STUDIES IN ICONOGRAPHY

Volume 33

2012

Special Issue
Medieval Art History Today—Critical Terms

Guest Editor
Nina Rowe

Published under the auspices of the Index of Christian Art,
Princeton University

by

Medieval Institute Publications
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo

Studies in Iconography is supported and administered by the Index of Christian Art, Princeton University.
For further details see <http://ica.princeton.edu/>.

ISSN 0148-1029

Composed by Tom Krol

Cover photo: The Cloisters Cross, detail of back. Walrus Ivory, 22 5/8 x 14 1/4 in. (57.5 x 36.2 cm), 12th century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, 1963 (63.12). (Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY)

Printed in the United States of America

PERFORMANCE

Laura Weigert

Although we might describe the modern museum-going experience as a ritual, we tend to agree that prior to the emergence of this institution art was experienced under much more regulated and ceremonialized conditions. Yet when we speak of an artwork's devotional, liturgical, ritual, or processional use, or when we refer to it simply as devotional or liturgical, we seem to be talking about more than just the nature of this setting or about an artwork's function as object within it. It seems we are assuming two points about artistic production and reception: that art was made to be seen within temporally and spatially limited circumstances, and it was within that setting that an artwork acquired its meaning. The word "performance" and its conceptual offspring "performative" offer a vocabulary to describe these fundamental characteristics of medieval art. The following essay provides a schematic history of the two terms and their application in the study of the Middle Ages, and then turns to an example of their use in the interpretation of a medieval artwork.

History of the Term

The *Oxford English Dictionary* proposes two etymological origins for "perform" (*OED*, s.v. "perform"). Either the word derives from the Old French *par* or *per* plus "former," "former," or "furmer," meaning "to carry through in due form"; or, it derives from the more common Old French *parfournir*: "to complete, to carry through to completion, to finish, to perfect, or to provide what is lacking." According to the *OED*, Chaucer is the first author to use the word in English (*Troilus* II.7.a), followed by Wyclif (*Phil.* I.6; *OED*, s.v. "perform," 1.a). In the seventeenth century "perform" was linked to the stage, and then quite significantly by Shakespeare, who used the verb to describe the process of acting or playing a part or character (*The Tempest* III.iii.84; *OED*, I.4.c). It was also in the seventeenth century that "performance" was used first to describe the enactment of a play or a piece of music for an audience (*OED*, s.v. "performance," 3.a). Although the French word "parformance" was first used at the end of the fifteenth century, its association with a public spectacle appears only in the eighteenth century; this use of the word derives from English.[1]

In their various forms in English and French, "perform" and "performance" imply a temporally limited action. "To perform" assumes the end point of a procedure that requires a beginning point: a task is completed; an actor assumes a role and then sheds it; the play or piece of music lasts for a predetermined span of time. "Performance" evokes an act or an event, inscribed within and limited by a fixed span of time. From their earliest use in the fourteenth century, the words focus on an act or the agent who is responsible for it. However, their transformation in the seventeenth century introduced an audience or the public as an implicit component of their definition: "to perform" and "performance" are actions or acts that take place before and are intended for the benefit of an audience.

"Performance" developed as a theoretical concept in the twentieth century within the context of two distinct traditions in the humanities and social sciences. On the one hand, it became associated with models of communication and meaning making in linguistics and the philosophy of language.[2] Noam Chomsky opposed "competence" to "performance" in order to differentiate between an individual's knowledge of how to construct and understand grammatical sentences—that is, an ideal capacity for language use—and his or her actual production of language in specific instances.[3] The word "performative" was developed in English in the domain of speech act theory and then adopted from this origin in other European languages. J. L. Austin was the first to use the term in 1955 (*OED*, s.v. "performative," A).[4] Following Austin, a performative is a particular kind of utterance that accomplishes an action as the words are spoken, such as, "I do," stated within the vows of the marriage ceremony. John Searle expanded this limited category of performatives to argue that an individual establishes the meaning of language through contextually specific speech acts.[5] And in a second stage he argued that non-language acts, such as the attribution of value to currency, are also performative; that is, they have no foundation outside of a group's collective imposition of worth on a piece of paper or metal.[6] In each case the efficacy of language is determined not by the inherent meaning of words and grammatical structures but by their communicative success in spatially and temporally bound acts involving both an agent and a recipient.

