

## Writing on the world beyond the page: medieval inscriptions as *facta* and *ficta*

Aden Kumler

Accepted: 26 April 2023 / Published online: 5 June 2023  
© The Author(s) 2023

**Abstract** From the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries texts proliferated upon the surfaces of objects, monuments and architecture, ensuring that medieval people lived with texts, even if they never turned a page. Examining a series of inscribed objects, monuments, and buildings, this article focuses upon three constitutive features of this large-scale dynamic: epigraphic prosopopoeia, the use and effects of deixis in medieval inscriptions, and the device of the banderole. It concludes by examining the twelfth-century Bridekirk baptismal font: an epigraphic monument in which all three devices are skillfully deployed, to remarkably self-reflexive ends. The article aims to show how the design of epigraphic texts added not only new textual-material facts to the world, but also textual-visual *ficta* or fictions.

### Schreiben auf der Welt jenseits der Seite: Mittelalterliche Inschriften als *facta* und *ficta*

**Zusammenfassung** Vom zwölften bis zum fünfzehnten Jahrhundert wucherten Texte auf den Oberflächen von Objekten, Denkmälern und Architekturen und sorgten dafür, dass die Menschen des Mittelalters mit Texten lebten, auch wenn sie nie eine Seite umblätterten. Der Beitrag konzentriert sich auf drei konstitutive Merkmale dieser groß angelegten Dynamik: die epigraphische Prosopopöie, die Verwendung und die Auswirkungen der Deixis in mittelalterlichen Inschriften und das Instrument der Banderole. Abschließend wird das Taufbecken von Bridekirk aus dem zwölften Jahrhundert untersucht: ein epigraphisches Monument, in dem alle drei Mittel geschickt und selbstreflexiv eingesetzt werden. Der Artikel soll zeigen, wie die Gestaltung epigraphischer Texte der Welt nicht nur neue textlich-materielle *facta*, sondern auch textlich-visuelle *ficta* hinzufügte.

---

✉ Aden Kumler

Kunsthistorisches Seminar, Universität Basel, St. Alban-Graben 8, 4051 Basel, Switzerland  
E-Mail: aden.kumler@unibas.ch



Scholarly interest in the quite varied formats, materials, and media employed for textual purposes in the Middle Ages is not new: it can be distinctly detected in the nineteenth-century, and arguably reaches back into the medieval period.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, in the last half-century, medievalists playing leading roles in »the new philology«, »material philology«, »material text studies«, in the study of »material-textual cultures«, and, in the so-called »material turn«, have repeatedly rediscovered the salience of the physical forms and facture of medieval texts.<sup>2</sup> Even as medieval manuscripts rightly continue to be a major focal point for scholarship across the disciplines, a growing body of work has turned to texts existing beyond the manuscript page with new questions and energy.<sup>3</sup>

With few exceptions, the non-manuscript »material texts« that have garnered the greatest notice from literary and art historians have been quite artfully composed works, rather than the *realia* of everyday life. *Tituli*, those brief texts, often composed in verse, that feature in church portals, mosaics, and wall paintings, as well as

<sup>1</sup> For a critical appraisal of the longer intellectual history, focused primarily on the Germanophone context, see Michael R. Ott, »Philologie der Worte und Sachen. Friedrich Panzers Inschriftenforschung als disziplinäre Herausforderung«, *DVjs* 88/2 (2014), 234–255. Collaborative research projects have played important roles in catalyzing new interdisciplinary research in recent decades; of particular note are the SFB 933 – *Materiale Textkulturen* at the Universität Heidelberg (<https://www.materiale-textkulturen.de/index.php> (10.02.2023: last viewed)), the former NCCR – *Medienwandel-Medienwechsel-Medienwissen: Historische Perspektiven* at the Universität Zürich (<http://www.medality.ch/index.php> (10.02.2023: last viewed)), the concluded SFP 231–*Träger, Felder, Formen pragmatischer Schriftlichkeit im Mittelalter* at Universität Münster (<https://www.uni-muenster.de/Geschichte/MittelalterSchriftlichkeit/> (10.02.2023: last viewed)), the ongoing epigraphic research conducted at the Centre d’études supérieures de civilisation médiévale (CESCM) at the Université de Poitiers (<https://cescm.lab0.univ-poitiers.fr/> (10.02.2023: last viewed)) and the German-Austrian *Die Deutschen Inschriften des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit* project (<https://www.inschriften.net/projekt.html#fc565> (10.02.2023: last viewed)).

<sup>2</sup> For further discussion, see Stephen G. Nichols, »Introduction. Philology in a Manuscript Culture«, *Speculum* 65 (1990), 1–10 (introducing a special dedicated to the »new philology«); Stephen G. Nichols, »Why Material Philology? Some Thoughts«, in: Helmut Tervooren, Horst Wenzel (eds.), *Philologie als Textwissenschaft. Alte und Neue Horizonte. Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie. Sonderheft*, Berlin 1997, 10–30; Kellie Robertson, »Medieval Things. Materiality, Historicism, and the Premodern Object«, *Literature Compass* 5/6 (2008), 1060–1080; Kellie Robertson, »Medieval Materialism. A Manifesto«, *Exemplaria* 22 (2010), 99–118; Thomas Meier, Michael R. Ott, and Rebecca Sauer, »Materiale Textkulturen. Konzepte-Materialien-Praktiken: Einleitung und Gebrauchsanweisung«, in: Thomas Meier, Michael R. Ott, Rebecca Sauer (eds.), *Materiale Textkulturen: Konzepte – Materialien – Praktiken*, Berlin 2015, 1–6; Markus Hilgert, »Materiale Textkulturen. Textbasierte historische Kulturwissenschaften nach dem material culture turn«, in: Herbert Kalthoff, Torsten Cress, Tobias Röhl (eds.), *Materialität. Herausforderungen für die Sozial- und Kulturwissenschaften*, Paderborn 2016, 255–268; Christina Lechtermann, »Material Philology«, in: Susanne Scholz, Ulrike Vedder (eds.), *Handbuch Literatur & Materielle Kultur*, Berlin 2018, 117–125.

<sup>3</sup> Among literary historians, much of this work has focused primarily on »narrated inscriptions« or »text immanent inscriptions«, that is, fictive inscriptions within literary texts; see, for example, the essays collected in Ricarda Wagner, Ludger Lieb, Christine Neufeld (eds.), *Writing beyond Pen and Parchment. Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature*, Berlin 2020.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Arwed Arnulf, *Versus ad picturas. Studien zur Titulusdichtung als Quellengattung der Kunsts geschichte von der Antike bis zum Hochmittelalter*, Munich 1997; Christa Belting-Ihm, »Zum Verhältnis von Bildprogrammen und Tituli in der Apsisdekoration früher westlicher Kirchenbauten«, in *Testo e immagine nell’alto medioevo*, 2 vols., Spoleto 1994, II, 839–886; Vincent Debaisie, »L’écriture dans l’image peinte romane: Questions de méthode et perspectives«, *Viator* 41 (2010), 95–125; Josef Engemann, »Zu den Apsis-Tituli des Paulinus von Nola«, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 17 (1974), 21–46; To-



in manuscripts, have attracted considerable attention.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, inscriptions found in high-status mortuary contexts – upon objects deposited in graves, upon tombs, memorial brasses, and epitaphs – have been explored from a range of disciplinary perspectives.<sup>5</sup> Art historians have paid particular attention to the texts worked into the surfaces of reliquaries, *vasa sacra*, altar cloths, vestments, lamps, altarpieces, and other liturgical equipment. Indeed, the import and effects of texts visually integrated into medieval sacred spaces and their furnishings have long dominated art historical consideration of extra-manuscript word-image relations. Perhaps this explains why it has been the medieval dynamics of text as image – »the iconicity of script« in

bias Frese, Wilfried E. Keil, Kristina Krüger (eds.), *Sacred scripture/sacred space. The interlacing of real places and conceptual spaces in medieval art and architecture*, Berlin 2019; Madeleine Gray, »Images of Words. Iconographies of Text and the Construction of Sacred Space in Medieval Church Wall Painting«, in: P. Thomas, J. Sterrett (eds.), *Sacred Text – Sacred Space*, Leiden 2011, 15–34; Christian Heck (ed.), *Qu'est-ce que nommer? L'image légendée entre monde monastique et pensée scolaistique: actes du colloque du RILMA, Institut Universitaire de France (Paris, INHA, 17–18 octobre 2008)*, Turnhout 2010; Nikolaus Henkel, »Titulus und Bildkomposition. Beobachtungen zur Medialität in der Buchmalerei anhand des Verhältnisses von Bild und Text im ›Bamberger Psalmenkommentar‹«, *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 62 (1999), 449–463; Amy Papalexandrou, »Text in Context. Eloquent Monuments and the Byzantine Beholder«, *Word & Image* 17 (2001), 259–283; Stefano Riccioni, »The Word in the Image. An Epiconographic Analysis of Reformed Mosaics in Rome«, *Acta ad archaeologiam et artuum historiam pertinentia* 10 (2011), 85–137; Ernst Steinmann, *Die Tituli und die kirchliche Wandmalerei im Abendlande vom 5. bis zum 11. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig 1892; Neil Stratford, »Verse ›Tituli‹ and Romanesque Art«, in: Colum P. Hourihane (ed.), *Romanesque Art and Thought in the Twelfth Century. Essays in Honor of Walter Cahn*, Princeton, NJ 2008, 136–153; Erik Thunø, *The Apse Mosaic in Early Medieval Rome. Time, Network, and Repetition*, Cambridge 2015; Calvin B. Kendall, *The Allegory of the Church. Romanesque Portals and Their Verse Inscriptions*, Toronto 1998; Erik Thunø, »The Power and Display of Writing. From Damasus to the Early Medieval Popes«, in: Norbert Zimmermann, Tanja Michalsky, Stefan Weinfurter (eds.), *Die Päpste und Rom zwischen Spätantike und Mittelalter. Formen päpstlicher Machtentfaltung*, Regensburg 2017, 95–114.

<sup>5</sup> A sampling of recent work: Peter Scott Brown, »The Verse Inscription from the Deposition Relief at Santo Domingo de Silos. Word, Image, and Act in Medieval Art«, *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 1 (2009), 87–111; Jill Hamilton Clements, »Writing and Commemoration in Anglo-Saxon England«, in: Joëlle Rollo-Koster (ed.), *Death in Medieval Europe. Death Scripted and Death Choreographed*, London 2017, 9–39; Vincent Debais, »L'inscription funéraire des XIe–XIIe siècles et son rapport au corps: une épigraphie entre texte et image«, *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 54 (2011), 337–362; Vincent Debais, »Écrire sur, écrire dans, écrire près de la tombe. Les aspects topographiques de l'inscription funéraire (XIe–XIIe)«, *Les cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 42 (2011), 17–29; David Griffith, »A Living Language of the Dead? French Commemorative Inscriptions from Late Medieval England«, *The Mediaeval Journal* 3 (2013), 69–136; David Griffith, »English Commemorative Inscriptions. Some Literary Dimensions«, in: Caroline Barron (ed.), *Memory and Commemoration in Medieval England. Proceedings of the 2008 Harlaxton Symposium*, Donington 2010, 251–270; Guy Halsall, »Burial Writes. Graves, ›Texts‹ and Time in Early Merovingian Northern Gaul«, in: Guy Halsall, *Cemeteries and Society in Merovingian Gaul. Selected Studies in History and Archaeology, 1992–2009*, Leiden 2010, 215–232; Walter Koch, »Memoriengräber. Darstellung – Text – Schrift«, in: Robert Favreau (ed.), *Épigraphie et iconographie. Actes du Colloque tenu à Poitiers les 5–8 octobre 1995*, Poitiers 1996, 125–142; Robert Marcoux, »Breaking the Silence of the Grave. The Agency of Speech Scrolls on Late Medieval French Tombs«, *Early Music* 48 (2020), 465–478; Sebastian Scholz, »Totengedenken in mittelalterlichen Grabinschriften vom 5. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert«, *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 26 (1999), 37–59; Sebastian Scholz, »Durch eure Fürbitten ist er Gefährte der Heiligen. Grabinschriften als Ausdruck des Totengedenkens im Mittelalter«, in: Peter Erhart, Jakob Kuratli (eds.), *Bücher des Lebens – lebendige Bücher. Katalog zur gleichnamigen Ausstellung im Regierungsgebäude des Kantons Sankt Gallen*, St. Gallen 2010, 153–161.



Jeffrey Hamburger's turn of phrase – rather than ›material texts‹ or object-texts that has recently inspired new lines of art historical inquiry.<sup>6</sup>

Stepping back from the many specific contributions made by this flowering of interest in the making and experience of texts beyond the format of the codex, one could, in quite generalized terms, observe that literary historians and art historians have come to realize what medieval and modern epigraphers have known all along: namely, that the codex never enjoyed a textual monopoly in the Middle Ages.<sup>7</sup> And, by turn, in the last half-century epigraphers have increasingly broadened their

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey F. Hamburger, »The Iconicity of Script«, *Word & Image* 27 (2011), 249–261 [the introductory essay of a special issue dedicated to script as image, edited by Jeffrey Hamburger]. See also: Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *Script as Image*, Paris 2014; Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak, Jeffrey F. Hamburger (eds.), *Sign and Design. Script as Image in Cross-Cultural Perspective (300–1600 CE)*, Cambridge, MA 2016; Michelle P. Brown, Ildar H. Garipzanov, Benjamin C. Tilghman (eds.), *Graphic Devices and the Early Decorated Book*, Woodbridge 2017; Laura Kendrick, *Animating the Letter. The Figurative Embodiment of Writing from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance*, Columbus, OH 1999; Benjamin C. Tilghman, »Writing in Tongues. Mixed Scripts and Style in Insular Art«, in: Colum Hourihane (ed.), *Insular and Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought in the Early Medieval Period*, Princeton, NJ 2010, 93–108.

<sup>7</sup> On epigraphy as a medieval project, see Vincent Debiais, *Messages de pierre. La lecture des inscriptions dans la communication médiévale (XIIIe - XIVe siècles)*, Turnhout 2009, 33, 51–59.

