
Volume 5 | Issue 1

2015

Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture (Volume 5, Issue 1)

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. "Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture (Volume 5, Issue 1)." *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* 5, 1 (2015). <https://digital.kenyon.edu/perejournal/vol5/iss1/7>

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Welcome

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It's been some time, but we think that this marvelous double issue here was worth the wait. So, welcome to the Autumn 2014 and Spring 2015 issues of *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture*. The first issue is devoted to how identity is signified by material and visual expressions connected to one particular location, here the Flemish Low Countries during the High Middle Ages. Edited by Elizabeth Moore Hunt and Richard A. Leson, the collection of essays touch on imagery and language from heraldry to specialized fortification reflecting a complex interaction in terms of tradition and new expectations. Jeff Rider examines how the author of *Genealogia Flandrensiū comitū* creates a new history from competing sources, while Bailey K. Young and Laurent Verslype investigate how the patrons of the castle of Walhain-Saint-Paul in Walloon, Brabant used very particular fortification models to signify their power. On a smaller scale, Anne E. Lester explores the weighty and diplomatic heraldic meaning of the sumptuous Coffret of John of Montmirail, an issue that arises from the Psalter for the Count of Flanders (Royal Library of Belgium MS 10607) which uses carefully heraldic shields, riders, and animals to negotiate an urban presence in Ghent. Richard A. Leson studies how the now-fragmented tomb of Robert of Cassel in Warneton reflected the ambitions of the Franco-Flemish nobility.

The second issue investigates underlying themes and functions of a diverse range of material and visual culture. Laura E. Cochrane explores why and how a Carolingian Copy of Boethius's *De institutione arithmetica* was used for both sacred and secular purposes. Less concrete, but just as crucial, Elisa A. Foster traces the visual culture of religious processions at Le Puy-en-Velay. Dominique Hoche then examines the appropriateness of studying medieval church wall paintings through the lens of modern graphic narratives. This issue also contains in-depth book reviews of *Medieval and Later Ivories in the Courtauld Gallery: Complete Catalogue* by Katherine Eve Baker, *The Bernward Gospels: Art, Memory, and the Episcopate in Medieval Germany* by Eliza Garrison, and *Palace of the Mind: The Cloister of Silos and Spanish Sculpture of the Twelfth Century* by Mickey Abel.

This issue's Discoveries section includes accounts of re-discovered treasures (4th-century glass paten, Byzantine-era church with quatrefoil baptismal font, a Viking hoard, and a dramatic pilgrim badge), archaeological discoveries of enameled Anglo-Saxon jewelry, a 9th-century ring with an Islamic inscription from a Spanish tomb, and more.



Photobank

The Photobank database continues to serve as a resource for scholars and teachers. Recent

uploads include details of English parish churches. Please note that our Photobank has undergone considerable renovation and is now part of Digital Kenyon at Kenyon College. You can search by typing in a key word or name in the search box (e.g. Canterbury). The Photobank continues to grow with copyright-free images all downloadable for use in research and teaching.



The Future

For future issues we are actively seeking articles on any aspect of medieval art and architecture, including: long and short scholarly articles, scholarly book reviews, review articles on issues facing the field of medieval art history, interesting notes and announcements, useful website recommendations, new archeological discoveries, and recent museum acquisitions. We are interested in publishing articles that will undergo double-blind review as well as those which are subject only to regular editing processes, including articles that are the result of preliminary research. We are also looking for images to add to our photobank, to be shared and used by anyone in the classroom and in their research. To round out the scholarly portion of the journal, we are also seeking short, amusing excerpts from medieval sources, comments on the Middle Ages in movies and popular culture, etc.

Again, welcome to *Peregrinations*. Any suggestions or comments you have concerning the journal would be most welcome. Please feel free to e-mail us at: [Sarah Blick \(editor\)](#).

Our grateful appreciation and thanks for partial funding provided by [Kenyon College](#).
Programming and copy-editing: [John Pepple](#).
Artistic Advising: [Karen Gerhart](#).

Current Issue: Vol. 4, Issue 4 (Fall 2014) and Vol. 5, Issue 1 (Spring 2015)

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Vol. 3, Issue 4 (Autumn 2012)

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FABRICATI DIEM, PVNC

-- The motto of the Ankh-Morpork City Watch (Terry Pratchett, *Guards! Guards!*)

Publication Information

Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture, ISSN 1554-8678 (online), is published periodically. Topics of research include: art and architectural history, medieval history and religion. Currently indexed in Directory of Open Access Journals, Project Muse, etc. It is published under Creative Commons License Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike (CC BY-NC-SA). Authors will retain copyright to their own articles, but Peregrinations asks to be credited. There are no subscription costs and no postage involved.



Secular Learning and Sacred Purpose in a Carolingian Copy of Boethius's *De institutione arithmetica* (Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Class. 5)¹

By Laura E. Cochrane, Middle Tennessee State University

Introduction

Of the early medieval copies of Boethius's *De institutione arithmetica*, by far the most sumptuous is a ninth-century manuscript that is presently housed in the Staatsbibliothek in Bamberg.² (**Figure 1**) Unlike other versions of the treatise,³ the

¹ Research for this article was funded by a Tennessee Board of Regents, Access and Diversity Grant. I presented aspects of this article in 2010 at the Saint Louis Conference on Manuscript Studies and in 2012 at the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

² Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Class. 5 (Olim Ms. H. J. IV. 12). Edward Kennard Rand discussed the manuscript in *A Survey of the Manuscripts of Tours (Studies in the Script of Tours I)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Publications of the Medieval Academy of America, 1929), cat. 71, pp. 131-132. Other descriptions of the manuscript appear in Wilhelm Koehler, *Die Karolingischen Miniaturen; Die Schule von Tours*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft, 1963), pp. 65-67; Percy Ernst Schramm and Florentine Mutherich, *Denkmale Der Deutschen Könige und Kaiser. Ein Beitrag zur Herrschergeschichte von Karl dem Grossen Bis Friedrich II. 768-1250* (Munich: Prestel, 1981), no. 41, p. 129; *Handschriften, Buchdruck um 1500 in Bamberg* (Bamberg: Bernhard Schemmel, 1990), pp. 32-33; Bernhard Bischoff, *Katalog Der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts*, vol. I (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), no. 204, p. 46; and Christoph Stiegemann and Matthias Wernhoff, eds., *799 - Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit. Karl der Grosse und Papst Leo III in Paderborn: Katalog der Ausstellung Paderborn 1999* (Mainz: P. von Zabern, 1999), no. X.20, pp. 725-727.

³ For a checklist of manuscript copies of this text, see Michael Masi, *Boethian Number Theory: A Translation of the De institutione arithmetica* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1983), pp. 58-63.

Bamberg manuscript's numerous diagrams are embellished with silver and gold and



Figure 1 Mathematical diagram, Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, c. 845. Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Class. 5, fol. 71r. Photo: with the permission of the Bamberg Staatsbibliothek.

decorated with foliage and animals.⁴ Also unique to the manuscript are its two full-page miniatures, one of which depicts Boethius presenting his treatise to his father-in-law, **(Figure 7)** while the other portrays four female personifications of the quadrivial arts: music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. **(Figure 5)** A three-part dedication poem,⁵ written in alternating lines of silver and gold on purple-painted parchment, **(Figure 2)** explains the manuscript's lavishness; it was made to be presented as a gift for a king. Although the poem does not identify the king directly, it states that he shares his name with his grandfather,⁶ implying that the recipient was Charles the Bald (r. 840-877), whose grandfather was Charlemagne.

Although the unusual decorative features of the Bamberg Boethius can be attributed to its purpose as a royal gift, in her study of illustrated Boethius manuscripts, Margaret Gibson asserted that the illustrations in the Bamberg manuscript were copied from a Late Antique version of the text. Because, as she assumed, the exemplar must have been a grand manuscript, Gibson suggested that the now-lost model might even have been the very manuscript that Boethius presented to his father-in-law in the fifth century.⁷ Although it is possible that the Bamberg Boethius is a close copy of a Late

⁴ Another of the manuscript's mathematical diagrams (fol. 73v) was published in Steigmann and Wernhoff, eds., 799—*Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, p. 726.

⁵ An edition of the poem appears in K. Strecker, ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Poetae Latini aevi Carolini*, vol. 4 (Berlin, 1881; reprint, 1964), pp. 1076-1077 (hereafter referred to as *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 4).

⁶ In Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Class. 5, fol. 1v, the poem begins "Invicto pollens nomine Caesar avi" (Caesar, powerful through the undefeated name of your grandfather). See *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 4, p. 1076, line 2.

⁷ Margaret Gibson, "Illustrating Boethius: Carolingian and Romanesque Manuscripts" in *Medieval Manuscripts of the Latin Classics: Production and Use*, eds. Claudine A. Chavennes-Mazel and Margaret M. Smith (Palo Alto: Anderson-Lovelace, 1996), pp. 119-129.

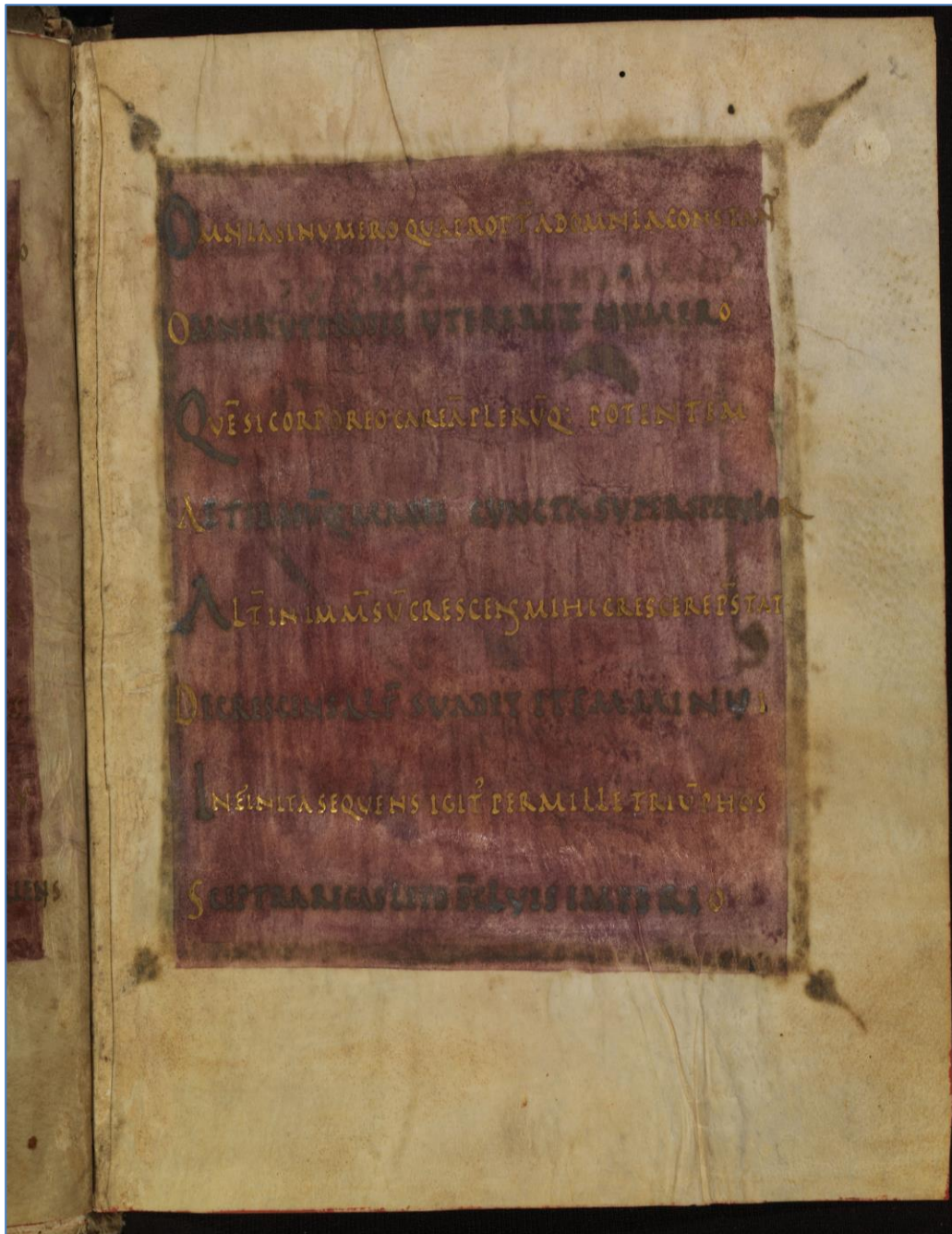


Figure 2 Dedication poem, Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, c. 845. Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Class. 5, fol. 2r. Photo: with the permission of the Bamberg Staatsbibliothek.

Antique manuscript, there is no direct evidence for Gibson's assumption.⁸ The Bamberg manuscript contains the only example of the image of Boethius presenting his book to Symmachus and the earliest extant visual depiction of any of the personified liberal arts. It is also the only such image that is known before the twelfth century, when personifications of the liberal arts became popular for cathedral portals and manuscript illustrations.⁹ As the only early medieval example of the iconography, the Boethius manuscript's quadrivium miniature has often been cited as evidence for the prescience of the Carolingian educational reforms,¹⁰ but has not been studied in detail.

The goal of this paper is to understand the appearance of the two miniatures and to investigate how they relate to the overall decorative program of the Bamberg manuscript and to the specific concerns of the manuscript's designers. As I shall show, the appearance of the miniatures does not need to be explained by citing a lost exemplar. Rather, their visual details can be attributed to specific Carolingian concerns about the nature of Christian education. Furthermore, the Boethius manuscript's illustrations also relate directly to the imagery and poetry of the First Bible of Charles the Bald,¹¹ which

⁸ For a discussion of the issue of Carolingian copying and the reliance on the idea of lost models, see Lawrence P. Nees, "The Originality of Early Medieval Artists" in *Literacy, Politics and Artistic Innovation in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Celia Chazelle (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1992), pp. 77-109.

⁹ For discussions of personifications of the liberal arts, especially in the later Middle Ages, and their relationship to the rise of Scholasticism, see Adolph Katzenellenbogen, "The Representation of the Seven Liberal Arts" in *Twelfth-Century Europe and the Foundations of Modern Society*, ed. Marshall Clagett, Gaines Post, and Robert Reynolds (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), pp. 39-55; and Michael Masi, "Boethius and the Iconography of the Liberal Arts," *Latomus* 33, no. 1 (1974), pp. 57-75.

¹⁰ For examples, see John E. Murdoch, *Album of Science: Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (New York: Scribner's, 1984), p. 189, and Katzenellenbogen, p. 41.

¹¹ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1. Presently, all of the folios of the manuscript can be viewed on the Bibliothèque nationale's Web site: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8455903b> (accessed on May 28, 2015).

was presented to Charles by the monks of St. Martin in Tours in 844 or 845. In their study of *The Poetry and Paintings of the First Bible of Charles the Bald*,¹² Paul Dutton and Herbert Kessler, argued that the First Bible demonstrated a concern for the king's education, arguing that he focus on the bible as a font of wisdom. Dutton and Kessler asserted that the First Bible was carefully designed to “send a special message to the young Charles the Bald.”¹³ They demonstrated that the monks of Tours urged Charles to treat the bible alone as the source of true wisdom and to let its lessons on virtue transform him into a good Christian king. Because the Bamberg Boethius also investigates questions of education and sources of knowledge, and because there is evidence that both manuscripts were made at about the same time and place, it is worth considering that the miniatures of the Bamberg Boethius play off of the images and poetry of the First Bible, responding to and elaborating upon its argument.

The Bamberg manuscript does not offer any direct evidence for its date or place of production. That information has been inferred from the manuscript's similarity to the First Bible, which does identify its location of origin and gives clues as to its date. The First Bible is larger¹⁴ and more sumptuous than the Bamberg Boethius, containing both the Old and New Testaments; four dedicatory poems, also written on purple-painted parchment; and eight full-page miniatures, including a final miniature that shows Charles enthroned beneath the approving hand of God, reaching out to accept the book from the

¹² Paul Dutton and Herbert Kessler, *The Poetry and Paintings of the First Bible of Charles the Bald* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

¹³ Dutton and Kessler, p. 4.

¹⁴ The First Bible measures 49.5 x 37.5 cm. and contains 432 leaves. The Bamberg Boethius measures 23.5 x 17.3 cm. and has 139 leaves.

monks. **(Figure 3)** The poem accompanying the First Bible's presentation image mentions Saint Martin and names three members of the monastery, as well as their new lay abbot, Vivian.¹⁵ The mention of Vivian suggests a date no earlier than 844, as he became abbot of St. Martin in Tours sometime that year.¹⁶ Dutton and Kessler discussed the date and historical context of the First Bible in detail and offered convincing evidence that production of the manuscript occurred during 845, with the finished book being presented to the king at the end of that year.¹⁷

Although the Bamberg Boethius lacks similar evidence, its visual similarities to the First Bible persuaded Wilhelm Koehler to locate its creation in Tours and to date it to about 845.¹⁸ Koehler identified the artist of the Boethius manuscript's two miniatures as "Master B," to whom he also attributed two of the First Bible's miniatures.¹⁹ Other features offer evidence of a connection. The books' poems have visual, textual, and organizational similarities. The First Bible's dedication poems are much longer than

¹⁵ Vivian and the three monks, Tesmundus, Sigualdus, and Aregarius, are mentioned in poem XI, lines 1-4. See Dutton and Kessler, pp. 118-119.

¹⁶ For a discussion of Vivian's appointment and its relationship to the manuscript's production and program, see Herbert Kessler, "A Lay Abbot as Patron: Count Vivian and the First Bible of Charles the Bald" in *Committenti e produzione artistico-letteraria nell'alto medioevo occidentale. 4-10 aprile 1991 (Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 39)* (Spoleto, 1992), pp. 647-75. The essay was reprinted in *Studies in Pictorial Narrative* (London: Pindar Press, 1994), pp. 251-277.

¹⁷ For their interpretation of the evidence, see their chapter on "Context," pp. 21-44.

¹⁸ Koehler, pp. 65-67.

¹⁹ Koehler, pp. 29 and 67, identified Master B as the artist of the First Bible's Exodus frontispiece on fol. 27v, and the frontispiece to the Pauline Epistles, on fol. 386v.

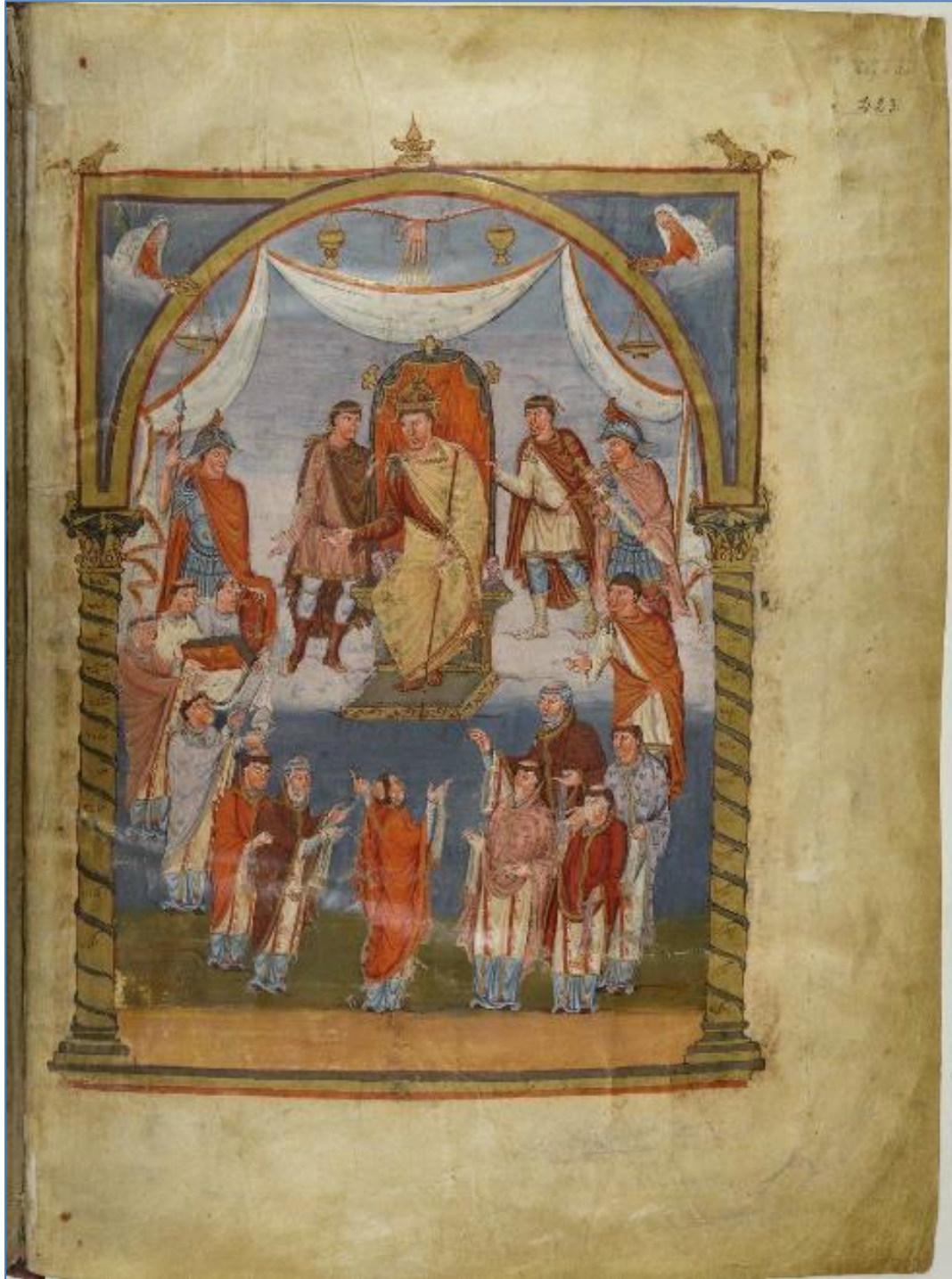


Figure 3 Presentation miniature, First Bible of Charles the Bald, c. 845. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1, fol. 423r.

those in the Bamberg Boethius²⁰ and also more ornate, written entirely in golden letters, organized into two columns, and contained within decorative frames.²¹ **(Figure 4)** However, both sets of poems were written in rustic capitals on fields of purple²² and both contain similar imperial language by which they address the king.²³ In both, also, the poetry is organized into three parts, with their first sections beginning each volume; their middle sections continuing between books one and two of Boethius's treatise and between the Old and New Testaments in the First Bible; and both finishing on their books' final text pages.²⁴

On the surface, the Bamberg Boethius appears to be an elegant gift for a learned king.

Yet, the manuscript's underlying purpose may not have been simply to glorify secular educational pursuits. Rather, when read with the texts and imagery of the First Bible in

²⁰ The First Bible contains 316 lines of added poetry, not including the *tituli* that accompany the various frontispieces. The Bamberg Boethius, in contrast, contains only 44 lines of poetry. Other than its transcription in *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 4 (see note 5 above), the poem has rarely been mentioned and never discussed in detail. Dutton and Kessler mention the Bamberg Boethius and its poem only once and only to point out similar imperial language to that used in the First Bible (p. 42). A section of the poem is quoted and discussed briefly in a footnote to a 2009 article by C. Stephen Jaeger, "Philosophy, ca. 950-ca. 1050," *Viator* 40 (2009), p. 29, note 56. However, Jaeger follows Nicolaus Bublov, *Gerberti Opera Mathematica* (Berlin, 1899), and mistakenly attributes the poem to Gerbert of Aurillac in the tenth century.

²¹ For published images of the First Bible's dedication poem pages, see Dutton and Kessler, frontispiece, plates 1-4, and plates 15-16. The entire manuscript can be viewed at the Bibliothèque nationale's Website, as in note 11.

²² The one exception is the First Bible's second poem, which appears on fol. 329r, which was not written on a purple field. Dutton and Kessler explain on p. 50 of their study that this was probably done because the First Bible was begun before the monks decided to include the poetry and so the scribes were limited to a blank recto of the leaf on which the *Majestas Domini* miniature was already completed.

²³ In Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Class. 5, fol. 1v, the poem begins "Invicto pollens nomine Caesar avi" (Caesar, powerful through the undefeated name of your grandfather). For a Latin edition, see *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 4, p. 1076, line 2. The First Bible also addresses Charles as Caesar (see Dutton and Kessler, p. 42).

²⁴ In the First Bible, the poems appear on fols. 1r-2v, 329r, and 422r-422v. In the Bamberg Boethius, they are on fols. 1r-2r, 62v-63r, and 139r-139v.

mind, the Bamberg Boethius can also be understood to have admonished



Figure 4 Dedication poem, First Bible of Charles the Bald, c. 845. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1, fol. 1v.

the young king that, although the study of the liberal arts was preparation for the intellectual rigors of bible study and theology, a secular education should not be an end in itself. As a path to Christian wisdom, the secular arts could only take the student so far, in order to show that it was the bible, and not the secular arts, that had to be his primary guide to Christian wisdom.

In the first section of this study, I shall investigate how the mathematical treatise was both an appropriate foundation for biblical study and also a secular foil to the

Christian bible. In the second section, I shall examine the manuscript's quadrivium miniature in order to demonstrate how it relates to the First Bible's argument that Charles should strive to embody the four virtues, rather than seek after the knowledge of the four arts. In the third section, I shall consider how the manuscripts' designers intended the presentation image, in which Boethius offers his treatise to Symmachus, to contrast with the First Bible's final presentation scene. In the Bamberg Boethius, Symmachus, who accepts the arithmetic book and appears as a secular prince receiving a secular gift, stands for Charles. The presentation image can be viewed as a contrast to the First Bible's depiction of Charles receiving the bible, which shows him as the monks hoped he would eventually become: a good Christian king who modeled himself on the Old Testament prophet David.²⁵

The Quadrivium and Biblical Study

The appropriateness of a mathematical text as a gift for a Christian king would have been understandable to Charles. He would have been aware of the writings of Augustine, Cassiodorus, and Boethius, all of whom advocated for a liberal arts education as preparation for the more advanced pursuits of philosophy and theology.²⁶ Indeed Boethius discussed this very topic in the prologue of *De institutione arithmetica*.²⁷ The

²⁵ See Dutton and Kessler, pp. 96-99.

