Reassessing the Roles of Women as 'Makers' of Medieval Art and Architecture

Volume One

Edited by

Therese Martin

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

WOMEN IN THE MAKING: EARLY MEDIEVAL SIGNATURES AND ARTISTS' PORTRAITS (9TH–12TH C.)[1]

Pierre Alain Mariaux

The role of women as patrons of culture during the Middle Ages is recognized and valued without any doubt, to the extent that we are able to distinguish women as "arbiters of medieval culture."[2] Like their male counterparts, women who sponsored or commissioned works of art identified and represented themselves in clearly-defined and conventional ways. Could the same be said of women artists, especially before the twelfth century?

Aside from textual evidence, most of what we know about medieval artists, whether they were male or female, is based on the inventory and analysis of signed works and "self-portraits." My purpose is to study some of these portraits and signatures, i.e. visual and textual self-presentations, in order to suggest ways for analyzing works that we know were "made" by women. To undertake such an analysis is to transverse the fields of lexicography, art history, history, and theology. Signatures give ambiguous information about the authorship of the work of art, since the artist, the designer, the contractor, and the patron all were engaged in the process of "making," and thus all may rightly be characterized as the creators of the work. A key part of my study, therefore, is to look closely at the implications of the verb *facere* (to make) when it was used to describe art production.

Women are named most consistently as makers of books and textiles, so it is in these genres that we can best explore women's roles in producing art. But even in those arts most associated with women, the ways in which women artists sign or represent themselves pose a significant

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[1] I dedicate this essay to Therese Martin, whose patience and learning has greatly contributed to what it has become since the 2010 conference in Madrid. Translation by Elaine Beretz.

[2] Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Women as Artists in the Middle Ages: 'The Dark is Light Enough'," in *Dictionary of Women Artists*, ed. Delia Gaze (Chicago, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 3–21.

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problem. From the eleventh century on, the creative gesture was considered a performative one, which was copied from the (sacerdotal) gesture of benediction. This is seen most clearly when the medieval artist represents him- or herself in the act of making, where he/she most frequently stages him-/herself in the act of putting the finishing touches on the work. Two portraits, even "self-portraits," of artists at work provide good examples of this: that of the illuminator Rufillus of Weissenau found in a Passionary from the end of the twelfth century (Fig. 1);[3] and that of the noble (*clarus*) Gerlachus (Fig. 2), a glass painter, who beseeches for himself the benevolence of the King of Kings on a stained glass window of Moses and the Burning Bush from Arnstein an der Lahn Abbey.[4] Sometimes it was even understood, or so it would appear, as analogous in function to the act of transubstantiation, the creation of the body of Christ at the altar.[5] Yet women were excluded from the priesthood, and this very fact should disqualify them (except for the Virgin) from acting as teachers or as mediators of the spiritual, such as their male counterparts did.[6] How then are the signatures and portraits of women artists to be understood within the larger dynamic of artistic gestures as sacerdotal ones?

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[3] Solange Michon, "Un moine enluminateur du XII^{e} siècle: Frère Rufillus de Weissenau," *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte*, 44/1 (1987), pp. 1–7; Walter Berschin, "Rufillus von Weißenau (um 1200) in seiner Buchmalerwerkstatt," in *Mittelateinische Studien II*, ed. Werner Berschin (Heidelberg, 2010), pp. 353–56.

[4] For Gerlachus, see Francesca Dell'Acqua, "Gerlachus: l'arte della vetrata," in *Artifex bonus. Il mondo dell'artista medievale*, ed. Enrico Castelnuovo (Bari, 2004), pp. 56–63.

[5] See my "The Bishop as Artist? The Eucharist and Image Theory around the Millennium," in *Genus regale et sacerdotale: The Image of the Bishop around the Millennium*, ed. Sean J. Gilsdorf (Münster, 2004), pp. 155–67, and "'Faire Dieu?' Quelques réflexions sur les relations entre confection eucharistique et création d'image, IX^{e}–XII^{e} siècles," in *Die Aesthetik des Unsichtbaren*, ed. Thomas Lentes (Berlin, 2004), pp. 94–111.

[6] Although she may bless: see Jean Wirth and Isabelle Jeger, "La femme qui bénit," in *Femmes, art et religion au Moyen Âge*, ed. Jean-Claude Schmitt (Strasbourg, 2004), pp. 157–79.

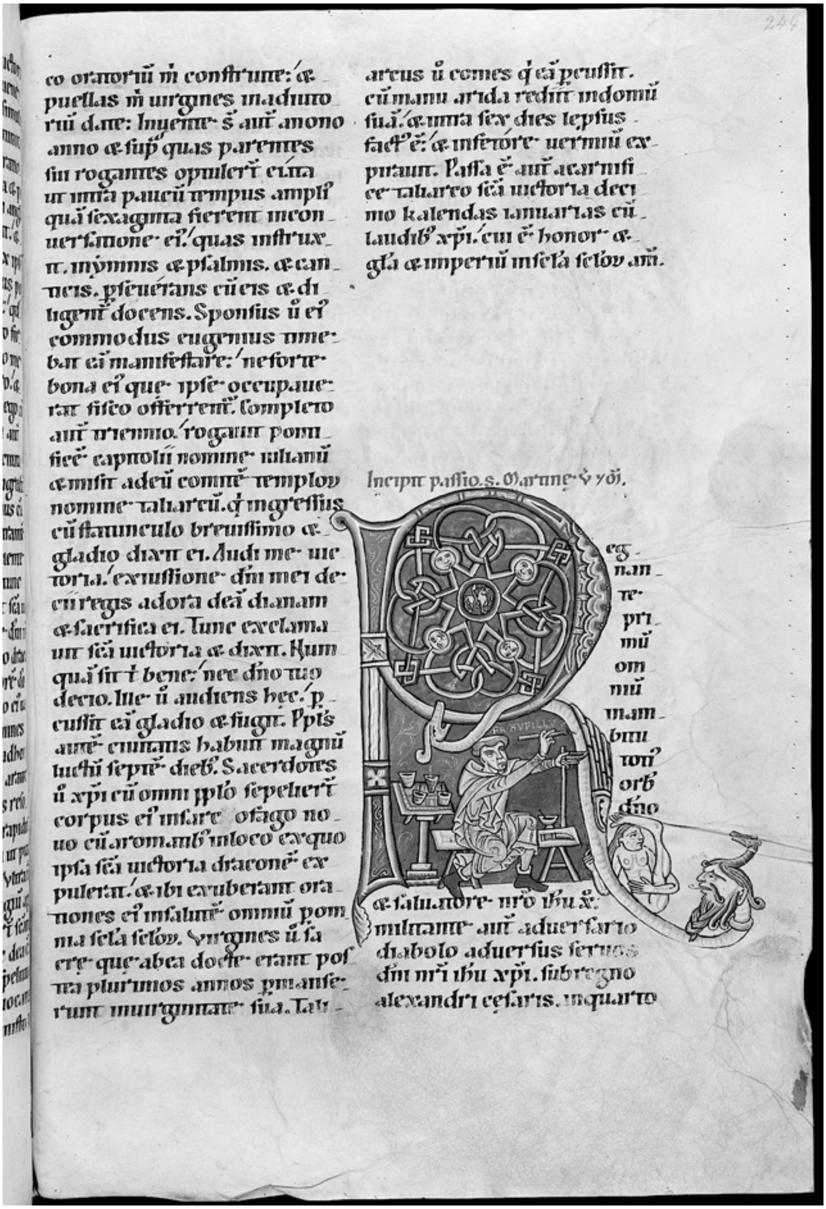
Incipit passio s. Marine v[irginis]
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Figure 1 Self-portrait of Rufillus, Weissenau Passionary, Weissenau, ca. 1200. Cologny (Geneva), Fondation Martin Bodmer, Codex Bodmer 127, fol. 244r (Photo: Fondation Martin Bodmer, Cologny).

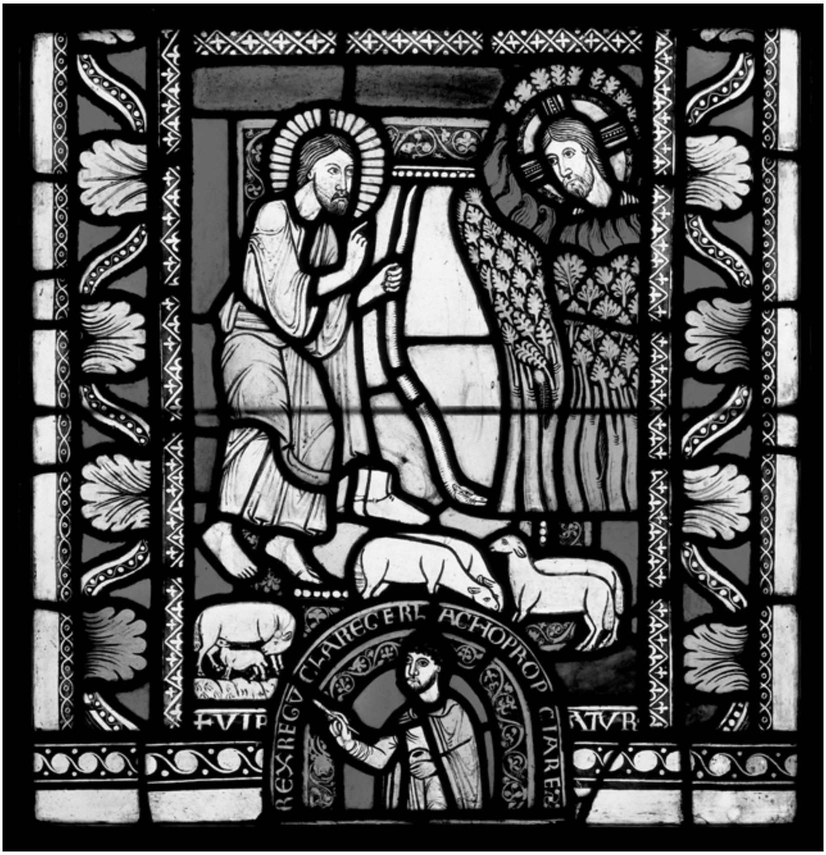
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Figure 2 Detail, stained-glass window depicting Gerlachus, from Arnstein an der Lahn Abbey, ca. 1150–1160. Münster, LWL-Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte (Photo: LWL-Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Münster, Westfälisches Landesmuseum).

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Earlier studies by Peter Cornelius Claussen,[7] Albert Dietl,[8] Anton Legner,[9] Enrico Castelnuovo,[10] and Piotr Skubiszewski,[11] among others, have brought about a gradual change in our conception of the medieval artist. This work has called into question the image Virginia Egbert or Andrew Martindale (to name but two) once gave of a subordinate craftsman, limited by the mechanical dimension of his work merely to executing the orders of his patron.[12] Most recent studies show in particular that signatures were more frequent than had been suspected earlier.

Evidence for women artists prior to the twelfth century is scanty and thus is hard to evaluate. As mentioned above, women are most consistently named as makers of books and textiles, and their association with textiles, especially with needlework, is attested from the beginning of the Middle Ages. The Anglo-Saxon sources are particularly rich in this regard, naming many women of various social levels who were expert in the textile arts, in all likelihood as designers and as makers.[13] But even here, there remain many difficulties in distinguishing patronage from an active role in the production of the works. Queens, abbesses, prioresses, women of noble lineage who were not necessarily nuns, all are credited with the creation of embroideries in gold and precious gems, or of large wall coverings. But a deeper insight into the nature of this creative activity is limited, since extant examples of their work are so scarce.

