



Text/Image/Sound

Initials as Entanglements and
Embodiment in the Leiden Psalter
(Leiden, University Library, BPL 76 A)

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RMA Thesis Medieval Studies

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Et verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis (Io 1:14)

Image on cover page: *Beatus-initial (detail of page)*, Leiden Psalter, Leiden, University Library, BPL 76 A, f. 30v.

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Introduction

The visual appearance of script matters. Recently the technology company Apple Inc. has chosen to design a new typeface for their products, replacing their trusted typeface ‘Helvetica Neue’ with ‘San Francisco’. According to typographer Erik Spiekermann, Apple, which is one of the biggest and most fashionable computer technology companies, is ‘really, really behind when it comes to typography’.¹ Although the new typeface hardly makes for an extreme difference in look, the fuss it has caused within the digital community goes to show that typography *matters* in the digital age.

The digital development of typographical design has led to new ideas about the way script is perceived and designed. Our expectations of text are expectations of singular and linear progression. The use of a digital environment to design typefaces allows for (perhaps even encourages) the reshaping and refinement of letterforms that could not have been developed with set type as the basis for typographical design. Design is no longer confined by the physical constraints of industrial printing and restricted by movable type on horizontal baselines and the material inflexibility of metal or wood. The digital has no restraining physical surface or space.² According to typographer Will Hill, this is similar to the medieval design of letters or script. The computer allows for a combined practice of image-making and text-making, similar to how the manuscript page holds no constraints in the design of letters.³ Hill explains that digitally designed typefaces, similar to medieval designed letters, can be seen as image. These ideas, stemming from typographical theory, show us that written text is a fundamentally pictorial medium, reliant on visuality and materiality, and therefore has image-like qualities. Digital developments bring the age-old discussion of the relationship between text and image back into the limelight in an interesting new way. What does the idea of ‘text as image’ mean for the study of art history, and more specifically decorated medieval manuscripts, in the light of the discussion on text-image relations?

Considering written text for its pictorial qualities and seeing it ‘as image’ has far-reaching consequences for traditional ideas on the relationship between text and image. This ongoing

¹ Liz Stinson, ‘Why Apple Abandoned The World’s Most Beloved Typeface’, *Wired*, 09-06-2015, <<http://www.wired.com/2015/06/apple-abandoned-worlds-beloved-typeface/>> [accessed 26-06-2015].

² Will Hill, ‘The Digital Scriptorium. Towards a Pre-Gutenberg Perspective on Contemporary Typographic Practice’, in: *Text and Visuality. Word & Image: Interactions 3*, ed. by M. Heusser et al. (Amsterdam: Rodopi 1999), pp. 229-230.

³ Hill, p. 230.

discussion is hugely significant for the study of art history and theory, and in particular for that of decorated medieval manuscripts. Medieval manuscripts are excellent objects of study for the exploration of the relation between writing and pictures, since they are literally bound together. The two concepts are seen as designating fundamentally different ways of conveying information and meaning on the parchment page. Although the question of text-image dynamics is central to the study of art in manuscripts, the basic distinction between the two frequently remains unquestioned. They are separated easily as the one being primary visual, the other being linguistic in nature. Too often, when the theoretical implications for the discussion of the relations between text and image are explored, images are interpreted ‘as text’. The idea that images are fundamentally linguistic in nature has considerably defined art historical and manuscript research over the last fifty years. In the study of medieval manuscripts, images are seen as subordinate to the textual contents of the book: the pictures convey textual meaning from the manuscript’s contents (as illustrations), just as commentary, glosses, etc.

A reconsideration of the relationship between text and image may lead to interesting conclusions for the study of decorated manuscripts. So far the material, visual, and performative nature of both written text and image have been largely ignored. The reversal of the interpretation of the relation between writing and pictures – i.e. seeing text as image – changes the dynamics and muddles their distinction. This divide is further obscured when regarding a combination of writing and images, with overlapping text-image elements, such as the decorated initials in medieval manuscripts. However, there *is* a distinction: writing and images are different in feel and experience. From this point onward some interesting problems unfold. It raises questions about the workings of script and images as pictorial signifiers: where exactly lies the distinction between text and image if one can be seen as the other, and the other way around? The determination of the distinction between written text and images would lead to a better understanding of the overlap between the two. And how can the inclusion of their visual, material and performative nature lead to a new, holistic, approach to the study of medieval manuscripts and their overlapping features of text and image – in particular of decorated initials?

Central to this master’s thesis is a (re-)consideration of the relationship between written texts and images, and its subsequent application on the case study, i.e. the Leiden Psalter (Leiden, University Library, BPL 76A). It primarily explores some theoretical issues concerning writing and images, their dynamic relation, signifying nature, materiality and performativity. I propose a holistic and inclusive method in the first chapter, which is translated into an analysis of the Leiden Psalter in the second chapter.

The theoretical considerations critically examine the relationship between text and image as systems of signs, with the inclusion of their (often ignored) material nature, and the incorporation of sound, orality and aurality, and performativity. In doing so, I look predominantly at the semiotic theory of Charles S. Peirce and the new materialist ideas of Karen Barad with the inclusion of some other ideas on semiotics, materiality, sound, performativity and object/subject relations.⁴ The two theories, the ideas of Peirce and Barad, are the pillars on which the architrave of my own theoretical ideas rests, on top of which I build the interpretation of the Leiden Psalter as a tympanum.

I have chosen specifically to incorporate semiotic and new materialist theory for the theoretical consideration of text, image and sound, because I believe it can lead to an interesting new interpretational perspective for the study of medieval manuscripts. Semiotics is essential to the discussion of text and image because it allows us to understand how they ‘work’ as signs without erasing their differences. It will be interesting to see whether semiotics, a theory that is very influential in the humanities, still has value in the light of a reconsideration of the relationship between writing and images. New materialism is a quite recently developed theory and one that I hold dear. It not only offers a fresh way of seeing how meaning and objects relate to one another, it pulls the discussion into the wider spectrum of the natural sciences. It understands objects to have autonomy and integrity. I believe it may present an excellent new way of looking at medieval manuscripts.

In this master’s thesis I attempt to provide a modern medievalist framework for the study of writing and images in manuscripts, taking a broad hermeneutic approach. It initiates a new interpretative tool for the study of manuscripts, not only looking at them from one perspective (e.g. investigating it only for their visual nature, such as conveyers of texts, holders of images, etc.), but comprehending them as multidimensional objects. The methodology attempts to redirect the study of the manuscript from acts of reading or looking, to also include acts of hearing, feeling, and performing. I am interested in what this new perspective means for the observer, both the modern scholar (including myself) or viewer, and the medieval reader in relation to the object. Does it reform our way of interacting with the manuscript, and how does the object itself change in this process?

The case study for the implementation of the theoretical consideration is the Leiden Psalter. It is a late twelfth-century English manuscript and one of the top pieces of the special collections at

⁴ For the discussion of the ideas of Peirce, see pp. 18-24. Idem for Barad, pp. 24-30.

the University Library of Leiden. The Leiden Psalter is an exceptionally rich manuscript: all of its 185 folia are decorated, be it with elaborate full-page miniatures or merely with a few penwork line-fillers. It is perhaps most famous for its extraordinary provenance: Saint Louis allegedly learned to read from it. The reason why the Psalter is such an amazing case study for this master's thesis is primarily because it contains over a hundred decorated initials. As explained earlier, the overlapping features of decorated initials challenge traditional ideas on the relationship between writing and images. Apart from theoretical questions about the distinction and overlap between written text and images, and their material and performative nature, this also raises questions about the influence these theoretical considerations have for our understanding of the manuscript as an art object. And are they able to say something about the use and function of the Psalter? The reconsideration of the dynamics of text and image, with the inclusion of materiality and performativity, analysed in the decorated initials of the Leiden Psalter may not only shed light on the multidimensionality of the manuscript, but also on its use and function.

I postulate that the theoretical reconsideration of the relationship between writing and images, determining their distinction and overlap by looking at them holistically as systems of signs with the incorporation of their materials, their performative nature, and sound, will help understand the initials and their place in the entity of the Leiden Psalter. The Psalter does not merely transmit the psalms, prayers, and other textual contents, but is an *embodiment* of religious devotion, sanctity, and literacy. This holistic approach to the study of decorated initials can lead to interesting new ideas about the position and function of the (art) object, in this case the Leiden Psalter as a devotional and educational manuscript, in medieval society. This means that the analysis of the entanglement of the text, image, and sound put forward in the present study is historically and geographically localised. The elements of the manuscript that are highlighted (i.e. text/image/sound in the decorated initials) only relate to one another in specific ways under specific circumstances. The entanglement and embodiment in the Leiden Psalter's initials that I point out is specifically localised in thirteenth- to seventeenth-century Western Europe (although I also include the modern observer). Moreover, whilst the theoretical considerations could apply more generally to the discussion of text, image, and sound, the specific conclusions drawn here have 'materialised' from the interplay between these considerations and the Leiden Psalter as an object of study.

The methodology this master's thesis puts forward in its first chapter is only a preliminary sketch of a full fledged interpretational tool and I acknowledge my shortcomings. Many things deserve more attention or are not included, mostly for the sake of not overcomplicating the text. As Barad would observe, the present study is a 'becoming'.

In short, the master's thesis is divided into two chapters: the first discussing a new theoretical framework for the understanding of the dynamic relation between writing and images, the second translating and implementing this method for the study of the Leiden Psalter and its decorated initials.

The first chapter is subdivided into five main sections. By means of a rather detailed introduction, some traditional perspectives on the dualistic relation between text and image, including medieval thoughts on the matter, are explored. Here I also discuss current ideas on 'text as image', from both students of medieval manuscripts and non-medievalists. Subsequently, I turn to Peirce's semiotic theory in order to get to the core of the problems regarding the 'inner workings' of writing and images. Peirce helps us with the understanding of text and pictures as systems of signs, the way they communicate meaning, and their consequential distinction. The third part of this chapter discusses the theoretical implications of the incorporation of a new materialist understanding of matter through the discussion of Karen Barad's 'agential realism'. I look at how a new materialist perspective affects the view on the relationship between writing and images. In the last part of the first chapter I discuss new ways of interpretation, exploring the relationship between object and observer (or reader). This also includes the matter of sound, the importance of orality and aurality, and of performativity, to the discussion of written text and pictures.

The second chapter consists of three general sections. Initially, the manuscript's codicology, provenance, and academic context are discussed. The running text does not contain all codicological details, which would be tedious; but there is a full description added to this master's thesis. Subsequently, the Leiden Psalter's functions and uses, and their reflection in its materiality are explored. I focus mainly on its function in the practice of medieval prayer and education. The materiality is discussed in the light of the manuscript's script, marginal notes, full-page miniatures, and accompanying sound. The final part of the second chapter provides an analysis of the Leiden Psalter's initials. The decorated initials will be explained in the light of the theoretical considerations of the first chapter. I have chosen three decorated initials of the Leiden Psalter to analyse, incorporating all previously offered information into one concluding interpretation.

Chapter 1

Theoretical considerations of text, image, and sound

The problem of text and image

In his 1973 book *Words and Pictures* (The Hague & Paris: Mouton), art historian and theorist Meyer Schapiro raises the issue of text-image relations in medieval manuscripts. Although the idea of a relation between the word and imagery had been important to art history and manuscript studies before, Schapiro is one of the first to shed light on the problems concerning the dialectical relationship of the two. While the distinction between text and image might seem quite straightforward, it is perhaps one of the most contested notions of art historical theory. Schapiro defines the problem as follows:

The great part of visual art in Europe from late antiquity to the 18th century represents subjects taken from a written text. The painter and sculptor had the task of translating the word – religious, historical, or poetic – into a visual image. [...] That correspondence of word and picture is often problematic and may be surprisingly vague.⁵

In traditional scholarship the relationship between text and image is assumed to be dialectical, that is, two separate and completely different media are involved in a never-ending ‘discussion’, each conveying information in its own distinct ways. Not only do they epitomise two different kinds of representation, they also embody deeply contested cultural values. The difference between image and text appears to be a difference in objects and concepts, seeing and hearing, both passive and active, and poses them to be completely different in representation and modes of experience.⁶ Within the discussion of this notion, text and image are always placed in a dualism where one is perceived as primarily linguistic and the other as fundamentally visual in nature.

⁵ Schapiro 1973, p. 9.

⁶ W. J. T. Mitchell gives an excellent account of this ‘extraordinarily ancient problem in the study of the arts’ in his ‘Word and Image’, in: *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. by Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff, 2nd edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2003), pp. 51-61. He considers ‘the domains of word and image (...) like two countries that speak different languages but have a long history of mutual migration, cultural exchange, and other forms of intercourse’. Mitchell, p. 53.

However, the dialectic is difficult to pinpoint exactly: there is overlap between the two media and there is a lack of precise definition. The overlap between text and image – between the linguistic and the visual – and the distinction where text ends and image begins, is a perpetual and critical discussion within the field of in art theory. It seems that the focus has primarily been on the image-side of the spectrum, following a semiotic-linguistic approach. What does such an approach look like?

The influence of the semiotic perspective on the humanities has been considerable and should not be attributed to one article, theory, or scholar. To provide a basic understanding of this theory, it makes sense to refer to Roland Barthes' approach to images. In Barthes' article 'The Rhetoric of The Image' the linguistic nature of images is emphasised. Images convey a linguistic message that is simultaneously denotational and connotational. An image is read through its visual signs (denotation) and interpreted in a cultural setting (connotation). The picture can be interpreted as a signification or likeness of a certain concept that is in its inner workings revealed to be linguistic. The linguistic message is equivalent to the image's meaning, which in turn is influenced by its denotation and connotation.⁷ This theoretical thinking about the semiotics of the image has found its way to the practical level of art historical analysis. Iconography, the practice of identification and classification of motifs in images, has a similarly semiotic approach to analysing the meaning behind imagery.⁸ In this discussion I would like to focus on the *problematic* notion of the relation between text and image in manuscript studies.

The study of the decoration in medieval manuscripts has been considerably affected by the notion of text-image dialectics. It seems almost traditional now to discuss the relation between word and image in the study of medieval art, specifically in manuscripts.⁹ As Kathryn Rudy states: 'Illuminated manuscripts provide salient opportunities for the study of image-text

⁷ Roland Barthes, 'Rhetoric of the Image', in: *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang 1977), pp. 32-51.

⁸ The study of iconography is a branch of semiotics that has been developed from the nineteenth century up until now, with leading figures as Emile Mâle, Aby Warburg, Erwin Panofsky, and Meyer Schapiro. For a more extended account on the relation between semiotics and iconography, see Hubert Damisch, 'Semiotics and Iconography', in: *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Donald Preziosi (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1998), pp. 234-241.

⁹ For this reason it is impossible for me to give an overview of all 'text-image'-related academic works on medieval manuscripts. I have chosen to use some works that are, in my view, representative for the theoretical ideas about text-image dialectics in manuscript studies.

relationships, since, with few exceptions, the images have a built-in textual context.¹⁰ The multimediality of manuscripts means that text and image are inextricably bound together, quite literally, in one object of study. The academic ideas in manuscript studies concerning words and pictures often primarily consider illustrations that are in direct relation to the text. According to Schapiro, it was the task of the artist to translate text into visual imagery. In effect, images are the pictorial conveyers of text: the written text in the manuscript or another ideation that needed representation – commentary, glosses, et cetera.¹¹ These word-bound images are in constant interplay with the represented text, commentary, symbolism and style of representation.¹² Pictures, however, sometimes also offer stand-alone commentary or witty jokes without direct textual reference. Images can be made to make specific verbal phrasing more visually vivid, even if often taken completely out of context. To quote Lucy Freeman Sandler: ‘Without the words, the visual motifs would be meaningless, but juxtaposed with the text, they function as valuable cues to the words, leading from pictorial reticence to immense verbal riches.’¹³ The images point to a wealth of meaning in the text – a meaning that is lost without one or the other.¹⁴

Images in manuscripts have an important function that is often linked to the relationship between text and image. They can be illustrations, mnemonics, nota-signs, and supplements as critique or commentary to the text. Consequently, the image is always in the service of the text – either in a direct relation or with a similar linguistic foundation that is formed by both denotation and connotation. Michael Camille believed that medieval painting in manuscripts should be understood as a meta-linguistic system. The tension between text and image increases because writing and imaging are distinct acts with separate structures of signification. Text-image dialectics are thus emphasised as a relation between language (a chain of simultaneous divisions and discontinuities defined by differences) and visual representation (defined by resemblance,

¹⁰ Kathryn M. Rudy, ‘Images, Rubrics, and Indulgences on the Eve of the Reformation’, in: *The Authority of the Word. Reflecting on Image and Text in Northern Europe, 1400-1700*, ed. by C. Brusati, K.A.E. Enenkel & W. S. Melion (Leiden & Boston: Brill 2012), p. 443.

¹¹ Schapiro 1973, pp. 9-17.

¹² Schapiro 1973, p. 11.

¹³ Lucy Freeman Sandler, ‘Word Imagery in English Gothic Psalters. The Case of the Vienna Bohun Manuscript (ÖNB, cod. 1826*)’, in: *The Illuminated Psalter: Studies in the Content, Purpose and Placement of its Images*, ed. by F. O. Büttner (Turnhout: Brepols 2004), p. 391.

¹⁴ Freeman Sandler, pp. 387-395.

unsystematic and continuous).¹⁵ However, in concurrence with this current view of text-image dialectics, the relationship is built on a disruptive difference, a mutual incompatibility between two codes that struggle for attention and generate meaning in the process, combined in *one* object.¹⁶

These modern scholarly interpretations deal with an ancient discussion. Its beginnings can be traced back to the distinction between *res*, visual things, and *verba*, words, in classical rhetoric; this had its influence on thinking about the position of the arts throughout the ages. What do we know about the historical context of this discussion at the time decorated manuscripts were made? What were the medieval thoughts about the relationship between text and image? Although the study of classical rhetoric was undoubtedly influential, the importance of the written word in medieval culture should be attributed to the Christian emphasis on text and the visible as a vehicle of revelation: ‘*in principio erat Verbum et Verbum erat apud Deum et Deus erat Verbum*’ (Io. 1:1).¹⁷ This directly relates to how images were perceived. On the eve of the Iconoclastic Dispute of the seventh and eighth centuries, Gregory the Great famously said that pictures are a kind of literature for the uneducated (*pictura est quaedam litteratura illitterato*). This argument has been understood as an early indication that medieval images were a strict form of iconography, pictorial writing.¹⁸ In early medieval thinking on ‘signification’, words were considered as direct signs of the divine Word. Images, however, were signs of signs, a meander to

¹⁵ In linguistics, this definition of language is called syntagm. Michael Camille in his ‘The Book of Signs: Writing and Visual Difference in Gothic Manuscript Illumination’, *Word and Image* 1 (1985) refers to Barthes’ *Elements of Semiology* (trans. by A. Lavers & C. Smith (New York: Hill and Wang 1981), pp. 58-88) and identifies the medieval manuscript with Barthes’ comic strip. Barthes explains: ‘every semiological system has its linguistic admixture. Where there is a visual substance for example, the meaning is confirmed by being duplicated in the linguistic message (which happens in the case of the cinema, advertising, comic strips, press photography, etc) so that at least a part of the iconic message is, in terms of structural relationships, either redundant or taken up by the linguistic system.’

¹⁶ Michael Camille, ‘The Book of Signs’, p. 139.

¹⁷ ‘In the beginning was the one who is called the Word. The Word was with God and was truly God’, Contemporary English Version, John 1:1.

¹⁸ Laura Kendrick, *Animating the Letter: The Figurative Embodiment of Writing from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press 1999), pp. 40-41.

true meaning.¹⁹ There was an acceptance of the didactic value of pictures – in accordance with scholarly views on the intrinsic superiority and unambiguous nature of written text.²⁰

The popularity of decorated manuscripts, however, shows us that these theoretical ideas were in reality not always adhered to. Images in manuscripts often have much more value than a mere didactical purpose. What's more, the overall attitude towards texts and images in the Middle Ages was not stable over time and space. One of the most prominent and remarkable medieval discussions of a dynamic view on text-image dialectics can be found in *Li Bestiare d'amours* of Richard de Fournival.²¹ This bestiary explains that the path to knowledge is memory, which in turn has two gateways: sight and hearing. The path to sight is imagery, or rather the visual (*peinture*), and the path to hearing is speech (*parole*). Both are equal means to gain access to human memory and each cognitively has the same effect. Written text has the quality of *peinture*, but reverts to its nature as *parole* when it is read. Richard de Fournival explains furthermore that text is not purely auditory; it has the quality of image 'because a letter does not exist unless one depicts it'.²² The written text is therefore a pictorial signification for a spoken or heard word. This suggests that writing was aligned with pictures: it was both heard and seen, a signification of sound and an image.

Although it is not my intention to historicise the discussion on text-image dialectic, the last example of *peinture* and *parole* provides us with a perspective that has not been explored by the scholars discussed previously.²³ The relation between text and image is discussed by way of the

¹⁹ Camille 'Book of Signs', pp. 133-135.

²⁰ The idolatry of Christian culture was also often explained with Gregory's argument. Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster (1085-1117) wrote in his *Disputation between a Christian and a Jew* that, 'just as letters are shapes and symbols of spoken words, pictures exist as representations and symbols of writing'. Camille 'Seeing and Reading', p. 32; Gilbert Crispin, *The Works of Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster (Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi, 8)*, ed. by A. S. Abulafia and G. R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, The British Academy 1986).

²¹ Richard de Fournival, *Li Bestiaire d'amours*, ed. by Cesare Segré (Milan: Riccardi 1957), trans. by J. Beer, *Beasts of Love: Richard De Fournival's Bestiaire D'Amour and a Woman's Response* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2003).

²² Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990), pp. 277-278.

²³ See discussion on modern scholarly views of text and image in manuscripts, pp. 10-13.

linguistic ground of the image: image can be considered as text. However, in this approach the visuality and materiality of both image and text are to all intents and purposes ignored. The information presented in a medieval manuscript – with or without images – is always revealed in a *visual* manner. Written text is communicating language in graphic and visual form. The distinction between text and image is muddled where it concerns the visual nature of written text – in other words, the text could also be considered as image. Furthermore, Richard de Fournival reminds us that pictures (in this case written text) are significant as representation of both meaning and sound. The idea of both writing and drawing as representation of the spoken word is essential to the discussion of the materiality of text and image.

Let us turn, for a moment, to the study of experimental typography where the idea of text as image, or at least the consideration of the visuality of text, is fundamental. In *The Visible Word* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press 1994) Johanna Drucker explains that one of the biggest limitations in typography is, that writing has generally been viewed with a focus on relationships of linguistics, rather than on visual and material structure.²⁴ Nevertheless, the practice of typography and graphic design includes making written text seem more than just ‘empty’ writing: logos or brand names are made to express presence, life, and identity. Think for example of graffiti or tattoo-artists, who see writing as a means of imagining and artistry.²⁵ Even more so in the present day: digital technology allows for the modification of typographical design because the production knows no physical constraints (as opposed to the industrial demands of printing) – as is also discussed in the introduction of this thesis.²⁶

This new way of thinking about visual culture has not gone unnoticed in the study of medieval manuscripts, yet it has been much less influential than the semiotic-linguistic approach to text and image. There are a few publications that are noteworthy. According to McKitterick in her ‘Text and Image’, the meaning of letters in manuscripts is determined by their role in word formation.²⁷ As an example, McKitterick refers to the symbolic and religious value of *nomina sacra*, a scribal practice that abbreviates sacred names (for example, *deus* becomes \overline{ds}) as an act of reverence. Furthermore, she observes that written text is a code that is similar to musical notation, because it records and preserves oral delivery. McKitterick introduces the idea of the

²⁴ Drucker, pp. 1-8.

²⁵ Kendrick, pp. 18-21.

²⁶ Hill, pp. 229-230. Introduction, p. 5.

²⁷ Rosamond McKitterick, ‘Text and image in the Carolingian world,’ in: *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, ed. by R. McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990), pp. 304.

visual impact of writing and raises questions about its complexity in medieval manuscripts, but does not elaborate on the theoretical implications. Laura Kendrick takes these ideas one step further, emphasising the bodily nature of writing and its transformative power in her book *Animating the Letter* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press 1999). According to her, written text in the Middle Ages was decorated and designed because it was meant to embody divine presence and inspiration, authorising it by encouraging the illusion ‘(...) of the signifying subject’s continuing presence in (or, later, near) the inscribed text.’²⁸ Decorated letters were animated, brought to life, with the inclusion of images in and around the letter shapes. Kendrick discusses many interesting and relevant ideas. In my opinion, however, she places too much emphasis on the importance of the scribe/author, terms that she uses moreover interchangeably, in the process of the authorisation of writing, suggesting that writing can be considered an embodiment of the divine inspiration of the scribe/author. Jeffrey Hamburger’s *Script as Image* (Louvain: Peeters 2014) and his identically titled forthcoming article also explore the notion of the written word as a form of imagery.²⁹ ‘Within the realm of visual imagery,’ he states, ‘the written word can rise to a form of representation in its own right [...] On the parchment page, the elaborately inscribed and decorated written word could also be seen as a form of imagery.’³⁰ He discusses the ‘iconicity of script’ – following the self-styled iconic turn as established by W. J. T. Mitchell and James Elkins – including its expressive aspects as a visual medium in the Middle Ages.³¹ Hamburger stresses the mutual identification of text and image: ‘text is as much part of the picture as the picture is part of the text’.³² Medieval representations, whether image or text, seek to create effects of presence, yet at the same time insist on their character as signs.³³ Hamburger lays the finger on the problem concerning the theoretical implications of this discussion. Although he only discusses decorated initials as ‘text as image’, he does indicate that writing and pictures are both essentially material and visual: they are also signs.

