

In ongoing work, Jackie Jung queries how vision is confirmed by touch, where the attempt to see the divine is complemented with “grasp[ing] the divine.” She exploits the example of Saint Hedwig and her ivory, discussing the “materiality of images.”⁶² The work of Jeffrey Hamburger, Barbara Baert, and others has considered vision in a devotional context, Baert is especially attuned to issues of the interaction of the senses. Kate Giles applies ideas about vision in the Middle Ages in an archeological study of a “palimpsest” process of painting and erasure in English parish churches, developing ideas of spatial viewing and even temporality, concerning herself with concepts such as somatic memory of spaces, and relative vision. Finally, another Princeton symposium posed questions of “Looking Beyond,” that is, visionary seeing, with many essays that treated vision *per se* in the published volume, including two on Apocalyptic visions and seeing.⁶³

Finally, although it has not been our brief to discuss Jewish or Byzantine art, important material on those subjects by Rachel Neis and Roland Betancourt has appeared recently. In an extensive review of ancient and Byzantine texts on sight, Betancourt has discounted the “tactile” nature of sight that has been promoted in regard to Byzantine art. This work has ramifications for Western art.⁶⁴

We can end here with a concrete example of some of the issues discussed in this chapter, and a consideration of “Last Things”: illustrations of the Revelation of John. Suzanne Lewis has discussed the manuscript history of the many versions of the fantastic biblical book, finding particular interest and narrative richness in the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Anglo-Norman examples.⁶⁵ According to Barbara Nolan, in her groundbreaking book *The Gothic Visionary Perspective*, however, issues concerning vision were already broached in Apocalypse manuscripts and frescoes from the Romanesque period. Nolan detects shared “visionary” elements in literature and art, largely based on Apocalypse commentary,⁶⁶ and writes in her preface that she became “aware that common spiritual backgrounds must have supported the pervasive and long-lived persistence of the several ‘arts of vision’ once they had been invented during the twelfth century.”⁶⁷ Nolan is particularly interested in the theology of Richard of St. Victor who, in a variation upon the standard description of Augustine (whom she does not discuss), adds a “fourth mode of seeing.” Richard’s third mode involves the “eyes of the heart,” the *oculi cordis*, which “by means of forms and figures and the similitudes of things,” sees the “truth of hidden things.” His fourth mode is anagogical following Pseudo-Dionysius in which “anagogy is the ascent or elevation of the mind for supernatural contemplation,”⁶⁸ but this ascent is through imagery: “Fixed on that light of eternity, he draws into himself the likeness of the image he perceives.”⁶⁹ As Nolan clarifies, this “visionary approach to God was personal and vertical rather than social and historical.”⁷⁰ Indeed, in this material we see the beginnings of a focus on the devotional use of vision.⁷¹

Despite her primary interest in the thinkers of the twelfth century, Nolan does draw attention to earlier commentators on the Apocalypse, especially singling out Bede, Alcuin, and Haimo of Auxerre. Bede and Alcuin both characterize the Apocalypse as concerned with “intellectual vision.”⁷² But Bede was also interested in the possible action of this vision. In his *Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, he remarks that when Benedict Biscop imported models including Apocalypse imagery and portraits of Christ, Mary, and the Apostles from Rome for the decoration of his church at Wearmouth in 674, his intention was to better contemplate a certain “*amabilem ... aspectum*,” to recall the grace of the Incarnation, and to allow viewers to judge themselves when they see the Last Judgment.⁷³ In the same vein of personal involvement through sight, Haimo claims that John’s suffering on Patmos enabled him to see the heavenly secrets and will also serve as an example to allow others to share in this vision.⁷⁴

Perhaps reflecting this possibility, an abbreviated text of Revelation that introduces a copy of Haimo of Auxerre’s commentary is illustrated with miniatures (Bodleian Library MS Bodley 352). Folio 5v shows John speaking to the Churches

of Asia in two upper registers and, below, the Apostle receives the command “*Ascende huc*” (“Come up here”). He ascends to see a vision of God in the Heavenly Glory of his court.⁷⁵ The miniature shows the figure of John adjacent to the court of heaven with the scroll carrying the words *Ascende huc* above him and the abbreviated biblical text squeezed into the borders of the miniature. John stands outside the “door into heaven” which the Apocalypse text specifies that he *looked through* (“After these things I looked and saw a door opened in heaven”: Rev. 4: 1). Rather than peer through the door, John points to his eye – an early occurrence of a gesture that came to signify interior contemplation in contrast to corporeal sight (fig. 3-2).

Although he notes that Beatus, the most famous of Apocalypse commentators, has no particular understanding or theory of vision and the figure of John as “seer” does not occur in the Spanish manuscripts, Peter Klein sets Nolan’s earlier insights into the context of Augustinian commentaries on sight.⁷⁶

By the time of Rupert of Deutz (c.1075–1130), Nolan claims that the Apocalypse has become “an intricately organized book of meditation – a systematic guide to spiritual consolation, and finally, to beatitude,” and in particular, “the images have become signs of spiritual progress, leading by ordered stages to the experience of beatitude.”⁷⁷ In other words, Rupert is already focusing on the operation of the narrative in allowing the individual, through devotional study, to approach the divine, an aspect that will come to the fore in the Anglo-Norman manuscripts (and is remarkably similar to the “narratives” developed in the sequences of devotional images for women in the Rothschild Canticles, as explicated by Jeffrey Hamburger).

In *St. John the Divine*, Hamburger further amplified his many insights on the questions of medieval vision and devotion, recovering the history of “elitist” images “open only to initiates” which proposed to invite the viewer to “look beyond the rhetoric of imitation and think in terms of full and complete identification [with God].” He describes the pathway, images of the divinized John the Evangelist, as: “A figure of contemplative ascent, [who] incorporates, anticipates, and enacts the process of elevation [for the viewer],” in escaping mere similitude and reaching identity, the purified soul uses John’s exemplar because, as Aquinas held, his vision was high, wide, and perfect (*alta, ampla, perfecta*).⁷⁸ Hamburger’s chapter, “Images and the ‘Imago Dei,’” reveals how Christian theologians have found such possibilities in images even as they have resisted them, discussing Athanasius, Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, Bonaventure, William of St. Thierry, Eckhardt, Tauler, and Suso and, fittingly, ending with Eckhardt’s principle of invisibility.

Ultimately, however, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, attention shifts decisively from the *Imago Dei* to the *Visio Dei* – from the nature of the image to the nature and possibility of sight itself, and “gazing upon the divine face” became an all-consuming goal for the devout, in imitation of John⁷⁹ and other saints. The *Omne Bonum*, an illuminated fourteenth-century encyclopedia of “All that is Good” discussed by Lucy Freeman Sandler, includes a remarkable image that could be said to diagram issues of vision in the Middle Ages (fig. 3-3).⁸⁰

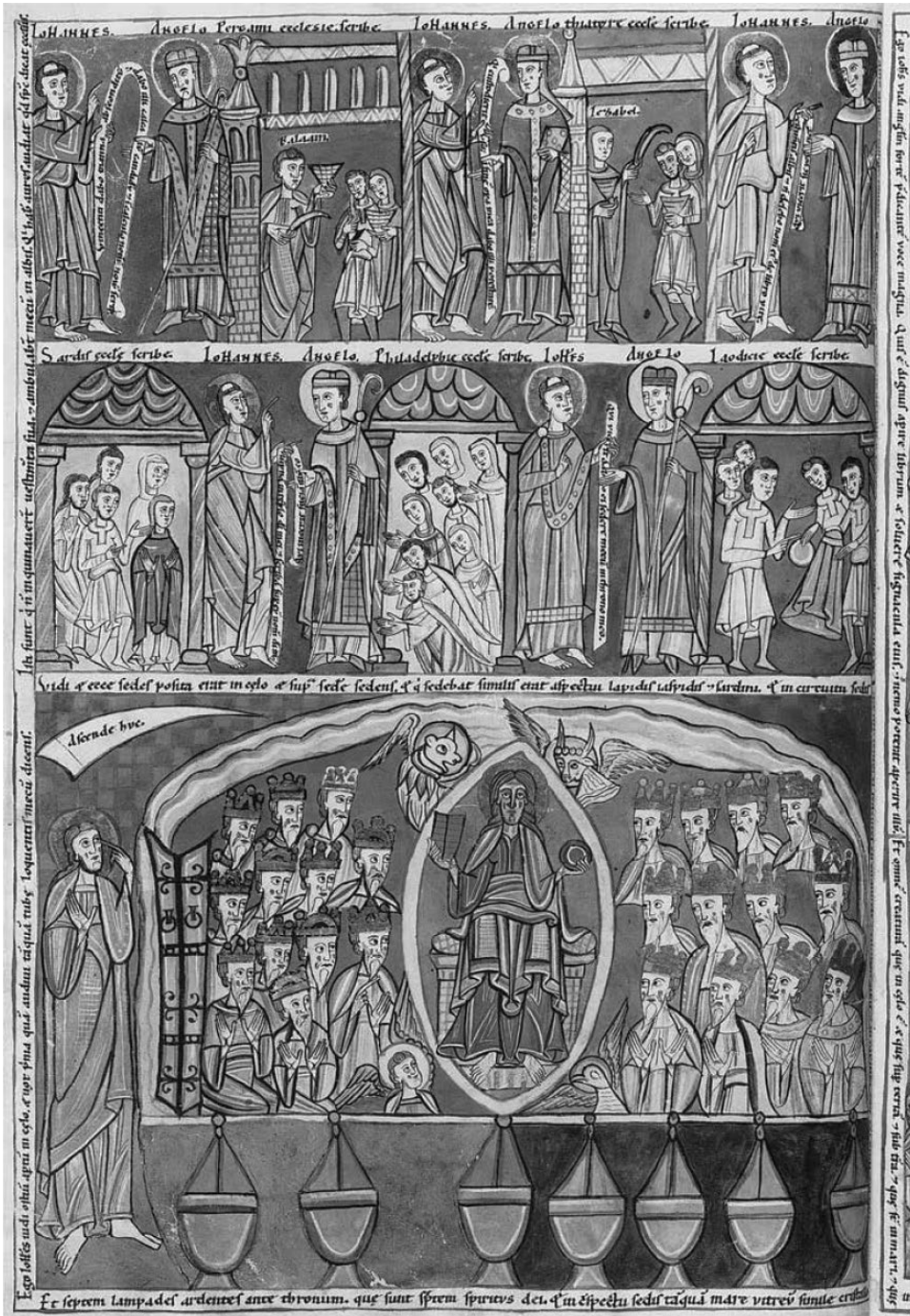


FIGURE 3-2 “John receives the command ‘Ascende huc,’” Revelation with Haimo of Auxerre’s commentary, twelfth century. Oxford: Bodleian Library MS Bodley 352, fol. 5v. Source: reproduced courtesy of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

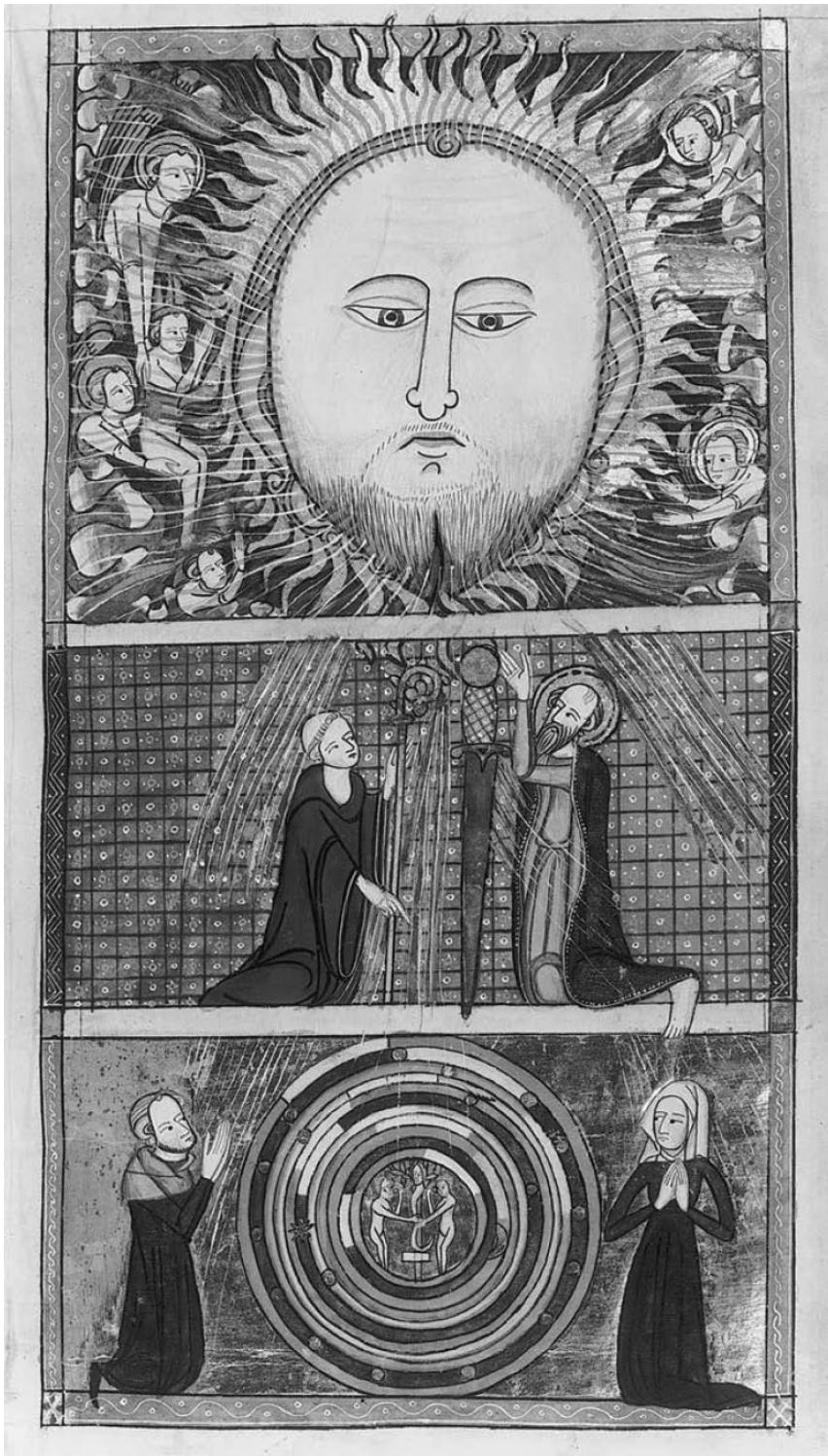


FIGURE 3-3 *Omne Bonum*, fourteenth century. London: British Library, Royal MS 6 E VI, fol. 16r. Source: reproduced courtesy of the British Library.

It illustrates a papal constitution of 1336 which settled a controversy over whether the Christian would see God with corporeal eyes after the resurrection. At the top is the face of God represented as, in effect, the sun of “divine illumination.” The vision illuminated by divine radiance is enjoyed by angels and one naked soul after death. In the middle register representing mundane life, some of the divine illumination descends upon two *saintly* figures: Paul engaged in the vision that Augustine discussed, and St. Benedict during a vision of the death of Germanus discussed by Gregory in the *Dialogues*. Both saints look upward with open eyes and provide an essential mediation for less saintly viewers as indicated by the downward but welcoming gesture of Benedict’s right hand. Below, on a lower rung of earthly existence and merit, Christians gather and direct their eyes toward a sphere illuminated by other sources of light including the sun and stars and centered on Adam and Eve as signs of fallen vision. Nevertheless, some divine illumination escapes the upper registers to illuminate even the fallen vision of earthly things (just as one learns of God in viewing his creation).⁸¹ At this moment in the fourteenth century, expectations of the possibilities of vision had reached a high water-mark for the Middle Ages. As never before, knowing God was *seeing* God.

Notes

- 1 I would particularly like to thank Jeffrey Hamburger for sharing a bibliography that he produced for a seminar at Harvard, although any errors of omission are mine alone. Unfortunately, neither “vision” nor “visuality” has yet become a key word in bibliographic tools or in titles (except in its sense as visions) and too much of the bibliography that I discuss here has come to my attention by chance. I am certain that I have missed other equally interesting studies and I ask that their authors excuse my oversight.
- 2 I will use “visions” for the latter meaning.
- 3 Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative*; Miles, “Vision”; Hamburger, *Rothschild Canticles*, p. 165.
- 4 An English translation can be found in *St Augustine: The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, pp. 41–42.
- 5 Kruger, *Dreaming*. See also the last chapter of Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages*, and Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity*. For dreams as a higher level of vision and purity see Elliott, *Fallen Bodies*.
- 6 Kruger, *Dreaming*, esp. pp. 41, 130.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 62.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp. 79, 80, 49, 54.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 190.
- 10 Aubrun, “Caractères.”
- 11 Ringbom, “Some Pictorial Conventions,” and Carty, “Dream Images.” See also Carty’s University of Michigan dissertation. [On narrative, see Chapter 6 by Lewis in this volume (ed.)]
- 12 Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*; and *Craft of Thought*.
- 13 Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, p. 99.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

- 15 Ibid., p. 109.
- 16 De Nie, "Iconic Alchemy," p. 159, quoting Devisch, *Weaving the Threads of Life*, p. 280.
- 17 De Nie, "Iconic Alchemy," p. 246.
- 18 Ibid., p. 160.
- 19 Ibid., pp. 162, 163.
- 20 See De Nie, "Poet as Visionary," as well as Hahn, "*Visio Dei*," Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing*, and Dale, "Monsters."
- 21 Cline, "Heart and Eyes."
- 22 Stanbury, "Feminist Film Theory," p. 47; see also Stanbury, *Seeing the Gawain-Poet* and "Feminist Masterplots."
- 23 "Feminist Film Theory," pp. 54, 63.
- 24 Bryson, *Vision and Painting*, esp. Chapter 5; see also Bryson, "The Gaze."
- 25 [On gender and medieval art, see Chapter 8 by Kurmann-Schwarz in this volume (ed.).]
- 26 Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*, pp. 41, 44.
- 27 Foster, *Vision and Visuality*, ix.
- 28 Trachtenberg, *The Dominion of the Eye*.
- 29 Nelson, ed., *Visuality Before and Beyond*.
- 30 Elsner, "Between Mimesis and Divine Power: Visuality in the Greco-Roman World," p. 46. (Jaś Elsner, formerly John Elsner.)
- 31 Ibid., p. 61.
- 32 Frank, "The Pilgrim's Gaze in the Age Before Icons," p. 108; see also Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes*.
- 33 Nelson, "To Say and to See," pp. 145, 155.
- 34 Hahn, "*Visio Dei*: Changes in Medieval Visuality."
- 35 As was my essay, then called "Structuring Medieval Vision."
- 36 Camille, "Before the Gaze," p. 217.
- 37 Camille, *Gothic Art: Glorious Visions*, p. 12.
- 38 Ibid., p. 23.
- 39 Dondaine, "L'Objet et le 'medium' de la vision béatifique." See also Sandler, "Face to Face with God."
- 40 See Kessler's notes for his bibliography in *Spiritual Seeing*, 225 ff.
- 41 [On Gregory the Great and image theory, see Chapter 9 by Kessler in this volume (ed.).]
- 42 *Pastoral Care*, 81 (II.10). This passage discusses the correction of sin, but Gregory's aside on images is not any less interesting for that. Immediately afterwards he gives a visual example with which a "teacher" will reveal "vision" to "mundane hearts" (p. 83). Furthermore, he repeats the idea almost verbatim in the *Moralia in Iob*, XXVI·VI.65.
- 43 Hahn, *Portrayed on the Heart*, pp. 48–49. Also see Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing*, pp. 118–125.
- 44 Kessler puts this forgery into context within Hadrian's efforts to counter the iconoclastic thrust of the *Libri Carolini*. He quotes it in his letter to Charlemagne: see Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing*, p. 123.
- 45 Again Kessler discusses the latter in terms of the importance of the "copy" within the discourse of "images made without hands." These images, although they justify the making of art – they are after all material images created miraculously – nonetheless in some sense are not "material." Kessler notes that they "float" above their supposed material matrix and are only seen in copies, sometimes pairs or multiple copies together that collectively reference their divine origin: *Spiritual Seeing*, p. 83.

- 46 Hahn, “*Visio Dei*,” pp. 178–183.
- 47 Musto, “John Scottus Eriugena,” p. 13, quoting the *Periphyseon* V, ed. Migne *PL* CXXII, 945, trans. Sheldon Williams, p. 624.
- 48 Dale, “Monsters.” [On the monstrous, see Chapter 15 by Dale in this volume (ed.).]
- 49 Caviness, “Simple Perception”; see also Hahn, *Portrayed*.
- 50 See Hahn, “Absent No Longer.”
- 51 Elsner, “The Viewer and the Vision”; Deshman, “Another Look at the Disappearing Christ.”
- 52 Deshman, “Another Look at the Disappearing Christ,” pp. 533f.
- 53 In *Spiritual Seeing*, pp. xv.
- 54 *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 144.
- 55 Flyer for the conference, “The Mind’s Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Medieval West.”
- 56 Rahner, “Début d’une doctrine” and “La Doctrine des ‘sens spirituels.’”
- 57 The formation of the soul through the senses has earlier medieval precedents. See: Hamburger and Bouché, *The Mind’s Eye*.
- 58 For a discussion of the meaning of Visuality see Sand, “Visuality”; for its use as a concept see Lindquist, *Agency, Visuality and Society*.
- 59 Platt, “Viewing, Desiring,” p. 109 n. 27, citing *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. A. Sheridan, New York, 1977), p. 103.
- 60 Platt, “Viewing, Desiring,” p. 88. Platt’s work is dependent on some of the distinctions in the work of Jaś Elsner, who has continued to pursue the topic.
- 61 The quote comes from publicity material for the book. And one should also see here the work by Aden Kumler.
- 62 Issues of materiality have come to the fore in other arenas of medieval art, see “Reliquaries,” Chapter 28 in this volume.
- 63 See essay by Jung for a citation of this volume. Work on post-medieval vision has much to offer medievalists in terms of further insight, and it suffices to mention the fascinating work of Jack Greenstein “Alberti’s Sign,” on Renaissance art and David Morgan, *Sacred Gaze* and his many publications on modern issues of religious vision.
- 64 Betancourt, “Why Sight Is Not Touch,” “Tempted to Touch,” and *Sight, Touch, and Imagination*.
- 65 Lewis, *Reading Images*.
- 66 Nolan, *Gothic Visionary Perspective*, p. 5.
- 67 *Ibid.*, p. xv.
- 68 *Ibid.*, p. 37 (*In apocalypsim*, 687).
- 69 *Ibid.*, p. 34 (Ben Maj. IV, ii in *PL* CXCVI 147–148).
- 70 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 71 Caviness has also discussed the “third mode” of seeing and its potential for the interpretation of medieval art that attempts to portray the divine: “Images of Divine Order.” She discusses the first mode in “The Simple Perception of Matter”; in other essays she suggests feminist dimensions of vision: see, for example, “Artist: ‘To See, Hear, and Know All at Once’.”
- 72 Nolan, *Gothic Visionary Perspective*, pp. 5, 7.
- 73 *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57 (*PL* XCIV 718).
- 74 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 75 *Ibid.*, pp. 55 n. 32, pp. 65–67, and figure 9.
- 76 Klein, “From the Heavenly to the Trivial.”

- 77 Nolan, *Gothic Visionary Perspective*, pp. 16–17, 19.
 78 Hamburger, *St. John*, pp. 203, 164, 56.
 79 Dondaine, “L’Objet et le ‘medium’ de la vision béatifique.”
 80 Sandler, “Face to Face with God.”
 81 Hamburger, “Speculations on Speculation.”

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Materials, Materia, “Materiality”

Aden Kumler

The State of Things

If today it is difficult to imagine a medieval art history that did not acknowledge how “overt materiality is a distinguishing characteristic of medieval art,” it must be acknowledged that the iconographic and iconological approaches that long dominated the study of the arts of the Middle Ages often gave short shrift to the materials of medieval art.¹ This tendency is hardly a blind spot particular to medievalist art historians. Profoundly shaped by traditions of philosophical idealism, art historical interpretation has often been practiced as a pursuit of meaning beyond the limits of the material into the domain of ineffable ideas or values. In the art and architecture of the European Middle Ages this engrained idealist hermeneutic commitment found seemingly perfect objects: an archive of iconographic forms, forming a tradition of image-making that testified to a medieval Christian pursuit of the ineffable and transcendent. Repeatedly constructed and reconstructed by historians as an “age of spirituality,” the medieval period could be conscripted to a range of art historical projects in which prior immaterial “contents” – doctrine, faith, spirit, etc. – were understood to be expressed in material forms, and material forms or works were, in turn, deciphered, parsed, and decoded by art historians in pursuit of ineffable meaning.

Nonetheless, from the earliest years of art history’s formation as a discipline, interest in the materials of medieval art and architecture can be detected. In the

nineteenth-century, advocates of *Materialgerechtigkeit* (“truth to materials”) championed the intrinsic “essence” and specific properties of materials, stressing that properly chosen, undisguised materials could positively contribute to both the physical structure and the aesthetic quality of architecture (and, to a lesser degree, art), thus laying the groundwork for a new interest in and valuation of materials at the turn of the century.²

To take but one important example, in Gottfried Semper’s *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder praktische Ästhetik*, a chronologically exhaustive account of “practical aesthetics” first published in 1860–1863, the concept of *Kunstwerden* put the materials of art and architecture at the center of Semper’s account of style. So too, Semper’s notion of *Stoffwechsel* addressed historical changes in the materials employed for particular “types” of artistic work – for example, sculpture – in a fashion that could account for alterations in conceptions of form or object-type.³ Despite their originality, Semper’s analyses exemplify a broader tendency in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that made strong conceptual distinctions between form and matter. This fundamental dyad – form and matter – was itself a manifestation of the long reach of Aristotelian hylomorphism: the notion that all being requires a conjunction of matter and form. Even as the value of materials was re-evaluated at the turn of the century, processes of making were persistently conceived as acts of imposition and mastery in which human creativity (or else technical skill) gave form to passive substances, thus laying bare the “essence” or “truth” of materials.⁴

Connoisseurial approaches to the art and architecture of the Middle Ages, alive and well in the twentieth century, put considerable emphasis on artistic technique and style – that is, upon the ways artists variously, even individually, handled the materials with which they worked – but rarely questioned *why* certain materials were chosen or what they might contribute, as materials, to how a work signified and might itself shape interpretation. The practice of *Stilkritik*, central to the early history of disciplinary art history, bore fruit in the creation of a monumental series of medium-defined *corpora* in the early twentieth century. Dedicated to clarifying the place of works within chronologies and subchronologies, and thus to recovering the existence and characteristics of regional “schools” and individual hands, alike, these projects had the accessory effect of establishing materials (or in current parlance, *media*) as a prime criterion in art historical taxonomies.

And yet, questions of meaning persistently haunted art historical discussions of materials. In a chapter of *La vie des Formes* (1934) dedicated to “the life of forms in matter,” Henri Focillon affirmed:

Unless and until it actually exists in matter, form is little better than a vista of the mind ... Art is bound to weight, density, light and color. The most ascetic art ... not only is borne along by the very matter that it has sworn to repudiate, but is nourished and sustained by it as well.⁵

And Erwin Panofsky, in 1939 noted the possibility of a meaning-oriented account of the materials employed in works of art:

A really exhaustive interpretation of the intrinsic meaning or content might even show that the technical procedures characteristic of a certain country, period, or artist ... are symptomatic of the same basic attitude that is discernible in all the other specific qualities of his style.⁶

Günter Bandmann's 1951 study of medieval architectural forms as bearers of meaning offered the first sustained response to these early twentieth-century invitations to consider the semantic import of medieval materials.⁷ Subsequently, Bandmann, Thomas Raff, Wolfgang Kemp, and Norberto Gramaccini have variously proposed a mode of iconological analysis – *Materialikonologie* – focused upon the signifying power of materials and the role played by materials and ideas about materials in the making and reception of art and architecture. In the last two decades iconological interpretation of materials has moved to center stage in discussions of medieval art.⁸

Although the modern order of (medieval) things has largely been organized according to media or materials, and the medium specialized training of art historians has intensified this approach, medievalists have come to recognize how this scholarly and museological situation effectively quarantines medieval works in post-medieval categorizations, abstracting them from their historical conditions of multi- or inter-media display and function, and suppressing fundamental aspects of their facture. The analytic imposition of modern (and modernist) conceptions of media and "medium specificity" upon medieval works of art and material culture obscures more than it illuminates.⁹

The vast majority of medieval works of art and architecture are materially composite works, constituted by skillful conjunctions of materials. Indeed, a continuous exploration of the effects produced by combinations, juxtapositions, and even tension-producing contrasts of materials is something of a hallmark of artistic production in the medieval period. To attend to the role of materials, as well as ideas about materials, in the art and architecture of the Romanesque and Gothic periods is to confront a dizzying range of interconnected issues, and an ever-growing bibliography: both the medieval works and practices and the scholarship devoted to them defy comprehensive summary. In what follows, I sketch several dominant approaches from a much larger body of work on the role and import of materials in Romanesque and Gothic Europe. Rather than offering a panoramic view of the state of the question (or rather, questions), I hope to suggest how attention to materials has yielded important insights into medieval culture. In the final section of the chapter, I turn, if all too briefly, to the recent emergence of "materiality" as a central and vexed term in medieval art history and point to several lines of

inquiry that could further transform our understanding of the role and import of materials, and ideas about materials, in the art of the Middle Ages.

Non solum voces, sed et res significativae sunt ...

Although the iconographic and iconological approaches that have dominated the study of medieval art are often critiqued for ignoring questions of material facture and import, other equally hermeneutic approaches have yielded important insights into the semantic power of materials in the Middle Ages. In a series of studies, Friedrich Ohly magisterially explored the medieval tradition of finding profound meaning in materials, a hermeneutic tradition that Ohly dubbed *Dingbedeutung*.¹⁰ As Ohly demonstrated, medieval thinkers understood material substances or things (*res*) to be potentially charged with a range of meanings that required careful adjudication and interpretation. Grounded in scriptural exegeses, medieval writers parsed and interpreted the phenomenal, material world about them as a divinely authored text in which works of nature and of culture could act as *figurae* expressing spiritual truths. The conviction that *non solum voces, sed res significativae sunt* (“not only words, but things signify”)¹¹ prompted medieval exegetes to attend to the properties or qualities of materials as revelatory indices of the *sensus spiritualis* (spiritual sense or meaning) concealed or congealed in their physical forms.¹²

Medieval interest in the interpretation of the created world spurred a rich commentary tradition in which materials played a starring role. In this tradition of materialist exegesis, allegoresis and observation mingled, confounding modern distinctions between the discourses of natural philosophy, etymology, practical knowledge, experimental science, folklore, biblical exegesis, speculative geography, and medicine.

Romanesque and Gothic artists made their own sophisticated contributions to the medieval tradition of *Dingbedeutung*. As Herbert Kessler and Thomas Raff have elucidated, an innovative relief sculpture at the abbey of St. Emmeram, Regensburg, made in the mid-eleventh century (c.1050–1064 CE) reveals how artists actively participated in a long medieval tradition of finding significance in materials¹³ (fig. 4-1). At the center of the St. Emmeram stone relief, the sculptor carved a full-length figure of Christ seated in majesty, framed by an inscription: “Since Christ is called a rock on account of his firm majesty, it is fitting enough that his image be made in stone.”¹⁴ Manipulated by the carver, the material of the relief sculpture became a literal and figural expression of the Pauline trope of Christ as the corner stone (Ephesians 2: 20). The carefully disposed inscription brackets the frontal, high relief form of Christ’s face with the phrases P(RO) NUMINE XPC (on the left) and ILLIUS IN SAXO (on the right), thus reassuring beholders that the glory of Christ’s hypostatic form ennobled the lithic “material of idols.”¹⁵ The word stone (“saxo”), carved out of stone, transforms the audacious four-cornered relief carving into a strikingly reflexive material revelation of the incarnate *lapis angularis*.



FIGURE 4-1 Relief sculpture of Christ enthroned, North Portal (interior), Church of St. Emmeram, Regensburg; limestone; c.1048–1064. Source: photo courtesy of Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

Vestigial Materials

The St. Emmeram relief sculpture foregrounds how an artist's choice and handling of a material could actively participate in and contribute to the rich tradition of medieval materialist hermeneutics. In the Middle Ages, however, the same material – stone – was also deployed so as to efface the intervention of human hands. Portable altars featuring stone slabs framed by iconographically and epigraphically dense metalwork mounts exemplify this canny aesthetic and semantic promotion of materials as found, rather than made by art (fig. 4-2).

Medieval ecclesiastical directives prescribe a rarified series of stones for use as the upper surfaces of such altars: alabaster, porphyry, jasper, onyx, marble, serpentine,



FIGURE 4-2 Portable Altar; porphyry; wood frame; gilt copper plates with vernis brun work, c.1160–1170. Victoria & Albert Museum, 10–1873. Source: photo courtesy of Marie-Lan Nguyen, CC-BY-2.5.

sapphire, or ivory.¹⁶ The stone slabs incorporated into portable altars were carefully selected, cut, and polished to showcase naturally occurring all-over variegations in color.

In contrast to the altars' metalwork mounts, medieval makers left no overt traces of their tools on the slabs of precious stones they prepared for portable altars, showcasing instead the natural, material properties of each piece of stone. The artistic cultivation of the untouched appearance of these altars' inset stone slabs was likely a direct response to the discursive framing of portable altars in the liturgies for their consecration. The prayer that opens the consecration of a portable altar in the thirteenth-century Roman Pontifical invokes the deity as the "stone cut from the mountain without [the effort] of hands," an epithet drawn from Exodus 20: 25 in which God commands Moses not to make altars of cut stones, defiled by the touch of tools.¹⁷ In medieval portable altars, artists skillfully worked pieces of stone in order to create the appearance of lithic *acheiropoeta*.

If the whiteness of a slab of alabaster in an portable altar invited associations with Christ's immaculate flesh, or the deep purple-red of porphyry in another altar conjured his physical and sacramental blood, the marked absence of any trace of the human hand on the stones inset in so many medieval portable altars was itself a mode of representation in which the simulation of an unworked, divinely mandated piece of stone did significant exegetical, theological, and auratic work.

The Stuff of Anagogy

The medieval search for *significationes* in material things was profoundly authorized by conceptions of divinely authored meaning immanent in creation and polysemously referenced in scripture. To paint in broad strokes, this hermeneutic approach to *res* was grounded in an apprehension of the material world as a sacredly semi-otic assemblage of *vestigia*: material traces of the divine. In the twelfth century, however, it seems clear that a new confidence in the spiritual power of material creations, including those created by human makers, was gaining ground. This new emphasis upon the spiritual import and efficacy of materials, both natural and artificial, was given exuberant expression by Abbot Suger of Saint Denis in the works he had made for his abbey church and in his exceptional writings about his efforts.

Suger's deep investment in materials has attracted considerable scholarly attention. In his famous account of anagogical ascent prompted by beholding the golden, gem-encrusted surfaces and liturgical equipment of St.-Denis's main altar, Suger quotes the inventory of precious stones in Ezekiel 28: 13 yet his encomium is only superficially exegetical. Instead, Suger employs the language of "loveliness" and "delight" to convey the effect of materials transformed by artifice; effects that he identifies as transporting him "from this inferior to that higher world in an anagogical manner."¹⁸

St.-Denis's stupendous main altar featured a golden frontal given by the Carolingian ruler, Charles the Bald, as well as three golden, gem-studded panels added by Suger. Describing these panels, Suger stresses how the "diversity of the materials" is "not easily understood by the mute perception of sight without a description."¹⁹ According to Suger, the frontal's complex conjunction of materials is "intelligible only to the literate" and requires some kind of gloss "set down in writing."²⁰ Unlike the theologically dense, figural programs of the stained glass windows Suger devised for the abbey church's east end, in his account of the main altar's anagogical efficacy Suger makes no mention of figural representation. It is instead the *varietas* of the material fashioned into the golden form of the altar's relief panels that requires a textual apparatus if its dazzling meanings are to be understood.

Material Requirements

As Conrad Rudolph has explored, Suger's writings furnish several justifications for his lavish expenditure upon precious materials.²¹ Not least among them, Suger emphasizes the material requirements involved in the celebration of Mass in the illustrious abbey church: "every costlier or costliest thing should serve, first and foremost, for the administration of the Holy Eucharist ... whatever is most valued among all created things, be laid out ... for the reception of the *blood of Christ!*"²²

Justifying his preoccupation with precious materials, Suger articulates a thoroughly traditional position, enshrined in ecclesiastical precepts and canon law: the unsurpassed spiritual and material preciousness of Christ's sacramental body and blood require appropriately precious ritual vessels (*vasa sacra*).²³ Whereas the chalice and paten employed in the celebration of the Eucharist could be made of a number of materials in the early Middle Ages, by the ninth century the *vasa sacra* employed in the Mass were subject to stringent stipulations that forbade the use of wood, horn, or base metals, conditions that applied in Suger's lifetime and in centuries following.²⁴ Despite the many aesthetic innovations that Suger introduced at St.-Denis, his approach to the material conditions and requirements of the liturgy, particularly the Mass, exemplify a widely held medieval sense of material decorum: the hyperbolic, redemptive value of Christ's sacramental body required the best, most precious, and most costly materials that human ingenuity and effort could obtain.

Material *Memoria*

A concern with tradition – in the medieval sense of *traditio* as involving a “handing down” – also animates Suger's preoccupation with materials and animated his material interventions at St.-Denis. In the writings he devoted to the works he undertook, Suger consistently substantiates the lustrous history of St.-Denis by means of a meticulous inventorying of the origins and histories of objects belonging to the abbey. At times, Suger's texts read as extensively annotated inventories of the abbey's treasures, full of precious information concerning the provenance of the works he singles out for attention. From the sourcing of timber, to the golden frontal given by Charles the Bald, to the famous (and extant) Eagle and Eleanor Vases, Suger recites the origins of materials and material things.²⁵

In this respect, Suger's writings offer an exceptionally dilated instance of a widespread Romanesque and Gothic phenomenon, whereby monastic communities and cathedral chapters, alike, perceived objects in their possession as precious things reserved and required for ritual use *and* as a material historical archive testifying to the authority, privileges, and charisma of their communities.²⁶ In Suger's lived experience, as he enshrined in it in his writings, the presence of materials worked into *vasa sacra* and *ornamenta*, fashioned into stained glass windows, and making up the architectural fabric of the church, collectively substantiated the glorious past, present, and future of St.-Denis.

Material Values, Material Substitutions

For all their exceptionality, Suger's writings testify to a widespread medieval valuing of materials as spiritually expressive and effective. On the one hand, materials were understood to be potent *vestigia* of the divine presence in creation. At the same

time, materials could also act as catalysts, catapulting Christian devotees beyond the contingencies of the material world toward the divine. This twofold medieval conception of materials has powerfully shaped current art historical perspectives, not least by focusing scholarly attention upon the role and import of materials in the context of medieval religion.

Medieval reliquaries have proven to be especially "good to think with" for scholars interested in materials. As several interpreters have shown, the conjunction of relic and reliquary offers an exciting opportunity to grasp the complex imbrication of material and ineffable value, spiritual and communicative efficacy, and the intimate, if often paradoxical relation between the sacred and worldly "stuff" in medieval Christian culture. Made to contain unassuming, sometimes potentially disquieting bits of material – fragments of bones, splinters of wood, scraps of textile – medieval reliquaries were aesthetically sophisticated objects, usually made from high-value materials. The choreography of precious materials and virtuosic techniques in medieval reliquaries did many things at once: it showcased ecclesiastical wealth and power, it elaborated the "divine allegories" Suger celebrated, and – not least – it asserted the psychosomatic *virtus* of the saints. As Cynthia Hahn, Brigitte Buettner, Michele Ferrari, and Bruno Reudenbach have explored, in the conjunction of relic and reliquary we encounter a particularly concentrated expression of how medieval systems of material and immaterial value were intimately and intricately intertwined.²⁷

The materials employed in medieval reliquaries (including but not limited to precious stones, metals, enamels, pearls, ivory, and rock crystal) powerfully communicated medieval Christian conceptions of the enduring worth of holy bodies and the anticipated perfection of the resurrected body. The very properties of stones and metals – their inorganic substance and seeming imperviousness to organic processes of decay – made them apt material proxies for the ultimate perfection and perdurance of body and soul, reunited after the last Judgment. Above all, the material vocabulary of reliquaries – like the *vasa sacra* employed in eucharistic ritual – derived from a lexicon of luxury employed in the *opus dei*.

Romanesque and Gothic reliquaries were produced in a wide range of formats, from purse-like forms to more elaborate microarchitectural structures, featuring portals, pinnacles, gables, and crocketing in miniature. Other shaped reliquaries were made in emulation of human figures or body-parts. These much-discussed anthropomorphic reliquary containers addressed devotees in the form of the human body, thus implying by outward appearance the holy contents concealed within, even in cases where corporeal relics were in fact absent.²⁸

The materials employed in the fabrication (and continuing alteration) of such anthropomorphic reliquaries not only articulated a strong account of the relic as metonym, but also of the reliquary itself as a material manifestation of verbal descriptions of saints as precious, shining vessels (fig. 4-3). The silver gilt surface of the Arm Reliquary of the Apostles from the treasury of St. Blaise in Braunschweig simulates the corporeal presence of a hand, complete with fingernails and wrinkled joints, as well as the differentiated drape of garments and the dense, worked surfaces of embroidery bands.²⁹ Simultaneously, in this reliquary



FIGURE 4-3 Arm Reliquary of the Apostles from the treasury of St. Blaise, Braunschweig (Lower Saxony); silver gilt over oak core with champlevé enamel; c.1190. The Cleveland Museum of Art, gift of the John Huntington Art and Polytechnic Fund, 1930.739. Source: photo © The Cleveland Museum of Art.

and in many other examples, the silver gilt sheeting simulating this array of other materials was handled by the maker so as to emphasize its metallic properties. Notwithstanding this spectacular mimetic substitution of one material for other materials (silver gilt for flesh and textile), the artist patently stresses the metallic appearance of the silver gilt, thus concretizing medieval conceptions of the unsurpassed preciousness of sanctity. As Brigitte Buettner has observed, the enclosure of holy remains in such precious containers worked

at once to produce and discount the splendid visual evidence of gem-wrapped relics, asking us to avert our eyes from the stones and to fasten them onto the bones instead. But for all the insistence of this injunction, the texture with which the world is woven had a way of coming back, stubbornly and luminously.³⁰

The reliquaries produced in vast numbers over the course of the Middle Ages testify to the central role played by aesthetically compelling, luxurious, and exotic materials in the period, not only as manifestations of cultic splendor, but also as crucial components in a medieval Christian economy of value animated by a powerful principle of inversion.

Calling Materials into Question

The glittering metallic surfaces, lustrous stones, and other high-value materials appearing in sacred spaces provoked critique throughout the Middle Ages. In the most famous medieval condemnation of material ostentation, Bernard of Clairvaux lambasted the "immoderate" dimensions of church building, "the costly refinements, and painstaking representations which deflect the attention ... of those who pray and thus hinder their devotion."³¹ With the stinging question "[W]hat is gold doing in the holy place?" Bernard took polemical stock of the "business" of bishops: "they stimulate the devotion of a carnal people with material ornaments because they cannot do so with spiritual ones."³²

At the heart of Bernard's critique lies the conviction that such opulence amounts to nothing but a perverted strategy of *do ut des* ("I give so that you will give") in which "[m]oney is sown with such skill that it may be multiplied" with the result that "[e]yes are fixed on relics covered with gold and purses are opened."³³

According to Bernard, high-value materials act as episcopal lures for an all too carnal congregation who confuse aesthetic infatuation with piety. Thanks to the profit-motivated materialist stagecraft of the secular clergy, churches become spaces of astonishment rather than compunction. Bernard decries the logic of inversion that animated the enclosure of relics in precious containers as a materialist perversion of the spiritual economy: "The Church is radiant in its walls and destitute in its poor. It dresses its stones in gold and it abandons its children naked. It serves the eyes of the rich at the expense of the poor."³⁴ In Bernard's unsparing reckoning, precious materials are not epiphanic *vestigia* or catalysts for spiritual ascent, but rather obstacles to devotion, tugging on purse strings rather than hearts.

In his scathing inventory of the aesthetic overkill of contemporary churches, Bernard particularly emphasizes the presence of gold; an emphasis echoed in medieval church inventories. Gold was consistently prized as a material in the medieval period and deemed particularly appropriate for Christian ritual, not least the Mass.³⁵ As Bernard makes plain, gold was also always, at least potentially, a form of wealth. Castigating bishops for their amassing of gold and neglect of the poor, Bernard drew, at least implicitly, upon a long medieval tradition of understanding the precious metal material of liturgical objects and ornaments as a store of wealth that could be put in the service of charity.

Justified by Ambrose, and subsequently enshrined in medieval canon law, the *vasa sacra* of medieval churches were objects removed from worldly circulation *and* things to be literally liquidated into worldly forms of value when pastoral needs must.³⁶ Although Bernard does not explicitly invoke this precept of commutability, his critique proceeds from the recognition that gold (like silver) was always, at least *in potentia*, a form of currency that could be enlisted in the redemptive work of charity.

Materiam Superabat Opus and Ars Auro Prior

If Bernard castigated his contemporaries for prizing gold above Christian charity, other voices in Romanesque and Gothic Europe testify to an acute awareness and appreciation of the skill required to produce gold – a work of culture, not nature – and to work it into spiritually elevating or wonderfully worldly forms. Suger, a veritable eulogist of golden surfaces, expressly prizes skilled artifice above precious materials when he describes how the artists he employed so enriched the “marvelous workmanship and lavish sumptuousness” of the golden frontal given by Charles the Bald, “that certain people might be able to say: *The workmanship surpassed the material.*”³⁷

Materiam superabat opus: quoting Ovid’s description of the doors made by Mulciber for the Palace of the Sun in the *Metamorphoses* (II,5) Suger finds no higher praise for the “barbarian” artists employed by Charles the Bald and the “foreign” workers he brought to St.-Denis than to esteem their work above the precious materials he provided them.

Although Suger was not the first medieval writer to invoke this Ovidian topos, his deployment of the quotation is characteristic of a new, twelfth-century perspective upon the skilled working of materials.³⁸ Unlike works of nature in a divinely authored cosmos, no divine provenance underwrote the epiphanic or semiotic efficacy of materials fabricated by human artifice. Nonetheless, starting in the Romanesque period, artistic skill and artificial, man-made materials attracted attention and praise.

A *champlevé* enamel plaque made for Bishop Henry of Blois before 1171 CE offers a particularly striking articulation of this new perspective upon the materials made and worked by *ars*³⁹ (fig. 4-4). The semi-circular copper plaque features the figure of its episcopal patron in proskynesis, holding a portable altar rendered in brilliant enamel color by a Mosan goldsmith who also inscribed “HENRICVS EPISCOP(VS)” below. The two lines of inscription arcing around the perimeter of the plaque gloss its ostensible subject matter and its material realization:

+ ARS AVRO GEMMISQ(UE) PRIOR, PRIOR OMNIBVS AVTOR. DONA
DAT HENRICVS VIVVS IN ERE DEO, MENTE PAREM MVSIS (ET) MARCO
VOCE PRIOREM. FAME VIRIS, MORES CONCILIAN(T) SUPERIS

+ Art comes before gold and gems, the author before everything. Henry, alive in bronze, gives gifts to God. Henry, whose fame commends him to men, whose character commends him to the heavens, a man equal in mind to the Muses and in eloquence higher than Marcus (i.e. Cicero).⁴⁰

Marshaling mimetic representation, epigraphy, and materials, the plaque promotes a new perspective upon artifice, artificial materials, and artificers in the later twelfth century. Read as an account of the creation of a work of art, the inscription describes a creative process in which the author comes first, *ars* (or skill) second, and precious materials last. As a statement of values, the plaque would



FIGURE 4-4 Henry of Blois Plaque; copper alloy “dished” plaque with enamel and gilding (largely lost); c.1150–1171. London, British Museum, 1852,0327.1. Source: photo © Trustees of the British Museum.

seem to echo Suger by prizing *ars* above gold and gems. The specific material expression of this aesthetic attitude inflects the inscription profoundly. Materially, the plaque features neither gems, nor gold. The object is instead made from gilt *aes* and enamel: less intrinsically precious materials produced not by a creator deity, but rather by human ingenuity.⁴¹ In the inscription’s reflexive gloss, “ars” denotes not only the goldsmith’s skillful acts of inscription and representation, but also his skill in making the very materials of his art.

Making Materials

The earliest surviving medieval texts providing instructions for the making of the materials required for *ars* – the *Compositiones variae* (dated to the late eighth or early ninth century) and the *Mappae Clavicula* (composed c.1000 CE) – reveal that knowledge of the production of materials and their handling was deemed worthy of textual preservation and transmission.⁴² The elevated status of materially practiced *artes* in the Romanesque and Gothic periods is demonstrated by the compilation and composition of new texts transmitting artisanal knowledge of a wide range of materials and techniques, most famously the *Schedula de diversis artibus* authored by a Benedictine monk writing under the pseudonym “Theophilus Presbyter.”⁴³

Drawing upon antecedent texts and infused with a Benedictine ethos, Theophilus’s treatise treats a wide range of practices. While the *Schedula* seemingly offers instruction in the making of materials, the crafting of productive devices, and the fabrication of objects (including works of art), close examination of the text reveals

that certain of its instructions would hardly have led to the results they describe.⁴⁴ Rather than understanding the *Schedula* only as a practical manual for the handling of materials, several interpreters have suggested it should be read as an expression of “artisanal epistemology” and the heightened status of *opus* and artifice in the twelfth century.⁴⁵

Considered from this perspective, the *Schedula* is also a major textual monument to the cultural and conceptual status of materials, particularly man-made materials. As Spike Bucklow has noted, medieval “crafts were known as ‘mysteries’ and the artist’s or craftsperson’s manipulation of materials was widely recognized as a type of secret.”⁴⁶ In the Middle Ages, the practice of *ars* invariably involved the laborious, often re-iterative transformation of natural substances into the materials or *Werkstoffe* required to realize an artwork, object, or monument.

The making of materials involved human-induced forms of substantial change that medieval people understood as influenced by and replicating cosmic order and mutability. Working with and from natural materials, in imitation of natural processes, medieval artists and artisans created materials that were themselves artificial and yet understood to participate in dynamic processes of change characteristic of the natural order. As Ittai Weinryb has penetratingly observed, the making of “unnatural” alloys or mixtures was not only fundamental to all art and artisanal practices in the Middle Ages, but also epitomized medieval views of artifice as always involving processes of material mutation.⁴⁷

The interest in materials and techniques evident in the *Schedula* intensified over the course of the later Middle Ages, giving rise to a series of “recipe books,” including expanded versions of *De coloribus et artibus romanorum* in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; *De arte illuminandi* in the fourteenth century; and Cennino Cennino’s famous *Il Libro dell’arte* (c.1390).⁴⁸ Although an extensive commercial trade in artisanal materials is well attested from the late twelfth century and medieval apothecaries specialized in supplying artists’ materials, artists and artisans in the Romanesque and Gothic periods remained intimately involved in the preparation of the materials with which they worked.⁴⁹

Materials, *Materia*, Materiality

Although materials have emerged as a central concern in the study of medieval art and architecture, fundamental aspects of the role and import of materials, and medieval ideas about materials and matter, remain unexamined. “Materiality” is a term that has been put to work by a growing number of medievalist art historians, yet it remains a vexed and contested concept that prompts more questions, at present, than it answers: What has “materiality” to do with materials? What has “materiality” to do with historical conceptions of matter? A series of potentially consequential distinctions are at stake in these questions.

Whose Materiality?

Michael Ann Holly has recently proposed a "working definition" of "materiality" as "the meeting of matter and imagination, the place where opposites take refuge from their perpetual strife."⁵⁰ For Holly, putting "materiality" at the center of art historical attention "comes down to a matter of phenomenology and embodied perception."⁵¹ Indeed, some exponents of the "material turn" have found in "materiality" an invitation to bring new attention to the interpreter's embodied experience of the physical presence of the work of art. For medievalists, such an understanding of "materiality" entails some critical consideration of the relevance of phenomenology to history, or rather to the project of historical analysis. When "History" appears on the material-phenomenological scene, it has sometimes been cast as an antagonist to the phenomenological force or plenitude of material presence. Writing out of and into the "new materialist" conversation, Karen Overbey comments:

If one thing we are asking ourselves to do is to re-imagine medieval history (and medieval art history) after history, then I want to start, as I did, with the object ... I want to look at the surfaces of things, not through them ... What matters in matter is, I think, present. Even if that matter is "medieval." Can we pull our focus, see the scratchy surface and somehow have art history without History? Can we write the histories of art objects, rather than an art history?⁵²

In Overbey's formulation, "matter" makes possible a mode of presentness that the desire for "history," routed through objects, derails or distorts. "History," in this account, would seem to name some immaterial quotient, like the "ideas" or "meanings" sought by iconological or iconographic modes of reading "through" or "beyond" material works. But if we grant that "matter" and its complement, "materiality," hold out the promise of presentness as a kind of phenomenological state of grace, I think we must still ask *whose matter? whose materiality?* If, in the experimental spirit of Overbey's essay, we answer *the object's, present to us here and now*, such a phenomenological account of matter and materiality focused on the interpreter's present would seem inexorably to lead to something like an *art criticism* of objects made in the Middle Ages.

By contrast, in Caroline Bynum's use of the term "materiality" *medieval* conceptions of matter, the "manifesting" of "power in the matter of the object," and the insistence with which medieval objects "call attention to their per se 'stuffiness' and 'thingness'" are privileged.⁵³

Bynum's "materiality" is a capacious analytic construct, at once descriptive and heuristic. Descriptively, it serves to name a past phenomenon. Medieval "materiality" has historical actuality in Bynum's account; it is a cultural construct (perhaps better, *constructs*) proper to the Middle Ages, contingently changing over time and locally inflected. In her study "materiality" operates, in part, as a condition that made possible *medieval* artistic, ritual, theological, and ideological practices and experiences. As a heuristic, medieval "materiality" allows Bynum to perceive and parse objects

and ideas, in order to advance claims that are propositional and historiographic. This heuristic “materiality” is not a medieval construct, but is analytically framed and deployed by the modern historian in her present-tense interpretation of the residue of medieval cultures; cultures understood to be phenomenally and phenomenologically distinct from the culture out of which and into which the historian writes.

As with all constructions of “materiality” as distinct from “matter” and individual material works, Bynum’s account of “Christian materiality” involves a certain “reading through” or “beyond” objects and texts. Put otherwise, “materiality” *as an analytic concept* signals a gap or difference between the fact of any medieval object’s perduring existence “now” and the cultural “then(s)” that witnessed its creation and, in turn, were shaped by its specific existence. The object’s material presence to the interpreter thus indexes its removal from past moments of presentness, and in this respect we might understand medieval objects as affording historians something like the *Werkstoffe* for the productive labor of historiography.

Attending to the Forest and the Trees: Medieval *Silva* and the *Werkstoffe* of Medieval Art History

To return to the questions posed above – *whose matter? whose materiality?* – historical accounts, like Bynum’s, offer complex responses. The “matter” and “materiality” under discussion are historically contingent; they were produced within and shaped cultures that are not conterminous with our own. At the same time, however, they remain constructs made – not found – by post-medieval acts of analytic judgment and historical interpretation. From this perspective, the material presence of medieval works in the historian’s present tense does indeed matter, but it does not afford them unmediated access to “matter” or “materiality,” in either their medieval or post-medieval forms. Rather, both “matter” and “materiality” are concepts made, maintained, and revised by past and present acts of analytic judgment and abstraction, both past and present.

For scholars interested in medieval “materiality” and “matter,” much work remains to be done. Despite the explosion of studies focused on the role and import of materials in the making of medieval works of art, craft, and culture, writ large, we have yet to really confront the plural concepts of “matter” circulating in the cultures of the Middle Ages and shaping those cultures from within. Only very recently have art historians and scholars of other art forms begun to profit from work on medieval concepts of *materia*, *hyle*, and *silva* in the history of theology, philosophy, and science.⁵⁴ With this trifecta of terms medieval thinkers conceptually grappled with *matter*, per se. The sophistication of medieval conceptions of *materia* (in the sense of prime matter) and the various distinctions made between the world of individual material existents and matter as formless *potentia* have serious consequences for medieval understandings of creation as a process and of the relation between materials and made things. Greater attention to this complex tradition of thought would allow us to construct more historically sensitive accounts of “materiality” as it was imagined, experienced, and operative within medieval cultures (fig. 4-5).



FIGURE 4-5 Matter (*Hile*) in the scheme of creation: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 48, fol. 7v, late twelfth century. Source: photo courtesy of The Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

As Conrad Rudolph and Ittai Weinryb have demonstrated, to attend to medieval concepts of matter is not to flee from material objects, for *materia*, *silva*, and *hyle* were examined and re-examined in the Middle Ages not only in thought or words, but also in the making of art works, monuments, and artifacts.⁵⁵

Attending to “matter” as a medieval concept (or rather, concepts) will require art historians to take up a wider range of materials and material processes. Base and “banal” materials, long neglected by art historians, were crucial not only to medieval processes of artful making, but also to medieval experiences of and ideas about the material world. While historians of material culture, archeologists, and scholars in the field of *Realienkunde* have long examined the stuff of everyday life – leather, wax, lead, urine, dung, etc. – art historians, with few exceptions, have remained preoccupied with a more rarefied and restricted repertoire of materials.

A further consequence of older art historical privileging of “works of art” and more recent investments in “material presence” has been a profound inattention to central aspects of material processes of making, not least the important part played by *Werkstoffe* in the practices of *ars* known to medieval cultures. So too, waste materials remain largely invisible in both “traditional” and “new materialist” accounts of medieval visual and material culture. And yet, as medieval recipe books and medieval philosophical thought experiments reveal, most acts of creation in the Middle Ages involved forms of material loss and privation: from the wood that fueled furnaces, to the wax forms liquefied in the process of casting; from the stone removed in the subtractive process of carving, to the refining of ore to yield gold, silver, and copper. Every medieval object compellingly present to us today is also an archive of other materials transformed, exhausted, and discarded in past acts of making. Phenomenally absent today, such materials were crucial to medieval acts of making and concepts of matter. They too are the stuff of the history of art and of materiality in the Middle Ages.

Notes

I regret that length constraints prevent me from citing many important contributions to the study of materials, *materia*, and materiality. The sources cited below represent only the tip of the bibliographic iceberg.

- 1 Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art*, p. 19.
- 2 Bandmann, “Der Wandel.”
- 3 Semper, *Style*, pp. 71–72, 250–253.
- 4 Bandmann, “Der Wandel.”
- 5 Focillon, *The Life of Forms*, p. 95.
- 6 Panofsky, “Iconography and Iconology,” p. 30.
- 7 Bandmann, *Mittellatealische Architektur*.
- 8 Bandmann, “Bemerkungen”; Kemp, “Material der bildenden Kunst”; Raff, *Die Sprache*; Raff, “Constat enim”; Raff, “Überlegungen”; Raff, “Materia superat”; Gramaccini and Raff, “Iconologia”; Gramaccini, “Zur Ikonologie.”

- 9 Weddigen, "Notes," p. 34.
- 10 Ohly, *Sensus Spiritualis*.
- 11 Richard of St.-Victor quoted in Ohly, *Sensus Spiritualis*, p. 4.
- 12 Ibid., pp. 8–9.
- 13 Kessler, "Image and Object," pp. 314–316; Raff, *Die Sprache*, pp. 57–59.
- 14 Kessler, "Image and Object," pp. 314.
- 15 Kessler, "Image and Object," pp. 314–316.
- 16 Palazzo, *L'espace*, p. 120.
- 17 Ibid., pp. 111–112.
- 18 Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, pp. 62–65.
- 19 Ibid., pp. 62–63.
- 20 Ibid. [See Chapter 13 by Mariaux in this volume (ed.)].
- 21 Rudolph, *Artistic Change*.
- 22 Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, p. 65.
- 23 Fruticieux, "Entre liturgie," pp. 228–233 (esp.).
- 24 Ibid.; Kumler, "Manufacturing," pp. 17–21.
- 25 Buc, "Conversion of Objects." See also the essays by Kinney and Mariaux in this volume.
- 26 For further discussion, see Mariaux's essay in this volume.
- 27 Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, Buettner, "From Bones"; Ferrari, "Gold und Asche"; Tous-saint, "Heiliges Gebein"; Reudenbach, "Gold ist Schlamm."
- 28 Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, pp. 67–71, 118–141; Hahn, "The Spectacle."
- 29 *Treasures of Heaven*, pp. 83–84 (Cat. no. 40).
- 30 Buettner, "From Bones," p. 57.
- 31 Trans. Rudolph, *The "Things,"* p. 279.
- 32 Ibid., pp. 279–290.
- 33 Ibid., p. 281.
- 34 Ibid., pp. 281–283.
- 35 Gauthier, "L'or et l'église"; Reudenbach, "Gold ist Schlamm".
- 36 Kumler, "Manufacturing," pp. 20–21; Lauwers, "Des vases et des lieux."
- 37 Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, pp. 62–63.
- 38 Bialostocki, "Ars auro prior"; Gage, "Gothic Glass"; Claussen, "*materia* und *opus*."
- 39 Campbell, "An Enameled Plaque"; Stratford, "The 'Henry of Blois' plaques."
- 40 Trans. in *English Romanesque*, p. 261.
- 41 Ackley, "Copper-Alloy Substrates," p. 28; Kingsley, "VT CERNIS."
- 42 Hedfors, *Compositiones ad tingenda*; Burnham, *A Classical Technology; Mappae clavicula*.
- 43 Theophilus, *The Various Arts*.
- 44 E.g., Buckton, "Theophilus and Enamel."
- 45 Reudenbach, "Ornatus materialis"; Mariaux, "La double formation"; van Engen, "Theophilus Presbyter"; Speer et al., eds., *Zwischen Kunsthandwerk*; Long, *Open-ness, Secrecy*, pp. 85–88. I borrow the phrase "artisanal epistemology" from Smith, *The Body*.
- 46 Bucklow, "Lead White's Mysteries," p. 145.
- 47 Weinryb, *The Bronze Object*, pp. 27–30, 33–37, et passim.
- 48 Davis-Weyer, "Panel and Wall Painting"; Pasqualetti, *Il Libellus*.
- 49 Kirby, Nash, and Cannon, eds., *Trade in Artists' Materials*.
- 50 Holly, "Notes from the Field: Materiality," p. 15.

- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Overbey, "Reflections," p. 15. Cf. Overbey, "Seeing through stone."
- 53 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 28–29.
- 54 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, Van Deusen, "In and Out," and Weinryb, "Living Matter."
- 55 Rudolph, "In the Beginning"; Weinryb, "Living Matter."

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Reception of Images by Medieval Viewers

Madeline Harrison Caviness

A Paradigm Shift in Visual Studies

In the 1970s and 1980s, many art historians followed literary criticism in a shift of focus from the planning and creation of a work to the processes of constructing meanings and assigning values through reader/viewer responses. These readings go beyond traditional decoding of “iconography” that depends on medieval texts and comparative images. Functions that have been proposed for works of art range from providing spontaneous pleasure, altered consciousness, instruction, or even salutary terror. Recent decades have seen newly intensified efforts by historians of cultural production to formulate medieval patterns of utilization that may be very different from those taken for granted in Western culture in the first half of the twenty-first century. This shift of emphasis, away from simpler notions of universal creative impulses and aesthetic pleasures, toward recognition of historically contingent reader and viewer responses, became the new norm, and the examples I have chosen to discuss may seem very arbitrary. Many scholars now take the alterity of the Middle Ages, and the plurality of its viewing communities, as their starting point; feminist criticism and anthropology, as much as the current public discourse of social diversity, assists the project. Others have suggested the use of psychology or phenomenology to explore supposedly universal human patterns of reception, including memory, emotions, and somatic experience, that can be mapped onto medieval subjects.

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This paradigm shift has been broadly defined as “the transformation of the history of art into a history of images.”¹ It continues to be important to our field even though theoretical debates are less often heard. We can think of it as a move from interrogation of all that lay “behind” the creation of the work, including any sources believed by earlier scholars to fix “iconographic” meanings in it, to a consideration of the varied readings that have arisen from viewing positions in front of the work after its completion, during its display or use. Art *historians* have predictably developed historical models that go further than literary reader-response *criticism* in attempting to (re)construct medieval readings. Yet for my purposes, “texts” as discussed by literary critics are interchangeable with “images.” Adapted from Debra Malina, the central tenet is that “the meaning of a work of literature [or art], rather than inhering statically in the text [or image] itself or being recoverable from the author’s [or artist’s] intentions, is produced dynamically through the interaction between text [or image] and reader [or viewer]”²; this encyclopedia entry, and similar pieces by Rabinowitz and Lernout, give very clear synopses of various approaches to the construction of meaning as approached through “real” or imaginary readers; a more extensive review is that of Andrew Bennett.³

David Axford⁴ has emphasized the contributions of the French deconstructionists to theories of the reader’s role. There and in Germany the movement had a long pre-history before it directly impacted art historians. Reader-response criticism, or affective stylistics, developed in *Rezeptionsästhetik* in the early 1960s Constance school, with Hans Robert Jauss as its main exponent; by the 1980s his work was being translated into English.⁵ He called for “a history of art that is to be based on the historical functions of production, communication, and reception, and is to take part in art”; in other words, the response also impacts the work. Being aware of the problem of alterity, he also laid the ground-lines for monitoring “the process of continuous mediation of past and present.” Jauss himself saw the medieval fourfold exegesis of the Bible as an example of “active reception” since a passive reading no longer provided an understanding of the ancient text.⁶ For art historians, two books announced that foregrounding the audience is a way to enrich historical perspectives, and especially to understand the power of images.⁷ Not surprisingly, one is an outgrowth of the study of iconoclasm and the debate over Christian representations, and the other examines the impact of devotional objects.

Yet the divide between traditional art history and the history of reception is not as dramatic as I indicated above. Either mode of interrogation, whether of the circumstances leading to production, or of the “after-life” of the image, can be virtually infinite. Sources can extend back to Classical Antiquity; influences can be long-lasting, while viewers have continued to provide different responses up to our own time. “Reception” is normally restricted to responses by the generation or two that viewed the work in its original cultural and spatial context, but “medieval reception” might legitimately include viewers up to the radical changes brought about by Protestantism and the Reformation. When reader/viewer responses are traced down to the present time they constitute a reception

history (*Rezeptionsgeschichte*), and this historiographical branch of inquiry initially claimed the term “reception theory.”⁸ Art historians have learned to examine their own biases by attention to historiography and reception history, and such perceptions are needed to historicize our understanding of reader/viewer response. Thus, even in this discussion of medieval reception, it is necessary to consider how, for instance, the mid-twelfth-century writings on “art” by the Benedictine Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis have been mediated through influential modern scholars like Emile Mâle and Erwin Panofsky.⁹ They exaggerated Suger’s creative role, the “originality” of his works, and the reach of their positive reception.¹⁰ Suger’s textualization of the Saint-Denis projects has had to be reevaluated. Andreas Speer used a close reading of part of Suger’s text to argue that, for the abbot, the liturgy took precedence over all else.¹¹ This shifts the argument back onto intention, but an important implication is that Suger’s cherished objects in the treasury, and the stained glass for which he assembled the best painters and materials, were only “activated” during a few hours of the year; there was a fluctuating visuality, to be considered below. Leaving aside debates about primacy and attribution, it is possible to find new ways to read both texts and visual objects from the perspective of their medieval reception. I have argued that the other Royal Abbey Church, Saint-Remi in Reims, entered into a dialogic relationship with Saint-Denis that extended to tombs, relics, and feast days as well as stones and glass; in the face of the visual evidence, agency or documented contacts are not necessary.¹²

Overall, how we interrogate Romanesque and Gothic images – I would prefer to say the artifacts in currency in Europe during the crusading period – has been immensely deepened and broadened through considerations of reception, including the enlargement of the canon we study as indicated in my rephrasing. What used to be taken for granted as “functions” (devotional, pedagogical, etc.) is being tested against reception of the work by a variety of real or imagined viewers. Some of the many advances and conundrums I list here give rise to issues that I will elaborate further:

- The canon dominated by the colonial narrative of a spiritual Christian past, promoting for instance a notion of illuminated manuscripts and abbey churches made by monks for monks, has expanded to include the seamy side of artifacts that played to ecclesiastic and lay viewers.¹³
- Medieval representational codes included rhetorical, semiotic, and theatrical aspects and gestures have been debated as ritual and/or as expressive language.¹⁴
- Mary Carruthers’s extensive work on mnemonics in relation to medieval textual practices and images in books was paralleled by art historians such as Suzanne Lewis examining visual recall.¹⁵ Memory aids learning and ensures a continuing impact.
- A broader understanding of Christian piety has brought attention to the way Christian images interacted with segments of the population who had previously been neglected: the women, the once-numerous Jews, the Slavs and Irish who were in the process of being converted and/or colonized, the Moslems living among Christians in Mediterranean countries.¹⁶

- The Jewish debate over images continued in medieval Europe, as discussed below.
- Negative reception not only includes textualized objections to a particular work, but also damage or destruction, and even reversion to non-figural expression.¹⁷
- Stylistic diversity in works of art, such as reliquaries and stained glass, and the buildings that housed them, can be appreciated for each embellishment that tells us something about changing uses and functions (e.g. fig. 5-1; or the twelfth-century stained glass panels that were given a new frame and integrated into the thirteenth-century architecture and liturgy of Chartres cathedral).¹⁸
- Medieval copies, once dismissed as less creative than their models, have become precious indexes of its reception, and of the changing perception of later artisans and their patrons (a famous example is the variety of English copies of the Carolingian “Utrecht Psalter”).¹⁹



FIGURE 5-1 Reliquary statue of St. Foi (St. Faith), ninth/tenth century, with additions. Conques Abbey, treasury. Source: photo courtesy of Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

- Whether a “seminal work of art” could be seen and emulated by artisans should be a test for modernist claims of “artistic influence.” It is necessary to formulate a “viewing community,” i.e. a group constituted by a shared experience of the work.²⁰
- It may be possible to construct an individual viewer in a particular social and temporal frame and extrapolate to the effect the work would have had on her/him (e.g. the princess for whom her mother the queen commissioned a prayer book).²¹
- Several cultural historians have historicized emotional responses, such as laughter, fear, horror, compassion, and grief.²²
- An apotropaic function, linked with fear of chimeras and freaks, was believed to ward off evil,²³ or even provide a *vade mecum* to help the viewer suppress “unclean” thoughts.²⁴
- Positive reception depended on many non-aesthetic considerations, but understanding medieval aesthetics is also crucial to construct pleasurable responses.²⁵
- Medieval optical theories caution against supposing that medieval viewers understood how and what they saw in the same way as moderns; visuality may be culturally contingent.²⁶
- Current phenomenology may bridge alterity by taking into account the medieval place and its inhabitants, understanding “vision and perception as embodied and synesthetic,” and relying on “somatic rather than semantic” reading.²⁷

Extrapolating from these impacts on our field it seems that medieval historians have used four avenues of approach to establishing reception, though of course they may overlap: First: There may be direct evidence for attitudes to the object, and an examination of the work itself should have priority, though in recent decades it was often forgotten; anecdotal textual evidence always has to be weighed with/against the artifact. Second, it may be possible to construct the viewer/reader as a group from societal norms, or even an individual from biographical information. Third, most modern theories of reception have a counterpart in medieval thought, for instance concerning representation, signs, personae, and optics, and scholars often invoke these theories to assist in period reading. Fourth but adjacent, are modern tools for decoding visual symbols that some consider universal enough to project back onto people of a distant past: Meyer Schapiro may have been one of the first to invoke semiotics as a way to decode Romanesque images;²⁸ psycho-analysis has had a very mixed history in terms of its trustworthiness for medievalists, but in the late twentieth century it contributed a great deal to our understanding of sexuality and gender;²⁹ cognitive science produced Gestalt theory, and more recently an understanding of the way representation of movement in a painting triggers the experience of it in the viewer’s brain;³⁰ optics has assisted notions of color perception;³¹ our adjacent disciplines of archeology and anthropology have assisted our understanding of the ways different people interact with artifacts – for instance, theories of ritual enactment cast liturgy and the cult of relics in a new light.³²

Praise and Criticism of Buildings and Artifacts by the Christian Establishment

What kinds of sources exist to indicate how medieval viewers reacted (or were supposed to react) to visual objects? The rhetorical mode known as *ars laudandi* might be expected to help, but praise of a new enterprise tended to be couched in generalities like variety, or well-worn topoi, such as the one claiming the richest materials, and even more superior craftsmanship. T.A. Heslop brought together a variety of such comments, as well as some of the negative criticism detailed below, noting the “ambivalence and contradictions inherent in medieval attitudes.”³³ Clear and specific documents charting the immediate reception of a particular work of art by a medieval audience are very uncommon, at least before the late fourteenth century. *Ars vituperandi* might shed some light, but there was nothing comparable to our modernist discourse of judicial criticism, largely because works did not circulate as commercial production. Only in the twentieth century did historians seek to convince non-medievalists (who often find medieval art ugly) that medieval philosophers and artisans had espoused certain aesthetic values.

Although it might seem obvious that any work accepted by a patron and preserved for posterity had met the standards then current, scholars have preferred to seek verbal formulations of an aesthetic. Their explorations were among the first that bridged production and reception, though with the assumption that the second was a mirror of the first. In 1935 Ananda Coomaraswamy, a connoisseur of Indian and Southeast Asian art, sought an aesthetics of European medieval art; a decade later a fuller range of texts and visual observations were brought to bear on the issue by Edgar de Bruyne³⁴ and Meyer Schapiro.³⁵ Schapiro claimed “a conscious taste of the spectators for the beauty of workmanship, materials, and artistic devices, apart from the religious meanings.” He posited medieval viewers of different stations and classes, but in his eagerness to claim delight in non-religious motifs, Schapiro almost overlooked the cultural distance that separates a medieval audience from us. On the other hand, Umberto Eco³⁶ historicized medieval viewers, but depended on a traditional array of theological and philosophical texts to posit top-down changing values. His account is historically grounded yet utterly impersonal, since he makes no attempt to substantiate pleasurable responses in a particular medieval audience. The quest for a philosophical aesthetics has continued, with substantial contributions by Mary Carruthers.³⁷ Her close reading of a wide range of texts that were read in the Middle Ages underpin her discussion of aesthetics, but she also evokes “commonplace medieval sense-derived understanding” of things like the physicality of skin/parchment. Like Jauss, she insists on the agency of the work in directing its own reception, so that we should ponder “what is it asking us to do?” Interdisciplinary text-based scholarship naturally dominates this line of enquiry, yet it seems to leave room for historians more familiar with a wide range of visual images to develop an even fuller observation-based history of diverse and changing taste.

One of the best indications we have of an appreciative audience is imitation, so works themselves have been viewed as contributions to critical discourse. Yet motivations for copying are historically contingent. In 1942, Richard Krautheimer noted that the many buildings that medieval viewers claimed as imitations of the Holy Sepulcher vary so much in composition that he raised the question whether the form of the original had much importance in itself (as modernists had assumed), or whether the essential similarity was conceptual (hexagonal and round both being central-planned), or if indeed it lay in the symbolism of numbers (12 columns; 8 sides, etc.). Accounts by travelers proved to be useful in plotting reception because their descriptions were as “inaccurate” as the built copies. Krautheimer’s analysis pointed toward a pre-modern visuality that was predisposed to symbolism.

Gervase, writing toward the end of the twelfth century, of the destroyed choir of Canterbury Cathedral that had been “gloriously completed” by 1124 under Prior Conrad, apologized for giving the impression that he was interested in “the mere arrangement of stones,” and assured his readers that his principal concern was the suitable placement of the relics of the saints.³⁸ Suspending the justificatory purpose of such texts, once we acknowledge the importance of relics, buildings that look as different as the great Byzantinizing church of San Marco in Venice and the Romanesque pilgrim church of Santiago in Compostela may have had a dialogic relationship, as rival houses for apostolic relics. This assumption is supported by Suger, who wished his altar furnishings in Saint-Denis to rival those of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, though he must have known they would not look alike; he concentrates on their costliness, but says nothing of outdoing the Western pilgrim churches by employing the new rib vaulting and supplying the portals with column statues.³⁹

The occasional verbal attacks on new (Gothic) building programs are an indication that churchmen did not condone novelty and inventiveness in a world that regarded extreme departures from accepted wisdom as heretical. In this climate it is all the more likely that texts praising new works and their patrons should be regarded as self-justificatory rhetoric. Far from being entirely transparent accounts of the motivation for the building campaigns, such texts were vehicles for the manipulation of viewers’ reception of the sumptuous building, persuading them to overcome their scruples against such lavish spending by ecclesiastic communities. Barbara Abou-el-Haj has cast doubt on the “cult of the carts” which was said to have motivated ordinary lay people to pull the carts of building materials to sites such as Chartres Cathedral in order to honor the Virgin. She sees this often-repeated topos as part of “an expanding rhetorical curve in the clergy’s accounts.”⁴⁰ We are thus confronted with the irony that sharper attention to textual sources in order to tease out medieval viewer responses has led to greater skepticism as to the authority of texts. If we apply ideology critique equally to texts and works of art, both are seen to have contributed to the construction and maintenance of social differences, an approach that has been clearly charted by feminists as well as more broadly by Jonathan Alexander.⁴¹ We have to conclude that the silent lay people

of the period between 1140 and 1240 were neither as devoid of spirituality as St. Bernard feared, nor as totally committed to the cult of the Virgin as Bishop Hugh of Rouen claimed.

Negative reactions to such building programs usually stemmed from a longstanding Christian anxiety about icons, images, and idols, as well as about the expenditure of money on church decorations when it might be given to the poor (Kessler, Chapter 9 in this volume). The best-known verbal attack on “art” from the High Middle Ages is the famous *Apologia* of Saint Bernard.⁴² Even without it, we could assume that the unadorned Cistercian enclaves satisfied very different communities from those of the great Benedictine abbey churches and the cathedrals. The disagreement was not about some fundamental notion of the role of images in the spiritual life of Christians (such as brought about Protestant iconoclasms), but a distinction drawn by both sides between different viewing communities; St. Bernard stated this clearly when he wrote: “For certainly bishops have one kind of business, and monks another. We know that since they [the bishops] are responsible for both the wise and the foolish, they stimulate the devotion of a carnal people with material ornaments because they cannot do so with spiritual ones.” He firmly believed that lavish and attractive “decorations” were not necessary for churchmen as aids to contemplation or to understanding scripture, but there is a note of disdain in Bernard’s characterization of the laity.

European Jewish leaders shared these conflicted attitudes to imagery. In Germany some communities hired the same masons who worked for cathedral chapters, and in the twelfth century the synagogue in Cologne had windows painted with human figures as well as lions and snakes, while wall paintings in Meissen depicted plants and beasts. Maimonides cautioned against the pictorial arts as a distraction from prayer, and c.1200 his followers in Mainz removed these decorations.⁴³ Yet the lion symbolized the tribe of Judah, the serpent, Dan, and these motifs were used on canting seals. Beasts and plants continued to appear in Hebrew books, as also figures and grotesques, and such decoration was approved by Meir of Rothenberg. By the thirteenth century Jewish leaders had realized that figural images of biblical history did not call for idolatrous use, and illuminated prayer books kept in the home were aids to memory for this private viewing community.⁴⁴

Using, and Attempting to Control, the Power of Images over Lay Audiences

At the same time as they allowed the private contemplation of paintings, Jews must have been increasingly fearful of the rhetorical power of negative images, such as statues of Synagogue, that Christian places of worship displayed.⁴⁵ In fact images of Christ’s passion mounted a violent rhetorical attack on Jews as supposed agents of his suffering, and even as desecrators of the consecrated host.⁴⁶ Repeated pogroms, carried out by the populace that had been manipulated by

such images and culminating in the burning of urban Jews after the Black Death, meant that this silent viewing community virtually disappeared during the second half of the fourteenth century. As Jews came back to the German towns in the Late Middle Ages, popular stories, prints, and public performances of plays kept Christian performers and their audience stirred up against them. Violent Christian mobs are another face of the somatized spirituality and intensified carnality of the devotional cults that now filled the streets.

During the High Middle Ages occasional censorship of particular images was accompanied by a decree of the church. Michael Camille has pointed to the Y-shaped cross and to the “Vierge Ouvrante” with the Trinity inside her as instances of unacceptable representations.⁴⁷ The former may have been of the type accused of producing a frenzy of popular devotion in a village near London in 1306, such that the churchmen decided to hide it away; apparently the church struggled to maintain control over the use and form of images. In the fifteenth century Jean Gerson criticized the opening Madonna shrines for a theological error that made it appear as though Mary gave birth to God the Father and the Holy Spirit as well as Christ, but Elina Gertsman has elucidated the power of their interactive performance.⁴⁸ In 1502 a bishop declared a painting of Joachim and Anna kissing when she greeted him at the Golden Gate to be heretical, because it lent support to popular belief that the kiss, rather than a miracle, made her pregnant with the Virgin Mary.⁴⁹

Prudishness was on the increase during the later Middle Ages. Despite an evident liking for scatology in texts and representations, there are instances of bowdlerism such as the erasure of genitalia that may be expressions of fear or disgust on the part of some medieval viewer.⁵⁰ Such actions hint at a gulf between the Western theological position on images that did not allow them any power in themselves, as mere signs, and popular beliefs that attributed magic-working powers to them as if they were the referent. The institutionalization of ritual curses directed at relics when they failed to answer people’s prayers was revealed by Patrick Geary, and this aided our understanding of the process of embellishing reliquaries in order to empower the relics.⁵¹

The clearest expression of disapprobation of the representational arts is iconoclasm, but destruction of Christian holy images was severely punished as heresy prior to the Reformation, and thus quite rare. One of the charges against the Templars who were burned in Paris in 1314 is that they defiled the cross.⁵² As with the later Lollards and Hussites, criticism of devotion that verged on *latria* (worship) was spurred by a profound skepticism about the sanctity of mere carvings. Sarah Stanbury uses the desecration and burning of a wooden statue of St. Katherine by alleged Lollards, described in Henry Knighton’s *Chronicle of 1337–1396*, to elucidate these tensions, and notes a new source of anxiety, the beginnings of a market for such costly objects.⁵³ Eamon Duffy has shown how dynamic were the relationships between people of various ranks, and the cross or crucifixion: they prayed to it in private and in churches for miracles, they bowed before it, they contemplated Christ’s sufferings to come to terms with their own, and were often buried with a cross.⁵⁴ This quintessential Christian icon was so

revered that disrespect for it was punished by burning the iconoclast, but in this exchange the crosses were eventually stripped from the churches and burned by the Protestants, as pointed out by Margaret Aston.⁵⁵

Many art historians see images as aids to devotion. Hans Belting, Nigel Morgan, and Jeffrey Hamburger are among those who have consistently used late medieval texts to elucidate these practices.⁵⁶ Hamburger emphasized the use of images in the “pastoral care” of nuns (*cura monialium*) by churchmen, and traced the reception history of a Byzantine icon.⁵⁷ In 2004, he reexamined the use of two images from Hildegard of Bingen’s *Scivias* in a sermon that Joannis Tauler preached to Dominican nuns in Cologne in 1339. Tauler’s text leaves little doubt about his expectation that such visionary images, even 160 years after their making, could lead the viewer’s mind away from worldly things to higher truths, and to a higher state of consciousness. He appears to elaborate on the claim Suger had made 200 years earlier, for his precious jeweled furnishings.

A disadvantage of this approach is that it once more emphasizes the orthodox Christian aspect of medieval visual culture, and privileges texts over images – as Mâle’s generation had done. This logocentrism is exacerbated when there is a gender distinction between the (male) author of an oral guide and the (female) audience for the image; we should not assume that this was a one-way channel for ideas; as feminist scholars we can resist this missionary position. The example of Tauler suggests the extent to which preachers garnered inspiration from the writings and pictures produced by saintly women “mystics,” so they, as much as the women, deserve to be analyzed as a viewing community, in concert with the current discussion of masculinities.

An alternative to looking at groups of women with shared experiences, such as mothers, or nuns, has been to posit individual viewers. In an article on the Hours of Jeanne d’Evreux published in 1993 I presented a construction of an individual pubescent girl’s reading of the images in the book given to her around the time of her marriage in 1324 to a much older king. Jonathan Culler’s notion of “reading as a woman” had usefully suggested that resisting readings are not produced subjectively, but are the result of a conscious act of constructing oneself as a reader.⁵⁸ However his project was suspect since it risked essentializing “women” as a monolithic community; more specificity is needed. Hence my aim was to “imagine” the frightening impact of this imagery on Jeanne at the age of 14, given her background and education, and the specific context of the Capetian court at the time. That the laughter we had all so long enjoyed at the exploits of hybrid creatures in the margins could be displaced by fear and revulsion was not at first popular. Yet as I suggested, Jeanne may have looked very differently at her prayer book years later.

Attitudes to the material objects made for the cult of saints, including for private use, have continued to receive attention, as have the representation of reliquaries in other media, such as stained glass.⁵⁹ The reliquary statue of Sainte Foy that resides in her church in Conques has become a paradigmatic case-study that assisted in changing the canon (fig. 5-1). Sainte Foy stubbornly resisted any focus on a moment of creation, since she is a composite work, an assemblage built up on a Roman core with accretions of gemstones throughout the Middle

Ages that constitute a material record of reception. Jean Taralon⁶⁰ established her archeology, but it is in the area of reception that the most impressive work has been done. An historian of art and drama and an anthropologist elucidated the role played by this reliquary statue in local ritual and belief systems, as indicated in her life and miracle book.⁶¹ Bernard of Angers, who wrote the first two books of the miracles sometime after 1010, explained in a preface addressed to Bishop Fulbert of Chartres that he went to Conques full of skepticism “partly because it seemed to be the common people who promulgated these miracles and partly because they were regarded as new and unusual.”⁶² He also feared that statues such as hers were idols worthy of Jupiter or Mars. The texts in the *Book of Saint Foy* give innumerable insights into the powers that people believed were invested in the relics and their precious encasing, revealing the strength of belief in the efficacy of its presence for cures, and even for civil transactions. By the Late Middle Ages, the cult of the saints that spread through prints and vernacular stories, such as legends of St. Joseph filling the role of a father, and St. Anne as a mother, showed signs of adaptation to the secular social context;⁶³ popular cults grew up around such figures. Saint Anthony was called on to find lost possessions, and Saint Cunigunde was addressed as Saint Con and imputed with powers to cure gynecological problems.

Medieval imagery has been a constant source of puzzlement and revelation to modern scholars, but it is only recently that there has been much focus on the ways in which the original devotees and casual viewers actually understood it. Decoding a work of art implies an encoding. Traditional iconography assumed that the two processes inevitably mirrored each other, as if meanings were fixed in the object. Deconstruction assumed they were not, and that each decoding brings new meanings. To what extent did the iconographic conventions of medieval art ensure a degree of common response, even among an informed community of viewers? We cannot make the assumption that the silences surrounding reception in the High Middle Ages indicate some sort of transparency that merely allowed works to speak for themselves. A sculpture of the Virgin and Child may have been widely recognized as Mary and Jesus, but for some viewers a knowledge of Latin texts would add layered theological meanings, of the kind that Adolf Katzenellenbogen elucidated by for the Marian programs of Chartres Cathedral in 1964.⁶⁴ A widespread tradition of twelfth-century exegesis constructed four levels of meaning for sacred symbols.⁶⁵ In this case, a highly educated person of the time could distinguish an immediate physical signification (the historical Mary and Jesus), an allegorical one (she is the Seat of Wisdom, associated with King Solomon), a moral or tropological level (she is the life-giving Church), and an association with eternal salvation such as that she will be crowned by Christ in heaven and mediate his judgment at the end of time. Thus about the time modern semioticians were arguing for the multivalence of the sign, medievalists were positing multivalence based on medieval theories of reading.⁶⁶

However, keeping in mind the example “Virgin and Child,” post-modern scholars have been concerned with a different kind of multivalence, arising from resonances that may be specific to various medieval viewing communities. Contextual art history provided a major step toward the exploration of medieval audiences.

In studying the medieval cult of the Virgin, Marina Warner took into consideration the ways in which its ideology would inflect the lives of real women.⁶⁷ She suggested that the unique status of Mary, as virgin and mother, could serve neither ordinary mothers nor ordinary nuns as a role model. And in the eyes of men, the Virgin Mary represented an ideal unattainable by real women who were thus always seen to fall short. On the other hand, a very different learned – as opposed to learned – response to this serenely seated female figure with an infant on her lap can be posited: To a pregnant or recently birthed mother approaching a portal such as the one on the west façade of Chartres Cathedral, the Virgin's seated position with knees wide apart could connote safe and painless birthing.⁶⁸ No surviving texts describe such responses (although of course the Virgin Mary was prayed to for fertility and safe birthing), my claim is substantiated by images of birthing and by non-theological discourses such as that of gynecology. Construction of a female viewing position also informed a study of the mothers whose grief is vividly depicted in the scene of the massacre of the innocents; in this case they may be supposed to have provided a model for performative identification, at the same time covertly condemning women in the community who heartlessly committed infanticide.⁶⁹

Yet another dimension has been added to French Gothic portal sculpture and stained glass by studies of the liturgy, especially the ordinaries or processions. Liturgical analysis serves to situate these works at Chartres in a performance space, where cyclic rituals animate them on a temporary basis, much as later altarpieces were successively opened and closed during the liturgical year.⁷⁰ This hermeneutic posits meanings that are constructed in specific viewing contexts. The works were interactive with their audience, a function that is more easily grasped in relation to the smaller pieces that were taken from the sacristy only during the feasts of the church. One such example, once in the treasury of Saint-Denis, is the elaborate enameled base whose Old Testament scenes were completed by New Testament antitypes when the processional cross was placed in it.⁷¹ Yet for liturgical objects it has to be remembered how elitist the user-group was, essentially restricted to the priesthood, with a viewing community of those in close proximity to the altar, or perhaps to the public procession. The eyes of the laity were diverted from the High Altar that was used for daily Mass by choir screens that divulged little of the mystery. The objects most gloated over by Abbot Suger were seen by very few, just as his text justifying the expenditures on them was scarcely read in the Middle Ages. We saw that Speer insisted on Suger's valuation of the liturgy above any other consideration, and Konrad Hoffmann long ago suggested that the famous stained glass windows that gave "new light" to his choir were so esoteric that their primary function may have been for learned contemplation by a monastic community that had the possibility of studying the Latin verses painted in them.⁷² Some inscriptions reiterated the sung text that they knew from the liturgy, as in a window with the life of Saint Benedict, the founder of their order, that they moved up from the crypt in the thirteenth century in order to include it in their processions (fig. 5-2).⁷³ This window could then also make an impression on lay pilgrims, its narrative authority enhanced by inscribed scrolls but most of all by the richness of its colors.



FIGURE 5-2 The Apotheosis of St. Benedict, c.1144, from the Abbey Church of St.-Denis; the scroll is inscribed with a verse from his Mass. Paris: Musée national du moyen âge – thermes et hôtel de Cluny. Source: photo courtesy of Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, NY.

Stained glass was such a monumental and brilliant medium that it could resonate on a less learned level for a wide audience. Vast Gothic windows lent themselves to elaborate narratives that seldom had any text for identification of the events. In 1987 Wolfgang Kemp used the term “sermo corporeus” to invoke the materiality of stained glass as a medium for preaching. In a sermon written about mid-thirteenth-century Cardinal Eudes de Châteauroux recalled, in a sermon written in about mid-thirteenth century, that when he was a child a layman had explained to him the misfortunes of the man saved by the Good Samaritan, as represented in a window. Kemp explored a wide range of visual signs that made it possible to “read” such a window without recourse to a text. Michael Camille made another major contribution to this question by considering the different attitudes and experience of illiterate and literate people in the presence of art.⁷⁴ Even those who could not read might be impressed by inscriptions, yet he argues that the largely illiterate audiences of the High Middle Ages believed pictures more readily than writings, while respecting scrolls and books as objects.

Problem of Alterity, Diverse Visualities, and Performativity

Several scholars have raised another very significant problem of alterity: Is our visual perception the same as that of medieval people? Color perception may be a test case. *A propos* Abbot Suger’s Saint-Denis, both Meredith Lillich and John Gage pointed out that the blue glass extolled in Suger’s text would have been regarded by a learned audience as next to black; Lillich ingeniously suggests it was a conscious reference to the version of Pseudo-Denis the Areopagite’s treatise that was probably known in Saint-Denis, which posited Divine Darkness as the necessary corollary of Divine Light.⁷⁵ Anca Vsilieu also re-evaluated Suger’s use of the term *clarus* (light/bright) in relation to his windows, in the context of medieval theories of transparency.⁷⁶ Yet modern notions of the wave-length of different colors, complimentary colors, and the impact of reduced light or distance on hue, have also been deemed relevant to the perception of medieval stained glass.⁷⁷ There is an evident contradiction between the learned medieval belief that blue was the darkest color in some absolute sense, and Purkinje’s modern empirical finding that a shift occurs in reduced light whereby blue appears brighter than red. Is it possible that theological truth over-rode optical events that we take to be scientifically true? The discussion has shifted from optics to visuality.

A range of essays on visuality in a collection edited by Robert Nelson⁷⁸ pointed to fundamental differences that framed medieval perceptions of images: Camille suggested that medieval visuality assumed an impact on the viewer much stronger than the mere perception of form and color; through extramission, the viewer risked being enthralled or fascinated, which had almost as threatening connotations as being bewitched, or even of becoming like the object of view. Suzannah Biernoff published the first history of medieval sight and vision (as distinct from optics) that takes alterity fully into account, coining the term “carnal vision.”⁷⁹

Alexa Sand, taking note of the extent to which the bodily/material and the spiritual/immaterial were interwoven in medieval accounts and images, advises a return to the tangible objects that link us to the materiality of that world.⁸⁰

The temporary invisibility of works of art is related to the drama of their reappearance. Lenten practices of suppression and deprivation in the church ensured the renewed impact of celebration afterwards. The procession of works, combined with chant and sung text, changed their reception even if they could only be glimpsed in movement. The staging of the Mass and its impact as a “drama of death” has been vividly described by Elina Gertsman.⁸¹ She argues that representations of processions, such as the dance of death sequences that greeted churchgoers as they proceeded through the aisles or cloister, were “performative.” The term is problematic, and worth clarifying; for this circumstance I frankly prefer to say interactive or simply inclusive of the viewer, in that the viewer feels directly addressed by the performers in the picture, and included in their action. Robert Clark and Pamela Sheingorn used “performative” as an adjective to describe their reading of a pictorial sequence in which the movement and gestures of the figures resonate with an imagined dramatic performance.⁸² Defined that way, it is hard to reconcile the term with the dictionary meaning of the noun, as used in speech act theory, which claims that performatives are enunciations that create the condition they describe (such as saying “I state”); as an extension of this precept, Judith Butler described m/f gender as performative. On the other hand, the general meaning of performance relates to theater, so theatrical would give the meaning of performative as used by Gertsman, and “performativity” might suggest a potential for theatrical performance. For representations to be performative they would have to bring about the conditions they describe, or ask for; the visual attacks on Jews, described above, constitute performatives since they no doubt instigated real violence.

For Whom and to What Effect?

An aspect of image reception that is seldom raised is the implication for the many images and relics that were for the most part, or even permanently, unseen. The simplistic answer that they were created for the eyes of God is not even hinted at in texts. The answer seems to be that their power could be imagined to work regardless. Mural paintings sealed inside thirteenth-century tombs, as in Notre Dame of Bruges, watched over the corpse, and apparently among the earliest function of printed images was to substitute for such paintings. Similarly, wall-safes for the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist in some churches on Gotland have an annunciation painted on the inside of the doors that comes together only when they are closed.⁸³ The concept no doubt extended to minute reliquaries within reliquaries, and pictures and prayers that were closed in books or painted in windows that were dark at vespers, or inscribed inside heavy bronze bells. Human interaction was not necessary to enable their affective spiritual

powers; yet when books were opened and words mouthed, when bells were rung, or light came in through colored glass (miraculously as was believed) powerful interactive relationships were renewed by somatic experience.

Post-modern readings allow for other reactions to “devotional images” that medieval and modern discourses have suppressed. Examined against the dominant culture, they may be viewed as pornographic, erotic, sadoerotic, abject, masochistic, or humorous. One example of such divergent readings must suffice here, though it is part of a larger enterprise to queer our interrogation of medieval artifacts by letting them “ask what it is they want us to do”: Whereas Nigel Morgan and Jeffrey Hamburger insist on the gaping side-wound of Christ as only-a-bleeding-wound, Karma Lochrie, Martha Easton, and I have associated it additionally with a life-giving vulva, especially when it is isolated from a body (fig. 5-3).⁸⁴ Even though Hamburger allows a sexual attraction between Catherine of Siena and a bloodied Christ on the cross, his phrasing as “a nubile woman passionately devoted to Christ,” vigorously suppresses the possibility of a homosexual attraction; but when she sucks the side-wound he can “imagine why reformers seem to have preferred that most manuscripts of St. Catherine’s *Vita* remained without illustrations” (fig. 5-4).⁸⁵ Lochrie’s reading of texts and images plausibly argues “an open mesh of polysemy”; a Franciscan treatise known as the *Stimulus Amoris* refers to the union (*copulo*) of mouth and wound, queering the reading (fig. 5-4).⁸⁶ A late medieval carnivalesque brooch presents a parody of the cult of the wound that confirms its blasphemous reading as a fertility symbol or sexual object by the man in the street: three erect penises, like ancient Priapic symbols, carry the “wound” on a palanquin as if in a procession of relics (fig. 5-5).⁸⁷ A contrary example reveals the physical evidence of intense performances of devotion: It has been possible to identify the actual owner of a print that centers the wound, the Nuremberg physician and humanist Hartman Schedel, in the fifteenth century; he hinged the picture in his prayer book, wrote verses round the margins, and had it pierced by the Holy Lance, allowing red paint to seep through onto the other side like blood.⁸⁸

We should allow for similar extremes of audience reaction in viewing the multivalence of images in the margins, whether of manuscript pages, embroideries, portals, stained glass windows, ivories, or choir stalls. These motifs were not always in the service of a text, and the debate as to whether or not they had higher meanings for their audience was engaged in the nineteenth century. Several scholars’ findings extend convincingly to the choices of religious subjects that operated like *exempla* in sermons as Lilian Randall long ago argued.⁸⁹ Yet if we were to posit a confessor as designer and mediator of the work, have we come full circle to regard reception by the owner as the mirror of intention? Some modern exegetes claimed the margins as a zone for dialogic laughter, unconscious doodles, or pagan survivals. Recent trends epitomize the available models for constructing medieval reception: universal, community-based, or individual.

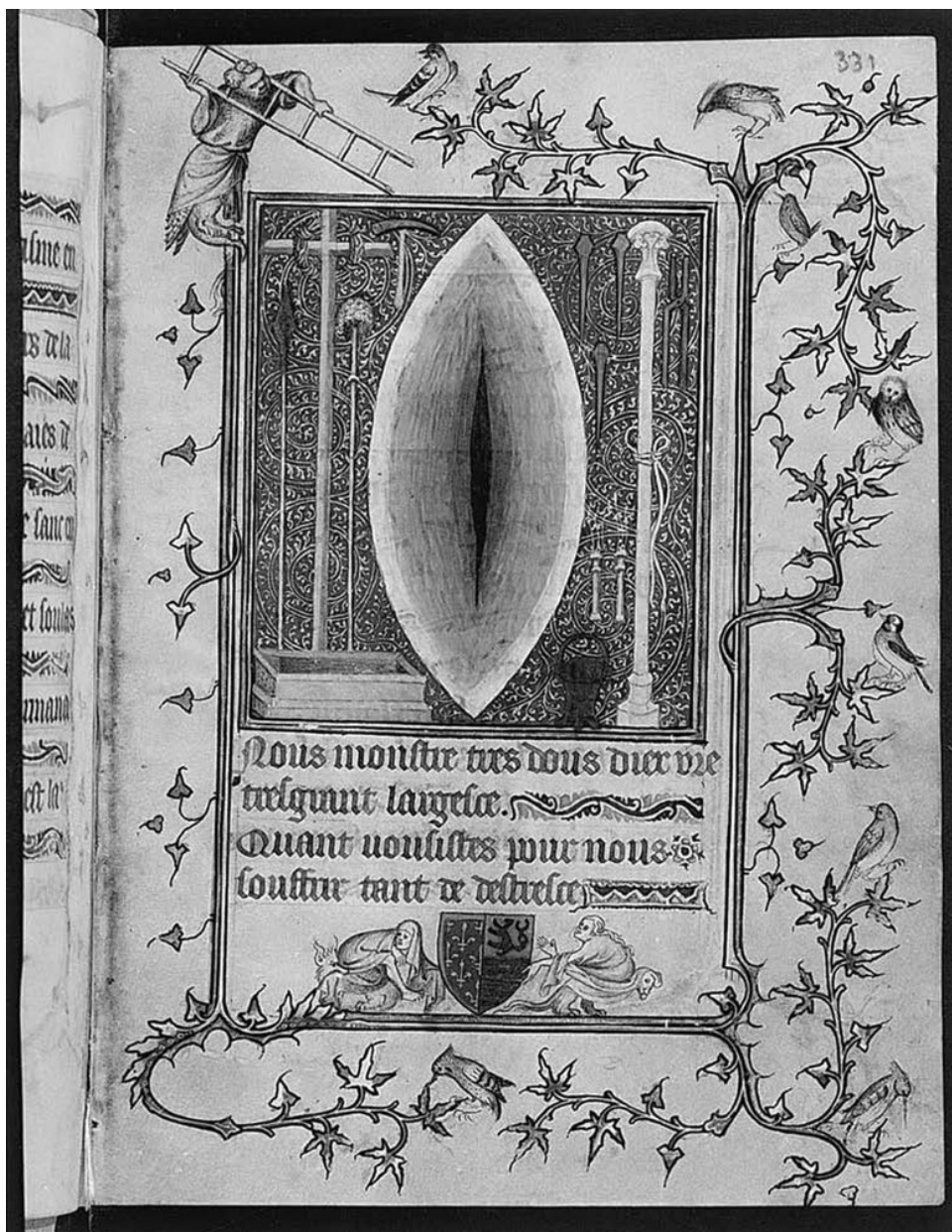


FIGURE 5-3 Christ's side wound and instruments of the Passion, Psalter, and Prayer Book of Bonne of Luxembourg, probably before 1349. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, 69.86, fol. 331r. Source: photo courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

genagelt sind Und sprach her ab zu ir du aller liebste tocht
katherina du hast manigen großen strit erlitten durch
müen willen vnd du hast die mit müer hilf alle bis her
überwunden vnd da von bist du mü genem vnd das du
gestern geton hast das hat mir bas geuallen den als
das das du ie geton hast du hast vorstecht den twost
dines libes vnd den bösen leumit der menschen du hast
überwunden die anuechtung des bösen geistes Aber das
ist das größte das du hast überwotten din eigene natur vnd
von der inbrünstigen liebi die du zu mir hast stölich ge
wuncken ein vnsubers vnd wider zemes tumb Ich sag
dir dar umb das du din natur also gar überwunden hast
mit dem getrank so wil ich dir ein getrank geben das über
trefelich ist vnd ungewonlich ist



FIGURE 5-4 St. Catherine suckling Christ's side wound, Raymund of Capua, *Life of St. Catherine of Siena*, fifteenth century. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS All. 34, f. 43v. Source: photo Bibliothèque nationale de France.



FIGURE 5-5 Three phalli with human legs carrying a crowned vulva figure with a three-phalli diadem, lead-tin badge, c.1375–1425, Van Beunengen Collection, Cothen, The Netherlands. Source: http://www.medievalbadges.org/mb_index_UK.php.

Open-Ended Readings/Viewings

This cursory historiography of the ways in which medievalists have proposed to explore reception during the past 50 years, indicates the extent to which historians of visual culture allowed themselves to become logocentric; if reception is only established outside the work and its production, our knowledge of it has largely been derived from the kind of texts that present-day scholars trained in history, theology, and literature are likely to know. To that degree, it risks being a mirror extension, moving forward in time, from the traditional habit of exploring textual sources. What distinguishes current notions of reception is a willingness to allow for shifting and contrary readings, and to speculate about subversive elements. Beyond that, if full consideration is given to the way an artifact has been handled, we might learn a great deal from its perfect condition, or from erasures, breakages, physical wear, and repairs – provided they can be dated in the Middle Ages. Returning to the materiality of the object may be extremely rewarding, and it puts the viewer literally in touch with the object.

Notes

- 1 Bryson, *Visual Culture*, p. xvii.
- 2 Malina, "Reader-Response Criticism," p. 338.
- 3 Bennett, *Readers and Reading*.
- 4 Areford, "Reception."
- 5 Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*.
- 6 Jauss, "The History of Reception."
- 7 Freedberg, *The Power of Images*; Belting, *The Image*.
- 8 Lernout, "Reception Theory."
- 9 Suger, *Abbot Suger*.
- 10 Kidson, "Panofsky, Suger and Saint-Denis."
- 11 Speer, "Art as Liturgy."
- 12 Caviness, *Sumptuous Arts*.
- 13 E.g. Hyman and Malbert, *Carnivalesque*; or scatological images on Bourges cathedral: Camille, "Dr. Witkowski's Anus."
- 14 E.g. Jordan, "Seeing Stories"; Nelson, "Mirror, Mirror"; Bolens, *The Style of Gestures*.
- 15 Lewis, *Reading Images*; Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*; Carruthers and Ziolkowski, *The Medieval Craft of Memory*; Brenner et al., *Memory and Commemoration*.
- 16 E.g. Hoffman, "Pathways of Portability"; Rowe, *The Jew, the Cathedral and the Medieval City*; Overbey, *Sacral Geographies*.
- 17 E.g. Zakin, "Light and Pattern"; Stanbury, "The Vivacity of Images"; Friedman, "The Iconography of Dagged Clothing."
- 18 Brisac et al., "La Belle-Verrière"; Shepard, "Memory."
- 19 Heslop, "The Implication of the Utrecht Psalter."
- 20 Driver, "Inventing Visual History"; Areford, *The Viewer*.
- 21 Sheingorn, "Subjection and Rejection"; Areford, "Reception."
- 22 Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions"; Perfetti, *The Representation of Women's Emotions*; Classen, *Laughter in the Middle Ages*; McNamer, *Affective Meditation*; Perry and Schwarz, *Behaving Like Fools*; Gertsman, *Crying in the Middle Ages*.
- 23 Mellinkoff, *Averting Demons*.
- 24 Caviness, "Patron or Matron."
- 25 Eco, *Art and Beauty*; Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty*.
- 26 E.g. Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*; Kornbluth, "Active Optics."
- 27 Borland, "Audience and Spatial Experience."
- 28 Schapiro, *Words and Pictures*.
- 29 Laqueur, *Making Sex*, however flawed.
- 30 Bolens, *The Style of Gestures*.
- 31 Johnson, *The Radiance of Chartres*.
- 32 Tambiah, *A Performative Approach to Ritual*; Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*.
- 33 Heslop, "Attitudes to the Visual Arts."
- 34 de Bruyne, *The Esthetics of the Middle Ages*, 1946.
- 35 Schapiro, "On the Aesthetic Attitude."
- 36 Eco, *Art and Beauty*.
- 37 Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty*.
- 38 Gervase, "History."

- 39 Suger, *Abbot Suger*.
- 40 Abou-el-Haj, "Artistic Integration."
- 41 Alexander, "Art History."
- 42 Rudolph, *The "Things of Greater Importance."*
- 43 Mann, *Jewish Texts*; Schütte and Gechter, *Von der Ausgrabung zum Museum*.
- 44 Kogman-Appel, *A Mahzor from Worms*.
- 45 Rowe, *The Jew, the Cathedral and the Medieval City*.
- 46 Rubin, *Gentile Tales*.
- 47 Camille, *The Gothic Idol*; also Heslop, "Attitudes to the Visual Arts."
- 48 Gertsman, *Worlds Within*.
- 49 Molanus, *De historia*.
- 50 Camille, "Obscenity under Erasure; Caviness, "Obscenity and Alterity."
- 51 Geary, "Humiliation of Saints."
- 52 Caviness, "Iconoclasm and Iconophobia."
- 53 Stanbury, "The Vivacity of Images."
- 54 Duffy, "Devotion to the Crucifix."
- 55 Aston, "Iconoclasm in England."
- 56 E.g. Belting, *The Image and Its Public and Likeness and Presence*.
- 57 Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*.
- 58 Culler, *On Deconstruction*.
- 59 Lautier, "Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres"; Koopmans, "Visions."
- 60 Taralon, "La Majesté d'Or: Sainte Foy de Conques."
- 61 Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*; Ashley and Sheingorn, "Sainte Foy on the Loose."
- 62 Sheingorn, *The Book of Sainte Foy*.
- 63 Ashley and Sheingorn, *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*; Sheingorn, "Constructing the Patriarchal Parent."
- 64 Katzenellenbogen, *The Sculptural Programs of Chartres Cathedral*.
- 65 Caviness, *Art in the Medieval West*, Chapters 2 and 3.
- 66 Jauss, "The History of Reception."
- 67 Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*.
- 68 Caviness, *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages*.
- 69 Nolan, "Ploratus et ululatus."
- 70 Fassler, "Mary's Nativity"; Sauerländer, "Reliquien, Altäre und Portale."
- 71 Suger, *Abbot Suger*.
- 72 Hoffmann, "Sugers 'Anagogisches Fenster'"; Speer, "Art as Liturgy."
- 73 Caviness, "Stained Glass Windows in Gothic Chapels."
- 74 Camille, "Seeing and Reading" and "Visual Signs of the Sacred Page."
- 75 Gage, "Gothic Glass"; Lillich, "Monastic Stained Glass."
- 76 Vasiliu, "Le mot et le verre."
- 77 Johnson, *The Radiance of Chartres*; Frodl-Kraft, "Die Farbsprache."
- 78 Nelson, *Visuality*.
- 79 Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*.
- 80 Sand, "Visuality."
- 81 Gertsman, *The Dance of Death*.
- 82 Clark and Sheingorn, "Performative Reading."
- 83 Gertsman, *Worlds Within*.
- 84 Morgan, "Longinus"; Easton, "The Wound of Christ."

- 85 Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*.
 86 Lochrie, "Mystical Acts."
 87 Caviness, "A Son's Gaze on Noah."
 88 Areford, "Reception."
 89 Randall, "Exempla."

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Narrative, Narratology, and Meaning

Suzanne Lewis

Pictures don't tell stories; viewers tell stories.
Art historians also tell stories, or at least we try.¹

As art history becomes increasingly engaged in adopting and adapting theoretical axioms from other disciplines, we develop new ways to experience and interpret medieval visual narrative. However, our built-in involvement with medieval texts, coupled with the dominant presence of literary historians and critics in narrative studies, has created a powerful impulse to prioritize word over image. Indeed, narratologists repeatedly point to the limitations of art itself as a mode of communication.² In response, a healthy antidote can be cited in the critical works of James Elkins who urges us toward a deeper and wider awareness of the act of seeing itself: "Seeing is metamorphosis ... [it] alters the thing that is seen [by the artist] and transforms the seer."³

In his magisterial essay on visual narrative, Wolfgang Kemp reminds us "the subject of art is the subject: the analogous formation of our own identity through processes of perception and identification."⁴ Art is an "agent of optimal, unconditional visibility ... [that] brings things and actions closer."⁵ Michael Camille's eloquent probing of medieval visual narrativity, as imagined by both artist and viewer within the framework of voice, gesture, and body, movingly reaches out to touch our own human experiences as it opens our understanding.⁶

In further contrast to the negative stance often taken in assertions of the primacy of word over image, an increasing number of art historical and critical studies

persuasively argue that visual narratives are not created to be “read” as if they were texts, but pictured to be seen, experienced, and understood within a singularly different, perceptual, cognitive world. At the same time, we still feel the necessity or desire to deal in various ways with the frequent traditional and inextricable presence of texts in medieval pictorial narratives. “Word and image” will not disappear. Within this configuration, “reading images” can be construed, not as a fixed paradigm, but as a complex, open process of asking how the reader-viewer, both implied and real, and the layered narratives of image visibly coupled with word, act in tandem to create cognitive, emotionally felt experiences.⁷

A Visual Narratology for Medieval Art?

At the same time that art historians have become increasingly engaged with theoretical issues, narratology has experienced a number of analogous paradigm shifts. Central to the new theories is the inclusion of context, which in turn is expanded to embrace non-verbal, visual narrative. Although visual narratology has particular relevance to medieval art, terms such as *syntagm* and *metalepsis* tend to create more obfuscation than light.⁸ Linguistic barriers mount as each theoretician seems obliged to create his/her own terminology and/or assigns new meanings to familiar words. Nevertheless, given the ever-widening interdisciplinary dimensions of art history, we can still engage in open-minded but critical explorations, as we ask how narratology offers “an additional layer of analysis” to our studies of medieval visual narrative.⁹

In the last three decades, our “close reading” of meaning in works of art in an expanded range of media has involved us in a wider and deeper probing of human experience, subjectivity as well as cognition.¹⁰ “Experientiality” is now considered as one of the key terms of narratology.¹¹ As medievalists, whether directly or by implication, we have become seriously involved with reception theory and phenomenology.¹² In the absence of an artist/author, the role of the viewer and the contextualization of the medieval viewer’s experience now function as critical factors in the interpretation of meaning.¹³ At the same time, contrary to current claims, formal or structural analysis has not been entirely abandoned but continues to play an integral part in the viewer’s response.

Reception theory has a long history with its roots in phenomenology posited on the idea of a knowable world and the centrality of the human subject.¹⁴ With the appearance of Roland Barthes’ *Pleasure of the Text* (1973) and Wolfgang Iser’s *Act of Reading* (1976), reception theory redefines the reader as the instigator of a dynamic end-game, a complex exploratory experience, unfolding in real time.¹⁵ For Iser, receptive perception is “a process of discovery in which gaps, surprises, frustrations, and reversals [that create] disjunctions in a work have the power to provoke the reader to reassess his or her assumptions.” Whereas Iser redirects the reader to strategies and codes created within the work to guide the reader/viewer’s cognition of meaning, Hans Robert Jauss (1982) situates a work within “horizons of expectations,” the context of cultural meanings at the time of production and the changing contexts of its historical readers.¹⁶

Reception continues to be relevant in directions initiated by the German theorists who transferred our focus from text to reader.¹⁷ Challenged by the poststructuralist accusation of “affective fallacy,” which argued that the meaning of a work was not to be confused with its affect, Stanley Fish, for example, moved his responsive individual reader into an “interpretive community” of readers who share theoretical approaches to meaning.¹⁸ However, the issue appears to have been more usefully addressed by Jauss’s concept of understanding and interpretation by expanding the reader’s focus to a mediation between historical “horizons of expectation” and those of the present.¹⁹ At the moment, reception theory stands at the root of the critical division between poststructuralist historicism that centers on the past without referencing the present and phenomenology’s focus on the here and now.

Phenomenology is a philosophy that positions the ultimate source of all meaning in the lived experience of human beings. Centered on the structures of experience, cognitive and perceptive inquiry explores consciousness, imagination, emotion, desire, embodied action, and the situatedness of the human subject in society and history.²⁰ Most important for the study of medieval visual narrative is phenomenology’s fundamental premise that works of art are mediators between the consciousness of both artist and viewer as they explore aspects of the “being” of humans and their worlds.²¹ In the words of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “The joy of art lies in showing how something takes on meaning.” His *Phenomenology of Perception* still remains at the center of our interest in the intersection of art and theory.²² In his primary framework of perceptual experience, Merleau-Ponty situates consciousness in the body. At the same time, the inevitable situatedness of human existence and the ambiguities of the lived world must be recognized as inherent factors both in history and in the present.

Notwithstanding current attempts to include the visual arts within the parameters of revisionist narratologies, variously called transmedial, transgeneric, and interdisciplinary,²³ it remains to be seen whether such efforts will be perceived by art historians as an opportunity to expand our horizons, a stifling imposition of theoretical limitations, or simply irrelevant. Most recently, however, an important next move has been taken by medievalist art historian Stuart Whatling.²⁴ Building upon concepts and strategies drawn from both art history and narrative theory, including poststructuralism, he has formulated a narratology specifically and directly addressed to medieval art historians. In a large number of case studies, Whatling then demonstrates how his ambitious but accessible approach to visual narrative functions within a wide range of medieval images in different times, places, and media.

Case Studies

Turning now from theory to realities of perceptual and cognitive exploration and analysis, the ensuing discourse will offer case studies intended to explain and demonstrate the workings of medieval narrative in light of what we can usefully

incorporate from narratology. We shall also confront the challenging problems and critical gaps in expertise that inevitably arise in interdisciplinary studies. Our analytical parameters shall be expanded to include the interpenetration of the sacred and profane, as well as gender, materiality, and performance. Within the distinctive parameters of the visual arts, media play a crucial role in the ways in which narrative imagery is created and perceived. Thus our investigation will not be limited to two-dimensional representations but also engage narratives in fourteenth-century ivory.

As a segue, I would like to begin by raising the still unanswered question, “What is pictorial narrative?” – and at the same time to respond to the uncertainties aroused by the recent impulse to search for narrative in every image we encounter.²⁵ Before considering definitions, we should reaffirm the indispensable role of the viewer, both past and present, as our founding premise. In contrast to the reader of texts, the viewer becomes more actively but less controllably complicit with the artist in constructing a narrative, as well as creating meaning, as he/she attempts to fill the inevitable gaps in the indeterminate visual narrative.²⁶ Consequently, the perceptual and cognitive processes of both artist and viewer are directly involved in every aspect of the “story.”

In response to the question of definition, the most useful answer can best be framed in terms of criteria. Indeed, the most flexible and accessible definition of narrative that could accommodate both images and text can be found in the list of basic elements “that most definitions of narrativity share” formulated by Whatling:²⁷

- TIME – The most fundamental characteristic of narrative. A diachronic narrative involves at least two chronologically distinct moments or events.
- EVENT/CHANGE – If time passes, something must change.
- CAUSE/PLOT – Changes or events are the consequence of other events or actions. The interaction of events into causal chain constitutes a plot.
- DIFFERENTIATION – Narrative describes a particular or separate series of events.
- INTENTION – Characters do not act at random but have particular intentions, based on beliefs, values, or expectations.
- REFERENCE – Story must relate to the reality experienced by a character and/or a viewer, which can be physical, intellectual or spiritual.

Other aspects of narrative will be discussed within the context of the following analyses.

The Historiated Initial of Guda

I shall begin with a work that might seem an unpromising example of narrative, long regarded as a static, iconic image, the self-portrait of Guda within an historiated initial (fig. 6-1).



FIGURE 6-1 Historiated Initial of Guda. Source: Goethe-Universitat Frankfurt am Main.

In the late eleventh century, the large decorated and often inhabited initial had become a fusion of figure and ornament, a “stage for action” – the letter was transformed into an “historiated initial.”²⁸ In a sudden dynamic impulse toward pictorial expression, the initial becomes a frame for narrative pictures.²⁹ At the same time, scribes and artists expand and exploit the powerful potential of imaging and imagining writing as presence.³⁰ As Cynthia Hahn concludes, they “enthusiastically transferred the burden of animation to the reader, requiring him or her to recognize a living reality in words by constructing a mental reality through reading and viewing letters.”³¹ From its inception, the historiated initial was intended to embody many aspects that involve the reception processes of the medieval viewer.³² It is now our task to recognize the various concrete visual strategies created by scribes and artists to engage the viewer’s memory and imagination in attempting to understand the meaning of the image.

Dating from the second half of the twelfth century, the familiar, charming but mysteriously provocative self-portrait of the German nun Guda inhabits an historiated initial.³³ Although she identifies herself as both scribe and artist (*GUDA peccatrix mulier scripsit quae pinxit hunc librum*), she does not hold the pen,

scraper, or brush that almost always serve as markers to identify her male counterparts.³⁴ However, with rare exceptions, there seem to be no representations of women writing before 1400.³⁵ Clearly this is not a question of literacy; pictures of women reading are ubiquitous in medieval manuscripts.³⁶ It was not unusual for daughters in aristocratic families to be taught to read some Latin as well as vernacular texts as they were groomed for eventual religious life as nuns or canonesses.³⁷

Contrary to the conventional location of the pictured scribe and painter at the beginning of the manuscript, Guda delays her appearance to the middle of this large collection of sermons, just as she commands the center of the large decorated letter that dominates the page. Within a circle inscribed with her name, she turns toward the viewer and gestures with both arms raised. The image is configured to resemble a twelfth-century episcopal seal, which in turn responds exactly to the function of validating the document to which the seal is affixed.³⁸

The inscription itself takes the form of a phylactery embodying words pronounced by Guda, further underlining the authority of the statement being made by the image as a whole.³⁹ Most important, her declaration directs the viewer toward a perception not immediately apparent in the picture itself.⁴⁰ First and foremost, written in capital letters, is her name, then and now a powerful sign of identity. Guda is a real person who addresses her reader-viewer in the “real” world of the artist-narrator as the singular source of information. She conventionally describes herself and her work in the more distanced third person with perceptual and conceptual powers, which would be narratively termed as “omniscient.”⁴¹ As we shall see, Guda can travel freely in space and time, as well as perceive and describe the inner consciousness of her own person. She is no longer merely a scribe but, in her “real” role of artist-narrator, she is an author. In the affective terms of Peter the Venerable, “Writing is a work of the hand, but composing is a work of the heart.”⁴²

Guda’s self-representation embodies the new humanism of the twelfth century.⁴³ The abstract and impersonal are brought into touch with the subjective. As she speaks in *propria persona* and situates herself at the center of her creation, Guda performs acts of human identification and control over the works of the hand and mind.⁴⁴ The artist’s self-incorporation in her work creates a “frame of reference that is immediate and alive.”⁴⁵ At first glance, Guda’s stability and isolation seem to resemble the timeless character of an iconic jamb figure in a contemporary French Gothic portal. However, her body is turning slightly to the left in counterpoint to the unfurling scroll. The long curving narrow band suddenly sprouts unfurling tendrils that draw the attention of the viewer to a series of tilting axes formed by Guda’s huge hands, which in turn disrupt the delicate balance formed by her vertical body and the horizontal lines running across the stem and outward curve of the letter D, left to right. Before our eyes the historiated initial transforms itself into an active world of movement and change. The monoscentic narrative is thus revealed by a “pregnant moment,” an action or event in the life of our singular character.⁴⁶

In opposition to the steadying gesture of Guda’s left hand closing around the scroll, the transitory nature of the image as a whole shifts to her other hand as she

raises her open palm in front of her heart. Her gesture, poised in the exact center of the initial, will function as the cognitive hub of the narrative. The open palm most frequently functions as a gesture of affirmation made in relation to a superior being, in this instance God, in the presence of a manifestation of his power.⁴⁷ The model and origin of this human gesture was the hand of God, *dextera domini*. For example, the image is celebrated on the first folio of the sumptuously illuminated Ottonian Codex of Uta in the gold Hand of God commanding from the heavens the skies, oceans, and earth below.⁴⁸ Jean-Claude Schmitt astutely suggests that the iconic gesture was intended to signify that, “in this case, divine power is not a matter of celestial heights, but is in this work here below.”⁴⁹

Saturated with meaning, Guda’s powerful gesture encourages the medieval reader-viewer toward further interpretation. The Latin word for “flat hand” (*palma*) denotes “victory prize” or “palm.”⁵⁰ As we note that the scroll held in her other hand is sprouting foliage, it now becomes clear that Guda is holding a celebratory wreath (*corona triumphalis*).⁵¹ We are further informed by the rubric title that the subject of the sermon is David’s victory over Goliath. Through God’s intervention, the intended human sacrifice triumphs over the evil pagan giant.⁵² However, it should also be noted that the circle of Guda’s wreath is incomplete.

As we find ourselves drawn into Guda’s constructed world, we are guided by a number of signs and symbols, a textual inscription, a semantic enclave within an image consisting of signs from another semiotic system. Words have been literally pulled into the vortex of the image by Guda herself and punctuated by her own body – head, hand, and legs. The text scroll begins with the conventional iconic sign, her name *GUDA*, interrupted by another iconic sign, the image of her face. Her eyes are aligned with the succession of words inscribed in rubric on the banderole. Continuing the texted message, she describes herself as a “sinful woman (*peccatrix mulier*).” Guda grasps the scroll with her left hand, breaking the word “*mu-lier*”; her left forearm and extended right thumb form a broken diagonal trajectory, leading the viewer’s eye to the outline of her pudendum, the most distinctive vector of her gender, made visible beneath the drapery clinging to her heavily outlined upper thighs. Although the epithet *peccatrix mulier* was a conventional self-description used by noblewomen, Guda probably intended a more literal meaning as well as a signifier of her superior social status.⁵³

Lastly, but most significant, her legs are tightly pulled together forming a line that initiates the vertical axis that runs upward through her body, and at the same time breaks the text between “wrote and painted (*scripsit et pinxit*)” and “this book (*hunc librum*).” The rest of her body is hidden. As she literally embodies the central event of the narrative, Guda begins to rise within a space, distinctly marked off in dark green, between the lower curve of the initial itself and the speech scroll that curves behind her. The ascending figure passes in front of a dark blue circular realm that is perceived to recede behind her. Although Guda has not yet reached her goal, the promise of success is revealed as the pale green drapery of her veil breaks the horizon. Above the heavy darkness of the green and blue spaces (earth and sky) she leaves behind, we perceive a golden space within

the initial as if it were advancing toward our gaze with the brilliance of sunlight. Ultimately, she emerges from the surface of the folio upon which we recognize the work she has done. She moves from the *vellum* (“skin”) folio, thus shedding the “flesh” of the “sinful woman,” and signals her victory with her open palm as she begins to raise her “palm branch.”⁵⁴ In the words of an anonymous Cistercian monk, “In the gesture of the body, my dear sister, is shown the soul.”⁵⁵

Guda is now protected within a safe refuge, enclosed in the center of the initial’s multiple frames, using the same strategy represented by a small rabbit hiding from a huge predator within a similar historiated initial on an earlier folio. Our heroine, however, places herself at the center of the letter D, “*Dominus deus*,” metaphorically within the presence of God. In addition, she expands the metaphor as her upright body and scroll mimic the letter D, reinforcing her imagined spiritual experience of proximity to the divine.⁵⁶ As we move one step further into medieval world of nuns, the viewer would probably recall the sacred referent for the entire image – the Assumption of the Virgin, her ultimate role model. In case this particular image failed to appear in the viewer’s stock of cognitive frames, Guda produces an example on a later folio (fig. 6-2) in an historiated initial that replicates her self-portrait almost exactly, except for the inscription “*Maria virgo*.” Since her speech is contained in the accompanying sermon, her scroll is left blank; unlike Guda who is still rooted on earth, Mary’s feet are suspended in mid-air.



FIGURE 6-2 Assumption of the Virgin. Historiated Initial. Sermons. Frankfurt am Main: Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, Ms Barth 42, for. 196.

We have just outlined the mimed performance of a spiritual journey from earth to heaven, as it would have been perceived in the twelfth century by one or several among the most likely readers of the sermons in Guda's book – her convent sisters.⁵⁷ They would also have been able to view the whole of her story by filling in a critical gap between two events, past and present, as well as recognize them as a temporal sequence of cause and effect. The causal event is the physical writing of the book text itself. Female scribes were generally not depicted writing nor did they identify themselves. Writing was regarded as literally a required manual labor for monks and nuns, considered as drudgery by many and often imposed as a penance.⁵⁸ The task would have been considered particularly onerous for a nun who was born and educated as a noblewoman. Guda's textual announcement of her work, although stated in past tense, refers to an ongoing task that she believes will earn her way to salvation.⁵⁹ The image is a declaration of aspiration and hope. This would then explain why she delayed the appearance until halfway into the book. It was necessary to give concrete evidence of extended hard labor. Her self-portrait thus documents a moment of progressing accomplishment in her present feeling of spiritual elevation as she earns redemption. With the passing of time, Guda herself is experiencing change.

Approaching the same image from another perspective of narrative analysis, we see frames and colors marking distinctive existential spaces and times, realms of being. Within the context of the narrative, the two texted frames, the enlarged decorated initial D and the conventional *prosopopoeic* inscribed scroll have one function – to guide and enable interpretation.⁶⁰ Indeed, the *paratext* of the scroll's message preconditions the viewer's response.⁶¹ As Guda transgresses the diegetic scroll three times, she transitions four ontological levels – the page (the viewer's world we share and from which she can address us), earth, sky, and heaven. Most important, both transitions are paradoxical, thus triggering the viewer's reflections on the boundaries between different realms of reality.

The singular leading character has initiated two distinct actions but at different times, past and present. Here we observe an example of *analepsis* when Guda, the author, needed to refer to what she had done to explain what is happening in the present.⁶² In this case, the flash-back functions as a cue to the viewer to think about the inevitability of a particular outcome. In terms of focalization, we see everything exclusively from Guda's point of view – she restricts our perspective and orients narrative information to her own experience, knowledge, and imagination.⁶³ Her transgression of different ontological levels (*metalepsis*) “derails the automatic processes of perception and forces the viewer into a more active mode of perception.”⁶⁴ The scribe-artist's open palm creates a special relationship between Guda and her image, in which she depicts herself and her own story, *mise-en-abyme*.⁶⁵ Guda appropriates this self-reflexive strategy from author portraits to mark the image as a potent autobiographical scene explaining the purpose of its existence. Since the isolated scene serves to summarize the moral character of the story, we can also define it as a “denarrated,” *epitomic* image, what Richard Brilliant has termed a “reductive epitome.”⁶⁶ Nonetheless, what we have seen and read is my story of Guda's story.

Aristotle and Phyllis with Pyramus and Thisbe in Performance

Along with the *fabliau* of Aristotle's humiliation by Alexander's lover, Phyllis, the tale of the doomed lovers Pyramus and Thisbe ranked among the most popular medieval narratives from the twelfth century on.⁶⁷ The stories appear in adjacent panels on an early fourteenth-century ivory box, now in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 6-3).⁶⁸ Constructed of multiple frames embracing many isolated scenes, the casket itself plays a critical role in shaping the narrative; it embodies a nexus of deeply sensuous and powerfully gendered experiences.⁶⁹ Covered with exquisitely carved representations of courtly love, this luxurious object was clearly an expression of aristocratic wealth and power. Its exclusive "audience" consisted of one noblewoman, the owner of the box.

The Metropolitan ivory object is the largest surviving example of what are now known as composite caskets (*coffrets composites*), identified as gifts from a man to a woman in connection with the rituals of marriage.⁷⁰ The caskets are almost invariably interpreted as a nobleman's expression of love.⁷¹ However, the conventional imagery carved in pre-set ensembles does not pretend to disguise intended messages relating to the actual economic, social, and political demands upon the fourteenth-century bride.⁷² Notwithstanding its entertaining fairy-tale surfaces, misogyny lies at the core of this charming discourse of courtly love.⁷³ The imagery we shall explore creates a forceful diorama of deceit, violence, and death awaiting the transgressors who pursue the fabled pleasures of "courtly love" against the rules of dominance and submission that prevail in the real world of wealth and power.

In its functional role of protecting jewels and other treasures, as well as proclaiming the overall theme of the casket's narrative contents,⁷⁴ the lid (fig. 6-4)



FIGURE 6-3 Ivory Casket. Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



FIGURE 6-4 Lid, Assault on the Castle of Love. Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

first demands our attention. We are immediately invited to take our places opposite the spectators in the central balcony, overlooking the interior courtyard of the Castle of Love.⁷⁵ Performing on center stage, two mounted knights joust in full battle armor, running at each other with blunted lances, as each attempts to unhorse his opponent.⁷⁶ In the flanking panels representing the outer walls and towers, the castle is being assaulted by knights clambering up its crenelated fortifications. On the right, although they are equipped with ladder and *trébuchet*, the only ammunition consists of the roses being thrown down by the ladies and courtiers from above.⁷⁷ On the left, the modern reconstructed figure of the crowned God of Love (who now thrusts a sword into the heart of a knight) was more likely shooting an arrow.⁷⁸ Vigorously enacted simultaneously on medieval double- and triple-tiered stages,⁷⁹ this prodigious orchestration of imagery appears on the cover of every surviving composite casket.

Obviously, despite its many images of action in progress, the lid has nothing directly to do with narrative. But we remain involved as we vicariously touch as well as take a closer look at the incessant bodily movement erupting in frozen episodes over its entire surface.⁸⁰ Almost every hand is touching someone or something, from the knights gripping their lances to the couple embracing on the back of a horse. As courtly nobles gesture in conversation and touch the smooth fabric draped over the balcony, the queen pets the soft fur of her little dog; a falcon perches on a young man's fist, protectively covered under its sharp talons. The deeply undercut and subtly modeled ivory bodies, drapery, foliage, weapons, walls, and towers take possession of their surrounding spaces as if they were carved in the round, brightly lit from the front and creating dark pockets

of shadows all around them. The hooded elfin figures blowing their horns are tucked into the corners beneath the protruding edge of the balcony, just as the embracing couple in the left panel recede beneath a bridge over the moat.

During the brief intermission that follows, we might ask what kind of perspective and expectations have we been given that might serve as a meaningful frame within which we can experience and interpret the “acts” that follow? Obviously, there are more “games” to be played. But we have seen two very different realms of behavior, separated by high barriers that mark the frontiers between incompatible albeit noble worlds.⁸¹ Pictured in the central panels is an enclosed realm of equilibrium, constrained by strict rules of behavior and ethics. Beyond the walls, literally outside, chaos reigns in the uninhibited pursuit of sexual gratification.⁸² Keeping in mind this encompassing notion of difference and potential conflict, we are now prepared for the heavily nuanced stories that follow. All four sides of the box are covered by a series of small framed panels, each inhabited by single dramatic episodes drawn from fables of courtly love. They form a kaleidoscopic parade of “stills” that unfold like a film running on a marquee from left to right on the lower surfaces of the box. Together with the lid, they function as a façade encasing the inner container that guards the “real” treasure.

Curtains open theatrically upon the first scene (fig. 6-5) in which we encounter a popular but paradoxical narrative strategy. Based on the assumption that the medieval viewer knows it well, the story is compressed into two emblematic images that focus primarily on meaning.⁸³ The familiar characters of Aristotle and his student, Alexander, are seated *en face* as they each gesture upward with one hand and downward with the other – a signal that reveals a moment of conflict and duplicity.⁸⁴ The imposing philosopher raises his forefinger as he reprimands the young ruler for his unseemly amorous affair with Phyllis, for whom the old man also lusts. Alexander raises one hand in acquiescence, but the other hand tightly clutches his gloves, making a gesture of sexual innuendo under the table.⁸⁵ As an overt gesture of royal arrogance, his crossed leg signals the end of the meeting.



FIGURE 6-5 Front Panels, Ivory Casket. Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Parallel visual trajectories lead our eyes downward into the right lower corner to the next panel, where analogous falling movements meet. There, as prearranged by the lovers, Alexander leans over the castle wall to observe a spectacle. He holds his flattened palm over his mentor's bared head in open rejection of Aristotle's earlier gesture of disapproval. On the street below, the smitten sage carries out his promise to allow Phyllis to ride on his back like a horse in return for her promise of sexual favors.⁸⁶ Intent on enjoying the humiliation of a great and famous philosopher, with no intention to fulfill her side of the bargain, she holds the reins and goads him on. Either by mistake or clever ploy, instead of a whip, she holds the tip of a lion's tail belonging to the huge beast in the next frame. Propelled by its blatant phallic reference, the extended appendage provides a tangible link with the next tableau. In the land of Eros, youth triumphs over old age and its foolish attempt at transgression.

Unlike the medieval story of Aristotle and Phyllis, the *fabula* of Pyramus and Thisbe has a traceable history from its ancient origin to its late medieval transformation into theatrical performance. Based on Ovid's Latin poem of ill-fated love in his *Metamorphoses*, the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe was known in the Middle Ages primarily in vernacular adaptations.⁸⁷ Among the first was the Old French version, "translated" by an unknown Norman poet around 1160, followed by several variations that collectively transformed the Roman myth into romance.⁸⁸ By the early fourteenth century, when the Metropolitan ivory casket was made, *Piramus et Tisbé* had become an enormously popular theatrical performance. In form and content, the *fabula* had been transformed into the same dramatic genre of intensely dramatic moments previously enacted by Aristotle and Phyllis.⁸⁹

At the same time, we recognize a distinctive resonance of Ovid's presence that pervades the entire sequence of moving tableaux. The medieval ivory carver's genius has been fully infused with the Roman poet's sensitivity to the basic human realities inherent in mythical narrative.⁹⁰ Within his extraordinary concoctions of sentiment and eroticism, small but meaningful details evoke both literal and emotional feeling for the human actors entangled in love's treacherous traps. Abrupt juxtapositions of the theatrical acts, fragmented into emblematic moments recreate Ovid's rapid shifts in time and emotion. Twelfth-century performances were similarly interrupted by the alternation of prose spoken offstage by a narrator-presenter and rhymed sequences sung or recited by the actors onstage.⁹¹

The late medieval rendition of *Piramus et Tisbé* surprisingly retains the dramatic tension of Ovid's polished erotic interplay between undisguised human emotion and sophisticated cynicism. Appearing in the right panels on the front of the Metropolitan box, the story replaces the usual depiction of the Fountain of Youth.⁹² In its place we see the tragic end of two reckless, naive young lovers who have made a pact to run away separately and meet outside the city walls at a designated place marked by a tomb, a fountain, and a mulberry tree. Separated by their parents as children in love and then forbidden to marry, the adolescent pair continued to communicate through a crack discovered by Thisbe in the common

wall between their houses. Long suffering the pangs of frustrated desire, she and Pyramus agree to consummate their love in the darkness of a marginal unprotected space between the city walls and wilderness.

The drama begins abruptly in *medias res*: we witness only two of the last three episodes.⁹³ In the first panel, Thisbe, as the instigating force behind the tryst, arrives first. Instead of Pyramus, she encounters a lion with his mouth still bloodied by the torn, devoured bodies of a whole flock of sheep. Taking refuge in an almond tree, Thisbe discovers the huge beast now biting and clawing her veil, which had fallen during her escape. Ovid's lioness has been replaced by a male lion that frequently serves as a symbol of fierce virility. Faced with this striking shift in gender, the viewer is urged to perceive the powerful beast as embodying the immanent presence of Pyramus whose desperate desire has driven him to fantasies of taking his beloved by force.⁹⁴

Encouraged by the physical link made by the lion's sexually charged tail with Aristotle's body, the viewer is prepared to observe a number of visual analogies.⁹⁵ We perceive parallels between figures of Thisbe and Alexander as they both lean forward, gripping respectively a tree trunk and the sharp corner of the crenellated wall. Their identical high places mark them as dominant, controlling forces. In the lower spaces of the central panels, the lion and "horse" turn in opposite directions, causing their rear ends to almost meet in a ludicrous heraldic bump. Aristotle bites on the hard bit and grabs rough stones, while the lion sniffs Thisbe's scent and tastes her soft veil, which he embraces in his clawed paws.

We are clearly faced with serious contrasts between two different worlds. Within the protective confines of civilization, the cost of Aristotle's foolishness is only his loss of dignity and respect, whereas, in the ungovernable wilderness outside, Thisbe risks losing her life.⁹⁶ And perhaps, in her imagination or only on a metaphorical level, she is losing something in reality more valuable – her virginity.⁹⁷ She pulls the phallic tree trunk to her body, creating an open vaginal space into which she moves her hand in a gesture of acceptance; below, the lion bloodies her lost veil.

The subsequent episode has been intentionally deleted for greater dramatic effect. But the audience is called upon to remember that, after Thisbe has safely escaped and is seeking return to the fountain, Pyramus finds her stained veil and hastily assumes she has been devoured. Unable to face another moment without her, our hero impulsively impales himself on his sword. In the last scene, we discover the tomb, fountain, and mulberry tree, knowing that its immature white fruit has suddenly ripened to a deep dark red. Beneath its leafy canopy, Thisbe has joined her lover in suicide.⁹⁸ Their eyes already closed, blinded by love and now by death, the couple are physically united in a last instant captured before their fatal end. Thisbe bends her pierced body over the falling almost lifeless form of Pyramus. She touchingly embraces him; her hands fall limp over his body. Pyramus still holds the hilt of his sword steady with one hand, while the other hand drops, with fingers faintly spread as if reaching to touch his lover for the last time – his arms are empty.

Death forces the lovers to exit both worlds of reality and make-believe. As Pyramus strides offstage, apparently with Thisbe on his back, the viewer looks back to the analogous gait of Aristotle as he carries Phyllis on his back, moving in the opposite direction. We immediately recognize the transgressive *topos* of the Woman on Top. With our eyes now encompassing the ensemble of four panels in retrospect, we see through the charming beauty of the entertaining fairytale performances and recognize the cruel threats of painful and even fatal loss awaiting those who overstep boundaries and disobey rules.⁹⁹ Although we have enjoyed the comic and then titillating tragic performances staged within a medieval theater, we realize that its fictions are merely subjective extensions of human reality on earth. The owner of the elegant ivory box would always be reminded of forbidding walls that both protect and control.

As they appear inside a book and on the outer ivory casing of a box, the subjects of our case studies have centered on small images, both religious and secular. Although the narrative of Guda is concentrated in a single female figure, the interacting theatrical performances of Alexander, Aristotle, and Phyllis with Pyramus and Thisbe, as well as the figures on the lid, involve many of both genders. The twelfth-century story of Guda unfolds as an ongoing spiritual transformation happening in the present and over time into the future. The late medieval ivory panels freeze-frame past moments from legend and myth.

Guda was a living person, whereas the later carved actors portrayed characters who were either imagined or deceased but revived within the time and place of a fourteenth-century audience. Nevertheless, all the narrative figures communicate with us through body language and hand gestures that can still be clearly understood in physical and subjective terms. In both instances, however, the images make heavy demands upon both medieval and present viewers. Without our ongoing, active participation, these narratives would be meaningless. Indeed, our direct or imagined sensory contact with textures of drapery, hair, fur, and flesh, enables us to experience a more intimate encounter with the represented personae. We have a deeper, more probing understanding of what we “see.” Thus, for example, we are encouraged to see through Aristotle’s posturing and Alexander’s guile as we observe each one pointedly touching an object, a book on the table and a gauntlet beneath, each signifying its owner’s authoritative power.

Rather than being presented in an easily parsed series of continuous situations and acts, every narrative we have explored is a dense concentration of human experiences within one or two frames. The viewer is challenged to make continuous connections, unraveling not only the complex interplay of looks, gestures, objects, and movements, and at the same time remembering significant but invisible past events, situations, and associations. We must become deeply involved. Inspired by phenomenology and reception theory within the expanded “intermedial” (interdisciplinary) currents of narratology, we find ourselves probing the inner thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and emotions of our own humanity in our current analytic approaches to medieval visual narrative.

Notes

- 1 Whatling, "Narrative Art," p. 1/5. [See also the entirely different essay on narrative in the first edition of this volume, ed.]
- 2 For example, Wolf, "Pictorial Narrativity," pp. 431–435.
- 3 Elkins, *Object*, pp. 11–12.
- 4 Kemp, "Narrative," p. 69.
- 5 Camille, "Seeing and Reading," pp. 26–49.
- 6 Mitchell, "Word and Image," pp. 47–57.
- 7 Lewis, *Reading Images*, explores this concept of "seeing" in the creative collaboration between the reader-viewer and the dynamic pictorial strategies. More recent, exemplary considerations of this issue appear in Sears and Thomas, ed., *Reading Medieval Images*. Also Bal, *Reader*, pp. 289–312.
- 8 Phelan, "Narrative," on the intimidating "Terminological Beastie," p. 283.
- 9 Holly, *Past Looking*, pp. 170–208, still offers a welcome guide.
- 10 Bann, "Meaning," pp. 87–100.
- 11 Fludernik, "Experientiality," p. 155; Caracciolo, "Experientiality," pp. 1–4.
- 12 Areford, "Reception," p. 74.
- 13 Caviness, "Reception," pp. 65–85.
- 14 Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, pp. 47–58. On "narrative worldmaking," see Herman, "Reception," pp. 150–154.
- 15 Iser, *Act of Reading*; Barthes, *Pleasure of the Text*.
- 16 Jauss, *Reception*; Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, pp. 67–72; also Lewis, *Reading Images*, pp. 45–53, on Jauss's *Rezeptionsästhetik*.
- 17 Holub, *Reception*, p. 154; also Goldstein, "Reader-Response."
- 18 Fish, *Text in This Class?* Also Freund, *Return of the Reader*.
- 19 Jauss, *Question and Answer*.
- 20 Sokowlowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*.
- 21 Parry, *Art and Phenomenology*; Crowther, *Phenomenology*.
- 22 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*; *Sense and Non-Sense*; *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*. In his last, incomplete work, *Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty deepens his concepts of the relationship between sensory perception and idea.
- 23 Fludernik and Olson, *Current Trends*, pp. 1–33; Fludernik, "Natural" *Narratology*. Wolf, "Narrative," pp. 180–197; Ryan, *Narrative*.
- 24 Whatling, "Narrative Art."
- 25 Many thanks to Asa Mittman and Ben Tilghman for suggesting that I raise this issue.
- 26 Whatling, "Narrative Art," pp. 3/4–4/4 on the indeterminacy of narrative images.
- 27 Whatling, "Narrative Art," pp. 1/39–4–39. Another useful, sensible, but literary, definition is offered by Altman, *Theory*, pp. 1–27.
- 28 Pächt, *Illumination*, pp. 89, 92; Sauerländer, *Initialen*.
- 29 Pächt, *Illumination*, p. 93. As Hamburger, *Script*, p. 4, observes, "Ornament plays an active role in the creation of sensation and meaning."
- 30 Kendrick, *Animating the Letter*, pp. 13–18.
- 31 Hahn, "Letter," p. 56.
- 32 Hamburger, *Script*, p. 4.
- 33 Frankfurt am Main, Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek, MS Barth. 42, fol. 110v. Powitz and Buck, *Katalogue*, Vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 84–88.

- 34 Alexander, "Scribes," pp. 107–116.
- 35 Smith, "Scriba," p. 29.
- 36 Smith, *Power*, pp. 22–23.
- 37 Carr, "Women Artists," pp. 5–6.
- 38 Chassel, "Forms," p. 204 and fig. 5, Seal of Arnoul, Bishop of Lisieux, 1170.
- 39 Curschmann, "Degrees," p. 89; also Witterkind, "Schriftband," pp. 343–367.
- 40 Heck, "Nouveau statut," pp. 14–15.
- 41 Rivara, "Narratology," pp. 95–96, 108.
- 42 *Letters of Peter the Venerable*, no. 26, i, p. 48.
- 43 Southern, *Humanism*, p. 87; Morris, *Individual*.
- 44 Stevens, "Performing Self," p. 208.
- 45 Stevens, "Performing Self," p. 212.
- 46 Whatling, "Narrative Art," p. 26/39; Wallis, "History of Art," pp. 34–35.
- 47 Garnier, *Langage*, Vol. 1, pp. 171–176.
- 48 Codex of Uta, Munich, Staatsbibliothek Clm. 13 601, fol. 1v; Cohen, *Uta Codex*, pp. 27–38.
- 49 Schmitt, *Raison*, p. 110.
- 50 As noted by Graf, *Bildnisse*, p. 44.
- 51 Hahn, "Letter," p. 70, discusses two earlier initials in which the D is similarly transformed into a victorious circular wreath.
- 52 "*Sermo Sancti Iohannis episcopi de David ubi Goliad humanum hostium [interfecit].*" The sermon was written by Paul the Deacon (d. 792) for a collection of sermons commissioned by Charlemagne. See Wiegand, *Homiliarium*, Vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 48, II, 56; Grégoire, *Homiliares*, pp. 100–101.
- 53 Schreiber, *Gemeinschaften*, p. 117. Guda's fashionable wide sleeves marked with red borders would tend to confirm this. The canoness scribe Guta (sic) displays an exaggerated example in the dedication page of the German Guta-Sintram Codex; Legner, *Ornamenta*, v. 1, p. 245.
- 54 Augustine first linked human flesh with vellum skin as he addressed God: "You clothed men with skins when by their sin they became mortal. And so you have like a skin stretched out the firmament of your book." *Enarrationes in psalmos*, 103, quoted by Hahn, "Letter," p. 72.
- 55 Schmitt, *Raison*, pp. 151–152, who quotes the *Liber de modo bene vivendi*, which had been wrongly attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux.
- 56 A propos the currency of relevant twelfth-century *topoi*, Mariaux, "Claricia?" persuasively proposes the imaging of an analogous spiritual transformation of the delightful swinging figure of Clarissa in a later folio where, now veiled, she is rising within doubled circles in the letter D.
- 57 Gertsman, "Spectrum," in *Visualising Medieval Performance*, p. 3, emphasizes the "various manifestations and meanings of performance within the intricate webbing of the somatic and spiritual." Also Schechner, *Performance*. On interpretive communities, Fish, *Text in This Class?*
- 58 Le Goff, *Time*, pp. 110–112.
- 59 Schmitt, "Mort," p. 23, observes, "In the Middle Ages, numerous images of the 'presentation of the self' demonstrate the desire to establish an identity and at the same time to value its merits with a view to salvation and judgment."
- 60 Wolf, "Introduction," p. 3.

- 61 Genette, *Paratexts*, pp. 1–15.
- 62 Whatling, “Narrative Art,” p. 9/39.
- 63 Jahn, “Focalization,” pp. 173–177. The term was formulated by Genette, *Narrative*, pp. 189–194.
- 64 Whatling, “Narrative Art,” pp. 1/25–5/25; Wolf, “Metalepsis,” pp. 83–108.
- 65 Whatling, “Narrative Art,” pp. 1/15–15/15.
- 66 The term *epitomic* is Watling’s adaptation (p. 38/39, n. 62) of a similar neologism first coined by Brilliant, *Visual Narratives*, p. 52.
- 67 As evidence of its longevity through Boccaccio and Shakespeare into our post-millennial century, Sontag’s parody, “Very Comical Lament,” pp. 290–293.
- 68 New York, Metropolitan Museum, Ivory Casket, Paris, c.1310–1330, acc. no. 17.190.173a; front panel, acc. no. 1988.16. 10.9 x 25.3 x 15 cm (see Little, “Plaque,” pp. 133–135.) <http://metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/464125>. My focus on ivory and performance was inspired by Anne F. Harris, “Narrative,” pp. 47–70. Renewed concerns with gender and materiality were prompted by Jennifer Borland, “Immediacy of Objects,” pp. 53–73.
- 69 Camille, *Art of Love*; also Smith, *Power*, pp. 169–173.
- 70 The term was first coined by Koechlin, *Ivoires gothiques*, Vol. 2, p.381, to describe a group of French ivory boxes carved with scenes of courtly love, of which there are now nine: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, 71.264; London, British Museum, Dalton 386; London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 146.1866; Birmingham, Barber Institute of Fine Arts; Florence, Bargello, 123c; Kraków, Cathedral Treasury; Paris, Musée de Cluny, Cl. 23 840, acquired in 2007, and the example in the collection of Lord Gort. See the new, indispensable database: <http://www.gothicivories.courtauld.ac.uk>.
- 71 Carns, “Compilatio,” pp. 69–88, interprets the Metropolitan casket as forming a “world view of love in which every type of lover and every form of love of present.”
- 72 Smith, *Power*, pp. 172–173. On the formulaic nature of the overall design and its components, Ross, “Allegory,” p. 140.
- 73 Bloch, “Medieval Misogyny.”
- 74 Smith, *Power*, p. 174; Carns, “Compilatio,” p. 84; Dalton, “Mediaeval Caskets,” pp. 299–309.
- 75 On mimetic performances of the tournament, Wickham, *Medieval Theater*, pp. 151–160. On the iconography of the lid, Wixom, “Eleven Additions,” pp. 110–112; Carns, “Compilatio,” pp. 82–83; Smith, *Power*, pp. 174–179.
- 76 Nickel, “Arms,” pp. 521–536; idem, “Games,” pp. 349–350.
- 77 On the sexual nature of the scenes and the thinly veiled metaphor of the rose, Lewis, “Images of Opening,” pp. 29–311; also Smith, *Power*, pp. 176–178 and fig. 32, draws our attention to the introduction of jousting women on the cover of the Walters ivory casket.
- 78 Carns, “Compilatio,” p. 82 and fig. 11, cites the casket in the British Museum.
- 79 Frank, *Medieval French Drama*, pp. 163–164.
- 80 On the medieval body as lived experience, Lewis, “Medieval Bodies,” pp. 15–29.
- 81 On oppositions within levels of society, Corti, “Models,” pp. 339–366.
- 82 As Bloch, “Medieval Misogyny,” p. 4, observes, woman as chaos (*riote*) is a *topos* in medieval literature.
- 83 Curschmann, “Myth.” pp. 107–116.

- 84 Based on Henri d'Andeli, *Le lai d'Aristotle*. On the narrative images of Aristotle and Phyllis the ivory casket in the Walters Art Museum, Harris, "Narrative," pp. 53–56.
- 85 On the "covert expression of libidinal drive" throughout the imagery, Baekeland, "Symbolism."
- 86 Johnson, "Women on Top." On desire and causality in medieval narrative, Vitz, *Medieval Narrative*, pp. 176–212.
- 87 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4, 55–166; Kibler, "Piramus et Tisbé."
- 88 Cadot, "Récit mythique."
- 89 Aubailly, "Pyrame et Tisbé."
- 90 Segal, "Narrative Art," pp. 331–337; on "dual focus" narrative, Altman, *Theory*, pp. 72–98.
- 91 Aubailly, "Pyrame," pp. 1–3.
- 92 Smith, *Power*, pp. 180, 185, and fig. 32.
- 93 Aubailly, "Sources," p. 23. Pyramus's suicide has been omitted.
- 94 *Piramus et Tisbé*, pp. 18–21.
- 95 Carns, "Compilatio," pp. 71–73.
- 96 My interpretation as well as much of what follows is based on Eley's brilliant reading, *Piramus et Tisbé*, pp. 22–30.
- 97 Loss of virginity would prohibit an honorable marriage to a nobleman; Kelly, *Performing Virginity*, pp. 72–43.
- 98 In the Middle Ages, suicide was a mortal sin for which there was no absolution. However, the word "suicide" did not exist in the Middle Ages; the master-word was "despair," a breach in social conduct; Murray, *Suicide*, Vol. 1, p. 12, vol. 2, pp. 369–395; Claude Schmitt, "Suicide," pp. 4–5, 18. Courtly love provided justification in the hope for union with the beloved after death; Williamson, "Exercise in Power."
- 99 Medieval viewers were familiar with this moral dichotomy in its twelfth-century formulation by Andreas Cappellanus; Allen, *Art of Love*, pp. 59–78.

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Formalism

Linda Seidel

Formalism is a theory of knowledge, an epistemology not a methodology. It questions our ways of thinking about representation and perception, and examines assumptions about the relationship between what we know, or think we know, and how we arrive at those claims. Its basic premise was forged in Antiquity, when Aristotle articulated belief in the centrality of sensorial experience to the acquisition of knowledge. Two thousand years later, Immanuel Kant constructed a compelling argument that established terms for understanding the relationship between experience and truths (or concepts) that exist a priori and independent of it. Formalism, which plays an important role in numerous branches of philosophical inquiry, is situated within the debate regarding the roles of reason and observation in human cognition.

For students of visual art, the term familiarly designates a practice in which information is first extracted from the shape or structure of things we encounter, and then interrogated in an effort to gain deeper and broader understanding. Its basic procedures involve identification and analysis of such immediately perceptual aspects of objects and images as shape, material, color, and line, elements that construct appearance and function as expressive agents. This activity, termed *formal analysis*, has considerable utility for the study of works of art.¹ But understanding of it as an end, and not as an initial stage of exploration, thwarts awareness of Formalism's more penetrating objective, inquiry into the nature of art.

Formalism had many "authors" before it had a name. The writings of several late nineteenth-century German-language speakers, such as Adolf Hildebrand,

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Wilhelm Vöge, Alois Riegl, and Wilhelm Wörringer, focused on perceptual elements of individual objects, many of Late Antique and medieval manufacture, and privileged in their work the creative process over either the imitation of nature or the transcription of subject matter.² Their independently pursued efforts to bring rigor to the analysis of individual works of art attended to visual and aesthetic properties instead of spiritual or thematic ones. In 1915, publication of Heinrich Wölfflin's *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* presented a codification of closely related ideas in ways that made them readily accessible. The book's appearance as *Principles of Art History* in 1932 disseminated Wölfflin's clearly enunciated, condensed precepts for visual scrutiny to an English-speaking audience, providing it with a basic and lasting tool for the analysis of paintings, sculpture, and architecture.³

The appellation *Formalism* only emerged during the First World War, in Russia, as a term of ridicule for the radical approach to literature espoused by a breakaway group of young linguists.⁴ However, its fame, one could say notoriety, didn't materialize until after the Second World War, in connection with distinctly modernist forms of visual production and as articulated by the critic Clement Greenberg.⁵ With *Formalist* principles fundamental to more than a century of discussion of diverse art historical as well as literary practices, uncertainty has emerged concerning what *Formalism* originally was and what it has become. Currently use of the word *Formalist* is likely to signal little beyond an artist or critic's engagement with the manipulation of shapes and colors (or words) at the expense of attention to a work's broader significance. This understanding has supplanted for the most part the crucial and more capacious original intention of the term *Formalism*.⁶

The basic principles of the Moscow Linguistic Circle's theory of literary art are enunciated in a manifesto produced one hundred years ago by Viktor Shklovsky. Their relevance to significant issues and approaches in the study of medieval art as it was emerging in the first decades of the twentieth century becomes apparent as elements in the manifesto are reviewed.

The separateness of art from ordinary activity was essential to the Russian Formalists' ideas. These set apart the object of their interest – literature – from the spoken and written communication of regular life, and countered then popular Symbolist claims regarding both the importance of the sounds of words and literature's mystic nature. In their view, literature as opposed to other kinds of texts, possessed, first and foremost, a special organization of language, one that departed from ordinary usage in its formal or structural devices and did not in any way reflect reality. This young group of scholars stressed the centrality of language's structure to writing and regarded its arrangements of carefully composed prose to be determinative of content, neither separate from nor subordinate to it. Whether that content comprised fact or fiction, philosophical inquiry or current events, literature, from their perspective, was not distinguished by being “a vehicle for ideas, a reflection of social reality, [or] the incarnation of some transcendent truth.”⁷

The group's revisionist agenda adopted principles that recalled those the German-language writers on art had independently developed; in both instances, emphasis was placed on artistic structure and the creative process at the expense of

subject matter and historical data. Both Russian- and German-language formulations of rigorous analytic systems sought to define and professionalize distinct critical practices. The young Russians differentiated between the high art of literature with its carefully organized forms, and the low, even non-art, status of other kinds of writing. Their espousal of a hierarchical differentiation among works of (literary) art paralleled practices in German museums (and some writings) in which objects were grouped and valued according to materials, receiving pride of place and a commensurate degree of attention according to their classification. The elevation and persistence of painting and carving in stone as areas of study by medievalists over and above work in metal or wood have long depended on such regard. Until the last decade or so, “minor arts” were considered craft rather than art because of the disjunction between the “applied” nature of their decorative motifs and the functionality of the support on which their decorative forms resided.

In the early scholarship on medieval art, Adolph Goldschmidt’s examination of miniatures and ivories and Emile Mâle’s attention to tympana identified elite kinds of artistic production at the expense of other often closely related, even adjacent, images and designs. For decades, these productions were seen as more worthy of study than border ornamentation in the margins of books, voussoirs on arches, and corbels on the cornices of churches.⁸ The secular subject matter of this material surely had much to do with Mâle’s oversight;⁹ but such works may also have escaped his attention because of their lack of imposingly structured composition.¹⁰ And, in the case of the marginal carvings, they likely evaded Mâle’s glance because he was studying the tympana, as photos throughout his works suggest, not in situ, but from casts in Paris’s Trocadero Museum.

The issue of workmanship, the distinct manner in which an author handles materials and configures their distribution, is one of Formalism’s cornerstones and has significant implications for art historical practice. Attention to craftsmanship emphasizes an object’s individuality and its maker’s autonomy, contributing to the sense of a work’s self-sufficiency and, consequently, its independence from cultural concerns. This conviction governed the early practice of Connoisseurship in which individuals, such as Goldschmidt, employed careful scrutiny of physical properties of works, together with comparative study of similar objects, in order to classify the materials with which they were involved. In contrast, Vöge and Wöringer, focusing on issues of plasticity and sinuous line, detected an independent inner working in those elements which they saw as expressing a relationship between art and certain conditions of its moment of production. However short their efforts to articulate the connection may have fallen, they did not consider such issues to be extrinsic to a work’s construction, or irrelevant to a work’s elucidation as colleagues focused on Connoisseurship were more like to do.¹¹

In the late nineteenth and first few decades of the twentieth century, notions of the autonomy of artistic creativity, with its attendant belief in the independence of artists from constraints on their inventiveness, presented a particular challenge for medievalists. Emile Mâle’s acceptance of the idea of ecclesiastical authority over

work produced in, on, or for places within the religious compound – the church, the cloister, the scriptorium – rendered the notion of an artist’s freedom to create uniquely expressive forms inconceivable. Mâle devoted himself to the study of subject matter in medieval images, seldom engaging in any substantial way either with elements of form or their intimation of artistic autonomy. Early in his career, Meyer Schapiro took up the conundrum of artistic freedom in ecclesiastical art in a rebuke to Mâle’s claims *and* in an effort to engage the study of medieval art in a broader philosophical (as opposed to archeological or iconographical) debate. Like his German-language predecessors, he found in the alterity of medieval art opportunity for the development of alternative approaches to it.

Attention to visual material held a reduced presence in the Moscow Circle’s interests, yet writings of a few members enunciated engagement with its distinctive constructive qualities, paying attention to its intrinsic properties and examining objects and images apart from any relationship to either subject matter or an individual artist. Victor Shklovsky, who served as a professor of Art History in Petrograd (St. Petersburg), recommended examination of a given work as a “complex of devices” in his best-known essay.¹² Such an approach, he argued, would impede perception through a process of estrangement that divorced the object from authorial biography and literary description. The heightened awareness and attention that results when the familiar is produced in an unusual way facilitates a critical approach to works and this, in turn, imitates scientific inquiry in its self-consciousness. Arguing on behalf of *seeing* in place of focusing on the *seen*, the Russian Formalists rejected dependence upon fact-based empirical evidence regarding place of production and dating in their studies.¹³

The ideas of the Moscow Circle did not immediately penetrate the thinking of European intellectuals, and their critical writings remained for the most part unknown, silenced by the inaccessibility of the language in which they had been written. More significantly, constraints on speech and artistic practice that were put in place in Russia immediately after World War I marginalized the precepts of the Formalists in their homeland. Art’s content rather than its formal properties was communism’s politically preferred choice; from the government’s point of view, Formalism did not sufficiently concern itself with historical considerations. After World War II, however, as the result of a number of migrations from Eastern bloc countries, a diverse group of young scholars of literature and anthropology working in Paris under the leadership of Lévi-Strauss saw links between their own (national) interests in linguistic theory and aspects of Russian Formalism.¹⁴

These individuals pursued a rigorous and systematic mode of analysis, one that endorsed principles earlier espoused by members of the Moscow Circle; in recognition of this kinship, they initiated translations of the group’s papers. Thus, a critical movement once undervalued as “the child of the revolutionary period,” and silenced for decades by Stalinist propaganda, came to be appreciated in the West for its distinctive contributions to intellectual thought.¹⁵ Recovered from the dustbin to which its ideas had been relegated, Russian Formalism was newly perceived as “a central trend of a broad critical movement” in literary and artistic

theory in the early twentieth century.¹⁶ In this way, what had once been a term of scorn came to serve as the umbrella under which approaches to art and literature that prize structural and sensorial properties above historical and thematic elements were returned to prominence.

Both the Russians and the Germans shared an important practical goal: the desire to establish a mode of analysis and argument that would provide the foundation for independent disciplines. The Moscow Linguistic Circle, by grounding the study of literature in systematic analysis of a text's structure, challenged the Symbolists' preoccupation with words and sounds and contested their claim that literature was primarily a vehicle for transcendent truths. The early German-speaking Formalists, art historians *avant la lettre*, sought to distinguish their endeavors from archeological and philological methodology on the one hand, and amateurish, romantic description on the other. Their systematic definition of the intrinsic qualities of visual material and their application of these definitions to the analysis of individual works facilitated the establishment of art history as a new form and field of inquiry, distinct as well from study of the classics, intellectual history, and *belles-lettres*.

Formalist principles, as established by the intersecting pursuits of both the early German-language and Russian-speaking scholars, place trust in the viewer's direct sensorial involvement with a painting, object, monument, or text. The results of such eyewitness encounters provide the grounds for analysis of a work's structure and defining characteristics, and enable thereby determinations regarding stylistic affiliations and degrees of valuation. Observations gleaned in this manner, when positioned in the hands of scholars eager to assert the intellectual rigor and scientific nature of the study of art, have frequently been put forth as objective data and used to categorize works in a definitive manner, particularly in regard to date and place of production. Insofar as these sorts of judgments are based on observations that result from subjective experience, they risk exposing Formalist practice to claims of relativity. Formalist scholarship, which has at times overlooked this implication, has attended to it more recently through the theorization of spectatorship, arguing for a process by which viewers achieve their insights into a work through interaction with the works' structures.¹⁷

Within a decade of its promulgation, Russian Formalism was critiqued for concentrating on the formal organization of art and failing to consider its role within social communication. Although this was not a fair statement, the matter was one of considerable urgency in post-Revolutionary Russia where, for a long time, concern about it succeeded in removing Formalist works from view and silencing their claims. In an effort to address the situation without abandoning the achievement of the Moscow Group, two Russian scholars, P.N. Medvedev and Mikhail Bakhtin, co-authored a book in 1925 in which they defended Formalism's practices while advancing the claim for close ties between literature and society.

The authors recognized that Formalism was not a precise methodology or tidy regime of practices, arguing instead that it needed to be viewed as encompassing diverse lines of inquiry.¹⁸ They drew on intimate knowledge of recent German

scholarship to establish the relationship between Russian Formalism and a widespread pan-European movement in art scholarship, and demonstrated that there was no fundamental hostility between form and content in the logic of Formalist thinking. The basic positions of Formalism in European writing on art, they remarked, “give no grounds whatsoever for the denial of content in art.”¹⁹

Medvedev and Bakhtin did not see evidence of any direct relationship between recent Russian and German scholarship, but argued that they were connected through shared changes in their “ideological horizon.” They associated Russian Formalism with *Kunstwissenschaft*, the rigorous practice of art-science (or art-knowledge) that German-speaking scholars had begun to develop in the closing decades of the nineteenth century in opposition to traditional *Kunstgeschichte* or art history, an unexacting practice that they regarded as excessively absorbed with documentary and biographical matters. In the eyes of both the German-language scholars and their Russian sympathizers, the shortcomings of *Kunstgeschichte* cast a shadow over the intellectual validity of the study of art, thereby tarnishing the reputation of its practitioners.

Medvedev and Bakhtin identified the “constructive aims of art” as the nucleus of recent Western art scholarship; these, in their view, regarded the work of art as a closed-off unity but one that is part of real space. They saw nothing exclusionary in this definition. “Realistic art is just as constructivist as constructivist art,” they wrote, indicating that content need not be excluded from consideration in Formalist works or Formalist practice. And they emphasized the deep ideological meaning that German scholarship attributed to form in contrast to the “simplistic realist view” of form as an “embellishment of content ... a decorative accessory lacking ideological meaning of its own,” that was held by supporters of contemporary Russian figurative painting. In summarizing the central tenets of what they called European Formalism, Medvedev and Bakhtin recognized Konrad Fiedler as one of the first theoreticians of the movement.

Responsibility for the 1925 book is now attributed primarily to Bakhtin, who came to be recognized as a major literary theorist in the last third of the twentieth century. One of the German writers whose work he cited in the co-authored publication was Wörringer, whose pioneering studies on the dynamic relationship between abstraction and naturalism in art and the psychology of Gothic style had been published a decade and a half before, and reissued in numerous printings in response to public demand.²⁰

In *Abstraction and Empathy*, originally published in 1908, Wörringer differentiated between art that imitated things in nature (classicism) and art that alienated itself from them (abstraction), identifying these as the two basic, divergent poles of artistic experience which emerge from instinctive feelings about the world and are expressed in artistic impulse. This “latent inner demand,” he observed, which he credits Aloïs Riegl for introducing, is the primary factor, he argued, in all artistic creativity. Its expression collapses distinctions between form and content by linking inner urges of the art to its outward appearances. In *Form Problems of the Gothic*, which he described as a sequel to the earlier book, Wörringer applied

the questions raised in the previous publication to that “complex of abstract art which is closest to us, namely Gothic.” He termed Gothic architecture the perfect expression of an unimpeded impulse toward abstraction, since no organic or natural model opposed itself to it.

During the decade of the 1940s, Formalism was introduced into American art criticism by Clement Greenberg as a brief in favor of abstract painting. This art, which he termed “avant-garde,” was valid, he wrote, “solely on its own terms ... independent of meanings,” with its content “dissolved so completely into form that the work of art or literature cannot be reduced in whole or in part to anything not itself.”²¹ Greenberg thus rejected any ascription of significance to incidents that lay outside the frame of the physical object, committing himself instead to the centrality of the irreducible material elements that artists employ in their conceptualization and realization of individual works “in search of the absolute.” In this limited guise, Formalist principles made a profound impression on the practice of art historians working in other fields who adopted its approach as a useful tool with which to describe works from any period. In the early 1960s, Michael Fried amplified Greenberg’s argument and popularized it through his championship of the work of an emerging group of young non-representational painters.²²

The spare and focused terms in which this criticism was presented were directly indebted to the writing of the English critic and curator Roger Fry, one of the first champions of post-Impressionist painting and, seen in retrospect, another early Formalist.²³ Fry, who was introduced to the work of Cézanne at an exhibition in London in 1906, was immediately captivated by the “insistence on the decorative value” that he found in one of the artist’s still lifes, both in the use of opposing local colors and “a quite extraordinary feeling for light.” He wrote that the artists whose works he brought together in an exhibition in 1912 “do not seek to imitate form but to create form, not to imitate life but to find an equivalent for life.” Fry was stimulated by the conflicted reception their painting received to continue work on an aesthetic theory that employed poetry to understand painting. “I want to find out what the function of content is, and am developing a theory ... that it is merely directive of form and that all the essential aesthetic quality has to do with pure form,” he wrote to a friend. Fry’s belief in artistic experience as detached from real life, his attention to such design components as color, plane, and rhythmic line, his appreciation of their connection with “essential conditions of our physical existence” and thus their capacity to elicit emotional response, all ally him with positions the Russian Formalists were simultaneously espousing.²⁴

By the 1960s, American scholars working on the art of various pre-modern periods were seeking alternatives to data-driven erudition and text-based iconographic study, much of which had been fostered by recently emigrated German academics. These approaches required linguistic skills that were no longer a part of educational preparation on these shores, and were based on intellectual assumptions concerning innovation and excellence that were foreign to domestic sensibility as well. Such scholars found support for a reinvigorated practice of visual

analysis in the descriptive language of contemporary Formalism. This approach was particularly apt for discussion of the distorted, non-mimetic figural imagery of early medieval and Romanesque work.

In the most widely used survey book of the second half of the twentieth century, a miniature of the Gospel writer St. Mark, painted in northern France in the early eleventh century, is described by the text's author in terms of the "twisting and turning movement of the lines which pervades not only the figure of the Evangelist but the winged lion, the scroll, and the curtain" (fig. 7-1). There is praise for the miniature's "firmly drawn contours filled in with bright solid colors, so that the three-dimensional aspects of the picture are reduced to an overlapping of flat planes." As a result of this "abstract clarity and precision," the "representational, the symbolic and the decorative elements of the design are knit together into a single, unified structure."²⁵

This language, which approximates an account of modernist painting, succeeds so well in drawing our attention to the geometric patterns of figure and drapery that we easily overlook the absence of anything more than the most minimal passing reference to other recognizable aspects of the miniature. The spiral columns, capped with acanthus leaf designs that frame the seated figure go unmentioned, and the description likewise avoids discussion of the contested position of the central element in the design: the scroll to which both St. Mark and the somersaulting lion hold fast. The silence of the text discourages us from inquiring into the fusion of elements that culminates in, or emanates from, the intense stare that locks the animal and the man's eyes on the object they both grasp. While we likely sense the way in which the glance functions as the generative element in the miniature, providing the fulcrum from which stable and chaotic forms emerge, the account, as written, invites no opening for further consideration of this relationship.

Formal analysis is here restricted to a description of surface pattern and the miniaturist's handling of color. It serves as a technique for elucidating the specific characteristics of composition or construction of an image that enable it to be related to a larger body of works – a workshop or regional school. Formal analysis in this way provides grist for Connoisseurship, the skill of discriminating distinct artistic handwriting and attributing specific works to artists living at a given moment in a certain place. Such procedures of attribution are fundamental to the cataloging of works of art, but they obscure aspects of an image or object that escape encapsulation in a characterization of arrangements of shapes, lines, and colors. While the procedures of Connoisseurship invariably celebrate the individual skill of the artist, a principle that Formalism endorses, they trample on other issues that a Formalist agenda endorses as critical to the study and definition of art.

In regard to the miniature, formal analysis assumes art's dependence upon the things of the world as a "given." We scarcely notice in the description of the miniature the affirmation it implicitly lends to the existence in the anonymous artist's imagination of a figure that is independent of and prior to the one rendered



FIGURE 7-1 St. Mark from a Gospel Book produced at Corbie, c.1025–1050. Amiens: Municipal Library. Source: photo courtesy of Bridgeman-Giraudon/Art Resource, NY.

here. Earlier European proponents of a Formalist approach to art, such as Riegl, who were at work even before the name of the movement had been put into place, had explicitly eschewed such notions, arguing that the artist's interaction with material (his pen, his colors) alone generates form. The implication that the artist has a pre-existent idea in mind to which he gives visible form is one that was rejected because it relegated the process of creating the work to a second-tier role.

This had been the concern of Konrad Fiedler who emphasized in his writing the distinction between art and ordinary life and our perceptions of each. For him, the interaction between an artist's ideas and the material through

which he explored and ultimately gave form to them was a central, non-negotiable issue. He argued that the notion that the artist had something in mind that he then “copied” into his work fell prey to the mechanization of society, and did not succeed in adequately engaging either the active potentialities of the material with which the artist was working or the moral underpinnings of the artistic enterprise itself.²⁶

In the case of the northern French miniature, such an assumption disregards the capacity of artistic energy, expressed through the explosive pattern of pen lines and colored washes, to create a previously unseen and unknown creature who, in turn, functions as the generative center of unbounded activity. The design conjures up before the viewer the linear tangle in which both the seated figure and the gyrating animal participate; this coursing energy also produces the inspired Gospel text found on successive folia. The content of the illumination is transmitted directly via the language of visual imagery and occurs without the intervention of an independent, pre-existent, (possibly copied) source.

Both form and meaning are made at the moment of creative invention; they are then seized by the viewer in a process of realization that emerges through engagement with the image and scrupulous apprehension of its design. The design does not have identity prior to or outside of artistic activity; even figurative imagery should not be regarded as imitative of something that has a reality elsewhere and which the artist is attempting to simulate. Forms in nature are to be taken neither as standards of representation nor as models for it. Art works themselves provide guidance for insight into their makers’ practices and offer clues as well to their own expressive purposes.

Accordingly, if images are sites of creativity in their own right, then artists are not merely technicians who execute the ideas of others, even when they are following prescriptions set down by programmers – the church officials and learned men of their time.²⁷ Scholarly recourse to theological or literary texts to articulate the content of images should not assume that religious images primarily illustrate knowledge that has already been articulated in verbal form, or are without meaning if, like grotesques or decorative arabesques, they fail to do so. Certainly images may act as substitute texts for the illiterate; they may be artistically uninteresting, and Formalists may question whether, in their judgment, they constitute “art” at all. But, extrapolating from precepts laid down by literary Formalists, visual images made by human hands ineluctably possess features that differentiate them from things in and of the natural world, even those that they most closely imitate. It follows then that to depict something is different from either description of the thing or the thing itself, and it needs to be examined according to a different set of rules.

Regard for these issues had been a hallmark of Wilhelm Vöge’s groundbreaking scholarship on Romanesque and Gothic sculpture during the early decades of Formalism’s developing practice. In his magisterial book on the emergence of Gothic style, Vöge established systematic terms for a descriptive analysis of medieval sculpture as part of an inquiry into stylistic change and the nature of artistic

creativity. Vöge orchestrated a combination of concerns in his work on sculpture at Chartres, bringing together crisp characterizations of previously unanalyzed details of figurative carving with sensitive appraisals of the significance of those achievements. From individual elements that served as evidence of different hands at work on different portals, he drew observations about profound distinctions between Romanesque and Gothic style. Limned in the richness of Vöge's written language, Chartres' Headmaster could stand alongside the most modern one, and, although anonymous, be better understood.²⁸

In the wake of Vöge's debut study, unknown makers of medieval carving concretized in the minds of some scholars as localized individuals whose technique was marked by a distinct manner of workmanship. Others who adopted his approach to the description of figural carving used it as a tool for the well-regulated and more limited exposition of relationships between sculpture and architecture or for the prescriptive description of the treatment of body and drapery. This *style criticism* or *stylistic analysis*, a self-sufficient form of investigation characteristic of Connoisseurship, provided the basis for decades of writing about Romanesque as well as Gothic art, manuscripts as well as sculpture, on both sides of the Atlantic.²⁹ It provided a foundation for the efficient categorization and definition of large bodies of material, serving the needs of archeologists sorting through the detritus of Europe's wars as well as archivists and curators organizing their national collections.³⁰ The pressing requirement for these individuals, eager to enhance claims to the scientific grounds and rigorous possibilities of their practice, was the development of categories for material that had infrequently, if at all, been studied in a systematic manner. Because considerable medieval material had been dislodged and dispersed during World War I, and political boundaries redrawn, scholarship participated in a re/construction and re-evaluation of regional as well as national lines of artistic affiliation.

The work of Arthur Kingsley Porter comes to mind here. His multi-volume study of sculpture along the pilgrimage roads, published in 1923, characterized carving in diverse regions of France, Spain, and Italy in an effort to construct an improved chronology of Romanesque sculpture's development, and settle disputes for priority between sites.³¹ Although he cited Vöge's work, his own study of style was more circumscribed; it was focused on establishing a correct date for an array of eleventh- and twelfth-century monuments. Porter eschewed explanation of why style varied as it did and refrained from any inquiry into what goals the distinctions he observed might have served. The question of style's "authority," the end toward which Formalist efforts aspired, did not figure in his purview.

In the early 1950s, when contemporary artists were concentrating almost exclusively on issues of form in their work, and Structuralists were rediscovering the writings of the Russian Formalists, Louis Grodecki, a Polish immigrant who had taken up residence in Paris after World War II, reintroduced Vöge's work to a new audience of medieval scholars as a model of diligent description, one that kept larger issues of artistic creativity in mind. Grodecki re-engaged with the careful procedures of scrupulous analysis that Vöge had inaugurated in his own work

on French sculpture in an effort to further enhance our knowledge of the emergence of new forms of architectural production at the turn of the first millennium. He urged others to do the same.³²

Vöge died in 1952, two years after Mâle's demise. The following year, Erwin Panofsky, Vöge's most celebrated student, dedicated his study of early Netherlandish painting to the teacher under whom he had studied in Freiburg and for whom he had written his doctoral dissertation on Albrecht Dürer. Panofsky contributed a stirring appreciation of Vöge's life and work to a collection of the latter's essays published in Germany in 1959. In it, Panofsky stressed for the reader the significance of Vöge's two-year stay in France in preparation for the writing of his book on early Gothic sculpture. Visits to the great cathedrals had provided Vöge with first-hand encounters with twelfth-century sculpture, Panofsky noted, and these enabled the direct perceptions out of which Vöge's thinking about the development of early Gothic statuary emerged. Panofsky was here re-presenting Vöge to the reader as a Formalist before the fact.

The notion of internal mechanisms by which art changes, which impelled Vöge's work, was instrumental to the writing of the slightly more senior Viennese scholar Alois Riegl, whose theories developed during the decade in which the younger man produced his major book. Riegl's writings, central to the European Formalist enterprise, have grown increasingly relevant ever since. His ideas were seminal to the art historians who were educated in Germany and Austria around the time of World War I, and who then came to prominence on the American intellectual landscape in the decades after World War II. Riegl's complex theorizing about art was fully absorbed into the work of the young Panofsky and Ernst Gombrich, each of whom pursued questions, in their own distinct ways, regarding the self-sufficient nature of art that Riegl had put into play.³³

During these same decades, Riegl's work, written in a dense German, was known in the US primarily through English-language representations of it, particularly in relation to questions concerning artistic style – its definition and development. In its place, the work of Bernard Berenson, formulated at the identical turn-of-the-century moment as Riegl's, and eminently more accessible in its straightforward pronouncements, came into prominence as a native authority in matters of Connoisseurship and style. His approach was unencumbered with the weightier epistemological questions of the burgeoning Formalist inquiry.

Riegl's ideas were further elided in subsequent decades by the differently framed claims of American Formalism; these, as we have seen, followed a more narrowly defined line of inquiry earlier articulated by Roger Fry and developed by Clive Bell. Since the 1990s, scholars whose interests have shifted away from the direct relationship between art and society have rediscovered Riegl. His relevance for a new generation lies in his study of visual perception, the changing nature of how we see – a concern that is bound up with representation and with issues of form. His works, now in translation, dominate current interests in visibility and reception theory, as well as historiography – art history's self-reflective engagement with its own past.³⁴

Riegl argued that art is a transformation not an imitation of nature and that it continues to be transformed from within in “a search for interconnectedness, variation, and symmetry.”³⁵ Individual artistic performance, he believed, is controlled by an inner need for pattern, order, and symmetry and is not generated by outside elements – historical, cultural, or otherwise. In order to account for change in art, Riegl introduced the idea of *Kunstwollen*, artistic volition or will. In one form or another, this notion of art’s inner drive has remained his most enduring and challenging contribution to art scholarship; its importance for Wörringer was earlier discussed. Riegl saw this internal dynamic, which produces change as it develops through history, as part of a given society’s world-view; he employed it to define the changing qualities in particular kinds of art over a period of time. Riegl’s suggestion that it accounts for national characteristics in art came close to endorsing racial stereotypes, which followers like Strzygowski went on to do and for which he was criticized, by Schapiro as well as Gombrich. Yet Riegl’s theories were egalitarian in other important ways: they accommodated both high art as well as lesser applied or decorative forms in their argument at a time when Formalists espoused a hierarchical ordering that restricted the designation *art* to certain types of creation. And, although Riegl’s ideas changed over the course of a decade, his engagement with meticulous observation of the details of individual works and his concern for the historic trajectory of artistic production never wavered.

Otto Pächt, who was initially trained by Riegl’s successors in Vienna, and who identified in his later years with Riegl’s sweeping project for art history, pursued some aspects of Riegl’s theories, more as policy guides than as theoretical inquiries. He remained committed to detailed structural or stylistic analysis in his work; supported the notion of regional or national characteristics in art; and he stayed skeptical of the idea that styles change through the impact of external influences. Upon his return to Vienna late in his career, after more than two decades at work in England, Pächt wrote in praise of Riegl’s close engagement with individual objects, saying: “I know of few more instructive things than to watch Riegl in his efforts to learn from the works of art the questions which they want to be asked and elicit from them the answers. Perhaps the most helpful thing in art history is this kind of dialogue with the object and not the monologues of the most brilliant art critics.”³⁶ In his numerous studies of Romanesque and Gothic manuscript, fresco, and panel painting, Pächt, following Riegl, persisted in the belief that regional or national schools display distinct characteristics in their art through the activity of the *Kunstwollen*. Such belief assisted him in a career largely devoted to producing catalogs of manuscript collections, a task to which he had turned out of necessity upon exile from Germany in 1938.³⁷

Meyer Schapiro staked out a different position from Pächt and Riegl in regard to the relationship between ethnicity and art, contesting, on several occasions, arguments that supported the existence of national characteristics in style. But he resembles Riegl more than he does any other scholar of art in the way in which

he wrestled with the issue of artistic creativity and change throughout his career. He displayed unusual sympathy for the vast range of his predecessor's work and its intellectual seriousness in one of his papers, calling him "the most constructive and imaginative of the historians who have tried to embrace the whole of artistic development as a single continuous process."³⁸ Numerous aspects of Riegl's theories endure as significant issues in Schapiro's own writings, especially in his inquiries into artistic creativity.

Schapiro's graduate studies at Columbia University had not brought him under the direct tutelage of scholars of medieval art, since they were in short supply on this side of the Atlantic at the time; art history itself was just emerging as an independent field of study on the fringes of work in Classical philology.³⁹ During a lengthy study trip through Europe in 1926 and 1927, Schapiro endeavored to make contact with scholars at work on medieval material in each country he visited: Manuel Gómez-Moreno and Walter Whitehill in Spain, Richard Hamann in Germany, Paul Deschamps in Paris, Bernard Berenson in Italy. He debated current theories with them and, through them, developed contacts with like-minded others. In this way, he entered into a lengthy correspondence with Kingsley Porter, with whom he exchanged letters filled with concerns and ideas about the dating of southern French and Spanish sculpture, among other matters.

In one of his early communications to Porter, Schapiro reveals the grand dimensions of the project he sees before him. He writes that he has heard of the senior scholar's lectures on monastic centers and the diffusion of medieval art, and confesses: "I regret all the more that I am not at Harvard, for there is no one occupied with medieval art, and no one sufficiently bold to speculate on the interrelations of fields so vast as east Christian and Romanesque art."⁴⁰ Porter invited him to pursue his studies in Cambridge but Schapiro wrote a few months later declining the offer. His polite response indicates his status as being beyond that of student: "I regret exceedingly that I will be unable to study at Harvard next year. My duties as a teacher will make it impossible for me to visit Cambridge except during vacation periods."⁴¹

Schapiro made his published debut as an art historian in the late 1920s as a scrupulous observer and impeccable historian of Romanesque sculpture. He remarked later in life that he was drawn to Romanesque by its vigor and inventiveness, its interplay between folk art and high art, and the starkness of its simple forms.⁴² His dissertation, completed in 1929 and published, in part, in the *Art Bulletin* two years later, was a study of the extensive carvings at the southern French abbey of Moissac (fig. 7-2). Its published portion remains a model of visual analysis in the tradition of turn-of-the-century German language scholars.⁴³ On its first page, Schapiro establishes that he is neither providing a catalog of the sculptures nor pretending to find the nature of their beauty. His effort, instead, he avows, has been to illustrate through an analysis of formal relations in the carvings his "sense of the character of the whole and the relevance of the parts to it." He goes on to identify a study of early Greek art as



FIGURE 7-2 Capital with Daniel at the lion's den, cloister at the Abbey of St. Pierre at Moissac, West Gallery, c.1100. Source: photo courtesy of Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

the exacting model for his own investigation, observing that he is following Emmanuel Löwy in the use of the term *archaic* “as a designation of a formal character in early arts.”⁴⁴ In the notes, Schapiro cites Vöge’s book on Chartres and a study by Hamann, along with more numerous references to French texts of an archeological nature (as might be expected for a dissertation on French medieval art at that time).

Schapiro’s introductory summary of his aims and achievements in the study of the sculpture demonstrates his interest in systematically understanding, not dismissing, the disproportional, non-mimetic figurative imagery that populates the capitals of the abbey’s cloister and the walls of its church entry. “In the present work,” he writes, “the postures, costumes, expression, space, perspective and grouping of the figures have been described ... to demonstrate that their departures from natural shapes have a common character which is intimately bound up with the harmonious formal structure of the works.”

The most comparable scholarly undertaking that comes to mind in reading Schapiro’s text is Riegl’s *Stilfragen*, his study of ornament in which he demonstrates the vitality and ability of design to flourish free of functional, technological, or mimetic concerns. Both texts are equally comprehensive in theoretical scope, similarly detailed in their performance of close analysis, and both take as their subject an equivalently overlooked body of visual material. Although Schapiro does not cite Riegl in his dissertation, since the latter’s work did not

substantively touch on the sculpture at Moissac, late in life Schapiro explained what he recognized to be the importance of Riegl's contributions:

“He described a perceptual world in the visual arts that was dynamic, and he tried to show how the broad development of art has been between these two poles Starting from that conception, Riegl analyzed in careful detail the structure of forms in succeeding styles which enabled one to see how things changed and moved, what the structure was in each period.⁴⁵

Moissac's sculpture offered an unusually extensive, carved figural corpus situated at the beginning of a development that moves quickly toward more faithful natural depiction. It was thus ripe for the kind of foundational study that a dissertation in the tradition of German scholarship, as represented by the work of both Vöge and Riegl, demanded. Schapiro's dissertation on Moissac should be regarded as a formidable English-language chapter in the ambitious and ground-breaking project of Formalist study that had begun in Vienna more than a half-century earlier and which is now being re-engaged in art history's ongoing self-evaluation of its interests and methods.⁴⁶

Schapiro had also read the essays of Roger Fry on post-Impressionism as a student and saw parallels between the inventiveness and simple forms of Romanesque sculpture and the achievements of twentieth-century art. These he observed closely as a teacher to and friend of artists, and as a practitioner in his own right. Direct engagement with the gestures of art-making and the independent decisions of art-makers, along with close analysis of discrete works of art – all significant elements of Formalist criticism – consistently drove his argument even when the goal of his inquiry was artistic change, not the characterization of what was constant in a single monument or series of objects.

In 1931, the year in which the first part of Schapiro's dissertation appeared, two books were published in France, in which, for the first time, formal principles of medieval art were explored in place of the more customary enumeration of archeological data or explanations of iconographic meaning, interests that were then, and for a long time remained, the focus of historically (rather than philosophically) minded academicians there. The works introduced the notion that a regulating role was played by the architectural frame in determining the geometric configuration of contingent reliefs, a notion Schapiro could not support. He expressed his criticism in a harsh review of Jurgis Baltrusaitis's *Le Stylistique Ornementale dans la Sculpture Romane*, which was published the following year. The essay was, as well, a critique of the approach taken by Baltrusaitis's teacher (and father-in-law), Henri Focillon, that was implicit in his book, *L'art des sculpteurs romans*.⁴⁷ In 1935, in a letter to Focillon, Schapiro emphasized his criticism of “a particular kind of formalism and schematizing of art.” Though he praised Focillon for his use of insights gained from an appreciation of contemporary art, he cautioned that unless “the peculiar assumptions underlying modern formalism are laid bare, its application to past art will involve serious distortions, even in formal analysis.”⁴⁸

Focillon had succeeded Mâle in the chair of medieval archeology at the Sorbonne several years before. A generation older than Schapiro, he had written a dissertation on Piranesi, taught modern art, worked at Lyon's Musée des Beaux-Arts, and is reported to have said that what qualified him for the position in Paris was the fact that he had taught in cities with cathedrals. While his writings on medieval art promote various aspects of Formalism, they do so in a bewildering manner, without consistent pursuit of their logic, employing eloquent language, which "heightened their effect and allusive range" as Cahn pointed out in his biographical essay.⁴⁹

In a number of essays written in the 1930s and 1940s, Schapiro pursued different strategies of inquiry and modes of analysis in an ongoing attempt to define what art history was and what it could be. He invariably worked from investigation of a specific work of art toward a more wide-ranging conclusion, demonstrating how essential a detailed, systematic analysis of an object was to any understanding of it. Pages of scrupulous and insightful analysis of both sculpted reliefs and miniature painting dominate his studies of Romanesque art at Souillac and at Silos in an effort to comprehend the reasons for, and the significance of, stylistic change at these abbeys. In the one case, this involved a carving's deviation from norms expected of high art, and, in the other, an unprecedented introduction of secular music-making figures into a liturgical manuscript, along with evidence of the coexistence in a single place, and for a brief moment, of two different visual languages of expression. To state that Schapiro's project in these path-breaking articles is "a comprehensive sociological explanation of Romanesque style," elides his means with his apparent ends, obscuring the critical process by which Schapiro constructed his analyses and arrived at his conclusions.⁵⁰ Such commentary disregards the fundamental role that Formalist analysis played in his work by substituting its own materialist claims for the more subtle and complex understanding of artistic creativity that Schapiro continuously sought.

Throughout, in his essays on Romanesque art, Schapiro takes the perceptual elements of individual works as his point of departure, pushing his observations into matters that others at the time regarded as inconsistent with, or irrelevant to, what they considered to be proper art historical practice. The essays on Souillac and Silos, which have been extensively analyzed in relation to the predominantly Marxist political interests that characterized the intellectual circles in which Schapiro was known to move in the 1930s, in fact align him with the interests and practices of the Formalists, both German and Russian, to whose work he adhered as a student and to whose goals he held fast throughout the six decades of his innovative scholarship.

At the same time, Schapiro was engaged with the study of contemporary art and an understanding of its relationship to its social bases. His efforts galvanized a popular audience that failed to recognize the Formalist terms on which he engaged the art, perhaps because Greenberg's contemporary criticism took such a different tack. In an interview late in life, Schapiro remarked that he had grown "increasingly disturbed by Greenberg's dogmatic formalism, by his refusal to grant

artistic intention or social context, much less iconography, any place in analysis.”⁵¹ He never wavered from an engagement with Formalism’s ultimate project and his commitment to it endured, long after his involvement with Marxist theory had dissipated. Schapiro’s important paper of the late 1960s on image-signs explores non-mimetic elements of artistic composition, some of which might be characterized as “subformal” in nature, and makes implicit reference to Romanesque and Gothic imagery. It was published with a note that some of the observations had been presented in his classes at Columbia 30 years before. The inquiry, he was telling its readers, did not represent a new “turn” in his thinking.

In one of Schapiro’s most celebrated papers, “On the Aesthetic Attitude in Romanesque Art,” Formalism trumps historic functionalism in a playful tour de force of observation and citation. Published in 1947, the paper was written for a volume of studies that honored Schapiro’s friend, the mystical philosopher and curator of Indian art Ananda Coomaraswamy.⁵² In it, Schapiro cites numerous medieval texts that display, as he notes, “keen observation of the work itself, the effort to read the forms and colors and to weigh their effects.” One text quoted at length describes the textile wrappings around St. Cuthbert’s relics at the time of their translation to the new cathedral of Durham, an event that had occurred in 1104 and was recounted 70 years later by the monk Reginald – either through eye-witness testimony or his own privileged access to the tomb. Reginald noted the unusual and fresh reddish-purple tone of the saint’s garments which “when handled make a kind of crackling sound because of the solidity and compactness of the fine skillful weaving.” Reginald also remarked on the charming variation provided by scattered spots of yellow which seem “to have been laid down drop by drop” and which contrasted with the purple, thus conferring on the background greater vigor and brilliance.

This twelfth-century description obliquely references critics and scholars with whom Schapiro was engaged privately as well as publicly in theoretical disputes. It resembles comments one might have read at the time about mid-twentieth century work, as written by Greenberg, a point Schapiro’s extended citation strongly suggests. As he had demonstrated in previous papers on Romanesque art, a more subtle Formalist model underscored his own encounters with visual material and he was relentless in his efforts to emphasize its importance in the study of all art, medieval included. Schapiro’s evocation of Formalist concerns in this essay also challenged the focus on iconographic content in medieval art that still governed its study. Emile Mâle’s iconographic study of twelfth-century French sculpture and painting, originally published in 1922, remained a basic reference work. It was deemed so essential that it was translated into English for the first time and published with updated footnotes in 1978.⁵³ Finally, Schapiro’s focus in the essay on craft work rather than high art, especially the textile wrappings around Cuthbert’s relics, makes a nod in Riegl’s direction; the latter’s important book on ornament, *Stilfragen*, was based on his experiences as curator of carpets and textiles in Vienna.

At the same time, Schapiro toys in his paper with materialist preoccupations with luxury goods and elite patronage.⁵⁴ He once told me of the circumstances

surrounding his decision to write the essay. These involved what he termed a private joke between him and Coomaraswamy concerning their divergent approaches to the study of art and are not irrelevant to the matter at hand. They had been corresponding since the early 1930s, initially debating the meaning of the contemplative in art. At one point, Coomaraswamy took exception to Schapiro's blunt manner, calling it "as between colleagues ... ex cathedra, or even a little patronizing," while hastening to add that he was certain that it wasn't intentionally so. Letters newly made available in Schapiro's archives indicate that Schapiro had written to Coomaraswamy in 1935 informing him of a lecture he had been invited to give at the Philadelphia Museum of Art for which he was "studying the medieval writing and incidental texts on art and the beautiful." He indicated that he had been reading Augustine, referring to the Church Father as "the most considerable writer on art," someone who has insufficiently been explored by art historians. In his response a few months later, Coomaraswamy, referring to the upcoming lecture, commented, "I am not at all sure that your '*materialism*' does not in fact disqualify you ... and believe you will someday realize this."

In his essay, Schapiro counters Coomaraswamy's expectations of him by turning a study of the transformed material wealth of the church into an examination of perception, fabrication, and taste, identifying his own work, thereby, as an inquiry into aesthetics. Schapiro's appreciation of the physical properties of medieval objects is signaled throughout by his analyses of design, color, contrast, and artistic imagination; with them, he hoped both to appeal, and pay respect, to the refined *immaterial* interests of his friend. Sadly, Coomaraswamy died before it was published.

Close looking, the fruits of visual engagement with an image or object, whether for the purposes of attribution, for understanding aspects of stylistic change, or for acquiring insight into how meaning is visually expressed, constitutes the fundamental obligation of Formalist inquiry. It provides the irreducible basis for any appreciation of visual art's unique achievement and perdures beneath theoretical detours that propose other pathways toward Formalism's epistemological claims. The closing lines of Schapiro's paper evoke St. Augustine's support for an aesthetic conception of art as an object for the eye, not just for the mind, and provide a terse yet appropriate epigram for both Formalism's and Schapiro's legacies: "For when you have looked at a picture, you have seen it all and have praised it."

Notes

- 1 These aspects were set out and formalized into something approaching a method in a student handbook that has been reprinted countless times (Taylor, *Learning to Look*, pp. v, vi).
- 2 The authors were Austrian and Swiss as well as German, something that does not immediately register when we reference the language in which they were writing.
- 3 Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art*, for discussion of Riegl and Wölfflin; Kathryn Brush, *The Shaping of Art History*, on Vöge and, below, on Goldschmidt; and Neil H. Donahue, *Invisible Cathedrals*.

- 4 For a brief account of the Russian Formalists origins, see Alexandra Berlina, “Make It Strange, Make It Stony,” pp. 14–15, and her *Viktor Shklovsky: A Reader* (London, 2016).
- 5 For a positioning of Greenberg’s work within mid-century America, see Caroline A. Jones, *Eyesight Alone*.
- 6 Recent efforts by medievalists to recuperate the fuller sense of the term engage with the writings of the philologist Frederick Ohly. See, for example, Amy Knight Powell, “Late Gothic Abstractions,” along with other papers in the volume.
- 7 Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, p. 2; Bennett, *Formalism and Marxism*, pp. 18–25.
- 8 [On the marginal, see Chapter 16 by Kendrick in this volume (ed.).]
- 9 *L’Art religieux du XIIe siècle en France*.
- 10 More recent scholarship understands art as a social rather than qualitatively constructed category and is interested not in drawing distinctions between high and low forms of image-making, but in inquiring how the visual as a category is articulated. Tom Gretton summarizes this thinking based on the work of Pierre Bourdieu in his paper “New Lamps for Old.”
- 11 For Whitney Davis’s differentiation of these interests into aesthetic, stylistic, and psychological Formalism, see “Formalism.”
- 12 For Shklovsky’s seminal text, “Art as Technique or Art as Device,” published in 1917, see Harrison and Wood, *Art in Theory*, pp. 277–281, as well as Berlina in n. 4.
- 13 Bowlt, “Russian Formalism.”
- 14 See Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language*, pp. 43–44, 101; Bennett, *Formalism and Marxism*, pp. 26–27, where the author remarks on the publication of Tzvetan Todorov’s *Textes des formalistes russes* in 1965.
- 15 See Stephen Bann’s introductory remarks to the collection of texts he assembled with John E. Bowlt; I repeat here Bann’s citation of Victor Erlich’s remark in the latter’s ground-breaking study of 1955 (*Russian Formalism*, p. 1).
- 16 Lubomir Dolezal, “Narrative Composition: A Link between German and Russian poetics,” in Bann and Bowlt, *Russian Formalism*, p. 73. The article was written for the publication of Bann and Bowlt’s collection. [On narrative, see Chapter 6 by Lewis in this volume (ed.).]
- 17 Davis and Womack, *Formalist Criticism*. See also Preziosi’s discussion of relevant aspects of Raymond William’s work in *Rethinking Art History*, pp. 81–82). [On reception theory, see Chapter 5 by Caviness in this volume (ed.).]
- 18 *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, p. xxvi.
- 19 For what follows, see *ibid.*, Chapter 3, “The Formal Method in European Art Scholarship,” pp. 41–53.
- 20 See *Abstraction and Empathy* and *Form Problems of the Gothic*.
- 21 “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” Vol. 4, p. 8.
- 22 Greenberg distinguished Formalist writing of the 1950s and 1960s by the term “criticism” to set it off from the work of either “art history or scholarship.” He further defined the distinctions as concern with “art as art, and not as a ‘subject’ or ‘field.’” He made these remarks in his review of a book by S.J. Freedberg on Andrea del Sarto, the Renaissance painter (*Clement Greenberg*, Vol. 4, p. 198). Fried presented his views most cogently in the essay he wrote for an exhibition catalog, *Three American Painters*). See also excerpts from Fried’s work, with commentary on it, in Harrison and Wood, *Art in Theory*.

- 23 For thumbnail sketches of the work of both Fry and Greenberg, and of the relationship between them, see Hyde Minor, *Art History's History*, pp. 133–139.
- 24 Woolf, *Roger Fry*, pp. 111–112, 177, 183. The citations come from “autobiographical fragments” as well as letters made available to Mrs. Woolf by the family.
- 25 Janson, *History of Art*, p. 226.
- 26 For the pioneering work in English on Fiedler see Podro, *The Manifold in Perception*; for the expansion of his inquiry into the next generation of German scholars, with remarks on Fiedler’s contribution to the later work, see *The Critical Historians*, pp. 69–70 and 110–111. Daniel Adler discusses the moral implications of the early Formalists’ desire to reconcile neo-Kantian (i.e. intuitive and speculative) goals with Positivist esteem for measurable data in an effort to systematize art historical scholarship (“Painterly Politics”).
- 27 [On sculptural programs, see Chapter 33 by Boerner in this volume (ed.).]
- 28 Vöge, *Die Anfänge*.
- 29 [On Romanesque and Gothic manuscript illumination, see Chapters 20 and 23 by Cohen and Hedeman, respectively, in this volume (ed.).]
- 30 [On the modern medieval museum, see Chapter 39 by Brown in this volume (ed.).]
- 31 See *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*. For Porter’s relationship to German modes of scholarship, see Brush, *The Shaping of Art History*, pp. 145–148. [On pilgrimage art see Chapter 36 by Gerson in this volume (ed.).]
- 32 [On Romanesque and Gothic architecture, see Chapters 17 and 21 by Fernie and Murray, respectively, in this volume (ed.).]
- 33 For Panofsky, see Podro, *The Critical Historians*, pp. 178–208, and Iverson, *Alois Riegl*, pp. 154–66. Gombrich’s engagement with Riegl’s challenging work and a critique thereof are central to the premises of his own influential book, *Art and Illusion*; see the introduction, especially pp. 16–22.
- 34 See especially in this regard, Olin, *Forms of Representation*.
- 35 For discussion of Riegl’s complex ideas, see Podro, *The Critical Historians*, pp. 71–97; Iverson, *Alois Riegl and Framing Formalism*. The citation in the text is from Podro, *The Critical Historians*, p. 71.
- 36 Art historical lineage may be traced through historiographical commentary. See Pächt’s evaluation of Riegl (“Art Historians and Art Critics”) and Jonathan Alexander’s obituary for his teacher, “Otto Pächt.”
- 37 Alexander describes Pächt’s peregrinations in search of work in the memorial note referred to above. Pächt’s own appreciation of Riegl, quoted above, appeared in the year in which he left the Bodleian Library at Oxford to take up the chair in Art History at Vienna, the post Riegl had himself once held. This marked, in a sense, the return of the “New Vienna School,” with whose work he had been intimately identified 30 years before. See Christopher Wood’s characterization of these relationships in his introduction to *The Vienna School Reader*, pp. 9–81.
- 38 Schapiro critiques the use of racial characteristics in discussions of artistic style in more than one place. His essay, “Style,” is the most relevant to the issues under consideration here; in it he separates his laudatory characterization of Riegl’s contributions to the study of style from his critique of racial categorization.
- 39 [On Romanesque and Gothic Sculpture, see Chapters 18, 19 and 22 by Hourihane, Maxwell, and Jung, respectively, in this volume (ed.).]
- 40 Schapiro’s letters to Porter are preserved in the collection of Porter’s Papers in the Harvard University Archives and are cited here with the archivist’s permission. The

- quotation here is taken from a letter of 10 November 1927 at the beginning of their correspondence (HUG 1706.102, box 10). [On the relation between East and West, see Chapters 29 and 30 by Folda and Olympios, respectively in this volume (ed.)]
- 41 Letter of 4 April 1928 (HUG 1706. 102, box 12).
- 42 Epstein, "Meyer Schapiro," p. 79.
- 43 The unpublished portion of the dissertation examines in historical detail the iconography of each sculpture. The published portion has been reprinted, along with Schapiro's other major studies of Romanesque art, in *Selected Papers: Romanesque Art*.
- 44 "The Romanesque Sculpture of Moissac," in *Selected Papers: Romanesque Art*, pp. 131–3.
- 45 "A Passion to Know and Make Known," p. 78.
- 46 Schapiro is not included in Whitney Davis's enumeration of Formalism's early proponents in his recent "What Is Post-Formalism? (Or, Das Sehen an sich hat seine Kunst)." See Nonsite.org/issues/issue-7-formalism-post-formalism.
- 47 Schapiro's review was translated into German and published as "Über den Schematismus in der romanischen Kunst," in *Kritische Berichte zur Kunstgeschichtlichen Literatur* 5 (1932/3), pp. 1–21. It was reprinted in English in Schapiro's *Selected Papers: Romanesque Art*, pp. 265–284. Schapiro refers to "Professor Focillon, the teacher of Dr. Baltrusaitis," once in his text, and cites Focillon's recent book (his first on medieval art) in n. 6.
- 48 Walter Cahn, "Schapiro and Focillon" (the quoted passages on pp. 130–131).
- 49 Cited by Walter Cahn, "Henri Focillon," in Damico, *Medieval Scholarship*, pp. 260–261 (259–271).
- 50 Werckmeister, Review of Schapiro's *Romanesque Art*, p. 214.
- 51 Schapiro et al., "A Series of Interviews," p. 162. For more recent strenuous criticism of "Greenbergian Formalism," see Yve-Alain Bois, "Whose Formalism?," pp. 9–12 along with Joanna Drucker's critique of Bois, ("Formalism's Other History," pp. 750–751.
- 52 Schapiro chose this paper to introduce the volume on Romanesque (*Selected Papers: Romanesque Art*, pp. 1–27). The citations in what follows come from pp. 13 and 12.
- 53 Princeton University Press published *L'Art religieux du XII^e siècle en France: Etude sur l'origine de l'iconographie du Moyen Age* as *Religious Art in France, The Twelfth Century, A Study of the Origins of Medieval Iconography*, with a foreword by Harry Bober.
- 54 [On patronage, see Chapter 12 by Caskey in this volume (ed.).]