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[7] Peter Cornelius Claussen, "Früher Künstlerstolz. Mittelalterliche Signaturen als Quelle der Kunstsoziologie," in *Bauwerk und Bildwerk im Hochmittelalter: anschauliche Beiträge zur Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte*, eds. Karl Clausberg, Dieter Kimpel, et al. (Giessen, 1981), pp. 7–34; Peter Cornelius Claussen, "Nachrichten von den Antipoden oder der mittelalterliche Künstler über sich selbst," in *Der Künstler über sich und in seinem Werk*, ed. Matthias Winner (Weinheim, 1992), pp. 19–54.

[8] Albert Dietl, *Die Sprache der Signatur: die mittelalterlichen Künstlerinschriften Italiens*, 4 vols. (Berlin, 2009). On signatures, see also Tobias Burg, *Die Signatur: Formen und Funktionen vom Mittelalter bis zum 17. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 2007).

[9] Anton Legner, *Der Artifex: Künstler im Mittelalter und ihre Selbstdarstellung: eine illustrierte Anthologie* (Cologne, 2009); Anton Legner, "Illustres manus," in *Ornamenta Ecclesiae. Kunst und Künstler der Romanik*, ed. Anton Legner (Cologne, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 187–230.

[10] Enrico Castelnuovo, "L'artiste," in *L'homme médiéval*, ed. Jacques Le Goff (Paris, 1989), pp. 233–66; Enrico Castelnuovo, *Artifex bonus. Il mondo dell'artista medievale* (Bari, 2004).

[11] Piotr Skubiszewski, "L'intellectuel et l'artiste à l'époque romane," in *Le Travail au Moyen Âge. Une approche interdisciplinaire*, eds. Jacqueline Hamesse and Colette Muraille-Samaran (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1990), pp. 263–313.

[12] Virginia W. Egbert, *The Mediaeval Artist at Work* (Princeton, 1967); Andrew Martindale, *The Rise of the Artist in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (London, 1972).

[13] See, for example, the many studies by Gale Owen-Crocker, including *Medieval Textiles of the British Isles c. 450–1100: An Annotated Bibliography* (Oxford, 2007).

As an instructive exception, let us turn to the so-called battle flag of Gerberga (Fig. 3), dating from ca. 960 and now preserved in the treasury of Cologne Cathedral.[14] Figures of a victorious Christ, archangels, and saints are embroidered in gold and colored thread on a piece of silk. A prostrate figure, labeled RAGENARDUS COMES (Count Ragenardus), is

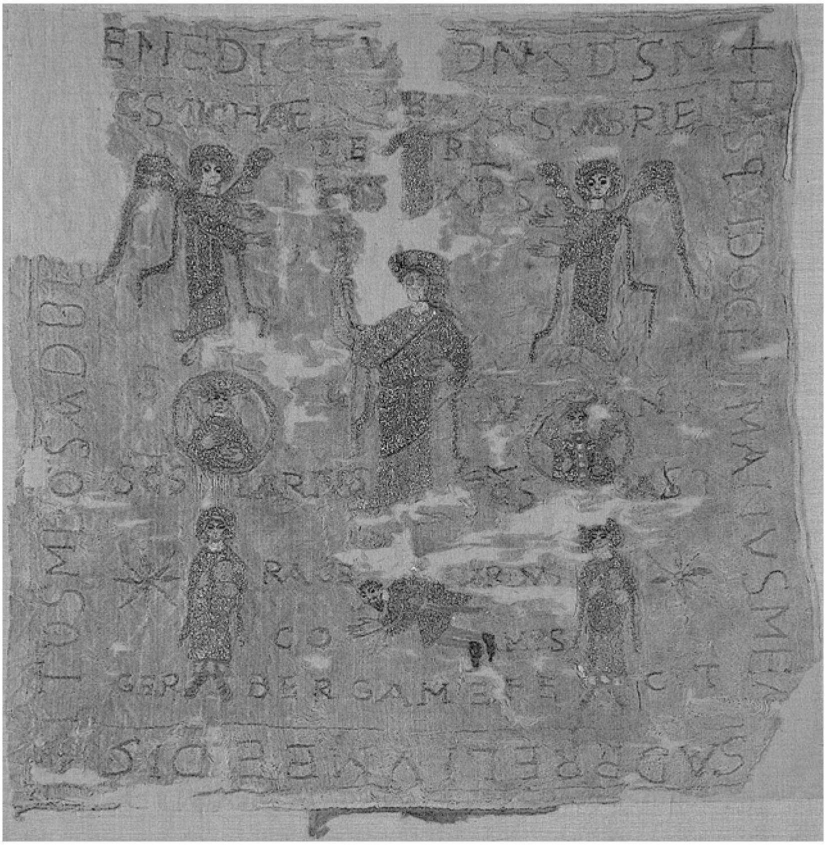

Figure 3 Gerberga's battle flag, ca. 960. Cologne, Domschatzkammer (Photo: Dombauarchiv Köln, Matz und Schenk).

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[14] Leonie Becks and Rolf Lauer, *Die Schatzkammer des Kölner Domes* (Cologne, 2000), p. 96; *Krone und Schleier. Kunst aus mittelalterlichen Frauenklöstern* (Munich, 2005), cat. no. 176, p. 292; Elizabeth Coatsworth, "Text and Textile," in *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, eds. Alastair Minnis and Jane Roberts (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 187–207. For Gerberga's involvement with palatine architecture, see in the present volume Annie Renoux, "Elite Women, Palaces, and Castles in Northern France (ca. 850–1100)."

paying homage to the heavenly figures. Beneath Ragenardus is inscribed: GERBERGA ME FECIT (Gerberga made me). The Gerberga (ca. 913–968) in question was a sister of Emperor Otto the Great (d. 973) and Archbishop Bruno of Cologne (d. 965). It is likely that this flag celebrated Gerberga's victory over her nephew, Count Reginar III, in a dispute over possessions in the duchy of Lotharingia. Reginar was banished by Otto in 958. The flag probably was given to Gerberga's (and Otto's) brother Bruno of Cologne, who himself was also duke of Lotharingia. Upon Bruno's death, the flag became part of the cathedral treasury, since it was used to wrap the relics of St. Gregory of Spoleto, which were kept within the Shrine of the Three Kings.

The battle flag of Gerberga makes clear that women were extensively involved in the creation of fine textiles and that they not only mastered the craft but that they also were credited with creative authority over it. One way of verifying the hypothesis is to compare the Gerberga flag, and other of the rare examples we have from the period under consideration, with what we know about medieval artists in general. To do so, I begin with a careful re-appraisal of "Claricia," whose representation in a twelfth-century psalter is generally taken to be a self-portrait. As such, hers is the key figure one finds in every study devoted to medieval women artists; the image thus merits a detailed examination in context.

Claricia

Since the 1970s, such pioneering scholars as Dorothy E. Miner looked for evidence of women artists and concentrated their attention mostly on images.[15] In the early days, this search resembled more of a quest for

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[15] See her seminal *Anastaise and Her Sisters: Women Artists of the Middle Ages* (Baltimore, 1974). The 1970s were very prolific, if uneven, for work on women artists: Thomas B. Hess and Elizabeth C. Baker, eds., *Art and Sexual Politics: Women's Liberation, Women Artists, and Art History* (New York, 1973); Eleanor Tufts, *Our Hidden Heritage: Five Centuries of Women Artists* (New York, 1974); Hugo Munsterberg, *A History of Women Artists* (New York, 1975); Karen Petersen and J.J. Wilson, *Women Artists: Recognition and Reappraisal from the Early Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1976); Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Women Artists in the Middle Ages," *Feminist Art Journal*, 5 (1976), pp. 5–9 and 26; Donna Bachmann and Sherry Piland, *Women Artists: A Historical, Contemporary and Feminist Bibliography* (Methuven, 1978); Elsa Honig Fine, *Women and Art: A History of Women Painters and Sculptors from the Renaissance to the 20th Century* (London, 1978). Reprints of pioneering studies were also issued at that time: Clara Erskine Clement, *Women in the Fine Arts: From the 7th Century BC to the 20th Century AD* (Boston, 1904, rprt. New York, 1974); and Walter Shaw Sparrow, *Women Painters of the World, From the Time of Caterina*

heroines than for artists, and they gathered their evidence in order to fill the gaps in a long genealogy before the Renaissance. The case of Claricia, the presumed creator of the so-called "Claricia Psalter" in the Walters Art Museum (Fig. 4; Color Plate 14), was evoked both by Dorothy E. Miner and for the great 1976 exhibition on "Women Artists, 1550–1950" as an ancestor of all women artists.[16] Claricia's status has not been questioned since.

According to this theory, Claricia was believed to have been a lay woman active in a convent scriptorium in Augsburg during the late twelfth century. On folio 64r of the Psalter, she portrays herself swinging from her own letter, her body providing the tail for the Q[uid], and her name making a kind of halo above her head. Is this "charming portrait," as Germain Greer has called it,[17] really the portrait of an artist? Let us look at the details: she lies down; she holds tightly to the body of the Q; and she dreamily (or wistfully as Christiane Klapisch-Zuber termed it)[18] raises her eyes. She is definitely not a nun: her long, blond hair is braided and she wears a dress with flowing sleeves that does not look like a monastic gown. Even so, does any of this make her the illuminator of the manuscript? Clothing style and uncovered hair point instead to a "femme de mauvaise vie," a woman who may be a certain "Claricia (brilliant one)" the scribe had in mind.[19] The Q she holds with her out-stretched arms opens Psalm 51, which is a decisive condemnation of vanity. Here the Psalmist criticizes those who use their talents for evil: "Why (Quid) do you glory in spite, you who are powerful in injustice? All day long you ponder injustice. You have done deceit with your tongue as a sharp razor. You have chosen to speak malice over kindness; injustice rather than justice."[20]

Vigni, 1413–1463, to Rosa Bonheur and the Present Day (London, 1905, rprt. New York, 1976). See also Chris Petteys, *Dictionary of Women Artists: An International Dictionary of Women Artists Born before 1900* (Boston, 1985); Nancy G. Heller, *Women Artists: An Illustrated History* (New York, 1987). To my knowledge, Elizabeth F. Ellet's *Women Artists of All Ages and Countries*, first published in 1859, has never been reprinted; see Sandra L. Langer's review in the *Woman's Art Journal*, 1/2 (1980), pp. 55–58.

[16] Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin, *Women Artists, 1550–1950* (New York, 1976).

[17] Germaine Greer, *The Obstacle Race: The Fortunes of Women Painters and Their Work* (New York, 1979).

[18] Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, "Guda et Claricia: deux 'autoportraits' féminins du XII^{e} siècle," *Clio*, 19 (2004), pp. 159–63.

[19] Jonathan J.G. Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work* (New Haven, 1992), pp. 19–20.

[20] "Quid gloriatur in malitia qui potens est iniquitate tota die iniustitiam cogitavit lingua tua sicut novacula acuta fecisti dolum dilexisti malitiam super benignitatem iniquitatem magis quam loqui aequitatem [...]."

