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## Theorizing Medieval Visual Art by Means of Information and Communication Sciences

### Medieval image as an audio-visual socio-cultural “dispositif”

Participating to “Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art” represents a great occasion to reflect on how image multistructurality depicts complex completive semantics. This paper intends to do so, following the works of Jacques Le Goff, Jean-Claude Schmitt, and Hans Belting (2005) [24; 4] with some thoughts about the “image-object”. This method can be completed within a transdisciplinary approach of visual anthropology and history of art by giving some grounds to cultural studies, visual semiology, information, and communication sciences, in order to construct the large and dense reflexion ancient symbolic images deserve. Those authors allowed us to frame the visual and cultural history of medieval artefacts, giving way to a new manner to design history of art, combining the contextualisation of images within their cultural phenomena with the semiotics and aesthetic effects of them as works of art<sup>1</sup>.

### Visual and cultural history of medieval artefacts

If Barbara Maria Stafford (1999)[33] considered the image as a *sui generis* image, and Ian Verstegen presented its construction through cognitive iconology (2014) [35], the image-object concept allows to consider medieval symbolic and narrative image as a complex apparatus that can activate effects and so affects its environment. The main relevant point is that late medieval images — and our entry point is here — show an analogical way of thinking from its actors (commissioners, artists, spectators). Analogy is a way to elaborate meaning visually in three ways: the image agentivity (a concept developed by Alfred Gell<sup>2</sup>), shared visual culture (Umberto Eco, Carlo Ginzburg) and a strong individual relationship attaching the receptor to the image-object (Daniel Arasse). As Jean-François Bordron (2019) [6] writes: “la temporalité du regard livre la richesse du contenu ” (the temporality of the gaze delivers the richness of the contents).

We can here join the three approaches synthesised by Marion Colas-Blaise about temporalisation and narrativization of the fixed image: image production, plastic and iconic figures, image reception. I reorganised the order of Marion Colas-Blaise’s angles of approach, according to the one I followed in this paper, in order to show better correspondence between them. Using the approach by dynamic processes from French Information and Communica-

<sup>1</sup> For further development about this transdisciplinary approach, I would draw attention to the paper I wrote in 2018 [8].

<sup>2</sup> See J. Guillaumou (2012) [17].

tion Sciences (Mucchielli, Corbalan et Ferrandez, 2004; Proulx, 2015) [24; 27], we can study religious art within its *milieux* of production, reception, and use, as well as take into account the cognitive aspects of said reception (Meunier, 2015) [23]. This reflexion will be exemplified by alpine religious wall paintings from the 15<sup>th</sup> century when visual semantic accumulation is quite strong.

### **A cognitive semiotic system**

The mural paintings in examination here can be complex on both cognitive and semiotic level (Régimbeau, 2007; Eco, 1970) [28, 13, pp. 23–26]. First example is hagiographic cycles panels serialized and sequenced in a storytelling process (Ryan, 2004) [30]. The story of the saint is told and based on memory reactivation: it is the story already known by the viewer when he sees it in images, and it is the fictionalization of a story considered to be true, with the adding of apocryphal elements to doctrinal elements.

Here we see several cycles from different chapels but produced by the same circle: the family Serra, which painters are of the same workshop and their later followers. These paintings have been done in a noticeably short period of time, between the decades of 1470 and 1480, and in a very small area, the high valleys of Susa and Maurienne. Those are three stories of three different saints: Andrew (at the chapel of Sant'Andrea di Ramats at Chiomonte in Piemonte), Sixtus (at the chapel of Santa Maria di Oulme at Salbertrand, in Piemonte), and Sebastian (at the homonym chapel at Lanslevillard in Maurienne). The narrative is already known when seen in images (Colas-Blaise, 2019) [12, p. 25] but if not, it is built in a way that it retains identical commonplaces from a saint's life to another, with highlights and key sequences, which can be found in a serial manner from a place to another, in this area of the Occidental Alps at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Eco, 1994) [16, pp. 15, 20]. The same episodes can be seen from different saint cycles: the exorcism, the disciples visiting the prison, the predication or reading of the Scriptures, the martyred body miraculously discovered, the confrontation with the heathen aedile. Those are always depicted, no matter which particular saint's life is told (Fig. 1).

