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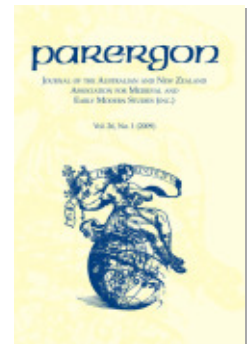
*Picturing Kingship: History and Painting in the Psalter  
Saint Louis* (review)

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they designate the Law by which Christians are damned and the promises by which they are saved; Law and Gospel are both dispersed across the Hebrew and Christian scriptures' (p. 201).

In the last sections of the book, Simpson returns to Thomas More, and argues that his response to evangelical reading and the impact of the vernacular scriptures was more nuanced and intelligent than most historians have credited. His defence of an older Catholic tradition of reading was based on the premise that 'texts are trustingly made and remade in human history by human institutions' (p. 223). Simpson shows clearly how More's position opposes all the dimensions of evangelical reading he has thus far examined. Sadly, in his attempt to refute the new mode of reading advocated by English Protestants, More entered into the same state as those he opposed, eventually backing the persecution of those he viewed as heretics.

Simpson's conclusion that 'Tyndale and More were both the victims of a new, immensely demanding and punishing textual culture marked by literalist impersonality' (p. 282) is bound to be controversial. So too is his implication that we are still wrestling with the direct heir of that textual culture, religious Fundamentalism. This is a brilliantly written, fascinating book, and it deserves a very wide readership. Not all will agree with Simpson, but all will learn something new and valuable.

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**Stahl**, Harvey, *Picturing Kingship: History and Painting in the Psalter of Saint Louis*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008; hardback; pp. 464; 60 colour & 50 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$85.00; ISBN 9780271028637.

*Picturing Kingship*, Harvey Stahl's posthumously published examination of the *Psalter of Saint Louis* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France MS lat. 10525, c.1265) is the product of impressive scholarship sustained over many years. Stahl builds meticulously on the research of those that have preceded him. He also relates his investigation to contemporary interpretations of illustrated medieval histories, both biblical and secular. Many aspects of the manuscript are explored; it is presented as an outstanding example of Parisian medieval book production and as an expression of its royal owner's personal concerns with the ideals and practical demands of kingship.

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Stahl's study of this splendidly illuminated manuscript includes a detailed codicological analysis, which he relates to the identification of different artistic hands. His discussion of the so-called 'court style' broadens this concept to include the expertise of illuminators working in relatively small groups or ateliers in the Parisian book trade, whose development has been highlighted in recent years by the productive research of Richard and Mary Rouse.

Stahl examines the style of the Psalter not only in relation to other manuscripts but also in the context of contemporary cathedral sculpture – especially that of the south portal of Notre Dame de Paris – of stained glass, monumental painting and ornamental works in precious metals and ivory. In itself, this approach is not new, but the author's detailed and perceptive analysis forms the basis for his argument that the Psalter 'reflects a new breadth of interest in techniques and effects of modelling, luminance and color, an interest that grows out of contemporary trends in the visual arts and is wholly consistent with contemporary thinking about vision'.

Stahl's chief interest, however, to which he anchors his study of the many facets of this manuscript, is the series of 78 miniatures of Old Testament subjects that preface the calendar and the text of the Psalter. He argues that this series, unusual for its exclusive focus on the Old Testament, reflects the growing contemporary interest in the historical and narrative aspects of the Bible, which is also expressed in the appearance of biblical manuscripts in the vernacular. Moral and typological interpretations of the Bible, Stahl comments, continued to be popular and gave rise to such elaborate programmes as that of the *Bible moralisée*, which was conceived for royal readers and whose pictorial programmes incorporate detailed political and social allusions. While he proposes both moral and allegorical interpretations of certain images in the Psalter, on the whole Stahl argues that the scenes from Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges and Kings are best interpreted as an expression of the growing interest in historical narrative.