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Gender and Medieval Art

Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz

The notion of gender entered the study of history and art history as an analytical concept after 1970.¹ Though gender studies aims at examining the interaction of men and women, most prominent studies primarily focus on the history of women.² In art history, gender-oriented research revolves around the ways in which women partake in the production, patronage, and conception of art and architecture. This one-sidedness is particularly owed to the fact that in the past, women's biographies were seldom recorded in a comprehensive manner. Furthermore, ever since the sixteenth – and predominantly in the nineteenth – century, historians have, sometimes quite consciously, omitted female contributions from their accounts.³ In more recent times, however, art-historical gender studies has increasingly put a strong emphasis on the co-operation of women and men when it comes to the choice of which recipients of donations, image contents, or architectural forms are to be analyzed.⁴

Moreover, since the 1970s, the questions posed have been reformulated and the methodological approaches have multiplied.⁵ Depending on a researcher's own viewpoints and preferences, research may take women's history as its subject, use gender as a category of analysis, or adopt a feminist perspective. However, these three components do not have to occur simultaneously and do not necessarily even belong together;⁶ where researchers in gender studies have questioned the bipolar gender model, they have often moved away from the decidedly feminist stance.⁷

Art historical gender studies continues to concentrate largely on the modern age, and the theoretical system and conceptual tools have been developed in relation

to the art of this later period.⁸ It is no mean task to transfer this to a medieval framework and, at the same time, to furnish a historical interpretation which corresponds to the actual relationship between gender and art in the various periods of the Middle Ages.⁹ It must be emphasized that gender, as well as the perception of “male” and “female,” are just as dependent on the historical period as are most other aspects of life, and hence should be interpreted in their historical context.

It is no exaggeration to say that gender as an analytical concept has entered mainstream art history. For a long time, however, the established discipline of medieval studies resisted considering gender as an analytical perspective,¹⁰ and the sparse source material extant from the Middle Ages only served to reinforce this reluctance. Artistic activities in general were poorly recorded and the lives of women, unless they were of noble birth, were barely acknowledged – or were even deliberately excluded from mention – by medieval authors.¹¹

The investigation of the relationship between women and art in the Middle Ages is additionally complicated by the fact that the art historian needs not only to be thoroughly familiar with the actual works of art, but also to have a clear picture of the general mentality prevalent at that time with regard to women, and of their legal, social, economic, religious, and cultural status. For this, it is absolutely essential to study the contemporary sources, which are however seldom available in translation, and often not even in printed form. Thus, so as to be able to properly analyze the role of women in medieval art, art history needs, even more than modern theories and methods, to turn to the questions being asked and the results obtained in related disciplines. The subject requires scholars to be ready and willing to work in an interdisciplinary mode, sometimes even to the extent of undertaking primary research in another discipline, since, even though for example gender studies in history is relatively advanced, it is still far from supplying all of the results needed to write the history of gender and art in the central centuries of the Middle Ages. Still today, the biographies of many outstanding medieval women, who have acted in great numbers as initiators of buildings and donors of art works, have not received due attention from a consistent gender studies perspective. There are exceptions to this rule, such as Eleanor of Aquitaine, whose life and work have of late been at the heart of several studies examining the degree of agency she had as the duchess of Aquitaine as well as queen of France and England.¹² By contrast, there still has not been published an adequate biography of Blanche of Castile, the mother of Saint Louis.¹³ Positive developments have taken place concerning research on crucial works related to women, such as the *Hortus Deliciarum* of the Hohenburg Abbey in Alsace.¹⁴

Women Artists

In the beginning of what can be called the “gender turn,” the focus predominantly lay on a quest for forgotten women artists, pursued within the framework of traditional art history.¹⁵ However, subsequent works by women authors

adopting a radically feminist position have gone far beyond these initial steps. They realized that evaluating female artists from the traditional art historical viewpoint meant that they could never occupy any place other than outsider, at best. It therefore became necessary to radically question the concept of artistic greatness as defined by men, as well as the established canon for teaching this in universities.¹⁶ Researchers studying both male and female artists were required to pay more attention to the social environment in which men and women lived and worked.¹⁷ This entails an examination of how women managed, in the midst of a world where all the major decisions were taken by men, to create a situation in which they were able to develop their artistic and intellectual abilities and to become artists themselves or to exert some active influence, be it as an artist or patron, upon art.

The question as to whether or not it is worthwhile researching women artists from the Middle Ages is debatable, since so little information about them is available (as indeed is also the case for male artists). But one thing is certain: It is unacceptable to ascribe all anonymous works to male artists.¹⁸ The point of departure for research on medieval women artists was a now famous lecture by Dorothy Miner entitled "Anastaise and Her Sisters," which is still a major source for most authors writing on the subject. Her examples serve to demonstrate that both religious and secular women were involved in the production of books during the Middle Ages.

Among the women artists of the twelfth century some researchers count two of the great names of the day, Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1196) and Herrad, abbess of Hohenburg/Mount St Odile in Alsace (1117–1197). Their status as artists is however the subject of much contention and therefore they will be discussed separately in the next section.¹⁹ In spite of the art-related deeds of these two great abbesses being critically scrutinized, the transcription and illustration of books were certainly among those artistic activities in which women participated in large numbers throughout the entire Middle Ages. Women manifested considerable self-confidence in this area and in certain cases, such as the painter and scribe Guda in a Frankfurt Homiliary, this is expressed in both word and image.²⁰ Yet, the case of Guda especially demonstrates that the self-portrayal of female artists is unmarked by gender. Rather, the female illuminator fashions herself in a manner akin to male artists and scribes.²¹

It seems fair to assume that the self-image, relatively well documented, of scribes and illuminators can be transposed to women artists in other fields. Along with book production, it was in the textile arts that women were most frequently active; in this area however there is a lack of written source material, so that very little can be directly deduced about the self-awareness of an embroiderer or a weaver – although their work was often greatly appreciated by highly placed patrons (for example Mabel of Bury St. Edmunds at the court of Henry III of England, 1216–1272).²²

The best-known embroidery of the Middle Ages, the Bayeux Tapestry (fig. 8-1), made after the Battle of Hastings in 1066, has also been linked to women. However, there is no mention of the tapestry in any contemporary source (the first



FIGURE 8-1 Mourning woman at the deathbed of King Edward the Confessor, Bayeux Tapestry, after 1066. Bayeux: Musée de la tapisserie (p. 131).

reference is in 1476²³), and the identity of the person who commissioned it as well as of the place where it was made have been the subject of controversy since the eighteenth century. Nowadays, the predominant view is that the embroidery was made in England (probably at St. Augustine's, Canterbury) and that it was designed by a monk who was familiar with the manuscript illuminations at Canterbury. The romantic notion that it was Queen Mathilda and her ladies who embroidered the hanging has long been refuted. Likewise, the long-promoted opinion that Bishop Odo of Bayeux, William the Conqueror's half-brother, had commissioned the embroidery has been questioned by more recent literature.²⁴ Moreover, the extent to which women actually participated in the embroidering is still under debate.²⁵ Recently it has been suggested that the nuns of Barking Abbey, who had formed a close association in prayer with the monks of St. Augustine's, were conducting the actual embroidering.²⁶

Apart from those working on books or textiles, only a very small number of women can be identified as artists in other fields. In the Paris tax lists, there is mention of female glass-painters and glass-makers,²⁷ and several women are listed as working in the building trade, termed “maçonne” or “charpentière” (the female forms of mason and carpenter). Women on the building sites, however, mostly constituted an unskilled and poorly paid part of the workforce and as such can hardly be regarded as having assumed an artistic role.²⁸ Their lack of mobility was, furthermore, a barrier to their participation in the monumental arts; hence it is hardly surprising to discover that the sculptress Sabina von Steinbach was in fact a figment of the imagination of a sixteenth-century chronicler.²⁹

Finally, we must ask why art history up until now has treated women artists as marginal, at best. From the time of the Renaissance and above all from the nineteenth century onwards, when art history became established as an academic discipline, those arts involved in the production of books and textiles have been attributed a lowly status in comparison with the “high” arts of painting, monumental sculpture, and architecture. The patrons of art in the Middle Ages, however, recognized no such modern idea of hierarchy.³⁰ The gold work of the *vasa sacra* and reliquaries, the precious textiles for use in the decoration of churches and altars or as liturgical vestments, stained glass, and beautifully presented books were all prized above painting as such (which was also outranked by sculpture as the traditional medium of the cult image). It is therefore an anachronism on the part of modern art historians to treat these medieval precious art objects as marginal works of inferior artistic value.³¹ If the hierarchy of the arts that was prevalent in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries is taken seriously, then the artistic work of women at that time accordingly assumes central importance.

Hildegard of Bingen and Herrad of Hohenburg

Three illustrated manuscripts of works by Hildegard are known: two of them date from the thirteenth century, the third is a copy of the twelfth-century Rupertsberg *Liber Scivias*. This manuscript was perhaps produced in the lifetime of the authoress, and possibly even in the convent at Rupertsberg itself; however, the original disappeared in World War II and now only a copy produced between 1927 and 1933 is available for study.

The question of Hildegard of Bingen’s role in the illustration of her manuscripts is highly contentious, and today’s academic circles are split into two factions.³² Saurma-Jeltsch and Suzuki give priority to the text:³³ in their opinion, Hildegard made notes on what she had seen and heard in her visions and had transcriptions made on which professional illustrators based the images. Caviness, on the other hand, ascribes to Hildegard a distinct artistic role, assuming that she provided the illustrators with detailed sketches on which to base their work.³⁴ The dating of the manuscript is essential to the validation of either hypothesis, but this too is open to debate. Most authors do agree that the *Liber Scivias* of Rupertsberg was created

during Hildegard's lifetime, but the exact dates advanced vary between 1160 and 1181. Saurma-Jeltsch and others categorically date the work toward the end of this time span. Whereas Caviness considers the illustrations as a direct representation of Hildegard's mystical experiences, Saurma-Jeltsch sees them as an interpretation of these experiences based on the text. Caviness and Claussen, by contrast, interpret the illustrations as Hildegard's own intellectual and artistic expression, and associate their unusual character with the aura typical of migraine. Hildegard, however, described her visions as an intellectual achievement, as defined by Saint Augustine.³⁵ A more finely differentiated idea of Hildegard's part in the creation of the texts and illustrations has been offered recently. Hildegard presents herself in both the prologue and the author's portrait as a divinely inspired author, by making allusion to the images of Moses, Gregory the Great, St. John, and the Sybils.³⁶ In this interpretation, text and images are copies of the divine exemplar, and so the two mediums can be deemed equally valuable, being nourished by the same source.

The *Hortus Deliciarum*, in which Herrad compiled the theological knowledge of her time for the women of her convent, presents similar problems. Just like the *Liber Scivias*, it is unique, and no longer available in the original. The *Hortus* was destroyed in 1870 and partially reconstructed in 1979 based on copies of the text and the images made in the nineteenth century.³⁷ As is the case for Hildegard, the role of Herrad in the creation of the illustrations is disputed. While the occasional author refers to Herrad without prevarication as the artist,³⁸ others regard her primarily as the compiler of the texts. Up until now it has only been possible to link the copies of the original miniatures with some of the stained glass in Strasbourg Cathedral, and with a parchment flabellum in the British Library.³⁹ Since the stained glass would hardly have been made anywhere other than Strasbourg itself, it can be concluded that the painters of the images in the *Hortus* were also active in northern Alsace. Therefore, the possibility should be considered that Herrad may well have been able to call in illuminators (from Strasbourg?) to carry out the commission. To sum it up, it is questionable whether Hildegard and Herrad can properly be called artists – unless the term artist is redefined for the Middle Ages to contain the idea that the mental conception of a work of art is just as much an artistic activity as is its material execution.⁴⁰

The Female Image in Romanesque and Gothic Art

Until recently, the issue of the image of woman in the Middle Ages, next to the quest for female artists, has been central to gender studies and feminist art history.⁴¹ Only in very recent times has the focus of interest shifted to an examination of options for activity available to women within a gender specific system informed by asymmetrical power relations.⁴² However, let us return to the question of what image of woman was conveyed through medieval visual arts. It should of course be borne in mind that the surviving portrayals do not represent

reality, but rather convey the ideals and norms of the age.⁴³ These in turn were primarily determined from a theological, and hence male, viewpoint, since the vast majority of the depictions of women originated in a religious context. Moreover, medieval images are rarely socially representative, their subject matter being heavily informed by the culture of the upper classes. The most important function of these images was to provide an appropriate role model for women, i.e. the images were meant to serve onlookers as instruments for the construction of their own gender.⁴⁴ Research into the medieval female image has led to two diametrically opposed conclusions: Frugoni and Caviness form a fairly negative impression of women's position,⁴⁵ whereas McKitterick and Goetz tend to the positive.⁴⁶ Indeed many gender art historical studies demonstrate that women, in spite of the unequal power structures between the sexes and the fact that their position was subjected to change which often led to a deterioration of their status, were able to occupy spaces that afforded them a heightened degree of agency.⁴⁷

Numerous portrayals of women have survived in the funerary arts or as donor or owner portraits.⁴⁸ The oldest extant figural tombs date back to the eleventh century, and among them can be found monuments for female founders, for example, the abbesses of Quedlinburg from c.1100.⁴⁹ A new publication that offers a thoroughgoing discussion of queens' tombs in the European Middle Ages demonstrates that the forms and motives encountered differ only slightly from those of kings' final resting places. Quite obviously, in the face of death, there was no consideration of gender-specific portrayals of queens.⁵⁰ In addition to the religious theme of hope that the soul would be judged worthy of joining the just, the images on the tombs primarily denote the women's standing as prominent members of the royal family.

Extant works of art designed for secular use, from which we could gain an insight into the female image outside of religion, are also rare in the period from 1100 to 1300. The most important is probably the previously mentioned Bayeux Tapestry. The latter can however be taken as evidence that society at that time accorded women a purely marginal role in public life: of the 626 figures depicted, a mere four are women (fig. 8-1).⁵¹ A much more useful group of pictures of women on non-religious objects is constituted by personal seals.⁵² On the seals the women were nearly always pictured standing, and easily identified as female by their physical characteristics. Abbesses in general, queens and empresses in the Holy Roman Empire were depicted with the symbols of their office.⁵³

The concepts of vision and "the gaze" are of great importance in the visual arts. With regard to women, both had negative connotations from a medieval viewpoint, for, particularly in the relationship between the sexes, they were considered dangerous.⁵⁴ A woman was not supposed to attract a man's attention with provocative glances; she should on the contrary be completely invisible to male eyes. The proscription, on moral grounds, of looking is in contradiction to all of the guidance on devotional practice given to the women by their spiritual supervisors.⁵⁵ They were advised to imagine the Life of Christ and the saints in both mental and actual images. Thus, in a religious context, vision and looking could

only have had positive connotations. This view is confirmed in the writings of Saint Bonaventura who ascribed positive qualities to the faculty of sight when it fostered pious sentiments. Hence women visionaries were no longer inclined to accept the gaze as a male privilege.⁵⁶

Recently, the idea of scopophilia has been associated with the images of female martyrs, to postulate that the depicted torture of these sensual virgins actually fulfilled hidden sexual longings. However, this view fails to take into account the internalized piety of the eleventh century and later, which demanded affective participation in the sufferings of Christ and the martyrs. Also, if these images of the torture of holy maidens really did serve to satisfy the sado-erotic desires of clerics, this would have to be authenticated by the medieval sources, over and above any explanation based on Freudian theory.⁵⁷ From what has been said until now, it seems to me that the interpretation of these images as stimuli for empathy, or as souvenirs of personal experience, is more convincing,⁵⁸ particularly in those pictures, created for women, in which the expression of the *compassio*, or affective compassion, constituted a central element.

Women Patrons

For some time now it has been evident that, because of the available sources, research on medieval women patrons would probably be more fruitful than the quest for unknown female artists or the image of woman in medieval art. This has indeed been verified in many case studies,⁵⁹ but there have been few wide-reaching surveys of female patronage which would allow an analysis of trends and patterns. Exceptions are the book by Loveday Lewes Gee which researches a group of English women patrons in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, an extensive article by Madeline Caviness devoted to the period from the eleventh to the early fourteenth century, and the volumes edited by Therese Martin about the role of women in medieval arts.⁶⁰ These texts present a very different picture of the opportunities open to female patrons. While Gee and the contributors to Martin's volumes are convinced that women – given the will, the necessary network of relationships, and the corresponding financial means – could express their own ideas through their commissions, Caviness regards these women's choices as extremely limited.⁶¹

The biographies of women like the German queens Anna (d. 1281, fig. 8-2) and Elisabeth (d. 1313, fig. 8-3), consorts of the two first kings of the Hapsburg Dynasty,⁶² as well as Eleanor of Aquitaine (d. 1204),⁶³ Blanche of Castile (d. 1252),⁶⁴ or Marguerite of Burgundy (d. 1308),⁶⁵ to name but a few, provide abundant material for the study of female patronage. I will limit my observations to only one aspect of the subject which has been heavily shaped by gender – namely, the responsibilities of medieval noblewomen for the preparation of the tombs for deceased relatives, and for the donations made in memory of the dead.⁶⁶ Fasting, the giving of alms, prayer, and the donation of masses for the deceased



FIGURE 8-2 Tomb of Queen Anna, Basel Cathedral, c.1280. © Basler Denkmapflege, Sammlung Münsterphoto. Source: photo by J. Koch, c.1893 (p. 134).



FIGURE 8-3 Elisabeth of Carinthia, Queen of Germany (d. 1313), 1555 after a stained glass panel of c.1360. Vienna: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 8614*, fol. 233r. Source: photo courtesy of Bildarchiv Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (p. 135).

were already mentioned by the chronicler Thietmar von Merseburg (975–1018) as being among a woman’s duties, and those belonging to the social elite were obliged to emulate this ideal to a high degree. With the consent of husband or son, they endowed monasteries, where the religious communities were placed under obligation to remember and pray for the souls of the deceased family members. Women who belonged to the higher social classes often disposed of enough wealth to enable them to bestow rich gifts on these institutions: Eleanor’s stained glass which she donated for the central window at Poitiers Cathedral is but one example of this (fig. 8-4).⁶⁷

Moreover the female patrons nearly always wanted to secure a home for themselves in widowhood and prepare their own burial place. With the exception of Queen Anna, who was buried in Basel Minster (fig. 8-2),⁶⁸ all of the ladies mentioned above chose as their resting place institutions which they had themselves founded or endowed. The German queen Elizabeth was interred in the crypt of the abbey church at Königsfelden in 1316 (fig. 8-3).⁶⁹ Eleanor of Aquitaine chose to be buried in Fontevrault Abbey at the side of her husband and her son.⁷⁰ Blanche of Castile established the tradition of double burial in the



FIGURE 8-4 Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II with their children as donors of a stained glass window, stained glass, Poitiers Cathedral, c.1165. Paris: UMR 8150 – Centre André Chastel. Source: photo Karine Boulanger (p. 136).

French royal family, by deciding on the abbey which she had founded at Maubuisson near Pontoise for the burial of her body and Le Lys Abbey, near Melun as the resting place for her heart.⁷¹ She entrusted both institutions to Cistercian nuns. Marguerite of Burgundy had her tomb prepared in the hospital at Tonnerre which she had founded in 1293.⁷²

The women mentioned above were involved, often intensively, in the planning and construction of their monasteries. It was, for example, in all probability Blanche of Castile who chose as builders for the monasteries of Lys and Maubuisson the team who had previously worked on the abbey of Royaumont.⁷³ The actual involvement of women patrons in the choice of craftsmen was likewise confirmed by Gee.⁷⁴ On the other hand, the style of a building does not necessarily permit an easy interpretation of the wishes of the benefactor. Precisely the institutions mentioned here, such as Maubuisson, Le Lys, or the hospital at Tonnerre, offer few concrete stylistic details which would enable scholars to associate them with any specific model.

The express wishes of female patrons are often no easier to determine with regard to the visual arts. Eleanor of Aquitaine (d. 1204) survived both her husband and her son, Richard the Lionheart. It would seem reasonable to assume that the queen would have arranged a suitable monument for her relatives and herself in the nuns' choir of the church. However, the dating and status of preservation of the funeral effigies is still open to dispute.⁷⁵ Nevertheless the late dating

of the tombs to 1220 should be reconsidered in the light of the particular responsibilities of women toward their dead. Moreover, contrary to her husband's and son's, Eleanor's effigy shows her reading a book. However, it is open to debate whether the queen's eyes were originally open or closed. The current condition of the sepulcher no longer allows any conclusions to be drawn. Most possibly, the chopped off hands holding the book, the nose, and the polychromy had only been restored after 1840 on the basis of drawings by Gaignières.⁷⁶

The tombs of Blanche of Castile and Marguerite of Burgundy were destroyed in the turmoil of the French Revolution.⁷⁷ The patrons of the monastery of Königsfelden, queens Elisabeth (fig. 8-3) and Agnes, found their final resting place there, in the crypt under a simple sarcophagus, void of images, which served as the focus for the ceremonies in memory of the deceased members of the Hapsburg family.⁷⁸ The treasury records and the few remaining textiles from this period afford but a glimpse of the pomp and magnificence of these memorial services.⁷⁹ In Königsfelden and in Tonnerre (fig. 8-5), some of the original stained glass has survived.⁸⁰ However, neither glazing scheme incorporates any specifically female theme: in Königsfelden the accent is placed on general aspects of piety, and in both locations the royal status of the founders is given pre-eminence. This observation can in fact be regarded as a generalization when considering the wishes of patrons in the Middle Ages: both men and women perceived themselves primarily as members of a certain social class, and only in second place as representatives of their gender;⁸¹ their attitudes and behavior were therefore shaped accordingly.



FIGURE 8-5 Portrait of a queen, stained glass, Tonnerre Hospital, c.1295. Paris: UMR 8150: Centre André Chastel, Inventory No. 14. Source: photo Françoise Gatouillat (p. 137).

The Role of Women in the Use of Devotional Images

In the changing spirituality of the monasticism of the eleventh and twelfth centuries can be found the roots of what has been dismissively labeled “popular piety.”⁸² A characteristic of this was the use of devotional images, primarily by the laity, which stood in marked contrast to the austere Cistercian proscription of images. The phenomenon was perceived as resulting from the decline of the monasticism of the High Middle Ages and, because of its permeation by the vernacular, as the opposite of “high” Latin culture. A strict differentiation was made between this popular piety and the devoutness of the elite. Jeffrey Hamburger, in the closing chapter of his masterly study on the Rothschild Canticles (created for a woman in c.1300) considered anew this idea, which had long been accepted by art historians and specialists in religious history alike.⁸³ He actually presents no less than a new, positively oriented history of the use of devotional images in the Late Middle Ages; and he demonstrates how in particular the communities of nuns in the Rhineland made a significant contribution to this field.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, women alone could not have been totally responsible for the change in attitude to images, for, as nuns, the care of their souls was dependent on men, who alone were authorized to administer the sacraments. Hamburger therefore stresses that the way in which women related to images and to their use must be studied within this framework, assuming thereby the cooperation between the nuns and their spiritual advisers.⁸⁵

Men wrote books for women to use as guidance in their devotional practices from the eleventh century onwards. Anselm of Canterbury composed his prayers for Matilda of Tuscany (1046–1115).⁸⁶ Mention should also be made of the richly illustrated psalter, made in the monks’ scriptorium at St. Albans, for the use of the anchoress Christina of Markyate (Albani-Psalter: St. Godehard’s at Hildesheim).⁸⁷ However, Hamburger emphasizes that these women were not merely passive recipients of the manuscripts but took an active part in the transcription of the texts and the creation of the illustrations. In the case of the Rothschild Canticles, he was able to show that the compiler incorporated German texts⁸⁸ that were so unusual that they can only have been included at the express wish of the German-speaking owner. Her influence also extended to the illustrations, which are informed by the metaphorical language of the mystics.⁸⁹

A close connection between the images created for female mystics and the visions they experienced has long been noted in research.⁹⁰ Since authors have, however, assumed that the definitive spirituality of the Middle Ages was predicated upon a standard without images, as ordained by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, the role which images played in visions has necessarily been evaluated as negative. Thus, most authors have judged these women on a criterion which has been devised by modern research but which for the women themselves was completely irrelevant. They in fact deliberately shaped their visions with the aid of real pictures. In the same way, they made use of accepted, familiar biblical and liturgical metaphors to describe their mystical experiences in writing. Without such a

picturesque language, they would not have been able to communicate their experiences in a comprehensible manner. Gertrude of Helfta quoted Christ himself as the authority for this, when she had him say in a vision that sensual devotional experience should not be disparaged, because only through such experience can the human soul apprehend invisible truths.⁹¹

Although Jeffrey Hamburger's research focuses on the period after 1300, he does address the beginnings of the development of the use of devotional images by women in one important study.⁹² Until the thirteenth century, the psalter was the usual prayer book of the nuns and of the laity.⁹³ The first psalters to include a series of full-page miniatures (mostly of the life of Christ) at the front originated in England around 1050. To the early examples of this type can be counted the psalter of Christina of Markyate (c.1120/30) mentioned above. At almost the same time, the first illustrated prayer books were produced; they display an even closer connection between prayer and image than do the psalters, by presenting an illustration on the facing page to one or more texts. In the first half of the twelfth century, the copious illustration of a prayer book was such an innovation that the compiler of the St. Albans Psalter found it necessary to include one of Gregory the Great's letters, in which he justifies the use of images.⁹⁴

In analyzing the justification of the use of images in monastic circles, Hamburger identifies two relevant groups: nuns and male novices.⁹⁵ Whereas the latter abandoned the use of images in their devotional practices after a certain time, the women remained permanently attached to devotional imagery. Medieval theologians explained this continued need for the support of images in their devotions as resulting from the more sensual and corporeal nature of women, which rendered them incapable of intellectual prowess. Hamburger's observations based on the Rothschild Canticles are proof that the use of images from the twelfth, perhaps even the eleventh, century onwards by the confessors and the spiritual advisers in the context of the *cura monialium*, or pastoral care of nuns, corresponded to a real demand on the part of the women and was not simply forced upon them.⁹⁶ This positive reception of imagery by the nuns and their position between the clerics and laity predestined them for mediation between the two, so that their devotional practices based on images passed into general use by the thirteenth century at the latest.⁹⁷ Women were therefore in large part responsible for the promotion of works of visual art to the status of objects which were greatly treasured as helping the soul in its efforts to find the way to God.

Monastic Architecture for Women

Whereas a mere decade ago the number of studies about architecture in women's convents was deplorably low, the situation has in the meantime much improved.⁹⁸ The general neglect of the history of female monasticism in the past probably also partially explains the fact that, over time, the physical vestiges of many of these institutions have more or less disappeared.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, as the latest studies

especially demonstrate, the remaining examples furnish enough architectural evidence to evoke a vivid picture of the life of the devout female members of the various orders. If the archives of the convents which have not disappeared are added to this, there is ample scope for present and future research.¹⁰⁰

The master builder of the Middle Ages was confronted with a fundamental problem when planning the construction of either a double or female monastery, in that he had to strictly separate several groups of inhabitants or users: the male and female occupants of the monastery in the first case; the nuns and their male spiritual advisers within the *cura monialium* in the second.¹⁰¹ Similarly the buildings for the lay sisters and for the employees, as well as the agricultural buildings, had to be completely separate from the nuns' living quarters. Furthermore, the observance of enclosure became more and more strict between the years 1100 to 1300 (it was made obligatory in 1298), and necessitated adaptations in the arrangement of spaces within the convents.¹⁰²

For the founding of a women's monastery, the patron would generally obtain the consent of the bishop of the diocese. The endowment would have to contain provision for a priest or a community of monks for the *cura monialium*, and the charter would usually grant visiting rights to the bishop or his representative. This illustrates how the female convents, even though usually founded by women, had nevertheless in many respects to fit in with, and submit to, a structure defined by men; which in turn explains why the church and convent buildings of female monasteries were generally influenced by the architectural forms prevalent among the male orders.¹⁰³ They were, however, nearly always built in a simplified form. The reason for this often lies in the smaller endowments made to female monasteries, but even the exceptions to this rule constituted by the institutions funded by highly placed patrons did not usually deviate from the ideal of simplicity.¹⁰⁴ This is clearly illustrated by a previously mentioned group of Cistercian monasteries, male and female, which were founded under the patronage of Blanche of Castile and Saint Louis: whereas the abbey church of Royaumont, a male institution, adopts the kind of construction typical of the Gothic cathedrals, the female abbeys of Maubuisson and Le Lys are much more austere. However, an evaluation of these edifices based solely on their architectural style would be mistaken, for Maubuisson, as the burial place of the Queen, was of more importance than the much larger and more magnificent construction at Royaumont, which housed the tombs of the royal children who had died prematurely.¹⁰⁵

The layout of monastery buildings for women and the structure of their churches differed by order and by region. Often it had to accommodate a complicated topography, or perhaps to incorporate an already existing church, as was the case for the convent of Wienhausen and for the nunnery at St. Peter's in Salzburg.¹⁰⁶ Roberta Gilchrist emphasizes the greater flexibility of the plans for female as opposed to male monasteries; often not even the classical arrangement around a cloister is in evidence.¹⁰⁷

In convent churches, the disposition and furnishing of the liturgical spaces posed a particular problem. Since many of these churches have now either

completely lost their furnishings and fittings, or indeed stand only in ruin, the original form and position of the nuns' choir is often difficult to determine. The builders working for the religious orders came up with many, often highly individual, solutions for its location.¹⁰⁸ Cistercian convents in German-speaking regions often had churches built to a single-vessel plan, with a simple choir, and a gallery with stalls at the west end. This model was also adopted by the mendicant orders, although it never became compulsory.¹⁰⁹ In France, for example, the nuns' choir was almost always placed on the same level as the liturgical choir.¹¹⁰

In most recent times, the number of studies on the construction of convent edifices has increased, providing the much-needed knowledge about the buildings the nuns inhabited.¹¹¹ These buildings, far more so than the churches, have been altered in the course of time, so that uncovering their original layout would be difficult. On the other hand recent research confirms that bringing together clues and facts in this area can greatly contribute to our understanding of medieval convent life.¹¹²

Conclusion

This overview on the gender-specific examination of art works testifies to a significant change in the ways in which this issue has been addressed in the course of the past 10 to 15 years. Research has filled many of the gaps lamented in the first version of this article in 2006, and in many respects, questions about gender can be regarded as having become mainstream in medieval art history. However, it is still the case that researchers interested in the women's or gender history have to rely on older publications and have to try to make these serve their interpretations. Other researchers are still attempting to integrate the material from the three central centuries of the Middle Ages into a highly intellectual theoretical framework and in this way to extract new understanding from the images. Both of these approaches are legitimate, but the results generated can only be regarded as credible if they withstand comparison with the original sources. The content and import of these set clearly defined limits to gender-oriented interpretation.

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Notes

- 1 Scott, *Gender*; Goetz, *Moderne Mediaevistik*, pp. 318–329; Gouma-Peterson and Mathew, "The Feminist Critique." To consult the latest contribution to the discussion of the term, see Lindquist "Gender."

- 2 Duby and Perrot, *Histoire des femmes en Occident*, Goetz, *Frauen im frühen Mittelalter*.
- 3 As demonstrated by Shortell, "Erasures and Discoveries of Women's Contributions," the abbey church of Saint Quentin is a prime example of this.
- 4 Martin, "Exceptions and Assumptions" consistently problematizes the cooperation of women and men.
- 5 Easton, "Feminism," and Dressler, "Continuing the Discourse."
- 6 Goetz, *Moderne Mediaevistik*, p. 320; Zimmermann, *Kunstgeschichte und Gender*, p. 13.
- 7 Regarding the development of feminist research, see primarily Easton, "Feminism," pp. 107–109.
- 8 Parker and Pollock, *Old Mistresses*. See also the essays in *Speculum* 68 (1993), pp. 305–471. Although more than a decade has passed since the finalization of the manuscript of the original article, this still is the case, even though publications have increased almost threefold.
- 9 Caviness, *Visualizing Women*.
- 10 Scott, *Gender*, p. 1070; *Speculum*, 68 (1993), pp. 309–331.
- 11 Morrison, *History as a Visual Art*, pp. 154–195.
- 12 Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*; Flori, *Aliénor d'Aquitaine*; Aurell, *Aliénor d'Aquitaine*.
- 13 Gérard Sivéry's *Blanche de Castille* remains the publication to consult. The latest biography by Delorme, *Blanche de Castille*, contributes little to a more profound understanding of the medieval queen.
- 14 Green et al., *Hortus Deliciarum*, was published when gender studies was still in its infancy. For a summary, see: Evans, "Herrad," pp. 358–359. By contrast, Herrad as the author of *Hortus Deliciarum* and the work as a means to educate the nuns of Hohenburg Abbey is presented by Griffith, *The Garden of Delights*.
- 15 Gouma-Peterson and Matthew, "The Feminist Critique," p. 350. [See also Chapter 34 by Hamburger in this volume (ed.).]
- 16 Pollock, "Women and Art History."
- 17 Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?"
- 18 This problematic issue is discussed by Martin, "Exceptions and Assumptions," pp. 13–20, where possible new approaches to female artists are presented.
- 19 Havice, "Approaching Medieval Women," pp. 366–367; Mariaux, "Women in the Making."
- 20 Graf, *Bildnisse*, pp. 50–60.
- 21 Mariaux, "Women in the Making," pp. 413–415.
- 22 Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, pp. 48–49.
- 23 Pastan and White, *The Bayeux Tapestry and Its Context*, pp. 19–23.
- 24 Pastan and White, *The Bayeux Tapestry and Its Context*, pp. 59–81.
- 25 Carr, "Women as Artists," p. 6.
- 26 Pastan and White, *The Bayeux Tapestry and Its Context*, p. 13. Tibbetts Schulenburg, "Holy Women and the Needle Arts."
- 27 Lillich, "Gothic Glaziers."
- 28 Schöller, "Frauenarbeit"; for a discussion of this topic from a different perspective, see Tibbetts Schulenburg, "Female Piety and the Building."
- 29 Geyer, "Le mythe d'Erwin de Steinbach," pp. 322–329. Pollock, "Women and Art History," p. 308, and Havice, "Women and the Production of Art," pp. 72–75, claim, on the contrary, that Sabina was a legendary medieval artist. However Havice, in "Approaching Medieval Women," p. 372, corrects her earlier assumption.

- 30 [On patronage, see Chapter 12 by Caskey in this volume (ed.).]
- 31 For a medieval *Paragone* see: Theophilus, *The Various Arts*, pp. 37 and 61–64. [In regard to Romanesque manuscript illumination and the sumptuous arts, see Chapters 20 and 27 by Cohen and Buettner, respectively, in this volume (ed.).] For a discussion of the relationship between high art and craft, now consult Hourihane, *From Minor to Major*.
- 32 Caviness, “Hildegard of Bingen”; Heerlein, “Hildegard von Bingen.”
- 33 Saurma-Jeltsch, *Die Miniaturen*, pp. 12–15; Suzuki, *Bildgewordene Visionen*, pp. 222–225.
- 34 Caviness, “Hildegard as Designer,” and “Gender Symbolism.” See also Claussen, “Visio – Vision – Visionsbild.”
- 35 Graf, *Bildnisse*, pp. 101–109.
- 36 *Ibid.*, pp. 92–189. Now also Ganz, *Medien der Offenbarung*, pp. 118–126 and 135–138.
- 37 See n. 14 above.
- 38 McGuire, “Two Twelfth Century Women,” now also Griffith, *The Garden of Delights*, pp. 112–130. However, the author ignores the relationship between the miniatures and the stained glass of the Werner Minster in Strasbourg. For such a discussion, see most recently Kurmann-Schwarz, “Les vitraux du choeur et du transept,” pp. 225–279.
- 39 Kurmann-Schwarz, “Les vitraux du choeur et du transept,” pp. 242–229, and 264–270; Cahn, *Romanesque Manuscripts*, pp. 180–181.
- 40 Most recently, this demand had been put forward by Martin, “Exceptions and Assumptions.”
- 41 Exemplary publications for this tradition of posing questions are Caviness, *Visualizing Women*; Havice, “Approaching Medieval Women,” pp. 347–359;
- 42 Lindquist, “Gender,” pp. 114–116; Easton, “Feminism,” pp. 101–102.
- 43 Goetz, *Frauen im frühen Mittelalter*, pp. 284–285; Zimmermann, *Kunstgeschichte und Gender*, pp. 20–24.
- 44 Lindquist, “Gender,” p. 114.
- 45 Frugoni, “La femme imaginée,” in Duby and Perrot, *Histoire des femmes en Occident*, pp. 357–437; Caviness, “Anchoress,” pp. 105–108.
- 46 McKitterick, “Women in the Ottonian Church”; Goetz, *Frauen im frühen Mittelalter*, pp. 281–323.
- 47 See contributions in Duby and Perrot, *Histoire des femmes en Occident*, and in Martin, *Reassessing the Roles of Women*.
- 48 As an exemplary publication for the discussion of gender specific portrayals of patrons, see Schleif, “Seeking Patronage.”
- 49 *Ibid.*, pp. 9–13; Havice, “Approaching Medieval Women,” pp. 345–347, 355; Blough, “The Abbatial Effigies of Quedlinburg.”
- 50 Blaser-Meier, *Hic iacet regina*.
- 51 Morrison, *History as Visual Art*, pp. 164–171. The consequences of such an attitude are discussed by Caviness, “Anglo-Saxon Women.”
- 52 Bedos-Rezak, “Medieval Women.”
- 53 Fössel, *Die Königin*, Ill. 11.
- 54 Caviness, *Visualizing Women*, pp. 18–44.
- 55 Hamburger, *Rothschild Canticles*, p. 167.
- 56 *Ibid.*, p. 163.
- 57 Caviness, *Visualizing Women*, pp. 84–124.

- 58 Stones, "Nipples, Entrails," and *Livre d'image*; Braem, *Das Andachtsbuch*.
- 59 Lord, *Royal French Patronage*, pp. 56–65 (Royal Female Patronage); Caviness, "Anchoress," p. 107. Over the course of the past years, research on male and female patrons has much increased. For the latest publication on patronage by men and women, see Hourihane, *Patronage*, and Martin, *Reassessing the Roles of Women*.
- 60 Gee, *Women*; Caviness, "Anchoress"; Martin, *Reassessing the Roles of Women*.
- 61 Caviness, "Anchoress," p. 107.
- 62 Fössel, *Die Königin*; Kurmann-Schwarz, *Die mittelalterlichen Glasmalereien*, pp. 29–31; Stercken, "saeldenriche frowen und gschwind listig wib," pp. 341–350.
- 63 Flori, *Aliénor d'Aquitaine*, pp. 394–413, and the articles in Aurell, *Aliénor d'Aquitaine*.
- 64 Sivéry, *Blanche de Castille*; also: Gajewsky-Kennedy, "The Patronage Question."
- 65 Lillich, *The Queen of Sicily*, pp. 68–74; Kurmann-Schwarz, "Des oeuvres d'art commanditées pour un hôpital."
- 66 Althoff, *Adels und Königsfamilien*, pp. 133–178; Fössel, *Die Königin*, pp. 222–249; Nelson, "Medieval Queenship."
- 67 Caviness, "Anchoress," pp. 128–131.
- 68 Schwinn-Schürmann, "Das Grabmal." A discussion of the reasons behind a particular choice of a tomb is offered by Stercken, "saeldenriche frowen und gschwind listig wib," pp. 348–350.
- 69 Kurmann-Schwarz, *Die mittelalterlichen Glasmalereien*, pp. 68–72.
- 70 Bienvendu, "Aliénor d'Aquitaine et Fontevraud."
- 71 Gajewsky-Kennedy, "The Patronage Question," pp. 242–244; Blaser-Meier, *Hic iacet regina*, pp. 173–175, 219.
- 72 Lillich, *The Queen of Sicily*, pp. 68–75, 110–112.
- 73 Gajewsky-Kennedy, "The Patronage Question," pp. 214–240.
- 74 Gee, *Women*, pp. 93–108.
- 75 Sauerländer and Kroos, *Gotische Skulptur*, pp. 130–131; Prunet and de Maupeou, "Présentation des Gisants," (with Bibliography). Contrary to the late dates offered by these authors, Erlande-Brandenburg, "Le gisant d'Aliénor," Flori, *Aliénor d'Aquitaine*, p. 398, and Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, pp. 294–295, promote the idea that the queen commissioned the tombs before her death. See now also Blaser-Meier, *Hic iacet regina*, pp. 207–208.
- 76 Mérimée: "Le haut du corps est tellement endommagé qu'il est difficile de juger sa position": see Prunet and de Maupeou, "Présentation des Gisants," p. 63, and Schreiner, *Die frühgotische Plastik*, pp. 67–75.
- 77 Erlande-Brandenburg, "Le tombeau de coeur"; Gajewsky-Kennedy, "The Patronage Question"; Lillich, *The Queen of Sicily*, p. 112, n. 21; Kurmann-Schwarz, "Des oeuvres d'art commanditées pour un hôpital," pp. 182–183, fig. 5; Blaser-Meier, *Hic iacet regina*, pp. 219, 237.
- 78 Kurmann-Schwarz, *Die mittelalterlichen Glasmalereien*, pp. 70–72.
- 79 Frings and Gerchow, *Krone und Schleier*, pp. 501–502, 525 (catalog entries by Susan Marti).
- 80 Kurmann-Schwarz, *mittelalterlichen Glasmalereien*; Lillich, *The Queen of Sicily*, pp. 77–95; Kurmann-Schwarz, "Des oeuvres d'art commanditées pour un hôpital," pp. 186–187.
- 81 Goetz, *Moderne Mediaevistik*, p. 329.
- 82 For a discussion of how art and spirituality changed for women, see Frings and Gerchow, *Krone und Schleier*, pp. 308–328.

- 83 Hamburger, *Rothschild Canticles*, pp. 155–167.
- 84 Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, pp. 111–148.
- 85 Hamburger, *Rothschild Canticles*, p. 164; Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*; Martin, “Exceptions and Assumptions,” pp. 2–7, and Kurmann-Schwarz, *Die mittelalterlichen Glasmalereien*, pp. 67–68.
- 86 Hamburger, *Rothschild Canticles*, p. 160 and “Liber Precum,” p. 220; Carrasco, “Imagery,” pp. 75–76.
- 87 Pächt et al., *The Saint Albans Psalter*; Hamburger, *Rothschild Canticles*, p. 160; Caviness, “Anchoress,” pp. 107–113; Hamburger, “Liber Precum,” pp. 228–230; Carrasco, “Imagery”; Geddes, *The St. Albans Psalter*, pp. 89–105.
- 88 Hamburger, *Rothschild Canticles*, pp. 99–100, 161.
- 89 Hamburger, “Liber Precum.”
- 90 Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, pp. 111–148. A foundational study of how visions were portrayed in the Middle Ages is offered by Ganz, *Medien der Offenbarung*, pp. 9–23.
- 91 Hamburger, *Rothschild Canticles*, pp. 165–166.
- 92 Hamburger, “Liber Precum.”
- 93 Oliver, *Gothic Manuscript Illumination*, pp. 29–119.
- 94 Pächt et al., *The Saint Albans Psalter*, pp. 137–138; Carrasco, “Imagery,” p. 71.
- 95 Hamburger, “Liber Precum,” p. 232.
- 96 Hamburger, *Rothschild Canticles*, pp. 164–165.
- 97 Geddes, *The St. Albans Psalter*, pp. 102–103; Boerner, *Bildwirkungen*, pp. 33–86.
- 98 Since 2003, the number of publications has increased enormously. Here, only a selection of studies can be offered: Siart, *Kreuzgänge*; Jäggi, *Frauenklöster im Spätmittelalter*; Frings and Gerchow, *Krone und Schleier*; Schmitt, *Femmes, art et religion*. See also Chapter 34 by Hamburger in this volume.
- 99 This can be shown with the example of Vienna: Schedl, *Klosterleben und Stadtkultur*.
- 100 Venarde, *Women’s Monasticism and Medieval Society*.
- 101 Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, pp. 44–57; Frings and Gerchow, *Krone und Schleier*, pp. 348–349 and 400–401 (Hamburger).
- 102 Concerning legislation on enclosure, see Huyghe, *La clôture*; Tibbetts Schulenburg, “Strict Active Enclosure”; Johnson, “La théorie de la clôture”; furthermore, for a discussion of the architectural disposition, see Muschiol, Jäggi and Lobbedey, in Frings and Gerchow, *Krone und Schleier*, pp. 40–51, and 88–103.
- 103 For example, Königsfelden (Switzerland): Kurmann-Schwarz, *Die mittelalterlichen Glasmalereien*, pp. 42–66.
- 104 Jordan, “Gender Concerns.”
- 105 Gajewsky-Kennedy, “The Patronage Question.”
- 106 Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, pp. 44–57.
- 107 Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture*, pp. 92–127. For a more recent discussion of this topic, see Jäggi, *Frauenklöster im Spätmittelalter*.
- 108 Bruzelius, “Hearing Is Believing.”
- 109 Descoedres, “Mittelalterliche Dominikanerinnenkirchen.”
- 110 Simmons, “The Abbey Church.”
- 111 Regarding the edifices of Dominican and Clarist nuns, see Jäggi, *Frauenklöster im Spätmittelalter*.
- 112 Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture*, pp. 128–169; Frings and Gerchow, *Krone und Schleier*, pp. 342–531.

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Gregory the Great and Image Theory in Northern Europe During the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

Herbert L. Kessler

In two letters written around the year 600 to Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, Pope Gregory the Great provided material for a defense of images that was seldom challenged during the Middle Ages and that came to serve as a foundation of art making.¹ According to the venerable pope, like other material things, pictures must not be adored; but they should also not be destroyed because representations of sacred events and saintly persons are useful for teaching the faith to gentiles and illiterate Christians, “who read in them what they cannot read in books,” and can serve to recall sacred history to the minds of the indoctrinated. Moreover, they activate emotions which, when properly channeled, lead the faithful toward contemplation of God.

A practical response to a particular act of iconoclasm, Gregory’s statements about the value of art are not original, nor are they systematic or altogether clear. But they invested diverse earlier ideas about images with the authority of a “doctor ecclesiae,” thereby providing an unassailable response to Byzantine iconoclasm during the eighth and ninth centuries and to later criticisms of art. Bede cited them as early as 731, and they were continuously invoked from then on.² Moreover, around the middle of the eighth century, someone in the Lateran, it would seem, interpolated a further defense of art into Gregory’s authentic letter to the recluse Secundinus, which came to be included in the *Registrum Gregorii*.³ Transferring to images the pope’s own claim (in his *Homilies on Ezekiel*, II.4.20) that Christ had “appeared visible to show us the invisible,”⁴ the Pseudo-Gregory linked pictures directly to the Incarnation and underscored art’s function for stirring the

emotions of believers.⁵ “When you see the picture, you are inflamed in your soul with love of him whose image you wish to see. We do no harm in wishing to show the invisible by means of the visible.”⁶ Specifically, the interpolation refers to Savior’s birth, suffering, and glorification and, in so doing, assimilates images to Christ’s two natures,⁷ a claim that, following it, others began to reiterate. The ninth-century *Life of St. Maura*, for instance, describes a church with statues of the Madonna and Child, crucified Christ, and Christ in Majesty.⁸

Because the Gregorian dicta did not constitute a reasoned theory, one aspect or another could be emphasized to suit a particular context of discussion or tradition of art production;⁹ and even though the letters themselves were circulated in the *Registrum*, the pope’s statements about images were generally known through excerpts introduced in debates on the subject. Thus, Theodulf of Orleans abridged the Serenus letters to suit his generally hostile stance toward religious art in the *Libri carolini*,¹⁰ while, in his reaction, Pope Hadrian adduced selected passages as evidence of the church’s traditional support of pictures.¹¹ Gregory was cited in favor of images at the Paris Council of 825,¹² but his “middle way” was also evoked to constrain those at the (erased) Eighth Ecumenical Council of 870 who had gone too far by advocating the “necessity of images.”¹³ In his influential *Decretals* (1008–1012), Burchard of Worms provided a synopsis of the reply to Serenus (wrongly citing it as from the Secundinus letter);¹⁴ and at the Synod of Arras in 1025, Bishop Gerard I of Cambrai apparently delivered a sermon (incorporated in the council’s acts) in which he conflated the authentic dicta with the Pseudo-Gregory.¹⁵

Transmitted in various forms, Gregory’s defense was taken for granted by the twelfth century when it was quoted by Gratian,¹⁶ Honorius Augustodunensis,¹⁷ and others. At mid-century, Herman-Judah put it into the mouth of Rupert of Deutz to justify Christian art to a skeptical Jew;¹⁸ and 50 years later, the Cistercian author of the *Pictor in Carmine* began his tract with condensed paraphrases of Gregory’s claims that images can serve pedagogical and affective roles.¹⁹ In the thirteenth century, Alexander of Hales,²⁰ Bonaventure,²¹ and Thomas Aquinas²² promulgated three basic arguments in support of images, the so-called *triplex ratio* that Honorius had distilled from the letters: instruction, affect, and recall.²³ At the start of his discussion of church decoration, William Durandus still deferred to Gregory: “Pictures and ornaments in churches are the lessons and scriptures of the laity” and then quoted the Serenus letter.²⁴ Even within such seemingly mechanical repetition, the Gregorian claims acquired new shades of meaning, however; for example, when Honorius reduced the pope’s premises to three, he was tacitly acknowledging that iconoclasm was no longer much of an issue.²⁵

Gregory the Great’s defense of art had its own history during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, generated by the general acceptance of art, changing notions of the sacred, an evolving image cult, shifts in audience, and the growth of vernacular culture.²⁶

An important part of that history was the melding with Greek image theory.²⁷ While Gregory had himself drawn on Eastern fathers to formulate his responses to the bishop of Marseilles,²⁸ the incorporation of Basil the Great’s essential

claim that “the honor given to the image ascends to the prototype” is largely the Pseudo-Gregory’s addition to the dicta, which actually subverts the Augustinian separation of physical sign and holy archetype underlying Gregory’s real statements. Pope Hadrian buttressed the imported notion of *transitus* with teachings from the Second Council of Nicaea (787) and citations from the most influential of all Greek writers, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite.²⁹ From the ninth century, the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius held a particular fascination in France where they were considered works of the patron saint, Denys; Hugh of St. Victor wrote a commentary on them which surely influenced Suger, who twice used the expression found in the ninth-century Latin translations “de materialibus ad immaterialia.”³⁰ By his day, however, the abbot of St.-Denis would also have known the principle of anagogy from many other sources as well.³¹ Genuine Greek iconodulic theory re-emerged in the twelfth century when Burgundio da Pisa translated John of Damascus’s *De fide orthodoxa*,³² and it entered the mainstream through Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*.³³ Thomas Aquinas incorporated Aristotelean ideas into this newly expanded defense of images, asserting among other things that the devout could distinguish the physical object from the “rational creature” represented on it and, therefore, could be led to venerate not the representation but God himself.³⁴ In this, he was attacked by Durandus of St. Pourçain and others who reiterated the basic tenet that images are arbitrary signs and hence veneration of them was idolatry.³⁵

The infusion of Greek theory reinforced the relationship between material images and Christ’s two natures suggested in the Serenus letters and made explicit in the Pseudo-Gregory; God can be pictured because he had assumed human form, but veneration is channeled mentally to his ineffable divinity. Pope Hadrian had already linked the image cult to Christ’s incarnation,³⁶ a connection later strengthened through the appropriation of John of Damascus’s reasoned argument. It was not merely a theory. Already c.1000, an opening in the Hitda Codex (Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, MS 1640, fols. 6v–7r) applied it to a picture of Christ in Majesty and proclaimed its essence in the accompanying titulus:

This visible image represents the invisible truth
Whose splendor penetrates the world through the four lights (Gospels) of his new
doctrine.³⁷

Not long afterward, the customary of the monastery of Fruttaria made the same distinction between the physical apprehension of a material image and seeing God himself with inner eyes.³⁸ Alan of Lille gave formal expression to the idea: “they depict the image of Christ so that people can be led through those things seen to the invisible, and through signs, the archetypes are venerated”;³⁹ and an illumination that must have resembled the initial cut from a twelfth-century Rhenish Sacramentary (fig. 9-1a) brought the same idea to the mind of Sicard of Cremona: “In some books, the majesty of the Father and the cross of the crucifix



FIGURE 9-1 Cutting from a Sacramentary. Vienna: Albertina (inv. 22864r).

are portrayed so that it is almost as if we see present the one we are calling to, and the passion that is depicted imprints itself on the eyes of the heart."⁴⁰ A popular early twelfth-century distich stresses art's basis in the Christological economy. Inscribed on the back of a phylactery picturing Christ in heaven made c.1165 in Liège (fig. 9-2), it reads:

What you see here is not a representation of a god or a man;
 this sacred image represents both god and man at one and the same time.⁴¹

Gregory had already linked the dual aspects of material images to bodily reactions before them, distinguishing physical prostration before the object from



FIGURE 9-2 Mosan enamel. St. Petersburg: Hermitage (inv. Φ 171).

mental veneration of the person depicted on it. Appropriating Byzantine distinctions and terminology, Alan of Lille differentiated the worship due to God from that properly accorded to images: “Christians should not exhibit to the creature the kind of adoration which is owed God (*latría*), but what the Greeks call *dulia*, which is owed to man and angel”⁴² – and he was followed in this by Thomas Aquinas among others.⁴³ In a general counterclaim to those who held that Christian images were idolatrous, this response became central;⁴⁴ thus, an inscription around the portrait of Christ exhorts viewers to “revere the image of Christ by kneeling before it when you pass by it; but in doing this make sure you do not worship the image but rather him whom it represents.”⁴⁵

More than any other element of his letters, Gregory’s equation of pictures with sacred writ resonated in the later reiterations.⁴⁶ The *Majestas Domini* at the front of the *Hitda Codex*, for example, renders visual the point spelled out in the *titulus*: the essential unity of the four written accounts that follow in the manuscript derives from the person of Christ, whose earthly history they record. In the *Albertina miniature*, word and image are actually made one. The cross on which Christ hangs is the T of the “*Te igitur*,” the opening prayer of the Mass; and the picture of the “*Throne of Mercy*” embellished with a chalice realizes the very essence of the words that in the performed liturgy connected Christ’s historic sacrifice to God alive in heaven.⁴⁷

Gregory had *imagines* of the sort depicted in the Hitda Gospels and on the Vienna cutting and St. Petersburg enamel less in mind, however, than depictions of events that had taken place in the world and had been witnessed by humans; and his claims about *historiae* were particularly influential on later theory. Narrative art was deemed both less likely than portraiture to provoke dangerous veneration and more effective for teaching because it could capture attention with its drama and then lead the faithful to an understanding of the meaning of the pictured event.⁴⁸ Thus, in advocating the picturing of scriptural events in churches, the *Pictor in Carmine* asserted: “since the eyes of our contemporaries are apt to be caught by a pleasure that is not only vain, but even profane ... it is an excusable concession they should enjoy at least that class of pictures that can put forward divine things to the unlearned.”⁴⁹ And Peter of Celle maintained that, because of their mnemonic capacity, images abrogate the prohibition of images in Deuteronomy.⁵⁰

How narrative art worked is evident in frescoes painted c.1200 in the church of St. Johann at Müstair in south Tirol (fig. 9-3).⁵¹ Painted at eye level in the apse, the martyrdom of the dedicatory saint is staged in a highly dramatic fashion, not only the beheading but also Salome’s dance before Herod. The backdrop of profane music, dancing, chatting people, and banqueting immediately engages the senses, providing a stark contrast to the ghastly execution and hence meditating on the relationship between earthly pleasures and holy sacrifice. His head shown being brought to the table on a charger, John is identified with the Sacraments; and his whole body is offered for contemplation in the depictions of

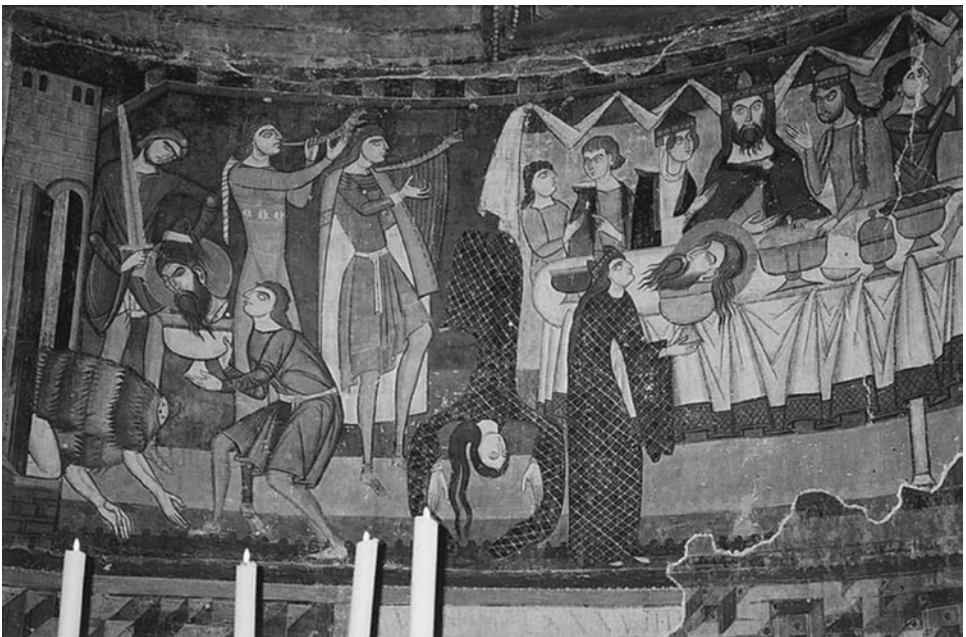


FIGURE 9-3 Central apse of St. Johann, Müstair. Source: photo by Herbert L. Kessler.

his funeral procession and solemn burial. Herod Antipas, in turn, is portrayed as a kind of anti-Christ, flanked by Herodias and a man of Galilee, that is, by two anti-intercessors demanding John's life. Literally inverted like a personification of Pride, the dancing Salome signals the result of sensual preoccupation and, in so doing, suggests the viewers' proper response, which is to turn their own heads and thoughts away from the earth and toward heaven. There above, flanking a window, depictions of the five wise virgins and five foolish virgins (Matthew 25: 1–13) remind them that, as preparation for meeting the celestial Judge, they must forsake worldly pleasures.

The dramatically presented events and saint's pain would surely have evoked in pious believers at Müstair the "ardor of compunction" that Gregory had hoped would result from making past happenings present and that was explicitly extended to depictions of saints at the Synod of Arras: "through them minds are excited interiorly to contemplation of the working of divine grace, and also through their deeds we are influenced in our own behavior."⁵² Alluding to Horace through Gregory, William Durandus summed up art's affective role succinctly: "painting seems to move the soul more than writing; by a painting a deed done is set before the eyes."⁵³ As the Pseudo-Gregory had already pointed out, by recalling the saint's presence, simple portraits too evoked compassion: "like scripture, the image returns the Son of God to our memory and equally delights the soul concerning the resurrection and softens it concerning the passion." In 1249, imitating "Gregory's" gift to Secundinus, Jacques Pantel on of Troyes (later Pope Urban IV) sent a copy of the Mandylion to his sister in the monastery of Montreuil-les-Dames near Laon, so that "through contemplation of the image the nuns' pious affections might be more inflamed so that their minds might be made purer."⁵⁴ Around the same time, Matthew Paris included a representation of the Holy Face in a Psalter (London, British Library, MS Arundel 157) "in order for the soul be stirred to devotion."⁵⁵ Emotions aroused by pictures facilitated the transfer of contemplation from the object before the eyes to the spiritual reality beyond and piqued and fixed memory. The Pseudo-Gregory had likened an image of Christ to the portrait of a departed lover; and, in the middle of the twelfth century, Nicholas Maniacutius applied the same idea when he compared the Lateran *Acheropita* to portraits of the deceased kept by mourners.⁵⁶

When Gregory defended art to Serenus of Marseilles at the end of the sixth century, the audience he imagined comprised pagans, peasants, and perhaps Jews;⁵⁷ as Christianity became firmly planted in Gaul and elsewhere, the target group was continually redefined.⁵⁸ The dicta were invoked in the *adversos Judaeos* disputes, such as Herman-Judah's encounter with Rupert of Deutz; but with art now an article of orthodox faith, they were also used as a weapon against heresy, as in Gerard of Cambrai's sermon and Alan of Lille's anti-Albigensian *De fide catholica*.

Steadily, the dicta were redirected toward the Christian laity. Gerard had already pointed toward "illiterati" as well as "simplices," presumably to distinguish true rustics from those simply unable to read; and, recognizing that pictures served

the whole Christian community, Honorius replaced Gregory's "gentes" and "idiotae" with "laici" and, substituting "clerici" for "litterati,"⁵⁹ contrasted the laity with clerics.⁶⁰ In this, he was followed not only by William Durandus, but also Alan of Lille,⁶¹ John Belet, ⁶² Sicard of Cremona,⁶³ and, a little after 1233, by Guillaume, bishop of Bourges, who asserted that "we make images because, just as scripture is the words of clerics, so images are the words of the lay."⁶⁴ About the same time, the dicta entered secular histories such as the Hohenburg chronicle;⁶⁵ with Gregory in mind, Matthew Paris explained that he had translated the life of King Edward into French for those who could not read Latin and into pictures for "ceux qui les lettres ne scavent."⁶⁶

The lay audience itself was not uniformly illiterate. The Council of 870 had already included the learned (*sapientes*) along with the uneducated (*idiotae*) in its discussion of images. The *Pictor in Carmine* is explicit that the "libri laicorum" were useful for both "simplices" and "litterati," teaching the one group and eliciting the love of scripture in the other; and it imagined an audience able to identify episodes from the New Testament by means of simple labels. The ubiquitous captions in medieval art and the inclusion of material images within books establish that pictures were intended also for those able to read.⁶⁷ Thus, while defending pictures as "the books of the lay," Peter Comestor assumed that the readers of his *Historia Scholastica* were iconographically as well as textually literate when he explained the presence of the ox and ass at the birth of Christ.⁶⁸ Abbot Suger noted that the reliefs on the (now lost) altar of St.-Denis were "intelligible only to the literate";⁶⁹ and his stained glass windows are ample evidence that only those capable of understanding the inscribed words would have comprehended the full meaning of his art.⁷⁰

Pictures served the clergy, as well.⁷¹ Suger remarked that Christ depicted on the front of his golden crucifix was to be "in the sight of the sacrificing priest";⁷² and the illuminated initial in Vienna was intended for an officiant at Mass versed in Trinitarian speculations.⁷³ Because they were both literate and had rejected the sensual world, monks, of all groups, were thought not to need art.⁷⁴ Even while permitting bishops to introduce pictures in churches to "stimulate the devotion of a carnal people with material ornaments because they cannot do so with spiritual ones," Bernard of Clairvaux, for example, disallowed art in monasteries;⁷⁵ and the *Pictor in Carmine* implied the same distinction when it permitted "paintings in churches, especially cathedral and parish churches."⁷⁶ In fact, however, art thrived in monasteries throughout the Middle Ages. The *Moralia in Job* illustrated at Cîteaux c.1111 (Dijon, Bib. Mun. MS 168–170, 173), for instance, deploys a range of fantastic and mundane figures to gloss the text as spiritual struggle and monastic meditation.⁷⁷ Jerome's Commentary on Daniel, Minor Prophets, and Ecclesiastes (Dijon, Bib. Mun. MS 132) produced in the same monastery a decade or so later is adorned with complex frontispieces that, in accord with the accompanying text, use sophisticated visual devices to represent the harmony of scripture and the relationship of written prophecy to the liturgy.⁷⁸ Hugh of St. Victor's *Mystic Ark* comprises lectures delivered to monks in which an elaborate wall painting

was the principal didactic instrument;⁷⁹ and Adam the Premonstratensian's *De tripartito tabernaculo* is organized around a diagram of Moses' tabernacle so that the monks could construct a harmony between "what they read in the book and saw in the picture."⁸⁰ Propelled by new forms of female spirituality, such images as the Holy Face given to the monastery of Montreuil-les-Dames acquired special importance during the thirteenth century in the devotional practices of nuns.⁸¹

Like the distinction between literate and illiterate, the difference between secular and lay was not clear cut. Thus, while advising that "Genesis is to be read in a book, not on the wall" and rejecting art's utility for "teachers," Hugh of Fouillooy addressed the illustrated *Aviarium* to a lay-brother of his Augustinian monastery and, accordingly, adjusted the argument to persons with some education but still needing pedagogical aids. For members of such intermediary groups, pictures are useful because they clarified complicated texts: "For just as the learned man delights in the subtlety of the written word, so the intellect of simple folk is engaged by the simplicity of a picture."⁸² Building on the Gregorian discussion of the two watchtowers of faith,⁸³ the prologue miniature in a late twelfth-century Burgundian exemplar of the *Aviarium* pictures the imagined system (Heiligenkreuz, Abbey, MS 226, fol. 129v): A knight brings the laity (symbolized by the birds) to be converted to the monastic rule through words and pictures.⁸⁴

As the miniature and diagrams in the Heiligenkreuz manuscript attest, mundane themes were also not always separated from religious ones. The psalter illuminated between 1121 and 1145 at St. Alban's monastery (Hildesheim, Dombibliothek, St. Godehard, MS 1, p. 72; fig. 9-4), for instance, deploys a chivalric motif to make a spiritual argument; prefacing the scripture, a picture of two battling knights is glossed as evidence that things of this world seen carnally are to be understood spiritually.⁸⁵ What that understanding might be remains ambiguous; like the Müstair fresco and Dijon *Moralia in Job*, the illumination engages the viewer/reader purposely in a personal struggle with worldly temptation.⁸⁶ The psalter also includes Burchard's synopsis of Gregory's letter to Serenus; the mistaken ascription to the holy hermit Secundinus must have appealed to the anchoress Christine of Markyate when she prayed from her illustrated book of Psalms.⁸⁷

In the St. Alban's psalter, the Gregorian text is transcribed in a Norman French translation, rendering it available to anyone who could read even if they were unable to understand the Latin version that is also included. It is possible that the dicta had been translated into the vernacular even earlier; whether or not Gerard of Cambrai actually delivered his defense of images at the synod as a Latin sermon, he may have read a short version of it in French.⁸⁸ The dicta certainly entered vernacular preaching later; a mid-thirteenth-century German compendium includes one sermon that maintains that God had provided church paintings for the laity as "another form of writing, from which they learn how they should strive to enter heaven" and that argues that "paintings of the saints in the churches" are particularly effective in redirecting vain thoughts toward the divine by virtue of the feelings they stir inwardly.⁸⁹ Cited also during the following century, the image

rembi: eade pibe: Hic firmam
 ueritate declaratum: quia qui
 uoluerit tenere ut subiacet
 Sicut uti uiriles se & prudentes
 incurfu equitationis: similes
 nos oportet ee uiriles & pfect
 tos in pauerantia stabilitatis:
 Si aliquid gladio aut lancea seu
 uolatu sagitta percuss fuerim
 si tam inanes decedam si uiriles
 pbat sum: si tantu in do pfecto
 refficient: & fide: &
 spe duplicet acceingem
 ut salui coram do cononem.

Nos au oportet omem artem
 quam in dno bellatores parant
 corporibus suis: ordinare spib:
 nris: Quia sanguis scōz marti
 rā & digna uirginitas illuminat
 libru uite: & pcedunt amorem
 celestem: & mutat diuina face
 & sermizat nocte acdie sedm
 significatiōe: & expurgat se afflu
 pbat corā die nouissimi: & di
 uinu plū qd est pcedit in scripta
 futurū: de scā ecclia & antipō:
 q se nunc peccatum & humanū
 genus commouebunt. N ominare
 se in libris scōz iste loceretel &
 qstille uirtutes qst scā ecclia doc
 enat & fecit conuocet. S eripat
 desapiencia regna qm consiliū
 conuocat: illa se debet sup albu
 dextrariū & pueret sup ger
 tū p dō: Si uel uel art multū
 honest & of unecet: de illo bello
 & diuina hereditate meditant
 die ac nocte boni clauit: nō q ui
 rilia condasobria & casta: & qsq;
 fidelis discipulus. Adhuc sunt
 duo de humano gēe uiri uel
 q sanguine suū effundent & ill
 belli consumabō: Iud bellu si
 necur magno labore & conat
 alle modū sanguini magnerit
 le clamor: N octe die q parat se boni
 & uel: I uiri student in aliorū & glificat se i adulatione & cupiunt supbia & discordia. I uiri student in uisifica
 tianib: & glificat se in ostensione & cupiunt pacē & pūā deuotionē. Modo audisti nrm dictū & illi uiri
 dicit se nō minue celestis amoris & in honore spūalis belli ne alijs illoy locutor qserucant nos respiciant.
 Michi uisū: qd raras est: ut ipse psalmista qstuduit in sapientia & sonare talis diuinitate sic pōt in pte
 reat & horazache postea in medio hoc: & tenet cycharā suā manu dēre cont peccō: & suū psalctū i
 manu sinis: I qd dicit uerba q nunciatur: Nā in illo scō studio nob noticiatur uia saluā & nōm redēp eorum
 q nō solum: & scām ecclia edficat: Michi uisū: qd sonus hie cycharē significat uocē scē ecclie: & suū lib
 que habet: in magna dilectione significat sapientia pphete & uia diuina pñtationē: & nō spu rales amant
 pñtationē: q nō uisū: suā diuina docēma: id q dicit eōmē in serie cordis: etc.

FIGURE 9-4 David Composing Psalms, Hildesheim, Dombibliothek, MS St. Godehard 1, p. 72.

texts were used to direct an appropriate reading of verbal imagery often incorporated in vernacular preaching and of stories actually pictured nearby.⁹⁰ Itself a basic pedagogical instrument, preaching thus engaged with pictures in a mutually reinforcing didactic strategy. As Opicino de Canistris pointed out, however, the vivid exempla deployed to animate sermons held the danger of idolatry if they were not subjected to an elevating imagination.⁹¹

Prepared by the redirection of the Gregorian dicta toward the laity and its insertion in oral pedagogy, Thomasin von Zerclaere took the next logical step in 1215–1216 by adopting the Gregorian precepts to advance the educational value of true “litteratura laicorum,” arguing in *Der welsche Gast* that mundane tales, too, could teach moral lessons:⁹² “Whoever cannot comprehend higher things ought to follow the example [of the romances] ... As the priest looks at writing, so should the untaught man look at the pictures, since he recognizes nothing in the writing.”⁹³ The contemporary stained glass window donated by the furriers’ guild in the ambulatory of Chartres cathedral bears him out;⁹⁴ there, scenes of battle alternate with ecclesiastical ceremonies to demonstrate the consonance of clerical with chivalric missions. And a miniature in Wolfram von Eschenbach’s *Willehalm* painted later in the century (fig. 9-5) pictures the reciprocity of word and image that Thomasin imagined when he manipulated variants on the Gregorian claims to justify secular narrative. The German tales previously known in oral versions are fixed in words and pictures set down in ink and paint on parchment, their mutuality linked through the very person of the author tied by large red Ws to the relevant text passage and pointing toward the pictorial dramatization of the words.⁹⁵

These examples make clear that, by the High Middle Ages, pictures were, in fact, no longer simply “books of the illiterate,” but, rather, multivalent devices used by various groups in diverse ways and deeply implicated in oral as well as written culture.

How might they have functioned? At Müstair, medieval viewers recognizing the saint from the church’s dedication and his halo and hair coat⁹⁶ would have been able to follow the action through the repeated figures; and, if they knew even the outlines of the story, could have reconstructed from it the sacred narrative. If they participated in the liturgy, especially on the saint’s feast day, they would have learned from the paintings about the relationship established in church doctrine between martyrdom of saints and Christ’s own sacrifice and the connection between John’s burial in his tomb and the relics encased in the altar. And snatched away from the lure of the pictured banquet by the true beauty of the sacramental liturgy with its antiphons, ordered recitation, and sacred meal conducted at the altar, they would have been led toward contemplation of higher things. Likewise, pilgrims on the way to Santiago de Compostela, attracted first by the gem-like glow of the Chartres window, could have parsed the narrative constructed of well-known conventions for dream-visions and chivalric jousts; and the most attentive among them, illiterate and literate alike, would have discovered in the kaleidoscopic ordering of the vignettes a simultaneous temporal

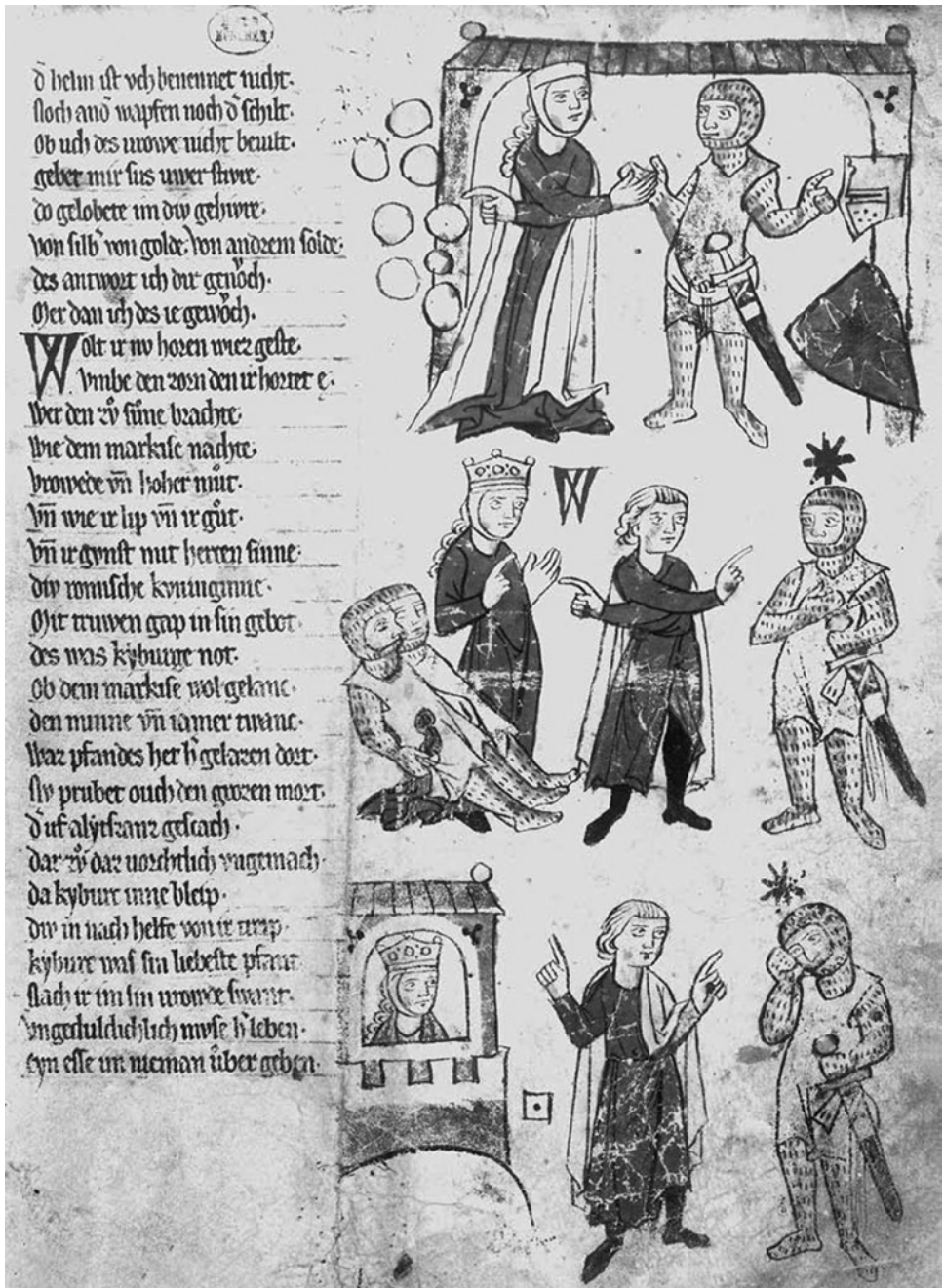


FIGURE 9-5 Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Willehalm*, thirteenth century. Munich, Bayer. Staatsbibliothek, Germ. 193, III.

unfolding and an anagogical ascent.⁹⁷ Those who had followed sermons organized around main themes and secondary explanatory references would have possessed a cognitive structure suited to reading the peripheral narratives as glosses on the subjects in the principal medallions.⁹⁸ And the single word *DURENDAL* inscribed on one knight's sword would have enabled those with even the most rudimentary reading ability to anchor the narrative in the story of Roland, passed on to them orally or through a performance;⁹⁹ it would have allowed those familiar with the Latin legend of Charlemagne and the Pseudo-Turpin chronicle, or a vernacular version, to recognize, in the generic combat scene within the central medallion, Charlemagne's victory over the Saracen giant Ferragut.¹⁰⁰

Pictures would have rendered the words in the Munich *Willehalm* more readily comprehensible to those who could follow Wolfram's vernacular text, while the "Throne of Mercy" in the Albertina Sacramentary would have put before the eyes of the priest celebrating Mass a clear diagram of the fluid and complicated relationship invoked in the "Te igitur," between the liturgy, Christ's crucifixion, and God in heaven.

Twelfth- and thirteenth-century pictures served the uneducated, those who knew only vernacular languages, lay-brethren and other intermediary communities, the secular clergy, and monks. Affirming Christ's dual nature in their very essence, material images channeled contemplation from this world to the next. They provided authorized versions of stories, including happenings reported in the Bible itself, that otherwise were known to illiterates only through fluid, often embellished, oral accounts. By means of details seamlessly integrated into the visual accounts, they offered their own readings of texts. And for those such as Suger's literates at St.-Denis, they presented sophisticated new interpretations of scripture.¹⁰¹ Whatever Gregory meant when he wrote his defense of images,¹⁰² by the High Middle Ages his dicta enabled the makers of pictures to teach the entire community of believers many important things that "they could not read in books."¹⁰³

Notes

- 1 Letter IX, 209 and XI, 10; *Registrum epistularum*, pp. 768 and 873–876. Three decades ago, when Michael Camille and I published articles on the subject almost simultaneously, Camille began his important essay by noting correctly that Gregory's dictum had "stimulated little research"; as this bibliography attests, scholarship on the subject has ballooned since then. For the original letters, see especially Chazelle, "Pictures, Books, and the Illiterate"; Cavallo, "Testo e immagine"; Mariaux, "L'image selon Grégoire" and "Voir, lire et connaître." On their influence, Schmitt, "L'Occident"; "Ecriture et image"; and "Question des images"; Chazelle, "Memory, Instruction, Worship"; Hamburger, *Visual and the Visionary*, pp. 111–113 et passim; Wataghin, "Biblia pauperum."
- 2 Meyvaert, "Bede and the Church Paintings"; Duggan, "Book of the Illiterate," pp. 229–230; Darby, "Bede, Iconoclasm, and Temple."

- 3 Erlaf of Langres introduced the doctored letter at the Lateran Council of 769; Noble, *Images*, p. 146; Ricciardi, "Inganni della tradizione."
- 4 Gregory the Great, *Registrum epistularum*, p. 272; Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing*, p. 121; Mariaux, "Voir, lire et connaître"; Krüger, *Das Bild als Schleier*, p. 13. See Veyrard-Cosme, "Polyphonie Énonciative."
- 5 Appleby, "Instruction and Inspiration," pp. 89–90.
- 6 *Registrum epistularum*, pp. 1110–1111. Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing*, pp. 124–135.
- 7 ... *illum adoramus quem per imaginem aut natum aut passum uel in throno sedentem recordamur*. See Angheben, "Résonances sacramentelles."
- 8 Veyrard-Cosme, "Polyphanie énonciative."
- 9 Duggan, "Book of the Illiterate."
- 10 *Opus caroli regis contra synodum (Libri carolini)*, ed. Ann Freeman (MGH, Concilia, Vol. II, suppl. 2) (Hanover, 1998), pp. 277–280; see also Freeman, "Scripture and Pictures." See, in general, Wirth, *L'Image médiévale* and Rudolph, "La resistenza."
- 11 *Epistolae karolini aevi*, Vol. 3, ed. Karl Hampe (MGH, Epistolae, Vol. V) (Berlin, 1899), pp. 5–57; Appleby, "Instruction and Inspiration," pp. 88–95.
- 12 MGH, Legum sectio III. Concilia, Vol. II (Hanover and Leipzig, 1906), pp. 475–551; Noble, *Images*, pp. 263–285 et passim.
- 13 Canon III; MGH, Leges, Sectio III, Concilia, Vol. II, part 2 (Hanover and Leipzig, 1906), p. 527. Although the Eighth Ecumenical council was canceled for reasons largely unrelated to the incorporation of Byzantine image theory in its third canon, Hincmar of Rheims focused on that issue in his account of the synod; *The Annals of St-Bertin*, trans. Janet Nelson (Manchester, 1991), p. 179. Cf. Schmitt, "L'Occident."
- 14 Chap. 36; PL 140.679.
- 15 Gerardi Cameracensis, *Acta synodi Atrebatensis*, p. 66; trans. Wakefield and Evan, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, pp. 84–85. Cf. Stock, *The Implications of Literacy*, pp. 128–129; Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, pp. 120–139.
- 16 *De consecratione*, dist. III; PL 94.1790.
- 17 *Gemma animae*, ch. 132; PL 172.586.
- 18 *Opusculum de conversione sua* MGH, SS, 12, ed. Ph. Jaffé (Berlin, 1856), pp. 513–530.
- 19 James, "*Pictor in Carmine*," p. 141; *Pictor in Carmine*, pp. 109–111.
- 20 *Glossa in quatuor libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi* (Florence, 1954), Vol. III, pp. 104–116.
- 21 *Comm. in IV Libros Sententiarum*, Liber III, dist. 9, in *Opera omnia* (Florence, 1882–1892), Vol. III, p. 203.
- 22 *Ibid.*, quaest. 1, art 2, q1a, in *Opera omnia*, Vol. IX, pp. 152–155.
- 23 Gilbert, *The Saints' Three Reasons*, pp. 13–16.
- 24 *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*, I, 3, 1; CCCM, p. 34; Faupel-Dreves, *Rechten Gebrauch*, pp. 255–258 et passim.
- 25 The concern never disappeared completely. In 1306, the bishop of London ordered the removal of a wooden crucifix because it was being adored (Heslop, "Attitudes to the Visual Arts," p. 26); and later in the century, John Wycliffe was worried that "dallying in imagery conceals the poison of idolatry" (Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*). Citing Gregory's dicta and later glosses on them, however, Wycliffe defended the right kind of pictures.
- 26 Duggan, "Book of the Illiterate."

- 27 Wolf, *Salus populi romani*, pp. 152–154.
- 28 Kessler, “Pictorial Narrative,” p. 76; Duggan, “Book of the Illiterate,” pp. 228–229.
- 29 Boiadjiev et al., eds., *Die Dionysius-Rezeption im Mittelalter*.
- 30 Cf. Meier, “Malerei des Unsichtbaren.”
- 31 Cf. Rudolph, *Artistic Change at St-Denis*; Speer et al., eds., *Abt Suger von Saint-Denis*; Poirel, “*Symbolice et anagogice*”; Rudolph, “Inventing,”
- 32 Wolf, *Salus populi romani*, p. 293.
- 33 *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, III, dist. IX, art. I, quast. 2 (Grottaferrata, 1981), Vol. II, p. 70. Cf. Albertus Magnus, *In III Sentent.*, dist. 9, 4 (*Opera omnia*, ed. August Borguet (Paris, 1890–1899), Vol. XIII, p. 18), and Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, p. 2, IV, quast. 6, a. 3 (ed. N. Wicki (Bern, 1985), Vol. II, p. 972). Backus, “John of Damascus.”
- 34 *Summa theologica*, 3a, quast. 25, art. 4; 4:2149. Feld, *Ikonomiasmus*, pp. 63–65; Wirth, “Structure et fonctions” and “Peinture et perception visuelle.”
- 35 Wirth, “La Critique scholastique.”
- 36 Appleby, “Instruction and Inspiration,” p. 90.
- 37 Diebold, *Word and Image*, pp. 124–126.
- 38 *Consuetudines Fructuarienses-Sanblasianae*, ed. Luchesius G. Spätling and Peter Dinter (Siegburg, 1985), Vol. I, pp. 149–151; Lipsmeyer, “Devotion and Decorum.”
- 39 *De fide catholica contra haereticos*, IV, ch. 12; PL 210.427.
- 40 Mitrale, III, ch. 6; PL 213.124; Belting, *The Image and Its Public*, p. 6; Boespflug and Załuska, “Le dogme trinitaire.”
- 41 Bugge, “Effigiem Christi”; Arnulf, *Versus ad Picturas*, pp. 273–285; Kessler, *Neither God Nor Man*. A gloss in a thirteenth-century manuscript (Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Cod. Reg. lat. 1578) returns the “nec Deus” distich to the original Gregorian context: “against Jews, heretics, and Muslims who say that we adore idols.”
- 42 Hugh of St. Victor had already introduced the distinction in his commentary on the Second Commandment; PL 176.9–10.
- 43 *In III Sentent.*, dist. 9, quast. 1, art. 2, q. 4.
- 44 Hrabanus Maurus distinguished between *bowing* before a colored painting of Christ and *adoring* Him whom the image represents; Carmen 61: cf. Palazzo, “Pratiques liturgiques.” A similar separation of physical and mental veneration underlies the canon of the Synod of Arras.
- 45 van Os, *The Way to Heaven*, pp. 119–122. Kessler, *Neither God Nor Man*.
- 46 Cf. Thümmel, “Annuncio della parola”; Cavallo, “Testo e immagine.”
- 47 Boespflug and Załuska, “Le dogme trinitaire,” pp. 203–205.
- 48 Cf. Carruthers, *Book of Memory* and *Craft of Thought*; Freedberg, “Holy Images and Other Images.”
- 49 James, *Pictor in Carmine*, p. 141; *Pictor in Carmine*, p. 109.
- 50 Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, pp. 206–209.
- 51 Brenk, *Die romanische Wandmalerei*; Goll, “Bei Salome in Müstair.” [For more on narrative, see Chapter 6 by Lewis in this volume (ed.).]
- 52 Cf. Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, pp. 222 et passim.
- 53 *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*, I, iii, 4; Faupel-Dreves, *Rechten Gebrauch*, pp. 254–255. Cf. Freedberg, *Power of Images*, pp. 161–162.
- 54 Grabar, *La Sainte Face de Laon*; Klein, “From the Heavenly to the Trivial”; Sansterre, “Deux témoignages.”

- 55 Wolf, "From Mandylion to Veronica."
- 56 Kessler, "Real Absence," pp. 135–136.
- 57 Baschet, "Introduction: L'image-objet"; Brown, "Images as a Substitute"; Wood, "Reply."
- 58 Krüger, "Die Lesbarkeit von Bildern."
- 59 *Gemma animae*, chap. 132; PL 172.586.
- 60 On the problem of defining these groups, see Grundmann, "Litteratus-illiteratus"; Turner, "The *Miles Litteratus* in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century England"; Steer, "Zum Begriff 'Laic.'"
- 61 *De fide catholica*, IV, chap. 12; PL 210.427.
- 62 *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*, chap. 85; ed. Herbert Doutei (CCCM, 41), pp. 154–155.
- 63 *Mitralis de officiis*, Book 1, chap. 12, p. 45; Eberlein, *Miniatur und Arbeit*, p. 322.
- 64 *Liber bellorum Domini*, ed. Gilbert Dahan (Paris, 1981), p. 224.
- 65 Bloch, *Die elsässischen Annalen*, p. 116.
- 66 Camille, "Seeing and Reading," p. 41; Alexandre-Bidon, "Images et objets," p. 1158.
- 67 Duggan is wrong in his claim that the "association between word and images ... which was indeed characteristic of later medieval art, was still infrequent in Gregory's own age": see "Reflections." Cf. Arnulf, *Versus ad Picturas*, pp. 9–145.
- 68 Ch. 5; PL 198.1540.
- 69 Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, pp. 62–63; Duggan, "'Book of the Illiterate?'" p. 233; Arnulf, *Versus ad Picturas*, pp. 286–293.
- 70 Rudolph, "Exegetic Stained Glass Window."
- 71 Caviness, "Biblical Stories"; Diebold, *Word and Image*; Bolzoni, *Rete delle immagini*.
- 72 Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, pp. 58–59.
- 73 Boespflug and Zaluska, "Dogme trinitaire"; Belting, *The Image and Its Public*, p. 6.
- 74 Schmitt, "Question des images."
- 75 *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*, p. 155; Rudolph, "*Things of Greater Importance*," pp. 278–281.
- 76 *Pictor in Carmine*, p. 109.
- 77 Zaluska, *Manuscrits enluminés*, pp. 56–61; Rudolph, *Violence and Daily Life*.
- 78 Travis, "Daniel in the Lions' Den."
- 79 Rudolph, *First, I Find the Center Point* and *The Mystic Ark*, p. 372.
- 80 PL.198.626; Antoine, "*Ad perpetuam memoriam*," p. 555.
- 81 Hamburger, *Visual and Visionary*, pp. 111–148 et passim.
- 82 Curschmann, "*Pictura laicorum litteratura?*"; *Aviarium*, pp. 118–119; Cahn, *Romanesque Manuscripts*, Vol. 2, pp. 95–96 and fig. 184.
- 83 Cf. Rudolph, *Violence and Daily Life*, pp. 46–48.
- 84 *Aviarium*, pp. 118–119.
- 85 Pächt et al., *Saint Alban's Psalter*, pp. 138, 163–164; Camille, "Gregorian Definition"; Gerry, "Cult and Codex."
- 86 Alexander, "Ideological Representation."
- 87 Curschmann, "*Pictura laicorum litteratura?*" Camille, "Philological Iconoclasm." Tellingly, David is portrayed as a type of Gregory the Great, with an enormous bird speaking into his ear.
- 88 "Quae Latina oratione dicebantur, non satis intelligere poterant, audita per interpretem vulgarem" (PL 142.1312C); cf. Stock, *Implications of Literacy*, pp. 128–129. Albertus Magnus' reference to pictures as books of the laity occurs in an Advent sermon, albeit in Latin.

- 89 An argument found later also in the *Pictor in Carmine: Der sogenannte St. Georgener Prediger aus der Freiburger und der Karlsruher Handschrift*, ed. Karl Rieder (Berlin, 1908), pp. 248–254; Frühwald, *Der St. Georgener Prediger*, pp. 94–97; Hamburger and Bouché, “Introduction,” pp. 3–10; Hamburger, “Various Writings of Humanity,” pp. 165–167.
- 90 Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, pp. 139–141; Bolzoni, *Rete delle immagini*. The twelfth-century life of Hugh of Lincoln reports that the bishop instructed John Lackland on the need to pray for forgiveness by pointing to a pictured Last Judgment; cf. *Magna vita*, ed. Decima Douie and Hugh Farmer (Oxford, 1985), Vol. 2, p. 137. A sermon preached in French at Amiens in the middle of the thirteenth century also focused on judgment and would have made the complex cathedral façade comprehensible; cf. Murray, *Notre-Dame, Cathedral of Amiens* and “Pourquoi la polychromie?” See now also Cooper, “Preaching Amidst Pictures.”
- 91 Morse, “Seeing and Believing.” Opicino was best known for diagrams, which provide a tertium comparationis between word and image; see Bogen and Thürlemann, “Jenseits” and Whittington, *Body-Worlds*.
- 92 Curschmann, “*Pictura laicorum litteratura?*” and “*Der aventiure bilde nemen*”; Wenzel, “*Schrift und Gemeld*.”
- 93 Rushing, *Images of Adventure*, p. 8 and “Images at the Interface.”
- 94 Kemp, *Sermo Corporeus*, pp. 115–119 et passim; Kurmann-Schwarz and Kurmann, *Chartres*, pp. 245–246; Bogen, *Träumen und Erzählen*, pp. 270–275.
- 95 Ott, “Texte und Bilder.”
- 96 The life of St. John Therista reports that the camel-skin cape alone enabled the identification of the Forerunner in a painting; Antoine, “Ad perpetuum memoriam,” pp. 550–552.
- 97 Nichols, *Romanesque Signs*.
- 98 Cf. Lillich, *Rainbow Like an Emerald*; Caviness, “Biblical Stories.”
- 99 The *Pictor in Carmine* points out that, for familiar subjects, only a name is needed.
- 100 Maines, “The Charlemagne Window”; Caviness, “Biblical Stories,” n. 24; Kurmann-Schwarz and Kurmann, *Chartres*, 245–247.
- 101 Some of which, such as the “Throne of Mercy,” were therefore attacked by theologians; cf. Wirth, “Critique scolastique,” p. 105.
- 102 Cf. Duggan’s attempt to distinguish Gregory from the later medieval use of his words: see “Reflections.”
- 103 For the post-medieval history, see Cramer, “Word of God.”

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Iconography

Shirin Fozi

Few images have sparked as much debate over their iconography as the right wing of the Mérode altarpiece (fig. 10-1). The panel shows an aged Joseph, resplendent in a bright blue turban and somber brown robes, turning away from a bustling city street and calmly drilling holes into a slab of wood. His cozy workshop forms a separate sphere from the domestic interior next door, where an angel is about to disturb a reading Mary with news of her divine pregnancy, and also from the courtyard of the left wing, where the solemn donors witness the miracle of Christ's incarnation through an open doorway. The center panel is scattered with familiar symbols, such as the lilies that reflect Mary's purity and the tiny carved lions that make her humble wooden bench a bourgeois Throne of Solomon. The left panel seems conversely devoid of such clever iconographic flourishes, presumably because its subjects are mere inhabitants of the everyday world, consumers rather than producers of Mary's hermeneutic baggage. Somewhere between the assumption that the center panel should be infused with symbolic codes and the corollary that the donor wing should not, the carpenter's workshop carries a certain vexing ambiguity. Were late medieval images of Joseph as heavily freighted with iconographic content as the far more frequently observed depictions of his virgin wife? If so, what meanings were tied to the crisply rendered tools, the open window, or the tantalizing mousetraps set prominently on the table and windowsill? Or was the web of symbolism limited to the center panel, leaving Joseph free to drill holes without references to ideas beyond the celebration of craftsmanship itself?

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FIGURE 10-1 Workshop of Robert Campin, *Annunciation Triptych* (Mérode Altarpiece), c.1427–1432. Source: photo courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, 1956, www.metmuseum.org.

Such questions have no easy answers, and it is thankfully not the present goal to propose a novel reading of this celebrated fifteenth-century ensemble, attributed to the Flemish master Robert Campin and housed in The Cloisters Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹ This chapter turns instead to the method of iconography, loosely defined as the study of signs that purposefully appear in images and point to external discourses that shape their meaning. To this end, the Mérode triptych is useful not only for its rich theological references, but also because its mousetraps were the subject of a seminal 1945 article by Meyer Schapiro (1904–1996).² Erudite and entertaining, the essay offers a sweeping intellectual journey from the patristic meditations of Augustine to the Freudian fantasies of Bosch, and builds a dazzling history of mousetrap symbolism through sources that may or may not have been familiar to the painting’s fifteenth-century audiences. The mere presence of the devices becomes evidence for their interpretation: after all, Schapiro seems to imply, why would these contraptions appear at all, if not to summon the medieval discourse of Joseph and highlight his role as “the guardian of the mystery of the incarnation and one of the main figures in the divine plot to deceive the devil”?³ Once set into the luminous surface of the painting, the mousetraps had seemingly absorbed a millennium of interpretation, patiently carrying their eloquent message of entrapment and salvation across five centuries until it could be deciphered through the Rosetta stone of iconography.

Schapiro’s essay, with its textual and contextual history of mousetrap metaphors through the long Middle Ages, remains a landmark of its own historiographic moment. It appeared at the end of World War II, coinciding with a transatlantic shift in the theory and practice of art history. The use of theological texts to “read” Christian images had taken root in the 1830s, and was championed as the dominant

paradigm of medieval art by Émile Mâle (1862–1954) at the start of the century. Though this logocentric approach would endure, Schapiro's contemporaries were also turning to alternative models of iconographic thinking. Most notably, Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968) published *Studies in Iconology* (1939) on the eve of the war, advancing a cultural approach that presaged later developments in the social history of art. Schapiro's essay reflects both the textual/theological mode of Mâle and the social/anthropological turn of Panofsky. It is something of a paradox, however, that the same intellectual agility and methodological scope that allowed Schapiro to pursue these threads have left his conclusions rather suspect some seven decades later. If iconography is defined as a field of visual knowledge, centered on images that require fluency in textual and cultural codes before their content can be grasped, it raises essential questions about audience and reception: who were the insiders, and the outsiders, that either could or could not unravel the complex meanings of medieval art? How can scholarship account for the full range of iconographic messages that existed in the past, and the symbols that circulated among an endlessly complex world of makers and viewers?

This chapter addresses these questions through a review of the study of iconography, from its rise as a quasi-scientific method in the nineteenth century to its present status as a malleable tool for the interpretation of visual culture. Setting Schapiro as a model, two points seem clear at the outset: first, that different modes of iconographic analysis can be mutually reinforcing rather than mutually exclusive; and second, that iconography can at times produce a mousetrap of its own cleverness, capturing a matrix of ideas that stand strangely apart from the work of art itself. Finally, though it may seem odd to approach a medieval topic through an early modern painting, this choice is tied to another opening observation. Even as the Mérode triptych is labeled as a masterpiece of the Renaissance but housed within a collection of Romanesque and Gothic art, the study of iconography has found many fruitful advances at the intersection of the medieval and early modern eras. Schapiro's own career reflects this point: unrestrained by periodization, his interests were always wide-ranging, and his approach to early Netherlandish paintings embraced the *longue durée* of the Middle Ages. Thus the inclusion of Renaissance perspectives reflects not only the fluid boundaries of medieval art history, but also the essential relevance of iconography in addressing the transmission of tradition, with its disruptions and continuities, and exposing the fraught relationships between images, texts, and contexts across time.

1840s–1940s

The modern study of iconography emerged in the nineteenth century, when scholars turned to the Middle Ages as a source of inspiration and renewal amid an age of revolution, industrialization, and transformation. It is in the early twentieth century, however, that it shifted from the pursuit of a few theologically minded specialists to a *sine qua non* of art history. Medieval images are still

frequently classified by their iconography, often conflated with subject matter. The Mérode triptych, for example, is known as *an Annunciation*: the image of an angel confronting a woman who reads a book is so ubiquitous that this identification is reflexive despite countless variations. Images that evade neat iconographic boxes become notable for that fact, and are often relegated to the world of fantastical monstrosities, or else the realm of ornament, though in recent years these categories have also been mined for associative meanings.⁴ Medieval art, it seems, can scarcely escape its own signification, and in the rare instances that it might – as in the tantalizing mousetraps of our example, or the hybrid beasts that also attracted Schapiro’s attention – images are still haunted by the potential for hidden symbolism to exist, or to have existed, just beyond the limits of modern knowledge. In short, it is no less difficult to argue that mousetraps in the Mérode altarpiece, or abstract foliage on Romanesque capitals, or jocular acrobats perched on Gothic choir stalls, or any other medieval images do *not* carry iconographic meaning than it is to suggest that they do.

The first question, therefore, is how art history arrived at the consensus that iconography, or systems of visual meaning that produce legible signs through deliberate references to outside sources, should become a central lens for interpreting medieval and Renaissance art. Brendan Cassidy has noted the emergence of its intellectual genealogy from European and American scholarship.⁵ The French tradition was exemplified by Mâle, later dubbed the “logocentric code-breaker of the cathedrals.”⁶ American iconography turned to the transmission of visual types, which guided Charles Rufus Morey (1877–1955) in founding Princeton’s Index of Christian Art in 1917. A German approach is evident in Panofsky’s formulation of iconology as a culturally oriented extension of iconography. Though the national origins of these intellectual leaders are clear, it should also be stated that their work was joined in transatlantic dialogues at an early date. Morey’s interest in classification, for example, is indebted to the French scholar Adolphe Napoléon Didron (1806–1867), and Panofsky was inspired in turn by his contact with Morey at Princeton.⁷ Another challenge in studying iconography thus lies in tracing the development of national schools without exaggerating their differences or discounting their shared histories.

Already in the nineteenth century, major art-historical studies were available far beyond their native countries. Didron’s pioneering book, *Iconographie chrétienne: Histoire de Dieu*, first appeared in 1843 and was republished as *Christian Iconography* in 1851, translated by Ellen J. Millington.⁸ This swift transmission suggests its strong international appeal. Noting that readers “will find no difficulty in determining any of the usual subjects met with in sacred edifices,” Millington explains that “M. Didron’s lucid explanation of the various modes of treating [these subjects] at different eras, and in different countries, will make it a comparatively easy task to decide on the age which ought to be assigned to them.”⁹ The role of iconography as a system of knowledge is thus made clear, affirming art history as a scientific method for determining the age and symbolic content of the monuments. Designed as an authoritative handbook to allow even

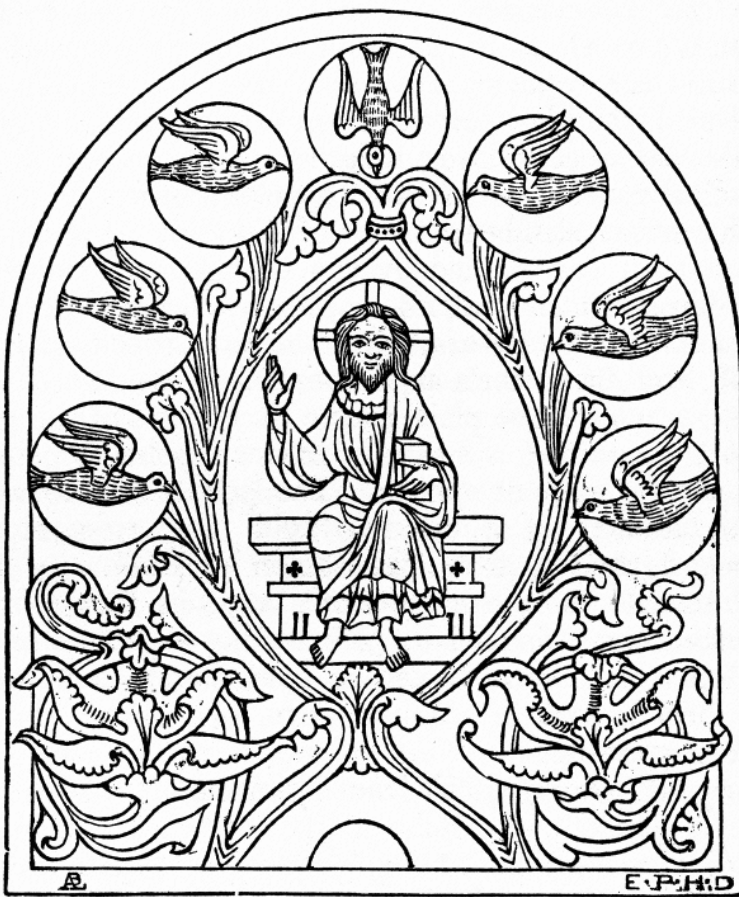


Fig. 40.—CHRIST IN AN ELLIPTICAL AUREOLE FORMED OF BRANCHES
Miniature of the XIII cent.; Psalter of St. Louis.

FIGURE 10-2 Line drawing of an image from the Psalter of St. Louis. Source: from Adolphe Napoléon Didron, translated by E.J. Millington, *Christian Iconography: or, The History of Christian Art in the Middle Ages*, Vol. 1, p. 120 (reprinted, New York, 1965).

casual viewers to interpret the assuredly stable meanings of major iconographic motifs, the book reproduced images through line drawings that presented examples as platonic ideals (fig. 10-2). Its ambitious scale, with 144 pages of the translated edition devoted just to the nimbus, offers a possible explanation for why only the first volume was realized, and invites wonder at the scope once imagined for the whole.

Didron's authority, tacitly acknowledged in Millington's preface, was largely derived from his position among the intellectual elite of Paris. Appointed secretary of the "Comité des lettres, philosophic, sciences et arts" at the age of 28, his

writings were informed by contact with Viollet-le-Duc, Victor Hugo, and other leaders of France's Gothic revival.¹⁰ *Iconographie chrétienne* was preceded by the idea, first recorded in 1837, of publishing a new translation of Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* likewise illustrated with line drawings from Gothic art.¹¹ The proposal fell apart once Didron realized that most of these saintly narratives were only rarely visualized, but nevertheless its seed reflects his early interest in the intersection of literature and archeology.¹² Didron turned to the *Speculum Maius* of Vincent of Beauvais as an intellectual guide, subscribing to the premise of a coherent medieval worldview that was defined by erudite theologians.¹³ Seeing the Middle Ages through the work of an elite Dominican who enjoyed access to the great Capetian library at Royaumont was perhaps only fitting for Didron, and it allowed him to claim France, and particularly the academic discourse emanating from Paris, as the apogee of medieval civilization. This perspective was later taken up by Mâle, whose studies likewise centered on an idealized vision of Gothic France, implicitly pushing other places and periods of medieval European art to a new periphery.

Appearing as a lynchpin between the nineteenth-century roots of iconography and its twentieth-century rise in popularity, Mâle is often framed as Didron's intellectual heir. As Jean Nayrolles has pointed out, however, the continuities between them should not be interpreted too narrowly. Didron was perhaps the most widely read iconographer of his era, but volumes such as the *Monographie de la cathédrale de Bourges* (1841) by Arthur Martin and Charles Cahier were also influential. Aimed at monuments rather than motifs, they offered case studies in contrast to Didron's ambitious (if unattainable) encyclopedic vision.¹⁴ In contrast to Didron's academic milieu, Martin and Cahier, along with their contemporary Auguste-Joseph Crosnier, were churchmen in the same tradition as Père Jacques-Paul Migne. Without exaggerating the resulting differences, it remains striking that Didron imagined a systematic, all-encompassing study for laymen, while his religious counterparts pursued a comparatively limited, site-specific approach. Against this backdrop, Mâle's contribution lies not only in his magisterial command of the subject matter, but also in his ability to negotiate a middle path between the overwhelming scope of Didron and the close focus of his contemporaries. Mâle, pursuing neither a sustained treatment of individual motifs nor the complete multimedia exploration of various buildings, addressed pictorial systems instead through their distilled ideals, exemplified by the Gothic cathedrals of the Île-de-France. Echoing Didron's use of Vincent of Beauvais, Mâle was even more intent on the fundamental coherence of iconography, and the imagined completeness of its theological arguments as encompassed by visual programs. Again like Didron, Mâle set Gothic France as the pinnacle not only of medieval art, but also of scholastic theology, understood as a metonym of knowledge itself. The nationalism of this stance is noteworthy, as is its embrace of a hierarchical view that unhesitatingly celebrated the largest and most visible monuments of the Middle Ages as the most meaningful.

Mâle's enormously popular *Gothic Image* (1913) is a revision and translation of his doctoral thesis, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle en France*, which was first published in 1898.¹⁵ Already in the subheadings of his opening chapters, strikingly laid out in the table of contents, broad assertions that are both deeply attractive and inherently problematic appear: "Mediaeval Iconography is a script. It is a calculus." "To the mediaeval mind the universe a symbol [sic]." Mâle acknowledged breaks in the system, but merely as afterthoughts, the exceptions that only strengthen the rules: "Animals represented in the churches; their meaning not always symbolic." "Exaggerations of the symbolic school. Symbolism sometimes absent." These phrases position iconography as the normative experience of the educated mind, reducing symbolic absence to an aberrant foil associated with the irrational sphere of animals rather than the privileged human form. Calculated theology, detached and rational, structures Mâle's opening lines:

The Middle Ages had a passion for order. They organized art as they had organized dogma, secular learning and society. The artistic representation of sacred subjects was a science governed by fixed laws which could not be broken at the dictates of individual imagination. It cannot be questioned that this theology of art, if one may so put it, was soon reduced to a body of doctrine, for from very early times the craftsmen are seen submitting to it from one end of Europe to the other. This science was transmitted by the Church to the lay sculptors and painters of the thirteenth century who religiously guarded the sacred traditions, so that, even in the centuries in which it was most vigorous, mediæval art retained the hieratic grandeur of primitive art.¹⁶

Mâle's internalization of social hierarchy permeated his conceptualization of the artist, painted as a figure bound by the stringent rules of a craft in which even style relied on ancient precedent. In his contention that "the art of the Middle Ages is first and foremost a sacred writing of which every artist must learn the characters," Mâle was reluctant to see artists as more than the conduits of theology. So serious was their task, it seems, that in choosing to represent a saint or apostle with either sandals or bare feet, "a mistake would have ranked almost as heresy."¹⁷ "No artist would be rash enough to dare to modify the arrangement of the great scenes from the Gospel," warned Mâle solemnly, before progressing to another key feature of medieval art, its "obedience to the rules of a kind of sacred mathematics."¹⁸ A third characteristic was its inherent "symbolic code," hinting again that images were little more than dry pictograms of theological content.¹⁹ Boldly stated, "mediæval art was before all things a symbolic art, in which form is used merely as the vehicle of spiritual meaning."²⁰

This introduction endures as a widely cited justification for the driving impulse to give primacy to texts in interpreting medieval images, and continues to resonate with that curious formulation that has haunted Christian art since Gregory

the Great: the notion that images could act as “bibles of the poor,” allowing even the illiterate to “read” theology.²¹ It has also received its share of critiques, including the caution that Mâle’s distilled approaches must be matched with attention to a wide array of contexts: historical, cultural, and social. This came first from followers of Aby Warburg (1866–1929), whose restless interdisciplinary forays into art history, psychology, and cultural anthropology inspired other iconographies beyond the merely textual.²² Best remembered for his celebrated library and idiosyncratic *Bilderatlas*, Warburg was the great early champion of interdisciplinary study. Personal wealth allowed him to pursue wide-ranging intellectual interests without the constraints of steady employment, and even though this resulted in few publications, his impact on younger scholars was profound. Chief among them was Panofsky, whose writings activated Warburg’s ideas for the history of art.

Studies in Iconology raised the field from the simple identification of textual sources to a broadly conceived methodology. In its introduction, Panofsky famously laid out three levels of meaning in a deceptively simple table (fig. 10-3) showing the “acts,” “equipment,” and “controlling principles” of interpretation.²³ *Primary* or *natural* subject matter was termed pre-iconographical, requiring only practical experience to identify images, inclusive of narrative and style. *Secondary* or *conventional* subject matter recognized *images*, *stories*, and *allegories*, and implicitly required extensive knowledge of textual sources. It also followed a “history of types,” in which Madonnas or Evangelists, for example, needed to be identified as common signs before their meaning could be grasped. This was iconography as Mâle had employed it, an informed but still straightforward process of identification. Rising from this apparatus and tacitly surpassing it in importance, the third level addressed the *intrinsic meaning* or *content* of the work, considered “iconographical interpretation in a deeper sense” or “iconographical synthesis,” and understood as Warburgian *iconology*. This etymological shift was no accident. Where iconography had echoed the Greek *eikonographia* to denote the writing (*-graphia*) or representation of an image, iconology would activate the ending *-logy* (discourse) to imply its broad-based study, and the elevation of art history to a higher disciplinary status. Requiring “synthetic intuition,” iconology aimed to reconstruct the mental tendencies of cultural producers and their *Weltanschauung*, or world-view.

Studies in Iconology marked Panofsky’s clearest articulation of the theoretical stakes of this method. Five years earlier, however, he had already published his most celebrated foray into iconological analysis, addressing Jan van Eyck’s *Arnolfini Wedding* and introducing the notion of “disguised symbolism.”²⁴ By interpreting the details of the enchanting domestic setting of the panel as a series of subtle allusions to a marriage ceremony, Panofsky questioned “whether the patient enthusiasm bestowed upon this marvelous interior anticipates the modern principle of ‘l’art pour l’art’, so to speak, or is still rooted to some extent in the medieval tendency of investing visible objects with an allegorical

OBJECT OF INTERPRETATION	ACT OF INTERPRETATION	EQUIPMENT FOR INTERPRETATION	CONTROLLING PRINCIPLE OF INTERPRETATION
I— <i>Primary</i> or <i>natural</i> subject matter—(A) factual, (B) expressional—, constituting the world of artistic motifs.	<i>Pre-iconographical description</i> (and pseudo-formal analysis).	<i>Practical experience</i> (familiarity with <i>objects</i> and <i>events</i>).	History of <i>style</i> (insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, <i>objects</i> and <i>events</i> were expressed by <i>forms</i>).
II— <i>Secondary</i> or <i>conventional</i> subject matter, constituting the world of <i>images</i> , <i>stories</i> and <i>allegories</i> .	<i>Iconographical analysis</i> in the narrower sense of the word.	<i>Knowledge of literary sources</i> (familiarity with specific <i>themes</i> and <i>concepts</i>).	History of <i>types</i> (insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, specific <i>themes</i> or <i>concepts</i> were expressed by <i>objects</i> and <i>events</i>).
III— <i>Intrinsic meaning</i> or <i>content</i> , constituting the world of ' <i>symbolical</i> ' values.	<i>Iconographical interpretation</i> in a deeper sense (<i>Iconographical synthesis</i>).	<i>Synthetic intuition</i> (familiarity with the <i>essential tendencies of the human mind</i>), conditioned by personal psychology and ' <i>Weltanschauung</i> .'	History of <i>cultural symptoms</i> or ' <i>symbols</i> ' in general (insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, <i>essential tendencies of the human mind</i> were expressed by specific <i>themes</i> and <i>concepts</i>).

HISTORY OF TRADITION

FIGURE 10-3 Panofsky's three levels of iconology. Source: from Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*, pp. 14–15 (New York, 1939).

or symbolical meaning.”²⁵ Having argued that the chandelier, its lone candle, and the evocative bed and arm chair are all laden with significance, he noted that,

the very fact that these significant attributes are not emphasized as what they actually are, but are *disguised*, so to speak, as ordinary pieces of furniture (...) impresses the beholder with a kind of mystery and makes him inclined to suspect a hidden significance in all and every object ... and this applied in a much higher degree to the medieval spectator who was wont to conceive the whole of the visible world as a symbol.²⁶

Panofsky’s invocation of the “medieval spectator” positions Jan van Eyck at the intersection of medieval and Renaissance traditions. *Studies in Iconology* was similarly aimed at the extension of intellectual concepts across broad swaths of time. This was echoed by Schapiro’s reading of the Mérode altarpiece. Both scholars framed early Netherlandish paintings as a culmination of the visual rhetoric of medieval art, developed to such a fine degree that the disguising of symbols as everyday objects would only enhance their intellectual and theological value. Thus iconography became a mirror not only of hidden meanings, but also of a tradition that was seen, understood, and transformed for the emerging audiences of early modernity. Even if the specific conclusions that Panofsky and Schapiro gave these famous paintings have since been challenged, the thesis that medieval and Renaissance art was permeated with symbolic codes would retain its potency.

1940s–1990s

It is a testament to the appeal of Panofsky’s formulation that the study of iconography would almost be eclipsed by its iconological extension by the 1990s, led by the thought-provoking writings of image theorists such as Michael Ann Holly and W.J.T. Mitchell.²⁷ Panofsky had taken the field from the simple identification of symbols to the exploration of culture across new registers of social history. Even among skeptics, the seismic effects of this shift were clear at an early date. As Creighton Gilbert noted in his 1952 critique of the method, *Studies in Iconology* marked “an epoch in the study of the history of art in America, since it introduced in a fully developed state a technique which had developed gradually abroad.”²⁸ This echoed a larger consensus that the post-war United States had taken up a scholarly mantle through the profound impact of Panofsky and other members of his generation who had likewise left Europe to escape the shadow of fascism. Gilbert acknowledged the significance of iconology but also cautioned against the flattened application of its principles, pointing to Renaissance paintings that evidently resist straightforward analysis of their symbolic content and require other, more open-ended approaches that give equal weight to style and subject

matter. In outlining iconology's appeal, Gilbert also made a passing remark that betrayed the sensibilities of his time:

[Iconology] fits the present interest in cultural history, the dominant pattern of societies, which we are lifting to equal importance with major specific persons and things. [...] For all of this, the Renaissance seems a most favorable field. If the Middle Ages have a more public and standardized set of symbols, amenable to the simpler attack of iconography, later periods show a well-known tendency to loosen or dispense with associative values.²⁹

The association of the Middle Ages with fixed iconographies echoes both Mâle's insistence on the strict "calculus" of medieval art, and also Panofsky's suggestion that the shift from overt to disguised symbolism was a hallmark of the transition to early modernity. This stands in marked contrast to the 1990s, when Michael Camille would lead a new examination of the slippery meanings of the monstrous and wildly imaginative images that inhabit the margins of medieval art. In the 1950s and 1960s, however, leading studies of iconography still looked to the temporal rather than the social edges of its subjects, interrogating the boundaries between medieval and early modern, as with the Mérode triptych, or from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages. André Grabar (1896–1990) took up the latter in his Mellon lectures, delivered at the National Gallery in 1961 and published in 1968.³⁰ His self-stated aim was not to produce "a manual of ancient Christian iconography" in the spirit of Didron, nor to give "a history of iconography which would show the modifications these images underwent in time,"³¹ but rather to clarify the function of early medieval images by questioning the origins of Christian iconography. This interest in strategies of communication rather than the mere residue of tradition signaled a shift away from the search for explanatory texts, toward the mediation between scriptural content and its reception among the newly converted. "Iconography is, after all, the aspect of the image that informs" wrote Grabar, "the aspect that is addressed to the intellect of the spectator, and is common to prosaic informative images and to images that rise to poetry, that is, to art."³² With these words, Grabar advocated a middle path that was more fluid than Mâle's logocentric vision, but also more clearly defined than Panofsky's broadly cultural iconologies.

Iconography was becoming a flexible term, its potential application shaped as much by the reconstructed experiences of artists and audiences as the dictates of theologians. The word had already been appropriated by Richard Krautheimer (1897–1994) in his seminal 1942 essays on architectural iconography.³³ Krautheimer – who also came under Warburg's influence before emigrating from Germany – did not use iconography to mean a series of textually defined signs, but applied it instead to an internal system of visual quotations and spatial allusions that operated in an inexact manner to transport viewers from one sacred space to another.³⁴ His hermeneutics of structure was built through architectural rather than scriptural references, and relied upon the contextual

value of historical information about the reception of the Holy Sepulchre in early medieval architecture as well as textual sources on Carolingian attitudes toward the past. In contrast to Krautheimer, Kurt Weitzmann (1904–1993) – another German-American immigrant of the same generation – turned to iconography for a different purpose, looking to repeated motifs as evidence for the transmission of compositional models, if not their interpretations.³⁵ Although it has been the subject of necessary critiques for its insistence upon the reconstruction of lost originals at the expense of artistic invention, Weitzmann’s work remains invaluable for its reflections on the remarkable persistence of iconographies across time.³⁶ Of course, iconography as Mâle had used the term also remained influential across this period, perhaps most beautifully exemplified by Adolf Katzenellenbogen (1901–1964) in his 1959 study of Chartres Cathedral.³⁷

By the late 1970s the search for formal allusions, models and copies, and textual citations had become increasingly inflected by new interdisciplinary studies. Among the most provocative would be James Marrow’s 1979 book on Passion iconography which, rather than accepting changes in its subject as mere symptoms of the nebulously defined phenomenon of late medieval spirituality, turned to early modern devotional literature to elucidate its theme.³⁸ Though still text-based in essence, Marrow’s work indicated that not all medieval imagery was derived from scripture and the early Church Fathers, and thus cautioned against the over-use of disguised symbolism to account for seemingly obscure motifs. The fact that Hugo van der Velden was still ardently advocating careful attention to contemporaneous sources nearly two decades later is telling evidence that Marrow’s interventions were both prescient and necessary.³⁹

The polemics of iconography were the subject of a 1990 conference fittingly held at the Index of Christian Art, where Morey had once welcomed Panofsky, and titled *Iconography at the Crossroads*.⁴⁰ Effectively juxtaposing traditional iconography with critical perspectives, the volume is inflected by Michael Ann Holly’s reminder that Warburg had claimed to be “less interested in the neat solution than in the formulation of a new problem.”⁴¹ Holly thus pointed to the disconnect of theory and practice, and the irony of Warburgian scholarship that insists too narrowly on iconological solutions to implied problems, rather than broader considerations of the encryption of art itself as a process by which viewers – medieval or modern – can engage in the creation of meaning. The tension between Holly and other voices in the volume, such as the structured approaches of Wolfgang Kemp and Herbert Kessler, remains clear: on the one hand, iconography could still generate coherent systems of meaning; on the other, such systems could no longer be taken as universalizing across medieval art.⁴² Craig Harbison’s analysis of Jan van Eyck’s *Madonna in a Church* aptly demonstrates both the panel’s sophisticated symbolism, and also the significance of Holly’s misgivings.⁴³ The point is not to decide if Harbison’s readings are compelling (they are), but rather to question the ways in which medieval visuality segregated insiders from outsiders, and the validity of art historians claiming the status of “insiders” as part of an intellectual elite demarcated by iconographic knowledge. Adopting Mitchell’s observation that “images are signs that

pretend not to be signs,” Holly nudged readers to acknowledge the other meanings – social, cultural, psychological, and more – that lie beyond the boundaries of traditional iconography. Keith Moxey took up a similar theme in the volume, quoting Mitchell directly to call for historical and political self-awareness:

I am not arguing for some facile relativism that abandons “standards of truth” or the possibility of valid knowledge. I am arguing for a hard, rigorous relativism that regards different versions of the world, including different languages, ideologies and modes of representation.⁴⁴

In challenging scholars to recognize the fundamental instability of iconology, and their own responsibility in shaping art-historical discourse, Moxey’s call for socially engaged scholarship carried iconography to the opposite pole from its beginnings 150 years before. Didron’s attempts to create a scientific system for identifying the fixed meanings of Christian art had been replaced by a series of creative interventions, in which the shifting world-view of its audiences was kept in view through the self-conscious lens of subjectivity.

One “crossroads” thus lay in the tension between traditional approaches to iconography and the mutable, particular iconologies proposed by Holly and Moxey. In hindsight, however, it was Michael Camille’s essay in the volume, and his articulation of an “anti-iconography” of medieval art, that reflected the most influential new direction to emerge from the critiques of the 1990s.⁴⁵ By rejecting the notion that the wild, seemingly irrational imagery of the so-called trumeau of Souillac was immune to iconographic analysis, Camille redefined the application of iconography to subject matter that had little or no relation to scriptural sources. Where Mâle had reduced the biting, twisting Souillac figures to empty echoes of manuscript illumination, and Schapiro had celebrated their exuberant forms as an “independent spectacle” inspired by “secular fantasy,” Camille insisted that the trumeau carried “somatic rather than semantic” meanings. This fresh perspective came on the heels of his *Image on the Edge* (1992), published just one year earlier.⁴⁶ As engaging and creative as the marginalia that it explored, the book provided a captivating antidote to Gilbert’s suggestion, now 40 years old, that iconographic values were not “loosened” until the close of the Middle Ages. Camille’s use of marginalia denied this truism, demonstrating how decipherable codes of mainstream theology had always existed alongside other signs that carried semiotic meanings, and yet resisted neat textual interpretations. Camille had already challenged Mâle in his first book, *The Gothic Idol* (1989), by shifting attention from the meaning of images to their function.⁴⁷ As reviewers pointed out, a new emphasis on the proverbial “power of images” had already been spearheaded by David Freedberg, Hans Belting, and others.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, with Mâle as his foil, it was Camille who destabilized any remaining view of Gothic pictorial systems as detached or self-contained. This point virtually exploded in *Image on the Edge*, which grappled inventively with other meanings – secular, sexual, chaotic, subversive – and finally shook off Mâle’s insistence on the scripted calculus of theology as the dominant paradigm of medieval

art. Vigorous, creative, and always entertaining, Camille's work matched his provocative subject matter in its playfulness and yet changed the future of the field.

Path-breaking as it was, *Image on the Edge* also resonated widely because it responded to a growing sense that the margins of medieval art deserve as much attention as its centers. In hindsight, it reads almost as a response to Schapiro's brief but remarkable review of Lilian Randall's 1966 study of Gothic marginalia, and its argument against the reductive binary of "symbolic or decorative" in medieval art.⁴⁹ *Image on the Edge* also coincided with other work that was equally sensitive to "other kinds of meaning (as in metaphor, parody and humor) which need not be symbolic in the coded manner of mediaeval religious symbolism."⁵⁰ Jonathan J.G. Alexander, for example, advocated for "social iconography" in a 1993 essay on visual signs that pushed beyond the merely linguistic into a broader realm of cultural meanings. Reading images for "an ideological system that served to represent medieval society to itself," Alexander invited fresh attention to "role models, social practices, and an encoded value system of social mores," and drew on Roland Barthes to open a spectrum of rhetorically constructed signs.⁵¹ In the case of a squirrel held against the breast of a young woman in the margins of the fourteenth-century Ormesby Psalter (fig. 10-4), Alexander linked Lucy Freeman Sandler's identification of the animal as the visualization



FIGURE 10-4 Psalter of Robert of Ormesby; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 366, fol. 131r, c.1300, detail. Source: photo courtesy of The Bodleian Library.

of a slang term for female genitalia to a broader discussion of the audiences for erotic word-play.⁵² Questioning the cultural web that not only produced the sign but also inflected its legibility, Alexander contended that it is not enough to identify the woman's squirrel or her lover's dagger as oblique sexual symbols: the essential point is to acknowledge underlying anxieties that extended all the way to King Edward II and the courtier Piers Gaveston, reportedly murdered for their homosexual bond. Iconography in this case is much more than the translation of a sly joke; it is the work of unmasking a patriarchal, heteronormative culture and its proactive moral instruction, in which art "codified and strengthened social values and thus ensured social cohesion throughout medieval Christian society."⁵³

Social iconography thus emerged as an indispensable framework for seeing sophisticated structural hierarchies that were once understood, explicitly or implicitly, by medieval audiences. To name one more compelling example, Jacqueline Jung invoked the term in re-assessing the Last Supper of the Naumburg choir screen in light of contemporary etiquette manuals.⁵⁴ Her analysis demonstrated not only the aristocratic associations of the sculpture in the Gothic era, but also the deeply ingrained prejudices that would color its reception in the twentieth century. Such work reflects the value of politically engaged iconographies, in which images can advocate – as vividly shown in Jung's example – for a powerful recognition of the myriad ways in which signs construct their audiences, becoming not only the reflections but also the agents of social change.

New Directions

It is only fitting to return to the Mérode triptych in closing, with an eye to Holly's observation that "writing about a picture does not exhaust what the image has to say."⁵⁵ The contemporary study of iconography is a case in point: rather than reducing its subject to a closed set of signs and their explanations, the field has embraced new questions and new meanings. Far from the stodgy science of static symbols that prompted Camille's call for an "anti-iconography" two decades ago, it has become a vehicle for semiotic approaches with no limit to their applications. Moving from the narrowly theological to the broadly cultural, from the elitism of textual sources to the inclusivity of visual culture, iconography no longer relies upon written words, much less on libraries and fluency in Latin. The monastic and scholastic perspectives that once inspired Didron are still relevant today, as seen for example in Jean Wirth's analysis of Romanesque art in relation to the Gregorian Reform.⁵⁶ Such approaches, however, are balanced with attention to the other, largely unwritten voices of medieval culture. The desire to decode visual programs is still present, but the nature of the code itself has become more complex: the mystical has been put in dialogue with the mundane; the familiar with the foreign; and the erudite with the erotic. These

expansions have followed two main tacks. First, the range of materials subjected to iconographic scrutiny has grown significantly and, as Jérôme Baschet and others have made clear, it is no longer possible to divorce images from objects, or the iconography of a work from its function.⁵⁷ Second, the iconographic method itself has expanded to address new sources of meaning, making it possible to speak of iconographies of materials, structures, social cues, and more, far beyond the narrow confines of theology. In the example of the Mérode triptych, from which Schapiro had plucked out mousetraps for investigation, there seems to be no end to the possibilities of iconography for “locking and unlocking meaning,” to borrow Holly’s phrase.⁵⁸

But what are these new threads of inquiry, and how might they unlock fresh meanings in something as familiar as the painted ensemble at *The Cloisters*? An iconology of the body as proposed by Hans Belting might consider Joseph’s weathered skin as sign of his advanced age and ambiguous ethnicity, both rare features amid the lily-white and mostly ageless world of the “*primitifs flamands*.”⁵⁹ An iconography of style – already implicit, as John Williams has noted, in Schapiro’s Marxist agenda – would situate the painting amid the heightened realism of its era, interrogating the view through Joseph’s window and the angles of his boxy workshop as daring experiments in the novel perspectival attempt to open Alberti’s metaphorical window.⁶⁰ The iconography of materials might pursue questions about the swift rise of linseed oil, or consider wood panels and the unwieldy reality of the triptych, with its movable wings that protected both the religious experience and the delicate glazed surfaces of the painting when closed. Its hinged pieces are echoed within the picture by the wooden window panels that have been lifted to show the Flemish street scene behind Joseph, and parted to reveal the cloudy sky behind Mary. It is an intuitive gravitation toward the potential encryption of ideas that makes such approaches “iconographic,” despite their obvious distance from Didron’s firm taxonomies. These alternative iconographies no longer adhere to the supposed detachment of scriptural narrative and text-based symbolism; they embrace a labyrinth of allusions that are grasped not only through asking which images are shown, but also by investigating how they have been rendered.

Finally, while it is still possible to pursue the iconographies of isolated motifs, the search for their historical meaning is increasingly tempered by an awareness of our own subjectivities. Looking back on Schapiro’s mousetraps, it seems almost inevitable that the view from the 1940s would center on complex gadgets that privilege human ingenuity and its potential to invent new ways to catch and kill an enemy, real or perceived. It is similarly unsurprising that my own eyes should linger on the blue and white ceramic jug on the table before Mary (fig. 10-5), an enigmatic vessel that embraces a trio of flowers. Its unreadable pseudo-Hebrew inscription suggests the mysterious language of Roman Judea, producing the aura of distant places that are the wellspring of theological history and yet also the source of conflicts, then and now, that threaten and define potential pilgrimages to Bethlehem and Jerusalem, to the Holy Land at the heart of a troubled world.



FIGURE 10-5 Workshop of Robert Campin, *Annunciation Triptych* (*Mérode Altarpiece*), c.1427–1432, detail. Source: photo courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, 1956, www.metmuseum.org.

Though admittedly ahistorical, the comparisons are difficult to ignore. Even as I consider the ways in which a fifteenth-century artist, his workshop, and his patrons may have consumed a water jug as part of the iconography of an evocative other, I must also concede that we are never quite free from the painful questions of the present. These too have their iconographies, though their ever-changing relationships to the past remain strangely disconcerting.

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Notes

- 1 Ainsworth and Christiansen, *Van Eyck to Bruegel*, pp. 89–96.
- 2 Schapiro, “Mérode Altarpiece.”
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 185.
- 4 See for example Camille, *Image on the Edge*, and Grabar, *Mediation of Ornament*.
- 5 Cassidy, “Introduction.”
- 6 Camille, “Anti-Iconography,” p. 45.
- 7 Lavin, “Humanistic Discipline.”
- 8 Didron, *Iconographie chrétienne*.
- 9 Didron, *Christian Iconography*, translator’s preface, p. viii.
- 10 Nayrolles, “Deux approches,” p. 202.
- 11 *Ibid.*, pp. 202–203.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 Martin and Cahier, *Cathédrale de Bourges*. Like Didron’s project, this too was an incomplete series, with only the first volume published.
- 15 Mâle, *L’Art religieux*. Note that the familiar *Gothic Image* was only added to the English title in the 1958 reprint edition; Nussey’s original title was a direct translation from the French.
- 16 Mâle, *Religious Art*, p. 1.
- 17 *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 2.
- 18 *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 5.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- 21 Chazelle, “Pictures, Books and the Illiterate. [See also Chapter 9 by Kessler in this volume (ed.).]”
- 22 Becker, “*Pathosformel*”; Holly, *Panofsky*, esp. pp. 105 ff. for engagement with Warburg; Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*.
- 23 Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, pp. 14–15.
- 24 Panofsky, “Arnolfini Portrait”; for “disguised symbolism” see also Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, pp. 131–148.
- 25 Panofsky, “Arnolfini Portrait,” p. 126.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 Holly, “Witnessing,” and *Panofsky*; Mitchell, *Iconology*.
- 28 Gilbert, “Subject and Not-Subject,” p. 202.
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 Grabar, *Christian Iconography*.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. xli.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. xlv.
- 33 Krautheimer, “Iconography of Medieval Architecture.”
- 34 McCurrach, “‘Renovatio’ Reconsidered.”
- 35 Weitzmann and Kessler, *Dura Synagogue*.
- 36 Wharton, “Good and Bad Images.”
- 37 Katzenellenbogen, *Sculptural Programs*.
- 38 Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, also reviews by Freedberg, van Buren.
- 39 Van der Velden, “Our Lady of the Dry Tree.”

- 40 Cassidy, "Introduction."
- 41 Holly, "Unwriting," p. 23.
- 42 Kemp, "Pictorial Systems"; Kessler, "Medieval Art."
- 43 Harbison, "Miracles Happen."
- 44 Mitchell, *Iconology*, p. 38; quoted in Moxey, "Politics of Iconology," p. 31.
- 45 Camille, "Anti-Iconography."
- 46 Camille, *Image on the Edge*.
- 47 Camille, *Gothic Idol*; also reviews by Bynum, Caviness, Hamburger.
- 48 Freedberg, *Power of Images*; Belting, *Bild und Kult*.
- 49 Schapiro, "Images in the Margins," review of Randall, *Images in the Margins*. [See also Chapter 15 by Dale in this volume (ed.).]
- 50 *Ibid.*, p. 685.
- 51 Alexander, "Iconography and Ideology," p. 1.; see also n. 2, and Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image."
- 52 Alexander, "Iconography and Ideology," p. 2, and Sandler, "Bawdy Betrothal."
- 53 Alexander, "Iconography and Ideology," p. 6.
- 54 Jung, "Peasant Meal."
- 55 Holly, "Witnessing," p. 162.
- 56 Wirth, *L'image*.
- 57 Baschet, *L'iconographie*.
- 58 Holly, "Witnessing," p. 163.
- 59 Belting, "Image, Medium, Body."
- 60 Williams, "Schapiro in Silos."

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Art and Exegesis

Christopher G. Hughes

Definitions and Period Terminology

This chapter sets out to describe the relationship between art and biblical exegesis as it is expressed in the Romanesque and Gothic periods, as well as in the modern art historical literature on the subject. Two remarks must be made at the outset. Unlike such subjects as, say, Gothic architecture or Romanesque manuscripts, there is no distinct body of literature on art and exegesis; instead, we have individual scholarly works that address the issue to a greater or lesser degree as part of other projects. Secondly, there is a question of period versus modern terminology, and I offer the following not to be pedantic, but because one wants to be clear about how modern critical discourses correspond – or do not – to medieval concepts. It is important to note that both “art” and “exegesis” are terms medieval writers used either in a different sense from ours or not at all. As for art, to a medieval ear, the Latin *ars* signified something more of a skill or craft. Writing around 1100, the Benedictine monk Theophilus entitled his technical treatise *De Diversis Artibus*, the word *ars* here carrying none of the modern associations with creativity or self-expression. Instead of art, one might substitute pictorial or visual modes of expression.

Similarly, the term “exegesis” requires clarification. A word of Greek origin, exegesis is not commonly used by the Latin writers of the Middle Ages. A survey of the titles of some exegetical works gives us a sense of the range of words they employed instead: Augustine’s *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Hrabanus Maurus’

Expositiones in Leviticum; Rupert of Deutz's *Commentaria in Evangelium Sancti Iohannis*; Hugh of St. Victor's *Quaestiones in Epistolas Pauli*. In the *Didascalicon*, a handbook for study written in the late 1120s, Hugh of St. Victor uses another range of verbs to describe the act of what we call exegesis, among them *iudicare*, *investigare*, *studiare*, and *interpretare*. What is clear from all of these Latin terms – and the texts that follow them – is what exegesis means: the interpretation of sacred scripture, and not theology. In the *Didascalicon*, Hugh of St. Victor, quoting Boethius and Isidore of Seville, defines theology as “discourse concerning the divine,” or the “searching into the contemplation of God and the incorporeality of the soul,” concluding that “it is theology, therefore, when we discuss with deepest penetration some aspect ... of the inexpressible nature of God.”¹ Therefore this chapter will restrict itself to works of art bearing some relation to exegesis, or the systematic interpretation of scripture, and not consider the relation of art to theology.

Certain terminological adjustments having been made, it is clear that throughout the High Middle Ages a deep connection was felt and then effected between what we call art and exegesis. Twelfth-century authors make clear that pictorial or visual modes were viewed as an effective way of expressing exegetical thought. For example, the probably English and Cistercian author of the *Pictor in Carmine* (c.1200) recommends typological programs (and typology, as we shall see, is the most common form of exegesis to be represented in art) for church decoration, not only because he believes this subject matter to be more edifying than others, but also because the representation of typologies in pictures will imprint exegetical concepts on the mind more forcefully than by other means.² Similarly, Hugh of St. Victor, who seemingly had a developed sense of the powers of visual exegesis,³ makes use of an elaborate, extended pictorial metaphor to explicate the allegorical sense of Noah's Ark in his commentary *De Archa Noe*, again working with the assumption that the mental construction and visualization of a picture will fix the exegetical content of his work more securely in the mind of the reader. In this text, Hugh claims to be drawing and painting an elaborate, quasi-diagrammatic picture of the ark, which he then harmonizes with his exegetical interpretation. At the end of *De Archa Noe*, Hugh offers a spiritual reason for attending to this picture:

And now, then, as we have promised, we must put before you the pattern of our ark. Thus you may learn from an external form, which we have visibly depicted, what you ought to do inwardly, and when you have impressed the form of this pattern on your heart, you may rejoice that the house of God has been built in you.⁴

This passage suggests that the contemplation of a visual image – in this case, an extremely complicated one which may or may not have ever been executed⁵ – will clarify for the “viewer” the moral or tropological sense of scripture.

A similar medieval conjoining of the visual and the exegetical occurs in the lengthy inscription found on Nicholas of Verdun's Klosterneuburg Altar (finished 1181). The opening hexameters of the dedicatory inscription by the donor, Prior Rudiger, makes this abundantly clear: in the inscription, he not only explains the

traditional exegetical habit of dividing sacred history in three eras (before the Law, under the Law, under grace), he also tries to focus vision and attention on certain features of the work's pictorial decoration. These beginning verses not only refer to an abstract exegetical system but also direct our visual experience of the object before us: "You see in this work" how the events of sacred history mirror each other, Rudiger tells us. To see, we are instructed to "seek" the time before the Law in the upper zone; below that we will find the time under the Law; and "in between the two" stands the era of grace. These detailed instructions inform the viewer where, according to Rudiger, the main visual interest lies, which is in how the system of the three ages has been translated into a pictorial program. The verses also suggest a schedule for studying the various regions of the work. Taken as a whole, the inscription not only lays out the exegetical foundation for the work's iconography, but strongly encourages us to experience it visually, and not just conceptually. The underlying reason for insisting on the visual perception of exegesis can only have been a strong belief in the efficacy of that relationship.

Further evidence for the medieval connection of pictorial exposition and exegesis can be seen in the many Romanesque manuscripts that rely heavily on visual devices such as *schemata* or diagrams to make exegetical points in a way that was clearly thought to be more forceful and expeditious than textual exposition. As Michael Evans has argued, diagrammatic exposition makes clear that medieval exegetes believed that certain ideas could be expressed visually, but less effectively verbally, which implies that the modern emphasis on prose as the primary medieval medium for the transmission of knowledge is overstated.⁶ Finally, certain works of art make their relationship to exegesis explicit. For instance, when the designer of the so-called "anagogical" window at St.-Denis (c.1140–1144; see below) frames an image of Moses receiving the Law with an inscription which makes direct reference to Paul's dictum "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (II Corinthians 3: 7–8, 16–17), the viewer is obliged to interpret the image in the light of scriptural exegesis, in this case concerning the transition from the Old to the New Dispensations.⁷

All of this suggests that "Art and Exegesis" is a topic with an authentic medieval pedigree (as opposed to, say, the study of iconography). However, given the fact that there is no established modern bibliography or methodology concerning the relationship of art to exegesis, this chapter will sketch out the ways the problem has been addressed by scholars by looking at three categories in which the two terms have been brought together in art historical research, and then give examples of each. These categories, which overlap each other at times, are: (i) art or decoration found in Romanesque and Gothic exegetical manuscripts; (ii) art that illustrates or gives visual expression to exegetical ideas found in texts, or, to put it another way, art that adopts exegetical ideas as its iconography; (iii) art that functions as a visual form of exegesis. Before proceeding to examples, I would like to offer a caveat about discussing the relation of art to a textual tradition such as scriptural exegesis (this issue will be touched upon again below). Georges Didi-Huberman reminds us that medieval exegetes did not view sacred texts as, to

use his idiosyncratic terminology, *lisible*, or open to an immediate and complete apprehension. Instead, they viewed the interpretation of scripture as an ongoing mystery which would never completely reveal itself. In painting, a similar distinction can be made between what Didi-Huberman calls the *visible* and the *visuel*: an iconographic approach to art history considers pictures to be *visible*, or fully understandable once we have deciphered their subject matter. Pictures, however, are, in fact, *visuel*, a distinction meant to stress the irreducible, resistantly non-verbal, visual nature of a picture.⁸ When speaking of art's relation to exegesis, this analogy not only reminds us of the medieval attitude toward the interpretation of scripture, but also asks us to think of works of art as manifesting a visuality that functions very differently from textuality, and finally suggests that because of this distinction, exegetical art will proceed by means of its own visual logic, never merely illustrating exegetical texts. This will become mostly apparent in my third group of examples, works of art that embody a notion of visual exegesis.

Scriptural Exegesis

Before turning to works of art, a brief descriptive history of the practice of biblical exegesis is in order. Generally speaking, the Christian interpretation of scripture is, at its heart, allegorical. That is to say, the events of both the Old and New Testaments are thought to have not only a literal or historical meaning, but a “spiritual” or “mystical” sense as well. Usually, the New Testament is taken to be the allegorical sense of Old Testament; that is to say, the New Testament is viewed as a fulfillment of the prophetic Old Testament. This idea of the mystical concord of the two testaments gives rise to the idea of biblical typology, which permeates scriptural exegesis throughout early Christianity and the Middle Ages. It is not always easy to sort out the differences between typology and allegory and it is not clear that medieval exegetes felt a need to do so.

A system for the hidden meaning of scripture was developed very early on and remained in place well beyond our period. This system, referred to as the “four senses of scripture,” sees in scripture a literal sense, an allegorical sense, a moral or tropological sense, and an anagogical or eschatological sense.⁹ The significance of each sense is nicely summed up in a much-quoted couplet by Nicholas of Lyra, writing about 1330 at the end of a very long tradition:

Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria,
Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.¹⁰

(The letter shows acts, allegory shows what to believe,
The moral shows what to do, anagogy what to strive for.)

Theoretically, every utterance in scripture can be interpreted in terms of all four senses, although in practice it was recognized that some were better suited

to certain senses than others. One finds the three spiritual senses of scripture explicated in straightforward terms throughout, for example, the *Glossa Ordinaria*, each sense introduced by *allegorice* (allegorically), *moraliter* (morally), or *mystice* (mystically), depending on what the glossator wishes to stress in a given passage. One should also note that all three of the non-literal senses were thought to be subcategories of a more general allegorical or spiritual sense. In terms of practice, this means that in the many commentaries on the Bible written in the patristic period and in the early Middle Ages, one can find a verse-by-verse exposition of scripture that explains each sense of that verse. On the other hand, certain commentaries, such as Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job* (c.590) could transform the ostensible explication of a biblical text into a work of extended theological meditation.

Closely related to the allegorical sense of scripture is what modern scholars call biblical typology (referred to again, somewhat vaguely, as *allegoria* in medieval usage), a more specialized practice that seeks to elucidate parallels between the Old and New Testaments. According to Augustine, the typological or figural meaning of scripture is closely related to the allegorical sense.¹¹ This approach is founded on the idea, promulgated by Christ, the evangelists, and Paul, that the truths of the new Christian dispensation are latent in the events of the "old" Jewish one. Typology was not only one of the most common and enduring ways of understanding the allegorical sense of scripture, it was also, for reasons we shall see shortly, the exegetical type that had the greatest impact on the visual arts. In order to do justice to the textual-exegetical aspect of this chapter, and given the pre-eminence of typology in this world, it seems useful to pause and briefly consider a representative example of typological exegesis. This is taken from Hrabanus Maurus's ninth-century explication of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22). After discussing the literal sense of the passage, including information provided by Jews concerning the location of the incident's mountain setting, Hrabanus notes the parallels between this Old Testament event and one from the New – the Crucifixion. The father, willing to sacrifice his only son for God, is likened to God himself sacrificing his son, Christ, for the sake of human salvation. Hrabanus also notes that the very wood carried by Isaac up the mountain resembles the cross carried by Christ. There is a further allegorical meaning to be discovered in this typology as well – the two servants dismissed by Abraham "signify" the Jews who "do not understand the humanity of Christ."¹² This conclusion is typical of typological exegesis in that it stresses not only mystico-structural similarities between the Old and New dispensations, but also stresses the superiority of the New.

The voluminous commentaries on the Bible, as well as other types of texts like the *City of God*, written over centuries by authors who had assimilated and repeated the work of their forebears, constitutes a kind of culture of exegesis, or a shared set of texts, practices, and paradigms that give this world its distinctive flavor. However, the harmony (or homogeneity, depending on your point of view) of this culture broke down sometime in the twelfth century as the

emphases and aims of scriptural exegesis changed. Masters such as Peter Lombard increasingly inserted *questiones*, or theological discussions, into their explanations, thereby combining exegesis and theology in a manner quite different from their early medieval counterparts. In the early thirteenth century, a new trend in glosses of scripture, partly as a tool for preaching, emerged in the circle of Stephen Langton in Paris. This combination of interests in the moralizing of scripture and preaching naturally found an eager audience among the Dominicans and Franciscans, and certain masters, such as the Dominican Hugh of St. Cher, became famous as authors of *postillae*, or running commentaries on the Bible, meant to complement the more atomized glosses. In the meantime, the pursuit of the spiritual or allegorical sense, beloved in the old monasteries, declined in influence and practice, and in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, emergent noble and bourgeois approaches to scripture focused new attention on books of the Bible previously neglected by the Church Fathers, which spoke to new interests in politics and kingship.¹³

Historiography of Art and Exegesis

Although never attaining the status of an “approach” or method, the use of exegetical texts to interpret works of Romanesque and Gothic art goes back to the early days of the systematic study of medieval art. Consequently, if the following historiographic overview of the relation of art and exegesis seems thin, it is because the bulk of the study on the subject has concentrated less on paradigms and more on individual cases. Nevertheless, a provisional history of the topic can be attempted. A prominent nineteenth-century example of exegetical texts being brought to bear on the interpretation of a work of art is found in the monumental study of the stained glass windows at Bourges Cathedral by the Jesuit Charles Cahier (1807–1882), who makes his interpretive stance clear by giving the typological window (c.1215) pride of place, devoting more than 100 pages to its explication.¹⁴ Cahier offers no methodological statement explaining his decision to discuss the window in light of exegetical texts (ranging from Tertullian to Rupert of Deutz), because he views exegesis as an expression of the truths of the faith, not as a body of material to be brought to bear on a historical problem. Similarly, he sees the artist’s representation of exegetical thought as a parallel affirmation of the “correct” way to convey the tenets of Catholicism. To put it another way, Cahier feels that both exegesis and art depicting exegetical ideas respond naturally to the reality of sacred scripture.¹⁵ In some sense, it is fair to say that Cahier works as an exegete himself, and not as an art historian.

The most influential medievalist to champion not only the use of exegetical texts in the interpretation of works of art, but also to reveal the extent to which works of art themselves should be viewed as forms of exegesis was Emile Mâle (1862–1954). Particularly in his magisterial *L’Art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France*:

Étude sur l'iconographie du moyen âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration (1898), Mâle proposed a view of medieval art that remains very much with us to this day:

Everything essential said by the theologians, encyclopedists, and the interpreters of the Bible was expressed in stained glass and sculpture. We shall attempt to show how artists translated the thoughts of the Church Doctors, and do our utmost to present a full picture of the abundant teaching the thirteenth-century cathedral furnished to all.¹⁶

Choosing Vincent of Beauvais as a model for a totalizing vision of all medieval knowledge, and citing inter alia Paul, Hilary of Poitiers, Origen, Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, Gregory the Great, and Isidore of Seville, Mâle interprets the art of the Gothic cathedrals as a complete visualization of “the immense chain of Catholic tradition.”¹⁷ As this statement makes clear, Mâle viewed most medieval art not simply as the visualization of theology and exegesis, but as didactic, rather than decorative, in purpose. In fact, for Mâle, exegesis practically drives or determines Gothic art. In his view, it is impossible to understand medieval art simply in stylistic or cultural terms because this approach misses that original impulse behind those works.

Perhaps the most thoroughgoing theoretical or methodological debate of the last century about the use of exegetical texts to elucidate works of art appears not in the study of Romanesque and Gothic art, but in the discussion of so-called “disguised symbolism” in fifteenth-century Netherlandish painting. In the wake of the chapter in Erwin Panofsky’s *Early Netherlandish Painting* (1953) devoted to “Reality and Symbol in Early Flemish Painting,” some scholars began routinely to adduce exegetical texts as sources for the purportedly arcane “symbolic” iconography of works of later medieval art. When pursued in a mechanical or uncritical way, this practice led to interpretations of works of art that implied a naïve relation of exegesis to image.¹⁸ Pursuing this thought, Brendan Cassidy notes that iconographic method’s recourse to exegetical texts often glosses over another important issue, the relationship of medieval texts to medieval images. He reminds us that “the visual is more intractable, offering only ambiguous answers to many of the questions that the text-bound historian is inclined to ask. However, it is not the appeal to texts for clarification of the meaning of an image that is the issue, for iconography would scarcely be possible without texts.” Cassidy also warns that, “the texts among which meanings were sought were predominantly the writings of medieval churchmen, and classical authors and their humanist admirers; again this approach is warranted only in some contexts.”¹⁹ This caveat reminds us that an expanded conception of the audience for a particular image, reflecting the social realities of literacy, class, and gender, means that certain exegetical texts might not be appropriate in the reconstruction of an artwork’s reception. This debate, however, has calmed somewhat, for, as Jeffrey Hamburger has recently observed:

[T]he interpretation of medieval art in terms of theology has fallen out of favor. The aversion to theology has many causes; not the least are disbelief and disinterest, allied with a general discrediting (and occasional abuse) of the iconographic

method, which in turn entails a healthy disinclination to explain images through texts. Instead, popular piety, oral traditions, and the beliefs of marginal groups command scholarly attention.²⁰

Finally, the tendency to view exegetical texts as sources for iconography, and not to understand (as was the case in the Middle Ages) exegesis as a cognitive act, misunderstands the degree to which works of art actively constructed exegetical meaning, rather than passively representing it.

Three Conceptions of the Study of Art and Exegesis

The Illustration of Exegetical Texts

This is certainly the least important area of our topic, but it would seem remiss not to mention what kind of art appears in actual exegetical texts. Compared with the great bibles, psalters, and service books made in the Romanesque period, generally speaking exegetical works were not as lavishly painted. There are, however, notable exceptions. For example, for a copy of Richard of St. Victor's *In Ezechielem* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS Lat. 14 516), produced c.1150–1175, Richard wanted Ezechiel's temple illustrated by plans, elevations, and exterior views in order to prove the literal sense of the text. However, the extensive illustration seen in this exegetical manuscript is unusual, owing to the polemical nature of the text.²¹

Art Illustrating Exegetical Writing and Thought

Art may also give visual form to an interpretation of scripture, as opposed to a scene or event from scripture. A pair of stained glass windows ordered by Abbot Suger around 1140 for the choir of the abbey church at St.-Denis illustrates exegetical thought with great sophistication. One of the windows, variously referred to as the "anagogical window," or more accurately as the window of the "Pauline Allegories," contains five roundels which visualize typologies and allegories of the concord of the two testaments. One roundel, now lost, depicted the "Mystic Mill" of St. Paul, which Mâle, and after him Louis Grodecki, correctly interpreted in the light of Paul's writings as a symbolic statement of how the Old Testament is metaphorically transformed into the New. (This subject is also depicted on a slightly earlier capital at Vézelay.) In order to insure a correct reading of the image, Suger appended a verse which states that "the wheat of Moses and the prophets became the pure flour with which the church nourishes mankind."²² A surviving panel showing Christ crowning Ecclesia and unveiling the eyes of Synagoga similarly gives visual form to a variety of verses from the Pauline Epistles that deal with the transition from the Old to New dispensations. Throughout his authoritative discussion of this window's iconography, Grodecki insists that its exegetical sources in the Epistles are as clear as they are venerable, and he thoroughly rejects

Erwin Panofsky's "anagogical" reading of the windows as overly complicated and institutionally unlikely.²³ By placing the emphasis instead on traditional allegorical readings of scripture, Grodecki returns the St.-Denis window to its proper place in the history of illustrating established biblical commentary. This type of iconography was already present at St.-Denis in the Carolingian altar frontal refurbished by Suger at this time, as well as in the subject matter of the great twelfth-century cross, now lost, which was, to quote Suger, "enameled with exquisite workmanship, and [on it] the history of the Savior, with the testimonies of the allegories of the Law [*cum antiquae legis allegoriarum*] indicated, and the capital above looking up, with its images, to the death of the Lord."²⁴ Grodecki's analysis of the windows also has the virtue of reminding scholars that the exegetical sources for twelfth-century art need not be contemporary – for example, the Victorines are often pressed into this service – and the New Testament and the patristic authors remained a vital source for iconographic ideas throughout the Romanesque and Gothic periods.²⁵ On the opposing window, dedicated to stories from the life of Moses, the panel of Moses receiving the Law is accompanied by an inscription, cited by Suger, which alludes to II Corinthians 3: 6: "Lege data Moysi, juvat illam Gratia Christi/Gratia vivificat, littera mortificat." This orthodox statement makes it clear that Suger wishes for the Exodus scenes to be interpreted in the light of traditional typological exegesis as well. As Grodecki says, it is clear that in some respects the "allegorical" window provides exegetical methods for interpreting the Exodus window, and others have argued for specific cross-window interpretive structures.²⁶ Finally, it should be noted that Suger's choice of conservative interpretations of scripture for the iconography of the windows and his cross is in part a response to criticisms concerning the place of art in the monastery leveled at St.-Denis by Bernard of Clairvaux.²⁷

A later example (fig. 11-1) from an English Gothic manuscript shows another way in which exegetical thought could be rendered pictorially. An illumination from the Queen Mary Psalter (c.1315) accompanying Psalm 68 shows the marriage at Cana; the historiated initial S beginning the first verse contains the story of Jonah and the Whale. At first glance, it is difficult to figure out why these two biblical stories have been chosen to illustrate this psalm. It turns out that the image presumes a familiarity with (which is different from saying something "is derived from") a bit of exegesis derived from Jerome's commentary on Jonah. Explicating Jonah 2: 1–11, which Christ had already interpreted typologically (Matthew 12: 40), Jerome says that "The Lord explains the mystery of this topic (*mysteriorum loci*) in the Gospels, so it's superfluous to repeat it either in the same terms, or in different ones."²⁸ Recognizing that the obvious typology – Jonah's three days in the whale foreshadow Christ's three days in the earth – is well known, Jerome turns to the allegorical significance of other aspects of the story: "If Jonah is compared to the Lord, and his passing three days and three nights in the whale is a sign of his passion, then Jonah's prayer should be a figure of the Lord's prayer." In his prayer, Jonah cries out, saying the Lord has "cast me forth into the deep heart of the sea, and a flood hath encompassed me" (Jonah 2: 4).



FIGURE 11-1 Psalm 68, Queen Mary Psalter, c.1315. Source: London, British Library, MS Royal 2.B.VII, fol. 168v.

This suggests to Jerome a passage from Psalm 69: “Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul ... I am come into the depth of the sea: and a tempest hath overwhelmed me” (Psalm 69: 2–3). So far, we have two Old Testament texts but no New, yet Jerome intends a typological reading. He brings this about by reminding us that the Psalms not only prophesy Christ, but that the psalmist, David, is a prefiguration of Christ. Therefore, the Psalms can be attributed to Christ. He speaks of “the person of Christ who, under the name of David, sings the psalm.”²⁹ The psalm prayer, uttered by David-Christ, is the typological equivalent of Jonah’s prayer in the whale. It is therefore not surprising that we should find Jonah at the beginning of Psalm 68 in the Queen Mary Psalter – or in other Gothic psalters.³⁰ However, this cryptotypology is further complicated by the marriage at Cana miniature above, given that the marriage at Cana was customarily interpreted as an allegory of the water of the Old Testament being changed into the wine of the New by Christ. The watery psalm verse and Jonah anecdote, both from the Old Testament, support the typological reading of water in the gospel scene above, which, as has been noted, unusually represents only a goblet of wine.³¹ This is a rather complex set of exegetical ideas to present to the viewer of the page without any textual hint as to its intended meaning. Nevertheless, we must assume that the designer of the Queen Mary Psalter expected the images to be understood in some way.

Art as Visual Exegesis

The third way in which art and exegesis can be related to each other is to think of works of art performing a kind of visual exegesis. That is to say, beyond the simple representation of an idea gleaned from an exegetical text, these works, through their formal arrangements, act as an exegetical mode themselves. As Marcia Kupfer has said in relation to Romanesque murals, visual exegesis is “a nonlinear mode of narration that correlates the dynamics of perception and interpretation. The viewer comprehends the various particular elements in light of the global arrangement in which they are subsumed.”³² It is in this area that “exegetical” art shines most brightly, constructing scriptural interpretations as ingenious and compelling as anything found in a text – and often more so.

Made around 1160 in the valley of the Meuse, possibly to contain a long-vanished relic of the True Cross, the Alton Towers triptych (fig. 11-2) is a noteworthy example of how visual exegesis might work. Its iconography is both allegorical and typological. Complemented by allegorical voices, typology asserts itself as the featured pictorial program of the triptych. The central panel is dedicated to events from Christ’s Passion: the Crucifixion, the Harrowing of Hell, and the Three Maries at the Tomb. The left and right wings provide each New Testament event with an Old Testament prototype. These particular matchings of Old and New Testament events is conventional, repeated throughout the patristic and early medieval commentaries. They also occur regularly in twelfth-century Mosan enameled metalwork. What is original about the Alton Towers triptych



FIGURE 11-2 Alton Towers triptych, c.1160. Source: London, Victoria & Albert Museum.

is the *format* in which these exegetical commonplaces are presented: they are accompanied by unusually ornate inscriptions and arranged in a diagrammatic network of roundels. This combination of inscription, diagram, and image give the work its distinctive exegetical power.

The inscriptions draw our attention to parallels in the Old and New Testaments by creating a system of verbal rhymes and echoes – in other words, formal structures meant to suggest a meaningful relationship. Similarly, the appearance of the Alton Towers triptych's imagery works by means of an equivalent visual process. Drawing on the rich tradition of medieval diagrams, or *figurae*, the abstract system of connecting bars and roundels on the triptych encourages the viewer to consider why various subjects are compared or contrasted. Both designer and audience would sense that roundels of similar size and position implied a formal comparison of their contents. Formal differences would register themselves as well: the roundels on the wings are blue, while those in the center are white. Those on the wings are incomplete, while those in the center are complete; this probably denotes the approved belief that the revelation of the Old Testament was incomplete, while that of the New is complete and perfect. These distinctions correspond to the Old/New dispensation distinction, or, to put it another way, one visual type of *figura* is used to elaborate an exegetical one.

Finally, the center panel of the triptych includes allegorical imagery that sets the Crucifixion and Resurrection in a cosmic setting. In the top and bottom borders appear personifications of Charity, who bears a scroll inscribed with her name, and Justice, with an identifying inscription just below her, two of the four cardinal virtues. Justice, a worldly virtue, occupies the lower place, ceding the higher, spiritual position to Charity. Versions of this allegorical schema, derived from patristic exegesis and reinforced by later commentators including Rupert of Deutz, were incorporated into early medieval representations of subjects such as the *Majestas Domini*, giving the Christ in Glory a broader setting.³³ The designer of the Alton Towers triptych complicates this theme by framing the retable's New Testament subjects with quasi-classical personifications of the Sun, Moon, Earth, and Sea, complete with inscriptions in the panel's outer border. Also present on the central panel are the symbols of the four evangelists, inserted into the corners of the box framing the Crucifixion. The two trees in half-roundels flanking the Crucifixion may be the Trees of Life and Knowledge. All of these symbols and images offer different perspectives on the narrative events depicted in the main column of roundels.

Compositional strategies closely related to those found in Mosan enamels can be found in early Gothic stained glass windows as well. Windows at Canterbury, Bourges, and Chartres have complex, usually diagrammatic, typological programs.³⁴ Another popular "exegetical" subject for glazing programs is the parable of the Good Samaritan complemented by a series of Old and New Testament typologies.³⁵ This interest in interpreting the parable – itself already an allegory – along typological lines lacks textual precedent; that is to say, the windows deviate from the conventional ways of explicating the text found in the early Christian and medieval glosses. Thus, they truly act as an independent form of visual exegesis. Deviating from contemporary works such as the late twelfth-century *Hortus Deliciarum* of Herrad of Hohenbourg, which accompanied literal illustrations of the story of the Good Samaritan with an allegorical gloss from Honorius Augustodunensis's *Speculum Ecclesiae*, the Good Samaritan stained glass windows at Sens (c.1200) and Bourges (c.1215) visually engage the literal and allegorical senses of the parable at once.

Along the central axis of the Bourges window are arranged in descending order five scenes from the parable. In the large half-roundels which stand on either side of the parable scenes we see Old and New Testament scenes. Ten of the Old Testament scenes illustrate the story of Creation, beginning with God creating the sun and the moon and ending with the angel shutting the gate of Paradise after the Expulsion of Adam and Eve. This abbreviated Genesis cycle corresponds to the first three Good Samaritan roundels – the quitting of Jerusalem and the attacks on the pilgrim. The fourth parable scene, the priest and the Levite before the wounded pilgrim, is framed by four scenes from Exodus: Moses and the burning bush, Moses breaking the tablets of the law, Aaron collecting the jewels of the Israelites, and the worship of the golden calf. At the bottom of the Bourges window (fig. 11-3) we see two New Testament events, the Flagellation

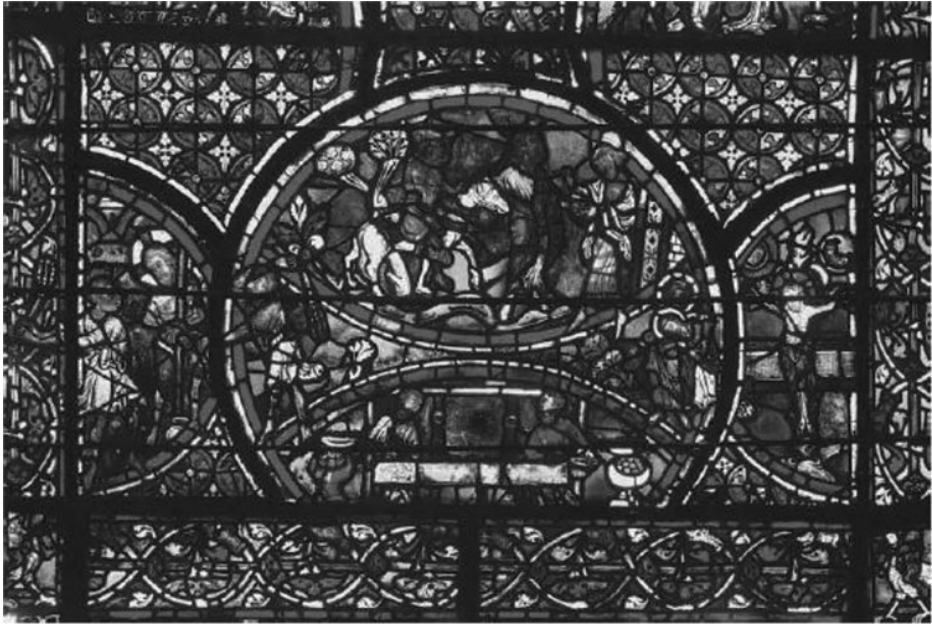


FIGURE 11-3 Typological window, c.1215. Source: Bourges Cathedral.

and the Crucifixion, placed on either side of the Samaritan leading the man to the inn. The meaning of these juxtapositions is clear. Two scenes of God creating the prelapsarian world suggest that the city of Jerusalem (at center) is like Paradise; the man's ordeals on his journey recall the sins of Adam and Eve, whose creation and fall parallel those scenes; the priest and the Levite, who signify the failures of Judaism for Honorius, find analogies in the scenes of Moses, Aaron, and the Israelites. Finally, the merciful deeds of the Good Samaritan are likened to the events of Christ's passion, events that stress the meaning of his sacrifice for humanity.

An even clearer pictorial version of this interpretation of the parable appears in the choir at Sens Cathedral. Here, the parable narrative proceeds clearly down the vertical axis, as at Bourges. The groups of typologies, arranged in four partial roundels abutting each of the three scenes of the parable, attain an even greater level of internal logic than those found at Bourges, in that the Old and New Testament "glossing" scenes read in a linear narrative (left-to-right and top-to-bottom). The result is one narrative serving as a commentary on another – quite a feat to accomplish within a rigid diagrammatic framework. It should be noted that typological exegesis exists side by side with more pure narrative in these windows of the early decades of the thirteenth century, suggesting it would be wrong to oppose an "old-fashioned" typological mode with a "progressive" narrative one. The popularity of allegorical and typological subject matter in diverse media at this time strongly contradicts this teleological notion.

Surely the most ambitious example of visual exegesis of the Gothic period is the *Bible moralisée*.³⁶ The intention of the original manuscripts' designers was

to illustrate in roundels biblical texts (the number of which far exceeds previous biblical cycles), which were then paired with both a textual and pictorial exegetical gloss.³⁷ The result, in the case of the exemplars made in Paris in the 1230s and 1240s, is a vast exegetical work that functions on both a textual and visual level. The visual system constructs exegetical meaning out of clear rhymes, correspondences, and parallels, whereas the textual glosses state their exegetical points more plainly. The designers of this vast book have created an infinitely extendable, seductive mode of visual exegesis, one that engages the eye and mind in an open-ended way. The texts inform the reader in one way, while the possibilities inherent in the visual imagery encourage a kind of engaged looking that was clearly thought to be a useful skill in thirteenth-century Paris.³⁸ One sees, for example, similar validations of visual interpretation in stained glass and in the great sculptural programs of the French Gothic cathedrals.

Postscript: Art and Exegesis in the Later Middle Ages

Just as in the later Middle Ages forms of monastic worship were increasingly imitated by the laity (most conspicuously in the recitation of the canonical hours), types of biblical exegesis originating and perfected in monastic circles found their way into personal devotional books. These developments were also influenced by such widely read fourteenth-century texts as the *Biblia Pauperum* and the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, which presented exegetical thought in a more moralizing, homiletic context than had been the case in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.³⁹ An ambitious early fifteenth-century example of a devotional work flavored with exegetical imagery would be the Rohan Hours (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Lat. 9471), in which a reduced version of a *Bible moralisée* cycle is interwoven with the more traditional imagery associated with the various hours. This means that at any given hour, the owner of the book would not only consider the imagery found at that point in the book's temporal structure, but would also be asked to consider an atemporal, typological relationship of Old and New Testaments as well. This dual activity must have considerably enriched the owner's conception of the place of his or her devotions within a much larger and quite complex Christian world-view. The presence of such an exegetical cycle in a Book of Hours confirms the general sense of intellectual innovation found in the ultra-lavish personal books of this later period, and reminds us that private "devotional" manuscripts were hardly removed from the more professional and erudite world of scriptural exegesis.

By the early sixteenth century, the combination of exegetical and devotional imagery in private devotional manuscripts reached new levels of interpretive as well as pictorial subtlety in the Low Countries. For example, the Spinola Hours (c.1515), features an unusually rich cycle of double-page openings for the Weekday Hours which represent cleverly paired scenes from the Old and New dispensations.⁴⁰ Two openings stand out in term of their seriousness of visual exegesis.



FIGURE 11-4 Spinola Hours, Eucharistic procession (*left*) and gathering of the manna (*right*), c.1515. Source: Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, MS Ludwig IX 18, fol. 48v–49r. © by The J. Paul Getty Museum.

At the Thursday Office of the Eucharist (fig. 11-4), one finds on the left a picture of a Eucharistic procession, complete with the host displayed in an elaborate monstrance, and on the right the Gathering of the Manna. The latter image is complicated by the inclusion of the meeting of Abraham and Melchisidech, from Genesis, in the border, which not only mirrors the ritual procession leading from left to right in the Eucharistic scene, but also deepens the meaning of the Exodus story in that Melchsidech is often shown in medieval art as a priest offering Abraham the host and a chalice in return for his tithe. Another opening for the Tuesday Office of the Holy Spirit compares the Pentecost to a scene of Elias calling down fire from heaven, which ignites a sacrificial offering on an altar. The link between the Old and New Testament scenes here is clear enough, but again, it is the border of the recto page that deepens the meaning of the whole. Here, we see illustrated the building of the Tower of Babel, the negative inverse of the speaking in tongues brought on by the descent of the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost. It is also worth noting in both cases that the New Dispensation scene always appears on the left side of the opening, with the one from the Old on the right. This deliberate inversion of the scriptural commentary reflects the by now ancient belief that the relationship of Old to New is not strictly chronological, but also allegorical and timeless. It was also considered appropriate for the New, or “correct” Dispensation to be given precedence over the Old. (It should also be said that this verso/recto arrangement of images is also informed by conventions of books of hours.)

Finally, while it is true that many aspects of both these complex sets of cross-readings of the Bible and Christian ritual had appeared in both earlier art and exegesis, it is only with the ingenious development of the border in later Flemish illumination as a space both complementary to and separate from the main image, that these imaginative and highly visual types of devotional exercise are made possible. This reminds us that two characteristically “medieval” endeavors – namely, interest in traditional exegetical thought and creativity in the field of book illumination – extended beyond our period and well into the Renaissance.

Notes

- 1 *Didascalicon*, pp. 62–63.
- 2 James, “Pictor in Carmine,” pp. 141–166.
- 3 See Zinn, “Suger, Theology”; and Rudolph, *Artistic Change*, p. 95, n. 24.
- 4 *De Archa Noe*, p. 117. English translation taken from Hugh of St. Victor, *Selected Spiritual Writings*, p. 153.
- 5 For a skeptical view of the picture’s existence, see Evans, “Fictive Painting.” A comprehensive study of Hugh’s ark is being prepared by Conrad Rudolph.
- 6 Evans, “The *Ysagoge in Theologiam*,” pp. 1–42.
- 7 On this window and its relationship to exegetical sources, see Grodecki, “Les Vitraux allégoriques.”
- 8 Didi-Huberman, *Devant L’image*, pp. 29–32.
- 9 The authoritative account of this method is Lubac’s *Exégèse médiévale*. See also Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, pp. 1–66. It should be noted that a threefold interpretation of scripture also was practiced from Origen to Hugh of St. Victor.
- 10 Quoted in Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, Vol. I, p. 23.
- 11 Hoefler, *Typologie im Mittelalter*, pp. 85–86.
- 12 Hrabanus Maurus, *Commentaria in Genesim*, PL 107:566B–569D.
- 13 These thirteenth-century developments are reviewed in Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, pp. 264–355.
- 14 Cahier, *Monographie*, pp. 19–132.
- 15 *Ibid.*, pp. 22–5.
- 16 Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Thirteenth Century*, p. vi.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 143.
- 18 See Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, pp. 131–148; Marrow, “Symbol and Meaning.”
- 19 Cassidy, *Iconography at the Crossroads*, pp. 6–7.
- 20 Hamburger, *St. John the Divine*, p. 1. For an extended meditation on the relationship of art to theology as a methodological issue, see Hamburger’s introductory essays in Bouché and Hamburger, eds., *The Mind’s Eye*.
- 21 See Cahn, “Architecture and Exegesis,” pp. 53–68.
- 22 Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Twelfth Century*, pp. 155–177 and Grodecki, “Les Vitraux allégoriques.”
- 23 Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, pp. 1–37. Despite his use of the Panofskian label, Konrad Hoffmann, “Suger’s ‘Anagogisches Fenster,’” clearly agrees with Grodecki’s interpretation of this window.

- 24 Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, pp. 58–59. Translation slightly adapted by me.
- 25 Hugh of St. Victor's thoroughgoing revival of Augustine in the early twelfth century and Louis IX's stocking of the Ste-Chapelle in the mid-thirteenth century with works by all the early Church Fathers attest to the fact that, despite new trends in biblical study in this period, the patristic writers never lost their authority.
- 26 Hoffmann, "Suger's 'Anagogisches Fenster,'" p. 76.
- 27 On this conflict, see Rudolph, *Artistic Change*, pp. 8–31.
- 28 Jerome, *Sur Jonas*, p. 77.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 81.
- 30 For illustrations of Jonah and the whale found at Psalm 68, see Haseloff, *Die Psalterillustration im 13*, tables 2 and 16; and Oliver, *Gothic Manuscript Illumination*, Vol. I, pp. 69–70.
- 31 Warner, *Queen Mary's Psalter*, p. 26.
- 32 Kupfer, *Romanesque Wall Painting*, p. 127. The notion of visual exegesis is given a more theoretical treatment in Berdini, *Religious Art of Jacopo Bassano*, pp. 1–35.
- 33 Esmeijer, *Divina Quaternitas*, pp. 47–61.
- 34 For a discussion of a typological window and its connections to Mosan art, see Kline, "Typological Window," pp. 83–130. The iconography of the 12 typological choir windows at Canterbury (which are now largely lost) is reconstructed by Madeline Caviness, who also lays out the methods and topics shared among the Canterbury windows and those in France (*Early Stained Glass*, pp. 115–138).
- 35 For an introductory study of these windows, see Manhes and Deremble, *Le Vitrail du Bon Samaritain*.
- 36 [On the *Bible moralisée*, see Chapter 23 by Hedeman in this volume (ed.).]
- 37 On the institutional and cultural background of the *Bibles moralisées*, see Hausherr, "Sensus litteralis" and "Über die Auswahl."
- 38 For a further discussion of this aspect of the *Bible moralisée*, see Hughes, "Typology and Its Uses."
- 39 See Schmidt, *Die Armenbibeln*, pp. 88–101.
- 40 On the manuscript in general, see Kren and McKendrick, *Illuminating the Renaissance*, pp. 414–417.

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Whodunnit? Patronage, the Canon, and the Problematics of Agency in Romanesque and Gothic Art

Jill Caskey

Studies of patronage occupy a critical niche in the history of medieval art, since they function as alternatives to the formalist and iconographic interpretations that have shaped the discipline for over a century. But like so many other approaches to art history, they also derive from dominant paradigms and the field's ever-changing methodological priorities. Patrons and their monuments were often integrated into the evolutionary model of art history around 1900, for instance.¹ Similarly, an emphasis on the spending habits of powerful men followed the lead of Renaissance scholarship shaped by Vasari and Burckhardt.² Since the 1970s, scholars have been seeking to identify a greater variety of patron groups and reconstruct more specific connections between works of art and the intentions, ideologies, demands, and desires of the individuals who paid for them or were their primary users.³

Given these contextual concerns, patronage studies have often coincided with the aims of the so-called Social History of Art.⁴ But while that movement has seen its ups and downs, the subject of patronage never disappeared from studies of medieval art. This staying power derives in part from the impact of the Annales School and the longstanding interdisciplinarity of scholarship on the Middle

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Ages. For decades, studies of patronage have characterized art as constitutive of social, political, economic, and other ideas; they have engaged a host of disciplines (such as literary, religious, gender, and other histories), and with them, attendant subject formations, foundational texts, and theoretical models.

Despite the recent flourishing of patronage studies, there have been few attempts to discuss the theme broadly. The largest obstacle to such a project is the sheer variety of contexts, types of patronal involvement, and artworks found during the Middle Ages. An overview of reference materials suggests that the specialization of academic discourse also has hampered such efforts. Whereas the *Encyclopedia of World Art* (1966) featured a synthesizing entry on patronage in Western art,⁵ the most recent reference work of that genre, the *Grove Dictionary of Art* (1996), does not. Only a handful of topics explored in its “Romanesque” and “Gothic” entries deal expressly with patronage issues.⁶ Rare attempts to generalize about medieval patronage are Brenk’s short essay in the *Enciclopedia dell’arte medievale* (1994) and Binski’s entry in *The Oxford Companion to Western Art* (2001).⁷ Beyond such reference works, recent collections of essays have probed definitions, conceptualizations, and types of patronage across a wide range of settings, while more focused studies contain in-depth examinations of patterns and types of patronage.⁸ But none offers as highly developed a model for understanding the phenomenon as early modern settings have inspired for decades.⁹

Still, this subfield has coalesced in the post-war era around salient themes. The principal loci of patronage examined in the literature are the primary institutions on which medieval society was constructed – court, cathedral, and monastery – many of which established their own aesthetic conventions. Within and outside of these contexts, patronal categories have multiplied. Queens are differentiated from kings, as are canons from bishops, and the impact of the laity has come to the fore. The taste and intentions of each group are seen as contingent upon many internal and external factors.

Despite this trend toward fragmentation and its result, our greater awareness of the variety of contemporaneous art forms, dominant narratives of medieval art still emphasize eschatological meanings. This structure makes sense for obvious reasons, but it comes at a price. Things outside that framework, such as secular monuments or those used by religious minorities, continue to occupy the margins of the discipline, despite our increasingly liberal definitions of material and visual cultures and medieval society.¹⁰

This chapter probes these and other problems relating to patronage, artistic production, and agency in the later Middle Ages. It begins by discussing some of the major themes that emerged at St.-Denis and their implications for how art history has been written. It then investigates debates surrounding artistic patronage, including the problem of agency, sites of patronage, and motivations for it. First, however, a caveat: this historiographical journey takes its cue from generations of art historians, and, like them, concentrates on elite patrons of religious art. An accompanying bibliography invites wider views of the subject, although it, too, is far from comprehensive.

Shaping the Canon: Suger and St.-Denis

When the glorious and famous King of the Franks, Dagobert, notable for his royal magnanimity in the administration of his kingdom and yet no less devoted to the church of God ... had learned that the venerable images of the Holy Martyrs who rested there [at St.-Denis] – appearing to him as very beautiful men clad in snow-white garments – requested his service and unhesitatingly promised him their aid with words and deeds, he decreed with admirable affection that a basilica of the Saints be built with regal magnificence.¹¹

The abbey of St.-Denis constitutes a critical juncture between Romanesque and Gothic in narratives of medieval art, a pivotal moment illuminated by Suger's writings. In this passage from *De consecratione*, Suger (d. 1151) summarized paradigms of artistic patronage operative in the later Middle Ages. He also suggested the ideologies and conventions that had long sustained such paradigms and would continue to do so well into the fourteenth century. As such, the passage articulates many of the themes that have shaped our understanding of patronal motives in medieval art and the priorities of art historians.

First and foremost, this account characterizes the Merovingian king Dagobert (d. 639) as a pious and generous sovereign. This is a familiar trope; the principal motives behind royal and lay patronage generally claim to derive from Christian ideals, in which almsgiving, donations of all types (money, materials, land), and endowments of liturgical celebrations were perceived as fundamental duties of the faithful. For the wealthiest members of medieval society, these pious expressions and largesse on a grander scale (such as the foundation of monasteries) articulated one's social station in life. But they were also essential responsibilities of that social station.¹² Here, then, patronage is naturalized as an attribute of a Christian king. Suger, in citing Dagobert's prestigious name, also strove to codify and reinforce the tradition of royal support of the abbey.

Using a variety of strategies and motifs, including the convention of visionary experience, Suger's passage establishes the intimacy between royal patrons and large-scale building projects. Imperial or royal commissions shape most narratives of medieval art, from Old St. Peter's in Rome to the Chartreuse de Champmol outside Dijon. This is not surprising, since so many extant medieval monuments derive from royal patronage, due to the concentration of human, economic, and material resources in the hands of monarchs. Royal settings are also better preserved and documented than more humble ones, thereby creating a wider interpretive framework for analysis. But the contours of the canon also reflect attitudes regarding originality and quality. Interpretations of medieval art tend to begin with the assumption that taste and related cultural practices were established at the pinnacle of society and inevitably trickled down to its more humble sectors. Works of *munificentia* are often assumed to derive from regal settings, and royal art is equated with quality. Given such historical and historiographical factors, it is not surprising that royal contexts have dominated patronage studies.

Although Suger and St.-Denis introduce many of the major themes in the literature, Suger's precise role in artistic production remains a matter of debate. As a reasonably learned man in charge of an important monastic center, was he well enough versed in theological matters to invent iconographic programs? Were more accomplished theologians working for him, and if so, who were they? Was he responsible for locating and hiring the diverse teams of artists and builders on the site and supervising their activities? Or was he merely empowered as the holder of the purse (and pen)?¹³

Scholars have addressed such questions since Panofsky's work on Suger appeared in 1946. His interpretation of the abbot as an erudite philosopher well versed in Pseudo-Dionysian theology, as well as von Simson's vision of Suger as all-encompassing intellect behind the building campaign, have been questioned and revised.¹⁴ The abbot's indebtedness to Augustine and Hugh of St. Victor has come to the fore, as have more nuanced views of the reception of Cistercian ideology in mainstream Benedictine settings.¹⁵ But while some consensus has emerged concerning Suger's circumscribed role as guiding intellect in the reconstruction of St.-Denis, basic questions concerning the dynamics of patronage and production there remain unanswered.

As such, the abbey is representative of many key Romanesque and Gothic monuments in which the nature of a patron's participation is unclear. For more than a quarter of a century, conceptualizations of what could be called the patronal field have expanded to help address this problem of agency. Scholars have come to emphasize that the individuals or institutions traditionally seen as great patrons – Bernward of Hildesheim, Louis IX, the mendicant orders, and so on – acted within a cultural fabric into which myriad threads were woven. Theoretical or multidisciplinary perspectives have provided critical tools for reconstructing and assessing this enlarged patronal field.

Agency and Patronage

The question of agency lies at the heart of patronage studies. Whose actions had the greatest impact on the appearance of a work of art? Who could claim credit, particularly for a large-scale project? Efforts to define and characterize agency have taken many forms.¹⁶ Marxist concerns with who controls the means of production and thereby determines whether or not a work is made seem straightforward enough. But such conditions are difficult to reconstruct. As Caviness notes regarding the Shaftesbury Psalter (c.1130–1140), the image of a woman praying below Christ in Majesty should not be identified as the patron until the genesis of this manuscript is better understood.¹⁷ If the woman received the book as a gift, then our interpretive strategies must change (see below). And given the large scale and long gestation of so many medieval projects, rarely could a single person act as what Warnke has called a superpatron.¹⁸

Brenk avoids rigid paradigms by differentiating between the "patron-*concepteur*" as overriding intellect/manager, and donor as financial contributor (likely one of

many for large-scale projects).¹⁹ This distinction is critical for creating more nuanced assessments of agency, but it can conceal women's participation in highly collaborative processes.²⁰ It also can underestimate the impact of "mere" donors. Modest gifts of land to monasteries were common following the rise of feudal elites in the Romanesque period. Tracing the patterns of such donations and their impact on monastic coffers can illuminate the formation of local religious allegiances,²¹ as well as the chronology of building campaigns.²² Such gifts also facilitated the expansion of libraries and treasuries.²³ Donors often had little control over how their contributions were utilized, but many institutions depended on them to advance their artistic agendas.

One problem lurking behind discussions of art and agency concerns terminology. Whereas scholars tend to utilize "patron" or "donor" to characterize initiators of art-making, this practice corresponds neither to the complex circumstances of production in the Middle Ages, nor to medieval usage. Records and inscriptions instead tend to express the role of the patron in verbs. Suger, for instance, characterized his role – and Dagobert's – through a series of actions: "we undertook to renew," "we caused to be composed," "he decreed," and so on.²⁴ Similarly, the foundation charter for Notre-Dame at Ecois (c.1310), written by Philip the Fair's Superintendent of Finances Enguerran de Marigny, expresses Enguerran's patronage as a series of differentiated acts: "I ... do establish, found, and endow," "I grant and give," "I establish and ordain," "I institute," and so forth, as he touches upon all matters regarding the creation and ongoing liturgical and financial operations of his collegiate church in Normandy.²⁵ Inscriptions on works of art show comparable patterns.²⁶ But because inscriptions commonly use *fecit* to express artistic as well as patronal agency, it is not necessarily clear who did what.²⁷ These representative samples suggest that medieval sources yield more complexity and often less certainty regarding matters of agency than our habitual use of the monolithic term "patron" might imply.

Patron, Artist, and Agency

In discussions of objects large and small, much of the scholarly literature modulates between empowering the patron or the artist. At stake is the division of labor, which was traditionally perceived as the patron's jurisdiction over subject and the artist's over form.²⁸ This dynamic is often observed through the lens of historiographic debates and contemporary intellectual concerns. Panofsky's portrait of Suger as theorist has been seen as a challenge to Viollet-le-Duc's emphasis on Gothic as structure,²⁹ and investigations into artistic freedom flourished around World War II.³⁰ Assessments of the individuality of artists are again coming to the fore,³¹ in tandem with our attempts to understand the meaning of authorship and ownership in a digital culture.

The question of agency in monastic art production is particularly fraught. Long-held views fueled by critiques of industrialization held that monks labored selflessly in closed environments to create buildings and objects for their own use.³² Distinctions between patron, artist, and user collapse, thereby upholding the Marxist ideal that monks were not alienated from their work.

Early Cistercian regulations seemingly corroborate this view, since they specify that communities be established far from existing human settlements. But since the publication of Mortet's *Recueil de textes* (1911), scholars have come to emphasize that the monks could not realize their spiritual agenda without involving the secular in their artistic endeavors.³³ An account of the construction of Clairvaux II (c.1133–1145) narrates that, “The bishops of the region, noblemen, and merchants of the land heard of it, and joyfully offered rich aid in God’s work. Supplies were abundant, workmen quickly hired, the brothers themselves joined in the work in every way.”³⁴ Studies of Cistercian expansion in England and Germany have stressed similar lay/monastic interplay.³⁵ Despite the involvement of lay donors and builders, the order was still able to maintain stylistic consistency and austerity, due to the cooperation of monks, lay brothers (*conversi*), and professional artisans, as well as frequent communication between parent houses and new ones.³⁶

Later contexts illuminate these dynamics. A contract of 1398 for a dormitory at Durham clarifies that the prior and convent established the parameters of the project, including window locations, variations in masonry, and the form of a tower; the master mason offered solutions to those needs.³⁷ Monastic patrons should be given credit, Shelby argues, for urging lay masons “onward by setting more and more difficult tasks.”³⁸ The discussions of specialized branches of knowledge (structural, financial, liturgical, aesthetic, etc.) that ensued in such circumstances have been seen as a critical moment in intellectual history.³⁹

The nineteenth-century elision of monastic artist and patron has reemerged in studies of religious women, albeit from a feminist perspective. For some time, abbesses and nuns have been appreciated as sophisticated patrons and users rather than creators of art.⁴⁰ Recent debates over Hildegard of Bingen’s role in the creation of the Rupertsberg *Scivias* (c.1165) provide another perspective. It has been suggested that the idiosyncratic style of the now-lost manuscript complements Hildegard’s textual descriptions of visions and must be attributed to her own hand.⁴¹ Any attribution of this sort is fraught, since the manuscript is known only through copies made between 1927 and 1933. But codifying Hildegard’s artistic agency not only would establish the significance of the abbess in a new realm of activity – in painting, versus music, theology, medicine, and administration, her other areas of expertise; it would also expand our knowledge of women artists in Romanesque monasticism. As such, the production of the *Scivias* possibly anticipates women’s artistic experiences at St. Walburg in Eichstätt around 1500 as reconstructed by Hamburger.⁴²

Hierarchies of Agency, Webs of Production

Studies since the 1970s have rendered the issue of agency more complex by emphasizing the webs of interaction that led to the creation of medieval art. Considering the social and political overtones of the word “patronage” helps reconceptualize

the dynamics of artistic production.⁴³ The relationship between patron and artist was not asymmetrical, oppositional, and merely economic, but also potentially about both participants gaining distinction, access to other artists/ patrons, intellectual camaraderie, and so on.⁴⁴ Furthermore, this model expands the artist/ patron binary to incorporate third parties, such as theological advisers working in courts, cathedrals, and monasteries.

A folio from the Toledo *Bible moralisée* idealizes this hierarchical model of patronage and production (fig. 12-1). In this work of c.1234–1235, Blanche of Castile and Louis IX are enthroned in an arcade above two figures. Blanche's demonstrative, open-handed gesture toward her more passive son suggests her control over the project.⁴⁵ Below her, a theological adviser looks down at his book and points toward the figure on the right; he is clearly dictating the manuscript's complex typological and exegetical principles. Lowden has identified the figure on the lower left as a secular ecclesiastic and the lower right a lay artist, who is creating the manuscript's circular underdrawings.

These two figures must be understood as generalizations, since so many people were involved in the creation of these densely illustrated works.⁴⁶ The hieratic image also suggests that Blanche's commanding presence was somewhat abstract during the making of the book. As such, the circumstances of production differed from some outside royal settings. As Stones has construed, the many additions made to the Book of Madame Marie indicate that its patron (Marie de Rethel? d. 1315) and her Franciscan adviser consulted with the illuminators while the book was in process and likely convinced them to make changes.⁴⁷ This difference in production also signals difference in type: whereas a variety of complex intellectual formulations informed the *Bibles moralisées*, mendicant-inflected prayer books emphasized emotional connections with Mary and Christ.⁴⁸

The literature on Gothic cathedrals explores tensions between the intellect(s) who developed thematic programs and the donors/patrons who contributed to the church fabric.⁴⁹ In contrast to monasteries, cathedrals are often characterized as urban monuments in which lay participation was prominent. This view derives in part from the "cult of carts," which held that all members of Christian society were moved by their faith to perform hard labor on cathedral construction sites.⁵⁰ There are some examples of unity and participation, as at Amiens in the 1220s and 1230s.⁵¹ But scholars have questioned how such participation unfolded, given the centralization of power in the hands of the bishop and the small scale of lay commissions (stained glass, wall paintings, side chapels, etc.).

Recent studies have disentangled these threads of agency by examining episcopal hierarchies. Bishops tended to initiate and manage building campaigns (they also contributed significant amounts of their personal wealth to the projects), while canons engaged in small fund-raising activities and supervised the flow of building materials, money, and labor through the vestry or *fabbrica*.⁵² But given the number of participants involved, how did Great Churches achieve the coherence of the sort described by iconographers like Mâle and von Simson? What choices did patrons of lesser stature than, say, kings, bishops, or deacons have in



FIGURE 12-1 Hierarchies of agency as represented in the creation of the Toledo *Bible moralisée*. Source: New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, MS 240, fol. 8r.

shaping their commissions? The windows at Chartres illuminate the problematics of agency in episcopal settings after 1200.

Representations of artisans plying their trades and knights on horseback bedecked with armor and heraldry have prompted the windows to be interpreted as “donor portraits” that commemorate diverse contributors to the building campaign. Questions about who developed such imagery and why have fueled considerable debate.⁵³ Mahnes-Deremble has argued convincingly that the chapter itself determined the content of the windows, which articulate the church’s view of proper modes of royal and lay behavior. Iconographic choice, then, rested in the hands of the chapter, rather than in those of financial contributors.

Gifts and Patronal Identity Politics

Questions of agency increase in complexity in the widespread practice of gifting, a problem that scholars have addressed in creative ways. As Camille points out, gifts are ambiguous, as they range from concretizations of a giver’s desires, idealizations, and assumptions to reasonable fulfillments of the needs, taste, or wishes of the recipient.⁵⁴ They also act as abstract currency, imposing a debt of a political, economic, or other sort on the recipient, and as a means of cultural-artistic transmission.⁵⁵

Consequently, the “first owners” of objects must not be construed automatically as patrons. Extensive notations in a Bible in Troyes indicate that the manuscript belonged to St. Bernard. But it is full of color, gold, and grotesques, the very features he railed against in monastic settings. Cahn has hypothesized that the book was a gift to Bernard and the product of a lay atelier – hence its deviations from his ascetic ideals.⁵⁶

Caviness has argued that works of art given to women must be scrutinized to determine “whether their messages were encoded for, by, or ‘against’” their recipient.⁵⁷ Her feminist inquiry illuminates canonical works of art, the St. Albans Psalter and the Hours of Jeanne d’Evreux, which previously had been discussed primarily in iconographic and stylistic terms.⁵⁸ She argues that the psalter (c.1120–1130) was made with the precise needs of Christina of Markyate in mind, whether for her or for the monk Roger, who perhaps used it for her spiritual instruction. Carrasco’s work corroborates this view by demonstrating that the psalter’s representations of the Magdalen typified new interpretations of the sinner-saint as a penitential paradigm for women.⁵⁹ Hence the appropriateness of such imagery for and “pro” Christina. In contrast, Caviness argues that much of the imagery in the Hours of Jeanne d’Evreux (c.1324) works “against” the young queen, as its ribald marginalia caters less to her spiritual interests than to the desire of her new husband to shape her views of marriage, sexuality, and reproduction.⁶⁰ This famous book may bear the name of Jeanne, but its texts and images divulge the agency and agenda of Charles IV.

Representing Agency: Donor Imagery

Images of patrons/donors on many late medieval works of art assert ownership of or affiliation with the object in question, regardless of the complexity of its production process. Studies of this feature of patronage illustrate the discipline's movement away from Vasarian paradigms. Classic investigations of donor imagery sought to identify patrons and relate them iconographically to early Christian or imperial prototypes, in which patrons generally offer a model of the commissioned work to holy figures or kneel before them.⁶¹ In contrast, recent work highlights the semiotics of such scenes. Many studies focus on manipulations of hierarchy in presentational imagery; others examine how such images structure or represent visionary experience, and others stress that donor figures may well be devotees rather than "patrons."⁶² Still other scholars have emphasized the salvational dynamics of donor imagery or considered a wider range of patron groups.

Studies of the tympanum of Mervilliers (first half of the twelfth century) reveal the web of financial and spiritual relationships generated around patronage.⁶³ Replacing the holy figures usually displayed on tympana, here a knight offers a gift to St. George; an inscription states that "Rembald, the knight ... conferred on me [St. George] present treasures in order to have [treasures] without end."⁶⁴ Although rarely represented in this literal way, such contractual arrangements multiplied after the codification of the doctrine of Purgatory (1215).⁶⁵

Within this salvational matrix, burials and family chapels of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries often included effigies, personalized inscriptions, and heraldry in order to clarify for whom surviving family members, the religious, and faithful should pray. Morganstern has shown that some Gothic tombs conveyed legal meaning, as their figural displays of lineage provided focal points for future generations of liturgical caretakers.⁶⁶ The new and increasingly elaborate visual language of heraldry articulated this literal type of lineage, while also displaying webs of political affiliation and projecting social status. And as Michael has demonstrated, the proximity of shield to images of holy figures articulated connections between the patron and his or her heavenly intercessors, thereby expediting the process of salvation.⁶⁷

Motivating Patronal Agency: Power and Family

Royal initiatives began to dominate patronage studies in the first half of the last century, as the foundational works of Schramm, Kantorowicz, and others on the iconography of power indicate.⁶⁸ Now, however, authority is no longer seen in purely iconographic terms; the semantic field has expanded to include styles, references, monument types, materials, and motifs. Furthermore, newly accessible settings in Central and Eastern Europe have expanded the canon beyond its narrow post-war boundaries, as have studies of East–West relations and cultural exchange in the Mediterranean region.⁶⁹ Interpretive models informed by literary

criticism, cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, and feminism cluster alongside ones of traditional but interdisciplinary derivation.

Take the case of St. Louis. Whereas Branner's influential study argued that the modern style and luxuriousness of the Sainte-Chapelle were de facto royal characteristics and thus emulated beyond the Île-de-France, later studies have sought to understand the wider circumstances and abstract references embedded in the royal foundation which legitimated the sacral foundations of Capetian kingship.⁷⁰ For instance, Weiss emphasizes the chapel's evocations of the Holy Land, which were intended to frame its relics of the Passion and promote conceptions of Louis IX as anointed ruler of a new Chosen Land.⁷¹ Jordan's study of narrativity in the chapel's stained glass links the windows to contemporary Parisian literary circles and the *ars poetriae*.⁷²

Although these studies take different paths, they magnify the underpinnings of French regal authority as articulated visually through "ideological, material, and formal integration," as Brenk observed.⁷³ As such, the Sainte-Chapelle can be seen as overlapping with other areas of Capetian patronage: the *Bibles moralisées*, *Grandes Chroniques*, urbanism, new tombs at St.-Denis, and so on.⁷⁴ Thematic and iconographic consistency possibly derived from the involvement of the king, as Jordan hypothesized for the Sainte-Chapelle; but it also speaks to the vast resources that the Capetians channeled into artistic production and the resulting ability to complete projects quickly – and under the aegis of a few advisers, say, rather than generations of them. It is vexing that the advisers who shaped such multilayered, propagandistic representations often remain unknown.⁷⁵

Studies of power patronage in Germany and England have uncovered other dynamics at play. Rather than asserting authority through sumptuousness or modern visual and literary idioms, the Landgrave Hermann of Thuringia (d. 1217) utilized imposing, imperial design elements for his palaces.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, Binski has emphasized the appropriational character of Plantagenet art, which drew from a wide range of sources and ideologies and recontextualized them for home consumption.⁷⁷

Scholarship on royal and other women moves away from power paradigms. While women commissioned innovative and large-scale projects (i.e. Blanche of Castile's *Bibles moralisées* and Cistercian monasteries),⁷⁸ recent studies have reconstructed more subtle activities, including how women fueled private piety and its attendant material culture, and transmitted cultural-artistic practices from their places of birth to where they spent their adult lives.⁷⁹

Women commissioned small projects, such as prayer books and liturgical objects used in private chapels, because they were in charge of the "spiritual and moral welfare of their families," as Gee has emphasized.⁸⁰ English women often conferred with mendicant confessors while creating religious environments appropriate to the home. Works of art such as the Clare Chasuble (after 1270), attributed on the basis of heraldry to the patronage of Margaret de Clare,⁸¹ demonstrate the potential richness of such environments. Others, such as the de Brailes Hours (c.1240), define new types of objects that historians have come to associate with women's spirituality.⁸²

Conclusions

As with other branches of art history, studies of patronage have followed the trajectories of the discipline as a whole. Supplementing strictly formalist or iconographic interpretations, foundational scholars such as Meiss and Branner tended to focus on elite, male patrons and the artworks associated with them. In the last 40 or more years, research has encompassed more diverse patron groups, including the laity and women of varied status.

This new inclusiveness is but one feature of the widening patronal field. Scholars have also examined mechanisms of art production and negotiations of agency within complex economic, social, intellectual, and theological systems. Motives for patronage likewise have come to the fore with greater specificity; scholars have endeavored to reconstruct the personal or cultural circumstances which fueled patronage, rather than simply characterizing the resulting art as generic expressions of concern with the afterlife. Similarly, others have emphasized the motives, means, and impact of recontextualizing pre-existing works or artistic conventions, and helped define patronage as an act of consumption as well as production. Feminism, Marxism, and other theoretical models of contemporary resonance have fueled these processes, as have creative perspectives drawn from a variety of historical disciplines. Through various means, then, patronage studies have consistently evaluated the myriad functions and roles of art, and in so doing challenged canonical views of both medieval art and society.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

- 1 E.g., the stylistic precocity of the Normans. Bilson, "The Beginnings of Gothic Architecture in England," pp. 259–269 and 289–326; Bony, "La Technique normande," pp. 153–188.
- 2 For example, Meiss, *French Painting*.
- 3 Macready and Thompson, eds., *Art and Patronage*; Camille, "For Our Devotion and Pleasure."
- 4 Foundational studies: see Burckhardt, *Kultur der Renaissance*; Antal, *Florentine Painting*; Hauser, *Social History of Art*. Critical fortunes of Hauser and movement: see Jonathan Harris, "General Introduction," pp. xv–xxx.
- 5 Haskell, "Patronage."
- 6 See D. Park on Romanesque wall painting (Vol. 26, p. 656); C.M. Kauffmann on Romanesque manuscripts (Vol. 26, pp. 659–660); P. Binski on Gothic painting

- (Vol. 13, pp. 127–128), and D. Sandron on Gothic sculpture (Vol. 13, pp. 76–77). See also Turner, ed., *Dictionary of Art*.
- 7 Brenk, “Committenza,” and Binski, “Patronage, Before 1500,” in Brigstock, *Oxford Companion to Western Art*.
 - 8 E.g., collections edited by Binski and New, eds., *Patrons and Professionals*; Quintavalle, ed., *Medioevo: I committenti*; Hourihane, ed., *Patronage: Power and Agency*; and Martin, ed., *Reassessing the Roles of Women*; studies by Bell, Bergmann, Binski, Caviness, Gee, and McCash (cited below).
 - 9 For example, Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*.
 - 10 Notable exceptions: Hindman, *Sealed in Parchment*; Fernie, *Architecture of Norman England*, Chapter 3.
 - 11 Suger, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church*, pp. 86–87.
 - 12 Duby, *Early Growth*, pp. 48–57, and “Culture of the Knightly Class.”
 - 13 For Suger as guiding force, see Gerson, “Suger as Iconographer,” in *Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis*, pp. 183–195; versus Skubiszewski, “L’Intellectuel et l’artiste” and Rudolph, *Artistic Change*. For the middle ground, see Grant, *Abbot Suger*.
 - 14 Kidson, “Panofsky, Suger.” Also see Grodecki, “Les Vitraux allégoriques”; Rudolph, *Artistic Change*; and von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral*, Chapter 4.
 - 15 Rudolph, *Artistic Change*; Grant, *Abbot Suger*; Speer and Binding, *Abt Suger von Saint-Denis*.
 - 16 E.g., essays in Hourihane, *Patronage: Power and Agency*, and in Martin, *Reassessing the Roles of Women*.
 - 17 Caviness, “Anchoress, Abbess, and Queen,” p. 113; also p. 107. British Library, Lansdowne MS 383, fol. 14v.
 - 18 Warnke, *Bau und Überbau*, p. 58.
 - 19 Brenk, “Committenza”; see also Bergmann, “Prior Omnibus Autor.”
 - 20 Martin, “Exceptions and Assumptions,” p. 31.
 - 21 Bouchard, “Knights.”
 - 22 E.g., Carlson, “A Charter for Saint-Etienne,” pp. 11–14; Hill, “Lay Patronage and Monastic Architecture.”
 - 23 Cahn, “Rule and the Book.”
 - 24 Suger, *Abbot Suger*, pp. 66–67, 76–77, 86–87.
 - 25 Gillerman, *Enguerran de Marigny*, Appendix A.
 - 26 E.g., Herimann Cross (1056) from Werden, inscribed “Herimann Archiep(iscopu)s me fieri iussit” – versus artists’ signatures, “Eilbertus coloniensis me fecit” on a portable altar in the Guelph treasury (c.1150). See also Caskey, “Medieval Patronage and Its Potentialities.”
 - 27 T. Martin, “Expectations and Assumptions,” in *Reassessing the Roles of Women*, ed. Martin, Vol. 1, pp. 8–9.
 - 28 For historiographic analysis, see Cahn, “Artist as Outlaw”; see also Kessler, “On the State of Medieval Art History.” See an extension of this idea in Henning, “Patronage and Style in the Arts.”
 - 29 Kidson, “Panofsky, Suger, and St. Denis.”
 - 30 Key studies are discussed in Gilbert, “Statement of Aesthetic Attitude.” See also n. 25.
 - 31 E.g., articles in *Gesta* 41 (2002), ed. Sherry Lindquist and Stephen Perkinson.
 - 32 Montalembert, *Les Moines d’occident*; Morris, “Art and Socialism”; foundations are in Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*, p. 130. For early revisions, see Mortet, *Recueil de textes*; Swarthout, *Monastic Craftsman*.

