

The Tympanum at the Remains of the Church of St Ursin, Bourges, France.

Opening Remarks

In the 1950s Tobias Schneebaum spent some time living with the Akarama tribe in South America. On encountering them he was quickly adopted by them and lived as one of them. He had drawing materials with him and he describes his efforts to show his 'fellow tribesmen' the result of his sketches (pp.81-83).¹ They take his pencils and stab the paper or tear it up – playfully. (Interpreting the pencils as spears?) He draws what he regards as a 'good sketch' of a close companion, Michii. But the likeness does not register with them. Schneebaum draws the episode of making the images to a conclusion with this verdict on his companions; 'they could not seem to understand'. And this leads us to the question which exercises the minds of modern historians, anthropologists, sociologists, archaeologists etc. Can we really know how the 'other' experiences anything within his/her own cultural context, i.e. a cultural context that isn't ours.

Tympanums

With the above caveat in mind I would like to discuss the visual implications and significance of the St. Ursin tympanum. Tympana are basically inscriptions enclosed in a pediment. Originally developed as part of Greek architecture in 700-480 BC the form was taken over by the Romans, eventually moving from the gable end of roofs to being placed above doors and assuming a more rounded form. With the rise of Romanesque architecture (1000-1200 AD), taking its inspiration from the Romans, tympana became a standard feature especially above the arched doors of large churches and cathedrals.² To quote Andreas Petzold they are a feature;

'(O)riginal to the Romanesque and would never have been found in a building erected before the eleventh century...(T)his type of relief sculpture was one of the most important formal innovations of the Romanesque period.'³

An interesting point about the tympanum is that – like the stained glass window - it was an image seen by all and sundry. In relation to the numerous illuminated MSS, available online today in glowing colour, it is salutary to recall Arnold's remarks;

'Manuscript illuminations were for the most part only seen by the kinds of people who illuminated manuscripts, namely monks, or (in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) those who bought them, namely rich people.'⁴

The tympanum was a public image. It would welcome the faithful as they entered the church and in a culture where the mental landscape of individuals was not nearly as cluttered with imagery and novelty as that of a modern viewer, it would resonate with them in a singular way. The sight would confirm their place in God's creation. And it was God's creation. In his discussion of Medieval Literature J A Burrow comments; 'The voice of religious scepticism never speaks in Middle English literature'.⁵ In a sense also it was an incidental image and again – like a stained glass window – was encountered on the way to the shrine, be it the altar or an alcove containing an image of the divinity. It was not an 'end' in itself yet it depicted a world of certainties. Though it deals with a slightly

1 Tobias Schneebaum, *Keep the River on Your Right*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970). pp.81-83.

2 Wikipedia Contributors, Tympanum (architecture), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tympanum_\(architecture\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tympanum_(architecture)), 3 December 2024, at 00:39 (UTC). [Accessed 10 December 2024].

3 Andreas Petzold, *Romanesque Art*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995). p.14.

4 John H. Arnold, *What is Medieval History*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008). p.46.

5 J. A. Burrow, *Medieval Writers and their Word*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982). p.86.

later period and primarily with the artistic endeavours of the gentry we may usefully note here Thomas Trolley's comments that the age was not interested in visual innovation in what we now call 'art'. Art was primarily religious and conventional.⁶

Indeed, these images were literally set in stone and may even be regarded as having a didactic purpose in terms of Christian doctrine. The more frequent depictions of Christ and his apostles, or the Virgin and attendant saints, such as the famous tympanum at the Basilica of Sainte Marie-Madeleine at Vézelay, Burgundy, sculpted c. 1125-30, which shows Christ 'conveying his message to the Apostles, who flank him on either side', are indicative of such a purpose.⁷ Many of these tympana have a central image of Christ which is evocative of the ubiquitous Christ Pantocrator, i.e. the ruler of all, such that those entering the church are submitting to and being embraced by his rule and his philosophy. A further image that drives the point home is the tympanum at the church of St. Trophime, Arles, France. Here Christ is the central figure surrounded by symbolic representations of the four evangelists each clasping their respective gospels. To the right and left of this image the souls of the deceased, based on their execution of Christ's rules while alive, make their way to either heaven or hell.⁸ The tympanum from the Church of St. Ursin in Bourges is somewhat different.