<sup>8</sup> For a selection of exemplary work, see: Claudio Ciociola (ed.), *Visibile parlare. Le scritture esposte nei volgari italiani dal Medioevo al Rinascimento*, Napoli 1997; Vincent Debiais, »Mostrar, significar, desvelar. El acto de representar según las inscripciones medievales«, *Codex aquilarensis* 29 (2013), 169–186; Vincent Debiais, »Carolingian Verse Inscriptions and Images«, *Convivium. Exchanges and Interactions* 1 (2014), 89–101; Vincent Debiais, »Ekphrasis from the Inside: Notes on the Inscription of the Crown of Light in Bayeux«, *English Language Notes* 53 (2015), 45–59; Vincent Debiais, »Des figures et des lettres. Note méthodologique sur les inscriptions dans la peinture murale romane de Catalogne«, *SVMMA. Revista de Culturas Medievales* 6 (2015), 48–66; Vincent Debiais, »Le texte épigraphique à l'épreuve de l'art. Style, date, attribution«, *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 25/1 (2019), 96–105; Robert Favreau, »Mentem sanctam, spontaneam, honorem Deo et patriae liberationem: épigraphie et mentalités«, in: Rita Lejeune, Joseph Deckers (eds.), *Clio et son regard. Mélanges d'histoire, d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie offerts à Jacques Stienon à l'occasion de ses 25 ans d'enseignement à l'Univ. de Liège*, Liège 1982, 235–244; Robert Favreau, »Les inscriptions médiévales. Reflet d'une culture et d'une foi«, in: Walter Koch (ed.), *Epigraphik 1988. Referate und Round-table-Gespräche. Fachtagung für Mittelalterliche und Neuzeitliche Epigraphik*, Graz, 10. - 14. Mai 1988, Wien 1990, 57–89; Robert Favreau, »Le thème épigraphique de la porte«, *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 34 (1991), 267–279; Robert Favreau, »Les commanditaires dans les inscriptions du haut Moyen Age occidental«, in: *Committenti e produzione artistico-letteraria nell'alto medioevo occidentale*, 2 vols., Spoleto 1992, II, 681–722; Robert Favreau, »Épigraphie et miniatures«, *Journal des Savants* 1 (1993), 63–87; Robert Favreau (ed.), *Epigraphie et iconographie. Actes du colloque tenu à Poitiers les 5–8 octobre 1995*, Poitiers 1996; Robert Favreau, *Epigraphie médiévale*, Turnhout 1997; Robert Favreau, »Commanditaire, auteur, artiste dans les inscriptions médiévales«, in: Michel Zimmermann (ed.), *Auctor et Auctoritas. Invention et conformisme dans l'écriture médiévale*, Paris 2001, 37–59; Rüdiger Fuchs, Michael Oberweis (eds.), *Inscriptions zwischen Realität und Fiktion. Vom Umgang mit vergangenen Formen und Ideen. Beiträge zur 12. Internationalen Fachtagung für Epigraphik vom 5. bis 8. Mai 2010 in Mainz*, Wiesbaden 2021; Helga Giersiepen, Andrea Stieldorf (eds.), *Über Grenzen hinweg. Inschriften als Zeugnisse kulturellen Austauschs. Beiträge zur 14. Internationalen Fachtagung für mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Epigraphik*, Düsseldorf 2016, Paderborn 2020; Walter Koch, Christine Steininger (eds.), *Inscription und Material. Inschrift und Buchschrift. Fachtagung für mittelalterliche und neuzeitliche Epigraphik* Ingolstadt 1997, Munich 1999; Tanja Kohwagner-Nikolai, Bernd Päffgen, Christine Steininger (eds.), *Über Staff und Stein. Knotenpunkte von Textilkunst und Epigraphik. Beiträge zur 15. Fachtagung für mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Epigraphik vom 12. bis 14. Februar 2020 in München*, Wiesbaden 2021; Christine Magin, Ulrich Schindel, Christine Wulf (eds.), *Traditionen, Zäsuren, Umbrüche. Inschriften des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit im historischen Kontext. Beiträge zur 11. Internationalen Fachtagung für Epigraphik vom 9. bis 12. Mai 2007 in Greifswald*, Wiesbaden 2008;



perspective and engaged other disciplines, with salutary results.<sup>8</sup> In short, the last half-century has opened up a host of new perspectives on what, where, and how texts were integral to the medieval world.

Although reading remained a minority competence until the thirteenth century, when pragmatic literacy significantly expanded in Europe, encounters with texts were not restricted to the literate minority.<sup>9</sup> Texts encountered outside of the codex or roll format – inscribed on the blade of a weapon or a brooch, chiseled upon the exterior of a building, minutely raised in relief upon the surface of coins, impressed upon the surface of Eucharistic hosts – were forms that could be seen, touched, and sometimes tasted, even when they were not read. No doubt, non- and semi-literate people could apprehend a great deal about a text's status, authority, and (if less precisely) its semantic contents thanks to its material substance, the appearance of its letter forms, its size, and its spatial or functional context. Conversely, the visual, material and paleographic facture of numerous inscribed objects and monuments

Cécile Treffort, »Inscrire son nom dans l'espace liturgique à l'époque romane«, *Les cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 34 (2003), 147–160; Christine Wulf, Sabine Wehking, Nikolaus Henkel (eds.), *Klöster und Inschriften. Glaubenszeugnisse gestickt, gemalt, gehauen, graviert. Beiträge zur Tagung am 30. Oktober 2009 im Kloster Lüne*, Wiesbaden 2010. Additionally, the contributions of the paleographer and historian of medieval diplomatics and literacy, Armando Petrucci, merit particular notice; see especially: Armando Petrucci, »Potere, spazi urbani, scrittura esposte. Proposte ed esempi«, *Publications de l'École Française de Rome* 82 (1985), 85–97; Armando Petrucci, »Scrittura e figura nella memoria funeraria«, in: *Testo e immagine nell'alto Medioevo*, 2 vols., 1994, I, 277–300; Armando Petrucci, *Le scritture ultime. Ideologia della morte e strategie dello scrivere nella tradizione occidentale*, Turin 1995; Armando Petrucci, »Spazi e forme nella memoria funeraria medievale«, in: Enrico Castelnuovo, Giuseppe Sergi (eds.), *Arte e storia nel Medioevo*, 4 vols., Turin 2002, III, 551–566; Armando Petrucci, »Fonti epigrafiche e scrittura esposta«, in: Attilio Bartoli Lageli (ed.), *Scrittura documentazione memoria. Dieci scritti e un inedito 1963–2009*, Roma 2018, 177–182.

<sup>9</sup> The scholarship on medieval varieties of literacy is too vast to be surveyed; here I note a number landmark contributions and recent stock-takings: Franz-Josef Arlinghaus (ed.), *Transforming the Medieval World. Uses of Pragmatic Literacy in the Middle Ages*, Turnhout 2006; Franz H. Bäuml, »Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy«, *Speculum* 55 (1980), 237–265; Gereon Becht-Jördens, »Schrift im Mittelalter – Zeichen des Heils«, in: Joachim Friedrich Quack, Daniela C. Luft (eds.), *Erscheinungsformen und Handhabungen heiliger Schriften*, Berlin 2014, 245–310; Thomas A. Bredehoft, »Literacy without Letters. Pilgrim Badges and Late Medieval Literate Ideology«, *Viator* 37 (2006), 433–446; Richard Hugh Britnell (ed.), *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West, 1200–1330*, Woodbridge 1997; Michael Camille, »Seeing and Reading. Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy«, *Art History* 8 (1985), 26–49; Christoph Dartmann, Thomas Scharff, Christoph Friedrich Weber (eds.), *Zwischen Pragmatik und Performanz*, Turnhout 2011; Hagen Keller, Klaus Grubmüller, Nikolaus Staubach (eds.), *Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit im Mittelalter: Erscheinungsformen und Entwicklungsstufen*, Munich 1992; Hagen Keller (ed.), *Schriftlichkeit und Lebensspraxis im Mittelalter. Erfassen, Bewahren, Verändern (Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums, 8.–10. Juni 1995)*, Munich 1999; Rosamond McKitterick, *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, Cambridge 1990; Rosamond McKitterick, »Charters, Languages, and Communication. Recent Work on Early Medieval Literacy«, in: Robert Gallagher, Edward Roberts, Francesca Tinti (eds.), *The Languages of Early Medieval Charters. Latin, Germanic Vernaculars, and the Written Word*, Leiden 2020, 22–67; Leidulf Melve, »Literacy Studies. Past, Present, and Future«, in: Amy C. Mulligan, Else Mundal (eds.), *Moving Words in the Nordic Middle Ages. Tracing Literacies, Texts, and Verbal Communities*, Turnhout 2019, 15–36; M. B. Parkes, »The Literacy of the Laity«, in: David Daiches, Anthony Thorlby (eds.), *Literature and Western Civilization II. The Mediaeval World*, London 1973, 555–577; Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy. Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Princeton 1983; Brian Stock, »Medieval Literacy, Linguistic Theory, and Social Organization«, *New Literary History* 16 (1984), 13–29; Paul Zumthor, »Litteratus/Illitteratus. Remarques sur le contexte vocal de l'écriture médiévale«, *Romania* 106, no. 421/1 (1985), 1–18.

rendered reading difficult, if not impossible; some inscriptions were deliberately concealed from view, rendering their texts imperceptible.<sup>10</sup> Despite a long-standing scholarly conception of epigraphy as a medium for communication, it is clear that many medieval epigraphic texts were made with other purposes and effects in mind.

Painted by hand, chiseled, woven, embroidered, stamped, and cast, poetry and prose visually punctuated the medieval built environment and material culture. The »image explosion« Michael Camille recognized in the Gothic Period was also an explosion of »texts-in-images« and »images of text« on and beyond the pages of manuscripts.<sup>11</sup> If one surveys the extant flotsam and jetsam of thirteenth-, fourteenth-, and fifteenth-century European material culture, one encounters snippets of text, again and again: on combs; shoes; weapons; domestic cooking and serving vessels; coins; precious and cheap dress ornaments, jewelry, and numerous base metal badges, both religious and profane. Texts were carved into wooden furniture and storage containers, as well as into the facades of religious and non-religious buildings. They were inscribed into stone flagstones and spelled out in tiled pavements. And texts routinely appeared on the markers that formally organized the townscape and the landscape: cornerstones, market crosses and *Sühnekreuze*, boundary stones, and the inscribed trunks of trees defining property lines.<sup>12</sup> In short, medieval people

<sup>10</sup> See the trenchant comments on this point in Anthony Eastmond, »Introduction. Viewing Inscriptions», in: Anthony Eastmond (ed.), *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World*, Cambridge 2015, 1–9, here: 3–5. On medieval endotaphs (deliberately concealed inscriptions), see Debiais, *Messages* (note 7), 205–210; Thomas Meier, »Inschrifttafeln aus mittelalterlichen Gräbern. Einige Thesen zu ihrer Aussagekraft«, in: Guy de Boe, Frans Verhaeghe (eds.), *Death and Burial in Medieval Europe. Papers of the »Medieval Europe Brugge 1997« Conference*, 2, Zellik 1997, 43–53; Cécile Treffort, *L'Église carolingienne et la mort. Christianisme, rites funéraires et pratiques commémoratives*, Lyon 1996, 23–42; Cécile Treffort, »Une écriture cachée aux yeux des hommes. Quelques réflexions autour des >endotaphs< médiévales«, in: Sylvie Balcon-Berry (ed.), *La mémoire des pierres. Mélanges d'archéologie, d'art et d'histoire en l'honneur de Christian Sapin*, Turnhout 2016, 39–45; Morgane Uberti, »Écritures endotaphes et expériences des temps entre Antiquité tardive et Moyen Âge«, in: Société des historiens médiévistes de l'Enseignement supérieur public (ed.), *Les vivants et les morts dans les sociétés médiévales. XLVIIIe Congrès de la SHMESP (Jérusalem, 4–7 mai 2017)*, Paris 2018, 105–118. On the broader phenomenon of textual obscurity, difficulty, and invisibility, see Tobias Frese, Wilfried E. Keil, Kristina Krüger (eds.), *Verborgen, unsichtbar, unlesbar. Zur Problematik restringierter Schriftpräsenz*, Berlin 2014; Wilfried E. Keil, »Abwesend und doch präsent? Zur restringierten Präsenz von Grundsteinen und ihren Inschriften«, in: Andreas Diener (ed.), *Gründung im archäologischen Befund*, Paderborn 2014, 17–24.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol. Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art*, Cambridge 1989, 219.

<sup>12</sup> Although several historians of medieval literature have presumed that arboreal inscription was exclusively a literary motif, the roman practice of inscribing trees to demarcate property boundaries (*arbores notatae* or *arbores insignes*), well attested in *agrimensores* texts, was known and continued in the medieval period; for further discussion, see Brian Campbell, »Surveyors, topography, and definitions of landholding in ancient Rome«, *Collection de l'Institut des Sciences et Techniques de l'Antiquité*, 993/1 (2006), 173–181; Luke Alexander Fidler, »Henry the Lion and the Art of Politics in Northern Europe, c. 1142–1195«, Ph.D. Dissertation, Chicago, IL, The University of Chicago 2022, 158, 160–164; Piotr Górecki, »Communities of Legal Memory in Medieval Poland, c. 1200–1240«, *Journal of Medieval History* 24 (1998), 127–154; Peter Kruschwitz, »Writing On Trees. Restoring a Lost Facet of the Graeco-Roman Epigraphic Habit«, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 173 (2010), 45–62; Jason Morris, »Shaping the Empire. Agrimensores, Emperors and the Creation of the Roman Provincial Identities«, PhD Dissertation, Leicester (U.K.), University of Leicester 2016, 91–93, 137–139, 234.



continuously added texts to the world they lived in, and they lived in a world shaped, and reshaped by writing.<sup>13</sup>

To examine the presence and effects of text beyond the pages of manuscripts in the Middle Ages is, therefore, a massive undertaking. This essay proposes to do so in a focused fashion by examining a series of epigraphic objects and monuments from both worldly and sacred contexts, ranging in date from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, that intervened in and transformed the phenomenal world, through the conjunction of letterforms and iconic forms.

In what follows, I consider three overlapping features of this large-scale dynamic. The essay turns first to the phenomenon of epigraphic prosopopoeia: the imputation of an ›ego‹ subject position to inanimate objects and monuments. Secondly, I consider the use and effects of deixis in medieval inscriptions. The third section of the essay focuses upon the device of the banderole: a ubiquitous fictive textual ›support‹ invented in the Middle Ages.<sup>14</sup> The fourth section of the essay is dedicated to a single monument: a twelfth-century English baptismal font whose carved surfaces conjoin pictorial representation, ›ego inscription‹, visual deixis, and the device of the banderole to remarkable, self-reflexive ends.

## I.

Numerous medieval inscribed texts employ the grammatical first person to varied effects; chief among those effects, is the imputation of a ›voice‹ to an inanimate entity. Such ›speaking objects‹ and ›speaking architecture‹ were made in every century of

<sup>13</sup> As Christian Kiening acutely remarked: »Darin liegt nicht die geringste Verheißung der Schrift: Orte in der Welt zu besetzen und sie so zu besetzen, dass aus ihnen ihrerseits Welten hervorgehen.« Christian Kiening, »Die erhabene Schrift. Vom Mittelalter zur Moderne«, in: Martina Stercken, Christian Kiening (eds.), *SchriftRäume. Dimensionen von Schrift zwischen Mittelalter und Moderne*, Zürich 2008, 8–126, here: 18. The cumulative effects of the textual dynamics of the built environment and material culture in the Middle Ages have not yet received the attention they warrant; several illuminating contributions toward such a perspective, are Gertrud Blaschnitz, »Schrift auf Objekten«, in: Horst Wenzel, Wilfried Seipel, Gotthart Wunberg (eds.), *Die Verschriftlichung der Welt. Bild, Text und Zahl in der Kultur des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, Wien 2000, 145–179; Anthony Edwards, »Middle English Inscriptional Verse Texts«, in: Vincent Scuttergood, Julia Boffey (eds.), *Texts and Their Contexts. Papers from the Early Book Society*, Dublin 1997, 26–43; Stefano Riccioni, »Rewriting Antiquity, Renewing Rome. The Identity of the Eternal City through Visual Art, Monumental Inscriptions and the Mirabilia«, *Medieval Encounters* 17 (2011), 439–463; Linda Safran, »Public Textual Cultures: A Case Study in Southern Italy«, in: William Randolph Robins (ed.), *Textual Cultures of Medieval Italy. Essays from the 41st Conference on Editorial Problems*, Toronto 2011, 115–144.