In particular, he stresses the contemporary relevance of this pictorial programme for the book's royal owner. Stahl rightly presents King Louis as well educated in the various ways of reading and interpreting the Bible. As king of France, Louis was confronted not only with the challenge to govern his people peaceably, but to fight the enemies of Christendom as a leader in the Crusades.

Stahl's emphasis on a historical parallelism between the Old Testament and contemporary events is in tune with recent interpretations of the illustration

of vernacular texts such as the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, Bersuire's translation of Livy's *History of Rome*, and in the early fifteenth century, Laurent Premierfait's translation of Boccaccio's *Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes*.

Understandably, such extensive coverage and occasionally venturesome interpretation prompt further questioning and in some cases alternative proposals. Stahl argues, for example, that the legends on the pages preceding the miniatures were written after the pictures were completed, while the ruling for them was done beforehand. It is difficult to envisage, however, the scribes writing on the back of these pages once their fronts had been so richly ornamented in costly colours and raised gold leaf.

It is also a matter of some regret that the historiated Psalter initials are not treated in any detail except for Psalm 1. This is especially the case with Psalm 52 which, instead of the usual pictorial representation of a fool in reference to the opening words of the Psalm: 'the fool has said in his heart there is no God', shows two wrestling men, nude, except for colourful loose draperies. Surely this unusual image warranted an explanation. On the other hand, considerable attention is paid to the illustration of the opening Psalm initial, which depicts the story of David and Bathsheba above, and below, a repentant David kneeling before the Lord. The interpretation of this scene, however, both as an expression of David's penitence, and as a symbol of ecclesial purification in the person of the naked Bathsheba, stretches the bounds of credibility.

Unfortunately this fine book has suffered in its final editing and course of publication. Between pages 211 and 212 appear colour illustrations of several of the prefatory miniatures. They are labelled only by folio numbers, and there is no reference made to these pages in the Table of Contents. It would seem that publication of the whole group of miniatures was intended, since many which are referred to in the text and notes are not reproduced elsewhere in the book. There are, however, 21 miniatures of the series missing, including some that are important for the author's arguments.

Furthermore, several of the English translations of the French legends introducing the miniatures, given in Appendix II are awkward or incorrect. For example, St Augustine interpreted the appearance of the three angels to Abraham at the tree of Mambré as an early intimation of the mystery of the Trinity: 'Abraham saw three but adored one'. This is cited in the original legend, and reflected in the distinctive rendering of the central figure in the

angelic group in the accompanying scene (fo. 7v). The translation incorrectly reads, 'Abraham saw three but adored one of them'.

To the best of my knowledge, this manuscript has never been reproduced in its entirety. Perhaps a CD of its contents might be designed to accompany the hard copy.

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**Terry, Ann and Henry Maguire**, *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007; cloth; 2 vols; 75 b/w illustrations, 226 colour plates; R.R.P. US\$95.00; ISBN 9780271028736.

In the Istrian town of Poreč, the sixth-century cathedral, baptistery and episcopal palace stand close to the Adriatic Sea. These buildings form one of the most complete and important surviving examples of such an ecclesiastical complex. Splendid mosaics adorn each of the three apses, the apsidal arch and the façade of the cathedral built by Bishop Eufrasius. This book presents a meticulous survey of the apse and arch mosaics, in the context of early illustrations, descriptions and restorations, and it explains their style, iconography and iconology in relation to other works of the time.

After briefly describing the appearance of the mosaics today, the authors make a critical analysis of the graphic and documentary evidence for what was visible in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Drawings, prints and photographs are carefully evaluated in relation to written descriptions of the mosaics and reports on their condition. In this way, the authors establish what was there before the controversial restoration of 1890-1900 by Pietro Bornia. Their aim is to distinguish between what dates from the sixth century and what from the nineteenth, and to ascertain whether the nineteenth-century restorers remade, copied or even 'improved' on the original work, according to the various theories of restoration then current.

The authors have undertaken a precise and very valuable examination of the mosaics from scaffolding erected in the cathedral at various times. This close inspection of the physical fabric of the mosaics has enabled them to see where the original plaster survives, where the original tesserae are still in situ, or have been reset, and where new tesserae have been added. The