Tympanum at the Church of St Ursin

St Ursinus, allegedly the first bishop of Bourges, is a relatively minor Christian Saint (not mentioned in the Oxford Dictionary of Saints).⁹ A short account of him is given by Gregory of Tours and concentrates on the miraculous discovery of his grave.¹⁰ (For convenience a copy of this is attached as Appendix 1.) After his re-interment miracles are recorded due to his intercession. The tympanum is located at Avenue 95eme de Ligne in Bourges, about 120 miles directly south of Paris. It was carved around 1100 by Giralduus. His name is recorded on a carved stone just below the three registers of the tympanum proper. The lowest register is reported to be the oldest stone-carved calendar in Europe.¹¹ The original church was destroyed during the French Revolution and this portal is almost all that remains. It has been moved to this site, hence the unsympathetic brickwork surrounding it. Its location is confusing as there is a Chapelle de Saint Ursin in Bourges and also the famous Gothic cathedral which boasts several stunning tympana itself and is indeed a UNESCO World Heritage site.¹² For that reason I have included in Appendix 2 a couple of pictures of the street where this tympanum is sited.

A picture of the tympanum proper is included as Appendix 3. It is surrounded by scrolling vegetation and 'resting' on a lintel. It is interesting to note that the lintel is composed mostly of a variant of 'voussoir' stones, normally used as a capstone/keystone to hold an arch in place and allow it to bear weight. Nevertheless it seems unlikely that this structure could bear much weight. The array of bricks around the tympanum have no keystone proper though they are off-square to create the 'fanlight' shape. The main arch of the portal above has alternating and varied voussoir

6 Thomas Trolley, 'Visual Culture', in *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005) pp.167-168.

7 Wikipedia Contributors, *Vézelay Abbey*, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 14 December 2024, at 16:17 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V%C3%A9zelay_Abbey, [Accessed 18 December 2024].

8 Wikipedia Contributors, *Church of St. Trophime, Arles*, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 24 October 2024, at 18:16 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_St._Trophime,_Arles, [Accessed 11 December 2024].

9 David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

10 Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Confessors*, trans. Raymond Van, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988). pp.83-85.

11 Bourges Romane, *Tympan de L'Église Saint-Ursin*, 19 September, 2014, <https://patrimoinebourgescjr.weebly.com/bourges-romane/tympan-saint-ursin>, [Accessed 17 December 2024].

12 YouTube, *Bourges Cathedral – UNESCO World Heritage Site*, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBukGr5c6YU>, [Accessed, 17 December 2024].

stones and thus must have taken the weight of the original wall. So, this lintel is only designed to take the weight of the tympanum itself. The lintel is decorated with what are most likely to be acanthus leaves. The image presents in three registers;

1. At the top we have a comical or at least incongruous series of animals engaged in unlikely alliances.
2. Below we have a rather graphic hunting scene.
3. Beneath is a tableau of men engaged in activities. There is a brief designation of the month of the year below each one.

What would the casual observer walking down Avenue 95eme de Ligne today make of this sight? We have some animals that might be doodles...aimed at filling the 'gap' at the top of the semicircle? An elaborate and gruesome hunt...well, they were always hunting in the past. And finally workers...doing the dull duties enforced upon the average man (serf) in a dark age? It would be a fairly reasonable estimation of the image.

Looking at it with a little more information we can see that the first register depicts the story of a wolf who persuades a crane to remove a bone stuck in his throat.¹³ This is an episode from Aesop's Fables. These tales from ancient Greece were well-known prior to the Renaissance. The largest contemporary collection of 83 fables bears the authorship of 'Romulus' and dates to the 10th century.¹⁴ To the left we have the donkey teaching class, another trope of the period. (See Appendix 4 for a further illustration for a German incunabulum of 1490). The third is from the cycle of stories about Reynard the Fox and shows Reynard's 'funeral'. Reynard the Fox is a well-known trickster appearing from the early Middle Ages to date.¹⁵ Humorous depictions of animals were a very popular Medieval theme and appear in all sorts of media from sculpture to psalter.

The next register is the hunting scene. The Compostela website states that it is 'a twelfth century replica of a fourth century Gallo-Roman sarcophagus'.¹⁶ Horsemen and hunters on foot chase boars and a stag. Hunting was an extremely popular activity with the aristocracy, gentry and common folk alike. Even ladies were allowed to engage in hawking.¹⁷ For these people who lived so closely connected to the land they must have read such a scene as a boisterous evocation of plenty...a table loaded with venison and wild 'pork'.

Below that the work of toiling the earth is spelt out for us: the reality of the world in which the average person found themselves. This is an ubiquitous theme in Medieval art. Petzold gives a very nice example from the Fécamp Psalter of c 1180, attached here as Appendix 5.¹⁸ These scenes of labour yielding the earth's bounty extend well beyond the period. A wonderful example is that of the – much later – stove at the Cistercian monastery in Salem; tiles show monks at various tasks.¹⁹ (See Appendix 6.)

