

Chapter 1 : iconography – Medieval Studies Research Blog: Meet us at the Crossroads of Everything

"Iconography at the Crossroads" is particularly appropriate at Princeton because Princeton became, after all, the locus classicus of iconography, inhabited by two of the subject's inspiring geniuses, Charles Rufus Morey and Erwin Panofsky.

Introduction to Visual Arts Art History Ancient Art Art History Medieval Art Art History Renaissance Art Art History European Art Art History Northern Renaissance Art Art History History of Prints Art History Museum Histories and Practices Art History Women, Art and Society Art History Lead author and responsible editor for Renaissance chapters. Pearson Prentice Hall, Fondos Pictóricos de la Colección Laia-Bosch. Syracuse University Press, , Areford and Nina S. The First Woman Painter of Florence. University of Missouri Press, , A Religious and Artistic Renaissance, edited by E. University of Pennsylvania, , Review of Dagmar Eichberger et al. Review of Jane L. Carroll and Alison G. Saints, Sinners, and Sisters: Hamburger, Nuns as Artists: Review of Brendan Cassidy, ed. New Works with Spanish Connections. Current Projects Book project: Representing Mary of Burgundy Book project: Summer research grant, Lake Forest College, , , , , University of Iowa Faculty Development Grants, , Professional Activities American Association for Netherlandic Studies, editorial board, present. Delivered paper at Boston,

As art historians draw increasingly from such cognate fields as literary theory and anthropology for new modes of inquiry, scholars in fields as diverse as music and the history of medicine are turning to images in art as sources of information for their respective disciplines.

How did Cain murder his brother? Where did he learn to kill? What did he do with the body? And so on and so forth in this manner, without recourse to satisfactory answers from the primary sources. Much like Nature, however, ancient and medieval scriptural commentators abhorred a vacuum; wherever lacunae existed in the biblical narratives, many were more than happy to fill the gaps with clever conjecture, rationalistic explanations, and apocrypha sourced from a variety of traditions. Similarly, the Babylonian Talmud explains how Cain, unfamiliar with the mechanics of death, effectively unleashes a flurry of wild blows until he finds the sweet spot of the neck. Ivory panel from Salerno Cathedral, c. Tucked away in a quirky little sermon on tithing dating from at least the eighth century a copy of which survives in British Library, MS Royal 5. Cain striking Abel with a jaw-bone. Cain striking Abel with a jaw-bone of a camel? The extra-scriptural tradition that Cain used a jaw-bone whether that of an ass, camel, or otherwise to slay his brother may ultimately derive, as M. Barb have suggested, from his designation as a tiller of the ground. Cain killing Abel with a scythe. British Library, MS Harley , f. Such an implement would not, of course, have been made from metal, since the forging of metal tools only began generations later with Tubal-Cain, as any early biblical scholar worth his salt would have remembered. In the absence of metallurgical science, then, a scythe or sickle would have been made of animal bone, perhaps even a jawbone or so the argument goes. As it happens, excavations of Near Eastern palaeolithic settlements have discovered just this sort of object, animal jawbones inset with flint blades as a replacement for the original teeth. One of the very earliest sources to allude to this outrageously primal method of killing is the apocryphal Latin Life of Adam and Eve or the Apocalypse of Moses in the Greek version , a collection of texts largely considered to be Jewish in origin and dating to the first century AD. Some such source as this must also lie behind the account given in the Zohar a thirteenth century collection of esoteric and Kabbalistic scriptural exegesis , where Cain is said to have bit his brother like a serpent because he did not know how to separate body and soul. It is worth pointing out as well that the Book of Enoch, an apocryphal Jewish text dating from around the third to first century BC, describes the antediluvian giants of Genesis 6 as cannibalistic monsters who drank the blood of their own race. These very giants, according to the tradition preserved in both the Irish Reference Bible and the Old English poem Beowulf, among others sources, had sprung directly from the murderous seed of Cain. The Book of Enoch, or at least a fragment of its Latin translation, was also definitely known in Anglo-Saxon England by the tenth century at the latest, and it is perhaps this very bit of apocryphal lore that the Beowulf poet had in mind when describing the monstrous kin of Cain, among whom the blood-drinking horror of the marchesâ€”Grendelâ€”numbered. For questions remained, and answers were demandedâ€”and when every detail, no matter how seemingly trivial, potentially held deep symbolic significance, such silence was indeed unacceptable. Luckily, there existed a robust inheritance of extra-biblical sources and authorities to satisfy even the most inquisitive of minds.