²⁶ For a discussion of Charles the Bald's education and the intellectual culture at his court, see Rosamond McKitterick, "The Palace school of Charles the Bald" in *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom: Papers based in a Colloquium held in London in April 1979*, eds. Margaret Gibson and Janet Nelson (Oxford: B. A. R., 1981), pp. 385-400, and Rosamond McKitterick, "Charles the Bald (823-877) and His Library: The Patronage of Learning," *The English Historical Review* 95, no. 374 (1980), pp. 28-47.

²⁷ Boethius, *De Institutione arithmetica* I.1.1. For discussions of Boethius and the liberal arts, see the collection of essays in Michael Masi, ed., *Boethius and the Liberal Arts* (Berne: Peter Lange, 1981). See especially the essay by Myra L. Uhlfelder, "The Role of the Liberal Arts in Boethius," pp. 17-30. See also

gift of Boethius's text then would have been a reminder of the necessity of a liberal education for the Christian student.²⁸

The medieval educational system required study of the seven liberal arts, which comprised the so-called trivium (literally, "the three ways") that included the verbal subjects of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic, followed by the quadrivium ("the four ways") that comprised the mathematical subjects of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy.²⁹ Although the tradition of a liberal education derived from pre-Christian practice, medieval students mastered the seven arts as preparation for the study of the bible and theology. The mathematical arts were particularly revered because numbers and mathematical rules were understood to reflect eternal truths and were thus linked to theological concepts about the nature of God and of eternity.³⁰ In fact, Boethius, in his treatise on arithmetic, advocated the study of the four mathematical arts as a necessary foundation of a philosophical education:

This, therefore, is the *quadrivium*, by which we bring a superior mind from knowledge offered by the senses to the more certain things of the intellect. There are various steps and certain dimensions of progressing by which the mind is able to ascend so that by means of the eye of the mind ... truth can be investigated and

Alison White, "Boethius in the Medieval Quadrivium," in *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence*, edited by Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), pp. 162-205.

²⁸ For a recent discussion of the importance of the liberal arts at the court of Charlemagne, see Åslaug Ommundsen, "The Liberal Arts and the Polemic Strategy of the *Opus Caroli Regis Contra Synodum* (*Libri Carolini*)," *Symbolae Osloenses: Norwegian Journal of Greek and Latin Studies* 77 (2002), pp. 175-200.

²⁹ For a general discussion of the liberal arts, with essays on each of the seven disciplines, see David L. Wagner, ed., *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).

³⁰ For discussions of the importance of number in the Middle Ages, see Russell A. Peck, "Number as Cosmic Language" in *By Things Seen: Reference and Recognition in Medieval Thought*, ed. David Jeffrey (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1979), pp. 46-80; *Charlemagne and his Heritage: 1200 Years of Civilization and Science in Europe*, vol. II: *Mathematical Arts*, eds. Paul Butzer, Hubertus Theodorus Jongen, and Walter Oberschelp (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997); and John J. Contreni, "Counting, Calendars, and Cosmology: Numeracy in the Early Middle Ages" in *Word, Image, Number: Communication in the Middle Ages*, eds. John J. Contreni and Santa Casciani (Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del galluzzo, 2002), pp. 43-83.

beheld. This eye, I say, submerged and surrounded by the corporal senses, is in turn illuminated by the discipline of the quadrivium.³¹

Boethius asserted, moreover, that it would be impossible to investigate philosophical questions without first mastering the four mathematical disciplines:

If a searcher is lacking knowledge of these four sciences, he is not able to find the true; without this kind of thought, nothing of truth is rightly known. This is the knowledge of those things which truly are; it is their full understanding and comprehension. He who spurns these, the paths of wisdom, does not rightly philosophize.³²

Like Boethius, Saint Augustine encouraged the study of the liberal arts. In his treatise *On Order*, Augustine argued that the student must proceed step-by-step to higher thought through the arts of music, geometry, astronomy, and arithmetic. Without such a foundation built by this gradual process, he asserted that the mind would be ill-equipped for the intellectual challenges of biblical study.³³ To counter arguments about the frivolity of a subject like music, Augustine wrote in his treatise on that art: “This trifling way is not of trifling value. This way we, too, not very strong ourselves, have preferred to

³¹ Boethius, *De Institutione arithmetica* I.1.1. The translation used here is from Michael Masi, *Boethian Number Theory* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1983), p.73. For a Latin edition of *De Institutione arithmetica*, see Henrici Oosthout and Iohannis Schilling, *Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii De arithmetica. Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina* 94A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), p. 11: “Hoc igitur illud quadriuium est, quo his uiandum sit, quibus excellentior animus a nobiscum procreatis sensibus ad intellegentiae certiora perducitur. Sunt enim quidam gradus certaeque progressionum dimensiones, quibus ascendi progredique possit, ut animi illum oculum, qui, ut ait Plato, multis oculis corporalibus saluari constituique sit dignior, quod eo solo lumine uestigari uel inspicere ueritas queat, hunc inquam oculum demersum orbatumque corporeis sensibus hae disciplinae rursus illuminent.”

³² Boethius, *De Institutione arithmetica* I.1.1. Masi, pp. 72-73, and Oosthout and Schilling, p. 11: “Quibus quattuor partibus si careat inquisitor, uerum inuenire non possit, ac sine hac quidem speculatione ueritatis nulli recte sapiendum est. Est enim sapientia earum rerum, quae uere sunt, cognitio et integra comprehensio. Quod haec qui spernit, id est has semitas sapientiae, ei denuntio non recte philosophandum.”

³³ Augustine, *De ordine*, II.14.39. For an edition and translation of *De ordine*, see *On Order/De ordine*, edited with a literal translation by Silvano Borruso (South Bend: St. Augustine’s Press, 2007), pp. 102-103.

walk, in company with lighter persons, rather than rush with weaker wings through freer air.”³⁴

Boethius too advised students to progress gradually through the four arts, beginning with arithmetic, proceeding to music and geometry, and ending with astronomy. This was the correct order, he argued, because arithmetic is required for the understanding of the other arts.³⁵ The sixth-century psalm commentator Cassiodorus agreed with Boethius’s order and wrote in his *Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning* that the study of the quadrivium should begin with foundational art of arithmetic and end with astronomy because this last subject elevated the student to the stars:

Let us consider why this arrangement of the disciplines [arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy] led up to the stars. The obvious purpose was to direct our mind, which has been dedicated to secular wisdom and cleansed by the exercise of the disciplines, from earthly things and to place it in a praiseworthy fashion in the divine structure.³⁶

Not only did the study of the arts lead to heaven, according to Augustine, Boethius, and Cassiodorus, numbers are co-eternal with God and so allow the student a glimpse of God’s eternal nature. All three theologians asserted that numbers were not created, but that they exist beyond time. In fact, as Boethius explained, mathematics was

³⁴ Augustine, *De musica* VI.1. This translation is from “On Music,” translated by Robert Catesby Taliaferro, in *Writings of Saint Augustine*, vol. 2 (New York: CMA Publishing, 1947), p. 324. For a Latin edition, see Martin Jacobsson, *Aurelius Augustinus, De musica liber VI* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2002), p. 6: “... intelliget non uilis possessionis esse uilem uiam, per quam nunc cum imbecillioribus, nec nos ipsi admodum fortes ambulare maluimus, quam minus pennatos per liberiores auras praecipitare.”

³⁵ Boethius, *De Institutione arithmetica* I.2. Masi, p. 74, and Oosthout and Schilling, pp. 14-15.

³⁶ Cassiodorus, *Institutiones Divinarum et Saecularium Litterarum* II.7. This translation is from *Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning and On the Soul*, trans. James W. Halporn (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), p. 229. For a Latin edition, see R. A. B. Mynors, ed., *Cassiodori Senatoris Institutiones* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 158: “Consideremus ordo iste disciplinarum cur fuerit usque ad astra perductus; scilicet ut animos vel saeculari sapientiae deditos disciplinarum exercitatione defecatos a terrenis rebus abduceret, et in superna fabrica laudabiliter collocaret.”

prior to creation and was indeed the logic by which God formed the universe. Numbers were, he said, the “principal exemplar in the mind of the Creator.”³⁷ According to

Boethius:

God the creator ... established all things in accord with [number]; or that through numbers of an assigned order all things exhibiting the logic of their maker found concord; but arithmetic is said to be the first for this reason also, because whatever things are prior in their nature, it is to these underlying elements that the posterior elements can be referred.³⁸

The arts of the quadrivium, therefore, linked the material world to the immaterial and to the eternal. Humans, mired in the material world, need the help of such sensible subjects to *hear* number in musical harmonies or to *see* number in geometrical patterns and the movements of the stars. Arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy allow humans to recognize eternal numerical logic and therefore offer a way for mortals to contemplate eternal truths. In his popular schoolbook, *On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury*,³⁹ the fifth-century writer Martianus Capella declared of the liberal arts: “in the

³⁷ Boethius, *De Institutione arithmetica* I.2. Masi, p. 76, and Oosthout and Schilling, p. 14: “Hoc enim fuit principale in animo conditoris exemplar.”

³⁸ Boethius, *De Institutione arithmetica* I.2. Masi, p. 74, and Oosthout and Schilling, pp. 14-15: “Omnia quaecumque a primaeua rerum natura constructa sunt numerorum uidentur ratione formata. Hoc enim fuit principale in animo conditoris exemplar. Hinc enim quattuor elementorum multitudo mutuata est, hinc temporum uices, hinc motus astrorum caelique conuersio. Quae cum ita sint, cumque omnium status numerorum colligatione fungatur, eum quoque numerum necesse est in propria semper sese habentem aequaliter substantia permanere, eumque compositum non ex diuresis—quid enim numeri substantiam coniungeret.”

³⁹ An edition of *De nuptiis* is available in Adolfus Dick, *Martianus Capella* (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1969). For a translation and study, see William Harris Stahl, *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971 and 1977). For discussions of the popularity and influence of Martianus’s treatise in the Middle Ages, see Stahl, vol. I, pp. 55-71. See also John Marenbon, “Carolingian Thought” in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 173-174 for Martianus’s influence in the Carolingian period.

cleavage that exists between the divine and mortal realms, they alone have always maintained communication between the two.”⁴⁰

The ideas of these Late Antique authors influenced Carolingian thinkers, who also stressed the importance of a mathematical education. Alcuin of York wrote in his *Dialog of True Philosophy* that the liberal arts are like seven columns supporting the temple of Christian wisdom.⁴¹ Another member of Charlemagne’s court, Theodulf of Orleans, wrote a poem about an image of the seven liberal arts.⁴² In the poem, he described a disk decorated with a personification of philosophy, surrounded by additional personifications the liberal arts. At the end of the poem, Theodulf urged the reader not to dismiss the arts as mere secular pursuits. Instead, he asserted, by such study “our life is trained, so that it may always strive from the lower to the higher. And little by little, human intelligence will be able to climb to the height, and regret its long-standing pursuit of inferior things.”⁴³

⁴⁰ Martianus, *De nuptiis* IX.893. Stahl, vol. II, p. 347, and Dick, p. 473: “Nam inter diuina humanaque discidia solae semper interiunxere colloquia.”

⁴¹ For a discussion of this passage, see Mary Alberi, “The ‘Mystery of the Incarnation’ and Wisdom’s House (Prov. 9:1) in Alcuin’s *Disputatio de vera philosophia*,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS 48, pt. 2 (1997), p. 506, and Marenbon, pp. 172-173.

⁴² An edition of the poem appears in Ernst Dümmler, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Poetae Latini aevi Carolini*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1881; reprint, 1964), pp. 545-547 (hereafter referred to as *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 1)

⁴³ Theodulf of Orleans, *De septem liberalibus artibus in quandam pictura depictis*, lines 103-106. This translation is from the unpublished dissertation by Nikolai Alexandrenko, “The Poetry of Theodulf of Orleans: A Translation and Critical Study” (Ph.d. diss., Tulane University, 1970), p. 266. For a Latin edition, see *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 1, p. 547: “Hac patula nostra exercetur in abore vita,/Semper ut a parvis editiora petat,/Sensus et humanus paulatim scandat ad alta,/Huncque diu pigeat inferior sequi.”

Like Theodulf and Alcuin, the author of the Bamberg Boethius's dedication poem⁴⁴ praised the study of number. At the beginning of the poem, he wrote:

Caesar, may you, powerful through the undefeated name of your grandfather, accept these small gifts of Pythagoras from this little book. I think they ought to be adorned with the crowns of an emperor, which unity wove, along with Pallas Athena herself.⁴⁵

In the poem's next verse, the poet encouraged Charles to "make use of number" and to recognize that number "is most powerful and more eternal than everything." From this source, he asserted, Charles could attain "infinite scepters through a thousand triumphs."⁴⁶

Even with such praise for the study of numbers, one might wonder why the manuscript's patron felt that Charles needed the mathematical treatise. Of course, the manuscript may have simply been meant to be an offering that the well-educated king would appreciate, or something that connected him to the educational concerns of his grandfather, Charlemagne. However, a close reading of the Carolingian dedication poem in the First Bible may help to shed light on the manuscript's larger purpose. Although a mathematical education was generally considered necessary for any educational pursuit, the dedication poem in the First Bible reveals an ambivalent attitude toward the liberal arts. The poet appears to have been convinced of the secular arts' obsolescence in relation

⁴⁴ Dutton and Kessler argued convincingly for Audradus Modicus as the author of the First Bible's poems. The identity of the Bamberg Boethius author remains uncertain and needs further investigation.

⁴⁵ Translations of this poem are my own. For an edition of the poem, see *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 4 (as in note 5 above), p. 1076, lines 1-4: "Pythagorea licet parvo cape dona libello,/Invicto pollens nomine Caesar avi./Sunt ea Caesareis reor exornanda coronis,/Ipsa quas monas Pallade texuerit."

⁴⁶ Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Class. 5, fol. 2r. For the Latin see *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 4, p. 1076-77, lines 9-16: "Omnia si numero quapropter ad omnia constant,/Omnibus ut prosis, utere, rex, numero,/Quem si corporeo caream plerumque potentem/Aeternumque magis cuncta super specular;/Alter in inmensum crescens mihi crescerpraestat,/Decrescens alter suadet item minui./Infinita sequens igitur per mille triumphos/Sceptra regas, leto praeclus imperio."

to the bible's teachings. He stated that nothing is needed but the bible and that it contains "all things ... physics, logic, even morals."⁴⁷ The poet further asserted that the bible "surpasses the liberal arts in worthiness."⁴⁸

Although in general Carolingians supported the liberal arts as necessary educational pursuits, they were also sometimes wary of their secular nature.⁴⁹ In his *Dialog*, Alcuin showed concern that students might neglect religious study and place too much emphasis on the secular aspects of their education. Alcuin gave Plato as an example to make this point, arguing that, although Plato "burned with love of secular wisdom," he "remained ignorant of the celestial wisdom that leads to eternal life."⁵⁰ Earlier, Augustine had suggested in book II of his *On Christian Doctrine* that a mathematical education had its limitations. He asserted that, though the science of number was immutable truth, our

⁴⁷ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1, I.131-132. For an edition and translation of the First Bible's added poetry, see Dutton and Kessler, pp. 104-122. This line appears on p. 108-109 and the Latin reads: "In phisicis, logicis, etiam moralibus istic/Omnia sunt, lector, in brevitate tibi."

⁴⁸ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1, I.150. Dutton and Kessler, pp. 110-111: "Ars genere, eloquio, vi, ratione, vice."

⁴⁹ For discussions of Carolingian education, see Richard E. Sullivan, "The Cultural Context in the Carolingian Age," and other essays in *The Gentle Voices of Teachers: Aspects of Learning in the Carolingian Age*, ed. Sullivan (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1995). See also Marenbon, pp. 171-192. For a discussion of the ambivalent attitudes toward secular learning, see John J. Contrini, "Inharmonious Harmony: Education in the Carolingian World," *Annals of Scholarship: Metastudies of the Humanities and Social Sciences* 1 (1980), pp. 81-96. This was reprinted in *Carolingian Learning, Masters and Manuscripts* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1992), IV. See also Mariken Teeuwen, "Seduced by Pagan Poets and Philosophers: Suspicious Learning in the Early Middle Ages" in *Limits to Learning: The Transfer of Encyclopaedic Knowledge in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Concetta Giliberto and Loredana Teresi (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), pp. 63-80.

⁵⁰ Mary Alberi cited and discussed this passage in two articles: "'The Better Paths of Wisdom': Alcuin's Monastic 'True Philosophy' and the Worldly Court," *Speculum* 76, no. 4 (2001), p. 902 and "Alcuin's *Disputatio de vera philosophia*," p. 509. It is Alberi's translation from "Alcuin's *Disputatio de vera philosophia*" that I have used here. For the Latin, see *Patrologia Latina* 101: 852D: "amore saecularis sapientiae flagrans, coelestis vero, quae ad vitam ducit perpetuam ignarus."

human perceptions and understandings are flawed.⁵¹ Although number may be perfect, our understanding of number is not. Only by recognizing the ultimate source of numerical truth would the learned achieve true wisdom:

Whoever delights in these things [the science of number] ... and does not seek to learn the source of the truths which he has somehow perceived and to know whence those things are not only true but immutable ... does not come to understand that it is placed between immutable things above it and other mutable things below it, and so does not turn all his knowledge toward the praise and love of one God from whom he knows that everything is derived—this man may seem to be learned. But he is in no way wise.⁵²

By offering Charles Boethius's treatise, the manuscript's patron did not necessarily want to encourage further study of the quadrivial arts. Rather, he may have meant to admonish Charles that such study, without a greater purpose, was incomplete and even dangerous. By itself, a secular education did not lead to what the king should have been seeking: the approval of God and the glories of heaven. The Bamberg Boethius thus pointed Charles toward the next segment in his educational journey: to the bible and to Christian wisdom it offered.

⁵¹ For the English, see *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1958). For a Latin edition, see William M. Green, ed., *De doctrina christiana*, in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 80 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1963).

⁵² Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* II.38.56. For the translation, see Robertson, p. 73. For the Latin, see Green, p. 73: "Quae tamen omnia quiquis ita dilexerit ut iactare se inter imperitos velit et non potius quaerere unde sint vera quae tantummodo vera esse persenserit, et unde quaedam non solum vera, sed etiam incommutabilia, quae incommutabilia esse comprehenderit, ac sic ab specie corporum usque ad humanam mentem perveniens—cum et ipsam mutabilem invenerit, quod nunc docta, nunc indocta sit, constituta tamen inter incommutabilem supra se veritatem et mutabilia infra se cetera—ad unius dei laudem atque dilectionem cuncta convertere a quo cuncta esse cognoscit, doctus videri potest, esse autem sapiens nullo modo."

The Quadrivium Miniature

The desire for Charles to eventually turn away from the secular arts and embrace

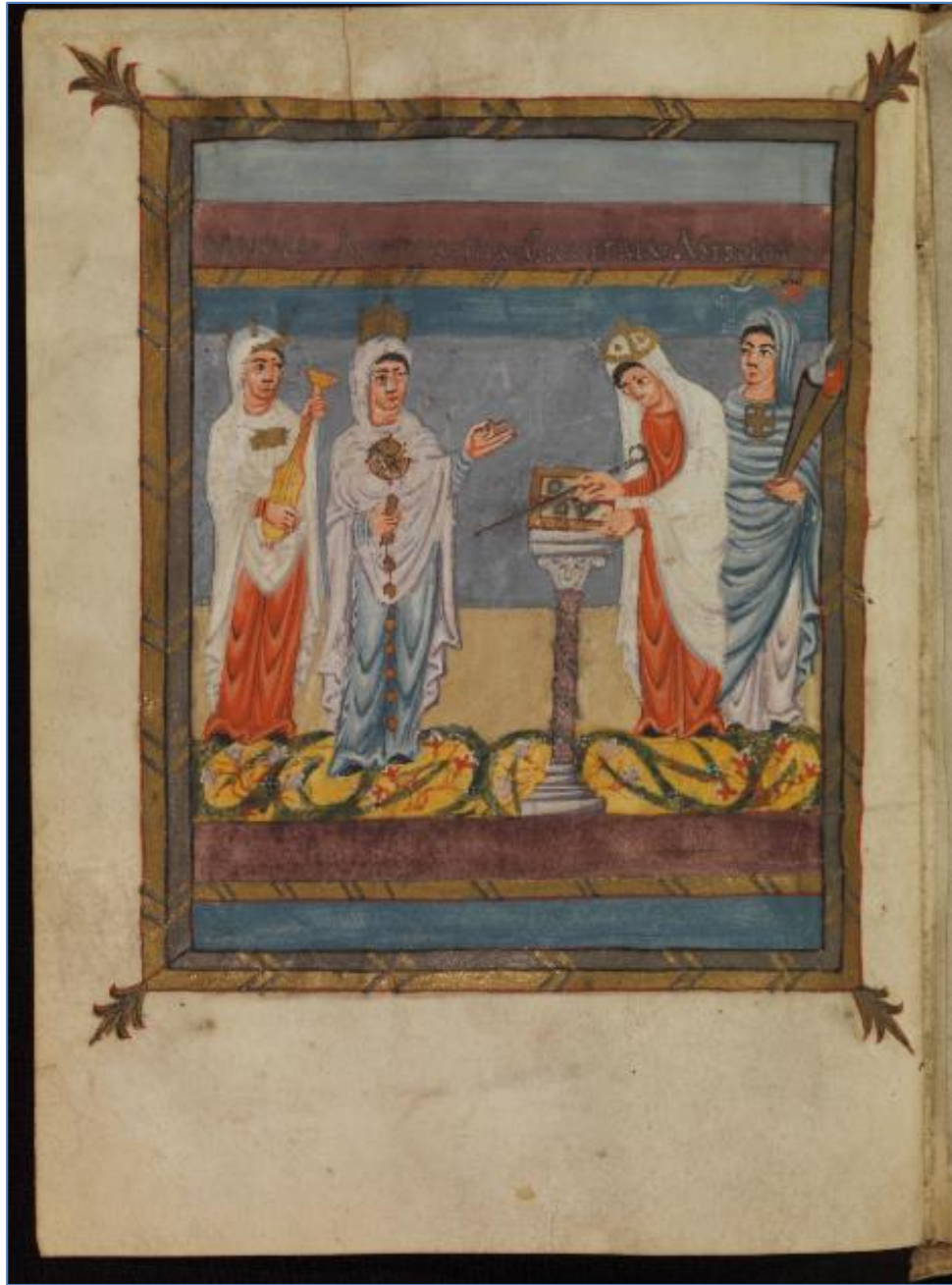


Figure 5 Quadrivium miniature, Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, c. 845. Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Class. 5, fol. 9v. Photo: with the permission of the Bamberg Staatsbibliothek.

the bible was embedded in the Bamberg Boethius's miniatures, particularly in the

miniature that depicts the four arts of the quadrivium as female personifications. In the scene, the four women are identified by inscriptions above their heads and by the attributes that they carry. **(Figure 5)** From left to right, the figures are Music, holding a stringed instrument; Arithmetic, holding counting beads and reckoning with the fingers of her left hand;⁵³ Geometry, using a measuring rod to draw geometric figures; and Astronomy (labeled *Astrologia*⁵⁴ in the image), holding two torches and surmounted by the sun, moon, and stars.

The passage in Boethius's treatise in which he discussed the quadrivium was probably the initial justification for the subject matter of the miniature; however, Boethius did not describe the arts as personifications. The Bamberg Boethius's designer may have arrived at the idea of personifying the arts by reading Martianus Capella's treatise, in which he described each liberal art as a maiden who discourses on her subject to entertain guests at a wedding. Because Martianus's book was often used as a school text in the Carolingian period, it is probable the manuscript's artists were familiar with

⁵³ The exact number that her gesture indicates has not been identified, but Bede described finger reckoning in general in the first chapter of his *De temporibus ratione*. For a translation, see Bede, *The Reckoning of Time*, trans. Faith Wallis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), pp. 9-13. For the history of the practice, see Edward A. Betchel, "Finger-Counting among the Romans in the Fourth Century," *Classical Philology* 4, no. 1 (1909), pp. 25-31, and Elizabeth Alföldi-Rosenbaum, "The Finger Calculus in Antiquity and the Middle Ages," *Frümittelalterliche Studien* 5 (1971), pp. 1-5.

⁵⁴ In Carolingian writings, the term "astrology" was often used interchangeably with "astronomy." Theodulf, for instance, used the term "astrology" instead of "astronomy" in his poem on the liberal arts (see *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 1, p. 547, line 80). Nevertheless, Isidore and Augustine both discussed the distinction between the two terms, warning that, while the science of astronomy was useful, astrology, when used to predict the future, was suspect and even dangerous. See Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies* III.xxvii in the translation by Stephen A. Barney, et al., *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 99, and Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* II.21.32-33, in Robertson, pp. 56-57. For a general discussion of the distinction between astrology and astronomy in the Middle Ages, see Theodore Otto Wedel, *Astrology in The Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920), pp. 15-48.

it.⁵⁵ However, very little beyond the portrayal of the mathematical arts as female personifications links the women of the Bamberg Boethius to Martianus's detailed and specific descriptions of the maidens. For instance, in the manuscript, Arithmetic is making finger calculations, as Martianus described in his text; however, she does not appear with ten rays of light emanating from her forehead.⁵⁶ Music in the Bamberg Boethius miniature does not hold a shield of concentric circles from which celestial music pours, as in the textbook.⁵⁷ And, the feet and hem of Geometry, in the Bamberg Boethius, are not dirty from her treks around the earth, as Martianus wrote.⁵⁸

If one must find a text to explain the visual details of the Bamberg Boethius's personifications, a closer match (although not a perfect one) does exist. Theodulf of Orleans also described the liberal arts as personifications in his poem. He too may have been inspired, at least in part, by Martianus;⁵⁹ nonetheless, his descriptions of the arts are very different from those in the textbook. Theodulf's imagery does suggest, to some degree, the figures in the miniature. For instance, Theodulf described Arithmetic as holding "numbers"⁶⁰ in one hand, which may have been visualized in the miniature by her finger reckoning, or by the counting beads that she carries. Music, according to

⁵⁵ As in note 38, above.

⁵⁶ Martianus, *De nuptiis* VII.728. Stahl, vol. II, p. 275.

⁵⁷ Martianus, *De nuptiis* IX.909. Stahl, vol. II, pp. 352-353.

⁵⁸ Martianus, *De nuptiis* VI.583. Stahl, vol. II, p. 219.

⁵⁹ Katzenellenbogen, *The Representation of the Seven Liberal Arts*, p. 41, cited the evidence of *tituli* from Charlemagne's palace that described the seven liberal arts, with the addition of medicine. See also *MGH, PLAC*, vol. I, pp. 408-411.