<sup>14</sup> Although I use the term »support«, it must be emphasized at the outset that it can imply a distinction and subordination of material surface to written language that little reflects the coordination and signification of language, material(s), and technique in medieval works. For further critical discussion, see Annette Kehnel and Diamantis Panagiotopoulos, »Textträger – Schrifträger. Ein Kurzporträt (statt Einleitung)«, in: Annette Kehnel, Diamantis Panagiotopoulos (eds.), *Schriftträger – Textträger. Zur materialen Präsenz des Geschriebenen in frühen Gesellschaften*, Berlin 2015, 1–14.

<sup>15</sup> On medieval ›speaking‹ objects and architecture, see Thomas Bredehoft, »First-Person Inscriptions and Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England«, *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 9 (1996), 103–110; Olga Bush, *Reframing the Alhambra. Architecture, Poetry, Textiles and Court Ceremonial*, Edinburgh 2018,



the medieval longue durée throughout Europe.<sup>15</sup> Medieval bells are an obvious case in point. It was a wide-spread custom in medieval Europe to name bells and the liturgical benediction of bells included a moment in which the bell was formally named and dedicated to a holy helper.<sup>16</sup> While numerous medieval bells epigraphically indicate their *patrocinium* on their surfaces, a smaller, but significant number of bells feature epigraphic statements of self-identification.<sup>17</sup> In some medieval bells, this textual self-identification is developed at length. The Marienglocke in the Mindener Dom, sadly destroyed by bombing in 1945, was once a case in point:

+ ECCE · SUB · HOC · TYTULO · TUA · DICOR · S(AN)C(T)A · MARIA +  
ORA · P(RO) · P(O)P(U)LO · DUM · SONO · VIRGO · PIA /  
+ · A · NATO · CHR(IST)O · FELIX · CREOR · ERE · SUB ISTO + MILLENIS  
· AN(N)IS · TRECE(N)TIS · SEX · NUMERA(N)DIS<sup>18</sup>

+Lo, under this titulus I am called yours, oh Holy Mary + Pray for the people  
while/when I sound, oh pious Virgin /

+ From the birth of Christ (when) I was created from this bronze + one thousand  
thirty and six years should be numbered<sup>19</sup>

Composed in the form of an elegiac distich with a leonine hexameter, the bell's poetic statement is framed as the petition of a subject addressed to the Virgin Mary.<sup>20</sup> Calling upon Mary to pray for the people while the bell sounds, the inscription lends

72–109 (»Ch. 2 Addressing the Beholder: The Poetic Inscriptions«); Cristina Maria Cervone, »John de Cobham and Cooling Castle's Charter Poem«, *Speculum* 83 (2008), 884–916; Catherine E. Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, Woodbridge 2011, 135–178 (»Ch. 4 Object and Voice«); Catherine E. Karkov, »Art and Writing. Voice, Image, Object«, in: Clare A. Lees (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature*, Cambridge 2012, 73–98; Calvin B. Kendall, »The Gate of Heaven and the Fountain of Life. Speech-Act Theory and Portal Inscriptions«, *Essays in Medieval Studies* 10 (1993), 111–128; Aden Kumler, »Lyric Vessels«, in: Cristina Maria Cervone, Nicholas Watson (eds.), *What Kind of a Thing Is a Middle English Lyric?*, Philadelphia 2022, 182–217; Ann Marie Rasmussen, »Badges. Abzeichen als sprechende Objekte«, in: Monika Unzeitig, Angela Schrott, Nine Miedema (eds.), *Stimme und Performanz der mittelalterlichen Literatur*, Berlin 2017, 469–487; Hana Taragan, »The ›Speaking‹ Inkwell from Khurasan. Object as ›World‹ in Iranian Medieval Metalwork«, *Mugarnas* 22 (2005), 29–44.

<sup>16</sup> On the benediction of bells, see Adolph Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter*, 2 vols., Freiburg im Breisgau 1909, II, 40–43; Andreas Heinz, »Die Bedeutung der Glocke im Licht des mittelalterlichen Ritus der Glockenweihe«, in: Alfred Haeverkamp, Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (eds.), *Information, Kommunikation und Selbstdarstellung in mittelalterlichen Gemeinden*, Munich 2009, 41–70; Heinrich Otte, *Glockenkunde*, Leipzig 1884, 8–16.

<sup>17</sup> For further discussion of inscribed bells see A. H. F. Boughey, »Inscriptions upon Medieval Bells«, *The Archaeological Journal* 76 (1919), 74–83; J. J. Doherty, »Bells, Their Origin, Uses and Inscriptions«, *The Archaeological Journal* 48 (1891), 45–64; E. Andrews Downman, *Ancient Church Bells in England*, [issued privately by the author] 1898, 25–38; Favreau, »Mentem sanctam« (note 8); Alfred C. Fryer, »Notes on Some of the Inscriptions on Continental Bells«, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 39 (1883), 357–360; Jacqueline Leclercq-Marx, »Vox dei clamat in tempestate. A propos de l'iconographie des Vents et d'un groupe d'inscriptions campanaires, IXe-XIIIe siècles«, *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 42 (1999), 179–187; Otte (note 16), 79–84; H. B. Walters, *Church Bells of England*, London 1912, 281–327.

<sup>18</sup> Sabine Wehking, »DI 46, Stadt Minden, Nr. 22†«, in: <https://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0238-di046d003k0002205> (10.02.2023; last viewed).

<sup>19</sup> Translations mine, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>20</sup> Wehking (note 18).



**Fig. 1** The Fishpool hoard brooch: front side. c. 1450 CE; Gold, with enamel; 41.1 x 34 x 3.7 mm. British Museum, 1967,1208.8; [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H\\_1967-1208-8](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1967-1208-8) (10.02.2023: last viewed). (Photo: © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved)



words to the bell's otherwise wordless sound. Although the inscription would not have been seen by most people who heard the bell ringing, its presence in the bronze form of the bell implicitly made each ringing an imperative call upon Mary's intercessory prayer.

The inscription of the Mindener Dom's Marienglocke expressed a wide-held medieval Christian belief that the sound of church bells was a powerful defense against various dangers, both natural and supernatural.<sup>21</sup> What sets this particular inscription apart from many other inscriptions on bells is its skillful concatenation of a number of customary practices – the naming of bells, the use of the first-person in their inscriptions, the invocation of holy helpers, the ringing of bells as a call to prayer and an appeal for supernatural protection – in a four-line poem that invokes the bell's function and, in the same stroke, lyricizes it.

In other medieval objects and monuments, first-person texts give voice to even more intensely affective statements. The fourteenth- and fifteenth-century practice of inscribing first-person affirmations of love or fidelity on the hidden, inside circumference of rings and other jewelry items is well-attested.<sup>22</sup> Such short pledge-

<sup>21</sup> For further discussion, see John H. Arnold and Caroline Goodson, »Resounding Community. The History and Meaning of Medieval Church Bells«, *Viator* 43 (2012), 99–130; Étienne Delaruelle, »Le problème du clocher du haut Moyen Âge et la religion populaire«, in: René Louis (ed.), *Etudes Ligériennes d'histoire et d'archéologie médiévales. Mémoires et exposés présentés à la semaine d'études médiévales de Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire, 3–10 juillet 1969*, Paris 1975, 125–131; Franz (note 16), 40–43 et passim; Michelle E. Garceau, »‘I Call the People.’ Church Bells in Fourteenth-Century Catalunya«, *Journal of Medieval History* 37 (2011), 197–214; Heinz (note 16); Itai Weinryb, *The Bronze Object in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge 2016, 134–138.

<sup>22</sup> Concerning inscribed or »posy« rings see Joan Evans, *English Posies and Posy Rings. A Catalogue with an Introduction*, London 1931; John Evans, »Posy Rings«, *Longman’s Magazine* 20/115 (May. 1892), 26–45.

**Fig. 2** The Fishpool hoard brooch: reverse side. c. 1450 CE; gold, with enamel; 41.1 x 34 x 3.7 mm. British Museum, 1967,1208.8, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H\\_1967-1208-8](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1967-1208-8) (10.02.2023: last viewed). (Photo: © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved)



like statements on behalf of the giver of a ring were materialized, proxy speech-acts, designed for discrete concealment and text-to-body contact. The mid fifteenth-century heart-shaped brooch from the Fishpool hoard offers a finely wrought example of this wide-spread late medieval phenomenon (Fig. 1).<sup>23</sup>

When worn, the outward-facing surface of the brooch presented torquing white and blue enameled bands, each delimited by rows of gold pellets.<sup>24</sup> Golden lozenge-like ornaments set against the blue and white enamel bands lend further optical and haptic complexity and brilliance to the softly rounded surface of the brooch's ›show‹ side. On the flat reverse surface of the brooch, the incised forms of flowers – once enameled – punctuate an engraved gothic ›black letter‹ inscription that was originally executed in white enamel: *Je suy vostre sans de partier* (I am yours forever/I am yours without parting) (Fig. 2).

The words »sans de partier« and variants of the phrase appear on numerous medieval rings and other items of jewelry.<sup>25</sup> On the enameled Fishpool brooch, however, the integration of the phrase acquires added resonance, thanks to its specific verbal and physical facture. Hidden from view when the brooch was worn, the concise first-person inscription conveys a redoubled secret message. The »je« of the

<sup>23</sup> British Museum (1967, 1208.8). Online cataloging and further images of this object are available from the British Museum's online collections portal: [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H\\_1967-1208-8](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1967-1208-8) (10.02.2023: last viewed). On this brooch and the other jewelry items from the hoard, found in 1966, in Fishpool (Nottinghamshire), see J. Cherry, »The Medieval Jewellery from the Fishpool, Nottinghamshire, Hoard«, *Archaeologia* 104 (1973), 307–321; David Alban Hinton, *Gold and Gilt, Pots and Pins. Possessions and People in Medieval Britain*, Oxford 2005, 238–245.

<sup>24</sup> The roughly worked surfaces of the exposed segments of gold bands on the front of the brooch reveal that these segments were also once enameled; for further discussion, see Cherry (note 23), 314.

<sup>25</sup> Cherry notes six rings and seven brooches featuring the phrase: Cherry (note 23), 308–309, 314.





**Fig. 3** Facade inscription of the »Ghellerborch« house at Alte Waage 2 in Braunschweig before 1944. 1435 CE, carved and polychromed wood. (Rudolf Fricke, *Das Bürgerhaus in Braunschweig*, Tübingen 1974, Tafel 106b; Photo: © Wasmuth & Zohlen Verlag, Berlin. [www.wasmuth-verlag.de](http://www.wasmuth-verlag.de))

text is putatively the voice of the giver, who pledges their constancy with the gift of the brooch. At the same time, however, the inscribed »je« invests the brooch with a ›voice‹ pledging that it will never part from its wearer; a promise enacted in the object's form and function. Securing a cloth garment upon the body, usually upon the breast in the vicinity of the physical heart, the heart-shaped brooch was also designed to secure its wearer's favor and affection.<sup>26</sup>

Not all affectively charged first-person object- and monument-inscriptions were so discrete. An inscription, dated 1435, once prominently displayed upon the streetside façade of the »Ghellerborch« house at Alte Waage 2 in Braunschweig,<sup>27</sup> aggressively interpellated passersby with its epigraphic address:

Du · droch · dit · is · de · gheller · borch · noch · here · va(n) · ghellere(n) · bi(n) · ek · ghe-na(n)t · ik · ruke · de(n) · brade(n) · vake(n) · un · ghe · laden mccc / xxxv<sup>28</sup>  
You rogue, this is the Ghellerborch, I am named after Herr von Ghelleren, un-invited, I often smell the roasted meats / 1435

The inscription was presented as a banderole unfurling across the building's façade (Fig. 3). At its left edge a relief carving depicted a fool's head and it has been suggested that the inscribed banderole was intended to be seen as the utterance of the depicted fool.<sup>29</sup> The text, however, left no doubt that it was the house itself that addressed the beholder with the pronoun »du«.

Although the initial use of the demonstrative pronoun »dit« would seem to couch the inscription in a third-person mode of designation, the introduction of the first-

<sup>26</sup> Olivier Thuaudet, »Le symbole du cœur dans les accessoires métalliques du vêtement et de la parure de corps (XIIe-XVIIe siècle). Un ›objet› polysémique«, in: Claire Leger, Stéphanie Raux (eds.), *Des objets et des hommes: études offertes à Michel Feugère*, Drémil-Lafage 2021, 891–906, here: 894.

<sup>27</sup> Repeatedly damaged by bombing during the Second World War, the house was finally destroyed in 1944. The house that one now sees at Alte Waage 2 is a reconstruction (completed in 1994) that omits the façade text discussed here. For photographic documentation of the original inscription, see Andrea Boockmann, »DI 35, Stadt Braunschweig I, Nr. 111†«, in: [www.inschriften.net](http://www.inschriften.net), urn:nbn:de:0238-di035g005k0016802.; Rudolf Fricke, *Das Bürgerhaus in Braunschweig*, Tübingen 1974, Tafel 106b.

<sup>28</sup> Boockmann (note 27).

<sup>29</sup> Boockmann (note 27).

person indicative »bin« shifts the text into a startling mode of direct-address. Having called out the beholder as a »droch«, the house next names itself, identifies its human name-sake, and finally complains that it can smell the meats cooked in the nearby *Ratsküche*, situated within the building in which the Braunschweiger *Küchenrat* met, a locus of civic power and elite sociability from which the Ghellerborch house is excluded.<sup>30</sup>

The inscription is a wonderfully ludic, profane instance of »speaking architecture« and a canny piece of prosopopoeia. The hailing of the passerby is predicated on the inscription's placement on the street-side exterior of the building and its complaint registers the structure's situation within the physical, sensory, and political topography of late medieval Braunschweig. Indeed, the Ghellerborch house lays claim to a highly specific plight: fixed in place, it cannot escape the smells of the meats prepared for Braunschweig's powerbrokers, but it never gets to taste them. Its only recourse is to draw attention to itself and its architectural, spatial, and social-political situation.

The Ghellerborch house's playful inscription exploited the contingency that all monumental and object inscription involves. Any passerby who looked at and read the inscription's first word was interpellated and characterized by the building's address: »Du droch!« As the text continues, its sense is contingent upon its place within the urban, political and social topography of medieval Braunschweig. A beholder-turned-reader familiar with Braunschweig's physical and political topography would have understood the inscription's otherwise enigmatic claim. If, in the moment of reading the façade, meat was indeed being roasted in the nearby *Ratsküche*, a further phenomenal dynamic would have lent extra credibility to the house's lament.

