

Under Construction: On Two Twelfth-Century Images of Book Production¹

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The image colloquially known as the ‘Bamberger Schreiberbild’ is one of the emblematic representations of high medieval book production (Fig. 1). It features prominently in many surveys of medieval book illumination or manuscript studies, whether reproduced whole, as in Alexander 1992,² or dismantled such that the roundels depicting the monks of St. Michael’s in Bamberg appear as literal windows onto the phases of book production staged in the rectangular frame.³ Emblematic though it is, however, this image cannot be taken for granted. In many respects it is frankly astounding—not least for the very fact that it stages such a detailed portrait of craftwork. In honor of John Mitchell’s devotion to medieval craft and the craft of the medievalist, his inspired teaching, his drive always to bring new materials into play, his writing practice, and his own interest in the representation of medieval books,⁴ in this essay I consider two 12th-century images that pair representations of manuscripts in active production with representations of books in active teaching. I first revisit the *Schreiberbild* of Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Patr. 5, in an effort to view that renowned image in fresh light. I then introduce Princeton University Library, Cotsen MS 35055, whose remarkable opening composition is very little known. Both these drawings argue that the making of books is a constituent part of their meaning. I will argue that this focus on process, in turn, bears important ramifications for the role of images in contexts of monastic reading and teaching. Like books themselves, these images are, in Mitchell and Pickwood’s words, both object and idea. By affirming the factor of craft in the function

and power of the books that bear them, the drawings ultimately reflect on the processual nature of both manuscripts’ production and their use.

Before turning to analysis of the *Schreiberbild*, it is worth rehearsing the image’s rather complex manuscript context. The image’s original provenance at St. Michael’s in Bamberg has never been in doubt: the central figure of the image is St. Michael bestriding the gable of a Benedictine abbey, and the codex also bears ownership inscriptions.⁵ The matter of the drawing’s original function and context is less clear-cut. The Bamberg book-making image now opens a collection of the writings of St. Ambrose, beginning with his moral treatise, *De officiis*, which sets out the responsibilities of a clerical life. The collection continues with other tracts on moral guidance, including Ambrose’s sermons on Solomon, Gideon, and the dignity of priests, and the first Apology for king David. Between *De officiis* and the sermon on Solomon, an inserted bifolio written in the same hand as the rest of the text presents Henry IV’s *Constitutio pacis* of 1085, regulating feuds.⁶

That the book-making image is regularly treated in scholarship as something entirely separate from the rest of the manuscript may reflect its own inherent interest, but also reflects the warranted caution about the messy situation at the beginning of the codex that Kathryn Rudy has stressed. Rudy, indeed, has advocated thinking of the *Schreiberbild* as a truly separate drawing, possibly even made to exist as a single sheet independent from any codex.⁷ The *Schreiberbild* is tipped in, ahead of another inserted bifolio containing the chapter list for Book I of the *De officiis* in another hand than the rest of the text (the chapter lists for Books II and III are part of the flow of the text, copied over the regular quaternio quires that pick up at folio 4). The book-making image was rendered on the blank verso of a leaf that had been written out, but now is quite thoroughly erased.⁸

Partly on the basis of a textual comparison, Fridolin Dressler proposed a turn of events in which the copying of the *De officiis* began on the basis of a 10th-century manuscript in the Bamberg Cathedral library containing

¹ The ideas in this paper coalesced through my experience of teaching manuscript illumination at Princeton. I first presented them publicly at *The Image of the Book: Representing the Codex from Antiquity to the Present*, the 16th Annual Lawrence J. Schoenberg Symposium on Manuscript Studies in the Digital Age at the University of Pennsylvania. I thank Nicholas Herman and Lynn Ransom for the invitation and the symposium colleagues for their questions; especially Sonja Drimmer and Jeffrey Hamburger. Eric White and the late, much-missed, William Noel spearheaded the multispectral imaging of Cotsen 35055 and have always welcomed holding class in direct conversation with medieval manuscripts. The paper is thus rooted in both the generous collegiality and the commitment to teaching championed by John Mitchell, and I hope it will also bespeak his delight in surprises.