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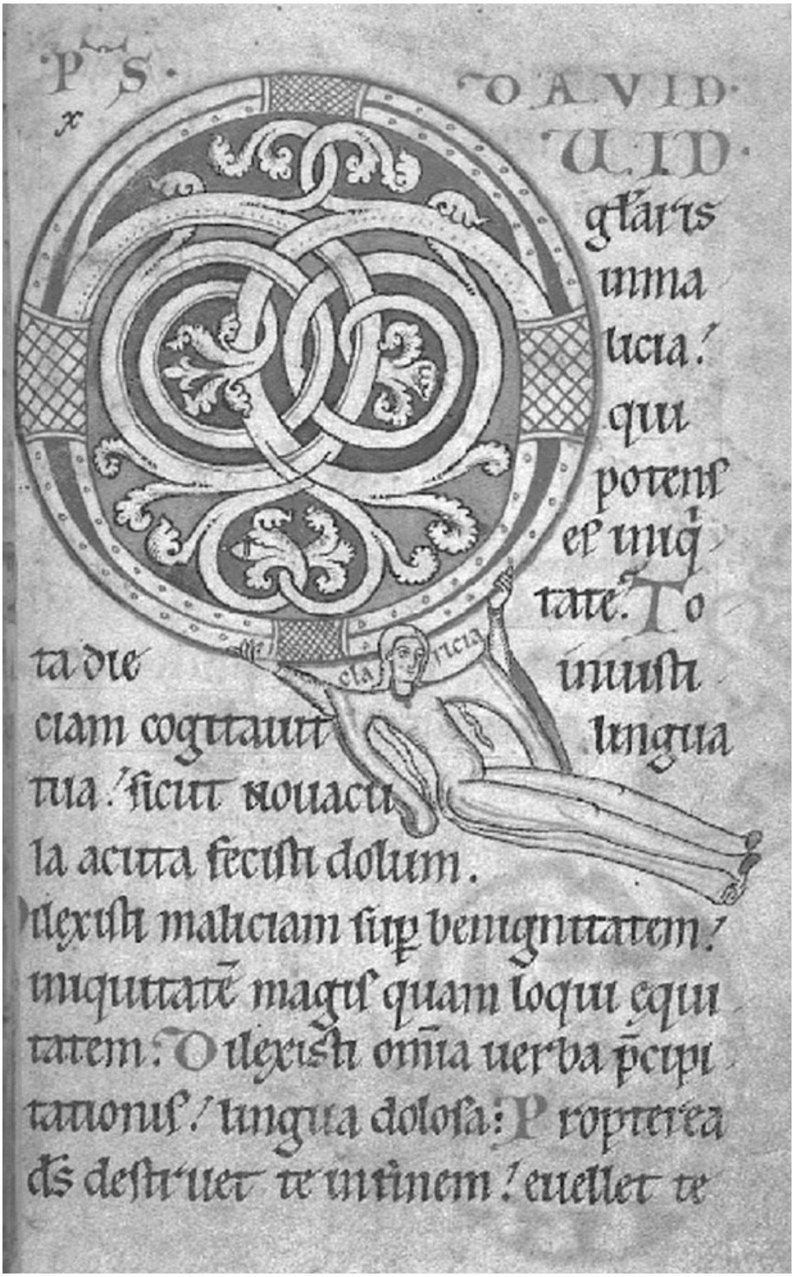

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Figure 4 Claricia, *Claricia Psalter*, Augsburg(?), late 12th c. Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum, Dept. of Rare Books and Manuscripts, MS W26, fol. 64r (Photo: The Walters Art Museum). See color plate 14.

Lacking a clear attribute, the image does not allow us to determine the role of Claricia. Is she the illuminator? Is she a negative *exemplum* of vanity? Here, only the context can inform us of the meaning of this representation. In the case of the Claricia Psalter, the contextualization must work in two directions: internally, within the network of decoration and ornament throughout the manuscript itself; and externally, by placing the image of Claricia within a series of similar images.

In the first instance,[21] an attentive analysis of the Psalter itself allows us to gain an impression, or so it seems to me, of a systematic program. The manuscript opens with a calendar (fols. 1v–7r), where the text unfolds in two columns surmounted by a two-bayed arcature, the tympana of which are decorated with a Zodiac cycle. Four full-page miniatures follow: the Annunciation (fol. 7v); the Nativity (fol. 8r); the Virgin and Child enthroned (fol. 8v); and a double full-length portrait of the Apostles Peter and Paul (fol. 9r). On folio 10, a later hand painted a scene of the Baptism of Christ. The Psalter proper begins at folio 11, signaled by the initial B[eatus]. This is one of four large foliated initials in the manuscript: the others are the Q[uid] at Psalm 51 (fol. 64r); the D[ixit insipientis] at Psalm 52 (fol. 64v); and the D[omine] at Psalm 101 (fol. 115v). Note that three of these initials mark out the tri-partite division of the Psalter. Four additional illuminations liven up the reading of the Psalms: another image of the Virgin and Child enthroned at the end of Psalm 50 (fol. 63v); St. Nicholas enthroned at the end of Psalm 100 (fol. 115r); St. Michael striking down the dragon (fol. 131r). At folio 131v, we find full-length portraits of a holy bishop and a virgin, probably Ulrich and Afra, in an architectural framework.

Since the images emphasize the major divisions of the Psalter, it is difficult on that basis alone to assert that the decoration of the Psalter follows a specific iconographic program. But the two-page spread on which Claricia appears (Fig. 5) reinforces the impression that she ought to be interpreted in a negative sense. The young woman occupies the page opposite the Virgin and Child, to whom she pointedly turns her back. This signals a disrespectful attitude, to say the least.[22] Even more, this representation

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[21] I will return to the iconographic program of the Claricia Psalter and give a complete analysis in my contribution to the Mélanges Jean Wirth, to appear in 2012. I am most grateful to Dr. William Noel, Curator of Manuscripts and Rare Books at the Walters Art Museum, from whom I gained permission to use the images of the Psalter. I thank equally Lynley Anne Herbert and Nathania Girardin for their very valuable help; both have greatly facilitated my work.

[22] On the necessity of considering the double page when dealing with books, see Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *Ouvertures. La double page dans les manuscrits enluminés du Moyen Âge* (Dijon, 2010).

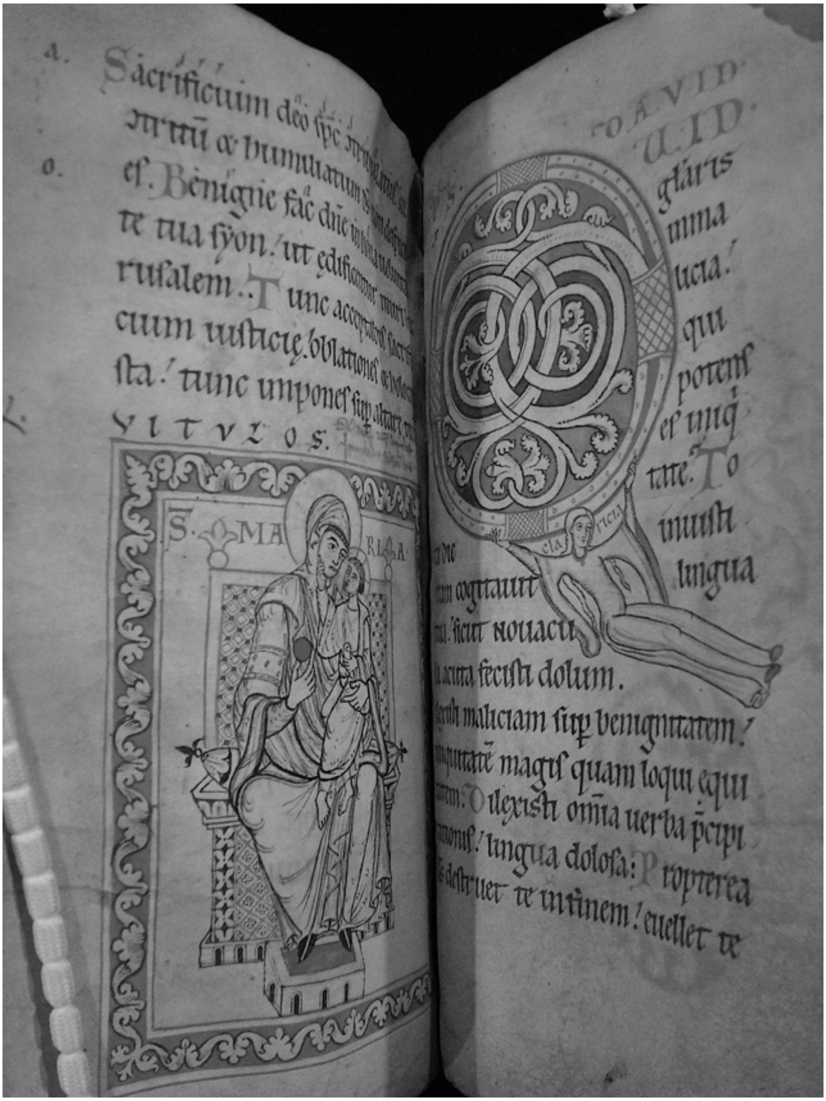

Figure 5 Claricia and the Virgin, *Claricia Psalter*, Augsburg(?), late 12th c. Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum, Dept. of Rare Books and Manuscripts, MS W26, fols. 63v–64r (Photo: The Walters Art Museum).

of Christ Incarnate and his mother as mediatrix closes Psalm 50 (Fig. 6), in the course of which David recognizes that he had sinned with Bethsheba and begs divine mercy for himself. More particularly, the prophet exhorts "O God, open my lips and my mouth will proclaim your praises (Psalm 50:17),"[23] in a petition that contrasts radically with the condemnation of Claricia, who has "chosen to speak malice over kindness." Lastly, an additional detail reinforces this interpretation: the Psalter presents a second female figure in a historiated initial (Fig. 7; Color Plate 15). The initial (fol. 115v) signals the last major division of the Psalter, marking the beginning of Psalm 101, the fifth of the seven penitential Psalms. A field, bi-colored in green and sky-blue, covers the whole surface of the letter. Against that field, the figure of a nun is captured in a position close to proskynesis. Indeed, in contrast to Claricia, she does not grasp the edge of the initial but occupies its center, as if she has been merged totally in the body of the heavenly Dominus. In this case, the visual strategy employed places the figure entirely within the body of the initial. The fact that she is not named allows us to understand that the representation here is one of status or function, not of an individual. These two images thus make visible to an exaggerated degree the two opposing moral characters for women that are based on speech: the speech of the nun is a cry that climbs up to God (Psalm 101:1); that of Claricia consists of words that kill, offered from a wicked tongue (Psalm 51:6).

This interpretation is further reinforced if we analyze a series of images outside the Claricia Psalter. In the case of Claricia, it has been believed that she appears in her own creation, supporting the initial according to the *topos* of humility. The placement of the name, as the placement of the image—under the gaze of God or even in close proximity to Him—has the effect of enrolling the author in the spiritual plane, as it is understood in prayer and in mystical vision.[24] In this way, the author (or the artist)

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[23] "Domine labia mea aperies et os meum adnuntiabit laudem tuam."

[24] Jean-Claude Schmitt, "La mort, les morts et le portrait," in *Le portrait individuel: réflexions autour d'une forme de représentation, XIII^{e}–XV^{e} siècles*, ed. Dominic Olariu (Bern, 2009), pp. 15–33, esp. 23: "Ces images de 'présentation de soi' sont nombreuses au Moyen Âge à témoigner en même temps de la volonté d'instaurer une identité et de faire valoir ses mérites en vue du Salut et du Jugement. Toujours le cadre conceptuel de ces images, où les finalités sociales éventuelles sont inséparables des finalités eschatologiques, dépasse la simple personne. Ce cadre conceptuel est habité d'une profonde tension, qui d'un côté tend à refuser toute considération à la singularité charnelle, accidentelle, de l'individu, mais qui d'un autre côté, le pousse aussi, bien qu'il vive dans l'imperfection de la chair et dans le péché, à s'adresser à la divinité, à lui offrir son 'labeur,' à lui rendre un voeu, à lui consacrer son visage ou son image […]."