The second tradition within which performance was theorized was as an explanatory model for human behavior and identity formation. Scholars primarily in the fields of anthropology and cultural studies, ranging from Clifford Geertz and Erving Goffman to Victor Turner and Richard Schechner, invoke the seventeenth-century association of performance with orchestrated events before a public as a metaphor to describe individual and group activity and behavior.[7] Consequently, they maintain a focus on an audience, even if that audience is fictive or imagined, and on an action or activity that is limited in time. Although the objects of their study and the conclusions they draw vary greatly, there is a commonality in this scholarship: it seeks to understand social behavior as a function of learned and

repeated activities, rather than as natural or instinctive. In turn, it considers that these activities contribute to the formation of individual and community identity. Within this tradition, Judith Butler drew explicitly on speech act theory to formulate a model of gender and sexual identity as constituted through repeated acts, the contours of which are defined by and through regulative discourses.[8] And Michel de Certeau, acknowledging his debt to Noam Chomsky, emphasized the agency of social actors to redefine commodities and cultural products through their individual creative practices.[9]

In its designation of a wide range of social activity as performance, this scholarship has effectively diminished the divide between stage-based theater and other forms of human expression. Institutional factors such as the foundation of departments of performance studies and theater history also have contributed to an expansive definition of performance, which incorporated aspects of everyday life, in addition to more traditional forms of audience directed activity.[10] Equally influential in this process was the creation of the term "performance art" in the 1960s.[11] As the topics of academic teaching and research expanded beyond the stage, artistic practice moved outside the confines of the gallery or museum. This new artistic form referred initially to works that integrated the artist's body, and then became associated with ones that involved their audiences both physically and/or as active agents in the constitution of meaning.

The historical use of the words "performance" and "performativity" can be summarized under three general headings. First, drawing on its etymology, "performance" refers to an event demarcated by a beginning and an end point, which takes place before an audience. Second, the word refers to any act of display by human beings or groups, which establishes their individual or communal identity. Third, "performativity" refers to a process of interpretation or meaning making that takes place at each exchange between an audience and an event, object, or activity.

"Performance" and "Performativity" in Medieval Scholarship

Scholars in a variety of disciplines have recognized the potential of "performance" and "performativity" to capture and articulate distinct aspects of medieval society, such as the complex history of and interaction between orality and literacy, and the way in which ceremonial occasions regulated the lives of individuals and established the authority of civic and religious institutions and leaders. The three uses of these words sketched above have provided a productive framework for evaluating the role of pictures and texts within medieval culture and as interpretive models for investigating these artifacts as evidence for the past.

"Performance," in the first sense, has provided a framework for scholars to focus on the reception of various kinds of texts—pictorial, written, and notational—

by audiences within temporally demarcated circumstances. For musicologists this was a logical move, since notation implies the physical transmission of a melody within a fixed time span. Leo Treitler was the first to consider the relationship between the notational record and its performance in his study of the transmission of Gregorian chant.[12] Similarly, scholars of medieval drama have shifted their focus on the designation of authoritative play scripts to thinking about these texts as documents of their production before an audience.[13] Scholars in all fields have, in turn, recognized the aural reception of the medieval texts they study.[14] This has resulted in productive investigations into the specific contexts in which audiences experienced texts, such as civic proclamations of charters, the singing of love poetry, and reading practices among noble women. It has also resulted in the reevaluation of manuscripts as evidence for their use in these situations. Rather than aspiring to identify or create an authoritative edition of a text, scholars consider each manuscript as a distinct manifestation of a set of information, which itself was experienced differently under varying circumstances.

One of the significant byproducts of the incorporation of the term "performance" into medieval scholarship is that it mitigates the force of arbitrary distinctions between types of ceremonies. The term bridges any artificial divide between what might be categorized as either liturgical, ritual, or theatrical. "Liturgy" was first used to describe prescribed religious practices in the sixteenth century; the first appearance of "ritual" as related to religious practices was in the seventeenth century.[15] The word "theater" was used in the Middle Ages, but it referred to ancient Roman spectacle, not to the contemporary orchestration of religious drama or farce.[16] There are certainly differences between orchestrated events in a church setting by members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and either self-directed actions repeated by individuals or groups outside the church, or occasional events featuring lay people and organized by civic authorities. There are, however, similarities between these events and the choice of liturgical, ritual, or theatrical to describe them does not necessarily provide a sufficient explanation for how one event differs from another. The use of the broader term "performance" encourages us to describe and evaluate the specificity of each event in its own historical terms.