²⁸ Kendrick, p. 207.

²⁹ Hamburger 2014 and the derived ‘Script as Image’, in: *Oxford Handbook of Latin Paleography*, ed. Frank Coulson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

³⁰ Hamburger forthcoming, p. 2.

³¹ For the iconic turn, see W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology. Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press 1986); James Elkins, *The Domain of Images* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1999).

³² Hamburger forthcoming, p. 38.

³³ Hamburger forthcoming, pp. 41-43.

The reversion of the interpretation of text and image changes the dialectics between the two media and muddles their distinction. This divide is obscured even further when regarding the combination of script and image: decorated initials mostly exemplify the overlapping text-image elements of a manuscript, where the blurred line is clearly present. These aspects of medieval manuscripts provide us with outstanding opportunities to investigate text-image dialectics, or rather the *dynamic interaction* between text and image. The term emphasises the muddled distinction, perhaps even interchangeability, and interactive qualities of the two concepts. I also use this term because it allows for a broad approach; it indicates that the relation between text and image not only involves an interaction between these two concepts (including materiality and visuality), but also ideas about sound and performativity.³⁴ For the understanding of the dynamic relation between text and image I turn to two essential theories, which are the pillars on which my theory and the following case study rest. In previous studies the primary underlying methodology for the discussion of text-image relation has been semiotics, a collection of theories that is undoubtedly important. To understand the overlap between text and image, it is necessary to understand the distinctions between them as systems of signs and separate structures of signification. In both Kendrick's and Hamburger's ideas, the importance of physicality, materiality, and visuality of both text and image are highlighted. They ask for a broader perspective, a holistic approach, to the study of writing and images in medieval manuscripts. I believe that a new materialist ontology is relevant to employ in this discussion, because it offers an inclusive, broad, and innovative approach to the study of objects. In the following sections of this chapter I propose a new theoretical framework for text-image dynamism in medieval manuscripts, discussing and combining a semiotic with a new materialist approach.

A semiotic categorisation of text and image

Let us first have a look at the intricate theory of semiotics, the theory of signs. The overarching idea in semiotic theory is the assumption that humanity is entirely dependent upon signs and

³⁴ The notion of performativity essentially denotes the ability to speak or communicate not only in order to communicate, but also to act or to construct an identity. Initially this only referred to performative speech ('I apologise' or 'I bet'), however later (most notably argued by feminist Judith Butler) this also referred to the construction of identity through the performativity of bodily actions and gestures. In this master's thesis the term performativity will be used in the Butlerean sense, taking into account the notion of 'post-humanist performativity' that is presented by Karen Barad (see pp. 24-27). For Butler's account on performativity and agency, see 'Performative Agency', *Journal of Cultural Economy* 3:2 (2010), 147-161.

systems of signs, and that the functioning of signs is inseparable from human interpretation. Although semiotics might be considered the doctrine of a general theory of signs, there are many varying ideas and theories can be placed under this common denominator. Broadly speaking, semiotics can be described as a study of communication: messages and meaning in all of their forms and in all of their contexts are to be found at its centre.³⁵ Semiotics are therefore essential to the discussion of the issues surrounding text-image dynamism. It considers the way information and meaning is communicated through signs in various ways, offering categorisation and distinction. We have seen above that there exists a muddled distinction between text and image when they are considered as fundamentally visual and material in nature. Yet, written text and pictures are two separate things that differ in modes of experience, understanding, feeling, and interpretation. In medieval manuscripts in particular, where text and image are closely bound, their difference is highlighted *and* they are entangled. This complex paradox of the concepts of text and image being seemingly distinct and yet entwined may be resolved by looking at them as systems of signs. Why do we see them as two different concepts in a dynamic relation? The central question is not *what* the texts or images mean or represent, but *how* they convey these messages. Images and writing have different means of communicating their meaning, which I believe to be central to their distinction. Can we pinpoint this difference in signification by looking at the theory of semiotics?

For the semiotic interpretation of text and image as systems of signs, I will turn to the theory of signs of Charles S. Peirce's 'Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs'.³⁶ Peirce is often considered the 'father' of modern semiotic theory, since he developed an elaborate structure of categorisations for signs. He saw semiotics as 'unlimited' or 'infinite' in principle, and explained that everything around us should be interpreted as a sign.³⁷ Although Peirce's theory has been written well over a hundred years ago, it remains relevant to this day. The categories explored by Peirce are useful both to provide labels for different kinds of signs, and for describing the ontology of signs – their mode of being. Furthermore, Peirce is considered to have a pre-

³⁵ R. E. Innis, 'Introduction', in: *Semiotics. An Introductory Anthology*, ed. by R. E. Innis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1985), pp. vii-xvi.

³⁶ This article is a collation of multiple selections of Peirce's writings on sign theory in his manuscripts. It was first printed in *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 2 vols., ed. by C. Hartshorne & Paul Weiss (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1931). The reprint that is used here is Charles S. Peirce, 'Logic as Semiotics: The Theory of Signs', in: Innis 1985, pp. 4-23.

³⁷ N. Houser, 'Introduction', in: *The essential Peirce. Selected Philosophical Writings*, ed. by N. Houser & C. Kloesel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1992), pp. xxix-xxxv.

linguistic approach to the theory of signs. After the extremely influential writings of Ferdinand de Saussure, semiotics became much more focused on the linguistic basis of the sign. This focus on linguistics in semiotic theory meant that the ‘meaning’ of signs was (intentionally or unintentionally) fused with ‘linguistic meaning’.³⁸ Since the theoretical consideration proposed in this master’s thesis is attempting to reconsider the traditional (linguistic) approach of the relation between text and image, it seems appropriate to discuss this in the light of a theory that has not been heavily influenced by a linguistic point of view.

In Peirce’s sign theory, both writing and pictures can be semiotically explained, since they are signs of a certain kind. The focal point of Peirce’s work is the fundamental triadic nature of signs:

A sign, or *representamen*, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its *object*. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the *ground* of the representamen.³⁹

In other words, a single sign consists of the sign itself (representamen), the sign as the observer perceives it (interpretant), and the idea or general meaning behind the sign (object or ground). The different components of a sign cannot be in mere dyadic relation to each other: all three are needed, in triadic relation, in order for a sign to exist. There might be a representamen without an interpretant, but these signs have no meaning – ‘*thought* is the chief, if not the only, mode of representation.’ This involves the epistemological assumption that reality cannot be known as it is, but only in the form it appears to us as signs: everything exists depending on a system of signs, representations or interpretations.⁴⁰

³⁸ The work of Roland Barthes discussed earlier is a premium example of the influence of linguistics on semiotic theory; see p. 11. For De Saussure and his linguistic semiotics, see Ferdinand de Saussure, ‘The Linguistic Sign’, in: *Semiotics. An Introductory Anthology*, ed. by Innis, pp. 28-46, and *Course in general linguistics*, trans. by Wade Baskin, ed. by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (London: Fontana/Collins 1974).

³⁹ Peirce, p. 5.

⁴⁰ Houser, pp. xxxv-xli. Peirce’s ‘idealism’ was, self-proclaimed, heavily influenced by the transcendental idealism of Kant. For more on this, see Robert Burch, ‘Peirce’s View of the Relationship Between His Own Work and German Idealism’, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2014), <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/peirce/self-contextualization.html>> [accessed 6-6-2015].

Peirce differentiates many kinds of fundamental semantic relations between a sign and its object. In fact, Peirce has created an unfinished system of sixty-six different classifications for signs. For our discussion I focus on the icon-index-symbol trichotomy, in which a sign can be categorised as an *icon*, an *index*, or a *symbol*. Icons represent their objects by similarity, for example images, photographs, diagrams, maps, and even metaphors. Indices signify the existential or physical connection with their objects, for example gestures, demonstratives, or personal pronouns. Symbols signify their objects through rules and conventions, for example language, laws or concepts.⁴¹ To discuss the trichotomy of icon-index-symbol risks reducing Peirce's complex theory; however, it seems that this generalisation is unavoidable in order to keep my theoretical considerations succinct.⁴² How can the concepts of image and text be categorised in Peirce's general trichotomy of signs? Following Peirce's description of his classification of different semantic relations between the sign and its object, it is possible to determine the inner workings of both image and text as signs, i.e. how they communicate meaning in their signifying process. By doing so we may be able to pinpoint the difference between images and texts, and accordingly understand the muddled distinction between the two.

It is generally thought that images can be categorised as icons, which are signs whose representative quality in itself renders them fit to be a representamen. Icons are representamina that are presented through the characteristics of their objects. They are iconic because they represent their object by similarity. This means that images operate by representing at least some qualities of the object and, through these qualities, directly communicate an idea.⁴³ However,

⁴¹ Peirce, p. 8.

⁴² As James Elkins rightfully points out, we have to bear in mind the discrepancy between the 'brief and schematic allusions to Peirce' in art theoretical writing vis-à-vis the tremendous complexity of the doctrines themselves. Although I fully acknowledge the complexity of Peirce's theory of signs, it is practically impossible to include all in this theoretical discussion. Minimising Peirce's theory to the icon-index-symbol triad seems therefore unavoidable if we want to apply it. Although Elkins argues that the abstraction of icon-index-symbol can no longer be named Peirce's theory, in the sense that it has begun to live its own life, I think that the more strict rules and categorisations Peirce uses for this trichotomy are among the foundations of his theory, and that they are still relevant. In practice, the generalisation of the icon-index-symbol trichotomy suits the theoretical exploration of the general concepts of written texts and images perfectly. James Elkins, 'What Does Peirce's Sign System Have to Say to Art History?' *Culture, Theory, and Critique* 44, no. 1 (2003), p. 5, pp. 13-22.

⁴³ Peirce, pp. 10-12.

‘pure icons’, being an immediate representation of the object and an unanalysed total impression without intrusion of human experience and interpretation, can only exist in the mind. This means that images and pictures can never be purely iconic; they need to be a form of index as well. An index refers to its object in its dynamic connection with the individual object on the one hand and the observer on the other hand. Peirce stresses that any form of communication is in fact an index, explaining that there is no sign that can be found devoid of the indexical quality.⁴⁴

The iconicity of images can be stretched in a sense, something that is made clear by Alain-Yves Bois in his article on semiotics and cubism. Picasso had been exploring the elasticity of iconicity and pictorial signs’ different ways of conveying meaning in his work. Although images as iconic signs appeared unfragmented in Picasso’s later work, they were there to demonstrate that their signification is always embedded in a system of signs. According to Bois, Picasso showed that images were polysemous, part of a much more complicated signification process than ‘mere’ Peircean iconicity. Picasso made icons in his work only in an array of structural oppositions, which deny any simple and direct relation with their objects. It is only with respect to their relations with their context that the likeness with the object was construed.⁴⁵ This is one of the reasons why Peirce included mathematical diagrams and functions to explain his notion of icons: they show a direct resemblance to their objects in relation to their context (although the algebraic signs that make them up are not themselves icons).⁴⁶ In other words, a mathematical function, which is built up of algebraic signs that are *not* icons but symbols, is iconic because it directly represents its meaning (or object) as a whole.⁴⁷

But what does this say about the symbolicity of icons, something that is not discussed by Peirce? He assumes that the conveyance of an idea through likeness does not obey any rules of representation or interpretation. The indexical value of an image implies that the image calls for interpretation. Barthes, however, sees how the meaning of images submits to laws of denotation and connotation.⁴⁸ The relation between the representamen and the object, to which Barthes

⁴⁴ Peirce, pp. 12-16.

⁴⁵ Yves-Alain Bois, ‘The Semiology of Cubism,’ in: *Picasso and Braque. A Symposium*, ed. by Lynn Zelevansky (New York: The Museum of Modern Art 1992), p. 177.

⁴⁶ Peirce, p. 12. The use of geometry and algebra is one of the characteristics of phenomenology (notably Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology) and in that sense Peirce should always be seen as belonging to his *Zeitgeist*. For further information see Herbert Spiegelberg, ‘Husserl’s and Peirce’s Phenomenologies: Coincidence or Interaction’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 17, no. 2 (Dec. 1956), pp. 164-185.

⁴⁷ For the definition of symbols, see pp. 22-24.

⁴⁸ For a short explanation of Barthes’ ideas, see p. 11.

refers as the signifier and the signified, is always explained within the context of the interpretation of an observer.⁴⁹ Perhaps this is better termed the ‘reading’ of images by an observer, since Barthes discusses the rhetoric of the image. The denotational and connotational value of icons can be considered symbolicity, that is, images are fundamentally interpreted according to a certain pattern following the rules of representation, communication and association.⁵⁰ Images are generally most like icons, but at times these iconic qualities are only present through the sign’s relation with its context. Yet the pure icon cannot exist in the flesh: icons are signs that are always dependent on interpretation and experience, giving them indexical qualities, and communicating knowledge through rules of representation, making them symbolic.

The categorisation of writing as a system of signs in the trichotomy complicates the matter further. One would think that written text are symbols as Peirce describes them: signs that relate to their object because they always adhere to a general law or rule. Their representative character resides in being a rule. The symbol is therefore connected with its object in a general and abstract sense. Even though symbols’ meaning always abides by laws and is therefore general, however, they also always denote the individual. For example, the word ‘cow’ adheres to various kinds of law (language, grammar) but conveys the meaning of something very specific. Peirce calls these symbols ‘conventional signs’, referring to words, sentences, and concepts that purely exist in the mind.

Writing, however, is a *replica* of symbols. According to Peirce, the word or symbol itself has no existence, but it is present in the fact that its replicas will conform to it: ‘It is a general mode of succession of [...] sounds or representamina of sounds, which becomes a sign only in the fact that a habit, or acquired law, will cause replicas of it to be interpreted as [their] meaning [...]’.⁵¹ The word and its meaning are determined by general rules, but only the word itself can prescribe the qualities of its replica. Consequently, a symbol might be embodied as an index or an icon.⁵² The indexical qualities of an embodiment of symbols seem straightforward: for example,

⁴⁹ The terms ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’ stem from Saussurean semiotics and have permeated through most modern semiotic theory. The terms refer to what Peirce calls the sign or the representamen (the signifier), and the object or ground (that which is signified). De Saussure 1974, pp. 65-67.

⁵⁰ I speak of ‘symbolicity’ as opposed to symbolism, which confusingly suggests the use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities. Symbolicity here refers to a sign’s value as a symbol, in the Peircian sense of the word.

⁵¹ Peirce, p. 16.

⁵² Peirce, pp. 16-19.

words are spoken and consequently are the production of human interaction and interpretation. But can written text as replicas of symbols (in this case ‘words’) be considered iconic? Peirce does not answer this question directly, although he does explain logographic writing as non-logical icons. In the syntax of modern languages, however, these signs have been replaced by phonetic signs. Accordingly, Peirce believes that logographic writing might hold some iconic quality, but modern phonetic writing does not.⁵³

The abstract representation of phonemes in the alphabet is difficult to understand since they have no separate semantic meaning. Phonemes are the units of sound that are basic to all languages that use the alphabetic system.⁵⁴ Logographic scripts, by contrast, represent words as wholes and not just as (collections of) phonetic elements: they carry semantic meaning in themselves (even within different languages, such as the Chinese *hanzi* script which is also understandable for readers of many other Asian languages) and do not need additional contextual signs. Its lack of basic semantic power makes alphabetic script much more complex to learn. In order to read a text one must know how to read the script as well as understand the language in which the text is written. Alphabetic writing formalises the semiotic system, which is useful to those who are literate and can experience and interpret the meaning that the system alludes to.⁵⁵ Written text is thus a representation of a system of signs: symbols that exist only in a general sense and in consistence with rules. The iconicity of written texts should perhaps not be sought in their representational (and pictorial) value, since alphabetical writing does not render the symbols it alludes to in a direct sense. The semantic, perhaps even iconic, value of written text can be found in its indirect representation of the symbols in relation to their *context*, similar to Picasso’s aforementioned example of unfragmented icons and the mathematical functions that fall into the semiotic category of icons. The indexical quality of written text might be explained along the same line as the indexical quality of images. The communication between observer and sign of written text works along the lines of denotation and connotation, with the sign’s object as the crux for understanding its meaning.

⁵³ Peirce, p. 11.

⁵⁴ It should be noted that there is a difference between phonemic and phrastic elements of (logographic) scripts. Phonemes are the units of sound that make up words, sentences, and languages, whereas phrastic elements of sound refer to the *content* of words or sentences. Jack Goody, ‘The Semiotics of Writing’, in: *The Semiotics of Writing: Transdisciplinary Perspectives on the Technology of Writing*, ed. by Patrick John Coppock (Turnhout: Brepols 2001), pp. 63-65.

⁵⁵ Goody, pp. 67-68.

How can Peirce's categorisation of signs help us in identifying the distinction and overlap between text and image? The distinction should not be sought in the vague statement that images are fundamentally iconic and written texts are fundamentally symbolic. They both contain iconicity and symbolicity, and they are also indexical in nature. This only reinforces the muddled distinction between text and image not only in their modes of being but also in their inner workings as signs. The distinction between text and image lies perhaps mostly in the respective directness and indirectness of their communication of meaning. Images convey the idea behind them by similarity, revealing their object, or the signified, in a straightforward and (relatively) universally known way. There is a certain kind of literacy that is involved in the understanding of the meaning of most images, perhaps best described as 'visual literacy'. Similar to the ability to read, which requires instruction, visual literacy is also dependent on education. The indexical workings of images explain how they evoke a denotation and connotation with their observer, and the symbolicity of images steer the interpretation of the observer towards the pattern of societal, representational, or associational rules. Written text has a far more indirect manner of working: it is the replica of a symbol, which in turn refers to its object in a generalised form. There are simply more steps in the signifying process than in that of images' signification. Alphabetic script may be explained to be iconic because it acquires meaning (and semantic power) through the context of words, sentences, and texts. Furthermore, it is indexical because the reading of texts requires human interpretation, denotation, and connotation. However, the meaning of written texts in alphabetic script is not immediately apparent to its observer. It is an abstraction and generalisation that represents language and concepts, but can only be known if the observer is literate and understands the context, i.e. the language that is written.

New materialism: a model to include a sense of materiality

Semiotic theory has proven to be useful for the understanding and differentiation of text and image. However, Peirce's semiotics (as do later semiotic theories) does not include the materiality of signs. Peirce does not acknowledge the existence of the material nature of signs and appears to focus mainly on their ideational aspect. In semiotic theory the arbitrariness of the sign is stressed: according to De Saussure the signifier could be replaced by anything whatsoever as long as it remains functionally distinct. This means that the sign itself, be it material (such as images) or otherwise (as, in a way gestures, speech), effectively has no importance in the signifying process.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ De Saussure 1974, pp. 67-70.

The semiotic system eliminates materiality in the disposability of signs, while paradoxically it is also dependent on it. Without actual signs there is no signification.⁵⁷ Peirce does not go into detail about the materiality of signs (he appears to assume that signs are simply extant), and this semiotic paradox is also apparent in his theory. The importance of the signified (the intangible idea) overshadows the underexposed, but vital, signifier. Both text and image can be considered signs as Peirce describes them, yet it should be remembered that they function as a material presence and play a role that goes beyond representation. The ideational and linguistic assumptions that make up semiotic theory have been critiqued from various different perspectives. I suggest that the current debate called ‘new materialist ontology’ can offer the means to evaluate, reconsider, and supplement the semiotic perspective on the dynamic relationship between text and image.

So what is ‘new materialism’? It is a multitude of (cultural) theories, philosophies, and ideas from many different people from many different backgrounds: from cultural and social studies, as well as from the natural sciences. It goes by many names. The name ‘new materialism’ is meant to be intentionally provocative: the theories are perhaps not so much ‘new’ as they are a rethinking and reconsideration of the ‘old materialism’.⁵⁸ The philosophical perspective of new materialism stems from Spinoza, Deleuze, and many others. It offers not only a new theoretical approach to science but also proposes to be an alternative worldview.⁵⁹ New materialism seeks a monist perspective, devoid of the dominant Cartesian dualisms in the humanities (meaning vs. matter, nature vs. culture), by emancipating matter. New materialists argue that matter in all its forms is *active* rather than passive. Furthermore, it tries to move away from the anthropocentrism that has shaped the modern (dualist) perspective.⁶⁰ New materialism suggests that the human-

⁵⁷ Drucker, pp. 24-25.

⁵⁸ This explained by Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin in the introduction to their *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies. II Cartographies* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press 2012). They explain that new materialism ‘is thus not necessarily opposed to the crude or Historical/Marxist materialist tradition. It is not necessarily different from any other materialist, pragmatic or monist tradition either [...] New materialism says “yes, *and*” to all of these intellectual traditions, traversing them all, creating strings of thought that, in turn, create a remarkably powerful and fresh “rhythm” in academia today.’ Dolphijn & Van Der Tuin, p. 89.

⁵⁹ This definition of new materialism is specifically related to the ‘feminist’ account of these theories. This includes the influential works of Karen Barad (the main focus in this master’s thesis), and the ‘Utrecht School’ of Rosi Braidotti, Rick Dolphijn and Iris Van Der Tuin.

⁶⁰ Dolphijn & Van Der Tuin, pp. 85-86.

centred way of thinking has distorted our strategies of studying the real. Its cultural post-humanism, often referred to as a follow-up of Foucault, strives to see beyond the idea that humans are central to all experience, understanding, and conception.⁶¹ The inclusion of a new materialist perspective on the discussion of the relation between text and image is useful because it offers a model for materiality in a discussion where previously this aspect has been ignored.

To highlight some aspects, I will use Karen Barad's 'agential realism' as most notably discussed in her book *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham & London: Duke University Press 2007). Barad has a background in quantum physics, which considerably influences her writing. Barad's theory is extremely complex, abstract, and can even be vexing at times. She attempts to transpose insights from a quantum level to an understanding of the world in the macro-sense.⁶² The abstraction that takes place in her theory makes it difficult to apply to the study of cultural objects. However, many of her findings are very innovative and propose an interesting understanding for a materially-centred worldview. Moreover, she offers a valid critique of the position of social and linguistic constructivism.

Barad argues that 'language has been granted too much power'.⁶³ She finds that at every 'turn' of the twentieth century (linguistic, semiotic, interpretative, cultural), everything – even materiality – is made into a matter of language or as some form of representation. 'Representationalism', the assumption that there is a dualism between what we perceive and what it represents, is fundamental to many cultural theories: not in the least social constructivism and some linguistic theory, but also, evidently, semiotic theory and deconstructivism.⁶⁴ The latter theories 'call into question the assumed congruity of the signifier and signified, insisting on the intrinsic arbitrariness of the sign or representation, [and] seem to be the ultimate linguistic narcissism'.⁶⁵ According to Barad the view of representationalism displays a deep mistrust in

⁶¹ Karen Barad perhaps best describes the post-humanism and post-anthropocentrism that is central to her new materialist ideas: "We" are not outside observers of the world. Nor are we simply located at particular places *in* the world; rather we are part *of* the world (...)." Karen Barad, 'Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28 (2003), p. 828. See also Rosi Braidotti's discussion of post-humanism in 'Posthuman, All Too Human. Towards a New Process Ontology', *Theory, Culture & Society* 23 (7-8), 197-208.

⁶² Koenraad A. G. Vos, 'What happens when you turn twice? Where the pictorial turn meets the material turn', *The International Journal of Art, Theory and History* (forthcoming 2015), p. 11.

⁶³ Barad 2007, p. 132.

⁶⁴ Barad 2007, pp. 132-133.

⁶⁵ Barad 2007, p. 42.

matter, seeing it as passive and holding it at a distance, because it believes that representations merely serve as a mediating function between knower and known.⁶⁶ The semiotics of Peirce is riddled with representationalist ideas: the very word *representamen*, Peirce's 'sign as it is', explains that a sign is in fact nothing more than a representation of its underlying idea. This not only implies a strong hierarchy between sign and meaning, it undermines the importance of the sign itself. Peirce's signs are only valuable in a signifying process: there needs to be interpretation for the represented idea to present itself through a sign.

Barad refuses the representationalist fixation on words (the represented linguistic idea) and (the representing) things, and instead suggests a relational ontology that is the basis for her agential realism. For an inclusion of materiality in accordance with new materialism, we must look into whether it is feasible to re-interpret Peirce's theory of the sign in the light of Barad's ideas. How does this help us understand the relation between writing and images better? To answer this question, we had best start with a short clarification of Barad's general ideas about the workings of the world.

Agential realism, already mentioned in passing, can be defined as the idea that reality is made up out of agency in a relational and performative sense. The traditional definition of agency is the ability of a thing or person to act in order to produce a particular result. The notion of agency, and the attribution thereof, allows persons and things the power to act and, consequentially, autonomy. Stemming from anthropology, it has become a key concept in the humanities.⁶⁷ Barad attempts to re-work the concept for her relational ontology, first of all by questioning the traditional human-centred notion of agency: "The granting of agency is an ironic notion, no?"⁶⁸ Allow me to explain Barad's train of thought.

For Barad the primary ontological units are phenomena.⁶⁹ These phenomena are in a constant state of agential 'intra-action' and are therefore epistemologically inseparable and

⁶⁶ Barad 2007, p. 133.

⁶⁷ The work *Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1998) by Alfred Gell has been very influential for the model of the term 'agency' in the study of art history. He explains that the term agency allows for a focus on action (intention, causation, result) rather than symbolic value when looking at a work of art. See Vos for an interesting account on various notions of agency in art historical writing.