- 33 Fergusson, *Architecture of Solitude*, Chapter 1; other works cited below.
- 34 *S. Bernardi vita prima* quoted/translated in Brooke, "St. Bernard," p. 21.
- 35 See Brooke, "St. Bernard"; Burton, "Foundation of the British Cistercian Houses"; Davis, "The Choir of the Abbey of Altenberg;" and Luxton, "Construction of English Monastic Patronage."
- 36 Brooke, "St. Bernard"; Hill, "Lay Patronage." [On the question of Cistercian stylistic consistency, see Chapter 35 by Fergusson in this volume (ed.).]
- 37 Shelby, "Monastic Patrons."
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 95.
- 39 E.g., Binski and New, eds., *Patrons and Professionals*; Price, "Effect of Patronage."
- 40 E.g., Cohen, *The Uta Codex*. Also Hamburger, "Introduction," in his *Visual and the Visionary*.
- 41 Caviness, "Hildegard as Designer." Also see Caviness, "Hildegard of Bingen."
- 42 Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*. [For more on Hildegard of Bingen, see Chapter 8 by Kurmann-Schwarz in this volume (ed.).]
- 43 Cooper, "*Mecenatismo* or *Clientelismo*?"
- 44 Martindale, *Rise of the Artist*; Warnke, *Hofkünstler*; Chartier, *Forms and Meanings*.
- 45 Lowden sees the gesture as conveying her political stature during the regency. On her patronage of the earliest *Bibles moralisées*, see Lowden, *Making of the Bibles moralisées*.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 130.
- 47 Stones, *Le Livre d'images*, pp. 36–38.
- 48 [For more on the *Bibles moralisées*, see Chapter 23 by Hedeman in this volume (ed.).]
- 49 [On the Gothic cathedral, see Chapter 21 by Murray in this volume (ed.).]
- 50 Noted in the twelfth century around repairs at the Cathedral of Chartres; introduced a utopian ideal celebrated by Romanticist writers and proponents of Gothic Revival such as Pugin, Viollet-le-Duc, and Henry Adams. Documents translated in Frisch, *Gothic Art*, pp. 23–30. For a Marxist critique of the consensual model, see Abou-El-Haj, "Urban Setting." Also see Kraus, *Gold Was the Mortar*.
- 51 Kraus, *Gold Was the Mortar*, Chapter 2; Kimpel and Suckale, *Gotische Architektur*, Chapter 1.
- 52 Erlande-Brandenburg, *The Cathedral*, Chapter 5; also, Kurmann-Schwarz, "Récits, programme," p. 67.
- 53 E.g., Brenk, "Bildprogramm"; Williams, *Bread, Wine, and Money*; Kemp, *Sermo corporeus*; Mahnes-Deremble, *Vitraux narratifs*. For a critique, see Kurmann-Schwarz, "Récits, programme," and for other patron groups, Lautier, "Canons of Chartres."
- 54 Camille, *Medieval Art of Love*, Chapter 2.
- 55 Mauss, *The Gift*; Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners"; von Euw and Schreiner, eds., *Kaiserin Theophanu*.
- 56 Troyes, Bibl. Mun. MS 458. Cahn, *Romanesque Bible Illumination*, p. 234; see also Cahn, "Rule and the Book," esp. Appendix of donors.
- 57 Caviness, "Anchoress, Abbess, and Queen," p. 108.
- 58 Hildesheim, St. Godehard; and New York, Cloisters 54.1.2. See classic studies of Pächt et al., *The Saint Albans Psalter*, and Mâle, *L'Art religieux*, pp. 3–13.
- 59 Carrasco, "Imagery of the Magdalen." [For more on Christina of Markyate, see Chapter 8 by Kurmann-Schwarz in this volume (ed.).]
- 60 Caviness, "Patron or Matron?" Holladay's "Education of Jeanne d'Evreux" sees a different instructional function; the Hours of St. Louis provides behavioral role models for Jeanne.

- 61 For example, Prochno, *Schreiber- und Dedikationsbild*; Ladner, *Papstbildnisse*.
- 62 E.g., Buettner, "Profane Illustrations," p. 78; Gee, *Women, Art*, p. 46 and Figure 5.
- 63 Maines, "Good Works"; and Skubiszewski, "L'Intellectuel et l'artiste."
- 64 Transcription/translation in Maines, "Good Works," pp. 82–83; p. 91, n. 64.
- 65 Le Goff, *La Naissance*.
- 66 Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs*; for an overview of the literature on tombs, see Holladay, "Tombs and Memory."
- 67 Michael, "Privilege of 'Proximity'."
- 68 Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen*; Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*. For National Socialist problems, see Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages*, Chapter 3.
- 69 Crossley, "Architecture of Queenship"; Rosario, *Art and Propaganda*; Lillich, "Gifts of the Lords of Brienne"; Brenk, "Committenza e retorica." See also studies in Alcoy et al., *Le Plaisir de l'art* and Quintavalle, ed., *Medioevo: I committenti*.
- 70 Branner, *St. Louis and the Court Style*. Significant critiques of Branner's "court style" include Colvin, "'Court Style' in Medieval English Architecture"; Bruzelius, *Thirteenth-Century Church*, Chapter 7; and most forcefully, Binski, *Westminster Abbey*. For diverse takes on his legacy, see *Gesta* 39 (2000), ed. Paula Gerson and Stephen Murray.
- 71 Weiss, *Art and Crusade*.
- 72 Jordan, *Visualizing Kingship*.
- 73 Brenk, "Sainte-Chapelle," p. 196.
- 74 Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le Roi est mort*, III.2, and Wright, "Royal Tomb Program"; Hedeman, *The Royal Image*; Lowden, *Making of the Bibles Moralisées*; Cohen, *Sainte-Chapelle and the Construction of Sacral Monarchy*; Stahl, *Picturing Kingship*; Hediger, ed., *La Sainte-Chapelle de Paris*.
- 75 Similar observations in Rosario, *Art and Propaganda*.
- 76 Holladay, "Hermann of Thuringia."
- 77 Binski, *Westminster Abbey*. Draws upon foundations as diverse as Elias's theories of civilizing influences and contemporary consumption theory.
- 78 See Gajewski-Kennedy, "Recherches sur l'architecture," and Kimpel and Suckale, *Gotische Architektur*, pp. 382–383, on Blanche's architectural innovations; versus Branner, *St. Louis*. For the manuscripts, see Lowden, *Making of the Bibles Moralisées*.
- 79 See Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners," for comparable arguments regarding manuscripts.
- 80 Gee, *Women, Art*, p. 39.
- 81 *Ibid.*, p. 66.
- 82 British Library MS Add. 49 999. Donovan, *De Brailes Hours*; Gee, *Women, Art*, Chapter 3; Hamburger, "Before the Book of Hours."

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Collecting (and Display)

Pierre Alain Mariaux

The history of collecting in the Middle Ages has only rarely been the subject of sustained research. There are of course publications on the history of museums and the original, though isolated, works of Kryzstof Pomian. Generally speaking, however, the subject has remained a *terra incognita* where one may find a few discreet and repetitive hints about collections but without any critical basis to their study. One of the subjects regularly brought up is the collection of Antique statues which the bishop of Winchester, Henry of Blois, assembled on his journey to Rome between 1149 and 1150;¹ another case is the clever display of some of the items belonging to the treasure of St.-Denis, after the abbey was reconstructed by Abbot Suger; also often mentioned are the Crusaders in Constantinople, their greed mingled with wonder when they discovered the riches of the city and its churches, true *emporia* of relics.² The secondary literature is full of similar accounts, dispersed within a multitude of monographs which should without any doubt be part of that history. Yet much material still remains to be analyzed and, above all, synthesized. This chapter endeavors to suggest the initial steps toward this, and hopes to bring out new topics to investigate and to deal with.

Introduction

Is it correct to talk of “collecting” in the Middle Ages? Admittedly, if we define the collection as an assembly of *chosen* objects (for their beauty, rarity, curious

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character, documentary value, or expense), no such thing existed during that period. Assembling a body of objects presupposes the presence of an individual, a collector. It is he or she who makes a deliberate choice. However, between the private collections to be found in Antique Rome (which also survive in Constantinople after the fall of the Roman Empire³) and the emergence of the lay collector in the fourteenth century, one of the signs of early humanism,⁴ we may consider treasures as the only medieval collections of which we have documentary evidence, which are commonly considered as collections without collectors (though this view should be finely shaded, as will be shown below).⁵ Be they princely or royal, or assembled by ecclesiastical institutions, these treasures are not considered the product of single individuals, but of an institution. However, some scholars suggest that the medieval treasury should, all the same, be included in the history of collections because it contains objects which no longer take part in an economic exchange, which have lost their utilitarian function, and which are subjected to definite regulations in order to be displayed in well-defined sites.⁶ Since not every medieval treasure fulfills these conditions, we should not speak of collections in all cases. Until at least the eleventh century, both church and lay treasuries were accumulations of objects whose value lies precisely in the fact that they were made up of a mass.⁷ From the twelfth century onwards, the arrangement of treasures began to change. This development allows us to infer that, instead of being simply accumulated, these objects became subject to a reorganization according to certain principles of symbolic order, often because they were now on view. It is precisely this reorganization that indicates the intervention of ambitious patrons (though this word tends to reduce the complex nature of their role as such), who must be considered as personalities demonstrating a high cultural consciousness through their commissions and gifts.⁸ These “patrons” may pride themselves on a sound aesthetic judgment and some, who are known, behave accordingly as true collectors, shaping memory and the past through the objects they commissioned such as Suger in St.-Denis or Wibald in Stavelot. The reuse around 1200 of a mid-twelfth-century tympanum for the portal of Sainte-Anne at Notre-Dame of Paris, or the setting of two Romanesque portals in the Gothic cathedral of Bourges, are clues not only of economic concerns, but also of a real interest in the art of the past at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Does the display of statues of different dates at Rheims western façade, which moreover do not match any iconographic program, pertain to museum display, according to the principle of *varietas*?⁹

The terminology for our modern concept of collection hardly existed in the Middle Ages: the term *collectio* means assembly, or congregation, and, more specifically, the collection of money in church or some form of feudal dues. A *collector* is the person who collects taxes or tithes. As a medical term, *collection* was used in French at the beginning of the fourteenth century to mean the collection of some material (e.g. collection of pus) – in this case, it seems certain that a more general meaning is intended, that of an amassment (*collection* from the Latin *collectio* (*colligere*), the action of assembling, gathering, or collecting). *Collection*

in the sense of the gathering or collection of objects does not appear until the eighteenth century. In medieval Latin the word used is either *corpus*, to indicate a collection of art or scientific objects, in particular literary collections, or *thesaurus* for books and artworks, though the latter term is often applied to the place where precious objects are kept. We find the word *thesaurus* for an assembly of precious objects, for the first time ever, in the Capitulary of Nijmegen in 806, but we must wait until the thirteenth century to find it again with the same meaning. Romanesque sources talk of treasure as a body of material goods belonging to a church. In the thirteenth century, however, the term indicates with greater precision the portable yet inalienable goods of a single church, such as sacred vessels, liturgical ornaments, and precious objects, particularly reliquaries. From the thirteenth century on, and throughout the following century, *thesaurus* meant, above all, a special room – the treasury – usually separated from the sanctuary, where precious objects were kept.

To gather diverse objects to form a whole is variously referred to as *colligere*, *conquirere*, even sometimes *comparare* in classical Latin. Over time, however, these words take on a more precise definition: in the Middle Ages *colligere* still meant to assemble (men and things), but *conquirere* meant to acquire and then to conquer, while *comparare* meant to buy. A more productive direction seems to lie in the study of the vocabulary of the conservation of things, e.g., *thesaurus*, *thesaurarium*, *gazophylacium*, *gaza*, *sacrestia*, *sacrarium*, *scrinium*, *armarium*, *theca*, *loculus*, etc. for some of which Isidore of Sevilla already suggests definitions, and their lexical field. Though the word *thesaurus* clearly reflects the accumulative character of medieval treasures, Anita Guerreau-Jalabert and Bruno Bon have shown that it does not have a tangible value as first meaning in the Middle Ages, with the consequence that metaphorical or figurative meanings would derive from it.¹⁰ On the contrary, *thesaurus* equally applies to anything pertaining to the immaterial as to the material, and the contexts in which it is used show that it is mobile, since “treasure” is permanently seized as something *circulating*. It seems that the opposition *spiritus/caro*, which maps the social representations in the medieval West according to Anita Guerreau,¹¹ operates here again as a referential instrument. The hierarchy between the spiritual and the carnal plays a central role in the way we understand “treasure,” which does not strictly cover the pair of opposites tangible/intangible. Treasure appears in the opposition between heaven and earth, where one naturally has to prefer the treasure that is formed in heaven against the one formed on earth, which remains perishable; in the opposition of gift/circulation (positive) to accumulation/immobilization (negative), since treasures are constituted through *caritas*, gift or alms that are performed in this world for the world to come; lastly in the opposition of what is concealed to what is revealed (that is, the visible as opposed to the invisible). Eventually, treasure is valued because of its inscription within the spiritual realm, which imposes the continuous circulation of goods, be it on earth or between heaven and earth.

Rather than talk of collecting in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we speak with Caroline W. Bynum of an “impulse to collect,” which can also be detected

in the expansion of the Cult of Relics,¹² for the phenomenon is not limited to treasure in the narrow sense of the term. Medieval collecting comprises several activities, one of the most remarkable being the reuse of objects.¹³ Others include the special use of *spolia* for remembrance, the enthusiastic gathering of miraculous objects (particularly relics), and acquisition of natural curiosities. These activities are all meant to create multiple connections with the past, with the collective memory of the community that possesses the treasure and, above all, with the invisible.¹⁴ Any treasure leads back to the past through the use of names that act as elements of a legendary heritage of myths and events. We may therefore wonder if collecting in the Middle Ages does not do very much the same thing, on a metonymic mode: more than a mere physical action, the gathering of these objects is the invocation of the memory of individual people, be they kings, saints, or heroes, through the collecting of objects that help shape the past and organize knowledge.¹⁵

Collecting in the Middle Ages: The Treasury

Previous scholarship commonly assumes that medieval treasuries, particularly church treasuries, are the origin of the *Wunderkammer*, the cabinet of curiosities, and museums in the modern sense, which flourished from the eighteenth century onwards.¹⁶ Yet we are forced to admit that it is impossible to establish a typology that could include the medieval collection.¹⁷ To consider the medieval treasury as a chapter in the history of museums gives the false impression that this history is linear, implying a continuous progression, while instead it is irregular. In fact, there are a number of ruptures, for example after the fall of Constantinople in 1204, which resulted in the amassing of precious bounties and of their expedition to the West. Previous scholarship also does not entirely take into account the polymorphic character of the medieval collection. Treasuries, especially church treasuries, are in fact more than the bringing together of precious objects to be preserved, as most of these maintain their original function. They do possess a value of exchange, but at the same time they retain their usefulness.¹⁸ Without taking into account its sacred dimension, medieval treasure is nothing more than the immobilization of capital in the form of artifacts. It is under constant threat of being melted down; furthermore it becomes the expression of value and possession that may inspire wonder and admiration.

As far as church treasures are concerned, primary sources tell us they can be categorized into *ornamenta* (or *ornamentum*), that is to say a collection of objects destined to ornament the church, or as *apparata* (or *ministerium*), that is, all the necessary furnishings to ensure the smooth running of the liturgical ceremony. The treasury can also be used as a place to deposit *regalia*.¹⁹ We therefore find an assembly of very diverse objects, such as *antependia*, portable altars, sacred vessels, relics in diverse forms and sizes, liturgical vestments, objects of devotion like images and statues, chandeliers, crowns, processional crosses, illuminated

manuscripts with gold bindings, etc. There are also rare fabrics, gold or silver objects (sometimes decorated in enamel), antique gems and precious stones, and ivory. To these, secular artworks may be added, whose function may or not be converted to religious purposes, and objects of curiosity. The main body of church treasure is therefore made up of precious objects (*clenodia* and *utensilia*), which continue or not to play a role in religious practice. But the true treasure remains the relics of the saints' bodies, around which the collection is organized.²⁰ What enables a treasury to be built up are the economic and religious fluctuations of a spiritual center; its wealth is in fact linked to the prosperity and the reputation of the center: the success of a pilgrimage favors the prestige and opulence of the place. If imperial, princely, or ecclesiastic patronage play a major role in the formation of a church's treasury, private gifts must certainly not be forgotten. All gifts offered to the church – at the tomb of the saint, at the altar, to the clergy, or to the monks who officiate in the sanctuary – add to its patrimony. A gift constitutes both a homage of the faithful to God, through His saints, and the financial capital of the church.

Thus defined, a medieval treasury fulfills various functions. First, it is the visible expression of the temporal or spiritual power of the authority that assembles it: from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, similar objects are collected for the same reasons; collections are created for prestige, to conserve financial resources, to establish status, and probably also, though less frequently, for study. A second function continues a strong tradition that exists between the creation of a treasury in an Antique temple and that of a medieval church, even if the conditions of collecting and the situation in which the treasure is displayed differ: both institutions preserve the memory of noteworthy or heroic times. For example, Orpheus' lyre, Helen's sandal, and Leda's eggs all herald, in a certain way, Virgil's mirror and the pitcher of Cana in the treasure of St.-Denis. Medieval treasuries are, furthermore, monetary reserves that can be delved into; this again is a sign of continuity. However, what is different is the fact that certain objects can be transformed, as the faithful do not make a gift of the object itself but of the matter of which it is made. Other items, due to their sumptuous aspect (for example ivory leaves) or the finesse of the workmanship (engraved precious stones), are kept in order to be used again. The medieval treasury is, finally, a place of conservation.

Because of these different uses, scholars must ask questions about the function of assembled objects as well as of the collections they form. For if certain objects are understood by their cultures as rising above the ordinary, it becomes necessary to define clearly what is sacred and what is profane, as well as to categorize the wonderful, the monstrous, the miraculous, and the curious, so as to be able to apply these concepts to the Middle Ages. The first instinct of a collector is to hoard goods, especially rare and precious artworks, and to amass *unica* (that is, whatever is unique). The symbolic value of the collected pieces then determines their destiny as "potential museum pieces," transforms them into museological objects, and suggests a display status. The treasury – with liturgical instruments, *curiosa*, and *pretiosa* as centerpieces – attracts crowds of pilgrims, the curious, and

even thieves. The criteria of choice for both sacred and secular treasures seem to be the same: their rarity and degree of preciousness, as much as their mercantile value, which transform relics, the marvelous, or manufactured objects into items with a price which can be offered, exchanged, lost, or stolen.

State of Research and Prospects

With the studies of Jules Antoine Dumesnil, Clément de Ris, Edmond Bonnafé, Eugène Müntz, Adolfo Venturi, Otto Hirschfeld, Ludwig Friedländer, and Jacob Burckhardt,²¹ among many others, the nineteenth century showed a consistent interest in the idea of the collection as a general phenomenon. These scholars concentrated their research on important collections as well as on amateurs and collectors since the Renaissance, yet they were little interested in the Middle Ages. Only the analytical presentations of the catalogs and the bibliographies of inventories published by Fernand de Mély and Edmund Bishop, and to a lesser degree by Guiseppe Campori, give importance to medieval documents.²² Yet since David Murray and Julius von Schlosser's interesting contributions to the study of medieval collections, both published at the beginning of the twentieth century, no other complete analysis of the phenomenon has been made.

The most recent studies of church treasure have mostly come from historians of heritage, who have the dual aim of conserving precious objects as well as displaying them in modern settings. Therefore, historical research is fundamentally interested in the transformation of the ecclesiastic treasury into a diocesan museum or a museum of sacred art, since the study of inventories makes it possible for the vicissitudes of a treasure to be traced and for displaced objects to be tracked. For a better understanding of the phenomenon of collecting in the Middle Ages, a certain number of inquiries must be undertaken.²³ The field of study concerned with the content of medieval treasuries is by far the most generally pursued line. But we must insist on the fact that the objects are generally considered in themselves, independently from their context, to establish the history of decorative arts. These studies very rarely concentrate on the notion of the treasury as a whole. It is only since the early 1990s that this tendency has been reversed: recent exhibitions have shown the interest in starting from the sources and in studying the treasury diachronically.²⁴ First of all, the analysis of inventories that began in the nineteenth century should be continued, following the founding studies of Fernand de Mély and Edmund Bishop. This work was halted after the publication of an initial volume by Bernhard Bischoff which deals with inventories of treasuries north of the Alps up to the end of the thirteenth century.²⁵ Regrouping inventories in one corpus would make it feasible to study their typology – whether they are inventories of cathedrals, monasteries, or royal chapels, etc. – so as to establish the most specific characteristics of each.²⁶ In this way, it would be possible to establish the existence or non-existence of symbolic relationships between the objects according to their place in the inventory, their physical position vis-à-vis

other objects, or their display during particular liturgical ceremonies. Typological analysis is necessary to establish the general history of the medieval treasury; in fact, it enables us to understand a set of recurrent facts and to operate horizontal crosschecking between treasuries, countries, and types of objects collected, by donors presumed or proven. In his study of the 1534 inventory of St.-Denis treasury, Erik Inglis has brilliantly demonstrated how surprising the reading of these inventories could be.²⁷ But an inquiry into these documents would be incomplete without a search for narrative sources: annals, chronicles, lives of saints and abbots, *gesta episcoporum*, travel accounts, wills, donations, the financial accounts of the cathedral workshop, etc. without forgetting the *descriptions*, legal deeds, accounts of the circumstances of invention, translation, or exposure of relics, and liturgical sources.

Architectural analysis of the buildings should also be undertaken with the aid of archeology and the history of architecture to determine the position of the treasury, the sacristy, and, if applicable, the archive room which held precious objects. Then the architectural layout should be reconstructed, showing the physical and visual access to the treasure. Clemens Kosch's detailed studies of the relationships between architecture and liturgy of different Romanesque and Gothic edifices of Germany should be emphasized as exemplary in this perspective.²⁸ Since the specific furniture in which objects were kept (cup-boards, recesses, relic cupboards, chests, shrines, and reredos for relics, etc.) (fig. 13-1) is also concerned, an analysis of the links between space, performance, and materiality would be of a great profit.²⁹ Supplementing visual evidence with documentary sources will help in compensating for monuments that have disappeared and in establishing a specific vocabulary.

From Medieval Treasures to Cabinets of Curiosity

Both David Murray and Julius von Schlosser agree that the first traces of collections of art objects and curiosities in the Middle Ages are to be found in royal residences and in church treasuries, as each contain both works of nature and works of art. The church, where miracles might be a daily event, keeps *mirabilia* for display and in order to stage them to draw in the faithful. Since the thirteenth century there has been written evidence to this effect; for example, Durandus of Mende, who talks about ostrich eggs: "In certain churches, ostrich eggs and other such items which cause admiration and which are seldom seen are hung up in order to attract the people to church and to touch them [through the sight of these objects]."³⁰ The church conserves what is rare, marvelous, or monstrous, and in some churches we may find, side by side, embalmed crocodiles, flints, meteorites, antelope and unicorn horns, griffon claws, huge teeth and bones, etc. Most of these *mirabilia* seem to have been placed in a conspicuous position in certain late medieval churches, as they would be later in encyclopedic museums; others were kept in the treasury cupboards. Yet can it be said that medieval treasures prepare



FIGURE 13-1 Cupboard, Saxony, c.1230. Halberstadt, cathedral treasure, inv. Nr. 42. Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt. Source: photo courtesy of Gunar Preuss.

the way for the *Wunderkammer*, the curiosity cabinet, and the modern museum, as is assumed by a major part of current research?³¹

Murray sees the church as a conservatory of the Creation, while von Schlosser finds in medieval treasures the justification for people's taste for things strange and curious. Indeed, in his attempt to determine the historical foundations of the *Wunderkammer*, von Schlosser evokes the medieval treasury as an example of the collecting curiosity of humankind. However, to see in church treasures the

ancestor of the cabinet of curiosities is the result of too narrow an interpretation, though “early and formative collections of art often display similar tendencies to the cabinet, and many of the key visual ‘tropes’ of the cabinet may also be found in earlier practices and contexts.”³² The fact that the objects are similar is certainly an indication, as von Schlosser notes, that the cabinet of curiosities partly takes over the representative function of medieval treasuries, while adding the taste for the marvelous. However, the *Wunderkammer* is not situated halfway between the medieval treasury and the modern museum. The origin of the museum is in the collections of Italian amateurs, who maintain a clear distinction between objects of art and objects of nature in order to build a coherent image of the world. Adalgisa Lugli quite rightly sees the cabinet of curiosities as a place of experimentation clearly situated outside the historical evolution of museums.³³ The medieval treasury has nothing to do with either.

It is true that sacristies preserve all sorts of objects in their cupboards (straw wisps, clumps of earth, stones, knives, pieces of cloth, etc.). These objects have an obvious judicial function: they signify a gift. As a matter of fact, the great number of such gifts provoked the anger of the bishop of Rodez in the thirteenth century. He threatened to excommunicate any giver of old rags, hay, or straw. These objects are not kept for themselves but rather as pieces of evidence, *testimonia*. The same is true for most objects which seem “bizarre” to the modern eye and which could fit in the *Wunderkammer*.³⁴ As treasuries in the twelfth century were still made up of many miscellaneous objects, it is difficult to decide on the connection between these “improbable relics” or curiosities and the nature of the treasury. For example, a unicorn horn was apparently kept in the abbey church of St.-Denis, fixed to a column of gilded copper and placed near Suger’s great crucifix, but there is no written confirmation before the sixteenth century.³⁵ A griffon claw that was part of the same treasury and very likely one of the abbey’s liquid measures was mounted as a drinking cup in the thirteenth century and so excluded from display.³⁶ Another griffon claw hanging from the vault of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris in the sixteenth century is not mentioned before 1433.³⁷

Medieval *Curiositas* and Curiosities

The existence of rare objects (as well as others) in treasuries is attested from the beginning of the fifteenth century onwards. At this time, *curiositas*, again intellectually acceptable, starts taking on the meaning of “curiosity, curious thing.” In the twelfth century, the Latin word *curiositas* was associated with an excessive desire of knowledge and exaggerated preoccupation or worry. Its negative connotation was stressed by moralists, who labeled it as “vain,” but from the middle of the following century it included the meaning of wanting to acquire new knowledge.³⁸ In calling *curiositas* the origin of pride, St. Bernard³⁹ and the monastic tradition follow in Augustine’s footsteps, who defines it as *concupiscentia oculorum* (1 John 2: 15–16).⁴⁰ This is still the meaning that Odo of Deuil ascribes to it in 1148.

When describing the behavior of the Crusaders on entering the churches of Constantinople, he paraphrases a passage from the Book of Numbers: “alii curiositate videndi, alii veneratione fideli.”⁴¹ Odo distinguishes between viewers (or even *voyeurs*) and the faithful. The latter approach the shrine to venerate; the former are not necessarily “curious” in the meaning given to the word since the eighteenth century, but it is already a first sign of a positive appreciation which announces the changes to come in the Gothic period.

The assembling of *naturalia* and monstrosities is also linked to an archeological inclination nourished by biblical stories. Preserving a rib of a whale signals a desire to display a bone of the monster that swallowed Jonah (Jonah 2: 1). But if the interest for things strange and marvelous is constant in the course of the Middle Ages, conditions change as time goes by: from the twelfth century onwards, the interest in natural curiosities increases.⁴² Natural rarities and curiosities in medieval treasuries – like the tooth of a narwhale (or unicorn horn), the nautilus, or the ostrich egg – are meant to show divine wisdom and power made manifest through the Creation.⁴³ But once the ontological distinction between *miracula* and *mirabilia* is established in about 1200, as Caroline W. Bynum has shown, natural curiosities function as *exempla*, seen henceforth through the moralizing filter of lapidaries and bestiaries. The ostrich egg is a perfect example in this respect. Looking through the table of inventories compiled by Bernhard Bischoff, we see that they existed in several churches north of the Alps. They were described either as *struthio* or as *ovum struthionis*.⁴⁴ In most cases they seem to have been receptacles (pyxes or reliquaries) (fig. 13-2). Most sources are not explicit about how they were displayed. Durandus of Mende, however, tells us that the common practice was to suspend them. In his presentation of church ornaments, he gives precise reasons why a treasury is shown to the people on certain feast days: for security reasons, because of the solemnity of the occasion, and above all for the sake of memory, to remember past donations, and to celebrate the *memoria* of the donors. The role of ostrich eggs (and other rare objects, *huiusmodi*) is to attract the faithful and to incite admiration, yet with a moral intent. An ostrich has a forgetful nature, but when a certain star appears it is recalled to its duty to return and sit on its eggs while they are hatching; likewise man, enlightened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, enjoins God to remember him by performing *bona opera*. The eggs are there to admonish the wandering spirit, just like a picture – *qua imago* – and to cause good works.⁴⁵

Objects of a treasury lose their earthly function and are kept because they are signs that refer to something invisible, to which they give access. They have the capacity to “pass on to” somewhere above, like the good deeds that follow their makers; in other words, they are “convertible.”⁴⁶ To acquire a treasure in heaven (Luke 12: 33; Matt. 6: 2) – that is, to arrive in paradise – was one of the desires of the medieval person. One means of attaining this celestial treasure was to begin on earth by making a series of donations to the altar, because through them pilgrims could prepare the salvation of their souls. Before ending up in the ecclesiastical treasure trove, these gifts passed through the hands of the mediators of the sacred, the priests, and, like the eucharistic species, they were transformed,

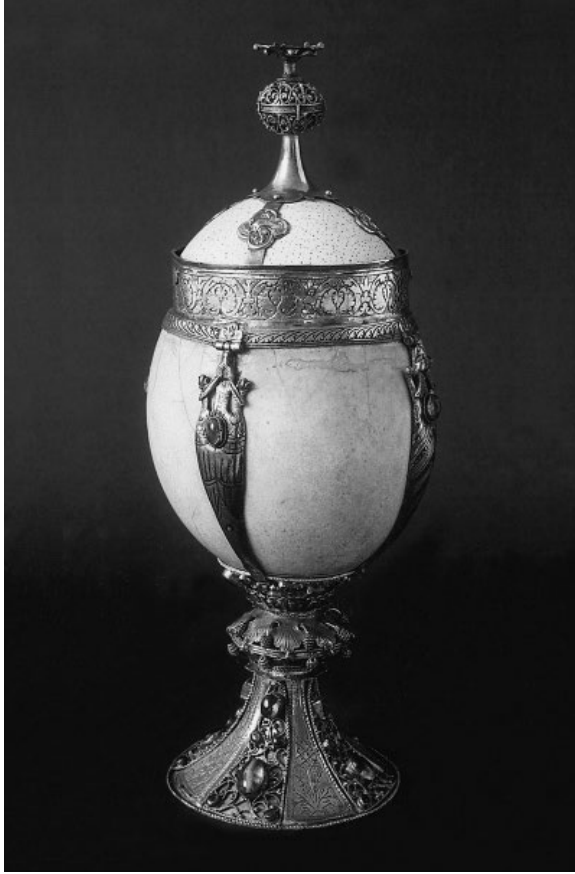


FIGURE 13-2 Egg-reliquary, Saxony, c.1210–1220. Halberstadt, cathedral treasure, inv. Nr. 47. Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt. Source: photo courtesy of Gunar Preuss.

increasing their value. One of the essential functions of the treasure was precisely to ensure good communication between the terrestrial below and the celestial above, between the material church and the heavenly Jerusalem.⁴⁷ The treasury thus stands at the threshold between the visible and the invisible, between the human being's temporal life and life beyond. As a sacred repository, it mediates between this world and the one to come, the accumulation of earthly treasures matching spiritual ones, since both seem to be indissolubly mixed together.⁴⁸

It seems that there is a correlation between the development of acts of mercy – for which the theology is slowly put in place in the course of the eleventh century before attaining a tremendous development in the following⁴⁹ – and the phenomenon of rearranging ecclesiastic treasures in the twelfth century. A look at Abbot Suger's activities in overseeing and building St.-Denis seems to confirm this theory. One of the aims of his *good* deeds was to establish a reciprocal link between the saint and Suger himself.⁵⁰

Manipulating the Objects: Memory Made Visible

The history of architecture tells us that, from the end of the twelfth century onwards, the choirs of numerous churches have been rearranged. (One of the consequences of this phenomenon was the progressive disappearance of crypts, many of which were filled in, as in the cathedral of Troyes.) There is no doubt that this architectural rearrangement brought about a change in the location and exhibition of a certain number of objects of the treasury, though we must be very careful to distinguish these objects clearly from those that were never taken out of their cupboards. Furthermore, vaulted and closed treasure chambers were now being built inside the sanctuaries themselves (for instance in the cathedral of Trier, c.1200), or near the choirs (as in Notre-Dame of Noyon, c.1170, placed against the northern arm of the transept); at Saints-Pierre-et-Paul of Troyes, the first radiating chapel to the south served as a treasury from the beginning of the thirteenth century – and sometimes it is the sanctuary itself which becomes the treasure chamber, as in the case of the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris (1239–1248).⁵¹ The end of the twelfth century heralds a new age of visibility, as can be seen from the new perception of the body of Christ, exemplified by the raising of the consecrated host, and by the progressive transformation of reliquaries into monstrances. There is a desire to recognize the divine or saintly presence, and this implies actually seeing the relic, which in turn leads to a multiplication of monstrances and phylacteries in the thirteenth century. The precious remains are exhibited in their shrines, visible through a crystal window.⁵² This interest in visibility results in a reorganization of treasures. In the history of their formation, the twelfth century is a turning point: we notice everywhere an effort to restore objects and to make the past attractive, the emphasis being on remembrance. The phenomenon concerns objects and consequently the ways of exhibiting them. We may consider one singular example. Nantelm, abbot of St.-Maurice d'Againe, is famous for a shrine he had made and into which he laid the saint's body, in 1225. But he also redistributes the other Theban relics in older reliquaries that he marks, or better, authenticates, with small enamel plates (fig. 13-3). Since the economic situation of the abbey was but unstable at the beginning of the thirteenth century, reuse appeared to be the ideal solution. It did not pejorate already low finances, while responding to heritage concerns. But in so doing, Nantelm consciously gathered head, arm, and corpse, forming a true *corpus*, that is a true *collection*.⁵³

Treasuries portray "History" or the past through objects and images staged as relics of that past. A striking example is Suger's restoration of Dagobert's throne that he found in the St.-Denis treasury. He restored it both for the excellence of its function and its value (*tum pro tanti excellentia officii, tum pro operis ipsium precio*), and also because it was supposed to be a gift made by the legendary founder of St.-Denis.⁵⁴ Legend seems to turn into flesh: the most precious symbols of the past become objects that can be touched, admired, or traded. These heroic relics are still perceived through the filter of the marvelous and the legendary,⁵⁵ but, by recalling immemorial times, they possess the faculty of connecting the community



FIGURE 13-3 Reliquary shrine of Nantelme, 1225, gable showing Christ in Majesty, detail: enamel plates. Abbey of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune, Treasure, inv. 3. Source: photo courtesy of Jean-Yves Glassey and Michel Martinez.

with History. Moreover, forging a prestigious past in order to inscribe an object in the collective memory, a process that Amy G. Remensnyder has termed as the “imaginative memory,” is an activity that might involve any object. In this way, an object is transformed into a memorial which is then given a name, generally a prestigious one.⁵⁶ For example, the sardonyx vessel that St. Martin supposedly entrusted to St. Maurice Abbey, according to a twelfth-century legend, was given to him by an angel. The precious gemstone material and the rarity of such a reliquary certainly helped the monks to assume that its origin was celestial and its provenance holy.⁵⁷ But the process may also have been an “operative action”: in the 1160s, the oval reliquary casket of St. Viktor in Xanten was purposely fashioned in Antique style in order to make it look older than it was. There were also imitations of Roman triumphs. The holy relics that Bishop Konrad von Krosigk (1201–1208) brought back from Constantinople in 1205 were carried

on a *feretrum* (or bier) and then exposed in Halberstadt Cathedral so that everyone would recognize the bishop's exploit. The *publicatio* of these *spolia opima* had several functions: to serve as commemoration, and to maintain or support the *religio*, that is the care for the churches and worship, as well as to incite donations.⁵⁸ The impact of such proceedings – *adventus*, *publicatio* – on medieval religious practice should also be assessed when it comes to collecting and display.

At St.-Denis, Abbot Suger moved the major relics from the crypt to the choir, where there was more light. He restored or transformed some pieces in the treasury and also enriched it with new ones. He then placed some of the items at strategic points in the church. Suger's description resembles an imaginary journey through the abbey, and it is the liturgy that ensures the spatial unity of the unfinished building and the display of chosen objects. This makes the church the theater of an experience of the senses, sometimes to saturation point, as Conrad Rudolph has shown.⁵⁹ Through the mediation of the objects which it possesses, the community is linked to history and claims the continuity that this implies. Consequently, "visual points of memory" are created and displayed, which also serve as so many liturgical stations. It is my belief that liturgy motivated the rearranging of church treasuries in the twelfth century, though it seems that its impact on medieval collecting has been greatly neglected. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the distinction was made between objects considered as liturgical instruments, as curiosities, and as marvels within the treasure. It is only from then on that we may truly speak of "collecting" in the Middle Ages.

Notes

- 1 John of Salisbury, *Historia pontificalis* IV, p. 79: "... veteres statuas emit Rome, quas Wintoniam deferri fecit."
- 2 Recent studies about medieval collections and collectors mainly repeat anecdotes: see for example Rheims, *Les collectionneurs* and Cabanne, *Les Grands Collectionneurs*. Pearce and Bournia (eds.) seem to validate the same approach in *The Collector's Voice*, where medieval sources are practically absent.
- 3 For Roman collections, see Stähli, "Sammlungen ohne Sammler" (with the preceding bibliography), and Bruneau, "Les Collections d'art"; for the Greek temple as community's museum, see Shaya, "Greek Temple"; for Byzantine collections, in particular the collection of Lausus, see Bassett, "Excellent Offerings."
- 4 For the "reinvention" of private collections in the fourteenth century, see Pomian, *Des saintes reliques*, pp. 35ff.
- 5 Pomian, "Collezionismo," p. 157. Cumming ("Collecting") mentions the Middle Ages in the context of accumulations only.
- 6 Pomian, *Collectionneurs*, p. 18: a collection is an "ensemble d'objets naturels ou artificiels, maintenus temporairement ou définitivement hors du circuit d'activités économiques, soumis à une protection spéciale dans un lieu clos aménagé à cet effet, et exposés au regard."
- 7 See the studies in Tyler, ed., *Treasure* and in Gelichi and La Rocca, eds., *Tesori*.

- 8 Consider Hourihane, ed., *Patronage*, p. xxiii: "We have to see patronage as a multi-stepped process or agency involving commissioning, conceiving, executing, receiving, and bequeathing," and also Buettner, "Testament," p. 10, who demonstrates that Blanche of Navarre transforms "la distribution des biens en un acte de mécénat."
- 9 See Wirth, *Sur le statut*, p. 21–27.
- 10 Guerreau-Jalabert and Bon, "Le trésor."
- 11 Guerreau-Jalabert, "*Spiritus et caritas*."
- 12 Bynum, "Wonder," p. 18. On relics in general, see Geary, *Furta sacra* and "Sacred Commodities"; Legner, ed., *Reliquien* and *Reliquien in Kunst*; Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien*; Bozóky and Helvétius, eds., *Les Relique*; and Toussaint, *Kreuz*.
- 13 [On reuse and the concept of spolia, see Chapter 14 by Kinney in this volume (ed.).]
- 14 Pearce speaks of collecting as a "spiritual pilgrimage" (*On Collecting*, p. 108), whereas Pomian sees in the history of collecting the history of the relationships that we entertain with the invisible (*Collectionneurs*, p. 126); Shaya ("Greek Temple," p. 423) speaks of a sacred-historical space that both legitimated and interpreted material traces of the past.
- 15 On collecting as a metonymic exercise in the pursuit of knowledge, see Brüning, "Sammlung und Synthese"; see also Bauer, "Collections."
- 16 On this "genetic lineage," see the henceforth classical studies by Murray (*Museums*) and von Schlosser (*Kunst- und Wunderkammern*), and, to a lesser extent, Lesne (*Histoire de la propriété ecclésiastique*) and Taylor (*The Taste of Angels*). See also Pearce, *On Collecting*, pp. 405–406. [On the modern medieval museum, see Chapter 39 by Brown in this volume (ed.).]
- 17 Olmi, "Die Sammlung."
- 18 *Contra*, see Pomian, *Collectionneurs*, p. 19: "les objets de collection possèdent une valeur d'échange sans valeur d'usage."
- 19 *Regalia* refers to an ensemble of objects symbolizing royalty, formed by royal garments, and liturgical and coronation instruments.
- 20 Gauthier, *Routes*, p. 94: "La muséologie débute par les collections de reliques." On collections of relics as instruments of representation, see for instance Elsner, "Replicating" and Wagner, "Les collections."
- 21 For a complete bibliography before 1900, see Lugli, *Naturalia et Mirabilia*.
- 22 De Mély and Bishop, *Bibliographie*; Campori, *Raccolta di cataloghi*. See also Klemm, *Zur Geschichte*, and Furtwängler, *Über Kunstsammlungen*.
- 23 See Caillet, "Le Trésor," and Sire, "Les Trésors des cathédrales."
- 24 In particular Gaborit-Chopin, ed., *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, and Durand, ed., *Le Trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*; see also Ehlers, ed., *Der Welfenschatz, Der Basler Münsterschatz* and Antoine-König and Mariaux, eds., *Le Trésor de l'abbaye de Saint-Maurice d'Agaune*.
- 25 See Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Schatzverzeichnisse*, and Ackley, "Re-approaching."
- 26 Palazzo, "Le Livre." On collections of books, see for instance Stirnemann, "Les Bibliothèques," and Tesnière, "Medieval Collections."
- 27 Inglis, "Expertise."
- 28 Many titles, among which Kosch, *Kölns romanischen Kirchen*. See also Bräm, "Schatzräume."
- 29 On furniture for conservation, see among others Polonovski and Perrault, "Le Trésor," and Krause, "Zur Geschichte." Other famous pieces include the painted cupboard in the Cathedral of Bayeux and the sacristy chest in the Cistercian Abbey of Aubazine (Corrèze).

- 30 Durandus of Mende, *Rationale divinatorum officiorum* I, III, 43: “In nonnullis ecclesiis ova structionum et huiusmodi, quæ admirationem inducunt et quæ raro videntur, consueverunt suspendi, ut per hoc populus ad ecclesiam trahatur et magis afficiatur” (p. 49).
- 31 Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park come to the same conclusion: “Medieval collections bore little resemblance to early modern or modern museums. They functioned as repositories of wealth and of magical and symbolic power rather than as microcosms, sites of study, or places where the wonders of art and nature were displayed for the enjoyment of their proprietors and the edification of scholars and amateurs” (*Wonders and the Order of Nature*, p. 68; cf. p. 383, n. 3).
- 32 Bowry, *Rethinking the Curiosity Cabinet*, pp. 147–148.
- 33 See Greitschuhs, “Bemerkungen”; Lugli, *Naturalia et Mirabilia*.
- 34 For many years a pear was seen to be hanging from the narthex wall at St.-Denis, as Hincmar reports in his compilation of the miracles of the saint (Hincmar of Rheims, *Miracula sancti Dionysii* I, 18; see also I, 7 (oats sheaf in the narthex), I, 8 (ram’s horn hanging from the abbey door), etc.).
- 35 Gaborit-Chopin, *Le trésor de Saint-Denis*, pp. 310–311.
- 36 *Ibid.*, pp. 223–225.
- 37 Durand, *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, pp. 182–183.
- 38 On the *curiositas* in the Middle Ages, beside Oberman, *Contra vanam curiositatem*, see Cabassut, “Curiosité,” II, 2: cols. 2654–2661; Labhardt, “Curiositas”; Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage*, pp. 18–41; Newhauser, “Towards a History of Human Curiosity”; Peters, “*Libertas Inquirendi*”; Kenny, *Curiosity in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 33–49; Peters, “The Desire to Know”; Krüger (ed.), *Curiositas*.
- 39 Bernard, *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae*, X, 28: “primus itaque superbiæ gradus est. curiositas.” Cf. *idem*, III, 14, 2–3: “Curiositas, cum oculis ceterisque sensibus vagatur in ea quæ ad se non attinent,” and therefore anything that draws a monk from himself can but remove him from God. On St. Bernard and curiosity, see Leclercq, “Curiositas.”
- 40 Oberman, *Contra vanam curiositatem*, p. 23.
- 41 Numbers 4: 20: “Alii nulla curiositate videant quæ sunt in sanctuario priusquam involvantur, alioquin morientur.” Odo of Deuil, *De profectioe*, pp. 64–66.
- 42 In the period between 1180 and 1320 there are more and more stories of marvels, monsters, miracles, and ghosts: Bynum, “Wonder.” See Kenseth, ed., *The Age of the Marvelous* and Findlen, *Possessing Nature*.
- 43 Daston, “Marvelous Facts.”
- 44 Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Schatzverzeichnisse*, ad v. *struthio, ovum struthionis*. Sometimes these eggs are supposed to be griffon eggs.
- 45 This parallelism is mentioned in certain bestiaries at the end of the thirteenth century, in particular in the *Libro della natura degli animali*, XXXVIII; see Morini, ed., *Bestiari medievali*, pp. 460–461.
- 46 Buc, “Conversion of Objects.”
- 47 As evidence, there is the chalice Emperor Henry II offered to St. Laurent of Merseburg: see Scheller, *Die Seelenwägung*.
- 48 Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 99.
- 49 The cause of this correlation may be found in the teaching of Christ (Matt. 25: 31ff.) which shows the transitive character of acts of charity (good deeds) and divine mercy: “... quamdiu fecistis uni de his fratribus meis minimis mihi fecistis” (*ibid.*, 25: 40).

- 50 Maines, “Good Works”; see also Gasparri, “L’Abbé Suger.” On art as similar to almsgiving, see Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance*, pp. 97–103.
- 51 On the display of objects, see Bandmann, “Über Pastophorien,” and “Früh- und hochmittelalterliche,” Vol. I, pp. 371–411; Ronig, “Die Schatz- und Heiltumskammern,” Vol. I, pp. 134–135; Kosch, “Zur spätromanischen.”
- 52 Examples by Gauthier, *Routes*.
- 53 Mariaux, “Trésor, mémoire, collection.”
- 54 The discovery of Arthur’s tomb at Glastonbury Abbey in 1191 is another example that testifies to the investigation into the space of memory. See Albrecht, *Die Inszenierung*, pp. 93–102 (Arthur’s tomb) and pp. 161–164 (Dagobert’s throne). From around 1300 at least, we have testimonies of sovereigns paying visits to church treasuries to see the “antiquities” and, indeed, learn history, guided by the prior or the treasurer who appear to be true “*periegetes*.”
- 55 Schnapp, *La conquête*, p. 98. The manipulation of objects, mostly reliquaries, is only one sign of the general investigation into the remote *loci* of memory. It becomes stronger and more effective from the twelfth century on, and prepares for the rediscovery of Antiquity in the next.
- 56 Remensnyder, “Legendary Treasure,” esp. pp. 884–885: “Memorial or monument is a physical object to which a commemorative meaning is attached; it is inherently instable and fluid, as memory itself.” See also idem, *Remembering Kings Past*.
- 57 Mariaux, “Objet de trésor.”
- 58 *Gesta episcoporum Halberstadensium, ad a. 1205* (MGH, SS, XXIII, pp. 120–121); see Andrea, *Contemporary*, pp. 239–264. On art to attract donations, see Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance*, pp. 20ff.
- 59 Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance*, pp. 63ff.

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The Concept of *Spolia*

Dale Kinney

Spolia are hot. An eruption of conferences, seminars, and publications in the past two or three decades has put a once obscure antiquarian subject in the limelight. Yet despite the increasing familiarity of the word *spolia*, the subject remains difficult to grasp in its entirety. Textbooks do not include it. The *Grove Dictionary of Art* has no main entry for *spolia*, only a few paragraphs buried under other headings: “Masonry, II” (Vol. 20), and “Rome, VII. Antiquarian revivals” (Vol. 26). Most of the literature on *spolia* is in German, followed by Italian and French, with hardly any English or American publications before the 1990s. The only comprehensive monograph is in Italian.

The subject denoted by *spolia* is materials or artifacts in reuse. As indicated by the subheading in the *Dictionary of Art*, initially *spolia* were reused bits of ancient Rome: the second-century reliefs on the fourth-century Arch of Constantine, or the ancient column shafts and capitals in St. Peter’s and other Christian basilicas.¹ Contemporary art historians use the word *spolia* more loosely, to refer to any artifact incorporated into a setting culturally or chronologically different from that of its creation.

As a label, *spolia* is both metaphorical and anachronistic. A Latin word meaning “spoils” or anything “stripped” from someone or something, “*spolia*” was coined as a term for reused antiquities by artist-antiquarians active in Rome around 1500. This use of *spolia* postdates medieval Latin, in which the word retained its classical, military meaning of “things taken by force.” In medieval texts, reused objects or materials are called by their proper names, “columns,” “marble,” “sarcophagi,” etc.

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This point would be merely pedantic if the metaphor did not have connotations that favor or even foster triumphalist and appropriationist interpretations.

Spolia are not an exclusively medieval topic; on the contrary, reuse is a universal response to limitations of technology or resources. If stone blocks, bricks, and roof tiles are more easily obtained secondhand than manufactured, builders will reuse them. It is far less laborious to melt down existing coins or vessels for recasting than it is to mine new gold and silver. Parchment can be scraped clean for new writing, and ivory plaques can be recarved. It is obvious why such forms of expedient reuse can be found in all cultures that employ durable materials.

Harder to explain is the reuse of culturally specific objects for non-pragmatic purposes, as ornament, especially when, like the reliefs of pagan emperors on the Arch of Constantine, the reused objects seem to contradict the message or purpose of their new setting. Such is the case with the gems, cameos, ivory plaques, and sarcophagi carrying profane or pagan imagery that were frequently reused in Christian contexts during the Middle Ages. The seemingly subversive effects of this practice have intrigued scholars of *spolia* for centuries.

Despite a long historiography, *spolia* are not a unified field of study. Modern scholarship on reused artifacts tends to form national traditions: with notable exceptions, Germans write about Ottonian art and architecture, the French write about medieval France, the Italians about Italy, the English about England. With no medieval patrimony of their own, Americans have ventured into all of these discourses occasionally. Although they frequently intersect, the separate threads of scholarship do not all have the same source or take the same directions. There is no common methodology. Rather than a coherent category, *spolia* might better be considered a theme of categories like architecture and sculpture, a theme that tends to be brought up in conjunction with other themes like the survival of Classical Antiquity or *renovatio*. *Spolia* also resonate with prominent themes of post-modern cultural criticism, such as appropriation, *bricolage*, historicism, the fragment, and ruin.

History

The label *spolia* applies most clearly to objects and materials that are obtained by despoliation, that is by robbing them from another object or site. This form of reuse is typically architectural, and in the Roman colonies of Gaul and Britain it was begun by the Romans themselves. The defensive city walls thrown up throughout Gaul in the third century were packed with stone recovered from damaged or abandoned cemeteries, temples, baths, and other public structures. In the Middle Ages these same walls became quarries for church builders tempted by the well-cut facing blocks that concealed the rubble inside. A twelfth-century chronicle reports that Charlemagne's chapel at Aachen was built with the "squared stones" of the wall of Verdun, and a document (817–825) of Louis the Pious grants permission to Archbishop Ebbo of Reims to take material from his city's wall to reconstruct Reims Cathedral.²

When rising walls were not available for spoliation, builders might dig for stone on the known sites of Roman habitation. One frequently cited episode is the excavation of Roman Verulamium, across the river from St. Albans Abbey, by successive tenth-century abbots planning to build a new church. Abbot Eadmar unearthed not only the squared stones, roof tiles, and columns that he needed, but also clay vessels, glass cinerary urns, “idols,” coins, jewels, and carved gems.³

The reuse of Roman stone for building was normal until the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, especially in Britain. At that point it tapered off due to depleted supply, the technological and economic recovery that made it possible to resume new quarrying, and the novel design demands of Romanesque (or Norman) and Gothic architects.

Marble was always a special case. It was a luxury stone and its reuse was ornamental, not expedient. Even in Italy it had to be obtained secondhand, as the Mediterranean quarries that produced it were abandoned in Late Antiquity. Probably the best-known primary source pertaining to *spolia* is the passage in Einhard’s biography of Charlemagne (c.825?) that reports that when the king “could not obtain the columns and marble for [his chapel at Aachen] from any place else,” “he took the trouble to have them brought from Rome and Ravenna.” A close second in familiarity is the claim by Abbot Suger of St.-Denis (c.1145), that when he rebuilt his abbey’s church he was prepared to go to the Baths of Diocletian in Rome for columns to match those in the original seventh-century basilica, had the Lord not spared him the trouble by revealing a good source of marble in nearby Pontoise. Suger’s ambition echoed Charlemagne’s, as did that of the German King (and later Emperor) Otto I, who imported “precious marble, gold, and gems” to the church that he founded at Magdeburg in 955.⁴

Charlemagne probably intended the display of Roman marble (as well as porphyry and granite) *spolia* in his Palatine Chapel as a political gesture. Its scarcity and esthetic appeal made marble desirable for other purposes as well, as an attribute of luxury or status. Marble was prized for the same qualities that drew medieval beholders to gems: its hardness, its capacity to take a glistening polish, and the variety and brilliance of color that polishing brings forth. The *Metrical Life of St Hugh of Lincoln* (bishop 1186–1200) praised the black stone that seemed like “an aristocrat of marbles” in Hugh’s cathedral, “more polished than a fresh-growing fingernail, present[ing] a starry brilliance to the dazzled sight ...”⁵ This stone was not true marble, but a limestone quarried in England on the Isle of Purbeck. On the Continent, Romanesque and Gothic architecture virtually did away with marble, creating new esthetic effects with spatial geometry and the virtuosic handling of local limestone and sandstone. Already in Ottonian architecture, marble played a diminished role compared to the previous millennium.

Outside the realm of architecture, reuse is most conspicuous in the treasury arts: reliquaries, gospel book covers, processional and standing crosses, and jewelry.⁶ Many of these artifacts incorporate older valuables such as Roman gems and cameos, Byzantine or early medieval metalwork and enamels, and Islamic rock crystals. Sensational examples include the Lothar Cross in Aachen (fig. 14-1), named



FIGURE 14-1 The Lothar Cross, c.980–1000. Aachen Domschatz. Source: photo courtesy of Bildarchiv Foto Marburg/Art Resource, NY.

for the intaglio portrait inscribed “King Lothar” (II? d. 869) on the lower staff, which sports a magnificent three-layered sardonyx cameo portrait of the Roman Emperor Augustus (d. 14) in the crossing; the Herimann Cross in Cologne (fig. 14-2), donated by Archbishop Herimann and his sister Ida, Abbess of St. Maria im Kapitol (d.1060), on which a lapis lazuli female portrait, possibly of Augustus’ wife Livia, functions as the head of Christ; and the Eagle Vase now in the Louvre (fig. 14-3), created for Abbot Suger by fitting an ancient porphyry vessel with the head, wings, and feet of an eagle made of gold.

Some composite objects seem blatantly syncretistic, like the golden pulpit ornamented with Late Antique ivory relief images of Isis, Bacchus, and Nereids that was given to the Palace Chapel at Aachen by King Henry II (r. 1002–1014); or the Shrine of the Three Kings in Cologne Cathedral (c.1200), which has large



FIGURE 14-2 The Herimann Cross, c.1049. Cologne: Erzbischöfliches Diözesanmuseum. Source: photo courtesy of Bildarchiv Foto Marburg/Art Resource, NY.

cameo images of Mars and Venus and the coronation of Nero prominently set on its front facade. Occasionally, inscriptions or other evidence show that pagan images were “converted” for Christian purposes by creative misreading, a process that modern scholars call *interpretatio christiana*. For example, the Gospel quotation “in principio erat verbum,” added to a first-century sardonyx cameo donated to Chartres Cathedral in 1367, transformed an ancient relief of Jupiter with his eagle into St. John and his symbol.⁷

Medieval thinking about gems is preserved in such inscriptions and in other texts. Treatises called “lapidaries” – like the especially popular verse example by Marbode, bishop of Rennes (d.1123) – spell out the many medicinal and magical powers attributed to gemstones. Some lapidaries provide such detailed information about pagan iconography that their readers could have deciphered many of the ancient carvings on gems as well as we can today, if they were not misled by other factors. The *Book of Minerals* by the thirteenth-century Dominican philosopher



FIGURE 14-3 The Eagle Vase of Suger, c.1140–1144. Paris: Louvre. Source: photo courtesy of Bridgeman-Giraudon/Art Resource, NY.

Albertus Magnus updated the lapidary tradition with scientific, Aristotelian explanations, but also perpetuated the beliefs that the innate forces of stones could be enhanced by images and that some of the images seen on gems were produced not by carving but by astrological influence during the formation of the stone. Albert thought that he had found one such “natural” image in an ancient portrait cameo on the Shrine of the Three Kings, known today as the Cameo of the Ptolemies.⁸

A different, emotional, and sensory relation to gems is recorded in the writings of Abbot Suger, who added many precious confections to the treasury of St.-Denis (fig. 14-4). Suger’s memoirs describe his delight in materials, nostalgic appreciation of lost standards of craftsmanship, and pleasure at getting a good bargain.⁹

Except in the realm of craftsmanship, Abbot Suger did not distinguish old objects from new ones; all works in lustrous materials functioned equally as *ornamenta*. It is questionable whether he or any other medieval patron or craftsman thought of

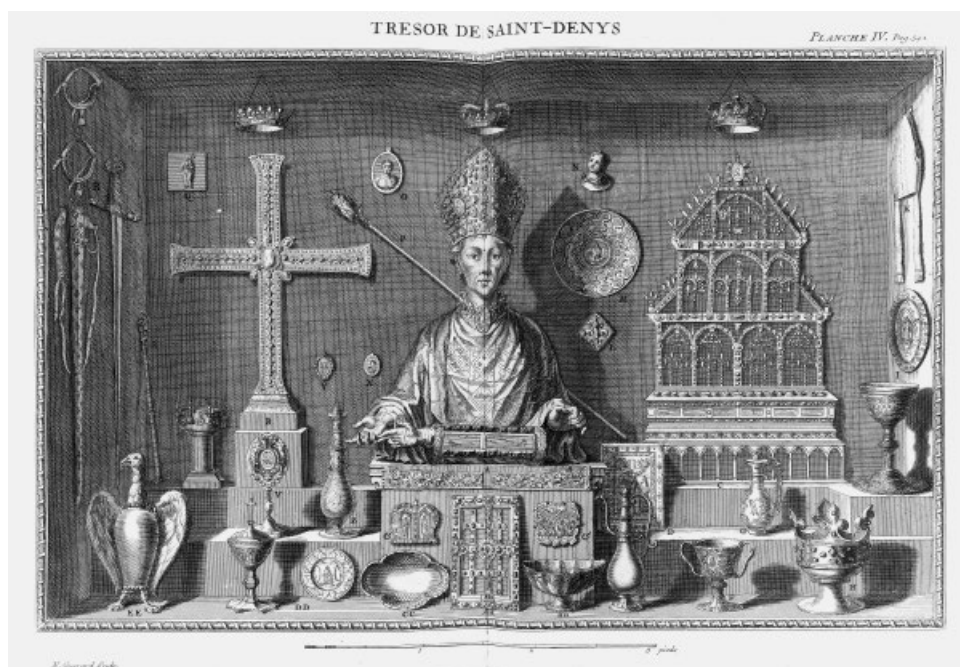


FIGURE 14-4 The Treasury of St.-Denis, including the Eagle Vase and other objects made for Abbot Suger. From Michel Félibien, *Histoire de l'abbaye royale de Saint-Denis en France*, plate IV (Paris, 1706). Source: photo courtesy of Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (Vaticano).

his ancient and other exotic ornaments as “reused.”¹⁰ Technically speaking, gems were reset rather than reused. For this and other reasons it is even more uncertain whether precious ornaments really belong to the discussion of *spolia*. Most Roman gems and other curios must have come into their donors’ possession by inheritance, gift, commerce – all attested to by Suger – and excavation, as at Verulamium. Exceptions would include the treasures that came west after 1204 as a result of the Crusaders’ plunder of Constantinople, which might be classified as true *spolia*, that is, *spolia* in the Classical (and medieval) sense of the word. The same might be said of objects obtained via the Seljuk dispersion of the Fatimid treasury in Cairo in 1061, and of the Islamic luxury items that passed into Christian treasuries as a result of the Reconquest of Spain.

Historiography

The first general book on *spolia* was published in 1744 by Giovanni Marangoni: *Delle cose gentilesche e profane trasportate ad uso ed adornamento delle chiese*. Marangoni, an ecclesiastic, sought to demystify the presence of “pagan and profane” objects in Christian sacred spaces. The opposition of pagan and Christian

became one of the most enduring themes in the study of *spolia*. In 1844 the antiquarian Thomas Wright invoked “the superstition of a barbarous age” to explain the appeal of Roman artifacts in nominally Christian Britain. In what he described as the first archeological analysis of ancient figured gems on liturgical objects (1932), G.A.S. Snijder proposed that the presence of each gem “prove[d] that somebody has gained a deeper insight into the power of God Almighty.”¹¹

The modern study of *spolia* began shortly after Snijder’s article appeared, with an essay on the sculptural decoration of the Arch of Constantine by Hans Peter L’Orange (1939) and an article on spoliated colonnades in early Christian basilicas by F.W. Deichmann (1940). Both postulated the coherence of Antique objects and their post-Antique settings, rather than stressing oppositions. L’Orange maintained that the reuse of older figural reliefs on the fourth-century Arch of Constantine was deliberate and intelligible, not, as had been assumed, a makeshift response to lack of time or skill. He pointed to thematic echoes of the *spolia* in the reliefs newly made for the Arch, and proposed that they revealed a subtext in which both the original and the secondary meanings of the *spolia* are in play. The viewer who knows their original subjects can see the recontextualized second-century reliefs as images of Constantine the new Trajan, the new Hadrian, and the new Marcus Aurelius; that is, Constantine in the mold of the great good emperors of the past.¹²

Deichmann’s similarly innovative article on “Columns and Order” in early Christian architecture argued that while the recycling of building materials was practiced in all ancient cultures, going back to Egypt and Persia, the incorporation of *spolia* into early Christian basilicas signaled something new. In conjunction with a new esthetic preference for diversity and pattern, early Christian *spolia* constituted a new “order” that undermined and replaced the uniform Greek and Roman Orders. According to Deichmann, the new architectural order prevailed all around the Mediterranean from the fourth century to the eighth, when it degenerated into “chaotic” combinations of reused parts.¹³

Important as they were for the study of *spolia*, these essays had no perceptible effect on the scholarship on gems or architecture north of the Alps. Attention to architectural *spolia* was inhibited by national prejudices in favor of authentically French or German – that is, non-Roman – buildings, as well as by a paucity of examples after the eleventh century. Viollet-le-Duc (1859) observed the haphazard combinations of *spolia* in early medieval French churches with disdain: “Antique columns, often hewn of precious materials, were luxury objects, a sort of spoil with which they sought to embellish their homely buildings.” Since he considered the Gothic style to be the supreme medieval architectural achievement, Viollet-le-Duc found any desire for marble among later medieval builders atavistic, and he dismissed Abbot Suger’s scheme to import marble columns from Italy as a grandiose literary fiction.¹⁴

If they attended to *spolia* at all, twentieth-century architectural historians tended to follow Viollet-le-Duc in considering *spolia* an impediment to the development of new, characteristically medieval styles. Thus for Hans

Jantzen (1947), Otto I's Magdeburg Cathedral with its imported columns and marble was a Carolingian throwback, as opposed to the church of St. Michael at Hildesheim, where "a German architectural feeling drives out the Latin-antique."¹⁵ Günter Bandmann, however, devoted a page to *spolia* in a book that considered medieval architecture not as a progression of styles but as bearer of meaning (1951). Bandmann noted that the taking of architectural *spolia* was a means of empowering or "consecrating" a new building by transferring to it pieces of a holy site that had existed somewhere else; Charlemagne's use of columns from Ravenna at Aachen was an example.¹⁶ It was Bandmann's work rather than Deichmann's that ultimately stimulated interest in *spolia* in northern medieval architecture, at least in Germany.

An example of Bandmann's influence is Wolfgang Götz's interpretation of the east end of Magdeburg Cathedral (1966), where the spoliated column shafts originally imported by Otto I were reused again in the early thirteenth century as supports for statues in the upper stories of the choir. The interruption of the Gothic elevation by these relics had baffled and annoyed earlier scholars because, as Götz observed, they judged it only on the criterion of style. Götz explained the *spolia* as embodiments of the authority of their place of origin, understood in the thirteenth century to be the prior cathedral of Otto I as well as imperial Rome. By their presence in the choir they conferred upon the thirteenth-century bishop the same rights and status enjoyed by his tenth-century predecessor.¹⁷ Götz was a pioneer; it was not until the 1980s that this type of interpretation became familiar.

The second dominant theme associated with *spolia*, after the pagan/Christian opposition, is the survival or influence of Classical Antiquity. Developed in German art history before World War II, this interest was transplanted to England and America when German-Jewish scholars fled the Nazis. The library of Aby Warburg, relocated from Hamburg to London in 1933, became an institute that is still dedicated to the classical tradition, "the theme which unifies the history of Western civilization."¹⁸

The first volume of the *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, published in 1937–1938, contained an article by William Heckscher that responded to Snijder's interpretation of ancient gems on medieval book covers. Heckscher introduced a philosophical justification, noting that gems possessed the principal qualities of beauty prescribed by neo-Platonic esthetic theory: wholeness and clarity or translucence. Intact, unblemished gems were the antithesis of ruin, the broken or imperfect, which was repugnant. Heckscher applied this rationale not only to book covers but also to Abbot Suger's scheme to take columns from the Baths of Diocletian to St.-Denis:

The modern romanticist may protest that by breaking up [i.e., taking away] columns from the baths of Diocletian, Sugerius would have impaired recklessly the beauty of an antique site. Sugerius, however, considered the columns as units, beautiful in themselves, whereas the condition of the place as a whole ... ranged for him under the category of disintegration and therefore worthlessness.

Heckscher stressed the conviction of medieval thinkers that their world was continuous with that of ancient Rome. The Roman past was “pagan,” but its relics could be adapted by *interpretatio christiana*, as in the case of Suger’s Eagle Vase. “Needless to say the eagle ... superimposed upon the antique relic, is meant as a symbol of Christ.”¹⁹

Another Warburg publication transposed the theme of classical influence into French. Jean Adhémar’s *Influences antiques dans l’art du moyen âge français* of 1939 is a survey of the archeological and literary evidence for the survival of classical (“Western”) culture, especially Gallo-Roman artifacts, in medieval France. It includes many instances of Roman objects in medieval settings – altars, tombstones, sarcophagi, columns and capitals, statues, gems, diptychs – without distinguishing them from other, similar objects that survived without being reused. Preservation was Adhémar’s driving interest, and he subsumed what we today might call *spolia* into the larger categories of “antiquities” and their “survival,” as was typical of the Warburgian approach.²⁰

Adhémar’s book inspired some French followers, notably René Crozet, but the future of the Warburg school of scholarship was in English. William Heckscher’s teacher, Erwin Panofsky, published his translation of Abbot Suger’s writings on St.-Denis in Princeton in 1946. Brilliantly paralleling Suger’s words with those of the fifth-century neo-Platonic philosopher “Pseudo-Dionysius,” Panofsky claimed that the abbot understood the “light” and “clarity” of gems, precious metals, and glass as a means of neo-Platonic ascent from the world of matter to the immaterial world of God.²¹ The neo-Platonic rationale applied to all precious objects, old and new, and like Suger himself, Panofsky paid no particular attention to reuse.

German scholars who remained in Germany tended to be skeptical of high-flown Warburgian intellectualism and to take a more intuitive and empirical approach to the same issues and objects. Hans Wentzel began his pioneering wartime article on medieval gems (1941) with a rebuff of Heckscher’s “very wide-ranging speculations,” asserting that his own conclusions were based on “the monuments alone.” He declared flatly that with few exceptions, “the pre-Christian origin and pagan significance of the stones were unknown to the middle ages,” when ancient gems were valued only for the rarity and beauty of their materials and for their amuletic effects. Wentzel claimed that most pagan gems were genuinely believed to be Christian, and gave the Herimann Cross as an example²²:

[The Cross] bears an antique Venus cameo as the head of Christ. This beautiful fully rounded head gives the Crucified an entirely unmedieval aspect ... It must have been an equally unusual sight around 1040 ... This unique use can only have been prompted by the assumption that the cameo (doubtless discovered in the ground) was and could only be the head of the Saviour.

Of the numerous German publications on the theme of Antiquity and the Middle Ages that appeared after World War II, only Richard Hamann-MacLean’s long article of 1949–1950 found a particular role for *spolia*. Calling them the

earliest, “most basic, most material stage of the connection between the middle ages and antiquity,” Hamann-MacLean offered a list of reasons why *spolia* might have been used: convenience, economy, esthetic appreciation of materials or workmanship, the collecting impulse, and the belief in miracles and the magic of things (*Dingzauber*). Anticipating Bandmann, he identified Charlemagne’s appropriation of Roman marbles for his church at Aachen as a “magic-political” use of *spolia*, unlike the incorporation of ancient marbles into eleventh-century churches, which he saw as strictly pragmatic. He observed that gems continued to be valued for their antiquity, exquisite craftsmanship, and supernatural powers long after the reuse of other ancient artifacts had ceased. The Herimann Cross was one example; he called it “a form of reified mystery,” in which the antipathy of pagan and Christian was broken down by “the timeless numen of a precious substance.”²³

The decades of the 1950s and 1960s were marked by a few impressive monographic studies and particular discoveries, including Jean Taralon’s stunning revelation (1955) that the golden head of the reliquary statue of St. Foi at Conques is Late Antique, and Joseph Hoster’s demonstration (1967) that the Cameo of the Ptolemies, stolen from the Shrine of the Three Kings in 1574, is in Vienna.²⁴ The most enduring monograph is Josef Deér’s article on the Lothar Cross (1955). Refuting earlier opinions that the central sardonyx cameo was “converted” by *interpretatio christiana* (becoming the head of Christ), Deér argued that the cameo was actually recognized and employed for what it was, a Roman imperial portrait, knowingly “appropriated” by the Ottonian donor to represent himself.

On a more abstract level, Erwin Panofsky’s grand synthesis of 1965, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art*, introduced the inspired aphorism “principle of disjunction” to describe the dissociation of Classical form from Classical content, which, in his view, made it possible for Classical art to survive the Christian Middle Ages:

[W]herever in the high and later Middle Ages a work of art borrows its form from a classical model, this form is almost invariably invested with a non-classical, normally Christian, significance; wherever in the high and later Middle Ages a work of art borrows its theme from classical poetry, legend, history or mythology, this theme is quite invariably presented in a non-classical, normally contemporary form.

Although it was not meant to explain *spolia*, Panofsky believed that the “principle of disjunction” accounted for Antique gems that were relieved of their original meaning by *interpretatio christiana*, and he cited the Lothar Cross as an example.²⁵ The “principle of disjunction” continues to tease scholars of *spolia*, who were still responding to it in the 1990s.

At the time, however, *spolia* studies were more affected by an unexpected and compelling article of 1969 by the German historian Arnold Esch. Drawing on an extraordinary knowledge of mostly Italian examples, Esch deduced five essential explanations for *spolia*: convenience and availability; profanation or exorcism

of demonic force; *interpretatio christiana*; retrodating or political legitimation (Bandmann's Rome "transferred in pieces"); and esthetic wonderment or admiration ("reuse at any cost"). All of these motives had already been suggested; indeed, Hamann-MacLean produced almost the same list 20 years before. The originality of Esch's contribution lay in the recognition of *spolia* as a distinctive cultural practice, which could be isolated and analyzed on its own terms rather than as a subset of Classical survival. His article defined a field.

As often happens, the impact of Esch's article was not seen for over a decade. Victor Lassalle's book of 1970 on the influence of Antiquity on Romanesque art in Provence remained in the framework created by Adhémar, although it recognized "reuses" (*remplois*) as a distinctive category. Like Viollet-le-Duc, Lassalle attributed most reuse to the technical impoverishment of early medieval masons and sculptors, but in some twelfth-century examples he discerned "the intention to present ... especially notable antique vestiges for everyone's admiration." He did not believe that reuse could be creative, however, and he dismissed the topic after only four pages.²⁶

In 1983, in an essay directly influenced by Esch, Beat Brenk extended the notion of *spolia* as "art politics" (*Kunstpolitik*) to Abbot Suger's plan to bring columns from Rome to St.-Denis.²⁷ This was the first lap of what quickly became a flood of *spolia* studies, composed of publications so diffuse that they are difficult to track and even harder to categorize. Joachim Poeschke attributed the new fascination with *spolia* to the turn of art history in the 1980s to content and program (as opposed to form), as well as to the "language of materials."²⁸ There were other motivations as well, including an Anglo-Italian revival of interest in Warburgian problems, and a vogue for treasury exhibitions and their catalogs, which made objects like the Herimann Cross more prominent. Not surprisingly, such diverse and uncoordinated stimuli produced multiple, erratically connected lines of scholarship.

The neo-Warburgian strain is represented by the three-volume *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana* (1984–1986), sponsored by Salvatore Settis in Pisa. Settis's own essay, "Continuity, Distance, Knowledge: Three Uses of the Antique," is an intellectual tour de force that takes on Warburg, Panofsky, and the whole of German scholarship on the afterlife of Classical Antiquity, offering brilliant insights into *spolia* along the way. As an authentic medieval metaphor for excerpting what was usable from Classical authors, *spolia* is Settis's leitmotif for the Middle Ages, the period of continuity. Citations and topoi are *spolia*; conversely, spoliating objects are citations. Excised from their original (ruined) context, citations assume the authority (*auctoritas*) of the no longer usable whole.

The ancient fragment, enclosed within a new system of values, immediately tends to occupy the center; but its imperfect, mutilated state invites you ... to complete it, beginning an exegetical process ... of conjecture. It is an almost empty center, and to fill it is not enough to squeeze from that single fragment all of the norms that it contains; it lets you make out that there were other [norms], and challenges you to find them. Thus the single spoliating column embodied Rome in all its aspects: "the

auctoritas that the Roman column carried with it was that of the city – ... capital of the imperial majesty and of Christianity; but also, at the same time, the *auctoritas* of a technical proficiency and of decorative and structural norms that were of one body with that majesty.”²⁹

Like many scholars, Settis assigned gems a special place. He argued that placing them in crosses or reliquaries was a deliberate means of neutralizing their pagan significance, which made *interpretatio christiana* unnecessary or after the fact. As objects of intrinsic value, gems were the model for “all reuse of antiquities for preservation or display.”³⁰

Settis’s reflections on *spolia*, arguably the most challenging of the present era, have not yet received the attention they deserve outside Italy. More influential was Michael Greenhalgh’s book of 1989, which also stands within the Warburgian framework although at the opposite pole of intellectual pretension. Explicitly devoted to “objects not ideas,” Greenhalgh’s overview of the survival of antiquities in Italy, Northern Europe, and England differs from previous efforts like Adhémar’s in being restricted to material remains, ignoring literary, ideological, and other purely verbal components of the classical legacy.³¹ Like Adhémar, Greenhalgh focused on survival, but reuse and *spolia* are much more prominently featured in his account. Greenhalgh’s compendium made the topic of reuse visible and easily accessible in English, and despite occasional inaccuracies, it is a goldmine of primary and secondary sources for researchers.

Outside the Warburg tradition, the survival of Rome ceased to drive interest in reuse. Medieval treasuries contain artifacts from many eras and cultures, and scholars began to address this.³² In the late 1980s, Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen, Lieselotte Stamm-Saurma, and others expanded the definition of *spolia* to include objects that were virtually new at the time of their reuse (e.g., a tenth-century Byzantine ivory in an eleventh-century book cover).³³ Julie Harris drew attention to the Islamic caskets that entered Spanish church treasuries as true *spolia* – as booty of the Christian Reconquest; and Avinoam Shalem provided a more comprehensive view of the means by which such objects passed into treasuries throughout Europe.³⁴

At the same time, attention to ancient gems continued to be strong, liberated by new interpretive strategies from the strict dualities of pagan/Christian and classical/medieval. Most of this new scholarship is in German. Antje Krug’s overview of ancient gems in the Middle Ages (1993) refreshed the standard account by introducing such contemporary concepts as status symbols, charisma, and heirlooms, in addition to grave-robbing, trade, connoisseurship, and humor. Her portrait of medieval collectors firmly contradicts the stereotype of credulous ignorance³⁵:

We find here not a naive inability to recover the original sense of the pagan representations, nor superstitious fear of the reality of the old images that one sought to oppose with Christian content ... but the capacity to recognize [pagan subjects] and to read them in more than one sense.

Taking a different approach, Erika Zwierlein-Diehl went back to Panofsky's principle of disjunction to restate the case for *interpretatio christiana*: "we may take it for granted that ... gems ... were given a Christian meaning when placed in medieval sacred objects."³⁶ Her reconstruction of the *interpretatio christiana* that might have been applied to the gems on the Shrine of the Three Kings in Cologne brings this interpretive model up-to-date with an understated application of semi-otic principles and reception theory.³⁷

North American and British scholars made their belated entrance into *spolia* studies in the 1990s. American contributions tend to reflect the larger discourse of art history on that continent, especially its preoccupation with the political instrumentality of history. George Beech's account of the "Eleanor of Aquitaine Vase" given by Abbot Suger to St.-Denis is an example; so is William Clark's interpretation of the reuse of marble column shafts in twelfth-century churches in Paris (1997).³⁸ A finely worded essay by Ilene Forsyth characterizes a number of Ottonian objects, including the crosses of Lothar and Herimann and the ambo of Henry II, as "art with history": "made up of concrete remains of ancient Roman, Early Christian, Byzantine, Fatimid, Frankish, Anglo-Saxon, Merovingian, Carolingian, and/or earlier Ottonian artifacts which in sum represent the cultural foundations of the Ottonian era." Forsyth proposed that these "aggregates" were "artistic statement[s] expressing a triumph of the whole over its own component parts, the present over its varied past."³⁹

By contrast, the British discovery of *spolia* seems critically innocent, even of the prior literature on *spolia*. David Stocker's seminal article on building stone proposed three categories of reuse: casual, functional, and iconic, without reference to any previous categorizations such as Esch's. In Stocker's scheme, "casual" reuse occurs when "the function of the original stone is disregarded"; it is "functional" when an element is reused for the purpose for which it was made; and it is "iconic" when a particular stone is reused because of its associations, history, or "superstitious power." Stocker's categories seem roughly equivalent to Esch's motives of convenience (= casual and functional), *interpretatio christiana*, exorcism and legitimation (= iconic); they do not explicitly recognize esthetic beguilement.⁴⁰

Tim Eaton's *Plundering the Past* (2000) provides a useful synthesis of recent British scholarship on architectural reuse, and also debunks some common assumptions about the practice and its motivations. He is critical of Stocker's classification, noting that it confuses descriptive labels ("casual" and "functional") with explanation. Eaton's remedy is drastic, collapsing all possibilities into just two categories of intention: "practical" (which includes "economy, convenience, professional preference [and] technological necessity") and "meaningful" (including "an appreciation of the material's age-value [and] esotericism").⁴¹

Books on *spolia* are still rare. Lucilla de Lachenal's was the first attempt to survey the entire subject, but it is overwhelmingly focused on Italy. The few remarks on Ottonian art are dominated by the paradigm of "the antique as the legitimation of [political] power" and are out of touch with contemporary scholarship on objects like the Lothar Cross.⁴²

While de Lachenal treats all perpetuations of ancient Roman material and literary culture as *spolia*, the multi-authored *Antike Spolien* promotes a much narrower definition, confined to the reuse of materials in architecture.⁴³ Of the dozen essays in this volume, three discuss buildings in post-millennium Northern Europe. Cord Meckseper inventories *spolia* imported for the Ottonian cathedral at Magdeburg; Joachim Poeschke briefly discusses Magdeburg's thirteenth-century choir and the façade of St.-Remi at Reims; and Thomas Weigel responds to Thomas Raff's position that *spolia*, like relics, were valued for authenticity and venerability rather than for esthetic reasons. Weigel marshals primary sources to show that even a programmatic use of *spolia* did not exclude regard for their beauty, quality, or size.

Another conference publication, the acts of the forty-sixth annual "Study Week" of the Italian Center for Study of the Early Middle Ages in Spoleto (1999), though mostly about Italy, contains some papers of broader relevance.⁴⁴ Umberto Eco offers a semiotic model for medieval approaches to citation (a form of reuse), which he illustrates with a metaphorical garment. The life of a jacket can be prolonged by reversal, mending, patching, adaptation, and, finally, dismemberment to be incorporated elsewhere as patchwork or *bricolage*. All of these processes alter the original, and Eco's point is that medieval citation always expresses new content disguised by reuse.⁴⁵

Anthony Cutler's call for a distinction between reuse and use is especially relevant to the discussion of gems. In Cutler's view, the difference turns on the intention of the (re)user and the reception of the altered or recontextualized artifact. He maintains that unlike people today, medievals accepted the "mutability" of objects and valued them "as much [for their] utility in the present and in the foreseeable future as [for their] antiquity."⁴⁶

Conclusion

The study of *spolia* is in a dynamic state of becoming, working itself out through what might be called a trialectic of specific, general, and theoretical publications. The process is illustrated by a recent series of attempts to recover the meaning of the Lothar Cross.

On the basis of a systematic study of all gemmed crosses, Theo Jülich argued that these objects were multilayered signs alluding to the crucifixion, second coming, and heavenly dominion of Christ. He concluded that a portrait in the center of such a cross could not have represented a donor, as had been the prevailing opinion of the Lothar Cross since Deér. Citing a medieval exegete who interpreted sardonyx as a sign of the two natures of Christ, Jülich insisted that the sardonyx cameo on the Lothar Cross must have represented Christ as ruler in heaven.⁴⁷

Approaching the "iconology as a *spolium*" of the same cameo, Norbert Wibiral began with the semiotic premise, grounded in an eighth-century source, that "expressions of content in art are often polyvalent." He asserted that in its Ottonian

adaptation, the central cameo represented the Emperor Augustus, not (only) as himself but in his medieval Christian function as *figura*, the image of Christ in his first and second coming.⁴⁸

Both interpretations employ appropriate historical sources and reasoning, so on purely historical grounds it is impossible to choose between them. Ilene Forsyth's explanation operates on another plane; it provides a general pattern for interpreting the Lothar Cross and other objects like it. The pattern accommodates Wibiral's specific interpretation but not Jülich's. Forsyth's categorical account depends on a conception of *spolia* as – in medieval eyes – embodiments of history.

Philippe Buc's article on the "Conversion of Objects" operates on the same plane but offers a somewhat different model, informed by social-historical theories of the "life of things." Buc proposes that "object-conversion [as when an ancient Roman object is given to a church treasury] establishes a relationship of superiority" of the object's present status over its past, and "signifies a transfer of power one hopes to freeze into eternity." In the particular case of object-donations to St.-Denis, such as the Eagle Vase, Buc argues that the objects' illustrious past ownership and varied histories created a "memorial network" for Abbot Suger, auguring salvation by commemorating his place "at the center of a web defined by his age's most famous figures of power."⁴⁹

The categorical explanations of Forsyth and Buc both posit history as an essential attribute of *spolia* or converted objects. In this respect both are challenged by the still more abstract question posed by Cutler: were ancient gems, vessels, and other such objects *reused* by their medieval donors, or just *used*? In Cutler's distinction, reuse is "at least in part, a historicist gesture," while use is driven by present value or need.

Theo Jülich undoubtedly would opt for use. Like Antje Krug and Erika Zwierlein-Diehl, Jülich avoids the term *spolia*, preferring "gems" or "cameos" or the name of the material – "sardonyx," "amethyst," etc. Items of use are open to a broader array of interpretive models than *spolia*, as seen in Thomas Raff's exposition of the medieval "iconology of materials." Defining the "iconology of materials" as the "semantics, symbolism, and allegory" of the substances of which art is made, Raff explicitly addresses *spolia* in an excursus. He explains that he did not reserve a particular chapter for *spolia* because he finds the fact of reuse less significant than the properties of a material and the reasons for choosing it. Consequently he dispersed cases of reuse among chapters on other topics: "Material as Relic," "Materials as Topographical References," and "Materials as Historical References."⁵⁰

These and other examples indicate that the historiography of *spolia* cannot be confined to *spolia*. Raff rejects the category and Buc never uses the word. Avinoam Shalem showed that *spolia* ("trophies") would be far too restrictive a label for Islamic treasury objects, which were also gifts, commodities, and souvenirs. Rather than a corpus of objects, *spolia* is a still evolving analytic concept, which functions like a spotlight to make objects appear momentarily different. The objects themselves are both more and less than they appear.

Addendum

Spolia in the New Millennium

Spolia continue to fascinate, and “*spolia* studies” is now recognized as an autonomous field of research straddling the traditional domains of archeology and art history.⁵¹ Befitting its subject it is a fragmented and centrifugal field, in which research remains compartmentalized by medium, period, and cultural divisions, and – less understandably – by the language of its practitioners. The quantity of publications in the past 15 years is too great to be summarized in a few paragraphs; instead, this addendum highlights a “critical turn” in *spolia* studies and contributions specific to the medieval eras covered in this volume.

The very idea of *spolia* studies has created a backlash, vividly expressed by Michael Greenhalgh. Pointing out that the word carries “baggage and prejudices,” Greenhalgh advocates abandoning *spolia* for *reuse*, which is “colorless.”⁵² While many scholars do employ *spolia* and “reuse” synonymously, most are also inclined to privilege *spolia* as a particular kind of reuse.⁵³ Illustrating a tendency to theorize *spolia* in the terms of disciplines like literature and semiotics, Henrik Karge identifies architectural *spolia* as citations, in unwitting contradiction to Arnold Esch and Paolo Liverani, who argue that because the taking of *spolia* destroys their source, *spolia* are not like citations at all.⁵⁴ Especially productive is the growing acknowledgment that *spolia* are a form of reception.⁵⁵ “Reception” covers many situations, from the perception of reuse by its initial viewers to the historical process of selecting and “filtering” the material remains of one culture by successive or foreign ones.⁵⁶ Applying semiotic theory to reconstruct fourth-century responses to the Arch of Constantine, for example, Liverani demonstrated that its reused figural reliefs would likely have been perceived as meta-linguistic signs that identified the traditional function of the monument but conveyed none of the specific content hypothesized by H.P. L’Orange.⁵⁷ In response, Siri Sande defended the position that the *spolia* on the Arch were “carefully chosen with a purpose to recall the past” but suggested that the reused columns in Constantinian churches were not. “Shorn of their original identity,” she wrote, columns would have registered only their number and precious materials.⁵⁸

Columns are prominent in the discussion of architectural *spolia* in later medieval Europe. Adhering closely to written sources, Günther Binding concluded, like Sande, that reused column shafts were noted for their number, beautiful materials, and the difficulty of transporting them but not for their history. They did not evoke Rome (even in Aachen and Magdeburg), but builders with a clerical education could have understood them allegorically as symbols of the Apostles or other “pillars” of the church.⁵⁹ Other scholars are less stringent, and continue to maintain that reused columns somehow represented an illustrious past or referred to a numinous predecessor whose authority medieval builders wished to appropriate.⁶⁰ Often the connection is termed “memory,” but only Stephan Albrecht proceeds from a clearly articulated understanding of collective

memory and its instrumentalization of objects.⁶¹ According to Albrecht, many kinds of objects can function as “memory pieces” (*Erinnerungsstücke*) if they are “activated” through actions (rituals) or words (inscriptions, oral propaganda). Only *spolia* so activated can “stage the past.” Peter Scott Brown’s attempt to prove the opposite – that even invisible *spolia* could be meaningful – lacks the methodological foundation that scholars like Binding and Albrecht have tried to build.⁶² Lukas Clemens’s substantial monograph on the medieval afterlife of six Roman cities (Metz, Besançon, Reims, Cologne, Mainz, and Trier) contains a lengthy consideration of the medieval perception of Antique remains deduced from written sources. Unlike Binding, Clemens finds that the employment of local *spolia* in Northern European church building was motivated by *Romimitation*, and he goes on to propose that the interest shown by foreign clerics in Rome’s antiquities lay behind the so-called *renovatio* in Rome itself.⁶³

Scholarship on the treasury arts remains largely independent of that on architecture. As before, interpretive debates dwell on the possible meanings of the figural imagery on ancient gems and cameos in medieval settings, but now also on the nature of the medieval settings themselves and on the role of the foreign – Byzantine and Islamic – *spolia* that often are part of the ensemble. In her acclaimed dissertation on the statuette of Sainte Foy at Conques, Beate Fricke builds on Thomas Head’s appropriation of Lévi-Strauss’s term *bricolage* to describe the statue’s tendency to accrue precious tokens and its consequently contingent and mutable appearance.⁶⁴ Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen, among others, objected that the gems on reliquaries and liturgical accoutrements are hardly the found objects of *bricolage*, but carefully chosen elements of a “multi-layered visual statement.”⁶⁵ Avinoam Shalem employs phrases like “assemblage,” “collection,” and a “micro-museum of history” to characterize composite treasury objects, and calls the Islamic works incorporated into them “ready-mades.”⁶⁶ In Shalem’s view, composites like the ambo of King Henry II introduced a new medieval aesthetic, in which different styles were displayed in a new “bi-visual” whole.⁶⁷

An ever widening spectrum of interpretive methodologies is brought to bear on these assemblages. At one pole is Erika Zwierlein-Diehl, who maintains that ancient cameos were not seen as pagan in the Middle Ages and their unfamiliar imagery was routinely subjected to *interpretatio christiana*; at the opposite pole is Fricke, who compares objects like the statue of Sainte Foy to Umberto Eco’s “open work,” which allows multiple defensible interpretations and has no final meaning.⁶⁸ Between these extremes are those who question the necessity and even the concept of *interpretatio christiana* and those who accept that elite clerical patrons not only recognized pagan iconography but wittingly made (re)use of it.⁶⁹ There is a growing consensus that spoliated assemblages signify in multiple ways, not only through iconography but through other properties of the *spolia*, objective (material, color, age, pedigree, commercial value, means of transfer, contiguity with other objects) and subjective (anachronism, the uncanny, “aura of strangeness”).⁷⁰ Novel contributions include Philippe Cordez’s essay on the

Shrine of the Three Kings, which argues that the Cameo of the Ptolemies was perceived not as an antiquity but as an object of black magic (*negromantia*), and Adriano Peroni's demonstration that the prominent blue head on the Herimann Cross is less surprising when viewed in the context of the medieval habit of carving the head separately from the body, making it "autonomous."⁷¹ Taking an anthropological approach, Antje Krug sketched the ancestry of medieval *spolia* from "blood trophies" or war booty to trophy artifacts testifying to political stature, to antiquities admired as exempla from an exemplary past. She dates the latter transition to the Carolingian period and observes that antiquities and blood trophies share the property of unrepeatability; both are unique.⁷² This returns us to the categorical definition of *spolia*, a definition that grows ever more elusive as the field continues to expand.

Notes

- 1 Kinney, "Spolia," pp. 121–122.
- 2 "Chronicon Hugonis monachi virdunensis et divionensis abbatis flaviniacensis," in Pertz, ed., *Monumenta*, pp. 351–352; Schlosser, *Schriftquellen*, p. 248.
- 3 Lehmann-Brockhaus, *Lateinische Schriftquellen*, pp. 410–411.
- 4 Dutton, trans., *Charlemagne's Courtier*, p. 32; Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, pp. 90–91; Warner, trans., *Ottonian Germany*, p. 104.
- 5 Garton, trans., *Metrical Life*, pp. 54–57.
- 6 (On the sumptuous arts, see Chapter 27 by Buettner in this volume [ed.])
- 7 Wentzel, "Mittelalterliche Gemmen," p. 49.
- 8 Riddle, *Marbode of Rennes*; Wickoff, trans., *Albertus Magnus*, pp. 65, 128, 131.
- 9 Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, pp. 56–67, 72–73, 76–79, 102–109.
- 10 (On patronage, see Chapter 12 by Caskey in this volume [ed.])
- 11 Wright, "Antiquarian Excavations," p. 447; Snijder, "Antique and Medieval," p. 17.
- 12 L'Orange, *Spätantike Bildschmuck*, pp. 161–191.
- 13 Deichmann, "Säule und Ordnung."
- 14 Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné*, Vol. 3, pp. 491–496; Vol. 6, p. 317.
- 15 Jantzen, *Ottonische Kunst*, pp. 17–18, 23–27.
- 16 Bandmann, *Mittelalterliche Architektur*, p. 145.
- 17 Götz, "Magdeburger Domchor."
- 18 http://www.sas.ac.uk/warburg/institute/institute_introduction.htm (consulted August 2004, no longer available in 2018).
- 19 Heckscher, "Relics of Pagan Antiquity," pp. 220, 217.
- 20 Adhémar, *Influences antiques*.
- 21 Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, pp. 15–26.
- 22 Wentzel, "Mittelalterliche Gemmen," p. 46, n. 1 *bis*, p. 49.
- 23 Hamann-MacLean, "Antikenstudium," pp. 161–173.
- 24 Taralon, "La Nouvelle Présentation," pp. 123–124; Taralon and Taralon-Carlini, "La Majesté d'or"; Hoster, "Wiener Ptolemäerkameo."
- 25 Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences*, pp. 84, 88.
- 26 Lassalle, *L'Influence antique*, pp. 13–16.

- 27 Brenk, "Sugers Spolien."
- 28 Poeschke, "Einleitung," in *Antike Spolien*, p. 9.
- 29 Settis, "Continuità," pp. 421–422.
- 30 *Ibid.*, pp. 478–480.
- 31 Greenhalgh, *Survival*, p. 7.
- 32 (On treasuries, see Chapter 13 by Mariaux in this volume [ed.] .)
- 33 Westermann-Angerhausen, "Spolie und Umfeld"; Stamm-Saurma, "Die 'auctoritas' des Zitates."
- 34 Harris, "Muslim Ivories"; Shalem, *Islam Christianized*.
- 35 Krug, "Antike Gemmen," p. 167. (On collecting, see Chapter 13 by Mariaux in this volume [ed.] .)
- 36 Zwierlein-Diehl, "*Interpretatio christiana*," p. 70.
- 37 (On reception, see Chapter 5 by Caviness in this volume (ed.) .)
- 38 Beech, "The Eleanor of Aquitaine Vase"; Clark, "Defining National Historical Memory."
- 39 Forsyth, "Art with History," p. 153.
- 40 Stocker and Everson, "Rubbish Recycled."
- 41 Eaton, *Plundering the Past*, p. 135.
- 42 De Lachenal, *Spolia*, pp. 7, 152.
- 43 Poeschke, "Einleitung," in *Antike Spolien*, pp. 7–9.
- 44 *Ideologie e pratiche del reimpiego nell'alto medioevo. 16–21 aprile 1998* (Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo, 46) (Spoleto, 1999), 2 vols.
- 45 Eco, "Riflessioni."
- 46 Cutler, "Reuse or Use?"
- 47 Jülich, "Sakrale Gegenstände," pp. 254–256.
- 48 Wibiral, "*Augustus patrem figurat*," pp. 105–106, 119–120.
- 49 Buc, "Conversion of Objects," pp. 110, 138, 123–127.
- 50 Raff, *Sprache der Materialien*, pp. 9, 72–74.
- 51 Esch, "Reimpiego"; the same in Esch, *Wiederverwendung*, and Esch, "On the Reuse of Antiquity"; Karge, "Magdeburg," p. 229.
- 52 Greenhalgh, *Marble Past*, DVD; Greenhalgh, "*Spolia*," pp. 78–79; Greenhalgh, *Constantinople to Córdoba*, pp. 284–290.
- 53 Clemens, *Tempore Romanorum*, p. 205; Araguas, "*Spolia/Contrefaçón*," p. 348.
- 54 Liverani, "Reimpiego," pp. 386–388; Esch, *Wiederverwendung*, p. 27; Karge, "Magdeburg," pp. 230–231; Liverani, "Reading *Spolia*," pp. 41–44.
- 55 Esch, "Reimpiego," pp. 105–106, and *Wiederverwendung*, p. 52; Müller, "Spolien."
- 56 Esch, "Reimpiego," pp. 92–97, and *Wiederverwendung*, pp. 12–13; Kinney, "Hans-Peter L'Orange," pp. 118–122; Boschung and Wittekind, *Persistenz und Rezeption*, pp. 8–9.
- 57 Liverani, "Reimpiego," pp. 407–411, and "Reading *Spolia*," pp. 35–37.
- 58 Sande, "The Arch," p. 288.
- 59 Binding, *Vom dreifachen Wert der Säule* and *Antike Säule als Spolien*, esp. pp. 38–43. See also Bosman, "Spolien"; Kinney, "The Discourse of Columns."
- 60 Meckseper, "Magdeburg"; Clark, "Context," pp. 169–170; Karge, "Magdeburg," pp. 231–236; Garrison, *Ottonian Imperial Art*, pp. 26–28.
- 61 Albrecht, *Die Inszenierung der Vergangenheit*, pp. 10–16, 265–269.
- 62 Brown, "As Excrement to Sacrament."
- 63 Clemens, *Tempore Romanorum*, pp. 295–316.

- 64 Head, "Art and Artifice," pp. 76–77; Fricke, *Fallen Idols*, pp. 249–254; also Toussaint, "Translozierte Aura?" p. 655.
- 65 Westermann-Angerhausen, "Das Gedächtnis der Gegenstände," p. 223, and "Spolia as Relics?" p. 187; see also Reudenbach, review.
- 66 Shalem, "Hybride und Assemblagen."
- 67 For a different view of the same object see Toussaint, "Cosmopolitan Claims."
- 68 Zwierlein-Diehl, *Antike Gemmen*, pp. 249–264, and "Antike Gemmen"; Fricke, *Fallen Idols*, pp. 249–254, 266.
- 69 Kinney, "Interpretatio Christiana"; Labusiak, "Islamische Pracht," pp. 246–247; Wittekind, "Die mittelalterliche Verwendung"; Westermann-Angerhausen, "Das Gedächtnis der Gegenstände," pp. 222–224; Toussaint, "Translozierte Aura?" p. 657; Westermann-Angerhausen, "Spolia as Relics?" p. 182.
- 70 Kinney, "Ancient Gems," pp. 115–117; Westermann-Angerhausen, "Das Gedächtnis der Gegenstände," p. 225; Garrison, *Ottoman Imperial Art*, pp. 91–111; Toussaint, "Translozierte Aura?" p. 657; Westermann-Angerhausen, "Spolia as Relics?" pp. 174, 180, 187.
- 71 Cordez, "La chasse des rois mages"; Peroni, "Teste a sé stanti."
- 72 Krug, "Spolien als Trophäen"; for a different approach see Liverani, "Il museo."

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The Monstrous

Thomas E.A. Dale

Since the mid-nineteenth century, the interpretation of the monstrous in Romanesque and Gothic art has been significantly influenced by a single text: St. Bernard of Clairvaux's *Apologia* composed in 1125 for Abbot William of Saint-Thierry. After a broader critique of religious art, Bernard asks:

[I]n the cloisters, before the eyes of the brothers while they read – what is that ridiculous monstrosity doing, an amazing kind of deformed beauty and yet a beautiful deformity? What are the filthy apes doing there? The fierce lions? The monstrous centaurs? The creatures part man part beast? ... You may see many bodies under one head, and conversely many heads on one body. On one side the tail of a serpent is seen on a quadruped, on the other side, the head of a quadruped is on the body of a fish. Over there an animal has a horse for the front half and a goat for the back; here a creature which is horned in front is equine behind. In short, everywhere so plentiful and astonishing a variety of contradictory forms is seen that one would rather read in the marble than in books, and spend the whole day wondering at every single one of them than in meditating on the law of God.¹

Without describing any particular cloister, Bernard evokes beautifully both the diversity of the monstrous and the complex reactions to it. His account highlights three categories that defined the monstrous for Christian writers since the early Middle Ages, including Augustine and Isidore of Seville: animals made monstrous

by the superfluity or absence of parts such as the double-bodied lions joined to a single head; hybrid animals combining different species; and finally, one semi-human hybrid, the centaur. To his representative examples one could add the ubiquitous sirens and the Plinian peoples inhabiting the margins of the known world; indeed, by the fourteenth century, Sir John Mandeville could define the monster quite simply as “a thing deformed against kind, both of man or of beast or of anything else.”²

To broaden our picture of the monstrous it is also necessary to take into account the changing functional contexts of the monstrous. In Romanesque art, monsters are particularly associated with monasticism. Although they are sometimes relegated to the margins – the socle zone of mural painting, the archivolt of doorways, or exterior corbels (modillions) – they are also frequently depicted in more central fields of representation. Thus, a satyr-like creature confronts a goat-headed man within an initial in the early twelfth-century manuscript of Gregory the Great’s *Moralia in Job* now in Dijon (fig. 15-1); and a cloister capital from Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa (c.1140) displays at eye level Bernard’s double-bodied lions (fig. 15-2). In Gothic art, while patronage expands to encompass public and private works for lay elites, there is also a significant displacement of monsters to the margins. Monsters that inhabited historiated initials in Romanesque texts are banished to the margins of Gothic manuscripts such as the Luttrell Psalter (fig. 15-3). Here we also see a greater playfulness: a human-headed hybrid wearing an inverted kettle is combined with a metallic blue body and the webbed feet of an aquatic bird.

As to the meaning and function of the monstrous, Bernard is ambivalent. He is clearly attracted to the sculptures that he criticizes: not only does he accurately describe the creatures that appear in cloisters (fig. 15-2); he also responds with wonder (*mira, mirando*) to the paradoxical “beautiful deformity” of monsters.³ Bernard’s ambivalence stems from the fact that even though monsters in stone potentially distracted monks from reading or meditation, they could also be meaningful. The term *monstrum* in medieval Latin refers to that which *demonstrates* or points to something else, and it is the contradictory form of the monster that makes it a particularly effective sign.⁴ By the twelfth century, monstrosity was so integral to metaphorical thinking that Bernard could describe himself as a “chimera” of his time in reflecting on his own hybrid social status as contemplative monk and worldly diplomat.⁵

Modern scholarly opinion has been divided between those who insist on the essentially decorative role of monsters and those who invest them with meaning, and further between those for whom the monstrous is integral to the dominant religious culture and those who see it as manifesting popular dissent. This chapter begins with an assessment of Bernard’s impact on nineteenth- and twentieth-century historiography as a voice against meaning. It then traces the changing interpretation of the monstrous on a thematic basis. Finally, it concludes with a case study which responds to Bernard’s question concerning the purpose of monsters in monastic art.

us bella. mag-
 icit. mira uir-
 ipso intus
 ñ quert. inli-
 t qe phoc qd
 interu intu-
 sinoculis meis;
 spiciens exhi-
 uid g accuri
 ex carne sua
 usq; gaudia
 met ipso cerui-
 ce depmebat
 uet. Bene g
 ri. & ñ audelit
 sapientes. Con-
 it. qui sibi sa-
 luce longe fe-
 et ñ sunt. qe
 refert. arcem
 se lucere ex
 ueritatis pri-
 atq; ipsa sapi-
 tot nos humilit
 entia. disca
 ippe scriptu e
 nclat sapientes;
 uos sapiens
 piens; hinc
 qe zacheus
 oaz arborem
 neret; Sicom-
 llus itaq; za-
 te. qe qmundi

p... & ñ necu ut e. ioude. itam p
 conceplationis lum. di sapientia qsi intran-
 situ uidet; Quã uerba heliu uerba uidere
 nequeunt q sibi sapientes eẽ uident. quia
 Ad conspiciendũ dñm in elata cogitacionũ
 suarũ turba dephensi. adhuc sicomoz ar-
 bore ñ inuenerunt;

EXPE LIB · XXVII;
INCIPI LIB · XXVIII;



PARS
 VLTIMA;

OST

DAPNA

RERVM? POST FVIERA NOTIOZ?
 post uulnera corporis? post uer-
 ba male suadentis uxoris? post
 contumeliosa dicta consolati-
 tum? post suscepta fortẽ ia-
 cula tot doloz? detanta uir-
 tute constantie laudandus
 auidice beate iob fuerat. sed
 si ia depõenta seto eẽt euocan-
 dus; At post quã hic adhuc
 duplicita recepturus e. post-
 quã saluti pristinae restituitur.

FIGURE 15-1 Historiated Initial P, *Moralia in Job* made at Cîteaux. Dijon, Bibl. mun. MS 173, fol. 103v. Source: photo courtesy of Bibliothèque Municipale, Dijon.



FIGURE 15-2 Capital with double-bodied lions threatening men from the Cloister of Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, 25.120.582. Source: photo courtesy of the author.

Saint Bernard and the Critique of the Monstrous

As Schapiro and others have observed, the paradox of Bernard's text is that he so powerfully articulates the essence of the monstrous forms that he condemns.⁶ It has also been noted that, elsewhere in the *Apologia*, Bernard does support art that is addressed to the laity.⁷ Since the nineteenth century, however, Bernard's *Apologia* has consistently been cited in favor of the assumption that monsters served no religious purpose but represented the fantasy of artists. As Rudolph has shown, the earliest scholarship on Bernard's *Apologia*, dating back as far as Mabillon's 1690 introduction to the text, explained the critique of religious art as a reaction against the dangers of visual curiosity and distraction.⁸ This notion was repeated by other French commentators in the mid-nineteenth century, but it was Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc who recast Bernard's text as an attack on monstrous images that were irrational and meaningless. Viollet-le-Duc understood Bernard to be attacking the "most strangely sculpted images" in Cluniac monasteries because they were "contrary to the Christian spirit."⁹ He argued that it was largely due to Bernard's protests that the iconography of sculpture in Gothic



FIGURE 15-3 *Babewyns* in the Luttrell Psalter. London, British Library Add. MS 42130 fol. 182v. Source: photo by permission of The British Library.

cathedrals was “controlled under the supreme authority of bishops.” Banished from cathedral interiors, monsters appear primarily in exterior sculpture such as gargoyles (fig. 15-4), and these he attributed to the enduring popular taste for ancient monsters kept alive by lay artists.¹⁰ As Michael Camille has documented, the architect was also significantly influenced by the romantic literary imagination of Victor Hugo and others when he directed the remaking of monstrous gargoyles as part of the restoration of Notre-Dame in Paris from 1843 to 1864.¹¹

Viollet-le-Duc made a number of questionable, but subsequently influential, arguments. He assumed that Bernard condemned monsters because they represented superstitious belief and had no meaning. As Rudolph has shown, however, Bernard’s primary complaint is that monstrous images will distract the monk from his reading and meditation.¹² The association of Romanesque monsters exclusively with the Cluniacs is also misleading, since Bernard was clearly disturbed by the monsters that appeared in earlier Cistercian art itself under Stephen Harding – most notably in the Dijon *Moralia in Job* (fig. 15-1).¹³ Viollet-le-Duc also drew an untenable distinction between the “superstitious” use of monsters in Romanesque art and the rationalism of Gothic art, ignoring the extensive display of monsters in cathedrals themselves. As Camille has noted, the architect recast the monstrous creatures, which had been associated by medieval viewers with diabolical fantasies, as signs of order and restoration, preserving and protecting the building by expelling water and staving off decay.¹⁴

Émile Mâle, the leading figure of a second generation of French medievalists, had a more nuanced view of the monstrous in Romanesque and Gothic art. Amplifying the method of Adolphe-Napoléon Didron, the important early

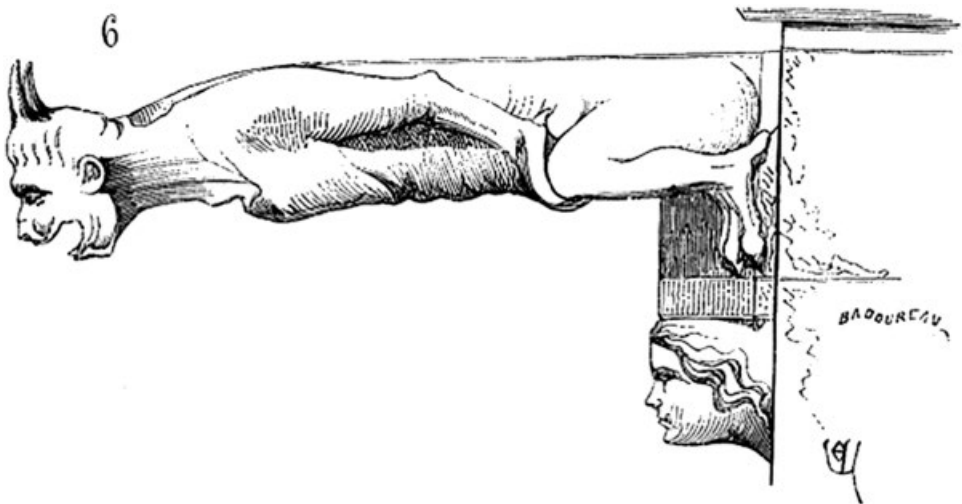


FIGURE 15-4 Gargoyle from Sainte Chapelle, Paris. Source: engraving, Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française*, Vol. VI (Paris, 1866), fig. 6.

developer of systematic iconography, Mâle affirmed that most images in medieval art could be explained by religious texts.¹⁵ In his volume on Romanesque art, he interpreted animals both domestic and fantastic on the basis of the moralizations in the bestiary. When it came to more inventive hybrids, however, he cited Bernard's *Apologia* as evidence that "hybrid monsters on capitals had no meaning."¹⁶ In his book on Gothic art, Mâle further argued that "grotesques" in gargoyles, misericords, and marginalia in thirteenth-century manuscripts were "of essentially popular origin."¹⁷ He connected the more humorous inventions with the creativity of competitive, young sculptors. His emphasis on artistic license is common to a broader current of late nineteenth-century French scholarship that saw in medieval monsters the origins of the contemporaneous art of caricature. Champfleury, for example, had evoked Bernard's name in 1872 as proof that monstrous gargoyles were nothing more than "useless caprices" of sculptors.¹⁸

Here we see the kernel of an idea that was later articulated in its most influential form by Meyer Schapiro. In his 1947 essay "On the Aesthetic Attitude in Romanesque Art," Schapiro argued that Bernard was particularly disturbed by monstrous images because they were the product of a profane, "thoroughly unreligious" imagination.¹⁹ Schapiro assumed that cloister capitals were carved by lay artists who had free reign to express themselves in one of the most sacred spaces of the monastery. He further argued that the monstrous combat scenes found in Cistercian manuscripts such as the Dijon *Moralia in Job* (fig. 15-1) were "entirely independent of the accompanying text" and "astoundingly modern in their freedom of conception."

Schapiro applied the same theory to Gothic marginalia.²⁰ Contrary to Mâle's notion of medieval art being governed by order and piety, Schapiro described the margins as "open to primitive impulses and feelings"; he also stressed again that marginalia manifested the "artist's liberty, his unconstrained possession of space." Schapiro's insistence on the freedom and "modernity" of medieval artists clearly reflects his engagement with the art of his own time.²¹ His flirtation with Marxist ideology also led him to see the artist in opposition to the church hierarchy; he thus downplayed the particular historical and religious contexts in which the images were used. Ignoring Bernard's careful distinctions between monastic and lay viewers, Schapiro ultimately cast monsters both in the monastic cloister and in books for the laity as products of the same profane imagination.

Ornament and Formalism

A second response that downplays meaning in the monstrous focuses on ornament. Émile Mâle assimilated the most common, heraldically posed beasts and monsters in Romanesque art to a vast ornamental repertory, ranging from ancient Mesopotamian and Sasanian art to more recent Byzantine textiles, which made their way to France as objects of gift exchange, as imported ornament for liturgical

vestments, or as wrappings for relics.²² The German scholar Richard Bernheimer arrived at similar conclusions, evoking again Bernard of Clairvaux's critique.²³ Paralleling Riegl's universalizing theories of ornament, Bernheimer argued that monsters in Romanesque sculpture had their origins in Near Eastern art and that the distant cultures were related not so much by shared religious meaning but by the "will to form" (*Formwille*) of the artist.

A more systematic theory of the formal development of the monstrous in Romanesque and Gothic art was forged during the 1930s by Jurgis Baltrušaitis, a pupil of Henri Focillon. In his first book on the topic, Baltrušaitis argued that Romanesque sculpture entails a dialectic between geometry and nature and that organic forms are distorted or deformed to conform to the surrounding frame and an inner "ornamental" logic.²⁴ He suggested that Romanesque artists either created monsters by combining elements of known species or by transforming an ordinary creature to conform to the internal rhythms of an ornamental vine scroll or the natural geometry of a capital. The impulse toward symmetrical compositions could lead further to the creation of double-bodied creatures joined to a single head, such as those described by Saint Bernard (fig. 15-2). In a second work focused on Gothic art, Baltrušaitis documented the debt of medieval artists to ancient Greek, Roman, and Mesopotamian sources as well as Chinese and Japanese motifs. Most convincing are the parallels between the fantastic hybrids found on ancient intaglios and their counterparts in Gothic marginalia known as *grylli*.²⁵ These creatures, which are particularly common in the margins of late thirteenth- and fourteenth-century English, French, and Flemish manuscripts, substitute an enlarged head for a body combined with other heads and features of different species (figs. 15-3, 15-4). Baltrušaitis contended that such borrowings would have been facilitated during the thirteenth century by the growing appreciation for ancient intaglios and their magical properties.

Baltrušaitis's teacher, Henri Focillon, incorporated the monstrous into a more influential, formalist definition of Romanesque art as ornament or decoration. Focillon argued that Romanesque monsters in which the body or head are doubled coincide with the "ornamental dialectic" between the organic and the logic of the geometric frame. The frame, in turn, constrains the monstrous and "assures the intertwining and interpretation of the parts so well that each ornamental block ... is like a little enclosed world ... which carries within it its own law."²⁶ This dialectic play between the monstrous and the frame, he suggested, paralleled the structure of scholastic thought.

No one since Baltrušaitis and Focillon has traced so thoroughly the formal development of the monstrous. It would seem that the moment of formalist analysis of the monstrous had passed in the second half of the twentieth century, when contemporary art itself expanded beyond "decoration" and abstraction to embrace the figural subject again. More recent scholarship, questioning the search for sources as far afield as the ancient Near East and China, has emphasized the influence of indigenous, pre-Christian Celtic, Scandinavian, and Germanic traditions.²⁷

Monstrous Iconography

Writing around the middle of the nineteenth century, the Abbé Charles Auber was among the first commentators to propose an iconography of the monstrous. Auber contended that Bernard disparaged monsters in the cloister only because they constituted an unnecessary expense.²⁸ At the same time, he showed that Bernard was aware of the significance of monsters when he deployed them as metaphors for heretics or associated them with demonic powers.²⁹ On this basis, Auber suggested that the hybrids Bernard described in cloister capitals should be understood as images of heretics.³⁰ In gargoyles (fig. 15-4) Auber found a perfect synthesis of practical and metaphorical function: monsters are placed outside the church, because they represent the expulsion of demons or the possessed from the sanctuary.³¹ Their monstrous forms and their grimaces represent their evil natures and the convulsions they suffer when exorcized from the church. Anticipating recent explanations of gargoyles as reflections of “popular culture” Auber suggested that their monstrous forms might have been inspired by the fantastic serpents and dragons carried in urban festivals to celebrate the triumph of Christianity over paganism.³²

While Auber provides a useful framework for understanding the monstrous, his interpretations lack the specificity required by Mâle’s iconographic method. Although Mâle dismissed Gothic gargoyles and marginalia as artistic fantasy, he did interpret those monsters mentioned in biblical or bestiary texts and in the great thirteenth-century encyclopedias as negative moral signs or vices.³³ His method was also adapted by German-language scholarship in the mid-twentieth century. Herbert Schade, like Mâle, drew largely upon biblical exegesis to suggest that monsters were susceptible to the fourfold interpretation of scriptural texts in terms of historical (literal), allegorical, tropological, and anagogical meanings.³⁴ He also emphasized the connection between monsters and demons.

More recent iconographical studies have expanded the range of textual sources. Lilian Randall’s seminal essays on marginalia in Gothic manuscripts consider monsters as one of many types of marginal motifs which draw not only on the bestiary and monster literature such as the *Marvels of the East* but also *fabliaux* and *exempla* designed to embellish sermons.³⁵ Randall accepts Schapiro’s notion that Bernard’s critique of monsters in the monastery stemmed from their association with “profane imagination,” but she goes on to show how themes from ostensibly secular literature came to be incorporated into ecclesiastical art under the influence of *exempla* from sermon literature. Randall attributes the inclusion of such motifs in the margins of religious and secular texts to the increasing lay audience for books drawn from an emerging upper middle class in Northern Europe.

While iconography is still a necessary first step in decoding conventional monsters, the more inventive creations such as the marginalia of the Luttrell Psalter (fig. 15-3) defy easy classification. Furthermore, as Leclercq-Marx has shown, in

the rare instances in which inscriptions are included, the text is often at odds with the image and serves, at best, to identify a general category of monster.³⁶ The indeterminacy of much monstrous iconography has led Michael Camille to posit an “anti-iconography” based on Walter Ong’s theories of orality.³⁷ Focusing on the ravenous beasts in the Romanesque trumeau of Souillac, Camille proposed a host of oral associations for the monk, ranging from the monastic discipline of *ruminatio* to vices such as oral gratification of both sexual and culinary appetites, and the monk’s anxieties over being devoured by wild animals in this world or fantastic monsters in hell. The advantage of Camille’s approach is that it recognizes the potential polyvalence of unconventional monsters.

Another “anti-iconography” is proposed by David Williams. Instead of assuming that monsters are negative moral signs, Williams proposes that they are paradoxical signs alluding to the invisible God.³⁸ Citing the negative or apophatic theology of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, as translated for the Latin West by John Scottus Eriugena, Williams argues that hybrid monsters reveal the unknowable God by showing that which He is not. It is the negation of form, order, hierarchy, and reason itself that also causes the monstrous to elicit the derision of churchmen such as Bernard.³⁹ Although Williams has been criticized for exaggerating the impact of the Pseudo-Dionysius, his approach is echoed in a number of recent essays. Robert Mills, for example, has suggested that three-headed images of the Christian Trinity cast Christ as hybrid “monster.”⁴⁰ Beyond representing literally the three persons in one, such images, he suggests, furnished palpable metaphors for the paradoxical admixture of diverse natures in Christ’s body.

Psychology and the Apotropaic

Long before Sigmund Freud had published his theories of psychoanalysis, French scholars saw a general psychological basis for representations of monsters. As early as 1884, Elphège Vacandard embraced A. Joly’s view that the monsters in the historiated initials of the Cîteaux *Moralia in Job* (fig. 15-2) presented “a startling image of the deepest side of our nature, of our brutality, violence.”⁴¹ Since the early twentieth century, Freudian psychology has played a pre-eminent role in trying to understand the function of monsters as a kind of cathartic expression of the inner workings of the artist’s unconscious mind. Meyer Schapiro was among the first art historians to apply this approach to monsters in Romanesque and Gothic art. In an essay on the sculpture of Souillac, he described the monstrous combats of the trumeau as manifesting a collective respect for, and fear of, violence in feudal society which was “sublimated in mythical themes of divine protection.” Schapiro similarly affirmed that Bernard’s monstrous cloister capitals manifested “a world of projected emotions, psychologically significant images of force, play, aggressiveness, anxiety, self-torment and fear ...”⁴²

While Schapiro focused on aggression and violence, two scholars of the Vienna School, Ernst Kris and Sir Ernst Gombrich, analyzed the monstrous in relation

to caricature and the comic. Following Freud's theory of laughter, Kris viewed the comic as a mechanism for coping with anxiety. The satyrs, goat demons, cock dancers, and comic devils in medieval art and literature thus revealed for him "another more sinister shape once feared and dreaded." He also argued that grinning Gothic gargoyles (fig. 15-4) simultaneously turned away evil with laughter and terrified the spectator.⁴³

Ernst Gombrich focused on the recuperative aspect of monsters in a larger study of ornament. Gombrich called the margins "zones of license" and he contended that the majority of monsters should be seen as "creations in their own right" and the "dream work" of the artist. Like Schapiro, he understood the monsters described by Bernard as a tool for mastering instinctual urges by "giving them an outlet of an acceptable shape."⁴⁴ But he also emphasized a certain ambivalence which upsets our sense of order: understood as real monsters, the images inspire fear of the unknown and demonic, but seen as playful inventions, they elicit laughter. Ultimately, he answered Bernard's question regarding the purpose of monsters in the cloister by recalling a more universal, apotropaic function.

Gombrich's apotropaic theory is echoed in much recent scholarship. Peter Dinzelbacher argues that demonic and monstrous creatures were "imprisoned in stone" to assure the faithful that evil powers would be vanquished by the church.⁴⁵ He also cites concrete evidence for associating gargoyles (fig. 15-4) with exorcism: a German "Hexenbuchlein" (c.1500) records that gargoyles, like magical spells, turn away witches, cats, wolves, and other malevolent creatures. In a broad-ranging study, which considers monstrous hybrids together with disembodied heads or masks, animals, entertainers and scatological imagery, Ruth Mellinkoff likewise argues that the entire range of "grotesques" and "drolleries" served as talismans.⁴⁶ By variously evoking laughter or fear, confusion or distraction, monsters both represent demons and avert their attacks.

More specific interpretations are proffered for monstrous images accompanied by texts. For Elizabeth Valdez del Álamo, a capital in the Silos cloister depicting birds attacking harpies and lion's masks dramatizes the prayer inscribed on its abacus: text and image evoke Santo Domingo's power to protect the faithful from harm.⁴⁷ Focusing on monastic spirituality, Conrad Rudolph has shown how monsters in the Cîteaux *Moralia in Job* relate to the monk's own interior "spiritual struggle" outlined in Gregory the Great's commentary.⁴⁸ Rudolph interprets semi-hominal hybrids as warning the monks of their potentially irrational or "bestial" behavior. This descent to the bestial is illustrated in the initial heading Book 28 (fig. 15-1): at the base of the initial a naked man appears on all fours, ridden like a beast of burden, and higher up, the human body is transformed into semi-hominal hybrids including a bull-headed satyr attacking a goat-headed man. Although not all of the hybrid initials can convincingly be related to adjacent texts, Rudolph's method of psychological interpretation is constructive, because it sets the images concretely within the monastic milieu in which they were used.

Popular Culture

While the images in the Cîteaux *Moralia* can be linked directly to the text's commentary on monastic life, it is often argued that inventive marginalia in Gothic manuscripts such as the Luttrell Psalter (fig. 15-3) were addressed primarily to the laity. An alternative to dismissing marginalia as the product of artistic fantasy has gained currency in the past 20 years under the banner of popular culture. The most influential exponent of this approach, the Russian literary scholar, Mikhail Bakhtin, saw the carnivalesque and laughter as keys to understanding popular culture as a ritualized release from the official controls of social, sexual, and religious behavior. According to Bakhtin, medieval popular or "folk" culture is manifested in three distinct forms: ritual spectacles such as the Feast of Fools or carnival before Lent; comic verbal compositions, including both oral and written parodies of sacred texts; and various genres of Billingsgate-type curses, oaths, and popular blazons.⁴⁹ Furthermore, like all forms of "grotesque realism," the "people's laughter," he argued, was a debasement of the higher, literally bringing it down to earth and the "bodily lower stratum." It was also simultaneously recuperative or reproductive.⁵⁰

Bakhtin's work came to the forefront of medieval studies after the appearance of the first English translation in 1968. Yet, it must be noted that many of his sources, including the *fabliaux*, mystery plays, and medieval festivals, had already been used selectively by literary historians as early as the late eighteenth century. Karl Floegel's *Geschichte des grotesk-komischen* (1788) held that the "grotesque-comedy" manifested in medieval mystery plays, and secular guild and religious festivals such as the Feast of Fools, met an essential human need shared with other cultures throughout human history to "let off steam" and protest authority. Floegel's theory was extended to the visual arts in 1865 by Thomas Wright's history of caricature and the grotesque.⁵¹ Wright argued that English caricature in his own day was rooted in medieval drolleries of illuminated manuscripts (fig. 15-3) and entertainments like the mystery plays; both visual images and performances parodied official clerical culture.

Michael Camille was the most influential exponent of popular culture's role in medieval art. In his 1992 survey of marginalia, Camille drew upon anthropological theory to define the margins as a "liminal" zone bridging the sacred and the profane, high and low, textual and oral; he further explored how popular culture both critiques and sustains the elite and sacred culture it frames.⁵² Amplifying Leslie Bridaham's discussion of gargoyles in relationship to "popular" festivals such as the Feast of the Fools, Camille interpreted monsters in Gothic sculpture as depicting an "inverted order" of the clergy's hierarchically structured lives.⁵³ He affirmed that the exterior of a church, like the margins of a page, allowed for a certain amount of free play because it lay at the intersection of sacred and secular space in the city.

In his monograph on the Luttrell Psalter, Camille appealed again to Bakhtin's notion of popular culture providing an officially sanctioned space for social

criticism, parody, and protest.⁵⁴ He connected the hybrid *babewyns*, such as those on the margins of fol. 182v (fig. 15-3), with folk plays performed by peasants from Lincolnshire, where the psalter was made. Their theatrical metamorphosis from one species to another was also understood as alluding to the inversion of social roles. The monsters' large open mouths and orifices might parody the mouths of the readers reciting psalms, but their prominent display of bottom parts of animals could also evoke the regenerative function of Bakhtin's "lower bodily stratum." The human-headed monster at the base of 182v (fig. 15-3) illustrates this quite literally in that a great leaf sprouts like a tail from his behind. Echoing Aron Gurevich's critique of Bakhtin,⁵⁵ Camille saw no contradiction in the representation of "low" or "folk" culture images in the pages of an "elite" knight's psalter because the knight was inextricably linked to the land and the people he controlled. In the end, Camille understood the *babewyns* of the Luttrell Psalter as an unofficial discourse appropriated by official culture for its own ends, manipulated and "kept in place" by logocentric culture.

Katrin Kröll has recently revived Kris's approach to the monstrous as a manifestation of the comic mode.⁵⁶ She argues that Bernard was principally concerned that the simultaneously ugly and comic aspects of monsters in the cloister would stimulate the monk in ways that would hinder his spiritual meditations. At the same time, she argues that church authorities generally considered monstrous images to be acceptable as a "coping mechanism" for the laity within certain boundaries. Monstrous creatures on the margins of sacred images functioned much like the temporary inversions of social order represented within officially sanctioned masking rituals during the Feast of the Fools and mystery plays.

While Kröll and Camille see popular culture as integral to elite culture, both challenging and reinforcing its boundaries, Nurith Kenaan-Kedar argues that the monsters and deformed humans sculpted in Romanesque modillions and Gothic gargoyles were created by lay artists in opposition to official clerical culture.⁵⁷ Because of their functional and supporting roles in the architectural structure, Kenaan-Kedar reasons, modillions and gargoyles naturally encompass "a lower category of art" distinct from the "official" art of facades, portals, and capitals. She also hypothesizes different readings of the sculptures by clerical patrons, lay audiences, and artists: the former would have understood the marginal images as representing the punishment of vice; the artists and lay public, by contrast, would have sympathized with the images of secular society as a form of protest.

Kenaan-Kedar's work prompts us to consider clear distinctions of audience responses to the monstrous, but one wonders if it is really possible that the clergy who commissioned this sculpture would have been oblivious to the "subversive" messages of some of the images. Kröll and Camille's model is more pragmatic: popular culture can hardly be seen in complete isolation from elite culture when the only textual sources describing it come from elite culture, and the images themselves appear within an ecclesiastical framework.

Race, Gender, and Disability

Reflecting the post-modern era's preoccupation with alterity and hybridity, medievalists, since the late 1980s, have increasingly associated the representation of monsters with the denigration of deviant or marginal social groups.⁵⁸ Friedman interprets the depiction of monstrous races on the eastern margins of *mappae-mundi* as a medieval example of Edward Saïd's "orientalism."⁵⁹ Monstrous races were viewed not merely as "wonders" of nature or as moralizations of sinfulness, but also as the means of labelling and distancing disparate social groups and non-Christian religious groups. As such, the monstrous races were more extreme examples of the caricatured bodies that were used more generally to represent non-Christians and heretics within and outside Europe.⁶⁰ As Debra Strickland has shown, it was particularly during the period of the Crusades, when conflicts were escalated between European Christians and foreign non-Christians that Saracens, Mongols, black Africans ("Ethiopians"), Muslims, and Jews alike were quite literally transformed in art into monstrous hybrids, befitting their status as "barbarous," morally debased, and demonic opponents of Christendom.⁶¹ Examining the monstrous closer to home, Rhonda Knight has similarly argued that the thirteenth-century manuscripts of Gerald of Wales's *Topographia Hibernica* cast the Irish as hybrid beasts in need of being civilized by British colonizers and their Welsh surrogates.⁶²

Recent feminist scholarship has affirmed either that women were assimilated to the monstrous or that monstrous images were designed to intimidate them. According to Margaret Miles, medieval clerics cast the female body as quintessentially "grotesque" as a result of Eve's role in the Fall, and her embodiment of sexuality.⁶³ For this reason, John Mandeville included female prodigies in his *Travels*, such as the daughter of Hippocrates, who revealed her monstrous nature by transforming herself into a dragon. Because women were viewed as the cause of lust in men, they were also represented with grotesquely enlarged genitals, as in the case of sheela-na-gigs, or as half-human hybrids such as the siren.

Madeline Caviness argues against what she terms the "masculinist" interpretations of monsters in comical terms.⁶⁴ Focusing on the margins of the Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, Caviness interprets monsters here as sexually charged images that terrorized and controlled the behavior of the female viewer. The constant allusion to masculine sexuality in the form of monsters with phallic tails and weapons, engaged in aggressive combat, would have been sufficiently repulsive to draw the female reader back to the words on the page and her devotions. Against this gender-specific interpretation of monsters, however, Lucy Sandler notes that the same kind of monstrous hybrids in combat appear in the margins of books designed for male patrons.⁶⁵

The canonical association of Plinian monsters of the kind represented in the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the Wonders of the East, and later *The Travels* of John Mandeville with "race" has recently been called into question by Asa Mittman. He points out the relatively recent invention of the term "race," which

he suggests “reifies the culture of the medieval authors and illuminators ... and implicitly, if unintentionally, elevates this group as normative.”⁶⁶ Contrasting the apparent fixity of “races,” Mittman points to the changeability of the monstrous peoples depicted in medieval manuscripts and also to the variable aspects that serve to classify them as monstrous. This point is amplified in the recent study of the Beowulf manuscript containing *The Wonders of the East*, co-authored by Mittman with literary historian Sarah Kim. Here it is argued that the images and textual descriptions of monsters in the Anglo-Saxon manuscript allow one to imagine creatures that are otherwise “ungefraegelicu” or “inconceivable.”⁶⁷ Texts and images are equally ambiguous and unstable, designed to engage the viewer and reader in the ambiguities of monstrosities. They are, the authors suggest, simulacra in the sense described by Baudrillard, in that, despite being artificial, they function *as if* they are real, simulating the qualities of the real. They are thus also in Mittman and Kim’s analysis multivalent, susceptible to a wide array of contemporary approaches, including psychoanalytic, post-colonial, feminist, gender and transgender theory, semiotics, formalism and deconstruction.

A related category of alterity that is only just emerging derives from disability studies. John Block Friedman has recently observed that disability is associated with monstrosity and moral deformity by Saint Augustine, and in the twelfth century, Gerard of Wales speaks of cripples in conjunction with werewolves and other hybrids.⁶⁸ It is not surprising, then, that cripples appear among the monstrous races arranged in compartments around the representation of the Pentecost at Vézelay, but this also suggests that, like the monstrous peoples, the disabled were understood to be capable of redemption.

Vision, Imagination and Memory

Most recent scholarship assumes that monstrous images are not merely text illustrations but also palpably affect the eyes and minds of the beholder. It is only during the past two decades that art historians have seriously explored the ramifications of vision for the representation of the monstrous. Michael Camille suggested that staring *grylli* in the margins of fourteenth-century prayer books such as the Luttrell Psalter (fig. 15-3) both warned against the susceptibility of the eyes to demonic gazes and potentially distracted the reader’s eyes from the sacred, deliberately countering the pious gaze of lay donors depicted in the same manuscripts.⁶⁹ Camille also explained the proliferation of hybrid monsters through the mechanics of vision.⁷⁰ The imagination or *phantasia*, he noted, was understood by scientists of vision such as Albert the Great as a force that could create new images. As an intermediary between the imagination and memory, *phantasia* had the capacity to generate images of a man with two heads or a hybrid with a human body, a lion’s head, and the tail of a horse.

As Mary Carruthers has shown, images of monsters held in memory could also be used to stimulate the process of thought.⁷¹ The fearful monsters so

frequently represented around the margins of Gothic prayer books might serve to generate anxiety as a prelude to meditation.⁷² Yet they were also potentially amusing and could be used in didactic contexts to stimulate productive thinking. As early as the eleventh century, drawings of hybrid monsters appeared alongside verbal descriptions in pedagogical texts known as the *versus rapportati*, which were elementary exercises designed to practice cognitive pattern formation.⁷³ The parts which make up the hybrids provide a visual cue to the “division” of verses into smaller parts which must be recombined in order to make any sense of them. Monstrous exercises thus facilitated the ability to invent or recombine familiar material in new ways.

Sandy Heslop’s essay on the “chimera” capital in the Canterbury Cathedral crypt (c.1100) furnishes a concrete application of comparable theories.⁷⁴ Citing the writings of the patron of the crypt, St. Anselm, Heslop proposes that the sculptor represented the most inventive “chimeras” in a figural capital closest to the altar as an allusion to the creative process and the Divine Creator himself. Anselm had argued that, whereas the Creator conceived of all creatures *ex nihilo* before physically creating them, artists, even when they produced hybrids that never existed, could only combine parts of creatures that already existed in memory. The chimera-hybrid, which had no natural antecedent, was as close as the artist could come to divine invention. This positive view of the imagination, Heslop further argues, was eclipsed in the mid-twelfth century by the authoritative texts of Bernard and others such as John of Salisbury, who saw chimeras either as distractions from spiritual matters, or as the product of dreams, impaired mental or physical health. What Heslop leaves unexplained is the continuing popularity of monsters in monastic art in spite of the protests of Bernard and his adherents.

Beyond Vision: Aesthetics, Senses and Affect

The most recent decade of research on medieval monsters has seen a shift away from an exclusive focus on the visual and the visionary to consider how the aesthetic value of monstrous beings lies in its appeal to multiple senses, reinforcing a powerful affect on the imagination and the emotions. As Asa Mittman has recently argued, monsters gained currency through their *affect* or impact on their audiences.⁷⁵ While vision might seem to be the foremost sense to engage the attention of the viewer of representations of monsters, it has been pointed out that even two-dimensional images in illuminated manuscripts had the power to evoke alternative sensory responses. Lara Farina, for example, focusing on the Blemmya in the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the Wonders of the East, argues that the visual image of the headless creature with a face on its chest offers the “enfolded, feeling skin” – the vellum of the manuscript itself – as a focus for the reader’s haptic engagement.⁷⁶ Other monstrous races, depicted in these manuscripts,

exaggerate different sensory organs, including the ears, the mouth, and the nose. In the case of the Blemmya, however, Farina argues that in emphasizing touch, it is not to be understood simply as the racialized other but also as an image of the reader's self, prompting us "to feel ourselves through the image."

While Farina suggests that a two-dimensional monstrous image could synaesthetically evoke touch and the other senses, it has also been argued that it is in the medium of sculpture that the somatic potential of the monstrous is most vividly realized. Kirk Ambrose, in highlighting the classical language of monsters described by Bernard of Clairvaux and depicted in Romanesque sculpture, suggests that the centaur, for example, though often understood as an image of shame or lust, could also be a vehicle for conveying a "heroic or somatic brand of spirituality."⁷⁷ He further suggests that the physicality of the medium of sculpture was an important aspect of ennobled monsters, drawing inspiration from ancient sculpture.

Shifting focus from the repurposing of antique monsters to the affect produced by viewing the monstrous in the specific setting of the cloister, Mary Carruthers has emphasized the aesthetic value of the striking images listed by Bernard.⁷⁸ Highlighting the concept of *varietas* (variety) in monastic culture, Carruthers argues that the carved monsters were designed to "create particular sensory experiences" and provoke a range of emotional responses including laughter, wonder, surprise, fear, and shock. Rather than embodying a struggle with the devil, the variety of monsters in the cloister are said to produce an immediate and positive *affectio animi* or "affection of the soul" which relieves the weariness and tedium of the monk in the cloister. What is particularly attractive about Carruthers' argument is that it recognizes the strong impact this striking imagery must have had on the monks – the shock value of the range of monsters, roaring beasts, and demons carved in cloister capitals, an impression, I would argue, that was enhanced by the novelty of carving in high relief which had a particular power to stimulate the imagination through multiple senses. Furthermore, instead of dismissing the imagery as unreligious, she firmly grounds the function of the visual images within monastic culture.

A Response to St. Bernard

Although it is now clear that Bernard particularly deplored the visualization of monsters because of their potential to distract the monk, it remains to be understood what purpose monstrous images served for iconophile Benedictine monks. Focusing on the Romanesque cloister of Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa, I propose that the monstrous capitals served both moralizing and cathartic functions.⁷⁹

The Cuxa cloister offers an unusually wide range of the subjects censured by Bernard: double-bodied lions joined to a single head (fig. 15-2), "filthy apes" seated adjacent naked men, semi-human hybrids such as the siren, and monstrous



FIGURE 15-5 Capital with monstrous heads mounted on human arms. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, 25.120.635. Source: photo courtesy of the author.

mouthing devouring human torsos (fig. 15-5). Conventional iconographical analysis helps us interpret individual motifs as negative moral signs: the siren may be identified with lust, the apes with the devil and fallen men, the threatening lions with those of Psalm 55; the monstrous mouths evoke the Hell-mouth and its biblical precursors, Leviathan and Behemoth (Job 41: 14; 40: 15–24), and the mouths of Sheol (Numbers 16: 30–32; Psalm 106: 17). Taking into account the psychoanalytical perspectives of Kris, Gombrich, and Schapiro, it is also possible to see in these grinning monsters an allusion both to monastic anxieties over diabolical interventions, and a certain comic aspect designed to ward off those same fears. This would also be in keeping with Carruthers's recent proposal that the variety of monstrous forms helped fend off boredom. But in order to understand why such negative images would have been represented in cloister sculpture, we need to examine monastic psychology in more concrete terms.

An essential clue to understanding how the monstrous images functioned in the minds of the monks is offered by the juxtaposition of monstrous and human bodies in the Cuxa capitals. In some instances, naked monks squat in the poses of adjacent apes; yet on the same capitals, the center of each face is marked by more athletic figures who stand in erect poses and even attempt to lift their squatting brothers up. In still other examples naked and clothed figures appear threatened by double-bodied monsters (fig. 15-2) or more directly assimilated

to monstrous creatures in the form of hybrids. These images suggest a deeper reality within monastic thought in which the body and its verbal and visual representations functioned as an image of the spiritual, inner man and externalized its conflicts and anxieties. William of Saint Thierry, for example, argued that man was distinguished from beasts principally by the faculty of reason; yet, he could still be influenced by the lower “animal power” of sensations associated with the imagination and thus “put on” a bestial image.⁸⁰ We see William’s notion of “putting on” a bestial image translated quite literally into the capitals juxtaposing naked men with apes and monstrous beasts.

Monsters did more than embody theological ideas, though. By the twelfth century, monastic writers insisted that monstrous phantasms were imprinted in the physical fabric of the memory by diabolical intervention, and thus had the potential to influence adversely one’s behavior. Nightmares and visions manifested the monk’s battles with demonic powers, as graphically illustrated in contemporaneous monastic accounts of dreams such as those found in Peter the Venerable’s *De miraculis*; they also mirrored the vices that he was trying to purge in his ongoing struggle for spiritual perfection.⁸¹ It is not surprising that visual equivalents to the monsters in the imagination are represented in the cloister, for it was here that the monk was tested in his personal, spiritual life as he meditated upon scripture and digested the lessons of such texts as Gregory the Great’s *Moralia in Job*. The visualization of monsters in this text (fig. 15-1), as well as in cloister capitals, exposed the diabolical phantasies of dreams and the imagination so that the monk would be prompted to deal with them and neutralize their power.

Mary Carruthers has suggested a model for this process from memory theory.⁸² She points out that monastic writers such as Saint Anselm and Saint Bernard believed that true conversion to the religious life could be achieved only by first recalling past vices and sins. Since one could never really eradicate sins completely from the memory, it was necessary to seek God’s forgiveness and then change one’s “intention” toward them, transforming them from producers of guilt into agents of conversion. It may be argued that beholding monstrous capitals in the cloister facilitated this process. The monk would have initially been caused to “wonder” over their monstrosity, as Bernard had predicted, but he would also be inspired to contemplate the malevolent spirits which led him to misbehave. Exposed to light, the monks’ inner demons and phantasms might ultimately be neutralized.

Conclusion: A Monstrous Methodology

What this historiographic survey reveals is that monsters are susceptible to, and even require a wide range of, interpretive strategies.⁸³ This is not to say that all approaches are equally valid in all cases, but rather that it is necessary to adapt

method to particular functional, social, and historical contexts. As pictorial signs that admonish or point to absent beings, monsters are ultimately one of the most significant means by which medieval viewers could explore the boundaries between body and soul, the sensual and the spiritual, the sacred and the profane, the human and the animal, as well as the real and the imaginary. More than a distraction, monsters were essential stimuli for thinking.

Notes

- 1 *Apologia ad Guillelmum Abbatem*, ed. and trans. by Rudolph, *The Things of Greater Importance*, pp. 282–283.
- 2 Mandeville, *Travels*, Chapter 7, ed. A. Pollard, p. 31.
- 3 Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, pp. 117–119.
- 4 Friedman, *Monstrous Races*, pp. 108–130.
- 5 Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, pp. 119–120.
- 6 Schapiro, “On the Aesthetic Attitude.”
- 7 See Rudolph, “Bernard of Clairvaux’s *Apologia*.”
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- 9 Viollet-le-Duc, “Cathédrale,” *Dictionnaire raisonné*, (1867), II, pp. 279–292, esp. p. 300.
- 10 *Idem*, “Sculpture,” *Dictionnaire raisonné*, VIII, 96–276, esp. 244–245.
- 11 Camille, *Gargoyles of Notre-Dame*, esp. pp. 30–50, 72–82.
- 12 Rudolph, *The Things of Greater Importance*, pp. 104–124, esp. 120–122.
- 13 *Ibid.*, pp. 1–14, 161–171.
- 14 Camille, *Gargoyles of Notre-Dame*, p. 17.
- 15 See Bober’s introduction to Mâle, *Religious Art in France*, pp. xiii–xx.
- 16 Mâle, *L’Art religieux du XIIe siècle*, pp. 341 ff.
- 17 Mâle, *The Gothic Image*, pp. 58–63.
- 18 Champfleury, *Histoire de la caricature*, pp. 10–11.
- 19 Schapiro, *Romanesque Art*, pp. 1–27, esp. 6–7. [On marginalia, see Chapter 16 by Kendrick in this volume (ed.).]
- 20 Schapiro, “Marginal Images,” pp. 196–198.
- 21 Camille, “How New York Stole the Idea of Romanesque Art.”
- 22 Mâle, *L’Art religieux du XIIe siècle*, pp. 341–351.
- 23 Bernheimer, *Romanische Tierplastik*.
- 24 Baltrušaitis, *La stylistique ornementale*, esp. pp. 95–162 and 273–297.
- 25 Baltrušaitis, *Le Moyen-Age fantastique*.
- 26 Focillon, *L’Art d’Occident*, pp. 104–105.
- 27 E.g. Henderson, *Early Medieval*; Zarnecki, “Germanic Animal Motifs.”
- 28 Auber, *Histoire et théorie*, Vol. 2, pp. 588–605.
- 29 *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 604.
- 30 *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 344–345.
- 31 *Ibid.*, pp. 377, 384.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 259.
- 33 Mâle, *L’Art religieux du XIIe siècle*, pp. 333–334.

- 34 Schade, *Dämonen und Monstren*.
- 35 Randall, *Images in the Margins*.
- 36 Leclercq-Marx "Les Oeuvres romanes."
- 37 Camille, "Mouths and Meanings."
- 38 Williams, *Deformed Discourse*.
- 39 Ibid., p. 77.
- 40 Mills, "Jesus as Monster."
- 41 Vacandard, "Saint Bernard et l'art chrétien"; cited by Rudolph, *Violence and Daily Life*, p. 11.
- 42 Schapiro, "On the Aesthetic Attitude," p. 10.
- 43 Kris, *Psychoanalytic Explorations*, pp. 204–216, esp. 213–214.
- 44 Gombrich, *The Sense of Order*, p. 276.
- 45 Dinzelbacher, "Monster und Dämonen am Kirchenbau," pp. 117–119.
- 46 Mellinkoff, *Averting Demons*, Vol. 1, pp. 41–51.
- 47 Valdez del Álamo, "The Saint's Capital."
- 48 Rudolph, *Violence and Daily Life*.
- 49 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 5.
- 50 Ibid., p. 21.
- 51 Wright, *A History of Caricature*, pp. 200 ff.
- 52 Camille, *Image on the Edge*.
- 53 Ibid., pp. 92–93.
- 54 Camille, *Mirror in the Parchment*, pp. 232–275.
- 55 Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, Chapter 6.
- 56 Kröll, "Die Komik des grotesken Körpers," pp. 11–105.
- 57 Kanaan-Kedar, *Marginal Sculpture*, pp. 1–8; 30, 53–54, 70–73; 134–157.
- 58 Cf. Freedman, "The Medieval Other."
- 59 Freidman, *Monstrous Races*, pp. 64–95.
- 60 See Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*.
- 61 Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, Jews*.
- 62 Knight, "Werewolves, Monsters, and Miracles."
- 63 Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, pp. 145–168.
- 64 Caviness, "Patron or Matron?"
- 65 Sandler, "The Study of Marginal Imagery," p. 33.
- 66 Mittman, "Are the 'Monstrous Races' Races?" esp. p. 36.
- 67 Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts*, esp. pp. 10–15.
- 68 Friedman, "Foreward," esp. pp. xxxvi–xxxix.
- 69 Camille, *Image on the Edge*, pp. 37–42.
- 70 Camille, "Before the Gaze," esp. pp. 212–214.
- 71 Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*.
- 72 Ibid., pp. 164–165.
- 73 Ibid., pp. 140–142; cf. Heslop, "Contemplating Chimera," pp. 153–154.
- 74 Heslop, "Contemplating Chimera."
- 75 Mittman, "The Impact of Monsters and Monster Studies," p. 7.
- 76 Farina, "Wondrous Skins and Tactile Affection."
- 77 Ambrose, *The Marvellous and the Monstrous*, esp. 44.
- 78 Carruthers, "Varietas."
- 79 The following summarizes Dale, "Monsters, Corporeal Deformities and Phantasms."

- 80 *De natura corporis et animae*, ed. PL 180:695–726.
 81 Peter the Venerable, *De miraculis libri duo*.
 82 Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, pp. 272–276.
 83 Varela, “Leer o contemplar,” esp. pp. 358–59; Camille, *Image on the Edge*, p. 9; Dinzelbacher, “Monster und Dämonen am Kirchenbau”; and Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts*, p. 229.

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Making Sense of Marginalized Images in Manuscripts and Religious Architecture

Laura Kendrick

Why should the margins of devotional books ... be loaded with incongruous distortions of natural or fabulous forms of life and why did not the sense of propriety in the possessors of such books revolt at the ill-timed, and even indecent, merriment of the artist? The only answer to be given to this question is that the ornamentation of a manuscript must have been regarded as a work having no connection whatever with the character of the book itself. Its details amused or aroused the admiration of the beholder who ... took no thought whether the text was sacred or profane.¹

It has taken art historical study of the imagery in the margins of Romanesque and Gothic manuscripts, as well as in the figurative margins of religious architecture and furniture, nearly 70 years to get beyond this response to the question so many viewers have asked, as phrased by E.M. Thompson, Keeper of Manuscripts for the British Museum, in his 1896 essay “The Grottesque and the Humorous in Illuminations of the Middle Ages.” A few years later, Louis Maeterlinck opened his own study of satire in Flemish painting by paraphrasing Thompson’s question and answer, and then elaborating on the reasons for this compartmentalization: different zones of the manuscript page were intended for different audiences; the text written in the center was meant for the education of the men in the family, while the extraneous marginal imagery was meant for the entertainment of the women and children.² Such a view may go a long way toward explaining why progress in the analysis of marginal imagery was slow at first: it was considered to be beneath study by men.

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The Battle over the Meaning of Monsters

Today we feel ill at ease reading Emile Mâle's ridicule of Félicie d'Ayzac, one of the earliest women to venture into the nascent field of art history (still called "archeology"), for her "ingenious" efforts to explain as symbols the monstrous hybrids carved in the "marginal" space of religious architecture:

In her *Mémoire sur trente-deux statues symboliques observées dans les parties hautes des tourelles de Saint-Denis*, she made most clever use of texts. The statues of Saint-Denis are hybrid monsters. Mme Félicie d'Ayzac broke them down into their components: lion, goat, billy goat, horse. Then, armed with the mystical dictionary of Saint Eucher or of Rhabanus Maurus, she discovered the allegorical sense of them ...

Mme Félicie d'Ayzac thought she had found a method and created a science of symbolism. In reality, she demonstrated only one thing: never were our ancient artists as subtle as their modern exegetes. How likely is it that they wanted to express so many things, and such refined things, through figures that can be seen from below only with good opera-glasses!³

In this attack published in 1898 in *L'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France* (his doctoral dissertation), Mâle also singled out Charles-Auguste Auber, for his attempt to explain the symbolism of corbels ornamented with animal and human heads on the cathedral of Poitiers and other churches⁴; Charles Cahier, for a volume devoted to *Curiosités mystérieuses* in which he used bestiaries and theological texts to explain "works that are nothing but artists' fantasies"⁵; and Count Bastard d'Estang for falling into the same error in his *Etudes de symbolique chrétienne*.⁶ These men were named along with Félicie d'Ayzac as perpetrators of a "mania for symbols" that threatened to discredit scientific *archéologie*. Mâle charged: "they have turned it into a novel."

Bastard d'Estang's oral report of 1849 to the *Comité historique des arts et monuments* concerning certain plates in Auber's study of Poitiers Cathedral opened the polemic. In this report, he defended Auber for trying to reproduce in engravings the monstrous sculpted figures of the cathedral's corbels, which "antiquarians have treated until now with a disdain these figures surely do not deserve."⁷ Bastard d'Estang argued that these corbel sculptures are analogous to the imagery in the margins of liturgical manuscripts, images which he called *vignettes* and claimed "frequently have an explanation ... drawn from textual passages on the same page as the vignette, often beside or directly opposite the symbol."⁸ Bastard d'Estang called for comparison of corbel figures both with other sculpted figures and with painted figures in the margins of manuscripts from the thirteenth century on. He predicted that such comparative study would prove "on the authority of the Church Fathers and of numerous connections, that caprice alone is not the creator of these peculiar compositions."⁹

To support his view that bizarre marginal imagery can often be explained by the textual context where it appears (a point so novel – and so poorly demonstrated – that it convinced no one), Bastard d'Estang narrated how he resolved the mystery of one monstrous figure in a Breviary of the late thirteenth century (see fig. 16-1)¹⁰:

[I]n the office of Saint Stephen protomartyr, beside the historiated initial that encloses the depiction of his death, the calligrapher has placed, as an ornament in the upper margin, a monster of such a bizarre shape that I was on the point of attributing it to the hand of a delirious illuminator: it is a red beast; its head is cut off, and from its breast emanates a long blue neck terminated by a human head. The figure being new to me, I thought I should turn to the text in order to verify whether, by chance, it was justified; I had the satisfaction of reading, on the same page, the following sentence from a sermon of Saint Fulgentius: *Hodie miles [Stephanus], de tabernaculo corporis exiens, triumphator migravit ad cælum*. Here, then, we have an allegory of Saint Stephen dying and “already seeing the glory of God,” or, what is sometimes called an apotheosis. The peculiarity of the monster helps to call attention to the symbol.¹¹

To Bastard d’Estang, the human head on the very elongated blue neck, which he showed in a drawing,¹² symbolized the migration of the soul to heaven, and he found support for this symbolism in the images at the bottom of the same page. This *bas de page* depicts an archer preparing to shoot at a snail coming out of its shell, which Bastard d’Estang understood, in this instance and others, as “certainly having to do with resurrection.” He went even further to argue, in a footnote, that marginal imagery may serve as a visual commentary by the painter upon the text it borders, and likewise for “marginal” sculpture:

Long experience has convinced us that marginal figures, very often inspired by the reading of the page itself, can serve as commentaries; often the passages relating to the miniatures, if one knows how to find them, reveal in turn the dominant thoughts of the painter at the time he was working. By allowing ourselves to be guided by analogy, we arrive at an explanation of fantastic creatures, which a similar intention has lavished on the corbels of churches. It is not rare, indeed, to encounter equally bizarre and monstrous compositions in liturgical books ... The understanding of a word, the sudden comprehension of a textual or figural analogy, suffice to guide the reader on the path of the sculpted symbol, there where he had thought he saw only a meaningless grotesque.¹³

These allegorizing explanations did not convince (for elongated necks ending in human heads are not uncommon on marginal monsters), and some antiquarians were offended by Bastard d’Estang’s regretful admission that medieval marginal imagery is not always symbolic (emblematic or allegorical) in intention, but that there are also figures “purely burlesque, presenting faults or, if one prefers, qualities of caricature, with the unique aim of provoking laughter.” To Bastard d’Estang, comic marginal imagery was “a symbolic aberration and a scandal in temples as well as in liturgical and prayer books.”¹⁴

It is no wonder that Champfleury, a student of caricature in all its forms, took Bastard d’Estang to task for “excessive, sectarian symbolism” and for his “bizarre analogies,” particularly those involving the snail. Like other antiquarians, Champfleury was convinced of the utility of comparative study of motifs as they appeared across the spectrum of material supports:

This comparison of different monuments is surely rational. The miniatures, drawings, sculpture, pottery, and metalwork of a period are held together by the bonds of ornament. In order to furnish his mind with the favorite forms of a period, the archeologist can never study various arts too much.¹⁵

Champfleury concluded that Bastard d'Estang had demonstrated his good archeological sense in theory, but not in practice, for the results of his explanatory method were ridiculous.

Interdisciplinary studies devoted to the transgeneric history of satire, caricature, and the grotesque flourished in the nineteenth century. In these, scholars such as Thomas Wright, Champfleury (who published the first edition of his history of caricature in 1876), and the Belgian Louis Maeterlinck made abundant use of, and thus called public attention to, "marginal" imagery from the pages of illuminated manuscripts and from the carvings on the capitals, corbels, portals, and misericords of religious buildings.¹⁶ These entertaining surveys treat monstrosity as a type of exaggeration and a mark of ridicule, but they are less interested in the monstrous or fantasized than in Gothic marginal images of a more mundane, everyday sort: entertaining or satirical "genre" scenes. These are presented in the form of drawings of specific details copied from vaguely identified medieval contexts. More scrupulous than the others on this point, Wright identified manuscripts by collection, number, and sometimes name, but never did he give a folio number for the medieval image copied in any engraving.

None of these antiquarian scholars believed there was the slightest connection between the written text on a manuscript page and the marginal imagery surrounding it. Wright, for example, explained that it was "only natural," considering the influence of the medieval minstrels and entertainers on "the people's minds generally, with their stories and satirical pieces, their grimaces, their postures, and their wonderful performances," that "when a painter had to adorn the margin of a book, or the sculptor to decorate the ornamental parts of a building, we might expect the ideas which would first present themselves to him to be those suggested by the juggleur's performance ... The same wit or satire would pervade them both."¹⁷ On the other hand, Maeterlinck's interest in marginal imagery as a reflection of popular traditions had a more tendentious, nationalistic motivation: to demonstrate an original Flemish genius for satire, which led to the great paintings of a Bosch or a Breughel the Elder.

In his review of the state of "archeological" studies in 1898, Mâle criticized both Wright and Champfleury (Maeterlinck came too late) for not paying enough attention to periodization: "All the epochs are mixed together."¹⁸ However, he commended Champfleury for perceiving that much symbolic interpretation was beside the point; not only had Champfleury attacked Bastard d'Estang, but he had openly rejected his own initial error of "revolutionary neosymbolism": "I began these studies [of the history of caricature] with the idea that the stones of cathedrals were speaking witnesses to the state of the people's revolt; I ended it no longer believing in such seditious eloquence."¹⁹ Mâle used Champfleury, in spite

of his shortcomings, to bolster his own judgment that “if ever works were devoid of thought, it was surely these.” For Mâle, all symbolic explanations of monstrous and fantastic marginal imagery were “condemned in advance.”²⁰

To clinch his argument against taking too seriously hybrid monsters and other “purely ornamental” features of Romanesque and Gothic art, Mâle quoted part of St. Bernard’s famous tirade against monstrous sculptures in the cloister – “what are these ridiculous monsters doing here ... what is the meaning of these unclean apes ...?”²¹ Mâle took this highly rhetorical passage at face value and concluded that, if St. Bernard did not understand such sculpture, modern interpreters should not even try, for it was never intended to have any sense:

The great mystic, the interpreter of the *Song of Songs*, the preacher who spoke only in symbols, admits that he does not understand the bizarre creations of the artists of his time ... Such a testimony decides the question. It is obvious that the flora and fauna of the Middle Ages, real or fantastic, usually have only a decorative value.²²

Mâle argued that naturalistic or fantastic flora and fauna are the result of unreflective imitation on the part of artisans “closely supervised when it came to expressing the religious thought of their time,” but “left free to ornament the cathedral just as they pleased.”²³ This ornamentation took the form of copying pleasing forms, either from nature (for plant leaves and the like) or from available visual designs (whether of Oriental textiles or of manuscript pages). In Mâle’s judgment, such images are purely formal solutions to the problem of how to fill space: “Hence so many hybrid monsters, whose supple limbs, easy to fling in every direction, had the merit of occupying all the parts of the field to be filled.”²⁴ By insisting heavily on the meaninglessness and pure formality of this marginal imagery as sheer ornament, Mâle was not only trying to put a stop to what he considered to be a dangerous drift in the new science of iconography, but also to discredit an older antiquarian trend that saw in marginal imagery (in genre scenes, as well as in monstrosity) documentary evidence of mockery of certain aspects of life in the Middle Ages, as well as signs of popular resistance to domination (especially by the Catholic Church, the priesthood, the friars).

Mâle may have felt that his argument was not entirely convincing, for he attempted to nuance and bolster it in his study of twelfth-century religious art, first published in 1922, where he suggested pictorial, literary, or real-life models for numerous motifs of Romanesque sculpture, “the most virile of the arts,” hence the primary focus of his research.²⁵ As sources for images of warriors or jongleurs and acrobats carved on capitals or façades, for example, he posited the real presence of jongleurs entertaining and reciting epics to the crowds in front of churches on the pilgrimage routes. To some monstrous carvings Mâle now allowed a moralizing intention; these he traced to descriptions and images from early bestiaries and writings on natural history and the peoples of the world. Nevertheless, Mâle concluded his chapter on the Romanesque imagery of

“The World and Nature” by reiterating his earlier views, this time backed with photographs and drawings of motifs borrowed from Oriental textiles:

It has become obvious today that the efforts of a whole generation of scholars have been fruitless. They worked in a vacuum, and it was Saint Bernard who was right. Our greater understanding today of Oriental decorative art leaves no doubt as to the truth of this. It is clear that, almost always, the peculiar animals of our Romanesque churches reproduce, more or less freely, the magnificent animals of Oriental textiles. Our sculptors were not always thinking of teaching; most of the time they were thinking only of decorating. This is the point it is important to establish.²⁶

As sheer ornament, the pagan, monstrous imagery of Romanesque and Gothic sculpture merited scholarly attention only to identify its foreign sources and to appreciate its lines or style.

The Return of the Repressed

After Mâle, much scholarly effort was directed toward the discovery of distant sources of decorative motifs and to analysis of the “stylistics” of ornamentation. Questions of artistic intent or meaning were left aside. These new research parameters are evident in the publications of Jurgis Baltrušaitis on monstrous plastic and painted imagery of the Romanesque and Gothic periods.²⁷ Nevertheless, Baltrušaitis took a certain delight in complicating the conventional nineteenth-century narrative of the progress or organic “evolution” toward naturalism of medieval Western art. Using a vast number of drawings and photographs, some reproduced in the margins of his own text in imitation of medieval marginalia, others showing entire manuscript pages rather than mere details, Baltrušaitis demonstrated that ancient stocks of stylized, “fantastic” (meaning fantasized or unnatural) imagery were continually recycled and varied in new schemes, to purely decorative ends, throughout the medieval period. He used words like *réveil* (resurgence, revival), *recrudescence* (upsurge or outbreak), *renaissance* (rebirth), and *libération des refoulements* (liberation from repressions) to describe this phenomenon, which made it seem to have a life – and a psychology – of its own: “the revivals are due, strictly speaking, to an organic evolution. They happen like a liberation from repressions, at the moment when barriers are let down, in an atmosphere of effervescence, immediately after a time of serenity and peace.”²⁸

Baltrušaitis paid lip service to the division of medieval art, whether plastic or painted, into two distinct categories of different value. Statues and figures representing religious doctrine were considered to be of central importance. Ornament or “decor” was considered to be marginal, whatever its spatial position. The case of “decorated” initial letters formed by or enclosing struggling, stylized beasts, birds, plants, and humans in early medieval illuminated Bibles and liturgical manuscripts is instructive. Even though these initial letters were the center of attention

and sometimes took up the greater part of the page, they were treated by most art historians as incidental or marginal, as meaningless ornament, like the monstrous sculptures of cloister capitals. Even when they appeared in a central position on medieval pages or monuments, fantastic images were considered extraneous and evacuated into the “margins” of art historical discourse as sheer decoration. The progress toward greater naturalism from Romanesque to Gothic art and beyond depends partly on these categorizations conventional to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art historical discourse.

The Gothic tendency to develop fantastic imagery in the margins of the page, rather than in major initials (as in earlier periods), was interpreted as conducive to greater naturalism in manuscript art. Baltrušaitis explained this, for example, in the opening of his chapter on the revival of the fantastic in the decor of the book:

A double development, determining the two independent and stylistically opposed aspects of architectural sculpture – its statuary and its decor, strictly speaking – also dominates the evolution of painting in manuscripts, where we see, on the one hand, illustration (the miniature) withdrawing progressively to its domain of story-telling in lifelike forms, and on the other hand, ornamentation (illumination) discovering nearby, in the borders of the page, a space of escape to the limitless distance of the impossible.²⁹

Yet Baltrušaitis was much more interested in the margins than in the center, and he chose to describe this displacement of fantastic imagery as an escape rather than an exclusion. Drawing support from a 1941 review by Francis Wormald, Baltrušaitis remarked that the creatures which appear in the margins of the manuscript page beginning in the mid-thirteenth century are not a sudden creation, but a “freeing,” a “liberation” of the fantastic living forms that had earlier been “imprisoned” in initial letters.³⁰ In effect, Baltrušaitis’s choice of the psychoanalytic concept of a lifting of repression to account for the multiple revivals and revisions of fantastic imagery (whose origins he identified in Hellenic, Saracen, and Far Eastern ornament) may reveal his own implicit project: to break out of the ideological parameters defined by turn-of-the-century art historians. In their often bewildering profusion, his studies of fantastic, stylized ornament are a kind of “return of the repressed,” that is, of a subject that had been treated as marginal and minor.

As successive twentieth-century artistic movements found ever new ways of rejecting naturalism, there seemed to be less and less sense in a nineteenth-century evolutionary theory that posited exact imitation of nature as the highest stage of development and the supreme value in art, that judged earlier art by how nearly it approached this ideal, and that constructed a theory of development on that basis. If the point of farthest “development” was not realism but, for example, Abstract Expressionism, there was no reason for histories of art to devalue expressive medieval stylization, no reason to marginalize the fantastic

or monstrous. In an essay of 1947, Meyer Schapiro announced his intention to re-evaluate certain aspects of medieval art in the light of modern art:

What concerns us here ... is not the defense of modern art, but rather the inquiry into the common view that mediaeval art was strictly religious and symbolical, submitted to collective aims, and wholly free from the aestheticism and individualism of our age. I shall try to show that by the eleventh and twelfth centuries there had emerged in western Europe within church art a new sphere of artistic creation without religious content and imbued with values of spontaneity, individual fantasy, delight in color and movement, and the expression of feeling that anticipate modern art.³¹

Schapiro agreed with Mâle's rejection of any programmatic theological or moral symbolism in monstrous sculptures and marginal imagery, but he tried to define the ornamental in a less denigrating way. It is not necessarily without meaning simply because it does not have a didactic religious sense:

Are the religious and the ornamental the only alternatives of artistic purpose? Apart from the elements of folklore and popular belief in some of these fantastic types, they are a world of projected emotions, psychologically significant images of force, play, aggressiveness, anxiety, self-torment and fear, embodied in the powerful forms of instinct-driven creatures, twisted, struggling, entangled, confronted, and superposed. Unlike the religious symbols, they are submitted to no fixed teaching or body of doctrine. We cannot imagine that they were commissioned by an abbot or bishop as part of a didactic program. They invite no systematic intellectual apprehension, but are grasped as individual, often irrational fantasies, as single thoughts and sensations. These grotesques and animal combats stand midway between ancient and modern art in their individualized, yet marginal character.³²

Schapiro suggested a new history of the development of art, this time focused on the expression of individual subjectivity, a history in which what was marginal eventually becomes central.

In Schapiro's contrast between the absolute regularity of classical Greek ornament and the deliberate variety of Romanesque ornament, which can be understood as a "fruitful instance of liberty of individual conception,"³³ there are echoes of John Ruskin's chapter on "The Nature of Gothic" from *The Stones of Venice* (London, 1851–1853), wherein Ruskin argued that the variety of Gothic ornament (as opposed to "servile" Greek, Ninevite, and Egyptian ornament) is a sign of the artist's freedom. The medieval commentaries Schapiro offered as evidence of an aesthetic appreciation of art emphasize the medieval viewer's delight in variation, but also in fine workmanship, in the expertise of the craftsman. St. Bernard's tirade against monstrous sculptures in cloisters is interpreted as proof of his opposition to "idle" or useless aesthetic expression devoid of didactic content or religious symbolism: "the monsters are not regarded by Bernard as symbols of evil; nor is there reason to suppose that the sculptors conceived them

deliberately as such.” Schapiro also pointed out that Bernard would have had occasion to encounter the same sort of monstrous imagery in the initial letters of Cistercian religious manuscripts, where they were “entirely independent of the accompanying text.”³⁴

From Romanesque to Gothic, from Monstrous to Droll

In *Apes and Ape Love in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, H.W. Janson devoted a whole chapter to “The Ape in Gothic Marginal Art” and stressed the inadequacy of iconographical study that either relies solely on theological sources to explain marginal imagery or else treats it as purely decorative, conveying no thought:

This rigid division has been broken down more and more in recent years. We have come to realise increasingly that mediaeval painters and sculptors, even though their status as craftsmen excluded them from the exalted realm of the *artes liberales*, did not simply carry out the commands of the clergy; that they enjoyed, in fact, considerable freedom in exercising their own imagination, so that their work must be regarded as complementary to the literary sources in expressing the thoughts and emotions of the era.³⁵

However, as Janson admitted, to concede individual intention to the medieval creator of *drôleries* causes major difficulties for the modern interpreter: “How, then, is he to determine the level of meaning appropriate to a given design? ... Even if the source of a motif is known, he has no assurance that its meaning has not been submerged in the free play of forms so characteristic of Gothic marginal art.”³⁶

Janson chose to focus on the motif of the ape because, as he claimed, “apes play a more conspicuous part in marginal grotesques than any other animal” and because he hoped, by studying one type of imagery, to “contribute ... to a better understanding of the nature of Gothic *drôlerie* and thus help to pave the way for more comprehensive studies of the subject-matter of marginal art as a whole.”³⁷ The ape is a kind of test case for the revised narrative of the development of Western art suggested by Schapiro, a narrative showing how individual subjectivity is finally granted center stage. Whereas in Romanesque marginal imagery the ape appears rarely and is engaged in serious struggle with monstrous creatures or vegetation, in Gothic *drôleries* the omnipresent ape is treated in a more diverse and playful manner – in short, with more liberty of imagination and with reference to a wide range of literary sources or real-life situations.

Janson was the first to devote a whole chapter to the study of one motif in manuscript margins (exclusive of other material supports) and to try to analyze simian representations by categorizing them: parodies, performing apes, illustrations of fables and anecdotes, apes and birds. Yet Janson agreed with the predominant view

that there was no meaningful connection between the text and the visual images of its margins, and he did not search for any: “a study of the texts is apt to be ... fruitless, since *drôleries*, with rare exceptions, have no illustrative function.”³⁸

Lilian Randall's *Images in the Margins of Gothic Manuscripts* was the first book devoted exclusively to marginal imagery in manuscripts, leaving aside stone, wood, and all other supports. It was a vast extension of Janson's effort to categorize one motif. Originating in a 1955 Radcliffe dissertation, Randall's study cataloged and classified marginal imagery from 226 Gothic manuscripts, both religious and secular in content, all made in Northern Europe between 1250 and 1350 (with a few later exceptions).³⁹ “Isolated renderings of inactive creatures” were considered to be “purely ornamental detail” and were not taken into account. Randall focused, instead, on “scenes depicting humans, animals, or hybrids in some sort of activity,” which “constitute the essence of marginal subject matter.” These she classified into four principle groups based on “religious sources, secular literature, daily life, and parody.”⁴⁰ With its voluminous subject index, comprising hundreds of themes and subthemes, *Images in the Margins of Gothic Manuscripts* provided what remains today a fundamental reference tool; it describes marginal imagery in detail, classifies it iconographically, and clearly identifies its manuscript location. As Randall pointed out, such a catalog was badly needed to make more comprehensive analysis of marginal imagery possible.⁴¹ Although far more images are indexed than reproduced, Randall also provided more than 700 photographic reproductions of details from the margins of manuscripts, thus demonstrating the great variety of themes and offering examples for further study.

In her introduction, Randall suggested a broadly aesthetic explanation for much Gothic marginal imagery: “the medieval propensity for juxtaposition of contrasting elements,” and she stressed the generally entertaining nature of this imagery, as she had done in an article pointing out the analogous use of profane *exempla* to spice friars' sermons, thereby “dispelling the lethargy of the congregation.”⁴² With respect to the scenes she classed as parody, Randall wrote:

No matter how outrageous the distortion, the function of the travesties which constitute the bulk of the iconographic repertory of marginal illustrations was less overtly didactic than in analogous subjects preserved in fabliaux and exempla. An element of humor was seldom absent, in the rendering if not in the theme, and the aim was both to divert and to elevate.⁴³

Like Schapiro and Janson, Randall viewed the margins as a space permitting individual artistic freedom: “the margins afforded an opportunity for more spontaneous individualistic expression, whether in the realm of sacred imagery, social commentary, or fantastic invention.”⁴⁴ She went on to say that she believed further exploration might discover a specific reason for seemingly inappropriate motifs “in a surprising number of instances,” and that the enigma of intention is “most easily solved when the subjects in the margin are directly related to their adjoining text or miniature.”⁴⁵ Probably to reduce expense and bulk in this catalog,

Randall squeezed many photographed details onto each page rather than trying to reproduce whole manuscript pages, which would have enabled preliminary analysis of relationships between texts, miniatures, and marginal imagery.

Randall also published a series of articles exploring particular motifs. In the earliest of these, she tried to discover a general explanation for the motif by reference to contemporary literature and other historical documents. For example, in “A Mediaeval Slander,”⁴⁶ Randall took up the late thirteenth-century French and Franco-Flemish marginal motif of a man sitting on a nest of eggs, which she explained as a slander of the English (as “hatched” and as cowardly egg-hatchers), a slander deriving from the much better-known medieval taunt against the “tailed” English. The point of connection between the two debasing images was supposed to be the medieval French word *cové* meaning both “hatched” (modern French *couvé*) and “tailed” (modern French *comé*). These particular images in the margins were thus thought to visualize familiar taunts against the English enemy. In “The Snail in Gothic Marginal Warfare,”⁴⁷ Randall returned to one of the earliest debates about the meaning of a marginal image (between Champfleury and Bastard d’Estang) and proposed a new solution: images of warfare against snails, chiefly in northern French and Franco-Flemish manuscripts from 1290 to 1310, could satirize the Lombards, the new bankers of Europe, whose cowardice was exemplified ironically in vernacular literature by their “prowess” at fighting or fleeing “armored” (shell-encased) snails.

Such wide-ranging studies of the cultural background behind a motif enrich our understanding and, in their mastery of detail, go far beyond nineteenth-century interdisciplinary studies of satire and caricature featuring marginal motifs. However, they leave aside the questions of why the motif under consideration appears on a particular page of a particular manuscript, and how and why it may vary from one manuscript context to another. Randall’s later articles tend to focus on single manuscripts. “Humour and Fantasy in the Margins of an English Book of Hours” uses a manuscript from around 1300 to demonstrate the general trend in marginal imagery from Romanesque to Gothic: “the intense ferocity of earlier *motifs* waned in the wake of the dominant new interest in anecdotic detail ... [while] dragons and grotesques ... became tamer and ... often designedly comical in appearance.”⁴⁸ A final example out of many, “Games and the Passion in Pucelle’s Hours of Jeanne d’Evreux,” analyzes two *bas de page* drawings, their cultural references, and their relationship to other images in the same fourteenth-century manuscript.⁴⁹

Closer Readings, Case Studies

Most of the published research of Lucy Freeman Sandler is devoted to Gothic manuscripts illuminated in England after 1300. Sandler’s work led the trend toward closer examination of marginal imagery within its particular manuscript context, in relationship both to the words of the central text block and to other

images in the same manuscript (in framed miniatures, in initial letters, after line endings, or in the margins). In “A Series of Marginal Illustrations in the Rutland Psalter,”⁵⁰ Sandler proposed that certain marginal scenes are burlesque variations on or “expansions” of the elements of a courtly calendar scene that appears earlier in the Psalter. “Reflections on the Construction of Hybrids in English Gothic Marginal Illustration”⁵¹ compares the method of construction of the “non-descript” monsters (those with no classical names) in certain English manuscripts in order to categorize them into six different types. In more recent articles devoted to the analysis of single manuscripts, such as “Pictorial and Verbal Play in the Margins,”⁵² Sandler has offered a variety of explanations for marginal imagery in particular contexts. In Stowe MS 49, a *Legenda sanctorum* copied around 1300 in a monastic environment and filled with marginal sketches, Sandler found that only “a few of the marginalia ... clearly respond to the meanings of words and phrases in the text ... yet many of the marginal images make a kind of sense when they are considered as a group independent of the text.”⁵³ In effect, the margins of this book of saints’ lives are the space into which the unsaintly – wayfarers, beggars, women, and people and creatures engaged in sexual activities prohibited to monks – is deliberately expelled and excluded by “depicting it with contemptuous familiarity, and presenting it by turns as grotesquely funny, and disgustingly sinful.”⁵⁴ The notion that marginal imagery should represent sin or behavior to be avoided is not new, but here it is explored in a specific manuscript context, not stated as a general rule.

Nigel Morgan studied a key witness in the history of the development of marginal imagery, the Rutland Psalter illuminated in England around 1260, one of the earliest manuscripts to present such fully elaborated border images.⁵⁵ Close comparison of technique, style, and choice of subjects for marginal figures allowed Morgan to distinguish personal preferences in the five different artists, and thus to define individual artistic subjectivity more precisely than had previously been done, as well as to demonstrate that the artists were not subject to the same regime, but free to differ in how and what they designed. For example, Morgan distinguished Artist A from Artist B in terms of the greater naturalism of the latter’s images:

Artist B ... prefers genre subjects and clearly defined actions. Even in fantasy subjects, the men, animals, and hybrids are involved in recognizable activities, and hold proper weapons, musical instruments, and other accessories. Artist A likes animals and birds as decorative features, but above all chooses pure fantasy subjects in which the action has little or no contact with reality.⁵⁶

A series of tabular appendices presents each artist’s work for easier comparison. Yet verbal categorizations of the visual are not always entirely satisfactory. For example, the monkey riding an ostrich on the verso of one page is tilting toward the facing recto, toward the butt of a nude man, whose hand seems to want to shield the target (see fig. 16-2). In the table of Appendix B, devoted to



FIGURE 16-2 Double page view of Rutland Psalter. London: British Library, MS 62925, fols. 66v–67r. Source: London, British Library.

comparison of *bas de page* subjects by different artists, this double-page spread is presented, with no acknowledgment of interaction, as two entirely separate images, both by Artist B, one a “fantasy subject” (“hybrid riding bird”) and the other a “genre scene” (“nude man with hand over posterior”).

After long ignoring manuscript contexts and giving visual images a wide berth as the subject matter of a different discipline, scholars of medieval vernacular literature began to try to understand marginal images as evidence of medieval reactions to or interpretations of texts, in short, as a kind of visual commentary. For example, in a 1985 essay on the image of women in manuscripts of troubadour verse, Angelica Rieger noted a coherent system of illustrative marginal drawings, keyed to the text by red marks, in one thirteenth-century manuscript (Pierpont Morgan Library M. 819), where the metaphoric language of the poet concerning his experience of love is “transformed directly by the designer into a symbolic image.”⁵⁷ Figures of speech prompt marginal figures. In a tabular annex, Rieger juxtaposed a brief description of each marginal image with a citation of the

lines of Occitan verse that evoked it. Sylvia Huot⁵⁸ returned to the same manuscript to try to explain why figurative language should be materialized in images this way; she suggested that the images might “help to fix the song in the mind of the reader by providing visual cues for key words and phrases,” but that they also serve as a “visual gloss” that “reflect[s] an impulse toward an allegorical reading of the songs.”⁵⁹ In *The Game of Love*, I discussed evidence of historicizing as well as facetious interpretative traditions provided by the illuminations, especially the figures of initial letters, in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century anthologies of troubadour verse, while Paula Gerson, in “Margins for Eros,” found that isolated words, phrases, or sentences from the text had suggested some of the whimsical marginal imagery of the early fourteenth-century Book of Hours John Ruskin once owned (London, British Library Add. MS 36684).⁶⁰

Suzanne Lewis explained some of the figures within initial letters, this time in a thirteenth-century biblical text, as playful, punning interpretations of the adjacent words or phrases – such as the Latin noun for heaven (*celo*), which may be confounded with the Latin word for arrow or missile (*telo*) figured in images of shooting. She suggested that “rebus-like images that pun visually on certain words or themes in the text” may serve as a mnemonic device,⁶¹ like the Cuerdon Psalter’s initials (c.1270), as Mary Carruthers demonstrated.⁶² Until Lewis’s essay, the historiated initials of the Getty Apocalypse had “passed unnoticed,” all critical attention being focused on the framed miniatures illustrating the text and on the figure of St. John peering into the frames.

Exploration of the possible senses of the figures of initial letters in medieval manuscripts was long hampered by their marginalizing designation as “decoration.” It was not until the 1970s that figurative initial letters began to emerge as a subject for analysis, with Carl Nordenfalk’s catalog and classification of the earliest figural motifs, J.J.G. Alexander’s historical overview introducing an anthology of color plates, and Howard Helsinger’s revisionist essay, “Images on the *Beatus* Page.”⁶³ Helsinger argued that, at least on the *Beatus vir* page of the Psalter, *bas de page* scenes of deer hunting, which appear from the late thirteenth century on, should not be taken as irrelevant genre scenes. Like other scenes of spiritual struggle against sin and the devil (for example, David overcoming Goliath or the lion), these deer hunts emerge from the initial B, and they retain an allegorical sense even when displaced to the margins. On the evidence provided by the twelfth-century St. Albans Psalter, where a marginal commentary explains as a figure of spiritual struggle the two knights fighting on horseback in the upper margin of the *Beatus* page, Helsinger extended allegorical significance to other profane scenes of struggle in the margins, such as jousts, on the *Beatus* pages of later Psalters. In a chapter entitled “Sacred Letters as Dangerous Letters and Reading as Struggle,” I treated the spiritual combat of monastic psalmody, but also the struggle to achieve spiritual understanding of the text (and to overcome the “killing letter” of literal understanding) represented in initials that embody or enclose struggle in Romanesque and early Gothic Psalters.⁶⁴

Conrad Rudolph provided a case study of figurative initials in their relation to the text of a single manuscript.⁶⁵ Whereas these had been “traditionally interpreted as ornamental or generic because they were typically not seen as illustrating the text of the *Moralia in Job*,” Rudolph’s closer reading discovered that “virtually all the initials of the Cîteaux *Moralia* are related either to specific passages of the books that they head or to the general sense of one of the issues raised in those books, although sometimes in an idiosyncratic or seemingly arbitrary way.”⁶⁶ These initials represent spiritual struggle as Gregory conceived it in the adjacent text, which can be used to explain specific details of the initials.

Margins and Marginality

Written for a broad audience, Michael Camille’s *Image on the Edge* presented past and present research on marginal imagery, including Camille’s own eclectic approach, which took on a strong anthropological and sociological cast, with margins (or “edges” or “fringes”) interpreted as liminal social spaces.⁶⁷ Like the earliest art historians, Camille discussed carved images as well as drawn and painted ones, the figurative margins of medieval buildings, furniture, and artifacts as well as the margins of medieval pages. Regardless of their different material supports, he grouped marginal images according to the different medieval “centers of power” for which they were produced: the monastery, the cathedral, the court, and the city. On the first page of his preface, Camille pointed out that he was not interested in exploring the general meaning of particular motifs (like Randall and others), but rather in “their function as part of the whole page, text, object or space in which they are anchored.” His reproductions are a model in this respect, often providing separate photos of the detail enlarged and the detail in its context, whether that be a full manuscript page, a double-page spread (see fig. 16-2), a façade, or other architectural unit. In this way, Camille was able to demonstrate how marginal figures interact with other marginal figures on opposite or nearby pages, with other elements on the same page (large miniatures, the words or syllables of the text), or with other features of a sculptural program. Camille’s subsequent case study, *Mirror in Parchment*, carried to new limits cultural contextualization of the marginal imagery of a single manuscript, the Luttrell Psalter.⁶⁸

Since the publication of Randall’s *Images in the Margins of Gothic Manuscripts*, marginal imagery in manuscripts has received more scholarly attention than “marginal” sculpture and has usually been treated separately. In a series of articles followed by a book, Nurith Kenaan-Kedar returned to the subject of corbel sculptures.⁶⁹ Her neo-Bakhtinian interpretation of the carved animals, monsters, and humans (chiefly “people from the margins of society – jongleurs, acrobats, musicians, female drunkards, fools and beggars”) allowed for the possibility of different meanings for different audiences. To ecclesiastical patrons, “these distorted figures could be understood as punished sinners, although their punishment was expressed only metaphorically, implicit in the burdens they had to bear

[as architectural supports].”⁷⁰ However, to the Romanesque artists who first created these provocative, boldly expressive, unstylized images, they represented both a protest against and a deliberate transgression of the codes of “official culture.”⁷¹ Since the late 1960s in the West, renewed interest in understanding the sense of medieval marginal images was part of a much broader interest in all aspects of marginality, and restoring significance to the marginal was a symbolic act.⁷²

Science, Subjectivity, and the New Visibility

The collaborative volume *Les Marges à drôleries des manuscrits gothiques (1250–1350)*, published in 2008 under the direction of Jean Wirth, was the first European book devoted entirely to the subject. An ambitious and polemical comparative study, it applies quantitative, statistical methods to analysis of a corpus of 80 manuscripts, mainly Latin devotional texts produced in northern France, Flanders, and England, selected subjectively for the “excellence” of their marginal imagery, which is abundantly reproduced in color, often at life-size on a scale of 1:1. Wirth presents the intent and plan of the book as a return to the proper paths of art history after Anglophone scholars have digressed for three decades by focusing too much on interpretation and using the interpretative grids of postmodern theorists or of other disciplines:

If the deciphering of allusions – pious or satirical – has long detained us in this introduction, there can be no question of limiting research to this exercise. On the contrary, it should be noted that fixation on this problem has diverted too many researchers from the most fundamental requirements of art history. The first task is to retrace the formation of the genre, its evolution, and its decline ..., to characterize its themes and note the appearance of new ones ..., to analyze the iconographic and textual sources of this repertory ..., the principle iconographic registers of the genre ..., and [to study] those who commissioned and received these books in order to get closer to their personalities ... for the purpose of answering, finally, the first question posed by everyone who discovers this repertory: how was it possible for a decor of this nature to invade books of devotion?⁷³

In an article in 2003 and again in the first chapter of *Les Marges à drôleries*, Wirth laid down three rules intended to limit subjective interpretations and attributions of meaning to marginal imagery. He did this at a crucial time, when access to many illuminated manuscripts digitalized in their entirety was being opened up to everyone on the planet, and when, as Wirth expressed it, a widespread “consumerist” orientation privileged the point of view of the individual spectator/interpreter and relativized meaning.⁷⁴ Wirth’s methodological rules have a scientific ring to them in their insistence on recurrence and replication as indicators of objective truth: “don’t hypothesize an allusion unless it has some chance of being perceptible [to others]; the possibility of an allusion is inversely proportional to the frequency of

the iconographic motif and to that of the textual motif to which it is supposedly related; the meaning of a motif can be established only after examining its different occurrences.”⁷⁵ Wirth himself, a few pages later, admitted the difficulty of applying these rules to Gothic marginal imagery because of its deliberate resort to nonsense and the disconcerting lack of consistency that constitutes its very system.⁷⁶ Nor did Wirth entirely divorce the meaning of marginal imagery from that of the text it surrounds, for he found parody and caricature of recurrent themes of the Psalter and Hours, especially as these were illustrated in historiated initials and miniatures depicting the life of David. Wirth suggested, for example, that the unequal combat between the young, slingshot-wielding shepherd David and the fully armed, knightly-looking giant Goliath, often pictured in or beneath the initial B opening the Psalter, stimulated “inexhaustible” marginal parodies of unequal combat in ever more incongruous encounters.⁷⁷ In Wirth’s view, such playful oddities in the margins of their devotional books helped those who could afford them, often noble women, to mitigate the boredom of reiterated Latin prayers⁷⁸ – and also, one might add, to keep their eyes on their prayer books.

Statistical comparisons within and between manuscripts and the presentation of evidence in tabular form are prominent in the published versions of the dissertations of a new generation of scholars such as Elizabeth Moore Hunt, Veronika Sattler, and Domenic Leo.⁷⁹ Aided by the ongoing work of Alison Stones and Kerstin Carlvant,⁸⁰ they have concentrated on northern French and Flemish manuscripts, studying a clearly limited corpus or a single codex, analyzing iconographical motifs, centers of production, illuminators, and especially first owners, those who commissioned and received the particular work, whose tastes and values are reflected in the illuminations of its margins, conceived not only as mirrors, but also as frames or “interfaces.” Hunt, for example, limited her corpus to manuscripts illuminated between 1270 and 1310 in the dioceses of Théroutanne, Arras, and Tournai, and treated all types of texts illuminated in these areas that were given similar marginal treatments: Psalters and Hours, collections of canon law, Arthurian romances, encyclopedic works such as Brunetto Latini’s *Trésor* and Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum majus*. Even when a single, whole codex is the object of investigation, as is the case for Veronika Sattler and Domenic Leo, lengthy chapters and tabular annexes are devoted to analyses of its marginal imagery. Sattler focused on the hybrid, “in between” nature of an innovative and understudied combined Psalter and Book of Hours illuminated in Arras before 1250, a codex whose margins are rich in entertainers (contortionists, acrobats, jongleurs), burlesque combats, and heraldry that identifies its first owners as Jean de Neuville-Vitasse and his wife Ghuiluys de Boisieux.⁸¹ The entire manuscript (M730) is available for viewing on the Pierpont Morgan Library’s website, as is true also for the manuscript (G24) of the vernacular romance, *Les Voeux du paon*, and its continuation, probably illuminated in Tournai around 1350, which Leo chose for his wide-ranging case study. He included a central chapter on the manuscript’s marginal imagery⁸² as well as comparative tables based on and serving to contextualize key features of the iconographic repertory of its margins:

illustrations of proverbs and of obscenities or “arse-generated humor.” These tables identify similar images from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries in the margins of other manuscripts of the Peacock cycle, but also in the margins of codices containing other, entirely different, vernacular or Latin texts, and even in the figurative margins of other material structures (chiefly the misericords of choir stalls).⁸³ The expansion of tabular and statistical comparisons in current case studies on marginal imagery is a foretaste of the integrated digital databases that will no doubt follow in the coming years.

As the private property of the tiny medieval elite that could afford it, and later the property of libraries and museums whose mission was to preserve and protect it, marginal imagery in illuminated medieval manuscripts was for centuries nearly invisible to the general public. Art historians intent on restoring significance to the marginal were limited in the scope of their actions by the difficulty and cost of making medieval images visible in print. However, in the past few years, as libraries and museums put digitalized versions of entire illuminated manuscripts on websites, there has been an exponential increase in the visibility of marginal imagery. It has been given a special exhibit at a major museum and is even featured now as a favorite subject of curatorial blogs aimed at the general public.⁸⁴ Making sense of medieval marginal imagery, in all its newly visible variety, is more of a challenge than ever.

Notes

- 1 Thompson, “The Grotesque,” p. 309.
- 2 Maeterlinck, *Le genre satirique*, p. 2, paraphrasing Mr. Lapidoth, a reviewer of the first edition of the book (1903). [On Romanesque and Gothic manuscript illumination, see Chapters 20 and 23 by Cohen and Hedeman, respectively, in this volume (ed.).]
- 3 Mâle, *L’Art religieux du XIIIe siècle*, p. 105. All translations from French in this essay are mine. [On the monstrous, see Chapter 15 by Dale in this volume (ed.).]
- 4 Auber’s *Histoire de la cathédrale de Poitiers* dates from 1849; his four-volume *Histoire et théorie du symbolisme religieux* was published in 1870–1871.
- 5 Cahier, *Nouveaux mélanges*. The offending material appeared in Volume 2 of this work.
- 6 Bastard d’Estang, *Etudes*.
- 7 Bastard d’Estang, “Rapport,” p. 169.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp. 172–174.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 172.
- 10 Paris, BNF *ancien fonds latin* MS Lat. 1258.
- 11 Bastard d’Estang, “Rapport,” pp. 172–173.
- 12 *Ibid.*, unnumbered illustration on p. 172.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 174.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 176.
- 15 Champfleury, *Histoire de la caricature*, p. 31.

- 16 Wright, *History of Caricature*; Champfleury, *Histoire de la caricature*; Maeterlinck, *Le genre satirique dans la peinture flamande* and *Le genre satirique, fantastique et licencieux*.
- 17 Wright, *History of Caricature*, p. 118.
- 18 Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle*, p. 136, n. 117.
- 19 Champfleury, *Histoire de la caricature*, pp. 173–174.
- 20 Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle*, p. 124.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 107. This passage from Bernard's letter to William of St. Thierry is analyzed, reproduced, and translated in Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance*.
- 22 Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle*, p. 107.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 114.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 124.
- 25 Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIIe siècle*, p. 2. [On Romanesque sculpture, see Chapters 18 and 19 by Hourihane and Maxwell, respectively, in this volume (ed.).]
- 26 Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIIe siècle*, p. 341.
- 27 Baltrušaitis, *La Stylistique ornementale*; *Le Moyen-Age fantastique*; and *Réveils et prodiges*. Although *Réveils et prodiges* takes into account the most recent criticism, including that of Schapiro, Janson, an essay by Randall, and even Bakhtin, Baltrušaitis's organicist, evolutionary argument belongs to an earlier phase of art history, characterized by the works of Henri Focillon, to whom Baltrušaitis dedicated *La stylistique ornementale*.
- 28 Baltrušaitis, *Réveils et prodiges*, rev. edn. (Paris, 1988), p. 335.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 197.
- 30 *Ibid.*, pp. 154 and 352, n. 101. This displacement had been remarked as early as 1896 by Thompson, "The Grotesque," pp. 309–312, and also by Haseloff, *Psalterillustration*, p. 5.
- 31 Schapiro, "Aesthetic Attitude," p. 1.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- 35 Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore*, p. 42.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 163.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 164.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 163.
- 39 Although nearly all the features of Gothic border imagery had been developed by 1300, the period from 1300 to 1350 saw the making of most of the best known and most studied manuscripts, such as the Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, the Luttrell Psalter, the Smithfield Decretals, to name but a few.
- 40 Randall, *Images*, p. 15.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 42 *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 14, 18. See also Randall, "Exempla," p. 98.
- 43 *Images*, p. 19.
- 44 *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- 45 *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 19.
- 46 Randall, "A Mediaeval Slander."
- 47 Randall, "The Snail."
- 48 Randall, "Humour and Fantasy," p. 482.

- 49 Randall, "Games."
- 50 Sandler, "Series of Marginal Illustrations."
- 51 Sandler, "Reflections."
- 52 Sandler, "Pictorial and Verbal Play."
- 53 Ibid., p. 56.
- 54 Ibid., p. 62.
- 55 Morgan, "The Artists of the Rutland Psalter."
- 56 Ibid., p. 169.
- 57 Rieger, "Ins e.l cor port, dona, vostra faisso," p. 399.
- 58 Huot, "Visualization and Memory."
- 59 Ibid., pp. 3, 5.
- 60 Kendrick, "*Lo Gay Saber*," and Gerson, "Margins for Eros." The engagement of literary scholars with the marginal imagery of particular manuscripts continues. See, for example, Braet, "Entre folie et raison."
- 61 Lewis, "Beyond the Frame," pp. 73–74.
- 62 Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*.
- 63 Nordenfalk, *Die spätantiken Zierbuchstaben*; Alexander, *The Decorated Letter*; Helsing, "Images."
- 64 Kendrick, "Sacred Letters."
- 65 Rudolph, *Violence and Daily Life*.
- 66 Ibid., pp. 9, 12.
- 67 Camille, *Image on the Edge*.
- 68 Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*.
- 69 Kanaan-Kedar, *Marginal Sculpture*.
- 70 Kanaan-Kedar, "The Margins of Society," pp. 15, 18.
- 71 Kanaan-Kedar, *Marginal Sculpture*, p. 1. For the concept of "official culture," see Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*.
- 72 For further historiography, see Sandler, "Study of Marginal Imagery"; Wirth, "Les Marges à drôleries," and Smith, "Margin."
- 73 *Les Marges à drôleries*, p. 41.
- 74 Ibid., p. 38.
- 75 Ibid., pp. 19–25.
- 76 Ibid., pp. 37, 34.
- 77 Ibid., pp. 109–116.
- 78 Ibid., p. 363.
- 79 Hunt, *Illuminating the Borders*; Sattler, *Zwischen Andachtsbuch und Aventure*; Leo, *Images, Texts, and Marginalia*.
- 80 Stones, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1260–1320*; Carlvart, *Manuscript Painting in Thirteenth-Century Flanders*.
- 81 See also Leson, "Psalter-Hours of Ghuiluys de Boisieux."
- 82 Leo, *Images, Texts, and Marginalia*, pp. 75–123.
- 83 Ibid., pp. 335–375. A seminal article comparing the imagery of misericords with that of the margins of Gothic manuscripts was published in 1975 by Grössinger, "English Misericords."
- 84 For example, marginal imagery is a frequent topic of the British Library's "Medieval Manuscripts" blog, while the J.P. Getty Museum mounted an exhibit in 2009 entitled "Out of Bounds: Images in the Margins of Medieval Manuscripts."

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Definitions and Explanations of the Romanesque Style in Architecture from the 1960s to the Present Day

Eric Fernie

The early history of definitions of the Romanesque style in architecture has been recounted a number of times, most notably in the concise and authoritative analysis by Tina Waldeier Bizzarro of 1992.¹ Arguably the two most important steps in this history were, first, in 1813, the adoption of the term Romanesque for architecture in Western Europe from the fourth century to the twelfth, and, subsequently during the nineteenth century, the restriction of the label to the short Romanesque of the eleventh and twelfth centuries still current today.

Bizzarro takes the discussion briefly into the second half of the twentieth century. What follows here is therefore concerned with the 50 years or so to the present day.² The authors of the works consulted (in the order of their publication) are Howard Saalman, Kenneth Conant, Roberto Salvini, Hans Kubach, Edson Armi, Engelbert ter Kuile, Richard Gem, John Onians, Eliane Vergnolle, Roger Stalley, Jean-Pierre Caillet, Klára Benešovska (with Tomáš Durdík and Zdeněk Dragoun), Marvin Trachtenberg, Andreas Hartmann-Virnich, Xavier Barral i Altet, Linda Seidel, Willibald Sauerländer, Janice Mann, Arturo Quintavalle, and John McNeill.

Two questions are discussed, namely how the style is defined, and how it is explained, acknowledging that there is a substantial overlap between the two.

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Definitions

In characterizing the style Saalman describes its main characteristics, as exemplified in Normandy in the eleventh century, as “clarity, simplicity, and forcefulness ... bay division by engaged column shafts rising from the ground to an open roof ...; and clear demarcation of parts.” He adds that this is an architecture “conceived in clearly articulated layers of functioning masonry and space,” and the meaning of the whole, “composed of distinct, schematically related parts, was to become comprehensible at a glance ...” The diaphragm arch, engaged shafts, and alternating supports are “key features of Romanesque spatial organization...”³ Conant calls it a “well-knit, fully articulated style,” “with bold massing and articulation of relatively simple shapes ...,” while the “creation of such a remarkable feature as the apse, ambulatory, and radiating chapels is a sign of maturity in the experimental French Carolingian Romanesque. This achievement marks a stage in our exposition; it is a landmark on the road to the mature Romanesque style.”⁴ Salvini argues that Ottonian buildings offer “just the contrary of what always happens in Romanesque architecture where structural functions and contrasts are enhanced, and where plastically moulded capitals seem to take the pressure of superimposed arches, walls and vaults.”⁵

For Kubach “there are certainly Romanesque buildings that outdo their Carolingian predecessors in the number of their spatial divisions, but at the same time they obviously strive to be clear and ‘readable.’” He stresses the importance of basilicas with piers for the development of the style, and notes that “the mature phase of the Romanesque then proceeded to treat the wall as a plastic, sculptural mass to be shaped and modelled both inside and out.”⁶

Armi sets out the main sources of Burgundian Romanesque architecture as follows: “Northern articulation provided the means to separate the parts of the nave into stories, bases, columns, capitals, and into precise and limited orders, yet it lacked the vertical connections necessary to bring the piers and vaults together. Southern articulation supplied an abundance of vertical connections, but it lacked separate stories and clearly separate articulating members. Together, like concave and convex pieces, the two systems complemented one another and provided the means to vertically integrate the nave into clear and distinguishable parts.”⁷ For ter Kuile “Romanesque builders were able to see and develop a building as a spatial and plastic unity more so than ever previously.” Their spatial compositions are characterized by “subordination and coordination.”⁸ Gem analyses the style in terms of forms such as the half-shaft, the compound pier, the bay (stressing the plasticity of the walls resulting from these features), new types of vaults and the east ends of churches.⁹ Vergnolle observes that the style in France is marked by “the compound pier and the bay ..., new types of chevet and the development of the vault.”¹⁰ That the relevant features are a response to the requirements of aesthetic design rather than practical, structural need is underlined by Benešovska, Durdík, and Dragoun when they say that “Paradoxically, the creation of rhythm by means of the vertical segmentation of walls, creating the typical regular sequence of fields

of cross-rib-vault, was first tried out in flat-roofed churches, with exposed rafters ...”¹¹ Hartmann-Virnich proposes that “in almost all variations of high Romanesque architecture, the combination of wall, support, top closure and exposure to light is a general architectural design principle beyond structural considerations. Blind arcades on supports and wall surfaces divide the space into bays and storeys, the related and separated parts amalgamating in a way which is expressed on both the interior and the exterior. Choir layouts, western constructions and tower positions stress hierarchically graded architectural volumes.”¹²

Some writers distance themselves slightly from this definition. Thus Vergnolle says that “No single model, no single rule, ever seems adequate to prevail as a unanimously accepted reference. Some of the challenges of studying Romanesque architecture, today as in the past, are created by its astonishing diversity,” and Benešovska, Durdík, and Dragoun (though they are referring to all the arts and not only architecture) argue that, given the extent of the style through western Europe, “it is rather misleading to use the single term ‘Romanesque’ to define the character of the arts over so large and diverse an area of Europe, but it has become common currency, and we shall use it for convention’s sake.”¹³

There are two radical interventions, by Seidel and Quintavalle. Seidel observes that the standard definition does not at all describe the character of the carved imagery on Romanesque buildings.¹⁴ This is a real problem. Sauerländer, for example, notes that “The difficulty and the confusion began when this catchword [Romanesque] was transferred from architecture to the other arts ...”¹⁵ Seidel therefore proposes that the meaning of the English word “Romanesque” and the French *roman* (as, for example, defined above) should be dropped and the French meaning of *romanesque*, which is “romantic,” adopted instead.

There is, however, a major difficulty: while the English word Romanesque may not be accurate for the carved imagery, the French *romanesque* is even more inaccurate for the architecture. This can be illustrated by the response of Anne-Marie du Boccage, a French visitor to Windsor in about 1750. In what Bizzarro calls “a precocious use of the term ‘romanesque’ with reference to medieval architecture” and “the earliest application of the term to building so far discussed,” du Boccage describes St. George’s Chapel in the castle as *romanesque*, conjuring up the rich tapestry of chivalric life. The building is a masterpiece of fifteenth-century Gothic architecture, making it difficult if not impossible to see how it could belong in the same stylistic category as buildings of what is currently called the Romanesque style. Bizzarro makes it clear that there is not a problem in accepting du Boccage’s words as applying to both the chivalric pageantry and the building.¹⁶ Although Seidel’s proposal therefore creates as many difficulties as it solves, the problem she has confronted concerning the imagery remains, and awaits a solution.

Quintavalle provides an equally radical theory, which removes the term Romanesque from its architectural context and applies it to the policies of the Gregorian reform movement in the late eleventh century.¹⁷ He defines it as “a language that would never have been born were it not for the will of the many popes,” adding that it “was not by chance that the origins of the Romanesque coincide with the

Gregorian Reform.” He calls it “an extremely learned art” dependent on “a unitary programme, that of the Church of Rome,” and specifically rejects the older architectural definitions of the Romanesque, particularly those associated with vaults and transepts. He presents a complex, wide-ranging, and convincing case concerning the characteristics and sources of the images and buildings associated with the reform, but it is not clear why “Romanesque,” with its longstanding definition in terms of architecture, needs to be appropriated to provide a name exclusively for what Quintavalle has identified.

Explanations

If the views on the definition of the style (with the exception of those of Seidel and Quintavalle) could be said to approach something like agreement, those concerning explanations are by contrast varied, with answers invoking not only social structures, but patrons, masons, and sources as well (the four categories often and understandably being treated in very interrelated ways).

Social Structures

Saalman explains the style as a reflection of contemporary social structures: “The meaning of the whole, composed of distinct, schematically related parts, was to become comprehensible at a glance, reflecting the essentially simple social, political and ideological order of feudal Europe.”¹⁸ Similarly, for Barral i Altet, “during the Romanesque era, the Church was associated with a feudal world view and that is expressed in the works, providing us with the key elements of the Romanesque way of thinking.”¹⁹

Feudalism also relates to the most commonly cited reason for local diversity in this architecture, namely, as expressed by Stalley, the political fragmentation following the break-up of the Carolingian Empire and the Viking, Hungarian, and Arab attacks, leading to power being exercised at a local level. “Regional variations in architecture, it might be supposed, were merely a reflection of these political and cultural distinctions.” In support of this view Stalley calls attention to the smaller number of regional variations in Germany, where emperors had more authority over the principalities, while in Normandy there was a particularly close association between architecture and politics. In other areas the link between architectural and political boundaries was less exact, as for example in the duchy of Aquitaine.²⁰ Similarly, Sauerländer notes that the regional diversity of Romanesque art “corresponds to the political and economic particularism of the period.”²¹

Kubach rejects this theory in the strongest possible terms: the areas of architectural groups are “by no means identical with the [political] territories, and, furthermore, display interrelationships on a higher level which have no parallel whatsoever with any ecclesiastical or civil entities to be found on the map.”²²

Unless one places “identical” at the forefront of the statement, it is hard to square this view with the evidence of the buildings and their regional groupings, those such as France north of the Loire, the German empire, and Lombardy, and the meaning of “a higher level” is unclear.

Another social structure relevant to the Romanesque style is that of the church. As Stalley puts it, after commenting on the introduction of Christianity into different parts of western Europe, the “distribution of Romanesque architecture mirrors in quite a precise way this expansion of Latin Christendom.”²³ The Romanesque is indeed the style of the Latin Church in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, with exceptions in any numbers largely restricted to central and southern Italy, and the absence, with very few exceptions, of buildings in the style beyond the territories of the church.