Obviously, those cycles have also more characteristic and conjunctural scenes, specific from a given saint (for example mainly in the typology of miracles and torments); and this method brings more devotional variety while keeping a strong formal and non-temporal unity. Thus, the question of the adaptability of the same saints cycle from one church to another needs to be addressed. In 2019, André Gunthert compared the mechanisms of visual storytelling, how the same image can change from one edition to another: in Late Middle Ages saints cycles, it can change the external organisation of the same cycle, regarding the addition or removal of episodes or patterns, but also the internal organisation, when the same episode is differently composed. Those choices are not only of iconographic or stylistic matters, but they also tell us about the specific community, the sponsor or procurator of the artistic commission, and so about the different visual receptions and mediations from a village to another. Those, as André Gunthert writes, orient a visual reading to a narrative structure organised with specific goals linked to local contexts on top of broader socio-cultural contexts (Cailloux, 2018) [8].

Seriality and sequentiality are technical processes that allow a certain formal formatting which brings in semantics, according to the orientation concept in figurative semiology from Algirdas Julien Greimas (1984) [15, pp. 19–20]. Framing in panels and lines creates a mul-



Fig. 1. Serra workshop, Stories of Saint Sebastian, 1480ca, wall painting at the homonymous chapel at Lanslevillard (Maurienne valley, High Savoy, France) ©Marianne Cailloux

multiple scenes composition but also the illusion of a homogeneous space (Le Guern, 2009) [21, pp. 128–130]: as Ernest Gombrich wrote (1960) [16], visual narration is a form of structuring communication, because it is recognizable. It elaborates the viewer's participation, who associates and completes what he sees to what he knows partly from learning but also from his community context, culture and life frame (Blume et al., 2015) [5], the aim being the soteriological identification and the support for values and beliefs provided through the visual media.

André Gunthert recently raised the question of the objectual narration of images, outside a strict linearity and context alienation. According to the cultural historian of images, no comma we mentioned before, narration can be defined as the building of a plot. It needs a sequential linearity in order to unwrap the course of the action. But on a semiotic level, without clear syntax, if we consider a narrative — or even a contemplative one — image, it can only be considered as a system of organised information, if it is enlightened by context, whereas its polysemy can be a threat to a good understanding (Gunthert, 2019) [18]. This was said about mediatic, recent images, but it can nourish the reflexion about medieval artefacts too, for they are known for their complexity and their multi layered reading. For ancient images, this finds an immediate answer in the linear construction of great narrative cycles with multiples panels organised through visual progression, and due to the fact that the completion works because it is a cognitive process of memory reactivation, either because the story is received as already known or because it is recognizable by its iconographic same patterns.

The question is more complex for isolated images: how, outside a linearity frame, outside an explicit narrative, a group of images can add on meaning? Along several essays in the collective directed by Hazel Gardiner and Chris Bailey in 2010 [2], we can wonder if a narrative is to be extracted through context, symbolic and cathartic contexts, through reception analysis, and more widely its visual mediations.

### **A transitive dispositif of cultural and informational contents**

In 2008, Yves Jeanneret [19] wrote about the triviality of images, meaning how images articulate a complex circulation of cultural phenomena and of informational contents in a pervasive way better than a mere cumulative one, and this can connect the creative role of art works with its communication and information transmissive display. It thus implies a multiplication of resources combined to make semantics emerge. Whether it is in large sacred narrative cycles or in isolated images, beliefs, powers and miraculous anecdotes (either doctrinal or apocryphal) are synthesised — and so made efficient in an implied magico-religious goal — in a static figure, because even non active and contemplative, its simple, reduced characteristic attributes enable identification and thus narrative projection.