Iconography at the Crossroads by Brendan Cassidy As art historians draw increasingly from such cognate fields as literary theory and anthropology for new modes of inquiry, scholars in fields as diverse as music and the history of medicine are turning to images in art as sources of information for their respective disciplines.

This African-derived crossroads ritual is one of the most widely dispersed beliefs in African-American folklore and is practiced throughout the South. Crossroads work of this type is probably the most well known aspect of hoodoo and the least understood by those who stand outside the tradition. In performing the crossroads ritual to gain skills, you bring an item that you wish to master: During your visits you may encounter a mysterious series of black-hued animals, and on your last visit a figure will arrive. This is the man who meets people at the crossroads and teaches them skills. If you show no fear and stand your ground, "the devil" will take up the item you have brought with you and show you how to use it properly by using it himself. When "the devil" returns your item to you, you will possess the gift for excelling with that item. Those who wish guidance in performing a crossroads ritual of this type may gain confidence and some measure of preparedness for the ordeal by scheduling a spiritual consultation or magical coaching session with a hoodoo rootdoctor who has done the work for him or herself. How Conjure Doctors Work for Clients at a Crossroads A root doctor or conjure worker may go down to the crossroads for clients to help them dispose of ongoing situations and conditions in their lives. Hoodoo rootworkers also call upon the spirits of the crossroads on behalf of their clients, gather crossroads stones for spell work , and dispose of or disperse items used in rituals and altar work. The root doctor or conjure worker may also disperse work out into the crossroads to help spread magical spells such as money drawing and attracting a new lover out into the world to help call the desired effects back to their clients from the four corners of the world. The rootworker or conjure doctor will also cast work out at the crossroads to scatter people apart, to break up couples , and banish or hot foot enemies of their clients, to set them roaming and make them wander out through the crossroads and into the world. The Portable Crossroads Not all rituals that use the crossroads need to take place at an actual crossroads. This portable crossroads or cross-mark can be drawn on the ground with a stick or on an altar with sachet powders. It may be painted on a wall or laid out on a blanket. A symbolic crossroads may also be created with five dots rather than with two crossing lines. The dots go at the four points and the center of the area, in the same shape as seen on the five-side of a die or on a five of any suit of playing cards. A five-spot may be laid at the four corners of a bed, the four corners of a room, the four corners of a house or the four corners of a property, placing the space thus delineated at a metaphorical intersection between the world of spirit and the world of materiality. The Crossroads in Other Cultures Many of the spirits and deities from the African Traditional and African Diasporic religions are associated with the crossroads. In Lukumi and Santeria , the orisha associated with the crossroads is Eleggua. In the Congolese religion and its diasporic counterpart in the Americas, Palo Monte or Palo Mayombe , the mpungo associated with the crossroads is Nkuyu. In India, the Hindu deities associated with the crossroads are Ganesha , the opener of the way, and Bhairava , an aspect of Shiva who protects the boundaries of villages which are delimited by crossroads. In the Catholic Tradition the Catholic Church Saint , Saint Peter , is associated with the crossroads through his iconography showing the crossed keys of heaven. Saint Expedite is also associated with the crossroads because he holds a cross with the word "hodie" inscribed on it "today" in Latin , and works quickly to make thing happen for those who petition him.