⁶⁸ Dolphijn & Van Der Tuin, p. 54.

⁶⁹ The term 'phenomenon' understandably prompts association with phenomenology. Although there are undoubtedly phenomenological influences in Barad's work (Barad mentions Maurice Merleau-Ponty's

entangled. This means that agency emerges from *within* the ‘intra-action’, as opposed to the term ‘interaction’, which implies that the agency precedes the interaction.⁷⁰ Agency, according to Barad, is not *attributed* by an external source. It only exists in, and *springs from*, a relation between phenomena. Agency represents an ongoing flow from observer to observed and the other way around; it is distinct in a relational sense and not in an absolute one. Crucially, agency is not inherent to something or someone, it is an action or continuous performance: a ‘doing’ or ‘being’ in its intra-activity.⁷¹ Performativity, in this sense, is the idea that things are created within a performance or ‘doing’. This is similar to Judith Butler’s ideas on performativity; she explained that identity is constructed through bodily actions and gestures.⁷² Barad’s focus on performativity sheds light on the importance of dynamism.

Barad’s performative understanding of agency shifts the focus from (linguistic and representationalist) meaning to ‘discursive practices’, by which she designates the primary semantic units. Discursive practices are ongoing agential intra-actions that determine the boundaries (specific determinacies and, inevitably, corresponding indeterminacies) of phenomena. They *enact* causal structures that determine the boundaries of phenomena and therefore allow specific interpretations of meaning. Because discursive practices are part of the dynamics of ongoing intra-activity, they are never complete or ‘finished’.⁷³ Every phenomenon, including the universe itself, is in a state of constant movement that Barad denotes as a ‘becoming’. This understanding of the world is what Barad calls ‘agential realism’ and ‘post-humanist performativity’.⁷⁴

ideas on the prosthetic enhancement of disabled bodies for her notion of embodiment), new materialism should be considered a separate cultural theory. The main difference between the two can be found in the fundamental post-humanism of new materialism, whereas the human experience is central to the phenomenological view of the world. Barad 2007, pp. 157-158; David Woodruff Smith, ‘Phenomenology’, in: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2014), <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/>> [accessed 4-8-2015].

⁷⁰ Barad 2003, p. 815.

⁷¹ Barad 2007, p. 178.

⁷² For the traditional definition of performativity, see p. 17, note 34. Butler, pp. 147-161.

⁷³ Barad 2007, pp. 148-149.

⁷⁴ Barad 2003, pp. 803-811.

Discursive practices always work in a certain context that is determined by what Barad calls ‘apparatuses’.⁷⁵ Apparatuses are specific physical arrangements that enable and constrain discursive practices and the determining of meaning. Think of the use of a microscope in a laboratory: it allows viewing things microscopically but can never give a full view of an object.⁷⁶ According to Barad, the metaphor of apparatuses should not refer to static laboratory setups, but to a dynamic set of open-ended practices that determine what is included and excluded from mattering. Apparatuses perform an agential cut, because they limit perception.⁷⁷ For example, the human senses can be considered apparatuses, because our view of the world is always constrained by our abilities and (cultural) context.

In an agential realist account, matter is not a fixed substance or an inherent property of abstract, independently existing objects. Matter should be considered as a substance of intra-active becoming: ‘not a thing, but a doing, a congealing of agency.’⁷⁸ Phenomena, in effect, have no inherent boundaries or properties. They are only realised through intra-activity as discursive practices that determine these boundaries and meaning. Matter is the *materialisation* of phenomena, or rather of the intra-activity of meaning-making discursive practices. In other words, *things embody their meaning*. Discursive practices themselves already are material (re-) configurations of the world. This means that materiality is discursive, just as discursive practices are material. Both the material and the discursive are equally entangled in the dynamics of intra-activity.⁷⁹ Consequently, everything exists as an embodiment of its meaning, which has been determined by the agential intra-action with other phenomena, discursive practices, and apparatuses. Everything is a material-discursive phenomenon. What constitutes matter is not an established notion, nor a free-floating ideology, but rather the dynamics of intra-activity in its materiality: this is how matter comes to matter.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ This term, obviously connected with the natural sciences, is adopted from the theories of the physicist-philosopher Niels Bohr, whose ideas have influenced Barad considerably. Barad 2007, pp. 167-168.

⁷⁶ Barad 2003, pp. 819-820.

⁷⁷ Barad 2007, pp. 167-170.

⁷⁸ Barad 2007, p. 151.

⁷⁹ Barad 2007, pp. 151-152.

⁸⁰ Barad 2007, p. 153.

Text and image as entanglements of meaning and matter

The discussion of text and image as distinct abstract concepts may seem inconsistent with the previously discussed theory, since they are always part of a bigger entity, such as a medieval manuscript. Barad explains that apparatuses make agential cuts that produce determinate boundaries and properties of ‘entities’ within phenomena. These phenomena, in principle, are ontologically inseparable as agentially intra-acting components.⁸¹ In other words, it is the apparatus of our perception that separates the different elements in a manuscript in intra-action with it. In a new materialist approach, it seems only useful to speak of written text and pictures in distinct instances and not to speak of them as general categories. However, to analyse and understand the distinction and overlap between text and image in an abstract sense, generalisation is unavoidable. Categorisations are not impossible, as long as it is remembered that phenomena do not have any inherent qualities. The categorisation of written text and image is only useful because these categories offer a generalised encompassment for theorising.⁸² Please be aware, however, that I do not claim that this analysis is generally applicable, and I certainly do not assume that writing and pictures are to be explained outside the (historical) context of their manuscript.

The agential realist notion of materiality means that things are in fact entanglements of matter and meaning. Meaning is not a property of words, ideas and concepts. It is a never-ending performance between phenomena, an intra-action that sets the boundaries and allows for the specific (or non-specific) interpretation of meaning. Something does not *have* meaning, it does not *represent* an idea, but actually *is* meaning. This perspective considers materiality at the centre of being. Consequently, an (art) object should be considered as a process of intra-action that creates and embodies a materialised phenomenon. The becoming of a work of art is not limited to its historical context, its productions and usage: it is an ongoing process that is determined by agential intra-actions with other phenomena, which do not necessarily have to be human.⁸³ The object develops through time, never-ending and in a constant state of flux.

⁸¹ Barad 2007, p. 146-148.

⁸² This categorisation of writing and images is evidently not objective, and leads to an inescapable circular argument. The categories (and their definitions) partly determine how written texts and images are embodied in manuscripts, but simultaneously, they (categories as discursive practices) are also determined by the embodiment of writing and images in manuscripts.

⁸³ Vos, pp. 13-14.

To come back to the discussion of written texts and images: they are entanglements of meaning and matter. Peircean signs are phenomena that are determined, materialised, and made meaningful by their agential intra-action with other phenomena, (human) observers or otherwise. However, meaning (object), matter (the sign itself or representamen) and interpretation (interpretant) should not be separated in a triadic relation in order to explain signification: they are a constant, ongoing intra-activity within phenomena, discursive practices, and apparatuses. In this sense, text and image are dynamic in their reciprocal, as well as internal, relations. The entanglement of material and discursive, meaning and matter, is thus central to the discussion of the fundamental material nature of text and image. The interdependence between written texts and images should be noted. They can exist as separate entities, but they determine each other's workings and meanings. The meanings that they embody are changeable and depend on each intra-action with every phenomenon they come into contact with. Written texts and images are materialisations of their agential intra-action in a performative and post-humanist sense, and therefore entanglements of the material and discursive.

What does this new interpretation mean for the workings of text and image? And how does this contribute to our understanding of their distinction? By taking a new materialist viewpoint, it becomes clear that materiality is not only essential to both written texts and images; it is their very (and only) mode of being. However, the muddled distinction between written texts and images is again emphasised: they are overlapping, interdependent, dynamic, and (sometimes literally) entangled. Despite discarding the triadic nature of writing and images as signs, the difference between text and image that Peirce's semiotics have brought forward is still useful. Written text is an indirect and abstract system of signs, enacting its meaning through an alphabetic system that can only fully be understood with the 'proper' apparatus, i.e. education and literacy. There is a 'correct' way of intra-acting with written text in order to understand it. Images have a much more direct effect on the eye of the observer, their meaning determined by apparatuses that are less dependent on education. However, the ability to 'read' images should not be taken for granted: visual literacy is not only bound to the skill to understand the images' subject matter, but also to seeing and appreciating specific pictorial and stylistic convention. Perhaps it can better be described by stating that the phenomena of writing and images *allow for* a certain interpretation. The determining of meaning through intra-activity should not be limited to the relation between the observer and observed. There is also a mutual determinability between text and image that dictates their materialisation and embodiment. The distinction between the phenomena is muddled, but consequently determines the differentiation between text and image: the two make an agential cut between themselves through their intra-activity as material-

discursive apparatuses. In other words, the distinction between writing and images is apparent because that which is writing is not image, and the other way around.

New ways of interpretation

Barad's agential realism calls into question not only the dualism between things and words, but also the dominant integral distinctions between subject/object, knower/known, and nature/culture. Although Barad focuses specifically on the correlation between nature and culture, I suggest having a close look at the entangled relation between subject and object. This is such an important and influential topic in the study of art, that it is impossible to provide a comprehensive overview here. Before turning to Micheal Fried, whose ideas are prominent in art historical writing, I look at to the notion of agency and the passivity of the object. Although agency is commonly attributed to art objects, they are still considered passive: art objects have significance (and the ability to act) in their being, but only through the grace of an artist or an observer. Put simply, the act of the artist is the creation of the object, but once the object is created it has agency on its own; it acts in order to provoke aesthetic pleasure or infer interpretation, et cetera. The maker (or observer) thus somehow inserts agency into the object.⁸⁴

Fried, however, grants the art object power and autonomy in its relation with the observer: it can either distance or include an observer in its being. Fried's notion of 'absorption' in a work of art is the (very literal) shying away of the depicted figures and scenes in art, paradoxically both excluding and including the observer. It creates a fiction that no one is standing in front of the object, neutralising the presence of the observer, and consequentially *including* the observer in a (seemingly) intimate scene.⁸⁵ The work of art compels the experience of inclusion by consciously excluding the observer. Fried terms the opposite of absorption 'theatricality', where the observer is made purposefully aware of their external position in relation to the work of art.⁸⁶ The power that Fried grants to the art object suggests a dynamic relation between subject and object. However, he still sees the object as passive. For him it is the situation in which the work of art is viewed that makes the relationship between object and observer

⁸⁴ Gell, pp. 12-27, p. 29.

⁸⁵ Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and the Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1980), pp. 107-108.

⁸⁶ Fried, pp. 108-109.

possible. Fried takes a phenomenological perspective to the study of art, emphasising the importance of spectatorship and human experience in the relation between art and observer.⁸⁷

Similar to Fried's ideas, Barad observes that the observer and the (art) object no longer stand in a dualistic relation to each other, but are in a dynamic relation. Accordingly, agency springs from within intra-action, which means that both phenomena are active agents. This means that there is no longer a clear subject/object position in the intra-action: both object and observer have an effect on each other's meaningfulness and therefore influence interpretation. Whereas Fried observes that it is the *situation* that makes the relation between object and observer possible, Barad would suggest that it is the intra-action between object and observer that determines situation. Furthermore, Fried's ideas on subject and object relation imply a pre-existing determinate boundary between the two. In Barad's interpretation subject and object do not pre-exist as such, but emerge from within intra-actions.⁸⁸ Intra-action therefore truly establishes a dynamic relation between object and observer.

The dynamic interpretation shows that texts and images are simultaneously distinct, in their respective directness and indirectness, and entangled in an agential intra-action with one another. This analysis of text-image problematics includes semiotics, visibility and materiality, as well as the specific idea of agential performativity. The discussed relation between subject and object, however, also suggests a 'practical performativity' in the intra-action between observer and art. In the theoretical considerations about text and image I mention the inclusion of orality and aurality, and the importance of sound generally. In order to make this dynamic account of text-image relations fully inclusive, orality and aurality should also be discussed. The inclusion of sound for the understanding of written text and pictures in medieval manuscripts allows us to view the object in its full depth: not only seeing it for its visual and material nature, but adding to the complexity of the object by the incorporation of sound and performativity. If text and image can be considered entanglements of meaning and matter, how does sound come into play? Written texts and images may be explored as embodiment of sound, a materialisation for an oral and aural purpose. Perhaps sound should be a third element in the creation of the object. The theoretical considerations for the inclusion of sound are discussed in this section; the

⁸⁷ In the article 'Notes from the Field: Materiality', *The Art Bulletin*, 95:1 (2013), 10-37, at pp. 15-17, DOI: 10.1080/00043079.2013.10786104, Michael Ann Holly notably places Fried under the denomination 'phenomenology' in her graph on materiality in cultural studies.

⁸⁸ Barad 2007, pp. 88-90.

implications and purpose of sound and prayer in the Leiden Psalter is addressed in the second chapter.⁸⁹

Written text, when spoken, has perhaps the most obvious connection to sound and orality. The status of writing is of a secondary nature, according to semiotic theory. As discussed by Peirce, written text is the replica of symbols: language can be considered a system of symbols. De Saussure distinguishes language into two systems: *langue*, which is language as an abstract and systematic signifying system, and *parole*, which refers to the concrete use of *langue*. *Parole* is commonly referred to as speech, yet De Saussure meant it to denote both the written and the spoken word, because they are both concrete uses of *langue*. According to De Saussure, writing and speech are the same in relation to *langue*.⁹⁰ But what is their relation to each other? According to Jacques Derrida, written text is of a tertiary nature in the signifying process. Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1976) explains that the concept of writing comprehends language, but it does not embody it. Written text is the signifier of a signifier: it refers to the spoken word, which in turn refers to linguistic meaning.⁹¹ However, considering Barad's ideas and the inclusion of materiality in the understanding of written text (and images), this notion should be revisited. The subsidiary nature of written text not only creates a hierarchical idea of signs, signification and representation, it also creates dualism between the material sign and its meaning.

As explained, written text is a phenomenon that materialises through the intra-action with other phenomena, discursive practices, and apparatuses. Written text embodies and evokes spoken (or sung) text in its interaction with the observer. It works similar to musical notation: it is a system of signs that allows for the interpretation of pronunciation, rhythm and silence. It might thus straightforwardly be concluded that sound is a feature of written text that is exposed through specific discursive practices and agential intra-action. However, written text and spoken text are not inherent to one another: there does not need to be writing for a text to be spoken, or the other way around. Sound can also be interpreted as a material-discursive phenomenon (or multiple phenomena) in itself. It is the materialisation of specific intra-actions: it needs a source and a receiver, as well as sound waves, in order to exist. Sound should not be considered as a mere feature of written texts, and writing is not necessarily an embodiment of spoken text. Both

⁸⁹ For the discussion of the practicality of prayer, devotion, and the materiality of the Leiden Psalter, see pp. 46-59.

⁹⁰ De Saussure 1974, pp. 9-10, 14-15.

⁹¹ Derrida, trans. by G. C. Spivak, pp. 6-8.

writing and speaking are materialised phenomena. However, in the context of medieval manuscripts and the recitation of text, writing and speech cannot be considered independent phenomena. The spoken text, the written text, and the observer are separate phenomena but can only exist in intra-action with one another and are therefore fully interdependent. Even if spoken text is not embodied in writing, in the case of medieval manuscripts, it only materialises from the intra-action between the written text and the reader. The practical performing role of the reader is essential to the materialisation of spoken text. In short, sound and text (and reader) are material-discursive phenomena that are not inherent to one another – i.e. they can exist without each other – but are, in the context of a manuscript, fully interdependent in their mutual agential materialisation.

Can images be analysed in a similar manner? It seems to be more complicated, since they do not have a direct connotation to the spoken word or sound. If taken quite literally, sound can be imaged through pictured figures. In the second chapter of this master's thesis some motifs are explained that embody music and musicians, and the invitation of the images to play music that accompanies prayer. One of the discussed initials, for example, contains a depiction of a musician playing a rebec, seemingly inviting a musical interpretation to accompany the psalm.⁹² However, this leaves other imagery unexplained. The notion of image as a phenomenon that embodies its entanglement of matter and discursive practices, materialised through intra-action with other phenomena and apparatuses, has been discussed earlier. Image, similar to written text, allows for interpretation of its meaning. However, to reduce the interpretation to 'mere' visuality and materiality seems not to do justice to the complexity of the workings of images. In fact, looking at images without the consideration of sound as one of its interdependent (though not inherent) properties seems to give an incomplete understanding of the matter.

The voice in painting should perhaps not be interpreted as definitive sound, but more as something like the breath or rhythm with which the images are inscribed. The term 'voice' could be used to mean any number of things. By definition it should refer to the sound of the spoken word; however, it may also refer to sound that is expressed in a work of art but is not necessarily always uttered aloud. It can also encompass the rhythm that is visual in a work of art, through patterns, colour or motifs. An interesting account of sound in painting has been explained by the modern New Zealand artist Colin McCahon. About the work *The Lark's Song (a poem by Matire Kereama)*, 1969, McCahon explains that the poem that features in the painting, which is written in Maori, should be read aloud for its sound. The rhythm and sounds of the words, in a language

⁹² For the discussion of the 'musician's initial' see pp. 68-72.

that was not known by McCahon or most of the observers, are important in themselves and give the painting depth, completeness. The painting would not be whole without its voice.⁹³ The painting's voice, I argue, is apparent in the work even though it is not always spoken. It is tangible in the use of the written word, pattern, colour or motifs. Similar to written text, images thus allow for the interpretation of sound and silence. In this line of thought, images and sound should not be considered as intrinsic features of one another, but rather as phenomena that are interdependent. The performing role of the observer is once again important for the materialisation of sound as a separate phenomenon. In a sense this indicates that images as well as written text are only complete when they are in intra-action with a reader or observer.

Does this mean that the object is not fully materialised when all these phenomena – manuscript, image, text, sound, and reader – are not in intra-action with one another? First of all, the 'completeness' of a phenomenon is an arbitrary notion: phenomena are an intra-active becoming and can therefore never be in a state of completion. Furthermore, the materialisation of a phenomenon to its 'full' potential depends on the kind of intra-action and the function of the object. Manuscript, text, image, sound, etc. are full in their incompleteness: they are separate and non-intrinsic, but fully entangled phenomena in their agential intra-active and performative becoming.

⁹³ R. Butler & L. Simmons, "'The Sound of Painting': Colin McCahon", in: *Art, Word and Image. Two Thousand Years of Visual/Textual Interaction*, ed. J. D. Hunt, D. Lomas & M. Corris (London: Reaktion Books 2010), pp. 339-340.

Chapter 2

The Leiden Psalter and its decorated initials

The Leiden Psalter in its context

MS BPL 76 A in the University Library in Leiden is a late twelfth-century psalter.⁹⁴ The book is not exceedingly large; the parchment folia measure c. 243x177 mm. The manuscript is no longer in its original binding: it was probably rebound in the 17th century in a brown leather binding. The Leiden Psalter numbers 185 folia, almost all of which are lavishly adorned with full-page miniatures, decorated initials and pen decoration. The manuscript's main text is in Latin, but there are some additions in French and Hebrew. The main script is an early Gothic *littera textualis* book hand, which is described in a 1424 inventory at the Burgundian court as '*de grosse lettre encienne*'.⁹⁵ The script is quite large and bulky, which gives the text space a dark appearance. The pages have large margins and in the running text every three or four lines are preceded by a blue or red lombard initial. Every line that does not finish at the edge of the page is filled in with abstract pen decoration. These elements give the page layout an organised and clear look.

The Leiden Psalter consists of roughly three parts, i.e. a calendar (ff. 1r-6v) in which Saints' feast days are recorded, full-page miniatures (ff. 7r-30r) of several Old and New Testament scenes in pairs, and the main part that contains psalms, canticles and prayers (ff. 30v-185r). This is a standard layout for this kind of manuscript. The inclusion of a series of Old and New Testament miniatures before the main text was prevalent in England in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century.⁹⁶ The main part of the manuscript contains several texts: the psalms and canticles, the Athanasian Creed, the litany of the Saints, and prayers. Different from most psalters

⁹⁴ Appended to this master's thesis is a full description of the Leiden Psalter, pp. 83-96.

⁹⁵ For the Burgundian ownership of the Leiden Psalter, see pp. 40-43.

'Item ung autre psautier de grosse lettre encienne, au commencement duquel a dix ystoires, a fermaulx d'argent dorez, couvert d'une chemise de fil ouvré a l'esguille.' Inventory of John II, Duke of Burgundy, 1424, recorded after the death of Margeret of Bavaria. Hanno Wijsman, 'Het psalter van Lodewijk de Heilige: Functie, gebruik en overlevering van een middeleeuws prachthandschrift', in: *Bronnen van kennis: Wetenschap, kunst en cultuur in de collecties van de Leidse Universiteitsbibliotheek*, ed. by Paul Hoftijzer et al. (Leiden 2006), pp. 35-38.

⁹⁶ Martin Kauffman, 'Illustration and ornament', in: *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain. Vol. 2: 1100-1400*, ed. by N. J. Morgan & R. M. Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008), pp. 474-476.

is the inclusion of a short text on ff. 184r-185v, which is an instruction for the use of a book for prayer. It explains that the reciting of the psalms should be conducted in groups of twenty-five, each day of the week apart from Sunday, with accompanying collects to be said after each collection of psalms. This text is written in a different hand; it is a little less neat than the main text, but it is a similar *textualis* bookhand. The text was probably added at a later date, possibly in the thirteenth century, for the instruction of later owners.⁹⁷

A distinction between the various uses of the word ‘psalter’ is useful in the following sections. The word might refer to the Leiden Psalter as a whole, the codicological unit in the manuscript containing the psalms and prayers in the Leiden Psalter, the general idea of a manuscript such as the Leiden Psalter, or the Bible book containing the psalms. When discussing the Leiden Psalter as one manuscript under the term ‘Psalter’, I capitalise the word. The term ‘psalter’ in minuscule refers to the general family of manuscripts the Leiden Psalter is part of. The main part of the Leiden Psalter, containing the psalms and prayers, will only be discussed in these terms, and will not be termed ‘psalter’. Finally, the Bible book will not be addressed as ‘psalter’, but rather as the ‘Book of Psalms’.

In the calendar of the Leiden Psalter, on f. 4r (the month of July) an obit is added stating: ‘Obit[us] henrici, reg[is] Angl[orum] . pat[ris] / d[omi]ni . G[eoffrey]. Ebor[acensis] Arch[ie]pi[scopi] .’ This is one of the few pieces of evidence the manuscript gives us about its patronage and production. Although the addition may seem insignificant, the information it provides is generous.

The obit commemorates the death of Henry II of England (1133-1189), the father of Geoffrey, archbishop of York. This note therefore introduces us to Geoffrey of York (1151-1212), sometimes named ‘Plantagenet’, the first (bastard) son of Henry II. He is the first known owner and presumably the patron of the Leiden Psalter. His life was tumultuous, to say the least. Henry was very ambitious for his first-born son, intending an ecclesiastical career for him. Geoffrey aspired to ecclesiastical high office as well, yet seemingly not wholeheartedly. He was bishop-elect of Lincoln for seven years (1175-1182) without being consecrated, let alone ordained as a priest. This meant that he still had some claim on the throne. However, after Henry’s death, Richard I took the throne, and within days Geoffrey had been named archbishop of York. In September of 1189 Geoffrey was ordained as priest and in 1191 he was finally

⁹⁷ Nigel J. Morgan, ‘Patrons and their Devotions in the Historiated Initials and Full-Page Miniatures of 13th-Century English Psalters’, in: *The Illuminated Psalter: Studies in the Content, Purpose and Placement of its Images*, ed. by F. O. Büttner (Turnhout: Brepols 2004), p. 318.

consecrated. He was archbishop of York until his death in 1212.⁹⁸ The Leiden Psalter was possibly made for the occasion of his appointment as archbishop. It is usually assumed that the manuscript was produced around the same time, c. 1190. Unfortunately the obit does not give us a time frame for the production of the Psalter. It is written in a different hand from the main text and it does not follow the layout of the rest of the calendar. It is clearly an addition of a later date, although it is not certain how much later.

The origin and date of the manuscript in the north of England, c. 1190, is supported by additional analysis. First, the calendar and the litany of the Leiden Psalter contain many typically English saints, for example St. Wilfrid on April 24.⁹⁹ The saints' veneration is based on the traditional Augustinian model of the province of York.¹⁰⁰ Secondly, the style of the decoration and the miniatures in the Psalter is very likely attributable to York artists during the second half of the twelfth century. The images in the manuscript cannot be attributed to any specific artist or group of artists, and there are no other manuscripts attributed to the same painters. The style is similar to a contemporary development in manuscript painting in Durham. The faces of the figures depicted in the miniatures have heavy features; they are modelled using dark colours. The poses appear to be rigid and stiff, yet the fluid depiction of drapery contradicts the stiffness of the figures.¹⁰¹ The style and iconography have been compared with many different manuscripts, among which the Gough Psalter (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Gough lit. 2), as well as with other artefacts, such as the English ciborium in the treasury of St. Maurice d'Agaune.¹⁰²

Although we do not know much about the makers of the Leiden Psalter, it may be possible to draw some conclusions from particulars about book production in England in the twelfth century. It seems clear that the manuscript was made in the latter part of the twelfth century in the York area, given its calendar, style, and iconography. At this time, book production in England was at the beginning of a gradual shift from monastic to secular manufacturing.