For instance, the saint Gregory Mass pattern is exceedingly popular throughout the Occidental Alps. It is an isolated image which does not belong to any cycle, nor does it attach itself to any “historical” event from Pope Gregory I’s life (590–604). It engages then the question of the predicate versus the composition, around the topic of optical recognitions of the image themes (Bordon, 2019) [6, p. 12]. The image shows the acmeic moment when the host incarnates itself and becomes Christ, who is depicted standing above and wrapped in a seraphic nimbus. It manifests iconographically the transubstantiation and it is an image of propaganda, particularly useful in the geo-political context of this part of the Alps, with heretic presences leading to the doctrinal need to reaffirm the importance of the Eucharist (Cailloux, 2015; Rigaux, 2009) [7; 29]. We could also mention the fact that, in these parts, there are frequent documented petitions for new parishes in the villages where there are only rural chapels with mass only once a year and where it is physically dangerous to go down the alpine valleys to rally the parish in order to take communion (Fig. 2).

Between this image with a haloed man, wearing a robe, in front of a clothed table, elevating a white disk on which another little nimbed naked man is standing, and the narrative I just gave, how the image is built to bring identification, narration, and political-religious meaning? The details are recognized by the viewer, who (re)assigns signification, which meaning “activate” activates the power of protection from the image: the little naked man with a cruciform nimbus and a flank wound is Christ; the disk he stands upon is stamped with the Crucifixion, is an host wafer; and the man before a clothed table, wearing a robe and elevating the disk is the priest performing mass at the altar. The cognitive recognition of what the image tells, and the recognition of geo-political and doctrinal subtexts constitute a religious experience (Walker Bynum, 2006) [37], one that Michael Camille even describes as theatrical (Camille, 1996) [11, p. 95]. It associates itself with the magic injected in the image, which is once again “activated” by those who look at it: in the Late Middle Ages, it is said that one gazing upon the living host is protected from death without communion, at least for the day.





Fig. 2. Master of the Horres (Serra follower), *The Mass of Saint Gregory (and part of the stories of saint James)*, 1530ca, wall painting at the chapel of Sant'Andrea di Horres-Millaures in Val Susa (Piedmont, Italy) ©Marianne Cailloux

Moreover, the pattern of St. Gregory's mass is popular because it conveys Papal Indulgence according to the image phylactery: the viewer prays in front of the image, thus he sees what saint Gregory sees (the miracle) and so receives the indulgence (being a reduction of Purgatorial days), and so activates the soteriological function of the image. As Caroline Walker Bynum (2006) writes [37, p. 232], late Middle Ages images do not have only an illustrative purpose, but they give to see the invisible, to see through, beyond physical gaze — what Jeffrey Hamburger calls “the Mind's eye” —, the accumulation of meanings enables to enter the image.

### **An information reception theory from the “spect-actor”**

Accordingly, visual cognitive meaning does not necessarily result from the visual display of a narration with connected panels from the same story-telling cycle. To a modern eye, the image might seem to be isolated and decorrelated from a story, anarchic even. Yet, the object-image can make sense, through a dynamic and processual grouping of several sets (Mucchielli, Corbolan, Ferrandez, 2004) [24]. It would be indeed quite interesting to try on these isolated images, the analytic tool developed by Lucien Massaert and published on the last issue of *Signata* [22].

« Si nous reprenons notre question de départ (que montre le tableau), notre réponse est qu'il ne s'agit pas seulement de voir dans le tableau la représentation d'une histoire, d'un récit, d'une action ou d'un mythe, mais la présentation d'une structure spatiale et d'une structure de sens.

Cette structure se donne immanente à l'image. Lorsque nous visons à énoncer la phrase du tableau, nous prendrons en compte les actants plastiques du tableau et les positions actantielles et chercherons ainsi à énoncer une phrase spatiale, une phrase espace. »<sup>3</sup>

This intellectual system proposes to investigate how the surface organisation of a painting (composition, spatiality, distribution system) can produce at the same time narration and sense by creating singularities or disruptions; what Lucien Massaert calls reversal, envelopment, opposition, continuity. The juxtaposition of iconic elements brings the receiver of images to thinking analogically and engaging a metaphorical projection (Meunier, 2015) [23, p. 89]; the viewer “re-establishes a narrative cohesion and consistency” writes Marion Colas-Blaise. It is what Jean-Marie Schaeffer (2001) [31, pp. 11–27] called “induction” and Jan Baetens called “the outside projection” (as he often recalls in the seminar conferences “Récit et images fixes” he gave at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, during the 2000s). This projection is mobilised by what the images describe and by their organisation in a global setting, a dynamic “device” that can be called a “dispositif” by activation (Agamben, 2007) [1, pp. 10–11].