² Alexander 1992, 12.

³ As in Clemens and Graham 2007, where the selection of details from the *Schreiberbild* tracks with the authors’ own description of the processes in manuscript-making: 4 [tablets and stylus], 11 [parchment scraping], 51 [binding].

⁴ Mitchell and Pickwood 2021.

⁵ Suckale-Redlefsen 1995, 31.

⁶ Leitschuh and Fischer 1903, 344–45.

⁷ Rudy 2015, 42–43.

⁸ For an image of the erasure visible under UV: Rudy 2015, 43, fig. 28.



Figure 1. The 'Bamberger Schreiberbild,' mid-12th century, Michaelsberg Abbey, Bamberg. Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Patr. 5, fol. 1v. Photo: Staatsbibliothek Bamberg.



Figure 2. Paul and his disciples, c. 1160, likely Michaelsberg Abbey, Bamberg. Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Bibl. 122, fol. 2v. Photo: Staatsbibliothek Bamberg.

many of the same collected Ambrosian texts⁹—but with no chapter lists—and then was finished on the basis of another, unknown copy of the Ambrose collection that did have the apparatus.¹⁰ In this scenario, Dressler suggests, the frontispiece and the chapter list for Book I may have been added as a secondary step in the completion of the manuscript. Urging caution on the question of when the *Schreiberbild* joined the Ambrose, Rudy stresses that the manuscript was rebound—probably in-house at St. Michael's—in the late 15th century, when it acquired its current, well-preserved binding. This is perhaps also around the moment that the manuscript was entered into a catalogue of the abbey library in 1483.¹¹ In sum, from what juncture we should consider the imaged sheet truly part of the Ambrose manuscript remains an open question.

Dressler observed that, whether or not the *Schreiberbild* was custom-made as a frontispiece for the Ambrose collection, its fitting character for that book was recognized when the image was integrated with the codex.¹² Rudy emphasized the image's divorce in subject

matter from the Ambrose,¹³ but I would join Dressler in giving greater weight to a recognition of appropriate theme whenever the image was joined to the book, even if it remains impossible to claim that the image was designed for its current role from the outset. Ambrose's concern with the duties of the religious life in *De officiis* is readily seen translated into the work of monks in producing the very books that teach and support their lives of service. In a congruent vein to Dressler, Jonathan Alexander characterised the *Schreiberbild* as a portrait of the Benedictine 'self-sufficiency principle'.¹⁴ Similarly, Monika Müller observed that to include this image at the beginning of Ambrose's treatise is to elevate the making of books to the level of spiritual value advocated in the theologian's verbal arguments regarding virtuous action.¹⁵ These readings hold, and I would also highlight that Heidi Gearhart has given us new terms in which to understand with even greater specificity and heft the conjunction of language around manual labor, artistic craft, and spiritual work in the

⁹ Now Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Patr. 4.

¹⁰ Dressler 1999 [1971], 7.

¹¹ Rudy 2015, 43; Dressler 1999, 6.

¹² 'Es ist wahrscheinlich, dass man die Miniatur nachträglich absichtlich an die Spitze eines Manuskriptes stellte, in dem mit dem

Werk *De officiis ministrorum* von den "Pflichten," freier gesagt von den "Aufgaben der Diener," nämlich der Angehörigen des geistlichen Standes, gehandelt wird, hier offensichtlich bezogen auf die Leistungen der Mönche eines Scriptoriums.' Dressler 1999, 7.

¹³ Rudy 2015, 42.

¹⁴ Alexander 1992, 12.

¹⁵ Müller 2014, 227.

