



*Seeing the Invisible  
in Late Antiquity and  
the Early Middle Ages*



*Edited by  
Giselle de Nie, Karl F. Morrison  
and Marco Mostert*

# Seeing The Invisible In Late Antiquity And The Early Middle Ages

**Patricia Cox Miller**



## **Seeing The Invisible In Late Antiquity And The Early Middle Ages:**

**Seeing the Invisible in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages** Giselle de Nie, Karl Frederick Morrison, Marco Mostert, 2005 Limiting itself to the vital centuries when the late Roman West reshaped itself into a first Europe the conference explored the dominant conception of human nature in that era that human existence was both body in the visible world of material things and soul in the invisible world of spirit This was a legacy of pre Christian elements handed down from Greek philosophy and Hebrew Scriptures Assimilating it to indigenous cultures in the Roman West many alien to the ancient Mediterranean world precipitated sea changes in the understanding of human psychology Ensuing frictions sparked extraordinary expressions of creativity in words and visual images It also created dangerously subversive disequilibriums in the collective mentality within elites and between them and majority cultures The papers in this volume investigate numerous configurations of a new culture taking shape in that volatile environment They contribute to continuing debates about the cognitive co ordination of words and pictorial images and to cross disciplinary dialogues in such disparate fields as art history religious literature mysticism and cultural anthropology

### **The Corporeal Imagination** Patricia Cox

Miller, 2012-02-28 With few exceptions the scholarship on religion in late antiquity has emphasized its tendencies toward transcendence abstraction and spirit at the expense of matter In *The Corporeal Imagination* Patricia Cox Miller argues instead that ancient Christianity took a material turn between the fourth and seventh centuries During this period Miller contends there occurred a major shift in the ways in which the human being was oriented in relation to the divine a shift that reconfigured the relationship between materiality and meaning in a positive direction *The Corporeal Imagination* is a groundbreaking investigation into the theological poetics of material substance in late ancient Christian texts From hagiographies to literary descriptions of sacred paintings to treatises on relics and theurgy Miller examines a wide variety of ancient texts to reveal how Christian writers increasingly described the matter of the world as invested with divine power By appealing to the reader's sensory imagination Christian texts endowed phenomena like relics saints bodies in hagiography and saints presence in icons with a visual and tactile presence The book draws on a variety of contemporary theoretical models to elucidate the significance of all these materials in ancient religious life and imagination

### **Envisioning**

**Experience in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages** Giselle de Nie, 2016-05-06 Our imagination reveals our experience of ourselves and our world The late philosopher of science and poetry Gaston Bachelard introduced the notion that each image that comes to mind spontaneously is a visual representation of the cognitive and affective pattern that is moving us at the time often unconsciously When such a mental image inspires a picture or text it evokes in the mind of the reader or beholder a replication of the internal pattern that originally inspired the artist or writer Thus mental images are rarely empty phantasies Whereas intellectual concepts are conscious constructions of abstracted relations mental images evoked by texts and pictures often point like dreams to pre verbal experience that patterns itself through multiplying associations and

analogies These mental images can also manifest their own limits pointing indirectly to experiences beyond what can be expressed and communicated The six essays in this volume seek to uncover the dynamic patterns in verbal and pictorial images and to evaluate their potentialities and limitations Thematically ordered according to their specific focus the essays begin with material images and move on to increasing degrees of immateriality The subjects treated are verbal descriptions of an icon and of a statue imaginative visions and auditions evoked by material depictions verbal imagery describing imagined sculptures and scenes as compared with drawings of a moving historical pageant drawings of symbolic figures representing subtle relationships between verbal expositions that cannot be syntactically represented dream images that precipitate actual healing and aural patterns in a sounded text that are experienced as images of affective dynamisms

Death and Rebirth in Late Antiquity Lee M. Jefferson, 2022-08-16 Death and rebirth was of vital importance to early Christians in late antiquity In late antiquity death was all encompassing Mortality rates were high plague and disease in urban areas struck at will and one lived on the knife s edge regarding one s health Religion filled a crucial role in this environment offering an option for those who sought cure and comfort Following death the inhumed were memorialized providing solace to family members through sculpture painting and epigraphy This book offers a sustained interdisciplinary treatment of death and rebirth a theme that early Christians and scholars found important By analysing the theme of death and rebirth through various lenses the contributors deepen our understanding of the early Christian funerary and liturgical practices as well as their engagement with other groups in the Empire