13 Aesop, *The Fables of Aesop*, illus. By Edward J Detmold, (London: The Folio Society, 1998) p.3.

14 Wikipedia Contributors, *Aesop's Fables*, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 3 December 2024, at 17:36 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aesop%27s_Fables, [Accessed 13 December 2024].

15 Wikipedia Contributors, *Renard the Fox*, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 17 November 2024, at 18:58 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reynard_the_Fox, [Accessed 13 December 2024].

16 Compostela, the Joining of Heaven and Earth, *Saint Ursin de Bourges, the Romanesque Porch Relief*, <https://compostela.co.uk/great-portals/saint-ursin-de-bourges-the-romanesque-porch-relief/#>, [Accessed 18 December 2024]

17 Richard Barber, *Henry Plantagenet*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001) p.58.

18 Andreas Petzold, *Romanesque Art*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995). P97.

19 Jean-Francois Leroux-Dhuys, *Cistercian Abbeys History and Architecture*, trans. Elizabeth Clegg, Caroline Higgitt et al, (Konigswinter: h f ullmann, 1998) p105.

According to the Bourges Romane website the months depict the following;²⁰

‘In February, the farmer stays by the fire. In March, he prunes the vines. In April, it is the spring festival with their best clothes. In May, he mows the hay, it is haymaking. In June, he sharpens his scythe. In July, it is the wheat harvest with a sickle. In August, he threshes the wheat with a flail. In September, it is the grape harvest. In October, it is winemaking. In November, he kills the pig. In December, she cooks indoors. In January, he warms himself by the fire.’²¹

The artist’s gift for composition can be seen here in the bottom register. Both Feb and Jan, the beginning and the end of the panel, are seated and face each other. This draws the eye to the middle of the composition where – almost at the very centre (and perhaps would be directly centred if the division of the Romanesque arches into twelve does not allow for a single central arch) – a workman bends between two arches.

Superficially these images could be regarded as pagan or at least secular. One might speculate that anyone looking at the tympanum when it was placed in the collegiate church may have balked at its lack of religious connotations. Compostela states; ‘The subject of the tympanum is probably the most baffling in the Romanesque canon.’²²

But is it? Aesop’s fables are moral tales. They bear strong comparison with the parables of Jesus Christ. As Wikipedia (which boasts exhaustive detail on the subject) notes, Christ’s parables ‘refer to simple everyday things’. They were very familiar to a medieval audience. (See especially Part 1 of Wailes’ book on the subject, ‘Parables: their Familiarity and Allegorization in the Middle Ages’).²³ Of those mentioned above the tale about the crane and wolf is a warning not to trust those you know to be basically wicked. A Luttrell broadside of 1709 – available on the Internet Archive – entitled ‘The Procession of Reynard the Fox’ is ‘Set forth by way of *Parable*, by Granny Green’.²⁴ (my italics)

The register below Aesop – the sarcophagus hunting scene – relates to the legend of St Ursinus in that it represents his own sarcophagus. One must take it that those who frequented his church were familiar with his legend. His original sarcophagus may well have been decorated with such a hunting scene, typical of the era. The Compostela website suggests that the diminutive figure peering out from the scrolling leaves at the very top of the tympanum may be St Ursinus himself ‘facilitating the miraculous *inventio* of his relics’.²⁵

We next come to the Labours of the Months. To a Christian living in the Middle Ages the cosmos was apprehended within the Ptolemaic model and had been for centuries.²⁶ An extension of this is that ‘the lives of peasants are represented as ordained by God, and as unchanging as the passing of

20 These occupations vary from region to region. See Petzold, p97.

21 Bourges Romane, *Tympan de L’Église Saint-Ursin*, 19 September, 2014, <https://patrimoinebourgesjr.weebly.com/bourges-romane/tympan-saint-ursin>, [Accessed 17 December 2024].

22 Compostela, the Joining of Heaven and Earth, *Saint Ursin de Bourges, the Romanesque Porch Relief*, <https://compostela.co.uk/great-portals/saint-ursin-de-bourges-the-romanesque-porch-relief/#>, [Accessed 17 December 2024]

23 Stephen L. Wailes, *Medieval Allegories of Jesus’ Parables*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). passim.

24 Granny Green, *The Procession of Reynard the Fox*, (London: Newberry Library, 1709).

25 Compostela, the Joining of Heaven and Earth, *Saint Ursin de Bourges, the Romanesque Porch Relief*, <https://compostela.co.uk/great-portals/saint-ursin-de-bourges-the-romanesque-porch-relief/#>, [Accessed 17 December 2024]

26 Wikipedia Contributors, *Geocentric Model*, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 16 December 2024, at 02:33 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geocentric_model#:~:text=In%20the%20Ptolemaic%20system%2C%20each,is%20distant%20from%20the%20Earth. [Accessed 20 December 2024]

the season's themselves'.²⁷ Thus the St. Ursin tympanum must have signalled comfort and confidence, for the imagery confirmed the world order, one's place in it and God's plan both for the world and for the individual viewer whom Jesus had redeemed from sin.