⁹⁸ C. Given-Wilson and A. Curteis, *The Royal Bastards of Medieval England* (London & New York 1988²), pp. 103-125.

⁹⁹ For a list of English saints from both the calendar and the litany, see Appendix p. 95.

¹⁰⁰ Nigel J. Morgan, *Early Gothic manuscripts, 1190-1250*, A survey of manuscripts illuminated in the British Isles 4 (London 1982), p. 61 (No. 14).

¹⁰¹ Morgan 1982, p. 61.

¹⁰² Morgan 1982, p. 61; Otto Homburger, 'Früh- und hochmittelalterliche Stücke im Schatz des Augustinerchorherrenstifts von St. Maurice und in der Kathedrale zu Sitten', in: *Frühmittelalterliche Kunst in den Alpenländern, Akten zum 3 internationalen Kongress für Frühmittelalterforschung* (Olten-Lausanne 1954), p. 353, fig. 168.

English book production by monastic scriptoria entered a period of stagnation around 1175, while secular book production increased.¹⁰³ Although the secular book makers may easily be associated with the university towns and lay ownership, it is not unthinkable that lay professionals were working in liturgical book production as well. Small libraries and scriptoria often dominated book manufacturing in cathedral cities such as in York. The book makers, lay and clergy alike, were often mobile and were therefore open to influence from outside their own scriptorium.¹⁰⁴ I assume that the Leiden Psalter was made in such a ‘secular’ production centre in the diocese of York.

The Leiden Psalter was thus made in the diocese of York around 1190 for Archbishop Geoffrey, who was either its patron or the manuscript was gifted to him. The manuscript was very probably intended for private devotion. The size is not appropriate for liturgical use of the Psalter – it is simply too small. The Psalter was in the personal possession of the archbishop, who would perhaps use it for private prayer, or for reading in a group. It is also possible that the Leiden Psalter was kept in the library of the cathedral church and was used for private devotion by other clergy.¹⁰⁵ This is all mere speculation, however, as there is no evidence on how the Leiden Psalter was used or kept at this point in time. However, the manuscript does supply some clues as to its intended use. The liturgical division of the psalms is notable. The psalms are divided into ten groups, the first psalm of each group being highlighted by a big decorated interlace initial.¹⁰⁶ This suggests that the patron wanted a liturgical division in his private devotional book.¹⁰⁷ It is important to investigate the anticipated use of the manuscript in order to understand the book makers and their intended audience. However, the intended use of the book should not be mistaken for its actual use.

Although in many cases the provenance and function of a manuscript is scarcely traceable, the Leiden Psalter has substantial evidence for its exceptional later ownership. The calendar contains

¹⁰³ Rodney M. Thomson, ‘Monastic and cathedral book production’, in: *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. by Morgan & Thomson, pp. 153-156.

¹⁰⁴ Thomson, pp. 158-161.

¹⁰⁵ Nigel J. Morgan, ‘Books for the liturgy and private prayer’, in: *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. by Morgan & Thomson, pp. 291-316.

¹⁰⁶ The liturgical division begins with the psalms 1, 26, 38, 51, 52, 68, 80, 97, 101, and 109. In the Leiden Psalter, they begin respectively on f. 30v, 52r, 65v, 77r, 78r, 90v, 106r, 120v, 122v, and 136r.

¹⁰⁷ F. O. Büttner, ‘Der illuminierte Psalter im Westen,’ in: *The Illuminated Psalter*, ed. by Büttner, pp. 1-8.

another significant obit, that of Alfonso VIII of Castile, who died in October 1214.¹⁰⁸ He was the father of Blanche of Castile (1188-1252), queen of France, the presumed second owner of the Leiden Psalter. Blanche was a known patron of the arts.¹⁰⁹ It is not entirely certain how the manuscript could have passed from Geoffrey to Blanche. It has been suggested that Blanche's husband Louis VIII of France had it brought over the Channel from England in 1216-1217. Geoffrey himself could also have taken it there during his exile in France in the last five years of his life.¹¹⁰ The most striking evidence of provenance in the Psalter itself, however, is an added double inscription in the margins of f. 30v and f. 185r: '*Cist psaultiers fuit mon seigneur/ saint looys qui fu roys du france/ ou quel il aprist en senfance*'.¹¹¹ This suggests that Blanche had given the Psalter to her son Louis IX (1214-1270), more commonly known as Saint Louis, who learned to read from it as a child. These inscriptions are of a later date, probably from the late thirteenth century, and should therefore be taken with a grain of salt. There are several psalters that have been attributed to the ownership of Saint Louis, if only to increase the books' reverence.¹¹² However, considering Blanche of Castile's ownership of the Leiden Psalter and later mentions in inventories of the Burgundian court, it is indeed likely that Louis owned the manuscript. Louis IX was crowned king of France at the age of twelve, in 1226, and reigned until his death in 1270.¹¹³ He is well known for his actions during the seventh and eighth crusades, as well as for the patronage of the arts that stimulated the so-called 'Golden Century of Saint Louis'. He is most known, however, for his religious nature and his absolute devoutness as a Christian.¹¹⁴ His actions as a ruler were inspired by his devotion to the Catholic faith. Only twenty-seven years after his death Louis was declared a saint, and he was the only French king ever to be canonised. The veneration of his

¹⁰⁸ '*Obiit aldefonsus Rex / castelle / [et] toleti .*', f. 5v.

¹⁰⁹ For Blanche of Castile's regency and patronage, which are intrinsically connected, see Babette Hellemans, 'Via pracht naar macht: de herinnering aan moeders en grootmoeders. Het mecenaat van Blanche van Castilië (1188-1252)', *Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis* 23 (2003), pp. 62-82.

¹¹⁰ Wijsman 2006, p. 34.

¹¹¹ On f. 185v the spelling of the inscription is slightly different: '*Cist psaultiers fu mon seignor/ saint looys qui fu roys de france/ ou quel il aprist sanfance*', as well as the addition of another inscription stating: '*qui obiit anno d[omi]ni millesimo ducentesimo septuagesimo*'.

¹¹² Harvey Stahl, *Picturing Kingship. History and Painting in the Psalter of Saint Louis* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press 2008), pp. 13-15.

¹¹³ See Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Gallimard 1996), pp. 923-925, for a chronology of the life of Louis IX.

¹¹⁴ Le Goff, pp. 175-180, 313-315.

sanctity was stimulated by hagiographical texts and depictions – and thus Saint Louis became one of the most important saints of the later Middle Ages. Saint Louis gained a cult following and became a symbol of the French monarchy, and ultimately of French nationhood.¹¹⁵

From the hands of Saint Louis the Leiden Psalter was probably passed on to his youngest daughter Agnes (1260-1325), who married Robert II of Burgundy. In turn, Agnes gave the manuscript to their youngest daughter Jeanne of Burgundy (c. 1293-1348). Having died without daughters, the manuscript remained in the hands of Jeanne's widower, Philip VI of France (c. 1293-1350). Philip remarried in 1350 to Blanche of Navarre (1330-1398), who remained childless. This information about the transmission of the Leiden Psalter in the thirteenth and fourteenth century is based on a codicil added to Blanche's testament, leaving '*le psaltier où monseigneur saint Loys aprint*' to Philip's youngest grandson, Philip the Bold (1342-1404), duke of Burgundy.¹¹⁶ It is clear that Blanche specifically chose to leave it to Philip rather than to another female descendant, for the manuscript stayed in the collection of the Burgundian household. Furthermore, the codicil emphasises the ownership of Saint Louis, which gives the Psalter a very high and even relic-like status. After 1396 the Leiden Psalter is mentioned in several inventories of the Burgundian library: these were recorded after the deaths of John the Fearless (d. 1419), his wife Margaret of Bavaria (d. 1424), and Philip de Good (d. 1467).¹¹⁷ Next, the manuscript is mentioned in the early sixteenth century. It is named in a list of thirty-eight manuscripts that temporarily had been taken from the collection of the dukes of Burgundy. However, this list does not only prove that the manuscript was still in the Burgundian collection. According to Hanno Wijsman, they were listed together as educational material for the young Margaret of Parma (1522-1586). Raised in Brussels, she lived a protected life away from the court of her father, the emperor Charles V (1500-1558). The latter provided her with teaching materials from his

¹¹⁵ M. C. Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis. Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2008), pp. 240-243.

¹¹⁶ '*Item, nous laissons à nostre très chier fils le duc de Bourgogne, le psaltier où monseigneur saint Loys aprint, et fu à madame la grant duchesse Agnès, duchesse de Bourgogne, sa fille, et depuis la duchess Agnès vint a nostre dicte dame la royne Jehanne de Bourgogne, sa fille, et en après a nostre dit seigneur et espoux qui nous le donna, le nous tesmongna, et aussi firent les femmes de la dicte madame la royne qui l[e] nous bailla que c'estoit icellui vraiment. Si desirons qu'il soit à la ligne. Et pour ce prions à nostre dit filz que il le veuille garder et faire tenir a ses successeurs et en sa ligne, pour l'amour de ceulx dont il lest venu.*' Codicil to the testament of Blanche of Navarre, 20 March 1396. Wijsman 2006, pp. 34-35.

¹¹⁷ For the entry in the inventory of Margaret, see p. 37, note 95. The other entries in the Burgundian inventories can be found in Wijsman 2006, pp. 35-38.

library.¹¹⁸ After this, the Leiden Psalter vanishes from the records and only comes back into view when curator Jan van de Bergh gave it to Leiden University Library in 1741. Not only had he been burgomaster of Leiden, he had also been ambassador of the States-General to the Southern Netherlands. He may have acquired the Psalter from the Burgundian library itself and brought it to Leiden where it became BPL 76 A. Eventually it was named after its current residence.¹¹⁹

The Leiden Psalter was not only used for the private devotion of its patron, it also functioned as an educational tool for the small Saint Louis. This is not an uncommon use for psalters. Young children of the higher classes were instructed in the reading of the alphabet, i.e. learning to recognise the shapes of the letters and identifying the sounds they signify. The syllables would often be taught from psalters. This would also instruct children in religious practice, and the psalms were learnt by heart. It should be remembered that educational practice was based on children learning to read a foreign language, namely Latin. The Leiden Psalter has large and clear letterforms, which made it a perfect manuscript for a boy such as Louis to learn from.¹²⁰ The following owners may have used the manuscript in a similar manner; the young members of the Burgundy family could have learned to read Latin by means of this Psalter. We are told that Margaret of Parma benefited from the manuscript in the sixteenth century. It is noticeable that the Leiden Psalter was mainly handed from mother to daughter, which reinforces the fact that education in Latin was not reserved for men. In fact, the mother would often undertake the education of young children.¹²¹ The section 'The Leiden Psalter as object in function and use' will look in depth at the use and function of the Leiden Psalter as a devotional and educational tool.

The Leiden Psalter has generated surprisingly little scholarly interest. It is recorded from the late nineteenth century onwards in both library and exhibition catalogues. These entries are focused on the codicological aspects of the manuscript, giving a short description and explaining its patronage and provenance. The most recent entry is in the catalogue of the 2014-2015 exhibitions for the 800th anniversary of Louis IX's birth across France.¹²² Furthermore, the Psalter

¹¹⁸ Wijsman 2006, pp. 38-39.

¹¹⁹ Wijsman 2006, p. 39.

¹²⁰ Suzanne Reynolds, *Medieval Reading. Grammar, Rhetoric, and the Classical Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996), pp. 7-16.

¹²¹ Reynolds, pp. 7-16.

¹²² *Saint Louis*, Catalogue of an exhibition presented by the Centre des Monuments Nationaux and held at

is mentioned in J. P. Gumbert, *Illustrated Inventory of Medieval Manuscripts* (Hilversum: Verloren 2009), and Nigel Morgan's *Early Gothic manuscripts* (London 1982).¹²³ The Leiden Psalter has one facsimile edition of the miniatures of the manuscript, by H. Omont.¹²⁴ The full-page miniatures, as well as the Beatus-initial on f. 30v, and f. 185r, because of the inscription, have been reproduced. The reproductions are preceded by an introduction, which gives a short description and history of the manuscript. Omont also gives a detailed account of the scenes on the full-page miniatures.¹²⁵ Recently an online reproduction was published by Leiden University Library, which shows the manuscript in full.¹²⁶

The manuscript is referred to, even if only in a footnote, in many different publications. I limit myself in discussing the state of the art of the academic publications to those that are fully devoted to the Leiden Psalter. The earliest article on the Leiden Psalter was by Baron Kervyn de Lettenhove in the *Bulletin de l'Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, published in 1865. The article concentrates on the ownership of Saint Louis and the marginal notes in the psalter texts, which according to the author were written by Louis himself. However, Kervyn de Lettenhove does not support this claim with any convincing evidence. After a discussion of the notes, he concludes that the Leiden Psalter retains the private devotion and prayer of Saint Louis. The manuscript provides direct access to the most intimate devotion of the saint.¹²⁷

In Léopold Delisle's discussion of the Leiden Psalter, in his *Mélanges de paléographie et de bibliographie* (Paris 1880), he examines the textual contents of the manuscript, based on the 1852

the Conciergerie, Paris, October 8, 2014 - January 11, 2015, ed. by Pierre-Yves Le Programme and Christine Vivet (Paris: Centre des Monuments Nationaux - Éditions du Patrimoine 2014), pp. 144 (ill. 110), 147, 217 (cat. 40). The events included five exhibitions in total: the primary exhibition at the Conciergerie in Paris, and four others in the town of d'Aigües-Mortes, the castle of Castelnau-Bretenoux, the castle of Angers, and the basilica of Saint Denis in Paris.

¹²³ Gumbert, p. 42, no. 01159; Morgan 1982, no. 14.

¹²⁴ H. Omont, *Miniatures du psautier de S. Louis, manuscrit lat. 76a de la Bibliothèque de l'Université de Leyde* (Leiden 1902).

¹²⁵ Omont, pp. i-xi.

¹²⁶ 'BPL 76 A', *Digital Sources, Universiteit Leiden*, <https://socrates.leidenuniv.nl/R/-?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=3185151> [accessed 24-01-2014].

¹²⁷ Baron Kervyn de Lettenhove, 'Le psautier de Saint Louis, conservé dans la Bibliothèque de l'Université de Leyde', pp. 296-304.

catalogue entry by Jacques Geel.¹²⁸ He confuses the manuscript with another psalter owned by Saint Louis, which was listed in an inventory drafted after the death of Emperor Charles V. Although we know that Charles V owned the Leiden Psalter, this inventory also lists a different manuscript with a similar provenance and appearance.¹²⁹ Delisle returns to the Leiden Psalter in his article 'Psautier de Saint Louis d'origine Anglaise', in *Notice de douze livres royaux du XIIIe et du XIVe siècle* (Paris 1902). It focuses on the codicology of the manuscript, carefully listing its most notable features. Prominent is the list of scenes in the full-page miniatures, which is adopted by Omont, Morgan, and myself in the appended description of the Psalter. Delisle gives an account of the manuscript that might best be described as an extensive catalogue entry.¹³⁰

After Delisle's publications, nothing was written specifically on the Leiden Psalter until Hanno Wijsman's short article 'Het psalter van Lodewijk de Heilige' in Leiden University Library's Bulletin of 2004.¹³¹ Wijsman has written an article carrying the same title in *Bronnen van kennis*, a book on the Special Collections in Leiden in 2006. This article has been extensively used for the introduction to the Leiden Psalter of my master's thesis, since it is the most thorough investigation on the provenance of the manuscript. Wijsman concludes that the Psalter was most significantly used for educational practices. The Leiden Psalter would have been perfect for reading lessons to young aristocratic children, both boys and girls, because of its large letters and the considerable amount of decoration. He also emphasises the symbolic value and the prestige connected to the manuscript, not only because of its richness but also the relic-like status of the book due to its previous saintly owner, Saint Louis.¹³²

Considering its exceptional richness, history and provenance, it is clear that the Leiden Psalter is an under-studied manuscript. However, the manuscript gradually is receiving more interest by the academic community. In the spring of 2015 Emma Luker, graduate student at the Courtauld Institute, defended her PhD thesis 'The Leiden Psalter: Patronage, Production and Ownership'. As the title suggests, the thesis is focused on the manuscript's patronage, production

¹²⁸ Jacques Geel, *Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum qui inde ab anno 1741 Bibliothecae Lugduno Batavae accesserunt* (Leiden: Lugduni Batavorum 1852), p. 78 (no. 318).

¹²⁹ Delisle 1880, pp. 167-172.

¹³⁰ Delisle 1902, pp. 19-26, 100-101, pls. iv-vii.

¹³¹ Hanno Wijsman, 'Het psalter van Lodewijk de Heilige', in: *Omslag. Bulletin van de Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden en het Scaliger Instituut*, 01 (2004), pp. 8-10.

¹³² Wijsman 2006, 38-39.

and ownership.¹³³ I hope that this master's thesis will also be a small contribution to the study of the Leiden Psalter.

The Leiden Psalter as object: function, use, and materiality

The medieval psalter is very difficult to define as one particular type of book, since it varies very much in its appearance and function. In his *Les psautiers manuscrits latins des bibliothèques publiques de France* (Mâcon 1940-41), Victor Leroquais observes that: 'Sous le nom de psautier, le moyen âge nous a légué une collection de manuscrits singulièrement complexe, bariolée et pittoresque à souhait.'¹³⁴ There is, however, one thing that medieval psalters have in common: they contain at least a few psalms, if not all, and are therefore fundamentally religious books. Nevertheless, the function of the medieval psalter changes over time and space, adjusting to new historical and cultural contexts, and to the needs of the owners.¹³⁵

The function of the Leiden Psalter can straightforwardly be characterised as devotional and educational. The intended function of the Psalter was private devotion, and it may be safely assumed that it was also meant as an object of prestige. In its later provenance the manuscript acquired the function of a book for education. The Psalter was not originally intended to be an educational tool, but this clearly shows that the manuscript is subject to constant interpretational change. The continuous reinterpretation of the book is reflected in and influenced by its use. The use and function of the manuscript is thus not a stable factor that is predetermined, but changes with its changing cultural, historical, and religious context. The Leiden Psalter is a case in point. It should not be interpreted as an object solely for private devotion; throughout its existence it has been interpreted and has fulfilled functions in a variety of different ways.¹³⁶ Perhaps the function of the Psalter may be equated with its very being: the manuscript *embodies* (at any moment in time) what it is used for. To understand the multiplicity of functions and meanings that are embodied in the Leiden Psalter, it is useful to discuss the use of the manuscript in private devotion, as an object of prestige and sanctity, and as an educational tool.

¹³³ E-mail conversation with Emma Luker (19 March 2015).

¹³⁴ Leroquais, p. xli.

¹³⁵ Leroquais, pp. xl-xliv.

¹³⁶ Cf. L. M. J. Delaissé, 'Towards a history of the medieval book' in: *Codicologica 1: Théories et principes*, ed. by A. Gruys & J. P. Gumbert (Leiden: Brill 1976), pp. 75-83.

The practice of prayer in the Middle Ages is something that is simultaneously ethereal and ordinary, a daily activity embedded in cultural, religious, and social contexts. It should be acknowledged that discussing the medieval practice of prayer and devotion is problematic. Not only is it impossible to fully grasp the experience of those living in another religious culture, it is also important not to mistake practices of prayer for the experience of prayer. Experience cannot be readily understood. Practice is more easily known, since it is often collective, public, and is produced over time and space.¹³⁷

The practice of prayer is extremely important for the understanding of the Middle Ages, let alone for that of medieval books for prayer such as the Leiden Psalter. Prayer is a means to express belief, doctrine, religion, and identity. It is a practice that involves communication, experience, performance, act, rite, and text. In a very basic sense, prayer is a conversation between the devotee and a higher being (God or a saint) with the goal of sustaining a reciprocal relationship with the sacred. In exchange for devotion and praise, devotees ask for assistance in this life and salvation in the life to come.¹³⁸ According to Virginia Reinburg the essential nature of the medieval practice of prayer consists of two ideas: ‘prayer was speech, and prayer was rite.’ Reinburg consequently states that ‘[w]ords and rites of prayer were at the same time collective and individual. Prayer could be personal, private, and even solitary. But the act of prayer was saturated with meanings created by family, community, church, and custom.’¹³⁹

The psalms are a set of conversations between the psalmist and God. The psalmist often speaks directly to God and at times God replies. Manuscripts such as psalters, books of hours, breviaries and prayer books are an aid for prayer.¹⁴⁰ These types of manuscripts were adapted from liturgical books to the needs of lay people’s private devotion. Psalters were initially books that were only used during the liturgy and later became popular among lay owners.¹⁴¹ The Leiden Psalter is relatively small, lavishly decorated, and easily readable because of its large lettersize,

¹³⁷ Virginia Reinburg, *French Books of Hours. Making an Archive of Prayer, ca. 1400-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2012), pp. 136-137.

¹³⁸ Reinburg, pp. 139-140.

¹³⁹ Reinburg, p. 140.

¹⁴⁰ The distinction between various devotional manuscripts can be muddled. It can be found in the structure of the texts (breviaries and books of hours are structured according to the daily hours), the amount of decoration, the intended function and use of the book, the original owners, etc. A psalter can be identified because it commonly contains a calendar, the psalms, canticles and litany of saints. However, there are many different kinds of psalters. Cf. Leroquais, p. lxiii-lxxi.

¹⁴¹ Leroquais, pp. li-lxii.

which indicates that it was intended to be used by one person or a small group of people. The reciting of the psalms and prayers for private devotion may be interpreted as liturgical ritual on a small scale. Psalters owned by laity were intended to be read, or to follow the chanting or reciting of the psalmody during the daily office in church or in a private chapel. Private prayer was also a matter of individual meditation, rather than of the collective worship of liturgical practice.¹⁴² When the reader of the psalms utters the words that are written on the page, they take on the role of the psalmist. The conversation with God becomes a dialogue that may be in the form of praise, lament, confession, song, hymn, etc.¹⁴³ The reading of the psalms was not limited to uttering the words: often the psalmody was chanted or sung. The act of prayer also involved a certain form of ritual. Reinburg explains that ‘to consider prayer as a rite means addressing how practices of prayer encompass gesture, posture, and the disposition of the body in space’.¹⁴⁴ Rites are made up of both language and bodily movements. The practice of prayer essentially involves performativity; prayer was a bodily practice. A primary example would be the kneeling at an altar, but the act of touching or kissing a manuscript is also not uncommon.¹⁴⁵ In fact, the very handling of the manuscript might be considered as a rite of prayer: not only the holding of the psalter but also flipping the pages implies interacting with its contents.

The performativity involved in prayer can be interpreted as something very practical using gestures and movements, as Reinburg suggests. However, the performative nature of prayer also refers to the intra-action between subject and object – reader and manuscript, devotee and sacred; a dynamic relation that blurs the line between subject and object in their mutual determination. The performative account of agency adds a layer of depth to the idea of ‘prayer as rite’; the enactment of devotion is the production of religion itself. The psalter embodies religion: it materialises the immaterial. The abstraction of religious concepts is made visible in the psalter.¹⁴⁶ The manuscript is initially produced with the intention of devotion. Religion, God, saints, heaven, the unreachable, are depicted and put forward in its contents. However, the intra-action with the reader is possibly more important in the materialisation of these abstractions: there is no devotion without a devotee. The Leiden Psalter is an embodiment of the devotion of

¹⁴² Morgan 2004, pp. 318-319.

¹⁴³ Reinburg, pp. 140-149.

¹⁴⁴ Reinburg, p. 162.

¹⁴⁵ Reinburg, pp. 162-171.

¹⁴⁶ Freeman Sandler, pp. 388-390.

the reader. Devotional manuscripts were often considered sacred in themselves, sometimes even without being used or touched: they can contain sanctity purely through existing.¹⁴⁷

The sanctity of a manuscript is also emphasised in its status as a relic. It seems only fitting to focus on the Leiden Psalter for a moment. Since the Psalter has been owned by Saint Louis, one of the most popular saints in the late Middle Ages, it gained a relic-like status. The double inscription on the first and last folium of the manuscript's unit of psalms, canticles and prayers, proclaiming that Saint Louis learned to read from the Leiden Psalter, was probably written during or shortly after Louis' canonisation process in the late thirteenth century. Whether this is actually true does not matter. The inscription served the purpose of supplying the manuscript with a certain status. It was not just owned by a saint, he even learned to read from this Psalter: an important moment in a small child's life and presumably his first contact with a sacred text. The description of the manuscript in Blanche of Navarre's testament suggests that the Leiden Psalter had indeed gained an almost relic-like status.¹⁴⁸ The Psalter is thus not only an embodiment of religion in an abstract sense, it also provides the materialisation of the sainthood of Louis: it is a precious object because of its unique provenance. The writing of the inscription has left a trace of the holiness of Saint Louis and therefore gives the entire manuscript a high status. The Psalter has been touched and used by a saint, which gives it a powerful living presence; the inscription may be interpreted as a trace that conserves and mythologises that presence.¹⁴⁹ In fact, the authority of Saint Louis is still tangible: there is something special about seeing and touching a manuscript that is a saint, even without religious importance or experience.

The sanctity of the Psalter magnifies the book as an indicator of status, sophistication, wealth, and identity. The manuscript's relic-like status came only later, through its provenance. However, initially the Psalter must also have been an object of prestige, not only referring to religious wealth but also to financial wellbeing. It is a high-quality manuscript that it must have been an expensive commission. The Leiden Psalter was intended to be an object of prestige as well as devotion. Its saintly provenance ensures that the manuscript is more than just a Psalter; it is a relic, a monument of religion, of wealth and status.¹⁵⁰

As discussed earlier, the Leiden Psalter was used as an educational tool for young children, from the ownership of Saint Louis onwards to his later lineage in the Burgundy family.

