Preface

The nine essays collected in this volume are based on the papers presented at three coordinated sessions on "Movement and Meaning in Medieval Art and Architecture," organized by the editors, at the Forty-second International Congress of Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in 2007. The project originated at the Department of Art and Archaeology of Princeton University, where we discussed our common interests in medieval art and ritual, and began to think about the significance of movement when considering the conception and perception of medieval art. Objects, buildings, and urban space, we quickly agreed, had their most powerful effect on a viewer when experienced in ritual action entailing moving objects or viewers in motion. Was movement then not a fundamental component of rituals and performances, and as such crucial for the creation of meaning in art and architecture? To answer this question more thoroughly, at the conference we engaged in an interdisciplinary discussion of the role of movement in the complex relationship between art, architecture, and the public in the Middle Ages.

In recent years, medieval art and architecture have increasingly been studied in the context of ritual function, with a focus on the interrelationships with liturgy. In a seminal study, Sible de Blaauw has meticulously reconstructed liturgical practices in three major churches of Rome (San Pietro in Vaticano, San Giovanni in Laterano, and Santa Maria Maggiore) together with the architectural development and the history of their liturgical furnishings.[1] André Vauchez has brought into the discussion the various forms of civic cults in which lay authorities instituted and presided over religious ritual activities concerning the civic communities in the medieval Mediterranean.[2] These studies were driven by a rigorous examination of historical sources to reconstruct the original function of buildings and works of art as well as that of the rituals themselves. They have also contributed to a better understanding of the complex iconographies of medieval art. The important issue of the viewer's interaction with space, objects, and images in the performance of the ritual, a process in which movement is crucial, has, however, not been addressed previously.

Two anthropological perspectives proved to be influential for our project. The first emerged from the work of Victor Turner, who developed the processual analysis of rituals of passage.[3] Focusing in particular on pilgrimage, he elaborated on the concept of the liminality of the subject undergoing a change of state. Applied to

art-historical research, the methodology expanded from an emphasis on the subject of the ritual to the place and the objects under investigation. The second is by Alfred Gell, who has addressed the role of the viewer and the viewer's interaction with works of art based on the investigation of social relations.[4] He examined works of art in their ritual context through the categories of the agent (performing the activity) and the patient (undergoing the action). His consideration of the interactive relationship between art and the viewer as a process fueled our own interest in movement for the interpretation of medieval art.

Connected with the concept of agency and an understanding of ritual as a performative act, performativity as an art-historical method has increasingly gained attention in medieval studies. In this way, scholars follow the path determined by Aby Warburg, who, rather than studying works of art in terms of aesthetics, investigated the religious origins and function of art from an anthropological viewpoint.[5] Recent contributions to this field focus on the audience in the process of viewing and experiencing art, particularly in the context of medieval theater, both liturgical and secular. Stimulated by this discourse, Elina Gertsman has recently presented an interdisciplinary collection of essays addressing a wide range of issues that emerged at the intersection of performance and medieval culture.[6]

In all of these methodological approaches, movement appears as a crucial component in the experience of art, architecture, and urban space, yet it remains conspicuously absent from the debate. Because movement concerns several varying aspects of the dialogue regarding the image, the architecture, and the beholder, it is a crucial agent for the creation of meaning, and its study is essential for a better understanding of the processes of semiosis in the arts. The essays in this book address the issue of movement and the arts from a simple threefold perspective: the object in motion, the moving viewer, and movement in the mind. Thinking about movement in the arts encourages the exploration of contexts not necessarily related to rituals and performances, such as practices of devotion, exercises of reading, and the appreciation of art in late medieval courtly society. It provides additional ways in which physical, intellectual, and emotional connections pertaining to art and architecture, their creation and their reception, are established. In this respect, we consider movement not only as a physical transition, but also as an intellectual process in the reception of images, creating layers of meaning through the experience of objects and spaces, real and imaginary.