⁶⁰ Theodulf of Orleans, *De septem liberalibus artibus in quandam pictura depictis*, line 65. Alexandrenko, p. 264, and *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 1, p. 546: "Ista manus numeros retinebat."

Theodulf, “seemed to move skillfully the chords of a lyre” and in the miniature she does play a stringed instrument.⁶¹ Theodulf also described Geometry as carrying a measuring rod in her right hand, as does Geometry in the miniature. He also wrote that around Astronomy’s head was an “image of a star-bearing sky that was filled by fiery shining arrangements of the constellations.”⁶² This description could relate to Astronomy in the miniature, above whose head are the sun, moon, and stars. Theodulf furthermore described the discipline of astronomy as the highest of the four arts because, he said, it “chooses its place in heaven, and holds the law of the stars and the sky.”⁶³ In the Bamberg Boethius, Astronomy is the furthest to the right and therefore could represent the culmination of the arts. Although she is not higher than any of the other figures in the composition, she is the one associated with the heavens by means of the celestial bodies above her head.

Nevertheless, Theodulf’s descriptions are far more detailed than what is visualized in the miniature. In his poem, Theodulf gave each of the figures more attributes than they carry in the miniature. He also situated them around a tree, with each

⁶¹ Although the instrument she is holding has not been certainly identified, some medieval lyres did have long necks, like the instrument that Music plays in the miniature. For a history of lyres and their various forms, see Hortense Panum, *The Stringed Instruments of the Middle Ages: Their Evolution and Development*, translated by Jeffrey Pulver (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1939, reprinted, 1970), pp. 292-300.

⁶² Theodulf of Orleans, *De septem liberalibus artibus in quandam pictura depictis*, lines 81-84. Alexandrenko, p. 265, and *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 1, p. 546: “Huic caput alta petens onerabat circulus ingens/Quem manibus geminis brachia tensa tenant:/Circulus astriferi formatus imagine caeli./Quem signorum implet flammeus ordo decens.

⁶³ Theodulf of Orleans, *De septem liberalibus artibus in quandam pictura depictis*, lines 109-110. Alexandrenko, p. 266, and *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 1, p. 547: “Quarum suprema sedem sibi legit in arce,/Quae legem astorum continet atque poli.”

one standing on branches off of a trunk that represents Philosophy. Both Theodulf and Martianus also described all seven of the liberal arts, including the verbal arts of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic, while the Bamberg Boethius depicts only the four mathematical arts. The focus on the mathematical arts in the Bamberg Boethius is understandable, of course, as Boethius did coin the term *quadrivium* in the text that the miniature illustrates, and he did discuss only these four disciplines in his treatise. Still, the image in the Bamberg manuscript is unusual among medieval images of the liberal arts, which, to my knowledge, in no other instance depict only the *quadrivium*.

The unusual choices to illustrate and present Boethius's treatise and to focus on the four figures of the *quadrivium* may also have had to do with the First Bible and the message it conveyed. The First Bible's dedication poem in fact refers to a *quadrivium*, although not to the mathematical one. Notably, the First Bible's poet used the term "*quadrivium*" to describe the four cardinal virtues. Immediately following his declaration that the bible "*surpasses the liberal arts in worthiness*,"⁶⁴ the poet wrote that the bible "*truly begets a noble quadrivium of virtue, through which it sends the earthborn race to the stars*."⁶⁵ The mention of stellar travel recalls Cassiodorus's and Theodulf's accounts of astronomy leading to the stars, as well as to the miniature's personification of astronomy, who is surmounted by the sun, moon, and stars. While Theodulf and other writers praised the study of astronomy for leading the student to the heavens, the First Bible's poet took issue with the notion, asserting that it is not the four mathematical arts,

⁶⁴ As in note 48 above.

⁶⁵ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1, I.165-166. Dutton and Kessler, pp. 110-111: "*Quadrivium gignit virtutis nobile sane, / Terrigenum mittit per quod in astra genus*."

but instead the four virtues, that lead to such heights. Later in the First Bible's verses, the poet identified the evangelists as another foursome that was raised to the stars, with John, as a parallel to the art of astronomy, ascending "above the stars like an eagle."⁶⁶

Additionally, the First Bible poet stated that it is the New Testament that allows "heavenly ascent toward the stars."⁶⁷ The poem's recurring theme of travel to the stars emphasizes alternate routes to the heavens than those offered by the "four ways" of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy.

In their study of the First Bible, Dutton and Kessler demonstrated how the comparison between the depiction of Charles in the First Bible's final miniature with that of David, who appears earlier in the manuscript in the frontispiece to the Book of Psalms, **(Figure 6)** encouraged the king to emulate his Old Testament counterpart and be as humble and virtuous.⁶⁸ The First Bible also offers a visual representation of how the virtues lead to the stars. In the frontispiece, David appears as the Psalmist, playing his harp. He is nude, partially covered by a red cloak, enclosed in a blue mandorla, and surrounded by his musicians and guards. In each corner of the page, personifications of the virtues (Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance) point toward David. Justice and Temperance, in the lower corners, are male personifications, but Prudence and Fortitude, in the upper corners, are female and they wear red dresses with white head

⁶⁶ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1, I.103. Dutton and Kessler, pp. 108-109: "More aquilae quoniam transcendit sidera quartus."

⁶⁷ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1, I.116. Dutton and Kessler, pp. 108-109: "Quo tribuente datur scansio celsa poli."

⁶⁸ For a discussion of this aspect of the First Bible, see Dutton and Kessler, especially their chapter, "The Presentation Miniature," pp. 71-87.

coverings that match those worn by Music and Geometry in the Bamberg Boethius's quadrivium miniature.



Figure 6 Frontispiece to the Book of Psalms, First Bible of Charles the Bald, c. 845. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1, fol. 215v.

In the frontispiece, David, honored by the virtues, has been transported to the stars. The accompanying caption describes him as “shining brilliantly,”⁶⁹ which suits his appearance as a constellation against a blue sky.⁷⁰ In addition to describing David as shining, the inscription that surmounts the miniature states that David’s company “is well- trained in the art of music to sing his work.”⁷¹ The phrase, “well-trained in the art of music,” may again refer to the notion of the quadrivium miniature and to the idea of training in the secular disciplines. David ultimately used his training appropriately, to sing the word of God. It was this correct use of his skill that allowed him to be both king and prophet, as the artist identified him in the inscription above the figure’s head. It was also what finally allowed him to be elevated to heaven. The First Bible’s poem states of Charles that he had “been trained in these very worldly practices,”⁷² but the First Bible’s poet hoped that Charles would be like David, and use his training in order to understand true virtue and the wisdom of the Word of God.

⁶⁹ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1, V.1. Dutton and Kessler, pp. 114-115: “Psalmificus David resplendet.” According to Dutton and Kessler, p. 7, this *titulus* is unique to the First Bible and was written for this particular manuscript project.

⁷⁰ The closest parallel to the image of David in the First Bible is the depiction of the constellation of Gemini in the Leiden *Aratea* (Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Ms. Voss. Lat. Q. 79, fol. 16v). In the image, the musician Amphion stands with his twin Zethus. Like David, Amphion holds a harp; is nude, except for a red cloak; and is depicted upon a field of blue. For a facsimile and commentary, see Bernhard Bischoff, et al., *Aratea. I. Kommentar zum Aratus des Germanicus*, Ms. Voss. Lat. Q. 79, *Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit Leiden*. 2 vols. (Luzern: Faksimile Verlag, 1989). The entire manuscript is online and available at the University of Leiden’s Website: https://socrates.leidenuniv.nl/R/-?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=1739618 (accessed on May 28, 2015). Dutton and Kessler, p. 84, discussed the relationship between the Leiden *Aratea* miniature and the David frontispiece in the First Bible, as does Kessler in “A Lay Abbot as Patron,” pp. 264-265.

⁷¹ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1, V.1-2. Dutton and Kessler, pp. 114-115: “Psalmificus David resplendet et ordo peritus/Euius opus canere musica ab arte bene.”

⁷² Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1, I.179. Dutton and Kessler, pp. 110-111: “Quisquis es instructus mundanis usibus hisce.”

Many of the First Bible's visual frontispieces and their inscriptions were modeled on earlier illustrated bibles from Tours, such as the Grandval Bible.⁷³ However, neither the David frontispiece nor its inscriptions are found in any of the earlier manuscripts. In the Grandval Bible, the image decorating the beginning of the Book of Psalms is a historiated initial in which David fights a lion.⁷⁴ The First Bible's frontispiece and its inscription were likely invented for the First Bible project, in order to establish a comparison between David and Charles and to reference the metaphor of travel to the stars that is continually referenced in the poem. Additionally, the depiction of David as a heavenly constellation surrounded by a "quadrivium of virtues" suggests as well that the artists of the Bamberg Boethius were reacting to the texts and images of the First Bible when they created the image of the quadrivium figures.

The image of the quadrivium in the Bamberg Boethius also shows how the study of the numerical arts leads to the material stars, with Astronomy's head surmounted by celestial objects. But the stars to which the First Bible's poet referred, and to which he stated that the virtues lead, were not the same stars sought by astronomers. The arrangement of the Bamberg Boethius's four personifications of the quadrivium encourages the viewer to compare the results of a secular education with those of a Christian one. Michael Masi, in his study of the iconography of the liberal arts, questioned the order of the personifications in the Bamberg Boethius, which, from left to right, represent music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. He noted that, read across in

⁷³ London, British Library, Add. Ms. 10546. For a facsimile with commentary, see Johannes Duft et al., *Die Bible von Moutier-Grandval* (Bern: Verein Schweizerischer Lithographiebesitzer, 1971). See Kessler, "A Lay Abbot as Patron," pp. 259-260, for a discussion of the relationship between the two miniatures.

⁷⁴ London, British Library, Add. Ms. 10546, fol. 243r.

this way, their order does not conform to that advocated by Boethius, who encouraged students to begin with the study of arithmetic and end with astronomy. Masi considered that the artist might have organized the arts from the center out, with Arithmetic, to the left of center, as the first art, followed by Music, furthest to the left, behind Arithmetic. He surmised that the viewer was then to look to the other side the page and read Geometry as the third art, followed by Astronomy, who stands on the far right and represents the final discipline.⁷⁵

Although Masi's suggestion reconciles the position of the arts in the image with the order of study that Boethius advocated, there is another explanation for their arrangement in the Bamberg Boethius. The manner in which the manuscript's designer arranged the women demonstrates that, by themselves, the four arts have no center. The First Bible's poem asserts that the four virtues lead to the stars and, indeed, in the miniature that prefaces the Book of Psalms, David is in heaven, centered amid the "quadrivium of virtues." In contrast, the arts in the Bamberg Boethius's quadrivium miniature stand in a row on the ground. They are on earth, not heaven, and they neither have a center nor surround a center. Between the mathematical arts in the Bamberg Boethius there is only emptiness.

Indeed, the Bamberg Boethius's poem alludes to the idea of center and the need to seek for it. The final verse of the poem reads:

But whoever approves number, not who ratio separates, but who unity
consecrates, he laughs at the gliding circumference of the opening from [a place
of] profound safety.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Masi, "Boethius and the Iconography of the Liberal Arts," p. 59.

⁷⁶ Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Class. 5, fol. 140v. *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 4, p. 1077, III.3-4: "At quisquis numerum probat,/Non quem portio dispartat,/Sed quem consecrat unitas,/Labentem foris ambitum,/Ridet tutior intimis."

The poem however goes on to warn that whoever leaves the center, “wandering flight scatters and destroys.”⁷⁷ While the rest of the poem praises the study of numbers, the last line ends abruptly and with a dire warning. Here the poem may allude to another work of Boethius: his *Consolation of Philosophy*. In the *Consolation*, Boethius told of “a set of revolving concentric circles,” of which “the inmost one comes closest to the simplicity of the center.”⁷⁸ Boethius went on to explain why what is farthest from the center is most in danger:

Whatever moves any distance from the primary intelligence becomes enmeshed in ever stronger chains of Fate. The relationship between the ever-changing course of Fate and the stable simplicity of Providence is like that between reasoning and understanding, between that which is coming into being and that which is between time and eternity, or between the moving circle and the still point in the middle.⁷⁹

For the Bamberg Boethius’s poet, although number was worthy of study, it did not itself fend off danger for the student who focused on the wrong aspects, as Augustine and Alcuin had warned. The women who represent the four arts, standing in a straight line, with nothing as their center, are more like a spinning circumference than they are a still point in the middle.

⁷⁷ Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Class. 5, fol. 140v. *MGH, PLAC*, vol. 4, p. 1077, lines III.4: “Quam, per plurima deferens/Dum linquit medium vaga/Sparsim perdiderat fuga.”

⁷⁸ Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae* IV.6.15-17. The translation is from *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. Victor Watts (London: Penguin Books, 1969, reprinted 1999), p. 105. For a Latin edition, see Claudio Moreschini, ed., *De consolatione philosophiae; Opuscula theologica* (Munich: K. G. Saur, 2005), p. 124: “Nam ut orbium circa eundem cardinem sese vertentium qui est intimus ad simplicitatem medietatis.”

⁷⁹ Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae* IV.6.15-17. Watts, p. 105, and Moreschini, p. 124: “Igitur uti est ad intellectum ratiocinatio, ad id quod est id quod gignitur, ad aeternitatem tempus, ad punctum medium circulus, ita est fati series mobilis ad providentiae stabilem simplicitatem.”

The Presentation Miniature

While the quadrivium miniature has received a great deal of attention due to its presumed relationship to depictions of the liberal arts in the later Middle Ages, the manuscript's presentation miniature (**Figure 7**) has received relatively little commentary. This neglect has probably been due to the fact that the image, in which Boethius and Symmachus sit together on a bench and hold a book between them, seems to be a straightforward illustration of Boethius's dedication text. Although in Boethius's dedication, he does offer his treatise to his father-in-law, the details of the miniature diverge from the text that it purportedly illustrates. The men's military dress, for instance, cannot be explained by the dedication. Another anomaly is the manner in which the figures are labeled. Surprisingly, the labels identify the young, brown-haired man on the left side of the image as Symmachus and the older, gray-haired man on the right as Boethius. Symmachus does appear to be the more important of the two, as he sits up taller and his cloak is trimmed in gold. While Symmachus's elevated status mirrors the respectful tone of Boethius's dedication passage, that passage does not explain why Symmachus is portrayed as the younger of the two men, when, as Boethius's father-in-law, one would expect him to appear as the elder.

Margaret Gibson (who asserted that the Carolingian manuscript was probably a copy of the very book that Boethius presented to Symmachus three hundred years earlier) addressed this problem and argued that the Carolingian painter had misunderstood the exemplar and mislabeled the figures. She pointed to the awkward perspectives of the



Figure 7 Presentation miniature, Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, c. 845. Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Class. 5, fol. 2v. Photo: with the permission of the Bamberg Staatsbibliothek.

bench, staff, and footstool to support her characterization of a somewhat confused copyist.⁸⁰ Gibson's observation that the figures appear mislabeled is an important one, but not for the reason she gave. The artist of the Bamberg Boethius most likely labeled the younger man Symmachus because, as the recipient of Boethius's treatise and the dedicatee of its contents, he was a surrogate for Charles, who was also the recipient and dedicatee of the manuscript. As Charles was a new king and a young man (only 22) in 845, it is not surprising that his surrogate would appear as a young man in the miniature.

If Symmachus represents Charles, who does the figure of Boethius stand for? Although the manuscript's patron would be a reasonable assumption, because Boethius, like Symmachus, appears in military garb, it is unlikely that he was meant to represent a monk or other religious figure. Alternatively, Boethius may stand for one of Charles's ancestors, such as his father Louis the Pious, who is dressed in a similar outfit in his portrait that appears in copies of Hrabanus Maurus's *In Praise of the Holy Cross*.⁸¹ The figure might also represent Charles's grandfather, Charlemagne. Charlemagne is a likely candidate because he is mentioned in the Bamberg Boethius's Carolingian dedication poem, which begins with the statement that the young Charles is "powerful through the undefeated name of [his] grandfather."⁸² If Symmachus represents Charles, and Boethius represents Charlemagne, the image then illustrates both the Late Antique and the

⁸⁰ Gibson, "Illustrating Boethius: Carolingian and Romanesque Manuscripts," p. 120: "The artist is in trouble with the staff in Boethius's right hand, and indeed the whole perspective of the bench, canopy, and footstool, and his title SIMMACHUS, BOECIUS is the wrong way round. He has only partly understood his exemplar."

⁸¹ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonensis 652, fol. 4v. A facsimile of the manuscript appears in Kurt Holter, *Liber de laudibus Sanctae Crucis* (Graz: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1973).

⁸² See note 6 above.

Carolingian dedications and makes the point that Boethius passed along secular knowledge, just as Charlemagne passed along secular power. The figures are thus in military dress because the book and its contents served a secular purpose.

The young man labeled Symmachus in the Bamberg Boethius miniature, with his brown hair and short beard, also bears a facial resemblance to Charles in the First Bible's presentation scene. In the same way, Charles in the presentation miniature looks similar to David in the frontispiece to the Psalms.⁸³ The composition of the two First Bible miniatures is also similar, with both Charles and David in the center of the compositions. Although Charles is not in heaven, like David, he is closer to that goal than he appears to be in the Bamberg Boethius's miniature, in which he is not centered and wears only symbols of secular fame.

In the First Bible, the presentation miniature ends the manuscript, appearing on its last leaf, while in the Bamberg Boethius, the presentation image is at the beginning of the text. Dutton and Kessler argued that the First Bible's designers situated the presentation scene at the end of the manuscript because Charles is shown not as he is, but as he would become after having embraced the bible's teachings.⁸⁴ The image at the beginning of the Boethius manuscript presents Charles in a pre-enlightened state. At the end of the First Bible's final poem, Charles is fully transformed into a David-like king. Indeed, the last line of the First Bible's dedication exclaims, "peace and praise for you without end, good

⁸³ Dutton and Kessler, p. 81, discussed the visual similarity between Charles and David in the First Bible.

⁸⁴ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1, I.2. Dutton and Kessler, pp. 104-105.

King David. Be well.”⁸⁵ Through the program of education offered by the bible, the secular ruler transformed into the humble and divinely inspired Old Testament king. The ruler depicted in the Bamberg Boethius is at the beginning of his educational path and still far from his journey’s end.

Conclusion

At first glance, with its gold and silver diagrams and full-page miniatures, the Bamberg Boethius seems to glorify the liberal arts. When considered in light of the First Bible, the illustration critiques a worldview that puts too much emphasis on secular learning. Although Boethius’s text could send Charles on a journey that had wisdom as its goal, that path led only from one mathematical art to another. Ultimately, it led to an earthly place from which Charles could merely gaze at the stars. The First Bible’s poet argued that the path of the liberal arts stops short. It declares, however, that the path of the bible, with its training in virtuous Christian kingship, could actually transport Charles to heaven. The images and poetry of the Boethius manuscript offered him the less splendid alternative. Without the supplement of biblical study, the quadrivium offered a de-centered existence. If Charles had chosen to cling to secular concerns and to neglect his Christian education, he would have remained on earth, like the figure of astronomy in the Bamberg Boethius—contemplating heaven, but never welcomed into it. 🐉

⁸⁵ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 1, XI.42. Dutton and Kessler, pp. 120-121: “Pax, laus continue, rex bone David. Ave.”



Moveable Feasts: Processions as Multimedia Performance in Le Puy-en-Velay

By Elisa A. Foster, Texas Christian University

Perched atop a volcanic outcrop on Mount Anis in the Auvergne

region of central France, the stunning town of Le Puy-en-Velay has

been considered a sacred place since the Roman era. **(Figure 1)** Despite its remote hilltop location, Le Puy-en-Velay played an important role in French ecclesiastical history



Figure 1 Le Puy-en-Velay Panorama. Photo: Licensed under CC BY-SA 1.0 via Wikimedia Commons

throughout the medieval and Early Modern periods. A Christian sanctuary has been

present at the site since the fifth century, and pilgrimages to Le Puy have been

documented from at least the late tenth century.¹ Le Puy was also home to important

¹ Pierre-Roger Gaussin, "La ville du Puy-en-Velay et ses pèlerinages," *Revue de géographie de Lyon* 26/ 3: 243 – 271. For history of Le Puy, see Jean-Arnaud-Michel Arnaud, *Histoire de Velay jusqu'à la fin du règne de Louis XV* (La Couche, 1816); Claude de Vic, J. Vaissete, Édouard Dulaurier, Ernest Roschach, Camille Chabaneau, and Camille Chabaneau, *Histoire générale de Languedoc, avec des notes et les pièces justificatives* (Toulouse, 1872).

French bishops, such as Godescalc, who made the first recorded pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela from 950 – 951, and Adhémar du Monteil (1080 – 1087), who famously became the first to volunteer his service following Pope Urban II's call to crusade at the Council of Claremont in 1095.² The late eleventh and twelfth centuries saw the construction of the present Romanesque cathedral during which time Le Puy also became the southernmost starting point in France on the route to Santiago de Compostela (the *via podenis*).³ **(Figure 2)** Though it is now overshadowed by modern-day French pilgrimage sites such as Lourdes, Le Puy-en-Velay still remains an important site of Christian pilgrimage, welcoming thousands of visitors each year.

As Le Puy's role as a pilgrimage center flourished, so too did ritual activities at the cathedral; one of the earliest examples of medieval French polyphony was composed at Le Puy.⁴ Moreover, religious processions occurred frequently both in and around the cathedral complex. Extra-mural processions were especially dramatic given the city's location atop of Mount Anis, requiring processions not only to move forward, but also to

² The early history of Le Puy in the context of pilgrimage was recently discussed in the past edition of this journal. See Roger E. Reynolds, "A Precious Ancient Souvenir Given to the First Pilgrim to Santiago de Compostela," *Peregrinations: The Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* 4/3 (2014): 1 – 30; see also note 1.

³ A concise summary of the importance of Le Puy-en-Velay during the Middle Ages and outline of its construction can be consulted in Walter Cahn, *The Romanesque Wooden Doors of Auvergne* (New York: New York University Press, 1974), pp. 59 – 75.

⁴ Wulf Arlt, "The Office for the Feast of the Circumcision from Le Puy," in *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography: Written in Honor of Professor Ruth Steiner*, eds. Ruth Steiner, Margot E. Fassler, and Rebecca A. Baltzer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 324-343. Recording: Ensemble Gilles Binchois, Dominique Vellard, and Wulf Arlt. *Le Manuscrit du Puy* (London: Virgin, 2001).

proceed up the steep incline of the city streets. While clergy both at the cathedral and in neighboring parish churches participated in these rituals on a near daily basis, pilgrims

Figure 2 Western façade, Le Puy Cathedral, 11 – 12th centuries, with 19th century reconstruction. Photo: author.



and residents in Le Puy also participated in extra-mural religious processions from at least the thirteenth century. Processions continue in Le Puy to this day on the fifteenth

of August, the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, bringing in thousands of participants to walk these well-worn routes.⁵ Despite Le Puy's important role as a pilgrimage city in medieval and early modern France, its processions have not been adequately examined.

Processions are often difficult to study precisely because they are visual, spatial, and symphonic productions whose components transcend contemporary fields of academic study. It is therefore unsurprising that many past studies of medieval processions have been examined through a disciplinary avenue of research such as liturgical music, or semiotically as a symbol of communal cohesion, conflict, or ritual

⁵ Pierre Cubizolles, *Le diocèse du Puy-en-Velay des origines à nos jours* (Nonette: Créer, 2005).

transformation.⁶ The works of Margot Fassler, Susan Boynton, Margit Thøfner, and especially Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüskén's edited volume on processional performance, have provided excellent models for a more comprehensive study of processions that account for sight, sound, and material culture. It is this spirit of interdisciplinary research that inspired this article and to which I hope it also contributes.⁷

The temporality of processional activity has also limited the study of these communal performances.⁸ Considering rituals like processions only through texts or

⁶ Louis Marin, "Establishing a Signification for Social Space: Demonstration, Cortege, Parade, Procession (Semiotic Notes)," in *On Representation*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 38 – 53. Louis Marin approaches the procession through the theory of semiotics, dismissing the more performative and unstructured aspects of processional activity. See also C. Clifford Flanigan, "The Moving Subject: Medieval Liturgical Processions in Semiotic and Cultural Perspective," in *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, eds. Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüskén, pp. 35–51. *Ludus 5* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 2001). For historical approaches integrating ritual theory see, among others, Ronald F. E. Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence: Population and Social Structure* (New York: Academic Press, 1981); Richard C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980).

⁷ Margit Thøfner, *A Common Art: Urban Ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels during and after the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2007); Margot Fassler, "Adventus at Chartres: Ritual Models for Major Processions," in *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Howe (Notre Dame, IN.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), pp. 13 - 62; Susan Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity: Liturgy & History At the Imperial Abbey of Farfa, 1000-1125* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006). In addition to Ashley and Hüskén's contribution to the study of processions, the edited volume *Visualizing Medieval Performance* includes several studies that address the multiple sources and multimedia of processions. These studies have provided the groundwork for new methodologies and perspectives on medieval performance in general. *Visualizing Medieval Performance: perspectives, histories, contexts*, ed. E. Gerstman (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008). For studies in this volume specifically considering processions see, Christina Maranci, "Performance and church exterior in medieval Armenia," pp. 17 – 32 and Rebecca Zorach, "'Taken by night from its tomb': triumph, dissent, and *danse macabre* in sixteenth-century France," pp. 223 – 248.