The Option Patrimoine du College Jean Renoir de Bourges states;

'Les trois registres du tympan Saint-Ursin représentent donc les trois ordres de la société au Moyen Age: tout en haut, l'Église qui domine la vie spirituelle; puis la noblesse qui combat, et tout en bas de la société, les paysans qui travaillent pour nourrir l'ensemble de la population.'²⁸

This is yet another reasonable interpretation albeit slightly tinged with the sensibilities of our modern world.²⁹ However, I think it also fair to conclude with some conviction that the medieval viewer of this tympanum would have seen it in terms of Morality (Fables as Parables), Sanctity (St Ursinus, who worked miracles posthumously), and Harmony (God's creation). That is, a thoroughly religious apprehension entirely in keeping with the mores of the day.

As can be seen from the above the St Ursin tympanum and the other Romanesque tympana are significant in recording the beliefs, social norms – such as entertainment - and aspirations of the society that produced them.

ENDS

27 Andreas Petzold, *Romanesque Art*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995). p98

28 Option Patrimoine du College Jean Renoir de Bourges, *Le tympan d'église Saint-Ursin de Bourges*, 17 September 2015, <https://patrimoinebourges.weebly.com/bourges-romane/le-tympan-de-leglise-saint-ursin-de-bourges>, [Accessed 17 December 2024].

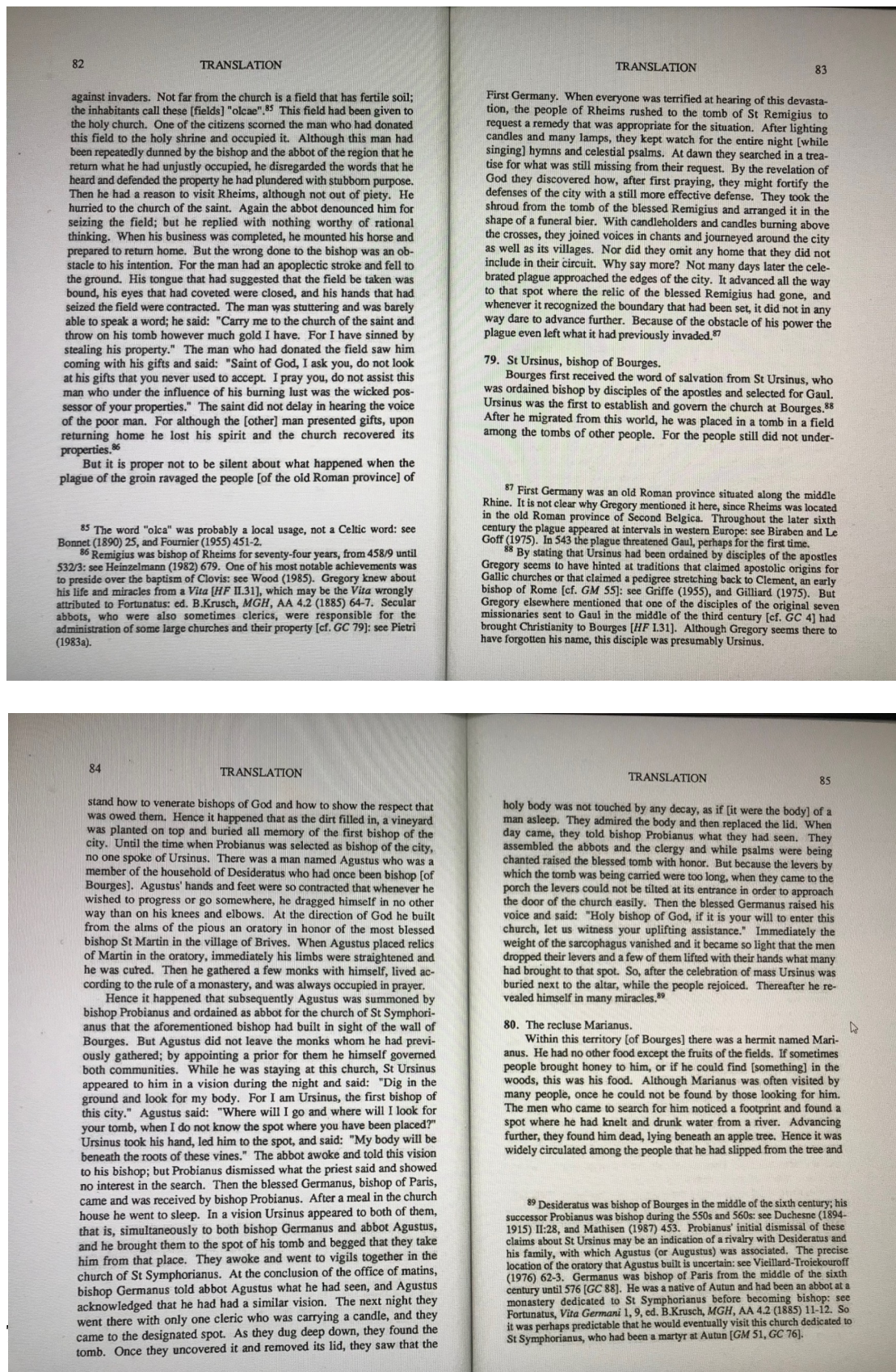
29 For example, the nobility not only 'fought' but 'defended'.