### **A combination of rational relations and symbolic investments**

About this specific topic, we can use quite a common example of accumulative wall painting, with few panels that are not particularly obvious at first sight in their connection and semantic added value. The outside wall of the chapel of San Antonio of Jouvenceaux in Piemonte has been made by the same family workshop that we spoke about, in the same Alpine area and in the same shorten time space. It presents a disparate group of isolated images: Saint Michael, Saint Christopher, the Annunciation, Saint Anthony, the good and bad confession and communion (Fig. 3).

Yet, it is a particularly consistent set when analysed through its contexts, its period (the decade of 1480), but also with the place, which is a part of Piedmont where Waldensian refuges are well documented. So, there is a reinforcement effect by putting together distinct elements, linked by semantic reading and local symbolism. Indeed, Saint Michael is a mountain protector and one of his most important sanctuaries, the *Sacra San Michele*, is located nearby, at the entrance of the valley. And, Saint Anthony is a very popular saint at that time for his miraculous cure from ergotism and the not-far Ranverso hospital is one of his two major pilgrimages in Europe. Also, Saint Christopher protects the travellers and everyone from sudden death, and one major road to France passes here, from Torino to Chambéry and Lyon. Finally, the Annunciation, which is the literal incarnation of the Verb, is an Eucharistic pattern (Cailloux, 2015) [7], as are the two moral images of good confession and communion, which participate to a dogmatic propaganda in a place of religious tensions (Cailloux, 2020) [9]. As writes Ian Verstegen (2014) [35, p. 185], the “reversed” beliefs of religious opponents can function as much by contiguity as by similarity in the denial through destruction processes.

<sup>3</sup> If we take our first interrogation (about what is shown in the painting), our answer is that it is not only about seeing the representation of a story, a narrative, an action, or a myth within a painting, but above all the representation of both a spatial and a semantic structure. This structure is to be immanent to the image. When we aim to set out the specific phrase that the painting is stating, we need to consider the plastic agents of the painting, and also the actantial positions; and then we will seek to state a spatial phrase.”



Fig. 3. Serra workshop, Annunciation, Good and Bad Communion and Confession, saints Anthony abbot, Michael and Christopher with Christ, 1480ca, outside wall painting of the chapel of Sant'Antonio di Jouvenceaux at Sauze-d'Oulx in Val Susa (Piedmont, Italy) ©Marianne Cailloux

Every one of those panels can be taken and understood in their own contemplative isolation; taken together, they mutually reinforce themselves and become part of total, global, accumulative visual syncretism that goes beyond a mere comparison of respective powers (Vincent, 2001) [36]. By metaphoric projection, with a “mise en scène” of specific iconographic choices in this specific wall painting, the Jouvenceaux village community narrates itself, for all to see (Blume et al, 2015) [5]. Visual accumulation has a goal of efficiency, by concentration which is similar to what the rhetoric of predication does: this wall painting composes a global image worthy of being remembered by focusing on a chain of correspondences, and so it works because of multiple entry points please take off the odd parenthesis (through Christological or hagiographical narration for some, through devotional contemplation or magical protection for others (Trippes, 2004) [34].

### **Cathartic emotional responses by physical and spatial investments**

The receiver of those paintings can reconstitute a frame of visible details from his perception; this frame corresponds to a common culture, facilitated by a ranking representation of the characters and by progression tricks. The fact that a panel can represent a precise and fixed action inside a story is a significant metonymy. This metonym makes the receiver reconstruct the narrative ensemble, with the visual help tricks set by the conceiver or the producer of the