Nino Zchomelidse's essay begins the first section of this book, which is dedicated to objects in motion. She examines the interaction of movement, images, and the viewer's reception in the medieval Easter liturgy according to the Beneventan rite practiced in southern Italy between the tenth and twelfth centuries. This specific liturgy, which culminates in the powerful moment of the lighting of the Easter candle, includes a particular type of illuminated liturgical manuscript, the Exultet roll. While the deacon sings the Exultet hymn, announcing Christ's Resurrection from the top of the ambo, part of the scroll unwinds over the edge of the lectern, revealing sophisticated programs of images: allegorical, biblical, and liturgical. The *Maiestas Domini* alludes to Christ ascending to heaven, the event that is celebrated at precisely this liturgical moment, while the downward unfurling of the scroll represents the descent of the *logos* to earth. The actual movement of the scroll therefore conceptually negotiates the visual manifestation of the Incarnation with the imagined movement of the resurrecting Christ.

The following two essays, by Francesco Lucchini and Melissa Katz, elaborate on the movable mechanisms of medieval artifacts and their impact on the reception of these works. Based on physical examination of the object, archival documents, and visual sources, Lucchini

is able to reconstruct the original form of the head reliquary that contained the jawbone of Saint Anthony of Padua. It included a movable visage that established complex relationships between the visual experience of the relic, the image of the saint, and the imagination of the viewer. Movement not only represents the transaction between the ostension of the relic and the display of the saint's face, but it is also the medium that constructs or deconstructs the mimetic conflation of relic and reliquary. Finally, movement reveals the contradictory nature of the reliquary: unveiling its mechanical nature as that of a counterfeit and determining the modes in which the presence and agency of the saint are transmitted.

Melissa Katz develops a particularly rich argument on the interaction of physical and iconographic features made possible by the movable parts, the shutters, of a group of largely unpublished *Vierges ouvrantes*, primarily from the Iberian Peninsula. The ability to open and close these intriguing sculptures, which date from the mid-thirteenth to the sixteenth century, created a multilayered web of meaning. In their closed state, the statues represent the Virgin Mary as Mother of God or the Immaculate Conception as iconographic types. Once opened, they unveil their interiors and become tabernacles, revealing a chain of metaphors that relate to the body of the Virgin as the Ark of the Covenant, the mystical body of Ecclesia, or the door by which Christ entered the world. The physical act of opening the sculptures' bodies constitutes an act of revelation and, at the same time, activates the intercessory power of the image. It provokes a strong emotional and intellectual response from the viewer. As the *Vierges ouvrantes* oscillate between the visually irreducible images of the Mother of God and the sacred mystery hidden in their entrails, movement reconstitutes the conceptual integrity of the object by unifying its metaphorical layers.

The second section of the book addresses movement seen from the perspective of a moving viewer. Giovanni Freni discusses the reception of the sculpted program of the facade of the Duomo of Fidenza in the context of pilgrimage. Located on the most important route connecting France to Rome, the facade of the church was devised to capture the attention of pilgrims on their journey. While moving along the intramural section of the Via Francigena that passed before the facade, the pilgrims encountered reliefs, statues, and inscriptions that were intended to direct their physical movement. Freni demonstrates that these viewers, in response to these specific indications, were prompted to gaze at sequences of images conveying religious messages. They showed the way to Rome, encouraged the pious journey, and warned against its perils. They also invited viewers to visit the shrine of the local patron saint, San Donnino, in the Duomo's crypt, and instructed them on the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith and the proper demeanor while approaching the sanctuary. Movement, he argues, functions as the principal medium by which the program of the facade develops its meaning. It generates the visual structure of the themes articulated in a complex web of references that is created by the sculptural program and the viewers' reception, and operates as a semiotic code.

Amy Bloch examines the late medieval and early modern components of the decoration of the Baptistery of San Giovanni in Florence from the viewpoint of a contemporary viewer participating in the rite of baptism. The ritual included a number of stations, beginning outside the building at the south portal and concluding inside at the baptismal font with the performance of the sacrament. As parents and godparents moved with their children through these ritual steps, they encountered a number of images relating to fertility and birth, baptism and purification. The rite created a powerful experience that triggered reflections on the meaning of the sacrament. It also constructed a form of collective experience and memory that integrated the children into the civic community of Florence.