12th-century discourse.¹⁶ Moreover, Rudy's reservations about classifying the drawing as a true frontispiece rest in part on the iconography's remove from expected prefatory subjects such as a text author or a book dedication.¹⁷ However, in a 12th-century context there seems to me little trouble and much interest in viewing the *Schreiberbild* as a move by the Michaelsberg book-makers, not unlike Eadwine of Canterbury's outsize scribal portrait at the end of his roughly contemporary psalterium triplex.¹⁸ These images shift attention to authorship away from the text toward the material codex.

I would like to propose an additional angle on the rhetoric of value in the *Schreiberbild*. The twist concerns a different trope from *ora et labora*; namely, *materiam superabat opus*—the work surpassing the materials. Gearhart lays out how intimately 12th-century thinking around monastic labor, ethics, and spiritual value was entwined with contemporary discussion of wealth and poverty in religious life.¹⁹ To my eye, the Bamberg artist engages related themes by joining the image's self-reflexive iconography to some clever thinking about format and materials.

As comparandum for the *Schreiberbild*, Dressler compared the St. Michael's image to a later-12th-century Pauline Epistles frontispiece with provenance in the Bamberg cathedral library,²⁰ thus couching the composition only in relation to other manuscript pages (Fig. 2). The comparison is apt in the common composition that places a large, focal central figure in the center of a compartmentalised frame that evokes a community around him.²¹ Examples of roundel busts in manuscript illumination abound—in the period and well before—that more closely match the *Schreiberbild*'s compass-made frames for the book-making monks, although the Epistle's frontispiece remains a clear counterpart to the composition overall.²² However,

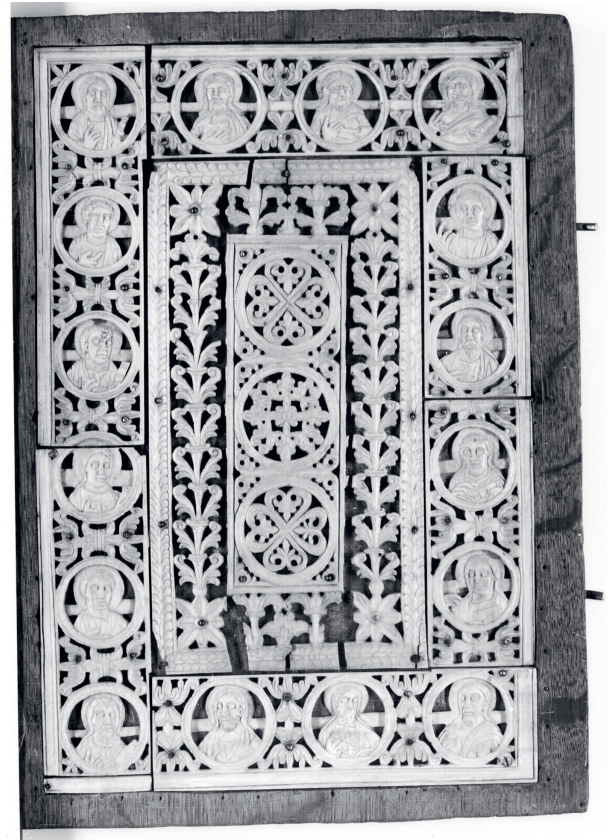


Figure 3. Cover plaque with saints, ivory, 10th century, N. Italy? Paris, BnF, Ms. lat. 9454. Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

if we look beyond manuscripts another possibility emerges. To my eye, while it adopts an idea *au courant* in manuscript imagery, the Bamberg composition also shares strong—and in some respects stronger—analogues with book covers in precious media, many of which pre-date the manuscript comparanda (Fig. 3).²³ The parallel with the 10th-century ivory cover of Paris, BnF, Ms. lat. 9454 offered as an example, of course, begins in the disposition of un-joined roundels around the central rectangle, but it extends to the position adopted for the Bamberg image at the opening

¹⁶ Gearhart 2017. Thomas O'Donnell's forthcoming work on the prevalence of craft metaphors in the characterisations of monastic community life—primarily early English—will deepen and broaden this intellectual context for the Bamberg image still further.