Iconophilia Francesca Dell'Acqua, 2020-05-07 Between the late seventh and the mid ninth centuries a debate about sacred images conventionally addressed as Byzantine iconoclasm engaged monks emperors and popes in the Mediterranean area and on the European continent The importance of this debate cannot be overstated it challenged the relation between image text and belief A series of popes staunchly in favour of sacred images acted consistently during this period in displaying a remarkable iconophilia or love for images Their multifaceted reaction involved not only council resolutions and diplomatic exchanges but also public religious festivals liturgy preaching and visual arts the mass media of the time Embracing these tools the popes especially promoted themes related to the Incarnation of God which justified the production and veneration of sacred images and extolled the role and the figure of the Virgin Mary Despite their profound influence over Byzantine and western cultures of later centuries the political theological and artistic interactions between the East and the West during this period have not yet been investigated in studies combining textual and material evidence By drawing evidence from texts and material culture some of which have yet to be discussed against the background of the iconoclastic controversy and by considering the role of oral exchange Iconophilia assesses the impact of the debate on sacred images and of coeval theological controversies in Rome and central Italy By looking at intersecting textual liturgical and pictorial images which had at their core the Incarnate God and his human mother Mary the book demonstrates that between c 680 880 by unremittingly maintaining the importance of the

visual for nurturing beliefs and mediating personal and communal salvation the popes ensured that the status of sacred images would remain unchallenged at least until the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century

**Once Out of Nature** Andrea Nightingale, 2011-06-01 Once Out of Nature offers an original interpretation of Augustine's theory of time and embodiment Andrea Nightingale draws on philosophy sociology literary theory and social history to analyze Augustine's conception of temporality eternity and the human and transhuman condition In Nightingale's view the notion of embodiment illuminates a set of problems much larger than the body itself it captures the human experience of being an embodied soul dwelling on earth In Augustine's writings humans live both in and out of nature exiled from Eden and punished by mortality they are resident aliens on earth While the human body is subject to earthly time the human mind is governed by what Nightingale calls psychic time For the human psyche always stretches away from the present moment where the physical body persists into memories and expectations As Nightingale explains while the body is present in the here and now the psyche cannot experience self presence Thus for Augustine the human being dwells in two distinct time zones in earthly time and in psychic time The human self then is a moving target Adam Eve and the resurrected saints by contrast live outside of time and nature these transhumans dwell in an everlasting present Nightingale connects Augustine's views to contemporary debates about transhumans and suggests that Augustine's thought reflects our own ambivalent relationship with our bodies and the earth

**Building the Body of Christ** Daniel C. Cochran, 2020-11-17 In Building the Body of Christ Daniel C Cochran argues that monumental Christian art and architecture played a crucial role in the formation of individual and communal identities in late antique Italy The ecclesiastical buildings and artistic programs that emerged during the fourth and fifth centuries not only reflected Christianity's changing status within the Roman Empire but also actively shaped those who used them Emphasizing the importance of materiality and the body in early Christian thought and practice Cochran shows how bishops and their supporters employed the visual arts to present a Christian identity rooted in the sacred past but expressed in the present through church unity and episcopal authority He weaves together archaeological and textual evidence to contextualize case studies from Rome Aquileia and Ravenna showing how these sites responded to the diversity of early Christianity as expressed through private rituals and the imperial appropriation of the saints Cochran shows how these early ecclesiastical buildings and artistic programs worked in conjunction with the liturgy to persuade individuals to adopt alternative beliefs practices and values that contributed to the formation of institutional Christianity and the Christianization of late antique Italy