Laura Weigert investigates the implication of movement in the conception and reception of a series of large-scale painted cloths depicting the "Vengeance of God against the Jews" for the killing of Christ, made in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, now in the Musée des Beaux-arts in Reims. The iconography of the series draws on the text of a mystery play written by Eustache Marcadé around 1430 and connects with actual performances of it. Weigert focuses particularly on the visual strategies employed in scenes of displacement and action. The former is rendered by the juxtaposition of various backdrops and the use of specially devised architectural frames, which effectively convey the flow of the narrative within a wide geographical scope. Action emerges in the gestural emphasis of the figures or through the massive number of characters, creating a powerful sensation of dynamics and energy. Weigert demonstrates that the cloths were intended to be viewed in the course of processional rituals, as was the practice for processional dramas. Reception based on ritual movement thus strengthened the sense of civic identity of the community whose common religious and political ideals were reflected in the images.

Joanna Frońska's investigation of the reading modes of medieval legal manuscripts opens the last section of this collection of essays, which is dedicated to intellectual forms of movement. She considers several manuscripts with commented or glossed editions of civil law (the *Digestum*), dating from 1180 to 1230–40, and examines the function and use of different types of marginal images conceived to support the consultation of the texts. These drawings depict legal cases in a literal sense, represent a relevant juridical term metaphorically, or refer as a symbol or sign to abstract concepts of a respective passage. In all instances, the images trigger the eye and thus the movement of the reader by guiding his attention toward the respective legal paragraphs. Some images develop more complex intertextual relationships that reflect the nonlinear pattern of reading legal texts. Following them, the reader was able to identify the passages that referred to the same juridical principles, and the consequent physical parsing of the book reflects the associative mental movement of the reader. Beyond providing the user with practical help in the consultation of these books, the addition of images to the texts was grounded in medieval theories of memory. As mnemonic props they created mental notes and glosses, thereby stimulating the intellectual process of reading.

Kathryn McKinley discusses the experience of mental movement in the description of the Temple of Venus in the first book of Geoffrey Chaucer's early poem *The House of Fame* (1378–86). The poet describes his imaginary visit to the Temple of Venus, where an extensive narrative of the story of Dido and Aeneas decorates the walls. McKinley places Chaucer's *ekphrasis* in the context of the poetic tradition of Virgil and Dante and of medieval visionary literature, modeled on the Apocalypse of John. She argues that Chaucer's experience of the imaginary temple evokes that of pilgrims moving through the space of churches, and describes the way in which Chaucer's poetic imagination elaborates on the actual practice of visiting English pilgrimage churches. As in the pilgrim's experience, Chaucer's imaginary movement through the Temple of Venus does not emerge as a simple visual experience but triggers a further meditative movement through an emotional and intellectual path that parallels religious contemplation.

In the concluding essay, Lorenz Enderlein examines the modes of reception of monumental allegories in the context of late medieval courtly society. His essay centers on the sophisticated fresco decoration of the great hall in the castle of La Manta (Saluzzo, Piedmont), dated ca. 1420. The program consists of a depiction of the Fountain of Youth, a cycle of Nine Male and Nine Female Worthies, a Crucifixion originally hidden behind the

shutters of a small chapel-niche, and heraldic motifs related to the House of Saluzzo. The paintings, commissioned by Valerano da Saluzzo, illegitimate son of Thomas III, Marquis of Saluzzo, are connected to the novel *Le chevalier errant*. Written by the patron's father, it narrates the adventurous journey of a knight who eventually reaches the court of "Lady Cognoissance" (Wisdom) and the Lord of Charity (Christ). In his meticulous analysis, Enderlein shows that the meandering movement of the knight in his quest for divine wisdom provides the key to understanding the enigmatic program of the great hall. The chevalier's voyage corresponds to the intellectual journey of the viewer, exploring the elusive realm of earthly paradise, the halls of fame, and finally approaching hope in salvation in the concealed image of the Crucifixion.

This volume contains revised versions of the papers given at the conference, with the exception of those by Mary Hazard, Jacqueline Jung, and Søren Kaspersen.

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1 Sible de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor: Liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale; Basilica Salvatoris, Sanctae Mariae, Sancti Petri* (Vatican City, 1994).
2 *La religion civique à l'époque médiévale et modern: Chrétienté et islam; Actes du colloque*, ed. André Vauchez (Rome, 1995).
3 Victor Turner, *Process, Performance and Pilgrimage* (New Delhi, 1979); Victor and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York, 1978).
4 Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford, 1998).
5 See Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, trans. Sophie Hawkes (New York, 2004).
6 *Visualizing Medieval Performance: Perspectives, Histories, Contexts*, ed. Elina Gertsman, (Aldershot, England, 2008).