VEXILLUM

the undergraduate journal of classical and medieval studies

Issue 4

2014

2014 Editorial Staff

Foreword

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dear Reader:

It is with a multitude of emotions that I deliver this, the fourth issue of *Vexillum*, to you and all of our readers in the United States and around the world. Sadness, because with this issue I step down as Chief Editor after two long years; excitement, because I know this issue includes some of the very best student work we've had the privilege of reading and reviewing. Above all else, however, are pride and satisfaction, as we bring you what we hope will be a fascinating read and a true testament to the abiding interest, dedication, and passion that our undergraduate authors have brought to their ongoing scholarly pursuit of knowledge. From medieval Transylvania to classical Athens, ancient Rome to the rain-swept isle of Ireland, our new issue spans the world geographically and chronologically.

It is with even more pride, indeed, that I announce that as I step down from the chair of Chief Editor—although never, I hope, from involvement with the journal—my place will be taken by our own Senior Editor, Edward Mead Bowen. Holder of a B.S. in journalism and B.A. in English from the University of Florida as well as an M.A. in medieval Welsh literature, Edward—Mead, to his friends—has served capably as reader, editor, and Senior Editor for almost as long as I have been at the journal. Together, we've plotted a bold new direction for *Vexillum*, and I cannot think of a better person to guide the journal forward down that road.

The most important of these changes is the end of our relationship with Western Washington University. We owe a great debt of thanks to Diane Johnson and the WWU Department of Classics for nurturing the germ that grew into this journal, but it is time for *Vexillum* to take advantage of the resources and connections afforded to us by other institutions. To that end, I am pleased to announce that for the 2014-2015 academic year we will receive full funding from the Yale University Medieval Studies Program, to which we owe thanks, as well as to its Chair and Director of Graduate Studies, Anders Winroth. It is the intention of the journal moving forward to seek grant funding to secure its future—a committee has been formed to negotiate this process over the course of the coming year.

Other changes will be evident as you read our issue. We have again reduced the proportion of published articles to submitted papers, so that we can present truly the best undergraduate work and take the time and care needed to ensure each is an optimal representation of the author's skill and the chosen topic. This year marked the debut of our new website, along with our new engagement with social media. Above all, we remember that our journal must change and grow as time passes, and I greatly look forward to seeing how Mead and the new board of editors direct and shape this ongoing process. As I step down, the future looks very bright indeed.

Sebastian Rider-Bezerra
Yale University, 2014

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A Noble Risk:
Plato's Eschatological Myths as a Defense for his Political Philosophy

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This paper examines the correlation between Plato's political philosophy and his spiritual teachings. In describing the ideal state ruled by philosopher "guardians," in contrast to lesser governmental constitutions, Plato demonstrates a moral hierarchy of souls, each soul corresponding to a type of state constitution, by emphasizing the philosopher as superior to the Spartan-like timocrat, the greedy oligarch, the Athenian-like democrat, and finally the wretched tyrant. Plato maps this political hierarchy onto his spiritual beliefs through his eschatological myths in the Gorgias, the Phaedo, the Republic, and the Phaedrus, dialogues written throughout the early and mid-fourth century B.C.E., in which he anticipates an ultimate reward for the philosopher and eternal punishment for the tyrant in the afterlife. For souls in between, Plato outlines a mixture of temporary reward and punishment followed by reincarnation into different types of humans and animals, based as well upon a hierarchy of character. In this way, Plato projects his political philosophy, which contrasts an ideal philosopher-ruled aristocracy with tyranny and intermediate constitutions, onto a posthumous system of reward and retribution favoring those who, like himself, practice philosophy. Due to this correlation, Plato's eschatological myths complement and justify his political teachings.

The writings of Plato have influenced countless philosophers and political thinkers for centuries. For example, one of his most famous dialogues, the *Republic*, has been extensively studied and debated due to its unique conception of an ideal state ruled by philosopher "guardians." Conversely, many of Plato's writings that emphasize the existence of an afterlife following posthumous judgment—his eschatological myths—have often been ignored by scholars in favor of his political philosophy. However, these two major aspects of Plato's philosophy are not mutually exclusive; further comparison reveals a consistent correlation between Plato's political arguments and spiritual beliefs. Due to the parallels between Plato's conception of the afterlife and his political philosophy, his eschatological myths complement and justify his political teachings.

This paper's examination of the correlation between Plato's spiritual and political beliefs fits within a broader historical context in which religious doctrines served to validate political authority. One

notable example is the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, which describes an afterlife for the virtuous that

reflects the socially stratified caste system maintained in the New Kingdom of Egypt (c. 1550-1077

B.C.E.). According to this text, while the pharaoh traditionally becomes the god Osiris, the souls of the

working poor who pass the scene of judgment are simply resurrected in the Field of Reeds, where they

work to produce crops in an existence similar to their lives on earth.[1] This depiction of the afterlife

consequently supports the pharaoh's divinely inspired authority over his subjects. Even in the Roman

Empire, the widespread worship of the Egyptian goddess Isis, who was thought to possess absolute

power and to demand acquiescence from her followers, was used to legitimize the authoritarian rule of

the Roman emperors. Rather than repress this unorthodox cult, veteran soldiers stationed on the

frontiers of the empire were allowed and even encouraged to spread this religion, since it was

compatible with the Roman political status quo.[2] Similar to these historical figures and institutions,

Plato's spiritual convictions inform his political beliefs.

Of his discussions of a variety of philosophical subjects, Plato (427-347 B.C.E.) is most renowned

for his focus on ethics and politics. Throughout his youth, the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.E.) raged

between the powerful Greek city-states of Athens and Sparta, a calamitous war that greatly influenced

Plato's future political beliefs.[3] After the execution of his ascetic mentor Socrates in Athens in 399 B.C.E.,

Plato began writing his philosophic dialogues.[4] In his early writings, the Socratic dialogues, Plato's

depiction of Socrates and his famous method of introspective questioning appeared relatively close to

the historical Socrates and his methods. In his middle dialogues and late dialogues, however, Plato

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[1] John H. Taylor, *Death and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 27-38, 115.
[2] R. E. Witt, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971), 233-39; Panayotis Pachis, *Religion and Politics in the Graeco-Roman World: Redescribing the Isis-Sarapis Cult* (Thessaloniki, Greece: Barbounakis Publications, 2010), 205-22.
[3] Andrew S. Mason, *Plato* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California Press, 2010), 4-6; Jean-François Pradeau, *Plato and the City: A New Introduction to Plato's Political Thought*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Exeter, U.K.: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 1-2; Greg Rocco, *Athens Victorious: Democracy in Plato's Republic* (Plymouth, U.K.: Lexington Books, 2007), 97.
[4] Mason, *Plato*, 5-7.

became more assertive and dogmatic, tending to giving answers rather than questions.[5] Using the character Socrates as his mouthpiece,[6] he espoused a political and philosophical framework in stark contrast to that of Athenian democracy, Spartan timocracy (a term used by Plato to characterize Spartans' militaristic and honor-based lifestyle), and tyranny, all of which he regarded as flawed constitutional forms.[7] In these later dialogues, Plato also began presenting his views on the afterlife, encapsulated in his eschatological myths.

Although theological and spiritual reflections abound in Plato's dialogues, the four myths in the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Phaedrus* stand out due to their cohesiveness, use of vivid imagery, and length. Despite differences in how the afterlife is specifically described, these stories all share the common theme of eschatological reversal, in which one's virtue and wisdom grants him or her entrance into heaven, while hell is reserved for those who, despite their power and wealth on earth, nevertheless led their lives unjustly and impiously. The *Gorgias* features, historically, Plato's earliest eschatological myth and paints a simplistic divide between the Isles of the Blessed for the virtuous and the chasm of Tartarus for the unjust (*Gorg.* 523a-527a).[8] An interesting side story, however, recounts the replacement of Cronus's flawed system for posthumous judgment with Zeus's improved system. Under Cronus, judges mistakenly admitted evil souls who hid their wickedness behind "fine bodies and lineage and wealth" into paradise; under Zeus's reforms, naked judges examined naked souls so that their verdicts were based upon virtue alone, not appearances (*Gorg.* 523b-e).[9] In this story, Cronus's system resembles the Athenian justice system of Plato's time, which was swayed by the external appearances

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[5] Mason, 9, 17-19.

[6] Alex Long, "Plato's Dialogues and a Common Rationale for Dialogue Form," in *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity*, ed. Simon Goldhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 45-59.

[7] Mason, 4-6, 9-12; Pradeau, 1-7; Rocco, 97, 104-05.

[8] David Sedley, "Myth, Punishment and Politics in the *Gorgias*," in *Plato's Myths*, ed. Catalin Partenie (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 51.

[9] Michael Inwood, "Plato's Eschatological Myths," in *Plato's Myths*, ed. Catalin Partenie (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 28.

and reputations of the wealthy and powerful, while Zeus's impartial system reflects Plato's ideal

conception of justice.[10]

In contrast to the simpler conceptions of the afterlife presented in the *Gorgias,* the *Phaedo*

presents the fullest descriptions of paradise and the underworld, describing the fate of the philosopher

as more ideal than that of other virtuous men as well as differentiating the fates of neutral souls from

the wicked in the underworld (*Phaedo* 108e-114c). This dialogue also briefly illustrates how one's

character influences the type of animal they will reincarnate into (*Phaedo* 81e-82c), though Socrates'

narrative of the Myth of Er at the end of Book X of the *Republic* describes the process of reincarnation,

or *metensomatosis*, most fully among Plato's dialogues. In this story, Er, a Pamphylian warrior, visits the

underworld in a near-death experience and witnesses the process in which souls choose their next life

from a selection of choices (*Rep.* X, 614b-621c).[11] Likewise, in the *Phaedrus* Plato offers an interesting

account of reincarnation but, in addition, contributes an allegory for how souls sometimes possess the

privilege to access an ultimate heavenly realm but risk losing this privilege, which will force them to

undergo reincarnation in a variety of human or animal forms depending on their character (*Phaedrus*

246a-250d). Although the myths of these four dialogues differ in terms of specific details, they share

much in common in how they depict Plato's essential beliefs of the afterlife, which emphasize eternal

torment for incurable tyrants and ideal prospects for philosophers.

The fates of souls in Plato's eschatological myths parallel his comparison of the ideal political

constitution, led by philosopher-rulers, with lesser constitutions, the worst being tyranny. In Book IX of

the *Republic*, Socrates further asserts that the various constitutions correspond to a particular type of

soul embodying the virtue of the constitution. Thus, his descriptions of the five primary constitutional

forms correspond to five types of men, ranked from best to worst in terms of their virtue: the wisdom-

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[10] Sedley, 56-58.
[11] I. P. Couliano, *Out of this World: Otherworldly Journeys from Gilgamesh to Albert Einstein* (Boston, Mass,: Shambhala Publications, 1991), 140.

loving philosopher, the honor-loving timocrat, the money-loving oligarch, the freedom-loving democrat, and worst of all, the self-loving tyrant (*Rep.* IX, 578a-587e). By comparing the ideal philosophic constitution with the worst government of tyranny, Plato creates an analogy that contrasts the happiness and virtue of the superlatively just man with the most unjust man.[12]

As is clear in Plato's core political philosophy, the tyrant is regarded as the most contemptible of all men. In the *Republic*, Socrates claims that "a man becomes tyrannical…when he has become even as the drunken, the erotic, the maniacal" (*Rep*. IX, 573c). Due to his immense greed and insatiable passions, the tyrannical man is considered without question the most unhappy of all men (*Rep*. IX, 573b). Thus, according to Plato, the tyrant's life is not only selfish and unjust, but also inherently unattractive, since he is enslaved to his desires. Plato contrasts this unflattering description of the tyrant to that of the just philosopher, who directs all his actions by self-restraint and reason.[13] Due to his extreme unjustness and impiety, the tyrannical man is considered to be a threat not only to other men but entire cities; to Plato, a tyrant's reign is the worst fate a city can suffer.[14]

Not only are tyrants the most wretched men on earth, as maintained by Plato, but they also suffer the greatest punishment in his eschatology. In the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic*, those responsible for the worst offenses are thrown into Tartarus, a deep, dark chasm within the earth (*Gorg.* 523b; *Phaedo* 113e; *Rep*. X, 615c-616a). Considered irredeemable due to their atrocious and impious crimes, these souls suffer "throughout eternity the greatest and most excruciating and terrifying tortures" (*Gorg*. 525c). Most of the men sentenced to be punished this way are tyrants, kings, and corrupt politicians, because the evilness of their deeds is amplified by their luxury and pomposity (*Gorg*. 525c-d).[15] Their eternal punishment is not simply punitive; it also serves to deter other souls from

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[12] Mason, 152-53.
[13] Zdravko Planinc, *Plato's Political Philosophy: Prudence in the Republic and the Laws* (Columbia, Miss.: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 187-89; Mason, 153-54.
[14] Planinc, *Plato's Political Philosophy*, 193-94.
[15] Inwood, 28-29.

pursuing a similar life. In the Myth of Er, Socrates mentions Ardiaeus the Great among other tyrants who were tortured in front of onlooking souls due to their heinous crimes (*Rep*. X, 615c-616a).[16] Socrates also claims that, even in Homer's conception of the afterlife, eternal punishment was reserved for kings and princes such as Tantalus, Sisyphus, and Tityus because "it is among the most powerful that you find the superlatively wicked" (*Gorg*. 525e). From these myths, Plato indicates that the punishment of tyrants and evil kings, the most despicable of all souls, is the worst form of retribution due to its permanence and use as a deterrent for other souls in Hades.

In describing his eschatology, Plato references real-life historical figures who he believes will suffer in hell, thus blurring the divide between his political views and his spiritual convictions. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates explains that as the judge Radamanthus examines souls from Asia to determine their fate in the afterlife, he will encounter "the Great King" among other despots whose souls are "full of scars due to perjuries and crime," and he will sentence them to be punished in Tartarus (*Gorg*. 524a-525a). Plato's mentioning of the "Great King" in Asia, without mentioning any specific rulers, seems to imply that not even the Persian kings, who were some of the wealthiest and most powerful leaders in Plato's time, could escape judgment and punishment for their abuse of power.[17] Additionally, in describing tyrants who will suffer eternal punishment, Socrates mentions Archelaus, the king of Macedonia in the early fourth century B.C.E., whom Plato sternly criticized for killing his own relatives in a power struggle (*Gorg*. 470d-471d, 525d).[18] Conversely, Socrates praises Aristides who, unlike many other politicians, actually used his power justly, though Socrates maintains that "most of those in power…prove evil" (*Gorg*. 526a-b).[19] These passages indicate that Plato's myths were intended to be

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[16] Couliano, 140.
[17] Rocco, 166.
[18] Rebecca Bensen Cain, "Shame and Ambiguity in Plato's *Gorgias*," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 41, no. 3 (2008): 215, doi: 10.1353/par.0.0008; Sedley, 66.
[19] Sedley, 60.

interpreted as more than just allegories; they also were premonitions of the fate of certain men from Plato's own time.

In contrast to the tyrant, Plato lavishes abundant praise upon the philosopher as the ideal citizen. Since Plato's ideal philosopher disregards corporeal and material desires in favor of the pursuit of truth and wisdom, he is considered not only to be the most just of all men, but even to have the closest connection humanly possible to divinity.[20] Due to these merits, Plato also considers the philosopher to be the ideal statesman. When Socrates outlines the ideal state in the *Republic*, philosopher-rulers are justified due to their exclusive knowledge of the Forms—ideal, abstract, timeless properties by which earthly objects serve as imperfect instantiations, like the Form of the Good[21]— which was considered a valuable skill that corresponds to the skill of ruling.[22] Since the philosopher also derives the most genuine pleasure from the pursuit of true knowledge, he is also the happiest of men, unlike others who are ruled only by corporeal or material desires.[23] Therefore, it will come as no surprise that Plato's writings regard his own lifestyle as a philosopher as the best, both during life and after death.

Plato's suspiciously favorable view of the philosopher as the superlatively just man is reflected in the ultimate paradise he believes the philosopher will enjoy in the afterlife. In the *Gorgias*, the fates of good private citizens and philosophers are not differentiated; since they similarly "lived in piety and truth," they are all sent to the Isles of the Blessed (*Gorg*. 527c). A greater realm for the philosopher, however, is emphasized in the *Phaedo*. In this dialogue, those who ascetically adhered to the philosophic life are freed from their bodies and are allowed to ascend to a realm "even more beautiful"

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[20] G. R. F. Ferrari, "Glaucon's Reward, Philosophy's Debt: the Myth of Er," in *Plato's Myths*, ed. Catalin Partenie (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 121; Mason, 139, 144; Planinc, 270-71.
[21] Couliano, 138; Mason, 1-3, 28-30, 166.
[22] Mason, 125-126; Pradeau, 55.
[23] Mason, 153-54.

than can be described, while all lesser souls must continue the cycle of reincarnation (*Phaedo* 114b-c).[24]

By reiterating this point several times in the *Phaedo*, Socrates promises to philosophers an escape from

metensomatosis altogether, claiming that if a soul "has pursued philosophy in the right way…it departs

to that place which is, like itself, invisible, divine, immortal, and wise…it really spends the rest of time

with God" (*Phaedo* 81a).[25] Socrates maintains that this ultimate realm is exclusive only to philosophers,

asserting that "no soul which has not practiced philosophy…may attain to the divine nature" (*Phaedo*

82b-c).

Similar to the *Phaedo*, in the *Phaedrus* Plato presents an elaborate picture of an ultimate

paradise for philosophers, which he calls the "plain of Truth" (*Phaedrus* 248b). Plato's character of

Socrates vividly explains how only worthy souls may enter this realm: the plain of Truth exists literally

"beyond the heavens," even above the paradisiacal home of the gods, and can only be accessed by

reaching the "summit of the arch that supports the heavens," where the soul will then "stand upon the

back of the world" as "the revolving heaven carries them round" to the other side (*Phaedrus* 247a-c). As

in the *Phaedo*, however, Socrates admits that he is unable to fully describe the nature of this mysterious

plain. Nonetheless, he explains that "it is there that true being dwells, without color or shape, that

cannot be touched; reason alone, the soul's pilot, can behold it" (*Phaedrus* 247c). This stipulation, in

Plato's mind, justifies why only the soul of a philosopher who seeks true knowledge and beauty is

allowed to follow the gods into this realm. Residing here, the philosophic soul is nourished by pure

reason due to unobstructed access to the Forms, contentedly "contemplating truth" (*Phaedrus* 247c-e).

Eventually, after enough time "the heaven's revolution brings [the soul] back full circle" into the realm

of the gods, but this most wise and virtuous soul, having fully experienced the plain of Truth, will always

be able to return (*Phaedrus* 247d). Lesser souls, however, may only catch at best a few glimpses of the

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[24] Couliano, 138-39.
[25] Ferrari, 129.

plain of Truth due to their lack of philosophic virtue, and their limitations will eventually prevent them

from being able to see this realm at all, thus forcing them to undergo the process of reincarnation.

Although a special, eternal paradise for philosophers is emphasized in the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and

Phaedrus, Plato's myth at the end of the *Republic* sets forth a different, yet still fortunate, fate for the

philosopher. In the Myth of Er, there is no mention of a special heavenly realm for philosophers since it

is implied that all men, even philosophers, must go through the cycle of reincarnation. However,

Socrates assures that he who "loved wisdom sanely…not only will he be happy here but that the path of

his journey thither and the return to this world will not be underground and rough but smooth and

through the heavens" (*Rep*. X, 619e). While most souls in their ignorance of the positive or negative lots

of future lives end up alternating between reward and punishment in the afterlife, the lover of wisdom

will carefully choose the lot of a virtuous "life seated in the mean," following the path of truth and

moderation, thus ensuring the soul's celestial well-being (*Rep*. X, 618c-619e).[26] Even under this

interpretation, Plato still allots a privileged position for the philosopher, who will safely navigate through

his future lives with the help of wisdom and reason.

Between the extremes of the just philosopher and the unjust tyrant, Plato claims that most

people embody the three intermediate constitutions of timocratic, oligarchic, and democratic souls. Out

of these three the timocratic constitution, which is most influenced by the Spartan and Cretan

constitutions,[27] is admired by Plato due to its reverence toward virtue.[28] Nevertheless, he criticizes the

way in which the Spartan-like timocrat admires only military virtue and honor while disregarding other

virtues like wisdom and philosophy.[29] Due to the timocrats' lack of gentleness and education, they are

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[26] Ferrari, 129-32.
[27] Rocco, 107.
[28] Mason, 133.
[29] Malcolm Schofield, "*Fraternité, Inégalité, la Parole de Dieu*: Plato's Authoritarian Myth of Political Legitimation," in *Plato's Myths*, ed. Catalin Partenie (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 112; Mason, 133, 153-154.

believed by Plato to eventually devolve into greedy oligarchs, who are criticized for their "illiberality."[30]

In describing this type of soul, Plato compares the oligarch to the Great King of Persia, who covets

wealth at the expense of other nations as well as his own subjects.[31] Worse yet, the democrat is further

criticized for pursuing unnecessary desires and foolishly adhering to the "false and boastful speeches" of

demagogues.[32] Due to his ignorance, the democrat is prone to enslavement by an ambitious tyrant.[33] It

is clear that Plato's criticism of the democrat is directed against the Athenian democracy. Furthermore,

even his ideal society reflects the stark rejection of democratic rule in favor of a philosopher-based

aristocracy.[34] Indeed, Plato lambasts Athens' democratic government not only in the *Republic* but

elsewhere in his writings; in the *Menexenus*, *Timaeus*, and *Critias*, Plato challenges Athens' belligerent

naval imperialism, which he believed arose in part due to the city-state's democratic system, which

often granted authority to opportunistic, warmongering politicians and generals.[35] Overall, Plato

considers the Spartan timocratic constitution and Athenian democratic constitution as both deeply

flawed, possibly due to both states' roles in the disastrous Peloponnesian War of the late fourth century

B.C.E.[36]

  In contrast to the philosopher and the tyrant, Plato does not outline any specific

correspondences of the timocratic, oligarchic, and democratic souls to their respective eschatological

fates. Nevertheless, the common theme he emphasizes is a system of temporary rewards and

punishments, paid "tenfold" respectively for good deeds and crimes on earth (*Rep.* X, 614d-615b) and

intermediated by the reincarnation cycle.[37] In the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic*, a soul judged to be

wicked has a seal set upon them indicating whether they are curable or incurable. While both types are

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[30] Rocco, 110-11, 113-14, 163.

[31] Rocco, 166.

[32] Rocco, 116-17.

[33] Rocco, 138.

[34] Mason, 128, 133; Pradeau, *Plato and the City*, 59; Schofield, 111.

[35] Pradeau, 11-15, 119-23.

[36] In the *Phaedo*, Socrates even laments that there is "so little time for philosophy" due to "wars and revolutions and battles…undertaken for the acquisition of wealth we are slaves in its service," (*Phd*. 66c-d); Rocco, 97.

[37] Inwood, 36-37.

sent to Tartarus, the curable souls are punished only temporarily for the purpose of purification and

repentance, unlike the incurable tyrants who suffer eternal torment in order to deter the former (*Gorg*.

525b-526b; *Phaedo* 112e-114b; *Rep*. X, 614c-d).[38] As stated in the *Phaedo*, curable sinners are given a

single chance once per year to beg forgiveness from those they have wronged. Amongst these souls,

Socrates even specifies that, en route to and from Tartarus, "manslayers" are sent down the leaden-gray

Cocytus River and pffenders against their parents down the fiery stream of Pyriphlegethon, where they

are forced to suffer while waiting for the rare opportunity for absolution (*Phaedo* 112e-114b).

      Unlike the souls of wrongdoers, the souls of virtuous men have access to a pleasant afterlife in

some form of paradise. In the *Gorgias*, the soul of a good "private citizen" is sent to the Isles of the

Blessed, a conception of paradise which evolves later in Plato's writings (*Gorg*. 526c). According to

Socrates in the *Phaedo*, "those who are judged to have lived a life of surpassing holiness" move upward

to earth's "true" surface, while philosophers ascend to an even higher realm (*Phaedo* 114b-c). The true

earth is more ideal and beautiful in every respect compared to the hollow depths which humans regard

as earth's surface. Socrates explains that the humans who dwell upon this aether have long-lasting

health due to the true earth's ideal temperate climate, and further, since the gods inhabit this realm

alongside these humans, they meet and converse in person (*Phaedo* 109b-111c). Plato's imaginative

description of the true earth, reserved for souls that led good lives, is consistent with his belief that

higher realms are more ideal.[39]

      Plato presents an entirely different story in the *Phaedrus* than in the *Phaedo*, though he is

consistent in maintaining that virtuous souls have access to some heavenly realm. In this dialogue,

Socrates claims that while only the souls of the most virtuous philosophers may forever visit the

magnificent plain of Truth, some virtuous yet unphilosophic souls may have at least partial access to this

celestial plane. To explain this concept, Socrates offers an extended metaphor describing the soul as a

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[38] Sedley, 60-63.
[39] Couliano, 139.

tripartite chariot, with the winged charioteer of reason driving both a "noble and good" horse and an obstinate horse of "the opposite character" at the same time (*Phaedrus* 246a-b). A philosophic soul, by virtue of his superior reason, can easily control his chariot and ascend to the plain of Truth without much difficulty. Virtuous yet unphilosophic souls, however, struggle to control their "unruly steeds" (*Phaedrus* 248a). As a result, the chariot tumultuously rises and sinks near the summit so that the charioteer's head is only briefly able to see inside the plain of Truth, unable to fully enter this higher realm. Soon enough, these souls, like all other lesser souls, will be unable to access this realm at all due to the impurities of their souls and, completely losing control of their chariots, will lose their wings and fall to the earth (*Phaedrus* 248a-c). No soul that has fallen this way may regain their wings until ten thousand years have passed (*Phaedrus* 248e). In the meantime, they must all undergo reincarnation interspersed with posthumous judgment, with wicked souls being "taken to be punished in places of chastisement beneath the earth" for a thousand years and virtuous souls conversely being "borne aloft by Justice to a certain region of the heavens, there to live in such manner as is merited by their past life in the flesh," alike for a thousand years (*Phaedrus* 249a-b). Thus, in both the *Phaedo* and the *Phaedrus*, Plato allows imperfect yet virtuous souls access to some type of heavenly realm, while the souls of philosophers reside in a place even higher and more blissful than the rest.