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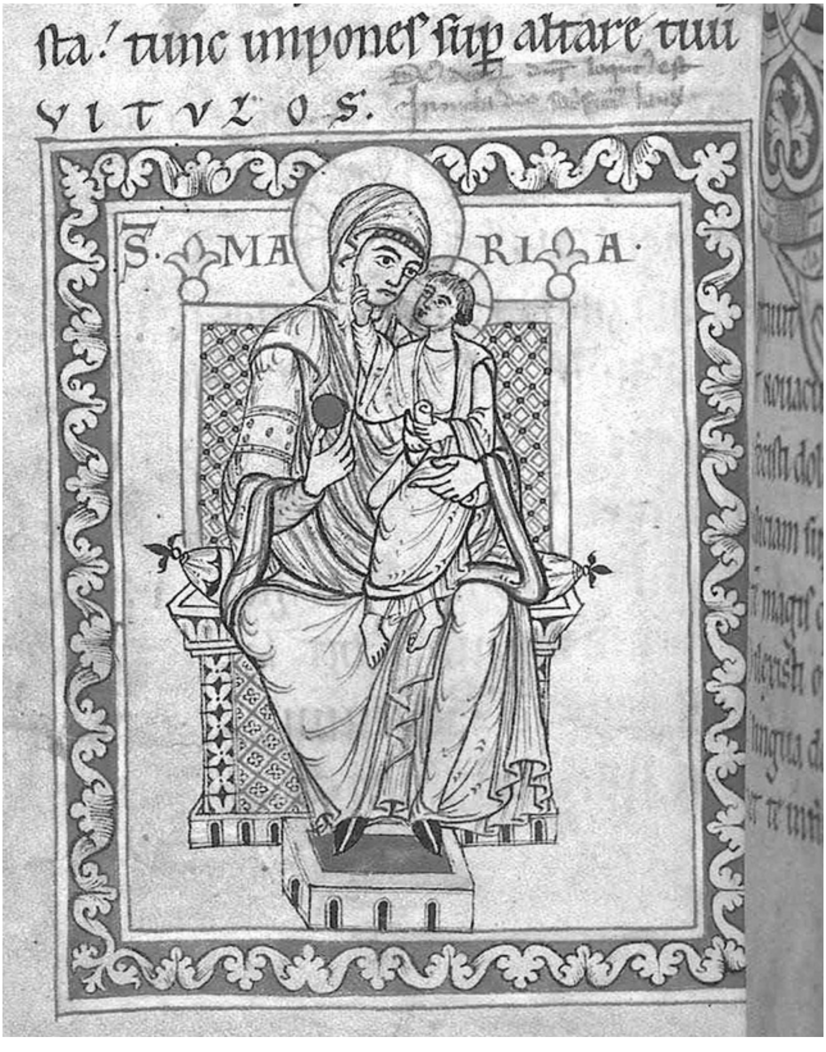
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S. MARIA.

Figure 6 Virgin and Child, *Claricia Psalter*, Augsburg(?), late 12th c. Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum, Dept. of Rare Books and Manuscripts, MS W26, fol. 63v (Photo: The Walters Art Museum).

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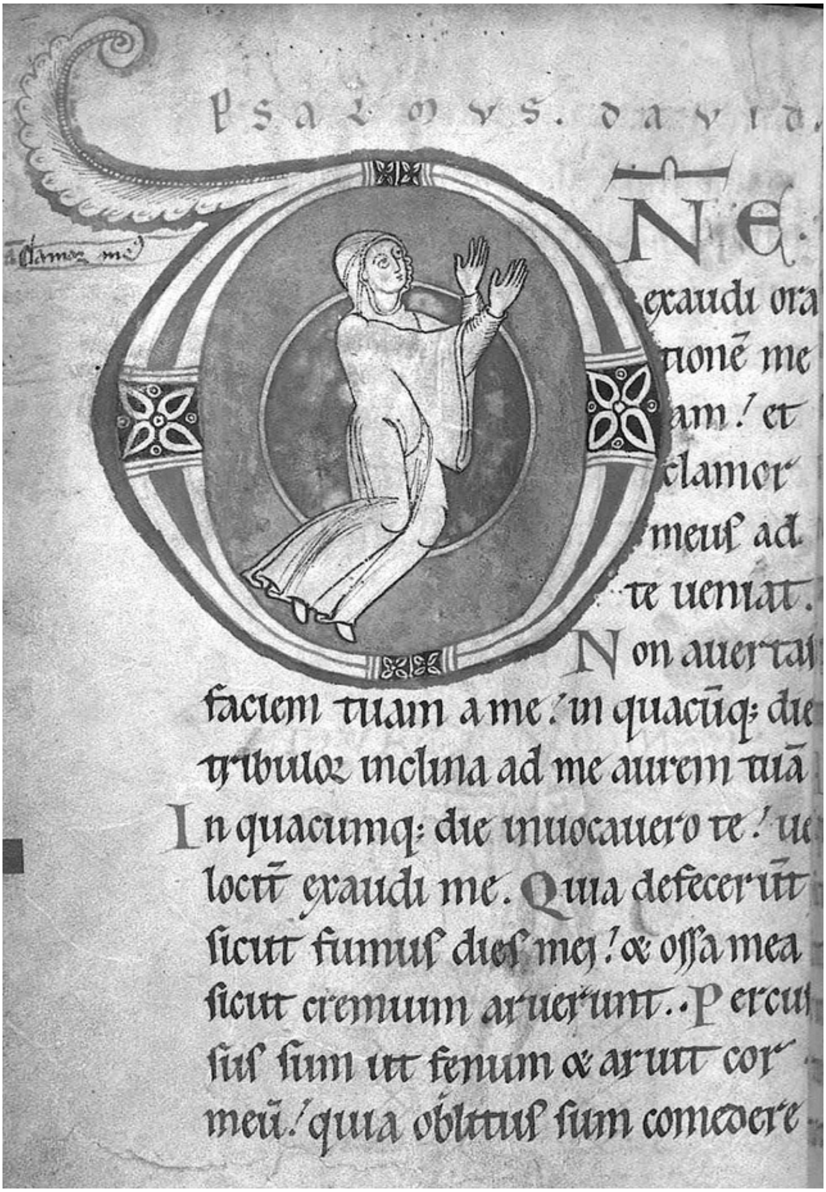

Psalmus. david.

DNE.
exaudi ora
tione͞ me
am! et
clamor
meuſ ad
te ueniat.
Non auertaſ
faciem tuam a me! in quacu͞q; die
tribulor inclina ad me aurem tuā
In quacumq; die inuocauero te! ue
locit͞ exaudi me. Quia defecerunt
ſicut fumuſ dieſ mei! & oſſa mea
ſicut cremium aruerunt.. Percuſ
ſuſ ſum ut fenum & aruit cor
meū! quia oblituſ ſum comedere

clamor me

Figure 7 Nun, *Claricia Psalter*, Augsburg(?), late 12th c. Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum, Dept. of Rare Books and Manuscripts, MS W26, fol. 115v (Photo: The Walters Art Museum). See color plate 15.

enters into the ensemble of symbolic players, in this case of mediators, and within that framework achieves recognition.

In that case, it would be possible to compare the position of Claricia with that of Engilbertus (Fig. 8), a layman who presents himself as the *pictor et scriptor* (painter and scribe) of a homilary produced at Springiersbach in ca. 1160–1170.[25] The figure of Engilbertus also forms the tail of the letter Q[uod], and he prostrates himself before an image of the Risen Christ. Clearly identified through his name and his position, Engilbertus had the power to prostrate himself: that mark of devotion places him in the visual field of Christ. We cannot say as much for Claricia, who presents herself as a caryatid and whose gaze shrinks away from the Virgin. The examples of Engilbertus and Claricia show the pressing need to consider images in context. In addition, it allows us to look into the basis of medieval identity and thus to investigate the question of the author.

In the Middle Ages, a social identity substitutes itself for an individual identity, where a medieval *identitas* designates conformity to a group, not a uniqueness. The multiplication of "portraits" and of signatures grafts itself onto a general tendency to identify with, and belong to, a group. In this regard, men and women artists participate in the same "systems of visibility" through name and image. Markers of individuality—such as a name, a signature, a portrait (or even a self-portrait), coats of arms, seals—signal uniqueness, as they could also signify deviance. In effect, the marker raises the issue of a subject, an author. It is in that context that it is necessary to re-situate the greater visibility, by signature and inscription, of medieval artists from the second half of the eleventh century on. But where we might have a hope of recognizing the affirmation of a creative individual by means of these markers, the Middle Ages presents instead membership in a group and designates the individual as a member of that group. The spread of modern conventions of naming in two elements—a given name followed by a surname—in the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as also the appearance and diffusion of coats of arms during the twelfth century throughout Western society, results from a taxonomic practice designed more to situate than to identify the individual.[26]

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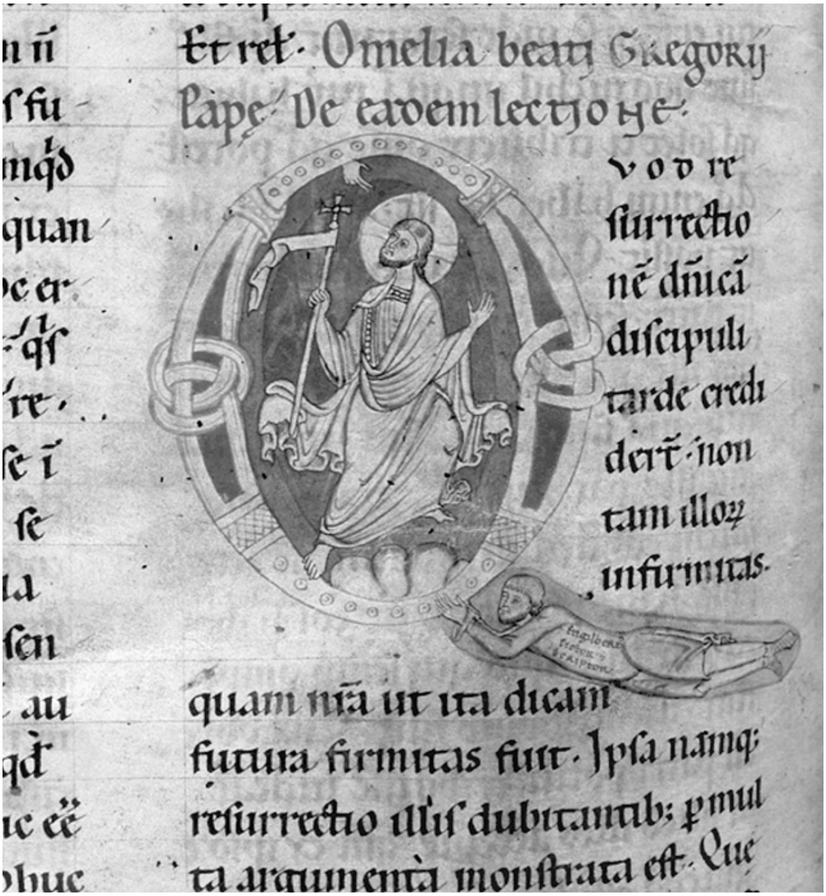
[25] F.J. Ronig, ed., *Schatzkunst Trier. Kunst und Kultur in der Diözese Trier* (Trier, 1984), cat. no. 63.