⁸ Terrence Bailey's *Processions of Sarum and the Western Church* is among the oldest scholarly works on the subject, but still remains the most comprehensive study of medieval processions in Western Europe. Bailey's approach is primarily musical, focusing instead on evidence of their practice. He does not address the meaning of processional activities, only that they occurred with increasing frequency throughout Western Europe. See *The Processions of Sarum and the Western Church* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1971). Processions have also drawn interest for historians, who study these events as part of the larger interest in medieval early modern ritual and ceremony Europe. See among many others, Andrea Löther, *Prozessionen in spätmittelalterlichen Städten: politische Partizipation, obrigkeitliche Inszenierung, städtische Einheit* (Köln: Böhlau, 1999); Moshe Sluhovsky, *Patroness of Paris: Rituals of Devotion in Early Modern France* (New York: Brill, 1998); Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in*

images lends itself to an incomplete reading of these events.⁹ Instructions outlined in ordinals and other religious texts can provide some semblance of the order of a procession, but they do not include more spontaneous aspects of the event. Likewise, visual representations can reveal the multiple parts, players, and objects of these activities, but they cannot capture the music and movement of procession. The study of processions therefore cannot be achieved through a single source, particularly clerical instructions, which present these events as a prescriptive ideal.¹⁰ This is not to say that processions never achieved this ideal, but rather that they must be understood through a careful examination of often conflicting evidence presented in material, textual, and musical sources. Such evidence can be found in less-studied records found in liturgical ordinals, cathedral inventories, and chroniclers' records of these processions. Together, these records provide not only a visual account of the performances, but they also

Late Medieval Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Edward Muir, "The Eye of the Procession," in *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe*, pp. 129 – 154. A few examples of studies in the history of art include, Rita Tekippe, "Pilgrimage and Procession: Correlations of Meaning and Practice, and the Effects in Art and Architecture," in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage*, eds. Sarah Blick and Rita Tekippe, Vol. 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), pp. 693-752; Cecilia M. Gaposchkin, "Portals, Processions, and Piety: Saints Firmin and Honoré at Amiens," in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage*, pp. 218- 242. Carolyn Marino Malone, *Façade as Spectacle: Rituals and Ideology at Wells Cathedral*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

⁹ For more on this issue see Nicolas Howe, "Introduction," in *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe*, pp. 1- 12; Elina Gertsman, "Introduction: the spectrum of performances," in *Visualizing Medieval Performance*, pp. 1–16.

¹⁰ The use of non-clerical sources for the study of processions has been addressed in the work of Jacques Chiffloeu, who analyzed Parisian processions in 1412 from both clerical records and chroniclers' descriptions. Chiffloeu, "Les processions parisiens de 1412: analyse d'un rituel flamboyant," *Revue historique* 284/ 575 (1990): 37 – 76). A similar politically-driven study using non-clerical sources is Françoise Michaud-Fréjaville, "Les processions à Orléans Au XVe siècle," *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes* 12 (2005): 113–130.

document the musical accompaniment and the phenomenological experience of the spectators.

The goal of this study is thus to analyze pre-modern processions in Le Puy-en-Velay as multi-media and multi-sensory performances through a variety of textual, visual, musical, and archaeological sources. It also describes the fluid nature of processional performance by interrogating how these medieval rituals affected their participants in the centuries thereafter when such events were “re-presented” to fulfill new desires of the faithful while also serving as a site of memory. The power manifest in the act of procession became increasingly important in Le Puy as tensions between those residing in the close surrounding the cathedral and the merchant-based lower town increased after the fourteenth century. Because of these changes, the urban fabric of the city itself must be considered in any study of processions, not simply as linear routes, but as spaces in which objects, people and the urban environment interacted and created the act of procession. This evidence reveals valuable information regarding both the order *and* disorder of processions as modes of expressing and creating power relationships.

This article also advocates for the study of medieval and early modern processions despite complete records, which are almost never available. To deny the study of processions because a full reconstruction cannot be achieved is short sighted and ultimately hurts our understanding of these ubiquitous and essential pre-modern practices. Instead, we should study these processions like ruins from the past— from the vestiges that remain—and use this knowledge to conjecture possible reconstructions while allowing for multiple interpretations.

Medieval Processions: An Overview

The earliest Christian processions were likely adapted from the Roman *adventus* ceremony.¹¹ Processions recorded in Jerusalem as early as the fourth century and also appeared at this time in Rome.¹² Extra-mural processions, such as the stational procession of Palm Sunday, differed from smaller, indoor processions and other ritual activities where the laity did not have an active role. The lay involvement in liturgical rites decreased from the ninth century, when it became largely centered on clerical participation. The laity again became involved in the later Middle Ages, providing a ritual outlet for the public to participate in religious ritual outside of the prescriptions of the Mass.¹³

Independent liturgical texts devoted to recording the instructions for processions, known as processionals (*processionale*), were not used consistently during the Middle Ages. Precise order and movement, especially for early sources, is therefore difficult to reconstruct.¹⁴ Even as these processions developed a more regularized form, they

¹¹ Fassler, “Adventus at Chartres,” p. 13.

¹² The most important record of early pilgrimage to Jerusalem is that of Egeria who went there c. 381 - 384. For English translation see, John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels* (Oxford: Aris & Phillips 2006).

¹³ Sible de Blaauw, “Contrasts in Processional Liturgy: A Typology of Outdoor Processions in Twelfth-Century Rome,” in *Art, liturgie et cérémonie au Moyen Age*, eds. Nicolas Bock *et al.* (Rome: Viella, 2002), pp. 357 – 396.

¹⁴ Bailey, 318. Early processions were recorded as notation in church ordinaries, or copied into a gradual or troper. The earliest processional books date no earlier than the twelfth century. See also Pierre-Marie Gy, “Collectaire-Rituel-Processional,” in *La liturgie dans l'histoire*, ed. Pierre-Marie Gy (Paris: Cerf, 1990), pp. 91-126. Jean Evenou, “Processions, Pilgrimages, Popular Religion,” in *The Church at Prayer*, vol. 3, *The Sacraments*, eds. Robert Cabié, Jean Evenou, Pierre Marie Gy, *et al.* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1988), pp. 241-250.

maintained a strongly local character.¹⁵ Early records of processional activities from the medieval period are rare, but some evidence for these practices is preserved in notations written in other liturgical manuscripts.¹⁶ As new architectural innovations beginning in the thirteenth century allowed for more ritual movement within the church, processional activity also increased. As such, more detailed instructions survive after this time.¹⁷

There were two different occasions for procession: liturgical, known as ordinary processions, and extraordinary processions, invoked during times of catastrophe or civic celebration.¹⁸ Ordinary processions were both symbolic and practical, providing an orderly way to move about the church before, during, and after services. Celebratory processions most commonly occurred at the beginning and end of Lent, the main feasts of the Virgin Mary (Purification, Annunciation, Assumption and Nativity), the feasts of Advent season, and in the later Middle Ages, the Feast of Corpus Christi. Penitential or supplicatory processions included major extra-liturgical processions on Palm Sunday and

¹⁵ Susan Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity*, p. 4.

¹⁶ Guido M. Dreves and Clemens Blume, eds. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*. 55 vols. (Leipzig: Riesland, 1886–1922); Michel Huglo, *Les manuscrits du processional*. 2 vols. Répertoire international des sources musicales Serie B, 14:1–2 (Munich: Henle, 1999–2004); Jean-Baptiste Molin, *Répertoire des rituels et processionnaires imprimés conservés en France* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1984). Ulysée Chevalier's multi-volume *Bibliothèque liturgique* (1893 - 1897) also provides documentation and transcription of some extant processional activity from Laon, Reims, and Bayeux among others. See "Ordinaires de l'église cathédrale de Laon (xIIe et xIIIe siècles): Suivis de deux mystères liturgiques," *Bibliothèque liturgique* 6 (Paris: A. Picard, 1897); "Ordinaire et coutumier de l'église Cathédrale de Bayeux (XIIIe siècle) Publiés d'après les manuscrits originaux," *Bibliothèque liturgique* 8 (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1902).

¹⁷ Anne Walters Robertson, *The Service-Books of the Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis: Images of Ritual and Music in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 251. Early processions at the Abbey of Saint Denis are recorded in *nou. acq. latin 306* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale). Personal consultation of this manuscript verifies many processions although they lack specificity of place names and focus rather upon roles for the canons, deacons and sub-deacons.

¹⁸ For a concise overview of terms see de Blaauw, "Contrasts in Processional Liturgy," pp. 357 – 396.

Rogation Days as well as ad-hoc crisis processions. Lay participation in these processions increased during the later Middle Ages, especially for extra-liturgical and extra-mural processions. Other processions that involved the laity varied by church or region, often on the feast days of local saints, the translation of relics, or the dedication of the church.¹⁹

Music, especially plainchant, was also an essential element to processional performance.²⁰ Processional hymns began quite early in Gallic France, developing by the sixth century.²¹ Processional chant included antiphons sung by the group, interspersed with individual soloists reciting a versicle. While processional music changed according to local variants, general patterns and antiphons frequently appearing in extant records of medieval French processions provide some consistency for comparison to those at Le Puy. Due to the scope of this study and available evidence, I will focus primarily on the antiphons recited during the Rogations processions at Le Puy-en-Velay.

Processions at Le Puy: Liturgical Sources

Although liturgical texts such as processionals, ordinaries, and graduals are critical sources for the study of medieval processions, they are often incomplete and present a static description of the event that belies the motion and temporality involved.

¹⁹ Blaauw, p. 373.

²⁰ The author would like to acknowledge that she is not a musicologist, and therefore this study is limited to the study of the types of antiphons commonly occurring in processions rather than specifics of musical structure. Many thanks to Dr. Benjamin Brand for kindly clarifying questions I had regarding the musical components of medieval processions. For a good introduction to medieval liturgical music see John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century: A Historical Introduction and Guide for Students and Musicians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

²¹ Ruth Ellis Messenger, "Medieval Processional Hymns before 1100," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 80 (1949): 375–392.

Liturgical texts record processions as highly structured, ordered, and harmonious events. And of course, in some ways, they had to be: The act of procession implies a group whose willingness to conform to the actions of the ritual commands its success. Yet a liturgical ordinal is a prescriptive source, so it dictates actions before the event. Descriptive texts, those that provide an account of the event performed, can provide new information about these processions that either confirm or contradict the liturgical directions. This being said, it is important to first outline the extant textual evidence for processions at Le Puy in order to ascertain the ‘ideal’ form of the procession. From this evidence, we can then add visual, demographic and archaeological evidence to nuance the reality of processional performance.

Although textual evidence of processions at Le Puy-en-Velay is somewhat elusive due to two fires at the cathedral archives, the most important source for this study is a sixteenth-century copy of a fourteenth-century ceremonial from Le Puy, entitled *Incipit liber ordinaries secundum usum Aniciensis ecclesie* (T. 586).²² Although this manuscript is badly deteriorated, scholar and abbot of Le Puy, Jean-Baptiste Payrard, published an edited version of this manuscript in successive editions of the *Tablettes historiques de la Haute-Loire et du Velay* (now *Cahiers de la Haute-Loire*) from 1874 – 1878. While this source must be used with some attention to modern corrections or

²² Jean-Baptiste Payrard, “Ancien cérémonial de l’église angélique du Puy,” *Tablettes Historiques de la Haute Loire et du Velay* (1872/1873 – 1876/1877ff.). Payrard does mention that he made some changes to this manuscript in order to correct the Latin text and restore the work to its original integrity, but as noted above, it preserves the essential information used for this study. The Bibliothèque municipale du Puy concurs with this assessment, and lists Payrard’s transcription as a copy of the deteriorated Grand Sémanaire version. The continued use of processions at Le Puy is also well documented and indicates a continued practice, as evidenced from a 1756 processional now at the Bibliothèque municipale du Puy (Fonds Léon Cortial).

additions, Payrard's transcription is the most reliable source for processions at Le Puy.²³ Certainly, one must use caution when relying on copied texts; however, I have examined an unpublished manuscript of a book of hours from Le Puy that provides strong evidence for the continuation of the medieval calendar and liturgical practices at Le Puy Cathedral.²⁴ Furthermore, musicologist Wulf Arlt also examined these documents from Le Puy and found them to reflect medieval practices.²⁵ Arlt argues that the later sources demonstrate an abbreviation rather than expansion of rituals at Le Puy, so processions likely occurred even more often than they are cited in Payrard's transcription.²⁶

Most of the liturgical processions in Le Puy-en-Velay took place within the cathedral complex itself, although a few clearly went outside the close. These include processions on the second and third minor Rogation days, detailed below, and the dedication of the Chapel of Saint Michel, located atop a small mount outside this city. Processions within the cathedral complex are mentioned for the Feast of the Circumcision, Feast of the Purification, fourth ferial day after Ash Wednesday, Dedication of the Cathedral, and Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent. Although

²³ There are some ambiguities in these texts that mention practices performed "by custom" or shortened titles of antiphons that do not precisely indicate the hymn sung. These discrepancies are unfortunate, but do not negate the information that can be learned from processional texts in conjunction with visual and archaeological evidence.

²⁴ London, British Library, Mss. Add. 58771. See also Augustin Chassaing, "Calendrier de l'église du Puy-en-Velay au moyen-âge," *Annales de la société d'agriculture, sciences, arts et commerce du Puy*, Vol. 33 (Paris: H. Champion, 1882). Chassaing cites sixteenth-century copies as evidence of medieval rituals. His reconstruction of the liturgical calendar at Le Puy deviates from Ms. 58771 only in the addition of saints to specific days, not in the order or veneration of local saints of Auvergne.

²⁵ Wulf Arlt, "The Office for the Feast of the Circumcision from Le Puy," in *The Divine Office of the Latin Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 324 – 343.

²⁶ Arlt, p. 329.

instructions for extra-ordinary processions, such as those held for relief from plague or natural disaster, are not recorded in these liturgical sources, both lay texts and visual sources provide ample evidence that such processions also occurred regularly, especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Although the processional is predominately a written text dictating appropriate antiphons and movement between sites during the procession, some visual aspects of these performances can be gleaned from liturgical sources. Most significantly, processions occurring during Rogations provide clear instructions to carry the ‘imago’ of the Virgin. This instruction presumably refers to the famous cult statue, the Virgin of Le Puy, thought to date from the late eleventh century.²⁷ The third ferial day of minor rogations also calls for the display of the cathedral relics.²⁸ Other processions specify the use of standard processional objects including candles, crosses and an aspergillum.²⁹ They also dictate appropriate the liturgical vestments to be worn during the procession.

The earliest processions in Le Puy appear to be those occurring on Rogations Days, or the “beating of the bounds.” Rogations processions have a well-documented early history in Gaul, and so it is unsurprising that they also appear early at Le Puy.³⁰

²⁷ This statue was destroyed in 1794 during the French Revolution. The present Notre Dame du Puy is known as a *vierge noire*, or Black Madonna. My research on this statue is forthcoming in *Studies in Iconography* 37 (2016).

²⁸ IIIa feria, “Ad processionem exeunt reliquae.”

²⁹ See, for example, the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin (Feb. 2): “...Ad processionem, Post pulsationem tertie vadit Episcopus sive ille qui agit officium *Lumen ad revelationem*.... Tunc spargit aquam benedictam super candelas...”

³⁰ The importance of procession during major and minor Litanies, known as Rogations, was recognized as early as the tenth century in France, as cited in an anonymous sermon from Corbie (Paris, Bibl. Nationale 18296, f. 81.); D. de Bruyne, “L’origine des processions de la Chandleur et des Rogations—à propos d’un sermon inédit,” *Revue Benedictine* 34 (1922): 14 - 26. Evidence for Rogations processions across Europe

Rogations processions, sometimes called the minor litanies, were performed during the three ferial, or non-feast, days before Ascension Thursday (25 April).³¹ These events extended outside ecclesiastical boundaries, physically uniting the spaces of the parish or other ecclesiastical jurisdiction through procession.³² Although Le Puy Cathedral was contained within a close, the Rogations procession sought to define the sacred boundaries of the entire city and surrounding areas.

Sixteenth-century prose chronicler of Le Puy, Étienne Médicis, states that Rogations processions occurred in the city from 1255, but they were likely happening even earlier than this date.³³ Two jointly-issued papal bulls dated to 1265 afforded one year and forty days up to perpetuity of indulgences for pilgrims who visited Le Puy during the feasts of the Nativity, Annunciation, Purification, Assumption, Ascension, and three days of Rogations, so it is not unreasonable to assume that processions were also taking place on these days.³⁴ In any case, Rogations processions were clearly taking place by the fourteenth century as evidenced by a citation given to cathedral canons during a

date even earlier, see Joyce Hill, “The Litaniae maiores and minores in Rome, Francia and Anglo-Saxon England: terminology, texts and traditions,” *Early Medieval Europe* 9/2 (2000): 211-246.

³¹ Bailey, pp. 95 – 98.

³² Steve Hindle, “Beating the Bounds of the Parish: Order, Memory and Identity in the English Local Community, c. 1500 – 1700,” in *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe* eds. Michaël Halvorson, Karen E. Spierling (London: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 205 – 228. See also Sabine von Heusinger, “Topography of Sacred Space and the Representation of Social Groups: Confraternities in Strasbourg,” in *Politics and Reformations: Communities, Politics, Nations and Empire, Essays in Honor of Thomas A. Brady, Jr.*, eds. Christopher Ocker, et al. (Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. 67 - 84.

³³ Médicis, *Le livre de Podio*, pp. 188 – 201. Council of Orléans mandated rogations processions for all of Gaul in 511. In addition, Rogations processions are clearly documented in France from 546 at Reims, and Limoges from 580.

³⁴ Jean-Baptiste Payrard, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de N-D. du Puy & du Velay: Premier layette de l'inventaire (chartier) de Sancta Aniciensis Ecclesia*, N° 31 (42), pp. 17 – 18.

1318 Rogations procession.³⁵ These non-liturgical references provide convincing evidence outside of Payard's transcriptions that processions at Le Puy were a regular practice from at least the fourteenth century.

The Rogations processions at Le Puy also appear to reflect earlier musical practices documented in sources across Europe. All Rogations processions are marked by the visitation to other churches in the city and the singing of antiphons and litanies. The antiphons sung during rogation days at Le Puy are fairly consistent with common antiphons appearing throughout the long history of rogations processions in France, including the *cum jocunditate*, *timor et tremor*, *de Jherusalem* and *omnipotens deus*.³⁶ Furthermore, although the antiphons are not quite as consistent at the processional preserved at the Cathedral of Bayeux, the Bayeux processional provides detailed instructions for the procession very similar to those at Le Puy.³⁷ Thus Rogations processions at Le Puy appear to be similar to other major cathedrals in that they followed many of the same antiphons and typical movements between the cathedral and other churches in the city.

So what did can we learn about the processions in Le Puy from this liturgical source? It is not possible to map the entire procession with absolute precision but the general structure and relationship between ritual, movement and place can be analyzed.

³⁵ Payard, N°51 (22), p. 25.

³⁶ Bailey, pp. 122 – 127.

³⁷ *Ordinaire et coutumier de l'église Cathédrale de Bayeux (XIIIe siècle): publiés d'après les manuscrits originaux*, Bibliothèque liturgique 8 (Paris: A. Picard, 1902).

(**Figure 3**) Although each of the Rogations processions in the Le Puy *cérémoniale* are well-recorded, for the scope of this study, I will focus on the second ferial day of Rogations.

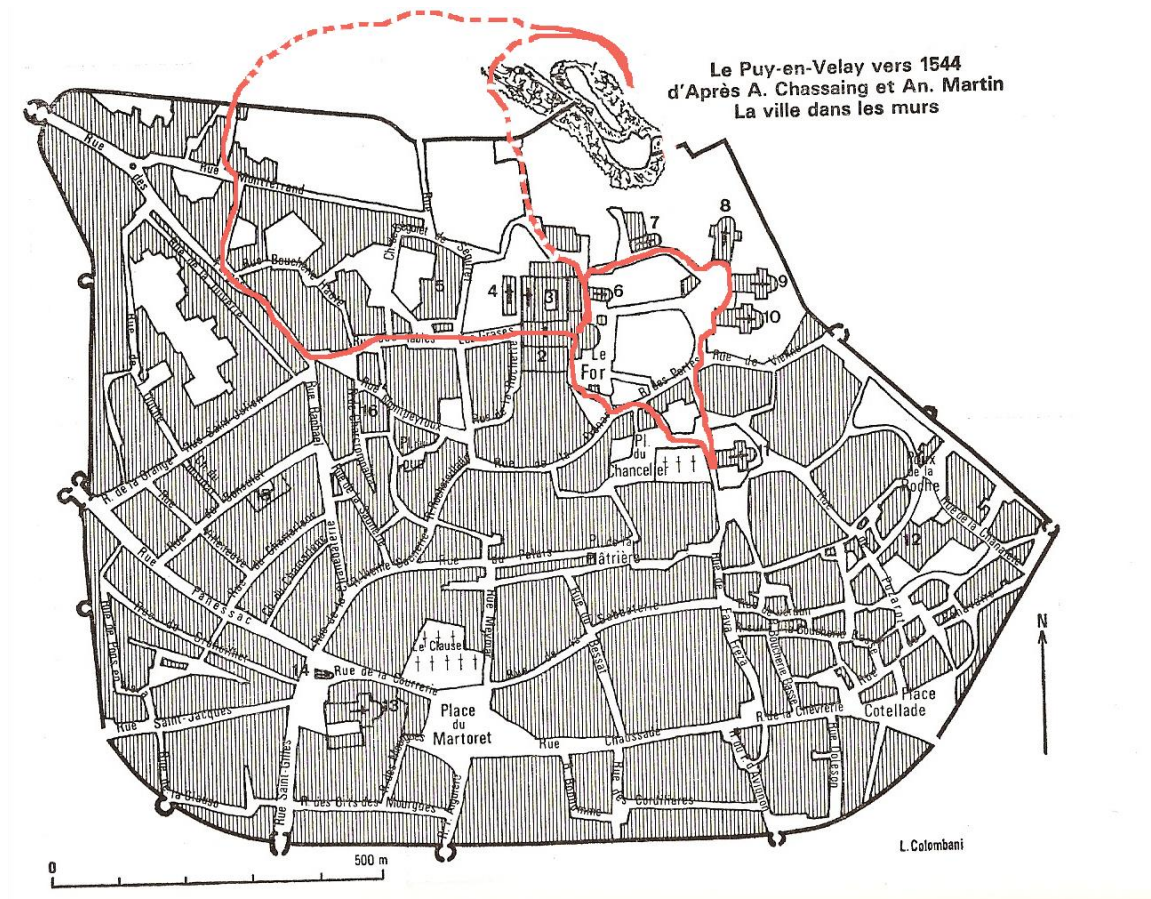


Figure 3 Proposed Route of Rogations procession in Le Puy-en-Velay, fourteenth century. Map after Médicis, c. 1544. Modified by author after Rivet, *Une ville au XVI siècle*. Dotted sequence indicates less evidence for exact route.

The second ferial day of Rogations began after noon.³⁸ After a minor cantor recited the *propitius esto*, the priest or deacon assigned for weekly duties blessed the cathedral with holy water and then a procession to the neighboring parish churches of Le Puy commenced.³⁹ Bearing the miracle-working Virgin of Le Puy in their retinue, the clergy processed first inside the church to the sanctuary and the chapel of Saint Paul.⁴⁰ As a minor cantor began to sing *De Jherusalem* the procession entered to the Chapel of the Holy Savoir in the bell tower where the Virgin was placed upon the altar. Invocations to various local saints then commenced as the procession went to the Baptistry of Saint John just outside the cathedral. According to the ceremonial, these petitions were to be performed “quickly in a lowered voice.”⁴¹ The same procedure was followed at the collegiate churches of Saint Georges, Agrève and Vosi, and on the other Rogation days, to the Church of Saint Pierre-de-la-Tour. The procession then returned to the baptistry and the antiphon *cum jucunditate* was recited by the home of the Seigneur of Mons [precise location unknown, likely at the corner of the Rue la Traverse and the Rue la Frenerie].⁴² After these litanies were recited, the procession returned to the cathedral

³⁸ All text and translations from Jean-Baptiste Payrard, “Ancien cérémonial de l’église angélique du Puy,” *Tablettes Historiques de la Haute-Loire et du Velay*. VIII, 1877-78, 377ff. Many thanks to Lauren Donovan Ginsberg for her assistance with the Latin translations.

³⁹ Feria secunda. – Ad procession que fit post meridem dictur à cantore minore antiphona *Propitius esto*. [The second ferial day [of Rogations]—for the purpose of the procession that is made after noon. The antiphon *Propitius esto* is recited by the minor cantor].

⁴⁰ The chapel of Saint Paul's precise location within the cathedral is unknown. Although the ceremonial indicates that the procession should go to the “ecclesiam” of the Holy Savior, this appears to be the Chapel of the Holy Savior in the bell tower, which was detached from the cathedral itself.

⁴¹ *et dicunt eam festinates et submissa voce*.

⁴² Given the location of the procession, the home that the ceremonial refers to is likely one of those owned by the Seigneur de Mons in the second île. According to Genéviève Douillard's reconstruction of these îles

where processional crosses were arranged in front of the choir to go to the Chapel of Saint Michel, a small Romanesque church that rests on the top of Mount Aiguille, known as the *Acuela*. The clergy then arose and exited the cathedral in the direction towards Saint Michel.

At this time, the procession extended beyond the bounds of the city, passing over waterways and bridges of the Borne Valley. On their way to Saint Michel, three young choristers from the collegiate churches of Saint Georges and Saint Vosi and Saint Pierre-de-la-Tour recited an antiphon before reaching the water, assumed to be the Borne River. Upon arriving into Aiguille, the priest assigned to weekly duties performed a mass at the Chapel of Saint Gabriel, located at the bottom of the *Rocher d'Aiguille*. From this point, the procession would head back to the city, entering Le Puy through the “gate that is next to Saint Agrève,” presumably the Porte de Vienne.⁴³ The procession then continued “until the blessed image is at Saint George Square by the marketplace [Porche du For].”⁴⁴ Having returned to the doors of the cathedral, the cantor sung *Aufer a nobis* and the priest designated for weekly duties recites *Salve domine plebem*. The procession ended when the statue of the Virgin was deposited in her place (*in suo loco*) after the priest recited his

in 1544, the Sir de Mons owned a large home on the Rue la Traverse at the corner of the Rue la Frenerie. This home seems to be the most likely location for the processional route. It is unclear who owned this home in earlier centuries, so this detail may reflect a sixteenth-century addition. See Douillard, *Topographie médiévale de la ville du Puy, jusqu'en 1544* (MA Thesis, Université de Paris IV-Sorbonne, 1982).

⁴³ *Juxta portale quod est juxta ecclesiam sancti Agrippani.*

⁴⁴ *Et cum imago beate Marie fuerit in plano sancti Georgii et ad januam ecclesie juxta Forum ante fores incipit cantor antiph. Aufer a nobis* [And when the image of Blessed Mary is at the square of Saint George and at the door of the church next to the marketplace and outside in front of the doors the cantor begins the antiphon *Aufer a nobis*].

versicle. Unfortunately this precise *loco* is unknown and is therefore interpreted here as the main altar. It is not clear from this text if the laity participated in the procession itself. As we shall see, if they did not participate initially, the involvement of the laity during Rogations later became common practice.