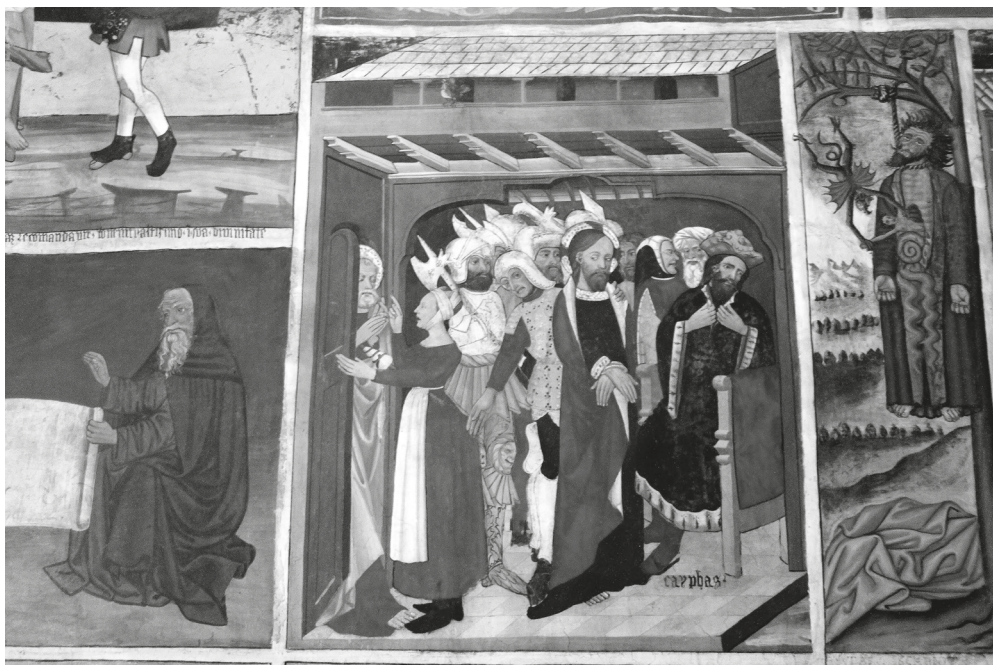


Fig. 4. Serra workshop, Saint Peter at the Comparison before Caiaphas, 1480ca, wall painting at the homonymous chapel at Lanslevillard (Maurienne valley, High Savoy, France) ©Marianne Cailloux

image. Those tricks are conventional in the sense that they can be found in other wall paintings of the occidental Alps, as for example, in the Saint Anthony cycle at Ranverso (Piedmont), the Passion stories of Notre-Dame des Fontaines at La Brigue (Alpes Maritimes). It is quite specific and obvious in largely developed cycles, which is the case of the two cycles (Passion and Saint Sebastian) at the painted chapel of Lanslevillard. This phenomenon brought Veronique Plesh to the idea that one could point out a specific narrative technicity in this area and as a common visual culture (Ory, 2004) [25, pp. 111–114] (Fig. 4).

So, in the painted saints' stories in the Occidental Alps, one can see the recurrence of characters, like identifiable clothes, going in and out, like being cut in the progression from a panel to the next. For example, we can see Peter literally entering in the Comparison before Caiaphas and the Denial, in the Passion Cycle of Lanslevillard (High Savoy). In the Antonine cycle at the painted chapel of Saint Anthony at Bessans (Savoy), we see the same character moving in and out of the panels of the Betrayal of Christ with the thirty pieces of silver, the Comparison before Caiaphas, the Wedding at Cana, and the Circumcision of Christ (Figs. 5, 6).

The castle of La Manta (Piedmont) has a chapel painted with a large Passion cycle: the panel where Pilatus washes his hands, shows a little female servant going out of a tower door and acting so as visual pivot between this scene and the next, which is the Mocking of Christ (Fig. 5). The same servant can be spotted in the Flagellation at the sanctuary of Nostra Signora delle Grazie at Montegrazie (Imperia), in the Passion cycle painted by Pietro Guidi da Ranzo.