[26] Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak and Dominique Iogna-Prat, eds., *L'individu au Moyen Âge: individuation et individualisation avant la modernité* (Paris, 2005). On seals, see Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak, "Women, Seals, and Power in Medieval France, 1150–1350," in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, eds. Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Athens,



Et ret. Omelia beati Gregorii
Pape. De eadem lectione.
Quod re-
surrectio-
nē dn̄ica
discipuli
tarde credi-
derūt· non
tam illoꝝ
infirmitas
quam nr̄a ut ita dicam
futura firmitas fuit. Ipsa namq;
resurrectio illi' dubitantib; ꝑ mul-
ta argumenta monstrata est. Que

Figure 8 Self-portrait of Engilbertus, Homilary, Springiersbach, ca. 1160–1170. Trier, Stadtbibliothek, Hs. 261–1140 2°, fol. 153v (Photo: Anja Runkel, Stadtbibliothek/Stadtarchiv Trier).

Each individual in effect is placed into a group and this group into a larger whole: the markers of individuation, which we also find in clothing, had no other function than to anchor the individual in his/her group. Artists—painters, illuminators, sculptors, goldsmiths, etc.—were not an exception to this rule, at any rate not in the period we are considering.

GA, 1988), pp. 85–97, "Medieval Identity: A Sign and a Concept," *The American Historical Review*, 105/5 (2000), pp. 1489–533, and *When Ego Was Imago. Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2010).

It is significant to point out that once we might have interpreted the portrait or self-portrait as one of the indices of the emergence of the individual during the Romanesque period.[27] Now the portrait or self-portrait ought to be analyzed by taking into account a context that allows the production of a "portrait effect." Indeed, there are some images which represent a person and even designate him/her by name. Still, it is not a portrait in the sense that we understand it today. The idea that a portrait is intended to convey the particular physical appearance of an individual and to render him/her recognizable, in the manner of the Roman bust, disappeared at the end of antiquity. It re-emerged only during the last quarter of the thirteenth century in a funerary context, within which the evolution of issues of commemoration as well as the question of the body were decisive.[28] Indeed, physiognomic characteristics are not the criteria for identifying the individual. The portrait would be all the more a likeness as it would be all the more admirable, because the *similitudo* (resemblance) is founded in the relation that the creature maintains with the Creator. The medieval portrait is related to a promotional image or an image of display. If the portrait is a self-portrait, it would have to be a "presentation of self" which remains iconographically anonymous. In the case of Claricia, her mere naming thus does not suffice; no iconographical attribute authorizes us to also speak of her as an illuminator. Obviously, we must set aside the idea that Claricia was the artist.

Just Names, or Signatures?

The inscription, as Robert Favreau has said,[29] has as its function the conveying of information to a general public over a very long period of time. It assures communication with a view to a universal and lasting advertisement. Through that advertisement, and to the extent that it is well situated, one could achieve in that way a perpetual memorial. If we trace inscriptions celebrating patrons, we can distinguish two approaches. The most ancient privileged the act of offering, which was inspired by the eucharistic liturgy and more particularly the canon of the mass. The more recent highlighted the person of the donor and conveyed a more individual piety. In both cases, however, the donors hope to earn salvation and, through their actions, to gain the rewards of the future life. In a more general sense, we can say the same thing about the "signatures" of artists. More precisely, the "signatures" resemble a dedication and consequently signal the active participation of the signatory.

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[27] Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050–1200* (New York, 1973); Carolyn W. Bynum, "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?" *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 31 (1980), pp. 1–17; Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Y avait-il un 'moi' au Moyen Âge?" *Revue historique*, 633 (2005), pp. 31–52.

[28] Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, Jean-Michel Spieser, and Jean Wirth, eds., *Le portrait. La représentation de l'individu*, Micrologus Library, 17 (Florence, 2007); Dominic Olariu, ed., *Le portrait individuel: réflexions autour d'une forme de représentation, XIII^e–XV^e siècles* (Bern, 2009); Stephen Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King: A Prehistory of Portraiture in Late Medieval France* (Chicago, 2009).

[29] Robert Favreau, *Epigraphie médiévale*, L'atelier du médiéviste, 5 (Turnhout, 1997), p. 31.

As I have noted, the signature is a sign of identity in the Middle Ages. It belongs to a category that also includes coats of arms, legal signatures, seals, and insignia. We can speak of medieval "signatures" in the sense that their principal function is to validate and then to identify. But with the stipulation that, in the first place, signing does not mean being able to read or write, and, in the second place, that it is quite improbable in any case that the signatures were autographs. One generally prefers the Latin term *subscriptio* (something written down) to "signature," but the Middle Ages used that term in an essentially juridical sense. The meaning of "to write under statues" (*sub-scrivere*) seems to have been lost in the course of time. Further, it gives the unfortunate impression that the artist placed his or her name on the work as one would sign a charter.[30]

The subscription opens with a sign, which is a symbolic invocation, not a name proper. Most inscriptions, as subscriptions, begin with a cross. This is an essential detail. Besides the fact that it inevitably evokes the Cross of which it is a sign, the epigraphic cross, which comes before an indicator of identity or involvement, is the equivalent of the sacred name (for example, *Deus, Christus, Spiritus*). On diplomas and charters, the cross often stands in for the sacred name at the beginning. And in the same

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[30] See P. Thubeuf, as quoted in Béatrice Fraenkel, *La signature. Genèse d'un signe* (Paris, 1992), pp. 34–35: "La souscription est une phrase, rarement un nom seul, écrite au-dessous de l'acte, soit par l'auteur de cet acte, soit par les personnes ayant concouru à sa rédaction, soit même par les témoins ou d'autres personnes, pour confirmer le titre, fournir ou faciliter la preuve de son authenticité, en assurer ou en certifier la publication. Ce qui constitue la signature, c'est d'abord et principalement le nom du signataire, apposé séparément du contexte, c'est ensuite le fait que ce nom a été écrit de la main de la personne désignée par ce nom [...], c'est enfin l'intention, par cette signature, d'énoncer son consentement au contenu de l'acte ou la reconnaissance de l'authenticité de cet acte." Robert Favreau in addition characterized as improper and less satisfactory the use of the expression "lapidary charter" to describe a sculpted program with epigraphs mixed in: Favreau, *Epigraphie médiévale*, p. 32.

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way as it opens a charter, the evocation of the sacred name also opens an epigraph when the epigraph begins with one of the signs that replace the divine name (such as the monogram of Christ, the cross, etc.). Placing the writing under the protection of God from the very start establishes the act in the name of God. Doing so both increases its power and affirms its legitimacy.

To place one's subscription under the sign of the cross is in effect to inscribe what one has said or written *in* God. As Béatrice Fraenkel has rightly pointed out, the sign of the cross "gives notice of the individual's filiation with God and functions as a sort of family name in a society where [...] everyone had for a name only his/her baptismal name."[31] An exemplary instance, the complex epigraphy of the tympanum of Autry-Issards, is discussed below.

The subscriptions of the goldsmith Gicelin, who signed ten or so swords in the twelfth century, repeat the same pattern. On one face, engraved between two crosses, is an invocation of the divine name: + INOMINEDOMINI + (+ In the name of God +). On the other face, as if a mirror image, is the signature proper: + GICELINMEFECIT + (+ Gicelin made me +). On each side of the blade, therefore, two crosses frame the inscription and register it under the authority that is the "name" of the Lord.[32]

There are many types of signatures found in connection with artists, as Fraenkel has shown. The most common is the signature in a self-portrait, which is specific to scribes[33] and illuminators,[34] but which is also found among sculptors and metalworkers. Like a colophon, the signature in a self-portrait is an act of self-designation, an "onomastic act" in which the purpose of the author is "to install in the midst of a work the kind of display reserved for the ostension, or the ostentation, of its creator ."[35] That double pun finds striking use among notaries from the thirteenth century on. When it was a matter of authenticating an act by means of a signature, they used rebus signatures or signature-monstrances, which were as good as signs of monstration.

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[31] Fraenkel, *La signature*, p. 65, "notifie la filiation individuelle à Dieu et fonctionne comme une sorte de nom de famille dans une société où [...] chacun n'a pour nom que son nom de baptême."

[32] Numerous swords from the 10th through the 12th centuries are signed. Besides Gicelin, the names of Benno, Ingelred, and Ulfbehrt have come down to us. We find the name of the last, who was active around 900, on examples of swords dated to the 12th century. This allows us to suppose that the signature was copied for strictly commercial purposes, as a means of affirming the quality of the product. See *Das Reich der Salier, 1024–1125* (Sigmaringen, 1992), pp. 102–106.

[33] For instance, San Daniele del Friuli, Bibl. Guarneriana, ms. 42, fol. 255r, end of 12th c. See *La Miniatura in Friuli* (Milano, 1972), p. 27.

[34] Padua, Bibl. Capit., (unnumbered) ms., fol. 85v, around 1170. See Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators*, fig. 27.

[35] Fraenkel, *La signature*, p. 108, "à installer, à l'intérieur d'une œuvre, une sorte de présentoir réservé à l'ostension, voire à l'ostentation, de son créateur."

The signature possesses a metonymic power based on proximity when it inscribes the subject in the blank space of a margin. A good way to see this is with a second type of signature: the colophon or marginal signature, which is held within the confines of the work. There are examples of goldsmiths who sign along the edge of the foot of a chalice, or on the socle of a portable altar, for instance.[36] There are illuminators whose signatures occupy the margin of a manuscript page, the frame of an image, or the end of a text.

The medieval signature possesses the double status as a sign of identity and a sign of validation.[37] So we might rightly understand the artist's signature as a mark that guarantees the quality or authenticity of the product, and not simply as a sign of pride on the part of the person who signed it.[38] Since signatures in the first person are rare, we might speculate a viewer who possessed the eye which permitted him/her to judge the quality of the work. The double pun of ostension/ostentation results from the metonymic power of the signature, which inscribes the subject into a signed work. Using the phrase that comprises the signature transforms the work into an enunciative subject, at least as far as the context permits us to be even more precise about what it is. Rare are the cases in the Middle Ages when someone stands in for the work in order to pronounce the act. One of those cases is a pier at Notre-Dame in Chantemerle-les-Blés that preserves an epigraph, engraved before it was set in place, which announces: A Ω ERMEFREDUS TE FECIT (A Ω Ermefredus made you).[39] In this instance,

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[36] On the marginal signatures of goldsmiths and other metalworkers, see in particular Jacqueline Leclercq-Marx, "Signatures iconiques et graphiques d'orfèvres dans le haut moyen âge. Une première approche," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 137/1584 (2001), pp. 1–17.

[37] Fraenkel, *La signature*, p. 194.

[38] Peter Burke, "L'artista: momenti e aspetti," in *Storia dell'arte italiana*, 1: *Materiali e problemi*, 2: *L'artista e il pubblico* (Turin, 1979), pp. 83–113, esp. 87. The signature (and in some cases, the portrait) of an artist borders on publicity: Peter Cornelius Claussen, "Künstlerinschriften," in *Ornamenta Ecclesiae*, vol. 1, pp. 263–76, esp. 263–64. Since artistic creation was a collective act in the Middle Ages, we might ask ourselves if the frequency of signatures did not also indicate a desire to mark out the individuality of the master (as principal artisan or the one in charge) in relation to the others.

[39] The church of Notre-Dame de Chantemerle-les-Blés (between Vienne and Valence) dates from the first third of the 12th century. The inscription runs along the plinth of the north pilaster, which supports the triumphal arch. The pier, therefore, stands at the entry to the choir. For the inscription itself, see *Corpus des Inscriptions de la France Médiévale*, vol. 16, no. 3, p. 106, pl. 30, fig. 63.

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nothing indicates whether it is the artist who speaks *in propria persona*, rather than the work speaking, as is often the case, or whether it is the author reminding his work that he is its author. If a medieval signature is impersonal, that does not mean that it could not stage an act of enunciation, however. In most cases, it is the work that proclaims its filiation: “Someone made me.” But there are some extreme cases in which the metonymic power of the signature gains the upper hand. Since the signature was not an autograph in the strict sense, one could play with it.