Patrons

Although acts of patronage are obviously shaped by social forces, they are worth considering separately because they are more specific. Mann provides an instance with her explanation of the adoption of Romanesque forms in the context of the Iberian Peninsula. She argues that this was the result of Christians, from c.1000 on, taking territory back from the Muslims and making their power visible through monumental buildings of the new kind, which evoked the common Roman heritage that the region shared with the rest of Christendom.²⁴ Mann notes that American art historical scholarship on medieval Spain has, since 1990, increased interest in contextual issues, including the diversity of social and political contexts such as patronage, and decreased reliance on standard taxonomies. “The buildings in effect embodied the spiritual power that supported the Christians’ military force and the righteousness of their hegemonic ambitions.”²⁵ The churches commissioned by Sancho el Mayor of Navarre in the early eleventh century were a pastiche of old and new, and not straightforwardly Romanesque. Those who followed him, however, who were mostly women, were patrons of buildings with all the elements which “made them part of a pan-European cultural matrix: the Romanesque.”²⁶

Onians, in his book on the symbolism of columns, provides an unusual explanation for the origins of the style, in the form of a textual reference.²⁷ He notes that, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, builders increasingly used the “new architecture of massive piers,” as at Speyer. This could be explained by a combination of an interest in Roman forms and structural needs, but, Onians asks, since many of the buildings have no vaults, why was there a wish to copy Roman piers? He calls attention to a reference in the encyclopaedia of Hrabanus Maurus, written in the 840s, where Maurus identifies strength as “the most important property of the column,” something which could have led builders to prefer the pier. Onians adds that the distinction between the terms for column and pier became clearer in the second half of the eleventh century, as at Saint-Trond, where Abbot Adelhard is reported as “throwing down the extremely strong piers [*eversis fortissimis pilariis*]”

and putting up in their place “columns which were impressive to look at [*spectabilibus columpnis*].” Onians attributes the change to the builders, but a written source is more likely to have been introduced by the patrons, though of course in conjunction with the masons involved.

Masons

Vergnolle underlines the high and improving quality of the mason’s craft and by implication its part in the formation of the style: the “working of stone and wood was facilitated by the constant progress of metallurgy”; the developments of the second half of the eleventh century were accompanied by “a transformation in the shaping of stone, which becomes more delicate than before, undoubtedly thanks to the use of better-tempered tools, which were both sharper and more resistant to wear”; and “the constant perfecting of stone-cutting and modes of installation provided a noteworthy conduit.”²⁸ I have set out a possible connection between the mason’s craft and the style as follows: “While high-quality masonry was produced throughout the poorer centuries [c.450–750], it was largely restricted to the dressing of corners, whereas once the working of stone had been established on a new scale [in the Carolingian period] it became easier to build whole walls of a regular character. Features like pilasters would have underlined the regularity by subdividing and paralleling the wall, with their corners expressing the exactness of the cutting. In other words the masons’ concentration on clarity and articulation, the chief characteristics of the Romanesque style, could have been strengthened if not caused by the opportunities offered by improvements in quarrying in the Carolingian economic revolution.”²⁹

Hartmann-Virnich links patrons with masons in explaining the style: “The repetition of characteristic forms, which lead to the development of regional, interregional and even order-specific versions of the Romanesque, shows that clients, just like builders, could rely on a widely known and acknowledged repertoire of established forms, techniques and design elements. While these lack a ‘system,’ as has been claimed for the later Gothic, the varied and versatile Romanesque forms are certainly to be understood as manifestations of a common architectural style.”³⁰

Then there is the tendency for masons (presumably with the approval of patrons) to make styles more complex over time, whatever the social contexts. As I have expressed it, changes from simple to complex “imply no mystical ‘life’ of forms, but rather the psychology of use and enjoyment, of boredom and invention.”³¹

Sources

For ter Kuile, “that Romanesque architecture is based on Roman architecture is beyond argument, however this does not mean that it misses the power to form its own character and develop new visions.”³² Stalley argues that, although Romanesque masons took much of their architectural vocabulary

from Antiquity, they deployed it in an unclassical way. “Thus the Romanesque style did not constitute a renaissance of Rome: it was a new style created out of a vocabulary inherited from the past,” and masons displayed little interest in the principles of classical architecture. Some methods, including proportional systems and the construction of smaller vaults, survived unbroken, but much had to be re-learned.³³

McNeill presents the documentary and physical evidence for patrons and masons using Roman elements not only because they found them interesting and attractive, but because they called to mind that imperial past: allusions to Rome “are for the most part locally accented, and may be as aesthetic in their motivation as they are ideologically explicit, but they are persistent and geographically wide-ranging. It is here that eleventh- and twelfth-century buildings differ from those of the fourteenth century, and this that underpins the term Romanesque.”³⁴ In discussing sources Vergnolle introduces a different aspect: “In France there exists constant tension between the two points of view: move forward or look back. The first pushes towards experimentation and new solutions, the second channels a respect for the past.”³⁵

Caillet presents the case for the old 900-year Romanesque, questioning the degree of change around 1000, and similarly for Trachtenberg the early nineteenth-century definition of Romanesque as Roman-*esque* “provides a more accurate take on the period it denotes than all the later academic analysis in terms of square schematism, bay systems, radiating chapels, and the like ...”³⁶

Given all of the preceding (with the exception of the arguments of Caillet and Trachtenberg), it seems likely that the best explanation for the emergence of the short Romanesque style from the ninth century to the eleventh includes elements of all four of the categories discussed, perhaps with the masons as the most important, working on a reciprocal basis with the patrons and in the context of the relevant social structures and sources.

Conclusion

Bizzarro concludes her book with the following words: “A phenomenological historian of art assumes an ideal Romanesque or Gothic style, laid up, like Plato’s forms in heaven that we can begin to recognize once named. This places the cart before the horse. Rather, the name we give a style is arbitrary and forms part of a conceptualization; it then determines the course of the working out of that conception, which is always abstract and arbitrary ... The present study seeks to warn, then, against a notion, like Frankl’s, of fundamental or quintessential style, which just gets poorly interpreted until the truth emerges. Our scholarship, like that of the authors mentioned herein, is for a particular audience ...”

It is heartening to note that this essential warning does not apply to any of the passages cited in this chapter.³⁷

Notes

- 1 Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*.
- 2 The chapter I contributed to the first edition of the *Companion* formed the basis of an extended account in my book of 2014 on Romanesque architecture. The editor and I consequently agreed that there was no point in reprinting that essay, and that I should substitute a chapter more directly to do with the historiography of the architectural style. One of the problems of treating contemporary historiography is that it is difficult to avoid taking part in the controversies.
- 3 Saalman, *European Architecture 600–1200*, pp. 28–30, 33, and 39.
- 4 Conant, *Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture*, pp. 32, 239, and 68.
- 5 Salvini, “Pre-Romanesque, Ottonian and Romanesque,” p. 18.
- 6 Kubach, *Romanesque Architecture*, pp. 11, 22, and 79.
- 7 Armi, “Orders and Continuous Orders,” pp. 184–185.
- 8 ter Kuile, *Romaanse Kerkbouwkunst*, p. 11.
- 9 Gem, “L’Architecture pre-romane et romane en Angleterre.”
- 10 Vergnolle, *L’Art roman en France*, p. 10.
- 11 Benešovska, Durdík, Dragoun, *Architecture of the Romanesque*, p. 21.
- 12 Hartmann-Virnich, *Was ist Romanik?*, p. 262.
- 13 Vergnolle, *L’Art roman en France*, p. 9; Benešovska, Durdík, Dragoun, *Architecture of the Romanesque*, p. 8.
- 14 Seidel, “Rethinking ‘Romanesque.’”
- 15 Sauerländer, “Romanesque Art 2000,” p. 46. Focillon, *Romanesque Art*, p. 4, acknowledges that the sculpture can appear as work of “pure fantasy and caprice,” and Schapiro, “On the Aesthetic Attitude,” p. 133, refers to “that exuberant fantasy which delights us in Romanesque art.”
- 16 Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*, pp. 96–97.
- 17 Quintavalle, “The Gregorian Reform,” pp. 220, 230–231.
- 18 Saalman, *European Architecture 600–1200*, p. 30.
- 19 Barral i Altet, *Contre*, p. 310.
- 20 Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, pp. 225–227.
- 21 Sauerländer, “Romanesque Art 2000,” p. 51.
- 22 Kubach, *Romanesque Architecture*, p. 10.
- 23 Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, p. 215.
- 24 Mann, *Romanesque Architecture*, pp. 3 and 99.
- 25 Mann, *Romanesque Architecture*, 44; Mann cites Jerrilyn Dodds’s study of 1989 as a leading example of the new approach.
- 26 Mann, *Romanesque Architecture*, pp. 4, 74, 79, and 95.
- 27 Onians, *Bearers of Meaning*, pp. 85–86.
- 28 Vergnolle, *L’Art roman en France*, pp. 10, 34, and 146.
- 29 Fernie, “Romanesque Architecture,” pp. 299–301.
- 30 Hartmann-Virnich, *Was ist Romanik?*, p. 262.
- 31 Fernie “Romanesque Architecture,” p. 296.
- 32 ter Kuile, *Romaanse Kerkbouwkunst*, p. 11.
- 33 Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, p. 235.
- 34 McNeill, “*Veteres statuas emit Rome*,” pp. 16–17.
- 35 Vergnolle, *L’Art roman en France*, p. 35.

- 36 Caillet, “Le mythe du renouveau”; Trachtenberg, “Desedimenting Time,” p. 13.
- 37 Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*, p. 160. Mario Denti, “Art ‘romain’ et art ‘roman,’” offers a similar criticism to that of Bizzarro, though in distinctly more convinced terms: “Dans cette direction, il sera en effet possible de remarquer la perpétuation d’une attitude heuristique finissant par superposer de façon inertielle, à un monde antique qui se présentait, aux yeux des hommes des XI^e et XII^e siècles, de façon fragmentaire et articulée – car, comme on le verra, il s’agissait d’un organisme *en soi* déjà fragmenté et articulé – une vision unitaire et homogénéisante de l’Antiquité: une vision qui est, par conséquent appelée, in toto, ‘classique’, et qui se révèle le fruit de *notre* interprétation moderne, et non, très probablement, de *leur* façon de l’observer. Si nous pouvons aujourd’hui nous poser cette question, c’est, parce que nous avons actuellement rejoint la conscience que le modèle prétendu – l’obsession même – de la culture romane, l’art romain, ne peut plus être vu comme un organisme unitaire et homogène, mais comme un phénomène décliné *au pluriel*: une expérience historique caractérisée par une trajectoire non unidirectionnelle mais, au contraire, polymorphique, dans l’espace comme dans le temps, qui s’est, révélée pluristratifiée et pluri-centrique. Paradoxalement, en ce sens, un seul ‘art romain’, *une* Antiquité classique, en réalité, n’ont jamais existé. Par conséquent – dans cette perspective – pouvons-nous également continuer à employer le terme d’‘art roman’ dans l’acceptation actuelle?” (p. 32); “Art ‘romain’ et art ‘romain’: deux mythes historiographiques? ... Deux expériences historiques grandioses et glorieuses, et en même temps extrêmement fragiles” (p. 42).

Denti’s denunciation of treating concepts such as Roman and Romanesque as if they were unitary, homogenized, and unidirectional, while correct, may be unnecessary, as once again none of the passages cited here appears to fall into the trap, something which may have been more common in and before the 1960s. For examples from that decade of styles treated as organisms see Fernie, *Romanesque Architecture*, p. 244.

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Romanesque Sculpture in Northern Europe

Colum Hourihane

The most useful historiographical studies for Romanesque sculpture up to the early nineteenth century, at which stage the study of sculpture starts to separate from architecture, are those which are specifically focused on the architecture of the period.¹

Without doubt, the most comprehensive such work is by Bizzarro, which looks specifically at the formative centuries in France and England.² Frankl, on the other hand, deals mainly with the medieval appreciation of the style and also provides a general background.³ When it comes to looking at Romanesque sculpture, the most valuable study has to be the annotated bibliography on French Romanesque sculpture by Lyman, which parallels that of Glass for Italy.⁴ A short but good introduction on the historiography of this subject especially for the appreciation of the style in the United States is given in Cahn and Seidel,⁵ while an interesting essay by Forsyth⁶ outlines a number of recent trends, developments, and issues in the historiography of French Romanesque sculpture and that of cloister studies in particular.⁷ A good survey of recent trends and future directions is given in Maxwell and Ambrose and in particular in the essays by Thomas Dale and John Williams.⁸

If France has not fared well, the subject has been almost entirely neglected in neighboring Germany. This is not unique in that little historiographical research has been undertaken there and certainly not by German scholars. What has been undertaken is by American scholars, and deals with German contributions to the development of style or research in countries other than their own. One such

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work, which has tangential bearing on Romanesque sculpture, is by Brush, who has written on the contributions of Vöge and Goldschmidt against a general historiographic background of their period.⁹

Apart from Bizzarro, Cocke is one of the few scholars to have dealt with the subject in England. He has documented its historical development and Kahn has extended his work into the modern and more theoretical period.¹⁰ Apart from these three countries, historiographic studies of Romanesque sculpture remain almost totally neglected in Austria, Ireland, the Low Countries, and Scandinavia apart from some general asides.¹¹

Up to the start of the twentieth century Romanesque sculpture was primarily studied in terms of its architectural associations and was never treated as a separate entity. It is true that most Romanesque sculpture is indeed architectural¹² and as such has always played a secondary position to its context.¹³ Unlike Gothic sculpture, which in many ways came to assume an equal role with the architecture of the period, that of the Romanesque period never received the same universal acclaim.¹⁴

Romanesque sculpture was never seen as a distinct style in itself but rather as a formative phase in the development of the Gothic. The taste for Romanesque sculpture, it is claimed, has to be acquired – it is a style that cannot be easily understood and the viewer does not immediately relate to it (fig. 18-1). It is



FIGURE 18-1 Tympanum showing Christ and the Four Beasts surrounded by fantastic animals and grotesques above the lintel with the 12 apostles, Rochester Cathedral, c.1160. Source: photo © by Colum Hourihane.

easy to see how this style, with its elements of stylization and distance from the classicizing beauty of what preceded and followed it, could be described as “barbarous” and “unfinished.”¹⁵ It is not a style that is easily understood because of its break with the traditional canons of representation and this has also acted against its wider acceptance (fig. 18-2).

Romanesque sculpture was viewed as being less forceful and lacking any redeeming features – its emphasis on capital sculpture, tympana, and absence of portal figures, archivolts, or large iconographic programs meant that it was relegated to a secondary role in the early phases of art history.¹⁶ In terms of production, its relatively short history of approximately two centuries, uneven distribution, and lack of documentary material did not give it popular standing.

Scholars of this style would be amazed to see the difficult history that it has undergone to gain the recognition that it presently has. It does not, as a general rule, appeal to the mass audience – unlike the Gothic. There are few surviving



FIGURE 18-2 The prophet Jeremiah showing the stylization characteristic of much French Romanesque sculpture, porch trumeau, Church of St. Pierre, Moissac, c.1115–1131. Source: photo © by Colum Hourihane.

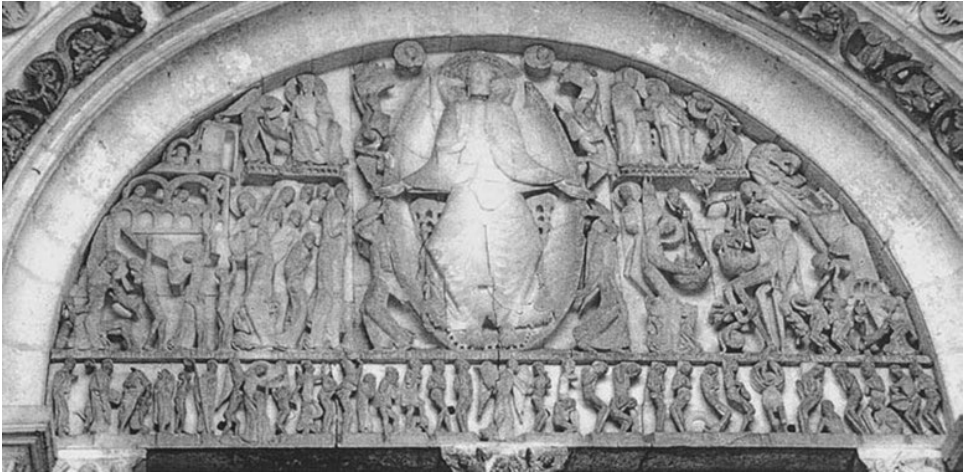


FIGURE 18-3 The Last Judgment, attributed to Giselbertus, tympanum, Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun, c.1120–1135. Source: photo © by Jane Vadnal.

sculptural programs that match the importance of Moissac, Vézelay, or Autun and more often than not its appreciation is dependent on isolated fragments or small buildings in remote locations (fig. 18-3). Much of what survives is still in situ and it is not well represented in museum collections. On the other hand, it should be said that some more recent large-scale exhibitions and effective museum displays are adding to its popular profile.¹⁷

The historiography of Northern Romanesque sculpture is essentially that of France, Germany, and England¹⁸ with a focus on stone rather than the many fine wooden carvings which have only recently entered the mainstream of scholarly study. Different chronological phases have been proposed (not all of which focus on art), but which usually divide the period into three. This chapter will propose yet another refinement – this time historiographic, and attempt to merge some of the overlap between existing proposals. Proposals such as those by Mortenson¹⁹ (for Latin historiography from 1500 to the present) and Lyman (the historiography of Romanesque French sculpture from 1700 to the present) stress the gradual process of refinement and definition. Understandably, my historiographical analysis is based on what has been published, and attempts to take into consideration trends and changes in scholarship.

The four phases are:

- 1 The Age of the Antiquarian (the Renaissance to 1820)
- 2 The Age of Structure (1820–1900)
- 3 The Age of Theory (1900–1945)
- 4 The Age of Modernism (1945–present)

All are dominated by the influence of major scholars such as Evans, Focillon, Kingsley Porter, Mâle, Montfaucon, and Schapiro, to name just a few, and each

phase has its own characteristics, which in many cases were instigated by such figures. The first phase was the age of the antiquarian – or to use Lyman’s terminology, “The Age of Documentation.” At this stage, all medieval architecture and sculpture had been undefined in terms of style, period, or region; this would only begin to happen with the amassing of a substantial corpus of material. It also has to be remembered that the whole concept of style, and indeed its use as a term of definition, did not start until the Renaissance. Most of the work undertaken in this phase was by archeologist-antiquarians who were driven mainly by nationalistic ideals to define not only the history of the Middle Ages but also to document their own cultural background and to achieve artistic superiority. The second phase is marked by a more structured approach to documentation with the creation of a nomenclature. It is heralded by the actual definition of the stylistic term “Romanesque” and has been seen as marking the independence of this period from the Gothic and the gradual separation of sculptural from architectural studies. This was also the period in which art history developed as a formal discipline and the whole field of medieval studies opened up on an unparalleled scale. It was soon followed by the most crucial of all four phases, characterized by some of the most innovative ideas and thinkers of the entire period, whose work was fortunately based on an understanding and appreciation of Romanesque sculpture. This phase is marked by iconographical studies with a strong background in Christian values and nationalism and an opening up of the field to international scholarship. It is claimed that this phase was “marked by hermeneutics and an interest in the history of ideas.” It is difficult to characterize the fourth and final phase, as we are still in the middle of it. Some old issues have been re-evaluated, some new ideas proposed, some aspects of previous scholarship have fallen by the wayside, and the work goes on. In a recent and insightful paper, Willibald Sauerländer discussed the general field of Romanesque studies and highlighted some neglected areas deserving of future scholarship.²⁰

In many ways the backdrop to these four phases has been a series of political, ideological, and nationalistic factors, which have strongly influenced its development. Its historiography has evolved in terms of a few specific major themes, including a search for its origins, a need to apply a dating structure, and the more recent socio-cultural analysis of sculpture. In between these two bookends lie a number of paths which scholarship has taken and which include categorization, cataloguing, chronology, political influences, religious iconography, reception, and the role of the artist, all of which will be discussed below.

Phase I, the Age of the Antiquarian

We know very little of how the medieval mind actually viewed their art forms,²¹ and it is clear that many of the comments that survive deal with architecture rather than sculpture.²² The art and architecture of the Romanesque period was clearly recognized as being different from the Gothic before the end of the Middle Ages.²³

These comments have been described by Frankl and van der Grinten, who have used such terms as *opus francigenum*, *opus arcatum*, and *opera romano* to describe Romanesque architecture.²⁴ By the end of the Middle Ages, however, the past centuries could be viewed more objectively and it was at the start of the sixteenth century that the whole concept of a *medium aevum* or Middle Ages was first defined and with that the first chronological and stylistic breakdown of the preceding centuries. It was also at this time that the term “Gothic” was first used to describe the sculpture, but principally the architecture, from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance.²⁵ Romanesque sculpture was not to be defined for at least a further 300 years.²⁶

In the post-medieval period, the historiography of Romanesque sculpture is largely given over to antiquarian studies. Problems of terminology and classification were being tackled, and although some of these studies illustrate sculptural elements it is always in secondary positions. Typical of such scholarship is the work of John Aubrey (1626–1697) who is generally credited as the first cataloger of the Romanesque in England. His asides are few and unillustrated, and are included in his pioneering study *Monumenta Britannica*, a work largely documenting Roman rather than Romanesque antiquities. Another whose research attempted to define and catalog English Romanesque was William Wilkins the Elder (1778–1839), whose studies separated the early Romanesque or Saxon from the later architecture of the period then referred to as Norman. Implicit in his division, which has lasted to the present, albeit with a different emphasis nowadays, is a stylistic development and elaboration. His work on Norwich Castle (1795)²⁷ sheds considerable light on all the architectural components of the building and on its stylistic development and was to provide a base line for other studies (fig. 18-4).

These studies – whether in England, France, or Germany – are largely concerned with documentation rather than analysis of style or form, but they attempted to be as scientific as possible. Where any analysis takes place, it varies from a general appreciation of the style to the more commonly found criticism of it as a debased version of a Roman original. One critic who was not afraid to voice a positive opinion on Romanesque sculpture was Roger North (1653–1734) who wrote c.1698 about Durham and Gloucester Cathedrals as well as Norwich Castle and, indeed, of Romanesque architecture in general that it “hath a strength and reasonableness beyond the other [Gothic].”²⁸

In France of the same period a number of scholars were attempting to document architecture and to record and disentangle different schools and styles. Here, as elsewhere, the historiography of medieval art takes on a strongly nationalistic bias, which was to develop even further throughout the century. French²⁹ antiquarian studies begin not with sculpture but with painting³⁰ and were soon followed with the establishment of formal bodies to promote and document the arts. Typical of these is the founding in 1648 of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, from which most of the principal art historical works in France were to emanate.³¹ One scholar whose work stands out in this period is Dom Bernard de Montfaucon, whose two main works – *L'Antiquité expliquée et*

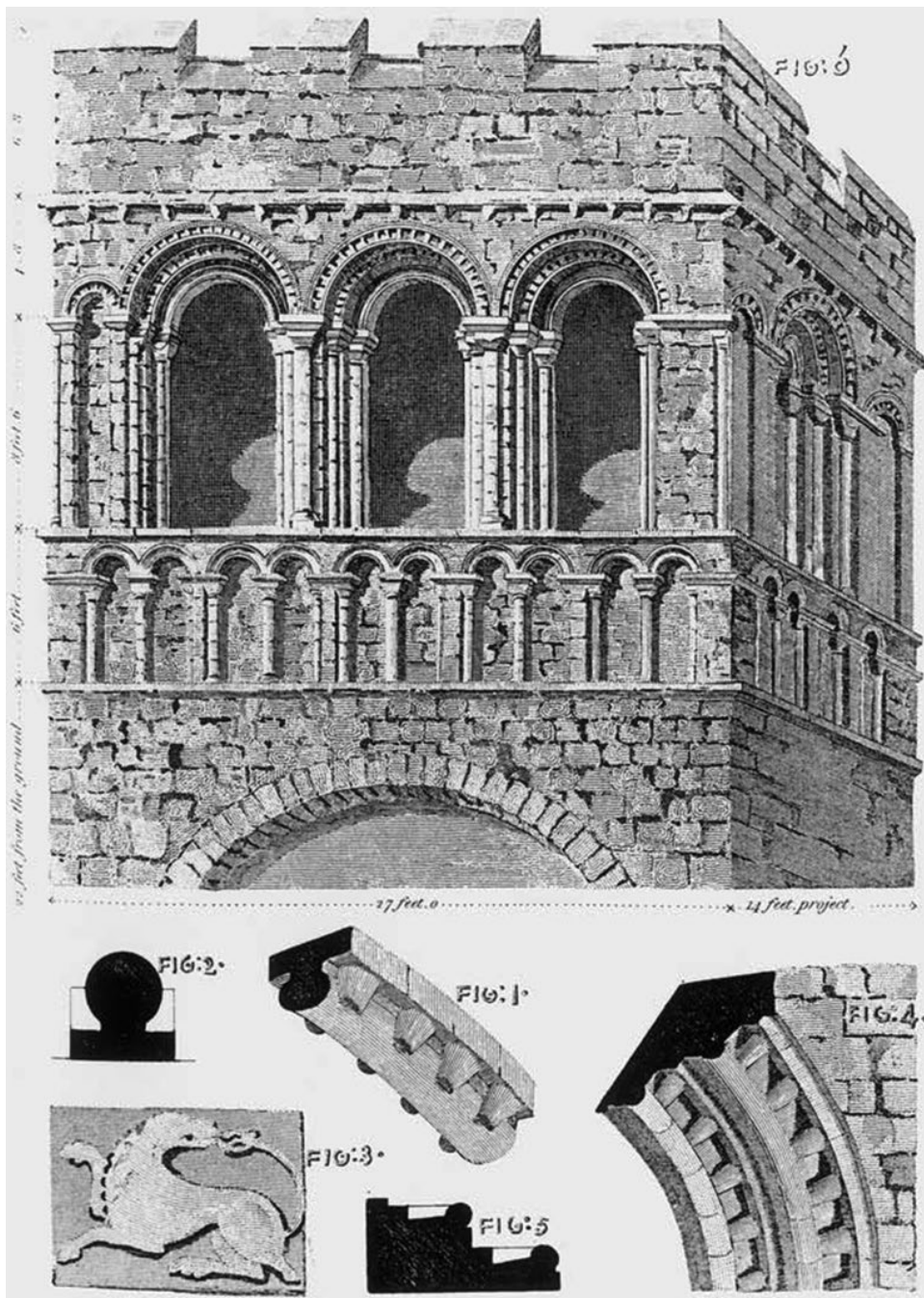


FIGURE 18-4 Bigods Tower, Norwich Castle, 1795. Studies such as this by William Wilkins on Norwich Castle, with their focus on architecture, are typical of eighteenth-century antiquarian research. Source: From Wilkins, "An Essay Towards an History of the Venta Icenorum of the Romans and of Norwich Castle," plate XXVI, p. 154.

représentée en Figures (1721–1722) and *Les Monumens de la monarchie française* (1729–1733) – were to provide one of the first illustrated histories of French art. Contemporaries such as Blondel (1705–1774) and Ducarel (1713–1785) were to provide a platform for future cataloguing and documentation and it was also at this time that the trend for non-nationals to study the art of other countries started, with Cotman and Ducarel being amongst the first.

If England and France had their topographical and antiquarian studies, art history as a formal discipline was to develop in leaps and bounds in Germany of the mid-eighteenth century, thanks to the studies and influence of Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768), the father of art history. Winckelmann was to move beyond his contemporaries’ “mere narratives of the chronology and alterations”³² into formulating a systematic analysis of the history of art history. His influence was to pave the way for future work in this whole field, especially iconography and the evolution of style and his avoidance of the role of artist or maker, which was to shape the work of numerous scholars in the following centuries particularly in the field of Romanesque sculpture. Romanesque sculpture or architecture failed to capture the imagination of Goethe, all of whose writings stress the verticality and uniqueness of the Gothic style in what he mistakenly believed was a manifestation of German creativity.

Phase II, the Age of Structure

There has been much dispute as to who first coined the term Romanesque, but it is now accepted that it was William Gunn (1750–1841), an English parson, who first published this term in 1819.³³ At around the same time, the term *romane* was coined and promoted to describe the same period in France, and it was not long after that the term *romanische* was used in Germany.³⁴ With a stylistic definition in place, the boundaries of this style expanded beyond national borders and its acceptance seemed to be ensured. Bizzarro has written of her belief that the application of such a term to the architecture of this period was its saving point. The separation of Romanesque from Gothic – and it has to be remembered that the former was initially applied only to the architecture of the period – was certainly a major advantage, but it was not to herald the instant acceptance of arts other than architecture at this time.

For most of the nineteenth century, the study of Romanesque sculpture was still largely neglected when it is compared to that of the thirteenth century. Romanesque sculpture in particular was rejected because of the overriding acceptance that Classicism was the ideal and that the sculpture of the eleventh and twelfth centuries was the antithesis of this. Viollet-le-Duc was typical in his rejection of Romanesque over Gothic. For him the former was based on Roman models – the art of oppression – and was the work of the monk.³⁵ On the other hand, it has to be acknowledged that this style was promoted thanks to the simmering belief that all French art was good and representative of the genius of that country.

The political struggles in the first three decades of the nineteenth century highlighted many studies which now became even more Franco-centric. The interest in the art of the medieval period in Germany coincided with the same development in France and has been seen as growing out of the strong nationalist movement, which led to the foundation of the German Empire in 1871. Three national schools were defined, centering on Saxony, the Lower Rhineland, and the South, including Switzerland and Austria. Classical art belonged to Greece and Rome, and the Renaissance had its birth in the south, but early medieval art and that of the Romanesque period in particular was believed to have had its origins in the Holy Roman Empire.

Scholarly research into Romanesque art in Germany and France in the late 1880s and early 1890s coincided with a popular interest in the subject outside the university environment. Carolingian and Ottonian art was to the fore in this nationalistic movement, and much of this research was initially based in Normandy and the northwest – an area that was then seen as the most important center for Romanesque sculpture in France. It was here that the Service des monuments historiques de France, founded in 1830, was first based and from which it extended to all areas. This national inventory of sculpture, which to this day is still one of the most complete and thorough catalogs of French monuments, highlighted the importance of Romanesque sculpture, which now began to assume its rightful place. It was also at this time that art history was first taught as a university subject in the United States, where the initial focus was either on the Classical or medieval period. Such survey works as that written by Allan Marquand and Arthur Frothingham in 1896 are typical of the period.³⁶ Although Romanesque sculpture is dealt with briefly, it is clear that the recognition of this period as a time of revival would open up the field to future studies.

One such study to deal significantly with the subject, albeit in relation to architecture and style, was that by Karl Schnaase (1798–1875). Direct in line to Hegel's theories, Schnaase devoted the entire second volume of his *magnum opus* to "Die Romanische Kunst." There is nothing iconographical in a study such as this, but it does provide the background that would enable Emile Mâle to undertake his work some 50 years later, and in many ways Schnaase's belief that the visual arts complement religious thought also links these two scholars.³⁷

The work undertaken in the museum world by scholars such as Alexandre Lenoir (1761–1839) and the slightly later and more significant Louis Courajod (1841–1896), director of the Department of Sculpture at the Louvre, did much to help promote this neglected area. Courajod, like Lenoir, used his position as museum director to publicize French sculpture and, whereas their initial works are largely descriptive catalogs, they were instrumental in making the wealth of this pre-Gothic corpus publicly known.³⁸ Courajod was strongly influenced by Vöge's theories and the need to unravel the origins of style. There was at this time a growing preoccupation with the issue of style, partly in response to Vöge's theories, which influenced not only his German colleagues but also his French compatriots. Ironically for Vöge, Romanesque sculpture did not exist – for him,

the sculpture at Chartres was of the utmost importance and in many ways prevented him from seeing anything other than the works at that site. Such theories, highlighted more by other scholars than by Vöge, form a distinct historiographical nucleus, which looked specifically at this art and sculpture from a Christian perspective. This nucleus can really be credited with defining the importance and acceptance of Romanesque sculpture, and their interest was primarily driven by the subject matter.

From the middle of the nineteenth century there were two distinct views of Romanesque sculpture, which were to change with its acceptance as a fully fledged style. It was, first, perceived as a phase of the Gothic and not really a style in itself. Its barbarous treatment of its subject matter was little but an exploratory phase in the evolution to the Gothic. On the other hand, there were some who were prepared to see it as a distinct style, which was fully developed and required an adjustment in perception as to its relations with what preceded and followed it. The development of modern art and the break in the traditional means of representation have been seen as pivotal in influencing our acceptance of what was unusual in Romanesque sculpture. Inherent in much of the writings on sculpture of this period is the belief that even though figures such as those at Vézelay are “barbarous,” they also have an element of genius. This was to change later in the century with the belief that this barbarous element should not be viewed as negative but as a positive counterbalance to Classicism. What is also interesting is the fact that many of the scholars such as Baltrušaitis, Cahn, Focillon, Panofsky, Seidel, and Schapiro, who wrote on Romanesque art and most significantly on its sculpture, also researched modern art.

Phase III, the Age of Theory

Searching for origins in the Byzantine world, the Near East, and Italy, French scholars such as Fernand Cabrol (1855–1937), Charles Cahier (1807–1882), François-René de Chateaubriand (1769–1848), Alphonse-Napoléon Didron (1806–1867), Émil Mâle (1862–1954), Albert Marignan (1858–1936), Barbier de Montault (1830–1901), and Walter Pater (1839–1894) were the first to look at the entire range of medieval sculpture and not just that of the Gothic period. This group of scholars suddenly approached the works from the perspective of their subject matter and shifted the emphasis using Christian dogma. Although scholars such as Mâle and Didron were also interested in the nationalistic perspective to this art they were also instilled by a strong Christian belief in the works and attempted to elevate the status of art history to that of science. They created new terms for the discipline and attempted to provide a more formal and scientific approach. This was the period when the great encyclopedic dictionaries on Christian art such as Didron’s *Iconographie chrétienne: Histoire de Dieu* (1843) was published.³⁹ One of the most influential of these writers, and one who paved the way, was Chateaubriand, in his *Génie du Christianisme* (1802) in which

Neo-classicism and rationalism were weighed against the concept of genius and spirit as represented by the world of medieval art. If Chateaubriand justified the study of art in all its forms from a slightly conceptual stance, it was Didron who actually enforced a more comprehensive iconographical approach. Suddenly, the concept of beauty in sculpture such as those at Vézelay and Moissac was discovered in the Christian ideas they personified and embodied. The makers of these works and their role in church organization were also looked at, but to a significantly lesser degree. There is a noticeable paucity of any stylistic analysis, which is in complete contrast with the general scholarship of this period. Based largely in France, this group worked independently of German scholarship, which was more focused at defining form and the problems of stylistic development. Nevertheless, it was to be a school of thought that was to influence general scholarship for many decades to come and was to create a unique identity for Romanesque sculpture.

They were also to be the first iconographers of Romanesque sculpture which culminated in Mâle's *L'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France* (1898). The publication of this work in advance of what should have been the first volume in his study – on the twelfth century (1922) – has been explained in a semi-apologetic way by Mâle. While admitting that he should have written the second volume first, he also says that he was drawn instinctively to the thirteenth century where “all is order and light.”⁴⁰ It was not until the start of the twentieth century that scholars accepted that the eleventh and twelfth centuries were not to be viewed as a transitory and ill-defined period. Mâle admitted in 1922 that “monumental sculpture was born in the eleventh century in southwestern France.” After many years, the sculpture of this period was defined as that of a renaissance and was heralded as being in a direct line to that of the Classical period. All of his studies went some way toward correcting the view that the sculpture of the twelfth was “unfinished,” whereas that of the following century was “a finished system.”⁴¹ It was also at this time that iconography, and indeed the study of Romanesque sculpture, became irrevocably text driven – a feature for which Mâle is generally either credited or criticized.⁴²

Mâle has been seen as heralding this interest in twelfth-century sculpture, which indeed he did, but his studies were also a factor of the age and an increasing research into the eleventh and twelfth centuries. He was the scholar who capitalized on the research undertaken in the fields of archeology, history, and Christian studies. The 1880s and 1890s saw the establishment of art history as an academic discipline throughout Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, paralleling what has been defined as a period of critical self-examination that swept through the whole field.⁴³ This period also saw the publication of a number of large-scale scientific surveys of medieval art in both Germany and France, with Romanesque sculpture taking its place in the wider art historical picture and also being studied by itself. A typical study is Beenken's 1924 semi-scientific survey of some 135 works.⁴⁴ With its focus on the development of style, it is also one of the earliest works to look at the role of the creator. The immediate period after World War I was particularly fertile in research and publications, which resulted from the crisis in the

liberal arts that ensued after the war. It was also an attempt by Germany to regain its position and realm of influence, especially in the area of Romanesque studies.

It was also at this time that Schnaase's work of some 30 years earlier was extended, with the writings of scholars such as Bode, Braun, Léon, Molinier, Enlart, Brutails, Hasak, Von Reber, and Goldschmidt. Some of these were contemporary with Schnaase, others were slightly later and bridge the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but they are all similar in their belief that the arts of the Middle Ages were built upon and indeed mirrored those of previous periods. While most German scholars of this period wrote on French monuments, there were also signs of a burgeoning interest in the Romanesque sculpture of their own lands – a movement which was badly affected by both world wars and from which research never really recovered. German studies on Romanesque sculpture never equaled that of France or England, and the insightful initiatives of some 20 years earlier were later reduced to the level of localized studies.⁴⁵

The start of the twentieth century saw the arrival of some eminent scholars, including Robert de Lasteyrie (1849–1921) and Eugène Lefèvre-Pontalis (1862–1923), who, along with François Deshoulières, were responsible for establishing the relative chronological development of the period and hierarchical structure for the monuments. It was this that was questioned and countered by Arthur Kingsley Porter (1883–1933), the American scholar. His work, based on a stylistic comparison as well as a robust use of documentation and dating, offered an alternative to the progressive and gradual evolution of Romanesque architecture and sculpture throughout the entire country on a regional basis and instead looked at monasticism and pilgrimage as influential forces.⁴⁶ Porter's beliefs of a possible origin for French Romanesque sculpture in Burgundy was not to be accepted until well into the next historiographical phase, with the admission by Francis Salet that he might have been right. The origins of Porter's theory brings us to one of the most eminent historians of the whole period, Henri Focillon (1881–1943), whose research on style in particular has remained significant to the present.⁴⁷ This was driven by a strong belief in an analysis of style and technique and he theorized on a widely dispersed evolutionary pattern of stylistic development.⁴⁸ Kingsley Porter's studies have suffered most and are now seen as being slightly outdated. After his untimely death, the mantle was taken up by Paul Deschamps (1888–1974), whose work in 1947 on the regional nature of French sculpture has also come in for recent criticism.⁴⁹

By the third decade of the twentieth century, Romanesque sculpture had become one of the most important areas for research.⁵⁰ Publications studied individual monuments and also included relatively large-scale catalog-type studies. A favorite platform for such studies was the *Bulletin Monumental*, first published in 1834 under the auspices of the Société française d'archéologie, Musée des Monuments Français, and which to this day is still one of the most important avenues for new research.

The interest in Romanesque sculpture in England at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is not heralded by any comparable studies, and the division

between the antiquarian works of the preceding period and this phase is imperceptible. Romanesque sculpture in England and Ireland differs considerably from that of mainland Europe. Organized on a more localized regional and school-type structure than France, different influences came into play at various times and in different areas with little uniformity. Its popular and indeed scholarly acceptance was impeded to a certain extent by these influences.⁵¹ Cahn has further theorized how this sculpture fared worse than book illumination in England and has proposed that the Reformation, Puritan movement, iconoclasm, and weather all militated against its popular acceptance.⁵² Its entry even into the museum world is also relatively late in England, with the first display of Romanesque sculpture in the Victoria and Albert Museum taking place as late as 1916. Its study in the academic world was similarly neglected until the founding of the Courtauld Institute of Art in 1932. It is not surprising therefore to find that catalog-type works predominated at the start of the century and were to do so for many decades. Instead of having the antiquarian stance of the nineteenth century, they instead tried to analyze form and iconography from a more focused perspective. Typical of such scholarship are those by Keyser and Bond with their formative studies on tympana and fonts. World War II was naturally to disrupt scholarship in the entire world of art history, but it was also to prove to be a benchmark period in which scholarship took on a new emphasis and life.

Phase IV, the Age of Modernism

Even though his work belongs largely to the third phase, the influence of Meyer Schapiro is felt most in this final phase with the legacy that he was to impart with his publications and through his many students. Beginning in 1935 with a study on Moissac, Forsyth has summarized Schapiro's approach as being very much based on the belief that form and meaning were inseparable.⁵³ He lacks many of the entrenched views prior to the outbreak of World War II.⁵⁴ Both world wars were adversely to affect scholarship on Romanesque sculpture, especially in Europe, but also with positive results for its future study in America where interest increased. France was naturally to retain its pre-eminent role in scholarship on the subject after World War II, and was also to hold onto its slightly entrenched Franco-centric view. The focus once again was the ongoing issue of the origins of the style, and numerous studies both reinforced the belief of a French genesis and its gradual movement throughout the rest of the country.

This was also a period of controversy in France with various official and unofficial theories forwarded as to the origins of monumental sculpture in terms of place and dispersal, with Francis Salet, head of the Société française d'archéologie, playing a central role.⁵⁵ Despite the series of disputes and controversies, Lyman has documented how this was a period in which Romanesque sculpture entered popular acceptance and was no longer under the sole control of the scholar.⁵⁶ It was also at this time that a number of studies began to use the socio-historical

approach that was first developed in relation to history by such scholars as Georges Duby. The need and value of having a complete documentary and photographic record of all Romanesque sculpture was first proposed by Focillon and its aims remain as valid today as when they were first stated well over half a century ago. The publication in 1954 by Jean Baudry of the first volume in a regional survey of French Romanesque sculpture titled *Bourgogne Romane* began one of the foremost surveys of this subject, which has since moved outside its national borders with the publication in 1999 of Volume 88 on Westphalia. It has paved the way for a similar series of hardcopy publications in the United States⁵⁷ and the more recent large-scale electronic undertaking in Britain of the Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland which was founded by George Zarnecki some 20 years ago. All of these undertakings are adding significantly to our understanding of this sculpture and in many ways continue the role of the antiquarian started some 300 years ago.

More recent French research by scholars such as Baylé, Boss-Favre, Cabanot, Durliat, Fain, Gould, Vergnolle, and Wirth has focused on the general as well as the regional nature of the sculpture and is now being driven from a greater understanding of what exactly has survived and how it can be viewed in relation to the broader picture.⁵⁸ These studies have looked at the functionality and creative powers behind such works from an interdisciplinary perspective, which has blended archeology and art history with slightly less of an emphasis on iconography.⁵⁹ The great period of iconographical research certainly seems to have gone and its role now appears to be secondary or equal to such issues as form or function.

French sculpture has continued to attract foreign scholars such as Borg, Cahn, Evans, Montagu, Rupprecht, Seidel, Stratford, Tcherikover, Travis, and Zarnecki, to name just a few, who have helped in removing some of the nationalism attached to such studies in the past and have also opened up the field to different issues. Our perceptions of the material have changed and there seems to be less of an emphasis on developing an absolute chronology for the entire period. Many of “the chronological implications of some general theories on the nature of Romanesque (were) formulated in the early decades of this (last) century”⁶⁰ and have tended to overshadow subsequent research and directed the approach of scholarship which is now being questioned. Occasional studies such as Anne Prache’s recent work still place a high emphasis on the search for the origins of the style, which is going to be a question that will remain with us for a long time.⁶¹

Studies have also looked at the more localized monument or group of carvings, and we are developing a more organized and paced approach to understanding the development of style. If research continued in France after the war, it was not to be so in Germany, where some of the country’s most established scholars fled their own lands and in many ways also left the subject of Romanesque sculpture behind them. Erwin Panofsky, for example, was one such scholar whose earliest work was on German Romanesque sculpture,⁶² but who was never to write on the subject again after he moved to America. Nowadays, German scholarship on the subject is limited, little remains in situ, and the pre-war nationalistic associations

that it evokes may lie in the modern avoidance of scholarship on the subject. Apart from the work of Kiesow, Legner, Lobbedey, Schütz, Müller, and von Winterfeld, little else has been written on this subject.

The highpoint of research on Romanesque sculpture in England began in the middle of the twentieth century with the general survey-type works on sculpture by scholars such as Prior and Gardner (1912), Gardner (1935), Zarnecki (1951, 1953), Saxl (1954), and Stone (1955) and after a short hiatus, interest was revitalized with the exhibition on Romanesque art that was held in 1984.⁶³ Localized studies now also predominate which are very much driven from an archeological perspective and, as in France, there is an emphasis on understanding form, style, and function with little work being done on iconography or reception. Ireland, like England, after the pioneering work by Françoise Henry and more recently by O’Keeffe, has eagerly awaited the completion of the Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture, and scholarship here as elsewhere has been diverted into adding to this resource.⁶⁴

We may have identified the hands of a few more sculptors since the pioneering work of the early part of the century, but this is an area that could benefit from greater research. Unusually for a topic so current in other areas of medieval scholarship, little study has been undertaken on reception issues in Romanesque sculpture.⁶⁵ We still remain relatively ignorant as to how these programs were viewed from the variety of contexts that exist and this is an area of research that will pay dividends in the future. Similarly, the need to contextualize this sculpture in the broader framework of Romanesque art still remains. Manuscript and metalwork studies have been linked, but sculpture still remains the isolated medium in the broader picture. The historiography of Romanesque sculpture has been guided by the attempts of the early historians to impose far-reaching rules regarding creation, date, dispersal, form, and style, which have recently been questioned with greater research into the *minutiae* of the style. This is a process which will only increase with time and greater knowledge, and will add to our understanding of what is clearly one of the most important periods in the history of sculpture.

Acknowledgments

This chapter is dedicated to the late George Zarnecki, doyen of British Romanesque art history, for all his help and encouragement. Thanks are due to Conrad Rudolph for inviting to me to contribute to this volume. Many colleagues have helped with my queries and these include Jens Bove (Bildarchiv Foto Marburg), Christian Heck (University of Lille), Alison Stones (University of Pittsburgh), Adelaide Bennett, Giovanni Freni, Andrea Campbell (Index of Christian Art, Princeton University), and Andreas Petzold (Open University). I would like to thank Jane Vadnal (University of Pittsburgh) for permission to reproduce the images and to John Blazejewski (Index of Christian Art, Princeton University) for his help with photography.

Notes

- 1 [On Romanesque architecture, see Chapter 17 by Fernie in this volume. See also Chapter 19 on the modern origins of Romanesque sculpture by Maxwell in this volume (ed.).]
- 2 Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*.
- 3 Frankl, *The Gothic*.
- 4 Lyman, *French Romanesque Sculpture; Glass, Italian Romanesque Sculpture*.
- 5 Cahn and Seidel, *Romanesque Sculpture*.
- 6 Forsyth "Monumental Arts."
- 7 After a long period of relative neglect it is rewarding to see an increasing interest in individual scholars such as Meyer Schapiro, whose extensive studies on the sculpture of this period were the subject of a session at a College Art Association meeting (Philadelphia, February 23, 2002) entitled "Reassessing the Legacy of Meyer Schapiro." Two of the papers, by Forsyth ("Narrative at Moissac") and Cahn ("Schapiro and Focillon"), were subsequently published in *Gesta*. The work and character of Arthur Kingsley Porter, after a long period of neglect, was also recently studied by Richardson ("The Fate of Kingsley Porter") and Neuman de Vegvar ("Shadow of the Sidhe") and he was the subject of a paper at the 38th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo 2003 (session 203, "Michael Camille and Kingsley Porter: Modernity, Medieval Margins and the Monstrous," Janice Mann).
- 8 Maxwell and Ambrose, *Current Directions*.
- 9 Brush, *Shaping of Art History*.
- 10 Cocke, "Pre-19th-Century Attitudes in England" and "The Rediscovery of the Romanesque." See also Kahn, "La Sculpture Romane."
- 11 See the *Grove Dictionary of Art*: www.oxfordartonline.com, accessed 24 August 2018.
- 12 Largely consisting of capitals, corbels, bases, jambs, lintels, cornices, and relief panels such as those found on tympana. The repertoire also includes liturgical furniture including fonts, altars, pulpits, and thrones as well as funerary slabs, but can also include freestanding figures such as those found in twelfth-century Germany.
- 13 The term "Romanesque" was first applied only to the architecture of this period, which of course included elements of the sculpture and was only applied to all the arts of the period at a later stage.
- 14 [On Gothic sculpture, see Chapter 22 by Jung in this volume (ed.).]
- 15 Caviness, *Politics of Taste*, pp. 57–81.
- 16 [On sculptural programs in general, see Chapter 33 by Boerner in this volume (ed.).]
- 17 See Forsyth, "Monumental Arts," p. 23.
- 18 Romanesque sculpture is sparsely represented in the Low Countries (with little surviving outside the Tournai and Meuse regions, and what is there being largely derivative), Switzerland (where historically it was part of the Holy Roman Empire and would have come under the influence of France and Italy), and Austria (which again was part of the Holy Roman Empire and has significantly more and better quality carvings surviving). Scandinavia has similarly been neglected in terms of scholarship and little has been written of this sculpture, which represents the first relief sculpture in that area (see www.oxfordartonline.com).

- 19 Although not published since first given at the First European Congress of Medieval Studies at Spoleto, Mortenson's ideas have fortunately been preserved by Constable ("Introduction," p. xiii).
- 20 Sauerländer, *Romanesque Art*, pp. 40–56.
- 21 See Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance*.
- 22 See Frankl, *The Gothic*; van der Grinten, *Elements of Art*, pp. 5–7, Doolittle, "Relations Between Literature and Medieval Studies"; Edelman, *Attitudes of Seventeenth Century France*; and Cocke, "Pre-19th-Century Attitudes."
- 23 There have been no historiographical studies of Romanesque sculpture per se in contrast to that of the Gothic period. Bober gives one of the best general outlines in the preface to the English language edition of Mâle (*Religious Art in France*, pp. v–xxiv). Also of interest are Beer, "Gothic," and Cocke, "The Rediscovery of the Romanesque." See also Fernie, "Contrasts" and *Romanesque Architecture*.
- 24 Frankl, *The Gothic*; van der Grinten, *Elements of Art*.
- 25 One of the most comprehensive studies on the negative application of the term "Gothic" is given in Frankl, *The Gothic*. For Vasari, the word "Gothic" was defined as non-Roman or Barbarian – it was an art and period which lay outside the Classical or Roman world (see also Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*).
- 26 Whereas post-medieval scholarship may not have chosen to distinguish between the Romanesque and Gothic, it is clear that the two styles were viewed separately in the Middle Ages where both Panofsky ("Friedsam Annunciation") and Fernie (*Romanesque Architecture*, p. 1) have pointed out the use of Romanesque architectural and sculptural forms, especially in fifteenth-century Northern painting, to denote a period removed from their own.
- 27 Wilkins, "An Essay."
- 28 North, *Of Building*, p. 111.
- 29 See Marquardt, *Defining French Romanesque*.
- 30 Typical of these early works are Pierre Monier's "Histoire des arts qui ont rapport au dessin" (1698).
- 31 Also founded at this time were the École des Chartres (1804), the Société des antiquaires de France (1821), Congrès archeologique de France (1834), and the Commission des monuments historiques (1837).
- 32 Preziosi, ed., *The Art of Art History*, p. 22.
- 33 See Frankl, *The Gothic*, p. 345; Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*, pp. 155–156; Gidon, "L'Invention du terme," pp. 268–288.
- 34 Prior to Gunn, this style was referred to in England as Saxon, Anglo-Norman, Gothic, Monastic, or *Opus Romanorum* (see Cocke, "Rediscovery of the Romanesque," p. 360).
- 35 Watkin, *Morality*, p. 33; See also Scott, *Gothic Enterprise*, p. 14.
- 36 Marquand and Frothingham, *A Text-Book*.
- 37 Schnaase, *Geschichte der Bildenden*; Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle*; *Religious Art in France*.
- 38 One of Lenoir's most significant contributions is his *Description historique et chronologique des monument de sculpture réunis a Musée des monumens Français* (1803).
- 39 The encyclopedic way of seeing and studying in nineteenth-century France is described in Inglebert, *Le Monde*.
- 40 Mâle, *Religious Art in France*, p. xxix.
- 41 Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle*, pp. iv, v.

- 42 It was Mâle who first described the sculptors of the Middle Ages as “writers in stone” – an approach later discussed by Camille, “Mouths and Meanings,” pp. 43–54.
- 43 Brush, *Shaping of Art History*, p. 1.
- 44 Beenken, *Romanische skulptur*.
- 45 Isolated regional studies of Romanesque sculpture such as that by Fastenau, *Romanische Steinplastik*, were certainly under way before World War I, but were to be disrupted until the early 1930s. Pinder’s 1925 study, *Deutsche plastik*, is one of the first to post-date the war, but was sadly not followed by other works in this area.
- 46 Porter, *Les Débuts and Romanesque Sculpture*.
- 47 One of the most revelatory documents from a historiographical perspective is a bibliography on Romanesque sculpture compiled by Focillon while lecturing at New York University. Divided under headings such as “Principles of Style” and “Historical Development,” it provides a personal documentation of what he considered important works on the subject (see Focillon, *Romanesque Sculpture in France*).
- 48 Focillon, *L’Art des sculpteurs Romains*. See also Francastel, *L’Humanisme roman*, pp. 194–200.
- 49 Tcherikover, *High Romanesque Sculpture*, pp. 1–2, provides a synopsis of the changing perspectives on this theory in general and shows how she believes it has hindered modern scholarship in that it was accepted verbatim.
- 50 One of the pivotal studies in the reversal of this theory was by Terret in 1914.
- 51 See Cahn, “Romanesque Art, Then and Now.”
- 52 Cahn, “English Romanesque Art,” p. 276.
- 53 Forsyth, “Narrative at Moissac.”
- 54 See Cahn, “Focillon’s Jongleur,” and Schmitt, “Images and the Historian.”
- 55 Lyman, *French Romanesque Sculpture*, pp. 159–160.
- 56 *Ibid.*, pp. 160–161.
- 57 Cahn and Seidel, *Romanesque Sculpture*.
- 58 Although Grodecki’s insightful work (*Le Moyen-Age retrouvé*) is now slightly dated, it still remains an invaluable study on this subject.
- 59 This shift in emphasis is nicely demonstrated when studies on Romanesque Normandy with their changing perspectives are examined: e.g. Gould, *La Sculpture romane*; Musset, *Normandie romane*; Baylé, *Les Origines, Architecture normande*.
- 60 Tcherikover, *High Romanesque Sculpture*, p. 1. This is reinforced by a number of similar statements from other scholars. Her study is typical of the current trend in reassessing published corpora, especially in France by scholars such as Baylé, Borg, Boss-Favre, and Vergnolle.
- 61 Prache, *Initiation à l’art roman*.
- 62 Panofsky, *Die Deutsche Plastik*.
- 63 See Cocke, “Rediscovery of the Romanesque” for all these works, except Gardner, *A Handbook*. Interestingly, the number of carvings in the actual exhibition (some 81) reflects an unusually high and unparalleled emphasis which must reflect that of the organizers.
- 64 Henry, *Irish Art*; O’Keeffe, “Lismore and Cashel.” The historiography of Romanesque Irish art is dealt with in detail in O’Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*.
- 65 One of the foremost treatments of this subject is in Kahn, *Romanesque Frieze*.

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Modern Origins of Romanesque Sculpture

Robert A. Maxwell

Ever since archeologists adopted the term “Romanesque” in the early nineteenth century, the label has profoundly influenced the study of eleventh- and twelfth-century sculpture. The act of naming a new style shaped research by signaling the discernment of an art different from Gothic (the period label to which scholars previously attached these works).¹ The nature of the difference, however, remained to be explored. The neologism also implied that the sources of the art were to be found in Roman traditions; nonetheless, even that seemingly straightforward notion raised many questions, not the least of which was the actual relationship to Roman building. Romanesque needed definition, more than a name alone could supply.

Archeologists looked first primarily to the architecture, folding sculpture into the taxonomic layers used to describe arches, vaults, and wall surfaces, but before long discussion of stylistic sources raised questions regarding the role of sculpture in Romanesque development.² Scholars noted high and low phases – birth, maturity, and decline – in step with art history’s foundational theory of evolutionary progress, but in this schema the birth of Romanesque sculpture was the most perplexing. After all, scholars understood that the production of monumental sculpture had fallen off in the post-antique period. Its resuscitation needed explanation. Identifying the origins could thus offer clues to Romanesque art’s particularity and contribute to an understanding of the distinct qualities that marked it from the art that came before and after.

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This chapter surveys several ways scholarship has addressed the origins of monumental sculpture in the Romanesque period, limiting its discussion to three specific approaches to the problem. One approach looked to different geographic regions to explain the style's distant sources; another considered the problem more philosophically and searched to define sculptural characteristics in metaphysical terms; and a third approach attributed the rebirth of sculpture to a shift in iconographic or signifying value. All three attracted debate, and on occasion doctrinal entrenchment obfuscated the substance behind the quarrels, but there is little doubt that these polemics propelled further research and indelibly shaped the field.

The Place of Origins

From its earliest concerted study, Romanesque art was identified with geography. The Englishman William Gunn and the Frenchman Charles de Gerville first applied the terms "Romanesque" and "*roman*" in the 1810s to signal a relationship to Roman building traditions.³ Both understood the term in the philological sense as marking both the debased Latinity of post-antique language and the derivative quality of Romance languages. In France, *roman* also found an analogue in the popular word *romanesque*, or novel-like, equally at ease describing a tortuous series of events, a dreamy attitude, or an eccentric person. The use of *roman* for eleventh- and twelfth-century art carried with it some of these connotations: it hinted at the curiousness of this art (in the sense of *romanesque*) while framing it in the philological sense of cultural erosion.

The impression that this art was somehow derivative, one or more steps removed from Rome itself, received widespread support from the outset, notably in the early lectures of Arcisse de Caumont (1830), the widely influential founder of the Société française d'archéologie.⁴ His discussion of architecture classified eleventh- and twelfth-century buildings into chronological periods and regional types, categories formulated in relation to the Roman tradition. Sculpture fell into his purview, earning brief stylistic commentary, yet it figured as little more than architecture's accessory for classificatory purposes. Some countrymen pushed Caumont's theory even further by contending that Romanesque art in France was more Roman-like than the art produced in other countries.⁵ In a tradition stretching back to Chateaubriand and forward to Emile Mâle (1917, 1922), the modern Catholic nation as a new Rome partly explained the special success of medieval art on French soil.

Although Caumont was probably Europe's most influential medievalist, his taxonomy did not satisfy all scholars. In Great Britain, for example, terms such as "Saxon" and "Norman" had long circulated in antiquarian circles and grounded this art in the indigenous history of the British Isles.⁶ Terms like "byzantine" and "oriental" were also not uncommon in the late eighteenth century, yielding period classifications like "romano-Byzantine primordial" (i.e. 400–1000) and

“romano-Byzantine secondaire” (1000–1100) that lingered until the start of the twentieth century.⁷ All such terms reflected the idea that this art’s pedigree may not have been purely Roman.⁸ Some scholars considered the Eastern impulse much more decisive. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, for one, argued that the Crusades provided the conduit of exchange, enabling the West’s interaction with the East. Only when the Latin tradition received this new impetus did it flourish as a new and distinctive style.⁹

Some scholarship also steered away from Latin and Byzantine sources to discover a distinctly “Northern” quality. Viollet-le-Duc believed, in addition to his Crusades theory, in a northern contribution: after the death of Charlemagne, each region’s people regained its “natural allure,” enabling each country to translate its own genius for the regeneration of its art.¹⁰ Louis Courajod developed this notion with greater precision by examining the specific traits of the northern impulse, arguing that Romanesque art drew its influences from the Celts, various Germanic tribes, and also Muslims.¹¹ The search for Northern European sources also found general support among some German and English scholars, including Franz Kugler (1842), Franz von Reber (1886), and William Lethaby (1904), who all described Romanesque at least in part as a “Northern” product. The American Arthur Kingsley Porter wrote an essay in 1909 strongly in favor of the general northern view, claiming that “five centuries of barbarism [were] the only conceivable force that could have had the power to free Western architecture from the trammels of Roman formula.” Owing to the cultural vacuum of the Dark Ages, Porter claimed, art could be reborn, “cut loose from the classical canons.”¹²

With such sentiments, discussion occasionally tipped into explicit commentary on the race of nations, as in the 1901 work of Josef Strzygowski. Strzygowski championed the Syrian and Palestinian influences on Western Christian art, but he also posited the special innate qualities of the “Nordic” man.¹³ The increasingly overt racial theories draped a noxious pall over his later studies in particular. Far less sulfurous but no less nationalistic, Emile Mâle answered the Viennese-based scholar, as well as Porter, by saying that Germany was not the privileged birthplace of Romanesque; its origins were in the East and this Eastern impulse took root first on French soil.¹⁴ Henri Focillon expressed similarly impassioned opinions and accentuated an East–West rift in geographic debates when he argued that Romanesque art (and all medieval art of quality) was distinct to the West (*l’Occident*) and foreign to Germanic lands whose rudimentary arts reflected the barbarism of the people.¹⁵

In 1911 the Catalan architect and archeologist Josep Puig i Cadafalch advanced a reverse position with his theory of the southern *primer art romànic* or *premier art roman*.¹⁶ He argued that the earliest recognizable Romanesque forms could be found around the Mediterranean, particularly in northern Italy and Catalonia at the start of the tenth century (fig. 19-1). Thereafter, the movement progressed north into Gaul and the Germanic Empire as far as the Moselle. If one wanted to search further for the origins of this first wave, he asserted, one would need to look eastward.¹⁷ “One could say that Romanesque art is a Mesopotamian art

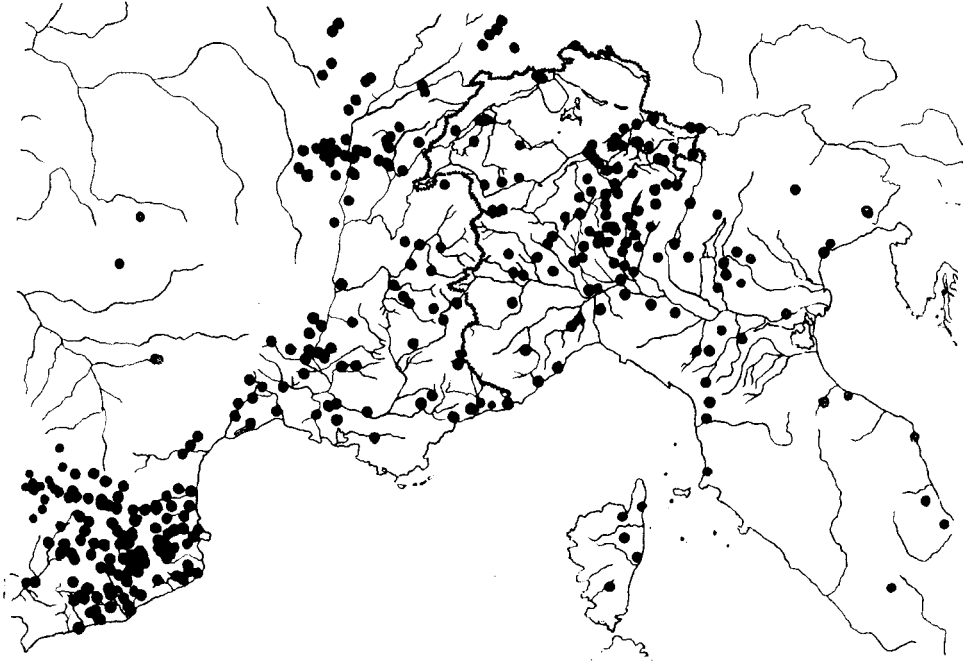


FIGURE 19-1 Map showing the spread of the “First Romanesque” style. Source: from J. Puig i Cadafalch, *La Géographie*.

in the same way that French art of the eighteenth century is a Greek art.”¹⁸ Though primarily an architecturally based theory, founded upon types of construction, wall decoration, and vaulting, the idea implicated sculpture by proposing the conditions of the medium’s genesis.

While the number of pan-Continental theories multiplied, scholars also paid growing attention to local geographic developments. In France the search for regional stylistic trends became tantamount to uncovering regional identities within national borders. Support for regional schools had much to do with the spread of local antiquarian societies, beginning with Caumont’s own *Société des antiquaires de Normandie* in 1824 (becoming the *Société française d’archéologie* in 1834),¹⁹ followed within a few years by a dozen regional archeological associations throughout the country. Since Caumont’s lectures in Normandy stressed classification into regional styles, this approach found its response at the local societies: hometown antiquarian-cum-archeologists quickly got busy plumbing the distinct qualities of their familiar monuments. Nave tribunes and half-barrel vaults, for example, became defining characteristics of Auvergnat Romanesque and in Poitou, the “hall” church typified the local style.

Caumont’s “geography of styles” won over many archeologists, though they often disagreed, sometimes quite vehemently, on the number of schools. Caumont identified seven distinct regions (North, Northwest, West, Southwest, Auvergne, Germanic, and Burgundian). Viollet-le-Duc, on the other hand, named seven in

one of his *Dictionnaire* entries and eight in another; in still other essays, he cited 11 and 13 schools.²⁰ Jules Quicherat, for his part, objected to Caumont's intuitive deductions and, borrowing terms from Linnaean classification, sought to ground identifications in more scientific data.²¹ Camille Enlart, one of the most outspoken proponents of the regional approach along with Robert de Lasteyrie, drew distinctions along very old (including Gallic) territorial divisions, thereby suggesting that something special in the soil, climate, and people produced differences among varieties of Romanesque art.²² Although all such regional divisions depended primarily on architectural qualities, scholars understood that sculpture added substantial corroborative evidence. The absence of carved tympana, for example, was typical of Aquitaine, while Burgundian portals exhibited a penchant for *Majestas* imagery, Auvergnat doorways favored carved, pedimental-shaped lintels, and Languedocian cloisters encouraged historiated capitals. Carving style was a less determinant but implicit part of this categorization.

England's scholars, too, attached great importance to regional traditions and to the local learned institutions established to study them, but with very different art historical results. After the refounding of the national Society of Antiquaries in 1717, regionalism received a boost with the 1751 incorporation of London's own Society of Antiquaries that in turn spurred the foundation of other local groups.²³ These societies sponsored comprehensive county surveys, such as Edward Hasted's four volumes on the county of Kent,²⁴ but sculpture was largely subordinate to the authors' interests (if present at all). Instead, these publications focused mainly on monuments' history and building accounts. Even into the nineteenth century, when single-edifice monographs such as those by Robert Willis on Canterbury and Glastonbury came to join the regional surveys, authors only considered sculpture as a complement to the architectural construction.²⁵ The first comprehensive sculptural studies did not appear until the twentieth century, and even then Romanesque sculpture did not foster the kinds of partisan border skirmishes that flared up in France.²⁶ If anything, the county studies in England championed not distinctions among counties, but distinctions between English and Continental Romanesque. Centuries-old traditions of stone carving in Britain, stretching back to the Anglo-Saxon period, provided grounds for this attitude, but British scholars nonetheless failed to reckon fully with the incumbent period categories like "Norman" or "Saxon"; the relation of twelfth-century sculpture to Anglo-Saxon or Irish high crosses, for example, remained problematic and unexplained. It was only in the twentieth century that, with the appearance of good surveys of this material, research began to entertain such questions.²⁷

Scholars of all nationalities reserved their fiercest debates for French monuments. The most famous volley came from the American Porter, seen (aside from its art historical merits) as an assault on the French academic establishment.²⁸ Porter overturned the usual hierarchies and argued for Spanish and Lombard priority in sculptural matters, and, within France itself, Burgundy's precedence over Languedoc. He based his position on scrupulous analysis of works and corroborating texts (dated foundation charters, altar consecrations, etc.).

And rather than posit merely natural evolution touching one region after another, he believed social phenomena such as pilgrimage and monastic reform helped explain stylistic progress and exchange.²⁹

The French academy bristled at Porter's rejection of their regional hierarchy and assailed his stylistic judgment and reading of texts. Paul Deschamps led the charge, publishing virulent corrections of Porter's textual evidence,³⁰ while others, such as François Deshoulières, Charles Dangibeaud, and Eugène Lefèvre-Pontalis, produced essays to reassert the schools classification.³¹ When a few French scholars, such as the widely respected Georges Gaillard working on Spanish sculpture and Charles Oursel working on Burgundy,³² offered research that supported some of Porter's theses, the tension ebbed; true détente did not reign, however, until the deaths of Porter and Deschamps in the 1930s. The dispute nonetheless left traces in subsequent scholarship and continues to mark especially Burgundian, Languedocian, and northern Spanish studies.³³

In Germany, Romanesque sculpture was late to garner specialized interest. When it did, the majority of nineteenth-century scholars remained attached to the study of abstract and formal qualities (cf. *infra*), rather than geographic sources.³⁴ After all, many believed that Romanesque sculpture represented simply a continuation of Ottonian forms and types, so the gradual distinctions that arose between the two periods could be explored best on aesthetic terms. A number of scholars in the early twentieth century, however, did pronounce on sculpture's geography and joined these debates. Julius Baum (1910), for one, stood behind Roman and Latinate origins, while Paul Frankl (1926) was perhaps Germany's strongest exponent of the "northern" theory. Frankl, building upon the studies of Courajod and others, sketched broad historical genealogies within Europe but tied regional styles to local conditions. Germany, in this view, held on longer to the Carolingian traditions, and thus continued a style consistent with the older forms. This was important since there were significant sculptural examples from tenth- and eleventh-century Germany, including works in stucco, that remained to be considered against the full Romanesque style. France and Italy, according to Frankl, likewise maintained traditions little different in form from Carolingian art, but by about 1080 developed their own regional styles – dependent on local temperament and conditions – that yielded the mature Romanesque. Frankl thus wove the study of regional specificity into a pan-European theory, melding the two outlooks most widely favored at this time.

Interest in geographic origins remained a constant, although less polemical, concern through the twentieth century. Kenneth John Conant maintained that Romanesque art had strong northern, Carolingian roots, and Charles Rufus Morey in 1942 echoed earlier scholars when he argued that the putatively Roman quality of Romanesque art was really a Germanic interpretation of Late Classical traditions.³⁵ Partisans of southern theories were not lacking either. Edson Armi traced the origins of the new style to the appearance of "continuous orders" in Catalonian and southern French churches,³⁶ while Roberto Salvini drew parallels between the *premier art roman* and linguistic

forms of provincial Latin that developed in particular social climates of southern Europe.³⁷ Such studies from the second half of the century, however, began to integrate the search for origins with other concerns, initiatives begun already in the 1920s and 1930s to which we turn below.

Origins as a Hermeneutic

Categorization had dominated the study of Romanesque art since the day of Gerville and Gunn, yet ongoing partisanship in geography discussions distracted somewhat from advances made in other areas of scholarship. In Germany, for example, nineteenth-century scholars were more steeped in aesthetics and stylistic qualities than in geographic (or scientific) explanations for Romanesque sculpture. F.W. Hegel's philosophy inspired scholars such as Carl Schnaase to discuss Romanesque sculpture in terms of stages in aesthetic evolution, and others under Heinrich Wöfflin's influence sought to define the style on purely formal terms. Some, such as Richard Hamann-MacLean (1908), Margret Burg (1922), and Eugen Lütghen (1923), speculated on the particularities of sculpture as a medium,³⁸ particularly in relation to Carolingian and Ottonian sculptural traditions.³⁹ Explanations of origins therefore occupied only the margins of such studies. Nonetheless, one scholar (also Hegel-inspired) who did address formal stylistic origins in a profound way was Henri Focillon, arguing that the new style was born of sculpture's own material conditions.

Focillon was convinced that the historicist, archeological endeavors of the nineteenth century unsatisfactorily served works of art. In his first book-length publication on a medieval subject, he argued instead that history experienced strong and weak periods, as well as moments of rupture, paroxysm, and *repli* that defied linear stylistic progress. Most significant, he believed, were "break-through" moments, those periods or episodes that revealed history's structure. As he said, there were several stages of humanity, or of human geology, whose stratigraphy must be taken apart to find the "present and the hidden" structure.⁴⁰ Form expressed itself through adherence to certain principles, guided for example by the exigencies of the sculptural canvas ("law of the frame") or the architectural field ("law of architecture"), and understanding these might hold the key to understanding the essence of Romanesque sculpture. The way to discern the patterns or laws was to attend to forms, their origins, survivals, and reawakenings, and from these patterns – revealing a kind of inherent structure or logic – one would arrive at an understanding of the history of a style, the history of art *tout court*.

In an important 1938 article, Focillon set the research agenda, as well as the method, for generations of scholars to come. He identified the year 1000 as crucial, one of those moments of both rupture (with the immediate past) and reawakening (of more distant traditions). Close study of this period's sculpture, therefore, should offer rare insight into the universe of forms specific to

Romanesque and provide a basis for understanding the special logic that separated this art from Gothic. His students (notably J. Baltrušaitis) consequently adopted the eleventh century as their field of predilection, publishing on the formal and geometric qualities of early sculpture in France.⁴¹

Following this methodological course were two Polish-born scholars, Louis Grodecki, one of Focillon's students, and the Courtauld-trained scholar George Zarnecki. They were perhaps their generation's most influential advocates of research into the rise of Romanesque sculpture as a distinct medium. Whether discussing sculpture in England, France, Switzerland, or Germany, both sought out the evidentiary forms that would demonstrate the evolution from early, rustic blocked-out capitals to fully mature historiated works of the twelfth century. The debt to Focillon surfaces in much of their work, whether in Grodecki's methodological essay on the inherent duality of Romanesque carving (described as both figure and architecture) or in case-studies, such as on Bernay's sculpture, or in Zarnecki's research into the early sculptural group at Payerne, Switzerland (fig. 19-2).⁴² Even this latter choice of subject derives from concerns laid out in Focillon's own writings, as in his reflections on Dijon's crypt capitals (fig. 19-3). When these scholars looked across the Channel, they also applied their Continental perspective to English sculpture.⁴³ Zarnecki, for example, argued that the impulses that gave rise to Romanesque sculpture were not indigenous to Britain, but brought from Normandy; for this reason English Romanesque sculpture does not properly begin until after 1066.⁴⁴ Viking and Anglo-Saxon art, he felt, were simply "quite out of step with the new architectural sculpture evolving on the Continent."⁴⁵ For these scholars, Romanesque production marked a new stylistic stage that wedded material and formal exigencies to produce works of unprecedented figural complexity.

These studies framed research for the next generation of scholars, although perhaps with more lasting effect in France than in England. Few in England maintained the interest in material origins along these lines, in spite of Zarnecki's status as one of Great Britain's most influential scholars.⁴⁶ When, for example, scholars addressed the distinctive character of Romanesque sculpture, as in Deborah Kahn's 1991 study of Canterbury Cathedral's earliest sculptural group, contextual considerations weighed more heavily than formalist study.⁴⁷ In France, on the other hand, Grodecki published an influential "state of the question" essay that outlined in very clear terms the important issues facing the study of French sculpture for the next generation of students.⁴⁸ Like Focillon's similar essay 20 years earlier, Grodecki championed the value of renewed research into the experimental impulses and ancient traditions that spurred on a slowly changing art form in the early years of the eleventh century.

Two subsequent generations have continued this interest, first in the work of Marcel Durliat, one of Grodecki's protégés, and in the work of Durliat's own students. Durliat, whose research focused on southern France and northern Spain, also in time published a "state of the question" article in 1968 setting out for future generations the issues that needed attention.⁴⁹ This article, however,



FIGURE 19-2 Capital. Payerne, Switzerland. University of Pennsylvania Image Collection. Source: photo courtesy of David Robb.

demonstrates how far the orientation initiated by Focillon had strayed, for Durliat, while noting that research into origins had turned fruitfully to the Loire Valley, hoped to draw attention to other issues, such as the role of pilgrimage, the identity of sculptors, and the still unshakeable “schools” debate.⁵⁰

Even with this expanded query, however, the subsequent generation has continued to refine formalist inquiry to understand the qualities that make the sculpture Romanesque. Their research has produced a series of impressive regional studies: Maylis Baylé on Normandy, Eliane Vergnolle on the Loire Valley, Jean Cabanot on Bordelais and southwest sculpture, and Marie-Thérèse Camus on Poitou.⁵¹ Each explored the kinds of formal and material-based qualities that so intrigued the earlier scholars, while also bringing texts and other source material to bear, notably on proposed chronologies. Characteristic of these works is their



FIGURE 19-3 Crypt Capital, Orans figure, Dijon, France. Source: photo courtesy of Robert A. Maxwell.

careful attention to artists' working practices, particularly the preparatory blocking out of capitals (*épannelage*), interpreted as affecting the choice of decoration and its manner of display (fig. 19-4). This series of scholarly volumes, though independent projects, offer interconnecting pictures of the eleventh-century sculptural revival, and they fulfill in many ways the wish uttered by Focillon in 1938 that an understanding of sculpture's formative development would only come once scholars had at their disposal detailed surveys of regional foyers.⁵²

This focus on the emergence of sculptural forms sometimes relegated iconographic questions to the background, although increasingly since the 1980s research has looked to reconcile form with issues of content. Rows of men crouched under a capital's abacus appeared to conform to the "law of the frame," but was this all there was to the figural impulse in early sculpture? The rich portal at Moissac, already the subject of much text-based research, would prove a prime test subject: Grodecki, Durliat, and Vergnolle all published on the abbey's portal group and argued that the tympanum's Last Judgment was not simply a translation from other pictorial sources, as Mâle had insisted (see below).⁵³ Instead, the tympanum's organization and its elaboration of eschatological themes had

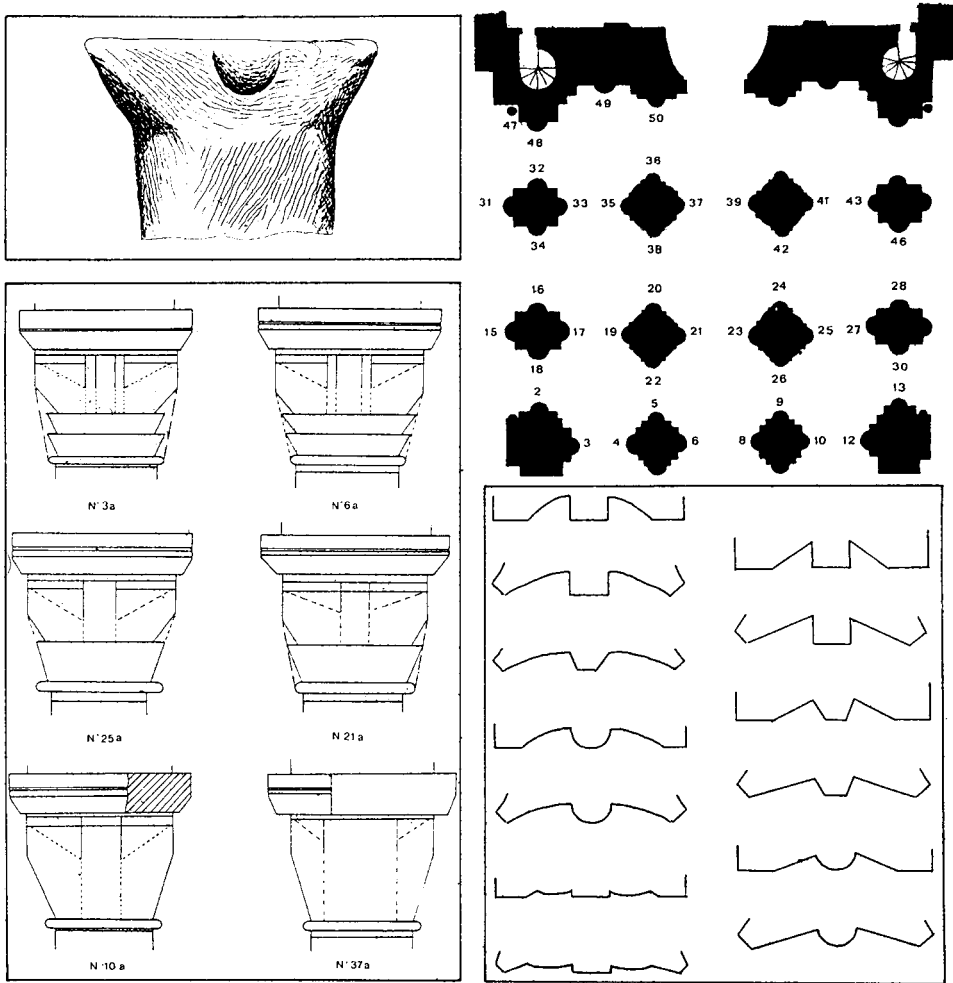


FIGURE 19-4 Diagram of capital profiles and *épannelage*. Source: reproduced from E. Vergnolle, *Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire*.

much to do with the constraints of the sculptural field and how those constraints engendered certain iconographical solutions; for them, neither a pre-existing text nor a chain of formal evolutions could alone “explain” the decorative program. In this sense, Focillon’s legacy was coming full circle: it had initially set new formal study at a distance from iconographic interpretation as practiced by Mâle, yet now decades later a muted formalism reintegrated iconographic study. This approach received confirmation in a recent survey of Romanesque monumental arts, in which Vergnolle addressed on equivalent methodological terms the early sculpture of St.-Génis-des-Fontaines and later work at Cluny.⁵⁴ Although not slavishly faithful to Focillon’s work, this latest discussion continues the exploration of form’s origins as an interpretative means for unlocking the defining qualities of the Romanesque as a distinct period style.

Content, Context, and the Sculptural Revival

For many nineteenth-century amateurs of the Middle Ages, religious meaning, not form, was medieval art's greatest legacy. The task of the archeologist was to uncover the theological bases for the assorted beasts, plants, and tunic-clad figures that decorated these millennium-old objects. This line of research produced voluminous compendia of iconographic interpretations, yet such works on the whole failed to consider subject matter as a defining quality of Romanesque sculpture or to entertain the possibility that content or meaning was somehow related to the condition of the period style. This position changed dramatically at the start of the twentieth century and within just a few decades scholarship's preoccupation with texts and contexts inflected even geographic and formalist approaches to sculpture's origins.⁵⁵

This shift owed a great deal to Emile Mâle, whose publications made an important contribution to the specific definition of Romanesque sculpture in iconographic terms. Resurgent enthusiasm for Catholic teaching in France, as well as the philological underpinning of much art historical practice, drew Mâle and others to look specifically for sculpture's origins in religious texts.⁵⁶ Although some simplified the matter to a purely philological issue, viewing pictures as just another form of textual transmission, Mâle viewed the rise of sculptural imagery as linked additionally to the survival of iconography in other visual media, especially from early Christian sources. "Christian iconography, born in the Near East, came to us ready-made," kept alive for centuries in the West through illuminated manuscripts (fig. 19-5). Romanesque sculptors incorporated novel motifs and ideas for the new medium, but all the same, the illuminated miniature "explains both the contorted aspect of our nascent sculpture and profoundly traditional character of our iconography."⁵⁷ The "rebirth" of sculpture was thus crucially bound to iconographic expression in a textual mode. It is no wonder then that Mâle considered monasticism crucial to this revival, for the religious orders were the link to early Christian textual/iconographic traditions. "Twelfth-century art is above all a monastic art," and sculpture was its religious codex in stone.⁵⁸

This codicological view of origins overlapped with another growing concern, namely the relation of monumental sculpture to the minor arts.⁵⁹ Comparisons to other media showed that the art of monumental carving, considered to have been entirely lost since Late Antiquity, was perpetuated in miniature form through metalwork, ivories, and gemstones. German scholars in particular had for a long time acknowledged sculpture's debt to Carolingian and Ottonian art production,⁶⁰ an orientation that reflected that country's longstanding scholarly commitment to those periods. German specialists understood the revival of sculpture in the eleventh century as simply part of a continuous chain of stylistic and technical development, and so, whether researching the sculpture of the Rhineland, Saxony, or the Netherlands, drew upon the corpus of surviving *Kleinkunst* to demonstrate continuity with ninth- and tenth-century art.⁶¹

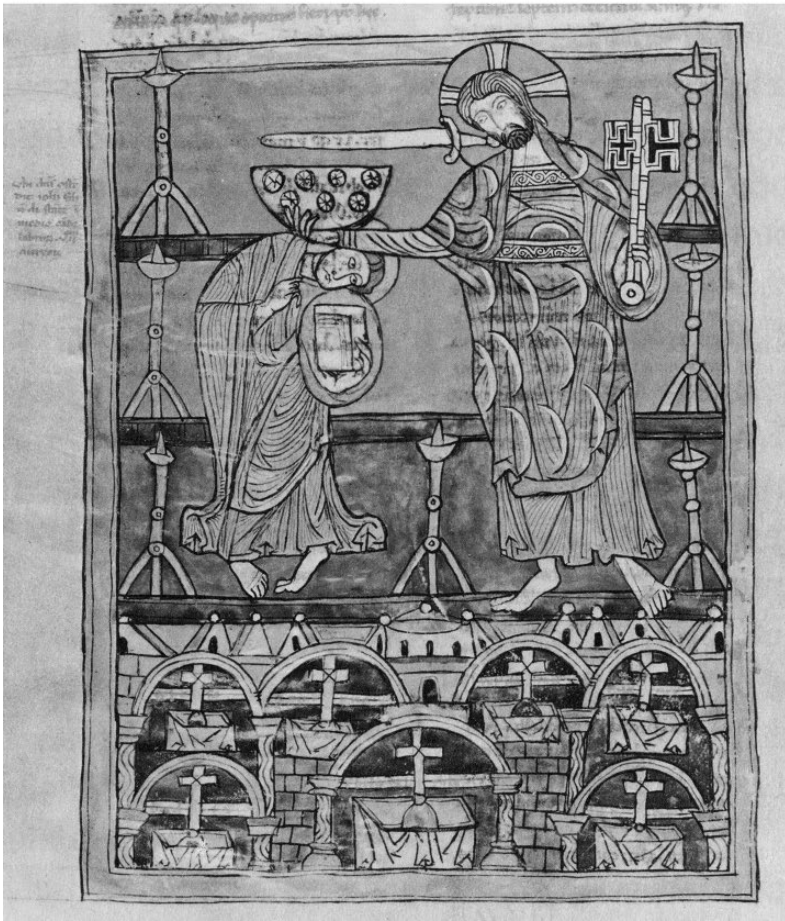


FIGURE 19-5 Vision of St. John: E. Mâle's comparison of sculptural (*above*) and manuscript iconography (*below*). Tympanum, south portal from La Lande-de-Fronsac, St. Pierre (*above*) and from Beatus Apocalypse, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS nouv.acq.lat. 1366, fol. 12v (*below*). Source: reproduced with permission from James Austin, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and Princeton University Press. Reproduced from E. Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Twelfth Century*, figs. 7, 8.

Some authors working in this tradition sought more than stylistic comparisons, however, and attempted to understand the traits that set eleventh- and twelfth-century work apart. For them, the decisive change in Romanesque art was its new conception of scale and its mastery of volume that projected a truly sculptural presence. Wilhelm Vöge developed an approach to address these changes in his discussion of the “monumental” quality of early Gothic sculpture.⁶² Although he applied this term to the mid-twelfth-century figures of the Royal Portal at Chartres, it effectively articulated the sentiment that large sculpture was but a translation in scale of precious objects. In Germany, Vöge’s evocative writings profoundly influenced a generation of students, including Hermann Beenken and a young Erwin Panofsky.⁶³ There was in these works a Formalist strain, and many scholars, applying *Stilkritik* indebted as much to Wöfflin as to the evolutionary aesthetics of Schnaase, produced stylistic categories without so much furthering discussion of monumentality or the material origins of the period style.⁶⁴

A more contextual strain of German and French scholarship viewed the issue slightly differently. Some authors viewed the problem as one of religious value, attributing the rise of freestanding sculpture to a shift in importance of cult objects. Louis Bréhier was one of the first to draw attention to the statues of the seated Madonna – “Vierges reliquaires” – as signal elements for the rebirth of sculpture,⁶⁵ and a number of scholars followed in this path. In Harald Keller’s important study of Ottonian precedents,⁶⁶ the reliquary function legitimated sculpture in the eyes of the church; it is only through this specific liturgical role that sculpture gained a foothold among accepted artistic forms. Some scholars, though, such as Paul Deschamps⁶⁷ and Hubert Schrade⁶⁸ (whose essay directly challenged Keller’s thesis), while more or less acknowledging that liturgical function played some role in sculpture’s rebirth, diluted the effects of this one cause by setting it within broader considerations.⁶⁹ Schrade emphasized changes in religious experience and belief, and for Deschamps, among many others, material and technical aspects illuminated sculpture’s affinities with other types of object. These latter discussions therefore considered monumental reliefs and metal retables as a single class of object (namely cultic) that naturally shared traditions of technique and craft; as the role of monumental productions grew, sculptors merely graduated to ever grander lapidary exploits.⁷⁰ A number of surveys, such as those by Arthur Gardner (1931) and Millard F. Hearn (1981), endorse this general perspective. Thomas Lyman (1978) offered a qualifying note to the theory when he asserted that it was precisely a decline in metal arts that made skilled artists available.⁷¹

Origins for these scholars lay not in geographical explanations or philosophical approaches, but in material developments that addressed religious needs and functions. Over the course of the twentieth century, liturgical use, patronage, and artist’s techniques occupied an increasingly important place in sculpture studies as scholars looked outward from the object to understand the conditions of its production.⁷² Whereas Bréhier had drawn in 1912 a parallel in form and sacrality between large-scale sculpture and small, tenth-century Marian cult statues, when Ilene Forsyth treated the same subject in 1972, the methodological gulf between

them had widened considerably.⁷³ Forsyth's attention to a complex set of cultural conditions, chief among them changes in liturgy, doctrinal theology, popular devotion, and sculptural praxis, evinced a profoundly contextual turn, for which the origin of sculpture was not reducible either to form or content alone.

Although Mâle's text-bound studies did much to promote interest in areas such as pilgrimage, monastic spirituality, and liturgical drama, Meyer Schapiro's studies collectively provided an equally important model for the contextual, or social-historical, approach. They addressed the specific problem of sculptural revival in terms of social critique. Pointing to images of secular musicians carved in the cloister at Silos and gestures of feudal homage at Souillac, and drawing upon the history, liturgy, and economics of those two sites, Schapiro drew attention to a set of social circumstances that he felt conditioned, even enabled, the sculptural revival.⁷⁴ These specific sculptures provided testimony to the clash of the sacred and secular worlds, irrevocably brought together in the new twelfth-century economy, and, most important of all, to the rise of the artist as an individual within an emerging class structure. The irruption of profane motifs into traditionally religious themes and settings marked for Schapiro not only a defining moment of Romanesque sculpture, but of history itself.

For other scholars, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, the contextual view produced a different result. Sculpture's revival was, if not an expression of the tensions caused when rising secular society invaded the once hermetic domain of religious art, as Schapiro believed, at least emblematic of an awakened human spirit. Jean Adhémar and Pierre Francastel discerned a self-consciousness in the iconographic developments of the eleventh century, particularly in the reuse of motifs from antiquity.⁷⁵ For Francastel, the manipulation in the twelfth century of lingering Classical traditions marked a significant shift in artistic consciousness. On one hand, he said, the late eleventh-century sculptural programs (such as at Toulouse) represented a monumentality that was a burden to the artist, too much under the weight of tradition; yet the sculptural play later (as at Charlieu) bore witness to a new freedom from tradition's constraints.⁷⁶ There is no way to explain this "miracle," not by reference to Near Eastern iconographic roots or the belief in a genius artist, other than by the rise of a liberated spirit, the collective soul of a humanistic Renaissance. It is worth recalling that a similarly hopeful nostalgia, but in formal terms, framed Focillon's writings of about the same date (although criticized by Francastel), as when he saw in an early eleventh-century capital at Dijon the human form emerging from material bonds, creative humanity awakening after a long slumber (fig. 19-3).

Conclusion

Focillon's approach had little in common with the methodological positions of Mâle or Schapiro; yet, as that final example demonstrates, the various theories of origins often shared some common intellectual ground. Different positions

overlapped and they certainly did so with more complexity than this brief chapter can adequately portray. Many of the scholars named above weighed in on not one but several approaches to the problem of origins. Focillon, for example, shared beliefs in the geographic sources of iconography with Mâle, just as Puig i Cadafalch and Baum understood their architectural research as contributions to the definition of Romanesque sculpture as a distinct medium. The methodological lines drawn above, therefore, should be considered not as reflective of absolute doctrines but as representative of the intellectual spaces in which conflicting and complementary theories struggled to understand a style that had been introduced into academic discussion only relatively recently.

What is clear, however, is that these queries on origins were set in motion from the moment the art “became” Romanesque through the coining of that term. The discovered style (and period) required definition and clarification, whether through formal or iconographic criteria and whether tracing the style’s genesis to a place, a metaphysical essence, or a context. Some of these queries set about trying to understand Romanesque sculpture *après la lettre*; that is, the descriptive term determined the manner of research. This is particularly evident in the geographic research, for the name pressed the art historian onward to seek out what was Roman and what was not. The question of course could only have been so posed once the art was called Romanesque. Even those opposed to the notion of a Roman inheritance, looking to the North or the Near East for the style’s origins, placed too much faith in the heuristic value of the modern term, and they took to arguing against the term as if it were as determined as the style itself. The intertwined invocations of nations, regions, and race, resembled a search as much for Romanesque art’s origins as modern cultural ones.

Scholarship since the 1970s has focused less on resolving the specific place or time of Romanesque sculpture’s genesis. Many would agree that the reappearance of monumental sculpture on a wide scale in the eleventh century was a form of continuity with cultures past – Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian, for example. Certain factors (social or political), as pointed out by Mâle and Schapiro among others, may have provided a special impetus along the way, giving a boost to sculpture as a crucial artistic commodity in evolving cultural contexts. It is perhaps not without some significance that content and contextual studies, such as those by Mâle, Francastel, and Schapiro, as well as a few of those that look to the minor arts as precursors, “postpone” the revival of sculpture until the twelfth century. These scholars’ interests in iconography and context find better examples in that later period than in the abstract or geometric sculpture of the early eleventh century. Whereas discussion of geographic origins drew the Romanesque style back in time to Rome or the Near East, contextual studies brought the so-called birth of Romanesque sculpture out of the eleventh century and into the twelfth. So much so, that Schapiro’s and Francastel’s studies even attribute to this sculpture qualities that are often also associated with the Gothic period: the secularization of a new bourgeois Christendom, on the one hand, and individualistic humanism, on the other. Students of context brought Romanesque forward, closer to their era, and there too the search for Romanesque origins seemed at times equally as much a search for modern ones.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

- 1 [See also chapter 18 on Romanesque sculpture in Northern Europe by Hourihane in this volume. On Gothic sculpture and sculptural programs in general, see Chapters 22 and 33 by Jung and Boerner (ed.).]
- 2 [On Romanesque architecture, see Chapter 17 by Fernie in this volume (ed.).]
- 3 Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*. I thank also W. Cahn for his valuable input on this subject.
- 4 Caumont, *Cours*, Vols. 4 and 6.
- 5 Courajod, *Leçons*, pp. 13–14.
- 6 Cocke, “The Rediscovery.”
- 7 Bourassé, *Archéologie chrétienne*. As applied esp. to sculpture, see de Verneilh, *Des Influences byzantines*.
- 8 Cf. references infra; also, Maxwell, “Misadventures.”
- 9 Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire*, VIII, esp. p. 166. [For more on medieval art and the relation between East and West, see Chapters 29 and 30 by Folda and Olympios, respectively, in this volume (ed.).]
- 10 Ibid., p. 119.
- 11 Courajod, *Leçons*.
- 12 Porter, *Medieval Architecture*, Vol. I, p. 165.
- 13 Strzygowski, *Orient; Ursprung*.
- 14 Mâle, *L’Art allemand*.
- 15 Cahn, “L’Art français.”
- 16 Puig i Cadafalch et al., *L’Arquitectura romànica*.
- 17 Puig i Cadafalch, *Le Premier art roman*, p. 154.
- 18 Puig i Cadafalch, *La géographie*, p. 401, with other references to Eastern origins; cf. Focillon, *Art of the West*, p. 112ff, with similar observations.
- 19 Preceded by the Société d’Emulation de Caen, 1823.
- 20 De Lasteyrie, *L’Architecture religieuse*, p. 407; see also Deshoulières, “La Théorie.”
- 21 Quicherat, *Mélanges*, pp. 99ff, 484.
- 22 Enlart, *Manuel d’archéologie*; de Lasteyrie, *L’Architecture religieuse*. Among critics, see, Crozet, “Problèmes de méthode,” and Francastel, *L’Humanisme*.
- 23 Evans, *A History*.
- 24 E.g. Ormerod, *The History of the County Palatine*; Surtees, *The History and Antiquities*.
- 25 Willis, “The Architectural History.”

- 26 Prior, *An Account*; Keyser, *A List of Norman Tympana*.
- 27 E.g. Zarnecki, "Regional Schools."
- 28 Porter, "The Rise" and "La Sculpture."
- 29 [On pilgrimage art, see Chapter 36 by Gerson in this volume (ed.).]
- 30 Cf. Deschamps, "Notes sur la sculpture romane."
- 31 E.g. Deshoulières, "Nouvelles remarques" and "La Théorie"; Dangibeaud, "L'Ecole."
- 32 Oursel, *L'Art roman*, pp. 203 ff.
- 33 E.g. Valdez del Alamo, "Ortodoxia"; Williams, "The Emergence"; Mann, *Romanesque Architecture*, 7–46; Marten, "Der alte Streit."
- 34 [On formalism, see Chapter 7 by Seidel in this volume (ed.).]
- 35 Morey, *Medieval Art*, pp. 180, 228 ff.
- 36 Armi, "Orders and Continuous Orders."
- 37 Salvini, "Pre-Romanesque."
- 38 Burg and Lüthgen were especially influenced by Riegl. Burg, for example, sought to understand the "Willen zur Monumentalen" and analyzed the various stages in the "Drang nach rundplastischer Gestaltung" (see Burg, *Ottonische Plastik*). Cf. also Sauerlandt (*Deutsche Plastik*, p. vi), who viewed early Romanesque plasticity as a struggle between ground-bound forms and "liberated" expression.
- 39 See the recent historiographic overview in Schenkluhn and Ranft, "Ottonische Kunst."
- 40 Focillon, *L'Art des sculpteurs* and *Art of the West*.
- 41 Quarré, *La Sculpture romane*; G. Micheli, *Le Décor géométrique*; Baltrušaitis, *La Stylistique ornementale*; García Romo, "Los pórticos,"; and García Romo, "La escultura románica."
- 42 Grodecki, "Dualité" and "Les Débuts"; Zarnecki, "1066" and "Sculpture," p. 146.
- 43 Grodecki, "L'Art roman en Angleterre."
- 44 Zarnecki, *English Romanesque*, pp. 8 ff.; "Romanesque Sculpture," "1066," and "Sources of English Romanesque."
- 45 Zarnecki, "Sculpture," p. 146.
- 46 Exceptions: Borg, "The Development of Chevron"; Henry, *La Sculpture irlandaise* and *Irish Art*; cf. also Cherry, "Recent Works," and Kahn, "La Sculpture romane."
- 47 Zarnecki's influence continues to be felt to some degree; cf. Thurlby, *Herefordshire School*; Moss, *Romanesque Chevron* and "A Twelfth-Century Renaissance?"
- 48 Grodecki, "La Sculpture du XIe siècle."
- 49 Durliat, "Les Premiers essais," "Les Débuts de la sculpture romane," and "L'Art roman en France."
- 50 See also Durliat's more recent *bilan*, "La Sculpture du XIe siècle."
- 51 Baylé, *La Trinité de Caen*; Vergnolle, *Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire*; Cabanot, *Les Débuts de la sculpture romane*; Camus, *Sculpture romane du Poitou*.
- 52 For a critique of the works by Baylé, Camus, and Vergnolle, see Sauerländer, "Verstreutes." Some of those scholars' own students have carried on the Focillon legacy to a certain extent, e.g. Proust, *La Sculpture romane*; Pêcheur "L'Eglise Saint-Pierre de Nant"; Duret, "La Sculpture de la vallée."
- 53 Grodecki, "Le Problème"; Durliat, "Les Premiers essais"; Vergnolle, "Chronologie et méthode"; see also Mézoughi, "Le Tympan."
- 54 Vergnolle, *L'Art roman en France*. For further discussion of Focillon's legacy, see Lécosse et al., "Table ronde"; Briend et al., *Vie des formes*.
- 55 Cf., for example, the effect on Ganter's formalist perspective (*Romanische Plastik*), or Porter's (*Romanesque Sculpture*) emphasis on pilgrimage as a stylistic catalyst.

- 56 [On art and exegesis, see Chapter 11 by Hughes in this volume (ed.).]
 57 Mâle, *Religious Art*, p. xxxi.
 58 Ibid., p. xxx.
 59 [On the sumptuous arts, see Chapter 27 by Buettner in this volume (ed.).]
 60 E.g. Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*; Reber, *Kunstgeschichte des Mittelalters*. See also Schenkluhn and Ranft, "Ottonische Kunst."
 61 Bachem, "Sächsische Plastik"; Klein, *Die romanische Steinplastik*; Wesenberg, *Frühe mittelalterliche*; Ligtenberg, *Die romanische Steinplastik*.
 62 Vöge, *Die Anfänge*.
 63 Beenken, *Romanische Skulptur*; Panofsky, *Die deutsche Plastik*; Sauerländer, "Die Anfänge des monumentalen Stils': Nach dem Ende der Stilgeschichte." See also n. 38 above.
 64 Novotny, *Romanische Bauplastik*, offered a different solution: he believed that close formalist study of regional developments (Austrian, in this case) would correct the sweeping evolutionist (and too aesthetic to his taste) views advanced by Panofsky and Beenken.
 65 Bréhier, "Les Origines de la sculpture romane" and "La Cathédrale de Clermont."
 66 Keller, "Zur Entstehung."
 67 Deschamps, "Etude sur la renaissance de la sculpture."
 68 Schrade, "Zur Frühgeschichte."
 69 For a summary, see M. Beer, "Ottonische."
 70 E.g. Wesenberg, *Frühe mittelalterliche*, pp. 96 f., 102–103 and passim; Durliat, "Les Débuts"; Pächt, "The Pre-Carolingian Roots"; Schapiro, "A Relief."
 71 Gardner, *Medieval Sculpture*; Hearn, *Romanesque Sculpture*; Lyman, "Arts somptuaires."
 72 [On patronage, see Chapter 12 by Caskey in this volume (ed.).]
 73 In addition to Forsyth, see the new considerations in Büchsel, "The Status of Sculpture"; and the important work by Pawlik, *Das Bildwerk*.
 74 Schapiro, "From Mozarabic to Romanesque" and "The Sculpture of Souillac."
 75 Adhémar, *Influences antiques*; Francastel, *L'Humanisme*. For a spirited defense of Focillon's view, against Francastel's work, García Romo, "Problemas actuales." A stimulating, more contemporary approach to related issues, looking back to A. Warburg rather than an idealized humanism, is argued in Trinks, *Antike und Avantgarde*. This work nonetheless shares some common ground with Francastel's study, such as in their understanding of a new artistic approach to the Antique as defining "roman."
 76 Francastel, *L'Humanisme*, pp. 199 and 202; cf. Cahn, "The Artist."

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The Historiography of Romanesque Manuscript Illumination

Adam S. Cohen

The term “Romanesque” conjures images of rounded arches and contorted figural sculpture, and a glance at any modern survey text underscores the primary place of architecture and relief in the presentation of Romanesque art. Manuscripts, on the other hand, seem to be included almost as an afterthought. As this chapter documents, this has long been the case. A historiographic examination of manuscript illumination of the eleventh and twelfth centuries reveals that considerations of style only slowly gave way to other concerns. In the process, Romanesque illuminations have gone from being disparaged medieval curiosities in the nineteenth century to valued historical artifacts in the present. I offer as a case-study one well-known illuminated manuscript, the *Life of St. Edmund* in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York (MS M. 736), whose reception and treatment in the modern period is emblematic of the history of Romanesque manuscript illustration as a whole. This focus will be supplemented by broader analyses that highlight additional issues and important literature in the field.

Early Disparagement

The St. Edmund manuscript (hereafter called the VSE – *Vita Sancti Eadmundi*) is a collection of texts and 32 full-page miniatures that tells the story of England’s ninth-century martyr king.¹ The earliest modern mention of the manuscript was

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in the 1814 sales catalog of the John Towneley Collection, in which the book is described as “Life of St. Edmund, King of the East Angles, a most curious and valuable manuscript upon Vellum, executed about the year 1100 and illustrated with a series of singularly curious paintings emblematic of Edmund’s History, Legend and Miracles.”² In 1817, the great bibliophile Thomas Frognall Dibdin referred to the VSE as a manuscript “of extraordinary interest and curiosity” (which suggests he knew of the book only from the Towneley sales catalog).³ In 1841 the VSE was sold to an eminent collector, Robert Holford, and soon discussed in print by Gustav Waagen, first professor of art history in Berlin and director of its Gemäldegalerie.⁴ Although Waagen considered it “a rich and well-preserved specimen of the Old English art of the twelfth century,” at the same time he disparaged the style of the miniatures, speaking of the clumsy compositions and the “childish” execution of the forms with their long proportions and meager limbs (fig. 20-1).

As Hindman et al. have demonstrated, most nineteenth-century writers clung to the Vasarian paradigm in which medieval art was the unfortunate interlude between Classical and Renaissance art.⁵ This is evident in one of the earliest English publications devoted to reproducing medieval manuscripts, Henry Shaw’s *Illuminated Ornaments: Selected from Manuscripts and Early Printed Books from the Sixth to the Seventeenth Centuries* (1833). The introduction was written by the authoritative Sir Frederic Madden, keeper of manuscripts at the British Museum, whose highest praise was for Cimabue and Giotto; consequently, Italian Renaissance manuscript illuminations were most prized. Notably, Madden subdivided the Middle Ages into smaller categories. For the early period he used such geographic, ethnographic, or political terms as Visigothic, Franco-Gallic, Irish or Hiberno-Saxon, Lombardic, or the period of Charlemagne. But from the eleventh century on the terms are simply chronological – eleventh century, twelfth century, and so on. This basic schema, with minor differences, reappeared in other mid-nineteenth century works.⁶

Nor was this a specifically English perspective. The most ambitious nineteenth-century attempts to reproduce medieval manuscripts were by two Frenchmen: Jean-Baptiste-Louis-George Seroux d’Agincourt in 1823 and Comte Jean-François-Auguste Bastard d’Estang from 1837 to 1846. In Seroux d’Agincourt’s comprehensive history of art, which began with a consideration of architecture, all manuscript painting from the eighth through thirteenth centuries was lumped together and characterized as being replete with bizarre figures and extravagant compositions; it was “the interval in which art appears to have reached the most miserable state.”⁷ In a more specialized work on manuscripts, Bastard d’Estang used terms similar to those of his English contemporaries: Merovingian and Lombardic for the early Middle Ages, century divisions for the later material.⁸ Bastard d’Estang was motivated primarily by the idea of preserving and disseminating the heritage of French culture, and other nineteenth-century treatments of medieval art were also rife with nationalistic concerns.



FIGURE 20-1 Charity of St. Edmund, from the Life of St. Edmund. New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M 736, fol. 9r. Source: Pierpont Morgan Library.

“Romanesque”

Despite the introduction of the term “Romanesque” into learned discourse about architecture toward the beginning of the nineteenth century,⁹ it was some time before the label was applied to manuscripts. This is evident in Paul Lacroix’s encyclopedic *Les arts au moyen âge et à l’époque de la Renaissance* (1871).¹⁰ For architecture, a chapter subheading is called “Age de transition du roman au gothique,” though sculpture after the year 1000 is only divided into various regional schools without reference to Romanesque or Gothic. The first of two chapters on manuscripts was devoted to paleography, then considered the most important aspect of manuscript study. Such terms as Lombardic and Gothic appear, but not Romanesque. The second chapter focused on miniatures, and it is apparent that a fairly clear sense of the chronology and stylistic development of medieval manuscript painting was already taking the shape familiar today, although the terminology still reflected clear biases against certain medieval material. The explicit goal “is to signal the principal phases of perfection and decadence” in medieval painting, and it is evident that by the 1870s Gothic was a far less pejorative term than it had been earlier in the nineteenth century. After a consideration of painting under Charlemagne, there is a section on “the decadence of the miniature in the tenth century,” a period of utter debasement in art that only began to emerge from its fascination with grotesques around the third quarter of the twelfth century. This was “the birth of gothic art” that was noted for “beautiful manuscripts of the time of Saint Louis.” Furthermore, Lacroix’s nationalistic perspective is evident in the comparison of French manuscript painting with its “delicacy and taste” to the “most naive compositions” of German illumination.

A survey of the nineteenth-century scholarship on Romanesque manuscript illumination shows several points of contact with the intellectual trends that animated studies of architecture and sculpture.¹¹ These reveal the nationalistic and regional motivations of many authors and the general opprobrium accorded to medieval art in general and to eleventh- and twelfth-century art in particular. In large measure this was the continued legacy of Vasari’s authority, but it also reflected contemporary concerns. The monarchical and statist impulses that drove a good deal of French scholarship tilted authors toward periods that were rich in royal products. They thus emphasized the ninth century under the Carolingians (one of the manuscripts of Charles the Bald is, notably, MS Lat. 1 in the Bibliothèque nationale) and the thirteenth century under Louis IX. In England, medieval book illumination was viewed negatively as a largely Catholic and foreign enterprise, in contrast to the “native” British ethos that was exemplified by medieval examples of naturalism.¹² Consequently, late medieval painting was valued more highly than that of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which likewise in England was a weak period for royal patronage of manuscripts.

Nationalistic motivations resulted in monumental efforts to collect, preserve, and publish the documents of national patrimonies throughout Europe. Thus the VSE was included in an 1897 volume of the English Rolls series. Whereas the

pictures had once attracted the attention of Dibdin and Waagen, the text of the Miracles was of primary interest to Thomas Arnold, who was responsible for collecting all available materials about St. Edmund's Abbey.¹³ Despite his intention to give "an exact account of the contents," Arnold offered a brief description of only a handful of the illuminations.

Public and scholarly awareness of the VSE was assured at the beginning of the twentieth century by its inclusion in the ambitious folio volumes of 250 plates published by the New Palaeographical Society.¹⁴ In keeping with preferences for naturalistic and classicizing art, post-Carolingian products were assessed rather negatively. The VSE is described as "executed in a peculiar style," while works of the thirteenth century, rather, are "refined," "graceful," and "beautiful." Despite the overall negative view of the twelfth century, and the Society's primary interest in paleography, Sir George Frederic Warner, keeper of manuscripts at the British Museum, did provide a meticulous analysis of the textual and pictorial contents of the VSE, which serves as the basis for the Morgan Library's current records.

The relationship between paleography and art is likewise seen in one of the first scholarly works dedicated to a study of manuscript illumination. In his 1885 *Les manuscrits et la miniature*, Albert Lecoy de la Marche, of the National Archives, sought to place manuscript illumination on the same scientific footing already accorded paleography. His intellectual approach, clearly derived from paleography's methods, emphasized stylistic characteristics in delineating "schools" of miniature painting. Lecoy de la Marche also was among the very first to transfer the term *Romanesque* to manuscript painting of the eleventh and twelfth century.

In his account, miniatures from the Merovingian, Carolingian, and Romanesque periods constituted a "first phase" characterized by a hieratic style that communicated spirituality and symbolism in books made by and for churchmen. Romanesque illumination was notable for a slow expansion of subject matter, progress in drawing and the imitation of nature, and, above all, the development of luxurious and fantastic initials filled with grotesques. While there is little objectionable in his descriptions, the style is still regarded negatively in comparison to Gothic art, which Lecoy de la Marche hailed as the second, "naturalistic" phase.¹⁵ The relationship is summarized in an analogy (attributed to Léopold Delisle, the prolific curator of the Bibliothèque nationale), in which Romanesque is characterized as a chrysalis in winter wrapped in a sheath awaiting the spring.¹⁶ For Lecoy de la Marche, as for most writers of the nineteenth century, Romanesque manuscripts suffered by having neither the patina of Late Antique and early Christian manuscripts nor the incipient naturalism of Gothic manuscripts as precursors to the Renaissance.

Forming the Canon

In the first third of the twentieth century two phenomena contributed to the appreciation of Romanesque manuscripts: an increase in encyclopedic survey texts and specialized museum and library exhibitions. Both modes of presentation

shared a fundamental similarity in approach of the continuing struggle to define and classify Romanesque art.

One of the most ambitious surveys was the *Histoire de l'art* edited by André Michel. The second part of volume one was dedicated to "Romanesque art" and contained a chapter on manuscript painting in Northern Europe by Arthur Haseloff.¹⁷ According to Haseloff, the new Romanesque period began in the middle of the tenth century and lasted until about 1100, roughly coinciding with the period of the Ottonian rulers in Germany. English manuscript illumination also flourished in this period until it became more continental around 1100, a date that also saw a marked change toward the Gothic style in France. Haseloff's approach expanded upon that of his nineteenth-century predecessors; after briefly discussing the political and historical circumstances, he remarked on manuscript illumination in general before treating individual schools. Haseloff tried to provide a positive assessment of the Romanesque period's lack of interest in naturalism, and he even addressed the issue of the relationship of texts and images, although he was primarily interested in tracing stylistic sources and developments, categorizing manuscripts in terms of schools, and tracking the intricacies of the historiated initial.

In one of several medieval volumes of the *Handbuch der Kunstwissenschaft*, Julius Baum offered a more refined division of Romanesque art than that found in similar works.¹⁸ Now the term was split into three separate categories: Early, Middle, and Late Romanesque, each treated according to regional schools. Baum directly tackled the meaning of the word *romanisch*, acknowledging but not adequately explaining the connection to Rome. Instead, he relied on a noxious assessment by Georg Dehio and Gustav von Bezold that the earliest and highest flowering of the Romanesque style occurred in Germany and in those adjacent lands regenerated by German blood, spirit, and knowledge.¹⁹ When Baum turned to specific analyses of individual works or schools, however, his language was free of such sentiments, and he provided, like Haseloff, meticulous analyses of stylistic connections that would not be out of place in more recent surveys. On manuscripts like the VSE, he wrote, "the earlier style is represented by the St. Albans Psalter and Bury Bible with their long, stretched out figures, turned mostly in profile and sometimes exaggerated, and whose parallel arrangement makes them appear conspicuously and uniformly agitated."

The exhibition of medieval manuscripts organized by the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1908 marked a watershed in the appreciation of Romanesque art.²⁰ In his introduction to the catalog, Sydney Cockerell wrote that this exhibition was meant to surpass the 1904 Paris exposition devoted to "*Primitifs français*," which was limited to French manuscripts from the thirteenth century and later. The London show had its own nationalistic bias in highlighting English products (though it did not exclude French and Italian works); the fact that England produced so many illuminated manuscripts from the seventh through thirteenth century likely motivated the more comprehensive chronological scope of the exhibition. Cockerell wrote that several twelfth-century manuscripts, including the

VSE, “show a mastery of technique and an energy of imagination which cannot be too much admired. It may be well to point out that the very last of them was finished about seventy years before the birth of Giotto.”²¹ So much for Vasari, at least temporarily.

That Cockerell’s point was taken is evident from a review of the exhibition by Roger Fry, the champion of modernism. For Fry, who was so concerned with the formal qualities of painting, twelfth-century English work presented the greatest achievement in manuscript illumination, the perfect fusion of “barbaric” color and “traditional” classicism.²² The formalist analysis in this review sounds very much like an appraisal of the Fauves, whose first exhibition had been just three years earlier; it is no coincidence that Romanesque art was increasingly valued by avant-garde artists seeking to subvert the classical heritage.²³ Nonetheless, Fry’s description of the VSE, which included references to “childish delight” and “primitive feeling,” shows that while Romanesque style was beginning to be appreciated, the rehabilitation of the period’s products was not wholesale.

In 1927 the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris mounted a major exhibition of material from the early medieval through Romanesque periods. In the catalog, Philippe Lauer provided a general history of manuscripts before the Romanesque, including a lengthy section on the Carolingians, presumably because of the library’s rich holdings in that area.²⁴ The tenth and eleventh centuries under the Ottonians are not included in Romanesque, nor is English painting of the time (a result, perhaps, of a nationalistic perspective). While Lauer spoke of “the romanesque age,” “romanesque art,” and “the romanesque style,” nowhere does he actually use the term “romanesque manuscript.” This suggests that, unlike “Gothic,” “Romanesque” was not yet universally employed as an umbrella term for the period between the Carolingians/Ottonians and the Gothic. More important is Lauer’s explicit recognition that French Romanesque painting is characterized by a lack of unity, an assessment implicit in earlier treatments of the multiple schools of painting during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

It was also in 1927 that the VSE was purchased for the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. In his introduction to a 1933–1934 exhibition catalog of Morgan manuscripts, Princeton’s Charles Rufus Morey provided an overview of the history of manuscript illumination that in many ways was much in keeping with contemporary European ideas like those of Baum: “As time goes on, racial force asserts itself, and the figures become more savage and Teutonic, finally evolving that strong, solid type which passes into Romanesque sculpture.”²⁵

By the middle of the twentieth century, scholars had largely accomplished what their nineteenth-century predecessors had sought to do: map the stylistic and regional contours of Romanesque art. This is evident in some of the specialized investigations of illuminated manuscripts from this period. Among the earliest was Albert Boeckler’s *Abendländische Miniaturen bis zum Ausgang der romanischen Zeit*. In his treatment of the VSE, Boeckler grouped the manuscript with a series of drawings in a manuscript (MS 120) belonging to Pembroke College, Cambridge, and the so-called St. Albans Psalter.²⁶ In his analysis of these works, Boeckler

characterized them as “monotonous” because of the uniformity in composition and the stale repetition of figures that displayed little movement. In addition, “rarely does a fan-like, fluttering piece of drapery break loose. The movement remains stiff and clumsy with regard to the intensely vehement gestures as well.”²⁷ Such descriptive language, especially the alliteration in German, is exquisite, but the perception is hardly more favorable than earlier attitudes about the VSE. Moreover, it would constitute the norm for decades to come.²⁸ Only in the middle of the twentieth century did writers begin to describe the style of the VSE and other Romanesque paintings without negative value judgments.

As long as style was the primary consideration for scholars of Romanesque art, three interrelated concerns dominated discourse in the field. First, to what extent could Morellian connoisseurship distinguish the hands of different artists? Second, what were the sources and channels of stylistic transmission between artists and regions? And third, when did Romanesque style begin and end?

Perhaps the supreme example of the first two issues is the treatment of the artists of the Winchester Bible, especially by Walter Oakeshott (fig. 20-2).²⁹ Scholars generally agree that some of the same artists worked on the Winchester Bible in the 1160s and the frescoes in the chapter house in Sigena, Spain, in the 1180s. Analyses of individual hands led to broader theories about the itinerant nature of professional lay artists in the twelfth century: their freedom of movement, contrasted with the cloistering of monastic artists in previous centuries, enabled such artists to absorb styles from different regions and to spread them throughout Europe. Above all, the motor that propelled Romanesque style was contact with Byzantine art, often through the intermediary of Norman Sicily.³⁰

Explicating the relationship of Western European art to Byzantine models had long been a central preoccupation of twentieth-century scholars,³¹ including Otto Pächt in the magisterial study on the St. Albans Psalter written in collaboration with C.R. Dodwell and Francis Wormald.³² In a wide-ranging iconographic and stylistic analysis of the miniatures, Pächt identified sources in Anglo-Saxon, Carolingian, Ottonian, and Byzantine art, though he pinpointed the most important models in the Italo-Byzantine sphere. The confluence of iconographic and stylistic models in Italy led Pächt to state that “the conclusion seems inescapable that the founder of the St. Albans school of painting had experienced that art in the flesh and that he had gone through a period of Italian training of some sort.” Based on a stylistic analysis of this artist, dubbed the Alexis Master, Pächt assembled an oeuvre that included the miniatures of the VSE.

At the heart of such analysis is the idea that individual artists can be identified and distinguished, and that entire periods can be similarly characterized and distinguished from others. Such a Hegelian view posits that there is something definable specifically as “Romanesque,” which partakes of the particular zeitgeist of that period and cannot, by definition, be “Gothic.”³³ This premise compelled scholars to define precisely when Romanesque art, including its manifestations in manuscript painting, could be said to begin and end. Basic disagreement well into the twentieth century about what the term meant with regard to book painting

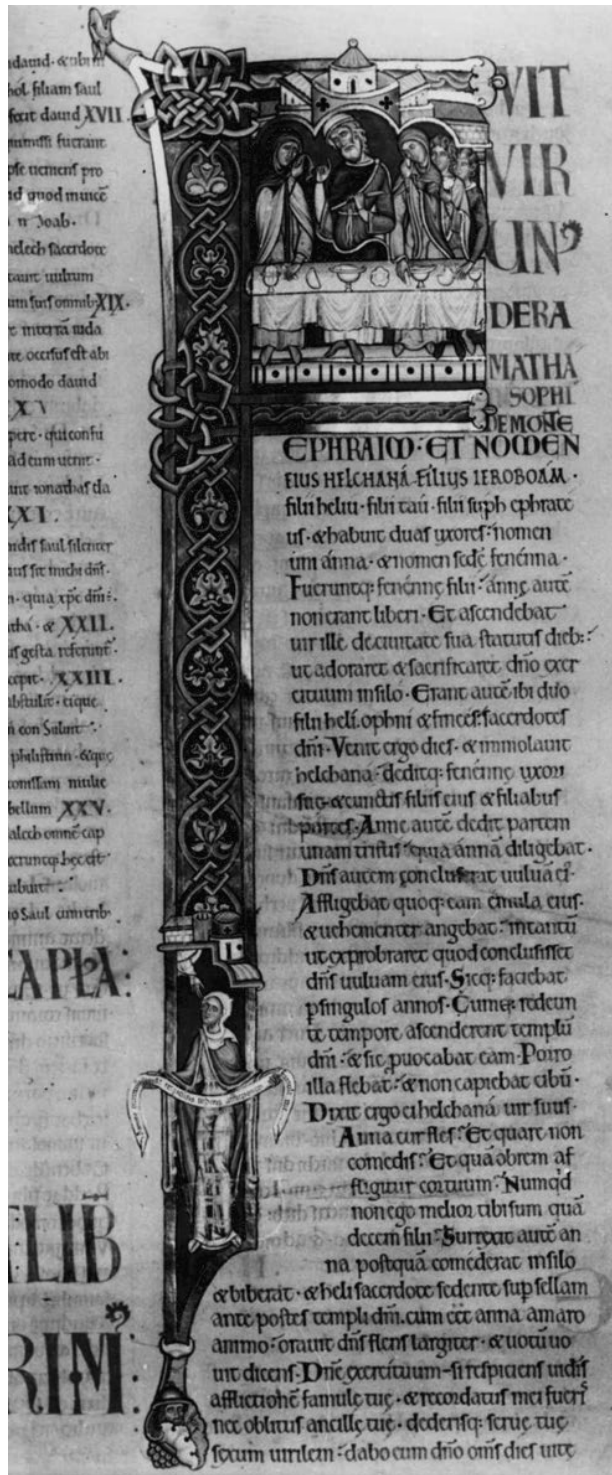


FIGURE 20-2 Elkanah and his wives; Hannah (I Samuel), from the Winchester Bible. Winchester Cathedral Library, fol. 88r. Source: reproduced by permission of the Dean and Chapter of Winchester/Winchester Cathedral Library.

and which historical periods composed “the Romanesque” did not stop scholars from accepting the validity of the Hegelian imperative and continuing to proffer working definitions.³⁴

This overriding desire for categorization and definition resulted in a view of Romanesque art that privileged certain objects – like the Winchester Bible – that were understood as conforming to and shaping the prevailing norm and marginalized others that fell outside the parameters of the paradigm. A case in point is a British Museum publication devoted to Romanesque book painting, in which D.H. Turner stated, “If we want to assign arbitrary dates to the beginning and end of the Romanesque period – and a style knows, of course, no exact limits – 1049 and 1180 are convenient.”³⁵ The fact that such categorization was incompatible with stylistic concerns did not give Turner pause. The dates chosen are grounded in historical phenomena: the Gregorian reform of the church and the ascendance of Philip Augustus to the throne of France. The latter date was meant to indicate the second “fundamental characteristic[s] of Romanesque ... [I]t was art in the creation of which France did not play the centralizing role she did in the Gothic period.” In other words, what characterized Romanesque art was that it was not French Gothic art, the teleological end to which Romanesque was destined. For Turner, as for so many scholars, “Romanesque” was an abstract, almost Platonic idea whose essential characteristics were formal and stylistic. Consequently, such objects as Montecassino manuscripts are described as “too freakish to be regarded as a true manifestation of Romanesque” – despite the fact that they conform to Turner’s chronological timeline and to his characterization of Romanesque as a decidedly ecclesiastical period (fig. 20-3).

Carl Nordenfalk provided the classic articulation of this stylistic approach in a lengthy essay in the popular *Skira* series, which brought generous color reproductions to the familiar survey format.³⁶ Although Nordenfalk was one of the twentieth century’s most astute and prolific scholars of medieval manuscripts, in his wide-ranging survey of Romanesque illumination stylistic analysis remained the crux of the matter. His comparison of two eleventh- and twelfth-century illustrations is a tour de force of stylistic analysis:

Fundamental to the High Romanesque style is a consistent effort to build up form by means of separate compartments or panels, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle ... Most of these [units] are given the form of rounded-off triangles, circumscribed by soft “V” folds whose contours are duplicated on occasion. Here and there we find a group of nested “V” folds.³⁷

Nordenfalk also treated at length the development of the exuberant initials common in Romanesque manuscripts, and, in an important departure from previous overviews, provided an extensive consideration of the principal types of manuscripts, including the illustrated saint’s life, of which the VSE was one example.

The VSE had already been included in a survey of illustrated saint’s lives by Francis Wormald, whose 1952 article was a catalyst for the shift toward concern with book type and manuscript function.³⁸ Wormald offered an iconographic insight when he compared the Flagellation of Edmund in the VSE to the Flagellation



FIGURE 20-3 Initial “D,” from a Montecassino Psalter. London: British Library, Add. MS 18859, fol. 24v. Source: reproduced by permission of the British Library.

of Christ in the St. Albans Psalter, which to him demonstrated the reliance of the *Vita* artist on the representation of the Passion. The ideological implications of this comparison would be brought out by later scholars; Wormald was more concerned with sketching the contours of the *vita* genre. His conclusion that this type of

book flourished from 950 to 1200 as a “mirror for monks, part of the relics of the monastery” would make it the Romanesque book par excellence according to definitions prevailing in the mid-twentieth century.

Beginning in the 1960s, monographic treatments of individual manuscripts became increasingly common. Whereas previous generations of scholars had sought to delineate the major contours of a given region or artistic school (a process that continued for those few schools remaining to be “cataloged”³⁹), scholars began to delve deeper into the place of a particular manuscript within a given group. For example, Elizabeth Parker McLachlan used iconographic and stylistic analyses to disentangle the various hands of the Bury St. Edmunds scriptorium and the connections of the VSE to contemporary St. Albans manuscripts.⁴⁰ A summary version of this approach can be found in the magisterial catalog of English Romanesque manuscripts by C.M. Kauffmann, which, like its counterparts by Elisabeth Klemm and Walter Cahn, contains a synthetic overview, generous pictures, detailed bibliographic information, and a wealth of insights on individual manuscripts.⁴¹

An increasing emphasis on iconography is seen in studies from the 1970s.⁴² Iconography had long been a topic of interest among medieval scholars, represented most forcefully by Emile Mâle, who sought nothing less than a complete decoding of the symbolism of medieval art.⁴³ Later generations of scholars have rejected many of Mâle’s premises – that there is a unified thought process behind all medieval art, or that one must find contemporary medieval texts upon which to base interpretations of specific objects – but the impact of the iconographic method can hardly be underestimated. Although more iconographic analysis has been devoted to Romanesque tympanum sculpture than to manuscript painting, work by Adolf Katzenellenbogen, for example, or Walter Cahn demonstrates the possibilities for understanding illuminations through this method of interpretation.⁴⁴

Beyond Style and Iconography

In the past several decades, such issues as patronage, function, reception, and gender have dominated the field. Studies addressed to these concerns are notable for breaking down disciplinary boundaries and often incorporate more than one interpretive mode. Unlike earlier analyses of style or iconography, which sought to assign any given object a single classification or meaning, studies that embed medieval art in historical and cultural contexts demonstrate that objects can have multiple audiences and meanings that allow for multiple interpretations. Barbara Abou-el-Haj, for example, situated the creation of the VSE in the context of conflict between the Abbey of St. Edmunds and both the king and local bishopric over control of the abbey’s holdings.⁴⁵ According to this reading, the manuscript’s pictures, like the ambitious new twelfth-century church building and the renewed interest in the hagiographic literature on St. Edmund, were products of the monastery’s attempts to assert its rights and promote the authority and power

of their saint to fend off royal and episcopal challenges. Recently, Julia Ricker has extended this consideration of the corporate aspect of the VSE in her analysis of Bury St. Edmunds as a cult site.⁴⁶

Studies of corporate patronage have produced important results especially for Cistercian monasticism. Investigations range from Conrad Rudolph's analysis of a particular book, the famous Cîteaux *Moralia in Job*,⁴⁷ to Yolanta Zaluska's consideration of the entire scriptorium,⁴⁸ to Nigel Palmer's investigation of an important Cistercian library.⁴⁹ Patronage studies, however, focus most frequently on individuals.⁵⁰ Considerations of patronage have often been intertwined with feminist perspectives. The St. Albans Psalter is a case in point. Although Christina of Markyate had already been linked to the manuscript by Adolph Goldschmidt in his 1895 *Der Albanipsalter in Hildesheim*, Madeline Caviness has argued that the continued use of the name "St. Albans Psalter," as propagated by Pächt et al., marginalizes Christina in modern discourse.⁵¹ Such scholars as Magdalena Carrasco have tried to recover how Christina's ownership of the psalter might have played a role in the pictorial program and function of the book.⁵² Kristine Haney, however, denied to Christina any role in the manufacture of the psalter; instead, she combines a traditional study of sources with newer considerations derived from reader-response theory to emphasize how the psalter would have functioned within the "pedagogical, intellectual and devotional practices of the Anglo-Normans."⁵³ While debate over Christina and other aspects of the psalter continues unabated,⁵⁴ feminist scholarship can be credited with reintroducing Hildegard of Bingen into the art historical conversation (fig. 20-4).⁵⁵

Feminists have not been the only ones to challenge the inherited paradigms that have guided medieval art history. Michael Camille's study of the historical bifurcation of texts and images in scholarship on the St. Albans/Christina of Markyate Psalter demonstrates how disciplinary boundaries have hampered a better understanding of this manuscript.⁵⁶ Similarly, Jonathan Alexander has considered the VSE in his critique of an essentialist ethnic view of medieval art that prevailed in earlier art history; his criticism of Pächt's assertion that the Alexis Master had to be a Norman calls into question the often unspoken view of artistic style as genetically determined.⁵⁷

While most studies of the last quarter-century overtly claim to be rectifying some historiographic error, those that make the greatest contributions do so by building on scholarship of the past and keeping the medieval material, not the scholarly discourse, at the center of the argument. Cynthia Hahn, for example, has focused on how the VSE embodied institutional ideas and values not just as a political tool but also as a hagiographic instrument to advance the claim that Edmund was a national saint par excellence.⁵⁸ In her original article and subsequent book,⁵⁹ Hahn gauged the meaning of the manuscript by considering the narrative structure of the pictorial program. The issue of narrative is not a new one; in 1962 Pächt published *The Rise of Pictorial Narrative in Twelfth-Century England*, a work that continues to command scholarly attention.⁶⁰ But Hahn masterfully integrated a consideration of how narrative works within a framework



Ecce quadra-
gesimo tercio
temporalis cur-
sus mei anno
cum celesti uisi-
oni magno ti-
more ⁊ tremu-

la intentione in-
hererem uidi maxi-
mū splendore in quo facta ē uox
de celo ad me dicens. O homo fragi-
lis ⁊ cinis cineris ⁊ putredo putredi-
nis. dic ⁊ scribe q̄ uidet ⁊ audis. Sed
quia tunda es ad loquendū ⁊ simplex

ad exponendum ⁊ indocta ad scriben-
dum ea dic ⁊ scribe illa n̄ scdm̄ of homi-
nis. nec scdm̄ intellectum humanę ad-
inventionis nec scdm̄ uoluntatē huma-
nę compositionis s; scdm̄ id quod ea in
celestib; desup̄ in mirabilib; dī uidet ⁊ au-
dit. ea sic edisserendo p̄ferens quemadmo-
dum ⁊ auditor uerba p̄ceptorū suū p̄cipi-
ent. ea scdm̄ tenorē locutionis illi. ipso uo-
lente ostendente. ⁊ p̄cipiente p̄palat. Sic
q̄ ⁊ tu o homo. dic ea q̄ uidet ⁊ audis. ⁊ lē-
be ea non scdm̄ te. nec scdm̄ aliū homi-
nem. s; secundū uoluntatē scientis uiden-
tis ⁊ disponentis omnia in secretis myste-
riorum suorum. Et iterū audiui uocē
de celo michi dicentē. Dic q̄ mirabilia
hec. ⁊ scribe ea hoc modo edocta ⁊ dic.

Factum ē in millesimo centesimo
quadragesimo p̄mo filiū dī ih̄u x̄
incarnationis anno. cū q̄draginta duoz
annoz septē q; m̄lium eē m̄ximę con-
sacrationis igneū lūm̄ ap̄to celo ueniens. totū
cerebrū meū tr̄studit. ⁊ totū cor totūq;
pectus meū uelut flamma n̄ tam ar-
dens s; calens ita inflammatur. ut sol-
rem aliquam calefacti. sup̄ quam radi-
os suos ponit. Et repente intellectum
expositionis libroz uidelicet psalteriū
euuangelii ⁊ alioz catholicoz tam ue-
teris quam noui testamenti uolumi-
num sapiebam. n̄ autē int̄pretatio-
nem uerboz textus eoz nec diuisionē

FIGURE 20-4 Hildegard of Bingen and Volmer from the “Scivias” [“Know the ways of the Lord”]. Formerly Wiesbaden, Hessische Landesbibliothek, MS 1, fol. 1r. Source: photo courtesy of Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

that elucidates how illuminated saints' lives functioned as critical components of religious devotion and affective piety. In her reading, manuscripts like the VSE become unparalleled documents for understanding the cultural context of a twelfth-century monastic community and the role its illustrated *vitae* would have played in the ritual practices of its members.

Another genre of illustrated book, the bestiary, was especially popular in England. Xenia Muratova has considered these manuscripts not only in terms of style and iconography, but also of text and image and especially of patronage and workshop practice.⁶¹ More recently, Ron Baxter has focused on the structure and use of the manuscripts,⁶² while Debra Higgs Strickland has suggested that people in the Middle Ages, particularly in the context of the crusades, used images of monstrous beasts as a paradigm for constructing negative views of non-Christian "others."⁶³

The Romanesque period is noted above all for its Bibles. These were the subject of a full-scale study by Walter Cahn, in which iconography and patronage are considered alongside style, artistic production, and regional affiliation.⁶⁴ Richer results are possible, naturally, in monographic treatments of individual Bibles. In their studies of the Floreffé and Gumbertus Bibles, Anne-Marie Bouché and Veronika Pirker-Aurenhammer have demonstrated the deeply learned and intricate programs that could be embedded in eleventh- and twelfth-century manuscripts (fig. 20-5).⁶⁵ Their investigations, though based on traditional iconographic analysis, consider didactic programs and narrative strategies to reveal how visual exegesis would have been understood and used by viewers as an exercise in visual theology.

In sum, recent scholarship offers nuanced reconsiderations of old questions and brings new insights to familiar books like Bibles and missals or to newly considered genres like illustrated commentaries or cartularies.⁶⁶ Romanesque style is being re-examined to assess how meaning is embedded in form and style and how philosophical and exegetical discourse both inform and are expressed through pictorial means.⁶⁷ Re-evaluations of the relationship of Western to Byzantine art explore not only the stylistic connections but also the motivations for artists to appropriate and manipulate Byzantine models.⁶⁸ And, of course, scholars continue to offer interpretations of the iconographic or symbolic meaning of individual monuments, themes, and even Romanesque art as a whole.⁶⁹

Looking Forward

In the nineteenth century, the VSE was considered a curiosity and disparaged because of its figural style. Although exhibitions and new reproduction techniques made manuscripts more available for public and scholarly scrutiny, it was some time before the style and meaning of eleventh- and twelfth-century manuscripts began to be appreciated and understood on their own terms. Exhibitions involving Romanesque art were and continue to be products of national or local interests.

17738 fol. 3v f. 516

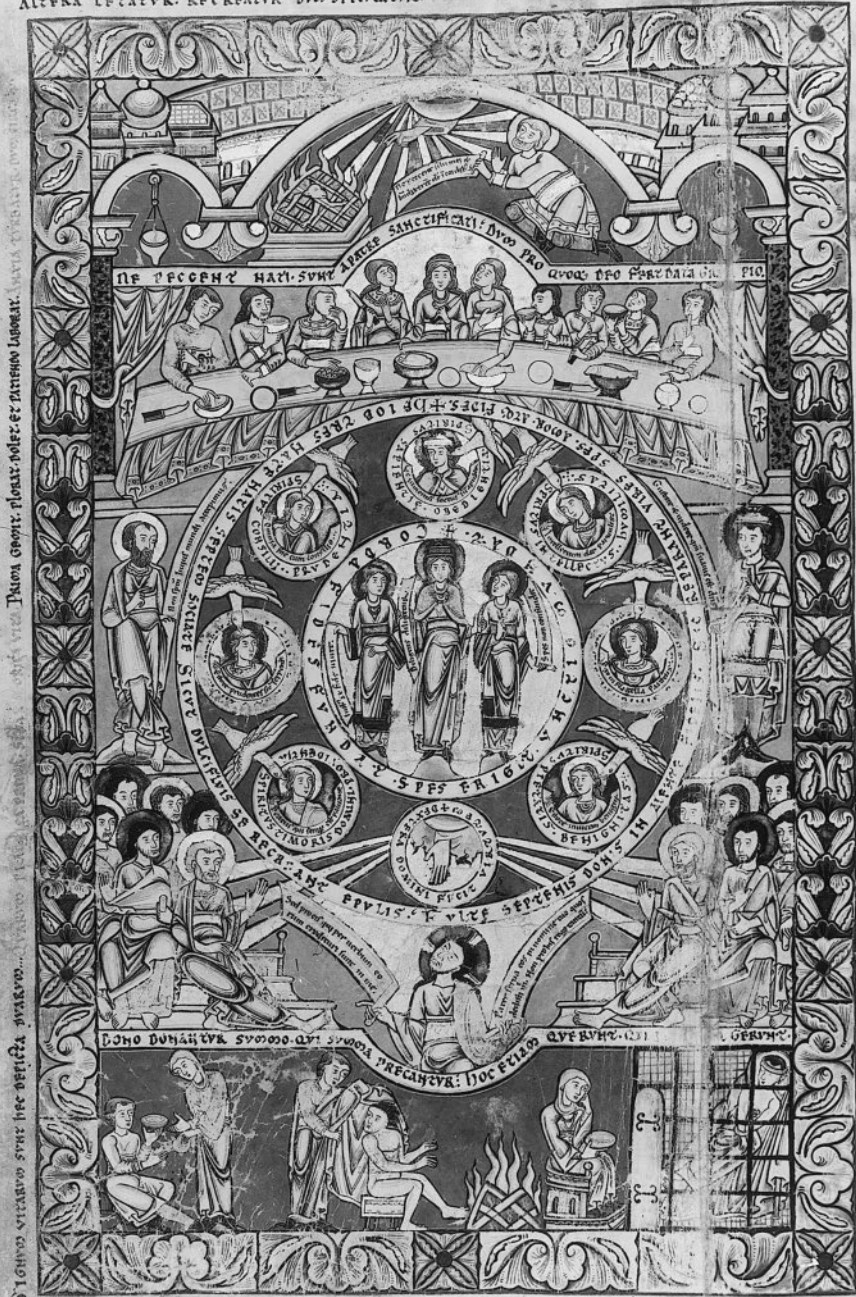


FIGURE 20-5 Personifications of the Virtues and Works of Mercy, from the Floeffe Bible. London: British Library, Add. MS 17738, fol. 3v. Source: reproduced by permission of the British Library.

Although there has been a notable shift from concerns with style⁷⁰ to those of production and function in such exhibitions,⁷¹ it seems that Romanesque exhibitions are once again in disfavor compared with early Christian, Byzantine, early medieval, and Gothic art, all of which have been the subject of important international exhibitions in the past several years. This, of course, is cyclical; manuscripts were an important component of a major 2005 exhibition in Paris,⁷² and other such exhibitions will no doubt be mounted as curators and institutions turn attention to neglected material.

While catalogs presumably will continue to document exhibitions and perhaps to concretize current scholarship in printed volumes, the internet and the World Wide Web are making medieval manuscripts increasingly available on a global scale. Libraries and museums have invested tremendously in making their holdings accessible to the public; the number of manuscripts now wholly available electronically has jumped exponentially since the first edition of this chapter in 2006. In 2018, researchers can now sit at a computer and easily access thousands of manuscripts with the click of a button and zoom in to see details in digital high-resolution that might otherwise be overlooked. “Digital humanities” has become a growing field, although its impact on the study of Romanesque manuscript illumination remains to be seen.

One drawback of the new technology is the ephemeral nature of some websites. In 2005, one could refer to the *Edmund of East Anglia* project, through which the Richard Rawlinson Center for Anglo-Saxon Studies and Manuscript Research at Western Michigan University made available 18 color images from the VSE, but that website was suspended in 2007.⁷³ Fortunately, however, images from the entire manuscript, as well as a full description and bibliography, are now available directly through CORSAIR, the website of the Morgan Library & Museum.⁷⁴ Such institutional websites are more likely to endure, but the concerns linger. The impressive virtual facsimile of the St. Albans Psalter produced by the University of Aberdeen (with page-by-page transcriptions and essays by noted scholars that provide an updated version of the original Pächt, Wormald, and Dodwell volume)⁷⁵ is still available but no longer updated; one must now go to a website personally maintained by the noted scholar Peter Kidd.⁷⁶

Technology aside, scholars will inevitably continue to build on old methodologies (e.g., by finding new connections through codicology, paleography, and visual analysis) even as they seek new intellectual approaches to familiar material. The most recent work on the VSE has focused on Edmund’s severed head, reflecting a broader current academic interest in the physical body;⁷⁷ it is likely no coincidence that in this age of digital reproduction, to invoke Walter Benjamin, more scholars are also paying even closer attention to the physicality of Romanesque manuscripts.⁷⁸ Another welcome trend is interdisciplinarity: some of the most important work on the VSE and other English illuminated manuscripts, for example, has been done by Rodney Thomson, who is not an art historian.⁷⁹ Similarly, Mary Carruthers’s intellectual history of medieval memory provides an important perspective for understanding Romanesque manuscripts,⁸⁰ and scholarship

dealing with such media as textiles and sculpture can potentially cast light on the style and function of manuscript illumination.⁸¹

Inevitably, scholars will continue to critique the modern reception and interpretation of Romanesque manuscripts and to integrate these objects into broader understandings of medieval art. *Manuscript Illumination in the Modern Age* by Hindman et al., for example, fundamentally alters our view of the modern status of the medieval manuscript, although its focus on England and France perpetuates a long-standing emphasis on those countries; attention to Germany, for example, would have revealed that perhaps the very first modern manuscript facsimiles were produced in Bamberg before 1738.⁸² Future scholarship will certainly have to direct more attention not only to German material but also to eastern European works that have received scant attention in Western literature.

Despite the conceptual expansion of art historical literature in the past 30 years, questions of terminology and definition remain as vexing as they were two centuries ago. Throughout the nineteenth century, authors were slow to apply the architectural and sculptural term “Romanesque” to manuscripts, but by the end of the twentieth century the concept had become fixed in the survey books. In the 2016 edition of Janson’s *History of Art*, manuscript illumination takes a back seat to architecture and sculpture and fits uneasily into the chapter’s overall definition of Romanesque.⁸³ But the pendulum may be swinging: in *Medieval Art*, Veronica Sekules abjured “Romanesque” and “Gothic” for art between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries. With regard to manuscript illumination, I would argue that “Romanesque” is meaningless and that no single term adequately conveys the richness and complexity of this material. A twenty-first-century scholar may yet devise better nomenclature, but until then it would be wise to combine nineteenth-century chronological terms with the more sophisticated intellectual constructs of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

Notes

- 1 For a complete description of the manuscript’s textual and pictorial contents, see the catalog pages on the Corsair Online Research Resource, <http://corsair.morganlibrary.org>, accessed 23 August 2018. [For more on the Vita Sancti Eadmundi, see Chapter 6 by Lewis in this volume (ed.).]
- 2 *Bibliotheca Townneliana. A Catalogue of the Library of the Late John Towneley, Esq.*, Pt. 1 (London, 1814), lot 904.
- 3 *The bibliographical decameron*, esp. p. lxxx for the Life of St. Edmund. On Dibdin, see Hindman et al., *Manuscript Illumination*, pp. 25–26, 38–44.
- 4 *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, Vol. 2, esp. pp. 215–216 (Letter XVII).
- 5 For the nineteenth-century reception of medieval manuscripts, see Hindman et al., *Manuscript Illumination*, which expands considerably on an earlier exhibition and catalog by Alice Beckwith (*Victorian Bibliomania*).
- 6 On the works of J.O. Westwood and Henry Noel Humphreys, see Hindman et al., *Manuscript Illumination*, pp. 123–125, 165–169.

- 7 *Histoire de l'art*, esp. Vol. 2, p. 47. This work originally was issued in 24 parts between 1810 and 1823.
- 8 Bastard d'Estang, *Peintures et ornements*. On Bastard d'Estang's ambitious project, see Hindman et al., *Manuscript Illumination*, pp. 129–132. For French efforts to catalog national holdings, see Cahn, *Romanesque Manuscripts*, Vol. 1, pp. 29–32.
- 9 Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*, esp. pp. 132–149.
- 10 This was a popular abridgement (running to seven editions and two English translations) of Lacroix, ed., *Le Moyen-âge et renaissance*, with chapters by noted scholars, including two on manuscripts by, respectively, Jacques-Joseph Champollion-Figeac and his son Aimé-Louis, both of the Bibliothèque nationale.
- 11 [On Romanesque sculpture and architecture, see Chapters 17, 18, and 19 by Fernie, Hourihane, and Maxwell, respectively, in this volume (ed.).]
- 12 Rowan Watson, in Hindman et al., *Manuscript Illumination*, pp. 188–192.
- 13 Arnold, *Memorials*, esp. pp. xxxvi–xxxix.
- 14 See Thompson et al., eds., *Facsimiles of Ancient Manuscripts*, esp. p. 19.
- 15 [On Gothic manuscript illumination, see Chapter 23 by Hedeman in this volume (ed.).]
- 16 Lecoy de la Marche, *Les manuscrits*, pp. 162–163.
- 17 For an appreciation of this essay, see Cahn, *Romanesque Manuscripts*, Vol. 1, p. 31.
- 18 Baum, *Die Malerei und Plastik*.
- 19 The citation, on p. 125, is to Dehio and von Bezold, *Die kirchliche Baukunst*, p. 147. On the VSE, see p. 228.
- 20 The term “watershed” is used by Hindman et al., *Manuscript Illumination*, p. 210.
- 21 Cockerell, *Exhibition of Illuminated Manuscripts*, pp. x–xi.
- 22 Review in *Burlington Magazine*, 13 (Apr.–Sept. 1908), pp. 128–129. Fry was referring specifically to the Winchester Bible.
- 23 Caviness, “Erweiterung.”
- 24 Lauer, *Les Enluminures romanes*.
- 25 Morey, *Exhibition of Illuminated Manuscripts*, p. x.
- 26 Boeckler built to some degree on the work of Millar, *English Illuminated Manuscripts*, esp. pp. 28–30.
- 27 Boeckler, *Abendländische Miniaturen*, 90.
- 28 As late as 1967, David Diringer (*The Illuminated Book*, p. 255), could quote verbatim an assessment from a half-century earlier (Herbert, *Illuminated Manuscripts*, p. 135).
- 29 Oakeshott, *Artists; Sigena; The Two Winchester Bibles*. See also Ayres, “The Work of the Morgan Master,” and Donovan, *The Winchester Bible*.
- 30 See, e.g. Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts*, p. 373.
- 31 See especially Demus, *Byzantine Art*, and Kitzinger, “The Byzantine Contribution.”
- 32 Pächt et al., *The St. Albans Psalter*. Comparable collaborative efforts on Romanesque manuscripts include Green, ed., *Hortus Deliciarum*, and Gibson et al., eds., *The Eadwine Psalter*.
- 33 The classic statement was the influential work of Focillon (*Art d'Occident*) translated as *The Art of the West in the Middle Ages*.
- 34 Countless twentieth-century overviews admitted the difficulty of defining termini for the Romanesque period. See, for example, Zarnecki, *Romanesque*.
- 35 Turner, *Romanesque Illuminated Manuscripts*, pp. 7, 25.
- 36 Grabar and Nordenfalk, *Romanesque Painting*, pp. 133–206.

- 37 Ibid., p. 186.
- 38 Wormald, "Some Illustrated Manuscripts," esp. pp. 251–252 and 261 for the VSE.
- 39 Gaborit-Chopin, *Le Décoration*, is representative.
- 40 McLachlan, *Scriptorium*, an unrevised version of her 1965 dissertation with a "Bibliographic Supplement: Relevant Scholarship since 1965." See also Bateman, "Pembroke 120 and Morgan 736." For the most recent overview of these issues, see Gerry, "Picturing Narrative."
- 41 Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts*, esp. pp. 72–74 for the VSE; this was updated in part by Kauffmann's historiographic review, "English Romanesque Book Illumination." For German manuscripts, see Klemm, *Die romanischen Handschriften*. For France, see Cahn, *Romanesque Manuscripts*.
- 42 See, for example, Klemm, *Ein romanischer Miniaturenzyklus*; Haney, *The Winchester Psalter* (based on her 1978 dissertation).
- 43 Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIIe siècle*.
- 44 Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories*. Many of Cahn's essays, originally published between 1964 and 1994, are gathered in his *Studies in Medieval Art*, with postscripts for each article.
- 45 Abou-el-Haj, "Bury St Edmunds Abbey." Another excellent analysis of institutional conflict and manuscript production is Carrasco, "Spirituality in Context."
- 46 Ricker, *Reliquienkult*.
- 47 Rudolph, *Violence and Daily Life*.
- 48 Zaluska, *L'Enluminure*.
- 49 Palmer, *Zisterzienser*.
- 50 E.g. Kauffmann, "British Library MS Lansdowne 383."
- 51 Caviness, "Anchoress, Abbess." Pächt et al., *The St. Albans Psalter*, pp. 135–144, explained the inclusion of the Alexis legend in the psalter with reference to events in Christina's life, but historical contextualization played only a minor role in his work. [For more on Christina of Markyate, see Chapters 8 and 12 by Kurmann-Schwarz and Caskey, respectively, in this volume (ed.).]
- 52 Carrasco, "The Imagery of the Magdalen." See also Nilgen, "Psalter."
- 53 Haney, *The St. Albans Psalter*. This rich work focuses on the psalter's initials and also provides a historiographic review of the manuscript and medieval psalter illustration.
- 54 Above all Bepler et al., *The St Albans Psalter (Albani Psalter)* facsimile commentary; Bepler and Heitzmann, *Der Albani-Psalter*; Collins et al., *The St. Albans Psalter*.
- 55 See the remarks by Madeline Caviness, in "Artist," on the historiographic reasons for Hildegard's previous exclusion from the art-historical canon. There is now a cottage industry on Hildegard: see, e.g. Saurma-Jeltsch, *Die Miniaturen*, and Suzuki, *Bildgewordene Visionen*. [For more on the feminist view of Hildegard of Bingen, see Chapter 8 by Kurmann-Schwarz in this volume (ed.).]
- 56 Camille, "Philological Iconoclasm."
- 57 Alexander, "Medieval Art."
- 58 Hahn, "Peregrinatio et Natio."
- 59 Hahn, *Portrayed on the Heart*.
- 60 [On narrative, see Chapter 6 by Lewis in this volume (ed.).]
- 61 See, among others, Muratova, "Les Manuscrits-frères."
- 62 Baxter, *Bestiaries and Their Users*. The first chapter includes a useful historiographic review of bestiaries and the *Physiologus*.

- 63 Strickland, *Saracens*. [On the monstrous, see Chapter 15 by Dale in this volume (ed.).]
- 64 Cahn, *Romanesque Bible Illumination*. [On patronage, see Chapter 12 by Caskey in this volume (ed.).]
- 65 Bouché, “*Vox Imaginis*”; Pirker-Aurenhammer, *Die Gumbertusbibel*.
- 66 See, fundamentally, Camille, “Seeing and Reading.” On individual books, see Reilly, “Picturing the Monastic Drama”; Teviotdale, “The Pictorial Program”; Sears, “Portraits in Counterpoint”; Maxwell, “Sealing Signs,” a most original and provocative essay.
- 67 See the essays by Caviness, “Images of Divine Order,” and “The Simple Perception.” [On formalism, see Chapter 7 by Seidel in this volume (ed.).]
- 68 Klein, “The So-Called Byzantine Diptych”; Nilgen, “Byzantinismen.”
- 69 Heslop, “Brief in Words”; Klein, “Les Apocalypses”; Petzold, “Of the Significance of Colours”; Wirth, *L’Image*.
- 70 E.g. Porcher, *French Miniatures*.
- 71 E.g. Zarnecki et al., eds., *English Romanesque Art*; Legner, ed., *Ornamenta ecclesiae*. [On the modern medieval museum, see Chapter 39 by Brown in this volume (ed.).]
- 72 *La France romane*, 2005.
- 73 <http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/research/rawl/edmund>.
- 74 <http://corsair.themorgan.org>, or for a link to the manuscript itself: <http://corsair.themorgan.org/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBID=143847&V1=1>, accessed 23 August 2018.
- 75 <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/index.shtml>, accessed 23 August 2018.
- 76 <http://www.manuscripts.org.uk/albani/index.htm>, accessed 23 August 2018.
- 77 Mittman, “Answering the Call,” and Mills, “Talking Heads.”
- 78 See, for example, the work of Kathryn Gerry, or Nancy Turner in Collins et al., *The St. Albans Psalter*.
- 79 See, among others, Thomson, “Early Romanesque” and *The Bury Bible*.
- 80 Carruthers, *The Book of Memory and The Craft of Thought*.
- 81 Such studies have been done for the Gothic period, but not the Romanesque: Oliver, “Worship of the Word,” and the works of Jeffrey Hamburger; see his essays collected in *The Visual and the Visionary*.
- 82 These were made by Johann Graff, subcustodian of the Bamberg Cathedral from 1722 until 1749. For his manuscript copies, see Baumgärtel-Fleischmann, ed., *Ein Leben*, esp. pp. 166–179. I thank Dr. Bernhard Schemmel, Director of the Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, for this reference.
- 83 See also Mazal, *Buchkunst*; Kauffmann, “Romanesque.”

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The Study of Gothic Architecture

Stephen Murray

What Is Gothic?

The understanding of “Gothic” architecture involves the assessment of *product* and *process*. The first approach, systematized over the past two centuries, applies a check-list of required features including the pointed arch, lightweight ribbed vault, highly developed buttressing (perhaps including flyers) and structure based upon a skeleton of cut stone (ashlar) rather than the massive rubble walls of earlier “Romanesque.” This combination produces a light-filled and spacious interior and jagged exterior massing. The story of Gothic, told in traditional terms, recounts the mid-twelfth-century assembly of these features to create a radically new structural *system* in and around the Ile-de-France, the perfection of that system circa 1200, its “triumph” and “spread” to England, Germany, Spain, and Italy, its transformation over time, and its demise soon after 1500.

The second approach (*process*) – manifestly more attractive to modern audiences – focuses upon the cultural framework of architectural production, correlating economic transformations, new agrarian methods, industry, commerce and the growth of towns, technology, and rationalized stone production, the newly expanded mission of the church and new forms of liturgical and devotional practice, the increasing power of the French monarchy, and supra-regional interactions that led to intense interest in a common set of forms that might be appropriated and exploited to meet a wide range of regional needs. Process meets product, of course, in our own experiential response to the building itself.

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The challenge is to deal with the full range of cultural variations that accompanied construction while at the same time recognizing and accounting for the power of that unmistakable Gothic “look.”

Problems and Resources

The principal resource for the study of the Gothic architecture lies in the buildings themselves. More than *metonymy* where the *idea* of the Middle Ages can be conveyed by a building or a group of buildings, the edifice provides direct physical access to the spaces, and contact with the material substance of the past. Buildings, moreover, may possess the power to *affect* us: not just through the miracle of survival and the “message” that might be found “encoded” in their spaces and forms, but also because of the artifice of builders who may have endowed the edifice with the power to move us to a sense of the beautiful or sublime. Our first problem is reconciling our experiential responses with the task of dealing with buildings as entities that can go beyond the written document in providing vital access to the past.

The student must form a direct and personal relationship with the raw material of study, the buildings themselves, visiting as many as possible and developing a systematic way of looking, understanding, documenting, and *interpreting* what is seen. These abilities cannot be learned entirely in the classroom nor from a book: they are acquired through an extended dialectic between the buildings, the written sources, and interactions with the *community of scholars*: between the active and the contemplative lives. Work must, of course, begin with an evaluation of the extent to which our buildings have been transformed physically, existing now in a context (urban and cultural) that may have little to do with the situation in which they were created.¹

“Interpretation” brings the assessment of the relationship between the monument and similar contemporaneous edifices (“style”) as well as the search for an understanding of that building in relation to the physical and cultural circumstances that attended its construction and use (“context”). Unable to visit countless edifices, the student quickly becomes dependent upon various kinds of *representation*. First, we have images of buildings made using mechanical means. Slides and photographs have long been accepted – sometimes thoughtlessly – as surrogates for the building.² At the end of this chapter I will refer to the new world of digital images, websites, and laser scanning. And then there are graphic images made manually – plans, sections, axonometric renderings, and, from an earlier age, lithographs, engravings, paintings, and sketches.³

“Representation,” of course, brings not only images, but also the *secondary sources* written by post-medieval (art) historians. As far as the *story* of Gothic is concerned, the pages of the book tend to impose a linear structure upon the narrative with two-dimensional linkages between buildings that are three dimensional, creating deceptive order out of ambiguity and complexity.

Then, the student must become a historian of medieval life, addressing problems of function, the role of the patron, the artisan, sources of revenue, mechanics

of construction, the dynamic political, economic, and religious contexts, and what the building might have meant to medieval builder and user.⁴ This leads to *primary written sources* from the time of construction, now scattered in countless libraries and archives – including great centralized collections (for example, the Public Records Office or the British Library in London, or in Paris the *Bibliothèque nationale* or *Archives nationales*) – and also local collections: for example, the French *Archives départementales*. First consult published anthologies such as Mortet and Deschamps, Frisch, Panofsky, Frankl, and Binding and Speer.⁵ The student may then proceed to the inventories of the archive(s) that pertain(s) to the object of study.

Primary written sources are narrative or non-narrative. The *narrative* source provides a contemporary account of construction: for example, Gervase of Canterbury's story of the reconstruction of the cathedral choir,⁶ or Abbot Suger's writings on Saint-Denis.⁷ The *non-narrative* source results from the process of construction: building accounts, contracts, chapter deliberations, and legal documents. Works that depend heavily upon such non-narrative sources include Colvin,⁸ Ackerman,⁹ Panofsky,¹⁰ Murray,¹¹ Erskine,¹² Cailleaux,¹³ and Vroom.¹⁴ Of particular importance are building (or fabric) accounts, fiscal documents left by the day-to-day record-keeping for Gothic construction. The earliest surviving accounts belong to the mid-thirteenth century: the prolific material of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries provides enormous amounts of information about sources of revenue, as well as expenses for artisans and materials.

From the written sources we learn that medieval people might be perfectly aware of the visual differences between “Romanesque” and “Gothic” “styles.” Descriptive epithets for the phenomenon will, of necessity, refer to time (newness) and place. Thus, Gervase of Canterbury provided a systematic comparison between the old cathedral choir and new edifice built after the 1174 fire. By the later thirteenth century we find an epithet that embodies the idea of place and cultural identity: the German chronicler, Burkhard von Hall (d. 1300) described the new construction at Wimpfen-in-Tal as “French Work.”¹⁵

Graphic sources begin in the first part of the thirteenth century with the famous little book (*carnet*) of drawings left by Villard de Honnecourt and his followers.¹⁶ By the end of the thirteenth century such plans and drawings become more common; German Late Gothic generated huge amounts of material.¹⁷

While we have differentiated three avenues: work on the building, relating that building to others, and locating it within a range of contexts, meanings, and functions, the student will probably undertake all tasks simultaneously. In finding various kinds of working method and synthesizing framework, the student will place herself within the history of *interpretation* or historiography.

Historiography

How did “Gothic” get its name? The earliest applications of the epithet to Northern architecture were associated with disapproval fostered in the decades around 1500 by Italian humanists for whom “Germanic” or “Gothic” was

synonymous with rustic, or barbaric.¹⁸ Raphael, in a letter of 1519, derided a form of architecture said to have resulted from the tying together of the branches of forest trees to create forms akin to pointed arches, yet conceded that such architecture could not be altogether bad, as derived from Nature, the only legitimate inspiration for all art.

Students might be troubled by the apparent absurdity of naming an architectural phenomenon of the twelfth and later centuries after fifth-century Germanic invaders of the Roman Empire – the Goths who fostered no tradition in stone architecture. Yet despite attempts to find an alternative (“Saracenic,” “Ogival,” “Pointed”), “Gothic” has stuck. Indeed, with its power to collapse time and to link form with alleged ethnic roots and function, this is a most powerful and suggestive epithet. The elements of the Classical orders embodied in the first generation of mid-twelfth-century “Gothic” buildings pointed emphatically to the past – Christian Triumph in the Late Roman Empire and the period of Gothic migrations that had seen the first establishment of the Northern Church through the agency of the saints. And there is a distinct possibility that ideas concerning natural origins (the forest) were deliberately nurtured by the patrons and builders of Late Gothic churches in Germany and possibly elsewhere.¹⁹

One is led to expect an “end” to Gothic in the early sixteenth century, followed by a period of negative reaction, then revival in the late eighteenth to nineteenth centuries.²⁰ Yet the northern skyline was still dominated by the churches and cathedrals of the earlier age. And by the seventeenth century local antiquarians began to unravel the history of the monuments that formed local identity – the writing of the history of Gothic architecture had begun.²¹

A series of interlocking concerns led people to look at Gothic architecture with new vision.

Romanticism in literature. Expressions of appreciation of Gothic were rendered eloquent by (for example) Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) and Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803).²² Gothic was viewed as a personal affective experience as well as the expression of cultural or national identity (German, English, French, etc.).²³

The French Revolution lent additional poignancy to the romantic yearning for the past. François René Chateaubriand (1768–1848) expressed it most beautifully:

One could not enter a Gothic church without a kind of shudder and a vague consciousness of God. One would find oneself suddenly carried back to the times when cloistered monks, after they had meditated in the forests of their monasteries, cast themselves down before the altar and praised the Lord in the calm and silence of the night.²⁴

“*Scientific*” approaches sought to identify the internal logic (*system*) of a building and to locate it within a class or “type,” matching parallel methods in the natural sciences. Classification was only possible when large numbers of edifices had been “collected” as specimens – visited, studied, and published. John Britton (1771–1857) pioneered the mass production of cheaply produced engravings.²⁵

The similar enterprise for French monuments came a little later with the *Voyages pittoresques*.²⁶ Thomas Rickman (1776–1841) provided the equipment necessary to classify the hundreds of monuments that were now becoming available in published form based upon the establishment of “styles” with common characteristics that could be fixed chronologically.²⁷

By the early nineteenth century it was realized that Gothic should be assessed as an organic *system* responding to functional, aesthetic, and structural requirements. The breakthrough to the critical monograph may be associated with names like Johannes Wetter (1806–1897) and Robert Willis (1800–1878). Wetter aligned the forms of Mainz Cathedral with datable monuments elsewhere, analyzing its structure as a skeleton of stone efficiently conceived from the top downwards in relation to vertical load and outward thrust.²⁸ Willis’s monograph on Canterbury Cathedral still provides a model combination of the critical written sources (the *Tractatus* of Gervase of Canterbury) and careful study of the forms of the building itself.²⁹

The institutionalization of the study of medieval architecture was furthered by the establishment in 1823 of the *Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, an organization that provided the model for the much more famous *Société française d’archéologie*, with its *Bulletin monumental* and *Congrès archéologique*, which from 1834 met annually in different cities, providing a vital framework for research and publication.

Conservation and restoration. The French Revolution had nationalized assets necessary to sustain the fabric of the church. The convergence (1830s) of the pressing physical needs of neglected or mutilated edifices with the increasing sensitivity to the cultural value of such monuments led to the development of a *métier* – that of the restorer. Jean-Baptiste Lassus (1807–1857) and Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) are prime examples of the nineteenth-century restorer in France.³⁰

Rationalism. In 1840 the young Viollet-le-Duc assumed direction of the restoration of La Madeleine at Vézelay.³¹ The theoretical understanding that he developed and published in his *Dictionnaire* must be understood in relation to his practice at Vézelay, Notre-Dame of Paris, and scores of other projects.³² He concluded that the ribs of a quadripartite vault served as a scaffold to steady the four vault fields during construction. Each of the vault fields was then built up using lightweight mobile wooden centering. Arches and ribs actually carried the vault. Romanesque architecture is *capricious*, Gothic is *rational* – pinnacles provided stability for the buttress uprights and all elements were designed around similar rational principles.³³

Critics argued that flying buttresses do not work by opposing the thrust of the vault by means of a counterload: they merely transmit the load to the exterior pylons.³⁴ Engaged shafts only *appear* to carry; they express “aesthetic logic” but perform no structural role. Gables, pinnacles, and tabernacles all come under the same understanding. Accusing Viollet-le-Duc of a romanticized notion of mechanics, Pol Abraham and others opened the way for the understanding of Gothic as an architecture of illusionism.

*Architecture, religion, morality, and gender.*³⁵ In Augustus Welby Pugin's (1812–1852) *Contrasts* the moral and religious force of Gothic is everywhere manifest: Gothic is *the* Christian style.³⁶ The linkage between appropriateness of form and Christian dogma led to an outpouring of creativity in England with the establishment of the Camden and Ecclesiological Societies to adjudicate on the creation of “good” buildings. John Ruskin (1819–1900) set out to define guiding principles such as “truth to materials.”³⁷ The needs of growing urban populations in mid-nineteenth-century England and the perceived dangers of socialism/Marxism produced a vast need for new churches, which was met by architects such as George Edmund Street (1824–1881), William Butterfield (1884–1900), and George Gilbert Scott (1811–1878).³⁸ Gothic was also a force in the establishment of national identity, particularly in England and Germany. A most interesting recent development is the realization of the gendered implications of the appearance of “Gothic Revival” in eighteenth-century England.³⁹

The establishment of an art historical métier: archeology and theory. The twentieth century was dominated by two streams of thought: “archeological,” associated especially with the French tradition, and the “theoretical” approaches of German writers. By 1900, in a field dominated by the *Ecole des Chartes* (1821), with its chair of archeology (1846), the requirements of the French archeological study had been clearly established. E. Lefèvre-Pontalis (1862–1923) addressed the question “How should one write a monograph on a church?”⁴⁰ The elements of the study should include: (i) determination of the campaigns of construction; (ii) analytical analysis (dismemberment) of the edifice; and (iii) connection of the edifice with a particular school. Methods that included an exacting study of molding profiles, capitals, and tracery as evidence of chronology were similar to those applied in the natural sciences (zoology, botany, and mineralogy) to the understanding of groups of fossils or living organisms, and similar language developed to deal with relationships over time: “change,” “development,” or “evolution.” Such methods produced a procession of studies that remain valuable to our own day, including works by Marcel Aubert (1884–1962), Robert de Lasteyrie (1849–1921), and Camille Enlart (1862–1927).⁴¹ Henri Focillon (1881–1951) brought to such work his astonishing powers of observation and analysis, systematizing the overarching theory of form derived from the organic metaphor of evolution or development.⁴²

Paul Frankl (1878–1962), sought to derive Gothic from one basic principle, creating a “system” for classification of style and locating that transcendent “essence” that determines architectural form much as the laws of the natural sciences determine the form of living organisms.⁴³ The essential quality of a thing is revealed by contrasting it with what it *is not*. Frankl's creation of three juxtaposed opposites for Romanesque and Gothic – addition/division, structure/texture, and frontality/diagonality – provided a powerful expository method for the teacher equipped with two slide projectors.

For Frankl it was the aesthetic implications of the rib that provided the mechanism for change. An internal dialectic imposed reconciliation and integration:

each new edifice embodied corrections of the previous one until a synthesis was reached in the nave of Amiens and the choir of Cologne. The extrinsic mechanism lay in cultural history understood as a wheel where the hub is understood as the “spirit of the times.” That central theme was identified in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. Man is a fragment of creation; the multiple forms of the cathedral expressed this coordination of many elements in one. “Gothic” takes on a metonymic relationship with society as a whole.

Focusing upon Saint-Denis, Sens, and Chartres, Otto von Simson (1912–1993) dealt with the image of the cathedral as the revelation of the kingdom of God on earth.⁴⁴ The vehicle for this revelation was provided by light and the linear forms of diaphanous architecture conceived around clear geometric principles, allowing the cathedral to reflect the Platonic image of the Cosmos.

Erwin Panofsky’s (1892–1968) translation of Abbot Suger’s writings remains an essential text to this day and represented a massive achievement at the time. *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* is a provocative attempt to parallel two of the most important cultural manifestations of the day: the use of unrelenting logic to make “truth” manifest, and the new architectural forms of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries which he saw as bound together in a cause-and-effect relationship.⁴⁵

American Goths. In the United States a powerful alliance developed between the moral/mystical response to Gothic associated with the work of Henry Adams and the actual construction of Gothic revival edifices by builders like Ralph Adams Cram.⁴⁶ Gothic is today alive and well on many an American university campus.⁴⁷

In the Academy it was the French archeological approach that dominated. Sumner McKnight Crosby (1909–1982) studied at Yale with Aubert and Focillon who directed his doctoral thesis (1937) on Saint-Denis. Crosby conducted extensive excavations in the 1930s, completing the first accurate plans and sections of this most important Gothic edifice and reconstructing the history of the monument from the fifth to the twelfth century.⁴⁸

Robert Branner (1927–1973) studied with Sumner Crosby at Yale, completing his dissertation on Bourges Cathedral. Branner brought the archeological investigation of the single building to a high level of sophistication, looking beyond the traditional parameters of the discipline to find a context for “style” in the form of the patronage of the royal court.⁴⁹ Closely aligned with the French archeological tradition, he sharply criticized certain German theorizing approaches. Through his acute powers of observation, his dynamic writing, and his powers as a teacher at Columbia, Branner energized the field through the 1960s until his untimely death.⁵⁰

Jean Bony’s years at Berkeley also left an important legacy. A critical milestone in the study of Gothic architecture was marked by the 1983 appearance of Jean Bony’s *magnum opus*.⁵¹ Written and rewritten over decades, *French Gothic Architecture* still provides the student with the best demonstration of the use of rhetoric to convey the “look” of an individual building as well as the connective tissue binding together multiple buildings. To demonstrate what Gothic is, Bony

turned to Soissons Cathedral, providing a masterly account of the elements that add up to form the system. He tracked the development of each element, concentrating upon spaciousness and linear organization – horizontal and mural as well as vertical. Aware of the dangers of determinism, Bony developed his “accidental” theory – that the new architecture resulted from the attempt to impose a heavy vaulted superstructure in the Anglo-Norman tradition upon a slender infrastructure of the kind favored in and around Paris. Gothic was invented in this atmosphere of danger and went on being invented as a kind of modernism.

Gothic Architecture in the “Crisis” of Art History: Prophets of the Millennium

The 1980s brought a sea-change in the conservative world of art historians as “theoretical” approaches developed in contiguous disciplines (literature, philology, philosophy, anthropology, sociology) were enthusiastically (if sometimes naively) applied to visual culture. The imminent millennium provoked a series of forcefully written statements that provide useful stimuli for the student, who should, however, be wary of the sometimes dogmatic panaceas recommended.

Willibald Sauerländer's review of Bony's *French Gothic Architecture* provides the most audible initial trumpet blast.⁵² While he praised Bony's “brilliant book” as the culmination of the French archeological approach, Sauerländer focused upon its limitations: excessive concentration upon major monuments in France; the suggestion that the “rise” of the great Gothic cathedrals came from some kind of inner yearning for increased spaciousness. He questioned Bony's reliance upon figurative language to convey the essential qualities of the building described: of the ambulatory of Chartres Bony had written that it is “as though the interior space, in an effort to expand outwards, had managed to break through the restraining cage of buttresses at three points.” Such words revealed much about modern sensitivities – yet church spaces in the Middle Ages were divided by screens and encumbered by liturgical furniture tombs.

Von Simson was also the object of Sauerländer criticism – for having spiritualized the history of architecture, ignoring the technical, material, and historical circumstances. In 1995 Sauerländer berated a discipline that had remained too committed to the “positivistic” approaches advocated by scholars such as Lefèvre-Pontalis. He challenged the assumption that Gothic resulted from a twelfth-century *avant-garde* or that it expressed a kind of anti-classicism, stressing rather the multiple references to antique architecture in early Gothic buildings, especially the cylindrical column. Sauerländer has kept up his criticism of the old mid-twentieth-century narratives including those by Bony, Sedlmayr, and von Simson.⁵³

The search for a wider contextual context for Gothic was pursued in *Artistic Integration in Gothic Buildings*, including William Clark's very useful essay underlining the power of Gothic to recall the glorious past.⁵⁴

Marvin Trachtenberg emphatically advocated an approach that was diametrically opposed to Sauerländer's.⁵⁵ Whereas the latter found revivalism or historicism as the principal catalyst, the former stressed "medieval modernism" returning to the anti-Classical essence of "Gothic" as associated with the destroyers of Rome. For Trachtenberg the essential modernity of Gothic was more germane to the "essence of the matter" than later "scientific" scholarship preoccupied with rib vaulting, skeletal structure, scholasticism, diaphaneity, geometry, diagonality, and so forth.

Michael Davis based his very useful survey of recent trends upon conflicting "prophetic" declarations, juxtaposing Michael Camille's condemnation of the alleged narrowness and positivism of architectural historians with Alain Guerreau's call for renewed rigor ("positivism?") in dealing with the material properties, masonry, mortar, and design principles of the buildings under study.⁵⁶ In the clash between theorists and formalists, Davis advocated abandoning the story of Gothic told in linear fashion and giving due attention to the regions and to internal connections within those regional entities. Most attractive is Davis's advice that the student should not be alarmed by "radical" attempts to re-align the study of medieval architecture with current monolithic agendas. Instead, the student should disregard the restrictive "border police," recognizing the astonishing breadth of the discipline, and should continue to experiment with new approaches.

Paul Crossley, in his generous-spirited and wide-ranging introduction to the new edition of Paul Frankl's *Gothic Architecture*, has provided the most useful map of the multiple strands of current scholarship.⁵⁷

Current Approaches

The monograph has played, and should continue to play, a most important role, allowing the writer to provide a full introduction to the experience of visiting a particular building using a combination of words and images and opening multiple avenues of scholarly investigation around that building. Such monographs are associated with the scholarly activities of, for example, Seymour,⁵⁸ Branner,⁵⁹ Wolf,⁶⁰ Hamman-McClean,⁶¹ van der Meulen,⁶² Bruzelius,⁶³ Sandron,⁶⁴ Murray,⁶⁵ and Cohen.⁶⁶ Particularly useful are the monographic British Archaeological Association publications, combining description, archeology, chronology, design, and context.⁶⁷ Gillerman dealt with Ecouis in relation to the artistic activity of the court of Philip the Fair and the devotional program of Engerran de Marigny.⁶⁸ Brachmann, on Metz, puts the cathedral in its context both historical and architectural.⁶⁹

Surveys that set out to present multiple buildings and to find the connective tissue linking these buildings present a particular challenge, since one is forced to attempt to represent a complex three-dimensional phenomenon in the linear format of the book. Recent broad-ranging surveys include Binding,⁷⁰ Wilson,⁷¹ Toman,⁷² and Coldstream.⁷³ Grodecki's older survey is still very useful.⁷⁴

Regional studies have long formed a key part of the work of medieval architectural historians: one thinks particularly of the *Congrès archéologique*. Branner's *Burgundian Gothic* provided a useful focus upon a regional expression of Gothic.⁷⁵ Bruzelius and Krüger have focused on Italian Gothic,⁷⁶ Freigang on southern France,⁷⁷ Recht on Alsace.⁷⁸ There has been recent interest in Central Europe.⁷⁹ National studies include Boase and Harvey on English Gothic,⁸⁰ Bony and Coldstream on English decorated,⁸¹ Stalley on Ireland,⁸² Nussbaum and Busch on German Gothic,⁸³ Lambert Freigang on Spain,⁸⁴ and Grant on Norman Gothic.⁸⁵

Artistic integration (1995).⁸⁶ This publication generated some useful studies and the student would be well advised to consider the essays by Sauerländer, McGinn, Reynolds, Clark, and others. However they tended at times to neglect the wealth of existing publications. Recent authors who include a careful treatment of the architectural envelope of the building as well as figurative cycles and/or furniture include Caviness on S-Remi at Reims,⁸⁷ Binski on Westminster Abbey,⁸⁸ Köstler on St. Elizabeth at Marburg,⁸⁹ Jung on Naumburg,⁹⁰ and Tripps on the figurative outfitting of the Gothic church.⁹¹

Primary sources. The work of correlating the primary written sources with the building itself is the most rigorous, but potentially one of the most valuable pursuits of the student of Gothic architecture. Binding and Speer have assembled important textual material on the medieval experience of art.⁹² Coenen has worked on Late Gothic master masons' work books.⁹³ There has been an astonishing recent burst of activity focused upon the written accounts of the administration and consecration of the abbey of Saint-Denis left by the abbot Suger, including works by Kidson,⁹⁴ Neuheuser,⁹⁵ Büchsel,⁹⁶ Grant,⁹⁷ Marksches,⁹⁸ Speer and Binding,⁹⁹ and Rudolph.¹⁰⁰

Liturgy. The best general introductions are provided by Harper and Dix.¹⁰¹ Reynolds addressed the problems of integrating liturgical studies with architecture.¹⁰² One of the most spectacular essays of the recent past was by Fassler who reinterpreted the sculptural programs and spaces of Chartres Cathedral in light of liturgical sources.¹⁰³ On the extent to which liturgical and institutional demands fixed architectural form, the architecture of the mendicants provides an interesting case study: see the recent works by Sundt and Schenlun.¹⁰⁴ Kroos published key liturgical sources for Cologne Cathedral,¹⁰⁵ and Speer dealt with the interaction of art and liturgy.¹⁰⁶ Craig Wright provided a delightful introduction to the music and liturgy of Notre-Dame of Paris.¹⁰⁷

The search for meaning. The most valuable account of the allegorical meanings attached to the various parts of the church and its furnishings was written by William Durandus, bishop of Mende (1230–1296).¹⁰⁸ Some of the meanings listed by Durandus may seem obscure or improbable to the modern reader. The *Gestalt* language of the cathedral can be just as powerful for the modern viewer as the medieval user. Thus the plan of the church with its rounded eastern end, its transept and longitudinal nave can be understood as an image of the human body; the church is the body of Christ. Similarly, the boat-like qualities of the edifice point to Noah's Ark, a prototype for the church.¹⁰⁹ Sedlmayr brought attention

to the *baldachin*: the spatial unit composed of a concave canopy supported upon columns to create the impression of an interior that is not bound to the earth, but which floats, suspended from above, creating a portrait (*Abbild*) of the Heavenly City.¹¹⁰ Bandmann attempted an ambitious survey of the power of the cathedral as a vehicle for meaning.¹¹¹ Buildings also carry meaning through their resemblance to other buildings – Krautheimer’s pioneering work on the “iconography” of architecture (1942) is still of enormous importance, especially as updated by Paul Crossley.¹¹² Hans-Joachim Kunst dealt with resemblances between buildings in terms of “quotations.”¹¹³

Materialism. The economic underpinnings of cathedral construction were discussed by Kraus, Murray, and Vroom.¹¹⁴ Warnke provided a sociology of medieval architecture.¹¹⁵ Marxism brought very different results on both sides of the Atlantic. Kimpel, standing in line with Benjamin, emphasized the means of production that facilitated mass production, particularly with respect to the working of stone.¹¹⁶ Abou-el-Haj and Williams, students of Weckmeister, stressing the abusive relations between clergy and townsfolk, presented the cathedral as a sign of crushing control of the means of economic production on the part of the clergy.¹¹⁷ On the legal framework, see Schöller.¹¹⁸ On the institutional organization of the cathedral, Erlande-Brandenburg.¹¹⁹ On the business of building, Binding.¹²⁰ On the urbanistic context of the cathedral, see Mussat.¹²¹

Useful recent work has addressed the material and the artisans of Gothic. On wooden roofs, see Binding.¹²² On the artisan, Barral I Altet and Nicola Coldstream.¹²³ On construction, see Fitchen.¹²⁴ On color, see Michler.¹²⁵

Design and metrology. Pioneering work was done by Bucher.¹²⁶ Kidson¹²⁷ and Fernie¹²⁸ offer useful methodological overviews. Most recently see the anthology edited by Wu.¹²⁹

Structure. This field has been dominated by Robert Mark at Princeton and Jacques Heymann at Cambridge.¹³⁰ Their writings provide an overview of the old debates and the application of new ideas and technologies. The deployment of the laser scanner in the last couple of decades has offered a new source of highly accurate models which may be subjected to structural and metrological analysis.¹³¹

Gender. On womens’ space in medieval architecture, see the special edition of *Gesta* edited by Bruzelius.¹³² On the hybridity of the English Gothic Revival as an expression of gender see Matthew Reeve.¹³³

Secular architecture. On Florence, see, for example, Braunfels¹³⁴ and Trachtenberg.¹³⁵ On castles, see Jean Mesqui.¹³⁶ On the interaction between castles and churches, Sheila Bonde.¹³⁷ See Albrecht on French palace architecture.¹³⁸

Anthropology/sociology. See Maines and Bonde on Soissons,¹³⁹ Fergusson on Rievaulx,¹⁴⁰ Bob Scott on the sociology of construction.¹⁴¹

Representation: language. This is a vast and most fertile topic. The recent anthology edited by Crossley and Clarke provides a start.¹⁴² On the rhetorical tropes of Gothic see Murray, *Plotting Gothic*.

Ductus and wonder. The anthropological approach to Gothic brings the concern with the *affect* of the building upon the visitor, whether a devout pilgrim

led compulsively forward through a sacred topography (the *ductus*)¹⁴³ or whether enthralled by breathtaking forms and spaces that lead one to a sense of the sublime (*wonder*).¹⁴⁴

“*Late Gothic architecture*. The idea of “style” anchors a set of visual forms to a unity of time and place and brings the assumption that a period of experiments (Early Gothic) will be followed by synthesis (High Gothic), routine production (Rayonnant; regional Gothic), decline (Late Gothic), and death. The earliest definitions of “Flamboyant” or “Late Gothic” depended very much upon a morphology of individual forms, particularly window tracery; Late Gothic was associated with double-curved shapes. The style-based study of Late Gothic led to a futile competition as to whether the French, English, or Germans had led the way to a new formal synthesis.¹⁴⁵ But there is so much more than this! Germany and England both produced the distinctive forms of “Perpendicular” and “Sondergotik.” Bialostocki¹⁴⁶ first laid out a critical and pluralistic interpretative framework and in 1971 Roland Sanfaçon set out to find a broader interpretation of “Flamboyant,” arguing that the definition of a “style” based upon the curves and countercurves of tracery cannot do justice to the originality and real meaning of the phenomenon. He found in the forms of architecture in the years around 1300 the unifying principle of “individualism,” or *détente*.¹⁴⁷ The most recent studies in the field, while still putting Late Gothic buildings in relation to their predecessors, concentrate more on problems of production, patronage, liturgy, devotional practices, and urban context. Most recently, see the wide-ranging survey of Late Gothic Architecture by Robert Bork.¹⁴⁸

Digital studies. The historian must engage in the impossible undertaking of holding each building suspended in the intelligence while it can find its multiple levels of relationship with the hundreds of other buildings under construction at the same time. The most valuable tool in this task will be systematically collected data, the organization of a database and the synthesizing power of the computer. Over the past two decades a considerable number of very promising websites have been established including www.mappinggothic.org, www.creationofgothic.org, <https://mis.u-picardie.fr/E-Cathedrale>, <http://www.arteguias.com/gotica.htm>, and <http://classes.bnf.fr/villard> (accessed 23 August 2018).

Conclusion

Half a century ago Paul Frankl wrote

The essence of Gothic is, in a few words, that cultural and intellectual background insofar as it entered into the building and was absorbed by it: it is the interpenetration, the saturation, of the form of the building by the meaning of the culture.¹⁴⁹

Everything has changed, yet little has changed. Today we would assign more importance to the culture and presuppositions of the viewer/interpreter, and we

would challenge Frankl's underlying idea of "style" as Platonic "essence." As we pursue the question as to *how the ideas got into the building* we will learn to deal more fully with the underlying structures and mechanics of human relations. But allow me to end as I began: it is the buildings themselves, with their amazing pull upon the curiosity and the awe of the spectator, that remain the most important raw material of our study. They continue to beckon us to return, even after a lifetime of work, to ask new questions and apply new approaches.

Notes

- 1 For an introduction to the world of restoration see J.-M. Leniaud, *Jean-Baptiste Lassus*.
- 2 The Conway Library at the Courtauld Institute of Art; the Marburg Photo Archive; the *Services photographiques* of the *Caisse National des Monuments Historiques*, Paris. The promise of the future lies in the digital collections currently being formed by ArtStore sponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. We will deal with digital databasing of Gothic edifices below.
- 3 Dehio and von Bezold, *Kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlandes*.
- 4 The works of certain historians have proved particularly rich as far as the student of Gothic architecture is concerned: particularly Richard Southern, John Baldwin, Jacques Le Goff, Elizabeth Brown, etc.
- 5 Mortet and Deschamps, *Recueil des textes*; Frisch, *Gothic Art, 1140–c.1450*; Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*; Frankl, *The Gothic*; Binding and Speer, *Mittelalterliches Kunsterleben*.
- 6 Gervase of Canterbury, *On the Burning and Repair*; Willis, *The Architectural History*.
- 7 Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*; Speer and Binding, *Abt Suger von Saint-Denis*.
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France, Germany, and the Historiography of Gothic Sculpture

Jacqueline E. Jung

In summer 2011, the German town of Naumburg an der Saale (pop. 30 000) hosted a massive state-sponsored exhibition on monumental stone sculpture of the thirteenth century. From the official exhibition advertisements seen throughout the region of Saxony-Anhalt, the frontal faces of a winsome, bright-eyed couple in the prime of life gazed out toward viewers (fig. 22-1). The female figure, suavely holding the edge of her cloak against her cheek, was a familiar presence to the locals. Representing Uta of Ballenstedt, a Saxon noblewoman who helped establish Naumburg's episcopal status in 1049, this life-sized polychromed statue was carved some two centuries after her death and installed, with figures of eleven other noble founders, in the wall of the cathedral's western choir (fig. 22-2a). Their creator – whose name, like those of most of his thirteenth-century colleagues, is unknown – was the focus of the exhibition: *The Naumburg Master: Sculptor and Architect in the Europe of Cathedrals*.¹

Neutral as it might seem to anyone unversed in the fraught historiography of Gothic sculpture, the exhibition's emphasis on the artist as an *international* man was a decision of considerable interpretive weight. The publicity image underscored the show's politically inclusive message by pairing Uta not with her own partner – Margrave Eckehard II of Meissen, with his double-chin and five-o'clock shadow, tousled curls and woolen cap, broad shoulders and confident handling of his sword (fig. 22-2b) – but rather with a crowned man with dainty features

DER BILDHAUER UND ARCHITEKT IM EUROPA DER KATHEDRALEN NAUMBURGER LANDESAUSSTELLUNG SACHSEN ANHALT 2011 MEISTER 29.6. BIS 2.11. NAUMBURG/SAALE



UNTER DER SCHIRMHERRSCHAFT DER BUNDESKANZLERIN
DER BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND DR ANGELA MERKEL UND
DES PRÄSIDENTEN DER REPUBLIK FRANKREICH NICOLAS SARKOZY

TRÄGER DER AUSSTELLUNG

VEREINIGTE
KUNSTSTÄTTER
an Merseburg und Naumburg
und der Kollegiativkirche Zeitz

BUNSTADT AN DER SAALE
NAUMBURG
HEILBAD BAD KÖSEN

FIGURE 22-1 Uta of Naumburg meets Childebert of Paris. Source: publicity image for exhibition *The Naumburg Master*, 2011.



FIGURE 22-2 (a)–(b) Naumburg Cathedral, west choir with founder figures, c.1250. Uta and Eckehard stand on the right-hand side at the threshold of the raised apse. Source: photo courtesy of the author.

and delicately sloping shoulders, an artful coiffure and natty beard, and, playing across his lips, the slightest hint of a smile. In 2011, Lady Uta had replaced her Saxon spouse with the French king Childebert.²

Visitors to the show, which highlighted the deep interconnections between the productions of thirteenth-century France and Germany, may have been puzzled not to find these figures near each other. Uta and Eckehard are physically part of the choir's fabric: like the column figures lining the portals of French Gothic churches, they were carved together with their stone responds, and installed in the wall as it rose.³ They are neither removable nor replaceable, and this tight integration of sculpture and architecture is what has long prompted scholars to see the Naumburg Master as an expert in both *métiers*.⁴ Childebert likewise originally formed part of an architectural setting, this time a refectory wall of the monastery of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. He was removed at the time of the monastery's dissolution and in 1851 given a place at the Louvre – one of the first works of medieval art to be displayed there.⁵ But the comparative detachment of his body from the slender shaft of the respond and the lightness of his foot position – the heel of the left rises from the ground, as if he is preparing to step forward – makes Childebert perfectly convincing as a free-standing statue. At the Naumburg show, he stood not among the founders in the west choir but rather in a small side chapel at the opposite end of the church.

The image on the show's publicity materials was thus quite brazenly a fiction. But the photograph, gracing each cover of the three gigantic tomes that comprise the catalog, is what will shape the perceptions of anyone who approaches the field of Gothic sculpture through those magisterial books. In the present chapter it will

function as an illustration of representative sculptures from Gothic France and Germany as well as a condensation of the two major issues that have perennially shaped scholarship on this art: nationalism on the one hand, and photography on the other. Although this chapter will focus chiefly on the former issue, it will address the latter where it is particularly germane. A thoroughgoing assessment of photography's role in the study of Gothic sculpture remains a desideratum.

I

It is well known that the language of art history developed around Classical monuments. For Johann Joachim Winckelmann (d. 1768) and Johann Gottfried Herder (d. 1803), the graceful marble statues of Greco-Roman Antiquity, with their "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur," set the standard against which all other art had to be measured.⁶ These writers knew such sculptures chiefly from the papal and princely collections into which they had absconded, and thus could appreciate them not as ritual objects but as *objets d'art*.⁷ Renaissance sculptures might come close in aesthetic appeal, but the figural carvings of the Christian Middle Ages – stuck against the walls of defunct churches, their bodies invisible under bulky robes, their faces long and somber, and their gritty limestone surfaces sometimes still flecked with a crust of once-gaudy polychromy – had no chance of finding love.⁸

Of course, it was these elements of the Christian, feudal heritage that surrounded the earliest champions of Greek Antiquity and the Italian Renaissance, who were all Northerners. That heritage, already seriously challenged by the Protestant Reformation, was overthrown during the French Revolution of the late eighteenth century, with monasteries dismantled, churches stripped of furnishings, and massive quantities of sculpture smashed, buried, thrown into rivers, or secreted away to storerooms.⁹ But by the middle of nineteenth century, the surviving relics of medieval culture were being recognized as important documents of national *history*, if not exemplars of good art.¹⁰ Toussaint Bernard Eméric-David's *History of French Sculpture* (composed in 1817, first published in 1853), while quick to point out the naiveté of thirteenth-century carvers, presented their works as vital manifestations of a distinctive cultural spirit linked to humanism and learning.¹¹ Léon de Laborde sharpened this view in his monumental study of French court arts (1850–1855), where the sculptural productions of thirteenth-century Paris, strongly associated with royal patronage, appeared as embodiments of the urbanity and grace of the city's burgeoning court culture.¹² The connection of French Gothic to royal patronage and ideology has been a *Leitmotif* in the literature ever since, with the "court style" of architecture associated above all with the reign of Louis IX readily extended to the elegant, supple figures produced by contemporary sculptors.¹³

Such discussions would likely have stayed in the rarefied realm of scholarship if not for the fact that some of the greatest exemplars of French Gothic architecture

were in terrible condition, and that new industrial technologies could allow for their repair, restoration, and even large-scale reconstruction. Enter Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc: architect, architecture historian, and theorist, whose efforts would give new luster to France's Gothic heritage. Now prized for their status as testaments to the ambition, wealth, taste, and ingenuity of the French, Notre-Dame of Paris, the Sainte-Chapelle, the abbey church of St.-Denis, the coronation cathedral at Reims, Amiens Cathedral, and many other religious and secular buildings received extensive facelifts that called new attention to their beauty and grandeur.¹⁴ Along with restoring buildings, Viollet-le-Duc set his hand toward repairing sculptures damaged during the Revolution, adding heads and hands, recarving draperies, and completing wholly lost scenes.¹⁵ The figural water-spouts (gargoyles) on the upper levels of Notre-Dame in Paris, which many visitors perceive as the very epitome of Gothic sculpture, were the inventions of Viollet-le-Duc and his collaborator Jean-Baptiste Lassus.¹⁶ If his stonework allowed people literally to see medieval sculptural programs afresh, his writings also offered new terms with which to appreciate the imagery; the long entry on sculpture in his *Dictionnaire raisonné* pulls Gothic sculpture up to the level of its ancient Greek counterpart.¹⁷ The Île-de-France of the mid-thirteenth century was for Viollet-le-Duc "the Attica of the Middle Ages."¹⁸

German scholarship through the mid-nineteenth century, often driven by a Hegelian totalizing impulse, likewise strove to make sense of Gothic sculpture in light of broader political, cultural, and even geographical conditions pertaining to France and Germany.¹⁹ In this endeavor, drawing distinctions was crucial. Thus, in Carl Schnaase's *History of Fine Arts*, the centralized authority of the French king engendered a cohesive artistic style in northern France that privileged the courtly values of elegance, beauty, and refinement.²⁰ This formed a stark contrast with the situation in Germany, whose geographical and political fragmentation yielded forms, in both architecture and sculpture, that were more robust, individuated, sensitive to nature, and infused with emotion. Uta and Childebert, while not singled out by Schnaase, exemplify this contrast in spirit: on the one hand the stolid Germanic noblewoman, wrapping herself in her cloak and gazing with steely aloofness toward beholders, and, on the other, the fastidiously groomed French king, looking openly at his audience and smiling with calm calculation.

It did not take commentators long to project positive or negative values onto each side, particularly in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871). This conflict – which began with Napoleon's army's incursion into Germany and ended with its swift repulsion, the consolidation of German states, and the absorption of Alsace-Lorraine into that new nation – affirmed the presence of national boundaries in the most palpable way, and these were underscored in subsequent writings on Gothic. Now the qualities that earlier writers had recognized in the sculptures were evidence not just of past conditions but of an *ongoing* national character, and differences in artistic styles indicated *conflict* rather than contrast. French art historians such as Louis Gonse wrote of the supremacy of French art vis-à-vis that of its neighbors and praised the *marche impérieuse* of French Gothic into the

culturally impoverished provinces.²¹ The *Musée de Sculpture Comparée* in Paris, a collection of plaster casts of ancient and French medieval sculptures assembled in part by Viollet-le-Duc, opened in 1882 with the aim of demonstrating to the public the superlative splendor of French art.²² But the Germans had beaten them to the punch: the National Museum opened on Berlin's Museumsinsel in 1876, with a carved inscription on the façade boasting its dedication to DER DEUTSCHE KUNST. Official accounts backdated the museum's opening to 1871, the year of the routing of Napoleon's army, and it was only with great effort that, after 1890, some works of French Impressionism would be admitted to the collection.²³

Meanwhile German art historians boasted of their art's autonomy from foreign influence, its independence of spirit, the proud lay energies and attachment to the land that it displayed. Hans Knackfuß's *German Art History*, for example, extolled German Gothic sculpture as the victor in multiple contests: that of French versus German art, of sculptors versus painters and architects, of late versus early Romanesque.²⁴ The Naumburg founder figures, representations of armed men and literate women in the very heart of the church, grew in regard at this time, assuming heroic stature as specifically *German* prototypes in both large international surveys and the monographs on Naumburg that began to appear at the century's end.²⁵ So did the enigmatic Rider and the Visitation Group at Bamberg, the Wechselburg crucifixion group, the Golden Portal at Freiberg, and the south transept program at Strasbourg – all preferentially characterized as “German Romanesque” rather than “Gothic,” despite their creation between around 1215 and 1235, so as to underscore their tough “Germanic” qualities and ward off any sniff of French influence.²⁶

By the 1890s, as Kathryn Brush notes, the “highly charged discussions regarding distinctive characteristics in ‘French’ and ‘German’ Gothic sculpture solidified into predictable clichés or catchwords.”²⁷ (These are still found in modern art history textbooks, but here the French have decisively won: their Gothic sculptures, always given chronological and conceptual primacy, represent the acme of elegance and sophistication, whereas the German adaptations are coarse, homely, and emotive.²⁸) At the same time, the discipline of art history was taking shape in German academia and its practitioners were facing their subjects with what they hoped were more objective eyes.²⁹ In 1890 Georg Dehio controversially enumerated the formal similarities between the sculptures at Bamberg and Reims Cathedrals, suggesting that the former program depended on the latter.³⁰ Despite derisive responses by many colleagues, this discovery opened the doors to new analyses of other major programs, and scholars soon found French influences at Freiberg, Magdeburg, Naumburg, and elsewhere.³¹ The argument for Chartrain influences on the south transept program at Strasbourg Cathedral, made in a dissertation by Karl Franck Oberaspach, came under special fire.³² This was not, however, due only to cultural chauvinism but also to what was deemed a sloppy method of analysis: in the view of established scholars, Oberaspach relied too heavily on decontextualized *photographs* of sculptures, and displayed too scanty

an awareness of the gamut of sculptural productions in France.³³ Lacking a rigorous boots-on-the-ground approach, his analysis seemed willful and uninformed.

Among Oberaspach's most vociferous critics was Wilhelm Vöge, who, during his brief career at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau, forged a new footing for the fledgling discipline.³⁴ Vöge can hardly be accused of sharing the anti-French bias of his older colleagues; after writing a dissertation on Ottonian manuscript painting, he spent two formative years (1892–1894) poring over the sculpture programs of early Gothic cathedrals in France, particularly those at Chartres.³⁵ The result was a book called *The Beginnings of the Monumental Style in the Middle Ages* (1894), itself one of the great monuments of our discipline.³⁶ Rejecting the chauvinism that characterized much art historical writing, Vöge registered full awareness of the importance of French art: "Despite emperor and empire [*Kaiser und Reich*, an ironic reference to the Germans' victory in the Franco-Prussian War]," he wrote in the introduction, "France is the most important land of medieval culture."³⁷ His aim, though, was not to provide insights into French history or character but to understand the sculptures as fine art.³⁸ Drawing on an array of intellectual influences, from Burckhardt's history of the Renaissance to Nietzsche's philosophy to Vischer's perceptual psychology,³⁹ and using a comparative approach developed by Wölfflin and Riegl, Vöge was the first scholar to outline the aims and accomplishments of Gothic sculptors, chart stylistic interconnections among sites, and identify the works of individual masters through their treatment of bodies and gestures, faces and expressions, and drapery patterns. Transcending toponymic designations (e.g. the "Naumburg Master"), his close examinations revealed individual creative agents with distinctive personalities who produced certain kinds of carving: the supple and sensitive "Master of the Kings' Heads" at Chartres, the intense, Classically oriented "Master of Peter and Paul" at Reims and so forth.⁴⁰ Although interest in discerning the personalities of unknown artists would wane after World War II, the methods of formal analysis and interpretation Vöge developed – along with his close colleague Adolph Goldschmidt, who wrote the first stylistic analyses of German Romanesque and Gothic sculpture – found immediate resonance, and are still indispensable tools in this field.⁴¹ Vöge also initiated what remains the common practice for German art historians to specialize in French Gothic sculpture.

The scholarly interest in crossing national borders has not been mutual; even today one is hard pressed to find French scholarship on German Gothic art. This resistance, already evident in the nineteenth century, solidified with the writings of Emile Mâle (d. 1954). Mâle, who assumed the Chair of Medieval Art History at the Sorbonne in 1912, is in many respects the antithesis of Vöge.⁴² Vöge was concerned with forms, Mâle with iconography; Vöge looked for hands, Mâle searched for texts; Vöge probed sculptures for their spirit, Mâle perused them for meaning. Vöge expressed himself in a dense, evocative, poetically inflected prose that has proven untranslatable. Mâle wrote in a clear, direct style that makes him eminently readable; three editions of his 1899 dissertation *Religious Art in France: The Thirteenth Century* appeared in France before 1910, and it was translated into

English in 1913.⁴³ Although Vöge's student Erwin Panofsky is generally credited with turning "iconography" into a key art historical tool, it was Mâle who coined the term. Deciphering the "picture-writing" of Gothic portal programs at Amiens, Bourges, Chartres, and Notre-Dame in Paris, he demonstrated that these ensembles were not just stone Bibles, as John Ruskin had famously described the west façade at Amiens;⁴⁴ together with the stained glass windows inside the building, they comprised visual *encyclopedias* that amassed all the facets of human knowledge valued by medieval churchmen. Biblical and hagiographic narratives; visions of the beginning and end of time; codes of virtuous conduct; the symbolism of nature; the ordering of time and human knowledge – all were synthesized and arrayed across cathedral facades to be "read" by the unlettered lay public. Although it has rightly faced criticism for its Catholic apologetics and its parochial view of artistic agency,⁴⁵ *Religious Art in France* was and remains a classic introduction to high medieval iconography and habits of thought.

II

Working with the same cluster of buildings in northern France at the turn of the twentieth century, Vöge and Mâle – the German and the Frenchman, the formalist and the iconographer – established the poles between which the study of Gothic sculpture would subsequently unfold. For all their methodological differences, the men were united in their sense that French Gothic sculpture programs crystallized all that was great and noble about medieval culture – and in their devastation when, in September 1914, the great coronation cathedral at Reims began to crumble under a rain of German firebombs.⁴⁶ It is difficult to overstate the horror and outrage that attended this targeted damage of a historic monument. Photographs of the burning cathedral and its pulverized statuary that appeared in newspapers, on postcards and commemorative posters brought the atrocity to the forefront of public consciousness (fig. 22-3).⁴⁷ In France, England, and America alike the "martyrdom" and "torture" of the building at the hands of German "barbarians" sparked a fresh appreciation for the sophistication, beauty, and urbanity of the medieval past.⁴⁸ In America, the destruction provided motivation to shed political neutrality and take up the cause of the French in the war.⁴⁹ Although Reims Cathedral never fell completely (Gothic engineering proved astonishingly powerful, and the destruction was not as thoroughgoing as the propaganda suggested), its damaged parts were eloquent. The American medievalist Arthur Kingsley Porter made an impassioned argument not to rebuild, likening the effect of the ruined portions to that of the Parthenon after its destruction in the Persian War.⁵⁰ The head of the smiling angel from the west façade's north portal, whose artistry had not hitherto found admiration, emerged from the rubble to become an emblem of the French suavity, grace, and innocence that would outlive the threats posed by the uncultured brutes of Germany.⁵¹

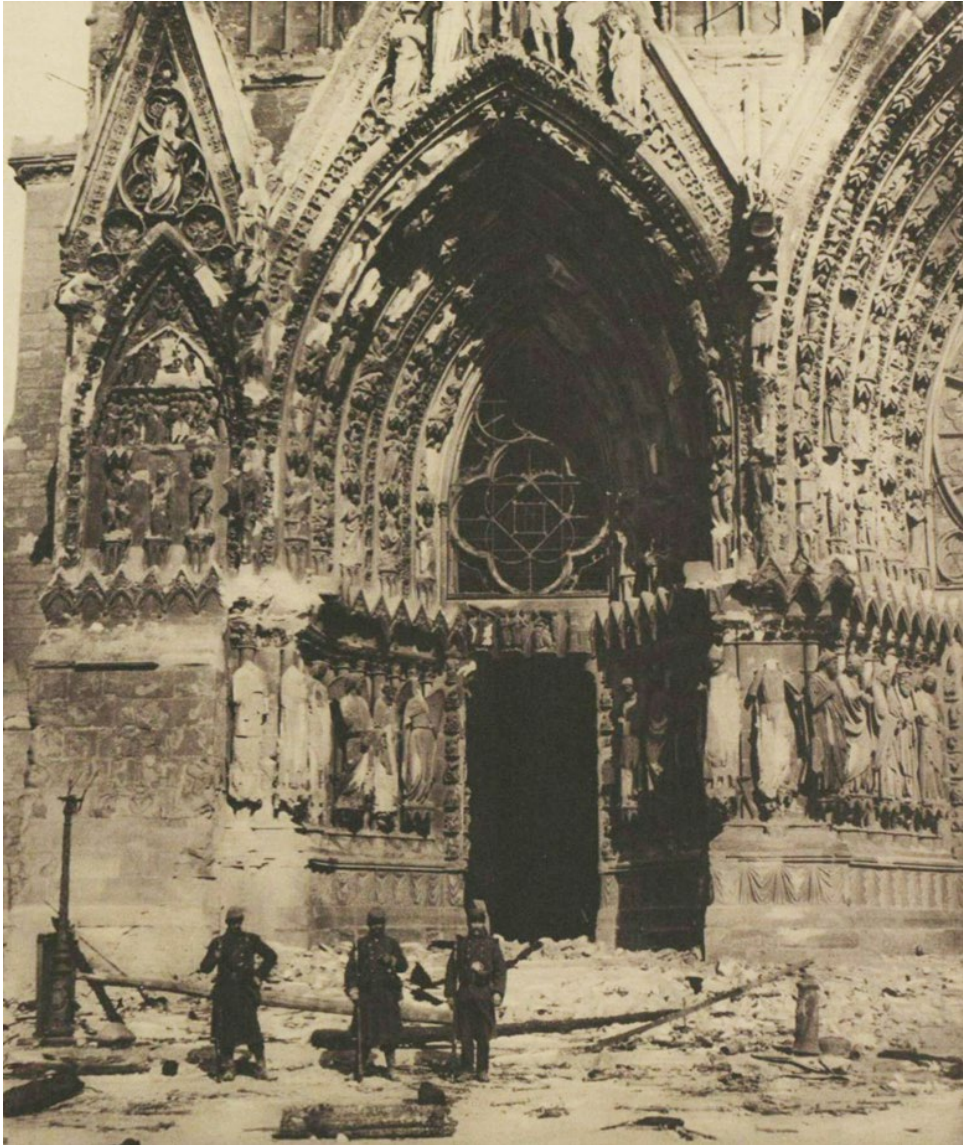


FIGURE 22-3 The damaged north portal of Reims Cathedral's west façade, from the *Illustrated London News*, 3 October 1914. Source: photo retrieved from <http://www.rte.ie/centuriyireland/index.php/blog/reims-cathedral-now-in-ruins>.