Chapter 4 : Index Publications | The Index

Whether 'iconography' is truly at a 'crossroads' remains unproven. However, this collection of essays is a generally stimulating window on to the current practice of the discipline.

Iconography is the description, classification, and interpretation of the subject matter of a work of art. Derived from the Greek words *eikon*, meaning image or icon, and *graphia*, meaning description, writing, or sketch, the word iconography is one of the least understood, most abused, and most flexible terms in the English language. Its primary purpose is to understand and explicate the meaning behind what is represented. Simply described, it is by definition closely related to the equally complex but more abstract term iconology, traditionally understood as a more advanced and secondary phase in visual definition. Iconology has been described as "the description, classification, or analysis of meaning or symbolism in the visual arts that takes into account the tradition of pictorial motifs and their historical, cultural, and social meaning" Baca, p. Whereas these two terms were historically distinct, with the latter usually seen as the ultimate aim of all iconographic research, it is clear that modern usage has lessened their division. They have, to a certain extent, become interchangeable. As a subject iconography is as old as the first image created by humans, but as a concept in the history of ideas its documented study first dates from the end of the sixteenth century. Although iconography is still largely the province of the art historian, in whose discipline it was first used and with which it became irretrievably linked, it is clear that this is no longer true. Within that discipline its purpose has changed significantly from its prime association with the representational; iconography is now used to support new fields of research at the crossroads of disciplinary studies. Increasingly iconography is being applied to the nonvisual and to studies using textual, aural, or verbal material, which has extended its meaning. Within the field of popular research and computerization, studies have shown that iconography is the most widely used field of inquiry apart from that of artist or maker. Iconography can work on many levels, from the simply descriptive to the cultural and symbolic, and may be applied to the wider relational framework of content. The easiest of these is undoubtedly the descriptive, where the multivalent nature of images causes the greatest problems Eliade, p. Even though most art-historical research is underpinned in one form or another by iconography, this study will deal only with the historical development of the concept, the methodology used in its classification, and some modern trends and not with research such as that by Johannes Molanus in *De picturis et imaginibus sacris*, which uses an iconographical approach but does not deal with the idea itself. Historical Development Italy at the end of the sixteenth century provided the first scholarly studies in iconographical classification, all of which appeared within twenty-five years of each other. His *Iconologia* was first published in to great acclaim and included descriptions of over 1, personifications ranging from *Abondanza I*, 1 Abundance to *Zelo V*, Zealousness, each of which is described in detail as a manual for writers, artists, and illustrators of the period. The personifications are always described in terms of human forms with their attributes and poses clearly delineated. This dictionary of visual imagery is highly subjective; Ripa not only drew widely on existing representations but, when such precedents did not exist, created structures showing how they should be depicted. Images came to assume a greater role with the consequent and irretrievable association of what was then called iconology and art history. Iconology came to deal in visual fact, not theory, and began to take on humanistic associations. From the mid-seventeenth century onward, iconology was synonymous with the study of visual matter, with a slight emphasis initially on religious themes which was later extended to the secular. It was also around this time that iconography, the now more widely used of these two terms, came into use with its specific reference to visual usually portraits rather than textual material. Over time it was a word that came to be applied to specific generic types of subject matter—not only portraits but medical and scientific material as well. Although the term *ichnography* the art or process of drawings, yet a third variant, had been in use since the late fifteenth century or early sixteenth century, it became popular at the beginning of the seventeenth century for its particular reference to architectural subjects. The nineteenth century saw the organized beginnings of large-scale iconographical studies. This was what could be called the age of theory in art history, in which iconography was to assume a