There are cases in which the contextualization is explicit and gives important clues about the function of the actors involved. Madalberta, a scribe from Meaux who was active around 800, puts her name in the initial I[n libro superiore] that opens Book 13 of Augustine’s *De trinitate*. This section of the text is conveniently entitled “De sapientia et scientia (On Wisdom and Knowledge),” and it is devoted to an analysis of the *exordium* (introductory passages) to the Gospel of John.[40] A text reminding its reader that “*in principio erat verbum* (in the beginning was the Word)” is a most appropriate place for a scribe to commemorate herself. Male scribes did the same thing. In the Gellone Sacramentary, the scribe’s name David is inscribed in the initial B[eati].[41] Once again, the context is decisive for appreciating the significance of the signatures of these scribes. Even though it is very hard to generalize with so few examples, we still might draw parallels between female and male artists. There are no gendered distinctions in the context or the visual conventions that accompany these signatures.

The first category of figures we have considered shows the artist present in the work or in the process of creating it. To that category, we add a second type of portrait or self-portrait, in which the artist beseeches a favorable judgment for him-/herself after the work is completed.

Guda

Such is the case with the famous signed self-portrait of Guda (Fig. 9; Color Plate 16), who represents herself within a collection of homilies in an initial D[ominus] for the octave of the Pentecost. The inscription reads: “Guda peccatrix mulier scripsit q[ue] pinxit h[un]c librum (Guda,

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[40] Cambrai, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 300, fol. 155.

[41] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. lat. 12048, fol. 99. Other examples are given by Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators*, p. 7.

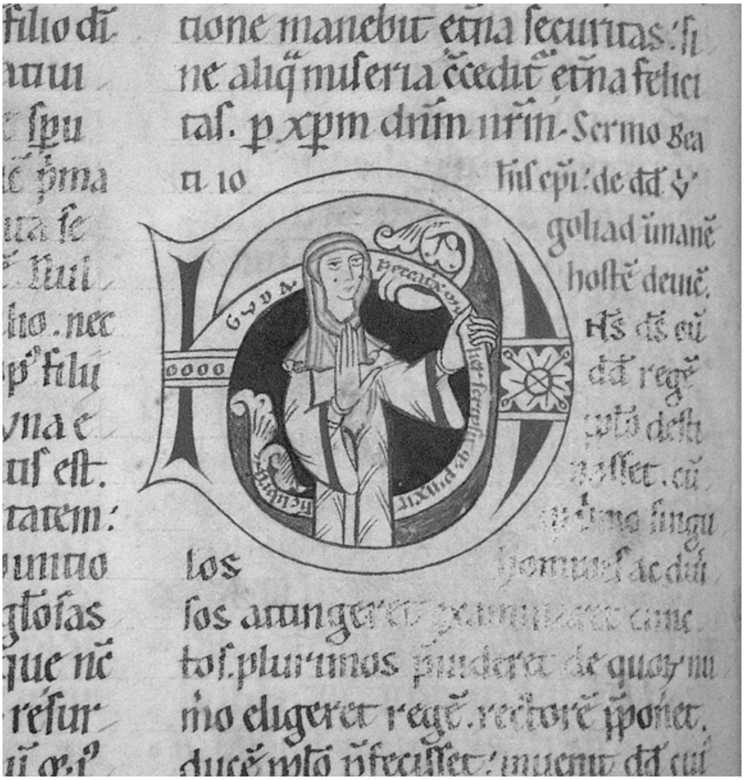

Figure 9 Self-portrait of Guda, Homilary, Frankfurt, second half of 12th c. Frankfurt am Main, Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, Ms. Barth. 42, fol. 110v (Photo: Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, Frankfurt am Main). See color plate 16.

a sinful woman, wrote and painted this book)."[42] Of the seven initials in the manuscript, this D is one of only two that contain figures. The other historiated initial comes at folio 196, the opening of the *Assumptio Mariae*, and contains a portrait of the Virgin identified as *maria virgo*. The other five initials display dragons, interlaces, ribbons, or spirals.

Guda represented herself firmly grasping the initial with her left hand and raising her right in a gesture of salutation and expectation. I would argue that Guda carefully and consciously chose to be here. The initial opens the ninth homily of St. John Chrysostom, the *Sermo beati iohannes episcopi de david ubi goliad immanem hostem devicit* (Sermon of the blessed Bishop John, on when David overcame the monstrous enemy Goliath),[43] which explains the election of David. The homily also offers an occasion to meditate on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and its role in comforting the soul. In short, Guda has chosen the perfect spot in which to await the Second Coming of Christ, and this is why she represents herself as a sinner, whose activity as an artist should count in her favor at the end of time.

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[42] Frankfurt am Main, Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, ms. Barth. 42, fol. 110v. See Gerhard Powitz and Herbert Buck, *Die Handschriften des Bartholomäusstifts und des Karmeliterklosters in Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt, 1974), pp. 84–88. See also Alison Beach, *Women as Scribes: Book Production and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Bavaria* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 129.

Guda's self-representation in this way is analogous to the scene the scribe Swicher has staged (for the reader?) in the frontispiece of his copy of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*.[44] Swicher's author portrait is most original. In the upper register, Isidore of Seville is depicted in conversation with Bishop Braulio of Zaragoza, the patron of the *Etymologies*. In the lower register, Christ *in propria persona* presides at the scribe's last judgment. Two angels busy themselves at a balance in which is weighed the very manuscript Swicher copied. The work of the scribe counts as a work of virtue: a third angel takes Swicher's soul away through a thick cloud, whereas the devil turns around empty-handed. The *titulus* attests to this: "O God, deign to have mercy on this wretched scribe. Do not consider the weight of my faults. Small though the good things may be, let them be exalted over the bad. Let night give way to light; let death itself give ground to life."[45]

Guda and Swicher make use of the same patterns of visibility and those patterns are not gender-specific. In both cases, the artists stage their humility and represent their belief that they might reach the Heavenly Kingdom through the artistic work they have done.

Maria

This same could be said of Maria, who made the so-called stole of St. Narcissus. A long inscription embroidered on the stole explicitly, and perhaps anxiously, expresses her desire to be remembered in the prayers of the community so that she might merit God's benevolence.[46] Probably made for the altar of St. Narcissus in the parish church of Sant Feliu of Girona, the stole is now kept in the Museu d'Art of Girona (Fig. 10). Formed by assembling different pieces, the stole's imagery is composed of three embroidered fragments: one decorated with a portrait of the Virgin (*s*[*an*]*c*[*t*]*a maria ora pro nobis* [Holy Mary, pray for us]) embroidered in gold and richly colored thread; the second showing the Baptism of Christ; and, on the third, the martyrdom of St. Lawrence. These fragments are attached to the stole proper, which is a band of linen embroidered with white and red silk threads. A long inscription, which preserves the memory of its author, Maria, runs along the center of the stole and on the margins of its two pendants (Fig. 11).[47] This Maria likely was the abbess of Sant Pere de les Puelles in Girona during the second half of the tenth century, and the text of her epitaph is also preserved:

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[43] Réginald Grégoire, *Homéliaires liturgiques médiévaux. Analyse de manuscrits* (Spoleto, 1980), no. 56, p. 463. John Chrysostom, Homilia 9, in *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series latina, Supplementum*, ed. Adalbert Hamman (Paris, 1958–1974), vol. 4, cols. 687–90.

[44] Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 13031, fol. 1r. See Elisabeth Klemm, *Die romanischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, vol. 1, *Die Bistümer Regensburg, Passau und Salzburg* (Wiesbaden, 1980), no. 89, pp. 64–65.

[45] "Scriptoris miseri dignare Deus misereri. Noli culparum pondus pensare mearum, parva licet bona sint super exaltata malis sint. Nox luci cedat vite mors iste recedat."

> ...Maria of venerable memory and consecrated to God, working with great effort all the days of her life in holy works and the commandments, wholeheartedly persistent in alms, very devoted to the memories and prayers of the saints, conserving with elaborate care the rule of the monastery, remains in the virginity of God.[48]

By signing her work, Maria made the stole an instrument in preserving her memory, and in that way she gave validity to the holy works and devotion to the saints recorded in her epitaph. The Virgin Mary is reputed to have woven vestments for the High Priest and the veil for the Temple, according to the apocryphal Gospels. It should not, therefore, be astonishing that the abbess would consider textile work fitting for herself, as it was for her illustrious patron.[49] So Maria created the stole perhaps for the new

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[46] The complete inscription is given by Milagros Guardia and Carles Mancho, "Consideracions a l'entorn dels teixits brodats catalans de l'alta edat mitjana," *Annals de l'Institut d'Estudis Gironins*, 38 (1996–1997), pp. 1455–479, esp. 1457–458.

[47] Javier de Santiago Fernández, *La epigrafía latina medieval en los condados catalanes* (*815—circ. 1150*) (Madrid, 2003), pp. 180–82.

[48] Fernández, *La epigrafía*, p. 318, no. 35. "[+I]N HOC TVMOLO CONDITA REQVIESCIT [IN] PACE VENERANDE RECORDATIONIS [ET] DEO SACRATA MARIA HABBAT STVDENS [IN] DIEBVS VITAE SVAE SCIS OPERIB IN MANDANTES [—] PERSISTENS IN ELEMOSINIS OMNINO [—] MTA MEMORIIS ET ORATIONIBVS SCRM VALDE DEVOTA REGOLA MONASTERII INSTANTISSIME OBSERVANS MANET IN VIRGINITATE D[—]." The epitaph is lost but still known thanks to a photograph kept in the collections of the Museo Arqueológico Provincial of Girona.

[49] Elizabeth Coatsworth, "Cloth-making and the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Art," in *Medieval Art: Recent Perspectives. A Tribute to C.R. Dodwell*, eds. Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Timothy Graham (Manchester, 1998), pp. 8–25.

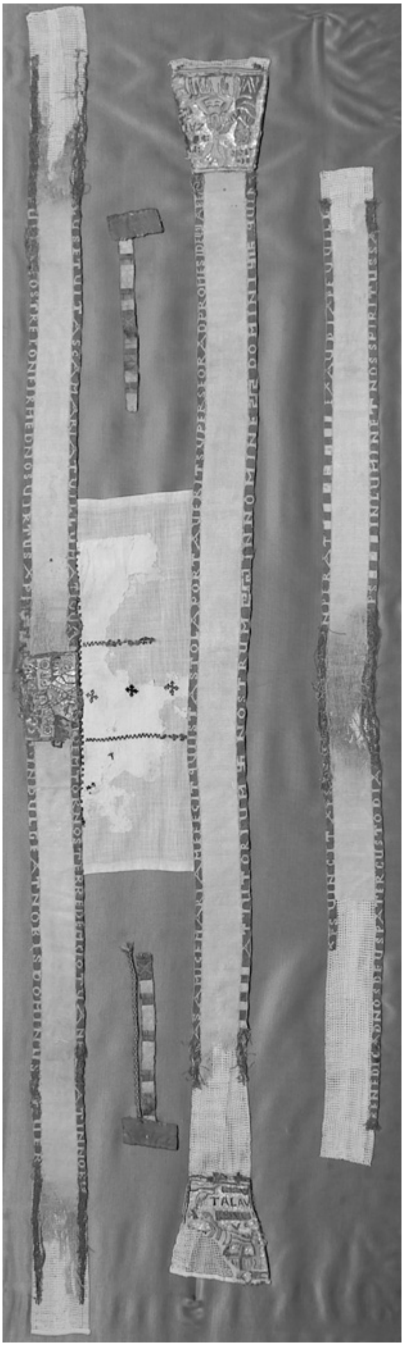

Figure 10 Stole of St. Narcissus, Girona, late 10th c. Girona, Museu d'Art (Photo: Bisbat de Girona).