It was in this context that Vöge, already plagued by nervous ailments, suffered a crippling psychological breakdown and retired, after only eight years in the professoriat, to Ballenstedt in Saxony-Anhalt (coincidentally the birthplace of the real Uta of Naumburg); his *magnum opus* on the sculptures at Reims, which occupied him intermittently until his death in 1952, would never see the light of day, and the Formalist mode of art history writing lost its most original

and eloquent voice.⁵² Mâle, by contrast, went on the offensive. In 1917 he published a little book called *German Art and French Art of the Middle Ages*, a survey driven by a single, insistently repeated thesis: “Germany of the past did not create; it imitated.”⁵³ All the connections German academics were discovering between their Gothic monuments and those of the crownland were reduced to being signs of the dependency of ham-handed German craftsmen on the superior products of French artists. Even the Naumburg donor figures, which Mâle conceded were *remarquables*, display a Germanic predilection toward the earth-bound, the individual, and the “purely human,” which compared unfavorably to the arts infused with French idealism.⁵⁴

In light of such assessments, it comes as little surprise that some voices called for the statuary at Naumburg and Bamberg be removed and handed over to Reims as recompense for the damage the Germans had inflicted on the coronation cathedral.⁵⁵ More practical and desirable to everyone was Germany’s restitution of damages in cash. This was significantly supplemented by a flood of money from American donors, most prominently John D. Rockefeller Jr., who regarded the cathedral as a symbol of civilization literally rising from the ashes.⁵⁶ The rebuilding of Reims and repair and reinstallation of its statuary coincided with, and to a large part inspired, a new appreciation for and desire to protect medieval art on the part of Americans. American collections burgeoned in the late teens through the 1920s, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s medieval branch, known as The Cloisters and again funded chiefly by Rockefeller, opened to the public in 1938, the same year that the reconstruction of Reims Cathedral was complete.⁵⁷

In Europe, scholarship on Gothic sculpture continued apace. In France, Mâle’s polemical presentation of the material continued to set the tone even as the rhetorical fire cooled. Thus in 1935, Louis Réau and Gustave Cohen could dismiss German Gothic sculpture with a verbal flick of the wrist: in the wake of French innovations in the early thirteenth century, “the German school of sculpture became a province of French art.”⁵⁸ (Some German scholars seem to have agreed; Hermann Schmitz ended his survey of German medieval art in the mid-thirteenth century, when French influences eradicated native tendencies.⁵⁹) But French medievalists seem to have agreed early on that the German art was not worth their time at all, and what we find after World War I was a focused concentration on their own country’s monuments and the discernment of regional styles. In a 1928 book dedicated to Émile Mâle, René Schneider sang the praises of French Gothic portal sculpture, lauding its rigorous order, its harmonious relationship with architecture, its naturalism and *joie-de-vivre*.⁶⁰ The ensemble at Reims (still under reconstruction at this time) not only equaled the productions of Classical Antiquity; it surpassed them in richness and daring.

For the most part, French scholarship throughout the twentieth century has eschewed grandiose statements or theoretical explorations of the genre of Gothic sculpture, opting instead for the rigorously positivistic approach championed by architectural historians such as Eugène Lefèvre-Pontalis.⁶¹ Marcel Aubert, one of the most prolific scholars of Gothic until his death in 1962, best embodies this

practice. Having studied architectural history as a young man, he worked after the war in the Department of Medieval, Renaissance, and Modern Sculpture at the Louvre, then as a professor of Archeology at the *École de Chartes*.⁶² His career through the late 1950s involved a combination of teaching, fieldwork, and curatorial work on sculpture collections at major French museums, all of which yielded a spate of publications marked by their close engagement with individual monuments – their process of creation, iconography, and, above all, their style. In his monographs Aubert tackled some of France’s most important Gothic cathedrals – Chartres, Notre-Dame in Paris, Senlis, Noyon, and others – and his survey of *French Sculpture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, from 1926, is remarkable as much for its calm, unpolemical tone as for the sharpness and authority of its analytical language.⁶³ As an archeologist, museum professional, and academic, Aubert set the standard for younger generations of French scholars including Anne Prache (d. 2009), Fabienne Joubert, Pierre-Yves Le Pogam, and Dany Sandron, who have produced enduring empirical studies of both intact monuments and sculptures in European collections.⁶⁴

III

It is one of the ironies of our field’s history that, whereas the idea of the History of Art as a science (*Wissenschaft*) was born and nurtured in German universities, it was in France that scholarship on Gothic has been conducted in the most consistently scientific way. In Germany, a current of positivistic scholarship coursed throughout the twentieth century, but this was overshadowed by highly ideological lines of interpretation that paralleled the tumultuous course of German politics. The span between the two world wars (1918–1939) witnessed a spate of richly illustrated monographs on thirteenth-century German cathedrals – particularly Bamberg, Naumburg, and Strasbourg – as well as broader surveys of German medieval sculpture.⁶⁵ Strasbourg Cathedral, subject of a 1922 monograph by Georg Dehio, was a particularly loaded case, as the region of Alsace had become French terrain after World War I. Dehio’s book thus served the melancholy purpose of presenting a national treasure whose artistic Frenchness was recognized but that had hitherto – indeed by no less an eminence than Goethe – been regarded as a German monument.⁶⁶ Dehio, who died in 1932, could not have predicted the German reclamation of Strasbourg during the Nazi occupation of France in 1940 – an event celebrated explicitly in the second edition of his book, published in early 1941. “Strasbourg Cathedral is ours again!” the editors crowed on the page leading to Dehio’s original mournful introduction.⁶⁷ More overtly than in other cases, the monograph recapitulates the turmoil of war.

The studies of German Gothic sculpture published in the 1920s by Dehio, Hans Jantzen (d. 1967), and the prolific, bombastic Wilhelm Pinder (d. 1947) were notable for their vivid descriptive prose and the sense of immediacy they brought to the sculptures⁶⁸; in that sense they are the progeny of Vöge’s more

subjective side. In contrast to Vöge's work, however, they addressed not only fellow academics but also an educated but demoralized lay public, in whom they aimed to instill an appreciation for these sculptures both as artistic creations and as evidence of past German ingenuity. They did so through strong verbal rhetoric and through an unprecedentedly vast array of photographic illustrations, which fostered viewers' sense of mastery over and intimacy with the works.⁶⁹ These volumes were huge successes: the title page of the second edition of Pinder's Naumburg monograph (1939) notes that the first edition sold 17 000 copies since its appearance in 1924. The writings often go beyond objective questions of style to explore figures' relations to spaces, the psychological effects of their faces and postures, and their subjective impact on beholders. The fact that the sculpture programs at Bamberg, Naumburg, and Strasbourg were smaller and more condensed than the expansive façade programs in France, and that they also included interior installations, became a major point of interest; these factors encouraged personal empathetic engagement with the individual sculptures, rather than the detached "readings" of imagery demanded by French façades. Even large-scale figures such as the Naumburg founders and the Bamberg Rider assumed something of the character of the devotional images (*Andachtsbilder*) – Pietàs, Christ-and-St. John Groups, and so forth – that were likewise attracting the attention of German art historians between the world wars.⁷⁰

With their preoccupation in discerning *characters* in the sculptures, and by extension their creators, these writings continued the project initiated by Vöge; they were also indebted to the philosophical explorations of *Einfühlung* (feeling-in, commonly translated as "empathy") that had been infusing studies of modern art.⁷¹ While they applauded the naturalism of thirteenth-century sculpture, these authors saw it balanced out by expressive values that conveyed spiritual ideals. Metaphorical language abounded. At Strasbourg, garments stretched over the "supple, reed-thin frames" of Ecclesia and Synagoga "like a gentle breath – though a spirit of chasteness and severity makes it as solid as armor."⁷² The Bamberg Rider, perched at the threshold of the cathedral's western choir, "gazes into the distance as the expansive force of sovereignty. He is the instantiated spirit of German chivalrous poetry of the Staufen age" (fig. 22-4a).⁷³ The aged woman who stands near the Virgin in the same church, often identified as St. Elizabeth, displays an "expression of austerity with a hint of bitterness in the tensed positioning of the imposing, masculine head; this prophetic figure seems to gaze into the fates of whole peoples."⁷⁴ Lady Uta – whose husband Eckehard evokes "*das Volk*, particularly that narrower segment of the German people that engendered Luther, Bach, and Leibnitz" – is a "synthesis of presence (*Vergegenwärtung*) and monumentality." With her left hand, "a singular marvel of softest refinement," she clasps her mantle against her breast "as if she were carrying roses."⁷⁵

By the 1920s, professional photo archives were growing exponentially and the process of reproduction had become cheap; monumental sculptures were making their way not only into the pages of specialized books but also onto the walls of homes, in the form of independent framed photographs and postcards.⁷⁶



FIGURE 22-4 (a) Two views of the Bamberg Rider, c.1235. Source: photos from Hege and Pinder, *Der Bamberger Dom und seine Bildwerke*; (b) Uta of Naumburg, c.1250. Source: photo from Hege and Pinder, *Der Naumburger Dom und der Meister seiner Bildwerke*.

The photographs of Gothic sculptures produced by Naumburg native Walter Hege (d. 1955) made Uta and the Bamberg Rider, above all, fixtures in German households, and gave people a sense of intimacy with them that was impossible to gain on site.⁷⁷ These close-up bust-length portraits, made from scaffolding, extracted the figures from any larger environment. Uta in particular, her softly lit face glamorously framed by her collar and her gaze slightly angled, was translated into the visual idiom of the movie-star headshot (fig. 22-4b). Such photos formed the basis for imitation by famous actresses in the popular “Uta-plays” of the 1920 and 1930s.⁷⁸ Uta made a cameo appearance in the Nazi propaganda film *Der ewige Jude* (initiated by Joseph Goebbels and directed by Fritz Hippler, 1940); emerging, ghost-like, against a stark black background, she slides up against the shoulder of the Bamberg Rider to illustrate the noble beauty of German culture imperiled by Jewish degeneracy (fig. 22-5).⁷⁹

Composed to highlight the figures’ sensual appeal and soulful appearance – to transform them from objects into *characters* – Hege’s photographs of Gothic statues served the Nazi agenda of collapsing times, enabling modern Germans to discern the (imagined) continuities between themselves and the exemplars of their country’s glorious past.⁸⁰ Pinder, whose essays gave voice to Hege’s images, articulated this principle of temporal elision in his *Art of the German Imperial Age*, the first volume of a series called *On the Essence and Development of German Forms* (1937) that marked this eminent scholar’s decisive step into Nazi propaganda.⁸¹ Opening with the formula “A good future is only possible on the ground of a good past,” the book proceeds explicitly to “rewrite” (*umschreiben*) the history of German medieval art “with the aim not of reporting



FIGURE 22-5 Uta and the Bamberger Rider, embodiments of imperiled German culture, in a still from the propaganda film *Der ewige Jude* (Fritz Hippler, 1940). Source: photo retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DOI3FqCZJE>, 4 March 2016.

but of presenting observations based on our *present* needs.”⁸² In the same vein, Hege’s close-up, often eccentrically angled images of sculptures and atmospheric depictions of architecture transformed works of the past into richly affect-laden subjects of encounters in the present.

Emerging as a counterpoint to Hege’s subjective images was the massive photographic archive initiated by the art historian Richard Hamann, which, under the name Foto Marburg, had by the 1930s become the chief repository of photographs of European architecture and sculpture outside Italy.⁸³ Hamann had begun systematically documenting medieval monuments upon his arrival at the University of Marburg in 1913, simply in order to have visual materials on hand with which to teach his courses.⁸⁴ Excursions into the field quickly became an integral part of his institute’s practice, and the project assumed totalizing ambitions.⁸⁵ Accelerating in both manpower and money throughout the 1920 and 1930s, the effort accrued a political dimension during the German occupation of France in 1940–1944, when the Nazi government sponsored Hamann’s campaigns there.⁸⁶ Well-trained teams of photographers and students, armed with cameras and scaffolds and assisted, in some cases, by French prisoners of war, trooped into France’s great cathedrals to document every detail of the buildings and their sculptures. Despite this quasi-military aspect of the archive’s formation, the tens of thousands of photos amassed by the war’s end made the Marburg *Bildarchiv* a zealously protected cultural artifact;⁸⁷ conservators used the photographs to aid in the process of urban and ecclesiastical reconstruction, and art historians have drawn on the images for research and publication purposes through the present.

Fully aware that great monuments could be easily taken away, whether through violence (as with Reims) or through changes to national boundaries (as with Strasbourg), the Marburg photographers aimed to create a record so complete, clear, and detail-rich that the images could substitute for the real things. Just as Hege's lyrical depictions of Gothic sculpture shaped Germans' views of them as relatable and immediate, so the Marburg photos have encouraged certain forms of scholarly analysis. Shot with cool scientific precision, they lend themselves well to the kind of iconographical investigations pioneered by Mâle and the kind of stylistic analysis pioneered by Vöge and Goldschmidt, grounded in close examination of drapery folds and hair-formations. Making works of sculpture and architecture available to scholars on both sides of the Atlantic, they contributed to the expansion of the discipline of Art History and the comparatively sober analytical approach that emerged in post-war Europe and America.

IV

Nurtured by an influx of intellectual luminaries from abroad, art history flourished in American universities after World War II. The study of German Gothic did not. Erwin Panofsky, who as a young professor in Hamburg had written a dense formalist survey of *German Sculpture of the 11th to 13th Centuries* (1924), turned his back on this material after moving to Princeton in 1935.⁸⁸ He touched on German effigies in his lectures on *Tomb Sculpture* (1956; published in 1992), but for most of his career he focused on the rational, intellectually meaningful dimensions of art, not the perilously affect-laden sculptures of his native country.⁸⁹ Panofsky's student Adolf Katzenellenbogen (d. 1964), who made his career first at the Warburg Institute in London and then at Vassar College and Johns Hopkins University, refined Mâle's iconographical method in his *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices* (1939) and *The Sculptural Programs of Chartres Cathedral* (1959).⁹⁰ The only study of German Gothic sculpture published in English in the post-war period was Wilhelm Valentiner's *The Bamberg Rider* (1956).⁹¹ Valentiner (d. 1958) had already resided in the United States, where he was a prominent museum curator and director, since well before the outbreak of World War II, and his book, which celebrated a figure that Pinder and others had made a poster-boy of Aryan values, did not attract a wide readership in the Anglophone world. Uta of Naumburg entered the American public consciousness indelibly, if obliquely, in the guise of the Evil Queen in Walt Disney's *Snow White* (1937).⁹²

Meanwhile, the study of French Gothic monuments flourished. Interest in these works was directly linked to the events of war. Arthur Gardner invoked the firebombing of Reims in the introduction to his 1915 photographic survey of French sculpture, which offered to "put in the hands of an art-loving public in a cheap and handy form a series of illustrations which will allow the sculpture of this epoch to be studied with more convenience than has hitherto been possible in this country."⁹³ In 1931, Gardner published a more detailed survey of this material, a

counterpart to the many studies of Romanesque sculpture that had appeared during the prior decade.⁹⁴ The ground was thus fertile for the study of French Gothic, which blossomed under the European scholars who assumed professorships at American universities. With Jean Bony teaching Gothic architecture at Berkeley,⁹⁵ Marcel Aubert and Henri Focillon (d. 1943) brought the study of French Gothic sculpture and architecture to Yale. The two had alternated teaching years there starting in 1933; with France under German occupation, Focillon remained in New Haven until his death.⁹⁶ His and Aubert's student Sumner McKnight Crosby (d. 1982) would go on to become the world's foremost expert on the Gothic architecture of St.-Denis; as a professor in the same institution, Crosby directed dissertations on French Gothic by Pamela Blum, Robert Branner, and Caroline Bruzelius among others.⁹⁷ At Harvard, the Byzantinist Ernst Kitzinger, a former student of Pinder, trained students in a variety of fields, including Dorothy Gillerman, whose dissertation on the choir enclosures of Notre-Dame in Paris (1977) expanded the purview of Gothic sculpture specialists and who, as a professor at Brown, would train a new generation of sculpture scholars.⁹⁸ Among them were Kathryn Brush, whose historiographical studies loom large in the present chapter, Joan Holladay, who has dealt extensively with Gothic tomb sculpture, and Susan Leibacher Ward. The latter two are completing the three-volume *Census of Gothic Sculpture in America*, a project Gillerman initiated.⁹⁹

In post-war Germany, scholarship on Gothic sculpture continued apace but assumed a radically different tone. Gone were the totalizing ambitions, the romantic effusions, the focus on national character; gone, too, by and large, was the populist appeal of the writings. Scholarship became more uniformly somber, objective, and academic; like that in France, its guiding questions focused less on the present than on the distant origins and regional characteristics of monuments. The question of the identity of the Naumburg Master (still a major focal point) shifted terms; whereas earlier art historians had sought to articulate his character as specifically *German* man – a counterpart to national icons such as Luther, Goethe, and Beethoven – the new generations sought to clarify the stages of his training and activity both within and beyond the bounds of Saxony, and to tease out the diverse hands that in fact comprised the Naumburg oeuvre. Intricate stylistic studies by Richard Hamann-MacLean (d. 2000) and others refined and nuanced earlier efforts from the 1920s and 1930s to chart the Master's distinctive contributions at far-flung sites, including Poland and northern France; the medieval sculptor's activity, in the scholarship, mirrored that of Germany's modern borders as they expanded and contracted.¹⁰⁰

With the ambitions of German nationalism stifled and the country itself split in two, post-war art historians tended to look more closely at individual monuments and regional networks of artistic movements. In East Germany, monographic studies of individual buildings abounded, most produced by local experts with an archeological or conservatorial bent, such as Edgar Lehmann (d. 1997), Ernst Schubert (d. 2012), and Heinrich Magirius.¹⁰¹ More interpretive studies naturally promoted the Marxist agenda, calling attention to the ideology and power

dynamics embedded in medieval artistic constructions. This entailed a new interest in conditions of patronage, labor, and audience, and concomitant questions about the *functions* of sculpture in historical contexts. Discussing the Naumburg west choir, Helga Scurie explained the stylistic distinctions between the elegant founder figures and the more robust and animated figures in the choir screen reliefs as an appeal to the works' diverse audiences: they registered the sculptor's respective address to aristocratic clerics on the one hand and the common folk on the other.¹⁰² Individual masters became important less for their national heritage than for their professional itineracy, their ability to learn from and gather impressions of different classes of people as they proceeded from one worksite to the next.¹⁰³ The culmination of the Marxist approach was the survey of the *History of German Art, 1200–1350* (1989) by Scurie and Friedrich Möbius, which stressed the social conditions of patronage and labor as determining factors of style and iconography.¹⁰⁴

With the canonical Gothic monuments of Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt closed to the West, books on this topic carried a new weight; a richly illustrated handbook of Gothic sculpture in those regions, Dietrich Schubert's *From Halberstadt to Meissen*, aimed explicitly to make Naumburg and its neighbors accessible to West German readers – an aim similar to what Dehio had done for Strassburg earlier.¹⁰⁵ To present an overview of particularly shining moment (*Aufgipfelung*) in German history, when the now fragmented land was unified (at least in theory) under a strong ruling dynasty, was the aim of the blockbuster 1977 exhibition *The Staufeu Age* at the Württembergisches Landesmuseum in Stuttgart.¹⁰⁶ This show assembled over 900 objects from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, from coins and seals to plaster casts of monumental sculptures, to present a vision of a strong, confident, ideologically cohesive past that *differed* from the fractured present. It also yielded an ambitious five-volume catalog that exemplifies the historical rigor and unsentimental interpretive methods of German post-war scholarship.¹⁰⁷ In what became a seminal essay, Willibald Sauerländer deconstructed the romantic mythology surrounding the Naumburg founder figures, reassessed the paltry state of empirical knowledge about them (the celebrated Uta figure, he surmised, may just as well represent the Polish princess Reglindis), and placed the discussion of their meaning squarely into functionalist terms.¹⁰⁸ The figures now stood as visual confirmations of donations made to this institution generations earlier; they did not celebrate individuals but commemorated economic deeds. Their seemingly spontaneous gestures and individuated faces were all conventional signs that enabled the figures to function as a “mirror of princes” for the cathedral's noble canons. The donor figures were tools of institutional memory and social formation of long obsolete communities.¹⁰⁹

The Naumburg essay was a rare foray onto Germanic turf for Sauerländer, who over the previous decade had established himself as an expert on French sculpture and remains the dominant voice in this field.¹¹⁰ It is his book, *Gothic Sculpture in France, 1140–1270*, that has served as the *locus classicus* for this material since its publication in 1970 (English version 1972, French version 1972).¹¹¹ Centered

upon a compendium of large, scientifically precise black-and-white photographs by Max Hirmer, that place different programs (chiefly portal ensembles) in neat chronological order, the volume bridges the gap between Mâle and Vöge: its introductory essay presents a concise overview of the major iconographic themes, while the catalog entries at the end furnish analyses of stylistic traits and influences. The development and transmission of style was a central concern in Sauerländer's earlier work. In 1966 he charted the movement of a particular form of naturalistic representation "from Sens to Strasbourg," definitively locating the latter monument in the French line of influence.¹¹² (Most scholars now would point to the Chartres north transept, rather than Sens Cathedral, as the crucial impetus, vindicating poor Oberaspach.¹¹³)

The connection of Bamberg to Reims – evident not only in the Rider but also in the unusually expressive faces at both sites – has been a near-constant preoccupation in scholarship since the world wars.¹¹⁴ Comparative studies of these and other monuments, made in tandem with new archeological and documentary research, have led to some important re-datings of the canonical touchstones of Gothic sculpture. Recent studies by the Swiss scholars Peter Kurmann and Jean Wirth, among others, have exposed the fragility of the chronological foundation upon which the study of Gothic sculpture rests.¹¹⁵ Kurmann's late dating of the supposedly most influential elements of the Reims program, for example, means that either the accepted dates of the dependent German monuments are far too early or that the entire prototype-copy relationship of France and Germany presumed by scholars since Mâle must be questioned.¹¹⁶ Meanwhile, Peter Cornelius Claussen has reconceptualized such relationships, introducing the term "trans-peripheral" to characterize works that transform distant prototypes to new ends; in this way, monuments such as the Freiberg Golden Portal or the Bamberg Princes' Portal may be understood for their own merits and not as muddled attempts to mimic foreign models.¹¹⁷ New examinations of familiar monuments, using the conventional tools of stylistic and documentary analysis free from the burdens of nationalist prejudices, will surely open up fresh insights into the creativity of Gothic sculptors, the investments of their patrons, and the networks of meaning in which these works operated.¹¹⁸

The "New Art History" that took shape in the 1980s, with its integration of other disciplinary models and its embrace of diverse perspectives, has also opened up exciting new dimensions in the study of Gothic sculpture. Shunning the aestheticizing discourse of traditional scholarship, the late Barbara Abou-El-Haj and Nina Rowe have pointed out the conflicted attitudes and even violent impulses that underlay the content and design of many programs.¹¹⁹ Donna Sadler has revealed the social tensions that pervaded the sculpture program of the inner west wall at Reims Cathedral, above all its pressing concerns about good and bad kingship.¹²⁰ Janet Snyder's examinations of the modern court clothing worn by early column statues at Chartres and elsewhere have embedded these seemingly timeless figures into the courtly milieu of the mid-twelfth century,¹²¹ while Stephen Murray's analysis of a sermon preached in mid-thirteenth-century Amiens allowed him to

situate that cathedral's west portals into a framework of reception centered on the economic interests of a rural audience.¹²² Borrowing terms from semiotics, Kathleen Nolan and Laura Spitzer have teased out the structural logic of the narrative capital reliefs on the Chartres west façade, and discovered underlying concerns with female viewership and the experience of pilgrims.¹²³ Considering the same monument through the lens of liturgical documents, the historian Margot Fassler has unveiled new nuances in the Royal Portal's imagery; the words chanted by the twelfth-century bishop and his retinue upon entering these doors on important feast days recast the iconography of the tympana in terms of divine revelation.¹²⁴ Indeed the study of liturgy, as mediated through documents such as *Libri ordinarii*, has enabled art historians to see sculpture programs as vibrant enhancements of human performance.¹²⁵ Sculptures inside the church, for example on choir screens and tabernacles, have come to be understood as integral elements of the building's ritual life for various communities of participants,¹²⁶ and the images on exterior portals are increasingly revealing themselves to be advertisements for the relics and altars located inside the church.¹²⁷ *Integration* has become a key term for understanding sculpture's role in the physical fabric and social life of the Gothic church.¹²⁸ Fabienne Joubert's recent survey of French Gothic sculpture (2008) exemplifies this shift; it eschews the conventional geographical or chronological organization in favor of embedding the major sculpture programs into domains of medieval religious thought, political ideologies, and technologies of construction, while attending closely to the methods of display and conservation that shape our current perceptions of the works.¹²⁹

Meanwhile, the recognition by historians of the *body's* importance in medieval Christianity – both as a physical sign of virtue and as the seat of subjective experience – has had important implications for the study of sculpture.¹³⁰ Gerhard Lutz has meticulously charted the formal changes in thirteenth-century renditions of the crucifix that gave heightened heft and sensuality to Christ's body.¹³¹ The physicality of the Virgin Mary's body, at once chaste and generative, has been central to studies of sculptures that show her glistening with precious stones, opening to reveal other figures, or proffering her baby with graceful vivacity.¹³² The famous naturalism of Gothic sculpture itself has returned to the center of some investigations, with scholars reconsidering the impact of Classical art on medieval figuration,¹³³ delving into naturalism's theological and scientific underpinnings,¹³⁴ or exploring it as an instrument of social distinction.¹³⁵ The issue of bodily mimesis leads easily to that of psychological mimesis, upon which the expressive faces and poses of many Gothic figures quite naturally prompt reflection. At a safe distance from the romanticizing writings of the 1920s, scholars such as Paul Binski, Martin Büchsel, and Jacqueline Jung have been seeking historically grounded ways of talking about the artistic display of emotional expression and its intended effects on original audiences.¹³⁶

As Johannes Tripps has demonstrated, both the affective appeal and liturgical impact of independent sculptures were enhanced by their tactile qualities: we are now understanding that many sculptures, particularly those in wood, were handled

and moved in the course of ritual performance.¹³⁷ The physical experience of beholders encountering architecturally static sculptures as fellow bodies in space, which early scholarship interested in *Einfühlung* had addressed, is also returning to scholarly investigations; such writings follow the lead of Robert Suckale's seminal study of the placement, multi-directionality, and engagement of viewers in the sculptures at Bamberg Cathedral.¹³⁸ Such investigations depend on close, protracted first-hand observation, and necessarily reject the reliance on the standard archive of photographs.¹³⁹ The increased use of digital imagery, and the possibility of rendering sculptural programs as three-dimensional virtual models, promise to open up new possibilities for exploring the spatial and physical effects of individual sculptures and programs.¹⁴⁰

New technologies are enhancing our understanding of sculpture in more pragmatic ways. Since the mid-1990s a team of American and French art historians and scientists has been using neutron-activation analysis to determine the unique profiles of stone from various quarries in France and comparing them with samples from stone sculptures dispersed in museums. Known as *The Limestone Sculpture Provenance Project*, this team has amassed an expansive (and still growing) database of objects that can now be definitively assigned to a particular location.¹⁴¹ Both in museums and in situ, microscopic examinations of sculptures' surfaces, enhanced by infrared reflectography, optical emission spectroanalysis, micro-Raman spectroscopy, and other specialized photographic techniques, have enabled experts to determine the original coloration of Gothic sculptures, which has in most cases been largely lost to the elements, intentionally stripped away, or repainted in later times.¹⁴² (The latter was the case with the Naumburg founder figures; Uta, we now know, began her life as a brunette, and sported an orange cloak with a black collar.¹⁴³) Meanwhile, digital modeling tools are allowing experts to bring their discoveries to life in the form of three-dimensional virtual models of sculptures in their original spatial environments and with their polychromy intact. These, in turn, can help scholars come closer to studying Gothic statues as they were intended to look, without the need for material interventions into the objects themselves.¹⁴⁴ Within the expanded field of art history, the realm of scientific analysis is one in which French, German, and Anglo-American scholars have found common ground, even if conservation practices in the countries vary widely.

It would be an overstatement to claim that the reunification of Germany in 1990 and the formation of the European Union in 1993 erased the fissures that long cut the Continent (and its art historical scholarship) into national entities. The Alsace is still an issue. In 2010–2011, two new monographs appeared on the south transept of Strasbourg Cathedral: one was in German by a German scholar, one in French by a French and a Swiss author, and, although covering the same ground, they came to differing conclusions about dates and influences.¹⁴⁵ Among the international contributors to the *Naumburg Master* catalog were seven French art historians, who dealt exclusively with French materials.¹⁴⁶ Scholarship in England, while preferentially addressing English and French Gothic

monuments, has made significant forays into Central Europe, largely bypassing Germany.¹⁴⁷ North American scholarship continues its longstanding love affair with France.¹⁴⁸ Only since the early 1990s have significant studies of German Gothic sculpture appeared in English, by a new generation of scholars working in the United States, Canada, and Israel.¹⁴⁹ With deep-seated nationalist biases fading from memory, younger art historians have fresh physical and conceptual access to materials long closed off to their twentieth-century counterparts. And, in keeping with the global reach of art historical interests in the 2000s, a new interest in the networks of artistic exchange that linked medieval artists, workshops, and patrons across Europe and the Mediterranean is animating recent scholarship across national boundaries.¹⁵⁰

In the age of the EU, a globalized economy, and the internet, the old worries about French and German identities no longer seem so pressing. Uta and Childbert, the stalwart noblewoman and the elegant courtier-king, can stand side by side (at least in the fictive realm of digital photography), in the same frame, and on equal footing – partners in expressing an ideal of pan-European sophistication and grace. Yet as many visitors to Naumburg in 2011 noticed, their differences in style and, yes, character are impossible to ignore; the more closely they are compared, the more distinctive they look. If the pairing of Uta and Childbert can teach us anything, it may be that the time is ripe to reconsider the question of national styles – not to provide clarity about the present, but to seek a more nuanced and capacious understanding of the constellations of individuals and institutions that produced these strange, splendid remnants of the distant past.

Notes

- 1 See Krohm and Kunde, *Naumburger Meister*, and the website <http://www.naumburgermeister.eu>, accessed 7 August 2018.
- 2 Krohm and Kunde, *Naumburger Meister*, Vol. 2, pp. 936–941, 1500–1501.
- 3 See Jelschewski, “Bautechnik.”
- 4 Markschies, “Naumburger Meister.”
- 5 Krohm and Kunde, *Naumburger Meister*, Vol. 2, p. 1500.
- 6 Winckelmann, *Reflections*; Herder, *Sculpture*.
- 7 Haskell and Penny, *Taste*.
- 8 Brush, “Integration.”
- 9 Kimpel, “Sort des statues.”
- 10 See Brush, “Gothic Sculpture,” whose general outline and observations are followed here.
- 11 Éméric-David, *Histoire*, pp. 49–74.
- 12 de Laborde, *Renaissance*, Vol. 1, pp. i–xlvi.
- 13 Branner, *St. Louis*; Brieger and Verdier, *Art and Courts*; Brückle, “Revision.”
- 14 See Midant, *Viollet-le-Duc*; and Chapters 19 and 21 by Maxwell and Murray in this volume.
- 15 See Blum, *Early Gothic Saint-Denis*.

- 16 Camille, *Gargoyles*.
- 17 Viollet-le-Duc, "Sculpture." The discussion of Gothic begins at p. 140.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 159.
- 19 On Hegel, see Podro, *Critical Historians*, pp. 17–30.
- 20 Schnaase, *Geschichte*, Vol. 5, pp. 42–49.
- 21 Gonse, *L'Art gothique*, p. iv.
- 22 See Brush, "Gothic Sculpture," pp. 196–197; Mersmann, *Musées du Trocadéro*.
- 23 Gahtgens, "Deutsche und französische," p. 191.
- 24 Knackfuß, *Deutsche Kunstgeschichte*, Vol. 1, pp. 232–247.
- 25 See Von Reber, *Kunstgeschichte*, Vol. 1, pp. 549–550; Schmarsow, *Bildwerke*.
- 26 Brush, "Gothic Sculpture," p. 196.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 197.
- 28 This situation has changed little since Brush analyzed it over two decades ago in "Gothic Sculpture," pp. 190–193. The polemical tone has softened in Kleiner, *Gardner's*, 14th edn., pp. 392–396, but the basic contrast between French prototypes and German variations persists.
- 29 Brush, *Shaping*; Gahtgens, "Deutsche."
- 30 Dehio, "Zu den Skulpturen."
- 31 See Kurmann, "Deutsche Skulptur," p. 79.
- 32 Oberaspach, *Meister der Ecclesia*.
- 33 See Schmarsow's critique, "Eindringen"; and Oberaspach's rejoinder, "Zum Eindringen."
- 34 Vöge, "Gotischen Gewandung"; Brush, "Wilhelm Vöge" and *Shaping*.
- 35 See Schlink, *Wilhelm Vöge*.
- 36 Vöge, *Anfänge*. For a translated excerpt, see Branner, *Chartres*, pp. 126–149.
- 37 Gahtgens, "Deutsche," p. 193, notes how incendiary this was just 23 years after the war's end.
- 38 See also Brush, "Wilhelm Vöge."
- 39 *Ibid.*, pp. 75–78.
- 40 Along with *Anfänge* see Vöge, "Bahnbrecher"; translated in Branner, *Chartres*, pp. 207–232.
- 41 See Brush, "Wilhelm Vöge," p. 78; Brush, "Adolph Goldschmidt"; Goldschmidt, "Stilentwicklung."
- 42 See Dilly, "Émile Mâle," pp. 140–141.
- 43 Mâle, *Religious Art*. See also Chapters 10 and 33 by Fozi and Boerner in this volume.
- 44 Ruskin, "Our Fathers," esp. p. 234.
- 45 Dilly, "Émile Mâle," pp. 134–135.
- 46 Gahtgens, *Reims on Fire* is the newest and most thorough source on this event and its repercussions. See also Lambourne, *War Damage*, pp. 19–24.
- 47 Emery, "Martyred Cathedral"; Harlaut, *Naissance*; Lewer, "Zerstörung."
- 48 Harlaut, *Naissance*; Bazin, *Histoire*, pp. 270–272. For early art historical studies that respond to the disaster, see Bréhier, *Cathédrale de Reims*; Gardner, *French Sculpture*.
- 49 See Emery, "Martyred Cathedral"; Lambourne, *War Damage*, pp. 12–39.
- 50 Porter, "Gothic Art." See also Emery, "Martyred Cathedral."
- 51 Harlaut, *Naissance*.
- 52 For the incomplete Reims project, see Markschies, "Wilhelm Vöge," pp. 65–72.

- 53 “L’Allemagne du passé a imité, elle n’a pas créé”; in Mâle, *L’Art allemande*, p. 2. Four editions had appeared by 1923.
- 54 Ibid., p. 204.
- 55 For Bamberg, see Harlaut, *Naissance*, p. 118; for Naumburg, where the integration of the figures into the architecture made this impossible, see “Stifterfiguren,” a source I owe to James van Dyck.
- 56 Emery, “Martyred Cathedral,” pp. 329–330.
- 57 Forsyth, “Five Crucial People”; and Chapter 38 by Marquardt in this volume.
- 58 Réau and Cohen, *L’Art du moyen âge*, p. 221.
- 59 Schmitz, *Kunst*, esp. p. 262.
- 60 Schneider, *L’Art français*, pp. 173–216.
- 61 See Chapter 21 by Murray in this volume.
- 62 Bazin, *Histoire*, pp. 489–490.
- 63 Aubert, *Sculpture française*.
- 64 Joubert and Sandron, *Pierre*; Joubert, *Sculpture gothique*; Le Pogam, *Maitres*; Erlande-Brandenburg et al., *Musée national*.
- 65 Panofsky, *Deutsche Plastik*; Jantzen, *Deutsche Bildhauer*; Pinder, *Bamberger*; Pinder, *Naumburger*.
- 66 Gage, *Goethe*, pp. 103–117.
- 67 Dehio, *Strassburger*, 2nd edn., p. 7.
- 68 For Pinder’s wide-ranging academic career, see Halbertsma, “Wilhelm Pinder.”
- 69 For the impact of photography on the study of art more generally, see Roberts, *Art History*; Caraffa, *Fotografie*.
- 70 Beenken, *Bildhauer*; Passarge, *Deutsche Vesperbild*; Pinder, *Deutsche Plastik*, pp. 92–107; Stechow, *Andachtsbilder*.
- 71 Worringer, *Abstraction*; Mallgrave and Ikonomou, *Empathy*.
- 72 Dehio, *Strassburger*, 38.
- 73 Pinder, *Bamberger Dom*, 2nd edn., p. 50.
- 74 Jantzen, *Deutsche Bildhauer*, p. 132.
- 75 Pinder, *Naumburger Dom*, p. 30.
- 76 Walbe, “Uta aus Naumburg.”
- 77 Gebhardt, *Das Deutsche*, pp. 150–163; Führ, *Naumburg/Saale*.
- 78 Ullrich, *Uta*.
- 79 Dwars and Wagner, *Fortgesetzte*, p. 45.
- 80 Kestel, “Walter Hege.” For characteristic attempts to glean national and even regional character from medieval sculpture, see Beenken, “Entwicklung”; Giesau, “Sächsisch-thüringische Kunst.”
- 81 For reassessments of Pinder’s legacy, see Suckale, “Wilhelm Pinder” and Meyer, “Der Deutsche.” For German art history during the Nazi period, see Dilly, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker*.
- 82 Pinder, *Kunst der deutschen*, pp. 6, 7. See also the foreword to Endres, *Deutsche Kunst*, pp. vii–ix.
- 83 Matyssek, *Kunstgeschichte*.
- 84 Ibid., p. 21.
- 85 Ibid., pp. 52–55.
- 86 Ibid., pp. 192–206.
- 87 Ibid., pp. 206–208.

- 88 Panofsky, *Deutsche Plastik*.
- 89 Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture*. Contrast Panofsky's interest in the subjective in *Deutsche Plastik* with his commitment to the rational and orderly in *Gothic Architecture*.
- 90 Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories and Sculptural Programs*.
- 91 Valentiner, *Bamberg Rider*.
- 92 Dwars and Wagner, *Fortgesetzte*, pp. 38–39.
- 93 Gardner, *French Sculpture*, p. 5.
- 94 Gardner, *Medieval Sculpture*; see p. xiv for the reference to English-language works on Romanesque sculpture by Baum and Kingsley Porter.
- 95 See Chapter 21 by Murray in this volume.
- 96 Cahn, “Henri Focillon”; and Chapter 19 by Maxwell in this volume.
- 97 Blum, *Early Gothic*; Branner, *Saint Louis*; Bruzelius, *Thirteenth-Century Church*. Bruzelius has been working on polychromy in medieval stone sculpture; see <http://medieval.colab.duke.edu>, last accessed 7 August 2018.
- 98 Gillerman, *Clôture and Enguerran*.
- 99 Gillerman, *Gothic Sculpture*, 2 vols.; Holladay, “Encounter”; and works cited in n. 148.
- 100 For an overview of the Naumburg Master historiography up to 1964, see Jahn, *Erschliessung*; for the state up to 1994, see Schubert, *Erforschung*. For current views, which waver between defining the Master as a person and a workshop but quite distinctly see him as a Francophile, see Krohm and Kunde, *Naumburger Meister*. For the political dimensions of efforts to chart the Naumburg Master's trajectory, see Brush, “Naumburg Master”; Jung, “Peasant Meal.”
- 101 See the essays in Möbius and Schubert, *Skulptur*. Among Schubert's many publications see most recently *Naumburger Dom*.
- 102 Scieurie, “Geistigen Anteil.”
- 103 Idem, “Bemerkungen.”
- 104 Möbius and Scieurie, *Geschichte*.
- 105 D. Schubert, *Von Halberstadt*.
- 106 Hauss herr, *Zeit der Stauffer*, Vol. 1, p. vii.
- 107 An unromantic but concerted interest in the artistic culture of imperial Germany is also evinced by the great six-volume study by Braunfels, *Kunst*, published between 1979 and 1989 (with two additional volumes left incomplete at the time of his death in 1987).
- 108 Sauerländer, “Naumburger Stifterfiguren.”
- 109 See also Sauerländer and Wollasch, “Stiftergedenken.”
- 110 Little, “Willibald Sauerländer.” See most recently Sauerländer, *Reims*.
- 111 Sauerländer, *Gothic Sculpture*.
- 112 Idem, *Von Sens*. Sauerländer disavowed this preoccupation with stylistic movement in his later work, turning instead of questions of function, meaning, and the modalities of form.
- 113 Bengel, *Straßburger*, pp. 144–156; Meyer and Kurmann-Schwarz, *Cathédrale*, pp. 181–183.
- 114 Sauerländer, “Reims und Bamberg”; Feldmann, *Bamberg und Reims*; Heinrichs, “Skulpturenzyklen.”
- 115 Kurmann, “Colosse”; Wirth, *Datation*.
- 116 Kurmann, *Façade*.
- 117 Claussen, “Zentrum.”

- 118 See also Kurmann, “Deutsche Skulptur”; Reinhardt, “Sculpture française”; Lutz, “Französischen”; Brachmann, “Naumburg.”
- 119 Abou-El-Haj, “Building”; Rowe, *Jew, Cathedral*; see also Weber, “Entwicklung.”
- 120 Sadler, *Reading*.
- 121 Snyder, *Early Gothic*.
- 122 Murray, *Gothic Sermon*.
- 123 Nolan, “Ritual”; Spitzer, “Cult.”
- 124 Fassler, “Liturgy.”
- 125 Kohlschein and Wünsche, *Heiliger Raum; Lichte, Inszenierung*.
- 126 Gillerman, *Clôture*; Crossley, “*Ductus*”; Brush, “Screening”; Jung, *Gothic Screen*; Recht, *Believing*; Timmermann, *Real Presence*.
- 127 Sauerländer, “Reliquien”; Weiland, *Sebalduskirche*.
- 128 See Raguin et al., *Artistic Integration*; Reeve, *Reading*; Bock et al., *Kunst und Liturgie*; Nussbaum, *Gebrauchte Kirche*.
- 129 Joubert, *Sculpture gothique*. Compare Williamson, *Gothic Sculpture*, which divides up its materials according to national boundaries.
- 130 Most influential was the work of Bynum, especially *Fragmentation*.
- 131 Lutz, *Bild des Gekreuzigten*.
- 132 Jung, “Crystalline”; Katz, “Behind Closed Doors”; Suckale, *Schöne Madonnen*. Gertsman, *Worlds*.
- 133 Sauerländer, “*Antiqui*”; Claussen, “Antike.”
- 134 Büchsel, *Skulptur des Querhauses*; Givens, *Observation*; Kurmann, “Vermenschlichung.”
- 135 Büchsel, “Nur der Tyrann”; Sauerländer, “Fate”; Rowe, “Idealization.”
- 136 Binski, “Angel Choir”; Büchsel, “Monströse”; Jung, “Dynamic”; see also Wilhelmy, *Seliges Lächeln*.
- 137 Tripps, *Handelnde Bildwerk*; see also Kopania, *Animated*.
- 138 Suckale, “Bamberger Domsulpturen.”
- 139 Grandmontagne, *Claus Sluter*; Jung, “Kinetics” and “Moving Viewers.”
- 140 See <http://mappinggothic.org>, last accessed 7 August 2018. For a recent study of the Pórtico della Glória at Santiago de Compostela, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bz6FIITfII4>, last accessed 7 August 2018.
- 141 See <http://www.limestonesculptureanalysis.com>, last accessed 7 August 2018.
- 142 Danzl et al., *Polychrome*; Verret, *Couleur*.
- 143 Karl, *Polychromie*, p. 109.
- 144 See Brinkmann et al., *Circumlitio*.
- 145 Meyer and Kurmann-Schwarz, *Cathédrale*; Bengel, *Straßburger*.
- 146 See the essays by Dectot, Demouy, Didier, Hayot, Hofman, Joubert, and Le Pogam, in Krohm and Kunde, *Naumburger Master*.
- 147 See Alexander and Binski, *Age of Chivalry*; Crossley, “*Bohemia sacra*.” Binski’s *Becket’s Crown*, pp. 233–259, and “Angel Choir” do include German materials.
- 148 See the works cited in nn. 120–124.
- 149 Brush, *Shaping* and “Screening”; Holladay, *Illuminating*; Kaufmann, “Magdeburg Rider.” Since then see Jung, *Gothic Screen*, “Dynamic Bodies,” and “Kinetics”; Rowe, *Jew, Cathedral*; and Pinkus, *Workshops, Patrons, and Sculpting Simulacra*.
- 150 Dubois et al., *Transferts*.

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Gothic Manuscript Illustration: The Case of France

Anne D. Hedeman

During the thirteenth century, Paris, the French capital, was one of the largest cities in Europe and, arguably, the center of European manuscript production. Home to a powerful court and to one of the pre-eminent universities in Europe, Paris was a market for a broad range of manuscripts, and thus was a leader and model for all of Europe.

As a result of these particular circumstances, French manuscripts, particularly Parisian ones, have long been the focus of scholarly analysis and serve as an appropriate case-study for methodological approaches to Gothic manuscript illustration. This chapter will describe how some recent methodological approaches have built on fundamental studies of style to shape and reshape our perception of Gothic book production. It will track how the interest in codicology, genre studies, and interdisciplinarity have posed new questions about the production and consumption of the illuminated book.¹

Style

Stylistic analysis remains a central component of art historical practice and an essential foundation for other approaches to the book. Volumes by Vitzthum and Porcher established broad parameters for discussion of French style in the Gothic period to 1300, which subsequent scholars have refined and are just beginning to replace.² In his posthumously published book, Robert Branner combined

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information drawn from diverse sources ranging from liturgical usage and historical associations to property records from the Abbey of St. Geneviève to anchor groups of manuscripts in Paris and to create a picture of book production in the capital. He grouped and localized stylistically related manuscripts around securely dated and localized nuclei, defining a series of at least 20 “ateliers” whose work he described in an extensive series of appendices and illustrated in more than 400 images. His book remains an important contribution and a starting point for scholars working on Parisian material, but it has a central flaw: it assumes that manuscripts were produced by ateliers made up of a master artist and multiple assistants who were in charge of the book’s execution.³ There is little evidence for the existence of such large ateliers in Paris. Indeed several subsequent studies of Parisian book production have used external documentary evidence in conjunction with careful codicological analysis (see discussion below) to suggest that manuscript production and decoration in Paris was probably overseen by a coordinator, usually a *libraire* (bookseller) affiliated to the university of Paris, who would subcontract work to small family businesses of artists.⁴ Thus, differences in styles in manuscript paintings were probably due to a *libraire* distributing individual segments of a manuscript to diverse artists as part of regular working practices, rather than an artistic atelier that was unable to meet its deadlines hurriedly farming sections of the book out to another atelier. Further, we know that many of these artists practiced their craft in distinctive sections of Paris, most typically the Rue Neuve Nostre Dame near the cathedral and the Rue Erembourg de Brie near St. Séverin on the left bank.

But where can we find stylistic information about other centers in France or in the French orbit? To the bibliographic overview given by Bräm we must add François Avril’s contribution to the catalog for the 1998 Parisian exhibition, *L’Art au temps des rois maudits*, which sketches a broad outline of distinct Parisian and regional styles.⁵ In his catalog essay, Avril suggests that French regional styles of high quality emerge after St. Louis’s death in 1270, first in the powerful fiefs in the north, such as Amiens, Arras, Cambrai, Saint-Omer, Théroouenne, Saint-Quentin, and Soissons (all equally in the stylistic orbit of the Netherlands, England, and the Rhineland), in Metz in Lorraine (an imperial city), and in Toulouse, the center of French power in Languedoc and a university town which produced a significant number of law books toward the end of the thirteenth century. Avril cautions that the Parisian model, in which *libraires* supervise book production, is not appropriate for other regions of France where artists did not experience the job security offered by a diverse and large clientele for books. Avril admits that there is a lot about the artist’s life, social status, and working methods that we simply do not know. His catalog entries of 27 Parisian manuscripts and 38 from other centers concentrate on stylistic analysis, at which he excels, and outline the state of research on each manuscript’s text, its documentary or liturgical localization, and its patronage. The beauty of the non-Parisian manuscripts exhibited in *Les rois maudits* whets the appetite for Alison Stones’s long-awaited *Gothic Manuscripts, 1260–1320*, which offers a detailed state of research on the

style in manuscript centers throughout what is now France. Stones's introduction presents an analysis of stylistic relations between artists and centers in France, and her catalog contains states of research on numerous thirteenth- and fourteenth-century manuscripts. The supplementary material – lists of patrons, illuminators, decorators, scribes, and owners – along with a series of tables that compare early cycles for 14 important texts ranging from the Bible to the *Roman de la Rose* and Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum historiale*, give scholars a strong foundation for both stylistic analysis and new interdisciplinary research.

Codicology

Since its début in the 1970s as an auxiliary discipline in manuscript studies, codicology, or the archeology of the book, broadened the understanding of artistic practice in the Gothic period. Codicology's concern with all aspects of book production has produced scholarship that explores different facets of artistic practice. Analyses of production – from the preparation and ruling of parchment; to the scribe's writing of the text leaving spaces for illustration, decorated initials, or marginalia; to the binding of the book – have clarified the artist's place in book production and emphasized the importance of careful observation and study of manuscripts themselves. Although there is a long tradition of studying indications to artists in manuscripts and artist's drawings, scholars have begun to pay renewed attention both to model books and to the use of written directions to illuminators and of marginal sketches that guided the artists in the illustration of both familiar and new texts.⁶ Scholars also examined other marginal marks and notes to piece together what they reveal about individual artists' organization of their work. For instance, Stirnemann and Gousset have discovered color notes and signs that prescribe decorative patterns to be used in painting backgrounds for initials and miniatures, marginal indicators for alternating of color in flourished initials, indications for payment that reveal medieval technical vocabulary for describing initials, and marks designed not for payment as Branner had previously speculated, but to remind an artist of the number of initials he was to paint on a bifolium or gathering of bifolia entrusted to him for illustration.⁷ One interesting aspect of their research to date is the suggestion that the systems devised to indicate color seem highly personalized in the Gothic period. Data derived from analyses like these may eventually be used in combination with connoisseurship to aid stylistic attribution. For instance, Stirnemann's analysis of filigrane initials in manuscripts securely attributed to Paris and to the regions of lower Champagne and upper Burgundy shows the utility of secondary decoration as an indicator of the localization of books.⁸

Codicological analysis can also establish broader parameters for understanding book production in the Gothic period. In a masterful book, historians Mary and Richard Rouse combined codicological study of surviving manuscripts produced by the Parisian book trade, analysis of documents involving individual commissions

and individual participants in the book trade (the scribes, illuminators, bookbinders, parchment-sellers, paper-sellers, and *libraires*), and evidence drawn from modern research on the textual and art historical content of the manuscripts to describe the Parisian book trade from the thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries.⁹ Their discoveries show how fruitful the integrated study of all aspects of a manuscript can be, making clear that knowledge about the place and the social network within which scribes, illuminators, bookbinders, parchment-sellers, and *libraires* plied their trades helps us ask appropriate questions of the manuscripts we study. Thus, for instance, their book makes substantial contributions to such longstanding art historical topics as the debate about the identity of “Master Honoré” and of the Papeleu Master (whom the Rouses suggest might be Honoré d’Amiens and his son-in-law Richard de Verdun), or the role of centers of patronage in the dissemination of illuminated texts.¹⁰

The organization of the Parisian book trade under the loose regulation of the university and in response to diverse types of patronage was probably not replicated elsewhere in France in the Gothic period. Nonetheless, there is more to do to analyze production in other French centers using an interdisciplinary approach comparable to that employed by Richard and Mary Rouse. Future interdisciplinary publications will doubtless result from the foundations provided by books like the analysis of the production of art in St. Omer that is based upon a thorough analysis of the rich archives in St. Omer, Lille, and Arras and from Alison Stones’s synthetic catalog.¹¹

Interdisciplinary Approaches and the Emerging Study of Secular Illustration

One of the most fruitful developments in art historical manuscript studies beginning in the last quarter of the twentieth century is the proliferation of interdisciplinary analyses grounded in the manuscripts themselves. Such analyses assume diverse shapes; their focus ranges from study of literary genre, narrative, reception, or patronage, to topics inspired by post-modernism, like recent studies of marginalia. Despite their different methodologies, most start from a careful examination of individual manuscripts and develop through active engagement with other fields, either through collaboration with colleagues from historical or literary studies or through the exploration of shared questions.¹²

Publications on the *Bible moralisée*, a book containing densely illuminated excerpts from the Bible accompanied by paired pictorial and textual commentary, show how valuable it can be when scholars from distinct fields employ different methodologies to approach a literary genre. Until 2000, most scholars first saw these manuscripts in facsimiles of either the French version (of Vienna Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonensis 2554) or of one of the three-volume Latin manuscripts (the copy now preserved as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 270b; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 11

560; and London, British Library, MSS Harley 1526–1527).¹³ The priority given these manuscripts by their publication shaped analysis of the text and image of the literary genre as a whole, reinforcing the philological contention that editing (or in this case, publishing) is interpretation.¹⁴

John Lowden returned to the manuscripts, examining the seven earliest *Bibles moralisées*, each decorated with thousands of images, within the frame of their production and consumption in order to offer a fresh appraisal of the relationships between them.¹⁵ His book presents a complex picture of the evolution and interaction of individual manuscripts, and tracks the afterlife of diverse *Bibles moralisées* as they move through the hands of sequential owners in France, England, and Spain. He combines a codicological analysis of all seven manuscripts in Volume 1 with a careful analysis in Volume 2 of the potential modes of viewing and reading of the book of Ruth, which they all share. Lowden successfully evokes multiple audiences for the *Bible moralisée* and begins to address questions concerning the authorship of the text and the relationships between textual and visual narratives in the diverse manuscripts. He sketches diverse audiences: authors and artists who actively consume and respond to the works of their predecessors; kings, queens, and princes who dip into the books; and other owners who treasured the work, unbound, for years, possibly without even reading or looking at it.

Lowden's examination of the book of Ruth across the multiple copies of the *Bible moralisée* dispels some long-held myths. He questions whether the text of the *Bible moralisée* was constructed systematically by a university master or theologian, as scholars have postulated since the 1920s. He observes that the text of the manuscript family was not fixed; rather it was rethought for each manuscript in "an additive process that was followed in search of 'improvement.'" Further, he suggests that images had priority, particularly in the earliest French manuscript. The pictures were painted first by accomplished artists who knew the Bible better than the caption's writers did, and who, in the commentary's illustrations, constructed images of "reality" by shaping new artistic conventions. Lowden shows that the seven early *Bibles moralisées* were not produced as copies of a prior authoritative model, but as a series of variations on a theme. His analysis links both the texts and the images of these manuscripts in a chain of production in which written word and painted image "improve in various ways on their predecessors."

Lowden's findings encourage further research into both the construction and the reception of these books. If as he suggests, the corpus has little influence outside its textual "family," why is that? Does the sophistication of the visual referencing described in these volumes find an echo in biblical illustration from other manuscripts painted by the same Parisian artists?

A book by Sara Lipton, a historian, complements Lowden's and contributes a different perspective on how the images of the *Bible moralisée* construct meaning.¹⁶ Less concerned with artistic practice than with the *Bible moralisée*'s role in internalizing and shaping contemporary political attitudes, Lipton examined the visual and verbal representation of Jews in the two earliest manuscripts

(Vienna Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonensis 2554 and 1179). Her analysis successfully evokes visual imagery's potential to create a rhetorical structure, a visual language of signs, that shaped the meaning of the moral teachings embodied in the manuscript. Unlike Lowden, Lipton is not as invested in establishing the priority of images, as in showing their rhetorical power in partnership with their text and with contemporary political attitudes. She argues that the contemporary subjects of the new commentary images and their texts in the *Bible moralisée* challenged artists and authors to translate familiar biblical scenes into visually associated thirteenth-century equivalents. She establishes how these thirteenth-century scenes are linked to their visual biblical analogue and its textual caption, but at the same time, are distinct from them. Her readings of the visual and textual signs employed to bridge gaps between biblical past and French present allowed her to unravel one thread: "the unarticulated, but influential factors underlying French Jewish policy."

Lipton reveals herself to be a sensitive viewer of images and a formidable historian as she tracks the visualization of verbal abstractions, even those with a long exegetical tradition, as they take a vividly contemporary and secular turn. In modernizing, the pictures incorporated and redeployed anti-Jewish imagery of a type traditionally classed as popular, and represented the behaviors of bad kings and philosophers, heretics, and misguided students as "Jewish" behavior.

If Lowden is right, most medieval readers would dip into the book, rather than read it from cover to cover as Lipton did. For them, the "piling on, broadening, and deepening of the anti-Jewish themes" may not have been as evident as it was to Lipton or, arguably, to those who constructed the manuscript in the first place. Nonetheless, readers in the thirteenth century would doubtless recognize the modernity of the book and its discrete anti-Semitic elements, even when they experienced just one or two pages at a time.

Publications on vernacular romance and *chansons de gestes* by scholars working across disciplinary boundaries also reshaped analyses of images in secular manuscripts. The manuscripts of Chrétien de Troyes attracted significant attention in the 1990s, when the collaborative team of Busby, Nixon, Stones, and Walters brought out a two-volume corpus. This assembled analytical essays by 18 scholars, catalog descriptions of the 45 extant manuscripts of Chrétien de Troyes, reproductions of all the miniatures, and selected reproduction of the range of scribal hands and decorative initials in the manuscripts.¹⁷ Almost simultaneously, Sandra Hindman published a socio-political reading of seven of the manuscripts that, together with Busby's corpus, raised important questions about the reception of manuscripts of Chrétien de Troyes.¹⁸

Hindman's book and Stones's and Busby's articles in their corpus have the greatest utility to art historians trying to understand Arthurian imagery.¹⁹ Their contributions were ably described in a review article by Huot, who noted their significance for the study of the medieval reception of Chrétien and their methodological importance in showing how an integrated analysis of the evidence provided by the medieval book provides a context for literary reception.²⁰

Huot signaled Stones's fundamental contribution in identifying and describing the stylistic hands that produced manuscripts of Chrétien's texts and others. She was stimulated by Hindman's and Busby's explorations of oral and literate culture and their relationships to manuscripts of Chrétien's romances. While Hindman analyzed the Chrétien manuscripts as embodying both prose-type and verse-type illustrations, Busby suggested that the reception of prose and verse had been assimilated by the thirteenth century so that the mere inclusion of illustrations in thirteenth-century copies of Chrétien's verse romance suggests the appropriation of the later prose text models. Busby noted that the illuminated Chrétien manuscripts date not from Chrétien's lifetime, but later – from precisely the period in which the illuminated prose Lancelot-Grail cycle and other prose Arthurian texts proliferated. He postulated that the intertextual relationship between thirteenth-century prose romances and Chrétien's verse romances helps explain why certain scenes popular in prose romance were chosen for illustration when Chrétien's text finally received pictures. Huot described the challenge that Hindman's and Busby's findings pose to students of secular material:

Medieval readers did not approach Chrétien in a vacuum; they read his works through the intervening lens not only of the subsequent *Continuations* [of Chrétien's text], but also of prose romance. That these altered modes of receiving twelfth-century romance should be reflected in manuscript format and illustration is perhaps not surprising: nonetheless, it is an important point whose ramifications have yet to be fully explored.²¹

Huot's discussion of Hindman's and Busby's work suggests a way to explore both the construction of these manuscripts and their reception. One avenue for further research would be to examine the visual communities within which the artists worked – the imagery that they knew and manipulated – in order to explore the impact of visual vocabulary on shaping the reception of both Chrétien's verse romance and Arthurian prose romance. Stones has shown that the artists who illustrated these texts also illustrated epic, song, romance, and books for private devotion and for liturgical use, and she has begun to explore visual modes used for sacred and secular texts in the early thirteenth century. She discusses the shared patterns that artists used for diverse literary genres in a series of publications where she suggests that visual motifs frequently take on a status independent of their textual genre so that these building blocks of visual narrative are neither sacred nor secular.²²

Blurred Literary Genres and the Study of Imagery

The interpenetration of sacred and profane texts and images are an intriguing area for further research. Are there situations where motifs did not gain independence of their origins as illustrations of the sacred or profane? If so, could these motifs be

used by artists to make an intentional *intervisual* reference to an alternate literary genre? Did artists ever deliberately create a secular image with a sacred resonance or a sacred image that has a secular resonance? Are there cases where such references are undeniable and where it is clear that their function was to shape a reader's response?

Some publications suggest that this could happen. One example is a pair of thirteenth-century manuscripts: the Morgan Picture Bible (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 638) and a mid-thirteenth-century Flemish psalter (Los Angeles, Getty Museum, MS 14).²³ Mann describes how artists visualized biblical tales in the Morgan Picture Bible. He analyzes the contribution that the manuscript's lively and detailed painted style makes to the visual cycle's narrative structure and to the relationship between the manuscript's vivid scenes of battle and the literary descriptions of battles in *chansons de gestes*. He also describes an intriguing feature of the Morgan Picture Bible that helped solidify the chivalric reception of the images: the use of inscriptions on the blades of five swords.²⁴ Some inscriptions make sense in the context of the manuscript, as, for instance, when the inscription "GOLIATH" on the sword with which David beheads Goliath in the Morgan Picture Bible clarifies that David used the giant's own sword to execute him. Others only make sense within a broader secular frame within which, as Mann indicates, biblical battle scenes seemingly exploit "the epic character of their textual sources to transform sacred history into a tale of great deeds and heroic actions."²⁵ Thus Mann describes how many sword inscriptions found in the Morgan Picture Bible and in the Getty Psalter, such as "IOIOUSE," "COURTE," and "DURN DAL," were derived from the *Song of Roland*, in which they are the swords of Charlemagne (Joyeuse), Ogier le Dane (Courtrain), and Roland (Durendal).

The blurring of genres that these inscriptions accomplish, particularly in the Morgan Picture Bible, is powerful. While the introduction of the inscriptions – originally the only words written in the manuscript – conflates biblical heroes and French epic warriors, this conflation operates on a generic level in the Morgan Picture Bible. Only in the Getty Psalter (fig. 23-1) does a named figure, David, bear a labeled sword; "DURN DAL" associates him with Roland. In the Morgan Picture Bible, by contrast, the book's designer seems to have been careful to give named swords only to anonymous soldiers: one of Saul's emissaries sent to kill David bears the sword marked "COURTE" (fig. 23-2, upper register), one of David's soldiers wields "ODISMORT" (fig. 23-3), and a Philistine uses "IOIOUSE" (also fig. 23-3).²⁶ The anonymity of the soldiers bearing the swords in the Picture Bible makes it more likely that the swords' inclusion would successfully foster a generic literary association between biblical history and *chansons de gestes*, rather than a specific association between the biblical King David and Charlemagne. This is different from the practices in court ceremonial, where comparisons were explicit by the reign of Philip III when the royal sword used in the coronation ceremony was first identified as "JOYEUSE," the sword of Charlemagne, in order to associate Capetian rulers specifically with their most famous Carolingian ancestor.²⁷

The Getty Psalter and Morgan Picture Bible are not by the same artist, but the artists who painted these manuscripts clearly practiced within an environment in



FIGURE 23-1 David plays the harp before Saul and David slays Goliath, from Psalter. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, MS 14, fol. 16v. Source: reproduced courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum.



FIGURE 23-2 Michal's ruse for saving David's life; David flees to Samuel; Saul sends armed men to kill David; Saul's messengers throw down their arms and prophesy, from Morgan Picture Bible. New York: Pierpont Morgan Library MS M. 638, fol. 31. Source: photo courtesy of Pierpont Morgan Library.

which the classic battles of *chansons de gestes* and of the Bible were freely associated by painters and readers.²⁸ Through the semiotic sign of the inscribed sword, artists economically and deliberately secularized sacred imagery and contextualized the artistic vocabulary of lively battle scenes, so that viewers of biblical imagery would see the pictures through the lens of “the narrative structure of French romance.”²⁹ In this case, motifs function very differently from the neutral “shared artists’ patterns” that Stones described for the early thirteenth century when secular illustration was neither as elaborate nor as sophisticated as sacred illustration.

What happens during the course of the thirteenth century as time passes and secular illustration becomes more elaborate? Were deliberate blurrings of boundaries between religious and romance illustrations more common? What was the relationship between these genres and the illustration of newly emerging historical texts in prose vernacular? Gabriel Spiegel established a theoretical framework for addressing this question in a series of articles and a book that consider French vernacular historical writings.³⁰ Her book explores the ideological underpinnings of the shift from verse epic and prose romance to prose historiography with its development of a language of “fact,” and her articles model ways to approach medieval histories as literary forms that incorporate signs of both the historical period and the social forces that generated them.³¹

The points Spiegel makes about texts raise interesting questions about the manuscripts that contain them. Manuscripts are physical objects made at specific moments that mediate between readers, with their external and diverse appropriations of a text, and the text itself. From an art historical standpoint, the imagery adapted and devised for the earliest copies of a new text and the very different imagery devised for later copies of the same text are of interest. How does the selection and deployment of illustration change the historical meaning and reception of a secular text as it moves through time and is claimed by different audiences? Enough groundwork has been done on illuminated manuscripts of individual texts to facilitate this inquiry, and research now looks across genres and finds purposeful interaction between them.³²

Consideration of a pair of related images from a *Grandes chroniques de France* and a *Roman de Troie* will exemplify the important contribution that imagery can make in signaling relationships between texts. In her study of the corpus of illuminated copies of the *Roman de Troie*, Morrison has shown that the earliest illuminated manuscript of the verse romance (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 1610) was painted in Paris in 1264, probably for a member of the Capetian court.³³ Ten years later, the first *Grandes chroniques de France* (Paris, Bibliothèque St. Geneviève, MS 782), a prose chronicle, was made in Paris and presented to King Philip III.³⁴ Both of these illuminated books were illustrated almost 100 years after the translation of the *Roman de Troie* from Latin into French, at the exact time that vernacular history was first being deployed in the service of the Capetian kings of France.³⁵

The visual relationship between the first illuminated *Roman de Troie* (fig. 23-4) and the introductory miniature of the first *Grandes chroniques* (fig. 23-5)



FIGURE 23-4 Priam dispatches Paris to Greece; Paris sets sail; Paris captures Helen at the Temple of Venus; Massacre of Greeks. Leaf exised from *Roman de Troie*. Collection of Dr. J. H. van Heek, Foundation Bergh Castle, Hs. 66 [inv. 216], Fr. XIVd. Source: S'Heerenberg. Stichting Huis Bergh.

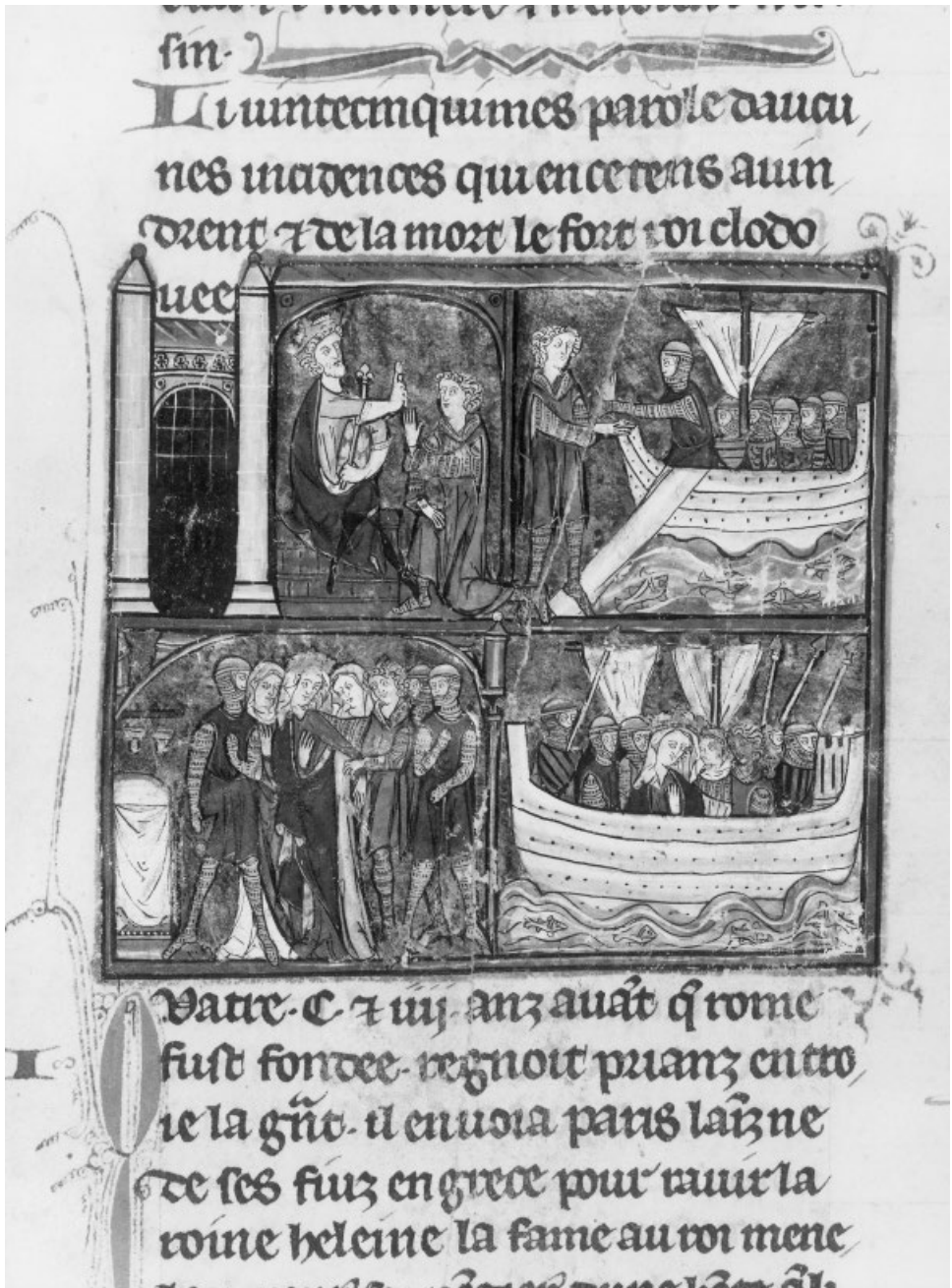


FIGURE 23-5 Priam dispatches Paris to Greece; Paris sets sail; Paris captures Helen at the Temple of Venus; Paris and Helen set sail for Troy, from *Grandes chroniques de France*. Paris: Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MS 782, fol. 2v. Source: photo courtesy of Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève.

parallels the development that took place in Arthurian romance almost 40 years earlier.³⁶ In both cases there was a lag in the illustration of one text until a moment when its themes and stories spark renewed interest and other texts incorporating them appear. Thus the manuscripts of Chrétien de Troyes are first illuminated well after Chrétien's death but contemporaneously with the emergence of illuminated prose romances like the Lancelot-Grail cycle. The *Roman de Troie* is first illustrated well after its appearance, but contemporaneously with the *Grandes chroniques de France*. Both the Trojan romance and the chronicle incorporate illustrations featuring the story of Troy, which was of increasing ideological significance to St. Louis and to the Capetian court in the late thirteenth century.

Morrison cautions us that this migration of imagery between what modern scholars see as distinct genres of romance (poetic fiction) and chronicle (prose fact) should remind us that our modern distinction between fiction and history was more permeable in the Middle Ages. Language used in the dedicatory poem (fol. 326v) to the first *Grandes chroniques* reinforces this observation, describing the text as "le romanz qui des rois est romez" (the *roman* [romance?] that is written in French about the kings).³⁷ The intervisual relationship between the first illustrated *Roman de Troie* and the first *Grandes chroniques* signals a relationship that was understood much better in the late thirteenth than in the early twenty-first century. Thus the analysis of the imagery in the visual cycles of these manuscripts in relation to each other is essential for a true historical understanding of the texts' deployment in the thirteenth century.³⁸ Points of harmony and disjuncture between the pictures and their texts are essential guides to modern scholars who are interested in recuperating ideological and intertextual relationships.

The independent visual narrative of the *Roman de Troie* recasts the story to emphasize the related themes of "the perfidy of the Greeks, the importance of leadership, and above all, the heroism of Hector."³⁹ The third full-page miniature of the romance (fig. 23-4) is a negative representation of Paris' impulsive gesture that led to the second destruction of Troy. Its upper register emphasizes the folly of King Priam who listens to his son Paris volunteer to be sent to Troy. Those around Paris react strongly: Paris' brother Hector, who was concerned about the greater strength of the Greek forces, and his sister Cassandra, who predicted the destruction of Troy if Paris took a Greek wife, appear beside their brother. The middle register shows the arrival of the Trojans outside the Greek city, and the lower represents Paris' embrace of Helen, visualizing the "love at first sight" that led to her abduction, and the ignoble massacre of Greeks in prayer at the temple.⁴⁰

Not more than 10 years after the *Roman de Troie* was illuminated, an artist devising pictures for the new *Grandes chroniques* turned to it as an appropriate visual source for the chronicle. He reconceptualized the *Roman de Troie*'s illustration to fit the chronicle's expressed goal of offering the young King Philip III examples of good and bad kingship to emulate and to shun.⁴¹

The frontispiece of the *Grandes chroniques* (fig. 23-5) is clearly a variation on the image of the *Roman de Troie*. This image accompanies a text that states that the Trojan King Priam sent his son Paris to carry off Queen Helen in order to avenge an earlier slight by the Greeks. The book's designer edited the model from the *Roman de Troie* to promote that message. In the upper register, Paris kneels alone before King Priam before setting sail for Troy. The lower register reconceptualizes Priam's and Helen's meeting in the temple; it does not emphasize their impulsive love at first sight, so much as the forceful abduction that was Paris' act of revenge.⁴² Helen's crown emphasizes her superior social status to Paris, and Paris grabs her wrist in a classic gesture of rape. His embrace of her shoulder with his right arm may be a residual influence of his model, for it offers Helen protection in a gesture that recalls the embrace in the *Roman de Troie*. The protective embrace is repeated in the final scene when they sail to Troy.

The changes between these illustrations were subtle, but deliberate. They manage to give the adaptation of the image in the first *Grandes chroniques* a different resonance than it had in the *Roman de Troie*. At the same time the images preserve the overt intervisual reference between them, which, for Morrison, signaled an intertextual relationship, a reference to the *Roman de Troie* as a "prologue" to the *Grandes chroniques de France*.⁴³

As secular imagery became more sophisticated during the course of the thirteenth century, it seems that interrelationships between the illustrations of newly emerging texts and their venerable predecessors were increasingly common. We cannot prove that such intervisual relationships were always significant. However, there is ample evidence that they often were, and, as a result, interdisciplinary study of all aspects of Gothic manuscripts – but especially the visual – is increasingly important for any medievalist who hopes to recuperate an understanding of the past.

Notes

- 1 For a prior state of research, see Bräm, "Buchmalerei des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts." [For other important approaches, see, in this volume: Chapter 5 on reception by Caviness, Chapter 6 on narrative by Lewis, Chapter 12 on patronage by Caskey, and Chapter 8 on gender by Kurmann-Schwarz. On Romanesque manuscript illumination, see Chapter 20 by Cohen in this volume (ed.).]
- 2 See Vitzhum von Ekstaedt, *Die Pariser Miniaturmalerei* and Porcher, *Les Manuscrits à peintures*.
- 3 See, for instance, how Branner structures artistic attribution in his appendices: "In the case of collaboration between shops, each part of a manuscript is listed under the atelier responsible for it with a cross reference to the other shop or shops concerned; I have, however, given fuller information on the manuscript, with bibliography, under the atelier I consider to be the one receiving the commission for it" (*Manuscript Painting*, p. 200).
- 4 For Parisian book production in the late twelfth century, see Avril, "À quand remontent les premiers ateliers?" and de Hamel, *Glossed Books*.

- 5 See Paris, Grand Palais, *L'Art au temps des rois maudits*, pp. 256–334.
- 6 See for instance the classic studies: Martin, “Les esquisses des miniatures,” and *La Miniature française*; Berger and Durrieu, “Les notes pour l’enlumineur.” More recently, see Stones, “Indications écrites”; Alexander, “Preliminary Marginal Drawings,” and *Medieval Illuminators*. For artists’ model books, see Scheller, *Exemplum*.
- 7 See Stirnemann, “Nouvelles pratiques,” and “Reflexions sur des instructions”; Gousset and Stirnemann, “Marques, mots, pratiques” and “Indications de couleur.”
- 8 See Stirnemann, “Fils de la Vierge,” and “Quelques manuscrits.”
- 9 Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*.
- 10 See the discussion of Maître Honoré and Richard of Verdun and the discussions of “hubs” in very different cases: the controlled dissemination of early copies of Adenet le Roi’s works and Girart’s *Meliacin* through the productions of one *libraire*, and the dissemination of early copies of the *Somme le Roi* created by a variety of *libraires* through a patronage network at the court of Philip the Fair. For this, see *ibid.*, pp. 127–172.
- 11 Gil and Nys, *Saint-Omer gothique* and Stones, *Gothic Manuscripts*, which offers a rich source for researchers.
- 12 Some have termed this move a “new philology” or “a postmodern return to the origins of medieval studies” in manuscript culture. For this, see the introduction to a special issue of *Speculum* dedicated to the new philology: Nichols, “Philology in a Manuscript Culture,” p. 7. [On the marginal, see Chapter 16 by Kendrick in this volume (ed.).]
- 13 See for example, de Laborde, *La Bible moralisée illustrée*; Haussherr, *Bible moralisée*; and Guest, *Bible moralisée*. Guest presents a concise state of research on the manuscript and translates all the French captions into English.
- 14 See Hult, “Reading It Right.”
- 15 See Lowden, *Making of the Bibles Moralisées*.
- 16 Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*. Lipton’s sophisticated arguments about the manipulation of Jewish representation in the individual texts and images of the two earliest *Bibles moralisées* is unaffected by Lowden’s re-dating of the French copy of the *Bible moralisée* in Vienna to be earlier than the Latin copy in Vienna.
- 17 Busby et al., ed., *Les Manuscrits de Chrétien de Troyes*.
- 18 Hindman, *Sealed in Parchment*.
- 19 See *ibid.*; Stones, “Artistic Context”; Busby, “Illustrated Manuscripts,” and “Text, Miniature.”
- 20 Huot, “Rereading the Manuscripts.”
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 106.
- 22 See, for instance, Stones, “Secular Manuscript Illumination,” “Sacred and Profane Art,” “Arthurian Art Since Loomis,” and “Illustrating Lancelot and Guinevere.” For an examination of cases drawn from vernacular history, see Morrison, “From Sacred to Secular.”
- 23 For the following, see Mann, “Picturing the Bible.”
- 24 These inscriptions were first observed by ffoulkes in Cockerell et al., *Book of Old Testament Illustrations*. He identified the inscriptions on the blade of Goliath’s sword as “GOLIAS” (in the scene of David beheading Goliath, fol. 28v), and transcribed other inscriptions on fols. 31 and 34v. On fol. 31 in the scene in which Saul’s soldiers seek to arrest David, one soldier holds a sword inscribed, “COURTE.” Multiple inscriptions

- appear on fol. 34v, where in the upper register, one of David's men cleaves the skull of an Amalekite with a sword labeled "ODISMORT," while a Philistine in the lower register cleaves the head of an Israelite with "IOIOUSE" and Saul falls upon his sword "EIDISAM."
- 25 For this and the following, see Mann, "Picturing the Bible," pp. 55, 179 n. 23, 59 n. 48.
 - 26 When named figures bear named swords in the Morgan Picture Bible, the swords clarify the story; for instance David uses Goliath's sword and Saul falls on his own sword, the as yet unidentified "EIDISAM" – perhaps a corrupt version of "his?"
 - 27 Only in the late thirteenth century was the sword used in the French coronation ceremony first identified as "JOYEUSE," Charlemagne's sword, in Guillaume de Nançis's description of Philip III's coronation in 1270 from his late thirteenth-century chronicle of the life of Philip III. See Zeller, "Les Rois de France."
 - 28 Much work needs to be done to identify where the artists painting these manuscripts worked. The Getty Psalter was made for the usage of Bruges, while current theories about the origins of the Morgan Picture Bible waver between northern France and Paris. For the state of research, see Noel and Weiss, eds., *The Book of Kings*, pp. 15–18, and articles in Hourihane, *Between the Picture and the Word*.
 - 29 Mann, "Picturing the Bible," p. 55.
 - 30 See Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*.
 - 31 Spiegel, "History, Historicism," pp. 25–26.
 - 32 For publications of corpora, see for instance, Buchthal, *Historia*; Oltrogge, *Histoire ancienne*; Jung, *La Légende de Troie*. For examples of research that examines the development of visual cycles within specific historical contexts, see Hedeman, *Royal Image*; Morrison, "Illuminations," and Morrison and Hedeman, *Imagining the Past*.
 - 33 Morrison, "Illuminations," pp. 83–96.
 - 34 For discussion of this manuscript, see Hedeman, *Royal Image*, pp. 11–29.
 - 35 Morrison, "Illuminations," pp. 92–95.
 - 36 See the discussion of Busby's findings above at note 19.
 - 37 For discussion of this passage, see Guenée, "*Les Grandes chroniques*." In the *Grandes chroniques*, "*roman*" seems to function as a term referring to the French vernacular, rather than to its modern meaning of "romance." It seems that when the *Grandes chroniques* were written for presentation in 1274, they were described by this flexible term that was able to include *romans d'antiquités* like the *Roman de Troie* and the sequence of emerging vernacular histories charted by Spiegel that culminated in the *Grandes chroniques*. For more on this phenomenon, see Morrison and Hedeman, *Imagining the Past*.
 - 38 Morrison, "Illuminations," pp. 104–105.
 - 39 For analysis of the complete cycle of the first *roman de Troie*, see *ibid.*, pp. 106–133.
 - 40 For identification of the scenes, see Morrison, "Illuminations," pp. 112–113.
 - 41 In what follows I am revising material I have published in light of Morrison's analysis. See Hedeman, *Royal Image*, pp. 12–14; Morrison, "Illuminations," p. 103.
 - 42 For the analysis of these gestures that follows, see Garnier, *Le Langage de l'image*, plates 106–107. For nuanced analysis of the gesture of a rapist seizing a woman's wrist, see Wolfthal, "Hue and a Cry."
 - 43 Morrison, "Linking Ancient Troy and Medieval France."

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Further Reading and Viewing

In the field of French thirteenth-century manuscript studies there are still many manuscripts that have been neither published nor fully examined. While this chapter gives a methodological introduction to the field of Gothic art history, careful study of individual manuscripts is an essential beginning. In addition to the bibliography listed above, see Keith Busby, *Codex and Context: Reading Old French Verse Narrative in Manuscripts*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 2002).

Websites of individual libraries and museums also provide increasing coverage of manuscripts; among the most notable to provide full manuscript digitalization are *Gallica* at the Bibliothèque nationale (<http://gallica.bnf.fr>) and Digitalized Manuscripts at the British Library (<http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Default.aspx>). A web portal, Euromuse (www.euromuse.net), gives access to information about current and forthcoming exhibitions in European museums. Numerous independent sites offering imagery of individual manuscripts and collections can be accessed through web portals like the website of the *Research Group on Manuscript Evidence* (<http://manuscriptevidence.org/>) or the *Digitized Medieval Manuscripts app* (DMMapp) (<http://digitizedmedievalmanuscripts.org>). For 20 years the Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes (IRHT) in Paris has surveyed and documented illuminated manuscripts in French libraries, and the results of their efforts appear in the *Bibliothèque virtuelle des manuscrits médiévaux* (BVMM) (<http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr>). Its ambitious goal is to digitalize and make accessible manuscript illumination in all French collections of patrimony, except the Bibliothèque nationale. Finally, *Calames* (<http://www.calames.abes.fr/pub/presentation.aspx>) is an online catalog for archives and manuscripts held in French universities, research libraries, and institutions. (All websites accessed 27 August 2018.)



“‘Specially English’: Gothic Illumination c. 1190 to the Early Fourteenth Century”

Kathryn A. Smith

An essay on English Gothic illumination presents singular challenges and opportunities. While there is no dearth of “traditional” art historical investigations constructed substantially from the fruits of stylistic analysis, the production of such studies was a relatively late development in the scholarship on the material. This is due, in part, to the belated establishment in the English intellectual ambient of the discipline of art history with respect to the pictorial arts, including manuscript illumination. As observed by T.S.R. Boase, general editor of *The Oxford History of English Art*, in the preface to that series printed in its earliest published volume, Joan Evans’s *English Art 1307–1461* (1949),

Art History, a clumsy but useful term, does not hold in this country the position that has been given to *Kunstgeschichte* on the Continent, and an academic discipline that in Europe and America is fully recognized has here few professorial chairs or university departments assigned to it. Our tradition of connoisseurship, the detailed study of works of art and objects of antiquity in order to decide their date and provenance, is, it is true, well established ... We still suspect the wider speculations by which analysis of styles provides not only a precise instrument of attribution but also an indication of phases of emotional temperament.¹

The production of style-generated histories is thus but one strand of the variegated scholarship on English Gothic manuscripts, the study of which was shaped early and significantly by methodologies grounded in antiquarian fields, codicology, and the history of the book. Regardless of its methodological orientation, however,

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a common thread of much of this literature is a desire to identify and highlight those genres, forms, and characteristics of the material that “may be regarded as specially English,” as Sydney Cockerell put it in his landmark 1907 monograph on the early fourteenth-century Gorleston Psalter (fig. 24-1).² This chapter focuses in particular on historiographical developments over the last century and a quarter, highlighting the contributions of scholars who played key roles in mapping the landscape of English Gothic manuscript illumination, as well as the institutions, publications, and exhibitions that have shaped and enriched its study.

Antiquarians, Bibliophiles, and Artist-Publishers, to c.1895

As A.N.L. Munby, Rowan Watson, Sandra Hindman et al., and Michaela Braesel have demonstrated, beginning in the sixteenth century, knowledge and appreciation of English Gothic manuscripts received crucial impetus from antiquarians, librarians, bibliophiles, and artist-publishers, some of whom contributed as much to the formation of Britain’s public and private manuscript collections as to the study of the material.³ Space permits discussion of only a few of these figures and their varied methods and motivations. A desire to preserve and promote British and Irish history and heritage fueled the interest in manuscripts of the author, collector, and Director of the Society of Antiquaries of London, Richard Gough. Gough was among the earliest scholars to study the manuscripts of the St. Albans monk and historian Matthew Paris (d. 1259) (fig. 24-2): he published in his *British Topography* (1780) the maps in Matthew’s *Chronica majora* as well as the Hereford *Mappa Mundi* (c.1300), and his substantial 1809 bequest to the Bodleian Library included numerous Gothic liturgical and religious volumes.⁴ Gough’s contemporary, the antiquary and artist Joseph Strutt, valued manuscript imagery principally as a “window” onto medieval and particularly English costume, social life, and “ancient habits.”⁵ Strutt’s sources for the engraved illustrations in *The Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of England* (1773; a project inspired by Bernard de Montfaucon’s *Monuments de la monarchie française* of 1729–1733), *A Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the English People* (1796–1799), and the oft-reprinted *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (1801) comprised miniatures, figures, and motifs from works in major manuscript collections – often significantly edited, all equipped with references to their original manuscript sources. These include drawings by Matthew Paris and marginal vignettes of courtly, urban, and rural activities from the early fourteenth-century Queen Mary and Luttrell psalters (fig. 11-1, fig. 15-3), among other volumes.

Works by artist-publishers and facsimilists of the generation after Gough and Strutt contributed to an appreciation of English Gothic manuscripts not only as historical artifacts but also as exemplars of good design. Among the “stars” of the architectural draftsman and illuminator Henry Shaw’s *Illuminated Ornaments: Selected from Manuscripts and Early Printed Books from the Sixth to the Seventeenth Centuries* (1833) are engraved and colored initials, border ornament, or marginal



FIGURE 24-1 Beatus Page, Gorleston Psalter, probably Norwich, c.1310–1325 (and 1330s), (London, British Library MS Add. 49622, fol. 8r). Source: © The British Library Board.



FIGURE 24-2 Matthew Paris, *Saladin's Capture of the True Cross*, *Chronica Majora*, Vol. 1, St. Albans, c.1240–1253 (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 26, fol. 140r; detail). Source: by permission of the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

vignettes from the Queen Mary and Gorleston psalters (fig. 11-1, fig. 24-1), the latter work at the time still in private hands, and the Ormesby Psalter, then owned by the antiquary and former British Museum Keeper of Manuscripts Francis Douce, whose 1834 bequest to the Bodleian Library enriched its English Gothic holdings (e.g. fig. 24-3).⁶ Drawings from the Queen Mary Psalter and miniatures from the mid-thirteenth-century Trinity Apocalypse, reproduced through the relatively new technology of chromolithography, feature in the paleographer and entomologist John Obadiah Westwood's *Illuminated Illustrations of the Bible* (1846), an account of biblical history organized from Creation through the events of Revelation.⁷ If Strutt's and Shaw's works were widely popular with an educated readership newly interested in the history, culture, and art of the Middle Ages, Westwood's opus offered what has aptly been described as "a Victorian reimagining of a medieval manuscript for the pious art-loving public."⁸

English Gothic illumination found one of its staunchest champions in the designer, writer, and activist William Morris, whose intensive study of manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and British Museum informed his book design and publishing and his own illumination as well as his tastes as a collector. Morris was influenced by the writings of the art critic John Ruskin, a vigorous promoter of English medieval and modern art who had rejected the preferences of previous generations of connoisseurs for Italian Renaissance manuscripts, proclaiming the period c.1250–1350 the apogee of achievement in illumination on account of Gothic art's symbolic character, idealized naturalism, clarity of outline, and simplicity of color.⁹ In his essays on medieval illumination, Morris singled out for praise English Gothic psalters of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, declaring that "nothing can surpass their fertility of invention, splendour



uocem quam audiui de
 celo iterum loquentem me
 cum ⁊ dicentem. **V**ate et accipe li
 brum apertum de manu angeli
 stantis supra mare ⁊ supra terra
Et abi ad angelum dicens ei
 ut daret michi librum ⁊ dixit mi.
Accipe ⁊ deuora illum. et faciet a
 maricant uentrem tuum. serm
 ore tuo erit dulce tanquam mel.
Et accepi illum de manu angeli
 et deuoratur cum. et erat in ore ap
 ranquam mel dulce. **E**t cum de
 uorasset cum amaricatus est ue
 ter meus. **E**t dixit michi. oportet

te iterum pphare ppis et gentib;
 et linguis et regib; multas. et c.
 uocem primam cum dicit quanto de celo ei dicit
 est. Signa que locuta sunt septem tonitrua noti ca
 sculer. **E**ntem itaq; uocem se iterum audisse di
 cit. quia auctem spiritus sancti uox fuit ista cui
 et ista. **P**er iohannem in hoc loco omnes aplos int
 ligere possumus. **N**o q; diuina iohanni locuta e
 ut uer ad angelum et accipere ab eo librum. q;
 spiritus sancti gratia aplos inspirauit ut retica
 omnib; xpm sequerentur ut doctrinam euangelii
 ab eo per
 apertur. **E**t abi ad angelum di
 cens ei ut daret michi librum. et c.
Auierunt apli ad xpm ut ab eo doctrina diuina
 rum sapientiarum
 instructur. et. **E**t dixit michi
 accipe librum ⁊ deuora illum. et c.
Per os in quo saporis discernuntur costa apo
 stolorum intelligere possumus. per uentrem au
 tem in quo omnes spiritus corpus commoat
 memoriam pccatorum intelligere debemus. **L**iber
 agitur dum deuoratur ut mel dulce fuisse et c.

FIGURE 24-3 *The Angel Gives John the Book to Eat (Rev. 10:8–11)*, Douce Apocalypse, London, c.1265–1270 (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 180, p. 33). Source: The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford.

or execution, and beauty of colour.”¹⁰ The illustrated Apocalypses produced in significant numbers in thirteenth-century England (fig. 24-3) Morris valued not only because they exemplified “serious Gothic design at its best,” but also because he saw in their miniatures possible evidence of “what wall-pictures of the period might have been in the North of Europe.”¹¹

Although Morris wrote relatively little about regional traditions of illumination, he did comment on the “subtle” stylistic features that, in his view, differentiated English Gothic manuscripts from French books. French manuscripts, Morris opined, “excel specially in a dainty and orderly elegance, the English specially in love of life and nature, and there is more of rude humour in them than in their French contemporaries,” and he lauded the artist of the Queen Mary Psalter (fig. 11-1) for what he termed that artist’s “coarseness,” that is, the artist’s “appreciation of the facts of ordinary life.”¹² Morris’s characterization of the Queen Mary “Master’s” work is striking, because most subsequent writers have considered the psalter to be the most elegant, refined, and indeed, the most “French” of English Gothic books.¹³ In his Reith Lectures, originally broadcast in 1955 by the BBC and published the following year as *The Englishness of English Art*, German-born art historian Nikolaus Pevsner similarly identified an interest in “observed life,” “the pursuit of nature,” and expressive line as among the defining features of England’s “national character” as manifest in its art.¹⁴ Richard Marks and others have elucidated the wider context of Pevsner’s intellectual formation, acknowledging the influence of Pevsner’s opus while highlighting the problems inherent in linking art or style with national or ethnic temperament and identity.¹⁵ What is noteworthy here, however, is that Pevsner marshaled vignettes and miniatures from many of the same Gothic manuscripts that Morris had praised six decades earlier in order to make his case.

Catalogs, Monographs, and Exhibitions c.1895–1980

In the decades around 1900 the study of English Gothic manuscripts entered its formative phase, advanced by scholars united by bonds of friendship and by what Christopher de Hamel has called “a kind of bibliophilia that was peculiarly English.”¹⁶ For these writers, connoisseurship, curating, collecting, and cataloging often went hand-in-hand. As de Hamel and Stella Panayotova have observed, Sydney Cockerell, Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum from 1908 to 1937, may be situated at the center of this web of personal, intellectual, and professional connection.¹⁷ Cockerell’s entrée into the world of manuscripts came through his association beginning in the early 1890s with Ruskin, Morris, and the Pre-Raphaelites. These connections enabled him to absorb the lessons of Ruskin’s and Morris’s discerning eyes, appreciation for well-designed books, and passion for Gothic art, and they facilitated his encounters with important manuscripts as well as future friends, collaborators, and clients. During the years around 1900, Cockerell served as an adviser to many British and American collectors and libraries,

and he earned a living from manuscript purchases on commission: even a cursory inspection of their provenances reveals Cockerell to have been instrumental in the sale or acquisition of some of the most important English Gothic manuscripts.

The decades around 1900 witnessed several major cataloging efforts. One of Cockerell's most important clients, the former newspaper publisher Henry Yates Thompson, built a small yet remarkable collection of illuminated manuscripts. In addition, he facilitated subsequent scholarship on them by sponsoring their publication in four descriptive catalogs (1898–1912) and seven plate volumes (1907–1918) containing contributions by friends and colleagues such as Cockerell, M.R. James, Edward Maunde Thompson, and George F. Warner.¹⁸ H.L.D. Ward's and J.A. Herbert's three-volume *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts of the British Museum* (1883–1910) remains fundamental for the study of classical and Arthurian romances, fables, legends, Marian miracles, and sermon *exempla* as witnessed in textual or pictorial form in medieval manuscripts, including English Gothic examples; of equal value is the four-volume *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections* (1921) authored principally by Warner and Julius P. Gilson.¹⁹

A towering figure in the study of English Gothic manuscripts, the development of the manuscript catalog, and the history of libraries is M.R. James, a provost of both Eton and King's colleges, Cambridge, and Cockerell's predecessor as director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, whose descriptive catalogs of the manuscripts in more than 30 British public and private collections remain essential resources. James began his series of catalogs of the holdings of Cambridge libraries in the 1890s, bringing to bear on the material formidable expertise in biblical studies and hagiography, languages and philology, codicology, paleography, and classical studies as well as art history and especially iconography, or what James called "Christian archaeology." During the same period, he embarked on efforts to reconstruct the libraries of medieval England through analysis and publication of their catalogs, so that by the first decade of the twentieth century, he was regarded as the foremost English authority on both illuminated manuscripts and the English monastic library.²⁰

Providing information about codicology, textual and liturgical contents, indices of medieval provenances, and terse but often incisive comments about scribal and artistic hands, style, iconography, and sometimes even function and use, James's catalog entries show him to have been an "archaeologist of the book" long before L.M.J. Delaissé's advocacy of that approach to manuscript study.²¹ One gets a sense of James's holistic approach from a particularly fulsome entry he authored on a manuscript made for an owner associated with St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, a now fragmentary volume containing illuminated canticles and hymns (in Latin) as well as 100 framed Passion miniatures equipped with extensive captions in Anglo-Norman French, or "insular French,"²² England's principal vernacular of learning, culture, record, devotion, and religious instruction from the Norman Conquest through the early fifteenth century (fig. 24-4). Concerning the Passion sequence James comments, "My impression, derived from the position of this series of pictures, between the Maundy

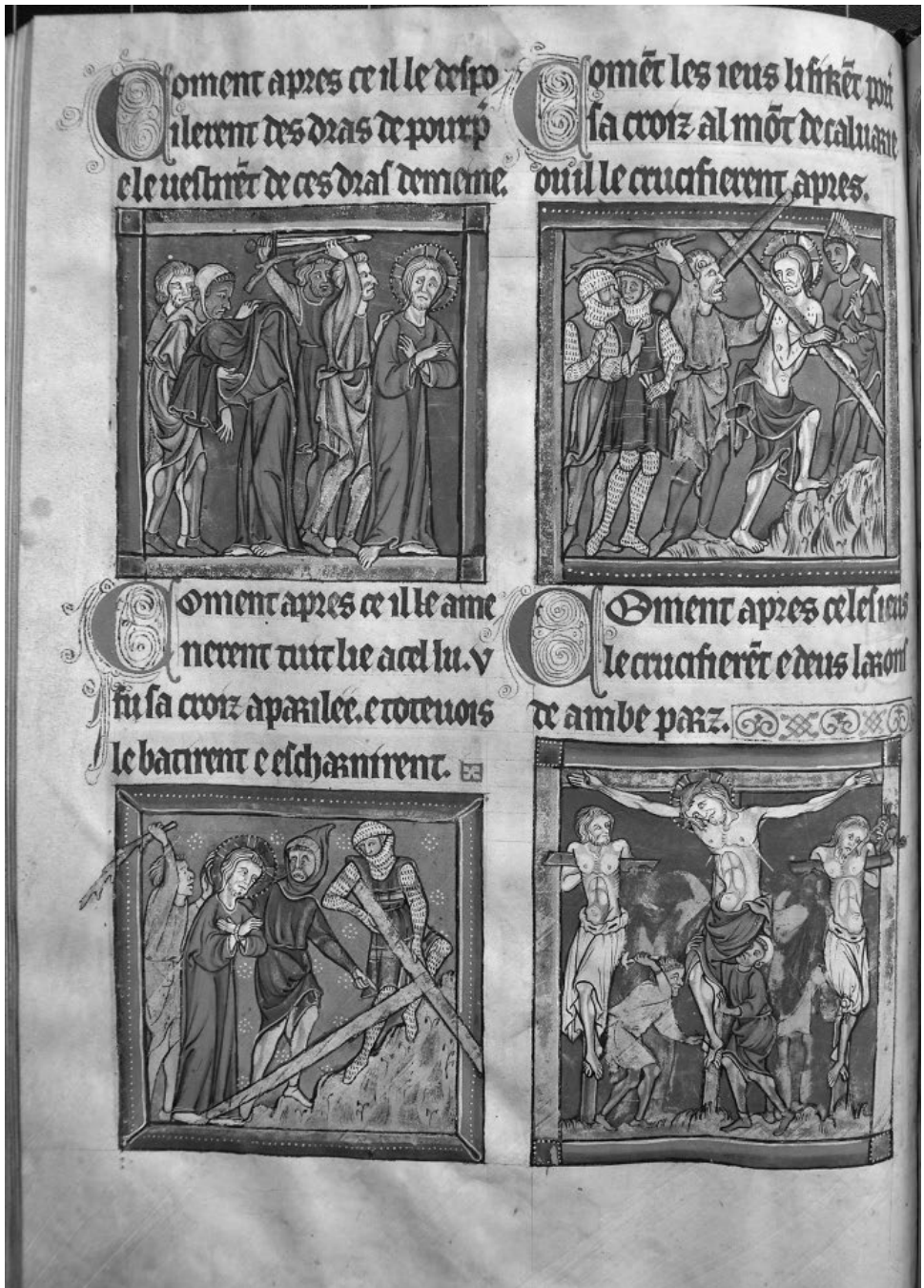


FIGURE 24-4 *Scenes of the Passion of Christ* with Anglo-Norman French captions, Canticles, Hymns, Passion of Christ, late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, St. Augustine's, Canterbury (Cambridge, St. John's College MS K. 21, fol. 51v). Source: by permission of the Master and Fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge.

Thursday and Easter Hymns, is that it was meant for the owner of the book (an Abbot perhaps) to study during the long services of Good Friday and Easter Eve.”²³ In this single sentence, James paints a suggestive picture of the potential use in a monastic context of images and vernacular texts as cues for “disciplined meditation,” and of the interweaving of liturgical and devotional modes and practices in medieval religion.²⁴

The first half of the twentieth century saw the publication of important investigations of English artists, manuscripts, and groups of manuscripts. While stylistic analysis, attribution, and the identification of regional “schools” of illumination were among their authors’ aims, no writer focused single-mindedly on style, and their studies remain valuable sources of liturgical, textual, codicological, heraldic, or iconographic information, even if their conclusions have been revised in subsequent scholarship. Many of these writers manifest an appreciation for the medieval artist as a resourceful, *engagé* individual rather than merely a “carrier” or vehicle of a period or regional style. This may be due, in part, to the fact that the thirteenth century produced two well-documented English illuminators “to whom a personal style can be attributed,”²⁵ William de Brailes (fig. 24-5) and Matthew Paris (fig. 24-2). Cockerell (1930) first defined the *oeuvre* of “W. de Brailes,” a project continued by Hanns Swarzenski (1938) and others.²⁶ But it was bibliographer and bookseller Graham Pollard’s (1955) discovery of “William de Brailes” in the Oxford archives that all but confirmed the artist’s identity as a professional illuminator active in that city c.1230–1260 producing small-format, luxury religious and devotional books for university clients and the lay élite, and that helped to establish Oxford as an important center of Gothic book production.²⁷ Married and living in Catte Street among other artisans associated with the book trade, William appears to have been a competent scribe as well as an illuminator, and his depiction as tonsured in three self-portraits (e.g. fig. 24-5) suggests that he held minor orders.²⁸ The *oeuvre* and influence of Matthew Paris had been contentious issues since the later nineteenth century, when the paleographer, antiquarian, and former British Museum Keeper of Manuscripts Frederic Madden (1866–1869) assigned all of the illustrations in the *Chronica majora* (fig. 24-2) and *Historia Anglorum* to Matthew himself, a view challenged almost immediately by several writers.²⁹ M.R. James (1925–1926) transformed Matthew into an artist with a legacy, if not a clearly delineated *oeuvre*, positing the existence of a “School of St. Albans” active under Matthew’s direction and after his death.³⁰ In his groundbreaking publications, Richard Vaughan (1958) defined Matthew’s *oeuvre* and fleshed out his artistic personality. Marshaling codicological and paleographical evidence derived from his earlier study of Matthew’s handwriting, Vaughan argued for Matthew’s authorship of nearly all of the drawings in the historical manuscripts, correlating changes in Matthew’s drawing style to parallel changes in his script, and demonstrating the close relationship between Matthew’s drawings and the text of his chronicles.³¹ Scholars now see Matthew’s artistic influence as far more limited than James and other early writers had imagined. Nonetheless,



FIGURE 24-5 William de Brailles, *Last Judgment*, with self-portrait of the artist saved by an angel and holding a scroll bearing the inscription, *W DE BRAIL' ME FECIT*, part of a prefatory series for a psalter, Oxford, c.1230–1250 (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS 230 f.iii (3). Source: © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

there has been no diminution in appreciation for Matthew's ability to render his diverse subjects in compelling and inventive ways.³²

The early twentieth century also witnessed the publication of foundational literature on the English illustrated Apocalypse (fig. 24-3). Building on the work of Léopold Delisle and Paul Meyer (1900–1901), who grouped the manuscripts into “families” based on textual and iconographical evidence, and adopting as a model H.O. Coxe’s facsimile (1876) of the mid-thirteenth-century Auct. D. 4. 17 Apocalypse, James (1909) devised a typology of Apocalypse manuscripts using style and technique as his principal criteria, assigning production of the English examples principally to the Benedictine monastic centers of St. Albans (mainly manuscripts executed in tinted drawing) and St. Augustine’s, Canterbury (most fully painted examples).³³ Although James’s groupings, chronologies, and localizations have been substantially revised in more recent scholarship,³⁴ his and Coxe’s Apocalypse facsimiles are still useful starting-points for study of this manuscript type. They are, moreover, among the many important studies of English Gothic manuscripts published by the Roxburghe Club, the bibliophilic society founded in 1812 by the clergyman Thomas Frognal Dibdin and a group of collectors and book-lovers.³⁵ Other Roxburghe Club volumes fundamental for the study of early Gothic manuscripts include James’s *The Treatise of Walter de Milemete* (1913), on a pair of “mirrors for princes” begun c.1326–1327 for presentation to the young Edward III, James’s *La Estoire de Saint Ædward le Rei* (1920), on the sole surviving copy (of c.1255–1260) of an illustrated Anglo-Norman French verse life of Edward the Confessor probably produced in the 1230s by Matthew Paris, and James’s *Bestiary* (1928), the first effort to classify medieval Latin bestiary manuscripts into “families”; Cockerell’s *The Work of W. de Brailes* (1930); Cockerell’s and James’s *Two East Anglian Psalters at the Bodleian Library, Oxford* (1926), on the Ormesby and Bromholm Psalters; and Eric George Millar’s *The Rutland Psalter* (1937), on the earliest surviving manuscript (dated c.1260) with “fully elaborated” marginalia (fig. 16-2).³⁶ Other platforms for scholarship on English manuscripts established during this period include the Henry Bradshaw Society, founded in 1890 and dedicated to publishing editions of liturgical texts and manuscripts, and the Walpole Society, formed in 1911 with the aim of promoting “the study of the history of British art.”³⁷ James’s analysis of the early fourteenth-century, trilingual Holkham Bible Picture Book (1922–1923) and Francis Wormald’s of the contemporary bilingual (Latin and Anglo-Norman French) Queen Mary Mass treatise (1966–1968) are among the many valuable early studies published in hardbound Walpole Society volumes.³⁸ Several important examinations of English Gothic illumination produced up to the present moment have appeared in *The Burlington Magazine* and *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, founded in respectively 1903 and 1937.³⁹

The earliest attempts to define some of the principal early fourteenth-century schools of English illumination date to the first half of the twentieth century. In his monograph on the Gorleston Psalter (fig. 24-1), Cockerell first employed

the term “East Anglian school” to characterize a group of late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century manuscripts distinguished by the “stateliness of the writing and the lavishness of the ornament, which is gay in colour, and virile, if somewhat irresponsible, in design,” as well as their apparent associations with religious centers and towns in the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire.⁴⁰ While later writers have altered the picture of the chronology, constituent members, patronage, and geographical contours of the East Anglian school, identifying subgroups of volumes linked by style, provenance, or circumstances of production, and viewing the manuscripts in the perspective of the broader development of art and architecture in that region (and beyond), Cockerell’s characterization is still a valuable point of entry into the material.⁴¹ If the East Anglian school was deemed the first major fourteenth-century school of illumination, the Queen Mary Psalter (fig. 11-1) was considered by early writers to “stand in a class by itself.”⁴² George Warner (1912) left unaddressed the issue of the localization of the psalter and the few other Queen Mary group manuscripts known at the time; nonetheless, his partial facsimile remains invaluable for its identification and analyses of the psalter’s over 800 images, and for his transcriptions and translations of the Anglo-Norman French picture captions in its remarkable Old Testament preface.⁴³ D.D. Egbert (1940) constructed the third “great school” of early fourteenth-century illumination around the copiously illustrated, unfinished Tickhill Psalter.⁴⁴ As had Cockerell, Egbert devoted significant attention to the division of labor among the illuminators of the volumes in his Tickhill group. Like Cockerell, he imagined these artisans as a loosely organized, fluctuating cadre of itinerant professionals who benefited from the patronage of particular religious houses (in the case of the Tickhill group, Augustinian houses principally in Nottinghamshire) as well as important families linked to these institutions.

The 1908 Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition, organized by Cockerell and achieved with loans from a remarkable roster of institutions and collectors, was a pivotal event in the study of English Gothic manuscripts. Intended, in part, as a rejoinder to the 1904 Paris exposition of “*Primitifs Français*,” which focused solely on later French material, the London exhibition included 269 French, Italian, Flemish, Spanish, Dutch, German, and English works of ninth-through sixteenth-century date, yet made “a special effort ... to bring together the finest examples of English workmanship.”⁴⁵ Nearly half of the exhibition cases included English Gothic books, including bestiaries, Apocalypses, psalters, bibles, and books of hours as well as liturgical, literary, and didactic volumes, with the objects grouped in order to highlight apparent commonalities of provenance, the work of noteworthy artists, regional styles and approaches to page design, and examples of different book types. Style was an important criterion, though not the sole one, for the exhibition’s organization: as Cockerell noted perceptively in the introduction to the catalog, “Every manuscript is unique, a human document which will sometimes not disclose all its meaning after researches that may last a lifetime.”⁴⁶

Surveys and Mapping Projects, c.1895–1980

The formative period of scholarship on English Gothic illumination witnessed the publication of numerous surveys and more narrowly focused studies aimed at creating a coherent picture of the material's stylistic development. Of course, such projects assume that style actually develops in linear fashion from one artifact to another, a problematic assumption further complicated in regard to the English corpus by Reformation-era losses and by the sheer diversity of the material with respect to languages and page and text formats, even in the case of genres that survive in large numbers, like bestiaries, Apocalypses, and psalter prefatory cycles. One observes in many of these studies an overreliance on style in the ostensible absence of other evidence concerning place of origin, an emphasis on identifying and touting "native" English forms and designs and in parsing the "influence" on English book illumination of "foreign," especially French but also Flemish, Italian, and (later) German and Bohemian styles, and an interest in highlighting English drawing traditions and the achievements of English artists with respect to draftsmanship and design. No two writers brought to their subject identical concerns, however, and each produced a narrative characterized by distinct trajectories and emphases and containing valuable insights.

Not surprisingly, many of the early surveys have a nationalistic ring. Edward Maunde Thompson, the first director of the British Museum, created a sweeping account of more than seven centuries of English manuscript art (1895) almost exclusively from works in that institution.⁴⁷ In his survey of manuscript illumination from the Late Antique period through the Renaissance, J.A. Herbert (1911) devoted considerable attention to English Gothic illumination, with many of the manuscripts on which he focused emerging as key artifacts in subsequent accounts. These include the Psalter of Robert de Lindesey, abbot of Peterborough, the "ascetic, emaciated types" of which epitomized for Herbert the early "thirteenth century style in full maturity," and the bible written by the scribe William of Devon, an exemplar of the trend toward "microscopic exactitude" seen in some works produced c.1250–1275.⁴⁸ The English Apocalypse Herbert examined not through the lens of Delisle's and Meyer's or James's "families" but rather in relation to style as evocatively conceived, with the Trinity Apocalypse and other examples leaning "towards the grotesque" and the Douce Apocalypse (fig. 24-3) and some contemporary books evincing a refined, "poetical imagination."⁴⁹

Surveys of the succeeding decades treat an expanded cohort of manuscripts. Eric George Millar, a friend of Cockerell and an important collector as well as a Keeper of Manuscripts in the British Museum, wrote what is widely considered the first in-depth account of English medieval manuscript illumination, dividing coverage of the Gothic period between two volumes that together span the tenth through the fifteenth century (1926, 1928).⁵⁰ Interweaving observations about patrons, owners, and the localization of the manuscripts, some previously un- or understudied, with anecdotes about collectors and discussions of artists, styles,

schools, and genres, Millar trumpeted the achievements of English Gothic art and artists, sometimes downplaying transregional (north French, Flemish) parallels in style and decorative program for those works that he regarded as “specially English” (to reprise Cockerell’s formulation). Thus, over the course of the thirteenth century, the “vigour and forcefulness,” “fertility of invention,” and “splendid sense of design and colour” of English illumination “gradually overcame” French “influence,” with early fourteenth-century Norwich emerging as “one of the greatest centres of book production that has existed in any country,” and the “thoroughly English” Beatus page of the Gorleston Psalter “rank[ing] as one of the finest surviving specimens of book decoration” (fig. 24-1).⁵¹ Frederic Harrison’s unabashedly triumphalist narrative (1937) is nonetheless thought-provoking for its insistence that English book arts of the period c.1250–1400 be viewed against the backdrop of contemporary developments in English religion and literature, especially Middle English literature, from the *Lay Folks’ Primer* to the works of William Langland and Geoffrey Chaucer and the Wycliffite Bible.⁵² O. Elfrida Saunders (1928) identified the Gothic as the first period in which English illumination became “more interested in the problems of the painter than in those of the draughtsman.”⁵³ Unlike Thompson, Herbert, Millar, and Harrison, who deemed the first half of the fourteenth century the apogee of English book arts, Saunders considered the reign of Henry III (r. 1216–1272) the “great period” of English illumination. Saunders saw the manuscripts of the East Anglian school (e.g. fig. 24-1) as analogous to works of the “Late Renaissance in Italian art” for their “sophisticat[ion],” “freedom of invention and design,” and “technical perfection” – qualities that their makers achieved, in her view, at the expense of the “simplicity and breadth” and “inner spirit” of the thirteenth-century production associated with Peterborough, Salisbury, Canterbury, St. Albans, and the so-called “Court Schools” of Henry III and Edward I (r. 1272–1307), based at Westminster.⁵⁴

That the chronological parameters of the three Gothic volumes in *The Oxford History of English Art* were determined not by neat centuries but rather by regnal dates, signals the approach of this series, which integrated English art and architecture into English history and culture. As T.S.R. Boase averred in the series preface, “A work of art is primarily an object that gives aesthetic satisfaction: it is also a piece of historical evidence” that “can serve various purposes for the interpretation of the past.”⁵⁵ One discovers in these volumes numerous trenchant observations that forecast directions taken in more recent scholarship. For example, Boase (1953) noted the apparent prevalence of women among the owners of early thirteenth-century psalters.⁵⁶ The emergence of the mendicant orders and the “growth of private and personal devotion amongst lay people” are among the religious and intellectual developments that Peter Brieger (1957) cited as transforming the design, style, and iconography of psalters, Apocalypses, and other thirteenth-century religious and devotional manuscripts.⁵⁷ Joan Evans (1949) positioned the Holkham Bible Picture Book “at the beginning of a long series of characteristically English” illustrated vernacular volumes that also

includes the earliest illuminated copies of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero A. X, art. 3 (the *Pearl* manuscript), the earliest surviving Middle English manuscript containing full-page illustrations.⁵⁸ In her expansive, detailed *Painting in Britain* (1st edn. 1954), published in the *Pelican History of Art* series edited by Nikolaus Pevsner – a survey that treats wall and panel painting, embroidery, and stained glass as well as book illumination, and which, its title notwithstanding, focuses almost exclusively on medieval *English* art – American Margaret Rickert took an approach somewhere between those of Millar and the authors in the *Oxford History of English Art* series. While she often “invoked English national character” in her discussions of individual works and stylistic schools,⁵⁹ she also opened each chapter with bulleted summaries of historical, political, and religious developments and events in the period covered.

Other noteworthy contributions of this period include Florence McCullough's (1962) study of Latin and French bestiaries, an expansion and revision of James's earlier investigations of this manuscript type, so popular in twelfth- and thirteenth-century England, and three interconnected articles by George Henderson (1967–1968) that lend nuance to the picture of English thirteenth-century illumination and its development.⁶⁰ Pioneering studies by Lucy Freeman Sandler (1959) and Lilian M. C. Randall (1966) raised scholars' awareness of the English contribution to the development of northern European manuscript marginalia.⁶¹ The third volume of Otto Pächt's and Jonathan Alexander's illustrated catalog of manuscripts in the Bodleian Library (1973) made better known the rich English Gothic holdings of that institution.⁶² And, building on the work of James and others, Neil Ker (1941, 1964; 1961–2002) embarked on efforts to list all of the surviving books from medieval British libraries and to catalog previously uncataloged ones, “mapping” projects of enduring value for the study of the material.⁶³

Expansion and Diversification: 1980 – Present

With the early 1980s, the study of English Gothic manuscripts entered an exceptionally dynamic phase, so that by the end of that decade the material had moved from a peripheral place to a more prominent one in medievalists' fields of vision. Richard Marks's and Nigel Morgan's contribution (1981) to Braziller's series on manuscript illumination integrated observations concerning changes in book patronage and production into a lively account of the principal styles and artistic personalities of the period c.1200–1500.⁶⁴ But the first of several intellectual “events” that shaped all subsequent scholarship was the publication of the Gothic volumes in the landmark series, *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, edited by Jonathan Alexander. Intended as an update of Millar's surveys of five decades earlier, the volumes of the *Survey*, including Morgan's covering the earliest Gothic material (1982, 1988), Sandler's treating the period c.1285–1385 (1986), and Kathleen Scott's on the period c.1390–1490 (1996) make judicious use of varied evidence for patronage, ownership, localization, and provenance

as well as liturgical, textual, and stylistic evidence, offering detailed analyses of both well-known and unfamiliar manuscripts, new, more nuanced chronologies and manuscript groupings, and abundant fresh insights into the English Gothic corpus and its relation to English and European art more broadly.⁶⁵ Signal developments that Morgan and Sandler highlighted as influencing the design and content of illuminated books include the ecclesiastical, liturgical, and pastoral reforms of the thirteenth century and lay aspiration to clerical forms of spirituality and culture, changing patterns of patronage, and the shift from principally monastic to predominantly (though not exclusively) secular, urban book production.⁶⁶ Furthermore, on account of their generous illustration, the *Survey* volumes vaulted scholarship forward simply by making the artifacts *visible* – a feature easy to overlook in the present age of dramatically increased accessibility of manuscripts through digitization.

Along with Oxford, London emerges as a significant center of book production in the first and especially the second of Morgan's survey volumes. Moreover, it is to the latter metropolitan center that Sandler assigned production of the central manuscripts of the expanded Queen Mary group, including the psalter itself (fig. 11-1).⁶⁷ Early fourteenth-century books like the Taymouth and Neville of Hornby Hours, which Herbert (echoing Strutt) had valued "for the wealth, vigour, and expressiveness of [their] illustrations of folk-lore, popular legend (sacred and profane), and contemporary life," and which Millar had pronounced "rough," were highlighted by Sandler for their makers' deft treatment of pictorial narrative.⁶⁸ Morgan's numerous studies or facsimiles of saints' lives, Old Testament illustration, Marian themes in literature and art, and Apocalypse manuscripts, and Sandler's of illuminated psalters, breviaries, encyclopedias (fig. 3-3), and compendia, as well as her wide-ranging investigations of diagrams and marginal and scribal imagery, have enriched immeasurably our picture of the artistic, religious, and intellectual culture of later and late medieval England.⁶⁹

Developments from c.1970 in the study and conception of medieval oralities and literacies – including recognition of the importance of vernacular literacies in England's trilingual culture, and notions of "pragmatic literacy" and "devotional literacy" – had a significant impact on the scholarship on English Gothic manuscripts, as did the critical interventions of the "new art history."⁷⁰ Language and images, and the ideological "language of images" were issues central to the work of Michael Camille. Employing approaches grounded in post-structuralism, literary studies, folklore studies, and other currents of thought as they fit his subjects, Camille (1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1992) situated English and French manuscripts at the heart of several studies that transformed scholars' conception of the term "Gothic" itself.⁷¹ The Luttrell Psalter (fig. 15-3), whose marginal illumination program Cockerell and others had characterized as representing the East Anglian school in its "decadence," and which Millar (1932) famously pronounced the product of "the mind of a man who ... can hardly have been normal," was in turn the object of Camille's most sustained meditations on the "Englishness" of English manuscript art, and on "the status of visual evidence in

history” (1987, 1998).⁷² Equally significant for the study of English Gothic illumination was the multimedia *Age of Chivalry* exhibition, held in 1987 at London’s Royal Academy of Arts. The accompanying catalog edited by Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski features incisive thematic and historiographical essays and nearly 750 entries aimed at illuminating the place of English art and architecture of the period c.1200–1400 in their wider historical, political, religious, social, and artistic contexts.⁷³

Publications of the last three decades have built on these developments to offer new perspectives on the material. Peter Klein’s facsimile of the Douce Apocalypse (1983) (fig. 24-3), Suzanne Lewis’s erudite study of thirteenth-century Apocalypse manuscripts (1995), and Debra Hassig’s of the bestiary (1995) have elucidated the visual programs and the religious, social, and ideological nexus of these artifacts’ production and consumption.⁷⁴ Lewis’s monograph on the *Chronica Majora* (1987) (fig. 24-2) and Claire Donovan’s on the de Brailes Hours of c.1240 (1991), the earliest surviving English illuminated example of that genre, contribute much to our understanding of these manuscripts and their creators.⁷⁵ English Gothic manuscripts figure importantly in Mary Carruthers’s investigations of medieval theories of memory and mnemotechnic praxis (1990, 2008), studies that have enriched scholars’ understanding of the visual mechanisms and intellectual operations of medieval imagery generally.⁷⁶ Accounts by Michael A. Michael (1994, 1997) and Paul Binski (1995, 2004, 2014) examine illuminated manuscripts through the lens of the political, spiritual, intellectual, ethical, and esthetic values and aims of their élite patrons and viewers, religious and lay, as well as the aims of their makers.⁷⁷ Analysis from a variety of perspectives of English Gothic manuscript imagery, including monstrous imagery, underpins investigations of the roles of visual images in the expression, construction, and affirmation of notions of religious, cultural, and social alterity and exclusion.⁷⁸ Studies by Adelaide Bennett (1990), Anne Rudloff Stanton (2001, 2002), and others foreground the potential roles of laywomen as patrons and/or owners of intellectually challenging, complex, and sumptuous Gothic books.⁷⁹ Michael Kauffmann’s magisterial book (2003) sets the Gothic material in the broad context of English traditions of biblical illustration.⁸⁰ Kathryn A. Smith’s studies (1999, 2003, 2012) of illuminated bi- and trilingual books of hours suggest how these artifacts register and shaped lay religious, literary, social, and intellectual interests or aspirations, as well as the creativity of the books’ makers in realizing those interests or aspirations, positioning the manuscripts as platforms for a potentially transformative, image-enriched book-bound experience and for consideration of medieval notions of identity and the self.⁸¹ Nigel Morgan and Nicholas Rogers (2005) and others have made a case for Cambridge as an important locus of book production, especially from the years around 1300.⁸² Focusing respectively on richly illuminated manuscripts of spiritual instruction and on the development and operations of the feminine “owner portrait” in devotional books, Aden Kumler (2011) and Alexa Sand (2014) consider French and English manuscripts as part of a broad, Francophone religious, intellectual, and visual culture.⁸³

The last three decades have produced numerous important “mapping” projects and aids to the study of the material. These include François Avril’s and Patricia Stirnemann’s catalog of manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale de France that were produced in the British Isles or by insular artisans working on the Continent (1987); studies of English illuminators and the London book trade respectively by Michael (1993) and C. Paul Christianson (1990); the invaluable handbook of Anglo-Norman French texts and their manuscript witnesses by Ruth J. Dean with Maureen B.M. Boulton (1999); the authoritative essays on all aspects of English book production in the relevant volume of the *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* (2008); and Richard Pfaff’s magisterial study of the liturgy in medieval England (2009).⁸⁴ Interdisciplinary venues for scholarship established in the 1980s include the Harlaxton Medieval Symposium and its annual proceedings, the “brainchild” of art historian Pamela Tudor-Craig, and the journal *English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700*, launched in 1988–1989 by Peter Beal and Jeremy Griffiths.⁸⁵ The websites *The Medieval Bestiary* and *The Aberdeen Bestiary* are rich resources for the study of this manuscript type.⁸⁶ Recent exhibitions and their allied catalogs have furthered the study of manuscript illumination generally and English Gothic manuscripts specifically.⁸⁷

The last quarter century is marked by the discovery or rediscovery of notable English Gothic manuscripts. A leaf dating c.1250–1275 depicting apocryphal Infancy miracles of Jesus, last shown in the 1908 Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition, an early fourteenth-century genealogical roll, a book of hours dated 1328, and a striking early fourteenth-century drawing of John the Baptist enrich our picture of lay and monastic visual, religious, and readerly cultures.⁸⁸ But the “most important discovery of any English illuminated manuscript in living memory” is the spectacular Macclesfield Psalter, probably produced in early fourteenth-century Norwich and connected on stylistic, paleographical, and/or liturgical grounds to many of the most celebrated contemporary East Anglian manuscripts (e.g. fig. 24-1).⁸⁹ Entirely unknown until its appearance in the library of the Earl of Macclesfield at Shirburn Castle, Oxfordshire, the Macclesfield Psalter was purchased by the Fitzwilliam Museum in February 2005 with the aid of several grant-giving bodies and contributions from a public appeal. Some of these works will no doubt loom large in surveys of English Gothic illumination yet to be written.

Moving Forward

With interdisciplinary, contextual study of English Gothic illumination well established, what productive directions might new research take? In fact, some promising areas for future research already have been signaled in recent scholarship. One fast-developing subfield of inquiry is technical analysis of illuminated manuscripts and its integration with “traditional” art history. While such investigations already have contributed to our understanding of the materials,

techniques, patterns of artisanal collaboration, and processes of facture of early medieval and Romanesque manuscripts, there has been little research of this nature published on the Gothic material. The present phase of the *MINIARE project* (*Manuscript Illumination: Non-Invasive Analysis, Research and Expertise*), spearheaded by the Fitzwilliam Museum, is analyzing English manuscripts of the twelfth through fifteenth century held in Cambridge collections and is starting collaborative research on related material preserved in other institutions.⁹⁰ The fruits of the first phases of these investigations have been published in *Colour: The Art and Science of Illuminated Manuscripts*, the catalog and conference proceedings for the exhibition of the same title held at the Fitzwilliam in 2016, as well as in the online research and teaching resource, *ILLUMINATED: Manuscripts in the Making*.⁹¹ Of potential to broaden our picture of the links among manuscripts and other classes of artifact is the research achieved in conjunction with exhibitions of other genres and mediums, such as *Opus Anglicanum: Masterpieces of English Medieval Embroidery*, on view at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2016–2017.⁹²

Efforts to examine anew the concept of “Britishness” may offer new perspectives on what is “English” about English Gothic manuscript illumination. The inaugural installment of a recent three-volume survey series approaches the latter question by situating the English material in a larger history of *British* art and architecture of the period c.600–1600.⁹³ Nonetheless, as Jane Geddes notes in the book’s opening chapter, until the 1603 unification of the Crowns of England and Scotland, “the concept of Britain as a whole barely existed.”⁹⁴ Thus, like the idea of “Englishness,” the notion of “Britishness” has shifted and fluctuated significantly over time. A forthcoming study by Julian Luxford of drawings from the Anglo-Saxon period to the Reformation will consider works produced in England, Scotland, and Wales, and thus has the potential to highlight the relevance or irrelevance of modern political boundaries and notions of identity to the medieval material.

As do modern political and geographical boundaries, so, too, chronological boundaries often hinder rather than aid the study of our subject. The chronological parameters of this volume necessitated terminating coverage of English Gothic illumination with the early fourteenth-century material. As this chapter has shown, however, no two surveys of Gothic manuscripts specifically or English medieval art generally have the same terminus, with many ending, at the earliest, at a neat, round 1400 and others carrying the narrative into the sixteenth century – or, in the case of the *History of British Art* series, to 1600, that is, beyond the Dissolution of the Monasteries, traditionally considered the endpoint of the British Middle Ages. Similarly, but with respect to “beginnings” rather than “endings,” the relevant volume of the *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* considers developments over the period c.1100–1400, taking as its starting-point material produced during the period that art historians call “Romanesque.”⁹⁵ Given the centrality of the book, including the illuminated book, to the history of England specifically and the British Isles generally, it would be fruitful to look

beyond style-generated chronological boundaries to consider continuities and change over the *longue durée*, as Kauffmann has done for biblical illustration and as Marks and Michelle P. Brown have advocated in respect to English art and book arts more broadly.⁹⁶

Certainly, as scholars, we must of necessity be “grounded” in our particular “disciplinary home[s]” in respect to focus, training, and methodologies, as Richard K. Emmerson has aptly observed.⁹⁷ Yet we would do well to keep in mind that our labors contribute to the production of a larger cultural history of the periods and regions that we study, however we define them. Until relatively recently, investigations of the medieval English (or British) illuminated book too often were hampered by a kind of disciplinary balkanization, with literary scholars and art historians engaged in superficial conversation at best, and scholars of Latin, Old French, Anglo-Norman French, and Middle English literature often working as if in linguistic vacuums. We have not yet reached the point of full engagement across our fields and disciplines. Yet recent multi-author studies of some English Apocalypses demonstrate how rich the scholarship on illuminated manuscripts can be when undertaken collaboratively, and in a spirit of partnership.⁹⁸ By working together from within our own specializations while recognizing their limits, we may yet come to a more nuanced understanding of what is “specially English” about the fascinating illuminated manuscripts that are the objects of our inquiries.

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Notes

- 1 Boase, “Preface,” in Evans, *English Art 1307–1461*, p. v.
- 2 Cockerell, *Gorleston Psalter*, p. 1.
- 3 Munby, *Connoisseurs*; Watson, *Vandals*; Hindman et al., *Manuscript Illumination*; Braesel, *Buchmalerei*, pp. 197–271, 284–319, and 393–460.
- 4 Gough, *British Topography*, I, pp. 61–76; Connolly, *Maps of Matthew Paris*; Kupfer, *Art and Optics*.
- 5 Strutt, *Regal and ecclesiastical antiquities, Complete view*, and *Sports and pastimes*; Munby, *Connoisseurs*, pp. 28–31; Hindman et al., *Manuscript Illumination*, pp. 19–24; Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*, pp. 28–30; Braesel, *Buchmalerei*, pp. 301–318.
- 6 Shaw, *Illuminated Ornaments*, nos. XI–XIII; Hindman et al., *Manuscript Illumination*, pp. 109–116. For Douce’s bequest, see Bodleian Library, *Douce Legacy*. For the Ormesby Psalter (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 366), see now Law-Turner, *Ormesby Psalter*.
- 7 Westwood, *Illuminated Illustrations*, sections 3 and 24, n.p. For the Trinity Apocalypse (Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.16.2), see McKittrick et al., *Trinity Apocalypse*.

- 8 Hindman et al., *Manuscript Illumination*, p. 125.
- 9 Needham, “William Morris”; Phimister, “John Ruskin”; Hindman et al., *Manuscript Illumination*, pp. 169–175, 194–197.
- 10 Morris, “Some Notes on the Illuminated Books” (1894), in *The Ideal Book*, p. 12.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.; and Morris, “Some Thoughts on the Ornamented Manuscripts,” in *The Ideal Book*, p. 5.
- 13 Sandler, “Illuminated in the British Isles,” esp. pp. 181–182.
- 14 Pevsner, *Englishness of English Art*.
- 15 Marks, “Englishness of English Gothic Art?”
- 16 De Hamel, “Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts,” p. 186.
- 17 De Hamel, “Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts”; Panayotova, “*I Turned It into a Palace*.”
- 18 James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Fifty Manuscripts*; James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Second Series of Fifty Manuscripts*; Yates Thompson, *Illustrations from One Hundred Manuscripts*; Yates Thompson, *A Lecture on Some English Illuminated Manuscripts*; Panayotova, “*I Turned It into a Palace*.”
- 19 Ward and Herbert, *Catalogue of Romances*; Warner and Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts*.
- 20 Pfaff, *Montague Rhodes James*; Dennison, ed., *Legacy of M.R. James*; Cruse, “Montague Rhodes James.”
- 21 Delaissé, “Towards a History of the Medieval Book.”
- 22 Wogan-Browne, “General Introduction,” pp. 1–13.
- 23 James, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of St. John’s College*, no. 262, pp. 302–310, at p. 310.
- 24 Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 2*, no. 8, pp. 18–19; Kauffmann, *Biblical Imagery*, pp. 226, 231, 235, 257; Binski and Panayotova, ed., *Cambridge Illuminations*, no. 76, pp. 184–185, quoting p. 185.
- 25 Morgan, *Early Gothic Manuscripts (I)*, p. 9.
- 26 Cockerell, *Work of W. de Brailes*; Swarzenski, “Unknown Bible Pictures.”
- 27 Pollard, “William de Brailes”; Pollard, “University and the Book Trade.”
- 28 Donovan, *De Brailes Hours*, pp. 9–30, 206–207.
- 29 Madden, ed., *Matthæi Parisiensis*. For the *Historia Anglorum* (London, BL MS Royal 14 C. VII), see Morgan, *Early Gothic Manuscripts (I)*, no. 92, pp. 142–144.
- 30 James, *Estoire de Seint Ædward le Rei* and “Drawings of Matthew Paris.”
- 31 Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*.
- 32 Morgan, *Early Gothic Manuscripts (I)*, pp. 30–31.
- 33 Coxe, *Apocalypse of St. John the Divine*; Delisle and Meyer, *L’Apocalypse en français*; James, *Trinity College Apocalypse*, *Apocalypse in Latin and French*, and *Apocalypse in Latin MS 10*.
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From Institutional to Private and from Latin to the Vernacular: German Manuscript Illumination in the Thirteenth Century

Michael Curschmann

To begin with a clarification of terms, “German” refers to the German-speaking regions and localities within the Holy Roman Empire which, incidentally, experienced a transition among the ruling dynasties, Hohenstaufen (1254) to Hapsburg (1273), around the middle of the century. “Institutional” refers to the church and its institutions as the traditional producers and owners of books through their monopoly on religious theory and practice as well as learning. The Middle Ages did not develop a concept of privacy in the modern sense; “private” as used here means non-institutional, individual ownership by religious or lay persons of books that they may use (and share) at their own discretion – a momentous shift in the culture of the book in general. Finally, this should be mentioned at the outset as broadly constitutive of developments in the thirteenth century: the practice of illuminating selected texts and manuscripts advanced along two different paths that correspond to the relative status of Latin and the vernacular (German) and rarely intersect. Latin (mostly religious) texts command higher expenditure and artistic quality, especially the deluxe editions that glitter with the gold that backgrounds colorful tempera compositions. The decoration of a comparatively small but growing number of

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vernacular (mostly secular) works is usually much more modest, although the planners are engaged frequently in original lay-out experiments.¹

Scholarly Foundations

From Salzburg in the southeast to Cologne in the northwest and from Constance in the southwest to Magdeburg in the northeast, the production of illuminated books flourished in a large number of monastic scriptoria, cathedral workshops and, increasingly, secular workshops in the cities. Given the territorial plurality within the empire, there is no one dominant center, and that accounts for the variety of “schools” as well as the direction scholarship has taken over the past 120 years. Two foundational studies serve as points of initial reference to this day. They were published more than one generation apart and opened up different major sectors of this large and diverse landscape. In 1897, Arthur Haseloff published an expanded version of his doctoral dissertation that studied 16 deluxe psalters and one gradual in an exceedingly detailed comparative investigation of their technique, iconography, and style to map out the production of what he labeled the Thuringian-Saxon school, i.e. the north and northeast (Saxony, Saxon-Anhalt, and Thuringia).² The result was a grouping in three series (still known as “Haseloff Reihen”), every one of which corresponds to one of the first three quarters of the century (pp. 43–44, pp. 213–214). Decline in quality is offset by freer, more animated composition. Adolph Goldschmidt was a mentor, but the only even remotely helpful model Haseloff could draw on was Wilhelm Vöge’s study of the much earlier “Reichenau School” (1891).³

Haseloff failed to associate any of his manuscripts with specific workshops, but the following years brought forays into the production of more clearly recognizable centers, e.g. Johannes Damrich on Augsburg or Albert Boeckler on Regensburg.⁴ Nevertheless, almost four decades went by before the next large-scale summary appeared, Hanns Swarzenski’s landmark investigation of the provinces along three major rivers – Rhine, Main, and Danube – published in 1936.⁵ Swarzenski’s more catalog-like survey with copious photographic documentation described 95 complete or fragmented manuscripts and provided introductions to the activity in six different regions beginning with the lower Rhine area (Cologne). He left out the north, omitted all vernacular manuscripts, and generally restricted himself to works that had not yet adopted the French “*dolce stile nuovo*” or seemed too beholden still to the twelfth century. A special case was the monastery of Weingarten in the southwest, to which the emigrant Swarzenski later devoted a major monograph.⁶ Swarzenski quoted as still valid Haseloff’s dictum that, for decades to come, the most important task of scholarship would remain to establish place and date of origin of the many surviving objects.⁷ But Swarzenski initiated an important methodological shift with his extensive introductions, pinpointing centers of origin and recognizing the fundamental changes in the production of art and their sociological foundations.

Swarzenski notwithstanding and while additional manuscripts were brought into the corpus, locating, dating, and sorting into networks with the help of ever more refined stylistic and iconographic analyses have remained the predominant tendencies among scholars in the field. In spite of new discoveries, Haseloff's classification and its methodological foundations are said to have survived the test of time by and large,⁸ and set the standard and the course for the future. Although much has been done in the past 50 years or so to connect the dots, there is still no general, monographic overview.⁹ In fact, the occasional complaint voiced in the past that the forest tends to disappear behind the trees is still valid today. Creative energies have been invested mostly in commentary for numerous exhibition catalogs,¹⁰ the various facsimile editions of major works, library catalogs, festschriften and colloquia.

Following Swarzenski, the work of two scholars has further shaped our understanding of activity in large parts of the south: Bavaria and Austria (Gerhard Schmidt) and the southwest (Ellen J. Beer).¹¹ Somewhat more parochially, Helmut Engelhart and others have brought Franconia, especially Würzburg, into view.¹² The northeast, long recognized as the most productive and cohesive province, where questions of location had been left open by Haseloff, has been revisited repeatedly by Renate Kroos and more recently by Harald Wolter-von dem Knesebeck and Felix Heinzer, among others.¹³ The broader view that transcends manuscripts and their origins is supported by the concept of "Kunstlandschaft" (the visual culture of a whole region), a term used frequently by both Schmidt and Beer.¹⁴ It includes all arts in a holistic view of mainly stylistic features. Incidentally, although less than a handful of thirteenth-century manuscripts conformed to his concept of Gothic, the first to include manuscripts in a systematic review of all types of painting (except glass) in all German-speaking regions had been Alfred Stange, in the first volume of his monumental history of German Gothic painting.¹⁵

In the wake of Swarzenski's observation of rapid changes in the conditions of production a general consensus has evolved: Major centers that had been active during the preceding period (Regensburg/Salzburg, Cologne, Helmarshausen/Hildesheim, etc.) continued to flourish, but that no longer sufficed to meet the rapidly growing demand that sprang, in part, from the general need of the new mendicant orders and the newly arrived Cistercians for liturgical service books. New scriptoria established themselves, often employing lay painters, who gradually replaced monastic artists as chief purveyors of their craft,¹⁶ identifiable by the occasional "portrait," but mostly through indirect evidence such as technique, style, or the inability to cope with Latin. They sometimes doubled as fresco painters, were hired by clerical institutions, and often traveled as well. Secular workshops opened in the cities. In the meantime, the laity had become customers as well. Rather suddenly, illuminators were in great demand as decorators of psalter books, including psalter elements embedded in associated items: a calendar, canticles, a litany, the Office of the Dead, and individual prayers.¹⁷ All but one of Haseloff's and practically half of Swarzenski's examples belong

to that genre. As observed already by Haseloff, this curtailed the production of illuminated liturgica, but the general importance of this transition to private ownership has only recently been acknowledged by Wolter-von dem Knesebeck as an “epochal turn” and major “caesura in the culture of the book.”¹⁸ Religious literature in Latin takes the lead, but secular literature in the vernacular is not far behind.

“Zackenstil” and Byzantine and French Influence

The only topic of discussion that runs prominently through all scholarship of the period is a stylistic feature that came to be called “Zackenstil” (jagged style). It is indeed a major characteristic of German manuscript illumination from the beginning of the period almost to its end and was adopted concurrently in the monumental arts as well. Strictly speaking, it only concerns the depiction of garments in figural compositions or other textiles the figures may surround themselves with, e.g. curtains. Hence the occasional description as “vestment rhetoric.”¹⁹ Nevertheless, the term took hold as a catch-all designation to identify the most prominent German contribution to stylistic developments during this period. Unlike the more sedate, older and more western “Muldenfaltensstil,”²⁰ where the folds of garments descend vertically in straight lines, forming shallow troughs or depressions (“Mulden”), the “Zackenstil” creates folds and outlines in sharp-edged zigzag patterns and occasional spikes that defy the laws of gravity (fig. 25-1). The effect has also been likened to “sheet metal”²¹ thrown around the body, as if leading a life of its own. As such it may detract from the growing emphasis on the body’s corporality. Haseloff was the first to describe this phenomenon, using adjectives like “zackig” (jagged, ragged), and he attributed its creation to artists in Lower Saxony responding to Byzantine works of art: “an occidental elaboration that could almost be called a caricature.” To him, its further development showed “no transition to Gothic but decay or mannerism,” the “death throes of the Romanesque style.”²² The current view is more neutral: the “Zackenstil” was created by painters who worked on the earliest deluxe psalters, especially the so-called *Landgrafenpsalter* (“Landgrave Psalters,” see below), as a novelty to enliven their work outside the liturgical tradition, and was continued as an idiom that was easy to learn and to be “vulgarized”²³

In any event, the following decades saw this manner spread from the northeast into the other regions, arriving last in always more conservative Bavaria and Austria. It proved as influential as it was adaptable, and flourished in the monumental arts as well: Examples abound and range from southeastern fresco painting to Thuringian stained glass. In that broader context, Liselotte Saurma-Jeltsch, pointing out that the “Zackenstil” was reserved generally for religious subjects, has looked beyond the notion of some kind of automatism at work here and emphasized the factors of context and choice, e.g. in the west choir windows of Naumburg Cathedral, where that style may be used as “rhetorische Form des



FIGURE 25-1 *Landgrafensalter* (Thuringia, c.1210–1213), Württembergische Landesbibliothek, HB II 24, fol. 109v: Christ's Ascension, facing Psalm 101, the beginning of part 3. A good example of early "Zackenstil" (note that the angularity of Christ's vestment extends even to the rocky pedestal below).

Erhabenen” (rhetorical form of the sublime).²⁴ Gerhard Schmidt and Ellen Beer as well as others have documented the swing of this convention through the southeast and southwest.²⁵ Here as elsewhere, regional variants continued to develop until this style merged with, or was superseded by, the *dolce stile nuovo*. That style was imported from France, to the German southwest and west as well as, by the local Cistercians, to Regensburg and its artistic environs. Schmidt saw this “Gotisierung” as a belated development, initiated by the “Zackenstil” itself,²⁶ resulting in “a swift and unproblematic” transition to the “melodious linearism of the time around 1300.”²⁷ Ellen Beer, who followed developments in the southwest, repeatedly noted “sweet expressions” and garments that fall in linearly tight outlines and close to the body they help mold.²⁸ Further down the Rhine direct influence from the Meuse region helped create a new western style in Cologne.²⁹

Haseloff saw Byzantine forms behind the early “Zackenstil,” and subsequent scholarship has detected (mostly stylistic) Byzantine influence in many other areas. The question usually arises: was there direct contact? Even in the most conspicuous and most controversially debated case, the so-called *Wolfenbüttler Musterbuch*,³⁰ the answer is ambiguous. This model book, a fascicle drawn up c.1230 that survives as part of another manuscript, transmits evangelist figures and others as pen drawings with wash that are copies of eastern monumental art, but rendered in “Zackenstil.” These figures appear to have exerted direct influence on a whole group of liturgical books like the so-called *Goslar Evangeliary*,³¹ psalters, and fresco paintings in Lower Saxony, suggesting something like a second wave of direct Byzantine inspiration. Hugo Buchthal wanted to connect these folios with other model books in the south and southwest (see below), but Wolter-von dem Knesebeck has opted for a solution that exemplifies the complexity of the issues involved: an itinerant artist who was trained in Saxony and translated what he saw in Venice and elsewhere into that idiom.³² For the most part though Byzantine forms were absorbed quickly into the general repertoire and distributed through new workshop connections brought about by traveling masters (or traveling books). That is how one of the most original and distinguished codices of the period, the *Berthold Sacramentary*, produced at Weingarten Abbey c.1209, came by the non-figural part of its decoration in “channel style,” a manner that had already absorbed Byzantine inspirations.³³

German manuscript painting was slow to absorb the western style, while the monumental arts, notably architecture and sculpture, but also glass and panel painting, opened themselves readily, if sporadically to new French forms and sensibilities. Albert Boeckler, whose work helped define “Gothic” in the German popular imagination, articulated in his own way what Haseloff before and Schmidt after him had concluded: “adoption of Gothic forms and types” came late and tentatively, because it seemed difficult to “shed the edgy [...] styling of folds that had dominated Late Romanesque art in Germany.”³⁴ The terminology speaks for itself. In 1979, Hans Belting published an influential article with a nuanced analysis of the situation around 1200 and beyond.³⁵ Among others, it yielded the term “alternative Gotik.” “Sächsische Alternativgotik” is what Daniel Hess has

called it more recently in a brief survey of both the debate and the facts.³⁶ There clearly is a case for acknowledging a “German way” that varied somewhat from region to region and was subject to “outside” influences (direct or indirect), i.e. from France in the west and southwest or Italy in Bavaria. Perhaps the neutral term “modern” might also be useful.³⁷ This form of medieval modernism even includes sophisticated ways of recreating features of the past (see below), and there is of course continuity in mundane matters: for instance, the scribes of the *Golden Hildesheim Calendarium*³⁸ copied some of the calendar data from the twelfth-century *Stammheim Missal*.

Elites and Their Books: Psalter and Evangeliary

Special scholarly attention has been devoted to two psalters that stand near the beginning of the century with copious pictorial and decorative illuminations meant to serve both private and representative purposes in a courtly setting. Scholarship since Joan A. Holladay’s examination of this court’s political and cultural outreach³⁹ has added considerable breadth and depth. Both codices are associated with the reign of the landgrave Hermann I of Thuringia (1190–1217), but targeted attention to signs of female ownership by Renate Kroos and others has shown that the older of the two was commissioned by Hermann’s second wife, Sophia of Wittelsbach (1170–1238) for her own use.⁴⁰ It is usually referred to as *Elisabethpsalter*, after her (future) daughter-in-law, Elisabeth of Hungary, and Sophia may actually have passed it on to Elisabeth when she herself entered a nunnery, in 1221. According to Harald Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, this codex was composed between 1201 and 1208, and the second, the landgrave psalters, followed a few years later, the work of lay painters, but in the same monastic environment.⁴¹

Such books now follow the precept of deluxe liturgical service books, with full-page miniatures on parchment, often divided into two registers, and smaller ones for the calendar or the litany, executed in tempera on a background of burnished gold in evocation of the divine, and application of gold and silver elsewhere. In singular richness, the *Elisabethpsalter* displays such decoration in all of its parts, and it is the first German psalter to include a pictorial preamble or prooemium between the calendar and the psalter proper: a cycle of 10 full-page miniatures recounting the life of Christ from birth to Pentecost. The *Landgrafenpsalter*, commissioned perhaps by Hermann himself, is somewhat truncated at the beginning but very likely to have contained a picture preamble as well. In other respects it is more modest than its predecessor, but with the ruler “portraits” at the end of the Litany it stresses the aspect of privacy while indicating just how status conscious and representative such a “private” book was meant to be: on the pages following the “portraits” of the owners, the landgrave and his wife, appear the king and queen of Hungary, their prospective in-laws, and the king and queen of Bohemia (fol. 174v/175r–175v/176r). The three ladies hold open psalters from which they pray!

Hermann's court was by far the most active culturally among German courts of the time. The count's sponsorship of vernacular literature has always been known, and, following Renate Kroos's demand for more historical context,⁴² extensive commentary for the subsequent facsimile edition of the *Landgrafenpsalter* by Kroos, Felix Heinzer, and others has done a great deal in that regard. More recently, the unique confluence of art, literature, and social attitudes has come into sharper focus: courtly motifs (hunt, combat, etc.) appear in decorated initials,⁴³ the pictorial ensemble of high-ranking nobility surmounting the litany and eschatological motifs elsewhere in the *Landgrafenpsalter* may be seen as direct precursors of the famous sculpture program in the west choir of Naumburg Cathedral.⁴⁴ Correcting Goldschmidt and Haseloff, Alfred Büchler had demonstrated programmatic intent in the placement of individual pictures in both psalters, although his interpretation has not gone unchallenged.⁴⁵ Further investigation of the iconography, especially in the more complex *Elisabethpsalter*, by Katharina Mertens Fleury has revealed an indirect but strong connection with the major romance composed, at least in part, at this court, Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*. A pervasive common denominator is the concept of *compassio*, ethical and affective compassion, developed in the calendar and psalter portions and, as participatory piety, addressing concerns of the court (economic, political, spiritual).⁴⁶ In that context it seems worth mentioning that the introduction of the "Zackenstil" by secular artists parallels the tendency of courtly romance to favor the outward appearance, splendid attire, over the human body itself as fashioning beauty and worth in society.

While secular elites, in addition to personal satisfaction and indemnification, sought regional visibility through such projects, the clerical elite would aim naturally for self-referential gratification through liturgical codices. The most prominent example is the *Mainz Evangeliary*, designed in the west (central Rhine region) around 1250.⁴⁷ While the one generation older (and northern) *Goslar Evangeliary* mentioned above or the splendid graduals designed elsewhere for (and by?) cloistered women at the end of the century⁴⁸ followed trends in their immediate environment, the planners of the *Mainz Evangeliary* looked deliberately in the other direction. Scores of miniatures in tempera on gold present close to 50 scenes in various formats: on eight full pages, some halved or quartered; on 14 half pages and 18 smaller ones fit into the column of text, grouped occasionally so as to form a whole framed column alongside the text. But the most distinctive feature of the codex is that the writing is in gold throughout, evoking Ottonian prototypes. In the words of Carl Nordenfalk in his review of Swarzenski, the *Mainz Evangeliary* is "the last Codex aureus of German manuscript painting."⁴⁹ Here as elsewhere, the issue of a facsimile edition has recently reinvigorated scholarship, based in this instance on archival research by Sigrid von der Gönna who established the cathedral of Mainz as the original home of the codex.⁵⁰ It was meant for its treasury and exclusive use on the altar in the west choir of the cathedral, and the clerics wanted a book that celebrated them as the guardians

of a long and authoritative tradition. Hence, for instance, the frequent appearance of the apostles and their relationship to Christ as prototypes of the clergy.⁵¹ Hence a picture program (the century's "most complete New Testament cycle on German soil"), "conceived as a sum of all traditions of gospel illustration."⁵² The example reproduced here (fig. 25-2) is in turn a summary celebration of the overall Christological program. The painter, in all probability a traveling layman, was an innovative master who had absorbed the "Zackenstil" into a style of his own whose influence is felt widely.⁵³ His work for the clerical elite at Mainz embraces an elitism that seeks self-affirmation of a small, closed group, almost a rearguard action, historically speaking.

Following on the work done on the landgrave psalters, Wolter-von dem Knesebeck's analysis of the picture program of the *Mainz Evangeliary* stands almost alone, along with Adam Stead's recent, similarly circumspect elucidation of "monastic image-making" in the earlier Cologne evangelistary,⁵⁴ as an example of where scholarship needs to go in future.

The church and monastic institutions continued to adhere to their near monopoly in the illumination of Latin library books in theology, hagiography, historiography, etc. The extensive decoration accorded the secular *Chronica regia coloniensis* in a manuscript from Aachen produced around 1240 is almost unique for the thirteenth century (Renate Kroos).⁵⁵

Devotion and Privacy

It was in the devotional genres and secular narrative in the vernacular that private interest asserted itself. The language of the psalter, illuminated or not, remained Latin, and yet, we know from the *Law of the Saxons* (*Sachsenspiegel*), compiled by Eike von Repgow around 1230, that women habitually "read" the psalter, as the first among other books.⁵⁶ Pictures would have provided aid as "Andachtsbilder," and in general, *lesen* here no doubt reflects, as it often does, a holistic notion of reading that encompasses all available tools. Still, what most clearly indicates the path to the future were directives and additional prayers in German. For instance, the sumptuous *Arenberg Psalter*, from the same Lower Saxony manuscript "family," as the landgrave psalters, shows short directions in German before almost every psalm, e.g. to pray this one, *so din vrunt ouer mer veret* ("when your beloved leaves for the crusade").⁵⁷ It is surely no coincidence that those kinds of insertions, covering the psalter proper as well as the canticles, are found predominantly in illuminated copies.⁵⁸ Pictures and the vernacular work hand in hand to "privatize" this kind of book. A Rhenish Psalter from the middle of the century includes German prayers as well as catechetical material and *tituli* for its nine full-page miniatures.⁵⁹ As Felix Heinzer has said, the vernacular compensates for the loss of personal intimacy through the advent of Christological picture programs.⁶⁰

Parallel to the ascent of the psalter with pictures, private prayer books continue a tradition begun in the preceding century. The earliest, the *Lilienfelder*

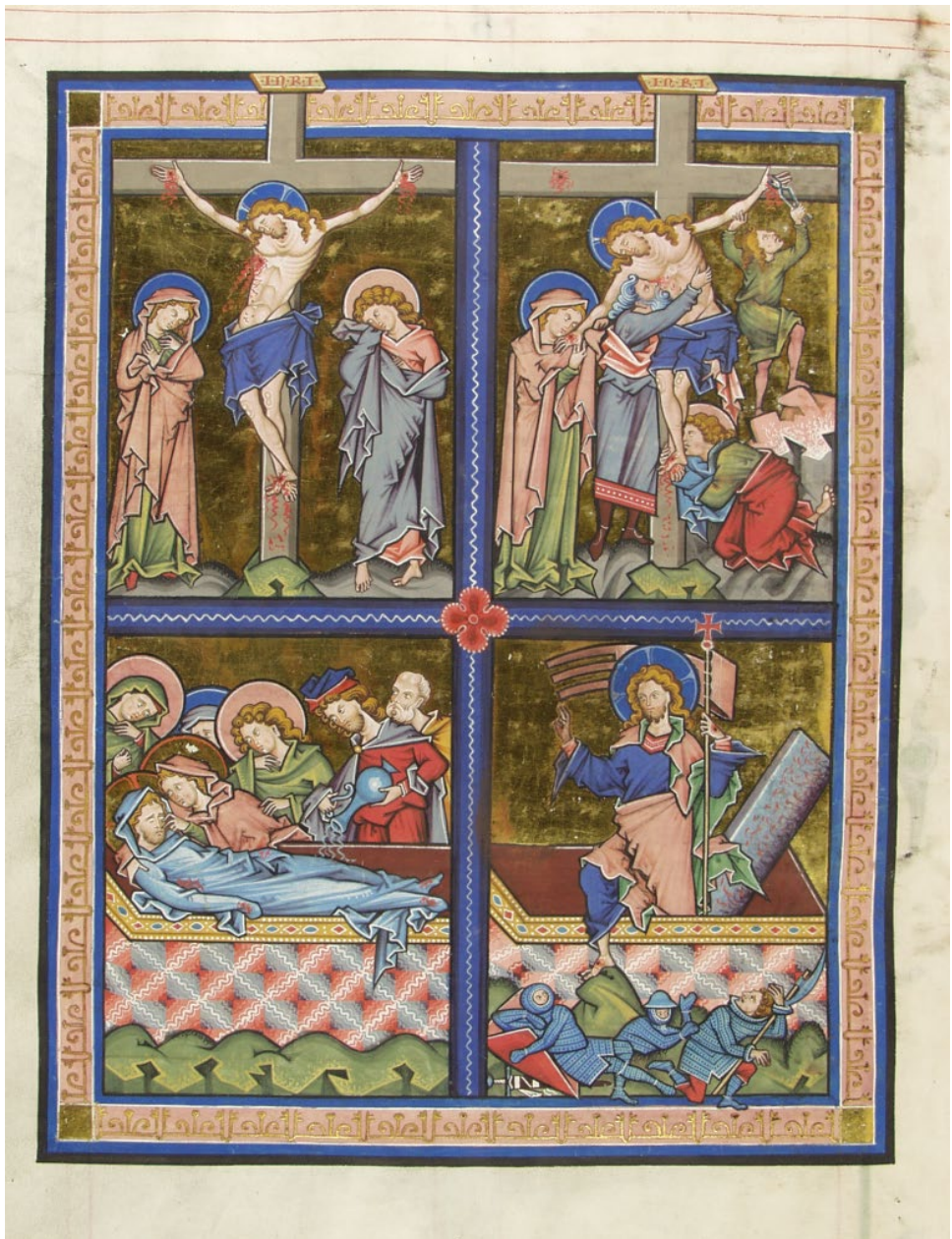


FIGURE 25-2 *Mainzer Evangeliar* (Mainz? c.1260), Aschaffenburg, Hofbibliothek MS 13, fol. 40v: at the conclusion of the gospel of Matthew: Christ's Crucifixion, descent from the cross, entombment, and resurrection. The pseudokufic ornament on the frame is in gold, as are the four cornerstones. Note that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus on the right in the entombment follow a different model from the one used in the descent.

Andachtsbuch (devotional book) was made in lower Austria, perhaps for a female member of the reigning Babenberg family.⁶¹ It aims at optimal coordination of pictures and language(s) in prayer: After a few introductory picture pages, dozens of relatively simple full-page, framed pen drawings, sometimes with color wash on colored background, still in the manner of the twelfth century, are arranged so that every opening has on the left (verso) a scene from the life of Christ identified by a Latin *titulus* and explained below in fairly extensive German verse, faced on the right (recto) by a Latin prayer in prose that uses the picture as its starting point.⁶² The dynamics of this relationship have been surveyed most recently by Norbert Ott.⁶³ 100 years later (c.1310), a small, almost entirely German prayerbook for a Dominican nun was accorded the privilege of 18 full-page tempera paintings on gold (fig. 25-3).⁶⁴ Just past the threshold of the next century, they demonstrate how far the vernacular has advanced in this genre. The Bavaro-Austrian workshop context in which the book was produced indicates the same degree of acceptance: as reconstructed by Gerhard Schmidt, while it gradually absorbed the new western style, this network illuminated, in addition, such diverse manuscripts as a missal, a Bible, two psalters, a copy of Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica* – and the new vernacular *World Chronicle* by Rudolf von Ems (see below) as well as a collection of lyric poetry.⁶⁵

An early attempt at modifying the format of the psalter for more specific devotional purposes, including the vernacular, is the so-called *Cursus Sanctae Mariae* (after its main text) of c.1215. Its unusually extensive pictorial preamble of 32 full-page and, with one exception, three-tiered illuminations records biblical history from Lucifer's fall to the *Majestas Domini*, accompanied by numerous German inscriptions. These pictures were meant to generate a vernacular narrative that would link them with the subsequent liturgical and paraliturgical texts.⁶⁶ As for the pictures themselves, according to Michael Stolz, who has recently contested Meta Harrsen's earlier assignment of the manuscript to a Bohemian scriptorium, numerous entries in calendar and litany as well as stylistic affinities of the pictures suggest Franconia, most likely Bamberg.⁶⁷ The female recipient may have belonged to the Andechs-Meranien family to whom, it could be added, Elisabeth of Thuringia belonged as well. Arrangement and stylistic features of what Stolz has dubbed "the experiment of a vernacular picture bible" point in two directions: backwards to a twelfth-century Bamberg workshop and forward to the contemporary illumination of vernacular literature.

Illuminating the Vernacular

In the twelfth century, the sporadic illumination of German-language texts had taken the form of simple, unframed pen drawings set down, along with the text, directly on the parchment. After 1200, variations of this comparatively cheap way of providing visual clarification or contrast were used mainly for didactic purposes, not unlike the procedure followed in scientific compilations, model books or, later,



FIGURE 25-3 German prayer book for a Dominican nun (Salzburg? c.1310), Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm. 101, fol. 14v: Last Supper. The small full-page picture (10.7 × 8.5) faces the beginning (15r) of a group of texts for the Mass on Corpus Christi.

the new genre of the *Biblia pauperum* in places in the south, where twelfth-century techniques survived well into the thirteenth.⁶⁸ Courty narrative, on the other hand, was accorded more expensive treatment, although, at least until end of the period, all of the few surviving examples are experiments in one way or another,⁶⁹ even

the deluxe edition of Heinrich von Veldeke's German version of the French *Encid* (pen drawings on tempera executed in Regensburg or environs, 1220/1230).⁷⁰ It is the first surviving German book to employ the layout known from liturgical and psalter manuscripts, i.e. full-page miniatures, divided in this case, into two registers. On one page at least, specific iconographic borrowing from a liturgical source is evident as well;⁷¹ the workshop must have had dual responsibilities. That included developing a new iconography or adapting established formulas for such new texts and their new audience. The evolving text–picture relationship is fundamentally different from that in most liturgical or devotional manuscripts: it requires ad hoc artistic responses instead of the secondary pairing of canonical texts with representations of the contents of the faith from an existing repertoire.

Whereas the study of splendid liturgica and high-end books of devotion has been the domain of (almost exclusively German-speaking) art historians, these vernacular manuscripts and their decor attracted diverse groups from the beginning. Initially they were librarians and literary scholars like the brothers Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm,⁷² and nineteenth-century interest in the pictures tended to be antiquarian. The first art historian to take notice was Franz Kugler in the 1830s.⁷³ Before the turn of the century, the art historian Adolf von Oechelhäuser had thoroughly studied the manuscript filiation of the large picture cycle that accompanies the *Welsche Gast* (see below). For quite some time afterwards, the central figure in studies and publications of such cycles was a legal historian, Karl von Amira, whose interest in the iconography and layout created for the illustrated manuscripts of Eike's *Sachsenspiegel* lead to first facsimile editions accompanied by influential commentary.⁷⁴ While Swarzenski had declined to treat vernacular manuscripts, and Albert Boeckler did publish and discuss the picture pages of the *Encid* manuscript,⁷⁵ a growing succession of literary scholars recognized the importance of those “illustrations” for their own subject. This preoccupation culminated in Wolfgang Stammer's surveys of the whole medieval period and all media, and special summaries for art historians.⁷⁶ Hella Frühmorgen-Voss followed with incisive analyses of the transmission of individual works and the interplay of text and picture.⁷⁷ She also turned to the relationship between literary traditions (the matter of Tristan, in this case) and their representations in other media, signaling a shift that was both methodological and substantive. In the following decades, examinations of individual manuscripts have been conducted in the larger context of the other media and word–image relationships in general⁷⁸ or in exploration of the post-1300 tradition and reworkings of those early cycles.⁷⁹ At the same time, the interaction between text and picture in their immediate manuscript proximity has come into sharper focus,⁸⁰ as have context, performance, and the relative independence of the artists. They bring their own “language” and possibly prior knowledge of the subject to bear on the text; they tend to isolate or emphasize what is of general value to the viewers as affirmation of the standards of their social environment and obligation, and what will generate discussion among them, following the audio-visual performance of the whole.

The latter is particularly true of the most original experiment with the illumination of a major vernacular poem, and the first in this century: Thomasin von Zerclaere's didactic verse tract *Der welsche Gast* ("The Stranger from Italy"). Split pages – text on one side and pictures on the other – are one of the hallmarks of early and typically German layout experimentation. One such center was located in the north and seems to have worked with Latin texts as well.⁸¹ Another must have been active somewhere in the southeast, illustrating Thomasin's work, composed in 1215/1216 as an address to the German nobility with moral exhortations and catalogs of do's and don'ts. To get his points across Thomasin himself or a contemporary designer divided every page of the original manuscript in half to accompany the text with simple but expressive colored pen sketches.⁸² They are indeed "illustrations," designed to amplify points in the adjacent text with (incomplete) diagrammatic explications to stimulate memory⁸³ or human characters (real or allegorical) who stage them in scenes that personalize the diagrammatic approach.⁸⁴ On fol. 68r (fig. 25-4), Thomasin's words deplore the compromised status of a man who allows a woman to dominate him, while the four figures on the right, using body language and speech scrolls, act out an example. The viewer can take it from there: Conversation should follow. Until recently, the contribution of those sketches has usually been assessed on the basis of such isolated examples or sections.⁸⁵ Vera Jerjen, using the multivalent notion of diagrammatic representation in literature and the arts, has demonstrated for the whole length of the poem (c.14 800 lines) just how the text and the picture program are intertwined in a dynamic relationship of oral presentation and visualization.⁸⁶

Historiography is the subject whose decor finally meets the standard of the most expensive Latin codices, the end-point of a process of gradual approximation that Norbert Ott diagnosed some time ago.⁸⁷ The St. Gallen manuscript combines the relatively new (c.1250) World Chronicle (*Weltchronik*) in verse by Rudolf von Ems with *Karl* (Charlemagne), an epic reworking in verse of the Roland/Charlemagne legend (c.1230) by the poet known only as "Stricker," in a large-format deluxe manuscript that has been dated to 1300 or a little later (fig. 25-5). With its 58 miniatures it stands at the threshold of the new, "Gothic" century as a product of the "Kunstlandschaft" in the southwest: Strassbourg, Freiburg, Constance, and Zurich.⁸⁸ A connection with the workshop that produced beautiful liturgical books like the Katharinenthal gradual of 1312 is likely. Here "all fundamentals for the flowering of the 'sweet new style' in the Lake Constance region are present," as Ellen Beer has put it.⁸⁹ Another way, equally important for this genre, in which the makers of this book look toward France is the layout: no more separate picture pages as they grace the aforementioned *Encid* and a number of German romance manuscripts. Rather, pictures inserted into the text, even if they are quite large (the dominant form in this case is the $\frac{3}{4}$ page in two registers). Rudolf von Ems had been connected to the court of his namesake, the Emperor Rudolf IV (d. 1254), and this is an appropriately representative copy, designed for persons of high rank.

D vlten vn gar ir gebot.
 D er machet avz im selben spot.
 D er alle wege ligen muoz.
 V nder ames weibes fuoz.
 Wi wil dann gebierender.
 D er dvrch am weip har so fer.
 S einn muot nider lazz en.
 J ch wil immer sein verwarzen-
 ob ich sein genozzen gebe.
 J ch en sprich daz mir geschehe
 daz ich in für herren welle han.
 D az wut von mir nimmer getan.

V habt ir vernomen wol.
 D az man sich behyren sol.
 V e vntzgent. ich han gefant
 A vch. wi vntz vntzrichant.
 Z allen ceiten mynen chan-

H ch sant wa von ain ieglich man.
 J nsemem erden sol beleben.
 inne für so wil ich schereiben.
 von der tygent vnd von der stete.
 J ch wil ain weile di vntzete.
 R ven lazzen ob si wil.
 J ch hier von ir zefagen vil.
 D es ich ir nuht gefagen mach.
 V ns wert nuht so lange der rath.
 D az ich sager daz ich sagen w solde.
 o b manf icht mere vernemen wolde.
 J ch sprach. daz vntzete sei.
 A llen vntzgenten bei.
 N v solt ir auch wizzen wol.
 D az der stete wofen sol.



FIGURE 25-4 Thomasin von Zerclaere, *Der welsche Gast* (The Stranger from Italy) (Austria, shortly after 1250), Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cpg 389, fol. 68r: the lady at the top points her bare foot at the kneeling gentleman and commands: "scratch there, quickly," and he responds: "with pleasure, my lady." The first of the two voyeurs below asks: "should he be my companion?" "God forbid" replies his companion.



FIGURE 25-5 The Stricker, *Karl* (Charlemagne) (Zürich?, c.1300), St. Gallen, Kantonsbibliothek, MS Vad. 302, fol. 50v: (upper register) Roland (face in anguish and under attack from both sides) blows his horn Olifant for the third time to summon Charlemagne's army. Next to him Bishop Turpin; (lower register) left: Roland helps Turpin shed his armor, right: A Saracen tries to rob the seated Roland who slays him with Olifant, which breaks.

Notes

- 1 For related essays in this volume, see also Chapter 20 by Cohen, Chapter 23 by Hedeman, Chapter 24 by Smith, and Chapter 34 by Hamburger.
- 2 Haseloff, *Eine thüringisch-sächsische Malerschule*.
- 3 Vöge, *Eine deutsche Malerschule*. See in general Kuder and Stork, eds., *Arthur Haseloff*. It includes, among other contributions, Haseloff's letters to Goldschmidt.
- 4 Damrich, "Die Augsburger Buchmalerei im Zeitalter der Hohenstaufen," pp. 108–109, 118–121, 131–135. Boeckler, *Die Regensburg-Prüfeningener Buchmalerei*.
- 5 Swarzenski, *Die lateinischen illuminierten Handschriften*.
- 6 Swarzenski, *The Berthold Missal*.
- 7 Haseloff, p. 3; Swarzenski, p. 1.
- 8 See the review article by Renate Kroos, "Sächsische Buchmalerei 1200–1250," pp. 283–316. Cf. Beate Braun-Niehr, "Die sächsische Buchmalerei," pp. 220–233, at p. 223: its outline is basically correct. Elisabeth Klemm had voiced careful reservations: *Die illuminierten Handschriften*, p. 258.
- 9 A very brief but helpful survey of the first half of the century is by Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, "Das 13. Jahrhundert," as part of his contribution to the handbook *Geschichte der Buchkultur*, Vol. 4, pt. 2, pp. 285–325, with copious bibliographical references.
- 10 I mention only a few that remain particularly rewarding with expert information on thirteenth-century manuscripts: *Die Zeit der Staufer* edited by Haussherr, esp. Vol. I with a brief introduction, pp. 28–34, and numerous pertinent entries by Renate Kroos, and Vol. V (Supplement) with an article by Renate Kroos, pp. 353–387; Mütterich and Dachs, *Regensburger Buchmalerei*, with pertinent essays by Ellen J. Beer and Robert Suckale; Moser, *Buchmalerei im Bodenseeraum* (Friedrichshafen, 1997); *Aufbruch in die Gotik* (see above, n. 7); Krohm and Kunde, *Der Naumburger Meister*, esp. Vol. II; Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, ed., *Krone und Schleier*.
- 11 Schmidt's diverse contributions have been collected by Martin Roland in Schmidt, *Malerei der Gotik*. For some of Beer's contributions see above and below, *passim*.
- 12 Engelhart, *Die Würzburger Buchmalerei*; Engelhart, ed., *Der St. Marienthaler Psalter*; Beuckers, *Studien zur Buchmalerei*, comprising papers by Ulrich Kuder and Stefanie Westphal, respectively.
- 13 For examples of Kroos's research see above, nn. 7 and 9, and below, *passim*. Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, *Der Elisabethpsalter*, is a magisterial work and the basis of the author's later contributions to this and related subjects. For Heinzer see below, *passim*.
- 14 E.g. Beer, "Der 'Rheinauer Psalter,'" pp. 251–266, at p. 259. The catalog *Buchmalerei im Bodenseeraum* is built around this concept.
- 15 Stange, *Deutsche Malerei der Gotik*, Vol. I: *Die Zeit von 1250–1350*.
- 16 Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, "Das 13. Jahrhundert," pp. 286–287.
- 17 See Büttner, *The Illuminated Psalter*, esp. pp. 1–106, "Der illuminierte Psalter im Westen," where Büttner himself discusses iconography, typical or atypical placements, etc.
- 18 Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, "Der Text-Bild-Bezug," pp. 193–214, at p. 214: "epochaler Wandel." Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, "Die Landgrafenpsalterien," pp. 105–118, at p. 107: "Umbruchssituation der Buchkultur."
- 19 Belting, "Zwischen Gotik und Byzanz," pp. 217–257, at p. 237.

- 20 On this see most recently Stead, "Seeing Christ," pp. 181–228. For a complete set of the pictures, see Grimme, *Das Evangelistar*.
- 21 Kroos, "Sächsische Buchmalerei," p. 312: "blechartig abstehende Hülsen." Harald Wolter-von dem Knesebeck calls its effect "metallic" in a more recent contribution to the debate: "Felder der Ausdifferenzierung," pp. 95–122, at p. 101.
- 22 Haseloff, *Eine thüringisch-sächsische Malerschule*, p. 298: "abendländische Ausgestaltung, die man beinahe eine Karikatur nennen könnte;" p. 352: "kein Übergang zur Gotik: Verfall oder Manier," and "Todeskampf des romanischen Stils."
- 23 Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, "Felder der Ausdifferenzierung," pp. 104–110.
- 24 Saurma-Jeltsch, "Der Zackenstil als *ornatus difficilis*," pp. 257–266, at p. 263.
- 25 Schmidt, *Malerei der Gotik*, I, pp. 14–15, provides a list of manuscripts that document the continuity of "late Romanesque stylistic traditions" in lower Austria. See also Beer, "Der 'Rheinauer Psalter,'" p. 257.
- 26 Schmidt, *Malerei der Gotik*, p. 11: "verspätet erst leitet der 'Zackenstil' die Frühgotik ein," with reference to a missal he dates to 1260–1270 (*ibid.*, p. 34). See also his color pl. 1. It is worth pointing out though that Schmidt's erstwhile special subject, the scriptorium of St. Florian, offers examples of pronounced "Zackenstil" as late as 1320: pl. 10 (a missal from Wilhering).
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 212: "Übergang des 'Zackenstils' zum melodiosen Linearismus rasch und problemlos," with reference to, among others, a *Legenda aurea* manuscript from St. Emmeram in Regensburg, dated 1295 (pl. no. 50 in *Regensburger Buchmalerei*).
- 28 See Schmid et al., eds., *Das Graduale von St. Katharinenthal um 1312*, and Beer's commentary in Vol. 2.
- 29 Gummlich-Wagner, "Zur gotischen Buchmalerei," pp. 127–137.
- 30 See Buchthal, *The "Musterbuch."*
- 31 Kroos, *Das Goslarer Evangeliar*.
- 32 Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, "Felder der Ausdifferenzierung," *passim*. See also *idem* in *Der Naumburger Meister*, pp. 1066–1076.
- 33 *Das Berthold-Sakramentar*. Commentary volume by Felix Heinzer and Hans U. Rudolf. A reduced facsimile with shortened texts from the commentary volume, some translated into English, is *Das Berthold-Sakramentar*. In his monumental study (see above, n. 5), Swarzenski had mischaracterized the book as a missal.
- 34 In his *Deutsche Buchmalerei der Gotik*, re-published posthumously as the second part of Boeckler, *Deutsche Buchmalerei*, in the series Die blauen Bücher, p. 5: "[...] zögernd und spät; man löste sich schwer von dem zackigen [...] Faltenstil, der die spätromanische Kunst in Deutschland beherrscht hatte."
- 35 Belting, "Zwischen Gotik und Byzanz," *passim*.
- 36 Not quite able to resist parody, Hess titled his paper "Barocke Spätromanik oder byzantinische Gotik? Der Zackenstil in den Bildkünsten von 1250 bis 1290," in Westermann-Angerhausen, ed., pp. 63–72.
- 37 It is borrowed from Marvin Trachtenberg, "Suger's Miracles, Branner's Bourge: Reflections on 'Gothic Architecture' as Medieval Modernism," *Gesta*, 39 (2000), pp. 183–205.
- 38 *Goldenes Hildesheimer Kalendarium*. Commentary by Helmar Härtel, Harald Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, and Werner Hohl.
- 39 Holladay, "Hermann of Thuringia," pp. 191–217.
- 40 See Suckale-Redlefsen, "Zwei Bilderpsalter," pp. 249–258, esp. 250–252.

- 41 Barberi, ed., *Salterio di Santa Elisabetta. Der Landgrafenpsalter*, commentary volume edited by Felix Heinzer. See Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, *Der Elisabethpsalter* and his introductions to both psalters in Blume and Werner, eds., *Elisabeth von Thüringen*, II (catalog), pp. 67–71 (nos. 21 and 22).
- 42 Kroos, “Sächsische Buchmalerei,” *passim*.
- 43 Heinzer, “Über das Wort hinaus lesen?,” pp. 147–168, esp. 159 ff.
- 44 Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, “Zum Bildprogramm,” pp. 1158–1168, esp. pp. 1163–1168.
- 45 Büchler, “Zu den Psalmillustrationen der Haseloff-Schule: Die Vita Christi Gruppe,” pp. 215–237. Büchler, “Zu den Psalmillustrationen der Haseloff-Schule: Psalter mit eklektischen Programmen,” pp. 145–180. Objections concerning the *Elisabethpsalter* by Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, *Elisabethpsalter*, pp. 200–247.
- 46 Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, “Der Elisabethpsalter,” no. 21 in the catalog *Elisabeth von Thüringen*, pp. 67–70. Mertens Fleury, *Leiden lesen*, *passim*.
- 47 Facsimile by Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, ed., *Das Mainzer Evangeliar*.
- 48 The so-called Codex Gisle c.1300 in the northwest, with 52 historiated initials. See the monograph by Oliver, *Singing with Angels*. The gradual of Katharinenthal in the southwest: *Das Graduale von St. Katharinenthal um 1312*, commentary volume edited by Alfred A. Schmid.
- 49 Nordenfalk, “Die deutschen Miniaturen,” pp. 251–266, at p. 255: “der letzte Codex aureus der deutschen Buchmalerei.”
- 50 von der Gönna: “Ein goldenes Evangelienbuch,” pp. 131–153.
- 51 Wolter-von dem Knesebeck in his commentary to the facsimile, p. 36.
- 52 Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, commentary, p. 146, and “Der Text-Bild-Bezug im Mainzer Evangeliar,” p. 212.
- 53 Nordenfalk, “Die deutschen Miniaturen,” p. 255. Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, commentary, p. 170 et *passim*.
- 54 See above, n. 20.
- 55 Kroos, *Die Zeit der Staufer*, I, no. 752, p. 581. Color photograph at II, no. 544.
- 56 *Sachsenspiegel: Landrecht*, edited by Karl-August Eckardt. MGH Fontes iuris Germanici NS 11 (Göttingen, 2nd. edn. 1955), I, 24, Par. 3: the inheritance of a widow includes *saltere unde alle bûke, die zu goddes dienste hôret, die vrowen pleget to lesene* (“psalters and all books that are needed for church service, that women are wont to read”). This famous passage is only one of many similar references at other times and under other circumstances.
- 57 Kroos, in *Stadt im Wandel: Kunst und Kultur des Bürgertums in Norddeutschland 1150–1650*, edited by Cord Meckseper (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1985). 2 vols., II, 1187–1189, at p. 1189. See also Kroos, *Die Zeit der Staufer*, I, no. 768.
- 58 Numerous occurrences are listed in the entry by Helmut Engelhart, “Gebetsanweisungen in lateinischen Psalterhandschriften,” Vol. 2, col. 1129–1130. Later research is mentioned by Wolf, “*vrouwen plegene ze lesene*,” pp. 169–190, esp. pp. 176–180.
- 59 See *Der Naumburger Meister*, no. XI, 3 (pp. 1010–1013, Claudia Kunde), fig. in color on p. 1012.
- 60 Heinzer, “Über das Wort hinaus lesen?,” *passim*.
- 61 Klemm, “Das sogenannte Gebetbuch,” pp. 29–78, at p. 19. See also Green, “The Vienna and Munich Prayerbooks,” pp. 94–98.
- 62 Black-and-white reproductions can be found in Hermann, *Die deutschen romanischen Handschriften*, Vol. 2, pp. 249–259.

- 63 Ott, "Vermittlungsinstanz Bild," pp. 191–208, and "Die Wahrheit der Schrift," pp. 9–23, esp. pp. 11–12.
- 64 See Hernad, *Die gotischen Handschriften*, no. 153 (Cgm 101), I, pp. 96–97 and II, pl. VII and figs. 310–325. Several figs. also in Schmidt, *Malerei der Gotik*, pp. 149–176, passim, and two in color in *Regensburger Buchmalerei*, pls. 52 and 53.
- 65 Schmidt, *Malerei der Gotik*, pp. 149–176 (originally 1982/1983, addenda 2003).
- 66 Curschmann, "Wort – Schrift – Bild: Zum Verhältnis von volkssprachigem Schrifttum und bildender Kunst vom 12. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert," reprinted in Michael Curschmann, *Wort – Bild – Text*, Vol. II, pp. 661–753, at p. 677.
- 67 Harsen, *Cursus Sanctae Mariae*. The book includes a complete set of black-and-white photographs. Stolz, "Das Experiment," pp. 9–45.
- 68 E.g. the *Reiner Musterbuch*, commentary by Franz Unterkircher. A page from one of the oldest manuscripts of the *Biblia pauperum* can be found in Schmidt, *Gotische Malerei*, color pl. 1.
- 69 See Curschmann, "Wort – Schrift – Bild," pp. 703–711.
- 70 *Heinrich von Veldeke*, commentary by Nikolaus Henkel and Andreas Fingernagel. Henkel, II, p. 24: "Ergebnis eines sichtbaren Experimentierens mit dem layout."
- 71 Curschmann, "Epistemologisches," pp. 21–67, at pp. 55–56.
- 72 See the accounts by Henkel, in *Heinrich von Veldeke*, II, pp. 8–34, and Montag, *Wolfram von Eschenbach*, pp. 15–19. A page from that extraordinary, fragmented manuscript is reproduced in Herbert Kessler's chapter this volume, Figure 9-5.
- 73 Kugler, *Kleine Schriften*, Vol. II, pp. 38–52 (*Eneid*).
- 74 *Die Dresdener Bilderhandschrift des Sachsenspiegels*, edited by Karl von Amira, 2 vols. *Bruchstücke der Großen Bilderhandschrift von Wolframs Willehalm*, edited by Karl von Amira.
- 75 Boeckler, *Heinrich von Veldeke*.
- 76 Stammler, "Schrifttum und Bildkunst." Stammler, "Epenillustration." Repeated in Stammler, *Wort und Bild*, pp. 136–160. Earlier initiatives by Germanists are mentioned by Norbert H. Ott in his introduction to Hella Frühmorgen-Voss, *Text und Illustration im Mittelalter*, p. XI. What followed Stammler's lead into the field of text–picture studies, especially in the United States, has been traced by Michael Curschmann, "Wolfgang Stammler und die Folgen," original publication 1998, reprinted in *Wort – Bild – Text*, II, pp. 637–659.
- 77 Frühmorgen-Voss, "Mittelhochdeutsche weltliche Literatur," pp. 23–75, reprinted in *Text und Illustration*, pp. 1–56.
- 78 Curschmann, "Wort – Bild – Text."
- 79 See Saurma-Jeltsch, "Zum Wandel der Erzählweise," pp. 124–152. Also Stephan-Chlustin, *Artuswelt und Gralswelt im Bild*. See also Ott, at n. 85 below.
- 80 E.g. in Walworth, *Function and Form in the Munich Illustrated Manuscripts*. Related studies of some importance by the same author: "Pictorial Narrative in Legal Manuscripts?," pp. 275–289; Manuwald, "Literate Illustrationsverfahren in volkssprachigen deutschen Handschriften," pp. 335–395.
- 81 All of this is discussed in the monumental study by Manuwald, *Medialer Dialog*, pp. 370–472.
- 82 *Der Welsche Gast des Thomasin von Zerclaere*, edited by Neumann et al. This oldest of 18 surviving illuminated manuscripts was put together soon after 1250, but, by longstanding consensus, accurately reflects the original design and purpose.

- 83 Stolz, "Text und Bild im Widerspruch?," pp. 344–372.
- 84 Curschmann, "Epistemologisches," pp. 50–53.
- 85 One exception is Ott, "Mise en page," pp. 33–64.
- 86 Jerjen, *Strukturieren und formen*. A recent monograph by Kathryn Starkey attempts to reconstruct the social context behind a fourteenth-century copy of the work and to acquaint American readers with the material basis: Starkey, *A Courtier's Mirror*.
- 87 Ott, "Typen der Weltchronik-Ikonographie," pp. 29–55. Ott, "Überlieferung, Ikonographie," pp. 356–385.
- 88 *Rudolf von Ems: Weltchronik. Stricker: Karl der Grosse* (1982). Commentary volume, edited by Ellen J. Beer et al. (1987).
- 89 Ellen Beer in the commentary volume, p. 118: "schon alle formalen Grundlagen für die Blütezeit des 'süßen neuen Stils' im Bodenseeraum gelegt sind." See also Beer's comments in her commentary to the facsimile edition of the Katharinenthal gradual (above, n. 47, pp. 203–204).

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Glazing Medieval Buildings

Elizabeth Carson Pastan

Any window can serve the practical end of keeping birds and the elements out of a building, while allowing light to enter. But when filled with different-colored panes of glass, the hues coming through the windows soften and unify the ambience within, an effect described by Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis (1122–1151) as “transfusing the interior with wonderful and uninterrupted light.”¹ As medieval exegetes also recognized, the eastern apertures in the oriented buildings favored in medieval Christian architecture consistently transmit the brightest light, underscoring the devotional importance of the choir, while those in the west are more muted; and the correspondingly darker northern windows offer contrast to the lustrous southern ones.² This luminous scaffolding was in turn used expressively in determining the choice of window subjects, not only to take advantage of the natural juxtapositions offered by the incoming light, but also to identify the unique characteristics of the setting, since themes in the glazing often align closely with the traditions, relics, and liturgy of their particular site.

The study of medieval stained glass includes both the intricately crafted vitreous composition of the window and the window’s performative role in its setting. Addressing the latter, Wolfgang Kemp adapted the call of the preacher Etienne de Bourbon (1180–1261) for the clergy to find new ways to appeal to the laity by entitling his study of medieval stained glass *Sermo Corporeus*, in support of his argument that stained glass windows, like contemporaneous sermons, were one of the means by which the church communicated to the faithful.³ Nevertheless Kemp, mindful of the window composition itself, began his study with an analysis

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of the *armature*, the iron grid that fixes the glass into the aperture of a building. As Kemp explains, the armature's compartments both discipline the individual scenes and also create patterns that encourage new readings of their narratives.⁴ In similar fashion, the subdivisions of this chapter are intended to organize the extensive literature, while permitting some of the character of the scholarship to shine through.⁵

History

Studies focused on materiality have drawn attention to the fact that the historiated window is but one application in the long history of the versatile medium of glass. Over time, appreciative observers have compared glass to liquid, gold, gemstones, crystal, the materialization of divine light, and to vision itself.⁶ The technology of melting sand into a shimmering and glassy substance that hardens into multiple shapes and desirable glazes was certainly known by the late Bronze Age (c.2500 BCE).⁷ While glass in the ancient world took the form of small cast vessels and jewelry arts, by the first century BCE at the latest, the invention of *inhalation*, or blowing air through the molten silicate mixture to make it thinner and more translucent, vastly enlarged the potential uses of the medium.⁸ Vessels using this technique attained astonishing complexity, and glass that was both cast and blown was also employed in window coverings.⁹ These "window screens," or *claustra*, were made of stone, stucco, or wood, and filled with small inset elements of translucent materials, including both manufactured glass as well as semi-precious adornments.¹⁰ By the later Roman era, the interiors of baths, mausoleums, and basilicas were illuminated by large apertures glazed with sheets of thinly sliced stone such as mica and alabaster. The clerestory windows at the Constantinian basilica at Trier, for example, measure 7.59 by 3.51 meters (roughly 25 by 11½ feet), a scale that approaches the size of medieval narrative windows.¹¹

A medieval stained glass window is a translucent composition made of different colored panes of glass, which are cut, painted, and then joined together by means of grooved leads to portray an image or scene.¹² Francesca Dell'Acqua has reopened the investigation of the early evidence by examining archeological discoveries, fragmentary remains, and texts that make explicit reference to figural images in windows, concluding that pictorial stained glass windows had emerged by the Carolingian era.¹³ Unfortunately, no stained glass windows that pre-date the twelfth century survive in situ, within the apertures that were designed to hold them.¹⁴ Despite many important early examples, stained glass is thus generally associated with Gothic architecture from the mid-twelfth century and later, its skeletal walls and tall proportions offering an optimal framework for extensive glazing ensembles. Chartres Cathedral is a good example of a well-preserved monument of this period, which astonishingly retains medieval glass in more than 90% of its apertures.¹⁵ Chartres also embodies the scale of a Gothic glazing program, with its vaults that rise nearly 37 meters (121 feet) from the ground. Its

rose windows alone, which are the large circular traceried openings in the window-wall compositions on the terminal arms of the building, have diameters ranging from 10.15 to 12 meters (approximately 33–39 feet).¹⁶

Material Form

Stained glass scholarship begins with the window itself. Central to this scholarship are the distinctive properties of medieval glass, including related issues of nomenclature and technique, its integration into an architectural setting, and its inherent fragility. Whereas the raw ingredients for making glass – sand and the beechwood that served as a flux to cause the sand to melt at a lower temperature – were inexpensive and readily available, the procedures for making a window were labor intensive, which is why medieval stained glass windows were notoriously costly.

The designation “stained glass” remains in widespread use and will therefore be used throughout this chapter, but it is an inaccurate term, since color was not added to glass by means of an external application, or stain, until the early fourteenth century.¹⁷ Up through c.1300 glass was colored “in the mass,” meaning that the metallic oxides that served as the colorants were added to different batches of the molten silicate mixture while they were still in cooking pots. For this reason, use of the term “pot-metal glass” to refer to colored medieval glass is more precise.¹⁸ Nonetheless, some scholars insist that “painted glass” is the best description,¹⁹ since it is the vitreous pigment applied to the surface of the various colored panes of glass that provides the expressive detail in a glass composition (figs. 26-1, 26-2, 26-5).²⁰ Neither of these terms used to refer to stained glass, however, conveys the fact that window glass is fundamentally an architectural art (fig. 26-3).²¹ A glass composition is complete only after being set upright into an aperture within a building and suffused with light.²²

The transformative properties of light on glass have given rise to myriad symbolic interpretations, including the metaphor, most famously attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux (c.1090–1153), which compares light passing through glass without breaking it to the miracle of Virgin birth, whereby Mary was penetrated by the Word of God and yet remained a virgin.²³ But it is noteworthy how often studies of medieval architecture, while noting that light held important symbolic and metaphysical associations, stop short of discussing the actual medieval windows through which the light passes.²⁴

Correspondences between glass and architecture originate in the fact that glaziers and masons routinely worked hand-in-hand, often making use of the same scaffolding.²⁵ This means that dating a building can help establish the glass chronology, and vice versa.²⁶ Scholars have also noted more specific reciprocal influences. Madeline Caviness observed compositional changes within the choir clerestory figures from Saint-Remi of Reims (c.1175–1181) that are most logically explained as the progressive modification of the window designs to enhance their legibility within the large interior space in which they would



FIGURE 26-1 Moses and the Burning Bush with image of Gerlachus, stained glass, c.1150–1160. Attributed to the abbey church of Arnstein an der Lahn. Source: Münster, Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, loan from a private owner.

be viewed.²⁷ In addition, the fashion in later glazing programs for framing figures with architectural canopies, spectacularly exemplified by the Great East Window of York Minster (c.1405–1407),²⁸ had the effect of visually connecting window compositions to other elements in the interior such as choir screens, altarpieces, and reliquaries.²⁹

Also related to the coordination of glass and its architectural environment is the issue of interior illumination.³⁰ In a pioneering article of 1949, Louis Grodecki argued that so readily do we equate stained glass with Gothic translucency that we have failed to notice that the light levels in Romanesque buildings are much the same as in early Gothic buildings, despite the fact that Romanesque apertures are



FIGURE 26-2 Adam Laboring, stained glass, originally in the northwest choir clerestory of Canterbury Cathedral, c.1178–1180. Source: reproduced courtesy of The Dean and Chapter, Canterbury.

significantly fewer and smaller. Noting the change in palette from earlier windows with their paler hues and significantly greater use of uncolored glass to the use of more deeply saturated color in Gothic monuments, Grodecki stated, “the darkening of the color palette ... virtually compensated for the enlargement of the Gothic window between 1140 and 1220.”³¹ This suggests that major developments in the medium do not align well with the broad style categories “Romanesque” and “Gothic.”³²

The use of *grisailles*, uncolored ornamental windows, also has implications for the luminosity of a given monument.³³ Although *grisailles* are associated with the Cistercian order, which eschewed the expense of colored glass, they were also used in many different kinds of stained glass ensembles.³⁴ At Troyes Cathedral (fig. 26-3), the colored historiated windows in the ambulatory chapels are flanked by *grisailles* in the narrower apertures at the opening to each chapel, providing both visual continuity across glazing campaigns that spanned half a century (c.1200–1245) and a practical means of allowing in more light.³⁵ A major transformation in medieval architecture took place around the mid-thirteenth century, with the appearance of the

band window, which considerably lightened the overall palette.³⁶ In these windows, *grisailles* provide the main glazing of the aperture and colored figural panels are set into them. When viewed in a group of windows, the inset row of colored panels stretching across the ensemble read as a horizontal row or band. Another significant change had occurred by the early fourteenth century with the invention of *silver stain*, the painted application of a silver-sulfide compound that turns yellow when fired onto the glass.³⁷ This technique also favored the use of uncolored glass (which reads as white), which optimally offsets the golden hues of the stain. In the silver stained composition from Chartres Cathedral of 1328



FIGURE 26-3 View of windows from the northern choir ambulatory of Troyes Cathedral, including medieval grisaille second from left, first quarter of the thirteenth century. Source: reproduced courtesy of C. Lemzaouda, CNRS-Centre André Chastel.

(fig. 26-5), the effects of the application are particularly noticeable in the crown of the Virgin and the delicate borders of her mantle.

The fragility of stained glass, perhaps its most self-evident characteristic, has far-reaching consequences, not the least of which is the arbitrary nature of its preservation. Anticipating more recent scholarship on the subject, Jean Lafond pointed out that although Chartres Cathedral may be noteworthy now, there were once many other important glazing programs.³⁸ This characteristic fragility also translates into the fact that many glazing programs include stained glass from several different eras, necessitating the discipline's methodology of first determining the authentic components and restorations within any glass composition before proceeding into further investigation.³⁹ Some of these successive additions are restorations that endeavor to harmonize with the earlier glass,⁴⁰ while others are "corrections" to a prior program. In an important study of the latter, Meredith Lillich drew attention to the grisailles that were added in subsequent decades to the choir glazing of Chartres Cathedral, undoubtedly to bring in more light.⁴¹

Sometimes, older glass was deliberately reused in new architectural settings. At Regensburg Cathedral, older scenes of the Genealogy of Christ (c.1230s) were recombined in the south transept façade (1330s) given by the Auer family in a new composition with bishops and saints whose theme reflects the family's strong ties to the cathedral chapter.⁴² Other examples of such "recycled" glass, sometimes referred to as *spolia* or "*belles verrières*," have been found in Chartres, Châlons-sur-Marne, Erfurt, Easby, Exeter, Moulins, Munich, Rouen, Strasbourg, Vendôme, York, and elsewhere.⁴³ It is highly unlikely that the incorporation of older glass was simply a cost-saving measure; indeed, these venerable older images are "objects of working memory," and their survival must have been regarded as nothing short of miraculous, given the odds.⁴⁴

Medieval References

The most important work in the historiography of medieval glass is the first original medieval text on the subject, part of the treatise *De Diversis Artibus*, written by the monk known as Theophilus Presbyter in c.1110.⁴⁵ The treatise consists of three extant chapters on artistic techniques noteworthy for their preciosity of effect: stained glass, manuscript illumination, and metalwork.⁴⁶ While Theophilus's text has been characterized as a recipe book, his accompanying prologues, like the scholarly treatises of his Benedictine contemporaries, justify the importance of art in arguing for the necessity of cultivating the craftsman's God-given artistic talent and in emphasizing the role of art in devotion.⁴⁷

Despite its historical importance in signaling the arrival of stained glass as a recognized form of artistic embellishment, Theophilus's chapter on glass lacks detail about workshop production.⁴⁸ Apart from one reference to a boy who assists in the workshop, Theophilus implies that a single craftsman created all aspects of the window on site.⁴⁹ However, just decades later, Abbot Suger established the

position of a glazier to ensure the upkeep and repair of the windows of the Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis, an indication that the necessary skills were not readily available.⁵⁰ Studies based on mid-twelfth- and early thirteenth-century windows at Saint-Denis and Chartres, respectively, have uncovered evidence that multiple artists collaborated closely on the windows' execution.⁵¹ Indeed discussions in which Theophilus's work is used as evidence of how the craft was practiced in subsequent decades can be highly misleading.⁵²

Inscriptions are another source of knowledge about windows. These include the names of personages depicted in the windows, such as Adam Laboring (c.1178–1180) from the genealogical windows once in the choir clerestory of Canterbury Cathedral (fig. 26-2)⁵³; dedications from donors⁵⁴; artists' signatures⁵⁵; and biblical commentary.⁵⁶ An early stained glass panel from the abbey of Arnstein an der Lahn (c.1150–1160) offers an example of the interpretive potential of inscriptions.⁵⁷ In one of the panels (fig. 26-1), the named artist-donor Gerlachus, identified as a monk of the Premonstratensian order by his blue mantle and white tunic, is depicted, paint pot in hand, in the act of inscribing a rhyming dedication: "REX REG[UM] CLARE GERLACHO PROP[I]CIARE" ("Brilliant King of Kings, be thou propitiated by Gerlachus").⁵⁸ In the center of the biblical scene of Moses and the Burning Bush above, Moses's staff is turned into a serpent as a sign from the Lord. The paintbrush held by Gerlachus echoes this staff and appears as an equally potent instrument. Lech Kalinowski's interpretation of the partial inscription in this panel, "VIR...ATUR," as "Virga Versatur" ("The rod is transformed"), suggests a learned and artistically self-conscious commentary on the revelatory potential of the glass painter's brush.⁵⁹

Later inscriptions make explicit connections to the liturgy,⁶⁰ as may be demonstrated by the theme of Saint Anne teaching the Virgin to read that appears prominently in English medieval glazing programs.⁶¹ In an example from Stanford-on-Avon of c.1325–1340 (fig. 26-4), here illustrated by the meticulous drawing after it by Charles Winston, the book Anne holds out to her daughter is inscribed with the opening words of the Hours of the Virgin for Matins, "DOMINE LABIA MEA APERIES" ("Thou, Lord, wilt open my lips").⁶² Such images must have also shaped expectations about literacy, offering compelling visual models for a mother's role as her child's first teacher.⁶³

Medieval literature makes occasional references to stained glass, and these hint at some of the ways that windows were regarded.⁶⁴ The metaphor comparing the way light penetrates glass without breaking it to the Virgin birth of Christ also enjoyed literary popularity. Among other applications, it was invoked to portray how the hero Alexander in Chrétien de Troyes's twelfth-century Old French romance *Cligès* was overcome by love without actually being wounded.⁶⁵ The early thirteenth-century verses from the *Metrical Life of St. Hugh* compare the rose windows of Lincoln Cathedral to the eyes of the church, with that in the north facing off against the devil, while the south looks to the Holy Spirit.⁶⁶ A passage in the *Tale of Beryn*, the anonymous fourteenth-century continuation of the *Canterbury Tales*, satirizes the pilgrims' ability to comprehend the twelfth-century images now



FIGURE 26-4 Charles Winston, watercolor after St. Anne Teaching the Virgin with inscribed book, from Stanford-on-Avon, c.1325–1340. Source: reproduced from Charles Winston, *Memoirs Illustrative of the Art of Glass-Painting* (London, 1865), pl. 12b.

“spatially and cognitively” far above them in the clerestory windows of Canterbury Cathedral (fig. 26-2).⁶⁷ William Langland’s 1362 poem *Piers Plowman* ridicules the expensive practice of donating a window in order to proclaim one’s good works.⁶⁸ The seventeenth-century poem “On Fayreford Windowes” by the preacher William Strode includes an amusing reference to the parish clerk’s practice of using a fishing rod to point out scenes in an early sixteenth-century window of Saint Mary in Fairford.⁶⁹

Despite the skeptical view evident in some of these allusions, stained glass continued to be a vital aspect of later medieval visual culture. Its continuing use in Italian Renaissance buildings,⁷⁰ the ubiquity of stained glass roundels in later medieval households and civic buildings,⁷¹ and the widespread diffusion of motifs in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,⁷² demonstrate its ongoing importance.

Modern Revivals

The declining fortunes of stained glass in the modern era are plainly described in the chapter title of Pierre Le Vieil's 1774 treatise on glass painting, "Reasons for the Decadence of Glass & Responses to the Difficulties Cited in Order to Excuse or Bring About its Abandonment." Le Vieil concedes that dissatisfaction with glass was understandable since his generation, better educated than its predecessors, had difficulty reading their prayer books in darkened church interiors.⁷³ He recommends allowing the crepuscular light of the windows to inspire a "*religieuse horreur*," or failing that, placing the principal scene of a window onto a clear new ground, an operation that he himself was hired to perform on the windows at the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, which had become darkened after centuries of neglect.⁷⁴

In the modern revivals of the medium in the nineteenth century, each country responded differently, according to its own legacy and vision of the past.⁷⁵ In England, the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII (1536–1541) mobilized antiquarians early.⁷⁶ Richard Marks pointed to "an almost unbroken series of detailed church notes made by scholars of national status, as well as local worthies"⁷⁷ for the glazing of Northamptonshire's 100 or so churches executed prior to 1559, and this is by no means exceptional among English parishes. By the nineteenth century, brisk sales of medieval glass, largely imported from Germany and the Low Countries, created a favorable climate for appreciation of the medium.⁷⁸ As Lafond observed, only in England could one study the entire history of stained glass through first-rate examples, many of them imported.⁷⁹

French restorers, facing the daunting task of restoring glazing programs devastated during the French Revolution, discovered that they no longer knew how to make medieval glass.⁸⁰ They turned to the medieval text of Theophilus Presbyter, which was translated into French for the first time.⁸¹ In German-speaking countries, the Romantic movement cultivated the medieval past as a high point of culture, a positive climate further enhanced by the linkage of the liturgical revival with governmental commissions.⁸² Given this history, it is not surprising that the first dedicated exhibition of medieval stained glass was held in Cologne by the collector-cum-dealer Christian Geerling, although Geerling was criticized for plundering the art of secularized churches.⁸³

Alexandre Lenoir's Musée des Monuments Français in Paris, which opened to the public in 1795, likewise gathered the remains of secularized medieval churches. Although Lenoir stimulated interest in the art of the medieval past and

was motivated to reclaim it from the vandalism that occurred during the French Revolution, his museum arguably accomplished as much harm as good. At Saint-Denis, for example, he extracted numerous stained glass panels from the abbey church, had them carried by oxcart to Paris, and rearranged those that survived the journey for exhibit.⁸⁴ When Lenoir's museum was dissolved in 1816, as much as three-quarters of the glass he took from Saint-Denis was irreparably shattered, or sold off to dealers.⁸⁵

Many nineteenth-century scholars were able to draw on their firsthand knowledge of the medium. English scholarship may be epitomized by the work of Charles Winston (1814–1864), who combined technical understanding of the medium with diversity of taste. While he praises German and Flemish sixteenth-century glass,⁸⁶ his fine drawings are primarily taken from English examples (fig. 26-4).⁸⁷ Winston, a lawyer by training, managed to concoct superior colored glass, although the harsh tonalities of the new glass creations he supervised for Glasgow Cathedral were much criticized.⁸⁸ Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) oversaw major campaigns of architectural restoration throughout France and wrote one of the most influential scholarly articles on stained glass, replete with astute practical suggestions, such as how colors could be effectively combined,⁸⁹ and how glass would “read” across distances in an architectural setting.⁹⁰ Yet his notion that a restoration should reestablish a monument in its complete state, even if such a state never existed at any given moment,⁹¹ and his championing of twelfth-century glazing techniques over what he saw as the decadent techniques of later centuries, indicate the complexity of his outlook.⁹² German scholar-practitioners, such as Heinrich Oidtmann (1861–1912), were particularly adept technically. A practicing physician, Oidtmann oversaw the glass studio in Linnich established by his father and wrote numerous scientific papers about the medium.⁹³ He also built a working glass-firing oven after Theophilus's account,⁹⁴ and both discovered and restored the glass from Arnstein an der Lahn (fig. 26-1).⁹⁵

The individual contributions of Winston, Viollet-le-Duc, and Oidtmann may stand for their generation of gifted nineteenth-century scholar-practitioners. Their appreciation of medieval glass fostered documentary images and technical knowledge, and contributed to its preservation. Yet while their insights gleaned from the close study of older glass were marshaled into practical applications, their actual restorations often left something to be desired.