"Performance" was developed as an interpretive model for human behavior and action within medieval studies and it has been applied to a range of social activities and events. Victor Turner's study of Christian rites of passage identifies and describes the significance of institutionalized rituals in the integration of individuals into a community.[17] His work prompted a body of scholarship on the role of religious practices and ceremonies in the formation of individual and communal identity. Crucial to this work are two ideas: religion is not to be understood as a given set of prescriptions, texts, or beliefs but as a set of practices adopted and repeated by

individuals and through which they establish and confirm their place within a group; and identity and community are not automatically attributed but created through repeated acts. Within the civic sphere "performance" is invoked in reference to the symbolic practices through which the power of the ruler or the social status of individuals is configured and conveyed.[18] Here too the emphasis is on how characteristics and institutions that might appear natural or automatic are, in fact, the result of codified social processes. Power or social status is not an inherent quality possessed by an individual; it is established and confirmed through ritualized activities and events.

The focus on the conditions of reception of medieval texts has initiated approaches that incorporate "performativity" in the third sense. Manuscripts provide evidence for a process through which the meaning of words and pictures was realized or completed as they were experienced by readers, listeners, and viewers. In some cases the manuscript allows us to recover a trace of an event, which required a speaker's or singer's improvisational and corporeal involvement for its enactment. Paul Zumthor's work on twelfth-century love lyrics, for instance, demonstrates that surviving poems provide the basis for a variety of combinations of the same set of themes, which when sung expressed the lover's desire for his beloved.[19] Sylvia Huot shows, in turn, that the transcription and illustration of these love lyrics in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century illuminated manuscripts provide evidence for the poet's self-definition as both singer and as writer.[20] For other scholars, the manuscript offers clues for a reader's active involvement with the object. Pamela Sheingorn and Robert Clark's detailed studies of the *mise en page*, parchment, illuminations, and other markers rely on a model of what they term "performative reading," in which the audience established the connections between these components of the manuscript thereby creating the meaning of the text.[21] These detailed studies of groups of manuscripts integrate a definition of meaning making that draws on the claims of speech act theory. However, "performativity" has also entered medieval studies simply as an adjectival form of "performance." In this use of the term the audience's response or experience often becomes the object of study, rather than the way a particular artifact or text produces meaning. The word has come simply to mean related to or like a "performance." It could be an object, text, or event that initiates a performance on the part of its audience, or that initiates and/or contributes to a performance of some kind, like a ceremonial or ritual occasion.

The Example of Rogier van der Weyden's *Deposition from the Cross*

The increased use of the terms "performance" and "performative" in medieval art history signals a shift in the discipline, away from artist-based studies to those emphasizing reception and away from iconographic studies that seek to

establish a single meaning for an artwork to a recognition that its meaning is contingent on the circumstances within which it was viewed. The focus in art historical scholarship on reception and context has, in many cases, diverted attention from or even ignored the specificity of an individual work of art. The origin of the term "performativity" in the third sense, as it developed in linguistics and the philosophy of language, locates the creation of meaning in the exchange between an agent and a recipient. If we carry this model to art historical inquiry, the work of art is the agent and the viewer(s) are the recipient. The work of art is thereby a necessary but not sufficient component of the hermeneutic process. Recent scholarship has also profited from the methodological rigor with which the terms "performance" and "performativity" have been developed in other fields. These studies range from a focus on the physical context in which artworks were viewed, to the way they contribute to the formation of communities and the construction of identity, to the more general process of how pictures convey meaning.[22]

In order to illustrate schematically how the three senses of "performance" and "performativity" might be engaged in interpretive practice, I turn to Rogier van der Weyden's *Deposition from the Cross*, currently housed in the Prado (Fig. 1).[23] The Louvain Greater Crossbowmans Guild or one of its members probably commissioned the painting, which was produced between 1430 and 1435. The *Deposition* was displayed on the high altar of the guild's chapel, Our Lady Outside the Walls, until 1548, when it was exchanged for a copy by Michiel Coxcie.[24] This painting is distinguished not only by the sophistication of interpretations it has generated but also by the extent to which its interpreters have focused on the relationship between the painting and its viewers, on the one hand, and its physical and ceremonial setting, on the other. Because this literature and the painting itself are so familiar as not to require a lengthy introduction, the *Deposition* provides an instructive example with which to differentiate between the three senses of the term.