¹⁷ Rudy 2015, 42.

¹⁸ Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.17.1, fol. 283v. Jeffrey Hamburger stresses the prominence of scribal portraits relative to author portraits in the early and high Middle Ages: Hamburger 2021, 9 esp. n. 18.

¹⁹ Gearhart 2017.

²⁰ Dressler 1999 [1971], 13.

²¹ Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Bibl. 122, fol. 2v. A similar composition, but with corner roundels housing Virtues, mirrors apostles and prophets across the square frame surrounding a double portrait of Christ and Archbishop Friedrich I von Schwarzenburg in the Jerome Epistles manuscript, Cologne, Dombibliothek, Hs. 59, fol. 1r (Cologne, c. 1130). The Job frontispiece in the Marchiennes *Moralia in Iob* of 1100–1125 mixes roundels for Virtues with square and rectangular frames for male figures: Douai, Bibliothèque Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, ms. 301, fol. 1v.

²² E.g., the six clerical portraits (with no central figure) in the Homiliary Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 7383, fol. 2r (South Germany, early 12th century); or the apostle roundels framing

a full scene of Peter with Simon Magus in the Pseudo-Clementine manuscript St. Gall, Cod. Sang. 86, p.6, Einsiedeln, 950–70.

²³ Illustrated is the present cover of Paris, BnF, Ms. lat. 9454, with probably 10th-century ivories: Steenbock 1965, #36, 113–14. The 11th-century cover (metal and re-used ivory) of Paris, BnF, Ms. lat. 9436 renders the composition with rectangular border figures: Steenbock, 1965, #75, 167–68. A particularly relevant roundel example appears in the Bookcover of Archbishop Alfanus in the Capua Cathedral treasury (dated 1173–82), because it renders the composition all of a piece in one medium: enamel. Similar medium unity holds for the late 12th-century rectangular examples in Düsseldorf and Fritzlar: Steenbock 1965, #92, 190–91; #101 and 102, 200–02. The early 12th-century silver and gold repoussé binding from Novara Cathedral now held in the Musée Cluny, Paris, is also similar in this regard, although the formal correspondence with the Bamberg roundels is less pronounced. One could arguably hark the basic pattern back to the early 11th-century *assemblage* cover for the Pericopes of Henry II (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4452).

of the Ambrose manuscript, entirely isolated from any immediate textual conversation by facing a blank recto.

In 1931, Eberhard Lutze posited that evidence does not exist for a robust tradition of illumination at the Michaelskloster before the 12th century, but that ivory carving at the abbey is attested.²⁴ He used a comparison of the drawn St. Michael with the carvings ascribed to the abbey to date the *Schreiberbild* early in the 12th century—a judgment that Dressler and Gude Suckale Redlefsen both overturned in favor of a middle-to-third quarter date.²⁵ De-coupled from a dating argument, Lutze's reference to the treasury arts speaks to another context in which to see the Ambrose frontispiece. If we take the formal rhyme seriously, the humble materials, limited palette, and emphasis on process in the Bamberg miniature come to read as a transmutation of medium and a displacement of value—from exterior show to interior content, book cover to written book, ivory (or silver, or enamel) to ink.