¹⁴⁷ Reinburg, pp. 76-83.

¹⁴⁸ For the provenance and use of the Leiden Psalter, see pp. 40-43.

¹⁴⁹ Kendrick, pp. 14-18.

¹⁵⁰ Morgan 2004, pp. 309-319.

The psalter was used in a child's instruction to understand the letters of the alphabet and syllables, learning from their family or clergy. Presumably, children of the high nobility did not go to an ecclesiastical school; they were taught privately, often from mother to child.¹⁵¹ Private devotional books such as the psalters of the upper class stimulated literacy amongst lay people. According to Reinburg, private devotional books served as a primer for literacy.¹⁵² Reading did not just entail the knowledge of alphabetic writing and the accompanying syllables and phonetics, it also included knowledge and understanding of the text, specifically enacting prayer. Furthermore, learning how to read from a psalter involved active interaction with one of the most important religious texts in the Middle Ages. This means that children would not only learn how to read alphabetic writing, they would also be instructed in the understanding of religious texts, the practice of prayer, and the images that accompany the texts in the Psalter.

The Leiden Psalter is thus a multifaceted object and embodies diverse functions. Devotion, sanctity and literacy are important in the use of the manuscript. How are these functions and uses reflected in the materiality of the object? And does the Psalter's intended function (as a devotional object) correspond to the evidence we have for its actual use? To answer these questions we take a closer look at the materiality of the Psalter. I focus specifically on the manuscript's writing and images.

The Psalter consists of many different material elements – parchment, writing, images, binding – forming one coherent functional object. Nearly every folium of the manuscript contains either text or image; more often than not they contain both or, as explained in the first chapter, an intertwining of the two. Before examining the matter of text-image-sound entanglement further, in an analysis of some initials of the Leiden Psalter, I would like to focus on the uses of the general text, images and sound in the Leiden Psalter and how they perform in the bigger entity of the manuscript. Writing and pictures always work in specific contexts, where they contribute to a larger process of cultural signification, as well as function in the microcosm of the manuscript itself.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Reynolds, pp. 7-16.

¹⁵² Reinburg, pp. 127-128.

¹⁵³ Veerle Fraeters & Jürgen Pieters, 'The Mediating Power of Images and Texts: The Dynamics of Sight and Insight in Medieval and Early Modern Literature and Art', in: *Speaking to the Eye: Sight and Insight through Text and Image (1150-1650)*, ed. by Thérèse de Hemptinne et al., MISC 2 (Turnhout: Brepols 2013), 1-14, pp. 11-12.

The Leiden Psalter's main texts are the psalms, canticles, the Athanasian Creed, the litany of the saints, and prayers. Apart from this, there is a calendar containing the feast days of saints, and an added instruction for the use of the Psalter. In line with the explanation of the practicality of prayer in the previous section, the manuscript was probably used for devotion in the sphere of the daily office in a church or a private chapel. The Leiden Psalter contains a unique plan for the reading of the Psalter texts, in which it is laid out which psalms were to be read for the various parts of the divine office and daily prayer.¹⁵⁴ The psalms and prayers were not ordered specifically for the use of devotion; they lack an explicit structure for reading and meditation. Presumably, the Psalter was used for reading individual psalms or groups of psalms such as the Gradual Psalms, rather than specific psalms allotted to the daily offices.¹⁵⁵ Since the instruction for use in the Leiden Psalter was added in the thirteenth century, probably after it came into the possession of Saint Louis, previously it must have been used in its originally 'unstructured' fashion. The psalm texts are structured according to general liturgical divisions, starting at psalms 1, 26, 38, 51, 52, 68, 80, 97, 101, and 109. Large decorated initials indicate these divisions.¹⁵⁶ A clear structure for daily devotion was not necessary for Geoffrey Plantagenet, since he was educated in liturgical and religious practice and presumably knew the psalms and prayers by heart.

The use of many different colours as display scripts in the Leiden Psalter's calendar and texts is a distinctive feature. The use of colour is the essence of display script. Different colours of ink, each representing an important feature of the month, structure the calendar. The numbers of the days are written in blue and the names of the saints are written in different colours, their first letters alternating between red and blue. This is sometimes interspersed with first letters or whole names in green. Furthermore, each segment of two or three lines in the main texts begin with a small Lombard initial, alternating between red and blue with contrasting red and blue pen decoration. Although the coloured letters give structure to the text, they do not stand out particularly. It is safe to assume that they are not meant for highlighting these passages.¹⁵⁷ The letters form a string in the fabric of decoration in the manuscript, where the colour amplifies and mystifies their existence.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ For additional information on the added instruction, see Appendix, pp. 92-93.

¹⁵⁵ Morgan 2004, pp. 317-319.

¹⁵⁶ For a full list of the Psalter's initials, see Appendix, pp. 86-87. Two large initials are discussed in the analysis, see Case I, pp. 64-68, and Case II, pp. 68-72.

¹⁵⁷ Hamburger 2014, pp. 24-26.

¹⁵⁸ According to Jean-Claude Schmitt in his 'La pluralité interprétative: entre textes et images', in: *La pluralité interprétative. Fondements historiques et cognitifs de la notion de point de vue*, ed. by Alain Berthoz, Carlo

The script of the main texts in the Leiden Psalter, a *littera textualis* book hand, is large and easily readable.¹⁵⁹ The regular and stately look of the *textualis* made it a preferred script for psalters. Its solemn proportions give the manuscript page an orderly layout, make the text easily readable, and attest to the wealth of the owner. The use of a large *textualis* means that less text fits onto the page and therefore more parchment is necessary, which indicates a more expensive and therefore more impressive book. It indicates at one glance what worth was attached to the book by its patron and owners. Furthermore, the text is ideal for a child's instruction in reading because it is easily readable.¹⁶⁰ Children were not only taught that the letterforms were indicators of sounds and syllables, they were also instructed in the recognition of punctuation to convey rhythm. In the Leiden Psalter the *positurae* punctuation system is used, which consists of various symbols that indicate pauses of different length.¹⁶¹ Punctuation signifies the silences that are required to distinguish and form part of spoken text. It forms an interesting relation with written letters, since it is part of the system of writing and has a similar indistinct manner of signification, yet in the practice of speaking punctuation and letters form a dynamic opposition. The relation between sound and silence (while reading a text aloud) might best be described as a mutually determinable agential intra-action, which seemingly stems from the same pictorial source, namely (alphabetic) writing. Writing as a system of signs does thus not only signify sound, but also indicates silence. It creates an intricate relation between written text as made up of signs, connected to spoken text as determinate sound and silence. Although I am not able to elaborate on this idea, it most definitely deserves more attention in future considerations.

Written text in the Leiden Psalter is not limited to the main texts of the manuscript. There are many marginal notes that may reveal information about the use of the Leiden Psalter, both as an educational tool and in private devotion. Most marginal notes appear to be additions to the psalms and prayers for the practice of reciting the texts.¹⁶² Most notable, but perhaps also most debatable, are graphite inscriptions in some of the left and right margins of the Psalter. There are

Ossola and Brian Stock (Paris: 2010) < <http://books.openedition.org/cdf/1442> > [accessed 13-08-2015], we should always consider each element of a manuscript as a strand in the complete fabric of the object.

¹⁵⁹ For a more extensive discussion on the Psalter's script and writing practice, see Appendix, pp. 90-91.

¹⁶⁰ Bernard Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990), pp. 135-136.

¹⁶¹ Raymond Clemens & Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2007), pp. 84-85.

¹⁶² For a short explanation of one of such added marginal notes, see pp. 72-75.

a few drawings or doodles, some seeming mere scratches, which often have a childlike quality. It reminds one of child's play, scribbling and drawing in the margins of the manuscript. On f. 32v, for example, the drawing appears to be as though the doodler attempted to recreate the decorated initial on the page (see image 1). On f. 178v childlike scratches are clearly visible (see image 2). Furthermore, there are many graphite letters next to initials, as if the writer was trying to recreate the letterforms. On f. 153r the initial 'B' is recreated in the left margin, with next to it the outlines of the letter 'a', the third letter of the word 'Beati', which is the first word of this particular psalm (see image 3). In the right margin there is a scratchy doodle, also in graphite. The

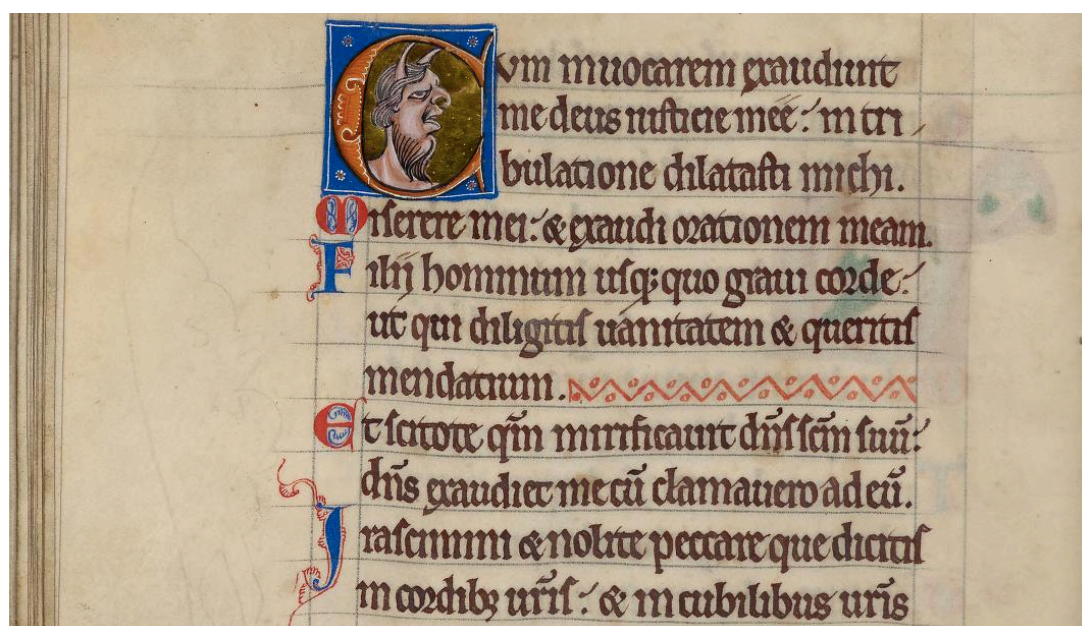


Image 1: Marginal drawing in graphite, Leiden Psalter, Leiden, University Library, MS. BPL 76 A, f. 32v.

graphite letters seem to have a childlike quality of writing as well.¹⁶³ It is unclear when these additions were made; it might well be the case that they are not medieval. Nevertheless, the Leiden Psalter has probably served as an educational manuscript until at least the sixteenth century. It may be the case that a pupil was allowed to practice his or her writing in the margins of the Psalter. But perhaps the inscriptions were made later by a disrespectful Leiden student

¹⁶³ The letters next to the initial are probably not written as instruction for the miniaturist: they are not consequent throughout the manuscript and there appear to be instructions written in full (although these are no longer readable). See Appendix, pp. 92-94.

who was attempting to learn how to write (or read) the *textualis* script. These are merely speculations.¹⁶⁴

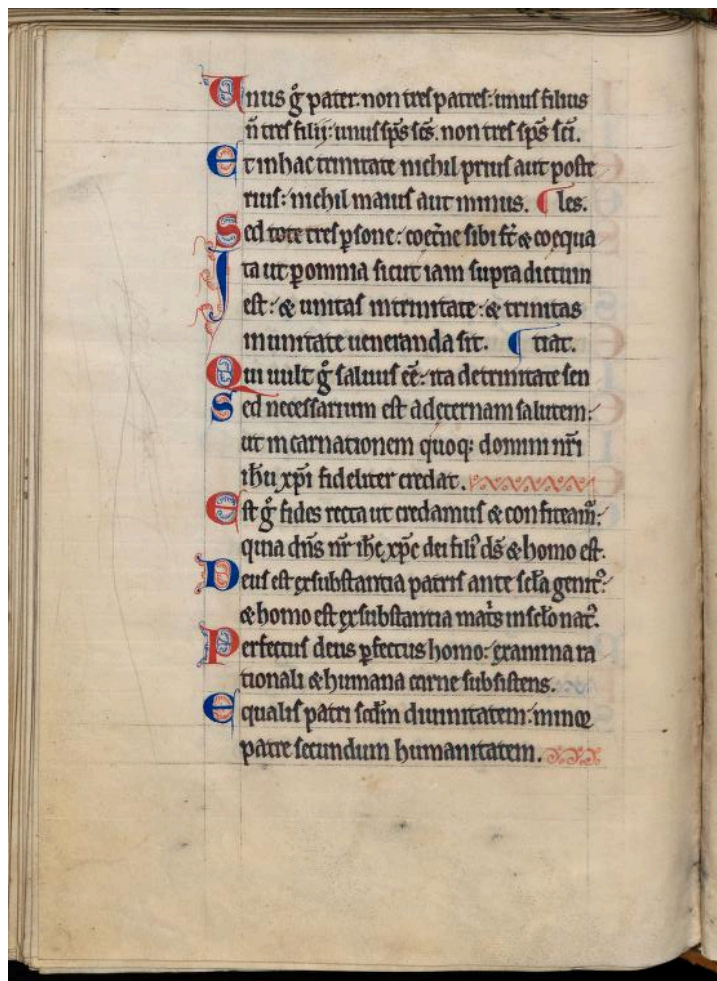


Image 2: *Scratching in the margin in graphite*, Leiden Psalter, Leiden, University Library, BPL 76 A, f. 178v.

In most lower and lateral margins of folia 136-143 there is musical notation of the antiphonal psalmody. The musical notation and words underneath are an addition in a shaky hand, in both the lateral and the lower margins (see image 4). It is the notation for a regular devotional day, presumably Sunday. If it were the psalmody for Advent or a saint's day the psalm would be sung in a different psalmody and tone. In antiphonal psalmody, the verses of the psalms are sung by two halves of a choir or schola alternating a relatively simple melody (the psalmody). It is sung in a psalm tone that is repeated and modified for each verse, usually alternated with a verse of the psalm sung in a different melody (the antiphonal).¹⁶⁵ The

musical notation is diastematic with quadrat notation on four lines. This indicates that the addition is probably late thirteenth century at the earliest, since this form of musical notation was

¹⁶⁴ In Nicole Eddy's recent article on the Middle English prose *Brut* chronicle in London, Lambeth Palace MS 491, she points out the children's drawings and writing in the marginal material. According to Eddy, the manuscript functioned as a pedagogical and educational tool, not only teaching children how to write but also educating them in literature. Nicole Eddy, 'The Romance of History. Lambeth Palace MS 491 and Its Young Readers', in: *New Directions in Medieval Manuscript Studies and Reading Practices. Essays in Honor of Derek Pearsall*, ed. By Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, John J. Thompson, and Sarah Baechle (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press 2014), pp. 300-323.

¹⁶⁵ *The Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Don Micheal Randell (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 2002), pp. 535-536.

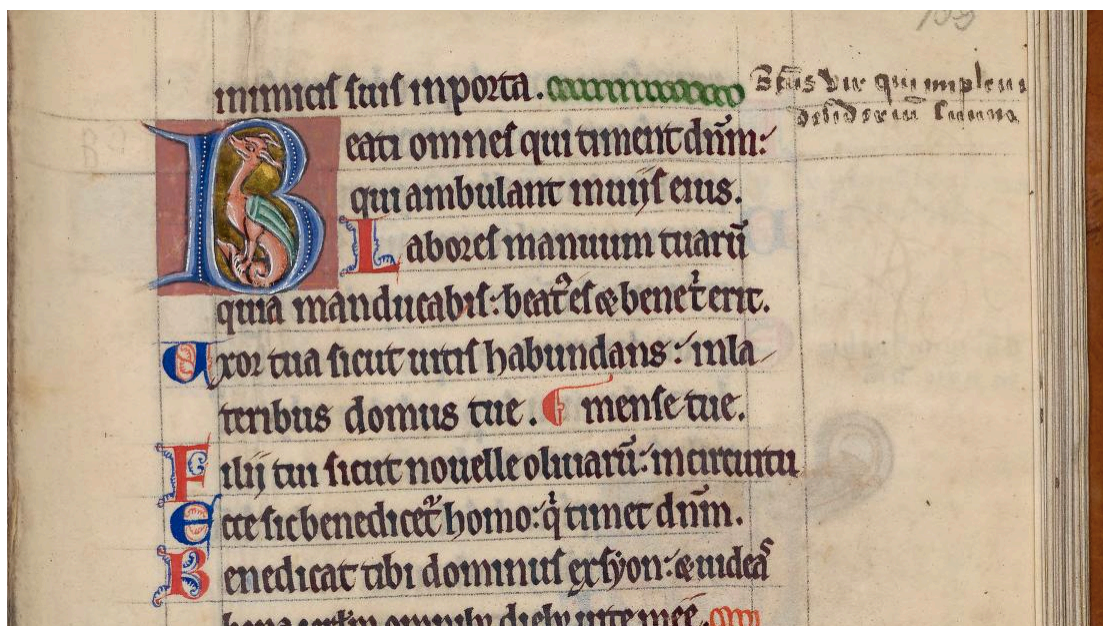


Image 3: Marginal letterforms in graphite, Leiden Psalter, Leiden, University Library, BPL 76 A, f. 153r.

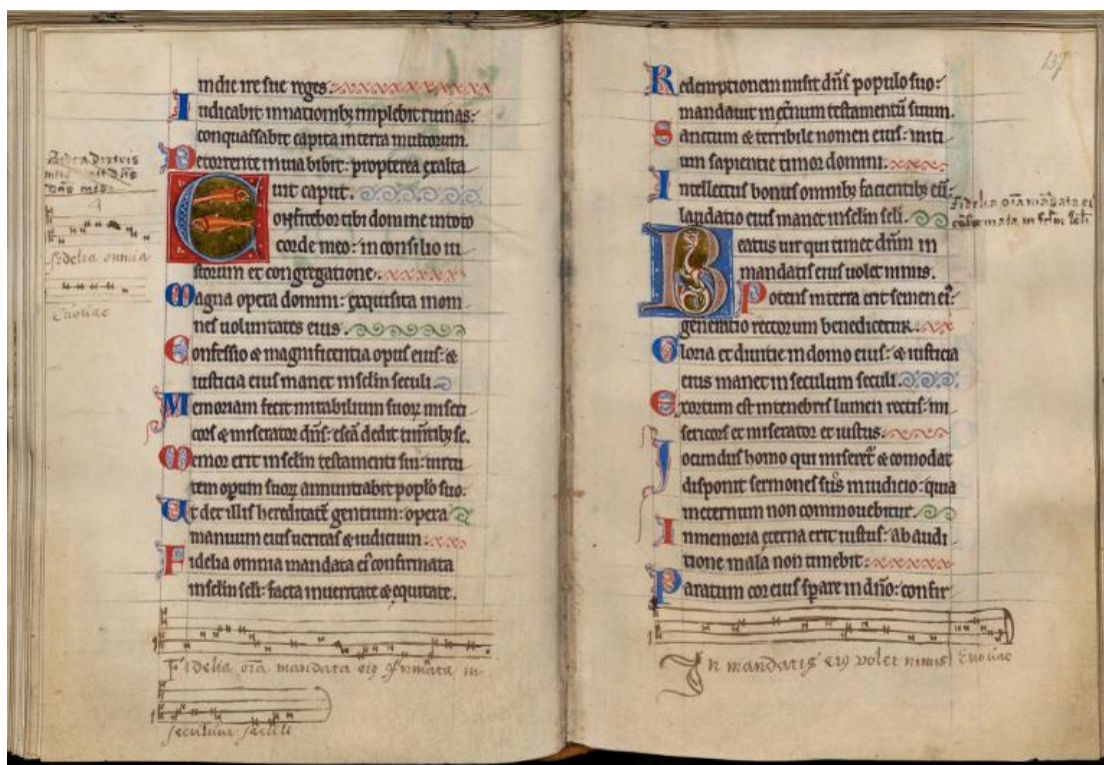


Image 2: Musical notation in the margins, Leiden Psalter, Leiden, University Library, BPL 76 A, ff. 136v-137r.

popularised around 1250 for religious manuscripts.¹⁶⁶ Although the notes appear to be squiggly lines, they are meant to be full squares. The inscription was made with a pen that was too thin to write musical notation. It is unclear why this musical notation is in the Leiden Psalter. It may have been used as aid for daily devotion, but this does not explain why it is only written on a few folia. Furthermore, a choir sang the antiphonal psalmody during the liturgy. If the Psalter was in the possession of laity, what use was the inscription of musical notation in the manuscript? Perhaps it was used to follow the singing of the psalmody in daily office, or maybe it was used for the instruction of the practice of singing the psalms?

From writing we move on to the images in the Leiden Psalter. The manuscript is decorated throughout. The calendar contains two miniatures on each page: one depicting the labours of the month, the other the zodiac sign of the same month. Folia 7r-29r are embellished with twenty-three full-page miniatures. The folia each have one miniature alternately on the verso or recto side, so that the miniatures face one another, thus leaving two blank pages in between each set of miniatures. Most of the full-page frameworks contain two sections, each of which depicting a different scene from the Old or New Testament. There are three exceptions: the first miniature on f. 7r depicts God in a mandorla surrounded by images of the Creation; f. 21r depicts the temptation of Christ; the last full-page miniature on f. 29r shows Christ in a mandorla surrounded by the four evangelists' symbols.¹⁶⁷ The main texts of the psalms and prayers are decorated with pen flourishes and linefillers. These are mostly non-figurative, abstract designs; there are a few pen decorations depicting creatures, including fishes, and one exceptional dragon-like figure in the lower margin of f. 105v.¹⁶⁸ It would be conventional to discuss the decorated initials of the Psalter under the heading of 'images' or 'decoration', but here I only focus on the images without any elements of written text.

Since the psalms were the most important devotional texts in the earlier Middle Ages, psalters most commonly received elaborate decoration. The poetic non-narrative nature of the textual contents of the psalter, as well as its function as a devotional book for the laity, resulted in

¹⁶⁶ Though the quadrat notation on lines (in order to establish intervals) was in use from the twelfth century onwards, it took until the fifteenth century before it was established everywhere. In the first years of its popularity it was primarily used in theoretical treatises, not yet in liturgical and devotional manuscripts. *Harvard Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Randell, p. 535.

¹⁶⁷ For a list of the iconography of the full-page miniature scenes, see Appendix, pp. 88-90.

¹⁶⁸ For a discussion on the Psalter's illumination, see Appendix, pp. 87-88.

its traditionally being a highly decorated book. This increased its value and sanctity, displaying (financial and religious) wealth, not only through the depiction of important religious themes but also because of the valuable nature of the material. The text of the psalms and prayers in psalters was traditionally preceded by a calendar, often ornamented with images of the labours and zodiac signs appropriate for each month. Prefacing the texts of the psalms with a cycle of full-page miniatures was started in eleventh-century England and became common in the twelfth century. The biblical scenes are traditionally iconographical depictions of narrative subjects in the Old and New Testament, especially the life and Passion of Christ. The depictions do not illustrate the contents of the psalter directly, but can be related to the Christian typological reading of the psalms as messianic prophecies.¹⁶⁹

Similar to written text, the images are important in the working of the manuscript for a multiplicity of reasons. Images are decoration, ornament and illustration. The quality of the images, both the material as well as the style, also exudes the wealth of the patron or owner. The images in de Leiden Psalter are of great quality: they are executed with care in vibrant colours, and have gold leaf for backgrounds and important details. The sheer amount of images also shows the value of the manuscript: every page is colourful and full of life. The worth and significance of this Psalter is visible at a glance.

Apart from their function to decorate and exude prestige, images also help structure and organise the layout of the manuscript. The linefillers, for example, help with the outlining of the text, which gives the text's space in the page layout an organised and neat overview. As discussed earlier, the decorated initials define the structure of the psalm texts, identifying their partition into liturgical divisions.¹⁷⁰ They work as visual cues and rubrics to the text, so that readers can find their way around the book. Moreover, images can also function as visual cues for memory. Through their colour and expression (and often illustration) of the written texts, images make the texts easily memorable, because the mind more easily holds visual motives than the abstraction of text. According to Carruthers, '[t]he importance of visual images as memorial hooks and cues is a basic theme in all memory-training advice and practice from the very earliest Western text we possess [...]'.¹⁷¹ She argues that many manuscripts with images were designed to speak to the memory to aid the reader with the memorisation of the text. Images serve a mnemonic function, not only proposing an intellectual technique of memorisation based on the classical arts of

¹⁶⁹ Kauffman, pp. 474-476.

¹⁷⁰ Kauffman, pp. 486-487.