**Sanctity and Female Authorship** Maria H. Oen, Unn Falkeid, 2019-10-10 Birgitta of Sweden Birgitta Birgersdotter 1302-03-1373 and her younger contemporary Catherine of Siena Caterina Benincasa 1347-1380 form the most powerful and influential female duo in European history Both enjoyed saintly reputations in life while acting as the charismatic leaders of a considerable group of followers consisting of clergy as well as mighty secular men and women They are also among the very

few women of the Trecento to leave a substantial body of written work which was widely disseminated in their original languages and in translations. Copies of Birgitta's *Liber celestis revelacionum* (The Heavenly Book of Revelations) and compilations of Catherine's letters (*Le lettere*), prayers (*Le orazioni*) and her theological work *Il Dialogo della divina Provvidenza* (The Dialogue) found their way into monastic, royal and humanist libraries all over Europe. After their deaths, Birgitta's and Catherine's respective groups of supporters sought to have them formally canonized. In both cases, however, their political and theological outspokenness orally and in text, and their public authority represented obstacles. In this comparative study, leading scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds offer for the very first time a comprehensive exploration of the lives and activities of Birgitta and Catherine in tandem. Particular attention is given to their literary works and the complex process of negotiating their sanctity and authorial roles. Above all, what the chapters reveal is the many points of connections between two of the most influential women of the Trecento and how they were related to one another by their peers and successors.

*A Saving Science* Eric M. Ramírez-Weaver, 2017-02-24 In *A Saving Science* Eric Ramírez-Weaver explores the significance of early medieval astronomy in the Frankish empire using as his lens an astronomical masterpiece, the deluxe manuscript of the *Handbook of 809*, painted in roughly 830 for Bishop Drogo of Metz, one of Charlemagne's sons. Created in an age in which careful study of the heavens served a liturgical purpose to reckon Christian feast days and seasons accurately and thus reflect a heavenly order, the diagrams of celestial bodies in the *Handbook of 809* are extraordinary signifiers of the intersection of Christian art and classical astronomy. Ramírez-Weaver shows how, by studying this lavishly painted and carefully executed manuscript, we gain a unique understanding of early medieval astronomy and its cultural significance. In a time when the Frankish church sought to renew society through education, the *Handbook of 809* presented a model in which study aided the spiritual reform of the cleric's soul and, by extension, enabled the spiritual care of his community. An exciting new interpretation of Frankish painting, *A Saving Science* shows that constellations in books such as Drogo's were not simple copies for posterity's sake but functional tools in the service of the rejuvenation of a creative Carolingian culture.

*Alcuin* Douglas Dales, 2012-11-29 Scholar, ecclesiastic teacher and poet of the eighth century, Alcuin was a person of deep Christian faith, tenacious in his loyalty to orthodox Catholic theology. He had a seminal influence upon his own generation and those that came after him. Although he remained a Northumbrian Christian at heart, the part of his life about which most is known was spent on the Continent. He never lost contact with his homeland, but his most significant and lasting work was evidently accomplished in Europe, and his influence on the early medieval Western Church was an abiding one. This book examines his life and career in England and on the continent; it also considers his legacy as a churchman and a leading political figure. This volume prefigures a forthcoming work on Alcuin's intellectual legacy, *Alcuin: A Study of his Theology*, due for release April 2013. This rich study is intended for the general reader as well as for those studying, teaching or researching this period of early medieval history and theology in schools and universities.

*"Gender, Piety, and*

*Production in Fourteenth-Century English Apocalypse Manuscripts* " Renana Bartal,2017-07-05 Gender Piety and Production in Fourteenth Century English Apocalypse Manuscripts is the first in depth study of three textually and iconographically diverse Apocalypses illustrated in England in the first half of the fourteenth century by a single group of artists It offers a close look at a group of illuminators previously on the fringe of art historical scholarship challenging the commonly held perception of them as mere craftsmen at a time when both audiences and methods of production were becoming increasingly varied Analyzing the manuscripts codicological features visual and textual programmes and social contexts it explores the mechanisms of a fourteenth century commercial workshop and traces the customization of these books of the same genre to the needs and expectations of varied readers revealing the crucial influence of their female audience The book will be of interest to scholars and students of English medieval art medieval manuscripts and the medieval Apocalypse as well as medievalists interested in late medieval spirituality and theology medieval religious and intellectual culture book patronage and ownership and female patronage and ownership

**The Ends of the Body** Suzanne Conklin Akbari,Jill Ross,2013-01-29 Drawing on Arabic English French Irish Latin and Spanish sources the essays share a focus on the body s productive capacity whether expressed through the flesh s materiality or through its role in performing meaning The collection is divided into four clusters Foundations traces the use of physical remnants of the body in the form of relics or memorial monuments that replicate the form of the body as foundational in communal structures Performing the Body focuses on the ways in which the individual body functions as the medium through which the social body is maintained Bodily Rhetoric explores the poetic linkage of body and meaning and Material Bodies engages with the processes of corporeal being ranging from the energetic flow of humoral liquids to the decay of the flesh Together the essays provide new perspectives on the centrality of the medieval body and underscore the vitality of this rich field of study