Although the Ghellerborch house's epigraphic assertion of a kind of multi-sensory sentience is unusual, all objects and architecture inscribed with first-person forms of language are personified, to some degree, by the texts they bear. Such medieval *>ego-inscriptions<* invested objects and monuments with grammatical subjectivity and often imputed to them a subjectivity that was not merely grammatical. The leveraging of contingency in the Ghellerborch inscription, which takes the house's spatial situation as an occasion for rhetorical and semantic games, is likewise an unusually ludic instance of a potent device employed in numerous medieval inscriptions: deixis.

## II.

Deixis has been defined as the discursive encoding of space, time, and subjective position or experience by means of specific words and expressions, most notably first- and second-person personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, adverbs of time

<sup>30</sup> A subset of the larger Council, the so-called *Küchenrat* (also known as *Enge* or *Engerer Rat* from the sixteenth century onwards), was effectively responsible for all ongoing civic business in Braunschweig. Meeting more frequently than the *Gesamtstadt Rat*, the *Küchenrat* was composed of 25 members until 1614: for further discussion, see Werner Spieß, *Ratsherren der Hansestadt Braunschweig 1231–1671*, Braunschweig 1940, 49–50.



(e.g., »now«, »then«, »before«, etc.) and of place (e.g., »here«, »there«, etc.).<sup>31</sup> Construed more broadly, deixis is »that feature of language that delineates a relationship between the speaking subject and a given word, a relationship that may be defined along one of three axes: subjectivity, time, and space«.<sup>32</sup>

One of the most obvious and wide-spread uses of deixis in medieval (and post-medieval) inscriptions is the copula preserved in countless grave markers: »Hic iacet« (here lies).<sup>33</sup> *Hic*'s significance in this verbal formula is contingent and yet place-making; it designates meaningfully by indexing its own place in the world: here (where you read) is where a body lies. An epigraphic *hic* works this locative effect in each place it appears; were the grave marker moved, its inscription would continue to designate the place of decoding as ›here‹.<sup>34</sup> Considering such a scenario reveals a principal characteristic of epigraphic deixis: it is a phenomenal fact-making use of language. Every place in the world where *hic* is inscribed or displayed is transformed into the ›here‹ of the inscription.

Deixis has often been proposed as a limit case of the context-dependent character of all communication. Epigraphic deixis, however, poses something of a challenge to this account. When deictic »shifters«, in Jakobson's parlance, are consubstantial with material-physical monuments and objects, their personal, locative, and temporal effects are context generating.<sup>35</sup> In epigraphic deixis, the inscribed monument or object is a semantic and a material *origo* or deictic center.<sup>36</sup> This dynamic is intensified in first-person inscriptions on objects and monuments, thanks to their »personal« deictic effects, but – as third-person mortuary *hic iacet* inscriptions ex-

<sup>31</sup> This triadic scheme derives from Bühler's fundamental analysis (first published in 1934): Karl Bühler, *Sprachtheorie. Die Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache*, 3. Aufl., Neudruck, Stuttgart 1999.

<sup>32</sup> Cervone (note 15), 889. From the sprawling literature on deixis, I have found the following particularly helpful: Holger Diessel, »Deixis and demonstratives«, in: Klaus von Heusinger, Claudia Maienborn, Paul Portner (eds.), *Semantics. An International Handbook of Natural Language Meaning*, Berlin 2013; Mary Galbraith, »Deixis«, in: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Literary Theory*: <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780190699604.001.0001/acref-9780190699604-e-1055> (12.11.2022); Keith Green, »Deixis. A Revaluation of Concepts and Categories«, in: Keith Green (ed.), *New Essays in Deixis. Discourse, Narrative, Literature*, Amsterdam 1995, 11–25; Wolfgang Klein, »Deiktische Orientierung«, in: Martin Haspelmath et al. (eds.), *Language typology and language universals. An international handbook*, 2 vols., Berlin 2001, I, 575–589; Roman Jakobson, »Closing Statements. Linguistics and Poetics«, in: Robert E. Innis (ed.), *Semiotics. An Introductory Anthology*, Bloomington, IN 1985, 145–175.

<sup>33</sup> On the *hic iacet* and *iacet hic* formulae, and their implications, see Estelle Ingrand-Varenne, *Langues de bois, de pierre et de verre. Latin et français dans les inscriptions médiévales* Paris 2017, 155–161.

<sup>34</sup> I employ the adjective »locative« here in distinction to Konrad Ehlich's conception of »lokostatisch« texts: Konrad Ehlich, »Funktion und Struktur schriftlicher Kommunikation«, in: Hartmut Günther, Otto Ludwig (eds.), *Schrift und Schriftlichkeit. Band Eins. Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch internationaler Forschung*, Berlin 1994, 18–41, here: 30.

<sup>35</sup> Although Jakobson attributes the term »shifter« to Otto Jespersen, comparison of Jakobson and Jespersen reveals considerable conceptual divergence: Roman Jakobson, »Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb«, in: Roman Jakobson, *Selected Writings. Volume II: Word and Language*, repr. of 1971 ed., Berlin 2010, 131. Cf. Otto Jespersen, *Language; Its Nature, Development and Origin*, New York 1922, 123–124. For further critical discussion, see Monika Fludernik, »Shifters and Deixis. Some Reflections on Jakobson, Jespersen, and Reference«, *Semiotica* 86/3–4 (1991), 193–230.

<sup>36</sup> The concept of the deictic *origo* derives from Karl Bühler's 1934 analysis of »Zeigwörter« in: Bühler (note 31). On epigraphic deixis, see further Ingrand-Varenne (note 33), 167–198, Flavia Licciardello, *Deixis and Frames of Reference in Hellenistic Dedicatory Epigrams*, Berlin 2022, 20–33, 35–90.



**Fig. 4** Plaque indicating the height of flood waters in Florence in 1333 CE. After 1333 CE, carved stone. (Photo: Sailko / Wikimedia Commons / CC-BY-SA-3.0; [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Via\\_don\\_giancarlo\\_setti\\_\(via\\_san\\_remigio\).\\_lapide\\_dell%27alluvione\\_del\\_1333,\\_01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Via_don_giancarlo_setti_(via_san_remigio)._lapide_dell%27alluvione_del_1333,_01.jpg))



emphasize – it is not limited to such inanimate »ego inscriptions«. Added to the fabric of the world, epigraphic deixis reorganizes the phenomenal world by virtue of its presence and its predication.

Numerous medieval epigraphic monuments enact deixis's ancient Greek etymology (*δεῖξις* from the verb *δείκνυμι* – to show, point out, make known) quite literally.<sup>37</sup> A plaque, mounted at the corner of the Via di San Remigio and Via de' Neri in Florence, features four lines of text above a disembodied hand whose index finger points to the upper limit of carved undulating lines filling the lower portion of the slab (Fig. 4).<sup>38</sup>

Together, the plaque's inscription and pictorial elements indicate the height of the Arno's waters in the devastating flood of 1333.

MCCCXXXIII

<sup>37</sup> »δείκνυμι« in Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, »The Online Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon« accessed via Maria C. Pantelia (ed.), *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae Digital Library*: <http://www.tlg.uci.edu> (28.11.2015).

<sup>38</sup> For further discussion of this plaque and other epigraphic memorials of the 1333 flood, with citations of antecedent literature, see Tommaso Gramigni, »La memoria epigrafica dell'alluvione dell'Arno del 1333«, in: Concetta Bianca, Francesco Salvestrini (eds.), *L'acqua nemica Fiumi, inondazioni e città storiche dall'antichità al contemporaneo. Atti del Convegno di studio a cinquant'anni dall'alluvione di Firenze (1966–2016): Firenze, 29–30 gennaio 2015*, Spoleto 2017, 61–94.



**Fig. 5** St. Wolfgang in Bad Kreuznach: exterior inscription. c. 1484 CE, carved stone. (Photo: Thomas G. Tempel, Forschungsstelle »Die Deutschen Inschriften« bei der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz)



DI QUATRO DINOVEMBRE GIVOVEDI  
LA NOCTE POI VENGENDOL VENERDI  
FU ALTA LACQUA DARNO I(N)FINO A QUI

Making contact with the surface of the depicted floodwaters, the carved index finger also underscores the last word of inscription's concluding locative deixis, »A QUI«.<sup>39</sup> »Here«, where fingertip touches carved rippling relief, water lapped against walls in 1333, the plaque claims. Epigraphic text and image work together to render a devastating historical event concrete and palpable in an emphatically spatial and haptic mode of witness. That the plaque is today mounted upon a wall with ironwork brackets, raising the possibility that its current location is not its original location, does not diminish the monument's performative effects. Even if it is no longer in its original location, the plaque's visual and textual deixis retains its (possibly counterfactual) force.<sup>40</sup>

The performative potential of depicted gesture combined with deictic verbal elements is likewise activated by a seemingly modest inscription integrated into the exterior of the church of St. Wolfgang in Bad Kreuznach. Carved into one of the flying buttresses of the choir of this former Franciscan church (consecrated in 1484),

<sup>39</sup> Gramigni notes that »la punta del dito che tocca il tratto inferiore della Q crea un evidente legame tra rappresentazione del reale e narrazione dell'evento, tra chi legge ed osserva e chi racconta e raffigura; tramite questo contatto scrittura e immagine si fondono«: see Gramigni (note 38), 67–68. Although I am not convinced that the finger points specifically to the descending *cauda* of the majuscule Q, I nonetheless find Gramigni's commentary on the plaque illuminating.

<sup>40</sup> I have not been able to determine if the plaque has been significantly displaced from its original position, although the current state and situation of the plaque suggest it has been subject to modification(s).

<sup>41</sup> As Nikitsch notes, although »hic« in this inscription has been reworked at some point in time it seems improbable that it was originally omitted from the inscribed sentence: Eberhard J. Nikitsch, »DI 34, Bad Kreuznach, Nr. 164«, in: [www.inschriften.net](http://www.inschriften.net), <https://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0238-di034mz03k0016400> (10.02.2023; last viewed). The first syllable of »consecratus« is also a restoration; apparently the inscription had been modified to read »secretus«! For a brief notice, including a photo-

**Fig. 6** So-called Glove of St. Liudger. 12th century CE (?), linen, silk and gold brocade.  
(Photo: © Schatzkammer Werden, Bildarchiv)



the form of a gesticulating right hand appears above the phrase »hic est / [locus · con]secr[a]tus« (Fig. 5).<sup>41</sup>

Noting that the epigraphic plaque likely once indicated the location of a cemetery situated between church's choir and the southern wall of the claustral enclosure, Eberhard Nikitsch suggested that the depicted hand should not be interpreted as making a gesture of benediction, but instead as pointing out »einen realen Ort«.<sup>42</sup> This analytic severing of benediction from designation misses the mark. The carved relief certainly shows a right hand, with extended thumb, index and middle finger, reaching out from a bulky segment of sleeve. The absence of a halo, combined with the exposed length of forearm and the prominent articulation of the sleeve, indicate that this is not a depiction of the *manus dei*, but rather a mortal hand making

graph of the unrestored state of the inscription, see Otto Kohl, »Inscription an der St.-Wolfgangs-Kirche zu Kreuznach«, *Zeitschrift für christliche Kunst* 25 (1912), 373–374.

<sup>42</sup> »Die wohl kaum als Segensgestus aufzufassende, sondern einen realen Ort bezeichnende Hand, dürfte sich auf den ehemaligen, zwischen Chor und südlicher Klostermauer gelegenen Friedhof des 1472 gegründeten und 1484 geweihten Klosters bezogen haben.«: see Nikitsch (note 41).



a gesture employed in benedictions and consecrations: two ritual actions that were consistently phrased and theorized as speech acts in the Middle Ages.<sup>43</sup>

Like the paradigmatic consecration of the Eucharistic bread and wine, other consecrations – including the consecration of cemeteries – involved gestures and deictic utterances that were understood to cause what they expressed.<sup>44</sup> Conjoined with the phrase »hic est locus consecratus«, the gesturing hand effects what it designates in a durable continual-present-tense. Reifying a transformative action performed at a specific point in time, the conjunction of word and image in the plaque affirms both the legal and spiritual status of the plot of land it points out, and it shows how »this place« was made to be the distinct consecrated place that it is.

A similarly deictic logic is at work in the embellishing of pontifical and abbatial gloves (*chirothecae*) with the phrases »dextera domini« or »dextera dei«.<sup>45</sup> On the so-called Glove of St. Liudger, the phrase »DEXTERA D(OMI)NI« appears as part of an embroidered medallion, likely made in the eleventh century, applied to the back of the hand (Fig. 6).<sup>46</sup>

Stitched in gold majuscule letter forms upon a golden textile ground, the phrase encircles a representation of a right hand that makes the conventional gesture of blessing or consecration, set against three bars of a cross (Fig. 7).

Framing a visual representation of the right hand of God (more specifically, of Christ), the two-word phrase might be characterized as a modest nominalizing *titulus*: an alphabetic element identifying a visual referent. Such a characterization would, however, fail to capture the deictic force of the phrase and its image-com-

<sup>43</sup> The complex, long-lived medieval theoretical tradition is brilliantly examined in Irène Rosier-Catach, *La parole efficace. Signe, rituel, sacré*, Paris 2004.

<sup>44</sup> On the liturgical consecration of cemeteries see Michel Lauwers, »Le cimetière dans le Moyen Âge latin. Lieu sacré, saint et religieux«, *Annales* 54/5 (1999), 1047–1072, here: 1068; Michel Lauwers, *Naisance du cimetière. Lieux sacrés et terre des morts dans l'Occident médiéval*, Paris 2005; Cécile Treffort, »Consécration de cimetière et contrôle épiscopal des lieux d'inhumation au Xe siècle«, in: Michel Kaplan (ed.), *Le sacré et son inscription dans l'espace à Byzance et en Occident. Études comparées*, Paris 2001, 285–299; Derek A. Rivard, »Consecratio Cymiterii. The Ritual Blessings of Cemeteries in the Central Middle Ages«, *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 35/1 (2004), 22–44.

<sup>45</sup> On the prevalence of these formulae in twelfth- and thirteenth-century liturgical gloves, with a focus on examples in France, see Estelle Ingrand-Varenne, »Dextera Domini. The Earliest Inscriptions on Liturgical Gloves«, in: Tanja Kohwagner-Nikolai, Bernd Päffgen, Christine Steininger (eds.), *Über Stoff und Stein. Knotenpunkte von Textilkunst und Epigraphik. Beiträge zur 15. Fachtagung für mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Epigraphik vom 12. bis 14. Februar 2020 in München*, Wiesbaden 2021, 84–96. The single best introduction to pontifical gloves remains Joseph Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient, nach Ursprung und Entwicklung, Verwendung und Symbolik*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1907, 359–384. For further discussion, see Lesley O'Connor Edwards, »Holy Hands. Ceremonial Knitted Gloves for Elite Churchmen in Europe from the Twelfth to Nineteenth Centuries«, *The Journal of Dress History* 5 (2021), 43–73; Cordelia Warr, »In Persona Christi. Liturgical Gloves and the Construction of Public Religious Identity«, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 95/2 (2019), 135–156.