pivotal and dominant role and extend its tenets into other fields. These studies were formative in the establishment and development of iconography as a modern interdisciplinary tool. If the works by these scholars were largely iconographical with occasional forays into iconology, they nevertheless defined the parameters of future research. Prior to this time, the focus of iconographical studies had been largely on style. In it, he balanced neoclassicism and rationalism against the concept of genius and spirit as represented by the world of medieval art. If Chateaubriand justified the study of art in all its forms from a slightly conceptual stance, it was Didron who actually enforced a more comprehensive iconographical approach. On the other hand, he is the first art historian to be either criticized or credited with the fact that iconography became irrevocably text-driven. The association between text and image is a characteristic that has both hindered and promoted research since then and is an element whose relationship is still not clearly defined. The twentieth century brought about a major reevaluation of the meaning of such terms and an even wider application of the practice. Resulting largely from the establishment of art history as a formal discipline in universities and the improvement of photographic reproductions, along with the greater availability of images and an increase in publications, iconography and iconology came into common usage and were applied to large-scale collections. The establishment for the first time of art historical photographic archives, such as the Witt Library Courtauld Institute of Art, the Index of Christian Art Princeton University, and the Frick Art Reference Library, meant that relatively large-scale visual resources were available for the study of particular themes and subjects. The organization of the many large photo archives created at the start of the century used subject matter or iconography as a point of access. One of the best-known archives, the Index of Christian Art, founded in at Princeton University, was also one of the earliest to use a thematic approach developed by Erwin Panofsky. This archive was undoubtedly to provide the impetus for what is considered the most innovative and insightful approach into the psychology of iconographical perception created by Panofsky, who was not only a friend of the founder but also one of the most ardent users and supporters of the Index. It was in the first few decades of the twentieth century that the value of iconography was analyzed for the first time in humanistic terms. Typical of such studies were those by Charles Rufus Morey, who saw iconography as a linchpin in understanding the broader context of any art-historical work. Iconography could therefore be used to determine date, style, and the broader sociocultural position of the work and was no longer limited to subject matter. This movement was ultimately to lead to a certain degree of stagnation in a number of studies prior to the s in which iconography was a slave to the determination of date and origin. *Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*, was published. Morey, like Panofsky, was a firm believer in the theory that iconography could be "read" like a text—a practice that continues in most cataloging systems. His reputation was established once he accepted the position of chair in the Department of Medieval Archaeology at the Sorbonne, Paris, in His studies largely focused on the French origins of both Romanesque and Gothic sculpture and were conducted from a strongly nationalistic and religious perspective. He is recognized as one of the most influential scholars of the twentieth century, not only for his academic studies but for his analysis of the methodologies of iconographic analysis and interpretation, which culminated in *Studies in Iconology*. Before assuming part-time teaching duties at New York University in , he taught at the Universities of Munich, Berlin, and Hamburg, where he was strongly influenced by Aby Warburg and what was then known as iconographical analysis. In , at the invitation of his friend Charles Rufus Morey, Panofsky transferred to the newly established Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University, where he remained until his death in His writings are characterized by a rare erudition and range. Denis as well as Mozart, the cinema, and the detective story. If Panofsky is seen as the scholar whose work culminated in the best-known study, Aby Warburg, a like-minded scholar, was also instrumental in promoting iconographical research methods. Panofsky was also preceded by some notable iconographers, mostly on the other side of the Atlantic with the exception of Meyer Schapiro, who, although born in Lithuania, lived in the United States, whose theories paralleled his own. All German by birth and training, they saw a need to evaluate the work from an interdisciplinary perspective in which its true meaning could be elucidated not just in relation to its immediate context but in its broader value, thus revealing "the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion" Panofsky, p. It was at this stage that the terms iconography and iconology were

