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Review

Reviewed Work(s): *The Allegory of the Church: Romanesque Portals and Their Verse Inscriptions* by Calvin B. Kendall

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Source: *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (Sep., 1999), pp. 538-540

Published by: CAA

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3051357>

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Driskell, and *Asian Traditions, Modern Expressions: Asian-American Artists and Abstraction, 1945–1970*, ed. Jeffrey Wechsler (New York: Abrams, 1997).

22. For more on Bearden and black subjectivity, see Thelma Golden, "Projecting Blackness," in *Romare Bearden in Black-and-White: Photomontage Projections, 1964*, exh. cat., ed. Gail Gelburd (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art and Abrams, 1997), 39–49, and Paul Rogers, "Hard Core Poverty," in *Picturing Us: African American Identity in Photography*, ed. Deborah Willis (New York: New Press, 1994), 158–68.

23. Conwill, 7.

24. Sims, "Subject/Subjectivity," 587.

25. Albert Boime, *The Art of Exclusion: Representing Blacks in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), focuses on this problem in the nineteenth century, and bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), examines contemporary popular imagery.

26. Fisher, 5.

27. Michael D. Harris, "Playing Against a Stacked Deck: Art, Coon, and a Negress at Harvard (sometimes the Cutting Edge Cuts Both Ways)," 6, an unpublished manuscript from his forthcoming book on black representation.

28. Stanley Fish, "Boutique Multiculturalism, or Why Liberals Are Incapable of Thinking about Hate Speech," *Critical Inquiry* 23 (Winter 1996): 386–87.

29. Kobena Mercer, "Black Art and the Burden of Representation," in *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 250.

CALVIN B. KENDALL

The Allegory of the Church: Romanesque Portals and Their Verse Inscriptions

Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1998.
401 pp.; 40 b/w ills.; 4 text figs.; 5 maps.
\$65

Since its "rediscovery" in the late nineteenth century, the study of Romanesque sculpture has been concerned either with style or with iconography. Scholars have tried in the past to focus, for instance, on the consequences the Investiture Controversy could have had on the (re)construction and decoration of churches, and to posit chronological evidence as well as stylistical relationships. The "contextual approach" proposed by M. F. Hearn in his *Romanesque Sculpture: The Revival of Monumental Stone Sculpture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Oxford, 1981) is an example of this scholarship. With relatively few exceptions, interest in the iconography of the tympanum (French especially) has dominated discussion at the expense of surrounding elements that frame the relief.¹ Texts attached to carvings have not heretofore been the subject of a monograph. In order to remedy this deficiency, Calvin B. Kendall proposes in his *Allegory of the Church: Romanesque Portals and Their Verse Inscriptions* an examination of the Romanesque portal through its verse inscriptions, and this should be a refreshing approach. The argumentation of his book rests on two assumptions: that the Romanesque church is a lively material allegory and that its portal speaks this allegory in a voice understood either as Christ's or as the Church's. The author considers the Romanesque portal to be a device designed to assist the audience in experiencing the church building as a

mystical and spiritually transforming space. Verse inscriptions displayed on portals express the allegory of the church and constitute one way of understanding the allegory, for the viewer then and now.

Kendall's methodology basically depends on the use of two models: Bede's *De schematibus et tropis* effectively provides the exegetical frame within which the inscriptions are deciphered, while art history's developmental claims concerning the transition from Romanesque to Gothic determine the chronological span within which the allegory is studied. That the author subsumes his study within this traditional view is particularly striking in the last part of his book (chapters 12 to 14), where he looks at the progressive disappearance of portal inscriptions. According to Kendall, portal inscriptions in leonine verse are *prima facie* indicators of the Romanesque; their absence characterizes the Gothic (p. 195).