¹⁷¹ Carruthers, p. 274.

memory, but also by arousing emotions in the reader. Images, especially those designed to look ‘alive’, engage the reader with the manuscript in an active manner by evoking emotions of surprise, admiration and devotion. It is likely that the images in the Leiden Psalter, particularly the initials, had a similar function: as explained before, it was encouraged to memorise the psalms from a young age onwards.¹⁷²

Perhaps most importantly, the images also support the function of the Leiden Psalter in the daily practice of prayer. Reading the Psalter would be intertwined with looking at the images; looking in turn is linked to the devotional use of pictures. As explained earlier, prayer is not a stable practice in which the texts are read or sung: it is a form of communication and interaction between reader, deity, manuscript, and religious context. A major aspect of medieval prayer was the importance of meditation and the personal relation with a higher being. It is widely accepted that the function of images in devotional manuscripts is to stimulate, animate and mystify devotional meditation. Images not only actively involved the reader with the text, they vitalised



Image 5: *Narrative from the New Testament*, Leiden Psalter, Leiden, University Library, BPL 76 A, ff. 16v-17r.

the whole practice of prayer. Devotional images would bring the devotee into vivid dialogue with the sacred. The exploitation of the mediating power of images served to embody and materialise God’s truth. The use of a manuscript for prayer therefore depends to a great extent on the

¹⁷² Carruthers, pp. 274-281.

interplay between images and imagination.¹⁷³ The intra-action of devotee and images makes the divine present, even without specific intra-action of the written texts and images. The full-page miniatures of the Leiden Psalter do not have any rubric or inscription: they are integrated in the bigger entity of the manuscript, but separate as an image-cycle enacting its own function in the whole. It is easy to imagine how the medieval owner of the Leiden Psalter would use the book, not only for the reading of the psalms, but also for meditating and reflecting on the scenes depicted in the full-page miniatures. The miniatures are an embodiment of religious devotion: they are lively, full of colour, and vividly depict important scenes from the Bible. Furthermore, they have a certain rhythm that allows for their meditational function. Not only does the image-cycle chronologically show the stories from the Old and New Testament, there is also a cadence to each miniature that resembles the patterns of reading. The scenes are 'read' from top to bottom, and the figures often have a clockwise direction in their movement (see image 5).¹⁷⁴ A structured viewing of the images, through which the awareness of the presence of God is animated and materialised, stimulates meditation.

The initials of the Leiden Psalter

The most prominent features in the Leiden Psalter, especially regarding text-image relations, are its decorated initials. Until the holistic, interdisciplinary approach to the study of medieval manuscripts of the last few decades, medievalists commonly accepted the dogmatic dualism between writing and pictures. Because of this, the study of decorated initials tends to fall between academic disciplines. They are not wholly of interest to medievalists who specialise in writing (such as palaeographers), who interpret initials as written text, nor are they to art historians, who mainly look at the initials' figurative elements. The decorated initial is never considered as a whole.¹⁷⁵ This is understandable, since a decorated initial consists of both written text and image, but is not quite either of them. Decorated initials are one of the main features in medieval manuscripts that defy the traditional distinction between text and image, which makes applying the theoretical considerations of the first chapter to them particularly interesting. The implementation of the theory may help understand the dynamism and entanglement of text, image, and sound in the initials of the Leiden Psalter.

¹⁷³ Fraeters & Pieters, p. 4-7.

¹⁷⁴ Morgan 2004, pp. 317-318.

¹⁷⁵ Kendrick, pp. 3-5.

Medieval psalters almost always contain a set of decorated initials, providing structure and organisation, but also giving decoration, emphasis, and amusement adjoining the text. The iconography of initials in psalters is diverse, varying from illustration of adjoining texts to Mass and devotional images, and from Christological iconography to peculiar and apparently unrelated figures.¹⁷⁶ Initials are either ‘historiated’ with a depiction in direct relation to the text, ‘inhabited’ with unrelated figures (human, animal, or fantastic creatures), or merely ‘decorated’ with foliation and interlace motifs. I prefer to use the term ‘decorated initial’ to encompass all these initials, because it says exactly what they are without including a terminological meaning that might not be appropriate.

The Leiden Psalter has decorated initials before every psalm, canticle, and prayer, as well as one decorated initial each before the litany and the Creed. A small three-line initial precedes most of the texts. At the liturgical divisions, bigger seven- or eight-line initials precede the psalms, as has already been pointed out. The manuscript contains one full-page initial, preceding the first psalm. Some of the initials are historiated, but most are decorated with interlace and foliation, and are inhabited by animals or frivolous figures.¹⁷⁷ This analysis will consider three cases, discussing the full-page initial on f. 30v (case I), one of the larger initials on f. 78r (case II), and one small initial on f. 158r (case III). The choice of initials is arbitrary: in principle any of the decorated initials in the Leiden Psalter could have been analysed as an application of the theory. I have reduced my choice to three cases, because there is neither space nor time to discuss all decorated initials in the Psalter, and it would probably be tedious to read. The three decorated initials are representative of all initials in the Leiden Psalter.

In line with Barad’s theory discussed in chapter one, the decorated initials of the Leiden Psalter should be interpreted as a process of intra-action and agential becoming, which creates and embodies materialised phenomena. They are entanglements of the material (in this case the paint on the parchment page) and the discursive, the meaning (in the broadest sense of the word) that it embodies.¹⁷⁸ The visible material of a miniature can both be explained as a component in a bigger entity (i.e. the manuscript) or as itself built up out of smaller elements: in the case of this analysis, written texts and images. The materiality of the initials is determined by their intra-

¹⁷⁶ Büttner, p. 81-82.

¹⁷⁷ For a list of the Psalter’s initials, see Appendix, pp. 86-87.

¹⁷⁸ For Barad’s ideas on materiality, see pp. 24-30, and for their repercussions for the discussion of text-image relations, see pp. 30-31.

actions with other phenomena. These phenomena are everything around them, both on a micro-level (for example, particles that make up the consistency of the page, paint, and ink) and macro-level (for example the miniaturist, a reader, or a scholar). The agential intra-action means that a decorated initial is as much determined by these phenomena as the other way around: a miniature also affects the ‘surrounding’ phenomena. The miniature and all phenomena around it are in dynamic relation, which means that the phenomena are nothing more than materialisations of this intra-active agency. Initials are a congealing of agency, a materialisation of interpretative meaning. The initial miniature – its letters, interlace, images and colours – is a performance: its being changes with every intra-action.¹⁷⁹ It might be stated that sound is also a component of a decorated initial: a fundamental element to make the miniature ‘complete’. However, the materialisation of sound requires oral or musical delivery, which can only be materialised outside of the object. The element of sound is simultaneously entangled with the letters and pictures of an initial, its materialisation evoked and fully dependent on the miniature, yet completely detached from it, relying on its enactment by the reader.¹⁸⁰ In other words, the initial (its texts and images), the reader, and sound form and *perform* one another in their agential intra-action.

The production of the Leiden Psalter is not limited to its first creation – the intra-action between the manuscript’s materials and its makers – but is an ongoing process. In this analysis, the focus will mainly be on the dynamic relation between the reader and the manuscript’s initials. Although the interpretation of the embodiment of the Psalter’s initials is fully subjective both by the medieval reader and the academic scholar, I believe that the material can say something about its meaning and subsequent use. Moreover, in the light of the Psalter’s function in the Middle Ages I attempt to look at the initials’ place in medieval devotional culture, reflecting on the possible intra-action between object and reader/devotee.¹⁸¹ The reader determines the meaning of the decorated initial as much as the textual and pictorial elements ‘allow for’ a specific interpretation. There is a ‘correct’ way of intra-acting with the miniature in order to fully grasp its meaning, which requires an intra-action with a phenomenon, particular apparatuses and discursive practices. As already explained, the manuscript was made with an intended audience in mind: the written texts and images within the decorated initials were produced with the intention of the reader being able to recognise their meaning.

¹⁷⁹ For Barad’s idea on post-humanist performativity, see pp. 27-29.

¹⁸⁰ For new interpretations and the inclusion of sound, see pp. 33-36.

¹⁸¹ The terms reader and devotee are used interchangeably, depending on the focus (on either the physical act of reading or the act of prayer) of the analysis.

Before going on to the analysis of the Leiden Psalter's initials, it is necessary to explain the text-image paradox that defines the problem of the decorated initial. The textual elements and figurative elements of decorated initials are entangled theoretically as material phenomena, and sometimes quite literally through interlace, colour, and figures. In principle, text and image as intra-acting components of a decorated initial are ontologically inseparable. They are elements that make up the miniature, consisting as it does of an entanglement of meaning and matter. Only an agential cut can separate the theoretical concepts as two different material-discursive phenomena: the ontological entanglement of written texts and images is only unravelled through the reader's classification. The letters and pictures in the initial are in essence nothing more than ink or paint on a parchment page. Only the interpretation by the reader (or any other intra-acting phenomenon), steered by cultural context such as education, makes the miniature consist of two separate elements. The interpretation of the object is prone to change, not only per reader but also per experience.¹⁸² The constant state of movement that defines an intra-action makes the theoretical distinction between text and image very difficult to pinpoint.

This creates a paradox, because the dynamic agential relation between written text and image as 'building blocks' of the initial are enacted as simultaneously separate elements and as in unison in one miniature. In the initials that are subsequently analysed, it is practically impossible to see where text ends and image begins: the use of colour and interlace does not discern between the pictorial patterns of ornament or the abstract forms of the letters. Furthermore, the third 'building block' making up decorated initials is sound, which is much more fleeting in its materialisation: separate yet fully dependent. The embodiment of sound only completes an initial when performed, and is therefore simultaneously extant and non-extant in the manuscript. Where text and image are primary building materials of decorated initials, sound is secondary.

Text and image are entangled, quite literally, by the materials of the initial; its colours, interlace, motives. However, oral performance, although material in itself, is not embodied in the manuscript (though it is evoked). The letters and images in decorated initials are in a mutually intra-active relation and therefore produce a kind of reciprocal determinability. Their existence is not inherent to one another, i.e. they do not necessarily have to exist together in the manuscript for them to determinately be 'text' or 'image'. However, the initial cannot exist without either one

¹⁸² These ideas are quite similar to the theories of reception (see, for example Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. by T. Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1982)). However, I would like to stress the dynamic relation between subject and object, where the divide between the two is muddled in their intra-action, as also described in the first chapter, pp. 32-33.

of them. They are theoretically fully intertwined. Simultaneously, however, the dynamic relation between text and image sharpens the divide: that what is not text is image, and the other way around. The divide between the two in decorated initials is seemingly evident to the reader in the 'correct' context.

Even though the letters in decorated initials are often ornamented, coloured, and done in paint, they are clearly discernable as alphabetic writing. Their abstract pictorial forms reveal meaning indirectly, and only to the properly literate and educated reader. The material (i.e. the letters) is therefore only truly significant to the phenomenon (i.e. the reader) that intra-acts with it through the appropriate apparatuses (i.e. human senses, knowledge of the alphabetic script and of Latin) and discursive practices (i.e. the letters' meaning). The letters thus are only discernable if the reader has knowledge of the alphabetic script, and the meaning of the words is only discernable through knowing the language of the text. If the reader does not know Latin, the letters conjointly still contain a certain semantic power conveying sound and alphabetic significance. For a reader who is not educated in this regard the letters embody much less meaning: for them the letters may even be a form of imagery or ornament, just as other scripts may be for us. The letters are abstract pictorial signs communicating linguistic concepts in a generalised, but exclusive, way.

An initial's figurative elements embody their meaning through similarity and in a universally known way. When, for example, there are depictions of human figures, it is to be expected that the reader is able to recognise their shape. The understanding of the meaning embodied in the images is much less dependent on specific discursive practices such as education, although we must keep in mind that visual literacy plays an important role. The interpretation of the images is still subject to the reader's context. The connotations that the image has for the reader may differ from person to person (and from experience to experience). Although images convey their initial meaning in a direct sense and allow for a specific interpretation, their significance is changeable when it comes to the reader's connotation and denotation.

In short, text and image in decorated initials are fully entangled and impossible to disentangle; yet they are still different in their materialisation and therefore distinguishable. Furthermore, the element of sound is similarly both entangled and separate, although in a different way: it requires secondary materialisation outside the manuscript. What do these theoretical considerations mean for the understanding of the decorated initials of the Leiden Psalter?

Case I: the Beatus-initial

The Beatus-initial of the Leiden Psalter can be found on f. 30v, at the beginning of the main texts following the calendar and the miniature cycle (see image 6). It measures 180x130 mm, occupying a full page, but leaving broad margins. The initial opens the first psalm, containing its first words '*Beatus vir*' within the framework of the full-page design. Suitably named 'Beatus-initials', these full-page miniatures are common (if not conventional) in medieval psalters preceding the first psalm. On f. 30v of the Leiden Psalter, the letter 'B' is the initial, and the other letters spelling out '*Beatus vir*' are written from the top down on the right-hand side next to the initial. The initial 'B' is made of interlace, foliation and geometric designs in several colours, interspersed with animal motifs, against a golden background. In the middle of the initial there is a roundel containing a crowned human figure playing the harp: this is a depiction of King David. Abstract foliation on a dark blue background, as well as the decorated letters '*Beatus vir*' surround the initial. All this is enclosed in a broad framework, containing interlace, interspersed with animals and naked human figures. The corners of the framework accommodate roundels with human figures playing musical instruments (clockwise, starting in the upper left corner, the instruments are a fiddle, a rebec, a psalterium, and an organistrum). The first inscription proclaiming Saint Louis' ownership is written in the lower margin of the folium, underneath the Beatus-initial.¹⁸³

The Beatus-initial of the Leiden Psalter is an entanglement of meaning and matter, materialising agency and meaning that is enacted through its intra-actions. It is impossible to separate letters from image in the miniature: there is no way to draw a line where image begins and text ends. However, in the intra-action with the reader there evidently is a difference, which lies in their embodiment and inner workings. The agential cut made by the reader determines the distinction in the materialisation of text and image, but they also determine one another. Furthermore, they allow for a certain interpretation, which not only provides distinction, but also leads to the materialisation of sound. But what does the determined meaning that is embodied in the Beatus-initial entail, and how does it add to the complexity of the miniature? As explained before, the Leiden Psalter was made as an aid for prayer, as well as, more profoundly, conveying divine truth and the message of God. Although this statement is shrouded in subjectivity, in so far as the interpretation of the miniature is different per person, it might be said that the Beatus-initial is an embodiment of medieval devotion and faith in divine truth.

¹⁸³ For a discussion on Saint Louis' ownership, see pp. 40-43; for the inscription, see Appendix, p. 92.



Image 6: *The Beatus-initial preceding psalm 1, Leiden Psalter, Leiden, University Library, BPL 76 A, f. 30v.*

The initial accompanies the text of the first psalm, conveying its meaning through iconography, colour, motifs, and figures. The miniature is a tool for prayer: a fundamentally communicative,

visual, oral, and aural experience. Considering the intra-active and dynamic relation between reader and manuscript, the embodiment of the divine in the miniature works both ways. Devotion is evoked, symbolised and portrayed: it is intended for the purpose of meditation and conversation with a higher being. The absorption of the miniature draws the reader in, excluding the observer by turning away, and by doing so creating a fiction of intimacy and including them. It invites this specific interpretation.¹⁸⁴ As Kendrick puts it, the elements of the Beatus-initial are designed to empower and authorise. They promote the illusion of a divine signifying presence in the miniature's materiality.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, the miniature expresses the seeming incompleteness of the visual and tangible nature of the manuscript's materiality: to a devotee it can only be whole when it functions in a devotional setting. The experience of handling the manuscript relies on sight, touch, smell, perhaps even taste (when kissing a miniature). In this line of thought, hearing may be incorporated as the sound of the parchment, the rustling of the manuscript's leaves. The sound that is equated with the Beatus-initial's writing and images, though, requires materialisation outside the manuscript. The silence of the miniature leaves something to be desired.

The Beatus-initial forms part of the main text, yet it stands apart from it. Its decoration, colours, background, and relative largeness give it a certain 'moreness', similar to how a majuscule gives the impression of being 'more than' a minuscule. The words themselves can be understood as elaborate *nomina sacra*: they are symbols of divine meaning, designed to express the mysteries of faith.¹⁸⁶ The words '*Beatus vir*', although in a different context quite trivial, in themselves embody holiness by the implication of the Book of Psalms. The decoration of the letters is a way to fetishise and mystify the text: letters are a living trace of God, an incarnation of divinity. Decorated initials are not a disembodied representation of the divine, but as an embodiment – holding divine power through writing. They are designed to enliven the letters, to empower and sacralise religious writing.¹⁸⁷ The busy motifs, interlace, and colours most definitely give the initial something 'more': these things allow for the embodiment of a range of meanings, instead of the generalised and abstract conveyance of meaning merely in letterforms. The inclusion of figurative motifs solicits animistic responses, which in turn influence the attitude to writing. The entangling of writing and images serves to animate the letterforms, suggesting not

¹⁸⁴ For a discussion on the dynamic relation between object and observer, see pp. 32-33.

¹⁸⁵ Kendrick, p. 207. For a discussion on Kendrick's (for this master's thesis) influential publication on decorated letters in medieval manuscripts, see pp. 15-16.

¹⁸⁶ Hamburger 2014, pp. 11-14.

¹⁸⁷ Kendrick, p. 144.

only movement and activity, but also helping to involve the reader in the embodiment of the divine. The Beatus-initial actively evokes the practice of prayer and encourages meditation.

The Beatus-initial marks the beginning of the conversation between the devotee and God. It is the very first page of the psalm texts, following the Psalter's calendar and cycle of full-page miniatures, and was probably opened the most. Folia 30v and 31r are obviously worn by use. The figures in the framework form a good example of the mystification and animation of the textual content. Iconographically speaking, the intertwined fighting animals and naked men presumably refer to the '*impii*' in the psalm's text: '*q[uonia]m nouit dominus uiam iustoru[m]; / et iter impiorum p[er]ibit*' (f. 31r, Ps. 1:6).¹⁸⁸ Protected in their roundels are the *beati viri* that choose to follow God. As stated by Kendrick, initials' frameworks depict the battleground of devotion. The initial is a site of peril and protection, a dramatisation of the choice the reader makes when reading the psalm: you are either an *impius* or a *beatus vir*. This not only animates the miniature and supplies it with gravity; it is also an embodiment of spiritual struggle.¹⁸⁹ It is curious, however, that the battle is not between opposing forces: the *impii* fight one another and perhaps attempt to free themselves from the entwining foliation. In some cases the figures step slightly out of the frame, protruding limbs or pointing at the depiction in the inner miniature. At the top of the framework two figures appear to lean on the initial letter 'B', connecting the outer with the inner miniature.

The initial letter consists of interlace, knotwork, and foliation. Biting creatures hold the three abstract shapes that form the letter – two rounds and one standing pillar – together. The figurative creatures themselves are part of the interlace, forming the rhythmic pattern of the initial. The text is literally enclosed in, and made out of, the image. The initial letter protrudes into the margin on several occasions, similar to how the figures in the framework interact with the inner miniature. This gives the impression of the initial letter standing out. The design of the letter gives it a body, making it seem alive and moving.¹⁹⁰ The appearance of the miniature is almost 3D, creating a depth to the image that makes it easy to imagine something *behind* the initial. It is almost as though the initial letter can be opened (like a door or the page of a book),

¹⁸⁸ 'The Lord protects everyone who follows him, but the wicked follow a road that leads to ruin.' Contemporary English Version, Ps. 1:6.

¹⁸⁹ Kendrick, pp. 126-139.

¹⁹⁰ Compare this with the contemporary practice of graphic design, typography, or even graffiti- or tattoo-artists. Writing is designed to be *more than*; to give it bodily presence. Graffitiists, for example, tend to magnify and colour letters in order for them to stand out. With the use of shading, the lettering gets a 3D effect. Kendrick, pp. 17-19.

with its hinges at the places where the letter integrates into the framework. The depth and movement in the Beatus-initial want to reveal its divine truth, arousing meditation and devotion, and stimulating prayer.

The reader would be able to interact with the Beatus-initial, perhaps touching it, following the movements that are depicted by the knotted interlace and foliation. The knots are a puzzle, an exercise in prayer and meditation that mystifies and embodies divinity.¹⁹¹ The miniature's use may have accompanied the reading or reciting of the psalm text. The interlace patterns of the 'B' initial are not only pleasing to the eye; they may also embody the rhythm of the oral performance, stimulating the utterance of prayer in meditation. The importance of music for the performance of the texts in the Leiden Psalter is symbolised by the musicians depicted in the roundels. It is conventional that King David, visible in the roundel in the middle of the Beatus-initial, is depicted as a harpist, since it was believed that he was the author of many songs of praise including the psalms. The metre and rhythm were set to melody and were often sung or rhythmically recited. An aspiration to perform the psalms is understandable, since the depicted musicians can be identified with the *beatus vir* of the first psalm. The figures make their presence known and arouse oral enactment of prayer.

Text, image and sound form a perfect ensemble in the Beatus-initial, constantly changing and allowing for new interpretation, and still forming one coherent element in the manuscript. It is arbitrary to speak of 'completeness' when an object is in constant flux. However, the changeable materialisations of writing, images, and sound add to the entanglement of the elements in the miniature, constantly re-considering and re-interpreting its function. The mutual dynamic agential intra-action between the devotee and the manuscript carries out the embodiment of personal devotion, divine truth, and the practice of prayer.

Case II: the musician's initial

At the liturgical divides of the Leiden Psalter there are nine large ornamental initials. The 'musician's initial' can be found on f. 78r and precedes Psalm 52 (53) (see image 7). The square that encapsulates the letter measures c. 65x70 mm., numbering seven lines in height of the psalm's text. The initial is the letter 'D', preceding *'ix[it] in si/piens'* in display script. These letters are written in blue (*'ix[it] in s'*) and red (*'i/piens'*) capitals, adorned with pen decoration in the opposing colour. The design of the initial 'D' recalls the Beatus-initial. The musician's initial

¹⁹¹ Kendrick, pp. 90-109.

consists of a green outline, containing interlace, geometric designs, and foliation, interspersed with animal motifs on a gold background. At the top left-hand corner of the letterform is a depiction of a musician, hence the nickname of this initial. The musician, a young man, walks up the slope of the round letterform and plays a rebec. The initial and the figure are placed in a square red background, which protrudes forming a polygon where the musician is depicted.



Image 7: *The ‘musician’s initial’ preceding psalm 52 (53), Leiden Psalter, Leiden, University Library, BPL 76 A, f. 78r.*

Similar to the Beatus-initial, the musician’s initial can be understood as a material-discursive practice that is determined in the process of intra-acting with other phenomena. It is a theoretical entanglement of material and discursive meaning, an ongoing agential becoming. The materialisation of the miniature is determined by its intra-action with every phenomenon it comes into contact with. The focus of this analysis, however, is mainly on the intra-action between reader and object. It is within this intra-action that the elements of the initial are discerned: it is an entanglement of writing, images, and sound. The agential cut made by the reader’s apparatuses and specific discursive practices is very important in the subdivision of the miniature’s material manifestation. As with the Beatus-initial, however, in the musician’s initial it is practically impossible to make a distinction between writing and image.

The letterform of the musician’s initial is alphabetically virtually undetermined. In fact, the initial does not resemble an alphabetical ‘D’ it means to resemble; it depicts nothing more than a round shape. The form could characterise any round-shaped letter. These kinds of ambiguous initials are not uncommon in medieval manuscripts – the Leiden Psalter itself has a

number of them. The initial 'D' is no longer an alphabetic letterform, but is still interpreted as one. In itself, the abstract and generalised form of the letter is not semantically significant any longer, because it can be interpreted as various letters. The writing has gained image-like qualities not only through its colour and decoration, but also because it does not characterise a specific, recognisable letterform. Its form is not enough to convey the meaning it embodies. The initial as sign is only understandable in the context of the rest of the psalm's text. For the educated reader, however, it is still obvious that the miniature is an initial and forms part of the following text.

The decoration, colours and interlace of the initial simultaneously make it stand out from the regular text on the page. The initial thus works to serve its purpose in various ways: it is only understandable as a letterform in its textual context, yet stands out from the rest of the text through its qualities as imagery. It is the pinnacle of the entanglement of writing and pictures, defying their separation completely yet still being distinct. It is the intra-action between the reader and the manuscript, context, and discursive practices that allow for the determinability of the musician's initial as a letter 'D'. However, it is that same intra-action that gives the miniature prominence as an image on the parchment page. It makes the initial letter and the following words into a kind of *nomen sacrum*, emphasising the importance of the beginning of this psalm. This determination fully depends on the situation and the current intra-action, and emphasises the changeability of the determination of the initials' material.

The non-signification of the musician's initial's position as a letter in the psalm's text underlines the idea of the designed image as embodiment of meaning. It does not need its alphabetic signification: the colours, patterns, images, knots and interlace are enough to communicate meaning. The miniature is intended to evoke devotion and meditation, capturing the divine truth that is unlocked through prayer. The initial letter is made of foliation and interlacing, interspersed with small dragon-like creatures in several bright colours. It has a similar pattern to the Beatus-initial, suggesting movement and rhythm by its repetition. The under-over pattern of the interlace makes it seemingly having no end or beginning, knotting everything without possibility of untangling, yet creating an orderly shape. The pattern may have been traced, touched or followed with the eyes, functioning as a meditation tool. The untangling of the knots can reveal divine truth, embodying devotional mystification and evoking contemplation.¹⁹² The creatures animate the interlace design and ensnare their presence. The musician's initial is alive through its use of colour, pattern and figures. It conveys a wealth of devotional meaning

¹⁹² Kendrick, pp. 90-109.

merely through its separateness from the rest of the psalm: it embodies life and divinity through its animation.¹⁹³

The enhancement and ornamentation of the musician's initial is thus part of its meaning. It is a thread in the larger tissue of decoration in the Leiden Psalter. The large initials, as is conventional, alternate between red and blue backgrounds: a pattern that gives coherence to the manuscript. All of the large initials (including the *Beatus*-initial), and many of the small ones, have a golden background. This appears to refer to a space *behind* the initial that embodies a second level of divine truth that the devotee attempts to reach in meditation. The golden background is reminiscent of chrysography – the practice of writing in gold to indicate writing in liquid light. Hamburger explains that gold was meant to embody perception, knowledge, and wisdom. It would allow the reader to comprehend fully the words of God, giving them the ability to communicate easily.¹⁹⁴ Gold as an embodiment of light suggests a kind of immateriality, similar to how divinity and sanctity are embodied in the initial.¹⁹⁵ The golden background is a materialisation of the immaterial, i.e. light, just as the miniature should be interpreted as a materialisation of divine truth.