It is perhaps most useful to examine these prescribed directions for Rogations processions at Le Puy-en-Velay by considering how the specific mention of places, objects and people worked in relation to each other to signal ritual. In many instances throughout the procession, approaching a threshold such as a door, gate or natural landmark signaled the ritualization of movement. For example, choristers from the collegiate churches were required to recite an antiphon before arriving at the Borne River as the procession moved toward the Chapel of St. Michel d'Aiguille.⁴⁵ It was not the specific antiphon that mattered for the procession, but rather *when* and *where* it was recited. That the waterway was mentioned at all is also significant as the Borne River, while not far from the city, did not limit access to Aiguille from all points. Thus, some semblance of the route beyond the borders of Le Puy can be inferred. Similarly, the text instructed the soft and quick performance of invocations from the cathedral to the baptistery. Given the close proximity of these two buildings this note is predictable, yet it

⁴⁵ *Et vadit ad Aculeam per pontem dous Estrolhas...Cantatur ab uno puero sancti Georgii antiphona Domine Dominus noster...Dictur ab uno puero sancti Evodii antiphona Et clamemus...Cantatur ab uno puero sancti Petri de Turre antiphona Abraham...Predictae antiphone debent esse finite antequam transeant aquam.* [and go toward Aiguille over the bridge *des Trollas* [Estrollas]....the antiphon *Domine Dominus noster* is sung by a boy of St. George...the antiphon *Et clamemus* is said by a boy of Saint Evodius...and the antiphon *Abraham* is said by a boy from Saint Peter of Tours...The aforementioned antiphons should be completed before they pass over the water.

reveals that conscious motion towards a place. This movement ritualized the processional space over any verbal cues.

Processional objects also played an important role in the liturgical text. The Virgin of Le Puy often acted as a visual marker of ritual movement during the Rogations procession. For example, the ceremonial instructed that the procession moved towards the cathedral until the Virgin has reached the square. There, the processants became defined in relation to the object rather than to each other. Even the end of the procession was signaled by the placement of the Virgin on the altar. Finally, the majority of sites visited during Rogations processions in Le Puy were contained within the cathedral close, with the exception of St. Michel d'Aiguille, thereby emphasizing not only the sanctity of these sites, but also their allegiance with the cathedral itself.⁴⁶ Places and objects were just as important as the antiphons or litanies recited in the procession, so in order to truly understand these processions, we must also uncover evidence beyond liturgical sources.

Material and Visual Evidence

Processions must not only be understood through textual accounts, but should be interrogated through the relics and other ecclesiastical objects that mark the processional space of the city. Nearly all medieval religious processions featured various ecclesiastical objects and accouterments such as the processional cross, candles, and censers.⁴⁷ As

⁴⁶ This allegiance was especially importance given the rivalry between the cathedral and other parish churches, namely Saint Pierre-le-Monastier in the lower town, more about which is outlined further below.

⁴⁷ Tekippe, "Pilgrimage and Procession," p. 699.

processions grew in pomp and size, they carried reliquaries, confraternity banners, and religious statues. Liturgical books were also carried in processions, used either for display or as an instructional aide to the clerics performing these ceremonies. The processions, too, were also visually marked by the dress of the clergy, who usually wore special pluvial copes, albs, and chasubles during the processions.⁴⁸ When examined in conjunction with the liturgical sources, these materials provide critical evidence of the moving space of processions.⁴⁹

Le Puy-en-Velay is fortunate to preserve a significant corpus of non-liturgical sources, both textual and visual, that provide an alternate means to uncovering the visual and phenomenological aspects of processions. The least known of these visual sources appears as a small drawing in the notebook of Jean Burel, a mid-sixteenth century chronicler of Le Puy-en-Velay. His manuscript, written as a local history of the city, includes many eyewitness descriptions and sketches of events in Le Puy.⁵⁰ A fervent

⁴⁸ A good explanation of liturgical vestments and objects used in the liturgy can be found in Stephen N. Fliegel, *Replendent Faith: Liturgical Treasuries of the Middle Ages* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2009). For more information on liturgical vestments see, Janet Mayo, *A History of Ecclesiastical Dress* (London: Batsford, 1984) and Cyril E. Pocknee, *Liturgical Vesture: Its Origins and Development* (London: Mowbray, 1960).

⁴⁹ This approach to processions takes cues from the work of Timothy Pestell, which examined the archaeological remains of a monastic priory to ascertain the limits of secular and sacred spaces within this landscape. See Timothy Pestell, "Using Material Culture to Define Holy Space: The Bromholm Project," in *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Press, 2005). A similar methodology was employed in Jonathan Glixon's study of the relationship between music and ritual ceremonies of Venetian confraternities. See Jonathan E. Glixon, "Music and Ceremony at the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista: A New Document from the Venetian State Archives," in *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and the Arts in the Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities* ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1991).

⁵⁰ Le Puy, Bibliothèque municipale. Ms. 59 (8081). *Mémoires et journal de Jean Burel, marchand tanneur du Puy*. 1560-1603, edited and reprinted as J. Burel and A. Chassaing, *Mémoires de Jean Burel, Bourgeois Du Puy: Publiés Au Nom de La Société Académique Du Puy*, Recueil Des Chroniqueurs Du Puy-En-Velay (Impr. M.-P. Marchessou, 1875), <https://books.google.com/books?id=yGJBAQAAMAAJ>. On Burel see

Catholic, Burel described many religious processions, including a description of a 1578 Assumption procession.⁵¹ At the bottom of this page, he provided a simple sketch of the head and torso of the statue of the Virgin of Le Puy flanked by two illuminated torches, noting the statue's primary role in the event. **(Figure 4)** This image not only provides



Figure 4 Drawing of the Virgin of Le Puy carried in procession, 1578. Le Puy, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 59 (8081), f. 102r. Photo, author.

intriguing evidence for the statue itself, but also confirms the long-standing use of the Virgin of Le Puy statue on the Feast of the Assumption. Burel's descriptions made procession as performance abundantly clear. For example, he noted that when two canons

Augustin Chassaing, "Notice historique sur Jean Burel, chroniqueur du Puy-en-Velay, 1540-1603" (Le Puy: M.-P. Marchessov, 1875).

⁵¹ Ibid., "Ymage de Notre-Dame porte en procession," f. 102r. Transcription in Burel and Chassaing, *Mémoires*, 51.

carried Virgin sculpture on a gilded pavilion during the procession, all the bells in the city rang and prayers, songs and supplications to the Virgin filled the air when her cortège passed by.⁵² The sculpture's physical marking of the space was not supplementary to the meaning of the procession, rather, processional objects directed, promoted and inspired devotion through their material presence.



Figure 5 Slippers worn by the Virgin of Le Puy. Cathedral treasury, Le Puy-en-Velay. Photo: author.

In addition to Jean Burel, city chronicler Etienne Médicis, also vividly described the processions of the city during the sixteenth century in his book *Le livre de Podio*.⁵³ He also included transcriptions of several inventories the cathedral dating to the fifteenth century, which record objects used in procession.⁵⁴ These inventory records are a

⁵² Ibid, 51. “ledict faint ymaige estoit porté par deux chanoines soubz ung pavilion de drag d’or que les confulz portoient; toujours les cloches de toutes les eglises sonnoient, chose de grand admiration & devotion; avec priers, oraifons, canticques chanterrie, s’acheminarent par tous la vile...”

⁵³ Etienne Médicis and Augustin Chassaing. *Le livre de Podio; ou, Chroniques d’Étienne Médicis, bourgeois du Puy* (Le Puy-en-Velay: Impr. de M.-P. Marchessov, 1869).

⁵⁴ The usefulness of the Le Puy inventories to reconstruct lost objects from the cathedral has been discussed by Martin de Framond, Director of the Archives de la Haute Loire, in his article on the treasury of Le Puy.



Figure 6 Jean Solvain, *Le vœu de peste*, 1650. Cathedral of Notre-Dame-du-Puy. Photo: author.

tremendously important source for understanding the ephemeral as well as material nature of processions at Le Puy. The 1444 inventory is especially extensive and includes objects such as standard processional fare such as crosses and candles, as well as special objects such as the Virgin and Child's slippers, some of which still survive in the cathedral treasury.⁵⁵ **(Figure 5)** Most significantly, these inventories list the litter (*chadaraiita*) that carried the Virgin in procession during Rogations.⁵⁶

The use of the Virgin statue during processions is also well-documented into the seventeenth century. Jean Solvain's *Le vœu de peste* (1650), for example, illustrates a 1630 procession of the Virgin during a time of plague in Le Puy. **(Figure 6)** The bottom

See "Notre-Dame des Armagnacs: Le trésor de la cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay," *Cahiers de la Haute Loire* (1993): 19 – 38.

⁵⁵ Medicis, pp. 101 – 130.

⁵⁶ Médicis, p. 122. This item reads "quedam chadareta in qua portatur ymago beate Marie in Rogacionibus."

right-hand corner of this large painting, which currently hangs in the northern aisle of the cathedral, bears an inscription that describes the scene to the viewer:

Voeu faict rendu par tous les Ordres des habitants de la ville du Puy le 22 avril 1630, rendans graces à Dieu de les avoir delivers du male de peste duquel mouruent dix mil et plus desdictz habitants l'année precedente, ceste faveur leur estant arrivée par les priers puissantes de la glorieuse Vierge, leur bonne dame et patronne, de la quelle a esté porté en procession solemnel le saint Image come est icy depainct.

The vow that was performed by all the orders of the inhabitants of the city of Le Puy on the 22nd of April 1630, giving thanks to God for having delivered them from the terrible plague which killed ten thousand or more inhabitants the year before, this favor came to them by way of the powerful prayers of the glorious Virgin, their fair lady and patron, who is carried in solemn procession, the holy statue that is painted here.⁵⁷

The continued use of the Virgin of Le Puy in processions is important. Such centrality was not always given to cult statues, especially as the Feast of the Corpus Christi became more dominant in the late Middle Ages and Early Modern periods.⁵⁸ The focus on the Virgin of Le Puy in both textual and visual sources reflects the importance of the statue to Le Puy-en-Velay and its history of processional activity, one that continues to present day.

Thus far, visual and textual evidence for processions at Le Puy affirm them as performances that succeeded in their goal of communal solidarity and public devotion. Yet the scholarship of Natalie Zemon Davis and others have also shown that religious

⁵⁷ Antoine Jacmon et al., *Mémoires d'Antoine Jacmon, bourgeois du Puy*, Mémoires d'Antoine Jacmon, bourgeois du Puy. Publiés aux frais de la société d'agriculture, sciences, arts et commerce du Puy par Augustin Chassaing (Le Puy-en-Velay. Impr. de Marchessou fils, 1885), p. 35.

⁵⁸ Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*, pp. 243 - 269.

ritual could also become a platform for violence.⁵⁹ In the case of processions, ecclesiastical and political tensions within the city were made visible through the guise of hierarchy (how the groups were arranged) and exclusion (which groups could participate). Davis and other scholars of Early Modern France have provided ample evidence for such violent acts that occurred during the sixteenth-century Wars of Religion.⁶⁰ While this historical event certainly provided an important context for such violence, Davis herself has argued for a broader cultural application of this evidence.⁶¹ Although outbreaks of violence during medieval processions are rarely recorded, it cannot be that processions suddenly—without precedent—became violent in the sixteenth century.⁶² Source material, particularly from lay chroniclers, though abundant during this time, is composed largely of textual accounts. The study of possible disorder during processions can be also confirmed through an investigation of the urban planning of Le Puy-en-Velay itself.

⁵⁹ Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Past and Present* 59 (1973): 51 – 91; David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Barbara B. Diefendorf, “Prologue to a Massacre: Popular Unrest in Paris, 1557 – 1772,” *American Historical Review* 90 (1985): 1076-91.

⁶⁰ See among others Barbara Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Philip Benedict, *Rouen During the Wars of Religion*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

⁶¹ Natalie Zemon Davis, “Writing ‘The Rites of Violence’ and Afterward,” *Past and Present Supplement* 7 (2012): 8 – 29.

⁶² Thanks to the anonymous reviewer for prompting me to think more critically about this issue. There is some evidence for the disruptive nature processions in the Middle Ages but it is far less documented. See Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, “*Discordia et Lis*: Negotiating Power, Property and Performance in Medieval Selestat,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 26/3 (1996): 419 – 446; see also Ashley and Sheingorn, “Ste. Foy on the Loose, Or, the Possibilities of Procession at Conques,” in *Moving Subjects*, pp. 53 – 67.

Archaeological Evidence: The Urban Environment of Procession

While Rogations processions extended beyond the city walls, urban topography and physical barriers in Le Puy dictated the primary movement of the urban processions. Most of the medieval roads, gates, churches, and other physical monuments in Le Puy-en-Velay have been identified through archaeological and textual documentation, but a few locations remain unknown. Although Le Puy-en-Velay has undergone significant changes in street planning, infrastructure, and neighborhood divisions since the Middle Ages, Bernard Rivet has argued that the urban fabric and general divisions within the city remained largely consistent from the fourteenth into the sixteenth century.⁶³ As such, we can be more confident that the processional routes were not impeded by the construction of new walls, gates or other urban developments that would have necessarily altered such activity until later centuries.

Early twentieth-century archaeological excavations of walls provide physical evidence for fortifications, gates, and neighborhoods in medieval Le Puy.⁶⁴ The first wall around the city was erected in the ninth or tenth century. By 1134, seven gates and seven towers around the city were erected. The wall was at its fullest extent in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, spanning approximately five kilometers.⁶⁵ The cathedral itself lies

⁶³ Rivet and Philippe Ramona used fifteenth-century population records, or *compoix* preserved in the municipal archives of Le Puy from 1408, 1456, and 1464 to create a map of the city around 1450. Philippe Ramona, "Le Puy au milieu du XVe siècle: la ville consulaire et ses habitants," *Cahiers de la Haute-Loire* (2005): 205 – 294; Le Puy, Bibliothèque municipale, Fonds Cordial, ms. 16. Compoix of 1456; Le Puy, Archives Municipales, CC20, Compoix of 1464.

⁶⁴ Ulysse Rouchon, "Les Fortifications de la Ville du Puy," *Congrès archeologique de France*, Le Puy (1904): 358.

⁶⁵ Geneviève Douillard, "Topographie médiévale de la ville du Puy, jusqu'en 1544," p. 19.

geographically at the highest point of Le Puy and occupied its own jurisdictional district known as the close (*cloître*) that was built within a machicolated wall constructed from 1220- 1240. The border of the cloister ran along the Rue de Frenerie, Rue des Portes and the Rue de Vienne.⁶⁶ These streets also served as primary routes for cathedral processions primarily subscribed to clerical participation.⁶⁷

Despite the abundance of visitors to Le Puy, fortifications along the close were not constructed to protect the cathedral from outside threats, but rather because of long-standing tension between the rising merchant class in Le Puy and the cathedral canons. As the city began to expand to the west and south in the thirteenth century, economic and religious factors determined the physical division between the cathedral close (also called the upper town) and the lower town of Le Puy.⁶⁸ By the sixteenth century, the areas inside the close were reserved for the noble classes, the Hôtel-Dieu, and inhabitants associated with the cathedral. The richest îles (neighborhoods) lay to the south, occupied primarily by merchants.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Rivet, p. 18. The extent of clôître determined by Bernard de Montaigu in 1236 and was expanded in 1237 under doyen Guillaume de Chalençon.

⁶⁷ Rivet, p. 204.

⁶⁸ Generally the northern and southern divide was separated by the rues Portail d'Avignon, Chaussade du Bessat, du Palais Rochetaillade, and Montpeyroux. See Douillard, "Topographie médiévale de la ville du Puy."

⁶⁹ Although nobility inhabited the upper town, it was not as wealthy as the lower town due to charitable foundations associated with the cathedral in this area. The chapter of the cathedral and the affiliated University of Saint Mayol actually owned many of the land plots in the more affluent areas of the city, thus the cathedral benefited from the high rents and taxes on these properties. The fortifications around Le Puy and the close itself were demolished in the eighteenth century as tensions between the upper and lower town declined.

The threat of infighting during processions served as a means to assert power in Le Puy. According a 1488 inventory record from the chapter, the canons of Le Puy issued a sort of “cease and desist” order to the priory of St. Pierre le Monastier and all other churches in Le Puy prohibiting them from having procession before the cathedral's designated event occurred.⁷⁰ The parish of St. Pierre-le-Monastier's resistance to this mandate created an instance of anticipated ritual violence, in which this church vied for their right to process through the city streets. This “race to procession” added conflict guised in ritual to the rival churches in Le Puy, which warranted an official sanction. The ritual movement of procession through the city could therefore create sacred space and simultaneously render this same space a belligerent zone of social disorder.⁷¹ Because of this, the ritual movement of procession and pilgrimage influenced the urban planning of Early Modern Le Puy. Failure to consider the role of the city streets in the execution of these processions or to ignore the impact of access during the procession could end tragically.

One instance of such tragedy sparked by procession permeated the communal memory of Le Puy-en-Velay for centuries. Médicis recounted a procession of the Virgin in 1255 in which the citizens of Le Puy attempted to push through a gate where a small replica of the Virgin of Le Puy was placed. So unruly and dense was this crowd who squeezed through the small entrance under the statue that some people were trampled to

⁷⁰ Jean-Baptiste Payrard, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de N.-D. du Puy*, Inventory No. 114 (129), dated 11 July 1488.

⁷¹ See note 59 and discussion of Natalie Zemon Davis above.

death.⁷² While Médici's, writing in the early sixteenth century, could not have witnessed this event himself, his vivid recording of this legendary event demonstrates how sites within the city were already becoming places of medieval memory for the Early Modern devout of Le Puy. For Médicis, then, rather than the repetition of the annual procession, it was the trauma of a single manifestation of this ritual that remained present in the minds of later generations. Procession thus took on two simultaneous meanings as present-day ritual and site of memory, a phenomenon that continues to this day.

Conclusion: Re-Presenting Le Puy Processions at Le Puy

In this study, I have attempted to uncover the late medieval and Early Modern processions in Le Puy-en-Velay through an examination of liturgical texts, maps, inventory records, chroniclers' accounts, and remains of visual culture. The processions in Le Puy were more than ordered ritual action, they were events with multiple parts, people, and motivations. These ephemeral events were mechanisms that encouraged collectivity while also acknowledging the hierarchies and divisions within the church and social networks of the city.

While examining a variety of both visual and textual evidence for processions can help understand the formal and historical significance of these prevalent and persistent ceremonies, examining static fragments as evidence of such fluid events can also be rather reductive. Instead, mapping through experience has provided a novel means for

⁷² Médicis, *Le livre de Podio*, p. 189.

uncovering cultural memories embedded in a place.⁷³ Timothy Ingold has suggested that places exist within a system of interrelated movement, wherein the present can be located within the context of past memories, journeys, and stories connected to that space.⁷⁴ The irregular route created through this exploration of space therefore creates a sort of “sketch map” based less on physical boundaries than on the relationship between significant sites.⁷⁵ In this way, the modern processions of Le Puy are connected to their past forms not only through physical fragments that remain, but also through the spatial relationships to people and their actions within these spaces. Likewise, the modern sites of Le Puy are connected to their past locations through the thread of time and memory that is ‘mapped’ cognitively onto the minds of its viewers through walking through these same places. This phenomenological approach thus focuses on the journey rather than points of reference that dominate cartographic realities.

Walking through the city, it is clear that while some medieval streets in Le Puy still exist, the town itself has experienced much growth and change. So have the processions. The modern urban planning of the city does not seem to have taken the processional sites into account as the city expanded. For example, the parish churches

⁷³ See overview for this approach in Edward S. Casey, “How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena,” in *Senses of Place*, eds. S. Feld and K. Basso (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1997).

⁷⁴ Timothy Ingold. *Lines: A Brief History* (London: Routledge, 2007).

⁷⁵ Ingold, p. 85. Ingold distinguishes this sort of “sketch map” as emphasizing gesture, or movement along surface rather than cartographic maps that defines space through boundaries and borders. Similarly, art-historian Lisa Pon has described the ways in which the procession of a miraculous print, the Madonna of the Fire, sacralized urban space through connecting cultural memories of places along this route through the processional path. Lisa Pon, “Place, Print and Miracle: Forlì's *Madonna of the Fire* as a Functional Site,” *Art History* 31/3 (2008): 303 – 321.

that marked the processional activity of the Rogations processions have been destroyed, replaced now with the Seminary of Le Puy Cathedral. The modern procession has also grown to include new streets in the city that extend beyond the cathedral precinct.⁷⁶ It would then seem that the city of Le Puy continues these processions not only for religious devotion but also partly for the sake of cultural heritage, as a way of preserving some semblance of a past tradition in spite of urban change.⁷⁷ The exact medieval routes of the procession are thus less important than the ritual of the procession itself.

The act of the procession serves as a site of memory for the community that is independent from the fixity of its routes. These events have become simultaneously commemorative, iterative, and performative. I cannot argue that participating in the contemporary processions at Le Puy render the same experience as their medieval counterparts. Obviously, they cannot. But through the repetition of the procession over centuries, people have engaged with the landscape of Le Puy. The contemporary processions at Le Puy nonetheless succeed not by reproducing medieval rituals, but rather by re-presenting them: renewing their value and unction in a city that has both preserved and altered its paths. 🐼

⁷⁶ Modern-day processional route (Feast of the Assumption, 2008/2011): depart les grands escaliers, Rue des Tables, Avenue de la Cathédrale, Boulevard Carnot, Rue Pannessac, Rue Courrierie, Place du Marouret, Rue Chaussade, Rue Chèvrerie, Place Cadelade, Boulevard Marchal Fayolle, Boulevard du Breuil, Boulevard St. Louis, Boulevard Carnot, Avenue de la Cathédrale, Rue des Tables, Les grands escaliers. This route was altered in 2010 for the 150th-anniversary of the statue of Notre-Dame de France. The procession began at the municipal garden and continued through the streets of the lower town up to the cathedral.

⁷⁷ The resurgence of local city historical festivals has its roots in the nineteenth-century. These sorts of events have been argued to tie local urban history to the history of France. See Stephane Gearson, "Town, Nation or Humanity: Festive Delineations of Place and Past in Northern France ca. 1825 – 1865," *The Journal of Modern History* 72/3 (2000): 628 - 682.



“Pictures are material signs of the invisible:” Medieval Visual Theory and Modern Graphic Narratives

By Dominique Hoche, West Liberty University

Comics – a form once considered pure junk – is sparking interest in literary studies. Those of us in literary studies may think the move obvious: making claims in the name of popular culture or in the rich tradition of word-and-image inquiry (bringing us back to the illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages). But comics presents problems we’re still figuring out... the field hasn’t yet grasped its object or properly posed its project.¹

Noting that comics are starting to be taken seriously in literary studies, graphic narrative scholar Hillary Chute argues that the claim seems to be a natural evolution from traditional analysis of texts with images. Her focus was on the connection between comics and history; however, I am intrigued with her parenthetical connection of comics with medieval illuminated manuscripts. Being a medievalist who often teaches classes that use graphic novels, it seems like an obvious connection that the theories behind medieval illuminated manuscripts should be easily connected to the theories behind graphic narratives. And yet -- currently there has been no body of work that explores the connections between the two genres.²

¹ Hillary Chute, "Comics as *Literature*? Reading Graphic Narrative," *PMLA* 123.2 (2008): 452-65.

² The closest full-scale comparative work known thus far is *Myth, Montage and Visuality in Late Medieval Manuscript Culture: Christine de Pizan's Epistre Othea* by Marilyn Desmond and Pamela Sheingorn (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), a study that analyzes the power of visual images to affect the reading experience and the reader. They argue, "The luminous nature of the reading experience in a manuscript culture situates the reader as a spectator constructed by the luminous quality of the page... This aspect of the reading experience in late medieval manuscript culture is analogous to the modern cinematic experience" (2). The connection between graphic novel narrative techniques and the cinema has been widely noted, but there is little to no

Using aspects of semiotics and hermeneutics, visual language, and grammar, this article will offer arguments towards making the connection between medieval visual theory and modern comic studies theory in order to explore the following thesis: *If* comics are an innovative narrative form in a tradition similar to the illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages, *then* we can read comics using medieval visual narrative theory and vice versa, that is, reading medieval illuminated manuscripts and iconography using comic studies theory.³ In using an example of medieval wall paintings in a Romanesque or Anglo-Norman church, this inquiry will broaden the field of medieval visual theory, but I anticipate that it will also offer a way for the younger field of comic studies to grasp its “object or properly pose its project.”

Justification and Rationalization

No discussion of image and narrative in the Middle Ages can begin without mentioning Gregory the Great’s often-quoted justification of art as the “bible of the illiterate” in which he corrects the actions of Bishop Serenus of Marseille who, c. 599 AD, destroyed the images in his church:

Pictures are used in churches so that those who are ignorant of letters may at least read by seeing on the walls [of churches] what they cannot read in books (*codicibus*). What writing (*scriptura*) does for the literate, a picture does for the illiterate looking at it, because the ignorant see in it what they ought to do; those who do not know letters read in it. Thus, especially for the nations (*gentibus*), a picture takes the place of reading. ... Therefore you ought not to have broken that which was placed in the church not in order to be adored but solely in order to instruct the minds of the ignorant.⁴

mention of the techniques and imagery in the Middle Ages.

³ Comics and graphic novels are a medium as well as a genre. The term “comics” is a site of contention in terms of definition, despite several years of academic discussion. For the purpose of this paper, I am using it in the general sense of “sequential art”: a graphic novel is a specific way of transmitting sequential art, but it is not limited to the constraints of the physical medium of a book, and so it is easier to use the generalist term “comics” to mean the entire spectrum of articulation within the medium and genre of sequential art.

⁴ Lawrence Duggan, “Was Art Really The ‘Book of the Illiterate’?” *Word & Image* 5 (1989): 227-51.

Pope Gregory's defense of images was seldom challenged in the medieval period and became a foundation for the rationale behind the creation of religious art. He believed that pictures must not be worshipped or adored because it violated the commandment regarding not making graven images or idols. He cautioned that these pictures should not be destroyed, however, because the depiction of sacred events and saintly persons were useful for converting pagans and teaching newly converted Christians, both of whom were probably illiterate. Pictures, according to Pope Gregory, "activate emotions which, when properly channeled, lead the faithful toward contemplation of God."⁵ As Herbert Kessler points out, "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."⁶ Pictures were defended and justified with a variety of phrases and paraphrases of Gregory's statement, and "books for the unlettered" became "books for the illiterate" which became the "bible of the illiterate," and when the word *codicibus* began being translated as *bible*, Gregory's ideas gained an even more authoritative tone.