The early medieval church indeed was a multilevelled allegory, and every part of it displayed meaning. It has been conceived as the Heavenly Jerusalem, in which the apostles served as doors, the doctors and bishops represented columns, and Christ was the portal. The book intends to provide answers to the following problems: what was the allegory (chapter 1), how did it affect the design of the Romanesque portal (chapter 4), and how did verses mediate the allegory for the portal's audience (chapters 6 to 11). The author presents textual evidence, i.e., inscriptions, mostly from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, geographically distributed in northern Spain, southern France, and northern Italy, and conveniently collected in an appended catalogue (pp. 197–300).² Chapter 1 deals with allegory at large, focusing on Bede's *De schematibus et tropis*, one of the earliest commentaries to provide a clear formulation of the fourfold method of interpretation according to Kendall. Bede is a convenient point of departure, since his writings were widely diffused and influential in the Middle Ages, says Kendall (p. 9). We should note that the author is a specialist on Bede: he edited this very text in the *Corpus Christianorum* series and also published an English translation of it. The allegory of the church can thus be understood literally (the church is the Temple of Solomon), typologically (the church is Christ, or the Virgin), tropologically or morally (the church is the community of the faithful), and anagogically (the church is the Heavenly Jerusalem). Bede is here considered as a practical starting point, since "the allegory of the church was part of [the abbots' and the builders'] mental and spiritual outlook" (p. 14). It was not a doctrine but a mental *habitus* common to everyone, from the illiterate to the most educated, a "spiritual frame" which manifested itself especially in the portal. "There would have been no need for them to consult a particular written source," the author continues, and this might explain why Kendall uses so few contemporaneous sources in his demonstration. Yet an examination of twelfth-century sources would

have benefited the study. Numerous liturgical treatises appeared during the twelfth century whose authors seek to reveal hidden meaning, the *mysterium*, according to the fourfold exegesis, and in which the allegorical and moral interpretations are tied to a description of the actual building and its furniture. Amalarius of Metz's *Liber officialis* was the initial model widely copied from the ninth century on, inspiring such treatises as Honorius of Autun's *Gemma animae* and *Speculum ecclesiae*, John Beleth's *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*, Sicardus of Cremona's *Mitrale*, Peter of Roissy's *Manuale de mysteriis ecclesiae*,³ and later in the thirteenth century (not in the fourteenth century, as the author writes in n. 1, p. 327), Durandus of Mende's *Rationale divinarum officiorum*. We should add to these specific commentaries on church allegory practically all the references scattered in the theological literature since Augustine, no doubt a painful but useful task.

Chapters 2 and 3 trace the history of the application of verse inscriptions to church buildings from Constantine to the Romanesque period. The author shows that in the period from the ninth to the twelfth century, churches and monastic buildings displayed inscriptions, and that the preferred location for these was the lintels of the principal doors. Inscriptions thus made the portal a place of spiritual transformation. Chapter 4 stresses that Christ's metaphor—*Ego sum ostium* (John 10:7, 9)—is the fundamental organizing principle of the Romanesque portal. The typological allegory of Christ the door is an "informing principle": "it shaped the design of portals and their sculptural programs in most parts of western Europe" (p. 68). We could also say that Christ is the rejected stone (Mark 12:10, Acts 4:11, 1 Peter 2:4–7; cf. Psalm 118:22, Isaiah 28:16, Zechariah 4:7), which finally becomes the cornerstone of the new Temple, thus providing scriptural evidence for keystones adorned with God's lamb. Chapter 5 looks at the language and form of the inscriptions. Practically all the verses that the author collected in his catalogue are hexameters, of which nearly 75 percent exhibit either full or common leonine rhyme. This should not be surprising, since *tituli* in manuscripts of the tenth and eleventh centuries are for the most part leonine verses too. More interesting are chapters 6 and 7, which address the question of Christ's voice made visible in the stone. It is the role of the inscription to capture the viewer's attention and point to the visual narration, thus establishing a bridge between the representation and the ever-present time of reading. This bridge then delineates and creates a space which Christ's real presence might occupy. Some inscriptions indeed speak in the first person, or address the audience in direct speech. These performative utterances take effect in the present, making the portal a place of enactment; or, to put it in other terms, word and image together make Christ's presence seem real.