In its basic function as an altarpiece, the painting was created for and perceived within the temporal limits of the Mass, its "performance." The nature of this event can be reconstructed based on the general features of this sacrament and the specific features of the Louvain chapel. The visual impact of the celebration of the Mass incorporated, among other things, the officiant and supporting clergy, their gestures, the high altar, the *Deposition* placed above it, and the surrounding architecture and church furnishings, including a polychromed pieta from the fourteenth century located in the chapel.[25] The event also incorporated the spoken and sung words, and the smell of candles and incense and the heat they emitted. Once this type of information is gathered, an interpretation of *The Deposition* might proceed to discuss how the painting contributed to the general theological content of this "performance." The painting refers directly to God's sacrifice and the redemption it promises, the doctrine enacted through the sacrament. The display of the corpse

Fig. 1. Rogier van der Weyden, The Deposition. Madrid, Museo del Prado. (Photo: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.)

at the center of the composition served to emphasize the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, at the moment of transubstantiation.[26] The painting thereby visualizes and explains the symbolic and doctrinal significance of the sacrament as it takes place on the altar.

Within this temporally and spatially delimited viewing context—the performance of the Mass—the painting, in turn, can be understood to have prompted a performance on the part of its audience. This performance could take a variety of forms. We might consider, for instance, that it initiated a process that established the viewer's position within the official church both doctrinally and socially. As doctrine, the Mass enacts God's sacrifice; the viewer then was witness to the possibility of salvation and was transformed as spiritually worthy of salvation at each celebration of the sacrament. By participating in this ceremony, the viewer established and confirmed his or her place within the official church and his or her reliance on its hierarchy. Or we might consider that the expressivity of the figures and their various emotional responses prompted the viewer to identify with them. The viewer adopted the appropriate attitude of reverence and sorrow towards the depicted event. Through this process the viewer performed an act of devotion, a performance which transformed him or her into a pious individual.[27] Finally, we might focus on how the *Deposition* contributed to the performance of the Greater Crossbowmans guild's status within the city of Louvain and its religious hierarchy. The gilded crossbows in the spandrels of the painted frame, the arched back of Mary Magdalene, and the arc created by Jesus's curved body and arms refer iconically to the attribute of this guild.[28] Within the site of the painting's display, these signs were associated not only with the guild as a whole but also with its representatives in Louvain, spanning from the distant past to its present configuration. In this process the current members of the guild became part of a distinct community in Louvain, with a privileged position within its civic and religious institutions.[29]

If we turn to the performativity of the *Deposition*, our discussion shifts from a description of a particular process involving a particular artwork and audience to a conceptual understanding of the hermeneutic process. The meaning of the painting is not fixed or preestablished on its surface; it is produced at each encounter between the painting and a viewer. Following this model, the *Deposition* initiates a series of possible associations that are actualized by the viewer. For instance, the postures of figures suggest connections between them, which, in turn, parallel other accounts of their relationship. Thus the inverted shapes, formed by the prone bodies of the Virgin and Christ, create a visual parallel between the two figures and then evoke a body of texts comparing their suffering.[30] Or, despite its common title, the *Deposition* recalls four separate events: the Crucifixion, the Lamentation, the Deposition, and the Entombment. The viewer associates the figures and actions within the painting to some or all of these stories relating to Christ's Passion,

circulated through a wide range of written, spoken, and pictorial texts. In a preceding, simultaneous, or subsequent move, the viewer associates the figures' gestures with physical human responses known through the codification and assimilation of emotions. Alternately or concurrently, she or he evaluates the similarity of the painted figures to other forms of visual representation, such as sculpture, sculpted altarpieces, tapestry, fabric, jewels, metalwork, and processional stages. The painting prompts the viewer to make such associations and to form units of meaning with them.

Although "performativity" provides a model for how all artworks signify, the process in which the viewer establishes associations between the forms within an artwork and outside of it, and creates meaning from these associations is unique to each encounter between artwork and viewer. The variety of meanings an artwork generates ranges from significant to tiny, depending on whether it is perceived under the same conditions or not, by individuals with a similar background and experience or not, or living at the same time in history or not. For instance, outside the celebration of the Mass the viewer might relate the painted body of Jesus to an idea of or a recollection of the sacrament, or to a memory or image of mourning. The spectrum of potential meanings and their affect on a viewer generated by this process is vast but can also be circumscribed historically. Consequently, it is possible to retrieve, to a certain extent, the range of plausible meanings that an artwork generates at a particular historical moment.

NOTES

1. *Le Trésor de la Langue Française Informatisé*, "performance," étymologie et historique B, http://atilf.fr/tlf.htm.

2. For an expanded account of this trajectory of the term, the reader might consult James Loxley, *Performativity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

3. Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965), 3.