Bibliography

1. Aesop, *The Fables of Aesop*, illus. By Edward J Detmold, (London: The Folio Society, 1998).
2. Arnold, John H, *What is Medieval History*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008).
3. Barber, Richard, *Henry Plantagenet*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001).
4. Bourges Romane, *Tympan de L'Église Saint-Ursin*, 19 September, 2014, <https://patrimoinebourgescjr.weebly.com/bourges-romane/tympan-saint-ursin>, [Accessed 17 December 2024].
5. Burrow, J A , *Medieval Writers and their Word*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).
6. Compostela, the Joining of Heaven and Earth, *Saint Ursin de Bourges, the Romanesque Porch Relief*, <https://compostela.co.uk/great-portals/saint-ursin-de-bourges-the-romanesque-porch-relief/#>, [Accessed 18 December 2024].
7. Farmer, David Hugh, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).
8. Granny Green, *The Procession of Reynard the Fox.*, (London: Newberry Library, 1709).
9. Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Confessors*, trans. Raymond Van, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988).
10. Leroux-Dhuys, Jean-Francois, *Cistercian Abbeys History and Architecture*, trans. Elizabeth Clegg, Caroline Higgitt et al, (Konigswinter: h f ullmann, 1998).
11. Option Patrimoine du College Jean Renoir de Bourges, *Le tympan d'église Saint-Ursin de Bourges*, 17 September 2015, <https://patrimoinebourges.weebly.com/bourges-romane/le-tympan-de-leglise-saint-ursin-de-bourges>, [Accessed 17 December 2024].
12. Petzold, Andreas, *Romanesque Art*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995).
13. Schneebaum, Tobias, *Keep the River on Your Right*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970).
14. Trolley, Thomas, 'Visual Culture', in *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).
15. Wailes, Stephen L, *Medieval Allegories of Jesus' Parables*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).
16. Wikipedia Contributors, *Aesop's Fables*, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 3 December 2024, at 17:36 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aesop%27s_Fables, [Accessed 13 December 2024].
17. Wikipedia Contributors, *Church of St. Trophime, Arles*, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 24 October 2024, at 18:16 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_St._Trophime,_Arles, [Accessed 11 December 2024].
18. Wikipedia Contributors, *Geocentric Model*, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 16 December 2024, at 02:33 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geocentric_model#:~:text=In%20the%20Ptolemaic%20system%2C%20each,is%20distant%20from%20the%20Earth. [Accessed 20 December 2024]
19. Wikipedia Contributors, *Renard the Fox*, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 17 November 2024, at 18:58 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reynard_the_Fox, [Accessed 13 December 2024].
20. Wikipedia Contributors, *Tympanum (architecture)*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tympanum_\(architecture\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tympanum_(architecture)), 3 December 2024, at 00:39 (UTC). [Accessed 10 December 2024].

21. Wikipedia Contributors, *Vezelay Abbey*, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 14 December 2024, at 16:17 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V%C3%A9zelay_Abbey [Accessed 18 December 2024].
22. YouTube, *Bourges Cathedral – UNESCO World Heritage Site*, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBukGr5c6YU>, [Accessed, 17 December 2024].