<sup>46</sup> Today the glove relic is preserved in the Schatzkammer Werden; see further Sonja Herman, »DI 81, Stadt Essen, Nr. 39«, in: [www.inschriften.net](http://www.inschriften.net), urn:nbn:de:0238-di081d007k0003908 (10.02.2023: last viewed); Matthias Puhle, Claus-Peter Hasse (eds.), *Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation 962 bis 1806. Von Otto dem Grossen bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters. Katalog*, Dresden 2006, 156; Jan Gerchow (ed.), *Das Jahrtausend der Mönche. Kloster-Welt Werden 799–1803*, Essen 1999, 508–509 (Cat. No. 370). I regret that I have not been able to consult Victor Elbern, »Kunstgeschichtliche Erinnerungen an St. Liudger in Werden«, in: Victor Elbern, *St. Liudger und die Abtei Werden: gesammelte kunsthistorische Aufsätze*, Basilius Senger (ed.), Essen 1962, 15–44.



**Fig. 7** Detail of so-called Glove of St. Liudger. (Photo: © Nordrhein-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Künste, Arbeitsstelle »Inchriften« Foto: Gerda Hellmer)



plement in this instance. Whereas in the New Testament, the *dextera domini* was understood in a locative sense as a position of favor next to God, in the so-called Glove of St. Liudger, and other liturgical gloves featuring the phrase, it is given a new context and a new meaning.<sup>47</sup>

In its identification of the bishop's right hand with the »right hand of the Lord« the so-called Glove of St. Liudger participated in a tradition. As Estelle Ingrand-Varenne has shown, the *dextera domini* text appears on numerous twelfth- and thirteenth-century liturgical gloves, all of them made to fit the right hand of a prelate.<sup>48</sup> Applied to the surface of a glove made for the right hand of a bishop (or abbot), the inscription designates not simply the embroidered divine hand but also the bishop's right hand covered by the glove. Gloved, the bishop's right hand received the blessing pictured in the embroidered medallion and when the bishop performed a benediction wearing

<sup>47</sup> Ingrand-Varenne (note 45), 90–93.

<sup>48</sup> Ingrand-Varenne further observes that left hand gloves most often feature the text »agnus dei« accompanying an image of the Lamb of God: Ingrand-Varenne (note 45), 91–93.



**Fig. 8** Stadtkirche St. Nikolaus in Babenhausen: exterior carving of fool with banderole. c. 1472 CE, carved stone. (Photo: Thomas G. Tempel, Forschungsstelle »Die Deutschen Inschriften« bei der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz)

the glove, his hand visually and phenomenally reiterated the icon of the *dextera domini* and its blessing.<sup>49</sup>

Many medieval inscriptions deploy textual and visual deixis to mark and thereby transform and reorganize the phenomenal world in relation to their presence, forms and facture. In such inscriptions, writing on the world amounted to a re-writing of the world, an act that takes the phenomenal world as an initial empirical and conceptual context for epigraphic predication only to re-articulate place, time, and other referents from the standpoint or *origo* of the epigraphic work. Certain medieval inscriptions employ visual and textual deixis to work this re-articulation of the world about them in the form of a question. Riddle-like inscriptions are a case in point.

<sup>49</sup> As Ingrand-Varenne astutely notes concerning the so-called St. Liudger glove: »one hand is covered by another hand (the glove), itself doubled by the image of a blessing hand, around which unfolds the inscription that names the ›hand‹. There is a stacking, a redundancy, almost a ›mise en abyme‹«: Ingrand-Varenne (note 45), 93. On the wearing (and removing) of gloves in the context of the liturgy, see Braun (note 45), 380–384.

<sup>50</sup> This phenomenon has primarily been explored in relation to Old English textual *enigmata* and early medieval insular works of art and artifacts, most famously the Ruthwell Cross and the Franks Casket; for further discussion see Seeta Chaganti, »Vestigial Signs. Inscription, Performance, and The Dream of the Rood«, *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 125 (2010), 48–72; Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England* (note 15), 135–178 (Ch. »Object and Voice«); Jennifer Neville, »The Exeter Book Riddles' Precarious Insights into Wooden Artefacts«, in: Michael D. J. Bintley, Michael G. Shapland (eds.), *Trees and timber in the Anglo-Saxon world*, Oxford 2013, 122–143; Benjamin C. Tilghman, »On the Enigmatic Nature of Things in Anglo-Saxon Art«, *Different Visions* 4 (2014), 1–43 (<https://differentvisions.org/issue-four/2019/07/on-the-enigmatic-nature-of-things-in-an Anglo-saxon-art/> 10.02.2023: last viewed); Leslie Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art. A New History*, Ithaca, NY 2012, 13–41 (Ch. 1: »Reading the Image, Seeing the Text«); Jonathan Wilcox, »Tell Me What I Am. The Old English Riddles«, in: David F.



**Fig. 9** View of the west façade of St. Nikolaus in Babenhausen, completed 1472 CE; with added indication of the carving of the fool and banderole. (Photo: Reinhard Dietrich / Wikimedia Commons / CC-BY-SA 3.0; [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:St.\\_Nikolaus\\_\(Babenhausen\)?uselang=de#/media/File:Bh\\_Stadtkirche1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:St._Nikolaus_(Babenhausen)?uselang=de#/media/File:Bh_Stadtkirche1.jpg). Photo modified by author)

Equally contingent and even occasional, deliberately puzzling inscriptions often frame their relation to the world in the form of a question.<sup>50</sup>

Hermeneutic uncertainty is certainly the name of the game played by a sandstone ashlar block situated just above eye-level at the northwest corner of the west façade of the Stadtkirche St. Nikolaus in Babenhausen (completed 1472) (Fig. 8).

The carved stone is inhabited by a half-length male figure who stares out into the world as the banderole unfurling from his left hand boldly asks: »wer bin ich«?<sup>51</sup>

Although the weathered condition of the relief carving frustrates attempts to discern fine details in the figure's form, the remains of what was likely a fool's hood can be made out to the right of the figure's head, and it seems likely that he once

Johnson, Elaine M. Treharne (eds.), *Readings in Medieval Texts. Interpreting Old and Middle English Literature*, Oxford 2005, 46–59.

<sup>51</sup> The facade can be dated from a second carved block, set into the southwest corner of the façade, whose very badly weathered surface still bears the legible date inscription of 1472: Sebastian Scholz, »DI 49, Darmstadt, Darmstadt-Dieburg, Groß-Gerau, Nr. 55«, in: [www.inschriften.net](http://www.inschriften.net), <https://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0238-di049mz06k0005503> (10.02.2023: last viewed).



held a short cudgel – another attribute of fools – against his breast with his left hand.<sup>52</sup> Is then the answer to the figure's riddling question obvious, for only a fool would think his identity was enigmatic?

Although the carved block might seem merely to tautologically present a fool being foolish, consideration of the position of the carved block within the church's physical fabric suggests that the riddling banderole's question is a pointed one (Fig. 9).<sup>53</sup>

Integrated into the north corner of the church's west façade approximately at eye-level, the carving is positioned to confront anyone moving toward, away from, or simply passing by the church's main entrance from the northwest. The short, simple, vernacular text inscribed into its banderole was certainly devised as a querulous address to all and sundry who stopped to look. A beholder standing before the carving mirrored the frontal figure of the fool. In such a situation of eye-to-eye parallelism, the fool's question, couched in the language of the secular day-to-day, potentially becomes the beholder's question. The specific siting of the relief carving and its question invited a spatially-conditioned response with moral-religious implications: you are a fool, as am I, standing in this place looking at your image, reading your banderole, and, like you, not inside the church.<sup>54</sup>

### III.

The carved fool at Babenhausen poses his question by means of a banderole, a ubiquitous device for the presentation of short texts in medieval manuscripts, works of art, objects, monuments, and architecture. Although depicted scrolls have not been neglected by scholars, discussion has primarily focused on their role as visualiza-

<sup>52</sup> Scholz (note 51).

<sup>53</sup> On the significance of spatial relations and perception for epigraphic texts, see Debiais, *Messages* (note 7), 65–91.

<sup>54</sup> In the *Deutsche Inschriften Online* entry for the relief carving, Sebastian Scholz observes: »Die Worte *wer bin ich* richten sich offenbar an den Kirchenbesucher. Indem dieser den Narren als solchen identifiziert, soll er daran erinnert werden, nicht selbst in die Fehler des Narren zu verfallen.«: Scholz (note 51; italics in original).

<sup>55</sup> Curiously, medieval banderoles have not yet attracted the focused critical attention they deserve. The single best synthetic analysis to date is Susanne Wittekind, »Vom Schriftband zum Spruchband. Zum Funktionswandel von Spruchbändern als Illustrationen biblischer Stoffe«, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 30 (1996), 343–367. Additional points of reference include: Franz H. Bäuml, Richard H. Rouse, »Roll and Codex. A New Manuscript Fragment of Reinmar von Zweter«, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 105 (1983), 192–231; Camille (note 9); Karl Clausberg, »Spruchbandaussagen zum Stilcharakter. Malende und gemalte Gebärden, direkte Rede in den Bildern der Veldeke-Aeneide (probably, could not check online) sowie Wernhers Marienliedern«, *Städels-Jahrbuch* 13 (1992), 81–110; Karl Clausberg, »Spruchbandreden als Körpersprache im Berliner Äneiden-Manuskript«, in: Thomas Gaethgens (ed.), *Künstlerischer Austausch – Artistic Exchange. Akten des XXVIII. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte, Berlin, 15.-20. Juli 1992*, 3 vols., Berlin 1993, II, 345–355; Alison R. Flett, »The Significance of Text Scrolls. Towards a Descriptive Terminology«, in: Margaret M. Manion, Bernard James Muir (eds.), *Medieval Texts and Images. Studies of Manuscripts from the Middle Ages*, Sydney 1991,



tions of speech.<sup>55</sup> The strangeness and elusive ontology of the banderole has yet to be fully confronted by modern commentators.

Whereas the English word *banderole* denotes both a kind of narrow flag or streamer and a »ribbon-like scroll bearing a device or inscription«, it is also sometimes employed as a synonym for the more pointed term »speech-scroll«.<sup>56</sup> The German terms *Schriftband* and *Spruchband* draw a dichotomous distinction between depicted text and depicted speech, whilst *Schriftrolle* and *Buchrolle* are employed to designate the *rotulus* as a textual artifact and its depiction in images in equal measure. The term preferred in much Francophone scholarship, *phylactère*, can denote pagan amulets, Jewish *tefillin*, and Christian reliquaries, as well as »[b]anderole[s], aux extrémités enroulées, portant les paroles prononcées par un personnage ou la légende du sujet représenté, surtout utilisée par les artistes du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance«.<sup>57</sup> Even this incomplete terminological survey reveals how scholars have variously perceived and attempted to characterize this ubiquitous element in European medieval visual culture.<sup>58</sup> Rather than lament this terminological diversity, I would instead suggest that in this case terminological precision is not a *desideratum*, but rather a distraction from confronting the ambiguity, flexibility, and real strangeness of the medieval banderole.

Indeed, two fundamental aspects of this pictorial-textual device have yet to be adequately apprehended and critically interrogated. First, that medieval banderoles – be they inscribed or uninscribed – do not depict or evoke medieval *rotuli* (roll artifacts). And second, that the banderole is a *fictive* object invented in the medieval period.

<sup>55</sup> 43–56; Marcoux (note 5); Pamela Nourrigeon, »Lorsque le rouleau vide devient parlant. L’illustration de l’annonce à Zacharie dans le *Rational des divins offices*«, *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* 20 (special issue: »Medieval Origins of the Republican Idea 12th–15th Centuries«) (2015), 303–315; Lisa Reilly, Mary B. Shepard, »Sufferance Fait Ease En Temps«, *Word as Image at St Michael-Le-Belfrey, York«, Word & Image* 32 (2016), 218–234; Meyer Schapiro, »Script in Pictures. Semiotics of Visual Language«, in: Meyer Schapiro, *Words, Script, and Pictures. Semiotics of Visual Language*, New York 1996, 157–165; Victor M. Schmidt, »Some Notes on Scrolls in the Middle Ages«, *Quaerendo* 41 (2011), 373–383; Hans Reinhard Seeliger, »Buchrolle, Codex, Kanon. Sachhistorische und ikonographische Aspekte und Zusammenhänge«, in: Eve-Marie Becker, Stefan Scholz (eds.), *Kanon in Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion. Kanonisierungsprozesse religiöser Texte von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart – Ein Handbuch*, Berlin 2011, 547–576; Birgit Studt, »Gebrauchsformen mittelalterlicher Rotuli. Das Wort auf dem Weg zur Schrift – die Schrift auf dem Weg zum Bild«, in: Ellen Widder, Mark Mersiowsky, Peter Johanek (eds.), *Vestigia Monasteriorum. Westfalen – Rheinland – Niederlande*, Bielefeld 1995, 325–350; Holger Schott Syme, »The Look of Speech«, *Textual Cultures. Texts, Contexts, Interpretation* 2/2 (2007), 34–60; Roger Tarr, »Visible Parlane. The Spoken Word in Fourteenth-Century Central Italian Painting«, *Word & Image* 13 (1997), 223–244; Susanne Wittekind, »Eingeschrieben ins ewige Gedächtnis. Überlegungen zur Funktion der Schriftverwendung an mittelalterlichen Kunstwerken«, in: Dietrich Boschung, Hansgerd Hellenkemper (eds.), *Kosmos der Zeichen. Schriftbild und Bildformel in Antike und Mittelalter*, Wiesbaden 2007, 187–207.

<sup>56</sup> »banderole, n.«, in: *OED Online*: [<sup>57</sup> »phylactère«, in: \*Le Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé\* \(TLFi\): <http://stella.atilf.fr/Dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/advanced.exe?8;s=668492700> \(09.20.2022: last viewed\).](https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15140?redirectedFrom=banderole&(09.20.2022: last viewed).</a></p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

<sup>58</sup> In this connection, it can be remarked that depicted song, *per se*, is a curious terminological-conceptual lacuna; it is, nonetheless, clear that some so-called »speech-scrolls« are better characterized as »song-scrolls«; for further discussion of a particularly clear case, see Michael Curschmann, »Integrating Anselm. Pictures and the Liturgy in a Twelfth-Century Manuscript of the *Orationes Sive Meditationes*«, in: Susan Boynton, Diane J. Reilly (eds.), *Studies in the Visual Cultures of the Middle Ages*, Turnhout 2015, 295–312.