Though throughout the book relatively scarce attention is paid to the images and the

way they produce meaning, the author finally looks at them in chapters 8 through 11. Especially interesting is the interpretation of Jaca's tympanum (pp. 122–38), in which the author very convincingly deciphers the inscription in tandem with an iconographical analysis. Expanding on both Otto K. Werckmeister (who hypothesized the existence of penitential portals in the twelfth century)⁴ and Susan H. Caldwell (who demonstrated that Jaca's sculptural program embodied an exhortation to penitence),⁵ Kendall is thus able to read the anagram *pax* hidden in the inscription, which corroborates the penitential function of the portal. He then examines this anagram with the chrismon carved on the tympanum, shedding light on numerous portals on both sides of the Pyrenees. In these *pax* and admonitory portals, as he calls them, "the voice of the Church or Christ . . . directed all those about to enter to engage in penitential self-reflection and cleansing before undergoing liminal transformation at the moment of passing through the door, which was Christ" (p. 138). This is the most convincing part of the whole book, and this should not surprise us: Kendall actually looks at both the images and the inscriptions, and he relies for his analysis on the liturgical lesson. It would nevertheless have been interesting to have had a closer look at the relationship, if any, between sculptural program and inscription on other tympana besides the Pyrenean ones, and to confront inscriptions displayed outside and within the church. The interaction between words and images is poorly exploited, however, since the author considers the allegory to be a mere literary tool,⁶ even though he does not explicitly say it; the reader has the impression that the image alone is unable to convey any allegorical meaning.

In the last three chapters of the book, the author shows that the allegory of the church was not the only "informing principle" of the Romanesque portal. The very inscriptions the author uses are a clear witness to that fact; in them liturgy, politics, patronage, and economics, among other things, conjoin. After the turn of the millennium, Kendall claims, allegory "had come to be thought of as symbolic of a transcendent reality rather than as a reality inherent in the material church" (p. xii).⁷ As time went on, "churches were more likely to be allegorized as symbols than as signs" (p. 155), and this, for him, qualifies the progression from Romanesque to Gothic art. As the author does not direct his attention toward the visual phenomena, he fails to see that allegory had been challenged in the West since the eighth century, within the debate over the medieval image.⁸

The critical apparatus is uneven. The footnotes bring no real alternative information or useful clues to some debated questions, and the index is incomplete. Far more important, the bibliography needs updating. Dealing with Romanesque buildings (almost) with the sole help of the Zodiaque series is a very risky enterprise we would not recommend to any student of Romanesque art—with all the respect we owe to the monks' labor at La

Pierre-qui-vire. We would have expected references to recent contributions in the field.⁹ Secondary sources are scarce on topics scholars have dealt with in the past two decades, too. In a nonexhaustive list, and to name but a few themes and scholars, we would have appreciated some remarks on the individual (Colin Morris, Caroline Walker Bynum, Aaron Gurevich), the notions of authorship and poetic individuality (Peter Dronke, Gerald A. Bond), looking at the past and the problem of memory (Patrick J. Geary, Mary Carruthers), the question of literacy vs. illiteracy and its consequences for the medieval image (Rosamond McKitterick, Michael Camille, Herbert L. Kessler, Brian Stock, Jean Wirth), the development of schools (C. Stephen Jaeger), the Romanesque narration (Steve J. Nichols), the role of the artist (Albert Dietl, Peter Cornelius Claussen, Anton Legner, Piotr Skubizewski), or the relationship between cathedral, city, and Heavenly Jerusalem (Chiara Frugoni, Alain Erlande-Brandenburg). We are conscious that the author could not have incorporated all this material into his study; but though numerous inscriptions that Kendall deals with suggest these topics, they receive too little attention in his book.