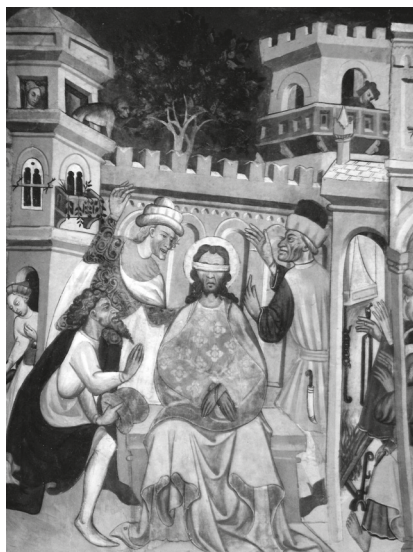


Fig. 5. Anonymous painter, *The Mocking of Christ*, 1427–1435 ca, wall painting at the Santa Maria al Castello church, at La Manta castle (Pinerolo valley, Piedmont, Italy) ©Marianne Cailloux



Fig. 6. Serra workshop, *The Virgin bidding goodbye to saint Joseph* (detail of the maiden servant), 14760–70ca, wall painting at the Santa Maria Maddalena chapel at San Pietro in Follonia at Avigliana (Susa valley, Piedmont, Italy) ©Marianne Cailloux

This motif is quite frequent in alpine cycles, and it is also used to densify composition: for example, at the Marian stories painted in the Magdalen chapel of San Pietro in Folonia at Avigliana (Piedmont), the little maid is throwing water from a window; it animates the surface of the architectural structure (Fig. 6) (Cailloux, 2021) [10, pp. 122–123]. It is quite difficult to understand what came first: is it that the motif was used to reinforce the composition and then came the idea of using it to increase narrative progression by filling panels with characters and making them recognisable from frame to frame, or the other way around?

By designing a narrative progression without a geometric framed structure, the painter, for example at La Manta chapel, uses architectural elements and little character figures, to enhance visual transition between biblical scenes: it supports the physical progression of the viewer through the story and by livelier setting, it facilitates a devotional identification. There are also some cases where the servant is painted going up a lateral stairs or scale, as it is at the San Fiorenzo chapel at Bastia Mondovi (Cuneo) but also at the already mentioned sanctuary of La Brigue (Alpes Maritimes). In any case, this motif is indeed recurrent in Christ stories cycles. Among other secondary unnamed figures, it functions as a technical help to visualize circulation, in service of the spiritual narration. Those characters are frequently represented under a door, a porch, or an arch, the architectonic opening being either cut out by the edge of the panel or at the centre of the image, which is the case in the *Ecce Homo* panel at San Giorgio chapel at Valperga (Piedmont), for example, but it is also quite a common tactic in Giovanni Canavesio's wall paintings (Figs. 7, 8).

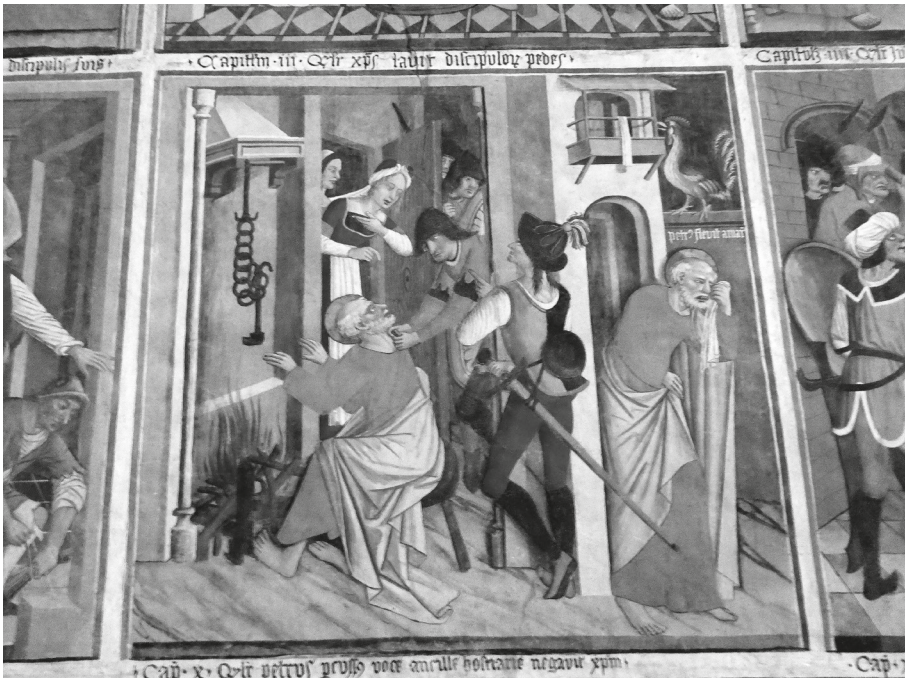


Fig. 7. Giovanni Canavesio and workshop, *The Remorse of Peter*, 1492, wall painting at Notre-Dame des Fontaines at La Brigue (Alpes Maritimes, France) © Alain Chaptal