To take the first of these points first: to the best of my knowledge, medieval banderoles never exhibit the chief hallmark of artifactual *rotuli*; namely, the stitched or glued seams that conjoin one sheet of papyrus, parchment, or paper to another.<sup>59</sup> So too, the *ordinatio* of texts inscribed in medieval banderoles set them apart from medieval *rotuli*. Countless medieval banderoles display one or more lines of text extending the full length (rather than breadth) of their forms: this textual *ordinatio* was not employed in medieval artifactual *rotuli*.<sup>60</sup> In medieval banderoles with legible or simulated text inscribed perpendicular to the length of the roll – the textual *ordinatio* found in the vast majority of extant *rotuli* artifacts from the medieval period – the letter-forms are disproportionately large, in relation to their depicted support. In other words, the texts inscribed on medieval banderoles were often scaled to the situation of the flesh-and-blood beholder turned reader, rather than any reading or authorial figure within the space of the image.<sup>61</sup> Considered together these features of medieval banderoles reveal that they were consistently and conventionally distinguished from the artifactual rolls that medieval people knew and used.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> The single best overview of extant medieval roll-artifacts, is Norbert Kössinger, *Schriftrollen. Untersuchungen zu den deutschsprachigen und mittelniederländischen Rotuli*, Wiesbaden 2018. A valuable online resource dedicated to medieval scrolls, with a database of extant medieval scrolls and an extensive bibliography, is: »The Medieval Scrolls Digital Archive. A Comprehensive Resource for Scrolls in the Middle Ages«, in: <https://medievalscrolls.com/> (10.01.2022: last viewed) For further reading, see also Enno Giele, Jörg Peltzer, Melanie Trede, »Rollen, Blättern und (Ent)Falten«, in: Thomas Meier, Michael R. Ott, Rebecca Sauer (eds.), *Materiale Textkulturen. Konzepte – Materialien – Praktiken*, Berlin 2015, 677–693; Jochen Johrendt, Maria Pia Alberzoni, Étienne Doublier (eds.), *Der Rotulus im Gebrauch. Einsatzmöglichkeiten – Gestaltungsvarianz – Deutungen*, Cologne 2020; Norbert Kössinger, »Gerollte Schrift. Mittelalterliche Texte aus Rotulis«, in: Annette Kehnel, Diamantis Panagiotopoulos (eds.), *Schriftträger – Textträger. Zur materialen Präsenz des Geschriebenen in frühen Gesellschaften*, Berlin 2015, 151–168; Studt (note 55); Andrzej Wojciech Suski, Giacomo Baroffio, Manlio Sodi, »Rotoli liturgici medievali (secoli VII–XV). Censimento e bibliografia«, *Revista Liturgica* 101/3 (2014), 603–621. I regret I have not been able to consult Thomas Forrest Kelly, *The Role of the Scroll. An Illustrated Introduction to Scrolls in the Middle Ages*, New York, NY, 2019.

<sup>60</sup> There are a few exceptions to this general rule, the best known of which is the tenth-century Joshua Roll (Rome, Vatican City, BAV, Pal. Gr. 431 pt. B), available in a digital surrogate from the Vatican Library: <https://digi.vatlib.it/mss/detail/215228> (09.22.2022: last viewed). For further discussion, see Vasiliki Tsamakda, »The Joshua Roll«, in: Vasiliki Tsamakda (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, Leiden 2017, 207–213; Kurt Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll. A Work of the Macedonian Renaissance*, Princeton, NJ, 1948. A fifteenth-century exception to the rule, whose *ordinatio* was motivated by its derivation from a wall painting, is discussed in Studt (note 55), 345–346, 350 [C.3, Paris, BN, Cabinet des Estampes, Nr. 206/207].

<sup>61</sup> As Birt observed, »so eigneten sich die offnen Rollen trefflich zum Tragen von Sinnsprüchen und Worten des Herrn. Sie wurden zum Plakat. Und nicht mehr der Träger des Buchs im Bild erscheint jetzt als Leser, sondern der Betrachter des Bildes wird zum Leser gemacht, denn ihm gilt die auf der Buchseite angebrachte lapidare Schrift«: Theodor Birt, *Die Buchrolle in der Kunst. Archäologisch-antiquarische Untersuchungen zum antiken Buchwesen*, Leipzig 1907, 318. Meyer Schapiro, however, pointed out that the inverse also obtains; that is, texts within medieval images that are oriented to a reader-beholder figure internal to the image: Meyer Schapiro (note 55), 153–155.

<sup>62</sup> Commenting on *Spruchbänder*, Clausberg observed: »Daß aber Realitäts- und Abbildungswahrnehmung keineswegs kongruent waren, zeigen eben die Spruchbänder – sie standen nur in der Bildwelt und nicht in der Lebenswelt als Mitteilungsorgane zur Verfügung.«: Clausberg, »Spruchbandaussagen« (note 55), 99.



In this respect, the medieval banderole is different both to the *tabula ansata* and to the depicted *rotulus* of antiquity.<sup>63</sup> In antiquity and late antiquity, *tabulae ansatae* existed as textual artifacts made of wood, metal, or clay, in the form of a horizontally oriented rectangular tablet with two triangular handles at each of its short ends. Likely originating as votive plaques displaying text in archaic Greece, *tabulae ansatae* proliferated in the Roman world as a way of framing and displaying a wide range of texts: inscribed with *vota* they continued to be hung or placed in temples, but they also featured in triumphal military processions. Additionally, the *tabula ansata* appears as a framing device for dedicatory and mortuary inscriptions on sarcophagi and relief sculptures, in floor mosaics, and on the walls of buildings.

Like *tabulae ansatae*, the *rotulus* was both an object in regular use and an artifact encountered within images.<sup>64</sup> Before the fifth century, *rotuli* are depicted in various physical states.<sup>65</sup> Completely rolled up and held in the left hand, they are often attributes of law-givers. In scenes of reading or singing in which a *rotulus* is depicted in active use, figures customarily hold the roll horizontally before them, grasping its rolled-up ends on either side of an exposed segment of the *rotulus*. Also well attested are scenes of »interrupted reading« from *rotuli* in which a figure holds the still rolled-up cylindrical end of the object, paying no attention to the exposed length of the roll that drapes across their lap or dangles from their hand.<sup>66</sup>

In consonance with extant antique and late antique artifacts, the rolls depicted in ancient and late antique art are presented as horizontally, rather than vertically oriented supports for writing. When text features upon the surfaces of pre-medieval depicted rolls, it is organized in paragraph-like blocks, whose lines parallel the depicted artifact's long horizontal edges, a layout attested in ancient and late antique extant papyrus and parchment *rotuli*.<sup>67</sup>

In sum then, the rolls that appear in antique and late antique works of art conform to the horizontal format and textual *ordinatio* of ancient and late antique artifactual *rotuli*. In a spirit of consistent medial realism, ancient and late antique artists depicted *rotuli* as they were encountered in lived experience: rolled up and unrolled, let fall from one hand, and held open horizontally in two hands in scenes of reading, singing, declaiming, teaching, and law-giving.

<sup>63</sup> My account of *tabulae ansatae* follows Sean V. Leatherbury, »Writing, Reading and Seeing Between the Lines. Framing Late-Antique Inscriptions as Texts and Images«, in: Michael Squire, Verity Platt (eds.), *The Frame in Classical Art. A Cultural History*, Cambridge 2017, 384–390; Sean V. Leatherbury, »Framing Late Antique Texts as Monuments. The Tabula Ansata between Sculpture and Mosaic«, in: Andrej Petrovic, Ivana Petrovic, Edmund Thomas (eds.), *The Materiality of Text – Placement, Perception, and Presence of Inscribed Texts in Classical Antiquity*, Leiden 2018, 380–404.

<sup>64</sup> As Leatherbury observes, depictions of *tabulae ansatae* in mosaic pavements »resist the flattening impulse of the medium, either through their color, shape and orientation, or sheer formal monumentality«: Leatherbury, »Framing« (note 63), 390.

<sup>65</sup> For an older, yet still instructive survey of ancient and late antique depictions of *rotuli*, see Birt (note 61). For a recent critical reassessment of artifactual and depicted *rotuli*, see Seeliger (note 55).

<sup>66</sup> On images of »unterbrochene Lektüre« see Birt (note 61), 182–196.

<sup>67</sup> The *ordinatio* of antique and late antique rolls is further discussed in Kössinger, *Schriftrollen* (note 59), 8–14; Otto Mazal, *Griechisch-römische Antike*, Graz 1999, 100–124. As Kössinger notes, a vertical, *charta transversa* orientation (with lines of text written perpendicular to the long-edge of the *rotulus*) was employed for antique and late antique letters and documents: Kössinger, *Schriftrollen* (note 59), 13–14.



The depiction of rolls as *realia*, evident in so many antique and late antique depictions of *rotuli* did not persist in the Middle Ages.<sup>68</sup> Whereas a conservative tendency affecting depictions of Moses, Hebrew Bible Prophets, the Evangelists, Apostles, and Christ himself ensured that *rotuli* continued to appear in the hands or upon the writing desks of such figures, fictive books increasingly replaced *rotuli* as attributes of New Testament authority figures and the depicted roll acquired a more iconographically pointed signification. As Theodor Birt pithily observed, »[d]as Heilige liebt das Archaisieren«: the *Buchrolle* held by depictions of holy figures were already archaizing attributes in the sixth century.<sup>69</sup>

Writing in the thirteenth century, William Durandus (c. 1230–1296 CE) understood the *rotulus* and the *liber* as well-established pictorial signifiers. In his *Rationale divinorum officiorum*, Durandus explains the differentiated use of these two iconographic attributes in the images and other ornaments encountered in churches:

[...] note that the Patriarchs and Prophets are painted with scrolls in their hands, and some of the Apostles are depicted with books and some with scrolls. This is clearly because before the coming of Christ, the faith was shown figuratively, and many things remained unclear; to represent this, the Patriarchs and Prophets are painted with scrolls, as if to denote this imperfect knowledge. But since the Apostles were instructed perfectly by Christ, they can be shown with books, by which is suitably depicted their perfect knowledge. But because some of them put down in writing what they had learned, for the instruction of others, they are fittingly depicted as if they were teachers, with books in their hands, such as Paul, the Evangelists, Peter, James and Jude. But others, who wrote nothing that has survived or has been approved by the Church, are not depicted with books but with scrolls, as a sign of their preaching.<sup>70</sup>

Durandus identifies two logics at work in the iconographic attributes of roll and codex. First, he sketches a typological-hierarchical logic that starkly differentiates the imperfect, unclear religious knowledge possessed by Jewish authorities before the Incarnation from the superior, perfect knowledge the Apostles acquired, thanks to Christ's teaching. Within this scheme, the motif of the scroll unequivocally connotes the imperfection, incompleteness, and obscurity of the revelation given to the Patriarchs and Prophets. Cast as anti types to the *rotulus*-as-type, codices, in turn, signify the perfect, more complete and no longer »figurative« (i.e., obscure) knowledge given to the Apostles by Christ. On this account, the scroll and book define an

<sup>68</sup> The carefully observed depiction of Exultet rolls in Exultet rolls is a notable exception to this general rule; on Exultet rolls, see Guglielmo Cavallo (ed.), *Exultet. Rotoli liturgici del medioevo meridionale*, Roma 1994; Thomas Forrest Kelly, *The Exultet in Southern Italy*, New York 1996; Marilena Maniaci, Giulia Orofino, »Les >rouleaux d'Exultet< du Mont Cassin: (techniques de fabrication, caractéristiques matérielles, décoration, rapports avec les rouleaux grecs)«, *Les cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 43 (2012), 71–82.

<sup>69</sup> Birt (note 61), 318.

<sup>70</sup> English translation quoted from Guillaume Durand, *The Rationale Divinorum Officiorum of William Durand of Mende. A New Translation of the Prologue and Book One*, trans. T. M. Thibodeau, New York 2007, 36–37. For the Latin text, see the critical edition: Guillaume Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum: I–IV*, ed. Anselmus Davril, T. M. Thibodeau, Turnhout 1995, 39 (Lib. I, c. II, 11).





**Fig. 10** St. Martini in Stadthagen; wall painting in apse. c. 1450–1500 CE. (Photo: © Inga Finck, Niedersächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Inschriftenkommission)

iconographic binary, a two-term set organized by, and expressive of a triumphalist Christian typology. Turning to the depiction of Christian figures with scrolls, Durandus identifies a second iconographic logic at work; namely, the distinction of writers from preachers or speakers.

Durandus sketches a rather simple iconographic scheme, in which depicted codex and depicted roll have clearly differentiated statuses and significations. His binary understanding of what depicted rolls and books signify has, consciously and unconsciously, been adopted and maintained by much art historiography. Although Durandus's *Rationale* is a magisterial work of liturgical synthesis it is not a reliable field guide to medieval visual culture. In practice, medieval banderole served numerous aims, ranging from the iconographic to the expressive, compositional, and ornamental.

Rather than acting as a pictorial surrogate for a class of extra-pictorial artifact, the medieval banderole was a pictorial device for the integration of actual or implied language within the space of images. In this respect, the medieval banderole is distinct from other textual artifacts frequently depicted in medieval images: books, pictured opened and closed; depictions of the two tablets of the Mosaic law; representations of wax tablets; depicted legal documents. By turn, banderoles are also distinct from the innumerable inscriptions that appear within or adjacent to pictorial space without any fictive support. Carved into the back planes of carvings, painted upon a ground, or disposed within framing elements, in medieval works of art texts

are often juxtaposed with iconic representation without being pictorially justified as fictive objects or artifacts.

Already starting in the ninth century, the legacy of artifactual realism, inherited from antique and late antique pictorial traditions, registers less and less in the forms of depicted rolls. As banderoles proliferated in subsequent centuries, their anti-realistic qualities intensified. Medieval banderoles float in mid-air. They curl, loop, fold back on themselves. They thread and zig-zag through pictorial space. Freed from the laws of gravity and the task of referencing extra-pictorial *realia*, banderoles were routinely invested with considerable kinetic energy: they launch from the heads of figures, ripple and stretch between figures, and bend at acute angles, quite independent of the hands that hold them. The ›physics‹ of medieval banderoles reveal how radically medieval artists re-imagined the depicted *rotulus* of antiquity. Unbound from the constraints of artifactual realism, the banderole was (re)invented in the Middle Ages as a pictorial device.

The remains of a wall painting situated immediately behind and to the north of the altar in the apse of the church of St. Martini in Stadthagen exemplify the formal and semantic flexibility of the medieval banderole, those qualities that made the banderole an agile and compelling pictorial-textual device (Fig. 10).<sup>71</sup>

Below what was once a full-length figure and a lily vase – almost certainly a depiction of the Virgin Annunciate – a banderole frames a fragmentary inscription: »O d(omi)na · glorie · regi[. . . . .] fon [. . . . .]eta[ti]s // [. . . . .]«.<sup>72</sup> The text can be reconstructed as »O domina gloriae, o regina laetitiae, o fons pietatis, o vena misericordiae« (Oh lady of glory, queen of joy, fount of piety, and vessel of mercy): verses from a Marian hymn attested in at least six fifteenth-century manuscripts.<sup>73</sup> The doubled black lines that frame the inscription could be mistaken for aniconic ruling, were it not for how they describe the folded, draped edge of a banderole at the far left.