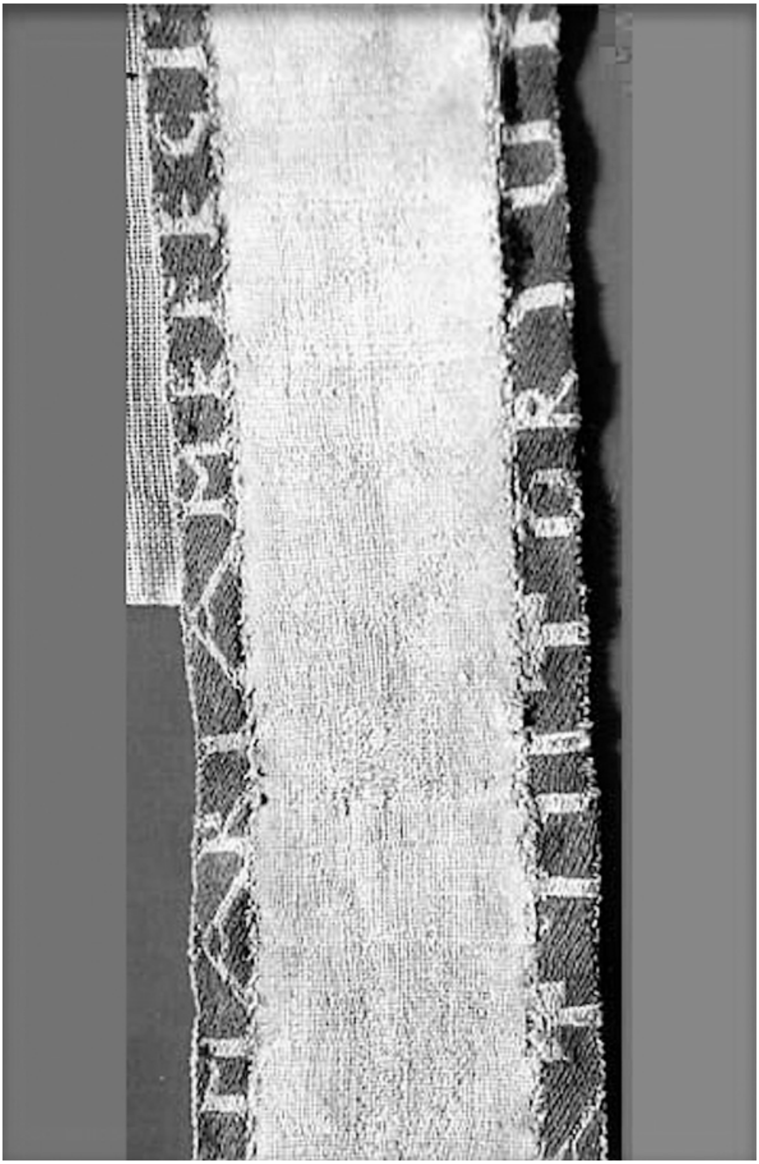

Figure 11 Detail: *Maria me fecit*. Stole of St. Narcissus, Girona, late 10th c. Girona, Museu d'Art (Photo: Bisbat de Girona).

tomb of Sant Feliu, which was built at the time of Bishop Miró Bonfill (d. 984), or for the tomb of St. Narcissus, with whom the stole is most often identified.

The unusually long inscription on the stole deserves closer inspection, since it quotes parts of the Lauds sung for the coronation of the Carolingian king and queen and also parts of the episcopal blessing pronounced at the end of the mass. Of particular interest is the portion that reads: "[Remember], friend, Maria made me, the one who wears this stole on himself pray for me if he wants to have God as his assistant."[50] It is not clear exactly what was meant by Maria's "making" of the stole, since the three parts with embroidered scenes appear to be from an earlier date. Milagros Guardia and Carles Mancho use stylistic and iconographical arguments to attribute the manufacture of the three figured pieces to a Byzantine workshop in Rome before the second half of the ninth century.[51] It makes sense, therefore, to define Maria's "making" as the assembly of the stole from diverse fragments. The abbess' creation thus compares with that of Abbot Bégon III of Conques, who around 1100 fashioned reliquaries out of diverse fragments.[52] In these two cases, creation consists of forming an ensemble from parts.

Elisava

The so-called Standard of St. Ot was also created by a woman (Fig. 12). Made of silk on a linen cloth, the form of this embroidered banner recalls an imperial *vexillum* or a votive gonfalon. It derives its name from the reliquary of Bishop Ot (or Otto), where it was discovered during the seventeenth century in the cathedral of the Seu d'Urgell. It thus is possible to date the standard to his episcopacy (1095–1122), or maybe slightly after the death of the bishop in 1122.[53] The picture field is framed with *rinceau* ornamentation and is backed with a purple-dyed cloth, while the image

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[50] [. . .]AS, AMICE, MARIA ME FECIT;/QVI ISTA STOLA PORTA-VERIT SVPER SE/ORA PRO ME SI DEVM ABEAD ATIVTOREM.

[51] Guardia and Mancho, "Consideracions," in particular pp. 1457–464.

[52] Such is the case with the so-called Reliquary of Pépin, the so-called Lantern of St. Vincent or of Bégon, the reliquary of Pope Pascal II, and the A of Charlemagne. For the most recent study, see *Le Trésor de Conques* (Paris, 2001). Along the length of the downstroke of the A of Charlemagne, the inscription specifies (among other things): "abbas formavit bego reliquiasque lo[cavit] [. . .]", where the verb *formare* signifies "to take form" equally in the sense of "to arrange," "to organize," "to fashion."

[53] Guardia and Mancho, "Consideracions," pp. 1464–479.

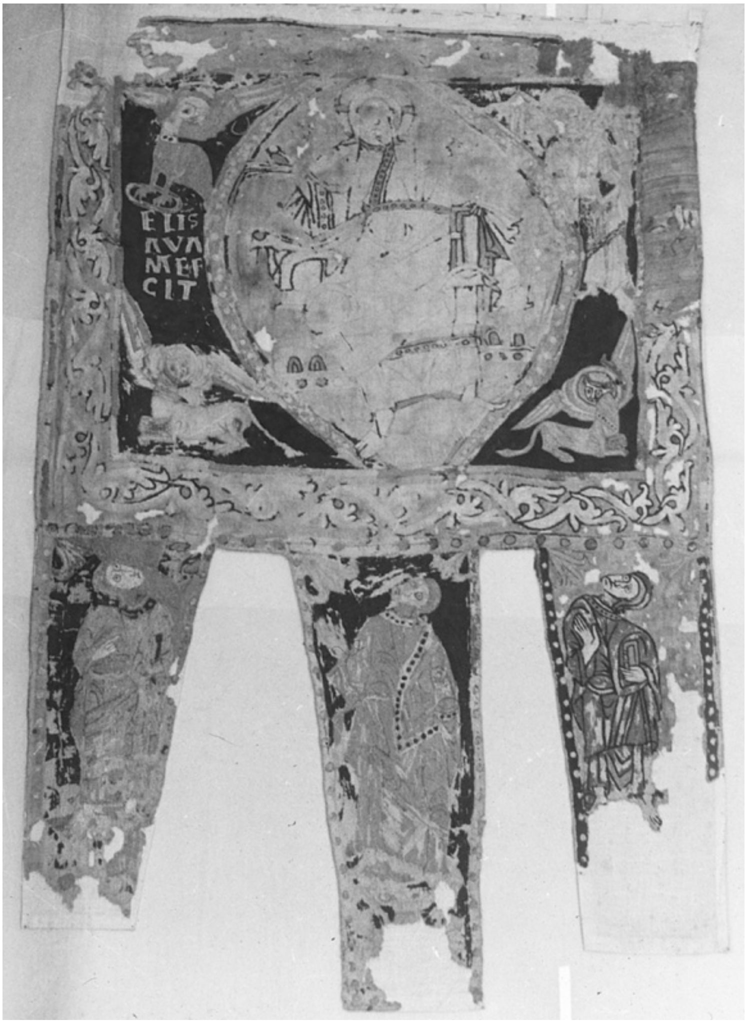

Figure 12 Standard of St. Ot, Urgell, first quarter of 12th c.? Barcelona, Disseny Hub Barcelona—Museu Tèxtil i d'Indumentària (Photo: MTIB).

itself has a *Maiestas Domini* with the Four Living Creatures arranged in the corners. Christ, enthroned in the mandorla, holds a closed book on His knee with His left hand, while He blesses with the right. His right hand also holds a small circular or spherical object, which can be interpreted either as the globe of the world, as in the Beatus of Girona, or the Eucharistic wafer. Directly under John's eagle and to the right of Christ, we can read the subscription or "signature" of the artist: ELISAVA ME F[E]CIT (Elisava made me). The inscription/signature is positioned to look as if Christ Himself is uttering those words as a continuation of His blessing, since the gesture of benediction also is a gesture of "speaking." Three pendants hang from the banner, embroidered with female figures praying or making an offering. The two figures to each side hold a book, although it is very difficult to make out what the figure in the center holds. Whatever the case, all three figures twist their heads to look towards God. The positions of the figures and the absence of haloes suggest donor portraits, something that has led some historians to conclude that the central figure, with its distinct garment and position, represents Elisava, who commissioned the embroidery.[54] Elisava (a form of Elizabeth) was a very common name in the region of Urgell during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, however, so it is rather difficult to identify this Elisava specifically with the family of the counts of Urgell.

Natalis

The frequency with which artists represent themselves, through both text and image, allows us to conclude that, from approximately the second half of the eleventh century on, artists assimilated their creative actions to those of God. More particularly, when an artist "makes" something, he/she is situated in relation to Creation and to the Incarnation, and in this way she/he declares himself to be a mediator, just as a priest is. On a capital in Saint-Pierre in Chauvigny (Vienne), Gofridus placed his signature in such a way that it seems as though God Himself was uttering the words. In a more elaborate epigraph at Autry-Issards (Allier), Natalis included his own name while using the exact same verb, *facere*, to characterize his own, God's, and the Son's creative activity (Fig. 13). Here is the perfect example of the aforementioned issue of subscription under the sign of the cross, as all three components that make up the epigraph open with a cross. In the center of the tympanum, just over the summit of the mandorla, two moldings in relief form a canopy inside which are engraved the following words, marked at the beginning by a cross to indicate that they are pronounced by Christ as Judge: + PENAS REDDO MALIS: PREMIA DONO BONIS (I render punishments to the evil; I give rewards to the good). A cross again signals the beginning of an inscription that runs along the lintel: + CUNCTA DEUS FECI HOMO FACTUS CU[N]CTA REFECI (I, God, made all things; being made man, I remade all things). Completing the inscription on the right side of the lintel, a cross yet again introduces the signature of Natalis: + NATALIS ME FEC[IT] (Natalis made me). The use of a cross to mark the beginning of these three inscriptions means that one and the same person pronounced the words there. This allows us to conclude that artistic creation in the twelfth century engages the Trinity, more specifically the Holy Spirit, in the process. Medieval artists are "theodidacts" (1 Thessalonians 4:9); literally, they are taught by God.[55]

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[54] Fernández, *La epigrafía*, p. 193: "Se trata de un pendón bordado, con la figura de Cristo en el centro rodeado por los cuatro evangelistas con la fórmula de donación a la izquierda de Cristo, ELISAVA ME FECIT, identica a la ya referida en otros objetos que tiene la intención de señalar, a mi juicio, la persona que donó el objeto más que el autor físico del mismo."