Like the happy confluence of Ambrose's attention to virtuous religious life and the *Schreiberbild*'s focus on a community of craft, the pair of image and textual contents in the manuscript also works particularly well in view of transmuted artistic value. In the *De officiis*, Ambrose affirms several times that readers should prize worthy contents over elaborate verbal style or intricately constructed argument.²⁶ Perhaps even more pertinently, the examples Ambrose discusses are rich in scriptural quotations and injunctions that substitute spiritual for material wealth, and de-value precious matter.²⁷ Elsewhere in the collection, Ambrose turns to craft metaphors to explain processes of spiritual work. An example especially striking in its detailed, step-by-step specificity appears in the *Apology for the Prophet David* and pertains to the cleansing of the soul through divine speech or through confession:

Thus precious dye does not immediately color fleece by means of a single infusion, but first the

fleece is infused by a second-rate substance and then by other sorts of substance; after frequent washings the natural color is changed quite often to a different color. Thus the dyeing is afterwards applied as a more thorough washing, so that a truer and more perfect brilliance of the purple shines forth. Therefore, just as a multitude of murexes is used to infuse the purple, so in the washing of regeneration a multitude of heavenly mercies is needed so that iniquity might be washed away.²⁸

Knowing that such a partnership of craft language and theology is part of the book introduced by the *Schreiberbild* deepens the sense that the image was marshaled to partner with the specific texts it precedes. More broadly, though, the visual parsing of book-craft at the outset of the Bamberg Ambrose sets a premise appropriate for virtually any text proper to monastic life, because it shows the process that produces the precondition for valuable reading itself—that is, a well-made book.

In the context of 12th-century monasticism, the value ascribed to texts is often linked directly, not only to reading, but to the role of texts in brokering relationships between parties who teach and learn. The upper and lower roundels on the central axis of the *Schreiberbild* make the use-phase an integral part of its portrait of manuscript production, as we see the finished book in action, taken up both for individual reading and for teaching. If the small monk's presence were not explicit enough to seal the latter, Dressler reports that Jean Loubier reported that he could see the word *discipulus* broken over three lines in the lower roundel teaching image in 1908.²⁹

A noteworthy image that pairs portraits of book-making and teaching just as explicitly as the famous Bamberg composition has been flying under the radar in the Cotsen Children's Collection of Princeton University Library (Fig. 4). Cotsen MS 35055 is a 12th-century copy of the popular doctrinal dialogue *Elucidarium*, written by Honorius Augustodunensis around 1100, and in good circulation as a monastic primer in the decades to follow.³⁰ The pocket-sized Princeton manuscript has been ascribed to Germany or Switzerland in the mid-12th century. It contains the *Elucidarium*, written by two hands who change at a quire break in the middle of Book I; and an *ordo* text written in a hand that has been variously dated to the 12th or 13th century. Two earlier

²⁴ Lutze 1931, 13.

²⁵ Dressler 1999 [1971], 12–14; Suckale-Redlefsen 1995, 32.

²⁶ E.g., *De officiis* I.116: *Nos autem artem fugimus, exempla maiorum proponimus quae neque obscuritatem adferunt ad intellegendum neque ad tractandum versutias* ('We want to shun artificiality: we would rather present the examples of our ancestors, which are neither difficult to understand nor tricky to handle'). Ambrose, trans. Davidson 2001, vol. 1, 185.

²⁷ E.g. *De officiis* I.11: 'And for whose benefit was that other command recorded in the Scriptures: "Hedge your property with thorns...; bind fast your silver and your gold; make door and bar for your mouth, and yoke and balance for your words"? It was for each one of us, was it not? Your property is your mind, your gold is your heart, your silver is your word: "The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tested by fire." A good mind is good property [*bona*].' Ambrose, trans. Davidson 2001, vol. 1, 123. Other particularly clear instances of de-valued money appear at I.241, where gold and silver are weighed against freedom; and II.128, where Peter gives a lame man a 'sound body' in place of silver or gold (this passage occurring in the midst of a long section on wealth, greed, and misplaced value). Ambrose, trans. Davidson 2001, vol. 1, 257, 339.

²⁸ Ambrose, *First Apology for the Prophet David*, 8.45, trans. Dunkle 2020, 129.

²⁹ Dressler 1999 [1971], 11.