Far from the paradises of earth's true surface and the plain of Truth as well as the depths of Tartarus, the majority of deceased souls go to a gloomy realm between these extremes. These souls which have lived "neutral lives" are sent through the River of Acheron to the Acherusian Lake, where they are "absolved by punishment for any sins…and rewarded for their good deeds" (*Phaedo* 113d-e). After each soul respectively experiences temporary paradise or punishment, he or she returns and converses together with the others in a meadow in preparation for reincarnation. According to the Myth of Er, "those from heaven related their delights and visions of a beauty beyond words," while others "recalled how many and how dreadful things they had suffered and seen in their journey beneath the

earth" (*Rep*. X, 614d-615b). Regardless of one's good or bad deeds, however, everyone but the philosophers, who will be eternally rewarded, and the incurable tyrants, who will undergo eternal punishment, is sent to be reincarnated once more, though each soul's fate in the next life is influenced by their character from their previous life. [40]

Although Plato's accounts of reincarnation differ between dialogues, the crucial role that virtue plays in determining one's future life remains consistent. In the *Phaedo*, reincarnation is directly based upon character; Socrates states that greedy, selfish, and alcoholic men "are likely to assume the form of donkeys and other perverse animals," while violent criminals "become wolves and hawks and kites" (*Phaedo*. 81e-82a). Conversely, those who "cultivated the goodness of an ordinary citizen…by habit and practice, without the help of philosophy…will probably pass into some other kind of social and disciplined creature like bees, wasps, and ants, or even back into the human race again, becoming decent citizens" (*Phaedo* 82a-b). Through these descriptions, Plato organizes reincarnated lives into a hierarchy, where reincarnation as some animals, like human beings, is considered a reward for good character, whereas reincarnation into other animals is regarded as a punishment.[41]

In contrast to the *Phaedo*, the Myth of Er in the *Republic* depicts souls choosing their next life from a number of lots. However, since the choices are ambiguous, whether the souls choose a seemingly good or bad life is heavily influenced by their character and ignorance.[42] For example, one of the men who had gone to heaven due to his "virtue by habit and not by philosophy," similar to the definition of an upright timocrat, who abides by law not due to wisdom but due to incentives and the fear of penalty,[43] returned now "unexercised in suffering," and excitedly chose the life of a wealthy

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[40] Couliano, 138-39.

[41] In the *Timaeus*, Plato provides an etiology that establishes mankind as the top of an evolutionary hierarchy by explaining how humans gradually degenerated into lesser animals due to the lack of wisdom, piety, and virtue, cascading from female humans, to mammals, and even to fish, which were descended from the most ignorant fools (*Ti*. 90e-92c); Inwood, 36-37.

[42] Inwood, 42.

[43] Ferrari, 126-28; Rocco, 153-58.

tyrant "in his folly and greed…without sufficient examinations, and failed to observe that it involved the

fate of eating his own children" (*Rep*. X, 619b-c). Through this story, Plato warns that without

philosophy, even good men are destined to fall into the traps of greed and desire. Interestingly, those

who had "themselves suffered and seen the sufferings of others" in Hades were more careful in

choosing a future life of virtue (*Rep*. X, 619d). The result, according to Socrates, is "an interchange of

good and evil for most of the souls" as the soft, inexperienced souls from heaven carelessly select lives

of vice, while the hardened souls from the underworld prudently choose better lives (*Rep*. X, 619c-d).[44]

This inevitable, cyclical mixing of good and bad lives underpins Plato's belief in the futility of

unphilosophical souls vying for true paradise and happiness, either on earth or beyond.

As described in the Myth of Er, even the souls of animals draw lots to change places with

humans and vice versa. Socrates explains the pattern in which "the unjust [transformed] into wild

creatures, the just transformed to tame [ones], and there was every kind of mixture and combination"

as each soul took their preferred spot in the animal kingdom (*Rep*. X, 620d). Despite the plurality of

available selections, Socrates emphasizes that "the choice was determined for the most part by the

habits of their former lives" (*Rep*. X, 619e). For example, the soul of Orpheus, "unwilling to be conceived

and born of a woman," chose to become a swan; the soul of Ajax, son of Telamon, chose a lion; the soul

of Agamemnon chose an eagle due to his "hatred of the human race because of its sufferings"; the soul

of the "buffoon Thersites" chose to become an ape. The experienced and knowledgeable soul of

Odysseus, however, examined his choices carefully and ultimately chose the "life of an ordinary citizen

who minded his own business," similar to Socrates' admiration of a "life seated in the mean" (*Rep*. X,

618c-620d).[45] By referencing a number of illustrious characters from Homer's epic poetry and Greek

mythology, Plato paints a clear picture of how the virtues, fears, and aspirations of mankind bear close

kinship to the nature of all animals. The souls of the most wise and pious philosophers, presumed to be

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[44] Couliano, 139; Inwood, 46.
[45] Ferrari, 133.

absent from the selection of future lives, transcend beyond the animal domain and enter the realm of

true wisdom.[46]

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato offers a slightly different depiction of reincarnation, though his underlying

argument regarding the differentiated fates of souls in-between the extremes of good and evil

corresponds with that of the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*. Similar to the Myth of Er, after a thousand years

of either reward or punishment, souls draw lots for their future lives, and "he who lives righteously has a

better lot for his portion, and he who lives unrighteously a worse" (*Phaedrus* 248e). However, only souls

who, in a previous time, had at least partially accessed the plain of Truth—that is, virtuous yet

unphilosophic souls—may become human, since "man must needs understand the language of [the

Forms]…and such understanding is a recollection of those things which our souls beheld aforetime as

they journeyed [to the plain of Truth]…gazing up to that which truly is" (*Phaedrus* 249b-c). Conversely,

the souls who were never able to ascend to this realm are relegated to lesser animals due to their

deficiency of wisdom, again reflecting a stratified hierarchy of the animal kingdom, at the peak of which

Plato places mankind (*Phaedrus* 248d, 249b-c).[47] However, even the souls that are allowed to choose

human lives must adhere to a sub-hierarchy of humankind based upon each soul's wisdom and

character, reflecting the prejudices that inform Plato's political philosophy in addition to his spiritual

beliefs. As Socrates explains:

> The soul that hath seen the most of being shall enter into the human babe that shall grow into a
> seeker after wisdom or beauty, a follower of the Muses and a lover; the next, having seen less
> [of the plain of Truth], shall dwell in a king that abides by law, or a warrior and ruler; the third in
> a statesman, a man of business, or a trader; the fourth in an athlete, or physical trainer, or
> physician; the fifth shall have the life of a prophet or a Mystery priest; to the sixth that of a poet

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[46] Ferrari, 131-32.

[47] Similar to the *Republic*, Socrates describes in the *Phaedrus* how the souls of men and animals will eventually
intermingle with one another due to the multiplicity of available lots, with the "soul of a man [entering] into the
life of a beast, and the beast's soul that was aforetime in a man [going] back to a man again" (*Phaedrus* 249b).
Again, Plato emphasizes how the souls of animals typically possess inferior virtue to those of men. Socrates
explains, for instance, how a soul that cannot even remember its experiences in the plain of Truth will,
"surrendering to pleasure…go after the fashion of a four-footed beast….consorting with wantonness he has no fear
nor shame in running after unnatural pleasure" (*Phaedrus* 250e-251a).

> or other imitative artists shall be fittingly given; the seventh shall live in an artisan or farmer; the eighth in a Sophist or demagogue; the ninth of a tyrant (*Phaedrus* 248d-e).

In this passage, Plato presents an outline of reincarnation that nearly exactly corresponds to his comparative ranking of philosophical, timocratic, oligarchic, democratic, and tyrannical souls discussed in the *Republic*. The obvious contrast, for instance, between the most ideal lot of a "seeker after wisdom" and the loathsome lot of a tyrant reflects the diametric opposition between philosophers and tyrants emphasized in numerous other dialogues.[48] Furthermore, the second-best lot, that of "a king who abides by law, or a warrior and ruler"—similar to Plato's definition of a timocrat—is compared favorably to the lesser lots of an oligarchic businessman or, worse yet, a democratic demagogue. Through this hierarchy, Plato draws even deeper parallels between his political and spiritual convictions.

Although in the *Phaedrus* most reincarnated souls do not regain the wings that would grant them another chance to reach the plain of Truth until ten millennia after losing them, Plato allows philosophers a shortcut to regaining their wings and escaping the cycle of reincarnation. As Socrates explains, if a soul has earnestly followed philosophy and, "with three revolutions of a thousand years…has thrice chosen this philosophical life [the most ideal lot among all humankind]," the soul may earn his or her wings back (*Phaedrus* 248e-249a).[49] In this way, Plato sets forth a fortunate path to the highest heavens, reserved only for philosophers like his mentor Socrates and himself, and thus promises great rewards for the genuine pursuit of philosophy and wisdom.

Plato's eschatological myths are crucial for justifying his political beliefs by projecting his description of the ideal and degenerative political states into differing realms of the afterlife. It seems that Plato has a vested interest in promoting these myths as true, although he acknowledges that his beliefs are based merely upon faith. While the Socrates of Plato's dialogues supports most of his philosophical arguments with deductive reasoning, the character offers no such logic or proof to justify

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[48] Couliano, 138.
[49] Couliano, 138.

his nonetheless firm belief in the afterlife myths presented in the *Gorgias, Phaedo, Republic,* and

Phaedrus.[50] For instance, Socrates claims he believes in the *Gorgias* myth simply because of a lack of a

viable alternative story (*Gorg*. 527a-b). In the *Phaedo*, Socrates admits that "no reasonable man ought

to insist that the facts are exactly as I have described them" (*Phaedo* 114d), although on numerous

occasions he asserts that he firmly believes in the *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus* myths, as well as the Myth of Er

(*Phaedrus* 246b, 250b-d; *Rep*. X, 521b-d).[51]

Why would Plato believe in these myths without proof, if he went through great pains to prove,

for instance, that the just philosopher is 729 times happier than the unjust tyrant (*Rep*. IX, 587e)?[52] One

explanation is that, since his comparison of the different political constitutions and their corresponding

souls closely parallels his description of the afterlife, Plato's eschatological myths serve to theologically

justify his political manifesto. Accordingly, both of these spheres of thought not only emphasize the

best life for philosophical souls and the worst life for tyrannical souls, but also serve as a practical lesson

for conventional morality.[53] Although in the *Phaedo* Socrates recognizes that he cannot prove his

eschatology, he maintains that it "is both a reasonable contention and a belief worth risking, for the risk

is a noble one," since it espouses "self-control, and goodness, and courage, and liberality, and truth," all

of which are valuable political as well as spiritual virtues (*Phaedo* 114d-e).[54] Furthermore, his concept of

eschatological reversal ensures "something much better for the good than for the wicked," and through

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[50] Gábor Betegh, "Tale, Theology, and Teleology in the *Phaedo*," in *Plato's Myths*, ed. Catalin Partenie (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 84; Ferrari, 128; Inwood, 48.

[51] Indeed, even Plato's proofs for the soul's immortality and the superiority of the philosopher over the tyrant rely upon his assumption of the existence of the Forms, a crucial yet unproven component of his political and ethical philosophy. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates admits, "I am assuming the existence of absolute beauty and goodness and magnitude and all the rest of [the Forms]," even though the rest of the dialogue is devoted to using these same Forms to prove the soul's existence before birth and after death (*Phd*. 100b). For the purposes of this essay I am focusing specifically on Plato's eschatological myths, but there also exists a strong connection between the Forms and the justification of his political philosophy; Mason, 26-30, 45, 50-52, 59; Pradeau, 55.

[52] Rocco, 97.

[53] Sarah Iles Johnston, "Working Overtime in the Afterlife; or, No Rest for the Virtuous," in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions*, ed. Ra'anan S. Boustan and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 97-98; Ferrari, 128; Planinc, 269-70.

[54] Inwood, 48.

this concept Plato stresses his conviction that injustice on earth will be meted out by long-lasting justice

in the afterlife (*Phaedo* 63c).[55] In this way, Plato's political and spiritual convictions are equally

complementary, for he asserts in the *Timaeus* that "he who has been earnest in the love of knowledge

and of true wisdom…must have thoughts immortal and divine" and that he "will be singularly happy" in

this world and the next (*Tim*. 90b-c).

Another explanation for this parallel is that, as a philosopher, Plato's character Socrates wishes

to demonstrate the best afterlife for himself by projecting the benefits of a philosophic lifestyle into the

otherworld. Socrates often indicates this confidence in his own fate, remarking on his deathbed that he

will "depart to a state of heavenly happiness" and "find myself among good men…I shall find there

divine masters who are supremely good" (*Phaedo* 63c, 115d). Indeed, even after describing the Myth of

Er, Socrates adds that the story "will save us if we believe it...so we shall hold ever to the upward way

and pursue righteousness with wisdom…and thus both here and in that journey of a thousand years…we

shall fare well" (*Rep*. X, 621c-d). With this in mind, it is not surprising that Plato's ideal afterlife, whether

in the form of reincarnation into successively better lives or the escape from the cycle of death and

rebirth altogether, is reserved only for those who practice philosophy like himself.

Additionally, Plato even uses his eschatological myth in the *Phaedrus* as a way to deflect

potential criticisms of the philosophical lifestyle. After describing at length the wondrous plain of Truth

and his elaborate system of judgment and reincarnation, he claims that philosophers, despite their

apparent eccentricity in day-to-day life, are in fact divinely inspired:

> Therefore is it meet and right that the soul of the philosopher alone should recover her wings [in order to reenter the blissful plain of Truth], for she, so far as may be, is ever near in memory to those things a god's nearness whereunto makes him truly god. Wherefore if a man makes right use of such means of remembrance [of the plain of Truth], and ever approaches to the full vision of the perfect mysteries, he and he alone becomes truly perfect. Standing aside from the busy doings of mankind, and drawing nigh to the divine, he is rebuked by the multitude as being out of his wits, for they know not that he is possessed by a deity (*Phaedrus* 249c-d).

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[55] Sedley, 67.

By framing the life of a philosopher as the most noble of all men not simply in terms of the accruement of virtue and wisdom, but even in terms of remembrance of the divine, Plato boldly places himself and other philosophers like his mentor Socrates above and beyond would-be detractors as well as the rest of mankind, all regarded as inherently inferior to philosophers according to Plato's stratified, comparative ranking of souls outlined in both his spiritual and political teachings.[56]

Plato's eschatological beliefs, which parallel and supplement his political philosophy, serve to extend his praises of the ideal philosophic society and his criticisms of contemporaneous Greek politics into a spiritual and theological divide between posthumous reward and retribution. Eternal punishment is reserved for the souls of evil kings and tyrants, whom Plato regards as the most miserable and unjust men on earth. Far above the depths of Tartarus, the souls of philosophers find everlasting happiness through successive reincarnation into good, virtuous lives and eventually entering an ultimate, indescribable paradise. In between these extremes, Plato outlines a fate of cyclical pleasure, pain, and reincarnation for the majority of the human race, which comprises flawed timocratic, oligarchic, and democratic souls. While many political philosophers have intensively studied Plato's political writings and many theological scholars have closely examined his spiritual beliefs, the strong overlap between both of these fields sheds light on how Plato's dialogues present an evolving narrative of his convictions and aspirations.

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[56] Couliano, 138.

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The Agonies of the Creator:
Ekphrasis and Authorial Anxiety in Virgil's *Aeneid*

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In Virgil's Aeneid, while there is no discussion of literary texts in Aeneas's world, there are many mentions to works of art that tell a story. By reading these ekphrases and the ways that characters respond to the works of visual narrative art they describe as allegories for how audiences receive and interpret literary works, it is possible to examine Virgil's opinions on literature. This paper will examine these ekphrases to argue that the depictions of art in the Aeneid and particularly the issues of how different characters misinterpret, fail to understand, or ignore the art altogether allow Virgil to describe the anxieties he had as an author about the potential problems he might face in publishing a written narrative.

Fearing the loss of his fleet and mourning the loss of his city, Aeneas, shrouded in mist, looks on the sculpted tale of the fall of Troy and weeps. Within Virgil's *Aeneid* there are three such lengthy examples of *ekphrasis*, the literary representation of visual art, that use delicate verse and take up a lengthy amount of space. Within the *Aeneid*, Virgil's characters tell stories to one another and reference storytelling, but there is no depiction of written literature, which is Virgil's own mode of artistic expression. However, the three large *ekphrases* within the *Aeneid* all depict works of narrative art. I will demonstrate that not only were these sections of *ekphrasis* intentionally crafted to serve the purposes of developing character and alluding to Homer, but that they also act as substitutes for discussions of written literature that still allow Virgil to comment on the narrative arts with a specific emphasis on his own anxieties as a poet and author. These anxieties are not a matter of conjecture; Virgil fought the publication of what would become considered his seminal work, and in his will he requested that all copies be burned upon his death.[1] While what exactly Virgil felt was unfinished about the *Aeneid* remains unknown, his refusal to allow it to be published shows an anxiety over releasing his work for

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[1] Aelius Donatus, *Life of Virgil*, trans. David Scott Wilson-Okamura, 37-39.

public consumption.

This paper uses Robert Fitzgerald's translation of the Aeneid[2] and Jaś Elsner's discussion of *ekphrasis*,[3] the latter of which draws on John Dryden's translation of the *Aeneid*. The issues of working in translation can at times be severe; for example, Dryden chose to use heroic couplets for his translation, a stylistic choice that required him to adhere to a particular meter and rhyme scheme. This choice by necessity may not have permitted Dryden to use the words most faithful to the poem's original meaning. As a result, while Elsner paraphrases the scene in the beginning of Book 6 wherein Aeneas and his companions pass over Daedalus's carvings on the gold doors of Apollo's temple as "Aeneas and his companions famously 'reading through with their eyes' … until the priestess calls them away,"[4] Fitzgerald translates that section as saying that Aeneas and his companions "[w]ould have passed on and gazed and read" the doors' images "had not Achates… [r]eturned now with the priestess of Apollo."[5] Where translations disagree, Fitzgerald's translation has been given primacy for its greater accuracy.

Virgil was widely read in Greek texts, and one of his greatest influences on the subject of literature was Aristotle. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle makes note of the unities of time and action, stating that an epic should focus on a single action in time; in support of this idea, Aristotle notes that Homer's *Iliad* "did not even try to treat the war as a whole, although it does have a beginning and an end,"[6] and that "when he composed the *Odyssey* he did not include everything which happened to Odysseus."[7] For example, Aristotle mentions that although the story of Odysseus's scar is important, the event of his wounding is not, and thus Homer was right to exclude it. Because the depiction of Achilles' shield is "emblematic of the story of the *Iliad* itself, so that the shield is a multilayered image of the poem,

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[2] Virgil, *The Aeneid*, translated and edited by Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Random House, 1983).
[3] Jaś Elsner, Roman Eyes: Visuality & Subjectivity in Art & Text (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007).
[4] Elsner, 82.
[5] Virgil, 6.52.
[6] Aristotle, *Poetics*, translated and edited by Malcolm Heath (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 23.
[7] Aristotle, 51a.

created by and embedded within the poem,"[8] it serves as one of several "actions," in the Aristotelian

sense, that Homer adds to his poem without these actions being extraneous to the plot. Similarly,

Homer uses Odysseus's four-book speech both to narrate a stretch of time that would be impossible to

convey in an epic considering Odysseus's lengthy stay with Circe and Calypso, and also to provide

additional characterization for Odysseus without intruding too far on the plot during this narration. Virgil

uses these same concepts, particularly *ekphrasis*, to similarly bend Aristotle's rules while still including

information that he wants to convey.

When Aeneas arrives in Carthage, he enters the grand temple to Juno. Along the edge of the

roof of the temple are metopes, sections carved to express important ideas to the temple's patrons. The

subjects of these metopes can take the form of a narrative describing a historical or mythological event.

The metopes in the temple that Virgil describes are used to tell the story of the Trojan War, the events

of which take place before the events of Aeneas's story of how he fled the sacked city. The wall art is a

parallel to Demodocus's oration in the *Odyssey*, with the *Aeneid* substituting temple bas-reliefs for

Demodocus's words. Virgil takes this thread up again with the description of Aeneas's shield, on which is

"wrought the future story of Italy, / The triumphs of the Romans."[9] Describing this shield allows Virgil to

describe events that do not fall within the unity of time maintained in the *Aeneid* but which are

nonetheless crucial to convey. Virgil is comfortable applying the Homeric tropes he co-opts to different

forms and repurposing them to fit his narrative needs. Moreover, as Michael C. J. Putnam argues, this

scene and its depiction of Achilles are a mirror to Aeneas, anticipating the end of the *Aeneid*. By the end

of the poem Aeneas "[f]aces a Turnus who is both Priam, as he stretches his hands forth to meet Achilles

in prayer, and Hector, as he prepares to meet his doom."[10] Virgil is willing to make a reference with this

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[8] James A. Francis, "Metal Maidens, Achilles' Shield, and Pandora: The Beginnings of 'Ekphrasis,'" *American Journal of Philology* 130.1 (2009): 12, retrieved from Project Muse on 6 December 2013.
[9] Virgil, 8.850.
[10] Michael C. J. Putnam, "Dido's Murals and Virgilian Ekphrasis," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 98. (1998): 259.

level of subtlety between the first and last books of the *Aeneid*. The *ekphrasis* of Juno's temple references Homer's use of Demodocus to move Odysseus to tears, and it also provides additional narrative information outside the restraints of the unity of action to which Virgil adheres. While Homeric epics contain information about events that occur outside of the action of the story, the inclusion of this information in the narrative occurs within the bounds of conversation or reminiscence. The *Aeneid*'s delivery of extra information in this way preserves the unity of time that Aristotle outlines in a similar method to what Homer uses.

In addition to the works of Aristotle, the corpuses of ancient Greek and Roman writing were rich in discussions and criticism of art. Classical art criticism focused on vastly different concepts than those of contemporary art criticism. In the earliest periods artists were mostly concerned with questions of style, composition, and form. Philosophers, as demonstrated in Plato's dialogues, were concerned much less with these questions and instead focused on the idea of the arts as a form of *mimesis* and artwork's relation to reality, or how people "could be affected by exposure to the arts."[11] Thus, these philosophers and art critics believed that, "particularly in the case of the young, society should harness and control the arts as an educational force."[12] Jerry Jordan Pollitt notes that by the time Cicero was writing treatises, "someone [had] hit upon the idea of comparing specific orators with specific sculptors and painters[,] thereby creating a comparative canon."[13] This approach brought the idea of literature and art as comparative fields to the Roman consciousness, especially because Cicero, the most influential writer of the empire in that time, introduced this perspective. However, literature and art share a feature that literature and oral storytelling do not. Unlike an orated poem or story, which has an author or speaker present to lend gesture and emphasis to the words, after an artist completes a work of visual art he or she must move on, unable to add, remove, or emphasize any part of it. In this way, visual art mirrors

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[11] Jerry Jordan Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art: Criticism, History, and Terminology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 31.
[12] Pollitt, 31.
[13] Pollitt, 60.

literature, as when a written poem is published, the poet no longer has control over how it is interpreted and received by its audience. As Virgil was notoriously reluctant to publish the *Aeneid*, we can assume that this was also a concern for him. Using his characters' readings or misinterpretations of the subjects of his *ekphrases* is Virgil's way of speaking through them on the subjects in which he was invested. Therefore, using the *ekphrases* in the *Aeneid* as sites of interpretation can provide insight into Virgil's thoughts on literature.

The first scene of the *Aeneid*, which takes place in the temple of Juno in Carthage, provides a particularly glaring example of an anxiety Virgil may have had. It is hard to ignore "that the murals decorate an edifice exalting the goddess who, as the poem's opening lines remind us, is the arch-enemy of the Trojans."[14] Carthage was, furthermore, a rival to Rome. Aeneas is moved by these images, saying to his companion, "what region of the earth, Achates, / Is not full of the story of our sorrow? Look, here is Priam. Even so far away / Great valor has due honor; they weep here / For how the world goes."[15] For an artist crafting devotional works to Juno, a notably capricious deity who easily develops and holds grudges, creating a work that sympathizes with the hated Trojans would be a suicidal endeavor. Within Carthage there is no evidence of discontent or divine wrath; on the contrary, the city is a bustling center of industry and flourishing enterprise, and the harmony with which the citizens work is a symbol of Dido's skill and talents as a ruler. The implication, then, is that Aeneas misinterprets the art in the temple due to his sorrow at the loss of his home city of Troy. A misinterpretation such as this shows that Virgil is aware that an audience may misinterpret a work's meaning based on personal experiences, which may then point to an anxiety he had about the possible misinterpretation of the *Aeneid*.

As aforementioned, Greco-Roman literary and artistic criticism in the time of Virgil were mostly concerned with the mechanical aspects of style, diction, and form. According to Pollitt's encyclopedia of Greek terms for art criticism, the most pressing concern to classical artists was that of the verisimilitude

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[14] Putnam, 247.
[15] Virgil, 1.625.

of the artistic representation. Pollitt mentions the often-cited argument "that the ancient Greeks did not have a word for what we now call 'art' and therefore presumably did not have the conception of what the word *art* expresses."[16] The word used was *technē,* a complicated concept that Pollitt cautiously defines as "[o]rganized knowledge and procedure applied for the purpose of producing a specific preconceived result."[17] There is even less data about the concept of a proper way to interpret art as having a meaning, rather than as a method of attaining mental health. However, despite the lack of data, I disagree with the notion that Greeks did not interpret a meaning from art, or that the primary goal of art was to mimic reality. The specific result is not always simply a close mimetic copy of the original, and Aristotle's *Poetics* involves a discussion of what provides the greatest emotional effect on the reader or playgoer. Virgil's worry seems to have been that art in general—and, by extension, the *Aeneid*—can be received incorrectly; the fact that Aeneas's bias and personal experiences lead him to interpret the sculptures in a certain egocentric way reflects this anxiety. Yet Juno and the people of Carthage shed no tears on behalf of the Trojans, of course. Additionally, it is possible that Aeneas's misinterpretation of the reliefs on the temple and its intent is meant by Virgil to demonstrate deficiency in the talent of the artist, who may have been unable to properly craft his work well enough to preclude poor interpretations; if this is the case, this idea would reflect Virgil's concerns that his own skill would be similarly insufficient to ensure that the messages he wanted to convey in the *Aeneid* would be received correctly. This is also the only *ekphrasis* in the *Aeneid* in which the artist is anonymous, and the use of an anonymous artist could demonstrate another anxiety on Virgil's part: that his name and connection to his masterpieces would fade over time, and this separation from his work would further allow later readers to interpret his works in a way that would flatter themselves or reflect their own experiences instead of in the way that Virgil meant for his work to be interpreted.

The final lengthy *ekphrasis* in the *Aeneid*, which describes the artwork that decorates Aeneas's

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[16] Pollitt, 32.
[17] Pollitt, 32.

shield, is noteworthy particularly for its length and for the effort taken to express its beauty. The

description of Aeneas's shield references Homer's description of Achilles' shield, both of which were

made by the Greco-Roman god of fire and forging, whom the Greeks called Hephaestus and the Romans

called Vulcan. As does Homer with Achilles' shield, Virgil devotes much verse to describing the skillful

craftsmanship of Aeneas's shield, narrating the story it depicts, and giving it qualities of movement and

sound so vivid that it could only exist in the imagination and in literature, never in reality. He makes use

of paradox, describing that on the "mid-shield, / The pictured sea flowed surging, all of gold, / As

whitecaps foamed on the blue waves."[18] Of course the ocean cannot be gold and blue at the same time,

but such is Vulcan's skill that the images in gold are seen as though in color. Throughout the *ekphrasis*

there is repeated mention of Vulcan as the shield's creator and the shield as an object created and

crafted. Virgil is invested in reminding the reader of the artificial nature of the object and makes use of

the unique qualities of writing. There is no reason that Virgil cannot say that the shield is gold, blue,

white, red, and silver all at the same time, or that it shows people speaking different languages, or that

it shows movement. Virgil demonstrates that he can describe with beauty things that not only could

never exist, but which also defy imagination. However, even the work of Vulcan himself is not immune

to the problems that Virgil feared would vex his poem. When presented with a beautiful, impossible

work of art crafted by the god of fire and metalworking himself, Aeneas, "knowing nothing of the events

themselves, / … felt joy in their pictures, taking up / Upon his shoulder all the destined acts / And fame

of his descendants."[19] In comparison to the dramatic, tearful reaction that Aeneas has in Juno's temple,

his only emotional response to the events shown on this incomparable masterpiece is that he "felt joy in

their pictures." To Virgil, this muted reaction can be seen as a lack of appreciation for the creator's

mastery due to Aeneas's ignorance of and lack of connection to the events depicted. Because Aeneas

does not have the same emotional connection to the future of Rome that he has to the sack of Troy, his

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[18] Virgil, 8.908.
[19] Virgil, 8.989.

ability to connect with these events on a visceral level is limited; he is thus unable to enjoy the images to

the same extent that Virgil's Roman audience was intended to appreciate them.