The author argues that the allegorical exegesis used to explain and to reveal Scripture "was applied to the material structure of the medieval church" (p. xii). Yet it remains uncertain that this allegory constituted such an important part of the "mental landscape of the earlier Middle Ages," which everyone, "from illiterate peasants to the most educated members of the aristocracy and the clergy" (p. 3), would have been able to easily grasp it with the help of inscriptions alone.¹⁰ We can challenge the assertion that the allegory of the church manifests itself especially in the design of the portal, since nearly all Romanesque objects speak through an inscription—liturgical furniture such as altars or fonts as well as *vasa sacra* such as censers, chalices, or ciboria. Would the question then be whether inscriptions function differently, say more or less allegorically, on metalwork, furniture, and so on? The portal obviously opens through to the church, but must the allegory remain at the church's doorway? And what about mute portals? The author fails to see that the images and the inscriptions of the portal are both directed inward, as a projection of the apse, and outward, as they "look" into the secular space. An example will clarify this. At the west portal of Verona cathedral, the tympanum is adorned with the Virgin in majesty, the Annunciation to the Shepherds, and the Adoration of the Magi, with an inscription around the rim.¹¹ Three circular medallions decorated with bust portraits of *Fides*, *Caritas*, and *Spes* appear on the lintel below. Crowned like antique allegories of the cities, Faith, Hope, and Charity are the three civic virtues according to Hrabanus Maurus (*De universo*, XIV), thus engaging the spectator to see the cathedral as an image of the city, both *distant* and in this world.

Contrary to what Kendall suggests, allegory was probably never considered as an end in

itself. It was one of the devices used to provoke an illumination, a sudden spiritual consciousness in the faithful's heart. Text and image invited the worshiper to read Christ's visible speech with the mind's lips, to see his image with the mind's eyes. Allegory was used to ease the future contact *facies ad faciem*, but did not itself reveal God. If one might ask how many levels of allegory it is tolerable to propose for the Romanesque portal, it remains one of the author's merits to have shown to medievalists that some verse inscriptions on the Romanesque portals (we would *only* add: as well as the images) engage the audience to seek God *spiritually*. Inscriptions such as the one on the north portal of S. Miguel at Estella ("The present image which you see is not God nor man, but it is God and man whom the sacred image figures")¹² or the one on the south portal of Saint-Pierre at Vienne ("This stone is not Peter. Peter is at Rome and in heaven above. In his likeness the form of this statue is made"),¹³ show that what the viewer can look at is limited to corporeal sight; both texts urge him to seek God or Peter *spiritually*. The divine presence—real voice, real presence—can be apprehended through the spirit alone. But this was not limited to divine presences. For F. du Soler's tomb, dated 1203 and now in the cloister of Elne cathedral, Raymond of Biaya signed: R[AIMUNDUS] DE VIA JA ME FE E IMAZE SERE (Raymond of Biaya made me and I will be a statue), clearly stating that, in this case, the image does not reveal a presence, but rather an absence.¹⁴ Considering the cathedral, or the church, as a book, and turning its pages in order to reveal its allegory as the author does, confines oneself to the literal meaning. The letter kills, only the spirit vivifies.

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Notes

1. The portal as a totality, the place where inside meets outside, nevertheless was the subject of a conference organized by Barbara Diemling at Princeton University in 1995.

2. To the 192 entries of the catalogue, we may add, among others, the tympanum of St. Cécilien, Cologne (Cologne, Schnütgen-Museum), where the inscription reads: VOS QUI SPECTATIS HEC PREMIA VIRGINITATIS, EXPECTATE PARI PARITER VIRTUTE BEARI (*Ornamenta ecclesiae: Kunst und Künstler der Romanik*, exh. cat., Schnütgen-Museum, Cologne, 1985, 2: 355); the lintel of Saint-Pourçain-sur-Sioule's west tympanum: EGO [SUM] PAST[OR] BON[US] EGO SUM VIA VERITAS ET VITA EGO SUM HOSTIUM OVIVM PER ME SI QUIS INTROERIT SALVABITUR ET INGRE[DIETUR] ET PASCUA IN[VENIET] DICIT DOMINUS (*Corpus des inscriptions de la France médiévale* [hereafter CIFM], 18, no. 24, 34–36); the tympanum of Aimeugny, where the inscription around a cross reads: LEX DEI VERA EST (CIFM, 19, no. 1, 51–52); the south portal of the west facade of Saint-Pierre, Champagne: AGNUS [DEI] QUI TOLLIS PECCATA MUDI [MISERERE NOBIS] (CIFM, 16, no. 25, 74–75); the fragmentary inscription on the lintel of former Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux, Lyon (Lyon, Musée Gadagne: CIFM, 17, no. 47, 107), which belongs to the same group as Saint-Pierre,

Vienne (cat. no. 189). A fragmentary inscription on the west facade of Notre Dame, Surgères, is worth mentioning in this context too: . . . MIRANTUR GENTES OPUS ISTUD INSPICIENTES (CIFM, 1:3, no. 34, 119), where *opus* probably refers both to the actual building and to divine Creation.

3. Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "Les Mystères de l'église, d'après Pierre de Roissy," in *ibid.*, *Pensée médiévale en Occident* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), no. 10 (originally published in 1966), with the edition of Peter's text.

4. Otto K. Werckmeister, "The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972): 1–30.

5. Susan H. Caldwell, "Penance, Baptism, Apocalypse: The Easter Context of Jaca Cathedral's West Tympanum," *Art History* 3 (1980): 25–40.

6. Particularly striking is the treatment of the archivolt of Aquitaine considered as "a schematic idea of the multiple levels of the allegory of the church" (p. 139).

7. See n. 5, 301: "If the Gothic church was a 'representation of supernatural reality' [Otto von Simson], then the Romanesque church was in some sense the supernatural reality itself."

8. On the early medieval image, see the recent important study by Herbert L. Kessler, "Real Absence: Medieval Art and the Metamorphosis of Vision," in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra Tarda Antichità e Alto Medioevo* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1998), 2:1157–211.

9. Such as Alan Borg for Provence, Piotr Swiechowski for Auvergne, Evelyn Kain and Dorothy F. Glass for Italy, Anat Tcherikover for Aquitaine, Kathryn Horster for Toulouse, Marie-Thérèse Camus for Poitou, Eliane Vergnolle for the Loire Valley, Maylis Baylé for northwestern France, etc. Of great importance are the essays collected by Herbert Beck and Kerstin Hengevoss-Dürkop (eds.), *Studien zur Geschichte der europäischen Skulptur im 12./13. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Henrich, 1994).

10. The need of an interpreter to decipher the words carved on the tympanum, as the author asserts on page 94, seems to contradict this very fact. About the legibility and the visibility of inscriptions, he raises the interesting question of intention but does not pursue the reflection further (p. 93). Earlier in the text, the author maintains that some inscriptions were familiar to generations of pilgrims, but does not back up this claim (p. 43).

11. Cat. no. 177. The scenes on the tympanum focus on the Incarnation of Christ and his kingship, while the inscription celebrates the Lamb of God represented on the keystone of the porch's arch.

12. NEC DEUS EST NEC HOMO PRESENS QUAM CERNIS IMAGO, SET DEUS EST ET HOMO QUE SACRA FIGURAT IMAGO (cat. no. 47; Kendall's translation). The titulus is ascribed to Hildebert of Lavardin; see Ragne Bugge, "Effigiem Christi, qui transis, semper honora. Verses condemning the cult of sacred images in art and literature," *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 6 (1975): 127–39.

13. + NON PETRUS HEC PETRA ROME PETRUS ET SUPER ETHRA, AD FORMAM CUIUS SPECIES FIT IMAGINIS HUIUS (cat. no. 189; Kendall's translation).

14. CIFM 6, no. 52, 64–66. See Michèle Beaulieu and Victor Beyer, *Dictionnaire des sculpteurs français du moyen âge* (Paris: Picard, 1992), 275–76, where the inscription reads: R[AMON] DE BIAIA ME FE E IMMAZE SERE.

GEOFFREY BATCHEN

Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography

Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997.
273 pp., 30 b/w ill. \$40, \$20 paper

The epigraph to the first chapter of George Eliot's 1876 novel, *Daniel Deronda*, offers a remarkably modern and useful insight into

one critical presupposition of narrative construction:

Men can do nothing without the make-believe of a beginning. Even Science, the strict measurer, is obliged to start with a make-believe unit, and must fix on a point in the stars' unceasing journey when the sidereal clock shall pretend that time is at Nought. His less accurate grandmother Poetry has always been understood to start in the middle, but on reflection it appears that her proceeding is not very different from his: since Science, too, reckons backwards as well as forwards, divides his unit into billions, and with his clock-finger at Nought really sets off *in medias res*. No retrospect will take us to the true beginning, and whether our prologue be in heaven or on earth, it is but a fraction of that all presupposing fact with which our story sets out.¹

Eliot is surely correct that stories (including narrative histories) must have beginnings that set off *in medias res*, but it is equally true that establishing the fiction of a beginning—starting the tale somewhere—does not mean that any starting point will do. Some possible starting points will not serve as useful beginnings; finding a beginning does not proceed in a random manner.