The conversation between the devotee and God suggested by Psalm 52 is accompanied by the depiction of a young musician. The figure might be interpreted in a number of different ways. It seems most likely that the musician is an illustration of the last verse of Psalm 52: *‘Quis dabit ex syon salutare isr[ae]l cu[m] auer- / terit d[omi]n[u]s captiuitate[m] plebis sue ; exul- / tabit iacob et letabitur isr[ae]l’* (f. 78v, ps. 52:6).¹⁹⁶ He could be the embodiment of the person saving Israel, leading the devotee to the holy land as a kind of Pied Piper. His music accompanies the prayer of the reader, leading them to an (imaginary) land of the divine. What is more, the musician could also refer to the celebration of Israel, in this case accompanying the reader in their celebration of devotion. The dragon-like creatures in the initial's ensnarement of interlace seem to be transfixed by the musician's play, looking up at him. Through this, the movement of the miniature is toward the figure, allowing him (although not literally) centre stage. The interplay between text (the psalm) and image (the musician) alludes to the musical nature of prayer, but does not fully

¹⁹³ Kendrick, pp. 75-79.

¹⁹⁴ Hamburger, pp. 23-24.

¹⁹⁵ Evidently, these concepts are not immaterial. However in the perception of the medieval reader they presumably were.

¹⁹⁶ 'I long for someone from Zion to come and save Israel! Our God, when you bless your people again, Jacob's family will be glad, and Israel will celebrate.' Contemporary English Version, ps. 53:6.

embody it. The performance of the devotee is fundamental for the subsequent materialisation of sound, which adds to the complexity and beauty of the musician's initial.

Although the animation of the letter is awe-inspiring through its use of colour and intricate interlace, it is truly mystifying when amplified with an oral performance. The interpretation of the musician's initial therefore allows for the entanglement of writing, images, and sound, in order to aid the reader's religious experience. The movement and changeable nature of the decorated initial and its consequential interpretation allows for the intertwining of the elements. Writing, image, and sound form a unity in their fluctuating entanglement and embodiment.

Case III: the grotesque initial

The last initial that is discussed here is one of the small initials of the Leiden Psalter. Preceding Psalm 138 (139) is the 'grotesque initial' of f. 158r, a rectangle measuring c. 30x27 mm. with an extension into the left margin (see image 8). The naming of this initial is perhaps somewhat generalising, considering that this is hardly the only initial with 'grotesque' features among the Leiden Psalter's small initials. The word 'grotesque' does not allude to malformations, but merely refers to the initial's bizarre imagery. The initial is a letter 'D' in uncial script, coloured in several shades of blue in wave motifs. There is some white highlighting on the letterform, including six small round forms for ornament. Inside the round shape of the letter 'D' is a winged creature, its

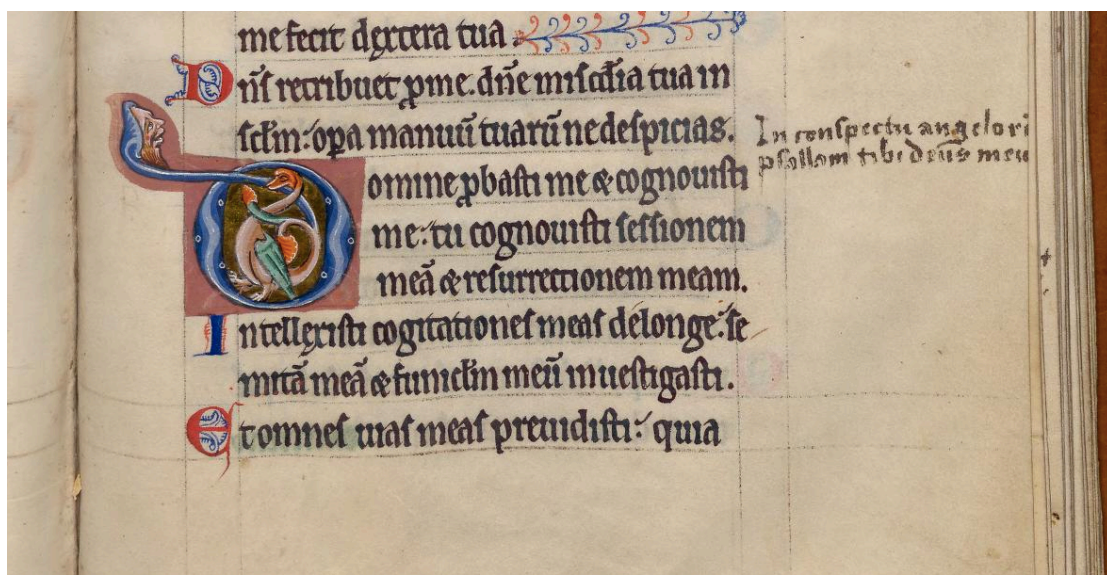


Image 8: The 'grotesque initial' preceding psalm 138 (139), Leiden Psalter, Leiden, University Library, BPL 76 A, f. 158r.

tail extending in three foliation-like designs, the largest protruding into the margin, forming the stem of the letter. At the end of the creature's tail is a bearded face, depicted as though he is wearing the extremity as a hat. The initial is placed on a square red background, with a golden background inside of the letterform.

In accordance with the theoretical considerations and the analyses of the other initials, the grotesque initial can be explained as a material-discursive practice. It is an entanglement of writing, image, and sound, which is materialised through its intra-action with other phenomena. Furthermore, it is an incarnation of its meaning that is determined in agential intra-action. The letterform and images are materialised on the parchment page itself, being completely reliant on the rest of the manuscript's internal phenomena. Sound, however, is materialised outside the manuscript, though still being fully interdependent in the object. The elements of the initial are intertwined and indistinguishable, though still clearly distinct to the eyes of the reader.

Different from the initials discussed earlier, the letterform and imagery of the grotesque initial is possibly 'more' intertwined. The letterform 'D' is partly *formed* by the imagery that is inside its round shape, whereas the primary letters in both the Beatus-initial and the musician's initial are formed by a clear, abstract outline. In this case, the tail of the winged creature, ending in the face of the bearded man, creates part of the letterform. The extremity makes sure that the letter is evidently an uncial 'D' by adding a tail – as opposed to the non-significant form of the musician's initial. Whereas the previous two initials might be understood as decorated letterforms, the grotesque initial might best be described as an image in the form of a letter. The letter is not necessarily enhanced or animated; rather, the image is comprised as a letterform: it is simultaneously encapsulated by and forms a part of the letter.

The grotesque initial is one of many initials that do not relate iconographically to the textual contents of the accompanying psalm. Psalm 138 is one of the longer texts, occupying more than two folia. The initial is placed at the bottom of f. 158r, which means that it is only visible when the reader consults the first four verses of the psalm. The reader thus reads the following twenty sections without coming into contact with the initial, or with any other miniature for that matter. The design of the decorated initial establishes the prominence of the first letter of the psalm, nevertheless. The miniature stands out on the parchment page, emphasising a new beginning as well as mystifying and animating the initial letter. However, considering the textual contents of the psalm and the function of the manuscript as embodiment of divine truth, the initial's grotesque imagery seems out of place. It seems unlikely that the initial

was used for meditation: it may have been traced or touched, but it does not have movement or rhythm like the previously discussed initials. The pattern is simple and straightforward.

The miniature did, however, apparently speak to the imagination. In the left margin there is a very vague trace of a graphite mark. Its form is difficult to make out, but it appears similar to the previously discussed traced letterforms in the margins.¹⁹⁷ It is understandable how such strange grotesque forms are particularly imaginative and memorable. The subject matter is particularly interesting: it is both gruesome and funny. The grotesque initial is not the only miniature in the Leiden Psalter with strange and seemingly unfit imagery. Furthermore, the golden background is also a common feature in the initials of the Leiden Psalter. It makes it seem as though there is light or another space behind the initial: it creates depth in the miniature. Although the grotesque figures seem out of place in a devotional setting, they are confined to the initials: they are simultaneously inside the letterform and form the letter itself. They are encapsulated and therefore form no threat to the devotee's practice of prayer and meditation.¹⁹⁸ The initial evidently is a thread in the Psalter's tissue of decoration, weaving the manuscript into unity.

In the right-hand margin of the page there is a (later) inscription, cut off at the edge of the page, which is a line of the Gregorian hymn *Te Splendor*: '*In conspectu angelor(um) / psallam tibi deus meu(s)*'.¹⁹⁹ It is very similar to the first section of Psalm 137.²⁰⁰ This note was presumably meant for the practical use of the Psalter: the sentence may have been repeated when reading the psalm or perhaps in the singing of the psalmody. It calls onto the devotee to sing praises, to speak aloud the texts of the Psalter. Even though the grotesque initial begins a new psalm, it relates to the added text in the margin. The importance of sound for the practice of prayer is underlined. There is interplay between the materiality of the miniature on the parchment and the reciting of the psalm's text that is encouraged in the marginal note referring to the directly preceding psalm. The bearded face that is attached to the tail of the letterform 'D' looks up at the previous psalm text, with his mouth wide open. The Leiden Psalter teems with open-mouthed and biting creatures, as we have already seen before. The winged creature inside the grotesque initial is biting his own tail, not only creating an amusing sight but also reproducing a minuscule

¹⁹⁷ For a discussion of the marginal notes in the Leiden Psalter, see pp. 52-55.

¹⁹⁸ Kendrick, pp. 126-139.

¹⁹⁹ 'I wilt sing praises to Thee, my God, before the Angels.'

²⁰⁰ '*In conspectu angelor[um] psallam tibi*' f. 157v, ps. 137:1.

'In the presence of angels, I sing your praises.' Contemporary English Version, ps. 138:1.

interlaced knotwork. However, the bearded face seems to have his mouth open with different intentions: he appears to speak or perhaps even sing. He may embody the oral performance of prayer. In the previously discussed initials the pictorial metaphor for the music and recitation of prayer was in the depictions of musicians, already performing the prayers in silence – needing to be completed by the reader's performance, materialising the aspect of sound of the miniatures. Here the aspect of the human voice is depicted, a fundamental necessity for communication between the divine and the devotee.

The unison of the grotesque initial is made out of the interplay of the letterform, the image, and sound. Its interpretation is, again, subject to movement and changeability, and therefore never fully complete. The entanglement of text and image in the grotesque initial is notable, since the image of the creature partly forms the letter, as well as being encapsulated by it. The miniature stands out on the page, suggesting depth and layers that may refer to the practice of devotion. What is more, the grotesque features of the initial speak to the reader's imagination, and give it memorability. The letterform, images, colours, interlacing, and suggested orality make the miniature simultaneously an entanglement of elements and a coherent entity.

Conclusion

The discussion about the relation between text and image is ongoing, especially in the study of medieval manuscripts where writing and pictures are closely bound together. The present study proposed a theoretical reconsideration of the dynamic relation between text and image as systems of signs, with the inclusion of their materiality, and sound (orality and aurality). To demonstrate the use of this theory for the study of medieval manuscripts, one particular case has been analysed. The Leiden Psalter is a twelfth-century devotional manuscript, containing a calendar, a set of full-page miniatures, psalms, canticles, the Athanasian Creed, the litany, and prayers. The manuscript was made in the diocese of York for Archbishop Geoffrey Plantagenet and was probably intended for devotional practice. Later it fell into the hands of Louis IX of France (Saint Louis), who learned to read from it. Later still the manuscript was passed on to the Burgundian family, who also used it as a tool for education and devotion. The theory of the dynamic relation between written text and image is perfect for the study of the elaborately decorated initials in the Psalter, because the muddled distinction between the two is particularly evident in these elements in the manuscript.

The hypothesis proposed at the outset of this master's thesis was that a theoretical reconsideration of the relationship between text and image in the initials of the Leiden Psalter, taking a holistic approach including materiality and sound, could indicate that the Psalter not merely transmits psalms and prayer, but is an embodiment of religious devotion, sanctity, and literacy. The inclusion of materiality in this discussion led to interesting new ideas about the position of the object, in this case the Leiden Psalter regarded as a devotional manuscript, in medieval society. These concluding remarks are meant to establish that this hypothesis proved productive.

Debate on the relation between writing and images is at the centre of the study of art in medieval manuscripts. The theoretical study presented in this master's thesis is significant because it offers a new perspective on this ongoing discussion. The focus has been on a linguistic-semiotic approach for too long, whereas materiality and the essential visual nature of both images and writing have been ignored. Traditionally, the relation between text and image is assumed to be dialectic. In the study of decorated medieval manuscripts images are always seen as being in the service of the text: it is a relation between language and visual representation. This reflects the primary medieval view on writing and images. Written text was deemed superior to images

because it was seen as a disembodied representation of divine truth that does not lend itself easily to idolatry. Yet, quite paradoxally, it was in the same medieval Christian culture that decorating letters became popular. The designing of letters in medieval manuscripts suggests authorisation, animation and mystification, in order to elevate their prominence. Additionally, ‘ordinary’ writing can also be seen as image. Letters are pictorial conveyers of meaning; they visually appeal to the senses and create presence, whilst still insisting on their character as a sign. The relation between written text and image is thus dynamic, suggesting changeability and emphasising their mutual overlap. So, if text and image are both fundamentally pictorial in nature, where lies their distinction?

Although writing and images are both pictorial, their inner workings are evidently different. Their distinction, however, is difficult to pinpoint. The implementation of Peirce’s theory of semiotics has shed light on the difference between writing and images as two distinct systems of signs, which in turn leads to conclusions about their overlap. However, Peirce saw signs as ‘representations’ of meaning: they represent an underlying ‘idea’. The presiding notion in semiotic theory understands signs as arbitrary and does not consider the materiality of signs to be important. For the inclusion of materiality in this discussion, this elementary ‘representationalism’ must be disputed.

In accordance with Barad’s critique of linguistic theories, signs do not *represent* meaning: rather, they *materialise* and *embody* meaning. Barad, one of the forerunners of the new materialist theory, postulates that matter is active and proposes a performative account of agency. Everything is a materialisation and embodiment of its determined meaning. Agency, the ability to act to produce a particular result, is not imposed. It is generated through intra-action of phenomena (the primary ontological units), which means that it is dynamic and relational in nature. Matter is extant only as performative agency, a literal materialisation that is determined by other phenomena. In a new materialist account, written texts and images are a congealing of agency that embodies meaning – just as everything else. It is only extant in its own intra-active ‘becoming’.

The primary function of the Leiden Psalter was to be an aid for private devotion. The manuscript, however, is subject to interpretational change over the course of time, and this is reflected in its materiality. Later, the Psalter also functioned as an educational tool for the youngest of its owners, amongst whom was Saint Louis. For this master’s thesis I chose to focus mainly on the use of the Psalter in the practice of prayer and devotion, rather than its use in education. Prayer in the Middle Ages entailed the expression of belief, doctrine, and identity. It

was the practical communication between the devotee and a higher being, in which the manuscript played an assisting role. It offered support, encouragement, and conducted the holy texts to the reader. The manuscript could have been used in different circumstances, most likely either during a collective form of worship (e.g. the liturgy) or during individual meditation and prayer.

The practice of prayer was speech, which could have required all kinds of oral delivery: uttering, singing, and reciting the words of prayer. Prayer was a conversation that was conducted inside the Psalter (in the psalm texts) and outside it (in the reciting of the texts by the reader). The written text in the Psalter signifies this conversation by marking pronunciation, rhythm and silence. Writing, however, is not an embodiment of speech, because the one is not inherent to the other: sound and silence are material phenomena in themselves. Speaking and silence are in a mutually determinable intra-active relation that stems from one material source, i.e. the writing in the Psalter. The sound (and silence) of speech is thus not independent of writing, which means that they are separate yet fully intra-dependent phenomena. The role of the reader is essential for the production of the oral performance of prayer. The practice of prayer is also conveyed in the (added) musical notation of the psalmody that can be found on ff. 136-143. This music is used in daily devotion. It is unclear, however, why the musical notation was added to the Psalter, since the devotee generally knew the melody of the psalms, and because it was only added on a few specific folia and not throughout the manuscript.

Prayer was also rite, incorporating gestures and bodily performance. The handling of the manuscript might be seen as part of the ritual of prayer itself: opening, browsing, and touching the Psalter, interacting with its contents. The texts of the Psalter are not necessarily structured for use in daily devotion, but there is an instruction added at the end of the book that indicates the order of prayer for the devotee. Furthermore, the liturgical division of the psalms, and the coloured and highlighted writing that emphasises the sections of the texts, indicates structure in the book.

There is also a dynamic performativity between the manuscript and its reader. Barad suggests an intra-active relation between object and observer in which they determine and interpret one another. In fact, the concepts can be used interchangeably, since there no longer is an inherent object or subject. The layout of the Psalter contains absorption that invites and animates the devotee to interpret the manuscript in a certain way. The images and the scripts of the text make the object 'alive' and active, animating the textual contents through illustration, decoration, lively colours and patterns. Images also make the contents of the Psalter memorable by stimulating, mystifying, and arousing prayer. Religion and devotion are embodied in the

Psalter. The divine and holy is made present through the materiality of the book: its parchment, images, writing and script, texts, etc.

The Leiden Psalter also functions as an object of wealth and status. The added marginal notes on f. 30v and f. 185r proclaiming that Saint Louis owned the manuscript, give it an almost relic-like status. The high standard of the materials, its beautiful images and large script guarantee that the manuscript conveys prestige and luxury. Furthermore, the large script and images make the Psalter especially interesting as educational material. It can be said that the devotional manuscript was a primer for literacy: it not only taught children how to read but also instructed them in the art of devotion. There are doodles, scratching, and writing in the margins of the Leiden Psalter that may refer to the educational function of the manuscript.

The decorated initials in the Leiden Psalter provide some of the main arguments that defy the traditional distinction between written text and image. Initials tend to fall between disciplines because of their overlapping nature; they encompass both text and image, but are not quite either of them. The decorated initials function in ways similar to the other images in the Psalter, as ornament, amusement, as mnemonic devices, to convey structure, and to emphasise important parts of the texts. There are more than a hundred and fifty decorated initials in the manuscript: one preceding every psalm, canticle, prayer, or other text. Three are analysed in the present study.

In the light of the proposed theory the decorated initials can be seen as entanglements: quite literally (an intertwining of text, image, and sound) and as a metaphor for the new materialist understanding of matter (an entanglement of the material and the discursive). I propose that these miniatures should be seen as a process of intra-active becoming – as is everything else. The initial is in constant intra-action with surrounding phenomena, which generates mutual agency and thereby determines materialisation. The materiality of the manuscript is thus a doing; it is a continuous and changeable intertwining of discursive practices (i.e. meaning) and matter. The initials are part of the bigger entity of the Psalter, but they themselves consist of ‘building blocks’ that are paint, colour, writing, decoration, figures, and sound. Meaning is thus not *represented*, but *embodied* in the materiality of the miniatures. This means that the texts and images are not merely arbitrary representations of an intangible ‘idea’ that eludes meaning, but rather the body of that meaning itself.

This, however, does not explain the ungraspable distinction between writing and images. There is a text-image paradox in this theoretical approach to the discussion, especially when looking at the decorated initials. Written text and images are simultaneously ontologically inseparable, but semantically distinct. The agential realist account of materiality emphasises the

homogeneity of the concepts. Both written text and image are material-discursive phenomena, and they are ontologically inseparable. However, they differ in experience and feel, and they can be seen as two different systems of signs. It is trivial to say that images are fundamentally the signs that Peirce terms 'icons', whereas the letters of writing are 'symbols'. Pictures and written text have qualities of icons, symbols *and* indices: both only hold semantic power in their pictorial context, depend on interpretation by the observer, and only exist within rules of representation. A semiotic interpretation only muddles their distinction. It does reveal, however, that written texts and images are distinct in their respective indirectness and directness of communication. Both pictorial elements allow for a specific intra-pretation by the observing phenomenon, i.e. the reader, with the 'proper' apparatuses and discursive practices. Written text allows for a generalised and abstract form of communication that is heavily dependent on a reader's literacy, education, and further context. Image, conversely, is more universally known and much less dependent on the reader's knowledge and education, although there is a certain visual literacy that should always be taken into consideration. Thus only the reader, who understands the matter only in its own context (education, background, ability, etc.), makes the distinction between writing and image in the light of specific intra-pretation. The reader's social context can be seen as apparatuses that make agential cuts and allows for specific determinacies. In turn, the initials also allow for specific intra-pretations, since the relation between subject and object is dynamic and reciprocal. The miniatures were created with an intended audience in mind and were made to be interpreted in certain ways, restricted by their own materiality.

The decorated initials of the Leiden Psalter make up a complex unity. The materialisation of writing and images in the decorated initials is also determined by their internal and reciprocal dynamic relation. That which is not text is image, and vice versa. This constant movement and dynamism, however, makes the distinction between letters and images also quite difficult to pinpoint. It is hard definitively to draw a line where writing ends and image begins in the decorated initials. They are thus paradoxally distinct and indistinct, simultaneously similar and different.

Moreover, the complex unity of the decorated initials is not complete without the inclusion of the 'building block' of sound. Where writing and images are part of the materiality of the manuscript, sound is primarily materialised outside the manuscript. It should be seen as an important part of the miniatures and an essential component in the initials' text-image dynamics. The mutual and reciprocal relation between written text and sound is perhaps easiest to determine. Images, however, are often seen as merely pictorial and visual in nature, even though they adhere to the senses in ways similar to those of written text. The silence of the images feels

incomplete. The voice that is experienced in painting is perhaps less absolute than that in spoken text, but it is still known as the breath and rhythm with which the images are inscribed. Moreover, music and recitation can be evoked by the subject matter of the images. The element of sound in the decorated initials of the Leiden Psalter is thus simultaneously entangled in the materiality of the miniatures *and* requires materialisation outside the object.

The analysis of the three chosen decorated initials from the Leiden Psalter – the Beatus-initial, the musician’s initial, and the grotesque initial – has shown that they were meant as an aid for prayer. The initials embody devotion and divine truth, and mystify religious meaning. The absorption of the decorated initials draws the devotee in: it captivates and animates the letter to inspire awe. The initial letters are designed to stand out on the parchment page and to be ‘more than’ the rest of the written text in the manuscript. They have a prominence that makes them similar to *nomina sacra*; their semantic power not only lies in the conveyance of textual meaning, but also in their embodiment of divinity. The musician’s initial, for example, is semantically insignificant, since its letterform is nearly unrecognisable as a ‘D’. Its intra-active relation with both the manuscript’s context and the reader, however, determines its ‘real’ textual and spiritual meaning. It has semantic power as a *nomen sacrum*, even more so than its signification as an alphabetic letterform. The figurative image of a winged creature in the grotesque initial is simultaneously locked into the letter shape *and* forms the tails of the letter. It forms the ultimate intertwining of written text and image, where the distinction is not definitive but gradually changes.

Furthermore, the decorated initials are designed to look ‘alive’ and moving. Not only do they stand out on the page from the rest of the lay-out, the initials are also composed to stand out toward the reader. The illusion of depth, a 3D object on a 2D page, gives the miniatures bodily presence. The Beatus-initial’s letterform ‘B’ looks as though it has hinges, hung onto the framework, and as if it can be opened like a door. The golden background suggests that there is something behind the initial that may be found only when the letter is ‘opened’. The golden background, which is also found in the other two initials, appears as a materialisation of the immaterial, an embodiment of light or the divine. This can be attained when the devotee reaches beyond the manuscript page.

The patterns and interlacing in the decorated initials suggest movement, which invites the reader to devotion and meditation. The repetition and rhythm of the interlace motifs is especially prominent in the Beatus-initial and the musician’s initial. The use of the miniatures in meditation may have been quite practical: the interlace pattern could have been traced, touched, or even

kissed. Divine truth was entangled into the knotwork, which may have been untangled through meditation and devotion. Moreover, the rhythm and pattern could be an allusion to the oral performance of the psalms through recitation or music. Even more so, the most prominent figures in the initials refer to the sound of music. An obvious example is the musician's initial, where the figure of the musician embodies and evokes musical performance, not only of practical prayer but also of the music that is mentioned in the psalm. In addition to the musician's referral to the practicality of prayer, some figures allude to devotion in different ways. In the Beatus-initial the figures in the framework signify the 'struggle' of devotion and embody a spiritual battle. Other figures, such as the imagery of the grotesque initial, seem to have no real place in devotion. They do, however, speak to the imagination and are memorable: they are beautiful, funny and gruesome.

In conclusion, all three initials form a perfect ensemble of text, image, and sound: these elements are simultaneously in constant movement and together form a coherent element in the manuscript. They embody, mystify and animate the practice of devotion and divine truth. The decorated initials of the Leiden Psalter intertwine the elements of text, image and sound into one holistic element of the manuscript. And although the manuscript as a material entity is never 'complete', since it is subject to constant interpretational change and movement that is created in its materialisation, it is full in its incompleteness. The elements of the Leiden Psalter, including its decorated initials, are separate and non-intrinsic, but fully entangled phenomena in their intra-active becoming. The Psalter gives bodily presence to prestige, education, sanctity, and the divine.