To make an analogy, even if Virgil were to refine his work to the same the level of perfection

that Vulcan achieved when crafting Aeneas's shield, it would not ensure that contemporary or later

audiences would properly understand and appreciate his work because of their potential ignorance of

the historical context surrounding the poem. Virgil's anxiety about this possible fate of his work is easily

understandable and was also somewhat prophetic. When Aeneas is in the underworld, Anchises shows

him the Roman heroes yet to be born, which allows Virgil to heap praise on contemporary Roman

figures without straying outside of the unity of time to which he has chosen to restrict himself. However,

there is a potential moment of confusion to a modern reader in this account: "See there, how Marcellus

comes / With spoils of the commander that he killed,"[20] Anchises says, but then, referring to a different

figure, says with grief, "Child of our mourning, if only in some way / You could break through your bitter

fate. For you / Will be Marcellus."[21] With two Romans both named Marcellus, a reader has to be aware

of the fame of the men and the tragedy concerning the younger Marcellus's death in order to fully

understand that section of the narrative. While the average modern reader is not the *Aeneid*'s intended

audience, Virgil was basing his epic on texts centuries older, so the thought of an enduring legacy would

not have been alien to him. This particular reference did not have such a legacy, as the younger

Marcellus's death during the writing of the *Aeneid* does not survive in the popular imagination.

The second *ekphrasis* that appears in the *Aeneid* is the most problematic one, narratologically

speaking. In *Narrate and Describe: The Problem of Ekphrasis*, Don P. Fowler outlines a hierarchy of

ekphrasis from a narratological point of view: the narrator or character describes art, the reader

perceives it, and the author, who is writing to the audience on a metatextual level, sets it all in motion.

This hierarchy can be seen most clearly in the *ekphrasis* of Juno's temple, in which a craftsman creates

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[20] Virgil, 6.1157.
[21] Virgil, 6.1197.

art for the Carthaginians, Aeneas and the narrator describe and interpret the art for the reader, and

Virgil creates the situation for the audience. The same concept is present in a more subtle way for the

ekphrasis concerning Aeneas's shield, with Vulcan as the artist making a shield for Aeneas, Virgil-as-

narrator describing the shield, and Virgil-as-poet using it as an overt reference to Homer for his

audience. This convention, however, is subverted in the *ekphrasis* of Daedalus's doors. It is only for

Apollo that Daedalus creates this temple, and Apollo does not need a mortal's craft to demonstrate his

power. Furthermore, the *ekphrasis* of Daedalus's temple doors is not an obvious reference to previous

epics by Homer, and it does not provide information for a character's class, means, or character; as such,

it pauses the action to seemingly narrate a sculpture seen by no one that depicts events largely

irrelevant to the poem's plot. Yet even though this *ekphrasis* does not advance the plot, it is invaluable

for the insight it provides into Virgil's anxieties.

Daedalus's doors, despite their masterful craftsmanship, do not have an audience. Achates is

sent ahead and retrieves the Sibyl before any of the Trojans can visit the shrine to Apollo and enjoy its

sights. Nonetheless, Virgil devotes many lines to describing them, ending thus:

> In that high sculpture you, too, would have had
> Your great part, Icarus, had grief allowed.
> Twice your father had tried to shape your fall
> In gold, but twice his hands dropped.
> Here the Trojans
> Would have passed on and gazed and read it all,
> Had not Achates, whom they had sent ahead
> Returned now with the priestess of Apollo.[22]

The beginning of this quotation is a climactic emotional moment. The narration of Daedalus's story as

shown through his art has thus far omitted the tragedy of his son's death, which is addressed here in the

most bitingly tragic moment of the *Aeneid*. The line after this selection immediately mentions that the

Trojans did not see Daedalus's masterpiece and that it went unappreciated. Yet even if the Trojans had

seen the temple, they would not have felt the same sense of tragedy that Virgil's intended audience

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[22] Virgil, 6.47.

does. Only by mentioning the omission and the reason for it is Daedalus's grief expressed. It is easy for a

poet to narrate that something is too tragic to be written or said, but it is next to impossible for a visual

artist to do so. The most telling part of this *ekphrasis* is Virgil's use of the word *perlegent*. From the

infinitive *legere*, "to read," *perlegere* implies reading thoroughly, reading aloud, or scanning in detail.

Aeneas "felt joy"[23] when he saw Vulcan's shield, and he stops to "feast his eyes and mind on a mere

image"[24] in the temple at Carthage. This *ekphrasis* is most closely is associated with close literary

scrutiny. Jaś Elsner states that Aeneas "is presented as looking at (or reading about) Daedalus's

creations, whose agonies Daedalus seems to live through and witness as Aeneas watches."[25] The

Fitzgerald translation notably does not mention Aeneas's appreciation of the doors. The temple is

mentioned and the doors are described as Aeneas and the Trojans enter, and the poem states that they

"would have" read the images, but they were called away. Rather, it is the audience who views the

image, a fact that serves to highlight the neglect that Daedalus's images receive from the characters in

the poem. Virgil's anxiety here is thus twofold. Firstly, there is the worry that nobody will read his

poems and thus, that his concern that his work may go unseen and unappreciated despite its merits.

The second anxiety that Virgil expresses in this scene is that he might fail in the way Daedalus failed—

that is, that Virgil could become emotionally unfit to complete his work—and in a way, this fear became

reality. Virgil resisted the *Aeneid*'s publication, and wanted the copies in circulation burned; he was

unable to accept seeing his manuscript out of his hands, unsatisfied with its completion to his death.

Narrative visual art and literature are similar in that once they are completed or published, their

creators may no longer revise them, leaving the works open to misinterpretation and neglect. Virgil was

very aware of not only this shared concern for visual art and written narrative released for public

consumption, but also how this possible fate could befall his own work, which is evident in the scenes

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[23] Virgil, 8.990.
[24] Virgil, 1.132.
[25] Elsner, 83.

where he employs *ekphrasis* in the *Aeneid*. Virgil uses this literary device to describe how his characters

misinterpret, misunderstand, or overlook narrative visual art in order to express his own fears that an

audience might do the same to his own works. We will never know if Virgil had an Icarus of his own that

his hands left unwrought; Virgil's *Aeneid* clearly was doomed in his eyes, never to be properly

appreciated by its audience or even by its creator.

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Sword, Cross, and Plow vs. Pickaxe and Coin:
A Comparison of the Medieval German Settlement of Prussia and Transylvania

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The German medieval settlement of Eastern Europe known as the Ostsiedlung *was carried out by Germans and the Teutonic Order in both Hungary and Transylvania, but with vastly different results. Of the regions settled during the* Ostsiedlung, *Transylvania offered colonists some of the strongest incentives to settle there; in addition to an agreeable climate and fertile soil, those who settled in Transylvania also stood to enjoy generous expansions of legal and economic freedoms far beyond the rights they held in their homelands. Yet the* Ostsiedlung *in Transylvania was arguably a failure compared to the success of the movement in Prussia. Much of this contrast can be explained by comparing the settlement process in each region, conducted largely by peaceful means in Transylvania but by the sword and cross in Prussia. Conquest and conversion supported by secular and ecclesiastical authorities allowed Germans to dominate Prussia and cement the primacy of German language and culture there. By contrast, peaceful settlement left Transylvania's large indigenous populations intact and independent. This cultural plurality, along with the long journey required to reach Transylvania and inconsistent support for settlement there, ensured German settlers in Transylvania never became more than a minority population.*

The medieval settlement of Prussia and Transylvania, from here on referred to by its German name, *Ostsiedlung*, was carried out by Germans and the Teutonic Order in both regions, but to vastly different ends. The German settlement of Transylvania was mostly peaceful, with the majority of settlers being miners, merchants, and peasants. The German settlement of Prussia, however, was done by the sword and the cross, with most of the population either killed or forcibly converted and assimilated. The extent and permanence of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and Transylvania depended on geography, secular and ecclesiastical support for it, methods of conquest and settlement, degrees of cultural assimilation, and the number of settlers. This research paper begins in the mid-eleventh century in both locations, although some background information is provided. This starting point was chosen because it represents the beginning of the Northern Crusades in the Baltic with the Wendish Crusade in 1147 and King Géza II of Hungary's invitation to Germans to settle Transylvania. The research concludes

at the dawn of the fourteenth century. By this time, the Prussian Crusade was over and the first ruling dynasty of Hungary, the Árpáds, had gone extinct.

I. Geography

The scope and duration of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and Transylvania were predicated on simple geography – climate, soil fertility, population density, and more importantly, distance. Bishop Frederick of Hamburg's 1106 charter to settlers attests to the poor state of the land in the Baltic region: "These men came to us and earnestly begged us to grant them certain lands in our bishopric, which are uncultivated, swampy, and useless to our people."[1] In contrast, the climate and quality of the land in Hungary and Transylvania was superb. The twelfth-century chronicler Otto of Freising wrote that Hungary was rich in both its natural beauty and the fertility of its soil.[2] The land was much more fertile and the climate more agreeable in Hungary and Transylvania than in Prussia, but far fewer Germans settled there because of the long journey.

The relative emptiness of Eastern Europe and what Western Europeans perceived as poor land management practices by Slavs, coupled with a population explosion in Western Europe, created a belief among Western Europeans that it was their God-given right to claim and tame lands in Eastern Europe. Of Hungary, Miklós Molnár writes, "There was no shortage of exploitable land in the time of the Angevins. On the contrary, with 3 million inhabitants distributed over a territory of around 300,000 square kilometers, population density was far lower than in Europe's more developed countries."[3] Hungary also contained very few urban settlements, which accounted for only three percent of the

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[1] "Charter to German Settlers," in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 265.

[2] Otto traveled through Hungary during the Second Crusade with the army of King Conrad III of Germany. Otto is best known for his *Gesta Friderici Imperatoris*, a biography of Frederick Barbarossa. See Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 137.

[3] Miklós Molnár, *A Concise History of Hungary,* trans. Anna Magyar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 47.

overall population.[4] In the Baltic as well, Western Europeans commented on the lack of urban

development.[5] The low population density and low level of urban development contributed to Western

European ideas that Eastern Europeans were backward and inferior.

The emptiness of the Baltic, coupled with the perceived poor land management practices of the

Slavs, created a mentality among Western Europeans similar to that of the nineteenth-century American

concept of Manifest Destiny. These medieval settlers felt that they could put the land to better use than

could their Slav counterparts. A late-fourteenth-century Cistercian poem about the earlier settlement of

monks in Poland states:

> The monks were scarcely surviving and were very poor,
> For the country was wooded and without farmers,
> And Poland's poor people were not industrious;
> They plowed the sandy soil with wooden plows, not iron,
> And with no more than two oxen at a time.[6]

The monks were critical of the Slavs' agricultural practices, which they found primitive and inferior to

the methods of Western Europeans, and believed that this inferiority justified German settlement of the

region. Otto of Freising referred to Hungarians as "human monsters" due to their inability to properly

work the land.[7] Half a millennium later, British colonists and American frontiersmen used similar logic to

justify their taking of Native American lands in North America. Jan M. Piskorski writes that the German

colonists were "convinced of their superior civilization and had a sense of mission."[8] Because the Slavs

did not understand appropriate methods of farming, the Germans argued, it was the Germans'

prerogative to settle and properly develop the lands of Eastern Europe.

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[4] Molnár, 48.

[5] "Poem Describing Cistercian Settlement," in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 267.

[6] "Poem Describing Cistercian Settlement," 267.

[7] Bartlett, 137.

[8] Jan M. Piskorski, "The Medieval Colonization of Central Europe as a Problem of World History and Historiography," *German History* 22 (2004): 336-37.

While climate, soil fertility, population density, agricultural practices, and a feeling of

ethnocentrism were all certainly factors, distance had a larger impact on the lasting effects of the

Ostsiedlung in Prussia and Transylvania. The logistics involved in medieval travel, along with the distance

of traveling from German lands to Transylvania, made the journey significantly more difficult than

traveling to Prussia. Consider the difference between travelling from Magdeburg, a major Saxon city in

the Middle Ages, to Kronstadt (modern-day Brasov), the capital of medieval Burzenland in Transylvania,

and traveling from Magdeburg to the Teutonic Knights' headquarters at Marienburg Castle (modern-day

Malbork, Poland). The distance from Magdeburg to Brasov is more than 1,500 kilometers. In the Middle

Ages, a journey like this one would have taken more than a month and a half, assuming that the settlers

were able to travel thirty kilometers per day.[9] In contrast, the distance from Magdeburg to Malbork is

closer to six hundred kilometers, and the trip between the two cities would have taken less than three

weeks, again assuming thirty kilometers per day. Thus, secular German leaders encouraged settlement

in Prussia and other Baltic lands because they had a stake in the process themselves due to these lands'

proximity to their own. German lay and ecclesiastical figures hoped to gain revenue by incorporating

more land into their territories. Settlement in Transylvania, controlled by the Kingdom of Hungary,

would not have been so eagerly encouraged by secular German leaders.

II. Secular and Ecclesiastical Support in Prussia

The papacy and German secular leaders both enthusiastically supported the efforts of the

Ostsiedlung in Prussia, primarily through their support for the Northern Crusades and the Teutonic

Order. The crusades in the Baltic region attracted German holy warriors, accompanied by merchants and

farmers who settled in Prussia. One of the most obvious ways that the papacy supported the

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[9] Peter Spufford writes that medieval four-wheeled carts were able to travel thirty to forty kilometers per day between Salins and Paris, while two-wheeled carts covered less than thirty kilometers a day. See Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit: The Merchant in Medieval Europe* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006), 200.

Ostsiedlung was through the multitude of crusades that it called against the Slavs of the Baltic region. The so-called Northern Crusades were first elevated to equal status with the crusades in the Holy Land during the twelfth century by the granting of full indulgences to soldiers who embarked upon them. In an 1147 letter preaching the Wendish Crusade, Bernard of Clairvaux wrote that "we, by virtue of our authority, promised [those secular and religious leaders assembled at the council in Frankfurt] the same spiritual privileges as those enjoy who set out towards Jerusalem."[10] In 1218, Pope Honorius III granted the same indulgences to the subjects of the German ecclesiastical provinces closest to the Baltic region for their participation in the Prussian Crusade.[11] A separate letter from Honorius stated that those who had taken crusader vows but who were too poor or too weak to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem would be granted the same indulgences for traveling to Prussia.[12] This extension of indulgences to warriors going on the Prussian Crusade meant that pious Germans could fulfill their crusading duties without making the arduous and expensive journey to the Levant. Maria Starnawska writes that once the crusades were extended beyond the Holy Land, "The 'substitute crusades' were organized on the model developed in Palestine: they included such practices as marking the participants of the crusades with the sign of the cross, indulgences, confessions, masses, and communions before a battle."[13] The Northern Crusades against pagan Slavs were thus given both the same appearance and spiritual rewards as the crusades in the eastern Mediterranean against Muslims, which encouraged further German settlement in these Slavic lands.

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[10] Saint Bernard of Clairvaux was a Doctor of the Church and prominent Cistercian monk responsible for preaching the Second Crusade. He also encouraged the Wendish Crusade, and promised the same spiritual rewards for participants, namely full indulgences, as those who took part in the crusades against the Muslims. See Bernard of Clairvaux," 269.

[11] "Regesten 1218," *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch: Regesten und Texte zur Geschichte Preußens und des Deutschen Ordens*, comp. Stuart Jenks and Jürgen Sarnowsky, accessed March 27, 2012, http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/Landesforschung/pub/orden1218.html., PrUB 1.1.20.

[12] *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch*, PrUB 1.1.21.

[13] Maria Starnawska, "Military Orders and the Beginning of Crusades in Prussia," in *The Crusades and the Military Orders*, ed. Steven Runciman, Zsolt Hunyadi, and József Laszlovszky (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 418.

The popes of the thirteenth century did not neglect the Baltic; in fact, they envisioned and preached several successful crusades against the pagans who lived there. Pope Gregory IX, who was pope from 1227 to 1241, called upon the clergy from Magdeburg, Bremen, Poland, Pomerania, Moravia, Sorabia, Holstein, and Gotland to preach the crusade against the Prussians.[14] Richard Spence has argued that during Gregory's reign, the Baltic Crusade became a power struggle between the pope and the crusaders over control of the expedition, and he has also argued that Gregory's policies resulted in a more powerful Teutonic Order, not greater papal control over the crusade.[15] However, I would argue that Pope Innocent IV, one of Gregory's successors, was much more involved in the affairs of the Teutonic Order and the Northern Crusades than his predecessor was. During Innocent's eleven-year reign, he appeared in 104 entries in the *Preußische Urkundenbuch* (roughly nine entries per year), while Gregory appeared in only forty-six entries during his fourteen-year reign (roughly three entries per year). In addition, the last crusade preached by Innocent IV garnered much popular support and succeeded in capturing Samland, the peninsula northwest of Königsberg. This crusade was led by King Przemysl of Bohemia and Margrave Otto of Brandenburg, and also included Bishops Bruno of Olomouc, Heidenreich of Kulm, and Anselm of Warmia.[16] Clearly, the papacy continued to play a major role in the crusades even after Gregory's attempts to control them supposedly backfired.

King Przemysl and Margrave Otto were not the only secular leaders to take part in the Northern Crusades; others were also eager to participate. In fact, it was a secular leader, Duke Conrad of Masovia, who invited the Teutonic Order to aid in the defense of his lands in Prussia when the Sword Brothers proved inadequate at this task. Nicholaus von Jeroschin wrote in his *Chronicle of Prussia* that "[Conrad] called to his court all the bishops and noblemen who could be persuaded to come, revealed his

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[14] *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch*, PrUB 1.1.81.
[15] Richard Spence, "Pope Gregory IX and the Crusade on the Baltic," *The Catholic Historical Review* 69 (1983): 16-17.
[16] *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch*, PrUB 1.1.304.

intentions [to invite the Teutonic Order] to them and asked their opinion. When the lords heard what he

had in mind they thought it was a good idea and agreed whole-heartedly."[17] The Prussian Crusade was

initiated by a secular noble and thus received much secular support. Other notable secular leaders who

participated in the crusade effort in Prussia included Margrave Henry III of Meissen, Duke Albert I of

Brunswick-Lüneburg, Margrave John I of Brandenburg, and Leszek II the Black.

In addition to participating in the crusades, secular leaders also encouraged the settlement of

their subjects in Prussia and donated lands, wealth, and materials to the Teutonic Order. In 1223, the

Bishop of Prussia was given donations of the villages of Szarne, Rudky, and Tushino by Duke Conrad of

Masovia and an annual payment from Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg.[18] According to the Golden

Bull of Rimini, Conrad also "[p]romised and offered [the Grand Master] and his brothers Kulmerland, the

territory between [Prince Conrad] and the Prussian territory, so that [the Teutonic Knights would] take

the pains to move into Prussia and take it into their possession to the honour and glory of God."[19] By

giving the Teutonic Order any Prussian lands that they might conquer in the future, Conrad provided the

Teutonic Knights with ample incentive to carry out the conquest.

When Duke Leszek of Poland gifted the Bishop of Prussia the village of Gut Malininow, this grant

came "with market rights and tax exemptions for the colonists."[20] These market rights and duty

exemptions demonstrate the understanding that secular leaders had of the importance of German

colonization in Prussia. In the transition from traditional Slav markets, which utilized a royal monopoly

system, to German towns, "The prince gives up part of the revenues due him as sovereign in return for

rents paid by the colonists. In agriculture, these rents take the place of *corvées*; in trade, they replace

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[17] Nicholaus von Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin: A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia 1190-1331, Crusade Text in Translation*, trans. Mary Fischer (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 46.

[18] *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch*, PrUB 1.1.43.

[19] The Golden Bull of Rimini was a decree by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II which, in 1226, confirmed the rights and territories of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia. See László Pósán, "Prussian Missions and the Invitation of the Teutonic Order into Kulmerland," in *The Crusades and the Military Orders*, ed. Steven Runciman, Zsolt Hunyadi, and József Laszlovszky (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 438.

[20] *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch*, PrUB 1.1.51. Author's translation.

monopoly income."[21] This policy shift enabled merchants to thrive in the new German market towns and created an incentive to urbanize. Therefore, both Slavic princes and German secular leaders understood the benefits to be gained from the *Ostsiedlung*.

The Teutonic Order and the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia were also able to profit from the conflict between the papacy and the Holy Roman Emperor. The pope and the emperor were the two chief patrons of the Order, but Eric Christiansen writes that "so suspicious of each other's interference were they that they preferred to keep outbidding each other for the friendship of the Order than [to] risk alienating the grand masters by inhibiting their freedom of action."[22] Both the pope and the emperor tried to take control of the Prussian Crusade as well as the land gained from it, but their conflict with each other kept them from fully realizing their goals. For instance, in 1224, Emperor Frederick II took the newly converted peoples of the Baltic region into his kingdom, brought them under his protection, and exempted them from the jurisdiction of their native princes; however, this claim was never confirmed.[23] This conflict allowed the Order to choose the most favorable privileges granted to them by each patron, who confirmed and reconfirmed these rights because they were all too eager to please the grand masters. Thus, the support of the pope, emperor, and other German secular leaders was a major factor in the success of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia.

III. Secular and Ecclesiastical Support in Transylvania

Unlike in Prussia, German settlement in Transylvania received limited papal and secular German support; in addition, the support of the Hungarian king was unreliable. However, Germans played a significant role in the development of the Kingdom of Hungary; although a small minority of the overall population, Germans in Hungary and Transylvania controlled a disproportionately high amount of

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[21] Richard Koebner, "German Towns and Slav Markets," in *Change in Medieval Society: Europe North of the Alps, 1050-1500*, ed. Sylvia Lettice Thrupp (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 32.
[22] Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 104.
[23] *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch*, PrUB 1.1.52.

wealth and power. German immigration to Hungary began with King Stephen's marriage to the Bavarian

princess Gisela, who brought along a large German retinue. Such entourages were the most common

form of German immigration to the Kingdom of Hungary before Géza II invited Germans to settle in

Transylvania in the mid-twelfth century. Martyn Rady writes, "The demand for warriors trained in

western methods of combat, together with land-starvation in Germany and the supposed rewards

available in the Hungarian royal household, fed this immigration."[24] German immigration to Hungary in

the early Middle Ages was mostly limited to knights and nobility. However, King Stephen set a precedent

for further and more extensive German immigration. "As settlers come from various countries and

provinces," he wrote in his *Admonitions* to his son Emeric,

> They bring with them various languages and customs, various instructive concepts and weapons, which decorate and glorify the royal court, but intimidate foreign powers. A country which has only one language and one kind of custom is weak and fragile. Therefore, my son, I instruct you to face [the settlers] and treat them decently, so that they will prefer to stay with you rather than elsewhere.[25]

Thus, King Stephen provided a model for future immigration to Hungary, both military and civil, and

encouraged his successors to continue his policy.

While the kings of Hungary understood the important military role that immigrants played, they

also recognized the potential economic value of immigrants. Hungarian kings had sole control of settling

immigrants on royal lands, and according to Nora Berend, "Taxes and services of immigrants were an

important source of revenue and power for the kings. It is not surprising therefore that many

immigrants were granted privileges by the king."[26] The settlement of Germans in Transylvania began

when Géza II "invited a group of impoverished knights and land-hungry peasants from the Rhine-

Moselle region to settle in Transylvania along the Olt River, on land which, according to a 1224 charter,

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[24] Martyn Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 29.

[25] Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003), 2-3.

[26] Nora Berend, "Immigrants and Locals in Medieval Hungary: 11th – 13th Centuries," in *Grenzräume und Grenzüberschreitungen Im Vergleich: Der Osten und der Westen des Mittelalterlichen Lateineuropa*, ed. Klaus Herbers and Nikolas Jaspert (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2007), 208.

had been 'deserted' (*deserta*)."[27] These immigrants, who came to be known as Transylvanian Saxons,

were intended to cultivate the fertile soil and introduce a forestry culture to the heavily wooded

region.[28] In 1224, King Andrew II of Hungary proclaimed the *Diploma Andreanum*, which stated that

people of different ethnic or legal status could not live in the same administrative region. János M. Bak,

György Bónis, and James Ross Sweeney write, "The territorial rights granted to the Székelys and Saxons

allowed them to form homogeneous societies. Thus began a process of social differentiation that

culminated in the recognition of three distinct and distinctive feudal 'nations': the Hungarians, the

Székelys, and the Saxons."[29] In the late thirteenth century, King Andrew III gave the Transylvanian

Saxons equal legal footing with the Székelys and Hungarian nobility in terms and conditions of military

service, taxes, tithes, rights of succession and inheritance, and legal status.[30] Thus, the legal status of

Transylvanian Saxons was more favorable than the status of Germans in Prussia; evidently, other factors

mattered more.

The next great wave of German immigration to Transylvania occurred during the reign of

Andrew II, who invited the Teutonic Knights to the region. Prior to the arrival of the Order, protection of

the eastern border of the Kingdom of Hungary was in the hands of the semi-nomadic Pechenegs. As the

power of the nomadic Cumans increased in the eleventh century, the Pechenegs were unable to curb

their invasions.[31] Andrew's solution was to invite the Teutonic Order, along with other Germans, to

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[27] László Makkai, András Mócsy, and Béla Köpeczi, *History of Transylvania Volume I. From the Beginnings to 1606* (Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs, 2001), 421.

[28] Zoltan Kosztolnyik, *From Coloman the Learned to Béla III (1095-1196): Hungarian Domestic Policies and Their Impact upon Foreign Affairs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 113.

[29] Székelys are an ethnic subgroup of Hungarians who live in the modern counties of Covasna, Mureş and Harghita in Transylvania. In the Middle Ages, they were given the Székelyföld or Székely Land in the Carpathian Mountains to guard the eastern frontier of Hungary. See Makkai, Mócsy, and Köpeczi, *History of Transylvania*, 425.

[30] János M. Bak, György Bónis, and James Ross Sweeney, *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary, 1: 1000-1301* (Bakersfield, Calif.: Charles Schlacks, Jr., 1989), 43-45.