The priory church of Autry-Issards is in addition a good way to illustrate two ideas usually associated with artistic creation before the end of the Romanesque period: that making a work of art counts as a work of virtue, and that it is made with God's help. The epigraph at Autry-Issards goes even further by asserting a direct relation between the Incarnation and artistic creation. Built between 1120 and 1140, Autry-Issards' western portal as a whole presents an original program within which epigraphs play a leading role. This is not the place for more than a brief iconographic analysis; my focus is rather on the inscriptions. In the center of the lintel, two angels support a mandorla. It is now empty, but more than likely it once held an image of Christ in Majesty. Inscriptions on the archangels' nimbuses identify the one to the left as S[ANCTUS] MIC[H]AEL and the one to the right as S[ANCTUS] RAFAEL. On the far ends of the lintel,

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[55] The medieval artist worked with the help of God and in turn assisted Him in the acts of making visible and of showing. It is in this sense, or so it seems to me, that the illuminator, Ende, who took part in the decoration of the Beatus of Girona, could declare herself *pintrix et d*[*omin*]*i aiutrix* (*painter and helper of the Lord*). See Pamela Patton, "Ende," in *Dictionary of Women Artists*, vol. 1, pp. 456–57; María Rosa Ferrer Delgá, "Una miniaturista en tierras de repoblación," in *Repoblación y reconquista. Actas del III Curso de Cultura Medieval*, ed. José Luis Hernando Garrido (Aguilar de Campoo, 1993), pp. 267–72.

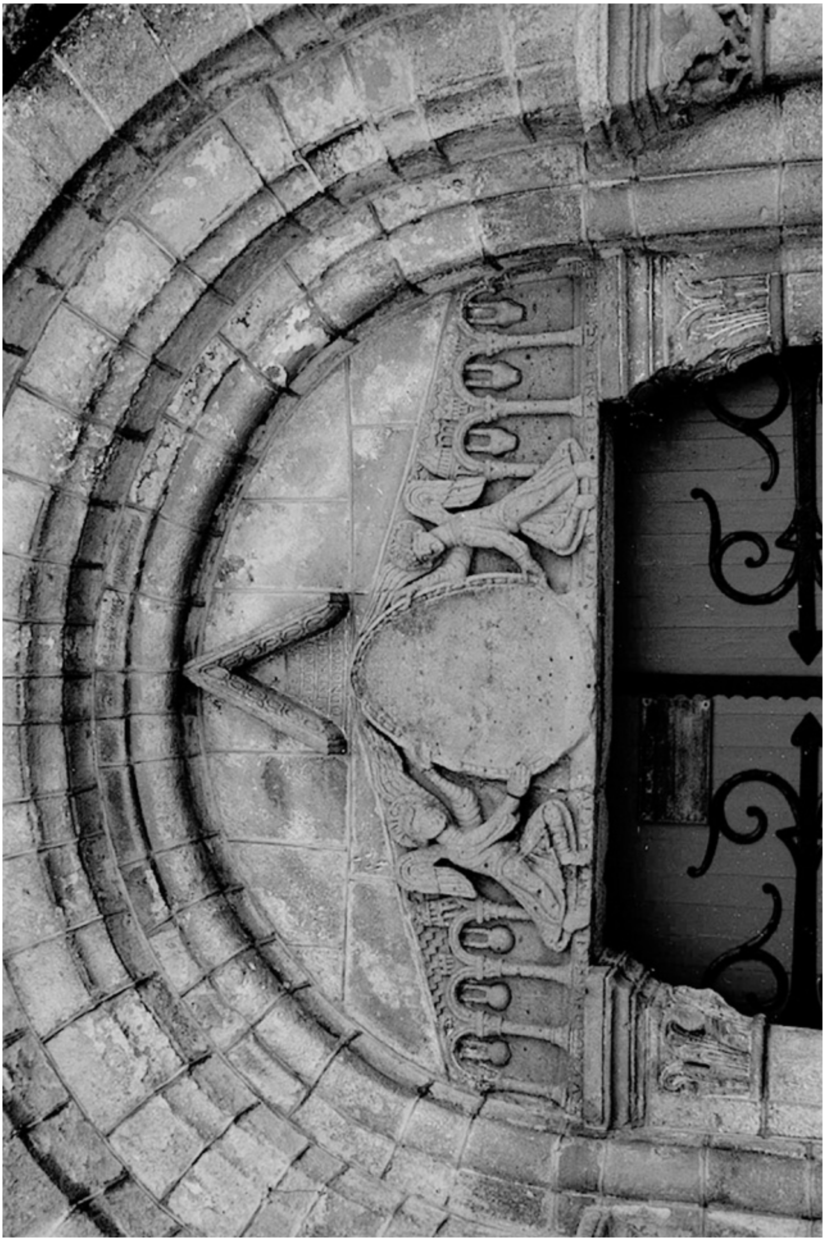

Figure 13 Detail of the portal, Priory of Ste. Trinité, Autry-Issards, France, ca. 1140 (Photo: P.C.).

to each side of the angels, three sculpted arches are surmounted by an architectural decoration. Hanging from the summit of these arches are decorative elements, to the left in the shape of globes and to the right in the shape of bags or purses, which are usually interpreted as lamps. Along the base of the lintel runs the inscription, cited above: + CUNCTA DEUS FECI HOMO FACTUS CU[N]CTA REFECI + NATALIS ME FEC[IT]. If we separate the signature of the artist, as the cross after REFECI invites us to do, the result is a rich hexameter, which, together with the epigraph engraved on the tympanum, forms part of a poetic convention known as a leonine elegiac distich. Three persons are named in the inscription: God; the one who "is made man," namely Christ; and Natalis. Four recurrences of the verb *facere* indicate the actions that characterize the three persons named: for God, the Creation; for Christ, the Incarnation and, through it, the Redemption or "remaking;" for Natalis, artistic creation. On the tympanum of Autry-Issards, text and image evoke the general theme of good works, without which salvation is impossible. The repetition of the verb *facere* is indeed a powerful device to tie together divine Creation, the Incarnation, and artistic creation in a schema that looks like this:

- The Creation and the Redemption through the Incarnation, which are the works of the Trinity;
- The *bona opera*; that is, works of faith that perhaps encompass works beyond those of mercy or charity;
- The work of Natalis the sculptor.

By placing his name after those of God and Christ, Natalis registers his own work in a continuum that proceeds from God's own creating and re-creating activity. We may suppose in addition that Natalis deliberately chose to substitute himself for the Holy Spirit to form a trinity of a particular kind. The placement of his signature in this specific place thus builds a progression. Perhaps even better, since we are after all speaking in a trinitarian context, the placement of the signature authorizes us to see relations of equivalence or reciprocity among the various persons who compose this trio and their particular work. Indeed, the epigraph accords to each of the protagonists—God, Christ, Natalis—an important part in the *ordo creationis* bound together with the four occurrences of the verb *facere*. "To make everything" are words attributed to God at the end of the sixth day (Genesis 1:31). "To redo everything" are the words pronounced by Christ (Revelation 21:5), just before the Evangelist is transported in spirit to contemplate the Heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21:9ff.). By listing his work after those acts of making, Natalis places his artistic creation in the same category. The artist asserts not simply that he works or he makes, but that he creates, just like God, and that his activity has a close affinity with the spiritual. In the same way as *cuncta facere* (to make all things) indicates the completion of God's work and *cuncta reficere* (to remake all things) the completion of Christ's, Natalis announces the completion of his own work. Since his work has been accepted as a "good work," he obtains his salvation through it. Could it be possible that divine Creation, Incarnation, and artistic creation appear as three manifestations of a single reality? By placing his signature immediately after the hexameter, Natalis likely plays consciously on a confusion of voices which inevitably occurs in the course of reading it. Thus, the ambiguity of the pronoun *me* can be seen to refer to God, which allows one to add a new layer to the meaning of the inscription as a whole: "I, God, made all things; being made man, I remade all things. Natalis made me." By putting his name after that of God and Christ, Natalis deliberately indicates a privileged relationship, which places him on an equal footing with them, and Natalis "substitutes himself" in this way for the Holy Spirit. At the same time, we must recognize that since God the Father cannot be created, it can only be Christ who pronounces the stony inscription. The pronoun *me* thus refers to the incarnate Christ, now missing from the mandorla above. The epigraph confirms it: it mentions not the Son or Christ, but insists specifically on God HOMO FACTUS; that is, a "fabricated" or a "made" god.[56]

Epilogue

Natalis is not the only artist of the period to assert this. Earlier, Rotbertus at Clermont-Ferrand, Gofridus at Chauvigny, and Nicolaus at Verona had already signed their work in an equally ambiguous way, taking advantage of the context. All imply that in the act of depicting God, they "make" God. That artistic activity was seen as a virtuous work allows some additional insights into these ideas. As Jean Wirth has stressed, scenes of donation took on a strong self-referential character from the beginning of the eleventh century on.[57] An example of this can be seen in the donors' portrait on the Processional Cross of Mathilda and Otto, in which the representation of the siblings at the base of the cross shows them holding a processional cross.[58] In certain cases, God's hand blesses the work, a sign that the donation is approved. The "works" of both patrons and artists thus associate themselves with works of virtue and take their place within the central moral values of Christianity. This association led to the multiplication of artists' representations, especially those emphasizing the process of artistic production and showing the artist in the act of working. This led in turn to the spiritual valuation of the very work itself, which is visible not only in the increased numbers of signatures, but also in what the signatures say. A good number of works indicate who made them, going so far as having the figures "claim" to be produced by a named artist, as we have seen in examples presented here. Such signatures elaborate on the kind of self-reference evident in donation scenes. We might say that the work of art, in this way, stages itself. A result of making the work speak in the first person is that the image shows itself both as made object and as living being, as something material and as a *persona*. The image thus presents a duality whose probable origin is to be found in the Eucharistic debates. The signatures of Rotbertus in Notre-Dame-du-Port in Clermont-Ferrand or Gofridus in Saint-Pierre of Chauvigny are situated in the work in such a way as to create a connection between the Incarnation and artistic creation. Such a relationship gives rise to ambiguity, suggesting that the artists not only have made the visible representation, but in a sense also the real body of Christ. Does the progressive importance of the hand of the priest from the second half of the eleventh century on have as a consequence a similar valuation of the hand of the artist? Both seem to take for a model the *dextra dei*, by which all the things are created: "... omnia haec manus mea fecit ..." (my hand made all things, Isaiah 66:2).

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[56] Although we cannot know whether Natalis was literate in Latin, it seems clear that he intentionally chose to frame his *subscriptio* in this ambiguous way, since inscriptions on the tympanum play such an authoritative role, both figuratively and as content.

[57] Jean Wirth, *L'image à l'époque romane* (Paris, 1999), pp. 303–27.

The use of a portrait or of a subscription is a powerful means of ensuring a continuous presence in the collective memory and in the prayers of the living. Since the *memento* of the Mass reinforces social ties within the community of the living, and also between the living and the dead, the primary place to fix one's memory would be in proximity to Christ, or more specifically in proximity to His real body in the Eucharist. The modalities of these appearances can sometimes be spectacular, but they do not vary in the case of a female artist or her male counterpart. At least in the period under consideration, patterns of visibility (and their symbolic implications) for men and women give every appearance of being the same, except that we have not yet found the names of women as sculptors carved in stone, despite their presence in documentary evidence.[59]

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[58] *Gold vor Schwarz. Der Essener Domschatz auf Zollverein*, ed. Birgitta Falk (Essen, 2008), pp. 64–65.

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[59] Carr, "Women as Artists," pp. 13–14.