Appendix 1



against invaders. Not far from the church is a field that has fertile soil; the inhabitants call these [fields] "olcae".⁸⁵ This field had been given to the holy church. One of the citizens scorned the man who had donated this field to the holy shrine and occupied it. Although this man had been repeatedly dunned by the bishop and the abbot of the region that he return what he had unjustly occupied, he disregarded the words that he heard and defended the property he had plundered with stubborn purpose. Then he had a reason to visit Rheims, although not out of piety. He hurried to the church of the saint. Again the abbot denounced him for seizing the field; but he replied with nothing worthy of rational thinking. When his business was completed, he mounted his horse and prepared to return home. But the wrong done to the bishop was an obstacle to his intention. For the man had an apopleptic stroke and fell to the ground. His tongue that had suggested that the field be taken was bound, his eyes that had coveted were closed, and his hands that had seized the field were contracted. The man was stuttering and was barely able to speak a word; he said: "Carry me to the church of the saint and throw on his tomb however much gold I have. For I have sinned by stealing his property." The man who had donated the field saw him coming with his gifts and said: "Saint of God, I ask you, do not look at his gifts that you never used to accept. I pray you, do not assist this man who under the influence of his burning lust was the wicked possessor of your properties." The saint did not listen in hearing the voice of the poor man. For although the [other] man presented gifts, upon returning home he lost his spirit and the church recovered its properties.⁸⁶

But it is proper not to be silent about what happened when the plague of the groin ravaged the people [of the old Roman province] of

⁸⁵ The word "olca" was probably a local usage, not a Celtic word: see Bonnet (1890) 25, and Fournier (1955) 451-2.

⁸⁶ Remigius was bishop of Rheims for seventy-four years, from 458/9 until 532/3: see Heinzelmann (1982) 679. One of his most notable achievements was to preside over the baptism of Clovis: see Wood (1985). Gregory knew about his life and miracles from a *Vita* [HF II.31], which may be the *Vita* wrongly attributed to Fortunatus: ed. B. Krusch, *MGH*, AA 4.2 (1885) 64-7. Secular abbots, who were also sometimes clerics, were responsible for the administration of some large churches and their property [cf. GC 79]: see Pietri (1983a).

First Germany. When everyone was terrified at hearing of this devastation, the people of Rheims rushed to the tomb of St Remigius to request a remedy that was appropriate for the situation. After lighting candles and many lamps, they kept watch for the entire night [while singing] hymns and celestial psalms. At dawn they searched in a treatise for what was still missing from their request. By the revelation of God they discovered how, after first praying, they might fortify the defenses of the city with a still more effective defense. They took the shroud from the tomb of the blessed Remigius and arranged it in the shape of a funeral bier. With candleholders and candles burning above the crosses, they joined voices in chants and journeyed around the city as well as its villages. Nor did they omit any home that they did not include in their circuit. Why say more? Not many days later the celebrated plague approached the edges of the city. It advanced all the way to that spot where the relic of the blessed Remigius had gone, and whenever it recognized the boundary that had been set, it did not in any way dare to advance further. Because of the obstacle of his power the plague even left what it had previously invaded.⁸⁷

79. St Ursinus, bishop of Bourges.

Bourges first received the word of salvation from St Ursinus, who was ordained bishop by disciples of the apostles and selected for Gaul. Ursinus was the first to establish and govern the church at Bourges.⁸⁸ After he migrated from this world, he was placed in a tomb in a field among the tombs of other people. For the people still did not under-

⁸⁷ First Germany was an old Roman province situated along the middle Rhine. It is not clear why Gregory mentioned it here, since Rheims was located in the old Roman province of Second Belgica. Throughout the later sixth century the plague appeared at intervals in western Europe: see Biraben and Le Goff (1975). In 543 the plague threatened Gaul, perhaps for the first time.

⁸⁸ By stating that Ursinus had been ordained by disciples of the apostles Gregory seems to have hinted at traditions that claimed apostolic origins for Gallic churches or that claimed a pedigree stretching back to Clement, an early bishop of Rome [cf. GM 55]: see Griffe (1955), and Gilliard (1975). But Gregory elsewhere mentioned that one of the disciples of the original seven missionaries sent to Gaul in the middle of the third century [cf. GC 4] had brought Christianity to Bourges [HF 1.31]. Although Gregory seems there to have forgotten his name, this disciple was presumably Ursinus.

stand how to venerate bishops of God and how to show the respect that was owed them. Hence it happened that as the dirt filled in, a vineyard was planted on top and buried all memory of the first bishop of the city. Until the time when Probianus was selected as bishop of the city, no one spoke of Ursinus. There was a man named Augustus who was a member of the household of Desideratus who had once been bishop [of Bourges]. Augustus' hands and feet were so contracted that whenever he wished to progress or go somewhere, he dragged himself in no other way than on his knees and elbows. At the direction of God he built from the alms of the pious an oratory in honor of the most blessed bishop St Martin in the village of Brives. When Augustus placed relics of Martin in the oratory, immediately his limbs were straightened and he was cured. Then he gathered a few monks with himself, lived according to the rule of a monastery, and was always occupied in prayer.