[31] Both the Cumans and Pechenegs were Turkic peoples from Central Asia who initially came to Hungary as raiders before settling down and serving as guardians of the Eastern frontier. See József Laszlovszky and Zoltán Soós, "Historical Monuments of the Teutonic Order in Transylvania," in *The Crusades and the Military Orders,* ed. Zsolt Hunyadi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 322.

settle in the Burzenland and defend the border of the kingdom.[32] This arrangement could have been

beneficial to both Hungary and the Order; indeed, a similar arrangement with the Hospitallers existed

from 1247 to 1260 during the reign of Béla IV, but the Teutonic Order got greedy.[33]

The Teutonic Order overstepped its bounds by expanding its influence beyond the Carpathians

and attempting to create an *Ordenstaat*, an independent state ruled by the Order. The sense of

entitlement that led to the Order's expulsion from Transylvania was likely inspired by the lavish

privileges offered to them by King Andrew II in exchange for their protection of his realm's eastern

border. József Laszlovszky and Zoltán Soós write:

> The privileges allowed them to build wooden castles and towns (*castra lignea et urbes ligneas*);
> to be dispensed from the hosting of the members of the royal court and from the paying of
> special taxes (*liberos denarios at pondera*); not to pay any other royal taxes (*exactione*); to found
> markets (*libera fora*); and to keep gold and silver found in that area, with partial payments made
> to the royal Treasury.[34]

These privileges were among the most generous in the Kingdom of Hungary. When the Order first

arrived in Transylvania, it had no intentions of creating an *Ordenstaat*. At this time, it would have been

unthinkable to attempt to move the primary operations of the Order from the Holy Land to Transylvania

because there was still hope that the situation in the Levant would improve.[35] However, the intentions

of the Order began to change as its position in Transylvania grew stronger. Florin Curta writes, "Judging

by their request to Pope Honorius III that their domain on both sides of the Carpathian Mountains be

placed under papal authority, the ultimate goal of the Knights seems to have been to create a state on

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[32] Burzenland is a historical region of southeastern Transylvania centered on Brașov. Other Transylvanian Saxon areas included Nösnerland, centered on Bistrița, Altland, centered on Sibiu, and Weinland, centered on Sighișoara. See Makkai, Mócsy, and Köpeczi, *History of Transylvania*, 424.

[33] Anthony Luttrell, "The Hospitallers in Hungary Before 1418: Problems and Sources," in *The Crusades and the Military Orders,* ed. Zsolt Hunyadi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 271-72.

[34] Laszlovszky and Soós, 323.

[35] When the Teutonic Knights were invited to Transylvania in 1211, the order was only twenty years old and in a relatively strong position. The Fifth Crusade, largely an Austrian and Hungarian venture, failed to conquer Egypt in the 1210s. However, the diplomatic maneuvers of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II and Grand Master Hermann von Salza resulted in the recapture of Jerusalem and Jaffa by Christian forces in 1229. See Laszlovszky and Soós, 322.

the southeastern frontier of Hungary."[36] As the Order's intentions began to shift, the Knights came into conflict with the Hungarian king.

Realizing the importance of the Order's task, King Andrew ignored the early transgressions of the Knights, but they eventually became a threat to royal power. The Order's early abuses included building stone castles, occupying royal areas, and insisting on changes to the original agreement.[37] In 1222, Andrew granted the Order even more generous rights, but it continued to spread beyond the Carpathians and occupied new territories. This expansion angered Andrew, who sent a large army to expel the Order in 1225. The pope attempted to intervene, but he was too late.[38] Laszlovszky and Soós claim that these events were a "[n]atural process, because the Teutonic Order had its own territories in the Holy Land, and they had more independence than was typical in the Hungarian Kingdom. In their *Hinterland*, in the Holy Roman Empire, the knights or the nobility had great freedom compared with the nobility of the Hungarian Kingdom."[39] The expulsion of the Teutonic Knights from Transylvania can be seen as a misunderstanding between the Teutonic Knights of Western Europe, who were used to having greater freedoms, and the king of Hungary, whose own subjects had less sovereignty than he bestowed upon the Order. After the Order was expelled from Transylvania, the vast majority of the German settlers who came with it stayed on and assimilated into the Transylvanian Saxon population.[40] The *Ostsiedlung* in Transylvania commanded much less attention from the pope than it did in Prussia, but the *Ostsiedlung* did occupy Hungarian royal favor until the Teutonic Order overstepped its rights and was expelled.

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[36] Florin Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1250* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 405.
[37] Laszlovszky and Soós, 324.
[38] Laszlovszky and Soós, 324.
[39] Laszlovszky and Soós, 323.
[40] Curta, 405.

IV. Sword, Cross, and Plow: Methods of Conquest and Settlement in Prussia

The conquest and settlement of Prussia were performed by the sword (crusades and secular

military conquests), the cross (missionary work and forced conversion), and the plow (peaceful

settlement of peasants). Before any military conquest or crusade was attempted in the Baltic region, the

Catholic Church undertook missionary work to convert the pagan Slav population. However, this effort

proved difficult because the Prussians were heavily entrenched in their beliefs. Nicholaus von Jeroschin

complained of the difficulties of converting the Prussians, writing, "Because the good seed did not fall on

good ground it did not bear any fruit. Their evil, sinful wickedness had made them so stubborn that no

teaching or exhortation or blessing could move them from their error or take away their false belief."[41]

Christiansen writes, "The paganism of the Balts was to reveal remarkable powers of development

wherever it was saved from the first impact of the Church Militant by determined war-leaders. Alone

among the ancient religions of Europe, it was to provide a straight answer to the challenge of medieval

Catholicism."[42] Because the resistance of the pagan Slavs to conversion was so stiff, more drastic

measures were deemed necessary. Before the Prussian Crusade, the pagan populace was not only

unwelcoming to missionaries, but was also often brutal. The Prussians were particularly harsh to

missionaries, as both Adalbert of Prague and Bruno of Querfurt were murdered while visiting Prussia

around the year 1000.[43] Even when early missionaries were not murdered, the conversion of the pagan

Slavs remained elusive. While not focused on Prussia, Henry of Livonia's chronicle is an important source

for accounts of attempts to convert the pagan Balts. In the latter part of the twelfth century, Bishop

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[41] Nicholaus von Jeroschin, 43.
[42] Christiansen, 38.
[43] Saint Adalbert served as Bishop of Prague in the 980s, but left this position and traveled to Hungary where he baptized Grand Prince Géza and his son Stephen, the future king. After Hungary, Adalbert traveled to Prussia where he was killed while attempting to convert the pagan populace in 997. Saint Bruno of Querfurt wrote the *Life of St. Adalbert* about the then-recent conversion of the Hungarians. Bruno was also a missionary and was beheaded while trying to convert Prussians in 1009. See Pósán, 429.

Meinhard of Uexküll tried to entice the locals to convert by having a stone fort built for them in the

Western style. However, once the fort was completed, the Livonians who had been baptized reverted to

their pagan ways, and those who had not yet been baptized refused to accept the sacrament.[44] In the

mid-1210s, it became apparent that peaceful conversion was not working, and secular rulers began to

question the success of the missionary effort. The failure of peaceful conversion to achieve any lasting

results during the two centuries it was employed finally convinced the pope to call for a crusade against

the Prussians in 1217.[45] This failure did not mean that all attempts at peaceful conversion were

abandoned, however, as Bishop Christian petitioned the pope in 1218 to allow him to "raise Prussian

boys to become clerics who would take part in the missionary work."[46] Later missionary work was more

successful, as by this time the Christians had established control over Prussia through military conquest.

Due to the failure of missionary efforts to convert the Slavs, the pope allowed crusades to be

fought against the pagans of Northern Europe. The precedent for the Prussian Crusade was set during

the Wendish Crusade, which occurred seventy years before in a region to the west of Prussia. This

endeavor was the first crusade fought against non-Muslims, and it is sometimes considered part of the

Second Crusade. In his letter to a council of ecclesiastical and secular leaders at Frankfurt, Bernard of

Clairvaux called for the Christian participants of the Wendish Crusade to either completely wipe out or

convert the pagans. Bernard wrote, "We utterly forbid that for any reason whatsoever a truce should be

made with these peoples, either for the sake of money or for the sake of tribute, until such a time as, by

God's help, they shall be either converted or wiped out."[47] While this is how Bernard of Clairvaux

wanted the crusade to be conducted, in reality the crusaders reached an agreement with the Wends in

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[44] Henry's chronicle consists of four books covering events in Livonia from 1186 to 1226. The first book details Meinhard's baptism of the Livonians. The second book relates the death of Berthold of Hanover, the second Bishop of Uexküll, at the hands of Livonians. The third book describes the founding of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword, while the fourth book tells of their conflicts with Estonians, Lithuanians, Semigallians and others. See "The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia," in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 273.

[45] Pósán, 433.

[46] Pósán, 433.

[47] Bernard of Clairvaux, 268-69.

which the pagans were to be baptized in exchange for the release of Danish prisoners.[48] The Wendish

Crusade was ultimately a failure because the baptisms and conversions of the pagans were false, no land

was gained by Christians, and it resulted in mistrust between the Danish and Saxon participants.[49]

However, despite the disappointing outcome of the Wendish Crusade, the bloodthirsty words of

Bernard of Clairvaux provided a blueprint for subsequent crusades. Nicholaus von Jeroschin writes that

when the crusaders captured the castle at Partegal, "none of the Prussians there survived; all of them

were dispatched forthwith in mortal terror to join their comrades-in-arms in hell."[50] Decades after the

initial conquest of Prussia, the Teutonic Order brutally suppressed a pagan uprising in the following

manner: "They gathered together all the manpower they could and launched an attack on Pogesania,

devastating the whole country, burning and looting, killing all the men they encountered and taking

away horses, cattle, children and women as prisoners."[51] The brutality of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia

would contrast starkly with the more peaceful settlement of Transylvania, which is discussed below.

However, the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia was not an entirely violent process.

Peaceful settlement often accompanied the processes of conversion and military conquest,

although the latter made it more lasting and tenable. Allen and Amt write, "The establishment of

Christianity was often seen as an important prerequisite to settlement, as the placement of churches

and monasteries helped to ease the subjugation of the native population while providing justification for

the defense of the newly acquired territory."[52] Once a monastery was established, additional settlers

were needed to provide tithes and protection. As the Church expanded throughout the settled

territories, so did the adoption of Western European culture and agricultural practices. Robert Bartlett

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[48] "Helmold's *Chronicle of the Slavs*," in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 272.

[49] Christiansen, 53.

[50] Nicholaus von Jeroschin, 84.

[51] In fact, there were five Prussian uprisings in the thirteenth century. The First Prussian Uprising was preceded by Christian defeats at the Battle of the Ice against Novgorod and the Battle of Legnica against the Mongols. The so-called Great Prussian Uprising lasted fourteen years and was only defeated with the help of King Ottokar II of Bohemia. Nicholaus von Jeroschin, 177.

[52] "Poem Describing Cistercian Settlement," 267.

writes, "The spread of cult and the spread of cultivation went hand in hand."[53] The peaceful settlement

of Prussia was made possible, and enticing, by the liberal land grants given.

The generosity of land grants and privileges for new settlers in Prussia varied over time, but

overall they provided a better life than that available to most people in Western Europe at the time. In

the early twelfth century, Bishop Frederick of Hamburg laid down regulations for German colonists who

wanted to settle in Slavic lands. Bishop Frederick's charter stated that German settlers should pay one

penny per hide of land per annum, went on to define the dimensions of a hide, and listed the tithes for

different animals. This document also includes a required annual payment from settlers so that the

settlers could hold their own courts and not be subjected to the possible injustices of indigenous

courts.[54] More than a century later, the Teutonic Knights were even more generous. In 1236, the Grand

Master of the Order enfeoffed one noble with a fort, three hundred hides of land, and the tithe from

three villages in Prussia, in return for which the noble owed a pound of wax, a mark of silver, and a tithe

of grain every year. In addition, the enfeoffed noble was not required to perform any military service.[55]

This level of generosity was almost unheard of in Western Europe, and it was not replicated in

Transylvania. It was also common for German colonists in Prussia to receive exemptions from rents and

tithes in the early years of their settlement. The Bishop of Hildesheim exempted settlers in his diocese

from rent and tithes during the time they cleared the soil with a mattock and an additional seven rent-

free years once a plow could be used.[56] This generosity with land grants, privileges, and exemptions for

settlers to Prussia created a lure for German colonists that was not quite replicated in Transylvania.

The *Ostsiedlung* succeeded in Prussia because it affected both rural areas, where large numbers

of peasant settlers took advantage of the generosity of grants, and urban centers, which were wholly

transformed. This transformation is embodied in the shift from Slav markets to German-style towns.

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[53] Bartlett, 153.
[54] "Charter to German Settlers," 265-66.
[55] Christiansen, 206.
[56] Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 124.

One of the primary differences between these two types of urban centers is that Slav markets existed to support the prince's royal monopoly and only contained buildings that were essential to its functioning; very few people actually lived in these urban centers.[57] As more and more German merchants arrived, the local Slav rulers granted them special privileges, and the system of royal monopolies collapsed.[58] Richard Koebner argues, "Thus colonial towns arose where once there was only an empty market space and a tiny colony of foreigners. The towns were modest in scale but it was in the interest of lord and colonists alike that they should grow."[59] By the year 1300, much of the Baltic region was dotted with German towns such as Danzig, Elbing and Königsberg.[60] Bartlett writes, "It was the small market town that was the vehicle of ineradicable cultural transformation in the great land spaces of Europe."[61] The spatial and demographic shift that the *Ostsiedlung* embodied transformed Prussia from a small, largely ignored Slavic region into a powerful German state. The way in which the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia combined political, economic, and religious motivations made it distinct from the same movement in Transylvania.

V. Pickaxe, Coin and Plow: Methods of Conquest and Settlement in Transylvania

The *Ostsiedlung* in Transylvania lacked some of the major components that the settlement in Prussia had, such as religious and military foci, but it did have key economic and political effects. The German settlement in Transylvania was done through mostly secular and peaceful means, with the vast majority of settlers comprising merchants, miners, and peasants. Germans initially came to the Kingdom

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[57] Koebner, "German Towns and Slav Markets," 39.
[58] Koebner, 46.
[59] Koebner, 46.
[60] Towns like Danzig, Elbing and Königsberg were founded by loosely associated German merchants, primarily from Hamburg and Lübeck. These towns later joined the Hanseatic League, which came into being in the mid-fourteenth century (past the scope of this paper). See Ulf Christian Ewert and Marco Sunder, "Trading Networks, Monopoly, and Economic Development in Medieval Northern Europe: an Agent-Based Simulation of Early Hanseatic Trade" (paper presented at the 9th European Historical Economics Society Conference, Dublin, September 2011), http://www.wifa.uni-leipzig.de/fileadmin/user_upload/iew-vwl/Docs/Sunder/Ewert_Sunder_EHESC.pdf.
[61] Bartlett, 181.

of Hungary in the form of much-needed heavy cavalry, but this need for troops was less critical in Transylvania.[62] In the *Gesta Hungarorum*, Simon of Kéza lists the foreign knights who came to Hungary and the manner of their arrival. The knights Wolfger and Hedrich brought with them armored knights and were given land upon which to build a fort.[63] Later, Simon states that the knight Geoffrey fled Meissen and sought a haven in Hungary after killing the landgrave of Thuringia in a revolt; he then served the Hungarian king.[64] These German knights, along with foreign clerics, introduced the soft power of their time, courtly and chivalric culture, to Hungary and brought troubadours with them.[65] It was thanks to the precedent set by these early colonists that Germans later came to settle in Transylvania.

In the mid-twelfth century, Géza II first invited Germans to settle in Transylvania. These earliest settlers are called "Teutons," "Flamands," and "Latins" in the sources. The term "Transylvanian Saxon," which came to identify all Germans in Transylvania, did not appear until 1206, when it came to signify their legal status, not a homogeneous ethnic group.[66] The Transylvanian Saxons included knights, farmers, herders, foresters, traders, and miners. László Makkai, András Mócsy, and Béla Köpeczi write, "The German peasants, for their part, applied advanced agricultural techniques, and enjoyed greater freedom than in their homeland, for they were allowed to choose their *geréb* [the knight who would perform military duties in their place] and priests and benefited from tax and duty concessions."[67] The lure for peasants certainly existed, but the journey from German lands to Transylvania was a difficult one. The *Sachsenspiegel*, a compilation of medieval Saxon laws, contains an illustration of the *Ostsiedlung* with a caption that reads, "German colonists in eastern Europe clear wasteland and build a

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[62] Berend, 208.

[63] Simon of Kéza, *Gesta Hungarorum*, ed. and trans. László Veszprémy and Frank Schaer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), 163-65.

[64] Simon of Kéza, 173.

[65] Laszlo Kontler, *A History of Hungary: Millennium in Central Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 71.

[66] Transylvanian Saxons are called *Siebenbürger Sachsen* in German, *Erdélyi szászok* in Hungarian, and *Saşi* in Romanian. The twelfth-century immigrants mostly came from Luxembourg and the Moselle River region, not Saxony. See Berend, 207.

[67] Makkai, Mócsy, and Köpeczi, 422.

village." This image depicts a royal character giving instructions to a character in peasant clothes and a

straw hat on the right side, and on the left side it depicts two characters clearing vegetation and another

building a wooden structure.[68] Vladimir Agrigoroaei and Ana-Maria Gruia interpret this image to depict

"the foundation of a [Transylvanian] Saxon village [that] lies under the authority of a village headman

and of a village counsel, who received the right to settle, dwell and erect buildings from a lord, via a

document bearing a shield-type seal. This community is autonomous, for it has its own rights. It has

been created into the wilderness, somewhere where no other German did ever boldly go before."[69] For

the Saxon settlement of Transylvania, or at least the *Ostsiedlung*, to be represented among a

compilation of medieval laws like the *Sachsenspiegel*, it had to have been a major movement that

captivated the hearts and minds of Germans. The promises of a new life, portrayed in the

Sachsenspiegel illustration, made the *Ostsiedlung* appealing to the lower classes of German society.

Although many of the Transylvanian Saxons were peasants, merchants, and soldiers, their most

important function for the Hungarian king was as miners. Berend writes:

> Germans were also important as miners, for example in the silver and gold mines of Radna, and Beszterce in north Transylvania, and the silver mine of Selmecbánya in the first half of the 13th century. In Rimabánya the archbishop of Kalocsa recruited *hospes* settlers to mine gold in 1268, in Gölnicbánya (Szepes county) in the mid 13th century settlers were involved in gold and silver mining, and in the early 14th century in gold mining in Aranyosbánya (Torda county).[70]

By encouraging the settlement of German miners in Transylvania, the Hungarian king boosted the royal

treasury and increased his own power. In the 1220s, Andrew II guaranteed in his *Diploma Andreanum*

that the Transylvanian Saxons would have access to the salt mines without payment of customs duties.[71]

This document also granted the Saxons sole jurisdiction over their land, gave them access to the "forest

of the Vlachs and the Pechenegs," and allowed their merchants to travel, sell, and buy freely throughout

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[68] Vladimir Agrigoroaei and Ana-Maria Gruia, "An Early XIVth Century Depiction of the Transylvanian Saxon *Hospites* in the *Heidelberger* and *Dresdener Sachsenspiegel*?" *Studia Patzinaka*, 4 (2007): 342.
[69] Agrigoroaei and Gruia, 357.
[70] Berend, 207.
[71] Curta, 403.

the kingdom.[72] Thus, the Hungarian king conferred specific rights to the settlers he valued most:

foresters, merchants and miners. The *Ostsiedlung* in Transylvania was conducted through peaceful

means and was supported by the Hungarian king for secular reasons, to the benefit of the royal

treasury.

VI. Degree of Cultural Assimilation

The extent of cultural assimilation affected the success of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and

Transylvania. In Prussia, the indigenous population was either wiped out or forcibly converted and

assimilated as a product of the crusades. In contrast, Transylvanian Saxons coexisted with Hungarian

nobles, Székelys, and Romanians for centuries. Piskorski states:

> From today's perspective, the processes of colonization, assimilation and acculturation seem to coincide. Yet it is necessary to consider them de facto separately, since the colonization of a particular territory lasted only a few decades, while assimilation and acculturation processes were drawn out over centuries and many generations. Their results were relatively independent from the external influx of colonists, and were more often influenced by later political and cultural events in the given territory.[73]

It is important to note the distinctions between these processes, as colonization, assimilation, and

acculturation all occurred in Prussia, but not in Transylvania.

The assimilation of the native population of Prussia into German culture was exhaustive and

complete. Christiansen claims that the German participants in the *Ostsiedlung* attempted to remake the

Baltic lands in their image, and by 1300, "The makings of a new order were there: in each province there

were laity and clergy, lords, peasants and burghers, administrators and subjects—categories that could

not have been applied in 1200."[74] Slavic Prussia was transformed into German Prussia, for the most part,

in just a century. Outside of the major population centers, however, the Germans had less success in

assimilating the indigenous population because of the *Deutsch-Undeutsch* distinction they maintained in

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[72] Curta, 403.
[73] Piskorski, 338.
[74] Christiansen, 200.

matters of law, business, politics and property.[75] One example of the unequal *Deutsch-Undeutsch*

separation was the German laws that set the *weregild* for murdering a property-owning German

colonist as equal to the native Prussian nobility.[76] Another example of these imbalanced policies that

favored Germans was the requirement that applicants for guild membership be of German descent,

called the *Deutschtumsparagraph*.[77] These unequal laws and policies were unfair but effective at

guaranteeing the primacy of German culture and language in Prussia during the Middle Ages. By the

seventeenth century, the language of the Prussians had died out completely in favor of German.[78] In

contrast, no language death occurred in Transylvania, where German was spoken by the Saxons,

Hungarians by the Székelys, and Romanian by the Vlach population.

True cultural assimilation in Transylvania did not occur until the Saxons were incorporated into

Hungarian culture in the nineteenth century. The chief reason for this delay was largely that the ethnic

groups in Transylvania were each given their own distinct territories. However, some cultural exchange

did occur.[79] The reasons Transylvanian Saxons did not assimilate the indigenous populace into their

culture included the language barrier, the relatively closed societies stemming from rigidly defined

ethnic territories, and the fact that Saxons were a small minority of the overall population of

Transylvania. This cultural pluralism in Transylvania was a far cry from the German dominance that

characterized the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and contributed to the disparate effects of the *Ostsiedlung* in

these regions.

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[75] Christiansen, 218.

[76] Bartlett, 211.

[77] Bartlett, 238.

[78] Bartlett, 203.

[79] Transylvanian Saxons maintained German superstitions such as beliefs in giants, goblins and imps, but also incorporated the *pricolici* or *prikulics* from Romanian folklore. See Makkai, Mócsy, and Köpeczi, 528.

VII. Number of Settlers

The difference in the number of German settlers in Prussia and Transylvania was a major determining factor in the lasting effects of the *Ostsiedlung* there. It is impossible to know the exact number of Germans who participated in the *Ostsiedlung* for either region, but estimates have been made. It is known that the Teutonic Order issued about five hundred grants of land to immigrants to settle in Prussia during the first sixty years of the crusade there.[80] Though this number is small, it does not include all the peasants who were not granted land themselves, but rather only those who worked the land for a knight or lord. Other historians have attempted to estimate the total number of German immigrants. Walter Kuhn estimates the number of German settlers east of the Elbe in the twelfth century to have been 200,000.[81] Robert Bartlett makes a more conservative estimate, saying that there were "tens of thousands of German urban and rural immigrants in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries."[82] Jan Piskorski disagrees with both assessments, stating that German settlers did not exist in very great numbers because "there is no question of overpopulation in the west and west central European countryside in the eleventh and twelfth centuries."[83] However, both Bartlett and Piskorski put forth the idea that "the colonists migrated eastward by generations, with each successive generation settling further to the east than its predecessor."[84] This process was repeated elsewhere, including the western frontier of America.

The sources on the Transylvanian Saxon population in the Middle Ages are much scarcer, although a few do survive. In 1308, a French Dominican monk who visited Hungary commented upon

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[80] Paul W. Knoll, "The Most Unique Crusader State: The Teutonic Order in the Development of the Political Culture of Northeastern Europe during the Middle Ages," in *The Germans and the East,* ed. Charles W. Ingrao and Franz A.J. Szabo (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2008), 38.
[81] Bartlett, 144.
[82] Bartlett, 112.
[83] Piskorski, 337.
[84] Piskorski, 340.

the lack of urban development there, saying that "the kingdom looked empty."[85] We can also compare

the post-industrial populations of the two regions: In 1871, Prussia had a population of about 25 million,

whereas the Transylvanian Saxon population at this time was less than a quarter of a million.[86] Whether

the reason for the disparity in their modern population sizes stems from the number of immigrants or

the other factors mentioned, the difference in the populations of Prussia and the Saxons of Transylvania

is striking.

VIII. Long-Term Effects of German Settlement Beyond the Middle Ages

The lasting effects of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and Transylvania were disparate, largely due to

the difference in the logistics of the conquest and settlement of the two regions. In Transylvania,

German settlers wielded considerable soft power that persisted well into the nineteenth century; in

Prussia, German hard power was a major player in continental affairs during the same period.

Eventually, German settlers were able to turn Prussia into a key power in the eighteenth century, and

the state of Prussia led German unification in the mid-nineteenth century. The fate of Germans in

Transylvania was quite different—they never accounted for more than about ten percent of the

population in Transylvania, where distinct Romanian, Hungarian, and Székely populations outnumbered

them.

In the span of five hundred years, Prussia went from a region populated entirely by Slavs to the

most powerful German state. The Teutonic Order maintained control over Prussia until its power began

to wane and finally subsided in the fifteenth century. The Order's defeat at the Battle of Grunwald in

1410 to Poland-Lithuania epitomizes its decline. The cities of Prussia banded together in the Thirteen

Years' War and control over western Prussia shifted from the Teutonic Order to the king of Poland with

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[85] Molnár, 48.

[86] Otto Büsch, Ilja Mieck and Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Handbuch der preussischen Geschichte* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), 42.

the signing of the Second Peace of Thorn in 1466.[87] The eastern part of Prussia, centered on Königsberg, remained in the hands of the Order until 1525, when it became known as the Duchy of Prussia. In the seventeenth century, Frederick William created a strong military and established an absolute monarchy in Brandenburg-Prussia. Frederick William's successor, Frederick the Great, expanded Prussia into the premier military force on the European continent. Prussia emerged as the leading German state after the Napoleonic Wars and led the unification of Germany in the mid-nineteenth century under Bismarck.

The history of Germans in Transylvania is less successful, and they have had a smaller impact on modern history. In the fifteenth century, Hungarian nobles, Transylvanian Saxons, and Székelys formed a pact known as the *Unio Trium Nationum,* or the Union of the Three Nations, in response to a peasant revolt; this pact was aimed at protecting their rights from possible abridgment by the majority Romanian population.[88] After the Hungarian defeat at the Battle of Mohács in 1526, Transylvania became an autonomous region under Ottoman control until the Hapsburgs took over in the early eighteenth century. During the reign of the Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph, Transylvanian Saxons lost their privileged status through the *Ausgleich* and were persecuted to some extent through Magyarization. The Treaty of Trianon following the First World War split up Hungary and gave Transylvania to Romania. During and after the Second World War, many Transylvanian Saxons fled Romania and settled in Germany; today there are very few Germans remaining in Transylvania.

The long-term effects of German settlement varied in Prussia and Transylvania. Prussians were assimilated into German culture, and Prussia eventually became a leading German state and European power, whereas Germans in Transylvania, while wielding significant cultural influence, were never even close to a majority of the population and were eventually expelled from the land.