In addition, the idea of pictures being "books for the illiterate" would have had a different meaning in Italy and France versus Anglo-Norman England: written and spoken Latin was a Mediterranean language and so what was spoken in church would have been comprehended by the congregation. In England, the situation would be very different: most church-goers, even after the Norman Conquest, neither spoke nor read Latin, so the words of missionaries and

⁵ Herbert L. Kessler, "Gregory the Great and Image Theory in Northern Europe during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries." *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic Art in Northern Europe* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2006), 151-172.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

priests needed translation, thus requiring pictures as examples.⁷ The earlier Anglo-Saxon imagery, with its knots, stylization, and intense concern for symmetry, would seem normal to those in England, whereas the illusionistic approach to art would have seemed very strange, possibly incomprehensible to the new converts.⁸ That is why simplicity reigned: art and architecture were based on Roman models that were “static and imposing” with figures that were “heavier and less linear than before.”⁹ Organization and coherence dominated over realism or expression.

The conditions behind medieval wall paintings and medieval manuscripts were obviously quite different – one was meant for public view, while manuscripts would have a limited, even exclusive audience. Understanding a wall painting required a different set of skills from understanding a manuscript, even though both types of art had accompanying inscriptions in Latin, and a viewer had to move through space to see the wall painting, while the reader had only to turn the pages.¹⁰ Still, many of the wall paintings resemble illustrated manuscripts: the Hildesheim doors were modeled after a ninth-century bible, making the entrance of the church into a veritable book, but they also transformed the illustration to suit the new context.¹¹ Kessler gives many examples of this interplay between manuscript and wall paintings from Ireland to Germany to Rome and beyond. The differentiation between the art in a manuscript and the art or sculpture on the wall of a church, therefore, may be argued to be a matter of narrative as opposed to offering a completely different artistic impulse.

As churches became more divided to accommodate new architectural styles and the

⁷ William J. Diebold, *Word and Image: An Introduction to Early Medieval Art* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), 19.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

⁹ Roger Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 11.

¹⁰ Herbert L. Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), 108.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

developing Christian liturgy, pictures became markers for various spaces and the transitions between these spaces. Kessler explains that

...narratives disposed on the lateral walls generally served several purposes at once. The sequential flow asserted God's working in historical time; juxtapositions, oppositions, and thematic repetitions chronicled a divine plan; and spatial positioning plotted spiritual movement. Following a system introduced during the fourth or fifth century in Saint-Peter's and Saint-Paul's, many churches, including Ceri and San-Pietro-in-Valle at Ferentillo, opposed Old and New Testament sequences on facing walls of the nave, and joined them together with a scene from the Book of Revelation. ... However, no fixed system governed decoration.¹²

Kessler continues by offering an almost exhaustive series of examples regarding decoration from church architecture to manuscripts to textiles to metalwork to reliquaries, and concludes, "While the distribution of pictures in these and other churches suggests an ordering of pictorial narratives in response to the functional spaces, the structure was, in fact, never rigid. As the *De diversis artibus* reminds artisans, 'a human eye cannot decide on which work it should first fix its attention.'"¹³ Instead of focusing on creating order, artisans in the Middle Ages were encouraged to know that decorations and pictures served different groups in different ways, and therefore, the focus should be on creating art that elicits "emotional responses to the events portrayed and to direct those responses to the invisible presences... Such work realiz[ed] the conceit that William Durand of Mende would later state explicitly, i.e. that pictures are material signs of the invisible."¹⁴ Durand was quoting Gregory, and in turn elaborated on the Pope's explanation on the value of pictures, by explaining:

Indeed, pictures seem to move the soul more than texts. Through pictures certain deeds are placed before the eyes, and they seem to be happening in the present time, but with texts, the deeds seem to be only a story heard, which moves the soul less, when the thing is recalled by the memory. For this reason we do not show as much reverence towards

¹² Ibid., 116.

¹³ Ibid., 126.

¹⁴ Ibid., 128. I wonder if McCloud knew of this medieval definition of pictures when he sub-titled his work "Understanding Comics" as "The Invisible Art." See: Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers., Inc., 1993).

books as we do to images and pictures.¹⁵

Clearly, Durand was aware of the synchronic and diachronic aspects of wall paintings in churches, and the necessity of human memory to understand the sequential flow: if the memory of a story is fragmented, then interpreting the sequence will inevitably be damaged. His conclusion regarding the aesthetic response is a product of his time that prizes visual literacy over textual literacy (and sounds unnervingly postmodern in his observation).

The intentionality of the creation of these pictures and art (“to move the soul”) leads us to the question of whether pictures can be read as books can. Some art historians, taking the question seriously and often literally, rebut any statement that pictures can be read in the same ways that books can be read.¹⁶ They say that comparing “reading” verbal-based texts with “reading” visual images is an incorrect analogy because religious art functions within a specific context, and without that context, an image cannot tell the story of an unknown narrative to a naïve viewer. Images, therefore, only serve a purpose in conveying a visual accompaniment to a story that has been already heard in a sermon because illustrations, as opposed to natural language, do not have any grammatical rules. That is, they argue, “one can recognize the content of images but one cannot ‘read’ this content.”¹⁷ In this, the critics of the “bible for the illiterate” maxim disagree with medieval and Renaissance scholars from Leonardo Da Vinci to Desiderius Erasmus, the latter of which believed “Painting is much more eloquent than speech, and often

¹⁵ Durand of Mende, *The Rationale Divinorum Officiorum of William Durand of Mende: A New Translation of the Prologue and Book One*, ed. and trans. Timothy M. Thibodeau (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 34.

¹⁶ See G.G. Coulton, *Art and the Reformation* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1953); Duggan; Ernst Hans Gombrich, *The Image and the Eye: Further Studies in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (London: Phaidon Press, 1994); Athene Reiss, “Beyond ‘Books for the Illiterate’: Understanding English Medieval Wall Paintings,” *British Art Journal* IX.1 (2008) 1-20; Rosewell; and Flint Schier, *Deeper into Pictures: An Essay on Pictorial Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). See Mare for a succinct summary of the rebuttal: Estelle Alma Mare, “Can one ‘read’ a work of visual art?” *Junctures: The Journal for Thematic Dialogue* VI.1 (2006) 63-74.

¹⁷ Mare, *Visual Art*, 4.

penetrates more deeply into one's heart."¹⁸

Making the Connection

It is true that not all works of visual art can be designated as equal to a "text," but I agree that making the connection between reading comics and reading medieval art requires going through the exact same five steps of hermeneutical discussion as examining the Gregory's aphorism of pictures being the "bible of the illiterate."¹⁹

First, are comics art? Or are they literature? Or are they both? Most comic studies scholars today say yes: comics are literature because they must be *read*.²⁰ They are also art. Therefore, we can list comics as both art and literature, the same way medieval wall paintings resemble illustrated and inscripted manuscripts.²¹

¹⁸ Mitchell Stephens, "By Means of the Visible," *Picturing Texts*, ed. Lester K. Born (New York & London: WW Norton, 2004), 56-65. The art historians who agree are far more numerous: see Richard Brilliant, *Visual Narratives: Storytelling in Etruscan and Roman Art*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Michael Camille, "Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Art History* 8.1 (1985): 26-49; Kessler; and Mare.

¹⁹ A later artist, Giotto, was so admired for his Paduan frescoes circa 1305 because of how his parallelism guided the viewer in the way Giotto wanted them "read." Alpatoff argues "the composition of the whole Paduan program shows that Giotto attended to both tasks; he succeeded in showing the moral basis of the legend, and the spiritual significance of its events; and at the same time he sought to emphasize their visual resemblances." See Michael Alpatoff, "The Parallelism of Giotto's Paduan Frescoes," *The Art Bulletin*. 29.3 (1947): 149-154. In the history of ideas, Alpatoff believes that Giotto's parallels were a deliberate commentary on the rules of how such wall paintings should be read, and thus function as a text within a text. Alpatoff concludes with Berenson's thoughtful analysis: "His thoroughgoing sense for the significant in the visible world enabled him so to represent things that we realize his representations more quickly and more completely than we should realize the things themselves." See Bernhard Berenson, *Florentine Painters of the Renaissance* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1896), 19.

²⁰ I follow Groensteen's observation that "A page of comics... demands to be traversed, crossed, glanced at, and analytically deciphered. This moment-to-moment reading does not take a lesser account of the totality of the panoptic field that constitutes the page (or the double page), since the focal vision never ceases to be enriched by peripheral vision," 19. He argues later that comics must, through necessity, also be a conceptual frame, a "system" in order to gather the "differences and commonalities within the same medium," 20. This frame or system is read through "iconic solidarity", a condition where "visual images can, in first approximation, be assimilated within a comic," 20. See Thierry Groensteen, *The System of Comics*. Trans. Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007). Also see note 18 above.

²¹ I hesitate at this point to have a full semantic discussion of the terms "art" and "literature" since many of the terms of the discipline of literary analysis of graphic novels and comics are still under discussion. See Will Eisner, *Comics and Sequential Art* (Princeton, WI: Kitchen Sink Press, Inc. 1992) and *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996); Groensteen; Charles Hatfield, "An Art of Tension." *A Comics Studies Reader*, eds. Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009) 132-148; Jet Heer and

Second, are comics hard to read? For new viewers, the answer is yes. I taught a class on the graphic novel last spring, and many of my students complained that they had a very difficult time reconciling the need to both look at the pictures and interpret the pictures, while also needing to read and interpret the text. Other students, who had grown up reading comic books, never had a second thought that the reading and interpreting could be, or would be, difficult for others. The reaction to wall paintings and manuscripts in the Middle Ages probably garnered the same reaction: those who had grown up with the forms of depiction and the Latin language had little problem interpreting or “reading” what was before them in picture form; others, like the Anglo-Saxons, would have needed assistance in comprehending the new illusionistic art and understanding the principles and metaphors within the intended illusions.²²

Third, comics have naturally evolved into a divide between audiences: the earliest audiences were raised on the printed medium, but soon thereafter the characters became the staple of radio plays, motion pictures, and television. The printed medium has a limited, exclusive audience, but the public medium is created to appeal to viewers all around the globe. Medieval wall paintings and manuscripts had the same divide between public audience and

Kent Worcester. “Introduction.” *A Comics Studies Reader* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009); Ann Miller, *Reading Bande dessinée: Critical Approaches to French-language Comic Strip* (Chicago: Intellect Books, 2007); Scott McCloud; Matthew J. Smith, and Randy Duncan, eds., *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods* (New York: Routledge, 2012); Rocco Versaci, *This Book Contains Graphic Language: Comics as Literature* (New York: Continuum, 2007); and Douglas Wolk, *Reading Comics: How Graphic Novels Work and What They Mean* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2007) for examples of a discipline evolving and establishing its own terms and theories. McCloud offers a much-quoted and discussed definition in the beginning of his work *Understanding Comics* as “comics (kom’iks) n. plural in form, used with a singular verb. 1. Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” 9.

²² Rosewell concludes, “...it seems reasonable to assume that wall paintings cemented the familiar, helped people remember stories, encouraged devotion and stimulated curiosity. Different audiences may have responded to them in different ways at different times. According to a French source, the ferocious Duke of Lorraine, one of the first crusaders to enter Jerusalem in 1099, who was known as the *Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri* (Defender of the Holy Sepulcher), often stayed behind after services to ask priests about the meaning of wall paintings he did not understand,” *Wall Paintings*, 183-84.

limited, exclusive audience: one was for public consumption, the other, private.²³ Critics caution that the two media supposedly require a different set of skills, believing that one set was much more elitist than the other,²⁴ however, I cannot see the argument carrying much weight when the same exact parallel is seen today. It is true that most people who have seen a *Batman* movie have never read a *Batman* comic book, but it is improbable that those fans that read the comic books have never seen a *Batman* movie. One medium flows with easy interpretation into the other, and while the reverse is less common, it is not problematic: that is, if I gave someone who had seen a recent *Batman* movie a graphic novel with Frank Miller's interpretations of the character, I am fairly certain that comprehension would soon follow.²⁵ Just like the persons of the Old Testament, the characters in *Batman* are established as public knowledge, even though the particular adventure might be new. Marvel Comics forces this mental connection at the beginning of each film: there is a quick opening montage where pages of a comic book are flipped quickly before the audience's eyes in the theatre, establishing the connection between the limited, exclusive medium of the comic book and the public medium of the film.²⁶ The

²³ Although Books of Hours were almost mass-produced in France, they were rare in Germany and "of poor quality" in England. Nevertheless, according to de Hamel, "Most people learned to read from Books of Hours," 13, and yet while "The Book of Hours was a very precious possession in [a] household... it was probably their only book," 198. See Christopher De Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts* (London: Phaidon Press, Ltd, 1997).

²⁴ See Reiss for the argument that it was more difficult to understand wall paintings than the images in illuminated manuscripts. See Brilliant for the counter-argument.

²⁵ See Frank Miller, *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* (New York: DC Comics, 2002).

²⁶ Granted, this montage does not follow Sergei Eisenstein's theory that there must be closure for meaning to be constructed from/between panels, as he argues that film's "Montage is a mighty aid in the resolution of this task," 4. Eisenstein's classic definition of montage as "two film pieces of any kind, placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of that juxtaposition," 4, does allow for the establishment of a book/film connection, because his next paragraph clarifies that "this is not in the least a circumstance peculiar to the cinema, but is a phenomenon invariably met with in all cases where we have to deal with juxtaposition of two facts, two phenomena, two objects," 4. The comics' reader, like the film viewer who is watching a montage, must combine the images into a connection or meaning in order to create closure. See Sergei M. Eisenstein, "Word and Image," *The Film Sense* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1942), 3-65. The Marvel montage of comic images does create the connection but not the "deliberate and voluntary closure," McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 69, because it is, indeed, only a sample of images and not a narrative, nor is it intended to be, I believe, anything else but a reminder – a way of evoking an emotional response by stirring a viewer's (or fan's) memory of reading Marvel comics.

difference between the two media is a matter of narrative, the same as with the difference between wall paintings and manuscripts.

Fourth, when Kessler described the pictures on the lateral walls of a church or cathedral as “narratives” that served the purpose of directing a “sequential flow [that] asserted God’s working in historical time [with] juxtapositions, oppositions, and thematic repetitions,”²⁷ the use of the terms “sequential” cannot but help lead us to Will Eisner’s axiomatic definition of comics as “sequential art.” Scott McCloud expands Eisner’s definition of comics to mean “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer.”²⁸ When comparing McCloud’s definition to Kessler’s description of the pictures as narratives that direct a sequential flow, the connection must be tested by examples, but even in the world of comics the work of Eisner often serves as the exception to the rule, and likewise, Kessler reminds us that the structure or order of the pictorial narratives was never rigid. In addition, Kessler’s statement that “art in churches was intended also to elicit emotional responses to the events portrayed”²⁹ is directly parallel to McCloud’s conclusion to his definition that the intention of a comic must be to “produce an aesthetic response in the viewer.”³⁰ Indeed, comic book fans can be fiercely emotional about the characters they like and are more than happy to spend hours on-line on the Internet and in person discussing the casting of the newest movie, or the aesthetics of a costume change in their favorite character. The wording of the definitions remains an uncannily similar call to the necessity of using phenomenology to open our understanding of the emotional and physical reactions that come from the human experience of art.

²⁷ Kessler, *Seeing*, 116.

²⁸ McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 9.

²⁹ Kessler, *Seeing*, 128.

³⁰ McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 9.

Fifth, the problem of whether pictures can be read as books does rely on a critic's view on the issue of whether pictures have "grammatical rules." Those who deny the analogy that "reading" verbal-based texts is equal to "reading" visual images rely on the idea that without an inscription or title, an image cannot be read because there must be an *a priori* title at least to begin the process of narrative.³¹ Those who accept that a viewer can "read" visual images like text find it difficult to counter the fact that illustrations are not generally considered to have grammatical rules.³² Here, I propose the counter-argument: use the grammatical rules of comics (defined below) to open the analysis of whether pictures, pre-modern wall art, or manuscripts without text can be read as graphic narratives.

The reason this argument has not been used before is because the "questions of comics form have received relatively little attention in English-language scholarship, which has tended to view the medium through historical, sociological, aesthetic (literary), and thematic lenses."³³ The two major contributors to the approach in English are Eisner and McCloud, and these works,

³¹ Note 16 above, *et al.* especially Reiss.

³² Note 18 above, *et al.* especially Brilliant. Camille takes the middle road, stating that most wall paintings could not have functioned as a book for the illiterate (outlined by St. Gregory) "since its whole referential system was to the written signs from which the latter were excluded" and the ability to read the images left-to-right presupposes training in literacy that sequences information in left-to-right. He does acknowledge, however, "Of course, many medieval narratives radiate from different points and follow no strictly regulated code of order, but nevertheless there existed what might be termed a visual literacy, which implied the systematic viewing of a series of pictures" (Camille, *Medieval Literacy*, 34). Visual literacy, then, does not necessarily imply the presupposition of text reading skills, because many "design[s] also contain[s] elements which can be associated with the needs of an audience still imbued with oral patterns of thought," 34. This "implication" comes from Schapiro's groundbreaking analysis of Image-Signs that examines the historical development of the frame, the needs for a smooth surface, the conception of ground vs. field, and the "habits of seeing" or "directedness" in various cultures from prehistory to the present. Schapiro suggests that while there are not "necessary or universal" rules for art, there is a need for the work to be intelligible, in that "the picture field has local properties that affect our sense of the signs," Schapiro, *Semiotics*, 229, and that a work must express a direction: "Directedness as such is not conventional; it arises from the transitive nature of the objects represented and the task of expressing an order of time in an order of space... The varying orders of left-to-right or right-to-left and even of downward vertical alignment in pictorial art, as in writing, were probably determined by special conditions of the field, the technique, and the dominant content of the art at an early stage," 231. See Meyer Schapiro, "On Some Problems in the Semiotics of Visual Art: Field and Vehicle in Image-Signs," *Semiotica* (1969): 223-42.

³³ Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen, "Foreword," in Thierry Groensteen, *The System of Comics*, trans. Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen. (Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2007), vii.

while offering a significant dialogue and terminology, have a lack of theoretical sophistication or semiotic development.³⁴ Thierry Groensteen's groundbreaking work, *The System of Comics*, published in 1999, on the other hand, offers a sophisticated argument called "iconic solidarity" based on visual analysis and semiotic forms, but even though he is the most prolific scholar on the subject of comics, the French work was not translated into English until 2007 and offered for worldwide distribution in 2009. Groensteen's masterpiece is indeed one giant definition that "reveals, through minutely detailed analysis of case studies, that comics are preponderantly visual language in which text plays a subordinate (though far from superfluous) role."³⁵ Semiotics has been applied across the humanities to language, culture and arts, but very rarely to comics, and this is where the lacunae has occurred in what appears to be a very valuable (and possibly obvious) way of opening the door to creating a grammar for reading the visual language of medieval wall paintings and manuscripts.

Application

What does it look like to apply graphic novel theory to medieval wall paintings or manuscripts? The church of St Mary's, Houghton-On-The-Hill in Norfolk, England (**Figure 1**)

³⁴ Eisner gives us this fascinating paragraph in *Comics and Sequential Art*, but it is unfortunately not expanded with further theoretical development: "In its most economical state, comics employ a series of repetitive images and recognizable symbols. When these are used again and again to convey similar ideas, they become a distinct language – a literary form, if you will. And it is this disciplined application that creates the 'grammar' of sequential art," 2. His discussion flows immediately into examples, which are intensely accurate, but there is not a sense of speculation or conveyance of any further aspects of the argument. In *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative*, we are given a concise continuation of the idea: "The reading process in comics is an extension of the text. In text alone the process of reading involves word-to-image conversion. Comics accelerate that by providing the image. Then properly executed, it goes beyond conversion and speed and becomes a seamless whole. In every sense, this misnamed form of reading is entitled to be regarded as literature because the images are employed as a language," xvii. Eisner likens comics to *kanji* because of the relationship between the visual shortcuts of a character-based writing system and the image-to-word conversion that is the vital part of the language of comics. His argument, in this book as well as the earlier work, relies on artistic examples from his own *oeuvre* to communicate the finer points of his theories and viewpoint, but the lack of verbalization offers too many choices for a reader to create a concrete conclusion, and thus hinders a more sophisticated argument.

³⁵ Beaty and Nguyen, *Foreword*, viii.



Figure 1 St. Mary's, Houghton on the Hill, Norfolk, England. Photo: Simon Knott, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/norfolkodyssey/10000731403/sizes/l>

has medieval wall paintings that are believed to be the oldest and best preserved in the entire country.³⁶ I am using these wall paintings as an example because they are a new discovery, and thus we do not have academic analysis that would cause us to approach them with presuppositions, as scholars have just begun offering competing and cautious explanations for the curious and unclear Romanesque or Anglo-Norman frescoes. Perhaps if the paintings are looked at through the view of the system of comics' grammar, we might shed new light on their

³⁶ See Rosewell, *Wall Paintings*, 9-11, and Tobit Curtis Associates, "Conservation of the Wall Paintings at St. Mary's Church, Houghton-on-the-Hill, Norfolk." (#HHM01.1, November 2006. Cambridge, UK), 2.

meaning? For this reading of the frescoes, I will be using Groensteen's "iconic solidarity" theory that is based on visual analysis and semiotic forms, with the intent of opening the door to creating a grammar for reading the visual language of medieval wall paintings and manuscripts.



Figure 2 St. Mary's, Houghton on the Hill, Norfolk, England. Photo: Nick Ford
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/nickpix2008/7023293131/>

St. Mary's was built on the remains of a Roman building on or before the 11th century, according to Tobit Curtis Associates, who wrote the Conservation report.³⁷ The evidence of the church's Roman roots can be seen in the use of Roman bricks in the structure, the nearby remains of a villa, and the church's proximity to Peddler's way, a Roman road that crosses the northern part of Norfolk on the outskirts of North Pickenham near Swaffam.³⁸ The church was

³⁷ Tobit Curtis, *Conservation*, 2.

³⁸ See Simon Knott, *Norfolk Churches: St. Mary, Houghton-on-the-Hill*, <http://www.norfolkchurches.co.uk/houghton/houghton.htm>

lost to record from 1933 to 1992, and its existence completely forgotten by locals. Already a fading and rarely used church, in World War I a returning Zeppelin dumped its bombs into the courtyard, ruining the chancel and the roof of the tower, and damaging a cottage beside it and the farmhouse across from the church. By 1930, the parish had moved away, and since there had never been a proper road leading to the hamlet, it was abandoned. In 1992, Mrs. Gloria Davey was on a walk with her women's club when they stopped for a rest on the edge of an overgrown graveyard. Intrigued by the gravestones, she cleared a path through some tall briars, and stepped into the churchyard itself. The church had become invisible because the entire shell was encased in ivy! She and her husband Bob Davey got the attention of the Norfolk City Council and had it added to the "Buildings at Risk Register," setting into motion the process of repair and attracting funding.³⁹

Cleaning the ivy off the building, clearing the graveyard, and making the floor safe was typical of the restoration process: the baptismal font was discovered in a nearby rectory garden, planted with tulip bulbs, and the holy water stoup from the nave was found being used as a birdbath in a neighboring garden. The next step was to rebuild a roof for the church. Bob Davey contacted the Norfolk Archaeological Service, who sent over an architect to view the site. The architect felt that the walls were sound, and it would be possible to rebuild the roof on the old timbers rather than bringing in new oak beams to build an entirely new structure. Under the crumbling Victorian plaster the archaeologist's team discovered painted texts from Elizabethan times – and under them, wall paintings from the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries – and still under them, the treasure: one of the best sequences of Romanesque wall-paintings in England.⁴⁰ When this happened, the Courtauld Institute, the English Heritage and other national

³⁹ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁰ Tobit Curtis, *Conservation*, 2.

heritage and archaeological organizations stepped in to provide help and funding for this little church.⁴¹



Figure 3 Gabriel blowing horn on Judgment Day, St. Mary's, Houghton on the Hill, Norfolk. Photo: Echoes of the Past, <https://blosslynspace.wordpress.com/category/churches-of-norfolk/>

The wall paintings on the east wall have three main scenes: The Seat of Mercy Trinity, the Harrowing of Hell, and the Creation of Eve. The Seat of Mercy Trinity is a very rare image, and indeed is the earliest known example of a wall painting showing the Trinity in this manner in Europe.⁴² Scholars speculate that it might have been unique to Britain, and the Conservation Report agrees, stating, "...the iconography is unquestionably sophisticated, suggesting a patron with a clear idea of how the scheme should be constructed. Because of the unique nature of the

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Tobit Curtis, *Conservation*, 7.

paintings at Houghton there are now no direct parallels in English wall painting.”⁴³ The image is right above the chancel arch: God is enthroned in the center and on his knee a cross – the depiction of a cross on God’s knee is the only one known in England. In the front of the throne is a smaller image of Christ on the cross, and by God’s head is a dove, haloed, representing the Holy Ghost. To the left of the arch is the fresco of Gabriel blowing the last trumpet and presiding over the dead who are rising from their graves on judgment day. **(Figure 3)** The circles (or roundels) show a scene that is disputed by scholars. These figures may be prophets holding scrolls of revelation, apostles carrying napkins to carry the souls of the saved to heaven, apostles carrying the shrouds of the resurrected dead, apostles carrying dead serpents as a sign they have conquered evil, or patriarchs carrying honor cloths.⁴⁴ The apostles are shown with very somber and miserable faces, a popular depiction prior to the twelfth century.⁴⁵

The Seat of Mercy Trinity fresco is the center of my focus, as it allows me to test the theories regarding image and narrative. The roundels **(Figure 4)** are especially useful for testing

⁴³ Ibid..

⁴⁴ The answer to what the men are carrying may depend on the timeframe in which they were painted. Petersen notes: “the convention of using scrolls to represent a spoken text becomes prevalent only in the High and Late Medieval period. The practice may have first been conceived as an expansion of the use of honor cloths in Ancient Greek and Roman frontispiece illustrations of authors that adorned classical texts.” See Robert S. Petersen, “Metamorphosis of the Phylactery: Changes in Emanata from the Medieval Times through the 18th Century.” (*IJOCA*) *International Journal of Comic Art* 10/1 (2008): 226-247. Durand of Mende, writing circa 1294-96, states that “Patriarchs and Prophets are painted with scrolls in their hands, and some of the Apostles are depicted with books and some with scrolls. This is clearly because before the coming of Christ, the faith was shown figuratively, and many things remained unclear; to represent this, the Patriarchs and Prophets are painted with scrolls, as if to denote this imperfect knowledge. But since the Apostles were instructed perfectly by Christ, they can be shown with books, by which is suitably depicted their perfect knowledge. But because some of them put down in writing what they had learned, for the instruction of others, they are fittingly depicted as if they were teachers, with books in their hands.... But others, who wrote nothing that has survived or has been approved by the Church, are not depicted with books but with scrolls, as a sign of their preaching,” Durand, *Rationale*, 36. If the fresco were painted in the 11th century, would the practice have been codified at that point? If yes, then the men in the image could be Patriarchs, Prophets or Apostles, since all three were depicted with scrolls. If no, then what they have in their hands might not reflect text, but the earlier tradition of honor cloths – which, in turn, might suggest that the fresco was based on a manuscript from an earlier century. The Conservation report supports this speculation, noting “...it is entirely possible that such parallels existed and it may have been possible for a patron simply to refer the painters to a nearby example. However it is also possible that there was a source such as a manuscript, with which the patron could demonstrate how aspects of the scheme should be laid out.” Tobit Curtis, *Conservation*, 7.