The upper line of the horizontal inscription is interrupted by a small male figure, seated in profile on a bench; a text painted on the wall surface immediately below identifies him as *ysayas*. Gazing at the Marian inscription immediately to the right of his form, Isaiah raises his left hand into the space of the large banderole, making an open palmed gesture of acknowledgment. In his right hand he holds a closed book, from which a second, smaller banderole unfurls. Its arcing and looping form seems to hover before him, breaking into the space of the larger horizontal inscription above, intervening in the orderly march of its letterforms, and obscuring the black lines that demarcate the edges of that inscription's banderole. Today only the indistinct traces

<sup>71</sup> Katharina Kagerer, »DI 104, Landkreis Schaumburg, Nr. 67«, in [www.inschriften.net](http://www.inschriften.net), urn:nbn:de:0238-di104g020k0006704 (10.02.2023: last viewed) For a basic introduction to the church and its furnishings see Heinrich Ulbrich, *Ev.-luth. St.-Martini-Kirche Stadthagen*, Munich 1987.

<sup>72</sup> Kagerer (note 71).

<sup>73</sup> Kagerer (note 71). The text is also included as a concluding prayer in the Cistercian Ogerius (or Olgerius) Locediensis's *Planctus beatae Mariae* (B version) in a number of manuscripts: for further discussion see H. Barré, »Le Planctus Mariae attribué à saint Bernard«, *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 58 (1952), 243–266. The text is best known today from its reuse in a motet by Giovanni Felice Sances: Andrew Weaver, »Music in the Service of Counter-Reformation Politics. The Immaculate Conception at the Habsburg Court of Ferdinand III (1637–1657)«, *Music & Letters* 87 (2006), 361–378.



of letterforms can be seen on the banderole that unfurls from the book held in the prophet's hand; they may once have spelled out a quotation from Isaiah's prophetic writing.<sup>74</sup>

The overlapping of the horizontal banderole with its Marian hymn-verse by the smaller figure of Isaiah and the floating form of the banderole that springs from his book effectively positions the prophet in front of the Marian banderole and the representation of the Annunciation above it. Given Christian interpretation of Isaiah's prophecy – as a prophecy of the Incarnation, the superimposition of prophetic figure and banderole upon the Marian banderole also figures a typological conjunction.

The figure of Isaiah and his ribbon-like banderole visually interrupt the Marian hymn inscribed on the monumental banderole above and putatively behind them. As prophet and prophecy intervene in that horizontally disposed banderole, they seem to occlude sections of its regular, ordered inscription. The overlapping of banderole by banderole, of Christian hymnody by prophetic figure and prophetic language stages a counterfactual chronology in pictorial terms, as if the event of the Annunciation and Incarnation preceded Jewish prophecy. This is, of course, the logic of Christian typology. According to Christian exegesis, Isaiah's prophetic utterance, »Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel« (Isaiah 7:14), foretold the Annunciation and with it the Incarnation. From this soteriological and exegetical perspective, Jewish prophecy communicated Christian revelation obscurely. Often analogized to a shadow or veil by Christian exegetes, Hebrew Bible prophecy was understood as a divine communication of Christ's future *adventus* and Mary's crucial role in salvation history, albeit in a concealed form that awaited full disclosure with the adventus of the *verbum incarnatum*.

It is this Christian conception of Jewish prophecy as at once foretelling and obscuring Christian revelation that structures the spatial conceit of the wall painting in the choir of St. Martini and motivates the choreography of its two banderoles. Nominally instances of the same epigraphic device, the two banderoles are rendered as starkly different visual forms, whose pictured interaction articulates a typological, supercessionist claim. Overlapping the larger inscribed banderole, the figure of Isaiah blocks the beholder's view of its praise of Mary and, by the same stroke, directs attention to the inscription and the figure of the Virgin above it. Positioned as if he too contemplates the Marian banderole, Isaiah's gesture with his left hand indicates his awareness of its presence, perhaps even his participation in its praise of the Virgin as »lady of Glory«, »Queen of Joy«, »Fount of Piety«, and »Vessel of Mercy«. Depicted as if it were positioned spatially behind the figure of Isaiah, the large banderole serves as a *titulus* for the Annunciation scene above it and as the epigraphic object of Isaiah's fictive gaze. The Hebrew prophet contemplates and responds to a Christian truth that, within the spatial conceit of the wall painting, is presented as existentially and soteriologically prior to his form and the smaller involved banderole that unfurls from his book of prophecy.

Although medieval banderoles rarely depicted artifactual medieval *rotuli*, they were nonetheless deployed as fictive objects, whose surfaces exhibit or else signify the presence of language within the image or upon the surfaces of objects and archi-

<sup>74</sup> Kagerer (note 71).



ture. When banderoles were legibly inscribed, they objectified language within pictorial space and integrated it into the forms of other artifacts and structures, inviting beholders to become readers. Encountered exclusively in works of art and on the surfaces of crafted objects and the built environment, the medieval banderole was a species of pictorial fiction, a counterfactual depiction of a kind of textual artifact that did not otherwise exist. At the same time, however, legibly inscribed banderoles added real, really material texts to the medieval world, no less than each *libellus*, codex, document, or medieval *rotulus* did. The legibly inscribed banderole is, in this respect, a remarkable medieval invention. A conventional and ubiquitous pictorial fiction in the high and later Middle Ages, the inscribed banderole was also a material support for actual writing and reading – a textual fact – in the phenomenal world.

## IV.

From the mass of medieval objects, monuments, and images with inscriptions, a subset of works depict inscription as a process or act. The numerous scenes of writing, and less frequently of painting, depicted in medieval manuscripts constitute a rich corpus of such meta-images. The long medieval tradition of Evangelist portraits alone ensured that the manuscript page would be a privileged site for pictorial reflection on what it meant, both pragmatically and conceptually, to write. Although other ways of adding of language to the world were rarely represented with such self-reflexivity in the medieval period, a small number of epigraphic works survive in which inscription is visually thematized as an act within and upon the world.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>75</sup> To the best of my knowledge, the topic has yet to be the object of focused study, although medieval artists' self-depictions and artistic »signatures« have garnered considerable attention. The following studies discuss &/or reproduce works (other than manuscripts) in which the act of inscription is depicted or otherwise thematized: Horst Bredekamp, »Das Mittelalter als Epoche der Individualität«, *Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berichte und Abhandlungen* 8 (2000), 191–240; Horst Bredekamp, »Die Ich-Werdung des Werkes im Mittelalter«, in: Nicole Hegener (ed.), *Künstler-Signaturen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Petersberg 2013, 90–99; Enrico Castelnuovo, »Artifex bonus: il mondo dell'artista medievale; introduzione«, in: Enrico Castelnuovo (ed.), *Artifex bonus. Il mondo dell'artista medievale*, Rome 2004, v–xxxv; Peter Cornelius Claussen, »Nachrichten von den Antipoden oder der mittelalterliche Künstler über sich selbst«, in: Matthias Winner (ed.), *Der Künstler über sich in seinem Werk. Internationales Symposium der Bibliotheca Hertziana Rom 1989*, Weinheim 1992, 19–54; Francesca Dell'Acqua, »Ursus ›magerest‹. Uno scultore di età longobarda«, in: Enrico Castelnuovo (ed.), *Artifex bonus. Il mondo dell'artista medievale*, Rome 2004, 20–25; Francesca Dell'Acqua, »Gerlachus. L'arte della vetrata«, in: Enrico Castelnuovo (ed.), *Artifex bonus. Il mondo dell'artista medievale*, Rome 2004, 56–63; Virginia Wylie Egbert, *The Mediaeval Artist at Work*, Princeton, NJ 1967; Beate Fricke, »Artifex and Opifex – The Medieval Artist«, in: Conrad Rudolph (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval Art. Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, 2nd. rev. ed., Hoboken, NJ 2019, 45–70; Albert Dietl, »Italienische Bildhauerinschriften. Selbstdarstellung und Schriftlichkeit mittelalterlicher Künstler«, in: Helga Giersiepen, Raymund Kottje (eds.), *Inschriften bis 1300. Probleme und Aufgaben ihrer Erforschung. Referate der Fachtagung für mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Epigraphik, Bonn 1993*, Opladen 1995, 175–211; Jacqueline Leclercq-Marx, »Signatures iconiques et graphiques d'orfèvres dans le haut Moyen Âge. Une première approche«, *Gazette des beaux-arts*, ser. 6, 138 (2001), 1–16; Jacqueline Leclercq-Marx, »La ›signature‹ au Moyen Âge. Mise en perspective historique«, in: Manuel Antonio Castañeiras González (ed.), *Entre la letra y el pincel. El artista medieval. Leyenda, identidad y estatus*, Almería 2017, 63–76; Anton Legner, »Illustres manus«, in: Anton Legner, *Ornamenta ecclesiae. Kunst und Künstler der Romanik. Katalog zur Ausstellung des Schnütgen-Museums in der Josef-Haubrich-Kunsthalle*, 3 vols., Cologne 1985,





**Fig. 11** East face of the Bridekirk font; St. Bridget's Church, Bridekirk. Twelfth century, carved stone. (Photo: Michael Garlick / CC BY-SA 2.0; <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/6232630>)

In the richly carved twelfth-century baptismal font in the church of St. Bridget in Bridekirk (Cumbria) the transformation of stone into text is presented as one among a series of profound ontological transformations.<sup>76</sup> On its east face, the Bridekirk font preserves an early Middle English couplet carved into the surface of a sinuous

I, 187–230; Françoise Perrot, »L'art de la signature. VIII: La signature des peintres-verriers«, *Revue de l'art* 26 (1974), 38–45; Piotr Skubiszewski, »L'intellectuel et l'artiste face à l'oeuvre à l'époque romane«, in: Jacqueline Hamesse, Colette Muraille-Samaran (eds.), *Le travail au Moyen Âge. Une approche interdisciplinaire. Actes du colloques internationales de Louvain-la-Neuve 21–23 mai 1987*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1990, 282–283 (esp.); Stefan Trinks, »Der Künstler im Zeichen des Kreuzes. Artistische Selbstdennnungen an der Grenze zur Selbstdverherrlichung«, in: Nicole Hegener (ed.), *Künstler-Signaturen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Petersberg 2013, 100–115; Cécile Voyer, »Le geste efficace. Le don du chevalier au sain sur le tympan de Mervilliers (XIIe siècle)«, in: Martin Aurell, Catalina Girbea (eds.), *Chevalerie et christianisme aux XIIe et XIIIe siècle: colloque*, Rennes 2011, 101–21.

<sup>76</sup> Today the font is situated within a nineteenth-century church that replaced an older medieval structure. Contradictory accounts of the font's original location in the older antiquarian notices of the monument are critically reassessed by Hugh Doherty, who convincingly argues that the font was commissioned as part of the campaign to rebuild the parish church of St. Bridget's in Bridekirk undertaken by Waltheof, lord of Allerdale and son of Earl Gospatric, and subsequently completed by his son Alan fitz Waltheof in the 1140s: Hugh Doherty, »The Twelfth-Century Patrons of the Bridekirk Font«, in: Jordi Camps Sòria et al. (eds.), *Romanesque Patrons and Processes. Design and Instrumentality in the Art and Architecture of Romanesque Europe*, London 2018, 291–312.

<sup>77</sup> Raymond Page characterizes the inscription as executed »in Scandinavian runes similar to the Man-Jæren type, supplemented by the bookhand characters eth, yogh and wynn and the [Tironian] symbol for and [i.e., et]«: R. I. Page, *An Introduction to English Runes*, London 1973, 195. On the Bridekirk font's





Fig. 12 Detail of the east face of the Bridekirk font. (Photo: Michael Garlick / CC BY-SA 2.0; <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/6232632>)

banderole in a mixture of Scandinavian runes and Old English bookhand elements (Fig. 11).<sup>77</sup>

Above the inscription, a rectangular field is dominated by two affronted griffin-like creatures, who gnaw upon the upper leaves of a stylized plant placed between them at the center of the register. The forelegs of the hybrid creatures rest upon a molding that divides the broader upper surface of the font's face from the gently tapered lower zone below. Immediately beneath the horizontal molding, an exuberant, leafy vine-scroll is inhabited by two figures: a dog, running toward the left of the carved surface, and, on the extreme right, a splayed-leg male figure who energetically pulls a cluster of grapes to his mouth. Below the rippling banderole, more stylized vegetal scrollwork fills the right half of the lower register. Framed by two diminutive columns with scalloped capitals, this part of the font's surface is inscription, see also Michael P. Barnes and R. I. Page, *The Scandinavian Runic Inscriptions of Britain*, Uppsala, 278–285 [E1]; Thomas A. Bredehoft, »Multilingualism in Anglo-Saxon Verse Inscriptions«, in: Elizabeth M. Tyler (ed.), *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England, c.800–c.1250*, Turnhout 2011, 15–32; Jasmin Higgs, »Runes in the North West of England«, in: <https://darkagespostgradpages.wordpress.com/2020/07/10/runes-in-the-north-west-of-england/> (25.09.2022: last viewed); Judith Jesch, »Runes and Verse. The Mediationalities of Early Scandinavian Poetry«, *European Journal of Scandinavian Studies* 47 (2017), 181–202. The Baptisteria Sacra Index (BSI) database currently records only two fonts in England that feature runic graphs: the Bridekirk font, discussed here, and the font in the Church of All Saints, Bingley (West Yorkshire), with its disputed runic inscription. A third font in the Church of John the Baptist, Low Dinsdale (Durham) may once have had a runic inscription that was destroyed by the recutting of the font. A further 26 medieval fonts with runic inscriptions recorded in the BSI Database are located in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. I am grateful to Dr. Harriet Sonne de Torrens and Dr. Miguel A. Torrens, of the BSI project, for generously responding to my query: personal communication (10.11.2022). For the BSI project, see: <https://bsi.dhn.utoronto.ca/> (09.12.2022: last viewed).

presented as a work in progress: in the left half of the register, a male figure raises a mallet, ready to strike the chisel with which he is carving the stylized vine tendril immediately before him (Fig. 12).

The sculptor depicted at work on the Bridekirk font from within its carved surface is named in the inscription situated directly above his form. To understand the inscription, however, takes some work: one must transform the carved marks of the inscription into a series of sounds, punctuated by silences; only then does the inscription reveal itself to be a Middle English couplet naming and praising the font's maker:

+ rikarþ : he : m<sup>ñe</sup> : i{w}r(o)kt<sup>ñe</sup> : {7} : to : þis : me:r{D} : {3}er : - : m<sup>ñe</sup> : brokt<sup>ñe</sup>

Ricarþ he me i{w}rocte. {And} to þis mer{ð} {3}er [...] me brocte.