Hence it happened that subsequently Augustus was summoned by bishop Probianus and ordained as abbot for the church of St Symphorianus that the aforementioned bishop had built in sight of the wall of Bourges. But Augustus did not leave the monks whom he had previously gathered; by appointing a prior for them he himself governed both communities. While he was staying at this church, St Ursinus appeared to him in a vision during the night and said: "Dig in the ground and look for my body. For I am Ursinus, the first bishop of this city." Augustus said: "Where will I go and where will I look for your tomb, when I do not know the spot where you have been placed?" Ursinus took his hand, led him to the spot, and said: "My body will be beneath the roots of these vines." The abbot awoke and told this vision to his bishop; but Probianus dismissed what the priest said and showed no interest in the search. Then the blessed Germanus, bishop of Paris, came and was received by bishop Probianus. After a meal in the church house he went to sleep. In a vision Ursinus appeared to both of them, that is, simultaneously to both bishop Germanus and abbot Augustus, and he brought them to the spot of his tomb and begged that they take him from that place. They awoke and went to vigils together in the church of St Symphorianus. At the conclusion of the office of matins, bishop Germanus told abbot Augustus what he had seen, and Augustus acknowledged that he had had a similar vision. The next night they went there with only one cleric who was carrying a candle, and they came to the designated spot. As they dug deep down, they found the tomb. Once they uncovered it and removed its lid, they saw that the

holy body was not touched by any decay, as if [it were the body] of a man asleep. They admired the body and then replaced the lid. When day came, they told bishop Probianus what they had seen. They assembled the abbots and the clergy and while psalms were being chanted raised the blessed tomb with honor. But because the levers by which the tomb was being carried were too long, when they came to the porch the levers could not be tilted at its entrance in order to approach the door of the church easily. Then the blessed Germanus raised his voice and said: "Holy bishop of God, if it is your will to enter this church, let us witness your uplifting assistance." Immediately the weight of the sarcophagus vanished and it became so light that the men dropped their levers and a few of them lifted with their hands what many had brought to that spot. So, after the celebration of mass Ursinus was buried next to the altar, while the people rejoiced. Thereafter he revealed himself in many miracles.⁸⁹

80. The recluse Marianus.

Within this territory [of Bourges] there was a hermit named Marianus. He had no other food except the fruits of the fields. If sometimes people brought honey to him, or if he could find [something] in the woods, this was his food. Although Marianus was often visited by many people, once he could not be found by those looking for him. The men who came to search for him noticed a footprint and found a spot where he had knelt and drunk water from a river. Advancing further, they found him dead, lying beneath an apple tree. Hence it was widely circulated among the people that he had slipped from the tree and

⁸⁹ Desideratus was bishop of Bourges in the middle of the sixth century; his successor Probianus was bishop during the 550s and 560s: see Duchesne (1894-1915) II:28, and Mathisen (1987) 453. Probianus' initial dismissal of these claims about St Ursinus may be an indication of a rivalry with Desideratus and his family, with which Augustus (or Augustus) was associated. The precise location of the oratory that Augustus built is uncertain: see Vieillard-Troiekouff (1976) 62-3. Germanus was bishop of Paris from the middle of the sixth century until 576 [GC 88]. He was a native of Autun and had been an abbot at a monastery dedicated to St Symphorianus before becoming bishop: see Fortunatus, *Vita Germani* I, 9, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH*, AA 4.2 (1885) 11-12. So it was perhaps predictable that he would eventually visit this church dedicated to St Symphorianus, who had been a martyr at Autun [GM 51, GC 76].

Appendix 2



Appendix 3



Appendix 4



¶ Quid amor mulierū faciat hoīem bestā / insensatū / seipsum nō cognoscentē / imo ⁊ porcū ex certa bystoria possum asseuerare. fuit qdā amor de dīr / ⁊ licet oīm litterarū ignar⁹ sicut stylpho / scholas tñ regēdas assūpsit docēs pueros p oīa ex ysidonio germanico. Et primo in grāmatica in capitulo de vocalib⁹ A E I O U. Posthac in grāmatica positiua. panē brot. caicum keß. ynum wyn offam ein sup. pira ein bier. lob.