4. Austin first used the word in 1955 when he delivered *How to Do Things with Words* as the William James Lecture at Harvard. The text was first published in 1962: John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962). The second edition was edited by J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà and published by Harvard University Press in 1972.

5. John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) and *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

6. John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1995).

7. Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cock Fight," *Daedalus* 101 (1972): 1–37; Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959); Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974); Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969); Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982); Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).

8. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge,

1996). In her use of speech act theory, Butler follows Derrida's reading of Austin, to which Searle objected. One of the issues about which they disagreed was whether speech acts could be repeated. Derrida argued that each iteration of a statement is necessarily different from the ones before and following it. For Butler this opens up the possibility that dominant discourses, which fix the terms within which individuals act, can be changed. Derrida's contribution to the debate with Searle are published in Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998); Searle's response to Derrida's first essay on Austin appeared as "Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida," *Glyph* 1 (1977): 198–208. Erving Goffman has been credited with anticipating Judith Butler's conclusions. See, for instance, Goffman, *Presentation of Self*.

9. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), xiii.

10. Nathan Stucky and Cynthia Wimmer, eds., *Teaching Performance Studies* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002).

11. The term was first used in 1971, according to the *OED* (*OED*, s.v. "performance," 5).

12. Leo Treitler, "Homer and Gregory: The Transmission of Epic Poetry and Plainchant," *The Musical Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (1974): 333–72; and Leo Treitler, "Oral, Written, and Literate Process in the Transmission of Medieval Music," *Speculum* 56 (1981): 471–91. On the debate around performance practice and the written transmission of notation, within the context of recent work on orality in medieval culture, please see: Susan Boynton, "Orality, Literacy and the Early Notation of the Office Hymns," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 56, no. 1 (2003): 99–109.

13. Meg Twycross, "The Theatricality of Medieval English Plays," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, ed. Richard Beadle and Alan J. Fletcher, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 26–75; Jody Enders, "Performing Miracles: The Mysterious Mimesis of Valenciennes (1547)," in *Theatricality*, ed. Tracy C. Davis and Thomas Postlewait (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 40–64; Carol Symes, *A Common Stage: Theater and Public Life in Medieval Arras* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); and Carol Symes "Out in the Open, in Arras: Sightlines, Soundscapes and the Shaping of a Medieval Public Sphere," in *Cities, Texts and Social Networks, 400–1500: Experiences and Perceptions of Medieval Urban Space*, ed. Caroline Goodson, Anne E. Lester, Carol Symes (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 279–302.

14. Evelyn Birge Vitz, Nancy Freeman Regalado, and Marilyn Lawrence, eds., *Performing Medieval Narrative* (Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2005; Mary A. Suydam and Joanna E. Ziegler, eds., *Performance and Transformation: New Approaches to Late Medieval Spirituality* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

15. *OED*, s.vv. "liturgy," 1; "ritual," 3.B.1.a. "Ritus" was, however, a medieval term and, according to Barbara Haggh, a less anachronistic term for the study of the Middle Ages. On the recent history of the term "liturgy" and its institutionalization, please see: Barbara Haggh, "Foundations or Institutions? On Bringing the Middle Ages into the History of Medieval Music," *Acta Musicologica* 68, no. 2 (1996): 87–94. On the history of the word "ritual" and the implications of its use in the study of the Middle Ages, see: Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), and the response by Geoffrey Koziol, "The Dangers of Polemic: Is Ritual Still an Interesting Topic of Historical Study?" *Early Medieval Europe* 11, no. 4 (2002): 367–88, followed by Philippe Buc's response, "The Monster and the Critics: A Ritual Reply," *Early Medieval Europe* 15, no. 4 (2007): 441–52.

16. *OED*, s.v. "theatre, theater," 1.a. (Chaucer, ca. 1374, and Wyclif in 1382); Littré, *Le Trésor*, "théâtre" (Oresmus, *Thèse de Meunier*, 1372–74); *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330–1500)*, http://www.atilf.fr/dmf/ (Raoul de Presles, *Cité de Dieu*, 1371–75). Any serious study of the term in the Middle Ages would, of course, address the use and meanings of the Latin word, "theatrum," and begin with: Mary H. Marshall, "Theatre in the Middle Ages: Evidence from Dictionaries and Glosses," *Symposium* 4, no. 1 (1950): 1–39 and *Symposium* 4, no. 2 (1950): 366–89.