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[87] Karin Friedrich, *The Other Prussia: Royal Prussia, Poland and Liberty, 1569-1772* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 43-45.
[88] The *Unio Trium Nationum* formed in 1438 was an alliance of Hungarian Nobles, Székelys and Transylvanian Saxons against peasants and Ottoman raids. The *Unio* also served to exclude serfs, primarily Romanians, but also Hungarians, from Transylvanian politics. See Lendvai, 72.

IX. Conclusion

The scope and durability of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and Transylvania was dependent upon geography, secular and ecclesiastical support, the method of conquest and settlement, the degree of cultural assimilation, and the number of settlers. Climate and quality of land favored Transylvania, but distance from German lands to the two regions, which favored Prussia, mattered more. The *Ostsiedlung* was fervently supported by the papacy and German secular leaders in Prussia through the Northern Crusades. This consistency and unity of support for the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia ensured the region received a steady stream of German nobles, crusaders, and settlers, who guaranteed a constant and robust colonizing presence in Prussia that would eventually cement the primacy of German culture and language there. The inconsistent support for the *Ostsiedlung* in Transylvania, by contrast, left only economic incentives to attract settlers, and these incentives may not have been enough to outweigh the dangers and hardships of the longer journey to Transylvania. In Prussia, the native, pagan population was initially either killed or forcibly converted to Christianity by Germans, and German culture came to dominate Prussian culture. In Transylvania, Saxons were a minority living in close proximity of Hungarians, Székelys, and Romanians, and many Germans were ultimately assimilated and absorbed into the larger population.

A fitting analogy for the differences between the success of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and Transylvania is illustrated by comparing the permanence of the Teutonic Order's buildings in the two regions. In Transylvania, the Order constructed five castles, which were partly wooden and partly stone, all of which now lie in ruins.[89] By contrast, in Prussia, the Order built many stone castles, including their headquarters at Marienburg Castle, which still stands and is the world's largest castle.[90] Just as a

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[89] These castles included the Marienburg Fortress in Feldioara, the Kronstadt Fortress in Braşov, the Schwarzenburg or Black Castle in Codlea and the Rosenau Fortress in Râșnov. Laszlovszky and Soós, 372.

[90] Leszek Kajzer and Piotr A. Nowakowski, "Remarks on the Architecture of the Teutonic Order's Castles in Prussia," in *The Crusades and the Military Orders,* ed. Zsolt Hunyadi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 453.

structure made of stone survives the ages better than does a wooden one, so, too, did the legacy of the

Ostsiedlung survive more fully among a fully assimilated German Prussian population than with the

minority Transylvanian Saxons.

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The Culturally Inscribed Canvas:
Bodily Agency in Late Antique and Medieval Depictions of Female Saints

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The aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between the Christian tradition and understandings of the female body as expressed through textual records and art depicting two prominent female Christian saints. The foundation of this study is based upon the rejection of the fallacious dichotomy of mind-over-matter in order to gain the perspective of the body as a receptor of cultural and religious knowledge and practice in developing an accurate understanding of the female body as an informed agent. This paper begins with The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, a record of the life of Saint Thecla of Iconium in the first century C.E. Through this close investigation, Thecla's intensely bodily experience of her religious path is revealed dramatically. The next text addressed is the* Rule of Saint Clare*, exhibiting the physically taxing and rigorous nature of the religious practice of Saint Clare of Assisi during the thirteenth century C.E. Through a close analysis of these two prominent saints through texts and figural depictions, it becomes clear that both the female body and the Christian tradition represent mediums through which culturally inscribed conceptualizations of femininity and the physical enactment of one's religious devotion become manifest.*

Ranging from celibacy, vegetarianism, and physical isolation to radical asceticism and martyrdom, self-sacrifice has been an integral aspect of Christianity since its advent. Due to the Christian tradition's heavy emphasis on self-sacrifice, the body itself became an important entity within Christianity both through its ability to illustrate the strict regulations of Christian doctrine and the martyrdom associated with succumbing to these hardships. Despite Christianity's patriarchal emphasis and structure, the bodies affected by self-sacrifice were not only masculine, and not only men's bodies suffered the demands of a life lived according to Christian principles. Women have also played essential roles in this tradition, using the regulation of their bodies to express their undying faith in their one true God and to reenact the passion of Christ through their suffering. Two of these women are Thecla, the "protomartyr" of Iconium, and Clare of Assisi, one of the most radical female ascetics in Christian history

and the leader of one of the first major female monastic movements, the Poor Ladies.[1] Both of these

women exhibit the power innate to the physical body in a religious tradition in which it holds such an

important and sacrificial position. By utilizing textual accounts of the lives of Thecla and Clare of Assisi as

well as several depictions of them in religious imagery to gain insight into their lives and ideologies, it is

evident that the bridge between the physical body and medieval Christian society was a mutually

influential one. Both of these women's bodies act as canvases on which the regulatory constructions of

the female body imposed by medieval society left their brushstrokes. However, their bodies also served

another function: they were also mediums through which these women exerted their own forms of

agency within their religious devotion, challenged those restrictive societal and religious constructions

that inhibited them, and in turn imposed their own ideas of religious practice upon Christianity.

Theories and Methods

This paper utilizes a number of theories and methods to organize ideas regarding the female

body and its place within Christian thought during late antiquity and the Middle Ages. First, it is

pertinent to consider that each body is a lived body, one that experiences the world through life and not

through thought alone.[2] The body carries its own knowledge, which informs life choices and impacts the

owner of that body in how it experiences the world, culture, personal relationships, and religion in an

increasingly tangible way. Alongside this idea, this paper also considers Michel Foucault's theory of the

"docile body."[3] This body, according to Foucault, is the body of every human living within a specific

cultural context. Within each cultural context there exist all-pervasive cultural constructions that are

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[1] Kim Haines-Eitzen, *The Gendered Palimpsest: Women, Writing, and Representation in Early Christianity* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2012), 96. The term "protomartyr" entails that Thecla was a martyr before Christian martyrdom became popularized.
[2] Pamela Sue Anderson, "The Lived Body, Gender and Confidence" in *New Topics in Feminist Philosophy of Religion: Contestations and Transcendence Incarnate* ed. Pamela Sue Anderson (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 164.
[3] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* Transl. Alan Sheridan, (New York: Random House, 1977), 135-69.

inscribed upon and then exhibited by the body from its birth to its death. The body acts as a permeable medium, both accepting and illustrating these constructions, and it uses them as the foundation from which it operates. Therefore, in the grander sense, the body—in this case, the female body—acts as a docile embodiment of the societal values, moral structures, and ideas of power. For the purposes of this paper, Foucault's "docile body" will be utilized to understand the position within society from which Saint Thecla and Saint Clare are acting. It will illustrate that these two women are, in fact, objects of their context and were probably not consciously attempting to subvert the patriarchal structure to which they were subject. However, it will also illuminate their agency by creating a stark juxtaposition between the authority expressed through their bodies and the patriarchal foundation from which they must function.

To supplement this theory, I will also be utilizing Judith Butler's theory of the "regulatory body,"[4] a concept quite similar to that of Foucault's docile body. Butler's theory suggests that the body is the subject of regulatory discrimination and subversion by the cultural and political ideologies prominent within the society inhabited by that body. She introduces this concept in order to draw attention back to the body as not merely a reflection of the tenets of the culture it inhabits, but as a construction itself, as a body imbued with knowledge and activated with an authoritative agency.[5] Butler notes that "bodies never quite comply with the norms to which their materialization is impelled," and therefore, suggests that although bodies are subject to a "regulatory law" within their culture, they are nevertheless able to "rematerialize" themselves through their intricacies and instances of noncompliance.[6] This concept has particular relevance for the ways in which the female martyr and ascetic in late antique and medieval Christianity were regulated by their societies' cultures and political constructions and how this regulation may have colored their individual actions as well as their depictions in contemporary and

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[4] Johannes N. Vorster, "The Blood of Female Martyrs as the Sperm of the Early Church," *Religion & Theology* 9, no. 1-2 (2002): 11, referencing the theories within Judith Butler's *Bodies that Matter.*
[5] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2011), 4.
[6] Butler, xii.

later accounts. As the saints Thecla and Clare were active during times of entrenched patriarchy, their

depictions as well as the foundation of knowledge from which their actions arise are reflections and

products of that time. However, as Butler argues, their bodies proved inconsistent with the demands

that patriarchal society placed upon them and therefore, it is evident that Thecla and Clare utilized their

bodies as avenues for physical agency, rematerialization, and redefinition of their Christian experiences.

I will employ the theories of Foucault and Butler within this argument as the lens through which

I develop my comprehension of their lives and capability to act as physical agents in relation to the time

in which Thecla and Clare lived and its implications upon them. Specifically, I will use these theories in

the definition of the term "patriarchal cultural inscription." In order to develop a clear comprehension of

Thecla and Clare, it is necessary to recognize that they are women grounded in their time. Not only did

they operate from a foundation of knowledge imbedded within a deeply patriarchal society, but

members of that society also recorded their lives in literature and art. Consequently, as Foucault asserts

in his concept of the "docile body," their lives and bodies were subject to the inscriptions of their

culture. However, I do not wish to assert that this disregards any agency or power that these women

exercised within their lives. I also do not wish to suggest that the physical agency demonstrated by these

women was an intentional attempt to undermine to patriarchal authority, but rather, that it was

exercised only in the interest of enhancing their religious experiences and beliefs in ways meaningful to

them. Through Butler's ideology of the regulatory body, I will argue that although Thecla and Clare were

undeniably functioning on a basis of patriarchal knowledge within a patriarchal society, they were able

to redefine their religious lifestyles in a way that challenged that foundation through physical agency.

Within my analysis, I will utilize textual sources, both *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* and "The Rule

of Saint Clare of Assisi," in order to provide further insight into their lives. Through the use of these texts

as well as a historical study of the religious and political contexts to which Thecla and Clare were subject,

I will attempt to expose the position each woman would have occupied within that patriarchal

framework as well as the physical agency she would have the ability to exercise in that position. To

supplement these textual sources, I will introduce figural representations of these saints in art through

an iconographical analysis. This study will enable me to ascertain both contemporary and later attitudes

toward these women and whether these depictions of Christian female bodies either portray the agency

these women exercised during their lives or if they instead embody the feminine ideal as defined by

Christianity and cultural prescriptions. Through these avenues and with the theories of Foucault and

Butler informing my concept of the patriarchal cultural inscription of these two women, I will create a

holistic conceptualization of how the patriarchal contexts in which Saint Thecla and Clare lived limited

their ability to act as physical agents. I will also argue that even from these patriarchal foundations, both

of these women exercised undeniable physical agency in their religious practice.

The Acts of Paul and Thecla

The Acts of Paul and Thecla, one of the more important primary sources in the analysis of the

near-martyrdom of Thecla as well as of her relationship with Paul, outlines Thecla's situation prior to

meeting Paul, her journeys to the stadium to be martyred, and the remainder of her life as a prominent,

influential figure within early Christianity. It begins with a picture of Thecla as a daughter of

marriageable age within a prominent family of Iconium during the first century C.E.[7] She becomes

engaged to Thamyris, one of the most important men of Iconium, through an agreement with her

mother, Theoclia. Thecla hears word that Paul has come to town to preach the Christian word on

chastity and purity for men and women. Though she cannot see him through the crowd, Thecla sits at

her window to hear Paul speak on the value of virginity in gaining eternal life in the kingdom of God. She

is so captivated and utterly taken by his words that she does not leave the window for days, rejecting

food as well as visits from her fiancé. Thamyris, troubled by the rapt, hypnotic state in which Thecla

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[7] Amy Oden, ed., *In Her Words: Women's Writings in the History of Christian Thought.* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1994), 21.

regards the speeches of Paul, conspires to have Paul arrested on charges of bewitching his betrothed.

However, even this plot is not enough to separate Thecla from the teachings of Paul. She sneaks out of

her parents' house late that night to visit Paul in prison, where she is found the next day by Thamyris

and her family. She is then called to trial along with Paul. He is banished from the city, and Thecla, after

refusing to provide an answer for the governor and instead staring intently at Paul, is sentenced to be

burned at the stake by request of her own mother, Theoclia. Thecla is stripped and brought to the arena

where she is bound to the stake. She shows no fear, having seen a vision of Jesus Christ in the form of

Paul ascending into heaven in the crowd before her. After the flames are set to the base of the stake,

they are immediately doused by a divinely caused earthquake and thunderstorm, saving Thecla for the

first time.[8]

After being released from the arena, Thecla rejoins Paul, following him to Antioch and absorbing

his teachings. Upon their entrance into the city, one of the most important men in Antioch, Alexander,

falls in love with Thecla at first sight due to her extraordinary beauty and physical radiance. Alexander

forces himself upon Thecla in the public streets of Antioch, causing her to beg him to preserve her

chasteness and to attempt to fight him off. In his anger toward Thecla's public refusal of his advances

and the ensuing shame, Alexander orders the governor of Antioch to throw her to the beasts for

assaulting a nobleman. The governor consents and the next day, Thecla is brought to the arena and

stripped, and the crowd is struck by her remarkable beauty. The beasts are brought in and a fierce

lioness approaches her, but she sits at Thecla's feet and licks them, guarding her from any harm. The

lioness kills all other beasts that approach and, in a final struggle with a male lion, she is killed along with

him. The next day, Thecla is put into the arena a third time, bound between two bulls. Her bonds are

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[8] William Hone, Jeremiah Jones, and William Wake, "The Acts of Paul and Thecla," in *The Lost Books of the Bible: Being all the gospels, epistles, and other pieces now extant attributed in the first four centuries to Jesus Christ, his Apostles and their companions, not included, by its compilers, in the authorized New Testament; and, the recently discovered Syriac mss. of Pilate's letters to Tiberius, etc., translated from the original tongues* (Cleveland: World Syndicate Publishing Company, 1926), 99-104.

broken and Thecla is freed once again by divine intervention. She then baptizes herself in a pond and is immediately ensconced within a protective cloud of fire that shields her from harm and hides her nudity from the crowd. Finally, she is clothed and released from Antioch. She reunites with Paul and gains his permission to travel and preach the word of God. After spending seventy-two years living a chaste, ascetic life in a cave, Thecla's life is threatened for a final time when rapists come to the cave seeking to defile the elder virgin. Coming to her aid once again, God opens a hole in the rock, allowing Thecla to escape her life in the material world for eternal life in the kingdom of Heaven.[9]

The Patriarchal Inscription of Martyrs

The early Christian social and political atmosphere is characterized by a traditional patriarchal constitution in which men are favored in most aspects of society.[10] Men were the "only active subjects in discourse," the authorities over and in control of households, political systems, sources of wealth, and, in effect, women and their children.[11] By contrast, women were considered mere objects within the considerable property that a man could accumulate, "occupying a dependent, childlike position."[12] As such property was considered inanimate and completely lacking in autonomy, feeling, and sentience, women were not considered full members of the religious community, and the female religious experience as felt and suffered by the female body was dramatically understated.

Accordingly, one of the first issues to consider when assessing the content and validity of an ancient primary source such as *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* is the identity of the author along with what personal biases or nuances could have been added through his or her interpretation of the event. According to Tertullian, this particular account of the martyrdom and life of Thecla was written by a

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[9] Hone, Jones, and Wake, 104-11.

[10] Barbara J. MacHaffie, *Her Story: Women in Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 6.

[11] Ida Magli, *Women and Self-Sacrifice in the Christian Church: A Cultural History from the First to the Nineteenth Century* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc. Publishers, 2003), 9.

[12] MacHaffie, 7.

male presbyter during the second century. In addition to the basic issue of this text being written almost an entire century after the events took place, this work was also recorded by a man. Though "books…were a powerful resource and arena for debates about the human body among Early Christians…they were vulnerable to corruption and manipulation" due to the influence of the author's lived experience on the text—in this case specifically, the author's sex.[13] The influence of authorial experience on accounts of events in Christian history is a particularly sensitive issue within the early years of Christianity, as it was a time of intense patriarchy for the religion that resulted in both the physical and social control of women. Moreover, the knowledge from which the male author would have operated would have derived from this patriarchal foundation of thought. However unintentional it might have been, the author would have undoubtedly endowed his work with these biases. In effect, female subjects being written by males—in this case, Thecla—would be irrevocably crippled and defined by the interpretation of their actions according to the patriarchal conceptions of appropriate female behavior during the early Christian period.

No matter the degree to which women became marginalized within textual representations and subsequent patriarchal inscriptions of them, women in the Roman Empire did, in fact, have an indispensable role within society. The main sphere of power and avenues for respect for the female in the Roman Empire were reproduction and motherhood. Due to the short life expectancy of twenty-five years in Rome during the first and second century C.E., Roman society depended upon each individual to marry and produce at least five children to maintain the population.[14] Therefore, women played an integral role in perpetuating Roman society. However, this obvious reliance on the female body is undermined and almost denied by the cultural disapproval and near-rejection of the sex act itself. It was seen as an innately impure act that was instigated by the inherently sensual and provocative female

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[13] Haines-Eitzen, 105.
[14] Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 6.

body. Taking any pleasure in sexual union would be giving into this temptation and would weaken the

bodies of both men and women.[15] Therefore, sex was an act of business in the Roman Empire as it was

in many other cultures of the same era, intended only to produce offspring and not physical pleasure.

In this sense, the act of voluntary celibacy by a female body was considered a blatant threat to

the Roman Empire and its continuity.[16] Not only did religious virgins challenge the traditional roles of

women within ancient societies as good wives in supplication to their husbands; from the male

perspective, such virgins also threatened to bring about "the end of the world" through their refusal to

procreate.[17] This opinion was especially common among the upper classes, the more aristocratic levels

of society that would ideally produce more valuable offspring. In the case of Thecla, breaking her

betrothal contract with a high-ranking man such as Thamyris was not only a personal insult to the most

important man in Iconium, but it was also a threat to the Roman Empire as a whole. In Thamyris's

words, Paul "introduced a new teaching, bizarre and disruptive of the human race that denigrates

marriage…the beginning, root and fountainhead of our nature."[18] By following the practice of celibacy

preached by Paul, Thecla disregards the role for which she was groomed and disrupts the societal norm.

Though this chain of reasoning may seem to devalue the female body even more and to expand

the control that the patriarchal society imposed upon women by demanding them to procreate, it also

lends a tangible sense of agency to the choice of celibacy. No woman in the Roman Empire was

required, let alone allowed, to remain celibate for fear of reducing the Empire's precariously small

population. The idea of celibacy as a higher level of connection with God was almost an entirely

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[15] Brown, 18-21. The male orgasm was seen as a sign of licentious weakness, a kind of "minor epilepsy" where vital energy was removed from the virile male body. Since sexual pleasure was seen as something causing the dominant male body harm, it was avoided.
[16] Magli, 22.
[17] Magli, 22.
[18] Brown, 5.

72]   *Ferrell*

Christian value in relation to the general Roman population.[19] In this way, the ability for women like Thecla to *choose* to be celibate and remain a virgin was a grand feat in and of itself. Thamyris desired Thecla, but he "desired her as a female," suggesting that he desired to take her as a wife and endangering her ability to maintain her celibate lifestyle.[20] By leaving the Roman Empire and its patriarchal inscription of female lives and bodies, Thecla circumvents these rules of femininity, crossing into an entirely new dimension for the Roman female. Being a "protomartyr," one of the major martyrs before martyrdom became more universally practiced in Christianity, Thecla was a pioneer in this form of agency for both men and women.[21] That a woman was able to exert her own, individual willpower as Thecla did was so unheard of in this context that her renunciation of participation in sexual union in pursuit of holy celibacy was an expression of incredible bodily power.

Outside of its essential role as child-bearer and wife, the female body was thought of as the antonym of the male body. The male body existed as the perfected symbol of the Roman Empire, an unyielding, fruitful, and strong being capable of holding its place within society with ease and success. Even within the early Christian church, the male body was exalted and "to be a Christian was to embody masculinity."[22] On the other hand, the female body was considered weak and incomplete "based on the simple fact of 'not being male.'"[23] Their bodies held no political or social value besides the ability to procreate within a marriage as mandated by their society. This Roman Christian distaste for the female body went so deep as to prompt men to accuse women of being seductresses, guilty of the provocation that would lead to human impurity and distance between men and God. This ingrained belief was

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[19] Some Roman gods and goddesses pertained directly to virginity such as Artemis or Diana, the virgin huntress who presided over the lives of young pre-pubescent girls, and the Roman tradition utilized the Vestal Virgins in specific religious functions; however, virginity in general was not necessarily considered a significant religious quality in pre-Christian Roman religion.

[20] Maud Burnett McInerney, *Eloquent Virgins: From Thecla to Joan of Arc* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 36.

[21] Haines-Eitzen, 96.

[22] L. Stephanie Cobb, *Dying to Be Men: Gender and Language in Early Christian Martyr Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 3.

[23] Vorster, 12.

validated through the Genesis story, in which Eve was tempted by the "knowledge" offered to her by

the serpent. In this case, knowledge meant an awakening to the world: the idea of an individual,

physically defined identity as well as sexual knowledge.[24] In offering this same knowledge to Adam, Eve

was the cause of God revoking immortality from humans and thus, the cause of a lifetime of pain and

struggle for future generations that would only ever end in death.[25] Consequently, sexual desire became

an instinct that was to be suppressed and resisted at all costs, and the female body a symbol of shame, a

reminder of the sexual abomination that robbed humanity of immortality as well as a constant

temptation for the male population.

This attitude toward the female body and toward the weakness of the body in general is

exceptionally pertinent to the very public and exposing act of martyrdom in the Roman Empire. As is

expressed in *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, many female as well as male martyrs were stripped before

being burned or fed to beasts. Whereas the pagan Roman population would have thought of this act as

an attempt to dehumanize the martyrs and accentuate their estrangement from the civilized Roman

world, the Christian population thought of it differently, seeing it as a humiliating exposure of the true

nature of human flesh. In Christianity, the physical body was seen as innately lacking and ultimately

susceptible to temptation and sin.[26] Through the complete exposure of the martyr's physical body, its

vulnerability to physical violence, temptation, and sin was readily visible. Therefore, this foundation of

thought inscribed upon the flawed flesh of the body was highlighted through its exposure, this weakness

made all the more apparent through the body's destruction by flames or fang and claw.

Stripping the female martyrs also served to feminize the body through nudity, revealing its

inadequacies.[27] In this sense, the female nature was seen as the female body itself. Baring the body

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[24] Anderson, 164.
[25] Brown, 85-86.
[26] Brown, 48.
[27] Cobb, 14.

would bare the martyr's femininity and inherent weakness as a woman.[28] It was not only exposed to the Roman public, but was also under the scrutiny and prejudice of the male gaze, causing the martyr more shame and objectification. For Christian men, this exposure of the naked female body posed an even greater threat, one of temptation and longing for the beautiful women on display in the arena. Thus, due to the exposure of the female body and the lust that it engendered in men, both the purity of the female martyr in her sacrifice as well as the religious dedication of the enticed men would be challenged. Therefore, nudity in the early Christian realm and in martyrdom was a debilitating and shameful tool utilized to emphasize the supposedly enfeebling femininity and the weakness of the physical bodies of these individuals.

As this practice of stripping condemned women in the arena served to highlight the femaleness and, by extension, the supposed weakness of their bodies, the effect of martyrdom on the female body begs attention. There is an evident transformation that occurs within the full scope of martyrdom, typically a transformation from an avidly devout individual to a culturally recognized and venerated figure symbolizing personal and cultural sacrifice within textual depictions and iconographical representation. However, there have also been assertions that this transformation is different for female martyrs. In this view, through the act of martyrdom and any subsequent accounts of that martyrdom by male authors, the female is transformed into a male. She is transfigured into a figure worthy of praise and recognition in this cultural setting.[29] This conclusion, though it seemingly reinforces the notion of the supremacy of the male in Christianity, holds some truth. When female bodies are transformed through the act of martyrdom and when this act is later described in textual accounts of this event, these female martyrs are perfected. They are not turned into males physically or figuratively, but the body's femininity and, by extension, that body's imperfections according to Roman and Christian

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[28] Margaret Miles, *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 176.
[29] Vorster, 24.

ideas of the female body as impure, dirty, and seductive are removed in their entirety. Since the ideal

body of the Roman Empire and of Christian thought was the male body, it is technically acceptable to

make the claim that when the body of the female martyr is perfected through its martyrdom, it is turned

into the Roman and Christian ideal, a male body. Yet this hypothesis disregards all agency of the female

body. During her attempted martyrdom and before, Thecla is given the opportunity to deny the charges

against her, but she ignores the governor's questions with conviction and continues to stare at Paul.

Furthermore, when she is summoned for her burning, she "received with joy" the call from the

guard with the knowledge that she would die a virgin and in accordance to her religious convictions.[30]

The agency exhibited within this context is undeniable. She does not enter the arena in an attempt to

achieve perfection through a metaphorical transformation— she does so with a depth of faith unable to

be tainted or altered by the patriarchal inscription of the female body and the actions this inscription

prescribes. Though she has the chance to save herself and return to the waiting arms of Thamyris or

escape into matrimony with Alexander in Antioch, Thecla chooses through her own will to subject her

body to the fire and wild beasts.

Imposing Saint Thecla

The image of Thecla in this analysis is an Egyptian Coptic limestone relief of the saint flanked by

lions and angels from the fifth century C.E.[31] Though its creation is separated from the time of Thecla's

life by a few centuries, it is one of the very few identifiable and comprehensive portrayals of her as it

includes elements of the many extraordinary feats for which she was known. Firstly, the figure of Thecla

herself is depicted face-on, a complete frontal view of the saint. This perspective lends a sense of

strength to the image, as she is facing her audience fully and thus harnessing the attention of the viewer

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[30] Hone, Jones, and Wake, 104.

[31] *Saint Thecla with Wild Beasts and Angels*, fifth century C.E., limestone, 3 ¾ x 25 ½ in. (9.5 x 64.8 cm.), The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. See Figure 1.

with conviction and authority. She is surrounded on either side by images of holy, watchful angels, expressing her legitimacy and sanctioned command in teaching and spreading the word of God. Here she is shown completely covered in draped robes, holding her body in a contained attitude with her hands and legs pulled close, suggesting that she is attempting to mask her femininity. However, it is interesting to note that despite her guarded posture, the curves of her hip and breasts are still visible, hinting at what is beneath.[32] Even the position of her left leg extending out from the line of her dress with its sensual bend expresses the importance of the artist's urge to identify her as female. In contrast, her facial expression seems to denote a much more serious attitude toward her identity within the church. Finally, she is flanked by lions, which have visibly turned their attention toward her figure. Their presence symbolizes her physical prowess while also alluding to her near-martyrdom and place within the Christian tradition.

The main point of interest within this image is the physical dominance that Thecla seems to exhibit even through her clear portrayal as female. Although her body is fairly contained in a vertical alignment, it stretches up to encompass the majority of the pictorial frame. As the largest figure within the frame, her dominance is immediately apparent. Her aggressive but curvilinear stance, fully facing her audience with one leg relaxed, commands attention. This is no passive depiction of a female succumbing to the patriarchal notions of a male sculptor, but a woman acting as an authoritative figure within her religious sphere. Her physical domination of this image asserts her power over the other figures in it as well as her influence and significance as a female martyr and saint.