Appendix 5

at Salzburg. It consists of a peasant

occupations of the land in new context appear on the monument to a sculptor in the radiating arch) above the door jamb. In any case, they occupy the church of St. England they they occasionally into cathedral, (FIG. 40).

eral borders of in Catalonia. It of medieval the figure of st, who, in the Christ radiates ages of five of ten the wheel s of the four ns and seated e figures per- riers of Par- Geon in the tions of the ary and pro- March as a her - a scene t; April as a nd June as a ged, but the wine harvest

appear in the saints' days the liturgical

prayers personally tailored to the devotional requirements of its owner, an extensive series of illustrations - generally of scenes from the life of Christ - as well as the text of the psalms.

In the layout of psalters the calendar illustrations were usually relegated to the space above the text at the top of the page. However, in a late twelfth-century psalter, probably made at the Norman abbey at Fécamp in Normandy for a woman patron, the entire left-hand page facing the calendar text is given up to a calendar illustration. This arrangement is unique for its time, and, together with the juxtaposing of scenes of noblemen with those of peasants, looks forward to the famous calendar illustrations of the fifteenth-century Books of Hours (books for private devotional use) such as the *Très Riches Heures* of Jean de Berry. The illustration for the month of October, for example, represents in the upper zone a peasant man sowing and a peasant woman spinning with a distaff and spindle (FIG. 67). In the lower zone a peasant guides a horse-drawn harrow, with sharp spikes to break up the soil. A horse was an important status symbol throughout peasant society.

Certain general observations may be made concerning Romanesque illustrations of the occupations of the months. First, the subjects of the illustrations are not constant. They vary from region to region, depending on such factors as the climate and the local agricultural economy: the illustration for January, for instance, in the Otranto floor mosaic is of a man warming himself, while further north this scene is traditionally reserved for February, as can be seen at Bourges. Second, the lives of the



67. October from the Fécamp Psalter, c. 1180.

Illumination on parchment, 7 x 4 1/2" (17 x 11 cm). Royal Library, The Hague.

Appendix 6

ECONOMIC POWER

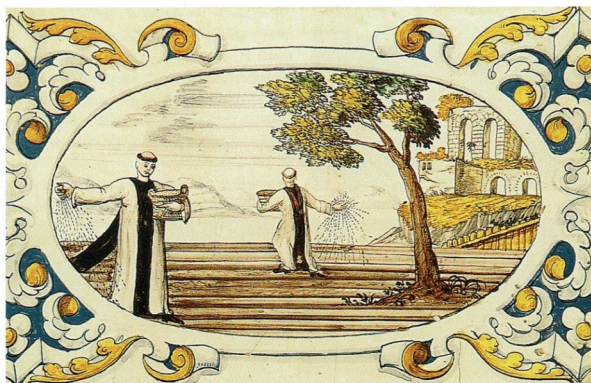
which is enlivened with a turret enclosing a spiral staircase ascending to a small guardroom in which three little openings form crenellations. The wooden roof is supported by arcades resting on well-preserved limestone piers (c.1230). It is also one of the largest barns built by the Cistercians, since its floor surface is 17,800 square feet (1,656 m²). It measures 235 x 75 ft (72 x 23 m).

In these cereal barns the winter and spring harvests, of wheat, barley, rye, and oats were stored. In addition, the harvests of the complementary rotation crops were stored there, oleaginous plants and hemp (for textiles), and also plants used for dyes such as woad, which produced a blue dye.

Wine Wine growing had survived the fall of the Roman Empire thanks to the early Christian bishops. They preserved a vineyard around their episcopal seat to supply the needs both of the eucharistic communion (then using bread and wine) and the Roman ritual of offering wine to important visitors.¹⁶ This tradition was revived by all monasteries, and by the Cistercians in particular. Their vineyards rapidly became famous: Burgundy, the cradle of the Order, enjoyed geological and climatic conditions that favored great vintages. Cistercian rigor found in the cultivation of grapes and wine-making activities worthy of its meticulous quest for perfection.

In the twelfth century, Cîteaux received in donation the vineyards of Clos Vougeot. It was to keep them until the Revolution. The vineyards of Morey, Beaune, Mersault, and Mercurey also belonged to the Cistercians. Pontigny, for its part, renewed the old vineyard planted by the Romans on the hillsides of Chablis. Clairvaux had two important wineries that before 1200 were providing wine (already sparkling, of course) in the two localities of Colombé-le-Sec and Baroville (Morvaux), that today produce the Côte-des-Bar champagne.

Cistercian wine production flourished equally in Germany. In the Rhineland, Baumgarten, Neuburg, Himmerod, and Heisterbach possessed the best vineyards. Eberbach discovered the advantages of terraces for the cultivation of vines. In the fifteenth century, the abbey made a giant barrel, containing 264,000 gallons. (317,000 US galls., 12,000 hectoliters) of wine, that was to make the



Stove at Salem, Germany. The harvest, sowing, and the wine-harvest.