revised, with iconography redefined as the basic stage of interpretation and iconology seen as the more advanced stage of interpretation. Iconography was to develop slowly yet consistently through the rest of the twentieth century until a period of critical self-examination in art history brought about some new developments. The relevance of iconography in art-historical studies was questioned, mainly by iconographers, and relegated to a secondary position by some factions within the discipline. Now that this period of self-examination seems to have abated, the relevance of iconography to what is called the "new art history" has once again been accepted as one of the fundamental tenets of the discipline. The implications for its understanding have also been extended into previously under-researched fields, such as reception, color, gender, and ethnography. Methodology If Ripa was among the first iconographical theoreticians to realize the importance of structure and systematization in this field, others did not follow his path until the beginning of the twentieth century. Informal, loosely defined, and independent structures were developed at the end of the nineteenth century with many scholarly studies in which related concepts and themes were grouped together, and significant and dominant subjects were discovered with the amassing of large bodies of visual data. It was from such studies that the twin applications of methodology to cataloging and interpretation developed. This work was initially undertaken in the photo archives that developed at the start of the century. It must be remembered that because no guidelines existed for the handling of such material, the organizational principles in use largely emulated those of the traditional book library—a policy that has caused some difficulties. The primary cataloging principle in visual collections was organization on a national basis French, Italian, Spanish. Such subject headings could also form the primary access point to the material, as in the case of the Index of Christian Art or the Rijksbureau Voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie in The Hague. Whereas such structures were broadly similar in their construction and could include any number of themes usually referred to as subject headings, there were no existing principles or guidelines with which to determine terminology or structure. His threefold division of interpretation and understanding also examined the psychology and mental processes involved in creative work: The first level is a description of the factual or expressional, termed the "pre-iconographic description," in which uninterpreted subjects are enumerated. This level does not require any in-depth knowledge of either the work or its context, apart from the ability to recognize what is represented. The secondary level, iconographical analysis, involves an understanding of the subject matter. It "constitutes the world of images, stories and allegories" Panofsky, p. The recognition of such themes can be based on external sources such as textual material and may be extensive, but it is usually acquired from familiarization with the material. The third or iconographical level is the most complicated of the three and involves an understanding of the intrinsic meaning or content, constituting the world of "symbolical values. Such deeper meanings cannot be immediately recognized. Why Panofsky completely reversed the use of existing terminology remains a mystery, but it was probably to accommodate his structure, which in itself is slightly unsatisfactory because of its inability to formulate a satisfactory term for the first level. The three divisions are clearly structured as a paper system, but in reality the speed with which the human mind culturally contextualizes subjects at a pre-iconographic level slightly blurs the three divisions. Considering the cultural associations everyone possesses, and which must be applied at a conscious or subconscious level, it is difficult to disentangle the various levels into coherent thought processes. His pioneering work, even in the early twenty-first century, forms the basic principle for iconographical analysis. The first of these is usually the broad level descriptor or general subject heading, such as portrait or landscape—an iconographic descriptor at its broadest. The second is the pre-iconographic description of the work—the generic elements in the work, such as bridge, lake, table, and so forth. Most cataloging systems fail to address iconological analysis, leaving such work to scholarly researchers. This alphanumeric system, published between and , divides what can be represented into nine divisions, with further subdivisions to the specific. For example, 73C14 is the code for the Burial of St. John the Baptist and is based on the divisions: Subjects drawn from the Bible Subjects drawn from the New Testament 73C: The public life of Christ from baptism until the Passion 73C1: Story of John the Baptist 73C However, no matter how structured or developed the classification system, the inherent difficulties and, ultimately, the impossible task of describing the visual with the verbal remain. Trends and Developments Computerization and its application to art history has been the most

dominant factor in the popular renewal of interest in iconography. User studies have shown the popularity of accessing subject matter in such venues as museum and gallery databases. There has been a similar renewed interest in scholarly research. Iconography is developing along twin tracks whereby the traditional is being refined with a greater need for detail and new needs are being created with the opening up of new fields. Large-scale iconographical projects have developed in art history with specializations, such as mythology, music, classical and legal material, medicine, and costume, to name just a few. Up to the end of the twentieth century, iconographical studies were largely concerned with Western art and the representational but must now encompass the abstract, stylized, non-Western, and nonrepresentational. Generalities will no longer suffice; more detail is required that reflects the study of minutiae now demanded by scholarship.

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Chapter 9 : Popular Iconography Books

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