³⁰ Gottschall 1992, esp. 25–35. The Princeton copy was not part of Gottschall's corpus. The manuscript is fully digitized: <https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/9947147673506421#view>. Accessed 13 November



Figure 4. Teaching and book production scenes, 12th century, likely Germany. Princeton University Libraries, Cotsen Children's Library, Cotsen MS 35055, fol. 1r. Photo: Princeton University Libraries.



Figure 5. Cotsen MS 35055, fol. 1r, image digitally processed with principal components analysis: composite of photographs taken with varying single wavelengths, some filtered. Photo: R.B. Toth Associates, Courtesy of Princeton University Libraries.

sets of sewing holes precede the current string binding, which Don Skemer ascribed also to Germany and dated 15th or 16th century.³¹ The manuscript currently has no hard binding. The first page of the first regular quire is occupied by a double-tier frontispiece image. The leaf is so badly abraded that it must have long gone without a cloth, leather, or parchment protection originally meant to encase the book. Like the Bamberg image, this one operates as a kind of interior cover for the text to follow; unlike the Bamberg image, here we can posit that the drawing was integral to the book's design from the outset.

Multispectral imaging of the manuscript performed in 2022 by R.B. Toth Associates has clarified several details that were not well legible at the time of the standard catalogue description (Fig. 5). In the upper register, a tonsured student sits before his capped *magister* inside a towered building or cityscape, whose ramparts frame the interior scene at top and bottom while marbled columns bound it at the sides. The student's speech scroll specifies the subject of a lively dialogue and ties it directly to the book at hand. The student poses an early topic of the *Elucidarium*: *Dicitur quod nemo sciat*

quid sit deus—'It is said that no one knows what God might be.' The choice of quote is striking: it is a high-stakes theme, but notable that the line is not the first of the dialogue. It appears early in the first question but not immediately at the beginning; line 6 in the Cotsen edition. The excerpt must have been chosen by someone who knew the work well and was not just copying the first line to indicate that the teaching scene should be understood to correspond to the text within the quire. The teacher points to an open book, presumably to render his reply, but this text currently remains illegible. Below, in a separate and plainer space, rendered in somewhat looser drawing, one tonsured scribe works with a strikingly precise quill and scraper, inkpot at the ready, while a tonsured associate perches on a stool nearby and turns back to confer with the scribe about what he reads from his open book. The most likely characterisation is that that he is dictating, the look over his shoulder confirming the connection between the working men and the identification of the text as an authoritative copy.³² If this is so, then the composition represents a precursor to formally analogous scriptorium scenarios attested in the 13th

³¹ Skemer 2013, 133.

³² On images of—often inspired—authorship, see Hamburger, 2021.

century that specify a clerical reader and a lay artist-scribe.³³

A fine point in the characterisation of readers, writers, and teachers in the Cotsen Honorius revealed by the multispectral imaging deserves mention: both figures on the left have removed their cloaks in order to perform their work of study and book-making. The student appears to sit on his cloak, and the dictator's is distinctly cowed. This feature adds to the image's sense of vivid activity around book-making and study; what it, and the figures' dress overall, implies about the social history of book culture merits further research.

The Cotsen image was rendered in two stages. While close links exist between the upper and lower registers, the distinction between them is significant as well. The upper and lower figures are comparably conceived in their dress, the red coloring of their cheeks, the alternation of rubric and brown ink, and their elegantly extended, pointed feet. However, the figures are not scaled in precisely the same way—those below are rather larger in proportions—and the way the lower bound of the teaching room is so firmly drawn relative to the apparently informal extension around the writing room suggests that either the lower scene was always intended to be marginal to the upper, like other famous marginal scribal scenes,³⁴ or it was an afterthought wholesale. In any case, just as someone decided that the Bamberg Ambrose was best completed with the scriptorium frontispiece, for the Cotsen Honorius someone decided that the portrait of active use for the manuscript at hand should be paired with an image of the type of work that produced it precisely for such use.