Twentieth-Century Scholarship

In his landmark 1906 chapter dedicated to medieval stained glass, Emile Mâle decried the lack of sufficient photographs.⁹⁶ His call for a “corpus” of reproductions of medieval glass was all the more credible because of his method of regularly finding examples of the iconographic themes he analyzed in stained glass.⁹⁷ Mâle's quest for the systematization of resources was paralleled in Germany by the establishment of the Deutsche Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft in 1908. By the

1930s, a group within the Vereins under the direction of Paul Frankl had begun to oversee the systematic photographic documentation of German window cycles.⁹⁸

However, the study of stained glass was not truly established as an art-historical discipline until after the Second World War. The glass that had been demounted for safety offered an unprecedented opportunity for close analysis. At the same time, the devastating wartime losses suffered by glazing programs throughout northwestern Europe again drew attention to the need for photographic documentation and for standardized records and methods of analysis.⁹⁹ One of the guiding lights behind this ambitious international effort, Hans Hahnloser, referred to the tremendous sense of obligation that the community of scholars felt over the losses of the war.¹⁰⁰ Initiatives begun in 1947 led to the founding in 1952 of the *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi* (subsequently shortened to *Corpus Vitrearum*), an international body devoted to studying the medium, with the stated goal of publishing all western medieval stained glass according to clearly prescribed standards. Further contributing to this effort was the collegial international participation in the exhibition of medieval stained glass in France (1953), which in turn helped to shape the guidelines for subsequent *Corpus Vitrearum* publications.¹⁰¹

While a number of *Corpus Vitrearum* publications are monographs, the regional surveys are a particularly useful means of covering areas whose extant medieval glass is widely dispersed.¹⁰² These surveys do not seek to promote the notion of regional schools of glass painting, although this remains a useful approach for some areas.¹⁰³ In a recent publication on glass in Normandy, for example, the authors highlighted the striking diversity of glass-painting styles in the region, drawing on evidence offered by civic statutes and the relatively late establishment of confraternities of glass painters to make the point that, in contrast to other more closed artistic environments, in Normandy there were no rules banning craftsmen from outside the area.¹⁰⁴ Another important accomplishment of these *Corpus* volumes has been to document glass that no longer survives. As Jean Lafond noted, only one parish in Denmark has a window that remains in place, despite evidence that all of its churches would once have possessed at least one stained glass window.¹⁰⁵ Still another goal of the *Corpus Vitrearum* is to identify the provenance of dispersed panels of glass. This is especially critical in cities such as Stockholm, Brussels, and New York, which have large collections of stained glass that originated elsewhere.¹⁰⁶ One consequence of this is that the volumes of the American *Corpus Vitrearum* also focus on collectors such as William Randolph Hearst and Raymond Pitcairn,¹⁰⁷ an approach that was recently the subject of an international *Corpus Vitrearum* colloquium.¹⁰⁸

Current Trends

Because of its late establishment as a discipline, the study of medieval stained glass is sometimes accused of being preoccupied with archeological issues at the expense of newer methodologies, even by scholars who focus on it. Yet as a monumental and

public art form, stained glass holds an innate attraction for scholars from multiple disciplines interested in issues of reception, who are drawn to its many diverse subjects. In addition to devotional themes, medieval stained glass windows sometimes include seemingly peripheral subjects – such as the “Monkey’s Funeral” in the border of a window at York Minster – which at first glance appear to be whimsical but which can also be read as commentaries on the central image.¹⁰⁹ There are depictions of Death himself, claiming his victim with bow and arrow,¹¹⁰ of medieval craftsmen and laborers,¹¹¹ of Jews and heretics,¹¹² and of the sado-erotic display of female martyrs and virtues.¹¹³ One need not go so far as Kemp, who concluded that within “the general distribution of thematic material in cathedrals,” as much as “80–90 percent of the windows are composed as detailed narrative that does not contain dogmatic or biblical themes.”¹¹⁴ Nonetheless, Kemp’s larger point about the communicative potential of window narratives is undoubtedly what has regularly drawn scholars from other disciplines to stained glass. Ultimately, however, a window cannot be assimilated to a discrete painted canvas or considered separately from its devotional environment, let alone detached from the restoration history of its site. As Peter Kurmann and Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz note, interdisciplinary approaches must respect the physical evidence of the building.¹¹⁵

Some of these interdisciplinary approaches are addressed in Michael Cothren’s provocative reappraisal of the discipline. Taking a broad view, Cothren sets aside “Modernist” perspectives on stained glass that pursue narrowly couched theological investigations or view it merely as a reflection of abstract Christian light symbolism or as a decorative complement to Gothic architectural design. Instead he envisions a human-centered and “nourishing” context for medieval windows, involving themes that were deeply meaningful to their makers and viewers. He also views the contents of glazing ensembles as flexibly conceived for their particular settings, whether moralizing in intent, ideologically motivated, or enhancing the performance of the Eucharist.

Cothren’s assessment is complemented by recent studies that are increasingly specific about the ways in which different glazing programs operated.¹¹⁶ Among these is Madeline Caviness’s investigation of the stale old chestnut that biblical scenes in the windows served as texts for the illiterate.¹¹⁷ Any scene in a window may serve as the basis for instruction when pastoral guidance, a sermon, or a celebration brings it into focus, but that does not mean that passively reiterating scripture was the windows’ *raison d’être*. As Caviness points out, the choice and arrangement of window narratives belie such a role. On the other end of the realm of possibilities, Conrad Rudolph’s study of the choir windows in the abbey of Saint-Denis (dedicated on 14 June 1144) takes as its starting point Abbot Suger’s remark that certain window subjects in the choir were “accessible only to the *litterati*.”¹¹⁸ Rudolph argues that Suger was able to justify the expense of his windows through exegetical subjects that required a level of engagement akin to monastic spiritual study.¹¹⁹

The very tall, 15.24 meters high (50 feet) window-walls of the palace chapel of the Capetian kings of France, the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris (consecrated on

26 April 1248), which are filled with dense narratives primarily featuring Old Testament subjects, have always presented a different kind of puzzle: how were these windows to be read, literally?¹²⁰ While conceding their general compositional similarities to the vast decorative programs of illuminated manuscripts known as *Bibles moralisées*, which were also made for the king, John Lowden has emphasized the fundamentally different role of windows, which were not simply *Bible moralisées* writ large.¹²¹ His work complements that of Alyce Jordan, who has suggested that the very prolixity and repetitious nature of the windows' subjects find counterparts instead in the prose cycles of their day, whose literary stratagems were outlined in the contemporaneous *ars poetriae*.¹²² A strategy involving multiple examples in service of the overarching ideal of sacred kingship was ideally suited to the glazing of the palace chapel, both ideologically and as a response to the design challenge that the chapel presented. An important conclusion to emerge from these studies is the degree to which glass narratives operate independently of any single textual source or programmatic ideal and draw from contemporary practices to articulate concepts of importance at their particular site.¹²³

Scholarship on the stained glass of Chartres Cathedral serves as a useful benchmark for discussing current trends in the literature, not only because of the quantity of medieval glass that has survived there,¹²⁴ but also because of the stimulus provided by its ongoing conservation.¹²⁵ Indeed, the coordination of the windows with the themes and emphases of the larger built environment is a notable aspect of many newer contributions.¹²⁶ Studies anchored in a close analysis of the stained glass continue,¹²⁷ but they take their place alongside of investigations where the medium of glass is no longer the sole focus.¹²⁸ For example, while heraldry is among the traditional means for dating and determining the patronage of a window,¹²⁹ newer studies also draw on heraldry to consider notions of corporate identity and social ideology.¹³⁰ Chartrain windows offer substantial material for the study of medieval hagiography,¹³¹ yet their saintly narratives are now revealed in an active role, as addressing contemporary concerns,¹³² offering a monumental evocation of the relics possessed by the treasury,¹³³ and in giving new impetus to the liturgy.¹³⁴

Recently, Claudine Lautier has drawn attention to the 16 images of canons in prayer in the stained glass windows of the choir of Chartres Cathedral, which are newly visible since their conservation.¹³⁵ These images of devout worshippers serve as affective proxies for their beholders, who could see the bodily activity of devotion in the images before them and imagine themselves experiencing prayer in the manner depicted.¹³⁶ The phenomenon is wonderfully illustrated by the silver-stained panel inserted at the bottom of an early thirteenth-century window in the southern transept of Chartres (fig. 26-5), which is accompanied by a large inscription, also in silver stain, naming Canon Guillaume Thierry as the donor and dating the composition to 1328.¹³⁷ Canon Thierry, who is the same size as the Virgin to whom he prays, acquires added valence not only through the technique of silver stain, which



FIGURE 26-5 Canon Guillaume Thierry praying in front of the Virgin and Child, detail of the silver-stained composition from the south transept of Chartres Cathedral, window 26, dated by inscription to 1328. Source: photo courtesy of C. Lemzaouda, CNRS – Centre André Chastel, Paris.

causes the canon's donation to stand out from the color-saturated window to which it was added, but also through the 16 images of figures praying in the choir windows. These Chartrain canons join other self-reflexive imagery, more commonly associated with manuscript illumination, that considers "[the devotee's] act of prayer itself worthy of a level of pictorial attention equal to that given elsewhere ... only to sacred subjects."¹³⁸ In the windows of a church, moreover, the performance of devotion models the activities that take place there and serves to further distinguish the choir within the sacred topography of the cathedral.

In the nearly four millennia since the discovery of glass and the nine centuries since Theophilus wrote about how to fashion a pictorial window, the medium of glass – fragile though it is – has withstood all kinds of natural disasters, iconoclastic outbreaks, wars, restorations, and scholarly agendas. This brief survey, while it can scarcely do justice to the rich literature on medieval stained glass, is intended to draw attention to complexities inherent in the nature of the medium, to identify broad historiographic trends, and to suggest some of the current issues in the study of this most dazzling monumental art.

Notes

- 1 Suger, *Abbot Suger* “De Consecratione,” Ch. 4, pp. 100–101; paraphrased by Frankl, *Gothic Architecture*, pp. 67–68.
- 2 Mâle, *Religious Art in France*, p. 7; Caviness, “Windows in Gothic Chapels”; Pastan, “Charlemagne,” pp. 102–103.
- 3 Wolfgang Kemp, *Sermo corporeus: Die Erzählung der mittelalterlichen Glasfenster* (Munich, 1987); cited hereafter in its English translation as Kemp, *Narratives*.
- 4 Kemp, *Narratives*, pp. 3–41.
- 5 In addition to works cited below, see Caviness with Staudinger, *Glass Before 1540*; and Kurmann-Schwarz and Lautier, “Recherches récentes,” with substantial bibliography. Two recent works, though they are not footnoted, offer excellent color images and examples taken from later medieval glass and secular imagery not focused on here: Hérold and David, *Vitrail*, and Raguin, *Stained Glass*. Recent monographs include Ayres, *Merton College, Oxford*; Boulanger, *Angers*; Cothren, *Beauvais*; Kurmann-Schwarz, *Königsfelden*; Lillich, *Reims*; Pastan and Balcon, *Troyes*; Schleif and Schier, *Katerina’s Windows*.
- 6 Kessler, “Vitrous Arts”; Dell’Acqua, “Between Nature and Artifice.”
- 7 Wright, *Molten Color*.
- 8 Stern, “Roman Glassblowing.”
- 9 Harden et al., *Glass of the Caesars*.
- 10 Harden, “Domestic Window Glass”; Whitehouse, “Window Glass”; concise overview in Dell’Acqua, “Glass.” Excavations have also uncovered small, cast sheets of semi-transparent glass; see Brown and O’Connor, *Glass-Painters*, p. 6, Fig. 1.
- 11 Dell’Acqua, “Between Nature and Artifice,” pp. 97–99.
- 12 Caviness, *Stained Glass*, p. 39.
- 13 For early glass, see Lafond, *Vitrail*, pp. 18–50; Grodecki, *Vitrail Roman*, pp. 37–56; Frodl-Kraft, *Glasmalerei*, pp. 13–28; Dodwell, *Pictorial Arts*, pp. 375–377; and now Dell’Acqua, *Illuminando colorat*, and “Enhancing Luxury.”
- 14 Grodecki, *Vitrail Roman*, pp. 18–20; Grodecki and Brisac, *Gothic Stained Glass*, pp. 13–27; Marks, “Romanesque Parish Church,” and the studies in Luneau et al., “Vitrail roman,” esp. Kurmann-Schwarz, “Vitrail dans le Saint-Empire.”
- 15 A figure based on Delaporte, *Vitraux*, Vol. 1, pp. 6–7, where using his own numbering system, Delaporte calculated that medieval glass remains in 173 out of the 186 apertures in the building.
- 16 On rose windows, see Viollet-le-Duc, “Rose” in *Dictionnaire*, Vol. 8 (1866), pp. 38–69; Cowen, *Rose Window*; Suckale, “Thesen”; and now Lautier, “West

- Rose.” For dimensions, see Grodecki et al., *Vitraux du centre*, pp. 25–44, which uses the French Corpus Vitrearum numbering system, with a concordance to Delaporte’s older system.
- 17 See *infra* n. 37 on silver stain.
 - 18 On techniques of glassmaking: Frodl-Kraft, *Glasmalerei*; Lafond, *Vitrail*, pp. 51–92; Grodecki, *Vitrail Roman*, pp. 11–35; Strobl, *Glastechnik*, pp. 73–127; Brown and O’Connor, *Glass-Painters*, pp. 47–64; Marks, *England*, pp. 28–40; Caviness, *Stained Glass*, pp. 45–57. Royce-Roll, “The Colors” has added important new evidence for understanding how early glass could be colored, apart from the addition of metallic oxides. For red glass, which exceptionally is laminated or “flashed,” see Johnson, *Radiance of Chartres*, pp. 53–66; and Newton and Davison, *Conservation of Glass*, pp. 57–59.
 - 19 Winston, *Inquiry*, I, p. xix; Le Couteur, *Painted Glass*, p. 1.
 - 20 On paint: Grodecki, *Vitrail Roman*, pp. 29–34, Ills. 13–21; Strobl, *Glastechnik*, pp. 94–98, Ill. 10; Caviness, *Stained Glass*, pp. 51–53, Ills. 1–3.
 - 21 Argued by the modern glass painter Robert Sowers (1923–1990) in his “12th-century Windows.”
 - 22 Viollet-le-Duc, “Vitrail,” in *Dictionnaire*, Vol. 9 (1868), pp. 373–462.
 - 23 Grodecki, “Fonctions,” p. 40 and n. 18.
 - 24 Among others: Simson, *Gothic Cathedral*, pp. 50–58.
 - 25 Marks, *England*, p. 37; Kurmann and Kurmann-Schwartz, “Chartres,” p. 134; Pastan, “Process.”
 - 26 Prache, “Stained Glass and Architecture”; Pastan, “Dating.”
 - 27 Caviness, *Sumptuous Arts*, pp. 107–116.
 - 28 French, *York*; Brown, *York Minster*, pp. 217–239; on the restorations at York: <http://yorkglazierstrust.org>, accessed 8 August 2018.
 - 29 Becksmann, *Architektonische Rahmung*; Scholz, “Ornamentverglasungen”; Kurmann-Schwartz, “L’Architecture et le vitrail”; Bugslag, “Architectural Drafting.”
 - 30 On color: Gruber, “Aspects,” pp. 72–77; Gage, “Gothic Glass”; Lillich, “Monastic Stained Glass”; Caviness, “Twelfth-Century Ornamental Windows”; Perrot, “La couleur et le vitrail.”
 - 31 Grodecki, “Vitrail et l’architecture,” p. 14.
 - 32 On limitations of period style: Caviness, “Images of Divine Order”; Shepard, “Memory.”
 - 33 On grisailles: Lafond, “Vitrail du XIVE”; Grodecki and Brisac, *Gothic Stained Glass*, pp. 153–164; Lillich, *Armor*, pp. 6–9, 68–71.
 - 34 On Cistercian grisailles, see Frodl-Kraft, “Einige Randglosse”; Zakin, *French Cistercian Grisailles*; Lillich, “Monastic Stained Glass.”
 - 35 Pastan “Process”; Pastan and Balcon, *Troyes*, pp. 133–142.
 - 36 Gruber, “Aspects”; Lillich, “Band Window”; Gage, “Gothic Glass,” pp. 46–49; Marks, *England*, pp. 124–136; Brinkmann and Lauer, “Glasfenster.”
 - 37 On silver stain: Lafond, “Essai historique sur le jaune d’argent”; Lillich, “European Glass Around 1300”; See Lautier and Sandron, *Antoine de Pise*, pp. 109–116.
 - 38 Lafond, *Vitrail*, p. 74; Kurmann and Kurmann-Schwartz, “Chartres,” p. 140.
 - 39 Among others: Hayward and Caviness, “Introduction,” pp. 16–17.
 - 40 Caviness, “Convenientia”; Perrot, “Verrières du XIIe”; Cothren, “Restaurateurs et créateurs.”
 - 41 Lillich, “Redating.”

- 42 Fritzsche, *Glasmalereien im Regensburger Dom*, Vol. 1, pp. 14–20, 212, and 220–223; Parello, “Der Leviathan.”
- 43 Lafond, *Vitrail*, pp. 74–80; Caviness, “Convenientia”; Bouchon et al., “Belle-Verrière”; Cothren, “Seven Sleepers”; Lillich, “Remembrance”; Shepard, “Memory.” On the Easby glass, see O’Connor, “Twelfth-Century Stained Glass.” On the twelfth-century glass from Troyes, sometimes described as reused older glass, see Pastan, “Fit for a Count”; Balcon, “De l’église”; and Pastan, “J. Pierpont Morgan.”
- 44 Shepard, “Memory,” p. 298.
- 45 Theophilus, *Diversis Artibus*.
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- 50 Suger, *Abbot Suger* 34, pp. 74–77; noted in Brown and O’Connor, *Glass-Painters*, p. 21.
- 51 Cothren, “Suger’s Masters,” pp. 47–51; Lautier, “Peintres-verriers.”
- 52 Brown and O’Connor, *Glass-Painters*, pp. 21, 23, 44–45. On changing practices: Lillich, “Gothic Glaziers”; Lautier and Sandron, *Antoine de Pise*; Scholz, *Entwurf und Ausführung*; Butts and Hendrix, *Painting on Light*, pp. 1–16. For contracts in later English examples: Marks, *England*, pp. 20–27.
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- 54 Becksmann, “Fensterstiftungen.”
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- 56 Suger, *Abbot Suger* 34, pp. 74–77.
- 57 Oidtmann, *Rheinischen Glasmalereien*, Vol. 1, pp. 32–33, 70–72; Grodecki, *Vitrail Roman*, pp. 151–161 (some color); Becksmann, *Deutsche Glasmalerei*, cat. no. 2, pp. 41–43; Kurmann-Schwarz, “Vitrail dans le Saint-Empire,” pp. 122–126; Parello and Gast, “Gerlachus”; Parello, “Funf Felder.”
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- 60 Marks, *England*, pp. 78–85; and Morgan, “What Are They Saying?”
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- 62 Marks, *Northamptonshire*, p. 247 and Figure 24.
- 63 Sheingorn, “Wise Mother,” pp. 75–78.
- 64 Harris, “Glazing and Glossing.”
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- 94 Oidtmann, *Rheinische Glasmalerei*, Vol. 1, pp. 37–38 and Ill. 55; Becksmann, *Deutsche Glasmalerei*, Vol. 1, pp. 31–33 and Ill. 24.
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- 96 Mâle, “Peinture sur verre,” p. 372.
- 97 Mâle, *Religious Art in France*.
- 98 Waetzoldt, “Glasmalerei,” pp. 12–14. Hans Wentzel’s *Glasmalereien in Schwaben*, the first volume published by the German Corpus Vitrearum, was based on research Wentzel undertook while working in the Deutsche Vereins.
- 99 Grodecki, “Dix ans,” p. 24; Frodl-Kraft, “Rückblick,” p. 4. Also Grodecki, “Stained Glass Atelier” (1948) articulating methods for analyzing a stained glass window.
- 100 Hahnloser, “Zur Einführung,” in the first publication of the Corpus Vitrearum, Beer, *Glasmalereien der Schweiz* (1956), p. 11.
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- 103 On regional schools, see Knowles, *York*, pp. 54–98; Lillich, *Armor*, esp. pp. 321–324. Both Hebgin-Barnes, *Lincolnshire*, p. li, and Marks, *Northamptonshire*, p. lxiv emphasize the absence of an indigenous style in the regions they survey.
- 104 Callias Bey et al., *Haute-Normandie*, p. 42.
- 105 Lafond, *Vitrail*, p. 73; Anderson et al., *Glasmalereien in Skandinavien*.

- 106 Helbig, *Vitraux médiévaux conservés in Belge*, pp. 17–42; Hayward, *English and French Medieval Stained Glass*.
- 107 Hayward, “Introduction” in Hayward and Cahn, *Radiance and Reflection*, pp. 32–47; Caviness, “Learning from Forest Lawn,” pp. 963–992; Kurmann-Schwarz and Lautier, “Recherches récentes,” p. 265.
- 108 Ayres et al., *Collections of Stained Glass*.
- 109 Hardwick, “Monkey’s Funeral”; Pastan, “Dating.”
- 110 Marks, *Northamptonshire*, p. 205.
- 111 Williams, *Bread, Wine and Money*; Camille, “Adam”; Marks, *Northamptonshire*, p. 104.
- 112 Pastan, “Tam haereticos”; Harris, “Performative Terms.”
- 113 Caviness, *Visualizing Women*, pp. 100–119; Schleif, “Crucifixion with Virtues.”
- 114 Kemp, *Narratives*, p. 134.
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- 116 Pastoreau, “Programme.”
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- 118 Suger, *Abbot Suger* 33, pp. 62–63.
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- 121 Lowden, “Rois et reines”; Caviness, “Biblical Stories,” pp. 122–127.
- 122 Jordan, *Visualizing Kingship*.
- 123 Cothren, “Theophilus,” p. 333; Caviness, “Biblical Stories,” pp. 145–147.
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- 125 Lautier, “Restaurations récentes”; Hamburger, “Forum”; also see the exchange in the *New York Review of Books* daily blog from 14 to 17 December 2014.
- 126 Caviness, *Sumptuous Arts*, and Harris “Pilgrimage” are good examples outside of Chartres. For Chartres, see Lautier, “Sacred Topography.”
- 127 Lautier, “Peintres-verriers”; Caviness, “Gothic Glass Paintings”; and Pastan and Shepard, “Introduction,” assessing the discipline since writing “Torture of Saint George” (1997).
- 128 A “sociological” approach once greeted with little enthusiasm: see Frodl-Kraft, “Stained Glass from Ebreichsdorf,” p. 403.
- 129 Lillich, “Early Heraldry,” pp. 41–47; but also Cothren, “Who Is the Bishop?”
- 130 Perrot, “Le Vitrail, la croisade”; Brenk, “Bildprogrammatik”; Bugslag, “Ideology and Iconography.”
- 131 Mâle, *Religious Art in France*, pp. 293–320.
- 132 Manhes-Deremble, “Saint Lubin”; Williams, *Bread, Wine and Money*; Guest, “Prodigal’s Journey”; Harris, “Performative Terms.”
- 133 Lautier, “Reliques”; Pastan, “Charlemagne as Saint”; Shepard, “Power Windows.”
- 134 Manhes-Deremble, *Vitraux narratifs*, pp. 32–33, 75–78.
- 135 Lautier, “Canons of Chartres.”
- 136 Also Maines, “Good Work.”
- 137 For a full color view, see Manhes-Deremble, *Vitraux narratifs*, pp. 350–351.
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Toward a Historiography of the Sumptuous Arts

Brigitte Buettner

When Giorgio Vasari published the second edition of the *Lives of the most eminent painters, sculptors and architects* in 1568, he brought together architecture, painting, and sculpture as sister arts. And hailed their common father *disegno* as equivalent to the intellect, the most God-like principle, and least matter-bound element in a human being.¹ Although he allowed other media to make anecdotal showings on the primeval scene of art, his theoretical priorities leave no doubt: the lesser siblings were best tossed into the unenviable bag of the mechanical arts. Thus expelled, the products of goldsmiths, metalworkers, ivory carvers, and enamellers found no place in the discipline's founding narrative. It was to be a tenacious prejudice. Perceived to be ensnared by the bonds of physicality, devoid of stories to tell, lacking the freedom of the painter's brush or the virile imprint of the architect's conceit, the so-called minor arts were pushed to the discursive margins, quite literally confined to a decorative role. That explains why we still lack an adequate terminology with which to designate them as a class of objects; and why the substitution of the charged labels of "minor," "industrial," "applied," or "decorative" art with more neutral designations has done little to lift the stigma of a devaluation in aesthetic worth, seemingly bound up with the shift to both smaller sizes and costly materials.²

The precarious status of what here will be called the sumptuous arts is in fact so deeply etched into the historiography of medieval art that academic medievalists have tended to concentrate on the major arts (book illumination being assimilated to that group as a medieval variant of painting) while most scholars

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evoked in this chapter belonged to the world of museums, a division of labor that persists to this day.

The Medieval *Ornatus*

There is much evidence, both written and visual, that the relationship between different forms of artistic expression was very much the reverse during the Middle Ages. Sumptuous objects were the locus of intensive investments – aesthetic, financial, functional, and symbolic – and their sheer quantity must have been positively staggering. For the most part, we have to rely on written evidence to reconstitute that original splendor in our mind's eyes, since only a fraction of these works of art, religious and secular, has withstood the vagaries of time, if often in painfully fragmentary or substantially altered conditions.

Because medieval society was to a large extent oral, rituals were of paramount importance in the ordering of its practices and beliefs. Ceremonial actions, however, require objects for their performance, and with no church vessels to receive the precious body and blood of Christ, there could have been no liturgy, no way to commemorate the Passion of Christ that re-enacted the regenerative communion between the divine and the human on a daily basis. Along with Romanesque ciboria and Gothic monstrances exquisitely wrought into miniature buildings, patens and chalices beamed their lustrous surfaces onto the altar, marking it as the focal point of attention. Joining other gem-encrusted containers and splendid altar crosses, the signs that made Christ present were collectively known as the *ornatus* (or *ornamenta*) of a church.³

Without brilliantly adorned reliquaries to protect the remains of the most exemplary champions of the Christian faith, there likewise would have been no cult of saints, no pilgrims, no donations, sometimes no elaborate church buildings at all.⁴ Earthly rulers needed dazzling external trappings – a political *ornatus* of sorts – just as much to make their exalted status manifest. But while regalia, that is, crowns, orbs, scepters, and the feudal swords and spurs, ranked as a major group of medieval sumptuous art, scarcely any has come down to us. One of the few survivals is the majestic crown of the Holy Roman Empire (fig. 27-1), an intricate cluster of gold, enamels, gems, and pearls. Now housed in the Schatzkammer in Vienna, it is one of the few secular objects to have received intense scrutiny, albeit mainly in German-language scholarship.

That the only artist ever to attain sainthood was the goldsmith Eligius (Eloy) (d. 660), court artist to two Merovingian kings, later bishop of Noyon and still the patron saint of his profession, is further proof of the high status that his craft enjoyed throughout the Middle Ages. In Romanesque and Gothic times, many well-regarded churchmen are reported to have excelled in this medium (whether myth or fact is irrelevant here). Best known is Bernward (d. 1022), the canonized abbot of the powerful Benedictine abbey of St. Michael at Hildesheim. Sources present him as a practicing artisan, and we know him as an energetic patron



FIGURE 27-1 Crown of the Holy Roman Empire, late tenth/eleventh century, gold, enamels, precious stones. Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Schatzkammer. Source: photo courtesy of Bildarchiv Foto Marburg/Art Resource, NY.

who commissioned, among other things, stately bronze doors and a monumental column in the same material to serve as a base for a now lost Crucifix, both notable for their technical mastery and skilled storytelling.⁵ The prestige of metalworkers, who handled rare, resplendent, and therefore auratic substances is also demonstrated by the fact that the first documented case of an ennobled artist is that of Raoul, goldsmith to the French king Philip the Fair. Other artisans are known by name, either because they proudly signed the things they manufactured or because they are mentioned in written documents. Besides well-known names, such as Nicholas of Verdun (d. 1205) and Hugo d'Oignies (d. c. 1240), one can think of the early thirteenth-century Guillaume Boucher who, having

moved from Paris to the kingdom of Hungary, was taken captive and found himself in the distant Mongol capital of Karakorum. There he fashioned for Mōngke Khan a much admired silver fountain, shaped like a tree whose branches dispensed wine and other intoxicating beverages.⁶ And though it has not been conclusively proven, some scholars like to identify Roger of Helmarshausen (a Mosan artist to whom several accomplished works from the first quarter of the twelfth century can be ascribed) with the author of the *De diversis artibus*, arguably the most important medieval treatise on the arts. Signed with the fancy-sounding Greek pseudonym Theophilus Presbyter, this elegantly written technical tract, prefaced by considerations about the theological import of artistic endeavors, provides invaluable insights into the working methods of painting (book 1), stained glass (book 2), and, in the most extensive part, metalworking (book 3).⁷

The role played by the sumptuous arts in the most pointed artistic controversies of the day confirms their pivotal cultural relevance. During the first millennium, disagreements over what constituted legitimate and illegitimate visual practices had rumbled around representational images, carved and painted. After the year 1000, the crux of disputes shifted to objects and their social, cognitive, and affective values. In the most famous of these debates, the eloquent Suger (d. 1151), abbot of the French royal abbey of Saint-Denis, sparred with the equally charismatic Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153). The Cistercian notoriously championed an attitude of minimalist restraint in matters seductive to fleshly eyes. In an incisive tract on monastic customs sent as a letter in 1125 to a fellow monk, and now known as the *Apologia*, he aired his objections to mainstream Benedictine monasticism, including his fundamental opposition to what he considered superfluous and, therefore, morally corrupting embellishments. And while his views on the “deformed beauty and yet beautiful deformity” of cloister capitals easily count as the most frequently cited excerpts of medieval art criticism, it needs to be stressed that it is the “things shining in beauty,” those that should be mere “dung” to monks, which made him quiver more than anything else with disparagement. Bernard concedes that a priest’s mission differs from a monk’s, and that pastoral care can excuse the need to “stimulate the devotion of carnal people with material ornaments.”⁸ Nonetheless, in an argument that would ring with renewed urgency in the ears of Protestant reformers and other revolutionary “idol”-smashers, he stigmatized the use of reliquaries because in his eyes their main purpose was to wrest donations from impressionable devotees.

In essence, Bernard rejected the traditional justification for the commission of ornate works of art as a proper means to honor God (*ad honorem Dei*), a position many of his contemporaries supported practically and defended philosophically. Some of them also subscribed to an idea tempered by the heady vapors of neo-Platonic mysticism: that material beauty could be a quasi-sacred manifestation of divine glory. Suger proved to be the most vigorous partisan of this line of argument. As an untiring impresario of his own achievements, he made sure that his opinions would be disseminated, and remembered, by writing them down. His autobiographical accounts devote relatively little attention to Saint-Denis’ decisive contribution to the shaping of Gothic architecture and sculpture. Stained glass

engages him more, in part for its jewel-like radiance (he paraphrases blue windows as *materia saphirorum*), and in part for its receptiveness to complex iconographic programs. Yet he goes to great lengths to justify spending vast amounts of energy and a great deal of money on artful *vasa sacra* adorned with the rarest gemstones that he could secure. And it is during moments of rapt contemplation of objects – like the miraculously surviving chalice crafted of a delicately variegated fluted agate bowl of antique provenance (fig. 27-2) – that the abbot experiences something like a stony ecstasy:



FIGURE 27-2 Chalice of Abbot Suger, second/first century BCE sardonyx cup; mounting in silver gilt with filigree, precious stones and glass insets, c.1140. Washington: National Gallery of Art, Widener Collection 1942.9.277. Source: photo courtesy of National Gallery of Art.

Thus, when – out of my delight in the beauty of the house of God – the loveliness of the many-colored gems has called me away from external cares, and worthy meditation has induced me to reflect, transferring that which is material to that which is immaterial, on the diversity of the sacred virtues: then it seems to me that I see myself dwelling, as it were, in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of earth nor entirely in the purity of Heaven; and that, by the grace of God, I can be transported from this inferior to that higher world in an anagogical manner.⁹

Suger was a trailblazer in assigning anagogic powers to luminous matter, in effect recognizing its redemptive ability to lift us up from the “slime of the earth” toward spiritual rewards.¹⁰ In a more traditional and less lyrically inclined reasoning, William Durandus, bishop of Mende (d. 1296), justified the ecclesiastical sponsoring of costly implements as an oblation that was sure to please God; and added, again *contra* Bernard, that the faithful precisely need to divest themselves of what they covet most because that is an effective way to combat innate human avarice. The first of the three books of his *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* offers an extensive symbolic interpretation of all the constituent parts of a church – its architectural elements, painted and sculptural décor as well as of the “ornament of the altar,” meaning the containers to house the host, altar cloths, phylacteries (or reliquaries), candlesticks, crosses, banners, and liturgical books (I, 3). The fact that he understands, for example, an altar cross placed between two candlesticks to represent Christ straddling the Jews and Gentiles makes his an accessible albeit quite rigidly programmatic manual. That did not hamper its success. Not only does the *Rationale* survive in many manuscript copies, but it also was one of the first books to leave the printing press. Furthermore, it can boast of an early English translation published in 1843 by John Mason Neale and Benjamin Webb, founders of the undergraduate club dubbed the Cambridge Camden Society, primarily remembered for its crusade in the name of a High Church revival in Anglican England and its parallel embrace of a hard-edged nostalgia for the medieval past.

The Age of Rediscovery

Burdened with a double handicap – medieval and mechanical –, the sumptuous arts were to be a latecomer, and often a timid one, in the great movement initiated by pioneer antiquarians and amateurs that led to the rediscovery of the Middle Ages in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A decisive early spark fomenting the interest in “national antiquities” came quite fortuitously with the much-publicized excavation of the tomb, complete with beautifully wrought insignia and items of personal adornment, of the Merovingian king Childeric in Tournai (Belgium) in 1653. These objects, somewhat incongruously mixed with Egyptian beetle ornaments, were to figure prominently in the capacious five-volume *Les monumens de la monarchie française* published between 1729

and 1735 by Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741), the first pictorial atlas to chronicle the succession of French reigns. Montfaucon had been trained by the eminent medieval paleographer and church historian Jean Mabillon in the learned world of the Benedictine congregation of Saint-Maur; and had edited and translated Origen, St. John Chrysostom, and Athanasius before moving into the uncharted waters of visual documentation. He methodically collected prints and drawings that recorded often long-gone Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Gallic artifacts, although for this publication he also recycled the graceful watercolors made by Roger de Gaignières (1642–1715), an earlier student of medieval art who by the end of his life had assembled a collection numbering several thousands of drawings and casts documenting medieval and Renaissance castles, tombs, inscriptions, portraits, costumes, and more.¹¹ Compared to the immense success of the earlier *L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures*, Montfaucon's survey of the "barbarian" centuries, recovered from oblivion, as he himself asserts, not because of any intrinsic artistic value, inspired so little interest that he was never able to bring it to completion. However, the parts that saw publication turned out to be path-breaking, and were subsequently used by anyone wanting to envision the formative stages of French (royal) history, brought to life in fine reproductions of funerary monuments, seals, coins, miniatures, tapestries, and regalia. Even more interesting is the fact that, regardless of numerous historical inaccuracies, Montfaucon's method of embedding, indeed of dissolving artistic objects into a more general historical context can be seen as prescient of modern interdisciplinary modes of inquiry.

More squarely rooted in the nascent discipline of art history, the lavishly illustrated *Histoire de l'art par les monumens, depuis sa décadence au IV^e siècle jusqu'à son renouvellement au XVI^e siècle* was written by the French savant, collector, and Roman expatriate Séroux d'Agincourt (1730–1814), and published posthumously once the upheavals of the Revolution had settled. Unlike Montfaucon's contextual framework, this author arranged works of art according to independent series, wedded together by an internal logic: the succession of styles. As is typical for an Enlightenment intellectual, much of his assessment of the cultural accomplishments of the period he covers is negative. Yet the hundreds of attractive plates containing several thousands of elegant if overtly classizicing line engravings did much to introduce an art that would inspire later generations of amateurs and artists alike.¹² The "major" arts, mostly of Italian origins, tower above the handful of specimens in other media, such as the superb Carolingian altar frontal executed by Master Voulvinus, rendered from different points of view across a number of plates; some coins and small-scale ivories here and there; and the forlorn Romanesque chalice from the abbey of Weingarten signed by Magister Conradus, placed at the center of the single plate that illustrates "Works executed out of Italy from the commencement of the decline to the 14th century."

Reviled as the epitome of the unsavory alliance between church and aristocracy, the wholesale destruction of medieval art during the French Revolution did not fail to produce its opposite: the desire to preserve, and therefore the

need to understand, even to appreciate. Formed in the iconoclastic crucible, but acting against its lethal consequences for works created during the Ancien Régime, an early collector and student of medieval objects was the Lyonnais painter Pierre-Henri Révoil (1776–1842). A pupil of Jacques-Louis David, he modified his teacher's neo-Classicism to initiate the first truly neo-medieval movement; and propped the credibility of the so-named Troubadour Style by filling his canvases with colorful imitations of the objects he avidly collected (what he nicely called his “cabinet de gothicités,” and which the Louvre bought in 1828). More decisively, the Revolution spawned the first public museum of medieval art. Created by Alexandre Lenoir (1794–1816) as the Musée des Monuments Français (1794–1816), its period-rooms brimmed with medieval sculptural ensembles saved from the Jacobin hammer; now displayed as works of art, they were stripped, as much as possible, of liturgical and monarchic associations. It inspired Alexandre du Sommerard (1779–1842) to found the first permanent museum of medieval and Renaissance decorative arts. In 1832 he opened his growing collection to the public, suggestively displayed in the rooms he rented in the Hôtel de Cluny in Paris, the present-day site of the Musée National du Moyen Âge.¹³ Here the tone was more sentimental. Viewers were coaxed into discovering broad facets of medieval life as objects illustrating devotional life or the art of warfare alternated with romantic domestic interiors arranged into collage-like installations. The strength of the collection resided in works from the later Middle Ages, yet Sommerard also had been able to secure such unique earlier pieces as a suite of three Visigothic votive crowns, then recently excavated at Guarrazar in Spain, or the golden altar frontal from the cathedral of Basel commissioned in the early eleventh century by Emperor Henry II. The French state bought the collection upon Sommerard's death – these were conservative times ushered in by the Orléans-Bourbon Restoration under which the vogue for the “age of saint Louis” reached a passionate climax.

By then, the fashion for the “Gothik” age ran high throughout Europe, often fueled by reactionary, nationalistic, and sectarian religious agendas. Architectural follies with turrets, crockets, and ogives had of course been imparting an exotic frisson to English parks since the late eighteenth century, but now churches and secular buildings steeped in the same resurrected idiom sprang up everywhere, like so many pinnacled mushrooms.¹⁴ Somewhat paradoxically, the most decisive opportunity for a wider public to become acquainted with more rarefied medieval relics than cathedrals arose when the “Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations” opened its doors in 1851 outside London. The magnificent glass and iron “cathedral” erected by William Paxton (and quickly given the mineral nickname of Crystal Palace) sheltered more than 100,000 industrial and natural products as well as handicrafts sent – often by way of coercion – from all over the world. Amid this extravagant and so utterly physical celebration of British colonial might, only one specific time period had the (now suspect) honor of being singled out: the centrally located Medieval Court designed by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812–1852). By that time, the trend-setting Gothic revivalist



FIGURE 27-3 A.W.N. Pugin's Medieval Court, Crystal Palace, 1851. Source: reproduced from *Dickinson's Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition of 1851* (London, 1852), Vol. 2, Section XII.

had completed not only the neo-Tudor Windsor castle but also many other places of leisure and worship inclusive of their furnishings. Pugin's room (fig. 27-3) appears chock-full with church vessels, secular plate, tapestries, furniture, sculpted objects, and jewelry, all jostling for space and viewers' attention. Contemporaries, however, hailed its aesthetic unity, finding it "attractive" and "picturesque" despite the "clumsy contrivances of the middle ages" it sheltered. In reality, the items on display had been designed "in the mediaeval style;" that is, in the fastidiously archeological manner for which Pugin and his associates were celebrated because, production methods notwithstanding, they tried to remain as true as possible to medieval forms, materials, and designs.¹⁵

The Medieval Court was not to everyone's taste, either because it showcased objects from "the culminating point of barbarism" or was too intensely redolent of popery. But whether one was for or against him, Pugin set the tone; all subsequent connoisseurs and scholars, irrespective of their religious and political leanings, had to move within the parameters he had staked out with great historicist sensibility. Endless arguments arose around the usefulness of rescuing the Middle Ages and, if so, how and why; ever more heated theoretical debates pitched those who defended the advantages of mechanized production against those who condemned it as a soulless incubator of alienated conformity. Supporters of the "industrial arts" promoted the view that a revival of past cooperative working methods could

only improve on current standards of production; possibly, on morals too. After Pugin, that belief was most ardently advocated by the Arts and Crafts Movement. John Ruskin (1819–1900) and William Morris (1834–1896) were its tutelary figures, and both were as much lovers of things Gothic as they were committed to easing the distinction between design and execution, fine and applied arts.¹⁶ With even more lasting consequences, the reformation of present tastes and technical know-how proved to be a robust argument in the hands of those who pressed governments to endow museums devoted to the applied arts. The first of these, built in the aftermath of the Crystal Palace exhibition, was the South Kensington Museum (forerunner to the Victoria and Albert Museum), which was then emulated in short succession across Europe in like-minded institutions that were generally enriched with sizeable departments of medieval art. Private collectors soon followed suit with the fervor of the newly converted; and since they were few and far between, they were able to bring home medieval objects quite literally by the cartloads. One can here remember individuals as diverse as the Lyon merchants Jean-Baptiste Carrand (1792–1871) and his son Louis (1827–1888), who ended up donating their vast collection to their adoptive city Florence where it forms the core of the Museo del Bargello, established in 1864 in explicit imitation of the Cluny and South Kensington museums. Or the canon of Cologne Cathedral, assembler of a prodigious collection of church art, and founder of the influential *Zeitschrift für christliche Kunst*, Alexander Schnütgen (1843–1918); the Russian diplomat stationed in Paris, Count Alexander Basilewsky, whose 750 or so pieces, many of outstanding quality and significance, Czar Alexander III bought in 1884 for the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; finally, and a little later, the New York financier and omnivorous collector John Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913), who had breathed his first medieval air at the Crystal Palace exhibition during his European study years.

Scholarly oriented publications did not lag behind. Another visitor who had been swept off his feet at the Great Exhibition was the lawyer turned medievalist Jules Labarte (1797–1880). He had curated an already legendary collection assembled by his father-in-law, the art merchant Louis-Fidel Debruge-Dumesnil, when in 1864 he started to publish the *Histoire des arts industriels au Moyen Âge et à l'époque de la Renaissance*. Acknowledging the efforts of the rare daring souls who had previously ventured into this *terra incognita*, Labarte's preface offers a poignant summation of the difficulties of seeing, let alone of documenting, much of this material. His work's success undoubtedly depended as much on the fact that it offered the first modern overview of medieval small-scale art as on its generous illustrations. For those he relied not only on engravings and chromolithographs but also on the then-innovative technology of photolithography. And when subtle tinting enhance the plates, the result is at once elegant and far crisper than early black-and-white photographic prints.¹⁷ Ensuing publications that sought to emulate or improve on Labarte similarly covered a broad chronological range whilst relying on catchy illustrations. One work that stands out is *Les Arts au Moyen Âge et à l'époque de la Renaissance*. Its author Paul Lacroix (1806–1884)

was an erudite scholar and writer of best-selling historical novels and plays all in one. Conceived as a one-volume distillation of an earlier eight-volume work on the history and customs of the Middle Ages, he hoped that this version – pruned of “scholarly roughness” and therefore likely to be financially more appealing – would attract young readers, women “interested in serious readings,” and the family “who likes to gather around a book both instructive and pleasant.”

Labarte’s systematic approach by medium, chronology, and national schools did not put an end to projects in the eclectic mode made fashionable by Pugin’s *Medieval Court*. Thus, a coeval German publication happily continued to mix and match objects of the most diverse kind and facture. The main author of *Kunstgewerke und Gerätschaften des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*, Jakob Heinrich von Hefner-Alteneck, hailed from a prosperous family from Aschaffenburg and, after moving to Munich, eventually became the second director of the Bavarian National Museum. Despite the loss of his right arm, he was a gifted draughtsman; so much so that he provided the majority of the drawings for the approximately 400 objects reproduced to exacting standards in hand-colored copper and steel engravings, occasionally complemented by informative line drawings of details and alternate views (fig. 27-4). Time-consuming and pricey, it took 10 years for the three volumes to appear, augmented in the second edition with a three-tome companion on the history of costume.¹⁸ Destined for the upscale market, this encyclopedic work can be viewed as the first coffee-table book on the medieval sumptuous arts.

Yet the search for disciplinary credibility favored enterprises that mustered the classificatory rigor of a natural science. In that sense, the hefty dictionaries and glossaries painstakingly extracted from primary and archival sources by some of the best connoisseurs of medieval art exemplify the entwinement of scientism and historicism characteristic of the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁹ Indefatigable Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) compiled the most famous. Now chiefly remembered for his sweeping architectural restorations of medieval buildings, he in fact shared with his English revivalist colleagues a deep interest in the decorative arts. That led him to publish the even now indispensable *Dictionnaire raisonné du mobilier français*. It is worth noting that volumes two to six bear the imprint of A(uguste) Morel & Cie, the same Parisian *libraire-éditeur* who published Labarte’s volumes, and a leader in the nascent market of art publications with a particular emphasis on the applied arts. Viollet-le-Duc also designed some of the most persuasive neo-Gothic *objets d’art*. Still extant is the impeccably historicist receptacle for the hallowed relic of the Crown of Thorns, which had been transferred to the newly installed treasury of Notre-Dame in Paris. The object was executed by Placide Poussielgue-Rusand, a goldsmith much in vogue who headed an enterprising revivalist studio that catered to an international clientele, shipping its neo-*ornamenta* to buyers from Jerusalem to Buenos Aires. Among the 2324 items advertised in the 1893 catalog of the firm, one could find an imitation of the cross reliquary Viollet-le-Duc had created for the cathedral of Sens; and buy it in two versions, one in copper gilt for 5000 francs, the other in silver gilt for 8000 francs.²⁰



1250 - 1300 .

I.H.v H.A. del:

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FIGURE 27-4 German Mortar with drolleries, c.1400, whereabouts unknown.
 Source: reproduced from Hefner-Alteneck and Becker, *Kunstwerke und Geräthschaften*,
 1863, Vol. 3, pl. 59 (reprint edn. p. 379).

On the whole, these publications have weathered the passing of methodological currents better than the more descriptive texts. Among those, worth remembering are the vivid panoramas drawn by Henry Havard (1838–1921) and by the prolific Emile Molinier (1857–1906). The latter’s claim in the introduction to the *Histoire générale des arts appliqués à l’industrie du V^e à la fin du XVIII^e siècle* that the “industrial arts” have definitively left the scholarly limbo is a good – if overly optimistic – reminder of the distance covered since Vasari.²¹ It must have been a source of particular pride when, as one of the art curators working for the Universal Exhibition of 1900, he was given a chance to bring together under a same roof dozens of exceptional creations from the Middle Ages. Loaned from provincial repositories and private collections, the display of styles and formats even educated viewers continued to scorn undoubtedly benefited from the bombastic but thoroughly modern frame of the Petit Palais. In turn, the “retrospective on French art” section bestowed a veneer of historic depth to the country’s bid for global artistic preeminence.

Jacob von Falke (1825–1897) concurred with the idea that art history had turned a page when it came to the “industrial arts.” He authored the first comprehensive German survey, *Geschichte des deutschen Kunstgewerbes*, a study meant to compensate for the heavily Franco-centric slant of the literature then available. As with his other wide-ranging publications on the subject, von Falke’s textbook remains an excellent source of information – once clipped, that is, of its patriotic partiality. For that compelled its author more than once to laboriously reassign objects, hitherto considered Byzantine imports, to Ottonian workshops; or else to campaign for a German origin of champlevé enamel against the contention of “French archeologists” that the technique had not only been perfected but invented in Limoges as well. Nationalistically inflected differences of opinion notwithstanding, he and Molinier shared a similar professional profile. Both were leading museum curators, the first in the Department of Decorative Arts at the Louvre, the second at the Museum für Kunst und Industrie in Vienna (he played a key role in the museum’s founding in 1864 in tandem with his more famous mentor Rudolf von Eitelberger, the initiator of the Vienna School of art history). The two men also were among the first to champion the first-hand study of objects while simultaneously hoisting them to the level of academic respectability: one offered public lectures and trained younger scholars at the École du Louvre while the other was appointed to a chair at the University of Vienna.

The Age of the Catalog

Compared to the flurry of publishing activity in the later nineteenth century, the early part of the twentieth century was decidedly quieter. The grand mappings of medieval sumptuous arts had run their course, and a more modest period settled in. Not in quantity – the volume of specialized studies on particular objects, artists, and regional schools continued to grow – but rather in breath, with most of the writing,

now confined to scholarly journals, focusing on questions of dating, attribution, and style. The one type of publication that stands out is the *catalogue raisonné* of all known objects in a given class gathered by schools and themes, further organized according to stylistic and formal genealogies. Thus Goldschmidt's mighty corpuses of Carolingian, Ottonian, and Romanesque ivories were complemented by the one devoted to (French) Gothic ivories by Koechlin. Unlike many individuals evoked so far, Adolph Goldschmidt (1863–1944) was a prominent art historian of his generation, and an inspired teacher who formed many leading younger scholars when he took over Heinrich Wölfflin's chair at the University of Berlin. Interestingly, both he and the independent scholar and collector Raymond Koechlin (1860–1931) were keenly interested in Islamic art, and that familiarity with visual languages that differed from dominant realistic Western norms made them more attuned to the expressive powers of medieval ivories, which they excelled at describing with flawless precision down to the most imperceptible changes in look and subject matter.

One student of Goldschmidt was Georg Swarzenski (1876–1957), who, like his mentor, was forced to flee Nazi Germany. Once in the United States, he participated in a landmark exhibition that kindled the American reception of medieval “decorative” arts, helping them to move from the sphere of private collectors into that of public institutions. That was the show on the so-called Guelph Treasure, which its impoverished owner, the Duke of Brunswick-Hanover, had sold to a consortium of Frankfurt art dealers in 1929 and was displayed to much acclaim the following year in several American cities in search of prospective buyers. Overcoming the initial tepid response from trustees who worried that such art was “beyond the appreciation and understanding of the general public for whom the Museum had been built,” William M. Milliken, then director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, bought the best pieces.²² Swarzenski went on to mount a more comprehensive and equally successful show on the “Arts of the Middle Ages, 1000–1400” a decade later when he was in charge of the medieval collection at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts (a show only surpassed in 1970 with the Metropolitan Museum of Arts's Centennial Exhibition *The Year 1200*, for which hundreds of objects crossed the ocean). Even more important in our context is Swarzenski's son, Hanns. He had joined his father at the MFA in 1948, and is the author of *Monuments of Romanesque Art*, a textbook that, despite drab reproductions and a terse introduction, had the merit of revealing to American readers the many hidden marvels of what he classified as “church treasury art.” Broader in chronological scope, yet narrower in methodology with its avowed espousal of an “unrepentant history of style,” was the 1972 contribution by Peter Lasko – long-time director of London's Courtauld Institute and one of the finest experts on medieval small-scale art – to the widely read Pelican History of Art.²³

The wave of reconstruction after World War II also propelled medieval works of art into the center of an exhibition activity that in the best iterations managed to combine high scholarly merit with atmospheric qualities, a display philosophy that continues to inform choices to this day. In France, the tone was given in 1964 with the hugely popular *Les Trésors des églises de France*, which assembled in the rooms

of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs the extraordinary number of 649 reliquaries and *vasa sacra*. In the introductory essay to the catalog, Jean Taralon, member of the Commission des Monuments Historiques, confidently stated that the “arts previously qualified as minor” were now firmly ensconced in the art historical canon. In retrospect, one has to wonder if this shiny and newly sacralized patrimony of national treasures, marshaled from grand cathedrals and obscure parish churches, was summoned to the capital for scholarly reasons only – did the parade of venerable objects not attest to a glorious history, one moreover that could spread its healing balm on a country recovering from the humiliation of military defeat and the stain of fascism?

Post-war Germany has supplied the best up-to-date information on medieval sumptuous arts. Ambitious exhibitions have been mounted there almost every year, arguably again as a not-so-unconscious strategy to retrieve what survives from a distant past untainted by the murderous sins of the recent past. And, keeping pace with a general trend in art history, each show was enshrined in steadily weightier catalogs, increasingly gorged with glossy color illustrations. *Die Zeit der Staufer*, mounted in Stuttgart in Spring 1977, holds the record with some 675,000 visitors and 150,000 copies of the five-volume catalog sold.²⁴ Remarkable for their size and scholarly perspectives, some also experimented with unorthodox displays. *Rhein und Maas*, for example, did away with glass cases for the massively bejeweled Mosan reliquary shrines, putting them directly in contact with viewers, one imagines, to awe-inspiring effect (fig. 27-5). Typically, these German exhibitions



FIGURE 27-5 Viewers looking at Nicholas of Verdun’s Shrine of the Virgin, “Rhein und Maas” exhibition, Cologne 1972. Source: reproduced from the exhibition catalog, edited by Anton Legner, ill. 59.

have invited metalwork and ivories, textiles and daily artifacts made of humbler materials to deploy their multimedia effects alongside their better-known sister arts in the interpretation of particular cultural areas, individual patrons, or specific time periods. Drawing on the expertise of scholars in a wide range of disciplines, they have regularly featured essays by some of the best specialists of medieval sumptuous arts, including Herman Fillitz, Renate Kroos, Anton Legner, Anton von Euw, and Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen.

A comparable move from catalogs tilted toward stylistic and technical concerns to ones that encourage a thematic approach has taken place in other countries as well, albeit more sporadically. Thus, one can compare the interdisciplinary 1987 exhibition devoted to the Gothic era in England, *The Age of Chivalry*, to its earlier and methodologically more limited counterpart on *English Romanesque Art*. Reliquaries and church treasuries have been the chief beneficiaries of this trend. A milestone was Henk van Os's 2000 *The Way to Heaven*, stylishly choreographed in the spaces of a church in Amsterdam and a former convent in Utrecht, which also had the merit to showcase rarely seen objects from the Russian Hermitage Museum. And – as both a continuation and critical engagement with it – the visually and conceptually powerful *Treasures of Heaven* conceived at the Walters Art Museum by a team led by Martina Bagnoli, which likewise proved that medieval art can reach a wide audience when properly framed. Still, it needs to be said that one of the unfortunate consequences of the dominance of exhibitions in this field has been to leave objects that are not part of the museum circuit languishing in barely accessible treasuries, as insufficiently documented as they were in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, preeminent medieval centers of production, such as Paris, Limoges, Venice, Cologne, and the Mosan region, have tended to eclipse other geographic areas, especially those in more “peripheral” countries, like Scandinavia and Eastern Europe.

Toward an Academic Renaissance?

By the 1980s, thousands of surviving items in bronze, enamels, ivory, and hardstones had been cataloged.²⁵ Then came the task of incorporating them into larger interpretative schemes capable of addressing issues of patronage, iconographic programs, the production of cultural meanings, and the circulation of objects at both the local and the global level. Thus Johann Michael Fritz's *Goldschmiedekunst* offers not only an impressive examination of Gothic metalwork (with detailed information on more than 800 objects) but also a sociologically inflected introduction that queries function and consumption.²⁶ Other publications may center on a particular category of objects yet are similarly inclusive in scope. The work of Ronald Lightbown, a former curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, can be singled out. His enormously informative *Mediaeval European Jewellery* catalogs the objects that were in his care all the while drawing an admirably thick picture of the making, collecting, and uses of jewelry.

Thematically oriented studies have done much to enlarge our knowledge of the workings of sumptuous objects in (elite) life during the central Middle Ages. Methodologically unique was the fruit of the collaboration between the innovative, if politically fraught, historian Percy Ernst Schramm (whose interest in visual culture had been kindled by Aby Warburg) and the manuscript specialist Florentine Mütterich. Reverting to the literal meaning of monument, their *Denkmale der deutschen Könige und Kaiser* led them somewhat provocatively to exclude large-scale representations, and rely instead on reliquaries, manuscripts and their opulent covers, regalia, and even musical instruments – in sum, on any “memorial” upon which rulers’ “eyes have rested, across which their fingers have glided.” In a correspondingly unprecedented move, the authors extended the notion of patronage to things obtained by inheritance, purchase, and gift, with the refreshing if slightly disconcerting result that a Carolingian reliquary possessed at a later date, say by Emperor Henry II, was taken to be his monument.²⁷

Michael Camille, an art historian of untiring talent who died prematurely, also reformulated many of the questions we continue to ask today. His *Medieval Art of Love* is expansive in coverage, and looks at anything from Limoges and ivory caskets to jewels and textiles in order to unravel how medieval artists and viewers asked physical tokens to act as a “manufacture of desire.” Herbert Kessler’s energizing survey *Seeing Medieval Art* likewise dispenses with the conventional approach of separating medieval art by media, instead foregrounding materiality and communication across a range of visual formats. The recent “material turn” in the humanities unquestionably has been a boon to the study of the artworks under consideration here.²⁸ And because it dovetails with the “global turn,” tracking the industrial operations and transnational commercial mechanisms that brought portable artwork as well as highly desirable raw materials via international trading channels from Africa (ivory, gold), the Near East and India (pearls, gems), and China (silks, porcelain) to European consumers, has encouraged medieval art historians to initiate more sustained conversations with specialists in the arts of Islam and Asia.²⁹ Attention to cross-cultural dimensions already informed the publications by Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, above all her multidisciplinary study on the cult of relics and pilgrimages. *Highways of the Faith* remains a lively introduction to the subject, particularly for the skillful way in which it relates reliquaries to physical movements stimulated by piety, commerce, and war.

There is no question that the study of the “minor” arts has made great strides. If it continues to lag behind, it is at least in part due to the continuing lack of access to holdings outside major repositories, especially when located in countries other than Germany where much has been made to revamp the display of church treasuries and refurbish departments of decorative arts to meet current curatorial standards. Insofar as the vast majority of ecclesiastical and princely objects have been destroyed, written sources play a major role to assess what was there and, if those documents are sufficiently forthcoming, how things looked. It therefore says something about the state of the field if the compilations put together almost a century ago by Otto Lehmann-Brockhaus (1909–1999) remain unmatched.³⁰

Culling thousands of excerpts from church inventories, chronicles, cartularies, and other historical documents, his volumes offer a convenient one-stop access to vocabularies, morphologies, and taxonomies pertaining to long-lost artifacts. His one-time assistant Bernhard Bischoff continued the task in *Mittelalterliche Schatzverzeichnisse*, editing his material to impeccable philological standards. But such projects are extremely taxing and receive little academic recognition, which undoubtedly explains why the planned second volume never saw the light.³¹

Teamwork is the best answer to processing “big data.” Exemplary in this regard is the Gothic Ivories Project based at the Courtauld Institute of Art, a model of institutional collaboration that bridges the museum and academic worlds.³² Launched in 2008, it nicely bills itself as the “Koechlin for the 21st-century,” although it has made significant additions to the corpus that the Alsatian scholar had assembled with extraordinary perseverance but artisanal methods. Thorough, flexible, and user-friendly, Courtauld ivory database contains more than 5000 images. Many in color and are fully “zoomable,” another major improvement over past publications limited to grainy thumbnail reproductions. It is to be hoped that works in other media as well as written sources will benefit from similar initiatives. Expanding digital archives, facilitating the consultation of high-resolution image databases, developing digital mapping projects, and harnessing 3D visualization software are exciting tools that can move what medieval viewers considered to be major arts into twenty-first century scholarship and public awareness.

Notes

- 1 In the first edition of 1550, Vasari gave more credit to goldsmithing, at least as a medium in which many important painters and sculptors had been trained. It is likely that he downplayed its importance in the later edition as a consequence of his animosity toward his rival Benvenuto Cellini, the then most celebrated practitioner of that art.
- 2 As addressed by several authors in the volume edited by Hourihane, *From Minor to Major*.
- 3 For the liturgical function, see Braun, *Der christliche Altar* and *Das christliche Altargerät*; also McLachlan, “Liturgical Vessels and Implements.”
- 4 On reliquaries, see Chapter 3 by Hahn in this volume.
- 5 See Grammacini, “Zur Ikonologie,” and Weinryb, *The Bronze Object*, for a combined discussion of the technical and cultural dimensions of this material. Alphonse Napoléon Didron, the “inventor” of medieval iconography, already devoted his *Manuel des œuvres de bronze et d’orfèvrerie* to things (primarily liturgical vessels) crafted in bronze.
- 6 Olschki, *Guillaume Boucher*, pp. 45–106.
- 7 Also known as the *Schedula diversarum artium*, following the title provided by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who discovered the manuscript while he was librarian to the Duke of Brunswick in Wolfenbüttel. English translation by Dodwell, *The Various Arts*; Latin ed. with German translation of book 3 by Brepohl, *Theophilus Presbyter*.
- 8 See Rudolph, *The “Things of Greater Importance,”* for the text, translation, and a detailed examination of the art historical implications of Bernard’s *Apologia* in the context of contemporary monastic culture.

- 9 Suger, *Abbot Suger*, pp. 62–65. On spolia in general, see Chapter 14 by Kinney in this volume.
- 10 As trenchantly argued by Bonne, “Pensée de l’art et pensée théologique.”
- 11 Many of the works reproduced by Gaignières have since been lost, which is why his documentation has become an irreplaceable source of information. His collection, as other publications discussed in here, can be accessed online through the Gallica digital collection at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Paris): <http://data.bnf.fr/documents-by-rdt/12115323/4030/page1>, accessed 9 August 2018.
- 12 See Mondini, *Mittelalter im Bild*.
- 13 He published its contents in the lavish Du Sommerard, *Les Arts au moyen âge*, completed after his death by his son Edmond. Early collectors of medieval art are discussed by Letellier, “Medieval and Renaissance Art.” On the modern medieval museum, see Chapter 39 by Brown in this volume.
- 14 On medieval revivals, see Chapter 37 by Bizzarro in this volume.
- 15 For Pugin’s ideas in this realm, see his beautifully contrived publications, *Designs for Gold and Silversmiths* and the *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament*.
- 16 The texts assembled by Frank, *The Theory of Decorative Art*, offer a handy overview of these debates.
- 17 As detailed by Aubenas and Smith, “La Naissance de l’illustration photographique,” pp. 169–196.
- 18 Discussed by Warncke in the introduction to the reprint edition.
- 19 Texier, *Dictionnaire d’orfèvrerie*; Laborde, *Glossaire français*; Gay, *Glossaire archéologique*.
- 20 Maison Poussielgue-Rusand Fils, *Manufacture d’orfèvrerie, de bronzes et de chasublerie* (Paris, 1893), p. 224, no. 517.
- 21 Molinier died before completing his work, and the fifth and last volume on tapestries was published by Jules Guiffrey. His career is examined by Bos, “Émile Molinier,” pp. 309–321.
- 22 Quoted after Heather McCune Bruhn, “William M. Milliken and Medieval Art,” in Smith, *Medieval Art in America*, p. 197.
- 23 Swarzenski, *Monuments*, and Lasko, *Ars Sacra*, a title borrowed from a German exhibition mounted in 1950 in Munich. On Swarzenski father and son, see McClintock, “Arts of the Middle Ages and the Swarzenskis” in Smith, *Medieval Art in America*, pp. 203–208, and Shirin Fozi, “The Time is Opportune,” pp. 425–439.
- 24 I take these figures from Diebold, “Balancing Medieval History,” pp. 269–270.
- 25 On enamels, see the publications by Gauthier as well as Antoine, *Corpus*, and the exhibition catalog *Enamels of Limoges*. On ivory: Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires*, and Randall, *The Golden Age*; and on hardstones, such as rock crystal and jasper: Hahnloser and Brugger-Koch, *Corpus*.
- 26 Another important inquiry on the social status of goldsmiths and workshop practices is Claussen, “Goldschmiede des Mittelalters.”
- 27 On this ruler’s patronage and Schramm’s legacy, see Garrison, *Ottonian Imperial Art*.
- 28 On materiality see Chapter 4 by Kumler in this volume.
- 29 For ivory: Elizabeth Sears, “Ivory and Ivory-Workers in Medieval Paris,” in Barnet, ed., *Images in Ivory*, pp. 18–37, and Guérin, “Forgotten Routes”; for rock crystal: Shalem, *Islam Christianized*; and for small-scale objects more generally: Hoffman, “Pathways of Portability.” On East/West contacts see Chapter 29 by Folda in this volume.

- 30 More recently edited and studied secular inventories from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are beyond the chronological limits of this chapter.
- 31 For the way in which such a source can be exploited to understand specific techniques, objects, and ensembles, see Ackley, “Re-Approaching.”
- 32 At <http://www.gothicivories.courtauld.ac.uk/index.html>, accessed 9 August 2018.

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Reliquaries

Cynthia Hahn

From the early Christian era, throughout the Middle Ages, and even today, relics – and the reliquaries that stage their appearance to the audience of the faithful – have been objects of fascination. Testifying to an unparalleled prestige in the medieval period, remarkably complete descriptions of shrines in surviving texts¹ and many informative inventories document once copious numbers and exceptional value.² Although during the Reformation and Enlightenment eras, positive assessments declined and commentary turned toward derisive condemnation or accusations of superstition,³ relics have emerged again today as objects of intense interest, not only to antiquarians and devotees, but also to artists and politicians, and even to the general public.⁴

Although relics and reliquaries have, of course, been consistently important to the church and most consequential early scholarship on reliquaries was produced by devout scholars sponsored by ecclesiastical institutions, until recently reliquaries were not at the center of a more general art historical discussion. Explanations for this oversight reveal assumptions and issues inherent in the historiography of the discipline.

A first problem is both urgent and immediate – many art historians find reliquaries repugnant, as embodiments of superstitious thinking, or literally disgusting, confusing, or frightening because of their contents – often human remains. In this, art historians follow a larger cultural trend. “Reason” invaded even religious circles in the wake of the Reformation and the Enlightenment and, given the duplication of some relics such as the head(s) of John the Baptist and foreskin(s)

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of Christ as well as the dubious origins of many of the bones or cloths and much of the “blood,” relics have been an easy target for criticism during eras that took pride in the cultivation of scientific thought. Because the cult of relics and other related practices was thus fouled by a taint of superstition, during the Enlightenment not only were miracles explained away, but the material expression of religion itself was vilified. Indeed, Luther nailed his theses on the door of a famous chapel that displayed an unparalleled collection of relics, although it should be noted that the brunt of his attack was directed at the Catholic Church’s granting of indulgences not at relics per se. In an iconoclastic paroxysm, relics and reliquaries were destroyed in the wake of religious reforms, especially in England, Scandinavia, and parts of Germany. Although material manifestations of religion have always been a matter of concern to Christian theologians and were met with open disdain during the reform period – indeed are still treated with suspicion today – scholars of religion now argue for their fundamental importance to religious faith and experience.⁵

The reliquary *Majesta* (Majesty) of Ste. Foi from Conques (fig. 28-1) can serve as a “cautionary tale.” Bernard of Angers, the twelfth-century compiler of the saint’s miracles, had already felt a need to voice the concern that she might be a material “idol.”⁶ His book of miracles, an important medieval document which tells us much about a reliquary and its cult, clearly also reveals the saint as a “trickster” very concerned with material donations. Ultimately, the wonderful assortment of stories must be understood to have been compiled in part to serve the economic interests of the monastery. Nevertheless, Foi only survived revolutionary furor – equal parts greed and anger against the church – because she was hidden by pious townspeople who had an unshakeable devotion to the saint as materialized by her reliquary.

A second reason for the lack of attention to reliquaries in art historical scholarship, perhaps more discipline-specific, may be related to the first. The prevailing art historical narrative of the post-medieval period describes theorists and practitioners turning away from faith-based artwork toward representational and “beautiful” art, usually in a naturalist mode. Held up to such aesthetic criteria, the assemblage-like nature, the “strange” use of body part imagery, even the materiality of the gold and gems of reliquaries seemed unsophisticated and even, at times, grotesque.

The reliquary image of Ste. Foi is again a perfect example of an object that would have repulsed such a Renaissance sensibility – it is a strange agglomeration of undateable parts, constituting a figure of squat proportion, ungainly posture, remote affect, and confusing sexuality. The reliquary is more notable for its glittering surface encrusted with gold and gems, and even adorned with whole added pieces of jewelry, such as its spectacular crown, than for any naturalism or conformity to aesthetic ideals.

It should be noted, however, that this understanding of Renaissance art is in large part false. More recent scholarship has been able to recover a strong thread of faith-based early modern art in which reliquaries and similar objects prove extraordinarily important.⁷ Although it is true that many relics were rehoused during the Renaissance and later periods in Italy, following a general



FIGURE 28-1 *Majesty of Sainte Foi*, second to tenth centuries and later additions, gilded silver, copper, enamel, rock crystal and precious stones, cameos, wooden core, 85 × 36 × 24 cm, Sainte-Foi, Conques. Source: photo © Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

trend in reliquary production of bringing reliquaries “up to date” in order to please audiences, an appreciation for older objects may be shown to have persisted, as witnessed by the enthusiastic reuse of pieces and even entire reliquaries as *spolia* in grand ensembles, especially during the post-Tridentine period.⁸

A third reason that art historians once neglected reliquaries, is perhaps more pragmatic. The objects themselves can be difficult and unattractive to study, entailing intractable problems of attribution and dating. As assembled objects, or objects that were extensively remade or repaired often with many *spolia* added, often no secure date can be assigned to them. The finest example of this array of issues is once again Ste. Foi, with components of the eighth, ninth, tenth, through the fourteenth centuries, assembled around an original core of a gold male portrait mask of the Late Antique period.

Fourth and finally, and again as a result of basic principles of the study of art history, reliquaries have not been deemed an important topic because they fall into the category of “minor arts.” Typical classificatory systems ranked paintings, sculpture, and architecture at the top of art historical hierarchies, making the cultural importance of useful “furnishings” such as reliquaries, which were grouped with the decorative arts, minor arts, or at best *ornamenta ecclesiae*, difficult to assess.⁹ Although seemingly a trivial by-product of cataloguing, such classification placed reliquaries and their study materials in the less prestigious sections of museums, libraries, and even slide collections. Distorting medieval value systems, such categorization erroneously placed painting, which barely constituted a category and certainly not a preeminent one, far above the manufacture of reliquaries, which were among the most valued and valuable art works of their time.

All of these four “problems” have impeded scholarship on reliquaries but have been overcome and, remarkably, each has proven to be a strength in recent scholarship. Instead of condemning reliquaries as unattractive objects of study, their additive nature discloses them as unique cultural objects of great interest for revealing and reifying a cultural life of things.¹⁰ The sumptuous and purposeful use of various substances and *spolia* in reliquaries, indeed an unapologetic focus on materiality, has enabled a lively new study of the nature and reception of materials in the Middle Ages.¹¹ An aesthetics based on visual attention and desire rather than naturalism has been put forward as a construct closer to the classical meaning of the term, rather than its nineteenth-century understanding.¹² Their abject beauty in the end proves undeniably appealing.¹³

Reliquaries, thus, are no longer classed as part of the “minor arts.” A reevaluation of categories, and of the relative historical value of techniques and materials, has allowed reliquaries to be understood as the most valuable of art products of the Middle Ages. This reconsideration and re-ranking reveals that, indeed, there are more names of artists associated with reliquaries as metalwork than perhaps any other area of art production of the Middle Ages. Gold and silver workers were among the premier artists of the Middle Ages, singled out for praise in the scant surviving documentation of art works.¹⁴

Finally, any lingering taint of superstition and “offense to reason” has been almost entirely eradicated as reliquaries have found a new prominence as a class of objects that are constructed as contingent upon audience involvement. Of immense interest for reception and performance studies and ultimately understood to be inappropriate to study in isolation, reliquaries not only support but demand a more general and synthetic context of study.¹⁵

In the following, after a preliminary clarification of terms, I will discuss major trends in scholarship on either side of the art historical divide just described. Although the discussion by no means should be considered exhaustive, it will become apparent that the earlier era is dominated by typological studies and exhibitions, as well as studies of individual reliquaries as masterworks, but largely out of context.¹⁶ A contemporary generation of scholars has produced work that

attempts to be more synthetic and to bring reliquaries together into a unified field of study. Finally this chapter will conclude with a short discussion of the ways that recent scholarship has clarified new methodologies appropriate to the consideration of reliquaries.

Earliest Publications

The study of reliquaries begins in crisis mode – with their collection and publication by antiquaries (through line drawings, engravings, or descriptions) in the wake of the Dissolution of the Monasteries or other threats to their continued survival. The Jesuit Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680) in Rome created a short-lived museum. The Benedictine Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741) is considered the founder of modern archeology, and reliquaries played a role in his wide-ranging studies. Also a Benedictine, Michel Félibien (1665–1719), the son of André Félibien, historian and early “art critic,” published an important account of the history and collections of the monastery of Saint-Denis: *Histoire de l'abbaye royale de Saint-Denis en France* (1706). Other Benedictines, Edmond Martène and Ursin Durand, traveled in Belgium as well as France, publishing *Voyage littéraire de deux religieux bénédictins de la congrégation de St. Maur* (Paris, 1724) with documentation of art works that were soon lost. The Brunswick Guelph Treasure, which had been taken as booty from the cathedral of the defeated town by descendants of the original princely family that had donated it, was inventoried and published by its appointed keeper, a professor of mathematics and theology, Gerhard Wolter Molanus (1633–1722). Of note, Patrick M. de Winter characterizes the result as, in effect, the description of a cabinet of curiosities, signaling a different approach from the original meaning of the treasury.¹⁷

Aubin-Louis Millin de Grandmaison (1759–1818), a director of the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris, worked before, during, and after one of the greatest historical threats to reliquaries – the French Revolution – to secure and publish the medieval heritage of France in multiple publications including *Antiquités nationales, ou, Recueil de monumens: pour servir à l'histoire générale et particulière de l'empire françois, tels que tombeaux, inscriptions, statues, vitraux, fresques, etc.: tirés des abbayes, monastères, châteaux, et autres lieux devenus domaines nationaux* (Paris, 1790). He was jailed in 1793 by the anti-religious faction, the Jacobins, but recovered his place and had a long and fruitful career. The publications of French antiquaries such as the Jesuit Charles Cahier (1807–1882) continued to follow largely nationalist concerns, although papal prelate Xavier Barbier de Montault (1830–1901) worked on French as well as Italian material, including the treasures at Monza. These antiquarians were crucial in documenting the wealth of extant reliquaries before the upheavals of the modern age.

By no means complete even for continental Europe, it should be noted that this list conspicuously omits some of the most renowned of antiquaries, the British. For our story, however, Britain is by necessity a peripheral concern. In Britain,

reliquaries were destroyed in the wake of Henry VIII's depredations and anti-Catholic sentiment prevailed long before antiquarianism emerged as a force. Although it should be noted that figures such as William Dugdale (1605–1686), and his son-in-law Elias Ashmole (1617–1692) supported Charles I and his Catholic inclinations, Ashmole did not collect reliquaries as evidenced by the eventual depository of his collection, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Lost English reliquaries can only be studied in texts and other tangential remains such as pilgrim badges. (It is interesting to note, however, that a prominent English journal published from 1860 was titled: *The Reliquary and illustrated archaeologist: a quarterly journal and review devoted to the study of early pagan and Christian antiquities of Great Britain.*)

Relic Exhibitions

In their very essence, reliquaries make a pledge to their viewers that they hold something secret and important. Perhaps for this reason, catalogs of exhibitions feature prominently in the history of publications of the objects: early public exposure of reliquaries offered the faithful and unfaithful alike a chance to view the normally secret and exclusive treasures of churches. Newly visible in spectacular and glittering displays and/or lavish publications, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reliquaries and other medieval art objects, liberated from their ecclesiastical homes, were avidly collected and exhibited by wealthy “gentleman” antiquarians with aspirations. These include: Alexandre de Sommerard (1779–1842, collection now in the Cluny Museum, Paris), Louis Fidel Debruge-Duménil (1788–1838, collection sold but published in a massive tome 1847 by his son-in-law Jules Labarte), Alexander Basilevsky (1829–c.1885?, collection now in the Hermitage), and Prince Peter Soltykoff (active 1840–1861, collection sold, pieces in many museums); bankers and financiers also collected, including giants such as James-Alexandre de Pourtalès, Comte de Pourtalès-Gorgier (1776–1855) and J.P. Morgan (1837–1913), and were served by dealers such as Frederic Spitzer (1815–1890), whose collection went to George Salting (1835–1909) who bequeathed most of it to London museums; and later Joseph Brummer (1883–1947, a large part of his collection went to the Met). The very fact that so many reliquaries in museums have traveled a circuitous route through the hands of collectors and dealers should, however, additionally caution scholars about the integrity of such objects once they arrive in the secular sphere – it was not unusual for dealers to elaborate the compound nature of reliquaries by adding “spare parts” from other reliquaries in order to make an object more enticing.¹⁸

This era of collecting and sales led to important exhibits in museums. In 1917, in early “blockbuster” style, Morgan’s collection of over 4000 objects was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of New York after his death. In a very different example, in the wake of World War I, in 1930 the German Ducal family chose to sell the Guelph Treasury to raise money and organized a series of exhibitions in Germany and the United States, culminating in a

spectacularly successful event in Cleveland where a large number of the choice treasures were purchased for the Cleveland museum (the rest was eventually purchased by the Nazi-controlled state but relinquished and recovered for St. Blaise in Braunschweig).¹⁹

Following the example of the Guelph Treasury exhibit, a particularly popular form of exhibition has focused on single treasuries, surviving or not. Such shows bridge the divide described above and indeed in some sense loosely realize a medieval ambition associated with feast days – a sort of visual inventory of the glories of any given church, a material and sparkling documentation (as Durandus the thirteenth-century bishop required).²⁰ The best of these modern exhibits give invaluable information about the history of treasuries, an important study in itself (see Chapter 13 by Mariaux in this volume) and, by default, discuss reliquaries in their larger historical context and therefore represent significant trends of institutional self-fashioning.

Indeed, attendance at these sorts of exhibits may parallel medieval visits to treasuries by pilgrims and have more than a little to do with issues of faith. The first publications, for example the mid-eighteenth-century pamphlet from Aachen (1733), had prayers and is reminiscent of *pilgerblätter*, but a century later the publication by Dr. Fr. Bock (1860), provides descriptions of materials, assessments, and measurements, as well as an appreciation of the relics.

A similar motivation combined with archeological curiosity and papal politics created a great deal of interest in the famed chapel of the Sancta Sanctorum in Rome. The appearance in 1908 of a study by German Jesuit Hartmann Grisar, *Die römische Kapelle Sancta Sanctorum und ihr Schatz*, documented the opening and inventory of the altar in Rome.²¹ (The correlated exhibitionary impulse came decades later with a series of enormously popular traveling exhibits featuring the “treasures” of the Vatican: Metropolitan Museum of Art 1982, New Orleans, 1984, Ottawa, 1986, Denver 1993, and Cleveland 1998). A group of important exhibits in Paris have focused on the treasuries of Saint-Denis (1973), Conques (2001), and the Sainte-Chapelle (2001), only one of which – Conques – is still extant as a collection. An exhibit featuring the reconstruction of the Basel Treasury, which had also been broken up due to secularization and nineteenth-century politics, made a splash in Basel and in New York in 2001. Reinstallations of Quedlinburg (1992) and Essen (2009) and the recent exhibition of the treasury of Agaune (2014) have created publications of note, documenting those monastic collections.²²

Proud celebrations of city, church, or region become unabashed nationalism in another sort of exhibit. In 1965/1966 Jean Taralon, a scholar of stained glass who served as Inspecteur general des monuments historiques of France, organized a seminal exhibit, *Les trésors des églises de France*, at the Musée des art décoratifs in Paris. That exhibit and its extensive scholarly catalog was intended not only to document France’s rich cache of surviving treasury objects (despite the ravages and systematic destruction of the French Revolution) but also to safeguard it.

A more scholarly impulse can be seen in the exhibitions curated by Anton Legner of the Schnütgen Museum. One of the few large early modern collections to survive intact in something like its original form, the Schnütgen Museum,²³ donated to the city of Cologne in 1906, represents the efforts of Alexander Schnütgen (1843–1918), a theologian and priest associated with Cologne Cathedral and University of Bonn. The collection is today housed in the deconsecrated Romanesque Church of St. Cecelia. As director of the Schnütgen from 1970, Legner pursued an intense personal interest in the history of relics and reliquaries in a succession of more and more focused shows, that centered on German and Mosan objects (*Rhein und Maas*, 1972, *Monumenta Annonis* 1975, *Ornamenta Ecclesiae* 1985, and *Reliquien: Verehrung und Verklärung*, 1989, among others). These exhibitions set the standard for scholarly inquiry into individual reliquaries, being perhaps the first to document all aspects of a reliquary, including materials, dating, inscriptions and, most importantly, if possible, examining and noting the relic(s) contained. The essays included with the catalog opened discussion of many associated issues, such as patronage and liturgical use of reliquaries, for example the fine essay by Renate Kroos on processions.²⁴

With the exhibition *Way to Heaven* (2000), scholarship emphatically entered a new era. In that exhibition and its catalog, Henk van Os charted a path to think more broadly about reliquaries and their meaning for their medieval and modern publics (a popular audio guide kept the gallery overly full as audiences lingered much “longer than usual”). Although it focused on reliquaries of the Netherlands, the exhibition also considered relics and reliquaries from other cultures and religions and delved into their devotional usage. Most recently *Treasures of Heaven* in Cleveland, Baltimore, and London (2011) has taken a similar, although even more ambitious approach and one conspicuously lacking a nationalist agenda. (Although the iteration in London featured a section, not included in the published catalog, on “British saints,” post-Henry VIII’s reforms.)

Reliquary Surveys

Of twentieth-century publications, neither associated with an exhibition or a specific collection, undeniably the most impressive and important is that by Joseph Braun. In his *Die Reliquiare: Des christlichen Kultes und ihre Entwicklung* (1940), with 602 illustrations(!), the Jesuit priest produced an invaluable survey of a wide range of extant reliquaries as well as inventory citations of lost works, classifying reliquaries by types. Braun begins with medieval terms from inventories and inscriptions, ranging from *vas* (vessel), to *pyxis* (cylindrical container), to *scriinium* (simple box), to *tabula* (tablet shaped), to *monstrantia* (using transparent materials), to *brachium* (arm), to *caput* (head). Unfortunately, to be used in reference to extant materials, these terms required revision – one would be hard-pressed to determine the exact shape and size of an *Arca* as opposed to a *Feretrum* or *Tumba*, words that could be interchangeable for box-like or church-shaped

reliquaries, and a *Tabernaculum* could take any number of shapes. Furthermore, medieval terms reflected many aspects of reliquaries: meanings, use, materials, and/or shapes. Instead of the Latin terms with which he began, therefore, Braun organized the bulk of his discussion using German terms (here loosely translated): *Kastenartige* (caskets), *Flashen* (flasks, etc.), *Tafelreliquiare* (tablet reliquaries), *Kapsel* or *Scheibenformige* (capsule or disc-shaped), *Ostensorien* (ostensories), and *Redende* (or “speaking”) reliquaries, thus classifying almost all reliquaries into clearly defined types. As professor at Valkenburg in the Netherlands and Frankfurt and Pullach in Germany, Braun produced other important handbooks on the development of the altar, liturgical vestments, and altar ornamentation, in effect expanding his discussion to all parts of the decoration of sacred space – *ornamenta ecclesiae* – and parts of the “treasury.”

Once Braun’s typological mode was established, over the next five decades most studies of reliquaries tended to follow its approach, although more recent work has considered such types as social phenomena rather than classificatory systems.²⁵ It might be noted that attempts to produce similar comprehensive surveys attest to Braun’s wide-ranging mastery of the material. Pierre Dor’s treatment of reliquaries housing Passion relics (1999) is limited in type and region, i.e. to France.

In his *Way to Heaven* exhibition mentioned above, Van Os’s alternative approach followed the lead of a very different text publication, *Les routes de la foi* (1983) by Marie-Madeleine Gauthier. That publication ranged from discussions of pilgrimage and trade to Buddhist relics and was written with a broad impressionistic stroke, intended for the general public. The intriguing selection of individual objects, however, received catalog entries and a useful scholarly treatment. Anton Legner’s *Reliquien in Kunst und Kult* (1995), a handbook by the Schnütgen curator, explored a wide chronological range and considered the use and presentation of relics. Both publications significantly diverge from the format of the list, catalog, or inventory.

All recent scholarship has followed this lead, affirming that any investigation of reliquaries must be thoroughly grounded in a historical understanding of relics, objects that have a distinctively indeterminate and fluctuating nature, dependent on their historical and cultural milieu, as seminally discussed by Patrick Geary (1978). Important scholarship on the cult of relics,²⁶ and their legal and ecclesiastical status,²⁷ further serves to show how crucial reliquaries are in presenting holy matter. Whether it takes the form of a body, a bone fragment, dust, pebble, or a scrap of cloth, the relic must be clearly and unequivocally presented in order to be recognized, and furthermore staged in a sufficiently impressive fashion to stir up the faithful – as the early thirteenth-century Abbot Berthold of Weingarten explained concerning his choice of a head reliquary “in order to encourage the faith and piety[of the people].”²⁸ As Bernard of Angers wrote of Foi, the image of the saint “touched” viewers’ emotions and caused them to “implore [the saint] more fervently.”

The newest art historical work on reliquaries moves into the realm of critical and anthropological methodologies. Studies consider exchange, especially in the

context of the Crusades: Hans Belting,²⁹ Holger Klein, Gia Toussaint, Michele Bacci and others³⁰; materials: Caroline Bynum,³¹ and articles in a *Gesta* issue edited by Aden Kumler³²; or literary critical perspectives: Seeta Chaganti,³³ or all three: Beate Fricke³⁴ and Hahn.³⁵ In an especially insightful use of the spatial theories of Henri Lefebvre, Karen Overbey in *Sacral Geography* (2012) invokes the spatial environment of early medieval Irish reliquaries, many of which have not survived, most of which do not contain bodies, and most of which have been radically altered. In considering this seemingly intractable material, she eloquently writes that typical Irish relics – bells, books, and staffs are: “signifiers of gesture and signs of holiness grounded in action and in movement: ecclesiastical foundation journeys, missionary activity, and apotropaic circuits of territory ... at once holy ground and ritual vector, oscillat[ing] between stability and motility, between sacred place and social space”³⁶

These publications take the study of reliquaries in a new and exciting direction. While major European research projects are delving more deeply into individual reliquaries in Belgium, Finland, Germany, and Israel in order to set up potential comparative databases that chart real as opposed to “believed” disposition of the material of relics in reliquaries,³⁷ new methods point to broadened interpretive means for thinking about these artful and sacred containers.

Reliquaries and Methods

It will be advantageous at this moment to sum up some of the methodological approaches and issues that have redefined this field and consider how they make the study of reliquaries an ideal window into the study of the Middle Ages, both historically and theoretically. In doing so, we will also attempt to effect something of a more general introduction to the concepts essential to the examination of relics and reliquaries.

We might begin by looking at how a reliquary was discussed in the 1970s and how that has changed today. In his fine book concerned with medieval art objects made for the church, *Ars Sacra*, Peter Lasko³⁸ notes that the *Alexander Head reliquary*, now in Brussels, was made for Abbot Wibald presumably for his monastery at Stavelot (fig. 28-2). Although Lasko eloquently introduces Wibald’s historical importance and gives a precise date for the reliquary (1145), based upon the documented ceremonial deposit of the relics in the object, he is primarily concerned with the innovative use of the technique of *champlevé* enamel and notes its connections with Byzantine and Mosan enamels. He identifies the iconography of the Beatitudes on the “box,” as well as the figures, and mentions the inscriptions.

A fresh look at the reliquary raises many questions.³⁹ While Lasko mentions only the relics of Alexander, the longest inscription (on the bottom of the reliquary), specifically includes a multitude of relics, including the sponge of the Crucifixion, the head of Peter, Alexander’s companions, and the stone of the Holy Sepulchre.



FIGURE 28-2 *Head Reliquary of Pope Alexander*, 1145 CE, gilded silver, enamel, and copper alloy, wooden core, 44.5 × 23.5 cm, Brussels, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire. Source: photo © Valkenberg, Christine, I.R.P.A., KIK-IRPA, Brussels (Belgium).

One wonders, who is this Alexander? Why are the remains of this early Roman pope here at Stavelot along with those of other saints and *loca sancta* (holy places)? How does one explain the remarkably “classical head,” almost like a portrait bust? Is it a portrait? Where has the artist learned to work in this way? What is the box? Some have called it a portable altar and it has a remarkably different look both stylistically and technically from the artistic execution of the head. Why does the saintly pope not wear a miter or other head gear as would be customary? Why does he have a jewel hanging on his neck – is it *spolia*? How is such a reliquary meant to function? Why did Wibald go to the expense of having such an elaborate reliquary made? Are we to look into these golden eyes and speak to this man? Why dragons? (Lasko *does* mention them). Ultimately, is the object not more than a little strange?

So many questions remain unanswered that one wonders how this piece could be singled out as the masterwork that is illustrated in the most popular “survey” text of the history of art, *Gardner’s Art Through the Ages*.⁴⁰ That account clearly relies

on Lasko in focusing on techniques and style, although it makes a comparison to Antique portrait heads, more emphatically attributes different styles within the piece to “Romanesque” eclecticism, and notes how valuable a reliquary could be as part of a sort of ecclesiastical competition for attention. Finally in what is the clearest nod to more current scholarship, the passage adds that the reliquary makes the saint seem “alive and present.”

The Alexander reliquary, although not a portrait, is without doubt a superb piece of metalwork, but it also, as a medieval material object, allows a fascinating glimpse into habits of prayer, veneration of relics, meaning of materials, and the potential shaping of a soul through emulation of a type of holy person who himself continually strove for personal perfection.⁴¹ Lasko’s assessment was more than adequate in its time, but our understanding of reliquaries now prompts an entirely new set of questions, and seeks to avoid taking such objects for granted as merely beautiful or costly. Instead, we must openly acknowledge their strangeness and contingency, their irruption into our space, as reliquaries “joining heaven and earth.”⁴²

Thus, it would seem, the most basic terms of our discussion, those that have thus far perhaps seemed self-evident, must be clarified. First and foremost: What is a relic? What is a reliquary? How do the two interact?⁴³

The simplest answer to the first question is that a relic is physical matter that is believed to be intrinsically bound to something spiritual, that it carries the *virtus* of a saint or Christ, literally the virtue but more accurately the power of the holy person. A relic can be, as is usually thought, a portion of the body, but it can also be an object that has come into contact with a sacred person. It can even be a bit of dust or stone from a holy *place*. To provide the crucial element of *identity* to these bits of matter, it is necessary that it have a tag or *authentic* (also in Fr. *etiquette*),⁴⁴ and ultimately that it be enclosed in a reliquary.

Although relic veneration is not clearly established as a practice by the church until the fourth century, the first evidence of Christian relic veneration involved the faithful of Smyrna who in the mid-second century CE collected the remains of Polycarp after his martyrdom in order to use them to celebrate the anniversary of his sacrifice, calling them “more dear than precious stones.”⁴⁵ In other words, from the beginning, relics have been defined by an audience’s recognition of the presence of power and a distinctive reversal of material values. Miracles may play a part, as well as the acknowledgment of institutional affirmation, but above all, without an act of recognition, a relic remains mere undifferentiated matter. Both audience and material identification are essential for authentication.

Thus, it is apparent why reliquaries themselves are essential – they identify, they summon an audience, they contain and enclose the relic. As an added benefit, they allow the transport and circulation of sacred substances. Reliquaries are mentioned in the earliest texts as a means of honoring, enclosing, and transporting relics, but they also, from the beginning, carry messages about the significance, authenticity, and meaning of their contents. Even if such messages are conveyed only by the prestige of precious materials, reliquaries are in their essence a mediation between

relics and audiences. As such, they prepare the audience for the proper reception and treatment of the holy objects, what Peter Brown calls *reverentia*, “an etiquette toward the supernatural.”⁴⁶ One thing they often do *not* do is clearly identify their contents through their imagery. Instead the imagery and visual signifiers of a reliquary are often indirect.⁴⁷

A first issue is thus that of representation. As above, relics were often fragmentary, perhaps taking the form of unidentifiable dust or shreds of cloth. The reliquary must find its place in doing the work of “representing” the relic as powerful, holy, and sacred, and even fictionally whole, as part of the larger institution of the church. This is frequently done in abstract or metaphorical terms. Remarkably, while at the same time the relic might be made “fully visible” in its power and associations, it is also, more often than not, hidden from view within the reliquary.

Again the reliquary of Ste. Foi can serve as an example (fig. 28-1). The Majesty is said to hold the skull (hidden not in the head cavity but in the wooden torso), separated from the other relics of the saint which are in a casket. Nevertheless, we see an entire and lively body reconstituted in the reliquary. The relics are thus obscured by their glittering container covered with gems (highly charged and symbolic materials), while simultaneously empowered. In contrast to its modern isolation in a glass vitrine, lit and immobilized as an art object, in the Middle Ages the reliquary was created to be a dynamic part of a collection of reliquaries. In such company, representing the church and its saints and their powers, the Majesty of Foi was, throughout its history, carried and manipulated, displayed and presented. (At one point, the Conques monks begged off too frequent requests for the saint’s Majesty to be processed!)

Moreover, in conjunction with its miracle stories, we learn that the Foi reliquary is literally a “collection in itself” in addition to its status as part of a larger collection in the treasury of Conques that supports it. Story after story tells of Foi asking for, and receiving gifts of jewelry and precious materials. She (in the personified form of her reliquary) becomes a documentation of her own miraculous and holy power and in turn bestows ornaments on her church as well (the altar frontal).⁴⁸ Perhaps the most fascinating story concerning Foi is that of her pre-history – her relics did not originally belong to Conques at all but were brought there by monks who perpetrated *furta sacra* (pious theft), in some sense discovering her potential and transporting her to a more “fitting” home. In these terms (for as a powerful saint, she had the power to stop the theft), Foi voluntarily takes up residence in what was soon to become a pilgrimage town.

Thus the reliquary assumes a very specific value in an elaborate system of provenance and exchange, it is an amalgamation of acquisitions through gift, *inventio* (discovery), and theft. As an object of continuing power, moreover, Foi’s reliquary is constantly revised, physically or contextually, and brought up to date. Such renewal is not just practical but significant: “All things renewed are pleasing to God; Christ is ever renewing all things, and ennobling them to enhance His light.”⁴⁹

In this claim about renewal of a shrine, the fifth-century saint, Paulinus of Nola, describes “ennobling” relics by encasing them in order to create “enhanced ... light” and to appreciate their origin in Christ; he engages in “renewing” older reliquaries and structures out of honor to their contents and their ultimate maker who reciprocates by “every renewing all things.” Paulinus even describes the newly arisen body of the faithful soul in resurrection as a sort of reliquary: “flesh ... covered with a shining garment.”⁵⁰ Such a metaphorical linking of body and soul, relic and shrine is not unusual in medieval commentary on relics, but this case makes the spiritual intent very clear – making a reliquary, renewing a shrine is a project to lift the minds of the faithful.⁵¹

In Foi’s case (as well as that of Pope Alexander), devotees are directly addressed by a reliquary with a “face”; the minds of the devout are “lifted” through specific acts of communication. Such communication may be formal – prayer and liturgy – or more spontaneous – requests and miracles. In either case, Foi instantiates an algorithm of the processing of prayers – she represents in her presence the act of intercession – passing along prayers to God. One catches her gaze, speaks to her, she speaks back, gestures, and refers the prayer (however, *nota bene*, the hands are nineteenth-century replacements).

In contrast to such promises of the future fulfillment of a relationship with the divine, however, reliquaries also materialized and validated contemporary social and societal relationships. Relics take an important place in the gift economy: not only did saints like Foi receive gifts, but they also gave them; not just immaterial spiritual gifts and miracles, but gifts of themselves. Massive numbers of relics were exchanged as gifts within the church and thus became a purposeful and material enactment of ties of friendship and affiliation. Bishops, for example, rarely traveled without collecting relics along the way, and in turn redistributing them. Saint Hugh, the twelfth-century bishop of Lincoln, famous for enthusiastically gnawing off a bit of the relic of Mary Magdelene, had a magnificent gemmed ring in which he secreted as many as 30 relics, eventually giving the jewel to Lincoln at his death as a pious donation.⁵² In this way, “distances between groups and persons were overcome by gestures of grace and favor,”⁵³ not to mention that the exchanges were reified in the forms of relics and reliquaries, as well as accompanied by stories and ceremonies that persisted in their new locations.⁵⁴

But although ultimately we must thus understand relics and their reliquaries, such as the Foi Majesty, as participating in a profoundly utilitarian relationship – containing, honoring, enabling communication, and intended to elicit veneration – we admit that the end result is still beautiful. However strange, Foi remains a persistent object of fascination to modern viewers.

In myriad ways, I have argued above that reliquaries are not merely works of art, and surely not “art for art’s sake,” but they are undeniably art. Although it was not unusual for them to become objects of veneration as a sort of slippage of the meaning between container and contained,⁵⁵ that is not why art historians value them – ultimately reliquaries have an aesthetic, they are something to be

looked at and admired. But can such a quality be understood as at all historical, rather than an artifact of modern concerns?

Certainly the relationship of medieval viewer and reliquary was always one of importance, and the details of its structuring raises important questions about Christian devotion as well as more basic questions about vision, yet to be adequately explored in their full range vis-à-vis reliquaries. Looking-at-relics, for example, can be described as a devotional practice. The devout employ a “meditative gaze,” a looking through that opens up to the full implications of faith – vision that is expansive, timeless, and “true.” The relics themselves reputedly give off light, returning to the viewer, alternately illuminating or blinding. Moreover, even when clear crystal is used for housing relics, the devotee does not necessarily look at the relic but practices an act of “looking” that is directed heavenward, toward “crystalline” heavens.⁵⁶

In such processes, medieval theologians claimed that the senses were purified, extended and enabled, and the soul reordered. The gaze traveled outward and the returned with grace: “Once our senses have been cleansed of all that gives rise to wickedness, our Lord Jesus Christ will gladly walk in them: in them as in the five porticoes, will stroll Wisdom ...”⁵⁷ The often tiny fragment of the relic could also serve to focus the gaze, as if only the small aperture could let in the blazing light. From gazing at the small, a process was initiated of opening up or understanding. The relic like other small things: “open[s] itself to reveal a secret life – indeed to reveal a set of actions and hence a narrativity and history outside the given field of perception ... a compressed time of interiority.”⁵⁸

Such devotional practices, however, must supplement looking with practices of spiritual engagement. Patricia Cox Miller has called such an imaginative performance an “aesthetics” that transforms bones and dust to beauty and power.⁵⁹ As she describes it, any material expression remains stubbornly unfinished, and the *artist* (in Cox’s example, a writer) calls upon the listener and viewer to complete it. Similarly, Seeta Chaganti declares that “enshrinement is an aesthetic principle,” and emphasizes that “The viewer’s task of negotiating between representation and sacred presence occurs within the object’s own negotiations between text and materiality.”⁶⁰

Among medieval sources that might confirm the origins of such an aesthetic approach, Richard of St. Victor writes in his *Benjamin Minor I.4*, that the “soul expands and is uplifted by the beauty it perceives; it loses itself in the object.”⁶¹ Christine de Pizan tells of the French king Charles V retreating after his afternoon nap to be with his “... most privy friends taking delight in pleasant things, [and for his health] examining *joyaux* or other rich works” many of which were reliquaries. Charles felt a need to have experts (*cognoisseurs de telz choses*) to help with this examination.⁶² Late medieval viewers may have examined architectural reliquaries to discover heavenly secrets “measuring the Temple” as in the book of Ezekiel, and approaching the “Tabernacle.”⁶³ Ultimately, the training of the body and the senses, the acquisition of sensory *knowledge* or “aesthetics,” is not only centered on beauty, but is one of the primary motives of education in the

High Middle Ages.⁶⁴ Whether contemplative or interpretive, calling upon metaphor, memory, or biblical directive, medieval viewers interacted with reliquaries in devotion *through their senses*, that is, via the aesthetic.⁶⁵

The beauty of a reliquary does not, therefore, only function to honor the saint with lavish materials, and mediate any “ugliness” of the relic. It also takes part, along with the beauty of the liturgy, the shrine, hymns, poems, and prayers, in creating or *constructing* the saint and his or her spiritual meaning for (and by) the viewer. Beauty is thus an inalienable and *required* quality of reliquaries, and the history of reliquaries shows us that rather than being taken for granted it was actively sought as a possibility and an experience. As Peter Brown evocatively describes such artistic effort in presenting the relics of martyrs:

[in]... a ... crescendo of beauty in poetry, in ceremonial, and in shimmering art [patrons] turned the *summum malum* of physical death preceded by suffering into a theme into which all that was most beautiful and refined [was expressed.]

As we have seen above, Abbot Wibald of Stavelot turned a heap of relics into a captivating and compelling image of a saint (fig. 28-2), urging his goldsmith (in a unique surviving letter to “G,” although the project is not specified), to do his best work and use the latest techniques, to accomplish his goals regardless of the high expense. Wibald compliments the artisan, saying he has an “elevated spirit” and adds “your work is inspired by truth.” In his response, G repeats that his work is “marked by truth” as well as faith.⁶⁶ Similarly, another, earlier patron of reliquaries was praised by a contemporary for his “grand and celebrated ingenuity” in the use of materials and the employment of superior artists, and notes that the resulting “admirable form” pleased both “eye and spirit.”⁶⁷ As a resounding success to such aesthetic challenges, reliquaries are indeed a proper subject for art historians, not only for what they can reveal about social history, but also, finally, for their beauty.

In sum, reliquaries are essential medieval objects. Despite their often fragmentary nature, relics were multiply validated as “real” and powerful by their provenance, by an accompanying story, by the company they kept, but most of all by their enclosure in a reliquary. Above we have noted that relics are “lively” and give “gifts” to those who pray to them, gifts of miracles, healing, and even conversion. Also above, relics and reliquaries were said to give off light, reassuring the faithful of their power and presence. In modern understanding, the reliquary has moved from the passive object of the gaze to the subject of its own story. Perhaps this is not surprising given that reliquaries seem to have been almost what one could call “restless.” They were lifted, gestured with, carried in processions, opened and closed. They, like the relics, had a life of their own. To art historians they present many rich possibilities of study: opportunities to understand how fragments encapsulated with beautiful materials can open up our understanding of social relations, medieval devotion, material understanding, vision, and even beauty.

Notes

- 1 Examples can be found in the *Vita of St Eligius*. W. Levison, *MGH SRM* 4:669–742. The *vita* of Eligius has been translated by Jo Ann MacNamara and published on the “Medieval Sourcebook” page at Fordham University (<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/eligius.asp>). For the Codex Calixtinus see: Gerson and Shaver-Crandall, *Pilgrim’s Guide*.
- 2 For inventories see, Cordez, “Gestion et méditation”; Ackley, “Western Medieval Church Treasury Inventory”; Bougard, “Trésors et mobilia italiens”; Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Schatzverzeichnisse*; and Lesne, *Histoire de la propriété*.
- 3 See material in Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*; and Hahn, *Reliquary Effect*.
- 4 Two general books on relics and saints have appeared: Freeman, *Holy Bones*; and Bartlett *Why Can the Dead?* Another argues for the political impact of relics: Bozoky, *Politique des reliques*. Hahn, *Reliquary Effect*, discusses a Russian incident that shows the persistent importance of relics to political groups and includes a chapter on relics and contemporary art. For the latter also see: Nagel, *Medieval Modern*.
- 5 Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze*.
- 6 For a discussion of the miracles see Remensnyder, “les joca de sainte Foy”; and Sheingorn, *Book of Sainte Foy*.
- 7 Holmes, *The Miraculous Image*; and Cornelison and Montgomery, *Images, Relics, and Devotional Practices*; as well as other publications by Cornelison.
- 8 Hahn, *Reliquary Effect*, Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, and see Chapter 14 by Kinney in this volume.
- 9 Discussed in a number of essays in Hourihane, ed., *From Minor to Major*; see also Chapter 27 by Buettner in this volume. Perhaps not insignificantly, new digital search mechanisms have replaced and erased the rigid classificatory categories of slide and text libraries.
- 10 Geary, “Sacred Commodities”; and other essays, in the Appadurai volume, especially the introduction. Also Buc, “Conversion of Objects”; and Normore, “Navigating the World.”
- 11 See the work of the Material Collective, <http://thematerialcollective.org>, accessed 9 August 2018; and the special issue of *Gesta* edited by Kumler, as well as Weinryb, “Living Matter,” pp. 113–131. And see Chapter 4 by Kumler and Chapter 5 by Caviness in this volume.
- 12 Hahn, “Medieval Enamels,” pp. 165–167.
- 13 See special issue of *RES*, on the abject, edited by Pellizzi.
- 14 Although still rare, metalworker’s names often survive, perhaps because of the value of materials but also certainly because of admiration for the products: Cherry, *Medieval Goldsmiths*. See also Chapter 2 by Fricke in this volume.
- 15 Gertsman, *Visualizing Medieval Performance*.
- 16 Because of space constraints, I must ignore the immense amounts of scholarship on individual reliquaries that does not address the question of reliquaries as a larger category, including valuable work by antiquarians and museum personnel as well as other inspired art historians.
- 17 De Winter, *Sacral Treasure*, p. 130.
- 18 Desirable objects might pass through the hands of all of these collectors. For example, 17.190.813, from the Metropolitan Museum of Art has this provenance: “comte

- Clément Wenceslas de Renesse-Breidbach (d. 1833), Belgium (sold 1836); Louis-Fidel Debruge-Duménil, Paris (sold 1849); Prince Peter Soltykoff, Paris (1849–sold 1861); Baron Achille Sellière, Paris (1861–sold 1890); Baron Albert Oppenheim, Cologne(1890–1906?); J. Pierpont Morgan, London and New York (1906–1913); Estate of J. Pierpont Morgan(1913–1917),” see <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/464678?rpp=30&pg=1&ft=reliquary&pos=2&imgno=0&tabname=object-information>, accessed 9 August 2018; also Hahn, *Objects of Devotion and Desire*, cat # 28, p.76 discusses such a composite object.
- 19 A catalog was published at that time and a new one was issued in 1985 by Patrick de Winter, *Sacral Treasure*.
- 20 “Propter cautele considerationem, ut appareat, quam cautus fuerit in servando ille...” Durandus, *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*, 3.61.
- 21 See Noreen, “Opening the Holy of Holies”; and Burkart, *Blut der Märtyrer*.
- 22 See Chapter 13 by Mariaux in this volume for more.
- 23 Although in this regard, one should also mention the Musée de Cluny, the collection of Alexandre de Sommerard a former revolutionary, who like Millin strove to preserve the French heritage, purchased by France at his death in 1842: Bann, *Clothing of Clío*, pp. 76–82; or the collections in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Pitcairn Museum in Pennsylvania, both of which were generated to provide examples to improve the skills of craftsmen. Also see <http://www.doaks.org/resources/online-exhibits/before-the-blisses/collectors>, accessed 9 August 2018.
- 24 “Vom Umgang mit Reliquien,” and her book *Schrein des heiligen Servatius*, from same year.
- 25 Souchal, “Bustes reliquaries”; Falk, “Bildnisreliquiar”; Boehm, “Medieval Head Reliquaries”; and Montgomery “Mittite capud meum.”
- 26 Brown, *Cult of the Saints*; Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien*; Beissel, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen*.
- 27 Hermann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints*; Smith, “Les reliques et leurs étiquettes,” pp. 221–257.
- 28 Annals of Weingarten, 1217–1232, cited in Swarzenski, *Berthold Missal*, pp. 18–20.
- 29 Belting, “Importation of Relics.”
- 30 Holger Klein has many publications on early Christian and Byzantine relics and reliquaries but on this subject see especially the important essay: Klein, “Eastern Objects and Western Desires.” Also Toussaint, *Kreuz und Knochen*, and Bacci, “Relics of the Pharos Chapel.”
- 31 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*.
- 32 *Res et signification*.
- 33 Chaganti, *The Medieval Poetics of the Reliquary*.
- 34 Fricke, *Fallen Idols*.
- 35 Hahn, *Strange Beauty*. See Cordez, “Reliquien, ein Forschungsfeld.”
- 36 Overbey, *Sacral Geographies*, p. 6.
- 37 For example the Finnish Relics project since 2007, see Immonen and Taavitsainen, “Finger of a Saint,” or the work of Galit Noga-Banai in Jerusalem and Hedwig Röckelein in Göttingen. These are similar to a project proposed decades ago by Philippe George of Liege, although so far as I know, never published. A symposium featuring the technical aspects of reliquaries was held in Brussels in 2016.
- 38 Lasko, *Ars Sacra*, p. 185.

- 39 Bibliography on the Alexander reliquary ranges from Squilbeck, “Le chef-reliquaire,” to Wittekind, *Altar – Reliquiar – Retabel*.
- 40 Kleiner, *Gardner’s Art Through the Ages*, pp. 449–450.
- 41 For possible answers to some of these questions, but not “why dragons?,” see Hahn, “Spectacle of the Charismatic Body” and *Strange Beauty*, pp. 127–132; for medieval portraits see Dale, “The Individual, the Resurrected Body, and Romanesque Portraiture,” and Perkinson, *Likeness of the King*.
- 42 Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, p. 1.
- 43 Much of this follows a longer treatment of the same questions in Hahn, “What Do Reliquaries Do for Relics?” and the introduction to *Strange Beauty*.
- 44 Authentic is a modern word for these customary labels that are perhaps as old as the seventh century, Hermann-Mascard, *Reliques des saints*, pp. 120–122.
- 45 *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 18.2.
- 46 Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, 119.
- 47 Hahn, “Voices of the Saints,” p. 20.
- 48 Sheingorn, *Book of Sainte Foy* (book 1, miracle 17), and Fricke, *Fallen Idols*, who calls Foy an “open work” and emphasizes the power of *bricolage*. I would note that Fricke’s book is unusual in that, although it seems to center on only one reliquary, in fact it is a much broader treatment of the field.
- 49 Walsh, *Poems of St. Paulinus*, p. 308.
- 50 Walsh, *Poems of St. Paulinus*, pp. 301–302.
- 51 There is little organized medieval theology on relics and reliquaries, the singular exception is Thiofrid of Echternach’s *Flores Epytaphii Sanctorum*, see Ferrari, “Thiofrid d’Echternach et le discours sur les reliques.”
- 52 See discussion in Hahn *Strange Beauty*, pp. 233–234.
- 53 Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, p. 89.
- 54 Here see Hahn, *Portrayed on the Heart*, for a discussion of these sorts of materials and bibliography.
- 55 For this slippage, see Hahn, “Voices of the Saints,” 1997; and Chaganti, *Medieval Poetics*; for examples see Dierkens, “Du bon (et du mauvais) usage des reliquaries,” p. 224.
- 56 As in Ezekiel 1: 22, discussed Hahn, “Reliquaries: Boundaries of Vision.”
- 57 Walsh, *Letters of St. Paulinus*, p. 158.
- 58 Stewart, *On Longing*, pp. 54, 66. And see my Chapter 3 on vision in this volume.
- 59 Miller, ““The Little Blue Flower Is Red,”” pp. 213–236.
- 60 Chaganti, *Medieval Poetics*, quotes at pp. 1 and 13.
- 61 Eco, *Aesthetics*, p. 51.
- 62 Solente, *Le livre des faits et bonnes meurs*, Vol. I, pp. 46–47.
- 63 Hahn, *Reliquary Effect*.
- 64 Goswin of Mainz, *Letter to Walcher*, p. 27: as cited in Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, pp. 349 ff.
- 65 See Chapter 31 by Palazzo in this volume.
- 66 The letter is reproduced and translated into French in Stiennon and Lejeune, *Rhin-Meuse*, p. 17.
- 67 *Exiguam materian nostram magnum ac celebre ingenium vestrum nobilitabit, cum adiectione vitri, tum compositione artificis elegantis;destinato operi designatas mittimus species...admirabilem formam et quae mentem et oculos pascit frater efficiat frati: Lettres de Gerbert* 104, p. 97, as cited by Lesne, *Histoire de la propriété ecclésiastique*, p. 183.

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East Meets West: The Art and Architecture of the Crusader States

Jaroslav Folda

Introduction

Historiographically the origins of the modern study of Crusader architecture and art can be located in French scholarship during the nineteenth century. The beginnings of the modern European rediscovery of Syria-Palestine are associated with the scholars who followed Napoleon's campaigns in the Near East from May 1798 to August 1799. Shortly thereafter, J.F. Michaud began the publication of his *Histoire des croisades*, starting in 1812.¹ Study of the material culture of the Crusaders was begun in terms of coinage, and the first attempt at a comprehensive study appeared in 1847 by Louis Félicien de Saulcy.² Interest in the Crusaders was indirectly intensified in France during the Crimean War (1853–1856), in which one of the major issues was French protection of Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem and the holy sites under the Capitulations of 1620 and 1740, firmans signed by the Ottoman sultan. Four years after the end of the war, the count Charles-Jean-Melchior de Vogüé (1829–1916), published a pioneering study entitled *Les Eglises de la terre sainte*.³ This book marked the beginning of modern research into the art and architecture of the Crusaders in the Holy Land.

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The Study of the Art of the Crusaders in the Late Nineteenth Century

De Vogüé approached the study of Crusader churches as the work of French architects who produced buildings in three phases: phase 1, in Syria-Palestine from 1099 to 1187; phase 2, from 1187 to 1291; and phase 3, on Cyprus from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. He argues for the importation of Romanesque architecture from western Europe as the basis of Crusader architecture, and he sees the development of Crusader art as controlled by French artistic ideals. But he was well aware of two aspects that influenced the architecture in its new setting: first, the local climate, materials, and masons, and second, the fact that the eastern Christians had their own distinctive architectural traditions.

De Vogüé focused on ecclesiastical architecture, and Emmanuel Guillaume Rey followed with the first extended discussion of Crusader castles and fortifications.⁴ Rey introduced the main characteristics of the castles, differentiated as he interprets the origins of their design into three schools: the first, that of the Hospitallers, the second, that of the Templars, and the third, a combination of types from the first two together with certain western features.

Rey published a number of important studies on the Crusader Levant, including a book which appeared in 1883.⁵ Here he presents the Crusaders in the Holy Land as a colonial experience in a multicultural setting. He provides a comprehensive historical geography commenting on all major Crusader sites. And he expands the picture of Crusader artistic interests based on written sources, including the *Assises de Jérusalem*, diplomatic documents, and a selection of the Arab chroniclers. He also has interesting comments on Crusader art.

French scholarship continued in the mainstream during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Gustave Léon Schlumberger published a remarkably comprehensive study of Crusader coins in 1878, with a supplement in 1882, a work that can still be consulted with profit.⁶ And in 1896, Charles Diehl, an orientalist who studied Byzantine art, gave a celebrated lecture on Crusader art, published a year later as an article.⁷ Meanwhile English and German scholars also began to make contributions. Archeological reports in the *Survey of Western Palestine*,⁸ while focused mainly on biblical and Classical Antiquity, also enlarged the repertoire of Crusader sites somewhat. And hard on the heels of Rey's 1883 work, Hans Prutz published a work of cultural history which was however interested less in artistic material and more on the study of the military orders in the Crusader States, especially the Teutonic Order.⁹

The Study of the Art of the Crusaders in the Early Twentieth Century

French archeologists worked intensively in the Holy Land in the first third of the twentieth century. Of particular interest for Crusader monuments was the work of Hughes Vincent O.P. and F.-M. Abel O.P. in Jerusalem,¹⁰ and Prosper Viaud O.F.M.

in Nazareth.¹¹ Vincent and Abel devoted much attention to Crusader monuments, in particular the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, for which they produced the first comprehensive study with detailed plans and measured drawings, quite different from the art historical study by Karl Schmaltz in 1918.¹² In Nazareth Viaud combined his report of the dramatic discovery of the famous Nazareth capitals with a study of the foundations and history of the Crusader church of the Annunciation.

Then, during the French and British Mandates in Syria-Palestine, Camille Enlart (1862–1927) arrived to pursue research carried out between 1921 and 1927.¹³ His work resulted in the publication of the first comprehensive study of the art and architecture of the Crusaders in the Holy Land.¹⁴ Although he followed in his predecessors' footsteps in prioritizing architecture and architectural sculpture, Enlart's credentials and approach differed from his predecessors' in three important ways. First, he carried out his study of Crusader art and architecture as a mature scholar, who already had extensive experience in Europe and the Near East. Second, Enlart had the full support of the Mandate authorities as a scholar commissioned by the Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres in Paris. Third, Enlart clearly states his intention to study the influence of the West on the Levant in the Latin Kingdom, as the last chapter in a vast inquiry he had begun 30 years before. Thus he was pursuing his art historical inquiry in reverse chronological sequence, having started with Lusignan Cyprus (1191–1474) in a study published in 1899,¹⁵ and then turning to the Crusader States in Syria-Palestine in terms of art, culture, and history, 1098–1291, in the 1920s. Intensely Francocentric in his outlook, Enlart argued against the view that artistic creativity and influence basically flowed east to west, as advocated by Josef Stryzowski in Vienna, but he also clearly understood some of the complexities and independent characteristics of the architecture and the art of the Crusaders on the mainland.

Enlart sees the Crusader States to be in effect French colonies. For him the architectural and the artistic developments of the Crusaders are parallel to those in the west. He basically views the mainland Crusader States and Lusignan Cyprus as part of a French cultural continuum linked to France. Therefore the same basic stylistic developments seen in France from Romanesque to Gothic architecture he finds in the Crusader East. He is the first to think in terms of Crusader work by individual, identifiable masters and artists, but he identifies them essentially as Frenchmen working in the Holy Land. Enlart imagines that most were transient; few came to the Near East as settlers. Despite the fact that the identifiable western masters or artists were few, he does not entertain the idea of resident Frankish settlers who were artists. Nonetheless he does recognize the existence of mason's marks, some with signatures, including one Armenian example, showing his awareness of local Christian participants.

Enlart's methodology and analysis greatly enlarged and deepened the terms of scholarly discussion. Not only did he begin the ongoing examination of the nature of Crusader architecture and art, and Crusader architects and artists and their workshops, based on concrete evidence, but he also brought Crusader art into the forum of discourse on larger issues such as East–West relationships, the nature of artistic “schools,” and ideas of artistic development and influence in

medieval art. Enlart essentially introduced Crusader architecture and art as a new chapter in the history of European medieval art. It was an argument he presented with the aid of 196 plates and 598 figures, all with a focus on “architecture religieuse and civile.” His achievement was such that he must be considered to be the founding father of the study of Crusader art. What De Vogüé began, Enlart brought to fuller conceptual realization, but more work remained to be done.

In 1927 Enlart “passed the baton” to his younger colleague, Paul Deschamps (1888–1974), handing him the opportunity and the responsibility to study the Crusader castles in Syria-Palestine. The first of Deschamps’s volumes came out in 1934; the last, though dated 1973, actually appeared posthumously after his death in 1974.¹⁶ The achievements of Deschamps and his architects were remarkable. Not only did their fieldwork produce the most accurate and useful measured drawings of these fortifications, but also their photographic documentation was invaluable. Prior to Deschamps, Louis de Clercq had produced four albums of photographs on Antioch and the Holy Land in the nineteenth century, including one entire volume on Crusader castles.¹⁷

What Deschamps achieved still serves to help guide us in identifying twelfth-century Crusader masonry from that of the thirteenth, or from that of the Mamluks and others. Moreover the legacy of Deschamps’s and Enlart’s publications provides us with a fully structured historical paradigm of Crusader architectural and artistic developments with a clear priority given to architecture. Their work still today provides us with an important entrée into the world of Crusader art and architecture, but one that requires serious revision in light of new finds.

The Study of Art of the Crusaders Before and After World War II

In the 1930s new views and different perspectives on Crusader art and architecture had begun to emerge. Already before Deschamps published his first two volumes, T.E. Lawrence had written a thesis on twelfth-century Crusader castles in 1909 as an undergraduate at Jesus College, Oxford.¹⁸ Lawrence’s work was eventually published posthumously, in 1936, and then again in 1986, with a new edition in 1988.¹⁹ Lawrence basically knew nothing of the work of Deschamps, and although Deschamps had read Lawrence’s study, he only referred to it once in passing in his 1939 second volume. Lawrence’s thesis is still worth reading, but it is more celebrated in the English-speaking world due to the fame of the author.

Lawrence was a bell-weather for another prominent Englishman who had also fought in World War I and who was a fellow Oxonian, whose historical work would approach the art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land from a new point of view. Thomas Sherrer Ross Boase, writing in 1939 as Director of the Courtauld Institute and Professor of the History of Art at the University of London, proposed the following idea about the art of the Crusaders: “in sculpture, painting and architecture, the West and the East meet and effect exchanges in Palestine:

there was also a similar interaction in literature.”²⁰ Boase introduced a new concept of the art of the Crusaders, recognizing its diversity and its multiple European sources as well as the cultural interpenetration of Crusader art with that of the Levant, both Byzantine and Islamic. He himself never used the term “Crusader Art,” but he paved the way for others to coin it.

Tom Boase (1898–1974) turned his attention to the art of the Crusaders with increasing intensity from 1939 until his death in 1974, the same year as Paul Deschamps. Notably, in 1950 he wrote the first draft of a large study that would only be published in 1977 – three years after his death! – as a series of chapters in Volume IV of *A History of the Crusades*.²¹ In the meantime Boase would also publish two books on the art and history of the Crusaders, the first books to introduce color plates for reproducing Crusader art.²² Whereas he does not enlarge on the corpus of architecture published by Enlart and Deschamps in Syria-Palestine, he begins to expand the corpus of art in other media and expands his focus on the historical context to include the entire Crusader Levant, not just the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, reflecting, e.g. newly flourishing Crusader historical studies by scholars such as Runciman, Mayer, Prawer, and Riley-Smith.²³ It was indeed, Runciman who, writing in 1954 about the art of the Crusaders, prophetically observed that “the slightness of the [artistic] evidence should not be interpreted to mean that little was done. If architecture flourished, it is likely that the other arts flourished also”²⁴ In fact, an enormous expansion of the artistic evidence was about to be published between 1957 and 1990.

The Study of the Art and Architecture of the Crusaders from 1957 to 2000

Three areas newly important for the study of Crusader art emerged between the later 1950s and the years around 2000: Crusader figural arts, Crusader archeology, and material culture, and our understanding of the nature and development of Crusader art became the subject of widespread commentary and debate.

The Study of Crusader Figural Arts Including Painting and the Decorative Arts

Hugo Buchthal (1909–1996) and Kurt Weitzmann (1904–1993), two prominent German art historians trained as Byzantinists, introduced what we know today as Crusader manuscript illumination and Crusader panel painting, respectively, into the discourse on Crusader art and architecture. Buchthal introduced a corpus of 21 illuminated manuscripts which he identified as having been done in the Crusader east.

Miniature painting in the Crusading Kingdom ... was not a colonial art. It had a distinctive style of its own, which was not derived from any single source, but emerged as the result of copying illuminations from a variety of Byzantine and

western manuscripts, and of developing certain features of these models in a highly original and individual manner. ... The masters of Jerusalem or Acre were either foreigners themselves, Frenchmen or Italians who had been specially recruited for work in Outremer, or Frankish natives who had perhaps served part of their apprenticeship at Constantinople, or in some well-known scriptorium in the Latin West. Not only did they work in their own native tradition but, more often than not, they were also given models to copy which had been imported from a different region of the Latin West, or from Byzantium. They were thus bound to produce works in which several different styles are superimposed on one another ... Thus miniature painting in the Crusading Kingdom developed into a very composite art, subject to influences which were the result of local conditions, and which differed with each succeeding generation ... The surprising thing is ... that, in spite of the obvious lack of continuity, something like a local style and a local tradition of unmistakable identity should have emerged at all.²⁵

This “local style” and “local tradition of unmistakable identity” in manuscript illustration done in the Latin East that Buchthal recognized is what we identify as characteristics of the art of the Crusaders.

Kurt Weitzmann also discussed icon painting that he connected to Crusader painters, in two pioneering articles.²⁶ In these publications he presented 43 images from a total of 26 icons newly attributed to Crusader painters, icons in the extensive collection of the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. In the earlier – 1963 – article, Weitzmann compared a crucifixion image in the Perugia Missal published by Buchthal to various “Western-influenced” crucifixion icons at Sinai he was discussing. He concluded with an important formulation of the artistic phenomenon that also built on Buchthal’s earlier comments.

Attempts to distinguish the nationalities of the icon painters may not always be successful, simply because Italian and French artists working side by side and apparently having models from both countries available, gradually developed a style and iconography which, when fused with Byzantine elements resulted in what one might simply call Crusader Art.²⁷

The Crusader miniature painting studied by Buchthal and the Crusader icon painting studied by Weitzmann substantially broadened and tremendously deepened our knowledge of the art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, and brought painting to the fore, a medium heretofore little associated with Crusader artistic activity. It is not too strong to say that this important new material revolutionized the study of Crusader art. The presentation of manuscript illumination identified primarily from scriptoria in Jerusalem in the twelfth century and in Acre in the thirteenth century, and the icons mainly attributed to artists working in Acre and the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai in the thirteenth century in these introductory studies provided a solid foundation and marked a turning point for the future after the mid-1960s.²⁸ And naturally, many new questions appeared: what other works of Crusader painting – manuscript illustration, icons,

monumental painting – could be recognized and integrated into the new understanding of Crusader art? Where else could Crusader art be found, both inside and beyond the borders of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, in the Crusader Levant? What other artists and patrons could be found in the Crusader world? These and other related issues challenged scholars after 1957–1966.

Stimulated by these foundational studies, the scholarly response was impressive in the figural arts as indicated by the following selected examples. Weitzmann continued his work publishing additional Crusader icons from the group he had identified at St. Catherine's Monastery.²⁹ Cormack published an important icon of St. George that possibly originated in Lydda (1984).³⁰ Possible Crusader icons from other locations such as Cyprus were published by Mouriki and others.³¹ Hélou published the important thirteenth-century bilateral icon from Kaftoun in the County of Tripoli.³² Newly recognized Crusader manuscripts have also come to light. Folda published (1976) seven manuscripts illustrated by an artist trained in Paris who came to Acre to work in a good late thirteenth-century Gothic style, a painter we now call the "Paris-Acre Master."³³ He also proposed to attribute an illustrated William of Tyre *History of Outremer* codex to Antioch in the 1260s (1967).³⁴ Gustav Kühnel published a systematic study of the twelfth-century column paintings commissioned by pilgrims from east and west and ecclesiastical figures, in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, with outstanding color plates (1988).³⁵ The magnificent twelfth-century mosaics, recently cleaned and conserved by Piacenti, S.p.A (2013–2016) under the auspices of the Palestinian Presidential Committee, have now been published by Michele Bacci, *The Mystic Cave: A History of the Nativity Church in Bethlehem* (2017). Crusader frescoes in the chapels of the formidable castles of Crac des Chevaliers and Marqab were published in 1982.³⁶ Among other media with figural art, Heribert Meurer and Bianca Kühnel also renewed attention to the minor arts in the hands of the Crusaders (1976, 1994) with studies of Crusader reliquaries and the famous ivory book covers of the Melisende Psalter, respectively.³⁷ And in figural sculpture, Folda published a study of the famous Nazareth Capitals in 1986 incorporating finds from archeological excavations there in the 1960s.³⁸ Indeed new attention to archeological study pertaining to the Crusaders formed another major chapter in Crusader studies after the mid-1960s.

The Study of Crusader Archeology and Material Culture Including Architectural History

As indicated above, significant archeological work which included attention to Crusader material had been done especially by French archeologists and architectural historians before 1960. And the English archeologist C.N. Johns had done extensive work at 'Atlit, including the fortified town and the Templar castle of Chateau Pelerin in the 1930s.³⁹ Johns's English successor in Palestine has been R. Denys Pringle who has pioneered archeological study of fortified towers and secular buildings in the context of settlements during the Crusader period.⁴⁰

Meanwhile Pringle began his impressive work as archeologist and architectural historian on his corpus of Crusader churches in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, publishing the first volume of four in 1993.⁴¹ Furthermore, invigorated by the archeological interest, enthusiasm, and accomplishments of Israeli scholars in ancient, mainly biblical and classical sites, following the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, major new archeological work dealing with Crusader sites has also added important new dimensions to the study of Crusader art and architecture in what had been the most important parts of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. The survey work of Meron Benvenisti,⁴² stimulated by the historical studies of Joshua Praver,⁴³ has been followed by the contributions of Ronnie Ellenblum,⁴⁴ Adrian Boas,⁴⁵ and Brigitte Porée.⁴⁶ For selected specific important sites we find important and very substantial contributions. See, for example, the publications of Virgilio Corbo and Martin Biddle dealing with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.⁴⁷ And Father Bagatti has published important material from the Nazareth excavations of 1955–1962 on the site of the Crusader church of the Annunciation.⁴⁸ An Israeli team led by Eliezer and Edna Stern joined by many others, such as Benjamin Kedar,⁴⁹ Adrian Boas,⁵⁰ David Jacoby,⁵¹ R. Gertwagen,⁵² and Robert Kool,⁵³ have worked in the old city of Acre (‘Acco). And Israeli along with other archeological scholars have also investigated many other important Crusader sites, such as Apollonia-Arsuf, Ascalon, Ceasarea,⁵⁴ and Jerusalem⁵⁵ to list only a few. As a result pottery and other small media such as coins and seals have become a focus of attention for scholars, e.g. publications by Edna Stern,⁵⁶ Denys Pringle,⁵⁷ Adrian Boas,⁵⁸ and important new books on coins.⁵⁹ Overall, it is clear that study of archeology and material culture of the Crusader period in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem has continued to be important and was increasingly fruitful for the study of the art and architecture of the Crusaders between c.1970 and 2000.

*The Debate Concerning the Nature and Development
of the Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land*

The third area of great importance for the study of Crusader art is the discussion that has been going on since the 1950s, dealing with the concept of “Crusader art,” the artists who produced it, and the patrons who sponsored it. Once again, as with the discovery of Crusader painting referred to above, it was two Byzantinists who began the debate. Writing in 1954, Steven Runciman observed that, “in the pictorial arts, the surviving examples show so strong a Byzantine influence that it seems doubtful whether any Frankish artist worked in the East.”⁶⁰ Then after discussing the few main examples, he wrote the passage cited above, “the slightness of the evidence should not be interpreted to mean that little was done. If architecture flourished, it is likely that the other arts flourished also . . .,” thereby leaving open the possibility for future discoveries.⁶¹ In fact, his perceptive comment would be validated by the publications of Buchthal and Weitzmann soon to appear between 1957 and 1966. The other Byzantinist was Otto Demus, who

challenged the idea of Crusader art when he reviewed Boase's chapters in Volume IV of *A History of the Crusade*, published in 1976. Demus wrote:

[I]t is ... questionable whether this label [Crusader Art] should be used at all for the sum total of the art that originated in the Crusader territories ... Some branches may be legitimately designated in this way, especially miniature and icon painting ... but others do not seem to qualify for such a definition. There is, for instance, hardly a thing such as "Crusader Sculpture", the few surviving works being stylistically so heterogeneous that they cannot be brought under a common heading.⁶²

Other skepticism and challenges were voiced in certain reviews of Buchthal's 1957 book with regard to the attributions of certain manuscripts to scriptoria in the Crusader East. And Hans Belting mounted a serious challenge from a different point of view. Belting introduced the idea of a "lingua franca" in art, that is, the existence of works of art in which painters working in the Mediterranean region integrated well understood Byzantine principles with certain western European characteristics so seamlessly that we cannot discern the artist's place of origin.⁶³ It is in effect an artistic "lingua franca" on the linguistic model. Belting enlarged on his idea for the introduction to his volume of *atti* for the 24th CIHA in Bologna in 1979. The art of the "lingua franca" as he saw it was quite specific and distinct from the old notion of the Italian "*maniera greca*," which lacked specificity. He called this art of the "lingua franca," "l'art du commonwealth méditerranéen de Venise," whereas "il faudrait réserver l'expression 'Art-Croisé' pour le 12^e siècle."⁶⁴

As the debate continued, Kurt Weitzmann, among others, was not willing to give up the idea of the "*maniera greca*" when dealing with the issue of Italian painting in the Byzantine manner, nor the idea of "Crusader Art" as distinct from the "*maniera greca*" or, for that matter, the "lingua franca" in the thirteenth century.⁶⁵ Meanwhile this debate also raised again the issue of who the Crusader artists may have been. In 1979, Marie-Luise Bulst, in her study of the mosaic decoration of the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, stated that Crusader art is more correctly characterized as "the art of the Frankish colonists in the Kingdom of Jerusalem."⁶⁶ In particular, she points out that it was not the actual *crucesignati*, who came as soldiers and/or pilgrims, who built, painted, or sculpted the works we call Crusader art. It was mainly the resident Franks, and the Italians from Genoa, Pisa, and Venice, that is, the settlers. They were Western Europeans, who came and stayed, some to intermarry, and their children, who generated the art either as patrons or even as artists. She also asserts that the Kingdom of Jerusalem remained a western colony, and this colonial outlook characterized Crusader art in the twelfth century. This proposal complemented the ideas of Weitzmann and Buchthal, and marks an important development by challenging the assumption that Crusader artists were all originally from western Europe. The implications of Bulst's idea are that Crusader artists could be the offspring of second- or even third-generation settlers, born in the Latin East and trained there.

Along with this expanded idea of who the Crusader artists could be, the debate also began to consider what their background and training could have been.

Buchthal and Weitzmann envisioned Crusader painters as westerners who came to the Latin East. There they learned to combine Byzantine style and technique with their own native traditions. But Folda argued that one concrete example – a painter first identified as the “Hospitaller Master” and later renamed the “Paris-Acre Master” – demonstrated that it was possible for a French gothic painter from Paris to work in the Holy Land with minimal impact of Byzantine style and technique on his work.⁶⁷ Then Valentino Pace, writing in 1986, argued that “the very nature of ‘Crusader painting’ eludes all efforts to verify the nationality of its artists; we could go so far as to say that if the origin of the artist can really be detected, his work must no longer be labeled as ‘Crusader.’”⁶⁸ In effect, Pace maintains the identifiability of Crusader art in the thirteenth century, but he appears to be thinking of the Crusader artist as one manifestation of the artistic “lingua franca” idea.

In the meantime, since 1980, a number of other scholars have contributed to this discussion. Doula Mouriki among others challenged the Crusader attribution of certain icons which Weitzmann included in the 120-some “western-influenced” group he identified now at St. Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai. Identifying his criteria for an icon to be called “Crusader” as (i) executed by a (Crusader) Western artist, (ii) produced in Crusader territory, and (iii) commissioned by a Crusader donor, Mouriki wrote in 1986, shortly before her untimely death, that “we may wonder if Crusader painting, according to the traditional definition, is a less substantial reality than has been assumed.”⁶⁹ Writing somewhat later, Robin Cormack agreed with this point of view saying that “as a consequence of her [Mouriki’s] systematic studies on the icons of Cyprus and Sinai, she reached the conclusion that the category of Crusader icons which Weitzmann had proposed should be almost entirely deconstructed.”⁷⁰ Barbara Zeitler shared this view as well.⁷¹

Other views were expressed by Lucy-Anne Hunt, from her point of view based on the art of the Eastern Christians in the Near East. She wrote, “the art historical concept of ‘Crusader’ art is grounded ... in a preoccupation with colonization from a western point of view. It is envisaged as a composite, the output of western artists of different nationalities confronting Byzantine art.”⁷² And Annemarie Weyl Carr, looking at the situation from the vantage point of medieval Cyprus, added her voice to those problematizing the idea of the artistic “lingua franca.” In 1995 she wrote, “on many levels – of style, iconography, ornament, Morellian detail – thirteenth-century Cyprus belongs with Syria and South Italy to an artistic commonwealth.”⁷³

As this debate continued and expanded, other developments in the study of the art of the Crusaders emerged which would move the terms of the debate to a more positive affirmation of the phenomenon and a deeper and wider understanding of the works of art at issue.

A Second Turning Point in the Study of Crusader Art in the Years Around 2000

In 1972 Joshua Prawer had written: “There is no study which deals with the arts of the Latin Kingdom as a whole.”⁷⁴ An important first step in this direction was

of course achieved with the publication in 1977 of Volume IV of *A History of the Crusades*, with chapters by T.S.R. Boase, A.H.S. Megaw, David J. Wallace, and Jaroslav Folda. And it was notable that Volume IV encompassed not only art and architecture in the Latin Kingdom, but also all of Palestine and Syria, as well as on Cyprus, in Frankish Greece, and on Rhodes in the Crusader period. And indeed we can say that in the years around 2000 – that is, between c.1995 and 2005 – major new studies were produced that synthesized what was known about the art of the Crusaders, and Crusader architecture, and the context of Crusader art and architecture. Among the most important publications there is the magnificent work of Denys Pringle, who prepared a corpus of Crusader churches in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, in four volumes published between 1993 and 2009.⁷⁵ Reflecting research conducted from 1979 to 2009, Pringle systematically surveyed, recorded, described, and analyzed the archeological, historical, and architectural evidence for 489 churches – in contrast to the c.50 found in Enlart's work – truly a groundbreaking achievement of the first rank. During the same period, Jaroslav Folda published his two-volume study of the art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land between 1098 and 1291; the first volume in 1995 and the second in 2005.⁷⁶ These books attempted to address the fact that for many people, Crusader art had not clearly existed because there had been no comprehensive recent study that attempted to present it as a coherent chapter in the history of medieval art, with adequate photographic documentation. The overall study that resulted discussed what we know about the art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land – architecture, painting, sculpture, and the “minor arts” of metalwork, numismatics, and sigillography – using art historical method to its fullest potential for synthetic interpretative investigation, and paying attention to the patrons, the artists, and the functions of the various works of art. These volumes also included extensive documentation on the Crusader manuscripts illuminated in the Holy Land⁷⁷ and the icons⁷⁸ provisionally identified as having been painted by Crusader and/or Byzantine or Local Eastern Christian artists for Crusader and/or Byzantine or local Eastern Christian patrons.

These studies did not appear in a vacuum of course, and the concerted efforts to document and study works of Crusader art were greatly stimulated and facilitated by a series of major international exhibitions at important museums in the United States, in France, in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Greece, and Israel. Perhaps the two most important exhibitions took place in the US at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Both exhibitions were focused on Byzantine art, but the art of the Crusaders and its relationship with Byzantine art were central issues in each one. In the 1997 exhibition, *The Glory of Byzantium (843–1261)*, Crusader Art was presented as a discrete section with impressive examples of ivory carving, goldsmiths work, silk embroidery, fresco painting, manuscript illumination, icons, panel painting, coins, silversmiths work, and glazed pottery, reflecting the presence of Crusader production in Syria-Palestine, Cyprus, and the Latin Empire of Constantinople.⁷⁹ In the 2004 show, *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, 17 Crusader icons dating from the late twelfth to the end of the

thirteenth century were included in the section on icons from the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, reaffirming and expanding the criteria for Crusader icon painting first put forward by Weitzmann.⁸⁰ Two other exhibitions of these same icons subsequently took place in Athens and in Switzerland,⁸¹ before the icons were returned to Sinai, thereby expanding the exposure of these Byzantine and Crusader icons to public viewers in European settings.

Other exhibitions approached the phenomenon of the Crusades and Crusader art in an East–West framework, with emphasis on the historical context with different works of Crusader art selected largely outside of a Byzantine visual context, with no icons included. In 1997 an exhibition staged at both Milan and Toulouse was entitled: “*Les Croisades: L’Orient et L’Occident d’Urbain II à Saint Louis, 1096–1270*”; it presented Crusader manuscripts, sculpture, and minor arts as related to contemporary Western European history, medieval art, and imagery.⁸² Later, a major exhibition in 2005–2006 took place in three German museums in sequence: in Halle, in Oldenburg, and in Mannheim. It took a similar approach, but as its title indicates, “*Saladin und die Kreuzfahrer*,” there was a much greater emphasis on the relationship between the Crusaders and Islam, historically and art historically.⁸³

Rare indeed are the exhibitions which focus primarily on Crusader art in contrast to those seeing Crusader art mainly in a Byzantine setting. In 1999, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem organized an important exhibition entitled, *Knights of the Holy Land: The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*.⁸⁴ And in 2000 the Franciscans organized an exhibition in Milan entitled, “*In Terrasanta: Dalla Crociata alla Custodia dei Luoghi Santa*.” Important Crusader sculpture, metal work, and some painting from the Holy Places in the twelfth and thirteenth century was featured in this exhibition, which also included later artistic work that was commissioned and/or came under the aegis of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Places as established by the pope and recognized by the Mamlukes starting in the fourteenth century. All of these exhibitions and the various basic studies created in the years around 2000 have provided a newly contributed foundation for continuing work of established scholars and, very importantly, a new generation of scholars working in the early twenty-first century, all of whom are carrying the research forward.

From 2005 to the Present

Anthony Cutler and Angeliki Laiou observed, writing in 2001 that “Art history has come a long way in the 30 years since Otto Demus’s *Byzantine Art and the West* was published” (in 1970), in their program statement for the Dumbarton Oaks Symposium of 2002, “Realities in the Arts of the Medieval Mediterranean, 800–1500.”⁸⁵ They were referring to Byzantine art primarily of course, and the fact is that a lot had happened with the study of Byzantine art, but Demus’s celebrated book had little to say about Crusader art. So from the point of view of Crusader art we might revise this to say here for our purposes that “Crusader art history

has come a long way in the 40 years since the Dumbarton Oaks symposium of 1965.” Once again in the 2002 symposium, the presentation of Crusader art had been made in the context of the enveloping tradition of Byzantine art, and this has continued after 2005 in later exhibitions such as “Byzantium: 330–1453,” organized in London in 2008–2009 by Robin Cormack and Maria Vassilaki.⁸⁶ It was also true in an important exhibition held at the Getty Museum in 2006, which featured approximately 45 icons from Sinai. Among these icons were several widely recognized as Crusader,⁸⁷ and there was also one, the well-known early thirteenth-century mosaic icon of the Virgin and Child *Hodegetria*, formerly attributed to a Byzantine mosaicist, which was newly attributed to a Crusader artist in Constantinople.⁸⁸ The reattribution of this icon by Bissera Pentcheva represents an important example of the way Crusader art has begun to be deeply reconsidered and newly identified and characterized in the complex artistic developments of the medieval Mediterranean context, East and West. This is being manifested in several ways.

Among new approaches we can cite expanded considerations of Crusader art and architecture, directly or indirectly, in cultural studies of the Crusades. A notable volume appeared in 2004 entitled, *France and the Holy Land: Frankish Culture at the End of the Crusades*.⁸⁹ Numerous recent examples have appeared⁹⁰ and in 2015 two important volumes have been published: *The Crusader World*,⁹¹ and *Crusades and Visual Culture*.⁹² Other examples have found the art and architecture of the Crusaders presented in the multicultural matrix of the holy city of Jerusalem as seen in the important exhibition, *Jerusalem: 1000–1400: Every People Under Heaven*, mounted at the Metropolitan Museum of New York (September 2016–January 2017). The international conference *Tomb and Temple: Re-Imagining the Sacred Buildings of Jerusalem*, held in London, has produced a volume of studies (2018) which explores the historical reality of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, and their impact on Orthodox churches in the East, and round churches in the West.

Other archeological and cultural studies work has continued of course and this includes important books, such as *Domestic Settings: Sources on Domestic Architecture and Day-to-Day Activities in the Crusader States*,⁹³ as well as projects, also by A. Boas, who is leading a major new campaign to study the archeological remains at the castle of Montfort. Meanwhile articles continue to appear on the basis of excavations and studies in important Crusader sites such as Acre.⁹⁴ But perhaps the most innovative approach has been initiated by Scott Redford and Nasser Khalili, who have launched an international research program looking at medieval art and archeology in the Eastern Mediterranean at SOAS University of London entitled, “Art of the Crusades: A Re-Evaluation.” This research seminar, funded by the Getty Foundation “Connecting Art Histories” program, lasted for two years, in 2015 and 2016, and took place in Greece, Israel, Jordan and Turkey. The participants, who came from seven different countries, studied the art and archeology of the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean with regard to the various ethnic, religious, social, and cultural aspects pertaining to the Crusader Levant.⁹⁵

Meanwhile the vigorous debate concerning the nature and development of Crusader art and architecture continues. Along with the doubts and caution expressed by Doula Mouriki (1986) and Robin Cormack (2002) mentioned above, David Winfield summarized his view in 2006 as follows: “A lifelong study of Byzantine painting leads the present writer to the conclusion that what has been claimed over the past half century as the work of Frankish painters can much more plausibly be attributed to provincial Byzantine painters.”⁹⁶ In writing this Winfield was, of course, following in the footsteps of Steven Runciman. At this point in time however, in 2015, it must be said that in the period since 1954, the fact is that it has been conclusively demonstrated that Frankish painters did work in the Crusader East for the Crusaders.⁹⁷ And while the activity of provincial Byzantine painters seems clearly to be a limited part of the picture in understanding the art of the Crusaders, there were also first-rank Byzantine painters in and from Constantinople who were active for the Crusaders. And, of course, another important issue has emerged which pertains to the role of Eastern Christian, i.e. local Christian artists, e.g. Syrian, Maronite, etc. who along with Frankish painters were working for Frankish patrons and very likely Orthodox patrons as well.⁹⁸ Rebecca Corrie has also formulated the following observation reflecting these complexities: “we may ... have instances, such as Acre, where we can identify Mediterranean Christian art of the mid-thirteenth century as a consciously hybrid art facilitated by the movement of artists and work ... It is the product of a culture where, based on their own experiences and those of their clients, painters formulated local versions of intersecting international styles that made claims to eastern kingdoms and theological alliances and articulated participation in the Crusader endeavour.”⁹⁹

Pondering all the complexities of these possibilities along with the notions of the “*maniera greca*,” the “*lingua franca*,” and the “Byzantinizing tradition” as concepts for understanding the relationships of East and West in the thirteenth century Mediterranean world, it is Robin Cormack who observed already in 2002, “the present stage of research has reached an impasse. It can be suggested that this is because the argument has so far been pursued in art historical terms with a strong emphasis on style and iconography. An alternative approach must be to ask whether technical considerations might be able to offer the possibility of progress over the nature of production of some of these paintings ... This will allow the more precise and refined assessment of the category, ‘the art of the Crusaders’.”¹⁰⁰

One response to Cormack’s call for new technical and scientific approaches to the study of Crusader art is contained in the recent book, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting* where art historical analysis is joined by technical examination of chrysography by a research conservator.¹⁰¹ The results include further documentation of Crusader painting in comparison to Byzantine icons and Italian panel painting, and the identification of at least five different techniques for applying chrysography. This is a step forward, but in the years ahead many more issues pertaining to such technical considerations remain to be studied.

Looking to the future, there is indeed much work that needs to be done as the study of Crusader art and architecture continues to unfold and new approaches develop. Full studies of the art of the Crusaders on Cyprus, and in the Latin Empire (Frankish Greece) are needed. There is more archeological work to be done in the lands where the Crusaders established footholds; Crusader architecture in Syria-Palestine outside of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, as well as on Cyprus and in Frankish Greece awaits further study. Many Crusader icons need more detailed study; besides the 134 icons identified in 2005 in Folda's book, additional Crusader icons have now been identified and published and those from Cyprus and Frankish Greece require further attention. And finally, Crusader art and architecture, a phenomenon that began c.1100, had suddenly ended in 1291, and with its end, a great deal of the amazing strength and sophisticated elegance of the Byzantine tradition that it had carried westward as part of the "Byzantinizing tradition" ended with it, in central Italy and in many other places all over Europe. Further study is needed on how we understand this relationship between Crusader art in the Byzantine east and its impact on the medieval west.¹⁰²

Notes

- 1 Michaud, *Histoire des Croisades*.
- 2 de Saulcy, *Numismatique des Croisades*.
- 3 de Vogüé, *Les Eglises de la terre sainte*.
- 4 Rey, *Étude sur les monuments*.
- 5 Rey, *Les Colonies franques de Syrie*.
- 6 Schlumberger, *Numismatique de l'Orient Latin*.
- 7 Diehl, "Les Monuments de l'Orient Latin," pp. 293–310.
- 8 Conder and Kitchener, *The Survey of Western Palestine*
- 9 Prutz, *Kulturgeschichte der Kreuzzüge*.
- 10 Vincent and Abel, *Jérusalem*.
- 11 Viaud, *Nazareth et ses deux églises*.
- 12 Schmaltz, *Mater Ecclesiarum*.
- 13 C. Enlart started with the works of De Vogüé and Rey, and also relied on Guérin, *Description géographique, historique et archéologique de la Palestine*.
- 14 Enlart, *Les Monuments des croisés dans le royaume de Jérusalem*.
- 15 Enlart, *L'Art gothique et de la Renaissance en Chypre*.
- 16 Deschamps, *Les Châteaux des croisés en Terre Sainte*.
- 17 L. de Clercq's album, *Voyage en Orient: Châteaux du temps des Croisades (1859–1860)*, dealt with the Crusader fortifications.
- 18 Lawrence, "The Influence of the Crusades on European Military Architecture."
- 19 The first edition was published in London in 1936 by the Golden Cockerel Press, in 2 volumes. Then later, *Crusader Castles*, Lawrence's Oxford thesis, was published by Michael Haag. A new edition followed in 1988: T.E. Lawrence, *Crusader Castles*, ed. with notes by D. Pringle.
- 20 Boase, "The Arts in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," p. 20.

- 21 Boase, (Chapter III) "Ecclesiastical Art in the Crusader States in Palestine and Syria: A. Architecture and Sculpture, B. Mosaic, Painting and Minor Arts"; (Chapter IV) "Military Architecture in the Crusader States in Palestine and Syria"; (Chapter V) "The Arts in Cyprus: A. Ecclesiastical Art"; (Chapter VI) "The Arts in Frankish Greece and Rhodes: A. Frankish Greece (with D.J. Wallace), B. Rhodes," in *A History of the Crusades*.
- 22 Boase, *Castles and Churches of the Crusading Kingdom and Kingdoms and Strongholds of the Crusaders*.
- 23 Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*; Mayer, *Bibliographie zur Geschichte der Kreuzzüge* and *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge*; Prawer, *Histoire du royaume latin de Jérusalem*, originally published in Hebrew; Riley-Smith, *The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus*.
- 24 Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. 3, pp. 385–386.
- 25 Buchthal, *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, pp. xxxii–xxxiii.
- 26 Weitzmann, "Thirteenth-Century Crusader Icons on Mount Sinai," pp. 179–203 and "Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom," pp. 51–83.
- 27 Weitzmann, "Thirteenth-Century Crusader Icons," p. 182.
- 28 A symposium held at Dumbarton Oaks in 1965, "The Byzantine Contribution to Western Art of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," provided the occasion for Weitzmann's second major article, "Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom," cited above in n. 26.
- 29 Weitzmann, "Four Icons on Mount Sinai," pp. 279–293, and "Three Painted Crosses at Sinai," pp. 23–35.
- 30 Cormack and Mihalarias, "A Crusader Painting of St. George," pp. 132–141.
- 31 Mouriki, "Thirteenth-Century Icon Painting in Cyprus," pp. 1–112.
- 32 Hérou, "La Mère de Dieu Hodigitria de Kaftoun," pp. 22–27 and "L'Icône Bilatérale de la Vierge de Kaftoun au Liban," pp. 101–131.
- 33 Folda, *Crusader Manuscript Illumination at Saint-Jean d'Acre*.
- 34 Folda, "A Crusader Manuscript from Antioch," pp. 283–298.
- 35 Kühnel, *Wall Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*. He also began a fundamental study of the famous wall mosaics in the same church, a study now continuing in the hands of Bianca Kühnel following his untimely death in 2009.
- 36 Folda, "Crusader Frescoes," pp. 177–210.
- 37 Meurer, "Zu den Staurotheken der Kreuzfahrer," pp. 65–76; Kühnel, *Crusader Art of the Twelfth Century*.
- 38 Folda, *The Nazareth Capitals and the Crusader Shrine of the Annunciation*.
- 39 Johns, *Pilgrim's Castle*.
- 40 Pringle, *The Red Tower and Secular Building in the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*.
- 41 Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*.
- 42 Benvenisti, *The Crusaders in the Holy Land*.
- 43 See above, n. 23.
- 44 Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement* and "Three Generations of Frankish Castle-Building," pp. 517–551.
- 45 Boas, *Crusader Archaeology*, with an extensive and very useful bibliography of articles and archaeological reports, pp. 238–255.
- 46 Porée, "La Contribution de l'Archéologie," pp. 487–515.
- 47 Corbo, *Il Santo Sepolcro di Gerusalemme*; and Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*.
- 48 Bagatti with the collaboration of Alliata, *Gli Scavi di Nazaret*.
- 49 Kedar, "The Outer Walls of Frankish Acre," *Atiqot*, 31 (1997), pp. 157–180.

- 50 Boas, "A Rediscovered Market Street in Frankish Acre," pp. 181–186.
- 51 Jacoby, "Montmusard, Suburb of Crusader Acre," pp. 205–217.
- 52 Gertwagen, "The Crusader Port of Acre," pp. 552–583.
- 53 Kool, "The Genoese Quarter in Thirteenth Century Acre," pp. 187–200.
- 54 Bull, *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima*.
- 55 Bahat, "Topography and Archaeology of Jerusalem in the Crusader Period," pp. 68–119.
- 56 Stern, "Exports to the Latin East of Cypriot Manufactured Glazed Pottery," pp. 325–335.
- 57 Pringle, "Pottery as Evidence for Trade in the Crusader States," pp. 451–475.
- 58 Boas, "The Import of Western Ceramics to the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," pp. 102–122.
- 59 See, Malloy et al., *Coins of the Crusader States*, and Metcalf, *Coinage of the Crusades and the Latin East*. See also the chapters on Crusader coinage with Latin, Greek and Arabic inscriptions by John Porteous, Michael Bates, and D.M. Metcalf in Vol. VI of Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, pp. 354–482. A volume on Crusader coins in the great publication project started by Philip Grierson, *Medieval European Coinage (MEC)*, has been designated as Vol. 16 in the series, but this volume is not yet announced as in preparation.
- 60 Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. II, p. 380.
- 61 Ibid., pp. 385–386.
- 62 Demus, review of Vol. IV of *A History of the Crusades*, in *Art Bulletin*, 61, pp. 636–637.
- 63 Belting, "Zwischen Gotik und Byzanz," pp. 217–257.
- 64 Belting, "Introduction," pp. 1–10, esp. 1 and 3.
- 65 Weitzmann, "Crusader Icons and Maniera Greca," pp. 143–170.
- 66 Bulst-Thiele, "Die Mosaiken der 'Auferstehungskirchen,'" pp. 442–471.
- 67 Folda, *Crusader Manuscript Illumination*, pp. 42–116. On the issue of renaming this artist as the "Paris-Acre Master," see Folda, "The Figural Arts in Crusader Syria and Palestine," pp. 318–320.
- 68 Pace, "Italy and the Holy Land," p. 334.
- 69 Mouriki, "Thirteenth Century Icon Painting in Cyprus," p. 77.
- 70 Cormack, "Crusader Art and Artistic Technique," p. 165.
- 71 Zeitler, "Two Iconostasis Beams from Mount Sinai," p. 223–227.
- 72 Hunt, "Art and Colonialism," p. 69.
- 73 Weyl Carr, "Images of Medieval Cyprus," pp. 97–98.
- 74 Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, p. 558.
- 75 Denys Pringle, with drawings by Peter E. Leach, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus*.
- 76 Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land* and *Art in the Holy Land*.
- 77 There is in Folda, *Crusader Art* (2005), a compact disc with documentary black-and-white photographs of all 27 known Crusader manuscripts dating from the thirteenth century.
- 78 There is in Folda, *Crusader Art*, in the appendix, an "Annotated Handlist of Western-Influenced Icons from the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai and Elsewhere," pp. 531–559, with bibliographic and photographic documentation for 134 Crusader icons, mostly from the thirteenth century. Note that this handlist does not include Crusader icons from Cyprus or the Latin Empire of Constantinople.
- 79 Folda et al., "Crusader Art," pp. 388–401.
- 80 Damianos et al., "The Icon as a Ladder of Divine Ascent in Form and Color," pp. 334–387.

- 81 Evans, *Pilgrimage to Sinai and Trésors du Monastère de Sainte-Catherine Mont Sinai Égypte*. In both catalogs the work of Helen C. Evans as editor, and the text of Archbishop Damianos and the various scholars who wrote entries for the icons displayed were retained from the original catalog in New York.
- 82 Rey-Delqué, *Les Croisades: L'Orient et l'Occident d'Urbain II à Saint Louis*.
- 83 Wieczorek et al., *Saladin und die Kreuzfahrer*.
- 84 Rozenberg, *Knights of the Holy Land: The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*.
- 85 Cited by J. Folda, "The Figural Arts in Crusader Syria and Palestine...", p. 315.
- 86 Robin Cormack and Maria Vassilaki, *Byzantium*, with selected examples of Crusader art included in section 7, "Byzantium and the West."
- 87 Nelson and Collins, *Icons from Sinai*, nos. 9, 15, 50.
- 88 Pentcheva, "No. 8 Mosaic Icon of the Virgin Hodegetria," pp. 140–143.
- 89 Weiss and Mahoney, *France and the Holy Land*.
- 90 These include Kostick, *The Crusades and the Near East* and Villads et al., *Cultural Encounters*.
- 91 Boas, *The Crusader World*.
- 92 Lapina et al., *Crusades and Visual Culture*.
- 93 Boas, *Domestic Settings*.
- 94 Stern, "La Commanderie de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers à Acre," pp. 53–60.
- 95 www.soas.ac.uk/artofthe/crusades, accessed 9 August 2018.
- 96 Winfield, "Crusader Art," pp. 159–173.
- 97 The Paris-Acre Master is one documented case. See n. 67 above. And with regard to cases exemplifying the "Byzantinizing tradition" where a number of Frankish painters were employed on one major manuscript, looking at two examples, e.g., the Psalter of Queen Melisende (London, British Library, Egerton MS 1139), most likely commissioned by King Fulk, or the *Histoire Universelle* most probably commissioned for King Henry II of Lusignan (London, British Library, Add. MS 15268), the alternative proposal that these were done by provincial Byzantine artists could not possibly be successfully argued in light of the fundamental western European characteristics that are found in the work of these painters that any Byzantine artist would have had to learn, among other reasons.
- 98 On this issue, see the publications of Hélou (see above, n. 32), Immerzeel, "Holy Horsemen and Crusader Banners," pp. 29–60, and Dodd *Medieval Painting in the Lebanon*.
- 99 Corrie, "Sinai, Acre, Tripoli and the 'Backwash from the Levant,'" pp. 446–447.
- 100 Cormack, as in n. 70, pp. 166, 168.
- 101 Folda, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting*, with a contribution by Dr. Lucy Wrapson, on "The Techniques for Chrysography in Thirteenth Century Panel Painting."
- 102 See Folda, "Epilogue," pp. 164–169, and extended discussion in Folda, as in n. 101.

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Gothic in the Latin East

Michalis Olympios

Of the specialist terms making up this chapter's title, "Gothic" would arguably hold pride of place as the one having elicited the fiercest discussions concerning its origins, precise content, and general appropriateness with respect to representing the art of the European Central and Late Middle Ages.¹ "Latin East," while certainly less controversial and a convenient shorthand, constitutes no less fraught a term. Conceived as a pendant to the blanket term "Latin West," it has been applied to the new polities founded in the eastern Mediterranean from the end of the eleventh to the beginning of the fourteenth century as a more or less direct outcome of the Crusades. In this manner, parts of modern-day Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Jordan, Greece, and Turkey, as well as the island of Cyprus, all appear indexed together under a designation unapologetically evocative of the great expansion of medieval Latin Christendom eastwards, into lands formerly in Muslim, Byzantine, or other hands.²

Nevertheless, such an overarching historical concept, already crystallized at the time of the foundation of the Société de l'Orient latin in the latter half of the nineteenth century, inevitably masks the significant geographical, political, demographic, religious, and cultural divergences between these places.³ It also privileges a single dominant constituent, "Latin" (a term referring to Roman Catholics, at least initially of European extraction), over all the other elements which are known to have contributed toward the complex multicultural and multireligious Mediterranean societies. A multitude of Christian denominations, from the Greeks (the modern-day Orthodox), the Armenians, and the Syrians (Jacobites, Nestorians, Melkites,

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or Maronites) to the Copts, Ethiopians, Georgians, and others, as well as Jews and Muslims – variously represented in individual polities – shared the region with the Latins, interacting with them on a daily basis, peacefully or aggressively, and on several different levels.

The length and intensity of fruitful interaction, leading to cultural interchange, was naturally predicated on the existence of propitious circumstances on the ground. Thus, short-lived entities such as the kingdom of Thessaloniki (1204–1224) or the Latin empire of Constantinople (1204–1261) were characterized by vastly different socio-political conditions, and allowed for different degrees of intellectual and artistic growth, than Lusignan and Venetian Cyprus (1192–1571) or Venetian Crete (1211–1669), where Latin rule lasted between three- and four-and-a-half centuries. Furthermore, the relative stability of Lusignan and Venetian administration definitely proved more fertile than the extreme volatility of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1291), under perennial military threat in the second century of its existence, or the almost constantly shifting borders of the principality of Achaia (1205–1430). What is more, according to more recent research in the field of social history, by the late medieval and early modern periods, such contact led to the demarcation lines between Latins, Greeks, and Eastern Christians becoming increasingly blurred, particularly at the higher social strata. Cyprus, Crete, and (to a lesser extent) other places witnessed significant upward social mobility on the part of wealthy Greeks, Syrians, etc. coupled with intermarriage into the established noble houses, which resulted in the emergence of an aristocratic elite of mixed ethnic background. Consequently, being “Latin” in the East meant different things in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries than in the fourteenth and fifteenth; rather than being immutable, “Latin” identity shifted and adjusted to the evolving social realities.⁴

Not being indigenous to any region but northern France, the Gothic traveled east with the Latins and, like them, did not move into a vacuum. Deep-rooted local artistic traditions continued to flourish alongside it and, while it, too, grew quickly acclimatized to local materials, techniques, and patronal preferences, it never quite monopolized the artistic scene across all media (for instance, via the rampant proliferation of microarchitectural image-framing devices replicating designs for large-scale buildings), as was the case in northern Europe from about the mid-thirteenth century onwards.⁵ The simultaneous coexistence of multiple stylistic modes – mainly what we would call “Gothic” and “Byzantine,” in their diverse variants, both local and imported – in the same space created an intriguing dynamic, which archeologists, art, and architectural historians have long been trying to comprehend in the context of the social forces that produced it. It would perhaps not be too reductive to suggest that, since the nineteenth century, the historiography on Gothic in the eastern Mediterranean has focused almost entirely on issues of style and patronage, whether concerned with the agents and processes of its transfer from West to East, its adaptation to local conditions, tastes, and expertise, or its impact on the preexisting local artistic landscape. Yet this perilously broad sketch demands to be further nuanced, especially in the light of

current scholarly preoccupations. For one, the acknowledgment of the variegated social fabric of the Latin East and the intricate interconnections and interpenetrations of its constituent elements, hinted at above, has opened up questions of individual and collective identities and of how these were catered to and fashioned through art. Whereas the “Gothic” was at first intimately associated with “Latin” patronage and authority, in time it came to serve the aesthetic needs and self-representational interests of a much larger segment of – primarily urban – society, not solely the Latins (however they may be defined, or have defined themselves, in the later centuries) but also the Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, and others.

This chapter will chronicle changing scholarly attitudes to the study of the Gothic in the eastern Mediterranean during the last 170 years or so. The discussion will concentrate on ecclesiastical architecture and art in the states of Frankish Greece and the kingdom of Cyprus during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries (with occasional forays into the later periods), to the exclusion of the Crusader states in Latin Syria, which are dealt with extensively by Jaroslav Folda elsewhere in this volume, and the island of Rhodes, which only came under Latin rule in 1309. Moreover, coverage of even this relatively restrained area will of necessity be uneven, depending on the survival rate of medieval monuments and works of art, the state of research, the availability of published archeological reports, and so on. The chapter will conclude with a brief consideration of the problems currently faced by the field and a few suggestions regarding potentially rewarding avenues for future research.

The Early *Summae*: Colonialism, Nationalism, and the Franco-Italian Missions

The section of the Warburg Institute Library (School of Advanced Studies, London) dedicated to art in the Near East and Cyprus at the time of the Crusades is bracketed by regional studies of French Gothic architecture. Surprising as this may seem for one of the world’s leading centers in cultural and art history, the Warburg’s unique classification scheme, which pits books in “dialog” with their immediate neighbors within broad thematic clusters, was devised in the early twentieth century and thus could be considered representative of older academic mindsets.⁶ Indeed, as we shall presently see, colonialism, as well as French and Italian nationalism, constituted a robust driving force behind the systematic study of medieval and early modern art in the eastern Mediterranean during the late nineteenth and the former half of the twentieth century. Awareness of the field’s origins in the past national agendas of major western European powers, especially as regards architectural history, is essential, given that the echoes of some of those ideas are still with us. One need look no further than Eric Fernie’s recent Pelican History of Art volume on Romanesque architecture, where the monumental heritage of the Crusader states is qualified and discussed as a direct offshoot of Burgundian architecture.⁷

Camille Enlart (1862–1927) cut an important figure in the study of medieval architecture, both within and outside of France. Educated as a painter and draftsman at the *École des Beaux-Arts* and as a historian at the *École des Chartes* under Robert de Lasteyrie, he traveled and published widely on the medieval monuments of France, Germany, Great Britain, Scandinavia, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, as well as Cyprus and the Levantine Crusader states. One of his foremost scholarly preoccupations was to demonstrate the significance of French input in the creation of medieval “national” architectural traditions, both West and East. Enlart’s agenda could not have been more explicit than in a short article on the Gothic monuments of Greece, published in 1897. There, he could hardly rein in his disdain for the “weak,” “poor,” “barbarous,” and “monstrous” buildings erected in Greek territory during Latin rule, in spite of the use of perfectly good French models; he judged that this “colonial” architecture, lacking in inherent aesthetic value, would be of purely historical interest, serving to document the impact of French architecture in the region.⁸

Be that as it may, Enlart’s first sustained – and much more positive – brush with Gothic in the Latin East came in 1896, when the *Ministère de l’Instruction publique* entrusted him with a mission to study the medieval buildings of Cyprus, which had become British-administered territory in 1878. Although his first sojourn on the island lasted a mere four months, the scope, breadth, and insight of his main contribution to the subject, *L’Art gothique et la Renaissance en Chypre* (1899), have yet to be superseded.⁹ Enlart identified previously anonymous structures in town and countryside with edifices known from the extant textual record; he studied closely for the first time the buildings and their sculptural and painted ornament, producing plans, sketches, watercolors, and photographs; and he puzzled out their chronology and style, suggesting plausible dates and design models. The success of the *Boulonnais chartiste’s* endeavor was surely predicated on the work of his forebears, men such as the historian Louis de Mas Latrie (1815–1897), the archeologist Marquis Charles-Jean-Melchior de Vogüé (1829–1916), and the architect Edmond Duthoit (1837–1889), pupil and collaborator of Viollet-le-Duc, who had themselves been charged with or attached to official “scientific” missions to the East several years ahead of Enlart.

Thus, armed with a solid grounding in the island’s complicated history and a few detailed drawings of some of the principal sites, Enlart ventured to enlighten his compatriots on the material vestiges of French “colonial” rule in Cyprus under the Poitevin Lusignan dynasty (1192–1489). In his quest for the sources of Cypriot Gothic, Enlart drew on his prodigious knowledge of his homeland’s medieval heritage, ascribing France the lion’s share in the shaping of the local architectural canon, as was his wont. Non-French influence, from Spain, Italy, and Rhodes, was relegated to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, by which time, according to the author, European architectural traditions had evolved in ways that rendered them sufficiently distinct from their French pedigree and, hence, identifiable. Despite its Francocentricity, Enlart’s *opus* remains invaluable for its careful scholarship and its documentation of the monuments prior to the restoration work undertaken during the British period (1878–1960).¹⁰

George Jeffery (1855–1935), friend of Enlart and an architect by trade, was responsible for preserving and restoring Cyprus's Gothic monuments until the creation of the Department of Antiquities in 1935. Trained at the Royal Academy in London and later made a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, he undertook the building of Anglican churches in Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and Jerusalem, before being appointed Curator of Ancient Monuments by the colonial administration in 1903. Jeffery's prime contribution to Gothic was undoubtedly his tenacious protection of the monuments themselves, which included the foundation of the Lapidary Museum in Nicosia, where loose architectural fragments from the capital's vanished buildings were kept. Nevertheless, he proved a prolific writer of articles and reports on topics much more diverse than the structures of the Lusignan and Venetian periods. The only focused attempt Jeffery made to commit his views on the island's Gothic edifices can be found in his *A Description of the Historic Monuments of Cyprus* (1918), which reads more like a compendium and a gazetteer of sites than a straightforward study.¹¹ Despite drawing on long years of acquaintance with the Cypriot monumental landscape, Jeffery offered only sparse art-historical commentary. Even though he opined that the Gothic monuments were inspired by models in Provence and southern Italy, he appears to have favored a more holistic, Cyprocentric approach: Contrary to Enlart, who lamented not finding the time to study the Greek churches during his flash-trip in the 1890s, Jeffery devoted a substantial part of his book – and a fairly extensive introductory section – to rural village churches, some of which exhibited stylistic flourishes redolent of local Gothic structures, ushering them into the mainstream narrative of the island's medieval architectural history.¹²

The work of Giuseppe Gerola (1877–1938) seems to have struck a delicate balance between Enlart's avowed colonial outlook and the regionalist antidote proffered by Jeffery. Following the end of Ottoman rule in 1898 and the institution of an international protectorate, the island of Crete attracted a number of foreign archeological missions intent on uncovering and studying primarily the remains of the prehistoric and classical eras. When the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti expressed the desire to fund analogous research into the documentation and study of the material vestiges of the rule of the Republic of Venice over Crete, the young Gerola, a true polymath, was thought to be the ideal candidate for the task. Having studied medieval history and paleography in Padua and Florence, he honed his diplomatic skills in Berlin and Freiburg; in his busy career, he conducted research and published in fields ranging from art history and archeology to archival documents, numismatics, heraldry, and epigraphy, while he also served as museum director and *soprintendente* of historical monuments, restorer, and founder of academic journals. Even though he did not possess Enlart's deep familiarity with the Gothic's many manifestations, through the years he was interested and involved in the study and restoration of Byzantine monuments, both in Greece and in Italy – a fact which may partly explain his stance vis-à-vis the material he encountered in Crete.

Gerola's Cretan mission lasted, on and off, for about two years (1900–1902), during which he scoured the land for any traces of Venetian presence that he could relate to pertinent documents in the Venetian archives. The fruits of this labor were published (among other venues) in his *Monumenti veneti nell'isola di Creta* (1902–1935), a monumental four-volume work painstakingly produced over several decades.¹³ In spite of the title, the book does much more than record and analyze material testimonies to the *Serenissima's* colonial regime, “ad majorem Venetiarum gloriam,” as per his initial instructions. In the early stages of his research, Gerola realized that understanding Crete's Venetian legacy necessitated delving into what preceded and followed it, namely the Byzantine and Ottoman past, and that one could not afford to exclude rural Greek churches, as Enlart had done, as they also partook of the larger picture of Venetian patronage and stylistic influence on Cretan artistic production.¹⁴ Gerola's universalism is remarkable for its precocity. In spite of his views not being completely untethered to Italian nationalist rhetoric, he anticipated developments in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century scholarship by several decades, as we shall see. His rich collection of thousands of photographs, hundreds of drawings, and dozens of plaster casts of Cretan architecture and sculpture – at one time meant to be exhibited in a projected museum about the Venetian colonies in the East – have proven an incomparable resource for students of the history and art history of Venice's maritime empire.¹⁵

Gothic Vs. Byzantine: Challenging Western Primacy

Enlart and Gerola had both been on a mission from their respective national governments to retrieve and publicize evidence of medieval French and Italian presence in the East, at a time when European nations were vying with each other for political control in the region. Conversely, Jeffery approached his object of study almost as a closed microsystem, allowing for outside artistic input but monitoring and analyzing its effects on a strictly local scale. However, none of these authors conceptualized the Gothic from the point of view of its relationship with local (eastern) artistic tradition to the degree that two other figures did in the second quarter of the twentieth century; tellingly, their training and background were quite unconventional for the task.

Even though his career was every bit as diverse as that of Gerola, Antoine Bon (1901–1972) was, at heart, a classical archeologist and historian turned Byzantinist. He spent the latter half of the 1920s at the *École française d'Athènes*, where he was encouraged to undertake the study of the medieval monuments of the Peloponnese. Bon carried out fieldwork there between 1925 and 1936 and again in 1938, but he did not defend his thesis until 1951. His hefty workload following his appointment as Professor of Byzantine History and Civilization at Lyon (1956–1970) and the meticulousness with which he effected revisions to his original manuscript made it so that another 18 years passed before his magisterial work, *La Morée franque* (1969), finally saw print.¹⁶ In it, Bon set out to answer one question:

What happened when the culture of the Latin settlers and that of the indigenous Greeks came into contact after the establishment of Villehardouin rule in the Peloponnese in the wake of the Fourth Crusade (1204), and to what extent the two worlds mixed and merged. In order to be able to assess the degree of cultural interpenetration, Bon launched himself into a wide-ranging study of the history, topography, and archeology of the principality of Achaia from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, in an effort to reconstruct the Peloponnese's medieval historical landscape. Naturally, his study of the Gothic monuments represents only a tiny fraction of the whole, yet his refreshingly non-Eurocentric perspective on the topic is exceptionally noteworthy. According to this author, the few, poorly constructed and preserved Latin churches of the Morea were erected by local builders, trained in the traditional Byzantine techniques; despite the overall design being assuredly western in origin, it would be impossible to trace it back to specific regions in Europe, due to its extreme plainness and simplicity. On the other hand, the churches of the Greeks continued to be built in the time-honored Byzantine manner, with only minimal borrowings from western practice. In the light of these observations, the introduction of the Gothic in the Peloponnese constituted, for Bon, merely a minor episode without long-term consequences for the region's vigorous Byzantine architectural heritage – a failed experiment of sorts, which did not eventually segue into the creation of a vibrant artistic “school” combining elements from both the art of the conquerors and that of the conquered. This is a striking assertion, probably partly adumbrated by Bon's acquaintance with the work of Enlart, who, as we have seen, took a rather negative view of Greek Gothic, and that of Ramsay Traquair (1874–1952), Professor of Architecture at McGill University. The latter's publications in the early 1920s had already deemed Gothic in the Peloponnese a moribund style, introduced mainly by Italian craftsmen and soon thereafter “diluted” in the hands of their local colleagues.¹⁷ At any rate, Bon's *longue durée* reading of Peloponnesian artistic developments (hardly surprising, given that his secondary thesis, also defended in 1951, pertained to the Byzantine Peloponnese) brings to mind Gerola's “long” Venetian period in Crete, but with an unprecedented twist: here, the stress lay squarely on local, Byzantine art and how it conditioned, transformed, and ultimately rejected the Gothic as a foreign body.¹⁸

Much less categorical and polemical was the work of T.S.R. (“Tom”) Boase (1898–1974). Equipped with an Oxonian education, Boase set out on a career as a medieval historian, which was soon intercepted by his surprising and fateful appointment to the directorship of the Courtauld Institute of Art in 1937. His occupation of this post had long-lasting consequences for his future research and publications. Despite authoring surveys and more focused studies on topics as diverse as Romanesque and Victorian English art, medieval death, and Giorgio Vasari, Boase harbored a particular appreciation for the art of the Latin East. His interest in the history of the Crusades, already sparked in his Oxford days, was rekindled during World War II, owing to his tenure as Chief Representative of the British Council Middle East in the 1940s, a post permitting extensive travel in the region.

Following his election as president of Magdalen College, Oxford in 1947, Boase completed a number of studies concerned with art and architecture in the Latin East, ranging from the Crusader states of Latin Syria, to Frankish Greece, and the kingdoms of Cilician Armenia and Lusignan Cyprus. Though his work on Cilicia and some of his publications on Syria-Palestine appeared in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the masterly surveys which he contributed to the fourth volume of Kenneth Setton's *A History of the Crusades*, submitted in 1950 and revised subsequently, only became available posthumously as late as 1977.¹⁹ In his chapters on the ecclesiastical art of Lusignan Cyprus and the art of Frankish Greece, as in those tackling Syria and Palestine, Boase innovated by juxtaposing Gothic architecture and sculpture – hitherto almost exclusively called upon to represent the artistic face of the Latin East – with Byzantine-style fresco and icon painting, manuscript illumination, as well as a host of other media, including stained glass, woodcarving, metalwork, textiles, and ceramics, to the extent that contemporary publications allowed. No scholar before him had attempted such a comprehensive overview of the extant material, by way of which the complex character of the artistic production in the region under discussion was thrown into higher relief. It was now made abundantly clear that a wholesale reliance on European models would not suffice to explain the composite nature of much of the art of the Latin East, and that a broader view encompassing local Byzantine or Levantine styles was in order; thus, the modern field of the study of the art of the Latin East was born.²⁰

The 1970s and the Challenges Faced by Indigenous Scholarship

The belated publication of Bon's book and Boase's survey chapters have brought us into the 1960s and 1970s. As a more inclusive perception of the art of the Latin East was coming to the fore, the foundational texts of the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century began being critically revisited, usually in smaller-scale studies. This fresh crop of research saw a more active participation of Greek scholars, who had long experienced a rather uneasy relationship with monuments evoking periods of foreign domination, the preservation and study of which were seen to clash with the three-pronged national historical and cultural agenda (revolving around Classical Antiquity, Byzantium, and post-1821 modern Greece). Much like in Ireland, the Gothic (along with other "western" historical styles) was vilified as the mark of the conqueror and oppressor.²¹ Nevertheless, following World War II, the Greeks were becoming increasingly invested in the study of the Gothic monuments of Crete and the Peloponnese and, by the 1970s, when the country's pro-European aspirations reached their crescendo, Greece's conflicted attitude to the Latin monuments of the Middle Ages and the early modern period came to a head: as Charalambos Bouras was castigating his compatriots' disinterest in the country's Venetian heritage and Heraklion's fourteenth-century

church of the Augustinian Hermits was being demolished with the encouragement of the military dictatorship in Athens, scholars such as Jordan Dimacopoulos and Kanto Fatourou-Hesychakis were seriously looking into the Italian sources for Cretan Renaissance architecture for the first time.²²

Meanwhile, things in Cyprus had turned out very differently. The lively response of the Department of Antiquities to the preservation needs of the island's Gothic heritage since its foundation in the 1930s petered out in the aftermath of Independence (1960), in favor of the Byzantine/Orthodox church monuments, to which Greek Cypriot collective identity was much more attuned. This re-orientation was also partly due to intercommunal strife between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots in the 1960s, which resulted in the majority of the Gothic buildings in Nicosia and Famagusta becoming effectively inaccessible for research or restoration. The occupation of the island's northern sector (where most of the major monuments are situated) by Turkey since 1974 has further exacerbated this issue. In the event, Greek Cypriot scholars were almost completely cut off from this aspect of the island's monumental landscape up until the early 2000s. It is hardly surprising, in this respect, that researchers on Cyprus largely turned to other topics and periods.²³

The Quest for Sources: Controversy Over the Agents of Stylistic Transmission

The opening up of the field in the last third of the twentieth century having encouraged a multiplicity of approaches and the participation of scholars drawn from a much wider pool, in terms of both nationalities and specialisms, it was only a matter of time until the hitherto dominant late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century nationalist narratives began showing cracks. A number of architectural historians have taken issue with Enlart's staunchly French-centered vision of the Gothic in the Latin East, and have employed the same time-honored methods of stylistic analysis as he to suggest plausible alternatives. Understandably, the discussion has revolved mainly around the, on the whole, better-preserved, and architecturally more sophisticated Latin cathedrals of Nicosia and Famagusta, which seem to have set the trend for high-caliber building in stone for much of the Lusignan period in Cyprus.²⁴

The controversy surrounding the chronology and stylistic pedigree of the Cenacle, namely the elevated Gothic chapel once part of the twelfth-century basilica on Mt. Sion in Jerusalem, where the Last Supper, the Pentecost, and a host of other Christological events were commemorated, and its relationship to monuments in Cyprus is an illustrative case in point. Enlart's study of the structure highlighted the similarities of its style with thirteenth-century northern French and Cypriot architecture, all the while acknowledging certain analogies with southern Italian work sponsored by Emperor Frederick II and the incorporation of Romanesque and antique *spolia*. In other words, he believed the Cenacle to

have been constructed between 1229 and 1244, when Jerusalem was once again in Christian hands thanks to the decisive involvement of Frederick II in Levantine politics, in a design based on French models and taking account of earlier architectural vestiges.²⁵ More recently, Jürgen Krüger has nuanced Enlart's hypothesis, viewing the Cenacle as the outcome of at least three successive building campaigns, spanning both the twelfth (Phases I–II, Romanesque) and thirteenth centuries (Phase III, Gothic). Whereas he still adhered to Enlart's dating for his Gothic phase, Krüger downplayed the Cypriot connection while emphasizing Frederick's role as patron.²⁶

On the other hand, a number of British and Israeli scholars have favored a different reading of the evidence. Hugh Plommer was the first to propose an early date for the Cenacle's Gothic rib-vaulting and sculpture, on the basis of comparisons with French, English, and Cypriot buildings – particularly the chevet of Nicosia Cathedral, which he dated to the 1190s (fig. 30-1). According to this theory, the Cenacle's Gothic phase would date from the 1170s and early 1180s, i.e. before the capture of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187, and thus would appear to be a stylistically highly precocious endeavor, in both an eastern and a western context.²⁷ In his corpus of churches in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, Denys Pringle subscribed to Plommer's view, adding a few more structural and historical arguments in its defense.²⁸ What is more, Nicola Coldstream exploited the Plommer–Pringle thesis to buttress her view that French architectural models reached Cyprus in the early thirteenth century through the intermediary of buildings in the Holy Land. Her reasoning originated from her conviction that the perceived similarities between the Cenacle and the chevet of Nicosia Cathedral denoted a common prototype, which she identified in Laon Cathedral (Aisne). Thus, Coldstream tentatively reconstructed the eastern itinerary of a mason having trained in Picardy as passing through the Latin kingdom in the 1170s–1180s before ending up in Nicosia by the early 1200s.²⁹ More recently, Amit Re'em and Ilya Berkovich have brought new archeological evidence to bear on the date of the Cenacle's Gothic phase (1160s–1180s, by their estimate) and have adduced further stylistic comparisons with Nicosia Cathedral, without, however, dwelling on the issue of the Cenacle's Cypriot afterlife.³⁰

The quest to define the stylistic makeup of the Latin cathedral of Famagusta is comparable in several respects (fig. 30-2). Famagusta Cathedral, begun c.1300, was thought by Enlart to have been designed by a French master mason familiar with Champenois edifices, primarily the collegiate church of Saint-Urbain at Troyes (Aube) and Reims Cathedral (Marne).³¹ A French descent for the building's style was also upheld by Philippe Plagnieux and Thierry Soulard in a volume of collected essays published in 2006 by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres as a tribute to Enlart's work on Cyprus; the only difference being that these scholars made the case for a mixture of Levantine with up-to-date French *Rayonnant* design elements, where Saint-Urbain, Reims, and Amiens Cathedrals (Somme) would have played a significant part.³² Be that as it may, already in 1901 Georg Dehio and Gustav von Bezold linked the design of the Cypriot



FIGURE 30-1 Nicosia, Selimiye Mosque (former Latin cathedral of St. Sophia), general view of interior, looking northeast. Source: photo by M. Olympios.



FIGURE 30-2 Famagusta, Lala Mustafa Paşa Mosque (former Latin cathedral of St. Nicholas the Confessor), west façade. Source: photo by M. Olympios.

church with that of Cologne and Regensburg Cathedrals, while from the 1980s onwards Nicola Coldstream has pressed forward with a Rhenish source for the Famagusta style.³³ Recent contributions have expanded on the Rhenish thesis, positing Cologne as the main prototype, around which other German or French models could be arrayed. Following this theory, the features Plagnieux and Soulard saw as nods to Amiens would have been channeled through Cologne, whose form was greatly indebted to that of the Picard great church.³⁴ Here, as in the case of the Nicosia chevet, some scholars have argued for the transmission of Gothic designs of ultimate French origin by means of non-French agents or architectural traditions – what Caroline Bruzelius has felicitously termed “second-hand Frenchness.”³⁵ The foremost consequence of such re-evaluations is the gradual re-orientation of art-historical scholarship from the old monolithic center–periphery/metropolis–colony paradigm toward a more open-ended model

taking account of the complex and multidirectional movement of craftsmen and ideas along networks linking the eastern Mediterranean with Europe on both sides of the Alps.

Art on a Mission? Monastic and Mendicant Architecture

Regardless of the relatively lively interest garnered by the Cypriot great churches among students of the Gothic, another genre of ecclesiastical architecture has proven equally, if not more, popular with medievalists and Byzantinists in recent decades, for reasons that will quickly become apparent: Latin monastic and mendicant houses were founded from the very end of the twelfth and especially from the thirteenth century onwards in Cyprus and all over Frankish Greece, and, in at least some regions, the extant vestiges of the orders' churches and conventual buildings constitute the most conspicuous, monumental, and lasting signs of Latin presence; in other words, these buildings were spread over a rather large area, and their size and relative ornamental elaboration (in their local context) commanded attention. Although these monuments were certainly accounted for in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century surveys, they were treated first and foremost as products of the "national" architectural schools or as eloquent manifestations of "western" mores on eastern soil, without much regard for their institutional affiliation, function, and possible interregional associations.

The first work to problematize Latin monastic and mendicant architecture in Greece and Cyprus was Beata Kitsiki-Panagopoulos's *Cistercian and Mendicant Monasteries in Medieval Greece* (1979), under preparation from the mid-1960s.³⁶ The author acknowledged the architecture of the Benedictines, the Cistercians, the Premonstratensians, etc., in addition to the major mendicant orders settled in the Latin East – Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, Augustinian Hermits – as requiring separate treatment from that of the grand Gothic cathedrals, and proceeded to emphasize common supraregional traits over local conditions and characteristics. Following Traquair and Bon, Kitsiki-Panagopoulos conceived of the monks' and friars' churches as evolutionary dead-ends in the long-term architectural history of Greece, a conclusion she could now justify by reference to the latest historical research: in 1976, Brenda Bolton published an influential study on the Cistercian expansion in Romania (i.e. the lands of the former Byzantine Empire), wherein she argued that the White Monks were directed to settle there on orders from the papacy, to act as missionaries to the Greeks and convert them to Roman obedience; their failure in this mission by the later thirteenth century meant that the mendicants had to take up the missionary mantle.³⁷ In Kitsiki-Panagopoulos's view, the friars fared little better in their artistic enterprises, given that, due to the animosity between Latins and Greeks, the impact of their architecture on local traditions was as minimal as that of the traditional monastic orders.³⁸

In her wide-ranging surveys on Gothic building in Greece and Cyprus, Maria Georgopoulou acknowledged received opinion on the place of Greek Latin

monastic and mendicant churches within the context of European architecture. Whereas the Cypriot monuments of this kind were almost all single-nave, rib-vaulted churches with polygonal chevets, their counterparts in Crete, the Peloponnese, Euboea, and elsewhere sported aisled or single naves, usually timber-roofed (with the exception of Zaraka, which was rib-vaulted), with or without transepts, and capped by three vaulted chapels at the east end; as a rule, wall surfaces were plain and the windows and other openings relatively restrained in size and elaboration.³⁹ Earlier scholarship had compared these structures, often somewhat unfavorably, to the glass-cage exuberance of northern French Gothic, while their old-fashioned aspect has evoked parallels with the architecture of the Midi and Catalonia.⁴⁰ In her study of medieval Cretan urbanism, Georgopoulou discussed extensively the place and role of monasteries and mendicant houses in the urban and social space of Candia/Heraklion, adding a further stimulating dimension to a topic habitually mired in questions of style.⁴¹

Beyond the broad overviews, the architecture and material culture of the Latin monasteries and mendicant convents of Frankish Greece and Venetian Crete have been explored in depth in more focused, often monographic art-historical and archeological studies, carried out in collaboration with the individual ephorates of Byzantine Antiquities. The buildings and landscape context of the thirteenth-century Cistercian abbey of Zaraka in Stymphalia, Peloponnese, had been the subject of archeological investigation in the 1990s, undertaken by the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies at the University of Toronto.⁴² What may well have been the thirteenth-century church of the Franciscan convent of Glarentza, the port-town of the principality of Achaia, was excavated in the early 2000s by the 6th Ephorate.⁴³ At Andravida, the erstwhile capital of the principality, the plan and fabric of the Dominican church of St. Sophia came under the detailed scrutiny of a team from the University of Minnesota in the 1980s (fig. 30-3).⁴⁴ The evidence culled by the Minnesota–Andravida Project allowed Mary Lee Coulson to reconstruct the building’s complicated and protracted construction history and justify its austere form by correlating the archeology with what was known about the friars’ order-specific architectural predilections.⁴⁵ In fact, it is precisely this avenue of research, namely reinserting the Greek monuments in their proper European mendicant context, that has hitherto proven most fruitful. Recent architectural and archeological analyses of Cretan churches, such as St. Peter Martyr in Heraklion (begun thirteenth century) and St. Francis in Rethymnon (sixteenth century), have attempted to situate them within the larger picture of Dominican and Franciscan building in the Mediterranean (fig. 30-4).⁴⁶ In exceptional cases, like that of the thirteenth-century Dominican church of Negroponte/Euboea (the present-day Ayia Paraskevi, Chalkis), enough has survived and been retrieved during conservation work to evoke a fairly good idea of the chronology (including the felling date for the roof timbers), the liturgical and funerary arrangements of the interior, the sculpture, and wall-paintings, effectively addressing many issues in the current research agenda for the study of mendicant architecture.⁴⁷



FIGURE 30-3 Andravida, St. Sophia (former Dominican church), general view from the nave toward the east end. Source: photo by M. Olympios.



FIGURE 30-4 Heraklion, Sts. Peter and Paul (former Dominican church of St. Peter Martyr), exterior of east end. Source: photo by M. Olympios.

The Gothic Democratized: Gothic by and for Non-Latins

Bolton's views on the alleged Cistercian "mission" and its failure have been heavily criticized by recent scholarship, as has Kitsiki-Panagopoulos's take on a supposed Greco-Latin architectural apartheid fueled by ethno-religious hatred.⁴⁸ In her surveys, Georgopoulou has shown how urban Latin edifices, while originally contrived to embody "colonial" authority and to bolster metropolitan hegemony, in time would have become "naturalized" to the surrounding monumental and social landscape, and mined for architectural designs and decorative motifs by local craftsmen.⁴⁹ This reception of Gothic forms into local Byzantine architectural practices all over Latin Greece has been perceived in different ways in the literature. Bouras has noted that the Gothic borrowings almost invariably consisted of isolated decorative motifs, which were integrated into buildings that remained largely Byzantine in structure and overall conception with a view to quenching the thirst for variety innate in Byzantine architecture.⁵⁰ On the other hand, Heather Grossman interpreted the mixture of novel Gothic design and sculptural elements with traditional Byzantine masonry techniques in Peloponnesian architecture – both Latin structures, such as the church at Zaraka, and Greek ones – as the creation of a new, typically Moreot hybrid style, practiced by both Latin and Greek builders, that defies attempts at conventional art-historical classification into generic categories such as "Gothic" or "Byzantine." A few decades after the Latin conquest, this composite style would have appealed to both Latin and Greek patrons, given that the two groups were by then integrated, at least in the higher social echelons.⁵¹ Building on Grossman's analysis, Georgopoulou has construed the presence of Gothic motifs in Cretan rural churches as fashion-driven: by the fourteenth century, local masons and patrons, both Latins and Greeks, developed a taste for the sophisticated Latin urban monuments, which carried over to more modest commissions in the countryside.⁵²

Dissociating art-historical stylistic labels ("Gothic," "Byzantine") from the ethnic background or creedal affiliation of the patrons and/or users ("Frankish"/"Latin," "Greek") has blazed new trails in thinking about medieval buildings in the eastern Mediterranean. It would now be imprudent to attempt to extrapolate information about the rite of the patron(s) or that for which a church was destined from style alone: the late thirteenth-century church of the Dormition at Merbaka, Argolid, thought to have been commissioned by the Latin archbishop of Corinth, the Dominican William of Moerbeke, was designed in a self-consciously Byzantine style; while the approximately contemporary church at Blachernai, Elis, a Byzantine-looking structure with strong Gothic accents, might have served both the Greek and Latin rites in its successive phases.⁵³ Interestingly, in the host of twin-nave churches which sprung up all over the Latin East during the late medieval and early modern periods, even in those cases where sufficient textual or other evidence exists to indicate that the two spaces were meant to accommodate the Latin and Greek rites side by side, architectural style does not seem to locate the two rites in their dedicated place.⁵⁴

Fourteenth-century Famagusta has preserved a small number of churches built for the Armenian, Nestorian, and other Eastern Christian rites in a version of the local Gothic seen in the town's Latin monuments. Evidently, the same masons and sculptors were hired to work on buildings cutting across the entire spectrum of religious rites inhabiting the Cypriot port-town at its heyday.⁵⁵ Undoubtedly, the most imposing instance of the use of the Gothic by non-Latins is the design of the grand basilica of St. George of the Greeks in the third quarter of the century (fig. 30-5). Second in size only to the Latin cathedral, on which it was modeled, the Greek mother church sported a fashionable aisled, rib-vaulted nave with a lofty clerestory braced by flying buttresses, traceried windows, and a dome over the crossing, the latter quite possibly from inception. St. George remained unique in the Cypriot context, and a cursory comparison of its majestic architecture with that of the diminutive Byzantine-type church complex partly incorporated within the wall of the basilica's southern flank (probably the old cathedral) would suffice to illustrate the profound socio-cultural transformations having affected the upper classes of Lusignan Cypriot society by mid-century.⁵⁶



FIGURE 30-5 Famagusta, St. George of the Greeks, exterior, looking northwest.
Source: photo by M. Olympios.

Gothic and Byzantine in Unison: Furnishings, Sculpture, and Painting

In the last decade or so, students of medieval Cypriot art have shown some interest in reconstructing the sacred topography and the interior aspect of the island's Gothic churches, which were invariably purged of their liturgical furniture, ornaments, screens, and other fittings following the Ottoman conquest in the late sixteenth century.⁵⁷ Chantry chapels, altars, and altarpieces have been tackled in comparison to analogous features in European edifices, while a fairly comprehensive corpus of incised and relief tomb slabs has seen print.⁵⁸ Whereas the typology of these funerary fixtures in Cyprus fell well within the ambit of European tradition, the fragmentary survivals from Frankish Greece occasionally betray an interpenetration of Gothic and Byzantine highly reminiscent of the situation in the realm of architecture.⁵⁹

The bulk of surviving non-funerary sculpture from this period in Cyprus is architectural, the vast majority of Gothic churches exhibiting large surfaces of plain walling and painted door tympana notwithstanding. Of the sculpture that once adorned the main fronts of Nicosia and Famagusta Cathedrals, mere fragments have come down to us, and any attempt at interpretation is, of necessity, laced with a high degree of conjecture.⁶⁰ What is particularly interesting, however, and widely accepted by scholars, is that the shallow niches in the portal jambs of the, otherwise French-inspired, west front of Nicosia Cathedral were apparently conceived to house painted panels, perhaps Byzantine-type icons.⁶¹ If true, this hypothesis would offer an eloquent testimony to the way imported styles were adapted to local preferences and visual habits.

In the same vein as Grossman for the Peloponnese and Georgopoulou for Crete, Justine Andrews commented on the successful marrying of Gothic and Byzantine in the monuments of fourteenth-century Famagusta – only, here, the union was not between distinct architectural traditions, but rather between Gothic buildings and Byzantine-style wall-paintings lurking within. Jarring as it may seem to contemporary art-historical sensibilities, such a combination would have taken advantage of locally available visual modes of the highest caliber, irrespective of their origin, to articulate responses to local needs relating to the display of wealth and prestige.⁶² Michele Bacci has shown that Greek artists, possibly trained in Thessaloniki, Mystras, or some other major center of Palaiologan painting, were in the employ of Latin, Greek, Armenian, and Syrian patrons in late fourteenth-century Famagusta, frescoing buildings designed in the local Gothic style, as we have seen.⁶³ Latin patronage of Greek painters is exemplified by the Carmelite church, among others, and it is in the convents of the friars that we find Byzantine-style mural painting in a Gothic setting elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean, as in the Franciscan church at Glarentza (thirteenth century) and the Dominican churches of Negroponte and Galata in Constantinople (fourteenth century).⁶⁴ This is not to say that western-style painting is not attested in the East in this period: an Italian (Neapolitan?) artist seems to have produced wall-paintings for the Latin cathedral in the town of

Rhodes in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, while Ioanna Rapti has ascribed an illuminated breviary kept in the library of the abbey of Saint-Wandrille (Seine-Maritime) and illustrated in a style approximating early fourteenth-century French Gothic to a Cypriot *scriptorium*.⁶⁵ Simply put, by the fourteenth century, art patrons in the Latin East were blessed with a remarkable array of visual modes to choose from, of which Gothic, in its many variants, was but one.

Concluding Thoughts and Future Prospects

In his “American Postscript,” appended to the 1953 edition of *An Outline of European Architecture*, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner (1902–1983) justified the decision to leave out any buildings put up in America earlier than the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in these words:

In a book in which the severe Mannerism of Herrera and his followers in Spain appears only in a few lines, it would be as perverse to devote space to the ruin of Tecali – the “purest” Franciscan church in Mexico, dated 1569 – as it would be to choose Dalmatian examples to discuss Venetian architecture or Nicosia in Cyprus to discuss French Gothic church buildings.⁶⁶

Pevsner’s statement encapsulates the reasoning of “western” medievalists of his and subsequent generations for the exclusion of the Gothic buildings erected in the eastern Mediterranean (as well as later endeavors designed in “western” styles) from the canon of European architecture: without Enlart’s conception of France as a benign, civilizing power lording over medieval western culture, the Frenchness of Cypriot monuments was seen as too derivative and provincial, and hence too peripheral to the “grand narrative” to be taken up in any serious manner.

From the vantage point of the present, the study of Gothic art in the Latin East has come a long way from its inauspicious beginnings as almost a byproduct of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century western European nationalist discourse. The stylistic pluralism observed in the art of the late medieval eastern Mediterranean and its socio-cultural conditions and corollaries could hardly have been appreciated without the concurrent recent advances in social history and anthropology; certainly, research on Cypriot and Greek Gothic has gained a great deal from acquiring indispensable historical context. However, while the art of the Syro-Palestinian Crusader states is very slowly but surely gaining a foothold in western art-historical canon, the same is not true of Cyprus and Greece: the only recent survey of European architecture to discuss the latter buildings in any context remains the Oxford History of Art volume on *Medieval Architecture* (2002), whose author had first-hand knowledge of the region and its medieval heritage.⁶⁷ There are several reasons for this unevenness in coverage and presence in scholarly awareness, a few of which will be addressed below in pursuit of encouraging new research and novel ways of looking at this material.

For all the intellectual subtlety and nuanced understanding the field has achieved through the implementation of a variety of interpretative models, in many cases the fundamentals are still lacking. Hardly any of the medieval buildings covered in this chapter have benefited from a proper modern architectural monograph, namely an in-depth and diachronical book-length look at its history and fabric, combining traditional art-historical methodologies with insights afforded by the minute scrutiny of masonry and the technical analyses of timber, mortars, and other materials. One would ideally desire to have in hand, when going about research on Gothic Cyprus or Greece, something as detailed and comprehensive as the recent multi-author volumes on Auxerre and Regensburg Cathedrals.⁶⁸ As it stands, archeology has been very slow in catching up to the leap-and-bound progress in theory, as the smattering of occasional preliminary reports available are no substitute for the full publication of any archeological excavation or investigation.

Much archeological work is done at the local or regional level, and therein lies part of the problem. Western medieval art and architectural history has never been an integral part of the curricula of the relevant departments in Greek universities, where courses on western art history habitually kick off with the Italian Renaissance; until very recently, the same situation obtained in Cyprus. Furthermore, even at the international level, university teaching and research on the art of the Latin East are more often than not carried out by trained Byzantinists. This is understandable to a certain extent, given that, by traditional academic specialisms, scholars of medieval and modern Greek studies would appear to be better equipped to delve into the wider historical, geo-political, and cultural context of Lusignan Cyprus, Venetian Crete, the Morea, etc. – especially since a more or less substantial part (depending on the region) of the relevant secondary literature is in Greek, a language which is not part of the average western medievalist's skillset. Nevertheless, a case might be made that, after the initial nineteenth-century push, the pendulum has swung too far the other way, and that balance between West and East will have to be restored.

On the edge of, and overlapping with, both the art of medieval Europe and that of Byzantium, the artistic production of the Latin East should not be of merely local interest to scholars of medieval Greek history and culture. On the contrary, Cypriot and Greek Gothic architecture and sculpture are uniquely situated to test the limits of western *Stilgeschichte* in its encounters with Byzantine art in its variegated forms. They are also sure to contribute to questions of supraregional scope and interest, such as the typology, chronology, and dissemination of mendicant architecture or the international reception and significance of particular design models in different periods. What is more, consideration of the adaptation of western models and the development of local stylistic variants, where applicable (mainly Cyprus and Crete, as well as Rhodes), could enrich the current picture of Gothic regionalism and, eventually, help redefine the heartland and major centers of architectural and artistic innovation. The possibilities of reshaping the canon, peering in from without, are exciting and virtually boundless.

This chapter updates and expands on that by Tassos C. Papacostas in this book's first edition ("Gothic in the East: Western Architecture in Byzantine Lands," pp. 510–530).

Notes

- 1 Consult Chapter 21 by Murray in this volume. For another up-to-date discussion of the term, see Reeve, "Gothic."
- 2 Andrea, *Encyclopedia of the Crusades*, p. 198; Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, pp. 13–23, 306, 313; France, *The Crusades*, pp. 1–5, 21; Tyerman, "Expansion and the Crusades," pp. 456–457, 469–470; Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades*, pp. 125–127, 147–148; Latham, *Theorizing Medieval Geopolitics*, pp. 17–18.
- 3 On the Société's foundation in 1875 as a learned association devoted to the publication of primary textual sources pertaining to the study of European dominion over the East, see Riant, "Introduction," pp. v, viii–ix; Richard, "The Société de l'Orient Latin," p. 19.
- 4 Grivaud, "Éveil de la nation chypriote"; Nicolaou-Konnari, "Ethnic Names"; McKee, *Uncommon Dominion*; Epstein, *Purity Lost*; Shawcross, *The Chronicle of Morea*, pp. 203–219.
- 5 Bugslag, "Architectural Drafting."
- 6 Schäfer, *Die Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg*, pp. 228–233; Steinberg, "The Law of the Good Neighbor," p. 128. The shelfmark for the art of the Crusades (CBL 305) is subsumed within that of Gothic architecture in France (CBL 300).
- 7 Fernie, *Romanesque Architecture*, pp. 124, 131–134.
- 8 Enlart, "Quelques monuments."
- 9 Enlart, *L'Art gothique*, I, I-XXXII, 1–66; Enlart, *Gothic Art*, pp. 15–74 (English translation).
- 10 *Camille Enlart 1862–1927*; Coldstream, "Introduction"; de Vaivre, "Sur les pas de Camille Enlart"; Bacci, "L'arte delle società miste," pp. 339–346; de Vaivre, "Visiteurs, voyageurs et savants français."
- 11 Jeffery, *A Description*.
- 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 7–13, 16–17; Pilides, *George Jeffery*, I, esp. pp. 3–17; Enlart, *L'Art gothique*, I, XX–XXI; Enlart, *Gothic Art*, p. 28.
- 13 Gerola, *Monumenti veneti*.
- 14 *Ibid.*, I, pp. xii–xiii; II, pp. 14–15, 249, 266–286.
- 15 On Gerola's life and work, see Curuni and Donati, *Creta veneziana*, pp. 37–41, 48–50, 73, 80–82 (pp. 41–48, 50–72, 74–80, 82–96 for the relevant correspondence, and pp. 123–126 for the Gerola archive and its contents); Bacci, "L'arte delle società miste," pp. 347–348; Curuni, "Gerola"; the essays in Baldini, *L'avventura archeologica*.
- 16 Bon, *La Morée franque*.
- 17 Traquair, "Frankish Architecture," esp. pp. 1–2, 30.
- 18 Bon, *La Morée franque*, pp. vii, 1–4, 537–599, 685–687; the essays in *Mélanges Antoine Bon*.
- 19 Boase, "The Arts in Cyprus"; Wallace and Boase, "The Arts: A. Frankish Greece."
- 20 Zarnecki, "Obituaries"; Alexander, "Thomas Sherrer Ross Boase."