Imposed against this portrayal of Thecla's supremacy is her depiction as a woman. As discussed earlier, the female figure was associated with many things, but dominance was not one of them. The dominant woman was seen not as empowering to women but as threatening to the perpetuation of the Roman Empire and to domestic peace within it. The physical body of the female in general was seen as a

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[32] Magli, 101.

temptation, as a complete embodiment of the feminine wiles and the threat of corruption that they posed to a man ensnared by them. In fact, a woman is "the object of male fear and longing, who, in revealing her body, is said to have revealed 'herself.'"[33] Therefore, the female body is in itself all of the elements of femininity that were recognized and feared by Roman and early Christian society. Consequently, it would seem unusual that the artist of this relief depicted Thecla with her curvaceous hips, bosom, and provocatively extended leg and thus highlighting the female body which was feared and abhorred by the culture and religions of that time.

Again, though this distracting portrayal of Thecla as physically feminine would seem odd and destructive to the view of Thecla as a significant religious figure, the other elements of this image lead the viewer to believe otherwise. The presence of the lions within this frame combined with her obvious femininity serves as another testament to Thecla's power and holiness. The lions hold various different levels of significance to Thecla and this depiction of her. Most obviously, they reinforce her status as a protomartyr, alluding to the beasts she faced and tamed during her attempted public executions at Iconium and Antioch. The lions encircle her legs and focus on her with rapt attention, though they do not seem to have any inclination to attack her. Their passivity toward Thecla renders this image "not like a scene of combat but rather like a scene depicting the victory" over adversity.[34] However, there is another element that creates an additional level of dominance for Thecla. Extending from the necks of both lions are what seem to be ropes, and a collar or length of rope is even visible around the neck of the lioness. These ropes seem to connect with Thecla's hands as they rest behind her back, as if she is in control of their nature by physically tethering some of the fiercest beasts known to humankind. She holds their attention not only through her physical strength but through her divine presence and authority, controlling their natural ferocity with her own composed conviction of faith. The once-

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[33] Miles, 172.
[34] Celal Şimşek and Barış Yener, "An Ivory Relief of Saint Thecla," *Adalya* 13 (2010): 327.

fearsome beasts that were held in wait for the next martyr have been turned into docile creatures at the

hands of Thecla's chaste honor and the purity of her true devotion to Christianity.

Thecla's depiction as a powerful religious female figure in control of predatory animals may also

have its roots in similar depictions of Greco-Roman deities. As stated above, the lions in the

aforementioned image have ropes extending from their necks into Thecla's hidden hands. Her depiction

as their handler seems to emphasize her dominance over them and turns them into servants rather than

adversaries. Celal Şimşek and Barış Yener liken this depiction of animal servility to a female religious

figure to images of pagan female religious figures such as Artemis or Diana and the *potnia*.[35] Artemis or

Diana, the virgin huntress, is typically shown in the company of animals in Greek and Roman imagery;

leopards, panthers, deer, or other creatures in her depictions all seem to fall under her control. This is

also evident in images of the *potnia*, or "mistress," a kind of all-powerful mother goddess in Minoan

civilization. In this way, there seems to be a trend of symbolism of powerful, sacred women expressing

their divine authority through a control over nature in its basic, uncivilized state. Due to the lack of

iconographical basis for artwork in Christianity during antiquity, much of the Christian art created during

the time preceding and for some time after the legalization of Christianity in the fourth century

employed artistic models that were familiar to the artisans. Consequently, images of Christian figures

would be closely linked in style, structure, and metaphor with Pagan images that predated them.[36]

Therefore, the likelihood that the artist of this image was utilizing the tradition of images of women

typically accompanied by or dominating animals is high.

If the artist indeed was fashioning the image of Thecla after her strong Pagan female

predecessors, it becomes important, even necessary, that the artist depict Thecla as female. Since the

animals that would have been included in images of Artemis or the *potnia* would have not been

threatening to these female figures, but friendly and under their control, illustrating Thecla side by side

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[35] Şimşek and Yener, 326.
[36] Şimşek and Yener, 326.

with the vicious beasts sent to kill her in the arena and likening it to images of these pagan goddesses would assert Thecla as a female of power with the same authority and holiness as them.[37] Although she has been thrown to the beasts, she remains in control of both herself and the lions threatening her survival. However, patterning her portrayal after the dominant goddesses of the classical pantheon imbues this depiction of Thecla with another element of agency and meaning for the Christian populace. If the artist was intending to highlight the parallels between depictions of Thecla and the *potnia* or Artemis, he could have also been attempting to create a clear separation between paganism and Christianity by replacing pagan goddesses with a Christian martyr.[38] Depicting her as a controller of nature victorious over the known viciousness of animal instinct to which the pagan Roman government subjected her, Thecla is being promoted here as a strong female Christian who, depicted in the likeness of her pagan antecedents, is paving the way for Christianity over the predominant paganism.

The Rule of Saint Clare

In thirteenth-century Italy, the female body was presented with another avenue for physical religious expression. On the rise since the third century, asceticism had by this time become an incredibly popular and revered lifestyle for expressively religious individuals within Christianity.[39] Ascetics were "holy men and women who believed they would achieve maximum closeness to God by divorcing themselves as completely as possible from the world."[40] Asceticism is grounded in the idea that "we typically become conscious of what our body knows at moments when such knowledge is disrupted."[41] This line of thinking holds that though these behaviors are destructive to the body, it is precisely that destruction that makes them valuable to the religious experience. It promotes the

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[37] Şimşek and Yener, 326.
[38] Şimşek and Yener, 327.
[39] MacHaffie, 44.
[40] Aideen M. Hartney, *Gruesome Deaths and Celibate Lives: Christian Martyrs and Ascetics* (Liverpool, U.K.: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2004), 59.
[41] Jennifer A. Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 10.

creation of a drastic distance from the needs of the physical body that distract from the knowledge of

God in order to arrive at the truth that is at the heart of Christianity and its worship. Though for many

ascetic groups a large part of their practice included traveling and spreading Christianity, which excluded

the participation of women, Christian women were drawn to this lifestyle nonetheless.

One of these women was Clare di Favarone, born in 1194 as the daughter of a well-to-do and

spiritually aware family in Assisi, Italy.[42] Leaving her comfortable home and refusing her fiancé,

Ranieride Bernardo, she joined the ranks of the ascetics with the blessing and permission of Saint

Francis in 1212.[43] After traveling from monastery to monastery to escape the anger of her family, Clare

settled at San Damiano, where she lived a monastic life and became a dedicated ascetic.[44] Forming her

own cloister of the Poor Ladies and establishing her own Rule, Clare followed the teachings and lifestyle

of Saint Francis in holy poverty.

"The Rule of Saint Clare" begins with its papal acceptance and the blessings bestowed upon the

newly established practice of the Poor Ladies by Pope Innocent IV.[45] Formally, they "confirm forever this

form of life and the manner of holy unity and highest poverty your blessed Father Saint Francis gave you

for you observance," allowing for the subsequent practice and perpetuation of the radically ascetic

lifestyle proposed by Clare.[46] In the first few chapters of the Rule, Clare calls to the Lord to bear witness

to the beginning of a new life for herself and her sisters underneath their new regulations, vowing to be

faithful and obedient to Pope Innocent IV and his successors. She outlines how new sisters will be

received and examined. Each new sister was to have her head shaved and to be issued clothing suitable

for cloistered life. Within this discipline, each sister was required to be fasting constantly. Unless they

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[42] Sharon Baker-Johnson, "Saint Clare: The Anchored Soul," *Priscilla Papers* 26, no. 2 (2012): 16.
[43] Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady, Transl., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1982), 170.
[44] Armstrong and Brady, 170.
[45] Armstrong and Brady, 173.
[46] Armstrong and Brady, 210-11.

were dangerously ill or weak, they were to eat only once a day except on the holy day of Christmas, when they were allowed to eat twice.[47]

In the Rule, Clare dictates the responsibilities of the abbess, the matron of the monastery, and the process of her election. She was required to make sure that the rules of silence and enclosure were kept in place. All sisters were to maintain a vow of silence for the majority of those day unless they were working in the infirmary or needed to voice something essential to another sister. At no point were the sisters allowed to converse with any visitor, male or female, unless they were granted permission by the abbess or her vicar. Outside of their ritual schedules of confession, prayer, and fasting, the sisters of Clare were to busy themselves with work that pertained "to a virtuous life and to the common good."[48] Idleness, an enemy of the ascetic Christian, would inevitably lead to undesirable thoughts or actions and a subsequent straying from the prescribed religious path.[49] As far as possessions and physical comforts were concerned, Clare dictated that they would be as minimal as possible, restricting the Poor Ladies to absolute essentials only. Clare told her sisters that being an ascetic and living in the most extreme degree of poverty made each of them "poor in the things [of this world] but has exalted you in virtue."[50] Therefore, without possessions or extraneous money, the sisters received alms of food and materials to make their impoverished, monastic lives possible.

Sisters were also not allowed outside of the monastery unless expressly asked. Whereas spiritual distractions and encounters with the opposite sex could be easily limited or prevented entirely under the abbess within the monastery, such protection was not always possible outside of it. The door into the monastery was secured day and night with one to two locks and guarded by a female porter, who would by no means open it "to anyone who wishes to enter, except to those who have been

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[47] Armstrong and Brady, 209-15.
[48] Armstrong and Brady, 219.
[49] Armstrong and Brady, 215-19.
[50] Armstrong and Brady, 220.

granted permission by the Supreme Pontiff or by our Lord Cardinal."[51] The women's seclusion was seen

as an absolute necessity and was enforced strictly as a preventative measure from straying from the

Rule and being influenced by the more dangerous, inevitable distractions in the outside world.[52]

Creating a Body Rule

Whereas the first and second centuries C.E. were characterized by a cripplingly staunch

patriarchal system that proved to pose a serious threat to the agency of the female body, the thirteenth

century is characterized by something noticeably different. Images emphasizing the role of the mother

in society and of the Virgin Mary in Christ's life abound and testify to her necessity and importance in

Christianity as well that of all holy women. Mary provided the nourishment to Christ both inside the

womb and out that sustained his life and promoted his growth.[53] Through these associations, women

gained a new identity within Christianity, especially in monastic life, where women were awarded

significant authority as well as recognition for their religious and devotional feats.[54] Using strict

asceticism to moderate the control their bodies exerted over them and to manipulate their bodies'

appearances, monastic women went to great lengths to secure their relationship with God and a place

in his kingdom.

Through the uniquely confined and communal sense of asceticism advocated by St. Clare's Rule,

"women's piety…took on certain distinctive characteristics that powerful males, both secular and

clerical, noted, sometimes with awe and sometimes with suspicion."[55] Therefore, despite the

recognition that Christian female piety garnered during this time, the patriarchal system at best was

hesitant to embrace female monastic movements and at worst actively sought to delegitimize them. The

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[51] Armstrong and Brady, 223.
[52] Armstrong and Brady, 223-25.
[53] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1987), 270.
[54] Bynum, 238.
[55] Bynum, 13-14.

remarkable and physically taxing feats of female ascetics would be praised by the church fathers, but "they also made sure to note that the females in question had somehow transcended the rest of their sex; they were not normal women."[56] Though negative patriarchal influences did not affect the religious female population nearly as much during Clare's time as it did during Thecla's, the masculine voice still dominated Christian discourse, both written and spoken, and was still able to exert its influence on the patriarchal inscription of the female body. Yet due to the advent of their newfound independence and increasingly structured devotion, spiritually inclined women were presented with a new avenue by which they could live their lives in pursuit of their religious convictions: the monastery. By entering into a monastic setting such as that prescribed by the Poor Ladies, these women were able to successfully devote themselves to celibacy, poverty, and fasting in a way that would not have been possible within the house of their fathers, a marriage, or on their own in society.

One of the most important attributes of the female ascetic life was that of enclosure. The necessity of the monastery to female ascetics such as Clare and the Poor Ladies during the thirteenth century was unique to the experience of female ascetics. Male ascetics such as Saint Francis travelled around Italy or their respective areas, spreading their beliefs and gathering followers. All the while, these men would retain their dedication to a life of renunciation and poverty in the face of the temptations, distractions, and unfamiliarity of the world around them. However, patriarchy and the power of the masculine voice within the Christian and Benedictine ideologies prevailed over Clare's situation. While the female body was seen as a temptation in itself, it was also weak and utterly corruptible by outside forces such as those that male ascetics would encounter during their travels. Thus, it would be easier for female ascetics to exist within the walls of a monastery, where such temptations could be minimized if not eliminated entirely, and for this reason such enclosure was

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[56] Hartney, 107.

endorsed and then enforced by the papacy.[57] In this way, the insistent patriarchy of the time was able to exert some form of control over Clare and her fellows. Although she was granted the blessing of Saint Francis to continue her life of asceticism, she was made to do so within the confines of the San Damiano monastery.

Although Clare's forced enclosure within a monastery seems subjugating and detrimental to her ascetic practice, since the lives of her monastic contemporaries were defined by itinerancy, encountering the temptations of the world, and subsequently rejecting them, there is an undeniable sense of power that develops because of that enclosure. Within her Rule, enclosure became not only a requirement but also a preference, even a necessity. She believed that the best way to achieve the ascetic purity she desired in practice was through the seclusion of herself and her sisters. Her choice is visible most clearly through her fight for a more effectual and encompassing form of holy poverty for her and her sisters. She moved above the traditional idea of poverty within the Franciscan tradition towards a much more complete form of it within her Rule. After much contestation over its severity and concern for the well-being of the Poor Ladies, Clare's Rule was finally approved. Through her dedication and persistent attempts to gain a life of highest poverty, it is evident that there was not much that Clare would not undertake or challenge to achieve what she considered to be the most appropriate and worthwhile form of asceticism for her community. Therefore, her acceptance of and insistence on enclosure in her Rule is purposeful. She firmly believed that "the monastic enclosure of the Poor Ladies…provided the setting for the building of the kingdom of heaven."[58] Within her accepted enclosure, Clare was able to focus entirely upon the cultivation of an ascetic community worthy of recognition. By emphasizing severe control over her body in order to enhance the religious experience and devotion, Clare created a monastic life that could better achieve the goal of a community based on the ideal of mutual love by virtue of a controlled environment.

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[57] Armstrong and Brady, 178.
[58] Armstrong and Brady, 180.

Along with this enclosure and the many other things that the Rule established, it recommended an intense schedule of fasting. Through asceticism and the Franciscan fellowship, food was constantly regulated. The restriction of the body through eating was seen as "a discipline far more basic than any achieved by shedding the less frequent and essential gratifications of sex or money."[59] Whereas the Franciscans and Poor Ladies considered sex and money both dispensable needs spawning from selfish desire, food was still considered a physical necessity and therefore was a crucial renunciation for Francis and Clare. Another aspect of fasting lies in the room it leaves to connect with the divine. In the ascetic view, "the body must not be permitted to force its needs upon the tranquil mind."[60] In essence, by separating oneself from dependence upon the physical body, one could in turn depend on Christ and the goodness that salvation brings. Some ascetics went so far as to not eat anything besides the Eucharist and in this way, "the renunciation of ordinary food prepared the way for consuming (i.e. becoming) Christ."[61] Therefore, the consumption of certain foods and abstinence from foods that were considered worldly contributed to the ultimate goal of emulating the life of Christ and achieving divine salvation. In effect, the ability to control one's intake of food and the frequency of that intake proved to be an incomparable means of separation from the innately flawed physical needs of the body that brings closeness with the divine.

This intense and essential fasting also proved empowering in the distinct control it gave Clare and her sisters over their bodies. Where some parts of their cloistered lives may have been under the control of outside powers such as the Friars Minor and papacy, the intake of food was almost uniquely not. Consuming food is an unavoidably physical and indispensable act that is individually regulated. Without food, the body deteriorates and relinquishes some of its earthly hold over the soul. With the extremity of the asceticism and food deprivation that Clare and her sisters practiced in San Damiano

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[59] Bynum, 2.
[60] Brown, 27.
[61] Bynum, 3.

came the recognition that these women were the only ones who could control the food that entered

their bodies, whether or not the lack of it took a toll on their ability to perform their daily duties. At one

point, the women's malnourishment provoked Saint Francis to enter the monastery with the sole

purpose of convincing Clare to lessen the rigidity of her fasting.[62] As Francis was the inspiration for her

ascetic practice, Clare heeded his warnings but continued in her renunciation. In the end, the ability to

control her consumption of food and, therefore, the role of her physical body in her spiritual life gave

Clare and the Poor Ladies an unprecedented agency over their bodies and religious lifestyle.

Possibly the most apparent symbol of physical agency for Clare and her sisters was their

separation from and lack of dependence on Saint Francis. From the start, Saint Francis played an

important role in the advent of the Poor Ladies. Being "fully open to Christians of both sexes," Francis

welcomed Clare into his following and blessed her with permission to continue a lifestyle like his on her

own.[63] He held her in high regard as an "innovative hero of the faith in her own right" but also

understood that spending as much time with women as he did with Clare was posing a temptation and

danger to his religious vows.[64] He then distanced himself from her to preserve his "fragile male virtue"

and became more of an absent role model rather than a constant influential presence.[65] Eventually

Francis died, leaving Clare to alone govern her order for twenty-seven years until her own death.[66]

It was after Saint Francis's separation from the Poor Ladies that Clare developed her own Rule,

which was eventually accepted by the Pope himself. Her dedication and sheer perseverance in the

establishment of her Rule illustrates the agency that Clare was able to exert over herself and her chosen

lifestyle without the hand of Francis. Despite the repeated attempts of Francis and leaders of the church

to convince Clare to adhere to a Rule more in line with their own, Clare constructed a life for herself and

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[62] Bynum, 85.
[63] André Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi: the Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint,* trans. Michael F. Cusato (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2012), 101.
[64] Baker-Johnson, 16.
[65] Bynum, 15.
[66] Baker-Johnson, 17.

her followers based upon the control of the body in order to express her religious devotion in the manner in which she found value and holiness.

Painting the Unworthy Handmaid

The image of Clare that I will be analyzing is from a fresco by Simone Martini in the Saint Martin chapel of the Basilica of Saint Francis.[67] It depicts a framed and haloed Saint Clare in a relaxed stance, holding a stem of blooming lilies. The vibrant and saturated blue of the backdrop and gold of her halo create a stark contrast with the colors shown on her body. The earth tones of tan, light green, and cream visible on her dress, cloak, and head wrap depict her as a figure choosing to exist outside of the worldly realms of fashion and material influence. Her clothing hangs heavily upon her slack frame, insinuating a fabric rougher and less expensive than her noble birth would otherwise demand. The rope belt that hangs from her waist adds to this perception, alluding to the roughly hewn and uncomfortable clothing of the Franciscan order. Her hair is not visible beyond the wrap of her head and neck, reminding the viewer of the depersonalization of having her head shorn. She stands calmly in her plain clothing; letting her head fall and tilt, she gazes serenely to her left and slightly up,, meeting the gaze of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, another prominent female saint associated with the Franciscans. Finally, in her hand she delicately presents her viewers with a stalk of lilies that seem to be less for them than for her own enjoyment and religious pride.

The first element worthy of attention here is Clare's lack of overt femininity as seen through the plainness of her habit and her lack of hair. Possibly the most important aspect of asceticism was the strict and absolute separation of identity from the human body that the soul inhabits. Upon becoming a formal follower of the Franciscan lifestyle, Saint Francis cut Clare's hair, "cutting off a much prized

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[67] Figure 2. St. Clare and Elizabeth of Hungary. 1320-25. Fresco, 215 x 185 cm.
Cappella di San Martino, Lower Church, San Francesco, Assisi. From The Web Gallery of Art.
http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/s/simone/3assisi/1saints/saints40.html.

attribute of feminine beauty."[68] The significance of this act and its portrayal here lies in the distinct

depersonalization and even dehumanization that came with removing such an integral and identifiable

aspect of identity and humanity. Ascetics were aware that "our perceptions and judgments are

corporally located and informed" and that bodies themselves were necessary in this exchange.[69]

However, instead of relying upon their bodies as informants and translators of the world around them,

ascetics wanted to create a separation from the world's distractions and enticements. This separation

required disengaging from their bodies.

Removing Clare's hair in this image and placing her in the coarse, traditional habit of the

Franciscan order allows Clare to transcend the prevailing cultural constructions of femininity of the time

and the assumptions they placed upon the female sex. Her depiction in the fresco accentuates the depth

of her humility and the necessity of her desire to remove her physical self from earthly distraction and

bodily desire by demonstrating a freedom from her body and the culturally inscribed physical identity

that it might otherwise manifest.[70] Though she is clearly still depicted as a woman, the swell of her

breasts illuminated by their lighter shading, it is readily visible that she is above the significance that the

human world places upon sexual identifications and social constructions. She has escaped "the

heaviness with which the mortal body weighed down the soul," transcending into a higher level of

religious practice.[71]

The humility of Clare's appearance is thrown into stark relief against the sumptuous cloth and

vibrant colors of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary standing next to her. Saint Elizabeth of Hungary was born to

the King of Hungary in 1207 and died at the untimely age of twenty-four in 1231.[72] Born in a position of

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[68] Jeryldene Wood, "Perceptions of Holiness in Thirteenth-Century Italian Painting: Clare of Assisi," *Art History* 14, no. 3 (1991): 315.
[69] Glancy, 8.
[70] Haines-Eitzen, 126.
[71] Brown, 47.
[72] Elizabeth Ruth Obbard, *Poverty, My Riches: A Study of St. Elizabeth of Hungary 1207-1231* (Southampton, U.K.: Saint Austin Press, 1997), 70.

social privilege as Clare was, Elizabeth also rejected her riches and position in the Hungarian monarchy

in favor of living in holy poverty and serving the poor. Although she did not opt to live a cloistered life

with the Poor Ladies, Elizabeth was one of the first members of the "Third Order" of the Franciscans.[73]

This order was not monastic but allowed individuals who desired to do so to pursue poverty, fasting,

abstinence, and charitable works while remaining a member of the society. This option allowed the

"freedom to respond to need" rather than living an entirely cloistered and ascetic lifestyle.[74] Elizabeth

distributed her wealth among the impoverished and helped to build hospitals with the remainder of her

fortune, all the while ascribing to the live of poverty she desired in her religious devotion.[75] Living at the

same time as Clare, the religious convictions of Elizabeth of Hungary directly coincided with that of the

Poor Ladies with the exception of the cloistered life to which the Poor Ladies cleaved. Clare of Assisi and

Elizabeth of Hungary were considered so similar in practice and Franciscan spirituality that "identical

sermons were used for the feast days of both, indicating…the two to be of equal stature."[76]

Due to the closeness in devotion between Clare and Elizabeth of Hungary, it was not unusual for

the two saints to be depicted together in art. However, this particular configuration of the women is not

standard for its time. During the Trecento, the fourteenth century in Italy when this fresco was painted,

images with both Clare and Elizabeth would typically display Elizabeth in the humble monastic garb in

which Clare is here shown, insinuating an inequality between the saints.[77] It was not until the

Quattrocento that they were portrayed as equals. Therefore, this depiction of Elizabeth of Hungary

draped in her soft, rich clothing with her long hair elaborately braided and wrapped around her head

held up by a crown seems to instead emphasize the plainness and humbleness of Clare in comparison.

Elizabeth's body language also suggests a reverence for the humility of Clare. While Clare's body is

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[73] Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, *The Cult of St. Clare of Assisi in Early Modern Italy* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 61.
[74] Obbard, 70.
[75] Debby, 61.
[76] Debby, 61.
[77] Debby, 61.

oriented toward the viewer and her gaze is dropped slightly to the side to catch the other saint's,

Elizabeth's body is turned completely to face Clare, with her gaze fixed upon Clare intently.

Consequently, the focus is shifted away from the sumptuous garb and rich ornamentation of Elizabeth

to the plain and humble image of Clare. In this way, the artist highlights the dehumanization of Clare's

body and the strictness of the Rule to which she forces her body to adhere, illustrating her as an icon in

the Franciscan spirituality for its other followers such as Elizabeth of Hungary.

In comparison with the relief of Thecla discussed above, the complete disregard of Clare's

femininity in this fresco is also emphasized. The figure of Thecla from the relief is illustrated as swathed

in a clinging garment, exposing her feminine curves and the swell of her breasts to all viewers and

displaying her as without a doubt a woman. In the case of Clare in Martini's portrayal, she is almost

entirely de-sexed. Her curves, if they existed despite the austerity of her Rule, are hidden in the folds of

the heavy hanging monastic frock, and her hair is shielded behind a thick veil. However, in the images of

both of these saints, they are nevertheless expressing their agency through their particular type of

religious devotion. For Thecla, that devotion came from her love of the teachings of Paul and the faith

that enabled her to face and then escape martyrdom by the Roman Empire. By portraying her as a

female-bodied figure and thus likening her iconographically to images of Artemis and the *potnia*,

powerful pagan female religious figures depicted as exhibiting their authority over animals and the

forces of nature, the artist could be allowing Thecla to emerge as a Christian figure to circumvent these

predecessors. Consequently, her femininity in this case is of vast importance, as it allows her to be

elevated to the same sacred plane as Artemis and the *potnia*. However, for Clare, portraying her as a

female-bodied person would have been counterintuitive and would have undermined her need to

distance herself from the tempting and distracting needs of the physical form in order to achieve the

holiness she desired, as outlined in her Rule. Therefore, Clare's lack of visible sex allows this image of her

to express not only her strict monastic and ascetic convictions but also to portray the success of those

convictions in achieving holiness through control of her body. Although these images of Thecla and Clare differ in their expression of femininity in their bodies, they both allow for an understanding of their importance as Christian figures and their use of bodily agency in achieving it.

The other significant element of this image lies in the stem of blooming lilies in Clare's hand. The lily, a recognizable symbol of chastity in western medieval Christianity, represents Clare's dedication to a life of perpetual celibacy in accordance with her religious beliefs.[78] Yet women in Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were expected to obey their fathers, to marry the man their male relatives selected for them, and to produce a family for that man. However, the safety of this lifestyle is debatable. There was inherent danger in childbirth as well as in marriages with violent or unsuitable husbands, making it "the presence, not the absence of the bridegroom that activated desire for perpetual chastity."[79] According to some, there was also an innate sense of danger in "what is hidden in maleness…which women fear all the more in that they have been condemned by men themselves to know nothing about it, except that it is something to fear."[80] Therefore, although the ascetic lifestyle was one entailing extreme levels of poverty and renunciation, it could be seen as a sanctuary for religious women from their culturally and religiously dictated responsibilities and the threat of the unknown posed by forced and often unwanted contact with maleness.

By becoming part of the Poor Ladies, "a woman could choose to devote herself to a life of celibacy, answerable to no man, only her God."[81] However, celibacy was not merely an escape from the restrictive expectations of Christian and Roman patriarchy; it was also a means of attaining an appealing and more intimate relationship with the divine. Therefore, by depicting the delicately illustrated fingers of Clare's hand grasping the stalk of lilies, the artist is professing Clare's vow of virginity to remain

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[78] Wood, 312.
[79] Bynum, 20.
[80] Magli, 69.
[81] Hartney, 92.