17. Turner, *The Ritual Process* and *From Ritual*.

18. A few examples are: Björn K. U. Weiler and Simon MacLear, eds., *Representations of Power in Medieval Germany 800–1500* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); Eglal Doss-Quinby, Roberta L. Krueger, E. Jane Burns, eds., *Cultural Performances in Medieval France* (Rochester: D. S. Brewer, 2007); Brenda Bolton and Christine Meek, eds., *Aspects of Power and Authority in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007).

19. Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Sevil, 1972).

20. Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Poetry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

21. Pamela Sheingorn and Robert L. A. Clark, "Performative Reading: The Illustrated Manuscripts of Arnoul Gréban's *Mystere de la Passion*," *European Medieval Drama* 6 (2002): 129–54; Pamela Sheingorn, "Performing the Illustrated Manuscript: Great Reckonings in Little Books," in *Visualizing Medieval Performance: Perspectives, Histories, Contexts*, ed. Elina Gertsman (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008): 57–82.

22. A list of the literature in which the terms are applied for the study of medieval art would be too long for inclusion here. I provide instead a few examples in which the terms are specifically invoked as critical models of interpretation. For "performance" in the first sense, please see: Margot Fassler, "Liturgy and Sacred History in the Twelfth-Century Tympana at Chartres," *Art Bulletin* 75 (1993): 499–517. Elina Gertsman's study of a *Vièrge Ouvrante* is a superb example of a model of "performance" in the second sense ("Performing Birth, Enacting Death: Unstable Bodies in Late Medieval Devotion," in Gertsman, *Visualizing Medieval Performance*, 83–104). Also see: Michael Camille, "Philological Iconoclasm: Edition and Image in the Vie de Saint Alexis," in *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper*, ed. R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 392–95. For a call for a model of "performativity" in the study of medieval art, please see: Paul Binski, "The English Parish Church and Its Art in the Later Middle Ages: A Review of the Problem," *Studies in Iconography* 20 (1999): 1–25. For a study that attempts to incorporate the three uses of the term, please see my book: *Weaving Sacred Stories: French Choir Tapestries and the Performance of Clerical Identity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

23. The painting is one of the three surviving works for which the attribution to this artist can be authenticated, albeit based on a document of 1565. The most recent general literature on the painting includes: Lorne Campbell and Jan van der Stock, *Rogier van der Weyden 1400–1464: Master of Passions* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2009); Stephen Kemperdick and Jochen Sander, eds., *The Master of Flémalle and Rogier van der Weyden* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009); Dirk de Vos, *Rogier van der Weyden: The Complete Works* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999); Elisabeth Dhanens and Jellie Dijkstra, *Rogier de la Pasture: Introduction à l'oeuvre, relecture des sources* (Tournai: Renaissance du livre, 1999).

24. De Vos, *Rogier van der Weyden*, 185–86.

25. Amy Powell, "The Errant Image: Rogier van der Weyden's Deposition from the Cross and Its Copies," *Art History* 29, no. 4 (2006): 543.

26. Barbara Lane, *The Altar and the Altarpiece: Sacramental Themes in Early Netherlandish Painting* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 91–95.

27. Here it serves the function of a group of artworks designated, using the German term, as *Andachtsbilder.* Two classic and quite different articles in the field address the devotional function of the altarpiece: Otto G. Von Simson, "Compassio and Co-Redemption in Roger van der Weyden's Descent from the Cross," *Art Bulletin* 53 (1953): 9–16; and James Marrow, "Symbol and Meaning: The Late Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 16, no. 2/3 (1986): 152–57.

28. Amy Powell is the first to observe the shape of Christ's body in relation to a crossbow (Powell, "Errant Image," 545).

29. Mark Trowbridge has established important historical links between the Crossbowmans

guild in Louvain and their annual procession, which included carts supporting live actors. Significantly, the city introduced crucifixion and entombments scenes in 1436 ("The Stadschilder and the Serment: Rogier van der Weyden's 'Deposition' and the Crossbowman of Louvain," *Dutch Crossing* 23, no. 2 [1999]: 12). The guild's prominent role in the orchestration of this annual procession, central to their status in the city, would thereby have been solidified and made permanent through the painted depiction of the entombment.

30. This is Otto von Simson's thesis ("Compassio and Co-Redemption," 9–16). For another exploration of the topic, please see: Donna Spivey Ellington, "Impassioned Mother or Passive Icon: The Virgin's Role in Late Medieval and Early Modern Passion Sermons," *Renaissance Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (1995): 227–61.