In both cases, people who clearly were interested in the books' role in forging both community itself, and community practices of teaching and learning, made the factor of manuscript production itself central to a self-representation of monastic practice. Their idea of the book is one that stresses human agency in the construction of the material texts on which the work of learning and thinking is built. We might simply take these images of books-in-making as metonymy, or a kind

of transparent symbolism for a bookish culture that prizes its libraries. But stronger language is required. The conglomeration of humble materials, thoughtful composition, and the whole folio used for the Cotsen image indicates just how high a priority its presence was for the book-makers. Even if we treat the Bamberg image as a self-contained meditation on scribal culture without integrating it too firmly with its manuscript, it too, asserts the necessity of visual-material facets to its makers' conception of books' worth and work.

When I introduced the Bamberg example as an image not to be taken for granted, I repeated its common moniker of *Schreiberbild*. This is not a name to take for granted either. The roundels stage many essential phases in producing a teaching-ready codex. From top to bottom the side pairs (read across the angel) may be identified as follows: pen-preparation-copy comparison and correction;³⁵ text drafting-quire binding; parchment scraping-sheet cutting and ruling; board-planing-working a clasp. The phases would produce an excellent text, carefully materialized and handsomely bound, but a crucial phase that does not appear is the actual application of scribal pen to parchment. The wax tablet phase seeds a draft, but the *Schreiberbild* does not actually depict a book in the writing.

To excise the formal writing stage from the litany of necessary parts in book production is, perhaps, to suspend an image that might complicate a distinction between the authorship of texts and the provision of authoritative copies (although many compositions make clear when a scribe is copying, not composing). Integrated with a codex, as the Bamberg image is now, the effect is also to defer the presence of writing for its star turn as the stuff of the rest of the codex. Be that as it may, I would like to dwell on the relationship between writing and image-making that appears at the heart of the Bamberg image and speaks to the role that this drawing and the Cotsen image share in defining the nature and value of crafted books.

To call the Bamberg composition a *Schreiberbild* is to conflate the work of the scribe and the draftsman—bespeaking the case at many a monastic scriptorium before the rise of the book trades.³⁶ The visible changes of tool and materials as the Michaelsberg draftsman took darker ink and a harder pen for the main lines of faces, hands, wings, and garments, yielding these for brush and wash in modeling, make it clear that the work

³³ I thank Sonja Drimmer for bringing the example in the Peter of Poitiers *Compendium historiae in genealogia Christi* to my attention (Harvard University, Houghton Library, Cambridge, MA, acc. no. MS Typ 216) see Drimmer 2023, Fig. 5. The flagship example of this composition—remarkably close to the Cotsen Honorius in its pair of learned conversation above and dictation below, but on a resoundingly different patronage scale—is the frontispiece to Blanche of Castile's *Bible moralisée*, now held in the Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum (MS M.240, fol. 8r).

³⁴ E.g. the colophon vignette below the Gregory portrait in the 'Olmütz Horologium' (Bohemia, c. 1140; Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket, Cod. A 144, fol. 34r). The scribes in a lower vertical position relative to an author is a composition with a long pedigree; out of many possible examples spanning various genres see, e.g. the scribes beneath King David in the 9th-century 'Bobbio Psalter' (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 343, fol. 12v).

³⁵ The upper right roundel is often—plausibly—identified as quire assembly. I follow Suckale-Redlefsen here in giving greater weight to the pen poised behind the monk's ear and the consistency of the knife form; also in view of the paramount importance of *correctio* in medieval scribes' own language about their work. Suckale-Redlefsen 1995, 31.

³⁶ On early medieval divisions of book-making labor that included artistic professionals, though, see Nees 2001.

showcases both the scribe's skills and the painter's. We might even dub the page the Bamberger *Zeichnerbild*—more the draftsman's image than the scribe's. Indeed, the work of an image-maker, not a text-maker, is the heart of the composition. Fully absorbed in his task, the monk beneath Michael's left foot constructs with his brush the representation of the abbey in which his brothers stand, leaving to them the praise of their patron while he establishes the very reality of painted parchment in which they all, in actual fact, exist (as pictures).³⁷ The fine work of book-making, like the work of place-making and community-making in this case, belongs most overtly to the painter-cum-draftsman.