"intact, untouched" for her divine bridegroom.[82] This image of symbolic marriage to Christ is incredibly

sacred to the Poor Ladies as well as other monastic women and men during the medieval period. It

creates a bond, "sexless, but nevertheless sexually construed," of an intimacy unparalleled by any other

action.[83] In this way, by portraying Clare with the lily of her virginity held carefully in her hand, the artist

is demonstrating the significance of her vow of chastity as well as its value in life after death.

This portrayal of Clare highlighting her choice of celibacy also coincides with Thecla and her

similar vow of chastity. In the late antique and medieval periods of Christianity, there were high

expectations placed upon women to both marry and procreate in order to be fruitful members of

society. In some cases, the refusal to do either was seen as threatening to the continuity of that society,

as in the case of Thecla. For Clare, there was the possibility of physical danger involved in the

reproduction process as well as at the hands of the powerful, dominant male body. However, although

Thecla and Clare's vows of celibacy were likely not in an intentional attempt to subvert the patriarchal

rule over the lives of women, both saints had to create a concrete separation between themselves and

the norm of society when they made their vows of chastity. In the image of Thecla, her choice to lead a

celibate life and never marry or reproduce is visible in the inclusion of the lions by her side. They are

symbols of her near-martyrdom by wild beasts for breaking her engagement with Thamyris and refusing

the sexual advances of Alexander in Antioch. By depicting her with lions lying at her feet in a subdued

and domestic attitude, this artist portrays Thecla as a strong figure who, through her vow of chastity and

faith, is able to survive the Roman Empire's attempts to execute her for refusing to fulfill her role as a

Roman female. In the same manner, Clare is depicted in Martini's fresco delicately holding a lily flower

symbolizing her deliberately chosen virginity. She is shown in control of it as she alone holds the stem,

rejecting the path that society had delineated for her in favor of a marriage with God. Consequently, by

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[82] McInerney, 34.

[83] Elizabeth A. Clark, "The Celibate Bridegroom and His Virginal Brides: Metaphor and the Marriage of Jesus in Early Christian Ascetic Exegesis," *Church History* 77, no. 1 (2008): 1.

portraying both of these saints as women asserting themselves through celibacy, these images express the bodily agency that both Thecla and Clare gained from devoting their lives to their religion.

Conclusion

The treatment of women in the Roman Empire and within the context of early Christianity provides a fascinating study of culturally constructed ideas of femininity and the inscription of them upon the female body. In its early years, Christianity was characterized by patriarchal norms that portrayed the female body as distasteful and declared it something to be feared and controlled. Though this attitude could manifest itself through the degradation and attempted destruction of the bodies of female martyrs such as Thecla whose actions subverted the patriarchal order, Christianity later offered an avenue for women's own form of physical agency. Undoubtedly, Christian constructions and ideas of femininity were impressed upon the female body, but to the woman who was being tied to the stake, martyrdom was her choice. It was her unfailing and unshakable belief that empowered her to maintain her convictions and to suffer for the validation of her chosen religious path. For the female ascetic in the medieval period, patriarchal control was more easily circumvented; while cultural and religious conceptions of femininity and prescriptions of female behavior were very much alive in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, by this time women had earned their place among the esteemed practitioners of asceticism. This acceptance of female ascetics not only allowed for Clare's uncompromising and complete dedication to her ascetic lifestyle, but also provided a means of circumventing patriarchal control over her body and transcending the stigmas that Christianity placed upon the female body. Therefore, it becomes evident through these analyses of Saint Thecla of Iconium and Saint Clare of Assisi that although the Christian female body was still in some respects a canvas for the inscription of patriarchal ideologies and values, it also emerged as an avenue for the establishment and enactment of a unique, religious female agency.

Appendix: Images

Figure 1: *Saint Thecla with Wild Beasts and Angels*, fifth century C.E. Limestone, 3 ¾ x 25 ½ inches (9.5 x 64.8 cm). The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 48-10. Photo: Jamison Miller.

Figure 2: Simone Martini, *St. Clare and Elizabeth of Hungary*, 1320-25. Fresco. Cappella di San Martino, Lower Church, San Francesco, Assisi. From *The Web Gallery of Art*. http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/s/simone/3assisi/1saints/saints40.html.

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Saint Thecla with Wild Beasts and Angels. Fifth century C.E. Limestone, 3 ¾ x 25 ½ in. (9.5 x 64.8 cm.). The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 48-10. Photo: Jamison Miller.

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Thomas Aquinas and the Grammarians

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When Etienne Tempier issued his Condemnation of 1277, among those he denounced as heretics was the man who is now arguably considered the Catholic Church's greatest theologian and philosopher, St. Thomas Aquinas. Yet perhaps even more surprising than how the Condemnation portrays Thomas as a subversive heretic is how it condemns him for teaching the same heresies as two of his most prominent philosophical opponents, Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia. As Thomas had argued against these men for years about these very subjects, that he would be condemned alongside them for supporting the same heresies seems nonsensical. However, if one examines the intellectual roots of the philosophical schools embroiled in the Aristotelian controversies of the thirteenth century, an explanation emerges. By contrasting the differing educational backgrounds of those involved in the Aristotelian controversies of the thirteenth century, the conflicting starting points of Aquinas and his critics can be elucidated. An investigation into Aquinas's style and the manner in which he used philosophical source material can further distinguish him from his contemporaries. His radically different, innovative, and ultimately syncretic philosophical method thereby becomes the cause of his inclusion in the Condemnation of 1277.

In the year 1277, the bishop of Paris, Etienne Tempier, formally condemned 219 philosophical propositions. They consisted of specific philosophical notions drawn from various aspects of Aristotelian thought. Ideas such as determinism; the possibility of an accident existing without inhering in a substance; the eternity of the material universe; the impossibility of a vacuum; that celestial bodies have eternity of substance but not eternity of motion; and that the logically impossible cannot be done by God were included in the proscription.[1] This condemnation singled out strains of thought present in the works of Siger of Brabant, Boethius of Dacia, and Thomas Aquinas.

This is a strange list of names. Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia were fierce philosophical opponents of Thomas Aquinas. Why, then, is Thomas Aquinas posthumously classified as a heretic alongside two men with whom he had vigorously debated for years? Moreover, this nearly contemporary view of Aquinas bears little resemblance to familiar historical depictions of the saint. He is

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[1] Edward Grant, *A Source Book in Medieval Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 48-50.

neither the Renaissance's representative of stodgy, unimaginative Aristotelianism nor the supremely

Catholic philosopher depicted by modernity. Rather, this depiction of Thomas Aquinas is that of a

dangerous and subversive heretic.

It has been common for scholars to explain the Condemnation of 1277 and the list of

philosophers it affected either within the context of the debates over the "struggle between faith and

reason" or by attributing it to resistance to Aristotle by some scholastic theologians. While such an

explanatory model justifiably makes reference to key issues in thirteenth-century scholasticism, it fails

to adequately explain the joint condemnation of both Thomas and his opponents in a single

proclamation. The relationship between religion and philosophy was debated throughout the medieval

period, and it could be invoked as a possible explanation for any philosophical dispute occurring

between the fifth and the fifteenth centuries. Thus, it fails to provide any real insight into what

prompted Tempier to issue the Condemnation of 1277. Furthermore, the opposition to Aristotle was, in

fact, opposition to a particular strain of Aristotelianism—Latin Averroism, a loosely related school of

thought that relied heavily upon the Muslim commentator Averroes's interpretation of Aristotle. It was

this very version of Aristotelianism that Thomas so resolutely resisted. Consequently, attributing the

Condemnation to an institutional opposition to Aristotle oversimplifies matters, failing not only to

explain why Thomas's positions were condemned, but also why those of other Aristotelians, such as his

teacher, Albert the Great, were not.

Why, then, did the Condemnation contain this odd list of names? For that matter, why was the

philosophy of the now canonized Thomas Aquinas considered heretical in the first place? The answers to

these questions can help us better appreciate the nuances of Aquinas's immediate intellectual context,

how he broke with the prevailing trends of his time, and why his philosophical innovations remain pillars

of both Christian and broader European thought. To do so, this paper will examine the relationship

between Thomism and developments in medieval logic, the influence of twelfth-century Platonic

theology on Aquinas's work, and Aquinas's approach to both classical and medieval non-Christian

sources. In light of such analysis, we can elucidate the seemingly unlikely connections between Thomas

and the Latin Averroists. From this, the uniqueness of Thomas Aquinas and his place in the history of

European thought can be better understood. Furthermore, it can provide a glimpse into the ongoing

dialogue between European and non-European thinkers in the formation of Western identity.

Prior to the Greco-Arabic translations of Aristotle that began appearing in Europe during the late

twelfth century, scholastic philosophers had undertaken a project that resulted in strikingly original

developments in the field of logic. The new system of logic that they devised was a marked contrast to

the Aristotelian system that preceded it. Partly inspired by Stoic sources, scholastic logicians of the early

twelfth century began crafting what would become known as formal logic. The goal of formal logic was

not to structure the empirical data obtained about extra-mental reality, but "to order the world of

concepts and to verify conclusions intra-mentally."[2] In other words, formal logic had no necessary

connection to objective reality; logic was not something that was inherently relatable to questions

arising about some aspect of the natural world. Its primary concern was establishing the veracity and

coherence of the logical statements themselves, accomplishing this task by clarifying the relationships

between concepts and the propositions in which people used them.

Contemporaneously, formal logic was known then as the *logica modernorum* and has since been

referred to as terminism. It proved attractive to many thinkers for a variety of reasons. When

understood within this framework, logic has a clearly defined scope and is established more firmly as a

discipline in its own right. It is no longer merely a means to an end. Scholastics now possessed an

intellectual tool that could clarify many of the debates of previous centuries through the use of semantic

analysis of the propositions involved.

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[2] Marcia L. Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition, 400-1400* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 27.

This emphasis on assessing the internal coherence of propositions and the relationships between concepts influenced the priorities of twelfth-century education. It was quickly realized that one must possess a thorough knowledge of grammar to sort out the linguistic distinctions that embodied the concerns of the *logica modernorum*. Therefore, the teaching of grammar became paramount in primary education. When Bernard of Chartres was teaching in the years around 1130, the "evening exercise… was so stuffed with grammar that if anyone took it for a full year…he could not remain ignorant."[3] Later in this account, its author, John of Salisbury, laments the decline in grammatical education by the time of his writing, claiming that it is the "peculiar prerogative" of grammatical study to make men learned.[4]

This emphasis on grammar had several effects on the intellectual outlook of twelfth-century scholars. Since the foundation of twelfth-century scholastic education was a rigorous course in proper grammar, the key texts for basic education were the writings of classical authors. There quickly emerged a distinct corpus of ancient authors whose works were considered canonical curriculum. Peter of Blois, writing around 1160, provides a list of authors for the introductory grammar student, consisting of "Donatus, Servius, Priscian, Isidore, Bede and Cassiodorus," as well as a list of authors for more advanced students, including such literary luminaries as "Josephus, Suetonius, Egesippus, Quintus Curtius, Cornelius Tacitus, [and] Titus Livius."[5] Thirty years before Peter's writing, Bernard of Chartres had already begun to demarcate the limits of this *corpus antiquae*. John of Salisbury writes that Bernard believed "that the writings of illustrious authors were sufficient."[6]

Since the use of ancient texts possessing good grammar was vital, schoolmasters focused on finding authors who maintained a consistent level of literary elegance. Thus, when selecting texts for use in their teaching, they became concerned with style over content. Once a prevailing grammatical style

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[3] Lynn Thorndike, ed., *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 8.
[4] Thorndike, 10.
[5] Thorndike, 16, 17.
[6] Thorndike, 8.

was identified in an author's writings, there arose stigmas concerning authors whose grammar was

deemed inferior, while cults of personality developed around other authors considered exemplars of

excellent grammar. It is for this reason that Bernard of Chartres admonishes his students that to "busy

oneself with what any worthless man has ever written is "too wretched a task… and wastes ability."[7]

Early scholastics consequently developed a distinctive conception of their inheritance from the

intellectual tradition of classical antiquity. They saw the classical intellectual tradition as consisting of a

group of men who possessed certain grammatical styles that were useful preparation for dealing with

the linguistic intricacies of terministic logic. Consequently, the ideas of the classical intellectual tradition

received less emphasis than the style in which classical authors presented those ideas . This emphasis

would prove influential for some of the early reception of Aristotle, whose surviving writings consisted

of unpolished lecture notes. The rough style of most of his works would have greatly offended the

sensibilities of a medieval grammarian or schoolmaster. Indeed, John of Salisbury, reminiscing about his

school days, comments on his mentor, a certain Adam, as being "a man of keenest wit, despite whatever

others may think…who applied himself to Aristotle more than the rest."[8]

There were, nevertheless, actual philosophical differences between Aristotelian logic and the

logica modernorum. In contrast to the intra-mental, linguistic focus of terminism, Aristotelian logic,

which developed into a school of thought known as modism, saw logic as the schema by which our

extra-mental reality is structured. The function of language is to signify real beings; thought and

language thus become "isomorphic with the world outside the mind."[9] The terminist logicians, including

Etienne Tempier, viewed modism as an overly rigid system. It seemed incapable of handling various

aspects of language that had no relation to objective reality, but which could nevertheless be expressed

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[7] Thorndike, 8-9.
[8] Thorndike, 13.
[9] Colish, 290.

in speech.[10] On the other hand, certain scholastics, especially those among the rapidly growing

mendicant orders, saw modism as the philosophical tool needed to bring logic into connection with real

experience. Modist logic could allow one to understand and structure a world made up of fixed,

knowable essences, the characteristics of which could be conceptualized on the basis of empirical data.

Abstractions could thus be built upon the basis of real beings encountered in the world. Nevertheless,

despite these advantages, many terminists still viewed Aristotelian logic as a step backward in matters

of precision and intellectual flexibility.

The tendency to concentrate on the grammatical style of ancient authors did not, however, lead

to a total neglect of the content of classical writings. Rather, it merely determined the perspective from

which twelfth-century philosophers and theologians considered these writers' ideas. Due to their status

as exemplary stylists, certain classical authors had reached the status of intellectual authorities. Their

reputations were such that it was paramount for their writings to be compatible with Christianity.

Chief among these authoritative classical authors was Plato. Throughout the twelfth century,

various theologians and philosophers produced works aimed at reconciling Platonic philosophy and

cosmology with Christian theology. To accomplish this task, scholastic theologians most commonly

employed allegory and metaphor.[11] The theologians of the cathedral school at Chartres produced

influential glosses and commentaries on Plato's works, particularly his cosmological work *Timaeus*.

Some commentators, such as Bernard Silvestris, went so far as to allegorize pagan deities when

combining Platonic and Christian cosmology. Peter Abelard and William of Conches, two men known

primarily for their contributions to the *logica modernorum,* also felt it necessary to allegorize Plato's

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[10] Colish, 291.

[11] David Luscombe, "Thought and Learning," in David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, eds., *c. 1204 - c. 1198,* vol. 4 of *The New Cambridge Medieval History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), accessed April 3, 2013, http://universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/histories/ebook.jsf?bid=CBO9781139054034, 473.

work so as to reconcile it with Christian doctrine.[12] The common concern of these philosophers, even those specializing in very divergent fields, was to ensure that pagan philosophy and Christian doctrine were fully compatible. Each allegorical reading went to great lengths to reconcile all aspects of whatever Platonic work was being glossed. Their primary education had ingrained in them the need to maintain amicable relations between Christian doctrine and these intellectual giants. It was an all-or-nothing proposition for these theologians—either the entirety of Platonic philosophy was reconcilable with Christian doctrine, or none of it was. Their approach to philosophical source material differed greatly from that of Aquinas; this difference in method would cause much misunderstanding with the reintroduction of Aristotle's writings to European scholars.

Translations of Aristotle had been present in Western Europe since around the 1160s, although the number of manuscripts was so small that he remained largely unread until the first decades of the thirteenth century. By this time, scholastics were receiving Aristotle's writings from three different sources. The continuing *Reconquista* in Spain made available increasing numbers of translations of Aristotle from Greco-Arabic translations, as well as the works of two highly influential Aristotelian commentators, the Muslim Averroes and the Jewish rabbi, Moses Maimonides. Crusading ventures in Palestine had provided further editions of Aristotle as well as the work of the other great Muslim commentator, Avicenna. The most direct source of Aristotelian works, however, were the translations received directly from Greek through contacts with scholars in the Byzantine Empire after the Fourth Crusade.

Aristotle's entry into scholastic thought was bitterly contested. Natural philosophers at Oxford eagerly adopted Aristotelianism by the time that Robert Grosseteste left Oxford in 1235.[13] Nevertheless, it was condemned at Paris in 1210 and again at 1215, although open lectures on Aristotelian philosophy

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[12] Luscombe, 473. They read the *Timaeus* from a perspective that asserted that its true meaning was often wrapped in an "envelope" (*integumentum, involucrum*) that could be unwrapped to reveal the underlying similarities between the pagan and Christian philosophies.

[13] James McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 149-50.

seem to have continued with increasing frequency until the university finally placed his writings on the required reading for master's candidates in 1255.[14] The Italian universities at Bologna and Padua would not fully accept Aristotle into the curriculum until the 1270s. Resistance to Aristotle came naturally from the grammarians and champions of the *logica modernorum*. This piecemeal process of assimilation also resulted from the lack of unity among proponents of Aristotelianism. Thus, differing interpretations were prominent in different universities, provoking differing reactions. The interpreters were divided into two main camps: the Latin Averroists and the mendicant interpreters.

The Latin Averroists took their name from Aristotle's Andalusian commentator, Averroes. As the name suggests, they read Aristotle primarily through the lens of his Muslim interpreter. This perspective led them to accept certain Averroist doctrines, such as the eternity of the material universe, the denial of the immortality of the individual soul, and the existence of a world mind-soul that resembled a form of pantheism. These doctrines led to widespread condemnation of Averroism in particular and Aristotelianism in general. Primary proponents of this school were Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia. Their easy acceptance of Averroist doctrines largely resulted from the period in which it began to develop, when translations of Averroes represented the best editions of Aristotle available to scholars.

The mendicant Aristotelians were found among the ranks of the new religious orders, the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans) and especially the Order of Preachers (Dominicans). The initial champion of this branch of Aristotelianism was the German Dominican St. Albert the Great, who taught at the Dominican priories in Paris and Cologne. Albert had a distinctly different reading of both Aristotle and of the Aristotelian controversy as a whole. Rather than believing that the resistance to Aristotle was the result of the philosopher's doctrines themselves, he contended that it arose due to poor translations of the philosopher's works and distortions of his ideas put forth by his chief commentators. This view stemmed from Albert's knowledge of Greek, something that set him apart from other European scholars

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[14] Colish, 289.

of the thirteenth century. He had set out, along with another Dominican, William of Moerbeke, to

provide accurate translations of Aristotle for his students.[15] These translations, as well as Albert's

general views on the Aristotelian controversy, were passed on to his star pupil—a quiet, plump Italian

novice named Tommaso d'Aquino.

The shy friar thus stepped into the debates of thirteenth-century philosophy with a

fundamentally different perspective compared to other figures on both sides of the debate. Albert had

been convinced that Aristotle's ideas were directly applicable to the key issues of thirteenth-century

philosophy. Both Albert and Aquinas thus sought to recover the original Aristotle from beneath the

layers of annotations made by Muslim and Jewish commentators that had shrouded his actual views. It

was to this task that Thomas dedicated himself from his earliest days as a bachelor's candidate at the

University of Paris. To this end, he began to read the classical authors in a way profoundly different from

the reading methods followed by previous scholastics. In so doing, he helped introduce a new

conception of the intellectual patrimony of European thought. These methods and conceptions,

however, stood out among the prevailing intellectual tendencies of the time. Consequently, he became

as controversial in his own time as his contemporary opponents, the Latin Averroists, and was even

more misunderstood.

In his effort to recover the original Aristotle, Thomas was without the knowledge of Greek

necessary to undertake a philological investigation. Having only Albert's translations of Aristotle into

Latin and the writings of the Jewish and Muslim commentators, he had no choice but to concentrate on

isolating what were distinctly Aristotelian ideas. Furthermore, because he was educated outside of the

grammar school system that produced the great twelfth-century philosophers and theologians, Thomas

did not have the same notions about the *corpus antiquae* that had informed their reading of classical

philosophers. Consequently, he was not focused on the quality of Aristotle's style, nor did he treat

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[15] Colish, 295.

Aristotle as an intellectual who could not be rejected no matter the cost. This is not to say that Aristotle

was not Thomas's primary philosophical influence and his writings not Thomas's principle source

material. Nevertheless, Thomas's use of Aristotle in his own writings was highly flexible.

This flexibility is first noticeable in the way Thomas cites Aristotle. Rather than citing Aristotle as

an authority whose name alone carries great weight, Thomas cites him in a manner more similar to the

way modern scholars use citations⸻in order to give credit to a source. This tendency is evident

throughout his writings by the common sequence of his citations. Thomas mentions each philosopher

separately from the concept being invoked, frequently placing each in entirely different syntactical

clauses. Thus, the idea can be understood completely apart from its originator's identity. For example, in

one of his Disputations, Aquinas mentions Aristotle almost in passing, asserting, "For, as Aristotle says,

you don't mention existence in definitions because…"[16] Elsewhere, he does not even bother with

Aristotle's name, such as in a section of his treatise on the *Essence of Law*, merely asserting that "[a]s

one man is a part of the household, so a household is part of the state: and the state is a perfect

community, as *Politics* I.1 says."[17] In each case, Thomas gives the idea precedence over the reputation of

its originator.

Thomas is also willing to blend Aristotle's ideas with those of others. His disputations

demonstrate his ability to weave together strands from various thinkers and in so doing create unique

presentations of well-worn concepts. For example, his consideration of whether or not the love of God

is a virtue combines elements from the works of Aristotle, Cicero, Pauline theology, Bernard of

Clairvaux, and Augustine.[18] During the disputation, Thomas considers a key Christian doctrine⸻the love

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[16] Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Potentia* 7.2.4, in Thomas Aquinas, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, trans. Timothy McDermott (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 204.

[17] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II.2.90:4, in Thomas Aquinas, *Treatise on Law,* Part II of *The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. The Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1915), 7.

[18] Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestio Disputata de Caritate*, Article 2, in Thomas Aquinas, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, 421-25.

of God⸻within the quintessential Aristotelian ethical framework of the virtues. His use of the virtues, however, does not result merely in an Aristotelian approach to Christian doctrine. Neither, however, does it produce a Christian appropriation of Aristotelian doctrine. Over and above these more simplistic philosophical approaches, Aquinas skillfully combines Aristotle's concept of virtue with the Augustinian notion of the will, and fleshes out his philosophical description with concepts drawn from Paul's theology of Christian adoption and Bernard of Clairvaux's mystical theology.

In a particularly sophisticated section of the disputation, Aquinas draws parallels between Aristotle's concept of social virtue and the mystical Christian notion of theological virtue embodied by divine love. Thomas invokes the mystical theologians to define charity as "a kind of friendship between God and man," but then critiques this definition by noting that friendship is not considered a social virtue.[19] In his conclusion, Thomas further nuances our understanding of the question by introducing concepts from the Pauline theology of grace and the Johannine corpus's treatment of divine love, which are employed congruently with the Aristotelian and mystical concepts.[20] This treatment is not merely a synthesis of two seemingly opposed ideas, which is how Thomas Aquinas's method has so often been characterized. Rather, Thomas's method, as demonstrated by his presentation of this disputed question, is syncretic.

Thomas's emphasis on the content of arguments is further borne out by his unique literary style. Stretching back through Saint Anselm of Canterbury to Saint Augustine of Hippo, presentations of theology either took the form of a prayer or were intermingled with prayer. In Thomas Aquinas's own time it was still common for theologians to use effusive language intended to convey the theologian's own religious experience and emotions, as evidenced by the writings of Alexander of Hales and St.

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[19] Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestio Disputata de Caritate* 2.8, in Thomas Aquinas, *Selected Philosophical Writings,* 422.
[20] Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestio Disputata de Caritate* 2.15.2, in Thomas Aquinas, *Selected Philosophical Writings,* 425.

Bonaventure. Thomas, however, deliberately adopts neutral language that avoids rhetorical and symbolic devices so as to not distract from the ideas being presented.

The discourse on the Trinity in Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* is a prime example of effusive language in early theological texts. Written entirely in verse, amongst its arguments are scattered such devotional exclamations as, "Who would not be lifted up in admiration at the sight of such marvels?"[21] Moreover, the discourse itself is structured as if the student and teacher were two cherubim on either side of God's throne. When discussing the Trinity in his *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas does not leap into verse, retaining his characteristically sober prose. Nor does he include devotional exclamations or literary techniques, as does Bonaventure. Instead, he presents his teachings in his preferred syllogistic format, with several series of objections and replies revolving around a central question. Even when discussing the central mystery of the Christian faith, Aquinas does not let his philosophy spill into emotive rhetoric. Since he proved himself fully capable of writing spiritual verse when necessary, this commitment to objective language would have been a conscious stylistic choice by him. The same man that wrote the Eucharistic hymn "Tantum Ergo" also penned the words: "Christ's body is not in this sacrament in the same way as a body is in a place, which by its dimension is commensurate with the place; but in a special manner which is proper to this sacrament."[22]

This content-based approach was not restricted to Thomas's reading of Aristotle. Rather, it was applied to every thinker he engaged, be they ancient or contemporary, pagan, Christian, or Muslim. Earlier scholastic thinkers sought to contextualize authoritative thinkers from previous eras rhetorically or historically, so as to understand how they might be fully reconciled with Christian doctrine. Thomas, on the other hand, evaluates their arguments in terms of what he finds in them to be correct.

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[21] Bonaventure, *Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 106.

[22] Summa Theologiae III.75.1, in Thomas Aquinas, *Treatise on the Sacraments,* Part II of *The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. The Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1915), 265.

Since Aquinas's focus in reading other thinkers is from the outset centered on their ideas and not on their historical reputation, it is not necessary for him to reconcile all the ideas of any one thinker with Christian doctrine. Some twelfth-century thinkers, such as Abelard, found it necessary to claim that Plato had been given a private revelation to account for his importance as a theological source.[23] Aquinas reverts to no such explanation to account for Aristotle's brilliance. For him, nothing seemed inherently peculiar about a pagan being so intelligent. Thomas was able to search through the thoughts of non-Christian authors for the ideas and arguments that were relevant to the questions at hand. Such an approach allowed for the presentation of Thomistic thought as its own system. Thomas established this principle in his earliest work of theology, his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, stating that "since the end of philosophy…is below that of theology, and ordered to it, theology ought to…use what is valuable in the other sciences."[24]

This principle of applying other scientific ideas in theology is embodied in the noticeably eclectic nature of Thomas's sources. While Aristotle is copiously cited throughout his works, Thomas does not limit his readings to Aristotelian writings alone. On the contrary, one finds references to a broad range of Christian authors, including St. Augustine, St. Jerome, Pseudo-Dionysius, St. John of Damascus, Boethius, Origen, St. Hilary of Poitiers, and St. Isidore of Seville. Such treatment also extends to his contemporary theological colleagues, even the Platonic theologians Hugh and Richard of St. Victor.[25] For example, in the opening of his *Cantena Aurea* on John's gospel, Aquinas effortlessly combines quotations from John Chrysostom, Augustine, and Basil of Caesarea. He even combines Augustine's sermonic comment on colloquial language, "Words, by their daily use…have become common things,"

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[23] Colish, 278-79.