**Relics and Writing in Late Medieval England** Robyn Malo,2013-12-06 Relics and Writing in Late Medieval England uncovers a wide ranging medieval discourse that had an expansive influence on English literary traditions Drawing from Latin and vernacular hagiography miracle stories relic lists and architectural history this study demonstrates that as the shrines of England s major saints underwent dramatic changes from c 1100 to c 1538 relic discourse became important not only in constructing the meaning of objects that were often hidden but also for canonical authors like Chaucer and Malory in exploring the function of metaphor and of dissembling language Robyn Malo argues that relic discourse was employed in order to critique mainstream religious practice explore the consequences of rhetorical dissimulation and consider the effect on the socially disadvantaged of lavish expenditure on shrines The work thus uses the literary study of relics to address issues of clerical and lay cultures orthodoxy and heterodoxy and writing and reform

**Icons of Sound** Bissera V. Pentcheva,2020-11-23 Icons of Sound Voice Architecture and Imagination in Medieval Art brings together art history and sound studies to offer new perspectives on medieval churches and cathedrals as spaces where the perception of the visual is inherently shaped by sound The chapters encompass a wide

geographic and historical range from the fifth to the fifteenth century and from Armenia and Byzantium to Venice Rome and Santiago de Compostela Contributors offer nuanced explorations of the intangible sonic aura produced in these places by the ritual music and harness the use of digital technology to reconstruct historical aural environments Rooted in a decade long interdisciplinary research project at Stanford University Icons of Sound expands our understanding of the inherently intertwined relationship between medieval chant and liturgy the acoustics of architectural spaces and their visual aesthetics Together the contributors provide insights that are relevant across art history sound studies musicology and medieval studies

The Routledge Companion to Medieval Iconography Colum Hourihane, 2016-12-19 Sometimes enjoying considerable favor sometimes less iconography has been an essential element in medieval art historical studies since the beginning of the discipline Some of the greatest art historians including M le Warburg Panofsky Morey and Schapiro have devoted their lives to understanding and structuring what exactly the subject matter of a work of medieval art can tell Over the last thirty or so years scholarship has seen the meaning and methodologies of the term considerably broadened This companion provides a state of the art assessment of the influence of the foremost iconographers as well as the methodologies employed and themes that underpin the discipline The first section focuses on influential thinkers in the field while the second covers some of the best known methodologies the third and largest section looks at some of the major themes in medieval art Taken together the three sections include thirty eight chapters each of which deals with an individual topic An introduction historiographical evaluation and bibliography accompany the individual essays The authors are recognized experts in the field and each essay includes original analyses and or case studies which will hopefully open the field for future research     In the Eye of the Animal Patricia Cox Miller, 2018-06-15 Early Christian theology posited a strict division between animals and humans Nevertheless animal figures abound in early Christian literature and art from Augustine s renowned wonder at the agility of the mosquito on the wing to vivid exegeses of the six days of creation detailed in Genesis and when they appear the distinctions between human and animal are often dissolved How asks Patricia Cox Miller does one account for the stunning zoological imagination found in a wide variety of genres of ancient Christian texts In the Eye of the Animal complicates the role of animals in early Christian thought by showing how textual and artistic images and interpretive procedures actually celebrated a continuum of human and animal life Synthesizing early Christian studies contemporary philosophy animal studies ethology and modern poetry Miller identifies two contradictory strands in early Christian thinking about animals The dominant thread viewed the body and soul of the human being as dominical or the crowning achievement of creation animals with their defective souls related to humans only as reminders of the brutish physical form However the second strand relied upon the idea of a continuum of animal life which enabled comparisons between animals and humans This second tendency explains Miller arises particularly in early Christian literature in which ascetic identity the body and ethics intersect She explores the tension between these modes by tracing the image of the animal in early Christian literature from the ethical



animal behavior on display in Basil of Caesarea's *Hexaemeron* and the anonymous *Physiologus* to the role of animals in articulating erotic desire and from the idyllic intimacy of monks and animals in literature of desert ascetism to early Christian art that envisions paradise through human animal symbiosis