In this, especially bound into the Ambrose, the *Zeichnerbild* communicates a great deal about what manuscripts meant to their bookish community. Like the Cotsen case, the Bamberg iconography argues that books themselves are not to be taken for granted, as they must be produced in order to exist as good helps for teaching and learning. It is the work of both images to broadcast this idea, which might otherwise remain too implicit—even in the most carefully written and beautifully presented script. Moreover, the emphasis of both images on the work of book-construction turns a spotlight on processes of active production that also bear upon the work of reading once the codex is complete.³⁸ The Honorius is a dialogue: its textual genre also has elements of unfolding and process baked in. Given the codicological situation we must remain circumspect about the Bamberg image's precise correlation to text, but treating it as a self-contained statement on the centrality of books to monastic life allows for a final observation about how the image plays with terms of value.

It is worth recalling that the leaf on which the Bamberg image was made was written and erased: even if the drawing was not always destined for the Ambrose for which it now makes such an apt frontispiece, its full integration with the materials, techniques, and context of the scriptorium is incontrovertible.³⁹ In this, with the representation of drawing itself at the center of the composition, the transmutation of value that I

have proposed to hold between precious materials and everyday scribal tools in Bamberg also holds between the verbal and the visual.⁴⁰ Indeed, the visual has literally overridden the verbal as the higher priority for employing this piece of parchment. The primacy of visual thinking about the value of books, and the importance of the making process to this value, emerges again, I think, in the curious matter of the roundels' ordering. Rather than marching the viewer through a teleological arc of book production, the deconstruction of the timeline allows for each phase to be considered in its own right as an act of monastic work. To see the sequence that actually would lead to the production of a codex requires a diagrammatic act of re-creation.⁴¹ The eye must hop around the frame in order to make the 'correct' order again, and to do so the viewer must have prior knowledge of how manuscripts are made.

In sum, the rhetoric of value in both the Bamberg and the Cotsen images runs like this: without such an image, the nature of material texts themselves as the products of craft might go unspoken. The images make a transitive argument that the processual materialisation of a text is followed by the processual usage of a text. Alongside the value of any given text for its learned community, these processes have value of their own that is also to be taught. Drawing, here, is the teacher.

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³⁷ This passage receives swift but insightful comment in a recent collection on material textual culture, but it is often mentioned only in passing: Becker, Licht, and Schneidmüller 2015, 345. Kessler named the detail as the painting of a sculpture—a characterisation that raises similar cross-medial issues to the more specific identification of the rectangle as evoking a binding ivory: Kessler 2019, 255, n. 319. Dengler-Schreiber termed the painting monk a 'self-portrait': Dengler-Schreiber 1979, 78.

³⁸ On active processes of medieval reading: Carruthers 1998; Leclercq 1961, esp. 77–82.

³⁹ Rudy frames the scraping of parchment to make a palimpsest as the 'omitted step' in the representation of manuscript making. Rudy 2015, 42. The residual presence of writing on the sheet, however, does in another sense retain the scribe's role as a visible part of the book-making community, testifying to phases of textual production beyond the drafting step.

⁴⁰ Pertinent to this reciprocity is Frese and Keil 2015.

⁴¹ On processual thinking as a diagrammatic mode see Kupfer, Cohen, and Chajes (eds) 2020.

- Poitiers's *Genealogia Christi*, *The Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 76. <https://journal.thewalters.org/volume/76/essay/the-rollodex-an-experiment-around-the-prepositional-paradigm-through-peter-of-poitiers-genealogia-christi/> accessed 13 November 2024.
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