⁴⁵ Rosewell, *Wall Paintings*, 15.

the theoretical analysis because scholars are not sure what is actually being depicted here. Are they holding napkins, shrouds, snakes, scrolls or honor cloths? Is it Jesus on the far right, or is that a modern analysis that would seem redundant to the medieval viewer?



Figure 4 St. Mary's Church, Houghton-On-The-Hill. "Galleries." Photo: retouched by Avalon Graphics, 2011.⁴⁶

Understanding a wall painting requires a different set of skills from understanding a manuscript: even though they may be viewed as similar, they involve different kinds of narratives – the manuscript often only had one purpose, but wall paintings involve multiple purposes that include both narrative and sequential flow, juxtapositions, and spatial positioning. The painting of the Holy Trinity invites a multi-purpose reading from the parishioners, and asks us to examine just how, in the words of William Durand of Mende, “pictures are material signs

⁴⁶ See St. Mary's Church, Houghton-On-The-Hill. "Galleries: 11th Century Wall Paintings." Friends of St. Mary's Church Trust Website, 2013. For Avalon Graphics, LLC, see Cathy Helms, Graphic Designer, Photographer and Writer at Avalongraphics.org.

of the invisible.”⁴⁷ Diving into the fresco itself: above the chancel arch are the images of the Trinity – that is, it has been identified as the type of Trinity familiar in Western art that is similar to the famous fresco by Masaccio in Santa Maria Novella, Florence, where God the Father stands behind the cross on which the Son is crucified, and is supporting the cross. The Holy Spirit, represented by a dove, is in flight from God’s right shoulder. Anne Marshall of PaintedChurch.org speculates, “...not only is this painting much earlier than Masaccio’s early 15th century example, it seems on present indications (more of a roundel still remains to be uncovered) to be combined with the Doom, or Last Judgment. If this turns out to be true, then this treatment of the subject may be unique.”⁴⁸ It is interesting to speculate if the Anglo-Saxon parishioners who first saw this painting knew of the uniqueness and originality of the artist’s choices.

What has been uncovered thus far indicates three tiers. The top with the roundel containing the Trinity, a middle tier with figures each in their own roundel, presenting scrolls, and the lowest is the Last Judgment. Marshall notes that another three are faint but detectable to the right of the arch, and that these figures

...are thought to be the Twelve Apostles, shown here as co-assessors at the Judgment. The belief that they would actually take part derives from Luke 22:30 where Christ at the Last Supper promises the disciples that they will ‘sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’ The figures, all painted as young and beardless, hold scrolls, perhaps bearing the appropriate sentence from the Apostles Creed.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Kessler, *Seeing*, 128. Kessler was paraphrasing Durand in 2004 through a German translation in 2000 of the original Latin. See Kirstin Faupel-Dreves, *Vom Rechten Gebrauch der Bilder im Liturgischen Raum* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 215-23. A recent translation of Durand from Latin to English in 2007 by Timothy Thibodeau can give us a closer idea of what Durand actually wrote, even though Durand himself was paraphrasing Pope Gregory’s *Pastoral Care* in saying, “When the shapes of external objects are drawn within, it is as if they were painted in the heart, whenever the faint images are thought about carefully.” Durand, *Rationale*, 33. Kessler’s paraphrase, if less exact, is chosen for being more poetic.

⁴⁸ See Anne Marshall, “Medieval Wall Painting in the English Parish Church: A Developing Catalogue.” (PaintedChurch.org, 2002). <http://paintedchurch.org/>

⁴⁹ Marshall, *Catalogue*, <http://paintedchurch.org/>.

Marshall's analysis is a modern one – but would a medieval analysis come to the same conclusion?

Groensteen's theory can help us: his argument asks us to look first at the *spatial positioning*. Then, he divides the positioning into two areas – *restricted arthology* and *general arthology*. The *spatio-topical system* looks at the framing of the comic, for the frames of a sequence create the smallest units of meaning, and the frame insures the integrity of the contents. The frame, and the order of the frames, acts as a continuum for the narrative, but it also controls the reader as each frame must be read for the meaning to be gleaned. Skipping a frame, or having too much change in the narrative between frames, will frustrate a reader. With the image of the Trinity, each roundel acts as a frame, and there are frames within frames as seen with the sequence of the apostles. The frame around the apostles acts as a signifier, and each roundel around the apostles also is a signifier, offering meanings within meanings. I could keep going, and follow what most systematic studies do when they approach what Roland Barthes calls the "obtuse meaning" of the comic: examining the pages' "larger and larger utterances: the panel, then the page, finally the entirety of the story."⁵⁰ Instead, I intend to pursue further studies of the paintings by following Groensteen's theories about not

...disassociate[ing] these multistage units, but to separately analyze their different levels of interaction, that being the spatial level in the first place, and, second, the syntagmatic level of discourse, or the story (which admits in turn two degrees of relations: linear and translinear.⁵¹

The medieval mind, I believe, would not separate out the elements of what he or she was seeing, but follow a train of thought that we today identify as not abstract thinking, but allegorical thinking – where different levels of interaction occur at the same time, weaving together a spatial

⁵⁰ Groensteen, *System*, 27.

⁵¹ Ibid.

understanding along with a linear and translinear understanding of what he was seeing.

The *restricted arthology* is the relationship between the sequence of syntagms, or one might say, the writing as it functions as narration. The middle tier of the fresco is the only place where speculation has put any writing, and as of this point (in the archeological uncovering of the wall paintings) we don't have any writing available for analysis, so this aspect will have to wait for further research. Restricted or restrained arthology will be of less value in analyzing medieval wall paintings because of the lack of narration or dialogue.

The *general arthology* covers all other relationships in the spatial positioning on the page. It reflects the integration between the narrative and the spatio-topical operation, or what is called the "multiframe."⁵² Every page of comics is subject to the need for a synchronic aspect, or the sequential panels on the surface of each page, and a diachronic aspect, or the knowledge that a reader must go through the series in order to create meaning, building recollection upon recollection and each echoing the previous recollection. The page is concrete, but the reader is not, and therefore neither is the reading. This creates a tension that ends not in conflict but in enrichment and densification of the text of the comic – or of the fresco on a wall. An easier way to handle this experience is to think of it as "braiding," a term introduced by Groensteen in 1990. When approached from this view, the images within the painting become more than likenesses, instead moving closer to what we might call or describe as having the quality of a place: for "what is a place other than a habituated space that we can cross, visit, invest in, a space where relations are made and unmade?"⁵³ If all the elements of a sequence are spatial sites, then the braiding of meaning is what constructs them as places. The relationship between the places is what gives rise to the dialogue: a direct exchange between the images as they co-exist under the

⁵² Ibid., 22.

⁵³ Ibid., 148.

gaze of a reader. The reading does not require the images to be viewed simultaneously. Each panel has a privileged relationship with another, whether that panel exists spatially next to the first, or is across the church, or even in the rafters of a cathedral two hundred meters away.

A Potential System

This article only scratches the surface of this powerful semantic network, and I am often astonished at how well the parallels work between comic studies theory and medieval visual theory. When the question of iconic solidarity is tested, the dynamic between the two *does* appear to reveal constant associations that might be called a network, and possibly someday, a system. To establish a system, however, we need to understand how and what strategies work: some are clearly applicable and others do not seem to apply; the latter we can put aside for future analysis as it does not pay to eliminate all angles too early. Modern comics, for example, have *modes* that are often radically different from each other; medieval art, however, does not have the same pliability between visual presentation and narrative as the clerical tradition encouraged uniformity.⁵⁴ Historian and comic studies scholar Joseph Witek offers an analysis of the different types of modes, described as *cartoon* versus *naturalistic*:

The first grows out of caricature, with its basic principles of simplification and exaggeration, while the other derives from the recreation of physical appearances in realistic illustration. Each of these visual styles also has come to carry with it a characteristic set of narrative tendencies and an orientation toward its themes and subject matter that... make up what I will call a comic's "mode."⁵⁵

Witek offers a comparative definition between "cartoon" and "naturalistic" that is an association that works for our purpose:

⁵⁴ See Durand of Mende's thesis.

⁵⁵ See Joseph Witek, "Comics Modes: Caricature and Illustration in the Crumb Family's *Dirty Laundry*," *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods*. Ed. Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan (New York: Routledge, 2012) 27-42. The struggle for definition within the medium/genre continues, as pointed out above.

Visually, the cartoon mode is marked by simplified and exaggerated characters which are created primarily by line and contour. Panel backgrounds and physical settings are often minimally represented. Little attempt is made to create a sustained illusion of three-dimensional space by such means as shading or the use of linear perspective.⁵⁶

Compare the cartoon mode to the naturalistic mode, where

... the rendering of figures and objects adheres to... the artistic conventions for creating the illusion of physical forms existing in three-dimensional space. A significant effort is made to create that plausible physical world using shading, consistent lighting sources, texture, and linear perspective. Backgrounds are rendered in detail, especially in establishing shots, and that background tends to be depicted relatively fully from panel to panel.⁵⁷

Witek connects the visual style of the naturalistic mode to realism and its conventions in visual arts and photography, and links the narrative style to the conventions of cinema and the filmic techniques of jump-cuts, montages, and close-ups, creating “page layouts [that are] fluid and highly complex.”⁵⁸ The cartoon mode and its strategies are much more suitable, however, for analyzing medieval images than the naturalistic mode, as most medieval art does not aim towards creating physical or psychological verisimilitude. As the ideas and creative modes of the Renaissance crept into art, the cartoon mode faded and the naturalistic mode rose, giving viewers and readers a clearer idea of the complex psychological landscape within the human mind. My concern here, however, is pre-Renaissance, and that means the most useful mode is the cartoon.

Line and contour, minimal backgrounds and settings, low interest in three-dimensional space, panels based on a regular, predictable grid – this description matches the cartoon mode with almost every medieval illustration or wall painting. Characters are all generally the same size from scene to scene or page-to-page and visible in full length, and their bodies are either facing front or in a three-quarter view. Witek notes that “these compositional strategies lend

⁵⁶ Ibid., 29.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 31.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 32.

themselves to plots built on pairs or small groups of characters exchanging dialogue,”⁵⁹ or in the case of many medieval illustrations, no dialogue at all except for the occasional phylactery, or “emanata”: the banners or scrolls that wave above a character’s head, seen in moments such as the Annunciation where Gabriel speaks to Mary, (**Figure 5**) “*Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui Iesus.*”



Figure 5 Miniature of the Annunciation, with two donors praying, with an inscription on the Virgin’s desk reading ‘*Omnia levia sunt amanti si quis amat non laborat / de daer*’. (England, S. E. (London) and Netherlands, S. (Bruges). After 1401, before 1415): London, British Library, MS Royal 2 A XVIII f. 23v. Photo: British Library.

In cartoon mode, the emanata will swirl and dance along with the text within the thought bubble, giving the speech a stylized nature of its own, whereas in naturalistic mode the emanata are often the result of clear, consistent, almost typewritten text. The physical reality of the cartoon mode is likewise mutable, for within one page we may have the birth, life, and death of a single

⁵⁹ Ibid., 29.

character: this concurs with medieval illustration where the narrative follows associative logic rather than the laws of perspective or physics. Witek argues that “the affinity of the cartoon mode for physical metamorphosis and non-linear logic has made it the most common vehicle for stories set in fantastical landscapes,”⁶⁰ which explains why it is linked to humor and fantasy, as the narrative is more important than the setting. We see the same in medieval illustrations, which (aside from historical depictions) are most often biblical narratives where the message is primary, and any attempt at being realistic is secondary.

That medieval illustrations do not have substantial amounts of dialogue (except for the rare emanata) is not a stumbling point in establishing a system: the key is that the narrative is a form of sequential art. D.A. Beronă, in his essay “Wordless Comics,” analyzes *The System* by Peter Kuper, a wordless comic that was compiled into a graphic novel in 1997: he notes that obviously, “Without dialogue, the images bear a heavier load for the understanding of context and narrative structure” and yet the result “eliminated language barriers and forced the reader to interact with the characters and connect the dots,”⁶¹ a point that returns us to Durand’s belief that pictures have primacy over texts. Beronă divides his reading into five elements of analysis: “characters and objects, image functions, stereotypes, word images, and line meanings, which are essential elements in any comic, but deserve particular attention in the wordless comic.”⁶² He believes that without word balloons, these elements are required to “assure the legitimacy of characters and objects” and so body posture and gesture doubly assert their primacy in the understanding of the narrative. Medieval art has an advantage in this area because the artist could

⁶⁰ Ibid., 30.

⁶¹ See David A. Beronă, “Wordless Comics: The Imaginative Appeal of Peter Kuper’s *The System*,” *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods*, eds. Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan (New York: Routledge, 2012), 17-26.

⁶² Ibid., 19.

not assume literacy in his reader or viewer, but he could assume the common cultural understanding of Biblical history and characters, or at least that the viewer was developing this cultural understanding as he or she was being converted. Like Greek or Russian icons, where each position, gesture, color and object have a specific meaning, medieval illustrations can rely on what we would today call stereotypes (rarely challenged) in order to establish meaning and ensure the sequence of the narrative is understood.

Charles Hatfield, a respected comics-studies scholar, suspects that the issue in determining meaning may not be “a matter of playing words against pictures; it may be a matter of playing symbols against other symbols.”⁶³ If so, this idea adds to the strength of using comic studies theories to analyze medieval art, as medieval illustrations have heavy use of allegory within a culture that depends on allegorical thinking (as discussed above). Hatfield divides the symbol play as being between diegetic and non-diegetic, or

... symbols that “show” and symbols that “tell”. More precisely, we may say that *symbols that show* are symbols that purport to depict, in a literal way, figures and objects in the imagined world of the comic, while *symbols that tell* are those that offer a kind of diacritical commentary on the images, or (to use another rough metaphor) a “soundtrack” for the images. At its broadest level, then, what we call visual/verbal tension may be characterized as the clash and collaboration of different codes of signification, whether or not written words are used. Again, the deployment of such devices assumes a knowing reader.⁶⁴

His last remark, that of assuming a “knowing reader,” increases the argument for the feasibility of a system: medieval audiences are for the most part “knowing readers” whether they are viewing a manuscript or a wall painting. The known Biblical allegory can be considered the non-diegetic element of the narrative, and because the stories engage in a time sequence, the allegory compliments the diegetic visual element. Even when facing a single panel such as the

⁶³ Hatfield, *Tension*, 134.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 134.

Annunciation, (**Figure 5**) we see a sequence in time: Mary is reading, and has been reading for a while since she is in the middle of the book; she turns with an iconic expression of surprise with her hand across her bosom and her head tilted modestly, her eyes on the ground. The emanata of Gabriel gets in the way of her gaze: the angel's legs are in a running position, implying that he has just arrived in the room and is in the process of unfurling the emanata to deliver his message. His face is below hers as he is in the process of kneeling, but the emanata, too, is in the way of his gaze and so they never quite connect as characters. Indeed, Mary could be looking at the book that is in the doorway outside the scene more than at Gabriel himself! The medieval reader's knowledge of what Gabriel is saying is demonstrated in the emanata: it does not contain all of the words of the Ave Maria, but skips *gratia*, splits *Dominus* into two words, and is missing the ending. While this confuses the modern reader, for medieval eyes it was more than enough; they knew what it was supposed to say, and could supply the missing ending themselves.⁶⁵

Hatfield's argument discusses the complexity of comic book form by addressing the mixed messages that modern readers, even the most experienced, must decode in order to establish meaning. For the modern reader, these tensions are a fundamental aspect to the art form: as a "hybrid text" the words in comics can have an appearance that is very elaborate and weighted with meaning, or the images in comics can be so simple to the point of functioning independently as a language, and the result can create a difficult reading experience. Medieval art is not static: of course, there are many medieval manuscripts, wall paintings and other

⁶⁵ Critics who follow McCloud's definition of a cartoon versus a comic might see a single-panel such as the annunciation as fitting within the definition of a *cartoon*, because "there's no such thing as a sequence of one," 20. The Annunciation, however, has a time sequence inherent in its depiction and therefore is a narrative, which means its approach is closer to a multi-image motion picture (the touchstone that McCloud uses to separate sequential from non-sequential art). The annunciation, in particular, exists not only within an external narrative of biblical events, but it also shows an internal narrative of sequences; it is, therefore, a *comic*.

illustrations that involve a sense of play, social comment and irony, humor and general bawdiness where the surface image appears to have one meaning, but the final image (seen after a reader follows the sequence) can ultimately mean something very different.⁶⁶ What seems alien or difficult to read for us was probably quite plain to the medieval reader.

The aim of this essay is admittedly not to look for conflict between comic studies' theory and medieval visual narrative theory, but to find a system whereby we can use the similarities to examine the nature of the art, the medium, and the genre itself. W.J.T. Mitchell, a scholar who specializes in the theory of images, states in his essay "Beyond Comparison":

The real question to ask when confronted with these kinds of image-text relations is not "what is the difference (or similarity) between the words and the images?" but "what difference do the differences (and similarities) make?" That is, why does it matter how words and images are juxtaposed, blended, or separated?⁶⁷

Mitchell uses the work of William Blake to illustrate the range in image-text from "absolutely disjunctive... illustrations that have no textual reference... to the absolutely synthetic identification of verbal and visual codes... mark[ing] the collapse... between writing and drawing", in order to illustrate the "flexible, experimental, and "high-tension" relation between words and images.⁶⁸ The image/text parallel implies a comparison, which sets up an artificial antagonism between image and text. Bringing us back around to the quote by Hilary Chute on the problem of the field of comics' inquiry, Mitchell describes the typical comic strip where "word is to image as speech is to action and bodies" and notes in parentheses:

(In the pre-Cartesian world of the medieval illuminated manuscript, by contrast, speech

⁶⁶ Gertsman and Stevenson's collection explores the thresholds of the "ruptures and margins" that make up the "cultural matrix" of the Middle Ages, providing solid evidence that "Medieval images are no longer viewed as static pieces of evidence that generate singular meanings and thus disclose irrefutable truths about the past. Instead, scholars now recognize these objects as phenomena whose meanings and functions change with each encounter, thereby revealing many competing narratives." See Elina Gertsman, and Jill Stevenson, eds., "Introduction: Limning the Field," *Thresholds of Medieval Visual Culture: Liminal Spaces* (Rochester: The Boydell Press, 2012), 1-7.

⁶⁷ W. J. T. Mitchell, "Beyond Comparison." *A Comics Studies Reader*, eds. Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), 116-123.

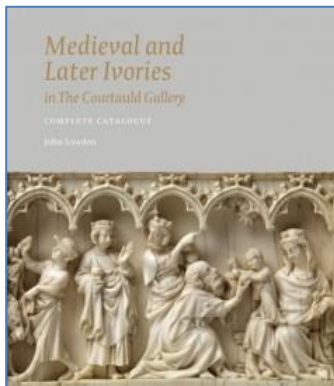
⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 117.

tends to be represented as a scroll rather than a cloud or bubble, and it emanates from the gesturing hand of the speaker rather than the mouth; language seems to co-exist in the same pictive/scriptive space – handwriting emanating from hand-gesture – instead of being depicted as a ghostly emanation from an invisible interior.)⁶⁹

Here we have another offhand connection between the medieval and the modern, used to add a small amount of color to an essay, when it would be so very easy to take the connection and expand upon it. I would have liked to see Mitchell ask (although this was beyond the thesis of his essay) what it *means* for the language to co-exist in the same pictive/scriptive space? Are there modern comics that have this quality, and how was it achieved? What difference does this make for the narrative and for the sequence of the art? In turn, is there any medieval art that depicts language as “a ghostly emanation from an invisible interior”? How was it achieved, and what difference does this make?

I would like to see this line of questioning be considered with medieval art: noting the differences and similarities between modern and medieval art is a moot point, well considered by many art historians, but the question of how a medieval manuscript can be viewed through the lenses of comic studies theory is a very high-tension site of exploration. Could we be more flexible and open in our consideration of the message, seeing elements beyond the traditional interpretation and coming at the image from beyond the margin? In order for comic studies to grasp “it’s object or properly pose its project” these questions of history, semiotics, and grammar must be answered. We *can* read comics using medieval visual narrative theory, and we can also read medieval illuminated manuscripts using comic studies theory; in doing so, we open up both fields to being able to read the entire message of the narrative within sequential art. 🐼

⁶⁹ Ibid., 117.



Book Review: John Lowden, *Medieval and Later Ivories in the Courtauld Gallery: Complete Catalogue*, with an essay by Alexandra Gerstein, London (Paul Holberton Publishing), 2013, 144 pages.

By Katherine Eve Baker, PhD, Broward College

In our modern imaginary, ivory is a substance dipped in blood, with conservation and the cessation of the illegal trade at the forefront of our minds. For those of us who study the past, however, it is a medium of tactile piety and secular luxury, which held a prestigious spot in the pantheon of materials for artists and patrons of previous eras. Recent years have brought a flourishing of study in this field, spurred in part by the Gothic Ivories Project, a publicly available digital database that was the brain-child of this catalog's author. The twenty-eight entries that comprise *Medieval and Later Ivories in the Courtauld Gallery* act in much the same manner as this digital platform, allowing the user to come away with a well-rounded vision of the objects presented.

As stated in the foreword, this publication is the first scholarly catalog to treat a discrete part of the collection of Thomas Gambier Parry, a neo-Gothic artist and Victorian gentleman whose objects passed into the hands of the Courtauld in the mid-1960s through the generosity of his grandson Mark Gambier Parry. **(Figure 1)** The essay

“Thomas Gambier Parry: Collecting in the Gothic Revival” by Alexandra Gerstein provides a thorough understanding of the life, projects, and collecting habits of the elder Gambier Parry, situating him amongst his contemporaries and providing a plausible impetus for his acquisitions. In terms of ivory, Gambier Parry’s first purchase was in 1839, making him a fairly early collector of this medium. Judging from the inventories of his collection, the fifteen years between 1860 and 1875 were

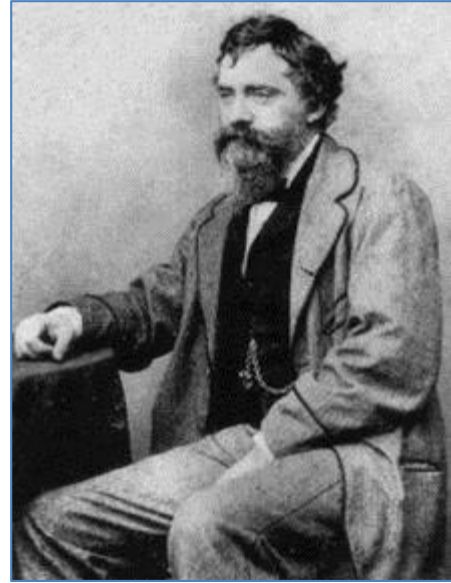


Fig. 1 Thomas Gambier Perry

particularly prolific, when he more than doubled his previous holding.¹ The reasons behind this rise, whether personal, artistic, or market driven, would have been an interesting addition to the essay, although anyone interested in Victorian collecting will find it imminently useful.

For those who wish to familiarize their students with the study of ivory, the catalog’s introduction makes an excellent addition to any syllabus. Lowden has a capacity for making the technical accessible, from his description of the difficulties of working with tusks and teeth, to the discussion of the processes and (sometimes) problematic results of radiocarbon dating. Four pieces were tested for this publication. While one object was shown to be a later production (no. 21), with turn of the sixteenth-century style and modern ivory, two objects (nos. 2 and 22) were found to have been made using ivory that *predated* their style by at least a century. While the recycling of

¹ For the inventory of 1860, 12 ivories were listed. The inventory of 1875 lists 35 ivories (Lowden, p. 23).

older panels was a well-known option in times when elephant ivory was difficult to get, these objects make clear that even when ivory was plentiful, artists did not automatically select the “freshest” material. It is an observation that reinforces recent discoveries made in the Parisian archives, which point to surprisingly large stocks of unworked ivory being kept by the city’s carvers c. 1500, supplies that were transferred across generations.²

The introduction’s discussion of the difficulties of studying ivory is a useful summary of the problems we continue to face when trying to produce scholarship about these objects. Our traditional questions – Who made this and where? What was its function? etc. – are stymied by “the extraordinary reticence of the sources.”³ Inscriptional silence, archival muteness, and a tendency for objects to have undergone transformations in regards to use and decoration have frequently tied the hands of ivory researchers who attempt to produce sweeping visions of production trends. So far, the most successful analyses have come in the form of catalog entries and case studies, wherein every curve of a swaying figure, every shifted hinge hole, every polished surface from repeated handling can be contextualized and made to produce information.

The complete catalog of the Courtauld Gallery’s ivories greatly contributes to this accumulation of knowledge, particularly in the Gothic period. Each ivory is thoughtfully photographed, including the back of objects like the writing tablet of no. 13, which allows newcomers to the field to visualize what the “shallow indent(s)” of tablets actually look like. More glorious visually are the details, illustrations of such precision that the tactile qualities of the material seem to leap from the page. **(Figure 2)** This close looking

² I discussed the large store of raw ivory listed in the estate inventory of Chicart Bailly (1533) at the conference “Gothic Ivories: Content and Context” (London, 2014). Further discussions of this text will be forthcoming.

³ Lowden, p. 14



Figure 2 Detail anointing the body of Christ, cat. No. 12.

Of the camera lens is paired with the superb descriptive skills of the author, and excerpts from the catalogue would make a welcome addition to any course interested in teaching students how to describe subject and iconography. Evocative phrasing like the billowing

clouds of the small panel of no. 7 having a “somewhat intestinal appearance” make these entries a pleasure to read.