[24] *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* I.1:1, in Thomas Aquinas, *Selected Writings*, trans. and ed. Ralph McInerny, (London: Penguin, 1998), 56.

[25] For examples, see *Commentary on the Sentences*- I.1:1, 3:6; II.17:1-2; *On the Divine Names*; *Summa Theologiae* I.54, 58:1-2; *Exposition of Boethius' De Trinitate* I.2:3; *Disputed Questions* I.1.4; *Summa Contra Gentiles* I.13; *Disputed Question on Truth* XVII.1.8; *Exposition of Boethius' De Trinitate* I.4:7; and *Commentary on the Sentences* I.4:2.

with his own thoughts on language, "[F]or a word is a thought formed from a thing which we know."[26]

The theory of language to which Aquinas ascribes is actually quite different from Augustine's own.

Nevertheless, Thomas need not disregard its content entirely; he is equally capable of taking and

reading.

Aquinas's use of pagan authors is equally broad in scope, incorporating not only the opinions of

Aristotle, but also those of Plato, Theophrastus, Themistius, Cicero, Ammonius Hermiae, and

Anaxagoras.[27] Thomas is also willing to use valuable insights in the work of the Islamic Aristotelian

commentators, Avicenna and Averroes, in addition to drawing from the work of the Jewish Aristotelian

Moses Maimonides.[28] He uses some of these authors' ideas despite disagreeing with some of the key

tenets of their interpretive schemes. For example, when discussing the meanings of "being" and

"essence," two crucial philosophical concepts, Aquinas is willing to invoke Averroes with favor,

incorporating part of Averroes's definition of being into his own.[29]

Thomas's more inclusive approach to source material would also explain why his theology was

identified with that of his intellectual opponents. Etienne Tempier and other opponents of Aristotelian

logic misinterpreted Thomas's use of certain Averroist principles in his own work as tending toward the

heretical notions held by Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia. Ironically, in this instance it was the

traditionally educated grammarians and terminist logicians who focused upon the minute details of

Thomas's work, who would himself later be mocked for his hair-splitting logic. By focusing on those

minor propositions shared by Thomas and the Averroists, they could not see the forest for the trees, as

they failed to understand how Thomas incorporated these singular propositions into his eclectic

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[26] Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels*, trans. John Henry Newman, ed. Paul A. Boer, Sr. (Lexington, KY: Veritatis Splendor Publications, 2012), 4:9.

[27] See *Exposition of De Interpretatione* IV.16; *Summa Theologiae* II.1.55.2; and *Commentary on the Sentences* I.2.1, II.2, d. 12.4.

[28] See *Exposition of Boethius' De Trinitate* I.2, 3.3; *On Being and Essence* I.3; *On the Power of God* VII.4-5; *On the Principles of Nature* 3; and *Commentary on the Sentences* II, d. 17.1.1.

[29] *On Being and Essence*, Chapter 1, in Thomas Aquinas, *Selected Writings*, 31.

synthesis of ideas. This interpretation of the Condemnation of 1277 makes further sense if one considers the educational background of Tempier and that of Thomas's other opponents. Their mindset derived from the grammar school system of the twelfth century and its author-centered view of intellectual inquiry, which saw philosophers' work as either wholly compatible or wholly incompatible with Christian doctrine. Since Averroes held some positions that could not be reconciled with Christian doctrine, they decided he had to be rejected wholesale.

Thomas's willingness to include in his work the thought of not merely pagans of revered antiquity, but also thinkers such as Avicenna, Averroes, and Maimonides, caused concern among some. These writers were thinkers who belonged to other cultures and religions that had not passed away with the coming of Christianity, but which had arisen after and often in opposition to it. Moreover, Thomas went so far as to combine Christian writers with both classical pagan and medieval Islamic writers' views on the same subject in his own analysis. For example, in his treatment of virtue in the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas cites Cicero, Aristotle, Augustine, and Averroes in a single article.[30] Such seeming disregard for cultural differences provided Aquinas's critics with evidence for the charge that he was too comfortable with infidels. Thus, the condemnation, when listing the errors of the philosophers, chastises them for believing that there could be "truth in the statements of damned gentiles."[31]

When viewed from this perspective, the position of Thomas Aquinas within European thought can be better understood. His outlook presented Europe with a distinctive way of considering its intellectual patrimony. Rather than conceiving of it as a collection of thinkers with separate, well-defined systems of thought, he proposed a new way of understanding that same intellectual tradition. This mindset saw its intellectual patrimony as a sea of ideas from which one could draw. Concepts and

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[30] *Summa Theologiae* II.1:55.2, in Thomas Aquinas, *Treatise on Virtue,* Part II of *The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas,* trans. The Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 7-9.
[31] Grant, 47.

arguments that were useful for issues at hand could be retrieved without having to accept the entirety

of any one system of thought.

This viewpoint not only distinguishes Thomas from the scholastics that came before him, but

also explains the negative reaction that his ideas received from many early Italian humanists. Often,

these humanists had been educated in a manner similar to that of the twelfth-century scholastic

primary schools, being drilled in grammar and rhetoric by the Italian *dictatores.* This approach fostered a

reverence for classical authors, and consequently the graduates of this educational system would have

been deeply offended by Thomas picking through the writings of beloved classical authors to search only

for concepts that he considered useful. Even for the most mild-mannered Petrarchan humanist, taking a

philosophical scalpel to Cicero was surely an unforgivable crime. On the other hand, this reading of

Aquinas actually places him in closer communion with some later syncretic humanists, such as Giovanni

Pico della Mirandola.

The philosophy that Thomas Aquinas formulated has survived into the present day with

remarkable adaptability. It has remained applicable to a surprising number of historical circumstances,

ranging from the formulation of the first principles of international law in the sixteenth century to

providing ammunition for counter-reformation apologists at the Council of Trent, and even inspiring

Alasdair MacIntyre's revival of virtue ethics in the twentieth century. Perhaps the reason for this

endurance has been the inclusive mindset of its founder, who was willing to draw from whatever source

necessary to adequately address issues at hand. Thomas himself stated as much at the very beginning of

his philosophical career, writing that, "that which acquires perfect goodness by many aids and activities

is the more noble."[32]

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[32] *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* I.1:2, in Thomas Aquinas, *Selected Writings*, 57.

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Being and Becoming:
Origins and Interpretations of Folio 3v in the Book of Durrow

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As the oldest extant insular illuminated manuscript, the Book of Durrow is a significant codex that embodies the cultural blending that occurred as Christianity adapted to the cultures of Britain and Ireland. Much of the knowledge regarding this manuscript, created in Ireland around the second half of the seventh century, has been lost to history. Folio 3v is particularly enigmatic, as it has been dislocated and decontextualized throughout the centuries. However, this isolation liberates folio 3v from its nebulous history and places it in an ongoing dialogue with a multiplicity of interpretations. This multiplicity is perhaps the appeal of insular illumination, as this ornamentation bridged the visual cultures of Christians and potential converts. Folio 3v features a spiral motif, which is unique to this page and is key to understanding it. "Being and becoming" refers to both the spiral's static form and the sense of movement that this form evokes, representing the contrast between its Christian origins and its openness to interpretation. By representing the intersections of pagan and Christian spirituality, the spiral recalls notions of transcendence, universality, and intermediation, which likely resonated with medieval viewers of diverse religions, just as they now speak to contemporary viewers across centuries.

I. Introduction

> But if you have found customs, whether in the Church of Rome or of Gaul or any other that may be more acceptable to God, I wish you to make a careful selection of them, and teach the Church of the English, which is still young in the Faith, whatever you have been able to learn with profit from the various Churches. For things should not be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things.

In a letter written from Gregory the Great to St. Augustine in 597 C.E., the pope suggests that Christianity adapt to the culture of Britain and Ireland in order to facilitate conversion from paganism. [1] This letter illustrates the concerns and adaptations that arose from cultural exchanges on both islands: less than a decade later, Columbanus's inquiries to the pope regarding the Celtic *computus* compared to that of continental Europe similarly highlight the intersections of local and Roman traditions that

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[1] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (London: Penguin Books, 1990): Book I, Chapter XXVII, 79.

continued to develop throughout the seventh century and beyond.[2] This blending of cultures gave rise

to the impressive illuminations found in insular manuscripts from this time period, which often feature

interlace patterns and other designs reminiscent of native pre-Christian forms.

The Book of Durrow is the earliest extant insular manuscript and was likely created sometime

during the late seventh century in Ireland.[3] The time of its creation supports analysis within the

historical context of missionary activity, and its illuminations exhibit the adaptation of pagan

iconography into a Christian context. A focused study of folio 3v in the Book of Durrow, which

traditionally receives little attention in scholarship on the manuscript, helps to shed light on the complex

relationships between these visual cultures. Through the concept of "being and becoming," this paper

contemplates the simultaneously fixed and fluid inspirations and interpretations embodied in the folio's

prominent spiral motif. While folio 3v is fixed in a permanent state of Christian being due to its

provenance, its use of abstraction and its synthesis of diverse visual languages provoke countless

analyses of vastly different meanings—each of equal validity—thereby placing the folio in a perpetual

state of becoming.

Limited knowledge of folio 3v, and of the manuscript itself, clouds understanding of this page's

significance. The Book of Durrow is an illuminated Gospel book that presently contains 248 folios with

designs that resonate with the missionary work of such figures as Augustine and Columbanus. While

Christianity had existed on the island for several centuries, the seventh and eighth centuries witnessed

"the synthesis of Christianity and pre-Christian Irish society."[4] As a product of this period of religious

conversion, the Book of Durrow is of utmost importance for several reasons: it reflects the transitions

occurring during the seventh century, embodies Irish-Gallic and Roman traditions, and represents the

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[2] Francis Shaw, "Early Irish Spirituality: 'One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic,'" *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 52 (1963): 190.
[3] Robert G. Calkins, *Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 33.
[4] Michael Richter, *Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 2005), 66.

gradual conversion of Britain and Ireland to Christianity.[5] This transition is especially evident in the manuscript's illumination, which is concentrated in six extant carpet pages.

The carpet pages in the Book of Durrow tend to follow their commonly accepted function as a preface for important sections in a manuscript; they accordingly demarcate the prefatory material and each Gospel (Figures 1-6). However, exceptions to this rule exist: the final carpet page, folio 248r, intriguingly marks the end of the manuscript (Figure 6). The Gospel of Matthew is also missing a carpet page, which presents the following possibilities: folio 248r's current location is inaccurate or a seventh carpet page is missing, and in either scenario the carpet pages quite possibly do not follow this proposed prefatory purpose.[6] The original placement of folio 3v is also unclear; it is likely the decorative panel was cut out at some point, sewn onto a new page, and reinserted into its current location as the frontispiece for St. Jerome's letter.[7] Another hypothesis suggests folio 3v might have been the frontispiece for the Gospel of Matthew.[8] Without delving into the specifics of these arguments, such contradictions demonstrate that it is important, and in this case quite necessary, to look beyond textual cues in order to derive meaning.

The incongruities and inconsistencies among the carpet pages encourage their study as individual works. This method offers an alternative to the tradition of analyzing the pages within the context of the manuscript's text and content, and instead more intentionally recognizes their significant history of rearrangement and dislocation. Folio 3v is particularly suited for this form of research as it marks a dramatic stylistic departure from the group. Unlike the other carpet pages, this folio prioritizes a spiral motif over interlace, which creates a distinctive visual effect. In addition, folio 3v is the only carpet

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[5] William A. Chaney, "Paganism to Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England," *The Harvard Theological Review* 53.3 (1960): 198.

[6] Calkins, 42.

[7] Calkins, 37.

[8] Meehan, 51. The basis for this argument is that the folio's forty-two spirals likely make reference to the forty-two generations from Abraham to Jesus. Matthew was the only evangelist to record this genealogy. However, this connection is challenged by the fact that the carpet page for the Gospel of John also features forty-two animals (Figure 5).

page that does not contain the image of a cross, which isolates it from the manuscript's otherwise

explicit Christian context. The absence of the cross is indicative of a broader trend in which the design

elements used throughout the manuscript draw on local traditions in a strategy that resonates with

Gregory's policy of inculturation.

II. Art and Audiences

Just as Gregory the Great found use in adapting Christianity to local customs, he also recognized

the power of the instructive function of religious images. In his famous letter to Serenus of Marseilles,

Gregory asks the bishop to preserve images while discouraging their adoration, arguing that images

served as educational tools for the illiterate.[9] Indeed, images could facilitate communication across

disparate verbal and visual languages. Augustine clearly attributed such a role to images during his

missions; upon his arrival in Kent in 597, he approached Ethelbert "carrying a silver cross as [his]

standard and the likeness of our Lord and Saviour painted on a board."[10] This scene illustrates the ways

in which art objects could demonstrate religious power through valuable and luxurious materials.[11] It

makes sense, then, that Christian manuscripts in Britain and Ireland would not only visualize religious

expression in commonly valued materials and craftsmanship, but might also accommodate the local

traditions of pagan culture to appeal to audiences of diverse religious backgrounds.

Given the absence of explicitly or exclusively Christian iconography in folio 3v, an analysis of the

folio is an ideal case study to examine the use of native and abstract forms to communicate across

religions and other cultural differences. Interestingly, this folio tends to receive little attention in

scholarship on the Book of Durrow, which is likely due to its contested location within the manuscript

and its relative lack of textual reference points. The composition's use of form, duplication, and symbolic

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[9] Celia Chazelle, "Pictures, Books, and the Illiterates: Pope Gregory I's Letter to Serenus of Marseilles," *Word & Image* 6 (1990): 139.

[10] Bede, Book I Chapter XXV, 75.

[11] Christopher De Hamel. *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*. (London: Phaidon, 1994): 14.

numbers nevertheless supplies plenty of interpretations. Folio 3v is composed of an interlace border

containing six trumpet and spiral devices that are nearly vertically symmetrical.[12] The devices are

grouped into two sets of three; each triad includes a larger device near the center of the page and two

smaller devices in the respective corners of the composition. Within each device reside either three or

six spirals that encircle a central spiral emanating trumpet-like forms. An interlace border composed of

six ribbons frames this dizzying design. Notably, the top edge of the border is missing, along with the

rest of the page.[13] The border likely formed twenty-four roundels at the time of the folio's creation, with

four knots in each roundel.

The intricate compositions of folio 3v and the other carpet pages in the Book of Durrow have

been related to artifacts ranging from Celtic to Sassanian sources, from textile to stonework.[14] While it is

possible that the Book of Durrow engages with all of these sources, the metalwork of Anglo-Saxon

England and early medieval Ireland is most commonly cited as its principle source of inspiration.[15]

Interlace in the Book of Durrow is often compared to similar designs in many of the seventh-century

treasures from the Sutton Hoo burial site (Figure 7). The manuscript's representations of animals, such

as the eagle in folio 84v, are clearly similar to cloisonné fibulae that predate the Book of Durrow (Figures

8, 9), while the spirals in folio 3v are much like those found on the Lagore belt buckle (Figure 10).[16]

These comparisons do not reveal mere artistic influence but instead highlight a complex relationship and

ongoing exchange between insular and continental discourses and visual languages.

The reciprocal relationships between insular and continental sources, and between metalwork

and manuscripts, were studied by art historian Lawrence Nees in his research on two garnet buckle

mounts found at Sutton Hoo. The mounts feature a unique guilloche, or "twist" pattern, with closed

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[12] The only interruption in this symmetry is the orientation of the spirals and trumpet elements.
[13] Meehan, 13. These pieces were perhaps lost when the manuscript was placed in an ill-fitting shrine around the
end of the ninth century.
[14] Calkins, 53.
[15] Calkins, 57.
[16] Meehan, 50.

cloisons deliberately inserted at the crossing points of the twists (Figure 11).[17] This style required much more work to produce and is markedly different from the other mounts found at Sutton Hoo and most known cloisonné metalwork. Nees argues the mounts' design drew inspiration from twists drawn in manuscripts, as paint on parchment would accommodate this style much more easily than metal. This connection illustrates that motifs in metalwork were quite intentionally translated across media and religions in a reciprocal relationship between pagan and Christian art.

What common values could diverse audiences identify in these designs? Given the high level of craftsmanship needed to create this work, some scholars believe such objects could have been appealing for their protective properties.[18] Small amulets and other forms of personal ornament often feature interlace designs and were perhaps used to protect against evil spirits.[19] The immense effort required to produce such work paradoxically made the finished product seem effortless, or even miraculous. The use of perfect geometry and symmetry could have emitted not only a sense of luxury but also a stunning, and perhaps unearthly, presence. [20]

While the Book of Durrow was believed to have protective properties, it is important to note that this power was likely derived from its connection with St. Colum Cille rather than its illumination:

> [St. Collum Cille's] bookes have a strange property which is that if they or any of them had sunk to the bottom of the Deepest waters they would not lose one letter, signe, or character of them, wch I have seen partly myselfe of that book of them which is at Dorow in the K^s County, for I saw the Ignorant man that had the same in his Custody, when sickness came upon cattle, for their Remedy putt water on the booke & suffered it

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[17] Lawrence Nees, "Weaving Garnets: Thoughts about Two 'Excessively Rare' Belt Mounts from Sutton Hoo," *Speculum* 83.3 (2008): 7.

[18] Robert D. Stevick, "The St. Cuthbert Gospel Binding and Insular Design," *Artibus Et Historiae* 8.15 (1987): 17. Stevick's article studies the design of the St. Cuthbert Gospel, which is derived from the perfect geometry of the square. The symmetry of the design, with spiraling forms framed by interlace, functions as a protection over the manuscript.

[19] Ernst Kitzinger, "Interlace and Icons: Form and Function in Early Insular Art," in *The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieval Art in Northern Britain and Ireland: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Insular Art Held in the National Museums of Scotland in Edinburgh, 3-6 January 1991,* ed. Michael Spearman and John Higgitt (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 1993), 3.

[20] Kitzinger, 4. Art historian Ernst Kitzinger interprets the carpet pages of the Lindisfarne Gospels in this way. Though he considers the potential for its design to protect, he argues the illumination in the manuscript is too excessive to have a solely protective purpose.

to rest there a while & saw alsoe cattle returne thereby to their former or pristin state & the book to receave no loss.[21]

This observation from the Annals of Clonmacnoise explains both the water damage found on a section of the manuscript and the possible origins of its protective powers. Though the source of the manuscript's power cannot be fully determined, it is believed that talismanic qualities were attributed to Irish manuscripts in particular.[22] While it is difficult to determine the nature of this power and how it might have functioned in relation to faith and other factors, the art object's value is easily perceived regardless of religious background.

III. Being and Becoming

Given the manuscript's origins, the design of folio 3v can be contextualized through an analysis of Christian beliefs and symbols that is not necessarily tied to the textual information surrounding the page. For example, folio 193v, the *incipit* to the Gospel of John in the Book of Durrow, uses the Greek delta in the place of a Roman D to make reference to the Trinity in a play on the formal qualities of the words (Figure 12).[23] Abstraction in both lettering and decorative panels required viewers to disentangle the coded iconic meanings of concurrent, competing images, which might allow them to "see God, or at least to glimpse his nature."[24] With this in mind, folio 3v has a degree of independence from whatever its original textual counterpart might have been. A reader of the Book of Durrow would have looked at the words and then past them, making use of his "spiritual sight" to attain higher understanding.[25]

Such intellectual puzzles direct the viewer's attention to the complexities of Christianity and to perhaps spirituality in general. In folio 3v, the forty-two spirals likely make reference to the forty-two

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[21] Denis Murphy, ed., *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, trans. Conell Mageoghagan (Dublin: University Press, 1896), 96.
[22] de Hamel, 38.
[23] Ben C. Tilghman, "The Shape of the Word: Extralinguistic Meaning in Insular Display Lettering," *Word & Image* 27.3 (2011): 292.
[24] Tilghman, 296.
[25] Tilghman, 303.

generations from Abraham to Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. The triangular shapes and organization of the circular devices recall symbolize the Trinity, while the two nearly identical triads might represent the dual nature of Christ. Spirals are unique to this particular folio, which suggests their intentional inclusion cannot be dismissed as decoration, especially given the absence of the cross: perhaps, then, the motif evokes ideas of cyclicality and continuity between the Old and New Testaments. The intricate design of folio 3v seems to defy human production, which could be reminiscent of the paradox of Christ's birth by the Virgin Mary. These analyses locate meaning outside of the art and text. By extension, this work can be appreciated more widely for its use of familiar motifs, independent of the specific spiritual connotations one might glean from them.

Images derive power and value from their mutability and flexibility of interpretation. Abstract ornament can facilitate such analyses by serving as an intermediary for broader reading.[26] Because geometric forms do not make specific reference to recognizable figures, they are the most effective form of intermediation between an art object and a viewer's understanding. Geometry both causes the image to lose distinct meaning and also makes it more accessible to viewers.[27] The lack of cultural specificity in folio 3v—its blend of Celtic imagery, Christian context, and geometric design—resonates with pagan, Christian, medieval, and contemporary viewers alike. These abstract visual cues are fragmented and imperfect, which encourage inculturation while attempting to address the often-paradoxical complexities of Christian faith.[28] In this way, the viewer's interpretation of the work does not have to match that of the artist's original connotation, making the illumination more universal and appealing to potential converts to Christianity.

Hegel's concept of the Absolute in Romantic art applies to this broader interest in spiritual essence, or universality, that is independent of religious belief. His analysis, though rooted in a Christian

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[26] Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 45.
[27] Grabar, 154.
[28] Tilghman, 301.

context, helps explain the interactions between spirituality and art. Similar to the ways in which

geometric design does not refer to geometry itself and thus serves as an intermediary for an external

spiritual ideal, the Absolute is a spiritual essence and truth that cannot be fully represented by the

physicality, or sensuousness, of art. Art is therefore an effective but imperfect vehicle for evoking

spirituality:

> There is something higher than the beautiful appearance of spirit in its immediate sensuous shape, even if this shape be created by spirit as adequate to itself. For this unification, which is achieved in the medium of externality and therefore makes sensuous reality into an appropriate existence, nevertheless is once more opposed to the true essence of spirit, with the result that spirit is pushed back into itself out of its reconciliation in the corporeal into a reconciliation of itself within itself.[29]

The impossibility of reconciliation between the "spirit" and the physical form of an art object creates a

closed-circuit relationship in which the spirit continuously refers to itself. An artwork's apparent, but

inferior, spirituality and its simultaneous reference to an external spiritual essence serves as an effective

model for understanding the role of spirituality in folio 3v.

The paradox of the spiral's physical stasis and perceived movement represents the phenomenon

Hegel describes. In folio 3v, the spirals' intrigue and intricacy appear to be "created by spirit as adequate

to itself," and in this sense the spiral's meaning is fixed, or static. However, the spiral's geometry does

not refer to itself, but serves as a vehicle to arrive at the "true essence of the spirit." As a vehicle for this

spirituality, it is therefore in a constant state of flux. Thus, the spiral represents being and becoming—

the spiral's static form and the sense of movement that this form implies—a key concept to

understanding folio 3v.

The spiral's intermediary role leaves the carpet page in a state of impermanence on two levels.

The first level of impermanence relates to the Hegelian idea of unification between Romantic art and

the Absolute. This relationship is in a constant state of becoming, as the spirit actively reconciles itself

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[29] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), Web.

within itself. The second level of impermanence involves the interpretive potential of insular manuscript illumination among viewers from different backgrounds. The spiral's geometric shape could reveal an ethereal sense of spiritual transcendence independent of a specific religion, which was likely appealing to missionaries and Celts alike, as the accommodation of local traditions facilitated the spread of Christianity.

IV. Conclusion

Though often neglected in research on the Book of Durrow, folio 3v offers a plethora of starting points for further study. Formal analysis of its predominant spiral motif encourages careful consideration of the principal visual elements in this folio and their significance. The spiral encapsulates this method by embodying the paradox of fixed context and infinite interpretative potential. In the impossible quest for perfect spiritual knowledge, fragmentary visual and mental exercises become more universal in that they are able to accommodate the interpretations of diverse audiences. This is perhaps the appeal of insular illumination, which attracted Christians and converts in centuries past. The notions of transcendence, universality, intermediation, and being and becoming likely resonated with medieval viewers of diverse religions, just as they now speak to contemporary viewers across centuries.

Appendix: Images

1. Folio 3v from the Book of Durrow
   Late 7th century
   Trinity College Dublin

2. Folio 1v from the Book of Durrow
   Late 7th century
   Trinity College Dublin

3. Folio 85v from the Book of Durrow
   Late 7th century
   Trinity College Dublin

4. Folio 125v from the Book of Durrow
   Late 7th century
   Trinity College Dublin

5. Folio 192v from the Book of Durrow
   Late 7th century
   Trinity College Dublin

6. Folio 248r from the Book of Durrow
   Late 7th century
   Trinity College Dublin

7. Gold belt buckle from the ship burial at Sutton Hoo
   Early 7th century
   London British Museum

8. Folio 84v from the Book of Durrow
   Late 7th century
   Trinity College Dublin

9. Pair of Eagle Fibulae
   Visigothic, found in Spain, 6th century
   The Walters Art Museum

10. Belt buckle from Lagore
    7th century
    National Museum of Ireland

11. Rectangular mounts for a harness from the ship burial at Sutton Hoo
    Early 7th century
    London British Museum

12. Folio 193v from the Book of Durrow
    Late 7th century
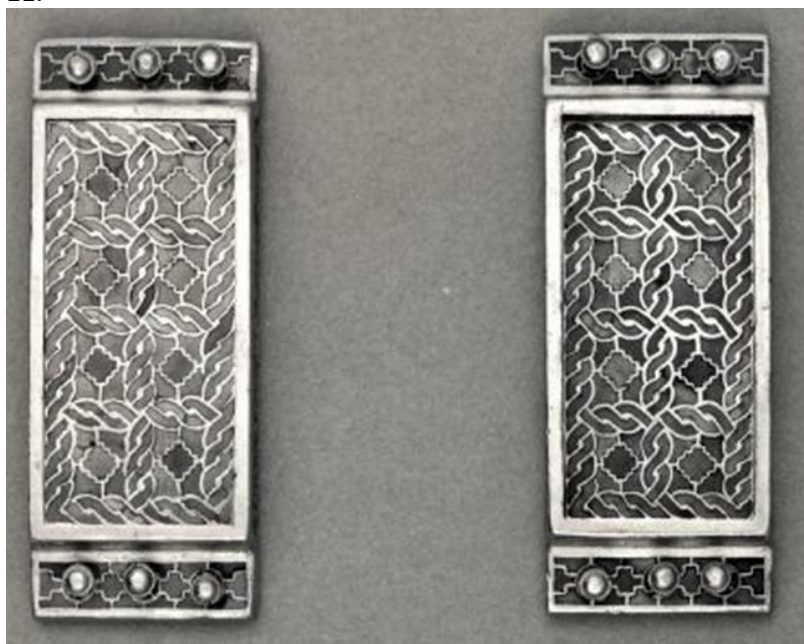   Trinity College Dublin

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