Fig. 8. Giovanni Canavesio, *Saint John evangelist*, 1482, wall painting at San Bernardo at Pigna (Liguria, Italy) ©CC-BY-SA Wikicommons Carlo dell'Orto

On the other hand, the panel of *Peter Remorse* at La Brigue “uses” open architecture, an arcade porch with the characters circulating as a visual tool of narrative transition, a trick that painter Giovanni Canavesio uses again — with less effects due to a humbler commission — at the White Penitents brotherhood chapel of Peillon (Alpes Maritimes) in 1495, with the porch-tower transitioning between the city exit between Judas Suicide and the procession towards the next Appearance in Court. The door marks an urban physical space, but also the symbolic frontier of the suburbia — a place with a pejorative connotation because of the infamous gesture of Judas —; it is a visual system that enhances the narrative meaning and story progression. Giovanni Canavesio is indeed a specialist of this technique of “outgoing” the frame in order to create a sense of continuity between registers, for example, at the chapel of San Bernardo at Pigna in alpine Liguria. The book-chest in the *Saint John’s* spandrel, at the vault, thereby bypasses the ornamented border decoration, whereas it is not systematically the case in the other spandrels. Sometimes, a foot or a piece of furniture step outside the bichrome border trips, and it occurs too often to be thought as a pictorial clumsiness from a workshop second-hand painter. The habit to put almost all saint cycles in registers induces the viewer’s ambulation, and so a physical stimulation of lateral movement inside the building in order to make the gaze circulate inside the cycle and it is less anarchical than using architectural elements as transitional modules (Plesch, 2004) [26, p. 90].



## Conclusion

In both systems, the viewer's gaze can wander around and through the cycle, either following the linear register and thus the linear narrative, but it can also follow a specific recognisable character, or even envision vertical or diagonal reading through spiritual concordances, aligning special events of the Passion and a Christological saint, or creating meaningful links between vetero- and new Testaments scenes, which is a common practice from Romanesque wall painting, like at Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe abbey (Vienne) or Monreale cathedrale (Palermo).

Thus, one cannot focus only on the narrative principle at all costs, meaning decontextualized like Marilyn Aronberg Lavin did in her book *The Place of Narrative*, because consistency does not only lie in a strict respect of chronology, but also frequently in the relations operating dynamically between themes and symbols, semantic and cognitive investments, above all within a multi-structural device with plural functions and in a religious edifice with local issues (Baschet, 1992) [3]. Therefore, it seems appropriate to consider the many ways a medieval religious image can be culturally activated to better understand its receptions and mediation uses.

Other details from the images induce other processes in the receiver, putting one in a place of "spect-actor", an active participation from the image believer reception, that Jean-Pierre Meunier qualifies as "mimetic" (2015) [9, pp. 67–68]. Thus, the spatialisation of narration also works in a metonymic way, as it is quotational of a broader geo-historical context.

Introducing inside the images, elements that do not correspond to the supposed "reality" of the story, for example, 15<sup>th</sup> century architecture elements (like Piemontese castral crenelations), very specific alpine plants or mountainous snowy sceneries, participates to this "perceptive accommodation" Jean-Pierre Meunier writes about: all those elements we saw "activate" the memory of whom gazes upon the image and make one enter the image as one proceeds through devotional narrative by visual progression.