A sort of (re-)introduction for most of the Gambier Parry ivories, for a few objects it is their first publication (nos. 16, 17, 19, 22, and 24). While the bibliographies for most objects are thin, indicative of their scholarly neglect, each entry makes an effort to provide as much supplementary material as possible, including references to numerous comparative examples and unpublished masters theses and dissertations. When available, Thomas Parry Gambier’s notes about the object are also given. The anecdotes about acquisitions are particularly charming, such as the *Virgin and Child triptych* (no 5), which was purchased one rainy day while Gambier Parry was sketching in the Friuli mountains.

Gambier Parry clearly had a keen understanding of his ivories. For example, no. 20 was tentatively identified by the collector as Flemish, 15th or early 16th century. This attribution is essentially retained by Lowden, who places the object in Burgundy/Flanders c. 1450-1500. The practiced eye of the author himself is at work with this entry, as he closes his discussion with an observation that it may be “based, at least in part, on contemporary woodcuts of devotional content,” although he was unsure of the source.⁴ The association with religious prints was absolutely correct, and it can now be confirmed that no. 20 was heavily indebted to marginal illustrations from Books of Hours produced in Paris around the year 1500. **(Figure 3)**

The use of Parisian prints for ivory carving at the turn of the 16th century seems to have been a widespread phenomenon, one whose repercussion continue to be parsed.

⁴ Lowden, p. 112

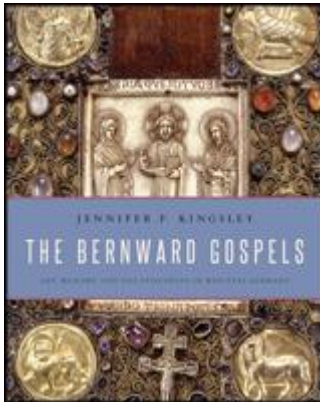


Figure 3 Casket, Burgundy/Flanders c. 1450-1500

While the connection to these printed images does not guarantee Parisian production, as these illustrations traveled and became models for artists across the globe, given the presence of large scale ivory workshops in the city c. 1500 we at least need to consider the French capital in our discussion of provenance for objects like no. 20. These kinds of associations based on localized models, of course, need to be taken with sizable grains of salt. The *Creation of Eve and the Annunciation* panel (no. 21) deftly provides that cautionary specimen. Stylistically linked to France of the Late Flamboyant period,

including possible resonances with printed illustrations, radiocarbon dating done for this publication demonstrated, with 95.4% probability, that the elephant used for this object died between 1663 and 1954. Science is not a panacea, however. The previously unpublished ivory portrait medallion of Anna, Queen of Hungary, once dismissed as a 19th century imitation, has proven to be made from some very old ivory, from an elephant that likely died between 1284 and 1438. As Lowden points out, this does not guarantee authenticity, since like the forgers of panel painting in the 19th century, modern ivory carvers could have also gone to ancient materials to craft their “fakes.”

Overall, *Medieval and Later Ivories in the Courtauld Gallery* is an excellent example of what catalogues should do. The entries act as introductions to these objects, laying out their form, iconography, comparative material, and possible function, but never shying away from their enigmas or areas where we are still lacking information. The complete catalog does not act as the final word on these ivories, but instead seeds the soil for future research, seemingly trying to seduce the audience into a desire to know more about each object in the Parry Gambier collection. As a researcher, this is the work of the best catalogs, the ones that drive us to ask more questions. They force us to get out our magnifying glasses and reference materials and begin a new relationship with an object from the past that seems to push past the muting power of historical distance and speak. 🐘



Book Review: Jennifer P. Kingsley, *The Bernward Gospels: Art, Memory, and the Episcopate in Medieval Germany* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014).

By Eliza Garrison, Middlebury College

The guiding argument of Jennifer Kingsley's book is that the magnificently illuminated Bernward Gospels (Hildesheim, Dom- und Diözesanmuseum, Domschatz 18) was a crucial object in the ritual commemoration of its patron during the final years of his life and long after his death. In a general sense, Kingsley points out, this manuscript's unusual iconography and its physical organization can tell us much about Bernward's self-fashioning. Over the course of four chapters, Kingsley analyzes four of the manuscript's guiding concepts: Memory, Service, Sight, and Touch. In spite of the criticisms that I will make of aspects of the book's organization and the scope of its argument, this important study is an essential point of reference for those interested in Ottonian art and theology.

The introduction and the conclusion, which bookend the substantial chapters that they bracket, offer the reader only the most basic contextualization for the Bernward Gospels. Indeed, the image that opens Kingsley's text, a painting of John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary on either side of a golden cross, is not from the Bernward Gospels at all, but instead derives from another Bernwardian manuscript called the Bernward Bible

(Dom- und Diözesanmuseum Hildesheim Inv. Nr. DS 6). Although this image does not play much of a role in the rest of the book, Kingsley uses this picture as a way to frame the complexity of Bernward's virtual presence in the figure of John; the first sentence of Kingsley's book in fact notes straightaway that the "painting assimilates Bernward of Hildesheim to John the Evangelist, Moses, and Jerome" (Kingsley, 1). While I have no reason to doubt that this image does precisely that, Kingsley makes this proposition without doing much at all to explain how this works. What Kingsley is perhaps most interested in are the theological concepts that this monumental work of Ottonian book painting activates, and here her study follows in many ways the model of Adam Cohen's venerable monograph on the Uta Codex. In lieu of providing historical and political contexts for Bernward's massive expansion of St. Michael's in the years leading up to his death (and at a time that ran just about exactly parallel to Henry II's construction of Bamberg cathedral as his future burial and cult site – See Kingsley, 100, and Garrison, *Ottonian Imperial Art and Portraiture*, 113-163), Kingsley understandably looks to famous sections of Thangmar's *Vita Bernwardi* that note Bernward's keen interest in the "mechanical arts" (Kingsley, 3) and presents the reader with a rich yet brief section on the codicology of the Gospels. This part of the introduction is its most substantial contribution, and it sets up nicely the description of the Gospels in the book's appendix, for Kingsley is here able to determine that the plans for Bernward Gospels seemed to have changed in mid-production: the manuscript was probably originally planned to be a more modest service book, and the book's full-page illuminations were integrated such that they interrupted the flow of the text. The reader is left wondering what may have

changed in Bernward's (or really, the abbey's) financial circumstances to afford the inclusion of such richly painted images. Perhaps, one imagines, the stakes involved in the making of the Gospels hastened the book's newly ambitious program.

Figure 1 Bifolium, Bernward Gospels. Hildesheim, Dom- und Diözesanmuseum, Domschatz 18. Photo: Wiki images.



Chapter One, "Memory," opens with the famous dedication bifolium depicting, on the left, Bernward in a church interior in the act of donating his gospels and other beautifully crafted liturgical objects, and, on the right, Mary and Child enthroned between the archangels Michael and Gabriel. Both images offer alternate schematic cutaway views of the interior of St. Michael's church. As Kingsley points out, this image is the key to understanding the rest of the manuscript's program of illumination. Following a thorough consideration of the various models that were available to Bernward and the Hildesheim illuminators who must have worked closely with him in

planning the manuscript's pictorial cycle, Kingsley advances to the "meat" of her argument: that this initial bifolium pictures the treasury visually, and thus could have functioned much like a written inventory. Indeed, the visual list that we see on these two folia mark, on the one hand, the founding moment of Bernward's treasury at St. Michael's, and thereby cue later ritual commemorative responses to this moment – and to Bernward – far into the future. This image, Kingsley makes clear, is both a representation of donation and of the celebration of the mass; each of the objects represented in this visual treasury list visualizes differently the truth of the Incarnation. Kingsley's rich analysis of the materiality of the image of the Virgin and Child is particularly excellent; in her examination of the metals used to render the folds of the figures' garments, she reminds us that this image occupies a space somewhere between picture and object. Ultimately, on this bifolium the Gospels and other images of things in Bernward's treasury were, as Kingsley puts it, "symbolic[ally] transform[ed]...into treasure." We are thus presented with visual proof of what Kingsley calls Bernward's "gift-giving *pro anima*" (Kingsley, 35), an act that was believed to secure Bernward's place in heaven in a work that was used directly above Bernward's own grave.

In the second chapter, "Service," Kingsley analyzes the Gospels' evangelist portraits and the six scenes of the ministry of John the Baptist. The four evangelist portraits are unusual because of the ways in which these figures are connected to each other; this "idiosyncrasy" (a term Kingsley uses a great deal in this chapter) must be related to the integration of different models in the creation of the Gospels' cycle of illumination. Kingsley's conclusions here are that the evangelists and John the Baptist

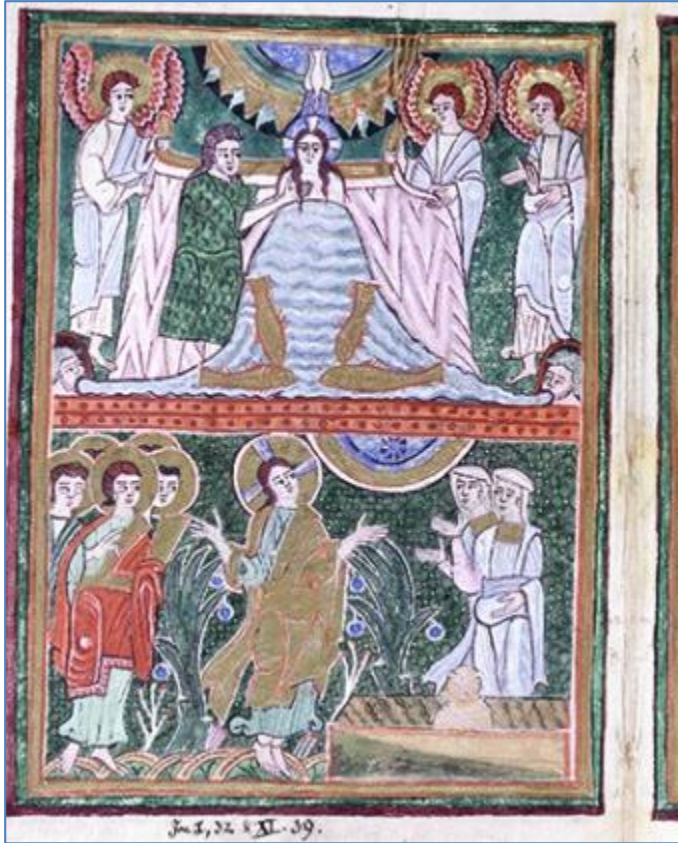


Figure 2 Hildesheim, Dom und Diözesanmuseum, Domschatz 18 (Bernward Gospels), fol.174v, Baptism of Christ (above) and Raising of Lazarus (below). Photo: Photo: Dom und Diözesanmuseum

served as exempla for Bernward, and thus in many ways their images in this book also referred to the roles that Bernward himself served: he was both a priest and also a messenger of the gospels. Thus, if the dedication scene visualizes the treasury's sacred

transformation, with Bernward as the initial arbiter of that change at St. Michael's, then the images of the evangelists and John the Baptist picture the various models whose legacies and images were to shape the manner of Bernward's commemoration at St. Michael's.

In chapter three, "Sight," Kingsley examines illuminations in the Bernward Gospels that fall into two separate but related categories: one group is characterized by the striking axial symmetry of its images; the second group of images shows figures either in profile or three-quarter view and engaged in activity that is part of a narrative. All of these images represent different ways of visually apprehending the divine, and



Figure 3 Hildesheim, Dom und Diözesanmuseum, Domschatz 18 (Bernward Gospels), fol. 75v, Noli me tangere (above) and Peter Charging Mark to Write the Gospels (below). Photo: Dom und Diözesanmuseum

each elaborates on the concepts that the dedication bifolium lays out. We are to understand (this seems to be implicit in Kingsley's argument) that the holy figures in each of these scenes serve as models for the Gospels' patron. Just as the objects in the visual treasury list at the beginning of the manuscript are portals to the divine, such works (and obviously the Gospels themselves) are ideally to cue the kind of Augustinian vision that we see modeled in the selection of images that Kingsley treats in this chapter.

Kingsley's fourth and final chapter, "Touch," is perhaps the book's strongest, and an earlier version of it appeared in 2010 in a special issue of *Peregrinations* devoted to Ottonian art. In this chapter, Kingsley looks closely at three miniatures that visualize differently the physical apprehension of Christ. The author first turns her eye to the Gospels' highly unusual representation of the *Noli me tangere* on folio 75v. Whereas it might be tempting to understand this image as another way of representing of spiritual sight, as Robert Deshman once suggested, Kingsley argues that this picture is especially important in the book's illumination cycle because of the way in which the two figures are connected by touch even though this scene is distinctly about not touching. This image has no known antecedents and for this reason could very likely represent an innovation of the part of the designers of the pictorial cycle, one of whom was certainly Bernward himself. Kingsley uses Calcidius's fourth- or fifth-century translation of Plato's *Timaeus* to explain the "non-touching form of haptic perception" rendered in this image (Kingsley, 84). Bernward knew the *Timaeus*, and Kingsley makes a convincing case for Bernward's familiarity with Calcidius's translation (Kingsley, 84-5). We see similar visual explorations of haptic perception in scenes of the Last Supper and Judas's betrayal (fol. 118r) and in the Baptism of Christ (fol. 174v). As is the case with the entire

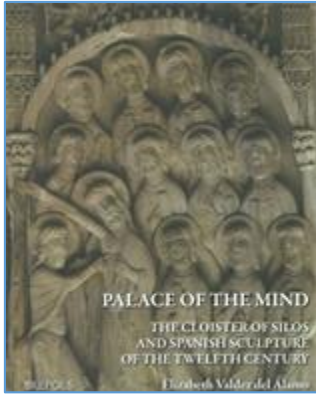
pictorial program, these scenes refer back to the work's donor; these different ways of touching Christ are to be understood as *exempla* for Bernward. Indeed, looking back to the dedication scene, we see Bernward modeling this haptic perception as he grips the Gospels themselves. This manuscript and the works that Bernward donated to the treasury along with it can be together understood as objects that could make invisible mysteries visible and could serve as conduits to the divine.

Kingsley's monograph is a welcome and hotly anticipated contribution to the Anglophone literature on Ottonian art, and Bernwardian art in particular. It is clearly and forcefully written, and the thematic organization she chose is fruitful. Because of this organization, the arguments of her four chapters unfold elegantly; each chapter builds nicely upon arguments presented in the preceding sections. Its razor sharp focus will offer other students of this manuscript and Bernward's patronage a crucial analytical touchstone. The volume contains both a number of high quality black and white reproductions from the manuscript and a positively sumptuous full-color array of every single full-page miniature in the Gospels.

Certainly no book is perfect, though, and there are a number of aspects of this astute and lively study that would seem to demand further explication. One of the challenges of a monographic study is that one runs the risk of myopia, and, appreciating as I do Kingsley's formidable strengths as an art historian and as a scholar with keen interests in the connections between art and theology, unschooled readers of this book might be confused about the connections between the people who made the book and the book's patron. While there can be no doubt that Bernward was involved in the creation of this manuscript at every stage, and that the designers of the work's pictorial program

were deeply engaged with the theological debates of the early eleventh century, Kingsley's study could do a much more thorough job of acknowledging the complications that arise when dealing with Ottonian patronage and especially that of Bernward; the reader could easily get the impression that Bernward himself was responsible for painting the illuminations in the book. And perhaps he was (indeed, the inscription on the final folio may be in Bernward's own hand), but Kingsley's study would be stronger if the introduction, for example, explained her vision of the artistic process of organizing and planning the Gospels' iconographic cycle. Some readers may also be, as I was, surprised to find that this book contains only tangential discussions of other major works that shared space in the treasury at Saint Michael's. That is, the Bernward Gospels were (and are) part of a much larger collection of precious objects that are of monumental art historical importance, and, while Kingsley should not be held responsible for not having written a comprehensive analysis of the Bernwardian works in the treasury at Saint Michael's, there would have been room in her introduction or conclusion for a consideration of the ways in which the theological concepts that motivate the book's images are shared by other works in the treasury. To be fair, Kingsley does occasionally acknowledge some of these connections – particularly in cases where we see objects from the treasury pictured in the manuscript - but the rather important fact that the Bernward Gospels were imbricated in a much larger physical whole (the treasury, the abbey church of Saint Michael's, etc.) is something that the author does not discuss. Indeed, this manuscript was created amidst a flurry of artistic and building activity at Hildesheim, and a quick glance at the cycle of illumination in the Gospels makes immediately clear that the ideas that gave meaning to the book seem very

clearly to find expression in works such as the monumental bronze doors and the Column of Christ, to name just two examples. Further, the detailed analyses of the textual sources for the miniatures in the book would have been stronger if Kingsley had integrated a consideration of how the book would have been used and viewed. Ottonian sources are frustratingly tight-lipped about such questions, but a little bit of educated speculation in this regard would have enriched the author's otherwise compelling arguments. In the end, the book concludes as it began with a re-statement of the book's thesis: that the Gospels conditioned the way in which Bernward's memory was preserved at St. Michael's. There can be no debate about the fact that the book functioned in this way, and yet a consideration of what the spiritual and political stakes were for Bernward in commissioning this work would certainly have deepened Kingsley's concluding remarks. That is, the expansion of St. Michael's and its treasury was programmatic, and the Bernward Gospels were a precious part of a much larger whole. 🐉



Book Review: Elizabeth Valdez del Álamo, *Palace of the Mind: The Cloister of Silos and Spanish Sculpture of the Twelfth Century* (Brepols, Turnhout, 2012), 532pgs, 139 plates, 176 images (ISBN# 978-2-503-51711-7).

By Mickey Abel, University of North Texas

Elizabeth Valdez del Álamo's much anticipated study of the cloister at Santo Domingo de Silos is a tour de force in the grand monograph tradition. Large in format at approximately 10 x 12 inches and richly illustrated with over 300 images and plates, one might at first glance confuse it with a "coffee table" edition. The reading of its 400 pages of dense text, coupled with the 20 pages of bibliography, proves otherwise. While it is clear that the writing of this *opus magmas* was a labor of love, years in the making, the vast and thoughtfully organized material contained within its binding reaches far beyond what one might expect of a monograph, seeking, as the title suggests, to contextualize the sculptural production at Silos within the larger landscape of Spain in the twelfth century. Anyone familiar with the historiography of Romanesque architectural sculpture knows how contentious and politically fraught a terrain this is, with volumes written on just the "Spain or Toulouse" issue. Undeterred, however, by the weight of the field's heavy-hitters—the likes of Porter, Mâle, Berenson, Whitehill, Schapiro, Werkmeister, and Williams--each having staked their claims of authority over this well-worn territory, Valdez del Álamo demonstrates quite amply her own credentials in the grand tradition

of stylistic “connoisseurship.” Importantly, however, she takes us deeper than this broad, visually comparative approach to ground her innovative iconographic reading of the sculptural program in an equally impressive knowledge of the supporting texts, to include the ancient sources, those of the early church, as well as those contemporary and local found in the monastery’s own library. Thus building a solid textual foundation, Valdez del Álamo goes about the work of contextualizing the visual and textual readings within both the liturgical practice of the monastery and the greater political and ecclesiastical histories of the region, most significantly the period of reform surrounding the transition from the Old Hispanic rite to that sanctioned by Rome.

What makes this complex historical tapestry comprehensible is Valdez del Álamo’s insightful positioning of the reader within the physical parameters of the architecture. Staging her interpretation of the iconography through the monastic community’s ritual movements, as well as their perceptions of the significant political and ecclesiastical changes occurring around them, she facilitates our “seeing” the sculpture through the eyes of the monks with whom it would have been the most familiar. Proceeding incrementally, she moves the reader in a systematic manner through the cloister and church, developing her analysis chronologically in tandem with the building’s phased production.

Key in this process are del Álamo’s beautifully rich descriptions, which in and of themselves make this book a great teaching tool. Seemingly a lost art, the tonalities and expressive color conveyed in this work is reflective of the many years of patient looking and detailed recording that can only be accomplished on site. Also indicative of this on-site familiarity is the fruitful recognition of the connective sightlines and visual correlations linking various imagery, which serve to multiply the avenues for meaning. Complicit in this

multivalency of meaning is del Álamo's convincing argument that because the patron saint and early abbot, Santo Domingo, was originally buried in the north gallery—today marked with a raised cenotaph-- the cloister was most likely open to lay pilgrims. It is therefore with the addition of this audience that she employs the corner pier reliefs as her iconographic guideposts, illustrating that although there appears to have been no “prescribed lines of perambulation,” the pier reliefs are “thematically related to accommodate a cloister that was passed through in a variety of directions,” by a greater variety of people than generally believed.



Figure 1 Puerta de las Vírgenes. Monasterio de Santo Domingo de Silos.
Photo: Wikimedia Commons

The direction of the guided tour provided by our author begins with the East gallery, moving to the north, past the Chapter Room, toward the “hub” of activity at the much-debated Puerta de las Vírgenes, (**Figure 1**) located under the arm of the church’s north transept at the northeast corner of the cloister. Arguing that the capitals along this alley, with their various animals and knotted interlace, would have reminded the monks of the price one pays for misbehavior, del Álamo suggests that these sculptural images would have signaled the virtues of self-control and discipline, no doubt a hallmark of the lessons reiterated within the chapter meetings. Appropriately, this northward journey brought the monk to the northeast set of pier reliefs depicting The Descent from the Cross, and then The Entombment as one turns the corner. Linking these images to themes of Resurrection and Triumph over Death, del Álamo brings the pilgrim into the picture, noting the correlation between these themes and the pilgrim’s destination--Domingo’s original burial site just to the west on the north gallery. Indicative of the



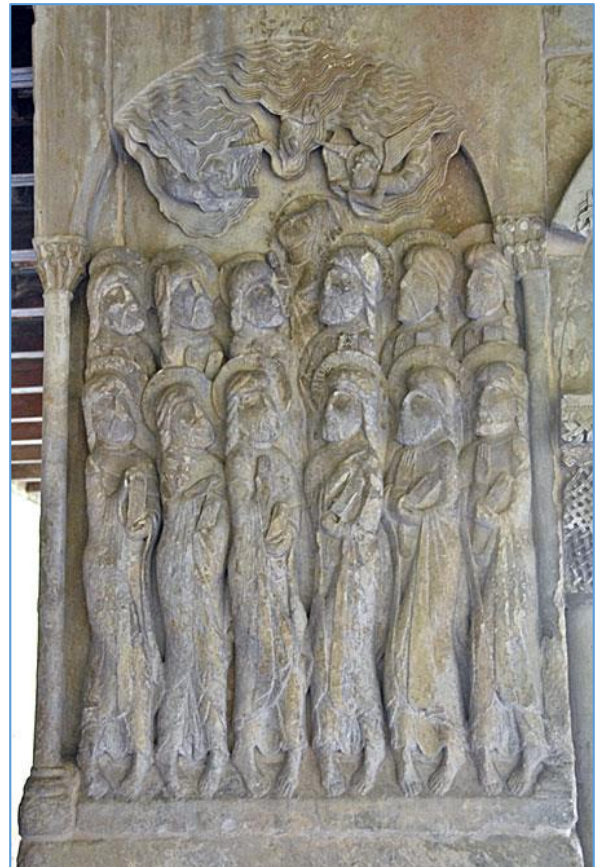
level of detail found throughout the book is her intriguing analysis of the Three Marys in The Entombment relief. (**Figure 2**) She compares this imagery to the description of the liturgical

Figure 2 The Entombment Relief. Monasterio de Santo Domingo de Silos. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

office for Easter found in a Breviary and an Antiphonary, both of which were rubricated for liturgical performance, and both produced at Silos

shortly after the instigation of Reform in 1080. Of particular interest is that this may be one of the earliest performances of the *Quem Quaeritis* dialogue between the angel Gabriel and the Marys, indicating the significance of this ritual in Silo's liturgical calendar, particularly as it relates to the tomb of Domingo. Finding precedent for the sculpted imagery in an illustrated Homiliarium, also produced at the monastery, del Álamo's analysis serves to highlight the rich resources available to the author. If only all monastic libraries were so well preserved!!

Similarly multivalent are the next set of reliefs at the northwest corner pier, where del Álamo stresses the miraculous nature of the confirmation that comes through Christ's return, which she sees in both the Journey to Emmaus and Doubting Thomas imagery. Calling these episodes "Appearances," she shows them to be representative of the dialogues on faith and



spiritual pilgrimage that characterized the monastic enterprise at Silos, and suggests that they introduce a sequence of sculpted capitals that stress the Apostles' sensory experience of Christ after resurrection. This series culminates in the southeast corner reliefs, which depict the Pentecost (**Figure 3**) and Ascension. Summarizing the monastic point of view, del Álamo sees this track as embodying "the promise of resurrection by means of contact with the sacred...and an emphasis on communal, apostolic

Figure 3 Pentecost Relief. Monasterio de Santo Domingo de Silos. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

experience,” where the “various elements operate to transform the entire cloister into a symbolic Jerusalem.”

What is missing in this tour is, of course, the pier reliefs of the southwest corner, which fall into a slightly later building phase, and a wholly different sculptural style. In this second atelier we are to understand a purposeful, post-reform joining of the old with the new. Bucking the long-held notion that these later sculptures represented a resistance to the new Roman rite, del Álamo makes the case that the imagery of these reliefs—the Annunciation-Coronation and the Tree of Jesse with its explicit Trinitarian depiction--were meant to signal a harmonious unity. Her treatment of these two topics is complex and richly documented—it is undoubtedly where del Álamo is at her best. Sadly, one fears that few will tread deep enough into the book to find these gems of analysis. While some of it has been previously published in article form, the benefit of reading this work in conjunction with the analysis of the other cloister reliefs is the sense of how it worked as whole. Bringing it all together, del Álamo states that “rather than being ordered in a linear narrative...the Christological reliefs have a reciprocal relationship with their locations....so that ritual and daily actions taking place there are magnified by a corresponding visual reference to God.”

While I have covered only the highlights, leaving much to be discovered, the book's final chapter seeks to place Silos and its sculptural program chronologically and stylistically in relation to other Spanish Romanesque sites. After the exquisite climax of the contextualized iconography of the previous chapters, this feels like a reversion to a previous era of art-historical scholarship. Almost as if our author cannot resist showing-up the old authorities at their own game, this seems like connoisseurship at its best, and unfortunately feels like an unnecessary

appendage begging the next scholar to come along and reshuffle the chronological deck. Despite this minor setback, the reading of Elizabeth Valdez del Álamo's weighty *Palace of the Mind* is as a cloister might be described--that is, a place fit for contemplation and mental digestion.

There is much here to be consumed with great pleasure. 🍷