Appendix

A description of the Leiden Psalter (Leiden, University Library, BPL 76 A)

Signature	BPL 76 A
Type	Manuscript
Short title and genre	Calendar; full-page miniatures; psalms & prayers
Language	Main text Latin; Additions in Latin, French and Hebrew
Date	c. 1190
Script	Gothic <i>littera textualis</i> (book hand)

Material	Parchment
Binding	The binding is from the 18 th century; brown leather, stamped with golden flowers and decorative edges. There are four 18 th -century parchment flyleaves – two in the front and two in the back of the book. There is an added paper leaf in the front with information on the provenance and bibliography. The manuscript was cut to fit the binding, most visibly on the upper and lateral margins. Gold leaf is added to the edges of the pages, so that when the book is closed the side, top and bottom of the manuscript has a golden colour. The edges also have four stamps at the top and bottom, proclaiming the ownership of the university library.
Number of leaves	185 folia ²⁰¹
Quires	32 quires: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The calendar (ff. 1r-6v) is one quire of six folia.• The full-page miniatures (ff. 7r-30r) are three quires of eight, twelve and four folia.• The psalms & prayers (ff. 30v-185r) are nineteen quires, all of eight folia, except for quires 16 and 17 that both have ten folia,

²⁰¹ The verso and recto on respectively ff. 7 -30 and f. 185v are left blank.

and quire 19 that only has six. The last folium (f. 185) is not part of any quire and was very probably attached to the book in the later thirteenth century.²⁰²

Physical state

The manuscript is in a relatively decent physical state. There is brown staining throughout. Additionally there are black and brown fingerprints in the entire manuscript. Most notably there are greasy stains at the top of many pages. On f. 103r there is an exceptionally large greasy stain covering the entire page.

The book has small holes throughout. In the first and last quires there are small insect holes. On f. 27r the miniature is painted through quite a large hole, onto f. 28r, which is a blank page. On ff. 88 and 174 the lower right corner is ripped.

The miniatures in both the calendar and the full-page miniatures are damaged and worn. The decorated initials are damaged as well – the larger initials more than the smaller ones. The full-page miniatures appear to have been touched, resulting in the fading of the paint. The green paint of the framework of the full-page miniatures has corroded and can be seen on the blank pages between the miniatures. The same is true for the green paint in the decorated initials, which has been acidic and has corroded through the folia. On some pages, such as f. 31r, the paint of the initial has stained the folium opposite.

Measurements (h x w)

243x177 mm.

Text area

ff. 1r-6v (calendar): 207 x 118 mm.

ff. 30v-185r (psalms & prayers): 180 x 100 mm.

Columns

ff. 1r-6v (calendar): not applicable; text in a diagram

ff. 7r-30r (full-page miniatures): not applicable

ff. 30v-179r (psalms, canticles, creed): one

ff. 179v-182r (litany): two

ff. 182v-185r (prayers): one.

²⁰² A.W. Byvanck, *Les principaux manuscrits à peintures conservés dans les collections publiques du Royaume des Pays-Bas* (Paris 1931) (Bulletin de la Société française de reproduction des manuscrits à peintures 15), p. 84.

Ruling	<p>There is ruling in dark graphite throughout. It is clearly visible.</p> <p>The ruling in the calendar shows through the miniatures.</p>
Way of ruling	<p>ff. 1r-6v (calendar): 7 vertical lines from edge to edge of the page, 33 horizontal lines between the two outermost vertical lines (except the 2 or 3 upper horizontals which reach to either edge of the page).</p> <p>ff. 7r-30r (full-page miniatures): 6 vertical lines and 6 horizontal lines which form the lines of the framework for the miniatures. The ruling only is on the decorated pages.</p> <p>ff. 30v-179r (psalms, canticles, creed) and ff. 182v-185r (prayers): 4 verticals drawn until the edge of the page, 20 horizontal lines from the between the two outermost vertical lines (except for the first and last two horizontals). The ruling is often messy and not consistent between the verticals.</p> <p>ff. 179v-182v (litany): 6 vertical lines from edge to edge of the page, 20 horizontal lines between the outermost vertical lines (the first and last two horizontals are drawn up to the edge of the page).</p>
Prickings	<p>ff. 1r-6v (calendar): there are prickings in the inner margin, but they are hardly visible.</p> <p>ff. 7r-30r (full-page miniatures): there are prickings in the upper margin, but these are often cut off.</p> <p>ff. 30v-185r (psalms & prayers): Prickings are sometimes visible in the inner margins and lower margins.</p>
Number of text lines	<p>ff. 1r-6v (calendar): 33 (f. 1v: 31 lines and f. 3v, 5r, 6r: 32 lines)</p> <p>ff. 30v-185r (psalms & prayers): 20</p> <p>Occasionally the last words of the sentence on the bottom line are written below the last line (on ff. 47v, 88v, 105v, 138r, 141r, and 151r).</p>
Foliation	<p>At the upper right hand corner of each recto there is modern pencil foliation.</p>
Catchwords	<p>There are catchwords on ff. 62v, 70v, and 126v. On f. 72r, 73r, 74r there are red roman numerals in the lower margin, respectively ii,</p>

iii, iiiii. In the lower margin of ff. 81r, 82r there is a small star-like sign in red ink, perhaps used as quire signature. In the lower margin of ff. 119r, 127r, 135r, 161r, and 171r, there are roman numerals in brown ink (XII, XIII, XIII, XVII, and XVIII).

Highlighting

ff. 1r-6v (calendar): text in red, green and blue.

ff. 30v-185r (psalms & prayers): A pilcrow-like sign in red or blue is found throughout the text. There is distinction text next to the large ornamental initials in red and blue. Furthermore there are many small initials and linefillers that may have functioned as highlighting (see 'Initials' and 'Illumination').

Initials

There are one-line penwork initials in blue and red throughout.

The decorated, inhabited, and historiated initials are the following:

- On f. 30v there is a full-page inhabited initial 'B' for the beginning of Psalm 1 (*Beatus vir*). The initial is decorated with a framework of interlace and multiple figures. In the middle of the letter, there is a medallion with a seated David (playing harp). In the four corners of the initial there are medallions with several different musicians. The Beatus-initial measures 180x130 mm (image 6).
- Nine large ornamental initials (seven or eight lines) are found at the main liturgical divisions, i.e. at the beginning of Psalms 26, 38, 51, 52, 68, 80, 97, 101, and 109. They are blue, red and green interlace on a golden background. Alternatively the initials have a red or blue framework. The interlace is interspersed with animals. Many initials have a larger human or animal figure in one of its corners. These initials are found on ff. 52r, 65v, 77r, 78r, 90v, 106r, 120v, 122v, and 136r. The measurements on average are 65x70 mm (see image 7 for the 'musician's initial' on f.78r).
- Every psalm and canticle starts with a three-line decorated initial, often in blue, red and gold. Alternatively in red and blue. The initials found on ff. 32r, 33v, f. 38r, 38v, 39r, 40r, 41r, 42r, 45r, 46r, 46v, 49r, 49v, 50r, 51r, 53r, 53r, 54v, 55r,

56v, 57v, 58v, 59v, 61r, 66v, 67v, 68v, 69r, 71r, 73r, 75r, 76r, 78v, 79r, 80r, 81r, 81v, 82r, 84r (2), 85v, 86r, 87r, 88r (2), 92v, 93r, 94v, 95v, 97r, 98v, 99r, 100r, 102v, 104v, 105r, 107v, 108r, 109r, 109v, 110v, 111r, 112r, 116v, 117r, 117v, 119r, 120r, 121v, 122r, 124r, 125r, 127r, 131v, 134r, 136v, 137r, 137v, 138r, 139r, 139v, 140r, 141r (four lines), 141v, 142r, 142v (2), 143r, 143v, 144r, 144v, 145r (2), 145v, 146r, 146v, 147r (2), 147v, 148r, 148v, 149r, 149v, 150r, 150v (2), 151r, 151v, 152r (2), 153r (2), 153v, 154r (2), 155r (2), 155v, 157r, 157v, 158r, 159v, 160r, 160v, 161r, 162r, 163r, 164r, 164v, 165r, 165v, 166r, 166v, 167r, 167r, 168r, 169r, 171v, 174v, 175v, 176v, 177r, and 177v (2), are decorated with zoomorphic depictions, foliation, mythical creatures, and grotesque-like motifs. The initials on ff. 32v, 33r, 34v, 35v, 36r, 40v, 43v, 47r, 62r, 64r, 69v, 72r, 72v, 83r, 85r, 98r, 107r, 114v, 115v, 118v, 121r, 129r, 133v, 139v, 148v, 152v, 156v, and 170r depict humans and might be historiated initials rather than decorated ones.²⁰³ The initial letters measure on average 30x27 mm; however, much of the decoration extends into the margin (see image 8 for the ‘grotesque initial’ on f. 158r).

- On f. 177v the Creed starts with a decorated initial ‘Q’ (*Quicumque uult*) with an animal motif.
- On 179v the Litany of the Saints begins with the initial ‘K’ (*Kyrieleyson*) in gold and blue with foliated motifs.
- Initials in gold, blue and red precede the prayers. On f. 182v there are 3, with animals and foliated motifs. On f. 183r there are 4; 2 with animals, 1 with foliation and 1 depicting the bust of a cleric. F. 183v has 3 initials; 2 with animals and 1 with a human figure (perhaps Christ?).

²⁰³ There might be decorated initials with animal motifs that could be historiation as well, especially the initials that depict fish (which could be seen as a signifier for Christ).

Illumination

There are abstract motifs as linefillers, in green, red and blue ink throughout the entire text of the psalms and prayers. On f. 105v there is a small ink dragon-like creature in the lower margin, which seems to be the only creature in pen decoration.

The calendar on ff. 1-6 has two miniatures per folium as a representation of every month. The miniatures in the upper margin are cut off partially at rebinding. They depict the labours of the months within a square frame, which measure on average 30 mm in width. The height is undeterminable because the tops of the miniatures are cut off. In the right margin at the middle of the page there are medallions with the zodiac signs for each month (see 'Iconography'). These measure 37x37 mm.

The 23 full-page miniatures on ff. 7-29 represent several Old and New Testament scenes (see 'Iconography'). The miniatures measure 160x110 mm. (including framework), and are divided into two separate scenes. The first full-page miniature contains six scenes in medallions and measures 160x140 mm. The last miniature is of Christ surrounded by the evangelists and measures 190 x 140 mm. The scenes of all the miniatures are painted on a golden background and within a framework ornamented with abstract decoration (see image 5 for the full-page miniatures on ff. 16v and 17r).

The style is typical of north-English painting. The faces are heavily modelled using brown shading. The figure poses seem stiff; however, the images are enlivened by the fluidity and sweeping folds of the drapery. The faces are seemingly expressionless. This style is often described as coarse or undistinguished. The images give a straightforward depiction of the scenes.²⁰⁴

Iconography

ff. 1-6 (calendar);

- f. 1r: January; a man feasting, Aquarius.
- f. 1v: February; a man warming himself by the fire, Pisces.

²⁰⁴ Nigel Morgan, *Early Gothic manuscripts, 1190-1250* (London 1982) (A survey of manuscripts illuminated in the British Isles 4), pp. 60-62 (no. 14).

- f. 2r: March; a man digging, Aries.
- f. 2v: April; a woman holding a flower, Taurus.
- f. 3r: May; a man falconing, Gemini.
- f. 3v: June; a man weeding, Cancer.
- f. 4r: July; a man scything, Leo.
- f. 4v: August; men cutting corn, Virgo.
- f. 5r: September; a figure threshing, Libra.
- f. 5v: October; a man sowing, Scorpio.
- f. 6r: November; a figure picking fruit, Sagittarius.
- f. 6v: December; the slaughter of a pig, Capricorn.

ff. 7-29 (full-page miniatures);

- f. 7r: Seated (beardless) God in mandorla held by four angels surrounded by six round medallions with scenes of the first six days of creation. In the upper left corner God between two angels, next to it (clockwise) God dividing the waters, the creation of the sun and moon, creation of Eve, creation of the birds, and the creation of the trees.
- f. 8v: God's instruction to Adam and Eve, the eating of the forbidden fruit, God's reprimand.
- f. 9r: Expulsion from Paradise, the angel instructing Adam to dig, Eve spinning.
- f. 10v: Offerings of Cain and Abel, Murder of Abel by Cain, God instructs Noah to build the ark.
- f. 11r: Noah in the ark receives the dove, Noah's drunken sleep.
- f. 12v: God's permission to Abraham, Abraham and Hagar with their son Ishmael, Abraham receives the three angels.
- f. 13r: Sacrifice of Isaac, Joseph sold by his brothers is carried off to Egypt.
- f. 14v: Samson and the lion, a group of figures with a small child (possibly Samson's parents), Samson carries off the Gates of Gaza, his destruction of the Temple.

- f. 15r: Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity.
- f. 16v: Annunciation to the Shepherds, Journey of the Magi.
- f. 17r: Magi before Herod, Adoration of the Magi.
- f. 18v: The Magi warned by the Angel to return by another way, Presentation of Christ in the Temple.
- f. 19r: Flight into Egypt, Massacre of the Innocents.
- f. 20v: Marriage at Cana, Baptism of Christ.
- f. 21r: Temptations of Christ.
- f. 22v: Raising of Lazarus, Entry into Jerusalem.
- f. 23r: Last Supper, Betrayal of Judah.
- f. 24v: Christ before Pilate, the Flagellation, Way of the Cross.
- f. 25r: Deposition, Anointing of Christ's body.
- f. 26v: Holy Women at the Tomb, Descent into Hell.
- f. 27r: *Noli me tangere*, Meal at Emmaus, Doubting of Thomas.
- f. 28v: Ascension, Pentecost.
- f. 29r: Christ in Majesty surrounded by Prophets with (empty) scrolls and symbols of the Evangelists.²⁰⁵

Attribution

The manuscript was probably made in York, c. 1190-1200. The style of painting can be compared to many contemporary art objects from the same region – according to Morgan the York style is similar to a contemporary development in Durham. There is no known artist or group coupled to the production of the Leiden Psalter, nor are there other manuscripts that are believed to have been attributed to the same artist(s).²⁰⁶

Language

Main text in Latin; additions in Latin, French and Hebrew.

Script

Early gothic *littera textualis* book hand (see 'Writing practice').

Main hands

Main text is seemingly one hand; additions are written in seven different hands (see 'Medieval additions' and 'Later additions').

²⁰⁵ Morgan 1982, pp. 61.

²⁰⁶ Morgan 1982, p. 61.

Writing practice	<p>The hand looks quite compact and dark, but the text is easily legible. The letters hover slightly above the line. The letterforms are minuscule and fairly regular; they are pointy and seemingly jagged. The letters are typically gothic, with diamond-shaped serifs (or ‘<i>quadratus</i>’-shaped) and hairline upstrokes. The ascenders and descenders have clubbed stems with a slightly forked top. Although the text has few ‘biting’ connections, there are many standard abbreviations and ligatures. Because of the lack of ‘biting’ I would argue that the script is an early <i>littera textualis</i>, which has some characteristics of a <i>proto-gothic</i> book hand.²⁰⁷ The punctuation uses the <i>positurae</i>-system, which punctuates by using different signs for each given pause.²⁰⁸</p>
Author	not applicable
Text	<p>ff. 1r-6v: calendar</p> <p>(ff. 7r-29r: full-page miniatures – no text)</p> <p>ff. 30v-171v: psalms</p> <p>ff. 171v – 177v: canticles</p> <p>ff. 177v-179r: Athanasian creed</p> <p>ff. 179v-182v: litany of the Saints</p> <p>ff. 182v-184r; prayers</p> <p>ff. 184r-185r; instruction for the use of the psalter (see ‘Medieval additions’)</p>
Incipit / Explicit	<p>ff. 1r-6v (calendar), Incipit: <i>Prima dies mensis</i></p> <p>Explicit: <i>S[an]c[t]i Siluestri pape .</i></p> <p>ff. 30v-171v (psalms), Incipit: <i>Beatus vir qui non</i></p> <p>Explicit: <i>in psalmis canentem</i></p> <p>ff. 171v – 177v (canticles), Incipit: <i>Audite celi que loquar</i></p> <p>Explicit: <i>et gloriam plebis tue .</i></p>

²⁰⁷ Bernhard Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990), pp. 127-136.

²⁰⁸ R. Clemens and T. Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Ithaca: Cornell UP 2007), pp. 84-85.

ff. 177v-179r (creed), Incipit: *Quicumq[ue] uult saluus e[ss]e*

Explicit: *saluus esse non poterit*.

ff. 179v-182v (litany), Incipit: *Kyrieleyson*.

Explicit: *Et clamor meus ad te ueniat*.

ff. 182v-184r (prayers), Incipit: *Deus qui p[ro]prium est*

Explicit: *quiete p[er]frui sempiterna*. [*Christus*].

Medieval additions

There is a later added obit on f. 4r: 'Obit[us] henrici, reg[is] Angl[orum] . pat[ris] / d[omi]ni . G[eoffrey]. Ebor[acensis] Arch[ie]pi[scopi] .' This translates loosely as 'death of Henry, King of England, the father of our lord Geoffrey, archbishop of York' (see 'Origin manuscript'). The text is written in a neat gothic cursive hand. Similarly there is a later added obit on f. 5v: 'Obiit aldefonsus Rex / castelle / [et] toleti .' ('Death of Alfonso, King of Castile and Toledo') This hand is different from the previous addition, but also a gothic cursive. These obits can be dated respectively 1190-1200 and early thirteenth century.

On f. 30v and f. 185r there is an added rubricated double inscription: 'Cist psaultiers fuit mon seigneur/ saint looys qui fu roys du france/ ou quel il aprist en senfance' and, in seemingly the same hand, 'Cist psaultiers fu mon seignor/ saint looys qui fu roys de france/ ou quel il aprist enanfance' ('This Psalter was my lord St. Louis' who was King of France, from which he learned [to read] in his childhood'). The hand is a gothic *littera textualis*, a legible book hand. On f. 185r there is another addition in a different hand underneath the inscription stating: 'qui obiit anno d[omi]ni millesimo ducentesimo septuagesimo'. According to De Lettenhove these additions are thirteenth-century.²⁰⁹

The text on ff. 184r-185 is also believed to be a thirteenth-century addition (see 'Text'). It is a written instruction for the use of the psalter for daily devotion. It explains that the reciting of the

²⁰⁹ Baron Kervyn de Lettenhove, 'Le psautier de Saint Louis, conservé dans la Bibliothèque de l'Université de Leyde', *Bulletins de l'Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, 2e série 34 (1865), pp. 296-304.

psalms should be conducted in groups of twenty-five, each day of the week apart from Sunday, with accompanying collects to be said after each collection of psalms. The text is written in a hand different from the main text, yet a similar *textualis* book hand.²¹⁰ Incipit: *F[e]ria . u[ideo?] . post . xxv . psalmos dicitur h[ic] . A[lius?]/Explicit: ea que sunt apta sectari . [Christus]* . There is no edition of this text.

There are marginal notes (corrections and glosses) to the psalms and prayers text in a different hand – a legible gothic cursive and perhaps one other hand – on ff. 34r, 38v, 40v, 41r, 42r, 45r (45v – erased?), 46r, 46v, 47r, 53v, 54v, 57r, 59v, 62r, 65r, 67v, 69r, 72r, 73r, 75r, 77v, 80r, 81v, 83r, 84r, 86r, 90r, 93r, 95v, 98r, 99r, 104r, 106r, 107v, 109r, 110v, 112r, 118v, 120v, 121v, 122v, 125r, 129r, f. 133v (2), f. 134r, 135v, 136v (crossed out), 137r, 137v (crossed out), 138r, 139r, 139v (2), 140r, 148r (intermarginal), 150v (2), 151r, 151v (2), 152r, 152v (1 scratched out?), 153r (2), 153v, 154r (2), 155r (2), 156v, 157r, 157v, 158r, 159v, 160r, 160v, 161r, 163r, 164r, 164v, 165r, 165v, and 170v. The marginal glosses are sometimes slightly cut off during a rebinding of the manuscript.

Furthermore, there are marginal notes with musical notation in a shaky hand (seemingly different from the other note-hand, but also a gothic cursive) on ff. 136r (music in the lower margin), 136v (left and lower margin), 137r (music in the lower margin), 137v (lower margin), 138r (right margin), 138v, 139r (lower margin only musical bars, text and music scratched out), 139v, 140r (lower margin), 142v, and 143r (lower margin).²¹¹ This musical notation is diastematic with quadrat notation on four lines. The music is the antiphonal psalmody for the respective psalms on the folia.

²¹⁰ N. J. Morgan, 'Patrons and their Devotions in the Historiated Initials and Full-Page Miniatures of 13th-Century English Psalters', in: *The Illuminated Psalter: Studies in the Content, Purpose and Placement of its Images*, ed. by F. O. Büttner (Turnhout: Brepols 2004), p. 318.

²¹¹ Bischoff 1990, pp. 136-145.

Although the notes appear to be squiggly lines, they are meant to be full squares; the pen of the scribe is evidently not thick enough to write down the formal musical notation.²¹²

On ff. 32v and 35v there are two doodles in graphite. It appears as though the doodler attempted to recreate the initials on these pages. Throughout the manuscripts there are multiple doodles in graphite and drypoint. The doodles often have a childlike quality, scribbling and drawing in the margins (for example on ff. 160v and 178v).

The letters of the initials are sometimes written next to the initials in the side margins. At times other letters, such as a second or third letter of the first word of a psalm, are written in the margin as well (for example on ff. 144r and 159v). These letters are most likely not used for the instruction of a miniaturist: it is not consequent throughout the manuscript and there appear to be instructions written in full (although this is hardly readable). Moreover, the letters seem to have been written as exact copies of the initials' letterform (for example f. 153r). Furthermore, the hand is wobbly and the letters are often not exactly the right form, as if someone was drawing the letterforms as a way of learning or practice.

There are 'nota' signs in the form of a Greek cross, as well as the words *g[ra]tia* and *n[o]ta* throughout in the margins.

Apart from the transcriptions in this appendix there are no editions of the additional notes.

Later additions

On the verso side of one of the miniatures, f. 11v, there is a Hebrew text discernable. There is no edition of this text. In the upper right corner there are four lines visible (and perhaps part of a fifth line) in brown ink. The text has been erased. It is not certain whether this is medieval or a later addition.

²¹² *The The Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Don Micheal Randell (Harvard University Press 2002), pp. 535-536.

Edition	Not applicable – the manuscript contains the standard texts of the psalms, canticles, creed, litany and prayers.
Origin manuscript	The manuscript was probably made for Geoffrey Plantagenet, archbishop of York (1151-1212). The obit for his father, Henry II, is entered as an addition on the 7 th of July in the calendar (see ‘Medieval additions’).
Comment	<p>The attribution of the production of the manuscript to North-England, possibly York, is partly based on the saints mentioned in the calendar, some of whom are typically English (although not all typically Northern English):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Cuthbert, bishop (20 March) • St. Wilfrid, archbishop (24 April) • St. Dunstan, bishop (19 May) • St. Æthelbert, King and martyr (20 May) • St. Augustine, bishop (26 May) • St. Swithin, bishop (2 July) • St. Oswald, King and martyr (4 August) • Translatio of St. Cuthbert (5 September) • St. Wilfrid, bishop and martyr (again mentioned on 15 October) <p>The calendar is based on an Augustinian model of the province of York. In the Litany there are also many English saints mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • f. 180r: Sts. Oswald, Alban, Ædmund, Ædward, Thomas, Ælfege • f. 180v: Sts. Augustine, Guthlac, Wilfrid, Swithun, Dunstan, John, Botulph, Aidan • f. 181r: Sts. Ætheldrida, Æthelburga, Sexburga, Wereburga <p>The added obit would reinforce the notion that the manuscript was in fact made for Geoffrey Plantagenet, archbishop of York (see ‘Medieval additions’).²¹³</p>

²¹³ Léopold Victor Delisle, 'Le psautier de Saint Louis', in: *Mélanges de paléographie et de bibliographie* (Paris 1880), pp 167-172.

Provenance manuscript	<p>The second known owner is Blanche of Castille, queen of France (1188-1252). The obit for her father, Alphonso VIII (1155-1214), is added to the calendar on 6 October (see ‘Medieval additions’). Blanche then gives the Leiden Psalter to her son Louis IX, commonly known as Saint Louis, king of France (1215-1270). He in turn passes the manuscript on to his daughter Agnes (c. 1260-1327), wife of Robert II of Burgundy (c. 1248-1350); and after that to their daughter Jeanne of Burgundy, queen of France (d. 1348) married to Philip of Valois (c. 1293-1350). Philip gave it to his second wife Blanche of Navarre, queen of France (c. 1330-1398) from whom it passed to her grandson Philip the Bold, duke of Burgundy (1342-1404) in 1398. Thereafter it remained at the Burgundian court in Dijon and then went to Bruges. The Leiden Psalter was passed on to Jan van den Bergh, curator of the University and the Burgomaster of Leiden, in the 18th century. He gave it to the University Library at Leiden in 1741.²¹⁴</p>
Present owner	University Library Leiden, Collection Bibliotheca Publica Latina.

²¹⁴ A.W. Byvanck, *Les principaux manuscrits à peintures conservés dans les collections publiques du Royaume des Pays-Bas* (Paris 1931) (Bulletin de la Société française de reproduction des manuscrits à peintures 15), pp. 84-87 (pl. XXVI).

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