- 21 Hourihane, *Gothic Art in Ireland*, pp. 19–34.
- 22 Bouras, “Βενετική αρχιτεκτονική”; Fatourou-Hesychakis, *Ἡ Πετόντα τῆς Κρήτης*, “Ἡ κρητικὴ Ἀναγέννηση,” and “Ἱταλικὴ καὶ κρητικὴ ἀναγεννησιακὴ τέχνη”; Gratziou, “Venetian Monuments in Crete”; relevant articles in Dimacopoulos, *Scripta Minora*.
- 23 Limbouri, “The Restorations of Ancient Monuments,” pp. 48–57.
- 24 For a short study of the local impact of the architecture of Famagusta Cathedral, see Coldstream, “The Church of St George the Latin.” See also Olympios, “The Shifting Mantle,” pp. 100–101.
- 25 Enlart, *Les Monuments des Croisés*, II, pp. 243–262.
- 26 Krüger, “Der Abendmahlsaal” and “Architettura federiciana.”
- 27 Plommer, “The Cenacle.”
- 28 Pringle, *The Churches*, III, pp. 261–287, esp. p. 285.
- 29 Coldstream, “The Late Twelfth-Century Rebuilding.”
- 30 Re’em and Berkovich, “New Discoveries.”
- 31 Enlart, *L’Art gothique*, I, pp. 30, 294; Enlart, *Gothic Art*, pp. 50–51, 240.
- 32 Plagnieux and Soulard, “Famagouste: la cathédrale Saint-Nicolas,” pp. 228–234.
- 33 Dehio and von Bezold, *Die kirchliche Baukunst*, II, p. 438; Coldstream, “Introduction,” pp. 9–10 and “Gothic Architecture,” pp. 55–57.
- 34 Franke, “St Nicholas in Famagusta,” esp. pp. 83–91; Olympios, “The Shifting Mantle,” pp. 83–99.
- 35 Bruzelius, *The Stones of Naples*, p. 60, for the use of the term in the context of Franciscan architecture at San Lorenzo Maggiore, Naples.
- 36 Kitsiki-Panagopoulos, *Cistercian and Mendicant Monasteries*.
- 37 Bolton, “A Mission.”
- 38 Kitsiki-Panagopoulos, *Cistercian and Mendicant Monasteries*, pp. xv–xix, 149–155.
- 39 For the Cyprus mendicants, see Soulard, “Les Ordres mendiants.”
- 40 Georgopoulou, “Gothic Architecture” and “The Landscape,” pp. 352–356 and *passim*.
- 41 Georgopoulou, *Venice’s Mediterranean Colonies*, pp. 132–164.
- 42 Campbell, “Cistercian Monastery”; Salzer, “Gatehouses”; *The Cistercian Monastery*.
- 43 *Γλαρέντζα/Clarence*, pp. 32–40, 52; Athanasoulis, “The Triangle of Power,” pp. 123–125.
- 44 Sheppard, “Excavations” and “The Frankish Cathedral”; Cooper, “The Frankish Church.”
- 45 Coulson, “The Dominican Church.”
- 46 Chronaki and Kalomoirakis, “Ο ναός του Αγίου Πέτρου”; Kougléri and Giapitsoglou, “Ο ναός του Αγίου Φραγκίσκου”; Olympios, “Treacherous Taxonomy.”
- 47 MacKay, “St. Mary of the Dominicans”; Delinikolas and Vemi, “Ἡ Αγία Παρασκευὴ Χαλκίδας”; Kontogiannis, “What Did Syropoulos Miss?” On a recent assessment of the state of the question in the field of mendicant architecture, consult Bruzelius, “The Architecture of the Mendicant Orders.”
- 48 Schabel, “The Myth.”
- 49 Georgopoulou, “Gothic Architecture,” p. 253, and “The Landscape,” pp. 331–332, 365–367.
- 50 Bouras, “The Impact.”
- 51 Grossman, “Syncretism Made Concrete” and “On Memory.”
- 52 Georgopoulou, “Vernacular Architecture.”

- 53 Sanders, “William of Moerbeke’s Church”; Athanasoulis, “Η ιαοδομία,” pp. 144–184; Tsougarakis and Schabel, “Of Burning Monks,” pp. 17–19.
- 54 Gratziou, *H Κρήτη*, pp. 126–183; Arvaniti, “Double-Identity Churches.”
- 55 Olympios, “The Shifting Mantle,” pp. 107–123, and “Saint George,” pp. 173–177.
- 56 Papacostas, “Byzantine Rite”; Olympios, “The Shifting Mantle,” pp. 108–120, and “Saint George”; Papacostas, “A Gothic Basilica”; Kaffenberger, “Harmonizing the Sources.”
- 57 Olympios, “Institutional Identities,” pp. 210–219.
- 58 *Lacrimae Cypriacae*; Bacci, “Side Altars”; Olympios, “Stripped from the Altar.”
- 59 Ivison, “Latin Tomb Monuments”; Melvani, “Η γλυπτική” and *Late Byzantine Sculpture*, pp. 116–122.
- 60 De Vaivre, “Sculpteurs parisiens”; Andrews, “The Latin Cathedral”; Bacci, “Spazi sacri,” pp. 186–190; Langdale, “Notes on the Marginal Sculpture.”
- 61 Andrews, “The Latin Cathedral,” pp. 41–44.
- 62 Andrews, “Gothic and Byzantine” and “Conveyance and Convergence.”
- 63 Bacci, “Patterns of Church Decoration.”
- 64 *Γλαρέντζα/Clarence*, pp. 38–41; Westphalen, “Die Dominikanerkirche.” For Negroponte, see above.
- 65 Bacci, “Una ‘maniera latina,’” esp. p. 142; Rapti, “Identities on the Page,” pp. 322–328.
- 66 Pevsner, *An Outline*, p. 437.
- 67 Coldstream, *Medieval Architecture*, pp. 12–13, 20, 34, 88, 203–204. For a recent major English-language textbook on medieval and Renaissance art, in which the art of the Crusades features prominently, see Lymberopoulou, “To the Holy Land.”
- 68 *Saint-Étienne d’Auxerre*; Hubel and Schuller, *Der Dom zu Regensburg*.

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Art and Liturgy in the Middle Ages

Eric Palazzo

In 2006 and 2008, I published two papers in English on recent research into the relationship between art and liturgy in the Middle Ages, as well as on the theme of performance in ritual and the use of images and art in general in liturgical action. In this chapter, I will limit myself to highlighting the main results of research in these same areas, but considering only publications issued in the last 10 years.¹ After some general considerations on recent developments of the concepts of “liturgy” and “ritual” as applied to the study of the Western Middle Ages, I will review the main publications of the last decade and their contribution to a new vision of relations between art and liturgy in the Middle Ages. I will first present new contributions on the theme of architecture and monumental decoration, then take up studies on liturgical manuscripts and their illustrations, and, finally, conclude this brief overview with a look at publications that have focused on liturgical objects and their role in the liturgy.

In the past decade, the primary characteristic of research on the relationship between art and liturgy in the Middle Ages has been one of a strictly historical approach, although almost all researchers consider it necessary to go beyond a strictly historical approach in regard to the relation between art and liturgy, even though such an approach remains fundamental to any serious study of the subject. We can therefore say that in the study of the relation between art and liturgy, the strictly historical approach came to be enriched in favor of a new awareness of the artistic material itself while at the same time allowing a full reintegration of theology. Before briefly going over these two points, we must bear in mind

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that the research trends in this area have been largely “globalized” as a result of the globalization of the research made possible by new information technologies which facilitate the circulation of ideas and concepts. Despite this, one should not assume that there has been a standardization of thought since, in some countries, specific historiographical trends are still very dominant.

The very conception of the definition of the liturgy in the Middle Ages has experienced some changes in recent years. In general, we can say that we have moved from a historical-anthropological conception of the liturgy, influenced by the theoretical approach of some authors,² to a conception which, without rejecting the historical and anthropological aspects of the topic, has reintegrated theology into the heart of the subject.³ Two anthologies by Danish scholars published in 2004 and 2007⁴ are in my opinion the best examples of this balance between the historical-anthropological approach of the ritual of the church and the desire to reopen this research to theology. In these publications, nothing is left untouched that might contribute to a deeper understanding of medieval liturgy in its historical, anthropological, and theological aspects. This is mainly made possible thanks to a perfect knowledge of the sources of the liturgy and its theology. The renewed approach to certain types of sources of medieval liturgy, such as liturgical commentaries – that is to say, exegesis on the liturgy – has also allowed the inclusion of subjects previously absent from the general understanding of medieval liturgy, such as dance performance in church ritual.⁵ In the field of Christian theology, recent publications have also helped us in our approach to and understanding of the liturgy in a historical perspective.⁶ In light of this, one can say that medievalists have recently, though only gradually, left behind a doctrinal and dogmatic approach of Christian theology in favor of a return to the realm of historical “reality.”

These publications have led to a return to the practices of some major twentieth-century authors in the field of historical theology, as found in Dom Jean Leclercq’s pioneering book⁷ or, more recently, several publications by Alain Boureau,⁸ both heirs of the great figures of Dominican erudition of the past century, Yves-Marie Congar and Marie-Dominique Chenu, to whom could be added Etienne Gilson. François-Cassingena Trévédý and Gilbert Dahan highlighted the central role played by the notion of experience in regard to liturgy and Christian theology in Antiquity and the Middle Ages in their respective publications,⁹ the one bringing into consideration the Fathers of the Church and the other monastic exegesis and hermeneutics. For these authors, the practice of the liturgy, as well as its theological exegesis, belong above all to the human experience of the divine, something that allows the operation a kind of interaction between texts and real life. In this way, the liturgy acts as a type of theological exegesis, encouraging humankind to experience the biblical events in question anew. The consequence of this notion of experience through the liturgy and theological exegesis leads humankind to an “existential reading” of scripture and an involvement on the personal level.¹⁰

One of the major effects of this conception of the liturgy informed by an experience-based theology is the reconsideration of the material dimension

of the ritual intended to be activated by the human sensory experience in the execution of the liturgical ceremony.¹¹ The methodological and epistemological innovation of understanding the sensory experience of the liturgy and theology through art is the richest and most innovative area of research on art and liturgy in the Middle Ages during the last decade. The major sensory experience of the liturgy must also be seen in light of the understandings of beauty and aesthetics in the ancient and medieval Christian periods as also being fundamentally based on the notion of experience.¹² Furthermore, this new approach, which sees art and liturgy as based on a thorough vision of the experience of artistic materiality, is echoed in research by specialists from periods other than the Middle Ages.¹³

Monumental Art and Its Decoration

In the field of medieval religious architecture and monumental decoration, the scholarship of the 1990s was dominated almost everywhere around the world by the notion of “ritual place.” Jerome Baschet, among others, was the one of the main proponents of this idea.¹⁴ This concept is now accepted and recognized by almost all specialists interested in religious architecture and its monumental decoration. It was so successful, in part, because of its refocusing of attention on both the actual archeological aspects of the medieval religious monument and the considerations of the sensory conception of the sacred space that constitutes the church.

The archeological study of the medieval church was recently reinvigorated by the combining of sound technological approaches, such as the study of acoustics, with methods traditionally used by archeologists but normally neglected by specialists. Recent interdisciplinary publications on the acoustical aspect of churches by acoustics experts and archeologists have included, for example, such previously unfamiliar objects as acoustic pots (vessels that were placed in the vaults of the churches to improve sound diffusion), as in, for example, Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.¹⁵ The study of acoustic pots, in particular, has been successful in trying to understand the impact of certain building devices on the course of the liturgy in ways different from the more traditional “archaeology of standing walls,” which, it seems, has not achieved its methodological and epistemological limitations. One can only hope for the continued development of such methods of research in the future. They are excellent examples of the actual practice of interdisciplinarity – in this case between archeologists and specialists in acoustics – and not the expression of an excessive and unfounded domination by “traditional” archeology (fig. 31-1).

Among works on religious architecture and its relationship to the liturgy, we must mention in particular the publications by Carolyn Malone on the famous church of Saint-Bénigne at Dijon (which dates from the early eleventh century), and those of Eduardo Carrero Santamaria on Spanish Gothic cathedrals and their architectural environment – including the cloister, the chapter house, and others spaces directly related to the church – of the second half of the Middle Ages. In both



FIGURE 31-1 Saint-Chef-en-Dauphiné, nave wall with acoustic pots. Source: courtesy of the author.

of these cases, the authors have demonstrated the value of an interdisciplinary approach to the subject by combining liturgical, theological, archeological, and architectural studies. In neither of them is there any privileging of the traditional approach to the monument as opposed to a study of its liturgical function and theological significance. Indeed, both authors have successfully achieved a truly balanced approach between the study of texts (liturgical, theological, historical) and the study of data acquired through traditional archeological and architectural analysis. The two publications represent the two greatest achievements of the last decade in general area of the study of architecture and liturgy in the Middle Ages. The same cannot be said, however, for *Les voies de l'espace liturgique: Art médiéval*, edited by Paolo Piva.¹⁶ In this book, almost all authors, starting with the editor, Paolo Piva, invite the reader to follow them in an outdated approach, in my opinion, to understanding the relationship between religious architecture and the liturgy in the Middle Ages. Overall, with the exception of the contribution by Bruno Boerner on Gothic sculpture, the preferred approach in this book seems to be based too much on assumptions about the influence of certain liturgical practices on the architectural forms – for example those relating to the conduct of the pilgrimage – rather than on a serious investigation of the various textual and archeological sources available to the scholar.

The study of the monumental decoration of the medieval church in its relation to the performance of the liturgical ritual has been reinvigorated in recent years by an approach that favors the study of the relationship between the visible

and the invisible, and sensory activation of the materiality of art and liturgical objects in the church.¹⁷ In general, this approach is based on the role of light in the church building, which is considered as the perfect manifestation of the divine presence at the very moment of the liturgy. Theologically, God's power is associated with light because it is in the nature of God to illuminate the church with his presence, in this case as embodied in the sensory dimension of the liturgy. This divine power is also evidenced by the painted representation of the *Maiestas Domini* in apses or even by the oculus in some churches, which is understood not only as allowing light to enter the building (his light) but also as the visible form of incarnation of God (his eye). In a recent article, Daniel Russo posed in new terms essential questions about the presence of the visible and the invisible with regard to representations of *Maiestas Domini* in the apses of churches from the ninth to eleventh centuries.¹⁸ This approach echoes the publication by Francesca Dell'Acqua on the theme of divine light conveyed in the church through the window and the oculus.¹⁹

In similar directions to those just described, the study of monumental decoration within the medieval church has also been reinvigorated in a number of innovative pieces on inscriptions found in painting or sculpture. We know that in Antiquity as well as the Middle Ages, especially the Carolingian period, inscriptions accompanying images and located in places within the building strategic for the liturgy were conceived of as a part of the decoration of the church. This has been confirmed from the Romanesque period to the end of the Middle Ages. In their work, Vincent Debiais and Daniel Rico have changed our way of looking at inscriptions, demonstrating that they were conceived of according to a design identical to the images and that the visual culture of Middle Ages includes not only images per se but also others sorts of "signs," including "graphics signs" such as *tituli* or inscriptions. In the field of monumental decoration of the church, there are other works that offer both new and thorough readings of various relationships between art and liturgy in the Middle Ages. In the book edited by Paolo Piva mentioned above, the contributions of Jerome Baschet and Marcello Angheben on the painted and carved decoration of Romanesque churches address no new essential elements of the relationship between iconographic themes chosen to decorate liturgical choirs, apses, and other parts of the building on the one hand, and ritual practices on the other, especially themes related to the performance of the celebration of the Eucharist. More innovative, however, is the work of Bruno Boerner in the same book, which discusses the influence of the central themes of the theology of the Mass in the Gothic period, the cult of saints, and even texts such as Nicolas Oresme's (1320–1382) "*Le livre des politiques d'Aristote*" in the sculptural programs of Gothic cathedrals, highlighting the power of text, images, and liturgical-theological treatises to spiritually restore humankind through its senses and their activation in the church. The author offers an innovative reading of such large groups of famous sculptures at Amiens, Strasbourg, and even Chartres, some of which had already been discussed in Boerner's remarkable

book dedicated to the power of the images in Gothic sculpture and the open concept of “communication.”²⁰

In the field of Romanesque sculpture, some very good publications, both from a methodological point of view and from that of the conclusions themselves, have been recently published, in particular an article by Alessia Trivellone, a thorough iconographic study of the façade sculptures of St. John-in-Tumba in Monte Sant’Angelo (Puglia).²¹ This study demonstrates clearly and convincingly the influence of the liturgical exegesis of the Mass on the conception of a sculptural program focusing on the passion of Christ, the descent from the cross, and the resurrection. The historical context of Monte Sant’Angelo involves the resurgence of certain heretical movements. According to medieval Christian theology, the church door opens onto the “House of God” because it is the “gate of heaven.” It is also the image of Christ and the Virgin Mary, herself an open door made possible with the coming of the Lord on earth. In this sense, the portals with their sculptures and iconography must be read with regard to the idea that the door is a place of “*passage*,” the transitional space between the outside world and the church, where sacred and sacramental actions of the liturgy are staged in order to restore humankind to its original harmony with the Creator.

Regarding the perception of these sculptures and the theological message iconographically conveyed by them, it has been suggested that the monumental sculptures of the Romanesque period were able to produce a distinct effect on the viewer, activating his inner emotions through the sense of sight. Certain assumptions along these lines have recently been suggested regarding the sculptures of the tympanum of Moissac and that of Conques.²² In particular, it has been suggested that the monstrous faces and erotic themes of these twelfth-century sculptures allowed the monks the opportunity to mentally express their fantasies and other fears through the sense of vision activated by the sculptures. The exploration of the form and iconography of the famous reliefs of the portal at the abbey of Souillac, made in the twelfth century, which I have proposed, has explored similar assumptions about their sensory activation there and how it is related to the overall significance of the church door (fig. 31-2).²³ Recent publications by Conrad Rudolph have also reconsidered certain aspects of the iconography of the monumental decoration of such famous works such as the stained glass of St.-Denis and the image of “The Mystic Ark” by Hugh of Saint Victor.²⁴ The author has shown the richness of both exegesis of Suger and Hugh of Saint Victor, and their influence on the conception of ecclesiology in the twelfth century as expressed in different forms of art. Finally, Xavier Barral i Altet has published a monumental study of mosaic pavements of the Romanesque period in Italy and France, in which he strongly emphasizes both theological and the liturgical dimensions of the church floor as reflected in the iconographic choices in their creation.²⁵



FIGURE 31-2 Souillac, Romanesque sculpture. Source: courtesy of the author.

Liturgical Manuscripts and their Illustrations

In the specific area of illustrated liturgical manuscripts of the Middle Ages, the last decade has been dominated by an epistemological opening to the consideration of the book as an object to be activated in the course of the liturgical celebration to allow the expression of the sacramentality of the rituals and their main theological meanings. I have explored these concepts using different examples of illustrated liturgical manuscripts – especially the sacramentary, gospel books, and the antiphonary – in order to consider their sensory activation in the liturgy, in particular the concept of “*Livre-corps*” (“book-body”).²⁶ In the Early Christian and medieval traditions, the book is considered to be an image or incarnation of Christ himself, and the text to have been written by the Holy Spirit. With the idea that the divine Word becomes visible by becoming incarnate in the book, the image comes to dominate Christian thinking of this period, being translated through the iconography and by the conception of the liturgical book – even the binding – as something to be activated by the senses in the liturgy. As to illustrations in gospel books, publications by Cécile Voyer and Beatrice Kitzinger have led to new interpretations of the iconography of some of the illustrations in these manuscripts (such as the theme of the three women visiting the tomb on Easter Sunday, frontispieces accompanying prologue of the Gospel of Saint John, and even some representations of the crucifixion), seeing the theme of Christ’s incarnation in the gospel book as fundamentally linked to its sensory activation in the liturgical ritual, in particular to the act of reading at Mass.²⁷ Indeed, the symbolic dimension of the liturgical book, considered as a space of revelation whose activation occurs in the liturgy through all aspects of the materiality of the manuscript, is particularly strong in the case of gospel books. The dual aspect of both the material and symbolic presence of the gospel book in the liturgy, clearly visible in its ritual use during the course of the celebrations, is well attested to in the liturgical texts of the Middle Ages.

My new study on the Godescalc Evangeliary (Paris, BNF, na. Lat. 1203, c.781–783) has underscored the idea that all the senses are stimulated in the course of the liturgy, activating the artistic object at the moment of the liturgical performance, in this way allowing access to the essence of “things” and revealing the invisible. The Godescalc Evangeliary is a total sensory experience whose ritual activation is a key moment of the liturgy of the Mass. Indeed, through the play of colors and their various symbolic meanings – and even through their ability to “embody” the thing they symbolize – the visual dimension is clearly and strongly activated. In this manuscript, the text of the Gospels, transcribed in gold letters on purple, expresses the visual dimension of the liturgy while also allowing the expression of the sound of the ritual because the text will be read aloud, thus embodying the sound dimension of the ritual. To this are added the tactile and olfactory dimensions that are also a part of the ritual use of the Godescalc manuscript. Indeed, when handling the manuscript, the reader feels the texture of the parchment and the colors that are applied to it with his fingers. Similarly, he senses

the pleasant odor of the object that has been honored before the act of reading itself by the use of a thurible diffusing the incense. As for the sense of taste, this is implied through the association of the manuscript with the body of Christ in the anticipation of the taste of the “real” body of the Lord enabled through the consecration of the host. Here, the materiality of the liturgical book strongly emphasizes the sensory dimension of the ritual and determines the “activation” of the object itself in order to contribute to the production of the sacramental effect of the Mass, largely centered on the “real presence” of Christ in all its forms, that is to say, through the text of the Gospels, the gospel book itself, and the consecrated Eucharist. The illustration of the Godescalc Evangeliary, with its ornamental and iconographic themes, not only expresses the theological, political, and liturgical meanings of the object in relation to a specific historical context, but it also activates the senses – and through this “activates” both the book (the manuscript) in ritual and the sacred word, making the divine presence possible, anticipating the “real presence” of Christ at the moment of consecration.

In a similar vein, Cécile Voyer has shown that the eucharistic meaning of the illustrations of the famous Sacramentary of Marmoutier (Autun, BM, MS 19bis, mid-ninth century) emphasizes not only major aspects of ecclesiology of the liturgy in Carolingian period but also make it possible to consider the manuscript itself as an “incarnation” of Christ at the moment of the celebration of the Mass.²⁸ All these considerations relate to the notion of the ontology of the book and its very nature. As Isabelle Marchesin has shown concerning some paintings from Carolingian manuscripts of the Apocalypse, iconographic details – such as the roll – invite one to think of the illustration and the book in which it appears as tangible signs of the ontological dimension of the book.²⁹ In a recent study, Jennifer Kingsley discusses in detail a very prestigious manuscript made at the time at the instigation of Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim (993–1022).³⁰ The author’s approach is relatively conventional and traditional, being characterized by the theme of memory and its construction by Bishop Bernward through art in general and through the Gospel Book of Bernward, the object of this study. More innovative is the author’s exploration related to the theme of the sensory activation, in which she examines the sense of touch, taking into account some representations depicting the tactile sense, for example, the scene of the *Noli me tangere*. Convincingly, the author argues that the iconographic expression of the sense of touch in the illustrations of that manuscript, especially that of *Noli me tangere*, reflect contemporary discussions on the Resurrection that were developed in part to defend the material nature of the sacrament. In this discussion, the author also develops the topic of the ability of the tactile sense to play a role in the redemptive process, including through the activation of the object by the bishop at the moment of the performance of the liturgy.

This last point echoes the recent work of Lynley Herbert on the sense of touch and a Carolingian bishop’s expression of spirituality as manifested in the gospel book of Sainte-Croix of Poitiers and its full page *Maiestas Domini* on folio 31r (fig. 31-3).³¹ In her detailed study of both the image and the entire Carolingian



FIGURE 31-3 Sainte-Croix Gospels, Poitiers, Médiathèque François-Mitterrand, fol. 31r. Source: Médiathèque of Poitiers.

manuscript in Poitiers, Herbert demonstrates perfectly and convincingly that the painting on folio 31r was most likely used for an actual act of sensory activation performed through devotional practices, private by nature, by Bishop Jesse, most likely the owner of the manuscript. Careful analysis of the iconography of the

image and of the materiality of the painting has allowed the author to state, correctly, that this representation of Christ in Majesty – painted in this gospel book that was used for the liturgy during the reading of the Gospel passage at Mass, as well as for private devotion – served as an aid to sensory activation that contributed to the production of the desired effect according to the theological basis of the rituals in question. In the painting of the Gospel of St. Croix, it is primarily the visual and tactile senses that were activated and put into action in the performance of the liturgical practices, especially devotional exercises that implicated the owner of the codex. As to touch activation, it is particularly remarkable that some traces of friction generated by the finger of the bishop are evident in the pigment of the painting of folio 31r. Recently, investigations of a quantitative nature were convincingly undertaken by Kathryn Rudy with regard to visible traces generated by the devotional practices with the manuscripts in books of hours in the Late Middle Ages.³²

The liturgical book in general may be used as a functional object and as the central component of a total sensory experience with the goal of implementing *synaesthesia*, that is, what might be called an intersensory interaction, in the ritual. Examples of this include the famous so-called *Exultet* rolls made in central Italy, in the Benevento area in the period between the tenth and the twelfth century. One of the characteristics of the manuscripts containing this liturgical hymn, sung during the performance of the ritual of the Easter Vigil, is that they all contain paintings whose iconography focuses on the representation of the liturgical use of the object, on scenes related to Christ's victory over death, and on theophanic images showing Christ in glory, enthroned in heaven for eternity and surrounded by angels and even, in some cases, by the personification of *Ecclesia*. With *Exultet* rolls, it should be noted, these illustrations are arranged in reverse to the text of the hymn, indicating that they were meant to be seen by the people present in the nave of the church when the deacon was performing the ritual. In this way, everything was planned in the *Exultet* manuscripts to activate both the audible and the visual dimensions of the rite to bring about a synaesthetic effect through the light produced by the paschal candle and from the movement created by the unwinding of the roll.³³

Liturgical Objects

Research on liturgical objects has involved far more than only traditional archeological approaches or the functional uses of the objects. In his book, pioneering in many ways, Herbert L. Kessler opened the way toward an approach to the medieval liturgical object that is functional, archeological, and theological.³⁴ Elsewhere, the catalog of the exhibition of reliquaries and the practice of devotion to the Middle Ages, *Treasures of Heaven*, held in Cleveland, Baltimore, and London, was an important step in how to consider liturgical objects – in this case the reliquaries – in the history of medieval art.³⁵ As presented in the catalog, the basic conception of the exhibition is one whose approach to these objects addresses the

cult of saints, the materiality of the works, and various aspects of their theological meaning. In the field of Byzantine art, Bissera Pentcheva has newly explained icons and other liturgical objects, associating them in various ways to the rituals of the Byzantine Church, particularly with consideration of their materiality and sensory activation.³⁶

In my own book on the Christian invention of the five senses, I attempted to demonstrate the generally held and fundamentally theological understanding of liturgical objects of all categories, with regard to their use in the sensory process during the celebration of the liturgy.³⁷ In the various stages of ritual, including but not limited to the Mass, this involves a number of objects (such as books, the chalice, the paten, and even the censer or thurible) that are in an almost permanent sensory activation, while others (like liturgical combs) are at times activated but not in a permanent sense. The low sensory and ritual activation of some objects compared to others, however, does not exclude the activation of their theological meanings in the course of the liturgy, when their meanings are made meanings present and active at a particular moment of ritual. This is, for example, the case with liturgical combs, ritual objects not very much studied by art historians and historians of the liturgy in any way other than their formal appearance, their typology coming from the tradition of Antiquity (fig. 31-4). Contrary to the original significance carried by liturgical combs and other functional objects of medieval liturgy – such as portable altars – these are now presented in museums as “art,” with no indication of their original liturgical use or the theological meaning activated at the time of their use in medieval ritual. Primarily an instrument for grooming the hair of the celebrant, the liturgical comb was used principally in the celebration of Mass and, at the end of the Middle Ages, during the ritual of consecration of bishops, having a powerful theological meaning that is activated during the liturgy through the use of the object. In the ritual of the consecration of a bishop in the second half of the Middle Ages, all of the liturgical objects necessary for the performance of the ritual were brought together at the beginning of the ceremony, among them a comb. At the end of the ceremony in which he was consecrated, the bishop activated the comb as part of his introduction to the ecclesiastical community. The presence of liturgical combs in church treasuries reflects the sanctity of this object which, in some ways, can be likened to a relic, as well as to other objects deposited in the treasury beside bodily relics that are material in nature and related to a saint. In the liturgy of the Mass, the liturgical comb is activated by the celebrant before the consecration of the bread and wine. This preliminary step at the consecration has directly to do with two essential aspects of the theological significance of liturgical combs in the performance of the ritual. First, it is to express the need for the priest to clean and purify his soul before celebrating. Second, this gesture highlights one of the major roles of the priest in the liturgy and in the definition of his function within the church: to bring order and harmony, as if his hair was the image of the church. The ecclesiological dimension associated with the theological significance of the liturgical comb – that is, its activation both actually and symbolically by the celebrant during the liturgy – sometimes goes together with the pleasure of offering a



FIGURE 31-4 Liturgical comb, Paris, Musée du Louvre. Source: Musée du Louvre.

beautiful object to a friend, as evidenced by a letter of the ninth century by Loup of Ferrières to his friend, the bishop Ebroin: “I sent you an ivory comb, which I beg you to keep for your use, so that, by using it, you think more strongly of me. I wish you good health.” The exactitude of the material of the comb sent by Loup of Ferrières to Ebroin seems essential in considering the theological meaning of liturgical combs as activated in the liturgy. Indeed, I do not think that the precious material with which the object was made was mentioned only anecdotally. I think it highlights the role of ivory in the theological significance of the object in relation to the activity of the bishop in his church, working for the establishment of order and harmony, the image of which is his hair. In this sense, we can consider that the choice of ivory expresses the idea of the mirror, the *speculum*, which must represent the liturgical comb and which is thus supposed to reflect the action of the bishop in his church, and that is activated by the comb at the moment the sacramental celebration of the Eucharist.

One of the major publications in the field of liturgical objects is the catalog of liturgical bronze censers, or thuribles, in the period between the year 800 and the year 1200, *Mittelalterliche Weihrauchfässer von 800 bis 1500*, by Hiltrud Westerman-Angerhausen. This volume greatly enhances our knowledge of liturgical censers from the medieval period and offers a much broader vision of these objects, one that goes beyond the strict context of art history. The classification of liturgical thuribles in the catalog does not follow the usual alphabetical or chronological order. Instead, Westerman-Angerhausen has wisely opted for a typological classification which, although the categories correspond largely to the chronology and geography of the production of the thuribles, provides an insight into the subject that is both technical and iconographic. We can only praise the richness and precision of this catalog, which lists all thuribles produced between 800 and 1500, and which describes and analyzes them in all their aspects, thus giving a clear vision of the evolution of these objects through much of the Western Middle Ages, including a fruitful perspective on the geographical areas of production. The first part of the book provides a detailed overview of the history of liturgical censers from the Carolingian period until the end of the Middle Ages. But even more, these pages are based on an interdisciplinary approach, one which thoroughly addresses the historical, exegetical, archeological, and material aspects of these objects. Westermann-Angerhausen introduces the subject by looking at the material “incense” throughout history, showing a perfect cultural continuity between non-Christian societies of Antiquity and the strictly liturgical use of incense in Christianity. These pages devoted to the topic of the “incense” as well as to the production of thuribles contribute to the anthropological approach proposed by the author. As to inscriptions on thuribles, Westermann-Angerhausen is rightly concerned with these as well as with the notion of the artist’s signature and the role of *memoria*. Exploring the liturgical use of the thuribles, their theological exegesis, their iconography, and their typology with a high level of scholarship, the author ultimately sees these liturgical objects as cultural, social, and liturgical windows onto the Western Middle Ages. In all this, the author draws two important conclusions. First, liturgical thuribles are somehow “real” reproductions in miniature of the heavenly Jerusalem on earth, activated by the liturgical use of incense and the aroma of Christ during the performance of the rituals. Second, Westermann-Angerhausen stresses the important role played by liturgical exegesis in the vision offered by the thuribles of the Middle Ages. Toward this end, she conducts a rich exploration of the long passage devoted to these objects in the art manual, *On the Various Arts*, written in the eleventh century by the monk Theophilus. In this text, Theophilus makes a description of the production of the thurible and its fully theological purpose in reference to the Heavenly Jerusalem.

In conclusion, it seems to me that studies engaging the intersection of art and liturgy during the last decade have broadened out to topics like the study of the five senses as well as a very specific use of archeology and iconography, and have reinvigorated the investigation of liturgy and art in the Middle Ages. What is also very remarkable is the distinct opening up to both the philosophical and the theological dimension of the understanding of the relationship between art and

liturgy. It is my hope that future directions will develop this full reintegration of the philosophical and theological aspects even further in order to achieve a better understanding the intersection between art and liturgy.

Notes

- 1 See the bibliography at the end of this chapter.
- 2 Buc, *Dangers of Ritual*; Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*.
- 3 Palazzo, *Liturgie et société au Moyen Age* and *L'Invention chrétienne*.
- 4 Petersen et al., *Appearances* and Haysteen et al., *Creations*.
- 5 Mews, "Liturgists and Dance."
- 6 Cassingena-Trévédy, *Les Pères de l'Eglise et la liturgie*, Dahan, "Herméneutique et procédures."
- 7 Leclercq, *L'Amour des lettres*.
- 8 E.g. Boureau, *L'Événement*.
- 9 See n. 6.
- 10 Dahan, "Herméneutique et procédures."
- 11 Bredekamp, "Carlomagno"; Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art*; Palazzo, *L'Invention chrétienne*; Jorgensen et al., *The Saturated Sensorium*.
- 12 Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty*.
- 13 Siracusano, *El poder de los colores*.
- 14 Baschet, *Lieu sacré*.
- 15 Pentcheva, "Hagia Sophia and Multisensory Aesthetics," whose medieval work complements the previous work of the Renaissance scholars Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti, *Sound Space*.
- 16 Piva, *Art medieval*.
- 17 Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art*.
- 18 Russo, "Présence de l'absence."
- 19 Dell'Acqua, "Il fuoco."
- 20 Boerner, *Bildwirkungen*.
- 21 Trivellone, "L'Iconographie."
- 22 Dale, "The Nude at Moissac" and Ambrose, "Attunement."
- 23 Palazzo, *L'Invention chrétienne*.
- 24 Rudolph, "Inventing the Exegetical Stained-Glass Window" and *The Mystic Ark*.
- 25 Barral i Altet, *Le décor*.
- 26 Palazzo, *L'Invention chrétienne*.
- 27 Voyer, "Un livre"; Kitzinger, "The Liturgical Cross."
- 28 Voyer, "Le sacramentaire."
- 29 Marchesin, "Ontologie et fonctions."
- 30 Kingsley, *The Bernward Gospels*.
- 31 Herbert, "Le toucher de l'évêque."
- 32 Rudy, "Kissing Images."
- 33 Zchomelidse, "Descending Word."
- 34 Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art*.
- 35 Bagnoli et al., *Treasures of Heaven*.
- 36 Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*.
- 37 Palazzo, *L'Invention chrétienne*.

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Architectural Layout: Design, Structure, and Construction in Northern Europe

Marie-Thérèse Zenner

Romanesque and Gothic architectural layouts reflect a creative cultural milieu in Northern Europe around 1000–1300 CE. While historians lack documentation for medieval design dating before the mid-thirteenth century, there are relevant sources in quantitative thought, such as land-surveying and the *artes mechanicae*. Recent approaches to technical literature and applied mathematics, from the Late Antique through early modern periods, offer medievalists paths for piecing together evidence harvested via this diachronic, cross-disciplinary perspective. Resurgent interest in theoretical and applied mathematics during the eighth century achieved a level of synthesis by the eleventh century. This synthesis may explain structural changes in the Romanesque layout, already visible in an ashlar building from the early second half of the eleventh century. This proposed plan for accessing sources relevant to medieval layout also poses broader questions on how we view the builder and his modes of knowledge transfer.

Introduction

The definition of architectural layout tends to vary in tandem with historiographic trends. Perhaps more than for any other period in European history the story of medieval history has unexplainable lacunae: this is not necessarily due to a lack of monuments or other records, but because to a large extent we did not know where to look and how to see. Late Antiquity and the medieval periods appear

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to have naturally associated architecture and applied mathematics as two aspects of technical thought. Only recently this interdisciplinary juxtaposition became a commonplace. This chapter proposes a plan of study for a history that remains to be written.¹ Fortunately, scholars have indeed published a great deal of original work on technical thought and mathematics in relation to architecture for monuments and texts from Antiquity through sixteenth-century Europe. In response this entirely revised chapter suggests a more contextualized, intercultural approach for viewing sources for building in Northern Europe between 1000 and 1300 CE.

How do we define architectural layout in view of this new material? Design and structure emerge as the core of layout. Here design means linear two-dimensional data articulation (point, line, plane and planar figures). And structure here means three-dimensional expression of the design often in terms of irregular solids subject to experientially understood physical laws governing matter and materials. Geometric design may be a mental concept or a drawing, whose elegance resides in independence from number. Once assigned dimensions the transition from linear design to spatial construction hinges on the role of structure. In late Northern Romanesque and Gothic styles the structure was reduced to the smallest part of the whole, whether an ashlar stone in walling or an irregular stone within independent structural supports. An intelligent transition from linear to three-dimensional design defines the structural efficiency. This defines the art of stereotomy. The development of stereotomic, technical thought seen in this 300-year time frame contributed to one of the most creative architectural phases in Europe.

Medieval creativity is countered by the modern historian's dilemma faced with an apparent dearth of documentation. Documents disappear or go unnoticed for many reasons. One is disdainful neglect. The very term "medieval" reflects a prejudice against the variant styles that arose in the former Roman colonies, particularly to the north, independently of possible influences by pan-Mediterranean aesthetics and techniques. Whether in history of science or of mathematics, the "medieval" period is still dismissed as a time of ignorance stretching over the millennium that witnessed fundamental shifts in religious belief and geopolitical centers/structures. Still now many historians regard the post-Roman (or even post-Greek) period with an attitude of cultural superiority characteristic of colonialist powers, rather than adopting the more neutral attitude that informs the arsenal of anthropological or ethnographic inquiry. To cite a parallel from another field, for some time now even major pharmaceutical companies are open-mindedly seeking ancient knowledge, notably of healing botanicals, whether by exploring shipping logs of the Dutch East India Company (1602–1796) or by interviewing shamans in remote areas of the globe. It is a matter of discarding known paradigms, categories, and disciplines in order to learn to see from the other's viewpoint. Older civilizations were not less, just differently, informed. The same is true for what may be considered the "lost millennium" in Europe. The presumption of greater continuity than discontinuity, perhaps under different form, should prevail when turning our eye to the medieval past.

What can be done regarding the apparent lack of written or drawn documentation for Romanesque and most Gothic building? Apart from examining actual plans and elevations dating from the mid-thirteenth century on, we can aim at piecing together cultural evidence of technical, quantitative thought. The felicitous title *Word, Image, Number: Communication in the Middle Ages*² suggests a creative/analytic approach. Word (w), image (i), and number (n) are the three distinct yet complementary languages that have produced separate archives more or less since prehistoric times. The three languages (w-i-n) have a common grammar: the place-value system (p-v-s). Letters require a certain order, so can images and numbers. To take a simple visual example: the essential form of a ceramic vase can typically be drawn by marking a mirror-version of a double curve. But to draw anything organic such as the elbow of a human arm, each point will vary according to an imaginary projected x/y graph that solicits a decision whether the subsequent point falls either higher/lower (x) or left/right (y) of the previous point. Drawing is as simple as that. The grids often seen on older drawings are not there just for transposing the drawing onto another surface, they also reflect/aid the mental/physical drawing process.

P-V-S is a universal and intuitively understandable concept. Even the law of gravity functions in terms of p-v-s: each object has its place principally according to its mass and weight (unless subject to a vector force). Plan and elevation layouts, essentially points and lines, are a perfect example: the stereotomic unit translates this point-by-point design into structural terms. Recasting the history of ideas (and objects) within a common grammar (p-v-s) may offer a means to organize and compare without regard to relatively artificial, fluctuating boundaries of language or disciplines. Regardless the language, documents of potential relevance to architecture exist, it suffices to learn to see. In this light the history of layout (design-structure-stereotomy) could reveal much about Romanesque and Gothic building.

This chapter, therefore, proposes *tabula rasa*, starting anew with a diachronic lens and wider geographic frame for identifying cultural comparanda outside known disciplinary boundaries. Thought patterns within the broadly changing contexts of post-Roman Europe have not been readily discernable to us. A phase of immense changes can favor thought multiplicities, thought fluidities. The phase of architectural creativity beginning in the tenth or eleventh century was almost certainly preceded by one of accumulating new experiences. What we recognize as science may have more closely resembled humanities then. For example, recent work suggests that the values of Late Antique technical, quantitative thought were hidden to us due to its more literary, if not organic style of presentation.³

Ironically, presentations of technical thought simultaneously tended to be more to the point by adopting a handbook or encyclopedic format, seen in much later periods as well.⁴ We can read in objects from the past that concepts such as the availability of time, the preferred language (w-i-n), and the corresponding type of supporting materials have waxed and waned: we only need to contrast the nineteenth-century popularity of the literary novel with today's YouTube videos

and the (originally) 140-character tweet – the closest approximations for oral transmission of the human saga but now on a global scale. It is up to historians to recuperate the cultural context for interpreting any surviving object, knowing that at best 10% of evidence has survived. Thus, the historian’s paradox of “ambition versus doubt.”⁵

Outline of Proposed Plan of Study

This chapter presumes that quantitative thought has played a crucial role throughout the history of building. Few would deny this. Largely due to prejudices, indicated above, potential sources for building during the “lost millennium” remain relatively unexploited. We can now identify a shift in historiographic attitudes. Some new approaches propose mediated access to ancient science and technology via the more familiar framework of humanities. Approaches include qualitative research techniques such as social-contextual inquiry or reception studies of text/image. Following Meissner’s dissertation on early technical literature, original authors within these experimental modes are Serafina Cuomo and Courtney Roby.⁶ The time is ripe for moving toward a diachronic history interlacing mathematics, technical thought, and the core of building – that is layout.

Some definitions are in order. First, what math? Here we consider only sources in “actual” mathematics, excluding at least temporarily numerically informed discussions in philosophical, theological, symbolic, or hermetic traditions. One of the foremost commentators on Euclid was Pappus of Alexandria (Egypt, *fl.* fourth century CE), whose “Mathematical Collection” (*Synagoge*, c.340 CE) may be considered the most advanced thinking on topics in arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and mechanics for his time. Pappus remarked that philosophers did not master mathematics (book V).⁷ Hence it seems fair to say that medieval historians have gone astray in part due to reliance on philosophical and related texts as sources in mathematics for interpreting architecture.

What do we mean by “actual” mathematics? In the past, historians of mathematics often sought to distinguish “pure” versus “applied” mathematics, considering practical aspects unworthy of study. We adopt the idea that all mathematics are applied.⁸ What time frame? Although this chapter is concerned with three medieval centuries, it seems wise to aim at documenting the continuity of quantitative thought in a wider context. Preferably, a diachronic context from the Late Antique through Late Medieval periods, informed by knowledge of Greco-Roman sources through sixteenth-century developments. Based on a massive cross-disciplinary review of literature covering 2000 years, the proposed plan provides a selection of pertinent sources as a starting point.

Finally, how do we approach a source that is relatively unstudied in this context? And why? For each source we propose an historiographic summary with essential bibliography from the last 10 years or so (critical editions and facsimiles of primary sources, selected original studies, and grouped bibliographies for

further research, especially to uncover overlooked yet valuable ideas from the past. The bibliography from the 2006 chapter will not be repeated here. Our word limit restricts comments to main themes relevant to layout: direct linear measure, measure at a distance, proportion, module, geometry versus arithmetic; angular motion (weight/mass, vector force); drawings, diagrammatic reasoning, use of rule and compass; stereotomy; visualization of data, technical thought.

Sources are presented in two sections. Each source uniquely combines w-i-n (word-image-number) languages. Section I presents sources in mathematics and technical thought that may best define the cultural context for architecture leading up to the period 1000–1300 CE. These four sources span over a thousand years: 1.1 Euclidean geometry traditions, 1.2 collected works of the Roman land-surveyors, 1.3 mechanical arts, and 1.4 mathematical syntheses of these sources in Northern Europe beginning in the eighth century. Section II presents three “monuments” representing quantitatively informed architectural knowledge. These records span approximately 13 centuries prior to c.1300 CE: 2.1 Vitruvius’ *De architectura* especially on mechanics, 2.2 the inscribed, scaled Plan of St. Gall depicting a complex site layout with monastic church and everyday living areas, and 2.3 the commented drawings of architecture and machines in the Portfolio of Villard de Honnecourt.

Section I: Sources in Mathematics and Technical Thought

1.1 *Euclidean Geometry Traditions*

Traditions in geometry are included as a benchmark for formal quantitative thought. Euclid of Alexandria (Egypt, fl. 300 BCE) summarized an older tradition by rigorously presenting the rules of geometry known in his time. While no original manuscript survives from his time, for over 2000 years scholars have copied, edited, commented on, changed, or added to this book of rules. The phrase “Euclidean geometry” here refers globally to the later transmission of this Hellenistic text. This source remains a principal foundation of knowledge: it embodies the intersection between logic and the physical world, within the history of quantitative, technical thought.

The Euclidean “book of rules” compresses much data into a near absolute minimum of words, images, and number (w-i-n), which offers many points of access and interpretation. Here the term “geometry” refers strictly to formal concepts delineated with rule and compass. The written rules (definitions, axioms, postulates, theorems) can and have existed independently from the images, and were subject to change. It may be for these reasons that many medieval manuscripts omit some or all rules known to us today: their lack is inconclusive evidence, at this stage, for presuming ignorance.

Manuscripts of Euclidean geometry also reveal a complex interrelationship with number. Among the thirteen books four treat number theory (books VII–X), and

number appears in other books as well. We understand arithmetic here as a code for describing and predicting quantity in terms of the spatial forms established by geometry (i.e. layout and length of lines and arcs). It would appear that these two forms of logic eventually grew into independently functioning languages (i-n) with fully developed rules, either inherent or expressed in words (w). As we shall see below, geometry and arithmetic continue to have a complex interrelationship in the later sources for quantitative, technical thought as applied to physical objects, including architecture.

Historians of mathematics have made significant recent contributions. French researcher Bernard Vitrac has produced a philologically informed, multivolume critical edition of the source texts; a useful English overview conceived as an online supplement to the *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*; and a book-length study with rich bibliography that is the best source on the manuscript transmission.⁹ On use of arithmetic in Euclidean geometry or the “changing relationships between geometric and arithmetic ideas in medieval Europe,” see Leo Corry’s study of book II, with extensive general bibliography.¹⁰ Of potential interest for architecture is the question of drawings or, rather, diagrams, which has solicited a great deal of attention both regarding Euclid and, more generally, themes such as model-based reasoning or visualization of data in mathematics and science.¹¹

1.2 *Collected Works of the Roman Land-Surveyors*

Better known under its Latin name *Corpus agrimensorum Romanorum* (CAR), the collected writings, drawings, and measurements of the land-surveyors (known as *agrimensores* or *gromaticis*) provide a rich resource for quantitative, technical thought between the first century CE through the early medieval period. The CAR incorporated aspects of Euclidean geometry and may be considered a direct source for techniques of linear measure, measuring height at a distance, and two-dimensional (planar) geometry in application to architecture.

The CAR bibliography features numerous new text editions and secondary literature. For critical editions of collected texts in the early period see Campbell, and for texts dating between the fourth and eighth centuries, Del Lungo.¹² New or forthcoming critical editions of individual texts by *gromatici* include five volumes by Guillaumin.¹³ In this context we should consider the new critical edition of *Metrica*, attributed to Heron of Alexandria (fl. first century CE).¹⁴ For the best overview, see Roby’s study on the cultural context (linguistic, literary, scientific, technical, and juridical aspects).¹⁵ A rich group of secondary sources focuses on geometrical questions in specific texts.¹⁶ For a well-presented, illustrated archeological case study see Romano.¹⁷

1.3 *Mechanical Arts, from “Ars mechanica” to “Artes mechanicae”*

Over the course of the “lost millennium” we see increasing interest in applying mathematically informed technology to practical three-dimensional problems.

Specialized technical literature with its own vocabulary developed from about the time of Vitruvius onward.¹⁸ The limited focus proposed here, perhaps surprisingly, is on mechanics for military purposes, extending from Vitruvius' personal engineering knowledge, as related in book X of his treatise, through the use of Roman and Late Antique military treatises into the tenth century.¹⁹ Tools and lifting machines for building construction, or even a continually turning millstone actioned by cranks fueled by a water or wind energy source, seem inherently less sophisticated than the complex mechanics of motion informing military artillery machines designed to conform to the less predictable, changing requirements for angled motion projected over long distances.

We hypothesize a parallel here with later developments in architectural layout, as design/structure moved from single point (rounded arch) to multipoint structural focus (pointed arch/vault). The concept of resistance to angular motion (mass and counter-thrust) might be considered the essence of Gothic layout (design/structure-as-stereotomy). Yet we have demonstrated structural innovations, probably equivalent to angular motion, in a Romanesque building in Burgundy that pre-dates Cluny III.²⁰ Fortunately, it seems the exploration of mechanical arts has begun in relation to Gothic if not pre-Gothic architecture.²¹

Context and conceptualization matter. Ancient natural philosophy consciously addressed the opposition of nature versus machine.²² Of particular interest are studies on mental construction and visualization of machines, and visual logic of diagrams used in the "new profession of engineers trained in mathematics."²³ For the texts in mechanics by Heron of Alexandria, refer to bibliography and manuscript editions provided in Roby, *Technical Ekphrasis* (see especially Schellenberg).²⁴ Discussions of mathematical principles in Heron's works are pertinent here.²⁵ A fourth-century text, *Epitoma rei militaris* (commonly known as *De Re Militari*) by Vegetius describes siegecraft; this text was widely influential in the Middle Ages.²⁶ Future research may be able to discern a continuum of thought regarding physical matter and mechanics, accumulated throughout the Middle Ages.

1.4 Mathematical Syntheses in Northern Europe Beginning in the Eighth Century CE

Our focus here is geometrical knowledge in application to architecture in Northern Europe prior to c.1100 since this period is relatively little studied in Anglophone graduate schools in spite of the foundational role of Romanesque building within the field. From at least the eighth century CE in northern France and Germanic regions, as well as the islands of Ireland and England, there was increasing interest in what may be simply labeled quantification, in large part due to gradual knowledge transfer from Southern Europe, notably from Italy and Spain. Among the many activities related to numeracy were time reckoning and forms of counting. In this cultural context, often within the same manuscripts, eventual syntheses of geometrical thought also emerged (c.750–c.1050): two demonstrated sources are the Euclidean tradition and the *Corpus agrimensorum*

Romanorum tradition (CAR). As with the previously named sources, this material at least indirectly treats the use of rule and compass in drawing. The principal figure of this period was the very traveled polymath scholar-teacher Gerbert of Aurillac (c.946–d. 1003), later elected the first French pope (Sylvester II, in 999), and credited with transmitting mathematical knowledge from Arabic sources.²⁷

The historiography continues to evolve on these early medieval sources but among a relatively small circle of scholars, principally historians of mathematics, classicists, and manuscript specialists. On Euclidean transmission in Carolingian schools, see Stevens; on the period before c.1100 see Folkerts.²⁸ On the continuation of the CAR tradition through Gerbert's time, with sample geometrical problems, see most recently Folkerts; and on a relatively little studied ninth-century manuscript see a 1982 lengthy, textual study by Toneatto.²⁹ Works by Jacquemard posit one or more *Geometria incerti auctoris* (GIA), and treat a problem of potential architectural relevance (measuring height from a distant point).³⁰

The introduction of Arabic science in the tenth century in the sphere of Gerbert is treated from two viewpoints by Folkerts and Moyon.³¹ Gerbert's tenth-century *Geometria* is the focus of two studies on angular distance, which may be compared with an older study on angular geometry in the eleventh century.³² A student of Gerbert, Fulbert, may have played a role in facilitating knowledge transfer: Fulbert was at the cathedral school in Chartres from the 990s CE, before becoming bishop of Chartres (1006–d. 1028).³³ Finally and quite significantly, Jacquemard persuasively argues that the contents of twelfth-century geometries were already known in the eleventh century.³⁴ Much of what historiographers have reserved for Gothic building could have come into play already in the Romanesque period, as our on-site work suggests (see Section 1.3, and n. 19 on Zenner dissertation above).

Section II: Three “Monuments”

2.1 Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, “*De architectura*”, c.30/25 BCE

Vitruvius' ten scrolls (“books”) represent a benchmark in the content and vocabulary of Latin technical literature. This treatise is a comprehensive précis within three overarching fields of knowledge, for the most part grouped into separate books: architecture (*aedificatio*: books I–VIII), astronomy/astrology (*gnomonice*: book IX), and mechanics (*machinatio*: book X).³⁵ Vitruvius wrote for the Roman emperor Augustus, while often referring to pre-Roman technical knowledge. This treatise's posterity is exceptional: it has now been read, commented on, interpreted, or abridged fairly regularly over the course of 2000 years.³⁶ Despite the extensive literature on *De architectura* two original intercultural studies appeared recently, providing complementary reception studies for its technical and literary aspects.³⁷

Of particular interest here are the mostly older studies on design-related themes in the treatise or on built comparanda (measure, proportion, symmetry,

arithmetic, geometry, drawing with rule and compass versus the Greek tradition of orally presenting space).³⁸ Perhaps the most clear and convincing argument on the role of arithmetic versus geometry in ancient architecture is the 2009 dissertation, by Geertman's student van Krimpen-Winckel, which she based on an exhaustive metrological/archeological survey of private architecture in Italy in the first century CE. She agrees with Geertman and Frey, in effect, that geometric proportions in the design were converted to round numbers for ease of communicating and verifying layout during the construction process.³⁹ Undoubtedly for this reason two researchers may indeed find a geometric and an arithmetic/modular approach within the same building – they are not mutually exclusive, one pertains to design, the other to construction.

Finally, the matter of *machinatio*. In the first nine books the architect was presented as being capable of siting and constructing buildings and timekeeping devices. In book X, Vitruvius summarizes the knowledge required for a range of civil and military machines, along with the art of defense (Chapter 16, *stratègèmata*). Of interest here are: lifting and mechanical systems (Chapters 2–3, *mèchanika*); throwing machines (Chapters 10–12, *belopoiika*); and siege machines (Chapters 13–15, *mèchanèmata*).⁴⁰ Vitruvius' opening and closing statements in Chapter 3 (X: 3,1 and 3,9) relate the fundamental mechanical principals of straight line and circle, as derived from ancient mechanics.⁴¹ For a recent study on Vitruvius' mechanics see Fleury and Madeleine.⁴²

In summary, the textual tradition on architecture beginning here with Vitruvius in the late first century BCE (and originally partially illustrated), promises to be an important source for all relevant issues in layout, as well as for the wider context of emerging Latin technical literature. Using new historiographic lenses, future synthetic analyses may eventually permit medievalists to identify explicit paths of transmission and incorporation of Vitruvian concepts such as numeracy and architectural layout within the medieval builder's tool kit.

2.2 *Plan of St. Gall. St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek,* *“Codex Sangallensis 1092”, c.819 or c.827/30 CE*

The Plan of St. Gall is a rare document. It is nearly the only surviving medieval plan from before the mid-thirteenth century, a gap of over 400 years.⁴³ An apparent gift between abbots of two Benedictine communities (physically situated on or near Lake Constance along the current German–Swiss border, then within the cultural sphere of Aachen), this parchment still exists nearly 1200 years later because it was safely housed at St. Gall, one of the oldest surviving libraries. In the past 40 years the Plan of St. Gall has stimulated unprecedented interest.⁴⁴ Over 300 legends indicate functional specifications as if the plan were conceived as a building model; even if only intended for conceptual discussion in view of the early ninth-century reform, the plan offers evidence for threading together early medieval concepts of layout.

The layout is complex, comprising a monastic church and cloister along with the multitude of vernacular buildings or spaces required by a self-sustaining agricultural community.⁴⁵ The Vitruvian tradition of optimal siting for promoting healthy conditions may have played a role: an inscription indicates the cardinal direction East. In this context, it may be fruitful to consider the epitome of Vitruvius' treatise by M. Cetus Faventinus (*fl.* third? century CE).⁴⁶ Finally, close examination of the Plan of St. Gall has confirmed use of compass and straightedge (rule); the discussions on modularity, proportion, and metrology continue to evolve.⁴⁷ A philological discussion on the presence of columns or piers in the church plan raises the question of structure and construction.⁴⁸ Data mining and "diagrammatic reasoning" will undoubtedly continue with regard to this exceptional plan.

2.3 Portfolio of Villard de Honnecourt. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Fr 19093

A northern French draftsman(?) known to us as Villard de Honnecourt produced a small handbook of drawings (c.1220–c.1240) to which others added drawings and inscriptions (up to c.1275/1300?).⁴⁹ Although probably intended for private purposes, Villard's handbook is as well known today as Leonardo da Vinci's drawings for the diversity of artistic/technical disciplines and materials, which, at least in the case of Villard, has proved disconcerting for the modern viewer accustomed to disciplinary specialization. Like Vitruvius (*fl.* 25 BCE) and da Vinci (1452–1519), Villard's work treats art and architecture, mechanical engineering and the natural environment.⁵⁰

As hoped in writing the 2004/2006 version of this chapter, recent studies do address the medieval builder's knowledge. For example, Nussbaum considers knowledge transfer among lodges and journeymen in relation to Villard.⁵¹ Perhaps the most stimulating new interpretation is the finding by Barnes's former student, Dr. Rebecca Price, that seemingly random forms reveal underlying geometric patterns.⁵² If coded, such drawings could have served as mnemonic devices, and the handbook should be reviewed in this light.⁵³ Others have focused on Villard's drawings as evidence of the medieval viewpoint, which in this case is closely related to the builder's knowledge.⁵⁴

On the whole, Villard studies continue to concentrate on technical or quantified aspects of architectural drawing, layout, or masonry. On the question of arithmetic/module versus geometry, Bork most recently concluded his anti-Hecht argument (1969–1970) by suggesting they were "complementary strategies" that "deserve far more detailed and rigorous exploration."⁵⁵ It is to be hoped that our own, Geertman/van Krimpen-Winckel's, and Bork's similar findings will put an end to continuing arguments that these two design layout approaches, especially in the same building, must necessarily be incompatible.⁵⁶ Finally, recent work on stereotomic exercises depicted in the handbook should contribute to positioning the handbook's stereotomic drawings among the best evidence of thirteenth-century technical thought in future syntheses on the history of applied mathematics.⁵⁷

Concluding Remarks

This chapter proposes solutions for addressing the well-known lack of documents that could provide evidence for creative design and technical thought underpinning structures built in Northern Europe during the period 1000–1300 CE. The obvious solution is to look at the building itself: as ever, an analytical archeology of the monument that can synthesize a maximum of perspectives remains the first, best, and last interpretable record. Indeed most new studies follow this path whether by measuring, imaging, and analyzing the structural forces or the construction materials and process. The less obvious solution is to look for other forms of documentation wherein the primary language(s) may be image or number, rather than word. One example is an article on incised stonemasons' drawings of geometric forms (mainly circles, ovals, spirals).⁵⁸ This chapter has opted to propose potential sources wherein the primary language is often number (i.e. of mathematical nature, which typically means geometry here). In fact, each of the proposed seven sources in applied mathematics and architectural thought reveals its own combination of word, image, number (w-i-n). The sources are examined as evidence for studies by future students of architectural layout, in particular of medieval layout.

In this light, we need to evoke historiographic issues regarding our phrase “sources in applied mathematics.” A classicist who studies literature of ancient Greek science and technology considered the question of theoretical and applied mathematics in a recent chapter, in which he states that Euclid's geometry is purely theoretical while admitting philological evidence that geometry began as a practical activity among “rope-stretchers”; Asper contrasts the isolated intellectual's ludic approach to math in fifth- and fourth-century Greece with the much older history of practical mathematics (measuring, counting) among professionals who enjoyed a lower social status.⁵⁹ Class status figures as a pervasive historiographic theme in many fields. In mathematical terms, the equation seems to be low social status, low content math. Another frequent term is “elite.” Historians in many disciplines continue to insist on a dichotomy opposing literate “elite” and the other. While we understand arguments that such distinctions were valid within their historical sociological context, it closes a door.

In Cuomo's writings on mathematics the bias of social/economic/literacy issues is refreshingly absent. This is a more fruitful approach since it opens that door to a possibility that the first millennium may eventually be understood as a period of technical/proto-scientific quantification, the foundations for early modern technology and science. We would argue that for the same reasons the medieval historiographic dichotomy between patron and builder (or any manual worker) should be re-evaluated.⁶⁰ High aesthetic (or other functionality) can operate independently of any other high or low status. Ideally the gauge for full “literacy” should comprise capacities to understand and use image, or number, as well as word.

There are also design practice issues to clarify. Our 2006 chapter evoked methodological pitfalls, one reason for suggesting *tabula rasa* here. Other longer essays

have since appeared elucidating the methodological issues. The most useful is by Yeomans, who agrees with the need for presenting a hypothetical plan design in terms of a step-by-step setting out on the ground.⁶¹ We accept that this is also the best means for analyzing a design. Yeomans is perhaps the first to understand and positively evaluate my design hypotheses,⁶² except on two historiographic/methodological points worth clarifying for future studies. First, Yeomans inserts bias by stating that “[h]er obsession with finding circles ... seems to have led her astray” (p. 43); this appears to ignore the methodological explanation that circles were part of an AutoCAD experiment that ultimately led to this novel hypothesis.⁶³ Second, Yeomans writes “she then fails to establish a realistic setting-out sequence” (p. 43, and n. 35). We proposed circles, essentially intersecting arc lengths: (i) as an efficient means to transfer the geometric design (rather than using arithmetic measure, which requires establishing perfect right angles at building corners); (ii) as the only apparent means for geometrically “calculating” wall thickness, a unique feature in design studies before the Renaissance it seems; and (iii) due to limited space and b&w figures the layout geometrically implies, if not actually shows, the sequence of straight lines Yeomans is seeking: they are obtained by aligning and connecting intersection points.⁶⁴ Here we hoped that marking the implied straight lines would have become the final (rather than first) step in setting out. Our analysis thereby aimed at addressing design creation before and perhaps during its transfer to the ground.

Layout can be seen as a mathematical object, manually implemented at each stage. Based on experience in physical analysis on-site and in subsequent design analysis, this chapter proposes linear design and multipoint structure as core aspects of design layout. Design/structure meet in the intelligent transfer from planar to solid.⁶⁵ Practical discoveries over long periods could eventually lead to conceptualization.⁶⁶ Increasing individualization of regular stereotomic units (ashlar stones within dynamic walling) and irregular stereotomic units (within other supports and vaulting) formed the organically fluid vocabulary that permitted an evolution from late Romanesque toward Gothic in the apparent desire to find more efficient solutions to countering angular motion.⁶⁷ Language evolved in roughly this same period.⁶⁸ As a basis for studies on European constructive building geometry, see a fuller discussion of the “practical geometry” debate in recent works by Cohen.⁶⁹

As a final note in the debate on “practical” geometry – set against the relative lack of obvious evidence for medieval technical thought on architecture – we can ask the question not only what did the medieval builder know, but how did he come to know it? Recent historiographic themes for Late Antiquity through the early modern period may shed some light on the matter. On useful knowledge, journeymen mobility, guilds, and technical knowledge see Davids.⁷⁰ On oral transmission or what Formisano’s review describes as the “relationship between orality and writing in professional training in antiquity” see Meissner.⁷¹ Another aspect is knowledge transfer through traveling or “inter-urban tramping” (cf. *Wanderungen, Wanderschaft Walz*, reflecting a number of recent articles and active guild

associations in Germanic countries and Central Europe). For early to late medieval textual records on this phenomenon, including travel as far as the Near East, consult Binding.⁷²

Peripatetic or not, artisans have shown evidence of keeping hands-on know-how to themselves by simply withholding (or distorting) knowledge. Texts and drawings for patrons may show a machine from every angle in a single view but carefully stop short of demonstrating applicable measures or even proportions.⁷³ Vitruvius, and quite possibly Late Antique mathematicians such as Pappus, either tacitly withhold or openly state they are not revealing all they know: this may be a rhetorical device but in view of the above it is likely true. On the intentional lack of precise detail in *De architectura* see Courrént: “aucune technique, aucune formule n’est développée intégralement et précisément dans le traité. L’activité créatrice reste l’apanage de l’architecte.”⁷⁴ Will these sources nonetheless reveal quantitative thought? If we add to this a rich ancient culture of verbal communication, memory, and the coded language of hand gestures, all of which leave no record, by definition, it is perhaps not so surprising that so few records have survived on the technical thought informing medieval architectural design layout.

Notes

- 1 The previous version of this chapter (written in 2004, published in 2006) was an experimental attempt to promote studies on the medieval builder’s “education.” Drawing from on-site work for the dissertation (1989–1992), our repeated call for renewal in medieval architectural studies dates to 1995. The concept of uniting serious study of “scientific” sources in mathematics with the monumental archeology of medieval architecture was sufficiently original to receive a Getty Postdoctoral Fellowship (1996–1997). The vagaries of life obliged retirement from medieval studies in 2004 but it is a pleasure to accept Conrad Rudolph’s renewed invitation to participate in this new Companion series edition and we offer this revised chapter in the hope that it may serve as a guide for future students.

Since this version builds on the previous one, the student would do well to begin with the 2006 text. It presents a didactically oriented historiography of layout, with a commented bibliography including references that are generally well known to medieval architectural historians. The current text, which could be titled “Architectural Layout, Then and Now,” takes into account some of the more original recent studies in literary, technical, and mathematical thought in the pan-Mediterranean of the first millennium CE. Many of these works figure among the first generations of “interdisciplinary-native” studies. It is an exciting time for historical inquiry. The advanced student, as well as the scholar, of medieval architecture in Northern Europe may find that an external, diachronic viewpoint can provide the context, vocabulary, and conceptual structure required for identifying increasing threads of continuity in architecturally relevant knowledge up to and through the first half of the second millennium, despite the obvious permutations through time and space.

- 2 John J. Contreni and Santa Casciani, eds. (Forence, 2002).
- 3 For a brief historiographic overview, see Doody et al., “Structures.”

- 4 See Formisano, "Late Latin." Also Davids, "Introduction: 'Useful Knowledge'."
- 5 Phrase adapted from title of intellectual biography by Lemoine, *Fernand Braudel*.
- 6 Meissner, *Die technologischen Fachliteratur*; Cuomo, *Ancient Mathematics; Technology and Culture*; *Ancient Numeracy*; and Roby, *Technical Exkphrasis*, esp. Chapter 4, "Diagram and Artefact," pp. 152–191, and Chapter 5, "Description and Instruction," pp. 192–242, with bibliography on quantitative sources. For a new look at the Roman approach to science see Lehoux, *What Did the Romans Know?*
- 7 After Cuomo, *Pappus*, Chapter 2, esp. p. 58. It is not yet clear whether Pappus' work was known in medieval Northern Europe. Nonetheless, Pappus provides insight into the state of Late Antique "applied" mathematics.
- 8 Ferreirós, "On the Very Notion." On "mixed" mathematics see Roux, "Forms." The term "real" mathematics is yet another kettle of fish!
- 9 Euclide d'Alexandrie, *Les "Eléments,"* Vitrac, ed.; Vitrac, "Euclid" and "Quand?"
- 10 Quote cited from Corry abstract; see "Geometry and Arithmetic," also on history and historiographic issues of the manuscript traditions in the medieval period.
- 11 For online image see Casselman, "One of the Oldest Extant Diagrams." On Euclidean diagrams see Panza, "The Twofold Role," with important bibliography. In addition to Roby on ancient diagrams (as in n. 6 above), see North, "Diagram and Thought in Medieval Science"; and Lüthy and Smets, "Words, Lines, Diagrams, Images" on the post-medieval scientific context.
- 12 Campbell, *The Writings*; Del Lungo, *La Pratica agrimensoria*.
- 13 From Balbus-to-Vitruvius Rufius refer to Guillaumin's editions, under Primary Sources in this chapter's bibliography.
- 14 Acerbi and Vitrac, eds., *Metrica*. Also see Vitrac, "Héron d'Alexandrie et le corpus métrologique."
- 15 Roby, "Experiencing Geometry," with important bibliography.
- 16 Cuomo, "Divide and Rule." See Guillaumin, "La classification des figures," as well as his professional site for additional titles, noted here under References.
- 17 Romano, "The Archaeology of Mathematics."
- 18 Fögen, *Wissen*, for its extensive bibliography for Vitruvius (on mechanics), Frontinus (*Strategemata*), and Vegetius. On Antiquity's *ars mechanica* to the medieval *artes mechanicae* see Whitney, "*Artes mechanicae*" and, generally, the reference Mantello and Rigg, *Medieval Latin*, on development of thought and language in diverse fields. On emergence of *artes mechanicae* in the Carolingian period see Meier, "Baumeister Europas?" On technology, Bes, "Technology in Late Antiquity."
- 19 See main discussion of Vitruvius in Section 2.1, below. On medieval developments and the role of military education, see Bachrach, *Warfare*, and Chevedden, "Artillery in Late Antiquity," as well as older bibliography cited therein, notably Marsden (1969, 1971) on the history and treatises.
- 20 See Zenner's 1994 dissertation, cited in our 2006 chapter, p. 551. The early date and technological advances present at St. Etienne in Nevers (c.1068/74–c.1090) have yet to enter the scholarly literature.
- 21 Although I was unable to consult it before publication, a recent collection on the geometry of military or naval construction looks promising, Nowacki and Lefèvre, eds., *Creating Shapes*.
- 22 For philosophically informed studies of the principal authors on mechanics through the Late Antique, see Schiefsky, "Art and Nature"; and Berryman, *The Mechanical Hypothesis*.

- 23 See Popplow and Lefèvre, respectively, in *Homo Faber*. Quote is from abstract in Bogen, “Diagrammatic Reasoning.”
- 24 Hans Michael Schellenberg, “Anmerkungen zu Heron von Alexandria und seinem Werk über den Geschützbau,” in Hans Michael Schellenberg, Vera Elisabeth Hirschmann, and Andreas Krieckhaus, eds., *A Roman Miscellany: Essays in Honour of Anthony R. Birley on His Seventieth Birthday* (Gdansk, 2008), pp. 92–130.
- 25 Schiefsky, “Theory and Practice.” Vitrac, “Mécanique et mathématiques,” and Laird, “Heron.” For post-medieval comparanda see Palmerino, “The Geometrization of Motion.”
- 26 See Allmand, *The “De Re Militari” of Vegetius*, for discussion, bibliography, and editions.
- 27 For extensive historiographic and bibliographic summary see Materni, “Attività scientifiche.”
- 28 Stevens, “Euclidean Geometry”; Folkerts, *The Development*, Chapter III, “Euclid in Medieval Europe” (revised version of 1989 text). Folkerts addresses specific *Geometria* treatises in *Essays on Early Medieval Mathematics*, Chapters VII–IX, see also Chapter X.
- 29 Folkerts, “Die Mathematik der Agrimensore.” Toneatto, “Note sulla tradizione.”
- 30 Jacquemard, “Recherches sur la composition” and “La mesure d’une hauteur.”
- 31 Folkerts, “Remarks on Mathematical Terminology.” Moyon, “La géométrie pratique.” See also discussion of first scholastic evidence of Arabic-Latin Euclid in the twelfth century, in Lejbowicz, “Le premier témoin.”
- 32 Guillaumin, “Les deux définitions,” and Jacquemard, “*Erectio, inclinatio*”; Lejbowicz, “La géométrie de l’angle.”
- 33 For the cultural context and building project for a new cathedral (1020–1037) see Rouche, *Fulbert*.
- 34 Jacquemard, “Avant la *Practica geometriae*.”
- 35 See most complete critical edition by an interdisciplinary group of scholars under direction of Gros (1969–2009; reprint 2015); and on developing terminology, Callebat and Fleury, *Dictionnaire des termes techniques*.
- 36 For the best overviews in Greek and Roman architecture, with chapters on design and building methods and current bibliography, see Ulrich and Quenemoen, *A Companion to Roman Architecture*, esp. Chapters 7–10, 22, 24; and Miles, *A Companion to Greek Architecture*, esp. Chapters 5, 7, 16.
- 37 Courrént, “La construction du savoir”; and McEwen, *Vitruvius*.
- 38 Refer to bibliography in Blackwell *Companion* series volumes, cited in n. 36 above, for works by Bommelaer, ed.; Geertman and de Jong, eds.; Frézouls, Gros, Haselberger, Jacobson, and Wilson Jones; more recently, see Senseney’s studies proposing geometrical hypotheses (circular geometry, 6-petal rosette, inscribed triangles, sets of equal squares).
- 39 See van Krimpen-Winckel, “*Ordinatio*,” English text online, 1:14, n. 42, n. 43; 1:31–38, followed by discussion of Vitruvian architecture.
- 40 Chapters’ names in Greek adapted from symposium directed by Fleury, “Autour des machines de Vitruve. L’Ingénierie romaine: textes, archéologie et restitution,” June 2015, University of Caen Basse-Normandie, <http://vitruve.hypotheses.org>, accessed 13 August 2018.
- 41 On this theme, see Gros, ed., *De architectura*, p. 661 and n. 38 (p. 660); p. 665 and n. 46 (p. 664).

- 42 Fleury, “Vitruve et le métier d’ingénieur,” as well as his publication list under References. See also Madeleine, “La restitution des machines.”
- 43 On textual evidence of medieval plans, see Binding and Linscheid-Burdich, *Planen*.
- 44 See the library’s facsimile printed edition and two online facsimile sites. For the historiography see Jacobsen, in Ochsenbein and Schmuki, eds., *Studien*. A recent dissertation critiques the archeological literature on St. Gall (Chapter 2) as part of a broader interdisciplinary analysis of Carolingian monastic architecture, see Rulkens, “Means, Motives” also for its bibliography.
- 45 See Meier, “Baumeister Europas?” on agriculture, pp. 304–311, and on Vitruvius, pp. 291–293, in relation to St. Gall.
- 46 See critical edition by Cam (*Cetius Faventinus, Abrégé d’architecture privée*); Cam and Jacquemard, “Les interpolations médiévales,” on manuscript transmission, noting significant changes in late tenth- or early eleventh centuries within Gerbert’s sphere of influence; and linguistic study, *M. Cetius Faventinus Concordance*, by Cam, Fleury, and Jacquemard.
- 47 Most recently on both points, see Huber, in Ochsenbein and Schmuki, eds., *Studien*.
- 48 Binding, “Columna.”
- 49 In this chapter’s bibliography, under Facsimiles, see study by Barnes, *Portfolio*; and under Secondary Literature, see his critical bibliography.
- 50 On Villard’s historiographic role as the predecessor to Renaissance technical drawing, see Lefèvre, *Picturing Machines*, passim, esp. Chapter 2 on machines and Chapter 6 on stonemasons’ geometry. On Villard’s machines within early engineering history, see Brooks, “The Mechanization,” passim.
- 51 Nussbaum, “Planning.”
- 52 Barnes, *Portfolio*, pp. 21–22.
- 53 Refer to concluding remarks on oral transmission and trade secrets, below.
- 54 Regarding formal typologies based on choir layout, see Schenkluhn, “The Drawings.” On drawing as a tool for observation and transmission of layout/elevation geometries, see Bork, “Villard’s Laon Tower.”
- 55 Bork, “Dynamic Unfolding,” p. 16, and passim on Villard.
- 56 Our studies on layout, published in Zenner, “A Proposal for Constructing the Plan and Elevation” (2002), found both arithmetic and geometric means present in an eleventh-century case study. Refer also to Vitruvius discussion above, in Section 2.1.
- 57 See Desbos, “Stereometric Studies” on fols. 20r, 20v, 21r. Refer again to Chapter 6 in Lefèvre, *Picturing Machines*. For its brevity and utility we cite use of rule and compass within this context, in Tee, “A Note.”
- 58 Adamson, “Stonemasons’ Drawings.”
- 59 Asper, “Two Cultures of Mathematics,” pp. 122–123, pp. 126, 128–129.
- 60 On the highly original concept of “trading zones” where “the learned and the skilled communicated” (p. 9), see Long’s most recent work, *Artisan/Practitioners*, which also addresses Vitruvius.
- 61 Yeomans, “The Geometry.”
- 62 *Ibid.*, pp. 39–43.
- 63 Zenner, “A Proposal for Constructing the Plan and Elevation,” p. 29, and n. 12.
- 64 For example, Zenner, “A Proposal for Constructing the Plan and Elevation,” p. 50, fig. 2.10 indicates three aligned circles whose diameters delineate two parallel lines that define internal nave width, along with western internal nave length.

- Other principal dimensions are established in the cited article's fig. 2.5 (which incidentally does begin with the crossing center point) and its fig. 2.6.
- 65 On the mathematics of plane/solid and stereotomy, see Arana and Mancosu, "On the Relationship."
- 66 On vaulting experiments in Late Antique provincial areas, see Lancaster, *Innovative Vaulting*, with bibliography.
- 67 On stereotomy in construction see Sakarovitch's publication list. On the history of stereotomic practice and (later) statics, see Aita, "Between Geometry."
- 68 On historical use of the terms "practical" or "theoretical" geometry, see Raynaud, *Géométrie pratique*.
- 69 Cohen, *Beyond Beauty*, Chapter 6, esp. pp. 243–269, as well as Cohen's "Provocative Similarities," an analytical comparison of late Medieval and Renaissance sources.
- 70 Davids, "Introduction: 'Useful Knowledge'."
- 71 Meissner, "Mündliche Vermittlung" with review by Formisano.
- 72 Binding, *Wanderungen*.
- 73 See Chapter 2 in Lefèvre, *Picturing Machines*, and Davids, "Craft Secrecy," which builds on Long's well-known book on the culture of knowledge, openness, and secrecy.
- 74 Courrént, "*Tenuitas cum bona fama*," p. 4, para. 6, and n. 17.

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Sculptural Programs

Bruno Boerner

The most impressive and elaborate works in the history of fine arts undoubtedly include the imposing sculptural programs that are found on the façades of Gothic cathedrals.¹ Some of these can be found in England, e.g. on the façade of Wells, and some in Germany. The most imposing examples are, however, to be found in northern France.² The portals of Amiens Cathedral have more than 40 larger-than-life-size jamb figures that are accompanied by numerous smaller sculptures in the tympana, archivolt, and the base level floor. Similar designs can be seen in the transepts of the cathedrals of Chartres and Paris. This development reached its climax in Reims Cathedral, where the sculptural program extends over all stories of the façade and even to the interior of the western façade. Because of their continuing presence in the centers of so many medieval towns, these programs retained their fame and their modern study began in the nineteenth century.

The term “sculptural programs” implies that these series of figures are interrelated and based on a unifying concept, that they are not just an arbitrary collection of figures. Yet, we cannot be sure that the sculptor and those responsible for the cycle actually always intended thematic consistency between the individual images. Michel Pastoureau draws attention to the fact that the word “program,” borrowed from the Greek, was unknown in French until the seventeenth century and that it was first used in art history by Emile Mâle at the turn of the twentieth century.³ Writing about Romanesque capital and façade cycles, Robert A. Maxwell warns against ascribing a uniform iconographic concept too hastily, since the pragmatic requirements of construction often required the employment of multiple

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groups of sculptors, a circumstance that contradicts such an assumption.⁴ Furthermore, it assumes that the sculptors, who often remained anonymous in the High Middle Ages, were not alone in being responsible for the planning but that others who were not artists but members of the clergy participated as well. These latter commissioned the construction of the cathedrals with their figural representations and bore the institutional responsibility for them.

Although modern art historians have often interpreted these sculptural programs in a rather political way, which will be demonstrated later in this chapter, almost all of the programs have a theological basis. One should be aware that the methodological approach taken by art historians to disclose the concepts behind these figural series is characterized by fundamental difficulties. On the one hand, there are only very few medieval texts about the contents of such “programs.” On the other, sources provide only very rare and vague information about the authors of the figural programs. The question arises which of the theological texts that were written in great numbers in the Middle Ages can be reasonably attributed to the sculptural series from a historical point of view. It is often problematic to take only one medieval text as the conceptual basis of a sculptural series. Although portal programs were “read” in the Middle Ages, this involved quite a different concept of reading than that of a continuous text. Apart from some narrative reliefs, portal programs are not read from left to right; a more complex type of reception is involved. The compositional structure of a sculptural portal program may offer the “reader” several approaches in various directions. There are horizontal, vertical, and even centripetal reading directions because the most prominent representation, e.g. a *Majestas Domini* (Christ in Majesty) or the coronation of Mary, is arranged in the central tympanum of the portal.⁵ Virtually all other elements of the image in the framing and lintel of doors or in the archivolts are oriented toward this central representation.

The Beginning of the Iconographic Research of Sculptural Programs

The earliest iconographic research of medieval cathedral sculptures is closely connected with the name of Emile Mâle. The great French scholar published his main work about Gothic cathedral cycles at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century.⁶ It was Mâle’s credo that art in the Middle Ages was regarded as a method of teaching. The world of religious images was a *Biblia Pauperum*, a Bible of poor men, for him. He thought that the uneducated laity visually learned everything from the images and associated this with their religious belief.

Everything that was of interest to humanity was taught to them by the glass paintings and the portal statues in the churches: the history of the world since its creation, religious doctrines, the exemplary deeds of the saints, the hierarchy of virtues, the manifoldness of the sciences, the arts and the handicrafts.

The basic intention of Mâle's book was to show that all medieval teachings had been plastically represented in many ways in the cathedrals. Since Mâle regarded the sculptural ensembles of the cathedrals as an "encyclopedia of knowledge," he organized and presented the huge iconographic material of the cathedral façades in accordance with the structural pattern of the most extensive encyclopedia of the Middle Ages – the *Speculum Maius* (*Great Mirror*) written by the Dominican friar Vincent of Beauvais. Because Mâle was convinced that the plan of this mirror reflected the divine plan, he used the same four subdivisions of Vincent's work for the four main parts of his study about the iconography of cathedrals. Thus he dealt with images of flora and fauna under the heading the "Mirror of Nature," explaining the symbolic meaning of individual animal and plant species. He discusses representations of seasonal labor and the seven liberal arts in the chapter "Mirror of Science." The section about the "Mirror of Morals" is dedicated to the virtues and vices. The major part of his study is dedicated to the "Mirror of History," which combines scenes of the Old and New Testaments, the apocrypha, legends of the saints, and events of salvation history as well as the Last Judgment.

Although Mâle was a pioneer in the iconographic research of the cathedrals, he could build on essential preliminary work, for there had already been a very strong interest in medieval art in the early nineteenth century. In the 1830s, for example, important restoration work was beginning to be undertaken in the restoration of many of the cathedrals that were slowly falling into decay, with sculptures that had often been severely damaged during various civil disorders.

Often, romantic writers spearheaded these initiatives. One of the most prominent was Victor Hugo, who directed attention in his novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* to the portals of the cathedral of the French capital and demanded its restoration, which was started in 1843. Restoration of the sculptural programs made it necessary to get an idea of the original appearance of the sculptures and their figural programs. As this was not easy, the results varied greatly. A comparatively successful approach to the medieval condition was probably the restoration of the Notre-Dame portals in Paris by Jean-Baptiste Lassus and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. They attempted to produce a reconstruction that was as authentic as possible. However, the result was greatly influenced by the Gothicism of their time. On the other hand, Lassus consulted historic descriptions of the old Paris, e.g. those written by Abbé Lebeuf and Guillot de Montjoie, to form a notion of the original appearance of medieval figural programs, thus demonstrating historic intuition and understanding.⁷

The enthusiasm for the Middle Ages in these years also resulted in the publication of numerous new journals that mainly dealt with the research of medieval cultural monuments and critically watched over their restoration. These are, above all, the *Annales archéologiques* published by Didron, the *Bulletin monumental*, the publications of the *Congrès archéologiques de France* and the *Revue de l'art chrétien*. Many medieval sculptural programs were examined and described in these publications for the first time, although the iconographic analyses of

the stone ensembles were often very limited. They were mostly restricted to discovering the meaning of the symbolic contents of individual motifs. At the same time, a large number of studies were made that were an attempt to explain Christian art as a whole, in particular Christian art of the Middle Ages. Among the most significant publications were Didron's *Iconographie chrétienne* from 1845 and X. Barbier de Montault's *Traité d'iconographie chrétienne* in 1870. These publications formed the basis on which Mâle could build his studies. One of the authors – Adolphe-Napoléon Didron (1806–1867) – had played a particularly important role. Mâle used the structure of studies that Didron introduced and which included the headlines of nature, science, morals, and history that were in accordance with the structure of the *Speculum maius* by Vincent of Beauvais. He knew that Didron had already interpreted the sculptural cycles of the cathedrals as an encyclopedia of knowledge. However, Mâle did not agree with Didron in attributing an absolute value to the order of the *Speculum maius*. Mâle used the structure of the *Speculum maius* to discover the deeper meaning of the iconography of the thirteenth century by attempting to decipher and explain their logical order. Generally, and above all from the present point of view, he demonstrated much more of a historic-scientific approach than Didron had done. It is amazing how he associated theological texts written in the Middle Ages with the iconography of the cathedrals, in the process demonstrating his own superb scholarship. Even today, a hundred years after its first edition, *L'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France* is an essential encyclopedia for all those who deal with the iconography of the Middle Ages.

However, the time and conditions in which the great French scholar carried out his studies must not be neglected. Emile Mâle had also been influenced by the efforts at Catholic renewal at the end of the nineteenth century. The fact that his studies were not completely free of apologetic interests already becomes obvious in the methodological preliminary remarks of his work. Concerning the relation between religious art and theological literature, he said:

Literary amour-propre – the pride of authorship was unknown to the early Middle Ages. It was plain that a doctrine belonged not to him who expounded it but to the Church as a whole ... It follows that the apparently immense library of the Middle Ages consists after all of a very few works. Ten well chosen books might almost literally be said to take the place of all others. The commentators on the Old and New Testaments are summarised in the *Glossa ordinaria* of Walafrid Strabo ... The whole of the symbolic liturgy is in the *Rationale divinatorum officiorum* of Gulielmus Durandus. The spirit and method of the old preachers live again in the *Speculum Ecclesiae* of Honorius of Autun. Sacred history, as then understood, is found in the *Historia Scolastica* of Peter Comestor and in the *Legenda aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine, profane history in the *Speculum historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais. All that was known of the physical world is summarised in the *Speculum naturale*, and all that was known of the moral world in the *Summa Theologica* of St Thomas Aquinas, epitomised in the *Speculum morale*. A reader familiar with these works will have penetrated the depths of the mediaeval mind.⁸

It seems Mâle intended to neglect the developments and different views in theological thinking. He perceived medieval art as a perfect world, which had been free of the vanities of modernism, in which the word of God was still purely revealed in writing and images. On the other hand, modern medievalists know very well that the theologians of the Middle Ages had their own culture of dispute, including controversies and discussions.⁹ Even the role of images was the subject of discussion.¹⁰ Moreover, it is a well-known fact that the thirteenth century in particular was characterized by dramatic developments concerning central questions of theology and philosophy. Unfortunately, it seems that these methodical findings are not always incorporated into scholarly investigations of art. Even today, art historians often choose any medieval or patristic text as the basis to explain a given program, although the text is related to the program only in regard to its content, without any demonstrable historical relationship. They justify their approach by stating or suggesting that the work in question surely existed in the relevant library of the monastery or chapter at the time the cycle was made. As a result, the explanation of the monumental image cycles of the Middle Ages has often been based on the same authors over and over again, such as Rupert of Deutz, Honorius of Autun, or Hugh of St. Victor. In this regard, it would be quite beneficial for modern iconographic research to develop a more detached and critical view of Mâle's heritage.

In relation to the main subject of this chapter, there is another reason to ask about the actual benefit of Mâle's study, and this is, in essence, that he rarely examined the sculptural programs as independent conceptual systems. It was not the individual ensemble of statues that formed an encyclopedia of knowledge for him, but cathedral art as a whole. Mâle seldom studied the relations within one single sculptural program to discover its specific overall meaning. In his book on the art of the thirteenth century, his primary method was to isolate a single iconographic motif from its total context and compare it with similar motifs of other cycles. If, for example, he compares the relief-cycle of the virtues and vices in the Last Judgment portal at Chartres with those of Paris, Amiens, Sens, and Laon, the "Mirror of Morals" is finally formed. The substantial relation of these images of virtues and vices to the other elements of the Chartres Last Judgment program – as well as a possible interpretation of the sculptural program as a whole – is of only minor importance for Mâle in his study.

However, there were also scholars at that time who had an interest in the specific overall message of a portal program. In 1847, Auguste-Joseph Crosnier (1804–1880), for example, presented his interpretation of the iconography of the sculptural cycles of Vézelay at the Société française d'archéologie, which was published one year later in the *Congrès archéologiques de France*. In the tympanum of the main entrance, Crosnier discovered the Mission of the Apostles as the central theological motif. He found that there is a strong relationship in medieval portal sculptures between the tympanum motif and the secondary representations that embellish its architectural frame, something that was the case for Vézelay. Crosnier believed he discerned the establishment of the church as the principal theme of the sculptural decoration in all parts of the doorway.¹¹

German art historians of the nineteenth century also showed an early interest in the interpretation of medieval sculptural programs, e.g. Karl Schnaase in his extensive *Geschichte der bildenden Künste* that was first published in the years 1843–1864 (2nd edn. 1866–1875). Schnaase's work was not only the first history of art that comprised all epochs, it also became the standard survey of art history in Germany in the nineteenth century.¹²

Although Schnaase devotes only a small part of his work to medieval sculptural programs, he studied the aesthetic significance and structure of portal programs far more completely than anyone before him. In his book, he mentions the Gothic portal cycles of Fribourg (Breisgau), Strasbourg, Amiens, and Chartres, dedicating much of his attention to the main entrance of Fribourg Cathedral.¹³ This is quite important with regard to his conclusions and his terminology of sculptural cycles, because this sculptural program in southwest Germany is quite different from its High Gothic French equivalents. This is particularly true for the architectural framework. The main portal of Fribourg Cathedral does not open out from the façade, properly speaking. Instead, the main portal, complete with tympanum and stepped figural jambs, is deeply recessed in a porch tower that dominates the west end. The sculptural program of the portal proper continues along the side walls of the porch entrance, while the main wall into which the portal proper is set functions as their background. In other words, the very physical environment in which the viewer perceives the sculptural program differs fundamentally from that of most French portal systems. The observer no longer stands in front of a sculptural ensemble. He finds himself within a three-dimensional ensemble of images that directs his eyes not only forward and upward but also sideways and to the back. Thus it is not incidental that Schnaase mentions the term “spatial symbolism” when talking about the significance of portal cycles. Moreover, he does not use the term “portal program,” but “composition” to describe the programmatic, mental, artistic, and architectural whole of the sculptural program. It must be admitted that with the Fribourg porch cycle, which was completed by the end of the thirteenth century, Schnaase dealt with one of the most complicated iconographic sculptural systems of the High Middle Ages. The walls of the porch are decorated with statues of the Seven Liberal Arts, female saints, Old Testament figures, the Wise and Foolish Virgins, and the strange figure of the Prince of This World whose front shows a seductive youth while his back is covered with toads and snakes. Exceptionally, the tympanum combines scenes of Christ's childhood, Passion, and the Last Judgment. The center of the tympanum shows a representation of the crucifixion as the main motif. However, it does not appear within a narrative context of the Passion, but is the central component of a Last Judgment scene, acting to separate the chosen and damned that flank either side.

Schnaase found a reasonable explanation for this unusual composition:

To sum it up, the relief contains the history of salvation and judgment, earth and heaven, in such a way that the course of worldly events – although part of the past from the human perspective – fuses with the outcome of the separation of the righteous and the wicked on the last day as the cause of judgment.

Schnaase thus believes he sees the causal connections of the events of the history of salvation in the portal of Fribourg Cathedral, and in this regard declares that the “laws of composition” are symbolic – probably wishing to express that there is no need to search for a narrative logic in this composition. According to Schnaase, the figures are in a close internal relation in this “spatial symbolism.”

In these sculptural cycles, which should be thought of in a “truly artistic sense,” Schnaase sees a “great, unique beauty” that is not based on the rational element alone, but on the interpenetration of plastic and architectural elements as well. Only a refined “sense of architecture” makes it possible to express the inner relation between the individual figures, says Schnaase. He regarded these figural cycles as a “tool to express the deepest thought with a sculptural clarity” that exceeds even the written word.

Schnaase’s aesthetic considerations of the sculptural cycles include very interesting aspects regarding the design and construction phases. This involves a closer consideration of the cooperation between the artists and the authors of the programs. Schnaase was convinced that the artists could not be the “authors” of these comprehensive and profound “compositions”; they lacked the necessary scholastic and theological background. Therefore, scholarly clergymen undoubtedly gave orders for the leading motifs. But, Schnaase underlines, as the “plan” was further advanced, the artists’ judgment became necessary again, so that, in the end, the whole piece could only be realized on the basis of the “mutual understanding of both parties.”

It is fascinating to observe the various aesthetic positions of the early nineteenth century that are involved in Schnaase’s aesthetic considerations on sculptural programs. On the one hand, one can detect traces of a romantic artistic concept in the adoration of the deep sensation that “these simple masters” (i.e. the sculptors) convey, transforming the dry symbolic relations between the various components into a wealth of liveliness and grace. On the other, basic elements of Hegelian aesthetics emerge in the idea that the beauty of these “compositions” results from the interplay of spirit and sensation, and that “the deepest thought” is expressed with “sculptural clarity,” something that had been impossible in other arts. What is new is Schnaase’s conclusion that this interplay was brought about by harmonious cooperation between theologians and sculptors. Finally, he even infers that “medieval art reached its climax in these compositions” in that it succeeded in “vividly presenting the great thoughts dominating the Church, the state, and science to the soul without the usual heavy scholastic formulae.”

Later, German art historians only rarely achieved the complexity of Schnaase’s interpretation of medieval sculptural programs. One of the reasons is the fact that the scholars researching the iconography of churches were closely associated with the clergy. Their primary task was to decipher the symbolic theological contents of the individual images. In other words, they searched for textual sources that helped interpret the persons and events depicted. They attempted to establish a history of iconographic types that offered a basis for the more or less clear classification of the representations.

In the early twentieth century, art historians in the circle of Aby Warburg began to expand considerably the expectations made in the basic analysis of works of art, and to regard works of art as social and cultural phenomena. These new aspects culminated in the three-stage interpretative model developed by Erwin Panofsky, who introduced ideological, general religious, and political beliefs into the analysis of the meaning of artworks. Nearly all of these innovative, and mostly Jewish, scholars, to whom modern iconographic research owes so much, left Germany because of the anti-Semitic regime, with most of them going to England or America. Among them was Adolf Katzenellenbogen, a pupil of Erwin Panofsky, who gave decisive impulses to the new interpretation of sculptural cycles.

Chartres Cathedral

Katzenellenbogen's research allows us to take a closer look at one of the most prominent Gothic sculptural programs – Chartres Cathedral. It has two parts. The first is the sculptural embellishment of the royal entrance with its three portals, which was built in the middle of the twelfth century and reintegrated into the west façade of the new structure which became necessary after the fire in 1194. The second consists of the sculptures of the transept façades which extend over six portals of the new structure. The tympanum of the central portal on the older west façade shows Christ in Majesty accompanied by the symbols of the four evangelists and surrounded by the 24 elders in the archivolt. The two lateral portals are dedicated to the Incarnation and the Ascension of Christ. The central part of the north transept, which was built at least five decades later, is decorated by a portal showing the coronation of the Virgin Mary. This portal is flanked by two entrances, the left of which shows images of Christ's childhood while the right depicts scenes from the Old Testament. Episodes from the lives of Job and Solomon decorate the tympanum of the right portal. In the central portal of the south transept, opposite the Coronation of the Virgin in the north transept, we find a depiction of the Last Judgment. The lateral portals here are dedicated to the martyrs and confessors of the church.¹⁴

The questions that Katzenellenbogen raises concerning the sculptural program go far beyond the questions that Emile Mâle, for example, asked:

It is the purpose of this study to investigate a number of basic questions not yet, or not yet fully, answered. They concern above all the main ideas governing the iconography of the various programs, their connection with specific historical and ideological situations, and the relation of cycles carved at different times. To state these questions briefly: What is the skeletal frame, so to speak, which sustains and gives structure to the multiple parts of the programs? What are its literary sources? Could the liturgy have contributed its share? To what extent are certain facets of church history, current theological, philosophical, and political concepts reflected in the choice of subject matter?¹⁵

Adolph Katzenellenbogen believes that the west portals represent the basic doctrines of religious belief: Incarnation, Ascension, and the Second Coming of Christ. One of the major difficulties that iconographic research of the sculpture of Chartres Cathedral has repeatedly faced is the identification of the famous jamb figures of the royal portal. In the first half of the eighteenth century, Bernard de Montfaucon recognized them as the French kings and queens of the Merovingian dynasty. Emile Mâle, however, identified the figures as the royal ancestors of Christ. An influential fact was that the figures are accompanied by Moses, who is the only figure that could be identified beyond doubt by its attribute, the stone tablets, and who could therefore be related to the Old Testament. Katzenellenbogen interprets these jamb figures both as Christ's ancestors and the spiritual forefathers of the French kings. So the Old Testament statues of the royal portal, prophets, kings, and queens, represent the harmony between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*. This harmony, which most closely guarantees the welfare of the church, is for Katzenellenbogen one of the threads linking the three cycles of the façade and the transept wings. He generally considers the three façade programs as a unit, joined together by the representation and the meaning of the main persons. The three cycles "depict, like a *Summa*, the total essence of Christ in all its conceptual ramifications ... The Virgin Mary, the Lady of Chartres, was honored in the lateral tympanum of the Royal Portal as Theotokos and *Sedes Sapientiae*. She received a prominent place on the transept wings. In the scene of her Triumph she is glorified in her own right and as the type of the Church." This church is "shown as the Bride of Christ and as His Body. She is shown triumphant and militant. She is exemplified by her foremost members, the Community of Saints."¹⁶ Katzenellenbogen shows that the planners of the sculptural programs drew inspiration from different sources: from the Bible, from legends, from the liturgy, from the dogmas of the church, from theological exegesis, and not least from political and philosophical concepts. He underlines the importance of the great teachers of the school of Chartres and sees their ideas alive in the sculptural decoration. So he realizes an "indissoluble link between a great center of learning and a great center of art."¹⁷

Not all researchers who studied the sculptures of Chartres after Katzenellenbogen believe that the royal portal was supposed to be reintegrated into the new part after the fire of 1194. Van der Meulen and Hohmeyer propose that the Last Judgment of the south transept portal was originally carved for the central west portal. Only when plans were changed were the already complete sculptures removed to their current position.¹⁸ Almost all researchers assume that plans had been changed several times during the conception phase of the transept portals. And so did Katzenellenbogen, even though he finally interprets the result as a very harmonious ensemble whose parts display strong associations to each other. The most recent large-scale study of the iconography of the Chartres transept sculptures, published by Martin Büchsel in 1995, suggests a very complex history of its planning and making. Even though Büchsel cannot detect any conceptual associations between the transept façades and the royal portal, he – like Katzenellenbogen – starts from

the fact that the latter was from the very beginning to be retained in the west façade after the fire in 1194. He believes that the initial planning focused on the reconstruction of the south transept façade with its three portals with sculptural decoration, and which faced the town, as the new main entrance of the cathedral. At that time, it was planned that its central portal was to be decorated with a coronation scene of the Virgin Mary that would be flanked by a Last Judgment together with an Epiphany. This disposition was modeled on the example of Laon, from where the sculptors would have been sent to Chartres. Only after the plans had been changed several times was the arrangement as we know it today decided upon. The Last Judgment was placed in the middle of the south transept, and the newly planned part on the north transept would house the coronation of the Virgin Mary and the Epiphany portal. To complete the six entrances, the confessors' portal and the martyrs' portal on the south and the Job and Solomon portal on the north (which exclusively consists of figures of the Old Testament) would be added. The tympanum of the latter shows the derision of Job and the lintel displays the judgment of Solomon. While Katzenellenbogen had already recognized the typological reference in this portal, which – in his opinion – points to the Epiphany portal and the coronation of the Virgin Mary portal, Büchsel goes one step further. For him, this portal is the hinge on which all parts of the now built sculptural program of the transept are based. It “comments” on the other portals of the transept and is a “universal program” that refers to every aspect that is expressed in the remaining portals. In the Christ types of Solomon, Job, Gideon, etc. it comments also typologically on the main components of the Last Judgment: judge, passion, victor, and intercession. The prefigurations of the church – i.e. the Queen of Sheba, Esther, Judith, Sarah, and Tobit's wife – correspond with the exegetical types of Christ.¹⁹ The church recognizes Solomon, i.e. Christ, as the true king enthroned by God. Moreover, Büchsel found that the typological references of the Job and Solomon portal could equally be detailed historical references. In this connection, he builds on the theses of Katzenellenbogen and Levis-Godechot. The latter proposed that Job's friends could be interpreted as the Albigenses who represented a very real danger for the church at that time.²⁰ The fact that Gideon is shown in a suit of armor gives rise to Büchsel's idea that this may be associated with crusaders and crusades. From the fact that the type of the Antichrist, Holofernes, is presented with an Antique emperor's head, Büchsel inferred an allusion to the Roman emperor who had often been accused of not being the representative of God but of being the Antichrist in the investiture controversy.²¹

However the question remains open whether a uniform sculptural program can still be assumed after the numerous changes of plans that are supported by archeological observations. Brigitte and Peter Kurmann have a very pragmatic view in this respect. They believe that the programs had been conceived and designed accordingly before the final assembly. But, they believe, it is possible that these sculptures were rearranged and combined differently afterwards, and even reworked where necessary – owing to structural and conceptual requirements.²²

Comparison of the Romanesque and Gothic

What distinguishes the Gothic from the Romanesque sculptural cycles in France is their greater consistency.²³ Two types of programs dominated the Gothic style. One of them is found in almost every façade of the cathedrals of the Île-de-France and its environment. On the one hand is the portal of the coronation of the Virgin Mary, which was first executed in Senlis in 1170, and on the other hand is the Last Judgment, whose quasi-canonical program was fully worked out in the Chartres transept and the west façade in Paris. Also, the system of architectural elements of the portal programs had been more or less regularized in the Gothic period, beginning with the early Gothic west portals of St.-Denis and Chartres. With only a few exceptions, sculptural decorations are now arranged in the archivolts, the tympanum, the lintel, the trumeau, the door frames, and the jambs where the sculptures were made as jamb figures.

The Romanesque sculptural cycles, however, have a different appearance. There is no consistent principle according to which the sculptures are arranged in the architectural layout of the buildings. Instead, you can find a wide range of architectural frames for the sculptural cycles. In the west of France, the images of the Announcement of the Last Judgment are often found in the archivolts only. At Conques and Autun, the programs spread over large-area tympana. At Moissac and Beaulieu, the porch walls are also decorated with reliefs. Arles follows its very own principle with its Antique porticus, which provides space for a wide-ranging cycle. St. Gilles has a similar layout. Consistent program types are much less typical for the Romanesque style than for the Gothic period. One can refer to simpler cycles in which only a few image elements are grouped around a *Majestas Domini*, or special regional forms such as the archivolt programs of the Aquitaine. Apparently, the so-called Last Judgment portals of Autun, Conques, and Beaulieu are also dedicated to a dominant main motif. However, even this reading is debated among scholars, as the example of Beaulieu shows. There are actually some particular features in this representation of the Last Judgment. These features allow Peter Klein, and with him Yves Christe, to assume that it is not the Last Judgment that is depicted in the tympanum of the portal but the Second Coming of Christ (which immediately precedes the Last Judgment), according to Matthew 24: 29–31: “and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Only the resurrection of the dead (Rev. 20: 12–13) and the Twelve Apostles as the assessors of the Last Judgment (Matt. 19: 28) have a direct reference to the Last Judgment, which has not yet begun.²⁴

Of course, it can be questioned whether it is reasonable to make a distinction between the Christ of the Second Coming and Christ the Judge in medieval portal programs that represent the Last Judgment. Or is it more useful to assume that Romanesque tympana have a much more synthetic character that points to several incidents in the salvation history? There are other examples of Romanesque

portal programs, the main subject of which is not completely clear to iconographers. One of them is the middle portal of the porch of the Abbey Church of Vézelay. In its central part, the tympanum depicts Christ in a mandorla. Beams of light project from Christ's hands to the heads of his disciples, who stand on either side of him. While Crosnier, as I have mentioned, wrote in 1847 that this represented the Mission of the Apostles, Emile Mâle identified it as a representation of Pentecost – to be more precise, as the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles.²⁵ Mâle gave iconographic parallels, such as a miniature from Cluny that was made about the same time and a twelfth-century image in the apse of St. Gilles at Montoire. Mâle, in turn, was contradicted by Fabre, who defended Crosnier's interpretation of the Mission of the Apostles and stated that it is not possible that Christ was depicted in a Pentecostal image.²⁶ Adolf Katzenellenbogen recognized a combination of several themes in the tympanum. For him, it is a combination of the wonder of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with Christ's ascension and the Mission of the Apostles, while Joan Evans focused on "the redemption of the world through the blood of Christ."²⁷

Methodical Aspects

The direction of the discussions about the contents of sculptural programs naturally depends on the specific questions researchers ask about them. During recent decades, for example, it has been very popular to inquire into patronage, the specific ritual and liturgical context, or the political functions of sculptural cycles.²⁸ This approach may be considered the heritage of Panofsky and Katzenellenbogen. Concerning the political reading, the ensembles were first interpreted as the expression of church politics, for example, the struggle between official church and heretical groups already mentioned.²⁹ Or the cycles are supposed to be specifically designed to serve as a summons to go on crusades. After Katzenellenbogen's study, Christian Beutler saw this as the solution of the interpretation problem of Vézelay.³⁰ In his opinion, the original tympanum initially showed the commemoration of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. During the years of the Second Crusade, he believes, a decision was made to change the tympanum and add the Christ on the Throne to motivate people for the crusade.³¹ Searching for the "hidden intentions" of the representations, researchers sometimes also presumed very detailed political ambitions of the clergy who formed the background of the program concepts. Michael D. Taylor attempted to analyze the political meaning of the main portal of Vézelay (which he interprets as a scene of Pentecost) as an effort to prevent the neighboring powers of the monastery, the Count of Nevers and the Bishop of Autun, from making reprisals on the monastery. According to this argument, the scene of Pentecost should be understood as representing the monastery itself: "[Pentecost] embodies the principle for the monastery's existence and legitimates its struggle for independence from secular power ... The image thus defines the community, its spiritual basis,

and, in the face of attacks, its rights and privileges.”³² Not infrequently, sculptural cycles in churches are interpreted as medial instruments legitimating the ruler, an argument that attributes influence on the program’s conception to the regent. For example, Jean-Marie Guillouët points to the rich iconographic program of the late medieval west façade of the cathedral of Nantes as the medium for the dynastic politics of the House of Monfort, which ruled the Duchy of Brittany from 1365 to 1514.³³ According to Claudia Rückert, the sculptural program of the Church of San Miguel in Estella was conceived as self-representation for the royal house of Navarre after the death of Alfonso I the Warrior as a preemptive move to gain international legitimation. In its early Gothic version, the Judgment portal is supposed to show the royal family’s potential for innovation and motivate the Roman curia to recognize the new ruling family.³⁴

Other methodological trends from the various disciplines of intellectual history have recently influenced the art historical study of medieval portal programs, including French Structuralism. For example, in 1984 Jean-Claude Bonne analyzed the Romanesque portal of Conques with its representation of the Last Judgment, employing a strongly Structuralist and Semiotic approach.³⁵ It was Bonne’s major concern that the formal structures in the great tympanum relief themselves should be recognized as statements or meaning; i.e. content and form must not be separated. He calls his approach *analyse syntaxique*, which refers to an analysis of the plastic and chromatic properties of the portal insofar as they are structures of meaning in themselves.³⁶ Bonne attempted to establish specific analytic categories for this method. These categories all refer to the formal and compositional characteristics of the tympanum, used by Bonne for the portal of Conques for the first time. He describes one of these categories as compartmentalization (*compartimentage*), or that which circumscribes the division of the overall relief into single segments. The theme of the Last Judgment is, according to Bonne, a very good example of how *compartimentage* functions in the task of giving figures and things their correct places. More recently, Martin Rohde investigated the narrative structures of early Gothic portal programs.³⁷ And Kirk Ambrose explores the multivalent functionality of the monstrous in Romanesque sculpture, suggesting that monstrous motifs like centaurs, fauns, eagles, and griffons were not depicted simply to terrify but to demonstrate intellectual, political, religious, and social ideals as well.³⁸

Other methodologies with origins in literary studies have also had an influence in the area of portal programs. Among them is reception theory, “whose focus is not the identity and significance built into the work of art, but the manner in which these characteristics are registered by the audience to which it is addressed.”³⁹ Michael Gradmontagne examines the idea of “readability” in particular in his study on Claus Sluter.⁴⁰ In *Sculpting Simulacra in Medieval Germany, 1250–1380*, Assaf Pinkus analyzes the martyr’s cycle in the archivolt of the north choir portal of the Holy Cross Minster at Schwäbisch Gmünd and its brutal parade of violence, considering these Late Gothic statues as likenesses of real people and an expression of the medieval theory of the simulacrum in image-production. The viewer is

invited to interact with the sculptures, which are designed to evoke a spontaneous somatic response. Increasingly, the reception-aesthetic objectives of sculpture are a central point of interest.⁴¹ Authors discuss which conditions for reception are present in works and how these are expressed in the specific forms of the figures in order to be efficacious. Using the representation of the personification of lust in the south porch of Saint-Pierre at Moissac, Thomas E.A. Dale explores the experience and effects of Romanesque sculpture. He argues that the female nude in Romanesque sculpture visualized the sexual fantasies that occupy the mind in order to neutralize their destructive power, thereby stimulating penance and conversion.⁴² In this way, it is assumed that the point of presenting sculpture cycles is to generate a certain conviction or call forth certain reactions in recipients. These answering actions of the beholder, which are the object of the communicative function of the image, are called *responsivity*.⁴³ In this stimulus to respond, in this demand to react, the true meaning and function of medieval image cycles is determined. Sculpture programs on the exterior of churches played an important role in ecclesiastical strategies of lay pastoral care. These programs do not wait until the believer enters the church to pray but burst into the everyday life of believers at the epicenter of medieval city life, where city churches and cathedrals used to be found, to try to influence them in their lives and actions.

The effective power of images is based on their emotional qualities, and pictorial motifs that trigger personal connections strengthen the image's memorability.⁴⁴ This poses the question of whether the actions motivated by images have to take place immediately during the process of looking or whether the images can be stored in the memory, inspiring reactions at a later point. After all, the images in our memories can be as effective as the images we perceive. The image does not only have the task of continually inspiring the believers to confess, but it should also influence people in their everyday lives, thanks to its continuous availability in the memory. Ideally, it should assert itself in the moment of moral judgment when the believer is in danger of sinful behavior.

Responsivity, the activity responding to the image, is directed not only at the religious life of the believer but equally so at the normative social behavior of its recipients. The religious self-control or moral judgment, which is stimulated by image cycles, is located at the intersection of social and Christian values and should exert influence on the urban civic socialization of individuals.⁴⁵ Image cycles, like images of virtues and vices, offer concrete models to guide the viewer and strategies to avoid social impropriety, and they activate self-criticism and self-perception along moral criteria. In this sense, medieval pictorial communication and interaction with images comprise an important communicative praxis in their function of constituting and stabilizing civic groups and identities.

Yet, recently, in thinking about what exactly the communicative function of images encompasses, scholars have pointed out that the *responsivity* of the beholder is based in semantic indeterminacy.⁴⁶ The way in which individual

reception proceeds substantially depends on the viewer; image reception as an individual activity of the beholder cannot be totally controlled by the sender. In the end, the process of internalizing images proceeds differently in each viewing, meaning that the message of a given image must necessarily contain certain blanks or gaps, which have to be filled in by the viewer. For example, in the individual perceptual experience of *Last Judgment* images, successive eye movements of each viewer are tied together into his or her own net of semantic relationships. The person who had just committed adultery or another act of sexual immorality might possibly let his or her gaze land on the depiction of the vice of *Luxuria* first whereas the greedy person turns toward to the representation of *Avaritia*. When both viewers take in the Judge of the World and the torments of hell, they will proceed, at least according the calculations of the sculptors and planners of the image cycle, to reflect on their deeds and do penance.

It is important to note that the rhetorical qualities of images determine their responsive effect – the more expressive and convincing their implementation by the artist, the better they are stored in the imagination of the image's viewer, inspiring his or her actions. Several research approaches have recently scrutinized the connection between Rhetoric and the visual arts, asking whether it is possible to bring together the Antique doctrine of the *genera dicendi*, the levels of style, which were conceived for oral communication, with the production and use of images.⁴⁷ Jens Ruffer recognizes a possible analogy between the *genera dicendi* and image cycles in the kind of depiction used for individual pictorial subjects and the various locations at which they are presented. For instance, the mode of the sublime is evident in the presentation of the divine sphere, with Christ and the saints, whereas the worldly sphere, with depictions of the months and virtue-and-vice image, is associated with the mode of simplicity.⁴⁸

In conclusion, it can be noticed, generally, that both the methodical approaches and the specific issues related to the study of medieval sculptural programs depend also upon the specific socialization of the individual researcher. This means that those studies were influenced to no insignificant degree by the trends of social sciences, the humanities, and philosophy of science at the time when they were written. Schnaase's studies on the sculptural program of Fribourg are marked by Late Romantic and Hegelian trends of around 1850 and Mâle's iconographic methodical considerations reflect, as we have seen, to a certain extent the intentions of the French *Renouveau Catholique* of the late nineteenth century. German and French researches into medieval sculpture in the first decades of the twentieth century were often influenced by nationalistic trends. Furthermore, from the 1960s until the 1980s the question of the political intentions behind the sculptural programs can also be explained by the specific interests of that time. In more recent years even specific aspects of gender studies have been examined in connection with medieval portal programs.⁴⁹

However, the difficulty mentioned earlier in this chapter continues to be felt. We do not know enough about the people behind these programs. Hardly any of

the program authors can be identified reliably today. The role played by Abbot Suger of the Benedictine Abbey Church of St.-Denis is probably a very special case. For example, the iconographic program of the west portals of his abbey church are attributed to him.⁵⁰ Laurence Brugger-Christe has proposed a remarkable thesis about the sculptural programs of the Cathedral of Bourges.⁵¹ This thesis can convincingly ascribe the sculptural program of the west façade to the works of a converted Jew (*olim judeaus*) Guillaume de Bourges, who was deacon of the cathedral during its construction. It would be desirable if such attempts to add further details to the specific historic environment of medieval sculptural programs were successful more frequently.

Notes

- 1 In the Middle Ages, sculptural cycles also decorated jubes, pulpits, cloisters, etc. For recent summaries of the state of research of the latter see Parker, *The Cloisters*, especially Forsyth, "Monumental Arts." The present chapter, however, focuses on the figures adorning the façades of churches. [On Gothic sculpture in general, see Chapter 22 by Jung in this volume (ed.).]
- 2 See Sauerländer, *Gothic Sculpture*.
- 3 Pastoureau, "Programme: histoire d'un mot, histoire d'un concept," p. 17.
- 4 Maxwell, "La sculpture romane et ses programmes: questions de méthode."
- 5 Concerning the vertical reading direction, Katzenellenbogen, *Sculptural Programs*, p. 15, draws attention to the fact that the central axis in the Chartres tympana and archivolts has an "ideographic function."
- 6 Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle*.
- 7 Leniaud, *Jean-Baptiste Lassus*, provides extensive information about Lassus and his Gothic image.
- 8 Mâle, *The Gothic Image*, p. xiv.
- 9 Flasch, *Einführung*, illustrates this topic very vividly.
- 10 For discussion about the role of images in the twelfth century, see Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance*. [On Gregory the Great and image theory in Northern Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, see Chapter 9 by Kessler in this volume (ed.).]
- 11 Crosnier, "Iconographic." See Nayrolles, "Deux approches," pp. 214–217.
- 12 For Schnaase see Karge, "Das Frühwerk Karl Schnaases."
- 13 For the following, see Schnaase, *Geschichte der Bildenden Künste*, pp. 290 ff.
- 14 For the state of research of the sculptural programs of Chartres, see Kurmann and Kurmann-Schwarz, *Chartres*.
- 15 Katzenellenbogen, *Sculptural Programs*, p. 8.
- 16 *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 102.
- 17 *Ibid.* [For more on the sculptural program of Chartres, see Chapter 22 by Jung in this volume (ed.).]
- 18 Hohmeyer and van der Meulen, *Chartres*.
- 19 Büchsel, *Skulpturen des Querhauses*, p. 88 ff. [On art and exegesis, see Chapter 11 by Hughes in this volume (ed.).]

- 20 Levis-Godechot, *Chartres révélée*, p. 153.
- 21 Büchsel, *Skulpturen des Querhauses*, p. 89.
- 22 Kurmann and Kurmann-Schwarz, *Chartres*, pp. 266ff.
- 23 [On Romanesque sculpture, see Chapters 18 and 19 by Hourihane and Maxwell, respectively, in this volume (ed.).]
- 24 Klein, “Eschatologische Portalprogramme”; Yves Christe, “Le Portail de Beaulieu.”
- 25 Mâle, *L’Art religieux du XIIe siècle*, pp. 326f.
- 26 Fabre, “L’Iconographie de la Pentecôte.”
- 27 Katzenellenbogen, “Central Tympanum at Vézelay”; Evans, *Cluniac Art*, pp. 70f.
- 28 For patronage, see, for example, Gaposchkin, “The King of France”; Gillerman, “The Portal of St.-Thibault-en-Auxois”; Kurmann and Kurmann-Schwarz, “Das mittlere.” For the relevance of ritual and liturgical matters, see, for example, Nolan, “Ritual and Visual Experience”; Horste, *Cloister Design*; Seelye-McBee, *Sculptural Program*; Sauerländer, “Reliquien, Altäre und Portale”; Fassler, “Liturgy and Sacred History.” [On patronage, see Chapter 12 by Caskey in this volume (ed.).]
- 29 See Lyman, “Heresy.”
- 30 Katzenellenbogen, “Central Tympanum at Vézelay.” For the state of research of the Vézelay Program, see Diemer, “Das Pfingstportal von Vézelay.”
- 31 Beutler, “Das Tympanon zu Vézelay.”
- 32 Taylor, “The Pentecost at Vézelay,” p. 13. See also Diemer, “Das Pfingstportal von Vézelay,” p. 94.
- 33 Guillouët, *Les portails de la cathédrale de Nantes*.
- 34 Rückert, *Die Bauskulptur von San Miguel in Estella*. See also Rückert, “Spanisch-französische Kulturbeziehungen im 12. Jahrhundert.”
- 35 Bonne, *L’Art roman*.
- 36 Ibid., p. 18. [On Formalism, see Chapter 7 by Seidel in this volume (ed.).]
- 37 Rohde, “Narrative Strukturen im Vergleich.”
- 38 Ambrose, *The Marvelous and the Monstrous*.
- 39 Cahn, “Romanesque Sculpture,” pp. 45, 46. For this approach, see also the other articles in Kahn, *The Romanesque Frieze*, and Altmann, “The Medieval Marquee.” [On reception, see Chapter 5 by Caviness in this volume (ed.).]
- 40 Grandmontagne, *Claus Sluter*.
- 41 Pinkus, *Sculpting Simulacra in Medieval Germany*.
- 42 Dale, “The Nude at Moissac”
- 43 For the following, see Boerner, *Bildwirkungen*.
- 44 For discussion about the role of affects, *phantasia* and memorability in sculptural programs see, for example, Dale, “The Nude at Moissac”; Ruffer, *Werkprozess - Wahrnehmung - Interpretation*, p. 481ff; Boerner, *Bildwirkungen*, pp. 49ff and 55ff.
- 45 Boerner, *Bildwirkungen*.
- 46 For the following, see Boerner „Die Chartreser Querhausportale und ihre Betrachter“.
- 47 Robert Suckale, „Peter Parler und das Problem der Stillagen”; Robert Suckale, „Stilbegriffe und Stil um 1300“.
- 48 Jens Ruffer, *Werkprozess - Wahrnehmung - Interpretation*, p. 466ff.
- 49 Smartt, “Cruising Twelfth-Century Pilgrims,” for example, studies the iconography of Romanesque sculpture at Moissac from a gay perspective.
- 50 See Gerson, “Suger as Iconographer.”
- 51 Brugger, *La Façade de Saint-Etienne de Bourges*.

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The Art and Architecture of Female Monasticism

Jeffrey F. Hamburger

Had this chapter been commissioned in 1980, rather than 2014, the first question to have arisen might have been: “is there anything about which to write?” To which might have been added: “and even if there were, would it be worth writing about?” The first surveys of women artists, which began to appear in the 1970s, rarely devoted much, if any, space to the Middle Ages. With a few notable exceptions, major works of art associated with female patronage, production, monasticism, spirituality, or spectatorship were routinely overlooked.¹ Even if they received notice, it was without much regard for what they might tell us about the role of art and architecture in the life of religious women, not only those who lived under strict enclosure (itself a relative term), but all those who followed various forms of religious profession, from canonesses to beguines and tertiaries.² Standing *pars pro toto* for this systematic oversight is Wolfgang Braunfels’ otherwise sweeping survey of the architecture of monasticism in medieval Europe (1972): not a single female house finds a place within its pages, although monuments such as Gernrode or Gandersheim, not to mention a host of beguinages, could easily have found a home there.³ Major monuments that had an established place in accounts of medieval art and architecture, such as Fontevraud in France, S. Chiara in Assisi, and Santa María de Sigena in Spain, were rarely if ever considered within an optic provided by women’s history, let alone gender studies. Not even double monasteries, whether Jouarre, which was founded in 630 and remained important enough to host a synod in 1133, or Königfelden in Switzerland, a site of signal importance for the Habsburg dynasty, were found worthy of inclusion.⁴

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In retrospect, some 35 years later, this state of affairs appears risible. Over the period in question, there are few other areas of medieval history, let alone medieval art history, that have been marked by such explosive development. To look back from the present is to realize not only how much has been accomplished, but also how much the history of art itself has been transformed over the course of a generation. Tracing the development of the study of the art of female spirituality over the past generation in many respects provides an ideal yardstick with which to measure the extent to which not only the subject matter but also the methodologies of art history have changed in the interim. A history of scholarship on the art of female monasticism can thus not be written without consideration of the broader development of art history in general during the period in question. A history of art largely focused on issues of style, attribution, chronological development, and great artists (almost exclusively male) to which concerns about context and function still remained largely foreign *de facto* left little space for consideration of the visual culture of a subgroup of medieval women whose patronage was often communal in character and whose own creativity was exercised in genres such as embroidery that fell outside the modern system of the Fine Arts. The inventiveness of much of the imagery produced by and for nuns would have lent itself to iconographic analysis, but the texts to which such imagery could have constructively been related – many of them written in the vernacular – were themselves not taken that seriously by senior scholars of the mystical tradition. In a critique that echoed the fiercest medieval critics of female spirituality, visionary piety in general was regarded as falling short of the highest intellectual reach precisely because it was tainted by images. William James regarded women's mysticism as "theopathic, absurd and puerile."⁵ David Knowles was hardly less dismissive.⁶ A minor strand in scholarship, exclusively German, linked the category of devotional imagery classified rather problematically as *Andachtsbilder* with texts from the context of female monasticism, which, however, too often were interpreted as transparent reports of reality rather than literary representations in their own right. Just as for art historians, much of the art of female monasticism could not be considered art, so too, for historians of the high line of medieval literary traditions, whether Latin or vernacular, its textual testimonies did not deserve to be considered as literature. Much of it fell into the category of utilitarian literature (*Gebrauchsliteratur*), which by definition denied it the status of art.⁷ There were notable exceptions, among them Horst Appuhn's studies on the material culture of the Cistercian convent of Wienhausen in Lower Saxony, where the contents of a medieval convent miraculously survives little short of intact (fig. 34-1).⁸ Apart, however, from a handful of classics, such as Eileen E. Power's *Medieval English Nunneries, c. 1275 to 1535* (1922), medieval historians had also managed to steer clear of the subject of female monasticism of the Middle Ages. In such circumstances, conditions were not ripe for a flowering of scholarship on the art of female monasticism.

The shift in the critical fortunes of the art of female monasticism cannot be attributed to any single cause. Even though he did not directly address issues concerning art, the groundbreaking work of Herbert Grundmann played a critical



FIGURE 34-1 Choir, Cistercian Convent of Wienhausen (Lower Saxony), c.1300.
Source: photo by Jeffrey F. Hamburger.

role in creating a space within which such work could be done.⁹ The publications of Caroline Walker Bynum, beginning with *Jesus as Mother* (1982), which established the importance of gender as a critical category for the study, not just of female spirituality, but medieval spirituality tout court, certainly served as a catalyst. So too did the emergence of the *Rothschild Canticles*, an indisputably great work of art that could only be coherently explained in the context of female spirituality and mysticism of the later Middle Ages.¹⁰ The discovery and reevaluation of a whole range of works, however, could not have taken place without a fundamental shift in the critical climate within which the history of art was conducted. In the case of medieval art history, some of the most dramatic changes involved issues and perspectives that inevitably came into play when dealing with the kind of devotional imagery often employed by nuns: to mention just a few, a renewed attention to the status of the image qua image, the history of attitudes toward images, the relationship of mental to visual imagery, and the role of visionary piety as it relates to broader understandings of medieval visibility. Critical interest in the body as a central term in modern criticism both explored and emphasized the centrality of somatic piety in female spirituality of the later Middle Ages, which in turn lent itself to discussion in terms of anthropological approaches that, beginning in the 1990s, insisted in a variety of ways on equivalences (and ambivalences) between image and body.¹¹ Medieval art, which had long languished within a mold inherited from Vasari that cast the Middle Ages

as a rude interruption between Antiquity and the Renaissance, instead could be seen, not as an exception to the mainstream of Western art history, but rather as an exemplification of attitudes and habits of viewing from which the rest of Western art marked a deviation. David Freedberg's *Power of Images* (1989) and Hans Belting's *Bild und Kult* (1990) are the books that turned the tide.¹² Despite significant differences in approach, both of these contributions can be considered symptomatic of a changed climate sympathetic to the study of religious imagery in general and devotional imagery in particular. In addition to identifying previously neglected works of art linked to female production and patronage, scholarship on the art of female monasticism participated in this paradigm shift by providing a wealth of previously overlooked evidence regarding the history of attitudes toward images. In their visions as well as in their daily devotions, the sources suggested, nuns kissed, touched, caressed, dressed, and played with images as their constant companions. Images permeated enclosure and impinged on every aspect of nuns' religious routines.

A comprehensive topical and topographical bibliography on the art of female monasticism remains a desideratum. The website Monastic Matrix <http://monasticmatrix.osu.edu/monasticon>, hosted by Ohio State University, provides a good foundation.¹³ A brief historiographical essay such as this necessarily takes a different tack: its purpose is to place the development of scholarship on the art and architecture of female monasticism within a tripartite frame consisting, first, of the development of medieval art history, second, that of medieval studies over the same period, and third, the broader, often tumultuous, history of the humanities in the wake of the intellectual revolution of 1968. It is in the nature of successful revolutions that, with time, the transformations they have brought about can too easily be taken for granted. Within the larger political arena, the persistence of the so-called "culture war" proves resistance to change remains deep-seated. The same holds true for an art history of female monasticism. Although in some respects it has entered into the mainstream of art history, in others it remains outside.¹⁴ Its legacy, if it is not too early to speak in such terms, is complicated by its dual mission, on the one hand, to seek commonalities and contributions, on the other hand, defiance and difference. Difference, however, is often a matter of degree, not in kind. Bridal mysticism provides an evident example. Exegesis of the Song of Songs that identified the bride with the soul assured that bridal mysticism was a universal inheritance, regardless of gender. For enclosed nuns, however, it assumed an especially important and sometimes outré role.

The place of art within female religious practice was as controversial in its own day as it is in ours. Some scholarship has sought to recruit female mystics and visionaries for a variety of modern causes.¹⁵ Female monastics, by challenging established norms in their own day, have done the same for established protocols and categories of historical inquiry in ours. To the extent that scholarship on female monasticism in general and the art of female spirituality in particular has identified elements of resistance to established norms, the scholarship itself represents a form of resistance to established protocols of art-historical inquiry.¹⁶

The tension between a subfield seeking acceptance within the mainstream of scholarly inquiry and a proud, even defiant, self-consciousness of difference contributes to the dynamism of this ever-expanding area of investigation. Historical treatments of the subject must therefore tread a fine line. One goal has been to bring the study of female monasticism generally and its art and architecture more particularly, into the mainstream of historical inquiry. The study of female monasticism is not just for feminists any more. In theory, what is wanted is not two separate histories, one of female, the other of male, monasticism, separate, but equal, but rather a fully integrated approach. Addressing the material in terms of gender demands a comparative framework. At the same time, there is good reason to resist complete assimilation. A sympathetic understanding of the art of female monasticism sometimes requires, if not the suspension of certain frameworks (or the application of others), then a willingness to shift emphasis or consider alternative modes of analysis.¹⁷

Not all scholarship on the art of female monasticism can be considered feminist in inspiration, any more than feminist art history focuses exclusively on the work of women artists. It is, however, impossible to imagine the emergence of this field of inquiry without the contribution of feminism. The insistence of “second-wave” feminism (or third-wave, if one includes the first feminist movements c.1900) on issues of identity and subjectivity, which marked a translation of concepts of difference from, first a linguistic, then a philosophical sphere, to the arena of culture and society, have achieved enormous, if hardly entire, success.¹⁸ Nothing might seem farther from the contemplative silence and disciplined isolation of a monastic cell than the raucous clamor of contemporary cultural politics. Only in an idealized Middle Ages, however (or for that matter in an idealized conception of scholarly inquiry), can the religious and the political be separated. This is but one reason why the term spirituality, once so popular in discussions of female pious practice, must be treated with caution. A modern term (as is mysticism), spirituality too easily suggests a realm of refined interiority cut off from considerations of context. To speak more generally of the art of female monasticism allows for a more robust view embracing the material as well as the spiritual, precisely the interface at which images both real and imagined interact. Just as the history of medieval mysticism requires consideration of the social institutions within which it flourished, so too the history of medieval devotional imagery requires attention to the contexts in which such imagery was cultivated, propagated, criticized, and sometimes condemned. Writing about medieval devotional imagery and iconography, Rudolf Berliner spoke of the “freedom” of medieval art.¹⁹ In the Middle Ages, however, anything related to religion was associated with risk, for women especially so. Women seeking to carve out new religious roles for themselves often served as lightning rods; as contemporary accounts attest, they and their images were often the focus of intense criticism.²⁰

To new materials have been added fresh ways of looking, many of which have proven to be of use beyond the study of medieval art made by and for women. In pursuing this path, it remains useful, schematic though the terminology might

be, to consider the study of the art of female monasticism in terms of the distinction between first- and second-wave feminism. The principal task of first-wave feminism was recovery and rehabilitation. Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party," which included Hroswitha of Gandersheim and Hildegard of Bingen, could be considered an iconic (if controversial) work of the first wave. In it, women who had been neglected or entirely overlooked were literally invited to take their place at the table, but in a setting traditionally associated with women. An analogous process marked early approaches to the art of female monasticism. Their novelty lay less often in methodological innovation per se than in a reinvigorated archeology: if one only dug deeper, so the thinking went, one would find the buried remains of a lost subculture. For this kind of excavation there were no more than a few important precedents, foremost among them Dorothy Miner's *Anastasia and Her Sisters* (1974), an essay by Annemarie Weyl Carr ("Women as Artists in the Middle Ages," 1976), and the modest, but nonetheless groundbreaking catalog of an exhibition held in Wolfsburg (1983) (fig. 34-2).²¹ Since these pioneering works, vast amounts of previously unsuspected material have been exposed; there is hardly a corner of Europe for which such ground-breaking work has not been



FIGURE 34-2 Claricia, in secular dress, praying to the Virgin and Child, initial for Psalm 51, Psalter, Benedictine Convent of St. Ulrich and Afra, Augsburg, c.1200. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, MS W.26, ff. 63v–64r. Source: photo courtesy of Walters Art Museum.

undertaken, although the focus has been on Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and, to a lesser extent, France and England.

New material need not mean new names. The textile arts provide perhaps the best examples of works by women that remain largely anonymous. Whether those made by women or (less often acknowledged) by men, textiles had hardly been neglected in previous scholarship, but they were not, on the whole highly regarded. Even a corpus as magisterial as Renate Kroos's book on the linen embroideries of Lower Saxony never properly entered the mainstream of art-historical inquiry (fig. 34-3).²² Textiles had no place in the modern system of the Fine Arts; whether the luxurious embroideries commissioned by the dukes of Burgundy or the liturgical hangings crafted by the nuns of the German Heideklöster, they were relegated to the category of craft. In the Middle Ages, however, they were both enormously expensive and highly esteemed (in no small part because of their prominent place in liturgical celebration and their use in the cult of relics). The labor of nuns in producing embroideries can be seen, as it was seen by them, as ennobling their labor by linking it the Virgin Mary, who spun in the Temple. Works previously dismissed as crude, because lacking depth, express and embody a textile aesthetic, closely related, also by etymology, to the "fabric" of certain types of text. Indicative of a broader shift in art-historical sensibilities is the renewed seriousness with which the study of textiles is taken. Previously the preserve of conservators and specialists, the study of textiles, whether as objects or within the metaphors of veiling and unveiling, has moved closer to the center of art-historical inquiry. Another category of imagery that has in part been rehabilitated is that of those devotional drawings too easily dismissed as "Nonnenarbeiten" or popular imagery.²³ The study of visual culture, which saw its heyday in the 1990s, made it possible to recapture the resonance of such modest objects and to lend them a dignity that they previously had been denied. What such drawings lacked in technical sophistication, they compensated for in deeply felt iconographic invention.

When dealing with medieval art of any kind, especially from the earlier Middle Ages, there are limits to how much information can be recovered about individual artists, whether male or female. Names, let alone clearly identifiable career trajectories, are hard to come by, although there have been additions, especially from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²⁴ Only by turning to patronage in addition to production can one take the full measure of women's contributions to medieval art. Not all such patrons can be discounted as matrons.²⁵ Whether in their roles as queens or as *Stiftsdamen*, many of whom came from the highest ranks of society, women wielded enormous wealth and very often the power that came with it. This power, religious as well as political, expressed itself in the construction of monasteries and the commissioning of impressive works of art that in terms of their sophistication and finesse are on par with anything the Middle Ages has to offer. Chelles, Nivelles, Essen, Sta. Maria im Kapitol in Cologne, Altenberg an der Lahn ... the names read as a roll-call of great centers of patronage. Despite a wealth of material, apart from pockets such as Vadstena in Sweden, Trezbnica in



FIGURE 34-3 Embroidery in silk and gold thread on linen, made by the nuns of the Birgittine monastery of Naantali, Vallis gratiae, Finland, fifteenth century. *Ave Maria gratia plena*/MAABObP. Suomen kansallismuseo (National Museum of Finland), KM 3000, NM inv. nr 3000. Source: photo by Matti Huuhka/Museokuva.

Silesia, Königsfelden in Switzerland, or the Benedictine St. George's and Franciscan monastery of the Holy Savior in Prague, the periphery in such places as Scandinavia, Spain, and Central Europe, has not received as much attention.²⁶

Second-wave feminism brought with it a shift to gender as the dominant category of interpretation. This new tack ironically sometimes had the effect of making intensive excavation more difficult: if medieval misogyny had suppressed authentic expressions of female identity, then by definition no genuinely independent forms of expression could emerge. According to this way of looking at things, it was not simply that the art of female monasticism, like dark matter, could not be perceived, it de facto could not exist, at least not in any authentic fashion. In keeping with a concomitant insistence on the domination of discourse, all that supposedly survived were representations of female identity put forward by men.²⁷ The limitations of so doctrinaire an approach are exposed by the title of an important and influential study of the literature of female monasticism, Ursula Peter's *Religiöse Erfahrung als literarisches Faktum* (Mystical Experience as Literary Fact, 1988).²⁸ Although successful in revealing the extent of convention (i.e. construction) in the representation of what purported to be first-hand accounts of female experience, this approach, if taken to extremes, ruled out any access to the experience of medieval women. Skepticism about experience, however, represented a welcome antidote to romantic assumptions of empathetic identification across time, let alone the previous practice of undue psychologizing brought to bear on female mystics (often "diagnosed" as hysterics) or positivist notions of being able to recover "wie es eigentlich gewesen ist" (how things actually were – as if one could ever recover fully what the world looks like from another viewer's perspective).²⁹

In all such debates, as in feminism itself, "experience" came to the fore as a proving ground for different ways of construing the sources, all the more so in that much of the literature of female monasticism, especially those from German-speaking regions, whether convent chronicles (otherwise known as "Sisterbooks") or mystical texts, offered an unusually rich vein to tap for historians interested in what otherwise remains rare in medieval sources, namely, apparent accounts of first-hand responses to works of art. Medieval sources are often frustrating in this regard; even when references to images (more plentiful than sometimes imagined) can be found, they are very often generic in nature.³⁰ Inventories are even less informative when it comes to issues of reception. In this respect, the literature of female monasticism presents an apparent gold mine, and its riches were tapped by historians whose work in the 1980s participated in the general shift away from issues of production to those of reception. The title of Hans Belting's groundbreaking study of the reception of the Byzantine Man of Sorrows in the medieval West, *Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter*, is indicative in this regard.³¹

The literary sources for the study of female monasticism, however, are not only a gold mine, they are also a mine field. Art historians often protest that historians too easily take medieval images as illustrations or reflections of reality, rather than as the representations that they are, images that shape experience more than they merely reflect it. Art historians, in turn, should not (and increasingly do not)

overlook the conventions that, shaped by social, political, and religious exigencies, structure the representation of experience in literature. One way forward has been to recognize that all such conventions are responsive both to authorial intention and social prerogative. Rather than choose between experience and exemplar, one can trace changing patterns and shifting points of emphasis within a complex network of conventions that both express and shape experience. Seen from this perspective, the texts are rich in accounts of devotional images, not because women necessarily required or relied on such images to a greater extent than men (although in some cases that can be shown to have been the case), but rather because they were, for a host of reasons, represented as requiring them. In this context, as in any other, virtually any account of how images were used or viewed must be considered in the context of a pre-existing culture of images and of the debates over the enthusiasm that they were capable of generating. Images, rather than offering a mirror held up to reality, occupy a house of mirrors in which appearances can deceive.

The literature of female monasticism forces the question to what degree certain types of “experience” themselves were conventionally associated with religious women. One signal instance involves erotic imagery.³² Christianity’s inclusion of the Song of Songs in its canon of scripture ensured its language of love a central, even sanctioned place in religious discourse, e.g. in the Marian liturgy. The somatic imagery of the *Canticle* was a common inheritance for monks and nuns. The literature written by and for nuns (and there are subtle distinctions) differs in its application of the Song’s metaphorical imagery, above all when it comes to its translation into images. Works such as the *Rothschild Canticles*, *Christus und die minnende Seele*, the Song of Songs cycle at Chelĉmno that represents the lost manuscript model for the *Canticum canticorum* block books of the fifteenth century, the majority of images representing Christ crucified by the virtues (to which the *Sponsa* is added), the prefatory images to the Burckhardt-Wilde Apocalypse – in short, virtually all depictions of the Song of Songs that translate its impressionistic imagery into a romance with a clear story line – were made for women, the majority of them nuns.³³ The existence of such imagery does not indicate any proclivity for (often thinly) veiled eroticism; rather it simply shows that such imagery was considered appropriate for enclosed women whose vocation defined them as brides of Christ. The somaticism of much (if hardly all) of female spirituality in the later Middle Ages lends its extravagant eroticism an overwhelming intensity (and, it must be added, an often cloying sentimentality).

Issues of experience remain front and center when it comes to a central topic in all of art history, especially after the semiotic turn, and that is representation. Medieval religious art lives from the tension between the visible and the invisible. The pressure to make present is typical of late medieval art in general, devotional art in particular, and of certain types of female devotional practice to a high degree. One should, however, be wary of associating the use of images in the context of female monasticism too closely with somatic modes of pious expression. Within the history of female mysticism, there is a strong strain of apophatic (negative) as

well as cataphatic (positive) mysticism. Margarete Porete and Hadewijch provide two potent examples, as does devotion to John the Evangelist, the virginal visionary, and bride of Christ.³⁴ Modern interest in the body has, to a certain extent, led to the neglect of the negative in favor of the positive, as has the tendency to emphasise various vernaculars over Latin. Not all women, however, chose to express themselves in their mother tongue.³⁵

Regional differences also play an important role. Whereas scholarship on female monasticism has focused on southern Germany, especially the Alemannic region in the German southwest, which experienced an undeniable efflorescence in the context of rapid urbanization along the Rhine, other regions present markedly different patterns. For example, in northern Germany, linked by the Hanse to both England and the Netherlands in the west and Prussia and even Russia to the east, the vernaculars spoken border on being a different language. Sources testify to the continuing importance of Latin learning in female monastic communities in the north, of which the Dominican convents of Soest and Lemgo in Westphalia are, along with the Cistercian convent of Helfta in Saxony, among the best documented (fig. 34-4).³⁶ The visual universe that unfolds in the liturgical manuscripts from *Paradies bei Soest* reveals a piety that was communal, not individual, in focus, and in which patristic and monastic classics of the twelfth century continued to play a prominent, even dominant, role. The prominence of diagrammatic imagery in these manuscripts reveals a corresponding reliance on high medieval monastic materials in service of a piety that is communal, liturgical, and intellectual. Not only did the nuns marshal a vast number of textual sources, some of them bordering on the esoteric, they employed inscribed images to compose a complex commentary on the liturgy and to articulate a theology of deification gleaned from Dominican mystical theology.

The manuscripts from *Paradies* demonstrate decisively that nuns cannot be restricted to the role of mouthpieces for their male advisers. Independence, however, did not necessarily imply resistance. Most nuns or tertiaries were not mystics; even when they exploited their status as charismatics to urge reform, as, for example, in the cases of Catherine of Siena and Birgitta of Sweden, they saw themselves as standing in service of the church. Most nuns owed their allegiance not only to their order, but also to their families for whom they prayed and who provided them in turn with material support (fig. 34-5). The close ties between clan and convent could generate factions within the walls who, no less than in other churches of the later Middle Ages, competed with one another for space and attention.³⁷ The politics in question in such situations were not sexual; they were civic, even secular.

Despite all the difficulties, close attention to patterns of patronage and piety reveals differences in practice that, if never absolute, mark out a different realm of experience. Nowhere is this clearer than in the boundaries marked by the architecture of enclosure. Space literally shapes experience, and the spaces inhabited by nuns differed by definition from those inhabited by men, in function as well as form. Degrees of difference can be observed in other areas as well.



FIGURE 34-4 Officium, Feast of Corpus Christi, Dominican Convent of Paradies bei Soest (Westphalia), c.1380. Gradual, Düsseldorf, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, D 11, p. 319. Source: photo courtesy of ULB Düsseldorf.



FIGURE 34.5 Deacon Vihelin performing mass in the Marian Church at Herrenberg, c.1410, 52.5 × 54.5 cm. Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Inv.-Nr. WLM 7796.

Aristocratic women, many of them nuns, led the way in the adoption of extensively illustrated prayer books, not only psalters (of which the St. Albans Psalter is easily the most famous example), but also devotional picture books.³⁸ The earliest extant book of hours with illustrations (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Liturg. 277), dating to the late eleventh century, and written in a variant of Beneventan script, was made for a late eleventh-century Benedictine nunnery in Dadar (Dalmatia).³⁹ In Germany, most early witnesses to the cult of the Veronica come from female monastic communities for which it provided a vehicle for the practice of spiritual pilgrimage. At least in the north, the same holds true for a preponderance of icons imported from the east at an early period. Not all visionaries were women, but visions, with their attendant emphasis on visual experience, assumed a place of special importance in female monastic communities. The omnipresence of pictures within enclosure could be construed as a response to isolation, but also served to support an intensely imaginative set of practices in which images acted as intercessors and interlocutors. The way in which nuns literally took devotion with images into their own hands has often been dismissed as a kind of child's play. If, however, one recalls that devotional props of all kinds – Christ in the cradle displayed by Francis of Assisi, Christ riding the donkey on Palm Sunday, Christ on the Cross with movable arms, the dead Christ in the Easter sepulcher, the ascendant Christ pulled up the vaults on Ascension day – were part and parcel of the everyday liturgy, then the so-called “devotional dolls” of nuns can be seen as having participated in a broader spectrum of image use.⁴⁰ It makes no sense to dismiss nuns' use of portable devotional images as child's play, yet accept their application in the other contexts as appropriately liturgical.

At the risk of generalization, it can be said that the distinctive profile of female monasticism became more pronounced as the Middle Ages progressed. In the early and High Middle Ages, double monasteries remained common, but over the course of the twelfth century, with notable exceptions, they largely disappeared. Monks and nuns were increasingly forced to go their separate ways. With the rise of the mendicant orders, which by definition sought to go out into the world, the contrast between their peripatetic life and the enclosed regime of nuns only became more pronounced. In the context of such developments, it should hardly come as a surprise that the sources for the history of female spirituality suggest something of a hothouse atmosphere. Convents were by definition inward-looking places in which a similarly oriented spirituality was cultivated.

There is, however, a tension between such spiritual interiority (especially important in the context of mysticism) and the overtly incarnational emphasis of much (although hardly all) female piety. Here too, however, nuns' pious practices must be seen as part of a continuum. The somatic character of their devotional practice is in keeping with the character of late medieval religiosity tout court.⁴¹ Materiality means more than the mere stuff from which objects are crafted. It also extends beyond material culture per se to include belief systems that comprehend matter.⁴² In theory, one must distinguish between the stuff of bodies (relics) and the matter from which images were made. In practice, the distinction

was blurred. Images were perceived as acting on their own. The sources, visual as well as verbal, suggest that nuns enjoyed an especially intense, intimate, animated set of interactions with images. Without rehearsing now tired debates over what constitutes an “Andachtsbild” (devotional image), it can be said that while any image could serve as a prompt to devotion, certain images, such as sculpted representations of the Christus-Johannes-Gruppe (Group of Christ and St. John), not all of which can be defined exclusively as devotional images, were particularly popular in female monastic communities. Moreover, even in those cases in which a particular image can be shown to have circulated among both men and women, very often it was women who led the way. In this respect, nuns’ use of images reflected their liminal social status. Although members of religious orders, they were not members of the clergy and thus, strictly speaking, remained part of the laity. Despite separation, they thus mediated, on the one hand, between the church and the laity through their prayers, providing efficacious pleas for intercession for patrons and family members. On the other hand, through their piety and pictorial propaganda, they provided the laity with effective, exemplary models for emulation.

In investigating the extent of difference in women’s devotional practice, the *cura monialium* or the pastoral care of nuns inevitably assumes an important role. It nevertheless represents a fraught area of research, as just how it is construed (and its conditions varied immensely), becomes critical when defining the roles and status of women and their ability to act as independent agents. When considering the *cura monialium*, all the issues of suppression vs. resistance, dependence vs. independence, submission vs. self-assertion that are critical to modern scholarship are played out in a great variety of ways. In the Middle Ages (and still often today) the lives of women were governed by men. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the celebration of the Eucharist, a rite that was central to the religious life of nuns, especially in the later Middle Ages. In the Middle Ages (as today), women could not assume the role of priest (although they did occasionally preach). Necessity, however, was then, as now, the mother of invention: nuns, whether mystics or not, found alternative avenues to express their reverence for the consecrated body of Christ. Although a variety of architectural solutions denied nuns access to the high altar, the lay congregation and, for the most part, the priest, nuns’ choirs often housed their own altar within which the consecrated host could be reserved. In coming to terms with the complexities of the *cura monialium*, it can again be debated to what extent certain sources are probative. Statutes define behavioral norms. They, however, were often honored in the breach, and not simply for scandalous reasons.⁴³ For different groups, the enclosure of women served different purposes; what resulted was often a compromise between conflicting ideals. One area in which such conflicts come to the fore is hagiography, visual as well as verbal. Male confessors, attracted to female charismatics, often sought to use them for their own propagandistic purposes. To try to see the world as the women themselves saw it therefore requires reading between the lines. Hildegard of Bingen’s *Liber Scivias* is perhaps the most controversial such

case. Whereas most historians regard the illustrations as Hildegard's inventions and creations, others see them, no less than the text, through the filter imposed by Hildegard's amanuensis, Vollmar.⁴⁴ To adjudicate controversies such as this, what is required is a revised notion of what constitutes authorship in various medieval contexts, whether in regard to texts or to works of art.

Scholarship on the art of female monasticism inevitably reflects the nature of the material. Whereas in some cases it focuses on those aspects that remain distinctive, in others it has helped propel certain issues to the forefront of scholarly attention on a broader front. One such issue is vision, not only prophetic and mystical, but sensory as well, a focus manifested in renewed interest in medieval optics and theories of sight.⁴⁵ Historical accounts of vision construe it in terms of visuality to underscore the degree to which its character remains contingent on the subjectivity of a particular viewer or audience. *Rashamon* now extends to embrace all of history; how a particular historical account ends depends on the standpoint of the viewer (and in turn of the historian). Art-historical interest in visuality hardly originated in medieval studies, but the prominence of visionary imagery in medieval art, as well as of medieval accounts of visionary experiences involving works of art, provided, as it were, a portal through which visuality and related terms (such as the gaze) entered the study of medieval art. Within this methodological optic, female visionaries have played a prominent role. Medieval vision is usually discussed within frameworks derived from such classics of exegesis as Augustine's *De genesi ad litteram*, which distinguished between corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual vision.⁴⁶ Within any such scheme, the devotional practices of medieval women who cultivated an intensely somatic relationship with corporeal images that appealed as much to touch as they did to the eye could not be but regarded as secondary in status, as obstacles rather than as vehicles to the perception of divinity. The art of female spirituality offers another perspective, not from below, but from another place in which the body, in keeping the incarnational imperative of Christianity itself, provides its own path to God.⁴⁷

As art history extends its purview to comprehend the entire sensorium, the liturgy presents a logical place to turn. The liturgy provided or at least aspired to provide an all-encompassing sensorial environment. Reform orders such as the Cistercians had rejected this aesthetic of sensory saturation but, by the Late Middle Ages, images were to be found everywhere. For nuns confined to enclosure, often without direct visual access to the high altar, hearing assumed outsized importance. The experience of sound, however, was not necessarily a passive experience. Nuns participated in the production of sacred sounds. In addition to illustrating their own liturgical books, they also composed chant.⁴⁸ The liturgical manuscripts from female monastic communities of the Late Middle Ages are among the most lavishly illustrated of their time, often with highly inventive iconography for which the closest parallels can be found in contemporary visionary literature, itself no less dependent on liturgical sources. Visualization and vocalization went hand in hand.

For female monasticism, as in so many other contexts, architecture provides the framework within which virtually any aspect of their daily life, devotional practices included, must be considered. Across Europe, the art and architecture of female monasticism varies greatly by region. One must also differentiate among monastic orders, although on closer examination strict typologies inevitably break down. In some areas (e.g. Italy, German-speaking regions), evidence is relatively abundant; in others (e.g. England and France), it is, in contrast, rather scarce. The reasons for such scarcity also vary. The Gilbertines, an order found only in England, built double monasteries of a particular type. In England, where the Carthusian order played a significant role in the pastoral care of nuns, a good many manuscripts from foundations such as Syon Abbey survive. Very few, however, are illustrated. The Reformation took an enormous toll. In France, where the Reformation was hardly a factor, modernization, amplified by centralization, plus the ravages of two world wars has obliterated most material remains of female monasticism (the library at Metz being one infamous example). The great royal foundations of Poissy and Longchamps, however, despite their ruined state, provide a wealth of evidence, partly in the form of inventories. In Italy, many female monastic communities continued to flourish well into the modern era, a fact reflected in the preponderance of modern scholarship on Italian foundations during the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

As gaps in the appended bibliography make clear, despite close to four decades of intense investigation, there remains a great deal to discover or revisit. Well-known repositories harbor little-known treasures. In addition to the manuscripts from Soest, recent discoveries include a group of textiles from Wienhausen consisting mostly of ritual garments custom-made from a colorful variety of precious textiles to adorn several cult images revered by the nuns.⁴⁹ In light of all that remains to be done, it would seem that no single tool-kit is sufficient to the double task of discovery and analysis defined at the outset of this chapter in terms of the various phases of feminist scholarship. On the one hand, it is vital to continue the important work of excavation using all traditional tools of art-historical inquiry. On the other hand, it is no less essential to treat the material sympathetically by deploying a range of methodological approaches that seek to integrate the material into mainstream art history without denying its distinctive character. It could be said that the study of the art of female monasticism inevitably remains in its infancy. Nevertheless, the methodological innovations and insights it has provided are indicative of a maturity beyond its years.

Notes

- 1 Perusal of the bibliography, which is arranged topically, reveals that there is a real paucity of literature on the subject prior to 1980 and that most comes from the past 25 years. Surveys from the 1970s include Eleanor Tufts, *Five Centuries of Women Artists* (New York, 1974); Hugo Munsterberg, *A History of Women Artists* (New

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- 2 For the spectrum of circumstances, see Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, pp. 35–109, and Suckale, *Die mittelalterlichen Damenstifte als Bastionen der Frauenmacht*.
 - 3 Wolfgang Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe: The Architecture of the Orders* (Princeton, NJ, 1972). Braunfels devoted a separate publication to Damenstifte: Wolfgang Braunfels, “Die Kirchenbauten der Ottonenäbittissen,” in *Beiträge zur Kunst des Mittelalters: Festschrift für Hans Wentzel zum 60. Geburtstag* (Berlin, 1975), pp. 33–40.
 - 4 *Doppelklöster und andere Formen der Symbiose männlicher und weiblicher Religiösen im Mittelalter*, edited by Kasper Elm and Michel Parisse, *Berliner historische Studien* 18 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1992).
 - 5 Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982), p. 171.
 - 6 David Knowles, *The English Mystical Tradition* (New York, 1961).
 - 7 The great guide to this body of literature in German-speaking lands, but also beyond, is *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd edn., edited by Kurt Ruh et al., 14 vols. (Berlin, 1978–2008). For French, see Geneviève Hasenohr-Esnos, *Texts de dévotion et lectures spirituelles en langue romane, XIIe–XVIIe siècle, Texte, codex & contexte*, 21 (Turnhout, 2015).
 - 8 Horst Appuhn, “Der Auferstandene und das Heilige Blut zu Wienhausen,” *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte*, 1 (1961), pp. 73–138, and Horst Appuhn, “Der Fund kleiner Andachtsbilder des 13. bis 17. Jahrhunderts im Kloster Wienhausen,” *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte*, 4 (1965), pp. 157–238. See also Konrad Maier and Helmut Engel, *Die Kunstdenkmale des Landkreises Celle im Regierungsbezirk Lüneburg: Wienhausen, Kloster und Gemeinde*, *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Provinz Hannover* 34/2 (Hanover, 1970).
 - 9 Herbert Grundmann, *Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter: Untersuchungen über die geschichtlichen Zusammenhänge zwischen der Ketzerei, den Bettelorden und der religiösen Frauenbewegung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert und über die geschichtlichen Grundlagen der deutschen Mystik*, *Historische Studien* 267 (Berlin, 1935), recently republished in translation as *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages: The Historical Links Between the Mendicant Orders and the Women’s Religious Movement in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century, with the Historical Foundation of German Mysticism*, translated by Steven Rowan, with an introduction by Robert E. Lerner (Notre Dame, IN, 1995). For Grundmann’s legacy and checkered reputation, see Martina Wehrli-Johns, “Voraussetzungen und Perspektiven mittelalterlicher Laienfrömmigkeit seit Innozenz III: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Herbert Grundmanns ‘Religiösen Bewegungen,’” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 104 (1996), pp. 286–309, and Anne Christine Nagel: “‘Mit dem Herzen, dem Willen und dem Verstand dabei.’ Herbert Grundmann und der Nationalsozialismus,” in Hartmut Lehmann and Otto Gerhard Oexle, eds., *Nationalsozialismus in den Kulturwissenschaften*. Bd.1: *Fächer, Milieus, Karrieren*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 200 (Göttingen, 2004), pp. 593–618.

- 10 Hamburger, *The Rothschild Canticles*. Despite speculation that the manuscript might have been made for a man, Barbara Newman, "Contemplating the Trinity: Text, Image, and the Origins of the Rothschild Canticles," *Gesta*, 52 (2013), pp. 133–159, has now demonstrated virtually beyond doubt that it must have been made for a nun of Saint-Victor affiliated with the abbey of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc.
- 11 Caroline Walker Bynum, "Why all the Fuss About the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," *Critical Inquiry*, 22 (1995), pp. 1–33.
- 12 For a look back at both of these publications, see Jeffrey F. Hamburger, "Art History Reviewed XI: Hans Belting's 'Bild und Kult,' 1990," *Burlington Magazine*, 1294 (January 2011), pp. 40–45, reprinted in Richard Shone and John-Paul Stonard, eds., *The Books That Shaped Art History: From Gombrich and Greenberg to Alpers and Krauss* (London, 2013), pp. 202–215, 228–230.
- 13 Although given the many languages of individual items, its utility would be greatly enhanced by the addition of subject cataloguing.
- 14 I have often been asked, "when are you going to stop working on nuns?" To which I no less often have replied, "when are you going to stop working on monks?"
- 15 As an example could be cited Rudolph M. Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago, 1985).
- 16 Sherry B. Ortner, "Resistance: Some Theoretical Problems in Anthropological History and Historical Anthropology," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37 (1995), pp. 173–193.
- 17 Although the form of "triangulation" advocated by Madeline Caviness could be considered a bridge too far insofar as in some cases it produces results that are demonstrably false. See, e.g., Sarah Bromberg, "Gendered and Ungendered Readings of the Rothschild Canticles," *Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspectives on Medieval Art*, 1 (2008), pp. 1–26, available <http://differentvisions.org/issue-one/>, accessed 14 August 2018.
- 18 Patricia Matthews and Thalia Gouma-Peterson, "The Feminist Critique of Art History," *Art Bulletin*, 69 (1987), pp. 326–357. See also Jo Ann McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia* (Cambridge, MA, 1996).
- 19 Rudolf Berliner, "The Freedom of Mediaeval Art," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 6th ser., 8 (1945), pp. 263–288; reprinted in Robert Suckale, ed., *Rudolf Berliner (1886–1967): "The Freedom of Medieval Art" und andere Studien zum christlichen Bild* (Berlin, 2003).
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- 21 Elisabeth Schraut and Claudia Opitz, *Frauen und Kunst im Mittelalter* (Wolfsburg, 1983), reprinted under the same title in Cordula Bischoff and Brigitte Dinger, eds., *FrauenKunstGeschichte: Zur Korrektur des herrschenden Blicks* (Giessen, 1984). For a reevaluation of Miner's findings regarding Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, MS W26, see Pierre Alain Mariaux, "Qui a peur de Claricia?," in Frédéric Elsg et al., eds., *L'Image en questions: pour Jean Wirth*, Collection Ars Longa 4 (Geneva, 2013), pp. 138–154.

- 22 Kroos, *Niedersächsische Bildstickereien des Mittelalters*, based on her dissertation of 1957.
- 23 Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*; Jan Gerchow and Susan Marti, “‘Nuns’ Work,’ ‘Caretaker Institutions,’ and ‘Women’s Movements’: Some Thoughts About a Modern Historiography of Medieval Monasticism,” in Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Susan Marti, eds., *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries* (New York, 2008), pp. 132–150.
- 24 See, e.g., Alain Arnould, *De la production de miniatures de Cornelia van Wulfschkerke*, *Elementa historiae Ordinis Praedicatorum* 5 (Brussels, 1998).
- 25 Caviness, “Anchoress, Abbess and Queen.”
- 26 *Reassessing the Role of Women as “Makers” of Medieval Art and Architecture*, edited by Therese Martin, *Visualizing the Middle Ages* 7/1–2 (Leiden, 2012), contains an unusually large number of essays on regions otherwise not given much attention.
- 27 For a useful summary, assembled by members of the Medieval Feminist Art History Project, see Marian Blecke et al., “Artistic Representation: Women and/ in Medieval Visual Culture,” in Kim M. Phillips and Linda Kalof, eds., *A Cultural History of Women 2: A Cultural History of Women in the Middle Ages* (London, 2013), pp. 179–213.
- 28 Ursula Peters, *Religiöse Erfahrung als literarisches Faktum: Zur vorgeschichte und Genese frauenmystischer Texte des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen, 1088).
- 29 M. Escherich, “Das Visionswesen in den mittelalterlichen Frauenklöstern,” *Deutsche Psychologie*, 1 (1918), pp. 153–166; Oskar Pfister, “Hysterie und Mystik bei Margaretha Ebner (1291–1351),” *Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse*, 1 (1911), pp. 468–485; Wolfgang Beutin, “Hysterie und Mystik. Zur Mittelalter-Rezeption der frühen Psychoanalyse: Die ‘Offenbarungen’ der Nonne Margaret Ebner (ca. 1291–1351), gedeutet durch den Zürcher Pfarrer und Analytiker Oskar Pfister,” in Irene von Burg et al., eds., *Mittelalter-Rezeption: Medien, Politik, Ideologie, Ökonomie. Gesammelte Vorträge des 4. Internationalen-Symposiums zur Mittelalter-Rezeption an der Universität Lausanne, 1989*, *Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik* 55 (Göppingen, 1991), pp. 11–26.
- 30 Especially rich in source material are the publications of Jean-Marie Sansterre, many of which can be found at: <http://ulb.academia.edu/JeanMarieSansterre/Papers>, accessed 14 August 2018.
- 31 Hans Belting, *Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter: Form und Funktion früher Bildtafeln der Passion* (Berlin, 1981).
- 32 Urban Küsters, *Der verschlossene Garten: Hohelied-Auslegung und monastisches Leben im 12. Jahrhundert*, *Studia humaniora* 2 (Düsseldorf, 1985); Hildegard Elisabeth Keller, *Wort und Fleisch: Körperallegorien, mystische Spiritualität und Dichtung des St. Trudperters Hoheliedes im Horizont der Inkarnation*, *Deutsche Literatur von den Anfängen bis 1700* 15 (Bern, 1993); Hildegard Elisabeth Keller, *My Secret Is Mine: Studies on Religion and Eros in the German Middle Ages*, *Studies in Spirituality: Supplement* 4 (Leuven, 2000).
- 33 Amy Gebauer, *“Christus und die minnende Seele”: An Analysis of Circulation, Text, and Iconography* (Wiesbaden, 2010); Ruth Bartal, “‘Where Has Your Beloved Gone?’: The Staging of the ‘Quaerere Deum’ on the Murals of the Cistercian Convent at Chelmno,” *Word and Image*, 16 (2000), pp. 270–289.
- 34 Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *St. John the Divine: The Deified Evangelist in Medieval Art and Theology* (Berkeley, 2002).
- 35 Eva Schlottheuber, “Bildung und Bibliotheken in spätmittelalterlichen Frauenklöstern,” in Susanne Rode-Breymann and Katharina Talkner, eds., *Musikort Kloster: Kulturelles Handeln von Frauen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne, 2009), pp. 15–30;

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- 36 Hamburger, *Leaves from Paradise*, and Jeffrey F. Hamburger, Eva Schlotheuber, Susan Marti, and Margot Fassler, *Liturgical Life and Latin Learning at Paradise bei Soest, 1300–1425*, 2 vols. (Münster, 2017).
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- 38 Hamburger, "A *Liber precum* in Sélestat," and Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Nigel F. Palmer, *The Prayer Book of Ursula Begerin*, 2 vols. (Dietikon, 2015).
- 39 *Liber horarum Cicae, abbatissae Monasterii Sanctae Mariae monialium de Iadr: Oxford, Bodleian Library: MS. Canonici Liturgical 277*, edited by Marijan Grgić (Zagreb, 2002).
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- 44 Lieselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch, *Die Miniaturen im "Liber Scivias" der Hildegard von Bingen: Die Wucht der Vision und die Ordnung der Bilder* (Wiesbaden, 1998), is an outlier in arguing for a date after Hildegard's death.
- 45 See Chapter 3 by Hahn in this volume.
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- 48 For a selection, see the CD, recorded by Benjamin Bagby and Sequentia, *Krone und Schleier: Musik aus mittelalterlichen Frauenklöstern*, intro. and commentary Jeffrey F. Hamburger (Bonn, 2005).
- 49 Charlotte Klack-Eitzen, Wiebke Haase, and Tanja Weißgraf, *Heilige Röcke: Kleider für Skulpturen in Kloster Wienhausen*, intro. by Jeffrey F. Hamburger, with a contribution by Henrike Lähnemann (Regensburg, 2013).

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Cistercian Architecture

Peter Fergusson

Few areas of medieval study have seen a more rapid expansion in the past 40 years than the scholarship on Cistercian architecture. Older general histories of medieval architecture if they presented the Order's work at all placed it as a coda to Romanesque or Gothic on account of its reductive forms and style, and even, on occasion, described its artistic interests as anti-art.¹ More recent work accepts the distinctiveness of Cistercian architecture and positions it in critical reassessments of the architecture of the Middle Ages.

This dramatic re-evaluation is best explained by a welcome confluence of interdisciplinary studies. Historians have greatly broadened knowledge of the order's documentary, legislative, and archival history throwing new light on its institutional character and the developing nature of its monastic ideals. Most illuminating has been the emergence thanks to women's studies of the neglected Cistercians nuns' foundations which are now considered with the extensively studied monks' monasteries. Architectural historians have benefitted from clearer contexts to open new interpretative approaches. At the same time, archeologists using new techniques in surveying have recovered information formerly believed to be irretrievably lost, the work aided, ironically, by ruined Cistercian sites which offer opportunities for study denied to most in-use buildings. Mutually stimulating each other, these different disciplines have progressively revitalized studies of Cistercian architecture.

The Cistercians never lacked for historians. From the order's beginnings 900 years ago, men set down accounts of the foundation of individual houses, chronicled

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their development, wrote *vitae* of their venerated brethren, collected charters and deeds, many containing an occasional reference to buildings. For the purposes of this chapter these references will be deemed the sources of Cistercian history and are distinguished from the commentaries on those sources, or from histories that aim to shape a narrative of architecture from them. The latter literature is largely post-use, written after the monasteries had closed. In most cases closure resulted from external events such as the destruction of the Hundred Years' War in parts of France.² A century later, the Reformation terminated communal life in entire countries like England. Where Catholicism continued, as in Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Bohemia, Italy, and much of France, monastic institutions survived for another 250 years until their doors were closed during the convulsions at the end of the eighteenth century.³ Few abbeys enjoy unbroken histories, although in Austria communities at Heiligenkreuz and Zwettl live in the same buildings and work the same granges as their brethren 800 years ago.

To steer this chapter I want to concentrate on the order's monasteries in England while including comparative material drawn from other countries to amplify trends or to illustrate the narrative. I would justify this approach because of the longer historiographical tradition related to the Cistercians in England than those in other European countries.

Tudor Interests

Record keeping was part of Henry VIII's Suppression (1535–1539). Visitations of religious houses began in the preceding decade with the intention of establishing their material holdings and assessing the income from their lands. The ensuing compilation of lists included monastic libraries and the registering of armorial devices carved on tombs or buildings (to identify aristocratic patrons). John Leland, for instance, who held the title of King's Antiquary, traveled for these purposes in the late 1520s. He made notes on their buildings and topography (Cistercian as well as those of other orders) with the intention of gathering the material into a book to be entitled *Laborious Journey and Serche of Johan Leylande for Englandes Antiquities*, although the project was never realized.⁴ Leland's recording illustrates, however, a distinctive turn of mind, one marked by a valuing of the past, as distinct from the Tudor king and his commissioners' valuing of assets.⁵

Antiquarianism

Following the Suppression, Leland's approach anticipated a wider view of the recent past. In the Elizabethan period, materials saved from the former monasteries such as screens, tracery, and choir stalls found their way into parish churches and gentry houses.⁶ At the same time manuscripts, books, charters, and chronicles offered the chance of acquisition. Collectors ranged from the former monks and

nuns to high-ranking churchmen like Matthew Parker (1504–1575), master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and later archbishop of Canterbury who dispatched a select number of the monastery's more than 4000 manuscripts and early printed books to his old college (where they remain), justifying his action because the new secular clergy barely consulted them. Later archbishops followed Parker's example. A similar impulse in the following generation led to the establishment of institutions such as the College of Antiquaries in 1586.⁷ In these circles, the sense was widespread that material loss had meant as well a loss of historical memory, the consequence of what Aston calls the "royal guillotining of the monastic past."⁸ The recusant poet, John Donne, punned on Henry's suppressions (made according to categories of "Lesser" and "Greater" monasteries):

So fell our Monasteries, in one instant growne
Not to lesse houses, but, to heapes of stone

Most of England's 64 Cistercian monasteries met Donne's description. In the immediate aftermath of the Suppression, conditions may be glimpsed from the inventories of buildings and their contents. At Rievaulx in north Yorkshire, the new owner, the Duke of Rutland, controlled the dismemberment of the contents and fabric.⁹ Elsewhere, mob ransackings destroyed the buildings such as the one described at Roche in south Yorkshire.¹⁰ The "heapes of stone" were reused variously, for gentry houses, road building, coastal defenses, etc. The last had been the fate of Quarr on the Isle of Wight, but, at a space of 70 years, Sir John Ogländer, conversing with one of the former monks and moved by his description of the beauty of the dismantled church now covered by a field of corn, hired "... soome to digge to see whether I myght find ye fowndation butt could not"¹¹

Ogländer's efforts aside, collections of charters, endowments, and privileges of destroyed houses appeared in Dugdale and Dodsworth's three-volume *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1655–1673) (Volume 1 for the English Cistercian houses, Volume 2 for the Scottish foundations, both with a number of engraved illustrations of select sites). These men left no doubt about their views on the Suppression. Dugdale referred to it as a "barbarous generation" which had subverted "... those godly structures ... whereby England was so much adorned."¹²

In France, Cistercian houses still in use like Clairvaux drew accounts from visitors such as the queen of Sicily (1517).¹³ Note was made of details like the number of stalls in the church, inscriptions, and brief comments made about the architecture. A hundred and fifty years later, Dom Germain at St. Germain-des-Près in Paris started what would eventually become the *Monasticon Gallicanum* for the Benedictine houses of the Congregation of St. Maur. The same occurred in Sweden in the 1690s.

Antiquarian interests underlay the foundation of academies, for instance the Académie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (1663), whose goals included the recording of "... antiquités et monuments de la France." At the regional level, abbés like Dom Georges Viole (d. 1669) recorded both archival and site

information on Cistercian foundations in the diocese of Auxerre, an interest marked later in the travels of Martène and Durand (published and illustrated in 1717).¹⁴ In England such regional interests had become so numerous it took William Nicholson in 1696–1699 three volumes to record their bibliography in his *The English Historical Library*.

A more focused attempt to address the shattered, unroofed remains of the former monasteries came in mid-eighteenth-century England from the garden arts. To accord with new meanings ascribed to landscapes, owners began to incorporate derelict monastic buildings into their landscapes. Famously at Rievaulx (fig. 35-1), Fountains, and Roche in Yorkshire, and Tintern in south Wales, ruins came to be newly perceived as stirrers of memory of a lost and distant past.



FIGURE 35-1 Rievaulx Abbey, Yorkshire, England. A viewing platform was constructed along the escarpment above the ruin and alleys were cut through the tree'd slope to give a sequence of staged views. Source: photo reproduced courtesy of English Heritage.

Although desolation fired the Romantic imagination, other responses were encouraged, including sacro-political readings. Historical narratives relating to England's medieval and contemporary history were triggered at Rievaulx where the architecture was seen as exemplifying the country's original, indigenous architecture.¹⁵

Archeology

In the late 1700s the old antiquarian traditions were gradually transformed into new interests. Critics turned a faulting gaze on landscaped ruins.¹⁶ William Gilpin, for instance, pilloried the aesthetic intentions of Lord Scarborough at Roche and John Aislabie at Fountains. The latter's creation of grassed parterres in the former cloister and the construction of a circular pedestal for a heathen sculpture in the choir, drew the comment "... a Goth may deform when it exceeds the power of art to amend."¹⁷

Opinion was divided not only on how to treat Cistercian ruins, but on how to view them. Those interested in the aesthetic effect were advised to adopt a distant view, while a close-up view was recommended for those wanting a more "authentic" reading. Artists provided for both tastes. Gilpin with his *Valley of the Tweed with Melrose Abbey* 1786 or W. Cooke with *Netley Abbey* 1806 rendered ruins in a scaled topography, while John Carter supplied close-up views. Carter was supported by Richard Gough, the director of the Society of Antiquaries of London whose advocacy of greater accuracy in topographic drawing appeared in the first number of *Archaeologia* (1770).

Collectors of both types of views could count on artists to serve their interests. In Germany they included Caspar David Friedrich who, in turn, was part of the antiquarian circle associated with University of Greifswald under the leadership of Ludwig Kosegarten (1758–1818).¹⁸ Kosegarten led tours to ruined sites, inspected tombs, and discussed architecture; he also translated English antiquarian and garden theory texts into German, such as Gilpin's *Observations on the Western Parts of England* (1798), translated in 1805. Such efforts were spurred by the Revolution in France; seen through this lens, the past resonated with values of stability and cultural permanence.

John Carter's drawings and written observations appeared in over 350 papers contributed to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. A number lambasted cathedral restoration and exposed the eccentricities of their errant chapters, but Carter's discerning eye also included Cistercian remains. Visiting Jervaulx in Yorkshire in 1806 he despaired over the "havocked down" condition of its "unintelligible ... ruins," but 15 years later approvingly hailed the site's clearance undertaken by John Claridge, the agent of the owner, the Earl of Aylesbury.¹⁹ Claridge's work, among the earliest at a Cistercian site, allowed Carter to measure the church, list tombs, record architectural detailing, and propose periods of work for the plundered building.

For Carter, monastic remains held value for their intrinsic qualities as well as for their powers of connection and association. The same interests prevailed in

France, manifested in the founding of the Société française d'archéologie in 1834 and of numerous regional societies, such as Arcisse Du Caumont's Société des Antiquaires de Normandie which made an early visit to Mortemer.²⁰ These bodies organized tours, published accounts of visits, and investigated monastic remains.

Much of the work before 1850 lacked a precise method of analysis, in particular a way of coordinating archeological, architectural, and historical material. In England, this need was supplied by Robert Willis (1800–1878) whose immensely impressive methods remain influential.²¹ As professor of engineering at Cambridge, Willis approached medieval architecture from a markedly different background. Extensive travels in Germany, France, and Italy, allowed him to formulate broad questions on such matters as style or the origin of Gothic. His publications of standing buildings such as Canterbury Cathedral and its conventual buildings established new analytical standards.²² By accurately phasing constructional sequences and relating them to historical documents and specific patrons, Willis was able to read out from the walls a demonstrable fabric history, an essential step in the construction of history.

Search for Definitions

Cistercian studies emerged prominently in the mid-nineteenth century. An early concern focused on how to classify Cistercian architecture, specifically how to define its identity distinct from contemporary efforts to define Romanesque and Gothic. In Germany, discussion focused on whether the order's architecture embodied Romanesque values, or undermined them through the importation of French Gothic. These wider issues feature in discussions by Schnaase (1856), de Roisin (1859), and Dehio and von Bezold at the end of the century.²³ Related interests in such definitions preoccupied Sharpe in England (1874), and Viollet-le-Duc in France in Volume 1 of his *Dictionnaire* (1875).²⁴ At the same time a different line of enquiry focused on the examination of individual sites in France. The Congrès archéologique (founded 1834) initiated regional architectural surveys where Cistercian sites were considered along with Romanesque and Gothic architecture. Notable were those published for the Aube by A.-F. Arnaud in 1837, for the Soissonnais and Laonnois by Jean Lequeux in 1859, and for the Aisne by Edouard Fleury in 1882.²⁵ More in-depth monographs dealing with history, documents, and architecture also appeared on specific Cistercian sites: on Buildwas in England by John Potter (1846), on Longpont in France by Abbé Poquet (1869), and on Villers-en-Brabant in Belgium by Charles Licot (with Emile Lefèvre) (1877) (fig. 35-2).²⁶ Licot's interests had begun in 1870 and his long efforts to persuade the state to assume responsibility for the site were finally realized in 1892.

In England, antiquarian interests widened discussion through archeology. Sir William St. John Hope, a polymath who held the influential position of secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of London, excavated nearly 30 monastic sites along



FIGURE 35-2 Villers-en-Brabant, Belgium. One of the most complete Cistercian ruins, Villers was also the first site to be taken under state control in 1892. Source: photo reproduced courtesy of Editions Racine/Thomas Coomans.

with other responsibilities in a 40-year career assisted by his sometime collaborator, Harold Brakspear. Six of the sites were Cistercian; others belonged to the Benedictines, Cluniacs, Augustinians, Premonstratensians, Templars, Carthusians, Friars, and an Augustinian nunnery. Hope's prodigious activity provided unique comparative site information and led him to identify "standard" series of building plans for the different orders.²⁷ Although many sites showed little more than grass overgrown earthworks, Hope exploited these conditions to dig small trenches seldom more than 0.5 meters in width to follow foundations or explore important intersections. His goal was the recovery of the plan of the entire site (rather than just the claustral nucleus) and to identify the precinct buildings. The functions of a number of the excavated buildings remained mysterious and it is puzzling why Hope failed to draw on Robert Willis's book on the St. Gall plan or his analysis of the "waterworks" drawing of Canterbury cathedral priory where each building is identified.²⁸ Brakspear developed Hope's "wall following" technique.

Working more slowly and with a wider remit, Brakspear realized that area excavation allowed for the recognition of earlier buildings on the site of their successor buildings.²⁹ Taking over Hope's excavation at Waverley, south of London, the Cistercians' first foundation in Britain, Brakspear discovered the remains of the community's early church and claustral buildings lying beneath later buildings. His development of what is now called "vertical archaeology" continues a century later. In subsequent campaigns at Waverley, Brakspear focused on such hitherto neglected areas as the inner and outer courts or on buildings like the laybrothers' infirmary.³⁰

A second phase followed related to the change of ownership of Cistercian sites. Until the early twentieth century all were privately owned, some the inheritance of families who had purchased or been granted them at the Suppression. The properties included monastic ruins and they were partly prized for their neglect. This made it easy for owners to attribute fabric decay (or collapse) to a "natural" process. In Yorkshire the crossing tower at Kirkstall collapsed in 1779, and the south transept at Byland subsided into a pile of rubble in 1822. Antiquarians deplored such losses and they lobbied the government to enforce maintenance, a process formulated by the Office of Works, established in 1882 by an Act of Parliament.³¹ Its statutory powers proved inadequate, however, and mandated maintenance had to wait until 1913 for the necessary muscle to be drafted into the language of the Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act. Credit for the new legislation belongs to Sir Charles Peers. Following the Great War (1914–1918), Peers encouraged private owners to place their crumbling monastic structures into government guardianship, and established the procedures and policy regarding their stabilization and care. Major Cistercian sites acquired by Peers were Rievaulx (1918), Roche (1921), Byland (1922), Furness (1923).

Guardianship entailed presentation of the formerly private properties to the general public. The parts of monasteries most easily grasped were the church and cloister; other areas within the former precinct such as the inner and outer courts and related buildings were considered of lesser importance. This ranking determined Peers's negotiations with owners. Subsequent experience indicated the need to purchase retroactively the adjacent precinct areas to meet requirements for visitor entry booths and parking lots. Peers faced many challenges as he worked to stabilize ruins and turn them into public monuments. Before they could be readied for public opening Peers assessed the need for clearance. Adopting Hope's plan-centered approach expedited a quicker turnaround of ruin into monument than was the case with Brakspear's painstaking method. So far as the gathering of information was concerned, this turned out to be a mistaken judgment. At both Rievaulx and Byland more than 100 000 tons of collapsed floors and overturned walls dating from the Suppression were emptied out by World War I veterans with trenching skills. Recording was minimal. Much primary evidence was irrevocably lost.

To serve the considerable public interest in the newly opened monuments, Peers devised the site *Guide*, a genre of writing and scholarship different from that

of the archeological paper where Hope and Brakspear had presented their findings.³² As austere as the cleared sites, the *Guides* offered a bare-bones history followed by a lucid description of the visible physical remains presented in itineraries. Light attention was paid to monastic function, precinct organization, or matters such as circulation. This mode of presentation endured for nearly half a century. And it underlay Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's influential *Buildings of England* series (early 1950s onwards) albeit enriched with broadening and informed observations.

It was left to John Bilson to bring synthesis to the growing body of Cistercian material. In two book-length studies of Cistercian architecture published in scholarly journals (1907, 1909), Bilson's interpretative treatments of the order's early buildings remained authoritative for much of the twentieth century.³³ An architect by profession, Bilson saw Cistercian architecture with an eye trained to ornamental detail which he employed to establish dating and to trace influence. Bilson maintained close contact with scholars in France, attending the annual meetings of the *congrès archéologique*, and his meticulously footnoted texts were rich in comparative material drawn from France and other European countries. Combined with his deep understanding of local building traditions, knowledge of the order's legislation, and familiarity with Romanesque in its motherland of eastern France, Bilson's contacts broadened the context for Cistercian architecture. Unaccountably, Bilson rarely phased standing fabrics, the method pioneered by Willis 50 years earlier and practiced by his colleague and contemporary, Brakspear.

Other scholars in Europe turned to synthetic treatments of the Cistercians. In 1911 Herman Rüttiman published his study of the role played by the order's legislation on its architecture.³⁴ The next year saw the appearance of Sigurd Curman's *Bidrag till Kännedomen om cistercienserordens byggnadskonst*, Stockholm, 1912, and four years later of both Hans Rose's *Die Baukunst der Cisterzienser*, Munich, and Paul Clemen's *Die Klosterbauten der Cistercienser in Belgien*, Berlin. Rose's study moved beyond matters of archeology, morphology, or style to make links to architectural theory related to Romanesque and Gothic architecture.

In the two decades separating the world wars specialists' treatments favored books demarcated by country borders despite the Cistercians' pan-European character. The most influential was Marcel Aubert's two volume *L'Architecture cistercienne en France* (1943, reissued 1947). The books resulted from a decade-long collaboration with the Marquise de Maillé, but her name failed to appear with his on the title page even though it was she who undertook much of the travel, fieldwork, photography, and negotiation with owners (extending into the early years of World War II). Their study moved systematically from historical matters to consideration of the life of the monks and conversi, and then to the architecture of the churches. For the last, which constituted the major part of Volume One, architecture was broken down into elements – plans, elevations, vaults, decoration, and so forth – which were treated developmentally. Volume Two covered the conventual structures. Nothing as comprehensive had been attempted before.

Post-World War II Interests

Following the devastation of World War II the impulse for European union encouraged interest in the Cistercian Order's model of centralized organization. Church reconstruction in Germany embraced the austerity and lack of ornamentation inherent in Cistercian buildings. Most attention went to the order's mid-twelfth-century Romanesque churches. These were regarded as the critical early statements of the order's intentions as well as being constructed during St. Bernard of Clairvaux's lifetime. As early as the 1120s Bernard's *Apologia* distinguished between monastic churches and ones serving lay people. Furthermore, Cistercian legislation ordained that specific details conform to the "forma ordinis."³⁵ Discerning what this phrase meant in practice proved complicated, as also did interpreting the legislation related to architecture. After 800 years of service, few surviving buildings retained their intended organization let alone their appearance. Suspicion grew that Cistercian legislation which earlier scholars regarded as determining uniformity, was in fact less monolithic than they supposed. As fabric evidence of the early churches accumulated it indicated a seeming mixed message. While plans supported the notion of a shared model across Europe, elevations showed a range of forms indicative of regional influence.

Filiation Paradigm

Different attempts to define Cistercian style marked the 1950s and 1960s. A leading figure was Père Anselme Dimier whose excavation activity and collection of more than 700 plans of Cistercian monasteries brought together an accessible corpus of information.³⁶ To organize this material German scholars argued for the primacy of the filiation (the means through which the order had controlled its growth in a genealogy stemming from the original five mother houses). Each filiation fostered certain characteristics which were transmitted within their respective families of daughter houses. Karl Heinz Esser argued for St. Bernard's influence in the second church at Clairvaux, begun in the mid-1130s (fig. 35-3), believing it the prototype for the Clairvaux filiation of more than 150 monasteries.³⁷

Since Clairvaux lay inaccessible under France's maximum security prison, verification of the evidence was unreachable. However, Esser argued that the church could be inferred at Himmerod, a direct foundation in Germany established in 1135 (which he had excavated). And it was reflected a little later at Eberbach in the 1140s, and in France at Fontenay and Noirlac in the 1150s.³⁸ These closely related buildings established the validity of the "Bernardine" family as it came to be called.³⁹ Esser's ideas were expanded by Hanno Hahn in an influential book.⁴⁰ He explained the ubiquitous square-ended church plans as based on a system of proportions generated from the crossing of transepts and nave, and further defined the elements of the "Bernardine" group to include barrel vaulted naves, aisles with transverse barrel vaults, east ends and transepts lower than the naves, and avoidance of towers, for example at Fontenay (fig. 35-4).

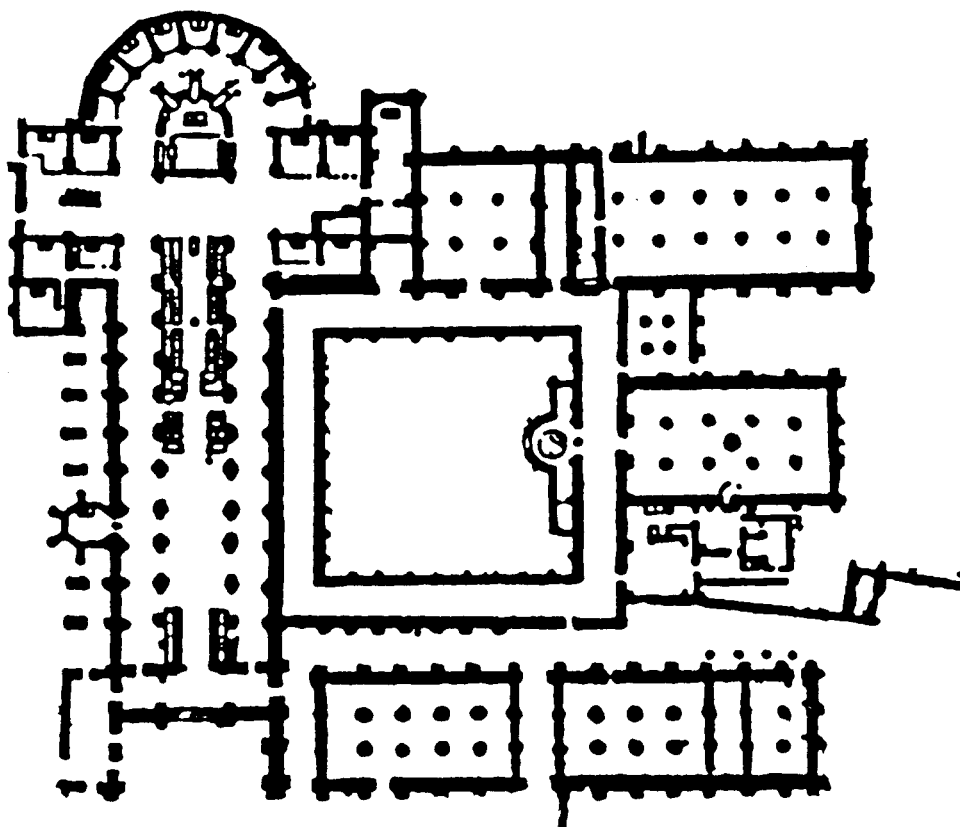


FIGURE 35-3 Engraving of Clairvaux, France by C. Lucas (1708). Source: after Dom Milley.

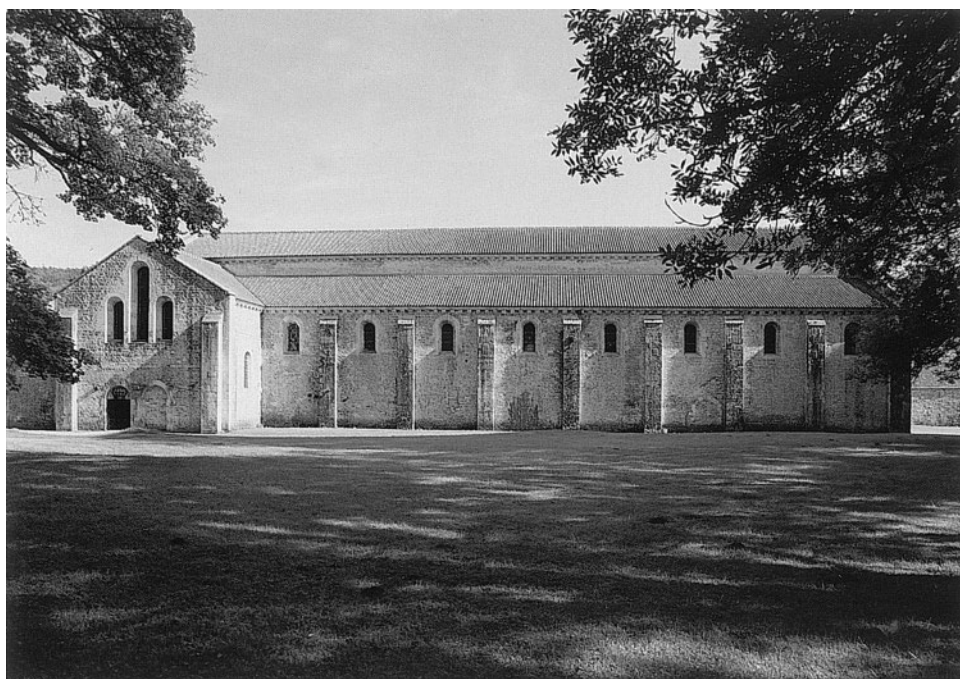


FIGURE 35-4 Fontenay (Côte d'Or), France. Fontenay illustrates the modest scaled overall form, with square-ended terminations, a low presbytery, and a tower-less crossing and window-less barrel vaulted nave associated with the "Bernardine" church.

Hahn had based his ideas on previously published plans, although these turned out to be only loosely accurate. When the buildings were precisely measured, doubt fell upon his neatly drawn modular schemes.⁴¹ Scrutiny by his German colleagues pointed to widespread variations among the proposed “Bernardine” examples even within the filiation of Clairvaux and, more damagingly, doubted the evidence about Clairvaux II. Hahn’s ideas nonetheless influenced scholars in a number of countries such as Romanini and Cadei for Italy, Stalley for Ireland, and Kinder in her Europe-wide survey who selectively considered his proportional theories, and took account of variations in his Bernardine categories.⁴²

The “Bernardine” model haunted the literature for several decades. Despite criticism of linking St. Bernard’s name to the group, it could not be denied that the filiation model elucidated features of a number of churches constructed in the period c.1145–1165. These buildings featured selected elements with no previous use in their locality. Their appearance, therefore, indicated conscious association with a model. For example, the two earliest and largest Clairvaux affiliated monasteries in Yorkshire, Rievaulx and Fountains, covered the aisles of their churches with transverse barrel vaults, a feature deriving from Romanesque in Burgundy and adopted there by the order’s monasteries. Similarly transmitting the same associations to the Yorkshire monasteries were plans, crossings, and distinctive architectural details.

The filiations of the four other mother houses also drew scholarly interest. At the founding monastery of Cîteaux construction between 1188 and 1193 saw an extended straight-ended east end with ambulatory chapels returned behind it. This design influenced a number of Cistercian foundations in Germany.⁴³ Clouding the proposed filiation influence of Cîteaux, however, was that of another mother house, Morimond, where a similar east end had been developed, arguably earlier.

Alternative interpretative models took a broader view of the Cistercian reform. The order’s early churches could be linked, albeit in general terms, to the wider reform movements in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries such as Hirsau, Grandmont, the Augustinian canons, Victorines, and churches in Rome raised during the papacy of the Cistercian pope, Eugenius III (1145–1153) committed to the *ecclesia primitiva*.⁴⁴

The same search for definitions underlay the Cistercians’ other buildings apart from the church. A medium-sized monastery comprised upwards of 50 buildings and the question arose: could they also carry the mark of the order? A number of distinctive features emerged from Glyn Coppack’s study of inner and outer courts in the monasteries in England. When other scholars focused on building types such as the chapter house, refectory, gatehouse, day stair, and abbot’s house, a pattern similar to that of the churches could be discerned.⁴⁵ Plans indicated a common identity; elevations constructed over the plans varied region to region.

A New Paradigm

More recent research focused on late twelfth century churches has reshaped an understanding of Cistercian architecture. In France Jacques Henriët's analysis of Cherlieu (Franche-Comté), and later Caroline Bruzelius's of Longpont, revealed features with no known origins within the order. Instead, the master masons of these buildings turned to contemporary regional developments for models.⁴⁶ For Longpont the sources could be traced to cathedral construction. Bishops of influential dioceses like Soissons, Noyon, and Laon had served as founders of a number of important Cistercian monasteries close to these centers. Study of these churches revealed an architecture drawn from cathedral models.⁴⁷ In turn, Longpont influenced Royaumont and Vauclair, and as Coomans later showed, Villers-en-Brabant.⁴⁸ Likewise, Villers inspired other abbeys such as Aulne, Val-Saint-Laurent, and Saint-Bernard-sur L'Escaut. In Germany, Altenberg and Walkenried could be seen in the same way.⁴⁹ For the latter, lack of agreement over the French sources has seen Cologne offered as the model or an amalgam of Rhenish and Île-de-France precedents.⁵⁰

The influence of regional centers on Cistercian master masons has also been raised by scholars in England. Abandoning the century-long notion of the order as "missionaries of Gothic," Stuart Harrison has persuasively outlined a developed Gothic in the north of England that showed the reverse.⁵¹ Cistercian monasteries in Yorkshire, notably Jervaulx and Meaux, absorbed ideas from York Minster (1160s), and in turn these abbeys influenced the eastern extension at Fountains, and, then, outside the order, the architecture at the Collegiate foundation at Beverley.⁵² In 2015 Harrison and Coppack demonstrated that Cistercian churches in Lincolnshire from the 1160s drew on this same minster prototype of early Gothic in the north.⁵³

These authors have re-set definitions about Cistercian churches constructed at the end of the twelfth century. A common model in the heartland of eastern France no longer holds as an idea to cover Cistercian architecture. Instead, the order may be seen as open to new ideas and impulses drawn from Early Gothic models in the pioneering centers of northeast France. This revision has parallels with Constance Berman's controversial recasting of Cistercian history arguing for the formation of its identity as completed only in the 1170s after a process of evolution.⁵⁴

Just as important in this rewriting of Cistercian history is the investigation awaiting the architecture of Cistercian nuns. Omitted from earlier histories, the nuns' in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries show the order to have been more experimental than was previously thought. Women's studies can take credit for the expanded knowledge about the nuns, although archeology has yet to uncover a corresponding history.⁵⁵ While men religious withdrew into rural isolation to fulfill their vocations, nuns in the order's homeland of France engaged with the world, living out their dedication to the spirit of poverty and charity by serving

hospices, caring for lepers, and addressing general medical needs. Notable institutions such as Montreuil, Tart, Tarrant, and Wechterswinkel remain uninvestigated, as also does the nuns' written legacy as exemplified by Gertrud of Helfta and Mechtild of Hackeborn.⁵⁶ City-based, the nuns' architecture needs to be incorporated in present histories. In a parallel development, French theorists like Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu have led scholars to seek gendered readings of both men's and women's institutions.⁵⁷

Less neglected has been the architecture associated with the late medieval period extending through the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Earlier writers tended to ignore this 200-year period. Yet in some countries such as Spain these years were something of a golden age marked by revival. The same marked France with the reform movements of Rancé at La Trappe.⁵⁸

Reassessments of Cistercian architecture may be linked to the development of specialist disciplines. Within archeology new technical and field-work methods superseded the grid methods of excavation pioneered by Mortimer Wheeler and later refined in the open area, stratigraphic procedures worked out by Axel Steensberg in Denmark.⁵⁹ After World War II the scholars making these advances were based in universities, the process exemplified in France with the establishment in the 1950s of the Centre de Recherches Archéologiques Mèdiévales (CRAM) at the Université de Caen. New equipment, like flotation tanks for soil sampling and sieving, made it possible to recover objects like seeds, fish bones, and the like. From these came information about Cistercian agriculture, diet, disease, and health. The wide range of finds nurtured, in turn, material culture as a central aspect of study. For recording and phasing structures, photogrammetry and rectified photography provided greater accuracy and when allied with computer assisted design (CAD), allowed for the production of drawings for easy manipulation of newly discovered data. Most recently, field surveying has been made more accessible and vastly cheaper by the appearance of drones. Data have begun to reveal how large walled Cistercian precincts were used and how their use differed from region to region.

Combinations of geophysical surveying such as resistivity, magnetometry, and ground-penetrating radar have revealed buildings seemingly irrecoverable as little as 20 years ago and regarded as permanently lost. Fountains Abbey may illustrate how these methods transform our apprehension of architecture. In the late 1990s the resistivity survey of the green sward which greets visitors to this World Heritage site showed the remains of a large-scale common hall for visitors located in the former Inner Court. Undeterred by this discovery, present-day presentation places a higher value on the verdant scenographic setting than on an accurate portrayal of the medieval past.

Modern survey methods are quicker and cheaper than excavation and their further advantage is that they leave the evidence undisturbed for later generations (when different and more sophisticated techniques may be expected to extract more evidence). As a result of these methods, the first architecture of the Cistercians is far better known today than 40 years ago. Timber buildings preceded

permanent stone replacements. Evidence of timber structures emerged at Fountains in the early 1980s, at Rievaulx in the 1990s, and at Sawley in 2002.⁶⁰ They revealed the use of unusual plans and forms. Recognizing this diversity highlights an important puzzle unresolved by architectural historians. What precipitated the Cistercians' adoption of the Benedictine plan in the late 1130s as the uniform layout for their monasteries? And who took the decision at a period when the order was assiduously distinguishing itself as different from Benedictine monasticism?⁶¹

Changed perceptions about the relation of the monks to their neighbors have emerged from the work of the order's economic historians. Patrons required the prayers of the monks to grace their families (and their burials) and took a proprietary interest in their foundations including making appearance at times in the cloister. Likewise, the departure from monasteries of the lay brothers after nearly two centuries of occupation posed problems of adaptation of their former buildings.⁶² Conversion to hospitality uses or to individual study quarters for monks with strong scholarly backgrounds reveal a responsiveness to developments rather than signifying a relaxation of ideals.

The principal advances to a fuller understanding of the Cistercians have come from historians. Although their contributions fall outside the scope of this chapter, mention needs to be made of four areas where they have provided architectural historians with new material. The first concerns the order's early documents and the light they shed on its institutional reform, an area notably advanced in the work of Leclercq, Lefèvre, van Damme, and Waddell.⁶³ A second area centers on Cistercian legislation. Previously seen as a monolithic phenomenon, it is now revealed, thanks to the scholarship of Waddell and others, as evolving and piecemeal, reactive rather than proscriptive, with statutes put together over time and in the face of changing circumstances.⁶⁴ A third area focuses on settlement, patronage, and the variable acquisition of lands (and income) and has been explored by McGuire, Burton, and Berman.⁶⁵ And the last area concerns Cistercian customs and practices, a subject spurred by Choisselet and Vernet's publication of the *Ecclesiastica Officia* in 1989.⁶⁶

Much has had to be rethought about the order's architecture as a result of scholarly research. The non-material aspects of architecture such as patrons, land management, burial, liturgy, and cults are routinely considered along with traditional concerns about design, sources, functions, adaptations and attunements, craft traditions, materials, and response to the rise of the mendicants, all seen within the context of more flexible definitions of Cistercian legislation, enforcement, and identity.⁶⁷

From its beginnings the Cistercian Order concerned itself with change. Architecture was no exception. During the most active period of growth in the twelfth and first half of the thirteenth century, scholars have established a development marked by varying phases. These extend from the first timber buildings in the Romanesque period all the way to the imposing, three-storied, powerfully scaled, fully vaulted stone structures in the High Gothic period. Compared to the earlier histories characterized by more linear narratives of withdrawal and

disengagement, present research reveals an architectural development for the order more nuanced (and more interesting), and more open to external ideas for its style and statement.

Acknowledgments

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For the many changes made to my chapter, I have benefited hugely from the authoritative 27-page discussion of publications on Cistercian architecture and art by Professor Christopher Norton in his preface to the second edition of C. Norton and D. Park, *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. xvii–xliv. I am also much indebted to Stuart Harrison and Alexandra Gajewski who read drafts of this revision and for their help in clarifying my ideas and writing.

Notes

- 1 For modern corrections of this view, see Talbot, “The Cistercian Attitude,” pp. 56–64; Rudolph, *The Things of Greater Importance*; Burton and Kerr, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages*. [On Romanesque and Gothic architecture, see Chapters 17 and 21 by Fernie and Murray in this volume (ed.)]
- 2 Denifle, *La désolation des églises*; Réau, *Les monuments détruits de l’art français*; Himmelein, *Alterkloster – Neueherren*.
- 3 Lekai, “French Cistercians and the Revolution,” pp. 86–118.
- 4 Smith, *The Itinerary of John Leyland*.
- 5 Aston, “English Ruins and History,” pp. 231–255; Duffy, *The Stripping of Altars*; Carter, ““It Would Have Pitied Any Heart to See,”” pp. 77–110.
- 6 See *ibid.*, pp. 85, 98–101.
- 7 Evans, *A History of the Society of Antiquaries*, pp. 9–10.
- 8 Aston, “English Ruins and History,” p. 232.
- 9 For the five inventories made within a nine-month period for the Duke of Rutland, see Fergusson and Harrison, *Rievaulx Abbey*, pp. 177–186.
- 10 For the eye-witness account of the events at Roche, see Dickens, “Tudor Treatises,” pp. 123–126
- 11 Long, *The Oglander Memoirs*, p. 199.
- 12 *Monasticon Anglicanum*, p. 492.
- 13 Arbois de Jubainville, *Etude sur l’état intérieure des abbayes cisterciennes* and Kinder, “Les églises médiévales de Clairvaux,” pp. 205–230.
- 14 Martène and Durand, *Voyage littéraire de deux religieux bénédictins de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur*.

- 15 Charlesworth, "The Ruined Abbey," pp. 62–80. A further factor, fear of a resurgent Catholicism, may be connected to the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 led by the Young Pretender, Charles Edward; see Fergusson and Harrison, *Rievaulx Abbey*, pp. 188–189; Janowitz, *England's Ruins*.
- 16 Gilpin, *Observations*, pp. 177–180.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Reusch, "Caspar David Friedrich," pp. 95–114.
- 19 For Carter's first visit, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 76, pp. 626–627; for his second, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 91, pp. 603–606.
- 20 De Toulza, *Le "Gothique" retrouvé avant Viollet-le-Duc*.
- 21 Buchanan, *Robert Willis*, pp. 322–356.
- 22 Willis, *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral* and "The Architectural History of the Conventual Buildings of the Monastery of Christ Church in Canterbury," pp. 1–206. For the latter see Fergusson, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*.
- 23 Schnaase, *Geschichte der Bildenden Kunst im Mittelalter*, p. 439; de Roisin, "Les missionnaires de l'art gothique," pp. 708–730; Dehio and von Bezold, *Die Kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlandes*, p. 537.
- 24 Sharpe, *The Architecture of the Cistercians*; Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné* Vol. 1, pp. 263–282.
- 25 Arnaud, *Voyage archéologique*; Lequeux, *Antiquités religieuses*; Fleury, *Antiquités et monuments*.
- 26 Abbé Poquet, *Monographie de l'abbaye de Longpont*; Potter, *Remains of Ancient Monastic Architecture*; Licot and Lefevre, *Abbaye de Villers-la-Ville de l'Ordre de Cîteaux*.
- 27 Coppack, *Abbeys and Priories*, pp. 22–23.
- 28 See Buchanan, *Robert Willis*, pp. 162–220.
- 29 His work drew on ideas developed by Pitt-Rivers and Flinders Petrie. On Brakspear's importance for archeology see Coppack, *Abbeys and Priories*, pp. 24–25.
- 30 See Brakspear, *Waverley Abbey*.
- 31 Thurley, *Men from the Ministry*.
- 32 The line of descent of the *Guides* has not been established. Topographical guides are known a century earlier, and archeological societies had supplied members with synopses for site visits. Neither supplies a clear prototype of Peers's *Guides*. See Ousby, *The Englishman's England*.
- 33 Bilson, "The Architecture of Kirkstall Abbey, pp. 73–141, and "The Architecture of the Cistercians," pp. 185–280.
- 34 Rüttiman, *Der Bau- und Kunstbetrieb der Cistercienser*.
- 35 See Norton, "Table of Cistercian Legislation on Art and Architecture," pp. 315–393.
- 36 Dimier, *Recueil de plans d'églises cisterciennes*. See also his later studies, *L'Art cistercien* and *L'Art cistercien hors de France*. Dimier's lifetime of work and publication resulted in several important anthologies; see Chauvin, *Mélanges à la mémoire du Père Anselme Dimier*.
- 37 Esser, "Über den Kirchenbau des hl. Bernhard von Clairvaux," pp. 195–222. For an assessment of this phase of study, see Untermann, *Forma Ordinis*, pp. 29–32.
- 38 For the date of Fontenay, granted world heritage status in 1981, and accepted as an exemplary Bernardine church, see Harrison, "Dating the Abbey Church of Fontenay," pp. 99–125.