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**Title.** Theorizing Medieval Visual Art by Means of Information and Communication Sciences

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**Abstract.** For about thirty years now, transdisciplinarity revitalised the history of art almost completely: cultural and visual studies, and among them French Visual Anthropology has brought cultural history within iconographic and stylistic analysis. The aim of this paper is to offer some thoughts about innovation in the approach of Art History with a particular reflexion on if et how it is possible to bring about visual arts theory and cultural history through the prism of information and communication sciences, by experimenting this way of analysing on late Middle Ages occidental images. This communication intends to fit in the thematic section studying medieval and early modern art from an interdisciplinary theorisation and methodology of research. It dwells on the break-through offered by the works of Hans Belting and Jean-Claude Schmidt, but also reflecting on artefacts issues about power (Freedberg), performativity (Bartholeyns and Golsenne) and agency (Gell). First, we will see an artistic image can be understood as an audio-visual socio-cultural “dispositive”, instead of just apprehend them as stylised representations. There is indeed a completing and cumulative aspect in the semantic links between liturgy, architecture, and iconography. The image builds itself as transitive dispositif of cultural and informational contents (Jeanneret, 2008), that can be experimented as a cognitive semiotic system (Régimbeau, 2007). Then, we will question multimodality and agency for ancient images, based on information reception theory from the “spect-actor”, rather than comparative and attributive approach of artefacts producers, like in classic art history. The goal here is to investigate uses and purposes, rather than functions. We can see that the receiver of an image establishes a complex individual relationship with it, which stratification can be decoded through rational relations, symbolic investments and cathartic emotional responses that are all often operating in this precise time period of the Middle Ages. This can put into perspective networks, communication and information circulations and see producers, patterns, and ideas as transcultural and transmissive carriers (Mucchielli, Corbalan et Ferrandez, 2004; Proulx, 2015).

**Keywords:** wall painting, Alps, visual studies, religious iconography, agency

**Название статьи.** Теоретизация средневекового визуального искусства средствами информационных и коммуникационных наук

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**Аннотация.** Вот уже около тридцати лет трансдисциплинарность почти полностью оживила историю искусства: культурология и визуальные исследования, в том числе французская визуальная антропология, исторические исследования культуры стали частью иконографического и стилистического анализов. От социальной истории до культурологии многочисленные новые дисциплины захватили артефакты в качестве объектов изучения, создавая обновленные и пересекающиеся подходы. Однако древние образы слабо изучаются с помощью информационно-коммуникационных наук, а визуальные историко-художественные подходы редко используют концептуальные средства коммуникации для их изучения. Цель данной статьи состоит в том, чтобы предложить некоторые мысли об инновациях в подходе к истории искусства с особым размышлением о том, возможно ли и как, создать теорию визуального искусства и историю культуры через призму информационных и коммуникационных наук, экспериментируя с этим способом анализа на примере западных образов позднего средневековья. Исследование опирается на инновационные подходы Г. Бельтинга и Ж.-К. Шмидта, идеи связи артефактов с властью (Фридберг), теории перформативности (Бартолейнс и Гольсен) и агентности (Гелл). Во-первых, мы увидим, что художественный образ можно понимать как аудиовизуальный социокультурный “диспозитив”, а не просто воспринимать в качестве стилизованной репрезентации. В семантических связях между литургией, архитектурой и иконописью действительно присутствуют завершающие и кумулятивные аспекты. Образ строится как транзитивный диспозитив культурно-информационного содержания (Жаннере, 2008), который может быть разработан как когнитивно-семиотическая система (Регимбо, 2007). Затем мы поставим под сомнение многомодальность и агентность древних изобра-

жений, основываясь на теории получения информации от «зрителя-актера», а не на сравнительном и атрибутивном подходе производителей артефактов, как в классической истории искусства. Цель здесь состоит в том, чтобы исследовать использование и цели, а не функции образа. Мы видим, что получатель образа устанавливает с ним сложные индивидуальные отношения, стратификацию которых можно расшифровать с помощью рациональных отношений, символических вложений и катарсических эмоциональных реакций, часто действующих именно в этот период Средневековья. Это позволяет рассматривать сети, коммуникации, информационные циркуляции и определять производителей, паттерны и идеи как транскультурные и трансмиссивные носители (Муккиелли, Корбалан и Феррандес, 2004; Пру, 2015).

**Ключевые слова:** настенная живопись, Альпы, визуальные исследования, религиозная иконография, агентность