Ricarþ he made me. And to this splendour [...] brought me.<sup>78</sup>

Couched in the first-person, the verse inscription's conjunction of prosopopoeia and auto-panegyric is not a *unicum*: numerous medieval objects with first-person inscriptions praise their makers, and by extension themselves.<sup>79</sup> Nonetheless, the specific feature of the Bridekirk font's inscribed banderole further intensifies the self-reflexive character of the monument's conjunction of text and image. The graphs composing the inscription were chiseled into the stone as negative, intaglio aniconic forms that contrast markedly with the positive, high-relief carvings that surround them. The banderole, by contrast, was invested with considerable plasticity by the carver. Bending in response to the pressure of the upraised mallet, the banderole is overlapped by the vine tendril's spur-like leaves and petals, and its left and right edges rest upon the capitals of the miniature columns bracketing the lower register. The inscription is thus subtly presented as a fictive artifact, occupying the notional depth of the carved relief surface like the other carved mimetic forms that surround it. Invested with ›objecthood‹ in this way, the banderole and the graphs incised into it, resist characterization as a figuration of ›speech‹, foregrounding instead the inscribed font's origin in stone transformed by skill into an epigraphic monument. As Judith Jesch has insightfully observed:

If the use of the verse implies a spoken performance, the first-person oblique pronoun *me*, the object of the verb of making, must indicate that any speaking is done by an inanimate object, the font itself, rather than any human voice. Or perhaps we should conceptualise the font as writing rather than speaking? The use of several bookhand characters from the English tradition [...] suggests the literate world of written verse rather than the oral world of spoken verse [...] If we take the text at its word, then what we have is a baptismal font speaking

<sup>78</sup> Transrunification, transliteration, and translation quoted from Jesch (note 77), 186.

<sup>79</sup> For further examples of inscribed fonts that name their makers, see Francis Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, London 1908, 107–117 [Ch. 9 »Inscribed Fonts«], et passim.





**Fig. 13** South face of the Bridekirk font; St. Bridget's Church, Bridekirk. Twelfth century, carved stone. (Photo: Michael Garlick / CC BY-SA 2.0; <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/6232668>)

Middle English and writing both Scandinavian runes and English bookhand, telling us about the craftsman, who is mute, but who seems to have illustrated himself in the act of making.<sup>80</sup>

Framed by the rhymed verb pair of »iwrōcte« and »brocte«, the verbal facture of the couplet puts particular emphasis on skilled acts of making; the spatial disposition of the couplet within the banderole further intensifies this resonant rhyme. The careful *ordinatio* of the inscription within the space of the banderole positions the name »Ricarþ« directly above the figure of the male sculptor at work. The name of the carver in the inscription thus doubles as a *titulus* for the figure of the sculptor at work and identifies that figure as an artistic self-portrait.

The past-tense verb forms in the inscription assert that the font was skillfully brought to state of splendid completion by its maker, and yet the figure of the sculptor at work, raising his mallet to strike the chisel held against the stone surface of the font is represented in an uncanny present-tense. Unlike many other medieval depictions of artists, the carver is not shown laboring with materials scaled to his form. Ricarþ is dwarfed by the vegetal ornament he carves. The effect of this play with scale is startling, even audacious. Ricarþ has depicted himself not simply or generically at work, but rather in the process of working upon the very surface of the font before our eyes.

<sup>80</sup> Jesch (note 77), 187.

**Fig. 14** West face of the Bridekirk font; St. Bridget's Church, Bridekirk. Twelfth century, carved stone. (Engraving in George Stephens, *Handbook of the Old-Northern Runic Monuments of Scandinavia and England*, London 1884, 161)



SUBJECT AS YET UNKNOWN.

The artful conjunction of the inscription with the depiction of the artist carving the outsized vegetal ornament invests the small figure with an uncanny quality, as if the human carver has been transformed into an inhabitant of the relief surface. At the same time, however, in the inscribed banderole the font declares itself to be a product of Ricarb's skilled labor. And in a kind of referential feed-back loop, the diminutive figure's fictive chisel, set against the vegetal ornament, acts like a pointing finger. An instance of visual deixis, it parallels the self-referential phrases »made me« and »brought me to this splendour« in the inscription, indicating precisely not only the font's »splendour« but also how it was achieved.

The inscription has the font proclaim its splendid completion thanks to Ricarb's skill in the past tense, yet the completed carving of the font's east face visually presents the artist still actively chiseling stylized vegetal forms out of the stone surface. There is, I would suggest, no unresolved contradiction in this juxtaposition of text and image. Indeed, the epigraphic and pictorial emphasis placed on the artist's transformation of stone into splendid font is part of a larger exploration of transformations and transformative acts sustained across each of the Bridekirk font's carved surfaces.

<sup>81</sup> Pace Doherty, who asserts, »[t]here is no coherent or integrated artistic programme, but rather a collection of visually arresting scenes«: Doherty (note 76), 294. For further stylistic and iconographic discussion of the font's carving, see Josephine Chapman Campbell, »A Study of Stone Sculpture in Cumberland and Westmorland c.1092–1153 within a Historical Context«, Ph.d. Diss., Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh 2008, 105–180.



**Fig. 15** North face of the Bridekirk font; St. Bridget's Church, Bridekirk. Twelfth century, carved stone. (Photo: Michael Garlick / CC BY-SA 2.0 / [geograph.org.uk/p/6232650](https://www.geograph.org.uk/p/6232650); <https://www.geograph.org.uk/p/6232650>)

Profound transformations are the central theme of the font's sculptural program.<sup>81</sup> In the bodies of the affronted hybrid creatures in the top register of the font's east side canine heads transition into curved necks with the curling locks of the lion's mane, that lead, in turn, to prominent wings, whose bands of transverse beading anticipate the beaded segments of the creatures' tails before they terminating in large, stylized leaves. So too, the vine-scroll vegetation immediately above and below the inscribed banderole shifts shape as it curls, sprouting diverse leaves and blooms.

Ricarb's skilled transformation of stone into a variety of vital shape-shifting forms is equally evident in the other faces of the font. It takes on overtly religious salience in the cross on the font's south side, whose left and right arms sprout bifurcated beaded tendrils, that divide and curve back on themselves before they terminate in pairs of leafy palmettes and the curled, rippling forms of stylized acanthus (Fig. 13).

The upper register of the font's west face presents a scene of hybrid struggle: a half human, half leonine figure at the center of the scene grasps, and is grasped by two monstrous creatures (Fig. 14).

The register below has eluded definitive iconographic interpretation.<sup>82</sup> On the left, a full-length figure raises a sword and points toward a second male figure. This

<sup>82</sup> Two proposals concerning this register have been aired: namely, that it depicts the archangel Michael expelling Adam and Eve from Eden or some yet to be identified episode or episodes from the life of St. Bridget, to whom the Bridekirk church was dedicated. Critically reviewing prior scholarship, Doherty has made the most convincing case for the Expulsion identification, noting a suggestive parallel in the twelfth-century *Play of Adam*: Doherty (note 76), 294–296.

facing figure reaches forward with his right arm, whilst holding something (damaged beyond recognition) before his body with his left hand. In the right half of the composition, a veiled female figure kneels and embraces the trunk of a tree, whose branches, towering above her, sprout stylized acanthus leaves and bend under heavy clusters of fruit. The tree's fantastical leaves, interlaced branches, and oversized clusters of fruit characterize it as a work of art rather than nature, or rather as the natural material of stone transformed by the artist's skill.

On the west face of the font, the upper register is dominated by a massive hybrid with two heads, a bifurcated neck, and an over-sized vegetal tail that spirals in upon itself before bursting into flower. In the register below, the font's development of the theme of transformation arguably culminates in the scene of the Baptism of Christ (Fig. 15).

Facing the beholder, Christ is half immersed in the rippling water of the river Jordan as the full-length figure of John the Baptist, in an unusual gesture, reaches out to embrace him by the shoulders. Descending from the right, the dove of the Holy Ghost joins in the sacramental action, its beak and head substituting for the upper vertical bar of Christ's carved halo.

To either side of the figure group, thickets of interwoven vegetation span the height of the lower register, erupting in clusters of fruit whose forms recall the grape cluster grasped by the male figure in the vine-scroll on the parallel, east side of the font. The two densely interlaced trees that bracket the scene of John baptizing Christ cannot be attributed to the Gospels' accounts of Christ's baptism (Mt. 3; Mk. 1; Lk. 3). They belong instead to the fantastic world of flora-become-fauna, and fauna-become-flora that Ricarb carved on each of the font's sides. Framing Christ's Baptism, this stylized, involuted, and interlaced vegetation also links that scene to the other vital transformations that fill each of the Bridekirk font's surfaces. Collectively they resonate with the font's role in the transformation of people into Christians. The grape-like fruit that hangs from the stylized trees on either side of John the Baptist and Christ gloss the rite of baptism's generative power and links the sacrament of initiation to the sacrament of the Eucharist in a fashion that was well-established by the twelfth century.

Just as the preparation of the font and the rite of baptism itself involved words, material substances (the paschal candle, water, oil and chrism), and manual gestures, so too language and material substance were fashioned by the carver's hand into a new, soteriologically transformative whole.<sup>83</sup> The exploration of form in the process of changing and of being changed that is sustained across each carved surface of the Bridekirk font resonates with the font's role in transforming people into Christians. Within the sacramental, supernatural ecology of the font's carvings, the figure of the carver of words and images makes and takes his place. And, as in the rite of

<sup>83</sup> On the preparation of the font and the conduct of the rite of baptism, see C. Coebergh, »Problèmes de l'évolution historique et de la structure littéraire de la >Benedictio fontis< du rit romain«, *Sacris Erudiri* 16 (1965), 260–319; Aden Kumler, »Imitatio Rerum. Sacred Objects in the St. Giles's Hospital Processional«, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 44 (2014), 469–502; Joseph Lupi, »The Development of the Rite of Baptism«, *Melita Theologica* 39 (1988), 1–31; Bryan D. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism. From the New Testament to the Council of Trent*, Aldershot 2006; S. Anita Stauffer, »Fonts. Baptism, Pascha, and Paradise«, *Studia Liturgica* 24 (1994), 58–65.



Baptism, he receives a name, thanks to the inscribed banderole that shelters his labor within and upon the font's surface.

## V.

The rite of baptism combines prepared materials, spoken words and gestures to transform people into Christians. Indeed, many of the sacraments and most of the sacramentals recognized by medieval Christians conjoined words with material substances: not only baptism, but also the Eucharist, extreme unction, ordination, the blessing of palm fronds and the imposition of ashes, the burial rite, the dedication of Churches and the consecration of bells.<sup>84</sup> By prescription and in practice, the adding of words to the world – voiced aloud, but also sometimes manifested in visual form – was a central feature of many medieval Christian rites of transformation.

The import of inscription cannot, however, be understood in exclusively sacred or religious terms in the medieval context. Epigraphic texts, seen and unseen, also worked worldly transformations: redoubling an amorous pledge in words and the functional form of brooch; durably and palpably fixing the ephemeral reach of flood-waters; recasting the spatial situation of a building as a social-political predicament. The use of the grammatical first-person singular in inscriptions invested inanimate objects and monuments with a fictive capacity for language, and by extension sentience. The deployment of deixis in inscribed monuments and objects also granted them the power of (re)organizing relations of time and space. Pointing out, indexing, and marking the situation of »here« and »now«, self-singularizing the inscribed work's presence and address through demonstrative pronouns (e.g., »this«), deictic inscriptions staked out a substantial, semantic, and sometimes subjective standpoint within and upon the world.

Many of these epigraphic devices and their effects invite comparison with the devices and effects of literary fiction. The investing of inanimate objects with grammatical subjecthood by means of inscription extends the personifying gambit of prosopopoeia from the planar surface of the page to the volumetric form of artifacts and monuments. So too, the epigraphic imputation of language, sentience, and affect to certain medieval buildings and objects participates in the fiction of subjectivity we have come to associate with lyric.<sup>85</sup> In the patterned language of verse inscriptions employing deixis and/or the first-person, the distinction of artful literary fiction from artifactual epigraphic fiction would seem difficult, if not impossible to maintain.

If the inscriptions worked into the surfaces of objects and monuments sometimes worked in the mode of fiction to create *as if* effects – as if the object spoke, as if the building sensed, thought and commented – the texts themselves were empirical facts

<sup>84</sup> For further discussion of the role of inscription in the liturgical dedication of churches, see Cécile Treffort, »Une consécration «à la lettre». Place, rôle et autorité des textes inscrits dans la sacralisation de l'église», in: Didier Méhu (ed.), *Mises en scène et mémoires de la consécration d'église dans l'Occident médiéval*, Turnhout 2008, 219–251; Cécile Treffort, »Opus litterarum. L'inscription alphabétique et le rite de consécration de l'église (IXe–XIIe siècle)», *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 53 (2010), 153–181.

<sup>85</sup> On this point, see Kumler (note 15).



in the world: really existing instances of written language available to the senses. The conjunction of epigraphic fact with pictorial fiction amounts to a long-lived tradition that acquired a particularly pointed form in the medieval banderole.

Consistently distinguished from artifactual *rotuli*, banderoles were fictive textual artifacts. At the same time, however, legibly inscribed banderoles acted as formats and material supports for words no less real than those written upon the pages of manuscripts. As Vincent Debiais has observed, »[l]e rapport à la matière ajoute cependant à la pratique épigraphique du support de l'écriture une dimension particulière dans le sens où le rouleau ... employé dans la sculpture ou l'orfèvrerie pour porter la parole est réellement un objet, et non plus sa représentation comme dans le monde.<sup>86</sup> And, unlike the inscribed pages of codices, the vast majority of banderoles were continually visible presences. Unfurled upon a dizzying range of surfaces, they could not be rolled up and stored away from view; only acts of effacement, of iconoclasm, or the cumulative erosive effects of environment and time could remove their words from the world.

The texts worked into the surface of buildings, worn on the body, and that punctuated the cityscape and the landscape ensured that medieval people lived with texts, even if they had never turned the leaves of a manuscript. It is, perhaps, the brevity of so many of these inscriptions that has led modern scholars – epigones of bookishness – to underestimate how visibly and materially the lived environment was also a textual, even a fictionalized environment in the Middle Ages.<sup>87</sup> If numerous epigraphic texts communicated the facts of dates, names, toponyms, and events, the medieval tradition of artfully conjoining text and image, text and object, and text and architecture ensured that the »Verschriftlichung der Welt« in the Middle Ages was never merely a project of transcribing.<sup>88</sup> Epigraphic *verba facta* were always works of textual and material artifice. And numerous medieval inscribed objects, monuments and buildings were also *ficta*: works that reworked the phenomenal world, in the mode of *as if*.

**Funding** Open access funding provided by University of Basel

**Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

<sup>86</sup> Vincent Debiais, »Le chant des formes. L'écriture épigraphie entre matérialité du tracé et transcendance des contenus«, *Revista de poética medieval* 27 (2013), 101–129, here: 117–118.

<sup>87</sup> On epigraphic brevity, see the insightful discussion in Estelle Ingrand-Varenne, »La brièveté des inscriptions médiévales. D'une contrainte à une esthétique«, *Medievalia* 16 (2014), 213–234; Ingrand-Varenne (note 33), 119–143.

<sup>88</sup> See Horst Wenzel, Wilfried Scipel, Gotthart Wunberg (eds.), *Die Verschriftlichung der Welt: Bild, Text und Zahl in der Kultur des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, Wien 2000.