- 39 For skepticism about the use of Bernard of Clairvaux's name to characterize this phase of Cistercian architecture, see Norton in Norton and Park, *Cistercian Art and Architecture*, p. xx.
- 40 Hahn, *Die frühe Kirchenbaukunst der Zisterzienser*; also Unterman, *Forma Ordinis*, pp. 30–31.
- 41 For Hahn's critics see Schmoll, "Zisterzienser – Romanik," pp. 153–180; Swartling, "Cistercian Abbey Churches," pp. 193–198; and Stalley, *The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, pp. 56–57.
- 42 For A.M. Romanini, "Ratio fecit diversum," pp. 1–78; Cadei, "Chiaravalle di Fiastro," pp. 247–288; Stalley, *The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, pp. 51–75; and Kinder, *Cistercian Europe*.
- 43 Schlink, *Zwischen Cluny und Clairvaux*.
- 44 See Fergusson and Harrison, *Rievaulx Abbey*, pp. 80–81.
- 45 See Fergusson, "The Twelfth Century Refectories at Rievaulx and Byland Abbeys," pp. 160–180; Fergusson and Harrison, "The Rievaulx Abbey Chapter House," pp. 211–255; Fergusson, "Porta Patens Esto," pp. 47–60.
- 46 For Cherlieu see Henriot, "L'Abbatiale cistercienne de Cherlieu," pp. 244–279; for Longpont, see Bruzelius, *L'Apogée de l'art gothique*.
- 47 See the new definition given to Bruzelius's work by Sandron, *La cathédrale de Soissons*, 199ff. who draws attention to the institutional relation between Longpont and Soissons Cathedral.
- 48 Coomans, *L'Abbaye de Villers-en-Brabant*, pp. 175–200.
- 49 Branner, *St Louis and the Court Style in Gothic Architecture*, pp. 132–134; and Krönig, *Altenberg*, pp. 83–87; Nicolai, *Libido aedificandi*.
- 50 Davis, "The Choir of the Abbey of Altenberg," pp. 130–160.
- 51 For the earlier position, see Wilson, "The Cistercians as 'Missionaries of Gothic,'" pp. 86–116.
- 52 Harrison, "Jervaulx Abbey," pp. 8–13; Harrison, "Jervaulx Abbey and Gisborough Priory," pp. 73–92; for report about the forthcoming book on York Minster to be published by English Heritage, see the note of the two authors, S. Harrison and C. Norton, "Reconstructing a Lost Cathedral," pp. 52–59.
- 53 Coppack and Harrison, "Kirkstead Abbey," pp. 1–50.
- 54 Berman, *The Cistercian Evolution*.
- 55 See Mohn, *Mittelalterliche Klosteranlagen der Zisterzienserinnen*; Kulke, "Zwischen ordens-tradition und Stifter-Repräsentation," pp. 167–175; Gilchrist and Mytum, *The Archaeology of Rural Monasteries*; also Gilchrist, *Contemplation and Action*. Aside from theoretical work, see archaeological investigations in France, Bonde and Maines, "The Archaeology of Monasticism," pp. 794–825, at 799.
- 56 See Bruun, *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order*, pp. 1–37.
- 57 [On gender and medieval art, see Chapter 8 by Kurmann-Schwarz in this volume (ed.)].
- 58 For La Trappe, see Bell, *Understanding Rancé*.
- 59 See Bonde and Maines, "The Archaeology of Monasticism."
- 60 Compare the limited material available to Schaefer, "The Earliest Churches of the Cistercian Order," pp. 1–12 with Coppack et al, "Sawley Abbey," pp. 22–114, esp. 29–34. See also the observations of Untermann, *Forma Ordinis*.
- 61 This important observation was formulated by Norton, in Norton and Park, *Cistercian Art and Architecture*, p. xx.

- 62 New insights into their life and role within the community emerged from Waddell's invaluable publication (2000) of the *Usus conversorum*, Waddell, *Cistercian Laybrothers Twelfth Century Usages with Related Texts*.
- 63 The publications of all four scholars are most easily accessed in Waddell, *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*.
- 64 See Waddell, *Cistercian Laybrothers*.
- 65 McGuire, *The Cistercians in Denmark*; Burton, *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire*; Berman, *Medieval Agriculture*.
- 66 Choisselet and Vernet, *Les Ecclesiastica Officia*.
- 67 The breadth of interests may be glimpsed in Ruckert, *Maulbronn zur 850 jährigen Geschichte des Zisterzienerklosters*. [On patronage, see Chapter 12 by Caskey in this volume (ed.)]

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Art and Pilgrimage: Mapping the Way

Paula Gerson

As with many aspects of Romanesque and Gothic art history in the West, study of the relationship of pilgrimage to art is less than a century-and-a-half old.¹ Early studies were centered on monumental architecture and sculpture along the pilgrimage roads through France and Spain to Santiago de Compostela.² But, more recently, scholarly interest has turned toward the experience of the pilgrim at the *loca sancta*. This includes relics, shrines, and reliquaries on the one hand and pilgrim badges and souvenirs on the other.³

The Pilgrimage Routes to Santiago de Compostela and Its Monuments

The historiography of the earliest studies on art and pilgrimage in Northern Europe involves the early studies of both Romanesque art and twelfth-century French literature. These two disciplines intersected early in the twentieth century. Both focused on the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela and on a text now known as the *Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela*.⁴ The *Pilgrim's Guide*, written in the twelfth century, lists the routes to the shrine of St. James and is the earliest witness in the West of a pilgrim's response to architecture and sculpture.⁵

Although known to earlier scholars, the *Pilgrim's Guide* gained prominence with its publication in 1882 by Fita and Vinson.⁶ The guide lists four routes through France that joined together at Puente la Reina in Spain and continued

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across northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela in the northwest of the peninsula (fig. 36-1).⁷ The easternmost route passed through Orléans, Tours, Poitiers, the Santonge, and Bordeaux. It joined the routes that began at Vézelay and Le Puy at Ostabat near St. Jean-Pied-de-Porte in the Pyrenees. The route that began in Vézelay went through Bourges, Limoges, Périgueux, and St. Sever, meeting the others at Ostabat. Beginning in Le Puy, the third route went through Conques, Cahors, and Moissac before joining the first two routes at Ostabat. Once joined, these routes crossed the pass at Roncesvalles, descended through Pamplona and continued west to Puente la Reina. The westernmost route came through Arles, St. Gilles, St. Guilhem, Toulouse, Oloron-Ste-Marie, crossed the Santa Christina pass, descended to Jaca and continued to Puente la Reina. Here it joined the three routes that had crossed the Pyrenees at Roncesvalles. The single route through northern Spain passed through Estella, Logroño, Sto. Domingo de la Calzada, Burgos, Frómista, Sahagún, León, crossed the pass of El Cebrero, and descended finally to Santiago de Compostela. In consulting maps of France and Spain, it is quite evident that many major Romanesque monuments can be found along these five routes.

Enter Joseph Bédier, the brilliant literary scholar of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Bédier seems to have been the first scholar to conceive of the pilgrimage routes presented in the *Pilgrim's Guide* as the paths of transmission of culture. In exploring the roots of the literary form of the epic in the twelfth century, Bédier envisioned the pilgrimage roads as the arteries along which intellectual life traveled in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁸ Although first presented (between 1908 and 1913) in a literary context, the concept was rapidly adapted to Romanesque architecture and sculpture.

We must now step back a few years. In 1892, Abbé Bouillet published an article in which he noted similarities in the architecture of St. Sernin, Toulouse, the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, and St. Foi at Conques.⁹ These buildings formed the core of what has come to be known as “the pilgrimage-type church.” Discussions of other relationships between the Romanesque art of France and Spain by both Camille Enlart and Emile Bertaux appeared in 1905 and 1906 in André Michel's *Histoire de l'art*.¹⁰

It is in the decade of the 1920s that Bédier's literary concepts were applied to the nascent history of medieval art. Emile Mâle is the first scholar to bring together Bédier's theory concerning the role of the pilgrimage routes through France and Spain with the earlier architectural studies.¹¹ First published in 1922, Mâle's extensive study of twelfth-century art added three monuments to Abbé Bouillet's original three “similar” churches: St. Martin at Tours, St. Martial at Limoges, and St. Sauveur at Figeac.¹² Mâle fostered the concept of a pilgrimage school of architecture, noting that one building of the “pilgrimage type” was found on each of the French roads described in the *Pilgrim's Guide*. He wrote: “our most famous sanctuaries were spotted along the four routes.”¹³ Mâle seems to be the first to speak of art “traveling” along the pilgrimage roads.¹⁴ While not stated directly in this way, the same concept is implicit in Arthur Kingsley Porter's

ten-volume *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, published in 1923, only one year after Mâle's volume appeared. The role played by the pilgrimage routes took on even greater significance in articles published by Porter between 1923 and 1926.¹⁵

By the end of the 1920s, the pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela were established as the primary force in the development of Romanesque architecture and sculpture. Using this model, one might envision artists and builders wending their ways along these routes plying their varied trades. The concept of the "pilgrimage-type church" was completely accepted and enjoyed unusual success through most of the twentieth century. We can note its inclusion in Kenneth John Conant's influential *Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture*.¹⁶ The diagram containing the five comparative plans published by Conant (fig. 36-2) has become a standard visual document for all classroom discussions of pilgrimage.

The model of the pilgrimage routes as conduits of stylistic developments in monumental art and architecture from the late eleventh century through the first half of the twelfth century seemed to bring together a number of broad cultural movements. The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela dramatically increased during the early years of the *Reconquista*. At the same time we see the maturing of Romanesque architecture and the rebirth of monumental architectural sculpture. This model has been combined with the other prevalent model for discussing Romanesque architecture and sculpture – the "regional styles" model. Together, they present an overarching order that appears to explain artistic developments in France and Spain.

The concentration on the pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela, from its beginning in the early decades of the twentieth century, has had many consequences. Certainly it focused attention on Romanesque art to an extent not seen earlier. Although this was positive, other consequences were not.

Relying on this paradigm has allowed scholars to ignore the complexity created by the extraordinarily diverse examples of architecture and sculpture as well as developments in other areas of Europe. Ultimately, this has distorted the evidence presented by the actual buildings and their sculptural programs.¹⁷ In addition, Porter's work, in particular, led to an explosion of nationalistic debate concerning whether or not Romanesque art and architecture was "invented" first in Spain or France. Since the 1960s and 1970s, the nationalistic fervor has decreased, and arguments presented are more sophisticated. In the second half of the twentieth century, the main scholars concerned with these issues were Durliat, Lyman, Moralejo Alvarez, and Williams.¹⁸ The bibliography here is considerable and depends almost entirely on issues of the style and chronology of the monuments cited.¹⁹

It is only since the 1980s, that scholars have seriously questioned the paradigm of the pilgrimage routes, and there are many issues to question. Here, it is somewhat easier to discuss architecture and sculpture separately.

In architecture, the primary aspect of the "pilgrimage-type church" has been the presence of a ground plan that provides for a ring of peripheral spaces surrounding the central core of the basilica. A pilgrim visiting such a church might

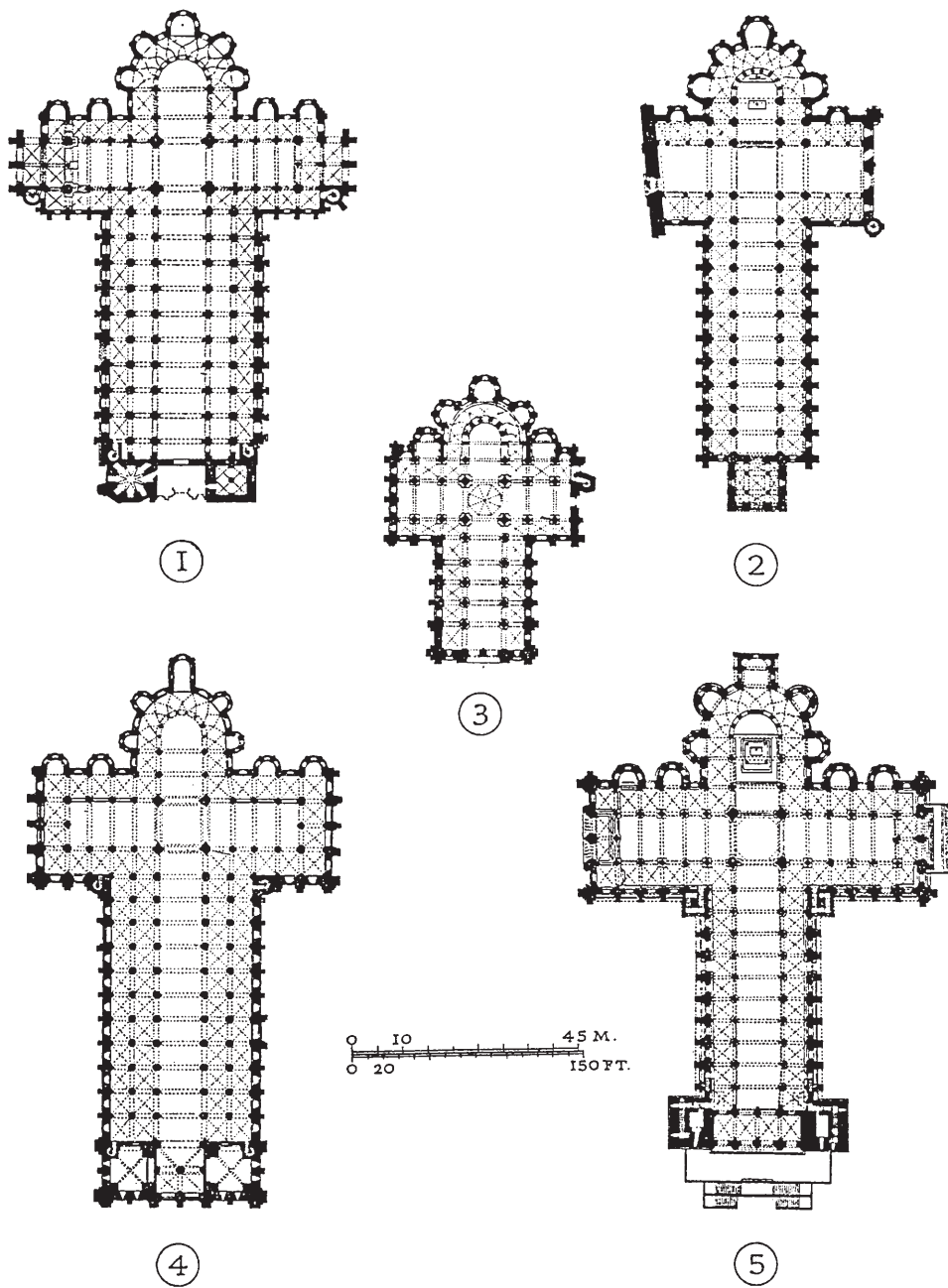


FIGURE 36-2 Comparative plans of “pilgrimage-type” churches (after Conant): St. Martin, Tours (1); St. Martial, Limoges (2); St. Foi, Conques (3); St. Sernin, Toulouse (4); Santiago de Compostela (5).

enter in the west, then proceed through the north aisle to the transept, where it would be possible to visit any transept chapels. It would then be possible to continue around the ambulatory, again visiting any ambulatory chapels, or perhaps descend to a crypt to venerate relics kept there. The pilgrim could then continue around the south transept to the south aisle and return to the western entrance of the building to exit. In traversing this path, the pilgrim would not disturb the processions or the liturgical activities taking place in the main spaces of the church.

When we consider Mâle's pilgrimage churches (St. Sernin, Toulouse, Santiago de Compostela, St. Martial at Limoges, St. Martin at Tours, and St. Foi at Conques), the basic ground plans are similar, and for good reason. All were coping with similar problems of traffic and liturgy.²⁰ But does the ground plan make the church? It is important to note here that only St. Sernin, Santiago de Compostela, and St. Foi stand today. St. Martin was destroyed in 1796, as was St. Martial in the French Revolution. Knowledge of both buildings depends primarily on eighteenth-century ground plans, drawings, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century excavations.²¹ Thus, while we can be certain of some of the similarities in ground plans, we cannot be certain of many aspects of the elevation, structural systems, wall openings, spaces, and volumes, all elements that are not so dependent on liturgy and function.²² St. Foi is instructive in this regard. Although St. Foi at Conques shares a similar ground plan with St. Sernin and Compostela, its nave is much shorter. As a result, the experience of space is quite different. Standing at the entrance to St. Foi, the visitor experiences the verticality of the space and not the long horizontal space of St. Sernin or Compostela. The vertical emphasis is strengthened as well, because the crossing tower is so much closer to the entrance and appears more important in the visual organization of the space.²³

As our knowledge of eleventh-century architecture expands, it becomes clear that elements said to be part of the "pilgrimage-type church" have precedents. The secondary space provided by the aisles is a perfect solution for any church with relics, whether a major pilgrimage church or not. Similar ground plans can be found in a number of churches begun earlier in the eleventh century and too far north to be considered on the pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela as described in the *Pilgrim's Guide* (for example, Jumièges and St. Remi, Reims). This has been convincingly argued by Isidro Bango Torviso.²⁴ As well, experiments with annular crypts from Old St. Peter's to St. Philibert at Tournus can be seen as prototypes for the arrangement of aisles, ambulatory, and chapels in the "pilgrimage-type churches." In order to avoid the problems caused by using the term "pilgrimage-type church" to refer to the Mâle/Conant five churches, Eric Fernie has suggested the use of "Santiago group."²⁵ This new designation allows us to recognize the many other diverse structures that served pilgrims whether on or off the five pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela.

One very serious failing of the pilgrimage route model was its restriction to architectural developments in France and Spain and to the five routes to Santiago de Compostela. Not only did this distort our understanding of the development of Romanesque architecture, it also left out the many experiments involved in

solving the problems of providing access to pilgrims at other churches. Major pilgrimage shrines in France and Spain were not considered (e.g., St. Bénigne, Dijon; Mont-St.-Michel; Sto. Domingo, Silos). Nor were monuments in England considered (Canterbury; St. Cuthbert, Durham; St. Frideswide, Oxford), nor in the Lowlands or in Germany (Aachen, Cologne).²⁶

In addition, the over-concentration on just the major monuments on the routes through France and Spain ignored the network of small hostels and churches that gave aid to pilgrims. They, too, must be considered in any real study of the relationship between architecture and pilgrimage.²⁷

As is the case with architecture, study of Romanesque sculpture and pilgrimage began with the early twentieth century work by Bertaux, who signaled the relationship between southern France and Spain, as well as by Mâle and Porter.²⁸ On one level, the issues with monumental sculpture are not quite as complex since, compared to architecture, there was very little monumental architectural sculpture in stone before the end of the eleventh century.²⁹

For sculpture, the first massive display of Romanesque monumental sculpture on a church portal occurred on the south and north transepts of Santiago de Compostela.³⁰ Sculpture in a similar style is found at St. Sernin, Toulouse, a building close to Compostela in architecture and prominent on the route from Arles. The consuming questions asked by scholars of the early twentieth century concerned the birthplace of the new style: was it Spain or France? Paul Deschamps came down decidedly on the side of France, with Arthur Kingsley Porter and Manuel Gómez-Moreno supporting Spain. The other major figure in this debate, Georges Gaillard, held a somewhat middle position structured on simultaneous development.³¹ The debate raged through most of the first half of the twentieth century, based, as it had been for architecture, on issues of style and chronology, with heavy injections of nationalism.

There is no question that sculptors did travel on the pilgrimage route between Toulouse and Santiago. Some of the same hands appear at St. Sernin, Jaca, León, Frómista, and Compostela.³² Claimed relationships among Santiago, Moissac, and Conques have also been argued.³³ However, finding such long-distance road relationships among the monuments on the other routes to Santiago de Compostela is nearly impossible. The existence of excellent photographic resources and the publication of the *Zodiaque* series on Romanesque art have allowed scholars to look more intensively and comprehensively at Romanesque sculpture.³⁴ The *Zodiaque* volumes in particular, with brightly lit images and organized by region, point up the coherence of local styles and local workshops. Use of these sources seems to have contributed to the erosion of interest in the pilgrimage roads as a major force in the development of Romanesque sculpture.

The pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela, in fact, followed some of the main Roman roads in France and, to a lesser degree, in Spain. These were well-traveled roads and, thus, important sites for the construction of religious houses. Monasteries and cathedrals with important relics situated along main roads were more accessible, and they attracted travelers and pilgrims alike, many

willing to donate gifts to the saint honored. The more pilgrims there were, the greater the income from them. More money meant that funds might be available for building campaigns and decorating programs. As is generally the case, artists go where the money is, no matter the road on which that job may be found. Thus it seems that the most important factors in the relationship of the pilgrimage roads to sculpture and architecture are relics and money rather than the specific roads themselves.

Establishing relationships among the twelfth-century monuments on the five routes delineated in the *Pilgrim's Guide* is no longer as paramount an issue as it was in the first half of the twentieth century. Of greater interest has been the competition and influences among the three great pilgrimage centers, Santiago, Rome, and Jerusalem.³⁵ In this shift, the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela has not lost its allure for scholars. This is evident in the work of Manuel Castiñeiras, whose many concerns include iconographic relationships within the cathedral and between the cathedral and its urban environment.³⁶ Of importance as well is the excellent volume on the cathedral edited by Bernd Nicolai and Klaus Rheidt, especially the new analyses of the architecture.³⁷ Also new are studies using 3D technology as aids in understanding the architecture and sculpture of Santiago de Compostela.³⁸ In these ways, as in others, the shrine of Saint James remains a crucial area of study in medieval pilgrimage art.

Changing the Focus

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed an explosion of interest in pilgrimage in many disciplines, especially anthropology, cultural and social history, hagiography, and religious studies.³⁹ These fields have reinvigorated studies of pilgrimage and art.

Thus, it is not surprising to see a critical shift in approach to art and its relationship to pilgrimage. Exhibitions have played a major role in this change. The first indication for the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela could be seen in the 1985 exhibition, "Santiago de Compostela, 1000 ans de Pèlerinage Européen" in Ghent. In the exhibition and catalog that accompanied it, the pilgrimage, and objects related to it, were treated in a more comprehensive manner and offered rich areas of investigation. The geographic areas covered were not restricted to France and Spain, but included most of Western Europe, even as far as Poland. The time frame extended well into the fifteenth century and beyond. Included in the exhibition were classes of objects that had not been given prominence previously in discussions of the art of the pilgrimage routes (reliquaries, pilgrims' badges, and souvenirs). As well, it brought medieval hospices for pilgrims into the discussion of architecture. This approach is also seen in the catalog from the 1993 exhibition, "Santiago, Camino de Europa," held in Santiago de Compostela. The 2010 catalog from the exhibition "Compostela and Europe, the Story of Diego Gelmirez," directed by Manuel Castiñeiras, has brought to the fore issues

of patronage in pilgrimage and has introduced the many webs of relationships created by the travels of churchmen.⁴⁰

Important in this change of approach was Marie-Madeleine Gauthier's 1983 book *Routes de la foi*. Her volume, devoted to reliquaries found along the pilgrimage routes, signaled an attempt to turn attention more deeply on those objects for which pilgrims specifically made their journeys. This understanding of the devotional nature of reliquaries was also important in Henk von Os's 2000 exhibition and catalog "The Way to Heaven."⁴¹

It was, of course, the saints and their relics that drew pilgrims to sites of cult. Thus, the medieval shrine has become more important, along with studies of the medieval participant and viewer.⁴² This has had the added benefit of widening the study of art and pilgrimage from Spain and southern France in the Romanesque period to include art of the Gothic period, and has extended the geographic range to shrines in England, northern France, Germany, and the Lowlands. Of special notice here are the variety of essays in the volume *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles* edited by Blick and Tekippe.⁴³ These studies seem to be of greater interest in current scholarship than the kind of studies concerned with style and chronology that consumed an earlier generation. Much of the new scholarship appears in recently published volumes drawn from presentations at conferences, recent dissertations, and the online journal *Peregrinations*.⁴⁴

Art, Architecture, and the Pilgrims' Goal

In exploring the pilgrim's experience at the *loca sancta*, a number of different approaches have been rewarding. The anthropologist Simon Coleman and art historian John Elsner have collaborated on a number of studies of shrines from Walsingham to Sinai, with some emphasis on the pilgrim, space, and the use of spaces; Eric Palazzo has been concerned with relics and liturgical space; and Kathryn Rudy has investigated virtual pilgrimage in convents.⁴⁵

Recent studies of pilgrimage architecture place emphasis on architecture as a setting for the saint's shrine rather than as an example of a development within architectural history. Although not previously considered in these terms, new studies have included the architecture of cloisters as spaces that could serve as saints' shrines. While in some cases it is clear that lay persons had access to such cloisters, it is not at all clear to what extent this was common practice, however, the placing of shrines in church aisles certainly was.⁴⁶

English scholars have been very active in this aspect of pilgrimage studies. John Crook has written a number of articles on specific English shrines, in addition to his broad survey covering many monuments in England, France, and Italy.⁴⁷ Shrines in England have also been of concern to Ben Nilson.⁴⁸ In general, concentrated examination of specific buildings and their cults, whether on or off the routes to Santiago de Compostela, have replaced the more general attempt to

develop an all-encompassing theory. See, for instance, the very welcome studies on Sto. Domingo de la Calzada, on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela, but now treated in terms of its own development as a site of cult.⁴⁹ As well, concerns of local pilgrimage and architecture are being explored.⁵⁰

The general interest in the study of medieval shrines has brought a new focus to tombs created for saints within their architectural setting.⁵¹ While some saints' tombs were, at times, placed in areas that were not generally open to the laity, this certainly does not seem to have been the case from the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. From this period on, the practice of moving saints' relics from below-ground crypts – either in tombs or reliquaries – to areas in the main spaces of the church went forward with momentum.⁵² With the growth of pilgrimage movements in Northern Europe (and perhaps the need for income from pilgrims), greater efforts are apparent in providing connection between tomb and pilgrim.

A study of a number of French tombs in their settings can be found in the work of Sabine Komm.⁵³ Individual tombs are the subject of many of the essays in the issue of the *Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* devoted to the cult of saints.⁵⁴ Of particular interest is a series of essays in *Decorations for the Holy Dead*, edited by Stephen Lamia and Elizabeth Valdez del Alamo. Some essays in this volume discuss the decoration that mediated or directed the pilgrims' visit to the tomb. Other essays are specifically concerned with the intense interaction of the pilgrim with the saint's tomb.⁵⁵ Discussions of such physical interactions can be found as well in articles by Stephen Lamia and Ben Nilson.⁵⁶ James Bugslag also has been concerned with activities of laity at shrines, including objects taken from shrines or those brought by pilgrims and left, such as wax body parts and shaped candles, although the latter are discussed in terms of "offerings" rather than in terms of the possible visual effect on the visitor.⁵⁷

Saints' tombs were fairly large objects, generally made of durable materials like stone. As such, close proximity does not seem to have been problematic. Reliquaries, containing relics of the holy dead, but made of precious materials and covered with gems were a different matter, and there seems to have been considerable variation in how close a pilgrim might come.

Reliquaries, themselves, have become an increasingly important area of study in the last ten years, as can be seen in Cynthia Hahn's chapter devoted to them in this volume. While previously discussed as isolated objects of medieval metalwork, newer studies of these works have sought to understand their meaning and use as objects of cult related to pilgrimage.⁵⁸ Interest has now expanded to groups of reliquaries that are, or were, found in church treasuries as evidenced by the Paris exhibitions of the treasuries of Conques, and the Ste. Chapelle, both in 2001. Issues related to collections in treasuries can be found in Chapter 13 by Pierre Alain Mariaux in this volume, and the inventories of such collections are discussed by Joseph Salvatore Ackley and Erik Inglis. With this greater interest in relic collections we look forward to more examples as that at St. Foi, Conques, in which cultic activities involving groups of reliquaries have been explored in terms of the pilgrims' experience.⁵⁹

Some larger reliquaries were on “permanent” view, as was the reliquary of St. Giles described in the *Pilgrim’s Guide to Santiago de Compostela* or the martyrs’ shrine that Abbot Suger had made for his new chevet.⁶⁰ However, smaller reliquaries had the advantage of many more above-ground placements. St. Quentin in the early thirteenth century presents an interesting example. As Ellen Shortell has discussed, the relics of three saints (including Saint Quentin), kept in separate tombs in the crypt were removed, and parts of their bodies were separated with heads, arms, and hands each placed in individual reliquaries for display behind the main altar. Such smaller reliquaries could easily be moved around and also carried conveniently in processions.⁶¹

Many smaller reliquaries were placed on altars in chapels, where they could be visited by pilgrims. Other reliquaries might be placed overhead on beams close to altars or closed up in treasuries and brought out for special occasions, as on the feast day of a saint or for processions. In some instances, intimacy was possible and (perhaps when crowds were small) a reliquary was brought out to be kissed. Scott Montgomery has discussed this practice for the reliquary head of St. Just. However, when crowds were large, reliquaries might be displayed from a tower or platform, or as at St. Servatius, Maastricht, from the dwarf gallery at the east end of the church.⁶² Reliquaries in procession would also have been seen at a distance, and special souvenir mirrors were sold to pilgrims in order to catch the reflection of the relic in its glittering reliquary.⁶³

It seems clear that the experience of pilgrims was quite varied, depending on time and place, and we await further research on tombs and reliquaries as they relate to pilgrimage.

Pilgrim’s Badges and Souvenirs

Another very important group of objects that has come increasingly to the attention of scholars, especially since about 1985, is pilgrim badges. Collected from at least the nineteenth century, these small, seemingly inconsequential objects were made mostly of lead or of pewter with a heavy tin content, although some were made of silver and bronze. They were produced from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, reaching their height of popularity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁶⁴ They now have been liberated from dusty storerooms to take an important place in the study of the visual and material culture of pilgrimage.⁶⁵

Kurt Köster began publishing articles concerning pilgrims’ badges in the late 1950s, although little attention was paid to these objects.⁶⁶ Brian Spenser’s publications on badges begin in the 1960s.⁶⁷ Both Köster and Spenser have concentrated attention on the artifacts themselves and their meaning for the pilgrim. The works published by Esther Cohen turn attention to the control and sale of pilgrim badges. Cohen underscores the fundamental importance in understanding the economic role these badges played in pilgrimage.⁶⁸

Pilgrims' badges came to greater attention with the 1985 exhibition, "Santiago de Compostela, 1000 ans de Pèlerinage Européan." The exhibition contained about 100 scallop shells and metal badges, and the catalog includes an essay by Kurt Köster on these in addition to the catalog entries on specific badges.⁶⁹ Important work by A.M. Koldewey began to appear in 1987 and by Denis Bruna in 1990.⁷⁰ There were many new finds of badges, especially in the Netherlands in the 1990s.⁷¹ The publication by H.J.E. van Beuningen, A.M. Koldewey, and D. Kicken of *Heilig en Profaan 1* (1993), *Heilig en Profaan 2* (2001), and *Heilig en Profaan 3* (2012) introduced many of the new finds and essays on the badges, and Denis Bruna's 1996 catalog of the badges at the Cluny Museum have brought the subject into greater focus.⁷²

Pilgrims' badges can be understood on many levels. Sewn or pinned on garments, they identified the pilgrim as someone for whom safe passage should be accorded and to whom hospitality should be offered.⁷³ They certainly had an apotropaic or talismanic nature and could be used to ward off danger and illness. After the pilgrim arrived home, they might be used as objects of meditation for private devotion as are the badges found in manuscripts.⁷⁴ Since so many badges have been found in rivers or buried in the mud of river banks, some have proposed an *ex voto* function.⁷⁵ This may be a difficult thesis to sustain since many profane ornaments (also with attachments so that they could be worn) have been found in the same locations as the pilgrims' badges themselves.⁷⁶

With so many new and excellent publications of these small objects, the subject of pilgrim badges and souvenirs can add significantly to our understanding of Romanesque and Gothic art and pilgrimage.

Conclusion

The interest of scholars concerned with the relationship of art to pilgrimage in Northern Europe during the Romanesque and Gothic periods has changed considerably since the early part of the twentieth century. Early discussions began in the 1920s. Generated by a literary model, art historians conceived of the pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela as the conduits along which Romanesque architecture and sculpture developed. Questions of the style and chronology of monuments along these routes occupied scholars for decades, with answers frequently colored by nationalism: did the style originate in Spain or France? In this debate, other pilgrimage sites in Northern Europe were almost totally ignored, as were monuments of the later medieval period.

For much of the twentieth century, the model presented by the pilgrimage routes remained a powerful construct for ordering our knowledge of Romanesque art, bolstered especially by sculpture found on monuments along the route between Toulouse and Santiago de Compostela. However, by the 1980s, many new studies in the field of architectural history had appeared, and more photographs of eleventh- and twelfth-century sculpture were available. With closer examination,

the paradigm of the pilgrimage routes was found to be limiting and misleading. By concentrating on a small number of monuments along these routes, the evidence of the development of Romanesque art and architecture was distorted.

At about the same time that the early twentieth-century model was found to be faulty, new ideas about the relationship of art to pilgrimage emerged. The focus of these current studies has shifted dramatically.

By the 1980s influences from other disciplines within medieval studies indicated new possibilities for understanding the relationship of art to pilgrimage, and they have been more concerned with the experience of the pilgrim. The geographic range has expanded as well as the time period, bringing us into the later Middle Ages. New studies now emphasize the effect of architecture, sculpture, tombs, and reliquaries on the pilgrim, as well as those objects, especially badges and souvenirs, that were taken home by the pilgrim and incorporated into the visual culture of everyday life.

Rather than imposing an artificial model on monuments, today's scholars prefer to understand pilgrimage art from the pilgrim's point of view.

Acknowledgments

My involvement with the pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela began many years ago when Alison Stones and I, after our first year or so of teaching, decided to travel these roads during a summer vacation. In subsequent years, many pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela followed with my friend and colleague Annie Shaver-Crandell, during which we photographed the monuments that could be seen along the roads in the twelfth century, when the *Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela* was written (see n. 4 below). Ideas concerning art and pilgrimage developed during those travels, and I owe a great debt to both Alison and Annie for our discussions and for the time spent sorting out and clarifying ideas. Some of the information presented here concerning the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela draws on introductory material in our *Gazetteer* (see n. 4 below) as well as in Paula Gerson, "Le Guide du pèlerin de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle." My thanks are due also to Elizabeth Valdez del Alamo, who kindly read a draft of this chapter and offered, as always, good and wise counsel, and to Manuel Castiñeiras for his invaluable insights.

Notes

- 1 While some would consider Spain in Southern Europe rather than Northern, the subject of this chapter, the historiography of art and pilgrimage, would be impossible without discussion of Spain in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.
- 2 The literature on the cult of St. James in general and its relationship to pilgrimage is enormous. Very valuable, although not primarily for issues of art, are two bibliographic volumes: Davidson and Dunn-Wood, *Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages*

- and Davidson and Dunn, *Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela*. (On Romanesque architecture and sculpture, see Chapters 17, 18, and 19 by Fernie, Hourihane, and Maxwell, respectively, in this volume [ed.] .)
- 3 For a recent, comprehensive, and excellent bibliography see Jennifer Lee, “Art and Pilgrimage” in *Oxford Bibliographies On Line*. (On relic collections see Chapter 13 by Mariaux and on reliquaries see Chapter 28 by Hahn in this volume [ed.] .)
 - 4 Shaver-Crandell et al., *The Pilgrim’s Guide to Santiago de Compostela: A Gazetteer*, hereafter cited as *Gazetteer*, and Gerson et al., *The Pilgrim’s Guide: A Critical Edition*, hereafter cited as *Critical Edition*. The *Pilgrim’s Guide* is the fifth text in a five-part compilation that contains other texts on the cult of St. James. Although originally referred to as the *Codex Calixtinus* (for the purported author Pope Calixtus II), a more accurate name is the *Liber Sancti Iacobi*.
 - 5 Gerson et al., *Critical Edition*, Vol. II. In Chapter 8 (“The Bodies of Saints which are at Rest along the Road to Saint James which Pilgrims Ought to Visit,” pp. 32–65), the author of the guide mentions and describes a few tombs (St. Gilles, St. Front), the setting and decoration of St. Leonard of Noblat, and the architecture of St.-Martin at Tours. Chapter 9 (“The Characteristics of the City and the Basilica of St James the Apostle of Galicia,” pp. 66–91) is entirely devoted to a discussion of the architecture, sculpture and church furniture of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.
 - 6 Fita y Colomé and Vinson, “Le Codex de St. Jacques, Livre IV,” pp. 1–20; 225–268; 268–270. Fita y Colomé and Vinson published their edition before the fourth book, the Pseudo-Turpin, was reunited with the rest of the texts in the Compostela manuscript. Thus they refer to the *Guide du Pèlerin* (the actual book V) as book IV.
 - 7 See Gerson et al., *Critical Edition*, Vol. II, pp. 10–11 and notes on pp. 146–148.
 - 8 Bédier, *Les Légends épiques*, especially Vol. 3. But see also Lavergne, *Les Chemins de Saint-Jacques*.
 - 9 Abbé Bouillet, “Ste-Foy de Conques.”
 - 10 Enlart, “L’Architecture romane,” and Bertaux, “La Sculpture chrétienne.”
 - 11 Mâle, “L’Art du moyen-âge,” and more thoroughly in *L’Art religieux du XIIe siècle*, Chapter 8, pp. 281–313. See the English translation with updated notes: Mâle, *Religious Art in France*, Chapter 8, pp. 282–315.
 - 12 Mâle, *L’Art religieux du XIIe siècle*, pp. 297–300 (Eng. trans.: pp. 299–302). St. Sauveur at Figéac is dropped out of the group later.
 - 13 *Ibid.*, p. 288 (p. 289).
 - 14 *Ibid.*, p. 6 (p. 5).
 - 15 Porter, *Romanesque Sculpture*; “Spain or Toulouse? and Other Questions” and “Leonese Romanesque.”
 - 16 Conant, *Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture*. The diagram of the five churches is fig. 28 on p. 94. Conant’s interest in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela went back to his early trips to Spain. See also *Early Architectural History* and the translation and reissue, *Arquitectura románica da Catedral* with excellent commentary by Serafín Moralejo Álvarez, “Notas para unha revisión da obra de K.J. Conant,” on pp. 221–236.
 - 17 This is evident from even a cursory look through the monuments in Shaver-Crandell et al., *Gazetteer*.
 - 18 The question was reopened by Lyman, “Pilgrimage Roads Revisited,” and answered by Durliat, “Pilgrimage Roads Revisited?” See also Williams, “Spain or Toulouse?” and Moralejo Alvarez, “San Martín de Frómista.”

- 19 Shaver-Crandell et al., *Gazetteer*, p. 100 nn. 11–16, and bibliography. For a bibliography of Marcel Durliat's work, see Fernandez, ed., *De la création à la restauration: Travaux d'histoire de l'art offerts à Marcel Durliat pour son 75e anniversaire* (Toulouse, 1992). For Serafín Moralejo Alvarez, see the new collected edition of his works, Franco, *Patrimonio artístico de Galicia y otros estudios*
- 20 See the important article by John Williams, "La Arquitectura del Camino de Santiago." Williams discusses matters of cult in determining architectural form.
- 21 For St. Martin, see Shaver-Crandell et al., *Gazetteer*, pp. 374–376. For St. Martial, see pp. 225–226.
- 22 Note that there are, in fact, differences even in the ground plans. While St. Martin and St. Sernin have double side aisles, Santiago, St. Martial, and St. Foi have single side aisles. Also, St. Martial had no aisles at the north and south terminals of its transepts. For differences between Santiago de Compostela and St. Sernin, Toulouse see Cazes, "L'Architecture de Saint-Sernin."
- 23 Differences among the monuments also extend to building materials and the changes required by, for instance, the brick of St. Sernin and the stonework of Santiago de Compostela.
- 24 See the analysis of plans by Isidro Bango Torviso in "Las Llamadas iglesias." See also "El Camino de Santiago."
- 25 For a brief survey of the early experiments see, in addition, Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, pp. 149–153. For crypts see Sapin, *Les crypts*. Fernie, *Romanesque Architecture*, pp. 137–138, considers five elements as characteristics of the Santiago group: "ambulatory and radiating chapels, transepts with aisles on three sides of each arm (with the exception of Saint-Martial), galleries round the church, no clerestory except in the apse, and barrel vaulted main spaces," p. 137.
- 26 On these issues, see the chapter on pilgrimage architecture in Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, pp. 147–165 and the bibliographic essay on this subject, p. 253. See also forthcoming, Paula Gerson, "Christian Pilgrimage and Architecture," Richard A. Etlin, ed., *The Cambridge Guide to the Architecture of Christianity*.
- 27 Most early studies of hostels are of local institutions and appear in regional journals. For an early attempt to place hostels and hospices in a broader context see Lambert, "Ordres et confréries." It is only since around 1985 that scholars have seriously explored hostels and hospices. See the exhibition catalog *Santiago de Compostela, 1000 ans de Pèlerinage Européen* (Ghent, 1985), esp. pp. 252–273. See also Jetter, *Das europäische Hospital*. More recently, see the dissertation by Morelli, "Medieval Pilgrim's Hospices," with excellent bibliography.
- 28 See above, nn. 10, 11, and 15.
- 29 I do not include here the free-standing stone crosses of Ireland and the British Isles.
- 30 See Shaver-Crandell et al., *Gazetteer*, pp. 336–346, with bibliography on pp. 343 and 346. The sculpture is described in the *Pilgrim's Guide*. Much of the sculpture originally on the north transept portal was moved to the south in the eighteenth century. The author of the *Guide* also includes a description of the sculpture originally planned for the west façade.
- 31 Paul Deschamps, "Notes sur la sculpture romane"; Gómez-Moreno, *El arte románico español*; Gaillard, *Les Débuts*. See the analysis by Durliat, *La Sculpture romane*, pp. 8–10, and a review of the issues by Valdez del Alamo, "Ortodoxia y Heterodoxia," pp. 12–14, and nn. 27–63 on pp. 25–26.
- 32 See notes 18 and 19 above and Shaver-Crandell et al., *Gazetteer*, p. 100 n.16.

- 33 See Durliat, *La Sculpture romane*, pp. 44–169 for these relationships. For a comprehensive recent review of the relationship between Compostela and Conques, see Lei Huang, “Le Maître du tympan de l’abbatiale Sainte-Foy de Conques,” pp. 87–100.
- 34 The early volumes in this series published at La Pierre-qui-Vire covering French Romanesque monuments appeared in the 1960s. See the recent volume by Janet T. Marquardt, *Zodiacque: Making Medieval Modern*.
- 35 See Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome*, pp. 115, 150–186 and Castiñeiras, “Santiago-Rome-Jerusalem,” for the role of this competition in art.
- 36 Castiñeiras, “The Topography of Images,” pp. 631–694. The extensive bibliography at the end of this article, pp. 685–694, is very useful and contains references to other works by this author.
- 37 Nicolai and Rheidt, *Santiago de Compostela*. Note the essays by Rheidt (pp. 102–133), Rohn (pp. 154–169), Watson, (pp. 170–183), and Münchmeyer (pp. 184–197).
- 38 Castiñeiras, “La reconstruction 3D,” pp. 49–64, has used technology to reconstruct the destroyed twelfth-century north façade of the cathedral. See also Dagenais et al., “New Perspectives,” pp. 88–101. The ongoing project, which is described in this essay, intends to reconstruct the entire cathedral as it existed in 1211. The project has been housed at UCLA since its inception in 2000; the team has changed over the years and includes James d’Emilio and Fernando López Alsina in addition to the authors listed in this essay in Nicolai and Rheidt, *Santiago de Compostela*.
- 39 Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, still remains a classic in the field. See also Diana Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage* and Taylor, *The Encyclopedia of Medieval Pilgrimage*. Brown, *The Cult of Saints*, has also been very influential in turning attention to the role of saints and the development of the cult of relics. The essays and the catalog of the 1984 exhibition *Wallfahrt kennt keine Grenzen* at the Bayerischen Nationalmuseum, edited by Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck and Gerda Möhler, indicated some new ways in which to approach pilgrimage and art. The anthropological aspects of Christian pilgrimage were presented by Victor and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, and more recently Turner, *Blazing the Trail*. However, see also the critique of the Turners’ work in Eade and Sallnow, *Contesting the Sacred*. See also Coleman and Elsner, “Contesting Pilgrimage,” Bynum, “Women’s Stories,” and Wheeler, “Models of Pilgrimage.”
- 40 Moralejo Álvarez and López Alsina, *Santiago*. See the essays (each with full bibliographic notes), that continue to explore the theme of the cult of St. James in many parts of Europe: France (Humbert Jacomet, pp. 55–81), Germany (Klaus Herbers, pp. 121–139), Italy (Paolo G. Caucci von Saucken, pp. 83–97), the Lowlands (Jan van Herwaarden, pp. 141–159), Britain and the passage by boat (Brian Tate, pp. 161–179) and Scandinavia (Vincente Almázan, pp. 181–191). The catalog includes a number of objects not in the 1985 exhibition. The 2010 exhibition “Compostela and Europe: The Story of Diego Gelmirez” was published by Skira-Xunta de Galicia.
- 41 Gauthier, *Routes de la foi*. This volume was translated into English by J.A. Underwood with the title, *Highways of the Faith* (Secaucus, 1986). Henk von Os, *The Way to Heaven*. (See Chapter 28 on reliquaries by Hahn in this volume [ed.])
- 42 Freedberg, *The Power of Images*. (On reception, see Chapter 5 by Caviness in this volume [ed.])
- 43 There are many excellent essays in Blick and Tekippe, *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe*.
- 44 See, for example, Bynum and Gerson, “Body-Part Reliquaries”; “Le Culte des saintes

- à l'époque préromane et romane," *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 29 (1998); "Les Pèlerinages à travers l'art et la société à l'époque préromane et romane," *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 31 (2000); Lamia and Valdez del Alamo, *Decorations for the Holy Dead*; and Stopford, *Pilgrimage Explored*. Two interesting dissertations that, taken together, indicate the importance of a multidisciplinary approach are McGrade, "Affirmations of Royalty," and Ciresi, "Manifestations of the Holy." The online journal *Peregrinations* is edited by Sarah Blick and Brad Hostetler, and hosted by Kenyon College.
- 45 Coleman and Elsner, "Pilgrimage to Walsingham and the Re-Invention of the Middle Ages." See their notes for additional bibliography. See also Eric Palazzo, "Relics, Liturgical Space, and the Theology of the Church," and Kathryn Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimage in the Convent*.
 - 46 See the articles by Elizabeth Valdez del Alamo, Leah Rutchick, and Leslie Bussis Tait in Lamia and Valdez del Alamo, *Decorations*, pp. 111–163, and Crook, *English Medieval Shrines*.
 - 47 Crook, *Architectural Setting* and *English Medieval Shrines*.
 - 48 Nilson, *Cathedral*. As might be expected, Canterbury has generated considerable interest. See Tatton-Brown, "Canterbury."
 - 49 *La Cabecera de la Catedral calceatense y el Tardorrománico hispano; Actas del Simposio en Santo Domingo de la Calzada* (Santo Domingo de la Calzada, 2000); Isidiro Bango Torviso, *La Cabecera*. Other examples are found in the essays by James Bugslag on Chartres, M. Cecilia Gaposchkin on Amiens, and Lisa Victoria Ciresi on Aachen in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage*.
 - 50 See for instance, Cassagnes-Brouquet, "Culte des saintes," and the special issue of the on-line journal *Peregrinations* (II–1) edited by James Bugslag devoted to local pilgrimage, including his essay "Local Pilgrimages."
 - 51 For a review of a number of recent books on tombs, see Holladay, "Tombs and Memory."
 - 52 During the Early Christian period there does not appear to have been any restriction of laity to tombs. However, some restriction seems to have been the case at some monuments during the Carolingian period. See Jacobson, "Saints' Tombs" and Hahn, "Seeing and Believing." For the eleventh and later centuries see Crook, *Architectural Setting*, p. 160 and following chapters.
 - 53 Komm, *Heiligengräbmäler*. See also Stratford, "Le Mausolée"; Mallet and Perry, "Les Tombeaux."
 - 54 *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 29 (1998): see Andre Bonnery, "Le Sarcophagereliquaire de Saint Saturnine, à Saint-Hilaire d'Aude," pp. 53–62; Francesca Español, "Le Sepulcher de Saint Ramon de Roda: utilization liturgique du Corps Saint," pp. 177–187; Richard Bavoillot-Laussade, "Les Avatars du corps de Guilhem et le culte du fondateur de Gellone," pp. 189–217.
 - 55 Lamia and Valdez del Alamo, *Decorations*: see especially Rocío Sánchez Ameijeiras, "Imagery and Interactivity: Ritual Transaction at the Saint's Tomb," pp. 21–38 and Daniel Rico Camps, "A Shrine in Its Setting: San Vincente de Ávila," pp. 57–76.
 - 56 Lamia, "Souvenir," and Nilson, "The Medieval Experience."
 - 57 Bugslag, "Performative Thaumaturgy," pp. 219–265. This important essay brings together many aspects of the pilgrims' experience including access to shrines, vigils and incubation, ostentions, processions, *ex votos*, and other types of offerings.

- See also Nilson, “The Medieval Experience,” pp. 104–112, and Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, pp. 211–216. The primary objects taken from shrines were pilgrim badges and ampullae. For pilgrim badges, see below. For ampullae see Boertjes, “Pilgrim Ampullae.”
- 58 For the newer approach see the exhibition catalog, Bagnoli et al., *Treasures of Heaven*. For earlier examples of reliquaries within museum contexts, see the many excellent catalogs prepared for exhibitions at the Schnütgen-Museums, such as *Ornamenta Ecclesiae: Kunst und Künstler der Romanik* (Cologne, 1985). For a recent general study of reliquaries see Hahn, *Strange Beauty*. For an overview of literature on the cult of relics see Bynum and Gerson, “Body-Part Reliquaries,” pp. 3–7, and essays in Bozóky and Helvétius, *Les reliques*.
- 59 Ackley, “Re-Approaching the Western Medieval Church Treasury Inventory” and Inglis, “Expertise, Artifacts, and Time in the 1534 Inventory of the St-Denis Treasury.” For Conques see Remensnyder, “Legendary Treasure” and “Un Problème de cultures ou de culture?”; Ashley and Sheingorn, “An Unsentimental View”; Sheingorn, *The Book of Saint Foy*; Garland, “Le Conditionnement.”
- 60 For the reliquary of St. Gilles, see Gerson et al., *Critical Edition*, Vol. II, pp. 37–41 and nn. 38–56 on pp. 173–174 with bibliography.
- 61 Shortell, “Dismembering Saint Quentin.” For processions see Rita Tekippe, “Pilgrimage and Procession.”
- 62 Montgomery, “*Mitte capud meum*,” pp. 51–52 and fig. 4, and “Relics and Pilgrimage.”
- 63 For these interesting objects, see Bruna, *Enseignes de pèlerinage*, pp. 16–17, and Köster, “Insignes de pèlerin.”
- 64 Bruna, *Enseignes de pèlerinage*, pp. 13–14. However, the individual badge can be difficult to date since shrines used the same format over many years.
- 65 See the excellent historiographic review by Jos (A.M.) Koldeweij in his essay “Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges” in Hourihane, ed., *From Minor to Major: The Minor Arts in Medieval Art History*, pp. 194–216, esp. pp. 209–216. Denis Bruna discusses the role of the nineteenth-century antiquary, Arthur Forgeais, and the objects found in the dredging of the Seine in the 1840s: *Enseignes de pèlerinage*, pp. 20–26. Important collections are found in museums in Paris, London, Prague, and Düsseldorf. Very important, as well, is the private van Beuningen collection, with many new finds. See Koldeweij, “Lifting the Veil,” esp. pp. 164–168. A number of pertinent essays including a partial list of Spenser’s publications can be found in Blick, ed., *Beyond Pilgrim Souvenirs and Badges* and in Blick and Tikippe, *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage*. See also Spenser, *Pilgrim Souvenirs*. Websites include that of the Medieval Badges Foundation (www.medievalbadges.org) and the database for Kunera (www.kunera.nl). The Digital Pilgrim Project (with the support of the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art) has begun a project to digitize in 3D the British Museum’s collection of pilgrims’ badges. For examples see <http://sketchfab.com/britishmuseum/collections/digital-pilgrim>. (Websites accessed 13 August 2018.)
- 66 See the bibliography in Bruna, *Enseignes de pèlerinage*, p. 376.
- 67 *Ibid.*, p. 381.
- 68 Cohen, “In haec signa,” “In the Name of God and of Profit,” and “Roads and Pilgrimage.”
- 69 *Santiago de Compostela, 1000 ans de Pèlerinage Européen* (Ghent, 1985). Köster’s essay is found on pp. 85–95. For the scallop shell as the symbol of Saint James, see Castiñeiras, *A vieira en Compostela*.

- 70 See Bruna, *Enseignes de pèlerinage*, for full bibliographies. For Koldeweij's work, see p. 378 and for Bruna's, p. 371.
- 71 Koldeweij, "Lifting the Veil," esp. p. 166.
- 72 Van Beuningen and Koldeweij, *Heilig en Profaan 1*; van Beuningen et al., *Heilig en Profaan 2* and *Heilig en Profaan 3*; Bruna, *Enseignes de pèlerinage*.
- 73 However, toward the end of the period of their popularity in the sixteenth century, they seem to have been misused by vagabonds and frauds. See Koldeweij, "Lifting the Veil," esp. pp. 181–185.
- 74 See Bruna, *Enseignes de pèlerinage*, pp. 16–17, and Köster, "Kollektionen"; and Koldeweij, "Pilgrim Badges." On badges in books see H. van Asperen, *Pilgrimstekens op perkament* and Megan Foster-Campbell, "Pilgrimage Through the Pages," developed from her dissertation of the same title (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2011).
- 75 Bruna, *Enseignes de pèlerinage*, p. 16.
- 76 This is a difficult problem. Recently, Mellinkoff, *Averting Demons*, Vol. 1, pp. 39–55, has argued for an apotropaic function. Other scholars have been more cautious, especially concerning the erotic nature of some of the secular badges. See Koldeweij, "Lifting the Veil," p. 167 and n. 25, and pp. 185–187.

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“The Scattered Limbs of the Giant”: Recollecting Medieval Architectural Revivals

Tina Waldeier Bizzarro

This examination of the shifting critical issues and stylistic choices which came to bear on European medieval Revival styles begins c.1830 with Victor Hugo’s *roman*, *Notre-Dame de Paris*. The novel defined critical rubrics for both medieval and medieval Revival architecture, undergirded by historicism. Negative opinion of Revival styles shifted c.1928 with the idea that the neo-Gothic had paved the road to modernism. Neo-Romanesque architecture, however, revived c.1830–1910, ultimately became the structural bearer of meaning for the modern movement.

In 1813, the English antiquary William Gunn referred to the Roman *spolia*, reused to formulate round-styled buildings throughout Europe, as “the scattered limbs of the giant,” poorly reassembled. Launching the theme that Mary Shelley’s novella, *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus* would treat five years later, Gunn inaugurated the most significant corporal metaphor for nineteenth-century historicism: an organism assembled from the dead remains of the past – recharged, resuscitated, and rendered monstrous. Gunn’s corpus of Romanesque buildings appeared to him very like the hybrid behemoth brought to life by science’s anti-hero, Victor Frankenstein. They were massive, deformed, inhumanly proportioned, gloomy, and recollected from Roman leftovers, with human industry, nearsightedness, and *naïveté*.¹

Both the beast and the beastly Romanesque were baptized and reified as products of nineteenth-century historicist understanding, an ontology in which all creation arose a priori from the past and was ineluctably bound to its origins – morally,

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genetically, and stylistically. This historical perspective provided the psycho-philosophical scaffolding and link not only for the understanding of the round-arched style, but also for the nineteenth-century revival of medieval architecture and its concomitant historiography. Medieval architectural styles, Gunn reckoned, *were the first revivals* – albeit monstrous – *of Classical Roman forms*.

It was not the antiquaries' tomes, however, but the *roman*, a product of early modern Europe, which proved the most fertile aesthetic and critical battleground upon which medieval architecture and civilization died, was resurrected, and transmogrified, like Frankenstein's hybrid. Thirteen years after Gunn, Victor Hugo published his robust *Notre-Dame de Paris*, a novel which quickly became a monument in its own right, establishing itself as a pre-eminent medievalizing text. Hugo was among the first and arguably the most significant French writer to revive and sculpt the medieval, textually positioning his audience both literally and figuratively above his lost medieval stone hulk. The period of *media aetas* had come to a close in 1830, 348 years, 6 months, and 15 days after the inaugural events of the novel in 1482. The fabric of time had been rent. In reviving the moribund medieval, Hugo had perforce to refashion it, and his romantic vision of medieval architecture and society still commands us.²

Victor Hugo was more romanced by the dark, inscrutable forces of medieval buildings than edified by their rational structure. Into the dense and exotic web of *Notre-Dame's* medieval fabric, Hugo wove his own monster – hunchbacked, mute, splay-footed *Quasimodo*, the avatar of the primitive Romanesque crypt. Esmeralda, the gypsy enchantress, personified its more popular Gothic features. Hugo's beloved pile became a synecdoche for all medieval churches, at once horrific and sublime, lugubrious and joyfully transcendent, symbolic of eternal paradise and the gulf of hell, and archetype of Christian sacred space – until suppressed by Gutenberg's book.³

For this incisive architectural critic, *Notre-Dame* was stylistically transitional, with its Romanesque base and Gothic middle, each characterized by its generative design element. The crushing incubus of the round style's broad and massive barrel vault, glacially nude and majestic in its simplicity, formed a cave-like quasi-Egyptian architectural space. This face of Janus looked back and spoke to the political authoritarianism and resolute theocracy of *Roman Catholicism*. *Notre-Dame's* Gothic “upper torso,” tall, airy, and penetrated by color, was the intrepid, unbridled, bourgeois, and democratic product of modern France.⁴ Hugo's antitheses internationally reoriented medieval architectural criticism and defined the critical rubrics not only for Romanesque and Gothic architecture, but also for their nineteenth-century revival styles.⁵ Hugo's *roman* became the most widely read book in France; his interpretation of medieval architecture seeped into the collective unconscious and quickly became common international currency.

This clinical retrovision of the early years of the European nineteenth century, this art of looking backward for inspiration, occurred because the fabric of tradition and memory had been cleft, and the speed of time had increased. Man's relationship to the past was no longer as casual and familiar as it had previously been,

and man's connection to the past weakened as he excavated it. This nascent medievalism, which became and remains a pervasive cultural phenomenon – especially since the 1970s – was a self-conscious experiment, away from the centrifugal Classical center of ritualized architectural patterns, forms, and meanings. A certain degree of aesthetic schizophrenia set in, in which the traditional Classical object of pleasure was shunted aside, and the medieval, unnatural, and supernatural, incorporated opposition into its aesthetic. Neo-medieval construction became asexual or inert, and the spectator was guilt-ridden with fear of the new replica. One new factor responsible for the change in critical attitudes was Christianity. Restored after the schisms of the Reformation and the French Revolution, it forced redemption into the future and determined a critical nexus of anxiety throughout medieval Revival historiography, until very recently.

The novel and historiography marched hand-in-hand in the Romantic era, both with a prophetic dimension, celebrating the essential relativity of life and history. Both stood weeping, to paraphrase Panofsky, at the graveside of the Middle Ages, hoping to resurrect the medieval soul. Historicism, the belief that history marches on in a clear pattern guided by visionary leaders and divine providence, directing us closer to an ultimate positive goal, was the defining ideal of both. It was within this philosophical context of the unity of historical phenomena in an evolutionary pattern of deliverance, promising the unique identification of the nation, that medieval revival became possible and forced changes in historiographical patterns.

The architectural metalanguage of criticism continued to prioritize the Classical architectural legacy, albeit periodically *sotto voce*, and concomitantly directed critical opinion against medieval revivalism. It is out of the tension between the popular, romantic craving for the historicizing medieval and the established textual and academic culture of Classical architecture that clear principles regarding exclusion and inclusion of medieval revival developed c.1820. This tension is at the center of any investigation of medieval revival criticism.⁶ The fluidity of historical memory – relative, redefined by time and type, and combining various types of recollections – shapes perception. The ethos of a building or type of buildings is, in some form of intellectual and psychological addition or multiplication, the sum of the critical accounts and/or memories of it. These contentions direct an investigation of the shifting critical issues which came to bear on medieval revival styles.

Back to the Medieval Future or a “Theatre of Outworn Masks”?

Constructs of historicism undergirded stylistic manifestations. Until recently and despite its century-long volume of pan-European, American, and other national production, nineteenth-century architecture, patronizingly classified as historicist, has been dismissed by listings and datings, which categorized its multivalent revivals under ambivalent rubrics. Somehow, neo-medieval creations were mistakes architects would *not* have made had they seen into the crystal ball of modernism.

Today Viollet-le-Duc, Ruskin, Pugin, and Revival architects of c.1780–1920 are not so easily dismissed.⁷

Gothic architecture, which is currently determined as the European and continental pointed style of the mid-twelfth through fifteenth centuries, has had a more resolved and independent – if not positive – critical history than its Romanesque predecessor of c.1000–1150. Their critical histories, and to a large degree their stylistic characteristics, remained conjoined and conflated under the common portmanteau, “Gothic,” through 1820.⁸ No sooner had the fork in the historiographical road nominally divided them than their critical fates diverged, and they were chosen as model architectural languages in which to tell a nineteenth-century story. Gothic Revival dominated that of its ugly, dumpy, round-styled sister, now rendered nearly invisible through anonymity, despite astute critical and visual sources from the fifteenth century onward, that had singled her out as the older, more residually classical, medieval style.

By far, more ink has been spilled on the Gothic Revival in England than that of any other country. Charles Eastlake’s groundbreaking analysis of the English Gothic Revival defined the terms of a critical dialogue which dominated architectural literature until about a generation ago, vis-à-vis characterization, periodization, and aesthetic verdict.⁹ For Eastlake, writing in the thick of Victorian eclecticism, the revival of pointed architecture in England c.1780 was not simply an episode in the history of taste but rather the British national style destined to supersede all others. Architectural expression of “an age when art was pure and genuine,” the Gothic became, for the next century, the architectural quintessence of England, whose history and institutions had descended in a continuous pattern from their murky medieval source.¹⁰

Eastlake determined a first “survival” phase from c.1600–1750, when English architects such as James Essex set to restoring their moldering Gothic legacy and when others continued to build after pointed-style models. Secondly, he traced an underdeveloped, unselfconscious, pre-Puginian revival from c.1750–1840, a revival without archeological pretension, induced by Horace Walpole and punctuated by James Wyatt. During this period, architects like John Nash, Robert Smirke, and Thomas Rickman, who were not concerned enough with “correct, honest Gothic building,” often produced “melancholy” results.¹¹ Appreciation for the Sublime inaugurated by Irishman Edmund Burke’s 1757 treatise, introduced a philosophical distinction and approved the aesthetic experience of awe, dread, and fantasy alongside the longstanding and centralized Classical, generating a new aesthetic pluralism which scaffolded reevaluation of medieval styles.¹²

Eastlake’s third watershed period occurred when the talented Charles Barry, assisted by Augustus W.N. Pugin, rebuilt London’s neo-Gothic Houses of Parliament (1840–1888) and when illustrated professional weeklies such as *The Builder* (1843) began not only to advance the taste of architectural students and the general public for this new style but also to lay a foundation for its more scholarly treatment. George Gilbert Scott, Matthew Hadfield, and Richard Carpenter et al., emerged as competent in the neo-Gothic mode. Finally, Eastlake traced a period

from c.1860–1870 during which the number of Gothic Revival buildings nearly doubled over those built in the preceding decade. By then, claimed Eastlake, “the grammar of an ancient art ... (had been) mastered.”¹³

Every cause has its martyrs, but before 1928 the Gothic Revival had fewer than most. In the 56 years between Eastlake’s seminal assessment and Clark’s Revival monograph, there was no significant text in English interpreting England’s neo-Gothic legacy. In order to fill this critical lacuna and to raise the critical significance of the Revival, Clark, while not relieved of the aesthetic force of Eastlake’s formulations, introduced several new concepts which pivoted scholarship in new directions for the next 75 years. The most consequential were his pronouncements that not only was the Gothic Revival “the most widespread and influential artistic movement which England ... [had] ever produced,” but also “perhaps the one purely English movement in the plastic arts.”¹⁴ These many neo-Gothic monuments, “monsters ... unsightly wrecks stranded upon the mud flat of Victorian taste,” deserved to be excavated from their critical neglect and studied as historical documents, “irrespective of their beauty.”¹⁵ The more art-historically objective Clark disencumbered the neo-Gothic of two centuries of critical opprobrium, precisely *because* it had once captivated England’s aesthetic imagination.

The Houses of Parliament, “the first neo-Gothic buildings which ... [England] can call great,” transformed the style from a popular, non-professional experiment in cottage-building, or “pure Batty Langley” to a national, English style.¹⁶ Clark thusly positioned the Revival critically front and center. The aesthetic ambivalence toward Gothic – since fifteenth-century Italian criticism had relegated it to history’s critical basement – was reconciled within Clark’s nationalizing assessment.¹⁷ While Clark reiterated pejorative appraisals, dubbing London’s previously acclaimed Houses of Parliament “a great necropolis of style,” he redirected art historical commentary. By accounting for neo-Gothic “mistakes” as perhaps lifeless and derivative, but ultimately respectable due to their significance for a nineteenth-century audience, he argued their importance as reflections of England’s national and religious, post-Puginian sentiment. Clark thus placed himself firmly within the nineteenth-century linguistic dialogue regarding the origins and nature of style, critically oriented away from Vitruvian notions of architecture as natural, monogenetic, and cyclical. Instead, operating within a still-current paradigm of architecture as language, Clark viewed style as socially or behaviorally determined – and *not* as genetically bound.¹⁸

Herein lay Clark’s trailblazing critical impact. Clark assessed Gothic Revivalism as an intrinsically English movement, an idea foreign to the historicizing eighteenth- and nineteenth-century consciousness and rooted within his early twentieth-century critical context. Furthermore, Clark rewrote Eastlake’s account of Pugin as a Catholic villain who recognized the principles of good architecture but who perverted them to the service of religious bigotry. Establishing Pugin’s historical importance as a Revival apologist, Clark argued that Pugin had fortified the Gothic with socialist Christian principles because he had understood how Gothic Revival architecture symbolically functioned as a vehicle for promoting

religious and social views; not all Revivalists had followed the rules of honesty and structural truth which Pugin had set forth in his *Contrasts* (1836) and in his *True Principles* (1841). In pleading for an architectural rationale based on truth, honesty, and material economy of structure and decoration, *Pugin had connected art with morality.*

Pugin's Revival *apologia* underpinned later English and French nineteenth-century rationalist theories and preambled the modern movement. Following Eastlake, Clark certified that for better or critical worse, neo-Gothic established a way-station on the road to modernism. Pugin, the modern Vitruvius, granted architecture a new moral standard. From the late nineteenth through the middle of the twentieth century, pioneers of architectural modernism from Great Britain's Morris, Shaw, Webb, and Mackintosh, to Belgium's van de Velde, Austria's Wagner and Loos, and America's Wright, worked their way through Gothic Revival architecture to arrive at sound, modern concepts of design informed by Puginian and Ruskinian philosophy. Architectural historians from Clark to Hitchcock and Pevsner established this. These two dicta changed not only the course of Revival criticism but also that of modern architectural criticism.¹⁹

Although the "picturesque Gothic Revival" before Pugin abounded in examples of castles with dysfunctional portcullises and drawbridges, Clark noted that after 1840, the severity of Pugin's, the Ecclesiologists', and the Cambridge Camden Society's "ethical Gothic Revival" righted the wrongs of the adolescent neo-Gothic. "For such ideas," argued Clark, "Pugin deserves our gratitude."²⁰ Clark underlined, *de nouveau*, the importance of the theologically rigorous Oxford Movement and Cambridge Camden Society, that small, pietistic architectural society which generated two important Revival precepts: the importance of sacramentality – a prescriptive, functionalist, clerical view which militated for architectural features best facilitating liturgy and worship – and the conviction that honest architecture could only result from the handicraft of honest men.²¹ Emblazoned in their motto, "Good men build good buildings," this ideal determined critical thinking. Henceforth, builders' moral sentiments, like that of virtuous medieval masons, came directly to bear on architecture's style, morality, and ultimate value. The international history of the Arts and Crafts Movement through the buildings of Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright cannot be understood without reference to this critical Revival watershed; henceforth, the reform of art led the reform of society.²²

Finally, Clark carefully defined the critical contribution of that apostle of taste, John Ruskin, to medieval Revival. Ruskin's accessibility, eloquence, and international popularity ranked him as a chief Victorian architectural critic and apologist.²³ The Protestant Ruskin succeeded in "disinfecting Gothic architecture" by disassociating it from Rome. Despite Ruskin's mid-century antagonism to the Gothic Revival, he was remembered by Clark and until today as one of the originators of Revival doctrines. Like Pugin, Ruskin inspired contemporary architects to build strong, honest, articulated structures. He differed, however, in one particular point which would define an important dialectic of modern architecture: *ornament.*

Less was not yet more for the Victorian Ruskin! To add medievalizing chimneys or to vary the size of a building's many ogival windows was, for the sensitive and neurasthenic Ruskin (who sneered at Paxton's Crystal Palace), to give a building style.²⁴ Clark's readers are left with a bittersweet taste for the failed Gothic Revival. Though it "changed the face of England ... [with its] Gothic lodging-houses, and insurance companies, [its] Gothic everything ... [it left behind] a wilderness of deplorable architecture."²⁵ Taste would not swing back from the horizontal to the vertical until the early twentieth century.

A mid-century landmark architectural history, Henry-Russell Hitchcock's volume on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries represents critical thought on neo-medieval architecture through the 1970s. Developing out of what Hitchcock termed "Romantic Classicism," formed between 1750 and 1790 in France and exported throughout the US, Europe, and Russia, all nineteenth-century architecture fell roughly under this catchall rubric – including the countercurrent "picturesque" and medieval revivals. Revival styles were considered "aberrations" which launched the "chaos of nineteenth-century eclecticism."²⁶ Despite Clark's apologetic legacy, these neo-styles horrified Hitchcock and his mid-century generation, enamored of architecture's modern movement.

Only the study and exploitation of new materials culminating c.1850 lay outside the Revivalist realm and aesthetic for Hitchcock, as it had for Pevsner, and represented modern architecture's salvation. Hitchcock blamed some of the neo-Gothic frivolity on its patrons, who requested it as a cheaper alternative to the "more noble Grecian." Whether Gothic church, baronial manor house, or castellated prison, neo-Gothic was aesthetically cast as indistinct and inappropriate. It had, Hitchcock agreed, improved during the 1830s, according to the legitimizing principles of the "Romanist" Pugin's *Contrasts* (1836) and had become brittle and absolute after 1840 with the Anglican Church's doctrinaire application of Pugin's principles. Only with Barry's Houses of Parliament did the Gothacists accomplish, proclaimed Hitchcock echoing Eastlake, "one of the grandest academic products of the nineteenth century."²⁷

Characteristic of his taxonomically driven, formalist generation and of the continued aesthetic ambivalence toward the neo-medieval, Hitchcock generated a plethora of new stylistic terminologies for the neo-Gothic offshoots of his "Romantic Classicism": Georgian Gothick, Late Georgian Picturesque, Norman, Rustic Cottage, Italian Villa, pre-Victorian, Early Victorian, Puginian Gothic, High Victorian Gothic, and Queen Anne. All of these rubrics variously applied to a neo-Gothic mode which had "accepted": irregularity, variety of silhouette, coloristic decoration, plastically complex organization, textural exploitation of traditional rustic materials, and a picturesque point of view.²⁸ Hitchcock appreciated the Gothic Revival's functional doctrines and its devotion to honest expression. We must build in a certain way, he opined, because it is right, not because it is pleasing!

Michael Charlesworth's 2002 study addressed English Gothic novels, architecture, and medieval architectural criticism in a three-volume interdisciplinary compilation, rare in Revivalist literature. One new idea emerging from this magisterial anthology

is that violence committed against the monastic orders, medieval architecture, and the Catholic population of Reformation England engendered a collective guilt which appeared in latent and symbolic form in the Gothic novel and in Revivalist literature. Gothic architecture, Charlesworth contended, was a setting conducive to the dramatic play of guilt and produced, in these dark novels of c.1760 through 1820, spectacular cruelty and heinous crimes. The mythic Gothic castle, a bridge to the past riddled with horror, was the literary *scaenae frons* for this play of bad conscience. Gothic Revival architects, in a desire for distance from associations of crime, transgression, and cruelty, created an antiseptic neo-Gothic which mimicked and recalled the old but was physically and chronologically free of the former's guilt.

Many international scholars who investigated the Gothic's origins, allied themselves to this architectural revival cause, swaying the debate to accommodate the whitewashed neo-Gothic. Based on his vast compendium of sources, Charlesworth estimated that the English, more than any other nation, raised the Revivalist stakes and, in order to sustain its literary thrust, transformed it into a living experience – from dressing up like monks à la Sir Francis Dashwood for evenings of drinking at Medmenham Abbey, to surveying surviving monasteries, to fashioning neo-Gothic buildings with emotion, religious feeling, and in the chaste and honest spirit of the medieval craftsman.²⁹ Eventually, the neo-Gothic became a way of life through Pugin, Ruskin, and onto William Morris, father of the modern movement.

Much recent scholarship addresses how medieval styles and their Revivals spawned modern architectural forms and ideals, supplanting Classical and Renaissance aesthetic authority and tradition. From London's Crystal Palace through the modern skyscraper movement, Gothic innovations linked new materials and structure with medieval engineering and craft. Wayne Dynes contended that medievalism was a major component of Le Corbusier's work in his initial neo-Gothic and later more mature neo-Romanesque architectural forms (Notre-Dame du Haut, Ronchamp, 1954) – not in an imitative Revival mode but in their medievalizing formal language. Speaking similarly to the issue of cultural survival vs. revival, Madeline Caviness has subtly demonstrated the stylistic connection between the medieval and modern aesthetic without reference to historicism. For *fin de siglo* Modernismo architect Antoni Gaudí, newly discovered buildings, originally named "First Romanesque" by Puig y Cadafalch (in *Le premier art roman*, 1928, and *La geografia i els orígens del primer art romànic*, 1930), had a tremendous avant-garde appeal and spoke to a burgeoning nationalistic interest in Catalunya's architectural patrimony. His neo-Catalan Romanesque basement in Barcelona's Güell Palace (1886–1891) and his neo-Gothic Sagrada Família (1882–2026?) witness to this.³⁰

The Gothic Revival was a more important and complex issue in Protestant countries, including the US and Australia, where Catholic religion and thought had been either extirpated and replaced or never cultivated across a wide portion of the population.³¹ Medieval revival came to bear differently on each nation in a complex mix of politics, religion, and national identity. The history of the Gothic

Revival in Catholic France, for example, was very different from its English, German, or American counterpart.³² The suppression of things medieval, aristocratic, or ecclesiastical during the French Revolution came much later to France than had the Reformation to England. This delayed the spirit of revival until the years around 1830, when the taste for renewal was ripe and largely borrowed or imported from England.³³ Additionally, the French medieval revival manifested itself rather in an intense program of restoration, often resulting in almost complete rebuilding. Even the ardent Viollet-le-Duc bemoaned neo-Gothic structures, those “remains of a lost civilization” with “bodies robbed of souls.”³⁴

Neo-Romanesque: The Ugly, Dumpy, Elder Sister or Avatar of Modernism?

During the high noon of the English neo-Gothic, the *Ecclesiologist* militated for a more functional Gothic church. The prescriptive nature of the Gothic Revival affected the revival of Romanesque architecture which had neither a champion like Pugin or Ruskin nor was promulgated anywhere by a Society with a written platform. Associated with a lack of Gothic sophistication, the neo-Romanesque, pan-European, like its mother style, developed between c.1830 and 1910 throughout England, Europe, the US, and elsewhere. In an ironic twist of critical fate, adaptive neo-Romanesque forms, though given much shorter shrift, outlived their neo-Gothic forebears, *emerging as the structural bearers of meaning for the modern movement.*

Early nineteenth-century definitions of the Romanesque stressed its two unifying cultural characteristics. First was its *romanitas*, as emerging nations of Europe were united in the development of a civilization which was substantially defined by imperial Roman ideals, laws, and architectural forms. Second, a Romanesque melding of antique Roman and Christian forms effectuated a quintessential historicizing moment when antique forms became infused with new meaning – as Gunn had explained for England and de Gerville had claimed for France.

Terminological ambivalence accounts for the early critical vacuum. Romanesque encompassed and was called by its alternative labels: Byzantine, Lombard, Norman, Saxon, Rhenish, and *Rundbogenstil*. In today’s scholarship, discussions of the neo-Romanesque still suffer by association from what the French antiquary Gidon termed, “la maladie de la nomenclature.”³⁵ Far less culturally determined, far more elusive of definition and origin, and far more geographically widespread, the “primitive” Romanesque was beset by the same critical issues as its distant “Roman” relative. Doomed to chronic inferiority by historicizing, neo-Classical theorists who judged any post-Antique or post-Renaissance style as devolved from the Classical ideal, medieval and neo-medieval architecture remained prisoners of this perspective through just over a scholarly generation ago.

Another complicating factor was the Romanesque sculptural program which has traditionally been conceived of as integral to, defined by, and defining of its architectural context.³⁶ Another ascribed Romanesque stylistic characteristic was

its integration of a large-scale sculptural program within its monumental space for the first time since Roman antiquity. Despite this international understanding, Romanesque architecture has traditionally been separated from its accompanying sculptural program in critical discussion. Its hydrocephalic heads and stocky bodies, its uncanonic “orders,” and its wild effusion of unruly, flattened, plant ornament created a house of natural horror. Strangling and overwhelming its station, Romanesque sculpture and ornament had no comfortable place within Classical terminology or taxonomy. The easiest way to deal with these strange bedfellows was to divorce sculpture from discussions of its historicizing albeit devolved architectural setting.

Christianity had disturbed the harmony between man and nature; it had upped the Classical ante by claiming a higher spiritual value and realm than man’s natural state. This dichotomous, idealistic belief system undermined the very basis of Classical architecture – a system designed to reflect a balanced, body-centered belief in its anthropocentric, modular, symmetrical proportions. The passionate struggle for grace and against sin informs medieval sculpture, which displays incoherent, fragmented, subversive, inauthentic, and polychromatic fantasy.³⁷

The Romanesque Revival is best traced in predominantly Protestant Germany and the US, where its political uses presented newly empowered groups with forms expressing change within a traditional albeit devolved architectural language and value system. The Romanesque Revival developed, was stimulated by, and simultaneously overshadowed by the Gothic Revival. It reflected a renewed international appreciation of medieval forms manifest in: the restoration and preservation of medieval buildings, the organization and institutionalization of the architectural establishment and journals from 1830 on, increased travel, and developments in photography.³⁸ However, no major definition of neo-Romanesque appeared in the journals spawned by this movement.

Between 1846 and 1876, most American architecture was round-styled. Qualitatively the most significant nineteenth-century style, it has been ignored in much critical literature, and many examples of neo-Romanesque have been demolished. Terminological ambivalence has not facilitated consistent classification and study. The historiography of the neo-Romanesque was launched with Robert Dale Owen’s praise of James Renwick’s design for Washington’s Smithsonian Institution (1846), which style, Owen heralded, deserved to be “named as a National Style of Architecture for America.”³⁹ For Owen and other early commentators, neo-Romanesque fulfilled the American aesthetic desiring picturesque irregularity, flexibility, economy, simplicity, and Republicanism. It was not too fancy or exotic a stylistic or decorative choice. Owen credited Englishman Thomas Hope and subsequent antiquaries as having predisposed German, English, and hence American taste for the round style.⁴⁰

By 1842, the neo-Romanesque was suggested as a model for “occasional adoption” in the US and England, as illustrated in the work of Richard Upjohn, who “converted” to Romanesque with his Church of the Pilgrims in Brooklyn. Emerging proponents of this style advocated its classic beauty, durability,

relative economy of materials, and rapid execution. The 1853 publication of the Congregationalist Church's *Plans for Churches* signaled "America's testimony to neo-Romanesque popularity."⁴¹ While developing architectural journals discussed Romanesque Revival, there was no commanding historical or aesthetic stylistic assessment until the mid-twentieth century. Mary Woods accounted for Americans' sidelining of the discussion of past historical styles and their relative value until c.1920–1950, claiming its divisiveness and that Americans were more concerned with the "dangers than the privileges of history."⁴² Works such as Samuel Sloan's *City and Suburban Architecture* (1859) indicated the incipient popularity of the round style in American secular building.⁴³

Carroll Meeks's article was the first monograph on the American neo-Romanesque, establishing the architects involved and a chronology and typology of American neo-Romanesque buildings, classifying them as round-arched with Lombard bands and arcades resulting in either "Byzantine" or "Norman" styles, or as "Italian Villa," a round-arched style combined with pilasters and entablatures. On the basis of little previous incisive scholarship, he determined the primary building types in the round-arched style: churches, governmental buildings, markets, retail stores, homes, hospitals, schools, railroad stations, and churches of non-liturgical Protestant denominations such as Congregationalists, Methodists, Unitarians, and Presbyterians.⁴⁴ Probing the nature and rationale of America's choice of the round style, Meeks determined its inherently more facile design process, its relative lack of detail, and the consequent ease of establishing archeological "correctness" in this more "stripped down" neo-style. Meeks suggested Germany's *Rundbogenstil* revival as a source of American stylistic appreciation.

More recently, P. Kent's comparative overview of revival literature from 1830 to 1910 classified Romanesque Revival as a complex international movement, which varied from country to country and region to region, with its height of popularity between 1875 and 1900. Relying on the few studies since mid-century, Kent defined neo-Romanesque as a style which provided newly empowered groups with architectural options and legitimacy; he characterized its stylistic polarities: primitive and progressive; crude and artistic; nationalist and internationalist; legitimate and subversive.⁴⁵ In a discussion of Alfred Waterhouse's neo-Romanesque, J.B. Bullen added to Meeks's and Kent's characterizations of the revived neo-round: its simple and primitive but grand and transcendent quality, its adaptive flexibility to modern building, and its secular yet sacred quality.⁴⁶ Neo-Romanesque forms served in developing an industrial architectural idiom for American urban centers. This resulted in buildings clad in medievalizing forms. Increasing numbers of building types converted to or were conceived of, *de novo*, in the neo-Romanesque. Kent enlarged Meeks's building type list with warehouses, hotels, office blocks, art galleries, and natural science or ethnographic museums. What these types shared was their need to accommodate new forms within progressive, innovative designs.

The "commercial deployment" of the neo-Romanesque ran on the wheels of urban, industrial, commercial, financial, and educational trade and progress – with the ecclesiastical features and scale of the resurrected round style appropriated

and engineered to the new ideals of materialism and capitalism.⁴⁷ Romanesque structural logic came to serve the natural and still-theological order of the newly-discovered world of Darwin. Lurking behind the positive estimation of this neo-style, as Phillip Kent has pointed out, was the prejudice against its origins – interracial, impure, and miscegenetic – a result of the stylistic marriage of the invading barbarian tribal forms with pure, classical architecture.⁴⁸

The signature neo-Romanesque of the Beaux-Arts-trained Henry Hobson Richardson, a highly rusticated, irregularly and compactly massed Francophilic style, took the US by storm and lent legitimacy to the round style there and abroad. Richardsonian Romanesque (c.1870–1890) was, however, “but a flower on a well-rooted stalk,” as Richardson had derived much from American architectural developments.⁴⁹ The revived round style became critically associated with American qualities of rugged individualism, innovation, entrepreneurship, and industry. Richardson and Chicago School architects such as Sullivan, Burnham, and Root accommodated new building types to this secure, classically resonant, divested medieval style. A happy marriage of simple form and practical content took place. Thrifty, seasoned, and pragmatic, like its Roman forbears, the neo-Romanesque became the signature and environment of the solid American marketplace.⁵⁰ From today’s perspective, the vitality of the Romanesque continues, as it plays a distinct and significant role, having seeded – again – the eclectic Postmodernist aesthetic.

Rundbogenstil, a German stylistic epithet designating the early nineteenth-century revived round style of Germany and central Europe, makes no real sense in discussions of Romanesque Revival in the US or English-speaking countries. It has recently become more widely used in English-language publications perhaps because of its elementary and broad meaning, its more simple stylistic characteristics, and because it was coined specifically for the revived epiphany of the German medieval *romanisch*.

While critical commentary regarding the American preponderance for and leadership in the neo-round style resulted of a national inclination for this simpler medievalizing style, the inverse was true for Germany. While the round styles of both nations were similar in many respects in form and composition and while German and American examples resulted in a larger corpus of Revival buildings than anywhere else, the theoretical and political processes that led to these results were altogether different.

Early German apologies for and adoption of the *Rundbogenstil* responded to a pervasive national insecurity, rooted in Napoleon’s destruction of medieval monuments. *In What Style Should We Build?* was the imperative and interrogatory title of Heinrich Hübsch’s book announcing Germany’s anxiety over “the crisis of present-day architecture.”⁵¹ The resolution to this two-decade long controversy was not to create, *ex novo*, but to imitate in the *Rundbogenstil*. Revival of the round style in Germany was more careful and programmatic than anywhere else, and by 1859 the neo-round was touted as Germany’s national product, reversing Goethe’s nationalistic determination for the pointed style only a generation after his death in 1832.

The architectural histories of Franz Kugler and disciple Wilhelm Lübke definitively established the *Rundbogenstil* for Germany.⁵² For Lübke and for generations to follow, the pure and exact round style, having been engendered by Saxon imperial rule, embodied, “the strong, independent feeling of the German people ... because ... [it took] an especially deep root in Germany ... and sank ... profoundly ... into the national life.”⁵³ Politics, theory, and round-style architecture were inextricably bound in Germany’s historiographies. In the years following the establishment of the German Empire in 1871, the *Rundbogenstil* became a national choice under Hohenzollern patronage.⁵⁴

Barbara Miller Lane’s study on “romantic nationalism” is one of very few significant twentieth-century theoretical studies on German medieval revival. Lane refuted the widely held tenet that modern European architecture resulted in a continuous and linear progression away from historical models and toward modernist styles such as the German Bauhaus. She also took to task the traditional and exclusive association of nationalism with neo-Classicism, providing a compelling account of *Rundbogenstil* revivalism, linked perhaps even more closely to German nationalism, populism, and innovation until well into the 1930s. Focusing on the continuities in German architectural history over the past 130 years, she argued that Germany both valued forms which suggested a distant medieval past as well as tended toward innovation in technology and building design in order to define its modernity.⁵⁵ The very burden of its historical discontinuity, Lane discovered, led Germany to prioritize medieval *Rundbogenstil* forms.

Kathleen Curran’s groundbreaking book on Romanesque Revival in Germany, England, and the US from c.1825–1875, took the German *Rundbogenstil* as its point of departure. In a complex disentangling of its international historical, religious, and political roots, Curran traced the origins of the first round-styled revival to the Munich and Karlsruhe of Ludwig I and the architectural theories of Hübsch, and mapped its rapid spread to England and the US.⁵⁶ Influential Americans such as Robert Dale Owen, Horace Mann, and Henry Barnard sought German architectural models. Curran uncovered an international circle of friends at the epicenter of the early *Rundbogenstil* in Germany and the US, including Hübsch, Christian von Bunsen, and Friedrich Wilhelm IV, inter alia.⁵⁷ This comprehensive archiving led Curran to determine that the primary patrons of the *Rundbogenstil* were German monarchs and members of the English and American Protestant Church hierarchy. The concerns of these powerful men were both “secular and sacred”: to spiritually reinvigorate a Protestant Church threatened by increasing industrialization and to reinvent state institutions.⁵⁸

All stylistic roads led to Rome for budding German medievalists and neo-Classicalists – all part of the late Romantic movement. All good nineteenth-century Germans since Winckelmann and Mengs drank at Rome’s fountain, returning with a thirst to create their own national style. The neo-round rode this wave of appreciation for Classical shapes and styles. The thorny debates regarding the developing concept of style were integral to the establishment of the *Rundbogenstil* in Germany. International aesthetic repercussions of this broad subject

aside, this matrix generated theories of a national German style based on a mixture of materialist ideas regarding structure, purpose, materials, and technology. Seen within this complex and voluminous literature, the *Rundbogenstil* takes its place as an historicizing episode in German history – no less Frankensteinian than Gunn’s or de Gerville’s “new” styles. Germany’s *Rundbogenstil*, less slavishly sculptural and more angular than its French or English relatives, was nonetheless a “monster” whose limbs had been more “successfully” surgically fused.

The issue of terminology guided this tower-of-Babel debate as *Rundbogenstil* replaced the current *neugriechische*, *byzantinisch*, and *romanisch* because of its widespread use in English and French. The recent terminological resurrection of *Rundbogenstil* by scholars of German neo-round-styled architecture continues this nominal historiography as Germany and America’s national redefinitions continue.⁵⁹ All told, the Romanesque Revival of Germany and the US led the insecure German nation and the young American republic toward more confident twentieth-century identities.

“Too Many Monsters” or a “Contemporary Taste for Veneers”?

In 1987, Umberto Eco, echoing Gunn’s corporal metaphor of the “scattered limbs of the giant” of 174 years earlier, cautioned us to continue to dream of the Middle Ages, provided “that it is not the dream [sleep] of reason.... We have already generated too many monsters.”⁶⁰ Coining the term “neo-medieval,” Eco, remembering Goya, pegged the knotty issue of medievalism. Medievalism has significantly underpinned discourse of the medieval and the medieval Revival, monstrously reborn where we began this account – in 1813 with Gunn, in 1830 with Hugo, or c.1790, with the prescient Goya! Whether neo-Romanesque, neo-Gothic, or neo-medieval, nomenclature functions as an artificial construct, and discussions of naming continue to designate and inform our “medieval” and “neo-medieval” – in literary, architectural, musical, cinematic, and other cultural and ludic studies. For Eco, these medieval revivals are possible because we moderns have not assigned the medieval to a platonic, formal ideal, as we have with our reconstructed, frozen Classical Antiquity. We are still reworking that paradigm, because we remain, in large part, medieval-moderns, after the Fall.

Particularly since the 1970s, studies of medievalism have intensified, as we seek to excavate our medieval origins, imagine our common identities and histories.⁶¹ Romanesque or Gothic architectural revivals, “cultural icebergs,” must be seen as part of a larger history of ideas of medievalism, which Michael Alexander claimed is “not a matter of dates but of category – the negative category of otherness.”⁶² Alexander Nagel and others have claimed that the lifting of the modernist veil now allows us to see modern art’s medieval underbelly and that “encounters with medieval art mark the whole history of modernism and its aftermaths.”⁶³ Nagel’s characterization of our contemporary visual culture of “artistic pluralism and highly-adept reenactments” oddly jives with C. Edson Armi’s conclusions

regarding the plastering-over of French First Romanesque wall surfaces. What Armi designated the “contemporary taste for veneers,” and the “focus on the envelope of a building,” was justified, he argues, by pluralist notions of embracing *all* stylistic periods of a building, producing a new and “more authentic” experience. Both these reductionist assertions, according to Armi and Nagel, assume that *the work of art is not unique*.⁶⁴ Contemporary terminological analyses of neo-medievalism (as distinct from medievalism) have identified this very same anti-historical attitude, this lack of interest or nostalgia for the authentic medieval, which establishes rather a “fantasy of medievalisms, a meta-medievalism – an important difference – in which electronic media figure prominently.”⁶⁵

The history of taste is a history of ways of seeing. This critical review reveals how successive generations valued their medieval legacies and their revivals. The template of our current understanding of medieval and revival architecture was formed when the medieval was first being resurrected, and this double birth continues to inform contemporary architectural style *and* theory. Modern and Postmodern architecture depends on Romanesque and neo-Romanesque spatial achievements, bold masonry work, and architectonic mural surfaces. Our understanding responds to other ideals such as our sensitivity to this moody, medieval place in time and how we envision ourselves vis-à-vis this past – politically, socially, and spiritually.

As quintessential architectural icons of Christianity, neo-medieval styles embodied the religious cradle and matrix of safety, childhood, nourishment, and peace in modern revivalist and contemporary memory. This architectural locus of the divine incorporated the first and final anchor, the portal to life and death. The medieval church has become part of the collective typology of the holy, an avatar of spiritual haven. It has become the greatest integrating architectural repository for the thoughts and aspirations of mankind. Our need to chronically revive this archetype of spirituality is fundamental to an understanding of medieval revivals in the West. This is why fairy tales often had medieval architectural environments – to house their battles where good triumphs over evil, in a land far away, once upon a medieval time. Life-sized Romanesque and Gothic sculpture turns us back on ourselves, and in the words of Henri Focillon, humanizes the celestial.

On the other hand, all of life’s insecurities come to bear on these stylistic archetypes. The medieval church is the *locus in quo* where death, accident, disease, and loss are mediated. Transformation and transcendence await the faithful in medieval and medievalizing building. For today’s student of architecture, medieval and neo-medieval buildings are no longer mistakes that post-Italian Renaissance criticism would have us forget or bury. These buildings, formerly considered five centuries or so of architectural *faux pas*, were not bad architecture, revived by foolish nineteenth-century architects. They have determined the shape of modern architecture and architectural history due to the historical patterns they established and spurned. We continue our interest in the moldering Middle Ages as the study of who we were informs who we are.

Notes

- 1 (On *spolia*, Romanesque architecture, and Gothic architecture, see Chapters 14, 17, and 21, by Kinney, Fernie, and Murray respectively, in this volume [ed.] .)
- 2 Although Prosper Mérimée despaired of the novel, and Goethe thought it too schematic, *Notre-Dame de Paris's* (1831) popular influence was swift and international, undergoing four English translations (1833–1839). English Gothic novels by Walpole and Radcliffe predated Hugo's, but none concerned itself as intrinsically with medieval architectural criticism. In his monograph, K. Clark's monograph, he recognized the considerable literary component of England's Gothic Revival and accounted for its "failure" in its literary over-determination. French critics tended to more intrinsically mix the literary and architectural manifestations of revivalism.
- 3 An initiator of medieval restoration, Hugo tongue-lashed the Revolutionary and Bourbon vandals of medieval buildings in *Guerre aux démolisseurs* (1829) and *La bande noire* (1824). Hugo served on the post-Revolutionary *Commission des arts et monuments* (1835–1848), superintending medieval restoration, and he oversaw the restoration of Chartres. See P. Léon, *La Vie des monuments français* and E. Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral* (pp. 1–10), in which Emery traced the late nineteenth-century rise in popularity of the cathedral. P. Ward's *The Medievalism of Victor Hugo* examined Hugo's revivalist vision.
- 4 Like Gunn and de Gerville, who invented the neologism *l'architecture romane* (1818), Hugo reckoned the Romanesque had emerged in the Late Roman Empire and had died with the Conqueror; the Gothic ended during the reign of King Louis XI (1461–1483). Contemporary French architectural historians, writers, and politicians quickly followed Hugo's lead and claimed the Gothic for France. L. Vitet echoed Hugo's words almost verbatim when he claimed that Gothic architecture was bourgeois, free, French, and Christian (*La République sera chrétienne, ou elle ne sera pas* (Paris, 1874)). F.-R. de Chateaubriand had anticipated and stimulated the mania of the medieval with his *Génie du Christianisme* (1802), extolling Gothic architecture, based more on the vague and mystical *frisson* it elicited than on its formal qualities. *L'architecture romane* became the logical relative of the eleventh-century French vernacular. The French were, however, more interested in the conservation of medieval monuments than in their revival.
- 5 With respect to the complex theoretical question of architectural revival vs. survival, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were marked by the psychic pain of death and detachment from the Middle Ages. Panofsky's seminal chapter in *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art*, as well as the collective bulk of neo-Classical literature prioritizing any Classical manifestation, continued to negatively direct medieval revival opinion and scholarship. Just as the Carolingian *renovatio* and the twelfth-century "proto-renaissance" were not, said Panofsky, quantitatively or qualitatively as significant as the fifteenth-century Italian Renaissance, *neither were its artistic manifestations as valid*. Since long before Panofsky and just before Vasari – with a firm corroboration in late eighteenth-century critical writing – revival, the Italian Renaissance and Classical Antiquity have been incontrovertibly linked. Panofsky confirmed that no good, liberal renaissance ignored the universal, Classical past which was unhampered by religious or dogmatic prejudice. I would argue that the crucial difference between the early nineteenth-century revivals and that of the Italian Renaissance was not their

chronological or philosophical perspective, which was at least as great as that of the fifteenth century, but their level of Romantic self-consciousness, which bred guilt and shame rather than optimism. Unlike the link the Italian Renaissance had forged with Antiquity, modern medieval revivals did not fashion a golden middle age to which they wished to return. Their interpretation of history was dominated rather by a quasi-religious belief in progress, a quasi-apocalyptic belief in the future which the Middle Ages could inform. Panofsky's ancient and Classical "Arcadia" was now displaced into the medieval future.

- 6 Even before the medieval revivals of 1780, the neo-Classical movement of Flaxman, Gunn, David, Quatremère de Quincy et al., had challenged Classicism as a too-narrowly defined language of structure and decorative elements, initiating an historicizing investigation of the dominant aesthetic of Classicism. Additionally, the expanding parameters of the known world worked to weaken the hegemony of the Classical ideal over others. Lavin, in *Quatremère de Quincy*, investigated the priority of Egyptian architecture in late eighteenth-century architectural criticism, claiming that a new view of architecture's origins resulted with the archeological study of Egypt. This debate was the battleground for the meta-question of the origins of all Western architecture. This view begged the question of truth in origins as a determinant of the true nature of reality or architectural style and substituted the social, linguistic model – which still scaffolds architectural criticism.

The dynamic, shifting, and reconstructive nature of memory – a topic too vast to be fully excavated here but which strikes at the heart of history writing – begins to be scientifically examined at the precise moment of the development of the modern novel, in the early nineteenth century. As well, memories as the slippery inventions of a story-telling mind, continue to provide grist for the novelists' mill – from Stendhal's *Le rouge et le noir* (1830) to Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-27), the progenitor of the twentieth century novel – along with countless others.

- 7 I must cast my net widely around the critical reception of neo-Romanesque and neo-Gothic, which spanned two centuries and many countries, even beyond Europe. I have chosen to prioritize English criticism of the neo-Gothic and German and American criticism of the neo-Romanesque for reasons of their predominant and cardinal status, the sheer volume of these neo-medieval monuments and the accompanying critical commentary, and leading architectural trends. While the Gothic was arguably a northern phenomenon, the Romanesque was pan-European and widely exported. The intersection of these two critical corpora, therefore, seemed logical and practical in this context. I have restricted myself to landmark and seminal studies which have fashioned the direction and tenor of architectural criticism.
- 8 Most educated or sensitive viewers conceived of the round style as a primitive version of the pointed until c.1850, when the Gothic Revival was in full swing. See my study, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*, Chapters 1 and 2, for a discussion of the absence of medieval stylistic subdivisions before the seventeenth century. See also Frankl, *The Gothic*.
- 9 Eastlake's *History of the Gothic Revival* adduced primary sources from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries.
- 10 Ibid., p. 71. Eastlake criticized Ruskin for his proposal (*Modern Painters*, 1854), to choose a British national architectural style from among Pisan Romanesque, *Trecento*

- Florentine, Venetian Gothic, or English Decorated, objecting to their unworkability and foreign origins.
- 11 Ibid., p. 95. Rickman's terminology (Saxon, Norman, Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular) in *An Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of Architecture in England* (London, 1817), took quick hold in England.
 - 12 Out of E. Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), the literary subgenre of the Gothic romance was born.
 - 13 Eastlake, *History of the Gothic Revival*, p. 372.
 - 14 Clark, *The Gothic Revival*, p. 7.
 - 15 Ibid., p. 7.
 - 16 Ibid., pp. 98, 133.
 - 17 More recently, Germann, *The Gothic Revival*, pp. 142–143, continued Clark's terminological evaluation.
 - 18 See Lavin, *Quatremère de Quincy*, on the link between language and architecture, which bibliography is lengthy. I cite only a few significant examples in this regard: Dynes, "Art, Language, and Romanesque"; Eco, *Search for the Perfect Language*; McEwen, *Socrates' Ancestor*; Guillerme, "The Idea of Architectural Language."
 - 19 M.J. Lewis, *Gothic Revival*, p. 2, agreed that Gothic Revival was "the story of Western civilization's confrontation with modernity."
 - 20 Clark, *Gothic Revival*, pp. 142–143.
 - 21 The Cambridge Camden Society, founded by Trinity College graduates J.M. Neale and B. Webb, was dedicated to the reform of church architecture and antiquities, the revival of ritual arrangements, and the restoration of medieval architecture. After its dissolution by the Anglican clergy (1845), the group changed its name to the Ecclesiological Society, continuing to publish its monthly vademecum, *The Ecclesiologist*.
 - 22 One of the first publications of Morris's Kelmscott Press was Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* (1851). Clark, *Gothic Revival*, p. 202, called Ruskin's chapter, "The Nature of Gothic," "one of the noblest things written in the nineteenth century."
 - 23 Clark observed that Ruskin, in his prodigious writings (39 vols.), crystallized many critical ideals already formulated by Pugin. Ruskin published his book-length essay *Seven Lamps of Architecture* in 1849, his *Stones of Venice* (2 vols.) from 1851 to 1853, and his *Lectures on Architecture and Painting* in 1854.
 - 24 Clark, *Gothic Revival*, pp. 196–198.
 - 25 Ibid., p. 214.
 - 26 Hitchcock, *Architecture*, p. 21.
 - 27 Ibid., p. 150.
 - 28 Hitchcock investigated American neo-Gothic, considering it "feeble parable(s) of English originals" (*Architecture*, p. 155). A positive evaluation of Gothic Revival in the US would have to wait for American scholars such as Trachtenberg and Hyman, *Architecture from Prehistory to Post-Modernism*, and M.J. Lewis in *The Gothic Revival*, who claimed that High Victorian Gothic, having overcome its "ferrophobia," became "the architectural language of a worldwide colonial empire" (p. 157).
 - 29 English Catholics were placed under various legal sanctions from the Reformation through their emancipation in 1829. See Charlesworth, *The Gothic Revival*. Hugo and many French critics to follow blamed the overwhelming influence of Italian Renaissance forms for suppression of the French Gothic.

- 30 Dynes, “Medievalism,” p. 90. Caviness in “Politics of Taste,” pp. 60–63, named this same medievalizing impulse in Picasso’s *Guernica* (and other paintings) which “eliminated all trace of a quasi-classical training in favor of more strident and expressive forms that resonate with the [Catalan] Romanesque without being historicist.” Caviness also claimed common historiographical themes in Romanesque art and architecture in Catalunya and Germany, due to their authoritarian politics.
- 31 I agree with Trachtenberg’s assessment of the Italian Gothic, in “Gothic/Italian ‘Gothic,’” as never having been really “Gothic” according to its reified definition from mid-century onward. He argued that fourteenth-century Italians eclectically and self-consciously Gothicized various types of buildings, to various expressive ends, never having swallowed the “gray Gothic pill.” His vision of the pan-European Romanesque as a “sustained conflict between historicist and modernist tendencies,” is a brilliant one and strikes at the essence of the issue of Revivalism from the fourth century onward, as suggested by Gunn – that *after Greece, all Western styles are revivals!* Italy’s revival of antiquity (Roman, Byzantine, or Moorish) is more characteristic of that nation’s historical aesthetic choices. I have chosen to deal in greater depth with the literature of countries whose revival of either Romanesque or Gothic styles and accompanying critical literature are consistent, long-lived, and exemplary.
- 32 Fewer scholars have chronicled the continental or American neo-Gothic than have excavated the flagship English style. See Lewis, *The Politics of the German Gothic Revival*, for a review of those sources. Lewis offered a sensitive account of how religion came to bear on Revivalism – Rhenish-Catholic vs Prussian-Protestant and anti-round-style – in the career of the seminal August Reichensperger, a German proponent of Neo-Gothic in the Catholic Rhineland from 1840 through c.1900. Recently, scholars have treated individual architects, such as the catalog (of seven decades of work) of the American neo-Gothic architect, Ralph Adams Cram (1863–1942) by Anthony, *The Architecture of Ralph Adams Cram*.
- 33 See Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism*, Chapters 3 and 8. From Napoleon’s empire through the Restoration, neo-Classical forms remained in favor. There were some French Gothic Revival buildings, such as St. Jean-Baptiste, Ste. Clothilde, and St. Bernard in Paris, Notre-Dame de Bon Secours in Rouen, and St. Nicholas in Nantes, but far fewer than in England. Viollet-le-Duc’s “restoration” of the ramparts of Carcassonne and his work on the Château de Pierrefonds was exceptional. During *la belle époque*, a new discourse on Gothic developed, casting it as a tower of reason and Celtic design.
- 34 Viollet-le-Duc, *Entretiens sur l’architecture*, Vol. 2, #10, p. 448. Viollet-le-Duc repudiated the idea of revival in the preface to his *Dictionnaire raisonné de l’architecture française* (1854). Passionate about the Gothic, he delved the structural secrets of its neo-Gothic application. Architect to the *Service des monuments historiques*, he restored medieval churches at Vézelay, Amiens, St.-Denis, Chartres, and Reims, “correcting” each. See Murphy, *Viollet-le-Duc at Vézelay*. A number of French architects worked in both the neo-Gothic: Anatole de Baudot, St. Jean de Montmartre, Paris; and neo-Romanesque: Claude Naissant, Notre-Dame de la Gare, Ivry, 1855; Victor Baltard, St. Augustin, Paris, 1860–1867; Gustav Guérin, Chapelle des Lazaristes, Tours, 1861; Théodore Ballu, St. Ambroise, Paris, 1863–1869; Paul Abadie, Sacré-Coeur, Paris, 1872–1919; Emile Vaudremer, St. Pierre de Montrouge (1864–1870); and Léon Vaudoyer, Cathédrale la Major de Marseille (1852). Paul Abadie, “*l’homme néo-roman*,” restored St. Front de Périgueux. Foucart et al., in *Paul Abadie*, p. 11,

- have claimed that Abadie was to a great degree responsible for the institutionalization of architectural restoration on a grand scale which inaugurated the important French rubric and discussion of *patrimoine*, addressed in the four-volume *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris, 1997).
- 35 Gidon, "L'invention du terme 'l'architecture romane' par Gerville (1818)," p. 285. Two hundred years later, this debate continues across Europe. Commenting on neo-Romanesque in nineteenth-century Ireland, Loeber and Campbell ("Architectural Styles and Discourse") applied the epithet "Hiberno-Romanesque" to the distinctive Irish/Celtic contribution to Ireland's sculpture and building style, which lived on firmly into the 1950s; at first used mainly for Catholic churches, the neo-round became the banner style for a more general cultural "Irish Revival."
 - 36 The pioneering work of Jean Bony on the Norman "*mur épais*" (*Bull. Monu.*, 1939) and of C. Edson Armi on the southern First Romanesque continuous order ("Orders and Continuous Orders in Romanesque Architecture") have patterned Romanesque scholarship. (On sculptural programs in general, and Romanesque and Gothic sculpture in particular, see Chapters 18, 19, 22, and 33 by Hourihane, Maxwell, Jung, and Boerner in this volume [ed.] .)
 - 37 Michael Camille ("How New York Stole the Idea") discussed the pioneering role of Meyer Schapiro's scholarship in renewing appreciation of the Romanesque. Camille assessed American scholarship before Schapiro, when Formalist poetics echoed nineteenth-century romantic visions of the medieval. Schapiro reckoned that medieval and modern art shared aesthetic goals, repositioning both into the center of "high art" discussions. Camille argued that medieval sculpture was popular like its modern American counterpart because both evinced rugged individualism and depersonalization.
 - 38 Kent, "The Meaning of the Romanesque Revival," pp. 50–55, reported that there was more written on architecture between 1850 and 1900 than previously. Armi, "Report on the Destruction," bemoaned the recent destruction and unrestrained restorations of Burgundian Romanesque architecture. Care of medieval monuments was initiated by the venerable *Service des monuments historiques* which inventoried and conserved medieval buildings c.1830, the era of the birth of the neo-Romanesque. Armi pointed to the modern understanding of architecture as surface and container – with a neglect for structure and surface articulation – as the intellectual underpinning of the present overzealous restoration of Romanesque buildings by the *Service*. The negative critical fate of the neo-Romanesque was tied to ideas of what a "modern" building was.
 - 39 Owen, *Hints on Public Architecture*, p. 109.
 - 40 Watkin, *Rise of Architectural History*, pp. 68–69, took up Owen's argument.
 - 41 According to Steege, "The Book of Plans," pp. 227–231, this book was the Congregationalists' analogue to *The Ecclesiologist* and a catalyst in disseminating neo-Romanesque in the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s. Steege also noted that other important arms of the American Romanesque Revival were religious journals associated with universities such as Harvard's *Christian Examiner*, Yale's *New Englander*, and Princeton's *Biblical Repertory*.
 - 42 Woods, "History," p. 77.
 - 43 Sloan, *City and Suburban Architecture*. Meeks, "Architectural Education," p. 31, pointed out that nine-tenths of Sloan's examples are of the round style.

- 44 Meeks, "Architectural Education," p. 18. She named the major architects: Jas. Renwick Jr. (1818–1895), R. Upjohn (1802–1878), T. Tefft (1826–1859), S. Sloan (1815–1884), J.J. Windrim (1866–1934), and H.H. Richardson (1838–1886).
- 45 Kent, *Meaning of the Romanesque*, p. 156, analyzed neo-Romanesque criticism in England, the US, and Australia. He argued that Romanesque Revival was closely allied to other modernizing movements and that modernists drew on neo-Romanesque forms in developing their new aesthetic. See also O’Gorman, *H.H. Richardson*, and Miller Lane, "National Romanticism."
- 46 Bullen, "Alfred Waterhouse’s Romanesque ‘Temple of Nature,’” pp. 257, 268, 271, underlined the importance and originality of Waterhouse’s stylistic choice – deployed on a theretofore unprecedented scale in England – for London’s Natural History Museum, arguing that it provided a suitable stylistic idiom for "a collection that focussed specifically on the evolution of the most primitive forms of life into the most sophisticated ... expressing the ‘Beauty of Holiness.’" He noted that the Pre-Raphaelite painters gave the neo-round their seal of approval. See Bullen’s n. 4, p. 282, for a listing of many other neo-round museums in the US and Britain.
- 47 Kent, *Meaning of the Romanesque*, p. 77.
- 48 Kent, "Survival of the Fittest," p. 11. Bullen, "Alfred Waterhouse’s Romanesque ‘Temple of Nature,'" pp. 257–260, discussed the accommodation of Darwin’s ideas on evolution (1859) to age-old belief in a "benevolent creator," in Waterhouse’s design for London’s Natural History Museum, dubbed in the contemporary press, "the cathedral to God’s wonders of the natural world" (p. 271).
- 49 Meeks, "Architectural Education," p. 33.
- 50 Kent, *Meaning of the Romanesque*, pp. 79–80.
- 51 Hübsch, *Bau-Werke*, p. 1, as quoted in Hübsch et al., *In What Style Should We Build?* Hübsch was essentially responsible for the adoption of the term *Rundbogenstil* in the early nineteenth century. Hübsch labeled architecture of the tenth and eleventh century as round-styled. Before this late determination, however, he had designated any round-styled building from late Roman examples through the Gothic as *Rundbogenstil* – as Gunn had done with "Romanesque" 15 years earlier!
- 52 Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, and Lübke, *Geschichte der Architektur*.
- 53 Lübke, *Geschichte der Architektur*, p. 470.
- 54 Lane, "National Romanticism," pp. 111–147. Nineteenth-century German scholarship on Romanesque and its Revival was substantial and varied. See Bullen, "Alfred Waterhouse’s Romanesque ‘Temple of Nature,'" pp. 275–276, for a good discussion of these sources, inter alia: C.G. Kallenbach & J. Schmitt’s *Die christliche Kirchen-Baukunst des Abenlandes*, 1850; L. Puttrich’s *Systematische Darstellung der Entwicklung der Baukunst*, 1852; G. Moller’s *Denkmaler der Deutschen Baukunst*, 1815–1851; Sulpiz Boiserée’s *Denkmale der Baukunst vom 7ten bis zum 13ten Jahrhundert am Nieder-Rhein*, 1833.
- 55 Lane, "National Romanticism," pp. 111–147. Lane noted the theories of L. Eaton and D. Tselos who have argued that H.H. Richardson’s beloved signature style was greatly copied in Scandinavian countries and Finland, in a national romantic movement post-1900. These countries lacked, they suggested, an indigenous medieval architecture. In Germany, where there was no lack of medieval models, Lane contends the reverse was true and that Germany’s earlier *Rundbogenstil* paved the way for the reception of H.H. Richardson in Germany. Lane used the term

- “national romanticism,” inaugurated by Swedish architectural historians, to describe medievalizing architecture. Lane listed *Rundbogenstil* examples under the aegis of Ludwig II of Bavaria (1864–1868), Wilhelm I (1871–1888), and Wilhelm II (1888–1918). Germany’s *Rundbogenstil* accommodated barracks, railroad stations, government offices, and eventually, she argued, inspired avant-garde architects. The Hohenzollerns wanted to forge a link with the Hohenstaufens in order to reclaim the Catholic imperial tradition. *Rundbogenstil* buildings continued beyond Germany’s defeat in World War I and consequent partitioning through the rise of Hitler’s Third Reich. Even Gropius’s avant-garde Bauhaus of 1919, Lane indicated, linked its modernity to a return to medieval guild structures and beliefs, as had England’s Morris, a generation earlier. Lane adduced the recent medievalizing work of Gottfried Böhm (b. 1920) to prove that the medieval past still bridged German modernity.
- 56 Curran, *The Romanesque Revival*, p. xxiv. Curran noted that Ludwig I paid for more Romanesque Revival buildings in the US than anywhere else except in Munich (p. xxiv).
- 57 *Ibid.*, p. xxvii. Von Bunsen was Prussian ambassador to the syndic of Hamburg, Karl Sieveking. Hübsch was appointed principal government architect in Karlsruhe in 1827. Curran traced the beginning of the term *Rundbogenstil* to Hübsch or J.F. Böhmer in the early 1820s (pp. 12–18).
- 58 *Ibid.*, p. xxv.
- 59 *Ibid.*, pp. 17–21.
- 60 Eco, “Dreaming of the Middle Ages,” *Semiotica*, p. 239.
- 61 A chapter of this scope and subject matter cannot hope to subsume the vast scholarship, especially since the 1970s, on medievalism. Leslie J. Workman is widely recognized as the pioneer and founder of medievalism studies, having organized the first sessions on this topic in 1971 at the ICMS, Kalamazoo Conference and having launched the journal, *Studies in Medievalism*. Since Workman’s pioneering formal inauguration and institution of the discipline, studies on medievalism have proliferated.
- 62 Alexander, *Medievalism*, pp. xxvi–vii, reported that in 1854 Ruskin first used the term “Mediaevalism,” designating that period from the fall of Rome to the close of the fifteenth century, book-ended by “Classicism” and “Modernism.” At that point, Jules Michelet had not yet coined our familiar, and now-disappearing, “Italian Renaissance.” Alexander examined the set of pervasive English ideals – political, social, literary, and religious – which scaffolded the medieval Revival.
- 63 Nagel, *Medieval Modern*, p. 8. Tracing the historiography of modernism and the role of the medieval within modern art, Nagel focused not on pictorial iconographic medievalism, but rather on deeper structural patterns and themes that form the connection between medieval and twentieth-century modern art, such as, “the generation and dissemination of images; site-specificity and mobility; fetishism and iconoclasm; memory and anachronism; ... authorship and authority” ... “patterns of pilgrimage, multi-media sacred environments, the semiotics of the relic and of trace-images, ritual performative stagings, ... modalities of replication, and a history of recurrent iconoclasm” (pp. 10, 14). Wayne Dynes “Medievalism and Le Corbusier” (p. 89) argues that the machine aesthetic modern architect/theorist, Le Corbusier, seduced by the collective spirit and universality he perceived in medieval Catholicism, produced his two masterpieces – the Chapel of Notre-Dame-du-Haut, Ronchamp, and the Monastery of La Tourette near Lyon.

- 64 Nagel, *Medieval Modern*, p. 7, and Armi, "Report on the Destruction," pp. 308–309. Armi has hit the critical nail on its head. The negative critical fate of the highly articulated and sculpted neo-Romanesque was undoubtedly tied to the antipathy of the sleek modern aesthetic to extrinsic decoration.
- 65 Grewell, "Neomedievalism," pp. 36–37, from Robinson and Clements, "Living with Neomedievalism," p. 56.

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Medieval Art Collections

Janet T. Marquardt

Michelle Brown introduces the early history of museums in her essay, “The Modern Medieval Museum.” She also focuses on the importance of medieval manuscripts as works of art, of exhibition styles, and of digital technology for access. My task here is to foreground the development of major public and private collections of medieval art objects in the West within the context of connoisseurship and the rise of national cultural preservation.

First valued only by English antiquarians during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the collection and presentation of medieval art was not fashionable until the late eighteenth century and only gained momentum during the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century. Brown sets our scene when she writes of the destruction and dissemination caused by the Dissolution in England (1536–1541) and the Revolution in France (1789–1799). I would add the Wars of Religion (1562–1598), the subsequent collection and conservation of books and objects by scholars, and the first public libraries and exhibition spaces. The most important medieval collections are held in Britain, France, Germany, Spain, and the United States.

Churches and aristocratic estates lost many art objects during the upheavals of the sixteenth–eighteenth centuries but more were sold or melted down to pay for the Revolutionary Wars. Napoléon (1769–1821) stripped northern Italy of art for what would eventually become the first major public museum devoted entirely to art, the Louvre. Alexander Lenoir (1761–1839), the director of a depot set up for appropriated art in Paris, turned the jumble into a chronological

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historical presentation of French sculpture. This was a key moment in the creation of the modern museum, linking an appreciation of the historical past to the concept of posterity by a presentation of cultural achievement that could uplift the story of the state. New meanings replaced those lost by change. Throughout the nineteenth century, a struggle raged between demolition and conservation of medieval buildings. A commission on historic monuments was established under the French king Louis-Philippe (r. 1830–1848) to inventory and list key buildings for preservation and restoration but simultaneously many important medieval structures were dismantled as being too costly to maintain (such as the Abbey Church of Cluny) or hindering major remodeling projects (such as whole neighborhoods in the city of Paris under Baron Haussmann’s plan).

Initially, museums copied the presentation of art shaped by gentlemen collectors, grouping subject themes, object types, materials, or even balancing decorative interests. As public museums took on the role of education, art was rehung to introduce viewers to not only the history of art but to the very progress of civilization. The core of nearly every museum in the world was, and still is, artifacts from the ancient civilizations that bore European culture (Egyptian, Greek) and thereafter painting beginning with the Renaissance. Museums of decorative art, on the other hand, included the craftsmanship of luxury medieval objects, both to serve as models for modern manufacture and in romantic longing for pre-industrial techniques. Over time, medieval art would play a role in all European nationalist aspirations. Its recognition coincided with the conservation of historical fragments since the formulation of cultural identities depended upon material evidence. In some countries, sacred art has also been assembled regionally into diocesan museums with medieval objects as core components. Although appreciation during the nineteenth century was almost exclusively reserved for Gothic and early Renaissance arts, an appreciation for non-European and “primitive” arts during the twentieth century widened interest in early medieval and Romanesque examples. Temporary exhibitions organized around thematic, iconographic, and contextual orientations now supplement the standard museum layout.

Medieval Art Collections in Europe

France

Musée des Monuments français, Paris

Alexandre Lenoir, named curator in 1795 of a depot of unwanted sculpture and other “movable” media in the former convent of the Petits Augustins in Paris, proposed to the government that he organize a chronological presentation of the monuments as an educational opportunity for the Republic as well as a visible compensatory measure during the reaction against Revolutionary vandalism. Lenoir was channeling the tenor of the times when he began this organizational

style of presentation and continued to adapt his justifications for maintaining his museum as vandalism gave way to visible achievements of empire and then royal symbols for the restoration of kings. Originally including material from Antiquity through the eighteenth century (but losing much of the Classical material and French painting to the national museums established at the Louvre and the Palace of Versailles, respectively), Lenoir shaped his presentation to reconstruct and reinterpret fragments in creative ways, replacing religion with myth and elite symbolism with evocations of national history. In his organization of the material, he set out four major periods of art: Celtic antiquities, ancient sculpture, medieval and post-Renaissance monuments. So, although Lenoir himself preferred modern sculpture, most of what remained at the depot was older. The museum opened in 1796 and led the visitor through the convent cloister and introductory hall (originally the church) to rooms allocated works according to the century in which they were made, and out to the *Élysée* – the garden where Lenoir buried the remains of prominent historical figures and erected tomb monuments, many pastiches like that of Heloise and Abélard now remounted in Père Lachaise cemetery.

Based upon prevailing taste that condemned medieval art as primitive, Lenoir's earliest room was assigned to the thirteenth century but contained works from the Merovingians onward to serve as a base line from which to judge the progress of French art up to the Renaissance, epitomized by the sixteenth-century tomb of François I. In order to downplay the original panegyric purposes of most of this work, Lenoir mixed sacred with secular and noble with common, emphasizing the names of artists over those of the subjects. He commissioned restorations, fabrications of fragments into new monuments, and memorialized select notables from the French past. Each room was decorated to fit the period and natural lighting increased as visitors moved forward in time, equating their experience with the Enlightenment (fig. 38-1). We know about the arrangements and Lenoir's values because he wrote a catalog for visitors which stands as the first descriptive tour of museum highlights in print.

Lenoir's museum was closed by Quatremère de Quincy in 1816, many works returned to churches and family estates, and the building became the *École de Beaux Arts*. It was reborn, however, in 1882 at the Palais du Trocadéro as the plaster cast *Musée de la Sculpture comparée*, an idea from the architect Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) to reconstitute the visual history of France that Lenoir had begun. The new museum changed the terms of Lenoir's emphasis on Renaissance sculpture with Viollet's appreciation for medieval art and a broader mandate to reproduce prime examples of French craftsmanship from across the entire country. The name was changed back to *Musée des Monuments français* when the collection was completely reorganized for the 1937 Exposition universelle at the new Palais de Chaillot. After a fire in 1995, the collection was reopened in 2007 as part of the *Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine*. It features architectural fragments, maquettes and drawings, sculpture and wall paintings. The most impressive exhibits are the casts of entire church facades and the copies of frescoed domes.



FIGURE 38-1 up: A painting by Jean-Lubin Vauzelle: *The Musée des Monuments français in the Chapel of the Petits Augustins Convent in 1795*. Source: Wikipedia Commons. Figure 38-1 down: Photograph of the Galerie Davioud, a room with mostly Languedoc Romanesque reproduction, Musée des Monuments français, Paris. Source: Wikipedia Commons.

Musée National du Moyen Age/Thermes de Cluny, Paris

The most extensive museum of genuine medieval art in the world, France's former Cluny Museum in Paris is housed in two conjoined buildings on the city's left bank: a former Roman bath and the Paris residence of the abbots of the abbey of Cluny. Also indebted to Lenoir's model (inheriting many pieces from his museum) and established during the first period of public museum creation in Europe, France's National Museum of the Middle Ages grew around the collection of Alexandre du Sommerard (1779–1842) after his death. Du Sommerard was an early proponent of medieval art collections as inspirations toward historical imagination. Living in the abbots' former fifteenth-century mansion, he organized objects in separate rooms according to their original purpose.¹ Now joined to the continuously conserved *frigidarium* of the baths from the first century CE, the museum exhibits archeological finds from the Roman city of Lutetia alongside medieval treasures in a setting offering a profoundly historical effect. The high vaults and sophisticated plumbing of the *frigidarium* demonstrate advanced Roman engineering while the huge fireplaces, spiral staircases, flamboyant chapel, and elaborate fenestration of the mansion provide a perfect context in which to view luxury objects from the Middle Ages.

The city of Paris began placing sculptures from historical buildings in the *frigidarium*, including statues from Notre-Dame and other medieval churches, in 1836. The entire site was handed over to the state when it purchased the Cluny residence in 1843. Albert Lenoir, architect and son of the founder of the Musée des Monuments français, merged and restored the two sites as a museum. Du Sommerard's son, Edmond, was the first director when the museum opened in 1844; he stayed in the post for 40 years and, under the auspices of the Commission des monuments historiques, greatly expanded the holdings. In 1867, Edmond organized an international exposition in Paris following the model set by Lenoir père, well tuned to its nationalistic aspirations, providing chronological and thematic presentations of monumental reproductions of art as lessons in French history.

After the Second World War, a new evaluation of the museum's strengths led to reorganization of the presentations and redistribution of post-medieval objects to other museums in France. In 1977, the same year a Renaissance art museum was opened in Écouen, the heads of the 21 kings from the west façade of Notre-Dame were discovered in excavations for a new Paris bank and transferred to the Cluny museum where their bodies already stood. Concentrating on western European medieval art and objects from everyday life, including a large number of sacred Jewish objects acquired from private collections,² the museum was renamed the National Museum of the Middle Ages in 1992. Since 2000, a four-part medieval garden has been open to visitors on the north side of the site, bordering the Boulevard Saint-Germain.

The Louvre also has a medieval section, begun before the creation of the Cluny Museum with the purchase of private collections in 1825–1829. It continued to purchase and receive bequests, housed in the Richelieu Wing since 1993. Together the Louvre and the Musée national du Moyen Age demonstrate

France's rich medieval heritage as well as a long history of art acquisitions in Europe – whether through wealthy donors, the spoils of war, or purchase power. That a museum of exclusively medieval art could have become a major tourist destination is testimony to the French marketing of their history and the resultant popularity of such works as the Unicorn Tapestries. At the same time, tourists are shown examples of medieval art that stretch their expectations beyond the ubiquitous Gothic madonnas and suits of armor with important pieces like the Basel antependium or coronation ivory of Otto II and Theophanou.

The United Kingdom and Ireland

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Originally named the Museum of Manufacture, the Victoria and Albert museum opened in 1852 with the support of Prince Albert following his successful sponsorship of the Great Exhibition of 1851 held in the Crystal Palace and featuring international manufactured goods set against the best of British examples. The aim was to acquire high-quality examples of decorative arts with a focus on British design. After moving to South Kensington in 1857 and rapidly expanding with more exhibition halls, the collection grew to include to prints, drawings, paintings, and full-scale sculpture as well as significant materials from former colonies and important private collections (including objects donated by the collector and American railroad magnate, J.P. Morgan). It was for a new building with a grand entranceway dedicated by Queen Victoria in 1899 that the name was changed to the Victoria and Albert Museum. The V&A holds a sizeable and comprehensive collection of medieval art, with some of the finest examples of the minor arts in Europe, as well as important examples of medieval revival arts.³

British Museum, London

Although the British Museum was first opened in 1763 with the collections of Sir Hans Sloane as the first national public museum, it was not until the nineteenth century that medieval art was given a curator. Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826–1897) was hired in 1851 in the Department of Antiquities, later appointed “Keeper of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography.” Over time, he became the leading expert on medieval objects. His purchases and personal donations over 45 years of service enhanced the collection to the point of world significance, building upon the 1823 donation by George IV of the King's Library that had added important medieval manuscripts to the collection, and 82 works of the Lewis hoard, including the famous chess pieces, which had been purchased 1831–1832 from the Edinburgh dealer, T.A. Forrest.⁴ Franks acquired the ninth-century Lothair Crystal from the collection of Ralph Bernal in 1855 and the French fourteenth-century Royal Gold/Saint Agnes Cup in 1892. He donated all but one end panel from the Anglo-Saxon whalebone box, now called the Franks Casket, to the museum in 1867.

In 1898, Baron Ferdinand Rothschild (1839–1898) bequeathed his *Kunst-kammer* of 265 high-quality medieval and Renaissance objects from Waddesdon Manor to the British Museum. The core of the bequest was begun by Ferdinand's father, Anselm, in Frankfurt in 1830–1866 under the direction of the dealer Moritz Daniel Oppenheim, painter and professor at Weimar University.⁵ After 1872 in Vienna, Anselm added more works, including the most important one: the Holy Thorn Reliquary of Jean, Duc de Berry, from 1400. Ferdinand continued to add to his inherited collection after he married into the English Rothschilds, also collectors, and took up residence in London. He was able to view works and read catalogs from the South Kensington (Victoria and Albert) and British Museums, purchasing objects from exhibitions. He kept this growing curiosity collection separate, however, from his other art purchases and housed it in a room designed in an earlier style than those in the rest of his houses. His decision to leave it as a discrete entity to the British nation was influenced by the examples of contemporaries, most directly that of Lord Hertford's collection, bequeathed in 1897 and today known as the Wallace Collection at Hertford House, London.

The British Museum's early medieval holdings are particularly noteworthy since few museums contain substantial examples dated before 1000. Local objects, such as those from the Sutton Hoo Ship Burial, are shown alongside others from across the world. They inspired the academic focus of art historian Ernst Kitzinger on the transitions between classical and medieval art, seen in his book *Early Medieval Art in the British Museum* (1940). In 2009 the medieval material was reorganized and a new gallery was opened under the direction of curator James Robinson. Major exhibitions, utilizing the rich holdings of the British Museum along with loans, have contributed to a renewal of public interest in medieval art in the twenty-first century. One such show was the immensely popular *Treasures of Heaven* exhibition from 2010–2011, which was organized in tandem with the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore and featured works from collections across Europe and the United States.

Burrell Collection, Glasgow

The Burrell Collection of Art was primarily compiled during his lifetime by Sir William Burrell (1861–1958), who made his fortune in shipping. Consisting of over 8000 pieces, important medieval works include western European and Islamic weapons and armor, stained glass, ceramics, sculpture, furniture, and textiles such as carpets, embroideries, and significant late medieval tapestries. In fact, when William and Constance gifted the collection to the city of Glasgow in 1944, they included a condition that it be housed in a pollution-free environment, specifically mentioning concerns for medieval textiles.⁶ The building that eventually opened in 1983 in Pollock Park incorporated medieval stonework into the structural form and privileged the display of more than 700 panels of stained glass with walls of windows that allowed for fully day-lit galleries.⁷

Interest in the collection of stained glass in Scotland had grown during the formation of the Free Kirk after 1843, which rejected the severe Calvinist attitudes toward representational art of the traditional Church of Scotland. William Burrell preferred the styles fostered by the Arts and Crafts movement, those of the medieval and Renaissance periods, and began purchasing glass in earnest after 1918, acquiring much of Sir George Jerningham's collection that had been assembled by his dealer, John Christopher Hampp, throughout France and Germany after the end of the French Revolutionary Wars.⁸ Burrell bought Jerningham's glass from Grosvenor Thomas, a dealer and colleague of Wilfred Drake, one member of a family of stained glass experts. Burrell and Drake formed a partnership of sorts, in that Drake acquired and restored much European glass during World War II which, in turn, Burrell often purchased. Thomas's son and Drake also made it possible for Burrell to purchase 17 important windows from the collection of the American, William Randolph Hearst, in 1939. One of them, a thirteenth-century *Marriage at Cana* scene, consists of nearly entirely original materials, including the lead comes. Although Burrell felt he overpaid for the Hearst glass, he made up for it with other, bargain purchases such as 38 panels from Vale Royal Abbey or a small saint purchased from the dealer Arnold Seligmann in 1923 and identified after Burrell's death as original to the Abbey of Saint-Denis, France. The bulk of the Burrell Collection stained glass dates from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and comes primarily from England, Germany, and the Netherlands.

National Museum of Ireland, Dublin

The Republic of Ireland's National Museum was originally formed under British rule as part of their Science and Art Museums act of 1877, with collections from the Royal Dublin Society, the Royal Irish Academy, and Trinity College Dublin. It included artifacts found by the Geological Survey of Ireland and collected on world explorations by Captain Cook. By 1890, the museum had outgrown its space and Thomas Newenham Deane designed a new building on Kildare Street. In 1922, after independence, the Irish Free State expanded the display to add objects from around the country, presenting its impressive medieval collection as proof of a historically powerful native culture. Irish Artists who worked on government commissions used these artifacts as models to create new iconographic symbols for the state. The bulk of the material is from prehistory through the Middle Ages with a special section, "the Treasury," exhibiting the most valuable works, arranged chronologically from the Iron Age to the twelfth century. Thus the museum shows archeological artifacts and art together as evidence of a continuous civilization on the island. Although the Book of Kells is held by Trinity College, key pieces like the Ardagh Chalice, Tara Brooch, Cross of Cong, St. Patrick's Bell, and Faddan More Psalter form the core of the national collection.

Germany and Austria

Alte Pinakothek and Bayerische Staatsmuseum, Munich

The Boisserée brothers, Sulpiz (1783–1854) and Melchior (1786–1851), were to Germany what du Sommerard became for France. Two of the earliest connoisseurs of medieval art, they first encountered the works being kept at the Louvre in 1803 and, influenced by the Romantic theories of Friedrich Schlegel, became concerned that the medieval art they saw on their travels through Europe was being destroyed.⁹ They began to study and conserve it almost immediately. Sulpiz focused on research about medieval art and was instrumental in finding the original designs for Cologne Cathedral, eventually convincing the crown prince of Prussia to complete construction. Melchior concentrated on making purchases in order to preserve medieval art. From 1810 to 1819, the brothers publicly exhibited their collection in Heidelberg, attracting the attention of the royal curator for Ludwig I of Bavaria (r. 1825–1848), who purchased and moved it to Munich. Sulpiz was then appointed curator of sculpture for Bavaria. Part of the movement to open princely collections to ever larger audiences, Ludwig established museums in order to permanently exhibit his collections.¹⁰ The Boisserée pieces joined works from those collected by the Wittelbach family up to the sixteenth century to form the Alte Pinakothek Museum, opened in 1836. It became one of the first European institutions to foster appreciation for medieval art among public viewers, predating the Cluny Museum in Paris.

In 1855, Maximilian II (r. 1848–1864) founded a museum for Bavarian craftsmanship, the Bayerische Staatsmuseum. Its medieval art collection is particularly strong in late medieval sculpture and painting. Some pieces are exhibited in period rooms, such as the Gothic painted Council Chamber of the Augsburg Weavers Guild. Earlier works include the Romanesque sculptures from the abbey of Wessobrunn and the Scandinavian ivory and bronze Bamberg Casket of St Kunigunde (c.1000).

Schnütgen Museum, Cologne

In 1876, the cathedral vicar of Cologne, Alexander Schnütgen (1843–1918), proposed an exhibition of medieval art to the board of trustees of the diocesan museum. At the same time, Schnütgen was privately making his own collection as well as serving on many local and regional art and monument committees and was the 1902 chairman of the Kunsthistorische Kunstaussstellung in Düsseldorf, where he contributed 546 of his own pieces. Exhibited in his home in dense displays according to material and function, Schnütgen's collection focused upon ecclesiastical objects, many separated from their original context during the Napoleonic invasions and thus associated with a form of German nationalism.¹¹ In 1906 Schnütgen donated his collection to the city on the condition it be housed in a separate museum. In 1910 a neo-medieval annex was built on to the

Kunstgewerbemuseum (Arts and Crafts Museum) for the Schnütgen collection but in 1931 an exchange was made between Cologne museums, thus acquiring for the Schnütgen some of its most important works, including the ninth-century ivory Comb of St. Heribert. The next year, the newly independent Schnütgen Museum moved across the Rhine River to Deutz and into the former monastery of Saint Heribert where the works stayed until 1939, when they were hidden for safekeeping across Germany. In Deutz, Schnütgen's compact presentation was changed to emphasis on lone objects in a spare setting, arranged by medium within a linear chronology. Unlike the earlier grouping as historical liturgical tools, the art took on spiritual-aesthetic power. Neo-medieval works were jettisoned and more originals were added. It was during this decade that the director, Franz Witte (1876–1937), drew cultural parallels between medieval art and National Socialist ideals of Christian anti-modernism.

Saint Heribert was destroyed in 1945, so an architectural reconstruction of the Romanesque Cäcilienkirche was undertaken between 1950 and 1956 to house the museum in the city center, lending a contextual aura to the viewing experience. Part of a double-church complex with the parish church of St. Peter, St. Cecelia's tympanum is now on exhibit in the museum. Reopened in 2010 after renovation, the Schnütgen has been physically connected to the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, part of the Neumarkt cultural district. The collection is primarily medieval, one of the most significant in the world, but incorporates works up to the nineteenth century.

Kunstgewerbemuseum (The Museum of Decorative Arts), Berlin

The recently renovated Kunstgewerbemuseum in the Kulturforum, Berlin, houses significant medieval artworks, including 44 pieces of the famous Guelph Treasure or *Welfenschatz*. From western workshops as well as Byzantine sources, the earliest objects date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹² They were commissioned by members of the Guelph (*Welf*) and Brunon families, beginning with Henry the Lion (1129–1195) and passing through his descendants Emperor Otto IV and Otto I (Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg). Along with later works from the Gothic period through the fifteenth century, the collection was kept at Brunswick Cathedral (Braunschweig) treasury until the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg at Hanover took it for his court chapel in 1671. It consists of assorted forms of reliquaries in metals, enamels, and ivory; portable altars; various small caskets; a standing cross; and other liturgical items.

In 1929, 82 items were sold by the duke to art dealers: an example of the economic straits many Europeans faced during the upheavals of the long nineteenth century that forced the sale of aristocratic heirlooms. During the 1930–1931 tour of the United States, a large number were acquired by important municipal museums (see entries for New York, Cleveland, and Chicago below). Most of the remaining objects were purchased for the Prussian State by Hermann Göring and

became the subject of a 2015 restitution lawsuit in the United States by heirs of the family after the Limbach Commission ruled against them in Germany.¹³ Some of the most elaborate early pieces from the Treasure, among them the so-called Dome or Cupola Reliquary from Cologne, the Eilbertus portable altar, and the eponymous standing cross, all twelfth century, remain in Berlin.

Belvedere Palace Museum, Vienna

Highlighted in the permanent exhibition at the Upper Belvedere in Vienna are Late Gothic sculpture and panel painting that survey the most significant artistic developments of the International Gothic style from c.1400 to the early sixteenth century. The remaining works of the museum's important late medieval collection are on display in the *Medieval Treasury* study collection, installed in 2007 in the Palace Stables at the Lower Belvedere.

Spain

Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona

In Spain, the cultural character of the nation-state and that of the regional "nation" are separate and part of a policy of regional identity and governmental decentralization initiated after the death of its modern dictator, Francisco Franco (1892–1975), when democracy under an elected government was installed. Catalonia's extensive medieval art collection is held in the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC) in Barcelona, the regional capital. Although this is a museum for art from all periods of Catalan history, until the ground floor was transformed in 2014 to accommodate 1300 works from c.1850–1950,¹⁴ the museum was primarily identified as the repository of the visually distinctive Catalan medieval art, particularly the Romanesque frescoes that were removed from the walls of Eastern Pyrenean churches in the period 1919–1923.

The MNAC belongs to the material history of Catalan identity recovered during the late nineteenth-century Catalan *Renaixença* (Renaissance) and continued in the twentieth century before Franco's death as a policy to create a powerful regional heritage garnering resistance to his repressive creation of a pure "Spanishness" centered in Madrid. Recognizable as a powerful style, different from much other European art, Romanesque monumental architecture and painting flourished in the area during the rule of the first powerful Catalonian counts. For those trying to shape a regional identity, this period marked the beginning of Catalonia's political unification.

The museum opened as a provincial antiquities museum in 1880 but by 1915 had grown to include the Municipal Museum of Fine Arts, housed in a building built during the 1888 Universal Exposition held in Barcelona, the Palace of the Cuitadella. In 1907, Catalonia created the Junta de Museus (Board of Museums)

and Josep Puig I Cadafalch (1857–1956) led the *Missió a la Ratlla d’Arago*, identifying Eastern Pyrenean churches filled with Romanesque fresco painting as valuable Catalan *lieux de mémoire*. Discovered and photographed first in 1904, a program was undertaken to paint copies of the murals and publish them. Beginning in 1907 and continuing through 1921, Josep Pijoan published detailed color reproductions based upon the paintings of artists Joan Vallhonrat, Rafael Padilla, and Alexandre Planella.¹⁵

However, during the years 1919–1923, after the sale of the apse fresco from Santa Maria de Mur to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, concerns arose about Catalan medieval art going abroad, thus dispersing the region’s heritage. The Junta de Museus formed a team of curators and Italian technicians, led by Josep Guidiol and Emili Gandia, to remove the frescoes from the church walls for conservation in the Museu d’Art i Arqueologia in the capital. In 1934, the museum was renamed the Museu d’Art de Catalunya in the new Palau Nacional on the Montjuic Hill park. The collection of Lluís Plandiura was added with over 1800 works of art, including some of the frescoes that he had purchased before churches were named Historical and Artistic Monuments, as well as other private collections during the Civil War.

Joan Ainaud de Lasarte directed the Catalan art museums from 1948 to 1985. He coordinated an ambitious presentation of Catalonian culture with the international exhibition “Romanesque Art” that opened in 1961 in Barcelona and Santiago de Compostela. Under the auspices of the Council of Europe, this was an effort to employ art in the reconciliation of European nations so recently in conflict. In 2004, the new Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya reopened after extensive renovations that reunified early arts with those of the Museu d’Art Modern, the Numismatics Cabinet, the Cabinet of Drawing and Prints, and the History of Art Library. The collection has served as a model for regional diocesan museums, such as those at Vic, Girona, Solsona, and la Seu d’Urgell, where local medieval materials, long conserved, are now arranged in the manner of the national museum.¹⁶ In the MNAC today, medieval displays set together frescoes and related objects, such as altars, crucifixes, or sculptural decoration from the same building, along with galleries of later art. The restored frescoes are mounted on wooden purpose-built apse- and vault-shaped structures inside the MNAC (fig. 38-2). This type of presentation had only previously been seen in Paris at the later Musée des monuments français. A redesign of the installation in 1995 by Gae Aulenti (1927–2012) revealed these apse structures in their entirety as important museum objects themselves. Catalonia is unique in removing nearly all its medieval frescoes into a museum. In contrast, Denmark left wall paintings in situ at around 600 churches across the country after removing the whitewash with which they were covered during the Reformation.



FIGURE 38-2 left: View inside the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona. Source: reproduced by permission of Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya. Figure 38-2 right: View inside the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona. Source: reproduced by permission of Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya.

Medieval Art Collections in the United States

In the United States, original art was initially the purview of private art collectors, who focused on the compilation of European-style collections.¹⁷ The first municipal museums, opened after the Civil War, primarily exhibited painted reproductions and plaster casts of masterpieces selected to educate the public viewer and to provide a broad collection of 'great' works within limited budgets.¹⁸ Few medieval works were included.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, huge fortunes that had been made in America allowed dealers to successfully peddle the precious objects of European aristocracy, ecclesiastics, and palaces that had come on to the open market. For American collectors, the art meant a connection with the Old World, with national heritages that were claimed through family bloodlines, and with a sophistication and culture seen to be lacking on the North American continent.¹⁹ Eventually, private collections were bequeathed to fill or found public museums where some of the greatest pieces of medieval art can now be found.

Early appreciation for the Middle Ages in the United States followed the English medieval revival in the late eighteenth century of neo-Gothic architecture and medieval artifact collections. Everyone from Queen Victoria to American church architects carried a fashion for medieval reproductions. Only a handful of Americans became interested in original medieval art and purchased it for their personal collections. In 1909, the United States government passed the Payne Bill, which repealed a 20% tax on art importation. In 1913, France passed a law restricting the export of artworks. It is between these two dates that American collectors were the most active in the medieval art market. The mere scope of all the medieval art that passed from Europe to America can be judged by the series of publications sponsored under the aegis of the International Center of Medieval Art concerning the sculpture now held in the United States.²⁰ At a time when reproductions and casts were being acquired by American museums in large quantities, private collectors helped create a demand for original objects that would completely change public expectations. Eventually, major American museums would compete with European institutions to purchase important works of art, helping raise market values.²¹ As donor's personal memorials lost ground to art-historical layouts, museums became a tool to enlighten and improve the American citizen, organized geographically and chronologically, highlighting human cultural achievements. Nevertheless, American fascination with the lavish past of European aristocracy has maintained lively interest in period rooms that "actively recycle social identities of the past for the benefit of the living."²²

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Professor Charles Eliot Norton (1827–1908) at Harvard (the first chair in art history in the United States), influenced by his friend John Ruskin, cultivated the first serious, lasting interest in medieval art, which led to an early concentration of

examples in the Boston area. Neo-medieval architecture went beyond the popular Gothic of practitioners like Ralph Adams Cram (1863–1942) to include the Romanesque style employed by H.H. Richardson (1838–1886).

It was Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840–1924), who acquired the first extensive collection of medieval art in America (along with important works from other periods, especially European paintings), beginning to purchase from European dealers during the 1890s and opening her home, Fenway Court, to public view in 1903. She received advice from art historians like Norton and Bernard Berenson, both of whom were especially interested in Italy, and incorporated designs and salvaged architectural sculpture from Venice and Florence into her house-museum. This was a divergence from most revival construction up to the time, since she used genuine historical material rather than only newly reproduced architectural elements.

During the 1940s, Georg and Hans Swarzenski built up the Museum of Fine Arts collection that had begun with private donations and a few select purchases, including the Catalan Romanesque apse fresco from Santa Maria de Mur.²³ Georg's introductory blockbuster exhibition in 1940, "Arts of the Middle Ages 100–1400," drew loans from municipal and university museums, private collectors, and a large number of dealers, whose works were available for purchase.²⁴ Consisting only of works held in the United States, the resulting assemblage clearly demonstrated how American tastes had warmed to original medieval art during the proceeding century.

Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge

The Fogg Art Museum at Harvard acquired a head from the west portal of Saint-Denis and cloister capitals from the French abbeys of Moutiers-Saint-Jean and Saint-Pons-de-Thomièrè during the same time (1918–1922) that Barnard was gathering his second collection of art works.²⁵ Among other purchases, these helped shifted the museum's focus from casts and photographs of mostly classical art for student enrichment to the acquisition of significant original pieces. Without university funding, the collection grew through donations and solicitations from the Fogg's directors: the collector Edward Forbes and the humanist/banker Paul Sachs.²⁶ In 1921, Arthur Kingsley Porter joined the Fine Arts faculty; his research and advice would guide medieval art purchases. A second building that housed the Fine Arts Department with the museum on the model of a laboratory opened in 1927. A significant expansion of this Fogg opened in 2014, designed by Renzo Piano, incorporating the holdings of all three Harvard art museums: the Fogg, the Busch-Reisinger (Germanic arts), and the Sackler (ancient Mediterranean, Islamic, East Asian, and Indian arts).

Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

One of the first collectors to follow Gardner's lead was Henry Walters (1848–1931), who began with his father's collection in their home, first opened in 1874, but

expanded in 1909 with a new gallery for the benefit of Baltimore residents. Henry added his own rare books and manuscripts, then quickly branched out when he acquired the Massarenti collection (Palazzo Accoramboni, Rome) in 1902. Walters was interested in a wide variety of arts: Classical, medieval, Renaissance, and nineteenth-century European, as well as Egyptian, ancient Near Eastern, and Islamic art. He was guided by dealers, especially the Europeans: Henri Daguerre, Dikran Kelekian, and the Seligmanns.²⁷ The Walters has an especially strong concentration in medieval enamels, ivories, and manuscripts.

The Cloisters and Metropolitan Museum, New York City

The only museum wholly dedicated to medieval art and the best-known collection in the United States is due to an American who was not wealthy, but an artist with a skill at finding authentic material and selling it to his compatriots.²⁸ George Grey Barnard (1863–1938) was a sculptor trained at the Art Institute of Chicago who got into debt on a commission in Paris in 1906 and turned for income to the acquisition and resale of medieval sculpture and architectural elements, including entire cloister ensembles from the south of France that he pieced together from across the countryside where portions had been dispersed and reused for other purposes.

The most extensive finds that Barnard compiled, the cloisters of Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa, Saint-Guilhelm-le-Désert, Trie-en-Bigorre, and Bonnefont-en-Comminges, he was unable to sell. Undeterred, he exhibited these and nearly 600 other works in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City in a brick building shaped like a church with an apse, upper galleries and garden formed from the stone remains of abbeys, and a pastiche of unrelated medieval objects installed in a manner reminiscent of Lenoir's eighteenth-century *Musée des Monuments français* in Paris.²⁹ Barnard named his new museum The Cloisters. It opened in December 1914 and treated visitors to a full Romantic neo-medieval experience with candles, chant, incense, and guides in monastic robes. The photographs from this period echo the most evocative preserved conditions in parts of Isabella Stewart Gardner's museum in Boston, which had opened only a few years earlier in 1903. His emphasis on Romanesque sculpture helped foster interest in this style among other American collectors and curators, while the reverent atmosphere created for formerly sacred works enhanced those same inclinations toward museums of art.

John D. Rockefeller Jr. (1874–1960), also a collector of medieval art, made it possible in 1925 for the Metropolitan Museum of Art to purchase Barnard's museum. Rockefeller envisaged the need for a larger location to house the Cloisters' collection – that he would help grow – and to that end, donated the Billings estate at the northern tip of Manhattan, along with acres of land, to New York City in 1930. He commissioned landscape architects to create Fort Tryon Park and, in 1931, the architect Charles Collens (1873–1956) to research and design a special neo-medieval building for The Cloisters. Collens worked with director and curator Joseph Breck (1885–1933) to reference numerous buildings in France – as well as Rockefeller's original idea for the exterior appearance of an English castle – and

display the works according to their Romanesque and Gothic context.³⁰ Such an evocative historical recreation was wholly endorsed by contemporary art historians.³¹ Authentic materials were found in Catalonia and around New York; stonemasons were drawn from afar, even Europe. The reconstructed cloister from Cuxa (approximately half its original size), with its monastic garden, forms the center with chapels, chapter house, and exhibition halls around it, followed by the other cloisters.³² This new wing of the Met opened in May 1938 (fig. 38-3).

Since most of the major objects in Barnard's collection, and many that Rockefeller purchased and donated, came from France, French criticism of this American presentation was initially quite harsh and France passed ever more stringent laws against the exportation of historical works.³³ However, Barnard was convincing in his claim to have saved the sites he reassembled from oblivion for a new appreciation and he was awarded the French *Legion d'honneur* in 1928. He amassed a second collection of medieval and Renaissance art, including the cloister from Saint-Genis-des-Fontaines, which joined other pieces displayed at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1931.³⁴ The presentation mirrored that of *The Cloisters*, integrating substantial architectural elements into the larger museum building.



FIGURE 38-3 Photograph from 1938 showing a view of the reconstructed Trie cloister at The Cloisters Museum, New York City. Reproduced with permission from the Metropolitan Museum, New York City.

Under Breck's successor, James Rorimer (1905–1966), many neo-Gothic parts of the structure were replaced with authentic antiques and more works were acquired for the museum including Rockefeller's prized Unicorn Tapestries and the controversial ivory cross from Bury St. Edmund's.³⁵ Other works draw visitors: the Merode Altarpiece, the Belles Heures of Jean de Berry and the Jeanne d'Evreux Book of Hours, the ivory mirror case with the Castle of Love battle scene, luxurious liturgical objects, and prime examples of stained glass.

Besides the distant Cloisters annex, the Metropolitan Museum, in its main location on Fifth Avenue, holds another important collection of medieval art originally housed in the Wing of Decorative Arts that opened in 1910 – even before Barnard's Cloisters – mostly due to the influential founding member John Pierpont Morgan's extensive collection that he moved from London.³⁶ Morgan (1837–1913) acquired his works in wide travels across Europe and working closely with the Paris dealer, Jacques Seligmann. He was as much interested in the minor arts and in pre-Gothic periods as the more current popular styles, thus accessing a broader market and eventually influencing public appreciation. Two-and-a-half miles away, the Pierpont Morgan Library, Morgan's personal library made public in 1924, has one of the world's most important collections of medieval manuscripts, including the famous Lindau Gospels.

Museum of Art, Cleveland

The curator of the Cleveland Museum of Art, William Milliken (1889–1978), had worked as an assistant curator of Decorative Arts at the Met while J.P. Morgan's objects for the Loan Show of 1914–1916 were there. After World War I, he began to acquire medieval art for Cleveland, in particular high-quality minor arts, in partnership with museum president J.H. Wade who provided the funds. In 1930, dealers put the Guelph Treasure of 85 objects up for sale. Milliken was traveling in Germany at the time and was able to make the first purchase of six pieces.³⁷ In 1931 the Guelph Treasure toured the United States, garnering enormous attention for medieval art, and Milliken purchased more during its stop in Cleveland. In the end, Cleveland acquired nine major pieces, nearly emptying one of the museum trust funds.³⁸ Milliken was soon after made director and put Cleveland on the map of first-class municipal museums.

Art Institute of Chicago

The museum at the Art Institute of Chicago began as an educational arm of the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts from 1879. The medieval collection grew through the donations and volunteer amateur curatorial services of members, mostly women, from prominent local families. Among these important collectors and donors were Martin and Carrie Ryerson, Mary Mitchell Blair, and Kate S. Buckingham. The latter was instrumental in bringing the Guelph Treasure exhibition to

Chicago in 1931 and also purchasing, along with Marion McCormick and others, eight pieces from it for the Art Institute.

Glencairn Museum, Bryn Athyn

Outside Pittsburgh, a private collection remains intact at Glencairn Museum, the neo-Romanesque exhibition house of Raymond Pitcairn (1885–1966) and Mildred Glenn (1886–1979) in Bryn Athyn, next to the neo-Gothic cathedral they sponsored, designed by Ralph Adams Cram. The house (1928–1939) integrates original medieval stained glass and sculpture, primarily French and all drawn from the period 1100–1300, which initially interested Raymond Pitcairn as part of the design process for the cathedral construction. Pitcairn worked with dealers in Europe and he bought pieces from Barnard, Georges Demotte, and Joseph Brummer. He also acquired books, engravings, casts, and sketches (many from important nineteenth-century restorations, such as the glass at Saint-Denis and the Sainte-Chapelle) that would support the design workshops for the cathedral. The site is now a museum maintained by the Academy of the New Church, to which the house was donated in 1980 and where the world religious artifacts of the Academy museum were combined with Pitcairn's own collection.

Other Americans may have turned their homes into museums to take advantage of lower customs fees, such as John Hays Hammond, whose collection of ancient, medieval, and Renaissance art is now open to the public in his neo-medieval home, Hammond Castle, built in Gloucester, Massachusetts 1926–1929.³⁹ Hays did not always carefully distinguish between originals and reproductions, while William Randolph Hearst bought so prolifically, he did not even see many of the objects. His purchases include major portions of the Abbey of Óvila, which was never transferred to his home at Hearst Castle and is now scattered in pieces around California. Parts of Hearst's collection were auctioned after 1937; some medieval pieces can now be found back in Europe, such as in the Burrell Collection.

Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, Durham

In 1966, Ella Baché Brummer gave Duke University a collection of Antique and medieval art works remaining in the collections of the late Joseph (1883–1947) and Ernest (1891–1964) Brummer to serve as a study collection for art history. This stellar acquisition prompted Duke to remodel their university museum. The Brummers were important art dealers after World War I, with galleries in Paris and New York. Nearly every American collection of medieval art has at least one piece acquired from them; the Met alone purchased over 400 between 1920 and 1940.⁴⁰ Study of Duke's Brummer Collection has proven valuable in particular when unidentified works belonging to other institutions were linked, such as a group of Romanesque stone figures that has been shown to include four apostles at Duke, a Saint Peter at Smith College, two apostles at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), and an angel and another apostle at the University of Rochester.⁴¹

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- 24 Kathryn McClintock, “‘Arts of the Middle Ages’ and the Swarzenskis,” in Elizabeth Bradford Smith, *Medieval Art in America*, pp. 203–208.
- 25 Kathryn Brush, “The Capitals from Moutiers-Saint-Jean (Harvard University Art Museums) and the Carving of Medieval Art Study in America After World War I,” in J. Marquardt and A. Jordan, eds., *Medieval Art and Architecture after the Middle Ages* (Newcastle, 2009), pp. 298–311.
- 26 Kathryn Brush, *Vastly More than Brick and Mortar: Reinventing the Fogg Art Museum in the 1920s* (Cambridge and New Haven, CT, 2003).
- 27 Jacques Seligmann employed his brothers, Arnold and Simon, and son Germain (who spelled the family name Seligman). Arnold split off to form his own company in 1912.
- 28 Elizabeth Bradford Smith, “George Grey Barnard: Artist/Collector/Dealer/Curator,” in Smith, ed., *Medieval Art in America*, pp. 133–142.
- 29 Smith suggests that Barnard was influenced by his time as a student in the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where the core buildings were those in which Lenoir had housed his museum, during those years (1880s) that interest was returning to that history: Elizabeth Bradford Smith, *Medieval Art in America*, p. 141.
- 30 William H. Forsyth, “Five Crucial People in the Building of the Cloisters,” in Elizabeth C. Parker, ed., *The Cloisters*, pp. 55–57.
- 31 Thomas Crow, “The Practice of Art History in America,” *Daedalus*, 135 (2006), pp. 75–76.
- 32 Mary B. Shepard, “The Cuxa Cloister,” in *Period Rooms in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 1996), pp. 24–31.
- 33 Hubert Landais, “The Cloisters or the Passion for Medieval Art,” in Elizabeth C. Parker, ed., *The Cloisters*, pp. 41–42.
- 34 Landais points out the shared provenance of medieval works in American museums: For instance, Philadelphia has a portion of the cloister from Saint-Genis-des-Fontaines reconstructed around a fountain from Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa while New York has a fountain from Saint-Genis-des-Fontaines in the cloister from Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa. Likewise, Toledo (Ohio) also has bits of Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa and the cloister of Pontaut, whose chapter house is in New York. *Ibid.*, 44.
- 35 Rorimer was director and Thomas Hoving the young curator who told the story of this purchase in *King of the Confessors* (New York, 1981). His account and interpretation of its meaning has since been questioned by Elizabeth Parker and Charles Little, *The Cloisters Cross* (New York, 1994).
- 36 Besides the lifting of the import tariff in 1909, Morgan was also prompted to ship his art collections to the United States from England due to the nearly simultaneous enactment of a British law levying inheritance tax on art. It was his son, however, J.P. Morgan Jr., who formalized the larger loans into Met donations. R. Aaron Rottner, “J.P. Morgan and the Middle Ages,” in Elizabeth C. Parker, ed., *The Cloisters*, pp. 115–126. George Pratt and other American collectors donated more. Some objects, such as the Antioch “Chalice,” were originally at the Cloisters and later moved into the city.

- 37 Heather McCune Bruhn, "The Guelph Treasure: The Traveling Exhibition and Purchases by Major American Museums," in Elizabeth Bradford Smith, ed., *Medieval Art in America*, pp. 199–202.
- 38 Heather McCune Bruhn, "William M. Milliken and Medieval Art," in Elizabeth Bradford Smith, ed., *Medieval Art in America*, pp. 195–198.
- 39 Jennifer Borland and Martha Easton, "Integrated Pasts: Glencairn Museum and Hammond Castle," *Gesta* 57.1 (2018), pp. 95–118.
- 40 Brummer sold the St. Louis Art Museum an entire fifteenth-century staircase from Brittany, which was installed 1931 in a "Gothic" room: Sherry C.M. Lindquist, "A 'Sympathetic Setting' for Medieval Art in St. Louis," in Christina Neilsen, ed., *To Inspire and Instruct: A History of Medieval Art in Midwestern Museums* (Newcastle, 2008), pp. 99–116.
- 41 Jean M. French, "Search for a Provenance: The Duke University Apostles," in Caroline Bruzelius, *Brummer*, pp. 54–73.



The Modern Medieval Museum

Michelle P. Brown

What is a museum? It is a place where materials are collected, curated, classified, conserved, and preserved. I am writing about the modern medieval museum from the perspective of a former curator of illuminated manuscripts/outreach officer and latterly digital curator working within a large national library (the British Library) – an international repository of global memory and identity – and as an emerita professor of medieval manuscript studies, who is still actively working in the field and who has curated a number of exhibitions. This may not seem the obvious vantage-point from which to survey the scene, but in fact it is. Illuminated medieval manuscripts are in themselves the largest repositories of medieval art. A single book, such as the Sherborne Missal (British Library, Add. MS 74236) made for Sherborne Abbey (Dorset) at the beginning of the fifteenth century, could fill an art gallery in its own right if its 694 pages were disbound and viewed as panel paintings. Such a mode of viewing would, however, emphasize the artistic merit at the expense of an understanding of the book as artifact and as a portal to the past – a complex meeting-ground for the various aspects of human currency in ideas, literature, faith, science, technology, craftsmanship, patronage, economics, and other facets of social contact and contract.

Such manuscripts are also at the forefront of developments in interpretative access and electronic articulation. For the medievals perfected the arts of manipulating and signaling the principles of hypertext and intertextuality long before our electronic age. The complex interrelationships between word, sound, and image lie at the core of their modes of communication, record, and self-image.¹

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Not surprisingly, manuscripts such as the unique copy of the Anglo-Saxon epic poem *Beowulf*,² the Archimedes Palimpsest,³ the Book of Kells,⁴ the Utrecht Psalter,⁵ and the St. Alban's Psalter⁶ have become the vehicles by which the frontiers of humanities computing and digital imaging are being advanced.

The challenges of accessing, ordering, and preserving information, verbal and visual, underpinned the creation of the very first museum – the Cage of the Muses, the great library of Alexandria. Its founder during the 280s BCE, the Hellenic ruler of Egypt Ptolemy I (assisted by Demetrius of Athens), introduced the age-old adage “knowledge is power” when he recognized that in order not only to effectively conquer but also to rule other peoples, it was necessary to understand them. As Luciano Canfora has outlined in his discussion of the Alexandrian Museum, the key to this lay in acquiring access to their group knowledge and identity in the form of their written and artistic record.⁷ Thus the Hebrew Bible was translated by a team of scholar-scribes into a Greek copy for the library – the Septuagint – and some 400 000 papyrus scrolls (this figure does not represent individual works, most of which each filled a number of scrolls) were assembled from around the known world to form the first “universal” library, building upon the model of other ancient repositories, such as the library at Ninevah. The first classification systems were devised by the Alexandrian library's custodians, notably Eratosthenes and Callimachus, to bring order to this otherwise unfathomable pool of knowledge: the method they originated being a subject-based division.⁸ In this ordering lay the origins of the epistemic systematization advocated by Foucault which continues to inform much of the compartmentalized organization and teaching of academic disciplines and the study of human culture.

It is therefore ironic, if explicable, that as a result of the extension of such principles of rationalization most of the world's great collections of medieval manuscripts now reside not in museums, but in libraries. This raises a potential dilemma for professional library managers. They do not run museums per se, but are part of a vibrant international information community and are faced with the challenges of selection and preservation of our written and audio-visual recorded knowledge, which escalates giddily in its annual volume, and of balancing the requirements of local and remote users with a wide range of backgrounds and needs: schools and teachers, lifelong learners, higher educational institutions and their faculties and students, professional bodies, media, and the business community. A heritage front-end can, and often should, be an integral part of such information edifices, acknowledging that there is no statute of limitations on history and that every item is a brick in the ever-growing wall of human knowledge and achievement and that books containing art are, nonetheless, books. Maximizing the impact of a heritage component of such collections, by exposing and interpreting them through exhibitions, educational outreach, publication, and the web to heighten public and governmental awareness and to enrich lives, can make them an effective showcase for the work and aims of the institution as a whole. However, the very range of opportunities available to us today is thrown into stark relief against the pragmatic, logistical, and financial

restraints imposed by competition for limited resources. Faced with more material and more potential than ever, we are also faced with the responsibility of more choice and decision-making. Theoretically, the great library of Alexandria, tragically consumed by fire, the perennial enemy of libraries (we still construct firewalls to protect our virtual archives), could today be reconstructed and extended on the internet to form an integrated, searchable global museum in which written and recorded knowledge and art and artifacts could be combined and suspended within a perpetual state of virtual preservation.

In fact, this is at best a long way off. The funding needed to prepare or convert records into a unified electronic standard and to digitize the materials themselves would be prohibitive, even if international cross-disciplinary standards were agreed upon. The long-term costs of maintaining and supplementing such a global site would also be crippling, as would the serious issues of electronic preservation which, at present, would require the construction of a “dark cave” of mythical propensities to allow electronic data to be perpetually preserved, refreshed, and accessed by new hardware in order to give it more than a 10-year archival shelf-life. Add to that the amount of international diplomacy which would be required in order to overcome issues of collaboration, ownership, rights, and compensation for any lost revenue generation (which, have no doubt, is necessary to help such institutions maintain their roles and invest in their futures) and we see that we are faced with a vision which may be as innovative as that of Ptolemy II but is equally doomed to be a victim of human conflict, divergent aspirations, and limited resource.

If a global museum is still but a dream, there are, nonetheless, optimistic and inspiring moves toward making as much material freely available on the web as possible. What does it matter if one has to access several sites and watch them grow and develop over the years, in response to changes in scholarship, technology, and public need, rather than getting a one-stop-shop uni-cultural overview? The diversity may in fact ensure continued response to challenge and debate. Posing the question is often as important as obtaining the answer.

Crowd-sourcing is also becoming a game-changer. The Walters in Baltimore adopted an innovative approach, a few years ago, of “publishing” an image per day on Flickr from its Islamic manuscripts collection. It was logistically possible to capture and make available digital images of this part of the collections but without the specialist resource to accompany the images with catalog descriptions. This public issue of images grew into a crowd-generated catalog. Despite professional qualms regarding the quality of information generated, without peer review or curatorial editing, it soon became apparent that the crowd was self-policing and that any unverified information was rapidly challenged by fellow scholars and enthusiasts.

Exhibitions and digital catalogs (such as the British Library’s Digital Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts) are also now often accompanied by online exhibitions, whilst websites mounted by members of the academic community or the wider public, and electronic pinboards such as Pinterest, enable the public to

curate their own electronic exhibitions. Simultaneously, some museums, such as the Petrie Museum of Egyptology in University College London – which is ultra-conservative in its nineteenth-century style of display, reflecting the period of its establishment – are adopting new electronic techniques to enhance the experience of exhibits and the level of information accompanying them. In this case, 3D modeling can enable visitors to see inside mummified remains, to explore the inside of mummy masks and ancient Egyptian foot-warmers. It has also been exploring the use of phone-scanned Qcodes to supplement label information with access to online catalogs and other learning resources. All of these trends are conspiring to further democratize public access to rare and otherwise somewhat *recherché* materials and to enthuse people by born-digital means concerning the thrill of exploring earlier stages of socio-historical human development via material culture.

So much for the future, what of the past? How did the knowledge, art, and artifacts of the Middle Ages feature in the development of museums and libraries? Some of the greatest collections of such materials were assembled during the medieval period itself. The seventh-century Anglo-Saxon nobleman-turned-monastic founder, Benedict Biscop, traveled to Rome and Gaul no fewer than five times during his adult life and on each trip brought back to his foundations of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow in Northumbria paintings, relics, icons, and books to adorn their churches (built *more romanum* in stone by masons and glaziers from Gaul). In so doing he also founded one of the best libraries of the early Middle Ages, which allowed Bede, who entered the twin foundation as a boy of seven, to become one of the foremost scholars of his day and an internationally best-selling author throughout the Middle Ages. At Durham Cathedral, with St. Cuthbert and Bede's shrines at its core, the magnificent monastic library and its lapidarium and treasury are being integrated into a new visitor/research experience, in collaboration with Durham University and its library. Likewise, the collection of ancient Roman and early medieval artifacts assembled by Abbot Suger of St.-Denis formed an invaluable stimulus to the French contribution to Romanesque and early Gothic art. For the churches of medieval Europe and of Byzantium and the Near East were the museums of their day: places where books, art, and other artifacts were assembled, studied, and gave rise in their turn to the creation of new works and styles. In this respect they were the descendants of the ancient temple libraries, such as the ancient Egyptian Ramesseum. Their buildings and the works that adorned them, some of which have remained in situ, continue to serve a "museum" and heritage function alongside their prime concern – the celebration of a living faith tradition. Cathedral treasuries such as those at Cologne, Trier, Reims, Siena, Florence, Pisa, and Durham display their remaining portable artifacts to the public and some have customized display facilities such as that built to display the famous *Mappa Mundi* at Hereford Cathedral or museum conversions of existing buildings such as that adjacent to the palatine chapel of Aachen and in the Catharijneconvent in Utrecht.

The dismantling or reformation of ecclesiastical structures, such as occurred during the 1530s in England with the Dissolution of the Monasteries, or in late

eighteenth-century France as part of the Revolution, occasioned massive losses and redistribution of materials. The method of disposal had a major impact upon the composition and structure of later collections. In England we hear reports of “tailors and small boys” ravishing the remnants of great monastic libraries for waste vellum for pattern-making and play, of the desecration of shrines and seizure of loot by Henry VIII’s commissioners (followed by further destruction a century later during the iconoclasm of the English Civil War), of the salvaging of venerated books, relics, and icons by Catholic recusants, and witness the attempts of collectors such as Archbishop Matthew Parker and the parliamentarian Sir Robert Cotton and their scouts to mop up and save whatever they could. In France the more organized coup led to many ecclesiastical treasures being gathered into the regional *musées* and *bibliothèques des départements* and into the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Private collections have always been a factor in the construction of museums. The libraries and lapidaria of Roman senators were replaced by the collections amassed by clerical and secular figures such as Benedict Biscop, Abbot Suger, the Duc de Berry, John, Duke of Bedford, and families such as the Medici and Gonzaga. They were not primarily antiquarians, but active patrons who collected works from their own and former times as part of a living agenda in which cultural property and consumption bolstered their own positions and/or those of the establishments they represented.

Growing recognition of the value of cultural heritage in public profile and marketing is also meaning that opportunities are being identified for corporate, as well as individual and state sponsorship of exhibitions and installations and even research projects (such as the archeological exploration and reconstruction projects at the National Museum of Scotland, funded by the whisky distillers Glenmorangie). Political and economic alliances can also be consolidated by such investments, with funding from states such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar (vid. British Library Qatar), and from Asian and Oriental companies, and becoming part of the mainstay of some Western nations’ cultural and higher educational life – and thereby impacting upon their economic, political, and even military allegiances in ways the public are often little aware of. Media exploitation of cultural heritage can have similar aims and results. Modern museums are big business.

Dissemination of knowledge, such as scripture, or of political ideology was also an implicit part of what motivated the retention or production of the works which we in turn seek to preserve in our collections for our own reasons, whether public or private. At the interface of both spheres stood not only the church but also the medieval heads of state: royalty. Charlemagne’s emphasis upon collecting and absorbing the content and signaling the stylistic and iconographic influence of Classical and early Christian texts and art was an integral part of his “imaging” of a transitory empire. Otto II’s interest in things Byzantine accompanied his dynastic union with the ancient eastern Roman Empire through his marriage to Theophanou, and signaled his own aspirations for revived Western imperialism. The early tenth-century ruler of Anglo-Saxon England, Athelstan, and his grandfather

Alfred the Great, likewise collected Carolingian works and patronized the development of local styles based in part upon such icons of imperialism, and upon other items culled from their indigenous past and that of their Celtic neighbors, as part of their agendas of spiritual reform and political reunification following Viking invasion and settlement. King Henry III of England looked to contemporary thirteenth-century France and the patronage of his royal counterpart, St. Louis (with his newly constructed reliquary of royalty, the Sainte-Chapelle) as one of his main referential sources of imagery, and even extended his collecting interests to natural history – counting an elephant amongst the denizens of his menagerie at the Tower of London, whilst in the later fifteenth century Edward IV turned to the Netherlands as the principal acquisition market for his manuscripts, some of which were bought “off-the-peg” and customized for him. The Hungarian monarch Matthias Corvinus signaled his identity as a Renaissance prince by incorporating humanist tomes into his impressive library and the French king François I included Leonardo in the international *equipe* assembled to adorn his court, whilst Bona Sforza, the focus of one of the leading Renaissance courts, surrounded herself with works by her fellow Italians. The palaces of Europe became evolving, living museums.

“Modern” Protestant rulers such as Henry VIII and Elizabeth I may have reacted against the medieval theocracy and its artifactual and intellectual legacy, but even in the new England it lingered on in the cathedrals and the vestiges of their libraries, behind the lime-wash applied to the walls of parish churches, in private collections, and even in the earlier parts of the royal collection itself. An appreciation of the legacy of the Middle Ages was also nurtured amongst those intent upon studying the past in order to inform the Protestant present, such as Archbishop Parker and the biblical and linguistic scholars of his circle (such as Joscelyn and Nowell) and those who combined a sense of history with the nascent connoisseurship and acquisitiveness of the true collector, such as Sir Robert Cotton (who, with Parker, was responsible for saving much of what remains of Anglo-Saxon culture owing to his interest in religion and in the origins of parliamentary democracy⁹) and Elias Ashmole. Cotton and Ashmole formed remarkable and celebrated versions of that seventeenth-century phenomenon, the “Cabinet of Curiosities,” symbolizing the expanding horizons of geographical, natural, and intellectual knowledge during that trade-oriented age. Cotton’s collection focused mainly upon books/documents/maps, coins, and medals whilst Ashmole’s favored antiquities and objects. They both became the foundation-stones of leading museums: the British Museum in London and the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, one a national facility and the other the core of a university collection. Cotton’s heirs bequeathed the collection to the nation, but the grateful nation, unwilling to invest, placed it in storage at Ashburnham House (adjacent to Westminster Abbey) until one fateful night in 1731 when fire destroyed part of this unique collection. This, and the bequest and preferential purchase of other collections (that belonging to Hans Sloane, the royal physician, and the Harley Collection assembled by the Earls of Oxford and the Royal Collection itself – all

incorporating significant numbers of medieval manuscripts), eventually led to the foundation of the British Museum in 1753.¹⁰ At its inception this was essentially a superb library with a cabinet of curiosities and some stuffed zoological specimens. The latter migrated to South Kensington during the nineteenth century to found the Natural History Museum in Victoria and Albert's South Kensington museum and arts quarter, whilst the "curiosities" were augmented by the "grand tour" collecting exploits of figures such as Lords Elgin and Hamilton and the orientalism of the Egypt Exploration Society. The British Museum Library also continued to grow apace, with the bequest or purchase of other major collections, such as the King's Library assembled by George III, and the legal deposit of any new books published in the UK in accordance with the Copyright Act. The holdings of Western manuscripts continue to expand by bequest or purchase as part of the Additional manuscript sequence or through the Egerton purchase fund. It became apparent that the library was outgrowing the museum, and vice versa, and in 1973 the British Library was formed by Act of Parliament, comprising the British Museum Library, the Science Reference Library, the Document Supply Centre, and various other official repositories. The medieval manuscripts remained within the library's collections, along with the printed books, maps, and other written materials with which they had been assembled. Prints and Drawings and Antiquities remained at the British Museum.

The development of public collections elsewhere followed along similar lines, with medieval manuscripts forming part of libraries rather than museums. Sometimes, as at the Vatican, these two functions remain contiguous and are housed within the same architectural complex. Nonetheless, the nineteenth-century passion for specialized function and its enduring legacy means that there are all too few places where one can see medieval painting in manuscripts on display to the public, let alone in a museum-like context alongside works of the period in other media. With the exception of the custom-built British Library, which opened in 1998, few of the larger national, state, or university libraries contain permanent gallery space suitable for the exhibition of these materials. Their display has to be undertaken in accordance with stringent modern conservation guidelines on environmental conditions, with the requisite carefully monitored and controlled temperature, humidity, and lighting levels necessary to ensure that such fragile materials can safely be exhibited without unduly prejudicing their long-term life expectancy. Any such exhibition policy also has to be balanced against other demands on the manuscripts from readers needing to access the originals in reading rooms, for photographic orders and the creation of surrogates, and from other venues internationally staging special exhibitions and requiring loans.

One thing that has to be remembered is that the conditions for display, access, handling, and conservation of materials in different media vary. One set of procedures, of research expertise (whether academic or technical) or of contingency and treatment plans in the event of an emergency, cannot suffice for all materials. The environmental specifications for illuminated manuscripts, whose jewel-like colors are held onto the page only by beaten egg-white which clings to a moving surface

of prepared calf, sheep, or goatskin whose big ambition is to return to the curved shape of the animal in the field, are not the same as those applicable to a recently excavated object of water-logged wood with metal attachments, for example. Restrictions on handling and loan to exhibitions accordingly prevail, mostly eminently responsible, sometimes a tad draconian, whilst occasionally decisions seem to be made on primarily commercial or political grounds. Such is life.

The degree of specialism required to study and preserve such wide-ranging materials is significant. This does not mean, however, that research need be restricted to any one medium. Acquiring the appropriate set of skills, such as paleography and codicology as well as the linguistic and art historical skills necessary for the study of illuminated manuscripts, does not mean that a researcher competent in those areas should not acquire those necessary for other areas of study or, if appropriate, construct an informed historical overview or synthesis. To deny this would be to confine the researcher to mastering the scales without ever playing a symphony, let alone actually composing one. Conversely, not every good musician necessarily makes a good composer. What museums and libraries do, in the present context, is to provide access to the hypothetical notes and the instruments, namely the primary research materials, the evidential base.

Leaving the public arena to return to the private, the Grand Tour did much to foster an appreciation of the past amongst the cognoscenti of eighteenth-century Europe, enriching the collections of many a country house and university college. The trend was continued and carried to new collecting heights by the wealthy American traveler (and, to a lesser extent, their Australasian counterparts) of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The civic museums and galleries of many an American town boast collections assembled by local worthies during their visits to Europe or via the art and antiquities market which proliferated from this time. Such collections occasionally feature a few objects from the Middle Ages as part of a mini survey of art history: a Greek vase here, a Frankish buckle there, a Limoges enamel casket, an ivory mirror case, a German Gothic aquamanile, a quattrocento panel painting or two, a Dutch still-life, some French Impressionist works – the shopping list is predictable, but has meant that a basic overview of Western art history has been made available to many aspiring students and that the essential human contact between ourselves and the peoples of the past has occurred through these portals, or rather chinks, in the fabric of time, and has fired the imagination and the thirst for knowledge.

Sometimes these collections have been world-class; constructed under the guiding hand of an expert in the field. Pierpont Morgan's interest in medieval and Renaissance manuscripts brought New York a remarkably fine collection, endowed with a fine building to match, which is again being remodeled to meet contemporary needs and opportunities. In Boston the steel heiress Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840–1924) sought the assistance of the notable art historian Bernard Berenson to construct her eclectic but aesthetically superior collection of medieval and Renaissance antiquities which she housed in a reconstructed Venetian palazzo. The public was admitted on select days, by limited ticket, during

her lifetime and on her death it became a public institution which still delights visitors and whets the appetite to visit the actual sites where such wonders were made and used (and where even the flower arrangements are maintained in accordance with the late patron's personal wishes). Displaying the materials within reconstructed or fictional fabricated room settings can undoubtedly assist in achieving this effect, as the Cloisters Museum ably demonstrates. This fabrication of a medieval monastery was built in the 1930s in Fort Tryon Park as an offshoot of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, principally to house the medieval collections of George Gray Barnard and John D. Rockefeller.¹¹ Here rooms and whole cloisters from medieval France and Spain have been transported and reconstructed to form an incomparably informative and aesthetically satisfying display context. Sadly this could only be achieved at the cost of denuding the actual sites of their fabric as well as the artifacts which had already been dispersed in the face of the vicissitudes of history.

The most extreme example of this is perhaps Hearst Castle, where the collection assembled by the media tycoon Randolph Hearst was treated as an interior designer's play-box. The fixtures and fittings of many a medieval church and palace were adapted to fit their new *mise-en-scène* as a backdrop to Hurst's lavish entertainments, illuminated by lamps adorned with shades formed of the leaves of medieval choirbooks. More successful, therefore, is the Musée des thermes et de l'hôtel de Cluny in Paris, where a wide range of medieval art, much of it from the Île de France itself, has been preserved and can be seen in an authentic, in situ late medieval building. The great royal palace of the Louvre itself has also become a sympathetic and absorbing showcase for part of the French national collections (as has the medieval castle housing the Musée nationale des antiquités nationales at St. Germain-en-Laye), and in adapting this important historic building a major contribution to modern museum design has been made. The new galleries not only allow the medieval collections to be well displayed in chronological or media-based themes, but also whole complexes to be reconstructed, such as the impressive early Christian Coptic church from Bawit, and the excavated foundations of the original medieval fortress of the Louvre to be revealed and themselves become a massive exhibit.

In another Parisian arrondissement lies another admirable French contribution to the study of medieval culture, the Palais de Chaillot, where casts and museum-quality replicas were painstakingly assembled of many of the monumental sculptures and frescoes of Europe, in which the Middle Ages figure large. This offered an unrivaled opportunity of studying a wide range of material from disparate locations side by side, without divorcing the original monuments from their topographical contexts. A sense of place is an essential part of understanding and appreciating the historical and social context of such works and visiting a study collection can never compensate for its absence. Used in tandem, however, they offer an invaluable opportunity for gaining insight. The closure of the Palais de Chaillot cast display at the beginning of the new millennium was a sad loss. The Victoria and Albert Museum in London fortunately also has a fine cast court and in Scotland

the production of casts is proving a valuable component in the fight to conserve and preserve the outstanding corpus of Pictish sculptures produced during the first millennium CE. The effects of weathering and of pollution are escalating apace and concerns over the long-term impact of interventionist conservation have engendered a variety of solutions: gathering the sculptures themselves into museums, whether the outstanding collections in the little site museums at Meigle and St. Vigean (themselves important find spots for part of their assemblages) or the National Museums of Scotland in Edinburgh; leaving the sculpture in the field but frequently encasing it within a protective structure (1930s concrete sheds and postmodernist hi-tech glass boxes both serve the function but equally restrict vision in frequent squalls of driving rain); or taking the sculpture into a nearby building, such as a church, and placing a cast in situ, thereby retaining a link to the landscape whilst preserving the original. Other important collections assembled by private individuals can be seen, for example, at the Schnütgen Museum in Cologne, devoted to medieval ecclesiastical art and housed in a converted Romanesque church; the Rothschild Collection at Waddesdon Manor, built for Baron Ferdinand Rothschild in the late nineteenth century in the style of a French chateau (reusing architectural fittings from authentic French buildings) in England's rural Buckinghamshire as a venue for entertaining and showcasing his collection; the custom-built Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon, Portugal; the Burrell Collection in Glasgow, with its award-winning building incorporating a modern cloister for the display of stained glass; and the Malibu ranch house (constructed in the 1970s to resemble the Roman Villa de Papiri, suitably adapted to natural disaster-proof display standards which would have been the envy of the original inhabitants of Herculaneum and Pompeii), which contained the collection of the oil tycoon J. Paul Getty (1892–1976) and, stemming from these roots, the major new complex housing the J. Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles.

The V&A was established to promote and serve as a reference tool for good design during the height of Victorian industrialism, colonial expansionism and inter-culturalism, and arts and crafts revivalism. The result was a heady mix of some fine and predominantly decorative arts, with a strong focus on internationalism and on medieval and Renaissance historicism and aesthetics, reflecting both imperial and socialist politics and the high-church aesthetics of the Oxford movement and of Catholic emancipation. Its recent refurbishments likewise reflect current and historical concerns and reference points. The silver and glass gallery and the medieval gallery, with its integrated mix of media and its elegant staging are at the height of contemporary museology (although light on IT) – as is the glitzy shop – but wander into the wonderful cast court or the textile reference gallery and you are back in Victoria and Albert's museum. Ancient and modern elide seamlessly.

These are good examples of how state and public benefaction on the part of collectors has led to the endowment of important museums and has enabled the preservation, intact, of collections which have much to tell us not only concerning the objects they contain but of the history of collecting itself and of the historical

period in which they were amassed. They have become the latter-day pyramids to personal achievement that they were intended to be, but in so doing serve to celebrate much wider human achievement.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the warfare, imperialism, social upheavals, philanthropy, and market forces which characterized them, led to the redistribution of significant slices of the world's cultural property. Many private and public collections were established or expanded as a result of this. Some of these have been broken and circulate periodically through the auction houses, whose scouts are ever vigilant for opportunities to stimulate trade, or occasionally appear on the market in their entirety. A sad aspect of the trade is that, even in this age when the integrity of the artifact in all its aspects is increasingly appreciated, medieval manuscripts are frequently broken up to enable their miniatures to be sold separately and the reputations of the various (and mostly anonymous) craftspeople who worked on them talked up to the status of "masters" in order to obtain higher market prices for them as "artworks." This can be tantamount to robbing the Sutton Hoo burial mound of its helmet and high-status metalwork, or Tutankhamun's tomb of its key treasures, without seeking to learn anything from the sites as a whole. Likewise, artifacts continue to be illegally traded out of certain countries (such as Italy and Egypt) and evidence of their history and provenance suppressed. The corpus of ancient and medieval material, especially metalwork, continues to grow as sites are excavated and finds conserved and acquired by local or national museums. Financial constraints, however, mean that excavations are seldom adequately funded or mounted on other than major known sites or on an immediate rescue basis within a very short time-scale. Work traditionally undertaken by the archeological units of public museums, local authorities, and universities is also increasingly bid for by independent companies which can carry implications for the long-term preservation, publication, and retention of finds and information. The rising popularity of metal-detecting as a hobby and as a business has also escalated tremendously over the last few decades, with an accompanying growth in website trading of antiquities. Legal loopholes have been tightened in certain areas, such as law of Treasure Trove, and in Britain the recent introduction of the Portable Antiquities Scheme has successfully encouraged many metal-detectors to register their finds and to seek expert opinion concerning them. This allows museum professionals at least to monitor what is being found and where, and sometimes leads to follow-up excavation of sites to determine their nature and importance. It has also stimulated something of a sense of community in the metal-detecting fraternity and lessened the divide between this and the professional archeological, museum, and university communities. Nonetheless, many important items have been traded out of their countries of origin without being revealed to the authorities or taken into account intellectually, let alone being offered to museums for purchase.

A good example of the impact of this archeological approach can be seen in the mode of display to the public of a recent major metal-detector find, the seventh-century Anglo-Saxon Staffordshire Hoard of gold and garnet weaponry and

religious artifacts. The politics of regional heritage initially kicked in and there looked to be an ownership battle brewing of epic Anglo-Saxon proportions worthy of Beowulf, with the West Midlands heavy-hitters such as Birmingham Art Gallery and the Potteries Museum taking the limelight, but careful negotiations to incorporate venues more appropriate to the contextualization of the hoard itself, such as Lichfield Cathedral, proved successful. Some items are displayed in smaller but relevant venues, whilst the main hoard is conserved and displayed in the larger museums and its historical and archaeological significance is researched by a scholarly team of experts and shared with the public, whose interest was stirred up by media coverage of the discovery.

Other recent exhibitions have also taken as their theme socio-historical significance and context, such as the Treasures of Heaven exhibition at the British Museum, which focused upon medieval reliquaries – not a “sexy” subject one might think in an increasingly secular society, but one which certainly fascinated visitors and pulled them in.

The academic trend to view books as integral artifacts in which each area of the evidence they contain is explored in interdisciplinary fashion is still sometimes held in tension, however, with a bibliophile connoisseurship. The Flemish miniatures show at the Royal Academy, for example, veered toward an “art for art’s sake” approach of detached miniatures celebrated as small panel paintings, feeding the market trend for book-breaking and the elevation of “the master of ...” identifications by scholars to boost market prices in the salerooms. The Pierpont Morgan Library’s exhibition in 2010, “Demons and Devotion: The Hours of Catherine of Cleves,” however, is one of several to display a disbound illuminated manuscript to great effect, allowing the public to view a manuscript in its entirety “in the flesh” and to appreciate the complex codicological aspects of manufacture by a number of specialist craftspeople and of assembly in bound book form.

One further development on the archaeological front which might usefully be mentioned is the growing trend to establish museums on site, to enable a fuller understanding of them in their entirety. Successful examples include that at Sutton Hoo, where recent excavations have significantly extended our understanding of the famous ship burial discovered in the 1930s and how it fits into a bigger cemetery containing not only other seventh-century high-status burials furnished with opulent grave-goods, but a slightly later felons or ritual burying ground, and how it relates to other local settlement sites such as the palace at Rendlesham. The British Museum now regularly mounts displays of original artifacts in the modern site museum, whilst displaying the star items at its Bloomsbury building. The major Pictish site at Tarbat in Easter Ross, Scotland, is also extending our knowledge of this mysterious but artistically productive people, with the descendant of the church which was the central focus of the site serving as a showcase for many of the finds and as an educational forum. At Rosekilde in Denmark a specially constructed museum houses some of the Viking longships and trading vessels, its glazed sides affording evocative views of the home waters they sailed, whilst at Bergen the excavated buildings and the

inscribed rune-sticks bring the medieval port to life and people it with the echoes of those who plied their trades there.

Heritage facilities are increasingly becoming a feature of the urban and rural scenes. These may range from medieval Irish tower houses, lovingly restored, converted, and staffed by local enthusiasts and furnished with some local artifacts and social history memorabilia, to archeological and vernacular architecture reconstruction parks (such as Craggaunowen near Limerick in Ireland where Celtic ring-forts and artificial islands – crannogs – can be viewed, or the Weald and Downland Museum at Singleton in Sussex, England, where buildings from all periods of the region’s history are rescued in the face of demolition and reconstructed). Others are small specialist museums (such as Bede’s World at Jarrow in Northumberland, England, adjacent to the church where Bede worshiped around 700, which houses some of the finds excavated on the site, reconstructed models, and interactive facilities). Some, such as “The House of Manannan” beside the medieval site of Peel Castle on the Isle of Man and the community Heritage Centre at Lindisfarne on Holy Island in Northumberland, England, have helped to pioneer “the object-less museum,” which does not exhibit actual objects of the period but which explores them and their context through the display of graphics and the use of film and interactive technology. Funding for such initiatives has been gained from a variety of sources, including regional development funds (such as those administered by the European Union), central or local government, and national participative schemes for the funding of community initiatives and the arts (such as the UK’s Heritage Lottery Fund), and charitable enterprises (such as the UK’s National Art Collections Fund and the National Heritage Memorial Fund which commemorates those who have given their lives for their country by contributing to the acquisition and preservation of its heritage). The charitable giving and acknowledgment of civic responsibility to the arts has also played a significant role in establishing and developing many museums. The US has been particularly active in fostering this role and European governments are now acknowledging (and emulating) the importance of taxation incentives to foster this sort of public involvement in maintaining heritage and the arts to supplement or to compensate for shortfalls in government funding and commercial revenue.

“Heritage” is also increasingly being recognized as a means of attracting publicity and generating tourism. This can play an essential role in the regeneration of a site, a place, a region, or a nation. It can also be a quick route to media coverage and a source of political leverage. Recent years have witnessed a flurry of campaigns for the restitution of cultural heritage, the foci of which have ranged from the Elgin Marbles and the Benin Bronzes to Ethiopic manuscripts, Native American artifacts, and books and other objects found in named sites but subsequently incorporated into other, often national, collections. The implications of such campaigns are complex and manifold and raise a range of legal, ethical, intellectual, and economic issues. Each varies in its precise nature, but one thing remains constant – the need to remember that the overarching concern must be the preservation of the artifact itself and appropriate levels of access which

will allow it to speak to the present generation without unduly compromising its life expectancy so that it can continue its dialog with future generations, all of which come to it with new questions, new perceptions, and new technologies. Addressing such concerns requires a high level of expertise in order to interpret and to conserve the material and, rather than being a fast track to funding, these responsibilities entail a great deal of investment and commitment to the long haul. Disaster planning and adequate security provision have to be part of the equation, as well as the establishment of appropriate environmental and display facilities, and a context for continued research and dissemination of information to specialists and public alike. Larger institutions are often best placed to serve this function in respect of particularly important or vulnerable materials and also often fulfill a function of transcending their purely local significance and placing it in a wider context of time and space.

The history of collecting and the wish to preserve important collections intact to allow them to speak of the age in which they were assembled or to honor terms of bequest can also be an important factor. Continuing to acquire material for a nation and to prevent or monitor its export is also often deemed the preserve of larger collections which could not fulfill this, or their other functions of custodianship and conservation to the contested items or to the legions of the regionally “unloved” or unclaimed objects, if unduly weakened. Cultural restitution also raises the thorny question of whether it is appropriate to turn back the clock of history and, if so, where to stop it in any given case. It is often far from clear or uncontroversial where artifacts, especially those cloaked with the comparative anonymity of medieval craftsmanship, were actually made and they have often traveled a great deal, generating rival claims on the part of their various intermediate homes. The more recent an act of appropriation or alienation, the more emotive and pressing the call or impetus to restitution may be, but there is no statute of limitations upon history and locally contained holocausts and injustices are not automatically outweighed by those of international stature. The legality of the current situation has to play a significant factor in any such debate.

Holocaust Restitution

Collaboration and partnership between museums, libraries, galleries, other repositories, local interest groups, and educators (at all levels) is an essential part of the present and future of the profession and the web is playing an increasingly important part in this equation. Material can be shared, assemblages or individual artifacts which have been broken up over the course of time can be virtually reunited, and items can be virtually restored to their original appearance or context without intruding upon their actual state of preservation. Thus a manuscript partially broken up as binder’s waste in the aftermath of the Dissolution, its leaves now scattered amongst several libraries and private collections, could be digitally reconstituted and any damaged leaves virtually restored by image

manipulation – if all the parties could be persuaded to participate and if the necessary project funding were forthcoming. New technology also potentially allows vast collections of material, much of it confined to the study collections housed in museum basements and out-housed storage facilities or to library stacks, to be opened up to the public without undue handling of original materials. This also allows the researcher to do as much preliminary work as possible before needing access to the sources themselves. Thus the British Museum’s “Compass” project, for example, seeks to mount a broad cross-section of its treasures on the web, whilst libraries such as the British Library, the Pierpont Morgan, and the Hague are in the process of mounting complete electronic catalogs with accompanying digital images of their illuminated manuscripts – or are mounting entire digital facsimiles of volumes – on the web. Collections of digital images of manuscripts and artifacts drawn from many repositories are also growing online, such as the digital scriptorium and the Schoenberg Collection. Most major museums and libraries now have websites where at least some of their treasures can be viewed. IT can also help overcome some of the didactic restrictions of displaying such materials. Looking at an object in a glass case offers a valuable encounter with the original, but can be frustrating, especially when the object in turn is a book of which only one opening of many can be displayed at one time. Gallery interactives have been developed in order to allow objects to be viewed on screen, sometimes as three-dimensional images which can be virtually rotated and examined from all angles, or, as with the British Library’s “Turning the Pages” system,¹² to simulate the experience of physically turning the vellum pages on screen and leafing through the book (initially only 20 or so of the major openings because of expense, but the system is being developed in such a way that whole books can be affordably mounted upon it). Such solutions also enable audio so that text and music can be explored and so that extra information can be given, beyond the constraints of a single case label. Digital surrogates of iconic treasures can also be made available in special display contexts at heritage facilities connected with their stories if the preservation and security requirements of the originals, or legal circumstances, dictate that they are best kept elsewhere. An example of a mutually beneficial resolution of an ongoing restitution dispute is that of the Codex Sinaiticus project (<http://codexsinaiticus.org/en>), which has succeeded in reuniting dispersed portions of a world-famous cultural landmark in book form, which had become the subject of a hard-fought restitution conflict, by means of a collaborative digitization project which allows the whole of the book that remains to be shared globally.

Surrogates are never a complete alternative to encountering original artifacts, however, and responsibly exhibiting them, when the occasion permits, remains a crucial element in firing the imagination and interest of the public. In an age when there are fewer and fewer opportunities to study the Middle Ages as part of the general education system, and even at graduate level, but when, paradoxically, media and popular entertainment interest have never been higher, the thrill of coming face to face with the past and connecting, through the witness of a site

or artifact, with the lives of those who inhabited it is essential for the subject's continued existence and regeneration. This chapter has touched upon some of the places where medieval materials can be seen displayed on a permanent or semi-permanent basis, some more didactically or comprehensively than others. The special temporary exhibition is a valuable adjunct to this. National and international loans programs are escalating in every major repository as more and more requests to borrow items for exhibition are received. In the medieval sphere these can vary from blockbuster exhibitions in which as many as possible of the major treasures representative of a particular period or theme are gathered together, affording a unique opportunity of viewing them in relation to one another, for purposes of study or connoisseurship. The exhibitions held in London between 1984 and 2003 surveying medieval British art are a good example of this.¹³ Likewise, the Bibliothèque nationale de France's exhibitions,¹⁴ and "Les Fastes du Gothique," held at the Grand Palais in Paris by la Réunion des musées nationaux et la Bibliothèque nationale in 1981–1982,¹⁵ their "L'Art au temps des rois maudits Philippe le Bel et ses fils 1285–1328" held there in 1998,¹⁶ and the Louvre's examination of the reign of King Charles VI;¹⁷ several exhibitions devoted to the Carolingian Empire;¹⁸ and exhibitions focusing upon Byzantine culture.¹⁹

For celebrating the art and culture of a particular people or region can carry deep social, economic, and political implications. The Coptic Museum in Cairo was established by a leading family of Copts as a statement of continuing ethno-religious identity of an ancient people in the modern age. Artworks in situ and those still used in churches run the risk of being stolen or vandalized or, as we are seeing in parts of the world beset by conflict, are destroyed as part of a human and cultural genocide. In 2016 the British Museum staged a major exhibition of Celtic art, challenging (but in the process demonstrating) its very existence as a distinct cultural expression extending from prehistory to the present. It was visually ravishing and otherworldly and both contrasted with and complemented the dense and information-rich smaller show that ran simultaneously on faith in Egypt from the Romans to the Crusades. Whether intentionally or not, this offered the public the rare and fascinating opportunity to appreciate and explore two ancient cultures that survive into the modern world and which are embroiled in ongoing concerns of ethno-religious geo-politics in which culture is both pawn and paramount.

Other shows have successfully focused upon a single work as their theme and as a springboard into an exploration of its age (such as the Lindisfarne Gospels, the Utrecht Psalter, the Macclesfield Psalter, the Wilton diptych, and the Westminster retable).²⁰ The need to disbound illuminated manuscripts, on conservation (or digitization) grounds has also frequently been taken as an opportunity to display them to the public in their entirety, rather than just an opening under glass or as a digital surrogate. Some exhibitions have sought to transcend their themes and take a more interdisciplinary, cross-cultural approach, even crossing the perennial East/West divide, as in the case of the stimulating and challenging display on world faiths at the Chester Beatty Gallery in Dublin Castle, "Europa und

der Orient 800–1900” held in Berlin in 1985,²¹ the British Library’s “Painted Labyrinth: The World of the Lindisfarne Gospels,”²² and “Treasures from the Ark: 1700 Years of Armenian Christian Art,”²³ “Memory and the Middle Ages,” staged at the Boston College Museum of Art in 1995,²⁴ the catalog of an exhibition entitled “Mirror of the Medieval World,” held to celebrate the medieval galleries and collections of New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art,²⁵ “In the Beginning: Bibles Before the Year 1000,” staged in the Freer Sackler at the Smithsonian (Washington, DC) in 2006, and the string of exhibitions (with a unified catalog) organized across Europe in 1997 by the European Science Foundation as part of their five-year “Transformation of the Roman World” project.²⁶ Others have focused primarily upon technique, using advances in technology and conservation as a starting point for examining objects, such as “Art in the Making: Italian Painting Before 1400,” held at the National Gallery in London in 1989.²⁷ Increasingly, multiple venue exhibitions are being staged as part of collaborative funding initiatives. The constraints of lending such unique and often fragile materials are such, however, that the same exhibits are only seldom loaned to more than one venue in succession. Gone are the days when important exhibitions and priceless objects went on world tours, such as “Treasures of Ireland: Irish Art, 3000 BC–AD 1500,” which in two incarnations toured during 1977–1981 to New York, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Boston, Philadelphia, Paris, Cologne, Berlin, Amsterdam, and Copenhagen, as well as being exhibited at the National Museum in Dublin.²⁸ One of its star exhibits, the Book of Kells, thankfully no longer travels at all. Some successful two-venue shows are still staged, such as “The Golden Age of Dutch Manuscript Painting,” shown at the Rijksmuseum het Catharijneconvent in Utrecht and the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York in 1989–1990,²⁹ and “Illuminating the Renaissance: The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe,” staged at the J. Paul Getty Museum in 2003 and at the Royal Academy of Arts in London in 2003–2004,³⁰ with requisite variations to the exhibits at either venue. And the British Museum has also recently launched a series of international travelling exhibitions, including ‘Medieval Europe AD 400-1500’ (2017) and the British Library has staged a resolutely traditional-style major exhibition ‘Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms: Art, Word, War’ (2018–2019), which featured the diplomatic coup of a particularly significant loan - the Codex Amiatinus, which returns to Britain for the first time since Ceolfrith left Northumbria bearing it as a gift to the Pope, and ambassador for its nation, in 716.

The conceptualization of an exhibition, whether temporary or permanent, actual or virtual, is of prime importance, for it impacts upon education, public perception, and, on occasion, political will. Exhibitions of early materials have also presented opportunities to juxtapose ancient and modern, with contemporary artworks (sometimes inspired by earlier counterparts) being inserted amongst ancient or medieval works, or forming part of the installation, as at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, where chunky bronze Paolozzi sculptures of warrior figures in mechanized forms serve as cases for finely wrought items of pre-historic jewelry. Museums, libraries, and galleries and their displays, publications,

and outreach programs have been known to both reflect and help direct the way in which a given subject area is studied. They can be fruitful meeting grounds for a wide range of disciplines and outlooks and a testing place for matching aspiration and resource. In short, they help us to write history, to record it, and to direct its future. They are powerful social mechanisms, capable of misrepresenting as well as mirroring our identities. As the repositories of our collective memory they are the stuff of which civilizations are formed – the way in which we shape them, use them, and invest in them in the future will help to serve as an indication of the extent to which we value, or merely pay lip service to, the very concept of civilization.

Notes

- 1 As explored by Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, and Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*.
- 2 British Library, Cotton MS Vitellius A. xiv; see Kiernan, *Electronic Beowulf*.
- 3 Private Collection, on loan to the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore.
- 4 Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS 58.
- 5 Utrecht, University Library, MS 32 (ed. Van der Hoerst, Noel, and Wüstefeld, 1996), CD-Rom.
- 6 St. Godehard's Church, Hildesheim, see www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/index.shtml, accessed 16 August 2018.
- 7 Canfora, *The Vanished Library*.
- 8 Callimachus' *Catalogues of the Authors Eminent in Various Disciplines* were arranged with six sections devoted to poetry and five to prose, his categories including epics, tragedies, comedies, historical works, works of medicine, rhetoric and law, and miscellaneous works; *ibid.*, p. 39.
- 9 See Tite, *Manuscript Library*, and Brown, "Sir Robert Cotton."
- 10 Miller, *That Noble Cabinet*.
- 11 Rorimer, *The Cloisters*.
- 12 Examples of which may be viewed via www.bl.uk, accessed 16 August 2018.
- 13 "1066: English Romanesque Art," Hayward Gallery, 1984 (ed. Zarnecki, Holt, and Holland); "The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art 966–1066," British Museum and British Library, 1984 (ed. Backhouse, Turner, and Webster); "Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400," Royal Academy of Arts, 1987–1988 (ed. Alexander and Binski); "The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600–900," British Museum and British Library, 1991 (ed. Webster and Backhouse); "Gothic Glory: Late Gothic Art in England 1400–1547," Victoria and Albert Museum, 2003 (ed. Marks).
- 14 "Les Manuscrits à Peintures en France 1440–1520," Paris, 1993–1994 (ed. Avril and Reynaud) and "Jean Fouquet, Peintre et Enlumineur du xve siècle," Paris, 2003 (ed. Avril).
- 15 "Les Fastes du Gothique: Le siècle de Charles V," 1981–1982 (ed. Baron, 1981).
- 16 "L'Art au temps des rois maudits Philippe le Bel et ses fils 1285–1328," 1998 (ed. Gaborit-Chopin).
- 17 In 2004 (ed. Delahaye).

- 18 “Karl der Grosse. Werk und Wirkung,” Aachen, 1965 (ed. Lübke); “La Neustrie: Les pays au nord de la Loire, de Dagobert à Charles le Chauve,” *Musées et Monuments départementaux de Seine-Maritime*, 1985 (ed. Périn and Feffer); “799. Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit, Karl der Grosse und Papst Leo III in Paderborn,” Paderborn, 1999 (ed. Stiegemann and Wemhoff).
- 19 “Byzantium: Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture,” British Museum, 1994 (ed. Buckton) and “Byzantium: Faith and Power,” Metropolitan Museum, New York, 2004.
- 20 For example, “The Utrecht Psalter in Medieval Art,” Utrecht, 1996 (ed. Van der Hoerst, Noel, and Wüstefeld), and “Painted Labyrinth: The World of the Lindisfarne Gospels,” British Library, 2003 (ed. Brown); or the permanent installation focusing upon the Book of Kells at Trinity College Library, Dublin.
- 21 Ed. Sievernich and Budde.
- 22 See n. 20.
- 23 Ed. Nersessian, 2001.
- 24 Ed. Netzer and Reinburg.
- 25 Ed. Wixom, 1999.
- 26 Ed. Webster and Brown, 1997.
- 27 Ed. Bomford, Dunkerton, Gordon, and Roy, 1989.
- 28 Ed. Ryan 1983.
- 29 Ed. Marrow, Defoer, Korteweg, and Wüstefeld, 1989.
- 30 Ed. Kren and McKendrick, 2003.

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