**The Long Morning of Medieval Europe** Jennifer R. Davis, 2016-12-05 Recent advances in research show that the distinctive features of high medieval civilization began developing centuries earlier than previously thought The era once dismissed as a Dark Age now turns out to have been the long morning of the medieval millennium the centuries from AD 500 to 1000 witnessed the dawn of developments that were to shape Europe for centuries to come In 2004 historians art historians archaeologists and literary specialists from Europe and North America convened at Harvard University for an interdisciplinary conference exploring new directions in the study of that long morning of medieval Europe the early Middle Ages Invited to think about what seemed to each the most exciting new ways of investigating the early development of western European civilization this impressive group of international scholars produced a wide ranging discussion of innovative types of research that define tomorrow's field today The contributors many of whom rarely publish in English test approaches extending from using ancient DNA to deducing cultural patterns signified by thousands of medieval manuscripts of saints' lives They examine the archaeology of slave labor economic systems disease history transformations of piety the experience of power and property exquisite literary sophistication and the construction of the meaning of palace spaces or images of the divinity The book illustrates in an approachable style the vitality of research into the early Middle Ages and the signal contributions of that era to the future development of western civilization The chapters cluster around new approaches to five key themes the early medieval economy early medieval holiness representation and reality in early medieval literary art practices of power in an early medieval empire and the intellectuality of early medieval art and architecture Michael McCormick's brief introductions open each part of the volume synthetic essays by accomplished specialists conclude them The editors summarize the whole in a synoptic introduction All Latin terms and citations and other foreign language quotations are translated making this work accessible even to undergraduates *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe* *New Directions in Early Medieval Studies* presents innovative research across the wide spectrum of study of the early Middle Ages It exemplifies the promising questions and methodologies at play in the field today and the directions that beckon tomorrow

**Emerging Iconographies of Medieval Rome** Annie Montgomery Labatt, 2019-10-23 *Emerging Iconographies of Medieval Rome* examines the development of Christian iconographies that had not yet established themselves as canonical images but which were being tried out in various ways in early Christian Rome This book focuses on four different iconographical forms that appeared in Rome during the eighth and ninth centuries the Anastasis the Transfiguration the Maria Regina and the Sickness of Hezekiah all of which were labeled Byzantine by major mid twentieth century scholars The trend has been to readily accede to the pronouncements of those prominent authors subjugating these rich images to a grand narrative that privileges the East and

turns Rome into an artistic backwater In this study Annie Montgomery Labatt reacts against traditional scholarship which presents Rome as merely an adjunct of the East It studies medieval images with formal and stylistic analyses in combination with use of the writings of the patristics and early medieval thinkers The experimentation and innovation in the Christian iconographies of Rome in the eighth and ninth centuries provides an affirmation of the artistic vibrancy of Rome in the period before a divided East and West Labatt revisits and revives a lost and forgotten Rome not as a peripheral adjunct of the East but as a center of creativity and artistic innovation

*Religion in Reason* Tarek R. Dika, Martin Shuster, 2022-11-30 This book presents critical engagements with the work of Hent de Vries widely regarded as one of the most important living philosophers of religion Contributions by a distinguished group of scholars discuss the role played by religion in philosophy the emergence and possibilities of the category of religion and the relation between religion and violence secularism and sovereignty Together they provide a synoptic view of how de Vries's work has prompted a reconceptualization of how religion should be studied especially in relation to theology politics and new media The volume will be of particular interest to scholars of religious studies theology and philosophy

*The Bernward Gospels* Jennifer P. Kingsley, 2016-05-12 Few works of art better illustrate the splendor of eleventh century painting than the manuscript often referred to as the precious gospels of Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim with its peculiar combination of sophistication and naiveté its dramatically gesturing figures and the saturated colors of its densely ornamented surfaces In *The Bernward Gospels* Jennifer Kingsley offers the first interpretive study of the pictorial program of this famed manuscript and considers how the gospel book conditioned contemporary and future viewers to remember the bishop The codex constructs a complex image of a minister caring for his diocese not only through a life of service but also by means of his exceptional artistic patronage of a bishop exercising the sacerdotal authority of his office and of a man fundamentally preoccupied with his own salvation and desire to unite with God through both his sight and touch Kingsley insightfully demonstrates how this prominent member of the early medieval episcopate presented his role to the saints and to the communities called upon to remember him

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