Until rather recently, histories of photography have established what their authors take to be the true beginning in the stories of invention found in the earliest published accounts (1839) of the first practical processes—the daguerreotype and photogenic drawing. Each of these chronicles, in turn, points back to the 1790s, when Thomas Wedgwood, son of the ceramics manufacturer Josiah, attempted and failed to make permanent pictures by the agency of light acting on nitrate of silver. By the early 1850s, practical photographic manuals routinely provided thumbnail sketches of important chemical discoveries of light-sensitive compounds made prior to the late eighteenth century, followed by chronologies of experiments (often beginning with reference to Wedgwood), aimed at producing pictures by optical and chemical means. National and personal rivalries and late entrant claims to glory inflected accounts of priority (who really invented photography?) until well into the last quarter of the nineteenth century; nonetheless, by the mid-1850s the list of initial experimenters, claimants to precedence, and overlapping claims had been reasonably well established. This rough chronology of photographic invention was readily accepted by the small group of twentieth-century writers of popular photographic histories. Accordingly, the names on the list have a familiar ring to anyone even remotely familiar with the received narratives of invention: Thomas Wedgwood and Humphry Davy, Claude and Joseph Nicéphore Niepce, L.J.M. Daguerre, W.H.F. Talbot, and Hippolyte Bayard.²

It was not until the late 1960s that a new wrinkle, in the form of a "mystery," was added to the history of the invention of photogra-

phy. In *The Origins of Photography*, Helmut Gernsheim argues:

Considering the knowledge of the chemical as well as the optical principles of photography was fairly widespread following Schulze's experiment (in 1725) . . . the circumstance that photography was not invented earlier remains the greatest mystery in its history. . . . It had apparently never occurred to any of the multitudes of artists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who were in the habit of using the camera obscura to try to fix its images permanently.³

Gernsheim's identification of this so-called mystery invited a reconsideration of the received narrative of the origins of photography—a rethinking that was in the offing in any case, since photography was just then receiving increased attention from museums of art and was making inroads into college and university curricula. Gernsheim's mystery serves as the basic premise of Peter Galassi's essay in the 1981 Museum of Modern Art catalogue *Before Photography* and motivates Geoffrey Batchen's recent *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography*. Both Batchen and Galassi assume Gernsheim's claim without question. Galassi argues that by concentrating on the material/technological components of invention, historians have failed to provide us with an understanding of the other necessary causal constituent that "catalyzed" or "engendered" photography. He identifies the missing component as a shift in "pictorial syntax" that he finds in the paintings of some artists working in the decades preceding the 1839 announcement of Daguerre's and Talbot's processes. Batchen now criticizes Galassi for cobbling together an internalized, modernist narrative of photography's origins by seeking its motive in artistic practice. It is remarkable that Batchen recapitulates the search for previously unnoted causal elements that served to propel the invention of photography, replacing "engender" with "desire" and "conception"—continuing the pursuit of an ordinary, procreative tale.

In reviewing Galassi's essay in 1982,⁴ I wondered if Gernsheim's counterfactual mystery was even remotely supportable, and pointed to the reliance of Daguerre and Talbot on the synthesis of chemical compounds and on chemical discoveries dating from the period of invention (as demarcated by nineteenth-century photographic historians). I had no intention of reducing the complex and difficult issue of invention to a technological matter, meaning only to suggest that the first practical processes were, in fact, dependent on the isolation and production of previously unknown elements and compounds (e.g., iodine and bromine), and on the discovery of new chemical reactions (e.g., Talbot's discovery in 1834–35 of more and less light-sensitive forms of the same silver compound; Herschel's 1819 discovery that silver salts are dissolved by what is now known as photographic "fixer"). I suggested that the first barely practical processes (dating from the